



Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation

August 2023 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt

Released:

August 22, 2023

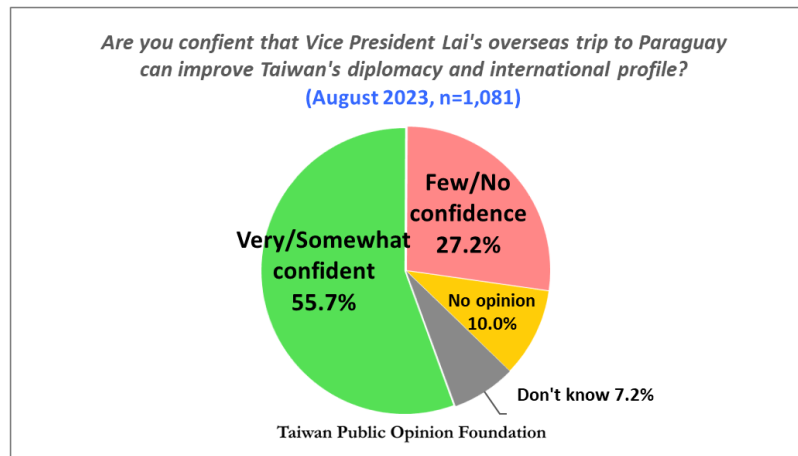
Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF) today released the result of its August 2023 nation-wide poll. This marks the 85th monthly survey conducted by the TPOF aimed at tracking the development and changes in Taiwan’s public opinion. The full release in Chinese language is available on our [official website](#).

How the Survey was Conducted

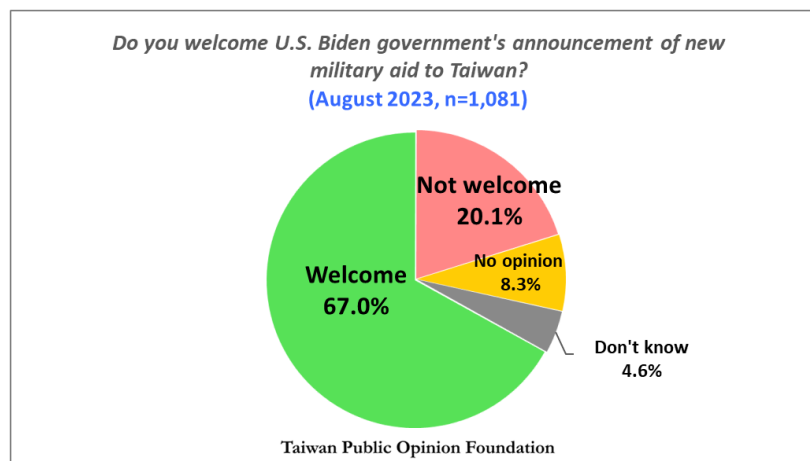
This survey was conducted on August 14-15, 2023, with a sample size of 1,081. Adults 20 years of age and older residing in Taiwan were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline and cellphone numbers were drawn through dual-frame random sampling with a proportion of 70% from landlines and 30% from cellphones. Samples were demographically weighted to adjust for gender, age, education and the district of residency based on the latest statistics published by the Ministry of the Interior. Sampling error is around ± 2.98 percentage points with 95% level of confidence.

Main Findings:

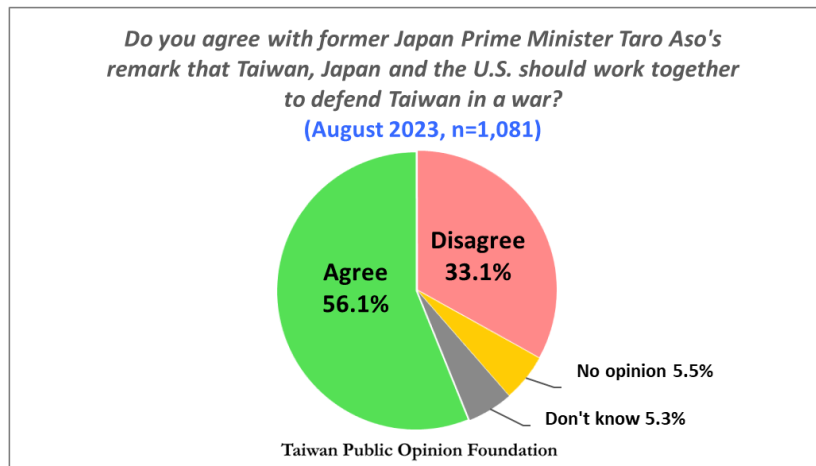
1. On August 12, 2023, Vice President Lai Ching-te embarked on an [official international trip](#) to attend the presidential inauguration ceremony of Paraguay, one of the remaining diplomatic allies of the Republic of China. During the trip he also transited through the United States and as such the trip has received some international attention. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 55.7% said they were confident that Lai's trip could improve Taiwan's international profile and diplomacy, while a minority of 27.2% were not confident.



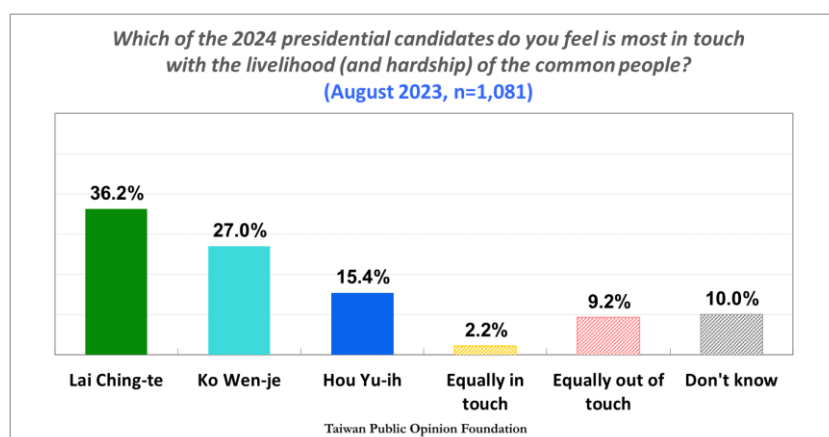
2. U.S. President Biden's administration announced on July 28 of a [new military aid package](#) to Taiwan to deter aggression from China. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a strong majority of 67% said they welcome military aid, while only 20.1% do not welcome it. Overall, more than two third of the Taiwanese people welcome the U.S. aids which vastly outnumbered those who don't welcome, a clear sign that U.S. support to Taiwan – even military aid – are generally welcomed by the Taiwanese public.



3. In early August Japan’s former Prime Minister Taro Aso visited Taiwan and [made a widely reported statement](#) that Taiwan, Japan and the United States must work together to “show strong resolve to come to Taiwan's defense in a war if it were attacked.” The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 56% agree with Aso’s comment, while 33% disagree with it.

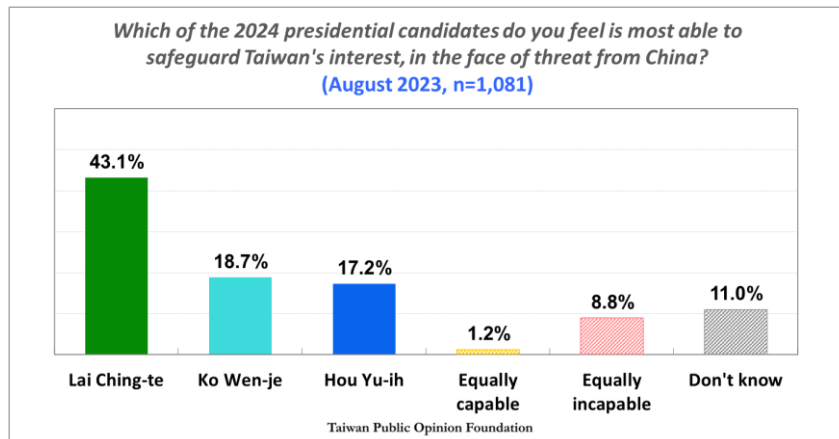


4. On the upcoming January 2024 Taiwan presidential election, the poll asked respondents which of the candidates they feel is most in touch with the lives of the common people. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, DPP’s Lai received the top spot at 36.2%, Ko came distant second at 27%, KMT’s Hou came last at 15.4%.

