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Taiwan in Dynamic Transition

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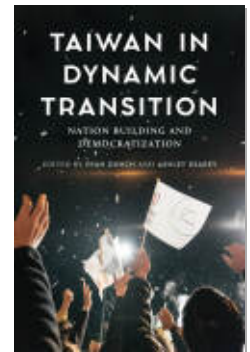
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DEMOCRATIZATION

NEIGHBORHOOD POLITICS IN TAIPEI

Democracy at the Most Local Level

BENJAMIN L. READ

THE “NINE-IN-ONE” ELECTIONS HELD THROUGHOUT THE REPUBLIC OF China on November 29, 2014, put local politics in the spotlight in historic fashion. Never before had elections for nine different offices been held concurrently throughout Taiwan.¹ Previously, local elections had been carried out in a piecemeal fashion and on a staggered schedule. This time, candidates for local offices—from village heads to big-city mayors—campaigns for their seats all at once, just as candidates for the presidency and legislature had in 2012. Local and national elections would henceforth alternate every two years in a regular cycle intended to avoid voter fatigue.

As returns came in, attention focused on the striking outcomes in the twenty-two races for city mayor and county magistrate positions. The fact that sixteen of those executive posts went to candidates of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) or independents was seen as a great defeat for the Nationalist Party and a rebuke to the Ma Ying-jeou administration. Indeed, with Nationalist Party mayoral candidates losing in such previously Blue-leaning cities as Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Taichung, and in the capital itself, no one could miss this loud message.² Premier Jiang Yi-huah resigned immediately, and Ma soon stepped down as party chairman.

The most prominent and visible of the races thus generated as clear a signal as one could imagine coming from local elections. This reinforced the tendency to interpret Taiwan’s local elections primarily as a barometer of public opinion on national issues—as a referendum on the incumbent administration and a straw in the wind for the next presidential elections. While understandable (and in this case accurate, as the DPP indeed won the presidency and a Legislative Yuan majority in 2016), this unidimensional

interpretation obscures other aspects of the Republic of China's rich and complex political system.

This chapter inverts the usual top-level focus by delving into the arena of politics found at the very bottom of the 2014 ballots: the 5,795 neighborhood positions that were up for grabs.³ This lowliest of strata is worthy of attention because neighborhood politics reflects and illuminates important aspects of Taiwan's democratic system. In some ways, it constitutes its own sphere of political contestation within local communities, illustrating how democratic processes have taken root at an intimate, face-to-face level of society. In this respect, it provides an important complement, as well as counterpoint, to narratives of political change that focus on core central institutions. Heavily structured by state institutions, neighborhood politics is also connected in various ways to politicians occupying higher offices in the city (city council, mayor) and to Taiwan's two primary political parties more generally. These connections help give the system vitality but also constrain and inflect it.⁴

Taiwan's form of neighborhood politics is also quite distinctive in regional perspective and in comparison with city governance as practiced in other democracies around the world. In the liberal democratic states of North America and Europe, politics in this domain generally takes the form of non-governmental neighborhood associations, which can be robust and well-organized in some places, weak or non-existent in others. In some cases, community representatives might sit on a citywide board or assembly. Like in other states of East and Southeast Asia, in Taiwan, neighborhoods are not left to communities to organize just as they please; rather, they are given a formal structure that in many ways constitutes an extension of city government.⁵ But Taiwan also contrasts with, for instance, South Korea and Indonesia, in that leadership at the neighborhood level is generated through highly institutionalized and competitive elections. This topic, therefore, showcases part of what makes Taiwanese politics unique. As we contemplate the processes through which the people of Taiwan have developed a particular political subjectivity and come to think of themselves as a self-governing community or even nation, we must take account of distinctive local practices as well as macro-level change.

TAIWAN'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Taiwan's neighborhoods, called *li*, are official components of the geography of urban administration.⁶ Delineated by precisely defined boundaries, in

large cities they are subordinate to the district offices (*qu gongsuo*). The Local Government Act stipulates that each *li* is to have an office (*li bangongchu*), led by a warden (*lizhang*), who is elected by the residents to one or more four-year terms of office. As of late 2016, there were more than three times as many urban *li* as there were rural villages (*cun*) in Taiwan.⁷ Details of policies concerning neighborhoods and their leaders are left for city governments to formulate, although they appear to be broadly similar around the island. The neighborhoods are subdivided into small blocks or clusters of households called *lin*.⁸ These small pieces of territory also have leaders, *linzhang*, whom we might call block captains. Each block captain is hand-picked by the incumbent warden.

Wardens occupy a curious and complex position within their neighborhoods and within the fabric of state-society linkages. Their role has origins in the *bao-jia* (or *hokō*) system that Japanese administrators implemented starting early in the colonial era and that the Nationalist Party employed on the mainland, a system that can be traced back to the Qing and earlier dynasties.⁹ Wardens are designated as “unsalaried” (*wuji zhi*) and are quite distinct from civil servants. They are not government officials nor do they see themselves as such. Still, they receive subsidies that amount to a modest salary, and they often put in hours comparable to full-time employment.¹⁰ The *li* offices—whether set up in the warden’s home or in a separate building—are furnished and equipped by the city. The wardens ostensibly fall under the command and supervision (*zhahui jiandu*) of mayors and district chiefs. In practice, in the democratic Taiwan of today, they are hardly the underlings of the urban hierarchy. Once elected, they can only be removed from their positions prior to the end of their term if they commit a serious crime. Rather than merely taking orders from above, they can question or push back against directives or policies from the city or the district. In part, they pursue their own agendas, which can include encouraging or resisting development plans or lobbying the city for infrastructure improvements. Still, they are expected to help the city government and its agencies and the police with a wide range of administrative tasks, including such duties as verifying the welfare eligibility of poor households and facilitating the conscription of draft-eligible young men. They work together with a neighborhood administrator (*li gan-shi*), a full-time civil servant who, in Taipei, is assigned wholly to one *li* and spends about half the workday there.¹¹ Neighborhoods in Taiwan are thus deeply integrated with state institutions in many respects.

Taipei’s twelve districts boasted a total of 456 neighborhoods as of 2014. On average, each *li* there contains 5,891 people, or 2,252 households.¹²

Neighborhood boundaries are periodically adjusted so that none gets too far out of proportion to others in terms of population. They vary substantially, however, in terms of the area they encompass. The *li* in the city's central districts, built on level ground (such as Zhongshan or Daan) are relatively small in area, often just a tenth or a fifth of a square kilometer, and rectangular or polygonal in shape. In these cases, the neighborhood's boundaries are defined by major streets. In peripheral zones such as Beitou, Neihu, and the southeast portion of Wenshan, *li* contain large swathes of the sparsely populated mountainsides that surround the basin in which Taipei nestles. In such places, a single neighborhood can comprise as many as sixteen square kilometers.

A *li* is small enough, then, that quite a few of its residents are acquainted with one another and encounter one another in daily life, whether at local businesses, on the streets, at parks, or in parent groups connected to nearby schools. For many in Taipei, these officially defined geographic units have real meaning and relevance. In a 2006 telephone survey (see note 4), for example, more than 91 percent of respondents were able to tell the interviewer the name of their *li*. Nearly 58 percent could correctly state all or part of the name of their neighborhood warden.

