

# TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION DURING PANDEMIC: DEMOCRACY VS “DEMO” CRAZY

*Asmadi Hassan<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Danial Azman<sup>2</sup>*

COVID-19 has plunged the world into chaos. Global cases increase every day, impacting economic, social and political sectors. Japan is among the impacted countries. How does it deal with the pandemic? The aim of this article is to examine the election in the Tokyo Prefecture area during the pandemic. It is a gubernatorial election which was held on July 5, 2020. The election was held when a seat vacancy occurred as demanded by democratic processes. At the same time, the election was held while the COVID-19 pandemic was spreading across the country, which included Tokyo. Therefore, this article juxtaposes the term democracy against "demo" crazy (you crazy) to show the conflict of norms between the demands of democracy and the madness of holding elections when the situation is considered inappropriate. The term “demo” crazy is a mix of Kelantan Malay words representing you and crazy (madness). The combination of the words translates as "you are crazy." It also reflects that holding elections at the wrong time is considered to be madness. How did the candidates conduct their campaigns and the voting? What was the content of the campaigns during the pandemic? What was the effect of the elections? This study uses the library research methodology to answer these questions. This study found that the demand of democracy was more important than waiting for a possible recovery in the situation. Although holding an election was considered a crazy move, as a supporter of democracy, an election was still considered to be a priority.

Keywords: Pandemic, democracy, Tokyo’s gubernatorial election, recovery phases

---

## INTRODUCTION

The Tokyo’s gubernatorial election campaign officially commenced on June 18, 2020 and the election was held on July 5 of the same year. A total of 17 days was allocated for candidates to campaign in the election.<sup>3</sup> The election was held when a seat vacancy occurred in accordance with democratic processes. While Tokyo was caught in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic along with the rest of the country, this election was being held at the very same time. Therefore, the election was held not only to elect a governor but also a leader to guide the residents of Tokyo in facing the life-threatening virus. Was democracy more important than human life? Had sanity collectively slipped with the holding of an election while COVID-19 cases in Tokyo simultaneously peaked? Therefore, this article places the

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Senior Lecturer, Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Malaysia. Email: [madisan@um.edu.my](mailto:madisan@um.edu.my).

<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Malaysia. Email: [danial@um.edu.my](mailto:danial@um.edu.my).

<sup>3</sup> Susumu Kuonuma, Tokyo Governor Election to Test Support for Olympic, *Nikkei Asia*, 1 July, 2020, available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Tokyo-2020-Olympics/Tokyo-governor-election-to-test-support-for-Olympics>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

term democracy alongside "demo" crazy<sup>4</sup> to show the conflict of norms between the demands of democracy and the madness of holding elections when the situation is considered inappropriate. The term "demo" crazy is a blending of Kelantanese Malay dialect words, which equivalent to you and crazy (madness). This combination essentially means "you are crazy" (*demo gila*). It also reflects that holding the elections at the wrong time is considered madness.

## DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS CONCEPT

Democracy is a set of ideas and principles of freedom. It is a manifestation of the concept of freedom and serves to protect human rights such as the freedom of speech and individual beliefs; the protection of the rule of law; as well as the right to participate in politics, the economy and culture.<sup>5</sup> For example, the participation in politics emphasizes the fair competition in elections among politicians and the right to be affiliated with a political party.

Elections are the main platform for every democratic country and its residents to choose their leader. It is a competitive arena for political parties and all involved candidates. In other words, elections are a battleground of ideas, planning and manifestoes to gain the support of residents to subsequently lead the government.<sup>6</sup> To be elected as a member of government, one has to obtain majority through the principle of a majority government.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, democracy is a way for individuals to gain power through competition in elections. Those who get the most votes will win the election.

In this regard, election is a fundamental aspect of democracy. Fair elections should not only be held to elect governmental leaders at a federal level, but also at the local level. It should be held when the term of the given mandate expires or any vacancy becomes available due to death or withdrawal of an incumbent. As a democratic country, elections in Japan are held at many levels of government, such as upper and lower house elections for the federal level, as well as prefectural and municipal elections for a local level. Elections are also held to elect a governor for each prefecture, and this includes in Tokyo.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in line with democracy, elections must be held in order to protect the rights of the residents of Tokyo. Elections must be held under any circumstances, including when COVID-19 was spreading across the country. Furthermore, equal opportunities should be given to all candidates to contest as well as to organise campaign elections.

## WHY TOKYO?

Tokyo was selected as the subject of this study due to significant consideration. It is a metropolitan prefecture and the capital of Japan. Whatever happens in Tokyo will attract world attention. Tokyo is also considered the heart of the country with an annual income of US\$ 1 trillion<sup>9</sup> or 20 percent of

---

<sup>4</sup> For more details on the concept of "democracy" in Japan, see Maiko Ichihara, "Japanese Democracy after Shinzo Abe," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2021, pp. 81-95.

<sup>5</sup> Jun Tsukada, "The Depiction of Democracy in Japan's Newspapers," *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2021, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Yong Jae Kim, "Issue, Ownership and Electoral Rule: Empirical Evidence from Japan," *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2020, p. 148.

<sup>7</sup> Doh Chull Shin, "Democratic Consolidation in East Asia: Exploring Realignment in Japan, Korea and Taiwan," *Democratization*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2020, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> Mireya Solis, Japan's Democratic Renewal and the Survival of the Liberal Order, *Brookings Institution*, 22 January, 2021, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/japans-democratic-renewal-and-the-survival-of-the-liberal-order/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Ryusei Takahashi, Pandemic gives Yuriko Koike the Edge as Key Tokyo Poll Approaches, *The Japan Times*, 3 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/06/03/national/politics-diplomacy/pandemic-koike-tokyo-election/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Japan's total revenue.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Tokyo is also facing the problem of an increase in the population of its senior citizens and a decline in younger people. The metropolis constantly faces the risk of natural disasters. More importantly, Tokyo was scheduled to host the 2020 Summer Olympics. With a population density that ranks among the highest in the world, Tokyo has the highest in Japan. The population is about 14 million, or 11 percent of all Japan. It is also an economic centre with employees living outside of the metropolitan area that commute every day to work. This further increases the density of Tokyo during the working day. Along with the high density and being a centre for commuters, COVID-19 could easily spread if large rallies — such as campaigning elections — are held. Therefore, how could the Tokyo gubernatorial election be held to meet the demands of democracy while facing the life threatening virus? Has the election impacted the number of COVID-19 cases in Tokyo?