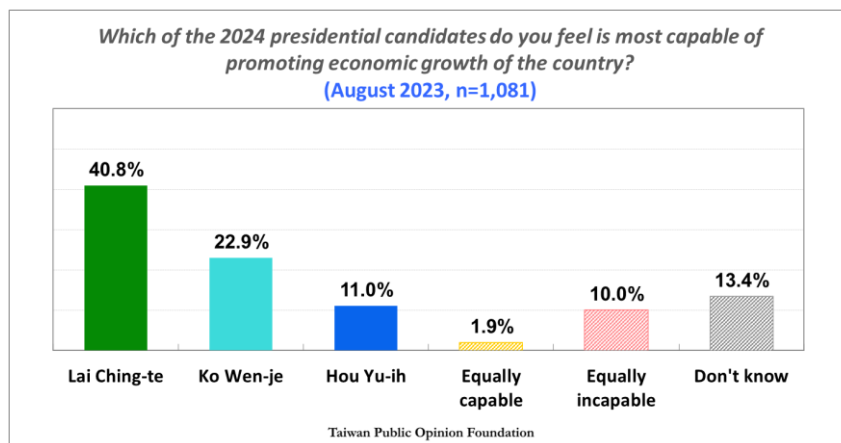


5. The poll asked respondents which of the candidates they feel is most capable of safeguarding Taiwan’s interest in the face of threat from China. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, DPP’s Lai received the most votes of confidence at 43.1%, Ko came second at 18.7%, KMT’s Hou came last at 17.2%. Notably the number who are confident in Lai outnumbered both Ko and Hou’s combined, indicating that the majority public sees Lai as the candidate most likely to assert

Taiwan's interest when confronting China.



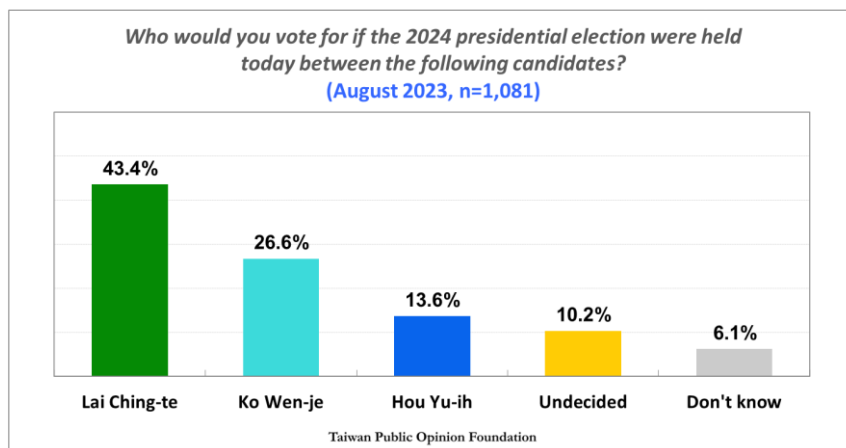
6. The poll asked respondents which of the candidates they feel is most capable of promoting economic growth. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, DPP's Lai received the highest mark at 40.8%, Ko came second at 22.9%, KMT's Hou came last at 11%. Here again Lai's votes of confidence on economic growth outnumbered both Ko and Hou's combined, which might be due to the perception that Lai has experience serving as a central government official whereas Ko and Hou only have local governance experience.