On average, each of Taipei's *li* is subdivided into about twenty-one *lin*. The city had a total of 9,533 such micro-units as of the end of 2012. The *lin* boundaries, too, are precisely defined by the city's Civil Affairs Bureau. An average block captain is responsible for 287 people, or 109 households. While *li* are known by names, *lin* are designated only by numbers. Block captains' duties are light—for instance, they are sometimes asked to distribute fliers from the city explaining a new policy—and ordinary residents might only occasionally encounter them acting in their official capacity.

The *li/lin* system can be thought of as the core of neighborhood organizational activity, but many other groups are active at this level as well. Community development associations (*shequ fazhan xiehui*, CDA) are one important category. With their name inspired by the rising prominence of “community” in international discourse, these emerged in the early 1990s in an effort to create local organizations separate from the framework of the *li* and *lin*. Community development associations pursue various purposes and in some cases transcend the standard boundaries of neighborhoods. Other community groups include condominium management boards, parent-teacher associations, and citizens' watch patrols (*shouwang xiangzhu xunshoudui*, or simply *xunshoudui*). All of these figure in neighborhood politics, as discussed below.

NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTIONS

Communities choose their own leaders through competitive balloting every four years, and this fact gives neighborhood politics a particular structure, character, and temporal cycle. In certain respects, the activity surrounding these elections mimics the rituals and hoopla found in Taiwan's electoral culture more generally, but on a smaller scale. Where mayoral candidates "sweep the streets" (*saojie*) in motorcades that proceed around an entire city, warden candidates do the same by tromping through the alleys of their *li* with groups of supporters. While city council candidates put up immense billboard advertisements bearing their images, slogans, and ballot numbers, warden hopefuls festoon the neighborhood with smaller banners and pennants.

Direct elections for neighborhood wardens in ROC-governed Taiwan began as early as 1950.¹³ It is unclear just how open or how restricted these elections were in the early years—at least, I have no solid data on this. The election records available in the National Taiwan Library become more detailed in the 1980s, revealing that at least by that time, if not far earlier, warden positions were almost entirely held by candidates who ran under the Nationalist (Kuomintang) party label, and most often ran unopposed. As the Republic of China state gradually democratized in the late 1980s and 1990s, warden elections became more competitive and less dominated by the ruling party.¹⁴ In other words, as the authoritarian regime evolved and latent democratic norms became more fully realized in practice, the *li* were swept along with this tide. Just as mayoral and city council elections turned into real contests, so too did those for wardenships.

Prior to 2010, warden elections were held on separate days from all other races, and thus the election commissions carried out all the work of putting on an election just for the warden balloting alone. Among other tasks, this entailed setting up polling stations on a designated Saturday, staffing them from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., publicly counting votes in each polling station, compiling the results, announcing the winners, and publishing a detailed record of the proceedings. On November 27, 2010, warden elections in the special municipalities (a designation that then comprised the island's five largest cities) were held together with mayor and city council elections. The 2014 cycle completed the process of consolidating local elections throughout the Republic of China into a single event. Both in their previous, separate form, and now in conjunction with other races, city election commissions have conducted these elections in ways that give them a level of formality,

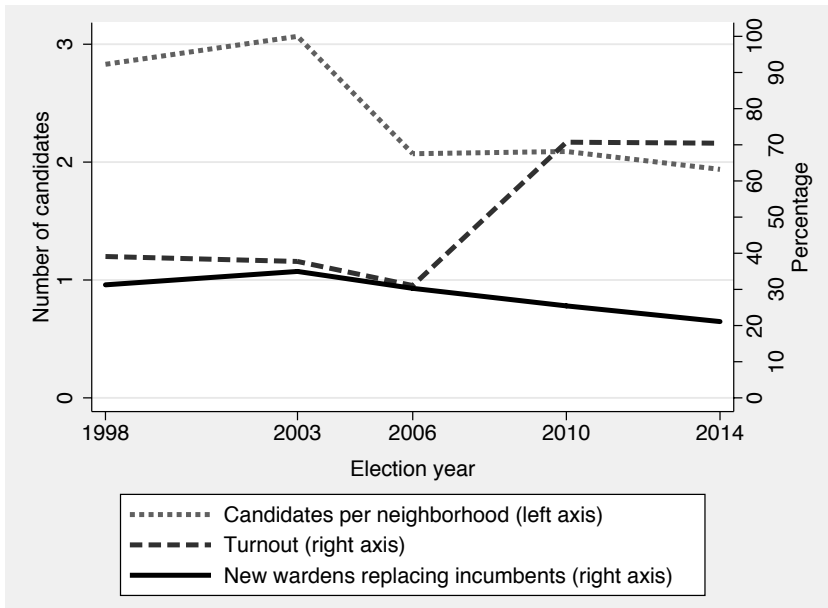


FIGURE 3.1. Contestation, turnout, and replacement in Taipei warden elections, 1998–2014.

Note: The measure of contestation, candidates per *li*, refers to the average number of individuals running for a warden position in the given year. Turnout is the percentage of the city’s eligible voters who cast votes in the neighborhood elections of the given year. Non-incumbent winners is the number of newly elected non-incumbent wardens, as a percentage of all elected wardens, in the given year. Data are from election records from the City of Taipei Election Commission, including published reports and, for 2006–14, records posted on the commission’s website and the website of the Central Election Commission.

transparency, and rigor that is seldom seen in neighborhoods anywhere around the world. For example, for each neighborhood, the authorities print and distribute to every home an election announcement (*xuanju gongbao*) just like those for city councilor and mayor races, presenting candidates’ pictures, names, dates and place of birth, educational backgrounds, and work and volunteer experience, as well as their campaign platforms (*zhengjian*).

Figure 3.1 presents three metrics that illuminate qualities of neighborhood democracy in Taipei. Voter turnout ranged from 31 percent to 39 percent in the last three cycles during which warden elections were held on a separate day from all other elections. Turnout leaped with the

introduction of a single election day for all local races, including the much-watched and media-saturated mayoral contests. (In these “three-in-one” elections in cities, urbanites voted for mayors, city councilors, and wardens.) Just over 70 percent of Taipei’s adult citizens cast a ballot in the neighborhood elections in both 2010 and 2014. Impressive though these numbers are, the earlier turnout figures arguably give a more pure indicator of Taipei residents’ participation in the warden elections per se. Having a third to two-fifths of the electorate make a special trip to the polls on a Saturday shows a fairly high degree of involvement by the standards of local elections—particularly given that in Taiwan, adult citizens are automatically counted as part of the electorate, without having to specially register to vote.¹⁵

Taipei’s warden elections also feature a substantial degree of contestation, as measured by the average number of candidates per *li*. In some neighborhoods (just over a third in 2014) incumbents run unopposed, and in others a scrum of many candidates emerges.¹⁶ Starting in 2007, city officials began taking deposits of NT\$50,000 from warden hopefuls, refundable only to those who garner the votes of 10 percent of the neighborhood electorate. The purpose of this reform was apparently to discourage “superfluous and trivial candidacies” and the practice of gaming elections by nominating spoilers to siphon votes away from one’s rivals. Certainly the deposit system seems to have discouraged quite a few people from throwing their hats into the ring, as seen in the decline in the average number of candidates per *li* from approximately three in 1998 and 2003 to approximately two in the last three elections. Still, in a majority (65 percent) of neighborhoods in 2014, at least two residents vied for the honor of being *lizhang*.¹⁷ In only 28 percent of neighborhoods with at least two candidates did the victor win more than 60 percent of the vote. These elections thus yield substantial competition.¹⁸

