Preface

This book began at a conference in Taipei, Taiwan, on March 24, 2013. The Election Study Center of National Chengchi University hosted all the authors for an intense discussion of how a book about the Taiwan voter might be written. (A few contributors were “virtual attendees” via an Internet link.) Preliminary versions of chapters were presented and thoroughly discussed. After additional reviews and revisions, this book was accepted for publication by the University of Michigan Press.

The Election Study Center has provided extensive administrative and financial support to this project from the beginning. The book would have been impossible without the research excellence and professional colleagueship of the members of the Center. Their warm hospitality to each editor on multiple occasions has been a highlight of our professional lives.

A great many people and institutions also helped make The Taiwan Voter possible. T. Y. Wang’s research sabbatical was funded by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation and Taiwan’s National Science Council (now called the Ministry of Science and Technology). He also received a Summer Faculty Fellowship from Illinois State University to support this project. A grant to Wang from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy paid for editing and other expenses of preparing the book for publication review. The Open Access edition was funded by the Top University Project of National Chengchi University, made possible by a grant from Taiwan’s Ministry of Education. Princeton University’s Politics Department and Illinois State University’s Department of Politics and Government also helped with logistical support and research funding.

Larry Bartels, during his time as director of Princeton’s Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, hosted a small conference that helped build a foundation for this book. Michele Epstein and Helene Wood provided the
administrative support to make the conference successful. We thank all three of them.

Achen remembers with respect and gratitude his former colleague Tang Tsou of the University of Chicago Political Science Department, now deceased, who arranged a first visit to Taiwan. The trip was paid for by Taiwan’s Government Information Office, which was then directed by Dr. Shao Yuming. That eye-opening initial encounter with the people of the island led to the professional relationships that have made possible Achen’s participation in this project.

The anonymous reviewers for the University of Michigan Press gave us two rounds of thoughtful comments and criticism. The book is much better for their efforts. Gail Schmitt and Carissa L. Tudor provided editing assistance, and we are in their debt as well. We also thank our editors at the University of Michigan Press, Melody Herr and Mary Francis, supported by Danielle Coty, for their enthusiasm about our project and for their encouragement and guidance through the publication process. We have also very much appreciated the unwavering support of the series editor, Mic Laver.

To analyze Taiwan voters’ political attitudes and electoral behavior, the contributors to this volume have utilized multiple waves of survey data, aggregate electoral data, and information gathered through focus group interviews, all collected on the island during the past two decades. Most of the data used in this book are taken from Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study (TEDS). This long-running series of representative national samples of Taiwan voters is the gold standard for academic election studies in Asia. The coordinator of the multiyear TEDS project is Chi Huang of the Election Study Center and the Political Science Department at National Chengchi University, Taipei, and the data are managed and distributed by the Election Study Center. More information is available on the TEDS website (http://www.tedsnet.org).

Other data sources for the book include the Taiwan National Security Survey (TNSS), sponsored by the Program in Asian Security Studies under the directorship of Emerson Niou of Duke University, and also a number of individual surveys conducted by the faculty of the Election Study Center, many of whom are contributors to this volume. Focus group interviews conducted by the faculty and staff of the Election Study Center also appear in subsequent chapters. Su-feng Cheng is the principal investigator for those projects.

The Taiwan Voter would have been impossible without all these data, and we very much appreciate the assistance that all these individuals have provided us.
We also owe thanks to a great many students and colleagues for advice and encouragement along the way. Achen is particularly grateful to the other members of the “Gang of Four dinner group,” Da-chi Liao, Pei-shan Lee, and Vincent Wang, for their support and inspiration. Wang extends his gratitude to Ali Riaz for his encouragement and friendship through the years.

We are grateful to all those who have helped us. However, our interpretations of the TEDS, the TNSS, and other data are our own. Each author in this volume takes sole responsibility for the remaining errors and misjudgments in what he or she has written.

Most important, the editors thank our wives, Tena Achen and Christine Lee, for their patience with our overseas absences and their tolerance of our frequent lengthy work days while we finished editing this book. Our gratitude for their love goes beyond anything words can say.