

TAIWAN'S 2014 NINE-IN-ONE ELECTION: GAUGING POLITICS, THE PARTIES, AND FUTURE LEADERS

By John F. Copper*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	2
II.	PAN-GREEN'S HANDICAPS	6
III.	PAN-BLUE'S TRAVAILS	17
IV.	PRE-ELECTION POLITICS	28
	A. State of the Economy	28
	B. Sunflower Student Movement	31
	C. Gas Explosion in Kaohsiung and Bad Cooking Oil Incidents	36
V.	THE CANDIDATES AND THE CAMPAIGN	39
	A. Taipei Mayor Race: Sean Lien v. KO Wen-je	44
	B. Taichung Mayor Race: Jason Hu v. LIN Chia- Lung	48
	C. Predictions of Other Elections	50
	D. How Different Factors May Have Influenced Voting	50
VI.	THE ELECTION RESULTS	51
	A. Taipei City Mayoral Election Results	53
	B. Taichung Mayoral Election Results	55
	C. New Taipei Mayoral, Taoyuan Mayoral and Other Election Results	56
	D. Main Reasons Cited Locally for the DPP Win and KMT Defeat	59
	E. Reaction and Interpretation of the Election by the Media and Officialdom in Other Countries ...	61
VII.	CONCLUSIONS	64
	A. Consequences of This Election in Terms of Its Impact on Taiwan's Future	70

* John F. Copper is the Stanley J. Buckman Professor of International Studies (emeritus) at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. He is the author of a number of books on Taiwan, including *Taiwan's Democracy on Trial* in 2010, *Taiwan: Nation-State or Province? Sixth edition* in 2013 and *The KMT Returns to Power: Elections in Taiwan 2008 to 2012* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013). He has written on Taiwan's elections since 1980.

B. Facts and Evidence that can Help Anticipate	
Cross-Strait Relations after This Election	73
C. America's Attitude to Taiwan and Its Future	76
D. Observations About Taiwan's Political Future	79
GLOSSARY OF SELECTED CHINESE NAMES	81

I. INTRODUCTION

On Saturday November 29, 2014 voters in Taiwan (officially known as the Republic of China) went to the polls to cast ballots for mayors and city council members of the metropolitan cities, mayors and councilors of the counties and provincial cities, township chiefs and councilors, aboriginal district chiefs and councilors, and borough and village chiefs.¹ Sometimes called Taiwan's

1. For this author's assessment of Taiwan's previous elections, see John F. Copper with George P. Chen, *Taiwan's Elections: Political Development and Democratization in the Republic of China* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1984); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's Recent Elections: Fulfilling the Democratic Promise* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1990); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 1991 and 1992 Non-Supplemental Elections: Reaching a Higher State of Democracy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's Mid-1990s Elections: Taking the Final Steps to Democracy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 1998); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 1998 Legislative Yuan, Metropolitan Mayoral and City Council Elections: Confirming and Consolidating Democracy in the Republic of China* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1999); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2000 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election: Consolidating Democracy and Creating a New Era of Politics* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2000); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2001 Legislative, Magistrates and Mayors Election: Further Consolidating Democracy* (Singapore: World Scientific/Singapore University Press, 2002); *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election: Democracy's Consolidation or Devolution* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2004); *Taiwan's 2004 Legislative Election: Putting it in Perspective* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2004); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2006 Metropolitan Mayoral and City Council Elections and the Politics of Corruption* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2006); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2008 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections: Maturing Democracy* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2008); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections: An Assessment of Taiwan's Politics and a Predictor of Future Elections* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2010); John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2012 Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Elections: Assessing Current Politics and Charting the Future* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2012).

Chosen in this election were 6 municipal mayors, 375 municipal councilors, 6 chiefs of indigenous districts in municipalities, 16 seats for county magistrates, 50 seats for indigenous districts in municipalities, 16 seats for county magistrates (city mayors), 532 seats for county (city) councilors, 198 seats for township chiefs, 2,096 seats for township councilors and 7851 seats for village chiefs (boroughs). See "Taiwan Local Elections of 2014," Central Election Commission, viewed November 8, 2014 (online at engweb.cec.gov.tw).

“midterms”, these combined elections are held at four-year intervals, scheduled in between its national presidential/vice presidential and legislative elections. The midterms are now considered nearly as important as the latter elections, one of the reasons being as of 2014 all local elections are held at the same time.²

While also labeled “local elections” virtually all qualified voters choose an official or officials to represent them. In fact, according to the Central Election Commission this election was the largest ever in Taiwan in terms of the number of candidates elected by the voters—11,130 in all.³ As a consequence over 200,000 poll workers were engaged at around 15,600 polling stations throughout Taiwan.⁴

Out of all the levels of local government where candidates needed to appeal to the voters, the metropolitan cities were the most important. The combined population of the metropolitan cities approaches 14 million, or around sixty percent of Taiwan's total population.⁵ Originally Taiwan had only two metropolitan cities: Taipei and Kaohsiung.⁶ Prior to the last such elections in 2010 Taipei County was separated from Taipei Metro and designated “New Taipei” or Xinbei.⁷ Kaohsiung Metro and Kaohsiung County

2. Taiwan has nine categories of elections. Two are at the national level: presidential and vice presidential elections and legislative elections. Seven are local elections: municipal mayors, municipal council members, county magistrates (city mayors), county council members, township chiefs, township council members, and village heads. All are elected for four-year terms, the terms of legislators having been changed from three to four years recently. Further details are provided by the Central Election Commission (online at cec.gov.tw). The decision to hold elections at the same time for the seven levels of local government, originally broached in the Legislative Yuan in 2008, was made in 2010. See “Seven-in-one elections to take place in 2014,” *China Post*, March 10, 2010 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

3. Li Wen, “Nov. 29 polls set candidacy record,” *Taipei Times*, November 14, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

4. “Campaigns heat up for Taiwan nationwide elections,” *Taiwan Today*, September 29, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

5. The total population of the five metropolitan cities is 13,744,000. Taiwan's total population is 23,024,956 (estimated as of July 2010). See “Taiwan,” *The World Factbook* published by the Central Intelligence Agency (online at www.cia.gov/library/publications).

6. Taipei was made a metropolitan city in 1967, Kaohsiung in 1979. They were so classified because of their size and their political and economic importance (Taipei being the capital and Taiwan's largest city and Kaohsiung the second largest city and Taiwan's largest port).

7. On December 31, 2010 the Ministry of Interior approved the English name “New Taipei City.” See June Tsai, “English name approved for New Taipei City,” *Taiwan Today*, January 3, 2011 (online at taiwantoday.com.tw). The term Xinbei is used here since it was the official name during the campaign and the election. The name for

were combined into one unit. Taichung City and Taichung County, and Tainan City and Tainan County respectively were merged and took the status of metropolitan cities.⁸ Thus, there were a total of five metropolitan mayors chosen. This time there were six: Taoyuan County was slated to be upgraded to a municipality and it was considered that during the campaign.

Before the campaign began, the Election Commission established some new rules for this election: Cell phones were prohibited from voting booths (with a fine for a violation of up to NT\$300,000) as was sending text messages on election day to solicit votes (a fine of NT\$500,000). Some small changes were made in election procedures. As with previous elections it was unlawful for the media to publish the results of opinion polls ten days prior to voting day.⁹

As usual, the ruling Nationalist Party (or Kuomintang, KMT) was expected to win in the northern part of the island, while the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was anticipated to prevail in the south. Pundits speculated that the victor in the election would accrue an advantage in the 2016 presidential/vice presidential and the legislative elections; in other words, this election was thought to forecast the results of the 2016 election.¹⁰ Victorious metropolitan mayors, especially in Taipei and New Taipei, were thought by many observers to be possible nominees in the future for the presidency and/or vice presidency by one or both of the two major parties.¹¹

Taipei County is also spelled Sinbei. In fact, there was a dispute over the spelling. The government and the KMT favored Xinbei as this was consistent with the spelling of Chinese in China and foreign tourists who have visited China would recognize it. The DPP favored Sinbei to avoid using the same spelling used in China. The *China Post* and the *Taipei Times*, the two main English papers in Taiwan, used different spellings reflecting their different views.

8. On October 4, 2010 the Central Election Commission decided that all local elections would be held at the same time as of 2014. That will include special municipalities, city mayors and county magistrates, city and city councilors, township chiefs, township representatives and village and ward heads. See "CEC to bring local elections in sync by 2014," *United Daily News*, October 4, 2010 (online at udn.com).

9. "CEC announces dates for nationwide elections," *Taiwan Today*, August 22, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

10. See Charles Fuchs, "The Invisible Candidate in Taiwan's Elections," *Foreign Policy* (blog), November 19, 2014 (online at foreignpolicy.com). Only the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) contested the metropolitan city mayor elections. The Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and the People First Party (PFP) focused on lower level positions. See "CEC says seven-in-one elections to be held on Nov. 29," *Taipei Times*, January 22, 2014 (online at tapeitimes.com).

11. President Chen Shui-bian and President Ma Ying-jeou were both mayors of Taipei. So was President Lee Teng-hui. Vice President We Den-yi had been mayor of

During the campaign the media, election observers, and scholars pontificated very little about a theory or theories that might predict the winners and losers of the election. This may be because the models and constructs used previously to anticipate Taiwan's voters' choices had become shopworn, had not worked very well, or, as some pointed out, contradicted one another.¹² Rather, many pundits considered the problems faced by the two major parties and how they would handle them as constituting the best predictor of this election's outcome. They thought it was a matter of who would lose the election rather than who would win.¹³

Students of Taiwan's elections, including this writer, viewed the DPP, for reasons inherent in the party's makeup and philosophy, perennial disunity, and serious disagreements about the party's stances toward China and the United States, as incapable of appealing to a broad segment of Taiwan's electorate. This meant the KMT had an advantage.

However, the KMT appeared fully capable of losing the election as reflected by the performances of a number of its members in the legislature, President Ma and his administration's low popularity, and what many considered its poor record in governance. In addition, serious factionalism and centrifugal tendencies plagued the Ma administration and the Nationalist Party, and both lost ground on important issues to voters such as economic management, corruption, political reform, and some other matters that influenced voters.

As the votes were counted, the media, election observers, and party leaders gave the victory with few caveats to the DPP and reported it was a loss for the KMT. In fact, most saw the election results as proof it was a big, even momentous, win for the DPP and a shellacking for the KMT. Many opined the election would have very profound consequences, including making it likely the DPP would win the 2016 election or elections.¹⁴ It would also impact re-

Kaohsiung. Frank Hsieh, the DPP's presidential nominee in 2008, was previously mayor of Kaohsiung.

12. For a discussion of various theories advanced to explain the nature of Taiwan's elections and predict their results, see John F. Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power: Elections in Taiwan 2008 to 2012* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013),

13. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, pp. 18-19 for details about this idea and its acceptance compared to various theories to predict elections.

14. It was still uncertain at this time whether the presidential/vice presidential election and legislative election would be held together and considered one election or whether they would be held separately.

lations with China and the United States. Finally, a majority of observers saw it as a plus for Taiwan's democracy.

II. PAN-GREEN'S HANDICAPS

Looking at Taiwan's politics broadly against the backdrop of this election, there were strong reasons to believe (at least initially) that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and its ally the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) faced very fundamental disadvantages in appealing to voters. Observers have even opined that they, the pan-green (the term for the two parties), could not win this or any other important election for reasons that were basic to the two parties' very natures.¹⁵

The recent history of elections in Taiwan have revealed that the DPP regularly encountered a "voter threshold" and was unable to get more than thirty to forty percent of the popular vote in major political contests. Some attribute this to the party's "ideological and symbolic" politics that limits its appeal in view of Taiwan's "pragmatic, conservative electorate."¹⁶ Others cite its penchant for "street politics" (protest and demonstrations), its provincialism, its preoccupation with local nationalism, and other traits. In addition, the DPP's voter support base is in the southern part of the island that is more rural and less educated, less global (even though Taiwan is dependent on foreign trade), and where citizens are less up-to-date with a changing world. Seeming to confirm this, the DPP, the dominant of the two opposition parties or pan-green's leading party, suffered serious defeats in Taiwan's most important recent elections: the 2008 legislative and the presidential/vice presidential elections, the 2010 mid-term elections, and the 2012 combined presidential/vice presidential and legislative election.¹⁷

Another favorite reason proffered to support the view that the DPP cannot win the support of a majority of voters is that the DPP lacks a reasonable and coherent China policy. The party's base and many of its activists are hostile toward China and support a policy of Taiwan's independence. This translates into ignoring China and/or angering Chinese leaders. Either is a very benighted stance since

15. See Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power: Elections in Taiwan 2008 to 2012* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), concluding chapter.

16. See Shelley Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party in 2000: Obstacles and Opportunities," *China Quarterly*, December 2001, p. 946.

17. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2008 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections*; Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*; and Copper, *Taiwan's 2012 Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Election*.

China has become a global economic juggernaut and Taiwan's economic health is increasingly dependent upon interchange with China.¹⁸ Underscoring this problem, cross-Taiwan Strait commerce has increased markedly in recent years while trade relations with the United States, Europe, and Japan is static.¹⁹

Cordial ties with China are even more critical to Taiwan than direct commercial relations because of Beijing's economic influence over other countries in Asia, most notably the nations of Southeast Asia. After January 2010, the China-ASEAN common market was created, which virtually gave China a veto over participants' commercial relations with Taiwan.²⁰ The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), an accord Taiwan reached with China in mid-2010 to ostensibly fix this situation, promised more amicable relations while further encouraging Taiwan-China trade and other economic ties. This was accomplished by the KMT.²¹

China's military and political/diplomatic influences have also grown exponentially. Chinese defense budget has expanded by double digits almost every year since 1991 and its total is slated to surpass U.S. military spending in a decade or so.²² No other country in Asia (including Taiwan) has come close to keeping up with China's military expansion. Taiwan is especially vulnerable to China's newly acquired military prowess as reflected in various studies assessing a possible Chinese attack on Taiwan.²³ Beijing's

18. In 2012, China contributed 26 percent to the growth of the global gross domestic product; in 2013 it was 29 percent—more than any other country in the world. Also by 2013 half of Asian countries' trade was within Asia. Lowell Dittmer, "Asia in 2013: Peace and Prosperity amid Rising Tension," *Asian Survey*, January/February 2014, p. 2.

19. In 2012, Taiwan's exports to China amounted to 39.4 percent of its total exports. The U.S. took less than a third of this or 11.0 percent; Europe accounted for 9.8 percent; Japan was the destination of 6.3 percent. See *Republic of China 2013 Yearbook* published by the Office of Information Services, Executive Yuan (online at ey.gov.tw). Taiwan's exports to China were but 7 percent of its total in 1990 and 16 percent in 2000. See Cal Clark and Alexander C. Tan, *Taiwan's Political Economy: Meeting Challenges, Pursuing Progress* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner Press, 2012), p. 97.

20. The China-ASEAN Free Trade Association (CAFTA) established in January 2010, was designed to create a European Union-style common market that was both large and important (with a population of 1.9 billion and a trade volume of \$4.5 trillion). Critically it excluded Taiwan's participation.

21. "No such thing as free trade," *Economist*, June 25, 2010 (online at economist.com).

22. Sam Ro, "China Could Be Spending More On Its Military Than The US. By 2035," *Business Insider*, January 13, 2013 (online at businessinsider.com).

23. See Armin Rosen, "Here's What the Pentagon Thinks a Chinese Attack on Taiwan Would Look like," *Business Insider*, June 6, 2014 (online at lbusinessinsider.com).

non-military influence has also grown fast. The “Beijing consensus” has replaced the “Washington consensus” over a broad front while democracy has faded as a trend among developing countries since it is seen as faltering in the U.S., Europe and Japan.²⁴

During the 2012 election campaign TSAI Ing-wen and other DPP leaders realized that the DPP’s China policy was unrealistic and was not winning it broad public support. Tsai suggested a “Taiwan consensus”; but even members of her party said this “idea” was not expressed very cogently. After that Tsai spoke only vaguely about her China stance and generally tried to avoid the issue.²⁵ Following the election defeat, top DPP leaders acknowledged that the party’s China policy had been a serious handicap. They realized, partly convinced by post-election public opinion surveys, that his China policy had helped MA Ying-jeou win the election.²⁶

The DPP made efforts to correct this. Its subsequent “Report on the Presidential Election” recommended a pragmatic and moderate line on cross-Strait policy and increased bilateral exchanges with China to dispel the “stereotypical impression” that the DPP was anti-Chinese. The report concluded that the “China factor” would play an even bigger role in future elections.²⁷ Shortly after the report was made public, DPP Chairwoman TSAI Ing-wen stated that her party must “face harsh realities” and “adjust its cross-Strait policy.” She noted in particular that the people of Taiwan want “stability and development” in relation to China. However, Tsai also noted that Ma’s four years as president coincided with an “increase in support for independence and the ‘fastest growth ever’ in a Taiwanese identity.”²⁸

Looking at these two statements, the major opposition party, or at least Tsai, was obviously conflicted. Perhaps it was worse.

24. See Stefan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus: How China’s Authoritarian Model will Dominate the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). Also see Joshua Kurlantzick, *Democracy in Retreat: The Revolution of the Middle Class and the Worldwide Decline of Representative Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

25. Copper, *The KMT Returns to Poser*, pp. 232-33.

26. See, for example, “Ma’s China policy credited as key election factor,” Formosa Television News, January 15, 2012. For more details, see Alan D. Romberg, “After Taiwan’s Elections: Planning for the Future,” *China Leadership Monitor*, April 30, 2012 (online at chinaleadershipmonitor.com). Polls cited by the author indicated that cross-Strait policy was the number one issue explaining Ma’s victory.

27. Tung Hen-suan, “DPP must change its China policy,” *Taipei Times*, May 1, 2012 (online at taipeitimes.com).

28. *Ibid.*

Some even opined that the DPP had not made a serious assessment of cross-strait relations and was still in denial about the need for a more rational China policy.²⁹

Shortly after Tsai's election defeat, SU Tseng-chang became DPP chairman. Su held a number of meetings to discuss China policy and hopefully fix the problem. The upshot of the discussions was a promise to be "more flexible." However in almost the same breath, Su declared he "hoped mainland officials would make changes." Not unsurprisingly he did not elicit a positive response from Chinese leaders in Beijing. In fact, China's new top leader, XI Jinping, subsequently stated that political differences (which Su obviously wanted to put aside) would have to be discussed and "not passed on from generation to generation."³⁰ Apparently recognizing that he had to please the party's base, Su asserted that the DPP remained committed to its pro-independence stance.³¹

After more than a year with only a plethora of discussions and pronouncements transpiring in the interim, Su had nothing concrete to report about the DPP's China policy. He described the relationship as like a man walking on the beach that sees a seagull. He advised that if the man let the seagull alone "both will be happy."³² Pro-DPP critics called Su's comment "belittling", while many others compared his statement to TSAI Ing-wen's "Taiwan consensus", which was announced during the 2012 election campaign and was followed by the DPP's defeat at the polls.³³

At nearly this same time, Mainland Affairs Council Minister WANG Yu-chi traveled to China and met his counterpart, Minister ZHANG Zijun, head of the Taiwan Affairs Office. The media labeled the encounter "historic" and a "breakthrough." The KMT seemed to be managing China policy quite adroitly. More than sixty percent of those polled in Taiwan supported the meeting.³⁴ To many

29. See Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2013), p. 163.

30. For details, see Alan D. Romberg, "From Generation to Generation: Advancing Cross-Strait Relations," *China Leadership Monitor*, March 14, 2014 (online at chinaleadershipmonitor.org).

31. Jenny W. Hsu and Aries Poon, "Taiwan Opposition Leader Willing to be 'Flexible' with China," *Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2012 (online at wsj.com).

32. "DPP head uses 'gull on the beach' analogy for Taiwan-China ties," *Focus Taiwan News Channel*, January 14, 2014 (online at focustaiwan.tw).

33. "EDITORIAL: The myth of Taiwan's China policy," *Taipei Times*, January 21, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

34. "Support for Wang-Zhang meeting widespread: poll," *Taipei Times*, February 28, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

uneasy DPP stalwarts the event was seen as bolstering President MA Ying-jeou's "mutual non-denial of jurisdiction" policy.³⁵

Relations with the United States constituted another elemental problem for the DPP. When President Richard Nixon made his historic trip to China in 1972 he signed the Shanghai Communiqué, where the U.S. pledged to adhere to a one-China policy. The U.S. has not since veered from this commitment. This means that the U.S. does not condone Taiwan's independence—a fundamental ideal of the DPP and its supporters. This became a serious issue during the Chen administration because Washington began to perceive that President Chen sought to provoke friction with Beijing or even conflict between Washington and Beijing in order to maintain the support of his base and cope with an opposition that held a majority in the legislature. This became especially troublesome for the Bush administration after September 11, 2001 when America was fighting a war on terrorism (that Beijing had pledged to support). Washington detested being distracted by President Chen's "antics" and Taipei's relations with Washington deteriorated badly.³⁶

After Chen left office, relations with the U.S. continued to be a problem for the DPP. Party officials expressed chagrin over Washington's unveiled support of the KMT during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns, even criticizing the U.S. publically for its "bias."³⁷ Yet getting along with its longtime friend and supporter (inasmuch as America virtually guarantees Taiwan's continued existence) was a *sine qua non*-for the DPP. In addition, the U.S. is respected and popular among Taiwan's voters.

This remained a serious dilemma for DPP leaders as little or nothing changed with the Obama administration despite DPP efforts to curry Washington's favor. In fact, President Obama during his first trip to China concurred with China's view that Taiwan is a "core interest," which was understood to mean Taiwan is Chinese territory. The Obama team further praised recent improvements in

35. Romberg, "From Generation to Generation," p. 17 footnote #28.

36. See John F. Copper, "Why the Bush Administration Soured on Taiwan," in Suisheng Zhao (ed.), *U.S.-China Relations: Cooperation and Competition in Northeast Asia* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2008). President Bush called President Jiang Zemin immediately after the events of September 11 and won Jiang's support for the war on terror.