## COVID-19 CASES IN TOKYO

Referring to Table 1, on the first day of the election campaign, there were 41 cases in Tokyo, 35 on June 19 and 39 on June 20. Additionally, on the first day of the election campaign, the total number of cases in Tokyo were 5,674, the highest among 47 prefectures in Japan.<sup>11</sup> The infection started to increase to 3 digits on July 2 with a total of 107 cases. On the following day, cases reached 124, with 131 cases on July 4 and 111 cases by election day. After the election, the number of cases remained at three digits with the highest number of cases on July 31 at 463. Therefore, infections in Tokyo began to spread again during the campaign and after the election. Although Tokyo represents 11 percent of Japan's population, its COVID-19 cases comprised almost half of the daily infection rate.<sup>12</sup> The increasing number of cases raised concerns over the reintroduction of the state of emergency which was previously imposed for two months until May 25, 2020.<sup>13</sup> However, to blame the election alone was not justifiable because Japan's economic and social activities had been completely opened at the time. Business was open as usual and employees commuted by train at full capacity. Thus, the probability of increased cases being caused by economic and social activities was undeniable. However, to balance the economic, political and social activities during the pandemic was essential and it was emphasized to practice standard operating procedures (SOP) set by the government.

**Table 1: Number of COVID-19 Cases in Tokyo June 18 -July 31, 2020**

<b>June</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
Number of Cases	41	35	39	34	29	31	55	48	54	57	60	58	54
<b>July</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
Number of Cases	67	107	124	131	111	102	106	75	224	243	206	206	119

<sup>10</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, Tokyo Governor Re-Elected after Plaudits for COVID-19 Response: Exit Poll, *Reuters*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600Thttps://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600T>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Campaigning for Tokyo Governor Election begins Amid Virus Spread, *Kyodo News*. 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/24047b398ee6-campaigning-for-tokyo-governor-race-begins-amid-virus-spread.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, Tokyo Governor Re-Elected after Plaudits for COVID-19 Response: Exit Poll, *Reuters*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600Thttps://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600T>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Tokyo's First Woman Governor Set to Secure Another Term in Re-Election, *CGTN*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-07-03/Tokyo-s-first-woman-governor-set-to-secure-another-term-in-re-election-RPe3MLM1JC/index.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<b>July</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
Number of Cases	143	165	286	293	290	188	168	237	238	366	260	295	239
<b>July</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>								
Number of Cases	131	266	250	367	463								

Source: [Updates on COVID-19 in Tokyo | Tokyo Metropolitan Government COVID-19 The Information website](#)

The next section discusses the implementation of the gubernatorial election in Tokyo. Among them are the characteristics of the election as practiced in democratic countries such as the availability of appropriate campaigning periods, fair campaigning activities, manifestoes offered and how voting is conducted. Did COVID-19 also affect the nature of the election of the Tokyo governor?

## TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

The Tokyo gubernatorial election is held every four years. To run in the election, candidates are required to submit a deposit of 3 million yen (roughly US\$28,000), which is higher than other countries such as the United Kingdom (£500, roughly US\$620), Australia (A\$2000, roughly US\$1400) and more than half of South Korea (₩15,000,000, roughly US\$12,500).<sup>14</sup> The deposit system was introduced to make it expensive for candidates who are not serious to run in the elections. It is also to prevent them from contesting the election without strong political party or grassroots support.<sup>15</sup> The deposit of 3 million yen will be refunded if the candidate wins at least 10 percent of the vote. Therefore, the expensive and strict conditions are enacted to allow only the serious and strong grassroots support candidates to contest. It is also to prevent a candidate from exploiting the campaign period solely to gain public attention, either for the purpose of business promotion or self-recognition through social media channels.

However, these aims were not achieved in the 2020 gubernatorial election when a total of 22 candidates had contested.<sup>16</sup> The number of contestants were large, given only one constituency contested. Furthermore, as COVID-19 cases were on the rise, it was expected that only a minimum number of candidates would remain as contenders.

One interesting fact about the 2020 Tokyo gubernatorial election was that some of the independent candidates were representing the political parties. There were some independent candidates who received support from certain political parties. This will never happen in Malaysia, as independent candidates will not receive support from political parties. The support was received because the political parties did not send their candidates to contest or had a similar ideology. For example, independent candidate Yuriko Koike, was backed by the ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito, another independent candidate Taisuke Ono, who was the former deputy governor of Kumamoto in 2012 was backed by the Japan Innovation Party (Nippon Ishin). Teruki Goto, who was a nationalist and conservative musician, did not receive support from any political party. Other candidates include Taro Yamamoto, a former actor who was the founder and is also the current leader of the left-wing party Reiwa Shinsengumi, as well as the former president of the Japan Bar Association, Kenji Utsunomiya, who is backed by the opposition Communist Party of Japan (JCP), the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ) and the Social Democratic Party

<sup>14</sup> Rob Fahey, Tokyo's 2020 Election Devolves into Circus, *Tokyo Review*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/07/tokyos-2020-election-devolves-into-circus/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Rob Fahey, Tokyo's 2020 Election Devolves into Circus, *Tokyo Review*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/07/tokyos-2020-election-devolves-into-circus/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Campaigning for Tokyo Governor Election begins Amid Virus Spread, *Kyodo News*. 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/24047b398ee6-campaigning-for-tokyo-governor-race-begins-amid-virus-spread.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

(SDP). Takashi Tachibana, founder and head of NHK Kara Kokumin Wo Mamoru To (The Party to Protect the People from Japan Broadcasting Corp NHK) had support from his own party.<sup>17</sup>

The method of the gubernatorial election campaign was modified to reduce the risk of getting infected by COVID-19. The five candidates followed in this study conducted online campaigns in addition to holding speeches on roads and at railway stations. Candidates used their own social media to spread election manifestoes as well campaign activities. The main candidate, who was the incumbent, Koike used her own Youtube channel called 小池 ゆり こ (Koike Yuriko), Niko Niko Doga Net Enzetsu (streaming video channel), Social Networking Service (SNS), Twitter and Facebook Live. Questions related to Tokyo raised by residents were answered via Niko Niko Doga Net Enzetsu and Youtube. While other candidates in this study such as Ono, Yamamoto, Tachibana, Utsunomiya also had their own social media channels. Ono's Youtube channels included 小野 たいすけ 公式 チャンネル (Ono Taisuke Koshiki Chaneru), Yamamoto 山本 太郎 (Yamamoto Taro), 立花 孝志 (Tachibana Takashi) and Utsunomiyakenji (using roman letters). They also used social media applications such as Zoom, Line, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Abema News (online television channels for disseminating candidate manifestoes).

