

**How the domestic factors influence Tsai Ing-Wen  
administration's foreign policy decisions-making: By  
Steadfast Diplomacy and The New Southbound Policy**

**Shape your world**



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Life is a continuous learning process. It can feel difficult, and you might want to give up, but the journey is quite enjoyable when you consider it. Life is hard, but it is also fun.

## **Certification:**

I, TENG, Hung-Yuan (Student ID: 11420137) hereby declare that the contents of this master's Thesis are original and true and have not been submitted to any other university or educational institution for the award of a degree or diploma.

All the information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately.

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## **Abstract:**

Taiwan is considered one of the potential flashpoints for a third world war. Caught between the major global powers of the United States and China, every move Taiwan makes is closely watched. Therefore, how Taiwan manages its relationships with these two superpowers and develops future possibilities is a critical consideration.

This thesis explores how domestic factors influence the Tsai Ing-Wen administration's foreign policy decision-making (FPDM). It begins by examining the various factors that can affect a country's FPDM, with a particular focus on domestic factors. Regardless of a country's political system, policymakers generally base their decisions on internal conditions. The thesis posits the following hypotheses: 1. When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy. 2. As public interest in a particular issue increases or decreases, leaders are more or less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy. 3. When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy.

To answer how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, this thesis employs a case study approach, selecting "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" as the cases for analysis.

The findings indicate that only the first hypothesis is supported in these two cases. The other two hypotheses lack sufficient evidence to prove their influence on the Tsai administration's FPDM. Furthermore, the initial belief that domestic factors are the most important influence on a country's FPDM is not substantiated in the case of the Tsai administration. The Tsai administration's FPDM is not solely influenced by domestic factors; international factors also play a crucial role.

# **1. Introduction:**

## **1.1. Background:**

According to the Economist (2021), Taiwan is currently the most dangerous place to be. The world saw a New Status Quo for US-China tension in 2022 when US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan (Haenle & Sher, 2022). This visit made China start to ramp up that incurring into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ), which is a made-up tacit agreement between ROC and PRC (Smith, 2022). China's 2023 defense budget is to rise by 7.2 percent (Xinhua, 2023). The above information has shown the tension on the coast of the Taiwan Strait. Also, those concerns have given rise to the Taiwanese government's decision-making because their decisions will affect the world.

Taiwan matters not only for both the US and China but also for the world (Rigger, 2013). Taiwan is located near the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping routes; also, is located at the first island chain that runs from Borneo to the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea. For the US, Taiwan is an important economic partner and an ally who shares the same values and sees China as a major threat (Glaser & Green, 2020). For the PRC, reunifying Taiwan is a national rejuvenation goal for all Chinese (Xinhua, Dec 2023); also, Taiwan's location, the first island chain, is a genuine strategic obstacle for China's Navy (Thompson, 2020). In addition, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) is the world's biggest contract manufacturer of advanced chips, which means the chips supply chain is global. Disrupting TSMC's operation could cause a global shortage of chips that will cost \$10 trillion around the world (Malcolm Scott, 2024).

The Tsai Ing-wen administration coincides with a critical period from the late Obama administration to the current Biden administration, spanning from friendly relations between the US and China to the onset of a trade war and the present strategic competition. Studying the factors influencing Tsai's foreign policy can help understand Taiwan's position and strategy in international affairs, predict future policy directions, and comprehensively assess Taiwan's role in international affairs. This, in turn, can impact regional and global stability and development, highlighting Taiwan's role and behavior in international affairs, which will have profound implications for the global landscape (Rigger, 2013).

Thus, analyzing the Tsai Ing-wen administration's foreign policy under the strategic rivalry between the US and China is critical. There are several reasons to explain why analyzing Taiwanese foreign policy is important. The first is Geopolitical Significance, which means the strategic rivalry between the US and China has significant implications for the balance of power in the region, and Taiwan's foreign policy decisions can influence this delicate equilibrium. The second is Global implications, which means Taiwan's foreign policy decisions have global implications, given its economic significance and role in the global supply chain, particularly in the semiconductor industry. Understanding how Taiwan positions itself in strategic rivalry contributes to a broader understanding of global economic and geopolitical trends. Last but not least is Security and Defense Considerations, which means Taiwan faces persistent security threats from China, which considers reunification with Taiwan to be a key national goal. Understanding the dynamics of the US-China strategic rivalry is essential for Taiwan's security planning and defense posture.