37. See Copper, *Taiwan's Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Elections*, pp. 63-64.

cross-Strait relations, which could only be taken as praise for President Ma's policies.³⁸

On top of all of this and perhaps worse, the legacy of the CHEN Shui-bian presidency amplified the handicaps just mentioned and damaged the DPP's brand in a number of other ways. Prior to Chen's presidency, the DPP could claim with some justification to be the party that advanced reform, minority rights, civil and political liberties, and democracy. But because of Chen's abortive efforts to build a coalition government and owing to his party being in the minority in the legislature, Chen had (or perceived there was no alternative) to fall back on his base for support. Therefore he (officially and energetically) promoted localism and the Fukien Taiwanese national identity.³⁹ In the process he abandoned the party's ideals just mentioned.⁴⁰

Taiwan's ethnic minorities soon felt the sting of discrimination in government hiring and through a variety of its other policies. The Aborigines, Hakka and Mainland Chinese were targeted. The majority of each group had not voted for Chen, so he and the DPP had no reason to believe they could count on their support now. Subsequently, top Chen administration officials referred publically to the Mainland Chinese as traitors for their positive feelings toward China. Some top Mainland Chinese military and intelligence officials felt so estranged that they defected, causing the U.S. to become seriously concerned. The Hakkas were traditionally hostile toward Fukien Taiwanese because they purloined the Hakka's land and forced them into dangerous and less fertile areas in the center of the island. The Chen administration further alienated the Hakkas by promoting Taiwanese (meaning Fukienese Taiwanese) lan-

38. Bush, *Uncharted Strait*, pp. 221-22. .

39. Taiwan's population is comprised of Aborigines, or the original inhabitants of Taiwan; two groups of Taiwanese (Chinese who migrated to Taiwan in centuries past); and Mainland Chinese, who went to Taiwan after World War II. Aborigines are less than 2 percent of the population. The two groups of Taiwanese are together 84 percent. Mainland Chinese are about 14 percent. Hakkas, who are one group of Taiwanese, comprise around 15 percent of the population. Fukien Taiwanese, or Fukienese (also called Hoklo) are nearly 70 percent of the population and are considered the majority ethnic group; the others are considered minorities. All of the minorities traditionally supported the KMT and did not shift their loyalties after the formation of the DPP and did not vote for Chen in 2000 or 2004.

40. See John F. Copper, "Taiwan in Gridlock," in John F. Copper (ed.), *Taiwan in Troubled Times: Essays on the Chen Shui-bian Presidency* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2002), pp. 42-48. Also see Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2013), p. 185.

guage, culture, etc. The Aborigines felt the government despised them because DPP officials referred to them in derogatory terms while also suggesting they were “polluting” Taiwan and should migrate elsewhere.⁴¹

Whether because of frustration over not being able to govern as he had hoped or due to arrogance and an aggressive personality, President Chen did not take kindly to criticism from Taiwan’s free-wheeling media. Not long after entering office, Chen adopted an unfriendly mien toward certain unsupportive and/or critical magazines and newspapers. He kept most in line through selective purchasing advertisements and by favoring media that were sympathetic to him and his party. This was effective in the context of bad economic times. But there were those that did not toe the line. In 2002, the government seized 180,000 copies of *Next* magazine for mentioning a government secret fund. The next year, a reporter was sentenced to eighteen months in jail for writing about a military exercise that was arguably not secret. Subsequently, the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders downgraded Taiwan’s press freedom ranking from thirty-five in the world in 2002 to sixty in 2004—below Albania, Botswana and Ghana.⁴²

Meanwhile political reform, which was a major DPP and Chen theme before 2000 and during his campaign that year, was put hold or forgotten. Real democracy, transparency, justice, and fairness were no longer mentioned. A power struggle within the pan-blue coalition trumped concern about these things. The upshot was that in some respects all of the DPP’s goals to reform the policy were less the subject of concern than they had been.⁴³

But the most serious blight caused to the DPP by the Chen presidency was its corruption. Before and during the campaign in 2000 the DPP painted, generally successfully, the KMT as the party of corruption and the DPP as a clean party. This soon flipped when greed and dishonesty from Chen, his cronies, and his relatives became a canker on the DPP’s image. This began with rumors of Chen officials selling jobs and other kinds of venal behavior. Then the media reported that President Chen’s wife, the first lady, was

41. Copper, “Taiwan in Gridlock,” pp. 96-98.

42. See “2004 Taiwan Civil Rights Violation Report,” Taiwan Civil Rights Watch Group, p. 6 and 10-12; Chen Ping-hung, “State ads replace professionalism,” *Taipei Times*, January 17, 2007 (online at taipeitimes.com); *Taiwan Country Report on Human Rights*, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 8, 2006 (online at lexisnexis.com).

43. For further details, see. Copper, *Taiwan’s Democracy on Trial*, pp. 73-76.

profiteering financially from her position in a host of ways, including influence peddling and insider stock trading.⁴⁴ President Chen did not seem to care about the effects from either of these activities.

There followed indictments of some of President Chen's important appointees.⁴⁵ Following this the Prosecutor's Office charged the first lady with stealing government funds, forgery, and perjury. She was subsequently convicted in court. Never before had a first lady been found guilty of a crime. At the time, prosecutor Eric Chen (no relationship to the president but his staunch supporter and a friend of the Democratic Progressive Party) stated that he would have also indicted President Chen had it not been for the fact that as the sitting president he had immunity.⁴⁶

The atmosphere of corruption that surrounded Chen, his cronies, and his relatives eventually alienated both party leaders and supporters and prompted some to criticize the president openly. A former party chairman and the member of the opposition who spent the longest time in jail of anyone that opposed the KMT during the authoritarian period, SHIH Ming-teh, organized mass protest demonstrations calling for Chen to step down. Tens of thousands of citizens donated money to Shih's cause. The turnout at street protest marches exceeded the numbers at any such event ever in Taiwan's history.⁴⁷

During the campaigns for the legislative election in January 2008 and for the president and vice president in March, candidates of all of Taiwan's political parties condemned Chen's behavior. Frank Hsieh and SU Tseng-chang, DPP candidates running for president and vice president, called Chen's corruption "disgraceful" and studiously avoided mentioning Chen's name during the campaign. DPP officials spoke of "starting over"—meaning trying to get past the ignominy of the Chen era. Clearly the corruption of the Chen presidency had hurt the DPP badly.⁴⁸

44. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

45. The president's deputy secretary general became infamous for taking payoffs when foreign workers employed on the Kaohsiung rapid transit system rioted because they were not paid. Then the media cited Ma Yung-cheng, a Chen friend and Chen appointee, for receiving a million dollar bribe for arranging appointments to the board of the Hua Nan Commercial Bank. Not long after this officials appointed by President Chen in the Taiwan National Railway Administration were implicated for receiving payoffs; bidding for NT\$17 billion in contracts had to be suspended.

46. Copper, *Taiwan's Democracy on Trial*, p. 63.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Copper, *Taiwan's 2008 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections*, p. 31.

President Chen admitted his guilt and apologized. When the DPP lost the legislative election in January 2008, Chen called it the greatest defeat since the party's founding and declared it was his fault and thus resigned as party chairman. Later, after his conviction by the court, Chen said: "I cannot continue to lie to myself and others, and admit to committing acts against the law." He went on to express regret for campaign dishonesty during four elections, including both his two runs for Taipei mayor and two for the presidency. He mentioned specifically misstating campaign expenses and secreting money in foreign bank accounts.⁴⁹

A number of Chen's relatives and associates provided information to prosecutors about his corrupt and illegal actions. Several testified in court against Chen. Foreign governments provided evidence against Chen that was used at his subsequent trials. The government of Switzerland offered proof of Chen's money laundering. Secret Chen funds had been transferred through banks in Hong Kong and Switzerland, a company in the Virgin Islands, and a trust in St. Kitts. These governments provided the details. The government of Singapore provided Taiwan's prosecutors with information about the Chen family's ten bank accounts there. The United States government seized properties in New York City and Virginia that were in the president's son's name and gave testimony they were purchased with monies the First Lady received from Yuanta Securities to get the Chen Administration's approval for it to acquire a financial holding company.⁵⁰

The "Chen albatross" around the DPP's neck was a problem that did not fade away. Rather the matter persisted and proved very difficult for DPP leaders to manage or spin. The legal proceedings dragged on partly because of the nature of judicial processes, but also because Chen decided belatedly to fight the charges.

Chen recanted his admissions of guilt and asserted that President MA Ying-jeou and the KMT were persecuting him. He adopted a victimization strategy, which, based on Taiwan's culture, had resonance.⁵¹ Many, especially his avid supporters, believed Chen was an innocent victim despite the evidence. Chen strength-

49. See Copper, *Taiwan's Democracy on Trial*, pp. 7-10.

50. Samuel Rubinfeld, "US Seizes Ex-Taiwan Leader's Manhattan Condo, Virginia House," *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2012 (online at wsj.com).

51. "Ex-President Chen detained on corruption charges," *China Post*, November 12, 2008 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

ened his case when he appealed his convictions, thus causing his case to become a protracted one.⁵²

Legal proceedings were not the only things that kept the Chen case alive. Chen attracted broad media attention when he went on hunger strikes and reportedly attempted suicide. He claimed bias in the judicial system and bad treatment in prison. Pro-Chen organizations abroad, in particular in the United States, repeated his claims and found sympathizers, including President Ma's mentor, former Harvard Professor Jerome Cohen, and among members of the U.S. Congress.⁵³

The Chen "case" thus presented an ongoing and deep dilemma for the DPP. Party leaders as well as supporters were very conflicted regarding CHEN Shui-bian's legacy. Praising him and evoking his name and that of his presidency hurt the party. Yet this was effective to rally the base, energize the party, and provide focus on some core issues. He was the party's first ever and only president. He was charismatic and was a hero to many party members and supporters.⁵⁴

The Chen presidency generated yet another problem: The DPP acquired an image of not being able to promote economic growth. This derived in part from the KMT's reputation for having created the "Taiwan economic miracle." It was reinforced by the fact that President Chen was in office only a short time when Taiwan experienced a recession that lowered the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) and raised unemployment to rates that many people had never experienced or expected. The DPP's socialist, anti-business agenda further contributed to the business community seeing the party as incompetent in managing the economy. Related to this, the DPP suffered from a perception that it advocated protectionism (especially when it came to expanding commerce with China was concerned).

Likewise, the DPP was not a winner on the issue of protecting social stability, including handling crime and other related problems. Harmony, tranquility, balance, and other such ideals were a part of Chinese culture and were the domain of the KMT. Networking, which was a significant Taiwan asset before CHEN Shui-bian became president, was destroyed to a large extent, espe-

52. See Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 229 for background on the issue of victimization.

53. William Lowther, "US representative hopes to meet Chen Shui-bian," *Taipei Times*, April 27, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com).

54. Copper, "Taiwan in Gridlock," pp. 37-38.

cially with the Overseas Chinese, by promoting local Fukien Taiwanese identity and nationalism.⁵⁵

The DPP also faced a “demographic problem.” Taiwan had for some years experienced a very low birthrate. A realization of the problem was painfully underscored when news was released in 2011 that Taiwan’s birthrate was the lowest in the world.⁵⁶ Many young people simply did not want to get married, especially women; also many women preferred foreign husbands. In response, men sought brides from China or Southeast Asia. Most foreign spouses, especially wives, became residents and/or citizens but did not feel loyalty toward the DPP (because of the party’s perception that the spouses did not understand or sympathize with local nationalism and a Taiwanese identity) and thus were more prone to be potential KMT voters.⁵⁷

A slow population growth rate, together with rising labor costs and local citizens becoming less willing to take menial jobs, meant that Taiwan had to import workers, mainly from Southeast Asia. Like foreign spouses, the “guest workers” did not understand Taiwan’s history, especially the DPP’s interpretation of it. Furthermore, they did not sympathize with the local nationalism advanced by the DPP. The DPP did not see them as sharing their national identity and did not favor or like foreign workers.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, aging created the need for more government money to help older citizens, especially for medical care. But more public spending meant higher taxes and a less competitive business sector, an issue that most people were aware of. This, and a cultural generation gap, pitted old against young. Young people were concerned about jobs and became enamored with opportunities in China where many went to work.⁵⁹ Young people also had little interest in listening to their elders’ complaints and their talk of KMT authoritarianism and the white terror of the past. Many also

55. Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 145.

56. Ralph Jennings, “Taiwan Birthrate Falls to World’s Lowest,” VOA News, August 16, 2011 (online at voanews.com).

57. See Copper, *Taiwan’s 2012 Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Elections*, p. 70. This group was one of the strongest that voted KMT, especially spouses from China.

58. Copper, *Consolidating Taiwan’s Democracy*, p. 161.

59. See Kathryn Chiu “Half of Taiwan youth claim to be willing to work in China: Report,” *China Post*, October 16, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw). According to a report cited the main attraction to young people is higher wages in China and better fringe benefits, partly the result of stagnant wages in Taiwan.

resisted the Chen administration's campaigns to promote Taiwanization that most considered a "soft" subject that was not useful in a competitive global world.⁶⁰ In short, many thus lost their Taiwan identity. This portended badly for the DPP.

Finally, the DPP became viewed as mimicking the KMT when it made meaningful efforts to reform or correct the problems previously mentioned, in particular fixing the relations with China, and to a lesser extent with the United States. Some DPP leaders described this situation as a serious conundrum.⁶¹

III. PAN-BLUE'S STRAVAILS

While the KMT and its allied parties do not suffer serious "fundamental" handicaps of the kind that plague the DPP, it is not completely free from problems that may be considered inherent and/or persistent.⁶² One is that the KMT has not been as attentive to local political issues as the DPP because it views itself a national party; as a consequence it has not been good at local governance.⁶³ This has created an obstacle for the KMT when it comes to finding good candidates and campaigning effectively in local elections. The KMT also suffers from its authoritarian past even though it was the primary driver behind Taiwan's democratization. Voters can, and do, lose sight of the latter when the KMT has veered toward authoritarianism in its governing practices.⁶⁴

More importantly, in terms of understanding the 2014 campaign, there were problems the KMT faced as the ruling party after 2008 that it and the Ma administration did not handle well. They made mistakes, did not explain policies cogently, and did not main-

60. Shelley Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powershouse* (Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2011), p. 155.

61. Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power*, p 237.

62. The KMT 's "allied" parties are the People First Party and the New Party. The three parties are referred to pan-blue.

63. This point has been made by the DPP in past elections including the 2010 local elections, and their candidates have cited opinion polls to prove this. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 36. It is also worth noting that the DPP's share of the vote in local executive elections has almost steadily increased since the party's founding. See Dafydd Fell, *Government and Politics in Taiwan* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 121.

64. See Mikael Martin, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One-Party Legacy* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute for Asian Studies, 2010). Mention was made in the media of the KMT's "style" of dealing with protest over nuclear power. See "EDITORIAL: Authoritarian Streak still infects KMT," *Taipei Times*, June 13, 2012 (online at tapeitimes.com) and Brent Crane, "Taiwan's Nuclear Future and its Authoritarian Past," *The Diplomat*, May 21, 2014 (online at thediplomat.com).

tain party unity. In fact, soon after the legislative and the presidential/vice presidential elections in January and March 2008 respectively, the Ma Administration, the KMT-controlled legislature, and the ruling party all experienced a decline in their images. As a consequence, what looked to be a strong mandate for all three at the time soon eroded.

During the 2008 election campaign, KMT candidates for the legislature spoke of taking their jobs seriously, not getting involved in petty partisan feuds, not abusing power, and not getting mired in corruption (as they charged DPP legislators had). But this did not prove true. In fact, all of these promises were soon broken to some degree or another. In addition, turf battles ensued that resulted in difficulties passing financial legislation, including even the government's budget.⁶⁵ As a result, citizens began to perceive that KMT legislators as self-serving, arrogant power seekers.⁶⁶

President Ma's halo likewise began to shine less brightly within a few months after he was elected. The most salient cause was a decline in Taiwan's economic growth. The global recession at that time hit Taiwan especially hard because of its high level of dependence on exports. Economic contractions in the U.S. and Japan were especially damaging. Many in Taiwan, rather than understanding or accepting the reasons the government offered for the downturn, recalled Ma's oft-repeated campaign pledge turned slogan "6-3-3" (meaning 6 percent growth in GDP, 3 percent or less unemployment and \$30,000 annual per capita income). To many citizens, Ma's most familiar campaign promise turned out to be empty or false. Many had believed Ma could return Taiwan to economic prosperity and had voted for him for that reason.⁶⁷

Then natural disaster struck. In August 2009 Typhoon Morakot, the worst typhoon in most peoples' memories (the most severe in fifty years), made a direct hit on Taiwan. It destroyed more than seven thousand homes, thirty-four bridges, and large

65. See Thomas J. Bellows, "No Change in Sight: Party Politics and the Legislative Yuan during the Global Economic Crisis," Asia Program Special Report (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars), October 2009, pp. 20-27. According to some opinion polls, there was public concern about this even before the election. See "Public worried KMT may abuse power, DPP poll says," *Taipei Times*, January 20, 2008 (online at taipeitimes.com).

66. The perception KMT legislators' excesses became widespread when several called for former president Chen's execution. See "inquiry ordered into Chen 'execution' remark," *China Post*, May 22, 2010 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

67. See Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power*, p. 108.

stretches of roads. Damage to crops was extensive. More than five hundred people died due to floods and mudslides.⁶⁸

For a host of reasons, his handling of the tragedy seriously dented President Ma's reputation. The presidential office had criticized the Central Weather Bureau the previous year and had promised better performance. But the forecasters made a big error: they announced that the brunt of the storm would hit further north than it did. Then President Ma took the position that local government should assume a central role in handling the after-effects of the typhoon, while the central government would play a supporting role. This theoretically may have made sense, but local governments were not capable of doing what was needed. In any case, most citizens expected the national government to act decisively and effectively, but it did not.⁶⁹

In response, 100,000 demonstrators assembled in front of the Presidential Palace to complain about the poor handling of the havoc and destruction caused by the typhoon. In October, on Retrocession Day (October 25), half a million turned out to protest. Ma's persona seemed to be weak. The media portrayed President Ma as unprepared, confused, aloof, and uncaring. As a consequence, Ma's public approval, as reflected in various opinion polls, fell to an unprecedented low.⁷⁰

President Ma's image seemed seriously affected. In any case, the DPP and the TSU worked hard to ensure this was the case and to exploit it. Broadly speaking, the situation can be explained as follows: During the election campaign, the opposition depicted Ma as a scholar that was introverted, weak, and someone who lacked the leadership qualities needed to function well in Taiwan's rough and tumble democracy. Ma's defenders argued that his style of governance, which emphasized consensus, was what was needed given Taiwan's very divisive and chaotic politics that had been made worse by former president CHEN Shui-bian. In any case, citizens'

68. "Typhoon Morakot lashes Taiwan," CNN, August 9, 2009 (online at cnn.com). See also Thomas B. Gold, "Taiwan in 2008: My Kingdom for a Horse," *Asian Survey*, January/February 2009 and Thomas B. Gold, "Taiwan in 2010: Eroding Landslide," *Asian Survey*, January/February 2010.

69. "EDITORIAL: A president far from his people," *Taipei Times*, August 12, 2009 (online at taipeitimes.com).

70. See, for example, a poll taken by Global Views Survey Research Center, cited in Thomas B. Gold, "Taiwan in 2008," *Asian Survey*, January/February 2009, p. 94.

view on the role of the president and the government became much more polarized at this time.⁷¹

As a result, public discourse focused on President Ma's leadership qualities rather than his personal stature or what he accomplished or even the difficulties he faced as president. One writer describes the situation this way: President Ma was a Confucian-style "enlightened ruler" that had created hopes that were hard to fulfill. When expectations were not met, cynicism resulted.⁷² In other words, Ma was a good leader who, despite his talents, was not able to solve his country's problems. A special problem was that Taiwan was much divided based on the matter of national identity and whether in the future Taiwan should be independent. In the eyes of the public Ma's position was unyielding. Hence ruling by consensus was difficult or nearly impossible to engineer. After the 2008 election, the opposition parties reverted to their traditional role of protest, which they were very adept at.⁷³

The public's perception of President Ma's performance showed a marked improvement in late 2009 as the economy sparked and the GDP grew by a whopping 9 percent. This showed that citizens' evaluations of President Ma and the KMT's performance hinged largely on the vigor of the economy. A high rate of growth continued into 2010 and succored the KMT, in combination with the handicaps the DPP faced mentioned above, to win the combined local elections late that year.⁷⁴

This economic growth in GDP continued through 2011, though not at the phenomenal rate of late 2009 and 2010. In any case, in early 2012 President Ma was reelected and the KMT won the simultaneous legislative election, though neither performed as well as they had in 2008.⁷⁵ In other words, the KMT was still popular with voters; but it was not as favored as it had been.

Still, the 2012 KMT election victory must also be seen from another perspective: the costs it incurred. Ma and his ruling party

71. See "The 51% rule: Why the blue camp refuses to vote," KMT Official Website, January 12, 2010, (online at kmt.org.tw), This came from a *United Daily News* editorial. Some observers saw this as reflecting serious disunity in the KMT and among the pan-blue parties.

72. John Fu-sheng Hsieh, "Taiwan in 2013: Stalemate at Home, Some Headway Abroad" *Asian Survey*, January/February 2014, p. 149.

73. For further details on this point, see Shelley Rigger, *Form Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Reinner, 2001), chapter 2.

74. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 54.

