

The Role of Issue in Taiwan's Politics, 1996-2004

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This article investigates the role played by issues in Taiwan's politics during the period 1996-2004. This is done by examining the electorate's attitudes toward the unification of Taiwan with China or Taiwanese independence (the UI issue), economic growth versus environmental protection (the EE issue), the expansion of social welfare programs (the SW issue), and social and political stability versus political reform (the SR issue). The findings suggest that Taiwanese people are more aware of the positions of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) on the four issues. They are more aware of the positions of the People First Party (PFP) and the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) on the UI issue than on other issues. The discriminant analysis suggests that the UI and SR issues persistently structured party competition during the research period. From an issues perspective, it is also important to note that Taiwan's party system is sometimes not so much affected by the emergence of a new issue as by the old parties moving their positions on existing issues.

KEYWORDS: Taiwan politics; issues; issue voting; discriminant analysis.

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Several issues have emerged in Taiwan since the late 1970s, including the pace of political reform, whether Taiwan should unify with China or seek independence, the pace and scale of economic development, environmental protection, and the expansion of social welfare programs.¹ In the 1990s, after the lifting of martial law, the rise of social movements and the increasing frequency of demonstrations and protests brought these issues to the fore in Taiwanese politics.

Generally speaking, however, not all issues attract the attention of political elites and the public. Issues that dominate the political agenda tend to be those that the public feel are the most important and those to which they believe the government should pay attention. Theories of political change, for example, argue that the emergence of new issues can overturn existing party loyalties and lead to a new and stable "normal vote."² Under those circumstances, issues are catalysts of change, disrupting the existing party system. The speed of this transformation depends on the capacity of the issues to stimulate political change in a society. It also depends on the ability of the existing parties to respond to the new challenge.

¹Political reform included the lifting of martial law, parliamentary reform, the extension of freedom of speech, and the granting of greater rights to demonstrate. The issue of unification with China became the most important and controversial issue on the political agenda in the 1990s. The issue of economic development vs. environmental protection came to the fore after the emergence of the environmental movement in the late 1980s. The expansion of social welfare also emerged as an issue in the early 1990s. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was the first party to make social welfare policies a central plank of its program in 1993. The Kuomintang (KMT) and the New Party (NP) subsequently pledged to expand social welfare policies as well. In this regard, there has been an intense debate recently about the national pension program.

²V. O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics* 17, no. 1 (February 1955): 3-18; Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 1-10, 71-134; and James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1983), 298-321. However, spectacular "issue effects" are rare. Key therefore suggests that there may be "secular realignments" in which party attachments are gradually eroded, leading to an old majority party being discarded by voters and the emergence of a new equilibrium in the party system. I contend that this is the case in Taiwan.

My principal concern is to establish which issues may have disrupted the party system in Taiwan over the period in question. This paper will focus on the four issues that have been measured since the 1996 presidential election survey.³ The paper is divided into five sections. The first section contains a brief introduction to the literature on issue voting. The second examines the main issues in Taiwan. The third moves on to examine voters' self-placement and their perceptions of the parties' positions on these issues. The fourth provides an empirical analysis of the relationship between a voter's self-placement position on an issue and his/her vote by applying discriminant analysis to the survey data. This method allows me to assess which issues played an important role in voting choice and when they did so. Finally, I will conclude with the role that issues played in Taiwan's politics during the period 1996-2004.

Issues and Change in the Party System

Until the 1950s, U.S. studies of voting behavior suggested that voting decisions were mainly based on party identification and responses to candidates, rather than on contemporary policy issues.⁴ The declining role attributed to social cleavages or party identification, however, has shifted attention toward issues. More recent research has maintained that issues and candidates have played an increasingly important role in elections over the past few decades.⁵ Indeed, some analyses conclude that voters' choices are largely based on their evaluations of parties' issue positions or candidates' characteristics.⁶

³They are unification with China vs. Taiwan independence, economic development vs. environmental protection, expansion versus contraction of social welfare programs, and social and political stability vs. political reform.

⁴Angus Campbell et al., *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), 131-32, 540.

⁵Harold D. Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 124-25, 324-26.

⁶Robert A. Jackson and Thomas M. Carsey, "Group Effects on Party Identification and Party

What is an issue? Fiorina gives an appropriate definition: "loosely speaking, an issue is any matter (i.e., subject, charge, promise) about which the parties disagree during a campaign."⁷ Voting based on issues occurs when voters are influenced by their policy preferences to vote for one party rather than another. Theories of "issue voting" represent the oldest voting theories around since they are associated with normative democratic theory.⁸ Most recent studies, however, have largely been inspired by rational choice theory. They assume that voters calculate which party to support based on their own policy preferences and their assessments of the parties' positions on these issues.⁹ Even in the early studies, however, it was recognized that issue-oriented voting behavior is influenced by the individual's cognitive and affective profile and the degree of issue familiarity.¹⁰

The most common method of assessing issue voting is based on proximity or spatial measures, which ask respondents to place themselves and the parties on seven-point or eleven-point scales on a show card. This method, of course, invites rationalization; thus it is not possible to make strong claims about causal relations between policy preference and voting choice. On the one hand, voters have a tendency to see their preferred party as the closest to their position and to perceive a disliked party as being far from their position, regardless of the actual issue position of the parties.¹¹

Coalitions Across the United States," *American Politics Research* 30, no. 1 (January 2002): 68; V. O. Key, Jr., *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), 58-59; David E. RePass, "Issue Salience and Party Choice," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 2 (June 1971): 400; Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies: Public Opinion and Political Parties in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and France* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1988), 192; Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 2 (June 1999): 265; and Mark N. Franklin, "Assessing the Rise of Issue Voting in British Election Since 1964," *Electoral Studies* 4, no. 1 (1985): 37-56.

⁷Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 130.

⁸John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 206-8.

⁹David Denver, *Elections and Voters in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 96.

¹⁰Campbell et al., *The American Voter*, 174-75.

¹¹George Rabinowitz, James W. Prothro, and William Jacoby, "Salience as a Factor in the

While there is strong evidence of an association between issue positions and voting choice,¹² it is not possible to demonstrate that issue preferences cause (or determine) voting choice.¹³

The spatial model has also been criticized for assuming a certain unidimensionality of political conflict.¹⁴ A voter might, for example, support the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) on political reform but be pro-Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨) on unification with mainland China. Despite what has been claimed about the way in which party identification might shape preferences, voters may have different preferences from "their" party on different issues. The difficulty for researchers is to establish which issue has most influence on a voter's decision. This is sometimes referred to as the problem of "decision-rules" or "salience."¹⁵

In addition, it is important to bear in mind that if the difference between the position of one party (or candidate) and another on an issue is ambiguous, the extent of issue-oriented behavior is likely to be low. Issues will be most important when the parties or candidates offer the electorate clear choices. When the parties' positions are vague, there may be no cue for voters to distinguish between parties or candidates. This is what Key called the "echo chamber effect."¹⁶ It is also mentioned in Page and Brody's analysis: "Vague candidates cannot contribute much to the education of the public, and cannot facilitate the casting of policy-oriented votes when there is a real difference between candidates."¹⁷

Impact of Issues on Candidate Evaluation," *Journal of Politics* 44, no. 1 (February 1982): 46; and Benjamin I. Page and Richard A. Brody, "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process: The Vietnam War Issue," *American Political Science Review* 66, no. 3 (September 1972): 981.

