

## **Strategic Adjustment or Genuine Change? The DPP's China Policy after 2008**

Gunter Schubert

European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan (ERCCT),  
University of Tuebingen, Germany  
德國杜賓根大學歐洲當代台灣研究中心

After the 2012 presidential elections, the DPP seems to stand at a crossroads again. Facing intensifying interaction across the Taiwan Strait and a majority of voters who want to see stable cross-strait relations, its history and identity as Taiwan's oldest independence party seems to have become a burden for electoral success. Arguably, most Taiwanese can now at least live with the '1992 consensus' of "one China with different interpretations". It is hence stated by some party leaders and advisors that the DPP must modify its China approach and accommodate the '1992 consensus'. Others reject such a strategy and plead for a rebuilding of the party from the grassroots, reactivating its links with civil society and rejuvenating the DPP's democratic values. This paper reconstructs the DPP's China policy since the change of ruling parties in 2008. It argues that the DPP "learned little" from its defeat in that year and mainly conducted strategic maneuvering in the run-up to the 2012 elections to neutralize Ma Ying-jeous pro-active China policy. The paper then focuses on the current debate in the DPP on the necessary consequences of the 2012 election outcome for the party's China policy, demarcating the space for an alternative approach and pondering if there might be a new 'pragmatist consensus' rising in the party leadership.