75. Copper, *Taiwan's 2012 Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Elections*, pp. 66-67.

took some actions during the campaign that had a delayed price to pay. President Ma froze energy prices during the campaign. Thus, after the election he had to oversee a steep rise in oil prices and a subsequent spike in electricity bills. Many citizens felt Ma had delayed the decision until he no longer needed their votes.⁷⁶ Another matter was the fact the government required new sources of revenue. This was ignored during the campaign. Post-election the Ma administration proposed a capital gains tax on securities' transactions. The tax was touted as a means to alleviate the growing gap between rich and poor and as a needed source of revenue given a serious government budget deficit. But the bill became the topic of tough, and at times rancorous, debate and got watered down in the legislature. Ma's finance minister resigned, and his new minister had to admit that it would not raise much revenue.⁷⁷

Taiwan then got into a dispute with the United States over American beef imports. The opposition exploited the issue: DPP leaders charged it was a matter of public safety and that President Ma and the KMT tried to cover that up. The tiff with the United States over the beef issue proved to be a serious distraction for both Ma and the KMT.⁷⁸

The economy continued to plague the Ma administration. Economic growth was below par. While it did not worsen, perceptions mattered and they were in large part determined by comparisons with 2009-2010 and with Taiwan's neighbors. Regarding the latter, Taiwan's GDP growth trailed the other three Asian "small dragons" (South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore), which the public looked to as a point of reference. Furthermore, Taiwan was the only one of twelve major Asia-Pacific economies to experience negative growth in exports. Many saw the problems as resulting from a decline in foreign investments and a growing gap between inward and outward capital movements (incoming investments totaled \$4.9 billion, outgoing was \$18 billion).⁷⁹ During 2012, forecasts for the growth in Taiwan's GDP were thus downgraded a number of times.⁸⁰

Economic malaise persisted into 2013, a year before the scheduled local elections under study here, during which time some ob-

76. Ming-tong Chen, "Taiwan in 2012: Curse of a Second-Term President?" *Asian Survey*, January/February 2013, p. 208.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

80. *Ibid.*

servers began to attribute the situation to factors other than the underperforming global economy and bad fortune. For example, the government's fiscal deficits were making it difficult to take effective measures to stimulate economic growth. Taiwan's ability to export intermediate goods to China was shrinking as China became the "world factory" and could produce almost anything at any stage of production. Taiwan's low increases in spending on technology (in comparison to its neighbors like South Korea, Japan, and China) amplified this problem.⁸¹

In 2013, a number of other issues or incidences (some turned scandalous) further undermined President Ma's reputation as well as that of his party. Some were simply inadvertent or bad luck. But others mirrored less than skillful handling of some important issues by the president and his administration. Generally it did not matter much which.

In June, the government signed a trade pact with China called the Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement. The arrangement, which was designed to free up trade in services, was favorable to Taiwan. Taiwan's services companies were already operating in China and it seemed that they were well positioned to take advantage of the agreement. Both the media and the opposition took notice of its benefits and the pact seemed to face smooth sailing.⁸²

But some companies were obviously going to be hurt and they began to complain. There were also allegations that the fine print in the arrangement would result in an influx of Chinese workers, a very sensitive issue in Taiwan. The DPP called for a careful review of all the provisions in the agreement—which had not been done in order to prevent nitpicking from wrecking the negotiations.⁸³ The opposition depicted the arrangement as a deal made with China to win the hearts and minds of Taiwan's residents, or put another way to lull Taiwan into accepting Beijing's ultimate aim of prodding Taiwan into giving up its sovereignty.⁸⁴

In July, a scandal occurred that the opposition could (and did) easily exploit. An Army corporal, HUNG Chung-chiu, died during

81. Chiang Min-hua, "Taiwan's Economy: Slower than Expected," *East Asian Policy*, January/April 2014, pp. 81-82.

82. Alan D. Romberg, "Settling in for the Long Haul: Stability with Chinese Characteristics," *China Leadership Monitor*, October 7, 2013, pp. 2-3 (online at chinaleadermonitor.org).

83. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

84. See Huang Tien-lin, "Trade agreement is too political," *Taipei Times*, August 4, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

training of heatstroke. The death became instant news and engendered questions in the public's mind about military personnel policies. Hung's family opined that his death was the result of excessive exercise forced on him as punishment for taking a Smartphone onto an army base.⁸⁵ The case promptly became a *cause célèbre* for opponents of the government and the KMT (since most of the top brass of the military were KMT supporters). Soon, a reportedly one hundred thousand people rallied in Taipei to demand justice for Hung. The upshot was thirty-seven military officers were punished for the incident – four, including a colonel, were detained on charges of abuse of authority.⁸⁶ The opposition made points against the Ma administration as a result.

This incident, unclear changes in Taiwan's defense policy, and concern that Taiwan was fast falling behind in its deterrence capabilities vis-à-vis China, all had an unwanted impact on the Ma administration for months.⁸⁷ It was especially troublesome in view of the fact that Ma had put in motion a plan to end compulsory military service in Taiwan by the end of 2015 and replace it with four months of military training for males over the age of twenty.⁸⁸ The question was: Would Taiwan have enough recruits?

At almost this same time Taiwan's fourth nuclear plant once again became a hot potato politically. The matter had seemed settled after the 2012 election. President Ma and the KMT favored nuclear power. The DPP's candidate TSAI Ing-wen did not. Ma won the election, ostensibly putting the issue to rest. The business community argued Taiwan needed the plant and the public generally agreed. Finally, people in Taiwan wanted clean air.⁸⁹ Furthermore, not building the plant, which was ninety percent finished, would be a waste and it would cause electricity costs to rise reportedly by nearly fifteen percent and drag the GDP down by 0.43 percent.⁹⁰

But the nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011 and its aftermath gradually diluted the arguments for nuclear power in Taiwan. Tai-

85. Benjamin Yeh, "Soldier death hits Taiwan plans to end conscription," AFP, July 26, 2013 (online at afp.com).

86. *Ibid.*

87. For the context of the dispute, see Eric Setzekorn, "Military Reform in Taiwan: The Lafayette Scandal, National Defense Law and All-Volunteer Force," *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, April 2014, pp. 7-19.

88. Yeh, "Soldier death hits Taiwan plans to end conscription."

89. Romberg, "Setting in for the Long Haul," pp. 4-5.

90. Tseng Hui-yi, "Taiwan's Politics: Stumbling Forward amid Uncertainties," *East Asian Policy*, January/March 2014, p. 74.

wan was in an earthquake zone (like Japan). Taipower, Taiwan's major producer and marketer of energy, was building the plant, unlike other plants that were constructed by foreign companies. Some people felt Taipower did not have the expertise required. The argument that the plant would provide cheap electricity was undermined when electricity rates were increased and then when the government stepped in to minimize the effects. All of this made it appear that the mounting cost of power was a spurious argument. Lastly, some experts, who were brought in, concluded that the new plant was not safe.⁹¹

In early September an even bigger issue arose when President Ma publically accused legislative speaker and colleague WANG Jin-pyng of corruption. Specifically Wang was charged with influence peddling for his lobbying on behalf of DPP whip KER Chien-ming, who had been indicted in a breach of trust case. Ker had been found not guilty, but the case was appealed and Wang tried to use his influence on the minister of justice and the prosecutor to block that process. President Ma had the KMT expel Wang from the party thus disqualifying him from serving as speaker, a role that he had held for fourteen years.⁹²

This move by Ma was seen to have deeper roots: The two had earlier competed for the KMT's chairmanship (in 2005) and the party's presidential nomination (in 2008). Each did not like the other. Their feud also carried with it an ethnic element: Ma being Mainland Chinese and Wang Fukien Taiwanese.⁹³ Then there was the view (espoused by Ma and many others) that Wang controlled the movement of bills through the legislature, often not in accord with the president's agenda. In other words, Wang was an obstructionist. WANG Chien-shien, President of the Control Yuan (the organ of government that deals with corruption), described the situation this way: Even though the KMT held eighty-four of the

91. Ibid. Greenpeace Taiwan brought in experts from Europe that made this assessment. See Lee I-chia, "Experts urge termination of nuclear power project," *Taipei Times*, September 11, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com). Some in Taiwan were also looking at problems associated with nuclear power in other countries, such as the cost of disposing nuclear waste, and global trends regarding nuclear power. See Yuan Chou and Sophie Wu, "Coping with Nuclear Power's Downsides," *CommonWealth*, March 6, 2013 (online at cw.com.tw).

92. Lawrence Chung, "Taiwan Speaker, Wang Jin-pyng, expelled by KMT," *South China Morning Post*, September 11, 2013 (online at scmp.com).

93. Chiu Lan-ling and Stacy Hsu, "MA-WANG SHOWDOWN: Netizens criticize Ma 'persecution' of Wang Jin-pyng" *Taipei Times*, September 12, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com).

one hundred and thirteen seats in the legislature the ruling party had accomplished very little from 2008 to date because the DPP “had a choke hold on the KMT” owing to Wang’s inability to make things work, though many others described the situation as Wang working in collaboration with the DPP against Ma.⁹⁴ Thus it was clear that Ma wanted to get rid of Wang – his corruption may not have been the main and only reason.

Wang appealed the decision to revoke his party membership and remained a party member and speaker temporarily. Following this, President Ma announced there would be a counter-appeal. Ma’s supporters said Wang was clearly guilty of corruption and deserved punishment. But that argument was not to carry the day, to a large degree because the means used to get the evidence on Wang seemed to overstep constitutional limits.⁹⁵

Wang found support for his position with the public, the DPP, and even some in the KMT. LIEN Chan and his son, Sean Lien, who was expected to be the KMT’s candidate for Taipei mayor, criticized Ma. President Ma’s position was also hurt by the fact that the news broke out when Wang was out of the country to attend his daughter’s wedding. Thus, Ma seemed mean-spirited. Then it was learned specifically how information on Wang’s deeds was obtained—from wiretaps or spying on Wang. Many people thought this was wrong. Thus the case against Wang was tainted.⁹⁶

One also needs to note the context of the “Wang affair.” The milieu was the widely publicized Snowden case. Edward Snowden, who was an employee of a company that had contracts with the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) had defected at this time and released unknown (or not yet cognizable) information about NSA’s spying on ordinary American citizens and foreigners by intercepting telephone calls in the United States and elsewhere and by collecting vast troves of data from clandestine sources.

The Snowden case had special resonance in Taiwan because Snowden made individual privacy and overreaching government, already a concern, an issue that triggered public consternation. Furthermore, Snowden had fled to Hong Kong, which is close to Taiwan geographically (but in many other ways as well), and is a major source of foreign news in Taiwan. There was even speculation

94. Jake Chung, “Wang Chien-shien lauds president,” *Taipei Times*, September 13, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com).

95. Tseng, “Taiwan Politics,” p. 75.

96. *Ibid.*

(though no doubt not really warranted) for a short time that Snowden might move to Taiwan because Taiwan has no extradition treaty with the U.S.⁹⁷ The Snowden issue also attracted more attention than it might have otherwise because most citizens in Taiwan at least knew vaguely of NSA operations in Taiwan to spy on China.⁹⁸

President Ma also lost public confidence because he and his administration got bogged down in less important issues, which kept him from handling critical problems such as the economy. Meanwhile, corruption became a problem notwithstanding Ma's high standards of honesty. A number of officials were accused or were indicted for corruption, most of them KMT.⁹⁹ Ma continued to have difficulty with the legislature not passing bills even though his party had a workable majority. The situation precipitated inter-party feuding and bad morale in the ruling party and the government.

Some observers summarized the situation by suggesting that Ma suffered the curse of a second-term presidency.¹⁰⁰ Underscoring that assessment, there were rumors and reports in the media of a conspiracy of the so-called "four families" of top KMT leaders that had allied against Ma and were set to blame him if the party did poorly in the 2014 election.¹⁰¹ All of this portended badly for the KMT and its candidates in the November election.

Amplifying the KMT's problems at the national level, its local leaders were not faring well. Local DPP leaders took top honors in *CommonWealth* magazine's recent local leaders' approval survey. Not only were they rated higher because they were more stable in their job performances, but they were seen as more capable and devoted to their work. Pundits attributed the poor ratings of KMT

97. "Edward Snowden, leaker of U.S. spy program documents, faces choices while in hiding," CBS News, June 12, 2013 (online at cbs.news.com).

98. See Wendell Minnick, "Spook Mountain: How the U.S. Spies on China," *Asia Times*, March 6, 2003 (online at times.com).

99. Norman Yin, "Rooting out corruption in the KMT," *Taipei Times*, April 16, 2013 (online at tapeitimes.com).

100. Chen, "Taiwan in 2012," pp. 206-08.

101. This story was published in a local magazine *The Journalist*. The four families refer to Lien Chan, Wu Po-hsiung, Taipei City Mayor Hau Lung-bin, and New Taipei City Mayor Eric Chu. They, however, denied there was a conspiracy and the rumors associated with it. See Lauy Li, "Hau, Chu deny involvement in 'four family' conspiracy," *Taipei Times*, September 13, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com). There were also reasons to believe that Ma's relationship with James Soong and Jason Hu were not good either.

officials to scandals and their lack of new programs at a time when, due to the sluggish economy, people were hungry for ideas.¹⁰²

In the fall of 2013, in the milieu of news about party disunity and its unpopularity with voters, the ruling Nationalist Party held several meetings to decide on its candidates for the various offices. The process revealed internal disputes over the KMT's likely choices and other problems. Former Vice President LIEN Chan's son, Sean Lien, was the most popular KMT candidate for Taipei mayor. But Premier JIANG Yi-huah was mentioned as a candidate. President Ma favored Jiang. (The current mayor, HAU Lung-bin could not run due to a two-term limit.) Eric Chu, the KMT's mayor of New Taipei would presumably run again, though Interior Minister LEE Hong-yuan was reportedly a possibility. There was speculation that Chu wanted to prepare to run for president in 2016 and would not run for mayor. Jason Hu, the current mayor of Taichung was assumed to be running again; but there were doubts about this. He expressed a desire not to run and it was reported he wanted instead an appointed position in the central government. YANG Chiu-hsing, former magistrate of Kaohsiung County who ran against the current Mayor CHEN Chu in 2010 was seen as a likely contender again but few gave him any chance of winning.¹⁰³

In November, the KMT held its nineteenth party congress after rescheduling the event due to internal problems and expected public protest demonstrations. The venue was Taichung, which party leaders viewed as critical to winning the election there a year later. Various civic and other organizations, including labor groups, appeared on the scene to protest KMT policies and political/economic conditions in Taiwan. It was reported they brought ten thousand pairs of shoes to represent discontent with President Ma and the government. According to the Deputy Minister of Interior, twelve hundred police were mobilized and five hundred barbed-wire barricades were used to ensure the meeting could proceed.¹⁰⁴ The situation was not a propitious for the KMT at the beginning of the election campaign.

102. Ting-feng Wu, Uidy Gao, Hsiang-yi Chang, "2013 Local Leaders Approval Survey: DPP Stands Firm, KMT Shuffles Deck," *CommonWealth*, September 5, 2013 (online at cw.com.tw).

103. "KMT election boosts possible mayoral run," *China Post*, August 19, 2013 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

104. Loa Lok-sin, "Hundreds protest at KMT congress," *Taipei Times*, November 11, 2013 (online at taipeitimes.com).

IV. PRE-ELECTION POLITICS

The year 2014 began with politics in Taiwan being driven by efforts of the political parties to perform well in the upcoming election. At center stage the KMT and the DPP geared up to do battle with the other. As a result Taiwan became more polarized than usual. In short, it was election season in spades.

A. State of the Economy

The most salient issue and the one that appeared to undergird the political contest and seemed to constitute the major determinant of its results, both anticipated and real, was the state of the economy. The situation seemed to resemble the period before the 2010 local elections: the economy was improving and maybe favored the party that was in charge, namely the KMT; alternatively it was too late and to date it had little impact on voters.¹⁰⁵

Early in 2014, the status of the economy as shown by surfeit data was not good (by Taiwan's standards as least). The growth in Taiwan's GDP had ended at two percent in 2013. Forecasts for 2014 were a bit better, but well below the expectations of most citizens. Especially important in terms of the ruling party winning voters' support in November was the fact that Taiwan's GDP increases were still below the other "small dragons" that served as the benchmark by which Taiwan's economic performance was gauged.¹⁰⁶

Factors said to be dragging Taiwan's economy down were the global economy, especially slow growth in three of Taiwan's important trading partners: the United States, Japan and Europe. Stagnation in information products, electronics and some other areas in particular hurt as well. Domestic factors holding back economic growth were said to be overregulation of the economy, high taxes, poor government planning, and ineffective communications with the business community. Joining regional organizations was also a problem.¹⁰⁷ China's economy continued to do well and made up for slow growth elsewhere; but this was a double-edged sword for Taiwan as it increased Taiwan's political worries, especially its growing

105. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*.

106. See "Economic and financial indicators," *Economist*, January 4, 2014, p. 68 and April 26, 2014, p. 88.

107. Joshua Maltzer, "Taiwan's Economic Opportunities and Challenges and the Importance of the Trans-Pacific Partnership," Center of East Asian Policy Studies, January 2014 (online at brookings.edu).

economic dependence on China that was widely seen to imperil Taiwan's sovereignty.

The government and KMT officials attributed the slow growing economy mainly to international economic conditions and argued that good relations with China had helped Taiwan from what would otherwise have been a much worse economic situation.¹⁰⁸ The DPP contended that commerce with China had not helped Taiwan much and, in fact, was in a number of respects a negative since the linkage had resulted in many of Taiwan's industries being hollowed out while investment capital that should have been used in Taiwan went to China.¹⁰⁹ DPP leaders and spokesperson also cited poor KMT governance and "hair brained schemes" to stimulate the economy that only diverted attention and/or didn't work.

In his New Year's Day (Lunar New Year) address, President Ma made the economy his central, almost exclusive, focus. He admitted that growth was slow and did not meet expectations, and there was disappointment in salaries, employment, and other economic conditions. He also confessed that Taiwan's growth was behind the other small Asian dragons, and Taiwan was lagging in industrial restructuring and regional economic integration. He said, however, that Taiwan had been second only to Singapore among the dragons during the first four years of his presidency and that growth had averaged over three percent during that period compared to growth in the global economy of 1.9 percent; furthermore, that inflation and unemployment had been kept below that of the developed countries. The president pledged to make the economy better and cited the free economic pilot zones proposed in August 2013 and five "key areas" of his administration's focus on development: smart logistics, the international health industry, value-added agriculture, financial services, and educational innovation. He predicted that the value of goods and services produced in the pilot zones would reach NT\$1 trillion by 2015.¹¹⁰

The early months of 2014, however, provided reason for only guarded optimism regarding a pickup in the economy. Taiwan's economic monitoring score was down two points in January due to

108. See, for example, Su Chi, "Without China Ties, Int'l Ties are Bleak," *Common-Wealth*, April 16, 2014 (online at cw.com.tw).

109. William Pesek, "Taiwan Needs a Reboot," *Bloomberg News*, November 30, 2014 (online at bloomberg.com).

110. "President Ma's New Year's Day Address," *Topics*, February 2014 (online at amcham.com.tw).

declines in industrial production, manufacturing and exports.¹¹¹ Subsequently, the economic news was both good and bad. Growth in the GDP got a stimulus from Chinese New Year. Exports to China fell, while exports to the U.S. and Europe rose slightly. Manufacturing output dropped, but growth in the computer, semiconductor and electronics fields showed some increases and moderate promise. In February, consumer confidence rose to its highest level in two years.¹¹² The Ministry of National Defense reported that the slow economy precluded reaching the three percent of GDP spending goal.¹¹³ The International Monetary Fund predicted 3.8 percent growth for the year; other organizations predicted a slower growth rate—around 3 percent.¹¹⁴

By late spring the economic news was better. Forecasts by various organizations on Taiwan's growth for the year increased a bit based on upward ticks in wholesale and retail sales and capital formation. However, China's slowing economy, increased competition with Chinese businesses, and slow growth among developing countries continued to be a drag on growth. Exports overall grew, led by sales to the United States. A big improvement was seen in the rate of unemployment, which fell to 3.85 percent in May—the lowest in nearly six years.¹¹⁵

In the summer there were continued improvements on the economic front. Second quarter growth was higher than predicted based on better economic conditions in the U.S. and China that stimulated Taiwan's exports. Europe, however, was a different matter. Unemployment showed a continued, though small, drop.¹¹⁶

At that point, it was uncertain how a somewhat improved economy would affect voters in November. That seemed to depend on how effective KMT candidates were at putting a positive spin on it and how effective DPP candidates were at playing it down while interpreting the government's policies toward China as leading to perilous economic dependency. Meanwhile the KMT sent the mes-

111. John Liu, "Economy in Jan. dips to 'yellow-blue signal,'" *China Post*, February 28, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

112. "Taiwan consumer confidence hits 1-yr high," *China Post*, February 28, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

113. Joseph Yeh "Economy precludes 3% GDP defense budget goal: MND," *China Post*, February 28, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

114. "Feb. Figures Bode well but Headwinds Loom," *Topics*, April 2014 (online at amcham.com.tw).

115. "The Economy Warms Up," *Topics*, July 2014 (online at amcham.com.tw).

116. "Growth Continues on Global Recovery," *Topics*, October 2014 (online at amcham.com.tw).

sage that the DPP hoped for a bad economy and it took actions in that direction to improve their candidates' chances at the polls.¹¹⁷

DPP officials and supporters questioned the optimistic economic data in a variety of ways. They argued that per capita income was below 1998 rates.¹¹⁸ They contended that the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement of 2010 had resulted in big business interests in Taiwan making large profits, which they used to support Beijing's efforts to purchase newspapers and TV companies to propagandize and to "buy" Taiwan instead of trying to conquer it with military force.¹¹⁹ They attacked the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement for not being transparent because it would, they said, cause an outflow of management and skilled workers to China.¹²⁰ This is why, they said, the agreement became bogged down in the legislature.¹²¹ Opponents also hit President Ma's pilot zones for the possible damage they would cause to Taiwan's agriculture.¹²²

B. Sunflower Student Movement

The second important factor affecting voters in Taiwan in the run-up to the election was a string of protest movements and demonstrations orchestrated, or at least supported, by the opposition. They focused attention on the matter of Taiwan's democracy being in danger and its loss of sovereignty (and the two were connected) due to China's efforts to undermine both. According to the opposition, both Taiwan's democracy and its sovereignty were also being trashed by actions of the Ma government and the KMT. The protestors declared that it was their job to protect and advance Taiwan's democracy.¹²³

117. Chu Chen-kai, "Victory for DPP may jeopardize Taiwan's economy," *Want China Times*, August 12, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

118. Huang Tzu-wei, "'illusory' problems show up in hard data," *Taipei Times*, March 3, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

119. Parris Chang, "Beijing's current road to unification," *Taipei Times*, February 10, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

120. "Editorial: Service pact needs redo, not review," *Taipei Times*, March 13, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). The position that it would cause an outflow of talent was based on opinion polling.

