

Press Release

Dec. 29, 2021

2021 TFD Survey on Taiwanese View of Democratic Values and Governance

The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) on Dec. 29 held a press conference at the TFD about the 2021 TFD survey on Taiwanese View of Democratic Values and Governance. The event was moderated by TFD President Yu-lin Huang, and invited scholars Tsung-han Tsai, Joint Appointment Research Fellow of the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, Eric Chen-hua Yu, Research Fellow of the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, and Chih-Jou Jay Chen, Director of the Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica to give an overview presentation on the survey results, the research method, and comment on the survey results.

The TFD has been conducting surveys on Taiwanese people's attitude on democracy since 2011. This year, the TFD again commissioned the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University for conducting the survey, and has continued to ask Taiwanese people their willingness to defend Taiwan, as we did for the last three years.

Dr. Eric Chen-hua Yu said that this year nearly 80 percent of the questioned (75.3%) agreeing to the statement that although there exist some problems with democratic system, it is still the best political system we have. Those who said they are optimistic about the future of Taiwanese democracy also reached over 50 percent (55.3%), according to the survey.

On Taiwanese people's willingness to defend Taiwan and its democracy, Dr. Yu said the survey found 62.7% of the polled said they would defend Taiwan if war breaks out due to Taiwan's declaring its formal independence.

To the question, "Would you fight for Taiwan if China uses force against Taiwan for unification," nearly 75 percent (72.5%) said they would, pointed out Dr. Yu.

Dr. Yu said that the survey found younger respondents had stronger faith in democracy, and he pointed out that this is one of the main differences between Taiwan and other older democracies. He also said the survey results showed those who had more faith in democracy were also more likely to defend Taiwan, regardless of age.

The poll this year also included questions about disinformation. The survey results showed that 89.1% of the polled believe disinformation would incur harm to Taiwan's democracy, which Dr. Yu believed to be the strongest consensus among the Taiwanese people. In addition, 79.9 percent of the polled said they do not agree with the statement, "Disinformation is part of freedom of expression, so the government should not have any regulations concerning disinformation," while only 14.2% said the opposite.

Dr. Tsung-han Tsai, told the press conference that this survey, conducted from Aug. 10 to Aug. 15, interviewed people who live in Taiwan and are aged over 20 via landline and mobile phone. The poll collected a total of 1,299 valid samples, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 2.72\%$.

Chih-Jou Jay Chen, Director of the Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica, in his presentation compared TFD's survey results to those of the China Impact Study thematic research team of Academia Sinica's Institute of Sociology. Dr. Chen pointed out that both survey results showed that most respondents believe disinformation poses as a threat to the development of Taiwan's democracy. The China Impact Study thematic research team in its survey this year also asked if the respondents approved of the Taiwan government regulating social media websites, such as LINE and Facebook groups, if the Chinese government was using them to spread political propaganda. Survey results showed that 72.1% of the polled agreed.

Dr. Chen also emphasized that comparing the results of both surveys over the last four years (2018-2021) demonstrates the Taiwanese people's faith in democracy is steady and growing. He said that potential factors include China's increasingly tough attitude towards Taiwan and intensifying tension between the United States and China. Dr. Chen also pointed out the Taiwanese people are more affirmative of democracy and optimistic of democratic development when Taiwan's democracy is facing challenges



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