Political participation by ordinary citizens is the essence of democracy. Verba and Nie (1972, 3–4) stress that political participation is at the heart of democratic theory and has “a particularly crucial relationship to all other social and political goals.” Dahl (1971, 1) also posits a strong link between the two: “A key characteristic of a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals.” To this end, a democracy must provide its citizens with equal opportunities to formulate preferences, to signify those preferences, and to have their preferences influence the formation of the government. Therefore, higher levels of participation by citizens in political activities can be viewed as a norm that supports a democratic political regime.

Political participation comes in many forms, including contacting public officials, participating in political demonstrations, and many others. To an ordinary citizen, however, voting is the commonest, simplest, and least costly form of participation in electoral politics, although it has profound implications for the political system. Under a system of voluntary suffrage, voter turnout not only indicates how much interest the electorate has in the election but it also reveals the electorate’s degree of psychological attachment to political affairs (Milbrath and Goel 1977, 46–47; Rosenstone and Hansen 2003, 245–48). Likewise, voting is the key mechanism for responsiveness in democratic society. Citizens cast ballots to choose among candidates from competing political parties, and their choices are important in the selection of political leaders and public policies. The desire for office certainly makes political elites modify or even totally change policies to meet the expectations of voters (Almond and Powell 1988, 49; Nie and Verba 1975, 9–10).
Thus electoral participation in general, and voter turnout in particular, are important elements in the maintenance of democracy. Both have been widely studied in Western countries; however, they have received comparatively little attention elsewhere. This chapter explores political participation in Taiwan since the early 1990s, with a particular focus on electoral participation and voter turnout from 2001 through 2012. Our main purpose is, first, to describe trends in voter turnout since democratization, and second, to analyze the personal attributes of Taiwan citizens that have led them to become involved in politics over the past decade.

Voter turnout in Taiwan has been relatively high compared to other democracies, with an average of about 70 percent; however, it has declined substantially since 2000. To understand this pattern, we will use individual-level survey data to explore the question of who votes in Taiwan, comparing people of different ages and ethnicities. We will also examine party identification and political knowledge to learn their effects on the decision to vote. Finally, we will discuss how each of these demographic and cognitive factors influences other forms of political participation. The survey data used originate from the multiyear Taiwan Election and Democratization Study conducted by the National Chengchi University Election Study Center.¹

The Framework of This Chapter

The term political participation encompasses many different activities. This chapter adopts Rosenstone and Hansen’s (2003, 4–5) definition, so our research is focused on voting, persuading others, campaigning, giving money, contacting others, attending meetings or rallies, and signing petitions. To explain these activities, we focus first on two sociodemographic variables—age and ethnicity.

Demographic factors are important for understanding political participation because individuals’ social backgrounds are central to the development of their political attitudes and behaviors. It is a generally accepted proposition that age is a predictive variable where political attitudes and participation are concerned. According to the life-cycle effects theory, political information and experience rise steadily with age, a phenomenon confirmed by previous empirical studies in the United States (Campbell et al. 1960, 485–87; Conway 2000, 19–24; Milbrath and Goel 1977, 114–16). Political participation increases through a person’s thirties, forties, and fifties, and is at its height in Taiwan when individuals are in their late fifties and early sixties. Participation among those older than sixty-five declines
primarily because these people are in poorer health and are less physically mobile. Thus a person’s ability to participate in political activities will be closely related to age.

Among the socioeconomic variables used to explain political participation, race/ethnicity is probably the most thoroughly researched factor (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003; Tate 1991; Verba and Nie 1972). Ethnicity has been a critical issue in Taiwan’s political life, especially in relation to the ethnic differences between Minnan and mainlanders (Wang 1994, 1998). In the light of Taiwan’s unique historical background and sociopolitical environment, ethnicity and its related issues (e.g., ethnic consciousness, national identity, and disputes over unification with or independence from the mainland) may all be regarded as social cleavages. Mainlanders have political attitudes and voting behavior that are distinct from those of other ethnic groups, mainly Minnan and Hakka (Hsiau 2000; Hughes 1997; Wu 2008; Wu and Hsiao 2006).