## **1.2. The Objective of this Paper:**

This report argues that there are three significant domestic influences on foreign policy decision-making: Domestic Politics, Public Opinion, and Bureaucratic Politics. This report analyzes that how domestic factors influence on “Steadfast Diplomacy” and “The New Southbound Policy” during the Tsai administration, to answer the research question which how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's foreign policy decision-making?

## **1.3. Significance of the Study:**

A few theses analyze the Taiwanese government's foreign policy decision-making, especially that of the Tsai administration. These studies include both English and Chinese research. This paper will focus on the Tsai administration as a case study and examine how domestic factors influence its foreign policy decision-making (FPDM). This analysis will help readers understand how the Tsai administration formulates Taiwan's foreign policy, providing



them with insights into the administration's decision-making process. It will also help predict what kind of foreign policy the next president of Taiwan might adopt.

#### **1.4. Limitations of the Study:**

For the Methodology part, it is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in case study research, such as issues with generalizability, lacking rigor, and the influence of external factors. These are well-known criticisms of case study methodology and may also be present in this thesis.

For the Case Study part, since this thesis was completed just as the Tsai administration was handing over to the next Taiwanese government, there is a relative scarcity of research on the Tsai administration's foreign policy. Few scholars have extensively studied the Tsai administration's foreign policy, making it challenging to comprehensively analyze all the influencing factors. Therefore, this thesis will rely on research from the previous administration up to the early period of the Tsai administration to support the discussion points.

#### **1.5. Organization of the Study:**

The following eight chapters will be discussed. Chapter 1. Background, research questions, significance, and limitation of the Study. Chapter 2. delves into past literature focused on what domestic factors influence a state's foreign policy decision-making. Chapter 3. Conclude the literature review, then argue the hypothesis. Chapter 4. describes the methodology and cases to be used. Chapter 5. provides the background and influences of Steadfast Diplomacy and The New Southbound Policy. Chapter 6. analyzes how domestic factors influence the cases of Steadfast Diplomacy and The New Southbound Policy. Chapter 7. provides an overall conclusion. Chapter 8. provides suggestions for future research.

## **2. Literature Review:**

Before discussing this research question, what are the domestic decision-making factors of foreign policy? This paper is responsible for helping readers understand several definitions: what foreign policy is, what decision-making is, and what the framework of foreign policy decision-making is. Understanding the above definitions can help clarify later discussions.

### **2.1. What is the Foreign Policy (FP)?**

Foreign policy, literally interpreted, refers to a country's policies directed towards external affairs, distinct from domestic policies. However, such a simple definition still requires further explanation and elaboration to gain a deeper understanding of FP. Although different scholars have different definitions of FP, they still have certain similarities about the behavior of a state towards other states. Modelski (1962) argues that FP is the system of activities evolved by communities to change other states' behavior and adjust their activities to the international environment for a state's interest. This means that the FP method changes the behavior of different states and adapts their activities to fit the international environment. Frankel (1963) states that FP comprises decisions and actions that, to some degree, include relationships between states. This means the FP is a tool for formulating and implementing a set of ideas that govern states' behavior and actions made with the state's decision while interacting with other states. Gibson (1944) defines FP as a well-rounded, comprehensive plan based on knowledge and experience for conducting government business with the rest of the world. This means that FP is determined by what disposal the government has for those interests and how far we hope to go. Anything less than this falls short of being a foreign policy. Padelford and Lincoln (1976) argue that FP is the overall result of the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into specific courses of action in order to achieve its objective and preserve its interests. This means the core of FP is the process of working with other states to reach the state's interest by using the resources at hand. Overall, from previous views, it can be concluded that FP consists of three parts: "purpose," "way," and "resource." The "purpose" of consisting means what goal a state wants to pursue. The "way" of consisting means how a state pursues its goal. The "resource" of consisting means what the available resource a state can use when

they pursue their goal. Thus, FP is pursuing its goal, setting the method, and combining available resources to interact with other states.

