

Call for chapters

The Tsai Years: Progress and Stagnation in Taiwan between 2016-2024 (working title)

[Julia Marinaccio](#), University of Bergen (Norway)

[Kristina Kironska](#), Palacky University Olomouc (Czechia)

In 2016, after eight years of Kuomintang (KMT) rule and Ma Ying-jeou's presidency, the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential and parliamentary elections, gaining full control of both branches of government for the first time in history. Moreover, Tsai Ing-wen was sworn in as Taiwan's first female president. Tsai Ing-wen's era is now drawing to a close, as on 13 January 2024, Taiwanese people will vote for a new president and their representatives in the Legislative Yuan. The outcomes of these elections are highly unpredictable and even more so their implications for Taiwan's future.

The past eight years were remarkable in many ways, and much has happened both internationally and domestically. China and the US are on a collision course, with Taiwan getting progressively drawn into the middle. Many observers claim Taiwan to be a bargaining chip in what is folding out as the greatest and most important power struggle in the 21st century. Tsai Ing-wen, therefore, has been walking a tightrope managing Taiwan's foreign relations and cross-Strait relations. Her presidency was likewise characterized by severing relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the loss of long-standing allies, especially in Central America. Yet, despite of China's growing attempts to impose its interpretation of the "One-China Principle" on other countries and reduce Taiwan's action sphere internationally, bilateral ties with many other countries were strengthened, notably with Central and Eastern European countries.

While protests in Hong Kong have inspired Taiwanese youth, the imposition of the National Security Law, which eventually strangled Hong Kong's democracy, have led to loud reflections about the feasibility of 'One Country, Two Systems' even within the Kuomintang (KMT). Taiwan's oldest political party is struggling to find its place and voters in a new era of global political contestation between autocracy and democracy, with China being not only one of the central protagonists but also the declared enemy of liberal democracy.

Meanwhile, new political forces and movements that emerged during the Ma Ying-jeou years have entered the domestic political stage trying to shape policies and legislation. Controlling both branches of government, the DPP could follow through on some of its longstanding policies and counter some of the legacies of the Ma Ying-jeou administration. It enacted same-sex marriage and supported reducing Taiwan's economic dependence on China. However, other policies failed or got protracted, notably the reform of the Referendum Act.

How to evaluate the legacy of eight years DPP government? How powerful and feminine has Tsai been and perceived as a leader? What achievements has the party taken up, where did it fail, and what was left unattended? More importantly, what might be the consequences?

Information about the editors:

[Dr. Julia Marinaccio](#) is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Bergen. She studied China studies and political science in Vienna and Taipei, and her research interests lie in political transnationalism in Taiwan and environmental governance in China. She previously worked at the University of Vienna, Free University Berlin, and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Vienna. Her research is published in international peer-reviewed journals, such as *China Perspectives* and the *European Journal of East Asian Studies*. She can be reached at: julia.marinaccio@uib.no

[Dr. Kristina Kironska](#) is an assistant professor at the Palacky University Olomouc (coordinating the Horizon Europe Twinning project "The EU in the Volatile Indo-Pacific Region") and Co-Director of the think tank Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS). She is the editor (and author) of books on China and Taiwan: *Contemporary China: A new superpower?* (published in Slovak, Czech, and the English version by Routledge is coming out in August 2023) and *Asian Champion: All you need to know about contemporary Taiwan* [in Slovak]. She can be reached at: k.kironska@gmail.com

About the book project:

The book will cover a variety of topics to provide a comprehensive and balanced account of Tsai Ing-wen's two presidential terms and help readers better understand her impact on Taiwan's politics and society. We welcome proposals for papers that are descriptive and analytical in style, using an approach with qualitative and quantitative research to address different policy areas and topics. Contributions should analyse issues in depth, with a focus on the hidden, rather than the obvious. Topics can range from minority rights, party politics and immigration in domestic politics to cross-Strait and international relations. The following list of suggestions is not exhaustive and merely serves as a rough guide.

Domestic politics (incl. social and environmental issues):

- Political psychology - public perceptions of Tsai's leadership (f.ex. whether she is perceived as the *1st female* president)
- Gender politics / female political representation / women's rights
- Health policy / Taiwan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Party politics / youth political engagement
- Economic and industrial development (f.ex., semiconductor and electronics industries, with a focus on companies like TSMC and Foxconn)
- Social policies (pension reform, welfare, demographics)
- Minority rights (disability rights, immigrants,...)
- Im- and emigration (citizenship, role of immigrant workers for industrial/economic development, etc.)
- Environmental protection and climate policies
- Identity politics (nationalism, language policies, etc.)
- Transitional justice and human rights

Cross-strait and international relations:

- Cross-Strait relations and changes of cross-Strait rhetoric across parties
- US-Taiwan relations, China-US relations: impact and public perceptions
- Losing diplomatic allies but winning strong partners? (How important are formal diplomatic relations with weak allies compared to strong bilateral relations with strong partners?)
- National defense and security
- Taiwan and its neighbors in the Indo-Pacific region
- Evolving Taiwan-CEE relations
- New Southbound Policy

Expected publication in 2025. We aim for an open-access publication with an academic publishing house, such as BRILL, De Gruyter, etc. Options will be discussed with successful contributors at the book workshops.

Workshop(s) for contributors:

We are applying for various kinds of funding to be able to bring all the contributors together. The first book workshop will be held in September 2023 in a digital format. Contributors are expected to give a 10-minute presentation of their research article and have five-pages draft ready (to share with the other contributors before the workshop). The second book workshop will be in February/March 2024 either in Bergen, Norway or Olomouc, Czechia (depending on the amount of funding we can secure). By then, contributors are expected to have finished their drafts.

Projected timeline:

- Chapter proposals due: **20 May 2023**
- Decision on participation in the project: **15 June 2023**
- 1st book workshop (digital) / preliminary draft due: **September 2023**
- 2nd book workshop (in person) / final draft due: **February/March 2024**
- Expected publication: **end of 2025**

How to apply:

Please send to both *Kristina Kironska* (k.kironska@gmail.com) and *Julia Marinaccio* (julia.marinaccio@uib.no), with the email subject "Taiwan-Tsai book project", a short abstract (200-500 words) that sketches your intended focus and structure and explains how your paper will address the project themes; and your CV or short bio (can be part of the abstract).