In addition to individual characteristics, we consider the effects of cognitive variables as well. Previous studies have demonstrated that these subjective psychological determinants could be more important than the sociodemographic factors noted above. Party identification, which refers to how closely a person identifies with one of the major political parties, is in theory closely related to political involvement (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1995, 72–75; Campbell et al. 1960, 121–23; Miller and Shanks 1996, 154–56). It is a key part of an individual’s belief system and is characterized by long-term stability. Previous studies have demonstrated that party identifiers have a greater degree of political interest than those without any party preference (Conway 2000, 52–55; Milbrath and Goel 1977, 54). In Taiwan, many voters think of themselves as Pan-Blue supporters, others consider themselves Pan-Green. The rest—with the exception of the few who identify with a minor party—are labeled independents.

Research has shown that independents tend to be less concerned about politics, have less political information, are less interested in political activities, and tend to vote less often. Partisans, in contrast, are more involved and informed and more likely to register and vote, to talk about politics, to evaluate the outcomes of elections, to discuss candidates’ campaign promises, to try to influence others, to engage in campaign activities, and so on (Wu and Hsu 2003; Wu and Huang 2007). Partisans are also treated as the object of mobilization efforts by political parties, so they tend to participate more actively in the political process.

Intimately connected with ethnicity and party identification is the issue of national identity, or what is sometimes termed “ethnic consciousness,” which is widely regarded as an important issue that attracts the most atten-
tion in Taiwan's politics, and is also considered to be a key variable in research on political behavior (Fell 2005; Hsiau 2000; Hsieh 2005; Wachman 1994). National identity comprises individuals' attitudes and beliefs toward their own nationality—Taiwanese, Chinese, or both Taiwanese and Chinese. Over the decades when Taiwan was ruled by a Kuomintang-controlled, mainlander-dominated authoritarian regime, a China-centered political ideology was the mainstream value. However, since the beginning of the democratization process in the mid-1980s, a Taiwan-centered consciousness has gradually risen to prominence. This is confirmed by there being a greater number of respondents who identified themselves as “Taiwanese only” compared to those who chose “Chinese only.”

It is necessary to explain that although ethnicity and national identity should be closely related, the former is an objective characteristic, while the latter is based on a subjective psychological sense of belonging. Regarding the direction of political participation, it is hypothesized that an individual having a more intense ideological identification (i.e., those who identified themselves as “Taiwanese only” and “Chinese only”) is predisposed to participate in politics more actively.

In addition to party identification and national identity, political knowledge is another subjective cognitive factor related to political participation. In theory, participation is strongly linked to information about government and politics. The available empirical evidence on this point indicates that individuals who have more information about what the government is doing tend to be more active politically (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 62–104; Stone and Schaffner 1988, 204–5). Actually, there is a positive-feedback relationship between participation and information: as individual citizens gain more political information, they participate more, thereby acquiring more experience and skills, thus further increasing their political knowledge. Previous studies on Taiwan politics have confirmed that a person’s political knowledge is directly related to sociopolitical involvement (Liao 2006; Tsai 2001; Yang 2003). In the data collected for this chapter, political knowledge is self-reported by the respondents in surveys. In other words, it reflects the respondents’ confidence about their own level of political knowledge, which may contain some degree of bias.

The Historical Trend in Voter Turnout in Taiwan

In 1949 the KMT government retreated to Taiwan after the civil war in mainland China. From the early 1950s through the mid-1980s, the KMT regime, in view of its comprehensive domination over the government’s rul-
ing apparatus, bore the characteristics of an authoritarian one-party state with elements of totalitarianism (Tien 1989; Winckler 1984). The control seized by the KMT was comparable to that of the ruling party in a Leninist-style state, with two exceptions. Those exceptions were the existence of private ownership and, more significantly, the institutionalization of local elections (Cheng 1989, 477–78).

The first local elections for executive posts were held in two stages in 1950 and 1951. Over the next five decades, voting was gradually expanded from local to national elections. From 1950 to 1968, electoral competition was limited to the chief executives and representative bodies at the city, sub-county, and county levels and to the provincial assembly. In these elections, no organized political opposition was permitted to compete with the governing KMT. In 1969, the authorities initiated limited electoral competition for supplementary representative seats at the national level. With the lifting of martial law and the end of the Period of Mobilization for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion, all members of the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan were subject to direct election in 1991 and 1992. The most important development was the first popular presidential election, which took place in 1996. At present, all representative bodies and major executive officials—except the premier, who is appointed by the president—are elected by popular vote.