Tachibana for example, runs an online program, Nomigatari Nama Haishin to interact with viewers. The program is used to discuss current issues and ideas that he would introduce should he win the election. The contestants also participated in a series of debates (toronkai) related to their respective manifestoes and were disseminated through Niko Niko Nama Hoso entitled Netto Toronkai. Among the candidates involved in the debate series were Yamamoto, Koike, Utsunomiya, Kenichiro Saito, Ono and Tachibana. This show gave the audience an opportunity to differentiate and evaluate the ideas presented by each candidate.

Some interesting points about the election campaign activities employed by Koike compared to other candidates included her rare appearances to meet voters on the roads or at train stations. This was to minimize people from gathering in large groups and exposing them to the virus. Koike instead involved more social media in her campaign. With social media, she posted her campaign schedule and used it to carry out the implementation of the campaign. For the other four candidates, they maintained traditional methods, such as campaigning at railway stations and meeting with voters. The election campaign conducted by Yamamoto did however emphasize physical distancing among audiences. Train stations were chosen by many candidates because of their function as a main public transport and as popular gathering places in Japan. Candidates made their respective schedules available on social media and followed-up with the implementation at designated train stations. For example, Utsunomiya held election campaigns at major stations such as Shinjuku, Shibuya, Osaki and Ikebukuro after he announced his schedule on social media.

Additionally, during the last few weeks before the election, every household in Tokyo received pamphlets containing candidate profiles. The pamphlets aimed to disclose to voters' details such as education and career background. Candidates also received a six-minute television slot on state-owned television, Nihon Hoso Kyoku (NHK). Each candidate had the opportunity to promote their manifestoes and advocate them on NHK and broadcast to every household in Tokyo. In addition, their posters were also hung at key locations on every street in the metropolitan during the election campaign. Unlike the poster wars commonly seen during elections in Malaysia, the posters in Japan were only permitted in designated areas with only one piece per space per candidate.<sup>18</sup> In addition to appearances on NHK, pamphlets and promotions via posters were carried out by the Tokyo local government. This was to ensure the fair opportunity for every candidate to promote their election campaign.

---

<sup>17</sup> Campaigning Starts for July 5 Tokyo Governor Election, *Nippon*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yjj2020061800235/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Asmadi Hassan, Rohayati Paidi, dan Muhammad Danial Azman, "Jepun Vs Malaysia: Strategi Kempen Pilihan Raya Umum 2017 dan 2018," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2019, p. 174.



The odds campaign election also happened in the Tokyo gubernatorial election. NHK Kara Kokumin Wo Mamoru To nominated three candidates in the election, but the only candidate that actively campaigned was Tachibana. Tachibana's name was emblazoned on posters and other literature.<sup>19</sup> Another candidate using the opportunity given was Goto Teruki. While officially campaigning through NHK, he took off his clothes to show off his brown-stained adult nappy underneath. This behaviour was a strategy to get the attention of voters. With the attention he could deliver his advocacy and candidacy to voters.

## MANIFESTOES

Although elections were held during the COVID-19 pandemic, candidates still issued their respective manifestoes to voters. As shown in Table 2, candidates chose their own slogans in order to disclose to the voters their advocacy. Koike chose "Tokyo Great Reform 2.0" as her slogan. The slogan symbolized her vision to continue reforms in Tokyo after becoming the first term governor from 2016 to 2020. Goto used a slogan "I'll make Tokyo the World's leading IT and AI City" which shows his goal to make Tokyo a metropolitan centre of high technology. Yamamoto on the other hand, used the slogan "What current Japanese politics lack is love for you and money." This slogan reflects his hopes to cultivate love and increase the purchasing power of Tokyo.

However, in line with the current situation in Tokyo and in facing COVID-19, most candidates used the pandemic as one of the manifestoes in their campaign. The main focus of the Tokyo gubernatorial election campaign was the formation of capable government in handling the pandemic. In the campaign against COVID-19, Koike, who was the governor of Tokyo, was being criticized by other candidates. For example, Utsunomiya criticized that Koike's actions against COVID-19 were late and caused confusion among Tokyo residents. This was due to Koike's decision to declare that Tokyo was to be under a state of emergency happened too late. She was supposed to have announced the declaration when the pandemic began to strike Tokyo. She was also criticized for conducting the inadequate Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. Yamamoto, on the other hand, criticized Koike for failing to address job loss problems due to COVID-19. Therefore, the manifestoes issued by many candidates were mainly how to prevent the virus from becoming widespread. For example, Koike promised to provide more PCR tests to curb the second wave in Tokyo. She also promised to set up Centres for Disease Control and Prevention as in the United States. In addition, Koike also promised to provide assistance to support residents and businesses affected by COVID-19. This could balance between COVID-19 and economic activity. On the other hand, Yamamoto and Utsunomiya also promised to increase PCR tests and the number of beds in public hospitals in facing the second wave of the pandemic.