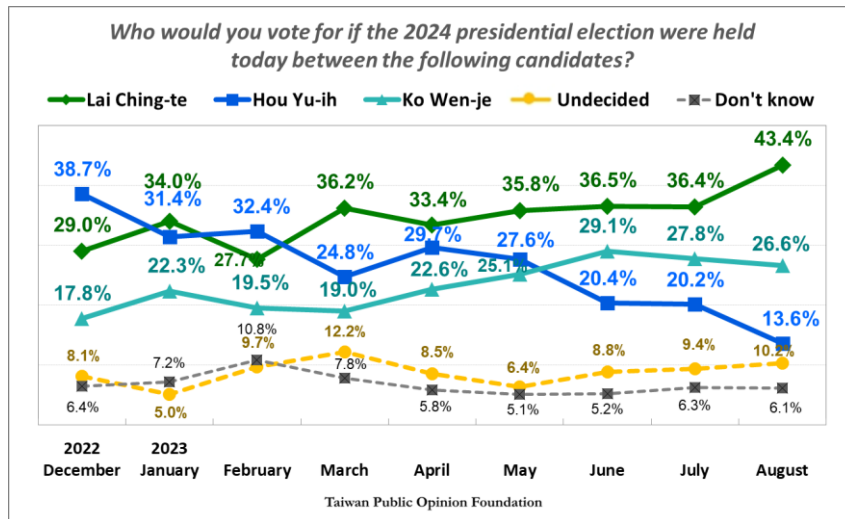


7. On the 2024 presidential election, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Vice President Lai Ching-te leads at 43.4%, former Taipei City Mayor Ko Wen-je came second at 26.6%, and New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih came third at 13.6%. Compared to July poll, the balance between the three candidates has changed considerably. Lai has now reached more than 43% of support, which is even higher than what President Tsai Ing-wen was holding in August of 2019 during that year's campaign.

Hou's freefall is particularly noticeable, as he has now lost almost two-thirds of the support he once held in December 2022. Ko only lost 1.2% support and yet he is now even further from catching up to Lai, whose lead is so commanding that he now has more support than *both* Ko and Hou combined. Some other observations:

- About 93% DPP supporters support Lai, while 81% TPP supporters support Ko, and only 57% KMT supporters support their party's candidate Hou. Among independents, 24% support Lai, 17% support Ko, and 10% support Hou. Lai made small gains among the remaining uncommitted DPP supporters, while both Ko and Hou lost some among their own party's supporters.
- Ko holds a lead among younger voters from 20-44, while Lai is the majority favorite among all other age groups from and above 40. Compared to last month, Ko's lost the lead among 40-45, while Lai made gains in all age groups.
- For those with college education and above Ko is the clear favorite. On the other hand, Lai is the clear favorite among those with lower education attainments.





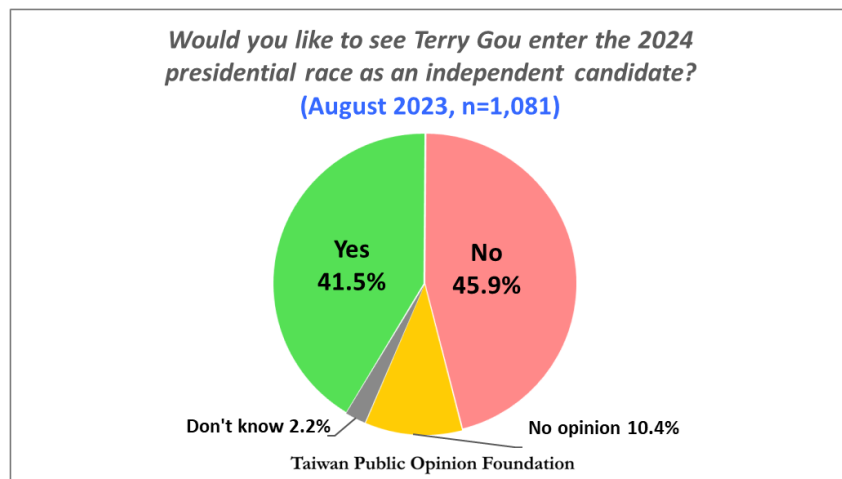
8. What are the possible causes of this dramatic shift in presidential support in August? Several factors could be at play here:

- Taiwan’s oppositions have been in a state of disarray over the past several months, as KMT was engulfed in an internal dispute over presidential nomination process, while Terry Gou continued to “campaign” and disrupt party unity.
- As three major candidates were decided and nominated by their parties, voters have become increasingly familiar with their respective public image, character, strengths and weaknesses. As TPOF polls shown, most voters have now made up their minds regarding the competency and trustworthiness of the candidates across a variety of issues. Having received the highest marks of confidence or approval across all these major issues, it is no surprise that the majority decided that Lai is their favorite candidate.
- On August 12, 2023, Lai led a diplomatic delegation to visit Paraguay in his capacity as the Vice President. While he kept a low profile, the majority public approved the trip as a positive step for Taiwan’s diplomacy as TPOF poll this month found. This no doubt has been beneficial for Lai’s campaign.
- Fundamentally the political predispositions of the Taiwanese voters today on major issues like unification-independence divide and political party identification are most beneficial for Lai and the DPP. The DPP currently has the highest support as a political party, while support for “Taiwan independence” is the majority position among

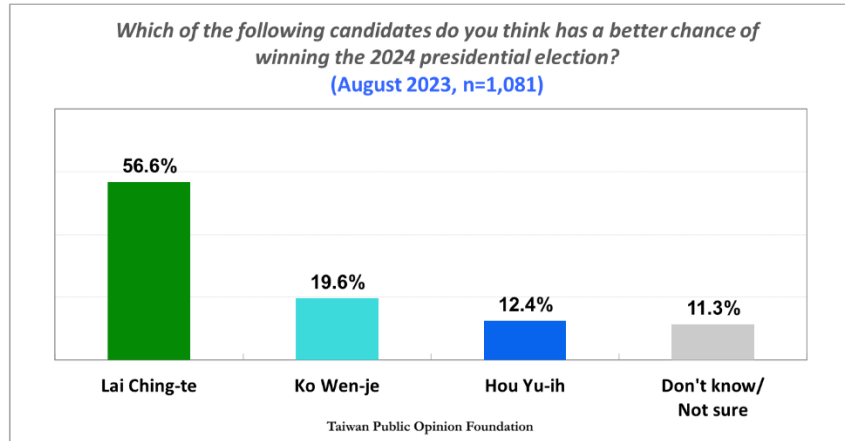
Taiwanese voters which again benefits Lai almost exclusively.

- External international events such as U.S. House of Representatives passing [Taiwan International Solidarity Act](#), U.S. President Biden announced new military aid package, as well as former Japan Prime Minister Taro Aso’s visit to Taiwan all gestured greater international support for Taiwan. In terms of domestic electoral politics, such outside support benefits the ruling party and its candidates almost exclusively.
- Finally, voters are also influenced by various government spending programs and welfare initiatives by the ruling Tsai government this year, such as government subsidies to private university students. This again benefits the ruling party and its candidates.

