

## Measurement of Party Position and Party Competition in Taiwan\*

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*This study examines and evaluates the existing research on party position in Taiwan and what this literature reveals about the state of inter-party competition during the island's first fifteen years of multiparty elections. There has been an increasing diversity in methodologies used to measure party position in Taiwan, including mass and elite surveys, propaganda content analysis, and elite interviews. Too much of the research has been carried out in isolation by individual researchers, however, with little reference to other existing studies. Many studies have focused on single years and used completely different measurement systems, making time series analysis impossible. There is a need for these schemes to become institutionalized and carried out by wider research teams rather than single scholars.*

*This study argues that the existing data shows that between 1991 and 2000 Taiwan's parties moved from polarized positions toward a pattern of moderate differentiation, similar to parties in mature democracies. Taiwan's parties do stress issues, compete on multiple issue cleavages, and—although having shown a degree of movement toward the center—remain clearly differentiated. The case is not so clear for the post-2000 period.*

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*Party image surveys show signs of increased polarization. However, while party propaganda analysis shows that the smaller parties have moved toward the poles, the difference between major parties has continued to blur.*

**KEYWORDS:** Taiwan; political parties; measuring party positions; party competition.

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Since Taiwan's first full democratic elections in 1991, the island has experienced thirteen years of multiparty politics.<sup>1</sup> A critical question for scholars of Taiwan's political parties to ask is: To what extent has Taiwan institutionalized a healthy system of multiparty competition? Have Taiwan's parties followed a convergent pattern of competition in which, though ideological distance is limited, parties still offer voters consistently distinct platforms? Or has competition been divergent, resulting in highly polarized parties with all its dangers for political instability? Or has Taiwan followed the patterns prevalent in numerous "Third Wave" democracies of one-party hegemonic systems or an unconsolidated system of weak catchall parties and candidate-centered, issue-less election campaigns?

These are hotly disputed questions among Taiwanese political analysts. Some studies have argued that Taiwan's candidate-oriented elections leave little scope for either party- or issue-oriented voting behavior.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there are conflicting arguments regarding whether Taiwan's parties have been converging or diverging. Wu Yu-shan (吳玉山) has argued that vote-maximizing strategies explain the movement of Taiwanese political parties toward the center in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, a number of scholars

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<sup>1</sup>I date the 1991 National Assembly (國民大會) election as the first full democratic election, as this was the first national election in which all the seats were up for election. In contrast, only a minority of seats were open for competition in the 1986 and 1989 elections.

<sup>2</sup>Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 44-47.

<sup>3</sup>Wu Yu-shan, "Moving toward the Center: Taiwan's Public Opinion and Mainland Policy Shift," <http://www.taiwansecurity.org/TS-Wu.htm>. Also see Ming Ju-zheng, "Xiangxin jingzheng yu Zhonghua minguo zhengdang zhengzhi zhi fazhan" (Centrifugal competition

have recently made the claim that Taiwan's political parties have become more polarized than ever.<sup>4</sup>

In order to answer the above questions, it is essential to be able to identify the critical cleavages in electoral politics and to measure the positions that the main parties take on these issue spectrums. The objectives of this paper are therefore to examine and evaluate research on Taiwanese party positions, and determine what these datasets can tell us about the state of inter-party competition in Taiwan.

This study argues that the general pattern of party movement in the 1990s is consistent, regardless of research methodology. The existing party position data shows that between 1991 and 2000 Taiwan's parties moved away from polarized positions toward a pattern of moderate differentiation, similar to parties in mature democracies. In other words, Taiwan's parties do stress issues, competition occurs on multiple issue cleavages, and the parties remain clearly differentiated despite having shown a degree of movement toward the center. The concept of moderate differentiation corresponds with what Samuel Merrill and Bernard Grofman term "moderate extremism," defined as "the mildly but not extremely divergent policy platforms that appear, empirically, to be characteristics of both two-party and multiparty competition."<sup>5</sup> The direction of party change is not so clear for the post-2000 period. The party image surveys and elite interviews show signs of increased polarization. Content analysis studies from the post-2000 period also demonstrate that the smaller parties are moving toward the extremes, while the major parties have continued to converge.

There has been an increasing diversity in methodologies used to measure party position in Taiwan, including mass and elite surveys, party

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and the development of the Republic of China's party politics), *Lilun yu zhengce* (Theory and Policy) (Taipei) 12, no. 2 (1998): 142-56.

<sup>4</sup>Since 2000 a number of scholars visiting London have made the claim that Taiwan's political parties have become polarized. For example, the School of Oriental and African Studies' (SOAS) 2004 Annual Taiwan Lecture by Edward Friedman was entitled, "Paranoia, Polarization, and Suicide: Unexpected Consequences of Taiwan's 2004 Presidential Election," [www.soas.ac.uk/taiwanstudies](http://www.soas.ac.uk/taiwanstudies).

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Merrill III and Bernard Grofman, *A Unified Theory of Voting: Directional and Proximity Spatial Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3-4.

propaganda content analysis, and elite interviews. However, this body of work still has much room for improvement. Too much of the research has been carried out in isolation by individual researchers, with little cross-referencing to other existing studies. Also many studies have focused on single years and use completely different measurement systems, making time series analysis impossible. There is a need for these schemes to become institutionalized and carried out by wider research teams. I would also argue that there is potential for greater comparative use of party position data to compare the development of Taiwanese political parties with their counterparts in both mature and new democracies.

This paper is organized as follows. Section one reviews the theoretical literature on party issue positions. Section two both introduces the principal projects on measuring the positions of Taiwanese political parties and offers technical details of the datasets examined in this paper. Section three then compares these studies' findings on four empirical issues regarding the state of party competition in Taiwan: (1) determining whether or not Taiwan's parties stress issues; (2) identifying the key issue cleavages; (3) ascertaining whether parties stress different issues; and (4) identifying whether the parties converge or diverge. The conclusion summarizes the main findings on measurement of party position in Taiwan, suggests the implications for inter-party competition in Taiwan, and offers some suggestions for future research in this area.

### **Theories of Party Issue-Position Measurement**

Over the last three decades political science has given such increasing attention to the importance of political issues that Edward Carmines and James Stimson have commented: "To speak of politics is to speak of political issues."<sup>6</sup> Thus a definition of political issues is needed before we

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Carmines and James Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3.

can review the main theoretical models supporting party issue-position measurements. This is a contested question, with both narrow and broad definitions having been offered. An example of the former is Colin Pilkington's assertion that "Issues are contentious matters which help formulate and polarize public opinion."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Dennis Kavanagh claims that the principal characteristics of political issues are (1) matters over which the public is sharply divided, (2) matters over which voters feel very strongly, and (3) matters for the solution of which voters look to particular political parties.<sup>8</sup> Such an approach would limit the scope of study to positional issues or what Carmines and Stimson term "hard issues" for which voters need a sophisticated understanding to use as a basis for vote choice. This study adopts a broader classification of political issues, however, which includes both valence issues and what Carmines and Stimson term "easy issues."<sup>9</sup> This definition would include symbolic issues both that deal with policy ends rather than means and that can be communicated simply even to apathetic and ill-informed voters.

We can now examine how political scientists have theorized the measurement of parties on issue spectrums. Mass survey data has been the most common method of placing political parties utilized by scholars applying variations of the Downsian proximity model and its related directional theory.<sup>10</sup> The proximity model assumes that voters choose candidates with a policy position closest to their own views. The optimal vote-maximizing strategy for candidates is to converge on the position of

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<sup>7</sup>Colin Pilkington, *Issues in British Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 2.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in *ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>9</sup>Edward Carmines and James Stimson, "Two Faces of Issue Voting," *American Political Science Review* 74, no. 1 (1980): 78-91.