¹²RePass, "Issue Salience and Party Choice," 400; Franklin, "Assessing the Rise of Issue Voting in British Election Since 1964," 37-56; and Shamir and Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel," 265.

¹³Denver, *Elections and Voters in Britain*, 99.

¹⁴Donald E. Stokes, "Spatial Models of Party Competition," *American Political Science Review* 57, no. 2 (June 1963): 370.

¹⁵Denver, *Elections and Voters in Britain*, 99; and Elinor Scarbrough, "The British Electorate Twenty Years On: Electoral Change and Election Surveys," *British Journal of Political Science* 17, no. 2 (April 1987): 231.

¹⁶Key, *The Responsible Electorate*, 2.

¹⁷Page and Brody, "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process," 995.

The process of change in the party system may be the result of an emerging issue that arouses powerful feelings. In such circumstances, voters may experience cross-pressures as a result of old political allegiances and preferences. If a split occurs, the new party may be attractive to voters with weak attachments to a particular party (such as younger voters). Votes shift in line with new issues, and, over time, new loyalties emerge. Sundquist, for example, suggests that a new issue or cluster of related issues has historically produced a "realignment," as was the case in the United States with slavery in the 1850s, the agrarian issue and related labor issues in the 1890s, and the depression issues in the 1930s.¹⁸

Not all issues are capable of generating a new political party. Not all voters attach great weight to ideology and policy. Some are clearly influenced by an enduring sense of party identification, especially in well-established democracies. Nonetheless, increasing numbers of studies maintain that issues have grown in importance in democracies since the late 1960s.¹⁹ The erosion of the social and partisan base of the vote in the United States and Western Europe appears to have promoted the rise of issue voting. These electorates appear to be more sophisticated and, by implication, less responsive to purely emotional or tribal appeals for support.²⁰ We could, therefore, expect that shifts in preferences from election to election are more influenced by short-term factors such as issues. In less established democracies, such as Taiwan, particular issues may lead to extensive changes in the party system.

Issues in the Taiwan Context

Beginning in the late 1970s, three broad changes had important effects on Taiwanese party politics. First, rapid economic growth brought

¹⁸Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 299-300.

¹⁹Richard G. Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg, *Classics in Voting Behavior* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1993), 98.

²⁰Clarke et al., *Political Choice in Britain*, 229-30.

about an increase in the size of the middle class.²¹ Second, although limited national elections had been regularly held since 1969, opposition groups and the electorate were provided with more opportunities for political participation. Finally, the emergence of diverse social movements in the late 1980s stimulated public discussion about the proper role of government. These changes made the policy debates between the political parties more relevant to the electorate.

Before discussing the main issues in Taiwan, I shall briefly review the policy stances of the political parties. To determine what each party stands for, I examined their party platforms and founding documents (see table 1).

I found that the KMT, the New Party (NP, 新黨), and the People First Party (PFP, 親民黨) hold similar positions on the key issue of cross-Strait relations. They are in favor of opening direct links with mainland China and have what is essentially a "one-China" policy.²² On constitutional questions, both the KMT and the PFP support a semi-presidential political system and the strengthening of relations with overseas Chinese.²³ The NP, however, advocates a parliamentary system, while the DPP and the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU, 台灣團結聯盟) favor a presidential system. The DPP and the NP are the only two parties that directly address issues of human rights in their party platforms.²⁴ On social welfare, most of the parties support a social security system and moves toward a welfare state, with the implementation of a national pension policy and allowances for the elderly and the unemployed. In terms of environmental protection versus economic growth, the DPP and the TSU place more emphasis on environmental protection. Given the basic similarity of their positions on cross-Strait policies and economic development, cooperation is more likely between the KMT, the NP, and the PFP in nominating candidates standing

²¹Steve Tsang, "Transforming a Party State into a Democracy," in *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*, ed. Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999), 10.

²²The three direct links are postal, commercial, and transportation links.

²³The PFP put "overseas Chinese policy" together with foreign policy.

²⁴The DPP spoke of protecting basic human rights and supporting human rights as universal values and the NP spoke of promoting human rights bills.

Table 1
Platforms of the Main Political Parties in 2001

Cross-Strait Relations	
KMT	Three direct links with China; one-China policy
DPP	Taiwan independence
NP	Three direct links with China; one-China policy
PFP	Three direct links with China; one-China policy (in three stages)
TSU	"No haste, be patient" on three direct links; Taiwan first
Electoral System for Legislative Elections*	
KMT	Re-drawing of districts, single-member districts, and two-vote system
DPP	Single-member districts and two-vote system
NP	Single-member districts and two-vote system
PFP	Single-member districts and two-vote system
National Defense*	
DPP	Reform of compulsory military service
NP	Voluntarism
Constitution	
KMT	Semi-presidential system
DPP	Presidential system
NP	Parliamentary system
PFP	Semi-presidential system
TSU	Presidential system; downsizing the Legislative Yuan to half current size
Ethnic Policy*	
KMT	Protect Hakka, Mongolian, Tibetan, and overseas Chinese interests
DPP	Aboriginal reservation
NP	Protection of aboriginal people's interests
PFP	New Taiwanese; protection of aboriginal people's interests
Education*	
KMT	Twelve-year compulsory education
DPP	"Taiwan culture first;" twelve-year compulsory education
Environment	
KMT	Balance of economic development and environmental protection
DPP	Nuclear-free homeland
NP	Balance of economic development and environmental protection
PFP	Sustainable development
TSU	Nuclear-free homeland

Sources: For the KMT, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/AboutUs/Aboutus-3-1.html> (accessed July 3, 2003); for the DPP, <http://www.dpp.org.tw/> (accessed May 20, 2003); for the NP, <http://www.np.org.tw/article.asp?channelid=A3&serial=88> (accessed July 4, 2003); for the PFP, <http://www.pfp.org.tw/platform/index.php?id=01> (accessed July 2, 2003); and for the TSU, <http://www.tsu.org.tw/tsuOutline.php> (accessed May 20, 2003) (all in Chinese).

Note: All of the parties stressed revitalization of the economy and social welfare measures such as a national pension system, old-age allowances, and unemployment allowances.