Finally, figure 3.1 also shows that the election contests regularly replace incumbents with new faces. Across the five election cycles under consideration, newly elected wardens emerged in 21 to 35 percent of neighborhoods. Sometimes this happens when an incumbent chooses not to defend his or her seat, but more often it represents an incumbent’s defeat at the ballot box.¹⁹ A few neighborhoods do have wardens who have served term after term. Chen Kairen, for example, won the warden post in Zhufu Neighborhood of Zhongshan District ten consecutive times since Taipei was given the status of special municipality in 1967.²⁰ Yet Chen was an outlier. For the most part, seats are vulnerable to challenge; indeed, even Chen, at the age of eighty-nine, lost his position to a rival in 2010.²¹ This vulnerability has significance far beyond the elections themselves. Wardens attend to their duties in awareness of the fact that challengers may emerge from the ranks

of their neighbors to hand them a humiliating defeat. It also has led to a generational shift in the composition of neighborhood leadership. For example, 104 women were elected to warden positions in Taipei in 2014—still very much a minority, at 23 percent of all wardens, but more than ever before.

To assert the democratic characteristics of Taiwan's neighborhoods is not to say that the *li* are democratic in every possible way. By certain criteria, Taipei's *li* might well be seen as falling short. For example, in theory, neighborhood-level bodies could be well-suited to *participatory* as much as representative democracy. Indeed, the Local Government Act stipulates that *li* may hold meetings open to all residents. In Taipei, such meetings are held in some neighborhoods, but overall, the practice is uncommon. Wardens, in interviews, stated that they find such meetings to be a hassle. These shortcomings aside, neighborhoods in Taiwan feature a robust form of representative democracy in terms of the elections through which leaders are selected.

NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE BROADER POLITICAL SYSTEM

The fact that elections for wardens are now held concurrently with elections for mayors and councilors accentuates the fact that neighborhoods form an integral part of Taiwan's political system as a whole—though this was true long before the advent of three-in-one urban elections. Most obviously, neighborhoods often reflect the partisan nature of national politics through wardens' party affiliations. A warden candidate can run as an independent or as the nominee of a political party. Taipei's neighborhood campaigns have a stronger partisan flavor than those of other large cities. In 2014, 80 percent of the city's *li* races had at least one party-nominated candidate. For the Republic of China as a whole, the same figure is just 41 percent of all *li*; in the other 59 percent, all candidates ran as independents. As other evidence will also show, parties are only one component, and arguably a diminishing one, of neighborhood politics. Nonetheless, wardens' links to other parts of the political realm—which take many forms in addition to overt party nominations—remain robust and relevant.

Where warden candidates run as one or another party's nominee, voters are reminded of this formal support through the election announcement posters. Even a candidate running as an independent might signal a partisan alignment or seek votes from a party's supporters, for instance by incorporating party-related symbols or colors into the handbills, pens, and tissue packets they distribute, or by taking part in joint campaign activities with politicians who seek or hold higher offices. Alternatively, he or she might

avoid such signals. Democratic Progressive Party–leaning wardens in Blue neighborhoods, Nationalist-supporting wardens in Green communities, or adherents of marginal third parties anywhere, commonly downplay their allegiances or keep them entirely under wraps.

Though elected wardens are expected to carry out their city-designated responsibilities without regard to partisan considerations, for many wardens, party allegiances form a central part of their identities. City electoral records, in turn, give prominence to party subtotals in the numbers of elected wardens and in votes cast in warden elections—thus providing one way of keeping score, as it were, in the Blue-vs.-Green struggle at the grass roots. This contrasts with political systems that formally exclude party politics from elected offices at the community or city level.²²

Although the 2014 mayoral races constituted a lopsided victory for the DPP, when looked at from the neighborhoods instead of from city hall, the results do not appear quite as clear cut. Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of

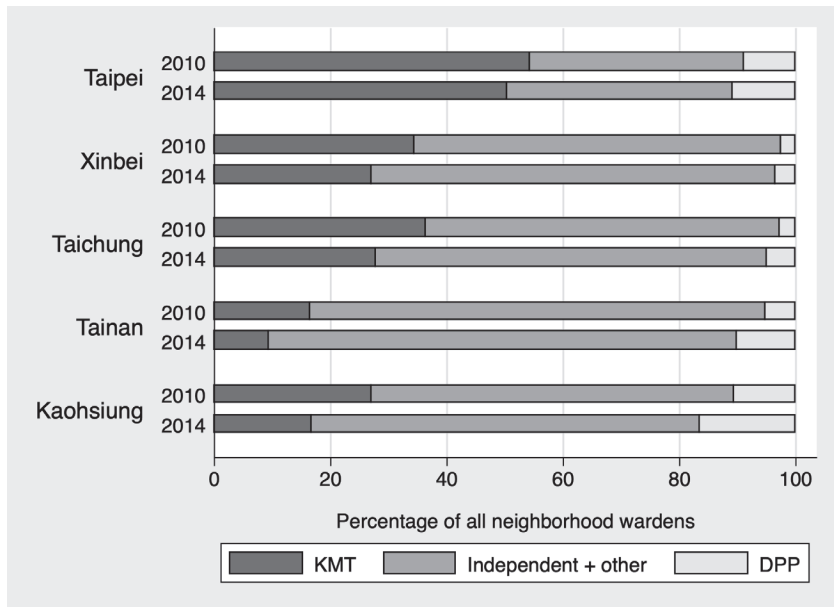


FIGURE 3.2. Party affiliation of neighborhood wardens in five special municipalities, 2010–14.

Note: Data produced on the basis of election records retrieved from the Central Election Commission website (<http://web.cec.gov.tw>). Taoyuan became a special municipality only in 2014 and so is not included.

wardens by party nomination in the five special municipalities.²³ To be sure, 2014 was a bad year for the Nationalist Party at the community level just as at the city level. The Nationalists lost—and the DPP gained—warden seats in all five of these major cities. In Kaohsiung in particular, the percentage of neighborhoods with Nationalist leaders fell from 27 to 17 percent as Mayor Chen Chu of the DPP handily won reelection, while consolidating her party’s grip on the city. But it was not an across-the-board rout. Only in Tainan did the DPP attain a larger number of warden positions than the Nationalists did, and there only by five positions. In Taipei, New Taipei City (Xinbei), and Taichung, the Nationalist Party retained its plurality of wardenships even as its mayoral candidates lost or, in Xinbei, barely eked out a win.