<sup>10</sup>The initial impetus of this tradition came from Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Voting* (New York: Harper Rose, 1957). A number of variations on Downs' approach soon followed, such as Melvin Hinich and Michael Munger, *Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); and Torben Iversen, "Political Leadership and Representation in West European Democracies," *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (1994): 45-74. For the directional alternative, see George Rabinowitz and Stuart Elaine Macdonald, "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting," *American Political Science Review* 83, no. 1 (1989): 93-121. For an approach combining proximity and direction, see Merrill and Grofman, *A Unified Theory of Voting*.

the median voter. Therefore this model predicts a pattern of convergent competition. In contrast, the directional theory predicts more divergent competition. This theory assumes that voters chose candidates not based on policy proximity but on voters' preferred direction of policy change. Therefore, in order to stimulate voter support, parties should take contrasting and strong policy stands on the side of the issue most voters favor. The directional model also predicts that parties will not benefit from taking vague centrist stances, as the center is "a neutral zone of indifference between two issue alternatives."<sup>11</sup> One caveat, however, is that parties cannot take positions that are too extreme, for voters will punish parties which go beyond "a range of acceptability." Both models rely principally on surveys which ask respondents to place themselves and political parties on policy spectrums. While proximity models employ a 0-10 scale, directional theorists use a -5 to 5 scale. Since the proximity form of questioning has been used in the U.S. National Election Surveys for several decades, this form offers valuable data on the extent the public sees parties as having changed over time (i.e., have converged or diverged).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, much measurement of party policy positioning using elite surveys is also based on proximity theory. For example, the British Representative Study asks parliamentary candidates to place themselves on a number of ten-point policy scales.<sup>13</sup>

While proximity and directional theorists have relied on survey data, the main content analysis projects have been based on issue saliency theory. Like the directional model, issue saliency theory and the related issue ownership theory predict party differentiation. However, saliency theory offers an alternative view of party competition in which 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

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<sup>11</sup>Stuart Elaine Macdonald, Ola Lishaug, and George Rabinowitz, "Issues and Party Support in Multi-Party Democracies," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 4 (1991): 1123.

<sup>12</sup>For example, see Alan Abramowitz, "Issue Evolution Reconsidered," *Journal of Political Science* 38 (1994): 1-24.

<sup>13</sup>For details of the British Representative Study, see <http://www.pippanorris.com/data>.

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.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the key objective of party leaders in electoral campaigns 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 the positions of other parties, prefer to target other more favorable but related issues. For example, Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) is associated with political corruption and good economic governance; the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨), for its part, is seen as promoting radical Taiwan independence, but also popular Taiwan identity appeals. Therefore, the DPP should aim to keep the electoral agenda focused on both KMT corruption scandals and love for Taiwan, and play down its own Taiwan independence agenda and failures in economic management.

Saliency theory does allow for party policy movement: parties will adjust policies or the saliency of issues in the hope of improving electoral fortunes. Movement is within ideologically delimited areas, however, and leapfrogging should be the exception. 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. The difficulty of fundamental ideological change can be seen by the numerous failed attempts by reformers in Taiwan's DPP to revise its Taiwan independence clause.

Saliency theory has been the framework employed by the largest cross-national party manifesto content analysis program, the Manifesto Research Group (MRG).<sup>15</sup> This program involved a team of international

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<sup>14</sup>Ian Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies: A Comparative and Theoretical Perspective," *American Review of Politics* 14 (1993): 695-716; and John Petrocik, "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1996): 825-50.

<sup>15</sup>For an introduction to this project, see Ian Budge and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "Finally! Over Time Mapping of Party Policy Movement," in *Mapping Policy Preferences: Esti-*

scholars carrying out content analysis of the party platforms or manifestoes issued prior to election campaigns in twenty-five countries over the post-war period. The MRG coding scheme contains fifty-six issue categories, and the scheme has proved to be applicable to varying political systems. The proportion of issue mentions for left- or right-wing issues has been used to track party movement in these twenty-five countries on a left/right dimension. In addition, this data has been used to plot changing party issue emphasis on single issues, such as UK parties' stress on social welfare or European integration.<sup>16</sup> As predicted by saliency theory, the MRG's findings have tended to show that "parties are neither converging nor diverging consistently and seem to overall inhabit that same policy sectors now as they did immediately after the war."<sup>17</sup>

### Existing Research on Party Positions in Taiwan

Ever since research on measuring party positions began in Taiwan in the early 1990s, analysts have embraced a variety of methodologies to examine party competition in Taiwan. This study examines the four main methods of measuring party position on the island: (1) public opinion surveys, (2) elite or expert surveys, (3) content analysis schemes, and (4) elite interviews.

#### *Public Opinion Surveys*

Survey data is the most popular method for measuring party position in Taiwan, with research having moved in two main directions. First, in a series of nationwide surveys, researchers at National Taiwan University

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*mates for Parties, Electors, and Governments, 1945-1998*, ed. Ian Budge et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19-50.

<sup>16</sup>Judith Bara and Ian Budge, "Party Policy and Ideology: Still New Labour?" in *Britain Votes 2001*, ed. Pippa Norris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26-41.

<sup>17</sup>Ian Budge and Judith Bara, "Manifesto-Based Research: A Critical Review," in Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preferences*, 58.



(NTU, 國立台灣大學) asked respondents if they view parties as representing certain policy or image opposites, such as tolerating or attacking corruption. These surveys are able to show voter's changing impressions of Taiwan's political parties. The surveys were carried out between 1989 and 1996, but unfortunately appear to have been discontinued since. Moreover, their results have rarely been published.<sup>18</sup> The only time this data has been employed to compare cross-party change was in Lin Chia-long's (林佳龍) unpublished Ph.D. dissertation.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, National Chengchi University's Election Study Center (ESC, 國立政治大學選舉研究中心) has taken a more orthodox proximity approach by asking respondents to place themselves and parties on key issue spectrums, such as independence vs. unification. Such nationwide surveys have been carried out consistently since 1993. These surveys have been employed by John Fuh-sheng Hsieh (謝復生) in a number of articles to show changing positions of both parties and respondents since the early 1990s.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Ming Ju-zheng (明居正) used this data to argue that Taiwan's public opinion has had a centrifugal impact on Taiwan's political parties.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps due to the popularity of survey data in Taiwanese political science, the ESC's party image methodology represents the most standard measurement method. Although these studies are useful in showing the electorate's party image, there may well be a discrepancy between this public image and that which the party wishes to project.

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<sup>18</sup>One published work by You Ying-long used this dataset to compare party images across parties for 1992. See You Ying-long, *Taiwan diqu shehui bianqian yu tezhi* (Social transformation in Taiwan and its characteristics) (Taipei: Hanlu, 1996), 65-105. Also Chen Ming-tong has tracked changes in the DPP's image between 1989 and 1996; see Chen Ming-tong, "Minjindang de zhengdang xingxiang" (The DPP's party image) (Paper presented at the Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, December 1998).

<sup>19</sup>Lin Chia-long, "Paths to Democracy: Taiwan in Comparative Perspective" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1998), 426-40.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Continuity and Change in Taiwan's Electoral Politics," in *How Asia Votes*, ed. John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and David Newman (New York: Chatham House, 2002), 32-49.

<sup>21</sup>Ming, "Xiangxin jingzheng yu Zhonghua minguo zhengdang zhengzhi zhi fazhan."

*Elite Surveys*

A method that has seen growing use in political science has been elite surveys.<sup>22</sup> Such surveys involve either political scientists or politicians being asked to place parties on policy spectrums. Such elite surveys have been less popular in Taiwan. I am only aware of one elite survey and one expert survey on party position: Lin Chia-long used the NTU party image questions mentioned above for a sample of sixty-six legislators between 1995 and 1996,<sup>23</sup> and Huber and Inglehart's cross-national expert survey included left/right placement for three Taiwanese parties in the early 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Although these single-year studies have been useful for the placement of parties, the use of different measurement scales and the fact that these surveys have not been repeated subsequently have limited their value for showing party change.

*Content Analysis Schemes*

In mature democracies party election manifestoes or platforms issued prior to each election campaign are a rich data source on party policy priorities and have a long history as a source material to measure party change.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, all the main parties in Taiwan have only issued such documents since 1998; therefore, these cannot be employed for the entire period of multiparty elections.<sup>26</sup> The use of content analysis systems to measure party positions has been less popular in Taiwan than surveys

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<sup>22</sup>F. G. Castles and Peter Mair, "Left Right-Political Scales: Some Expert Judgements," *European Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 12 (1984): 73-88; Michael Laver and W. B. Hunt, *Policy and Political Competition* (London: Routledge, 1992); and John Huber and Ronald Inglehart, "Expert Interpretations of Party Space and Party Location in 42 Societies," *Party Politics* 1, no. 1 (1995): 73-111.

