



Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation

March 2023 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt

Released:

March 21, 2023

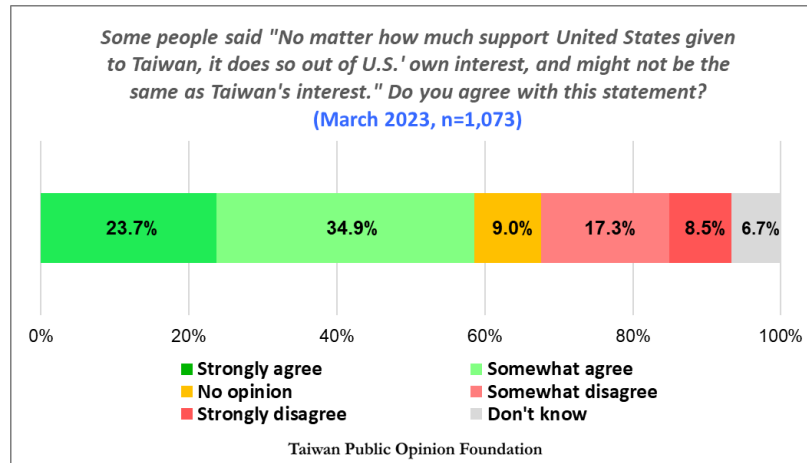
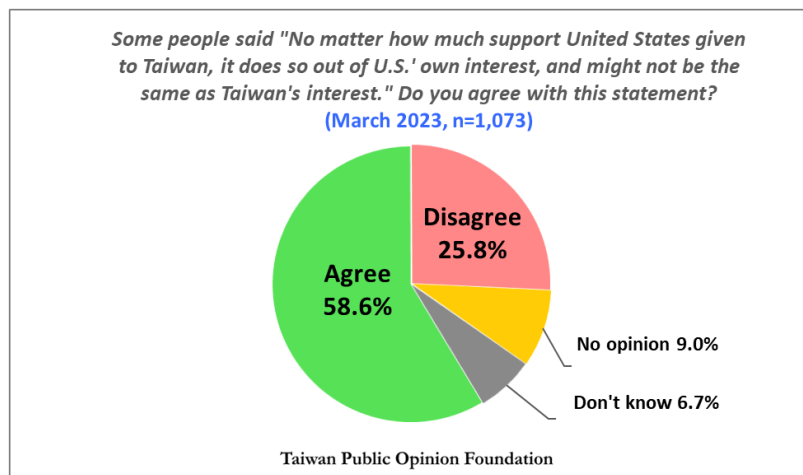
Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF) today released the result of its March 2023 nation-wide poll. This marks the 80th monthly survey conducted by the TPOF aimed at tracking the development and changes in Taiwan’s public opinion. The full release in Chinese language is available on our [official website](#).

How the Survey was Conducted

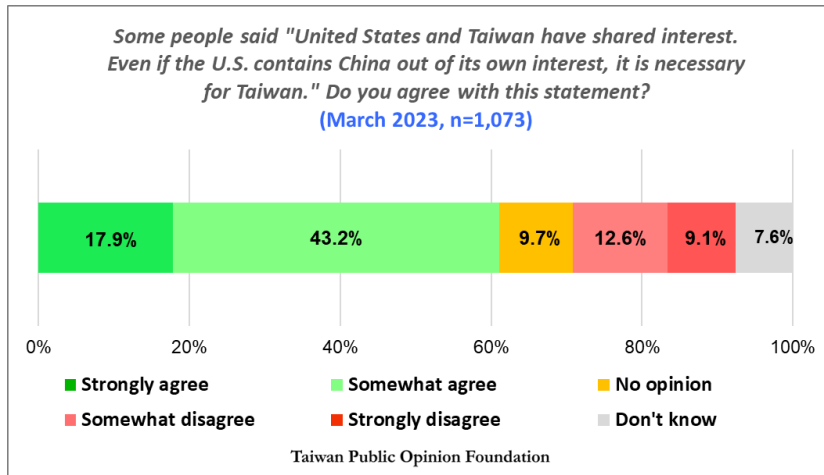
This survey was conducted on March 13-14, 2023, with a sample size of 1,073. Adults 20 years of age and older residing in Taiwan were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline numbers were drawn through random digit dialing system. The samples were demographically weighted to adjust for gender, age, education and the district of residency based on the latest statistics published by the Ministry of the Interior. Sampling error is around ± 2.99 percentage points with 95% level of confidence.