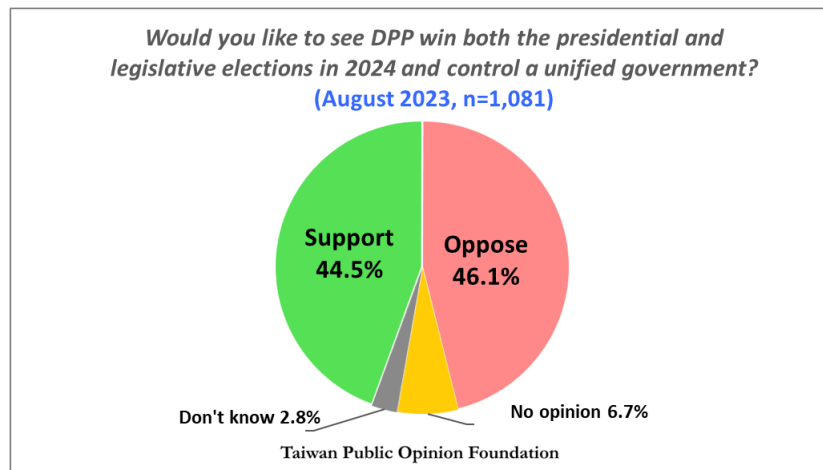
9. Foxconn tycoon Terry Gou was a contender for KMT’s presidential nomination but lost out to Hou Yu-ih in May. Since then, Gou has continued to “campaign” around Taiwan and rally supporters but has not formally launched an independent campaign. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, the public is still mixed on whether they like to see Gou run as an independent presidential candidate, with a slight majority does not wishing to see him enter the race.



10. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 56.6% think Lai will win the 2024 presidential election, while only 19.6% think Ko will win, and 12.4% think Hou will win. With four months to go until election day, the Taiwanese public overwhelmingly see Lai as favored to win, and this perception itself will no doubt have an impact on the eventual outcome.

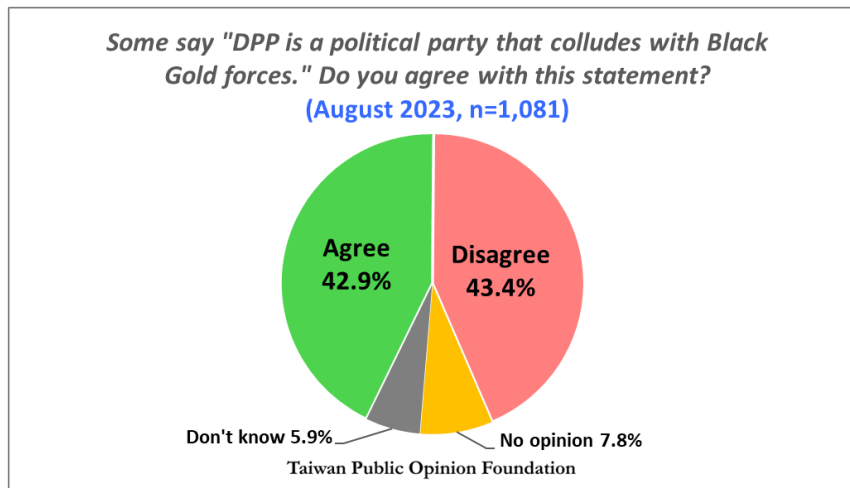


11. We asked respondents whether they like to see the ruling DPP win *both* the presidential and legislative elections in 2024. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a slim majority of 46.1% oppose having another four years of unified DPP government and parliamentary majority, while 44.5% support it. This means that despite Lai leading the presidential poll by a wide margin, Taiwanese voters might not want the DPP to win *both* executive and legislative power again.