<sup>23</sup>Lin, "Paths to Democracy," 434-42.

<sup>24</sup>Huber and Inglehart, "Expert Interpretations of Party Space and Party Location," 73-111. The third party examined was the short-lived Chinese Social Democratic Party (中華社民黨).

<sup>25</sup>For a review of manifesto research see Budge and Bara, "Manifesto-Based Research," 51-74.

<sup>26</sup>Liu Tsung-wei, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change in Taiwan from 1989 to 1998" (Paper presented at the Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, December 2000), 4.

have been. Time series analysis is impossible, moreover, because the majority of attempts have been restricted to single election studies of the issue content of election propaganda, with each study having used completely different coding schemes.<sup>27</sup> However, two individual researchers have recently carried out systematic content analysis of party documents to examine party change.

Liu Tsung-wei (劉從韋) made the first attempt to apply the MRG framework to the Taiwan case. He carried out content analysis of the candidate policy section of electoral gazettes for legislative elections (立法委員選舉) between 1989 and 1998.<sup>28</sup> Since this data is for individual party candidates, it reflects the policy preferences of politicians rather than the party center. However, this study offers valuable time series information on candidates' changing issue saliency and issue emphasis.

I myself conducted the second content analysis study, which represents the first attempt to use newspaper campaign advertisements to measure party change in Taiwan.<sup>29</sup> Newspaper ads are relatively easy to obtain, represent the public face of a party rather than that of only a single candidate, and receive considerable media attention in Taiwan.<sup>30</sup> In countries where no manifesto is issued, content analysis of election newspaper advertisements offers a valuable alternative. I carried out content analysis of all election newspaper advertisements covering nine national-level

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<sup>27</sup>For example, see Zheng Zilong, "Yijiujiuwu nian dusanjie lifa weiyuan xuanju zhengdang jingxuan guanggao xunxi yu meiti celue fenxi" (An analysis of newspaper advertisements and media policy during the 1995 legislative election), *Xuanju yanjiu* (Journal of Election Studies) 3, no. 2 (1996): 1-32.

<sup>28</sup>Liu, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change," 3-4. These gazettes are issued to every voter a few weeks before the voting day. These show a picture of each candidate, their party affiliation, work experience, education, and main policy goals.

<sup>29</sup>Dafydd Fell first published this data in the article "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *Issues & Studies* 38, no. 2 (2002): 31-60. However, in this paper I employ a different dataset, as while in 2002 I used total ads statistics (including candidate, party center, anonymous, and support group ads), in this study I only use statistics for party center ads.

<sup>30</sup>One example was the wide media coverage given to Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) 2000 presidential campaign 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.

elections from 1991 to 2004<sup>31</sup> for the thirty-one days prior to voting day and from the three newspapers with the highest readership:<sup>32</sup> *China Times* (中國時報, Zhongguo shibao), *United Daily News* (聯合報, Lianhe bao), and *Liberty Times* (自由時報, Ziyou shibao).<sup>33</sup> In total 807 official party ads were analyzed from Taiwan's major parties: the KMT, DPP, New Party (NP 新黨), Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU, 台灣團結聯盟), and People First Party (PFP, 親民黨). This study also used a revised version of the MRG coding scheme; the details of this coding scheme are displayed in Appendix 1. In this research the advertising statistics used are for official ads, given that these reflect the party image the party center is trying to create. 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. For example, if the KMT had ten newspaper ads in one year and 25 percent of issue mentions in each ad were in favor of greater welfare spending, then the KMT's average percentage of issue mentions for the issue category of welfare state expansion would be 25 percent. This data can offer information on both the relative party issue emphasis over a single campaign, and position or issue emphasis change over the entire decade. Moreover, the data can show if the parties are converging toward the center or diverging toward the poles.

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<sup>31</sup>The elections included for the National Assembly in 1991 and 1996; the Legislative Yuan in 1992, 1995, 1998, and 2001; municipal executive (city mayors and county magistrates) in 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998, and 2001; provincial governor in 1994; and the President in 1996, 2000, and 2004. Although the municipal executive is a local office, the media treats these campaigns as national events. Official ads refer to those clearly produced or financed by the party center or, in the case of presidential elections, by the official campaign headquarters.

<sup>32</sup>In 2000 a nationwide survey found the following readership figures: *China Times* 38 percent, *United Daily News* 36.7 percent, and *Liberty Times* 35.4 percent. See Zhang Ying-hua and Fu Yang-zhi, eds., *Taiwan diqu shehui bianqian jiben diaocha* (Social change in the Taiwan region: A basic survey project) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2000), 91.

<sup>33</sup>These three papers also reflect the main political currents, with *China Times* closer to the mainstream KMT, *United Daily News* sympathetic with both the non-mainstream KMT and the NP, and *Liberty Times* closer to the DPP.

### *Elite Interviews*

The final and most common method of measuring party change has been qualitative analysis of data sources such as party documents, propaganda, and elite interviews. This has been popular in the Taiwan case. For example, Shelley Rigger and Julian Kuo's (郭正亮) separate treatments of the developments in the DPP relied heavily on interviews and participant observation.<sup>34</sup> This qualitative approach can give the reader a colorful portrait of party developments, though it is of greater value when used in conjunction with other quantitative sources.

In this current study, I make reference to a series of in-depth elite interviews I conducted in two periods of fieldwork in Taiwan in 2000 and 2001. Requests for interviews were sent to over one hundred politicians and I interviewed a total of sixty-six experienced Taiwanese politicians. My main criteria for selection were either politicians that had been involved in a minimum of three national-level elections or those that held important decision-making positions in their parties after 1991. The respondents included thirty from the DPP, twenty-two from the KMT, nine from the NP, and five from the PFP.<sup>35</sup> On average each interview lasted forty-five minutes. Most questions focused on the perspectives politicians held on their parties' changing campaign issue emphasis over the 1990s.

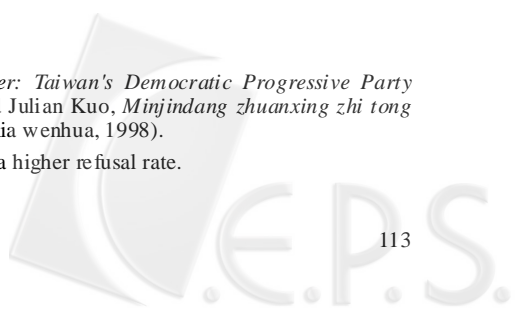
## **Results of Existing Research on Party Position in Taiwan**

This section compares the findings of existing studies on party position to see what they can tell us about the state of party competition in the first decade of multiparty elections. I examine the findings these studies offer on the following empirical issues: (1) whether or not Taiwan's parties stress issues; (2) identifying the key issue cleavages; (3) ascertaining

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<sup>34</sup>Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001); and Julian Kuo, *Minjindang zhuanxing zhi tong* (The DPP's painful transition) (Taipei: Tianxia wenhua, 1998).

<sup>35</sup>The reason for the lower KMT number was a higher refusal rate.



whether parties stress different issues; and (4) identifying whether the parties converge or diverge.

*Do Taiwan's Parties Stress Issues?*

Content analysis schemes are the optimum source for answering the question of whether Taiwan's parties stress issues in their election propaganda. As mentioned earlier, Taiwanese elections have the reputation for being candidate- rather than issue- or party-oriented. However, separate studies by both Liu Tsung-wei and myself found that, on the contrary, Taiwanese parties do give considerable attention to electoral issues in their propaganda. In Liu's study a mere 4.5 percent of quasi-sentences<sup>36</sup> on the policy section of election gazettes between 1989 and 1998 fell into the "others" category.<sup>37</sup> In my newspaper ad study, only 10.1 percent of quasi-sentences in the three main parties' newspaper election ads between 1991 and 2000 fell into the "others" domain.<sup>38</sup> In short, we can conclude that during election campaigning Taiwanese parties do stress issues in their election propaganda.