In April 2020, when public hospitals were working hard to treat COVID-19 patients, Koike decided to change the public hospitals into independent entities. This was to allow for efficient administration and to reduce Tokyo metropolitan financial assistance to medical institutions.<sup>20</sup> However, Utsunomiya criticized Koike's policy as contrasted with the increasing COVID-19 cases in Tokyo. In addition, Koike allowed the reduction of the number of public health centres in Tokyo from 71 to 31 in 1994.<sup>21</sup> Koike's plans to turn hospitals into independent entities had again been criticised by other candidates. Utsunomiya, for example, campaigned for the defense of the right of every resident to live and be protected from COVID-19. He opposed Koike's plan and stressed that the

---

<sup>19</sup> Rob Fahey, Tokyo's 2020 Election Devolves into Circus, *Tokyo Review*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/07/tokyos-2020-election-devolves-into-circus/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Amid Calls for Increasing Efforts to Cope with Surge in Corona Cases, Tokyo Governor Declares Cuts in Healthcare Spending, *Japan Press Weekly*, 2 April, 2020 available at: [https://www.japan-press.co.jp/modules/news/?id=12839&pc\\_flag=ON](https://www.japan-press.co.jp/modules/news/?id=12839&pc_flag=ON), accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Tokyo Gubernatorial Race Putting Coronavirus at Top of Agenda Officially Starts, *Akahata*, 19 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

function of public health centres should be further enhanced as a front line to fight the virus. At the same time, financial assistance to medical institutions was argued to be increased.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, regarding the effects of COVID-19, the candidates promised to assist residents and businesses affected by the virus. Yamamoto promised to provide 100,000 yen in assistance to affected Tokyo residents and businesses.<sup>23</sup> The same applied regarding compensation for small companies that were affected. He also aimed to collect 15 trillion yen to help those who were affected. COVID-19 also affected the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Koike was criticized for taking a silent stance on the issue of organizing the 2020 Olympics and Paralympic Games before deciding to postpone to the following year. However, Yamamoto went further by criticizing Koike's stance of postponement. He advocated that the postponement would cause an increase in the cost of maintenance of the completed sports facilities. Consequently, Yamamoto and Utsunomiya campaigned to cancel the 2020 Olympic Games and used the available funds and facilities to help residents affected by COVID-19.<sup>24</sup> Yamamoto and other candidates were concerned about the entry of about 11,000 Olympic athletes from 200 countries as well as 4400 Paralympic athletes and several thousand more sports, technical, media, journalists and fans. The government also needed to think about how to quarantine those who enter Japan in large numbers. When all this were to happen, Tokyo would become a petri dish for micro-organisms. Yamamoto also stressed that Tokyo could not organize the Olympics safely as long as the COVID-19 virus was not eradicated.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the economic and social aspects were also emphasized by candidates in the election campaign. Concerning economics, Koike promised financial recovery for Tokyo while promoting the 4 "less" — namely Paper-less, Hanko-less, Cash-less and Touch-less. Ono, on the other hand, campaigned to reduce the governor's salary and allowances by 50 percent, consolidate all public and private subway companies and to provide efficient underground transportation. Yamamoto supported the reduction of consumer taxes to 5 percent, the employment of 3,000 new employees in the Tokyo Metropolitan government, and the provision of stable employment for the "lost generation" who lost their jobs due to the bubble economy. Utsunomiya, meanwhile campaigned to eradicate poverty, withdraw casino construction plans, increase permanent employment opportunities, and reduce part-time work.

On the social aspect, Koike campaigned to prepare for the phenomenon of the aging society, to strengthen measures to prevent suicides among Tokyo residents, and provide support to working parents by improving childcare facilities. Other candidates promised to develop a policy to protect the disabled, to provide public housing with low rental rates, increase the number of childcare centres and schools for special needs, and instate the exemption of school and university fees for a year.

---

<sup>22</sup> Profiles: Candidates of Tokyo Governor Election, *Kyodo News*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/a62339ce37ca-profiles-candidates-of-the-tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, *Inside the Games*, 15 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1095322/taro-yamamoto-tokyo-governor-2020>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, *Inside the Games*, 15 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1095322/taro-yamamoto-tokyo-governor-2020>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Mari Yamaguchi and Stephen Wade, Call to Cancel Tokyo Olympics Enters Race for Tokyo Governor, *The Associated Press*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/1f284575dc0aa4da20b8d98e99c8e690>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

**Table 2: Manifestoes of the Candidates**

<b>Election 2020</b>					
<b>Yuriko Koike</b>	<b>Goto Teruki</b>	<b>Taisuke Ono</b>	<b>Taro Yamamoto</b>	<b>Kenji Utsunomiya</b>	<b>Takashi Tachibana</b>
Slogans: “Tokyo Great Reform 2.0”	Slogan: “I’ll make Tokyo the world’s leading IT and AI city”	Slogan: “Open up Tokyo”	Slogans: “What current Japanese politics lack is love for you and money”	Slogan: “Building a city where every resident can live with hope”	Slogans: “Smash the corona-induced self-isolation and self-restraint”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incumbent.</li> <li>• Supported by LDP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musician.</li> <li>• Right wing</li> <li>• Conservatist.</li> <li>• Bring Japan “strongest, kindest and most interesting country in the world.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Deputy Governor of Kumamoto in 2012.</li> <li>• Supported by Japan Innovation Party (Nippon Ishin).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former actor.</li> <li>• President of Reiwa Shinsengumi.</li> <li>• Anti-establishment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former President of Japan Bar Association.</li> <li>• Supported by JCP, Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, Social Democratic Party.</li> <li>• Contested in 2012, 2014.</li> <li>• Both second place after Inose Naoki and Masuzoe Yoichi.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder of President of NHK Kara Kokumin Wo Mamoru To. (The party to protect the people from Japan Broadcasting Corp NHK).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide more PCR tests for residents of Tokyo.</li> <li>• To contain the second wave of COVID-19.</li> <li>• To establish Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.</li> <li>• To support residents and businesses infected by COVID-19.</li> <li>• To balance between COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To speedily economic recovery infected by COVID-19.</li> <li>• To support businesses effected.</li> <li>• Prevent second and third waves of COVID-19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase PCR testing.</li> <li>• More beds for COVID-19 patients in hospital.</li> <li>• To provide ¥100,000 assistance for Tokyo’s residents.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• Fund raising campaign to help those infected by COVID -19.</li> <li>• Total target 15 trillion yen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide more PCR tests for residents of Tokyo.</li> <li>• Prevention measures to prevent infection.</li> <li>• To increase number of public hospitals in Tokyo.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• More assistance for businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To break the chain of COVID-19 via quarantine in specific centres.</li> <li>• To protect high risk people, especially 60 years old and above.</li> <li>• To protect SME and businesses.</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, *Inside the Games*, 15 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1095322/taro-yamamoto-tokyo-governor-2020>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> Profiles: Candidates of Tokyo Governor Election, *Kyodo News*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/a62339ce37ca-profiles-candidates-of-the-tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.



