

**Mini Three-Link Transportation: A Content Analysis of Policy
Position in the Legislative Yuan Gazette under KMT and DPP
Administrations.**

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Abstract

The Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative, rooted in Article 18 of the Offshore Islands Development Act, was designed to bolster economic growth, foster development, and enhance cross-strait relations. However, its interpretation and application vary significantly between the KMT and DPP administrations. This analysis seeks to identify and assess the primary points of contention related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy as perceived by the KMT and DPP. For this purpose, we examined the Legislative Yuan Gazette as a reference to delineate these differences. From a total of 592 entries in the Legislative Yuan Gazette related to this policy, the data suggests that the Mini Three-Link Transportation was predominantly championed by the “Pan-blue” camp, with a majority of “Pan-blue” legislators supporting it. Notably, the KMT administration leaned towards a more liberal approach to the policy, while the DPP administration adopted a more conservative stance. In conclusion, there are marked differences in the discourse pertaining to the Mini Three-Link Transportation between the KMT and DPP administrations, highlighting the contrasting policy positions of the two parties.

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PREFACE

The administration of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has instituted the Mini Three-Links Transportation initiative. This policy has been pursued with the dual objectives of fostering economic development and enhancing the growth of cross-strait relations. Despite these intentions, legislators from the Pan-Blue coalition have expressed skepticism regarding the significance and efficacy of the Mini Three-Links Transportation policy, deeming it inconsequential.

In this report, a content analysis was conducted with 'The Legislative Yuan Gazette' serving as the primary source of data. The focus was on extracting relevant information pertaining to the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy for an in-depth examination. The primary aim of this analysis is to understand the dynamics of the debates among different political parties concerning this policy. Furthermore, the analysis intends to glean insights from these discussions, which may shed light on possible future directions in the political landscape.

This study is designed to identify and assess the key areas of contention within the discourse surrounding the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative, especially between the administrations of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

This study is segmented into three distinct timeframes corresponding to the tenures of three different administrations: that of Chen Shui-bian, Ma Ying-jeou, and Tsai Ing-wen. The analysis categorizes the issues into five thematic areas: economy, transportation, politics, the expansion of the Mini Three-Link Transportation, and other relevant topics. However, during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen, the categorization is slightly modified, comprising four themes: economy, transportation,

politics, and other considerations, with the specific theme of the expansion of the Mini Three-Link Transportation being excluded.

In conclusion, my heartfelt thanks go to my advisor, Daniel, for his steadfast guidance and assistance throughout this research. I must also acknowledge my family and friends for their enduring support and encouragement. Furthermore, to refine the context and elevate the quality of writing within this report, I utilized the aid of ChatGPT. I assure that all content and ideas contained herein are borne of my own original thinking and creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Mini Three-Link Transportation for the Matsu and Kinmen areas have brought about great mass favor that the reformation in economy and governance in politic, the political propaganda seemingly provides certain political significance.¹ In 2001, the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative was halted due to concerns over national security. Yet, as interactions across the strait intensified, there was a mounting demand for direct flight services. The community eagerly anticipated the inauguration of these direct flights, given the profound influence of cross-strait exchanges on Taiwan and China's economic ties. These exchanges promised several benefits, such as lowering transportation expenses across the strait, broadening markets, and bolstering international economic competitiveness. The advocacy for the direct flights wasn't confined to the public. Elected officials, too, vocally backed the policy. President Chen Shui-bian's policy blueprint prominently featured the Three Direct Links, with an acute focus on direct flights. Upon his election, President Chen Shui-bian reiterated his dedication to revive the Mini Three-Link Transportation in 2001. his commitment to implementing the Mini Three-Link Transportation in 2001.

The Mini Three-Link Transportation underwent a two-stage evaluation process, resulting in a decision to implement it gradually and partially. The initial stage allowed residents of Kinmen and Matsu to conduct direct trade and shipping with Mainland China.² The next stage would involve increasing bilateral exchange of commercial activities to make the operation more economically meaningful.³ As a

¹ Liu Chih-Lien, "The responsive evaluation of Three-Little-Link Policy: The Case Study of Matsu," (2005).

² Horng-Ming Tsai, "The Impact of "Mini Three Links" on the Interactions across the Taiwan Strait," *遠景季刊*, 2 2001.

³ Tsai, "The Impact of "Mini Three Links" on the Interactions across the Taiwan Strait."

result, the government extended the policies related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation.

The government's decision to implement the Mini Three-Link Transportation was driven by several pivotal objectives. Primarily, they sought to boost economic growth, respond to public aspirations, and promote peace along the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, the associated policies of this initiative were carefully tailored to ensure national security. These strategies not only adhered to the Offshore Islands Development Act but also resonated with the principles of the Three Direct Links and the standards of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The execution of the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy faced interruptions on two separate occasions, both resulting from public health apprehensions. The initial interruption was in 2003, corresponding with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak. This health crisis led to the temporary cessation of the Mini Three-Link Transportation, particularly in the Matsu region. Regarding the operations of "Implementation Measures for Trial Navigation between Kinmen-Matsu and Mainland China," the exchange of passengers and cargo with mainland China ships shall be suspended (only the exchange of passengers and cargo) and smuggling prevention measures shall be strengthened simultaneously.⁴ The Mini Three-Link Transportation for the Kinmen not was suspended temporarily. However, the epidemic prevention and quarantine capabilities of the Shui Tou and port of Lo Ro and the airport shall be immediately strengthened.⁵ During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy faced its second interruption. Drawing from the experience of the earlier SARS outbreak, the

⁴ 行政院, 有關因應「嚴重急性呼吸道症候群」疫情調整「小三通」運作事宜, 行政院 (92).

⁵ 行政院, 有關因應「嚴重急性呼吸道症候群」疫情調整「小三通」運作事宜.

government swiftly introduced border quarantine protocols. This policy halt spanned from February 2nd, 2020, to January 6th, 2023. Following this pause, the policy was resumed on July 20th, 2023.

The progression of the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy was markedly swayed by the dominant political ideologies of the time. Such ideologies also guided the expansion and nuances of policies tied to this transportation initiative. Under the governance of the Kuomintang (KMT) party, there was a pronounced emphasis on strengthening cross-strait relations. However, with shifts in the ruling party, the approach to matters like public health, smuggling, and national sovereignty witnessed noticeable changes. This underscores the pivotal role of political ideology in steering the trajectory of the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy.

The partisan divide between the Pan-blue and Pan-green camps in Taiwan has been sharp and acute since the 1990s.⁶ This observed reality contradicts the stable and modest prediction based on Dalton's index.⁷ Taiwan's citizens are unfamiliar with, and sometimes misunderstand, the meaning of left-right ideology by replacing the indicator of left-right ideology with that of the respondents' positions on the unification versus independence issue.⁸ The Kuomintang (KMT) party traditionally underscores matters related to unification, whereas the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) tends to champion independence-oriented issues. This alignment is consistent with each party's broader ideology. The KMT champions principles of nationalism, advocating for a balanced approach to cross-strait relations and underscoring societal

⁶ Su-feng Cheng Yi-ching Hsiao, "Citizens' Perceptions of the Left-Right Ideology in Taiwan: Replacing Left-Right Ideology with the Unification – Independence Issue to Measure Taiwan's Party Polarization," *台灣政治學刊* (2014), [https://doi.org/10.6683/TPSR.201412.18\(2\).79-138](https://doi.org/10.6683/TPSR.201412.18(2).79-138)

⁷ Yi-ching Hsiao, "Citizens' Perceptions of the Left-Right Ideology in Taiwan: Replacing Left-Right Ideology with the Unification – Independence Issue to Measure Taiwan's Party Polarization."

⁸ Yi-ching Hsiao, "Citizens' Perceptions of the Left-Right Ideology in Taiwan: Replacing Left-Right Ideology with the Unification – Independence Issue to Measure Taiwan's Party Polarization."

stability. Conversely, the DPP, rooted in democratic principles, opposes extreme insider viewpoints and emphasizes societal reforms. Such differences in ideological underpinnings often cause these parties to prioritize their political agendas, which might sometimes overshadow the broader public interest. As a result, governmental policy formulation typically leans towards the reigning party's ideological inclinations.

According to the data of democracy index, Taiwan is a democratic country. The major political parties, especially the KMT and the DPP, played significant roles in the democratization of Taiwan.⁹ Before the 1990s, Taiwan was characterized by authoritarian governance, predominantly under the Kuomintang (KMT) party's control. The rise of the Tang-wai Movement signified a pivotal change, steering Taiwan towards adopting a democratic system. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) emerged as a symbol of this democratic transition, ingraining democratic values into Taiwan's political fabric. Fundamentally, democracy hinges on the collective voice of its citizens. Yet, while based on the collective will, policies often echo the stances of prevailing political parties rather than the direct desires of the populace. Thus, the governing party's identity plays a decisive role in determining the trajectory of governmental policies.

Research Motivation

In this study, a content analysis will be conducted using the Legislative Yuan Gazette as the primary data source. Data pertinent to the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy will be extracted for a comprehensive review. The central objective is to discern the nature of debates among various political parties regarding

⁹ I-Chou Liu, "Democratic Party and Democratization of Taiwan," *臺灣民主季刊* 103 / 01, 2004.

this policy. Additionally, the analysis seeks to derive insights from these debates that might illuminate potential future political trajectories.

Research Purpose

This study aims to pinpoint and evaluate the primary areas of disagreement in the discourse related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation, particularly between the KMT and DPP administrations.

Research Questions

1. What are the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Chen Shui-bian (DPP)?
2. What are the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Ma Ying-jeou (KMT)?
3. What are the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Tsai Ing-wen (DPP)?

Contribution

The unique value of this research lies in highlighting that, despite the traditional association of the Mini Three-Link Transportation with the “Pan-blue” camp, there were marked differences in the debate perspectives of the KMT and DPP administrations. This analysis delved into diverse facets such as the economy, politics, transportation, and the expansion of the Mini Three-Link, among others. The study conclusively shows that the discourse surrounding the Mini Three-Link

Transportation presented discernible contrasts between the KMT and DPP administrations.

Limits

A significant limitation of this study stems from its expansive sample size, covering the period from 2001 to 2023. The vast amount of data poses challenges in thoroughly processing every detail. Even with a reduction in sample size over time, the sheer volume of information is daunting. This means that during the data filtering stages, certain pieces of information might be unintentionally excluded or insufficiently refined. To mitigate this challenge, the research employs a bifurcated filtering strategy: Initial filtering is achieved using specific keywords to condense the dataset. During content coding, a secondary data refinement is performed to further ensure the granularity and relevance of the data.