*What Are the Key Issue Cleavages?*

The next question is what are the critical issues in Taiwanese electoral politics. Is it correct that the sole salient issue in Taiwanese politics is national identity, with alternative cross-cutting cleavages having failed to appear? If this is the case, then there exist inherent dangers for Taiwan's parties to compete on a single polarized issue. The tragedies of the former Yugoslavia have vividly shown the dangers of ethnic conflict in countries emerging from authoritarian rule.

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<sup>36</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, which can be marked off by commas, semicolons, or colons. For details see Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preferences*, 96-103.

<sup>37</sup>Liu Tsung-wei, "The Effects of Electoral Laws on Party Competition in Taiwan 1989-1998: With Particular Reference to the Single Non-Transferable Vote" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Essex, 2002), table 8.1.

<sup>38</sup>Dafydd Fell, "Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan" (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2003), table 1.2.

Table 1 shows issue saliency using five indices: (1) the top ten issues from my own official newspaper ads content analysis, (2) the top ten issues from Liu Tsung-wei's election gazette content analysis,<sup>39</sup> (3) my 2001 elite survey, (4) Lin Chia-long's 1995-96 elite survey, and (5) a 1996 NTU mass survey.<sup>40</sup> According to my official ad dataset, if party and candidate categories are excluded, the most salient issues are political corruption, Taiwan independence, government competence, and democracy. Using a similar coding scheme but different dataset, Liu found welfare state expansion by far the issue most stressed by Legislative Yuan candidates. In fact the only issue falling into both top ten lists was political corruption. To check the validity of these findings I asked Taiwanese politicians, "What have been the most salient political issues in Taiwan's elections over the last decade (1991-2001)?" The results show some support for both content analyses top ten lists, with a consensus among politicians that the most influential issues of the decade were national identity, political corruption, the economy, and social welfare. The results of Lin Chia-long's elite survey and the NTU mass survey also showed similar patterns, with both politicians and the general public seeing socioeconomic issues as the most pressing concerns. In fact out of the five studies, national identity is only among the top four issues in my elite survey. The premise that national identity is the sole significant issue in Taiwanese politics must be questioned. Instead, Taiwan's public and politicians clearly give equal—if not more—attention to alternative issues such as political corruption, social welfare, the economy, and crime.

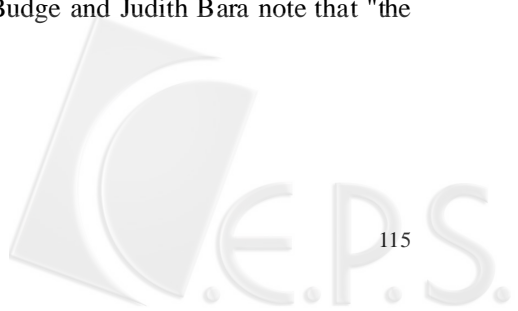
#### *Do the Parties Stress Different Issues?*

Of course, if Taiwan's parties stress the same issues, then we would not expect voters to vote according to policy differences. A number of scholars have pointed out the importance of policy difference in an electoral democracy. For example, Ian Budge and Judith Bara note that "the

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<sup>39</sup>See note 37 above.

<sup>40</sup>Lin, "Paths to Democracy," 578-79.



**Table 1**  
**Five Indices of Issue Salience in Taiwan**

Ranking	Fell's Content Analysis Study	Liu's Study	Fell's Elite Survey	Lin's Elite Survey	NTU's Mass Survey
1	Political corruption	Welfare state expansion	National identity	Economy	Economy
2	Party: positive	Technology and infrastructure	Political corruption	Law and order	Law and order
3	Taiwan independence: negative	Non-economic demographic groups	Economy	Democracy	Transport and infrastructure
4	Candidate: negative	Education expansion	Social welfare	Social justice and social welfare	Cross-Strait relations and national security
5	Government ability	Social justice	Democracy	International relations	Stability
6	Party: negative	Law and order	Social welfare	Political corruption	Social justice and social welfare
7	Democracy	Environmental protection	Law and order	Cross-Strait relations and national security	Democracy
8	Other parties' lack of government competence	Political corruption		National identity	International relations
9	Taiwan independence: positive	Efficiency of the Legislative Yuan		Environmental protection	Political corruption
10	Political stability	Productivity		Transport and infrastructure	National identity

**Notes:**

1. This table compares Taiwan's top ten election issues using five different studies.
2. The Fell content analysis study shows the top issues for the KMT, DPP, and NP in their official newspaper ads between 1991 and 2000. The source is Fell's content analysis of 583 official party newspaper ads from the nine national-level elections between 1991 and 2000. See Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan* (London: Routledge, 2005), table 2.2.
3. Liu's top ten list represents the top issues for all Legislative Yuan candidates between 1989 and 1998. The numbers in brackets are average percentage of issue mentions. The source is Liu Tsung-wei's content analysis of the policy proposals of legislative candidates in election gazettes. See Liu Tsung-wei, "The Effects of Electoral Laws on Party Competition in Taiwan 1989-1998: With Particular Reference to the Single Non-Transferable Vote" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Essex, 2002), table 8.1.
4. The Fell top elite issues are based on interviews with 61 experienced Taiwanese politicians, and specifically their reply to the question: "What have been the most salient political issues in Taiwan's elections over the last decade (1991-2001)?" See Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, table 2.2.
5. Lin Chia-long's elite survey shows the top ten issues in his survey of 66 legislators between 1995 and 1996. The question Lin posed was: "Which of the following issues do you consider as the most important and pressing?" See Lin Chia-long, "Paths to Democracy: Taiwan in Comparative Perspective" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1998), 578-79.
6. The NTU survey was carried out after the 1996 presidential election. There were 1,383 total respondents. See Lin, "Paths to Democracy," 578-79.



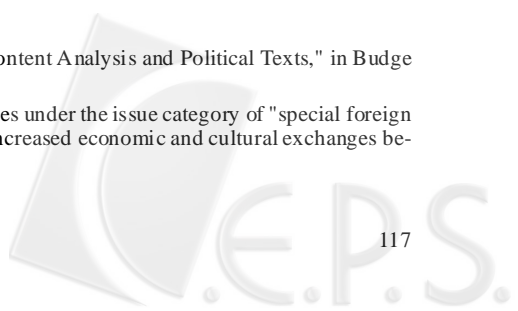
essential democratic requirements for an electoral mandate policy are that there is some difference between parties so electors can make a choice, and that once elected the party will do more or less what it promised to do when in government."<sup>41</sup> Therefore, we must next ask if the evidence shows that Taiwan's parties offer distinct issue emphasis. Here the initial evidence appears contradictory, for while my newspaper ad content analysis scheme and elite survey show that parties do stress different issues, Liu's election gazette survey shows a higher degree of overlapping issue emphasis. Table 2 shows which issues from the major parties' top ten lists overlap and which ones are exclusively stressed or owned by one party according to my newspaper ad and Liu's election gazette content analysis schemes. My data shows that other than positive and negative references to parties, the only issue in the top ten for all three parties is political corruption. In terms of issues, the DPP and the KMT have little in common; even the NP and KMT share only a concern for opposing Taiwan independence. In contrast, the lists for issues exclusively owned by single parties are far longer. The DPP has dominated the national identity issues of Taiwan independence and Taiwan nationalism, along with freedom, human rights, and welfare state expansion. Since the KMT ruled Taiwan from 1945 until 2000, it is not surprising that the party has also owned political stability, economic growth and prosperity, law and order, and government competence issues. The NP, in turn, has stressed better relations with the PRC and has emphasized peace due to its frequent warnings of war with China.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast, Liu's data shows much more overlap in the parties' top ten issues, with actually far fewer issues exclusively dominated by any single party. There are some similarities, however, as both show Taiwan independence dominated by the DPP and better relations with the PRC controlled by the NP. Here the difference can partly be explained by the use of

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<sup>41</sup>Ian Budge and Judith Bara, "Introduction: Content Analysis and Political Texts," in Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Differences*, 9.

<sup>42</sup>Promoting better relations with the PRC comes under the issue category of "special foreign relations: positive." This includes calls for increased economic and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and the PRC.