and economics.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation for SME infected.</li> <li>• One-year exemption for utility bills.</li> <li>• To assist in finding new jobs.</li> <li>• Opposed the privatization of public hospital.</li> </ul>	<p>and residents infected.<sup>28</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To expand health centres in Tokyo as front liners to contain the virus.</li> <li>• Financial assistance to health centres.</li> </ul>	
• Postponement of Olympic Games.	• NA	• NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To cancel the Olympics and Paralympic games<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• To utilize funds for Olympic games for those infected with COVID19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To cancel the Olympics and Paralympic games based on expert assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined by IOC. Postponement from 2-4 years.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tokyo administrative and financial reforms continued through Great Tokyo.</li> <li>• Digitalizing Tokyo.</li> <li>• Reduce train congestion.</li> <li>• Promotion of the 4 “less” -Paperless, -Hanko-less, -Cashless, -Touchless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of foreign tourists.</li> <li>• Enforce 100% cashless society, paperless, hanko-less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce governor's salary and pension allowance by 50 percent.</li> <li>• Consolidate all underground public and private railway companies.</li> <li>• Passengers do not need to pay different railway ticket.</li> <li>• Hanko-less, fax-less.</li> <li>• Digitizing government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing consumer taxes to 5 percent.</li> <li>• Employs 3,000 new jobs at the Tokyo Metropolitan government.</li> <li>• Provide stable work to the "lost generation" who lost their jobs due to the bubble economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-poverty.</li> <li>• Cancellation of public hospital corporation plans.</li> <li>• Withdrawal of casino development plan.</li> <li>• Increase permanent jobs and reduce part-time work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuilding the Adachi neighborhood as "Tokyo's Brooklyn."</li> <li>• Launch Uber service.</li> <li>• Reduce traffic system no-ticket.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared for the aging society phenomenon.</li> <li>• Strengthen measures to avoid suicide.</li> <li>• Provide support program for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legalize polygamy.</li> <li>• Introducing "I love you" as popular speech.</li> <li>• Distribute ¥10,000 beauty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheaper cancer screening.</li> <li>• Reduce road congestion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a policy to protect people with disabilities and the elderly.</li> <li>• Provide public low rental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a lawyer to serve for communities with problems.</li> <li>• Free food for children.</li> <li>• Reduce 50% of the public university tuition fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support online education.</li> <li>• Paperless book.</li> <li>• Legalization of marijuana.</li> <li>• English as the official language other than Japanese.</li> </ul>

<sup>28</sup> Kyoko Hasegawa, Olympics, Virus Dominated Tokyo Governor Vote, *AFP News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.barrons.com/news/olympics-virus-dominate-tokyo-governor-vote-01593914407>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, *Inside the Games*, 15 June 2020, available at: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1095322/taro-yamamoto-tokyo-governor-2020>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<p>working parents by improving childcare facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paternity and maternity leave.</li> <li>• Supports the changes of academic year to September.</li> </ul>	<p>treatment discounts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting gender equality.</li> <li>• Legalize physician assistance for committing suicide and choose to die.</li> <li>• Introduce patriotism in schools.</li> </ul>		<p>house to residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving childcare centres and schools with special needs.</li> <li>• Provide free one-year fee to all students.</li> </ul>	<p>and finally eliminate them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support LGBT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Online election infrastructure.</li> <li>• Support online news conference.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transforming NHK as national official broadcaster by incorporating nationalism in it content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abolish NHK.</li> <li>• Eliminate mandatory NHK subscription fees.</li> <li>• Exposing scandals involving NHK.</li> </ul>

Sources: Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, Profiles: Candidates of Tokyo Governor Election, *Kyodo News*, Kyoko Hasegawa, Olympics, Virus Dominated Tokyo Governor Vote, *AFP News*, 5 July, 2020.

## HOW ARE ELECTIONS CONDUCTED?

Since the election was held during the outbreak of COVID-19, there were several modifications done to the way elections were conducted. Elections during the pandemic required a new norm in electoral practices. This was to reduce the risk of infections among voters and officials. Voters were required to practise social distancing as well as follow the prescribed SOP. Voters and officials avoided the three C's, namely closed spaces, crowded areas and close-contact at polling stations.<sup>30</sup> Officials at polling stations wore gloves, veils and face shields. Meanwhile stickers were placed on the floor to indicate where voters should wait until it was their turn. In addition, booths at the polling centres were regularly sanitized to ensure cleanness.

Voters on the other hand were required to wear face masks and use a sanitizer before and after voting. At the polling station in Setagaya Ward for example, voters were required to maintain proper distances, while pencils and disposable gloves were used. In addition, voters were also encouraged by the Tokyo local government to vote earlier rather than on the actual date to avoid congestion and thereby risk spreading COVID-19. Even though voters and officials had to follow SOP and regulations, the most important things in the elections were maintaining transparency and the fairness as demanded by democracy.

<sup>30</sup> Mariko Tamura, Koike Wins 2nd Term as Tokyo Governor, Vows to Step Up Virus Fight, *Kyodo News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/07/6ded3b51ca30-voting-under-way-for-tokyo-governorship-virus-olympics-in-focus.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

## ANALYSIS: ELECTIONS DURING PANDEMIC

Table 3 shows the election results. Koike was re-elected as governor of Tokyo with an outstanding number of votes. She obtained 3.66 million votes, or 59.7 percent of the total votes. This was the second-most votes for a single candidate in the Tokyo gubernatorial election. Koike garnered fewer votes than Naoki Inose in 2012 (4.33 million votes), but more than those obtained by Ryokichi Minobe in 1971 (3.61 million votes). In the 2020 election, three main candidates after Koike, Utsunomiya garnered 844,000 votes or 13.76 percent, Yamamoto (657,277 or 10.72 percent) and Ono (612,530 or 9.99). The total number of votes for three of them was only 2.114 million. This showed a huge victory for Koike who received 1.54 million more votes than the three main candidates. This also shows that Koike's campaigning strategy was very successful in the election.

