Agenda Setting in Taiwan's First Presidential Election, 1996:
A Comparison of Coverage in Three Newspapers and
Public Perceptions of Issues and Candidates

**University of Leicester**

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

Huei-ling Chen

BA (Foreign Languages and Literature, National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan)
MA (Communication Studies, University of Leeds, UK)

Centre for Mass Communication Research
University of Leicester

2003

UMI Number: U520117

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

ProQuest

Agenda Setting in Taiwan's First Presidential Election, 1996: A Comparison of Coverage in Three Newspapers and Public Perceptions of Issues and Candidates

# Abstract

This study aimed to examine agenda-setting in the context of Taiwan's first presidential election held in 1996 by comparing newspaper coverage and data from extended focus groups. Three major Taiwanese newspapers, the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*, and the *Liberty Times*, were content-analysed to investigate the newspaper agendas on important issues, campaign issues and candidates' images; eight focus groups with a total of 92 voters from Taichung were conducted to learn the public agendas on key issues and image attributes linked to presidential candidates. The use of extended focus groups in this study proved to be innovative and useful. By providing opportunities for participants to clarify and justify their responses, this research method helped avoid some methodological criticisms surrounding previous agenda-setting research and gain further insights into understanding what issues and candidates' images were most important in the public minds and why their perspectives were formed in this way.

The results showed that Taiwanese newspapers do, to a certain degree, influence the public agendas on key campaign issues and salient image attributes linked to candidates Chen Li-an and Peng Ming-min. Participants with different gender and educational backgrounds generally showed similarities in their issue, campaign, and image agendas despite certain variations in order of importance. However, the study showed that education had some influence on agenda-setting of the press. It was found that the views of lesser educated female (LEF) participants on the five key campaign issues were closer to the newspaper coverage of those issues. On the other hand, higher educated participants, especially females, were more easily influenced by the newspapers in their perceptions of the top five substantive attributes linked to candidates Chen Li-an, Lee Teng-hui, and Peng Ming-min.

# Acknowledgements

I wish to thank many people for their support and assistance in completing this thesis.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Dr Olga Linne for her supervision and encouragement in the accomplishment of this thesis. She supervised my research work from the conception of the topic until in its present form. I was deeply impressed with her insightful comments and advice on the structure and content of my work. Without her invaluable guidance and help, this thesis would have never been brought to fruition.

I am grateful to Tutor Anders Hansen for his helpful suggestions about the application of SPSS to my research data analysis.

I am indebted to Rotary Foundation International for providing me with 2-year ambassadorial scholarship. In the absence of this financial help, I could not have come to the UK for my PhD.

My thanks go especially to all the participants who made themselves available for my focus group interviews, which are an integral part of the thesis.

Words cannot express my gratitude to my family, especially my parents, Chung-hsiung and Yueh-cheng for their love, understanding and limitless support. I cannot repay what they have done for me despite my best efforts. I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents as a token of my affection and gratitude.

Special thanks also go to my friend Tung-cheng for his patience and support. His valuable efforts in collecting material for my thesis and emotional sustenance in my time of distress are unforgettable and always appreciated.

The completion of this thesis is also to the memory of my revered Grandpa – the late Rotary counsellor Bruce Roberts who gave me the most precious life in Leicester.

Last but not the least, my thanks are due to all friends who accompany and assist me through my stay in the UK. I will always cherish the happy memories with them in great respect.

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ARATS | Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits |
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| CNP | Chinese New Party |
| CTS | Chinese Television Service |
| CTV | China Television Company |
| DPP | Democratic Progressive Party |
| FTC | Formosa Television Corporation |
| GIO | Government Information Office |
| HEF | Higher Educated Female |
| HEM | Higher Educated Male |
| KMT | Kuomintang |
| LEF | Lesser Educated Female |
| LEM | Lesser Educated Male |
| MAC | Mainland Affairs Council |
| NP | New Party |
| NUC | National Unification Council |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| PR | Proportional Representation |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| ROC | Republic of China |
| SEF | Straits Exchange Foundation |
| SES | Social-Economic Status |
| SMD | Single-member District |
| SNTV | Single Non-transferable Vote |
| TTV | Taiwan Television Enterprise |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |

# List of Tables

# List of Figures

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

List of Tables

List of Figures

# Chapter 5 - Findings of Extended Focus Groups   5-1

# Chapter 6 - The Agenda-setting Results and Discussion

# Chapter 7 - Summary and Conclusions

# Bibliography

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Research

Following its well-known economic achievements, Taiwan also succeeded in its democratic reform and political liberalisation when the lifting of martial law was initiated in 1987, thus creating a pluralistic society with competitive party politics and widespread media freedom. Specifically, ever since the lifting of martial law, the country's outdated domestic politics has undergone a process of overhaul. The parliament is presently fully elected by popular vote, as are local officials, opposition parties are thriving and the print media have remained relatively free of government surveillance and control. Taiwan's broadcasting industry, once largely owned and controlled by political agencies, has also experienced more and more growth in freedom. By 1993, with the establishment of several core institutions of a democratic polity, including political parties, competitive elections, electoral rules and legislatures, important aspects of democratic transition had been completed (Tien and Chu, 1994). The culmination of democratisation appeared to have been reached on 23 March 1996 when Taiwan's voters directly elected their president for the first time.

The 1996 first presidential election is regarded as an important milestone in Taiwan's democratisation. It has marked the end of Taiwan's decade-long democratic transition since the late 1980s. This presidential election is unique in that it was the first of its kind in any Chinese society; for the first time in 5,000 years of Chinese history and 400 years of Taiwanese history the head of a Chinese polity was popularly elected. As noted by Copper (1998), this election was a big step, perhaps the final step in the process of Taiwan's democratisation because it created a popularly elected president and vice-president. These positions were previously decided in an indirect election by the National Assembly, which until 1991 was not completely representative of the Taiwanese people. Apart from this significant departure, this election also had other important implications. On one hand, it provided by example and in

contrast to China's undemocratic process of choosing leaders. On the other hand, it also served as a commentary on the argument about whether Asian nations can perform democratically. Nevertheless, in the eyes of China, this first direct presidential election may have edged Taiwan closer to independence because it legitimised the status of the Taiwanese political leadership. The election campaign was conducted against a backdrop of continued Chinese military exercises in the Taiwan Straits, which made Taiwanese relations with China virtually the most important election issue. China's continued military exercises in the Taiwan Straits led to the most serious confrontation between the two sides since the Quemoy crisis of 1958.

In the past, the impact of the mass media has not been a major theme in voting studies. In recent years, however, there has been renewed interest in the influence that the election campaigns and particularly the media have on voters in terms of a structuring or re-structuring of their cognition, opinions and perceptions. Communication scholars have increasingly come to see the mass media vested with power to shape the political agenda, to determine which versions of reality are acceptable on a wider level, and to shape the values of society (Weaver, 1987a).

The media, in the process of selecting some issues and not others, construct an agenda which tells audiences what to be concerned with and in what order. In other words, the media not only provide cognitive knowledge, informing people about what is happening, but they also order and structure political reality, assigning events greater or lesser importance based on their presence or absence on the media agenda. This ability of the mass media to structure people's cognitions and to effect change among existing cognitions has been called the *agenda-setting function* of the media (McCombs and Gilbert, 1986).

The power of the mass media's structuring of issues and candidates, as argued by Lang and Lang (1981a), extends far beyond political campaigns. They noted:

Not only during the campaign but also in the periods between, the mass media provide perspectives, shape images of candidates and parties, help highlight issues around which a campaign will develop, and define the unique atmosphere and areas of sensitivity which mark any particular campaign (p. 332).

Nevertheless, election campaigns do provide an ideal time and milieu to examine the agenda-setting process because they traditionally have an agenda of issues and candidates (Jeffres, 1997). With obvious start and end points, they also make it easier to identify media agendas and public agendas (Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal, 1981).

As mentioned earlier, this first-ever presidential election itself was of great political significance because it was viewed as an important step in the process of Taiwan's democratisation. The growing tensions in the Taiwan Straits resulting from China's missile tests and military exercises, together with the USA's response to the cross-strait crisis by sending two aircraft carriers to the waters around Taiwan, not only formed the background to the election, but also became the 'agenda' of the campaign. The broader context within which this presidential election took place provides an excellent opportunity to study news media coverage of the electoral campaign and public perceptions of issues and candidates. The present study therefore, with its purpose to investigate the agenda-setting phenomenon of Taiwanese newspapers, chose to collect its research data during the epoch-making 1996 presidential election in Taiwan.

Beginning with a series of US presidential elections, the agenda-setting model primarily originated from a Western society. Most of the agenda-setting research has been conducted in the contexts of Western culture, particularly in the United States, with only a few studies being carried out in Asian countries such as Singapore (Holaday and Kuo, 1993; Kuo, Holaday, Hao, Koh, and Lee, 1996), Japan (Takeshita and Mikami, 1995), and Taiwan. This thesis replicated the agenda-setting study in the Taiwanese context with the aim of avoiding some

criticisms surrounding previous research, and seeking to examine the diversity and evidence of public perceptions of issues and candidates. Indeed, Taiwan offers an interesting research setting for exploring the dynamics of political communication in the sense that it is an oriental society where the essence of Asian democracy is well preserved. But in light of its rapid and successful political democratisation and liberalisation, it has also adopted Western-style democracy with sound inter-party politics, open and active elections, and the rising autonomy and diversification of its media systems. It is expected that the global relevance of the agenda-setting phenomenon will be enhanced when studies are conducted in different cultural contexts.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. This introduction will later discuss Taiwan's political development with a focus on its domestic politics, including party politics, elections and their impact on the process of democratisation. An introduction of Taiwan's electoral politics and the 1996 presidential election as well as cross-strait relations will be made. In addition, the key media systems in Taiwan will also be examined.

The second chapter provides a literature review and a theoretical framework. The focus is on the development of agenda-setting concept, examining key assumptions of the agenda-setting model, criticisms of the model, the overview of agenda-setting research, findings of previous studies, and the application of the model to the present study.

The third chapter will introduce the methodology, which includes content analysis of news coverage from three selected newspapers during the campaign period and extended focus group interviews. Study method rationale, advantages and disadvantages of methodologies adopted, data collection designs, analysis plans, and research questions will also be presented.

The focus of the fourth chapter is mainly on exploring the newspaper agendas. The results of the content analysis from three major newspapers, the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*,

and the *Liberty Times*, will be presented to find out the important issues, campaign issues, and salient presidential candidates' image attributes emphasised by the newspapers selected. In addition, initiators and news sources of campaign issues, initiators, actors and tone of campaign visuals, the focus of campaign coverage, the overall dimension of election-related news items, and the evaluation and sources of presidential candidates' image attributes will also be discussed in this chapter.

The analysis of the public agendas will be the main thrust of chapter five. Which issues are most emphasised by the public in Taiwan today? What image attributes of the presidential candidates are most salient in the minds of the public? Do participants with different gender and levels of education differ in their issue and image agendas? The use of extended focus groups allows the researcher to examine the issue and attribute rankings of the public agendas and simultaneously to find out the reasons and justifications for participants' perceptions of issue and attribute emphasis in their minds. Evaluation of candidates' image, participants' interpersonal communication, media influence, media use and exposure patterns, media evaluation, media political gratification, political interest, participation, and preference, as well as their views on national identity will also be examined.

The emphasis of chapter six will be the exploration of the media agenda-setting results. The comparisons will be made between the newspaper agenda and the public agenda on issues, campaign issues, and candidates' image attributes. Further comparisons of issue rank and attribute rank will also be made between the newspaper agenda and the public agendas of sub-groups. The similarities and differences between them will be discussed.

The final section of the thesis will sum up the findings of the research, examine the implications of the study, and end with recommendations for future agenda-setting studies.

Since the research context was in Taiwan with a focus on the first presidential election, it is

necessary to have an understanding of its political background. The following section takes an overview of Taiwan's domestic politics with an emphasis on its political development and electoral politics. The prelude to the 1996 presidential election, the history of Taiwanese relations with China, and Taiwan's major media systems will also be examined.

## 1.2 An Introduction to Taiwan's Political Development and Current Domestic Politics

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the Nationalist government also known as the Kuomintang (KMT) on the Chinese mainland took control of Taiwan from the Japanese, who had ruled the island for fifty years as a result of the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895. By the terms of this treaty, Taiwan was ceded to Japan following the Ch'ing government's defeat in the 1894 Sino-Japanese war. Two years later, on 28 February 1947, riots erupted against the Mainlander-controlled KMT government. Thousands of the Taiwanese, many of whom were prominent local politicians and activists, were brutally massacred in this tragedy known as the *28 February Incident of 1947*. It is this event that is said to have resulted in the so-called 'provincialism complex', the ethnic and political conflict between native Taiwanese and Mainlanders. This tragic event created deep and lasting hostility and mistrust among the Taiwanese towards the KMT regime (Lai, Myers, and Wou, 1991) since it symbolised the KMT's brutal oppression of the Taiwanese in the early post-war period (Tsang, 1993). The KMT government was regarded by many Taiwanese as a kind of colonial regime (Hu, 1993). Moreover, this Mainlander-Taiwanese division has developed as a major source of friction in Taiwan's domestic politics since then. In 1949 as China's civil war came to an end with the Mainland falling into the hands of Chinese Communists, the central government of the Republic of China (ROC) under the leadership of the KMT's Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan. The KMT regime maintained that it was the only legitimate government of all China and used this as the rationale for not renewing the national elective bodies, thus effectively perpetuating the rule of a regime dominated by a small minority of Mainlanders, who came to Taiwan with Chiang in the late 1940s and accounted for about 15% of the population in

Taiwan (Clough, 1978; Gold, 1986). Trying to rebuild itself in Taiwan, which was regarded as a military and political base for the recovery of the Chinese mainland, the KMT government set a priority of economic development and social stability over democracy (King, 1984). Thus, for over a quarter of a century since its takeover of Taiwan, the KMT regime has exercised authoritarian rule over the island state to consolidate its power and continued to insist it was the legitimate government of all China. Afraid of its legitimacy being challenged and in the name of anti-Communism, the KMT government imposed emergency provisions, including martial law[1], a set of constitutional amendments called 'the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion' (hereafter the Temporary Provisions), and at least sixteen emergency laws, decrees and judicial interpretations on the island from 1949 to 1991, making Taiwan become a permanent state of emergency (Hu, 1990). Martial law legalised the KMT regime's one-party authoritarian control. Under martial law, no recognition was granted to the right of public assembly, the right of association, including the formation of new political parties, and freedom of publication. Taiwanese civil society fell under the complete control of the Mainlander-dominated central state apparatus. The effect of the Temporary Provisions aimed to expand presidential power by offering the president unlimited authority unintended by the framers of the constitution (Tien, 1989). Harsh measures of suppression or imprisonment were immediately applied to any signs of political opposition or dissident movements, which came to be known as the 'white terror'. As Tien (1989: 209) indicates, 'the entire shape of the government departs from the constitution' under the combined influence of martial law, the Temporary Provisions, and the emergency decrees.

Significant political changes began in the mid-1970s when Chiang Ching-kuo succeeded his father to the presidency. In the domestic political context, decades of rapid economic growth brought in its wake tremendous social changes, including the emergence of a large segment of

---

[1]. Martial law, which had been imposed on 19 May 1949, empowered the KMT regime to prevent any criticism, public assembly or political groups judged as threatening public order.

middle class and the rise of social movements demanding changes. The result of these socio-economic developments prompted growing demands for political liberalisation. Therefore, native Taiwanese were gradually recruited by Chiang Ching-kuo into the upper ranks of the ruling KMT. Although most high-ranking positions in the party and the government were still controlled by Mainlanders (Winckler, 1984), this process of co-opting native Taiwanese into the regime's ruling circle, known as 'Taiwanisation', resulted in 'interethnic power-sharing', which increased the role of the Taiwanese in decision-making and their common stake in the regime's fortunes, and 'legitimacy of the regime', which was modified to rely increasingly on its effective governance of Taiwan (Tien, 1992: 40). On the other hand, drastic changes in the external environment beginning in the 1970s also played a vital role in the ruling elite's responses to rising popular demands for political opening. A series of diplomatic setbacks, including the loss of Taiwan's United Nations (UN) seat to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1971 and withdrawal of recognition by major allies, especially President Jimmy Carter's termination of diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1978, severely undermined the legitimacy of KMT authoritarian rule and triggered intensive requests for the speeding up of political reform (Peng, 1991). As a result, the KMT elite started to rely more on 'the legitimating function of electoral institutions' to strengthen its political legitimacy (Chu, 1994: 103). It was also during this period that a number of non-KMT politicians formed the *Dangwai*, literally 'outside the party', which was the forerunner of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), to start the opposition movement and coordinate campaigns in order to challenge the ruling KMT's monopoly on power and establish a democratic structure with a true Taiwanese identity.

Major breakthroughs in democratic reform and political liberalisation occurred between 1986 and 1988, when the ban on new political parties was lifted, martial law was terminated, and restrictions on public assemblies, demonstrations, visits to mainland China, and news media were eliminated. In January 1988 the death of President Chiang Ching-kuo, the man who had controlled Taiwanese politics single-handedly since 1975, symbolised the end of the era of the

KMT's political monopoly. The Taiwanisation of the regime culminated in the succession of a native-born Taiwanese, Lee Teng-hui, to the presidency and chairmanship of the KMT after a brief power struggle within the party. In January 1989, President Lee promulgated 'the Act of Civic Organisation' adopted by the Legislative Yuan, which set the ground rules for the formation of new political parties. From then on, Taiwan's political system was transformed from 'an essentially authoritarian one-party state to a democratic, competitive, multi-party system' (Chiu, 1993: 33). In May 1991, Lee also suspended the 'Temporary Provisions', which extended unlimited presidential power and created extra-constitutional institutions to perform emergency functions, in an attempt to return to normal constitutional rule. He maintained the momentum of reforms and accelerated the pace of democratisation through the 1990s despite periodic objections from the conservative elite within the KMT.

Since 1990, Taiwan's political system has continued the transition towards representative democracy, and the one-party authoritarian dictatorship has given way to a dominant-party system with the establishment of more than a dozen new political parties. The introduction of a voluntary retirement law for all life-tenure members of the Legislative Yuan, the Control Yuan, and the National Assembly initiated the reform of these outdated national representative institutions, which were filled with senior representatives elected on the Mainland in 1947-1948 and who had served an indefinite term. With all members elected in Taiwan, the first elections for a full National Assembly were held in 1991, and Legislative Yuan elections followed a year later (Tsang, 1993; Copper, 1997). Moreover, popular elections for the Governor of Taiwan and the Mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung municipalities followed in 1994. The first presidential election by popular vote took place in March 1996.

By December 1995, there were 76 recognised political parties in Taiwan, but most were insignificant in electoral politics (GIO, 1995). The three major parties are the Kuomintang (KMT), the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and the New Party (NP). As the main opposition party, the DPP was formed by a coalition of Dangwai forces, including moderate

politicians, pro-Taiwanese independence candidates and labour and welfare activists, and predominantly supported by native Taiwanese (Long, 1991). The party was established in 1986 and was legalised in 1989 after 'the Act of Civic Organisation' was in effect. The DPP presented itself as a party for the Taiwanese people, in contrast to the KMT, which, as argued by the DPP, was primarily concerned with Mainlander interests. By the summer of 1995, there were five principal factions within the DPP: the Formosa Faction, the Justice Alliance, the Welfare State Alliance, the New Tide Faction, and the World United Formosans for Independence. All of them supported Taiwanese independence, or the permanent political separation of Taiwan from the Chinese mainland despite their differences in the urgency of realising independence. The New Tide Faction and the World United Formosans for Independence are generally considered more radical in the DPP's political and social policies (GIO, 1996). In fact, as early as October 1991, the DPP amended its political platform to include an advocacy of *de jour* independence for Taiwan through self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign state. In 1992, the party abandoned its earlier constitutional reform proposal, which was intentionally vague on the issue of sovereignty, and instead proposed a new draft constitution for the establishment of the 'Republic of Taiwan' (Chu and Lin, 1996). By questioning the KMT's official 'one China' policy and emphasising the emergence of a separate Taiwanese identity from Chinese nationalism, the DPP challenged not only the KMT's vision of the ROC, but also its legitimacy as a representative of the Taiwanese people (Lee, 1999). This separatist tendency has therefore aroused much controversy between the two major parties as well as much concern from the other side of the Straits. The People's Republic of China (PRC) still regards Taiwan as an inalienable part of China. While the party itself has long been divided between a faction that supports a declaration of independence from mainland China and a faction that considers such a policy to be guaranteed electoral suicide, since voters are afraid of Chinese retaliation, the official policy of the DPP is that the question of independence would be put to a referendum if it was to come to power. Nevertheless, as noted by Yu (1996) in more recent elections, the mainstream DPP leadership has downplayed the party's independence theme in an attempt to broaden voter support.

Meanwhile, the issue of Taiwanese independence also became increasingly complicated within the KMT party. Once a Mainlander-dominated party, the KMT, due to its *Taiwanisation*, has become a local party with more than 70% of the membership now Taiwanese (Hughes, 1997). Some Taiwanese members publicly favoured a modified two-Chinas model, 'one China, two political entities', which was strongly opposed by some members, mostly Mainlanders, who advocated reunification with the Mainland. President Lee's attempts at greater democratic reforms also alienated many conservatives in the party. Under his leadership, Taiwanese not only occupied more than half of the top positions in the party and government hierarchies but were also assigned to posts of real importance and power (Kau, 1996). The influence of native Taiwanese within the party had increased to the point where some of the leading Mainlanders felt marginalised. By the early 1990s, the continuing power struggles in domestic politics led to factionalism within the KMT under Chairman Lee Teng-hui's leadership. Liberal and reform-minded leaders, especially of Taiwanese origin, took Lee's side whereas the conservative old guard of mainland origin formed coalitions to support first Premier Li Huan and later Premier Hau Pei-tsun. Two major groups could thus be identified. Those who supported Lee and his policies of identifying with Taiwan belonged to the 'mainstream faction'. Accordingly, those who opposed Lee were referred to as the 'non-mainstream faction' (Hood, 1996; Kau, 1996). Between 1990 and 1992, the two factions clashed over every major policy issue, including the revision of the constitution, the change of the electoral system from indirect to popular election, eradication of the blacklist system, and the speed and scope of exchange between Taiwan and China (Chu and Lin, 1996). The rise of Lee Teng-hui and the mainstream faction within the KMT changed the image of the party dramatically. In fact, under Lee's leadership, the KMT began to manoeuvre itself into becoming the representative of all the people of Taiwan and therefore moved to a certain extent in the direction of the DPP.

This continuous confrontation finally led the non-mainstream faction to split from the KMT. In August 1993, a group of KMT elite linked to the non-mainstream faction, including six

incumbents and one former legislator, broke away from the ruling KMT because of incompatible ideology, especially the differences with Chairman Lee over his leadership methods and his policy towards mainland China, and they announced the establishment of the Chinese New Party (CNP), later the New Party (NP), shortly before the KMT's 14th National Congress (Kau, 1996). The split of the New Party cadres from the KMT was indeed, as argued by Chao and Myers (1998), a consequence of generational, ideological, and power conflicts among KMT elite. In particular, the NP's founders were dissatisfied with Lee's *Taiwan-first* approach to cross-strait relations, his toleration of corruption, and his autocratic dealings with his opponents in the KMT (Rigger, 1999). The NP adopted anti-money politics and the protection of social justice as its main platforms. The goal of the NP was to absorb those voters who are neither satisfied with the performance of the ruling KMT over the years nor enchanted with the DPP's radical advocacy of Taiwanese independence (GIO, 1996). As the second major opposition party, mainly but not exclusively supported by Mainlanders, the NP advocates the eventual unification of Taiwan with mainland China. In fact, the NP attracted much support from Mainlanders disenchanted with the KMT party mainstream. Despite its effectiveness in addressing public dissatisfaction with political corruption, the NP's policy development was weak, thus making it difficult to distinguish the party from the KMT. Hood (1997) observed that with its limited base of support, the NP has been stigmatised most of all by its image of representing Mainlander interests.

After the departure of the NP, splits within the KMT continued. On 15 November 1995, two high-ranking KMT members, Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun decided to openly support the NP and even campaigned for its candidates for the 1995 legislative elections. Lin and Hau were later relieved of their party membership by the KMT. They then formed an independent presidential team with the technical support of the New Party (Tien, 1996a).

The differences between Taiwan's ruling and opposition parties are clear. The KMT has gradually evolved into a local political party competing with the DPP for votes among the 85%

of voters who are native Taiwanese. Once a right-wing authoritarian apparatus organised along Leninist principles, the KMT is now a mundane centrist political machine selling itself as the party of stability, much as the Liberal Democrats in Japan did during their long spell in office. The KMT offers the status quo: a wondrous level of economic prosperity coupled with a peaceful working relationship with China. In other words, in Taiwan's political scene the ruling KMT is depicting itself as a centrist party, with the pro-independence DPP on one side and the pro-reunification NP on the other.

## 1.3 Taiwan's Electoral Politics

Political elections in Taiwan were initially designed to be democratic trappings for the KMT's political legitimacy. Central political powers have been tightly controlled by the political elite from the Mainland, whereas the Taiwanese political elite were only allowed to engage in local politics. Claiming to be the only legitimate government of all China, the KMT government maintains a complicated political bureaucracy in Taiwan. A redundant four-tier administrative system designed for all China, including central government, provincial, county/city, and town/borough, is still retained. Members of central government legislative bodies, including the National Assembly, the Legislative Yuan, and the Control Yuan, elected in 1947-1948 in China continued to serve for this political claim. These members were not required to be re-elected in Taiwan and could hold their seats indefinitely since Taiwan was considered a province of China (Hu and Chu, 1992). When the KMT government suffered diplomatic isolation and the members of parliament gradually died off, popular elections were regarded as an additional important source of legitimacy for the regime. To meet rising demands for the Taiwanisation of the KMT regime, a few seats in the central government became open to election in 1969 when fifteen supplemental members were elected to the National Assembly for life tenure. Since 1972, supplementary elections for the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly were held regularly. Nevertheless, it was not until 1991 and 1992 that the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan were fully elected by voters in

Taiwan. The national elections, as pointed out by Robinson (1991), have facilitated the non-violent transfer of power from a mostly Mainlander-dominated political elite to non-Mainlander elite and mid-elite. On the other hand, the limited opening of national representative bodies for electoral contest also provided grounds for the opposition forces with national aims to form an island-wide coalition, labelled the *Dangwai*, which was the core of the DPP, to challenge KMT electoral hegemony (Hu and Chu, 1992; Chu, 1994). Electoral competition did offer a major venue for the DPP to become the principal opposition party. It won 20% of contested seats in the 1991 National Assembly elections and 31% in the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections (Copper, 1994). In the 1994 direct elections of the Governor of Taiwan and the Mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung, the DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian won the mayoral race in Taipei with 44% of the vote (Copper, 1997). The 1995 Legislative Yuan elections were a three-party race, ending up with the KMT receiving slightly over 46% of the popular vote in comparison with a comfortable majority of 60.7% of the vote it garnered in the 1989 supplementary Legislative Yuan elections, the DPP winning over 33% of the popular vote and the NP receiving 13%. Since the democratic transition began in 1986, the KMT's electoral strength has declined in the face of opposition parties' competition (Tien, 1996a).

While national elections were suspended for more than 40 years, local elections for offices such as county magistrates, city mayors, county and city councilmen, and provincial assemblymen were held regularly since 1950. None of these offices subject to election had significant political powers. This explained why the provincial Governor and the Mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung were not directly elected until 1994 because the KMT government considered these positions vital to linking the majority of the population and resources to the centre. Under the rules of martial law, the KMT banned the formation of opposition, but individuals were allowed to run as independents against KMT candidates. From time to time, some non-KMT independent candidates defeated official nominees for various elected offices in many localities, but on the whole local elections were subject to manipulation by KMT authorities, who considered the elections 'instruments of political control and co-optation'

(Tien, 1996b: 4). Indeed, the purposes of local elections were primarily to alleviate demands for the openings of political powers from the native Taiwanese, to co-opt native elite, and to incorporate existing local patron-client networks into a superimposed party apparatus (Hu and Chu, 1992; Chu, 1994). As observed by Huang (1996: 111), 'local elections and the limited opening of representative bodies to electoral competition expanded the opposition's political leverage and ability to mobilise'. On the other hand, these local elections also paved the way for the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s (Hu and Chu, 1992; Huang, 1992). With organisational advantages and resources, the KMT dominated local elections before the formation of the DPP in 1986. One of the political pitfalls of Taiwan's local politics is money politics. Due to keen competition, local elections in Taiwan often become a money contest, riddled with vote-rigging and vote-buying, with those who spend more always standing a better chance of winning close run races (Tan, Yu, and Chen, 1996).

There are three separate electoral systems employed in Taiwan. For electing representatives to executive offices such as the presidency and vice-presidency, provincial governor, county chiefs, city mayors, and village heads, the single-member district (SMD) plurality system is practiced. Under this system, each voter casts only one vote and the candidate who receives the most, not necessarily an absolute majority, is elected. In the elections for legislative members at various levels, including National Assembly and Legislative Yuan members, provincial assemblymen, county or city councilmen, and village board members, each voter has a single non-transferable vote (SNTV) in a multi-seat district. In other words, more than one representative would be elected in one district, but each voter only casts a single ballot. Under such a system, because the party may nominate more than one candidate in a district, candidates have to compete not only with other parties' candidates but also with their own and the candidates who garner the most votes are elected (GIO, 1995). As a result, election campaigns become very much candidate-oriented, and personal influences on local factions are of much greater importance than party labels in gaining votes. Political campaigns thus put a

candidate's characteristics at the top of the priority list. Candidates may rely more on their own devices, such as personal connections, radical gestures, money, or even use of physical force to attract votes. Party labels and public policy debates weigh considerably less in importance (Hu and Chu, 1992; Hsieh, 1996).

The third electoral system in use is based on proportional representation (PR) and was introduced in the 1991 National Assembly elections. The PR electoral system is for special seats, the number of which allocated to the party depends on the overall ratio of votes each party receives in the election. Voters are unable to vote directly for the PR seats. These special seats are allotted to political parties in accordance with each party's share of the total vote in the electoral districts. Only parties that win at least 5% of that total vote can claim a share of the at-large seats. In the case of the 1991 National Assembly elections, apart from 225 assemblymen elected to represent districts in Taiwan, there were 100 special seats, 80 of which were for nation-wide representatives and the remaining 20 seats were for overseas Chinese (GIO, 1995; Hsieh and Niou, 1996a)

## 1.4 The 1996 Presidential Election: Candidates, Campaign, and Election Results

The President of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan is the highest representative of the nation. The term of office for the president and vice-president used to be six years. As the head of state, the president represents the country in its foreign relations and at state functions. All acts of state are conducted in his name. Since the enactment of the Constitution in 1947, the power to choose the head of state was given to members of the National Assembly, one of the two parliamentary bodies. The electoral system for electing the president and vice-president used to be a comparatively closed one because the contenders were limited exclusively to heavyweights of the ruling KMT. This method of choosing the president and vice-president has long been called into question by many, especially opposition politicians. They considered the indirect presidential election by the National Assembly representatives

neither democratic nor fair since the majority of the representatives were elected in the later 1940s on the Mainland and have served an indefinite term. However, all that changed with constitutional revisions in 1994. According to Article 2 of the new amendment, the president and vice-president should be elected directly by the general populace and the presidential term is shortened to four years (Hsieh, 1994). In 1995, 'the Presidential and Vice-presidential Election and Recall Law' was passed and approved by the Legislative Yuan. Would-be presidents can now get their names on the election ballot either through winning a nomination by any political party receiving at least 5% of the vote in the most recent provincial-level or higher election or by collecting signatures of endorsement from no less than 1.5% of the total eligible voters in the most recent parliamentary election. The presidential and vice-presidential candidates run on a single ticket. Through the method of simple plurality rather than an outright majority, the presidential candidate that gets the most votes wins the election, and may be re-elected for a second term (GIO, 1996).

The 1996 presidential election was contested by four teams of candidates. After its 15th Party Congress in August 1995, the ruling KMT nominated incumbent president Lee Teng-hui, who was indirectly elected by the National Assembly in 1990. Lee chose premier Lien Chan as his running mate. The Lee-Lien team campaigned on the KMT's record of economic prosperity, social stability, and political reform. They emphasised their experience and achievements in creating Taiwan's 'economic miracle' and 'quiet revolution of democracy' (Hood, 1997). The opposition DPP nominated Peng Ming-min, former professor of international law and a pioneer of the Taiwanese independence movement, after a competitive two-stage process within the party. His running mate was Hsieh Chang-ting, a prominent DPP member of the Legislative Yuan. The Peng-Hsieh team centred their campaign on attacking the KMT's past abuses and calling for Taiwan to emerge from the shadow of mainland China. Besides, there were two other tickets entering the race via petition. Lin Yang-kang and his running mate Hau Pei-tsun decided to stand as a team of independent candidates. Both were vice-chairmen of the KMT and prominent leaders of its

non-mainstream faction, but their KMT membership was suspended as punishment for helping NP candidates in the 1995 Legislative Yuan elections and for running against Lee and Lien. As a vice-presidential candidate, Hau was closely associated with Taiwan's authoritarian past, but Lin-Hau's ticket received the endorsement of the NP, which did not nominate any candidate for the presidency. Lin and Hau were personally opposed to Lee and attacked the KMT under his leadership for being corrupt. Their campaign focused on clean politics and cross-strait peace. The other independent team was Chen Li-an and his running mate Wang Ching-feng. Chen was a former member of the KMT and President of the Control Yuan, an organisation similar to the Parliamentary Ombudsman in the Scandinavian countries. Chen resigned from the presidency of the Control Yuan and his membership in the KMT and announced his intention to run for the presidency. The son of the late vice-president, Chen Cheng, and a devout Buddhist, Chen was regarded as an honest public figure and had strong connections with some influential Buddhist organisations. His running mate, a member of the Control Yuan, was the only female candidate in the race and both campaigned predominantly on personal characteristics, spiritual renewal, government integrity, environmental protection and good working relations with the PRC (Bellows, 1996; Hsieh and Niou, 1996a; Cheng, 1997).

Nevertheless, the 1996 presidential election was dominated by the threat of aggression from mainland China. As far back as the eve of the KMT's presidential-nominating congress in late August 1995, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched missile tests near a Taiwanese-controlled offshore island with the aim of influencing Lee Teng-hui's nomination. Military threats and exercises continued to the run-up to the Legislative Yuan elections in December 1995. As the presidential election neared, the tensions across the Taiwan Straits were more serious because of the PRC's sabre-rattling. By February 1996, mainland authorities announced their intention to hold war games in waters off the northern and southern coasts of Taiwan. Beijing renewed its willingness to take Taiwan by force if a candidate in favour of independence won the election and attempted to make Taiwan an independent

republic. Therefore, the crisis in the Straits was openly debated in the presidential race. The issues of Taiwan's national identity and its relations with mainland China permeated the campaign. Beijing's propaganda machine also focused severe criticism on President Lee because of his alleged pursuit of Taiwanese independence by stealth ever since his efforts to earn a seat in the UN, his pragmatic diplomacy, and his visit to Cornell University in June 1995 (see p.1-24). Lee's opponents attacked his foreign and mainland policies. Lin and Hau blamed him for taking the country to the brink of war. Chen made similar accusations. Peng suggested that Taiwan stand firm and press for a future break with mainland China. On the other hand, Lee argued that war across the Straits was unlikely and China's frustration was with Taiwan's democratisation, not with him personally. As observed by Hood (1997), most Taiwanese voters agreed with Lee's position because Taiwanese democratisation created a political culture that distinguished it from China. Despite Lee's independent diplomatic efforts that had aggravated the situation, no amount of bargaining or compromise could change the differences apparent between the two political entities across the Straits. Indeed, one of the reasons why the PRC leadership was so determined to disrupt the presidential election was because 'a politically free and economically prosperous Taiwan is a constant reminder to Beijing's leaders of their shortfalls and the reforms they may be compelled to adopt' (Bellows, 1996: 236). Different from the indirect election by the National Assembly, which on some pretext included participation of mainland representatives, a direct presidential election by the people in Taiwan alone would create a presidency whose legitimacy came totally from Taiwan with no accountability to the Chinese mainland. This, in Beijing's view, was equal to Taiwan's move for independence (Rigger, 1999).

Moreover, with the escalation of the cross-strait crisis, discussions surrounding the issue of national identity were also made in the campaign. The four candidates differed in their position on this issue. The DPP's Peng ran his campaign on one theme: fully-fledged independence for Taiwan though in face of China's military threats and for gaining voters' support, he did try to modify his independence position by stating that he would not declare

Taiwanese independence if elected because Taiwan had been a *de facto* independent nation for more than four decades. On the other hand, Lin leant towards the peaceful reunification with China. President Lee was somewhere in the middle. Lee maintained that Taiwan was *de facto* independent of the Mainland. At the same time he supported the eventual reunification with China, but made it clear that it was a long-term goal. Chen, the least concerned with the missile crisis, insisted that the issue of national identity should be temporarily left aside. Nevertheless, he opposed Taiwanese independence and supported better relations with China. Basically, he too was seen as pro-reunification (Hsieh and Niou, 1996a).

Despite facing a very split vote due to the competition of two ex-KMT rivals, Lee was the front-runner in the four-way race from the beginning according to opinion polls released by various organisations during the campaign. The key question was whether he could capture a clear majority for a mandate. As the PLA prepared for live-ammunition manoeuvres and conducted missile tests, the 14 million voters in Taiwan went to the polls and made their choice in the first-ever popular presidential election. On 23 March 1996, with a 76.04% turnout, Taiwanese voters elected Lee Teng-hui as President and Lien Chan as Vice-President. The Lee-Lien team captured 54% of the popular vote in a four-candidate race. The Peng-Hsieh's ticket was a distant second with 21.13% of the vote, followed by Lin-Hau's 14.9%. Chen-Wang finished last with just 9.98% (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

Results of the 1996 Election for President and Vice President

| Team | Total Votes | % of Vote | Party |
|------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Chen-Wang | 1,074,044 | 9.98 | Independent |
| Lee-Lien | 5,813,699 | 54.00 | KMT |
| Lin-Hau | 1,603,790 | 14.90 | Independent* |
| Peng-Hsieh | 2,274,586 | 21.13 | DPP |

*Endorsed by the New Party (NP)

Source: Central Election Commission, Government Information Office, March 25, 1996

## 1.5 Relations across the Taiwan Straits

As discussed above, issues of Taiwanese relations with China such as national identity and the level of the threat from Beijing structured the campaign agenda. It is necessary to offer a brief introduction of relations between Taiwan and China to better understand the root causes of the Taiwan Straits crisis.

Since the end of China's civil war in 1949, each side of the Taiwan Straits had been ruled by one of the two main parties – the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on the Mainland and the Kuomintang (KMT) in Taiwan. Both claimed to represent China's legitimate national government and cross-strait relations had been in a state of high tension, often characterised as an extension of the Chinese civil war. In 1958, China launched an extensive artillery barrage against Quemoy and Matsu, two small islands controlled by Taiwan, but close to the Mainland. Although Taiwanese forces withstood the attack, the PLA had continued to bombard these two islands until 1979. In 1971, the ROC on Taiwan lost its membership in the UN to Communist China; in 1979, the US broke off formal relations with the ROC in deference to the PRC. Since then, China has made efforts to internationally isolate Taiwan and any real movement in the relationship between the two sides was virtually impossible. It was not until the last ten years, through trade, investment, tourism, and semi-official contacts, that the atmosphere of reconciliation between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland has developed.

In the 1980s, Taiwan's 'three nos' policy – no official contacts, no negotiations, no compromise – was dictated in response to Beijing's call for 'three exchanges' – post, trade, air and shipping services. However, with Taiwan's democratisation came the transformation of its attitudes towards relations with China. The KMT government came under growing pressure to loosen control over civilian and economic contacts with China, thus bringing about a more pragmatic relationship with the Mainland. In late 1987, the KMT allowed Taiwanese residents to travel to mainland China through a third country or area. At the same time, indirect trade and economic relations with the PRC were also liberalised. In 1990, mainland

residents were also allowed to visit Taiwan, though on a restricted basis. In 1992, the government passed the 'Statute Governing Relations between People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area', thus greatly facilitating cultural exchanges between the two. The significant increase in economic, social and cultural exchanges across the Straits was obvious. For example, the number of Taiwanese residents travelling to China totalled more than 8.35 million between 1987 and December 1995 (GIO, 1997a). Trade between Taiwan and the Mainland was estimated at US$1.5 billion in 1987. It increased more than ten times and amounted to US$22.5 billion by 1995. Taiwan's bilateral trade surplus with mainland China skyrocketed from US$7.04 billion in 1990 to US$30.1 billion in 1995. Taiwan ranked second after Japan as mainland China's major supplier (MAC, 1997). The growing economic bonds between Taiwan and mainland China have been the most important factor in reducing the cross-strait tension.

As a result of growing developments in cross-strait relations, both sides felt the need to better manage bilateral exchanges. On Taiwan's side, President Lee set up the National Unification Council (NUC) in October 1990 to deliberate and formulate Taiwan's policy guidelines for medium- to long-term development of cross-strait relations (Leng, 1996). The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) was established the same month to direct Cabinet-level planning, evaluation, coordination, and implementation of policy for managing Taiwan's burgeoning cross-strait investments. Because the KMT still held to its policy of no official contacts with the Mainland, the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), a non-governmental organisation in charge of practical issues arising from cross-strait relations and serving as a communication channel across the Taiwan Straits, was also founded in November 1990. On the Mainland, a counterpart organisation to SEF, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) was set up in November 1991 (GIO, 1995). While the function of the SEF was to promote cross-strait contacts and exchanges, ARATS was designed to encourage the 'three direct links' between Taiwan and mainland China and to 'carry out the peaceful reunification task on the basis of "one country, two systems"' (Cabestan, 1996: 1267). Since 1992, SEF

and ARATS have engaged in attempt to establish a cooperative, or at least working, relationship to govern exchanges across the Straits. High-level talks between SEF and ARATS have been held on a number of occasions. The most noted was the April 1993 meeting in Singapore between Koo Chen-fu and Wang Tao-han, the Chairmen of SEF and ARATS respectively. The Koo-Wang talks were the highest level of 'non-official' contact between the two sides in over four decades. A number of joint agreements relating to document verification and registered post were signed, but the negotiation of touchy issues such as the interpretation of the 'one China' concept, namely the legal jurisdiction of the two governments, met with many difficulties. The causes of the failure to reach agreements lay in 'Beijing's treatment of the Republic of China as a local government and rejection of the ROC's right of judicial jurisdiction' (Wu, 1995: 94).

In 1994, both sides agreed in principle that three main issues under discussion – the resolution of fishing disputes, the repatriation of illegal immigrants and the return of hijackers – should be solved in the next round of the meeting in July 1995, despite the Qiandao lake boating incident which slowed down the negotiation process.[2] However, improved Taiwan-Mainland relations deteriorated dramatically and reached crisis point again due to the PRC's missile-firing exercises in the summer of 1995 after President Lee's trip to the United States (Tien, 1996a).

Ever since President Jimmy Carter recognised Beijing in 1979 as the legitimate government of China, Taiwanese leaders have not been permitted to visit the United States. Recognising Taiwan's progress in democratisation, the US government in May 1995 issued a visa to President Lee to visit his *alma mater* Cornell University. Relations between Taipei and Beijing were soured in June when President Lee made a landmark trip to the United States that

---

[2]. The Qiandao lake boat incident happened in March 1994, in which 24 Taiwanese tourists were slaughtered, probably by demobilised soldiers at a Zhejiang beauty spot. Because of this incident, talks between SEF and ARATS were suspended.

China saw as a violation of an American pledge not to permit visits by senior Taiwanese leaders. In retaliation, Beijing abruptly postponed the second round of the Koo-Wang talks due to be held with Taiwan in July. Since then, all established channels of semi-official contact and negotiation have been cut off by Beijing. Between July and November 1995, the PLA conducted four military exercises in the Taiwan Straits, including two rounds of missile testing near the islands. Beijing also launched vicious personal attacks on President Lee for his potential intent to move Taiwan towards independence. By the year's end, cross-strait relations had suffered serious political setbacks (Tien, 1996a). Confrontation had dominated negotiations between the two sides.

Nevertheless, cross-strait tensions did not ease. Just before the presidential election in March 1996, Beijing substantially increased its military pressure on Taiwan in an attempt to influence the result of the presidential election and to force Taipei to adopt a more conciliatory mainland policy. From 8-28 March, the PRC again conducted three military exercises and missile tests off Taiwan's shores to intimidate Taiwanese voters. It was the most extensive military exercise conducted in forty years. Taiwan was on high alert and declared that it had made all necessary preparations to handle 'the communist invasion', thus leading to the first military confrontation between the two sides since 1979. At the height of the tensions, the US dispatched two aircraft carriers the U.S.S. *Nimitz* and *Independence* to the proximity of the Taiwan Straits to monitor the situation, demonstrating its willingness to risk war with China to defend the principle that the Taiwanese-Chinese dispute should be peacefully resolved without resorting to force. The crisis made it clear that cross-strait relations were not simply about trade, investment and tourism, but also about war and peace (Lee, 1999). However, after the presidential election, China ended its military exercises and ceased criticising Lee. Both sides expressed a willingness to reconcile with each other. The cross-strait crisis temporarily ended with an unspoken agreement, but the disputes remained unsettled. It was expected that some sort of rapprochement in relations could be built up again.

To a large extent, the 1995-6 crisis resulted from conflicts of the concept of 'one China' between the two sides. Given that Taiwan's 1996 presidential election was taken as the first popular election of a president in Chinese history, it did have implications for the legitimacy of the Taipei regime. Although Taipei had renounced its legitimate claim over the Mainland in 1991, Beijing, arguing that it was the only legitimate government representative of China, had never changed its sovereignty claim over Taiwan.

Both Beijing and Taipei insist that there is only one China. However, they differ on how to interpret the concept and how to realise reunification. While Beijing considers one China to be the PRC, Taipei regards it as the ROC, or alternatively a reunified China based on a negotiated settlement in the future. After adopting the flexible middle-of-the-road policy on reunification under President Lee's leadership, Taipei maintains that one China should refer to the country formed once Taiwan and the Mainland reunite, as there have been two political entities in China since 1949.

On one hand, after its normalisation of diplomatic relations with the US, Beijing decided to change its policy towards Taiwan from Mao Tse-tung's 'liberating Taiwan by military force' to 'peaceful reunification' under the 'one country, two systems' formula initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s and originally created for use in Hong Kong. According to Deng's proposal, the PRC has sovereignty over Taiwan because the PRC is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China and Taiwan is merely a province. While Taiwan as a 'special administrative area' of China will be allowed to enjoy some degree of autonomy in domestic affairs such as keeping its current political, social and economic systems as well as its armed forces, it can only participate in the international arena as a local government, so it will have no diplomatic relations abroad. Beijing strongly opposes 'two Chinas', 'one China, one Taiwan', 'Taiwanese independence', 'one country, two governments' or Taipei's 'flexible diplomacy'. The PRC does all it can to veto Taiwanese participation as a fully-fledged political entity in any international organisations and prevents it from establishing diplomatic

or official relations with any nations that have formal diplomatic ties with Beijing. At the same time, although 'peaceful means' have been adopted for reunification, Beijing has not ruled out the use of military force if Taiwan declares independence, obtains nuclear weapons, suffers from domestic insurrection, is subjected to foreign military intervention or delays reunification beyond Beijing's ability to be patient (Ma, 1993). Deng's proposal failed to elicit a positive response from Taipei.

In January 1995, consistent with Deng's formula in principle, the PRC General Secretary Jiang Zeming issued an eight-point proposal pertaining to the development of cross-strait relations and the promotion of China's reunification. Jiang's proposal was widely considered synonymous with the idea that 'Chinese should not fight Chinese' and was promptly labelled *conciliatory*. The proposal called for leaders on both sides to meet and suggested negotiations to end hostilities across the Straits. Jiang's peace overture represented another wave of Beijing's Taiwan policy, a move away from the hawkish inclination popular among the PRC's military brass and civilian conservatives (Tien, 1996a).

On the other hand, before 1987 Taiwan had just one single mainland policy – the final reunification of the Chinese nation under 'the Three Principles of the People', namely principles of freedom, democracy, and equal prosperity. However, from the beginning of the 1990s with the emergence of democratic reforms and the ensuing *Taiwanisation* of the power structure, the issue surrounding Taiwan's political status as a province of China or an independent republic has become a principal problem for politicians in Taiwan and challenged cross-strait relations. In May 1991, President Lee of the ruling KMT government ended a 43-year emergency 'Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion' and stopped all hostile actions against the PRC, thus technically ending four decades of unwaged 'civil war' against the Mainland. It also renounced its claim of being the only legitimate government representing China and having jurisdiction over mainland China. Instead, the government formally acknowledged the post-war political division between Taiwan and

mainland China. Although still encouraging the expansion of trade and investment on the Mainland and cultural interchange across the Taiwan Straits, and asserting a long-term goal of reunification with the Chinese mainland, the ruling KMT government began to manoeuvre into becoming the representative of all people on Taiwan. Therefore, a more flexible principle of reunification for Taiwan's own interests was adopted in regard to cross-strait relations and Taiwan's international status. In theory, the KMT government has not given up the concept of one China and avoids outright support for independence, but in practice it has adopted the policy of 'placing Taiwan first' (Lo, 1994). In dealing with cross-strait relations, President Lee tried to engage the PRC in a state of coexistence and to induce Beijing to accept a divided-nation model as exemplified by divided Germany before 1990 (Chu, 1999). Taipei's proposal of 'one country, two governments' or 'one country, two political entities' is in response to Beijing's position on 'one country, two systems', which Taipei considered a measure to relegate Taiwan to the status of a local government and an excuse to eventually annex Taiwan (Chen, 1996).

Taipei's new approach to the Mainland is to normalise cross-strait relations by making the PRC recognise Taiwan as a political equal. Three major statements present Taiwan's policy on cross-strait relations, including 'the 1991 Guidelines for National Reunification', 'the 1994 White Paper', and President Lee's six-point speech in 1995 in response to Jiang's eight-point proposal. The 1991 Guidelines proposed a three-phase policy development to envisage progress towards peaceful reunification between Taiwan and mainland China. It specifically stipulated three preconditions, including renouncing the use of force against Taiwan, recognising Taiwan as a political entity on an equal footing, and allowing Taiwan to have reasonable space for international participation and for lifting the ban on establishing direct trade and direct air and sea links with mainland China (Ma, 1993; Chu, 1999). The 1994 White Paper placed emphasis on the interests of Taiwan and the necessity, before the reunification of Taiwan and the Mainland, of a gradual normalisation of the two Chinese entities, following a formula similar to the German model. It is considered a quiet statement

that Taiwan renounces the 'three nos' policy proposed in the 1980s (Cabestan, 1996). President Lee's six-point speech in 1995 reiterated Taipei's insistence that a condition of achieving national unification was to accept the reality that Taiwan and mainland China have been governed by two different political entities since 1949 (Tien, 1996a).

While seeking equal political recognition from the PRC, Taipei also endeavours to tear down its international isolation. In the international arena, the PRC has long attempted to isolate Taiwan by manoeuvring to severing its official ties with other sovereign countries and denying its participation in any important international organisations. To raise its international status and regain international recognition as a political entity separate from the PRC, Taiwan has adopted a policy of 'pragmatic diplomacy', including applying for re-entry to the UN and for membership in other international organisations, conducting unofficial state visits, and seeking dual recognition. Nevertheless, Beijing regards Taiwan's efforts to expand its international space as manufacturing 'two Chinas' or 'one China and one Taiwan'.

The two sides across the Straits have not reached a consensus regarding the operational definition of 'one China'. As far as Beijing is concerned, since October 1971 the international community has recognised that there is only one China, Taiwan is part of China, and the PRC is the only legitimate government for all China. Under this 'one China' framework, Taiwan is only a local government under the PRC and therefore cannot be allowed to create 'two Chinas' in the international arena. However, Taipei holds a different view on the concept by maintaining that China has already been divided into two separate political entities – Taiwan and the Mainland – and that the ROC on Taiwan is an independent sovereign state with the right to pursue international recognition. A clear statement was made by Hu (1993) expounding the fact that China was divided into two under the jurisdiction of two sovereign states. He said,

> We recognised that the communist authorities were a political entity. We accepted the fact that the nation was divided, and that, prior to the unification of China, both the ROC and the Chinese communists exercise political authority in the areas under their de facto control. Each is entitled to represent the residents of the territory under its de facto control and to participate in the activities of the international community.
>
> (cited in Rigger, 1999:154)

From Taipei's perspective, a divided-nation model similar to that of Germany before 1990 can reflect the reality across the Taiwan Straits. Arguing against the PRC's 'one China' formula, President Lee pointed out that 'one China is a US policy. Before national reunification, we will never accept a "one China" policy; one China is a future goal and only after reunification between the two separate sovereign states in Taiwan and the Mainland will there be one China. Taiwan and China are currently ruled separately' (The *United Daily News*, 1994: 1-2). Given the divergence in the definition of *'one China'*, Chen (1996) concluded that the root cause of the cross-strait disputes was *one China* versus *two Chinas*.

## 1.6 The Media Systems in Taiwan

Cheng (1988) pointed out that there are five types of media systems in the world, including the private sector system, the public system, the political party system, the state system, and the mixed system. In Taiwan the print media can be classified as the mixed system, with most newspapers being private and some being run by the state and the ruling KMT. On the other hand, before the arrival of cable television stations and the establishment of the fourth national wireless television, three television networks were run by the state and the KMT. Since newspapers and television are the main mass media most often used by the public for political information in Taiwan, the next section will give a brief account of the history and development of Taiwanese newspapers and television industry.

## 1.6.1 Newspapers

Prior to 1987, the constitutional guarantees of freedom of both speech and press were virtually impossible because the government had several means at its disposal to control the press. Among these measures were martial law and the 'Temporary Provisions'. In order to prevent press ownership from falling into the hands of KMT challengers, government authorities imposed a press ban in 1951 to take tight control of registration of new press licences during the martial-law period. This press ban, which froze the total number of daily newspapers in Taiwan at 31 between 1951 and 1987, has seriously thwarted the development of Taiwanese newspapers for forty years (Chen and Chu, 1987). All of these 31 dailies were initially restricted to six pages per issue in 1951 and then gradually increased to twelve pages per issue in 1974 (Berman, 1992). Half published by what Lee (1993: 2) called the 'triple alliance' of the KMT, the government, and the military, most of the major newspapers were aligned with the KMT government. Only a few were financially self-sufficient, but most relied on state subsidies. None were allowed to criticise government policies or politicians. In fact the press ban, which protected the existing news organisations from increased competition, made most of the publishers less willing to challenge the existing order (Goldstein, 1985). Comparing the press editorials in Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, Nam (1971) ranked Taiwan lowest in terms of freedom of the press.

The KMT's leading mouthpiece the *Central Daily News*, the government-owned *Taiwan Hsin Sheng News*, and the military-run *Youth Daily News* and *Taiwan Daily News* formed the core of the 'official press', which accounted for 80% of newspaper circulation in Taiwan (Lee, 1993) between 1949 and the early 1970s with the provision of government advertising and grants. However, suffering from tightened control and facing strong competition from the emerging commercial 'Big Two', the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*, these official newspapers gradually declined in importance. Apart from owning a significant number of official press, the KMT government also tactically controlled the privately owned newspapers by ensuring

that they remained in the hands of its loyal supporters. Chief among them were the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*. Started in the early 1950s by two Mainlanders politically affiliated with the KMT, these two private commercial dailies came to challenge the dominance of the official press and became the two largest newspapers with a circulation of more than one million copies each in the early 1980s. Known as the 'Big Two', the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* accounted for about two-thirds of Taiwan's total circulation of 3.5 million (Goldstein, 1985). The owners of these two newspaper conglomerates were recruited to serve as members of the KMT's standing committee, the most powerful decision-making body in the ruling party. The *China Times* was generally considered somewhat more liberal than the *United Daily News* though both were editorially pro-government (Goldstein, 1985; Berman, 1992; Lee, 1993). In addition, a group of other privately owned commercial newspapers, especially those owned and run by native Taiwanese, struggled for survival in the limited leftover space with small circulation until 1988. These newspapers kept a distance from the ruling KMT and displayed diversity of editorial position. For example, the *Independence Evening Post* and the *People's Daily News* were known for a relatively critical stance on politically sensitive issues (Berman, 1992). The *Independence Evening Post* had, in the words of Goldstein (1985: 28), 'the most independent and critical editorial stand of all' despite the government's efforts to enforce conformity.

Under the rules of martial law, the press was subjected to the domination of KMT ideology and pervasive government control (Lee, 1993). The press played a major role in consolidating the power and legitimacy of the ruling KMT in the sense that it was considered a political educator to promote the solidarity of the people and to strengthen the rule of law in accordance with the notion of Chinese culture and the ideology of anti-Communism (Chen, 1991). As pointed out by Lee (1993: 3):

The KMT not only had to point the "gun barrel" to fend off an external Communist menace and to put down internal rebellion; it had to control the "ink barrel" as well, in order to prevail on the public to accept autocracy either as a natural way of life or as a necessary price to pay to prevent Communism.

On the other hand, the 'Temporary Provisions', which were appended to the constitution in 1948 to give the president extra-constitutional powers to deal with the Communist threat, have seriously limited freedom of press and speech. In particular, a complicated web of regulations were installed to prohibit the press from supporting Communism, advocating Taiwan's secession from China, or attacking the KMT and the Chiang family (Berman, 1992). For example, open discussion of Taiwanese independence was a crime of sedition and so was the support of the Communist cause by media activity. However, 1987 saw unprecedented developments in Taiwan. The 38-year martial law ended, and several rival political parties formed to break the ruling KMT's monopoly of power (Metzger and Myers, 1990). The momentum for political liberalisation resulted in press freedom. On 1 January 1988, the government lifted the ban on newspaper registration, and the page limit was abolished. The print media were now perceived as relatively free of government surveillance and control (Gunther, Hong, and Rodriquez, 1994).

The lifting of the long-standing press ban also introduced an era of intense competition over market share in the newspaper industry. The fierce competition among newspapers had brought about a chaotic market (Heuvel and Dennis, 1993). As a result of free growth in the newspaper industry after the demise of the ban, the total number of newspapers reached 357 by December 1995, most of which were privately owned (GIO, 1995). The effects of competitive market were particularly unfavourable to the radically partisan newspapers targeting marginal readers. For example, the *Capital Morning Post*, known for its radical editorial stance in favour of the opposition DPP, closed down because it was unattractive to general readers and unable to keep up with the intensified competition. The official press also suffered further decline in the highly competitive market after the end of the press ban despite

their efforts to be more market-oriented (Wei, 1996). Facing the competitive pressure from new titles after 1988, the 'Big Two', the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*, also tried to maintain their dominance by adopting a strategy of 'de-emphasising political and ideological treatment on news' to attract 'cross-party, cross-ethnic group and cross-region readers' (Wei, 1996: 123). These two newspaper giants continued to maintain their supremacy in the newspaper market by accounting for more than 50% of all the newspapers sold in Taiwan (Rampal, 1994a). The only newspaper able to threaten the Big Two's market supremacy was the *Liberty Times*, a privately owned tiny and insignificant paper before 1988 but which expanded into the third-largest paper in Taiwan (Tseng, 1993) with its 'Taiwan first' editorial policy and marketing strategy targeting large segments of native-born Taiwanese readers. As a self-designated defender of local Taiwanese interests, the *Liberty Times* fully supported President Lee, ruthlessly criticised his Mainlander opponents during the KMT leadership fights, and regularly assailed the Big Two's Chinese nationalism (Lee, 2000). The *Liberty Times* launched a number of costly promotions, including a NT$120 million promotion campaign offering gold bars and luxurious cars like Mercedes-Benzes, and the 1994 NT$500 million giveaway with offers of lavish gifts like a suburban home (Teng, 1997). A series of marketing campaigns had proven successful in increasing its circulation.

On the other hand, as noted by Kuo (1993) and Rampal (1994b), the most significant feature in the press was the unprecedented increase in press freedom. Ongoing political liberalisation and democratic reforms had a far-reaching impact on the press. In particular, the abolition of the 'Temporary Provisions' regulations on 1 May 1991 enabled the press to increasingly play the watchdog role. The relationship between the media and the government, as observed by Gunther, Hong and Rodriquez (1994), had changed from cooperative to even adversarial. Besides, the restoration of constitutional guarantees of press freedom brought about growing liberalisation in report and press commentary. Newspapers manifested diversity and aggressiveness as never before. Apart from reporting views and interests in society, newspapers had more editorial independence covering sensitive subjects that were considered

taboo during the martial-law period, such as the independence of Taiwan, opposition party politics, and the Taiwanese-Chinese relationship (Rampal, 1994a).

The vigour and dynamics of a press system in transition can also be found in press partisanship that has characterised the Taiwanese press (Heuvel and Dennis, 1993). For example, the *United Daily News* took sides with the KMT conservative wing (non-mainstream faction), supporting the policy of eventual reunification with mainland China. By contrast, the *China Times* leant towards the KMT liberal wing (mainstream faction) and generally took a more moderate position on the opposition proposals for an independent Taiwan. Nonetheless, both papers remained affiliated to the KMT (Berman, 1992; Lee, 1993). The *Liberty Times* was considered pro-DPP and also pro-mainstream faction in the KMT. The *Independent Evening Post*, showing favouritism for the DPP, was perceived as an opposition newspaper with DPP leanings. The *Taiwan Times* was closely associated with the opposition DPP, but took a more moderate political stance. The *People's Daily News* was also more sympathetic to the DPP viewpoints (Rampal, 1994a).

## 1.6.2 Television

The development of Taiwanese television stations was based heavily on political considerations. The first commercial television was inaugurated coinciding with the peak of American expansionism. Television was a timely showcase of Taiwan's commitment to a private, free-enterprise system different from Communist China's command economy. From the outset, Taiwanese television was built around the bureaucratic-business complex, resulting in a commercial model that grew out of the government-business alliance and the reality of oligopolistic competition (Lee, 1980). As a product of the hybrid of authoritarian state and capitalist society, on one hand, television was an official mouthpiece for the state; on the other hand, it was run as a profitable enterprise.

To fulfil this showcase mission, three television networks were established in Taiwan, including Taiwan Television Enterprise (TTV), China Television Company (CTV), and Chinese Television Service (CTS). The TTV, the oldest TV station running since 1962, has been controlled primarily by the Taiwan Provincial Government (48.95%). The CTV, established in 1968, is held in large part by the KMT (60.2%) and thoroughly censored by the government. The CTS was set up in 1971, 76.06% of whose interests are being controlled by the Ministry of National Defence and three military affiliate enterprises, and 10.39% controlled by the Ministry of Education (Tien, 1989; Wang, 1993a). The CTS was designed to promote social and military education and to initiate 'total cultural warfare' (Wang, 1993a: 98), but became an unashamedly commercial operation as soon as it went on the air. Although the television industry was not initially created in pursuit of profit, the three television stations have benefited from Taiwan's successful capitalist economy and made lucrative profits from advertising revenue.

The government's strict control over the three television stations is reinforced by the fact that the general managers of TTV, CTV, and CTS are all political appointees, who are political functionaries bearing conspicuous military or government credentials and loyal to official ideology (Wang, 1993a). Of the thirteen general managers appointed to head the three stations, six were ex-military men, including aides to late President Chiang Ching-kuo (Cheng, 1988). Besides, the boards of these three television networks comprise mainly a 'club of retired high-ranking KMT officials and generals of the Ministry of National Defence' (Wang, 1993b: 108). Berman (1992) noted that critics had accused the directors of the three networks of being appointed by the government without the broadcasting expertise needed to effectively manage a television station.

During the martial-law years, Taiwan's media were under strict surveillance of the tight-knit network of the Government Information Office, the KMT's Cultural Work Committee, and the Taiwan Garrison Command. The Government Information Office was in charge of regulating

broadcast licence and content; the KMT's Cultural Work Committee and the Taiwan Garrison Command were major censors behind the scene. As a result, the media, particularly television, were politically 'guided' on what to cover and how in order to meet the objectives of the KMT regime, defined as the economic and political development of Taiwan and the reunification of Taiwan with mainland China (Rawnsley and Rawnsley, 1998). Monopolised by the KMT, the three television stations became the state's ideological apparatus. They were unable to scrutinise the performance of the government and challenge the legitimacy of its platform. Not surprisingly, the content of news bulletins on the three networks usually faithfully toed the KMT line on controversial issues and disparaged dissenting views. The networks have long been criticised for being the mouthpieces of the KMT government, serving the specific political ends. The news departments of the three stations were characterised as 'the communication bureau of the Executive Yuan (the Premier's Office)' and television reporters described themselves as 'mouthless' and 'gutless' (Global View, 1987). An independent and objective Fourth Estate did not exist in Taiwan given such strict and penetrative political supervision over the television networks.

On the other hand, to be of political service, television had to adopt the interpretations of Chinese nationalism identity consistent with KMT ideology. As a mass medium, television had to appeal to local Taiwanese tastes, but as an ideological instrument, it had to consciously suppress cultural and linguistic localism in order to promote the grand preconceived goal of a Chinese ideology (Lee, 1980; Lee, 1992). For example, programming in regional dialects such as Taiwanese and Hakka has been curtailed to facilitate the standardisation of the official Mandarin, which was aimed at the national integration of China. Taiwanese dialect programming was considered associated with the illegal independence movement and therefore was discouraged. The suppression of cultural and linguistic localism has caused conflict between people speaking different dialects and developed into a focal point of relentless protests (Lee, 2000).

The three state-controlled television networks not only remained pro-government in their coverage of news and public affairs during the martial-law years but also continued to derogate the opposition parties and social protest movements even after the lifting of martial law. Unable to keep pace with the radical social and political changes in the late 1980s and 1990s, three television stations continued to present conservative and uncritical programmes to protect their political and commercial interests, especially during elections (Kuo, 1990; Chang, 1995). Social movement groups were often denigrated as a threat to social stability (Hsueh, 1988). Television news portrayed a very limited view of the society, consisting primarily of official rituals (Lo, Cheng, and Lee, 1994). Even in the post-martial law period, the three state-owned television stations still showed evident bias in favour of the ruling party in their news coverage of election campaigns (Lo and Chung, 1992; King, 1995). It was difficult for opposition politicians to obtain a fair share of time on television since the imbalance in political news coverage was rampant on all three channels. As pointed out by Lee (1992), little change in the way of television content and ideology was seen before and after the abolition of martial law.

Any opposition access to the mass media, especially television, was denied during its long struggle for political power. The opposition often criticised the media for the biased news coverage and called for media democratisation as a necessary condition for the democratisation of Taiwanese society. To subvert the official ideology and find a propaganda outlet, the opposition had to develop an alternative to the KMT-dominated media to get its messages across to the electorate. Dissatisfied with the KMT's control of all three television stations, in 1990 the opposition DPP established its first 'Democracy Television Station', part of the independently operated clandestine broadcasting station commonly known as the 'fourth channel', to further its own political ideas and cultural identity. Since the mid-1980s, the cable stations of the 'fourth channel' have appeared and grown rapidly during the 1990s as the political liberalisation and the strength of the opposition movement intensified. However, it was not until July 1993 when the 'Cable Television Law' was enacted that the cable television

industry was legal (Lee, 1992; Chin, 1997).

Furthermore, the liberalisation of state control over the media became apparent when in May 1993 the government announced that it would end a 22-year-old ban on the establishment of new television stations. In June 1995, the government sanctioned the establishment of a fourth national wireless television station, the Formosa Television Corporation (FTC), which went on the air in June 1997. Located in Kaohsiung and affiliated with the opposition DPP, FTC is Taiwan's first fully privatised television network (GIO, 1997b).

# Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The basic ideas of agenda-setting role of the news media can trace its roots to Walter Lippmann's classic 1922 book, *Public Opinion*, where a chapter was entitled *'The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads'*. He argued that the news media are a primary source of the pictures in our heads; that is to say the mass media are the principal link between events that happen in the larger external world beyond our physical reach and the images of these events in our minds. Lippmann's notion of the role of the mass media in shaping public opinion eventually initiated the research tradition on the agenda-setting model of the media.

Forty years after the publication of *Public Opinion*, the metaphor of agenda-setting was further enhanced by Bernard Cohen (1963), who noted that 'the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about' (p. 13). However, it was not until Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's *Chapel Hill Study* (1972) on the 1968 US presidential election that the concept of the agenda-setting function of the news media was put to an empirical test, hence leading to an entirely new research paradigm.

Since its conceptualisation more than 30 years ago, research on the agenda-setting model has been robust. As identified by Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman (1993), there were more than 200 articles about the agenda-setting model in social science literature since the publication of McCombs and Shaw's original work in 1972. The crucial contribution of McCombs and Shaw's research, according to Dearing and Rogers (1996: 7) was 'in clearly laying out the agenda-setting hypothesis, in calling the media-public agenda-setting relationship "agenda-setting", in suggesting a paradigm for further research, and in training many excellent students who went on to carry out agenda-setting research of their own'.

## 2.1 Development of the Agenda-setting Concept

Rogers and Dearing (1988) define *agenda-setting* as 'a process through which the mass media communicate the relative importance of various issues and events to the public' (p. 556). The more importance the media place on an issue or event, the more importance the consuming public will attach to it. In other words, agenda-setting asserts that the mass media can transfer the salience of issues on their news agenda to the public agenda. Thus, agenda-setting, claimed by McCombs (1996), is a theory about the transfer of salience of the elements in the mass media's pictures of the world to the elements of the pictures in audience's heads. At the heart of the agenda-setting model is a causal assertion that the very elements emphasised in the news media will be perceived as important by the public and will, over time, become the priority issues on the public agenda.

The two key variables that define the basic concept of agenda-setting research are *media agenda* and *public agenda*. However, what is an agenda? In the words of Rogers and Dearing (1988: 565), an agenda is 'a list of issues and events that are viewed at a point in time as ranked in a hierarchy of importance'. 'Events' are defined as 'discrete happenings that are limited by space and time', while 'issues' are defined as 'involving cumulative news coverage of a series of related events that fit together in a broad category' (Shaw 1977, cited in Rogers and Dearing, 1988: 566). More specifically, an issue is seen as a social problem, often conflictual, which receives mass media news coverage (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Issues 'compete for attention'. Lang and Lang (1981a) argued that the salience of an item on the agenda is 'not just an absolute but to some extent a relative matter' (p.453). Some issues are elevated to prominence on the public or media agendas, yet some are not. Noting that an issue suddenly leaps into prominence, remains prominent for a short time, and then gradually loses the intensity of public attention, Downs (1972) concluded that each issue has its own life-cycle and defined the rise and fall of an issue on the public agenda over time as the

'issue-attention cycle'. In order to gain prominence on the media and public agendas, issues have to compete and the result of this competition for the limited agenda space among issues, as suggested by Zhu (1992), is that agenda-setting can be a 'zero-sum game', in which the rise of one issue is at the expense of another.

In McCombs and Shaw's original study, and in more than 200 publications about agenda-setting that have followed, both the media agenda and the public agenda were composed of 'a set of objects, public issues' (McCombs and Shaw, 1993: 61) competing for attention. Apart from 'a set of objects, public issues', the agenda can consist of a single object, a single issue and attributes of objects such as candidate images and the different facets of public issues. Reviewing the evolution of agenda-setting research, McCombs and Shaw (1993) implied the new research frontier to be *the second dimension of agenda-setting effects*. While the first dimension of agenda-setting focused on the transmission of issue or object salience from the media agenda to the public agenda, the main emphasis of the second dimension of agenda-setting is on the transmission of attribute salience from news media to the public mind. More specifically, each of the objects on the agenda possesses numerous attributes, characteristics, and properties that fill out the picture of each object. The perspectives and frames employed in the news coverage for the selection of attributes can draw public attention to certain attributes and away from others (McCombs, 1996; McCombs and Estrada, 1997). The second-level agenda-setting effects work along two dimensions, including the *substantive* and the *affective*. While the hypothesis of the former is that the attributes of candidates (e.g. descriptions of their personality or their stands on issues) emphasised in the mass media will influence the kinds of characteristics voters think about when they evaluate candidates, the latter dimension hypothesises that candidate attributes presented in positive, negative, or neutral terms in media coverage will affect voters' evaluations of those attributes (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey, 1997). Compared with the majority of studies that focus on the agenda of public issues, only some research explored the second dimension of agenda-setting. These included studies like Cohen,

(1975); Benton and Frazier, (1976); Atwood, Sohn, and Sohn, (1978); Becker and McCombs, (1978); Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal, (1981); Atwater, Salwen, and Anderson, (1985); Salwen, (1988); Iyengar and Kinder, (1987); Takeshita and Mikami, (1995); King, (1997); McCombs *et al.* (1997); Golan and Wanta, (2001). The second dimension of agenda-setting research linking with concepts of framing and priming[1], suggests that the media tell audience how to think about some objects (McCombs, 1996) and broadens our perspectives on the agenda-setting role of the news media.

## 2.2 Key Assumptions of the Agenda-setting Model

Weaver (1984) pointed out two major assumptions underlying media agenda-setting research. First, rather than mirroring reality, the news media filter and shape it. In other words, journalists select what issues and events will be covered and how they will cover them. Second, certain issues stressed most heavily by the media over time lead to increased salience of these issues among the public. That is to say, the more an issue is covered by the news media, the more it is considered important by the public.

A minority of agenda-setting research has focused on the first assumption of an active press as a mirror or a transmission belt that filters and shapes reality. Instead, most empirical studies have pertained to the second assumption. Therefore, the second assumption that what the news media emphasise results in what the public are concerned about has become the major basis for the agenda-setting hypothesis. That is, the fundamental concept of the media agenda-setting model is an assertion that news media with their heavy coverage of certain issues can increase the salience of these issues on the public agenda. According to this concept, mass media, as suggested by Lippmann (1922), link 'the world outside' to 'the pictures in our heads'.

---

[1]. According to Iyengar (1991), 'framing' refers to the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to increase their importance and thus to emphasise a particular cause of some phenomena; 'priming' is defined as the ability of the media agenda to affect the criteria by which audience judge issues or political leaders.

The mass media have the ability to define our world outside, especially the world beyond immediate personal concern and experience, thus playing an important role in shaping people's maps of social and political reality. Lippmann (1922) noted that the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for ordinary people to have direct acquaintance with. Ordinary people are not equipped to deal with everything happening in the world outside. To traverse the world, people must have maps of it in order to reconstruct things on a simple model before they can manage to make sense of it. It is the news media that provide these maps of people's images or pictures of world events. Through their day-by-day selection of news stories and decisions about how to display those stories, editors and news directors provide us with major cues and clues about what are the important topics of the day (McCombs and Gilbert, 1986; McCombs, 1994). As pointed out by Cohen (1963: 13), 'the world will look different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read'. The mass media, therefore, have the ability to structure and organise our world for us.

The mass media are a primary source of the pictures in people's minds about the vast external world of public affairs that is 'out of reach, out of sight, out of mind' (Lippmann, 1922: 29). People have to rely on mass media for important information about the world outside because they have limited opportunities to know what is happening in the vast and complicated external world from firsthand experience. The role of the news media is thus to provide us with views of 'the world outside' from which we form 'pictures in our heads'. Lang and Lang (1981b) argued that people not only learnt about the important issues of the day from the media, but also learnt about campaign issues in a manner parallel to the way in which they were covered and emphasised by the media. As they noted:

> The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images
> of public figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what
> individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about (p.
> 337).

Claiming that the information flowing in interpersonal communication is still largely relayed from and based on mass media, McCombs and Shaw (1972: 185) indicated that 'the media are the major primary sources of national political information; for most, mass media provide the best-and only-easily available approximation of ever-changing political realities'. Mass media thus play a more significant role in the agenda-setting process than other alternatives.

Mass media not only largely determine people's awareness of the world at large, providing the significant elements for their pictures of the world, they also influence the prominence of those elements in the pictures (McCombs and Gilbert, 1986). The core theoretical idea of agenda-setting asserted that people not only obtain information about public affairs and events through their exposure to news media but also perceive the salience of important issues from what was emphasised in news coverage. People tend to perceive as the important issues of the day those themes that the media focus on to construct their personal agenda because they lack immediate personal experience in those issues and they believe the professional judgement of the mass media. As argued by McCombs and Shaw (1972: 176), 'readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position'. Therefore, elements emphasised in the media picture come to be considered important in people's minds (McCombs, 1996; McCombs and Estrada, 1997). This is a reiteration of the causal assertion that mass media set the agenda for each issue in the media to influence the salience of attitudes towards that issue in the public's minds. Moreover, the media are more likely to have a stronger effect in determining the public's agenda than vice-versa 'since the media agenda supposedly is a product of professionalism – often an isolated professionalism little influenced by feedback from the audience' (King, 1994: 27). In other words, it is assumed that the media agenda is an independent variable and the public agenda a dependent variable. Some previous agenda-setting studies, especially those with laboratory experiment, have confirmed this causality (Weaver, 1977; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987).

In terms of the agenda-setting effects, issues emphasised in the news coverage subsequently come to occupy prominent positions in the minds of the audience. Mass media function as both information suppliers and inadvertent agenda-setters, particularly for topics and issues in which people ordinarily lack personal and direct experience. On the other hand, the audience are information consumers, who construct 'the pictures in their heads' to a large extent on the basis of the knowledge and information they obtain from the media. In the pictures obtained from the mass media, there is the priority or relative importance attached to many issues competing for attention. Over time, the priorities of news media, which are expressed through patterns of news coverage, become the priorities of the public. In this sense, the emphases of the news media coverage influence the perceived importance of these topics to the news audience. Therefore, to a considerable degree, it can be argued that the news media set the public agenda (McCombs, 1981; Weaver, 1987b; Protess and McCombs, 1991).

## 2.3 Criticisms of the Agenda-setting Model

Despite robust development and academic proliferation since McCombs and Shaw's seminal study, agenda-setting research is not immune from criticism because of its inherent weaknesses and shortcomings. Critics indicate that agenda-setting studies have not advanced far, either theoretically or methodologically. As argued by Iyengar and Kinder (1987: 3), 'Agenda-setting may be an apt metaphor, but it is no theory'. Rogers and Dearing (1988) attributed the little theoretical progress in agenda-setting to the greater effort that has been devoted to conducting empirical investigations. As they noted, 'we feel there has been a very incomplete "digestion" of the growing set of research findings about agenda-setting into a theory of agenda-setting' (p. 582). Similarly, Kosicki (1993) pointed out that despite the steady growth in empirical generalisations, many agenda-setting studies have still not provided convincing theoretical arguments to explain the effects. Perry (1996) called for the need of theoretical explanation for agenda-setting phenomenon. He claimed that 'agenda-setting is a hypothesis about a process. Explaining how and why it might happen requires theory' (p.

151). Noting that agenda-setting has been described as 'a hypothesis, empirical generalisation, concept, metaphor, or even a full-fledged theory', Kosicki (1993: 102) argued that it is best to refer to 'agenda-setting as a model of media effects'. He drew on McQuail and Windahl's (1981) definition of term of 'model' and claimed that model 'is a more modest and limited term than theory, and it seems to capture the essential characteristics of the perspective' of the agenda-setting.

On methodological grounds, the traditional agenda-setting research relied heavily on quantitative methods for data collection and analysis and subsequently drawing conclusions for findings (Rogers et al., 1993; Wike, 1995; Rogers et al., 1997). The methodological approach dominating agenda-setting research to the present consists of a content analysis of mass media to measure the media agenda and an audience survey to measure the public agenda. The main concern of agenda-setting research has been to demonstrate that the media agenda had an impact on the public agenda and had shaped it. Accordingly, it has been necessary to explore the associations between intensities of media coverage and measures of public opinion so as to establish the direction of causality between the two agendas. In this sense, the quantitative nature of the agenda-setting research was more obviously embodied in using statistical measures to compare the correlation between these two agendas to prove agenda-setting evidence of the media. The quantitative characteristics of agenda-setting research was noted by Wilke (1995) when he pointed out:

> To be precise, the evidence for the impact of agenda-setting is only convincing if one is able to confirm that the importance and ranking of topics in the media reappear accordingly in the audiences' minds. This requires the correlation of data taken from content analyses of the coverage with those taken from public surveys (p. 64-65).