**Table 2**  
**Overlap in Issue Emphasis Top Ten Lists**

	<b>Fell's Content Analysis Study</b>	<b>Liu's Study</b>
<b>Only KMT</b>	Political stability; party-government competence; other parties' lack of government competence; economic growth and prosperity; law and order; party negative: violence	Productivity, agriculture, and farmers
<b>Only DPP</b>	Pure Taiwan independence; diluted Taiwan independence; freedom and human rights; social justice; welfare state expansion; Taiwanese nationalism; non-economic demographic groups; candidate positive	Taiwan independence: positive; democracy; free enterprise
<b>Only NP</b>	Special foreign relations: positive; peace; education expansion; national way of life: positive; environmental protection; culture	Special foreign relations: positive; efficiency of the Legislative Yuan
<b>KMT &amp; DPP</b>		Environmental protection
<b>KMT &amp; NP</b>	Taiwan independence: negative; candidate: negative	Law and order; middle class and professional groups
<b>DPP &amp; NP</b>	Democracy	Political corruption
<b>All Three Parties</b>	Political corruption; party: positive; party: negative	Technology and infrastructure; social justice; welfare state expansion; education expansion; non-economic demographic groups

**Note:** This table shows the degree of issue emphasis overlap from parties' top ten tables shown in Fell's and Liu's content analysis studies.

**Sources:** Fell's content analysis of 583 official party newspaper ads from each national-level election between 1991 and 2000; and Liu, "The Effects of Electoral Laws on Party Competition in Taiwan," table 8.1.

different datasets: my study only includes newspaper ads issued by the party center, while Liu's study is of the policy proposals of individual Legislative Yuan candidates. This fact may imply that while the policy positions of party headquarters are highly differentiated, party candidates take more moderate stances.

Lastly is a comparison of the two content analysis schemes with my interview data. I asked elite respondents, "What issues have you and your party stressed most over the last decade?" The findings are shown in

**Table 3**  
**Elite Views on Issue Saliency and Ownership**

**Question:**

What issues have you and your party stressed most in elections over the last decade (1991-2001)?

KMT	DPP	NP
1. National identity	1. National identity	1. National identity
2. Economy	2. Money politics	2. Money politics
3. Stability	3. Democracy	3. Economy
4. Prosperity	4. Social welfare	4. Social welfare
5. Education	5. Environmental protection	5. Democracy

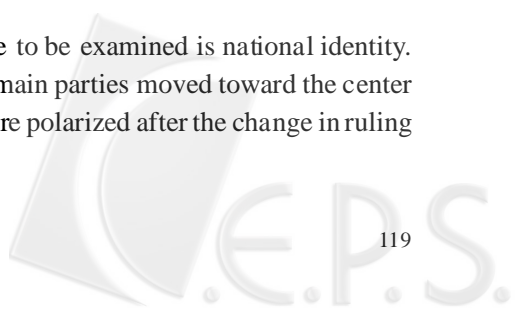
**Note:** The top elite issues rankings are based on Fell's interviews of sixty-one experienced Taiwanese politicians; the sample included twenty-two from the KMT, twenty-nine from the DPP, and ten from the NP.

table 3. Although politicians from all parties agree that their most stressed issue was national identity, the remaining top four issues show the parties' dissimilarities: the economy, stability, and prosperity were most stressed by the KMT, while political corruption, democracy, and social welfare were the purview of the DPP. In short, although both my content analysis and elite survey show party differentiation in issue emphasis, this interpretation is challenged by Liu's gazette study.

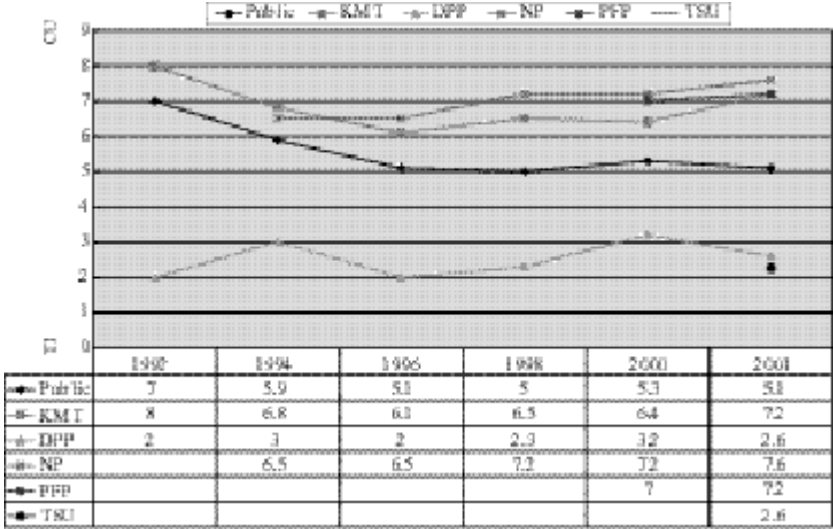
*Convergence or Divergence?*

Next is an examination of whether the main party position datasets support the contention that Taiwan's parties are converging or diverging on the central issue cleavages. By looking in more detail, moreover, we can see whether the parties also differ significantly on the level of single issues. I examined the patterns of party issue emphasis for these datasets on the following salient dimensions: national identity, social welfare, and political corruption.

*National identity:* The first issue to be examined is national identity. The goal is to test the claims that the main parties moved toward the center during the 1990s, but then became more polarized after the change in ruling party.



**Figure 1**  
**Party Image on the Taiwan Independence versus Unification Spectrum**



First, the ESC survey data shows support for the line of argument that the KMT moved toward the center under Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), and then back to the right after 2000.<sup>43</sup> Figure 1 shows the results of a series of ESC surveys asking respondents to place themselves and the main political parties on an independence/unification spectrum, with 0 representing the fastest possible independence and 10 meaning unification as soon as possible. The results show that the public does see the parties as being wide apart on this issue. The KMT is seen to have moved toward the center, from 6.8 in 1994 to 6.1 in 1996. Following the turnover of power, however, the party has reached its most right-wing position of 7.2 under Lien Chan (連戰) in 2001. The DPP is seen to have followed a fluctuating course, moving from 3.0 in 1994 to reach its record left-wing position of 2.0 in 1996 when fronted by the Taiwanese nationalist Peng Ming-min (彭明敏).

<sup>43</sup>ESC data was supplied by Professor Sheng Hsing-yuan (盛杏媛) from the ESC.

**Table 4**  
**Party Images on the National Identity Issue (1992-96)**

**Question:**

Do you think the KMT/DPP/NP is a party that supports Taiwan independence (TI), unification (CU), or the status quo (SQ)?

	The KMT is a party that supports:			The DPP is a party that supports:			The NP is a party that supports:		
	TI	CU	SQ	TI	CU	SQ	TI	CU	SQ
<b>1992</b>	1.3%	67.7%	3.5%	65.9%	2.1%	2.7%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
<b>1993</b>	1.8%	63.9%	6.5%	65.9%	3.0%	3.5%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
<b>1996</b>	7.3%	33.0%	22.7%	66.4%	1.4%	3.8%	4.1%	36%	16.9%

**Source:** Lin, "Paths to Democracy," 437.

**Note:** This table shows the proportion of respondents seeing the main parties as supporting Taiwan independence, the status quo, or unification. The number of cases was 1,384 in 1992; 1,398 in 1993; and 1,376 in 1996.