The pattern seen in these five cities is largely a continuation of an island-wide trend in which greater numbers of wardens have forgone any party label; thus, in each city, independents grew in number along with DPP affiliates. Figure 3.3 shows how this trend has unfolded over the long term with data from Taipei, displaying results of the eight rounds of local elections from 1985 to 2014. The proportion of wardens affiliated with the Nationalist

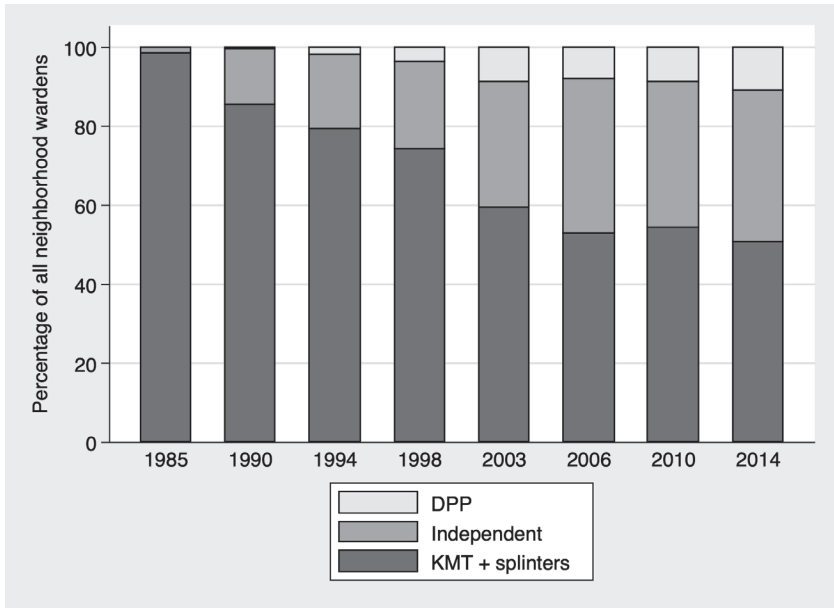


FIGURE 3.3. Party affiliation of Taipei neighborhood wardens, 1985–2014. *Note:* Data are from election records from the City of Taipei Election Commission, including published reports and, for 2006–14, records posted on the commission’s website.

Party dropped from 98 percent in 1985 to 53 percent in 2006. Since then, the party's decline has slowed; its fraction has hovered just over the 50 percent mark, with the 2014 elections bringing it to 50.3 percent. Meanwhile, the number of DPP wardens has grown, but only modestly. Even as DPP-backed independent Ko Wen-je achieved a blowout victory over his opponent in the mayoral race, the ranks of the party's wardens expanded only marginally, to 11 percent.²⁴ Independents have come to constitute nearly two-fifths of wardens in the capital city, while making up 67 to 80 percent of all wardens in the other five metropolises, including Taoyuan.²⁵ This trend toward non-aligned wardens is discussed further in the next section.

Why has the Nationalist Party continued to hold a majority of wardenships in Taipei, if only by a hair? Why does it perform better there than in other large cities in neighborhood politics? The capital remains favorable terrain for the once-dominant party. Nationalist candidates won a slender plurality of city council seats in 2014.²⁶ Also, the Nationalists in Taipei clearly benefit from the winner-takes-all nature of warden elections; only in districts where DPP voters are concentrated, notably Datong, Zhongshan, and Wanhua districts, can the opposition party win many neighborhoods.²⁷ The Nationalist Party, of course, long dominated *li*-level organization. In the authoritarian period, wardens formed one component of its mechanisms of control and co-optation. Since democratization, as shown above, the Nationalists' grip on neighborhoods has relaxed, yet it retains considerable strength at the grass roots. This can be seen in its organizational structure. Unlike its rival the DPP, the Nationalist Party funds and maintains a hierarchy of committees beneath its city-level headquarters, in districts and even neighborhoods.

Parties and candidates engage in extensive personal mobilization of votes during elections at all levels in Taiwan. The official *li* system provides a useful framework for such mobilization, and the position of warden in particular is well-suited to parties' purposes. Wardens receive state recognition, office space, equipment, and stipends for their official duties, but they are able to use these resources, as well as their dense local networks, to pursue activities that directly or indirectly help their political parties. Their role as supporters and activists (*tiau-a-ka* in Taiwanese, or *zhuangjiao*, "cornerstones" in Mandarin) is a well-established feature of Taiwan's politics. When city and national elections roll around, of course, they avidly pursue get-out-the-vote efforts in many forms.

To give just one conventional example, a Nationalist-affiliated warden in an affluent part of Taipei's Shilin district was called upon in June 2010 to arrange a buffet dinner for more than one hundred party loyalists in

support of the reelection campaign of incumbent mayor Hau Lung-Bin, with the candidate in attendance.²⁸ Four years later, the same individual received a personal phone call from president and party chair Ma Ying-jeou requesting that he set aside misgivings and give wholehearted backing to the struggling mayoral nominee Lien Sheng-wen.²⁹ On a Sunday two weeks before the 2014 election, another Taipei warden held a campaign event for her own reelection in her neighborhood, then later the same day joined a group of local and national notables on stage at a rally that featured Lien and council candidates; some of the Nationalist Party supporters among her volunteers and associates came to both events.³⁰ But these election-season events are only the tip of the iceberg. Wardens' day-to-day activities build ties of familiarity and reciprocity with citizens that can be drawn on for political purposes—selectively and judiciously, taking care not to offend residents whose loyalties lie with the other party. These ordinary activities include classes held in community centers, subsidized excursions to parks and tourist attractions, voluntary associations such as CDAs, clean-up and patrol groups, and the like.

Small wonder, then, that parties make sustained efforts to help their supporters win warden posts and also to recruit or co-opt independent wardens. Such independents in Taipei have sometimes been offered substantial cash payments to join the Nationalists.³¹ The Nationalist Party also provides relatively generous support to warden candidates in the form of banners, campaign brochures, and the like. The DPP, meanwhile, has long desired to build strength and compete more effectively at the alley level, but generally has fewer resources to offer its warden candidates. Its various efforts to provide training for those running for local positions have included a “new village and neighborhood” movement in 2006.³² In 2014, the party aimed to harness some of the energy created among youth who took part in the Sunflower Movement, launching a “People Power” campaign that selected and backed thirty-seven warden candidates in cities from Keelung to Kaohsiung. DPP staff provided training, campaign materials such as fliers, and a sleek website with candidate profiles and promotional videos. While only nine of the candidates won (as discussed below), this effort, together with a similar initiative by the Taiwan Solidarity Union, illustrated neighborhoods' importance to political parties.³³

Of all their political relationships, wardens' ties with city council members tend to be particularly close and cooperative. Councilors operate on a much broader political stage and are a big step up from the wardens in terms of clout and prestige. In Taipei, for example, the six main city council districts (each electing between eight and thirteen councilors) contained an

average of seventy-six neighborhoods each as of 2014.³⁴ Thus, councilors representing one of those districts will build connections with many wardens. They do so by responding to constituent requests referred to them by wardens, and more generally by using their positions to ensure that city government treats specific neighborhoods kindly—much as political scientist Shelley Rigger once explained.³⁵ Warden–councilor ties are not always strictly partisan arrangements, but rather personal connections that in some cases cut across party lines. For their part, the neighborhood leaders help councilors stay connected with their constituents, providing opportunities for them to press the flesh at community gatherings and social activities. Parties will also include their wardens in their vote-allocation (*peipiao*) arrangements, which aim to even out support across multiple council candidates in order to maximize the number of seats won in a given district.³⁶ A Nationalist councilor’s party-assigned responsibility zone (*zeren qu*)—the area where he or she strives to build particularly close ties with constituents and where voters are urged to support him or her as opposed to other candidates of the same party—might include just a dozen neighborhoods, a fraction of an electoral district. Wardens there are supposed to make special efforts to familiarize residents with the councilor in question and give him or her opportunities to build support.³⁷

Dealings with parties and politicians thus have many overt and entirely legitimate manifestations, as well as other aspects that are hidden or, in some cases, even illegal. Nonpartisan wardens often make a point of their independence from party support, casting their rivals’ party backing in a negative light. Candidates tend to downplay the extent of their connections with parties, particularly money that they receive in the course of these dealings. Neighborhood and village wardens in many parts of the island are known for serving as conduits for buying votes on behalf of candidates for city or county council and other positions.³⁸ In metropolises like Taipei and Kaohsiung this practice has waned. There, enforcement of the vote-buying prohibition has been vigorous, and citizens are more likely to see cash gifts as an ugly or offensive practice rather than as an appealing token of appreciation. In other parts of the Republic of China, this illegal practice, and variants through which not cash but other things of value are given to voters, remain common.³⁹ Perhaps the most important point is that it illustrates an aspect of the political utility of a warden. Closely familiar with his or her constituents, she or he is in a position to have a good sense of which households would accept, and also be motivated to vote by, a cash payment.

