

Press Release

Oct. 16, 2020

## **2020 TFD Survey on Taiwanese View of Democratic Values and Governance**

The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) on Oct. 16 held a press conference at the TFD about the 2020 TFD survey on Taiwanese View of Democratic Values and Governance. The event was moderated by TFD Vice President Ketty W. Chen, and invited scholars Tsai Chia-hung, Director of the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University and Chih-Jou Jay Chen, Deputy 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 in 2018 and 2019.

Tsai Chia-hung, Director of the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University that conducted the survey this time, said that this year nearly 80 percent of the questioned (79.7%) agreeing to the statement that although there exist some problems with democratic system, it is still the best political system we have.

There is also a drastic decrease of 15.9 percentage points in the percentage of people being pessimistic about the future of Taiwanese democracy compared to that of last year (44.4%), and those who said they are optimistic about the future of Taiwanese democracy also increased, with 63% saying they are optimistic this year and 43.1% said so last year, according to the survey.

On Taiwanese people's willingness to defend Taiwan and its democracy, Director Tsai said last year's survey found 57.4% of the polled said they would defend Taiwan if war breaks out due to Taiwan's declaring its formal independence, and this year over 70% (71.5%) said they would, while the percentage of those said the opposite decreased drastically from 31% last year to this year's 19.8%.

To the question, “Would you fight for Taiwan if China uses force against Taiwan for unification,” nearly 80 percent (79.8%) said they would, an increase of over 10 percentage points from last year’s 68.2%, pointed out Director Tsai.

Director Tsai also told the press conference that this survey, conducted from May 6 to May 10, interviewed people who live in Taiwan and are aged over 20 via landline and mobile phone. The poll collected a total of 1,226 valid samples, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of  $\pm 2.8\%$ .

Chih-Jou Jay Chen, Deputy 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. The China Impact Study thematic research team in its 2016 to 2018 surveys asked whether respondents were willing to defend Taiwan in the event of a military invasion from China, and all survey results saw over 70% of those polled saying they would defend Taiwan. Deputy Director Chen said these findings are very similar to those of TFD’s survey results in 2018 and 2019, and he emphasized that this year’s survey results show an even higher consensus among the Taiwanese when it comes to defending Taiwan’s democracy.

Deputy Director Chen also mentioned that in the China Impact Study thematic research team surveys from 2018 to 2020, the respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement that democracy is the best political system under any circumstance, or that dictatorship is better than democracy under certain circumstances. Again, the results were similar to those of TFD’s surveys and found that there was a record-high this year in respondents agreeing that democracy is the best political system (China Impact Study’s 2020 survey results had 71% agreeing while TFD’s results had 79.7% agreeing). Deputy Director Chen said this shows the Taiwanese have strong faith in democracy.

Regarding both survey results this year, Deputy Director Chen said that potential factors include China’s advancing threats of unification, Taiwan’s success in containing COVID-19, the China-U.S. trade war, and the implementation of the Hong



TAIWAN FOUNDATION  
*for* DEMOCRACY

財團法人

臺灣民主基金會

臺灣民主基金會 | 10658 台北市大安區信義路三段 147 巷 17 弄 4 號

TEL: +886-2-2708-0100 FAX: +886-2-2708-1148

---

TAIWAN FOUNDATION for DEMOCRACY No.4, Alley 17, Lane 147, Section 3, Sinyi Road, Taipei 10658, Taiwan

Kong national security law, among others. Deputy Director Chen emphasized that China's threats against Taiwan and support for Taiwan from the U.S. also influence the Taiwanese faith in democracy and their willingness to defend it. He said that the faith and willingness increase when China's threats intensify and U.S. support grows, and vice versa.

### **Media Contact:**

Alison Hsiao

Tel: +886-2-2708-0100 #606

Email: [alison@tfd.org.tw](mailto:alison@tfd.org.tw)

Olivia Yang

Tel: +886-2-2708-0100 #607

Email: [olivia@tfd.org.tw](mailto:olivia@tfd.org.tw)