After the lifting of martial law in 1987, voting participation in Taiwan’s national elections, at an average of approximately 70 percent, was relatively high in comparison with that of other democratic countries. Nevertheless, Taiwan’s aggregate-level turnout rate for presidential and parliamentary elections has exhibited a downward trend similar to that in many developed countries (Powell 1986). Generally speaking, the rates of voter turnout in presidential elections are somewhat higher than those in parliamentary elections, as shown in table 11.1. For presidential races, turnout increased from 76 percent in 1996 to 83 percent in 2000, and then slipped to 80 percent in 2004, 76 percent in 2008, and 74 percent in 2012.

The turnout rates for legislative elections exhibit an obviously declining trend. The turnout in the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections was about 72 percent, which was high compared to the elections that followed. In 1995, 1998, and 2001, the average was approximately 67 percent. The level of voter turnout then plunged to 59 percent in the 2004 year-end legislative election. Save for 2012, which was the first occasion upon which a presidential election coincided with a legislative vote, and when, as might be expected, there was a higher turnout rate (Fornos, Power, and Garand 2004; Nikolenyi 2010), the turnout rate for legislative elections has consistently
decreased, reaching its lowest point in 2008 at about 58 percent. Overall, Taiwan’s voter turnout has declined for both presidential and legislative elections at the aggregate level. This drop in citizen engagement raises worrisome questions for the health of Taiwan’s democracy to which we will return at the end of this chapter.

Explaining Voter Turnout in Taiwan

To understand who votes in Taiwan, we examine the TEDS multiyear survey data mentioned above. These data allow us to trace the pattern of changes in the turnout rate in recent elections. In each election year, the survey data constitute a nationally representative, multistage probability sample of adults living throughout Taiwan.\(^5\)

The respondents were asked whether they had cast ballots, but in Taiwan, as in other countries, people sometimes report that they voted when in fact they did not.\(^6\) The actual turnout of individual citizens is known to the Taiwan Election Commission, but their records are secret. Unlike in some other democracies, researchers are not given access to these records, even on a confidential basis. Thus turnout reports in Taiwan cannot be “validated,” that is, checked against official records. The result is that turnout in Taiwan as reported in surveys is higher than the official records, as may be seen in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of election</th>
<th>Turnout (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Supplementary representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2nd session representatives of the National Assembly</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2nd session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3rd session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>9th presidential election</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3rd session representatives of the National Assembly</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4th session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10th presidential election</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5th session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 March</td>
<td>11th presidential election</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 December</td>
<td>6th session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 January</td>
<td>7th session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 March</td>
<td>12th presidential election</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 January</td>
<td>13th presidential election</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 January</td>
<td>8th session representatives of the Legislative Yuan</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, http://www.esc.nccu.edu.tw/.
Thus surveys are not very good at estimating absolute levels of turnout. Fortunately, however, turnout comparisons across groups are less affected by this problem, and that is our focus in this chapter. In order to provide clearer ideas, we present the results in figures (11.1–11.5) and tables (11.2–11.6).

Figure 11.1 shows the differences in voter turnout rates by age group. The first thing to note is that the reported turnout rate in presidential elections is higher than that in legislative elections, which is as expected. Moreover, in both types of elections, the turnout rate increases with age. However, with the exception of voters in their fifties and older, the reported turnout rate has gradually decreased with time. Thus the problem of declining interest in voting is concentrated among younger voters. Their turnout has declined faster than the average seen in figure 1. This raises special concerns for Taiwan's democratic health as Taiwan's older and more reliable voters inevitably reach the age at which they can no longer participate actively.

Ethnicity has long been a politically sensitive issue in Taiwan, especially the cleavage between the majority Taiwanese and the minority mainlanders (Moody 1992; Wachman 1994). Mainlanders are often thought to participate more. Contrary to expectations, however, the results in figure 11.2 reveal that mainlanders do not have a significantly higher turnout rate than Minnan and Hakka. Thus subethnic differences in Taiwan have very little impact on turnout. As we will see, however, differences reappear when we look at electoral participation more broadly.

Next, we explore the relationship between an individual’s party identification and turnout rate, as displayed in figure 11.3. Party identification, in theory, is closely related to political involvement. As expected, an individual with a preference for a specific political party, either a Pan-Blue or a Pan-Green supporter, is more likely to vote in both presidential and legislative elections. The differences are typically not large (5 to 10 percentage points), but they have existed in all elections after the 2001 Legislative Yuan contest.