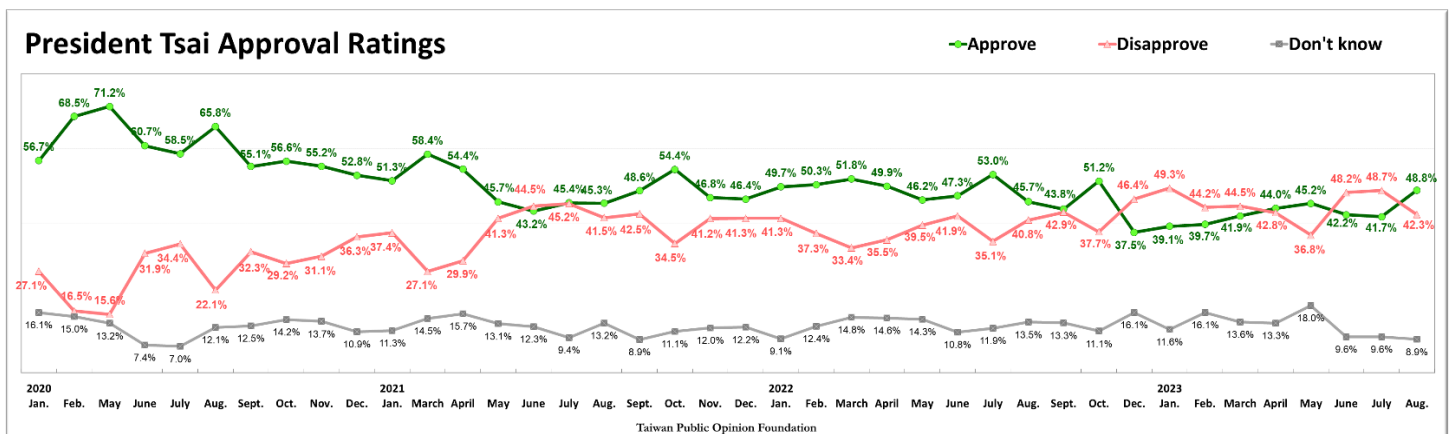


12. In Taiwan politics, “Black Gold” is a term used to describe political corruption and criminal actors attempting to influence and/or control government through corrupt politicians. As such it is a serious accusation to say that a political party, a ruling government, or a politician is colluding with or is even him/herself representing the “Black Gold” forces. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 43.4% disagree with the statement that DPP is a party that colludes with Black Gold, while 42.9% agree with it. This means that almost half of the electorates believe in the serious accusation that DPP is the Black Gold, which indicates a serious lack of public trust at least among a significant portion

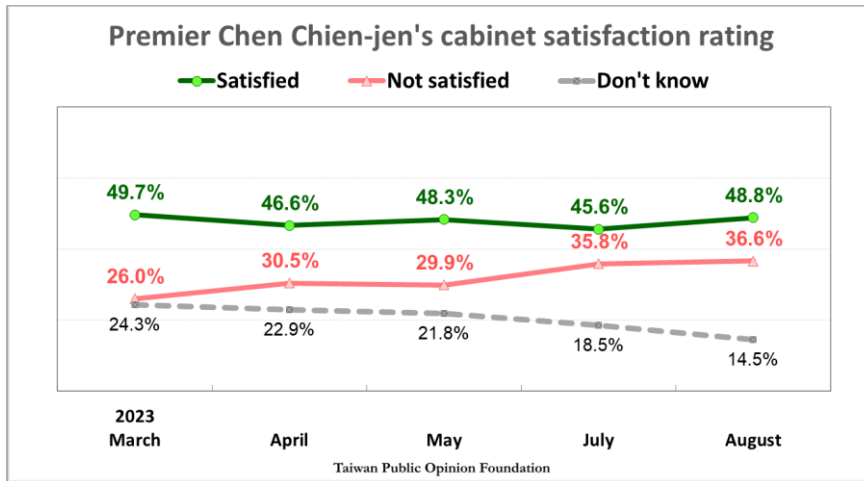
of the population.