*Certain parties are not listed here because they did not address these specific issues in their party platforms.

at executive level (i.e., elections for the president, and city mayors/county magistrates) or in passing bills in the Legislative Yuan (立法院). The DPP and the TSU have similar positions on Taiwan independence, a presidential political system, and the environment.

Fell has analyzed the importance of issues in Taiwan during the 1990s by examining the content of newspaper campaign advertisements.²⁵ He finds that Taiwan's parties did emphasize issues. Political parties in Taiwan stress issues that are favorable to them and ignore or treat perfunctorily issues that are unfavorable to them.²⁶ Moreover, Fell points out that political corruption, Taiwan's independence, and political stability were among the top ten issues for all three major parties (KMT, DPP, and NP). The DPP placed particular stress on the expansion of the welfare state, while the NP stressed environmental protection. Fell concludes that Taiwan independence, political corruption, and the economy were the core issues in 1990s Taiwan.²⁷

This brief examination of party platforms and founding documents provides us with an overview of the positions of the major parties on issues in Taiwan. Moreover, Fell's abovementioned content analysis offers a preliminary picture of which issues may have defined the political agenda in Taiwan in the 1990s. Many issues cropped up in campaign debates, but comparative data on voters' positions on all issues and their perceptions of the parties' positions are not available for Taiwan.²⁸ Only four general issues were included in the 1998, 2001, and 2004 surveys for the legislative elections and the 1996 and 2000 surveys for the presidential elections. They were: (1) unification with mainland China versus Taiwan independence; (2) economic development versus environmental protection; (3)

²⁵Dafydd Fell, "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *Issues & Studies* 38, no. 2 (June 2002): 31-60. Fell's coding scheme followed Ian Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 219-28.

²⁶Fell, "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," 59.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Any analyst of issue voting has to accept that the data are never perfect. As Fiorina notes, there is no guarantee that the authors of surveys will correctly identify the issues. See Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, 130-45.

expansion versus contraction of social welfare programs; and (4) social and political stability versus political reform.

Unification with Mainland China vs. Taiwan Independence (UI Issue)

Under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), the Taiwanese people were educated to believe that their fundamental purpose was to "reconquer the mainland and unify China." There was thus no room for developing a distinct consciousness of being Taiwanese. It was not until the late 1980s, when political liberalization and democratization began, that a Taiwanese consciousness gradually developed in a more open, free, and information-rich environment. The issue has also been important for parties other than the KMT. The DPP added a Taiwan independence clause (台獨黨綱) to its charter in 1991 and the issue of unification or independence has been debated intensively both during election campaigns and in daily politics. This highly emotional issue divides the main political parties into two camps. The KMT, the NP, and the PFP stand for unification, while the DPP and the TSU stand for independence. For some, at least, the UI issue transcends all others.

Economic Development vs. Environmental Protection (EE Issue)

Taiwan, one of the Asian tigers, is noted for its high degree of economic development. Rapid economic growth, however, has been accompanied by environmental problems that have gradually attracted public attention. Protests against nuclear power plants, petrochemical factories, and waste dumping sites began in the late 1980s. There was an average of 31.3 incidents of environmental conflict per year between 1988 and 1990, but there were 258 such incidents in 1991 alone.²⁹ The issue of economic development became more visible during election campaigns. Debate intensified when the new DPP government announced that it was halting construction of the fourth nuclear power plant in 2000. The formation of the

²⁹Shui-yan Tang and Ching-ping Tang, "Democratization and Environmental Politics in Taiwan," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 3 (March 1997): 284.

Green Party Taiwan (台灣綠黨) in 1996 also helped to keep the issue in the news.³⁰ The party has nominated candidates to contest national and local elections since 1996 but has failed to win any seats to date. Although all parties would like to combine growth with environmental protection, the KMT is often seen as more pro-growth, while the DPP and the NP are seen as more pro-environment.³¹

Expansion vs. Contraction of Social Welfare Programs (SW Issue)

Rapid economic growth since the 1970s has brought striking demographic change to Taiwan. The crude birth rate has declined significantly and an aging population has gradually emerged.³² With the emergence of interest groups and the rise of public awareness of social welfare, Taiwan is evolving into a welfare state. An old-age social allowance program was established in 1993 in some areas governed by the DPP and a national health insurance system was launched in 1995.³³ The DPP's campaign theme in the 1993 elections for county magistrates/city mayors was "welfare expansion."³⁴ This was the first time social welfare issues had been brought to the attention of the electorate. The KMT later advocated a similar old-age allowance during the 1994 elections for the Taiwan provincial governor and the mayors of Taipei (台北市) and Kaohsiung (高雄市).³⁵ In the 2000 presidential election, the DPP candidate further proposed a "3-3-3 family welfare program" (三三三安家福利專案), apparently

³⁰The platform of the Green Party Taiwan includes ecological sustainability, grass-roots democracy, social justice, and world peace. It was prominent in opposing the building of the fourth nuclear power plant.

³¹John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Emerson M. S. Niou, "Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electorate Politics," *Electoral Studies* 15, no. 2 (May 1996): 224.

³²Older people have made up more than 7 percent of the population in Taiwan since 1993. The crude birth rate was 11.0 per thousand in 2002. Available from: <http://www.dgbase.gov.tw> (in Chinese) (accessed March 22, 2005).

³³Christian Aspalter, *Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 3.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 75; and Cheng Tzu-leong, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu Taiwan shehui* (Election campaign communication and Taiwan society) (Taipei: Yangzhi wenhua, 2004), 34.

³⁵See report from Chen Shu-ling (陳淑玲) at <http://issue.udn.com/DAILY/200302/0211b4.htm> (in Chinese) (accessed April 27, 2004).

aimed at winning support from young couples and older voters.³⁶ There has recently been intense debate over the national pension program (國民年金計畫). The DPP was the first party to make social welfare policies a major part of its platform in 1993, but the KMT and the NP subsequently pledged to expand social welfare.³⁷ There is, therefore, little doubt that the social welfare issue is salient.³⁸ The only difference between the main parties is over how quickly and how far social welfare should expand. The DPP is often seen as more pro-expansion, while the KMT is seen as more conservative on this issue.³⁹

Social and Political Stability vs. Political Reform (SR Issue)

Under martial law, civil and political rights were restricted, and before 1988 it was illegal to found new political parties. Demand for reforms, however, increased in the late 1970s. These included the lifting of martial law, granting of the right to demonstrate, allowing freedom of speech, and retiring members of the National Assembly (國民大會) and the Legislative Yuan elected before 1949.⁴⁰ More and more Taiwanese people supported further democratic reforms in the 1990s. Street demonstrations and fierce conflict among legislators in the Legislative Yuan, however, caused many to express concern about social and political stability. Indeed, some evidence suggests that stability was more important to some voters than freedom and democracy.⁴¹ Reforms had long been advocated by the pre-1988

³⁶The program included the following: (1) over-65s without any welfare allowance would be granted NT\$3,000 per month; (2) under-3s would be exempt from any medical expenses; and (3) preferential loans at a 3 percent interest rate would be given to first-time home buyers.