Apart from all the ways in which neighborhoods can be linked externally to political parties, partisan affiliations can also shape the *internal* politics

of the neighborhood. The incumbent warden and his or her chosen team of block captains generally constitute one important and politically active group within a *li*, but there are often others. Frequently, a CDA will be aligned with or led by the incumbent warden, but in other cases, it provides a base for future warden candidates—or wardens who have lost elections but plan a comeback. These associations, and the small grants they might win from the government, allow such hopefuls to sponsor activities and maintain relationships with core supporters and voters. Not just CDAs, but also citizens' watch and other volunteer groups, can have these functions. Should a leader of one of these rival factions win the wardenship, many members of the new team of block captains are likely to be selected from within the victorious faction. The contending blocs often align with different political parties, though intraparty competition is also common.

NEIGHBORHOOD POLITICS ON ITS OWN TERMS

Parties and partisanship are thus an important part of what drives community-level politics and what motivates citizens as they choose among warden candidates or participate in groups and activities. Sometimes analysts see wardens as little more than local agents of this party or that. Yet this is misleading. There is much in neighborhood politics that needs to be understood on its own terms rather than viewed through the lens of party politics.

The long-term trend toward wardens running without a party nomination clearly shows that partisanship can be an unwanted burden in *li* politics. The number of independent wardens reached an all-time high in the 2014 elections in Taipei. The same pattern is seen in Taiwan's other major cities as well, and indeed in village and neighborhood elections throughout the Republic of China, but in even more pronounced forms. As figure 3.2 shows, in the 2014 warden elections held in four other municipalities, the proportion of winning candidates without a party nomination ranged from 69 percent (Xinbei) to 80 percent (Tainan). Indeed, the great majority—72 percent—of neighborhood and village leaders throughout the Republic of China are now nonpartisans.⁴⁰ A party label can be helpful to a candidate in a neighborhood where her party enjoys a strong majority of supporters. In other circumstances, however, it can be a vulnerability. Wardens often try to win votes among (or at least avoid alienating) adherents of all parties. Claiming to be above the fray and impartial to both sides is a standard part of the campaign appeals of independents, carrying an implication that partisan opponents practice favoritism in dealings with constituents.

Whereas city council candidates are expected to have party affiliations—and independents are relatively few in number at that level—the same kind of affiliation doesn't always play well in neighborhoods, sometimes with serious consequences. One three-term Nationalist warden in Taipei seemed to pay a steep price for his party label when constituents voted both for his independent challenger and for the independent mayoral candidate in approximately equal proportions. On the evening of election day, he shuttled among the neighborhood's five polling stations in bewilderment as the ongoing vote count made clear that—in his reading, at least—the anti-Nationalist Party mood of 2014 had cost him his position.⁴¹

The state-structured nature of the *li/lin* system also shapes what wardens do and constrains their ability to use their positions toward partisan ends. As previously noted, each warden is paired with a neighborhood administrator. These civil servants, who in Taipei spend part of the day in district offices and part of the day in the community, have direct responsibility for matters pertaining to government programs such as welfare and military service. Their oversight, and that of the district offices, checks a warden's ability to—for example—give co-partisans or other friends a break on eligibility for benefits. The civil servants also must approve most kinds of expenditures and thus can enforce limits on the use of state resources toward political purposes.

Neighborhood politics in Taiwan is deeply personal in nature. To win a warden position usually takes between one thousand and three thousand votes, and this requires a critical mass of core supporters and face-to-face acquaintances.⁴² It takes time to build these kinds of relationships, and different wardens acquire them in different ways. Family networks constitute one time-honored type of political base. Some wardens, for example, come from families who have lived and owned property in their localities for many generations and thus can rely on a solid bloc of votes from their kin no matter who runs against them. Networks assembled by incumbent wardens sometimes transfer to children or widows who succeed them. Proprietors of small businesses such as eateries, automotive shops, and stores are often able to win votes from their local clientele. Finally, some wardens get their start in community associations such as parent-teacher groups, neighborhood watch patrols, or condominium boards. Wardens thus vary significantly in their backgrounds and in what motivates them to go through the laborious process of winning a wardenship and carrying out the manifold duties that come with it.

This helps explain why young people's efforts to break into politics via the neighborhoods—such as the People Power campaign—often fall short.

While warden positions may seem like a good way to build experience at the grass roots, in fact they are elusive for those lacking longstanding networks built through family ties, businesses, and associations. Xu Jingyin, the youngest of the neighborhood wardens chosen in Taipei in 2014, was thirty-one years old on election day.⁴³ Only 5 percent of her elected cohort was younger than forty, and its average age was fifty-seven, almost exactly the same as the national average for all neighborhood and village leaders.⁴⁴

Election campaigns in this setting are shaped by the relatively small size of the electorate; in Taipei, an average of 4,656 citizens with voting rights lived in each *li* as of 2014.⁴⁵ Margins of victory are often small. Candidates sometimes spend the equivalent of many thousands of dollars on promotional materials, their campaign headquarters, the security deposit, and other expenses and also become heavily invested emotionally—low-ranking though the positions are, winners bask in their success, and incumbents who are voted out by their neighbors suffer a painful loss of face. All these things mean that elections can be tense and closely fought contests. Candidates and their associates spend weeks knocking on doors and walking the alleys to canvass voters. Sometimes they employ dubious tactics such as mailers or whispers alleging misdeeds on the part of their rivals (corruption, personal impropriety, and the like). In 2014, for example, one Shilin warden claimed that his opponent's camp ripped down his campaign banners, spread rumors of domestic violence in his family, turned in neighbors for parking violations and claimed he had done it, and submitted false accusations of vote buying that resulted in a raid on his home by government investigators.⁴⁶ Needless to say, hard feelings and grudges can linger in the wake of these struggles.