As many as 55 percent of Tokyo residents cast their votes in the election compared to 59.73 percent in the previous election. It was 4.73 percent lower in turnout than the previous election. The reduction in turnout was due to concerns over the spread of COVID-19 in Tokyo. According to a Kyodo News report, Koike garnered more than 80 percent of the vote from LDP supporters and its allies New Komeito, 56.9 percent from independent voters and 31.6 percent from the opposition party Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ). Koike's policy on COVID-19 has raised her good image as a leader with 60.7 percent of voters evaluating her well. Divided voting among the opposition also helped Koike's victory.<sup>31</sup> Utsunomiya, who was supported by CDPJ, obtained only 45.9 percent of the party's supporters.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Yamamoto, who leads the Reiwa Shinsengumi party, got support from his own party.

**Table 3: Tokyo Gubernatorial Election Result 2020**

Candidate Name	Age	Votes Obtained	Percentage
小池百合子 (Yuriko Koike)	67	3,661,371	59.70
宇都宮健児 (Kenji Utsunomiya)	73	844,151	13.76
山本太郎 (Taro Yamamoto)	45	657,277	10.72
小野 泰輔 (Taisuke Ono)	46	612,530	9.99
桜井誠 (Makoto Sakurai)	48	178,784	2.92
立花孝志 (Takashi Tachibana)	52	43,912	0.72
七海ひろこ (Hiroko Nanami)	35	22,003	0.36
後藤輝樹 (Teruki Goto)	37	21,997	0.36
沢しおん (Shion Sawa)	44	20,738	0.34
西本誠 (Makoto Nishimoto)	33	11,887	0.19
込山洋 (Hiroshi Komiyama)	46	10,935	0.18
平塚正幸 (Masayuki Hiratsuka)	38	8,997	0.15
服部修 (Osamu Hattori)	46	5,453	0.09
斉藤健一郎 (Kenichiro Saito)	39	5,114	0.08
市川浩司 (Hiroshi Ichikwa)	58	4,760	0.08
内藤久遠 (Hisao Naito)	63	4,145	0.07
関口安弘 (Yasuhiro Sekiguchi)	68	4,097	0.07
竹本秀之 (Hideyuki Takemoto)	64	3,997	0.07
石井均 (Hiroshi Ishii)	55	3,356	0.05
長澤育弘 (Yasuhiro Nagasawa)	34	2,955	0.05
押越清悦 (Seiichi Oshikoshi)	61	2,708	0.04
牛尾和恵 (Kazue Ushio)	33	1,510	0.02

Total Votes 6,209,813

Votes 6,132,679

Void Votes 77,134

Source: Asahi Shimbun 2020 東京都知事選挙 (2020 Tokyo Metropolitan Gubernatorial Election), 6 July 2020.

Koike's huge victory against the other candidates showed that voters put significant trust in her leadership. They believed in her capability to restore Tokyo as before. At the same time, the reform

<sup>31</sup> Mariko Tamura, Koike Wins 2nd Term as Tokyo Governor, Vows to Step Up Virus Fight, *Kyodo News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/07/6ded3b51ca30-voting-under-way-for-tokyo-governorship-virus-olympics-in-focus.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Tomo Yamamoto, Koike Wins second Term as Tokyo Governor: What Does This Means for a Tokyo IR, *Inside Asian Gaming*, 6 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2020/07/06/koike-wins-second-term-as-tokyo-governor-what-does-this-mean-for-a-tokyo-ir/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

agenda proposed by other candidates was rejected. Another reason for Koike's victory was the ruling party, as LDP did not send a candidate, but supported the Koike candidacy.<sup>33</sup> In addition, some opposition votes were divided among 22 contestants which allowed Koike to easily win the election.

Koike's success in defending the seat was also linked to her outstanding achievements as governor of Tokyo since 2016. Upon winning the election, she managed to resolve the controversy of relocating the famous Tokyo seafood market from its original location in Tsukiji to Toyasu. The location was later built with the Tokyo Olympics 2020 facilities. Tsukiji had narrow spaces and was no longer suitable for future expansion of the seafood market operations.<sup>34</sup> However, the transfer was met with opposition from many tenants and workers who had been doing business for generations. During the campaign, Utsunomiya criticized the move because the tenants were still sceptical of Toyasu's safety, especially the pollution caused by its original site being used by chemical plants. She also managed to ban many smoking areas in Tokyo, mostly in closed places. The second-hand smoker reduction ordinance, which was considered very difficult to implement, had been successfully implemented under the Koike administration.<sup>35</sup> Koike also showed her tendency as a right-wing supporter by rejecting the annual ceremony of paying homage to Koreans who died in the massacre after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923.<sup>36</sup> She also withdrew school land lease approval for ethnic Koreans who were mostly brought to Japan as forced labour before and during World War Two. Koike was also a supporter of the movement to remove anti-war provisions from the Japanese Constitution. With this stance, she managed to attract voters, especially among the right wing LDP supporters. In terms of appearance, Koike was often praised as stylish and media savvy.<sup>37</sup> Unlike other major Japanese leaders, Koike is fluent in English and Arabic. Even in a TV survey, 10,000 Tokyo residents praised her communication and leadership skills.