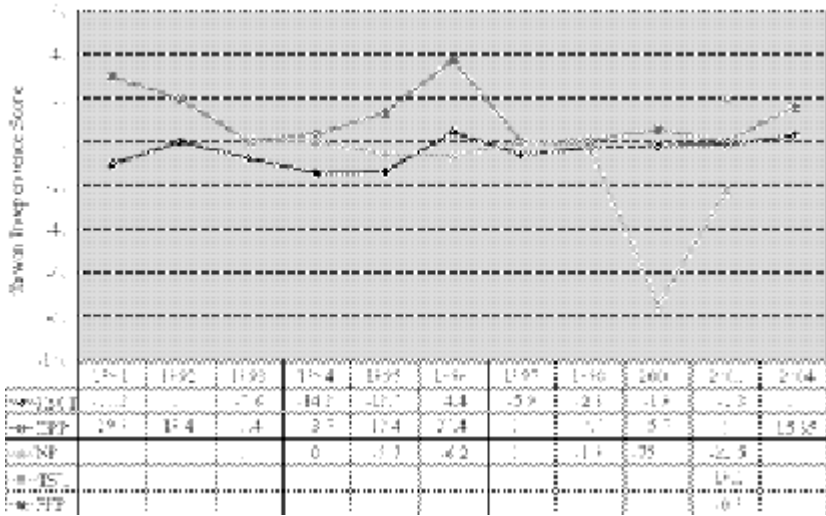
The DPP showed a degree of moderation in 2000 following Chen Shui-bian's election, reaching 3.2; however, the party is seen to have once again shifted to the left in its first year in office, at 2.6 in 2001. The NP is seen to have swung to the right in 1998 and continued this move toward the pole in 2001 when it reached 7.6. In another worrying sign, both new arrivals on the political scene in 2001 are viewed as radical, with the PFP placed at 7.2 and TSU at 2.6. In short, the ESC surveys support the thesis that party platforms showed some moderation in the 1990s, but became more polarized after 2000.

Table 4 shows the results of the NTU surveys which asked respondents if they see the parties as supporting independence or unification.<sup>44</sup> Once again, the three parties are seen as quite distinct, with the KMT being viewed as the most supportive of the status quo, the DPP as pro-independence, and the NP as pro-unification. There is no sign that the DPP has moderated its position on this question. Like the ESC data, the impression that the KMT under Lee Teng-hui has moved from unification

<sup>44</sup>Lin, "Paths to Democracy," 437.



**Figure 2**  
**Party Emphasis on the Taiwan Independence Versus Chinese Unification Issue in Newspaper Ads**



toward the status quo is supported with a fall in number of respondents seeing the KMT as supporting unification from 67.7 percent in 1992 to 33 percent in 1996. Unfortunately, this NTU dataset appears to have been discontinued, so it is uncertain whether the NTU survey findings would have differed from those of the ESC in the late 1990s.

The two content analysis studies also show a similar pattern of party differentiation and limited movement. Figure 2 plots the official parties' newspaper ad issue emphasis on the unification/independence spectrum. The figures for Taiwan independence are reached by subtracting the scores for Taiwan independence. A positive score represents support for Taiwan independence, while a negative score represents an anti-Taiwan independence stance. This figure also offers strong support for party differentiation, with "Taiwan independence: positive" dominated by the DPP, and "Taiwan independence: negative" shared by the NP and KMT. There have been no cases of the KMT or NP leapfrogging the DPP. The figure shows that the KMT and DPP became highly polarized in 1991 with a

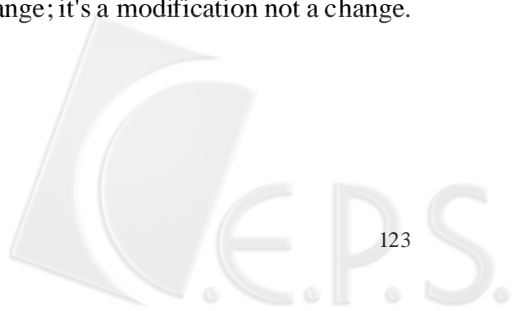
40-point gap in their Taiwan independence scores, with a gap of over 20 points being maintained until 1996. Since 1997 there has been a degree of convergence, as the gap has narrowed dramatically since the issue was de-emphasized. However, although the DPP and KMT have been less polarized since 2000, they are still differentiated. The DPP has not shown a consistent trend toward moderation on the Taiwan independence issue. Although there was a fall in Taiwan independence emphasis after 1991, the DPP increased focus on the issue from 1994 to 1996, and moderation seems to begin only in 1997. Then the party again paid more attention to Taiwan independence in both 2000 and 2004. My results for the KMT ads show a more consistent pattern of opposition to Taiwan independence over the decade. Figure 2 shows that the NP has repeatedly taken a strong anti-Taiwan independence stance. It even took a radical swing to the right in 2000, reaching record levels of emphasis in 2000 and 2001. As for the two new parties, figure 2 shows that while the TSU has clearly taken an even more pro-Taiwan independence stance, the PFP has tried to stay clear of the issue in its propaganda.

My findings on this issue correspond with Liu's content analysis of the policy proposals of legislative candidates. He also found that the parties held widely disparate stances during the 1990s, with the KMT close to the center, the NP most anti-independence, and the DPP the pro-independence party. Moreover, there is a similar pattern of change for the DPP, which increased emphasis on Taiwan independence in the early 1990s yet de-emphasized the issue in 1998.<sup>45</sup>

In my interviews, most DPP respondents agreed that from 1992 the party de-emphasized Taiwan independence in favor of other issues. The idea that the DPP has simply made an adjustment to, rather than having completely abandoned, Taiwan independence cropped up repeatedly in interviews. For example, DPP Tainan Mayor Hsu Tien-tsai (臺南市長許添財) stated, "I don't think it's a change; it's a modification not a change.

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<sup>45</sup>See note 37 above.



Nothing has changed..."<sup>46</sup> Similarly, DPP legislator Yen Chin-fu (顏錦福) remarked that it has been the DPP's spin not substance that has changed, noting that the DPP's Taiwan independence ideals "have not changed. We have been looking for the right way to propagandize our ideals that can be more acceptable to the people."<sup>47</sup>

There is more disagreement within the KMT over the degree of change both during the Lee Teng-hui and post-Lee eras. Most politicians remaining in the KMT agree that Lee gave the party a more localized image. According to KMT advertising expert Fu He-kang (伏和康), "Before 1994 the KMT's position was clearer, it was anti-Taiwan independence, so [the party was] always attacking people as being pro-independence. After 1994, however, they began to use the language of localization and betraying Taiwan, and became less direct in their censure of opponents, talking of loving Taiwan."<sup>48</sup> However, many also feel that the party has not actually forsaken positions set in the early 1990s, such as the Guidelines for National Unification (國家統一綱領) and the "one-China" principle. KMT politicians often stress the consistency in the KMT's national identity positions. For instance, according to former Kaohsiung Mayor Wu Den-yih (前高雄市長吳敦義), "The KMT's position on national status has always been the most conservative and steady."<sup>49</sup>

The public impression that the KMT has swung back to the right since 2000 is also reflected in the views held by KMT politicians. Some see a return to the KMT's core values, while others see an unwelcome rightward shift. The late KMT legislator, Wei Yung (魏鏞), falls into the former category, stating, "I had a strong conviction that sooner or later the KMT would revert to its original path. I was completely convinced that the KMT couldn't completely disown its party position. It was only a matter of time."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Author's interview with Hsu Tien-tsai, Tainan, August 25, 2001.

<sup>47</sup>Author's interview with Yen Chin-fu, Taipei, September 28, 2001.

<sup>48</sup>Author's interview with Fu He-kang, Taipei, November 1, 2001.

<sup>49</sup>Author's interview with Wu Den-yih, Nantou (南投), October 8, 2001.

<sup>50</sup>Author's interview with Wei Yung, Taipei, November 5, 2001.



The pattern of change in the NP closely matched that found in my advertising analysis and party image surveys, as politicians from all the NP's factions agreed that the party had swung to the right of the identity spectrum after 1998. For instance, the political scientist and former NP magazine editor Yang Tai-shun (楊泰順) recalled, "In the summer of 1995, I could definitely say that the NP was not a pro-unification party. Of course, now if you say the NP is a pro-unification party, I cannot disagree."<sup>51</sup> This move was viewed as a welcome return to orthodoxy by such Chinese nationalists as Hsieh Chi-ta (謝啟大), who commented, "For a while the NP seemed to have lost its ideals, it forgot them, but now we're proclaiming them loud and clear."<sup>52</sup>

The above data shows that politicians' views on the direction and degree of change closely follow both the patterns found in my advertising analysis and the perceptions of party change among the general public. Although Taiwan's parties are seen to have changed, the change has not been too radical. Parties are still seen as distinct and most voters still perceive a wide gap between themselves and Taiwan's parties on core electoral issues. During the 1990s, the parties were moving away from polarized positions on national identity, and toward a pattern of moderate differentiation. There are, however, clearly some signs of post-2000 polarization.