However, criticism pointed to the fact that correlation existing between the media agenda and the public agenda does not necessarily imply the media effect. It is difficult to establish the correlation and decide the direction of influence and causality. For this reason, the

agenda-setting research has been often criticised for not providing convincing evidence of causal relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda (Perry, 1996). Burd (1991: 291) observed that 'unfortunately, too many agenda-setting researchers rely on a linear, one-dimensional, assembly-line model for the production and manufacture of public opinion and policy'. Establishing a correlation is not necessarily equal to demonstrating a causal relation. The most serious methodological problem facing the agenda-setting research, as argued by Rogers and Dearing (1988), mainly concerns using the correlation to justify the validity of the inference that media agenda determines the public agenda. In other words, evidence of an association between the media agenda and the public agenda does not effectively prove a unilinear influence of media coverage on public opinion (Manning, 2001). It is hard, if not impossible, to decide which agenda influences or causes the other in trying to use data from agenda-setting studies to establish a credible cause and effect relationship. As noted by Gunter (2000), the issue of establishing the direction of causality has been a problem that needed to be effectively resolved in the agenda-setting research conducted to date since some of the research designs adopted have still been unable to prove a causal relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda. In particular, survey-based agenda-setting studies are largely inadequate for demonstrating causality, and studies using cross-sectional analyses often amount to little more than 'agenda-matching' exercises (Kosicki, 1993). Similarly, McQuail (2000) pointed out that the evidence of a correspondence between the order of importance given to issues in the media and the order of significance ascribed to those issues in the minds of the public was not sufficient enough to show a causal relationship. In fact, some scholars have suggested that empirical findings were discrepant and the direction of causality remained unclear (Swanson, 1988).

Quantitative agenda-setting research has been very effective in describing and charting in broad terms, the associations between the media agenda and the public agenda (Manning, 2000). Indeed, statistical measures used in traditional survey-based agenda-setting research excel in collecting, analysing, and quantifying data. Nevertheless, the survey method tends to

disregard 'the polysemic and context-dependent nature of meaning' (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996: 90).

Critics also suggest that in measuring the public agenda, researchers may sometimes obtain superficial responses based on people's recollection of recent headlines, instead of thoroughly reasoned and meaningful answers (Perry, 1996). In traditional agenda-setting research, the public agenda was obtained by utilising opinion surveys, which provide little room for respondents to elaborate on their responses because interviewers usually work from a rigid set of standardised questions. Davis and Robinson (1986) also criticised previous survey-based agenda-setting research for failing to explain why people consider issues important.

Apart from its heavy reliance on statistical measures, the use of aggregate data in agenda-setting research has also been called into question. As noted by Swanson (1988), the aggregated public agenda does not reflect the judgements of diverse sub-groups or publics. In the aggregate, the true picture may very well be disguised because the individual differences in perceptions of issue importance were cancelled (DeGeorge, 1981). Rogers and Dearing (1988) called for disaggregation of data as they pointed out that many agenda-setting studies, in particular the early investigations, were so highly aggregate in their data analysis that individual differences of the respondents had been ignored. They suggested that disaggregation of data analysis can allow 'a wider range of research approaches to be utilised' and 'a more precise understanding of the process of agenda-setting' (p. 580).

## 2.4 An Overview of Agenda-setting Research

### 2.4.1 Three Principal Avenues of Agenda-setting Research

As pointed out by McCombs (1992: 821-822), there have been three major avenues of advancement under the agenda-setting umbrella: (1) exploring the 'social system functioning'

# PAGE CONTAINS PEN/PENCIL MARKS

of the mass media, (2) re-exploring 'powerful media effects' by extending the agenda-setting effects tradition on issue salience, 'beyond cognitive effects to attitudinal and behavioural effects', and (3) 'carefully surveying and explicating aspects of the agenda-setting process identified in the past 20 years of research'.

## 2.4.2 Four Phases of Agenda-setting Research

Summarising the collective body of findings from hundreds of agenda-setting studies of the past twenty years, McCombs (1992) defined that the focus of all previous agenda-setting research can be divided into four phases. In the first phase, research centred on testing the basic agenda-setting hypothesis about the connection of issue salience between the media agenda and the public agenda. Studies in this category involved a comparison of media coverage of issues with the public's issue concerns. Included in this category were the *Chapel Hill Study* by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and the follow-up Shaw and McCombs (1977) study in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The focus of the agenda-setting research in the second phase was on the exploration of contingent conditions that might weaken or enhance the magnitude of the agenda-setting effects. Factors influencing the agenda-setting effects included the psychological concept of need for orientation (e.g. McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977; McCombs and Weaver, 1985), comparative roles of newspapers and television (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Patterson and McClure, 1976; Shaw and McCombs, 1977), and interpersonal communication (e.g. Hong and Shemer, 1976; Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller, 1980).

The third phase of agenda-setting research explored candidate images and political interest as alternative agendas (e.g. Weaver *et al.*, 1981). As for the fourth phase of agenda-setting studies, which began by the 1980s, attention had turned to exploring the news media from the perspectives of media sociology and regarding the news media not as an independent, but as a

dependent variable. The question 'Who sets the news agenda?' was asked in this phase of research. For example, a study by Wanta, Stephenson, Turk and McCombs (1989), which examined potential sources of the news media agenda, is considered a representative example of research in this area.

## 2.4.3 Four Types of Agenda-setting Studies

In terms of research methodology, the agenda-setting studies have been grouped into four types of study (McCombs, 1981; Blood, 1982; Weaver, 1984; McCombs and Gilbert, 1986; McCombs and Bell, 1996). Two factors, the type of data used (aggregate or individual) and the type of issue (a set of issues or a single issue), defined a four-cell typology of approaches to agenda-setting research. Further detailing these four categories, McCombs, Danielian and Wanta (1995) labelled them *mass persuasion, automation, natural history, and cognitive portrait*. The typology is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

The Typology of Agenda-setting Research

The Public Agenda

| Scope | Aggregate Data | Individual Data |
|---|---|---|
| A Set of Issues | I<br>Mass Persuasion | II<br>Automation |
| Single Issue | III<br>Natural History | IV<br>Cognitive Portrait |

The Media Agenda

Source: McCombs (1981); McCombs, Danielian, and Wanta (1995)

In the first type of study (mass persuasion studies), the major set of issues on the press agenda was compared to the public's aggregate agenda of issues. Agenda-setting was viewed from the societal level in this type of research because respondents were treated as a group. Findings of type I research show that there were significant correspondences between the ranking of issues on the news coverage and the ranking of the issues' importance assigned by the public (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973). The vast majority of agenda-setting studies fell into this category.

The second type of research (automation studies) continued to examine the entire set of major issues on the media agenda, but shifted the unit of analysis for the public agenda from the aggregate population to the individual (e.g. McLeod, Becker, and Byrnes, 1974; Hill, 1985). This type of study also made it possible to investigate a number of contingent conditions (such as respondents' personal characteristics, political interests, and major source of political news), which weakened or strengthened the media agenda-setting effects (e.g. King, 1994). As noted by Weaver (1984), due to the stringency of the test, less support for agenda-setting effects was found in this type of studies, which typically examined whether the ranking of a set of issues emphasised by the media transferred intact to the ranking of those same issues by individuals.

The third type (natural history studies) compared the press coverage of a single issue to aggregate public agenda data. By focusing on a single issue, it allowed more specific measurement and analysis of the contingent conditions affecting the magnitude of the agenda-setting effects (e.g. Winter and Eyal, 1981; Eaton, 1989; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990).

In the fourth type of research (cognitive portrait studies), the focus was on exploring the agenda-setting function of a single issue and its influence on people at the individual level, with the emphasis being on individual behaviour (e.g. Blood, 1982; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder,

1982; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Like the third type of study, by centring on a single issue, research of the fourth type could potentially help to increase our understanding of the dynamics involved in the agenda-setting process.

In addition to the traditional agenda-setting studies that focus on investigating the relations between the media agenda and the public agenda, one particular agenda-setting study by Asp (1983) further examined the role of party agenda in influencing the priorities of the news media and those of the voters. The findings indicated that the news media, especially print media, were more powerful than political parties as agenda-setters for the voters.

### 2.4.4 Evidence of Agenda-setting Effects

Many empirical studies have supported the basic agenda-setting proposition that the priorities of the media agenda influenced the priorities of the public agenda. The salience of an issue was the main focus of the agenda-setting research. Salience is defined as 'the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important' (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 22). In his review of the fruition of agenda-setting research, McCombs (1996) summarised research with strong evidence of agenda-setting effects as follows:

1) In their seminal study in 1968, by surveying 100 undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and content analysing nine principal local and national news media, both print and broadcasting, regularly used by these voters, McCombs and Shaw found an almost perfect rank-order correlation (+.967) between five major issues perceived most important by voters and the coverage of those issues in the news media used by those voters (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

2) Replicating the basic agenda-setting hypothesis, Shaw and McCombs (1977) conducted a three-wave panel to measure the public agenda and a content analysis of two local US

newspapers and two national US TV networks to measure the media agenda during the 1972 presidential election. The study, set in Charlotte, North Carolina, found support for the causal assertion that the news media influenced the public agenda.

3) Evidence supporting the concept of an agenda-setting role of the news media was also reported by Funkhouser (1973), who conducted an intensive national study of public opinion trends in the politically turbulent 1960s. Comparing news coverage of the issues with the trends in public opinions about the most important problems facing the United States across this decade, he found substantial correspondence (+.78) between the media agenda, the measure of which was based on a content analysis of three national magazines – *Times*, *Newsweek*, and *US News and World Report*, and the public agenda, which was measured based on the data from the Gallup polls that asked respondents the question, 'What is the most important problem facing America?'.

4) In their study of the natural history of a single issue, civil rights, Winter and Eyal (1981) compared the front-page stories in the *New York Times* with the ebb and flow of national concern about civil rights from 1954 to 1976 based on the Gallup poll's 'most important problem' question and found strong support for an agenda-setting effect for the civil rights issue.

5) Eaton (1989) examined the relationship between coverage of news media and the salience of eleven different individual issues over a period of 42 months during the 1980s. Using the Gallup poll's 'most important problem' question to measure the public agenda and content analysis of three national network newscasts, five national newspapers, and three national news magazines to measure the media agenda, he found a positive correlation between the shifting of salience of ten of these eleven issues and the news coverage of those issues.

Research about agenda-setting has not only been carried out in the United States with

significant support but has also been replicated across vastly different cultures, including Western Europe and East Asia, suggesting the applicability of the agenda-setting model can be extrapolated across specific national situations.

In their study of the relationship between the media agenda and public agenda across time, Brosius and Kepplinger (1990) compared the newscasts of four major German television stations with 53 weekly national polls on sixteen issues and found significant agenda-setting effects for four issues: energy supply, defence, environmental protection, and European politics.

King's (1994) study on the 1992 Taiwanese legislative elections found strong agenda-setting effects on six major issues in the election. Separately examining the top two issues on the election agenda – a democratic political system and ROC-PRC relations, he also noted that both newspapers and television had significant agenda-setting effects for the former, but not for the latter.

Takeshita and Mikami (1995) reported the agenda-setting effects among voters in their study of the 1993 Japanese General Election. They found the salience of political reform among the public to be positively correlated with their levels of exposure to the news media and with their levels of political interest.

A study by Llamas and Rey (1996) on the 1995 regional elections in Spain also showed significant agenda-setting effects for an agenda of six local issues in the city of Pamplona. A positive correlation was found between the combined agenda of newspapers and the public agenda. The combined TV agenda was also significantly related to the public agenda. In terms of the above findings, the pattern of news coverage in the newspapers and TV did appear to affect the salience of issues on the agenda of Pamplona voters.

## 2.4.5 Contingent Conditions Affecting Agenda-setting

Although the agenda-setting model assumes direct effects from exposure to the mass media, it was not an assertion of universal, undifferentiated effects. McCombs (1981) noted that agenda-setting effects were not of consistent and major magnitude in all circumstances. Not everyone was assumed to be equally susceptible to the influence. Rogers and Dearing (1988) pointed out that (a) 'low media credibility', (b) 'conflicting evidence from personal experience or other communication channels about the salience of the issue or news event', and (c) the individual's different news values from those reflected by the mass medium or media, accounted for the fact that 'agenda-setting does not operate everywhere, on everyone, and always (McCombs, 1976)' (p. 569). Besides, based on the previous agenda-setting research, it was found that some important intervening variables and contingent conditions could either strengthen or weaken the media influence in the agenda-setting process. These were:

1.  Audience personal characteristics, including demographic factors, people's media exposure patterns, people's need for orientation, and interpersonal communication;

2.  Type of news media;

3.  Nature of issues; and

4.  Time lag.

## (1) Audience Personal Characteristics

## (a) Demographic Factors

In their examination of daily newspaper contributions to community discussion regarding international, national, state, regional and local news, Atwood, Sohn, and Sohn (1978) content-analysed local daily newspapers and interviewed 150 residents in a small Southern Illinois city. They found female readers exhibited an agenda-setting effect of reading local and regional news. However, as far as male readers were concerned, the agenda-setting effect

was only for the local news. The result showed that other sources of information contributed to the salience of regional, state and national news for male readers.

McLeod, Becker, and Byrnes (1974) found older respondents (over 25) were more likely to be influenced by media agenda-setting than younger ones. There was a greater agenda-setting effect on older respondents who had lower expectation for media utility gratification and who discussed the campaign most frequently with their friends. Younger respondents, with weak political partisanship, also exhibited a stronger agenda-setting impact. Besides, Atwood et al. (1978) also noted a clear agenda-setting effect existed for local, state and international news among older readers (over 35), whereas the agenda-setting effect appeared only for regional and national news among younger readers (under 35).

With respect to the effect of levels of educational attainment on agenda-setting, it was observed that television seemed to have a more powerful agenda-setting effect on voters with lower educational levels and in blue-collar jobs late in the election campaign than the newspapers (Weaver et al., 1981). Contrary findings were reported by Hill (1985) who discovered that the agenda-setting effect was more evident among television viewers with college education. In their study of the agenda-setting function of the mass media at three levels of information holding, Benton and Frazier (1976) also observed that respondents with higher education consistently held more information at both levels two and three than respondents with lower education (level one: awareness of general issue names; level two: awareness of causes and proposed solutions of issues; and level three: awareness of pro and con rationales for proposed solutions and persons or group making proposals).

As noted by Allen and Taylor (1985), social-economic status (SES) was also positively related to exposure to newspapers. According to their findings, people with higher education and people with higher income, tended to be more exposed to public affairs information presented in the newspaper. Besides, a study by Allen and Izcaray (1988) also found that those with

higher SES were more likely to attend to the informational content in the mass media, especially to newspaper exposure, which influenced their awareness of social problems. In this sense, the more people with higher SES attended to newspaper exposure, the more they were influenced by issue coverage, thus leading to the stronger agenda-setting effects.

## (b) Media Use

Previous research also showed that audience's media use pattern played a significant role in influencing the agenda-setting effect. Patterson and McClure (1976), for example, found that the level of newspaper exposure was highly correlated with issue salience. A similar finding was confirmed by MacKuen and Coombs (1981), who noted that agenda-setting effects increased with an individual's level of media exposure. Besides, according to Benton and Frazier (1976), newspapers were more powerful in setting the agenda for newspaper-oriented respondents than television was for TV-oriented viewers.

In their study of diversity in agenda-holding, Chaffee and Wilson (1977) also observed that there was a positive relationship between *media richness* (i.e., number of locally based daily newspapers and number of television and radio stations) and greater diversity in the *public problems agenda* held by the citizens of that community. The greater diversity of media resources available in a community led to a diversity of perceptions about public issues among its citizenry. Asp (1983) pointed out that newspapers' readers with a higher exposure to political material were more likely to be in greater agreement with the agenda of their own party press than were low exposure readers. Investigating the influence of audience attributes on the agenda-setting process, Hill (1985) also indicated that viewers' quantity of print media exposure was a significant and positive predictor of the agenda-setting influence of news programmes. The amount of newspaper exposure, as noted by Allen and Izcaray (1988), positively influenced people's agenda diversity.

Lasorsa and Wanta (1990), in a study concerning effects of personal, interpersonal and media experiences on issue saliences, observed that media exposure and attention were the strongest predictor of conformity to the news media's agenda. Similarly, Wanta and Hu (1994) suggested that individuals' exposure to news media messages was significantly related to the intensity of agenda-setting effects.

## (c) Need for Orientation

The notion of a need for orientation, composed of the personal relevance of the information and the extent of uncertainty about the subject of the message, was proposed by McCombs and Weaver in 1973 to explain why individuals had different issue agendas. On one hand, individuals with high relevance of the information and high uncertainty concerning the subject would have had a corresponding high need for orientation, which led to a high level of media exposure, thus in turn increasing the strength of agenda-setting effects (Weaver, 1977).

On the other hand, as indicated by McLeod *et al.* (1974), less interested voters were most susceptible to the agenda-setting effects, so were the more undecided (uncertain) younger voters. In other words, the findings indicted that people with a moderate need for orientation (low interest and high uncertainty) were most influenced by the media agenda-setting effects (McCombs and Weaver, 1985). A similar finding was also reported by Schoenbach and Weaver (1985) in a study of the 1979 European Parliamentary Election campaign.

Furthermore, evidence also showed that people possessing greater prior political knowledge of the issues, the politically involved, as compared with the politically naïve, could resist agenda-setting by means of counter-arguments. Thus, the more attentive and involved individuals were, the less they were subject to the agenda-setting effects (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982).

## (d) Interpersonal Communication

The role of interpersonal communication in influencing the magnitude of agenda-setting effects remains disputable. Although some researchers have found interpersonal communication tended to inhibit the agenda-setting effects, others argued that it increased the effects (Winter, 1981). In the words of Wanta and Wu (1992: 847), 'few contingent conditions in agenda-setting have drawn so much attention from researchers with so little agreement in their results'.

McLeod et al. (1974) suggested that interpersonal communication played a greater role in political campaigns when newspapers declined as an agenda-setting source late in the campaign. Hong and Shemer (1976) argued that interpersonal communication, an intervening variable between media and personal agendas, might either facilitate or reduce the importance of certain issues under varying conditions (as cited in Brosius and Weimann, 1996).

Erbring et al. (1980) also noted that interpersonal communication played a critical role in shaping public perceptions of issue salience because it helped people make sense of news media content. Based on the findings of their research, they concluded that informal communication increased issue salience for new issues, but not for long-standing issues.

Wanta and Wu (1992), examining the relationship between interpersonal communication and the agenda-setting process, found that interpersonal communication led to higher agenda-setting effects for issues that had received extensive media coverage, but interrupted agenda-setting effects for the issues that had received little coverage in the media. In their study of drug abuse, Weaver, Zhu, and Willnat (1992) also pointed out that interpersonal communication was significantly correlated with people's perceptions of the salience of drug abuse at both personal and social levels.

**(2) Type of News Media**

The agenda-setting effects have been seen to vary with the different types of news media. Previous research has found that newspapers were more powerful agenda-setters than television (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Patterson and McClure, 1976; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; Schoenbach, 1982; Asp, 1983; King, 1994).

Asp (1983) indicated that television news was an important agenda setter for the low exposure viewers who were not particularly interested in politics. Issue emphasis of newspapers and television was found substantially correlated during election periods (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, Weaver, Barkin, and Wilhoit, 1991). Nevertheless, as found by Benton and Frazier (1976), there were high correlations of issue emphasis between newspapers and television, but not enough between television and newsmagazines.

Palmgreen and Clarke (1977) found television, both network and local, demonstrated stronger agenda-setting effects than newspapers, on respondents' national issue priorities. On the other hand, newspapers were superior to television in setting the public agenda on local issues. Shaw and McCombs (1977) argued that newspapers had a more consistent long-term effect on the public's agendas early in presidential campaigns, but that television manifested a stronger short-term impact as the campaign progressed.

Reviewing the role and influence of the 'new' or non-traditional media in the 1992 US presidential election, Weaver (1994) pointed out that the campaign agenda controlled by politicians and the media resulted in voter alienation from politics, whereas non-traditional media such as television talk shows and town hall meetings contributed to greater voter interest and involvement in politics.

Newspapers' treatment of crime news, according to Gordon and Heath (1981), was associated

with readers' levels of fear of crime. In a study assessing the effects of crime coverage in newspapers on the readers, Gordon and Heath indicated that readers of newspapers with high coverage of crime showed more fear of crime than did readers of other newspapers devoted less space to crime news.

## (3) Nature of Issues

The obtrusiveness of an issue also played an important role in the magnitude of agenda-setting effects. Issues which individuals experienced directly, such as inflation, were termed *obtrusive issues*. By contrast, *unobtrusive issues* were issues, such as international developments, with which individuals had little personal contact and for which they were reliant on the media as the primary, and often, the only source of information. As noted by Zucker (1978), the less direct experience the public have with an issue, the more they will have to rely on the news media for information about that issue. Most of the studies indicated that the agenda-setting effects were greater for unobtrusive issues than for obtrusive issues (Zucker, 1978; Weaver *et al.*, 1981; Winter and Eyal, 1981; Atwater, Salwen, and Anderson, 1985; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Smith, 1987).

On the other hand, some researchers reported the significant media agenda-setting effects for obtrusive issues. For example, Erbring *et al.* (1980) found agenda-setting effects for unemployment, an issue widely regarded as obtrusive. Sohn (1984), in her examination of the correlation between local newspaper reports and citizens' opinions on expectations for changes due to the expansion of the mining industry, found a strong support of agenda-setting effects even for an obtrusive local issue. Iyengar and Kinder (1985) also observed that viewers who were personally affected by the subject of television news coverage tended to be most susceptible to the agenda-setting effects.

Similarly, a study by Lasorsa and Wanta (1990) also showed the stronger agenda-setting effects

for issues in which individuals were more personally involved. They suggested that personal experience of an issue sensitised individuals to that issue. Individuals then turned to the news media for additional information on obtrusive issues; this increased exposure to news media messages in turn led to the increase of agenda-setting effects. In general, the assertion that the agenda-setting effects were stronger for unobtrusive issues than for obtrusive ones appeared to be somewhat more supportive.

Besides, in their study of the media agenda-setting effect of *concrete* versus *abstract* issues, Yagade and Dozier (1990) concluded that the stronger media agenda-setting effects were found for concrete issues such as energy and drug abuse, but not for abstract issues like nuclear arms race and federal budget deficits. In other words, the concreteness of an issue enhanced the media agenda-setting power whereas the abstractness of an issue reduced its agenda-setting power.

## (4) Time Lag

Agenda-setting is by definition a time-related process (Gonzenbach and McGavin, 1997) in which changes in media coverage result in or cause subsequent changes in problem awareness of issues. Eyal, Winter, and DeGeorge (1981) pointed out five distinct temporal variables in the agenda-setting research, including the *time frame*, the *time lag*, the *duration of the media agenda measure*, the *duration of the public agenda* measure, and the *optimal effect span*. Time lag selection was important in agenda-setting research because studies in this area investigated a causal hypothesis. As noted by Chaffee (1972: 8), though a time lag that was too short could not fully capture the causal relationship, a time lag that was too long was also a serious matter because 'there is always the danger that a causal effect will "dissipate" over time if the researcher waits too long to measure it' (cited in Salwen, 1988: 100-101). Nevertheless, how long would it take for the agenda-setting effects to appear? What was the optimal time lag required for an issue in the media to become most salient among the public?

Zucker (1978) argued that a time lag of less than two weeks did not allow enough time for the agenda-setting effects to reach the public and that media content of more than four weeks might be forgotten by media consumers. The optimal time lag, according to Zucker, was between two and six weeks. A study by Stone and McCombs (1981) to investigate the time lag for agenda-setting found that it took between two and six months for an item to move from the media agenda to the public agenda.

Investigating time span by focusing on a single issue, civil rights, Winter and Eyal (1981) found that a period of eight weeks was needed for news coverage of civil rights to become salient among the public and argued for an optimal time lag of four to six weeks for the agenda-setting effects to occur.

Salwen (1988), in a study to examine the accumulation of media coverage of seven environmental issues on audience issue salience, reported that after the accumulation of five to seven weeks of news media coverage, the public started to adopt news media salience of environmental issues. The optimal effect span, namely, the peak relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda, appeared after eight to ten weeks of media coverage.

Eaton (1989) found that for issues such as inflation and poverty, the greatest correlation occurred when the importance measure was carried out within the same two week period as the media coverage. Besides, the strongest correlation for unemployment, the economy and the deficit was found when media coverage cumulated two to four weeks before the importance measure period. It seemed that news coverage of familiar issues like inflation and poverty had almost immediate effects on the public agenda.

Brosius and Kepplinger (1990) observed that time lags ranked between one and three weeks in their study of the agenda-setting function of television news. McCombs, Danielian, and Wanta (1995) pointed out that five to seven weeks were a typical time span for the translation

of news coverage on an issue into a reasonably high degree of salience for that issue on the public agenda.

Overall, the optimal time lag has been seen to vary greatly, depending on the research design, the nature of the issue, the amount of media coverage, and the medium. It has taken at least one or two months to observe significant shifts in the public agenda for mass persuasion studies, which focus on sets of issues on the agenda, whereas much shorter time intervals were needed for agenda-setting effects to occur in natural history studies, which followed the rise and fall of a single issue across time (McCombs, Danielian, and Wanta, 1995). Moreover, as noted by Wanta (1997), national newscasts produced agenda-setting effects much earlier as compared with newspapers; national media also had shorter time lags than local or regional media.

## 2.4.6 Agenda-setting Research in Taiwan

Studies about the agenda-setting effects in Taiwan were mainly conducted during early 1980s and early 1990s, with eleven publications in all prior to the present research. There were no systematic conceptualisations, operationalisations and methodologies employed in measuring public agendas and media agendas in these studies. Besides, small sample-size of respondents, one-shot research designs, and the unclear direction of causal influence between the media agenda and public agenda could also be detected in some of the earlier research. Despite these shortcomings, the findings of most of these studies showed a significant degree of correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda. Researchers have investigated the agenda-setting effects by examining election issues, non-election issues and different news media. They have also studied contingent conditions which strengthen or weaken the magnitude of agenda-setting effects, and looked at the second dimension of agenda-setting with a focus on an agenda of attributes, such as the attributes of products and the images of political candidates.

Kuo's (1979) study on the relationship between newspaper coverage of ROC-USA relations and the public's awareness of this issue was the first agenda-setting research in Taiwan. Using the third type of research design referred to earlier, he interviewed 110 university students and content-analysed the issue of ROC-USA relations in the *United Daily News* and found the sub-issues of the ROC-USA relations emphasised by the newspaper were significantly correlated with university students' awareness of those sub-issues, but there was no significant agenda-setting effects. Besides, the study also found positive correlations between interpersonal communication and issue emphasis of the newspaper.

Using questionnaires to test respondents' awareness of the medical issues concerning Siamese Twins, Lee (1981) found people with high interest in this issue and high media usage were more likely to be susceptible to the agenda-setting effects. However, without analysing the content of the news media to measure the media agenda, Lee's methodology has been found to be problematic.

Shiu (1982) examined the agenda-setting function of the Taiwanese press in the 1980 supplementary elections for National Assembly and Legislative Yuan. Interviewing 156 randomly-selected residents of Taipei in a cross-sectional survey and content analysing the news coverage of three major newspapers (the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*, and the *Central Daily News*) for two weeks prior to the election, she found significant evidence of agenda-setting effects. Issues emphasised more by the newspapers came to be regarded as more important by the residents interviewed. Moreover, the researcher found the media agenda-setting effects were mediated by contingent conditions such as residents' education, occupation, age, political interest, media usage, and non-media use. In particular, higher educated respondents exhibited the stronger agenda-setting effects than lesser educated respondents. However, gender and political party preference had no influence on the media agenda-setting effects.

Yeh (1982) conducted a study to test the agenda-setting effects of the specialist financial dailies. By content analysing two such newspapers and interviewing 193 random shareholders, he found no significant agenda-setting effects at the salience level. However, the study showed shareholders' awareness of issues and interpersonal communication were positively correlated with issue emphasis of the newspapers. Besides, those who invested more and longer in the stock market were more likely to be susceptible to the agenda-setting effects at the awareness level.

Outside the setting of elections, Pan, Wang, and Hsieh (1990) conducted a large-scale agenda-setting study, which was sponsored by a national research institute. The study measured the media agenda by content analysing ten newspapers, three national television newscasts and news programmes, and twelve radio news bulletins and news programmes. The public agenda was ascertained by asking a national sample of 1,489 respondents to report the level of media emphasis on the eight issues singled out from the media agenda. Basically, no considerable media agenda-setting effects were found, but newspapers were found to have the agenda-setting influence on the interpersonal agenda. Besides, this study found intervening variables such as respondents' education and media usage pattern had no significant influence on the agenda-setting effects.

Similarly, in her examination of the intervening variables influencing the agenda-setting effects, Liao (1990) content-analysed the news coverage of ten newspapers and three national television stations, and interviewed 351 local residents in the Taipei area. She found no significant correlations between the media agenda and the public agenda. Liao also pointed out that respondents with higher education were more susceptible to the agenda-setting effects whereas respondents' media use behaviour was not related to agenda-setting susceptibility. The methodology used by Liao was seen to be problematic because her measure of the public agenda was the ranking of issues based on the estimated level of media emphasis rather than the issue importance. Therefore, the lack of findings about media agenda-setting effects in

Liao's study was open to question (King, 1994).

Shiau (1991) conducted a study on the agenda-setting effects of the *China Times* on its readers. Content-analysing the newspaper's coverage of the issues concerning the 1990 National Assembly meeting and interviewing 283 readers of this newspaper, he found a significant correlation between the issues emphasised by the newspaper and the awareness of those among its readers. In addition, this study also found demographic variables like age, occupation, education and interest influenced the magnitude of the agenda-setting effects. Positive correspondence was found between the issues which lesser educated respondents were aware of and the issues covered by the newspaper. Readers who spent more time reading the newspaper and who often read political news were more susceptible to the agenda-setting influences at the awareness level. Using both open-ended and closed questions to measure readers' salience of issues, this researcher also reported readers' issues obtained from the open-ended questions to be more closely related to the issues in the newspapers.

In a study of the agenda-setting function of the television commercials, Kao (1991) analysed the content of television commercials of isotonic drinks over seven years and surveyed 393 university students. He found positive correspondence between the agenda of attributes of isotonic drinks emphasised in the television commercials and the agenda of attributes of those drinks which respondents were aware of. The study also found that the higher the respondents' exposure to the television commercials of isotonic drinks, the stronger the agenda-setting effects were demonstrated by respondents.

Peng (1992) examined the agenda-setting role of the newspapers in the 1989 elections for supplementary Legislative Yuan seats and found no evidence of media agenda-setting effects. The researcher concluded that the research design might account for the negative results about media agenda-setting effects. Despite the media agenda obtained from the content analysis of five newspapers over a period of a whole year prior to the elections, only the headline of the

lead story on the front page was content-analysed. Issues based on content analysis of headlines could perhaps not give a complete picture of issues emphasised by the newspapers. Therefore, the findings of this study also remained in question.

In his analysis of the 1992 Taiwanese legislative elections, King (1994) conducted a three-wave panel study of the agenda-setting function of the news media. Apart from replicating the basic agenda-setting hypothesis, he also examined the influence of the party agenda on the public agenda and the media agenda. Content-analysing the news coverage of three main newspapers and three national television stations for a two-month period and interviewing a panel of 527 residents of Taipei City, the researcher found strong support for an agenda-setting role of newspapers. However, no significant evidence of agenda-setting effects of television was found. Besides, the study also found contingent conditions affecting the agenda-setting effects included age, education, gender, sub-ethnicity, and television news exposure at different stages of the campaign. People with higher education were more easily affected by the media agenda and the males exhibited the stronger agenda-setting effects than the females. However, voters' interest in reading political stories was found to be the most powerful predictor of the media agenda-setting effects over the whole campaign period.

In the 1994 Taipei mayoral election study, Lee (1996) examined the second dimension of media agenda-setting, especially the relationship between the images of the candidates presented in the mass media and voters' perceptions of those candidates' images. Using content analysis of the news stories concerning the candidates' images in three main newspapers and conducting a survey among 1,002 voters in Taipei City, Lee found significant correlations between candidate attributes emphasised in the press and salient elements in those images perceived by the voters. The study also found that younger voters and those with a higher level of campaign interest were more likely to show the image agenda-setting effects. The image agenda-setting effects were found to be more pronounced for voters who read newspapers more frequently. Besides, voters' partisan identification and education were the

significant predictors of their affective evaluations of candidates. It was found that lesser educated voters put more emphasis on candidates' images at the affective level than their higher educated counterparts. On the other hand, gender was not an important factor in influencing the image agenda-setting effects.

## 2.5 Study of the Agenda-setting Model

In their suggestions for the future research of the agenda-setting process, Dearing and Rogers (1996) point out that most of the more than 350 agenda-setting studies have a *made-in-the-USA* label, so more research in other nations is needed to observe the comparative media functions in these countries. Indeed, since its seminal study by McCombs and Shaw, agenda-setting research has continued to be a fascinating and enlightening field of communication study (Robinson, 1998), which attracts researchers across national settings to examine the applicability of this predominantly western model to different cultural contexts.

In the case of agenda-setting research conducted in Taiwan, the findings of the previous empirical studies, as discussed earlier, are mixed and inconclusive. While most studies showed no significant agenda-setting effects of the media (Kuo, 1979; Yeh, 1982; Pan *et al.*, 1990; Liao, 1990; Peng, 1992), some – including Shiu's (1982) study and King's (1994) research – demonstrated that the agenda-setting effects of the press did occur in Taiwan. The discrepant results possibly arise from the different research designs used in operationalisations and methodologies, with most of the studies dealing with aggregate data and statistical measures.

It has been argued that agenda-setting research should be expanded beyond the traditional boundary of matching aggregate media agendas with aggregate public opinion data, so that the diversity of sub-groups' viewpoints could be reflected. Moreover, if agenda-setting is only examined by testing the significance of the statistical correlation between the media agenda

and the public agenda, it would amount to little more than exercises in 'agenda matching' (Kosicki, 1993) and it would not be possible to understand why and how the people think about the important issues in their own minds, relative to coverage of those issues in the media.

Burd (1991: 291) has suggested that 'agenda-setting research is at its best when it is ...eclectic and congenial to multiple methods'. In this sense, the agenda-setting research can be methodologically strengthened by using research designs that can overcome some of the criticisms levelled against agenda-setting such as heavy reliance on quantitative methods and statistical correlations and an inability to probe the detailed and properly considered responses from respondents.

The present research is interested in exploring which issues and presidential candidates' image attributes were emphasised by the newspapers during the 1996 Taiwan's first presidential election and whether these issues and attributes, with heavy coverage in the press, were the same as or different from those mentioned by voters with different gender and educational backgrounds. The agenda-setting model is a suitable theoretical model which allows the researcher to study the relationship between the newspaper coverage of important issues and candidates' salient attributes and the voters' perceptions of those issues and attributes in the context of a key democratic milestone in Taiwan's electoral politics. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the problem (that statistical correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda does not sufficiently imply media effects) which the quantitative agenda-setting research has been criticised for, this study will not emphasise the traditional tests of bivariate relationships by using statistical measures, but instead tries to solve the difficulty in proving the direction of influence or causality with a direct question about media influence which elicited a direct response, and also focuses more on the pubic perceptions of important issues and candidates' attributes and why they thought these to be so. Therefore, the present research will not completely follow the traditional agenda-setting methodology since it will adopt a combined research approach: the *qualitative analysis of focus groups* and the *quantitative analysis of*

*pre-session questionnaires*, to ascertain the public agendas. By adopting a qualitative approach such focus groups, this study is able to overcome the problem of obtaining superficial top-of-the-head answers from respondents, which survey-based agenda-setting research has often encountered. The use of focus group approach made it possible to probe further the voters' viewpoints and understand why their opinions were formed in this way. Respondents were usually asked to provide reasons for their answers to make sure they gave detailed responses, instead of giving answers off the top of their heads or merely ticking boxes. In so doing, it provides a better understanding of the context in which the respondents' answers were given, and increases the validity of the conclusions drawn.

Apart from these methodological innovations aimed at avoiding the limitations traditional survey-based agenda-setting research has suffered from, this study also responds to the trend in agenda-setting research towards disaggregation of the data by examining the differences of the public agendas of sub-groups based on their gender and educational levels. In fact, in his study of American voters' behaviour, Popkin (1991) noticed a significant influence of education on awareness of public issues. He stated that voters' education affected issue diversity in terms of the increasing number of issues the electorate considered politically relevant, and in terms of the increasing number of connections they made between their daily-life experience and national and international events. Previous research also indicated that education played a significant role in influencing the agenda-setting effects (e.g. Benton and Frazier, 1976; Weaver *et al.*, 1981; Hill, 1985). Moreover, several studies in Taiwan have also demonstrated the impact of education on agenda-setting (e.g. Shiu, 1982; Liao, 1990; Shiau, 1991; King, 1994; Lee, 1996). On the other hand, empirical research has shown mixed results of the role of gender in agenda-setting effects (e.g. Atwood, Sohn and Sohn, 1978; Shiu, 1982; King, 1994; Lee, 1996). It is expected that use of this less aggregated approach can provide insights into understanding the influence of gender and education on individual differences of respondents' issue and image agendas.

Instead of merely replicating one of the several agenda-setting studies set in Taiwan, the present research using a different research design, tries to avoid some of the criticisms levelled at previous agenda-setting methodology, and seeks to bring a new dimension to understand reasons and justifications for public perceptions of issues and candidates' image attributes.

# Chapter 3 – Research Design and Questions

The main purpose of the present research is to find out which important issues, campaign issues, and salient image attributes of presidential candidates were emphasised by the newspapers, and whether these issues and attributes with significant press coverage were the same as or different from those mentioned by Taiwanese voters with differing gender and educational backgrounds during Taiwan's first presidential election held in 1996. In other words, the operational task of the research is to find out what the newspaper issue, campaign issue, and image agendas were, and to compare them with the relative issue, campaign issue, and image agendas of different groups of voters. Data were collected from content analysis of three major Taiwanese newspapers and extended focus group interviews.

## 3.1 Methodology

### 3.1.1 Rationale for the Research Design

Election campaigns offer an ideal time and milieu to examine the agenda-setting process because they traditionally involve an agenda of issues and candidates (Jeffres, 1997). This is the reason why this study has chosen the 1996 Taiwan's first presidential election as the research setting. Since the main goal of the present research is to study the newspaper and public agendas on important current issues, campaign issues and candidates' prominent image attributes during the presidential election, the content of the newspapers, therefore, will be studied to explore what was covered in the press, and voters' perceptions of issues and candidates will also be examined.

Each research method has its strengths and weaknesses. Personal interest and exigency is always inherent when the researcher chooses one approach over another. Given the purpose of the present study, two research methods were used, including *content analysis* and *extended*

*focus group interviews.* The former was employed to examine the coverage of the three selected newspapers; the latter to investigate voters' views on important issues, campaign issues and candidates' salient image attributes. In other words, the news coverage of the newspapers was content-analysed to measure the newspaper agendas on issues and candidates' images. Extended focus groups, on the other hand, were conducted to measure the public agendas on issues and candidates' images and were also used to gain an insight into why public opinion on these issues and candidates' images was formed. The *newspaper issue agenda* was made up of a rank ordering of the prominent issues appearing in the newspapers; the *newspaper campaign agenda* was composed of a ranking of the key campaign issues in the newspaper coverage; the *newspaper image agenda* referred to a ranking of salient candidates' image attributes covered by the press. The rank ordering of the key issues perceived by a sample of voters indicated the *public issue agenda*; the ranking of the first most important issues to voters constituted the *public priority issue agenda.* The ranking of important campaign issues mentioned by voters formed the *public campaign agenda*; the rank ordering of candidates' prominent image attributes in the minds of voters consisted of the *public image agenda.* Highlighting responses from the focus group interviews will be used to provide a deeper understanding of the nature and evidence for the public agendas on issues and candidates' images.

While most agenda-setting studies utilise traditional survey research procedures to assess the public agenda, the present study chose extended focus groups over the traditional large-sample survey for the following reasons: first, a broader range of responses could be obtained from focus groups than from survey interviews because the former allows the researcher to probe participants' responses in more detail. Survey interviews using typical standardised questionnaires, can obtain quantitative descriptions of the data for measuring the public agenda, but they are unable to provide in-depth insights into how, and why, voters feel and think about specific issues or candidates' images. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, since little room is provided for respondents to elaborate on their points in the traditional survey-based,

agenda-setting research, it was likely that when researchers measured the public agenda, they received superficial answers based on respondents' recall of recent headlines rather than carefully thought-out responses (Perry, 1996). Manning (2001) pointed out that one of the limits of agenda-setting research was its inability to reveal the complexity of the way in which people think about issues because most quantitative agenda-setting studies tend to consider the processes through which people are asked to rank priorities of issues in a polling questionnaire in the same ways in which they actually think about these issues.

Second, many agenda-setting studies were criticised for the highly aggregate nature of their analysed data. In traditional agenda-setting research, the public agenda was measured in terms of aggregated levels of issue salience among large groups or samples of survey respondents. All members of a public were pooled in computing the relative salience of various agenda items, as if individual differences in item rankings either did not exist or else were not considered important at all (Rogers and Dearing, 1988). The individual differences of the public, therefore, cannot be reflected by the aggregated public agenda (DeGeorge, 1981; Swanson, 1988). By adopting a qualitative research approach like focus groups to examine the differences of the public agendas of sub-groups based on their gender and educational levels, this study made it possible to solve the problem of highly aggregate analysed data.

Third, in terms of practical feasibility, conducting a large-scale survey is not impossible, given adequate research, resources and time, but more difficult than running focus groups. The small sample of voters recruited in focus groups was within the researcher's manageable limits when time, costs and resources were all considered. Bertrand, Brown, and Ward (1992: 199) agree that a practical advantage of using focus groups was that 'they can be conducted in a short span of time by a small staff with limited financial resources'.

## 3.2 Content Analysis: Definitions, Advantages, and Disadvantages

Content analysis has been a widely used research method in the social sciences, especially popular with mass media researchers. Over the past 25 years, the use of content analysis in the field of mass communication research has witnessed rapid and unprecedented growth (Riffe and Freitag, 1997).

There have been many definitions of content analysis. According to Berelson (1952: 18), content analysis is defined as 'a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication'. In the words of Holsti (1969: 14), 'content analysis is any technique for making inferences by systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages'. Krippendorff (1980: 21) regarded content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context'. Kerlinger (1986) identified content analysis as a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

Moreover, content analysis was defined by Berger (1991) as a research technique based on measuring the amount of something (violence, percentages of blacks, women, professional type, or whatever) in a representative sampling of some forms of communication. A more detailed definition of content analysis was formulated by Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998: 20):

> Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption.

Given the aforementioned definitions, it seems that content analysis should be systematic,

quantitative, replicable, and objective. It aims at producing 'an objective, measurable, verifiable account of the manifest content of messages. It analyses the denotative order of signification' (Fiske, 1990: 136).

Content analysis is systematic in the sense that it follows a clearly defined and consistently applied set of rules and procedures for analysing media content. The uniformity in the procedures of coding and analysis allows replication and follow-up studies. Analysing media content in a systematic way also makes possible identifying long-term changes and trends in media coverage (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, and Newbold, 1998). Wimmer and Dominick (1997) noted that one of the advantages of content analysis was its potential in identifying trends over time.

With a set of clearly defined rules and procedures, content analysis can be used to evaluate and quantify media content in a systematic and reliable way. Because of this attribute, content analysis, in the words of Hansen *et al.* (1998: 123-124), 'lays open to scrutiny the means by which textual meaning is dissected and examined', which makes it different from qualitative and interpretative methods.

Content analysis is intrinsically a quantitative method and the goal of the method is to 'quantify salient and manifest features of a large number of texts, and the statistics are used to make broader inferences about the processes and politics of representation' (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, and Murdock, 1999: 116). Quantification allows the accurate representation of a body of messages, so that researchers are able to summarise and report results succinctly when interpreting and analysing media content (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997).

However, content analysis does suffer from certain limitations. One of the main criticisms is directed at its positivist notion of objectivity. Absolute objectivity is very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve since it involves researchers' subjective choice in specifying the unit of

analysis and indicating the precise makeup and definition of relevant categories chosen for analysis (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997). Even in scientific research, objectivity is an ideal state of affairs that is rarely reached practically, and the same applies to content analysis. Objectivity in content analysis, as argued by Hansen *et al.* (1998) could never be objective in a 'value-free' sense of the word because the content analyst is making a subjective choice when he or she is delineating certain dimensions or aspects of text for analysis. In the same vein, Deacon *et al.* (1999) also agree that it is very questionable to claim content analysis provides completely value-free insights to the study of content. They pointed out that the decisions of 'what you count, how much you sample, how you categorise, etc.' are ultimately related to 'the researcher's subjective judgement of what is significant' (p. 131).

The quantitative character of content analysis is also called into question. Gunter (2000) noted that a purely quantitative assessment may not provide the most useful way to understand the nature of media content. Frequency of occurrence is not everything. Often, the potential impact of the content may lie in infrequent, but still highly important events. Furthermore, quantitative indicators as provided by content analysis do not necessarily merit the meaning or interpretation associated with certain symbols to be more accurate by counting the frequency of the symbols appearing. The ability of content analysis to measure frequency of symbols does not necessarily indicate significance of meaning of media texts since content analysis cannot tell us 'how to interpret the wider social significance or meaning of the quantitative indicators generated' from its own exercise (Hansen *et al.*, 1998: 124). The problem is to what extent quantitative indicators are interpreted as intensity of meaning in texts, social impact of texts and the like. No such simple relationship exists between media texts and their social implications. It would be over-simplistic to base conclusions purely on numbers resulting from statistical content analysis. What is needed, in the words of Hansen *et al.* (1998), is to place 'what is counted in content analysis within a theoretical framework which articulates, in the form of a model of communication influence, the social significance and meaning of what is being counted' (p. 96).

Nevertheless, content analysis has been considered an appropriate and useful approach for the present study since it is a research technique designed to say something about the context of media – to measure frequency of occurrence, prominence and significance, and to identify which processes lead to bias in reporting.

### 3.2.1 The Choice of the Print Medium

Texts from newspaper coverage were chosen as the representative sample for content analysis. The selection of newspapers as the focus of research was based on the following reasons: first, radio and magazines in Taiwan carry only limited information on political issues, so they are excluded from this analysis. It must be made clear here that television and newspapers are the chief sources of political information in Taiwan.

Second, compared to television, which is unable to give extensive coverage and deal with important political news in detail because of time constraints, newspapers can give more space to cover detailed political information and can be read repeatedly. Research by Choi and Becker (1987) found that newspapers were more effective than television in developing voters' ability to discriminate issue positions and images among candidates. Hofstetter, Zukin, and Buss (1978) also suggested that voters' exposure to network news, election specials and political advertising only reinforced or intensified pre-existing candidate images and issue positions. Nevertheless, newspaper reading was highly correlated with political information and candidate imagery among voters. Graber (1972) noted that although television was the most widely used medium, when people needed more complete or in-depth information than the constraints of visual coverage allow, they relied on newspapers. Besides, past relevant research has shown newspapers to be more effective agenda-setters than television (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Patterson and McClure, 1976; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; Schoenbach, 1982; Asp, 1983; King, 1994).

Third, as previous research on Taiwan has revealed, there was an amazing degree of similarity in the content of news coverage between television and newspapers (King, 1994). Similarly, findings of research by Pan *et al.* (1990) and Mou (1997) also suggest that TV news borrowed its news agenda from newspapers, thus resulting in a similarity of media content.

Finally, in terms of balanced news coverage, as compared to the three wireless television stations in Taiwan, which have long been criticised for favouring the ruling party and not providing fair coverage for the opposition parties, newspapers, ever since the lifting of martial law, have demonstrated greater freedom and diversity in their coverage.

### 3.2.2 The Selection of Newspapers

The choice of the newspapers for the study was based on circulation and political partisanship. Three newspapers were selected for the present study: the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*, and the *Liberty Times* because they enjoyed large circulation and reflected different stands of political opinion. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* are the biggest newspapers in Taiwan, with a combined circulation over 50% and the *Liberty Times* is ranked third. The results of a telephone survey conducted by the Survey Centre of the *United Daily News* before the presidential election also confirmed that the top three newspapers read most often by Taiwanese voters were the *United Daily News* (40.9%), the *China Times* (35.6%), and the *Liberty Times* (20.8%).[1]

Apart from the readership, the journalistic positions in the political spectrum among the newspapers selected are also different. On the whole, the *United Daily News* is more pro-KMT's conservative wing (non-mainstream faction) whereas the *China Times* leans

---

[1]. The telephone survey was conducted by the Survey Centre of the *United Daily News* from 2 February to 5 February 1996 based on a systematic random sample of 1,165 eligible voters in Taiwan. According to the results of the survey, the most-often-read newspapers based on the multiple responses were the *United Daily News* (40.9%), the *China Times* (35.6%), the *Liberty Times* (20.8%), the *Min Sheng News* (9.3%), the *Taiwan Times* (3.9%), and the *People's Daily News* (3.9%).

towards the KMT's liberal faction (mainstream faction) and also takes a moderate position on the DPP's proposals. The *Liberty Times* is considered pro-DPP and also supportive of the liberal faction within the KMT. It would be interesting to see if the news content analysed actually reflects the support for the different political ideologies claimed by the three newspapers.

### 3.2.3 The Time Period of the Study

Regarding the time period for the content analysis of news coverage, the phase began from the announcement of the presidential election and up to the voting day, namely from 24 February 1996 to 23 March 1996, overall spanning a period of 29 days.

Unlike presidential election campaigns in the US, which officially last for over two months, the campaign period of the first Taiwanese presidential election is much shorter, spanning only four weeks. Unofficially, nevertheless, candidates were on the campaign for at least a year prior to the election and the first eight months of the election year are occupied with primaries and caucuses. Despite the fact that candidates started campaigning quite early, not all newspapers provided systematic and detailed coverage of campaign issues.

Some scholars question the usefulness of focusing primarily on the period of the electoral campaign, since it is likely to ignore the significant period preceding the campaign, a period when long-term social, political and economic change may happen and influence the election result. Instead they suggest including the period before and after the elections (Seymour-Ure, 1974; Negrine, 1989). Nevertheless, during the official campaign period, the press gave more coverage to the election campaign and various important public issues were extensively discussed. Besides, the official campaign period served as a baseline for content analysis because it was the period when all three selected newspapers began to run special coverage of election news on a regular basis.

It was for these reasons that the present study chose the whole official campaign as the period of the study. At 29 days, it was longer than Semetko *et al's* 24-day study of the 1983 British general election campaign, but less than the 67-day study of the 1984 US presidential election campaign (see Semetko *et al.*, 1991).

### 3.2.4 The Sampling of the Relevant Content

Ever since the Taiwanese government's lifting of the stipulation of the number of pages a newspaper could publish, newspapers have increased the number of pages from the original six to 40- or even 50-plus pages. However, most of the important news about domestic politics and public affairs is covered in the *national section* of the newspapers, usually confined to the first twelve pages. As expected, most of the national newspapers gave extensive coverage of the presidential election in the national section because it was a nationwide election.

Because the aim of the present research is to examine how newspapers covered the important domestic political issues and the presidential campaign, only the *national section* of newspapers, namely the first twelve pages in the chosen newspapers, are under study. In terms of newspaper page layout, pages one to four are where the most important domestic political news items are usually put. During the official campaign period, there were additional pages devoted to special coverage of campaign news and China's missile testing. In order to gain further insights into newspapers' campaign agendas, these pages were also included for content analysis. However, in the national section, *International news* pages, *Mainland China news* pages, *Letters to the editor* pages, *Local news* pages, and *Advertising* pages were not included as part of the analysis.

The unit of analysis for the newspapers was the news item. Photographs, diagrams and cartoons were counted as news item. All news stories on Taiwan's domestic politics appearing in the *national section*, whether they were directly or indirectly related to the

presidential election, were content-analysed.

It is important to mention that physical copies of newspapers, and not digital or digital-archival copies, were used for analysis.

### 3.2.5 The Design of the Coding Schedule

A pilot study involving fifteen randomly selected copies of newspapers were content analysed to help construct and test the coding schedule. Based on this pilot study, and with reference to Semetko *et al*'s (1991) and King's (1994) coding books, the main variables coded on the coding schedule included:

**1. Item number**: Each news item is given a unique code number. The *item number* is for counting the available units of the examined data.

**2. Date**: *Date* refers to the date when the news item appeared in the newspaper. The date is useful for classifying and comparing the data.

**3. Paper**: *Paper* refers to the name or title of the publication. As mentioned previously, based on the circulation and differences in political partisanship, the three newspapers chosen for the present study were the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*, and the *Liberty Times*.

**4. Page number**: The *page number* refers to the page of the publication where the news item appeared. Given that the selective importance of the news item is usually closely related to the page on which it appears, this category is in this case designed to measure level of priority given to the article. The first twelve pages, the so-called *national section*, usually cover the important news about domestic politics, public affairs and, in this case, the election campaign.

**5. Type of item:** According to the nature of content, each news item is classified in the following categories:

(1) news story

(2) feature

(3) column

(4) editorial

(5) analysis/comment

(6) photograph

(7) interview/profile

(8) speech/debate

(9) others (e.g. maps, diagrams, drawings, cartoons, and so on)

**6-8. Text area, length of headline, and size of photograph**: These categories were created to examine the prominence of the news item and the amount of news coverage. They were recorded, tabulated and analysed in terms of area in square centimetre.

**9. Priority:** *Priority* asks if the news item is the lead story on the page. It is assumed that the prominence attached to the news item is directly related to the importance and priority given by the newspaper. The lead story, especially the one on the front page, is considered the most important by editors.

**10. Campaign**: All news items are divided into two categories, those related to the presidential campaign and those not. This classification is useful for exploring the focus of the presidential campaign news covered by the selected newspapers and the difference between the newspaper issue agenda and the newspaper campaign agenda.

**11-12. Subjects**: The *main subject* is the issue given greatest coverage in the news item. Judging from the visibility of the issue appearing in the headline, the leading paragraph, and

the text, the amount of space given to the issue, and the ordering of the presentation, the main subject of the news item was decided. Up to five subjects in order of predominance were coded for each news item whether it was *election-related* or *non-election-related*. Based on the pilot study and the modification of the category scheme used by King (1994), the following subjects were identified and established. Due to their coincidence and commonality of focus, some issues are grouped into the same subject category. Since analysing each issue individually may not have generated significant results, a total of 48 distinct subject categories were identified for analysis of the *subject* in the news:

(1) **Taiwanese-Chinese relations** (e.g. government's policies towards mainland China, reports of high-level talks and negotiations between Taiwan and China, cross-strait trade, investment, cultural exchanges, agricultural exchanges, direct shipping and air services, repatriation of criminals, Taiwanese internal reaction to cross-strait tensions resulting from China's military exercises and missile tests)

(2) **National identity** (e.g. the future of Taiwan: independence, reunification or the maintenance of the *status quo*)

(3) **Constitutional reform** (e.g. presidential or cabinet system, division of power between local and central governments)

(4) **Election** (e.g. the electoral system, regulations and enforcement of election campaign rules, reports of trends in the election campaign such as poll violence and negative campaigning)

(5) **Party politics** (e.g. formation of new political parties, political alliance/coalition, elections for speaker and vice-speaker in the Legislative Yuan, the legislature's consent over the premiership)

(6) **Democratisation** (e.g. the political impartiality of government officials, Cabinet reshuffles)

(7) **Political stability** (e.g. political harmony among political parties, avoidance of national unrest)

(8)  **Parliament** (e.g. pace and quality of legislation, conflict among parliamentarians)

(9)  **Judicial reform**

(10)  **Money politics** (e.g. vote-buying, collusion between politicians and interest groups and underworld criminal organisations)

(11)  **Government efficiency** (e.g. government corruption and malpractice)

(12)  **Government policies and regulations**

(13)  **Social order** (e.g. social unrest such as demonstrations and strikes, social instability such as increases in emigrant numbers and the exchange of US dollars, social justice)

(14)  **Crime/Legal/Law**

(15)  **Social trends and values** (e.g. change or degeneration in moral standards and social values)

(16)  **Economics/Finance** (e.g. banking, stock market, exchange-rate, foreign exchange reserves, business investment, international trade - export and import, industry promotion, pay rises for government employees)

(17)  **Inflation**

(18)  **Housing and land**

(19)  **Tax**

(20)  **Labour and employment** (e.g. disputes between management and labour, policies on migrant labour)

(21)  **Unemployment and human resources**

(22)  **Distribution of wealth**

(23)  **Agriculture and fisheries**

(24)  **International status** (e.g. membership of the UN and other international organisations)

(25)  **Diplomatic policies and relationships** (e.g. Taiwan's foreign policy, the development of its relationships with other countries, foreign perceptions of Taiwan)

(26)  **Taiwan-US relations**

(27)  **Environmental protection** (e.g. quality of living environment, pollution, and rubbish)

(28)  **Soil and water conservation** (e.g. conservation of natural resources, construction of golf

courses)

(29) **Population**

(30) **Urban development** (e.g. development gap between urban and rural areas)

(31) **Local community** (e.g. reconstruction of local communities and promotion of local culture)

(32) **Social welfare** (e.g. National Health Care, special care for the disabled, special services for low-income earners, old-age pensions)

(33) **Medicine and public health**

(34) **Women** (e.g. feminism, women's employment, care of children)

(35) **Disadvantaged groups** (e.g. the minorities and veterans)

(36) **National defence** (e.g. military defence and national security)

(37) **Mainlander-Taiwanese rift** (e.g. problems between Mainlanders and Taiwanese, especially resulting from their divergent views on issues concerning party politics and Taiwan's future)

(38) **Education** (e.g. the quality and appropriateness of the educational system, educational policies, textbooks, the quality of teachers)

(39) **Development of culture/arts**

(40) **Juvenile problems** (e.g. juvenile delinquency such as theft, robbery, drug-taking, illegal motorcycle-racing, underworld criminal organisations)

(41) **Religion**

(42) **Tourism**

(43) **Sports**

(44) **Science/Technology**

(45) **Traffic/Transportation/Communications** (e.g. roads, traffic accidents, traffic congestion, privatisation of Taiwanese railway, telecommunications)

(46) **Mass media** (e.g. subjects such as fairness of election coverage, and media monopoly of the state/autonomy of the media)

(47) **Campaign activities** (e.g. stories dealing with campaign strategies used by candidates,

stories relating to campaign trail activities and events, voter profile and constituency, and stories about poll predictions)

(48) **Others** (e.g. subjects that could not be satisfactorily classified under any of the categories listed earlier)

**13. Initiators of the subject of the election-related news item:** To examine who made more contributions to the coverage of the campaign agenda in the selected newspapers, the election-related news items were coded based on the initiation of the subject of the news. The coding instructions for this variable were as follows: *party or candidate-initiated stories* are those triggered by politicians' planned events, press releases and press conferences. As suggested by Semetko *et al.* (1991: 28), specific examples of this category were 'speeches or statements made by candidates and party leaders at rallies and on the hustings, and candidates' activities on the campaign trail'. On the other hand, *media-initiated news stories* are stories stemming from 'reporters' activity, such as questions to politicians during press conferences or while on the hustings'. The investigative reports, opinion columns, editorials, issue stories, news analysis, poll stories, articles about press-conducted interviews with candidates and stories taking elements from different time periods belong to the *media-initiated* category. Apart from initiation by parties or candidates and initiation by media, the *other possible initiators* of the subject in the news item such as government officials/organisations, interest groups, non-profit organisations, specialists/experts, the public and others were also included in this coding category. In the case of the election-related visuals such as photographs and cartoons, the similar criteria for identifying the initiator of the subject were applied. Up to five initiators in order of importance were coded for each item.

**14. News sources/Actors quoted, interviewed or referred to:** This variable is used to examine the news sources and actors in the election-related news item. From the extent to which a party or candidate was quoted or referred to as an actor in the news item, we can determine how much importance is attached to the actor from the press's viewpoint and how

the newspapers studied differ in selecting their news sources in the coverage of the campaign news. There are 29 items classified in this category (see the press coding schedule). Up to five news sources and actors in the order of frequency were coded for each story.

**15. Focus of the coverage of the election-related news item:** In order to determine whether the newspapers emphasised merely the electoral race or the substance of the campaign, the *major focus* of coverage of election-related news items was coded. Modifying Sinclair's (1982) classification of the coverage of the campaign news, the category definitions included:

(1) *substantive coverage*: (a) issues such as political policies proposed by candidates or parties and issues discussed by the press. The specific examples of issues could be found in the classification of the variable Subject 11-12. (b) candidates' personal qualities including ability, experience, leadership, political style, personality, intelligence, education, presentation skills, partisan affiliation, etc. More detailed examples of candidates' personal qualities could be found in the list of *image attributes*. (2) *electoral contest*: (a) opinion poll reporting, (b) stories about voter profile and constituency, (c) campaign strategies such as stories dealing with the campaigning tactics adopted by candidates to win elections, (d) campaign activities and events such as stories reporting campaign schedules and meetings, candidate's canvassing for voters, candidate's walkabouts addresses to rallies, candidate's press conferences, presentation, and debates on TV, candidate's talking about the opponents, candidate's predictions of the election outcome, electoral violence, and (e) political endorsements such as stories pledging support for a candidate without referring to issues or policy stands.

**16. Presidential candidate(s) covered:** To examine how newspapers differ in their attention given to the presidential candidates, the candidate(s) covered in the election-related news item was coded. There are sixteen categories in this variable, depending on how the presidential candidates were referred to in the news item.

**17. Mention of the presidential candidates' images:** This variable asks if the election-related

news item mentions presidential candidates' images. A further insight is taken into this theme using the next category (18).

**18. Presidential candidate's images, evaluation and news sources:** To examine what kinds of presidential candidates' images were being emphasised in the press, how these images stressed were evaluated, and who was quoted or cited as the news sources of the images emphasised, the four presidential candidates' images, candidate images evaluation and the news sources regarding candidate images were coded. First, candidate images stressed in the press were coded according to the list of *image attributes*. Second, the statement of each attribute mentioned was classified as *positive*, *negative*, *neutral*, *mixed*, and *cannot be determined*. Finally, with regard to the news sources of the presidential candidate images stressed in the press, the *main source* referred to the primary source that mentioned the candidate images most often.

Based on the modification of the category scheme employed by Lee (1996) in her study of second-level agenda-setting effects in the 1994 Taipei mayoral election, candidate images were classified into nineteen categories of attributes:

(1)  **Political style**

(2)  **Political honesty**

(3)  **Political philosophy**

(4)  **Ability** (e.g. government management ability, reform ability, past performance in public office)

(5)  **Leadership qualities** (e.g. leadership, think tank, human relations)

(6)  **Qualifications and experience** (e.g. qualifications or experience relating to public affairs, foresight and international experience)

(7)  **Integrity and virtues**

(8)  **Personality**

(9) **Appearance and bearing**

(10) **Intelligence**

(11) **Presentation skills/communication**

(12) **Personal background** (e.g. family background, personal experience, education, age, health, wealth)

(13) **Private life** (e.g. family life and marriage)

(14) **Religion**

(15) **Ancestral origin** (e.g. Taiwanese or Mainlander)

(16) **Localism** (e.g. Taiwanese qualities)

(17) **Partisan affiliation** (e.g. political identification, political relations and factions, political ideology)

(18) **Issue and policy stands**

(19) **Others** (e.g. attributes that could not be satisfactorily classified under any of the categories listed earlier)

In terms of the degree of emphasis on the *attribute* in each news item, up to five attributes were coded. A *positive* classification was given to statements indicating praise or endorsement for a presidential candidate's image. A *negative* classification was for statements that criticised, belittled or taunted a presidential candidate's image. A *neutral* classification referred to any statement that contained only objective and straight descriptions of a presidential candidate's image without any complimentary or derogatory comments. Statements showing both positive and negative evaluations of a presidential candidate's image were classified as *mixed*. Statements that did not directly mention a presidential candidate's image fell into the classification of *cannot be determined*.

**19. Main actor(s) in the visual:** For election-related visuals (photographs and cartoons), the main actor(s) appearing in both the picture and the caption accompanying the picture was coded according to the level of importance attached to the actor(s). Up to two primary actors

were coded for each visual.

**20. Initiator(s) of the visual:** A similar method used by Semetko *et al.* (1991) was applied to code the initiator of the election-related visual. For example, the mug shots were coded as *initiated by candidates or parties* while the cartoons were considered *initiated by the media*. A photograph showing a candidate was speaking, arriving, presenting something or appearing in a planned event was classified as *candidate or party-initiated*. On the other hand, a photograph representing hecklers, demonstrators, mistakes, private glimpses of the candidate, or some other unexpected events was classified as *media-initiated*. Besides, the *other possible initiators* of the visual such as government officials/organisations, psephologists/opinion poll organisations, interest groups, specialists/experts, the public, and others were also included in this coding category. Up to two initiators per visual were coded.

**21. Tone of the visual:** Each election-related visual was coded as (1) *positive*, (2) *negative*, and (3) *neutral* based on Semetko *et al*'s (1991) classification of the visual dimension. For example, a photograph depicting a candidate as receiving applause or smiling was considered *positive*. By contrast, if a photograph showed fewer crowd gathered, hecklers, demonstrators, protesters, conflicts, or candidate gaffes, it was coded as *negative*. Photographs were classified as *neutral* if they did not fit well into either category.

**22. Dimension/Overall tone of the campaign-related news item:** To evaluate the overall tone of the election-related news item, each item was analysed and coded in terms of whether it was *positive, negative, mixed,* or *neutral* or *non-applicable* to the presidential candidates of the four teams. Criteria similar to that used in evaluating candidate images were adopted to code the tone of the news item. Specifically, the overall tone of the news item was evaluated on the basis of the overall impression resulting from what was highlighted in the headline, the text of the news, and the visual, the main actor(s) concerned, and the perspective of the campaign. For example, a news item as a whole was classified as *positive* if it contained reinforcing

statements that praise or endorse a candidate and his/her positions. By contrast, a news item with remarks that criticise, belittle, or taunt a candidate and his/her positions was considered *negative*. A news item containing a mixture of reinforcing and critical remarks was coded as *mixed*. If a news item only contained objective and straight descriptions and facts, it was classified as *neutral*. A news item with no mention of a political party or a candidate was classified as *non-applicable*.

## 3.3 Focus Group Interviews

Apart from the content analysis of newspaper coverage, a total of eight extended focus group interviews were conducted to probe voters' views and opinions on issues of the day, campaign issues, and presidential candidates' image attributes.

### 3.3.1 Definitions and Characteristics of Focus Group Interviews

The focus group is a research method widely used in the social sciences and presently in politics and industry as well. The method is particularly useful for exploring participants' opinions, concerns and ways of understanding. Despite its widespread popularity as a key method for media researchers seeking to study audience responses, the focus group is not a new research tool. The use of focus groups in media research can be traced back to the early 1940s, but academic interest disappeared in subsequent years with the rise of exclusively quantitative methods adopted by researchers in the social sciences (Merton, 1987). Instead, the approach became popular as a research technique in the marketing and business research over the following decades. It was not until the 1980s and early 1990s that focus group interviewing experienced a revival of interest in media audience research and cultural studies (Deacon *et al.*, 1999).

The focus group is defined as 'an informal discussion among selected individuals about

specific topics relevant to the situation at hand' (Beck, Trombetta, and Share, 1986: 73). What makes focus groups different from other qualitative interview methods is the group discussion in which the use of group dynamics and interaction can generate rich and useful data. This is because in a focus group discussion, participants are encouraged to talk to one another, to comment on each other's points of view, to share insights, and to provide diversity of perceptions on the topics under investigation. A defining feature of focus group research is, as Morgan (1988: 12) indicates, 'the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group'.

Bertrand *et al.* (1992: 198) regard focus groups as a research method involving 'organising and conducting a series of group discussions with the objective of better understanding the attitudes, beliefs, practices, and values on a specific subject'. In the same vein, Lunt and Livingstone (1996) describe focus groups as a methodology which involves bringing together a group(s) of participants to explore an issue under the direction of a moderator who ensures that the discussion remains relevant, while promoting interaction to eliciting a wider range of opinions on that issue. A more specific and detailed definition and procedure of focus groups was suggested by Einsiedel, Brown, and Ross (1996):

> A focus group is a group of approximately ten to 12 people, sampled from a client population, who are asked to discuss and share their ideas, attitudes and feelings about a well defined topic in a session lasting 90 minutes to two hours. The participants are not necessarily experts on the topic, nor are they expected to arrive at consensus or decisions. The group discussion is guided by a moderator who facilitates by following a series of carefully crafted questions. These queries are usually designed to focus and probe the topic of interest to those conducting the research. This discussion process is commonly called a focus group interview (p. 7).

Despite considerable diversity in the conduct of contemporary focus group interviews, it is clear that 'the goal in using focus groups is to get closer to participants' understandings of the

researcher's topic of interest...Focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating what participants think, but they excel at uncovering why participants think as they do' (Morgan, 1988: 24-25).

A strategy known as the extended focus group is often adopted by researchers and this study also uses this approach as one of the research methods. The extended focus group requires participants to complete a written questionnaire prior to the group session. The pre-session questionnaire usually covers the material that will be discussed during the focus group session. This pre-session questionnaire can allow participants to develop a commitment to a particular answer or position before entering the group, so that minority opinions will also be presented (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997).

### 3.3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Focus Groups

Using focus groups provides a number of advantages. First, focus groups offer practical strengths like the fact that they are comparatively easy to conduct, can be done very cheaply and quickly in many circumstances (Morgan, 1988). In other words, a focus group study can be conducted quicker by a small team with limited financial resources than would be the case of larger national surveys. Berger (1991) states that focus groups are a much less expensive research tool than making a survey. The relatively low cost of focus groups makes the approach an attractive research method, especially for academic researchers who are unable to find funding for national surveys of worthwhile size and sophistication (MacGregor and Morrison, 1995).

Second, focus groups can provide in-depth insights into how the opinion of the participants on specific issues is formed and why they feel this way, allowing specific themes to be explored in-depth. The open response format of focus groups enables the observation of participants' changes in attitudes and understanding on issues under enquiry and allows the researcher to

'obtain deeper levels of meaning, make important connections, and identify subtle nuances in expression and meaning' (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 16). This offers greater insights into probing and exploring how people perceive the subject at hand and, even more importantly, why their diverse opinions and perspectives are formed in this way. As Lederman (1990: 117) observed, in contrast to the large-sample polling technique of surveys, which missed the *why* questions behind the numbers, focus groups can 'explore people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour' because of the ability of this approach 'to generate data about the "why" behind the behaviour' and 'to ask the kinds of questions that surveys don't ask and that individual interviews, too, miss'.

Moreover, in focus group interviews, interactions take place not only among the participants themselves, but also between participants and the researcher. On one hand, the very nature of group dynamics provides the participants with an opportunity for open exchange of different perceptions about the designated topic. Thus, a result of the synergy accompanying dynamic exchange between participants could be that 'the data generated by focus group interview are richer and deeper than data elicited in the one-on-one interview situation' (Lederman, 1991: 119) since the group members have an opportunity to pick up on, and react to, one another's comments and responses during the focus group discussion. Also, the direct interaction between participants and the researcher also offers 'opportunities for the clarification of responses, for follow-up questions, and for the probing of responses' (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 16) that may be impossible to capture through most structured interviews or surveys.

Third, focus groups allow participants with similar positions to interact with each other in a spontaneous manner not structured by the researcher's prejudices. Participants are free to provide a range of responses on points that are important to them which might be beyond the researcher's anticipations (Bertrand *et al.*, 1992). Morgan (1988) observed that one of the distinct strengths of focus groups in comparison to other interviewing techniques is the fact that this approach can generate useful data with relatively little direct input from the researcher.

Besides, the group setting encourages free flowing comments within a permissive environment where participants can control the way in which they wish to express themselves. In a focus group discussion, participants are encouraged to respond in their own terms and with their own frame of reference instead of the researcher completely defining terms and concepts in the framework. Focus groups can allow the researcher 'to observe the natural vocabulary with which people formulate meaning about the issues' (Gamson, 1992: 192).

Indeed, as suggested by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), focus groups have an advantage over survey research 'because focus groups produce a very rich body of data expressed in the respondents' own words and context'. They note:

> There is a minimum of artificiality of response, unlike survey questionnaires that ask for responses expressed on five-point rating scales or other constrained response categories. Participants can qualify their responses or identify important contingencies associated with their answers. Thus, responses have a certain ecological validity not found in traditional survey research (p. 12).

Similarly, Hansen *et al.* (1998) also argued that the major strength of the focus group discussion over the survey questionnaire study lies in its openness and flexibility for participants to respond, at length, in their own 'language' and on their own terms.

Despite a number of advantages examined, focus groups are not a panacea for all research needs and have their drawbacks. First, critics of this method argue that the findings of focus groups cannot be generalised to the population as a whole. The small number of participants selected in focus groups may not be representative of the target population and therefore significantly limit generalisation to a larger population (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Berger, 1991; Bertrand *et al.*, 1992; Wimmer and Dominick, 1997).

Second, the generalisability of focus group results can also be restricted because of the very

nature of group interaction. Although the interaction of participants in focus groups can result in the richer production of ideas, the responses from group members are not independent of one another, thus limiting the generalisability of focus group findings (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990).

Third, the outcome of focus groups could potentially be biased because of the influence of dominant or opinionated members or internal group pressure. Without proper handling, the performance of the group may be adversely affected by a few dominant participants who tend to monopolise the conversation and impose their opinions on other group members and, as a result, the more reserved participants might be unwilling to talk (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Berger, 1991; Wimmer and Dominick, 1997).

Fourth, the synergistic effect of the group setting is also likely to lessen the researcher's control over environment, participation and data gathering (Einsiedel *et al.*, 1996). In focus groups, participants' interaction among themselves is more than their interaction with the researcher. In other words, a higher level of control over the interaction is in the hands of the participants instead of the researcher. The danger of over-emphasis on group interaction is, as Krueger (1988) notes, detours in the discussion and the raising of irrelevant issues. Indeed, the data generated may not be useful if the participants are allowed to stray too far from the topic of the discussion (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997).

Finally, it is often difficult to analyse and interpret the focus group results due to the open-ended nature of responses. The data produced from focus groups often cannot be analysed quantitatively because focus group research is intended to collect qualitative data to answer questions of *how* or *why* (Bertrand *et al.*, 1992).

### 3.3.3 Purposes and Objectives

The purpose of focus group discussions for this research is aimed at ascertaining the public agendas on important issues and salient candidates' image attributes. Specific objectives of the focus groups include:

(1) to probe voters' perspectives about the issues of the day and candidates' images;

(2) to examine why voters' perceptions of important issues and candidates' image attributes were formed in this way;

(3) to study if voters with different gender and levels of education differ in their issue and image agendas.

### 3.3.4 Study Procedures and Basic Information about Focus Group Participants

In their study on important issues in Taiwan's electoral politics conducted during the 1993 elections for county magistrates and city mayors, Hsieh and Niou (1996b) found education, gender, and party identification were the most important demographic variables influencing the respondents' position and salience rankings. In the present study of Taiwan's first presidential election, the researcher is also interested in learning if differences in public perceptions of issues and candidates exist among groups of participants with differing gender and levels of education. Therefore, apart from their availability and voting eligibility, careful note was made of participants' demographics such as gender and educational level when the target sample for focus groups was recruited. In other words, the attributes used to recruit the members of focus groups would be eligible voter, gender, and education. Four types of voters would form the main sample for focus groups. They are higher educated female (HEF) voters, higher educated male (HEM) voters, lesser educated female (LEF) voters, and lesser educated male (LEM) voters. Higher educated voters were defined as people with at least a university degree, whereas lesser educated voters referred to people who had not been to university, such as those possessing elementary school or high school diplomas.

After confirmation of the target sample, the next step was to decide the numbers of focus groups and participants therein. There are a lot of variations in the number of groups used in studies adopting focus groups as a research method. Most of the time more than one focus group is used. Using just one group will not suffice for the needs of the research because there is no way of knowing whether the responses are particular to that one group or are characteristic of a wider audience (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997; Bryman, 2001). Furthermore, Hansen et al. (1998) noted that one main determinant of the number of groups is 'the type of comparisons across different group or population characteristics specified by the objectives of the research' (p. 269). Morgan (1988) suggests the number of focus groups depends on the number of different population sub-groups required. He argues that 'running a minimum of two groups in each distinct segment will obviously increase the total number of groups' (p. 2). With regard to the size of each focus group, there is wide disagreement on this issue, with some recommending between five to ten participants (Deacon et al., 1999) or six to ten participants (Morgan, 1988) and others suggesting no more than ten to twelve participants (Krueger, 1988; Lengua et al., 1992). Apart from the above considerations, time and resources are also factors in deciding the numbers of groups and participants in the focus groups used.

Taking all factors there into account, it was decided to conduct eight focus groups, which consisted of two groups of four types of participants respectively and each group ranged from ten to twelve members. Participants were recruited from the official voter registration lists on an *available* basis. Before focus groups were formally conducted, seven potential participants were contacted to carry out a pilot study to see if any techniques in running a focus group needed improving. At the next stage, participants were contacted by telephone and a meeting time arranged. A total of 92 voters from Taichung were finally recruited to participate in focus group discussions. Choosing Taichung as the site for study was based on the following reasons:

First, Taichung is the researcher's hometown, where contacts and resources are more accessible. Second, with a population more than six hundred thousand, Taichung is the third most populous city in Taiwan. It lies about halfway between the metropolitan northern area and the suburban southern area. Third, Rogers, Hart, and Dearing (1997), in their reviewing a paradigmatic history of agenda-setting research, also argue that a means of disaggregation of the agenda data is to have more agenda-setting research at regional, state, and city levels. In this sense too, conducting focus groups with Taichung voters conforms to the trend in agenda-setting studies.

Researchers have argued that when participants are unknown to each other, better data are obtained (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub, 1996). This is because focus groups consisting of strangers have the advantage of allowing individuals to speak more freely and openly than they would in a pre-existing group, where participants may be less likely to voice *taken for granted* standpoints and experiences (Morgan, 1988). Some researchers also precluded utilising participants knowing each other on the ground that pre-existing styles of interaction may contaminate the group session (Bryman, 2001) or status differences within groups may inhibit participants in particular structural positions making revelations to members of their own social circle (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). With this in mind, this study recruited participants who were unknown to each other.

Eight focus groups were conducted during the 29-day election period, beginning on 24 February and lasting until 23 March 1996, with the intention of probing the perceptions of 92 participants concerning the importance of the issues of the moment, and the image attributes of the four presidential candidates. Of the 92 focus group participants interviewed, 46 (50.0%) were male and 46 (50.0%) were female. Group HEF1 was made of twelve female participants; Group HEM1 had twelve male participants. There were eleven female participants in Group LEF1 and twelve male participants in Group LEM1 respectively. A total of eleven female participants were recruited in Group HEF2; twelve male participants in

Group HEM2. Group LEF2 consisted of twelve female participants and Group LEM2 had ten male participants. The participants in Groups HEF1, HEF2, HEM1 and HEM2 all possessed university degrees. By contrast, the educational level of the participants in Groups LEF1, LEF2, LEM1, and LEM2 ranged from elementary school to professional college, but on the whole centred on high school. Of the 46 female participants, half were classified as *higher educated*, those with university or postgraduate degree, and half were *lesser educated*, those whose educational level was below university. In the case of 46 male participants, 24 (52.2%) were the *higher educated* and 22 (47.8%) fell in to the category of the *lesser educated*.

More than half (55.4%) of the participants' ages fell between 25 and 39 years. There was only a slight difference in the age distribution among eight individual focus groups. In terms of sub-ethnicity, 63% of the participants were Taiwanese, followed by Mainlanders (18.5%), Hakka (15.2%), and aboriginals (3.3%). There was a similar pattern of sub-ethnic background among eight focus groups though only Groups HEF1 and HEM1 had aboriginal participants, who are the minority in Taiwan.

The average monthly income of most participants interviewed mainly ranged from NT$20,000 to NT$49,999. Closer examination of the figures in Table 3.1 shows that there were more participants with monthly income more than NT$50,000 in higher educated groups than in lesser educated groups. On the other hand, more participants with monthly income less than NT$20,000 were found in the lesser educated groups.