Delimits

A primary delimit of this study is its concentrated focus on the Legislative Yuan Gazette, which illuminates policy stances within Taiwan concerning the Mini Three-Link Transportation—a matter of cross-strait significance. Notably, this research does not extend to analyzing policy positions from the Chinese perspective. A more holistic understanding of the topic would emerge from juxtaposing Taiwan's viewpoints with those of China on this issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mini Three-Link Transportation

According to Offshore Islands Development Act, Article 18 mentions “To promote the development of Offshore Islands, prior to the comprehensive opening of transport links between the main island of Taiwan and the Mainland area, transport links between the Kinmen, Matsu and Penghu areas and the Mainland area may be opened on a pilot basis. Residents of the Taiwan area may, with due approval, use the pertinent entry/exit certificates, after checks, to enter the Mainland area from the pilot areas, or to enter the pilot areas from the Mainland area, without limitation by the Act Governing Relations Between the Peoples of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area or other laws or decrees. Regulations on the implementation thereof shall be prescribed by the Executive Yuan.¹⁰”

History of Mini Three-Link Transportation

The Mini Three-Link Transportation stands as a notable landmark in the evolution of cross-strait relations. Following Chiang Kai-shek’s retreat from mainland China in 1949, Taiwan and China remained distinctly separate until the 1980s. Throughout this prolonged separation, Matsu and Kinmen emerged as pivotal elements of Taiwan’s defense architecture, often positioned as primary defense frontlines. Owing to their strategic importance, several skirmishes between Taiwan and China occurred in Kinmen. A particularly significant conflict was the Battle of Ku-Ning-Tou in 1949, where the Chinese military initiated a nighttime incursion into Kinmen, leading to a fierce three-day engagement. The victory also frustrated the Chinese Communists attempt to liberate Taiwan by force, with the result of

¹⁰ National Development Council, "Offshore Islands Development Act " in *Article 18* (2019).

maintaining Taiwan sovereignty and retaining our country future.¹¹ A key episode in cross-strait tensions was the August 23rd Artillery Battle in 1958. During this conflict, the Chinese military launched a sustained artillery barrage on Kinmen. This intense battle spanned forty-four days, throughout which both soldiers and civilians in Kinmen exhibited remarkable determination and resilience in safeguarding their territory. The victory has altered the history of Kinmen, changed the fate of both sides, and has offered Taiwan a firm platform for future development.¹² Kinmen, given its strategic placement, frequently stood as the vanguard of Taiwan's defense. In tandem, Matsu, due to its geographical closeness to Kinmen, was also recognized as an essential frontline defense location.

The 1970s brought forth a myriad of challenges for Taiwan. Politically, a notable low point transpired in 1971 when Taiwan exited the United Nations. This departure marked the acknowledgment of the People's Republic of China as China's sole representative, triggering a domino effect with numerous nations, including the United States in 1979, severing their diplomatic bonds with Taiwan. Conversely, on the economic front, Taiwan showcased adaptability and resilience. Amidst the backdrop of a global oil crisis, the Taiwanese government rolled out the "Ten Major Construction Projects." Spanning a wide spectrum from heavy and chemical industries to essential infrastructures like transportation and electricity, these initiatives were instrumental. Central to Taiwan's economic strategy during this era was the export-oriented industrialization (EOI) framework, which significantly catalyzed economic expansion. Thus, the fast pace of economic growth of the East

¹¹ "English Guidebook of Kinmen Tourism," 金門日報 2009.

¹² "English Guidebook of Kinmen Tourism."

Asian nations known as the “Four Tigers”-South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore-has become a legend.¹³

Taiwan’s economic connection with China strengthened significantly during the 1980s. At the end of the 1980s, changes in macroeconomic conditions forced Taiwanese industry to restructure.¹⁴ Consequently, Taiwanese businessmen began to invest in China. From a political perspective, as indicated in the White Paper, the Chinese government stated that “from 1979, the Chinese government has striven for the peaceful reunification of China in the form of ‘one country, two systems’ with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort.”¹⁵ Initially, the Taiwanese government declined the proposal from China. Yet, following the cessation of martial law, Taiwan displayed a more accommodating stance towards China. A significant milestone occurred in 1987 when Taiwan allowed its citizens to visit family in China. This decision heralded the onset of cross-strait exchanges, leading to an escalating trend in interactions between the two territories.

Amidst expanding cross-strait interactions, 2000 witnessed the enactment of the Offshore Islands Development Act. Following closely, the Regulations Governing the Trial Operation of Transportation Links Between Kinmen/Matsu and the Mainland Area were introduced in 2001. This culminated in the official launch of the Mini Three-Link Transportation on January 1, 2001, signifying a pivotal shift in cross-strait relations.

¹³ Umesh C. Gulati, "The Foundations of Rapid Economic Growth: The Case of the Four Tigers," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 51, no. 2 (1992).

¹⁴ Philippe Chevalérias, "The Taiwanese Economy After the Miracle," *China Perspectives* (2010), <https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.5301>.

¹⁵ The Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, (2000).

The Goal of Mini Three-Link Transportation

The Mini Three-Link Transportation, commonly known as “Mini-Three-Links,” was introduced to enable limited connections in postal services, transportation, and trade between Taiwan and China. In the 2000 Taiwan presidential race, divergent policy platforms emerged: Chen Shui-bian from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) suggested forming a special administrative region for the outlying islands, envisioning them as bustling hubs for shopping and tourism, with an emphasis on economic progression. Kuomintang (KMT) candidate Lian Zhan championed the idea of a peace zone encompassing Kinmen, Matsu, and Fujian, underscoring the importance of peaceful coexistence. James Soong proposed the inception of a special economic zone between Kinmen and Matsu, spotlighting potential economic growth opportunities. The eventual roll-out of the Mini Three-Link Transportation became a critical initiative during this time. This era heralded the “Three Links” phase, a transformative period in cross-strait dynamics.

The Taiwanese government has simultaneously striven to boost economic progression in the Kinmen and Matsu areas and to ameliorate relations across the strait. The Mainland Affairs Council delineates two main aspirations in this pursuit:

The first objective is economic upliftment in Kinmen and Matsu. Before the advent of the Mini Three-Link Transportation, trade imbalances with the mainland led to deficits. Post-implementation, a trade surplus emerged, signaling its beneficial influence on the economies of Kinmen and Matsu. The second goal is augmentation of cross-strait relations. Enhancing these relations poses intricate challenges. Given that the nuances of cross-strait dynamics frequently mirror the ideologies of Taiwan’s reigning parties, gauging advancements in this realm becomes multifaceted.

In 1979, the Chinese government introduced the concept of the Three-Link in its “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.” The Chinese government articulated the following: “We hope that at an early date transportation and postal services between both sides will be established to make it easier for compatriots of both sides to have direct contact, write to each other, visit relatives and friends, exchange tours and visits and carry out academic, cultural, sports and technological interchanges.”¹⁶ The principal aim of this initiative was to bolster cross-strait interactions, leading towards the broader objective of Chinese reunification. This goal harmonizes with the Chinese government’s overarching ambition, as expressed in the 1979 “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.”

Although Taiwan and China both utilized comparable approaches to promote cross-strait interactions, like family reunions and exchange initiatives, their foundational objectives varied notably. Taiwan primarily sought to boost economic growth, foster development, and improve cross-strait relationships. Conversely, China’s paramount aspiration centered on achieving reunification.

The Principles of Mini Three-Link Transportation

According to the guidelines set forth by the Mainland Affairs Council, the development of policies associated with the Mini Three-Link Transportation is governed by three central tenets: national security, institutionalization, and progressive implementation. The government remains committed to upholding these foundational principles in the formulation of relevant policies.

¹⁶ The Standing Committee of the Fifth National People's Congress, *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan* (1979).

Central to the guiding principles of the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy is national security. It remains a predominant consideration, pervading every facet of the policy. Given the intricacies of cross-strait relations, maintaining national security is paramount. The government is meticulous in ensuring that the Mini Three-Link Transportation's execution does not compromise national security. Moreover, it diligently addresses and mitigates any potential security implications related to the policy's rollout.

The second guiding principle, institutionalization, emphasizes the creation of a comprehensive legal structure. Informal trade between Taiwan and China was prevalent, prompting the government to codify and validate such trade activities. The objective was to move from illicit to lawful trade channels, ensuring cross-strait exchanges occurred within a well-defined and orderly framework.

The third guiding principle, progressive implementation, underscores the value of a phased and methodical approach. For the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy, the government delineated specific thresholds and stages. The initial focus was on legitimizing minor trade and communication without necessitating official cross-strait dialogues. During this phase, only residents of Kinmen and Matsu were allowed direct trade and shipping with Mainland China. Following this, the government transitioned to a more expansive phase that required formal cross-strait negotiations. Here, the policy's reach was extended to include business activities, academic collaborations, and familial visits for Mainland Chinese residents.

At its core, the three guiding principles serve as the foundational pillars for the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy. Every policy decision is meticulously formulated in harmony with these essential tenets.

The Two Times Interruptions of Mini Three-Link Transportation

Public health policies are critical to be effective.¹⁷ With the expansion of cross-strait exchanges, public health concerns became increasingly pronounced. The amplified interactions between regions heightened the risk of epidemic diseases spreading through commercial endeavors. As a result, the imperative for robust quarantine measures came to the fore. Interestingly, when public health alarms led to the suspension of the Mini Three-Link Transportation twice, the government instituted targeted policies to curb disease transmission risks. These strategies presented a mixed bag of outcomes. While they acted as vital shields, curtailing the spread of diseases and safeguarding public health, they also had their downsides. Such interventions, though crucial, could negatively affect the economy, daily living, and various societal facets.

In 2003, cross-strait transport experienced a significant disruption. On April 1, 2003, Taiwan's Executive Yuan announced adjustments to the Mini Three-Link Transportation in Matsu, driven by the emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). This halt spanned from April 1st to May 16th, 2003, underpinned by a desire to protect public health. The government introduced meticulous quarantine measures. For instance, individuals at immigration points had to fill out health declarations specific to severe infectious pneumonia and undergo temperature screenings. Additionally, travelers from China faced self-health monitoring and self-isolation mandates. Yet, despite these measures, the repercussions of SARS on public health and other societal domains were decidedly adverse. A SARS epidemic has

¹⁷ Catherine A. Sharp et al., "Public acceptability of public health policy to improve population health: A population-based survey," *Health Expectations : An International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy* 23 (2020), <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1111/hex.13041>.

adverse effects on GDP and employment through a decrease in inbound visitors' consumption expenditures on the Taiwanese economy.¹⁸

In 2020, another significant disruption in the Mini Three-Link Transportation arose. The Mainland Affairs Council declared a temporary cessation of the Mini Three Links between Taiwan's Kinmen and Matsu islands and Mainland China on February 10, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Learning from the SARS incident, the Taiwan government promptly curbed cross-strait interactions to prevent the virus's potential spread. This suspension persisted from February 10, 2020, until March 15, 2023—a total of three years. Throughout this duration, Taiwan's primary aim was safeguarding public health. Yet, as the dynamics of the pandemic shifted, public sentiments became divided. As the severity of COVID-19 decreased, there was a growing call for the restoration of the Mini Three-Link Transportation, exemplified by movements such as the 2022 "Give me back the Mini Three-Link Transportation" parade. Heeding these public appeals, the government formally reinstated the Mini Three-Link Transportation on March 15, 2023.

In the face of public health crises, proactive and adaptable government intervention is crucial. At the onset of the SARS epidemic, Taiwan saw the virus's spread despite an early decision to suspend the Mini Three-Link Transportation. This escalation resulted in the unfortunate lockdown of several hospitals. Such events underscored the necessity for broader and more effective strategies to tackle the outbreak. Therefore, Taiwan's effective response to COVID-19 is based on its experience with SARS.¹⁹ As the COVID-19 pandemic began, the government acted

¹⁸ Hao-Yen Yang and Ku-Hsieh Chen, "A general equilibrium analysis of the economic impact of a tourism crisis: a case study of the SARS epidemic in Taiwan," *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* 1 (2009).

¹⁹ Wei-Ting Yen, "Taiwan's COVID-19 Management: Developmental State, Digital Governance, and State-Society Synergy," *Asian Politics & Policy* 12, no. 3 (2020).

promptly by halting the Mini Three-Link Transportation and introducing various epidemic control strategies such as home quarantine, a mask distribution system, and a name-based tracking method. As the situation progressed, public opinion varied on the efficacy and need for these measures, leading to shifts in governmental policy directions.

Mini Three-Link Transportation under KMT Administrations

Since Taiwan and China have reentered negotiations in June 2008, results of these negotiations have on one hand promoted increasingly close cross-strait interactions, but on the other hand also mean that cross-strait relationships have formed a unique state of governance.²⁰ During Ma's tenure, the administration crafted a policy focused on fostering stronger ties with China.