*Social welfare:* Most studies examining party position in mature democracies attempt to place parties on a left-right scale. However, Taiwanese analysts tend to argue that Taiwanese parties do not compete on such a spectrum. The content analyses by both Liu and myself have attempted to track party movement on the MRG's left-right scale and both found that the DPP tended to have more left-wing issue emphasis than the KMT.<sup>53</sup> However, since the most significant left-right issue in Taiwanese politics is social welfare, tracking party movement on this spectrum makes more sense.

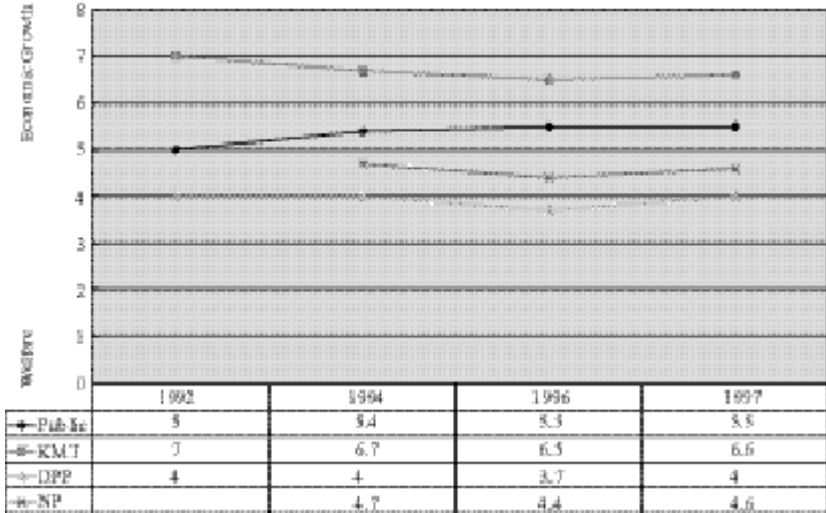
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<sup>51</sup> Author's interview with Yang Tai-shun, Taipei, November 1, 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Author's interview with Hsieh Chi-ta, Kaohsiung, September 7, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> This corresponds with the pattern found in Huber and Inglehart's expert survey. See Huber and Inglehart, "Expert interpretations of Party Space and Party Location in 42 Societies," 107.

**Figure 3**  
**Party Image on the Social Welfare versus Economic Growth Spectrum**



The ESC asked respondents to place themselves and the main parties on a social welfare vs. economic growth spectrum in which promoting social welfare equals 0 and promoting economic growth equals 10. The results for surveys in 1994, 1996, and 1997 (shown in figure 3) show a consistent pattern of the DPP and NP being viewed as more pro-social welfare and the KMT more pro-economic growth, with the respondents locating themselves close to the center. Unfortunately the wording of the question was altered to distinguish maintaining the existing social welfare system and actively promoting social welfare; the results of the modified 2000 survey are shown in table 5. The trend here is even clearer, however, with the DPP being seen as by far the most pro-social welfare expansion, the NP located close to the center, and the KMT the most passive on the issue.

Figure 4 shows the three parties' relative social welfare issue emphasis fluctuation in my study of official newspaper election ads between 1991 and 2004. As with the survey data, there is a clear pattern in official party ads, with the DPP dominating the issue and almost no leapfrogging

**Table 5**  
**Party Image on Social Welfare (2000)**

**Question:**

Where would you place yourself and the main parties on a spectrum in which passively maintaining the existing social welfare system equals 0 and actively promoting social welfare equals 10?

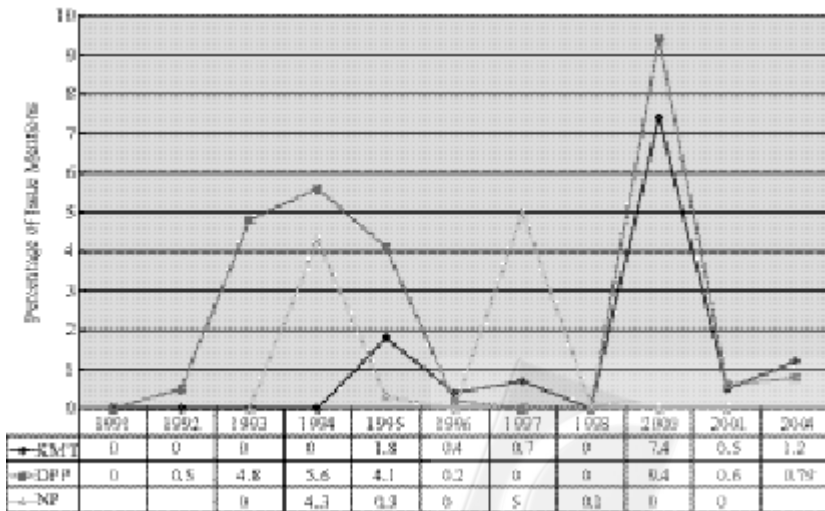
Respondent	KMT	DPP	NP	PFP
5.6	4.8	6.5	5.2	5.3

**Note:** 89.1 percent of respondents could place themselves; 69.2 percent could place the DPP and KMT; 48 percent could place the KMT, DPP, and NP; and 44.5 percent could place all four parties.

**Source:** Data supplied by Sheng Hsing-yuan of the ESC.

between the DPP and the KMT or NP. The parties placed most stress on social welfare between 1993 and 1995 and then again in 2000. Throughout the decade, the NP has given the least stress on welfare. Since the change in ruling party in 2000, however, the issue has been de-emphasized by all parties.

**Figure 4**  
**Party Emphasis on the Social Welfare Issue in Newspaper Ads**



My elite interviews found a number of significant patterns of party change. First, there was a consensus among respondents that the DPP did begin to give welfare more attention from the early 1990s and maintained this dominance in most subsequent elections. As the KMT legislator Apollo Chen (陳學聖) lamented, "Looking back over the last ten years, if there is one issue that the DPP has controlled, then it is the pensions issue."<sup>54</sup> Second, there was a shift within the KMT from the far right to the center right of the welfare spectrum, so that most in the party agreed with an expansion of contributory welfare schemes—as long as the welfare system favoring pro-KMT occupational groups was maintained. Therefore, the KMT moved to steal certain DPP welfare proposals such as National Health Insurance (全民健保). Third, the welfare issue was highly divisive for the KMT, with some factions promoting universal schemes and others opposing change. Lastly, the degree of KMT movement on the issue should not be exaggerated: though accepting National Health Insurance, the party remained hostile to universal pensions.

In short, while both the newspaper ad data and my elite interviews show that the DPP has dominated campaign emphasis of the welfare issue since 1993, survey data shows these welfare campaigns have rubbed off on voters, as the public have a clear image of the DPP as the most pro-welfare party. The de-emphasis of social welfare since 2000 may, however, imply a convergence and blurring of party differences on the issue.

*Political corruption:* We discussed above how political corruption is undoubtedly one of the most salient issues in Taiwanese electoral politics. Since this is a valence issue, however, few Taiwanese scholars have attempted to track party movement on this cleavage. For example, ESC surveys have not seriously dealt with party image change on this question.<sup>55</sup>

The only party image survey that I have been able to locate that shows cross-party change on the corruption issue was a series of *United Daily*

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<sup>54</sup>Interview with Apollo Chen, Taipei, September 28, 2001.

<sup>55</sup>The NTU survey does contain a question asking respondents if they see parties as tolerating or attacking corruption. However, this data has only been published for the case of the DPP. See Chen, "Minjindang de zhengdang xingxiang," 25.

**Table 6**  
**United Daily News Survey on the Percentage of Respondents Viewing the KMT/DPP as Clean or Corrupt (1992-97)**

	KMT is clean	DPP is clean	KMT is corrupt	DPP is corrupt
1992	37	26	28	29
1993	32	41	36	19
1994	31	39	34	17
1995	23	41	43	20
1996	25	41	45	22
1997	21	47	50	23

**Note:** This table shows the percentage of respondents viewing the main parties as being either clean or corrupt in six national surveys carried out by the *United Daily News*.

