The Emergence of Tsai Ing-wen and the Presidentialization of DPP, 2008 - 2016

AUSTIN HORNG-EN WANG
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, DUKE UNIVERSITY
AHW15@DUKE.EDU   HTTP://SITES.DUKE.EDU/AUSTINWANG/
Research Question

How did Tsai Ing-wen emerge and DPP revive (from an unlikely place)?

- Hsieh 41.55%, failed Legislative election
- Scandals of President Chen
- All existing factions are unpopular
- Huge deficit and lack of resource
Four factors + 1

1. Framing from the 2008 DPP fiasco
2. Balancing among (declining) factions
3. CEC’s decision to hold 2012 Legislative and Presidential election concurrently
4. Development of information technology
5. (Tsai’s non-faction, consensus-seeking, median-voter position)
Framing from the 2008 DPP Fiasco

1. The “remove-the-blues survey” didn’t work
   ◦ Leaving the median voter

2. Openly and fiercely factional competition
   ◦ Mudslinging in 2008 primary

3. Lose the brand of “progressive” and young supporters
   ◦ Chen’s scandal (DPP corrupt 24.5% → 44.9%)

4. Discord between chairman and presidential candidate
DPP Chairman election, May 2008

1. Independence Fundamentalist – Chai (73) and Koo (82)
   ◦ To defend KMT and China, DPP’s pro-independence claim should be clear!

2. Tsai Ing-wen (52)
   ◦ Non-faction, only joined DPP for four years, young, female
   ◦ Consensus-seeking personality, median-voter position on cross-strait

3. All other faction heads (didn’t run)
   ◦ Responsible for the 2008 lose
   ◦ Cannot support each other
Tsai’s consensus-seeking strategy/personality

“Taiwanese people need to form a consensus on the cross-strait relationship before meeting with China.”

-Tsai Ing-Wen (2009)
Tsai’s emergence as faction balancing

1. Winning the chairmanship 57.14% (73865 votes)
   - Highest votes in history. DPP members chose to return to median voter
   - Supported by multiple factions, a Pareto-optimal.

2. Lack power, lack resource (deficit $6million USD)
Tsai’s emergence as faction balancing

3. Power centralization on nomination process
   ◦ **Negotiation** for mayor election (from closed primary)
   ◦ **Nomination committee** for the full 2012 legislative party list (from 1/3)
   ◦ Both were originally for factions (no closed primary but consensus-seeking)

4. Inclusive poll for 2012 presidential candidate
   ◦ Supported by 2008 chairmanship election
   ◦ Advantageous to famous/experienced faction heads, fair
   ◦ Tsai was almost defeated by Su (42.5% v.s. 41.5%)
2012 Concurrent election (Shih, 2016)

1. Believed to help President Ma and KMT
2. +20% Turnout in Legislative election (linked-fate!)
3. -34% News coverage for legislative candidate from 2008
   → District candidates must cooperate with Tsai (nationalization?)
   → Help solve the DPP’s discord problem in 2008
Decline of Factions and the 2016 election

1. DPP votes share improvement evidenced the success of the “return-to-the-median” strategy
   ◦ Attempt to return to closed primary failed, 66 in 287, May 2013

2. Aging of the (former) factions
   ◦ Formed from the common experience of political repression
   ◦ Not good at cultivating or recruiting the new generation (except for sibling)

3. Non-faction Legislators increased
   ◦ 32.9% in 2004 to 47.5% in 2012 (Batto and Huang, 2016)
Decline of Factions and the 2016 election

4. Stop discussing of “Freezing independence stance clause” in DPP national committee (Jul. 21, 2014)
   ◦ Fully control the DPP’s policy agenda

5. Negotiation and Nomination committee became a strategic tool for the DPP presidential candidate
   ◦ 2016 legislative party list for campaigning, not for factions

6. Asked party member to follow the campaign theme and to cooperate with the small party
   ◦ Psychologically speaking, it makes DPP to be perceived as much moderate
Development of Information Technology

1. Internet user increased 20% in 2000 → 82% in 2016
2. Read political news online 15% in 2000 → 55% in 2016
3. Smartphone usage 10% in 2008 → 65.4% in 2016
4. Personal blog, social network site, live stream.
   → Internet users are no longer young generation.
   → Increased mobility and capability
   → Single-issue voters and echo chamber effect
DPP’s centralization on campaigning

1. Internet Department in 2009
   ◦ Organized from factional online armies.
   ◦ Provides professional training to ALL party members and workers
   ◦ Try to attract young, women, non-partisan, and absentee voters

2. Media and Creative Center (MCC) in 2015
   ◦ Sunflower movement shocked DPP
   ◦ Combined ID and Propaganda Department, tested in Ko’s Taipei Mayor Election

3. Micro-Targeting and Presidential candidate-centered
   ◦ 80 videos for 80 groups in 2016 election.
   ◦ Different content for different people on different platform.
   ◦ Both labor- and capital-intensive. Must supported by the SNS.
Four factors + 1

1. Framing from the 2008 DPP fiasco
2. Balancing among (declining) factions
3. CEC’s decision to hold 2012 Legislative and Presidential concurrently
4. Development of information technology
5. (Tsai’s non-faction, consensus-seeking, median-voter position)
Looking Forward

1. Consensus-seeking personality implies...
   1. No big policy change
   2. More protests
   3. Exile of the pro-independence fundamentalists?

2. Centralization of chairman power...
   1. If the chairman and president are different people?
   2. If an unexpected member won the chairmanship?
The Emergence of Tsai Ing-wen and the Presidentialization of DPP, 2008 - 2016

AUSTIN HORNG-EN WANG
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, DUKE UNIVERSITY
AHW15@DUKE.EDU  HTTP://SITES.DUKE.EDU/AUSTINWANG/