Main Findings:

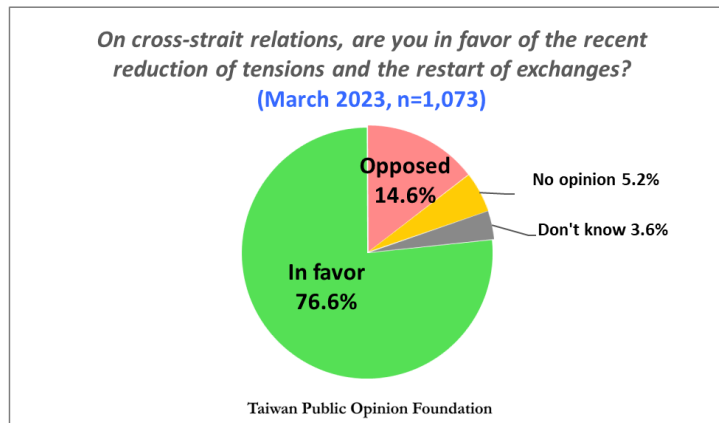
1. How do Taiwanese public view the nature of United States' support for Taiwan?
The Poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 58.6% said they agree with the statement that U.S. support for Taiwan is motivated by U.S.' own national interest which might not be the same as Taiwan's interest. This shows that most Taiwanese have a realist understanding of the nature of U.S. support for Taiwan and manage their expectations of U.S.-Taiwan relations accordingly.



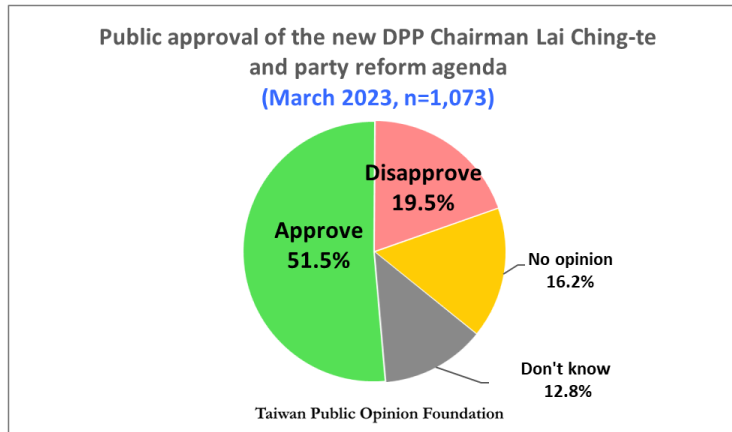
2. Do Taiwanese public see U.S. efforts to curb China's power as inline with Taiwan's own interest? The Poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 61% agreed with the statement that "Even if the U.S. contains China out of its own interest, it is necessary for Taiwan." Only a minority of 22% thought U.S. containment of China is not in Taiwan's interest. It can therefore be said that the number of *pro-American Taiwanese* outnumbered those who are not pro-American by as many as three times.



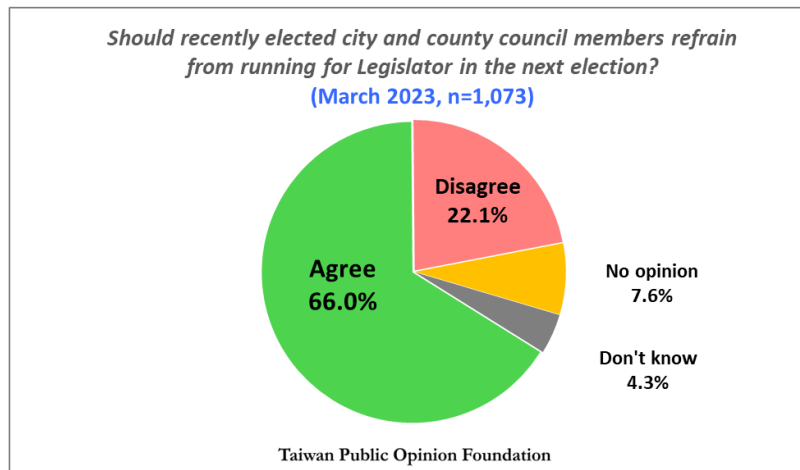
3. There have been increasing signs in recent months that tensions in cross-strait relations are easing. Several gestures have been made by China and some by Taiwan, such as China [lifting import ban](#) on some Taiwanese food products and the [resumption of several direct flights](#). Poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, an overwhelming majority are in favor of the reduced tensions and the resumption of cross-strait exchanges. This is evidence that most Taiwanese are *not* in favor of a conflict with China if alternatives are present.