**Source:** Christian Schafferer, "The 1997 City and County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan," 26-27. <http://www2.uni-linz.ac.at/fak.SoWi/gespol/DOWNLOAD/elactact.doc>.

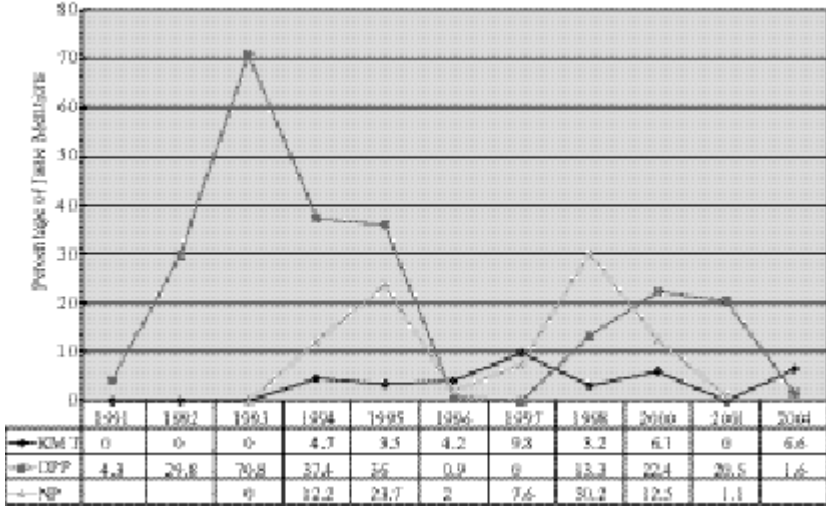
*News* surveys carried out between 1992 and 1996. These are displayed on table 6. This table shows that the percentage of respondents seeing the KMT as clean dropped from 37 percent in 1992 to 25 percent in 1996—against a corresponding rise for the DPP from 26 percent to 41 percent. The percentage of respondents seeing the KMT as corrupt rose from 28 percent in 1992 to 45 percent in 1996—against a corresponding fall for the DPP from 29 percent to 22 percent.<sup>56</sup>

I also examined party movement on the corruption issue in my newspaper ad content analysis. Figure 5 plots the parties' relative issue emphasis on political corruption in official newspaper ads between 1991 and 2004. A similar pattern is shown, with the issue having been dominated by the DPP, and to a lesser extent by the NP. Other than 1996 when the main parties largely ignored the issue, there were only two cases of the KMT leapfrogging the DPP.<sup>57</sup> In a sign of continuity, the DPP still dominated anti-corruption attacks in the first election after the change in

<sup>56</sup>Christian Schafferer, "The 1997 City Mayor and County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan," 26-27. <http://www2.uni-linz.ac.at/fak.SoWi/gespol/DOWNLOAD/elactact.doc>.

<sup>57</sup>In 1997 DPP newspaper ads focused on the crime issue, while its TV ads stressed political corruption.

**Figure 5**  
**Party Emphasis on the Political Corruption Issue in Newspaper Ads**



ruling party in 2001. Figure 5 also reflects the high saliency of the issue: the issue of political corruption has been heavily stressed in every election. In short, the data shows that the parties are again differentiated on this issue, with the KMT increasingly seen as a corrupt party, and the DPP's clean image continuing to improve.

My elite interviews also showed a number of related party change trends on this issue. First, politicians agreed that the DPP did initiate the anti-corruption issue in the early 1990s and dominated it in later elections. Second, the DPP progressively broadened the scope of its anti-corruption efforts, from attacking vote buying, KMT party assets, gangster politics, and central government corruption. Although traditionally having ignored or even tacitly encouraged corruption, the KMT gradually moved to accept the opposition's views on many corruption sub-issues. For example, after years of defending its right to run a huge business empire, the KMT accepted the need to reform its party assets in 2000. However, as with the social welfare issue, KMT change of stance on the political corruption issue was heavily constrained; as a result, the party has struggled to

brush off its corrupt image.

In short, the newspaper and interview data reveal that the DPP placed the anti-corruption issue on the agenda in the early 1990s, and has dominated it since. Moreover, surveys show that once the image of the KMT as corrupt—and the opposition parties as clean—was forged, it has remained set in the public imagination even after the change in ruling party.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has examined the existing research on party position measurement in the first fifteen years of Taiwan's democratic elections. The results between 1991 and 2000 are encouraging for the state of Taiwan's party competition. Taiwan's parties have followed a pattern of moderate differentiation in which parties do stress issues, compete on multiple issue cleavages, and—although having shown a degree of movement toward the center—remain clearly differentiated. The jury is still out for the post-2000 period, however, with the ESC surveys detecting signs of increased polarization.

This paper has also revealed that there is still much room for improvement in the study of party position in Taiwan. Too much research has been carried out in isolation by individual researchers, with little reference to other existing studies. Also many studies have focused on single years and used completely different measurement systems, making time series analysis impossible. The ESC party image surveys have been the most consistent and orthodox method for plotting party change. However, it is important that these questions be continued in the new Taiwan Election and Democratization Study surveys. The content analysis schemes offer a fresh perspective on party change in Taiwan. These were carried out by Ph.D. researchers, and now need to be institutionalized and continued by wider research teams. Now that parties are regularly issuing election manifestoes, content analysis of this source should be carried out. Elite surveys are the least developed of the three methods. The ideal solution would be to devise for Taiwanese legislators a system similar to the British Rep-

representative Survey. New challenges for research include measuring the positions of the new parties that have emerged since 2000, and also to find what issue cleavages will eventually replace the issues that dominated the campaigns of the 1990s. Finally, there is also room for greater comparative use of party position data to contrast the development of Taiwanese political parties with their counterparts in both mature and new democracies.

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## Appendix 1

### Revised Manifesto Research Group Coding Scheme

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#### Domain 1: External Relations

101: International relations: positive	109: Internationalism: negative
102: International relations: negative	110: European Community: negative
103: Anti-imperialism	<b>111: Taiwan independence: positive</b>
104: Military: positive	<b>111A: Pure Taiwan independence</b>
105: Military: negative	<b>111B: Diluted Taiwan independence</b>
106: Peace	<b>112: Taiwan independence: negative</b>
107: Internationalism: positive	<b>112A: Taiwan independence: negative</b>
108: European Community: positive	<b>112B: Chinese unification</b>

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#### Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy

201: Freedom and human rights	203: Constitutionalism: positive
202: Democracy	204: Constitutionalism: negative

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#### Domain 3: Political System

301: Decentralization: positive	305: Political authority
302: Decentralization: negative	305A: Political stability
303: Government and administrative efficiency	305B: Party/government competence
<b>304: Political corruption</b>	305C: Other parties' lack of government competence

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#### Domain 4: Economy

401: Free enterprise	410: Productivity
402: Incentives	411: Technology and infrastructure
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	420: Economic growth and prosperity
409: Keynesian demand management	

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#### Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life

501: Environmental protection	505: Welfare state limitation
502: Culture	506: Education expansion
503: Social justice	507: Education limitation

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#### **504: Welfare state expansion**

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**Appendix 1 (Continued)**

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**Domain 6: Fabric of Society**

601: Chinese nationalism	605: Law and order
601T: Taiwan nationalism	606: Social harmony
602: National way of life: negative	607: Multiculturalism: positive
603: Traditional morality: positive	608: Multiculturalism: negative
604: Traditional morality: negative	

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**Domain 7: Social Groups**

701: Labor groups	704: Middle class and professional groups
702: Labor groups: negative	705: Underprivileged and minority groups
703: Agriculture and farmers	706: Non-economic demographic groups

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**Domain 9: Candidate and Party**

901: Candidate: positive	904: Party: negative
902: Candidate: negative	904V: Party negative: violence
903: Party: positive	

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**Notes:**

1. The categories featuring in my case study chapters are in italicized/bold print.
2. This revised MRG coding scheme is similar to the one used by Liu Tsung-wei.

**Sources:** Budge et al., eds., *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments, 1945-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Appendix 3; and Liu Tsung-wei, "The Effects of Electoral Laws on Party Competition in Taiwan 1989-1998: With Particular Reference to the Single Non-Transferable Vote" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Essex, 2002), table 7.1