The Relationships between Taiwan and China during the administration of Ma Ying-jeou

Ma Ying-jeou led Taiwan as its President from 2008 to 2016, a period signifying the country's second change in party leadership. He coined his foreign policy approach as "Flexible Diplomacy." This strategy, synonymous with a diplomatic truce, suggested Taiwan would abstain from pursuing active diplomatic ties with other nations, ensuring no complications to its international position concerning China. Importantly, Ma Ying-jeou's administration's foreign policy still recognized the One-China principle, driving Taiwan towards enhanced collaboration with China.

²⁰ Yuh-Feng Lee, "Construction of Cross-Strait Governance Mechanisms: Structure, Path and Institutionalization," *Review of Global Politics* (2012).

President Ma has been consistent in his stance on the “1992 Consensus of one China, with respective interpretations.”²¹ The core of this strategy revolved around the belief that “two sides of the Taiwan Strait insist on one China.” However, while both parties expressed this sentiment, their interpretations of “One China” differed. President Ma’s approach blended elements of both “Flexible Diplomacy” and “Progressive Diplomacy.” In the diplomatic sphere, the Ma administration tended to adopt a more cautious posture, emphasizing the fortification of current diplomatic ties. Yet, a noticeable shift occurred in Taiwan’s UN policy. Initially focused on rejoining the UN, the goal transitioned to achieving meaningful involvement in global organizations. This change influenced China’s stance, leading them to endorse the policies of Ma’s administration. This period saw diplomatic milestones, encompassing Taiwan’s inclusion in the World Health Organization (WHO), the landmark Ma–Xi meeting, and other significant initiatives.

China remains firmly dedicated to the “The One-China Principle,” aiming for peaceful reunification. In alignment with this ambition and after reaching mutual agreements with Ma’s administration, China introduced several economic strategies to bolster their objectives. These strategies encompassed the launch of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), initiation of direct transportation links, and the enablement of unrestricted travel for Mainland Chinese residents to Taiwan.

Finally, Ma stated that “For our party, the eventual goal is reunification, but we don’t have a timetable. At the moment, we don’t believe that either side is prepared to have unification. The conditions are really not ripe yet,”²² Under Ma’s

²¹ MAC Press, *MAC: "1992 Consensus of One China, with Respective Interpretations" Fully Highlights ROC Sovereignty and Taiwan Dignity* (2015).

²² Jonathan Adam, "Conditions Aren't Ripe," interview by Ma Ying-jeou, *NEWSWEEK*, 2005.

administration, there was a strengthened bond with China, with a policy inclination favoring reunification.

Policy Relaxation of Mini Three-Link Transportation

As cross-strait relations enhanced, Ma's administration implemented policies to deepen connections with China. Economic and cultural exchanges flourished, with fewer restrictions. As a result, Ma's administration advocated for more relaxed policies concerning the Mini Three-Link Transportation.

Under President Ma's administration, standard operating procedures for the Mini Three-Link Transportation system, connecting Taiwan and China, were effectively established. As outlined by the Executive Yuan, this standardization covered several crucial areas: Launching the Mini Three-Link Transportation service for Penghu, allowing Mainland Chinese tourists to travel to Taiwan for tourism. Making the Mini Three-Link Transportation system a viable transit route for Mainland Chinese citizens traveling to and from Taiwan. Implementing an efficient system for granting landing visas to Mainland Chinese travelers. Encouraging duty-free imports of select agricultural and fishery products between Taiwan and Mainland China. Streamlining customs procedures for the convenience of Mainland Chinese citizens.

Under Ma's leadership, policies were reformed to standardize the Mini Three-Link Transportation system. These reforms covered multiple essential facets, including the introduction of the Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu, enhancing personnel exchanges, and optimizing freight transport. As a result of these policy changes, cross-strait interactions witnessed substantial development and proliferation.

Mini Three-Link Transportation under DPP Administrations

According to Democratic Progressive Party platform, it indicated that “Taiwan is a sovereign state. It is a historical fact and a de facto status quo that Taiwan is not a part of the People’s Republic of China nor does her sovereignty encompass Mainland China.”²³ The DPP administration has developed a policy that emphasizes a distinct separation between Taiwan and China.

The Relationships between Taiwan and China during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

From 2000 to 2008, Chen Shui-bian held the presidential office in Taiwan, marking the historic shift in political leadership between parties. His foreign policy was anchored in three main pillars: “Pragmatic Diplomacy,” “Transit Diplomacy,” and “Competition Diplomacy.” While “Pragmatic Diplomacy” built upon the strategies from Lee Teng-hui’s era, both “Transit Diplomacy” and “Competition Diplomacy” encountered significant obstacles, primarily due to China’s active attempts to discourage nations from maintaining diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This environment led to a heightened emphasis on Taiwan’s sovereignty during Chen Shui-bian’s administration.

Taiwan had clear policy framework on the relationship with China. According to President Chen’s 520 Inaugural Speech, he said “I pledge that during my term in office, I will not declare independence, I will not change the national title, I will not push forth the inclusion of the so-called “state-to-state” description in the Constitution, and I will not promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard

²³ (*Party Platform*, 1986).

to the question of independence or unification.”²⁴ President Chen’s administration is characterized by the stance known as the “Four Noes and One Without.” While this policy emphasized not altering Taiwan’s current status, actions taken during Chen’s tenure, including the adoption of transit diplomacy and competition diplomacy, hinted at a tilt towards independence.

The position of China is the One-China Principle. According to the One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue in 2000, the Chinese government has, since 1979, adopted the policy of peaceful reunification and gradually evolved the scientific concept of “one country, two systems.”²⁵ China proposed anti-secession law. The PRC’s Anti-secession Law of March 14, 2005 is not only a legislative threat of war, as it seems to impress, but also redefines the status quo of China as a nation and becomes the major inter-zonal law of PRC.²⁶ Hence, China tried to use strong-arm tactics to reunify Taiwan.

While President Chen’s administration championed Taiwanese independence, China remained unwavering in its adherence to the One-China Principle. As a response to Taiwan’s stance, China employed forceful tactics to intimidate the island. Despite such pressures, Chen’s administration maintained its ideological commitment.

The Relationships between Taiwan and China during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

Tsai Ing-wen served as Taiwan’s president from 2016 to 2024, marking her distinction as the country’s first female president. Her tenure also witnessed the third-

²⁴ Chen Shui-bian, "President Chen's Inaugural Address," *Office of the President Republic of China (Taiwan)* 2000.

²⁵ Council, Short The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue.

²⁶ 蘇永欽, "從區際法的角度看反分裂國家法 " *中華國際法與超國界法評論*, 2005, https://www.lawbank.com.tw/treatise/pl_article.aspx?AID=P000189147#t2.

party alternation in leadership. In terms of foreign policy towards China, President Tsai advocated for “Steadfast Diplomacy.” There are two primary interpretations of this diplomatic stance: “Unwavering and fixed in direction” – highlighting the administration’s commitment to navigating diplomatic challenges. “Firm in purpose” – emphasizing Tsai’s goal to forge an alliance with other democracies. These strategic underpinnings suggest a leaning towards Taiwanese independence during President Tsai Ing-wen’s administration.

Relations between Taiwan and China have experienced increased challenges and tensions. According to unveiling ceremony for New Frontier Foundation, president Tsai said “The two sides must maintain a “harmony without uniformity” and “unity without uniformity” relationship.”²⁷ The term “harmony” in the context of Tsai’s administration denotes peaceful development. Under Tsai’s leadership, a policy of strategic ambiguity was adopted concerning cross-strait relations. However, the overarching stance of her administration displayed inclinations towards Taiwanese independence.

China views the DPP as a separatist entity, opposing reunification. According to The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era. The People’s Republic of China, China government said that “DDP refuse to recognize the one-China principle, and distort and deny the 1992 Consensus.”²⁸ China resorted to forceful methods, including military aggression, conducting military exercises near Taiwan, and disrupting official cross-strait exchanges, as means of intimidation. These tactics were aimed at pressuring Tsai’s administration to acknowledge the 1992

²⁷ 蔡英文, "蔡英文主持新境界文教基金會智庫揭牌," 2011.

²⁸ The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council and The State Council Information Office, The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era The People's Republic of China, (2022).

Consensus. Should Tsai's administration accept the 1992 Consensus, it would signify a successful united front strategy on China's part.

While President Tsai's administration championed Taiwanese independence, China remained firm in its adherence to the 1992 Consensus. As a result, the cross-strait relationship didn't warm; instead, it cooled further. China intensified its use of forceful tactics against Taiwan in response. Despite these pressures, Tsai's administration held steadfast to its ideological stance.

The Implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation

Effective from the beginning of 2001, the implementation of direct shipping between the offshore islands of Kinmen & Matsu and China's Fujian Province marks a new phase of development for the cross-strait relationship.²⁹ The decision marked a significant development concerning the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu in relation to China.

Following the surprise shift from the "no haste, be patient" policy, the newly inaugurated Chen's administration in 2000 championed the implementation of the Mini Three-Link Transportation by 2001. The initiative aimed to bolster economic growth and development in Kinmen and Matsu and foster improved cross-strait relations. However, the Mini Three-Link Transportation approach was unilateral, implemented without cross-strait consultation.

The foundational legislation for the Mini Three-Link Transportation is articulated in Article 18 of the Offshore Islands Development Act. Its primary objective was to stimulate economic growth and advancement in Kinmen and Matsu.

²⁹ Chung-Yuan Fan, "Study of "Mini-three-links" between the Offshore Islands of Kinmen & Matsu and Mainland China," *實踐通識論叢* Vol.3 (2005).

Notably, this transportation initiative was not restricted by the Act Governing Relations Between the Peoples of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area or any other prevailing laws.

Despite the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy being implemented without cross-strait consultation, it represented a milestone in cross-strait relations. The ultimate objective was to establish “normal” exchanges between the straits.

The Records of the Legislative Yuan Gazette

According to Organic Law of the Legislative Yuan, Article 18 mentions “Pertaining to taping and recording conferences of Legislative Yuan and Committees. Pertaining to stenograph of conferences of Legislative Yuan and Committees. Pertaining to editing, printing and issuance of Official Gazette. Pertaining to printing of any kind of documents. Pertaining to duplication and issuance of video and audio. Other matters related to Official Gazette.”³⁰

The Policy Background in the Legislative Yuan Gazette

The Legislative Yuan Gazette is an official publication that chronicles the proceedings and legislations of Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan. It primarily draws from records and minutes of both the main sessions of the Legislative Yuan and its committees.

The Legislative Yuan Gazette serves as the official record of interpellation proceedings. It is published based on legislative sessions, of which there are two each year. These sessions traditionally occur from February to March and then again from September to November. Initially, the first appointed date comprised nine sessions.

³⁰ "Organic Statute of Legislative Yuan," (Article 18).

From the second to the sixth appointed dates, there were six sessions each, spanning a three-year term. Starting from the seventh appointed date, the term extended to four years, with eight sessions. A notable change occurred on February 1, 2005, when the Gazette transitioned from a vertical to a horizontal format.

The Legislative Yuan Gazette is produced by the Official Gazette Department. This department consists of five divisions and a dedicated printing plant. First to Third Divisions: These divisions focus on stenography and the collection of primary drafts from conferences. Fourth Division: This division is responsible for editing, printing, and publishing the Gazette both in physical form and on the website. Fifth Division: It specializes in audio recording of Legislative Yuan and Committee conferences. Additionally, it manages the duplication and distribution of these recordings. Printing Plant: This facility handles the printing of various documents associated with the Gazette.