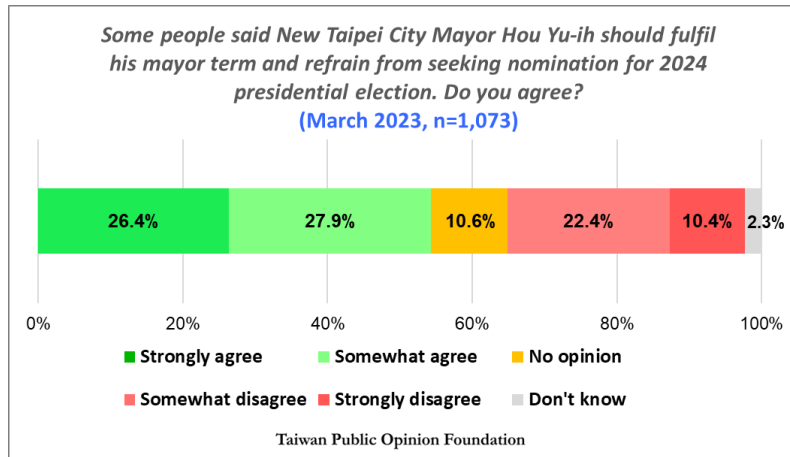
4. The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) suffered a landslide defeat in the local elections last November, which forced President Tsai Ing-wen to relinquish DPP chairwoman position. The incumbent Vice President Lai Ching-te was elected the new DPP chairman in January. Since then, Lai has embarked on a series of internal party reforms, such as requiring party candidates to delist academic diploma(s) if they have been caught committing plagiarism (a behavior President Tsai did not condemn), among other new ethical requirements for party candidates and officials. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 51% approved of the new DPP chairman Lai and his party reform agenda.



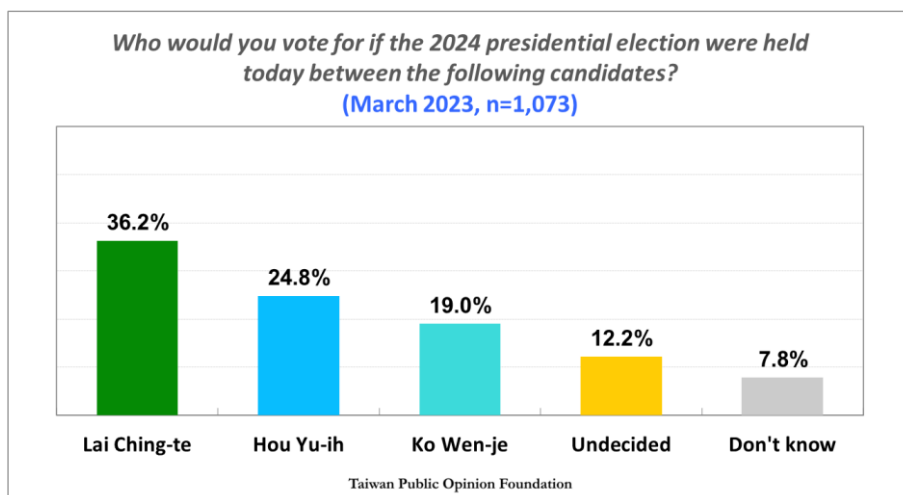
5. In Taiwan politics it is common for some newly elected (or re-elected) local city and county council members, who have four-year terms, to campaign for Legislative Yuan election (Taiwan's parliament) even while they have not yet served a fraction of their elected terms. The practice is frowned upon by many in the public, and DPP has recently been discouraging (though not banning) its council members from seeking nomination in legislative election. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 66% said newly elected council members should serve their terms and refrain from running in the legislative election.