## **2.2. What is the Decision-Making (DM)?**

Simon (1960) states that decision-making comprises three principal phases: finding occasions for making a decision; finding possible courses of action; and choosing among courses of action. This theory shows the basic steps of decision-making: first, identifying the appropriate times to make decisions; second, locating potential courses of action; and finally, selecting a plan to implement. Eilon (1969) points out that decision-making is when the decision-maker has several alternatives and that his choice involves comparing these alternatives and evaluating their outcome. This means that besides the basic decision-making steps, it emphasizes these alternatives and evaluates their outcome. Laroche (1995) argues that decision-making is best understood as a process of reality creation through organization members' representation of their own roles and activities. This means that decision-making can be through organization members in different positions to create an outcome. Plight (2001) states that decision-making is often studied as the outcome of carefully evaluating alternative options in terms of the likelihood and the value of outcomes associated with these options. This theory points out that the alternative options include the outcome's possibility and value. Overall, from the previous theory, it can be concluded that Decision-Making consists of four steps: Finding the appropriate time to make a decision; identifying possible options; Comparing the possibility and value of options; and finally, deciding the best option to implement. Additionally, decisions can be made not only by a person but also by a group.

## **2.3. What is the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM)?**

Before discussing this section, the framework of FPDM, it is necessary to understand foreign policy analysis (FPA). Because of its difficulty and complexity, many approaches are needed to analyze the decision-making process of any state. Although currently there are many different FPAs, there are still common ideas to explore. FPA focuses on the continuous interaction between actors and their environment. Also, in order to comprehend and explain FP, international context must be included (Morin & Paquin, 2018). This means that FPA aims

to understand the process behind FPDM and its method of studying such decisions in IR, which is why understanding FPA is necessary before discussing FPDM. According to Wukari (2015), FPA would encompass more than just state decision-making and FP. Also, it covers investigating and evaluating numerous other factors influencing FP, including internal and external politics, diplomacy, conflict, intergovernmental organizations, and economic sanctions. This means that FPA is focused not only on the factors that influence a state's decision but also on international situations that influence a state's FP. Moreover, FPA gets involved in studying the states through its individuals, groups, and international system (Walker et al., 2011). Thus, FPA can be described as establishing the facts related to FP through multi-level factors in explaining FPDM.

Combining the above definition of FP and DM, the framework of FPDM is the process by which a state, through individuals or groups, determines its goals, selects the strategies and methods to achieve them, and utilizes its available resources to interact with other states. This process involves assessing the timing of decisions, identifying and evaluating options, and selecting the most suitable course of action. However, this explanation requires more clarification and elaboration.

Hermann (2001) states that the framework of FPDM has several components: 1. it views decision-making as involving responding to foreign policy problems and occasions for decision; 2. it focuses on three types of authoritative decision units (the predominant leader, the single group, and the coalition); 3. it defines the key factors that set into motion alternative decision processes; and 4. It links these alternative decision processes to particular outcomes. The framework of FPDM by Hermann (2001) focuses on the decision units' approach, which means the behavior of the units is contingent on a set of key factors that help to understand who attends policymaking and how they affect it. Mintz and DeRouen (2010) add further detail by stating that FPDM consists of four components: 1. identifying the decision problem, 2. searching for alternatives, 3. choosing an alternative, and 4. executing the alternative. They also mention that the determinants of foreign policy decisions are Decision environment, Psychological factors, International factors, and Domestic factors. Mintz and DeRouen's framework emphasize the complexity of FPDM, highlighting the importance of considering various factors and stages in the decision-making process.

In summary, FPDM is a multifaceted process that involves various levels and stages. This theory divides the decision-making process into four stages: identifying the decision problem, searching for alternatives, choosing an alternative, and executing the alternative. Throughout this process, decision-makers must respond to foreign policy problems and opportunities, considering key factors such as the decision environment, psychological factors, international factors, and domestic factors. The decision environment includes external factors such as political, economic, and social conditions, which influence decision-makers' choices. Psychological factors involve individual and collective psychological characteristics, such as cognitive biases and beliefs, affecting how decision-makers evaluate and select alternatives. International factors encompass the behavior of other states, international organizations, and global trends, shaping foreign policy formulation and implementation. Domestic factors relate to domestic politics, public opinion, and bureaucratic interests, impacting decision-makers actions and choices within the domestic political environment.