In essence, the Legislative Yuan Gazette serves as a comprehensive record of proceedings. It amalgamates records and minutes from both the main sessions of the Legislative Yuan and its associated committees.

The Different Political Inclination of Legislators in the Legislative Yuan Gazette

With regard to electoral strengths, Taiwan's case apparently is a stable two-party system according to the trend of party identification and votes since 1986.³¹ Political affiliations in Taiwan can be categorized into three primary groups: Pan-blue, Pan-green, and those that are either unaffiliated or unknown. The Pan-blue camp tends to

³¹ Tsong-Jyi Lin, "Institutionalization of Party System in Taiwan: An Analysis on the Mass Political Attitudes," *臺灣民主季刊* Vol.8 (2011).

align with the views of the KMT, while the Pan-green camp is more closely associated with the DPP.

The Pan-blue camp can be further segmented into “Deep Blue” and “Light Blue” factions. Deep Blue: This faction is primarily represented by the Kuomintang (KMT). The KMT was the main party in Taiwan since the nationalist government’s relocation to the island in 1948. Prior to 2000, the KMT dominated the political landscape, serving not only as the ruling party but also holding a majority in the Legislative Yuan. Light Blue: This category encompasses parties such as the People First Party (PFP), Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU), and New Party (NP). The PFP and NP are known to support the “1992 Consensus of One China.” Meanwhile, the NPSU’s policy positions lean towards the blue spectrum, making all three parties constituents of the Pan-blue camp.

The Pan-green camp can be classified into “Deep Green” and “Light Green” factions. Deep Green: This faction is symbolized by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The DPP emerged from the Tang-Wai movements, establishing itself as a significant political force. Over time, it became an alternative to the Pan-blue camp, advocating for Taiwanese independence. In 2000, the DPP achieved its first party alternation, although the KMT still held the majority in the Legislative Yuan. By 2016, the DPP not only served as the ruling party but also maintained a majority in the Legislative Yuan. Light Green: Parties such as the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and New Power Party (NPP) fit this category. The TSU’s core objective is to “resist China and protect Taiwan.” On the other hand, the NPP promotes the idea of Taiwan being recognized as a sovereign state. Collectively, both the TSU and NPP align with the principles of the Pan-green camp.

Middle is Nonpartisan. Political parties are main actors when forming a government³², but nonpartisan legislator is a special existence. With Ko Wen-je's victory in the 2018 mayoral election as an independent candidate, the prominence of nonpartisan political figures came to the forefront. Key nonpartisan legislators, such as Chen Fu-Hai, played crucial roles in issues like the Mini Three-Link Transportation. While these independent legislators aren't affiliated with any particular party, they have distinct policy positions and significantly influence the political landscape.

Unknown is Taiwan People's Party (TPP.) The Taiwan People's Party (TPP), established in 2019, is a relatively new entrant in the political arena. Given its brief four-year existence, determining a clear political inclination for the TPP remains challenging.

Different legislators possess varying political inclinations, which often influence their respective policy positions. While these inclinations typically result in distinct policy stances, there are instances where consensus can be reached across different inclinations. This ability to find common ground, despite diverse beliefs, is a notable phenomenon in the political landscape.

Research Methods for the Content Analysis

Through content analysis, this research aims to identify the key debate points surrounding the Mini Three-Link Transportation between the KMT and DPP Administrations. The analysis utilizes codings based on factors like publication year, affiliated party, and the specific issue at hand.

³² Yu-Chung Shen, "Non-partisan Ministers in Semi-Presidential Democracies: Appointment and Legislative Behavior," *行政暨政策學報* Vol.73 (2021).

Significance of the Legislative Yuan Gazette

The Legislative Yuan Gazette documents the legislation related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation. This record highlights the policy stances of various legislators and underscores how different ruling parties influence the direction of the policy.

The focus of this study is the Legislative Yuan Gazette's coverage of the Mini Three-Link Transportation. This source was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the policy stance on Mini Three-Link Transportation as documented in this particular record.

The sampling frame encompasses documents related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation, spanning from the fourth to the tenth appointed dates. This method ensures a targeted and systematic capture of policy stances under various ruling parties.

In conclusion, the Legislative Yuan Gazette plays a crucial role in my research. It serves as both the target population and the primary data source.

Methodological Approach of Similar Studies

Based on the research titled "Taiwan's Implementation of the Cross-Strait Mini-Three-Links," this study aims to delve into the background, strategic planning, outcomes of the "Mini Three-Links" experimentation, and its areas for improvement. The analysis reveals that the dynamics involve not only Taiwan and China but also the USA and China.

Based on the research titled "To depend on the theory of interdependence to construct the Kinmen economic development strategy", the purpose of this study is

the country is the essential behavior body of international politics.³³ It emphasizes that the essential behavior body substitute the economic cooperation for traditional military force to interaction relation which originates as the authority.³⁴

Based on the research titled “小三通」的實施成效與續存需求, this study aims to examine the continuity of the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy. It explores ways the central government can enhance these policies and further bolster the development in Matsu and Kinmen.

A Content Analysis based on Policy Position

This study aims to analyze the debates surrounding the Mini Three-Link Transportation, focusing on varying policy positions as presented in the Legislative Yuan Gazette. The researcher will gather documents from the Legislative Yuan Gazette and identify policy positions of the advocates using codings, such as publication year, the party, and the specific issue.

³³ 蔡承旺, "To depend on the theory of interdependence to construct the Kinmen economic development strategy," (2006), <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/ahcjz2>.

³⁴ 蔡承旺, "To depend on the theory of interdependence to construct the Kinmen economic development strategy."

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes qualitative research methods to delve into the policy stance on the Mini Three-Link Transportation. This policy is pivotal, touching various facets of Taiwan like elections, transportation, and the economy, and also having implications for China. The viewpoint on the Mini Three-Link Transportation often reflects the inclinations of the ruling parties. For example, under Chen Shui-bian's leadership, the policy was introduced with a measured approach to openness. In contrast, Ma Ying-jeou's tenure saw endeavors to normalize the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Taiwan's dynamic political arena has catalyzed a shift in its relationship with China, transitioning from a phase of tension to one of easing. The chosen research design aims to offer an in-depth analysis of the policy perspectives across diverse administrative reigns.

This study's qualitative component delves into documents pertinent to the Mini Three-Link Transportation. These materials mainly highlight the discussions about the Mini Three-Link Transportation, reflecting diverse public perspectives. Through content analysis, the gathered data will be systematically evaluated, ensuring consistent objectivity throughout the research.

The research approach adopted for this investigation is longitudinal, encompassing data accumulation from 2000 through May 2023. This methodology highlights the evolution of policies and transitions in the governing parties. Since the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative began in 2000, the starting point for the publication year is identified as such. The Legislative Yuan's sessions extend from February to May, marking the end of the publication year in May 2023. Notably, this

span also includes two peaceful shifts in party leadership, further validating the timeframe's relevance for this study.

In summary, the combination of qualitative analysis and a longitudinal research approach in this investigation offers an in-depth comprehension of policy stances across various administrations. This study augments the current literature on the subject and holds promise in shedding light on potential future political trajectories.

Source of Data

The primary data for this research is sourced from the “The Legislative Yuan Gazette” databases, covering the period between 2000 and May 2023. This gazette stands as an invaluable resource due to its exhaustive coverage, which includes both verbal and written interpellations on subjects like Budget and Auditing, project interpellations, and committee interpellations. Analyzing these records allows for a detailed exploration and assessment of policy stances adopted by different political factions. The comprehensive information encapsulated in the proceedings of “The Legislative Yuan Gazette” provides a solid basis for our study of the Mini Three-Link Transportation topic across both KMT and DPP tenures.

This research draws from two main data sources, as detailed. (See **Table 1**) The first source is the “Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.,” and the second is the Legislative Yuan’s official website. Both sources can be accessed online and fall under the category of Internet-based resources. The “Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.” primarily functions as a data repository. It offers access to proceedings from “The Legislative Yuan Gazette,” which encompass interpellations related to Budget and Auditing, project interpellations, and committee interpellations.

It's worth noting that committee interpellations from 2020 to May 2023 were sourced from the Legislative Yuan's official website, as delineated. (See **Table 2**)

Table 1, Data source

Data Collection	Source of the Article	Source Type	Data Location
Official Document	Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.	Internet	https://lis.ly.gov.tw/qrkmc/qrkmout?@0.021311897446299133
	The website of the Legislative Yuan	Internet	https://ppg.ly.gov.tw/ppg/#section-3

Table 2, Where to download the data

Year	2000 to 2008	2008 to 2016	2016 to 2020	2020 to 2023
Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.	Download	Download	Download	Use website
The website of the Legislative Yuan	No data	No data	No data	Download

It's important to highlight that the “Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.” provided only a subset of the required information. For a more complete dataset, data concerning committee interpellations between 2020 and May 2023 was obtained directly from the Legislative Yuan's official website. This approach was adopted to ensure a comprehensive dataset, given the richer details present in “The Legislative Yuan Gazette.” Notably, despite the differences in data granularity between these two sources, the overall findings of our research remained consistent.

Data Editing, Coding, and Analysis

The research question at the heart of this study pertains to the policy stance regarding the Mini Three-Link Transportation policy under various ruling parties. To address this question, the coding process was systematically divided into distinct sections, each serving a specific purpose. As a result, three separate sections were established to facilitate this comprehensive analysis.

This report provides a content analysis based on the publication year, focusing on the span between 2000 and May 2023. The timeline is divided into three distinct periods: (See **Table 3**) 2000 to 2008: Chen Shui-bian presided during this period with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) at the helm. Notably, although the DPP was the ruling party, it was in the minority in the Legislative Yuan. To elaborate, the Pan-blue camp had a stronger representation compared to the Pan-green camp in the Legislative Yuan. 2008 to 2016: Ma Ying-jeou presided during this period with the Kuomintang (KMT). The Legislative Yuan during these years was predominantly under the control of the KMT. 2016 to 2023: Tsai Ing-wen led during this period with the DPP in governance. Notably, the DPP held a majority in the Legislative Yuan. This era marked the first instance of the DPP establishing a unified government.

Table 3, The presidents' parties and the majority party in the Legislative Yuan

Year	Presidents' Parties	Majority Party in the Legislative Yuan
2000 to 2008	DDP	KMT
2008 to 2016	KMT	KMT
2016 to 2023	DDP	DDP

This report segment offers a content analysis focusing on political party affiliations of the legislators. The analysis is divided into five specific categories, detailing the political alignments of the legislators based on their party origins. The

categories and their corresponding party affiliations are as follows: (See **Table 4**)

Deep Blue: Represents the Kuomintang (KMT). Light Blue: Encompasses legislators from the People First Party (PFP), Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU), and New Party (NP). Middle: Refers to those who are Nonpartisan. Light Green: Constitutes members from the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and New Power Party (NPP). Deep Green: Represents the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Unknown: Pertains to the Taiwan People’s Party (TPP). To provide a more generalized view, these affiliations can be broadly grouped into four overarching categories: “Pan-blue,” “Pan-green,” “Middle,” and “Unknown.”

Table 4, The party affiliations and the parties

Party Affiliations	Parties
Deep Blue	Kuomintang (KMT)
Light Blue	People First Party (PFP) Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU) New Party (NP)
Middle	Nonpartisan
Light Green	Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) New Power Party (NPP)
Deep Green	Democratic Progressive Party (DDP)
Unknown	Taiwan People’s Party (TPP)

This report segment delves into a content analysis centered on the key issues confronted during different administrative periods. Specifically, the emphasis is on the varying stances and policies regarding the Mini Three-Link Transportation across three distinct leadership tenures: Chen Shui-bian’s Administration: The predominant issue was the open and implementation of the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Ma Ying-jeou’s Administration: The primary concern during this period was the relaxation of policies governing the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Tsai Ing-wen’s

Administration: The central debate revolved around the suspension or potential reopening of the Mini Three-Link Transportation.