121. Loa Lok-sin, "Legislative review descends into chaos," *Taipei Times*, March 13, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

122. Camaron Kao, "Expert: pilot zones will hurt produce suppliers," *Taipei Times*, March 14, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com); Du Yu, "Half-baked pilot zones ruin recipe for success," *Taipei Times*, March 15, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

123. See "Sunflower sutra," *Economist*, April 8, 2014 (online at economist.com).

The KMT's position was that: (1) Taiwan's sovereignty had been placed in danger more by the previous Chen administration in terms of the trend toward economic dependency on China; (2) Taiwan's security was assured; (3) Taiwan was in better hands due to Ma's good relations with Taiwan's protector (the United States); and finally (4) Taiwan needed commercial ties with China in order to maintain its economic health (like other countries in the area whose sovereignty was not made an issue) given China's role as the economic juggernaut in the region. They also argued that the protest was in many instances illegal and/or incited violence, both of which reflected Taiwan's democratic system was being devolved by the opposition.¹²⁴

The first important protest movement was the Sunflower Student Movement. It began on March 18 and lasted to April 10. The term sunflower was a symbol of hope and was an allusion to the Wild Lily Movement in 1990 that to some was considered a milestone in Taiwan's democratization. The stated reason for the protest was the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement, specifically that it should not have been put to the legislature without an item-by-item debate on its provisions. Also protesters said it would hurt Taiwan's economy and make Taiwan vulnerable to Chinese political influence. Advocates said it would help improve Taiwan's economy and rejecting it would create an impediment to reaching other trade agreements and would hurt Taiwan's international credibility.¹²⁵

During the height of the movement protestors occupied the legislature for several days, the first time this ever happened in Taiwan. Riot police were called. Some police and some students were injured. On March 20, the student leader of the movement called for a mass rally. Organizers said 500,000 people participated; the police estimated the number at 116,000. Counter-protest demonstrations occurred at the same time and later.¹²⁶

It appeared that the movement was student-led and/or was spontaneous. Some, however, said DPP supporters were behind the movement from its onset. In any case, DPP leaders lined up strongly behind the movement and gave it enthusiastic support.

124. "Reassessing the March Sunflower Student Movement," *China Times*, August 15, 2014 (online at kmt.org); J. Michael Cole, "Was Taiwan's Sunflower Movement Successful?" *The Diplomat*, July 1, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org).

125. Jenny Hsu, "Students Occupy Taiwan's Legislature to Protest China Pact," *Wall Street Journal*, March 9, 2014 (online at wsj.com).

126. "Carnation-wielding demonstrations take place in counter protest in Taipei," *China Post*, March 30, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

KMT leaders were thought to oppose the movement; but some opined otherwise. There were certainly some KMT factions who opposed President Ma and his administration that liaised with the protesters.¹²⁷ Other pan-blue leaders predicted the movement would create a backlash or in some way discredit the DPP.

What did the Sunflower Movement accomplish? And did it help DPP candidates running for office in November? It is perhaps more appropriate to first ask: What did it not accomplish? The movement did not stop the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement, as was its stated central purpose. It was speculated that the protest might result in President Ma losing the chairmanship of the KMT and WANG Jin-pyng assuming that position. That did not happen. It was said it might fracture the KMT such that it would not have a common platform going forward. That was not a product of the movement. Some hoped the movement would become a permanent fixture of Taiwan's politics. That was not to be; the movement fizzled (as it has usually happened with most large movements in Taiwan).¹²⁸

Yet in some ways the movement was a success. It increased the voices of young people and students in the political processes. It drew public attention to several issues, including the one it intended to influence. It hurt President Ma's image. It focused attention on and interest in the coming election. It spawned other grassroots, democratic movements.¹²⁹

In its wake, both sides claimed an advantage. DPP leaders argued it was a powerful grassroots movement that awakened citizens to the fact that Taiwan's democracy was under siege. Some DPP officials asserted it would force Beijing to come to terms with the DPP. However, the DPP had put formulating its China policy in abeyance until after the election and didn't belabor this point. Also Beijing refuted the DPP's claim that it had to negotiate. In fact, President Xi reiterated China's "one country, two systems" policy

127. Some observers in Taiwan told this writer that Wang Jin-pyng, Ma's nemesis, was sympathetic toward the movement. The fact he was later able to convince the students to wind down their occupation of the Legislative Yuan seems to confirm this view. Sean Lien, who was a candidate for Taipei mayor without the support of Ma and who was a favorite among the youth was considered another "sympathetic" person.

128. See Lorand C. Laski, "The Transformation of Taiwan's Sunflower Movement," *The Diplomat*, May 5, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org); J. Michael Cole, "Was Taiwan's Sunflower Movement Successful?" *The Diplomat*, July 1, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org); Fanny Liu, William Kazer and Aries Poon, "Taiwan Tallies Winners and Losers After Political Standoff," *Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 2014 (online at wsj.org).

129. *Ibid.*

(used to incorporate Hong Kong) would apply to Taiwan. However, Beijing also talked about the “peaceful development” of cross-strait relations. The KMT and Ma cited progress in relations with Beijing, while admitting there had been some “interruptions.” President Ma pointedly mentioned South Korea’s successful commercial negotiations (including a free trade agreement) with China and the prospects of Taiwan losing out to one of its competitors.¹³⁰

After the Sunflower Movement ended, though certainly having left its mark, other (democratic or otherwise) protest movements sprang up in its place. One that had been festering, and was delayed because of the Sunflower Movement, was the Anti-Nuclear Movement. Sizeable protests were held during 2011 and 2012, but, as noted above, the matter became an election issue in 2012 and the KMT, which supported nuclear power, won on the issue. That changed in mid-2014. The center of attention became the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant under construction in Gongliao near Taipei.¹³¹

In fact, the anti-nuclear movement took on a new life when in April former DPP chairman LIN Yi-hsiung staged a hunger strike to block further work on the plant. Public protest followed, including street demonstrations that brought out thousands of citizens. Whereupon President Ma announced that work on the plant would be halted. Taipower officials interjected that not building the plant meant bankruptcy, but this plea seemed to fall on deaf ears. Protestors were happy with the decision to stop work on the plant; though they were not satisfied with merely halting it as opposed to cancelling the plant’s construction and ending Taiwan’s reliance on nuclear power.¹³²

The next public protest in Taiwan involved vicarious support for the protest demonstrations in Hong Kong that seemed to mimic the Sunflower Movement. Hong Kong students were reacting to a bad economy, fewer job opportunities, and displeasure that China was reneging on promised freedoms. Specifically, they charged

130. Alan D. Romberg, “Cross-Strait Relations: Portrayals of Consistent Calm on the Surface, Padding Like Hell Underneath,” *China Leadership Monitor*, Fall 2014, p. 1 (online at hoover.org).

131. J. Michael Cole, “Taiwan Rocked by Anti-Nuclear Protests,” *The Diplomat*, April 28, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org).

132. *Ibid.* See also, Hsieh Horng-ming, “Gongliao power a dangerous design mix,” *Taipei Times*, May 5, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

Beijing with backtracking on pledges made in 1997 when Hong Kong became part of China.¹³³

The movement, known as the Occupy Central (recall the Sunflower Movement had occupied the legislature in Taiwan) or the Umbrella movement (umbrellas being used to keep the protest going during the rain and also to shield students against police teargas, which reminded some of the students' confrontations with police in Taiwan), gained steam in September. Through October it appeared the Hong Kong protest energized to the opposition in Taiwan and might affect the November election in a way to help the DPP.¹³⁴

But there were reasons to think otherwise. Hong Kong is populated by a different ethnic group of Chinese that is not particularly popular in Taiwan. Hong Kong is not a democracy and makes little pretense to be; it is part of the People's Republic of China. President Ma was born in Hong Kong (something voters in Taiwan know) and he became open in his criticism of China and his support for the movement in Hong Kong. Ma even suggested that China should make Hong Kong a democratic region separate from China and experiment with political reform there as it did with capitalism when it set up special economic zones in the 1980s.¹³⁵ But, President Ma also made a distinction between the Umbrella Movement (which was seeking democracy) and the Sunflower Movement that was attempting to influence policy (since Taiwan was already a democracy), and so in a sense belittled the latter.¹³⁶

In any case, the leaders of the movement decelerated activities in late October amid tension and confusion about how (and why) to sustain the movement.¹³⁷ Regarding Taiwan's linkage to the Hong Kong protest it appeared that President Ma had defused the protest in Taiwan in support of Hong Kong by adopting a hostile mien toward Beijing (although Chinese leaders probably understood this would help the KMT in the election and also it was not very meaningful and certainly not permanent). The DPP moved toward a

133. "Tracing the history of Hong Kong's umbrella movement," ABC Radio National, October 29, 2014 (online at abc.net.au).

134. Jonathan Kaiman, "Taiwan shows growing support for Hong Kong Protest," *The Guardian*, September 30, 2014 (online at theguardian.com).

135. "Told you so," *Economist*, November 1, 2014, p. 39.; Kieth Bradsher, "Taiwan Leader Stresses Support for Hong Kong Protest," *New York Times*, October 31, 2014 (online at nyt.com).

136. Jin Kai, "The Problem with Taiwan's Support for Hong Kong Protestors," *The Diplomat*, November 6, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org).

137. Chris Buckley and Alan Wong, "Pro-Democracy Movement's Vote in Hong Kong Abruptly Called Off," *New York Times*, October 26, 2014 (online at nyt.com).

more accommodating policy toward China notwithstanding its support of the protest and its continued advocacy of Taiwan's sovereignty (while not talking about independence very much).¹³⁸ Thus, there seemed to be a convergence between the two camps in Taiwan, which ostensibly reflected the desire of both to move toward the center to win more votes as is typical in democratic elections.

C. Gas Explosion in Kaohsiung and Bad Cooking Oil Incidents

At this time there were two separate events that looked to have an impact on the election. One was a gas explosion in Kaohsiung. The other was a scandal that broke over bad cooking oil that contaminated the food chain in Taiwan.

At the end of July a gas pipeline exploded in the city of Kaohsiung that killed twenty-five and injured two hundred and fifty-seven according to the first report on the incident. It also caused considerable physical damage to the streets and buildings in the city.¹³⁹ Clearly, someone was at fault. After a round of casting blame, responsibility settled on "permissive development" that allowed gas lines and housing tracts on the same streets.¹⁴⁰ Mayor CHEN Chu was subpoenaed over the incident and was called a "culprit" by her opponent in the November election contest.¹⁴¹ It appeared that her image was hurt and her reelection chances possibly diminished.

In September, a serious scandal hit when it was discovered that cooking oil in Taiwan had been tainted by recycled waste oil and animal feed oil, which affected more than a thousand businesses and citizens. Accusations were first leveled against the companies involved. But there followed finger pointing at local governments, especially in Kaohsiung where a major company involved was lo-

138. At this same time President Ma noted that the number of students from China studying in Taiwan had increased from 800 to 25,000 during his presidency while the number of Chinese tourists had reached three million a year. Also, Ma had signed twenty-one agreements with China during that period. See Benjamin Carlson, "Exclusive: Taiwan president seeks closer China ties," *Global Post*, November 3, 2014 (online at globalpost.com).

139. Jenny Hsu Eva Dou and Aries Poon, "Deadly Gas-Pipeline Explosions Rock Taiwan," *Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2014 (online at wsj.com).

140. Ralph Jennings, "Deadly Taiwan Explosions Expose 'Relaxed' Land Use Rules," *Forbes*, August 7, 2014 (online at forbes.com).

141. Shih Hsiu-chuan, "KMT's Yang says Chen Chu a 'culprit' in gas blasts," *Taipei Times*, August 20, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

cated, but also the central government as the regulator.¹⁴² As the case unfolded, blame was cast more on big business and the national government. Clearly the administration and the KMT were hurt by the public outrage generated by the problem, which remained headline news for weeks.¹⁴³

By early fall, Taiwan's economy was looking much better. Its GDP growth was up and was projected to be 3.7 percent for the year, higher than the other three small dragons.¹⁴⁴ There was more good news: The Directorate General of the Budget announced Taiwan's GDP in the third quarter had increased by 3.78 percent. The higher than expected growth was attributed to a stronger showing in Taiwan's exports of electronics and machinery.¹⁴⁵ The positive news, however, was offset by concern over consumer confidence, which was hit by worries about tax increases.¹⁴⁶ Also exports to China were down, manufacturing in general was stagnant, and youth employment was still a problem.¹⁴⁷

As Election Day drew closer, there was more good news on the economy. In early November, the Ministry of Transportation reported a 2.9 percent increase in passenger traffic on the railroads, a 52.4 percent rise in port traffic, and a 10.3 percent increase in airport passengers (reaching the highest level of growth in seventeen years). Tourism was up, reaching 7.25 million visits – a reported increase of 26.7 percent, which was the world's highest.¹⁴⁸ Taiwan's export processing zones recorded a 12.36 percent gain from a year earlier.¹⁴⁹ The World Bank ranked Taiwan number nineteen in the

142. Austin Ramzy, "Taiwanese Tycoon Faces Charges in Cooking Oil Scandal," *New York Times*, October 30, 2014 (online at [nyt.com](http://nytimes.com)).

143. Victoria Jen, "Taiwan's tainted oil scandal may hurt KMT's chances in elections," Channel NewAsia, November 6, 2014 (online at channelnewsasia.com).

144. "Economic and financial indicators," *Economist*, October 18, 2014, p. 92.

145. "GDP up 3.78% year-on-year over third quarter," *China Post*, November 1, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

146. Crystal Hsu, "Consumer confidence rocked by taxes," *Taipei Times*, October 28, 2014 (online at tapeitimes.com).

147. Lai Hsiung-ju, "Taiwan's exports to China down 6% for Q1-3," *Want China Times*, October 30, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com); John Liu, "Manufacturing to have sluggish year: TIER," *China Post*, October 31, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw); "Roots outcompeting Taiwan's youth for jobs," *Want China Times*, October 30, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

148. "ROC records strong transport, travel numbers," *Taiwan Today*, November 4, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

149. "Taiwan EPX output chalks up strong growth," *Taiwan Today*, October 31, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

world for doing business, up 1.1 points from a year earlier.¹⁵⁰

Better times were also anticipated for 2015. Most economists forecast Taiwan's economy would do at least somewhat better. This was based mainly on better prospects for the information and communications technology industries, financial services, and tourism. It was predicted inflation would remain low and unemployment would decline (though most new employment was expected to be in low paying jobs and there was a mismatch between new jobs and job seekers preferences).¹⁵¹

While the economy was moving in an upward trajectory and justified some, or even considerable, optimism, it was uncertain if it would have much influence on voters. It may have come too late. Generally, the public protest movements, scandals, President Ma's low poll ratings, and the political mood in Taiwan leading up to the election seemed to give the KMT (as the party in power) a disadvantage and an advantage to the DPP candidates. But conditions also contributed to cynicism about politics in Taiwan and to a lack of confidence in both political parties.¹⁵²

The DPP generally managed during the run-up to the election to avoid the "CHEN Shui-bian matter." The party and its top candidates did not make Chen an issue during the campaign. They generally eschewed even mentioning him. In late October, the Taiwan Democratic Human Rights Platform organized a march on behalf of the former president but it attracted only just over one hundred participants. They stopped at DPP Headquarters to ask that the party honor its pledge to fight for Chen's medical release from prison. But no top DPP official responded. It was evident that the party did not want to hear or talk about Chen.¹⁵³

America, as usual, played a role in the campaign. Its influence factored in on the side of the KMT. Former officials that played a role in making or carrying out Taiwan policy lauded President Ma for the last six years in terms of tamping down tensions with China and reducing the flashpoint level in the Taiwan Strait. The Obama administration, notwithstanding its Asia pivot to balance the rise of

150. "ROC ranks 19th in World Bank doing business survey," *Taiwan Today*, October 30, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

151. Timothy Ferry, "The Taiwan Economy: Outlook for 2015," *Topics*, November 2014 (online at amcham.com.tw).

152. Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Surveys provide warning signs for DPP: think tank," *Taipei Times*, August 16, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

153. "Chen Shui-bian deserves parole for health: rally," *Taipei Times*, October 20, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

China, did not continue to push this policy with any élan and made no mention of Taiwan's role in it. President Obama was visibly quiet about democracy or human rights in carrying out his Asia policy and did not applaud Taiwan's Sunflower Movement or the opposition's pitch that it sought to support Taiwan's democracy and sovereignty.¹⁵⁴

On the other hand, the mid-term election in the United States on November 4 installed more Republicans, who are friendlier to Taiwan than Democrats, in Congress. The Democrats big setback in the election was seen by some observers to offer a poignant lesson to Taiwan: that dissatisfaction with top leaders and their policies would influence voting in a local election in favor of the opposition.¹⁵⁵

V. THE CANDIDATES AND THE CAMPAIGN

In the months before the election, the parties selected their candidates. Others joined the race without party endorsements. Those running for mayors of the metropolitan cities were the most visible. On the top of the list was Taipei Metro. Sean Lien was the KMT's candidate for Taipei mayor. KO Wen-je ran as an independent, but was supported by the DPP and the TSU. (The DPP did not have a candidate in the race, having decided in June that its candidates did not have as good a chance of winning as Ko, whom they regarded as pro-DPP.)¹⁵⁶ Eric Chu was the KMT candidate for mayor of New Taipei; YU Shyi-kun was the DPP's candidate. John Wu was the ruling party's choice to run for mayor of Taoyuan; CHENG Wen-tsan stood for the DPP. Jason Hu was the KMT's standard-bearer for mayor of Taichung; LIN Chia-lung represented the DPP. HUANG Hsiu-shuang was the KMT's candidate for

154. See William Lowther, "Washington conference eyes Obama's trip to China," *Taipei Times*, November 7, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com); Joshua Kurlantzick, "Obama, Asia, and Democracy" Council on Foreign Relations, November 5, 2014 (online at cfr.org); "The city on the hill," *Economist*, November 1, 2014, p. 41.

155. "Could midterms shift US policy in Taiwan's favor?" *WantChinaTimes*, November 11, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com). Also see James Wang, "If you think Obama is bad, take a look at Ma," *Taipei Times*, November 12, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). The writer notes that just as Democrats in the U.S. sought to avoid Obama and did not talk about him, Sean Lien took the same position toward President Ma.

156. "Taiwan's Opposition Party Drops Out of Key Mayoral Race," *Naharnet*, June 18, 2014 (online at naharnet.com). DPP officials said the reason was that it sought to build a united front. More accurately they saw city as a KMT stronghold but also observed, according to various polls, a large cohort of undecided or independent voters that Ko might win.

mayor of Tainan; William Lai stood for the DPP. YANG Chiu-hsing had the KMT's nomination for mayor of Kaohsiung; CHEN Chu was the DPP's candidate. Eric Chu, Jason Hu, William Lai and CHEN Chu were incumbents.

The two main parties nominated candidates for the provincial city mayoral contests and most of the county magisterial jobs. But there were also other candidates. The other parties nominated contestants for provincial councils, municipal mayors, district chiefs and township chiefs. There were independents as well in these races.

Sean Lien, LIEN Sheng-wen in Chinese, was born in 1970 in the United States. He received his bachelor's degree from Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan and a J.D. Degree from Columbia University Law School in the U.S. At age forty-four he was considered young for high office. However, he was already well known before entering the race, being from a famous family and the son of LIEN Chan, a former vice president and presidential candidate in 2000 and 2004.¹⁵⁷ Sean Lien had also been chairman of Taipei Smart Card Corporation and EasyCard Corporation. Further giving him notoriety, in 2010 during the most recent off-year election, he was shot in the head by an assailant while campaigning for CHEN Hung-yuan, a candidate for City Council in New Taipei City.¹⁵⁸

KO Wen-je was born in Hsinchu City in Taiwan in 1959. He studied medicine in both Taiwan and the United States where he specialized in surgery and critical care. Dr. Ko was a pioneer in bringing transplant surgery to Taiwan and was a well-known advocate for better medicine. He gained instant fame in 2006 when it was reported that he saved the life of Taichung Mayor Jason Hu's wife who was very seriously injured in an auto accident. He also directed the emergency team that attended Sean Lien after he was shot. Finally, he organized support from the medical community for CHEN Shui-bian when Chen ran for mayor of Taipei in 1994 and president in 2000.¹⁵⁹

157. The Lien family is an old and famous one in Taiwan. Lien Chan's grandfather, Lien Heng, was a leading intellectual and wrote the book *A General History of of Taiwan*, that was published in 1920 and was the first detailed history of Taiwan at the time. The family became wealthy and has remained so. Lien Chan was the youngest person ever to serve in Taiwan's cabinet, serving in several offices during his career. He was also governor of Taiwan Province, premier and chairman of the KMT before he twice ran for president.

158. For details see Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 48.

159. *Wikipedia* (viewed November 2014).

Eric Chu, CHU Li-lun, was born in Bade City in Taoyuan County in Taiwan in 1961. He graduated from National Taiwan University and then went to the U.S. for further study, receiving an M.A. and a PhD degree in accounting from New York University. He taught at New York University for a short time before returning to Taiwan, where he joined the faculty of his alma mater. He was promoted to full professor at the young age of thirty-six. From 1999 to 2001, he served as a KMT legislator. In 2001, he ran successfully for the position of Taoyuan magistrate; he was reelected in 2005. In 2009, President Ma appointed him deputy premier; he was the youngest person ever at age forty-eight, to take that position.¹⁶⁰ In 2010, he resigned to run for mayor of New Taipei and defeated DPP chairwoman TSAI Ing-wen in that election. He soon became a popular figure in Taiwan.¹⁶¹

YU Shyi-kun was born in Taihe village in Yilan County in Taiwan in 1948 of a poor rural family. As a youth he worked on the family farm and attended school part time. He graduated from Tunghai University at the age of thirty-seven. Meanwhile, Yu was elected to the Taiwan Provincial Assembly and in 1986 became a founding member of the DPP – later rising to membership on the party's Central Committee and its Central Standing Committee. He was elected magistrate of Yilan County in 1990. In 2000, President Chen appointed him Vice Premier. In 2002, he was elevated to the job of premier, which he held until 2004. In 2006, he was chosen chairman of the DPP.¹⁶² In 2007, the Supreme Prosecutor's Office indicted Yu on charges of corruption; he resigned as chairman of the party the same day. However, he was later found not guilty of the charges.¹⁶³

John Wu, WU Chih-yang, was born in Taiwan in 1969, the son of WU Po-hsiung, one of Taiwan's leading political figures.¹⁶⁴ He received Master degrees in law from National Taiwan University and from Harvard University in the U.S. He was also a visiting scholar at Harvard. He returned to Taiwan where he practiced law for several years before becoming a national legislator. He served

160. *Republic of China Yearbook 2012*, p. 384.

161. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 49.

162. See John F. Copper, *Historical Dictionary of Taiwan (Republic of China)* fourth edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2015), p. 315.

163. Rich Chang, "Former officials found not guilty," *Taipei Times*, July 3, 2012 (online at taipeitimes.com).

164. Wu Po-hsiung served as mayor of Taipei, minister of state, minister of interior, secretary-general of the Office of the President, and Secretary General of the KMT.

in that position from 2005 to 2009 before he was elected the mayor of Taoyuan.¹⁶⁵

CHENG Wen-tsan was born in Taiwan in 1967. He received a B.A. degree in sociology from National Taiwan University and studied at the university's Graduate Institute of National Development. Upon entering politics, he was appointed a member of the DPP's Department of Culture and Administration and served on the Taoyuan County Council. During the Chen administration, he was head of the Government Information Office at which time he became a known political figure. In 2010, Cheng ran for Taoyuan magistrate; he lost by only 49,000 votes even though he had only two months to prepare for the election.¹⁶⁶

Jason Hu (HU Chih-chiang) was born in Beijing. A year later his family moved to Taichung where he grew up. He graduated from National Chengchi University after which he went abroad for graduate study. He received his PhD degree in international relations from Oxford in the U.K. in 1984. He returned to Taiwan and taught at Sun Yat-sen University. Later, he was appointed director of the Government Information Office. In 1996, he was chosen Taiwan's diplomatic representative to the U.S. In 1997, he rose to become foreign minister, and then was director of the Cultural and Communications Affairs Committee of the KMT. In 2001, he was elected mayor of Taichung.¹⁶⁷

LIN Chia-lung was born in Taipei in February 1964. He graduated from National Taiwan University and then went to Yale University in the United States where he received a PhD degree in political science. He returned to Taiwan and taught at National Chengchi University. He specialized in the democratization of Taiwan and the political and economic development of China, publishing several works on these subjects. In 2000, President CHEN Shui-bian appointed him advisor to the National Security Council and cabinet spokesman in 2003. In 2004, he became director of the Government Information Office. In 2005, he ran for mayor of Taichung but lost to Jason Hu. In 2006, he was appointed Secretary-General of the DPP and in 2007, deputy secretary general to the president.¹⁶⁸

165. *Republic of China Yearbook 2012* (Taipei: Executive Yuan, 2012), p. 478.

166. "DPP picks Cheng Wen-tsan as Taoyuan mayoral candidate," *China Post*, May 2, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

167. *Republic of China Yearbook 2012*, p. 400; Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 31.

168. *Taiwan Yearbook 2007* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 2007), p. 363.

William Lai (LAI Ching-te) was born in Taipei County in October 1959. He studied at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan and National Taiwan University in Taipei. Subsequently, he went to Harvard University and received an M.A. degree in public health. He returned to Taiwan and in 1996 won a seat in the National Assembly. In 1998, he ran for the Legislative Yuan and won. He was reelected three times and was chosen four times Taiwan's best legislator by NGO Citizens Congress Watch. In 2010, he was elected mayor of Tainan metropolis.¹⁶⁹

HUANG Hsiu-shuang was born in Taiwan in 1961. She received an M.A. degree from Chengchi University and a PhD degree in psychology from Liverpool University in the U.K. After returning to Taiwan, she was hired as a professor at National Tainan University where she later became an academic dean and then in 2007, president of the university. In the meantime she was a scholar in residence at the University of California, Berkeley and Yale University. She has authored and co-authored a number of academic articles.¹⁷⁰

CHEN Chu was born in Yilan County in Taiwan in 1950. After Shih Hsin School of Journalism, she attended National Sun Yet-sen University in Kaohsiung. In 1979, she was involved in planning the Kaohsiung Incident, an opposition-led protest movement that turned violent, and was one of the "Kaohsiung eight" that was prosecuted the next year. She served six years in prison. After her release, she became director of the Taiwan Association of Human Rights and served as their chairwoman from 1992 to 1994. When CHEN Shui-bian was elected mayor of Taipei in 1994, he appointed her head of the city's Bureau of Social Affairs. Later, when Frank Hsieh was elected mayor of Kaohsiung, he appointed CHEN Chu head of the city's Bureau of Social Affairs. When CHEN Shui-bian was president, he appointed her Minister of the Council on Labor Affairs. In 2006, she was elected mayor of Kaohsiung; she was reelected in 2010.¹⁷¹

YANG Chiu-hsing was born in Taiwan in 1956. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in civil engineering at National Taiwan University. He was employed as an engineer and also public works and civic planning. He represented the DPP as a member of the Legislative Yuan from 1999 to 2001. He subsequently became a member of

169. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 32.

170. *Republic of China Yearbook 2012*, p. 402.

171. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, pp. 32-33.

the party's Central Standing Committee. He was a magistrate in Kaohsiung County from 2001 to 2010.¹⁷²

In 2010, Yang sought the DPP's nomination to run for mayor of Kaohsiung metropolis. Failing to get it, he decided he would run anyway. TSAI Ing-wen expressed concern that this would split the DPP vote and tried to persuade him to withdraw, so instead James Soong endorsed Yang. The polls, however, showed that CHEN Chu would win easily and concern about the "Yang challenge" faded. Afterwards, Yang switched parties and joined the KMT.¹⁷³

The campaign went into high gear at the end of September, two months ahead of voting day. It was clear at that time that two of the metropolitan city mayoral races, those in Taipei and Taichung, would be the most competitive, the most interesting, and the most telling in terms of defining the election as a KMT or DPP victory. If the KMT should lose in Taipei, it would be considered a serious setback in a KMT stronghold. If it should lose the Taichung race, it would signal that the DPP had conquered central Taiwan, giving it control of both the central and southern parts of the island.

A. Taipei Mayor Race: Sean Lien v. KO Wen-je

In running for mayor of Taipei, Sean Lien realized that he would gain little or nothing from associating with the Ma administration and may have even calculated that it would help to dissociate from Ma. Anyway, shortly after he announced his candidacy in February, Lien criticized the Ma administration for its bad performance in managing the economy. He also focused on youth issues and kept in touch with student protesters during the Sunflower Movement and won the backing from many of them—which again separated him from Ma. Lien later chided President Ma for his attempts to oust WANG Jin-pyng from the party. Lien's campaign strategy had resonance and early on he led in the opinion polls, though he obviously had the advantage due to the DPP's difficulty in choosing a candidate, or in this case, deciding to support an independent and not fielding a contender.¹⁷⁴

As the campaign proceeded, Ko's supporters used the Lien's family wealth and social status to portray Sean Lien as the scion of

172. *Republic of China 2012 Yearbook*, p. 484.

173. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 34.

174. Lawrence Chung, "Taipei mayoral hopeful Sean Lien distances self from President Ma Ying-jeou over student protests," *South China Morning Post*, April 7, 2014 (online at scmp.com).

a rich family and distant from ordinary people as in he was uncar- ing, arrogant, etc. Ko's campaign also sought to link Lien to Presi- dent Ma in order to use Ma's unpopularity and the public's distrust of Ma and his administration against Lien. This in fact, became a central theme of Ko's election strategy. In addition, Ko condemned partisan politics and endeavored to appeal broadly to the electorate to prevent it from dividing along party lines (which would be an advantage to Lien).¹⁷⁵ Finally, Ko portrayed himself as a profes- sional person with no ties to business. He avoided the topic of independence.¹⁷⁶

The Lien camp responded by citing legal charges against Ko for overseeing an organ transplant from a person with AIDS in 2001 – he was punished by the National Taiwan University and the Ministry of Health, while the Control Yuan accused him of miscon- duct. The Lien campaign also said Ko profited from selling organs harvested in China from Falun Gung members that were executed – Ko denied these charges. In addition, the KMT took note of Ko's support for former president CHEN Shui-bian (which Ko publically confirmed), and his differences with TSAI Ing-wen over the "Tai- wan Consensus."¹⁷⁷

Ko's campaign platform had considerable resonance and in mid-October, according to a poll conducted by the pro-pan blue Chinese language paper, the *United Daily News*, Ko would win the election handily. Ko had a thirteen point lead, the paper said, mainly because of the perception Lien had "gotten everything on a silver platter", and the public discontent with the KMT and the Ma administration. The paper reported Ko had very strong support among pan-green voters and a thirty-one percent edge among in- dependents; Lien had weaker than expected support even among pan-blue voters.¹⁷⁸

However, two weeks later, according to the KMT, the gap had narrowed. The odds-makers (gamblers), in fact, predicted a Lien win (though this was subsequently changed to a draw or close elec-

175. See Keith Badsher and Austin Ramzy, "2014 ELECTIONS: Wang, Ko see old mindset favoring win for KMT's 'scabby-headed child,' Lien," *Taipei Times*, November 5, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). Also, see "EDITORIAL: Does Lien listen to public or party?" *Taipei Times*, November 2, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

176. "Political Surgery," *Economist*, November 22, 2014, p. 37.

177. See "Ko Wen-je," *Wikipedia*, viewed November 8, 2014 (online at wikipedia.org).

178. "Poll tips Ko as winner of Taipei mayoral election," *Taipei Times*, October 22, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

tion).¹⁷⁹ The difference in the predictions was, in part, due the fact that an estimated one hundred thousand Taiwan business people and their families in the constituency resided in China, and were mainly pro-blue (by a seventy percent or more margin) and were not counted; they would presumably return to vote.¹⁸⁰ Some pundits also predicted that many undecided voters would go for Lien in the last few days of the campaign because of their loyalty to the KMT and the view that Ko is a “lose cannon.”¹⁸¹ On the other hand, due to discontent with politics in Taiwan, by one estimate only half the number of voters residing in China that returned in 2012 would come back to vote.¹⁸²

On November 7, the two candidates faced off in a two-hour televised debate. Ko characterized himself as a candidate that can “reset” Taiwan politics by ending partisanship and advancing fairness and justice. He described what Taipei would become if Lien were elected: a “monopolistic financial holding company.” Lien said his victory would be followed by a “great leap forward in development” and Ko’s, if he won, a “massive disaster.” Furthermore, he said Taipei would become a “laboratory of new medicines” if Ko were elected mayor.¹⁸³ By most accounts, Ko won the debate.¹⁸⁴

Subsequently, Ko, in an appeal to independent voters, pledged not to join a political party and declared his senior officials would not participate in political activities. Lien charged that Ko shifted his positions on issues, while noting that Ko had once been an advocate of Taiwan’s independence. He also linked Ko to CHEN Shuibian based on his “deep green” affiliations, and Ko’s call for Chen to be released from prison. Ko retorted that Lien and Chen alike were his patients. Lien said that he would demand all city govern-

179. “Bookmakers Give Sean Lien 20,000-Vote Point Spread,” Kuomintang Official Website, November 5, 2014 (online at kmt.org.tw). For an assessment of polls and gamblers’ odds in predicting Taiwan’s elections, see Jens Kastner, “Taiwan Midterm Polls a Toss-Up,” *Asia Sentinel*, November 19, 2014 (online at asiasentinel.com).

180. “Opinion Poll: Blue and Geen Camps Narrow Gaps in Taipei and Taichung,” Kuomintng Official Website, November 3, 2014 (online at kmt.org.tw).

181. “November 2014 megacity election preview,” European Chamber of Commerce Taiwan, October 30 2014 (online at ecct.tw). This view was presented by Joanna Lei, who was an invitee to a “Premium Event” luncheon.

182. Chen Ma-ning and Lu Su-mei, “Taiwanese in China show little interest in current elections,” *Want China Times*, November 15, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

183. Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taipei contenders hold debate,” *Taipei Times*, November 8, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com); Katherine Wei, “Ko, Lien cross swords for the first time,” *China Post*, November 8, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

184. Allison Hsiao, “2014 ELECTIONS: Poll shows most believe Ko won the debate,” *Taipei Times*, November 9, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

ment officials to abide by strict rules of ethics and would not allow them to entertain anyone from businesses involved in public contracting. Both candidates said they opposed extending the life of the two nuclear power plants in Taipei City.¹⁸⁵

In early November, a controversy broke out which potentially might have a profound impact on the election given the milieu of public concern about government spying. The Ko campaign director reported that he had found their offices to be wiretapped. He suspected the Lien camp and immediately called the police. The police found what the media called a “mouse tail.” *Prima facie* evidence suggested that Lien’s people did the deed.¹⁸⁶ Soon, however, investigators said that the Ko campaign organization had planted the wire in order to implicate the Lien camp. Alex Tsai, Lien’s campaign manager, sued. On the other hand, further police work found the detectives hired by the Ko team to commit the deed. Ko personally was not found involved and continued to lead in the opinion polls by a significant margin.¹⁸⁷

Going into the final stretch of the campaign, LIEN Chan used foul language, which publically excoriated KO Wen-je. Lien said Ko’s family had collaborated with the Japanese during the colonial period (1895-1945), noting specifically that Ko’s grandfather had taken a Japanese name. There was a backlash and LIEN Chan subsequently apologized.¹⁸⁸

Toward the end of the campaign period it appeared Ko maintained his momentum. The weekend before Election Day, his campaign organized a parade that reportedly got a turnout of two hundred thousand (including many who joined along the way). The turnout created a mood that was festive and where idealism and inclusiveness seemed the ideas of the day. Ko’s campaign color was white representing idealism and acceptance (as opposed to divisive-

185. Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taipei mayor contenders hold debate,” *Taipei Times*, November 8, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

186. “Ko’s Camp Accused Lien of Wiretapping Its Campaign Office,” KMT Official Website, November 6, 2014 (online at kmt.org.tw).

187. Lawrence Chung, “Senior aide to Taipei mayoral candidate Ko Wen-je interviewed as witness over alleged wiretap,” *South China Morning Post*, November 27, 2014 (online at scmp.com).

188. Loa Lok-sin, “2014 ELECTIONS: Lien Chan’s ‘bastard’ barb bounces off Ko Wen-je,” *Taipei Times*, November 23, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

ness).¹⁸⁹ Lien's campaign in a number of respects seemed desperate.¹⁹⁰

Just two days before the voting, it was reported that KMT officials had notified their legislators that if Lien did not win the vote in their constituencies the party might not re-nominate them in 2016, reflecting a lack of party support for Lien or perceiving he would otherwise lose the election. The KMT denied the accusation.¹⁹¹ The opposition in the meantime charged that the government was making financial decisions to help KMT candidates, such as raising bonuses for government employees, increasing pensions, and controlling the price of oil and other commodities.¹⁹²

B. Taichung Mayor Race: Jason Hu v. LIN Chia-Lung

Jason Hu appeared to hurt his campaign early on by saying he was not running again. This evoked reports that he was tired of being mayor. There were also questions about his health, stemming from a stroke and coronary bypass surgery earlier and concern that his popularity had declined in recent years.¹⁹³ This was offset, some observers said, by the fact that the Hu-Lin race was a repeat of the 2005 election when Hu won easily, by almost ninety thousand votes, and that Hu could repeat the performance.¹⁹⁴

In late September, President Ma travelled to Taichung and appeared at Mayor Jason Hu's campaign headquarters to bolster his campaign. He lauded Mayor Hu for transforming the cultural and social landscape of the city. At the same time, DPP Chairwoman Tsai embarked on a tour of central Taiwan, which she said was key to winning the election. The occasion was the anniversary of the party's founding. She spoke of consolidating democracy, driving ec-

189. "Ko Wen-je buoyed by 200,000 spontaneous supporters in Taipei parade," *Taiwan News*, November 23, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

190. Ted Chen, "Ko, Len battle it out over final weekend," *China Post*, November 24, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

191. "2014 ELECTIONS: Lien's showing not tied to legislative primary, KMT," *Taipei Times*, November 27, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

192. It was no doubt this was true; however, it was uncertain to what degree the decisions were timed to impact the election. For example, the state-run CPC Co. lowered the price of gasoline and diesel just five days before the election. See "Ted Chen, 'Gas prices edge down to 4-year low,'" *China Post*, November 24, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

193. Mo Yan-chih, "Jason Hu launches reelection drive," *Taipei Times*, February 6, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

194. "Taichung mayoral race sees rerun of 2005 contest," *Taiwan Today*, October 30, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

onomic development, and institutionalizing a mechanism for cross-strait exchanges.”¹⁹⁵

On October 24, Hu and Lin engaged in a public debate. Lin, at the time, enjoyed a large lead in the polls: Lin was favored by forty-eight percent of voters whereas Hu was favored by only twenty-four; twenty-six percent of voters were undecided.¹⁹⁶ Hu performed well in the debate, but it also seemed he had the advantage since he had held the office for thirteen years. He spoke of his accomplishments as mayor and about his vision of continuing to make Taichung a world-class city. Lin downplayed Hu's accomplishments, and touted better public transportation, social welfare, and a downtown renewal.¹⁹⁷ It was uncertain at the time whether Hu could close the favorability gap.

Just a few days before the election, Central Taiwan's first opera house opened in Taichung. Minister of Culture LUNG Ying-tai called it the “pride of Taichung” and praised Mayor Hu for the accomplishment. President Ma attended the opening ceremony of the 2,014 seat architecturally eye-catching building.¹⁹⁸ This was offered as evidence to refute Lin's charge that Hu had not accomplished what he had planned in terms of helping the city. Lin countered with claims that Hu was making the opera house appear as a personal project, that the timing of the opening date was suspicious, that city money was spent on advertising it just before the election, and that the project experienced many problems during construction.¹⁹⁹

During the very last days of the campaign, Terry Gou, chairman of the Foxconn Technology Group and well-known businessman in Taiwan, publically endorsed Hu. Gou praised Hu's strategic vision and his “block development” plan for the area. TSAI Ing-wen assailed Gou for “stepping over the line” in the endorsement and said that Lin had the support of a broad based of people.²⁰⁰

195. Campaigns up for Taiwan nationwide elections,” *Taiwan Today*, September 29, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

196. Taichung mayoral race sees rerun of 2005 contest,” *Taiwan Today*, October 30, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

197. Ibid.

198. “State-of-art opera house opens in central Taiwan,” *China Post*, November 24, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

199. “Lin Chia-lung chides Jason Hu for playing ‘Opera House’ card in election,” *Taiwan News*, November 24, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

200. John Liu, “Gou crosses line with Hu endorsement: Tsai,” *China Post*, November 25, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

C. Predictions of Other Elections

John Wu, who became well known in Taiwan for his work as mayor of Taoyuan, seemed to be a shoo-in based on his work in improving Taiwan's major international airport and building the rapid transit system linking the airport with Taipei, and for advancing the idea of making Taoyuan an intelligent city which meant promoting economic development, civic consciousness and the environment.²⁰¹ However, mid-year 2014, there were rumors that the KMT would replace Wu as its candidate for Taoyuan mayor because of a corruption scandal involving his deputy. The KMT, however, denied this.²⁰² In the following months the issue appeared to have lost traction.

Eric Chu appeared to be an easy winner in the New Taipei election contest. He was popular and his campaign was on track. Similarly, in the months and weeks leading up to Election Day, the campaigns in Kaohsiung and Tainan showed, by all of the evidence available, not to be close. CHEN Chu and William Lai, both DPP candidates and incumbents with good track records in office and working in their party's stronghold areas, were, according to all calculations, going to win easily.

D. How Different Factors May Have Influenced Voting

The Ma administration and KMT officials continued to push on the issue of trade, arguing that agreements initiated by President Ma, notably the Trade in Services deal and bilateral free trade agreements, were vital to Taiwan's economy; by innuendo they blamed the DPP for blocking the agreements and thus hampering Taiwan's economic growth.²⁰³ The KMT likewise continued to talk up how critical trade with China was to Taiwan's economy.²⁰⁴ DPP officials continued to play down the economic importance of China to Taiwan, the harm from the commercial relations, and the threat to Taiwan's democracy and sovereignty.

These issues attracted more media attention during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Beijing during the run-up

201. "Reshaping the Urbanomics of Cities," Asia Pacific Cities Summit, September 11, 2013 (online at 2013 apcs.org).

202. "KMT rebuts report of replacing Taichung, Taoyuan mayor candidates, Radio Taiwan International, June 8, 2014 (online at rti.com.tw).

203. John Liu, "Taiwan's ability to sign FTAs in doubt: US," *Chinal Post*, November 22, 2014 (online at chinapost.com).

204. See, for example, "The Silk Road—another missed Taiwan opportunity," *Want China Times*, November 25, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

to the election. Former Vice President Vincent Siew attended the meeting and met with China's President XI Jinping and other high officials. Taiwan's reliance on trade got attention. Coinciding with the meeting, China reached a free trade agreement with South Korea, which drew unwanted attention to Taiwan; this resulted in restrictions on trade and economic losses on Taiwan.²⁰⁵ For all of this, DPP candidates lost the argument and sacrificed points to impress the electorate.

Meanwhile, the issue of campaign irregularities, especially bribery and vote buying, got playtime in the media. It was reported that this had become more serious and was a threat to Taiwan's democracy. The reported number of cases and people involved came from the Supreme Prosecutor's Office.²⁰⁶ The KMT was implicated more than the DPP because it was the ruling party, more of its people were in office, and because it appeared the KMT was not doing as well as the DPP in the campaign and so was desperate.²⁰⁷

In the last days of the campaign, the Ma administration received more good news on the economy. Real monthly earnings were up almost three percent from a year earlier.²⁰⁸ Unemployment fell to a seven-year low.²⁰⁹ These were areas of most concern to citizens. However, Ma's approval rating did not go up; rather it went down—by two percentage points the first ten days of November according to the Taiwan Mood Barometer.²¹⁰ Thus, it appeared that the positive economic news was too late to have much impact on voters' views of the Ma administration and the KMT.