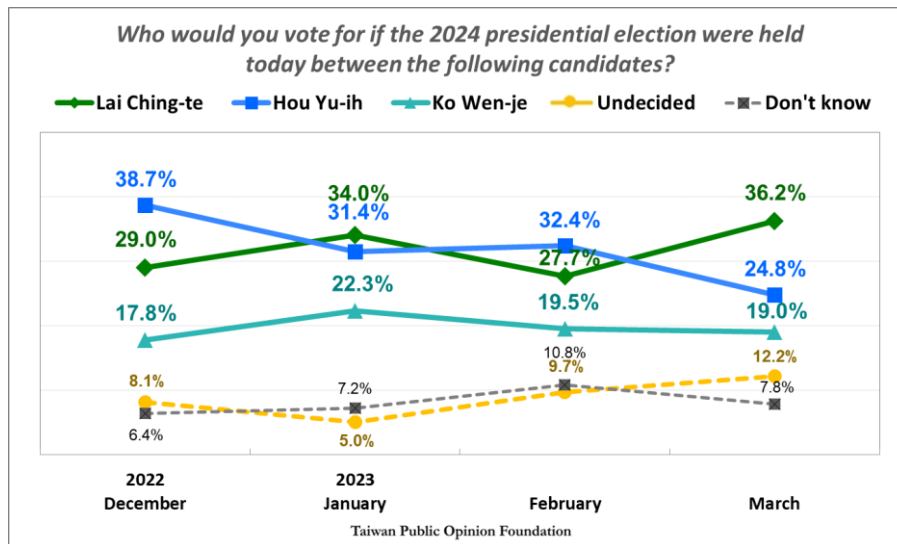


6. New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih is considered the KMT's front-runner for January 2024 presidential election, even though Hou has just been re-elected to his second mayor term last November. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 54% agree with the statement that Hou should fulfil his mayor term and not seek presidential office in 2024. This shows Taiwanese public still has significant reservation regarding Hou leaving his office to run for president. While this public sentiment itself is not necessarily a deal breaker, it is nevertheless something Hou must overcome should he decides to run.

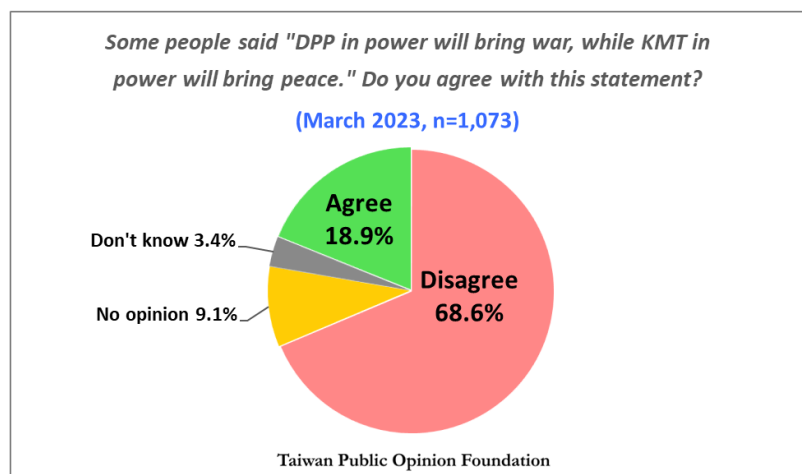


7. Taiwan's next presidential election is announced to be held on January 13, 2024. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Vice President Lai Ching-te 36.2% leads the poll at 36.2%, New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih came second at 24.8%, former Taipei City Mayor Ko Wen-je came third at 19%. As can be seen from our polls of past few months Lai again established himself, this time quite substantially, as a front-runner in the presidential race for 2024. Hou's decline is particularly noticeable as his lost support by double digit over the course of the winter. On the other hand, Ko has consistently gotten around 20% of national support but it does not look like he has benefited from Hou's decline at all.