This content analysis report delineates the systematic process undertaken by the author in coding and categorizing the data: Year Coding: Given the emphasis on the transition of ruling parties over time, the initial step involved coding the years. Party Coding: Following the chronological framework, the author then coded the different political legislators. Issue Categorization: Simultaneously, the author categorized and coded the pertinent issues. Policy Analysis: In the concluding phase, the author synthesized the data to understand the policy positions corresponding to each ruling party.

Research Instrument and Its Use

This content analysis report elucidates our data collection methodology, as depicted. (See **Figure 1**) Our primary data resources are derived from the Legislative Yuan website and the Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C. Of these, the most frequently tapped source for our data is the Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C.

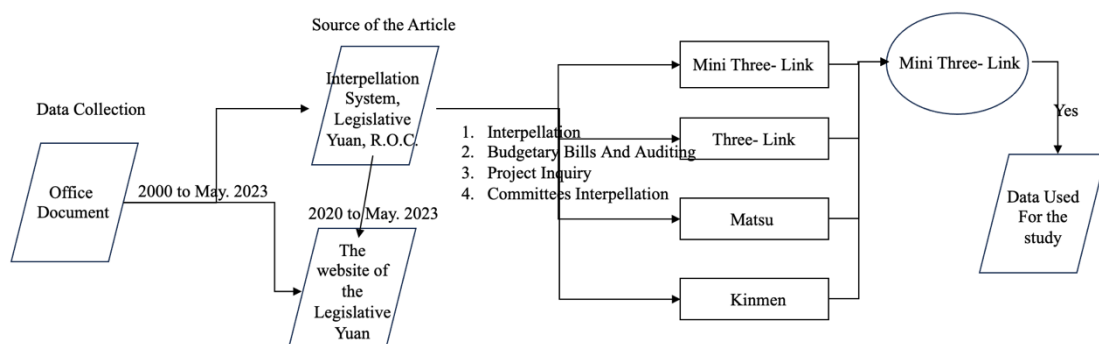


Figure 1, The process of data collection

In this content analysis report, to systematically accumulate and structure the primary data, the author categorized it into four specific segments: interpellation, budgetary bills and auditing, project inquiry, and committee interpellation. The primary resource for the first three segments was the Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C. However, for committee interpellations spanning 2020 to 2023, an alternative method was employed. This data was directly downloaded from the Legislative Yuan website, given its comprehensive format. The website proved instrumental in enabling a coherent analysis of the committee data.

In this content analysis report, to uphold data integrity, an initial sample comprising approximately 2,397 documents was determined. This sample size was derived from the extensive range of the target source, specifically the Legislative Yuan Gazette, in relation to pivotal keywords like Mini Three-Link, Matsu, Kinmen, and Three-Link. Following this, the author executed an additional data refinement process to remove any unrelated information concerning the Mini Three-Link

In this content analysis report, to maintain uniformity across segments, a consistent set of search keywords was utilized: “Mini Three-Link,” “Matsu,” “Kinmen,” and “Three-Link.” After filtering out entries that did not encompass the term “Mini Three-Link,” the initial sample was refined to 732 entries by discarding data not pertinent to “Mini Three-Link.” Notably, among the keywords, “Matsu” had the sparsest representation. In contrast, “Three-Link” registered a higher frequency, predominantly because the search outcomes encapsulated both the specific “Mini Three-Link” and the more generalized “Three-Link” category. The bulk of the data predominantly correlated with the terms “Mini Three-Link” and “Kinmen.”

In this content analysis report, upon uploading the refined data into MAXQDA, the author embarked on the coding process. The initial step involved segmenting the

data into three distinct timeframes, each aligning with the tenures of Chen Shui-bian, Ma Ying-jeou, and Tsai Ing-wen. Following this temporal classification, the author organized the legislators according to their party allegiances during these periods, broadly categorizing them into “Pan-blue,” “Pan-green,” “Middle,” and “Unknown.” The “Pan-blue” category consolidated members from the Kuomintang (KMT), People First Party (PFP), Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU), and New Party (NP). Meanwhile, the “Pan-green” designation comprised the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP), Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), and New Power Party (NPP). “Middle” pertained to those identified as Nonpartisan. Intriguingly, an atypical political categorization labeled “Unknown” surfaced during Tsai Ing-wen’s leadership.

Within MAXQDA, the author utilized a dual-coding approach to categorize the issues. The first code was assigned to capture hesitations or concerns raised by the legislators, representing the core issues. The second code was tailored to encapsulate the government’s replies, signifying its position or stance. A subsequent refinement process was undertaken to excise any residual irrelevant entries associated with the Mini Three-Link. As a result of this filtration, the sample size was narrowed down to 592, as highlighted. (See **Table 5**)

	Keyword				Total
	Mini Three-Link	Matsu Kinmen	Three- Link		
Interpellation	94	0	14	6	114
Budgetary Bills & Auditing	9	0	2	0	11
Project Inquiry	324	4	92	10	430
Committees	32	1	4	0	37
Total	459	5	112	16	592

Table 5, The amount of the data about filtering the irrelevant issue about Mini Three- Link

Concluding the data-processing phase, the author segmented the data based on various administrations and exported the coding outcomes into Excel. This transition facilitated a structured organization of parallel and contrasting issues, as well as the categorization of hesitations rooted in the legislators' party allegiances. With the data meticulously arranged, the author embarked on a comparative analysis, spotlighting the congruencies and disparities in policy stances concerning the Mini Three-Link Transportation between the KMT and DPP regimes.

Tool for Data Analysis

In this content analysis report, our research relies on secondary data extracted from the Legislative Yuan Gazette databases. To ensure data authenticity, we sourced it directly from the official website, placing emphasis on the Legislative Yuan Gazette, and prioritizing accuracy above all. With regards to reliability, our objective centered on achieving consistent and stable outcomes to bolster the credibility of the findings. Through this methodology, our research aims to deliver thorough and trustworthy insights. The foundational data was amassed from two pivotal sources: the Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C., and the official website of the Legislative Yuan. This gathered data was subsequently fed into MAXQDA for the coding process.

In this content analysis report, our primary analytical tool is MAXQDA, a specialized software tailored for qualitative data examination. We harnessed MAXQDA to segment the data into three specific categories: the year of publication, party affiliation, and the focal issue being addressed.

In this content analysis report, besides MAXQDA, we also incorporated ChatGPT as a crucial research tool. ChatGPT was instrumental in composing several

segments of this report, verifying content accuracy, and amending any linguistic or grammatical oversights that arose during the drafting phase.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this content analysis report, my research objective is to discern the policy stances on Mini Three-Link Transportation across varying ruling parties. The foundational data for this study is sourced from the Legislative Yuan Gazette, specifically sections pertinent to Mini Three-Link Transportation. The selection criteria for the Gazette's sections were based on their relevance to the transportation system in question. This method was designed to ensure that the chosen population directly aligns with the research theme. The study employed four keywords for data extraction: "Mini Three-Link," "Matsu," "Kinmen," and "Three-Link." The time frame for this research spans from 2000 to May 2023. An approximate sample size of 630 documents was derived, based on the Gazette's content directly associated with Mini Three-Link Transportation. This sample size was chosen to strike a harmonious balance between practicality and representativeness in content analysis.

In this content analysis report, within MAXQDA, the coding was segmented into three primary categories: year, parties, and issue. The 'year' category enabled us to ascertain under which administrations the data fell. The 'parties' category was instrumental in identifying the political affiliations associated with the data. However, the 'issue' category was paramount for contrasting policy stances. Consequently, the 'issue' category was further divided into two codes: "hesitation," representing the perspective of the legislator, and "response," reflecting the government's stance. During the comparative analysis of policy positions, our primary focus was on the 'year' code coupled with the sub-code from the 'issue' category. The latter, the sub-code, delved deeper into the specific issues at hand (See **Table 6**)

Table 6, The results of coding

Source	Code	Sub-code
Interpellation System, Legislative Yuan, R.O.C	The administration of Chen Shui-bian	Economy Transportation
	The administration of Ma Ying-jeou	Politic Expanding Mini Three- Link Transportation
	The administration of Tsai Ing-wen	Others

In this content analysis report, the ‘Year’ code was segmented into three distinct periods, while the ‘Issue’ code remained consistent across these periods. The study employed specific scenarios to address three primary questions, which are as follows:

1. What were the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Chen Shui-bian (DDP)?
2. What were the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Ma Ying-jeou (KMT)?
3. What were the similar and different policy positions on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and the administration of Tsai Ing-wen (DDP)?

The Administration of Chen Shui-bian

In this content analysis report, under the Chen Shui-bian’s administration, the legislators’ stance can be categorized into two phases. The first phase centered on the introduction of an open policy concerning Mini Three-Link Transportation. In

contrast, the second phase dealt with the practical implementation of the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Throughout the transition from policy introduction to its execution, five pivotal issues emerged.

The Open Policy about Mini Three-Link Transportation

In this content analysis report, the “Pan-blue” legislators, as detailed, (See **Appendix A 1**) encompassed members from the Kuomintang (KMT), Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU), New Party (NP), and People First Party (PFP). Out of these, 68 “Pan-blue” legislators voiced concerns and posed questions related to the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators referenced, (See **Appendix A 2**) were primarily associated with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU). A total of 23 “Pan-green” legislators actively participated in dialogues and raised queries about the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Meanwhile, the “Middle” legislators outlined, (See **Appendix A 3**) represented the Nonpartisan faction, with 5 of them discussing the Mini Three-Link Transportation’s intricacies. Notably, with their substantial numbers, the “Pan-blue” legislators exhibited a pronounced interest and investment in the Mini Three-Link Transportation topic.

During the administration of Chen Shui-bian, there were five distinct issues concerning the open policy related to Mini Three-Link Transportation (See **Table 7**). These topics spanned the realms of Economy, Transportation, Politics, Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and Others.

Table 7, The issue about the open policy of Mini Three-Link Transportation in the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Issue	Sub-issue
Economy	Navigation
	Economy
Transportation	Infrastructure
	Manpower and material resources
	Border quarantine
	Personnel exchanges
	Freight transportation
	Fishing workers
	Decriminalization of small-scale trade
Politic	National security
	Cross-strait relations
	Religious navigation
Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation	Three-Link Transportation
Others	Ambling
	Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu

On the Economy. “Pan-blue” legislators suggested eliminating route restrictions, lifting currency trading limitations, and promoting enhanced economic collaboration with China, among other initiatives. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators introduced the concept of a direct banking remittance service with China. “Middle” legislators, independent of their political affiliations, also championed stronger ties with China. A common thread across the spectrum was a general inclination towards expanding economic initiatives. Yet, the Chen administration displayed prudence in their approach. They pursued cross-strait dialogues, aimed at drawing tourists for economic growth, and rolled out the open policy for Mini Three-

Link Transportation in a phased manner. As a result, the government's stance was notably measured and restrained.

On Transportation. The “Pan-blue” legislators championed various initiatives such as infrastructure enhancements, resource augmentation, strengthening border quarantine protocols, fostering exchanges between civil servants and Chinese civilian personnel, boosting freight transportation capabilities, and addressing challenges faced by fishing workers. Conversely, the “Pan-green” legislators prioritized bolstering border quarantine measures to guard Taiwan against potential disease transmission and tackling resource deficits at quarantine checkpoints. The “Middle” legislators advocated for broadening personnel exchanges, while also attending to issues of household registration limitations and emergency healthcare services. Despite varying political allegiances, a unified perspective emerged among the legislators. The Chen administration aligned with many of these initiatives, undertaking steps to advance infrastructure, amplify resources, and intensify border quarantine procedures through infrastructure project planning, human resource strategizing, and the creation of quarantine stations and oversight mechanisms. Yet, exchanges involving Chinese civilians and civil servants remained restricted, and the expansion of freight transportation was approached incrementally, reflecting a more cautious stance in these domains. Overall, while the Chen administration actively pursued advancements in infrastructure, resource distribution, and border controls, their strategies concerning personnel exchanges and freight transport were marked by a methodical, conservative progression.