What exactly is at stake in neighborhood politics from the voters' perspective? Wardens' campaigns feature promises of "service," generally meaning personal availability to respond to problems, queries, and needs, often at all hours. Some advertising appeals ("I'll spare no effort in providing wholehearted, full-time service") point out that a candidate would devote him or herself to warden duties without the distraction of other employment.⁴⁷ Challengers promise improved responsiveness ("Try me as warden for a change, I'll give you double the service").⁴⁸ It is common for male candidates to pledge that their wives and other members of the household will be just as devoted to the neighborhood as they are ("Elect one person, get an entire family's service").⁴⁹ Indeed, spouses often do become deeply involved; one woman whose husband had stepped down after twelve years as a warden said that she had difficulty getting used to being free to leave her home without anyone else present to answer the phone in case of incoming requests.⁵⁰

In practice, people call upon the service of the wardens in a broad spectrum of ways. Along with the block captains and the neighborhood administrators, wardens act as general-purpose contact points for residents on matters pertaining to all aspects of city government. Even if the issue ultimately will be resolved by the staff of the Social Bureau (as with welfare benefits), the Household Registry Office, or the police, it might start with an inquiry at the *li* office, in person or by phone. Disputes between households frequently give rise to requests for intervention by a warden. For example, he might be asked to document water leakage and ask the party whose pipes are leaking to hire a plumber. Sometimes residents ask a warden to try to influence or prevent the enforcement of formal city policies. A warden might prevail on the city to refrain from upholding construction rules that would prohibit homespun add-ons or modifications to balconies, fences, rooftops or the like. Elderly or low-income residents approach the neighborhood office for help obtaining bus passes, blood-pressure checks (using equipment in the community office), and small subsidies from the city.

Apart from providing such individualized forms of service, wardens also generally try to put their stamp on the locality through improvements to neighborhood amenities and infrastructure. This can take the form of installing benches and chairs, upgrading small parks, widening sidewalks, removing unsightly snarls of power and phone lines, improving sewers, and more. Smaller projects can be carried out with the wardens' budgeted funds, while larger ones require applying for grants or appealing to city council members for help. Neighborhood offices regularly hold festivals and parties to celebrate holidays, and community centers sponsor classes in everything from foreign languages to yoga.

In all these undertakings, the individual predilections and style of a neighborhood leader can matter substantially. Some are more attentive and responsive than others; some take a more encompassing view of their duties while others are partial to certain segments of the neighborhood. Old-style wardens—in the past, wardens were almost entirely men—typically took a patriarchal approach to their positions, offering only routinized and minor forms of service to residents and taking little initiative to bring about more substantial changes or to help constituents who fell outside the boundaries of their support base. But the “uncle wardens” (*lizhang bo*) in this classic mold are giving way to a new generation that contains more diversity and has broader ideas about how they should fulfill their roles. Some make a point of campaigning on specific substantive issues (such as infrastructure improvements to be demanded from the city, like wider sidewalks and upgraded local parks) rather than on general promises of “service.” Some

engage in broad consultation with the community on decisions that affect it and provide greater openness and transparency by communicating with constituents through email or messaging apps like Line. Numerous wardens now maintain public social media profiles, such as Zhang Chaoxing of Xingbang Neighborhood in Wenshan District, who won reelection in 2014 and boasted more than a thousand “friends” on Facebook.⁵¹

As noted, more and more women have won neighborhood elections, and site visits indicate that they often take a different approach as compared to their male peers. For example, in late 2006, Xu Peilan won the leadership of Yanping Neighborhood at the age of forty as an independent candidate, handily defeating the Nationalist incumbent, a barber who had served four terms. Xu immediately set up a community center; previously there had been no space for residents to gather and hold activities other than the warden’s office. By the time she won reelection to her third term in 2014, the community center was flourishing, with middle-aged and retired residents celebrating birthdays there and singing karaoke in the basement. Rather than conduct business on a one-to-one basis, Xu had developed a team of some hundred volunteers who received visitors and helped her handle some aspects of her work. Thus, she made use of existing institutions such as the security-patrol team and the block captains, but also incorporated a larger group of residents into neighborhood service.⁵² Other women wardens also made particularly extensive use of volunteers.⁵³

The individual personalities and styles of wardens can make a real difference in residents’ experiences and perceptions. In one Taipei neighborhood, when a DPP warden won election, a resident who was committed to Taiwanese heritage and independence rejoiced and became active in teaching courses at the community center.⁵⁴ Some interviewees reported being impressed when new leaders came into office and began making improvements to long-neglected parts of the locality.⁵⁵ Residents’ choice of neighborhood leader is both an expression of the kind of neighborhood they wish to live in and an evaluation of who is most fit to look out for their interests in the locale. Self-styled modern *lizhang* pride themselves on taking a reasoned, impartial approach to neighborhood improvements, and they distance themselves from the kinds of smoke-filled, cliquish gatherings that a stereotypical warden of the past might host. One candidate expressed this with a banner promising “no tobacco, no liquor, no betel nut.”⁵⁶ Apart from partisan and gender considerations, class is thus often a dimension of neighborhood elections, expressed overtly in the “experience” and “educational background” sections of the election announcements. To take one example from 2014: in the Dazhi neighborhood of Zhongshan district

fifty-year-old independent Cai Junxian, a graduate of a bank management program, beat out three other candidates, including sixty-year-old Nationalist incumbent Cao Yukun, whose profile listed only an elementary school education.⁵⁷

At times, neighborhood politics transcends day-to-day needs and volunteering and can involve significant local issues. Although they do not have direct authority over land-use decisions, wardens are consulted on, and can influence, construction projects such as the building of new temples or shops. They sometimes take a position for or against infrastructure projects such as sluices for rainwater on mountainsides or even major undertakings like the Maokong Gondola, built in the mountains on Taipei's southern edge. Wardens might be consulted in the negotiations involved when owners of older housing units sell their homes to developers for tear-down and rebuilding. The *li* also forms part of the response to major events and crises. In the aftermath of earthquakes like that of September 21, 1999, wardens and other volunteers helped to identify structural damage to buildings and took part in the massive clean-up effort. They helped to distribute disinfectant and to provide food and assistance to residents confined to their homes under quarantine during the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic of 2003.⁵⁸

These kinds of issues come up only occasionally, however, and are not the everyday bread-and-butter of *li* affairs. The way in which the activities of the wardens are generally oriented toward service in various quotidian forms might be seen as a limitation of Taiwan's style of neighborhood politics. Most of the time, for most people, the business of the *li* revolves around things that do not transcend its boundaries and that take quiet forms, often individualized requests and assistance. As the 2014 results show, neighborhoods are a challenging (though not impossible) place for youthful activists to establish a toehold and pursue goals that go beyond the traditional scope of warden work. The institutions of the *li/lin* are not particularly hospitable to social movements or to NGOs focusing on particular causes. This stems in part from the fact that wardens typically come from social strata (such as small business owners and retired government officials) that tend to prefer "development" to activist politics. But it also derives from the wardens' democratic accountability; they can be reluctant to take on causes that lack overwhelming majority support.

Despite—and in part, because of—the very small scale of neighborhood politics, the activities and institutions of the *li* matter quite a bit to many people. Not to everyone, of course; neighborhoods are most relevant to those who possess property in them (owners of homes and shops); whose children

are growing up and attending school in them (parents); and those whose social activities are centered there (particularly retirees). Yet a robust majority of Taipei residents expressed support for the warden system, and island-wide surveys show similar results.⁵⁹ For them, it makes sense to have a state-backed office close at hand, led by a neighbor of their choosing, to keep an eye on the locality and respond to needs or problems that arise. These institutions help to fill what otherwise might be seen as a gap between the household and the broader urban polity. Given this popular support, as well as the importance that wardens have for parties and politicians, these institutions can thus be quite resistant to change. This was illustrated, for example, in 2002 and 2003, when then-mayor Ma Ying-jeou proposed a set of reforms to Taipei's neighborhood system that among other things would have modestly trimmed wardens' benefits and their discretion over expenses and block captain appointments. With wardens strongly objecting to the plan, city councilors of both major parties criticized it, and Ma was obliged to apologize.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Neighborhood politics have thus evolved over time in ways that parallel changes in Taiwan's political system as a whole. Since at least the 1990s, Taiwan's elaborate system of neighborhood governance has featured a form of public electoral competition that is unusually if not uniquely competitive in comparison to counterparts elsewhere in the region and around the world. It forms an extension of party politics at the grass roots, while also constituting a micro-level political sphere in and of itself. Both of these dimensions must be appreciated in order to understand these institutions' persistence and their resistance to change. Both help to explain the ongoing vitality of neighborhood politics—a realm that rarely grabs headlines but continues to attract a great deal of energy in the form of candidates running for the nearly six thousand *lizhang* positions, citizens choosing among them at the ballot box, and residents participating in the numerous forms of community activities that the system proliferates.