Table 3.1

Demographic Background of Focus Group Participants

| Participant | Group HEF1 (N=12) | Group HEM1 (N=12) | Group LEF1 (N=11) | Group LEM1 (N=12) | Group HEF2 (N=11) | Group HEM2 (N=12) | Group LEF2 (N=12) | Group LEM2 (N=10) | Total (N=92) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | - | 12 (100%) | - | 12 (100%) | - | 12 (100%) | - | 10 (100%) | 46 (50.0%) |
| Female | 12 (100%) | - | 11 (100%) | - | 11 (100%) | - | 12 (100%) | - | 46 (50.0%) |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | | |
| 20-24 | 3 (25.0%) | 1 (8.3%) | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | 3 (25.0%) | - | 15 (16.3%) |
| 25-29 | 2 (16.7%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (27.3%) | 3 (25.0%) | 4 (36.4%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (30.0%) | 24 (26.1%) |
| 30-39 | 4 (33.3%) | 4 (33.3%) | 4 (36.4%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (27.3%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (25.0%) | 3 (30.0%) | 27 (29.3%) |
| 40-49 | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (18.2%) | 3 (25.0%) | 2 (16.7%) | 3 (30.0%) | 18 (19.6%) |
| 50-59 | 1 (8.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | - | 2 (16.7%) | - | 1 (8.3%) | 1 (8.3%) | 1 (10.0%) | 8 (8.7%) |
| **Sub-ethnicity** | | | | | | | | | |
| Taiwanese | 6 (50.0%) | 8 (66.7%) | 5 (45.5%) | 8 (66.7%) | 7 (63.6%) | 8 (66.7%) | 9 (75.0%) | 7 (70.0%) | 58 (63.0%) |
| Hakka | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (8.3%) | 3 (27.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (9.1%) | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (10.0%) | 14 (15.2%) |
| Mainlander | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (16.7%) | 3 (27.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | 3 (27.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (8.3%) | 2 (20.0%) | 17 (18.5%) |
| Aboriginal | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (8.3%) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 (3.3%) |
| **Educational Level** | | | | | | | | | |
| Less Than Elementary School to Elementary School Graduate | - | - | 1 (9.1%) | 2 (16.7%) | - | - | - | 2 (20.0%) | 5 (5.4%) |
| Junior High School Graduate | - | - | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | - | - | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (10.0%) | 7 (7.6%) |
| Senior High School Graduate | - | - | 6 (54.5%) | 7 (58.3%) | - | - | 8 (66.7%) | 5 (50.0%) | 26 (28.3%) |
| Professional College Graduate | - | - | 2 (18.2%) | 1 (8.3%) | - | - | 2 (16.7%) | 2 (20.0%) | 7 (7.6%) |
| University (Graduate) to Postgraduate | 12 (100%) | 12 (100%) | - | - | 11 (100%) | 12 (100%) | - | - | 47 (51.1%) |
| **Monthly Income** | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than NT$20,000 | 1 (8.3%) | 1 (8.3%) | 4 (36.4%) | 2 (16.7%) | 1 (9.1%) | 1 (8.3%) | 5 (41.7%) | 2 (20.0%) | 17 (18.5%) |
| NT$ 20,000-NT$49,999 | 7 (58.3%) | 5 (41.7%) | 5 (45.5%) | 8 (66.7%) | 6 (54.5%) | 5 (41.7%) | 7 (58.3%) | 7 (70.0%) | 50 (54.3%) |
| NT$ 50,000-NT$79,999 | 4 (33.3%) | 5 (41.7%) | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | 4 (36.4%) | 5 (41.7%) | - | 1 (10.0%) | 23 (25.0%) |
| More than NT$80,000 | - | 1 (8.3%) | - | - | - | 1 (8.3%) | - | - | 2 (2.2%) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   N: Number

Focus group sessions were deliberately run on weekends since they were the most convenient times for participants. The discussions were held in the mornings, afternoons and evenings of weekends between 24 February and 17 March 1996. Their durations varied between one and a half to two and a half hours. Participants were paid a small fee as an inducement to participate in focus group discussions. Light refreshments were provided for all groups on all days.

Before each of the focus group sessions, a brief presentation about the subject of the research was made and the purpose of focus groups was explained. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity for responses used in the research. Permission was also obtained from participants to audio-tape focus groups for research analysis and reference purposes. All participants were then asked to complete a written questionnaire allowing them to think about the topic before the sessions began. This pre-session questionnaire included most of the questions that would later be discussed during the group session and was also intended to encourage participants to take stands on particular issues. This helped avoid one potential problem created by group dynamics, i.e. the person who is unwilling to express an opinion because he or she is a minority (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997). Moreover, the responses gathered from pre-session questionnaires also provided the quantitative data for measuring the public issue agenda and public image agenda in contrast to the qualitative results from focus group sessions used for better understanding of why participants felt and thought about these important issues and candidates' images.

Apart from main open-ended questions probing the public's perceptions of important issues, campaign issues, and candidates' images, this pre-session questionnaire also included questions about participants' interpersonal communication, media influence, media use and exposure, media evaluation, media political gratification, political interest, participation, and preference, candidate evaluation, national identity, and demographics. When completing pre-session questionnaires, participants were asked to give direct and honest answers to questions without

discussing with other members and also told not to write their names on the questionnaires. All questionnaires were checked for completeness at the time of collection.

At the beginning of each discussion, participants were told that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions that would be asked, and that they should feel free to express their opinions, whatever they might be. Since participants recruited for focus groups were unfamiliar with one another, in order to make participants feel more at ease, they were asked to briefly introduce themselves before the group session proceeded. This brief introduction could also serve as a crucial cue to the taped discussions because it provided an opportunity for the researcher to identify the voice of each participant. In each session, a single standard set of open-ended questions was used to ask every participant in turn about their views on the important current issues in Taiwan and their perceptions of four presidential candidates' image attributes. Use of the same set of questions allowed comparisons to be made between the answers given by different groups, as one of the main purposes of the study was to explore the similarities and differences of viewpoints presented by participants with different gender and educational backgrounds. Although the main questions asked in the focus groups were about participants' opinions on important issues and salient candidates' images, probing and follow-up questions were also added when necessary during the course of a discussion.

Since I was fully aware of the nature of my research and its aims, I took on the role of moderator though I was aware of the risk of bias whenever the researcher also acts as the moderator of a focus group. Careful attention was given to reducing this kind of risk by not being predisposed to steering participants' responses into the direction to fit my pre-conceived expectations from the research. As a moderator, I was aware that my job was to 'facilitate, moderate and stimulate discussion among the participants, not to dominate, govern or unduly lead such discussion' (Hansen *et al.*, 1998: 272).

Great efforts were made to ensure that the topics or issues stated in the questioning route

were to be covered, the discussions in groups stayed focused on the subject relevant to the present research, and group dynamics fairly handled so that potentially dominant participants could be controlled and shy participants encouraged to talk. In practice, it was found that maintaining a balance of participant contributions was not an easy job, in that group dynamics could often affect individual's responses, with some people having less input. Nevertheless, the over-domination of the group by certain individual members and the passive contributions from timorous members could be minimised by skilful facilitation.

At the start of each group session, participants were reminded of the need for everyone to participate and to be respectful of each other. In order to make sure that everyone in the group had their say, each participant was asked to respond to the questions in turn. A useful strategy, as suggested by Einsiedel *et al.* (1996), was also borne in mind in coping with dominant participants or reticent participants. For example, statements such as 'I believe XX has something to say...let's give him/her a chance, shall we?' or 'does anyone else want to share his/her perceptions?' were often used to discourage dominant talkers. In dealing with shy and reluctant participants, eye contact, subtle encouragements and simple questions were used to elicit responses. Paying careful attention to their facial expressions and gestures also proved to be helpful for drawing out reluctant members because 'facial expressions and gestures often suggest occasions when an individual is about to speak, disagree, is puzzled by something that has been said, or requires reassurance that an expressed opinion is accepted' (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 94). One of the cases was that I invited a shy participant to contribute to the discussion when seeing her nodding her head in reaction to another participant's comments. I said to her, 'I saw you nodding your head, XX. Is there something you can say about this point?' This method turned out to be very useful for motivating shy participants' contributions to the discussion during the course of focus groups. On the whole, it was observed that in comparison to their lesser educated counterparts, higher educated participants seemed more talkative and detailed in their responses. In terms of gender, male participants were generally more active in voicing their

opinions than females.

All the focus group sessions were audio-taped and transcribed before the findings were analysed. Using audio-taping over video-taping was because of the perceived intrusiveness of the latter. Prior to the transcription of focus groups, the data obtained from pre-session questionnaires were statistically analysed in order to get a preliminary impression of the pattern of participants' responses to the main interview questions. In addition, notes taken during the interviews were reviewed and organised to detect the trend of the key ideas conveyed by participants. After the transcription of all the focus groups had been completed, I began reading through the transcripts to obtain a complete picture of the results. For the analysis of the focus group data, a thematic coding scheme relating to the ideas or topics identified during an initial read-through of the transcripts was developed. The responses to the relevant questions asked in the pre-session questionnaires were also used for developing the coding categories. The task of analysing the transcribed texts was to classify and sort the responses and to identify important examples and themes in the data pertinent to questions asked and discussed. In the words of Hansen *et al*. (1998: 279), one task for the analysis is 'to examine, categorise, and analyse the types of responses generated in relation to the "headings" and specific "foci" determined by the research framework and set out in the interview guide'.

As a first step towards analysing focus group data, participants' comments were grouped together based on similarity of focus. The next step was to find the recurrent ideas or themes that appeared with the most frequency. As pointed out by Krueger (1988: 109), the clues of analysis lie in 'trends and patterns that reappear among various focus groups'. In order to present the diversity of viewpoints expressed by participants, not only key points and representative examples but also specific ideas and different remarks that reflect a minority view would be discussed. Special attention was paid to the reasons participants provided for their opinions. Direct quotes of the group discussions were used to highlight

the important points being made. Finally, to see what the different groups said and felt about the given topics, similar themes or opinions discussed by different groups were drawn together and compared, and a further examination of how these relate to the difference between individuals and between groups was made.

## 3.4 Research Questions

The present research is mainly aimed at finding out answers to the following questions:

1. To examine issues most often emphasised by the newspaper stories during the campaign period for the 1996 Taiwanese presidential election;

2. To find out the relative contributions of political parties/candidates, and the press to the newspaper campaign agenda;

3. To analyse which actors are given prominence over others in newspaper campaign coverage;

4. To investigate the image attributes of the presidential candidates most often covered by the newspapers and how they are covered during the presidential campaign period;

5. To analyse the sources of candidates' image attributes covered in the press;

6. To examine the issues most often mentioned by the participants of the focus groups during the presidential campaign period and why they are important in the minds of participants;

7. To explore the image attributes of the presidential candidates most often mentioned by the participants of the focus groups during the presidential campaign period and why these attributes are considered important by participants;

8. To examine if participants with different gender and levels of education would have different issue and image agendas;

9. To compare and contrast newspaper coverage and public perceptions of issues and candidates' image attributes.

# Chapter 4 – Content Analysis: Results and Discussion

The main focus of this chapter aims to examine the newspaper agendas, including the *newspaper issue agenda*, the *newspaper campaign agenda*, and the *newspaper image agenda*. The results of content analysis of the three selected Taiwanese newspapers, the *United Daily News*, the *China Times*, and the *Liberty Times*, will be presented. All election-related items were further analysed in order to understand which actors were given greater prominence, who made greater contributions to the formation of newspaper campaign agenda, the focus of campaign news, and the overall dimension of campaign news items. Evaluation and the sources of presidential candidates' image attributes will also be discussed.

## 4.1 Amount and Prominence of Press Coverage

A total of 10,534 news items, published between 24 February and 23 March 1996 in the three principal Taiwanese newspapers, were content-analysed. As Figure 4.1 shows, the *United Daily News* published 3,575 news items, representing 33.9% of the total, followed by the *China Times* with 3,508 items (33.3%) and the *Liberty Times* with 3,451 items (32.8%). There was no considerable difference in the number of news items printed in these three newspapers.

Figure 4.1



Percentage of News Items in the Three Newspapers

☐ The Liberty Times 3,451 (32.8%)

▨ The United Daily News 3,575 (33.9%)

▨ The China Times 3,508 (33.3%)
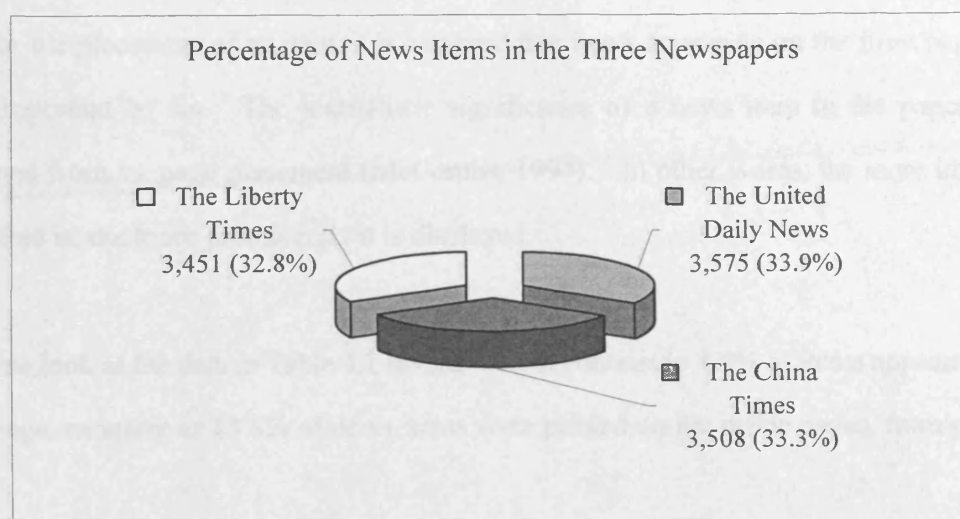
Of the total number of items, 3,747 (35.6%) were election-related. The *China Times* gave more coverage to the election campaign. A total of 1,522 election-related items (40.6%) appeared in the *China Times*. The *United Daily News* came second with 1,239 items (33.1%), followed by the *Liberty Times* which contained 986 items (26.3%). Figure 4.2 shows these statistics:

Figure 4.2



Number of Election- and Non-election-related News Items in the Three Newspapers
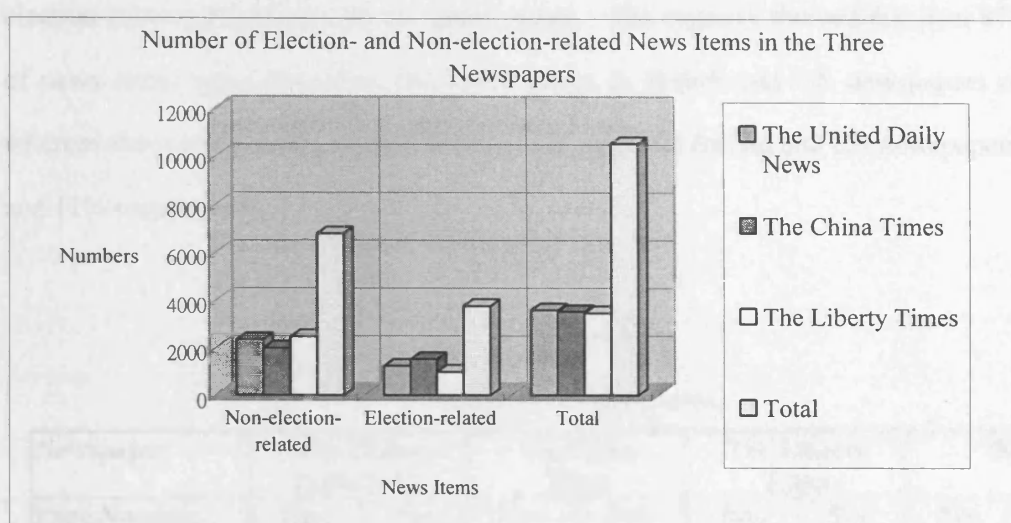
### 4.1.1 Position of News Items

The page number indicates the place in the newspaper where a news item was put, and the importance of an item is closely related to its page placement. No matter what criteria are used for the placement of an item, it is assumed that items appearing on the front page are the most important by far. The journalistic significance of a news item in the papers can be evaluated from its page placement (McCombs, 1994). In other words, the more important a news item is, the more prominently it is displayed.

A simple look at the data in Table 4.1 reveals that in contrast to 4.8% of items appearing on the front page, as many as 83.8% of news items were printed on the inside pages, from pages two

to seven and a total of 11.5% of items were placed on the rear pages, from pages eight to eleven. Given that there is only one front page per newspaper, it is not surprising to find that the majority of items were placed on the inside. Besides, another important reason why a low percentage of news items were found on the front page is mainly due to the layout of the newspapers selected. On the front pages of the newspapers under study, only 50% of the pages displayed important news items with the remaining 50% devoted to advertisements. This is consistent with the results of Semetko et al's 1991 research in which the bulk of election coverage appeared on the inside pages. The research showed that over 87% and 89% of news items were placed on the inside pages in British and US newspapers respectively, whereas the corresponding figures for the front pages of British and US newspapers were 13% and 11% respectively.

Table 4.1

Position of News Items

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Page Number | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Front Page | 190 | 5.3% | 160 | 4.6% | 153 | 4.4% | 503 | 4.8% |
| Page 2 | 459 | 12.8 | 482 | 13.7 | 537 | 15.6 | 1478 | 14.0 |
| Page 3 | 506 | 14.2 | 427 | 12.2 | 518 | 15.0 | 1451 | 13.8 |
| Page 4 | 562 | 15.7 | 544 | 15.5 | 488 | 14.1 | 1594 | 15.1 |
| Page 5 | 471 | 13.2 | 291 | 8.3 | 585 | 17.0 | 1347 | 12.8 |
| Page 6 | 505 | 14.1 | 510 | 14.5 | 571 | 16.5 | 1586 | 15.1 |
| Page 7 | 509 | 14.2 | 515 | 14.7 | 341 | 9.9 | 1365 | 13.0 |
| Page 8 | 99 | 2.8 | - | - | 258 | 7.5 | 357 | 3.4 |
| Page 9 | 274 | 7.7 | 407 | 11.6 | - | - | 681 | 6.5 |
| Page 10 | - | - | 139 | 4.0 | - | - | 139 | 1.3 |
| Page 11 | - | - | 33 | 0.9 | - | - | 33 | 0.3 |
| Total | 3575 | 100 | 3508 | 100 | 3451 | 100 | 10534 | 100.1 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

Close examination of the figures in Table 4.1 reveals that the three newspapers presented a similar trend insofar as carrying much more back-page news items than front-page items. The figures in the individual newspapers were quite near to the average results. Specifically, the *United Daily News* printed the most items on its front page, 190 items (5.3%) while both

the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* were very close to each other in terms of the percentage of news items appearing on their front pages; 4.6% and 4.4% respectively. With regard to inside-page items, it appears that the *Liberty Times* was ahead of its counterparts by printing 88.1% of items on the inside pages. The corresponding figures for the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* were 84.2% and 78.9% respectively. The *China Times* had more news items (16.5%) placed on the back pages in comparison with 10.5% for the *United Daily News* and 7.5% for the *Liberty Times*. The *Liberty Times* had fewer news items on the back page because the page layout of its *national section* only included the first eight pages.

### 4.1.2 Type of News Items

According to the figures in Table 4.2, the highest percentage of news items across all three newspapers (67.9%) was coded as *news story*. *Photographs* accounted for the second largest percentage (14.6%), followed by *features* with 5.7%. Due to the importance of the election, newspapers tried to provide in-depth analysis of campaign activities of both the parties and candidates. The results, as shown in Table 4.2, indicate that *column* and *analysis/comment* were very close to each other in terms of total number of items – 303 items and 302 items respectively. During the campaign period, newspapers also gave special coverage to candidates' televised debates and speeches. Of the total items printed in all three newspapers, 2.1% concerned *speeches* and/or *debates*. Another type of item was the *interview/profile*. Only 1.1% of news items in all three newspapers fell into this category. Despite its importance in reflecting the editors' opinions on topical issues, newspapers in Taiwan do not normally publish more than one editorial a day. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that only 89 *editorials* (0.8% of the total items) were coded in 87 issues of the selected newspapers.

Table 4.2

Type of News Items in Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Item | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| News Story | 2404 | 67.2% | 2286 | 65.2% | 2459 | 71.3% | 7149 | 67.9% |
| Feature | 220 | 6.2 | 234 | 6.7 | 147 | 4.3 | 601 | 5.7 |
| Column | 83 | 2.3 | 64 | 1.8 | 156 | 4.5 | 303 | 2.9 |
| Editorial | 29 | 0.8 | 29 | 0.8 | 31 | 0.9 | 89 | 0.8 |
| Analysis/Comment | 122 | 3.4 | 163 | 4.6 | 17 | 0.5 | 302 | 2.9 |
| Photograph | 546 | 15.3 | 511 | 14.6 | 479 | 13.9 | 1536 | 14.6 |
| Interview/Profile | 37 | 1.0 | 52 | 1.5 | 24 | 0.7 | 113 | 1.1 |
| Speech/Debate | 66 | 1.8 | 75 | 2.1 | 78 | 2.3 | 219 | 2.1 |
| Others | 68 | 1.9 | 94 | 2.7 | 60 | 1.7 | 222 | 2.1 |
| Total | 3575 | 100 | 3508 | 100 | 3451 | 100 | 10534 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

When the newspapers were viewed individually, the *Liberty Times* took the lead in publishing news stories (71.3%), compared with the *United Daily News* (67.2%) and the *China Times* (65.2%). The figures in Table 4.2 also indicate that the *United Daily News* printed more photographs (15.3%) than the other two newspapers (14.6% and 13.9% in the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* respectively). In terms of the percentage accounted for by features, news items numbered 4.3% in the *Liberty Times* in contrast to the *China Times* and the *United Daily News*, which were close to each other in the percentage values – 6.7% and 6.2% respectively. Although the *Liberty Times* led in number of publishing columns (156 – more than double the *China Times'* 64), it fell behind the other two newspapers with the smallest percentage of analysis and/or comment (0.5%). Both the *Liberty Times* and the *China Times* scored a very close percentage in speeches and/or debates, with 2.3% and 2.1% respectively, compared with 1.8% for the *United Daily News*. The *China Times* printed more than twice the volume of interviews or profiles (1.5%) than the *Liberty Times* (0.7%). As mentioned earlier, because newspapers only printed one or two editorials every issue, there was little difference in the number of editorials published by the three newspapers.

### 4.1.3 News Items Which Are Lead Stories

Analysis of whether a news item was a lead story can reveal the importance and priority given to that item. The underlying assumption is that the prominence accorded to an item is positively related to the importance and priority given to it by the newspapers. One indicator of importance and priority accorded to an item is to see if the item is a lead story on the page. A lead story, especially on the front page, is considered the most important item by the editors.

Table 4.3

Frequency of the News Items Which Are Lead Stories

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lead Story | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Yes | 227 | 6.3% | 239 | 6.8% | 206 | 6.0% | 672 | 6.4% |
| No | 3348 | 93.7 | 3269 | 93.2 | 3245 | 94.0 | 9862 | 93.6 |
| Total | 3575 | 100 | 3508 | 100 | 3451 | 100 | 10534 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

As the data show, of the total 10,534 news items analysed, only 672 items (6.4%) were lead stories. When the individual newspapers were examined, it was found that there was an almost identical pattern in the proportion of lead stories among the three newspapers. This was because there is only one lead story on every page of the *national section* in the three newspapers.

### 4.2 Newspaper Issue Agenda

In the present study, the *newspaper issue agenda* is defined as a rank-order agenda of different issues emphasised in the newspapers. The ranking is based on the tally of the frequency of each issue coded in news items. In other words, the more coverage given to an issue by a newspaper, the higher ranking the issue will have on the agenda.

## 4.2.1 Issues Emphasised in All Newspapers

Although not every item had more than one issue, a maximum of five issues were coded, based on the order of their importance in the item. Table 4.4 shows all the issues discussed in the 10,534 news items printed in the three newspapers. From the table, it is obvious that 'Taiwanese-Chinese relations' was the most popular issue, with 30.2% of the total news items relating to the issue. The second most mentioned issue was 'campaign activities', which accounted for 26.3% of the items. The third most discussed issue was 'national defence', which was mentioned in 20.7% of the items. As stated before, the *national section*, namely the first eight to twelve pages, was chosen as the range of content on which the content analysis of newspapers was conducted, because these pages usually cover important national news events and social news stories. However, they also gave coverage of many news items with issues that were too divisive to be satisfactorily classified under any categories but coded together as *others*. As a result, it is not surprising to find 14.3% of news items categorised as 'others'. The fifth most popular issue in the press was 'crime/legal/law', which was mentioned 1,350 times (12.8%). The next three issues, which were emphasised more than 500 times in all the news items, were 'economics/finance' (558 times), 'Taiwan-US relations' (528 times), and 'elections' (512 times). The ninth-ranked issue was 'national identity'; 4.1% of all the news items were related to this issue. The tenth important issue was 'traffic/transportation/communications', which was found 331 times.

Table 4.4

Frequency of Issues

| Issue | Count | % of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Taiwanese-Chinese Relations | 3178 | 30.2% |
| Campaign Activities | 2772 | 26.3 |
| National Defence | 2181 | 20.7 |
| Others | 1502 | 14.3 |
| Crime/Legal/Law | 1350 | 12.8 |
| Economics/Finance | 558 | 5.3 |
| Taiwan-US Relations | 528 | 5.0 |
| Elections | 512 | 4.9 |
| National Identity | 435 | 4.1 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 331 | 3.1 |
| Money Politics | 319 | 3.0 |
| Democratisation | 230 | 2.2 |
| Mass Media | 221 | 2.1 |
| Diplomatic Policies and Relationships | 217 | 2.1 |
| Party Politics | 176 | 1.7 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 174 | 1.7 |
| Education | 173 | 1.6 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 168 | 1.6 |
| Parliament | 157 | 1.5 |
| Government Policies and Regulations | 134 | 1.3 |
| Medicine and Public Health | 130 | 1.2 |
| Social Welfare | 118 | 1.1 |
| Constitutional Reform | 114 | 1.1 |
| Social Order | 111 | 1.1 |
| Environmental Protection | 108 | 1.0 |
| Government Efficiency | 95 | 0.9 |
| Judicial Reform | 83 | 0.8 |
| Women | 80 | 0.8 |
| Development of Culture/Arts | 79 | 0.7 |
| International Status | 66 | 0.6 |
| Disadvantaged Groups | 62 | 0.6 |
| Labour and Employment | 51 | 0.5 |
| Tourism | 43 | 0.4 |
| Inflation | 33 | 0.3 |
| Social and Water Conservation | 33 | 0.3 |
| Science/Technology | 33 | 0.3 |
| Juvenile Problems | 32 | 0.3 |
| Tax | 30 | 0.3 |
| Local Community | 28 | 0.3 |
| Political Stability | 25 | 0.2 |
| Social Trends and Values | 24 | 0.2 |
| Housing and Land | 24 | 0.2 |
| Urban Development | 8 | 0.1 |
| Religion | 8 | 0.1 |
| Unemployment and Human Resources | 7 | 0.1 |
| Sports | 6 | 0.1 |
| Distribution of Wealth | 1 | 0 |
| Population | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 16749 | 159.0* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

**4.2.2 Regrouping of Issues into Macro Level Issues**

How all the issues given in the coding schedule were mentioned in entirety has been presented

in Table 4.4. Given that a total of 48 different issues went into the coding schedule, analysis

of each issue alone may not generate meaningful results. Therefore, it may be more helpful

in understanding the importance of different issues emphasised in the newspapers if the

subjects are regrouped in terms of their similarity. What follows is a list of eighteen macro

level issues under which all 48 micro level issues have been categorised.

1. **Cross-strait relations**
    -Taiwanese-Chinese relations
    -National identity

2. **Improvement of the democratic political system**
    -Constitutional reform
    -Elections
    -Party politics
    -Democratisation
    -Political stability
    -Parliament
    -Judicial reform
    -Money politics

3. **Government efficiency**
    -Government efficiency
    -Government policies and regulations

4. **Law and order**
    -Social order
    -Crime/Legal/Law
    -Social trends and values

## 5. Economic development

- -Economics/Finance
- -Inflation
- -Housing and land
- -Tax
- -Labour and employment
- -Unemployment and human resources
- -Distribution of wealth

## 6. Agriculture and fisheries

## 7. International relationships

- -International status
- -Diplomatic policies and relationships
- -Taiwan-US relations

## 8. Environment/Ecology

- -Environmental protection
- -Soil and water conservation

## 9. Urban and rural development

- -Population
- -Urban development
- -Local community

## 10. Social welfare

- -Social welfare
- -Medicine and public health
- -Women
- -Disadvantaged groups

## 11. National defence

## 12. Mainlander-Taiwanese rift

### 13. Education/Culture/Arts

-Education
-Development of culture/arts
-Juvenile problems
-Religion
-Tourism
-Sports

### 14. Science/Technology

### 15. Traffic/Transportation/Communications

### 16. Mass media

### 17. Campaign activities

### 18. Others

-Issues that cannot be satisfactorily classified under any of the above categories

### 4.2.3 Coverage of Issues at Macro Level in the Three Newspapers

Overall, as the contents of Table 4.5 reveal, the issue of 'cross-strait relations' was the top ranked issue during the 1996 presidential contest, accounting for 29.0% of the total macro issues appearing in all the newspapers taken together. The second most important issue was 'national defence', which accounted for 17.5% of the macro issues covered. The third most mentioned issue was 'improvement of the democratic political system' (13.0%), followed by 'law and order' (11.9%), 'international relationships' (6.5%), and 'economic development' (5.6%). Issues receiving less than 5% included 'social welfare' (3.1%), 'education/culture/arts' (2.7%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.7%), 'government efficiency' (1.8%), 'mass media' (1.8%), 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (1.4%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.3%), 'environment/ecology' (1.1%), 'urban and rural development' (0.3%), and 'science/technology' (0.3%). Although the issue of 'campaign activities', comprised of micro

issues such as voter profile and constituency, poll predictions, candidates' campaign strategies, electoral activities and events, political endorsement, and so on, was mentioned in 26.3% of the total news items (see Table 4.4), it was excluded from the analysis here because it contained no issue of substance other than electoral contest reporting.

Table 4.5

Ranking and Percentages of Issues Emphasised in the Three Newspapers

| Newspapers<br>Issues | The United Daily News (N=3659) | | The China Times (N=4423) | | The Liberty Times (N=4393) | | Total (N=12475) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 27.8% | 1 | 29.6% | 1 | 29.3% | 1 | 29.0% |
| National Defence | 2 | 16.4 | 2 | 18.3 | 2 | 17.5 | 2 | 17.5 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 4 | 13.1 | 3 | 13.6 | 3 | 12.2 | 3 | 13.0 |
| Law and Order | 3 | 14.5 | 4 | 10.3 | 4 | 11.3 | 4 | 11.9 |
| International Relationships | 6 | 5.9 | 6 | 5.3 | 5 | 8.2 | 5 | 6.5 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 7.2 | 5 | 7.1 | 9 | 2.9 | 6 | 5.6 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 2.7 | 7 | 2.9 | 7 | 3.7 | 7 | 3.1 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 9 | 2.2 | 9 | 2.1 | 6 | 3.8 | 8 | 2.7 |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 8 | 2.6 | 9 | 2.1 | 8 | 3.3 | 8 | 2.7 |
| Government Efficiency | 10 | 1.5 | 11 | 2.0 | 10 | 1.9 | 10 | 1.8 |
| Mass Media | 10 | 1.5 | 8 | 2.2 | 11 | 1.5 | 10 | 1.8 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 10 | 1.5 | 13 | 1.3 | 12 | 1.4 | 12 | 1.4 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 14 | 1.1 | 12 | 1.7 | 13 | 1.2 | 13 | 1.3 |
| Environment/Ecology | 13 | 1.4 | 14 | 1.1 | 14 | 0.9 | 14 | 1.1 |
| Science/Technology | 15 | 0.2 | 15 | 0.3 | 16 | 0.3 | 15 | 0.3 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 15 | 0.2 | 16 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.6 | 15 | 0.3 |

*Each news item may contain more than one issue; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of issues. The categories of 'Others' and 'Campaign Activities' were excluded from this analysis.
N: Number

From the table it is clear that the top three important issues, 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', and 'improvement of the democratic political system', dominated the *newspaper issue agenda*, as the share of these three issues amounted to approximately 60% of issues emphasised in all three newspapers. Issues such as 'environment/ecology', 'urban and rural development', and 'science/technology' received less coverage. This was because these types of issues usually appeared in the *local* or *special* sections of the newspapers, seldom in the *national section* on which this study was focused.

When the different issues emphasised by different newspapers were looked at, this research discovered that all had a similar amount of coverage on the top four issues, namely 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'improvement of the democratic political system', and 'law and order'. Both the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* treated these issues with similar levels of importance, as shown by their identical ranking and close percentages. Compared with its counterparts, the *United Daily News* gave more coverage to 'law and order' (14.5% of the total share of issue emphasis) than to 'improvement of the democratic political system' (13.1%), while 'cross-strait relations' (27.8%) and 'national defence' (16.4%) were the top two issues on its agenda. More specifically, the *China Times* took the lead in emphasising 'cross-strait relations', devoting 29.6% of the total counts to this issue, followed closely by the *Liberty Times* (29.3%) and the *United Daily News* (27.8%). The same was true with 'national defence'. The *China Times* devoted 18.3% to this issue, whereas the corresponding figures for the *Liberty Times* and the *United Daily News* stood at 17.5% and 16.4% respectively. With regard to 'improvement of the democratic political system', the *China Times* and the *United Daily News* were very close to each other as far as the percentage of this issue was concerned, 13.6% and 13.1% respectively, followed by 12.2% in the *Liberty Times*. As mentioned above, the *United Daily News* placed more emphasis on 'law and order' than 'improvement of the democratic political system' on its agenda and it was found that the *United Daily News* was in the lead in covering the issue of 'law and order' (14.5%), in contrast to 11.3% in the *Liberty Times* and 10.3% in the *China Times*.

Little difference was found on the agendas of the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* in terms of their treatment of issue importance from the fifth-ranked to the tenth-ranked issues. In the agenda of the *United Daily News*, the fifth most important issue was 'economic development', constituting 7.2% of the share of its issue emphasis, followed by 'international relationships' (5.9%), 'social welfare' (2.7%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.6%), 'education/culture/arts' (2.2%), 'mass media' (1.5%), 'government efficiency' (1.5%), and 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (1.5%). The *China Times* showed similarities, only with

difference in its eighth-ranked issue, 'mass media' (2.2%) and its ninth-ranked issue, 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.1%). The corresponding figures for the fifth-ranked to seventh-ranked issues and the ninth-ranked issue were 7.1% for 'economic development', 5.3% for 'international relationships', 2.9% for 'social welfare', and 2.1% for 'education/culture/arts'.

The *Liberty Times*, compared with its counterparts, gave more coverage to 'international relationships', the fifth most popular issue, which received 8.2% of the total issue emphasis. The sixth most important issue was 'education/culture/arts', occupying 3.8% on the issue agenda, which was more than the percentage accounted for in the *United Daily News* (2.2%) and the *China Times* (2.1%). 'Social welfare' was the seventh-ranked issue, with 3.7% of the share of the entire coverage in the *Liberty Times* and it was from the fifth-ranked issue to the tenth-ranked issue the only one with the same ranking on the agendas of the three newspapers. Eighth rank went to 'traffic/transportation/communications', which was emphasised more by the *Liberty Times* (3.3%) than the other two newspapers (2.6% in the *United Daily News* and 2.1% in the *China Times*). Table 4.5 also shows that the *Liberty Times* placed less emphasis on 'economic development', which was its ninth-ranked issue with 2.9% of the total issue numbers on its agenda. The percentages given to this issue by the other two newspapers (7.2% in the *United Daily News* and 7.1% in the *China Times*) were twice as many as that of the *Liberty Times*. 'Government efficiency', accounting for 1.9% on the agenda, was the tenth issue in the *Liberty Times*.

From the data it can also be found that the three newspapers showed some differences in their issue emphasis relating to the last six issues on their agendas. It is worth noting that the issue emphasis of the last six issues in the *Liberty Times* was almost the same as that in all the newspapers taken together. These six issues had a nearly identical ranking and similar percentages on the agenda of the *Liberty Times* and the newspaper issue agenda as a whole. According to the percentages on the agenda of the *Liberty Times*, 'mass media' was the

eleventh-ranked issue, sharing 1.5% of the total issue counts in the newspaper, followed by 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (1.4%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.2%), 'environment/ecology' (0.9%), 'urban and rural development' (0.6%), and 'science/technology' (0.3%). In the *United Daily News*, the thirteenth-ranked issue was 'environment/ecology' (1.4%), followed by 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.1%), 'science/technology' (0.2%), and 'urban and rural development' (0.2%). As for the *China Times*, the eleventh rank was the issue of 'government efficiency', which received 2.0% of the total issue numbers, followed by 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.7%), 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (1.3%), 'environment/ecology' (1.1%), 'science/technology' (0.3%), and 'urban and rural development' (0.1%). When the last six issues in all three newspapers were compared, it was found that the *China Times* had 2.2% of counts devoted to the issue of 'mass media', whereas the corresponding figures for the other two newspapers stood at 1.5%. As for 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift', the distribution of percentages devoted to this issue among the three newspapers was very similar, with only 0.1% difference. The percentage of 'agriculture and fisheries' in the *China Times* was 0.5% higher than that in the *Liberty Times* and 0.6% higher than that in the *United Daily News*. The *United Daily News* was ahead in emphasising the issue of 'environment/ecology', which accounted for 1.4% of its total issue counts, in comparison with 1.1% in the *China Times*, and 0.9% in the *Liberty Times*. As far as the percentages were concerned, the three newspapers showed very little difference in their treatment of issue significance for 'urban and rural development' and 'science/technology', since the last two lowest positions of the newspapers were occupied by these two little-mentioned issues.

## 4.3 Newspaper Campaign Agenda

The news media are considerably less interested in covering public issues during election campaigns (McCombs, 1992). In this section of the chapter, all election-related news items were further analysed individually to gain a greater insight into the most important campaign issues in Taiwan's presidential election. The rank-order agenda, composed of various issues

prominent in campaign-related news items, was defined as the *newspaper campaign agenda*.

The ranking is based on the tally of the frequency of each campaign issue coded in news items.

### 4.3.1 Election-related Issues Emphasised in All Newspapers

Table 4.6 shows what micro issues were emphasised in the total 3,747 election-related news

items. It is not surprising to find that '*campaign activities*' formed the main focus of the

items concerning the election and 68.3% were devoted to coverage of this subject. This

finding concurs with previous research findings. For example, as indicated by McCombs and

Shaw (1972), the findings showed that only 37% of media coverage was related to campaign

issues, 47% was about campaign analysis and campaign events, and the remainder was related

to candidates and their characters. Similarly, King (1994) in his study of the 1992 Taiwanese

legislative elections found that 71.6% of election-related newspaper stories were about

*campaign activities*, which contained no issue substance but only electoral contest reporting,

stories about campaign trail activities, and stories regarding official logistical operations. The

second most important campaign issue was 'Taiwanese-Chinese relations', with mention in

19.6% of campaign-related items. 'National defence' was the third most mentioned issue,

emphasised in 11.0% of items relating to the campaign. The next principal issue was

'elections'. It was found that 9.3% of all campaign-related items focused on this issue.

'National identity' also received press attention as it was mentioned 274 times (7.3%),

followed by 'money politics', (198 times – 5.3%). Issues mentioned more than 100 times

included 'crime/legal/law' (143), 'economics/finance' (140), 'democratisation' (129) and

'others' (126).

Table 4.6

Frequency of Election-related Issues

| Issue | Count | % of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Campaign Activities | 2561 | 68.3% |
| Taiwanese-Chinese Relations | 734 | 19.6 |
| National Defence | 413 | 11.0 |
| Elections | 347 | 9.3 |
| National Identity | 274 | 7.3 |
| Money Politics | 198 | 5.3 |
| Crime/Legal/Law | 143 | 3.8 |
| Economics/Finance | 140 | 3.7 |
| Democratisation | 129 | 3.4 |
| Others | 126 | 3.4 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 93 | 2.5 |
| Mass Media | 92 | 2.5 |
| Taiwan-US Relations | 73 | 1.9 |
| Government Efficiency | 62 | 1.7 |
| Constitutional Reform | 57 | 1.5 |
| Party Politics | 57 | 1.5 |
| Diplomatic Policies and Relationships | 57 | 1.5 |
| Education | 55 | 1.5 |
| Women | 54 | 1.4 |
| Social Welfare | 49 | 1.3 |
| Environmental Protection | 45 | 1.2 |
| Disadvantaged Groups | 38 | 1.0 |
| Social Order | 34 | 0.9 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 33 | 0.9 |
| International Status | 28 | 0.7 |
| Government Policies and Regulations | 27 | 0.7 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 23 | 0.6 |
| Tax | 19 | 0.5 |
| Development of Culture/Arts | 18 | 0.5 |
| Science/Technology | 18 | 0.5 |
| Parliament | 17 | 0.5 |
| Labour and Employment | 17 | 0.5 |
| Tourism | 17 | 0.5 |
| Judicial Reform | 13 | 0.3 |
| Social Trends and Values | 13 | 0.3 |
| Political Stability | 12 | 0.3 |
| Soil and Water Conservation | 11 | 0.3 |
| Housing and Land | 5 | 0.1 |
| Unemployment and Human Resources | 4 | 0.1 |
| Urban Development | 4 | 0.1 |
| Religion | 4 | 0.1 |
| Local Community | 3 | 0.1 |
| Inflation | 2 | 0.1 |
| Juvenile Problems | 2 | 0.1 |
| Distribution of Wealth | 1 | 0 |
| Population | 1 | 0 |
| Medicine and Public Health | 1 | 0 |
| Sports | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 6125 | 163.5* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

### 4.3.2 Coverage of Macro Campaign Issues in the Three Newspapers

While Table 4.6 indicates micro issues prominent in election-related items, the data fail to show the ways in which the different newspapers covered these issues. As explained earlier, the regrouping of micro issues facilitated better understanding of the coverage of issue importance in the press. It is useful to consider the following table:

Table 4.7

Ranking and Percentages of Campaign Issues Emphasised in the Three Newspapers

| Newspapers | The United Daily News (N=992) | | The China Times (N=1513) | | The Liberty Times (N=933) | | Total (N=3438) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issues | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 28.3% | 1 | 27.4% | 1 | 33.4% | 1 | 29.3% |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 2 | 24.6 | 2 | 23.2 | 2 | 25.2 | 2 | 24.1 |
| National Defence | 3 | 10.2 | 3 | 13.4 | 3 | 11.8 | 3 | 12.0 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 6.9 | 5 | 5.8 | 6 | 3.8 | 4 | 5.5 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 6.1 | 4 | 6.0 | 5 | 3.9 | 4 | 5.5 |
| International Relationships | 7 | 3.3 | 7 | 4.3 | 4 | 6.4 | 6 | 4.6 |
| Social Welfare | 6 | 4.7 | 6 | 4.8 | 9 | 2.4 | 7 | 4.1 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 7 | 3.3 | 9 | 2.8 | 10 | 2.3 | 8 | 2.8 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 9 | 2.8 | 11 | 2.4 | 7 | 3.0 | 9 | 2.7 |
| Mass Media | 10 | 2.7 | 8 | 3.0 | 11 | 2.0 | 9 | 2.7 |
| Government Efficiency | 11 | 2.4 | 10 | 2.6 | 8 | 2.7 | 11 | 2.6 |
| Environment/Ecology | 12 | 1.9 | 12 | 1.5 | 12 | 1.5 | 12 | 1.6 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 14 | 0.8 | 13 | 1.3 | 13 | 0.5 | 13 | 1.0 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 13 | 0.9 | 14 | 0.6 | 13 | 0.5 | 14 | 0.7 |
| Science/Technology | 15 | 0.7 | 14 | 0.6 | 16 | 0.2 | 15 | 0.5 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 16 | 0.2 | 16 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.4 | 16 | 0.2 |

*Each news item may contain more than one issue; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of campaign issues. The categories of 'Others' and 'Campaign Activities' were excluded from this analysis. N: Number

Overall, the issue of 'cross-strait relations' was found to be most popular in the coverage of election-related items as it accounted for 29.3% of total macro issues. The second most dominant campaign issue was 'improvement of the democratic political system', which shared 24.1% of the total issue emphasis. The third most mentioned campaign issue was 'national defence' (12.0%), followed by 'law and order' (5.5%), and 'economic development' (5.5%). In comparison, the other issues only occupied a small percentage (less than 5%) on the

*newspaper campaign agenda*: 'international relationships' (4.6%), 'social welfare' (4.1%), 'education/culture/arts' (2.8%), 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (2.7%), 'mass media' (2.7%), and 'government efficiency' (2.6%). Issues receiving less than 2% included 'environment/ecology' (1.6%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.0%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (0.7%), 'science/technology' (0.5%), and 'urban and rural development' (0.2%). It is clear that the *newspaper campaign agenda* was dominated by the top two issues which together accounted for more than half of the share of the total issue emphasis. The last three issues were hardly mentioned on the agenda as shown by their low percentages.

Examination of the figures in Table 4.7 further reveals that the distribution of issue emphasis relating to the top five campaign issues in the three newspapers was very similar. The top five issues prominent on the campaign agenda of the *United Daily News* were exactly the same as those on the newspaper campaign agenda as a whole. While the issue of 'cross-strait relations' was more salient in the *Liberty Times* (33.4%), the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* were close as far as the percentages devoted to this issue were concerned, 28.3% and 27.4% respectively. The three newspapers placed similar emphasis on 'improvement of the democratic political system', with 25.2% given to this issue in the *Liberty Times*, 24.6% in the *United Daily News*, and 23.2% in the *China Times*. On the matter of 'national defence', the *China Times* published a higher percentage (13.4%) of coverage on this issue than the *Liberty Times* (11.8%) and the *United Daily News* (10.2%). The issue of 'law and order' was mentioned more in the *United Daily News* (6.9 %) than in the *China Times* (5.8%) and in the *Liberty Times* (3.8%). Both the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* were very close to each other in their coverage of 'economic development' based on the percentages devoted to this issue (6.1% in the former and 6.0% in the latter).

A closer look at the data also shows that the issue of 'international relationships' was more frequently emphasised in the *Liberty Times* (6.4%) than in the *United Daily News* (3.3%). In

the case of 'social welfare', the percentage devoted to this issue in both the *China Times* (4.8%) and the *United Daily News* (4.7%) was almost twice as many as that in the *Liberty Times* (2.4%).

Little difference was found in the three newspapers in terms of percentages devoted to the last nine issues on their campaign agendas. All gave the similar coverage to these last nine issues though the ranking of them on the individual agendas might differ. It is also worthwhile noting that the three newspapers did not give much importance to issues such as 'environment/ecology', 'agriculture and fisheries', 'traffic/transportation/communications', 'science/technology' and 'urban and rural development' as shown by the low positions these issues were given.

### 4.3.3 Newspaper Issue Agenda vs. Newspaper Campaign Agenda

There was a marked similarity between the top five important issues and the top five most often emphasised campaign issues in the three newspapers, as demonstrated in Table 4.8. Overall, the *newspaper issue agenda* was dominated by issues of 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'law and order', and 'international relationships'. On the other hand, the top five key issues that appeared on the *newspaper campaign agenda* included 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'national defence', 'law and order', and 'economic development'.

Table 4.8

Top Five Issues vs. Top Five Campaign Issues in the Three Newspapers

| Newspapers Issues | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank 1 | Rank 2 | Rank 1 | Rank 2 | Rank 1 | Rank 2 | Rank 1 | Rank 2 |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| National Defence | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Law and Order | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 |
| International Relationships | - | - | - | - | 5 | 4 | 5 | - |
| Economic Development | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | - | 5 | - | 5 |

Rank 1: the ranking of the top five issues coded in the three newspapers.
Rank 2: the ranking of the top five campaign issues coded in the three newspapers.

The issue of 'cross-strait relations' received attention in the press because the 1996 presidential election was dominated by the threat of aggression from China. Soon after President Lee's 1995 visit to the US, China had conducted a series of missile tests and military exercises in the area around Taiwan in protest at Taiwan's allegedly pragmatic foreign diplomacy. For Beijing, this pragmatic diplomacy initiated by Taiwan (such as the launch of the UN membership drive and Lee's visit to the US) was a stealthy campaign for Taiwanese independence. These military manoeuvres had seriously damaged cross-strait relations and forced the cancellation of negotiations between the two sides. Just before the 1996 presidential election, tensions were high enough to foresee the possibility of war. As argued by Bellows (1996), one of the reasons why China was so determined to disrupt the presidential election was because the existence of Taiwan proud of its free politics and prosperous economics was a constant reminder to Beijing of its shortfalls and the reforms it may be compelled to adopt. China was opposed to the idea of a direct presidential election in Taiwan because 'a direct election by the people of Taiwan alone would create a presidency whose legitimacy came entirely from the island of Taiwan, with no accountability, even in theory, to the mainland' (Rigger, 1999: 175).

In an attempt to calm the mounting tensions, the US dispatched two aircraft carrier battle

groups to the Taiwan Straits. China was furious at this international interference. The missiles of March, therefore, had also drawn considerable attention to issues of national identity, national security and international concerns. In this sense, it appears that issues of 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', and 'international relationships' were much interlinked in the coverage of the press.

'Improvement of the democratic political system' also found high ranking on both the newspaper issue and newspaper campaign agendas. This was so because much attention was focused on the impact of the first direct presidential election on constitutional reform and party politics. After the 1995 Legislative Yuan elections, no party commanded a decisive majority in the legislature. Therefore, the resolution of domestic issues could be achieved only by means of inter-party compromise, cooperation, and accommodation. News such as political coalition, speaker and vice-speaker elections in the Legislative Yuan, as well as the legislature's consent over the premiership found much mention in the press both before and during the campaign period.

The issue of 'law and order' also found prominence in press coverage. On the page of domestic social news, a great number of news items were about violent crimes, burglary, theft, robbery, kidnapping, drug abuse, smuggling, arson, and so on. Social order reached a low point in March 1996 when cross-strait tensions deteriorated so much that some residents rushed to buy foreign currency and prepared to flee. The fact that 'law and order' was prominent on the newspaper issue and newspaper campaign agendas revealed the depth of crisis of Taiwan's social stability and the degeneration of its moral and social values.

'Economic development' was also mentioned with noticeable frequency mainly because of Taiwan's serious economic recession caused by the poor stock market, real estate inflation and mounting cross-strait tensions. Lagging economic performance was also reflected by a high unemployment rate, fraud in financial institutions, and a poor investment environment. In

order to stabilise stock and property prices, the government offered a stock revival package. Despite best efforts to boost the economy, Taiwan was still in a recession.

### 4.3.4 Issues Emphasised on the Front Page

Analysis of the contents in Table 4.1 provides an outline of the extent to which news items were prominently placed in the newspapers. Given the fact that the front page is usually the place where the most prominent news items will be placed, what is worth discussing next is what issues appeared most often on the front page. It is assumed that the importance of an issue can be increased by its position on the front page.

As the figures in Table 4.9 indicate, the issue of 'cross-strait relations' appeared most often on the front pages of the three newspapers. Of the total 503 front-page news items analysed, 57.9% were about 'cross-strait relations'. The second most prominent issue was 'national defence', which accounted for 36.8% of the items on the front pages. The third most often emphasised issue was 'international relationships', which was mentioned in 18.5% of the total front-page items. The next two issues, 'economic development' and 'campaign activities' also received some coverage on the front pages. The former was mentioned in 16.3% of the cases and the latter in 12.1% of the cases. Issues that were emphasised in more than 10% of the front-page items included 'improvement of the democratic political system' (10.7%) and 'law and order' (10.1%). If we exclude 'campaign activities' from the analysis, the top five key issues on the front-page items are 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'international relationships', 'economic development', and 'improvement of the democratic political system'.

Table 4.9

Frequency of Issues on the Front Pages of the Three Newspapers

| Issue | Count | % of Cases |
|-------|-------|------------|
| Cross-strait Relations | 291 | 57.9% |
| National Defence | 185 | 36.8 |
| International Relationships | 93 | 18.5 |
| Economic Development | 82 | 16.3 |
| Campaign Activities | 61 | 12.1 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 54 | 10.7 |
| Law and Order | 51 | 10.1 |
| Others | 35 | 7.0 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 15 | 3.0 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 11 | 2.2 |
| Government Efficiency | 8 | 1.6 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 7 | 1.4 |
| Social Welfare | 6 | 1.2 |
| Mass Media | 4 | 0.8 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 3 | 0.6 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 2 | 0.4 |
| Science/Technology | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 909 | 180.7* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

When comparing these five prominent issues with the top five issues emphasised in all news items, as shown in Table 4.5, it appears that there was an expressly identical pattern in the issue emphasis of the top two issues while difference was found in the rankings from the third to the fifth. These issues were 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'law and order', and 'international relationships'. Despite variation in the extent of prominence given to these issues it is clear that the top five issues in both all items and all front-page items focused on 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'improvement of the democratic political system', and 'international relationships'. The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that the importance of an issue is closely related to its placement on the front page. It appears that the more important an issue is, the more chance it stands of being placed on the front page.

Analysis of what issues were more important on the front pages has been examined above. What follows is the analysis of the difference in prominence given to the top five issues on the

front pages of the three newspapers individually.

Table 4.10

Ranking and Percentages of the Top Five Issues Emphasised in the Front-page Items

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 29.2% | 1 | 33.0% | 1 | 33.7% |
| National Defence | 2 | 19.6 | 2 | 20.1 | 2 | 21.3 |
| International Relationships | 3 | 8.9 | 3 | 7.3 | 3 | 11.1 |
| Economic Development | 4 | 8.2 | 5 | 5.6 | 4 | 6.3 |
| Law and Order | 5 | 5.5 | - | - | - | - |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | - | - | 4 | 6.6 | 5 | 4.8 |

*Each front-page news item may contain more than one issue; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of issues. The categories of 'Others' and 'Campaign Activities' were excluded from this analysis.

There was a marked similarity among the three newspapers insofar as the first three most important issues were concerned. The issues of 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', and 'international relationships' were the top three principal issues covered on the front pages in the three individual newspapers. On the other hand, the three newspapers varied in the importance accorded to the fourth and fifth important issues. 'Economic development' and 'law and order' were respectively the fourth- and the fifth-ranked issues on the front pages of the *United Daily News*. The fourth and fifth prominent issues in the *Liberty Times* were 'economic development' and 'improvement of the democratic political system'. As for the *China Times*, 'improvement of the democratic political system' was ranked fourth and 'economic development' fifth.

### 4.3.5 Issues Emphasised in Lead Stories

Since the lead story is the most important news item on the page, it can be used as an indicator of prominence given to certain issues over others. In other words, it is worthwhile examining what issues were most often emphasised in lead stories. It is assumed that the more important

an issue is, the more likely it is to appear in the lead story.

Table 4.11

Frequency of Issues in the Lead Stories of the Three Newspapers

| Issue | Count | % of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Cross-strait Relations | 255 | 37.9% |
| Campaign Activities | 176 | 26.2 |
| National Defence | 151 | 22.5 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 148 | 22.0 |
| Law and Order | 85 | 12.6 |
| Others | 76 | 11.3 |
| Economic Development | 68 | 10.1 |
| International Relationships | 66 | 9.8 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 30 | 4.5 |
| Government Efficiency | 18 | 2.7 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 15 | 2.2 |
| Social Welfare | 14 | 2.1 |
| Mass Media | 14 | 2.1 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 12 | 1.8 |
| Environment/Ecology | 12 | 1.8 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 9 | 1.3 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 4 | 0.6 |
| Total | 1153 | 171.6* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

As is clear from Table 4.11, 'cross-strait relations' was the most important issue in lead stories. Of the total 672 lead stories analysed, 37.9% covered this issue. 'Campaign activities' came second, with a share of 26.2% of coverage in the total lead stories. The third most important issue was 'national defence' – 22.5% of the total lead stories. The next two issues were 'improvement of the democratic political system' and 'law and order', which appeared in 22.0% and 12.6% of the total lead stories respectively. Issues receiving more than 5% of coverage in lead stories included 'others' (11.3%), 'economic development' (10.1%), and 'international relationships' (9.8%). The rest of the issues were mentioned less often in the lead stories given the low percentages offered to them.

If 'campaign activities' and 'others' are excluded, the top five key issues appearing in the total lead stories are 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'improvement of the democratic

political system', 'law and order', and 'economic development'. When comparing these findings with the top five prominent issues on the general *newspaper issue agenda* as shown in Table 4.5, it appears that there was a marked similarity between issues emphasised in total lead stories and issues important in total news items. The issue emphasis of the first four issues was exactly the same, with slight variation in the fifth. It suggests that prominent issues stand more chance of appearing in lead stories.

While the data in Table 4.11 give us an idea as to what issues were the most important in the lead stories of all the newspapers taken together, it does not tell us the variation of issue emphasis among the individual newspapers. To see how the three differ in emphasising the top five issues in lead stories, let us consider Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Ranking and Percentages of the Top Five Issues Emphasised in the Lead Stories

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 20.2% | 1 | 23.1% | 1 | 22.8% |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 2 | 13.0 | 3 | 11.5 | 2 | 14.1 |
| National Defence | 3 | 11.8 | 2 | 13.9 | 3 | 13.4 |
| Economic Development | 4 | 9.2 | 5 | 4.9 | - | - |
| Law and Order | 5 | 8.4 | 4 | 7.3 | 5 | 6.5 |
| International Relationships | - | - | 5 | 4.9 | 4 | 8.6 |

*Each lead stories may contain more than one issue; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of issues. The categories of 'Others' and 'Campaign Activities' were excluded from this analysis.

One revealing fact emerging from the contents of Table 4.12 is that issue emphasis in lead stories of the three individual newspapers concentrated on six key issues. Despite the slight differences in the extent of emphasis, all three presented a similar trend in attaching importance to the top three issues ('cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', and 'national defence'). Relative to the similarity of the first three important issues, more variation in the extent of prominence given to the fourth and fifth was found among the three newspapers. 'Economic development' and 'law and order' were the fourth- and

fifth-ranked issues in the *United Daily News* whereas the corresponding prominent places were given to 'international relationships' and 'law and order' in the *Liberty Times*. In the *China Times*, the fourth important issue was 'law and order' and the fifth important issue went to 'economic development' and 'international relationships'.

## 4.4 Initiators of Campaign Issues

Table 4.13 shows how all fourteen initiators were mentioned in total in all the three newspapers. The major opposition party, the DPP, was the most frequently mentioned initiator in total. It was mentioned no fewer than 1,169 times (31.2% of the total election-related items). The ruling KMT was the second most frequently referred to initiator, and was mentioned 1,160 times (31.0%), followed by the independents (Lin and Hau) and their campaign staffs (29.9%). The media also made contributions to the initiation of campaign issues, and 26.3% of the total items relating to the election were initiated by journalists. The independents (Chen and Wang) and their campaign workers, who initiated 20.9% of the total campaign items, were the fifth frequently referred to initiators. Three initiators, mentioned more than 100 times after the independent Chen-Wang team and their campaigners, were a mixture of parties/candidates (361), government officials/organisations (262), and specialists/experts (118). Based on their low percentage in Table 4.13, other infrequent initiators also included the second major opposition party, the NP (1.7%), interest groups (1.4%), others (0.6%), the public (0.3%), non-profit organisations (0.2%), and other small parties (0.1%).

Table 4.13

Frequency of Initiators of Campaign Issues

| Initiator | Count | % of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| DPP | 1169 | 31.2% |
| KMT | 1160 | 31.0 |
| Independents (Lin & Hau) and their Campaigners | 1122 | 29.9 |
| Media | 987 | 26.3 |
| Independents (Chen & Wang) and their Campaigners | 784 | 20.9 |
| Mixture of Parties/Candidates | 361 | 9.6 |
| Government Officials/Organisations | 262 | 7.0 |
| Specialists/Experts | 118 | 3.1 |
| NP | 63 | 1.7 |
| Interest Groups | 52 | 1.4 |
| Others | 22 | 0.6 |
| The Public | 12 | 0.3 |
| Non-profit Organisations | 9 | 0.2 |
| Other Small Parties | 4 | 0.1 |
| Total | 6125 | 163.5* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

Since some initiators appeared very infrequently, it will not generate significant results when comparing their frequency in the three different newspapers. For this reason, initiators appearing less (such as interest groups, the public, non-profit organisations, and other small parties) were regrouped into the category of 'others' in the following analysis.

When viewed individually within the newspaper, it was found that the media were the number one initiator of campaign-related issues in the *United Daily News*, appearing as many as 347 times (19.0%). It is also worth noting that the independents (Lin and Hau) and their campaigners were mentioned as initiators more than other parties or candidates in the *United Daily News* (18.3%). In the case of the *China Times*, the DPP was the most frequently referred to initiator in the coverage of campaign issues, accounting for 20.0% of the total, followed by the media (17.9%). A closer look at Table 4.14 also shows that the percentage devoted to the KMT and the independents (Lin and Hau) and their campaign workers as initiators was very close in the *China Times*, 17.8% and 17.3% respectively. With regard to the *Liberty Times*, the KMT was the most frequently mentioned initiator (22.1%), closely

followed by the DPP (21.1%), and the independents (Lin and Hau) and their campaign staffs

(19.9%). The media were not mentioned as often as the initiator compared to political parties

and candidates in the Liberty Times.

Table 4.14

Initiators of the Campaign Issues in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News (N=1829) | | The China Times (N=2635) | | The Liberty Times (N=1661) | | Total (N=6125) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initiator | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| DPP | 291 | 15.9% | 527 | 20.0% | 351 | 21.1% | 1169 | 19.1% |
| KMT | 325 | 17.8 | 468 | 17.8 | 367 | 22.1 | 1160 | 18.9 |
| Independents (Lin & Hau) and their Campaigners | 335 | 18.3 | 457 | 17.3 | 330 | 19.9 | 1122 | 18.3 |
| Media | 347 | 19.0 | 471 | 17.9 | 169 | 10.2 | 987 | 16.1 |
| Independents (Chen & Wang) and their Campaigners | 215 | 11.8 | 361 | 13.7 | 208 | 12.5 | 784 | 12.8 |
| Mixture of Parties/Candidates | 118 | 6.5 | 150 | 5.7 | 93 | 5.6 | 361 | 5.9 |
| Government Officials | 80 | 4.4 | 104 | 3.9 | 78 | 4.7 | 262 | 4.3 |
| Specialists/Experts | 57 | 3.1 | 27 | 1.0 | 34 | 2.0 | 118 | 1.9 |
| NP | 23 | 1.3 | 27 | 1.0 | 13 | 0.8 | 63 | 1.0 |
| Others | 38 | 2.1 | 43 | 1.6 | 18 | 1.1 | 99 | 1.6 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage; N: Number; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of initiators.

When the initiators in the three newspapers were compared, it was found that the DPP was

more popular as an initiator of campaign coverage in the Liberty Times (21.1%) than in the

United Daily News (15.9%). While the KMT appeared more frequently as an initiator in the

Liberty Times (22.1%), the percentage devoted to it in the other two newspapers was the same,

17.8% in both the China Times and the United Daily News. The independents (Lin and Hau)

and their campaigners appeared more often as initiators in the Liberty Times (19.9%) than in

the United Daily News (18.3%) and in the China Times (17.3%), though the difference was not

great. Since the independents (Chen and Wang) ran for the presidency without any partisan

support, it is not surprising to find that coverage devoted to them and their campaigners was

much lesser than those of the major political parties and candidates with political endorsements.

In contrast to the 10.2% of the Liberty Times, the United Daily News had more media-initiated

campaign coverage (19.0%). Apart from political parties and candidates as well as the media,

government officials and specialists or experts were mentioned as initiators, but the difference in the figures referring to them as initiators in the three newspapers was not over pronounced.

Overall, the three newspapers had more party- and candidate-initiated election-related items than media-initiated ones. In other words, political parties and candidates contributed more to coverage of the campaign than the press. Furthermore, the three newspapers also differed in referring to their favourite initiators among the political parties and candidates. It was found that the independents (Lin and Hau) and their campaign workers were the most popular initiators in the *United Daily News*, as were the DPP in the case of the *China Times* and the KMT in the case of the *Liberty Times*.

### 4.5 Actors Quoted or Referred to

Table 4.15 shows the frequency with which all news sources/actors were quoted or referred to in all campaign-related items of the three newspapers. It was found that independent candidates Lin and Hau appeared most frequently. They were referred to no fewer than 751 times, which equated to 23.8% of the total election-related items. The second most frequently mentioned actors were DPP candidates Peng and Hsieh, who were referred to in total for 21.5% of all cases. KMT candidates Lee and Lien were the third most frequently referred to actors in all coded campaign items and they were mentioned 668 times (21.2%), followed by the independent candidates Chen and Wang, (643 times – 20.4%). Among party officials and campaign workers, the KMT party officials and campaigners were referred to the most (283 compared with 206 for the DPP party officials and campaigners, 179 for Lin-Hau team's campaign staff, and 85 times for Chen-Wang team's campaign workers). The figures also suggest that government officials or civil servants and anonymous sources were mentioned frequently among the top ten news sources.

Table 4.15

Frequency of News Sources/Actors in Newspaper Campaign Items

| News Source/Actor | Count | % of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Independent Candidates (Lin & Hau) | 751 | 23.8% |
| DPP Candidates (Peng & Hsieh) | 678 | 21.5 |
| KMT Candidates (Lee & Lien) | 668 | 21.2 |
| Independent Candidates (Chen & Wang) | 643 | 20.4 |
| KMT Party Officials/Campaigners | 283 | 9.0 |
| Government Officials/Civil Servants | 223 | 7.1 |
| DPP Party Officials/Campaigners | 206 | 6.5 |
| Lin-Hau Team's Campaign Staff | 179 | 5.7 |
| Not Specified/Anonymous Sources | 132 | 4.2 |
| Chen-Wang Team's Campaign Staff | 85 | 2.7 |
| DPP Elected Representatives | 78 | 2.5 |
| Others | 61 | 1.9 |
| Specialists/Experts | 60 | 1.9 |
| NP Party Officials/Candidates | 59 | 1.9 |
| Media/News Agencies/Journalists | 50 | 1.6 |
| The Public/Voters | 32 | 1.0 |
| KMT Elected Representatives | 30 | 1.0 |
| Interest Groups | 27 | 0.9 |
| Official Documents | 14 | 0.4 |
| Research/Studies | 14 | 0.4 |
| Independent Elected Representatives | 13 | 0.4 |
| Psephologists/Opinion Poll Organisations | 12 | 0.4 |
| NP Elected Representatives | 11 | 0.3 |
| Foreign Government Officials/Experts | 11 | 0.3 |
| Foreign News Agencies | 6 | 0.2 |
| Other Party Officials | 4 | 0.1 |
| Businessmen | 4 | 0.1 |
| China | 4 | 0.1 |
| Total | 4338 | 137.5* |

*Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.

It is clear to see that four teams of presidential candidates and major party officials and campaigners were referred to more frequently than the rest. In this sense, presidential candidates and major party officials and campaign workers had more access to the news media since they were mentioned more often as news sources. However, the second major opposition party, the NP, was mentioned the least when compared with the KMT and the DPP, because it did not nominate its own presidential candidates in the campaign. Some actors received scant mention, with less than 1% of the total. It can be argued that they were perhaps not important enough, at least from the journalists' viewpoints. Although Table 4.15 shows the actors or news sources referred to in all three newspapers, it will prove more significant to see how individual actors were mentioned in the different newspapers after the

regrouping of these actors based on their similarities. In the following section, the way in which the regrouped news sources were referred to in the three newspapers will be discussed.

Table 4.16 shows how the news sources/actors, after regrouping, were referred to in the three newspapers. The ruling KMT was most often mentioned (981 times – 22.6%) in all three newspapers together. The DPP came second (962 times – 22.1%). The third most frequently mentioned actor was the independent Lin-Hau team, referred to as many as 930 times, which represented 21.4% of the total counts coded in respect of all the actors. The fourth most frequently referred to actor was the independent Chen-Wang team, accounting for 16.8% of the total. Obviously, the most prominently mentioned actors were the two major political parties and candidates vying for the presidency as they formed over 80% of the total news sources/actors referred to in all the campaign items. Understandably, the election was predominantly a political show where the sources/actors belong to the political parties and candidates. Since the four teams of presidential candidates and the two major political parties (the KMT and the DPP) were the main contestants in the arena, these actors played an important role in the drama surrounding the presidential election and could draw much attention from the media. This also explains why the second major opposition party, the NP, did not garner much press attention because, without nominating its candidates, it was absent from the presidential contest.

Table 4.16

News Sources/Actors of the Campaign Items in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actors | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| **KMT** | | | | | | | | |
| Presidential Candidates (Lee & Lien) | 233 | 16.4% | 271 | 15.0% | 164 | 14.8% | 668 | 15.4% |
| Party Officials & Campaigners | 98 | 6.9 | 110 | 6.1 | 75 | 6.8 | 283 | 6.5 |
| Elected Representatives | 8 | 0.6 | 16 | 0.9 | 6 | 0.5 | 30 | 0.7 |
| Subtotal | 339 | 23.9 | 397 | 22.0 | 245 | 22.1 | 981 | 22.6 |
| **DPP** | | | | | | | | |
| Presidential Candidates (Peng & Hsieh) | 225 | 15.8 | 282 | 15.6 | 171 | 15.4 | 678 | 15.6 |
| Party Officials & Campaigners | 57 | 4.0 | 83 | 4.6 | 66 | 5.9 | 206 | 4.7 |
| Elected Representatives | 25 | 1.8 | 35 | 1.9 | 18 | 1.6 | 78 | 1.8 |
| Subtotal | 307 | 21.6 | 400 | 22.2 | 255 | 22.9 | 962 | 22.1 |
| **Independent Lin-Hau Team** | | | | | | | | |
| Independent Candidates (Lin & Hau) | 254 | 17.8 | 306 | 17.0 | 191 | 17.2 | 751 | 17.3 |
| Lin-Hau Team's Campaigners | 61 | 4.3 | 78 | 4.3 | 40 | 3.6 | 179 | 4.1 |
| Subtotal | 315 | 22.1 | 384 | 21.3 | 231 | 20.8 | 930 | 21.4 |
| **Independent Chen-Wang Team** | | | | | | | | |
| Independent Candidates (Chen & Wang) | 198 | 13.9 | 293 | 16.2 | 152 | 13.7 | 643 | 14.8 |
| Chen-Wang Team's Campaigners | 28 | 2.0 | 35 | 1.9 | 22 | 2.0 | 85 | 2.0 |
| Subtotal | 226 | 15.9 | 328 | 18.1 | 174 | 15.7 | 728 | 16.8 |
| **Official Sources** | | | | | | | | |
| Government Officials/Civil Servants | 76 | 5.3 | 81 | 4.5 | 66 | 5.9 | 223 | 5.1 |
| Official Documents | 2 | 0.1 | 7 | 0.4 | 5 | 0.5 | 14 | 0.3 |
| Subtotal | 78 | 5.4 | 88 | 4.9 | 71 | 6.4 | 237 | 5.5 |
| **Specialists and Studies** | | | | | | | | |
| Specialists/Experts | 28 | 2.0 | 12 | 0.7 | 20 | 1.8 | 60 | 1.4 |
| Research/Studies | - | - | 14 | 0.8 | - | - | 14 | 0.3 |
| Psephologists/Opinion Poll Organisations | 2 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.1 | 8 | 0.7 | 12 | 0.3 |
| Subtotal | 30 | 2.1 | 28 | 1.6 | 28 | 2.5 | 86 | 2.0 |
| **NP** | | | | | | | | |
| Party Officials/Candidates | 18 | 1.3 | 25 | 1.4 | 16 | 1.4 | 59 | 1.4 |
| Elected Representatives | 5 | 0.4 | 6 | 0.3 | - | - | 11 | 0.3 |
| Subtotal | 23 | 1.7 | 31 | 1.7 | 16 | 1.4 | 70 | 1.7 |
| **Mass Media** | | | | | | | | |
| News Agencies/Journalists | 23 | 1.6 | 13 | 0.7 | 14 | 1.3 | 50 | 1.2 |
| Foreign News Agencies | 2 | 0.1 | 3 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.1 | 6 | 0.1 |
| Subtotal | 25 | 1.7 | 16 | 0.9 | 15 | 1.4 | 56 | 1.3 |
| **The Public/Voters** | 8 | 0.6 | 18 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.5 | 32 | 0.7 |
| **Interest Groups/Businessmen** | 10 | 0.7 | 15 | 0.8 | 6 | 0.5 | 31 | 0.7 |
| **Small Parties/Independents** | | | | | | | | |
| Other Party Officials | 3 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.1 | - | - | 4 | 0.1 |
| Independent Elected Representatives | 2 | 0.1 | 8 | 0.4 | 3 | 0.3 | 13 | 0.3 |
| Subtotal | 5 | 0.3 | 9 | 0.5 | 3 | 0.3 | 17 | 0.4 |
| **Foreign Government** | | | | | | | | |
| Foreign Government Officials/Experts | 7 | 0.5 | 3 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.1 | 11 | 0.3 |
| China | 2 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.1 | - | - | 4 | 0.1 |
| Subtotal | 9 | 0.6 | 5 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.4 |
| **Others/Miscellaneous** | 48 | 3.4 | 85 | 4.7 | 60 | 5.4 | 193 | 4.4 |
| Total | 1423 | 100 | 1804 | 100 | 1111 | 100 | 4338 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

The order of importance attached to the top four actors in total campaign coverage seemed to reflect their anticipated performance in the election. As the results of the election showed, KMT candidates Lee and Lien won the presidency in a four-candidate race with 54% of the vote, followed by DPP candidates Peng and Hsieh (21.13%), independent candidates Lin and Hau (14.9%), and independent candidates Chen and Wang (9.98%). Apart from the political parties and candidates, official sources from government officials/civil servants and official documents were actors mentioned more than the rest in the press, but relatively less frequently when compared with the fourth most often referred to actor, the independent Chen-Wang team. With regard to other actors, it is obvious that they did not receive much attention in the press given the low percentages devoted to them as news sources.

Since there was little reference to the rest of the actors, the top four actors mentioned above would be the focus of analysis when discussing how they were referred to as news sources in the three newspapers. Closer examination of the figures in Table 4.16 further reveals that not all three newspapers referred to these four groups of actors in their campaign coverage in the same order as the press taken together. The *United Daily News* made more reference to the KMT as a news source as it was mentioned 339 times in comparison with 315 times for the independent Lin-Hau team, 307 times for the DPP, and 226 times for the independent Chen-Wang team. Nevertheless, as far as the presidential candidates were concerned, independent candidates Lin and Hau (17.8%) were referred to more often than KMT candidates Lee and Lien (16.4%) in the newspaper. In the case of the *China Times*, the DPP was the most prominent actor, accounting for 22.2% of the total, closely followed by the KMT (22.0%). While overall the DPP and the KMT were the most frequently mentioned actors, independent candidates Lin and Hau (17.0%) were referred to the most as news sources in the *China Times*, followed by Chen and Wang (16.2%). With regard to the *Liberty Times*, the DPP was referred to the most, with 22.9% of the total in the newspaper. The KMT came second with mention in 22.1% of the total news sources. However, in comparing the frequency devoted to the four teams of presidential candidates as news sources, it was found

that independent candidates Lin and Hau (17.2%) and DPP candidates Peng and Hsieh (15.4%) were quoted more often in the *Liberty Times*. On one hand, it can be argued that the importance attached to certain actors reflects the preference of the newspapers. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the *United Daily News* was considered pro-KMT, and in particular sides with the non-mainstream faction of the party. The *China Times* was seen as pro-KMT mainstream faction and also takes a more moderate position on DPP proposals. The *Liberty Times* was regarded as pro-DPP and also pro-KMT mainstream faction. With this in mind, it is not surprising to find that the *United Daily News* referred to the KMT and the independent Lin-Hau team more frequently. The same can be said of both the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times,* where the most frequently mentioned news sources were the DPP and the KMT. On the other hand, it is likely that the journalists tended to refer to news sources/actors belonging to the major parties as they stood a good chance of winning the election. This can explain why the two major political parties, the KMT and the DPP, achieved greater mention as news sources in the press. Actors of newsworthy stories, which may have an impact on the outcome of an election, can also draw much attention from journalists. It is obvious from the table that independent candidates Lin and Hau were referred to with the most frequency in the three newspapers. This was arguably so because in order to challenge Lee's natural advantages deriving from incumbency, all opposition candidates waged negative campaigns against Lee. Among them, independent candidate Lin and his running mate Hau attacked Lee most bitterly. Not only did they accuse him of alleged connections with interest groups and underworld organisations, but they also assailed Lee with arguable documents that 'prove' that he betrayed his comrades to save himself when he was arrested as a Communist in 1949. Obviously, this kind of news stories was quite newsworthy during the campaign period. It is not surprising, therefore, to find independents Lin and Hau were referred to more than any other individual actor in the three newspapers.

The contents of Table 4.16 also clearly show that the absolute difference among the three newspapers, when referring to the four groups of actors, was not very great. The only

noticeable difference was in mentioning the independent Chen-Wang team. While the *United Daily News* and the *Liberty Times* presented a similar trend in referring to independent candidates Chen and Wang and their campaigners (15.9% and 15.7% respectively), the *China Times* offered 18.1% of total counts coded in respect of all news sources to the Chen-Wang team.

On the whole, it seems that the three newspapers had different preferences when referring to news sources. The findings also suggest that the major political parties had more access to the news media because they were more frequently mentioned as actors in campaign coverage, especially when compared with independent candidates who did not have party resources. Actors of newsworthy stories were likely to stand more chance of being referred to in coverage of the presidential election.

## 4.6 Substance and Election Contest

In this part of the research, all election-related news items were further coded to see whether the coverage in the three newspapers focused on substantive coverage or electoral contest reporting. As mentioned in the coding schedule (Chapter 3), substantive coverage includes (a) issues discussed by the journalists and issues proposed by candidates or political parties and (b) candidates' personal qualities. By contrast, electoral contest reporting refers to (a) opinion poll reporting and (b) stories about voter profiles and constituencies, campaign strategies, campaign activities and events, and political endorsements.

Table 4.17

Focus of Campaign Coverage in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Focus | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Substantive coverage | 448 | 36.2% | 424 | 27.9% | 302 | 30.6% | 1174 | 31.3% |
| Electoral contest reporting | 635 | 51.3 | 799 | 52.5 | 474 | 48.1 | 1908 | 50.9 |
| Combination | 152 | 12.3 | 297 | 19.5 | 206 | 20.9 | 655 | 17.5 |
| Not applicable | 4 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.1 | 4 | 0.4 | 10 | 0.3 |
| Total | 1239 | 100 | 1522 | 100 | 986 | 100 | 3747 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

As shown by Table 4.17, the three newspapers focused much more on electoral contest reporting in their coverage of the presidential campaign. Taking the three newspapers together, over half of the election-related news items were examples of electoral contest reporting in contrast to the 31.3% devoted to substantive coverage. When each individual newspaper was analysed, it was found that there was an identical pattern in the focus of campaign coverage among the three newspapers. Electoral contest reporting formed the main focus of campaign items in all three newspapers. Compared with its counterparts, the *China Times* took the lead in providing electoral contest reporting, but the absolute difference between the three newspapers was not that big. On the other hand, the *United Daily News* was ahead of the other two newspapers in emphasising substantive coverage. To sum up, the three newspapers provided much more electoral contest reporting than substantive coverage in their campaign news items. Of the three newspapers, the *China Times* devoted more coverage to electoral contest, while the *United Daily News* provided more substantive coverage.

## 4.7 Visuals

There were a total of 621 visual items, including 608 photographs and thirteen cartoons, in all campaign items in the three newspapers. All these photographs and cartoons were analysed to see who initiated the visuals, who the main actor was in the picture, and the tone of the

visual.