VI. THE ELECTION RESULTS

The election results were pretty much known by the evening of voting day. By almost everyone's reckoning, the DPP had won and the KMT had lost. When the final tallies were made, it was clear the

205. "Mainland-S Korea FTR will hurt Taiwan: CIER," *China Post*, November 16, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw). The government estimated it would cause Taiwan's exports to China to drop by 1.35 percent and the GDP to fall by 0.5 percent.

206. Jason Pan, "2014 ELECTIONS: Vote-buying, other election irregularities rampant," *Taipei Times*, November 23, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

207. Abraham Gerber, "2014 ELECTIONS: Local councils rife with corruption, watchdog says," *Taipei Times*, November 23, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

208. "Real monthly earnings up on-year last month," *China Post*, November 25, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

209. Crystal Hsu, "Unemployment falls to seven-year low of 3.95%: DGBAS," *Taipei Times*, November 25, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

210. "Taiwan Mood Barometer Survey, First Half of November 2014," Taiwan Security Research, November 24, 2014 (online at taiwansecurity.org).

election outcome was much better than expected for the DPP and worse than anticipated for the KMT – the DPP had won a major victory while the KMT had suffered an embarrassing drubbing.

This was evident from what the two parties' leaders said and did. Premier JIANG Yi-huah took responsibility for the KMT's poor performance and announced his resignation the evening of the election. He stated that the results showed that the people were dissatisfied with the administration's policies.²¹¹ Before the end of the day, President Ma apologized for the poll results and promised reform. Prior to Ma returning to party headquarters, several KMT officials gathered to demand Ma resign as chairman of the party.²¹² The next day, eighty-one members of the cabinet stepped down, including Vice Premier MAO Chi-kuo, Executive Yuan Secretary General LEE Si-chuan, and various ministers and deputy ministers; this left a serious vacuum in the Ma administration.²¹³ President Ma subsequently promised to resign as chairman of the KMT (and did), while accepting blame for the KMT election defeat.²¹⁴ Some, including former President LEE Teng-hui, said Ma should step down from the presidency in order to "revolutionize the government."²¹⁵ The DPP leadership's happy reaction stood in contrast to the KMT's. Chairwoman TSAI Ing-wen cited the victory her party's "best performance" and said it represented trust in the DPP. She said she saw the results as a "mandate for her party," though she did not say exactly what that meant.²¹⁶

The numbers also proved that the election was a disaster for the KMT and a huge victory for the DPP. Before the election as the ruling party, the KMT controlled fourteen of Taiwan's twenty-two cities and counties. It held three of the five metropolitan mayoral

211. Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Premier quits after landslide KMT defeat," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

212. *Ibid.*

213. "81 to leave Cabinet in massive shakeup Monday," *Taiwan News*, November 30, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw). This caused a problem in that it seemed highly unlikely that number of new officials could be appointed and approved within the required time limit to do so. Obviously a number would be reappointed and switched to other posts. Still it caused considerable worry about the government functioning well. See "Cabinet in 'caretaker' mode until new Premier is named," *Taiwan News*, December 2, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

214. "Ma resigns as chairman after election loss," *Taiwan Today*, December 3, 2014 (online at taiwantoday.tw).

215. Amy Chan, "President Ma to step down as KMT chief," *China Post*, December 3, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

216. "DPP chair thanks voters after party takes 13 cities, counties," Central News Agency, November 29, 2014 (online at cna.com.tw).

jobs (and Taoyuan), while in contrast the DPP had only two. As a result of this election, the KMT will rule a total of only six city, county and municipal governments. Only one metropolitan city will have a KMT mayor.²¹⁷ In city council seats, the KMT failed to win a majority in any of the municipalities; this is a big drop from the number of seats it held before the election.²¹⁸

By political party, votes cast for mayors were as follows: the Democratic Progressive Party received 47.6 percent of the votes, the Kuomintang 40.7 percent. Other parties received but a tiny percent of the votes. However, Non-Party candidates received 11.7 percent of the vote. In the municipal councilor elections, the DPP won 37.1 percent of the ballots cast, while the KMT received 36.9 percent. Non-Party candidates garnered 20 percent of the vote. Votes for the other parties divided as follows: The Taiwan Solidarity Union (1.9 percent); the People First Party (1.7 percent); and the New Party (1.1 percent).

For township magistrates, the KMT won 33.7 percent and the DPP 31.7 percent. Non-Party candidates won 34.2 percent. Among the other parties, none received more than one percent of the votes. For township representatives, the KMT got 22.6 percent of the vote, while the DPP received 12.7 percent of the vote. Non-Party candidates won 35.6 percent. In the village chiefs' election, the KMT won 23.8 percent of the vote in contrast to the DPP, which received 6.6 percent. Non-Party candidates got 69.4 percent.²¹⁹

Looking at the metropolitan city mayoral races separately is especially instructive in terms of assessing the election's scorecard and the political sea change that will inevitably result from the election. They provide both individual stories and together speak of the KMT's travails and the DPP's winning strategies.

A. Taipei City Mayoral Election Results

In the Taipei city race, KO Wen-je won with 853,983 votes compared to Lien's 609,932, or by a whopping 244,051 vote margin. Ko took more than fifty-seven percent of the vote compared to Lien's less than forty-two percent.²²⁰ This split is akin to HAU

217. Loa Lok-sin and Shih Hsiu-chuan, "KMT trounced," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

218. "Opposition wins by landslide; Jiang resigns," *China Post* November 30, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

219. "2014 Local Elections," Central Election Commission (online at cec.gov.tw). Viewed on December 1, 2014.

220. *Ibid.*

Lung-bin's victory in 2010, where he won 55.7 percent of the vote in comparison to SU Tseng-chang's 43.8 percent. Hau was not considered an especially good campaigner and ran against one of the DPP's best—a founding member of the party and former premier, chairman of the DPP, and vice presidential candidate in 2008. Hau had won with even bigger margins in the previous election. MA Ying-jeou won a twenty-eight point victory over CHEN Shui-bian in 1998.²²¹ That number indicates Taipei's importance as a KMT stronghold and the gravity of the Lien loss.

Moreover, Ko had little experience in politics or business. He was known for making gaffes in public. He had no political party, though the DPP supported him as its candidate. He won by besting the DPP's candidates in a pre-campaign poll and then convincing DPP leaders not to field a candidate. He won by making an appeal to end politics as usual, while condemning Taiwan's divisive political partisanship. He won by criticizing the KMT and President Ma, and Lien by association. His campaign made an issue of Lien's wealthy family and Sean Lien's privileged status in life, which resonated with the voters. He appealed to undecided voters and to disgruntled KMT voters. He got the support of Taiwan's youth and a multitude of voters who perceived something was wrong with politics in Taiwan. He used the Internet and other social media effectively.²²²

Lien criticized Ko harshly during the campaign, but this was not very effective in the context of citizen fatigue over partisanship, attack ads, mean politics, and most voters wanting something new and better. Also, Ko handled the attacks very well.²²³ The nastiness of the campaign, which was mainly perceived as initiated by Lien, clearly turned off many potential voters.²²⁴

But mostly it was President Ma and the KMT's brand. There was a widespread public perception of a lack of leadership and a feeling that Taiwan was not doing well mainly because of sub-par governance. This was more apparent in Taipei, it being the capital city, compared to other places. It was made even more obvious ow-

221. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 50.

222. Katherine Wei, "Ko defeats Lien by a landslide 240,000 votes," *China Post*, November 30, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

223. See "Taiwan clamors for change," *Taiwan News*, November 29, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

224. One observer told this writer that Lien looked especially bad in attacking Ko on a personal level, especially since Ko had attended to him when he was in the hospital after he had been shot during the 2010 election campaign.

ing to Lien and his campaign criticizing President Ma and his policies.

Ko was lucky in several ways. He probably would not have won as a DPP candidate. If the DPP had entered a party candidate in the race (which would have divided the anti-KMT vote), he would not have been victorious. His lack of experience and family wealth were assets in the political milieu of this campaign; ordinarily, they would not have been. Also, the various protest movements helped him.

In any case, failing in the Taipei mayoral election was a profound setback for the KMT. It was a matter of losing a city of mostly pro-KMT voters. Taipei is the capital city and Taiwan's largest city. It is the location of the national government, the parties' offices, the best universities, and the headquarters of most large companies. It is a trend setting city. Few thought the KMT would lose Taipei, so the loss was indeed a shock.

Losing Taichung metropolitan was also a huge setback for the KMT. Taichung had long represented central Taiwan and was viewed as a "strategic battleground" between north Taiwan (which was a KMT stronghold) and south Taiwan (which was DPP territory). It was said that whichever party won Taichung, tipped the "geopolitical balance" in its favor and thus that party could claim an overall election victory.²²⁵

B. Taichung Mayoral Election Results

Jason Hu lost the election by 209,753 votes, which meant his challenger had received more than fifty-seven percent of the votes cast. It was a stunning defeat for Hu. He said after the votes were counted: "I am not good enough and I didn't work hard enough."²²⁶ But this explanation wasn't complete and perhaps wasn't plausible.

Hu had won every election he stood for in Taichung. He had defeated his challenger, LIN Chia-lung, in 2005 for the mayoral job by a nearly twenty point margin. He was a superb campaigner. He had garnered some sympathy vote because of the car accident that he had been in and his wife's serious injury in that accident—damage to her spleen and an arm injury that required an amputation.

225. This was often stated during election campaigns in Taiwan and was even said to be an important part of the two parties' strategies. This was certainly the case of the most recent local elections. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 52.

226. Alison Hsiao, "DPP wins mayoral race in Taichung with landslide," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

By most accounts, he had done a good job as mayor. In fact, he felt he should have won and blamed the Ma administration and the KMT's unpopular status for the loss. Hu noted after the election that the election was a "death sentence" for Ma, suggesting the election had gone bad for the KMT almost everywhere because of Ma's poor leadership.²²⁷

But Lin also capitalized on the fact many citizens of Taichung felt Hu had been mayor too long. Hu reinforced this perception when he said early on that he did not want to run again. Some said that President Ma pressured him to run and he could not refuse. While this fact was unconfirmed, it shouldn't have become public knowledge. Lin cited many public projects that Hu had not undertaken as well as some that Hu had started, but that Lin said he himself had proposed nearly a decade earlier. Specifically mentioned was a metro system.²²⁸ This had some resonance.

Lin's reputation, as a critic of China and an advocate of Beijing following the Taiwan model of democracy and its improving its human rights record, no doubt gained him acclaim and voter's support in view of widespread perception that the KMT and the Ma administration had seriously overreached in promoting ties with China.²²⁹ His ethnicity may have also helped – Lin being Fukien Taiwanese versus Hu who was Mainland Chinese (like President Ma).

C. New Taipei Mayoral, Taoyuan Mayoral and Other Election Results

Eric Chu defeated YU Shyi-kun in the New Taipei race – but the vote was close. It probably would not have been so close if it wasn't for the fact that the KMT and the Ma Administration were unpopular, and voters were angry and wanted a change. Chu won by a vote tally of 959,302 votes compared to 934,774 for Yu. Chu

227. "Jason Hu: Elections were 'political death sentence' for Ma in the KMT," *Taiwan News*, December 1, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

228. Tang Tsai-hsin and Joseph Pan, "INTERVIEW: 'Jason Hu's biggest enemy is himself': Lin Chia-lung," *Taipei Times*, August 19, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

229. Fanny W.Y. Fung, "Taichung mayor-elect an outspoken figure on mainland's democracy and rights campaigns," *Souh China Morning Post*, December 1, 2014 (online at scmp.com). Lin founded the New School for Democracy in 2011 and was in constant touch with dissidents from China and with Overseas Chinese students that advocated reform in China.

barely won over fifty percent of the vote versus Yu, who received 48.8 percent.²³⁰

In 2010, Chu had received 1,115,536 votes against TSAI Ing-wen of the DPP, who got 1,004,900. Chu captured 52.6 percent of the vote compared to Tsai's 47.4 percent. Chu defeated the DPP's chairperson who was popular and a very good campaigner.²³¹ He was a highly regarded mayor and was popular in office as well as during the months leading up to this election. There was even serious talk that he would be the KMT's presidential nominee in 2016. Finally, New Taipei was regarded as a KMT stronghold. The tight vote count surprised many observers and varied considerably from what the polls predicted.²³² All of this suggests that the KMT and the Ma administration were a drag on the candidates running in this election. And this got worse during the last days of the campaign.

If the vote tally for Eric Chu was not anticipated, it was even more so for John Wu. CHENG Wen-tsan defeated Wu by around 50,000 votes even though the polls indicated Wu would win by something between nine and twenty percent.²³³ Cheng won fifty-one percent of the vote compared to Wu's forty eight percent.

Wu had the advantage of incumbency. He had name recognition. The Wu family had produced three commissioners of the county: Wu's grandfather, his father, and himself.²³⁴ Wu had done well for Taoyuan. He had announced feasible and intelligent plans for its future. He had defeated Cheng in the 2009 election. Taoyuan had been governed at the executive level by the KMT since 2001. With a number of military bases in the area, most voters were pro-KMT. Wu seemed to have momentum going into the final stretch of the campaign despite being hurt by an earlier scandal.²³⁵ Wu's loss was another indicator that the Ma administration and the KMT had lost more voter support late in the campaign.

The Tainan and Kaohsiung metropolitan mayoral races were easy wins for the DPP since both were DPP strongholds. The two

230. Jason Pan, "Eric Chu survives with razor-thin majority," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

231. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. 48.

232. Queena Yen, "New Taipei, Taoyuang results contrary to expectations from pre-election polls," *China Post*, November 30, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

233. *Ibid.*

234. Shirley Shan, "2014 ELECTIONS: KMT's John Wu loses Taoyuan re-election bid," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

235. Joseph Yen, "DPP clinches surprising victory in Taoyuan," *China Post*, November 30, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

incumbent mayors, William Lai and CHEN Chu, both won by larger vote margins than in previous elections. Lai won with 711,577 votes in comparison to HUANG Hsiu-shuang's 264,636 votes. This meant that Lai captured 72.9 percent of the total votes cast. CHEN Chu won 993,300 votes or 68.1 percent of the total whereas her challenger won 450,647 votes or 30.9 percent of the total.²³⁶ In 2010, Lai garnered 619,897 votes to win, while Chen won 821,000 votes or 52.8 percent of the votes for her win.²³⁷

In the case of these two victorious DPP mayors, incumbency seemed to be an asset as in there was no voter sentiment to "throw out those in power." This was quite different from the KMT's situation. Gas explosions in Kaohsiung a few months earlier had hurt Chen's reputation, but this didn't seem to matter.

The DPP won victories in some other lesser, but still meaningful, mayoral races. The DPP's candidate, LIN Yu-chang, won in Keelung (Taipei's port city), which was a KMT stronghold. This was only the second defeat for the KMT in this position since 1950.²³⁸ The KMT also lost the mayoral race in Hsinchu, another traditional stronghold.²³⁹ In Penghu (Pescadores), the DPP won the top executive job. In Kinmen County and Lienchiang County in the Offshore Islands (very much KMT strongholds), the DPP was victorious. The same result occurred in Pingtung County.²⁴⁰

Notwithstanding the overall huge election loss for the KMT, it could cite some victories. The KMT won in the county commissioner's race in Taitung.²⁴¹ The KMT retained its power in Hsinchu County and Miaoli County. The KMT won a number of victories at lower levels of government as well. KMT officials might have made the case that the election was not a complete rout. But that would not have been a convincing argument and few even hinted at this.

236. Wang Jung-hsiang, Huang Wen-huang and Jake Chung, "2014 ELECTIONS: Kaohsiung and Tainan mayors win re-election," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

237. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, p. . 51.

238. Sean Lin, "2014 ELECTIONS: DPP's Lin elected in Keelung," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

239. Li Wen, "2014 ELECTIONS: Lin Chih-chien of the DPP edges by in Hsinchu City win," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

240. Lao Lok-sin and Shih Hsiu-chuan, "KMT trounced," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com)

241. Abraham Gerber, "2014 ELECTIONS: Taitung provides rare victory for KMT," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

On the other hand, smaller political parties and independent or non-affiliated candidates made a good showing.²⁴² This reflected a growing dissatisfaction among voters with both parties and/or politics generally in Taiwan.

D. Main Reasons Cited Locally for the DPP Win and KMT Defeat

Clearly the media and pundits alike attributed the election results more to the KMT's failings than to the DPP's good candidates, strategy, ideas, etc. But the main reason cited for the KMT's abysmal performance was the economic conditions. Despite the fact that the rate of GDP growth was increasing and gaining some momentum, the average person did not feel this. Wages had stagnated. Monthly paychecks had hit a fifteen year low. Young people were struggling. Some even said Taiwan had become a haven for foreign businesses looking for cheap labor. Meanwhile, the prices of daily necessities were going up. There was disappointment in the Ma administration's vaunted ties with China that were supposed to help the economy. Few people noticed this supposed help due to the relationship and many were apprehensive of the consequences of closer ties to China. Finally, the public was afraid of opening Taiwan's markets further, which the agreement with China on trade in services and Ma's free economic pilot zones was perceived would do.²⁴³

The growing gulf between rich and poor in Taiwan deserves special mention. According to an article published just as the campaign was getting underway in the respected *CommonWealth* magazine, the gap was at an all-time high with the top one percent of income earners enjoying the lions' share of Taiwan's economic growth. The article's author said that this gap had created very different lifestyles between the rich and the less rich or poor in Taiwan, and had fostered what he called the "biggest class divide in history." Furthermore, the government seemed oblivious to the problem.²⁴⁴ Clearly, this became an election issue that hurt the rul-

242. Li Wen, "2014 ELECTIONS: Smaller parties clinch big victories," *Taipei Times*, December 1, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). These parties include the Green Party Taiwan, the Tree Party, the Labor Party, and the Taiwan First Nations Party (advocating political autonomy for Aborigines).

243. "EDITORIAL: 'It's the economy, stupid.'" *Taipei Times*, December 3, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

244. Hsiang-Yi Chang, Ting-feng Wu and Jimmy Hsiung, "Taiwan's Vast Wealth Gap," *CommonWealth*, June 12, 2014 (online at english.cw.tw).

ing party candidates. During the campaign, homelessness and poverty amid a proliferation of luxury apartments and the rich engaging in conspicuous consumption also became an issue that opposition candidates exploited.²⁴⁵ The Sean Lien candidacy underscored this problem.

Related but also standing alone as an explanation for the outcome of the election was a loss of confidence in President Ma. It was often cited that he was out of touch with ordinary people, while thinking he could placate the public with the notion that improving relations with China was the panacea for improving the economy and to support otherwise would be a disaster for Taiwan. As noted, Ma was also perceived as indecisive, weak, and advised by a small, insular group of officials that were better academics than problem solvers. The election was thus a vote of “no confidence” in the president.²⁴⁶

These views were confirmed by opinion polls published after the election. One survey found that seventy-four percent of respondents said they were dissatisfied with President Ma’s performance, up from just over sixty-six percent in June. Simultaneously, Ma’s approval rating fell from 21.7 percent in June to 9.7 percent, with only 5.7 percent of those age twenty to twenty-nine saying they were satisfied. (Since the youth vote, which was around sixty percent in previous elections, increased to seventy-four percent in this election, this mattered.) According to the polls, 53 percent of the population attributed the KMT’s defeat to widespread disapproval of the Ma administration’s “China leaning and corporation-centered” policies.²⁴⁷

One media source stated the KMT’s election loss was due to a combination of Taiwan’s economic stagnation and the government’s lack of resolve in governance. What was cited were stagnant wages (declines in some sectors and with certain groups, in particular the young), higher housing prices, youth unemployment, controversies over pension reform, concern about energy policies, and a backlash over a proposal to increase the capital gains tax. Also, it said that the government and the KMT waffled frequently on policy and were woefully inconsistent on important issues. One example was

245. “FEATURE: No way out for homeless amid Taiwan’s wealth gap,” *Taipei Times*, May 15, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

246. Rachel Lin and Jake Chung, “Results show ‘no confidence’ in Ma, KMT,” *Taipei Times*, December 2, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

247. Stacy Hsu, “Strong disapproval of Ma led to KMT’s rout: survey,” *Taipei Times*, December 3, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

the government functionaries' pensions – the government abandoned its position due to a public backlash. Its stance on nuclear power was another, where public concern caused the Ma administration to shift gears and thus created confusion. There were other government flip-flops. According to this assessment, the government watched opinion polls too much and made policy that it changed when the polls were forgotten or shifted. In short, the government lacked direction and determination in making policies.²⁴⁸

E. Reaction and Interpretation of the Election by the Media and Officialdom in Other Countries

The foreign media almost in unison saw the election as a huge loss for the KMT and a big win for the DPP. Foreign news reports generally dispensed the impression that it was more of a defeat for the KMT than a win for the DPP. They often mentioned the unpopularity of the Ma administration and its overreaching efforts to improve relations with China.²⁴⁹ Many spoke of the impact this election would have on the coming 2016 election, suggesting it would give the DPP momentum and up its chances considerably for a victory in the presidential contest to come in just over a year. Many also opined that the election would have a negative impact on Taiwan's relations with China.²⁵⁰

Another interpretation was that the Sunflower Student Movement and other protests during the months leading up to the election exposed President Ma's weaknesses and fostered serious infighting in the KMT. It also underscored the fact that the economy was still in trouble for the majority of citizens. It even caused many to question the state of Taiwan's democracy. Ma's open conflict with Speaker WANG Jin-pyng made this much worse.²⁵¹

The foreign media's coverage on the election, however, was not as comprehensive as it was for previous elections in Taiwan.²⁵²

248. "KMT fails on stagnation and fatal lack of resolve," *Want China Times*, December 6, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

249. "Dire KMT setback covered by foreign media," *Taiwan News*, November 29, 2014 (online at taiwannews.com.tw).