#### **2.4. The Domestic Factor Influencing FPDM:**

Katzenstein (1977) argues that the domestic structure of nation-states is a key intervening variable. Without it, one cannot understand the interdependence between nations and the relationship between international politics and political strategy. Additionally, Krasner (1977; 1982) also shows a similar idea that, in the field of business policy, decisions are often influenced by the parliament and administrative institutions, which are easily influenced by domestic factors. In other words, domestic factors are a key variable in policy formulation. Moreover, Hussain (2011), through the US, China, and Jordan, argues that even though the countries have different political systems, they still see domestic politics as the priority factor in decision-making. Thus, this paper focuses on the domestic factor in analyzing FPDM through three types of domestic factors that influence FPDM: Domestic Politics, Public Opinion, and Bureaucratic Politics.

##### **2.4.1. What is the Domestic Factor?**

Hermann (2001) indicated that the decision units of FPDM, besides the predominant leader, the single group and the coalition of autonomous actors are the other decision units.

Additionally, Mintz and DeRouen (2010) state that domestic politics, economic conditions, and public opinion are among the most essential domestic factors that shape FPDM. Overall, the domestic factor refers to the influence of the internal state on FPDM. It can be political within the country or government departments, etc., and is not a single person but a group of more than one person as the central unit.

#### **2.4.2. What Domestic Factors are Important for Foreign Policy?**

##### **a. Domestic Politics:**

Domestic Politics literally means the political events, activities, or situations that occur within a country. Waltz (2001) provides and explains the force that creates the policies by domestic policy, which the Second Image has mentioned that the domestic makeup of states causes wars. Waltz refers to a case in Lenin's theory of imperialism, which posits that the leading cause of war is rooted in the need for capitalist states to continue opening up new markets to perpetuate their economic system at home. While Waltz (2001) did not explicitly state that domestic politics can influence policymaking, Waltz only explained that domestic politics usually cause wars. However, war is an extreme means of foreign policy, usually used when conflicts cannot be resolved, or goals cannot be achieved through diplomatic or other means. In a broad sense, Waltz also has similar ideas about how domestic politics influence FP.

A similar logic can be understood by diversionary war theory. Levy (1989) defines diversionary war theory as political elites often embarking on adventurous FP or even resorting to war to distract widespread attention away from internal social and economic problems and consolidate their domestic political support. However, in the diversionary war theory, the different people concerned with various issues will result in different effectiveness on this theory. Tir and Singh (2013) state that participation in foreign crises highlights problems with FP, boosts support for the leader and almost completely mitigates the detrimental effects of unemployment. While people in the workforce and those without jobs react to crises almost equally, citizens who are worried about foreign policy view the leaderless favorably when a situation arises. In addition to the leader resorting to wars to distract from domestic problems, Tir and Jasinski (2008) argue that the embattled leader can elicit public support by using armed force against ethnic minorities within his/her country. It means that sometimes, the leader might choose a lower-cost policy against ethnic minorities within his/her country to divert domestic

attention, called domestic diversionary. Tir (2010) further states that since people react strongly to territorial issues, leaders in distress may try to manipulate and exploit this tendency by specifically initiating territorial conflicts. While Tir (2010) does suggest that some international conflicts may indeed be triggered by very narrow personal interests, the theory of war diversion provides strong empirical support for public responses to transformative crises. Morgan and Bickers (1992) revise the diversionary theory that several behaviors should be considered as diversionary tactics, which are 1. state leaders typically adopt such tactics only when faced with a loss of support from within their ruling coalition, 2. relatively low-level uses of force usually would be used, and 3. the relationship should be viewed as probabilistic because other means of bolstering support might be available. From the preceding theory, many scholars believe that waging war to divert domestic public dissatisfaction is just one of many means, and leaders will choose the option with the lowest cost from among many options. Kanat (2014) further explains the relationship between that and states that the diversionary use of FP is a theory of domestic politics and FP interaction. Leaders do not have a single choice but a range of different FP actions to divert domestic public attention. Leaders adopt low-cost diversion strategies to deal with domestic issues and may gradually or simultaneously use multiple strategies depending on the level of support they create.