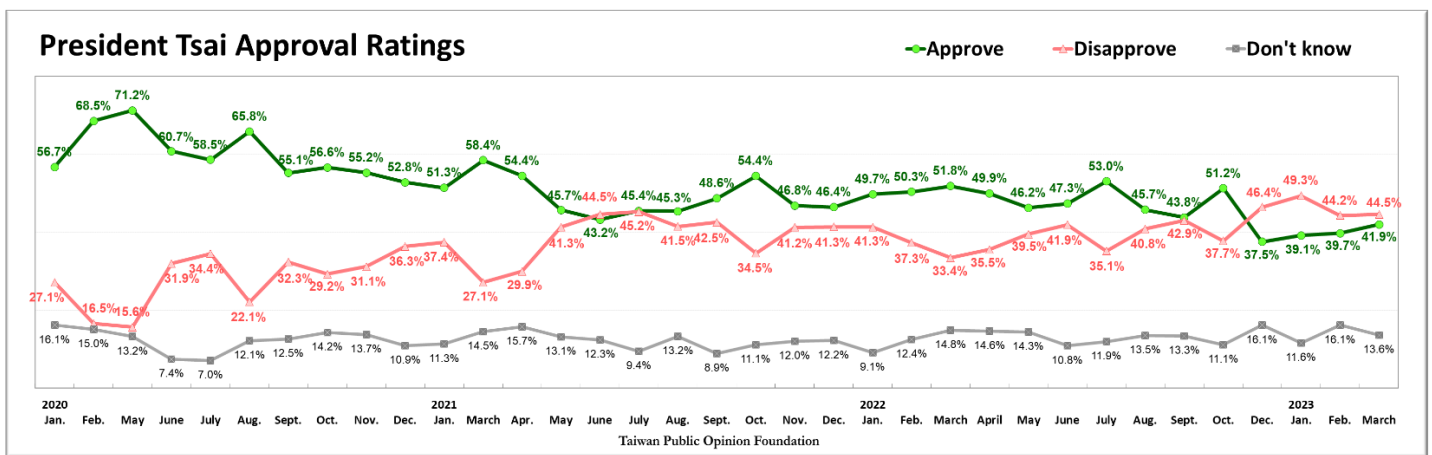




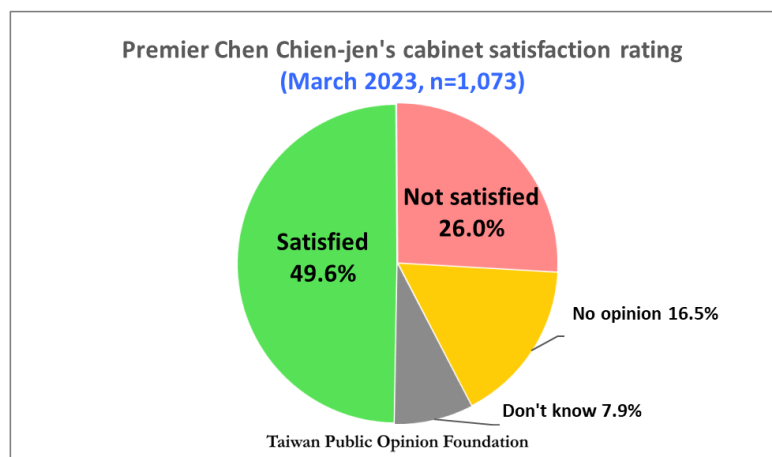
8. Do Taiwanese public think electing a different political party to power could avoid a war with China? Several media pundits and public figures (mostly the ones supportive of opposition KMT party) have made similar statement insinuating that the ruling DPP party is primarily responsible for cross-strait tensions and therefore is the cause of the increasingly likelihood of a war with China. However, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a strong majority of 68.6% Taiwanese do not agree with the statement that “DPP will bring war while KMT will bring peace”, and only 18.9% agree with it. It can therefore be said that most Taiwanese really do not subscribe to the idea that electing a different political party to power would somehow dissuade China from initiating a war against Taiwan. Conversely, majority of Taiwanese who don’t vote for DPP likely do so because of other reasons such as having different views over domestic policies, or lacking confidence in the competence or integrity of DPP’s governance, rather than out of a genuine belief or fear that DPP will bring war to Taiwan.