## 4.7.1 Initiators of Campaign Visuals

As the data in Table 4.18 show, the press took the lead in initiating visuals. Of all the campaign-related visuals, 20.9% were media-initiated. The independent Lin-Hau team came second as the visual initiator with 20.6% of the total. The third most frequently mentioned initiator was the DPP, which accounted for 19.3% of total visual initiation. The next two frequent initiators were the KMT and the independent Chen-Wang team, respectively initiating 16.6% and 16.4% of all election-related visuals. By contrast, very few visuals were initiated by the other initiators such as a mixture of parties/candidates (4.8%), government officials/organisations (1.1%), and others (0.2%). Although the press led the way in initiating campaign visuals, when all the political parties and candidates were taken together, over 77% of campaign photographs and cartoons were party- and candidate-initiated.

Table 4.18

Initiators of the Campaign Visuals in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initiator | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Media/News Agencies/Journalists/ Press Photographers | 46 | 21.4% | 51 | 19.5% | 33 | 22.9% | 130 | 20.9% |
| Independents (Lin &Hau) & their Campaigners/Supporters | 50 | 23.3 | 51 | 19.5 | 27 | 18.8 | 128 | 20.6 |
| DPP (Candidates, Party Officials & Elected Representatives) | 39 | 18.1 | 55 | 21.0 | 26 | 18.1 | 120 | 19.3 |
| KMT (Candidates, Party Officials & Elected Representatives) | 36 | 16.7 | 41 | 15.6 | 26 | 18.1 | 103 | 16.6 |
| Independents (Chen &Wang) & their Campaigners/Supporters | 35 | 16.3 | 44 | 16.8 | 23 | 16.0 | 102 | 16.4 |
| Mixture of Parties/Candidates | 6 | 2.8 | 15 | 5.7 | 9 | 6.3 | 30 | 4.8 |
| Government Officials/Organisations | 3 | 1.4 | 4 | 1.5 | - | - | 7 | 1.1 |
| Others | - | - | 1 | 0.4 | - | - | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 215 | 100 | 262 | 100 | 144 | 100 | 621 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of initiators.

The most frequently mentioned campaign visual initiator in the *United Daily News* was

independent candidates Lin and Hau and their campaigners, who contributed 23.3% of the visual initiation, which was higher than the percentages in the other two newspapers. As for the *China Times*, the top visual initiator was the DPP, which initiated 21.0% of election-related visuals. In the *Liberty Times*, 22.9% of campaign visuals were media-initiated. This was only a little higher than the percentages devoted to the media in the other newspapers. The KMT was mentioned as the visual initiator more often in the *Liberty Times* (18.1%) than in the *United Daily News* (16.7%) and the *China Times* (15.6%). Independent candidates Chen and Wang and their campaign staff were found to have very close percentages in the three newspapers.

The data in Table 4.18 leave us in no doubt that while the three newspapers differed in the most frequently mentioned campaign visual initiator, there was a marked similarity among them in that the majority of election-related visuals were initiated by parties and candidates. This finding is consistent with the results of initiators of the election-related issues in the three newspapers (see Table 4.14). Therefore, it seems that the political parties and candidates had great influence on the formation of the *newspaper campaign agenda* and were very successful in having their photographs published in the way they themselves posed. When the contents of the two tables (Tables 4.14 and 4.18) were analysed together, it appeared that among the political parties and candidates, the *United Daily News* was in favour of referring to independent candidates Lin and Hau and their campaigners as initiators of campaign issues and visuals. The DPP was the favourite initiator of campaign issues and visuals in the *China Times* whereas the *Liberty Times* showed no marked preference for any political party or candidate as initiators of campaign issues and visuals.

### 4.7.2 Actors in Campaign Visuals

When the main actors in the campaign visuals were examined, it was found that independent candidates Lin and Hau and their campaigners received more attention in press photographs.

Of the total 621 campaign visuals, 21.3% were about the Lin-Hau team. The DPP was the second most important actor, accounting for 20.3% of the total campaign visuals. The third most photographed actor was the KMT, appearing in 18.4% of visuals. The independent Chen-Wang team was the fourth major actor (16.9%). It is obvious from Table 4.19 that compared with the principal political parties and candidates mentioned above, other actors did not stand much chance of being represented, which is reflected by their low percentages as far as visuals were concerned. It does not need much explanation as to why other actors were pictured less, since the presidential election is a drama enacted mainly by the actors of political parties and candidates competing for the presidency.

Table 4.19

Main Actors in the Campaign Visuals in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Actor | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Independents (Lin &Hau) & their Campaigners/Supporters | 52 | 24.2% | 53 | 20.2% | 27 | 18.8% | 132 | 21.3% |
| DPP (Candidates, Party Officials & Elected Representatives) | 42 | 19.5 | 57 | 21.8 | 27 | 18.8 | 126 | 20.3 |
| KMT (Candidates, Party Officials & Elected Representatives) | 39 | 18.1 | 49 | 18.7 | 26 | 18.1 | 114 | 18.4 |
| Independents (Chen &Wang) & their Campaigners/Supporters | 36 | 16.7 | 45 | 17.2 | 24 | 16.7 | 105 | 16.9 |
| The Public/Voters/Demonstrators | 13 | 6.0 | 13 | 5.0 | 15 | 10.4 | 41 | 6.6 |
| Mixture of Parties/Candidates | 9 | 4.2 | 18 | 6.9 | 10 | 6.9 | 37 | 6.0 |
| Government Officials | 1 | 0.5 | 4 | 1.5 | 6 | 4.2 | 11 | 1.8 |
| Journalists | 1 | 0.5 | 4 | 1.5 | 1 | 0.7 | 6 | 1.0 |
| NP (Party Officials & Elected Representatives) | - | - | 1 | 0.4 | - | - | 1 | 0.2 |
| Others | 22 | 10.2 | 18 | 6.9 | 8 | 5.6 | 48 | 7.7 |
| Total | 215 | 100 | 262 | 100 | 144 | 100 | 621 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of actors.

Closer examination of the figures in the table also reveals that the independent Lin-Hau team achieved greater publicity in the campaign visuals in the *United Daily News*. The *China Times* gave more importance to the DPP. In the *Liberty Times* there was an almost even distribution in campaign visuals among the major political parties and candidates.

### 4.7.3 Tone of Campaign Visuals

The tone of campaign visuals was defined as (1) *positive*, (2) *negative*, and (3) *neutral* based on Semetko *et al*'s (1991) classification of the visual dimension (see Chapter 3). As shown by the data in Table 4.20, the press seldom, if ever, presented campaign visuals in a negative way. No more than 3% of the visuals were coded as negative or unfavourable to the main actors pictured. By contrast, over 60% of the campaign pictures were neutral in nature, namely neither positive nor negative. Pictures showing actors with smiling faces and receiving applause from the public or supporters were most common in visuals classified as positive, and they accounted for 35.1% of total campaign visuals. Given the fact that there were more positive visuals than negative ones, it seems that actors were successful in having their most favourable pictures printed.

Table 4.20

Tone of the Campaign Visuals in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tone | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Positive | 80 | 37.2% | 73 | 27.9% | 65 | 45.1% | 218 | 35.1% |
| Negative | 4 | 1.9 | 12 | 4.6 | 2 | 1.4 | 18 | 2.9 |
| Neutral | 131 | 60.9 | 177 | 67.6 | 77 | 53.5 | 385 | 62.0 |
| Total | 215 | 100 | 262 | 100 | 144 | 100 | 621 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

It was found that the three newspapers presented a similar trend in the way they depicted actors in campaign visuals because of the similarity between the figures in each newspaper and average results. Despite this, of all three newspapers, the *Liberty Times* had less negative coverage of the campaign visuals than the other two. The largest number of favourable campaign visuals was printed in the *United Daily News* (80). Percentage-wise the *Liberty Times* took the lead in offering as many as 45.1% of counts to positive visuals. While the discussion above shows the tone of campaign visuals in different newspapers, it does not say whether the three newspapers treated major visual actors differently. Since the principal

actors appearing in campaign visuals were of the two major political parties and two independent teams, only these actors were included in the following analysis.

Table 4.21

Tone of the Campaign Visuals Relating to the Major Actors in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper / Visual Actor | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KMT (Lee & Lien, Party Officials, & Elected Representatives) | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Positive | 18 | 46.2% | 15 | 30.6% | 14 | 53.8% |
| Negative | 1 | 2.6 | 4 | 8.2 | - | - |
| Neutral | 20 | 51.3 | 30 | 61.2 | 12 | 46.2 |
| Subtotal | 39 | 100.1 | 49 | 100 | 26 | 100 |
| DPP (Peng & Hsieh, Party Officials, & Elected Representatives) | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Positive | 19 | 45.2 | 26 | 45.6 | 14 | 51.9 |
| Negative | 2 | 4.8 | - | - | - | - |
| Neutral | 21 | 50.0 | 31 | 54.4 | 13 | 48.1 |
| Subtotal | 42 | 100 | 57 | 100 | 27 | 100 |
| Independents (Lin & Hau) & their Campaigners | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Positive | 21 | 40.4 | 11 | 20.8 | 11 | 40.7 |
| Negative | 1 | 1.9 | 2 | 3.8 | - | - |
| Neutral | 30 | 57.7 | 40 | 75.5 | 16 | 59.3 |
| Subtotal | 52 | 100 | 53 | 100.1 | 27 | 100 |
| Independents (Chen & Wang) & their Campaigners | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Positive | 13 | 36.1 | 14 | 31.1 | 9 | 37.5 |
| Negative | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Neutral | 23 | 63.9 | 31 | 68.9 | 15 | 62.5 |
| Subtotal | 36 | 100 | 45 | 100 | 24 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

While the results of Table 4.19 show who appeared most often in the campaign visuals in different newspapers, it does not necessarily mean that these prominent figures were able to influence the way in which they appeared. After all, greater media presence does not lead to greater media access in a positive way. For this reason, the tone of the visuals towards the principal actors should be further examined.

The picture emerging from the data in Table 4.21 is quite clear. It shows that, apart from 4.8% of unfavourable visuals given to the DPP, the *United Daily News* barely showed a

negative tone to the other main actors. Similarly, the *China Times* was not particularly unfavourable in presenting these dominant actors, although 8.2% of campaign visuals devoted to the KMT were found to be negative. As for the *Liberty Times*, there were no unfavourable campaign visuals relating to these dominant actors at all. This indicates that the three newspapers generally presented these actors in a positive and predominantly neutral manner. Specifically, the KMT received more positive pictures in the *United Daily News* as far as the percentage of positive visuals devoted to it was concerned. In the *China Times* more favourable campaign visuals were given to the DPP. The KMT and the DPP were pictured more favourably in the *Liberty Times*. In the light of more positive and neutral visuals given to these political figures in the press, it can be concluded that the KMT, the DPP, and the two independent teams had more access to the news media in a favourable and neutral way which they would have wished for.

## 4.8 Newspaper Coverage of Presidential Candidates' Images

In this section of the chapter, the focus is on examining newspaper coverage of presidential candidates' images. All campaign-related news items were further coded to see how newspapers covered four presidential candidates' images.

### 4.8.1 Amount of Campaign-related Items Mentioning Presidential Candidates' Images

Of the total 3,747 campaign-related items, 1,248 news items (33.3%) contained reference to presidential candidates' images. The *China Times* published the most items referring to images – 534 items in total, equivalent to 42.8%. The *Liberty Times* came second with 381 news items, followed by the *United Daily News*, which had 333 such items (Figure 4.3). The fact that the *China Times* gave more coverage to candidates' images showed that it attached greater importance to the coverage of the election than its counterparts. Another reason was that the *China Times* offered a great deal of coverage on the contents of the four televised

debates, which were organised by the company itself.

Figure 4.3
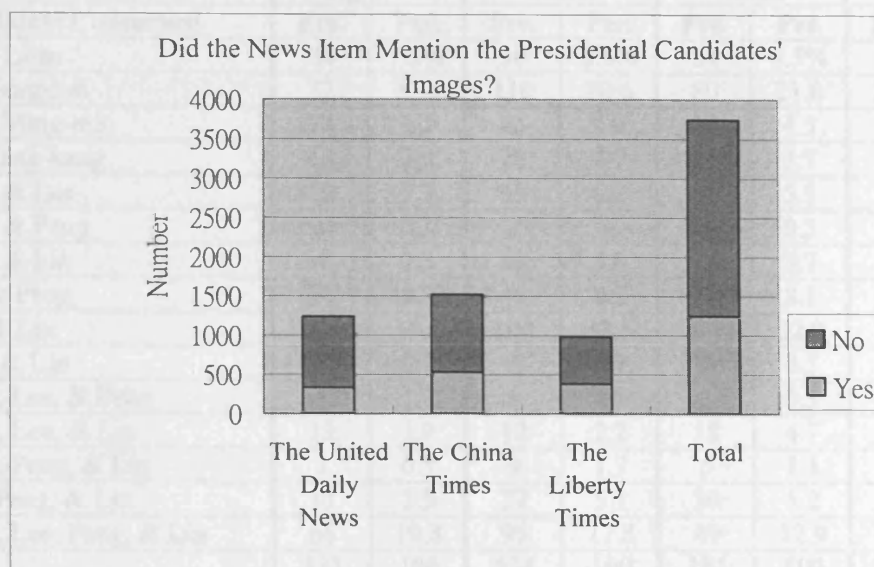


**4.8.2 Presidential Candidates Appearing in Image-related News Items**

A clear picture emerging from the data in Table 4.22 is that the KMT's candidate Lee Teng-hui appeared most frequently in press coverage. Of all the 1,248 items relating to the presidential candidates' images, 21.0% of them were about Lee. Coverage about Lee and independent candidate Lin Yang-kang came second, accounting for 19.5% of the total counts, followed by news items focusing on all four presidential hopefuls (16.8%).

Table 4.22

Frequency with Which Presidential Candidates Appear in Image-related News Items

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Candidate Concerned | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Chen Li-an | 24 | 7.2% | 30 | 5.6% | 24 | 6.3% | 78 | 6.3% |
| Lee Teng-hui | 72 | 21.6 | 110 | 20.6 | 80 | 21.0 | 262 | 21.0 |
| Peng Ming-min | 14 | 4.2 | 26 | 4.9 | 17 | 4.5 | 57 | 4.6 |
| Lin Yang-kang | 13 | 3.9 | 20 | 3.7 | 14 | 3.7 | 47 | 3.8 |
| Chen & Lee | 19 | 5.7 | 33 | 6.2 | 21 | 5.5 | 73 | 5.8 |
| Chen & Peng | 1 | 0.3 | - | - | 1 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Chen & Lin | 4 | 1.2 | 14 | 2.6 | 14 | 3.7 | 32 | 2.6 |
| Lee & Peng | 31 | 9.3 | 44 | 8.2 | 31 | 8.1 | 106 | 8.5 |
| Lee & Lin | 55 | 16.5 | 104 | 19.5 | 84 | 22.0 | 243 | 19.5 |
| Peng & Lin | 3 | 0.9 | 4 | 0.7 | 2 | 0.5 | 9 | 0.7 |
| Chen, Lee, & Peng | 4 | 1.2 | 6 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.3 | 11 | 0.9 |
| Chen, Lee, & Lin | 13 | 3.9 | 12 | 2.2 | 18 | 4.7 | 43 | 3.4 |
| Chen, Peng, & Lin | 1 | 0.3 | 9 | 1.7 | 5 | 1.3 | 15 | 1.2 |
| Lee, Peng, & Lin | 13 | 3.9 | 27 | 5.1 | 20 | 5.2 | 60 | 4.8 |
| Chen, Lee, Peng, & Lin | 66 | 19.8 | 95 | 17.8 | 49 | 12.9 | 210 | 16.8 |
| Total | 333 | 100 | 534 | 100 | 381 | 100 | 1248 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

When the newspapers were analysed separately, it was found that all three presented a similar trend in attaching importance to the presidential candidates. In the *United Daily News*, more coverage was given to Lee (21.6%), followed by coverage relating to all four candidates (19.8%) and coverage concerning Lee and Lin (16.5%). The figures of the first three items relating to the appearance of the presidential candidates in the *China Times* were quite near to the average results. Items about Lee took the lead (20.6%), followed by items covering Lee and Lin (19.5%) and items concerning all four candidates (17.8%). As for the *Liberty Times*, items covering Lee and Lin appeared more (22.0%), followed by items relating to Lee (21.0%) and items about all four candidates (12.9%). It can be concluded, therefore, that the KMT's Lee Teng-hui was given more coverage than any other candidate by the press. News items covering both Lee Teng-hui and Lin Yang-kang also appeared a lot. This was perhaps because the candidates and campaign workers of these two teams often conducted smear campaigns by mudslinging during the election period. On the whole, compared with the coverage given to Lee, there was no great difference in the respective coverage of Chen, Peng,

and Lin in the three newspapers. Another revealing fact deriving from the contents of Table

4.22 is that the press gave a lot of coverage to the four candidates together in an attempt to

maintain balanced reporting.

### 4.8.3 Presidential Candidates Whose Image Was Covered in Image-related News Items

Although the data in Table 4.22 show the frequency of items relating to the appearance of the

presidential candidates, they do not say whether the coverage about the appearance of the

candidate mentioned his images. Therefore, all the news items covering the candidates'

images were further analysed in order to understand which candidate's images were mentioned

more frequently in the press.

Table 4.23

Frequency with Which Image-related Items Mention Presidential Candidates' Images

| Newspaper | The United Daily News | | The China Times | | The Liberty Times | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Candidate Concerned | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Chen Li-an | 43 | 12.9% | 50 | 9.4% | 33 | 8.7% | 126 | 10.1% |
| Lee Teng-hui | 169 | 50.8 | 247 | 46.3 | 181 | 47.5 | 597 | 47.8 |
| Peng Ming-min | 24 | 7.2 | 38 | 7.1 | 33 | 8.7 | 95 | 7.6 |
| Lin Yang-kang | 28 | 8.4 | 60 | 11.2 | 44 | 11.5 | 132 | 10.6 |
| Chen & Lee | 5 | 1.5 | 19 | 3.6 | 11 | 2.9 | 35 | 2.8 |
| Chen & Peng | - | - | 1 | 0.2 | - | - | 1 | 0.1 |
| Chen & Lin | 4 | 1.2 | 5 | 0.9 | 10 | 2.6 | 19 | 1.5 |
| Lee & Peng | 13 | 3.9 | 26 | 4.9 | 8 | 2.1 | 47 | 3.8 |
| Lee & Lin | 18 | 5.4 | 50 | 9.4 | 30 | 7.9 | 98 | 7.9 |
| Peng & Lin | 3 | 0.9 | 3 | 0.6 | 3 | 0.8 | 9 | 0.7 |
| Chen, Lee, & Peng | 2 | 0.6 | 4 | 0.7 | 4 | 1.0 | 10 | 0.8 |
| Chen, Lee, & Lin | 4 | 1.2 | 8 | 1.5 | 5 | 1.3 | 17 | 1.4 |
| Chen, Peng, & Lin | 1 | 0.3 | 6 | 1.1 | 4 | 1.0 | 11 | 0.9 |
| Lee, Peng, & Lin | 3 | 0.9 | 4 | 0.7 | 3 | 0.8 | 10 | 0.8 |
| Chen, Lee, Peng, & Lin | 16 | 4.8 | 13 | 2.4 | 12 | 3.1 | 41 | 3.3 |
| Total | 333 | 100 | 534 | 100 | 381 | 100 | 1248 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

Table 4.24

Frequency of Total Items Mentioning Presidential Candidates' Images

| Candidate Concerned | Chen Li-an | | Lee Teng-hui | | Peng Ming-min | | Lin Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Newspaper | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| The United Daily News | 75 | 28.8% | 230 | 26.9% | 62 | 27.7% | 77 | 22.8% |
| The China Times | 106 | 40.8 | 371 | 43.4 | 95 | 42.4 | 149 | 44.2 |
| The Liberty Times | 79 | 30.4 | 254 | 29.7 | 67 | 29.9 | 111 | 32.9 |
| Total | 260 | 100 | 855 | 100 | 224 | 100 | 337 | 99.9 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

As the contents of Table 4.23 indicate, nearly half of the total items concerning the candidates' images were related to the KMT's Lee Teng-hui (47.8%). The second most frequently mentioned candidate was Lin Yang-kang, who received 10.6% of the total, closely followed by Chen Li-an, (10.1%). Similarly, it was found that Lee was totally mentioned in 855 image-related items, followed by Lin (337), Chen (260), and Peng (224) (Table 4.24).

It is clear from Table 4.23 that each individual newspaper presented a similar trend in giving importance to the presidential candidates. For example, the candidate receiving the most attention in the United Daily News was Lee, who appeared alone in over half of items covering candidates' images. Lee was followed by Chen (12.9%), and by Lin (8.4%). In the China Times, Lee gained the most mention, and 46.3% of image-related items were about him alone. Lin came second appearing alone in 11.2% of coverage relating to candidates' images, followed by Chen alone and Lee and Lin together (9.4% respectively). In the Liberty Times, Lee was mentioned the most in image-related items (47.5%), followed by Lin (11.5%), Chen (8.7%) and Peng (8.7%). The data in the table leave us in no doubt that Lee Teng-hui was much farther ahead of the other three candidates in terms of amount of the coverage given to him by the newspapers. It was not only the overall effect of all the newspapers together, but also each individual newspaper. On the other hand, there was not much difference between the three newspapers in offering coverage to the other three candidates. By analysing the contents of two tables (Tables 4.22 and 4.23), it can be argued that Lee had much significance

for the press covering the electoral campaign because he was given more coverage than the other three candidates. The reason why Lee received the most attention in the press was arguably because he had the natural advantages that derive from incumbency. Another important reason was that Lee was also the major target of the negative campaigns launched by his opponents, thus making him the most visible candidate with less favourable attributes of his image in the press. While as the target of attacks, Lee's image was often mentioned in items covering the other three opposition candidates, he frequently appeared alone in image-related items since he usually emphasised his political achievements in his term as head of state and seldom referred to his challengers.

## 4.9 Background Information about the Four Presidential Candidates

Before I turn to discuss coverage of the presidential candidates' image attributes in the newspapers, it is useful to give a brief account of the four contesting presidential candidates. Overall, there was a sharp difference among the four candidates.

President Lee Teng-hui stood for the ruling KMT in the contest. He selected Premier Lien Chan as his running mate. Lee was an agricultural expert and had obtained an agricultural economics doctorate at Cornell University. Impressed by his record, late President Chiang Ching-kuo had appointed Lee as vice-president in 1984. He succeeded to the presidency following Chiang's death in 1988 and was re-elected by National Assembly as president in 1990. Lee was the first native Taiwanese to hold Taiwan's highest office and was widely viewed as the favourite. With the natural advantages deriving from incumbency and his role as KMT party chairman, Lee was expected to do well among conventional KMT voters. As a native, Lee also stood a good chance of attracting a substantial portion of opposition DPP supporters, the majority of whom were Taiwanese and who had so-called 'Lee Teng-hui complex' in the election. Describing Lee as the first native Taiwanese president meant he enjoyed great popularity among ethnic Taiwanese, who have long been under the KMT's

one-party authoritarian rule dominated by Mainlanders and who wished to symbolically fulfil their dream to become their own masters by supporting Lee. Under the influence of 'Lee Teng-hui complex', many DPP sympathisers also preferred Lee to the DPP nominated candidate Peng as they saw this as 'the most effective way to nurture a Taiwan consciousness' (Bellows, 1996: 243).

Lee was noted for his track record of constitutional reform and political democratisation. He had successfully transformed Taiwan from a single-party, authoritarian state to an open, competitive, dynamic democracy in less than a decade. Because of his contributions to Taiwan's democratisation, Lee won a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. In order to reconcile the sub-ethnic conflict between Taiwanese and Mainlanders, in March 1995 Lee as head of state was willing to take responsibility for the government's past mistakes and formally apologised for the '28 February Incident of 1947'. For the first time, the ruling government officially acknowledged that tens of thousands of people were massacred at the hands of government troops in 1947 (Newsweek, 1995). Lee's apology earned him much grateful support since people seemed to distinguish between Lee's new KMT and the old KMT of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo. Lee's proposal to develop Taiwan into an attractive regional economic hub for the Asia-Pacific area also helped him to win a high public approval rating of his job performance.

As far as his position on cross-strait relations was concerned, Lee had been forced to walk a fine line between those who wanted complete independence from China and those who sought reunification. Lee argued that Taiwan was *de facto* independent of China. At the same time, he maintained that reunification was a long-term goal, which was only possible when conditions in China were right. Nevertheless, Beijing was always suspicious of Lee's alleged pursuit of Taiwanese independence by stealth because of his efforts to earn Taiwan a UN seat, his 'holiday diplomacy' and the Cornell visit to boost Taiwan's international visibility. Beijing began its military intimidation soon after Lee's 1995 US visit, resulting in the most

serious deterioration of cross-strait relations. The escalation in cross-strait tensions before the 1996 March presidential election also provided Lee's opponents with new ammunition to challenge him and his 'holiday diplomacy'. All three opposition candidates held Lee personally responsible for bringing Taiwan to the brink of war with China as a result of his creatively ambiguous diplomacy policies.

Lee's political style, political honesty, integrity as well as his personal background were questioned during the campaign period. Despite his contributions to the Taiwanisation of the power structure within the party after power struggles and party splits, his opponents criticised Lee or the KMT under his leadership for being corrupt because of the close ties with money politics and organised crime. Lee's honesty and integrity was called into question because he failed to openly reveal his financial dealings in a luxurious villa. In addition, independent candidate Lin Yang-kang attacked Lee's dishonesty since Lee had stated many times in the past that he would not run for the 1996 presidency. Vicious attacks also focused on Lee's supposed background as a Communist in his youth.

Overall, by emphasising his experience and achievements in creating Taiwan's economic miracle and dynamic democracy, Lee campaigned on the KMT's record of prosperity, political reform, and stability necessary for continued economic growth.

Lee's chief opponent, Peng Ming-min, ran for the main opposition party, the DPP, after a fierce two-stage primary process within the party. Peng's running mate was Hsieh Chang-ting, a prominent member of the Legislative Yuan. Unlike typical politicians, Peng was a statesman with a distinct scholarly image. He received his first degree from a top Japanese university and later held a doctorate in law from the Sorbonne in Paris. Peng was a friend of Lee and a former international law professor at the National Taiwan University. Due to his excellent academic achievements, late president Chiang Kai-shek appointed Peng adviser to Taiwan's UN delegation. However, Peng became disillusioned with Chiang's regime. In 1964 Peng

published *Manifesto to Save Taiwan* to promote Taiwanese independence. Peng was viewed as a pioneer of the Taiwanese independence movement and later became a veteran dissident who spent over two decades of exiled life in the United States to avoid a prison sentence because of his promotion of Taiwanese independence in the 1960s. While he was in exile in the US, Peng spared no effort to boost Taiwan's international status, especially relations with the United States. After Lee proclaimed a general amnesty in 1992, Peng returned to Taiwan and continued pushing for more democratic reforms (Reyes, 1996).

Taiwanese nationalism and sovereignty are always an important part of Peng's appeal. Although Peng ran his campaign on fully-fledged Taiwanese independence with emphasis on self-determination, he tried to moderate his position in light of China's war games. Peng regarded Taiwan as a *de facto* independent nation, so there was no need to declare independence if he was elected. Instead, Peng stated that he would merely affirm the fact that Taiwan has indeed been independent for more than four decades and asked the world to accept this situation. Apart from the issue of national identity, Peng also campaigned on the public welfare system, environmental protection, economic growth, and anti-money politics. He also focused much attention of his campaign on attacking the KMT's record of authoritarianism and corruption.

The other two independent candidates were Lin Yang-kang and Chen Li-an. Lin was technically an independent candidate who in fact was endorsed by the second major opposition party, the NP, since the party did not formally nominate its own presidential candidate. Born in Nantou, where he enjoyed popularity throughout his career, Lin was known as 'Ah Kang Bo' (Uncle Ah Kang) because of his amiable, avuncular, and local characteristics. Lin had much administrative experience since he used to hold some important government posts such as Nantou county magistrate, Governor of Taiwan, Minister of Interior Affairs, vice-premier, and President of the Judicial Yuan. As one of the leaders of the non-mainstream faction within the KMT, Lin challenged Lee's first presidential bid in 1990, but was persuaded to

withdraw from the race. Despite the fact that he lost to Lee in the KMT's election for the party's presidential candidate in August 1995, Lin still vowed to continue his bid for the presidency as an independent candidate. Lin chose Hau Pei-tsun as his running mate. As the former premier, a leading military figure, and a prominent leader of the non-mainstream faction, Hau was considered closely associated with the KMT's authoritarian past. Lin and Hau openly endorsed the NP and campaigned for some of its candidates in the 1995 Legislative Yuan elections. Because of this and their decision to run against Lee and Lien in the 1996 presidential election, Lin and Hau, both vice-chairmen of the KMT, were expelled from the party (Tien, 1996a; Hood, 1997).

Lin and Hau criticised Lee's leadership style and accused him of lacking tolerance for dissenting views. They were deeply opposed to his mainland China policy and tried to focus on clean politics. With an anti-independence stance, Lin was seen as being in favour of eventual reunification with China. During the campaign period, he kept blaming Lee for moving Taiwan towards independence and causing cross-strait tensions. As Lee gained poll strength with his defiant anti-Beijing speeches in the face of the mainland's belligerence, Lin was stung by the president's accusations that he was a 'traitor' to Taiwan because of his attitudes towards pro-communism and pro-appeasement on the issue of Taiwanese-Chinese relations (Reyes, 1996).

Chen, a devout Buddhist, was a non-party affiliated candidate who favoured clean government. It was thought that Lin and Chen might join together as presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the contest, but their striking differences kept them apart. Chen decided to run for the presidency himself and chose Wang Ching-feng, a member of the government watchdog Control Yuan, as his running mate. Wang was the only female candidate. Chen was the son of the late vice-president Chen Cheng, who made contributions to Taiwan's land reform in the 1940s. Being a high-ranking KMT official, Chen used to be Economic Affairs Minister, National Defence Minister, and the President of the Control Yuan. He renounced

his KMT membership and resigned from his post as Control Yuan President to run for the presidency as an independent candidate (Hsieh and Niou, 1996a; Hood, 1997).

Chen was generally regarded as an honest public figure and had a good reputation for his clean political style. Despite his lack of party apparatus and endorsement, Chen was backed by some influential Buddhist groups. With a close working relationship with these groups, Chen's campaign had a strong religious backdrop. Apart from campaigning on personal character and spiritual renewal, Chen also emphasised cross-strait peace, educational reform, environmental protection, economic prosperity and government integrity. While Chen insisted that the issue of national identity should be put aside for the moment, he was considered pro-reunification with China because he strongly opposed Taiwanese independence and supported better relations with Beijing authorities. Criticising Lee's *Taiwan-first* approach to cross-strait relations, Chen suggested some form of commonwealth ties between China and Taiwan in the future ((Bellows, 1996).

## 4.10 Newspaper Image Agenda

All the image-related news items were further coded to find out what important image attributes relating to the four presidential candidates were covered in the newspapers under study. The newspaper image agenda is defined as a rank-order agenda of different candidates' attributes emphasised in the image-related items. The ranking is based on the tally of the frequency of each attribute coded in news items

### 4.10.1 Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Emphasised in All Newspapers

It is clear from the data in Table 4.25 that the KMT's Lee Teng-hui had the greatest number of image attributes (1272) mentioned in the press, followed by Lin (439), Chen (350), and Peng (287). On the whole, among all the attributes of candidate's image, the press put more

emphasis on 'personal background' (28.0%), 'partisan affiliation' (27.6%), 'issue and policy stands' (15.2%), 'political honesty' (9.1%) as well as 'qualifications and experience' (9.1%).

Table 4.25

Frequency with Which Different Attributes of the Candidate's Image Appeared in All Three Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | Chen Li-an | | Lee Teng-hui | | Peng Ming-min | | Lin Yang-kang | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Personal Background | 73 | 28.1% | 266 | 31.1% | 59 | 26.3% | 72 | 21.4% | 470 | 28.0% |
| Partisan Affiliation | 109 | 41.9 | 139 | 16.3 | 99 | 44.2 | 115 | 34.1 | 462 | 27.6 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 42 | 16.2 | 108 | 12.6 | 23 | 10.3 | 81 | 24.0 | 254 | 15.2 |
| Political Honesty | 6 | 2.3 | 136 | 15.9 | 4 | 1.8 | 6 | 1.8 | 152 | 9.1 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 10 | 3.8 | 76 | 8.9 | 56 | 25.0 | 10 | 3.0 | 152 | 9.1 |
| Ability | 6 | 2.3 | 105 | 12.3 | 1 | 0.4 | 22 | 6.5 | 134 | 8.0 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 8 | 3.1 | 111 | 13.0 | 3 | 1.3 | 5 | 1.5 | 127 | 7.6 |
| Political Style | 16 | 6.2 | 81 | 9.5 | 16 | 7.1 | 12 | 3.6 | 125 | 7.5 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 15 | 5.8 | 51 | 6.0 | 5 | 2.2 | 32 | 9.5 | 103 | 6.1 |
| Leadership Qualities | 2 | 0.8 | 79 | 9.2 | 1 | 0.4 | 4 | 1.2 | 86 | 5.1 |
| Personality | 11 | 4.2 | 44 | 5.1 | 3 | 1.3 | 15 | 4.5 | 73 | 4.4 |
| Religion | 37 | 14.2 | 10 | 1.2 | 4 | 1.8 | 3 | 0.9 | 54 | 3.2 |
| Ancestral Origin | 7 | 2.7 | 23 | 2.7 | 1 | 0.4 | 20 | 5.9 | 51 | 3.0 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.9 | 39 | 11.6 | 41 | 2.4 |
| Political Philosophy | 2 | 0.8 | 16 | 1.9 | 2 | 0.9 | - | - | 20 | 1.2 |
| Intelligence | 2 | 0.8 | 13 | 1.5 | 2 | 0.9 | 3 | 0.9 | 20 | 1.2 |
| Private Life | 2 | 0.8 | 6 | 0.7 | - | - | - | - | 8 | 0.5 |
| Others | 2 | 0.8 | 6 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.4 | - | - | 9 | 0.5 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | 2 | 0.2 | 5 | 2.2 | - | - | 7 | 0.4 |
| Total | 350 | 134.6 | 1272 | 148.8 | 287 | 128.1 | 439 | 130.3 | 2348 | 140.1 |

Due to multiple coding, the total percentages add up to more than 100.
Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage of cases

Table 4.26

Top Five Most Often Mentioned Attributes of the Candidate's Image

| Candidate Concerned | Chen Li-an | Lee Teng-hui | Peng Ming-min | Lin Yang-kang |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Personal Background | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Religion | 4 | - | - | - |
| Political Style | 5 | - | 5 | - |
| Political Honesty | - | 3 | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | 4 | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | - | - | 3 | - |
| Localism | - | - | - | 4 |
| Integrity & Virtues | - | - | - | 5 |

The press taken together showed some variation in the coverage of the image attributes relating to the four presidential candidates. As revealed by the data in Tables 4.25 and 4.26, the most emphasised attribute of Chen was his 'partisan affiliation'. Of the 260 items concerning Chen's image, 41.9% mentioned this, 28.1% mentioned his 'personal background', 16.2% mentioned his 'issue and policy stands', 14.2% mentioned his 'religion', and 6.2% mentioned his 'political style'. The press usually focused on the fact that Chen was an independent candidate without any support from political parties and local factions and also on the political appeal of his no unification-independence debate. The press also often discussed Chen's family background and his personal experiences in government service. Compared with his contenders, Chen was given the most coverage regarding his 'religion' since he was a devoted Buddhist. In coverage of his 'political style', the press also liked to emphasise that Chen was an honest, upstanding government official.

As far as the coverage of Lee's image was concerned, the most salient attribute was his 'personal background', which appeared in 31.1% of the total 855 items covering his image. The second most mentioned attribute was his 'partisan affiliation' (16.3%), followed by his 'political honesty' (15.9%), his 'presentation skills or communication ability' (13.0%), and his 'issue and policy stands' (12.6%). Lee's 'personal background' received much attention because of his role as incumbent, his controversial claims to be the victim of the *28 February Incident of 1947*, his nomination as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, his supposed background as a Communist, and so on. The newspapers also gave coverage to Lee's 'partisan affiliation', especially centring on his ambiguous political stand on the unification-independence issue, his political advantages from the ruling party and incumbency, and past power struggles within the KMT. Lee's 'political honesty' also found much mention, with the newspapers mainly emphasising his alleged connections with interest groups and the underworld, his political partiality, as well as his purchase of a luxurious villa. In addition, Lee's 'presentation skills' was referred to because of his controversial speeches and his special communication style catering to the grass roots. The focus of coverage about Lee's 'issue

and policy stands' was mainly on his political stance on long-term Taiwanese-Chinese relations and his proposals to alleviate cross-strait tensions caused by China's military exercises and missile tests. Another revealing fact emerging from the contents of Table 4.25 is that the coverage of Lee's 'ability' and 'leadership qualities' was much more than that of his contenders'. This was possibly because, as incumbent president, Lee had a clear advantage over his opponents in making these two attributes more visible – newspapers frequently made reference to his past performance in government service and his competence and political achievements.

With regard to Peng, the most often reported attribute was his 'partisan affiliation', which found mention in 44.2% of the entire 224 items concerning his image. 'Personal background', accounting for 26.3% of the total counts, was the second most emphasised attribute, followed by his 'qualifications and experience' (25.0%), his 'issue and policy stands' (10.3%), and his 'political style' (7.1%). Percentage-wise the press published more coverage of Peng's 'partisan affiliation' than his competitors' because of Peng's strong commitment to Taiwanese independence. Peng's 'personal background' also received much attention in the press, which tended to mention his academic position and his many years in political exile abroad. The coverage of Peng's 'qualifications and experience' mainly concerned his role as a pioneer for Taiwan's democratic reform movement and Taiwanese independence and his contributions to promoting Taiwan's international status. Apart from his position on Taiwanese-Chinese relations, Peng's proposals to make Taiwan a nation with a good public welfare system also warranted much press attention. When referring to his 'political style', the newspapers usually emphasised his insistence on fulfilling the political ideal of promoting Taiwanese independence.

For Lin, the press gave the most coverage to his 'partisan affiliation', which was mentioned in 34.1% of the total 337 counts coded. The second most salient attribute was his 'issue and policy stands' (24.0%), followed by his 'personal background' (21.4%), his quality of

'localism' (11.6%), and his 'integrity and virtues' (9.5%). The coverage of his 'partisan affiliation' mainly centred on his cooperation with the NP after being expelled from the KMT and his political stand on the unification-independence issue. Lin's 'issue and policy stands' was also mentioned a lot in the press, the focus of which was on his proposal of cross-strait relations. When reporting on Lin's 'personal background', the press placed greater emphasis on his family background. Compared with his competitors, Lin also received the most coverage on the attribute of his 'localism', emphasising his localised and down-to-earth qualities. Lin's 'integrity and virtues' was covered in the newspapers, which mainly centred on the honest, gentle, and friendly characteristics of his personality.

## 4.10.2 Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Emphasised in the *United Daily News*

The different attributes of the four presidential candidates' images have been shown in Tables 4.25 and 4.26. In this section analysis will focus on how each of the three newspapers covered the most important attributes relating to the four candidates' images. Since not all the attributes of each candidate's image were assigned significant importance in press coverage, only the top five most often mentioned image attributes will be analysed.

As the data in Table 4.27 reveal, Lee was ahead of his competitors in terms of the number of image attributes mentioned in the *United Daily News*. The number of attributes about Lee's image was at least three times more than the respective number of the other three candidates. The *United Daily News* gave the most coverage to the candidates' 'personal background' (17.6%). 'Partisan affiliation' also received much attention in the paper (15.6%), followed by 'issue and policy stands' (14.6%), 'qualifications and experience' (7.6%), and 'political style' (7.3%).

Table 4.27

Ranking and Percentages of Candidates' Image Attributes Covered in the *United Daily News*

| Candidate Concerned / Attributes of the Image | Chen Li-an (N=94) | | Lee Teng-hui (N=350) | | Peng Ming-min (N=72) | | Lin Yang-kang (N=72) | | Total (N=615) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Personal Background | 2 | 20.2% | 1 | 17.1% | 2 | 18.1% | 3 | 16.2% | 1 | 17.6% |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 24.5 | 6 | 8.9 | 1 | 29.2 | 1 | 21.2 | 2 | 15.6 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 17.0 | 2 | 11.7 | 4 | 16.7 | 1 | 21.2 | 3 | 14.6 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 6 | 5.3 | 7 | 7.1 | 2 | 18.1 | 8 | 4.0 | 4 | 7.6 |
| Political Style | 5 | 7.4 | 5 | 9.1 | 5 | 6.9 | 10 | 1.0 | 5 | 7.3 |
| Political Honesty | | 1.1 | 3 | 11.1 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 6.5 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 7 | 3.2 | 4 | 9.4 | - | - | 10 | 1.0 | 7 | 6.0 |
| Ability | - | - | 8 | 6.9 | 7 | 1.4 | 7 | 6.1 | 8 | 5.0 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 7 | 3.2 | 11 | 4.0 | 7 | 1.4 | 4 | 9.1 | 9 | 4.4 |
| Personality | 9 | 2.1 | 10 | 4.3 | 6 | 2.8 | 9 | 2.0 | 10 | 3.4 |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | 9 | 5.1 | - | - | - | - | 11 | 2.9 |
| Religion | 4 | 12.8 | 16 | 0.3 | 7 | 1.4 | 10 | 1.0 | 12 | 2.4 |
| Ancestral Origin | 9 | 2.1 | 14 | 0.6 | - | - | 6 | 7.1 | 13 | 1.8 |
| Political Philosophy | 11 | 1.1 | 12 | 2.0 | 7 | 1.4 | - | - | 14 | 1.5 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 9.1 | 15 | 1.5 |
| Private Life | - | - | 13 | 1.4 | - | - | - | - | 16 | 0.8 |
| Intelligence | - | - | 14 | 0.6 | 7 | 1.4 | 10 | 1.0 | 17 | 0.7 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | - | - | 7 | 1.4 | - | - | 18 | 0.2 |
| Others | - | - | 16 | 0.3 | - | - | - | - | 19 | 0.2 |

*Each image-related news item may contain more than one attribute of candidates' image; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes.  N: Number

Chen's most important attribute covered in the paper was his 'partisan affiliation', which accounted for 24.5% of his total.  Second was his 'personal background' (20.2%), followed by his 'issue and policy stands' (17.0%), his 'religion' (12.8%), and his 'political style' (7.4%). These findings were in agreement with the overall results (see Table 4.26).

The *United Daily News* offered the most coverage to Lee's 'personal background', which formed 17.1% of his total attributes reported.  The second most principal attribute was his 'issue and policy stands' (11.7%), followed by his 'political honesty' (11.1%), his 'presentation skills/communication' (9.4%), and his 'political style' (9.1%).

Peng's most reported attribute in the *United Daily News* was his 'partisan affiliation'. Nearly three out of ten attributes of Peng were devoted to his 'partisan affiliation'.  His

'personal background' and his 'qualifications and experience' came up second with a respective share of 18.1%, followed by his 'issue and policy stands' (16.7%) and his 'political style' (6.9%). In terms of the top five most often emphasised attributes of Peng, the *United Daily News* conformed to similar trends in the overall results found earlier in this chapter (see Table 4.26).

Analysis of the data in Table 4.27 also reveals that 'partisan affiliation' and 'issue and policy stands' were the most important attributes of Lin in the *United Daily News*. These two attributes each constituted 21.2% of attributes relating to his image. The next most frequently reported attribute was his 'personal background' (16.2%), followed by his 'integrity and virtues' (9.1%) and his quality of 'localism' (9.1%). Lin was the only candidate whose quality of localism was mentioned in the paper.

### 4.10.3 Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Emphasised in the *China Times*

According to the figures in Table 4.28, it was found that the total number of Lee's attributes exceeded his rivals' in the *China Times*. Lee's attributes appeared as many as 530 times, followed by Lin's (195), Chen's (151), and Peng's (125). Overall, the *China Times* put more emphasis on 'partisan affiliation' (21.9%), 'personal background' (19.8%), 'issue and policy stands' (9.0%), 'political honesty' (7.3%), and 'presentation skills/communication' (5.9%).

Table 4.28

Ranking and Percentages of Candidates' Image Attributes Covered in the *China Times*

| Candidate Concerned<br><br>Attributes of the Image | Chen<br>Li-an<br>(N=151) | | Lee<br>Teng-hui<br>(N=530) | | Peng<br>Ming-min<br>(N=125) | | Lin<br>Yang-kang<br>(N=195) | | Total<br>(N=1001) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 37.1% | 2 | 12.3% | 1 | 37.6% | 1 | 26.2% | 1 | 21.9% |
| Personal Background | 2 | 15.9 | 1 | 21.9 | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 16.9 | 2 | 19.8 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 | 9.3 | 7 | 7.0 | 4 | 4.8 | 2 | 16.9 | 3 | 9.0 |
| Political Honesty | 8 | 2.0 | 3 | 11.5 | 7 | 2.4 | 9 | 3.1 | 4 | 7.3 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 7 | 2.6 | 4 | 9.8 | 8 | 1.6 | 14 | 0.5 | 5 | 5.9 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 12 | 1.3 | 9 | 4.9 | 2 | 20.0 | 11 | 1.5 | 6 | 5.6 |
| Ability | 8 | 2.0 | 5 | 7.9 | - | - | 6 | 4.6 | 7 | 5.4 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 5 | 6.6 | 10 | 4.0 | 8 | 1.6 | 5 | 6.7 | 8 | 4.6 |
| Leadership Qualities | 14 | 0.7 | 6 | 7.5 | - | - | 11 | 1.5 | 9 | 4.4 |
| Political Style | 8 | 2.0 | 8 | 5.5 | 4 | 4.8 | 10 | 2.1 | 10 | 4.2 |
| Personality | 6 | 4.6 | 11 | 2.5 | - | - | 6 | 4.6 | 11 | 2.9 |
| Religion | 3 | 11.3 | 13 | 1.3 | 8 | 1.6 | 13 | 1.0 | 12 | 2.8 |
| Ancestral Origin | 8 | 2.0 | 12 | 1.9 | 11 | 0.8 | 6 | 4.6 | 13 | 2.3 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | 11 | 0.8 | 4 | 9.2 | 14 | 1.9 |
| Intelligence | 14 | 0.7 | 15 | 0.8 | 11 | 0.8 | 14 | 0.5 | 15 | 0.7 |
| Others | 12 | 1.3 | 14 | 0.9 | - | - | - | - | 15 | 0.7 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | - | - | 6 | 3.2 | - | - | 17 | 0.4 |
| Political Philosophy | 14 | 0.7 | 16 | 0.4 | - | - | - | - | 18 | 0.3 |

*Each image-related news item may contain more than one attribute of candidates' image; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes. N: Number

Chen's most salient attribute was his 'partisan affiliation', which made up 37.1% of his total attributes covered in the paper. His 'personal background', which accounted for 15.9% of the total counts, was the second most frequently reported attribute, followed by his 'religion' (11.3%), his 'issue and policy stands' (9.3%), and his 'integrity and virtues' (6.6%). Compared with his contenders, Chen received the most coverage about his 'religion' in the *China Times*.

Lee's 'personal background' was mentioned the most in the newspaper (21.9%). His 'partisan affiliation', appearing in 12.3% of his total attributes, was the second most principal attribute, followed by his 'political honesty' (11.5%), his 'presentation skills/communication' (9.8%), and his 'ability' (7.9%). These top five most important attributes, with the exception of his 'partisan affiliation', received much more mention in the *China Times* compared with the same individual attributes of his rivals.

Peng's 'partisan affiliation' appeared most frequently in the *China Times* (37.6%). His 'personal background' and his 'qualifications and experience' were both the second most salient attributes, accounting for 20.0% of the total counts each. The next two most often mentioned attributes of Peng were his 'issue and policy stands' and his 'political style', which both shared 4.8% of the total attributes. In general, emphasis of Peng's first five principal attributes in the *China Times* was consistent with that in all the newspapers put together (see Table 4.26).

Lin's most frequently reported attribute was his 'partisan affiliation', which appeared in 26.2% of the total counts relating to Lin's image. The second most emphasised attributes were his 'personal background' and his 'issue and policy stands', each accounting for 16.9% of the total. The next most reported attribute was his quality of 'localism' (9.2%), followed by his 'integrity and virtues' (6.7%). It is worthwhile noting that compared with his competitors, Lin was given more coverage to his 'issue and policy stands' and his quality of 'localism' in the *China Times*.

### 4.10.4 Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Emphasised in the *Liberty Times*

As is clear from the figures in Table 4.29, the number of Lee's attributes covered in the *Liberty Times* was at least twice that of the other three respective candidates'. Overall, the attribute with the most emphasis in the paper was the candidates' 'personal background', which accounted for 22.4% of the total attributes mentioned. 'Partisan affiliation', appearing in 20.1% of the total counts, was the second most often emphasised attribute, followed by 'issue and policy stands' (10.1%), 'ability' (6.7%), and 'qualifications and experience' (6.7%).

Table 4.29

Ranking and Percentages of Candidates' Image Attributes Covered in the *Liberty Times*

| Candidate Concerned<br><br>Attributes of the Image | Chen<br>Li-an<br>(N=105) | | Lee<br>Teng-hui<br>(N=392) | | Peng<br>Ming-min<br>(N=90) | | Lin<br>Yang-kang<br>(N=145) | | Total<br>(N=732) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Personal Background | 1 | 28.6% | 1 | 23.0% | 2 | 23.3% | 3 | 15.9% | 1 | 22.4% |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 28.6 | 2 | 11.0 | 1 | 34.4 | 1 | 29.7 | 2 | 20.1 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 11.4 | 5 | 7.7 | 4 | 5.6 | 2 | 18.6 | 3 | 10.1 |
| Ability | 6 | 2.9 | 3 | 9.9 | - | - | 6 | 4.8 | 4 | 6.7 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 6 | 2.9 | 7 | 6.4 | 3 | 20.0 | 10 | 2.1 | 4 | 6.7 |
| Political Honesty | 8 | 1.9 | 4 | 9.2 | 7 | 1.1 | - | - | 6 | 5.3 |
| Political Style | 5 | 5.7 | 9 | 5.1 | 4 | 5.6 | 6 | 4.8 | 7 | 5.2 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 13 | 1.0 | 6 | 6.6 | 7 | 1.1 | 10 | 2.1 | 8 | 4.2 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 8 | 1.9 | 10 | 4.1 | 6 | 2.2 | 5 | 6.9 | 9 | 4.1 |
| Leadership Qualities | 13 | 1.0 | 8 | 5.4 | 7 | 1.1 | 12 | 0.7 | 10 | 3.3 |
| Personality | 8 | 1.9 | 10 | 4.1 | 7 | 1.1 | 8 | 2.8 | 11 | 3.1 |
| Ancestral Origin | 8 | 1.9 | 12 | 2.8 | - | - | 8 | 2.8 | 12 | 2.3 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | 7 | 1.1 | 4 | 8.3 | 13 | 1.8 |
| Religion | 4 | 7.6 | 15 | 0.5 | 7 | 1.1 | - | - | 14 | 1.5 |
| Intelligence | 13 | 1.0 | 13 | 1.8 | - | - | 12 | 0.7 | 15 | 1.2 |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | 13 | 1.8 | 7 | 1.1 | - | - | 16 | 1.1 |
| Private Life | 8 | 1.9 | 17 | 0.3 | - | - | - | - | 17 | 0.4 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | 15 | 0.5 | - | - | - | - | 18 | 0.3 |
| Others | - | - | - | - | 7 | 1.1 | - | - | 19 | 0.1 |

\*Each image-related news item may contain more than one attribute of candidates' image; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes. N: Number

When individual candidate's attributes were analysed, it was found that the most salient attributes of Chen were his 'personal background' and his 'partisan affiliation', which each found mention in 28.6% of his total attributes in the newspaper. The next most mentioned attribute was his 'issue and policy stands' (11.4%), followed by his 'religion' (7.6%), and his 'political style' (5.7%). These findings were similar to the results of all three newspapers put together when the contents of the two tables (Table 4.26 and Table 4.29) were compared.

Lee's 'personal background' was the attribute which received the most coverage in the *Liberty Times* (23.0%). His 'partisan affiliation', with a share of 11.0% of the total counts, was the second most frequently reported attribute, followed by his 'ability' (9.9%), his 'political honesty' (9.2%), and his 'issue and policy stands' (7.7%). A closer look at the figures in Table 4.29 reveals that compared with his competitors, Lee received the most coverage on both

his 'ability' and 'political honesty' in the newspaper.

Over 34% of the total attributes concerning Peng's image in the newspaper were about his 'partisan affiliation'. His second most emphasised attribute was his 'personal background' (23.3%), followed by his 'qualifications and experience' (20.0%), his 'issue and policy stands' (5.6%), and his 'political style' (5.6%). These findings were similar to the overall results in Table 4.26. Another revealing fact emerging from Table 4.29 is that the newspaper seemed to focus on reporting Peng's 'partisan affiliation', 'personal background', and 'qualifications and experience'. In comparison to his rivals, Peng received the most coverage on 'partisan affiliation' and 'qualifications and experience'.

With regard to the coverage of Lin's image, it was found that the most emphasised attribute was his 'partisan affiliation' (29.7%). His 'issue and policy stands', constituting 18.6% of his total attributes, was the second most often reported attribute, followed by his 'personal background' (15.9%), his 'localism' (8.3%), and his 'integrity and virtues' (6.9%). In terms of percentages, Lin received the most reporting on 'issue and policy stands', quality of 'localism', and 'integrity and virtues' in the *Liberty Times*.

## 4.11 Evaluation of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes

Evaluation of all four presidential candidates' image attributes in the press was examined in this section. The statement of each attribute mentioned was classified as *positive, negative, neutral, mixed,* and *cannot be determined* (see Chapter 3 for the detailed definition).

### 4.11.1 Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

As the data in Table 4.30 show, the press presented the attributes of Chen Li-an's image in a more favourable way. Over half of Chen's attributes were coded as positive, in contrast to

28.3% of negative coverage. Nevertheless, when the tone of press coverage of Chen's top five important attributes was analysed, it was found that the reporting of his 'issue and policy stands' was more unfavourable, and the coverage of his 'religion' was slightly negative. One of the possible reasons was that Chen's campaign was so emotionally and spiritually driven that he did not offer concrete solutions to the important problems he identified.

Table 4.30

Frequency of Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | Positive | | Negative | | Neutral | | Mixed | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Political Style | 12 | 75.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 2 | 12.5% | - | - | 16 | 100% |
| Political Honesty | 5 | 83.3 | 1 | 16.7 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 100 |
| Political Philosophy | 1 | 50.0 | - | - | 1 | 50.0 | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Ability | 4 | 66.7 | 2 | 33.3 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 100 |
| Leadership Qualities | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 7 | 70.0 | 3 | 30.0 | - | - | - | - | 10 | 100 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 15 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 15 | 100 |
| Personality | 8 | 72.7 | 3 | 27.3 | - | - | - | - | 11 | 100 |
| Intelligence | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 8 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 | 100 |
| Personal Background | 37 | 50.7 | 10 | 13.7 | 26 | 35.6 | - | - | 73 | 100 |
| Private Life | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Religion | 16 | 43.2 | 17 | 45.9 | 4 | 10.8 | - | - | 37 | 99.9 |
| Ancestral Origin | 4 | 57.1 | 2 | 28.6 | 1 | 14.3 | - | - | 7 | 100 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 45 | 41.3 | 38 | 34.9 | 25 | 22.9 | 1 | 0.9 | 109 | 100 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 9 | 21.4 | 21 | 50.0 | 11 | 26.2 | 1 | 2.4 | 42 | 100 |
| Others | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Total | 177 | 50.6 | 99 | 28.3 | 72 | 20.6 | 2 | 0.6 | 350 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.11.2 Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

Examination of the tone adopted towards Lee Teng-hui's image shows that his image attributes were unfavourably presented in the press. Table 4.31 reveals that 66.3% of the press coverage on his attributes was classified as negative. All his top five important attributes received more negative coverage than positive one. A big difference between favourable tone and unfavourable one was found in the attributes of Lee's 'political honesty' and 'presentation skills/communication'. As mentioned earlier, one possible reason for this was that Lee's

rivals often criticised his controversial speeches and alleged ties with corrupt local factions, gangsters, and interest groups. On the other hand, three attributes were treated more positively than negatively, including his 'political philosophy', 'qualifications and experience', and 'intelligence'.

Table 4.31

Frequency of Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | Positive | | Negative | | Neutral | | Mixed | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Political Style | 14 | 17.3% | 63 | 77.8% | 3 | 3.7% | 1 | 1.2% | 81 | 100% |
| Political Honesty | 10 | 7.4 | 125 | 91.9 | 1 | 0.7 | - | - | 136 | 100 |
| Political Philosophy | 11 | 68.8 | 4 | 25.0 | - | - | 1 | 6.3 | 16 | 100.1 |
| Ability | 35 | 33.3 | 69 | 65.7 | 1 | 1.0 | - | - | 105 | 100 |
| Leadership Qualities | 9 | 11.4 | 70 | 88.6 | - | - | - | - | 79 | 100 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 47 | 61.8 | 27 | 35.5 | 1 | 1.3 | 1 | 1.3 | 76 | 99.9 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 5 | 9.8 | 45 | 88.2 | 1 | 2.0 | - | - | 51 | 100 |
| Personality | 14 | 31.8 | 27 | 61.4 | 2 | 4.5 | 1 | 2.3 | 44 | 100 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Intelligence | 9 | 69.2 | 4 | 30.8 | - | - | - | - | 13 | 100 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 8 | 7.2 | 94 | 84.7 | 6 | 5.4 | 3 | 2.7 | 111 | 100 |
| Personal Background | 70 | 26.3 | 127 | 47.7 | 66 | 24.8 | 3 | 1.1 | 266 | 99.9 |
| Private Life | 1 | 16.7 | 5 | 83.3 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 100 |
| Religion | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 6 | 60.0 | - | - | 10 | 100 |
| Ancestral Origin | 8 | 34.8 | 12 | 52.2 | 3 | 13.0 | - | - | 23 | 100 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 32 | 23.0 | 93 | 66.9 | 13 | 9.4 | 1 | 0.7 | 139 | 100 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 23 | 21.3 | 72 | 66.7 | 11 | 10.2 | 2 | 1.9 | 108 | 100.1 |
| Others | 2 | 33.3 | 4 | 66.7 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 100 |
| Total | 300 | 23.6 | 843 | 66.3 | 116 | 9.1 | 13 | 1.0 | 1272 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.11.3 Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

Peng Ming-min's image was favourably depicted in the press since the total positive coverage of his attributes was three times the number of the total negative coverage. As far as the top five attributes of Peng were concerned, it was found that more favourable reporting was given to these attributes. The only attribute that received more negative than positive coverage was his 'presentation skills/communication', but when compared with the neutral coverage of this attribute, it appeared that the overall tone of Peng's 'presentation skills/communication' in the press was still neutral.

Table 4.32

Frequency of Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | Positive | | Negative | | Neutral | | Mixed | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Political Style | 13 | 81.3% | 1 | 6.3% | 2 | 12.5% | - | - | 16 | 100.1 |
| Political Honesty | 4 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 100 |
| Political Philosophy | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Ability | 1 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100 |
| Leadership Qualities | 1 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 51 | 91.1 | 1 | 1.8 | 4 | 7.1 | - | - | 56 | 100 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 4 | 80.0 | 1 | 20.0 | - | - | - | - | 5 | 100 |
| Personality | 3 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 100 |
| Appearance & Bearing | 1 | 20.0 | - | - | 4 | 80.0 | - | - | 5 | 100 |
| Intelligence | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | - | 1 | 33.3 | 2 | 66.7 | - | - | 3 | 100 |
| Personal Background | 31 | 52.5 | 6 | 10.2 | 22 | 37.3 | - | - | 59 | 100 |
| Religion | - | - | - | - | 4 | 100 | - | - | 4 | 100 |
| Ancestral Origin | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100 | - | - | 1 | 100 |
| Localism | 2 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 40 | 40.4 | 35 | 35.4 | 22 | 22.2 | 2 | 2.0 | 99 | 100 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 9 | 39.1 | 7 | 30.4 | 7 | 30.4 | - | - | 23 | 99.9 |
| Others | 1 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100 |
| Total | 165 | 57.5 | 52 | 18.1 | 68 | 23.7 | 2 | 0.7 | 287 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.11.4 Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

As the contents of Table 4.33 indicate, 49.2% of the total coverage relating to Lin Yang-kang's attributes was coded as positive, compared to 29.2% coded as negative. With regard to his top five most frequently mentioned attributes, it was found that, with the exception of 'issue and policy stands', all attributes were presented more positively than negatively by the press. One possible reason for the more negative tone towards Lin's 'issue and policy stands' was that Lin's rivals often criticised his proposals for cross-strait relations for being pro-China. A further two attributes of his image were also reported more negatively than positively; they were 'political style' and 'presentation skills/communication'.

Table 4.33

Frequency of Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes in All Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | Positive | | Negative | | Neutral | | Mixed | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the image | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Political Style | 5 | 41.7% | 6 | 50.0% | 1 | 8.3% | - | - | 12 | 100% |
| Political Honesty | 4 | 66.7 | 2 | 33.3 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 100 |
| Ability | 14 | 63.6 | 6 | 27.3 | 2 | 9.1 | - | - | 22 | 100 |
| Leadership Qualities | 3 | 75.0 | 1 | 25.0 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 100 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 7 | 70.0 | 3 | 30.0 | - | - | - | - | 10 | 100 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 24 | 75.0 | 8 | 25.0 | - | - | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| Personality | 10 | 66.7 | 5 | 33.3 | - | - | - | - | 15 | 100 |
| Intelligence | 3 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 100 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 2 | 40.0 | 3 | 60.0 | - | - | - | - | 5 | 100 |
| Personal Background | 32 | 44.4 | 7 | 9.7 | 33 | 45.8 | - | - | 72 | 99.9 |
| Religion | 2 | 66.7 | - | - | 1 | 33.3 | - | - | 3 | 100 |
| Ancestral Origin | 15 | 75.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 2 | 10.0 | - | - | 20 | 100 |
| Localism | 32 | 82.1 | 1 | 2.6 | 6 | 15.4 | - | - | 39 | 100.1 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 48 | 41.7 | 27 | 23.5 | 39 | 33.9 | 1 | 0.9 | 115 | 100 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 15 | 18.5 | 56 | 69.1 | 7 | 8.6 | 3 | 3.7 | 81 | 99.9 |
| Total | 216 | 49.2 | 128 | 29.2 | 91 | 20.7 | 4 | 0.9 | 439 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.11.5 Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Top Five Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

When the overall tone towards Chen's image attributes in the three individual newspapers was examined, it was found that each newspaper generally presented Chen's attributes in a more favourable manner. As is clear from the figures in Table 4.34, positive tone was double that of negative tone in both the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* whereas the difference was found to be very close in the *Liberty Times*.

Table 4.34

Frequency of Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Top Five Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper / Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT |
| Political Style | 5 (71.4) | - | 2 (28.6) | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 3 (60.0) | 2 (40.0) | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 3 (100) | - | - | 10 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Personality | 2 (100) | - | - | 4 (57.1) | 3 (42.9) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 3 (100) | - | - | 4 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Personal Background | 14 (73.7) | 3 (15.8) | 2 (10.5) | 13 (54.2) | 3 (12.5) | 8 (33.3) | - | 10 (33.3) | 4 (13.3) | 16 (53.3) |
| Religion | 7 (58.3) | 5 (41.7) | - | 8 (47.1) | 7 (41.2) | 2 (11.8) | - | 1 (12.5) | 5 (62.5) | 2 (25.0) |
| Partisan Affiliation | 9 (39.1) | 4 (17.4) | 10 (43.5) | 24 (42.9) | 19 (33.9) | 12 (21.4) | 1 (1.8) | 12 (40.0) | 15 (50.0) | 3 (10.0) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (25.0) | 6 (37.5) | 6 (37.5) | 4 (28.6) | 5 (35.7) | 4 (28.6) | 1 (7.1) | 1 (8.3) | 10 (83.3) | 1 (8.3) |
| Total | 53 (56.4) | 20 (21.3) | 21 (22.3) | 82 (54.3) | 40 (26.5) | 27 (17.9) | 2 (1.3) | 42 (40.0) | 39 (37.1) | 24 (22.9) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

Closer examination of the data shows that there was a marked similarity between the three newspapers in that each offered the same percentage of favourable counts to both Chen's 'integrity and virtues' and 'presentation skills/communication'. Chen's 'political style', 'qualifications and experience', and 'personality' were considered positive given the fact that the percentage of favourable counts was more than that of unfavourable counts in each of the newspapers. While both the United Daily News and the China Times gave more positive coverage of Chen's 'personal background', the reporting of this attribute in the Liberty Times was more neutral. On the other hand, the Liberty Times offered more negative coverage to Chen's 'religion' in comparison to the more positive coverage of this attribute found in both the United Daily News and the China Times. The reporting of Chen's 'partisan affiliation' was found to be more favourable in the China Times and more neutral in the United Daily News whereas the Liberty Times gave the most unfavourable coverage. In the case of Chen's 'issue and policy stands', the China Times took the lead in offering the most number of positive coverage, but the most negative, and the least positive reporting of this attribute was found in

the *Liberty Times*.

## 4.11.6 Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Top Five Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

According to the data in Table 4.35, it is clear that each of the attributes relating to Lee's image was presented quite unfavourably in each of the three newspapers. The *United Daily News* published the most negative coverage of Lee's attributes.

Table 4.35

Frequency of Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Top Five Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper / Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | 3 (9.4) | 26 (81.3) | 2 (6.3) | 1 (3.1) | 5 (17.2) | 24 (82.8) | - | - | 6 (30.0) | 13 (65.0) | 1 (5.0) | - |
| Political Honesty | - | 39 (100) | - | - | 4 (6.6) | 57 (93.4) | - | - | 6 (16.7) | 29 (80.6) | 1 (2.8) | - |
| Political Philosophy | 5 (71.4) | 2 (28.6) | - | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 5 (71.4) | 1 (14.3) | - | 1 (14.3) |
| Ability | 7 (29.2) | 16 (66.7) | 1 (4.2) | - | 18 (42.9) | 24 (57.1) | - | - | 10 (25.6) | 29 (74.4) | - | - |
| Leadership Qualities | 3 (16.7) | 15 (83.3) | - | - | 5 (12.5) | 35 (87.5) | - | - | 1 (4.8) | 20 (95.2) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 13 (52.0) | 12 (48.0) | - | - | 16 (61.5) | 9 (34.6) | - | 1 (3.8) | 18 (72.0) | 6 (24.0) | 1 (4.0) | - |
| Personality | 6 (40.0) | 8 (53.3) | 1 (6.7) | - | 4 (30.8) | 8 (61.5) | 1 (7.7) | - | 4 (25.0) | 11 (68.8) | - | 1 (6.3) |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 4 (12.1) | 26 (78.8) | 1 (3.0) | 2 (6.1) | 2 (3.8) | 47 (90.4) | 2 (3.8) | 1 (1.9) | 2 (7.7) | 21 (80.8) | 3 (11.5) | - |
| Personal Background | 8 (13.3) | 45 (75.0) | 7 (11.7) | - | 34 (29.3) | 47 (40.5) | 33 (28.4) | 2 (1.7) | 28 (31.1) | 35 (38.9) | 26 (28.9) | 1 (1.1) |
| Partisan Affiliation | 13 (41.9) | 18 (58.1) | - | - | 13 (20.0) | 46 (70.8) | 5 (7.7) | 1 (1.5) | 6 (14.0) | 29 (67.4) | 8 (18.6) | - |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (9.8) | 30 (73.2) | 6 (14.6) | 1 (2.4) | 7 (18.9) | 27 (73.0) | 2 (5.4) | 1 (2.7) | 12 (40.0) | 15 (50.0) | 3 (10.0) | - |
| Total | 69 (19.7) | 258 (73.7) | 19 (5.4) | 4 (1.1) | 121 (22.8) | 356 (67.2) | 47 (8.9) | 6 (1.1) | 110 (28.1) | 229 (58.4) | 50 (12.8) | 3 (0.8) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

It was found that only Lee's 'political philosophy' and 'qualifications and experience' received more positive coverage in the newspapers. By contrast, all his other attributes were presented in a more negative way. Even so, further examination of the figures reveals that the three newspapers showed differences in the extent with which they offered positive and negative coverage of Lee's attributes. For example, while the *China Times* was ahead in publishing

unfavourable coverage of Lee's 'political style', the *Liberty Times* had more positive coverage of this attribute than the *United Daily News*. Lee's 'political honesty' received the most negative reporting in the *United Daily News* whereas the most unfavourable coverage of his 'ability', 'leadership qualities', and 'personality' was found in the *Liberty Times*. The *China Times* took the lead in offering both the most negative and the least positive coverage of Lee's 'presentation skills/communication'. The *United Daily News* was particularly unfavourable in presenting both Lee's 'personal background' and his 'issue and policy stands', in that it published the least positive and the most negative reporting of these two attributes. With regard to Lee's 'partisan affiliation', it was found that the *China Times* had the most unfavourable coverage.

### 4.11.7 Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Top Five Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

On the whole, as is evidenced by the contents of Table 4.36, the three newspapers followed a similar trend in that they all presented Peng's image attributes in a favourable light. The *China Times* published more positive coverage of Peng's attributes than the *United Daily News* whereas the *Liberty Times* had the least number of unfavourable coverage of his attributes in contrast to the most number of unfavourable reporting found in the *United Daily News*.

Table 4.36

Frequency of Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Top Five Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper / Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (40.0) | 5 (83.3) | 1 (16.7) | - | - | 5 (100) | - | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 9 (69.2) | 1 (7.7) | 3 (23.1) | 25 (100) | - | - | - | 17 (94.4) | - | 1 (5.6) | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | - | - | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Personal Background | 10 (76.9) | 2 (15.4) | 1 (7.7) | 17 (68.0) | 1 (4.0) | 7 (28.0) | - | 4 (19.0) | 3 (14.3) | 14 (66.7) | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 8 (38.1) | 11 (52.4) | 2 (9.5) | 23 (48.9) | 16 (34.0) | 7 (14.9) | 1 (2.1) | 9 (29.0) | 8 (25.8) | 13 (41.9) | 1 (3.2) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 2 (16.7) | 5 (41.7) | 5 (41.7) | 2 (33.3) | 2 (33.3) | 2 (33.3) | - | 5 (100) | - | - | - |
| Total | 38 (52.8) | 19 (26.4) | 15 (20.8) | 79 (63.2) | 22 (17.6) | 23 (18.4) | 1 (0.8) | 48 (53.3) | 11 (12.2) | 30 (33.3) | 1 (1.1) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.  P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

Closer examination of the figures shows that all of Peng's attributes, with the exception of his 'presentation skills/communication' covered in the *China Times*, and his 'partisan affiliation' and 'issue and policy stands' covered in the *United Daily News*, were presented more positively than negatively in the three newspapers. The *Liberty Times* was ahead of its counterparts in publishing positive coverage of his 'political style'. The tone towards Peng's 'qualifications and experience' was found to be more favourable in both the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* than in the *United Daily News*. Peng's 'personal background' was covered more positively in both the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*, but more neutrally in the *Liberty Times*. The *China Times* offered the most favourable coverage to Peng's 'partisan affiliation' whereas the most unfavourable reporting of this attribute was found in the *United Daily News*. As for Peng's 'issue and policy stands', while the *Liberty Times* presented this attribute in a very positive way, the *United Daily News* had the most negative coverage of this attribute.

### 4.11.8 Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Top Five Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

Overall, as the data in Table 4.37 indicate, evaluation of Lin's image attributes was found to be

positive rather than negative in each of the three newspapers. Over 50% were coded as favourable in both the *China Times* and the *United Daily News*, though the difference between the positive coverage of his total attributes and the negative was not great in the *Liberty Times*.

Table 4.37

Frequency of Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Top Five Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (50.0) | 1 (25.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | 3 (42.9) | 4 (57.1) | - | - |
| Ability | 3 (50.0) | 3 (50.0) | - | - | 6 (66.7) | 2 (22.2) | 1 (11.1) | - | 5 (71.4) | 1 (14.3) | 1 (14.3) | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 (66.7) | 3 (33.3) | - | - | 11 (84.6) | 2 (15.4) | - | - | 7 (70.0) | 3 (30.0) | - | - |
| Personality | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 7 (77.8) | 2 (22.2) | - | - | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - |
| Personal Background | 12 (75.0) | 2 (12.5) | 2 (12.5) | - | 13 (39.4) | 2 (6.1) | 18 (54.5) | - | 7 (30.4) | 3 (13.0) | 13 (56.5) | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 7 (100) | - | - | - | 5 (55.6) | 2 (22.2) | 2 (22.2) | - | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | - |
| Localism | 8 (88.9) | - | 1 (11.1) | - | 16 (88.9) | - | 2 (11.1) | - | 8 (66.7) | 1 (8.3) | 3 (25.0) | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 9 (42.9) | 4 (19.0) | 8 (38.1) | - | 24 (47.1) | 9 (17.6) | 18 (35.3) | - | 15 (34.9) | 14 (32.6) | 13 (30.2) | 1 (2.3) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | - | 14 (66.7) | 5 (23.8) | 2 (9.5) | 10 (30.3) | 20 (60.6) | 2 (6.1) | 1 (3.0) | 5 (18.5) | 22 (81.5) | - | - |
| Total | 50 (50.5) | 31 (31.3) | 16 (16.2) | 2 (2.0) | 106 (54.4) | 43 (22.1) | 45 (23.1) | 1 (0.5) | 60 (41.4) | 54 (37.2) | 30 (20.7) | 1 (0.7) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

The contents of Table 4.37 also give a clear picture of how some of Lin's attributes were presented in a favourable manner while others were presented more unfavourably. The three newspapers differed in reporting the individual attributes of Lin. For example, the tone towards Lin's 'political style' was found to be the most negative in the *United Daily News*, but the most positive in the *China Times*. The *United Daily News* presented Lin's 'ability' most unfavourably. However, the most favourable coverage of this attribute was found in the *Liberty Times*, where over 70% of Lin's 'ability' was classified as positive. The *China Times* was ahead of its counterparts in publishing positive coverage of Lin's 'qualifications and experience', 'integrity and virtues', and 'personality'. In contrast to the most favourable

reporting of Lin's 'presentation skills/communication' in the *Liberty Times*, both the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* presented this attribute in a completely unfavourable way. As for Lin's 'personal background', the most positive coverage was found in the *United Daily News* whereas both the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* reported this attribute more neutrally. Three attributes of Lin's image, including his 'ancestral origin', quality of 'localism', and 'partisan affiliation', were more positively depicted in the three individual newspapers. However, the three newspapers were unfavourable in presenting his 'issue and policy stands'. In particular, the *Liberty Times* published the most negative coverage of this attribute.

## 4.12 Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes

All the image-related news items were also further coded to see who was quoted or cited as the news source of the candidates' image attributes emphasised in the papers. The main source referred to the primary source that mentioned the candidate's attributes most often.

## 4.12.1 Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes in All Newspapers

When the sources of the candidate's image in the press were examined, it was found that the most often referred to source was the candidate himself and his campaign organisers. As the data in Table 4.38 show, the most frequently mentioned source about the image of independent candidate Chen Li-an was himself and his campaign team, who accounted for 40.0% of total sources relating to his image attributes. The second went to journalists, who contributed to 25.4% of Chen's image sources. A similar pattern was found in the top two most quoted sources of the images concerning both DPP candidate Peng Ming-min, and independent candidate Lin Yang-kang. Of the total 287 sources of Peng's image attributes, 47.4% of them came from the candidate himself and his campaign staff, followed by journalists (20.9%). Lin and his campaign team were referred to in the press most frequently (33.7%), followed by

the media (26.7%). However, this was not the case in the most often quoted source of KMT candidate Lee Teng-hui's image. It was found that Lin and his campaign workers, who contributed to 30.5% of Lee's total image sources, were the most frequently referred to source. Lee himself and his campaign team were the second most mentioned source (18.1%). The next image source went to Peng and his campaigners, who appeared in 17.8% of the total sources relating to Lee's image attributes. Understandably, the candidate himself and his campaign staff were most frequently referred to as the source of his own image since they wanted to project as many positive images as possible to impress voters. However, in the case of often quoted sources relating to Lee's image, Lin and Peng appeared very frequently because they conducted many negative campaigns against Lee.

Table 4.38

Frequency with Which Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Were Quoted in All Newspapers

| Candidate

Source of Candidate's Image | Chen Li-an | | Lee Teng-hui | | Peng Ming-min | | Lin Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Independent Chen Li-an & his Campaigners | 140 | 40.0% | 140 | 11.0% | 13 | 4.5% | 22 | 5.0% |
| KMT Lee Teng-hui & his Campaigners | 25 | 7.1 | 230 | 18.1 | 7 | 2.4 | 50 | 11.4 |
| DPP Peng Ming-min & his Campaigners | 30 | 8.6 | 226 | 17.8 | 136 | 47.4 | 43 | 9.8 |
| Independent Lin Yang-kang & his Campaigners | 24 | 6.9 | 388 | 30.5 | 27 | 9.4 | 148 | 33.7 |
| Media (Journalists) | 89 | 25.4 | 156 | 12.3 | 60 | 20.9 | 117 | 26.7 |
| Others | 42 | 12.0 | 123 | 9.7 | 44 | 15.3 | 54 | 12.3 |
| Not Specified | - | - | 8 | 0.6 | - | - | 5 | 1.1 |
| Total | 350 | 100 | 1272 | 100 | 287 | 99.9 | 439 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.12.2 Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

When the most frequently quoted sources of the candidate's image in the individual newspapers were analysed, a remarkable similarity was found in the way the China Times and the Liberty Times referred to, at least, the first two most important sources of the attributes relating to the four candidates' images. Comparing the contents of the three tables (Tables 4.38, 4.40, and 4.41), it appears that the figures in these two individual newspapers were

generally close to the average results. However, there was a slight difference between the *United Daily News* and its counterparts when mentioning the top two principal image sources. As is clear from Table 4.39, in the *United Daily News* journalists were referred to as the source of Chen's image more often than the candidate himself, but the difference was not very big. Lee and his staff were far behind his rivals in being quoted as the source of his own image, since the first three most often mentioned sources were Lin's team, Peng's team, and Chen's team.

When the data in the tables (Tables 4.39, 4.40, and 4.41) were compared, a difference in importance attached to the candidate and his campaigners as his own image source was detected in the three papers. Chen and his campaigners were referred to as the source of his own image more frequently in the *China Times* than in the *United Daily News* (50.3% vs. 31.9%). Lee and his campaign staff found much mention in both the *Liberty Times* (22.4%) and the *China Times* (18.9%), but least mention in the *United Daily News* (12.0%). Both the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* quoted Peng and his campaign organisers as his own image source more often than the *United Daily News*. The *United Daily News* gave 36.1% of Peng's total sources to Peng's team whereas the corresponding figures for the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times* were 55.2% and 45.6% respectively. When the sources of Lin's image in the three newspapers were compared, it appeared that the *China Times* was ahead of its counterparts in quoting Lin and his staff. Nevertheless, it was also found that the *Liberty Times* made more reference to both Lee's team and Peng's team than the *United Daily News* when quoting the sources relating to Lin's image. It may therefore be concluded that the individual standing of the three newspapers in the political spectrum was, to a certain extent, reflected in the way they quoted the image sources. In terms of the opportunity for media access, the *Liberty Times* was both pro-Lee and pro-Peng while the *United Daily News* was not so in favour of Lee or Peng.