Contrary to expectations, the results in figure 11.4 indicate that there is no specific relationship between voter turnout and national identity. Individuals who have a clear national identity (either Taiwanese only or Chinese only) have relatively high turnout rates; however, the differences are weak and insignificant. More specifically, those who identify themselves as Chinese are more likely to vote. Overall, the findings are consistent with the results displayed in figures 11.2, 11.3, and 11.4—that individuals who have a distinct idea of their ethnicity, party affiliation, and national identity are more likely to vote, although these variables merely exert conditional effects on voting participation.
Also as hypothesized, the turnout rate in presidential elections increases with the level of (self-reported) political knowledge (see figure 11.5). The turnout rate for individuals with a low level of political knowledge is around 84–86 percent. The rate for those with either a moderate or high level of political knowledge is generally higher than 90 percent. However, in the elections to the Legislative Yuan, the relationship between turnout and knowledge is more erratic. Not until the 2008 election does a legislative election exhibit the expected pattern, with more knowledgeable individuals voting at a higher rate. It may be that the parties formerly mobilized voters differently in the two kinds of elections but no longer do so; this is a topic that deserves further investigation.

In summary, an individual’s age (up to 65), party identification, national identity, and level of political knowledge are all positively correlated with turnout rates, just as they are in most democracies. Essentially, the more experienced and more engaged citizens are more likely to vote, as one would expect. However, we did not find strong differences between Taiwan’s sub-ethnic groups.
Voter turnout is just one aspect of democratic participation. Citizens may influence their representatives in many different ways, and all of those pathways matter for democratic responsiveness. Thus we now proceed to examine other types of participation, using the same explanatory factors we used to study voter turnout. Due to the different types of participation being recorded in our multiyear datasets, we divided respondents into two groups, participants and nonparticipants, for analytical convenience. Participants are defined as those who took part in at least one form of political activity in the surveyed time period, while nonparticipants are those who indicated an abstention from all such activities.8

Differences in electoral participation by age group, by an individual’s ethnicity, by party identification, national identity, and by level of political knowledge are displayed in figures 11.6–11.10.

Age, ethnicity, party identification, national identity, and political knowledge are all more or less positively correlated with the level of an individual’s electoral participation, as was the case with turnout rates. However,
all these explanatory factors make a bigger difference to electoral participation broadly defined than they do to turnout. Age matters more; mainlanders participate more, at least in recent elections; and partisanship, political knowledge, and national identity matter much more significantly than they did for turnout. Thus substantial inequality in political participation persists in Taiwan, with older, more engaged mainlanders participating more.

If this trend of inequality in participation continues, it will have a negative impact on the future development of democracy in Taiwan. If younger people drop out of the politically active population, the nation’s political agenda will be dominated by the interests of older, possibly more conservative, voters in the future. Economically, this might result in more government resources spent on welfare programs geared toward the elderly as well as protection of inefficient traditional industries at the expense of financing future-oriented policies, such as improving education and providing incentives for starting new businesses. Politically, it might cause young people to become disillusioned with the democratic establishment, pushing them toward ever more radical methods of promoting their own interests.

Fig. 11.3. Voter turnout by party identification. Note: From left to right in each year, bars represent Pan-Blue identifiers, Pan-Green identifiers, and independents. L: legislative; P: presidential.
Taiwan Voter

recent Sunflower Student Movement is an illustration of youth’s lack of confidence in a political system led by an older generation with apparently little concern for the needs of the young.

Conclusion

This chapter covers the development of voter turnout and electoral participation in Taiwan. Both voting and participation in electoral activities are essential elements in the formation and maintenance of democracy. Elections, especially, are the most important way of promoting political participation among ordinary citizens. Through elections, citizens select political leaders and shape public affairs, while the government uses them to guarantee its legitimacy (Jackman 1987, 405–6). According to Lipset (1981, 27), “democracy is a complex society . . . which supplies regular constitutional
opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office.” In a democracy, political participation affects the distribution of social values, and one way of judging its effectiveness is to see who plays an active role in the political process, and how much they participate in it.

Despite the importance of political participation to democracy, we find that empirical research on this topic has been limited primarily to Western countries, and that systematic analysis of electoral participation in developing democracies such as Taiwan remains scarce. Research into the level of political participation among Taiwan citizens is therefore likely to have implications for government authorities and civic groups, as they seek to sta-
bilibize and strengthen the island’s fledgling democratic institutions. The need to deduce what drives political participation in Taiwan is even more pressing due to a significant downward trend in turnout for both presidential and legislative elections in recent years.