Even though Koike faced questions from the media and political enemies about her academic background, she managed to resolve it. Her degree from Cairo University in Egypt was said to have been forged, but the university issued a statement through the Egyptian embassy in Tokyo confirming her degree originality. Still, the most important thing that helped Koike's victory was the way she dealt with COVID-19. Despite the increased infections of COVID-19 in the metropolitan area, her public support was still high.<sup>38</sup> Koike consistently appeared in the media when COVID-19 peaked in Tokyo in April 2020.<sup>39</sup> She held tele-conferences almost every night to deliver daily tips and advice on how to prevent the infection.<sup>40</sup> This included staying at home and wearing a face mask when going out. In addition, residents were not encouraged to travel to other areas in order to reduce the spread of the

---

<sup>33</sup> Isabel Reynolds, Tokyo's First Female Governor Wins in Virus Clouded Election, *Bloomberg*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-04/tokyo-s-first-woman-governor-seeks-re-election-in-sunday-vote>, accessed on 12 February 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Masami Ito, Tsukiji Countdown: Clock Ticking on Famed Fish Market, *The Japan Times*, 31 October, 2015, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2015/10/31/lifestyle/tsukiji-countdown-clock-ticking-famed-fish-market/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Koike Secures Comfortable Win for 2nd Term as Tokyo Governor, *The Asahi Shimbun*, 5 July 2020, available at: <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13518399>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Motoko Rich, Tokyo's First Female Governor Sails to Re-Election Even as Virus Cases Rise, *The New York Times*, 5 July 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/world/asia/tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo Governor Wins 2nd Term, Buoyed by Handling of Virus, *AP News*, 5 July 2020, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/8b4e8bb3c246c1af04335b9d3e5d2825>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Tokyo's First Woman Governor Set to Secure Another Term in Re-Election, *CGTN*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-07-03/Tokyo-s-first-woman-governor-set-to-secure-another-term-in-re-election-RPe3MLM1JC/index.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Philip Brator, Tokyo's Gubernatorial Election Results Align with Recent History, *The Japan Times*, 25 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/25/national/media-national/tokyo-gubernatorial-election-history/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Motoko Rich, Tokyo's First Female Governor Sails to Re-Election Even as Virus Cases Rise, *The New York Times*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/world/asia/tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

virus. Koike's ability to deliver a message to residents during COVID-19 proved fruitful as she looked more capable in dealing with the virus compared to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe instead was considered slow and late to take action against the virus. The NHK survey found that 74 percent of the respondents supported Koike, with 63 percent saying they agreed with the way she handled the COVID-19 crisis. A survey by Sankei and the Fuji News Network found that during the pandemic, 64 percent did not support Abe's approach to the virus, an increase of 25.1 points from the end of March 2020.<sup>41</sup> Abe, who had been criticized for doing too little, too late and did not manage dealing well with COVID-19.<sup>42</sup> Even in dealing with the crisis, Koike was described as the best and Shinzo Abe as the worst.<sup>43</sup> While Abe was still hesitant to take action on declaring a state of emergency, Koike already took drastic measures to deal with the virus. Koike showed a contrast compared to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who often looked stiff in front of the media. He was widely criticized for posting awkward videos on Twitter showing himself at a tea house with his dog during COVID-19.

Therefore, COVID-19 struck at just the right time for Koike to prove her leadership. Voters appreciated her firm action. Koike announced compensation to restaurants and businesses who had closed in Tokyo before the federal government introduced similar moves. During the emergency period, she asked businesses to voluntarily limit operations and residents to stay at home.<sup>44</sup> She also made Tokyo the first of 47 prefectures where businesses were asked to close and provided financial aid packages should they cooperate, which consumed huge funds from the metropolitan government. Such a move enabled her to gain support from an unaffiliated voter, LDP and its coalition partner, New Komeito.<sup>45</sup>

The results of her leadership, especially the daily presence in tele-conferences on television, elevated her popularity. She did not need to work hard to campaign in the election. The daily routine on media showed that she was doing her job perfectly. This was discussed in the sub-title of the Tokyo gubernatorial election when the other candidates went out every day to meet the residents, Koike took a different approach by just using social media to campaign. While other candidates were intensely campaigning, Koike was uploading the daily COVID-19 cases in Tokyo to her social media. Koike's daily routine was just making speeches and channelling them through social media.

## CONCLUSION

After the election, Koike's task became increasingly difficult, facing the escalating of COVID-19 cases while at the same time balancing political, economic and social activities. The economic activities were especially important to avoid recession.

All of this leads back to the initial question posed: an election during a pandemic — democracy versus “demo” crazy; it was found that the demand of democracy was more important than waiting for a possible recovery in the situation. Although holding an election was considered a crazy move, as a supporter of democracy, an election was still considered to be a priority. But we can learn something

---

<sup>41</sup> Linda Sieg, Tokyo Governor Koike, A PM Abe Rival, Takes Tough Stance on Coronavirus, *Reuters*, 13 April, 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-koike-idUSKCN21V0EI>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Tokyo Governor Favoured to Win Re-Election for Handling Pandemic, *Al Jazeera-English*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/5/tokyo-governor-favoured-to-win-re-election-for-handling-pandemic>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Walter Sim, Tokyo Governor Election Race Kicks Off, *The Straits Times*, 19 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/tokyo-governor-election-race-kicks-off>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Linda Sieg, Tokyo Governor Koike, A PM Abe Rival, Takes Tough Stance on Coronavirus, *Reuters*, 13 April, 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-koike-idUSKCN21V0EI>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Alastair Gale, Yuriko Koike Wins Second Term as Tokyo Governor Ahead of Olympics, *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/koike-wins-second-term-as-tokyo-governor-ahead-of-olympics-11593958158>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.



from the Tokyo gubernatorial election. It is not a necessity to campaign physically should you have a good image. The difference in the number of votes obtained showed that it was evident that a good image is enough to attract voters. In Koike's case, she has been building her image for a long time, since becoming an anchor in television shows. With this image, she was chosen by Prime Minister Koizumi to contest in the lower house elections and subsequently become Japan's defense minister. When she expressed her intention to run for governor of Tokyo in 2016, she did not get permission from the LDP but ran as an independent candidate. She won the election by beating the LDP candidate. Her good image was further evidenced by her success in dealing with COVID-19 compared to other leaders. Therefore, the election campaign does not necessarily need to be conducted physically because of the risk of spreading COVID-19. In addition, for candidates who were less popular than Koike, they could build the image from now on by utilizing the advancements of information technology instead of using traditional campaign elections. This could help them in the next gubernatorial election in 2024.