The system has shown that it can incorporate new generations and new conceptions of how local affairs should be run. Most of the 104 women now serving as wardens in the capital see their roles and relate to their communities in ways that differ from those of their predecessors of past decades. But as we have also seen, the institution changes gradually. While holding neighborhood elections concurrently with those for mayor and city council has dramatically increased turnout, it is not evident that this has

revolutionized neighborhood politics in other respects. More time and more study will be needed to determine whether this systematically favors or jeopardizes incumbents, for example, and whether it strengthens or weakens ties to politicians at higher levels. Rapid change is also impeded by the fact that warden positions are not easily claimed by youth—due in large part to the nature of the work they entail, the expectations of constituents, and the prerequisites of a successful campaign. Some neighborhood politicians have begun to embrace technology such as social media, but the *li* can only be virtualized to a limited extent. It remains a sphere of essentially interpersonal relationships, cultivated week in and week out through interactions in local parks, stores, and garbage collection points.

There are multiple aspects to this system and the kinds of activities and participation it engenders. The wardens cannot be reduced merely to electoral tools of political parties and politicians in higher offices; indeed, as a group they have become less partisan and more independent over time. The system contributes to a personalized politics oriented toward constituent service. It is geared toward citizens' immediate environs and day-to-day needs and engages grand principles and debates (such as concerning national identity) only indirectly through partisan ties. This form of politics does not appeal to everyone and is not designed to accomplish transformative social change. But it does fill a range of needs and provide space for addressing the kinds of street-level concerns that can matter a great deal in people's lives.

The *li* system thus adds an important dimension to Taiwan's democratic system, giving it extra depth and reach. It brings politics into people's lives at the community level. Citizens do not merely elect the mayors and council members who govern their city as a whole and who appear frequently in newspapers and on television. In the *lizhang*, they also select representatives who handle affairs pertaining directly to the immediate locality, serving as very close-at-hand, tangible expressions of the community's choice.

NOTES

- 1 The nine offices were as follows: in the cities, (1) mayors, (2) city councilors, and (3) neighborhood wardens; in the indigenous districts of municipalities, (4) chiefs and councilors; and in counties, (5) county magistrates, (6) county councilors, (7) township chiefs, (8) township councilors, and (9) village heads.
- 2 In Taiwan's political parlance, Blue refers to the Nationalist Party along with parties that align with it, while Green refers to the DPP and its allies.
- 3 A total of 7,848 neighborhood and village leaders were elected: "103 nian cun/lizhang xuanju gaikuang" (Overview of the 2014 village and neighborhood warden election), Zhongyang Xuanju Weiyuanhui (Central Electoral

Commission), accessed May 18, 2016, <http://db.cec.gov.tw/histQuery.jsp?voteCode=20141101V1E1&qryType=prof>.

- 4 This chapter draws primarily on research I conducted over the course of seven research trips between December 2003 and December 2015 to urban Taiwan, during which I visited thirteen neighborhoods in Taipei, in most cases returning on multiple occasions for repeated interviews and observational research. I also conducted many other interviews for this project with residents of Taipei and with a range of representatives and officials, including city council members, civil affairs bureau staff, district chiefs, district staff, neighborhood administrators, and police officers, as well as staff of the Nationalist Party and the DPP. Research assistants Li Wanru, Shih Li-wen, and Su Kuei-han conducted further interviews with Taipei residents with me or on my behalf in 2006. I designed a survey of Taipei residents concerning neighborhood matters and worked with Focus Survey Research to carry it out in March and April of 2006. Called the Taipei Neighborhoods Survey, this yielded data from 1,140 completed telephone interviews. I also spent several days in the cities of Chiayi and Kaohsiung interviewing neighborhood wardens and city officials to obtain perspective from locales far from the capital. Finally, public records, including the official records of neighborhood elections and city yearbooks, have provided a crucial source of information. Some of my findings have been published elsewhere, notably in Read, *Roots of the State*, comparing neighborhoods in Beijing and Taipei, but this chapter probes more deeply into aspects of neighborhood politics that are specific to Taiwan and pertain particularly to democratic contexts.
- 5 This kind of formal structuring of urban neighborhoods is found in Japan, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia in addition to Taiwan; for detailed case studies by country experts, see Read and Pekkanen, *Local Organizations and Urban Governance*.
- 6 Within Taiwan, recent research on the *li* system (sometimes in conjunction with rural villages) has primarily been undertaken by students and scholars of public administration, sometimes in government-sponsored projects. Particularly valuable contributions include Chen, *Cunlizhang zhi gongneng*; Chuang, *Taibeishi lilin zuzhi yunzuo*; Hsi and Fan, *Taibei shizhengfu jiceng zuzhi*; Tseng, *Cunlizhang shifou gaiwei youjizhi*; and City of Taipei Civil Affairs Bureau, *Taibeishi li ji lizhang gongneng dingwei*. One older study is Po, “Taiwansheng cunli zhidu.”
- 7 “Xiang zhen shi qu cun li lin shu,” (Numbers of cities, townships, districts, villages, neighborhoods, and blocks), table 01-01, *Neizheng tongji nianbao* (Statistical Yearbook of Interior), dated February 3, 2017, <http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/stat/year/list.htm>. Almost a third of the *cun* in existence as of 2010—fully 955 in total—were redesignated as *li* by 2011.
- 8 Some official documents use the term “neighborhood” for *lin*, but this is misleading given their very small scale.