We end this chapter as we began it, by highlighting that political participation can be affected by sociodemographic characteristics and subjective cognition, as well as people’s personal attitudes and life experiences. Political socialization is a continuing process. Reviewing the similarities and differences displayed above, we note in particular that voters in their fifties and sixties, those who identify with a particular party, those who perceive themselves to be Chinese, those who have high levels of political knowledge, and those who are mainlanders are more likely to vote and engage in political activities. This more engaged group can be seen as the established higher social class within Taiwan society. They tend to be an economically well-off sector whose interests are at least in part opposed to those of younger voters.

In this sense, social and economic factors are fundamental to political participation. The findings of this chapter confirm the proposition that the
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higher a person’s social status, the more likely they are to be an active participant in political life. People in the upper and middle classes tend to be more interested and involved in public affairs than lower class individuals. The unequal distribution of political participation may have the effect of driving Taiwan toward an “elite regime” in which the established upper class will be able to use its financial resources and political knowledge to dictate the policy agendas of elected politicians, gradually creating an environment more favorable to corporate and business interests at the expense of labor. Such a development would not only further strengthen the dichotomy between the young and the old but also create an insurmountable gap in power between the urban and the rural populations, the rich and the poor, as well as between the politically connected and unconnected members of the public. Socioeconomic disparity between groups and regions would be accompanied by political unfairness, and the democratic system would no longer guarantee an equal voice for all voters as it was originally meant to do.

The potentially divisive nature of unequal political participation means that it is necessary for Taiwan to reengage those groups of voters who are un-
derrepresented in the electorate. To be fundamentally and sustainably effective, this process of reengagement must emphasize cooperation between the higher levels of society and the grassroots. On the one hand, populist civic groups must be established to educate people about the long-term harm caused by political indifference. These groups should not only be encouraged but also financed, if necessary, by the government. On the other hand, the government must be tolerant of dissent. Negotiations with the Sunflower Student Movement and even partial incorporation of their platform into official policy, for instance, may trigger renewed interest among those young people who have become disillusioned with politics.

What is most important, however, is the need to continue monitoring the levels of political participation by different groups, as has been done in the research presented in this chapter. The ability to identify which groups have become estranged from the mainstream political establishment allows measures to be taken to rectify this state of affairs before the drifting away of certain voters creates systemic problems for policymakers and for Taiwan society.
Appendix 11.A1. Survey Questions and Coding of Variables

Voter Turnout. “Did you vote for the Legislative Yuan Election?” (1 = yes; 2 = no) (TEDS 2001L) (TEDS 2004L) (TEDS 2008L)

“In this presidential election many people went to vote, while others, for various reasons, did not go to vote. Did you vote?” (1 = yes; 2 = no) (TEDS 2004P) (TEDS 2008P) (TEDS 2012)

Electoral Participation. “Respondents’ total amount of political activities listed below: did volunteer campaign work for either a candidate or a party; attended an election-related gathering or banquet; joined a candidate’s support organization; reminded friends to watch candidate debates or campaign; persuaded others to vote for a particular candidate or party; gave money to a political party or candidate; purchased a candidate’s souvenirs; attended a candidate’s rally) (1 = none; 2 = at least one of them) (TEDS 2001L) (TEDS 2004P) (TEDS 2004L) (TEDS 2008P) (TEDS 2012)
Fig. 11.10. Electoral participation by self-assessed political knowledge. Note: From left to right in each year, bars represent low, moderate, and high level of political knowledge. L: legislative; P: presidential.

Age. Respondent’s age measured in years. (1 = 20 to 29; 2 = 30 to 29; 3 = 40 to 49; 4 = 50 to 59; 5 = above 60)

Ethnicity. Ethnic background of respondent’s father. (1 = Hakka; 2 = Minnan; 3 = Mainlander; aborigines coded as missing)

Party identification. “Among the main political parties in our country, including the KMT, DPP, PFP, NP, and TSU, do you think of yourself as leaning toward any particular party?” “Which party is that?” (1 = Pan-Blue supporter [KMT, NP, and PFP]; 2 = Pan-Green supporter [DPP and TSU])

National identity. “In Taiwan, some people think they are Taiwanese. There are also some people who think that they are Chinese. Do you consider yourself as Taiwanese, Chinese, or both?” (1 = Taiwanese; 2 = both; 3 = Chinese)

Political knowledge. Respondents’ total amount of correct answers to the following questions: “Who is the current Vice President of our country?”; “Who is the President of the PRC?”; “Who is the current President
of the United States?”; “How many years are a legislator’s term?”; and, “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–1]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 2–3]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 4–5]) (TEDS 2001L)