³⁷The PFP included unemployment insurance and a national pension policy in its party platform, but the TSU did not address this issue in its founding documents.

³⁸Aspalter, *Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan*, 96, 100.

³⁹Hsieh and Niou, "Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electorate Politics," 222.

⁴⁰Joseph Jau-shieh Wu, *Taiwan's Democratization: Forces Behind the New Momentum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 63. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, the KMT launched a series of political reforms and amended the constitution six times.

⁴¹John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Emerson M. S. Niou, "Issue Voting in the Republic of China on Taiwan's 1992 Legislative Yuan Election," *International Political Science Review* 17, no. 1 (January 1996): 16.

opposition (黨外, *dangwai*) and their successors in the DPP. The NP and the PFP also were commonly believed to be in favor of more political reform. The KMT, on the other hand, has been seen as more conservative and concerned to promote stability.⁴²

The SR issue appears to have dominated the political agenda in the early 1990s. Given increased awareness of the need for environmental protection and social welfare as a result of media exposure and the activities of environmental groups, such as the Green Citizen's Action Alliance (綠色公民行動聯盟) and Green Formosa Front (綠色陣線), we might expect the public to have been more familiar with the EE and SW issues in the late 1990s. The UI issue, because of its emotionally-charged character, has never faded away. It is this issue, more than any others, that has the greatest potential to destabilize the party system. Debate on the UI issue is intense and frequent, and evokes deep emotions. Moreover, it is associated with an emerging Taiwanese identity.⁴³

Distribution of Opinion on the Four Issues

It was not until 1996 that researchers began to look seriously at issue voting in Taiwan.⁴⁴ The data used here include the surveys for the 1998, 2001, and 2004 legislative elections and those for the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. In the survey for the 1995 legislative election, however, researchers used a closed-ended question to establish voters' opinions on cross-Straits relations. This survey also asked respondents to evaluate the positions of the parties on this issue. The findings are reported in table 2. Clearly, in 1995 most Taiwanese wished to maintain the status quo. Almost half of the respondents (47.4 percent) wanted no change in the

⁴²See note 39 above.

⁴³T. Y. Wang and I-chou Liu, "Contending Identities in Taiwan," *Asia Survey* 44, no. 4 (July/August 2004): 568-90.

⁴⁴See Appendix for full questionnaires.

Table 2
Positions of Respondents and their Perceptions of Party Positions on Cross-Strait Relations in the 1995 Legislative Election (Column Percentages)

Position	Respondent	KMT	DPP	NP
Immediate independence	3.0	1.7	40.5	2.2
Maintain the status quo and move toward independence in the future	10.1	8.1	23.6	4.3
Maintain the status quo forever	14.4	6.0	0.6	3.0
Maintain the status quo and in the future decide whether to unify or become independent	33.0	19.0	2.6	9.5
Maintain the status quo and move toward unification in the future	20.2	29.9	1.7	22.4
Immediate unification	3.9	4.7	2.9	15.2
Don't know	15.4	30.6	28.1	43.3
Cases	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

existing situation.⁴⁵ Perceptions of party position largely confirm expectations: voters perceived the DPP to be a pro-independence party, while the KMT and the NP were perceived as more pro-unification. The results also show that more respondents knew the DPP's position than knew the position of the KMT or the NP. More than one-third of respondents did not accurately report the position of the KMT; and more than two in five respondents could not indicate the NP's position. The perceived ambiguity of the KMT's position may also reflect subtle and gradual changes in the KMT's position that were not entirely understood by the public.

In order to understand voters' preferences and their perception of the parties' positions on these issues, from 1996 respondents were asked to identify their own positions as well as those of the parties on an eleven-

⁴⁵The percentage includes respondents who opted for "maintain current situation and then in future decide whether to unify or become independent according to the situation" (33.0 percent) and "maintain current situation forever" (14.4 percent).

point scale. Questions about the four issues—UI, EE, SW, and SR—were asked in each survey with the exception of 1996 when there were no questions on the EE issue. The questionnaires for each year were almost identical, except in the case of the SW issue.

Awareness of Own Position and Party Position

Over 85 percent of the respondents were apparently able to place themselves on the scale on all four issues.⁴⁶ Respondents were also almost equally familiar with the KMT's and the DPP's positions on the issues. While three out of five respondents were able to locate the NP on the UI issue, only about half could locate the NP on the other three issues. More than half of the respondents were able to place themselves and the positions of the NP, the PFP, and the TSU on the UI issue, while less than half of the respondents could locate themselves and these parties on the other three issues. In all, respondents appeared to be more familiar with the positions of the PFP and the TSU on the UI issue than on the other three issues (see table 3).

These results suggest that respondents' familiarity with the positions of the DPP, the PFP, and the TSU has increased over the four issues and over time, while perception of the NP's positions has decreased. This could be a consequence of the fact that the NP is not the third largest party anymore and that its media exposure decreased after the 1998 legislative election. The PFP and the TSU, both newly established parties, gained publicity during elections for the legislature and for county magistrates/city mayors, thus giving the electorate more opportunity to learn about their policies.

The UI Issue

On the UI issue, the average position of voters was highly consistent until 2001.⁴⁷ The average was somewhere in the middle (5.0 to 5.3), though

⁴⁶The only exception is in the 1996 survey. Only 82.8 percent of the respondents were able to place themselves on the UI issue in that year.

⁴⁷Pro-independence is coded 0 and pro-unification is coded 10.

Table 3
Respondent's Awareness of Party Positions on Issues, 1996-2004

Year	Able to place	UI issue	EE issue	SW issue	SR issue
1996	Self	82.8		91.9	94.1
	KMT	70.8		72.9	74.5
	DPP	72.5		64.5	65.9
	NP	52.3		38.5	46.6
1998	Self	87.4	93.1	94.5	94.4
	KMT	76.6	79.9	81.3	79.6
	DPP	76.2	71.3	74.3	76.1
	NP	60.4	50.6	54.1	56.3
2000	Self	85.2	90.9	89.2	91.1
	KMT	73.7	74.2	72.7	75.9
	DPP	77.3	70.3	72.2	75.2
	NP	59.0	48.5	49.2	52.4
	PFP	58.8	47.3	48.7	52.5
2001	Self	85.9	91.0	91.7	91.3
	KMT	72.9	70.4	70.6	69.8
	DPP	75.6	70.4	72.3	71.3
	NP	58.4	47.9	48.8	47.7
	PFP	65.5	54.5	56.2	57.7
	TSU	61.4	46.9	47.5	48.3
2004 ^a	Self	87.5	91.4	90.9	92.5
	KMT	79.3	72.3	70.7	75.5
	DPP	81.6	73.7	72.8	76.8
	PFP	74.0	62.5	62.6	67.4
	TSU	74.0	59.5	59.2	66.3

Acronyms: **UI:** unification with mainland China vs. Taiwan independence; **EE:** economic development vs. environmental protection; **SW:** expansion vs. contraction of social welfare programs; **SR:** social and political stability vs. political reform.