Overall, although both theories explain how domestic politics can influence policymakers' thoughts, affecting policymaking results, their approach differs. The Second Image theory leans towards adapting to the domestic political situation, which could be internal pressure or for better domestic development, prompting leaders to decide to wage war. On the other hand, diversionary war theory suggests that dissatisfaction with domestic politics leads leaders to decide to wage war, shifting domestic political pressure. These two theories represent single-directional influences on policymaking, specifically from the bottom up.

In addition to the bottom-up influence, domestic politics can also interact with international politics, thereby influencing foreign policy formulation. Putnam (1988) argues that international agreements (Level I) must be ratified domestically (Level II), creating a complex interplay between diplomacy and domestic politics, and international pressure can positively or negatively influence domestic politics, either facilitating or hindering agreement ratification. In other words, global and domestic contexts influence international negotiations. In the different kinds of issues, the domestic and international polity will affect each other, and the process of this interaction will become this state's international negotiations. However, in

this theory, Putnam focuses on the "reverberation" and "synergistic linkage" of the synergistic strategies available to negotiators. Schoppa (1993) highlights that besides those strategies, the strategy should include "participation expansion" and "alternative specification." This means that the interaction comprises transforming decision-making in ways that expand elite participation, bring the weight of public opinion to bear on policies previously dictated by small groups of privileged domestic actors, and influence how policy alternatives are considered in the decision-making process. In addition, Mo (1994) shows that when the political power of domestic constituents is medium range, the negotiator benefits from tighter domestic constraints; when the political power is too strong, the country may find it too expensive and decline to seek its support. When political power is weak, the foreign country will always seek its support when it is in the medium. The negotiator can clearly benefit from an increase in its political power. It means that negotiators can be either better or worse under more significant domestic constraints, and the conditions under which these different outcomes result depend on the distribution of political power between the negotiator and domestic constituents.

#### **b. Public Opinion:**

Public Opinion literally refers to a population's collective beliefs, attitudes, and views on a particular issue or topic. Many leaders depend on public opinion to decide their FP. Brule and Mintz (2006) state that US presidents are affected by public opinion on the use of force. However, this effect of public support and opposition is not symmetrical. In the data provided by Brule and Mintz (2006), if more than 50% of people support the use of force, the president is likely to rule out nonforce alternatives and pursue military action. On the other hand, if more than 60% of people oppose the use of force, there is a negative effect on the choice of presidential crisis response.

After the post-war period, The Almond-Lippmann Consensus is an influential theory to analyze the relationship between public opinion and the FP, which is based on three assumptions: 1. Public opinion is volatile and thus provides inadequate foundations for stable and effective foreign policies; 2. It lacks coherence or structure; and 3. It is irrelevant to the policy-making process. However, after The Vietnam War, many scholars challenged this consensus. Caspary (1970) challenged this assumption by stating that American Public Opinion is characterized by a solid and stable permissive mood toward international involvement.



Additionally, Mueller (1973) analyzed the public opinion of the Korean and Vietnam wars to argue that public opposition to conflict has been steadily increasing, following a pattern that mirrors the curve of battle deaths. This suggests that the public is using a heuristic that is understandable for assessing US policy. This implies that the public is interpretable and rational, rather than arbitrary and blind. Shapiro and Page (1988) have a similar argument to Mueller (1973) that when leaders explain the international reality clearly and accurately, the public tends to react wisely based on their fundamental values. This means that the public's reactions are rational under conditions of sufficient information.