Table 4.39

Frequency with Which Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Were Quoted in the *United Daily News*

| Candidate<br>Source of Candidate's Image | Chen<br>Li-an | | Lee<br>Teng-hui | | Peng<br>Ming-min | | Lin<br>Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Independent Chen Li-an & his Campaigners | 30 | 31.9% | 44 | 12.6% | 5 | 6.9% | 6 | 6.1% |
| KMT Lee Teng-hui & his Campaigners | 7 | 7.4 | 42 | 12.0 | - | - | 7 | 7.1 |
| DPP Peng Ming-min & his Campaigners | 8 | 8.5 | 76 | 21.7 | 26 | 36.1 | 11 | 11.1 |
| Independent Lin Yang-kang & his Campaigners | 4 | 4.3 | 107 | 30.6 | 5 | 6.9 | 24 | 24.2 |
| Media (Journalists) | 33 | 35.1 | 42 | 12.0 | 18 | 25.0 | 31 | 31.3 |
| Others | 12 | 12.8 | 39 | 11.1 | 18 | 25.0 | 19 | 19.2 |
| Not Specified | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1.0 |
| Total | 94 | 100 | 350 | 100 | 72 | 99.9 | 99 | 100 |

Table 4.40

Frequency with Which Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Were Quoted in the *China Times*

| Candidate<br>Source of Candidate's Image | Chen<br>Li-an | | Lee<br>Teng-hui | | Peng<br>Ming-min | | Lin<br>Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Independent Chen Li-an & his Campaigners | 76 | 50.3% | 56 | 10.6% | 6 | 4.8% | 7 | 3.6% |
| KMT Lee Teng-hui & his Campaigners | 9 | 6.0 | 100 | 18.9 | 4 | 3.2 | 23 | 11.8 |
| DPP Peng Ming-min & his Campaigners | 8 | 5.3 | 95 | 17.9 | 69 | 55.2 | 13 | 6.7 |
| Independent Lin Yang-kang & his Campaigners | 11 | 7.3 | 159 | 30.0 | 15 | 12.0 | 84 | 43.1 |
| Media (Journalists) | 35 | 23.2 | 75 | 14.2 | 22 | 17.6 | 52 | 26.7 |
| Others | 12 | 7.9 | 42 | 7.9 | 9 | 7.2 | 15 | 7.7 |
| Not Specified | - | - | 3 | 0.6 | - | - | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total | 151 | 100 | 530 | 100.1 | 125 | 100 | 195 | 100.1 |

Table 4.41

Frequency with Which Sources of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Were Quoted in the *Liberty Times*

| Candidate<br>Source of Candidate's Image | Chen<br>Li-an | | Lee<br>Teng-hui | | Peng<br>Ming-min | | Lin<br>Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Independent Chen Li-an & his Campaigners | 34 | 32.4% | 40 | 10.2% | 2 | 2.2% | 9 | 6.2% |
| KMT Lee Teng-hui & his Campaigners | 9 | 8.6 | 88 | 22.4 | 3 | 3.3 | 20 | 13.8 |
| DPP Peng Ming-min & his Campaigners | 14 | 13.3 | 55 | 14.0 | 41 | 45.6 | 19 | 13.1 |
| Independent Lin Yang-kang & his Campaigners | 9 | 8.6 | 123 | 31.4 | 7 | 7.8 | 40 | 27.6 |
| Media (Journalists) | 21 | 20.0 | 39 | 9.9 | 20 | 22.2 | 34 | 23.4 |
| Others | 18 | 17.1 | 42 | 10.7 | 17 | 18.9 | 20 | 13.8 |
| Not Specified | - | - | 5 | 1.3 | - | - | 3 | 2.1 |
| Total | 105 | 100 | 392 | 99.9 | 90 | 100 | 145 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

## 4.13 Overall Dimension of Campaign-related News Items

The dimension of the campaign-related news items was classified as *positive, negative, neutral, mixed,* and *non-applicable* based on the overall impression of the presidential candidates of the four teams (see Chapter 3). This could result from what was highlighted in the headlines, the text of the news, the visual, the main actor(s) concerned, and the perspective of the campaign. Table 4.42 shows how the three newspapers allocated coverage, with different overall tone to the candidates and their running mates. It is clear from the data in the table that the majority of campaign news items relating to the candidates running for the presidency in the three newspapers were neutral in nature. However, when viewed more specifically, it was also found that the three newspapers had an almost identical pattern in tone of items towards KMT candidates Lee and Lien, and DPP candidates Peng and Hsieh. On the whole, the newspapers portrayed Peng and Hsieh more favourably in contrast to the negative reporting on Lee and Lien. The DPP candidates were given the most positive coverage by each newspaper, whereas the KMT candidates received both the least positive coverage and the most negative coverage in each. This finding was contrary to the political stance shown by the newspapers, since the *China Times* is considered pro-KMT mainstream faction (in this case Lee and Lien), the *United Daily News* is in favour of the KMT's non-mainstream faction (in this case Lin and Hau) and the *Liberty Times* takes sides with the DPP and is also sympathetic towards the KMT mainstream faction. Nevertheless, this proves consistent with the findings of past studies. For example, in their study of newspaper coverage of the 1991 National Assembly elections, Lo and Chung (1992) found that only party-run newspapers offered positive coverage to the KMT whereas private newspapers generally reported more favourably on the DPP. Similarly, King (1994), in his analysis of newspaper coverage on the 1992 Taiwanese legislative elections, also found that the DPP was given more favourable coverage by the newspapers than was the KMT.

Table 4.42

Overall Dimension of the Campaign-related News Items in the Three Newspapers

| Newspaper<br>Candidate | The United<br>Daily News | | The China<br>Times | | The Liberty<br>Times | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **KMT (Lee & Lien)** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** |
| Positive | 72 | 9.9% | 127 | 13.7% | 139 | 23.8% |
| Negative | 253 | 34.8 | 339 | 36.6 | 176 | 30.2 |
| Neutral | 384 | 52.8 | 427 | 46.2 | 258 | 44.3 |
| Mixed | 18 | 2.5 | 32 | 3.5 | 10 | 1.7 |
| Subtotal | 727 | 100 | 925 | 100 | 583 | 100 |
| **DPP (Peng & Hsieh)** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** |
| Positive | 113 | 26.8 | 186 | 32.0 | 117 | 32.4 |
| Negative | 28 | 6.7 | 27 | 4.6 | 22 | 6.1 |
| Neutral | 275 | 65.3 | 360 | 62.0 | 219 | 60.7 |
| Mixed | 5 | 1.2 | 8 | 1.4 | 3 | 0.8 |
| Subtotal | 421 | 100 | 581 | 100 | 361 | 100 |
| **Independents (Lin & Hau)** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** |
| Positive | 117 | 23.0 | 180 | 26.8 | 130 | 30.6 |
| Negative | 54 | 10.6 | 68 | 10.1 | 90 | 21.2 |
| Neutral | 324 | 63.7 | 407 | 60.6 | 198 | 46.6 |
| Mixed | 14 | 2.8 | 17 | 2.5 | 7 | 1.6 |
| Subtotal | 509 | 100.1 | 672 | 100 | 425 | 100 |
| **Independents (Chen & Wang)** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** | **Fre.** | **Per.** |
| Positive | 75 | 20.5 | 107 | 20.7 | 75 | 24.7 |
| Negative | 20 | 5.5 | 31 | 6.0 | 37 | 12.2 |
| Neutral | 266 | 72.9 | 372 | 72.0 | 188 | 61.8 |
| Mixed | 4 | 1.1 | 7 | 1.4 | 4 | 1.3 |
| Subtotal | 365 | 100 | 517 | 100.1 | 304 | 100 |

Fre.: Frequency; Per.: Percentage

In general, the press seemed to present KMT candidates unfavourably in the campaign coverage compared with the positive coverage devoted to DPP candidates, but a closer look at the figures indicates how the three newspapers showed differences in the extent of their positive and negative tones towards the candidates. The *Liberty Times* had more than double the percentage of favourable items relating to the KMT's Lee and Lien than the *United Daily News*. The *China Times* took the lead in offering negative coverage to KMT candidates, but the difference in the percentage among the three papers was not great. With regard to the overall tone of items towards DPP candidates, it was found that the *Liberty Times* was ahead of the *United Daily News* in publishing favourable reports on Peng and Hsieh, whereas the *United Daily News* gave more negative coverage to DPP candidates than its counterparts. It appears that the differences between the three newspapers in their distribution of positive and negative coverage allocated to the KMT and the DPP candidates still reflected the preferences of the

papers in the political spectrum.

On the other hand, while in terms of percentage the *Liberty Times* took the lead in presenting independent candidates Lin and Hau most favourably, it also had a greater number of unfavourable coverage on Lin and Hau than both the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*. A similar case about the distribution of the overall tone to independent candidates Chen and Wang can be found in the three newspapers. As far as the percentages devoted to positive and negative items were concerned, the *Liberty Times* was ahead of its counterparts in showing a more favourable tone towards Chen and Wang, but it had double the percentage of unfavourable items relating to Chen and Wang than both the *China Times* and the *United Daily News*.

# Chapter 5 - Findings of Extended Focus Groups

While issues and themes given prominence in the coverage of the three selected newspapers have been discussed in Chapter 4, the focus of this chapter will explore participants' views of the most important issues facing Taiwan today, and key campaign issues and their perceptions of the four presidential candidates' image attributes. This chapter will be divided into two, including the results of pre-session questionnaires and the results of focus group discussions. The former provided quantitative data, whereas the latter, in its qualitative nature, helped back up the quantitative data by providing evidence for the findings.

## 5.1 Results of Pre-session Questionnaires

### 5.1.1 Public Issue Agenda

Participants' views on the most important issues were measured by two open-ended questions: 'In your opinion, what are the most important problems and issues facing Taiwan now (up to five national issues)?' and 'Among these issues, which is the most important to you personally (single response)?' The rank ordering of the important issues for the first question answered by participants was defined as the *public issue agenda;* the rank ordering of the key issues singled out by participants was consisted of the *public priority issue agenda.*

Table 5.1

The Most Important Issues Mentioned by Participants (Multiple Responses)

| Participant | HEF[1] (N=115) | | HEM (N=120) | | LEF (N=115) | | LEM (N=110) | | Total (N=460) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 1 | 21.7% | 1 | 23.3% | 2 | 20.9% | 4 | 15.5% | 1 | 20.4% |
| Economic Development | 2 | 18.3 | 4 | 14.2 | 1 | 27.0 | 1 | 22.7 | 1 | 20.4 |
| Cross-strait Relations | 4 | 15.7 | 3 | 18.3 | 4 | 13.9 | 3 | 18.2 | 3 | 16.5 |
| Law and Order | 3 | 16.5 | 5 | 10.8 | 3 | 15.7 | 2 | 20.9 | 4 | 15.9 |
| Environment/Ecology | 4 | 15.7 | 2 | 19.2 | 5 | 12.2 | 4 | 15.5 | 5 | 15.7 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 2.6 | 7 | 4.2 | 6 | 4.3 | 6 | 4.5 | 6 | 3.9 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 6 | 6.1 | 6 | 5.8 | 8 | 1.7 | 7 | 1.8 | 6 | 3.9 |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 7 | 2.6 | 8 | 3.3 | 8 | 1.7 | 8 | 0.9 | 8 | 2.2 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 9 | 0.9 | 9 | 0.8 | 7 | 2.6 | - | - | 9 | 1.1 |

*Each participant may answer up to five important issues of the day; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of issues. N: Number

Table 5.1 shows all issues mentioned by the 92 participants. It can be clearly seen that the most important problems facing Taiwan today in the minds of participants were the issues of 'improvement of the democratic political system' and 'economic development', which each shared 20.4% of the total responses. The next most important issue was 'cross-strait relations' (16.5%), followed by 'law and order' (15.9%), 'environment/ecology' (15.7%), 'social welfare' (3.9%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (3.9%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.2%), and 'education/culture/arts' (1.1%). The top five issues dominated the overall *public issue agenda* as the share of these five issues accounted for 88.9% of the total most important issues mentioned by the participants.

Further analysis of the issue agendas among participants revealed that higher educated female (HEF) participants put the issue of 'improvement of the democratic political system' on the top of their issue agenda as 21.7% of the total issues emphasised by them were devoted to this

---

[1]. HEF = Higher Educated Females; LEF = Lesser Educated Females; HEM = Higher Educated Males; LEM = Lesser Educated Males.

issue. The second most important issue was 'economic development' (18.3%), followed by 'law and order' (16.5%), 'cross-strait relations' (15.7%), 'environment/ecology' (15.7%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (6.1%), 'social welfare' (2.6%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.6%), and 'education/culture/arts' (0.9%). In the case of higher educated male (HEM) participants, the issue they considered most important was 'improvement of the democratic political system' (23.3%). 'Environment/ecology', which accounted for 19.2% of the total responses relating to issues of the day, was the second most mentioned issue. The third-ranked issue was 'cross-strait relations' (18.3%), followed by 'economic development' (14.2%), 'law and order' (10.8%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (5.8%), 'social welfare' (4.2%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (3.3%), and 'education/culture/arts' (0.8%). Lesser educated female (LEF) participants, on the other hand, regarded 'economic development' (27.0%) as the issue of greatest importance. 'Improvement of the democratic political system', which accounted for 20.9% of the total, came second followed by 'law and order' (15.7%), 'cross-strait relations' (13.9%), 'environment/ecology' (12.2%), 'social welfare' (4.3%), and 'education/culture/arts' (2.6%). Both 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.7%) and 'traffic/transportation/communications' (1.7%) were the least mentioned issues in the minds of LEF participants. As for lesser educated male (LEM) participants, it was found that they attached much greater importance to 'economic development' (22.7%). The second issue they considered most important was 'law and order' (20.9%), followed by 'cross-strait relations' (18.2%), 'improvement of the democratic political system' (15.5%), 'environment/ecology' (15.5%), 'social welfare' (4.5%), 'agriculture and fisheries' (1.8%), and 'traffic/ transportation/communications' (0.9%).

When issue agendas among participants were compared, it was found that LEM participants referred to 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the most important problem facing Taiwan with less frequency. Participants with lower levels of education seemed to

name 'economic development' as the issue of greatest significance more often than participants with higher levels of education. Compared with female participants, male participants mentioned 'cross-strait relations' as the most important issue much more frequently. 'Law and order' found the most mention as the issue of greatest importance for LEM participants, but least mention for HEM participants. HEM participants attached most importance to the issue of 'environment/ecology' whereas LEF participants referred to this issue as the most important problem the least. There is a noticeable similarity among HEF, LEF, and LEM participants in that these three groups of people offered almost the same percentage of counts respectively to the issue of 'social welfare'. 'Agriculture and fisheries' and 'traffic transportation/communications' received more attention from higher educated participants than from lesser educated participants. 'Education/culture/arts' weighed the most in the minds of LEF participants, but the least in the minds of LEM participants.

## 5.1.2 Public Priority Issue Agenda

Participants were asked to specify the issues most important to them personally from those issues they had mentioned. This answer shows the priority of issue importance in the minds of participants. The contents of Table 5.2 give a clearer picture that the *public priority issue agenda* concentrated on five key issues, which were the same as those on the *public issue agenda* discussed earlier. It was found that the issue of 'law and order' topped the list on the public priority issue agenda. Of the 92 participants, 37.0% regarded this issue as the most important. The second most important was 'cross-strait relations', which was mentioned by 23.9%. The issue of 'environment/ecology' was ranked third with mention by 16.3%, followed by 'economic development' (14.1%) and 'improvement of the democratic political system' (8.7%).

Table 5.2

The Most Important Issues Mentioned by Participants (Priority Response)

| Participant<br><br>Issue | HEF<br>(N=23) | | HEM<br>(N=24) | | LEF<br>(N=23) | | LEM<br>(N=22) | | Total<br>(N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Law and Order | 1 | 39.1% | 4 | 16.7% | 1 | 47.8% | 1 | 45.5% | 1 | 37.0% |
| Cross-strait Relations | 2 | 30.4 | 2 | 25.0 | 5 | 8.7 | 2 | 31.8 | 2 | 23.9 |
| Environment/Ecology | 3 | 13.0 | 1 | 29.2 | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 9.1 | 3 | 16.3 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 4.3 | 2 | 25.0 | 2 | 17.4 | 3 | 9.1 | 4 | 14.1 |
| Improvement of the<br>Democratic Political System | 3 | 13.0 | 5 | 4.2 | 3 | 13.0 | 5 | 4.5 | 5 | 8.7 |

N: Number

When viewed closely, it was found that HEF participants regarded 'law and order' (39.1%) as the number one issue, followed by 'cross-strait relations' (30.4%), 'environment/ecology' (13.0%), 'improvement of the democratic political system' (13.0%), and 'economic development' (4.3%). HEM participants mentioned 'environment/ecology' (29.2%) most often. The second-ranked issue was 'cross-strait relations' (25.0%) and 'economic development' (25.0%), followed by 'law and order' (16.7%), and 'improvement of the democratic political system' (4.2%). For LEF participants, 'law and order' dominated with 47.8%. 'Economic development' (17.4%) was the second most often mentioned issue, followed by 'environment/ecology' (13.0%), 'improvement of the democratic political system' (13.0%), and 'cross-strait relations' (8.7%). LEM participants considered 'law and order' the issue of greatest importance. Of the 22 LEM participants, 45.5% mentioned this issue as the most important, followed by 'cross-strait relations' (31.8%), 'environment/ecology' (9.1%), 'economic development' (9.1%), and 'improvement of the democratic political system' (4.5%) (Table 5.2).

On the whole, it was found that lesser educated participants named 'law and order' as the most important issue more often than did higher educated participants. LEF participants seemed to mention 'cross-strait relations' as the issue of most pressing importance much less frequently.

The issue of 'environment/ecology' found most mention among HEM participants. 'Economic development' was referred to as the most important problem by HEF participants with less frequency. Male participants, on the other hand, attached less importance to the issue of 'improvement of the democratic political system' than did female participants.

## 5.1.3 Issue Obtrusiveness

To understand issue obtrusiveness, participants were asked to indicate (1) the extent of effect that the most important issue to them personally had, (2) how much this affected their daily life, and (3) how much they were concerned about this issue.

Table 5.3

Effect of the Most Important Issue on Participants

| Extent of Effect | This Important Issue Affects | | | | | | Total (N=92) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Many People | | Some People | | Few People | | |
| Issue | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Subtotal |
| Law and Order | 33 | 97.1% | 1 | 2.9% | - | - | 34 |
| Cross-strait Relations | 21 | 95.5 | 1 | 4.5 | - | - | 22 |
| Environment/Ecology | 15 | 100 | - | - | - | - | 15 |
| Economic Development | 13 | 100 | - | - | - | - | 13 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 6 | 75.0 | 1 | 12.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 8 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Participants generally thought the most important issue to them personally had a great effect on other people. Participants who regarded 'environment/ecology' as the most important problem said this issue affected many people. Similarly, participants ranking 'economic development' as the number one problem also agreed that this issue affected many people. Of the 34 participants who named 'law and order' as the most important problem, 97.1% suggested that this affected many people. By contrast, only 2.9% said this issue affected some people. In the case of the 22 participants who considered 'cross-strait relations' the top

issue, 95.5% mentioned that this affected many people, whereas 4.5% of them thought that only some people were influenced by the issue. As for the eight participants who rated 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the most important problem, 75.0% of them said this affected many people. 12.5% of the participants suggested this affected some people, but another 12.5% argued only a few people were affected by the issue (Table 5.3).

Table 5.4

Effect the Most Important Issue Had on Participants' Daily Life

| Extent of Effect / Issue | This Important Issue Affects Your Daily Life | | | | | | | | Total (N=92) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Very Much | | Somewhat | | Not Much | | Not At All | | |
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Subtotal |
| Law and Order | 20 | 58.8% | 14 | 41.2% | - | - | - | - | 34 |
| Cross-strait Relations | 15 | 68.2 | 5 | 22.7 | 2 | 9.1 | - | - | 22 |
| Environment/Ecology | 9 | 60.0 | 5 | 33.3 | 1 | 6.7 | - | - | 15 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 38.5 | 4 | 30.8 | 3 | 23.1 | 1 | 7.7 | 13 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 2 | 25.0 | 5 | 62.5 | 1 | 12.5 | - | - | 8 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

As the data in Table 5.4 show, the majority of participants thought these important issues had much influence on their daily life. Of the 34 participants who considered 'law and order' the most important, 58.8% said this affected their everyday life very much and 41.2% mentioned this issue somewhat influenced their life. A total of 22 participants who regarded 'cross-strait relations' as the most important problem held a slightly different view, with 68.2% of them indicating this issue influenced their daily life very much, 22.7% saying this issue somewhat affected their life, and 9.1% mentioning their life was not much influenced by this issue. Similarly, three out of five participants who personally perceived 'environment/ecology' the crucial issue of the day suggested this issue affected their life very much, followed by 33.3% saying their life was somewhat influenced by this issue and 6.7% arguing this issue did not affect them very much. Thirteen participants rated 'economic development' as the most important problem to them and their views on the influence of this issue on their daily life was

rather divergent. 38.5% of them suggested the issue had a great effect on their life, followed by 30.8% who said their life was only somewhat affected. On the other hand, 23.1% of them mentioned that their life was not much influenced by the issue and 7.7% said this issue did not affect them at all. As for participants who ranked 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the number one problem, only a quarter thought their life was much influenced by this issue; 62.5% said this issue somewhat affected their life; and 12.5% mentioned their life was not much influenced by this issue.

The issue of 'cross-strait relations' took the lead in affecting participants' daily life very much (68.2%), followed by 'environment/ecology' (60.0%), 'law and order' (58.8%), 'economic development' (38.5%), and 'improvement of the democratic political system' (25.0%).

Table 5.5

Participants' Level of Concern about Their Most Important Issue

| Level of Concern / Issue | You Are Concerned About This Issue | | | | | | Total (N=92) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Much | | Somewhat | | Not Much | | |
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Subtotal |
| Law and Order | 27 | 79.4% | 7 | 20.6% | - | - | 34 |
| Cross-strait Relations | 18 | 81.8 | 4 | 18.2 | - | - | 22 |
| Environment/Ecology | 12 | 80.0 | 3 | 20.0 | - | - | 15 |
| Economic Development | 9 | 69.2 | 3 | 23.1 | 1 | 7.7 | 13 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 6 | 75.0 | 2 | 25.0 | - | - | 8 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It is clear from the data in Table 5.5 that the majority expressed a great deal of concern about the number one issues in their mind. Of the 34 participants who regarded 'law and order' the most important problem, 79.4% of them said they were very concerned, whereas 20.6% mentioned they were only somewhat concerned about this issue. A similar case can be found for the participants who considered 'cross-strait relations' the issue of greatest importance to them. 81.8% of the 22 participants suggested a lot of concern about Taiwanese-Chinese

relations in comparison with 18.2% saying they were only somewhat concerned about this issue. Four out of five participants who ranked 'environment/ecology' as the top-ranked issue indicated that they were very concerned about this issue. By contrast, only 20.0% of them mentioned they were somewhat concerned about this issue. Participants who attached the most importance to 'economic development' had a noticeable variation in their extent of concern about this issue. 69.2% expressed much concern about this issue and 23.1% said they were somewhat concerned about this issue. Only 7.7% were not very concerned. In the case of the eight participants who regarded 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the most important issue, three quarters showed a lot of concern about this issue and a quarter of them were somewhat concerned.

From the above discussion, it showed that the five most important issues to participants were generally of an *obtrusive* nature since most affected many people, affected participants' daily life very much, and aroused considerable concern from participants.

## 5.1.4 Public Campaign Agenda

Participants were also asked about their views on the most important election campaign issues and topics. The *public campaign agenda* was composed of a ranking of these important campaign issues mentioned by voters. As the figures in Table 5.6 show, there were a wide variety of campaign issues in participants' minds. 'Improvement of the democratic political system' was most often mentioned by participants (26.5%) as the most important campaign topic. The second was 'cross-strait relations', which was mentioned by 21.1%. The issue of 'law and order', accounting for 13.7% of the total responses, was ranked as the third most important campaign topic. The fourth-ranked campaign issue was 'economic development' (8.7%), followed by 'national defence' (6.1%), 'government

efficiency' (4.3%), 'international relationships' (4.3%), 'education/culture/arts' (3.7%), 'environment/ecology' (3.0%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (2.8%), 'social welfare' (2.0%), 'candidate's policy stands' (1.7%), 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (1.5%), and 'agriculture and fisheries' (0.4%).

Table 5.6

The Most Important Campaign Issues Mentioned by Participants (Multiple Responses)

| Participant  Issue | HEF (N=115) | | HEM (N=120) | | LEF (N=115) | | LEM (N=110) | | Total (N=460) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 1 | 20.9% | 1 | 25.8% | 1 | 31.3% | 1 | 28.2% | 1 | 26.5% |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 20.9 | 2 | 21.7 | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 21.8 | 2 | 21.1 |
| Law and Order | 3 | 15.7 | 3 | 10.8 | 3 | 15.7 | 3 | 12.7 | 3 | 13.7 |
| Economic Development | 4 | 7.0 | 5 | 7.5 | 4 | 9.6 | 4 | 10.9 | 4 | 8.7 |
| National Defence | 8 | 4.3 | 5 | 7.5 | 5 | 7.0 | 6 | 5.5 | 5 | 6.1 |
| Government Efficiency | 5 | 6.1 | 4 | 8.3 | 9 | 1.7 | 11 | 0.9 | 6 | 4.3 |
| International Relationships | 6 | 5.2 | 8 | 4.2 | 6 | 4.3 | 8 | 3.6 | 6 | 4.3 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | 4.3 | 7 | 5.0 | 7 | 3.5 | 9 | 1.8 | 8 | 3.7 |
| Environment/Ecology | 10 | 3.5 | 11 | 1.7 | 10 | 0.9 | 5 | 6.4 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 6 | 5.2 | - | - | 10 | 0.9 | 6 | 5.5 | 10 | 2.8 |
| Social Welfare | 12 | 2.6 | - | - | 7 | 3.5 | 9 | 1.8 | 11 | 2.0 |
| Candidate's Policy Stands | 10 | 3.5 | 10 | 2.5 | 10 | 0.9 | - | - | 12 | 1.7 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | - | - | 8 | 4.2 | 10 | 0.9 | 11 | 0.9 | 13 | 1.5 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | 0.9 | 12 | 0.8 | - | - | - | - | 14 | 0.4 |

*Each participant may answer up to five important campaign issues; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of issues.   N: Number

Closer examination of the data indicates that more differences in key campaign issues existed between the agendas of participants with higher education than those with lesser education. The top five most important campaign issues considered by HEF participants were 'improvement of the democratic political system' (20.9%), 'cross-strait relations' (20.9%), 'law and order' (15.7%), 'economic development' (7.0%), and 'government efficiency' (6.1%). The corresponding issues for HEM participants were 'improvement of the democratic political system' (25.8%), 'cross-strait relations' (21.7%), 'law and order' (10.8%), 'government efficiency' (8.3%), 'economic development' (7.5%), and 'national defence' (7.5%). Other

important campaign issues mentioned by HEF participants included 'international relationships' (5.2%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (5.2%), 'national defence' (4.3%), 'education/culture/arts' (4.3%), 'environment/ecology' (3.5%), 'candidate's policy stands' (3.5%), 'social welfare' (2.6%), and 'agriculture and fisheries' (0.9%). For HEM participants, the seventh-ranked important campaign issue was 'education/culture/arts' (5.0%), followed by 'international relationships' (4.2%), 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (4.2%), 'candidate's policy stands' (2.5%), 'environment/ecology' (1.7%), and 'agriculture and fisheries' (0.8%).

It was found that both LEF and LEM participants presented a similar trend when referring to the top four most important campaign issues. The issues stressed by LEF participants included 'improvement of the democratic political system' (31.3%), 'cross-strait relations' (20.0%), 'law and order' (15.7%), and 'economic development' (9.6%). The corresponding figures on the agenda of LEM participants were 28.2% for 'improvement of the democratic political system', 21.8% for 'cross-strait relations', 12.7% for 'law and order', and 10.9% for 'economic development'. Nevertheless, slight differences could be found on the agendas of LEF and LEM participants in terms of the importance attached to the rest of the campaign issues. The fifth-ranked campaign issue dominated the agenda of LEF participants went to 'national defence' (7.0%), followed by 'international relationships' (4.3%), 'education/culture/arts' (3.5%), 'social welfare' (3.5%), 'government efficiency' (1.7%), 'environment/ecology' (0.9%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (0.9%), 'candidate's policy stands' (0.9%), and 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (0.9%). In the case of LEM participants, it was found that 'environment/ecology' (6.4%) was ranked fifth, followed by 'national defence' (5.5%), 'traffic/transportation/communications' (5.5%), 'international relationships' (3.6%), 'education/culture/arts' (1.8%), 'social welfare' (1.8%), 'government efficiency' (0.9%), and 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' (0.9%).

For the sake of simplicity, only the top five overall key campaign issues were used for analysing the difference of importance attached to them among participants. This was justifiable because these five issues accounted for 76.1% of the total responses relating to the most important campaign issues. The results of analysis showed that LEF participants referred to 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the most important campaign issue relatively much more frequently than did HEF participants. There was no marked difference in the importance attached to the issue of 'cross-strait relations' among the participants. Female participants paid more attention to the issue of 'law and order' than did male participants. 'Economic development' found more mention as the most important campaign issue among lesser educated participants than among higher educated participants. Besides, HEM participants rated 'national defence' as the most important campaign issue with the most frequency as compared with the least mention of this issue for HEF participants.

### 5.1.5 Interpersonal Communication

Participants' patterns of interpersonal communication were measured by (1) their frequency of discussing important issues with friends, and (2) with family members, (3) the number of friends with whom participants discussed important issues, and (4) the number of family members with whom participants discussed important issues.

Table 5.7

Frequency of Discussing Important Issues with Friends

| Participant / Frequency | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Very Often | 5 | 21.7% | 9 | 37.5% | 8 | 34.8% | 13 | 59.1% | 35 | 38.0% |
| Occasionally | 15 | 65.2 | 13 | 54.2 | 11 | 47.8 | 7 | 31.8 | 46 | 50.0 |
| Seldom | 3 | 13.0 | 2 | 8.3 | 4 | 17.4 | 2 | 9.1 | 11 | 12.0 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

When participants were asked how often they discussed those important issues with friends, 50.0% said 'occasionally'. 38.0% of the participants said 'very often' whereas 12.0% indicated they 'seldom' had a discussion about those issues with their friends. It is worth noting that the majority of LEM participants (59.1%) discussed those important issues 'very often' with their friends (Table 5.7).

Table 5.8

Frequency of Discussing Important Issues with Family Members

| Participant / Frequency | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Very Often | 7 | 30.4% | 6 | 25.0% | 9 | 39.1% | 12 | 54.5% | 34 | 37.0% |
| Occasionally | 11 | 47.8 | 15 | 62.5 | 9 | 39.1 | 8 | 36.4 | 43 | 46.7 |
| Seldom | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 12.5 | 5 | 21.7 | 1 | 4.5 | 12 | 13.0 |
| Never | 2 | 8.7 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.5 | 3 | 3.3 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It is clear from Table 5.8 that 46.7% of the participants said they 'occasionally' talked about the issues with their family members. 37.0% of the participants said the frequency of discussion was 'very often' in comparison with 13.0% of the participants 'seldom' discussing those issues with their family members. A very small number (3.3%) stated that they 'never' talked about those issues with their family members. Among the four groups of participants, LEM participants seemed to discuss important issues with their family members much more often.

Table 5.9

Numbers of Friends with Whom Important Issues Were Discussed

| Participant Number | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total N=92 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| 0 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 8.7% | - | - | 2 | 2.2% |
| 1 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 4.2 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 3.3 |
| 2 | 8 | 34.8 | 4 | 16.7 | 6 | 26.1 | 1 | 4.5 | 19 | 20.7 |
| 3 | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 12.5 | 2 | 8.7 | 7 | 31.8 | 15 | 16.3 |
| 4 | 1 | 4.4 | 5 | 20.8 | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 18.2 | 14 | 15.2 |
| 5 | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 12.5 | 2 | 8.7 | 7 | 31.8 | 16 | 17.4 |
| 6 | 1 | 4.4 | 1 | 4.2 | 4 | 17.4 | 1 | 4.5 | 7 | 7.6 |
| 7 | 1 | 4.4 | 2 | 8.3 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 3.3 |
| 8 | 2 | 8.7 | 2 | 8.3 | 1 | 4.4 | - | - | 5 | 5.4 |
| 10 | 1 | 4.4 | 2 | 8.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 2 | 9.1 | 7 | 7.6 |
| 12 | - | - | 1 | 4.2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1.1 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Table 5.10

Numbers of Family Members with Whom Important Issues Were Discussed

| Participant Number | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| 0 | 2 | 8.7% | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.5% | 3 | 3.3% |
| 1 | - | - | 4 | 16.7 | 5 | 21.7 | 3 | 13.6 | 12 | 13.0 |
| 2 | 10 | 43.5 | 7 | 29.2 | 8 | 34.8 | 8 | 36.4 | 33 | 35.9 |
| 3 | 5 | 21.7 | 7 | 29.2 | 3 | 13.0 | 5 | 22.7 | 20 | 21.7 |
| 4 | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 16.7 | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 13.6 | 15 | 16.3 |
| 5 | 1 | 4.4 | 1 | 4.2 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 4.5 | 5 | 5.4 |
| 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.5 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 8 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.3 | - | - | 1 | 1.1 |
| 10 | 1 | 4.4 | 1 | 4.2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2.2 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

The number of friends with whom participants discussed important issues ranged from zero to twelve, but a closer look at the data in Table 5.9 shows that the number was mainly between two and five persons. A similar pattern can be found among the four groups of participants in terms of the distribution of the number of friends with whom they discussed important issues. It can also be clearly seen from Table 5.10 that on average participants discussed the issues with between one and four family members.

## 5.1.6 Public Image Agenda

The *public image agenda* referred to the rank ordering of the four presidential candidates'

prominent image attributes perceived by voters. When participants were asked about their

perceptions of each presidential candidate's image, the image attribute they most often

mentioned was 'partisan affiliation', accounting for 15.8% of the total 848 responses.

Candidate's 'personal background', which found mention in 14.7% of the entire responses,

was the second most often emphasised attribute by participants. The third was 'ability'

(9.7%), followed by 'personality' (9.3%), 'political style' (9.2%), 'qualifications and

experience' (9.0%), and 'issue and policy stands' (8.1%). The remainder accounted for less

than one quarter of the total responses as these seven most often emphasised attributes shared

75.8% of the total counts.

Table 5.11

Ranking and Percentages of Attributes Relating to the Four Presidential Candidates' Image Mentioned
by All Participants

| Candidate | Chen (N=228) | | Lee (N=247) | | Peng (N=188) | | Lin (N=185) | | Total (N=848) | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attribute | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Partisan Affiliation | 3 | 13.6% | 3 | 11.7% | 2 | 20.7% | 1 | 18.9% | 1 | 15.8% |
| Personal Background | 1 | 15.4 | 1 | 14.2 | 1 | 22.3 | 6 | 7.0 | 2 | 14.7 |
| Ability | 8 | 7.9 | 2 | 13.8 | 12 | 2.1 | 2 | 14.1 | 3 | 9.7 |
| Personality | 4 | 11.4 | 6 | 8.9 | 8 | 3.7 | 3 | 13.0 | 4 | 9.3 |
| Political Style | 5 | 9.2 | 7 | 7.7 | 4 | 8.5 | 4 | 11.9 | 5 | 9.2 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 7 | 8.3 | 4 | 10.1 | 3 | 13.8 | 11 | 3.2 | 6 | 9.0 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 6 | 8.8 | 8 | 7.3 | 5 | 4.8 | 4 | 11.9 | 7 | 8.1 |
| Religion | 2 | 14.0 | 12 | 1.6 | 5 | 4.8 | - | - | 8 | 5.3 |
| Political Honesty | 10 | 2.2 | 5 | 9.7 | 15 | 1.1 | 13 | 0.5 | 9 | 3.8 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 13 | 0.9 | 9 | 6.5 | 11 | 2.7 | 12 | 1.6 | 10 | 3.1 |
| Ancestral Origin | 10 | 2.2 | 11 | 2.4 | 8 | 3.7 | 8 | 4.3 | 10 | 3.1 |
| Leadership Qualities | 12 | 1.3 | 10 | 4.0 | 12 | 2.1 | 10 | 3.8 | 12 | 2.8 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 9 | 3.5 | - | - | 14 | 1.6 | 8 | 4.3 | 13 | 2.2 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7 | 5.4 | 14 | 1.2 |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | - | - | 5 | 4.8 | - | - | 15 | 1.1 |
| Intelligence | 13 | 0.9 | 14 | 0.4 | 10 | 3.2 | - | - | 15 | 1.1 |
| Political Philosophy | 15 | 0.4 | 12 | 1.6 | - | - | - | - | 17 | 0.6 |

*Each participant may answer up to three important image attributes of the four presidential candidates; the
percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes. N: Number

Some differences were found in participants' perceptions of the top five important image attributes relating to the four candidates. Further examination of the data in Table 5.11 reveals that the most often mentioned attribute of Chen was his 'personal background', which appeared in 15.4% of the total responses. His second most emphasised attribute was 'religion' (14.0%), followed by his 'partisan affiliation' (13.6%), 'personality' (11.4%), and 'political style' (9.2%). When asked about their impressions of Lee, participants linked the attribute of 'personal background' to him with the most frequency. Of all the 247 responses, 14.2% were about his 'personal background', 13.8% about his 'ability', 11.7% about his 'partisan affiliation', 10.1% about his 'qualifications and experience', and 9.7% about his 'political honesty'. In the case of Peng, his 'personal background' was also most frequently referred to by participants. The attribute of 'personal background' accounted for 22.3% of the total counts devoted to Peng's image, followed by his 'partisan affiliation' (20.7%), 'qualifications and experience' (13.8%), 'political style' (8.5%), 'issue and policy stands' (4.8%), 'religion' (4.8%), and 'appearance and bearing' (4.8%). With regard to participants' perceptions of Lin, his 'partisan affiliation' received the most mention, sharing 18.9% of the total counts coded in respect of his image attributes. The second most often mentioned attribute was his 'ability' (14.1%), followed by his 'personality' (13.0%), 'political style' (11.9%), and 'issue and policy stands' (11.9%). Lin was the only candidate whose quality of 'localism' was mentioned by participants. Similarly, Peng was the only candidate with the attribute of 'appearance and bearing' being referred to by participants. It was also found that Chen was given the most mention of the attribute of 'religion'. Lee was the candidate with the most reference of the attributes of 'political honesty' and 'presentation skills/communication'. Peng took the lead in the frequency of mention of 'personal background' and 'qualifications and experience'. Lin was ahead for 'ability', 'personality', and 'political style'.

### 5.1.7 Chen Li-an's Image Attributes Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

The overall *public image agenda* has already been presented in Table 5.11. To understand if each group differed in their perceptions of the four candidates' images, this study further compared the most important image attributes of each candidate by each group. Since participants were asked to name up to three attributes of each candidate, only the top three most mentioned attributes were discussed.

Table 5.12

Ranking and Percentages of Attributes Relating to Chen Li-an's Image Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF (N=56) | | HEM (N=64) | | LEF (N=58) | | LEM (N=50) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of Chen's Image | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Political Style | 8 | 7.1% | 4 | 12.5% | 6 | 6.9% | 5 | 10.0% |
| Political Honesty | 9 | 3.6 | 9 | 1.6 | 9 | 3.4 | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | 9 | 1.6 | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 7 | 8.9 | 6 | 7.8 | 4 | 10.3 | 9 | 4.0 |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | 9 | 1.6 | 12 | 1.7 | 10 | 2.0 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 3 | 10.7 | 6 | 7.8 | 6 | 6.9 | 7 | 8.0 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 9 | 3.6 | 9 | 1.6 | 9 | 3.4 | 8 | 6.0 |
| Personality | 3 | 10.7 | 5 | 9.4 | 3 | 12.1 | 2 | 14.0 |
| Intelligence | 11 | 1.8 | - | - | 12 | 1.7 | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 11 | 1.8 | 9 | 1.6 | - | - | - | - |
| Personal Background | 2 | 12.5 | 1 | 17.2 | 2 | 15.5 | 1 | 16.0 |
| Religion | 3 | 10.7 | 2 | 14.1 | 1 | 17.2 | 2 | 14.0 |
| Ancestral Origin | 11 | 1.8 | 9 | 1.6 | 9 | 3.4 | 10 | 2.0 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 16.1 | 2 | 14.1 | 4 | 10.3 | 2 | 14.0 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 10.7 | 6 | 7.8 | 6 | 6.9 | 5 | 10.0 |

*The percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes. N: Number

It can be seen from the data in Table 5.12 that HEF participants linked the attribute of 'partisan affiliation' to Chen with the most frequency. Of all 56 responses, 16.1% concerned this. The second most often mentioned attribute was his 'personal background', accounting for 12.5% of the total counts. There were four attributes regarded as his third most important attribute including 'qualifications and experience' (10.7%), 'personality' (10.7%), 'religion'

(10.7%), and 'issue and policy stands' (10.7%). When HEM participants thought of Chen, they made the most mention of his 'personal background', which constituted 17.2% of the total responses. Both Chen's 'religion' and 'partisan affiliation' were the second-ranked. These two attributes received 14.1% of the total counts respectively. The most often emphasised attribute linked to Chen by LEF participants was his 'religion', which found mention in 17.2% of the total responses. Chen's 'personal background' (15.5%) was the second most important attribute, followed by his 'personality' (12.1%). As for the top three attributes linked to Chen by LEM participants, it was found that Chen's 'personal background' was referred to most frequently with 16.0% of the total counts. His 'personality', 'religion', and 'partisan affiliation' were ranked second. These three attributes were offered the same percentage of the total (14.0%).

Further comparison of the top three important attributes relating to Chen on the image agendas of participants showed that HEF participants attached greater importance to Chen's 'partisan affiliation' than did LEF participants, whereas all male participants had little difference in the weight of significance given to this attribute. Male participants made more mention of Chen's 'personal background' than their female counterparts. Chen's 'religion' and 'personality' received more attention from lesser educated participants than from higher educated participants. It was also found that Chen's 'qualifications and experience' and 'issue and policy stands' were referred to with the most frequency by HEF participants but with the least frequency by LEF participants.

### 5.1.8 Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

Analysis of the important attributes linked to Lee by participants with different gender and educational levels indicated that Lee's 'ability' impressed HEF participants most. As the

figures in Table 5.13 show, 14.5% of the total 62 responses concerned his 'ability'. Both Lee's 'personal background' and 'partisan affiliation' came second and formed 11.3% of the total counts each. For HEM participants, Lee's 'personal background' was the most important attribute (15.4%). The second was his 'political honesty', which accounted for 12.3% of the total. Both Lee's 'qualifications and experience' and 'partisan affiliation', mentioned in 10.8% of the total responses respectively, were ranked as the third most important attribute. With regard to the important attributes of Lee in the minds of LEF participants, it was found that Lee's 'ability' received the most mention with 17.2% of the total responses devoted to this attribute. His 'personal background' (15.6%) was ranked second, followed by his 'partisan affiliation' (14.1%). In answer to their impressions of Lee, LEM participants referred to his 'ability' most frequently (16.1%). Lee's 'personal background' with mention in 14.3% of the entire counts was regarded as the second most important attribute. The third rank went to his 'qualifications and experience' (12.5%).

Table 5.13

Ranking and Percentages of Attributes Relating to Lee Teng-hui's Image Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF (N=62) | | HEM (N=65) | | LEF (N=64) | | LEM (N=56) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of Lee's Image | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Political Style | 4 | 9.7% | 6 | 7.7% | 9 | 4.7% | 6 | 8.9% |
| Political Honesty | 4 | 9.7 | 2 | 12.3 | 5 | 7.8 | 6 | 8.9 |
| Political Philosophy | 11 | 1.6 | 12 | 1.5 | 12 | 1.6 | 11 | 1.8 |
| Ability | 1 | 14.5 | 6 | 7.7 | 1 | 17.2 | 1 | 16.1 |
| Leadership Qualities | 10 | 3.2 | 10 | 4.6 | 7 | 6.3 | 11 | 1.8 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 7 | 8.1 | 3 | 10.8 | 4 | 9.4 | 3 | 12.5 |
| Personality | 7 | 8.1 | 5 | 9.2 | 5 | 7.8 | 4 | 10.7 |
| Intelligence | 11 | 1.6 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 7 | 8.1 | 6 | 7.7 | 9 | 4.7 | 8 | 5.4 |
| Personal Background | 2 | 11.3 | 1 | 15.4 | 2 | 15.6 | 2 | 14.3 |
| Religion | 11 | 1.6 | 11 | 3.1 | 12 | 1.6 | - | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 11 | 1.6 | 12 | 1.5 | 11 | 3.1 | 10 | 3.6 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 2 | 11.3 | 3 | 10.8 | 3 | 14.1 | 4 | 10.7 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 | 9.7 | 6 | 7.7 | 7 | 6.3 | 8 | 5.4 |

*The percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes.   N: Number

When the level of importance assigned to the top three attributes of Lee by each group of participants was compared, it was found that Lee's 'ability' weighed the most in the minds of LEF participants, but the least in the minds of HEM participants. LEF participants referred to Lee's 'personal background' most often, whereas this attribute drew the least attention from HEF participants. There was no marked difference among HEF, HEM, and LEM participants since the weight of importance given to Lee's 'partisan affiliation' by these three groups of people was quite similar. The data also suggested that male participants attached more importance to Lee's 'qualifications and experience' than did their female counterparts. Lee's 'political honesty' found the most mention among HEM participants. By contrast, LEF participants paid the least attention to this attribute.

### 5.1.9 Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

Examination of the data in Table 5.14 reveals that participants emphasised the top three important attributes of Peng in a very similar way. It was found that the attribute linked to Peng with the most frequency by HEF participants was his 'partisan affiliation', which accounted for 22.2% of the total 54 responses. The second most important attribute was his 'personal background', which was mentioned in 16.7% of the total counts. Peng's 'qualifications and experience' was ranked third (14.8%). HEM participants made the most mention of Peng's 'personal background', constituting 25.0% of the total 48 responses. 'Partisan affiliation' was the second most often emphasised attribute (18.8%), followed by 'qualifications and experience' (14.6%). When LEF participants were asked about their impressions of Peng, they also referred to his 'personal background' most frequently (24.4%). The second most important attribute was his 'partisan affiliation', which found mention in 22.2% of the total counts. Peng's 'qualifications and experience' was the third most often mentioned attribute (11.1%). In the same vein, the top-ranked attribute linked to Peng on the

image agenda of LEM participants was also his 'personal background' (24.4%). Peng's 'partisan affiliation' was regarded as the second most important attribute with 19.5% of the total responses devoted to this attribute, followed by his 'qualifications and experience' (14.6%).

Table 5.14

Ranking and Percentages of Attributes Relating to Peng Ming-min's Image Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF (N=54) | | HEM (N=48) | | LEF (N=45) | | LEM (N=41) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of Peng's Image | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Political Style | 4 | 13.0% | 4 | 8.3% | 6 | 4.4% | 4 | 7.3% |
| Political Honesty | 9 | 1.9 | 10 | 2.1 | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 9 | 1.9 | 7 | 4.2 | - | - | 10 | 2.4 |
| Leadership Qualities | 9 | 1.9 | - | - | 6 | 4.4 | 10 | 2.4 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 3 | 14.8 | 3 | 14.6 | 3 | 11.1 | 3 | 14.6 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 9 | 1.9 | 10 | 2.1 | - | - | 10 | 2.4 |
| Personality | 7 | 3.7 | 5 | 6.3 | 6 | 4.4 | - | - |
| Appearance & Bearing | 7 | 3.7 | 7 | 4.2 | 4 | 6.7 | 5 | 4.9 |
| Intelligence | 9 | 1.9 | 10 | 2.1 | 6 | 4.4 | 5 | 4.9 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 9 | 1.9 | - | - | 6 | 4.4 | 5 | 4.9 |
| Personal Background | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 24.4 | 1 | 24.4 |
| Religion | 6 | 5.6 | 7 | 4.2 | 6 | 4.4 | 5 | 4.9 |
| Ancestral Origin | 9 | 1.9 | 10 | 2.1 | 4 | 6.7 | 5 | 4.9 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 22.2 | 2 | 18.8 | 2 | 22.2 | 2 | 19.5 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 5 | 7.4 | 5 | 6.3 | 12 | 2.2 | 10 | 2.4 |

*The percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes. N: Number

Participants' perceptions of Peng's image mainly concentrated on three important attributes, including his 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', and 'qualifications and experience'. Noteworthy here is the point that the order of ranking given to these three attributes was found to be exactly the same on the image agendas of all participants except HEF participants. A closer look at the data in the table also indicates that HEF participants and their lesser educated counterparts gave the identical weight of importance in percentage to Peng's 'partisan affiliation'. Peng's 'personal background' received the least attention from HEF participants, whereas HEM participants referred to this attribute with the most frequency. LEF participants

concurred with their male counterparts in the level of significance attached to Peng's 'personal background'. All participants except LEF participants showed striking similarities in the frequency of reference to Peng's 'qualifications and experience'.

### 5.1.10 Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes Mentioned by the Four Groups of Participants

Lin's 'ability' and 'partisan affiliation' topped the list on the image agenda of HEF participants. Each of these two attributes was mentioned in 14.3% of the total 49 responses. Three attributes linked to Lin by HEF participants were ranked third, including his 'political style' (12.2%), 'personality' (12.2%), and 'issue and policy stands' (12.2%). Lin's 'partisan affiliation' also impressed HEM participants as 20.4% of the entire 49 responses to Lin's image were devoted to this attribute. The second most mentioned attribute was his 'issue and policy stands' (14.3%). The third most important attribute of Lin included his 'political style', 'ability', and 'personality'. Each of these three attributes found mention in 12.2% of the total responses. In their answer to the top three important attributes linked to Lin, LEF participants also considered 'partisan affiliation' Lin's most important attribute (18.2%). Both Lin's 'political style' and 'personality' came second, accounting for 13.6% of the total counts respectively. In the case of LEM participants, Lin's 'partisan affiliation' was put on the top of their image agenda as 23.3% of the total 43 responses were given to this attribute. Lin's 'ability' was ranked second, accounting for 18.6% of the total counts. The third most important attribute of Lin went to his 'personality' and his 'issue and policy stands', which respectively formed 14.0% of the entire responses (Table 5.15).

Table 5.15

Ranking and Percentages of Attributes Relating to Lin Yang-kang's Image Mentioned

by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF (N=49) | | HEM (N=49) | | LEF (N=44) | | LEM (N=43) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of Lin's Image | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Political Style | 3 | 12.2% | 3 | 12.2% | 2 | 13.6% | 5 | 9.3% |
| Political Honesty | - | - | - | - | 10 | 2.3 | - | - |
| Ability | 1 | 14.3 | 3 | 12.2 | 4 | 11.4 | 2 | 18.6 |
| Leadership Qualities | 7 | 6.1 | 8 | 4.1 | 9 | 4.5 | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 9 | 4.1 | 6 | 8.2 | - | - | - | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 | 8.2 | 10 | 2.0 | 10 | 2.3 | 7 | 4.7 |
| Personality | 3 | 12.2 | 3 | 12.2 | 2 | 13.6 | 3 | 14.0 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 12 | 2.0 | 10 | 2.0 | 10 | 2.3 | - | - |
| Personal Background | 7 | 6.1 | 6 | 8.2 | 5 | 9.1 | 7 | 4.7 |
| Ancestral Origin | 9 | 4.1 | - | - | 5 | 9.1 | 7 | 4.7 |
| Localism | 9 | 4.1 | 8 | 4.1 | 7 | 6.8 | 6 | 7.0 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 14.3 | 1 | 20.4 | 1 | 18.2 | 1 | 23.3 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 12.2 | 2 | 14.3 | 7 | 6.8 | 3 | 14.0 |

*The percentages in the table were based on the total number of attributes.   N: Number

Further analysis of the differences in the top three important attributes linked to Lin by the four groups suggested that his 'partisan affiliation' was referred to the most by LEM participants, but the least by HEF participants.   LEM participants attached more weight of significance to Lin's 'ability' than did their female counterparts.   However, there was no appreciable difference in the degree of salience assigned to Lin's 'ability' between HEF participants and their male counterparts.   While Lin's 'issue and policy stands' found the least mention among LEF participants, there was a marked similarity between HEM and LEM participants because both mentioned this attribute with almost the same frequency.   It also emerged from the analysis that the four groups of participants presented a very similar trend in terms of the level of salience they attached to Lin's 'personality'.   Lin's 'political style' drew the most attention from LEF participants, but found the least mention among LEM participants.   HEF participants were consistent with their male counterparts since both offered the same percentage of counts respectively to Lin's 'political style'.

## 5.1.11 Participants' Overall Evaluation of Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes

Participants were also asked to evaluate presidential candidates' image attributes they mentioned. It can be seen from the figures in Table 5.16 that participants generally had a neutral or positive opinion of the attributes relating to the four presidential candidates' images. In comparison with 20.7% of negative evaluation of his attributes, nearly four out of five of Chen's attributes were considered positive or neutral by participants. A similar case could be found in participants' evaluation of Lee's image. A total of 72.1% of Lee's attributes were regarded as either positive or neutral by participants in contrast to 27.9% of negative evaluation of his attributes. Participants were not unfavourable in evaluating Peng's image as only 12.8% of his attributes were presented negatively. Participants also gave favourable evaluation to Lin's image. It was found that the total number of positive assessment of Lin's attributes was nearly twice that of negative assessment.

Table 5.16

Participants' Overall Evaluation of the Four Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes

| Candidate | Chen | | | Lee | | | Peng | | | Lin | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attribute | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT |
| Partisan Affiliation | 5 (16.7) | 10 (33.3) | 15 (50.0) | 9 (31.0) | 4 (13.8) | 16 (55.2) | 5 (12.8) | 9 (23.1) | 25 (64.1) | 1 (2.9) | 16 (45.7) | 18 (51.4) |
| Personal Background | 1 (2.9) | 8 (22.9) | 26 (74.3) | 5 (14.3) | 2 (5.7) | 28 (80.0) | 10 (23.8) | 4 (9.5) | 28 (66.7) | 1 (7.7) | - | 12 (92.3) |
| Ability | 8 (44.4) | 2 (11.1) | 8 (44.4) | 21 (61.8) | 7 (20.6) | 6 (17.6) | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | 20 (76.9) | - | 6 (23.1) |
| Personality | 19 (73.1) | 2 (7.7) | 5 (19.2) | 10 (45.5) | 11 (50.0) | 1 (4.5) | 1 (14.3) | 3 (42.9) | 3 (42.9) | 22 (91.7) | 2 (8.3) | - |
| Political Style | 17 (81.0) | 1 (4.8) | 3 (14.3) | 10 (52.6) | 8 (42.1) | 1 (5.3) | 12 (75.0) | 1 (6.3) | 3 (18.8) | 12 (54.5) | 10 (45.5) | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 1 (5.3) | - | 18 (94.7) | 13 (52.0) | - | 12 (48.0) | 17 (65.4) | - | 9 (34.6) | 2 (33.3) | - | 4 (66.7) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (20.0) | 10 (50.0) | 6 (30.0) | 7 (38.9) | 7 (38.9) | 4 (22.2) | 1 (11.1) | 2 (22.2) | 6 (66.7) | 7 (31.8) | 11 (50.0) | 4 (18.2) |
| Religion | 4 (12.5) | 11 (34.4) | 17 (53.1) | - | - | 4 (100) | - | - | 9 (100) | - | - | - |
| Political Honesty | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (40.0) | 1 (4.2) | 22 (91.7) | 1 (4.2) | 2 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | 9 (56.3) | 7 (43.8) | - | 3 (60.0) | 2 (40.0) | - | 3 (100) | - | - |
| Ancestral Origin | - | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | 3 (50.0) | - | 3 (50.0) | - | - | 7 (100) | 1 (12.5) | - | 7 (87.5) |
| Leadership Qualities | 1 (33.3) | 1 (33.3) | 1 (33.3) | 8 (80.0) | 1 (10.0) | 1 (10.0) | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | 3 (42.9) | 4 (57.1) | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 8 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | 8 (100) | - | - |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 (20.0) | - | 8 (80.0) |
| Appearance and Bearing | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9 (100) | - | - | - |
| Intelligence | 2 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 4 (66.7) | - | 2 (33.3) | - | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | 1 (100) | 1 (25.0) | - | 3 (75.0) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 74 (32.6) | 47 (20.7) | 106 (46.7) | 98 (39.7) | 69 (27.9) | 80 (32.4) | 63 (33.5) | 24 (12.8) | 101 (53.7) | 83 (44.9) | 43 (23.2) | 59 (31.9) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.　P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral

Nevertheless, when participants' evaluation of top five most important attributes of the four individual candidates was further analysed, it appeared that Chen's 'personal background', 'religion', and 'partisan affiliation' were given more unfavourable than favourable evaluation by participants though the overall evaluation of these three attributes was neutral. On the other hand, Chen's 'personality' and 'political style' were considered predominantly positive given that participants gave much more favourable evaluation to these two attributes. Lee's 'ability', 'qualifications and experience' were found to be more positive in participants'

evaluation, whereas his 'personal background' and 'partisan affiliation' were evaluated in a more neutral manner. By contrast, Lee's 'political honesty' was rated as very negative. The data show that Peng's 'political style' and 'qualifications and experience' were evaluated in an overwhelmingly positive way. Participants had a neutral opinion of Peng's 'appearance and bearing', 'personal background', and 'religion'. Peng's 'partisan affiliation' and 'issue and policy stands' received more unfavourable than favourable evaluation, but participants generally evaluated these two attributes neutrally. As for Lin, there was no considerable difference between the positive and negative evaluation given to his 'political style' though participants' general impressions of this were positive. Lin's 'ability' and 'personality' were considered quite positive by participants. On the whole, participants gave a neutral evaluation to Lin's 'partisan affiliation', but there were also a number of negative evaluations assigned to this attribute. Lin's 'issue and policy stands', on the other hand, was evaluated in a very unfavourable way.

### 5.1.12 Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Top Three Important Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants

The evaluation of the important attributes linked to Chen by the four groups of participants with different gender and education is displayed in Table 5.17. A simple look at the data shows that more neutral assessment was found for each group of participants. HEM participants gave more neutral evaluation to Chen than did the rest. Chen's image also received more positive assessment than the negative one from all participants except LEF participants. HEF participants had the most positive evaluation of Chen's image, whereas the most negative evaluation was given by LEF participants.

Table 5.17

Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF | | | HEM | | | LEF | | | LEM | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT |
| **Attributes of Chen's Image** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Political Style | 4 (100) | - | - | 6 (75.0) | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 3 (75.0) | - | 1 (25.0) | 4 (80.0) | - | 1 (20.0) |
| Political Honesty | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | - | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (40.0) | 2 (40.0) | 1 (20.0) | 2 (40.0) | 2 (33.3) | 1 (16.7) | 3 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 1 (16.7) | - | 5 (83.3) | - | - | 5 (100) | - | - | 4 (100) | - | - | 4 (100) |
| Integrity & Virtues | 2 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - |
| Personality | 4 (66.7) | 1 (16.7) | 1 (16.7) | 5 (83.3) | 1 (16.7) | - | 4 (57.1) | - | 3 (42.9) | 6 (85.7) | - | 1 (14.3) |
| Intelligence | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Personal Background | - | 2 (28.6) | 5 (71.4) | - | 2 (18.2) | 9 (81.8) | - | 3 (33.3) | 6 (66.7) | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 6 (75.0) |
| Religion | 1 (16.7) | 2 (33.3) | 3 (50) | 1 (11.1) | 2 (22.2) | 6 (66.7) | 1 (10.0) | 5 (50.0) | 4 (40.0) | 1 (14.3) | 2 (28.6) | 4 (57.1) |
| Ancestral Origin | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0 | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 3 (33.3) | 2 (22.2) | 4 (44.4) | 1 (11.1) | 2 (22.2) | 6 (66.7) | 1 (16.7) | 3 (50.0) | 2 (33.3) | 1 (14.3) | 3 (42.9) | 3 (42.9) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 1 (16.7) | 1 (16.7) | 4 (66.7) | 2 (40.0) | 2 (40.0) | 1 (20.0) | - | 4 (100) | - | 1 (20.0) | 3 (60.0) | 1 (20.0) |
| Total | 22 (39.3) | 8 (14.3) | 26 (46.4) | 20 (31.3) | 11 (17.2) | 33 (51.6) | 15 (25.9) | 17 (29.3) | 26 (44.8) | 18 (36.0) | 11 (22.0) | 21 (42.0) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral

It was found that Chen's 'qualifications and experience' was considered neutral by all groups of participants. Participants generally had a good opinion of Chen's 'personality'. In particular, male participants gave this attribute more favourable evaluation than did female participants. Chen's 'personal background' was evaluated overwhelmingly neutrally by participants. LEF participants had an unfavourable opinion of Chen's 'religion', whereas it was generally considered neutral by the rest of the participants. Chen's 'partisan affiliation' was negative in the minds of LEF participants, and LEM participants were also not particularly favourable in evaluating this attribute. On the other hand, participants with higher education,

male and female alike, had a neutral impression of Chen's 'partisan affiliation'. As for Chen's 'issue and policy stands', it was found that participants with lesser education evaluated this attribute in a negative manner. By contrast, HEF participants had a neutral opinion of Chen's 'issue and policy stands'. HEM participants' evaluation of this attribute was either positive or negative.

**5.1.13 Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Top Three Important Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants**

Table 5.18 shows participants' evaluation of the important attributes of Lee. It can be seen from the table that lesser educated participants generally had a favourable impression of Lee's image because they gave more positive assessment. HEF participants also evaluated Lee's image in a positive way, but the figure of the negative evaluation was quite near to that of the positive one. On the contrary, HEM participants were not very favourable in evaluating Lee's image since the total number of neutral or negative assessments was more than positive ones.

Table 5.18

Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant | HEF | | | HEM | | | LEF | | | LEM | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT |
| **Attributes of Lee's Image** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Political Style | 2 (33.3) | 4 (66.7) | - | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | 4 (80.0) | - | 1 (20.0) |
| Political Honesty | - | 6 (100) | - | - | 7 (87.5) | 1 (12.5) | - | 5 (100) | - | 1 (20.0) | 4 (80.0) | - |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Ability | 6 (66.7) | 2 (22.2) | 1 (11.1) | 2 (40.0) | 2 (40.0) | 1 (20.0) | 6 (54.5) | 3 (27.3) | 2 (18.2) | 7 (77.8) | - | 2 (22.2) |
| Leadership Qualities | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | 2 (66.7) | - | 1 (33.3) | 4 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 4 (80.0) | - | 1 (20.0) | 3 (42.9) | - | 4 (57.1) | 4 (66.7) | - | 2 (33.3) | 2 (28.6) | - | 5 (71.4) |
| Personality | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (33.3) | 3 (50.0) | 1 (16.7) | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - |
| Intelligence | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | 3 (100) | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - |
| Personal Background | - | - | 7 (100) | 2 (20.0) | 1 (10.0) | 7 (70.0) | 2 (20.0) | - | 8 (80.0) | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 6 (75.0) |
| Religion | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) |
| Partisan Affiliation | 4 (57.1) | 2 (28.6) | 1 (14.3) | 2 (28.6) | 1 (14.3) | 4 (57.1) | 2 (22.2) | 1 (11.1) | 6 (66.7) | 1 (16.7) | - | 5 (83.3) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 1 (16.7) | 2 (33.3) | 3 (50.0) | 1 (20.0) | 3 (60.0) | 1 (20.0) | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | 3 (100) | - | - |
| Total | 24 (38.7) | 23 (37.1) | 15 (24.2) | 18 (27.7) | 23 (35.4) | 24 (36.9) | 28 (43.8) | 15 (23.4) | 21 (32.8) | 28 (50.0) | 8 (14.3) | 20 (35.7) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral

A closer look at the contents in the table reveals that Lee's 'political honesty' was considered quite negative by the four groups of participants, especially females.  Lee's 'ability' received more positive than negative evaluation from all participants except HEM participants, who had an either good or bad opinion of this attribute.   While female participants evaluated Lee's 'qualifications and experience' favourably, male participants had a neutral impression.  Lee's 'personal background' was considered overwhelmingly neutral in nature by participants. HEF participants gave Lee's 'partisan affiliation' more favourable evaluation, whereas the rest of the participants evaluated this attribute in a very neutral manner.

**5.1.14 Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Top Three Important Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants**

As shown by the data in Table 5.19, participants generally had a neutral opinion of Peng's image. It was also found that HEF participants gave Peng the most positive evaluation, whereas LEF participants had the least positive assessment in number.

Table 5.19

Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant Evaluation<br>Attributes of Peng's Image | HEF | | | HEM | | | LEF | | | LEM | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT |
| Political Style | 6<br>(85.7) | - | 1<br>(14.3) | 3<br>(75.0) | - | 1<br>(25.0) | 1<br>(50.0) | - | 1<br>(50.0) | 2<br>(66.7) | 1<br>(33.3) | - |
| Political Honesty | 1<br>(100) | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | - | 1<br>(100) | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | - | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - |
| Leadership Qualities | 1<br>(100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 6<br>(75.0) | - | 2<br>(25.0) | 4<br>(57.1) | - | 3<br>(42.9) | 2<br>(40.0) | - | 3<br>(60.0) | 5<br>(83.3) | - | 1<br>(16.7) |
| Integrity & Virtues | 1<br>(100) | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - | - | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - |
| Personality | - | - | 2<br>(100) | 1<br>(33.3) | 2<br>(66.7) | - | - | 1<br>(50.0) | 1<br>(50.0) | - | - | - |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | 3<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) |
| Intelligence | - | - | 1<br>(100) | 1<br>(100) | - | - | 1<br>(50.0) | - | 1<br>(50.0) | 2<br>(100) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 1<br>(100) | - | - | - | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - |
| Personal Background | 5<br>(55.6) | - | 4<br>(44.4) | 4<br>(33.3) | 2<br>(16.7) | 6<br>(50) | 1<br>(9.1) | 2<br>(18.2) | 8<br>(72.7) | - | - | 10<br>(100) |
| Religion | - | - | 3<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) |
| Ancestral Origin | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | - | 3<br>(100) | - | - | 2<br>(100) |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1<br>(8.3) | 2<br>(16.7) | 9<br>(75.0) | 2<br>(22.2) | 3<br>(33.3) | 4<br>(44.4) | 1<br>(10.0) | 3<br>(30.0) | 6<br>(60.0) | 1<br>(12.5) | 1<br>(12.5) | 6<br>(75.0) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 1<br>(25.0) | - | 3<br>(75.0) | - | 1<br>(33.3) | 2<br>(66.7) | - | - | 1<br>(100) | - | 1<br>(100) | - |
| Total | 23<br>(42.6) | 3<br>(5.6) | 28<br>(51.9) | 19<br>(39.6) | 8<br>(16.7) | 21<br>(43.8) | 8<br>(17.8) | 8<br>(17.8) | 29<br>(64.4) | 13<br>(31.7) | 5<br>(12.2) | 23<br>(56.1) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages. P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral

As far as the evaluation of Peng's top three salient attributes was concerned, his 'qualifications and experience' was considered very positive by all participants except LEF participants, who

had a neutral impression of this attribute. While HEF participants were favourable in evaluating Peng's 'personal background', others assessed this attribute quite neutrally. The general impression of Peng's 'partisan affiliation' in the minds of the four groups was neutral, but the data also showed that this attribute received more negative evaluation from all participants except LEM participants.

**5.1.15 Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Top Three Important Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants**

Table 5.20 shows the four groups of participants' evaluation of the important attributes relating to Lin. It can be seen from the table that LEF participants did not evaluate Lin's image particularly unfavourably because the majority of their responses were either positive or neutral. By contrast, the remaining participants generally had a positive opinion of Lin's image. HEF participants made the most favourable responses to Lin's image in contrast to the most number of unfavourable evaluations given by HEM participants. LEF participants had the most neutral assessment of Lin's image in the total number.

Table 5.20

Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes by the Four Groups of Participants

| Participant Evaluation | HEF | | | HEM | | | LEF | | | LEM | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of Lin's Image | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | P | N | NT |
| Political Style | 2 (33.3) | 4 (66.7) | - | 3 (50.0) | 3 (50.0) | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | - |
| Political Honesty | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 5 (71.4) | - | 2 (28.6) | 5 (83.3) | - | 1 (16.7) | 4 (80.0) | - | 1 (20.0) | 6 (75.0) | - | 2 (25.0) |
| Leadership Qualities | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | - | - | 2 (100) | 2 (50.0) | - | 2 (50.0) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 4 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Personality | 6 (100) | - | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - | 6 (100) | - | - | 6 (100) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Personal Background | - | - | 3 (100) | 1 (25.0) | - | 3 (75.0) | - | - | 4 (100) | - | - | 2 (100) |
| Ancestral Origin | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | 4 (100) | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) |
| Localism | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | 3 (100) | 1 (33.3) | - | 2 (66.7) |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 (14.3) | 4 (57.1) | 2 (28.6) | - | 4 (40.0) | 6 (60.0) | - | 3 (37.5) | 5 (62.5) | - | 5 (50.0) | 5 (50.0) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - | 1 (14.3) | 4 (57.1) | 2 (28.6) | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | 2 (33.3) | 3 (50.0) | 1 (16.7) |
| Total | 26 (53.1) | 11 (22.4) | 12 (24.5) | 18 (36.7) | 15 (30.6) | 16 (32.7) | 18 (40.9) | 8 (18.2) | 18 (40.9) | 21 (48.8) | 9 (20.9) | 13 (30.2) |

Figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral

It is clear that lesser educated participants were much more positive in evaluating Lin's 'political style', but HEF participants had more negative evaluation of this attribute.   HEM participants' impressions of Lin's 'political style' were either positive or negative.   Lin's 'ability' was favourably recognised by all four groups of participants since it was given much more positive assessment.   Lin's 'personality' was overwhelmingly considered positive by the four groups of participants as well.   While HEF participants had an unfavourable opinion of Lin's 'partisan affiliation', the prevailing impression of this attribute among LEM participants was either negative or neutral.   On the other hand, there was a noticeable similarity between HEM and LEF participants because both evaluated Lin's 'partisan affiliation' in a neutral way. Lin's 'issue and policy stands' received more positive evaluation from HEF participants, but it

was considered quite negative by the remaining participants.

## 5.1.16 Media Influence

Participants were asked if newspapers in any way influenced their perceptions of important issues or campaign issues and candidates' images to determine the possibility of media influence on the public agendas.

Table 5.21

Newspaper Influence on Public Perceptions of Important Issues or Campaign Issues and Candidates' Images

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Influence | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Yes | 18 | 78.3% | 15 | 62.5% | 15 | 65.2% | 12 | 54.5% | 60 | 65.2% |
| No | 2 | 8.7 | 7 | 29.2 | 5 | 21.7 | 6 | 27.3 | 20 | 21.7 |
| Undecided | 3 | 13 | 2 | 8.3 | 3 | 13 | 4 | 18.2 | 12 | 13 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

The data in Table 5.21 show that the majority of participants (65.2%) mentioned that newspaper coverage did influence them in determining the key issues or campaign issues and important image attributes relating to presidential candidates, whereas 21.7% of the participants argued that their perceptions of important issues and candidates' images were not influenced by the press. It was found that higher educated participants seemed to be more susceptible to the influence of the press in determining issues and attributes deemed important in their minds than their lesser educated counterparts.

## 5.1.17 Participants' Media Use and Exposure

To measure participants' media use and exposure patterns, focus group participants were asked to answer in the pre-session questionnaire (1) their most-often-used mass media, (2) newspapers they most often read, (3) the television news channel they most often watch, (4) the average time spent newspaper reading per day, (5) the average time spent television news viewing per day, and (6) their preferred mass media for obtaining more information about politics and election.

Table 5.22

Most-often-used Mass Media

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Media Used | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Television | 12 | 52.2% | 15 | 62.5% | 15 | 65.2% | 17 | 77.3% | 59 | 64.1% |
| Newspaper | 9 | 39.1 | 8 | 33.3 | 4 | 17.4 | 5 | 22.7 | 26 | 28.3 |
| Radio | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 4.2 | 4 | 17.4 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7.6 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Table 5.22 gives a clear picture that television was the media participants used most often. 64.1% of the participants mentioned television as their most-often-used mass media, followed by newspapers (28.3%), and then radio (7.6%). It was found that higher educated participants referred to newspapers more as their most-often-used media than lesser educated participants.

Table 5.23

Most-often-read Newspapers (Multiple Responses)

| Participant<br><br>Newspaper Read | HEF<br>(N=91) | | HEM<br>(N=95) | | LEF<br>(N=78) | | LEM<br>(N=84) | | Total<br>(N=348) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| China Times | 17 | 18.7% | 20 | 21.1% | 16 | 20.5% | 19 | 22.6% | 72 | 20.7% |
| United Daily News | 17 | 18.7 | 17 | 17.9 | 19 | 24.4 | 13 | 15.5 | 66 | 19.0 |
| Liberty Times | 11 | 12.1 | 13 | 13.7 | 13 | 16.7 | 14 | 16.7 | 51 | 14.7 |
| Min Sheng News | 10 | 11.0 | 10 | 10.5 | 10 | 12.8 | 5 | 6.0 | 35 | 10.1 |
| Taiwan Times | 7 | 7.7 | 6 | 6.3 | 3 | 3.8 | 6 | 7.1 | 22 | 6.3 |
| Economic Daily News | 8 | 8.8 | 8 | 8.4 | 2 | 2.6 | 2 | 2.4 | 20 | 5.7 |
| People's Daily News | 2 | 2.2 | 7 | 7.4 | 4 | 5.1 | 4 | 4.8 | 17 | 4.9 |
| Independence Morning Post | 4 | 4.4 | 2 | 2.1 | 2 | 2.6 | 7 | 8.3 | 15 | 4.3 |
| Central Daily News | 2 | 2.2 | 4 | 4.2 | 2 | 2.6 | 3 | 3.6 | 11 | 3.2 |
| Taiwan Daily News | 4 | 4.4 | 2 | 2.1 | 1 | 1.3 | 3 | 3.6 | 10 | 2.9 |
| Independence Evening Post | 3 | 3.3 | 3 | 3.2 | 1 | 1.3 | - | - | 7 | 2.0 |
| China Times Express | 2 | 2.2 | - | - | 2 | 2.6 | 3 | 3.6 | 7 | 2.0 |
| Ta Cheng News | 1 | 1.1 | 2 | 2.1 | 2 | 2.6 | - | - | 5 | 1.4 |
| Taiwan Hsin Sheng News | - | - | 1 | 1.1 | - | - | 3 | 3.6 | 4 | 1.1 |
| United Evening News | 3 | 3.3 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1.2 | 4 | 1.1 |
| Chung Hua Daily News | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1.3 | 1 | 1.2 | 2 | 0.6 |

*Each participant may answer up to five newspapers they read most often; the percentages in the table were based on the total number of responses. Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

When participants were asked to indicate newspapers they read most often, the *China Times* was mentioned most frequently, accounting for 20.7% of the total counts, followed by the *United Daily News* (19.0%), the *Liberty Times* (14.7%), and the *Min Sheng News* (10.1%). A closer look at the data shows that the top three most-often-read newspapers among the four groups of participants were very similar, mainly concentrating on the *China Times*, the *United Daily News*, and the *Liberty Times*. Nevertheless, it was found that higher educated participants seemed to read the *Economic Daily News*, a newspaper specialising in financial and economic coverage, more often than lesser educated participants.

Table 5.24

Most-often-watched TV News Channel

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TV News Channel Watched | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| TTV | 4 | 17.4% | 8 | 33.3% | 10 | 43.5% | 10 | 45.5% | 32 | 34.8% |
| Cable TV | 10 | 43.5 | 11 | 45.8 | 3 | 13.0 | 4 | 18.2 | 28 | 30.4 |
| CTS | 5 | 21.7 | 2 | 8.3 | 6 | 26.1 | 4 | 18.2 | 17 | 18.5 |
| CTV | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 12.5 | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 18.2 | 15 | 16.3 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

More than one third of the participants said they watched news on TTV more often, followed by Cable TV (30.4%), CTS (18.5%), and CTV (16.3%). An interesting picture emerging from the data in Table 5.24 is that Cable TV was watched more often by higher educated participants than by lesser educated participants (Table 5.24).

Table 5.25

Time Spent Reading Newspapers per day

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| 10-30 Minutes | 9 | 39.1% | 5 | 20.8% | 12 | 52.2% | 6 | 27.3% | 32 | 34.8% |
| More Than 30 Minutes | 8 | 34.8 | 5 | 20.8 | 2 | 8.7 | 7 | 31.8 | 22 | 23.9 |
| Less Than 10 Minutes | 4 | 17.4 | 7 | 29.2 | 6 | 26.1 | 5 | 22.7 | 22 | 23.9 |
| One Hour Or More | 2 | 8.7 | 7 | 29.2 | 3 | 13.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 16 | 17.4 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It is clear to see from Table 5.25 that the average time participants spent reading newspapers was mainly 10 to 30 minutes per day. More than one third of the total participants mentioned they spent 10 to 30 minutes every day on newspaper reading. The number of participants who spent less than ten minutes reading newspapers was the same as that of participants who spent more than 30 minutes newspaper reading; that is 22 in number (23.9%). Only 17.4% of the participants indicated the average time spent reading newspapers was one hour or more per day.

Table 5.26

Time Spent Watching TV News per day

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| More Than 30 Minutes | 6 | 26.1% | 6 | 25.0% | 8 | 34.8% | 8 | 36.4% | 28 | 30.4% |
| 10-30 Minutes | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 25.0 | 8 | 34.8 | 5 | 22.7 | 25 | 27.2 |
| Up To One Hour | 6 | 26.1 | 8 | 33.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 5 | 22.7 | 21 | 22.8 |
| Less Than 10 Minutes | 5 | 21.7 | 4 | 16.7 | 5 | 21.7 | 4 | 18.2 | 18 | 19.6 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

As the data in Table 5.26 show, 30.4% of the participants spent more than half hour on television news viewing per day. A total of 27.2% of the participants mentioned the average time they spent watching television news was from 10 to 30 minutes, followed by up to one hour (22.8%), and less than ten minutes (19.6%).

Table 5.27

Choice of Mass Media for More Information about Politics and the Election

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Media Chosen | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Television | 3 | 13% | 8 | 33.3% | 13 | 56.5% | 15 | 68.2% | 39 | 42.4% |
| Newspapers | 12 | 52.2 | 7 | 29.2 | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 27.3 | 31 | 33.7 |
| News Magazines | 7 | 30.4 | 9 | 37.5 | 3 | 13.0 | 1 | 4.5 | 20 | 21.7 |
| Radio | 1 | 4.3 | - | - | 1 | 4.3 | - | - | 2 | 2.2 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Television was the number one mass media participants would use if they wanted to obtain more information about politics and the presidential election. As the data in Table 5.27 reveal, 42.4% of the participants preferred television for obtaining news about politics and the election. Newspapers, mentioned by more than one third of total focus group members, were their second choice, followed by news magazines (21.7%). Only two participants said they would choose the radio for information. It was found that higher educated participants preferred using newspapers and news magazines to television for political information. On the contrary,

most of the lesser educated participants relied on television over newspapers for information about politics and the election. It can thus be concluded that there was a marked difference in preference among group members with higher education and with lesser education.

## 5.1.18 Participants' Media Evaluation

In order to understand participants' evaluation of the media, they were asked to indicate (1) the performance of newspapers in providing information about the issues they were concerned about, (2) the performance of television news in providing information about the issues they were concerned about, (3) how newspapers covered the presidential election, (4) how television news covered the presidential election, and (5) a comparison of media in terms of objective coverage of the presidential election.

Table 5.28

Amount of Information Provided by Newspapers about Issues Participants Are Concerned about

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information Provided | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Not Enough | 12 | 52.2% | 11 | 45.8% | 15 | 65.2% | 4 | 18.2% | 42 | 45.7% |
| Enough | 10 | 43.5 | 12 | 50.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 11 | 50.0 | 36 | 39.1 |
| More Than Enough | 1 | 4.3 | - | - | 4 | 17.4 | 7 | 31.8 | 12 | 13.0 |
| Not Enough At All | - | - | 1 | 4.2 | 1 | 4.3 | - | - | 2 | 2.2 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

As the figures in Table 5.28 reveal, more than half of the participants thought the amount of information provided by newspapers was enough or more than enough for them to understand the issues they cared about. On the other hand, there were 45.7% of the participants arguing that newspapers did not provide sufficient information for them to learn the issues they were concerned about. Only two members said the amount of information obtained from newspapers was not enough at all for them to understand the issues important to them. A

closer look at the table shows that compared with their male counterparts, female participants seemed to consider the information provided by newspapers insufficient for them to understand the issues they were concerned about.