^aThe 2004 survey did not ask respondents to place the NP's position on the four issues.

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

it moved to 4.7 in 2004 (see table 4 [a]). The KMT, the NP, and the PFP were regarded as pro-unification and the DPP and the TSU as pro-independence. The NP, however, was thought to be more pro-unification than the KMT. Moreover, respondents thought that both the KMT and the NP had moved toward a stronger pro-unification position after 1996. Note,

Table 4
Respondent's and Party's Positions on the Four Issues, 1996-2004

Issues	Year	Respondent	KMT	DPP	NP	PFP	TSU
(a) UI	1996	5.1	6.1	2.0	6.4		
	1998	5.0	6.5	2.3	7.2		
	2000	5.3	6.4	3.1	7.2		
	2001	5.1	7.2	2.6	7.5	7.2	2.6
	2004	4.7	7.4	2.2		7.3	1.8
(b) EE	1998	5.3	7.3	5.1	5.0		
	2000	5.3	7.2	5.2	5.0		
	2001	6.2	7.2	5.7	5.6	6.3	5.9
	2004	5.7	7.1	5.6		6.4	5.4
(c) SW	1996*	5.5	6.5	3.7	4.4		
	1998	1.4	3.3	3.5	4.1		
	2000*	4.4	5.2	3.5	4.8		
	2001	1.4	3.9	2.9	4.2	3.6	3.9
	2004	3.7	4.4	3.9		4.5	4.7
(d) SR	1996	7.0	6.8	3.8	5.6		
	1998	7.2	6.5	4.0	5.1		
	2000	7.2	7.0	4.4	5.6		
	2001	7.3	6.7	4.7	5.7	6.1	4.8
	2004	7.4	6.8	3.9		6.1	3.7

Acronyms: UI: unification with mainland China vs. Taiwan independence; EE: economic development vs. environmental protection; SW: expansion vs. contraction of social welfare programs; SR: social and political stability vs. political reform.

Note: Cell entries are the mean; the "don't know" response is excluded from this analysis.

*: Questionnaire is different from 1998 and 2001 surveys. See Appendix for question wording.

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

too, that respondents' perceptions of the DPP's position altered from 2.0 to 3.1 in the 2000 presidential election, subsequently returning to 2.2 in 2004. Apparently, the DPP's campaign theme in the 2000 presidential election, the "new middle way," was perceived as a move on the UI issue toward a position that was more popular among voters. The party was certainly successful in conveying that message to voters.

The EE Issue

On average, respondents were more pro-environment than the KMT (see table 4 [b]).⁴⁸ This makes perfect sense since the KMT's long record in government showed that it had a strong commitment to economic growth. The positions of the DPP, the NP, and the TSU were closer to voters on this issue. However, there is some tendency for both respondents' own views and their perceptions of the DPP's and the NP's positions to gradually shift closer to pro-growth. This is especially evident in the 2001 survey, and it may be a response to the economic downturn in 2000. Rising unemployment encouraged Taiwanese electors to prioritize economic development rather than environmental protection.⁴⁹ The major campaign themes during the 2001 legislative election, "revitalize the economy" and "reduce the unemployment rate," reflected these reduced economic conditions.⁵⁰ Opposition parties such as the KMT and the PFP condemned the DPP government's policies and poor performance on the economy during the 2001 campaign.

The SW Issue

In many West European countries the welfare state is a significant issue dividing parties and serving as a basis of choice. Historically, the issue has been less important in Taiwan.⁵¹ It is unfortunate that the questionnaires differed between surveys on this issue, so the data are not strictly comparable (see table 4 [c]).⁵² Bearing the limitations in mind, I compared

⁴⁸Pro-economic growth is coded 10 and pro-environmental protection is coded 0.

⁴⁹Clarke et al. have shown that responses to Ronald Inglehart's "post-materialism" questions are similarly sensitive to economic context. Economic contexts strongly influence how people answer the Euro-Barometer values battery. See Harold D. Clarke et al., "The Effect of Economic Priorities on the Measurement of Value Change: New Experimental Evidence," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 3 (September 1999): 645.

⁵⁰See the manifestos of the KMT, PFP, and TSU for the 2001 legislative election.

⁵¹Pro-expansion is coded 0 and resistance to social welfare programs is coded 10.

⁵²In 1996, the survey asked respondents to place themselves and the parties on a scale whose poles were "economic growth" and "expand social welfare." In the 2000 and 2004 surveys, the poles were "maintain social welfare at status quo" and "increase taxation in order to improve social welfare." Curiously, respondents were not given the option of endorsing a reduction in social welfare. In the 1998 and 2001 surveys, the poles were "the government

the results in 1998 and 2001, and the results in 2000 and 2004, pairs of years when the questions asked were identical. Roughly speaking, respondents appeared to favor "expansion of social welfare programs" and their positions were far more progressive than those of any of the parties. Respondents viewed the KMT and the NP as being less pro-welfare expansion, with the DPP regarded as being more pro-welfare than it had been in 1998. Yet while the data confirm that the DPP was regarded as the most pro-social welfare party, the KMT was not regarded as the most conservative. Rather, the NP was seen as being the party more likely to oppose increased social welfare spending. Overall, the data suggest that respondents perceived most parties as holding similar positions on this issue with the exception of the DPP, which was, on average, the party closest to the respondents.

The SR Issue

Political freedom is usually a potent issue in Taiwan, a newly democratized country. In the surveys, the DPP and the TSU were perceived to be more pro-reform, while the KMT was thought to advocate greater stability (see table 4 [d]). The NP and the PFP were placed somewhere between those parties. The data also suggest that respondents were far more in favor of stability than the parties. The KMT was the closest party to the respondents' average position. Taiwanese gave increasing priority to social and political stability over the period 1996-2004.⁵³ The data also suggest that respondents perceived the DPP as moving to a pro-stability position over the period 1996-2001. This is perhaps because many of the reforms the party advocated had already been achieved. However, the DPP was perceived to have moved toward a more pro-reform position in 2004 (the average position was 3.9). This significant change reflected the fact that

should not intervene too much" and "the government should expand welfare program." Thus, the measures in the 2000 and 2004 surveys are identical to each other, as are those of 1998 and 2001.