250. Ibid. Mentioned specifically were Associated Press and BBC. See, for example, "Taiwan elections: Local elections seen as 'China policy' vote," BBC, November 29, 2014 (online at bbc.com.uk).

251. Katherine Tseng Hui-yi, "The Protest over the Cross-Strait Service Trade Pact," *EAI Bulletin* (East Asian Institute), October 2014. This article was published before the election, but the author's views were confirmed by other sources after the election.

252. See previous writings by this author cited in footnote #1. The reactions of the foreign media were cited as part of the analysis of past elections.

Part of the reason for this was that it was a local election; local elections in other countries simply do not as a rule attract much attention abroad. But, the world press, especially in the West, also had a number of other issues drawing its notice at this time. In the United States, the media was focused on tension and possible standoffs between Republicans and President Obama in the wake of the Republican victories in mid-term elections. The White House was also preoccupied with crises in the Middle East, Ukraine and elsewhere. In Europe and Japan, economic malaise was a problem and this drew media interest.

In the U.S. and other Western countries, there was a noticeable lack of congratulations towards Taiwan for its democracy working well (especially comments to the effect that the election signified its democratization was advanced by this election as was frequently heard in Taiwan). The Western media seemed to wish to avoid making any comparisons with the West, where democracy was not in good stead with its citizens. In the U.S., Europe and Japan, democratic governance was in doubt as registered in numerous public opinion polls and by other evidence.²⁵³ Democracy was not doing well in the developing world either.²⁵⁴ Taiwan was thus unique and this should have been noticed more than it was.

The U.S. government was almost mute about the election. Some said it was not paying much heed.²⁵⁵ Alternatively, the White House and the Department of State did not want to talk about Taiwan or had too many other things on their plates. When asked to comment about the election, the State Department's spokeswoman, Jen Psaki, simply said "the U.S. would encourage Beijing and Taipei to continue their constructive dialog."²⁵⁶ This was nothing new. Raymond Burghardt, chairperson of the American Institute in Taiwan (which manages U.S. Taiwan policy) said, perfunctorily, that relations between the United States and Taiwan would remain close.²⁵⁷ Stephen Yates, an advisor on Taiwan policy to Vice President Cheney during the Bush administration, confirmed the view that the U.S. would not change its policy toward Taiwan because of

253. See John Micklethwait, "The West's Malaise," in *The World in 2015* (London: The Economist, 2015), pp. 19-20.

254. See Kurlantzick, *Democracy in Retreat*.

255. William Lowther, "Rout of KMT takes US by surprise," *Taipei Times*, December 3, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

256. *Ibid.*

257. "US-Taiwan ties remain close post-election: AIT chief," *Want China Times*, December 5, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com.tw).

this election.²⁵⁸ No top U.S. official involved in making foreign policy commented on the election.

China's reaction to the election was at first guarded. Neither government officials nor China's news agencies said anything of significance immediately. China's media reported on the election, including the results – they characterized it as a DPP win and a KMT loss of some import but said little more. Officials in Beijing had obviously taken a wait and see position toward the event. An official in Taiwan, interpreting China's stance, said that China had adopted a “benefit yielding” approach, or a policy of pursuing economic ties as a priority in its Taiwan policy, and this had generated pushback in Taiwan. He later suggested that Beijing was not certain what to do at this point, if anything.²⁵⁹

An official of the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office subsequently declared that China had been watching the election and that he hoped that people in Taiwan would continue to cherish the “hard won fruits of their ties with China.” In the same article, a scholar from the Taiwan Studies Institute of the China Academy of Social Sciences was quoted as saying cross-Straits ties may regress.²⁶⁰

There followed even harsher comments. An article in the official *People's Daily* warned the DPP to “discard fantasies” about pursuing independence. The paper noted that China's might and influence have (and will) continue to expand and as that happens it will have more say about cross-strait ties.²⁶¹ Haiwai Net, a popular website, warned the opposition against “pressing is luck” and pointed out that Taiwan had benefited considerably from its economic relations with China. It specifically cautioned about disavowing the 1992 Consensus.²⁶² *China Daily* blamed President Ma's domestic policies for the election defeat asserting that his cross-strait policy did not cause the setback.²⁶³

258. “No change in Taiwan-U.S. ties after local elections: U.S expert,” *Focus Taiwan*, December 5, 2014 (online at focustaiwan.tw).

259. This comment was made to the author by an official in Taipei shortly after the election.

260. Catherine Wong Tsoi-lai, “Cross Strait ties may stall, but no profound change,” *Global Times*, December 1, 2014 (online at globaltimes.cn).

261. “China media: Taiwan election ‘no rejection of Beijing.’” BBC News, December 3, 2014 (online at bbc.com.uk).

262. *Ibid.*

263. *Ibid.* Interestingly the DPP's former representative to the U.S., Joseph Wu, supported this view.

A few days after the election, the Taiwan Affairs Office issued a statement denying a report published in Taiwan by the weekly magazine *The Journalist*, which claimed that China was making major changes in its Taiwan policy and that it was thinking of inviting the DPP “chief” for a visit. FAN Liqing, the spokeswoman for the Office, declared, “policy toward Taiwan had not changed.”²⁶⁴

At this same time, China’s state-run newspaper *Global Times* praised President Ma, citing his “sense of purpose” and his “intolerance for corruption”, which they noted explained why he had so few friends. The paper went on to say that Ma’s ambitions were lofty but his concrete measures to reform the KMT were too few, and factionalism and nepotism were “rife within the party.” The paper went on to criticize Taiwan’s “revolving door” politics and its populism.²⁶⁵

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The most widely heard conclusion about this election was: Voters had lost confidence in the Ma administration and the KMT (including handling the economy), and most of the ruling party’s candidates lost as a result.²⁶⁶ This contrasts with the KMT election setbacks in the past when the party split over a specific candidate or decided to “give” the DPP a victory rather than allow a KMT “rebel”, or candidate the top party leadership didn’t approve of, to win.²⁶⁷ On other occasions, the party was divided over its leadership or ideology.²⁶⁸ Never was the economy a deciding issue. Never had

264. “China may invite DPP chief for a visit: TAO,” *China Post*, December 4, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

265. “Global Times uses KMT defeat to take swipe at Taiwan politics,” *Want China Times*, December 4, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com.tw).

266. See, for example, “EDITORIAL: A vote of no confidence in KMT,” *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

267. This happened in 1994 in the Taipei mayoral election. Rather than support the New Party’s candidate or reach some compromise, the KMT stuck with its own candidate who was unpopular and as a result performed the worst in a three-way race. The KMT’s position was determined largely by anger with the New Party being formed from KMT members that were unhappy about President Lee’s leadership. Ethnicity was also a factor. See Copper, *Taiwan’s Mid-1990s Elections*, chapter 2. It happened again in 2000 in the presidential election when top party leaders, notably President Lee Teng-hui, opposed the party nominating James Soong, who was way ahead in the opinion polls and would certainly have won as a KMT candidate. See Copper, *Taiwan’s 2000 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, pp. 11-18. The election in November 2014 was very different insofar as it was the KMT’s leadership and brand which hurt KMT candidates.

268. For several examples, see Copper, *Consolidating Taiwan’s Democracy*, pp 13-19.

the party suffered from such an array of centrifugal forces as during this election campaign with various factions opposing the president (and KMT chairman), thus engendering malaise and lack of enthusiasm and direction in the party.

The economy, as noted, was the underlying problem. It was showing many signs of improvement during the campaign, but the good news came too late. Moreover, most people did not feel any positive change in their lives. The restive youth mirrored the public's insecurity about the economy. They lamented Taiwan's growing economic inequality, the lack of good jobs, and diminishing economic opportunities – so they protested, which hurt KMT candidates. President Ma and the KMT had won the votes of young people in recent elections, but this time it was different. Some KMT officials expected a backlash from the students' protest, but that did not seem to have any significance. The widely held perception that big business in Taiwan was doing well while small businesses and common people were struggling was a sidebar that hurt the KMT's message. This eroded citizens' respect for the business community and discounted the usual positive effect of its support for KMT candidates.²⁶⁹ Voters also thought more in terms of what candidates could do locally to fix the economy, which did not help the KMT.²⁷⁰

Public disbelief regarding the Ma administration's claims that economic ties with China had significantly improved Taiwan's economy made the economy a bigger negative for KMT candidates than would have otherwise been the case. Commerce with China obviously prevented Taiwan's economy from even slower growth and perhaps even going into recession, but it is unpersuasive policy argument to make when something didn't happen. As a consequence, Ma's pet economic projects were not perceived to have made a big difference. To voters, there was a huge offsetting negative: these deals were seen as imperiling Taiwan's sovereignty.²⁷¹

269. Terry Gou's endorsing candidates that lost demonstrated this vividly. See Ou Hsiang-yi, "2014 ELECTIONS: Terry Gou's picks fail to win seats," *Taipei Times*, December 1, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). The Hon Hai Precision Industry chairman supported Sean Lien, Jason Hu and Yang Chiu-hsing; all lost. He even pledged large investments in their districts if they won.

270. Many of the economic issues discussed during the campaign were local projects. Economic problems were also framed in terms of what candidates could do for their districts.

271. "Gov't method of pushing trade agenda upsets voters: economist," *China Post*, December 1, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw) and "EDITORIAL: Government needs new direction," *Taipei Times*, December 1, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

The second major factor impacting the vote was President Ma and the KMT's leadership (and the two connected since Ma was the chairman of the party).²⁷² KMT governance, broadly speaking, came into question. Even though this was a local election (or group of them were), dissatisfaction with the central government mattered a lot. One has to wonder how the very favorable public impression of MA Ying-jeou – who won the presidential election in 2008 with more votes than any candidate running for that office since the direct election system was established; who garnered the majority of votes from woman, young people, all minority groups; who won in almost all the voting districts (save some in the south); and who won reelection singlehandedly in 2012 – could have changed so dramatically.²⁷³

Ma's image, as noted, was damaged by events. First, was the global economic downturn. Then a typhoon occurred. Other misfortunes followed. During this campaign, a food scandal hurt his image. In the public's mind, the Ma administration did not respond quickly or effectively to problems it faced. Part of the reason was that many citizens thought the national government could do more than it was actually capable of doing. Ma and his party boasting during the 2008 election campaigns about what it could and would do, which reinforced the impression (albeit falsely) of the government's omnipotence and its ability to resolve almost all problems.²⁷⁴ This scenario was repeated in 2012. Politicians in democracies routinely do this, but in Taiwan it is less accepted. This clearly influenced voters to favor DPP candidates.²⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the DPP, reeling from an election defeat and having been out of office since 2008, reverted to its previous *modus operandi* of criticism and protest – which the DPP was always good at. The DPP had the support of a sizeable portion of the media and

272. Ma assumed the chairmanship of the KMT in 2008. There was considerable tension at the time over this. Wang Jin-pyng sought the position and he was supported by Lien Chan. See Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power*, pp. 52-53. In retrospect this appeared to be the start of party disunity and opposition within the party to Ma.

273. See Copper *Taiwan's 2008 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, pp. 72-75.

274. This had an impact on the KMT's image leading up to the local elections in 2010, but was offset by serious difficulties the DPP faced at the time. For details, see Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, pp. 8-9.

275. Premier Jiang said this after the election as he resigned. He mentioned specifically that "people are dissatisfied with the administration's policies." Many observers had already said this and others echoed it in the wake of the election. See Shih Hsiuchuan, "Premier quits after landslide KMT defeat," *Taipei Times*, November 30, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

sufficient money to become an effective opposition.²⁷⁶ And it kept at it. It portrayed Ma as an indecisive president, and his party as having regressed to its earlier authoritarian character.²⁷⁷ It gradually overcame its bad image in the wake of the Chen presidency and negated, at least temporarily, its fundamental handicaps to win the support of a majority of the electorate.

Another factor that hurt the KMT's image was the fact that President Ma heavily relied on advisors that were academics (rather than hardnosed, experienced politicians); they were idealists²⁷⁸; they were self-confident; they did not accept much input from the various KMT "in-groups". So as a result, they effectively evolved into party factions. This caused serious party disunity. Party elders and many KMT stalwarts came to view President Ma as unwilling to compromise and inattentive to party solidarity. They also saw him trying to preempt the DPP on various issues either to please pan-green supporters and/or to undermine the opposition party's platform. But this was an approach that no longer worked.²⁷⁹ Moreover, it alienated many KMT members, notably the heads of party factions.

The Ma administration also pursued policies that put Taiwan in good stead with the United Nations and other international organizations.²⁸⁰ But few in Taiwan were impressed. Most citizens understood that the UN was not Taiwan's friend; it would certainly not

276. It deserves noting that the *Liberty Times*, a pro-DPP newspaper, is Taiwan's largest paper. The *Taipei Times*, also pro-DPP, is its largest and most comprehensive English paper.

277. This was apparent to many observers during the student protest in the spring. See Michael J. Cole, "Taipei flirts with 'authoritarian lite' amid political crisis," China Policy Institute Blog (Nottingham University), May 1, 2014 (online at nottingham.ac.uk).

278. A noteworthy example was the issue of capital punishment. President Ma continued the moratorium on the death penalty established by President Chen Shui-bian. Ma's first minister of justice strongly opposed capital punishment and even said she would "rather go to hell" than administer it. There was a public outcry, since seventy to eighty percent of the population approved of it, and she resigned. However, the use of capital punishment in recent years has been quite limited. See "Taiwan Death-Penalty Debate Could Influence Asia," Crime and Capital Punishment, April 15, 2011 (online at cncpunishment.com).

279. This statement is based on talking with a number of KMT officials and supporters and scholars in Taiwan. Regarding this as a practice used by the KMT in the past, see Yuen-wen Ku, *Welfare Capitalism in Taiwan: State, Economy and Social Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

280. Taiwan complying with UN principles, conventions, etc. has been commonplace under Ma. This is mentioned in various government publications; for example, see *The Republic of China Yearbook 2012*, pp. 184-86.

challenge China's views on Taiwan, support Taiwan's democracy, or protect its sovereignty. Thus many of Ma's initiatives in this realm, including bills sent to the legislature, did not resonate with the public.

The corruption issue likewise hurt President Ma and the KMT. There are some understandable explanations for this: The corruption of the Chen presidency had faded from the public mind to a considerable extent; government intrusiveness and spying on its citizens to a large degree trumped concern over corruption in Taiwan as the WANG Jin-pyng case showed. Leading up to this election there were a number of cases of local corruption that involved KMT officials and got media attention.²⁸¹ Adding to the gravity of the problem in the months leading up to the election several international agencies reported corruption in Taiwan had worsened.²⁸²

The issue of political reform had a similar negative impact on the KMT candidates. Initially, President Ma's reform efforts were mainly measures taken to repair the deterioration of civil and political liberties, freedom of the press, and ethnic relations during the Chen presidency. Subsequent reforms were chiefly actions the public either did not notice or did not consider very important. Or they were contradicted by actions that hurt the Ma administration's image, such as using government agencies and/or funds to help party candidates, increasing government workers' pensions just before Election Day, and even trying to provoke the DPP to adopt extreme actions that would hurt its image.²⁸³

Ma's policies and actions in improving relations with China, for which he received widespread acclaim (but mostly abroad), and for making the Taiwan Strait no longer the world's number one flashpoint (place where a war might occur with participants, meaning the U.S. and China using weapons of mass destruction) also

281. See "Corruption in Taiwan," Human Rights in Taiwan, no date given (online at inthumanrights.com).

282. Some cases attracted considerable media during the campaign period. One in particular, a corruption scandal involving the KMT's nominee for mayor of Keelung and the sitting City Council speaker hurt the KMT's image. See "KMT mulling dropping Keelung mayor nominee amid corruption scandal," Central News Agency, July 8, 2014 (online at cna.com.tw). The Keelung case hurt the KMT's image. The case in Taoyuan, in retrospect, did also.

283. Kan Chi-chi, Tseng Wei-chen and Jake Chung, "2014 ELECTIONS: KMT pandering to retirees with bonus money: critics," *Taipei Times*, November 8, 2014; "EDITORIAL: KMT's Pork-barreling hurts reform," *Taipei Times*, November 9, 2014; "EDITORIAL: President playing wih fire," *Taipei Times*, November 6, 2014 (all online at taipetimes.com).

faded from the public's mind. In its place grew concern that Ma's China policies endangered Taiwan's democracy and its sovereignty.

Because of the above-cited matters, whether KMT faults or coincidences, most of the analysts that explained of the election's results concluded that the KMT's errors and poor performance explain what happened. But what about the DPP's performance? The DPP's campaign strategy was sound. The party offered good candidates. Most were well educated. (This used to be the forte of the KMT.) It ran a professional, well-oiled campaign; in the past this had generally give the KMT an advantage. It avoided disunity and infighting that had often been a problem. The DPP also studiously eschewed certain topics that would have hurt its candidates: CHEN Shui-bian, independence, and opposition to the 1992 consensus.²⁸⁴

Except for KO Wen-je, opposition candidates running for top offices during the campaign made little or no mention of Chen or his presidency, which had been a handicap for DPP candidates for the last 6 years. They did not advocate his release from jail. They did not visit him in prison. In Ko's case, Lien made issue of it but not effectively. Ko could not avoid talking about the former president; so he focused his comments on Chen's medical condition, of which well qualified to speak of; this did not alienate voters. Ko was an independent anyways.

The DPP's candidates (and Ko too) did not advocate Taiwan's independence. They treated it almost as a taboo topic. Instead, they spoke in favor of Taiwan's democracy and sovereignty. They portrayed themselves as protectors of both. This was a wise, and as it turned out, very effective strategy.

The DPP very adroitly employed what some have called Taiwan's "new media." This term refers to Facebook, YouTube videos, tweeting, and, in many cases, the use of "big data." Here, the DPP was way ahead of the KMT, as the latter noted after the election.²⁸⁵ Its use of social media was instrumental in winning the youth vote. The youth influenced other voters and may be credited for the DPP

284. A number of election observers noted that DPP candidates carefully avoided addressing these issues during their campaigns. As a result, observers also noted, they were not in the media very much.

285. See Yang Yi, "Sulking KMT blames 'twisted' press for election defeats," *Want China Times*, December 12, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com.tw).

candidates gaining more, and generally favorable, media coverage during the campaign.²⁸⁶

Finally, the DPP gained momentum during the campaign period and kept it up until Election Day. This is important in running any election campaign and it proved especially so in this one. DPP campaign strategists did not get sidetracked. Its party's candidates stayed on message. DPP campaign managers also employed some innovative ideas and tactics late in the campaign. The DPP's victory was obviously bigger than it would have been otherwise because of this.²⁸⁷

A. Consequences of This Election in Terms of Its Impact on Taiwan's Future

The most widely suggested implications were: One, it forecasted another win for the DPP in the presidential/vice presidential and legislative elections to be held in early 2016. Two, it would have a strong impact on Taiwan's relations with China. Three, it would have some impact on U.S.-Taiwan relations, although it was not certain what that would be.

The overwhelming number of observers of this election both in Taiwan and elsewhere predicted this election would influence the 2016 elections just a year and two months away in favor of the DPP.²⁸⁸ They cited specific reasons such as: the DPP had momentum, the KMT was discredited in the minds of voters, and the KMT had lost its unity and the party was in disarray. Also many citizens felt the KMT had been in power too long and this feeling, it was assumed, would persist for at least another year. Finally, this election demonstrated that the DPP is not just a south Taiwan regional party; it was successful in middle and northern Taiwan, thereby giv-

286. See Bao-chiun Jing, "KMT's Dubbing and Surgeon's Victory: Not Just Cross-Strait Relations," *The Diplomat*, December 10, 2014 (online at thediplomat.org). The author notes that it was, in particular, effective in Ko advertising his vision and the DPP announcing campaign events. KMT leaders recognized this after the election.

287. This is evidenced in the fact that polls leading up to the time after which they could not be published showed that the DPP was generally doing better than earlier in the campaign. Proof is also to be assumed from the fact the polls were not accurate and fairly consistently underestimated the size of the DPP's victory.

288. Both local and foreign reporters came to this conclusion. See for example, "China issue key to international coverage of Taiwan election," *China Post*, December 1, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

ing it confidence that it could be a party for all of Taiwan.²⁸⁹ Ko's win in Taipei and the DPP's victory in Taoyuan bolstered this view. In short, the DPP seemed to be a "new DPP."

Yet it may be otherwise; in fact, it may be that this election has little meaning in terms of setting a precedent or in predicting the results of the next election. How so?

First, Taiwan's economy will likely do better in 2015 than it has for the past three years.²⁹⁰ More importantly, economic growth will affect more people and so will be noticed by more. When a period of steady growth is sustained, the rate of unemployment usually goes down (as it has been), wages improve, and the rich-poor gap closes. Meanwhile, there is most likely a growing realization, especially among the youth, that Taiwan's economic woes have been felt in other countries in the world, and that these woes were caused in large part by globalization and the information technology revolution—neither of which Taiwan wants to shun. It should also be noted that in the countries whose governments have taken action to reduce the rich-poor gap, have sacrificed economic growth in order to do that.²⁹¹

Second, as noted, this election was a local one and the DPP has traditionally performed better in local polls. In fact, it was once thought, especially after a major DPP win in local election contests in 1997, that it might become the dominant party in local elections while the KMT would perpetually win national elections.²⁹² In fact, the DPP victory in the 2000 presidential election interrupted what might have been a trend. If that is the case, plus the fact that the KMT's victory in the last local election in 2010 has been less than impressive than the national elections before and after, suggests this

289. Wang Yeh-lih, "Future society indicator for politics," *Taipei Times*, December 8, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com). The author sees this as a "major realignment" in support for the two main parties.

290. See "Institute raises Taiwan's economic growth forecast to 3.36% for 2014," Central News Agency, December 14, 2014 (online at cna.com.tw). The Taiwan Research Institute made this assessment; it predicted an even higher growth rate for 2015 because of a decline in the price of oil and other raw materials Taiwan needs to import for its agricultural and industrial sectors. Others anticipated higher economic growth in Taiwan based on predictions that the world economy would grow faster in 2015.