On Politic. The “Pan-blue” legislators made several proposals. These included heightened concerns over smuggling and trafficking risks, the decriminalization of small-scale trade of minor trade activities, voicing apprehensions about national

security, fostering improved cross-strait relations, and championing non-political religious navigation. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators recognized the amplified smuggling and trafficking risks associated with the open policy, attributing it to potential exploitations by the Chinese through legal avenues to smuggle goods into Taiwan. They also viewed religious navigation as being intrinsically political. The “Middle” legislators expressed support for strengthening cross-strait relations via the open policy of Mini Three-Link Transportation, even if the specifics were somewhat nebulous. Despite the diverse viewpoints, a consensus emerged across the political spectrum. The Chen administration, however, presented a distinct perspective. They believed the open policy could serve to formalize and thereby legitimize minor trade operations. Addressing national security concerns, they undertook policy assessments, even though China remained non-communicative on these issues. Regarding religious navigation, the administration refrained from initiating direct flights but permitted the utilization of foreign vessels for journeys to China. In essence, the Chen administration demonstrated backing for the decriminalization of small-scale trade of minor trade and specific religious navigation facets. Yet, their overarching approach leaned toward nurturing healthier cross-strait relations, underpinned by a robust focus on safeguarding national security.

On Expanding Mini Three-Link Transportation. Both the “Pan-blue” and “Pan-green” legislators advocated for the expansion of Three-Link Transportation. Their proposals emphasized enlarging Taiwanese ports and promoting direct trade. Contrarily, the Chen administration resisted the push for Three-Link Transportation’s expansion. Their opposition was grounded in prioritizing national security, favoring phased policy implementation, and viewing the Mini Three-Link Transportation as a

more pragmatic and viable substitute for the broader Three-Link Transportation initiative.

On Others. The “Pan-blue” legislators put forth two notable proposals. The first suggested the introduction of “gambling,” indicating the establishment of gaming and entertainment activities on the outlying islands. The second recommendation was to expand the Mini Three-Link Transportation to Penghu. In contrast, Chen’s administration perceived the ‘gambling’ suggestion as a potential avenue for augmenting financial resources. As a result, they gave consideration to this idea while progressively implementing the Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

In conclusion, while the legislators and Chen’s administration often held divergent views on economic policies, there was a notable consensus on transportation, particularly in areas such as infrastructure enhancement, resource allocation, and strengthening of border quarantine measures. However, the administration adopted a more cautious stance when addressing personnel exchanges and freight transportation. Politically, the legislators shared some agreement on decriminalizing small-scale trade, managing national security concerns, and advancing cross-strait relations. Yet, divergent views persisted on religious navigation. Although Chen’s administration recognized the merits of decriminalizing small-scale trade and some facets of religious navigation, they approached cross-strait relations with an emphasis on national security. Moreover, there were stark differences in opinions on the expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation between the legislators and the administration. On auxiliary topics, a shared viewpoint emerged on gambling, but disparities persisted on the rollout of Mini Three-Link Transportation in specific areas. Overall, the interplay between the legislators and

Chen’s administration highlighted both commonalities and differences in their policy positions across various domains.

The Implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation

The “Pan-blue” legislators, as detailed (See **Appendix A 4**), were primarily from the Kuomintang (KMT), Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU), New Party (NP), and People First Party (PFP). Of these, 49 expressed concerns and posed questions about Mini Three-Link Transportation. Conversely, the “Pan-green” legislators referenced (See **Appendix A 5**), were mainly from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU). Eighteen of these legislators engaged in dialogues and investigations pertaining to Mini Three-Link Transportation. The “Middle” legislators highlighted (See **Appendix A 6**), were associated with the Nonpartisan group; three of them brought up issues concerning Mini Three-Link Transportation. Notably, the “Pan-blue” legislators were in the majority, underscoring their heightened interest in the Mini Three-Link Transportation topic.

During Chen Shui-bian’s administration, there were five issues related to the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation (See **Table 8**). These topics spanned the realms of Economy, Transportation, Politics, the Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and Others.

Table 8, The issue about implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation in the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Issue	Sub-issue
Economy	Navigation
	Economy
Transportation	Infrastructure
	Manpower and Material Resources
	Border quarantine
	Personnel exchanges
	Freight transportation
	Fishing workers
Politic	Decriminalization of small-scale trade
	National security
	Cross-strait relations
	Religious navigation
Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation	Expanding Mini Three-Link Transportation
	Middle Three-Link Transportation
	Three-Link Transportation
Others	Water navigation
	Authorization
	Laws
	Tourism
	Mini Three-Link Transportation Pause
	Mail service.
	Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu

On Economy. The “Pan-blue” legislators advocated for various economic initiatives, such as eliminating route restrictions, allowing free currency trading, creating special economic zones, exerting economic control, and transitioning from air to sea freight. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators prioritized re-evaluating economic governance, while the “Middle” legislators spotlighted concerns about

agricultural competition. Notably, the “Pan-blue” faction appeared more inclined towards broadening economic horizons, whereas both the “Pan-green” and “Middle” factions championed tighter economic oversight. Reflecting these inclinations, Chen’s administration chose to institute economic regulations. They also engaged in dialogue with mainland China through civic entities and adopted a phased approach to economic and navigational issues, demonstrating the government’s preference for a more measured stance on economic matters.

On Transportation. The “Pan-blue” legislators put forth a variety of proposals, emphasizing infrastructure enhancement, boosting resources for law enforcement and coastal protection, strengthening border health measures—especially during the SARS outbreak, broadening exchanges between Taiwanese and Chinese citizens, advancing freight transportation, and proposing a training hub for fishing workers. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators highlighted the need for adequate resource provisioning for aviation police at checkpoints, bolstering of SARS-related quarantine measures, widening the scope of exchanges specifically for Taiwanese entrepreneurs and government officials, and augmenting freight transportation capabilities. Notably, both the “Pan-blue” and “Pan-green” factions converged on key issues: they agreed on the need for better resource distribution, intensifying SARS-era health measures, expanding interaction avenues for Taiwanese business figures, and the advancement of freight movement. Chen’s administration resonated with these concerns, showing support for infrastructure, resource enhancement, and robust border health protocols. Yet, when it came to expanding people-to-people ties and the progression of freight logistics, they displayed caution, rolling out these measures incrementally. Furthermore, they did not back the idea of a new training facility for fishermen. To encapsulate, while Chen’s government exhibited forward-thinking strategies for

infrastructure, resources, and health security, it treaded more cautiously on matters of interpersonal exchange and freight logistics.

On Politic. The “Pan-blue” legislators put forward several suggestions, encompassing the strengthening of measures against smuggling and trafficking, decriminalizing minor trade activities, amplifying national security efforts—especially in neutralizing political interventions from the Chinese government and Communist Party—and supporting religious navigation. Notably, the “Pan-green” legislators echoed many of these recommendations, indicating a rare consensus across party lines. On a different note, the ‘Middle’ legislators championed the enhancement of cross-strait relations via the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation. Across the political spectrum, there was unanimous agreement on the issues of decriminalizing small-scale trade and bolstering national security. In response, Chen’s administration bolstered efforts to regulate minor trade activities and intensified security-related inquiries. In tune with the ‘Middle’ legislators’ proposals, the administration underscored the goals of Mini Three-Link Transportation, particularly emphasizing decriminalization of small-scale trade of minor trade activities and fostering cross-strait dialogues. However, when it came to religious navigation, the administration adopted a vigilant oversight approach. To sum it up, Chen’s administration exhibited a cautious stance, especially in areas intertwining religion and politics.

On Expanding Mini Three-Link Transportation. The “Pan-blue” legislators advocated for the expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation, Middle Three-Link Transportation, and Three-Link Transportation. In response, Chen’s administration expressed support for the expansion of Three-Link Transportation. Progress was made

on the front of Middle Three-Link Transportation under Chen's guidance. Eventually, the administration shifted its focus to fully implementing Three-Link Transportation.

On Others. The "Pan-blue" legislators put forward seven additional proposals, encompassing water navigation, authorization mechanisms, regulatory legislation, tourism, a temporary halt to Mini Three-Link Transportation in Matsu, mail service provisions, and the introduction of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

Specifically: Water navigation sought to establish direct waterways between Taiwan and China. Authorization dealt with both private sector participation and localized permissions. The term "laws" was associated with the formal sanctioning of specific regulations. The proposed 'pause' in Matsu revolved around a temporary suspension of Mini Three-Link Transportation there. Mail service concerns addressed package delivery constraints and the creation of a cross-strait mail exchange center. The push for Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu was aimed at the policy's execution. In response, Chen's administration: Laid out plans for water navigation. Perceived authorization through a centralized lens. Interpreted laws as clear legal directives. Applied restrictions on tourism activities. Backed the temporary suspension of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Matsu. Established certain restrictions for mail services. Adopted a phased methodology towards Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

In sum, both the legislators and Chen's administration trended towards cautious economic policies. Common ground was achieved in domains like infrastructure development, resource distribution, and border quarantine measures. While Chen's administration exhibited a progressive inclination in most areas, they maintained a conservative stance on personnel exchanges and freight transport. On political issues, both the legislators and the administration adhered to a cautious perspective, largely influenced by concerns related to China. A unanimous agreement was achieved on the

expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation. However, in other policy dimensions, such as water navigation, authorization procedures, legal frameworks, tourism, mail services, and the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu, varying viewpoints surfaced between the legislators and Chen's administration. A solitary consensus was found regarding the temporary halt of Mini Three-Link Transportation. Thus, across an array of topics, both convergent and divergent policy stances were evident between the legislators and Chen's administration.

The Administration of Ma Ying-jeou

the "Pan-blue" legislators (See **Appendix A 7**), represented primarily by members of the Kuomintang (KMT), took the lead in addressing issues associated with Mini Three-Link Transportation. Out of them, 12 actively voiced questions and concerns. Meanwhile, the "Pan-green" legislators (See **Appendix A 8**), predominantly affiliated with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) had 3 representatives engaging in relevant discussions. The "Middle" legislators, belonging to the Nonpartisan group (See **Appendix A 9**) had 3 representatives engaging in relevant discussions. The "Middle" legislators, belonging to the Nonpartisan group.

During Ma Ying-jeou's administration, five key issues emerged (See **Table 9**) Economy, Transportation, Politics, the Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and Others.

Table 9, The issue in the administration of Ma Ying-jeou

Issue	Sub-issue
Economy	Navigation
	Economy
Transportation	Infrastructure
	Manpower and Material Resources
	Border quarantine
	Personnel exchanges
	Freight transportation
	Fishing workers
Politic	Decriminalization of small-scale trade
	Religious navigation
Expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation	Expanding Mini Three-Link Transportation
Others	The cooperation of rescue
	Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu
	Environmental problems
	Tourism

On Economy. The “Pan-blue” legislators championed a range of economic reforms. These included proposals to abolish route constraints, liberalize currency trading, promote devolution, and curtail small-scale trade. In contrast, the “Pan-green” legislators suggested a year-long suspension of the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative. The “Middle” legislators, meanwhile, accentuated the need for a cross-strait currency clearing mechanism and the enhancement of business development. The “Pan-blue” and “Middle” legislators generally inclined toward liberalizing economic policies. However, the “Pan-green” legislators exhibited caution, especially concerning the potential economic impact of halting the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative. In its deliberations, Ma’s administration exhibited

pragmatism. It opted not to endorse certain liberal economic proposals when the anticipated economic benefits appeared unsubstantial. Broadly, Ma's administration exhibited a commitment to a more liberal economic environment, as evinced by their endorsement of standardizing the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Addressing the "Pan-green" legislators' apprehensions, the administration noted that while the Mini Three-Link Transportation wasn't fully halted, more rigorous administrative checks were introduced to thwart corruption.