Table 5.29

Amount of Information Provided by TV about Issues Participants Are Concerned about

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information Provided | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Not Enough | 15 | 65.2% | 16 | 66.7% | 11 | 47.8% | 8 | 36.4% | 50 | 54.3% |
| Enough | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 25.0 | 7 | 30.4 | 9 | 40.9 | 28 | 30.4 |
| More Than Enough | - | - | - | - | 3 | 13.0 | 5 | 22.7 | 8 | 8.7 |
| Not Enough At All | 2 | 8.7 | 2 | 8.3 | 2 | 8.7 | - | - | 6 | 6.5 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It is quite clear from Table 5.29 that more than 60% of the participants indicated television news was either not enough or not enough at all in providing them with information about the issues they were concerned about. By contrast, only 39.1% of the participants were satisfied with the information given by television news. When closely examined participants' views on the performance of television news in providing them with information about the issues concerned, the difference in evaluation among the four groups of participants could be found. Compared with lesser educated participants, participants with higher education seemed more unsatisfied with the amount of information obtained from television news because it was not enough for them to understand the issues important to them.

Table 5.30

Participants' Evaluation of Newspapers' Coverage on the Presidential Election

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Not Impartial | 17 | 73.9% | 13 | 54.2% | 11 | 47.8% | 6 | 27.3% | 47 | 51.1% |
| Impartial | 6 | 26.1 | 10 | 41.7 | 5 | 21.7 | 10 | 45.5 | 31 | 33.7 |
| Very Impartial | - | - | - | - | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 18.2 | 8 | 8.7 |
| Not Impartial At All | - | - | 1 | 4.2 | 3 | 13.0 | 2 | 9.1 | 6 | 6.5 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Most participants (57.6%) considered newspapers not objective in their coverage of campaign news. Nevertheless, some participants (42.4%) thought the way newspapers reported the election campaign was either very impartial or impartial. Among the four groups of participants, it is worth noting that female participants were more likely to think newspapers were not very impartial or not impartial at all in reporting election news than were their male counterparts (Table 5.30).

Table 5.31

Participants' Evaluation of TV News Coverage on the Presidential Election

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Not Impartial | 19 | 82.6% | 10 | 41.7% | 13 | 56.5% | 9 | 40.9% | 51 | 55.4% |
| Impartial | 2 | 8.7 | 6 | 25.0 | 7 | 30.4 | 8 | 36.4 | 23 | 25.0 |
| Not Impartial At All | 2 | 8.7 | 8 | 33.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 4.5 | 13 | 14.1 |
| Very Impartial | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.3 | 4 | 18.2 | 5 | 5.4 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Analysis of participants' evaluation of television news coverage on the presidential election also suggests the majority of participants (69.5%) regarded television as either not impartial or not impartial at all in reporting the election news. On the other hand, the figures in Table 5.31 indicate that more than 30% of the participants held a different view. They considered television news objective or even very objective in covering the campaign. Closer

examination of the data reveals that the percentage of persons who thought television news was objective in reporting the election was higher among lesser educated participants, especially LEM members, than among higher educated participants. When the two tables (Tables 5.30 and 5.31) were compared, it was found that participants seemed to consider newspapers slightly more objective in reporting the presidential campaign than television news.

Table 5.32

Comparison of Media in terms of Impartial Coverage of the Presidential Election

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Media | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Newspaper | 11 | 47.8% | 16 | 66.7% | 7 | 30.4% | 7 | 31.8% | 41 | 44.6% |
| Hard to say | 9 | 39.1 | 7 | 29.2 | 9 | 39.1 | 6 | 27.3 | 31 | 33.7 |
| Television | 3 | 13.0 | - | - | 7 | 30.4 | 6 | 27.3 | 16 | 17.4 |
| Both | - | - | 1 | 4.2 | - | - | 3 | 13.6 | 4 | 4.3 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

The results of participants' comparison of television and newspapers in covering the election further confirmed the above findings. As is evident from Table 5.32, newspapers were regarded by 44.6% of the participants as more objective in reporting the presidential election. By contrast, only 17.4% suggested that television was more impartial. About one third said it was difficult for them to compare both media in terms of their coverage of the election. It was found that higher educated participants had a higher percentage of persons who thought newspapers were more objective in reporting the election news.

## 5.1.19 Media Political Gratification

To learn their media political gratification, participants were asked about their main motivation for consuming campaign news. As the figures in Table 5.33 show, 47.8% of the participants

stated it was 'to catch up with current events', followed by 'to help to decide whom to vote for' (33.7%), and 'to get topics for interpersonal discussion' (8.7%). A few participants also indicated their main motivation was 'to enjoy the excitement of the election' (4.3%) and 'others' (5.4%), including 'to see how the candidates stand on the issues', 'to judge candidates' strong points', 'no particular reason', and so on.

Table 5.33

Participants' Main Motivation for Consuming Campaign News

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| To Catch Up With Current Events | 11 | 47.8% | 12 | 50% | 14 | 60.9% | 7 | 31.8% | 44 | 47.8% |
| To Help To Decide Whom To Vote For | 10 | 43.5 | 5 | 20.8 | 6 | 26.1 | 10 | 45.5 | 31 | 33.7 |
| To Get Topics For Interpersonal Discussion | 1 | 4.3 | 4 | 16.7 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 4.5 | 8 | 8.7 |
| To Enjoy The Excitement Of The Election | - | - | 1 | 4.2 | 1 | 4.3 | 2 | 9.1 | 4 | 4.3 |
| Others | 1 | 4.3 | 2 | 8.3 | - | - | 2 | 9.1 | 5 | 5.4 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

## 5.1.20 Political Interest, Political Participation, and Political Preference

To evaluate their political interest, participants were asked (1) how interested they were in the presidential election, and (2) how interested they were in reading political news when reading newspapers. Participants were also asked about (1) their past voting behaviours and (2) the frequency of attending stump speeches during the presidential campaign period to understand their political involvement. Participants were asked to answer (1) their voting decisions and (2) their political party identification in order to understand their political preference.

## I. Participants' Political Interest

As shown by the data in Table 5.34, participants displayed very high interest in this election. Nearly nine out of ten participants said they were either very interested or somewhat interested in the election in contrast to a small number of participants that took no interest.

Table 5.34

Participants' Extent of Interest in the Presidential Election

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extent of Interest | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Very Interested | 16 | 69.6% | 16 | 66.7% | 14 | 60.9% | 14 | 63.6% | 60 | 65.2% |
| Somewhat Interested | 6 | 26.1 | 5 | 20.8 | 6 | 26.1 | 5 | 22.7 | 22 | 23.9 |
| Not Very Interested | 1 | 4.3 | 3 | 12.5 | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 13.6 | 10 | 10.9 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It was found that the majority of participants (90.2%) were either very interested or somewhat interested in reading news about politics in newspapers. On the other hand, it is clear from Table 5.35 that only nine participants had no interest in reading political news in newspapers.

Table 5.35

Participants' Extent of Interest in Reading Political News Stories

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extent of Interest | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Somewhat Interested | 9 | 39.1% | 8 | 33.3% | 16 | 69.6% | 10 | 45.5% | 43 | 46.7% |
| Very Interested | 9 | 39.1 | 14 | 58.3 | 6 | 26.1 | 11 | 50.0 | 40 | 43.5 |
| Not Very Interested | 5 | 21.7 | 2 | 8.3 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 4.5 | 9 | 9.8 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

## II. Participants' Political Participation

Participants were asked if they voted in the 1995 legislative elections. Table 5.36 tells us that 75.0% of the participants cast their votes in the election whereas only a quarter did not vote. Among the 69 participants who voted, 43.5% voted for KMT candidates, 33.3% voted for DDP candidates, 17.4% voted for NP candidates, and 5.8% voted for independents (Table 5.37).

Table 5.36

Participants' Voting Behaviour in the 1995 Legislative Elections

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voting | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Yes, I Voted | 17 | 73.9% | 17 | 70.8% | 16 | 69.6% | 19 | 86.4% | 69 | 75.0% |
| No, I Didn't Vote | 6 | 26.1 | 7 | 29.2 | 7 | 30.4 | 3 | 13.6 | 23 | 25.0 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

Table 5.37

Political Party Voted for in the 1995 Legislative Elections

| Participant | HEF (N=17) | | HEM (N=17) | | LEF (N=16) | | LEM (N=19) | | Total (N=69) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political Party Voted for | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| KMT | 8 | 47.1% | 7 | 41.2% | 7 | 43.8% | 8 | 42.1% | 30 | 43.5% |
| DPP | 5 | 29.4 | 7 | 41.2 | 4 | 25.0 | 7 | 36.8 | 23 | 33.3 |
| NP | 3 | 17.6 | 3 | 17.6 | 3 | 18.8 | 3 | 15.8 | 12 | 17.4 |
| Independents | 1 | 5.9 | - | - | 2 | 12.5 | 1 | 5.3 | 4 | 5.8 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

In order to understand their involvement in the presidential election, participants were also asked how many times they attended the stump speeches during the campaign period. Over half of the participants said the frequency of their attendance at the stump speeches was once or twice. 21.7% indicated that they attended three or four times whereas 19.6% never attended (Table 5.38). Given high voter turnout in the 1995 legislative elections, and the low

percentage of participants who did not attend stump speeches, it can be argued that members of

focus groups were quite active in political participation.

Table 5.38

Frequency of Attending Stump Speeches during the Presidential Campaign Period

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| None | 4 | 17.4% | 4 | 16.7% | 5 | 21.7% | 5 | 22.7% | 18 | 19.6% |
| Once | 7 | 30.4 | 5 | 20.8 | 8 | 34.8 | 5 | 22.7 | 25 | 27.2 |
| Twice | 7 | 30.4 | 9 | 37.5 | 6 | 26.1 | 7 | 31.8 | 29 | 31.5 |
| 3 Times | 4 | 17.4 | 5 | 20.8 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 13.6 | 15 | 16.3 |
| 4 Times | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 4.2 | 1 | 4.3 | 2 | 9.1 | 5 | 5.4 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

## III. Participants' Political Preference

Participants were asked about their voting choice. A clear picture emerging from the contents

in Table 5.39 is that 40.2% of the participants indicated they would vote for the KMT's

Lee-Lien team. There was no striking difference in the respective number of participants

planning to vote for the other three teams of candidates. Of the 92 participants, 20.7% would

vote for the DPP's Peng-Hsieh team, 20.7% for the independent Lin-Hau team, and 18.5% for

the independent Chen-Wang team.

Table 5.39

Participants' Voting Decision

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voting Decision | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| KMT's Lee-Lien Team | 8 | 34.8% | 7 | 29.2% | 11 | 47.8% | 11 | 50% | 37 | 40.2% |
| DPP's Peng-Hsieh Team | 4 | 17.4 | 6 | 25.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 5 | 22.7 | 19 | 20.7 |
| Independent Chen-Wang Team | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 25.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 13.6 | 19 | 20.7 |
| Independent Lin-Hau Team | 5 | 21.7 | 5 | 20.8 | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 13.6 | 17 | 18.5 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

With regard to participants' political party identification, 32.6% said that they did not have any

preference for political parties and would consider themselves neutral. Nevertheless, 31.5%

said that they were pro-KMT. Participants supporting the DPP accounted for 21.7% of the

total, followed by 14.1% of the participants who were pro-NP (Table 5.40).

Table 5.40

Participants' Political Party Identification

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Party Identification | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Neutral | 8 | 34.8% | 6 | 25.0% | 10 | 43.5% | 6 | 27.3% | 30 | 32.6% |
| Pro-KMT | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 25.0 | 8 | 34.8 | 9 | 40.9 | 29 | 31.5 |
| Pro-DPP | 5 | 21.7 | 8 | 33.3 | 3 | 13.0 | 4 | 18.2 | 20 | 21.7 |
| Pro-NP | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 16.7 | 2 | 8.7 | 3 | 13.6 | 13 | 14.1 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

## 5.1.21 Participants' National Identity

In order to gain an insight into their views on the issue of national identity, participants were

asked about (1) their views on ethnic consciousness and (2) their views on Taiwan's future.

Table 5.41

Participant's Views on Ethnic Consciousness

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic Consciousness | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Taiwanese | 7 | 30.4% | 11 | 45.8% | 10 | 43.5% | 7 | 31.8% | 35 | 38.0% |
| Both Taiwanese and Chinese | 10 | 43.5 | 10 | 41.7 | 6 | 26.1 | 6 | 27.3 | 32 | 34.8 |
| Chinese | 6 | 26.1 | 3 | 12.5 | 7 | 30.4 | 9 | 40.9 | 25 | 27.2 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

When participants were asked whether they were Taiwanese or Chinese to learn their ethnic

consciousness, 38.0% of them thought they were Taiwanese. Over a third considered

themselves both Taiwanese and Chinese, followed by 27.2% of the participants who classified

themselves as Chinese. It is worth noting that 'Chinese' here refers to the ethnic Chinese, not

the nationality. It was found that more LEM participants considered themselves Chinese

(Table 5.41).

Table 5.42

Participant's Views on Taiwan's Future

| Participant | HEF (N=23) | | HEM (N=24) | | LEF (N=23) | | LEM (N=22) | | Total (N=92) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Taiwan's Future | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. | Fre. | Per. |
| Maintaining the *Status Quo* | 14 | 60.9% | 12 | 50.0% | 13 | 56.5% | 14 | 63.6% | 53 | 57.6% |
| Independence | 6 | 26.1 | 9 | 37.5 | 6 | 26.1 | 4 | 18.2 | 25 | 27.2 |
| Reunification With Mainland China | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 12.5 | 4 | 17.4 | 4 | 18.2 | 14 | 15.2 |

Fre: Frequency; Per: Percentage; N: Number

It can be seen from Table 5.42 that the majority (57.6%) preferred maintaining the *status quo*.

More than a quarter supported Taiwanese independence. By contrast, only 15.2% of the

participants advocated reunification with mainland China.

## 5.2 Results of Focus Groups

### 5.2.1 The Most Important Issues Discussed in the Focus Groups

In each session, participants were asked to cite a number of issues deemed most important in

Taiwan and provide explanations for their responses. This was an open-ended question and

participants could answer up to five issues. The results of the focus groups showed that issues

most often discussed by participants were the same as those found in pre-session

questionnaires, including 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political

system', 'economic development', 'law and order', and 'environment/ecology'.

Since the presidential election was shadowed by China's military threats, it is not surprising that issues about relations between Taiwan and China came up for discussion with the impact of cross-strait tensions, the issue of national identity and Taiwan's national defence and security being mentioned most often by the respondents. Participants were concerned about growing tensions across the Taiwan Straits resulting from China's military exercises and missile tests which might finally lead to war. Taiwan's national security was of primary concern in response to the deteriorating cross-strait relations.

As argued by one HEF participant (HEF1, D),

> I think the improvement of Taiwanese-Chinese relations is the most important issue of the day because China's military exercises have posed a grave threat to the stability of our society and our daily life. I am afraid that the tensions across the straits will escalate into a full-scale war.

Similarly, this view was shared by one HEM participant (HEM1, B) in answer to the question of the important issues of the day. He said,

> As far as I am concerned, the most important issue facing Taiwan today is national security. China's military manoeuvres have influenced our daily life and damaged Taiwan's stability. Therefore, how to ensure Taiwan's stability and security is the most pressing issue.

Indeed, China's military exercises raised fears of invasion among some participants. One LEF participant (LEF1, H) said she was very concerned about a possible military attack from China. She was afraid that 'the war is about to break out over the Taiwan Straits'. She added,

We should let China know that the use of force is no way to settle disputes. China's military threats only alienate Taiwanese people and set back the cause of reunification.

Another LEF participant (LEF2, A) said,

It's hard to predict what additional measures China will take next. We don't want them to create a situation where there is no way out. An all-out war with China is the last thing we expect to have. I think what Taiwan should do is to get Beijing back to the negotiating table and to refocus cross-strait relations on common interests.

One LEM participant (LEM1, E) also expressed his worry about serious armed conflicts with China by relating to his past war experience. As he pointed out,

I know how terrible and cruel a war can be because I used to fight against the communist China during the civil war. I hope cross-strait relations can be normalised and no war will happen between Taiwan and China. Our government should do something to further our relationship with China.

Although agreeing with the cruelty of the war, another participant from the same group (LEM1, G) argued that how to improve the cross-strait relations was the responsibility of the both sides. He emphasised,

Of course, we are against war because it only brings damage and destruction. Our government should do something to prevent provoking China, but I think the mainland authorities should control itself by refraining from making any military move before the situation gets worse.

A similar comment was made by one HEM participant (HEM2, K). He said,

We oppose antagonism and war. We want to have equality, a win-win situation with mainland China. Both sides should work hard to ease the tension across the straits. We have no intention to provoke China. It is China that started the military reprisals to worsen the cross-strait relations. So, Beijing should demonstrate its good will by immediately stopping its military intimidation and publicly renouncing the use of force against Taiwan to repair the relations.

It is clear from the analysis of discussion that participants were worried about the worsening ties between Taiwan and China. They considered the improvement of cross-strait relations key to avoiding further confrontation across the straits and ensuring Taiwan's national security. They also believed what should be done for better ties across the straits depended not only on the Taiwanese government but also on the Chinese authorities.

On the other hand, despite recognising the importance of repairing cross-strait relations, some participants, especially males, believed that Beijing's military threats were unlikely to result in a war across the straits. As argued by one HEM participant (HEM1, F),

China's military exercises are a kind of psychological warfare, only aimed to undermine support for President Lee and independent sentiment in Taiwan. I don't believe the military tension will turn to a serious war though it is a matter of great urgency to build better ties with the mainland.

In the same vein, a HEM participant in another group (HEM2, D) also said,

China's real intention of military exercises is to beat back support for President Lee, not to launch a real war. But I think China is playing fire. Its military approach will not be effective in undermining voters' support for President Lee. It serves only to increase anti-China sentiment among the public in Taiwan.

One LEM participant (LEM2, E) said (laughed),

> It's very obvious that China's military exercises are just a dirty trick to coerce
> us into surrendering to Beijing and being reunified by it. Well, I think it's
> only a war game; no real war will break out. No need to worry.

Participants also expressed their views on the possible causes of the growing tensions across
the straits. One LEM participant (LEM2, H) argued that it was not Taiwanese independence
or President Lee Teng-hui that China was opposing. He added,

> It's Beijing's fear and hatred of Taiwan's democracy. We remain hopeful that
> tensions can be reduced but we cannot give China the right to define and
> interpret our own policies just because we fear China's show of military force.

One HEF participant (HEF2, B) said,

> Beijing is worried about Taiwan's presidential election because it could give
> our government greater international legitimacy and also strengthen President
> Lee's hand at home. This election is just like a time bomb for China. It
> wants to defuse this time bomb ahead of time. This is the reason why China
> launched a series of military exercises and missile tests just before the election.

One HEM participant (HEM1, D) also pointed out the possible reason for China's military
intimidation. As he argued,

> What Beijing fears is the powers that Taiwan's democratisation is unleashing.
> China is afraid of a surge of hope for the supporters of independence and a gain
> in international stature that could boost Taiwan's bid for more international
> space.

On the other hand, in the face of China's sabre-rattling, several participants also feared that

China would use military force against Taiwan if Taiwan became independent. They believed that Taiwan's active pursuit of greater international recognition was regarded by China as a move towards independence. Therefore, China's military threats aimed at preventing Taiwan from heading down a separation path. A typical comment shared by several members was made by one HEF participant (HEF1, A):

> I don't agree with President Lee's pragmatic diplomacy, which China sees as a
> guise for Taiwan to move towards separation. Of course, we need to promote
> Taiwan internationally, but at what cost? It's not wise to provoke the other
> side or to invite potential danger with missile exercises.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF1, F) also indicated,

> President Lee has gone too far in promoting Taiwan's international status.
> For me, Taiwan's national security is more important than its international
> status. We should let China know we are not moving towards independence
> to prevent its further military threats.

It seemed that as far as these participants were concerned, China's military hostility was aroused by Taiwan's active quest for international space and supporters for independence. They believed that the rapprochement between Taiwan and China and Taiwan's national security took priority over its quest for international recognition and the abstract issue of independence/reunification.

Nevertheless, some participants harboured a view that tensions between Taiwan and China were caused by political problems, and should be thus resolved politically. The root cause was the 'one-China' issue, which was not easy to solve because both Taiwan and mainland China held divergent views on the definition. As pointed out by one LEM participant (LEM1,

A),

The conflict between Taiwan and China resulted mainly from the different views on 'what one China means'. Beijing has abused and distorted the term 'one China' to suppress Taiwan. It only regards itself as the sole representative of China and refuses to recognise Taiwan's status as a sovereign government.

One HEF participant (HEF2, K) also expressed a similar opinion. She said,

The Chinese communists often use the 'one-China' principle to negate our legitimate place in the international community. I think one China refers to not only the People's Republic of China (PRC) but also our Republic of China (ROC). That's one China with two equal political entities, just like the case of pre-unification Germany and the two Koreas.

Her view found an echo in another participant from the same group (HEF2, E), who argued,

The current Beijing government has never ruled Taiwan, and the two separate governments — Taipei and Beijing should be accepted by both sides. Only by treating this reality objectively will it be possible for both sides to reach a common recognition of the meaning of 'one China'.

One the other hand, one HEM participant (HEM2, G) pointed out the dilemma Taiwan might face in dealing with 'one China' issue. He said:

I think Taiwan's formal name, the Republic of China (ROC), is the detriment to the Taiwanese people. If we continue to use ROC, then we cannot get away from 'one China' problem. Any nation can only have formal relations with one government in a nation, not two. So, as long as Taiwan maintains that it is part of China, it will not be able to make a breakthrough on the international scene.

Closely relating to this 'one China' problem was the issue of national identity, which was also heatedly debated by participants in the sample. One HEF participant (HEF1, L) pointed out that the unclear and divergent positions on the future of Taiwan had put Taiwan in a tricky position. She added,

> Many problems relating to cross-strait relations cannot be solved without a consensus of opinion on Taiwan's national identity, which has great influence on the government's policies towards China.

Her view was shared by one HEM participant (HEM1, A) who also emphasised that the most pressing problem facing Taiwan was 'the issue of Taiwanese independence or reunification with China'. He emphasised,

> We need a clear national identity to avoid political discord. We've got to face this independence/reunification problem rather than avoiding it.

One LEF participant (LEF2, F) also suggested,

> The ultimate decision about national identity must be made by the 21 million people of Taiwan through democratic processes, rather than imposed by any single political party in Taiwan or by the authorities in Beijing.

Discussions with members of focus groups revealed that people had different opinions about national identity. Most of them pointed out that national identity revolved around the issue of Taiwanese independence or reunification with China. As one HEM participant (HEM2, J) put it,

> We have two nationalisms coexisting in Taiwan. One is to create a separate Taiwanese state; the other is to embrace the Chinese mainland. How do these two nationalisms compromise with each other is the key issue in both Taiwan's democratisation and the cross-strait relations.

One LEM participant (LEM2, B) argued that Taiwan's ambiguous political status made it difficult to define whether Taiwan was a country itself or only part of a larger country. He said with signs,

> I don't know if Taiwan is an independent country; it looks like it is because we have our own government, military, judiciary, and territory, everything to make up a sovereignty except the name. But we are not fully recognised internationally and what's worse is that China arbitrarily regarded Taiwan as part of its province.

In answer to why she preferred Taiwanese independence, one HEF participant (HEF1, C) replied:

> Taiwan has to become independent if it is to be regarded as an equal player on the international stage. If we don't declare independence, we will always be considered part of China, and China has been trying to isolate us internationally. Though China says it will use force if we declare independence, I think it's just bluffing.

One HEM participant (HEM2, A) also explained his preference for Taiwanese independence because he thought

> that's the only way for Taiwan to survive. It is very obvious that there's not much room for Taiwan in international society because of mainland China's obstruction. If Taiwan becomes independent, we will have more dignity diplomatically and internationally. I travel a lot, so I know that ROC passport holders have visa problems in many countries.

Besides, some participants also believed that Taiwanese independence would have benefits for both sides. A practical view shared by several participants was expressed by one HEF participant (HEF2, G), who argued that

> China is too large. If there were several Chinese nations in the United Nations, it would be useful for Beijing, just as it was for the old Soviet Union. So, let Taiwan be free, and there would be many benefits for China as well.

For those who in favour of Taiwanese independence, the desire to support independence was not an effort to create a separation but to recognise Taiwan's status quo as a *de facto* independent country with its own autonomy. As claimed by one HEF participant (HEF1, H),

> Why not recognise the reality that Taiwan is already an independent country, separating from China for a long time?

Another participant from the same focus group (HEF1, C) also supported her view, suggesting that

> there is no reason why Taiwan should be part of the Chinese state for China to be complete.

In a similar vein, one LEF participant (LEF2, K) said,

> We want other countries to understand that Taiwan is different from China.
> We are Chinese in race, but like Singaporeans we are independent.

One LEM participant (LEM1, F) asserted that Taiwan as an independent political entity was an undeniable fact. He said,

> Taiwan is an independent, sovereign political entity whether Beijing likes it or not.

In elaborating on his view of national identity, a HEM participant (HEM1, E) disagreed that Taiwan was just a political entity. Instead, he said,

> I don't agree that China and Taiwan are two equal political entities. China is not just a political entity. China is an independent nation. And Taiwan should be the same, an independent nation rather than an entity.

Although the ruling KMT government continues to insist on reunification as a long-term national goal, many participants in the focus groups doubted the advantages reunification could bring as long as the Communists were still in control. In these participants' opinion, the notion of reunification with China was unworkable in terms of the huge gap in the standards of living, political democratisation, and freedom between Taiwan and China. One LEF participant (LEF1, C) argued against reunification with China by questioning

> only because our culture is Chinese, do we have to reunite with China? What good is it for us in reunification?

One LEM participant (LEM1, L) also expressed his view of anti-reunification by stating that

> reunification is unfavourable to Taiwan because it only makes Taiwan's destiny like that of Hong Kong fallen into China's hand without any bargaining power at all.

His comment was echoed by one HEF participant (HEF2, H), who argued,

> The time for reunification is not yet ripe. The two sides are too far apart, economically and politically. Taiwan should not be forced to accept communist domination. If we were in the control of China, I could imagine that the most threatening scenario for democracy in Taiwan is that it will become like Hong Kong.

Even for those who supported reunification with China, they were wary of moving too fast to reunify. As one HEF participant (HEF1, G) suggested,

> I do not want to sacrifice what I enjoy in Taiwan — the comforts and liberties of life though emotionally I think Taiwan should be reunified with China some day in the future. For me, reunification is a long-term goal. Only when China becomes fully democratic and has the equal standard of living to that of Taiwan will reunification be possible.

A similar comment was made by one LEM participant (LEM1, D) who maintained that

> a unified China is my hope, but there is no way to unify with the Chinese mainland at the moment. Maybe sometime in the future when the political and economic differences between the two sides have considerably narrowed.

One HEM (HEM2, H) also mentioned his conditional support of reunification with China. He emphasised,

> Reunification would only come about if and when we people of Taiwan agree
> to it. We're waiting for China to move towards greater openness and a much
> more democratic and pluralistic society.

In response to the issue of national identity, participants also related their option to their background. One HEF participant (HEF2, C) said,

> I'm a so-called Mainlander and I grew up in a Mainlander community, so I
> have a strong sense of Chinese identity. I am for eventual reunification with
> mainland China but against Taiwanese independence.

One LEF participant (LEF2, D) also cited her personal reason for advocating reunification with China on the issue of national identity. She said,

> Culturally, I am Chinese, so I want reunification... but we cannot be unified
> on their (Chinese communists') terms.

Moreover, several participants considered the issue of national identity from another angle different from the ideological argument over the issue of national identity. One businessman participant with high education (HEM1, K), citing his experience to justify his view on national identity, said,

> Generally speaking, people do not care about reunification or independence.
> As far as I am concerned, I want Taiwan to be a sovereign nation with full
> international recognition, so my passport can be accepted in every country for
> my convenience of travelling and doing business abroad.

The results of the discussions also revealed that most participants preferred the *status quo, de facto* independence without a formal rupture. One LEF participant (LEF1, B) believed many people in Taiwan preferred the *status quo: de facto* independence coupled with a push for greater international recognition. She argued,

> I am quite satisfied with what Taiwan is now. There is no need to change the current situation. What we need is more space in the international society.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM2, D) said,

> Why should Taiwan be united with China? Just because China is powerful? There is no reason to think Taiwan belongs to the mainland. The gulf between two sides has been growing too big. I am quite happy with the *status quo*. We don't need to be independent; we are a sovereign country in reality. What we need is to gain more international recognition.

Furthermore, several participants mentioned that the reason why they opted for maintaining the *status quo* was because they were afraid that declaring Taiwanese independence would certainly provoke a direct Chinese military attack. As one LEF participant (LEF2, H) argued,

> I don't want Taiwan to reunify with China, but I know if we declare Taiwanese independence, China will definitely use military force to attack us. So, the safe choice, I think, is maintaining the *status quo*.

Her comment reflected the typical views of participants who had no interest in reunification but supported maintaining the *status quo* because they were afraid of China's hostility if Taiwan chose to be independent.

On the other hand, some participants in favour of maintaining the *status quo* took a

wait-and-see attitude towards the issue of Taiwan's future. A prevailing opinion found among these members was the comment made by one HEF participant (HEF1, B), who said,

> I prefer Taiwan to maintain the *status quo* for the moment. The timing for reunification with China or for Taiwanese independence is not right. We can wait to see which option is the best for Taiwan's future.

A similar view was also held by one HEM participant (HEM1, L). As maintained by him,

> Taiwan's future should be decided by all the people in Taiwan, but we don't have to decide this issue now. If the situation in the future is favourable for Taiwanese independence, I'd like to see Taiwan become a fully independent country. Otherwise, I won't mind Taiwan reunifying with mainland China one day on the condition that Taiwan's sovereignty won't be sacrificed.

In a follow-up among those who advocated reunification and participants favouring the *status quo* but willing to reunify with China if the timing is right, their interpretation of 'one China' was quite different from Beijing's. While they generally agreed that there was only one China, and that Taiwan and mainland China should be or may be reunified one day, they were unwilling to acknowledge that one China was the People's Republic of China and that Taiwan was but one of its provinces. In their eyes, reunification with mainland China was a long-term aim, which could be achieved on an understanding that both Taiwan and Chinese mainland were equal political entities. For example, one LEM participant (LEM1, D) said,

> China cannot treat Taiwan like the way they treat Hong Kong. Taiwan must be treated on equal footing. It is unacceptable to be treated just as a province of China.

One HEF participant (HEF1, B) also argued,

> It's a shame that Beijing has stubbornly refused to recognise Taiwan as an equal and insists on sovereignty over Taiwan.

One HEM participant (HEM2, H) articulated a similar view:

> Personally, I agree with the goal of reunification with the mainland in the future when the time is ripe. That's when China has become more democratic and will treat Taiwan equally, not as one of its local governments. I don't want to sacrifice the democracy and freedom we now possess in order to reunify with China and accept communist rule.

One LEF participant (LEF1, K) also said,

> Beijing said Taiwan and the mainland should coexist as one country with two systems. We can still have our own armed forces, economic system, and political system, but Taiwan will be regarded as a part of China. What good is it to reunify under these terms? If Beijing is unable to accept Taiwan as equal political entity, I doubt we'll be treated like second-class citizens.

When discussing most important issues of the day, participants also indicated that 'the improvement of the democratic political system', 'economic development', 'law and order', and 'environment/ecology' were of pressing significance. Although the issue of 'cross-strait relations' received heated debate, some participants suggested that this issue should be set aside for the moment because of its complexity. Instead, more attention should be paid to practical issues such as democratising the political structure and improving law and order, gangland crime and official corruption. As argued by one HEM participant (HEM1, G),

The reunification issue is just something put up by politicians. It's not such an urgent issue for ordinary people. The important problems we cared about are government corruption, political stability, money politics, crimes, and economy.

Similar to the above view, one HEF participant (HEF2, A) also argued,

We have expressed too much concern with the issue of independence/reunification. This issue is too abstract and theoretical to reach a satisfying conclusion. I think we should concentrate on problems of more immediate concern, say, money politics, equitable economy, decline in law and order, and better quality of living environment.

It was found from focus group discussions that some participants were very concerned about the degeneration of democratic political system resulting from money politics. In fact, money politics and Mafia politics have existed for a long time in Taiwanese local politics. Recently they have become more rampant in the national arena. The close linkage between criminal elements and elected officials had corrupted Taiwan's politics (Chu, 1996; Kau, 1996; Cheng, 1997). One HEF participant (HEF1, K) claimed that money politics such as the illegal practice of vote bribery and collusion between politicians and gangsters or criminal organisations was a very serious obstacle to the development of Taiwan's democratic political system. She added,

The influence of organised crime in politics and in government-funded construction projects has reached to such a serious extent that the government can't ignore it anymore.

Another participant from the same group (HEF1, E) also expressed her worry about Taiwan's deteriorating democracy resulting from illegal collusion between lawmakers and business groups and criminal gangs. She said,

It's hardly a surprise that some elected lawmakers were involved in lobbying on and manipulating public-works contracts. Almost all major construction groups have their close connections in the legislature. In particular, many unqualified construction companies operated by criminal gangs are winning bids so easily that the situation is out of control. Those lawmakers involved in influencing the bidding process of public-works contracts could make huge profits from the political contributions of construction companies.

Similarly, several HEM participants also observed that Taiwan's democratic political system had worsened by citing political graft and bid-rigging in public works that were involved with the widespread gangster influence and illicit deal-making between elected officials and business groups. As one participant (HEM1, A) noted,

> These problems (political graft and bid-rigging in public works) have been with
> us for a long time. They include projects big and small and extend from the
> central government right down to the local level.

Another participant (HEM2, B) criticised the ubiquitous influence of the organised criminal groups at the central-government level. He said angrily,

> Most members of the legislature were elected through buying votes or because
> of factional interests. Some of them even have the close connections with
> gangs. They don't really represent the public interest.

Similar comments were found in the discussion of LEM participants. One participant (LEM1, D) said,

> The linkage between elected officials and organised crime groups was too
> shamefully close in Taiwan. Look, how many politicians are gang-connected?
> It is too many to count.

Agreeing with the above view, another participant (LEM1, K) in the same group also pointed out the gang influence on politics was a serious problem in Taiwan. He said,

> Taiwan would become a 'second Sicily' controlled by gang-connected politicians. It's hard to imagine that so many elected politicians have either criminal records or strong ties to organised crime. The government should care about this serious problem and have more effective law enforcement to keep our politics clean.

LEF participants also regarded the corrupting influence of money and organised crime in politics as a serious problem facing Taiwan today. As mentioned by one participant (LEF1, E),

> It is quite commonplace to see gangsters openly intervene in elections with violence and intimidation. Our politics is rift with gang violence.

Another female participant in the same group (LEF1, H) also said,

> I feel very hopeless about our democratic politics because many of our elected politicians were linked to underworld activity and gang violence. They act only in accordance with personal interests or party interests, not the public interests.

Her view was agreed by one participant in the group (LEF1, B). As she argued,

> Many legislators sit as members of boards of directors or as supervisors of private corporations. It's hard not to think they won't exploit their posts for private gain or crime.

Similarly, one female participant in another lesser education sample (LEF2, C) also accused

politicians from crime organisations of graft in the bidding for public construction contracts. She said,

> Corruption practices in public-works have grown so widespread in Taiwan that they're damaging our investment environment and slowing development. Our government should do something to halt the spread of underworld influence into politics.

Another female participant in the group (LEF2, F) indicated that 'the prevalence of vote-buying, corruption, and organised crime in politics has seriously damaged Taiwan's democratic political system'. She added,

> The KMT has been controlled by local and criminal factions. It becomes very corrupt and only serves the interest of the rich.

Indeed, when talking about money politics, some participants were very disappointed with the ruling KMT and blamed it for tolerating illegal collusion between elected officials and organised criminal groups and interest groups. For example, one HEM participant (HEM1, C) said,

> The ruling KMT should be responsible for the infiltration of criminal gangs into politics and the collusion between elected officials and big businesses because many of its members have aligned with criminal and rich elements. They are corrupting Taiwan's politics.

One LEF participant (LEF1, A) also complained about the KMT's corruption and its strong link with powerful clans, business conglomerates, and criminal elements. As she pointed out,

The KMT has become a party of patronage and big business. For it, money and connections are seemingly more important than policies and performance in office.

One HEF participant (HEF1, F) emphasised,

The inner-party struggle of the KMT has exhausted and divided the party. It can no longer impose the party discipline. Since the party needs to win elections to be in power, it has to rely on powerful local factions and big business groups and tolerates their dirty tricks. It's not surprising to see the party use voter bribery and recruit candidates with records of criminal conviction to run for the elections.

In response to how to prevent the gang influence on Taiwan's democratic politics, one HEM participant's suggestion was generally accepted by the majority of participants with higher education. He (HEM2, H) said,

The law should prohibit anyone convicted of a gang-related crime from running for public office. Political parties should be fined if their candidates or elected officials are found to have criminal ties.

Apart from corruption, money politics, and gangster influence in politics, participants also considered the improvement of legislative efficiency and quality a matter of pressing importance. Some were not satisfied with the legislature's overall performance, especially legislative inefficiency. As one HEF participant (HEF2, D) put it,

There are no incentives for legislators to work hard or consider the public. They are very busy going to weddings and funerals and tending to the business of their factions back home.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM1, J) said,

> Our lawmakers only look after their own interest. They don't really recognise the need for the public.

One HEM participant (HEM2, F) also pointed out the frequent parliamentary violent conflicts had ruined Taiwan's democratic politics and delayed legislative efficiency. As he argued,

> Our legislative quality needs improving. There are too many unnecessary conflicts among legislators. Some of them just want to get photo opportunities to be famous. Dozens of important bills are 'sleeping' in the legislature when they need to be passed.

One HEM participant from another group (HEM1, J) also said,

> We have too many elections, too many unqualified elected officials, rampant corruption, and party rivalries that paralyse the legislative process. We need a mechanism for breaking the stalemate in the legislature and improving discipline among the political parties, so our democratic system can be on the right track.

The results of the focus groups also showed that the issue of 'economic development' was deemed important by participants. It was found that this issue had received much mention among participants with lesser education and HEF participants. One HEF participant (HEF2, J) presented a generally accepted view. She pointed out that Taiwan should place economic development above all other matters. She added,

> Economic development is very vital to Taiwan. Because Taiwan is short of natural resources, there is no choice but to develop industry and business. In fact, our economic growth depends heavily on foreign trade and investment.

Several participants also pointed out the need for economic reform to forward the economic development. As one HEM participant (HEM2, E) put it:

> The economic system needs to be reformed. We must build a reasonable and equitable market economy, and an efficient and complete investment environment. Right now we have a serious problem with monopolies controlled by party-operated enterprises, publicly financed corporation, and so on. Besides, there are too many special loans, special privileges and unjustifiable economic regulations. All of these things have bad influence on our economic development.

Similarly, one HEF participant (HEF1, I) was disappointed with mismanagement of the banking business and pointed out many areas in the financial system need improvement. She said,

> The banking system is in urgent need of repair. Many of the state-owned banks are in a mess because they are often used by local politicians as vote-buying machines.

Her opinion was supported by another participant in the same group (HEF1, B), who observed,

> Many co-ops are loosely organised and easily controlled by businessmen and politicians who gain seats on the boards. They often use phony names to funnel loans to themselves and to their friends.

One LEF participant (LEF1, G) also noted that a series of bank runs hit some financial institutions. She said,

> These institutions are usually not well-regulated. They're all doing illegal lending to stock speculators and they also act as arms of local politicians for buying votes.

Apart from concern over financial irregularities such as embezzlement and fraudulent loans, one LEM participant (LEM2, F) also suggested the necessity of eliminating impediments to investment. He pointed out:

> The government needs to take action to improve the domestic investment environment such as reforming the laws. The restrictions of too many rules have left those who want to do business thoroughly perplexed. Simplifying laws and regulations is very important. Our government doesn't need to over-regulate.

His suggestion was in agreement with the opinion of another participant in the same group (LEM2, A), who advocated reforming the obsolete rules. As he indicated,

> Our government has to revise outdated laws and regulations for Taiwanese economy to continue its prosperous development.

One LEF participant (LEF1, I) also presented the same view. As she pointed out,

> The existing regulations and laws are outdated and in urgent need of an overhaul. Besides, the government has to make all possible efforts to stop corruption, remove bureaucratic obstacles, and restore investors' confidence in Taiwan to ensure the prosperous economic development and competitiveness.

In addition, several participants also indicated that Beijing's military belligerence has had an economic impact on Taiwan. As one LEM participant (LEM1, C) observed,

> The pre-condition of steady economic growth is political and social stability. Look at what damage China's missile tests and military exercises have done to our economy. Our stock market was badly battered, our currency experienced serious devaluation, and there was a lot of capital flight.

In the similar vein, one HEM participant (HEM1, J) said:

> One of the major conditions to continue Taiwan's prosperous economic development is that Taiwan and China have to maintain stable and peaceful relations. Without the stability of this greater environment, I am sure no one will feel secure or continue to invest.

His opinion was supported by another participant in the same group (HEM1, L), who also considered Taiwan's economic prosperity relied on its stable relations with China. He said,

> If cross-strait relations have a serious impact on the will to invest, how can the economy be good?

On the other hand, not all participants were concerned with the economic development at the macro-level. Rather, most participants naming 'economic development' as a matter of great urgency paid much attention to economic issues relevant to their own daily life, such as soaring real estate prices, expensive costs of living, increases in unemployment, frequent labour disputes, and the inequitable distribution of wealth. When discussing these matters, participants indicated that they were only concerned with bread-and-butter issues. Several participants said that as ordinary people, their primary concern was earning a good livelihood. They worried about economic recession just because it would affect the stock market, the costs of living, and the prices of housing and land, which were more relevant to their personal interests. As argued by one LEF participant (LEF1, G),

> It's so difficult to buy a house nowadays because the price is surprisingly high. I'm afraid that even if I save every penny I earn for twenty years, I still cannot afford to buy one.

Similarly, one HEM (HEM2, I) also complained about skyrocketing prices of housing and land. He said with signs,

> The prices are so prohibitive that for ordinary white-collar workers like me, it's very hard to buy a flat, not to mention a house.

One HEF participant (HEF1, I) believed the unreasonably expensive prices of real estates were mainly caused by property speculation. She said,

> The rampant property speculation has raised the cost of home ownership to prohibitive levels for many first-time buyers. Even if I work very hard to earn money, I'm still unable to afford to pay such high prices for an ordinary house. I hope our government can do something to prevent property speculation and provide some special loans for first-time buyers.

In discussion with participants, it was found that the problem of unemployment also received grave attention among several participants. One HEF participant (HEM2, G) said,

> I've been out of the job for three months. It's so difficult to find a good job in times of economic recession.

One LEM participant (LEM2, I) also regarded unemployment as the most important issue of the day. As he put it,

> I was fired by my boss not because my work performance was unsatisfactory but because my company needed to lay off some workers. Some of my friends are in the same boat. What I care is when I can get a job to make a living.

The case of this participant also aroused discussion about the issue of disputes between labour and capital in the group. Another participant (LEM2, E) said,

> Most of the labour laws are favourable to the management, so it's very easy for the employer to dismiss his employees when the company isn't doing well. It's quite necessary to review the unreasonable labour laws.

One LEF participant (LEF2, F) also expressed a similar opinion. She cited her personal experience to explain the necessity of reforming labour regulations. As she pointed out angrily,

> The labour rules are usually on the employer's side. If we show no interest in working overtime, we will face the risk of being fired. The wages for working overtime are often quite low, but I cannot but work an extra shift to keep the job. The unfair labour laws really need revising.

On the other hand, one HEM participant (HEM1, B) indicated the labour-management harmony depended not only on the employers but also on the employees. He said,

> Some workers have gone too far. They become too focused on struggling for their personal interests. They often go on a strike for higher wages or whatever. It's getting harder and harder to find industrious employers.

One LEM participant (LEM2, D) shared a similar opinion and said,

> Sometimes the labour disputes come from the unreasonable demands of the employees. It's not always the employer's faults.

Moreover, some participants also recognised the need for a much fairer distribution of wealth since there was a clear disparity between the rich and the poor in society after Taiwan became

economically prosperous. A typical comment was made by one HEF participant (HEF2, I), who said,

> The ultimate goal of economic development is to improve the quality of life, but unfortunately it also results in the unequal distribution of wealth. The poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer.

One LEF participant (LEF2, E) also noted that the problem of poor and rich gap was getting more serious as Taiwanese economic development depended more on technologically advanced and knowledge intensive industries. As she pointed out,

> The result of rapid economic development is only enjoyed by a select few. There is a very obvious disparity of income distribution. Those who with professional skills and higher education can make more money than those who without. People like me without higher education can seldom expect to find a good job with a higher salary.

One LEM participant (LEM2, C) believed that unreasonably soaring real estate prices had widened the gap in the distribution of wealth. He said,

> What I earn is just enough for making ends meet, not to mention buying a house. But look at those who are lucky to own land or property. They can become very wealthy overnight. The gap between rich and poor is worsening. Our government should take action to stop land speculation to reduce the unfair distribution of wealth.

It was also found in the focus groups that several participants considered the stable stock market an important issue of the day because it not only reflected Taiwanese economic stability but also influenced their investment. Despite holding different views of what affected the performance of the stock market, they suggested the government should take remedial

measures for saving a weak stock market.   One LEF participant (LEF2, L) said,

> The weak stock market has something to do with lagging economic performance and China's military intimidation, but I think the latter is the main cause for our bear market.   Our government has to do something to shore up the slumping stock prices, to bolster the investors' confidence.

One HEF participants (HEF1, H) also argued,

> Shares are near their record low for the year.   This shows investors don't have much confidence in the market.   Though the government has made all-out efforts to bolster investors' confidence, I wonder how useful the government-coordinated intervention is to help booster the weak stock market.

However, one LEM participant (LEM2, J) believed the government's stock market stabilisation fund could exert some influence on the anaemic Taiex (Taiwan Stock Exchange). As he put it,

> The bourse has been influenced by non-economic factors such as China's military exercises, so it's quite necessary for the government to rescue share prices.   I've invested all my savings in the market.   I hope the bourse-stabilising fund can prevent share prices from tumbling sharply.

One LEF participant (LEF2, I) also expressed the similar opinion.   She said,

> The performance of Taiex has been quite unsatisfactory.   I've lost an awful lot of money in the bourse because the shares dropped to their lowest level in six months.   I'm afraid that I will go bankruptcy if the situation doesn't change for the better.   The government's stock market stabilisation fund is my last hope and I wish it could save share prices from plummeting.

The analysis of the focus groups also suggested that 'law and order' matter was on participants' list of primary concerns. Many participants were deeply worried about the deterioration of social order and the change of social values. One HEF participant (HEF2, C) argued that the degradation of social order had something to do with the decline of Taiwan's social values and even the people themselves. She observed,

> Our traditional values are diminishing in this modern society where everyone becomes more indifferent and materialistic. People only care about pursuing pleasure and fame. Some even don't care how they become rich; they just care how rich they are. So, it is quite common to hear teenagers willing to be involved in prostitution in exchange for money.

Another participant from the same group (HEF2, F), in an assertion that mirrored what the former participant argued, said,

> The values and attitudes of our young generations are changing as our economy grows. They're moving away from traditional goals such as 'working hard' and more towards goals like 'having fun while you're still young'.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, G) also attributed the worse law and order to the decline in social values. As she put it,

> Under the impact of social transition and economic progress, people's value concepts have been changing. It is a sad fact that people don't want to face hardship; they just want to make the easy money by fair means or foul. It's not surprising to see so many frauds in our society.

Several participants also agreed that the collapse of social values had something to do with the economic boom. As pointed out by one LEM participant (LEM1, B),

Taiwan's economic boom has led to aberrant social behaviour. Many people indulge in money games to wish to get rich overnight.

One HEM participant (HEM2, L) also noted,

We've become rich, but our society is not well prepared for democracy. Greed, cruelty and fast money have taken over our country.

Some participants also argued that Taiwan's rapid democratisation over the past decade had freed society from the rigid control of the martial-law years, but left many with a disturbing sense of rootlessness. One LEM participant (LEM2, G) said,

Democratisation gives people more freedom than ever, but some people abuse the meaning of freedom and just want to do anything they want even if it is illegal. They are easily to get lost in this excessively free and material society.

Another typical comment was made by one HEF participant (HEF1, J), who said,

The process of democratisation should be partly responsible for the breakdown of the community because we have put so much on individualism. People now just care about themselves and material gains. They become very selfish and show no concern for the general welfare at all.

She emphasised that the communal indifference and excesses of consumerism had prevented Taiwanese social development and degenerated moral and social values. Holding a similar view, one HEM participant (HEM2, C) said,

Making money is easy to do here, and everyone worries about not having enough of it. But no one wants to help his community. People should realise what makes our society a really worthwhile place to live is not more material things.

The discussion of the focus groups also showed a worrying trend among some participants in the rise of violent crime. One HEF participant (HEF2, F) said,

I think the most pressing thing in Taiwan is to improve the deterioration of the social order. There are so many cases of robbery and child abduction happening everyday in our life. Our government should take concrete action to crack down on crimes, so we can have a secure living environment to live.

A similar view was put forward by one LEF participant (LEF1, G). As she put it,

A series of recent crimes reported in the press make me feel very worried. We are living in such a chaotic and unsafe society. Violence and greed are swamping daily life in Taiwan. The government should do something to manage threats to public safety.

One LEM participant (LEM1, H) also cited his personal experience to emphasise the urgency of improving social order. He said angrily,

I feel so disappointed with the degradation of law and order. The government's response to the declining law and order has been very passive. No one is taking responsibility. There have been numerous burglaries near the district where I live. During the past whole year, my house was broken in three times and cost me a lot of money.

His words were supported by another participant in the same group (LEM1, C). He said,

> What we want is a safe place to live. I am also fed up with the indifference of top government officials to concerns about the declining law and order. They are only good at empty talks. They should take full responsibility to stop crimes.

During the course of discussion, some participants also suggested not only the government but also school education and family education should take responsibility for halting the degradation of social values. A typical comment was offered by one HEF participant (HEF2, C):

> The degradation of social values is a sign that there may be something wrong with our school education. Our school education put too much emphasis on acquiring factual knowledge than on developing personality and virtue. So, our students only know how to pass the examinations; they don't really care about the true meaning of moral education. No wonder that young generations nowadays have no strong sense of law and order and our social order is worse than ever. It's time we should review our educational system and reform it.

In the similar vein, one LEF participant (LEF1, D) said:

> I think family education also plays an important role in maintaining moral and social values. People with good family education usually show more respect for the law. By contrast, many criminals are from broken or problem family where their parents don't instil proper values in them.

One LEM participant (LEM1, F) also indicated that society needed spiritual reform to improve the declining law and order. As he pointed out,

The deterioration of social order means our society has been ill. It needs to be reformed. We have to reconstruct social ethics and improve the degenerating spirit of citizenship.

His opinion was echoed by another participant in his group (LEM1, H), who emphasised,

To clean up our society, we need to clean up crime and corruption. But the basic solution is that we need to promote traditional virtues and elevate the level of our spiritual lives.

The results of the focus group discussion also found environmental and quality-of-life issues of great concern among participants. From their heated discussion of these issues, it showed that participants' awareness of environmental protection was quite high. Recognising the severity of environmental pollution, participants regarded environmental protection as a matter of pressing importance in Taiwan. A typical comment was made by one HEM participant (HEM1, I). He pointed out:

It's sad to know that our environment has been polluted so seriously. Look at the smoggy air we have in the cities, the sludgy river water, traffic noise bombarding our ears, and our drinking water tainted by pesticides or other harmful chemicals, you can know what kind of environment we are living in. We need to take action to protect our environment before it's too late.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, J) also named environmental protection as an issue of great urgency because she observed that

Pollution in our cities has reached levels that are barely tolerable. Our air is dirty, our rivers are filthy, our land is full of dumping grounds, and even the noise level is irritating.

One HEF participant (HEF2, G) indicated that the environmental problem had received much attention, but more concrete action should be taken in order to protect and conserve the environment. As she noted,

> Our living environment has been seriously polluted for a long time. Acid rain, the pollution of soils, lakes and rivers, and the imminent extinction of species, and so on have been common headline news, but they're only the tip of an iceberg. We need to take more specific action to save our environment.

Her view was agreed by another participant in the same group (HEF2, C), who said,

> We should learn to look after our island well; it's the only one we have. I'm glad that more and more people are concerned about our environment, but environmental thinking is not just empty talks; it should enter our daily lives.

Several participants also considered it necessary to instil in the public the correct environmental thinking to prevent the environment from pollution and destruction. One LEM participant (LEM1, I) said,

> Some people just treat a river as a sewer, so we can see so many rivers have been polluted because of people's ignorance and lack of concern for public welfare; they should understand that a river, in fact, is a living thing. People should be taught how to love and protect our environment.

One LEF participant (LEF1, J) also attributed the problem of environmental pollution to people's lack of concern for general welfare and improper environmental ideas. She said,

> Some people are too selfish. They don't care about others. They just dump their rubbish into the river or in front of others' house. Some of the factories even illegally discharged harmful chemicals, waste and dirty smoke. They are either ignorant of environmental knowledge or indifferent to the environment. If we don't try to stop the problem of environmental pollution from getting worse, I'm afraid our children have to live in a squalid environment.

In agreement with the above quote, another participant in the same group (LEF1, K) argued,

> We want our environment to be clean and flourishing, so not only we but also our children can enjoy it. Both the government and the public should cooperate to save Taiwan's environment.

A similar opinion was also voiced by one HEM participant (HEM2, A), who said,

> The most important issue of the day in Taiwan is how to protect our environment. We are economically rich, but look at the poor environment we live in. The welfare of people depends not only on things money can buy but also on the quality of the living environment. If we don't want to live in such a polluted place, how can we leave an unhealthy environment to our future generation? We should save a clean land for our children.

His view was supported by another participant in the same group (HEM2, L), who emphasised,

> We should get people to realise the importance of conservation and do our best to rebuild our natural environment. This is not only for us but also for our children.

When discussing the most serious environmental problems such as pollution and ecological devastation, most participants strongly felt that the rapid development of industry should be responsible for environmental over-exploitation and damage. As indicated by one HEF participant (HEF1, D),

> To develop our economy, we used to establish too many higher polluting industries in the past. We have become economically prosperous, but we have also created a polluted environment. Look at the dirty river water, foul air, and the damaged mountain slopes. I doubt if our government really takes into consideration the needs of nature when it makes its environmental policies.

Similarly, one HEM participant (HEM1, D) argued,

> Taiwan has been sacrificing the environment for economic growth. It's getting harder and harder to find a breath of fresh air in our land of the economic miracle.

One LEF participant (LEF2, K) even considered protecting the environment more important than pursuing the economic development. She added,

> It's a pity that we only care about our economic success, but express so little concern for our environment.

On the other hand, one HEM participant (HEM1, F) believed industrialisation and environmental protection were equally important and environmental pollution could be reduced by strict regulations. As he put it,

> We are now enjoying the fruits of industrialisation — the prosperous economy and material comforts. It's hard for us to give up what we are enjoying and it's impossible to stop industrialisation if we want our economy to continue to grow. But, I think it is also quite important to protect our environment from being polluted. The best way to protect our environment is to have strict laws against those industries with harmful discharge.

His comment was supported by another participant in the group (HEM1, A), who suggested,

> We should urge people in industry to manage their businesses without damaging the environment. At the same time, the government can tackle the problem of environmental pollution by encouraging the establishment of less polluting industries.

### 5.2.2 The Most Salient Image Attributes Linked to Presidential Candidates by Focus Group Participants

In each of the focus groups, participants were also asked about their perceptions of the four presidential candidates' images and their reasons for linking these attributes to the candidates. Up to three attributes relating to each candidate's image could be answered to this open-ended question. Participants were also asked to evaluate the image attributes they mentioned. It was found that participants had different answers to this question.

### 5.2.3 Participants' Perceptions and Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Image

The attributes participants most often linked to Chen Li-an were his 'personal background', 'religion', 'partisan affiliation', 'personality', 'integrity and virtues', 'political style', 'issue and policy stands', and 'qualifications and experience'.

Chen's 'personal background' received much attention among the participants in discussing

their perceptions of his image. Chen's age was often mentioned by them. A typical dominant view presented in the focus groups was:

> 'Chen is the youngest presidential candidate'
> (HEF1, C; HEM1, F; HEM2, K; LEF1, D; LEM2, H).

Apart from his age, Chen's family background also left a deep impression on participants. As one LEF participant (LEF2, A) pointed out,

> Chen is a man of illustrious lineage; his father is the late vice-president Chen Cheng.

One LEM participant (LEM1, C) said,

> Chen's family background makes him special and distances him from the ordinary public. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

One HEM participant (HEM2, I) also observed,

> My impression of Chen is that he was born in a powerful and rich family. He is very different from us. He has a lot of privileges, so he doesn't know much about the hardships ordinary people suffer.

It is clear from the above quotes that these participants' perceptions of Chen's family background were not so favourable. One HEF participant (HEF1, L) even made a critical comment:

I don't trust Chen's ability. Were it not for his father, Chen would never have held the positions of Minister and the President of the Control Yuan. He tried to establish an image as a religious person, but I think he was acting like a politician.

'Religion' was a sharp attribute participants linked to Chen in the discussion of candidates' images. The prevailing feelings found among participants who mentioned Chen's religion were that Chen was a candidate with a strong religious sentiment. A typical positive opinion of Chen's religion was given by one HEF participant (HEF1, B):

Chen is a decent candidate. He's a devout Buddhist, leading a religious and simple life. I totally identify myself with his appeals for spiritual reform. Our society needs more politicians like Chen.

One HEF participant in another group (HEF2, K) also expressed a similar view. She said,

Chen's religious faith distinguishes him from other candidates. Religion can help to promote our spiritual life and purify our society. I believe a person with good spiritual life like Chen can be an ideal president.

However, it was found that several participants held contrary opinions about their impressions of Chen's religion. As one LEM participant (LEM2, B) argued,

Chen is too idealistic. Basically, I agree with his idea of spiritual renewal, but his religious sentiment is too strong. He is more like a preacher than a presidential candidate.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF1, A) observed,

> Chen is more like a Buddhist monk, only praying and praying. I'm not quite
> aware of his policy stands.

One HEM participant (HEM2, G) also pointed out,

> I wonder if it's just one of Chen's campaign strategies. He's using religion as
> a cover to win votes. Chen has a close relationship with Buddhist
> organisations. He can use them to mobilise voters.

Chen's 'partisan affiliation' was often mentioned in the focus groups when participants thought

about Chen's image. Participants knew Chen ran for the presidency as an independent

candidate. They also indicated the advantages and the disadvantages of being an independent

candidate. As mentioned by one HEF participant (HEF2, D),

> Among all the presidential candidates, Chen is the one with the least political
> baggage. He doesn't run for any political party, so he'll maintain neutrality
> when elected.

A similar opinion was also expressed by one LEM participant (LEM1, B). He considered

Chen's candidacy as an independent was his advantage. He said,

> As an independent candidate, Chen is freer to advocate policies without having
> to consider party interests.

On the other hand, several participants were pessimistic about and sympathetic to Chen

because he was short of solid finance and effective mobilisation a political party could provide.

One HEM participant (HEM1, D) presented a typical comment. He said,

Chen is honest and honourable, but he doesn't have the support of a political party, so it isn't likely that he will win.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, K) argued,

The party politics still rules Taiwan. Without any party apparatus, I don't think Chen is going to win.

Her words were agreed by another participant in the same group (LEF2, C), who suggested,

Chen cannot compete with the other three candidates because he has no political support and resources though he is a good choice.

The analysis of focus groups also indicated that participants often associated Chen's 'personality' with his 'integrity and virtues' and they generally had good impressions of these attributes. The typical opinions expressed in the focus groups were:

'Chen is a person with clean image' (HEF1, A).
'Chen is a frank and trustworthy candidate' (LEF2, D)

Similar views could be found among the male participants. As one HEM participant (HEM1, G) observed,

When talking about Chen, what comes to my mind is that he is an honest public figure. He's quite different from the other politicians.

One LEM participant (LEM1, J) also agreed:

> Chen is a gentle person with good moral sense. I'm quite impressed with his generous donations to the Buddhist organisation. Not so many politicians can do so.

His comment was supported by another participant in the same group (LEM1, H), who stated,

> I have no idea why a person like Chen Li-an would throw himself into an election battle. He isn't a politician, but he's like a clean stream. He behaves differently from most other politicians.

Nevertheless, several participants did not like Chen's personality. One HEM participant (HEM2, E) believed Chen was not as simple and sincere as he looked. He added,

> I think Chen is a complicated person and he's quite adept at scheming. Just look at his motivation for joining the presidential election.

Similarly, one HEF participant (HEF2, C) also considered Chen a man with affectation. As she put it,

> Chen is a pretentious person. His special family background brings him many privileges. He just wants to establish a good image of himself to win the election, so he is doing something charitable.

Participants also related Chen's 'ability' to his 'political style' in the focus groups. When participants talked about Chen's political style, they generally made neutral or favourable statements. The typical dominant comments were:

'Chen's an honest and clean official' (HEF1, F).

'It's hard to find an official like Chen who has political integrity' (HEM1, E).

'Chen's a hard worker. I'm impressed with his political competence' (LEF1, G).

'Chen did a good job when he was the economic affairs Minister' (LEM1, L).

'I think Chen's a very capable man; he's been equal to every official post he held' (LEM2, D).

'Chen isn't such an ambitious person; he is not obsessed with power. Unlike Lin, who was expelled from the KMT, Chen quitted his job as the President of Control Yuan and left the KMT before he decided to run for the presidency' (HEM2, L).

Participants also referred to Chen's 'issue and policy stands'. It was found that some could not clearly identify the issues Chen brought up. A typical opinion was presented by one LEM participant (LEM1, G):

> Chen promotes environmentalism and criticises materialism, but on the whole, Chen's policy stands are not very concrete. Sometimes, I feel what he said is full of empty talks.

In the same vein, one HEM participant (HEM2, A) also observed,

> Some of Chen's planks are quite good, such as building Taiwan as a better place to live, but how to do it? It's a pity that he didn't really provide clear solutions to the problems he raised.

Another participant (HEM2, D) in the same group agreed with the above quote and pointed out,

> Chen is vague in some of his policy stands. All he often talks about, as I can remember, is spiritual renewal. He doesn't touch the real problems we're concerned about.

Participants in focus groups also mentioned Chen's 'qualifications and experience'. Their impressions of this attribute mainly concerned his past performance in government service. They knew Chen was 'a former economic affairs minister', 'national defence minister', and 'head of the government watchdog Control Yuan' (HEF1, D, F; HEF2, G; HEM1, B, K; LEF1, E; LEF2, H; LEM1, L; LEM2, D). It was found that several participants were not very satisfied with Chen's competence for the official jobs he used to hold. For example, one HEM participant (HEM1, H) believed Chen's successful official career depended more on his father's influence and help than on his own capability. He argued,

> Chen isn't qualified for these official positions. He got the job easily just because he has an influential father.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF1, E) also doubted if Chen was capable enough to be the president. She said,

> Though Chen is a nice and clean person, I wonder if he has what it takes to run the country.

**5.2.4 Participants' Perceptions and Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Image**

Among all the four presidential candidates, Lee was the one with highest name recognition because he is the incumbent president. This possibly explained why the majority of participants were able to name Lee's image attributes without any difficulty. The findings of focus groups showed that when participants were asked to identify Lee's image, the most often cited attributes were his 'personal background', 'ability', 'qualifications and experience', 'partisan affiliation', 'political honesty', 'personality', 'political style', 'issue and policy stands', and 'presentation skills/communication'.

Lee's 'personal background' was not unaccustomed to participants since he had the most visibility in the media as 'the incumbent president'. Apart from Lee's status as 'head of state', participants knew he was an agricultural expert with a 'PhD in agricultural economics'. Lee was also known as 'the first native-born president'. Running for the presidency at the age of 73, 'the oldest of the four presidential candidates', Lee impressed participants as 'a man in vigorous health'. There was no disparity of views among participants as to their impressions of Lee's personal background. It was found that they generally had a neutral evaluation of this attribute. Typical comments in the focus groups included:

> 'Lee is the incumbent president'.
> (HEF1, B, J; HEF2, D, J; HEM1, A, C; HEM2, D, G, H; LEF1, E, K; LEF2, A, F; LEM1, H; LEM2, F, I).

> 'Lee's the first native Taiwanese to hold the job of president'
> (HEF2, C, G; HEM1, A; LEF1, B; LEF2, G; LEM1, A).

> 'Lee is an expert in agriculture. He earned his PhD in agricultural economics at Cornell University' (HEM2, J; HEF1, D; HEF2, E, F).

'Lee is very energetic and restless; he looks young for his age'
(LEF2, E; LEM1, D).

When talking about Lee's 'ability', participants often associated this attribute with his 'qualifications and experience'. Before Lee became the incumbent president, he held the following posts: an official on the Council for Agricultural Planning and Development, the Taipei Mayor, the Governor of Taiwan, and the vice-president, so it was not surprising that participants could name these jobs he took when mentioning Lee's ability or qualifications and experience. Disparity of views on Lee's ability and qualifications and experience could be found in the focus groups, but participants generally had a positive evaluation of his ability. In particular, they had a high opinion of Lee's political competence in leading the country, his past performance, and his contributions to Taiwanese democracy. One HEM participant (HEM1, C) held a generally accepted opinion about Lee's competence. He observed,

> Our country's been dogged by bad luck, but Lee's managed to keep everything working. This shows Lee is a very capable person. The opposition candidates don't understand the problems of being in power. They just keep picking on Lee and the KMT, which only makes things worse. I'm not sure they could do as good a job as what Lee's done.

One HEF participant (HEF2, F) also expressed a similar view when mentioning Lee's ability to deal with the issue of Taiwanese sovereignty. As she pointed out,

> President Lee is the only candidate who is able to make it clear that the Republic of China (ROC) has been in existence for more than eighty years, and he intends to keep it that way. Many people have harshly criticised the president. But if they were in Lee's position, I wonder what they'd do.

Her view was supported by another participant in the same group (HEF2, K), who said:

When thinking of President Lee, I'm impressed with his past performance during his presidency. Lee is an experienced leader in dealing with domestic affairs and also eager to raise Taiwan's international status. Lee's opponents always question his pro-independence position just because of his efforts to gain Taiwan worldwide political acceptance. If Taiwan has a recognised position internationally, we'll have more bargaining chips to negotiate with China. So, I think Lee has not only tried to give Taiwan an international role, he's also tried to find a way of solving the cross-strait problems.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM2, J) also appreciated Lee's efforts to promote pragmatic diplomacy. He emphasised,

I'm impressed by how Lee handles international affairs. He's heightened our visibility like no one else has. This is very important, because if we cannot become part of international society, nothing counts — not even our huge foreign exchange reserves.

Another LEM participant (LEM1, F) also noted,

Lee is the only candidate best able to respond to people's desires. He knows we're anxious for a higher degree of international recognition and he's doing fine in this matter.

Apart from Lee's ability to increase Taiwanese international status and his effort to maintain Taiwanese sovereignty, it was found that participants also appreciated his contributions to Taiwanese democratic politics and his capability to cope with the cross-strait tensions. A typical comment was made by one LEF participant (LEF1, D). She said,

When talking about Lee, I'll associate him with Taiwanese democracy. He made a lot of contributions to democratic reform. Without him, Taiwan won't have made such great progress in its democratic politics.

Another participant in the same group (LEF1, G) added,

> Taiwan didn't experience serious violent conflicts in its process of democratisation. It's all Lee's contributions. Lee is the moving force behind the new Taiwan.

One HEM participant (HEM1, E) also believed Lee played a very important role in Taiwanese democratisation. As suggested by him,

> It's Lee who transformed Taiwan from a one-party dominated state to an open, plural, and competitive democracy. During his presidency, the 'Temporary Provisions' appended to the ROC Constitution was lifted. He also retired all of the life-term parliamentarians and held the first full, free election for the Legislative Yuan.

Lee's ability to deal with the issue of cross-strait relations was also recognised by participants. One HEF participant (HEF1, C) noted,

> Lee's done a lot to improve our relations with China. It's Lee who took the initiative in renouncing the use of force against China. He ended the 'Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion' to show our goodwill. Since then, the cross-strait relations have been proceeding rapidly.

One HEM participant (HEM2, H) also had a positive opinion of Lee's ability to cope with the relations between the two sides. As indicated by him,

> I think the way Lee handles the relations between Taiwan and China is quite impressive. Some people often blame Lee for worsening the cross-strait relations because of his trip to the USA last year. But I don't think it's his fault. Don't forget it was during Lee's presidency that Taiwan and China started to develop the close ties.

Similar views were also presented by participants with lesser education. For example, one LEF participant (LEF2, F) said,

> Lee behaves like a very experienced statesman when he handles the cross-strait crisis.

One LEM participant (LEM1, K) also observed:

> My impression of Lee is that he has guts and political wisdom in handling the cross-strait problems. He remained very brave and calm when China started missile tests to influence our election. He's a capable leader.

On the other hand, not all the participants appreciated Lee's ability. A small number of participants blamed Lee for failing to or doing little to stop corruption, improve the economy, and repair the cross-strait tensions. The typical dominant comments included:

> 'Lee's done a great job of leading our country into chaos. Under his leadership, Taiwan has become very unstable, politically or economically. We are on the verge of war with China; our economy is weakening' (HEM2, B).

> 'Lee should take responsibility for the escalation in cross-strait tensions. He's not so capable of dealing with the cross-strait crisis. He keeps provoking Beijing and almost brings Taiwan to the war with China' (LEF1, I).

> 'President Lee has been in power too long. I admit he has some contributions to Taiwanese political reform, but he also fails to crack down on rampant corruption in the KMT. Scandals involving the organised crime, big business, and the KMT can be heard very often and Lee hasn't done a lot to solve the problem of money politics' (HEF1, G).

Lee's 'partisan affiliation' was also discussed by participants in focus groups. Participants knew that Lee was 'the KMT chairman', 'the KMT-nominated presidential candidate', and had

a lot of political support and resources from the KMT party apparatus. The typical opinions voiced by participants were:

'Lee is the KMT chairman'
(HEF1, A, E; HEF2, H; HEM1, B; LEM1, D, LEF2, G).

'Lee is the KMT presidential candidate/ Lee represents the KMT to run for the presidency' (HEF1, D; HEF2, B; HEM2, F; LEM1, E; LEM2, I; LEF1, D; LEF2, J).

'Lee has much more political advantages over his opponents because his party is the ruling KMT' (HEF1, B; HEM2, B; LEM2, A).

'Lee's party KMT can provide him with organisational advantages and financial resources that other candidates are short of' (HEF2, C; HEM2, H; LEF1, A).

When discussing Lee's KMT chairmanship, participants also talked about the party splits and power struggles. As pointed out by one HEM participants (HEM1, F),

Lee has made a lot of contributions to the Taiwanisation of the KMT, but also split the party under his leadership. His opponents accused him of his undemocratic leadership methods, but I think this is not the main cause of the KMT splits. It is the ideological and power conflicts between the mainstream faction and non-mainstream faction that separate the party.

Another participant in the same group agreed that Lee was not totally responsible for the splits of the KMT. He (HEM1, H) argued,

The KMT's splits are not all Lee's faults. Maybe his leadership in the party is not satisfactory. But the main reason, I think, is the power conflicts between Lee and conservatives. Those conservatives like Lin and Hau always oppose Lee's political ideology and policies.

One HEF participant also argued that the challenge of Lin and Hau to run for the presidency was the continuation of leadership fights between Lee and non-mainstream faction within the party. As she (HEF2, B) said,

> The confrontation between mainstream faction and non-mainstream faction hasn't ended yet with the establishment of the NP. The power conflicts have continued until Lin and Hau left the KMT. After that, it is sure that Lee has full control of the party. No one in the party can challenge his status.

Lee's 'political honesty' also received participants' attention in the focus groups. It was found that participants generally had unfavourable impressions of this attribute. They questioned Lee's honesty and integrity as a leader mainly because of his close connections with corrupt business interests and they also blamed him for endorsing politicians with strong ties to organised crime. As one HEF participant (HEF1, A) noted,

> It's questionable whether President Lee got the luxurious house as a political contribution. As a national leader, he should honestly reveal his financial dealings in this house.

This comment was agreed by one HEF participant in another group (HEF2, G). She said,

> Lee has tolerated money politics and corruption. Maybe he isn't involved in any wrongdoing, but it's an undeniable fact that the KMT is much dirtier than ever under Lee's leadership. The collusion between the KMT politicians, big business and organised crime has become a commonplace. Lee obviously hasn't done a lot to stop graft and corruption because he has close ties to special business groups and gang-connected politicians.

Similarly, one HEM participant (HEM1, J) also observed,

> The KMT has ruled for too long, and it cannot cast off its image of being closely connected to the underworld and the rich. Lee therefore has his hands tied by special interests.

Apart from Lee's alleged connections with the underworld and corrupt business interests, some participants, especially those with lesser education, also talked about Lee's political integrity with a focus on inconsistencies between his words and his actions. One LEF participant (LEF2, H) pointed out,

> Lee has been in the position long enough. He said several times that he would retire, but he still wants to run for the presidency. I think he's not an honest person and likes power very much.

Another participant in the same group (LEF2, K) said,

> Lee isn't a trustworthy leader. His words and actions are not consistent. No one knows what he wants. He speaks from both sides of his mouth.

One LEM participant (LEM1, A) also expressed a similar opinion. He said,

> President Lee is good at telling lies. He says one thing in the morning and another in the afternoon. He's getting old and very stubborn and emotional.

Lee's 'personality' and 'political style' were another two attributes participants often linked to him. The analysis of the focus groups showed that participants' impressions of Lee's personality were closely relating to their impressions of his political style. It was found that participants had divided opinions about Lee's personality. For example, some said Lee was

'stubborn', 'emotional', and 'proud' while others had different interpretation of these qualities. In their opinion, they regarded Lee as 'a man of his own principle', 'a forthright person without affectation', and a 'confident' man. As observed by one HEF participant (HEF1, H),

> Lee has a strong character. He seems an emotional and self-opinionated person.

Another participant in the same group (HEF1, D) agreed:

> Yes, Lee looks very dominating and proud. That's his personality and also his style.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM2, B) also said,

> I have kind of impression that Lee is too self-confident and proud. It seems he only sticks to his own opinion.

On the other hand, some typical positive comments on Lee's personality could also be heard in the focus groups. One HEM participant (HEM1, F) indicated,

> Lee's a self-possessed person with political wisdom. He knows his own mind and he acts on his own principle.

One HEF participant (HEF2, E) argued,

> In my opinion, Lee's a straightforward person. Some people think he is easily carried away, but I think he's an honest person who seldom hides his true feelings.

In the lesser education group, one male participant (LEM1, C) praised Lee's brave character in the face of China's military threats. He said,

> Lee's a courageous leader; he has guts to face and handle China's military intimidation. I am quite impressed with his defiance against China.

One LEF participant (LEF1, G) also noted,

> Lee's a hard-working and people-loving leader. He's warm and gentle. I once saw him when he came to Taichung.

Participants also talked about Lee's 'political style'. In a sense, Lee's political style is the reflection of his personal character. It was found that participants were slightly unsatisfied with Lee's political style. As one HEM participant (HEM1, H) suggested,

> Lee seems very uncompromising. People say he lacks tolerance of dissenting views.

Another participant in the same group (HEM1, K) added,

> Lee's a dominating leader. He has a strong personality. For this reason, some people don't like his leadership style.

Similarly, one HEF participant (HEF2, D) also indicated,

> Lee's done a lot to reform Taiwanese democracy, but he's not so democratic in the ruling KMT. There's no real internal democracy in the KMT. This is the reason why Lin and Chen would like to run against Lee for the presidency.

One LEM participant (LEM2, E) also held a similar view.   He said,

> My impression of Lee's political style comes from the coverage of newspapers.
> It is said that Lee tolerated little diversity of opinions in the ruling KMT, so
> there are some problems with his leadership in the party.   Judging from his
> self-assertive character, I'm afraid so.

One LEF participant (LEF2, B) also considered Lee an ambitious and proud politician.   As observed by her,

> Lee is a democratic reformer.   It's true, but he also becomes too obsessed with
> power.   He's getting more and more proud because of the political power he
> holds.

Nonetheless, some participants had a favourable opinion of Lee's political style.   One HEF participant (HEF1, K) expressed a typically accepted view.   She said,

> Lee is a very charismatic person; he enjoys great popularity with the public.
> He doesn't put on airs; he's an approachable leader, always caring about
> people.

One HEM participant (HEM2, E) emphasised,

> Lee's a capable leader.   Under his leadership, our country becomes more
> democratic and prosperous.   He knows what people need and responds to
> their aspirations.   This explains why he is so popular with us.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEM2, C) also pointed out,

> Lee has a lot of administrative experience in government service. I think he is a born leader with attractive charisma. He also has great determination and confidence. Because of these qualities, he is able to accomplish Taiwanese democratic reforms.

When discussing Lee's image, some participants also mentioned his 'issue and policy stands', especially about his stance on the cross-strait relations and Taiwan's future. Divided opinions were found in the focus groups when participants were talking about Lee's policy stands on the independence and reunification issue. A typical positive comment was made by one LEM participant (LEM1, E), who advocated Lee's policy on cross-strait relations. As he argued,

> Lee's stance on the issue of independence and reunification is quite flexible. He's trying to find a way for Taiwan to survive. He's right that reunification with China is not an urgent issue, especially when China still hasn't given up using force against us and when China is not democratic.

This was agreed by one LEF participant (LEF1, B), who also suggested,

> Lee's stance on the cross-strait relations is right. Contact with Beijing should be slow and steady. Reunification with China is something in the very remote future. It only can happen when the gap between the two sides has been narrowed, politically and economically.

Some participants, however, considered Lee's stance on cross-strait relations ambiguous and unclear. One HEM participant (HEM1, D) said,

Lee is quite vague in terms of his policy stance on independence or reunification. Though he often claims to be pro-unification, he seems to more deeply sympathise with the independence movement.

Another participant in the same group (HEM1, G) added,

Lee's mainland affairs policy is quite ambiguous. He only supports reunification in theory.

One HEF participant (HEF1, B) also argued,

Lee is only paying lip service to eventual reunification. He is vague about his vision for Taiwan's future.

On the other hand, several participants had a low opinion of Lee's stance on the issue of relations between Taiwan and China. As argued by one HEM participant (HEM2, K),

I think Lee is moving closer to an independence path. I cannot bring myself to side with him. It's ridiculous to deny the fact that your ancestors were from mainland China. When you're still worshiping your mainland ancestors, how can you not admit that you're Chinese?

One LEF participant (LEF2, C) also held a similar opinion. She noted,

Lee is taking the independence road and betraying the doctrine of reunification.

Participants also mentioned their impressions of Lee's 'presentation skills/communication'. Some thought Lee was a good speaker while others were critical of his presentation skills. One HEF participant (HEF2, H) said,

> Lee's speaking style is very convincing. He's good at using plain and colloquial words to express his ideas.

One LEF participant (LEF1, A) also emphasised,

> Lee's words are unrefined yet understandable. He also knows how to use vivid body language to draw the audience's attention.

On the other hand, negative comments on Lee's presentation skills could be found in the focus groups. As noted by one LEM participant (LEM1, G),

> The way Lee talks and behaves is very bossy and irresponsible. He seems to talk without thinking thoroughly and then acts on the spur of moment.

Similarly, one HEM participant (HEM2, C) also observed,

> I don't like President Lee's thoughtless and often emotional comments about being a Taiwanese, or about cross-strait relations. He often gets carried away. That kind of thing doesn't suit his role as president. I suggest that he stick to the speeches his staff prepare for him.

### 5.2.5 Participants' Perceptions and Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Image

When participants were asked about their impressions of Peng, they often talked about his 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', 'qualifications and experience', 'political style', 'appearance and bearing', and 'religion'. It was found that participants' perceptions of Peng's image were limited. Peng's many-year exiled life abroad may possibly explain his low name recognition in the Taiwanese political circle.

Peng's suffering as a political dissident found much mention in the focus groups when participants discussed his 'personal background'. One HEF participant (HEF1, B) had a prevailing neutral opinion of Peng. As she said,

> My impression of Peng is that he was a political exile during the old KMT authoritarian regime because of his active promotion of Taiwanese independence.