291. Brazil is a case in point. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Road to Global Prosperity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), p. 135. It is also noteworthy that the countries that have the smallest gap between rich and poor have lower GDP growth rates while the countries where the gap is larger have higher rates of growth.

292. Copper, *Consolidating Taiwan's Democracy*, pp. 24-25.

view still has validity.²⁹³ In this connection, most elections (but especially local ones) are unique and must be viewed as *sui generis*. Underscoring this point, after this election forty-three percent of respondents in a survey stated those candidates' personalities influenced for whom they would cast their vote—more than any other factor.²⁹⁴

Third, the belief that the DPP will win the 2016 election assumes that the DPP candidates that won election will govern effectively, the DPP will remain unified, and that it can again successfully hide from issues that would have hurt it in this election. These are big assumptions. It is also presumed by those advancing this view that the KMT will not be able to recover from this election defeat, fix what went wrong, and do better in 2016. Yet the KMT has learned from election losses in the past and has recovered to win subsequent elections.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, the party has a new leader. President Ma will likely concentrate more on his legacy and forsake policies that caused the KMT to become unpopular.²⁹⁶ In addition, he is probably thinking that in order for historians to treat him kindly, his party must not again suffer the embarrassment it met in this election. This suggests the KMT may not be the same party in 2016 as it was in 2014.

Another prediction cited by many media sources was that Taiwan's relations with China would change due to the DPP election victory.²⁹⁷ This seems a reasonable forecast given the fact that the DPP has long stood for an independent Taiwan (though democratic and sovereign were the terms used in this election campaign), while Beijing stuck to reunification as its "core interest"—meaning it is a goal China is willing to use its military to attain. As noted, on a number of occasions and in several different contexts, DPP leaders opined that Chinese leaders would make concessions and negotiate

293. Copper, *Taiwan's 2010 Metropolitan City Elections*, pp. 49-59. It needs to be recalled that the DPP won the popular vote in these elections.

294. This poll was done by Taiwan Thinktank. See Emily S. Chen, "Questions: Should Taiwan Change its China Policy?" *The National Interest* (blog), December 29, 2014 (online at nationalinterest.org).

295. In 1989 the DPP won a significant election victory. The KMT recovered and won the National Assembly election in 1991. It lost the Legislative Yuan election in 1992 but won the gubernatorial and the Kaohsiung metropolitan mayoral race in 1994. It performed below par in the 1995 legislative election but won the 1996 presidential election. See Copper, *Taiwan's Mid-1990s Elections*, chapter 1.

296. See "The LIBERTY TIMES EDITORIAL: Could new year usher in new Ma?" *Taipei Times*, January 5, 2015 (online at taipeitimes.com).

297. Again both local and foreign reporters said this.

with them once they had won the election. They also asserted this after this election.²⁹⁸ But Chinese leaders denied this and warned the DPP that they would take aggressive actions including using military force if Taiwan pursued independence.²⁹⁹ Thus, it hardly seems the case that Beijing will change its policies as a result of the DPP election victory.

B. Facts and Evidence that can Help Anticipate Cross-Strait Relations after This Election

First off the question must be considered a serious one for several reasons. One, in the past the “Taiwan issue” was the cause of armed conflict and almost war on two occasions (plus there were some near conflicts).³⁰⁰ Two, any move toward separation (or splitism to use China’s terminology) has grave implications for China domestically as its leadership fears secessionist tendencies in Tibet and Xinjiang Province.³⁰¹ Third, China’s military takes a hard stance toward Taiwan as the Taiwan question relates intimately to Chinese nationalism and patriotism, which the military feels is its purview.

Currently, these conditions arguably have greater saliency given that China’s relationship with the U.S. is strained, there is more unrest in Xinjiang than usual, and the military’s role in Chinese politics may have been enhanced by greater uncertainty in China over its future economic growth. Furthermore, Beijing’s relationship with the rest of the world (especially the U.S. and its Asian neighbors) and questions related to political and other reform in China will also be factors that could affect the situation as it persists.

In counterpoint, President XI Jinping is popular in China, and although he has pushed reforms that have created uncertainty in the Chinese Communist Party and among the population, most see

298. See “DPP gains should prompt Beijing to modify its approach,” *Want China Times*, December 2, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

299. Faith Hung, “China officials satisfied with Taiwan ties but warns on ‘bottom line,’” Reuters, December 16, 2014 (online at reuters.com).

300. The Offshore Islands crises in 1954-55 and 1958 were thought to risk an expanded conflict between the U.S. and China at the time. A near conflict occurred in the 1960s and there was a serious face-off in 1996.

301. See Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: Norton, 2011), p. 161.

his plans for change as both rational and necessary.³⁰² Also, since Xi has consolidated his power, neither his policies nor his leadership are seriously challenged. One might conclude that he is better able to deal with Taiwan than Taiwan is able to with China whether under DPP or KMT leadership.

Then one must ask: What are China's intentions vis-à-vis Taiwan? As a fast rising power, China's external policies are seen as assertive and aggressive and are often perceived, especially in Taiwan, as much worse than that. This is natural. But one must ask: Does China plan to incorporate Taiwan? And when? And how? China claims Taiwan is its territory. Thus there is fear of China in Taiwan. But the issue has been exaggerated in Taiwan – it certainly was during the run-up to this election. This was partly due to Taiwan's poorly performing economy, which made it seem especially vulnerable, but also because the opposition used the fear of China as an effective campaign issue.

What are the facts? In 2005, China's legislature passed a "law" called the Anti-Succession Act. It stated that if Taiwan continued to resist unification over a period of time China would employ other than peaceful means to accomplish that task. But there was no deadline set. Recently Chinese leaders have spoken of accomplishing "important tasks" before the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China—in 2049.³⁰³ This is almost three and one-half decades in the future. Ten years is a long time to predict (or plan) in international politics. Finally, it is the "dream" of both China's leaders and its citizens that China become a major world power in the future, perhaps even *the* predominant power. If that being the case, resolving the Taiwan issue is perhaps a small part of China's future global plan.³⁰⁴ Moreover, for China, dealing with the "Taiwan issue" does not seem a pressing matter; clearly Beijing does not want to use means other than enticements, mainly

302. See "The Power of Xi Jinping," *Economist*, September 20, 2014 (online at economist.com) and Dexter Roberts, "Xi Jinping Is the World's Most Popular Leader, Says Survey," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, December 18, 2014 (online at businessweek.com).

303. "'Chinese dream' draws international attention," *People's Daily*, March 12, 2013 (online at peoplesdaily.com.cn).

304. See Xi Jing ping, *The Governance of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2014), p. 45. Xi mentions improving cross-strait relations and the lives of Chinese on both sides in connection with the dream. He does not threaten military force against Taiwan.

economic (which has been its policy to date) to bring Taiwan “back into the fold.”³⁰⁵

Then, notwithstanding Taiwan’s economic dependency on China and the fear of the consequences of it that created an aura of panic during the campaign, there is little Taiwan can do about it. In fact, dependency will doubtlessly increase even with the DPP in charge of local governments in most of Taiwan. The facts are these: China’s economy over the past year accounted for nearly a quarter of the world’s economic growth.³⁰⁶ China is Taiwan’s largest trading partner—its largest export market and its biggest source of imports. Taiwan had an almost \$40 billion trade surplus with China in 2013.³⁰⁷ The surplus remains large and it is important to Taiwan. Taiwan’s economic dependency on China accelerated during the CHEN Shui-bian presidency and has only continued to grow since. It increased from twelve percent in 2003 to twenty-two percent in 2013. Trade with other countries, relatively speaking, has decreased. In the first half of 2014, sixty-four percent of Taiwan’s foreign investment went to China. Taiwan’s most important exports – semi-conductors and computer parts –are linked through networking and the global production chains of these items to China, which only reflects the future health of these industries.³⁰⁸

Clearly, the DPP cannot cut or even reduce Taiwan’s economic dependency on China lest Taiwan’s economy immediately spiral downward and with some permanence. Trying to disassociate with China economically (and in other ways since economic issues cannot be isolated) will have disastrous results for Taiwan and the DPP. Most citizens in Taiwan realize this, so the DPP has to as well.³⁰⁹

305. This was confirmed after the election by the president of China’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, the organization in China that manages relations with Taiwan. He spoke of waiting for two years for approval of the trade in services agreement and stated that the election would not change cross-strait relations. See Amy Chyan, “China will wait 2 years for Taiwan: ARATS,” *China Post*, December 11, 2014 (online at chinapost.com.tw).

306. “Who’s driving global growth,” Breaking News (Reuters), December 15, 2013 (online at breakingnews.com).

307. “Taiwan,” in *2014 Report to Congress* (of the U.S.–China Economic and Security Review Commission (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2014), pp. 470-82.

308. Ibid.

309. In fact, sixty-three percent of respondents in a poll conducted by *China Times* newspaper said Taiwan should pursue trade pacts with China. See Chen, “Question: Should Taiwan Change its China Policy?”

It is also worthy to note that the leadership of the DPP is in the hands of Chairwoman TSAI Ing-wen, who has pursued more proactive policies in connecting Taiwan with China than her predecessor.³¹⁰ Refuting her policies would likely split the party.³¹¹ Anyway, China has established manifold ties with individual DPP officials. In 2009, CHEN Chu visited Beijing and enlisted China's help in bringing the Asian games to Kaohsiung.³¹² William Lai has contacts in China, notwithstanding his well-publicized statement during the campaign that Taiwan's future is for the people of Taiwan to decide – his statement is patently false since Taiwan is small, so its future will be decided by the United States and China. KO Wen-je has made a host of trips to China and has worked closely with medical authorities there on a number of issues. China also has extensive contacts with lower DPP officials. Thus, it does not have to deal with the party itself per se.

C. America's Attitude to Taiwan and Its Future

America's immediate response to the election news, as noted, was underwhelming. U.S. foreign policy officials said little. A quick response was obviously not needed; there was no crisis. Anyway the U.S. was preoccupied with other foreign matters.

Pro forma U.S. officials declared that the U.S. does not take sides in foreign elections. But this was patently not true in Taiwan's case. Washington has influenced previous elections – President Clinton did so in 1996 by sending U.S. aircraft carriers adjacent to the Taiwan Strait during the run-up to President LEE Teng-hui's presidential election victory; in the run-up to the 2000 election, Richard Bush, the head of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), stated that America's view on Taiwan's China policy favored the KMT. President George W. Bush came to detest former president Chen for his provoking China at a time the U.S. was fighting terrorism. Bush administration officials also abhorred Chen's inciting and

310. See Yan Anlin, "Directions of Cross-Strait Ties Development After Su Tseng-chang's Election as DPP Chairman," paper presented at the 10th Symposium on China-European and Cross-Strait Relations sponsored by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs held in Shanghai July 28-31, 2013. The author notes that Su Tseng-chang, and other DPP leaders are much more beholden to pro-independence forces.

311. "The end is nigh for cross-strait relations and it's the DPP's fault," *Want China Times*, January 11, 2015 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

312. Kaelyn Lowmaster, "Once More, With Feeling: DPP Mayor of Kaohsiung Returns to Visit from the Mainland," GITASIA (Center for Strategic and International Studies), August 16, 2013 (online at gitasia.com).

exploiting ethnic ill will. Bush said this openly before the 2004 election. During the 2008 election, the U.S. favored the KMT campaign as clearly stated by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tom Christensen shortly before the election.³¹³

The Obama administration continued this policy. In the fall of 2011, a high-ranking U.S. official was cited in the press as saying (after a visit from the DPP's presidential candidate, TSAI Ing-wen) that there are "distinct doubts about whether she is both willing and able to continue the stability in cross-strait relations."³¹⁴ In 2012, the Obama administration was seen as blatantly favoring President Ma's reelection, especially when Douglas Paal, former head of AIT, expressed on television that the U.S. had "concerns about the DPP" upon his arrival in Taipei.³¹⁵

Prior to the election under study here, there were reports emanating from Washington to the effect that the U.S. would likely try to influence Taiwan's 2016 presidential election and, more specifically, would declare a preference for the KMT because of "lingering doubts about the DPP's cross-strait policies." U.S. interests were cited.³¹⁶

The explanation for this is that to the Department of State advocating Taiwan's independence is tantamount to provoking a conflict with China that the U.S. does not want. This view remains unchanged. Notwithstanding the fact Washington has experienced tension with China before (i.e. the South China Sea, the Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) Islands, China's claim to control of air lanes, etc. . .), the U.S. needs China's cooperation in keep peace in many parts of the world, to realize its global environmental goals, and to maintain global financial stability. U.S. officials have regularly said this.³¹⁷

313. See Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), p. 218.

314. Kathrin Hille, Anna Fifield and Robin Kwong, "U.S. and China keep a close eye on Taiwan race," *Financial Times*, September 15, 2011 (online at ft.com).

315. See Copper, *Taiwan's 2012 Presidential/Vice Presidential and Legislative Election*, p. 63.

316. Richard C. Bush III, "Taiwan's Elections and United States Interests," Up Front (Brookings Institution), September 15, 2014 (online at brookings.com). Former AIT head, Richard Bush, was cited in these reports.

317. U.S. officials have stated this often and with such consistency that it is unmistakably U.S. policy. It was also asserted just before this election. Secretary of State Kerry called the U.S.-China relationship "the most consequential in the world" and said "We have to get it right." See "Kerry calls for greater U.S.-China cooperation," *Want China Times*, November 5, 2014 (online at wantchinatimes.com).

Washington's "pivot" to Asia is a case in point. Its origins, of course, reflect America's concerns about a rising China. But the Obama administration has not aggressively pursued implementing it; it remains in limbo and it is uncertain what will come of it.³¹⁸ Some argue that if it were a truly serious policy, Taiwan would play an important role; but there is no evidence this will happen. The Obama administration obviously does not want to alienate China over Taiwan, having agreed (with Chinese leaders) that Taiwan is one of China's "core interests."³¹⁹

Having said this, the media and academe in the U.S. favor the DPP. This is partly for historical reasons (both see the KMT as the party of CHIANG Kai-shek who "lost" China because he misplaced the hearts and minds of the people, and due to KMT corruption). The other part is ideological: the DPP is a liberal party, the KMT a conservative party. Both the media and academe in the U.S. are liberal. But both also support President Obama's foreign policy, even though it does not lean toward the DPP.³²⁰

The 2014 election in the U.S. provided meaningful encouragement to the DPP since its results showed how voters could rise up successfully against the party in power and win an important election. This no doubt helped the DPP win votes. Also, Republicans represent strong U.S. support for Taiwan in a number of other respects – including providing the country with arms and using the U.S. military to defend Taiwan. But it should be kept in mind that the election "wave" in the U.S. will not be relevant in 2016 because the U.S. election occurs after the Taiwan's that same year. In any case, it is uncertain whether it will be a repeat performance. Furthermore, although Republicans favor Taiwan more than Democrats, they are generally generic about this – as in they support Taiwan, but not one political party. Finally, Congress has many interests to consider and cannot focus day-to-day on foreign policy

318. See John F. Copper, "America's Asia Pivot: What does it Mean and will it Succeed?" *East Asia Policy*, June/July 2014.

319. For background, see Dennis V. Hickey, "U.S. Policy Toward Taiwan: Time for Change," *Asian Affairs*, October-December 2013, pp. 175-98. See also William A. Stanton, "The U.S. Pivot to Asia and Taiwan's Role," World United for Taiwan's Independence (no date given), (online at wufi.org.tw). The author was the former director of the American Institute in Taiwan.

320. This was noticed in the several months after Barack Obama became president when he sent signals that the U.S. would not continue to support and protect Taiwan. See John F. Copper, "Will the United States Desert Taiwan?" in Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian (eds), *China: Development and Governance* (Singapore; World Scientific, 2013), pp. 479-81.

matters as the State Department (which is clearly dominant in terms of formulating U.S.-Taiwan policy) does.

Thus, what influence America has on Taiwan's 2016 election is difficult to predict. It seems very unlikely it will have little or none. Washington could view the DPP victory as likely to cause the Taiwan Strait to become the world's number one flashpoint again (which it seriously does not welcome); apprehension of this has already been expressed.³²¹ Or America could assume an abiding (but larger) interest in Taiwan's democracy, and remain neutral or even favor the DPP. That decision obviously hinges on DPP policies going forward, especially its positions on CHEN Shui-bian, independence, and the '92 consensus.

D. Observations About Taiwan's Political Future Following the 2014 Elections

Hence, what impact this election has on Taiwan's political future especially the 2016 election depends, to a large extent, on whether the DPP can continue to overcome its fundamental handicaps as it did in this election. If it keeps this in mind, it will have a good chance of winning in 2016. It does seem to be aware of this and the problems it will face on the road ahead. Related to this question is whether or not the KMT can fix what has gone wrong with the party is an open question. It has to adopt new ways. Whether one or both parties will adjust better seems an open question as well. Both seem to be at a critical juncture in plotting their futures. This is underscored by the very close level of voter identification with one of the two parties and a very large (and growing) segment of undecided voters.³²²

As a conclusion, there are some final observations that should be highlighted from the next election. One, whether Taiwan's voters will become accustomed to (and/or prefer) a frequent turnover of ruling parties or will they opt for fairly long periods of one party staying in power with the other playing the role of a somewhat per-

321. Some observers even opine that the Taiwan Strait might again, as it was before 2008, become the number one flashpoint in the world. See William Lowther, "Taiwan a 'flashpoint': US group," *Taipei Times*, December 10, 2014 (online at taipeitimes.com).

322. In October, the last party identification survey taken before the election showed a slight advantage, though a declining one, to the KMT over the DPP (26.3 percent down 1.2 percent from September versus 25.9 percent and up 0.6 percent). Undecided or independents were 45.6 percent, up 0.9 percent. See "Party Identification Tracking Analysis in Taiwan, October 2014, Taiwan Indicators Survey Research, November 11, 2014.

manent opposition is uncertain.³²³ That question seems up for grabs. Some argue that the former makes democracy livelier and the people's voice heard more strongly. The latter ensures much better long-term planning and seems to be more of the Asian model.³²⁴ Both ideas have characterized other democracies.

Two, this election is positive proof that Taiwan's democracy is alive and well. This may not appear to be saying a lot since Taiwan's democratization has been doing well for some time. But currently in many places of the world, democracy is not faring well; this makes Taiwan unique.³²⁵ Thus, it seems likely that going forward Taiwan's polity will be more noticeable and respected; maybe it will even be seen as a model as it was in the 1980s and 90s.

Three, this election, to a large degree, turned on the issue of governance. This comports with a global trend and realization that the style of the polity, the quality of leaders, and good public policy are of utmost importance; and that economic growth, social stability, the quality of life, and much more are the "dependent variables."³²⁶ This may mean that in the future Taiwan's electorate will pay more heed to good, intelligent leaders that possess a good education and relevant experience. This may mean that Taiwan will continue to follow the Asian model, where discipline and efficiency are more prized than in Western democracies.

Lastly, populism may have a possible corrosive impact on Taiwan's politics.³²⁷ Populism had a negative impact on Taiwan's political system and its leadership in the years before 2008. With TSAI Ing-wen taking over the leadership of the DPP, she has restored

323. In fact, the argument can be made that Taiwan has seen a rotation of political parties frequently because the parties learned from their mistakes and quickly changed for the better and thus did not lose credibility with voters. See Copper, *The KMT Returns to Power*, pp. 32-33 and p. 113.

324. See John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Fourth Revolution: The Global Race to Reinvent the State* (New York: Plenkun, 2014), p. 138.

325. See John F. Copper, "The Current State of Taiwan's Democracy: Doing Well in Spite of Negative Global Trends," in *Chia-Kan Yen and Economic Development in Taiwan* (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2014), pp. 429-64.

326. Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Fourth Revolution*, pp. 138-40.

327. See Huoyan SHYU, "Populism in Taiwan: The Rise of a Populist Democratic Culture in a Democratizing Society," *Asian Journal of Political Science* August 2008, pp. 130-50. The author notes that populism in Taiwan "inclines" its politicians to build their careers on emotional issues while skipping rational policy debates that he feels is not a positive trend. Recently the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan warned that populism hampers intelligent economic policy and growth. See "Commercial Times: Populism hampers Taiwan's progress," Central News Agency, July 12, 2013 (online at focustaiwan.tw).

pragmatism as the most important guiding ideal for the party going forward.³²⁸ This election brought back populism to some extent and it may be a concern if it grows and becomes the central theme in coming elections.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED CHINESE NAMES

Chen, Chu	陳菊	Lee, Si-chuan	李四川
Chen, Eric	陳瑞仁	Lin, Chia-lung	林佳龍
Chen, Hung-yuan	陳鴻源	Lin, Yi-hsiung	林義雄
Chen, Shui-bian	陳水扁	Lin, Yu-chang	林右昌
Cheng, Wen-tsan	鄭文燦	Ma, Ying-jeou	馬英九
Chu, Eric	朱立倫	Mao, Chi-kuo	毛治國
Fan, Liqing	范麗青	Siew, Vincent	蕭萬長
Gou, Terry	郭台銘	Soong, James	宋楚瑜
Hau, Lung-bin	郝龍斌	Su, Tseng-chang	蘇貞昌
Hsieh, Frank	謝長廷	Tsai, Alex	蔡正元
Hu, Jason	胡志強	Tsai, Ing-wen	蔡英文
Huang, Hsiu-shuang	黃秀霜	Wang, Chien-shien	王建煊
Hung, Chung-chiu	洪仲丘	Wang, Jin-pyng	王金平
Jiang, Yi-huah	江宜樺	Wang, Yu-chi	王郁琦
Ker, Chien-ming	柯建銘	Wu, John	吳志揚
Ko, Wen-je	柯文哲	Xi, Jinping	習近平
Lai, William	賴清德	Wu, Po-hsiung	吳伯雄
Lien, Chan	連戰	Yang, Chiu-hsing	楊秋興
Lien, Sean	連勝文	Yu, Shyi-kun	游錫堃
Lee, Hong-yuan	李鴻源	Zhang, Zhijun	張志軍
Lee, Teng-hui	李登輝		

328. Jonathan Standing, "Taiwan's Tsai puts pragmatism over populism," Thomson Reuters, January 5, 2012 (online at uk.reuters.com).