On Transportation. The "Pan-blue" legislators proposed a range of measures, including infrastructure improvements, an increase in resources for the police, enhanced border quarantine, expanded personnel exchanges with Chinese citizens, addressing fees for Taiwan Exit and Entry Permits, increasing freight transport, and dealing with fishing workers through Mini Three-Link Transportation in Matsu. The "Middle" legislators generally shared similar proposals but with a broader scope. For instance, they focused on both hardware and software design improvements in infrastructure, an increase in resources for the coast guard, firefighters, and the National Airborne Service Corps. They also suggested fare discounts for residents of Kinmen and Matsu, the transportation of agricultural products with certificates of origin related to freight transport, and the impact of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) on freight transport. Ma's administration reached a consensus with the "Pan-blue" legislators and the "Middle" legislators. However, the administration believed that ECFA did not significantly impact freight transport. Consequently, Ma's administration pursued a more progressive policy approach.

On Politic. The "Pan-blue," "Pan-green," and "Middle" – underscored the need to address smuggling concerns and advocated for the decriminalization of small-scale trade of small-scale trade. Notably, only the "Pan-blue" legislators broached the

subject of religious navigation. In response, Ma's administration ramped up its efforts against smuggling, with notable actions like the Angang plan. Beyond domestic measures, the administration engaged in an array of cross-strait collaborations and partnerships, predominantly with China. Nevertheless, charter flights and ships remained the preferred modes of transportation. The administration's alignment with the legislative consensus on the decriminalization of small-scale trade of small-scale trade was evident, and their initiatives played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between Taiwan and China.

On Expanding Mini Three-Link Transportation. The "Pan-blue" legislators advocated for a visa-on-arrival policy for Chinese citizens. Ma's administration responded by emphasizing that such a policy would necessitate collaboration with China. Though the immediate removal of visa requirements for Chinese citizens was not executed, there was marked advancement in the normalization of Mini Three-Link Transportation under Ma's administration.

On Others. The "Pan-blue" legislators highlighted an additional concern: the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu, suggesting that the policy did not adequately address Penghu's needs. Meanwhile, the "Middle" legislators introduced three more issues: the need for cooperation in rescue operations, the environmental implications of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and the potential for boosting tourism. Both factions appeared to favor the expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation. In response to this legislative consensus and the improving cross-strait relations, Ma's administration backed the legislators' propositions. This led to a series of cross-strait initiatives, including the 2010 Cross-Strait Search and Rescue Joint Exercise, the standardization of Mini Three-Link Transportation, the

Cross-Strait Forum on marine matters, and the introduction of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

In summary, both the legislators and Ma's administration demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to policy, especially concerning economic and transportation matters. Ma's administration engaged in consistent collaboration with China on political subjects. While not all barriers for Chinese individuals were removed in relation to the Mini Three-Link Transportation expansion, notable progress was achieved in normalizing this transit system. While there were occasional differences in policy perspectives between the legislators and Ma's administration, they often found common ground, leading to widespread agreement on several issues.

The Administration of Tsai Ing-wen

The "Pan-blue" legislators, affiliated with the Kuomintang (KMT) (See **Appendix A 10**), consisted of 11 members who voiced questions and concerns about the initiative. The "Pan-green" legislators, associated with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and New Power Party (NPP) (See **Appendix A 11**), had 10 members actively engaging in discussions and raising inquiries about the transportation project. The "Middle" legislators, a Nonpartisan faction (See **Appendix A 12**), a single legislator brought forward issues related to Mini Three-Link Transportation. The "Unknown" legislators, representing the Taiwan People's Party (TPP) (See **Appendix A 13**), representing the Taiwan People's Party, included three members who also delved into inquiries regarding Mini Three-Link Transportation.

As a result, the "Pan-blue" legislators were in the majority, closely followed by the "Pan-green" legislators, with a mere difference of one legislator between the two groups. The "Unknown" legislators emerged during Tsai's administration,

representing a new political faction. The close tally underscores the significant attention the “Pan-blue” legislators dedicated to the topic of Mini Three-Link Transportation.

During the administration of Tsai Ing-wen, four significant issues emerged (See **Table 10**): Economy, Transportation, Politics, and Others.

Table 10, The issue in the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

Issue	Sub-issue
Economy	Navigation
	Economy
Transportation	Manpower and material resources
	Border quarantine
	Personnel exchanges
	Freight transportation
Politic	National security
	Cross-strait relations
Others	The paused of Mini Three-Link Transportation
	Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu
	Tourism

On Economy. The “Pan-blue” legislators highlighted several concerns including addressing route deficits, adverse sea conditions leading to the suspension of shipping services, the need for increased voyages, promoting devolution, and bolstering supplementary measures. On the other hand, the “Pan-green” legislators championed enhanced supplementary measures, especially a relief package tailored for the Mini Three-Link Transportation. Both legislative groups converged on the economic front, especially regarding supplementary measures. Responding to these concerns, Tsai’s administration augmented voyages between Beigan, Matsu, and Huangqi in Foochow to mitigate challenges arising from turbulent sea conditions. Furthermore, the

administration leaned on cross-strait consultations as a mechanism to address these issues. Supplemental solutions became the primary focus, evident from a substantial subsidy of 300 million to buttress the Mini Three-Link Transportation, especially considering the detrimental effects of Covid-19 on the tourism sector. Additionally, the administration sought to counter route deficits through strategies like appreciation. Devolution, as envisioned, implied a structure where central authorities framed policies while local governance structures ensured their execution. As a result, under Tsai's stewardship, a conservative economic strategy prevailed, anchored on supplementary measures and cross-strait dialogues.

On Transportation. The “Pan-blue” legislators put forth several proposals. These included bolstering manpower and resources for the police, firefighters, and civil servants, and introducing epidemic prevention measures such as home quarantine, transportation provisions, and pausing reception services for Chinese tour groups. Additionally, they pushed for personnel exchanges between the Chinese and Taiwanese populace and suggested transportation solutions like cargo isolation. Conversely, the “Pan-green” legislators emphasized tightening border quarantine measures and curtailing personnel exchanges, specifically concerning Taiwanese citizens, spouses from Mainland China, and Taiwanese businessmen. The “Unknown” legislators posited ideas such as eliminating PCR testing during border quarantine and prohibiting Chinese visitors from participating in personnel exchanges. The solitary “Middle” legislator centered their attention on personnel exchanges involving Chinese officials and expressed apprehensions regarding the review mechanism. In essence, while the “Pan-blue” and “Unknown” legislators appeared inclined towards a more liberal transportation policy framework, the “Pan-green” and “Middle” legislators advocated for a more restrictive approach. In response, Tsai's administration

augmented manpower and resources, implemented stringent measures on border quarantines, personnel exchanges, and freight transport, thereby reflecting a cautious stance on transportation policy.

On Politic. The “Pan-blue” and “Unknown” legislators both advocated for strengthening cross-strait relations using Mini Three-Link Transportation as a conduit. However, the “Unknown” legislators highlighted China’s inspection practices on Mini Three-Link Transportation vessels. Despite this, both factions found commonality in their economic stances, especially concerning supplements. Contrastingly, Tsai’s administration leaned towards active cross-strait dialogue and developed strategies to reignite cross-strait interactions. Their communication with China was grounded in principles of peace, reciprocity, and respect. In essence, when addressing political affairs, Tsai’s administration demonstrated a more measured and cautious approach.

On Others. The “Pan-blue” legislators brought forth two primary concerns. First, they addressed the suspension of Mini Three-Link Transportation, exploring the possibility of its recommencement. Second, they highlighted the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism. On the other hand, the “Pan-green” legislators flagged two distinct issues: the efficacy and sufficiency of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu and the introduction of a one-stop model in the tourism sector. In response to these concerns, Tsai’s administration placed paramount importance on public health while evaluating the resumption of Mini Three-Link Transportation. Even during its hiatus, the foundational infrastructure for this transportation method in Taiwan remained operational. Drawing from historical insights, Tsai’s administration charted a phased strategy for reintroducing Mini Three-Link Transportation and adeptly navigating challenges in the tourism sector.

In summation, the prevailing impact of Covid-19 led both the legislators and Tsai's administration to embrace a conservative perspective on economic policies. While the "Pan-blue" and "Unknown" legislators were inclined towards broadening transportation policies, Tsai's administration resonated more with the "Pan-green" legislators' cautious approach to transportation. This circumspect attitude was also mirrored in political policies. Overall, faced with various challenges, Tsai's administration adeptly steered its course, choosing a measured and conservative policy trajectory as its guiding principle.

Summary of Data Analysis

The research encompasses three specific time frames. The findings reveal that:

During the Chen Shui-bian's administration (DDP), a significant convergence was observed in policy stances concerning Mini Three-Link Transportation between the legislators and the Chen Shui-bian administration (DDP). Both parties shared a mutual perspective on transportation facets, encompassing infrastructure, manpower and resources, and border quarantine measures. On the political front, there was an agreement on the decriminalization of small-scale trade, certain elements of religious navigation, and other considerations like gambling. Nonetheless, divergences in policy stances manifested in areas such as the economy, specific transportation elements like personnel interactions and cargo transport, political topics including national security, the expansion of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and additional concerns, notably the introduction of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

In the framework of Mini Three-Link Transportation's implementation, both the legislators and Chen Shui-bian's administration (DDP) showcased congruence in

policy perspectives across multiple transportation dimensions. Commonalities spanned infrastructure enhancement, manpower and resources allocation, border quarantine protocols, political facets like decriminalization of small-scale trade of small-scale trade and national security considerations, the broadening of Mini Three-Link Transportation, and other subjects, including waterway navigation and the provisional halt of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Matsu. Yet, discernible divergences in policy stances between the legislators and Chen Shui-bian's administration manifested in economic strategy, diverse elements of transportation such as personnel interactions and cargo conveyance, and other particular areas encompassing authorization, legislative matters, tourism, postal services, and the rollout of Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu.

During Ma Ying-jeou's administration (KMT), The shared policy stances on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between legislators and Ma Ying-jeou's administration (KMT) encompassed areas such as the economy, transportation, politics, and other issues. These included aspects like the Mini Three-Link Transportation itself, collaborative rescue efforts, the introduction of the Mini Three-Link Transportation in Penghu, environmental concerns, and tourism. However, there were divergent views between the legislators and Ma Ying-jeou's administration (KMT) on economic topics, especially when involving the "Pan-green" legislators, as well as on expansion.

During Tsai Ing-wen's administration (DDP), legislators and the DPP-driven administration showcased both aligned and divergent policy viewpoints on the Mini Three-Link Transportation initiative. Areas of consensus spanned the economic realm, transportation in tandem with the views of the "Pan-green" legislators, and specific topics like tourism. However, distinctions became apparent in the

transportation perspectives held by the “Pan-blue” and “Unknown” legislators, the policy’s political nuances, and particular concerns such as the temporary halt of Mini Three-Link Transportation and its establishment in Penghu.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the content analysis, the author delved into detailed discussions derived from the results of each analytical phase. These discussions can be distilled into two primary themes.

Discussion

Discussion 1: The Proportion of the Legislators

The analysis revealed that legislators from the “Pan-blue” coalition proposed the issue of Mini Three-Link Transportation more frequently than their counterparts.