One HEM participant (HEM2, E) also argued,

> Peng is a political refugee. He has been in exile for many years to escape the political persecution of the KMT regime. He is a hero. I feel sorry for his past suffering.

The same impressions of Peng as a political dissident could also be found among participants in lesser education groups. As noted by one LEF participant (LEF1, G),

> Peng is a pro-independence activist. Because of this, he became a political prisoner on the blacklist. I remember he's been living overseas for a long time before he came back to join the DPP.

One LEM participant (LEM1, H) said,

> Peng was an exiled dissident, who was terribly persecuted by the Chiang regime. He was a victim of the white terror.

Apart from the image as a political refugee, Peng's distinct academic image also impressed many participants. They knew he was 'Dr Peng', 'a brilliant scholar', especially 'a very distinguished law professor'. It was found that some participants had a favourable evaluation

of Peng's personal background because of his excellent academic achievements. They generally regarded him as a man with broad vision. One HEF participant (HEF2, A) made a typical comment:

> Peng is the only candidate that has the best foresight and the most international experience because he's been abroad for many years.

On the other hand, several participants had a low opinion of Peng's personal background because they thought his exiled life had distanced him from voters and current Taiwanese political situation. One HEM participant (HEM1, K) made a typical comment:

> Compared with the other three candidates, Peng isn't so familiar to voters because he's left Taiwan for a long time.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, D) also pointed out,

> Peng's stayed abroad for too long, so he lost contact with Taiwan. He doesn't know much about political changes.

Peng's 'partisan affiliation' also drew much attention in the focus groups. Participants generally knew Peng was the pro-independence DPP's presidential candidate. A most often heard impression of Peng was made by one LEF participant (LEF1, B). She pointed out,

> Peng is the DPP's presidential nominee; he supports Taiwanese independence openly.

As for Peng's political identification, one HEM participant (HEM1, E) made a typical comment. He said:

Peng has had close relations with the Opposition. As a pioneer of the Taiwanese independence movement, he identified with the DPP's pro-independence platform. Given his qualifications and experience in public affairs, he is the most suitable person to represent the DPP to run for the presidency.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, H) also talked about this attribute. She argued,

Peng is respected and enjoys a high status in the DPP because of his political ideology of Taiwanese nationalism and his significant contributions to democratic reforms and Taiwanese independence movement.

On the other hand, different opinions about Peng's partisan affiliation could also be heard in the focus groups. Several participants argued that they were not very familiar with Peng and they doubted his contributions to the DPP. As one LEM participant (LEM1, F) observed,

Peng's name recognition isn't as high as that of some elite in the DPP. I doubt his political connection with the DPP. It seems he joins the DPP just for running for the presidency.

One LEF participant (LEF2, C) also suggested,

Peng is capable, but there are some people more qualified and excellent than he in the DPP. Compared with them, his contributions to the DPP are not so noticeable. It's quite possible that Peng's political affiliation with the party is just for the presidential election.

The findings of the focus groups also showed that Peng's appeals for Taiwanese independence were familiar to most participants mentioning his political ideology and made him different from the other candidates. One HEF participant (HEF1, J) expressed a generally accepted view on Peng's political ideology. She said,

Peng is quite different in the sense that he's the only candidate that openly advocates Taiwanese independence. For him, Taiwanese independence is his lifelong goal. He's spared no efforts to achieve this goal.

In answer to his impression of Peng, one HEM participant (HEM2, G) also mentioned Peng's distinct political ideology of Taiwanese independence. He replied,

> I've always appreciated the DPP's efforts to achieve Taiwanese independence. I think that's the only way for Taiwan to survive. Peng's my favourite because he stands for independence.

Nonetheless, contrary views about Peng's commitment to Taiwanese independence could be found in the focus groups as well. One LEF participant (LEF1, K) suggested Peng attach little importance to his appeals for independence and instead focus on concrete and urgent problems of concern to the public. She said,

> Peng's support for independence is too ideological. I don't think Taiwanese independence can work. He should play down the DPP's traditional platform of independence and concern instead with problems of more pressing importance such as money politics and economy.

Peng's 'qualifications and experience' was another attribute participants often linked to him. The analysis of the focus groups revealed that participants who mentioned Peng's qualifications and experience generally appreciated his contributions to Taiwanese democracy and independence movement. One HEF participant (HEF1, H) said she was very impressed with Peng because he was 'the godfather of Taiwanese independence movement'. She added,

> Peng is a very courageous person with foresight. He dared to challenge the Chiang's authoritarian regime and spared no efforts to promote the independence cause.

Agreeing with the above quote, another participant in the same group (HEF1, K) also said:

> Peng is the godfather of the opposition; he spent a lifetime fighting for individual rights, democracy and independence.  He made great contributions to Taiwanese democratic development.

In the same vein, one HEM participant (HEM1, D) praised Peng's foresight in Taiwan's future. As he pointed out,

> Peng is a man of vision.  More than thirty years ago, he knew that Taiwan and mainland China would go their separate ways.  Now we see it happening. Taiwan has become *de facto* independent.

In the lesser education groups, one male participant (LEM2, F) also made a similar comment on Peng's qualifications and experience.  He suggested:

> Peng can be called the intellectual fountainhead of Taiwanese self-determination movement.  After publishing his famous 'Manifesto to Save Taiwan', he's devoted his life to promoting Taiwanese independence cause.  It is said even when he was exiled in the USA, he still exerted all possible efforts to raise Taiwan's international status.  He is really a man with far-seeing ideals and international experience.  I'm very moved by what he has done for Taiwan.

Peng's 'political style' was also mentioned quite often in the discussion.  Participants who talked about this attribute generally considered Peng different from typical politicians because of his strong scholarly image.  As one HEF participant (HEF2, C) observed,

> I'm quite impressed with Dr Peng's scholarly image.  He's a man with high ideals.  This makes him different from typical politicians.  I think he's more like a scholar than a politician.

Her view was supported by another participant in the same group (HEF2, I). She emphasised,

> Peng's very idealistic. For me, he's like a missionary. He's devoted his lifelong efforts to promoting the ideal of Taiwanese independence. He refused to compromise his ideals even when he suffered the political persecution.

One HEM participant (HEM2, A) also had a favourable opinion of Peng's political style. He said:

> I respect Professor Peng. He behaves like a Christian: he says what he means and he means what he says. He is totally different from another candidate Lee who also claims to be a Christian, yet visited temples to win support from temple-goers. I think Peng's a man of integrity, and he's not the strongman type. He is a real statesman.

Nevertheless, one LEM participant (LEM1, G) argued that Peng's scholarly image made him difficult to fit into the political circle. As noted by him,

> Peng is more suited for an academic. He's too idealistic to be a politician. He doesn't know much about politics in Taiwanese society.

Participants also mentioned Peng's 'appearance and bearing' and his 'religion'. The typical views of these two attributes were:

> 'Peng lost his left arm during World War II/ Peng is physically handicapped because he doesn't have the left arm' (HEF1, A; HEF2, F; HEM1, H; HEM2, B; LEF1, H, I; LEF2, C; LEM1, G, E; LEM2, A, F).

'Peng looks like a true gentleman/Peng is a well-behaved gentleman/Peng behaves like a well-educated gentleman/Peng's gentle and scholarly image is very impressive' (HEF1, B; HEF2, G; HEM1, D; HEM2, J; LEF1, D, E; LEM2, C)

'Peng is a Christian/Peng is a Presbyterian/Peng's image as a Christian often appears in the newspapers' (HEF1, D, F; HEF2, B; HEM1, G; LEF1, A, B; LEF2, H; LEM1, B; LEM2, E, G).

## 5.2.6 Participants' Perceptions and Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Image

The findings of the focus groups showed that Lin's 'partisan affiliation', 'ability', 'qualifications and experience', 'personality', 'integrity and virtues', 'political style', and 'issue and policy stands' were the attributes participants most often linked to him when they talked about their impressions of Lin.

Lin's 'partisan affiliation' was most often mentioned in the focus groups when participants discussed his image. It was found that participants often mentioned Lin's political relations with the KMT and the NP. They knew Lin aligned himself with the NP after he was forced to leave the ruling KMT because of his support for the NP and his intention to run for the presidency. As pointed out by one HEM participant (HEM2, C),

Lin was the KMT vice-chairman, but he isn't as popular and influential as President Lee in the party. It caused much controversy within the KMT when Lin's membership was suspended because he insisted on running for the presidency against Lee.

One HEF participant (HEF1, E) also noted:

> Lin is one of the leaders of the KMT's non-mainstream faction. He's been very ambitious for presidency, so it's not surprising that he would challenge Lee and run for the presidency as an independent candidate.

In the lesser education groups, one male participant (LEM1, B) also provided a clear explanation for Lin's partisan affiliation. He said,

> Lin openly supported the NP and campaigned for its candidates during the Legislative Yuan elections last December, so he was kicked out of the KMT, but he is backed by the NP instead.

One LEF participant (LEF1, F) also suggested:

> Lin's political ideology is in line with that of the NP, so it's not surprising that he would ally himself with the NP though he didn't join the party.

The analysis of the focus groups also showed that participants held different views about Lin's close political connection with the NP. A typical positive comment was made by one HEF participant (HEF2, G). As she observed,

> It's right for Lin to form alliance with the NP since their political ideology is quite similar and Lin can benefit from its political resources and support. In my opinion, Lin and his running mate Hau represent the authentic KMT and they defend the country's political tradition. The KMT under Lee's leadership has abandoned the commitment to the cause of reunification, but Lin has steadfastly retained his political identity and ideal nevertheless.

By contrast, several participants also pointed out the possible negative effect of Lin's close

affiliation with the NP.   In the words of one HEM participant (HEM1, J):

> It may not be politically beneficial for Lin to align himself with the NP.   With the NP's endorsement, Lin carries political baggage.   The NP on the whole gives people a kind of impression that some of its leaders are former KMT conservatives who are always opposed to President Lee and his polices.   And the NP's distinctive pan-Chinese ideology is not necessarily accepted by the majority of voters and instead may limit Lin's appeal to the broader constituency of voters.   So, it's unwise of Lin to be close to the NP.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM1, K) also suggested,

> Lin's choice to form an alliance with the NP won't do him any good.   The party cannot draw support nationwide because not many voters identify with its distinct partisan ideology of pan-Chinese nationalism.

Participants also often associated Lin's 'ability' with his 'qualifications and experience' when asked about their perceptions of Lin.   The results of the focus groups revealed that his qualifications and experience was known to the participants and his ability was generally recognised by them.   In particular, Lin's wide experience in government service was often mentioned in the focus groups.   The prevailing comments on Lin's ability and qualifications and experience included:

> 'Lin is a very capable person.   This can be learned from his outstanding past administrative ability and performance' (LEF1, D).

> 'Lin was a former magistrate of Nantou County where I used to live.   As far as I can remember, he's a hardworking and competent elected official.   He made a lot of contributions to the development of Nantou' (HEF2, K).

'Lin is a person with great political competence. This is why he could hold so many important government posts, say, Taipei Mayor, Governor of Taiwan, and President of the Judicial Yuan' (LEM1, A).

'Lin is an honest and down-to-earth politician. He is from the basic government unit, so he knows the need of the grass roots very well. In fact, he's been doing well throughout his official career. I think he is able to govern the country well if elected' (HEM2, H).

'Of the four presidential candidates, Lin is the one with the most sufficient qualifications and experience in government service. I believe he is well qualified for a national leader as well' (LEM2, C).

The findings of the focus groups also showed Lin's 'personality' and his 'integrity and virtues' received much attention from participants. On the whole, participants were favourably impressed with Lin's personality and integrity and virtues. They considered him a sincere, good-humoured and reliable person. Typical dominant comments included:

'Lin is a kind and gentle person. He is not as aggressive and emotional as Lee. He is trustworthy' (HEF1, H).

'Lin is very approachable and kind; he is a real gentleman' (LEF2, C).

'I've the kind of impression that Lin is a man with amiable personality and honest virtue' (LEM1, D).

'Lin has a charming personality; he is affable to everyone. He doesn't keep his distance from people and you can feel his sincerity' (HEM2, G).

On the other hand, several participants did not have a positive evaluation of Lin's personality. As one HEM participant (HEM1, B) indicated,

> Lin impresses me as a man with little personality.   It seems he is too mild and
> indecisive.

Another participant in the same group (HEM1, G) also agreed with the above quote and added,

> Lin's character is peaceable but too soft.   He lacks charisma and resolution to
> be a national leader.

Similarly, one LEF participant (LEF2, J) also presented the same comment on Lin's personality.

She observed,

> Judging from what he said, Lin is like an obstinate and old-fashioned person.
> I kind of feel he is too genial and sometimes lacks personality.

Lin's 'political style' also found much mention in the focus groups.   It was found that

participants had a mixed opinion of this attribute.   On one hand, some participants appreciated

Lin's moderate political style.   A typical positive view about his political style was voiced by

one LEF participant (LEF2, K).   She observed,

> Lin is an upright and down-to-earth official.   He's a moderate.   His way of
> doing things is steady and his policies are middle-of-the-road.

Another participant in the same group (LEF2, L) in agreement with the above quote also

pointed out,

> Lin's style as an administrator has won him the reputation of being responsible
> and capable.   He is a mild and flexible official.

On the other hand, negative opinions about Lin's political style were more often heard in the

focus groups, especially among participants with higher education. For example, one HEF participant (HEF1, B) said,

> I don't like Lin's political style. He is too soft and easy to compromise. He lacks guts and decision a national leader should possess.

Another female participant (HEF2, E) also argued,

> Lin's been in officialdom for a long time, so you can sense he has obvious bureaucratic airs. He's a very typical ambitious politician; he has strong obsession with power.

One HEM participant (HEM2, J) regarded Lin as a timeserver because of his inconsistent political position and principle. As he noted,

> Lin's an opportunist. He is not a stalwart of the KMT as he claims. Otherwise, he wouldn't have campaigned for the NP's legislative candidates and aligned himself with the NP.

One LEM participant (LEM1, G) shared the same view and said,

> Lin should have learned from Chen to break off with the KMT neatly if he decides to run as an independent. But he didn't do so because he is reluctant to give up the political resources in the KMT. He's a politician without political principle.

Lin's 'issue and policy stands' was another attribute often discussed in the focus groups. Participants mainly focused on Lin's stance on the issue of independence and reunification when referring to his issue and policy stands. It was found that Lin's distinctive anti-independence stance was known to participants who mentioned the attribute of his issue

and policy stands. Some considered his policy stands on the cross-strait relations to be pragmatic and flexible while others disagreed with his pro-communist policy stands on handling relations with China. One HEF participant (HEF2, A) observed,

> Lin strongly opposes Taiwanese independence. He favours a more conciliatory approach towards China. He's right. Taiwanese independence isn't workable and reunification won't happen as long as China is not democratic. In fact, Lin's policy stands on the mainland affairs is quite pragmatic. He encourages promoting more active cooperation with China in direct trade, transportation and postal services, so both sides can enjoy mutual benefits. I agree with him that it won't do us any good if we keep provoking China.

Similarly, one LEM participant (LEM1, D) said,

> Lin's right that it will be much easier to communicate with China and to ease the mounting cross-strait tensions if we let China believe we won't follow the path of separatism, but instead we are willing to further friendly and close relations with the mainland.

One HEF participant (HEF1, K) also argued,

> Lin doesn't want to rush into unification with China, and he doesn't want independence. Not limiting himself to being Taiwanese, he wants to be Chinese, too. Lin campaigns on a platform of reconciliation with Beijing. He wants Taiwan to restore ties with China and eventually reunify with it.

Nevertheless, some participants opposed Lin's conciliatory policies on the cross-strait relations. As one LEF participant (LEF2, D) pointed out,

Lin seems too pro-communist. He even supports Beijing's view that Lee is taking the separatist road and betraying the doctrine of reunification. Unlike Lee, he's far too mild and compliant; he doesn't dare to say no to China.

Her view was shared by one HEM participant (HEM2, L), who said,

Lin's soft on negotiations with China. He's so pro-appeasement that sometimes he gives people a kind of feeling that he's pro-Beijing. Of course, we really need to adopt a policy of détente to improve our relations with China, but it should be based on equality not on concession.

In the same vein, one LEM participant (LEM2, E) noted,

Lin's conciliatory policies on handling the cross-strait relations look as if he tries to make concessions to please China. Why should we be afraid of China? If we got scared every time they held an exercise, we would be constantly terrified. We should maintain our dignity when negotiating with China.

# Chapter 6 - The Agenda-setting Results and Discussion

The focus of this chapter is on examining the agenda-setting results by comparing and contrasting newspaper coverage and public perceptions in the order of importance attached to issues and candidates' image attributes. For this reason, comparisons were made between newspaper agendas, (including the *newspaper issue agenda*, the *newspaper campaign agenda*, and the *newspaper image agenda*), and public agendas, (including the *public issue agenda*, the *public priority issue agenda*, the *public campaign agenda*, and the *public image agenda*). Public agenda data were based on the findings of pre-session questionnaires. Further comparisons of issue rank and attribute rank were also made between the newspaper agenda and the public agendas of sub-groups.

## 6.1 Comparison of Newspaper Issue Agenda and Public Issue Agenda

### 6.1.1 Newspaper Issue Agenda vs. Public Issue Agenda

When comparing the level of importance given to key issues by the press and the relative level of significance assigned to those issues by participants, this study shows that some differences in ranking of issues existed between the *newspaper issue agenda* and the *public issue agenda*. As displayed in Table 6.1, there were a variety of issues on the agenda of the newspapers, totalling sixteen issues, whereas the issues deemed important by voters concentrated on only nine issues on the agenda. It is clear that participants did not attach any importance to the issues of 'national defence', 'international relationships', 'government efficiency', 'mass media', 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift', 'urban and rural development', and 'science/technology' since these issues found no mention on the public issue agenda.

Table 6.1

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Issue Agenda and the Public Issue Agenda

| Agenda | Newspaper Issue Agenda | Public Issue Agenda |
|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | Rank |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 3 |
| National Defence | 2 | - |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 3 | 1 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 4 |
| International Relationships | 5 | - |
| Economic Development | 6 | 1 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 6 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | 9 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 9 | 8 |
| Government Efficiency | 10 | - |
| Mass Media | 11 | - |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 12 | - |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | 6 |
| Environment/Ecology | 14 | 5 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 15 | - |
| Science/Technology | 16 | - |

A closer look at the data in the table reveals that while the press placed most emphasis on the issue of 'cross-strait relations', the top one issues participants considered important were 'improvement of the democratic political system' and 'economic development'. Nevertheless, 'cross-strait relations' was the third most often mentioned issue in the minds of participants. 'Improvement of the democratic political system' and 'economic development' were ranked third and sixth on the newspaper issue agenda. The only issue with the same ranking on both agendas was 'law and order', the fourth-ranked issue. Little difference was found between the newspaper issue agenda and the public issue agenda in terms of the ranking of the issues of 'social welfare', 'education/culture/arts', and 'traffic/transportation/communications'. These three issues took the seventh, eighth, and ninth place on the newspaper issue agenda, whereas their corresponding rankings on the public issue agenda were sixth, ninth, and eighth respectively. On the other hand, there was a marked discrepancy in the degree of importance accorded to the issues of 'agriculture and fisheries' and 'environment/ecology' between the two agendas. It was observed that while the press did not attach much significance to these two issues as reflected by their low ranking on the agenda, namely thirteenth and fourteenth,

they were the sixth- and fifth-ranked issues on the public issue agenda.

As far as the comparison of the top five important issues between the two agendas was concerned, newspaper coverage and public perceptions were consistent in the ranking of the issue of 'law and order', close in the order of importance assigned to the issues of 'cross-strait relations' and 'improvement of the democratic political system', but with a marked difference in the level of issue emphasis given to 'environment/ecology'.

## 6.1.2 Newspaper Issue Agenda vs. Public Issue Agendas of Sub-groups

To compare and contrast the newspaper issue agenda and the public issue agendas of sub-groups, this study compares the issue emphasis presented by the press and that perceived by participants with different gender and educational backgrounds. On the whole, the issue ranking on the newspaper issue agenda was at variance with that on the public issue agendas of sub-groups. When the order of importance the top five issues received from the press and sub-groups was compared, it showed that 'cross-strait relations', the top-ranked issue on the newspaper issue agenda, was regarded by female participants as the fourth important issue, whereas it was the third key issue in the minds of male participants. Participants with higher education gave the most importance to the issue of 'improvement of the democratic political system', which was the third most often covered issue by the press, but the corresponding rankings of this issue on the agendas of LEF participants and their male counterparts were second and fourth respectively. In the case of 'law and order', the fourth-ranked issue on the newspaper issue agenda, there was little difference in the level of importance given to this issue between the newspapers and the female participants since it was the third most often mentioned issue on the agendas of female participants, higher educated and lesser educated alike. A noticeable finding from the analysis was that compared with its order of importance on the newspaper issue agenda, namely, the sixth-ranked, 'economic development' was given

the most priority by participants with lesser education. However, it was the second and the fourth principal issue considered by HEF and HEM participants respectively. It is also clear that the press and participants presented a similar trend insofar as the level of importance accorded to the issues of 'social welfare', 'education/culture/arts', and 'traffic/transportation/communications' was concerned. On the other hand, there were some disparities in the weight of importance given to the issues of 'agriculture and fisheries' and 'environment/ecology' by the press and participants.

Table 6.2

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Issue Agenda and
the Public Issue Agendas of Sub-groups

| Agenda<br>Issue | Newspaper<br>Issue Agenda<br>Rank | HEF<br>Issue Agenda<br>Rank | HEM<br>Issue Agenda<br>Rank | LEF<br>Issue Agenda<br>Rank | LEM<br>Issue Agenda<br>Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| National Defence | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| International Relationships | 5 | - | - | - | - |
| Economic Development | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 9 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Government Efficiency | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| Mass Media | 11 | - | - | - | - |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 12 | - | - | - | - |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| Environment/Ecology | 14. | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 15 | - | - | - | - |
| Science/Technology | 16 | - | - | - | - |

## 6.1.3 Newspaper Issue Agenda vs. Public Priority Issue Agenda

Some noticeable differences in issue ranking could be discerned between the *newspaper issue agenda* and the *public priority issue agenda*. The picture emerging from the data in Table 6.3 is very clear. Compared with a wide variety of issues appearing on the newspaper issue agenda, there were only five key issues that drew significant attention from participants when

they were asked to name one principal issue of the day they were personally concerned about. Nevertheless, the figures indicate that newspaper and public perceptions were mainly close in the order of importance attached to three of the top five issues, including 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', and 'law and order'. It was found that the press placed the most stress on the issue of 'cross-strait relations', which participants considered the second most important issue on their agenda. The most important issue of the day perceived by the public was 'law and order', which was ranked fourth on the newspaper issue agenda. There was no significant disparity in the degree of issue emphasis given to 'improvement of the democratic political system' and 'economic development' by the press and by participants. However, it is worth noting that participants attached much more importance to the issue of 'environment/ecology' than did the press because it was ranked third on the public priority issue agenda in comparison with its low ranking on the newspaper issue agenda.

Table 6.3

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Issue Agenda and
the Public Priority Issue Agenda

| Agenda | Newspaper Issue Agenda | Public Priority Issue Agenda |
|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | Rank |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 2 |
| National defence | 2 | - |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 3 | 5 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 1 |
| International Relationships | 5 | - |
| Economic Development | 6 | 4 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | - |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | - |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 9 | - |
| Government Efficiency | 10 | - |
| Mass Media | 11 | - |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 12 | - |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | - |
| Environment/Ecology | 14 | 3 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 15 | - |
| Science/Technology | 16 | - |

### 6.1.4 Newspaper Issue Agenda vs. Public Priority Issue Agendas of Sub-groups

This study further examines the differences in prominence assigned to the issue of the day between the newspaper issue agenda and the public priority issue agendas of sub-groups. A simple look at the contents of Table 6.4 shows that not many striking similarities in the ranking of the top five important issues were found between newspaper coverage and public perceptions of sub-groups. For example, the top issue of the day on the newspaper issue agenda, 'cross-strait relations', was ranked second on the agendas of all participants except LEF participants, who regarded it as the fifth-ranked. There was identical issue importance accorded to 'improvement of democratic political system' by the press and female participants since this issue was considered the third most principal issue on the both agendas. However, male participants, higher educated or lesser educated, unanimously regarded this issue as the fifth-ranked on their agendas. HEM participants were in agreement with the press in the weight of importance given to 'law and order', which was the fourth-ranked issue on both agendas, whereas this issue topped the list in the issue raking on the agendas of the rest of the participants. 'Economic development', the sixth-ranked on the newspaper issue agenda, was considered the second most important issue of the day by both HEM and LEF participants. HEF participants and LEM participants ranked 'economic development' as the fifth and the third issue of pressing importance respectively. This study also clearly shows that participants were at variance with the press as far as the level of emphasis given to the issue of 'environment/ecology' was concerned. While the press paid little attention to 'environment/ecology' given its low ranking on the newspaper issue agenda, participants did attach much significance to this issue, which ranked first on the agenda of HEM participants and third in the minds of the rest of the participants.

Table 6.4

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Issue Agenda and

the Public Priority Issue Agendas of Sub-groups

| Agenda | Newspaper Issue Agenda | HEF Priority Issue Agenda | HEM Priority Issue Agenda | LEF Priority Issue Agenda | LEM Priority Issue Agenda |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| National Defence | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| International Relationships | 5 | - | - | - | - |
| Economic Development | 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | - | - | - | - |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | - | - | - | - |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 9 | - | - | - | - |
| Government Efficiency | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| Mass Media | 11 | - | - | - | - |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 12 | - | - | - | - |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | - | - | - | - |
| Environment/Ecology | 14 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Urban and Rural Development | 15 | - | - | - | - |
| Science/Technology | 16 | - | - | - | - |

## 6.2 Comparison of Newspaper Campaign Agenda and Public Campaign Agenda

### 6.2.1 Newspaper Campaign Agenda vs. Public Campaign Agenda

The comparison between the most important campaign issues on the *newspaper campaign agenda* and those on the *public campaign agenda* showed that on the whole there were slight differences in issue diversity and emphasis between the two agendas. There were sixteen key campaign issues mentioned by the press, whereas fourteen principal campaign issues were emphasised by participants. It was found that three issues, including 'mass media', 'science/technology', and 'urban and rural development', were not on the list of participants' important campaign issues. The newspaper campaign agenda and the public campaign agenda were extremely close in the rank order of the first five important campaign issues: 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'national defence',

'law and order', and 'economic development'. However, the views of participants differed sharply from those of the press in terms of the level of importance given to campaign issues such as 'social welfare', 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift', 'government efficiency', and 'traffic/transportation/communications'. 'Education/culture/arts' was the only campaign issue accorded the same weight of importance by both participants and newspapers.

Table 6.5

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Campaign Agenda and the Public Campaign Agenda

| Agenda | Newspaper Campaign Agenda | Public Campaign Agenda |
|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | Rank |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 2 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 2 | 1 |
| National Defence | 3 | 5 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 3 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 4 |
| International Relationships | 6 | 7 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 11 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | 8 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 9 | 13 |
| Mass Media | 10 | - |
| Government Efficiency | 11 | 6 |
| Environment/Ecology | 12 | 9 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | 14 |
| Traffic/Transportation/Communications | 14 | 10 |
| Science/Technology | 15 | - |
| Urban and Rural Development | 16 | - |
| Candidate's Policy Stands | - | 12 |

## 6.2.2 Newspaper Campaign Agenda vs. Public Campaign Agendas of Sub-groups

When the differences in the level of importance assigned to the key issues of the campaign between the newspaper agenda and the public agendas of sub-groups were further examined, it was found that newspaper coverage and public perceptions of sub-groups showed marked similarities in the order of importance assigned to four of the top five key campaign issues: 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'law and order', and 'economic development'. On the other hand, obvious differences could be discerned in the

weight of importance given to the issue of 'national defence' between the campaign agenda of HEF participants and the newspaper campaign agenda. 'Social welfare', the seventh-ranked issue on the newspaper campaign agenda, had a low ranking in the minds of HEF participants and even found no mention among HEM participants. There was no considerable difference in the level of importance attributed to 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift' between the newspaper campaign agenda and the campaign agendas of all participants except HEF participants, who did not name this issue as an important campaign issue on their agenda. While the issue ranking of 'government efficiency' on the campaign agenda of LEM participants mirrored that on the newspaper campaign agenda, obvious discrepancies in the degree of importance assigned to this issue existed between the views of participants with higher education and those of the press. Closer examination of the figures in Table 6.6 also shows that LEM participants attached much more importance to the issue of 'environment/ecology' than did the newspapers and the other participants. Compared with lesser educated participants, who placed no emphasis on 'agriculture and fisheries', higher educated participants gave almost the same level of significance to this issue as the press did. It was also found that participants' views differed sharply from those of the newspapers in relation to the degree of issue emphasis given to 'traffic/transportation/communications'. Overall, the campaign agenda of LEF participants correlated more with the newspaper campaign agenda in terms of the rank order assigned to the top five key campaign issues than the campaign agenda of HEF participants.

Table 6.6

Comparison of the Issue Rank between the Newspaper Campaign Agenda and

the Public Campaign Agendas of Sub-groups

| Agenda | Newspaper Campaign Agenda | HEF Campaign Agenda | HEM Campaign Agenda | LEF Campaign Agenda | LEM Campaign Agenda |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Cross-strait Relations | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Improvement of the Democratic Political System | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| National Defence | 3 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Law and Order | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Economic Development | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| International Relationships | 6 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| Social Welfare | 7 | 12 | - | 7 | 9 |
| Education/Culture/Arts | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| Mainlander-Taiwanese Rift | 9 | - | 8 | 10 | 11 |
| Mass Media | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| Government Efficiency | 11 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 11 |
| Environment/Ecology | 12 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 5 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 13 | 13 | 12 | - | - |
| Traffic/Transportation/ Communications | 14 | 6 | - | 10 | 6 |
| Science/Technology | 15 | - | - | - | - |
| Urban and Rural Development | 16 | - | - | - | - |
| Candidate's Policy Stands | - | 10 | 10 | 10 | - |

## 6.3 Comparison of Newspaper Image Agenda and Public Image Agenda

### 6.3.1 Comparison of the Four Presidential Candidates' Image Attributes Emphasised by the Press and Participants

There were some differences in the level of importance between candidates' image attributes emphasised in the press and their relative image attributes in the minds of participants. As the data in Table 6.7 reveal, attributes linked to Chen with the most marked discrepancies in order of ranking between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda* included his 'private life' and 'presentation skills/communication' though the two agendas gave the same level of importance to Chen' 'political style', 'intelligence', and 'ancestral origin'. Nevertheless, when the rank order given to the top five attributes of Chen on the image agendas of the press and the participants was examined, it was found that the two agendas were quite similar in the degree of importance accorded to Chen's 'political style', 'personal

background', 'partisan affiliation', and 'religion'. Both the press and participants gave the same weight of importance to 'political style', which was ranked fifth on both image agendas. The attribute mentioned with the most frequency by participants was Chen's 'personal background', which was ranked as the second most important attribute on the newspaper image agenda. Chen's 'partisan affiliation' was the most mentioned attribute in the press, whereas it was the third most salient attribute when participants thought of him. The third-ranked attribute of Chen emphasised by the press went to his 'issue and policy stands', but participants did not give the same level of importance to this attribute since it was the sixth salient attribute linked to Chen on their image agenda. While the press regarded 'religion' as Chen's fourth important attribute, it was the second most often mentioned attribute of Chen in the minds of all the participants. On the other hand, participants referred to 'personality', the seventh-ranked attribute on the newspaper image agenda, as the fourth salient attribute linked to Chen.

Table 6.7

Comparison of Attribute Rank Relating to the Four Presidential Candidates' Images between the Newspaper Image Agenda and the Public Image Agenda

| Candidate | Chen Li-an | | Lee Teng-hui | | Peng Ming-min | | Lin Yang-kang | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Image Agenda | Newspaper | Public | Newspaper | Public | Newspaper | Public | Newspaper | Public |
| Attribute | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Political Style | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 4 |
| Political Honesty | 11 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 15 | 11 | 13 |
| Political Philosophy | 13 | 15 | 13 | 12 | 12 | - | - | - |
| Ability | 11 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 15 | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| Leadership Qualities | 13 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 10 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 8 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 11 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 | 9 | 10 | - | 6 | 14 | 5 | 8 |
| Personality | 7 | 4 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 3 |
| Appearance and Bearing | - | - | 18 | - | 6 | 5 | - | - |
| Intelligence | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 14 | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 9 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| Personal Background | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Private Life | 13 | - | 17 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Religion | 4 | 2 | 15 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 14 | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 15 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Localism | - | - | - | - | 12 | - | 4 | 7 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Others | 13 | - | 16 | - | 15 | - | - | - |

Table 6.7 also shows the discrepancies in the ranking of attributes linked to Lee between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda*. It is clear that participants had very different views from those of the press in terms of the degree of importance assigned to Lee's 'integrity and virtues', 'appearance and bearing', 'private life', 'qualifications and experience', 'personality', and 'presentation skills/communication'. Participants made no mention of his 'integrity and virtues', 'appearance and bearing', and 'private life'. By contrast, Lee's 'personal background' and 'political style' were the two attributes with the same order of importance on the two image agendas. When the top five salient attributes of Lee emphasised by both the press and participants were further compared, it was found that the newspaper image agenda and the public image agenda were close in the rank order of three attributes: 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', and 'political honesty'. For example, Lee's 'personal background' was the top-ranked attribute on the two image agendas. Lee's 'partisan affiliation' was the second most often covered attribute by the press, but it was the third-ranked attribute on the public image agenda. Instead, the second most salient attribute of Lee perceived by participants went to his 'ability', the sixth-ranked attribute appearing in the newspapers. Lee's 'political honesty' received more attention in the press than from participants because it was the third-ranked attribute on the newspaper image agenda but the fifth salient attribute in the minds of participants. On the other hand, the press considered Lee's 'presentation skills/communication' the fourth salient attribute in reporting Lee's image, whereas the corresponding rank order of this attribute was ninth on the public image agenda. The fourth most mentioned attribute of Lee by participants was 'qualifications and experience', which was ranked ninth by the press. Lee's 'issue and policy stands' was rated as the fifth salient attribute by newspapers, but it was the eighth-ranked attribute perceived by participants.

The comparison between salient attributes of Peng mentioned by the press and those by participants indicated that participants and the press presented a substantially similar trend in the level of emphasis given to his top five attributes. However, some sharp differences in the rank order of Peng's attributes between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image*

*agenda* could still be discerned. Peng's attributes with appreciable variations of rank order on the two image agendas included his 'political philosophy', 'localism', 'integrity and virtues', 'political honesty', and 'ancestral origin'. It was found that Peng's 'political philosophy' and 'localism' did not receive any attention from participants. Further examination of the weight of importance given to Peng's top five salient attributes showed that newspapers covered his 'partisan affiliation' most often, but it was regarded as the second most salient attribute in the minds of all participants. The top-ranked attribute linked to Peng by participants went to his 'personal background', which was the second most emphasised attribute on the newspaper image agenda. Peng's 'qualifications and experience' was the only attribute with the same rank order on the newspaper image agenda and the public image agenda. This attribute was ranked third on both agendas. The fourth salient attribute of Peng covered by the press was his 'issue and policy stands', which was the fifth most often mentioned attribute on the public image agenda. Participants, on the other hand, considered 'political style' the fourth-ranked attribute of Peng, but the corresponding ranking of this attribute on the newspaper image agenda was fifth.

Some differences in the level of attribute emphasis relating to Lin's image was also found between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda*. In particular, Lin's 'intelligence', 'religion', 'political style', and 'personality' were the attributes with obvious discrepancies in ranking between the two agendas. On the other hand, Lin's 'partisan affiliation' and 'presentation skills/communication' were given identical weight of importance by both the press and participants. Analysis of the rank order of the top five salient attributes on the two image agendas showed that the newspaper image agenda and the public image agenda were only close in the order of importance given to Lin's 'partisan affiliation' and 'issue and policy stands'. Specifically, Lin's 'partisan affiliation' was the most often mentioned attribute in the press and in the minds of all participants. The second most important attribute of Lin on the newspaper image agenda was his 'issue and policy stands', which was the fourth-ranked attribute perceived by the public. On the contrary, participants

ranked Lin's 'ability', the sixth salient attribute appearing in the press, as the second most emphasised attribute. While the press considered Lin's 'personal background' the third most important attribute on its image agenda, the corresponding ranking of this attribute was sixth on the public image agenda. Lin's 'personality', the eighth-ranked attribute in the press, was the third most salient attribute deemed by participants instead. Lin's 'localism' drew more attention in the press than from participants since it was the fourth salient attribute covered by the press but the seventh-ranked attribute in the minds of participants. On the other hand, participants attached more importance to Lin's 'political style' than did the press. Lin's 'political style' was also the fourth salient attribute on the public image agenda, whereas it was the ninth-ranked attribute in the press. The fifth attribute emphasised by the press was 'integrity and virtues', which was the eighth-ranked attribute perceived by participants.

### 6.3.2 Comparison of Chen Li-an's Image Attributes Emphasised by the Press and the Four Groups of Participants

When further comparing the top five salient attributes relating to Chen between the newspaper image agenda and the public image agendas of sub-groups, this study demonstrates that on the whole there were some similarities in the level of attribute importance between the image agenda of the press and the image agendas of participants with different gender and educational backgrounds. It can be seen from Table 6.8 that the views of HEF participants were consistent with those of the press in attaching most weight to Chen's 'partisan affiliation', whereas it was the second most salient attribute on the image agendas of all male participants. By contrast, 'partisan affiliation' did not receive the same degree of importance from LEF participants since it was the fourth-ranked attribute in their minds. The press and participants only slightly differed in their views in relation to the ranking of Chen's 'personal background'. Male participants made the most mention of Chen's 'personal background', but it was ranked second by both the press and female participants. Chen's 'issue and policy stands' received more attention from the press and HEF participants than from the rest of the participants. It

was regarded as the third most often mentioned attribute by both the press and HEF participants, but was ranked as the sixth salient attribute by both HEM and LEF participants. The corresponding ranking of Chen's 'issue and policy stands' on the image agenda of LEM participants was fifth. While Chen's 'religion', the fourth-ranked attribute on the newspaper image agenda, was mentioned with the most frequency by LEF participants, male participants rated it as the second when they thought of Chen's image. HEF participants, nevertheless, considered Chen's 'religion' the third most often mentioned attribute on their agenda. Chen's 'political style' had the same ranking on the image agenda of the press and the image agenda of LEM participants. It was ranked as the fifth salient attribute on both agendas.

Table 6.8

Comparison of Attribute Rank Relating to Chen Li-an's Image between the Newspaper Image Agenda and the Public Image Agendas of Sub-groups

| Candidate | Chen Li-an | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Image Agenda | Newspaper Image Agenda | HEF Image Agenda | HEM Image Agenda | LEF Image Agenda | LEM Image Agenda |
| Attribute | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Political Style | 5 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| Political Honesty | 11 | 9 | 9 | 9 | - |
| Political Philosophy | 13 | - | 9 | - | - |
| Ability | 11 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| Leadership Qualities | 13 | - | 9 | 12 | 10 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 8 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| Personality | 7 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Intelligence | 13 | 11 | - | 12 | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 9 | 11 | 9 | - | - |
| Personal Background | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Private Life | 13 | - | - | - | - |
| Religion | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Ancestral Origin | 10 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Others | 13 | - | - | - | - |

The views of LEF participants differed widely from those of the press in terms of the level of importance to Chen's 'ability', the fourth-ranked attribute in their minds but the eleventh-ranked attribute in the press. Similarly, more obvious differences in the rank order

of Chen's 'qualifications and experience' were found between the newspaper image agenda and the image agenda of HEF participants. The press ranked Chen's 'qualifications and experience' as the eighth salient attribute, but it was ranked third by HEF participants. It is also revealing that Chen's 'personality' received more attention from LEM participants and female participants than in the press. The press considered Chen's 'personality' the seventh-ranked attribute on its agenda, whereas the corresponding rank order of this attribute was second on the image agenda of LEM participants and third in the minds of female participants. Overall, it was found that the views of HEF participants correlated much more with those of the press than the views of their lesser educated counterparts in terms of the rank order assigned to the first five most salient attributes of Chen. Male participants also had views very close to those expressed in the newspapers in relation to the rank order of Chen's top five important attributes.

### 6.3.3 Comparison of Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes Emphasised by the Press and the Four Groups of Participants

On the whole, the image agendas of higher educated participants were more similar to the newspaper image agenda than the image agendas of lesser educated participants as far as the comparison of the ranking given to Lee's top five salient attributes was concerned. Specifically, Lee's 'personal background' was the second most important attribute in the minds of all participants except HEM participants, who concurred with the press in mentioning this attribute with the most frequency. By contrast, Lee's 'ability' was the top-ranked attribute on the image agendas of all participants except HEM participants, who again agreed with the press in rating this attribute as the sixth important attribute. The press and HEF participants gave the same weight of importance to Lee's 'partisan affiliation', the second most mentioned attribute on both image agendas. HEM participants and LEF participants considered Lee's 'partisan affiliation' the third-ranked attribute on their image agendas, whereas it was the fourth key attribute perceived by LEM participants. Participants with higher education had

views closer to those of the press than their lesser educated counterparts in terms of the rank order assigned to Lee's 'political honesty'. Lee's 'political honesty', the third salient attribute in the press, was ranked fourth and second by HEF and HEM participants respectively, but the corresponding rankings of this attribute on the image agendas of LEF and LEM participants were fifth and sixth.

Table 6.9

Comparison of Attribute Rank Relating to Lee Teng-hui's Image between the Newspaper Image Agenda and the Public Image Agendas of Sub-groups

| Candidate | Lee Teng-hui | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Image Agenda | Newspaper Image Agenda | HEF Image Agenda | HEM Image Agenda | LEF Image Agenda | LEM Image Agenda |
| Attribute | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Political Style | 7 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| Political Honesty | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| Political Philosophy | 13 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 11 |
| Ability | 6 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Leadership Qualities | 8 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 11 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 9 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| Personality | 11 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Appearance and Bearing | 18 | - | - | - | - |
| Intelligence | 14 | 11 | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
| Personal Background | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Private Life | 17 | - | - | - | - |
| Religion | 15 | 11 | 11 | 12 | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 12 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Others | 16 | - | - | - | - |

The figures in Table 6.9 also indicate that there were marked differences in the level of importance assigned to Lee's 'presentation skills/communication' between the newspaper image agenda and image agendas of participants with lesser education. Lee's 'presentation skills/communication' was the fourth most covered attribute in the press, whereas it was ranked ninth and eighth on the image agendas of LEF and LEM participants respectively. The ranking of Lee's 'issue and policy stands' in the minds of higher educated participants was closer to that of the press. Lee's 'issue and policy stands', the fifth attribute emphasised by

the press, was ranked fourth and sixth in the minds of HEF and HEM participants. More obvious discrepancies in the ranking of Lee's 'qualifications and experience' and 'personality' also existed between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of all participants except HEF participants. While the press rated Lee's 'qualifications and experience' as the ninth salient attribute, it was the third rank on the image agendas of all male participants and the fourth rank on the image agenda of LEF participants. In the case of Lee's 'personality', the eleventh-ranked attribute in the press, its corresponding rank order was fourth in the minds of LEM participants and fifth on the image agendas of both HEM and LEF participants. A closer look at the table also shows that Lee's 'integrity and virtues', 'appearance and bearing', 'intelligence', and 'private life' were the attributes with considerable ranking differences between the newspaper image agenda and the public image agendas of sub-groups. On the other hand, the press and participants assigned similar weight to Lee's 'political philosophy', 'religion', and 'ancestral origin'.

### 6.3.4 Comparison of Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes Emphasised by the Press and the Four Groups of Participants

The comparison of the importance assigned to Peng's top five salient attributes between the newspaper image agenda and the public image agendas of sub-groups suggested that all participants agreed with the press in terms of the level of significance assigned to Peng's 'qualifications and experience'. As the data in Table 6.10 indicate, this attribute was ranked third both in the press and in the minds of all participants. HEF participants gave the same level of importance to Peng's 'partisan affiliation' and 'personal background' as the press did. While both the press and HEF participants mentioned Peng's 'partisan affiliation' with the most frequency, the rest of the participants unanimously rated it as the second most salient attribute. Peng's 'personal background' was the second-ranked attribute on the image agendas of the press and HEF participants respectively, but it was attached the most importance by the rest of the participants. Higher educated participants' views on the rank

order of Peng's 'issue and policy stands' were closer to those expressed in the newspapers. Peng's 'issue and policy stands', the fourth-ranked attribute in the press, was the fifth attribute perceived by higher educated participants, whereas it was the twelfth-ranked and tenth-ranked on the image agendas of LEF and LEM participants respectively.

Table 6.10

Comparison of Attribute Rank Relating to Peng Ming-min's Image between the Newspaper Image Agenda and the Public Image Agendas of Sub-groups

| Candidate | Peng Ming-min | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Image Agenda | Newspaper Image Agenda | HEF Image Agenda | HEM Image Agenda | LEF Image Agenda | LEM Image Agenda |
| Attribute | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Political Style | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Political Honesty | 8 | 9 | 10 | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | 12 | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 15 | 9 | 7 | - | 10 |
| Leadership Qualities | 15 | 9 | - | 6 | 10 |
| Qualifications & Experience | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 | 9 | 10 | - | 10 |
| Personality | 10 | 7 | 5 | 6 | - |
| Appearance and Bearing | 6 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Intelligence | 12 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 5 |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 10 | 9 | - | 6 | 5 |
| Personal Background | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Religion | 8 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Ancestral Origin | 15 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 5 |
| Localism | 12 | - | - | - | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 10 |
| Others | 15 | - | - | - | - |

There was little difference in the ranking of Peng's 'political style' between the image agenda of the press and the image agendas of all sub-groups. The press and each group of participants also gave similar weight to Peng's 'appearance and bearing' and 'religion'. The level of importance assigned to Peng's 'presentation skills/communication' by the press and by HEF participants was closer. On the other hand, noticeable differences in the rank order of 'political honesty' existed between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of participants with lesser education. Compared with their higher educated counterparts, participants with lesser education had more different views from those of the press in terms of

the level of importance given to Peng's 'intelligence' and 'ancestral origin'. There was a wide variation in the rank order of Peng's 'ability' and 'integrity and virtues' between the newspaper image agenda and the image agenda of LEF participants. The weight of significance assigned to Peng's 'leadership qualities' by HEM participants was also greatly different from that in the press. LEM participants and the press presented a very divergent trend in terms of the level of importance accorded to Peng's 'personality'. Substantial disparities in the weight of emphasis given to both Peng's 'political philosophy' and 'localism' could also be perceived between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of all sub-groups since these two attributes drew no attention from all participants. Overall, it was found that HEF participants had views more correlated with those of the press than their lesser educated counterparts in terms of the order of importance given to Peng's top five attributes. Similarities could also be detected in the rank order of Peng's first five most salient attributes between the image agendas of male participants and the newspaper image agenda.

### 6.3.5 Comparison of Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes Emphasised by the Press and the Four Groups of Participants

Table 6.11 compares Lin's attributes between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of all sub-groups. All groups concurred with the press evaluation in terms of the degree of importance given to Lin's 'partisan affiliation', which found the most mention in the press and among all participants. While HEM participants assigned the same level of significance to Lin's 'issue and policy stands' as the press did, there were marked differences in the rank order of this attribute between the newspaper image agenda and the image agenda of LEF participants. Lin's 'issue and policy stands', the second-ranked attribute in the press, was the seventh salient attribute perceived by LEF participants. Lin's 'personal background' received more attention in the press than from participants. It was the third most often covered attribute by the press, but no group of participants attached the same significance to Lin's 'personal background' as the press did. There were more differences in the weight of

importance given to Lin's 'localism' between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of higher educated participants. Lin's 'localism' was the fourth salient attribute in the press, whereas its corresponding rankings on the image agendas of HEF and HEM participants were ninth and eighth respectively. Compared with its importance in the press, Lin's 'integrity and virtues' was referred to by HEM and LEF participants much less frequently. The press considered Lin's 'integrity and virtues' the fifth rank on its image agenda, but it was the tenth in the minds of both HEM and LEF participants. It was also found that HEF and LEM participants made much more mention of Lin's 'ability' than did the press. This was the sixth attribute covered by the press, yet it was ranked first and second on the image agendas of HEF and LEM participants respectively. LEM participants and the press gave the same level of importance to Lin's 'ancestral origin', the seventh-ranked attribute on both image agendas.

Table 6.11

Comparison of Attribute Rank Relating to Lin Yang-kang's Image between the Newspaper Image Agenda and the Public Image Agendas of Sub-groups

| Candidate | Lin Yang-kang | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Image Agenda | Newspaper Image Agenda | HEF Image Agenda | HEM Image Agenda | LEF Image Agenda | LEM Image Agenda |
| Attribute | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank | Rank |
| Political Style | 9 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Political Honesty | 11 | - | - | 10 | - |
| Ability | 6 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Leadership Qualities | 13 | 7 | 8 | 9 | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 10 | 9 | 6 | - | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 5 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 7 |
| Personality | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Intelligence | 14 | - | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | - |
| Personal Background | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Religion | 14 | - | - | - | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 7 | 9 | - | 5 | 7 |
| Localism | 4 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| Partisan Affiliation | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 3 |

Little agreement was found between the press and participants insofar as the level of

importance assigned to Lin's 'personality' was concerned. Lin's 'personality' was the third most often mentioned attribute by all participants except LEF participants, who ranked this second, but it was the eighth-ranked attribute in the press. The weight of importance given to Lin's 'political style' by participants also differed appreciably from that by the press. While this attribute was ranked ninth in the press, it was the third and second on the image agendas of participants with higher education and LEF participants respectively. HEF participants' views on the rank order of Lin's 'qualifications and experience' were closer to those of the press. By contrast, this attribute did not receive any attention from participants with lesser education. LEF participants and the press assigned a similar level of importance to Lin's 'political honesty' in comparison with no mention of this attribute among the rest of the participants. The rank order of Lin's 'presentation skills/communication' on the image agendas of all participants except LEM participants was close to that of the press. Noticeable discrepancies in the rank order of Lin's 'leadership qualities' could also be found between the image agenda of the press and the image agendas of all participants. All participants made no reference to Lin's 'intelligence' and 'religion', two last-placed attributes in the press. From the above analysis, it showed that there was little similarity between newspaper coverage and perceptions of all sub-groups on the top five salient attributes of Lin.

# Chapter 7 - Summary and Conclusions

Taiwan has successfully transformed itself from an authoritarian regime to a newly democratised country with open and fair elections. Previously, the president of Taiwan was chosen through the indirect election by National Assembly representatives. The 1996 presidential election was extremely significant because it was the first time the electorate could decide directly who would lead the country. The direct election of the president was thus considered an important step in the process of Taiwan's political democratisation (Copper, 1998).

Election campaigns provide an ideal time to examine the agenda-setting process because they traditionally contain an agenda of issues and candidates (Jeffres, 1997). China's missile firing and military exercises, together with the US's response to the cross-strait crisis, provided the backdrop to the 1996 presidential election in Taiwan and thus became the 'agenda' of the campaign. The broader context within which this election took place offers a good opportunity to study news media coverage of the electoral campaign and the public perceptions of key issues and candidates (Chapter 1).

Since McCombs and Shaw's (1972) study of the 1968 US presidential election, the news media have been suggested by some researchers to have an agenda-setting function that helps construct what Lippmann (1922) called 'the pictures in our heads' though the effects were not clear-cut. Elements prominent in the media picture also become important in the audience's picture (McCombs, 1996). It is argued that voters learn about the major issues of the day, campaign issues, and important characteristics of candidates through media coverage. Priorities in this coverage may influence the priorities of the public. In other words, the core hypothesis of agenda-setting research asserts a relationship between news media coverage of public issues and the order of significance attached to these same issues by the public. The media's emphasis on certain issues rather than on other issues influences which issues the

public consider to be important. Consistent with the findings of McCombs and Shaw's original study, considerable empirical evidence has been found in support of this hypothesis (Chapter 2).

Beginning with a series of US presidential election studies, the agenda-setting model primarily originated in a Western society, and most of the agenda-setting studies were accordingly carried out in the contexts of Western culture, with only a few studies being conducted in Asian countries. Social scientists have suggested more research in other countries is needed to compare media functions in these nations (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). This thesis attempts to explore the agenda-setting role of the news media in the Taiwanese context, especially in relation to the significant 1996 presidential election.

The research mainly aims to find out answers to the following questions:

1. To examine which issues are most heavily covered and given priority by the press during the presidential period;

2. To find out the relative contributions of political parties/candidates, and the press to the formation of the newspaper campaign agenda;

3. To analyse which actors are given greater prominence over others in newspaper campaign coverage;

4. To look at which candidates' image attributes are most emphasised by the press and how they are covered;

5. To analyse the sources of candidates' image attributes covered in the press;

6. To examine public perceptions of the important issues and candidates' image attributes, and why these perspectives were formed in this way;

7. To analyse if participants with different gender and educational backgrounds would have different agendas on important issues, campaign issues, and image attributes;

8. To compare and contrast newspaper coverage and public perceptions of issues and

candidates' image attributes.

To address these questions, this study adopted two research methods: content analysis of news items relating to domestic politics and the presidential election in three selected Taiwanese newspapers (see Chapter 4) and extended focus groups (see Chapter 5). The former was mainly used to determine the issue agenda, the campaign agenda, and the image agenda of newspaper coverage; the latter, including pre-session questionnaires and focus group interviews, were not only for measuring the public agendas on important issues, campaign issues, and candidates' image attributes, but also for gaining insights into why these public opinions were formed. The newspapers were selected for the study mainly because radio and television in Taiwan are controlled by the government and serve only the political views of the ruling KMT. By contrast, the majority of the press in Taiwan are privately owned and enjoy more freedom in their coverage (refer to Chapter 1).

Focus groups proved to be innovative in studying agenda-setting research. Traditional survey-based agenda-setting studies have relied heavily on statistical measures to analyse and quantify data and often obtained 'superficial top-of-the-head' answers from respondents in ascertaining the public agenda because there was little room for them to elaborate on their responses (Perry, 1996). Therefore, such kind of studies failed to tell us why people think in that way and why they consider issues important (Davis and Robinson, 1986). By contrast, focus groups can allow the researcher to go beyond simple, superficial answers and probe further so as to understand what is in the minds of respondents concerning their agendas on important issues and salient candidate image attributes and why they think so. This is mainly so because the open and interactive response format of focus groups provides opportunities for greater clarification of answers in respondents' own terms and explanations for why their opinions are formed in that way. As indicated by Morgan (1988), focus groups are useful for investigating what participants think, but also excel at uncovering why participants think as they do.

The thesis findings suggest that the top five most significant issues appearing on the *newspaper issue agenda* were 'cross-strait relations', 'national defence', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'law and order', and 'international relationships'. The analysis of the press coverage of the election shows that the *newspaper campaign agenda* was dominated by five key issues, including 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'national defence', 'law and order', and 'economic development'. There were striking similarities in the issue emphasis between the two agendas. The issue of 'cross-strait relations' mainly focused on national identity and tense relations between Taiwan and China resulting from China's military exercises and missile tests aiming to influence the election. Because of these threats, the press also attached more importance to the issue of 'national defence', with wide coverage on the possibility of cross-strait war, national security, and military defence. The coverage of 'improvement of the democratic political system' in the press was about the impact of the presidential election on constitutional reform and party politics, money politics, and political neutrality. The issue of 'law and order' centred on crime and the degeneration of Taiwan's social order and traditional values. The issue of 'international relationships' received much attention in the press mainly because of Taiwan's campaign for the UN membership and Taiwan-US relations as well as international concerns about the cross-strait crisis. The press also mentioned the issue of 'economic development' with noticeable frequency, especially emphasising the poor economic performance in Taiwan and the government's efforts to boost the economy.

The findings deriving from further analysis of election-related news items demonstrate that the press carried more party-and candidate-initiated campaign-related issues than media-initiated ones. With only 16.1% of total campaign coverage created by journalists, the press did not present election-related stories on its own very much. Rather, political parties and candidates were in a more advantageous position in initiating election-related issues themselves. Overall, the DPP was quite successful in getting its message across to readers because it was the most often mentioned initiator in the press, followed by the KMT, the independents Lin and Hau and

their campaigners, and the independents Chen and Wang and their campaign workers. This indicates that the political parties and candidates contribute more to the formation of a campaign agenda in Taiwan than the press. On the other hand, although the three newspapers had a very large number of party- and candidate-initiated items, not all the major parties and candidates were capable of having the same potential in influencing the newspaper campaign agenda. It is revealing that the independents Lin and Hau and their campaign staff were more successful than the other parties and candidates in initiating election-related issues in the *United Daily News*, a pro-conservative KMT newspaper, while the DPP initiated more stories in the *China Times*, which leans more towards the KMT's liberal wing and also takes a more moderate position on the DPP's political proposals. The KMT was the most popular initiator in the *Liberty Times*, a paper whose political stance is both pro-DPP and pro-liberal KMT faction.

In consonance with the findings of initiators of election-related issues, the study also demonstrates that the press published much more party- and candidate-initiated campaign *visuals* than media-initiated ones. While the press took the overall lead in initiating campaign *visuals*, over 77% of the total were initiated by the parties and candidates. This trend also applies to the newspapers individually. This indicates that the political parties and candidates were very successful in initiating the campaign *visuals* in the way they themselves posed for. This study also finds that the individual newspapers had different preferences in publishing campaign *visuals* as initiated by the parties and candidates. For example, the *United Daily News* used more campaign *visuals* initiated by the independent candidates Lin and Hau and their campaigners, whereas the *China Times* was in favour of publishing *visuals* initiated by the DPP.

It is clear that the press does give more prominence to some actors/sources than to others in election coverage. This study shows that over 80% of the actors/sources quoted or referred to in the total campaign coverage of the press were the political parties and candidates competing

for the presidency. The reason why the major political parties and prospective presidential candidates in particular are much sought after seems to lie in the fact that the election is a predominantly political drama enacted by those who are the main actors in politics. Since the four teams of presidential candidates and the two major political parties (the KMT and the DPP) were the main contestants, it is not surprising that they would receive more attention from the press. As revealed by the findings, the KMT was covered most frequently in all the newspapers put together, followed by the DPP, the independent Lin-Hau team, and the independent Chen-Wang team. The weight of press coverage given to these top four actors seemed to mirror the order in which they came in the presidential election outcome, which shows the KMT Lee-Lien team won the presidency. This also may explain why the second major opposition party, the NP, had less press coverage because it did not nominate its own candidates. It can therefore be concluded that major political parties and candidates with partisan support had more access to the news media since they have more resources and may stand a better chance of winning the election.

On the other hand, the political stance of newspapers and the nature of news stories could influence the degrees of prominence given to the news sources. For example, the *United Daily News,* a pro-KMT newspaper, referred to the KMT more often than it did to the other actors whereas the *China Times* and the *Liberty Times,* two papers sympathetic to the DPP, quoted the DPP as its news sources more frequently. The independents Lin and Hau were the most often mentioned individual actors in the three newspapers because they appeared in many newsworthy stories concerning negative campaigning against the incumbent Lee.

The study also discovers that political parties and candidates, accounting for more than 80% of the actors photographed in the press overall, were the main actors in the campaign *visuals.* The independent Lin-Hau team appeared most often in all campaign pictures. The DPP was the second most pictured actor, followed by the KMT, and then the independent Chen-Wang team. The domination of the political parties and their candidates in campaign *visuals*

conforms to the same trends found earlier; that political parties and their candidates gained more publicity as actors/sources in the press during the election campaign. This suggests that the press tends to give much more prominence literally and visually to the main political parties and prospective candidates because they were the predominant actors in the campaign. On the other hand, not all the major political parties and their candidates were equally presented in campaign *visuals*. The importance given to these political parties and candidates, to some degree, still reflected the political stands of the newspapers and the nature of news stories. The *United Daily News*, as the study shows, placed most emphasis on the campaign *visuals* of the independent Lin-Hau team. The DPP was more successful in having its pictures published in the *China Times*. Although the independent Lin-Hau team and the DPP gained the most publicity in campaign *visuals* in the *Liberty Times*, there was no real difference in the distribution of campaign photographs among the four contenders in the paper.

The research also examines presidential candidates' image attributes in newspaper campaign coverage. The findings show that Chen's 'partisan affiliation', 'personal background', 'issue and policy stands', 'religion', and 'political style' were the five most salient attributes covered by the press. Chen's 'issue and policy stands' was presented more unfavourably and his 'religion' was slightly negative, whereas the other three attributes were covered in a more favourable manner. The press attached most importance to the president-elect Lee's 'personal background', followed by 'partisan affiliation', 'political honesty', 'presentation skills/communication', and 'issue and policy stands'. All of these five most often mentioned attributes were given more negative coverage in the press. Peng's 'partisan affiliation' received the most attention in the press, followed by 'personal background', 'qualifications and experience', 'issue and policy stands', and 'political style'. It was found that the press was generally positive in presenting Peng's five key attributes. The most emphasised attributes of Lin were his 'partisan affiliation', 'issue and policy stands', 'personal background', 'localism', and 'integrity and virtues'. More favourable evaluation was given to these attributes, although 'issue and policy stands' was presented in a much more negative way.

Overall, the newspaper image agendas on the four presidential candidates were noticeably different from each other. It was found that the attribute of 'religion' was linked much more to Chen than to the other three candidates. This was mainly so because Chen was a devoted Buddhist and had a close working relationship with the Buddhist organisation during the campaign. Similarly, Lee's 'political honesty' and 'presentation skills/communication' were covered more than his opponents'. The press mainly focused on his alleged ties to certain interest groups and the underworld, as well as his controversial speeches and communication style. Peng was given more coverage for his 'partisan affiliation' and 'qualifications and experience' than were other candidates. Peng's political appeals for Taiwanese independence, his experience as a respected veteran advocate of democratic reform and independence, and his contributions to promoting Taiwan's status internationally, may explain why he received significant coverage on these two attributes. Lin received greater coverage of his 'issue and policy stands' and 'localism' because of his distinctive anti-independence policies and his local qualities. The evaluation of candidates' image attributes shows that Lee's image was generally more negatively presented than the other candidates' in the press as he received the least positive attribute coverage and the most negative attribute coverage. This was mainly so because the incumbent Lee appeared in many news stories that covered how he was harshly criticised by his rivals, but most of negative evaluation of Lee came from his challengers, not the journalists. By contrast, the press was more favourable in presenting Peng's image since he was given the most positive attribute evaluation and the least negative attribute evaluation. Despite Peng's good image presented in the press, he still lost to Lee in the presidential race. Possible explanations were that Peng's name recognition was not as high as the incumbent Lee's, Peng's pro-independence stance worried voters, and the 'Lee Teng-hui complex' influenced DPP sympathisers on their preference for Lee rather than Peng (Bellows, 1996).

The study also reveals that the press relied more on the candidates themselves and their campaigners than on itself as the source when reporting presidential candidates' image attributes. For example, Chen and his campaigners were the most frequent source for his own

image, followed by journalists. The same can be said of Peng and Lin. By contrast, the press referred much more to Lin and his campaign workers as the source of Lee's image, whereas Lee and his campaign staff were the second most often mentioned source, closely followed by Peng and his campaigners. No further explanation is necessary as to why the most often mentioned source of the candidate's image was the candidate himself since they were the main actors in the election campaign, and had easy access to the news media. Understandably they would make use of this chance to project a good image in order to impress voters. On the other hand, candidates could also use this easy access to the news media to attack their rivals. This was the reason why Lin and Peng, and their respective campaigners, were quoted so often as sources in press coverage of Lee's image, which as mentioned above was presented more unfavourably.

A further noticeable feature arising from the analysis suggests that the preference for image sources in the three individual newspapers, to some extent, still followed their respective political perspectives. For example, Lee and his campaign staff were referred to as the source of his own image more often in the *Liberty Times* than in the *United Daily News*. Similarly, the *Liberty Times* also quoted Peng and his campaigners as Peng's image source more frequently than did the *United Daily News*. It was also found that when referring to the sources of Lin's image, the *Liberty Times* mentioned Lee's team and Peng's team with more frequency than did the *United Daily News*. Therefore, in terms of the opportunity for media access, the *Liberty Times* seemed to have a clear slant towards Lee and Peng, whereas the *United Daily News* was not so favourable to them.

This thesis has found that 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'economic development', 'cross-strait relations', 'law and order', and 'environment/ecology' were the top five most mentioned issues on the *public issue agenda*, which was obtained from the analysis of pre-session questionnaires and supported by responses and justifications from focus group interviews as previously detailed in Chapter 5.

The issue of 'improvement of the democratic political system' was regarded by participants as the most important issue mainly because of the corrupting influence of money and organised crime in politics and unsatisfactory legislative performance. As pointed out by participants[1], the most serious obstacle to the development of the democratic political system included 'the influence of organised crime in politics' and 'politicians' involvement in corruption practices in public-works', 'political graft and illicit deal-making between politicians and business groups', and 'the close linkage between elected officials and organised crime groups' or 'underworld activity and gang violence'. Participants also attributed the degeneration of Taiwan's democratic political system to legislative inefficiency and violent conflict within the legislature. In particular, they believed that 'legislators did not represent or recognise the interest of the public' and that the frequent parliamentary violent conflicts among legislators or party rivalries had 'paralysed the legislative process' and 'delayed legislative efficiency'.

Participants were concerned with 'economic development' at the macro level and from their own personal experiences or interests. They accordingly attached importance to this issue. On one hand, they recognised the importance of economic development in Taiwan due to its lack of natural resources, the need for reforming the economic system to 'build a reasonable and equitable market economy, and an efficient and complete investment environment', financial irregularities in the banking business which was controlled and used by local politicians as vote-buying machines, the importance of eliminating impediments to investment by 'simplifying laws' or 'revising outdated regulations' and 'stopping corruption and removing bureaucratic obstacles', and the influence of political factors such as cross-strait relations on Taiwan's economic stability. On the other hand, most participants paid more attention to economic issues relevant to their own daily life or interests. Micro issues of 'economic development', such as soaring house prices, increases in unemployment, disputes between labour and capital, the unfair distribution of wealth, and remedial measures for boosting a weak stock market, were participants' primary concern.

---

[1]. All the quotes of participants were detailed in Chapter 5, please refer to the relevant analysis in that chapter.

Although 'cross-strait relations' was the third most important issue revealed in the results of pre-session questionnaires, it was most heatedly discussed in the focus groups due to its complexity. The discussion mainly centred on growing tensions between Taiwan and China, Taiwan's national defence and security, and national identity. The deteriorating relations with China and Taiwan's national security became matters of great importance in participants' minds because China had launched a series of military exercises and missile tests both before and during Taiwan's presidential election. Participants worried that Chinese hostility had threatened Taiwanese stability and would eventually result in 'a full-scale war' cross the Taiwan Straits. They pointed out that stopping China from using force to attack Taiwan, measures to avoid the escalation of the cross-strait crisis into a war, ensuring Taiwan's stability and security, and setting Beijing back to the negotiating table to improve relations, were urgent issues. Repairing the damaged relations between Taiwan and China to prevent further military confrontation was the responsibility of both sides.

On the other hand, some participants believed that cross-strait tensions were unlikely to lead to an all-out war. In their opinion, China's military exercises were 'a kind of psychological warfare' and aimed to 'undermine support for President Lee and independent sentiment in Taiwan' or coerce the Taiwanese people into 'surrendering to Beijing and being reunified by it'. Participants also suggested that the possible reasons for Chinese military intimidation included 'Beijing's fear and hatred of Taiwan's democracy', Taiwan's active quest for international recognition, preventing Taiwan moving towards independence, and influencing Taiwan's presidential election. The 'one-China' issue, as argued by some participants, was the cause of conflict between Taiwan and China since both sides held different views on 'what one China means'. Closely related to the 'one-China' problem was the issue of national identity: the future of Taiwan, which participants considered a most important issue. Participants noted that 'a clear national identity', based on the decision of all Taiwanese people 'through democratic processes', was needed in order to 'avoid political discord' despite their differences in preference for Taiwan's future. Participants in favour of Taiwanese independence argued

that it was 'the only way for Taiwan to survive' with dignity both 'diplomatically and internationally', the only way to be 'an equal player on the international stage' without being considered part of China and being isolated internationally, and of benefit to Taiwan and China. Instead of creating a separation, some asked to recognise the fact that Taiwan is already a *de facto* independent country, and not a part of China. Those opposing reunification with China considered it unfavourable to Taiwan because 'the two sides are too far apart' in terms of the huge gap in standards of living, democratisation, and freedom. For this reason, participants who supported reunification were also wary of moving too fast to reunify. They maintained that reunification was 'a long-term goal' in the future, which would only be possible when China moved towards a more democratic society with 'equal standards of living to that of Taiwan', and treated Taiwan 'on equal footing'. The sample of responses in the focus groups also showed that most participants who highlighted national identity as the key issue preferred maintaining Taiwan's *status quo*. Some participants mentioned that they were quite happy with the current situation in Taiwan, but believed that Taiwan should 'gain more international recognition'. Participants also regarded it as a safe choice for Taiwan to maintain the *status quo* because 'if we declare Taiwanese independence, China will definitely use military force to attack us'. A wait-and-see attitude towards the issue of Taiwan's future could also be found among some participants who advocated maintaining the *status quo*.

The issue of 'law and order' also received much mention from participants in the focus groups because they were worried about the deterioration of the social order and the collapse of social values. Participants argued that the degradation of social traditional values had led to an ill society where people, especially younger generations, had 'become more indifferent and materialistic', and 'only care about pursuing pleasure and fame'. They just wanted to 'make easy money by fair means or foul', indulged in 'money games to wish to get rich overnight', and no longer worked hard. Apart from lamenting over Taiwanese society being taken over by 'greed, cruelty and fast money', participants also attributed the decline of social values to Taiwan's rapid democratisation. They believed that some people abused the meanings of

freedom provided by democratisation and that democratisation also brought about overemphasis on individualism, the result of which was people's indifference to their community, their 'no concern for the general welfare', and excesses of material gains. The rise of violent crime was another reason for participants to name 'law and order' as an important issue. Participants felt insecure because of the deterioration of the social order and they hoped that the government could take concrete action to crack down on crimes and manage threats to public safety so that they could have a safe environment to live. Participants also mentioned that school and family education played an important role in halting the decline of social values, and suggested the need for spiritual reform to 'reconstruct social ethics', to 'improve the degenerating spirit of citizenship', and to 'promote traditional virtues and elevate the level of our spiritual lives'.

'Environment/ecology' was an issue of great concern because participants sensed the severity of environmental pollution and ecological devastation. Knowing that environmental pollution, (including air, water, and noise pollution), had reached irritating and intolerable levels in Taiwan, they urged that more concrete action should be taken to protect the environment. Participants pointed out that the cause of environmental pollution and ecological over-exploitation was people's 'ignorance' of proper environmental ideas, their 'lack of concern for public welfare', and the rapid development of industry. The public, participants argued, 'should be taught how to love and protect our environment' by instilling in them the correct environmental thinking to prevent pollution and destruction. In participants' minds, saving and conserving a clean living environment for them to live, and for future generations was everyone's responsibility. On the other hand, some recognised that 'Taiwan had been sacrificing the environment for economic growth' by establishing many highly polluting industries. Therefore, in order to protect the environment, tougher regulations against those industries with harmful discharge were needed and the establishment of less polluting industries should be encouraged.

A further noticeable fact arising from this research shows that the top five principal issues in the minds of participants with different gender and educational backgrounds were the same as those on the *public issue agenda* as mentioned earlier. However, the weight of importance given to these issues by the four groups was somewhat different. For example, LEM participants did not attach as much importance to 'improvement of the democratic political system' as did the rest of the participants. Lesser educated participants gave more weight to 'economic development' than higher educated participants. Male participants placed more emphasis on 'cross-strait relations'. 'Law and order' drew more attention from LEM participants than from HEM participants. Compared with the rest, HEM participants seemed to mention 'environment/ecology' as the most important issue much more often.

The study shows that the top five issues dominating the *public priority issue agenda* were also the same as those on the *public issue agenda*, but with variations in the order of importance. More significance was attached to 'law and order' because it was the top of all participants' lists of priority issues, whereas 'economic development' received less attention than it did on the *public issue agenda*. Further analysis of the differences in issue importance given by different participants suggests that lesser educated participants mentioned 'law and order' more often than higher educated participants. LEF participants did not put as much emphasis on 'cross-strait relations' as did the rest of the participants. The issue of 'environment/ecology' was given highest priority by HEM participants. HEF participants seemed to mention 'economic development' with the least frequency. Compared to their male counterparts, female participants assigned more significance to 'improvement of the democratic political system'.

The findings of this thesis reveal that there were slight differences in the diversity and weight of importance assigned to the top five issues between the *public campaign agenda* and the *public issue agenda*. It was found that the issues of 'national defence' and 'cross-strait relations' gained more significance on the public campaign agenda, but less attention was

given to 'environment/ecology'. The results of the analysis of campaign issue salience accorded by different participants show that LEF participants mentioned 'improvement of the democratic political system' much more often than HEF participants. The issue of 'cross-strait relations' was attached similar importance by all four groups. Female participants referred to 'law and order' as the most important campaign issue with more frequency than their male counterparts. 'Economic development' drew more attention from lesser educated participants than from higher educated participants. HEM participants made the most reference to 'national defence', whereas this issue found the least mention among HEF participants.

This study also demonstrates that participants' perceptions of the four presidential candidates' image attributes were different. When participants thought of Chen, the five key attributes they linked to him were his 'personal background', 'religion', 'partisan affiliation', 'personality', and 'political style'. The responses to Chen's 'personal background' in the focus groups centred on his age and his family background. Participants pointed out that 'Chen is the youngest presidential candidate'. As the son of the late vice-president (Chen Cheng), Chen's privileged and rich family background also drew much attention from participants. Chen stood out as the candidate who had the strongest religious sentiment. Participants generally regarded him as 'a devout Buddhist' and agreed with 'his appeals for spiritual reform' though some questioned his strong religious connections. In discussing his 'partisan affiliation', participants often mentioned his candidacy as an independent who was 'with the least political baggage', 'freer to advocate policies without having to consider party interests', and short of political support and resources to win the election. Chen's 'personality' also received much attention from participants. They pointed out that he was 'a person with a clean image', 'a frank and trustworthy candidate', 'a gentle person with good moral sense', and an honest public figure 'like a clean stream'. However, several participants had a negative opinion of Chen's personality, as they considered him a 'complicated' or 'pretentious' person. Participants' impressions of Chen's 'political style' were based on his

ability and political honesty. Most recognised Chen's past performance in government service and mentioned that he was 'an honest and clean official', an official with great political integrity, a hardworking and capable official, and a person 'not obsessed with power'.

As for the president-elect Lee, his five most often mentioned attributes on the *public image agenda* included his 'personal background', 'ability', 'partisan affiliation', 'qualifications and experience', and 'political honesty'. Participants were not unaccustomed to Lee's 'personal background' because he was 'the incumbent president', 'the head of state', 'the first native Taiwanese to hold the job of president', an expert with a 'PhD in agricultural economics', and 'the oldest of the four presidential candidates' yet full of energy. When participants talked about Lee's 'ability', they also referred to his 'qualifications and experience', such as his posts as an official on the Council for Agricultural Planning and Development, as Taipei Mayor, as Taiwanese Governor, as the vice-president, and as the incumbent president. The main focus of discussion was on his political competence in leading the country, his past performance in government service, and his contributions to Taiwanese democracy. Participants recognised that Lee was a 'capable' and 'experienced' leader in handling 'domestic affairs' and raising 'Taiwan's international status'. Participants associated Lee with Taiwanese democracy because they believed that with his contributions to a series of democratic reform, Lee was 'the moving force behind the new Taiwan', which had been transformed from a one-party dominated state. Lee's ability to cope with the cross-strait relations was also appreciated by some. They pointed out that Lee promoted the rapid development of cross-strait relations and did well in dealing with China's military threats. Nevertheless, some participants had an unfavourable opinion of Lee's 'ability' to stop rampant corruption of money politics, to improve the weakening economy, and to reduce escalations in cross-strait tensions. When participants discussed Lee's 'partisan affiliation', they often referred to his role as 'the KMT chairman' and as 'the KMT presidential candidate', the political advantages and resources Lee was offered by the KMT, and the power conflicts between Lee and his conservative opponents in the party. Participants generally had negative impressions of Lee's 'political honesty' when

discussing this attribute. They questioned Lee's unclear financial dealings in a luxurious house, his close ties to special business groups, his endorsement of gang-connected politicians, and inconsistencies between his words and his actions as a political leader.

Participants were impressed with Peng's 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', 'qualifications and experience', 'political style', 'appearance and bearing', and 'religion'. When mentioning Peng's 'personal background', their impressions centred on 'his active promotion of Taiwanese independence', his tragic experience as 'a victim of the white terror' under the Chiang regime, his sufferings as 'an exiled dissident', and his academic achievements. Most participants had a neutral opinion of Peng's personal experience as a political refugee, whereas only a few considered that Peng's exile abroad had distanced him from voters and from Taiwan's political circle. Peng's 'partisan affiliation' was an obvious attribute in the minds of participants because they knew he was close to the opposition, 'he was identified with the DPP's pro-independence platform', 'he openly advocated Taiwanese independence', and he ran as the DPP's presidential candidate. Although several participants doubted Peng's political affiliation with the DPP and his political ideology of Taiwanese independence, his 'partisan affiliation' was evaluated either neutrally or positively by participants. Participants also linked 'qualifications and experience' to Peng frequently. In their opinion, Peng was 'the godfather of the Taiwanese independence movement', 'the godfather of the opposition', 'the intellectual fountainhead of Taiwanese self-determination movement', and a man with foresight and international experience due to his contributions to Taiwan's democracy, international status, and independence movement. When talking about Peng's 'political style', participants often referred to his 'scholarly image', which made him different from other politicians. Participants generally had a good opinion of Peng's political style and considered him 'a real statesman' who 'refused to compromise his ideals' though several believed Peng was 'too idealistic to be a politician'. Participants' perceptions of Peng's 'appearance and bearing' and 'religion' centred on the fact that 'Peng lost his left arm', 'Peng behaves like a well-educated gentleman', and 'Peng is a Presbyterian'. Although

participants appreciated Peng's contributions to Taiwanese independence, independence under the shadow of China's military attack still worried voters, as showed by the earlier discussion of 'cross-strait relations'. This may partly explain why Peng, despite his good image projected, did not win the election.

The five key attributes of Lin as perceived by participants included 'partisan affiliation', 'ability', 'personality', 'political style', and 'issue and policy stands'. 'Partisan affiliation' was most often mentioned mainly because of his political relations with the KMT and the NP. Participants knew that 'Lin was KMT vice-chairman' and leader of the KMT's non-mainstream faction, but was forced to leave the KMT because he campaigned for NP candidates and insisted on running for the presidency against Lee. While some participants believed that Lin's close political affiliation with the NP was the right choice, others argued that the NP's distinctive pan-Chinese ideology would not do him any good. When talking about Lin's 'ability', participants also referred to his 'qualifications and experience'. They generally considered him to be a man 'with great political competence' in government affairs because of his outstanding past administrative performance. Lin's 'personality' drew much attention from participants when they thought of him. Most participants regarded him as a 'kind', 'gentle', 'approachable', 'trustworthy', 'honest', and 'good-humoured' person, but some participants argued that Lin lacked personality and charisma to be a leader because he was too 'soft' and 'indecisive'. Divided opinions on Lin's 'political style' were also heard in the focus groups. While some participants appreciated Lin's 'down-to-earth', 'moderate', and 'flexible' political style, some considered him 'too soft and easy to compromise', an ambitious politician with 'obvious bureaucratic airs', 'an opportunist', and 'a politician without political principle'. Participants' discussions about Lin's 'issue and policy stands' mainly focused on his stance on the issue of independence and reunification. Some agreed with Lin's anti-independence stance and considered his 'conciliatory' policies to China to be 'flexible' and 'pragmatic', whereas others criticised him for being 'pro-appeasement' and 'soft' on negotiations with China.