⁵³This implies that the KMT should maintain its emphasis on stability in order to win elections, while the DPP and the TSU need to demonstrate their ability to consolidate democracy without destabilizing the political situation.

the DPP government delivered a series of constitutional reforms after it came to power and the public were aware of the message this conveyed.⁵⁴

It appears from the above that respondents changed their positions, becoming increasingly in favor of Taiwan independence, economic growth at the expense of environmental protection, expanded welfare programs, and social and political stability. Of the parties, the KMT was perceived as becoming more pro-unification, the DPP as more pro-growth, the NP as more pro-unification and pro-growth, and the TSU as more pro-reform. In general, the data suggest that the DPP's positions were closest to the respondents' positions on the UI, EE, and SW issues in 2004. Moreover, the UI and SR issues are position issues that may encourage voters to use them as a basis of choice. The EE and the SW issues are valence issues in Taiwan in that all parties are in favor of economic growth and welfare programs.

Discriminant Analysis of Issues and the Vote

My analysis, to this point, has focused on the types of issues that might be related to voting decisions: respondents' issue preferences and their perception of the parties' positions. Another question is which issue is important in defining the party system in Taiwan. In particular, which issue appears to have the most potential to change the party system. Examining voters' self-defined positions on the issues also has the merit of "reduc(ing) the amount of 'simultaneity' from other causes of the vote."⁵⁵ To further examine the differences between the main parties, I conducted a discriminant analysis.

This analysis provides evidence about party differences and the extent to which votes are influenced by voters' preferences on the four

⁵⁴In particular, these were reforms of the electoral system for the legislature and a new constitutional referendum.

⁵⁵Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 209.

issues.⁵⁶ Discriminant analysis enables us to identify which of all the issues is the most important in differentiating between party supporters.⁵⁷ My prior expectation is that voters' self-defined positions on the UI and SR issues were the most important influences on the vote during the 1990s.

Discriminant analysis (DA) is a statistical technique that enables analysts to examine the differences between two or more groups of respondents with respect to several variables simultaneously.⁵⁸ It also enables researchers to assess the relative importance of the independent variables (i.e., the four issues) in classifying the dependent variable (vote decision). The eigenvalues of the canonical discriminant functions indicate whether the function is a powerful discriminator or not. The function with the largest eigenvalue is the most powerful discriminator, while the function with the smallest eigenvalue is the weakest.⁵⁹ In general, none of the functions derived from the discriminant analysis necessarily provides perfect discrimination, but the size of the eigenvalue allows us to establish the order of importance of the functions (see table 5).⁶⁰

The analysis suggests that for the period 1996-2004, only one canonical discriminant function is capable of distinguishing between party supporters. The first function contains more than 90 percent of the total discriminant power in the system of equations in each year, and therefore contributes most to our understanding of group differences. Note, too, the values for the canonical correlation, which is a measure of association that summarizes the degree of relatedness between the groups and the

⁵⁶The basic prerequisites for the discriminant analysis are that independent variables are measured at the interval or ratio level and the dependent variable is categorical. See William R. Klecka, *Discriminant Analysis* (Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, no. 07-001) (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1980), 8.

⁵⁷Although the multinomial logit analysis can also provide information regarding which issue is important for the vote, it only allows comparison between alternatives one pair at a time. See John H. Aldrich and Forrest D. Nelson, *Linear Probability, Logit, and Probit Models* (Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, no. 07-045) (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1984), 47.

⁵⁸Klecka, *Discriminant Analysis*, 7.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 35.

Table 5
Eigenvalues and Measures of Importance, 1996-2004

Year	Canonical discriminant function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Canonical correlation
1996	1	0.167	92.7	0.378
	2	0.013	7.3	0.114
1998	1	0.153	91.8	0.364
	2	0.014	8.2	0.116
2000	1	0.182	97.2	0.392
	2	0.005	2.8	0.072
2001	1	0.132	90.3	0.342
	2	0.008	5.5	0.089
	3	0.005	3.4	0.071
	4	0.001	0.8	0.035
2004	1	0.268	96.2	0.460
	2	0.011	3.8	0.102
	3	0.000	0.0	0.003

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

discriminant function; a larger figure denotes a higher association.⁶¹ The correlation between voting choice and the first function is modest, ranging between 0.34 and 0.46, while the correlation between voting choice and the second function (or the third, or the fourth function) is minuscule.

Based on the results of the relative percentage of variance and canonical correlation, function 1 is substantively meaningful in explaining group differences. I examined the standardized discriminant coefficients in function 1 in order to ascertain the relative importance of the discriminant variables. The larger the magnitude of the standardized coefficients, the greater the contribution of that variable to the discriminant function.⁶² The data in table 6 suggest that the UI issue made the greatest single contribu-

⁶¹Ibid., 36.

⁶²Ibid., 29-30.

Table 6
Standardised Discriminant Coefficients in Function 1, 1996-2004

	1996	1998	2000	2001	2004
UI	0.830	0.814	0.804	0.883	0.823
EE		0.052	-0.082	0.061	0.105
SW	0.068	0.216	0.054	0.334	0.135
SR	0.395	0.407	0.507	0.296	0.383

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

Acronyms: **UI**: unification with mainland China vs. Taiwan independence; **EE**: economic development vs. environmental protection; **SW**: expansion vs. contraction of social welfare programs; **SR**: social and political stability vs. political reform.

tion to the vote in the period 1996-2004. The SR issue was the second most important influence on the vote in all years, with the exception of 2001, when the SW issue overtook it in importance.

On the basis of these results, there is little doubt that the UI and SR issues were important in discriminating between party supporters during the period 1996-2004. As noted earlier, the DPP has increasingly emphasized the issue of social welfare since 1993, with the KMT and the NP addressing this theme in subsequent elections. During the 2000 presidential election campaign, all the main parties sought to push expansion of welfare up the political agenda, appealing to voters with different welfare policies.⁶³ Even during the 2001 elections for the legislature and county magistrates/city mayors, when the opposition mainly focused on economic issues, social welfare issues were still prominent in the campaign.⁶⁴ The emphasis given by the parties may, indeed, account for the SW issue making a greater contribution than the SR issue in 2001.

⁶³The DPP, for example, proposed the "3-3-3 family welfare program," while the KMT advocated a national pension system, and Lien Chan (連戰, KMT presidential candidate) tried to demonstrate his competence in relation to social welfare policies. James Soong (宋楚瑜, the independent presidential candidate) also advocated an old-age allowance.

⁶⁴See the manifestos of the KMT and DPP for the 2001 legislative election. The KMT proposed to introduce a "social security old people account," an infant educational allowance, and a national pension system. The DPP similarly proposed a program of old-age allowances and a national pension system.