Over an extended period, the “Pan-blue” legislators held a majority in the Legislative Yuan. During Chen’s administration, despite the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) being in power, the Kuomintang (KMT) held a larger proportion of legislative seats than the DDP. It became the divided government because the president and majority party in Legislative Yuan did not belong the same party.³⁵ In contrast, during both Ma’s and Tsai’s administrations, the president and the majority party in the Legislative Yuan were from the same party, resulting in a unified government.

During Tsai’s administration, although the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) held a greater proportion of legislative seats compared to the Kuomintang (KMT), the “Pan-blue” coalition still had a majority when considering all its affiliated parties. As a result, the Mini Three-Link Transportation was predominantly championed by the “Pan-blue” legislators.

³⁵ 黃秀端, "少數政府在國會之困境," *台灣政治學刊* Vol.2 (2003).

In conclusion, the “Pan-blue” legislators were the primary proponents of the Mini Three-Link Transportation, making it predominantly a “Pan-blue” issue.

Discussion 2: The Trend of Policy

The analysis revealed that the policy trend during the KMT administration was generally more liberal compared to the DDP. The study identified three distinct periods.

Chen Shui-bian’s foreign policy revolved around three core pillars: “Pragmatic Diplomacy,” “Transit Diplomacy,” and “Competition Diplomacy.” Overall, Chen’s administration leaned towards a conservative policy approach and aimed for gradual implementation. However, the Chinese government did not reciprocate.

The foreign policy of Ma’s administration is equidistant diplomacy, Ma’s administration tended to China, especially the economy.³⁶ Overall, Ma’s administration adopted a progressive policy approach, particularly in promoting the normalization of the Mini Three-Link Transportation. In response, the China government reacted positively, leading to an enhancement in cross-strait exchanges.

Tsai’s administration had an ambiguous stance on China policy, but the overall strategy leaned towards maintaining peace and tranquility. While the approach was nuanced and received intense scrutiny, the administration showed a willingness to engage closely with China. Generally, Tsai’s tenure was marked by a conservative policy direction. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the approach towards the Mini Three-Link Transportation became even more conservative to prioritize health

³⁶ 施正鋒, "馬英九政府的中國政策," *台灣國際研究季刊* Vol. 9 (2013); 施正鋒, "馬英九政府的中國政策."

concerns. Nevertheless, during this period, the Chinese government pursued reunification with Taiwan with increased vigor.

In conclusion, the KMT administration adopted a liberal policy approach, while the DDP administration leaned towards a more conservative stance. Because of the different future vision, KMT claim integration, and DPP claim independence³⁷.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to discern the key points of contention regarding the Mini Three-Link Transportation between the KMT and DPP administrations. While the research highlighted that the Mini Three-Link Transportation was primarily championed by the 'Pan-blue' coalition due to their majority status, this did not influence the core debate points between the two administrations. The findings further indicate that the KMT administration leaned towards a liberal policy approach, in contrast to the DPP administration, which adopted a more conservative stance.

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the divergent perspectives on the Mini Three-Link Transportation between the KMT and DPP administrations. Broadly speaking, the KMT administration demonstrated a liberal approach, whereas the DPP administration leaned more conservative.

³⁷ 紀國棟, "兩岸通航策略與國家安全之研究," (2004).

Appendix A

Party	KMT	FPF	NP	NPSU
	Chang Fu-Hsin	Chen,Chao-Jung	Cheng, Long-Shai	Cheng, Yu-Cheng
	Chang Jen-Hsiang	Cheng, San-Yuan	Fung, Hu-Hsiang	Chiu, Chuang-Liang
	Chang, Chang-Tsair	Chou, Hsi-Wei	Hau, Lung-Bin	Ho, Chin-Sung
	Chen Ching-Pao	Chung, Shao-Ho	Lai,Shyh-Bao	
	Chen, Chien-Min	Feng, Ting-Kuo	Lee Chu-Feng	
	Chen, Rong-Shen	Hsieh, Chang-Chieh	Wu, Cherng-Dean	
	Chen,Tsai Ling-Lan	Hsu, Ching Yuan		
	Cheng, Yung-Chin	Huang, Yi-Chiao		
	Chiu, Ching-Chun	Kao, Ming-Chien		
	Chou, Wu-Liu	Lee, Yong-Ping		
	Chu, Fong-Chi	Lin, Hui-Kuan		
	Chung-Yu Wang	Liu, Wen-Hsiung		
	Ho, Chih-Hui	Shen Chih-Hwei		
	Hong, Yuh-Chin	Tsao, Yuan-Chang		
	Hsiao, Uan-U			
	Hsieh, Kuo-Liang			
	Hsu, Su-Yeh			
	Huang, Chao-Shun			
	Huang, Ming-Hui			
	Huang, Min-Ho			
	Hung,Hsing-Rong			
	Hwang, Mub-Tien			
Legislators	Kuan, Wo-Juan			
	Lee,Sen-Zong			
	Liao, Fung-Te			
	Lin, Chien-Jung			
	Lin, Hsu Shao-Ping			
	Lin, Hung-Chih			
	Lin, Nan-Sheng			
	Lin, Yi- Shih			
	Lin,Hong-Tsung			
	Lin,Pin-Kuan			
	Liu, Chuan-Chung			
	Liu, Shen-Liang			
	Pan, Wei-Kang			
	Sun, Kao-Hwa			
	Ting, Shou-Chung			
	Tsai Chia-Fu			
	Tsao, Erh-Chang			
	Tseng, Hua-Te			
	Wang, Yu-Ting			
	Wu, Cherng-Dean			
	Wu, Kuang-Hsun			
	Yang S. Fan			
	Yang, Chiung-Ying			

Appendix A 1, The “Pan-blue” legislators about the open policy of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	DDP	TSU
Legislators	Chang, Ching-Hui	Lo, Chih-Ming
	Chang, Hwa-Kuan	
	Chen, Chi-Yu	
	Chen, Tsung-Yi	
	Cheng, Pao-Ching	
	Cheng, Tsao-Min	
	Chia-Jong Ho	
	Chi-Changhong	
	Ching You	
	Chiu, Chuang-Chin	
	Chou, Ya-Shu	
	Chu, Hsin-Yu	
	Huang, Chao-Hui	
	Kuo, Jung-Chung	
	Lee, Ming-Hsien	
	Liu, Chun-Hsiung	
	Liu, Ping-Wei	
	Tang, Bi-A	
	Wang, Sing-Nan	
	Wu, Fu-Quei	
Yeh, Yi-Jin		
Yen Ching-Fu		

Appendix A 2, The “Pan-green” legislators about the open policy of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	Nonpartisan
Legislators	Chang, Li-Shan
	Chen, Chin-Ting
	Robert Hsu
	Tsai, Hau
	Yeh, Hsien-Hsiu

Appendix A 3, The “Middle” legislators about the open policy of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	KMT	PFP	NP	NPSU
Legislators	Chang Fu-Hsi	Chang, Hsien-Yao	Fung, Hu-Hsiang	Cheng, Yu-Cheng
	Chang Jen-Hsiang	Cheng, San-Yuan	Hau, Lung-Bin	Chiu Chung-Liang
	Chang, Chang-Tsair	Chung, Shao-Ho	Lai, Shyh-Bao	Ho, Chin-Sung
	Chen Ching-Pao	Feng, Ting-Kuo	Lee Chu-Feng	
	Chen, Chien-Min	Hsu, Ching Yuan	Wu, Cherng-Dean	
	Chen, Rong-Shen	Kao, Ming-Chien		
	Chen, Tsai Ling-Lan	Lee, Yong-Ping		
	Chen, Tsai Ling-Lan	Lin, Hui-Kuan		
	Chiu, Ching-Chun	Shen Chih-Hwei		
	Chung-Yu Wang	Tsao, Yuan-Chang		
	Hong, Yuh-Chin			
	Hsieh, Kuo-Liang			
	Huang, Chao-Shun			
	Hung, Hsing-Rong			
	Kuan, Wo-Juan			
	Lee, Sen-Zong			
	Liao, Fung-Te			
	Lin, Hung-Chih			
	Lin, Nan-Sheng			
	Lin, Yi-Shih			
	Lin, Chien-Jung			
	Lin, Pin-Kuan			
	Liu, Chuan-Chung			
	Sun, Kao-Hwa			
	Ting, Shou-Chung			
	Tsai, Chia-Fu			
	Tseng, Hua-Te			
	Wang, Yu-Ting			
Wu, Cherng-Dean				
Wu, Kuang-Hsun				
Yang S. Fan				

Appendix A 4, The “Pan-blue” legislators about the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	DDP	TSU
Legislators	Chang, Ching-Hui	Lo, Chih-Ming
	Chang, Hwa-Kuan	
	Chang, Shiow-Jen	
	Chen, Chi-Yu	
	Chen, Tsung-Yi	
	Cheng, Tsao-Min	
	Ching You	
	Chiu, Chuang-Chin	
	Chou, Ya-Shu	
	Huang, Chao-Hui	
	Kuo, Jung-Chung	
	Lee, Ming-Hsien	
	Liu, Chun-Hsiung	
	Tang, Bi-A	
	Wang, Sing-Nan	
	Wu, Fu-Quei	
	Yen Ching-Fu	

Appendix A 5, The “Pan-green” legislators about the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	Nonpartisan
Legislators	Chang, Li-Shan
	Chen, Chin-Ting
	Yeh, Hsien-Hsiu

Appendix A 6, The “Middle” legislators about the implementation of Mini Three-Link Transportation during the administration of Chen Shui-bian

Party	KMT
Legislators	Chang, Ching-chung
	Chen, Hsueh-Sheng
	Chen, Ken-Te
	Chiang, Chi-Chen
	Lin, Hung-Chih
	Lin, Ping-kun
	Lin, Chien-Jung
	Lu, Chia-Chen
	Ting, Shou-chung
	Tsao, Erh-Chang
	Yang, Ying-Hsiung
	Yen, Kuan-Heng

Appendix A 7, The “Pan-blue” legislators in my research during the administration of Ma Ying-jeou

Party	DDP
Legislators	Chiu, Chih-Wei
	Lin, Tai-Hua
	Wang, Sing-Nan

Appendix A 8, The “Pan-green” legislators in my research during the administration of Ma Ying-jeou

Party	Nonpartisan
Legislators	Chen, Fu-Hai

Appendix A 9, The “Middle” legislators in my research during the administration of Ma Ying-jeou

Party	KMT
Legislators	Chen, Hsueh-Sheng
	Chen, I-Hsin
	Chen, Yu-Jen
	Cheng, Li-Wun
	Hsu, Chih-Jung
	Hung, Mong-Kai
	Jeng, Tian-Tsair
	Lee, Guei-Min
	Lee, De-Wei
	Yang, Cheng-Wu
	Yu, Yu-Lan

Appendix A 10, The “Pan-blue” legislators in my research during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

Party	DDP	NPP
Legislators	Chang, Hung-Lu	Chen, Jiau-Hua
	Chiang, chieh-an	
	Chuang, Jui-Hsiung	
	Kuan, Bi-Ling	
	Loh, Meei-Ling	
	Wang, Mei-Hui	
	Wu, Chi-Ming	
	Wu, Li-Hua	
	Yang, Yao	

Appendix A 11, The “Pan-green” legislators in my research during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

Party	Nonpartisan
Legislators	Lim, Tshiong-Tso

Appendix A 12, The “Middle” legislators in my research during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

Party	TPP
Legislators	Chiu, Chen-Yuan
	Jang, Chyi-Lu
	Lai, Hsiang-Ling

Appendix A 13, The “Unknown” legislators in my research during the administration of Tsai Ing-wen

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