The findings of this study also suggest that participants with different gender and educational backgrounds assigned different levels of importance to the top three attributes of the four presidential candidates. It was found that Chen's 'partisan affiliation', 'qualifications and experience', and 'issue and policy stands' received more attention from HEF participants than from LEF participants. Male participants attached more importance to Chen's 'personal background'. Lesser educated participants made more mention of Chen's 'religion' and 'personality' than higher educated participants. In the case of Lee, this study shows that Lee's 'ability' was mentioned the most by LEF participants, but least by HEM participants. LEF participants put more emphasis on Lee's 'personal background' than their higher educated counterparts. No marked differences in the level of significance given to Lee's 'partisan affiliation' were found among all participants with the exception of LEF participants. Compared with their female counterparts, male participants attached more importance to Lee's 'qualifications and experience'. HEM participants referred to Lee's 'political honesty' most often, whereas LEF participants paid the least attention to this attribute.

The analysis of participants' perceptions of Peng's image attributes shows that HEF participants were consistent with their lesser educated counterparts in offering the same level of importance in percentage to Peng's 'partisan affiliation'. Peng's 'personal background' weighed the most in the minds of HEM participants, but least in the minds of HEF participants. On the other hand, LEF participants attached the same importance to Peng's 'personal background' as their male counterparts did. There was a strikingly similar pattern in the importance assigned to Peng's 'qualifications and experience' by all participants, except LEF participants. Regarding the differences in participants' impressions of Lin's image attributes, this study shows that LEM participants made the most mention of Lin's 'partisan affiliation', whereas HEF participants referred to this attribute least. LEM participants put more emphasis on Lin's 'ability' than their female counterparts, but HEM and HEF participants showed no obvious differences in the level of importance attached to this attribute. While Lin's 'issue and policy stands' received the least attention from LEF participants, HEM participants and

their lesser educated counterparts mentioned this attribute with almost the same frequency. All four groups of participants showed marked similarities in the importance attached to Lin's 'personality'. Lin's 'political style' found the most mention among LEF participants, but drew least attention from LEM participants. HEF participants and their male counterparts attached the same weight of significance to this attribute.

Comparing the results of newspaper content analysis with the findings of the focus groups, it appears that some differences in ranking of issues existed between the *newspaper issue agenda* and the *public issue agenda*. This study reveals that participants attached no importance to the issues of 'national defence', 'international relationships', 'government efficiency', 'mass media', 'Mainlander-Taiwanese rift', 'urban and rural development', and 'science/technology' because these issues found no mention on the public issue agenda. Further comparison of the top five issues between the *newspaper issue agenda* and the *public issue agenda* also indicates that the two were only consistent in the rank order of the issue of 'law and order'. Newspaper coverage and public perceptions were also close in the order of importance assigned to two issues: 'cross-strait relations' and 'improvement of the democratic political system'. 'Cross-strait relations', the most emphasised issue by the press, was the third key issue in the minds of participants. Instead, the most important issues considered by participants were 'improvement of the democratic political system' and 'economic development', and their corresponding rankings on the newspaper issue agenda were third and sixth. Newspaper coverage, nevertheless, was at marked variance with public perceptions on the issue emphasis of 'environment/ecology', the fifth-ranked issue in the minds of participants, and only the fourteenth issue on the newspaper issue agenda.

This research also further reveals that participants with different gender and educational backgrounds perceived the importance of the top five issues differently from the press. For example, 'cross-strait relations', the top-ranked issue on the newspaper issue agenda, was the fourth key issue in the minds of female participants, but it was ranked third by males. While

'improvement of the democratic political system' was the third most covered issue in the press, it was attached the most importance by higher educated participants. By contrast, LEF participants and their male counterparts regarded 'improvement of the democratic political system' as the second and the fourth salient issue respectively. The issue of 'law and order' was assigned the close weight of importance by the press and female participants. Participants with lesser education put the most emphasis on 'economic development', the sixth key issue on the newspaper issue agenda, whereas the corresponding rankings of this issue were second and fourth on the issue agendas of HEF and HEM participants respectively. Besides, the press and participants of the four sub-groups showed marked differences in the significance given to the issue of 'environment/ecology'.

This research further indicates that overall noticeable differences also existed in the ranking of the most important issues of the day between the *newspaper issue agenda* and the *public priority issue agenda*. This was mainly so because there were only five key issues given top priority by participants in comparison with sixteen issues covered in the newspapers. However, as far as comparisons of the top five salient issues between the two agendas were concerned, newspaper coverage and public perceptions were close in the order of importance given to three issues: 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', and 'law and order'. By contrast, participants were particularly at variance with the newspapers in the weight of salience accorded to the issue of 'environment/ecology'.

This study also shows that on the whole there was not much marked similarity in the ranking of the first five important issues between the newspaper issue agenda and the public priority issue agendas of the sub-groups. Public perceptions of the four groups differed greatly from newspaper coverage in the level of importance accorded to the issue of 'environment/ecology' since this issue was given less priority in the press when compared with its respective importance assigned by the four groups of participants. However, the findings also reveal that female participants attached the same weight of salience to the issue of 'improvement of the

democratic political system' as the press did. HEM participants were consistent with the press in the rank order of 'law and order'.

Revealed in the study is also the finding that the *public campaign agenda* generally slightly differed from the *newspaper campaign agenda* in the issue diversity and emphasis. It was found that participants made no mention of 'mass media', 'science/technology', and 'urban and rural development' on their list of important campaign issues. However, it is worth noting that the two agendas were quite similar in the rank order of the first five key campaign issues: 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'national defence', 'law and order', and 'economic development'.

The results emerging from the further comparison of the top five salient campaign issues between the newspaper campaign agenda and the public campaign agendas of the sub-groups suggest that participants and the press assigned the similar or identical order of importance to four campaign issues: 'cross-strait relations', 'improvement of the democratic political system', 'law and order', and 'economic development'. By contrast, there were wide differences in the level of significance accorded to 'national defence' between the newspaper campaign agenda and the campaign agenda of HEF participants. Striking variations in the ranking of 'government efficiency' also existed . between the newspaper campaign agenda and the campaign agendas of higher educated participants. Overall, the views of LEF participants on the top five key campaign issues were closer to the newspaper coverage of those issues than the views of HEF participants.

This research has shown that on the whole the rank order of four presidential candidates' image attributes emphasised in the press did not correspond exactly with that of their relative image attributes in the minds of participants. Marked differences were discerned between press coverage and public perceptions on the substantive attributes of Chen's 'private life' and 'presentation skills/communications', whereas his 'political style', 'intelligence', and 'ancestral

origin' were the attributes with the same level of significance on the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda*. Nevertheless, when the top five attributes linked to Chen between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda* were compared, it was found that the two agendas were similar to each other in the degree of salience assigned to four of Chen's substantive attributes: 'political style', 'personal background', 'religion', and 'partisan affiliation'.

Participants were found to be at obvious variance with the press in the weight of importance assigned to Lee's 'integrity and virtues', 'appearance and bearing', 'private life', 'qualifications and experience', 'personality', and 'presentation skills/communication'. By contrast, participants were consistent with the press in the order of importance attached to Lee's 'personal background' and 'political style'. The further comparison of Lee's top five substantive attributes suggests that the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda* were close in the rank order of three attributes, including 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', and 'political honesty'.

It was found that some striking discrepancies existed between the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda* in the order of importance given to Peng's 'political philosophy', 'localism', 'integrity and virtues', 'political honesty', and 'ancestral origin', but his 'qualifications and experience' was given the same ranking on both agendas. This study, nevertheless, further shows that there were substantial similarities between the two agendas in the level of importance assigned to the top five most often mentioned substantive attributes of Peng: 'qualifications and experience', 'personal background', 'partisan affiliation', 'political style', and 'issue and policy stands'.

Participants differed widely from the press in the weight of importance accorded to Lin's 'intelligence', 'religion', 'political style', and 'personality'. On the other hand, identical levels of importance were attached to his 'partisan affiliation' and 'presentation

skills/communication' by both participants and the press. When the top five most salient substantive attributes of Lin on both the *newspaper image agenda* and the *public image agenda* were compared, it showed that only two attributes were with close order of importance: 'partisan affiliation' and 'issue and policy stands'.

This study further demonstrates that there were similarities in the level of importance accorded to Chen's top five important attributes between the newspaper image agenda and the image agendas of participants with different gender and educational backgrounds. It was found that the views of HEF participants corresponded much more with those of the press than the views of their lesser educated counterparts in terms of the order of importance attached to these five most salient attributes. Male participants, higher educated and lesser educated alike, and the press presented a close pattern of rank order assigned to Chen's first five most salient attributes. The comparison of newspaper coverage and perceptions of the four groups on Lee's top five salient attributes indicates that the image agendas of higher educated participants resembled the newspaper image agenda more closely than the image agendas of lesser educated participants. Similarly, when Peng's first five salient attributes emphasised by the press and the four groups were compared, it was observed that more correspondence existed between the image agenda of HEF participants and the newspaper image agenda than between the image agenda of LEF participants and the newspaper image agenda. The findings of the comparison between the image agendas of the sub-groups and the newspaper image agenda on Lin's top five attributes show that there was little correspondence between newspaper coverage and perceptions of the four groups on these five attributes.

In summary, this study has shown that, to a certain degree, the first dimension of agenda-setting was at work for the top five key campaign issues between the *newspaper campaign agenda* and the *public campaign agenda*, though it was not clear-cut for the top five important issues and priority issues. The findings of the thesis also suggest that the second dimension of agenda-setting was more evident for the top five substantive attributes relating to

candidates Chen and Peng than for Lee's between newspaper coverage and public perceptions. In other words, this study suggests that the agendas of campaign issues and image attributes concerning Chen and Peng mentioned in the Taiwanese newspapers could influence the agendas of campaign issues and attributes that Taichung voters linked to the two presidential candidates. Considering that nearly two thirds of the participants in the study indicated that they were influenced by the press in determining their perceptions of important issues or campaign issues and candidates' attributes (see Chapter 5), it is not so surprising that the public not only learned the level of importance accorded to campaign issues in proportion to the amount of coverage these campaign issues received in the press, but also linked factual information about presidential candidates to Chen and Peng based on the newspaper coverage. On the other hand, despite differences between newspaper coverage and public perceptions on Lee's substantive attributes, Lee still won the election. One possible explanation was that Lee was the incumbent and always enjoyed high name recognition and advantages over his rivals no matter what he was presented by the press.

It is also reflected in the study that the issue agendas, campaign agendas, and image agendas of participants with different gender and educational backgrounds were generally similar but with certain variations in order of importance. Lesser educated participants seemed more concerned about the issues of 'economic development' and 'law and order' than higher educated participants, who paid more attention to the issue of 'improvement of the democratic political system'. From the responses in the focus groups and pre-session questionnaires, these three issues have an *obtrusive* nature, which might have contributed to their high level of importance on the issue agendas of lesser educated participants and higher educated participants respectively. Overall, LEF participants' perceptions of the top five key campaign issues were closer to the *newspaper campaign agenda* than those of their higher educated counterparts. By contrast, higher educated participants, especially females, had views more similar to those expressed in the *newspaper image agenda* in relation to the first five attributes linked to candidates Chen, Lee, and Peng than lesser educated participants. In this sense, this

study showed that education had some influence on agenda-setting of the Taiwanese newspapers. Although there was no agreement on the exact degree of the agenda-setting effects of the press, it could be concluded that newspapers in Taiwan seemed to influence campaign issues among voters in Taichung, especially LEF ones. The press was also found to influence substantive attributes relating to Chen, Lee, and Peng in particular among HEF participants during Taiwan's first-ever direct presidential election.

By not completely following the traditional agenda-setting methodology, the present study, despite its tentative nature, is an early contribution to the field of agenda-setting research. The adoption of extended focus groups in this study proved useful in providing further insights into participants' justifications for their issue agenda and image agenda and thus made it possible to avoid some of the problems the previous agenda-setting studies have faced. Apart from examining the agenda-setting function of a single issue and investigating the influence of time lag on the agenda-setting process by expanding the time span of the study, future research should also increase the number of focus group samples to secure the generalisability and representativeness of the findings.

# Appendix 1

## Press Coding Schedule

### 1. Item number

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] 1-5

### 2. Date

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] 6-11

### 3. Paper
01. The United Daily News       [ ] 12
02. The China Times
03. The Liberty Times

### 4. Page number
01. front page       [ ][ ] 13-14
02. page 2
03. page 3
04. page 4
05. page 5
06. page 6
07. page 7
08. page 8
09. page 9
10. page 10
11. page 11
12. page 12
13. supplementary pages about the presidential election news and China's military exercises

### 5. Type of item
1. news story       [ ] 15
2. feature
3. column
4. editorial
5. analysis/comment
6. photograph
7. interview/profile
8. speech/debate
9. others (e.g. map, diagram, drawing, cartoon...)

6. **Text area** (exclusive of headline) (in square cm.)

[ ] 16

7. **Length of headline** (in square cm.)

[ ] 17

8. **Size of photograph** (in square cm.)

[ ] 18

9. **Priority**
   Was the news item a lead story on the page?                    [ ] 19
   01. yes
   02. no

10. **Campaign**
    Was this new item related to the presidential election?        [ ] 20
    01. yes (skip to category 12)
    02. no (continue category 11)

*<For the Non-election-related News Items>*
11. **Subjects in the non-election-related news item**
    (use the subject list to code, in order of predominance, up to 5 subjects)

| Primary | Secondary | Tertiary | Fourth | Fifth |
|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|
| [ ][ ]  | [ ][ ]    | [ ][ ]   | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 21-22   | 23-24     | 25-26    | 27-28  | 29-30 |

*<For the Election-related News Items>*
12. **Subjects in the election-related news item**
    (use the subject list to code, in order of predominance, up to 5 subjects)

| Primary | Secondary | Tertiary | Fourth | Fifth |
|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|
| [ ][ ]  | [ ][ ]    | [ ][ ]   | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 31-32   | 33-34     | 35-36    | 37-38  | 39-40 |

**13. Initiators of the subject of the election-related news item**

01. KMT (including candidates, party officials, and elected representatives)  Primary
02. DPP (including candidates, party official, and elected representative)  [ ][ ]
03. NP (including party officials and elected representatives)  41-42
04. independents (Lin-Hau) and their campaigners
05. independents (Chen-Wang) and their campaigners  Secondary
06. mixture of parties/candidates  [ ][ ]
07. other small parties  43-44
08. government officials/organisations
09. media (journalists, polls or analysis)  Tertiary
10. interest groups  [ ][ ]
11. non-profit organisations  45-46
12. specialists/experts
13. the public  Fourth
14. others  [ ][ ]
47-48

Fifth
[ ][ ]
49-50

**14. News sources/Actors quoted, interviewed or referred to**
**(main sources and actors)**  Primary
01. KMT candidates (Lee Teng-huei, Lien Chan)  [ ][ ]
02. DPP candidates (Peng Ming-min, Hsieh Chang-ting)  51-52
03. independent candidates (Lin Yang-kang, Hau Pei-tsun)
04. independent candidates (Chen Li-an, Wang Ching-feng)  Secondary
05. KMT party officials/campaigners  [ ][ ]
06. DPP party officials/campaigners  53-54
07. NP party officials
08. other party officials  Tertiary
09. independent Lin-Hau team's campaign organisers or campaigners  [ ][ ]
10. independent Chen-Wang team's campaign organisers or campaigners  55-56
11. KMT elected representatives (e.g. mayor/county magistrate, councilman, legislator, etc.)
12. DPP elected representatives  Fourth
13. NP elected representatives  [ ][ ]
14. independent elected representatives  57-58
15. government officials/civil servants/bureaucrats
16. official documents  Fifth
17. media/news agencies/journalists  [ ][ ]
18. psephologists/opinion poll organisations  59-60
19. researches/studies
20. specialists/experts
21. interest groups
22. businessmen
23. the public/voters
24. China
25. foreign news agencies
26. foreign government officials/experts

27. others
28. not specified
29. not applicable

## 15. Focus of the coverage of the election-related news item
01. substantive coverage                                        [ ] 61
02. election contest reporting
03. combination
04. cannot be determined
05. not applicable

## 16. Presidential candidate(s) covered
01. Chen Li-an                                                  [ ] [ ] 62-63
02. Lee Teng-huei
03. Peng Ming-min
04. Lin Yang-kang
05. Chen Li-an & Lee Teng-huei
06. Chen Li-an & Peng Ming-min
07. Chen Li-an & Lin Yang-kang
08. Lee Teng-huei & Peng Ming-min
09. Lee Teng-huei & Lin Yang-kang
10. Peng Ming-min & Lin Yang-kang
11. Chen Li-an, Lee Teng-huei & Peng Ming-min
12. Chen Li-an, Lee Teng-huei & Lin Yang-kang
13. Chen Li-an, Peng Ming-min & Lin Yang-kang
14. Lee Teng-huei, Peng Ming-min & Lin Yang-kang
15. Chen Li-an, Lee Teng-huei, Peng Ming-min & Lin Yang-kang

## 17. Mention of the presidential candidate's images
01. yes                                                         [ ] 64
02. no

18. **Presidential candidate's images, evaluation and news sources**
    (use the list of image attributes to code candidates' images, in order of predominance, up to 5 attributes)

Evaluation: 01. Positive
02. Negative
03. Neutral
04. Mixed
05. Cannot be determined

Source: 01. independent Chen Li-an
02. Chen's campaign organisers or pro-Chen's campaigners
03. KMT Lee Teng-huei
04. Lee's campaign organisers or pro-Lee's campaigners
05. DPP Peng Ming-min
06. Peng's campaign organisers or pro-Peng's campaigners
07. independent Lin Yang-kang
08. Lin's campaign organisers or pro-Lin's campaigners
09. media (journalists)
10. others
11. cannot be determined

1. **Chen Lin-an**

| Image 1 | Evaluation 1 | Source 1 |
|---|---|---|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 65-66 | 75-76 | 85-86 |

| Image 2 | Evaluation 2 | Source 2 |
|---|---|---|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 67-68 | 77-78 | 87-88 |

| Image 3 | Evaluation 3 | Source 3 |
|---|---|---|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 69-70 | 79-80 | 89-90 |

| Image 4 | Evaluation 4 | Source 4 |
|---|---|---|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 71-72 | 81-82 | 91-92 |

| Image 5 | Evaluation 5 | Source 5 |
|---|---|---|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 73-74 | 83-84 | 93-94 |

**2. Lee Teng-huei**

| Image 1 | Evaluation 1 | Source 1 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 95-96 | 105-106 | 115-116 |

| Image 2 | Evaluation 2 | Source 2 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 97-98 | 107-108 | 117-118 |

| Image 3 | Evaluation 3 | Source 3 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 99-100 | 109-110 | 119-120 |

| Image 4 | Evaluation 4 | Source 4 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 101-102 | 111-112 | 121-122 |

| Image 5 | Evaluation 5 | Source 5 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 103-104 | 113-114 | 123-124 |

**3. Peng Ming-min**

| Image 1 | Evaluation 1 | Source 1 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 125-126 | 135-136 | 145-146 |

| Image 2 | Evaluation 2 | Source 2 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 127-128 | 137-138 | 147-148 |

| Image 3 | Evaluation 3 | Source 3 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 129-130 | 139-140 | 149-150 |

| Image 4 | Evaluation 4 | Source 4 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 131-132 | 141-142 | 151-152 |

| Image 5 | Evaluation 5 | Source 5 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 133-134 | 143-144 | 153-154 |

## 4. Lin Yang-kang

| Image 1 | Evaluation 1 | Source 1 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 155-156 | 165-166 | 175-176 |

| Image 2 | Evaluation 2 | Source 2 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 157-158 | 167-168 | 177-178 |

| Image 3 | Evaluation 3 | Source 3 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 159-160 | 169-170 | 179-180 |

| Image 4 | Evaluation 4 | Source 4 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 161-162 | 171-172 | 181-182 |

| Image 5 | Evaluation 5 | Source 5 |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] | [ ][ ] |
| 163-164 | 173-174 | 183-184 |

<u>*<For election-related Press Visuals only 19-21>*</u>

19. **Main actor(s) in the visual** (up to 2 primary actors per visual to be coded)
    01. KMT (including candidates, party officials, and elected representatives)          [ ][ ]
    02. DPP (including candidates, party officials, and elected representatives)          185-186
    03. NP (including party officials and elected representatives)
    04. independents (Lin-Hau) and their campaigners          [ ][ ]
    05. independents (Chen-Wang) and their campaigners          187-188
    06. mixture of parties/candidates
    07. government officials
    08. specialists and experts
    09. journalists
    10. the public/voters/demonstrators -
    11. others
    12. not applicable

20. **Initiators of the visual** (up to 2 initiators per visual to be coded)
    01. KMT (including party officials, elected representatives and candidates)          [ ][ ]
    02. DPP (including party officials, elected representatives and candidates)          189-190
    03. NP (including party officials and elected representatives)
    04. independents (Lin-Hau) and their campaigners                                    [ ][ ]
    05. independents (Chen-Wang) and their campaigners                                  191-192
    06. mixture of parties/candidates
    07. media/news agencies/journalists/press photographers
    08. government officials/organisations
    09. interest group
    10. psephologists/opinion poll organisations
    11. specialists/experts
    12. other small parties
    13. the public
    14. others
    15. cannot be determined

21. **Tone of the visual**
    01. positive                                                                        [ ] 193
    02. negative
    03. neutral

22. **Dimension/Overall tone of the campaign-related news item**

| | positive | neutral | negative | mixed | non-applicable | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chen | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | [ ] 194 |
| Lee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | [ ] 195 |
| Peng | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | [ ] 196 |
| Lin | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | [ ] 197 |

## Appendix 2

## The Subject List

### (1). Cross-strait relations

01=Taiwanese-Chinese relations (e.g. government's policies toward mainland China, reports of high-level talks and negotiations between Taiwan and China, cross-strait trade, investment, cultural exchanges, agricultural exchanges, direct shipping and air services, repatriation of criminals, Taiwanese internal reaction to cross-strait tensions resulting from China's military exercises and missile tests)

02=National identity (e.g. the future of Taiwan: independence, reunification or the maintenance of the *status quo*)

### (2). Improvement of the democratic political system

03=Constitutional reform (e.g. presidential or cabinet system, division of power between local and central governments)

04=Elections (e.g. the electoral system, regulations and enforcement of election campaign rules, reports of trends in the election campaign such as poll violence and negative campaigning)

05=Party politics (e.g. formation of new political parties, political alliance/coalition, elections for speaker and vice-speaker in the Legislative Yuan, the legislature's consent over the premiership)

06=Democratisation (e.g. the political impartiality of government officials, Cabinet reshuffles)

07=Political stability (e.g. political harmony among political parties, avoidance of national unrest)

08=Parliament (e.g. pace and quality of legislation, conflicts among parliamentarians)

09=Judicial reform

10=Money politics (e.g. vote-buying, collusion between politicians and interest groups and underworld criminal organisations)

### (3). Government efficiency

11=Government efficiency (e.g. government corruption and malpractice)

12=Government policies and regulations

### (4). Law and order

13=Social order (e.g. social unrest such as demonstrations and strikes, social instability such as increases in emigrant numbers and the exchange of US dollars, social justice)

14=Crime/Legal/Law

15=Social trends and values (e.g. change or degeneration in moral standards and social values)

## (5). **Economic development**

16=Economics/Finance (e.g. banking, stock market, exchange-rate, foreign exchange reserves, business investment, international trade - export and import, industry promotion, pay rises for government employees)

17=Inflation

18=Housing and land

19=Tax

20=Labour and employment (e.g. disputes between management and labour, policies on migrant labour)

21=Unemployment and human resources

22=Distribution of wealth

## (6). **Agriculture and fisheries**

23=Agriculture and fisheries

## (7). **International relationships**

24=International status (e.g. membership of the UN and other international organisations)

25=Diplomatic policies and relationships (e.g. Taiwan's foreign policy, the development of its relationships with other countries, foreign perceptions of Taiwan)

26=Taiwan-US relations

## (8). **Environment/Ecology**

27=Environmental protection (e.g. quality of living environment, pollution, and rubbish)

28=Soil and water conservation (e.g. conservation of natural resources, construction of golf courses)

## (9). **Urban and rural development**

29=Population

30=Urban development (e.g. development gap between urban and rural areas)

31=Local community (e.g. reconstruction of local communities and promotion of local culture)

## (10). **Social welfare**

32=Social welfare (e.g. National Health Care, special care for the disabled, special services for low-income earners, old-age pensions)

33=Medicine and public health

34=Women (e.g. feminism, women's employment, care of children)

35=Disadvantaged groups (e.g. the minorities and veterans)

## (11). **National defence**

36= Military defence and national security

## (12). **Mainlander-Taiwanese rift**

37=Mainlander-Taiwanese rift (e.g. problems between Mainlanders and Taiwanese, especially resulting from their divergent views on issues concerning party politics and Taiwan's future)

## (13). **Education/Culture/Arts**

38=Education (e.g. the quality and appropriateness of the educational system, educational policies, textbooks, the quality of teachers)

39=Development of culture/arts

40=Juvenile problems (e.g. juvenile delinquency such as theft, robbery, drug-taking, illegal motorcycle-racing, underworld criminal organisations)

41=Religion

42=Tourism

43=Sports

## (14). **Science/Technology**

44=Science/Technology

## (15). **Traffic/Transportation/Communications**

45=Traffic/Transportation/Communications (e.g. roads, traffic accidents, traffic congestion, privatisation of Taiwanese railway, telecommunications)

## (16). **Mass media**

46=Mass media (e.g. subjects such as fairness of election coverage, and media monopoly of the state/autonomy of the media)

## (17). **Campaign activities**

47=Campaign activities (e.g. stories dealing with campaign strategies used by candidates, stories related to campaign trail activities and events, voter profile and constituency, and stories about poll predictions)

## (18). **Others**

48=Others (e.g. subjects that cannot be satisfactorily classified under any of the above categories)

# Appendix 3

## The List of Image Attributes

(1) **Political style** (e.g. a leader of resolution, dominating style of leadership, soft on negotiation, obsession with power)

(2) **Political honesty** (e.g. abuse of privileges, close ties with business groups and Mafia organisations)

(3) **Political philosophy** (e.g. idealistic political ideals, typical politicians, responding to the public needs)

(4) **Ability** (e.g. government management ability, reform ability, past performance in public office)

(5) **Leadership qualities** (e.g. leadership, think tank, human relations)

(6) **Qualifications and experience** (e.g. qualifications or experience relating to public affairs, foresight and international experience)

(7) **Integrity and virtues** (e.g. honest and trustworthy quality)

(8) **Personality** (e.g. temper, personal character)

(9) **Appearance and bearing**

(10) **Intelligence**

(11) **Presentation skills/communication** (e.g. a good/bad speaker)

(12) **Personal background** (e.g. family background, personal experience, education, age, health, wealth)

(13) **Private life** (e.g. family life and marriage)

(14) **Religion** (e.g. a devoted Buddhist, a Christian, spiritual renewal)

(15) **Ancestral origin** (e.g. Taiwanese or Mainlander)

(16) **Localism** (e.g. Taiwanese/local qualities)

(17) **Partisan affiliation** (e.g. political identification, political relations and factions, political ideology, power struggles, political resources and advantages)

(18) **Issue and policy stands**

(19) **Others** (e.g. attributes that could not be satisfactorily classified under any of the categories listed earlier)

# Appendix 4

## Pre-session Questionnaire

Dear Friend,

I am a PhD student in the UK, doing research on media agenda-setting. Thank you for participating in focus groups. Before we start the focus group session, please fill in the questionnaire. These questionnaires are purely used for academic research, and are absolutely confidential. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions based on your knowledge.

**Public Issue Agenda**

(1). There are many issues of the day in Taiwan. In your opinion, what are the most important problems and issues facing Taiwan now? (Open-ended question allowing for up to five national issues to be mentioned.)

**Public Priority Issue Agenda**

(2). Among these issues, which is the most important to you personally?

**Issue Obtrusiveness**

(3). Does this most important issue affect

___1) many people   2) some people   3) few people   4) no one

(4). Does this issue affect your daily life?

___1) very much   2) somewhat   3) not much   4) not at all

(5). Are you personally concerned about this issue?

___1) very much   2) somewhat   3) not much   4) not at all

**Public Campaign Agenda**

(6). In your view, what will be the most important issues or topics involved in the coming presidential election? (Open-ended question allowing for up to five national issues to be mentioned.)

**Interpersonal Communication**

(7). How often do you discuss those important issues you just mentioned with friends?

___1) very often   2) occasionally   3) seldom   4) never

(8). How often do you discuss those important issues you just mentioned with your family members?

___1) very often   2) occasionally   3) seldom   4) never

(9).    How many of all your friends would discuss those issues with you?

(10).   How many of all your family members would discuss those issues with you?

## Public Image Agenda and Candidate Evaluation

(11).   When you think of Chen, what do you think about? (Open-ended question allowing for up to three attributes to be mentioned.)   What is your evaluation of Chen's image attributes you just mentioned?

(12).   When you think of Lee, what do you think about? (Open-ended question allowing for up to three attributes to be mentioned.)   What is your evaluation of Lee's image attributes you just mentioned?

(13).   When you think of Peng, what do you think about? (Open-ended question allowing for up to three attributes to be mentioned.)   What is your evaluation of Peng's image attributes you just mentioned?

(14).   When you think of Lin, what do you think about? (Open-ended question allowing for up to three attributes to be mentioned.)   What is your evaluation of Lin's image attributes you just mentioned?

## Media Influence

(15).   Did the newspapers in any way influence your perceptions of important issues or campaign issues and candidates' images?

___1) Yes   2) No   3) Cannot determine

## Media Use and Exposure

(16).   Which media do you use most often?

___1) television   2) newspaper   3) radio   4) magazine   5) others (please specify)

(17).   Which newspapers do you read most often? (Open-ended question, up to five newspapers, in the order of frequency)

(18).   How much time on the average do you spend reading newspapers per day?

___1) less than 10 minutes 2) 10-30 minutes 3) more than 30 minutes 4) one hour or more than one hour

(19).   Which channel's TV news do you watch most often?

___1) TTV   2) CTV   3) CTS   4) cable TV

(20).   How much time on the average do you spend watching TV news per day?

___1) less than 10 minutes   2) 10-30 minutes   3) more than 30 minutes   4) up to one hour

(21).   If you want to obtain more information about politics and presidential election, which media will you use?

___1) television   2) newspaper   3) radio   4) news magazine   5) others (please specify)

## Media Evaluation

(22). In your opinion, has the newspaper provided you with enough information to understand the issues you are concerned about?

    ___1) more than enough  2) enough  3) not enough  4) not enough at all

(23). Do you think the newspaper as a whole is impartial in reporting the presidential election?

    ___1) very impartial  2) impartial  3) not impartial  4) not impartial at all

(24). In your opinion, has TV provided you with enough information to understand the issues you are concerned about?

    ___1) more than enough  2) enough  3) not enough  4) not enough at all

(25). Do you think TV news as a whole is balanced in reporting the presidential election?

    ___1) very impartial  2) impartial  3) not impartial  4) not impartial at all

(26). In your opinion, which media is more balanced in reporting the presidential election, television or newspaper?

    ___1) television  2) newspaper  3) both  4) hard to say

## Media Political Gratification

(27). Could you tell me the main reason why you consumed campaign news stories during the election?

    ___ 1) to catch up with current events  2) to help to decide whom to vote for

        3) to get topics for interpersonal discussion  4) to enjoy the excitement of the election

        5) others (please specify)

## Political Interest

(28). The presidential election is going to be held on 23 March.  How interested are you in this election?

    ___1) very interested 2) somewhat interested 3) not very interested 4) not interested at all

(29). When reading a newspaper, how interested are you in reading political news stories and presidential election?

    ___1) very interested 2) somewhat interested 3) not very interested 4) not interested at all

## Political Participation

(30). Did you vote in the 1995 Legislative Elections?

    ___1) Yes  2) No

(31). If you did, which political party's candidate did you vote for?

    ___1) KMT  2) DPP  3) NP  4) Independents

(32). How many times have you attended the stump speeches during the presidential election campaign?

## Political Preference

(33).   Could you tell me which pair of candidates you are going to vote for in the forthcoming presidential election?

___1) Independent Chen-Wang team   2) KMT's Lee-Lin team   3) DPP's Peng-Hsieh team
4) Independent Lin-Hau team

(34).   Which political party do you support?

___1) KMT   2) DPP   3) NP   4) others (please specify)   5) neutral

## National Identity

(35).   Do you think you are a Taiwanese or a Chinese?

___1) Taiwanese   2) Chinese   3) both

(36).   What is your view on Taiwan's future?

___1) reunification with Mainland China   2) independence   3) maintaining the *status quo*

## Demographics

(37).   What is your educational level?

___1) less than elementary school - elementary school graduate   2) junior high school graduate   3) senior high school graduate   4) professional college (graduate)
5) university (graduate) - postgraduate

(38).   What is your age?

___1) 20-24   2) 25-29   3) 30-39   4) 40-49   5) 50-59   6) 60 or older than 60

(39).   Are you a(n)

___1) Taiwanese   2) Hakka   3) Mainlander   4) aboriginal

(40).   What is your approximate monthly income?

___1) less than NT$20,000   2) NT$20,000—NT$49,999   3) NT$50,000—NT$79,999
4) more than NT$80,000

(41).   Participant's gender:

___1) male   2) female

**Appendix 5**

**Questioning Route of the Focus Groups**

At the beginning of each group session, participants were asked to introduce themselves.

1) There are many issues of the day facing Taiwan today. In your opinion, what are the most important issues and why do you think they are important? (Open-ended question, up to five issues to be mentioned)

2) There are four candidates running for the presidency in this election, including Chen Li-an, Lee Teng-hui, Peng Ming-min, and Lin Yang-kang. Let's talk about your perceptions of these four presidential candidates' images.

   When you think of ___, what do you think about? (Open-ended question, up to three image attributes to be mentioned) Which one of the image attributes you just mentioned is more salient? Why do you link this attribute to ___? How do you evaluate this attribute of ___ and why do you think so?

## Appendix 6

### Issue Categories of the Public Agenda

**(1). Cross-strait relations**
- -Taiwanese-Chinese relations
  (e.g. the cross-strait tensions, one China issue)
- -National identity (e.g. the future of Taiwan)
- -Concern about nation security due to the cross-strait crisis
  (e.g. military attack from China and the possibility of war)

**(2). Improvement of the democratic political system**
- -Constitutional reform
- -Elections (e.g. election rules, campaign violence)
- -Party politics
- -Democratisation (e.g. political neutrality)
- -Political stability
- -Parliament
  (e.g. legislative efficiency and quality, legislative conflicts)
- -Money politics
  (e.g. vote bribery, political graft, collusion between politicians and
  business groups or gangsters, Mafia politics)

**(3). Government efficiency**
- -Government efficiency (e.g. corruption, malpractice)
- -Government policies and regulations

**(4). Law and order**
- -Social order (e.g. social instability)
- -Crime/Legal/Law (e.g. the rise of violent crime)
- -Social trends and values (e.g. decline in moral and social values)

## (5). Economic development

-Economics/Finance

(e.g. foreign trade and investment, economic reform, financial irregularities, stock market)

-Inflation (e.g. costs of living)

-Housing and land

(e.g. soaring real estate prices, property speculation)

-Labour and employment (e.g. labour disputes)

-Unemployment

-Distribution of wealth (e.g. the gap between the rich and the poor)

## (6). Agriculture and fisheries

## (7). International relationships

-International status (e.g. UN membership)

-Diplomatic policies and relationships

-Taiwan-US relations

## (8). Environment/Ecology

-Environmental protection

(e.g. environmental pollution, establishing less polluting industries)

-Soil and water conservation (e.g. ecological devastation)

## (9). Social welfare

-Social welfare

-Medicine and public health

-Women

-Disadvantaged groups

## (10). National defence (e.g. military defence and preparedness)

## (11). Mainlander-Taiwanese rift

## (12). Education/Culture/Arts

-Education

-Development of culture/arts

-Juvenile problems

## (13). Traffic/Transportation/Communications

# Appendix 7

## Image Attribute Categories of the Public Agenda

(1) **Political style**
(e.g. an honest and clean official, political integrity, (no) obsession with power, a man of his own principle, no tolerance of dissenting views, dominating style of leadership, an approachable leader, no compromise of the political ideals, a moderate, inconsistent political position and principle)

(2) **Political honesty** (e.g. close connections with business and organised crime)

(3) **Political philosophy**

(4) **Ability**
-political competence and contributions
-reform ability
-past performance in public office

(5) **Leadership qualities** (e.g. leadership, think tank, human relations)

(6) **Qualifications and experience**
-qualifications or experience relating to public affairs
-foresight and international experience

(7) **Integrity and virtues** (e.g. good moral sense, honest and trustworthy quality)

(8) **Personality**
(e.g. clean image, kind and affable, pretentious, emotional, strong character, lack of personality)

(9) **Appearance and bearing** (e.g. a well-behaved gentleman, lost the left arm)

(10) **Intelligence**

(11) **Presentation skills/communication**
(e.g. a good speaker, thoughtless and emotional talking)

(12) **Personal background**
-family background and wealth (rich and powerful family, privileges)
-personal experience (a political dissident)
-education (PhD in agricultural economics, Dr, a brilliant scholar)
-age and health (the oldest/youngest candidate)

(13) **Religion** (e.g. a devout Buddhist, spiritual reform, religious sentiment, a Christian)

(14) **Ancestral origin** (e.g. Taiwanese or Mainlander)

(15) **Localism** (e.g. Taiwanese qualities)

(16) **Partisan affiliation**
-political identification (an independent candidate, the KMT chairman, the DPP's presidential candidate, close affiliation with the NP)
-political relations and factions (no political support and resources, party splits)
-political ideology (Taiwanese nationalism/independence, pan-Chinese nationalism)

(18) **Issue and policy stands** (e.g. policy stands on cross-strait relations)

# Appendix 8

Frequency of Evaluation of Chen Li-an's Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper / Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT |
| Political Style | 5 (71.4) | - | 2 (28.6) | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - |
| Political Honesty | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | - | - | 1 (100) | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | - | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (33.3) | 2 (66.7) | - |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 3 (60.0) | 2 (40.0) | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 3 (100) | - | - | 10 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Personality | 2 (100) | - | - | 4 (57.1) | 3 (42.9) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Intelligence | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 3 (100) | - | - | 4 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Personal Background | 14 (73.7) | 3 (15.8) | 2 (10.5) | 13 (54.2) | 3 (12.5) | 8 (33.3) | - | 10 (33.3) | 4 (13.3) | 16 (53.3) |
| Private Life | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 (100) |
| Religion | 7 (58.3) | 5 (41.7) | - | 8 (47.1) | 7 (41.2) | 2 (11.8) | - | 1 (12.5) | 5 (62.5) | 2 (25.0) |
| Ancestral Origin | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | 2 (100) | - | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 9 (39.1) | 4 (17.4) | 10 (43.5) | 24 (42.9) | 19 (33.9) | 12 (21.4) | 1 (1.8) | 12 (40.0) | 15 (50.0) | 3 (10.0) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (25.0) | 6 (37.5) | 6 (37.5) | 4 (28.6) | 5 (35.7) | 4 (28.6) | 1 (7.1) | 1 (8.3) | 10 (83.3) | 1 (8.3) |
| Others | - | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 53 (56.4) | 20 (21.3) | 21 (22.3) | 82 (54.3) | 40 (26.5) | 27 (17.9) | 2 (1.3) | 42 (40.0) | 39 (37.1) | 24 (22.9) |

Table shows the tone towards Chen's total image attributes in the three newspapers; figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

# Appendix 9

Frequency of Evaluation of Lee Teng-hui's Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | 3 (9.4) | 26 (81.3) | 2 (6.3) | 1 (3.1) | 5 (17.2) | 24 (82.8) | - | - | 6 (30.0) | 13 (65.0) | 1 (5.0) | - |
| Political Honesty | - | 39 (100) | - | - | 4 (6.6) | 57 (93.4) | - | - | 6 (16.7) | 29 (80.6) | 1 (2.8) | - |
| Political Philosophy | 5 (71.4) | 2 (28.6) | - | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 5 (71.4) | 1 (14.3) | - | 1 (14.3) |
| Ability | 7 (29.2) | 16 (66.7) | 1 (4.2) | - | 18 (42.9) | 24 (57.1) | - | - | 10 (25.6) | 29 (74.4) | - | - |
| Leadership Qualities | 3 (16.7) | 15 (83.3) | - | - | 5 (12.5) | 35 (87.5) | - | - | 1 (4.8) | 20 (95.2) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 13 (52.0) | 12 (48.0) | - | - | 16 (61.5) | 9 (34.6) | - | 1 (3.8) | 18 (72.0) | 6 (24.0) | 1 (4.0) | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | - | 14 (100) | - | - | 1 (4.8) | 20 (95.2) | - | - | 4 (25.0) | 11 (68.8) | 1 (6.3) | - |
| Personality | 6 (40.0) | 8 (53.3) | 1 (6.7) | - | 4 (30.8) | 8 (61.5) | 1 (7.7) | - | 4 (25.0) | 11 (68.8) | - | 1 (6.3) |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 (100) | - |
| Intelligence | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | - | 5 (71.4) | 2 (28.6) | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | 4 (12.1) | 26 (78.8) | 1 (3.0) | 2 (6.1) | 2 (3.8) | 47 (90.4) | 2 (3.8) | 1 (1.9) | 2 (7.7) | 21 (80.8) | 3 (11.5) | - |
| Personal Background | 8 (13.3) | 45 (75.0) | 7 (11.7) | - | 34 (29.3) | 47 (40.5) | 33 (28.4) | 2 (1.7) | 28 (31.1) | 35 (38.9) | 26 (28.9) | 1 (1.1) |
| Private Life | - | 5 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Religion | - | - | 1 (100) | - | 2 (28.6) | 2 (28.6) | 3 (42.9) | - | - | - | 2 (100) | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 4 (40.0) | 5 (50.0) | 1 (10.0) | - | 2 (18.2) | 7 (63.6) | 2 (18.2) | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 13 (41.9) | 18 (58.1) | - | - | 13 (20.0) | 46 (70.8) | 5 (7.7) | 1 (1.5) | 6 (14.0) | 29 (67.4) | 8 (18.6) | - |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 4 (9.8) | 30 (73.2) | 6 (14.6) | 1 (2.4) | 7 (18.9) | 27 (73.0) | 2 (5.4) | 1 (2.7) | 12 (40.0) | 15 (50.0) | 3 (10.0) | - |
| Others | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (40.0) | 3 (60.0) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 69 (19.7) | 258 (73.7) | 19 (5.4) | 4 (1.1) | 121 (22.8) | 356 (67.2) | 47 (8.9) | 6 (1.1) | 110 (28.1) | 229 (58.4) | 50 (12.8) | 3 (0.8) |

Table shows the tone towards Lee's total image attributes in the three newspapers; figures in parentheses show percentages. P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

# Appendix 10

Frequency of Evaluation of Peng Ming-min's Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Candidate Concerned | The United Daily News | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attributes of the Image | P | N | NT | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | 3 (60.0) | - | 2 (40.0) | 5 (83.3) | 1 (16.7) | - | - | 5 (100) | - | - | - |
| Political Honesty | - | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Political Philosophy | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Ability | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 9 (69.2) | 1 (7.7) | 3 (23.1) | 25 (100) | - | - | - | 17 (94.4) | - | 1 (5.6) | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - |
| Personality | 2 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Appearance & Bearing | - | - | 1 (100) | 1 (25.0) | - | 3 (75.0) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Intelligence | 1 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | - | - | - | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Personal Background | 10 (76.9) | 2 (15.4) | 1 (7.7) | 17 (68.0) | 1 (4.0) | 7 (28.0) | - | 4 (19.0) | 3 (14.3) | 14 (66.7) | - |
| Religion | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Ancestral Origin | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Localism | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 8 (38.1) | 11 (52.4) | 2 (9.5) | 23 (48.9) | 16 (34.0) | 7 (14.9) | 1 (2.1) | 9 (29.0) | 8 (25.8) | 13 (41.9) | 1 (3.2) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | 2 (16.7) | 5 (41.7) | 5 (41.7) | 2 (33.3) | 2 (33.3) | 2 (33.3) | - | 5 (100) | - | - | - |
| Others | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Total | 38 (52.8) | 19 (26.4) | 15 (20.8) | 79 (63.2) | 22 (17.6) | 23 (18.4) | 1 (0.8) | 48 (53.3) | 11 (12.2) | 30 (33.3) | 1 (1.1) |

Table shows the tone towards Peng's total image attributes in the three newspapers; figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

# Appendix 11

Frequency of Evaluation of Lin Yang-kang's Image Attributes in Three Individual Newspapers

| Newspaper / Evaluation / Attributes of the Image | The United Daily News | | | | The China Times | | | | The Liberty Times | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M | P | N | NT | M |
| Political Style | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (50.0) | 1 (25.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | 3 (42.9) | 4 (57.1) | - | - |
| Political Honesty | - | - | - | - | 4 (66.7) | 2 (33.3) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ability | 3 (50.0) | 3 (50.0) | - | - | 6 (66.7) | 2 (22.2) | 1 (11.1) | - | 5 (71.4) | 1 (14.3) | 1 (14.3) | - |
| Leadership Qualities | - | - | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - |
| Qualifications & Experience | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | - | 3 (100) | - | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - |
| Integrity & Virtues | 6 (66.7) | 3 (33.3) | - | - | 11 (84.6) | 2 (15.4) | - | - | 7 (70.0) | 3 (30.0) | - | - |
| Personality | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | - | - | 7 (77.8) | 2 (22.2) | - | - | 2 (50.0) | 2 (50.0) | - | - |
| Intelligence | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - |
| Presentation Skills/ Communication | - | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (100) | - | - | 2 (66.7) | 1 (33.3) | - | - |
| Personal Background | 12 (75.0) | 2 (12.5) | 2 (12.5) | - | 13 (39.4) | 2 (6.1) | 18 (54.5) | - | 7 (30.4) | 3 (13.0) | 13 (56.5) | - |
| Religion | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 1 (50.0) | - | 1 (50.0) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ancestral Origin | 7 (100) | - | - | - | 5 (55.6) | 2 (22.2) | 2 (22.2) | - | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | - | - |
| Localism | 8 (88.9) | - | 1 (11.1) | - | 16 (88.9) | - | 2 (11.1) | - | 8 (66.7) | 1 (8.3) | 3 (25.0) | - |
| Partisan Affiliation | 9 (42.9) | 4 (19.0) | 8 (38.1) | - | 24 (47.1) | 9 (17.6) | 18 (35.3) | - | 15 (34.9) | 14 (32.6) | 13 (30.2) | 1 (2.3) |
| Issue & Policy Stands | - | 14 (66.7) | 5 (23.8) | 2 (9.5) | 10 (30.3) | 20 (60.6) | 2 (6.1) | 1 (3.0) | 5 (18.5) | 22 (81.5) | - | - |
| Total | 50 (50.5) | 31 (31.3) | 16 (16.2) | 2 (2.0) | 106 (54.4) | 43 (22.1) | 45 (23.1) | 1 (0.5) | 60 (41.4) | 54 (37.2) | 30 (20.7) | 1 (0.7) |

Table shows the tone towards Lin's total image attributes in the three newspapers; figures in parentheses show percentages.   P: Positive; N: Negative; NT: Neutral; M: Mixed

# Bibliography

Allen, R. L. and Izcaray, F. (1988) 'Nominal Agenda Diversity in a Media-rich, Less-developed Society', *Communication Research*, 15(1): 29-50

Allen, R. L. and Taylor, B. F. (1985) 'Media Public Affairs Exposure: Issues and Alternative Strategies', *Communication Monographs*, 52: 186-201

Asp, K. (1983) 'The Struggle for the Agenda: Party Agenda, Media Agenda, and Voter Agenda in the 1979 Swedish Election Campaign', *Communication Research*, 10(3): 333-355

Atwater, T., Salwen, M. B., and Anderson, R. B. (1985) 'Media Agenda-setting with Environmental Issues', *Journalism Quarterly*, 62(2): 393-397

Atwood, L. E., Sohn, A. B., and Sohn, H. (1978) 'Daily Newspaper Contributions to Community Discussion', *Journalism Quarterly*, 55(3): 570-576

Barbour, R. S. and Kitzinger, J. (1999) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, London: Sage

Beck, L. C., Trombetta, W. L., and Share, S. (1986) 'Using Focus Group Sessions before Decisions Are Made', *North Carolina Medical Journal*, 47(2): 73-74

Becker, L. and McCombs, M. E. (1978) 'The Role of the Press in Determining Voter Reactions to Presidential Primaries', *Human Communication Research*, 4: 301-307

Bellows, T. J. (1996) 'The March 1996 Elections in the Republic of China', *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, 3(2): 235-249

Benton, M. and Frazier, P. J. (1976) 'The Agenda-setting Function of the Mass Media at Three Levels of "Information Holding"', *Communication Research*, 3(3): 261-274

Berelson, B. R. (1952) *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, New York: The Free Press

Berger, A. A. (1991) *Media Research Techniques*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Berman, D. K. (1992) *Words like Coloured Glass: The Role of the Press in Taiwan's Democratisation Process*, Boulder, CO: Westview

Bertrand, J. T., Brown, J. E., and Ward, V. M. (1992) 'Techniques for Analysing Focus Group Data', *Evaluation Review*, 16(2): 198-209

Blood, W. (1982) 'Agenda-setting: A Review of the Theory', *Media Information Australia*, 26: 3-12

Brosius, H. and Kepplinger, H. M. (1990) 'The Agenda-setting Function of Television News: Static and Dynamic Views', *Communication Research*, 17(2): 183-211

Brosius, H. and Weimann, G. (1996) 'Who Sets the Agenda?: Agenda-setting as a Two-step Flow', *Communication Research*, 23(5): 561-580

Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Burd, G. (1991) 'A Critique of Two Decades of Agenda-setting Research', in Protess, D. L. and McCombs, M. (Eds.) *Agenda Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 291-294

Cabestan, Jean-Pierre (1996) 'Taiwan's Mainland Policy: Normalisation, Yes; Reunification, Later', *The China Quarterly*, 148: 1260-1318

Chaffee, S. H. and Wilson, D. G. (1977) 'Media Rich, Media Poor: Two Studies of Diversity in Agenda-holding', *Journalism Quarterly*, 54(3): 466-476

Chang, Chi-kao. (1995) *From Refinement to Perfection*, Taipei: Chiu-Ke Publishing Ltd (Chinese)

Chao, L. and Myers, R. H. (1998) *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press

Chen, Kuo-hsiang and Chu, Ping (1987) *Forty Years of Newspaper Evolution in Taiwan*, Taipei: The Independence Evening Post (Chinese)

Chen, Qimao (1996) 'The Taiwan Strait Crisis: Its Crux and Solutions', *Asian Survey*, 36 (11): 1055-1066

Chen, Sheue-yun (1991) *Reality Construction of the News Media: A Study of Press Coverage of Social Movements in Taiwan*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Cheng, Jei-cheng (1988) *Examining the Mass Media*, Taipei: Cosmopolitan (Chinese)

Cheng, Tun-jen (1997) 'Taiwan in 1996: From Euphoria to Melodrama', *Asian Survey*, 37 (1): 43-51

Chin, Sheila (1997) 'Broadcasting and New Media Policies in Taiwan', in Sreberny-Mohammadi *et al.* (Eds.), *Media in Global Context: A Reader*, London: Arnold, 78-93

Chiu, Hungdah (1993) 'Constitutional Development in the Republic of China in Taiwan' in Tsang, S. (Ed.) *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 17-47

Choi, H. C. and Becker, S. L. (1987) 'Media Use, Issue/Image Discriminations and Voting', *Communication Research* 14(3): 267-291

Chu, Yun-han (1994) 'Social Protests and Political Democratisation in Taiwan' in Rubinstein, M. A. (Ed.) *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 99-113

Chu, Yun-han (1999) 'The Political Economy of Taiwan's Mainland Policy', in Zhao, Suisheng (Ed.) *Across the Taiwan Strait: Mainland China, Taiwan, and the 1995-1996 Crisis*, London: Routledge, 163-195

Chu, Yun-han and Lin, Tse-min (1996) 'The Process of Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan: Social Cleavage, Electoral Competition, and the Emerging Party System', in Tien, Hung-mao (Ed.) *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 79-104

Clough, R. N. (1978) *Island China*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Cohen, B. C. (1963) *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Cohen, D. (1975) 'A Report on a Non-election Agenda-setting Study', Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism, Ottawa, Canada, August 1975

Copper, J. F. (1994) *Taiwan's 1991 and 1992 Non-supplemental Elections*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America

Copper, J. F. (1997) *The Taiwan Political Miracle: Essays on Political Development, Elections and Foreign Relations*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America

Copper, J. F. (1998) 'Taiwan's Recent Elections: Putting the Final Touches on Democracy', in Lai, Jeh-hang and Yu, George T. (Eds.) *Taiwan on The Move Conference Proceedings*, October 1998

Davis, D. K. and Robinson, J. P. (1986) 'The Social Role of Television News: Theoretical Perspectives', in Robinson, J. P. and Levy, M. R. (Eds.) *The Main Source: Learning from Television News*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 29-54

Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P., and Murdock, G. (1999) *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, London: Arnold

Dearing, J. and Rogers, E. (1996) *Agenda-setting*, London: Sage

DeGeorge, W. F. (1981) 'Conceptualisation and Measurement of Audience Agenda', in Wilhoilt, G. C. and DeBock, H. (Eds.) *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 2: 219-224, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Downs, A. (1972) 'Up and Down with Ecology: The "Issue-Attention Cycle"', *The Public Interest*, 28: 38-50

Eaton, H. Jr. (1989) 'Agenda-setting with Bi-weekly Data on Content of Three National Media', *Journalism Quarterly*, 66(4): 942-948, 959

Einsiedel, A. A., Brown, L. M., and Ross, F. (1996) *How to Conduct Focus Groups: A Guide for Adult and Continuing Education Managers and Trainers*, Saskatoon: University Extension Press, University of Saskatchewan

Erbring, L., Goldenberg, E. N., and Miller, A. H. (1980) 'Front-page News and Real-world Cues: A New Look at Agenda-setting by the Media, *American Journal of Political Science*, 24(1): 16-49

Eyal, C. H., Winter, J. P., and DeGeorge W. F. (1981) 'The Concept of Time Frame in Agenda-setting', in Wilhoit, G. C. and DeBock, H. (Eds.) *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 2: 212-218, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Fiske, J. (1990) *Introduction to Communication Studies* (2nd ed.), London: Routledge

Funkhouser, G. R. (1973) 'The Issue of the Sixties: An Exploratory Study in the Dynamics of Public Opinion', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37: 62-75

Gamson, W. A. (1992) *Talking Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

*Global View* (1987), 'The Mouthless TV Reporters', April, 61-64 (Chinese)

Golan, G. and Wanta, W. (2001) 'Second-level Agenda-setting in the New Hampshire Primary: A Comparison of Coverage in Three Newspapers and Public Perceptions of Candidates', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 78(2): 247-259

Gold, T. B. (1986) *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe

Goldstein, C. (1985) 'Dominance of Taipei's Big Two', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 December, 27-29

Gonzenbach, W. J. and McGavin, L. (1997) 'A Brief History of Time: A Methodological Analysis of Agenda-setting', in McCombs, M. E., Shaw, D. L., and Weaver, D. (Eds.) *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-setting Theory*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 115-136

Gordon, M. T. and Heath, L. (1981) 'The News Business, Crime, and Fear', in Protess, D. L. and McCombs, M. E. (Eds.) (1991) *Agenda-setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 71-74

Government Information Office (1995) *The Republic of China Yearbook: 1995*, Taipei: GIO

Government Information Office (1996) *The Republic of China Yearbook: 1996*, Taipei: GIO

Government Information Office (1997a) *The Republic of China Yearbook: 1995-1996* (Chinese), Taipei: Cheng Chung Publishing Co.

Government Information Office (1997b) *The Republic of China Yearbook: 1997*, Taipei: GIO

Graber, D. A. (1972) 'Personal Qualities in Presidential Images: The Contribution of the Press', *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 16: 46-76

Gunter, B. (2000) *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact*, London: Sage

Gunther, A. C., Hong, Yah-huei, and Rodriquez, L. (1994) 'Balancing Trust in Media and Trust in Government during Political Change in Taiwan', *Journalism Quarterly*, 71(3): 628-636

Hansen, A., Cottle, S., Negrine, R., and Newbold, C. (1998) *Mass Communication Research Methods*, London: Macmillan

Heuvel, J. V. and Dennis, E. (1993) *The Unfolding Lotus: East Asian's Changing Media*, New York: Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre

Hill, D. B. (1985) 'Viewer Characteristics and Agenda-setting by Television News', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 49: 340-350

Hofstetter, C. R., Zukin, C., and Buss, T. F. (1978) 'Political Imagery and Information in an Age of Television', *Journalism Quarterly*, 55(3): 562-569

Holaday, D. and Kuo, E. C. Y. (1993) 'Unsetting the Agenda: Media and the 1991 Singapore Election', *Gazette*, 51: 197-218

Holsti, O. R. (1969) *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Hong, K. and Shemer, S. (1976) 'Influence of Media and Interpersonal Agendas on Personal Agendas', Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Madison, WI

Hood, S. J. (1996) 'Political Change in Taiwan: The Rise of Kuomintang Factions', *Asian Survey*, 36 (5): 468-482

Hood, S. J. (1997) *The Kuomintang and the Democratisation of Taiwan*, Boulder: Westview Press.

Hsieh, John Fuh-sheng (1994) 'Parliamentarism versus Presidentalism: The Politics of Constitutional Reform in the Republic of China on Taiwan', Paper presented at the 16th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Berlin, Germany

Hsieh, John Fuh-sheng (1996) 'The SNTV System and Its Political Implications', in Tien, Hung-mao (Ed.) *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 193-212

Hsieh, John Fuh-sheng and Niou, E. M. S. (1996a) 'Taiwan's March 1996 Elections', *Electoral Studies*, 15(4): 545-550

Hsieh, John Fuh-sheng and Niou, E. M. S. (1996b) 'Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electoral Politics', *Electoral Studies*, 15(2): 219-235

Hsueh, Cheng-hsiung (1988) *Media Domination: Deconstructing Taiwan's Television News*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Hu, Fu (1990) 'Political Democratisation and Constitutional Structure', in *Constitutional Reform*, Taipei: Institute for National Policy Research, 11-47

Hu, Fu (1993) 'The Electoral Mechanism and Political Change in Taiwan', in Tsang, S. (Ed.) *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 134-168

Hu, Fu and Chu, Yun-Han (1992) 'Electoral Competition and Political Democratisation', in Cheng, Tun-jen and Haggard, S. (Eds.) *Political Change in Taiwan*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 177-203

Huang, Teh-fu (1992) *The Democratic Progressive Party and Political Democratisation in the Taiwan Area*, Taipei: Shih-ying Publishers (Chinese)

Huang, The-fu (1996) 'Elections and the Evolution of the Kuomintang', in Tien, Hung-mao (Ed.) *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 105-136

Hughes, C. (1997) *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, London: Routledge

Iyengar, S. (1991) *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D. R. (1985) 'Psychological Accounts of Media Agenda-setting', in Kraus, S. and Perloff, R. M. (Eds.) *Mass Media and Political Thought*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 117-140

Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D. R. (1987) *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Iyengar, S., Peters, M. D., and Kinder, D. R. (1982) 'Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-so-minimal" Consequences of Television News Programmes', *American Political Science Review*, 76(4): 848-858

Jeffres, L. W. (1997) *Mass Media Effects*, Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press Inc.

Kao, Chen-shang (1991) *The Study of Agenda-setting Effects of Television Commercials*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Kau, Michael Ying-mao (1996) 'The Power Structure in Taiwan's Political Economy', *Asian Survey*, 36 (3): 287-305

Kerlinger, F. N. (1986) *Foundations of Behavioural Research* (3rd ed.), New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

King, Pu-tsung (1994) *Issue Agendas in the 1992 Taiwan Legislative Election*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA

King, Pu-tsung (1995) 'Election Soundbites as a Measure of the Fairness in Taiwan's Television News Coverage', Paper presented to Symposium on the 60th Anniversary of Journalism Education at National Chengchi University (Chinese)

King, Pu-tsung (1997) 'The Press, Candidate Images, and Voter Perceptions', in McCombs, M. E., Shaw, D. L., and Weaver, D (Eds.) *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-setting Theory*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 29-40

King, Yeo-chi (1984) *The Dilemma and Development of Chinese Democracy*, Taipei: The China Times Publishing Co. (Chinese)

Kosicki, G. M. (1993) 'Problems and Opportunities in Agenda-setting Research', *Journal of Communication*, 43(2): 100-127

Krippendorff, K. (1980) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Krueger, R. A. (1988) *Focus Group: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Kuo, E. C. Y., Holaday, D. A., Hao, X., Koh, R., and Lee, B. B. (1996), 'Tracking Public Concerns: Towards a Theory of Agenda Management in Singapore Elections', *Asian Journal of Communication*, 6 (2): 119-132

Kuo, Li-shin (1990) *Criticism of Television and Observation of the Media*, Taipei: China Times Publishing Ltd. (Chinese)

Kuo, P. (1993) 'Taiwan's News Media: Its Role in Democratisation', *World Affairs*, 155(3): 109-116

Kuo, Yang-dao (1979) *The Agenda-setting Function of News Media: The Awareness and Issue Salience of ROC-USA Relations among College Students*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Kwansah-Aidoo, K. (2001) 'The Appeal of Qualitative Methods to Traditional Agenda-setting Research: An Example from West Africa', *Gazette*, 63(6): 521-537

Lai, Tse-han, Myers, R. H. and Wou, Wei (1991) *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1974*, Stanford: Stanford University Press

Lang, G. E. and Lang, K. (1981a) 'Watergate: An Exploration of the Agenda-Building Process' in Wilhoit, G. C. and DeBock, H. (Eds.) *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 2: 447-468, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Lang, K. and Lang, G. E. (1981b) 'The Mass Media and Voting', in Berelson, B. and Janowitz, M. (Eds.) *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication* (3rd Edition), New York: The Free Press, 327-340

Lasorsa, D. L. and Wanta, W. (1990) 'Effects of Personal, Interpersonal and Media Experiences on Issue Saliences', *Journalism Quarterly*, 67(4): 804-813

Lederman, L. C. (1990) 'Assessing Educational Effectiveness: The Focus Group Interview as a Technique for Data Collection', *Communication Education*, 38(2): 117-127

Lee, B. (1999) *The Security Implications of the New Taiwan*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Lee, Chin-chuan (1980) *Media Imperialism Reconsidered: The Homogenising of Television Culture*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Lee, Chin-chuan (1992) 'Subverting State Control of Television: The State and Cable Technology in Taiwan', Paper presented at the Conference on The Right to Communicate: How the Concept Is Understood and Practised in Chinese Societies, 16-19 June, 1992

Lee, Chin-chuan (1993) 'Sparking a Fire: The Press and the Ferment of Democratic Change in Taiwan', *Journalism Monographs*, 138: 1-39

Lee, Chin-Chuan (2000) 'State, Capital, and Media: The Case of Taiwan', in Curran, J. and Park, Myung-Jin (Eds.) *De-westernising Media Studies*, London: Routledge, 124-138

Lee, Mao-cheng (1981) *The Study of 'Topic-setting' Function in Taiwan: The Case of Medical Issues concerning Siamese Twins*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Lee, Yu-chin (1996) *Second-level Agenda-setting Effects: The Study of Candidate Images*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Leng, Tse-kang (1996) *The Taiwan-China Connection: Democracy and Development across the Taiwan Straits*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press

Lengua, L. J., Roosa, M. W., Schupakneuberg, E., Michaels, M. L., Berg, C. N., and Weschler, L. F. (1992) 'Using Focus Groups to Guide the Development of a Parenting Program for Difficult-to-reach, High-risk Families', *Family Relations*, 41: 163-168

Liao, Shu-ling (1990) *The Study of Factors Influencing Agenda-setting Effects: The Analysis of Correlations between Media Characteristics, Demographic Factors, Communication Behaviours, and Media Agenda-setting Effects in Taipei Area*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Lippmann, W. (1922) *Public Opinion*, New York: Macmillan

Llamas, J. P. and Rey, F. (1996) 'Two Levels of Agenda-setting Effects in the 1995 Regional Elections in Spain', Paper presented at the World Association for Public Opinion Research, Salt Lake City, Utah

Lo, Chi Kin (1994) 'Relations across the Taiwan Straits', in Brosseau, M. and Lo, Chi Kin (Eds.) *China Review 1994*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 4.2-4.13

Lo, Ven-hwei, Cheng, Jei-cheng, and Lee, Chin-chuan (1994) 'Television News Is Government News in Taiwan: Patterns of Television News Sources Selection and Presentation', *Asian Journal of Communication*, 4(1): 99-110

Lo, Ven-hwei and Chung, Wei-wen (1992) *A Study of Newspaper and Television Coverage of the 1991 National Assembly Elections*, Special Research Report, Taipei: The Asian Foundation

Long, S. (1991) *Taiwan: China's Last Frontier*, London: Macmillan

Lunt, P. and Livingstone, S. (1996) 'Rethinking the Focus Group in Media and Communication Research', *Journal of Communication*, 46(2): 79-98

Ma, Ying-jeou (1993) 'Policy towards the Chinese Mainland: Taipei's View', in Tsang, S. (Ed.) *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 193-211

MacGregor, B. and Morrison, D. E. (1995) 'From Focus Groups to Editing Groups: A New Method of Reception Analysis', *Media, Culture and Society*, 17: 141-150

MacKuen, M. B. and Coombs, S. L. (1981) *More Than News: Media Power in Public Affairs*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Mainland Affairs Council (1997) *The Cross-strait Economic Statistics Monthly*, January, 53, Taipei: MAC

Manning, P. (2001) *News and News Sources: A Critical Introduction*, London: Sage

McCombs, M. E. (1981) 'The Agenda-setting Approach', in Nimmo, D. D. and Sanders, K. R. (Eds.) *Handbook of Political Communication*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 121-140

McCombs, M. E. (1992) 'Explorers and Surveyors: Expanding Strategies for Agenda-setting Research, *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(4): 813-824

McCombs, M. E. (1994) 'News Influence on Our Pictures of the World', in Bryant, J. and Zillmann, D. (Eds.) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 1-16

McCombs, M. E. (1996) 'The Picture of Politics in Our Heads', Keynote address presented to a National Chengchi University Conference in Taipei, 28 April, 1996

McCombs, M. E. and Bell, T. (1996) 'The Agenda-setting Role of Mass Communication', in Salwen, M. B. and Stacks, D. W. (Eds.) *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 93-110

McCombs, M. E., Danielian, L., and Wanta, W. (1995) 'Issues in the News and the Public Agenda: The Agenda-setting Tradition', in Glasser, T. L. and Salmon, C. T. (Eds.) *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent*, New York: Guilford, 281-300

McCombs, M. E. and Estrada, G. (1997) 'The News Media and the Pictures in Our Heads', in Iyengar, S. and Reeves, R. (Eds.) *Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters, and Reporters in America*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 237-247

McCombs, M. E. and Gilbert, S. (1986) 'News Influence on Our Pictures of the World' in Bryant, J. and Zillmann, D. (Eds.) *Perspectives on Media Effects*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1-15

McCombs, M. E., Llamas, J. P., Lopez-Escobar, E., and Rey, F. (1997) 'Candidate Images in Spanish Elections: Second-level Agenda-setting Effects', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* 74(4), 703-717.

McCombs, M. E. and Shaw, D. L. (1972) 'The Agenda-setting Function of Mass Media', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 36: 176-187

McCombs, M. E. and Shaw, D. L. (1993) 'The Evolution of Agenda-setting Research: Twenty-five Years in the Marketplace of Ideas', *Journal of Communication*, 43(2): 58-67

McCombs, M. E. and Weaver, D. H. (1973) 'Voters' Need for Orientation and Use of Mass Communication', Paper presented at the International Communication Association, Montreal, Canada, May, 1973

McCombs, M. E. and Weaver, D. H. (1985) 'Toward a Merger of Gratifications and Agenda-setting Research', in Rosengren, K. E., Wenner, L. A., and Palmgreen, P. (Eds.) *Media Gratifications Research: Current Perspectives*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 95-108

McLeod, J., Becker, L. B., Byrnes, J. E. (1974) 'Another Look at the Agenda-setting Function of the Press', *Communication Research,* 1(2): 131-165

McQuail, D. (2000) *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (4th Edition), London: Sage

Merton, R. K. (1987) 'The Focussed Interview and Focus Groups: Continuities and Discontinuities', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51(4): 550-566

Metzger, T. A. and Myers, R. (1990) *Understanding the Taiwan Experience: A Historical Perspective*, Taipei: Kwang Hwa Publishing Co.

Morgan, D. (1988) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Newbury Park: Sage

Mou, Ying-shing (1997) *The Study of Intermedia Influence: The Case of Evening Newspapers and TV Network Evening News*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Nam, Sunwoo (1971) 'Editorials as an Indicator of Press Freedom in Three Asian Countries', *Journalism Quarterly*, 48 (4): 730-740

Negrine, R. (1989) *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain*, London: Routledge

*Newsweek* (1995) 'Sincere Regrets: Lee Lays to Rest Some Old KMT Ghosts', 13 March, 32

Palmgreen, P. and Clarke, P. (1977) 'Agenda-setting with Local and National Issues', *Communication Research*, 4(4): 435-452

Pan, Chia-ching, Wang, Shi-fan, and Hsieh, Ying-chun (1990) *The Study of Mass Media Agenda-setting Effects in Taiwan*, Special Research Report, Taipei: National Science Council (Chinese)

Patterson, T. E. and McClure, R. D. (1976) *The Unseeing Eye: The Myth of Television Power in National Politics*, New York: Putnam

Peng, H. E. (1991) *The Political Economy of Taiwan's Development*, Taipei: Fang-Yuen Publishing Co. (Chinese)

Peng, Yun (1992) 'The Agenda-setting Effects of Newspaper Campaign Coverage', in Peng, Yun (Ed.) *News Media and Politics*, Taipei: Dawn Culture Publishing Co., 155-194 (Chinese)

Perry, D. K. (1996) *Theory and Research in Mass Communication: Contexts and Consequences*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Popkin, S. L. (1991) *The Reasoning Voter*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Protess, D. L. and McCombs, M. E. (1991) *Agenda-setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Rampal, K. R. (1994a) 'Post-martial Law Media Boom in Taiwan', *Gazette*, 53: 73-91

Rampal, K. R. (1994b) 'Press and Political Liberalisation in Taiwan', *Journalism Quarterly*, 71(3): 637-651

Rawnsley, G. D. and Rawnsley, Ming-Yeh T. (1998) 'Regime Transition and the Media in Taiwan', in Randall, V. (Ed.) *Democratisation and the Media*, London: Frank Cass Publisher, 106-124

Reyes, A. (1996) 'The Making of a New Taiwan', *Asianweek*, 5 April, 32-39

Riffe, D. and Freitag, A. (1997) 'A Content Analysis of Content Analyses: Twenty-five Years of Journalism Quarterly', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(3): 515-524

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., and Fico, F. G. (1998) *Analysing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Rigger, S. (1999) *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy*, London: Routledge

Robinson, J. A. (1991) 'The KMT as a Leninist Regime: Prolegomenon to Devolutionary Leadership through Institutions', *Political Chronicle*, 3: 1-8

Robinson, S. P. (1998) 'Media Agenda-setting', Journalism Honours Project, Northern Illinois University, available at http://www3.niu.edu/newsplace/agenda.html

Rogers, E. M. and Dearing, J. W. (1988) 'Agenda-setting Research: Where Has It Been, Where Is It Going?', *Communication Yearbook*, 11: 555-594, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Rogers, E. M., Dearing, J. W. and Bregman, D. (1993) 'The Anatomy of Agenda-setting Research', *Journal of Communication*, 43(2): 68-84

Rogers, E. M., Hart, W. B. and Dearing, J. W. (1997) 'A Paradigmatic History of Agenda-setting Research', in Iyengar, S. and Reeves, R. (Eds.) *Do The Media Govern? Politicians, Voters and Reporters in America*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 225-236

Salwen, M. B. (1988) 'Effect of Accumulation of Coverage on Issue Salience in Agenda Setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 65(1): 100-106, 130

Schoenbach, K. (1982) 'Agenda-setting Effects of Print and Television in the West Germany', in Protess, D. L. and McCombs, M. E. (Eds.) (1991) *Agenda-setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 127-130

Schoenbach, K. and Weaver, D (1985) 'Finding the Unexpected: Cognitive Bonding in a Political Campaign', in Kraus, S. and Perloff, R. M. (Eds.) *Mass Media and Political Thought*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 157-176

Semetko, H. A., Blumler, J. G, Gurevitch, M., Weaver, D. H., Barkin, S., and Wilhoit, G. C. (1991) *The Formation of Campaign Agendas: A Comparative Analysis of Party and Media Roles in Recent American and British Elections*, Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Seymour-Ure, C. (1974) *The Political Impact of Mass Media*, London: Constable

Shaw, D. L. and Martin, S. (1992) 'The Function of Mass Media Agenda Setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(4): 902-920

Shaw, D. L. and McCombs, M. E. (1977) *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-setting Function of the Press*, St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.

Shiau, Yeong-sheng (1991) *The Study of Newspaper Agenda-setting Function: The Case of Issues concerning the 1990 National Assembly Meeting*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Shiu, Hui-ling (1982) *The Study of Newspaper Agenda-setting Effects: The Case of the 1980 Supplementary Elections for National Assembly and Legislative Yuan*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Sinclair, K. (1982) '"Horserace" vs. "Substance" in Coverage of Election by British Prestige Press', *Journalism Quarterly*, 59(4): 598-602

Smith, K. A. (1987) 'Newspaper Coverage and Public Concern about Community Issues', *Journalism Monographs*, 101: 1-31

Sohn, A. B. (1984) 'Newspaper Agenda-setting and Community Expectations', *Journalism Quarterly*, 61(4): 892-897

Stewart, D. W. and Shamdasani, P. N. (1990) *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Stone, G. C. and McCombs, M. E. (1981) 'Tracing the Time Lag in Agenda-setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 58(1): 51-55

Swanson, D. L. (1988) 'Feeling the Elephant: Some Observations on Agenda-setting Research', in Anderson J. A. (ed.) *Communication Yearbook*, 11: 603-619, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Takeshita, T. and Mikami, S. (1995) 'How did Mass Media Influence the Voters' Choice in the 1993 General Election in Japan?: A Study of Agenda-setting', *Keio Communication Review*, 17:27-41

Tan, Qingshan, Yu, Peter Kien-hong, and Chen, Wen-chun (1996) 'Local Politics in Taiwan: Democratic Consolidation', *Asian Survey*, 36 (5): 483-494

Teng, Shufen (1997) 'Hard-pressed Taiwan's Newspapers Battle for Readers', *Sinorama*, August, 6-15

Tien, Hung-mao (1989) *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press

Tien, Hung-mao (1992) 'Transformation of an Authoritarian Party State: Taiwan's Development Experience' in Cheng, Tun-jen and Haggard, S. (Eds.) *Political Change in Taiwan*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 33-55

Tien, Hung-mao (1996a) 'Taiwan in 1995: Electoral Politics and Cross-Strait Relations', *Asian Survey*, 36(1): 33-40

Tien, Hung-mao (1996b) 'Election and Taiwan's Democratic Development', in Tien, Hung-mao (Ed.) *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 3-26

Tien, Hung-mao and Chu, Yun-han (1994) 'Taiwan's Domestic Political Reforms: Institutional Change and Power Realignment', in Klintworth, G. (Ed.) *Taiwan in the Asia-Pacific in the 1990s*, Canberra, Australia : Allen & Unwin, 1-20

Tsang, S. (1993) *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd.

Tseng, Yen-ching (1993) 'New Developments in the Third Press', *Wealth*, January, 246-254 (Chinese)

The *United Daily News* (1994) 'Lee's Speech to the Global Association of Taiwanese', 10 August, 1-2

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., and Sinagub, J. (1996) *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Wang, G. (1993a) 'The Ownership of Radio and Television', in Cheng, Jui-cheng *et al.* (Eds.) *Deconstructing Broadcasting Media: Establishing the New Order of Broadcasting Media*, Taipei: Cheng Society, 75-128 (Chinese)

Wang, G. (1993b) 'Satellite Television and the Future of Broadcast Television in the Asian Pacific', Paper presented at the Conference on Communication, Technology and Development: Alternatives for Asian, AMIC, Kuala Lumpar, Malaysia, 25-27 June, 1993

Wanta, W. (1997) 'The Messenger and the Message: Differences across News Media', in McCombs, M. E., Shaw, D. L., and Weaver, D (Eds.) *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-setting Theory*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 137-151

Wanta, W. and Hu, Y. (1994) 'The Effects of Credibility, Reliance, and Exposure on Media Agenda-setting: A Path Analysis Model', *Journalism Quarterly*, 71(1): 90-98

Wanta, W. and Wu, Y. (1992) 'Interpersonal Communication and the Agenda-setting Process', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(4): 847-855

Wanta, W., Stephenson, M. A., Turk, J. V., McCombs, M. E. (1989) 'How President's State of Union Talk Influenced News Media Agendas', *Journalism Quarterly*, 66(3): 537-541

Weaver, D. (1977) 'Political Issues and Voter Need for Orientation', in Shaw, D. L. and McCombs, M. E. (Eds.) *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-setting Function of the Press*, St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 107-119

Weaver, D. (1984) 'Media Agenda-setting and Public Opinion: Is There a Link?', in Bostrom, R. N. and Westley, B. H. (Eds.) *Communication Yearbook*, 8: 680-691, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Weaver, D. (1987a) 'Thoughts on an Agenda for Mass Communication Research', in Gurevitch, M and Levy, M. R. (Eds.) *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 6: 60-64, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Weaver, D. (1987b) 'Media Agenda-setting and Elections: Assumptions and Implications', in Paletz, D. L. (Ed.) *Political Communication Research: Approaches, Studies, Assessments*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 176-193

Weaver, D. (1994) 'Media Agenda Setting and Elections: Voter Involvement or Alienation?', *Political Communication*, 11: 347-356

Weaver, D. H., Graber, D. A., McCombs, M. E., and Eyal, C. (1981) *Media Agenda-setting in a Presidential Election: Issues, Images, and Interest*, New York: Praeger

Weaver, D., Zhu, J., and Willnat, L. (1992) 'The Bridging Function of Interpersonal Communication in Agenda-setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(4): 856-867

Wei, Ran (1996) 'Coping with the Challenge of a Changing Market: Strategies from Taiwan's Press', *Gazette*, 58: 117-129

Wilke, J. (1995) 'Agenda-setting in an Historical Perspectives: The Coverage of the American Revolution in the German Press (1773-83)', *European Journal of Communication*, 10(1): 63-86

Wimmer, R. D. and Dominick, J. R. (1997) *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (5th ed.), Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Winckler, E. A. (1984) 'Institutionalisation and Participation on Taiwan: From Hard to Soft Authoritarianism', *The China Quarterly*, 99: 481-499

Winter, J. P. (1981) 'Contingent Conditions in the Agenda-setting Process', in Wilhoit, G. C. and DeBock, H. (Eds.) *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 2: 235-247, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Winter, J. P. and Eyal, C. H. (1981) 'Agenda-setting for the Civil Rights Issue', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45: 376-383

Wu, An-chia (1995) 'Mainland China's Bargaining Tactics: Future Negotiations with Taipei', in Cheng, Tun-jen, Huang, Chi, and Wu, Samuel S. G. (Eds.) *Inherited Rivalry: Conflicts across the Taiwan Straits*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 81-95

Yagade, A. and Dozier, D. M. (1990) 'The Media Agenda-setting Effect of Concrete versus Abstract Issues', *Journalism Quarterly*, 67(1): 3-10

Yeh, Shiuan-muo(1982) *The Study of Agenda-setting Effects of Specialist Financial Dailies*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (Chinese)

Yu, Peter Kien-hong (1996) 'Another New Party Marks Shifting of Political Sands', *The Free China Journal*, 12 October, 1996, 12: 6

Zhu, J. (1992) 'Issue Competition and Attention Distraction: A Zero-Sum Theory of Agenda-setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(4): 825-836

Zucker, H. G. (1978) 'The Variable Nature of News Media Influence', in Ruben, B. D. (Ed.) *Communication Yearbook*, 2: 225-240, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books