- 9 See, in particular, Tsai, “One Kind of Control,” and Ts’ai, *The Colonial Engineering of Taiwan*. Chapter 2 of Read, *Roots of the State*, presents a concise overview of historical antecedents of neighborhood institutions.
- 10 Taipei wardens received NT\$45,000 per month during the time of my field research. Some of the city’s wardens own businesses or have other jobs; this was even more common outside the capital.
- 11 Elsewhere I have translated *li ganshi* as neighborhood liaison officer. The wardens do not choose their neighborhood administrators, although they sometimes might pressure a district chief to reassign one that they do not get along with. These officers assist the wardens while also serving as a check on them. They are required to remain neutral in *li* politics. In other cities, such as Xinbei, a single civil servant covers multiple neighborhoods. For more, see Read, *Roots of the State*, chapters 2 and 4.
- 12 Figures in this paragraph come from *102 nian Taibeishi tongji nianbao* (Taipei City statistical yearbook 2013), accessed December 24, 2014, www.dbas.taipei.gov.tw.
- 13 Schafferer, *The Power of the Ballot Box*, 85–91.
- 14 Read, *Roots of the State*, chapter 2.
- 15 Turnout in elections for Washington DC’s advisory neighborhood commissions (ANCs) can serve as a comparison. In the November 4, 2014, election, turnout in the ANC vote was just 28.5 percent of registered voters, even though voters also chose a mayor and city council member on the same ballot. This figure should thus be compared with the 70.4 percent turnout in Taipei’s elections of the same month. We can only speculate how low ANC turnout would be if a separate election were held just for these positions, as was the case with Taipei warden elections prior to 2010. Author’s calculations from Washington’s official precinct-level results, retrieved on July 28, 2015, www.dcboee.org/election_info/election_results/downloads/November_4_2014_General_Election_Certified_Results.csv.
- 16 In only one Taipei neighborhood, Dajia, did a non-incumbent run unopposed in 2014. This and other specific figures from the 2014 elections come from the database of the Central Election Commission, www.cec.gov.tw.
- 17 There were two candidates in 47 percent of Taipei’s neighborhoods, and three or more candidates in 19 percent.
- 18 By comparison, in the 2014 election, there were only 1.3 candidates for each of Washington DC’s ANC seats, not counting write-ins. Author’s calculations from Washington’s official precinct-level results, retrieved on July 28, 2015, www.dcboee.org/election_info/election_results/downloads/November_4_2014_General_Election_Certified_Results.csv.
- 19 Of the ninety-six non-incumbents who won in 2014, sixty-one (64 percent) were challengers who beat an incumbent.
- 20 In this chapter, I give real names for neighborhoods and individuals when drawing only on information about them that comes from public records.

- I use pseudonyms when drawing on my own site visits and interviews, with the exception of Chen Kairen (real name).
- 21 Interview with Chen Kairen on January 19, 2007, and election records.
 - 22 In the United States, for example, even higher-level city elections are usually nonpartisan, with no reference to candidates' party affiliation appearing on ballots, to say nothing of neighborhood councils and the like. According to the International City/County Management Association's 2011 survey of municipalities, city council elections in 79 percent of US cities are nonpartisan. See Svava and Auer, "Perspectives on Changes in City Government Structure," 27.
 - 23 Taoyuan, which became a special municipality only in late 2014, is excluded here.
 - 24 Ko beat Nationalist nominee Lien Sheng-wen by a margin of 57 to 41 percent.
 - 25 Are wardens who run without a party affiliation truly nonpartisan? Interviews in Taipei revealed cases where wardens personally have clear partisan preferences—some Blue, some Green—but chose to eschew a party brand. At a minimum, running as a nonpartisan signals some distance from the organized parties and an effort to appeal to voters of various stripes.
 - 26 The Nationalist Party took 44 percent of city council seats in Taipei in 2014, with the DPP winning 43 percent.
 - 27 DPP warden candidates won eighteen out of twenty-five neighborhoods in Datong District in 2014, eleven out of forty-two neighborhoods in Zhongshan District, and seven out of thirty-six in Wanhua District.
 - 28 Interview with warden, July 3, 2011.
 - 29 Interview with warden, November 16, 2014.
 - 30 Interview with warden, November 15, 2014.
 - 31 This was noted at various times in the neighborhood I call Wenchang, which has elected independent wardens since 1998 despite leaning toward the Blue camp overall.
 - 32 In this initiative, party leaders issued a call to "expand electoral participation and recruit talent from among the people" in the name of deepening participatory democracy at the grass roots. "Local champions" who took part in the program and ran in neighborhood or village elections were given a modest amount of coaching and NT\$10,000 in financial support. See "Shen geng cun li, sheng gen Taiwan" (Deeply plow the villages and neighborhoods, extend roots into Taiwan)," DPP press release, March 24, 2006, www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=1202; interview with DPP official, November 18, 2014.
 - 33 Interviews with DPP official, November 18, 2014, and a Xinbei warden, August 2, 2017; records of the Central Election Commission; and information from the Minzhu Xiao Cao (People Power) website, <http://grass.tw>. About two-thirds of the People Power candidates ran as independents rather than as DPP nominees. The 2014 People Power effort also included ten candidates for township assemblies, of whom six were successful.

34 There are also two city councilors elected by voters of the city's indigenous
population.

35 Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 42.

36 Abandoned in the national legislature, the single non-transferable vote
system is still used in city councils. Not all *peipiao* schemes involve assigning
neighborhoods to council candidates, however. Voters can instead be asked
to vote for particular council candidates on the basis of their birthdays or ID
numbers, for instance.

37 DPP councilors I have spoken to in Taipei say that their party does not use a
responsibility zone system.

38 On vote buying, see Wang, *Democratization and the Breakdown of Clientelism*,
and Wang and Kurzman, "Logistics: How to Buy Votes."

39 A total of fifteen vote-buying cases were reported in warden campaigns in
the five special municipalities in the 2010 elections. Lin Changshun, "Shi Jian
ti 3 lizhang dangxuan wuxiao," (Shilin District prosecutor's office moves to
annul three warden elections), Central News Agency, January 4, 2011,
<http://news.cts.com.tw/cna/society/201101/201101040644855.html>.

40 Of all successful *cunzhang* and *lizhang* candidates in 2014, 23 percent ran
with a Nationalist Party nomination and 5 percent with a DPP nomination;
Central Election Commission records, accessed December 18, 2014, [http://
vote2014.nat.gov.tw](http://vote2014.nat.gov.tw).

41 Site visit, November 29, 2014, and records of the Taipei Election
Commission.

42 In the 2014 Taipei elections, the median number of votes received by a
winning warden candidate in a contested race was 1,748.

43 Election announcement for Jianguo Neighborhood in Zhongzheng District,
accessed December 18, 2014, <http://103bulletin.cec.gov.tw>.

44 Central Election Commission records, accessed December 18, 2014, [http://
vote2014.nat.gov.tw](http://vote2014.nat.gov.tw).

45 This figure is derived from records of the November 2014 election, obtained
from the Central Election Commission web site, at www.cec.gov.tw.

46 Interviews, November 16 and 29, 2014.

47 "Quanxin quanli zhuanzhi fuwu." These are common phrases, but the quoted
examples in this paragraph come from warden campaign banners in Taipei's
Wenshan District, 2006 and 2014.

48 "Lizhang huan wo zuo fuwu jia bei duo."

49 "Yi ren dangxuan quanjia fuwu."

50 Site visit, November 30, 2014.

51 www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001212776270, accessed July 28, 2015.

52 City of Taipei warden election records; interviews with Xu and her predecessor,
March 16, 2006, January 25, 2007, August 13, 2010, and November 15, 2014.

53 This was the case in the neighborhoods I call Wenchang and Andong, for
instance.

- 54 Interview with resident, March 25, 2006.
- 55 Residents expressed this, for instance, in interviews of March 19, 2006, and November 20, 2014.
- 56 “Bu yan, bu jiu, bu binlang.” Mentioned on television news during the November 2014 campaign.
- 57 Dazhi election announcement for the warden election of November 29, 2014.
- 58 On the role of neighborhood wardens in such emergencies, see Schwartz, “Achieving Effective Pandemic Response in Taiwan.”
- 59 In the 2006 Taipei Neighborhoods Survey, 69 percent of 1,100 respondents said that they supported maintaining the warden system. In a national survey sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior in 2004, 74 percent of the 877 urbanites surveyed said that they would like to see the warden system continued.
- 60 For details and references on the proposed reforms, the *lizheng gaige*, see Read, *Roots of the State*, 103–4.