## REFERENCES

Alastair Gale, Yuriko Koike Wins Second Term as Tokyo Governor Ahead of Olympics, *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/koike-wins-second-term-as-tokyo-governor-ahead-of-olympics-11593958158>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Amid Calls for Increasing Efforts to Cope with Surge in Corona Cases, Tokyo Governor Declares Cuts in Healthcare Spending, *Japan Press Weekly*. 2 April, 2020 available at: [https://www.japan-press.co.jp/modules/news/?id=12839&pc\\_flag=ON](https://www.japan-press.co.jp/modules/news/?id=12839&pc_flag=ON), accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Asmadi Hassan, Rohayati Paidi, dan Muhammad Danial Azman, "Jepun Vs Malaysia: Strategi Kempen Pilihan Raya Umum 2017 dan 2018," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2019, pp. 172-195.

Campaigning for Tokyo Governor Election begins Amid Virus Spread, *Kyodo News*. 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/24047b398ee6-campaigning-for-tokyo-governor-race-begins-amid-virus-spread.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Campaigning for Tokyo Governor Election begins Amid Virus Spread, *Kyodo News*. 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/24047b398ee6-campaigning-for-tokyo-governor-race-begins-amid-virus-spread.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Doh Chull Shin, "Democratic Consolidation in East Asia: Exploring Realignments in Japan, Korea and Taiwan," *Democratization*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2020, pp. 142-160.

Isabel Reynolds, Tokyo's First Female Governor Wins in Virus Clouded Election, *Bloomberg*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-04/tokyo-s-first-woman-governor-seeks-re-election-in-sunday-vote>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Jun Tsukada, "The Depiction of Democracy in Japan's Newspapers," *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2021, pp. 3-20.

Kiyoshi Takenaka, Tokyo Governor Re-Elected after Plaudits for COVID-19 Response: Exit Poll, *Reuters*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600Thttps://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-election-tokyo-vote-idUSKBN24600T>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Koike Secures Comfortable Win for 2nd Term as Tokyo Governor, *The Asahi Shimbun*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13518399>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Kyoko Hasegawa, Olympics, Virus Dominated Tokyo Governor Vote, *AFP News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.barrons.com/news/olympics-virus-dominate-tokyo-governor-vote-01593914407>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Linda Sieg, Tokyo Governor Koike, A PM Abe Rival, Takes Tough Stance on Coronavirus, *Reuters*, 13 April 2020, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-koike-idUSKCN21V0EI>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Maiko Ichihara, “Japanese Democracy after Shinzo Abe,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2021, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 81-95.

Mari Yamaguchi and Stephen Wade, Call to Cancel Tokyo Olympics Enters Race for Tokyo Governor, *The Associated Press*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/1f284575dc0aa4da20b8d98e99c8e690>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo Governor Wins 2nd Term, Buoyed by Handling of Virus, *AP News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/8b4e8bb3c246c1af04335b9d3e5d2825>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Mariko Tamura, Koike Wins 2nd Term as Tokyo Governor, Vows to Step Up Virus Fight, *Kyodo News*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/07/6ded3b51ca30-voting-under-way-for-tokyo-governorship-virus-olympics-in-focus.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Masami Ito, Tsukiji Countdown: Clock Ticking on Famed Fish Market, *The Japan Times*, 31 October, 2015, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2015/10/31/lifestyle/tsukiji-countdown-clock-ticking-famed-fish-market/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Michael Houston, Tokyo Governor Candidate Yamamoto Pledges to Cancel Olympics if Elected, *Inside the Games*, 15 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1095322/taro-yamamoto-tokyo-governor-2020>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Mireya Solis, Japan’s Democratic Renewal and the Survival of the Liberal Order, *Brookings Institution*, 22 January, 2021, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/japans-democratic-renewal-and-the-survival-of-the-liberal-order/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Motoko Rich, Tokyo’s First Female Governor Sails to Re-Election Even as Virus Cases Rise, *The New York Times*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/world/asia/tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Philip Brator, Tokyo’s Gubernatorial Election Results Align with Recent History, *The Japan Times*, 25 July 2020, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/25/national/media-national/tokyo-gubernatorial-election-history/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Profiles: Candidates of Tokyo Governor Election, *Kyodo News*, 18 June, 2020, available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/a62339ce37ca-profiles-candidates-of-the-tokyo-governor-election.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Rob Fahey, Tokyo's 2020 Election Devolves into Circus, *Tokyo Review*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/07/tokyos-2020-election-devolves-into-circus/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Ryusei Takahashi, Pandemic gives Yuriko Koike the Edge as Key Tokyo Poll Approaches, *The Japan Times*, 3 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/06/03/national/politics-diplomacy/pandemic-koike-tokyo-election/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Susumu Kuonuma, Tokyo Governor Election to Test Support for Olympic, *Nikkei Asia*, 1 July, 2020, available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Tokyo-2020-Olympics/Tokyo-governor-election-to-test-support-for-Olympics>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Tokyo Governor Favoured to Win Re-Election for Handling Pandemic, *Al Jazeera-English*, 5 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/5/tokyo-governor-favoured-to-win-re-election-for-handling-pandemic>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Tokyo Gubernatorial Race Putting Coronavirus at Top of Agenda Officially Starts, *Akahata*, 19 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Tokyo's First Woman Governor Set to Secure Another Term in Re-Election, *CGTN*, 3 July, 2020, available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-07-03/Tokyo-s-first-woman-governor-set-to-secure-another-term-in-re-election-RPe3MLM1JC/index.html>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Tomo Yamamoto, Koike Wins second Term as Tokyo Governor: What Does This Means for a Tokyo IR, *Inside Asian Gaming*, 6 July, 2020, available at: <https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2020/07/06/koike-wins-second-term-as-tokyo-governor-what-does-this-mean-for-a-tokyo-ir/>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Walter Sim, Tokyo Governor Election Race Kicks Off, *The Straits Times*, 19 June, 2020, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/tokyo-governor-election-race-kicks-off>, accessed on 12 February, 2021.

Yong Jae Kim, "Issue, Ownership and Electoral Rule: Empirical Evidence from Japan," *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2020, pp. 147-162.