The findings from discriminant analysis confirm that Taiwanese electoral politics was continually influenced by the UI issue during the period in question, with the SR issue having a secondary role. Whether the SW issue has the potential to make a powerful impact on politics is still under question. However, the results of this analysis suggest that parties can use issues (UI and SR) to mobilize support. For instance, the appeal for a strategy of "stability" which the KMT used over the period was successful in winning voters' support. Furthermore, the UI issue had the greatest potential to influence party competition in the 1990s and this influence seems to have continued into the early twenty-first century too.

I also conducted a multinomial logit analysis of vote choice among three parties in the 2004 legislative election (see table 7).⁶⁵ It is clear that respondents' positions on the UI, SR, and SW issues significantly affected their choice between the DPP and the KMT after controlling for socio-demographic variables, national identity, economic evaluation, and impression of the parties. The negative sign of the coefficients means that voters who were pro-unification, pro-stability, and resistant to welfare expansion were less likely to vote for the DPP (holding all other variables constant). This analysis confirms that the KMT was successful in attracting stability-oriented voters, while the DPP gained support from reform-oriented voters. In the PFP vs. KMT model, the UI issue had modestly significant effects; that is, the more pro-unification voters were, the more likely they were to vote for the PFP. None of the four issues had significant effects on voters' choices between the PFP and DPP. The analysis conveys a sense that the UI issue is the major driving force behind party competition. It suggests that predictions of future party competition need to consider the strength of the UI, SR, and SW issues in electoral politics in Taiwan.

⁶⁵Voters for the TSU were so few that they were excluded from the multinomial logit analysis.

Table 7
Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote Choice in the 2004 Legislative Election

	DPP/KMT	FPF/KMT	FPF/DPP
Gender			
Female	-0.20 (0.37)	-0.19 (0.40)	0.01 (0.45)
Age (60 and above = 0)			
20-29	-0.64 (0.63)	0.70 (0.68)	1.34 (0.80)
30-39	-0.45 (0.61)	1.85 (0.68)**	2.30 (0.78)**
40-49	0.03 (0.56)	0.93 (0.63)	0.90 (0.72)
50-59	-0.63 (0.59)	0.43 (0.59)	1.05 (0.74)
Education (university and above = 0)			
Elementary School and Below	1.21 (0.73)*	0.47 (0.82)	-0.73 (0.91)
High School	0.42 (0.61)	0.16 (0.71)	-0.26 (0.84)
Senior High School	0.40 (0.51)	-0.18 (0.49)	-0.58 (0.61)
College	-0.08 (0.49)	-0.08 (0.52)	0.00 (0.56)
Provincial Origin (mainlander = 0)			
Hakka	1.30 (0.56)*	-0.03 (0.46)	-1.33 (0.58)*
Minnan	0.97 (0.47)*	-0.53 (0.40)	-1.50 (0.50)**
National Identity (both = 0)			
Taiwanese	1.65 (0.35)***	0.05 (0.42)	-1.60 (0.45)***
Chinese	0.92 (0.61)	0.33 (0.55)	-0.59 (0.68)
Sociotropic Voting			
Retrospective	0.21 (0.25)	-0.40 (0.26)	-0.61 (0.31)
Prospective	0.02 (0.26)	-0.36 (0.30)	-0.37 (0.35)
Pocketbook Voting			
Retrospective	0.39 (0.29)	0.14 (0.29)	-0.25 (0.33)
Prospective	0.07 (0.32)	-0.42 (0.34)	-0.48 (0.41)
Party Image			
Image of KMT	-1.44 (0.20)***	-0.39 (0.20)	1.06 (0.26)***
Image of DPP	0.63 (0.18)**	-0.02 (0.20)	-0.65 (0.23)**
Image of PFP	-0.31 (0.19)	0.72 (0.21)**	1.03 (0.22)***
Issues			
UI	-0.18 (0.08)*	-0.16 (0.08)*	0.02 (0.09)
EE	-0.01 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.07)
SW	-0.13 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	0.08 (0.07)
SR	-0.14 (0.07)*	-0.11 (0.07)	0.04 (0.08)
Constant	0.98 (0.97)	0.55 (1.02)	-0.43 (1.19)

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

Note: N = 501; Pseudo $R^2 = 0.41$; Robust standard errors in parentheses * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$

Conclusions and Discussion

Over the past two decades, Taiwan has experienced numerous social and political reforms, and it has been transformed from a one-party system into a competitive multiparty state. Several parties have emerged in the past two decades. Some have enjoyed a certain amount of support for a relatively long period, but some have been unable to maintain their political strength. By looking at the issues in Taiwan over the period 1996-2004, this paper offers an understanding of Taiwanese politics from the issue perspective. I have recognized that issues have the potential to divide existing party coalitions and that they can lead to a new political equilibrium. I found that individuals had more awareness of the UI issue than any of the others. They were also more familiar with the positions of the KMT and the DPP. In general, the public's perceptions of party positions differed in terms of the UI issue and the SR issue. On the one hand, the DPP and the TSU were perceived as pro-independence and pro-political reform, while on the other, the KMT, the NP, and the PFP were seen as pro-unification and pro-stability. In terms of the EE issue, the KMT and the PFP were seen as pro-economic growth, while there was only a minor difference in the perception of the DPP, NP, and TSU on this issue.

Sundquist has suggested that a powerful new issue that cuts across all other issues will lead to a realignment.⁶⁶ When a party fails to respond to core issues, it loses some of its supporters. If this defection is significant, a new party system replaces the old one. The formation of the NP in 1993 fits this view of party system change.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, it was not a *new* issue, but the old UI issue, that appears to have provoked the change. The creation of the NP damaged the KMT's majority status in elections and helped the emergence of a multiparty system, and the underlying cause of this was the UI issue.

⁶⁶Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 298-321.

⁶⁷See table 4 for the difference in the perceived positions of the KMT and the NP on the UI issue.

Based on the evidence of the discriminant analysis and the multinomial logit analysis, I conclude that Taiwan's political agenda in the period 1996-2004 largely centered on the same set of issues. The most important of these was the issue of cross-Strait relations. The results imply that the SR issue was secondary in discriminating between the parties during this period. These were the major driving forces in the political system during the period in question. The continuing importance of the UI and SR issues largely determined the configuration of the party system while these issues were also important in mass party politics. Since the parties increasingly emphasized the social welfare issue and proposed similar welfare policies, it may be expected that the SW issue will increase in significance. The available data confirm that the SW issue did, indeed, affect voting choice between the DPP and the KMT in 2004. One characteristic of Taiwan's democracy is that the process of democratization is entangled with the process of nation-building. The increasing importance of the SW issue means that it has the potential to overtake the UI issue. If policies such as those associated with social welfare grow more prominent, one can expect a more sound and stable polity. In other words, any possible resolutions reached either within the island (between pro-unification and pro-independence forces) or between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in terms of identity politics, will not only help to stabilize Taiwan's political system but also benefit regional security and peace in East Asia. Having said this, however, one should note that it is a very optimistic outlook. All in all, the evidence contained in this research suggests that preferences on the UI, SR, and SW issues sustained continuity and change in the party system over the period 1996-2004.