“Who is the President of the PRC?”; “Who is the current President of the United States?”; “How many years are a legislator’s term?”; “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?”; and, “Who is the current Vice President of our country?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–1]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 2–3]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 4–5]) (TEDS 2004P)

“Who is the current Vice President of our country?”; “Who is the President of the PRC?”; “Who is the current President of the United States?”; “How many years are a legislator’s term?”; and, “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–1]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 2–3]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 4–5]) (TEDS 2004L)

“Who is the current President of the United States?”; “Who is the current premier of our country?”; “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–1]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 2]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 3]) (TEDS 2008P)

“Who is the current Vice President of our country?”; “Who is the current President of the United States?”; “Who is the President of the PRC?”; “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?”; and, “How many years are a legislator’s term?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–1]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 2–3]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 4–5]) (TEDS 2008L)

“Who is the current President of the United States?”; “Who is the current premier of our country?”; “Which institution has the power to interpret the Constitution?”; “Which of these persons was the finance minister before the recent election?”; “What was the current unemployment rate in Taiwan as of the end of last year”; “Which party came in second in seats in the Legislative Yuan?”; and, “Who is the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, Kurt Waldheim, Ban Kimoon, or Boutros-Ghali?” (1 = low [total correct answers are 0–2]; 2 = moderate [total correct answers are 3–4]; 3 = high [total correct answers are 5–7]) (TEDS 2012)
Notes

1. Data analyzed in this chapter were collected as part of the research project entitled “Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study, 2012: Presidential and Legislative Elections” (TEDS 2012) (NSC 100–2420-H002–030). The coordinator of the multiyear TEDS project is Chi Huang of the Department of Political Science at National Chengchi University. The principal investigator is Professor Yun-han Chu of the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica. More information is on the TEDS website (http://www.tedsnet.org). The following were responsible for distributing the data: the Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University; the Department of Political Science, Soochow University; the Graduate Institute of Political Science, National Sun Yat-Sen University; the Department of Political Science and Graduate Institute of Political Economy, National Cheng Kung University; the Department of Political Science, Tunghai University; and the Election Study Center, National Chengchi University. The authors appreciate the assistance of the institutes and individuals aforementioned in providing data. This research is partially supported by National Chengchi University’s Top University Project. The views expressed in this chapter are those of the authors alone.

2. For a discussion of ethnic and subethnic differences in Taiwan, see chapter 1.

3. Although Minnan and mainlanders have different attitudes and characteristics, in reality politics is the main factor generating the ethnic consciousness of both groups. See chapters 1 and 3.

4. As a reminder for readers, the Taiwan party system is generally divided into the Pan-Blue camp, which espouses eventual political unification with China, and the Pan-Green camp, which consists of supporters of Taiwan independence. The major parties of the Pan-Blue camp are the Kuomintang, the People First Party, and the New Party, while the Pan-Green parties are the Democratic Progressive Party, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, and the Green Party.

5. The TEDS data are weighted by gender, age, and education to achieve national representativeness. The population statistics are based on census data reported in the official documents, Taiwan-Fukien Demographic Statistics, Republic of China, released by the Ministry of the Interior, Republic of China.

6. The topic of vote misreporting is important both theoretically and practically (Wu 2006, 224). Research on both electoral turnout and vote choice depends heavily on self-reported behavior, but it is generally found that a number of respondents do not accurately report their electoral behavior. One cause of errors in survey research is that more respondents claim to have voted in postelection interviews than have actually cast ballots. A possible consequence is that misreporting does indeed produce some misleading conclusions, since much of the scholarly work tests models of electoral behavior based on survey measurements containing a relatively large amount of error.

7. In figure 11.2, for example, all but the small, youngest group reported turnout rates exceeding 80% for the 2001 Legislative Yuan election, but as figure 11.1 shows, the actual turnout rate in that election was only 67%.

8. The 13 electoral activities in the TEDS are as follows: read the official election notice; read candidates’ leaflets, newsletter, or newspaper ads; watched candidate
debates or campaign speeches on TV; did volunteer campaign work for either a candidate or a party; attended an election-related gathering or banquet; joined a candidate’s support organization; reminded friends to watch candidate debates or campaign; persuaded others to vote for a particular candidate or party; gave money to a political party or candidate; purchased a candidate’s souvenirs; invited to participate in a candidate’s rally; attended a candidate’s rally; and visited a candidate’s website.

References