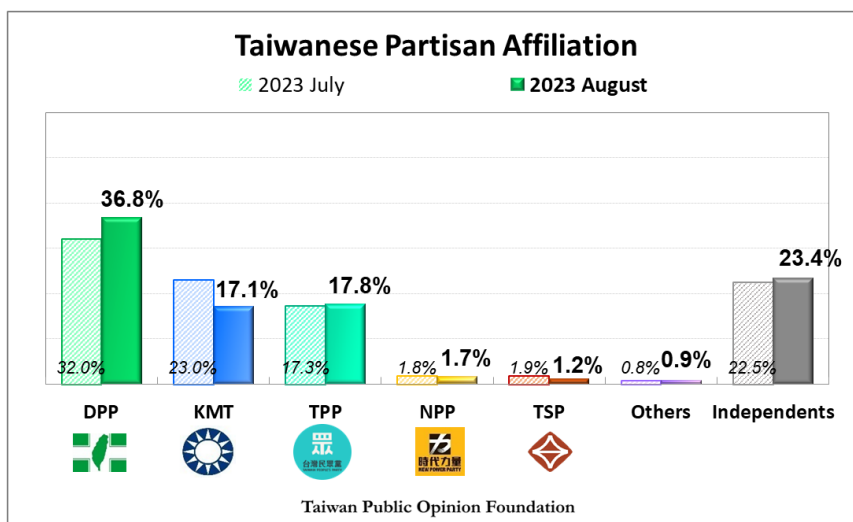
13. On Presidential job approval rating, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 48.8% approved of the way Tsai Ing-wen is handling her job as the President, while a minority of 42.3% disapproved of her. Compared to our July poll, Tsai's approval saw a dramatic 6% increase while disapproval decreased by 6% concurrently. Having President Tsai regaining the majority approval is no doubt a very positive factor for the DPP and Lai's campaign for 2024, however there are still 42% disapproval which means while Tsai is not currently *unpopular*, she is also not exactly *popular* and dramatic shift could still happen over the remaining course of the election.



14. Premier Chen Chien-jen has been in office for six months since President Tsai appointed him to the position. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 48.8% were satisfied with this Chen cabinet's performance so far, while 36.6% were not satisfied.

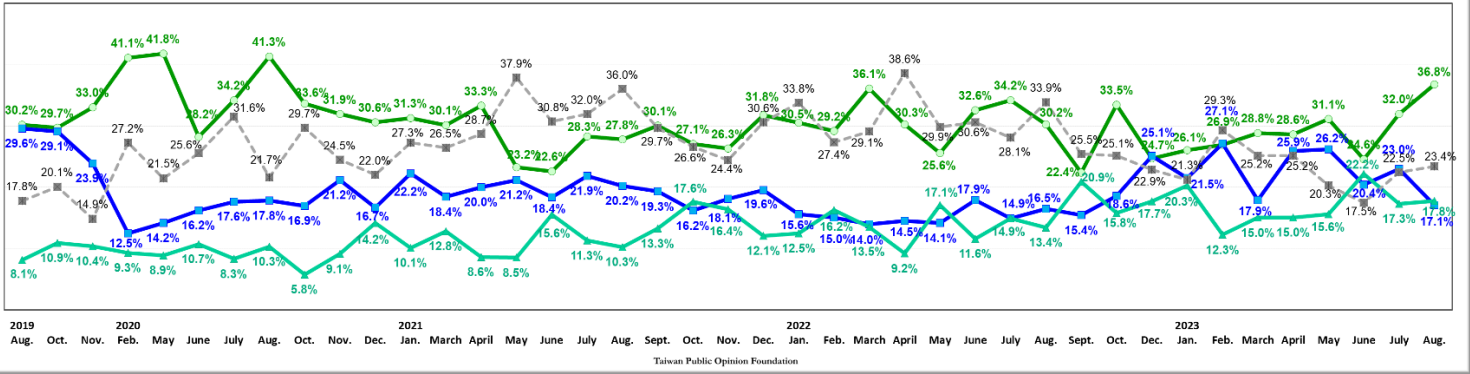


15. On political party affiliation, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 36.8% said they support the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), 17.1% support the Kuomintang (KMT), 17.8% support the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), 1.7% support the New Power Party (NPP), 1.2% support the Taiwan State-building Party (TSP), and 23.4% respondents identified themselves as independents. Compared to our July poll, DPP made noticeable gain while KMT suffered a significant setback. Like our analysis of presidential polling, KMT's internal disunion and disputes have clearly taken a toll on the party's popularity. On the other hand, TPP made a tiny gain but has failed to capture most of the support that the KMT lost.



Taiwanese Partisan Affiliation 2019 - 2023

—○— DPP —■— KMT —▲— TPP —■— Independents



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