Appendix: Questionnaires

1. The UI issue

- 1.1 Concerning Chinese reunification and Taiwan independence, some people think Taiwan should declare independence immediately and should not worry about mainland China's reaction. Other people believe Taiwan and China should begin negotiations as soon as possible to bring about the reunification of the two sides in the near future. There are also people whose opinions fall between these two views. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of declaring independence immediately and 10 represents the other extreme of beginning reunification negotiations as soon as possible (display card #___). What is your position? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? (in 1996 survey)
- 1.2 In our society people often talk about the question of Taiwan independence or the unification of China. Some people say that Taiwan should declare independence right away. Other people say that Taiwan and China should unify right away. Other people have opinions between these two positions. Suppose 0 represents one extreme that Taiwan should declare independence right away and 10 represents the other extreme that Taiwan and China should unify right away (display card #___). Which position do you occupy? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? The Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP)? (The PFP? The TSU?) (in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004 surveys)

2. The EE issue

- 2.1 On the question of economic development and environmental protection, some people emphasize environmental protection while some emphasize economic development. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of emphasizing environmental protection and 10 represents the other extreme of emphasizing economic development (display card #___). Which position do you occupy? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? The TAIP? (The PFP? The TSU?) (in 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004 surveys)

3. The SW issue

- 3.1 Concerning social and economic questions, some people think we should work to implement social welfare programs, even at the cost of slower economic development. On the other hand, some people think that in our current condition,

rapid economic growth should still be our most important goal and that social welfare questions can be resolved more gradually. There are also people whose opinions fall between these two views. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of giving priority to handling social welfare matters and 10 represents the other extreme of placing importance on economic development (display card #___). What is your position? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? (in 1996 survey)

- 3.2 On the question of social welfare, some people believe that people should take care of themselves and the government should not get involved while other people believe that the government should actively promote social welfare and take care of all the people. Suppose 0 represents one extreme that individuals should take care of themselves and the government should not get involved and 10 represents the other extreme that the government should actively promote social welfare (display card #___). Which position do you occupy? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? The TAIP? (The PFP? The TSU?) (in 1998 and 2001 surveys)
- 3.3 Concerning social welfare, some people think the government should only maintain current levels of social welfare in order not to increase taxation. Other people think the government should actively promote social welfare, and it doesn't matter if taxation is increased. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of maintaining social welfare at status quo and 10 presents the other extreme of actively promoting social welfare (display card #___). What is your position? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? The PFP? (in 2000 and 2004 survey)

4. The SR issue

- 4.1 Concerning democracy and the rule of law, some people think that the most important thing is that everyone should have adequate freedom. This is still worthwhile even if seeking freedom means sacrificing some social stability. Other people emphasize that stability is the most important thing and that seeking freedom should not be allowed to harm social stability. There are also people whose opinions fall between these two views. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of the importance of freedom and 10 represents the other extreme of importance of stability (display card #___). What is your position? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? (in 1996 survey)
- 4.2 Looking at Taiwan's overall development, some people believe that large-scale reform is the most important thing, even if it means sacrificing some social stability. Other people believe that stability is most important and that reform

should not be allowed to affect social stability. Suppose 0 represents one extreme of large-scale reform and 10 represents the other extreme of maintenance of social stability (display card #___): Which position do you occupy? According to your understanding, what is the position of the KMT? The DPP? The NP? The TAIP? (The PFP? The TSU?) (in 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004 surveys)

The interviewer then displayed a printed card with the numbers 0 through 10 arayed at equal intervals along a line. Point 0 was labeled "Taiwan independence," "environmental protection," "resistance to social welfare expansion," or "freedom and political reform," and point number 10 represented "unification with mainland China," "economic growth," "social welfare expansion," or "social and political stability."^a Other points were designated only by numbers.^b Respondents were then asked where on this scale they would place themselves and the parties.

The four issues are coded as:

1. UI issue: 0. pro-independence; 10. pro-unification; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
2. EE issue: 0. pro-environment; 10. pro-growth; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
3. SW issue: 0. pro-expansion; 10. pro-contraction; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
4. SR issue: 0. pro-reform; 10. pro-stability; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.

5. Economic Evaluation

Do you feel that our whole society's present economic condition is better than, worse than, or about the same as one year ago?

Do you feel that our whole society's economic situation will get better, get worse, or be about the same in the next year?

^aQuestions on the SW issue in 1996 and 2000 are different from those in the 1998 and 2000 surveys. In order to bring these into line with the coding of the other three issues, I recoded the SW issue from pro-social welfare expansion to resistant to social welfare programs. Therefore, 0 represents "social welfare expansion" and 10 represents "against expansion of social welfare" in my analysis.

^bThis not generally thought to be a good idea. Krosnick and Fabrigar suggest that labeling all scale points could help to clarify the meaning of the points and make it easier for people to answer more precisely. Furthermore, fully labeled scales are more reliable and valid than partially labeled scales. See Jon A. Krosnick and Leandre R. Fabrigar, "Designing Rating Scales for Effective Measurement in Surveys," in *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*, ed. Lars Lyberg et al. (New York: Wiley, 1997), 149-52.

Do you feel your family's present economic situation is better, worse, or about the same as one year ago?

Do you feel that your family's economic situation will get better, get worse, or be about the same in the next year?

The codebook for economic evaluation is:

1. Sociotropic retrospective: -1. bad; 0. the same; 1. good; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
2. Sociotropic prospective: -1. bad; 0. the same; 1. good; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
3. Pocketbook retrospective: -1. bad; 0. the same; 1. good; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.
4. Pocketbook prospective: -1. bad; 0. the same; 1. good; missing data and "don't knows" are coded as missing.

6. Party Image

Most peoples' impressions of each political party are not quite the same. I would like to ask you about your impressions of the main political parties in our society. (The interviewer should display card #___.) First, when you mention the KMT, what is your first impression? Then the DPP, and the PFP?

The codebook for party image is:

1. KMT: -1. negative; 0. neutral and don't know; 1. positive; missing data is coded as missing.
2. DPP: -1. negative; 0. neutral and don't know; 1. positive; missing data is coded as missing.
3. PFP: -1. negative; 0. neutral and don't know; 1. positive; missing data is coded as missing.



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