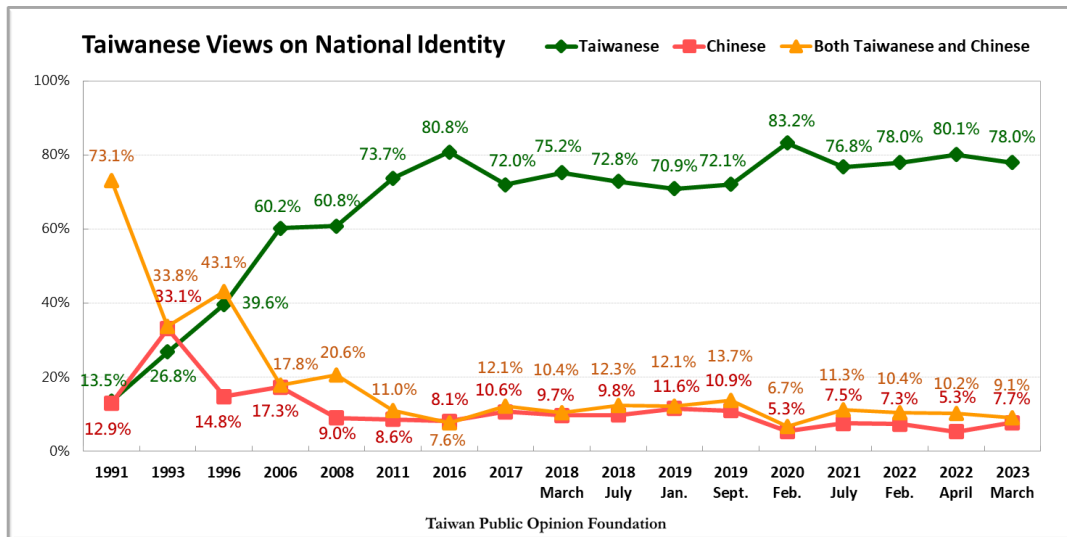
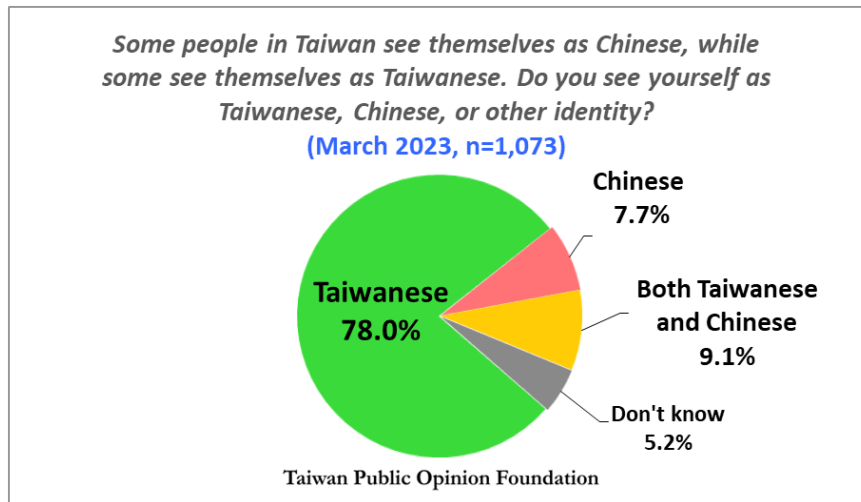
9. On Presidential job approval rating, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 44.6% disapproved of the way Tsai Ing-wen is handling her job as the President, while a minority of 41.9% expressed approval. Comparing to result from February, President Tsai's approval rate continues to recover very slowly but has yet to reach majority approval. It has now been four months since Tsai lost her majority approval in the polls, and it remains to be seen whether her administration can regain that majority in the remaining one year in power.



10. President Tsai reshuffled her cabinet in January and replaced Premier Su Tseng-chang with Chen Chien-jen, the former Vice President during Tsai's first presidential term. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 49.6% were satisfied with this Chen cabinet's performance so far, while 26% were not satisfied. Despite the many unfavorable domestic issues, controversies, and scandals that have been going on over the past month, Premier Chen managed to keep a majority satisfaction rating one month into office, whether this can be maintained that remains to be seen.



11. Concerning Taiwanese national identity, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 78% said they see themselves as Taiwanese, 7.7% as Chinese, 9.1% both Taiwanese and Chinese, and 5.2% said they do not know. As can be seen from our past polls, Taiwanese identity has been embraced by vast majority of Taiwanese people for more than a decade and that percentage has not changed significantly over the years.



12. On political party affiliation, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 28% said they support the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), 17.9% support the Kuomintang (KMT), 15% support the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), 4.4% support the New Power Party (NPP), 3.9% support the Taiwan State-building Party (TSP), and 25.2% respondents identified themselves as independents. Compared to our February poll, KMT suffered a huge setback in popularity that wiped out all of its gain from the party's November 2022 local elections victory. It is astonishing how KMT managed to lose the No. 1 political

party support in such a short time after struggling for years to regain that position.