In modern times, many scholars have focused on the relationship of decision-makers between public opinion and FP. Risse-Kappen (1991) states that public opinion's impact is determined by the domestic structure and coalition-building processes among the elites in the respective country. This means there are different kinds of public opinion impact on different countries. The stronger the state institutions and the greater their control of the policy networks, the less access the public has to the policy-making process. However, this assumption is incomplete, as the theory only discusses democratic countries and does not address authoritarian states. Moreover, once each country's different cultural factors or social needs are considered, it becomes flawed. Therefore, in discussing the impact of public opinion on foreign policy, a more comprehensive analysis should be conducted. Additionally, Foyle (1997) argues that decision-makers' perceptions and reactions to public opinion depend on their views of the proper relationship between public opinion and foreign policy choices. In other words, decision-makers will consider whether public opinion influences the choice of FP and whether the success of that policy requires public support, which calls elite beliefs as an intermediate variable for the influence of public opinion on foreign policy decision-making. However, this theory does not explain the impact of beliefs, but it does demonstrate the relationship between elite beliefs and decision-makers. Moreover, Knecht and Weatherford (2006) state that presidents are more likely to incorporate mass preferences into their decision-making at high public interest stages than during low public quiescence stages. This implies that the level of public interest in an issue can increase or decrease pressure on the president, thereby influencing the extent to which the president takes public opinion into account when FPDM.

### **c. Bureaucratic Politics:**

Besides domestic politics and public opinion, the internal bureaucratic system of a country is also one of the influencing factors. Most discussions of bureaucratic politics begin with Graham T. Allison's 1969 article in *The American Political Science Review*, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." The idea of bureaucratic politics is dominated by two significant pieces of literature: Graham T. Allison's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* and Morton H. Halperin's *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. The bureaucratic politics model means that the outcomes of policies result from bargaining games among a few high-level government actors. These participants bring different preferences, capabilities, and positions of power into the game. However, because the interests of each participant are different, and this process is neither dominated by one person nor likely to prioritize experts or rational decision-making, it may lead to suboptimal outcomes that fail to achieve the goals of any individual participant. In other words, foreign policy decisions and actions are shaped by the interests and behavior of various participants in the government because actors will pursue policies that benefit the organizations, they represent rather than national or collective interests. Bureaucratic politics research extends far beyond this. Bureaucratic politics is complex, with many factors influencing it, such as the characteristics of political leaders, such as their need for power, cognitive complexity, and policy experience, shaping the organization and operation of the advisory system (Preston & Paul, 1999); or the organizational interests of the bureaucracy, domestic politics, and presidential interests (Halperin et al., 2006); or even the democratic legislature (Halperin et al., 2006), all of which can influence bureaucratic politics and indirectly affect the formulation of FP.

#### **2.4.3. What are the Limits of Domestic Factors on Foreign Policy?**

Although domestic factors can be said to have the greatest impact on FPD, as decision-makers in any political system will seek to maintain their current position and thus prioritize meeting internal demands, many other factors besides domestic ones can influence FPD. Factors such as the leader's style (Kaarbo, 1997; Bass & Stogdill, 2008; Hearman, 1980), political advisors (Orbovich & Molnar, 1992; Burke & Greenstein, 1989), geography (Spykman, 1938; Dodds, 1993; Henrikson, 2003), international institutions (Wendt, 1999; Mearsheimer, 2001; Lee & Pyun, 2009), and international organization (Kim, 2011;

Panke & Henneberg, 2017; Kim & Whang, 2018) are all influential. However, because the field of FPDM in International Relations research is very broad, this paper will only study the domestic factors that influence FPDM.

## **2.5. Conclusion to Literature Review:**

This literature review aims to explore the domestic decision-making factors of foreign policy, starting from the definitions of FP, the decision-making process, and the framework of FPDM, delving into the fundamental theories of FPDM. Firstly, FP was defined as a country's policies directed towards external affairs, comprising goals, methods, and resources. The decision-making process included four steps: identifying the decision problem, searching for alternatives, choosing an alternative, and executing the alternative. The framework of FPDM included Hermann's components focusing on decision units and Mintz and DeRouen's stages emphasizing problem identification, alternative search, choice, and execution.

Subsequently, the section delved into the three main domestic factors influencing foreign policy decision-making: domestic politics, public opinion, and bureaucratic politics. In terms of domestic politics, the paper discussed theories by Waltz and Levy on how war is used to address domestic pressures and the diversionary war theory on how leaders use FP to shift domestic attention. Regarding public opinion, the section explored the impact of public opinion on foreign policy and how decision-makers adjust policies based on public sentiment. In terms of bureaucratic politics, the section discussed the bureaucratic politics model and how it shapes foreign policy outcomes through bargaining among government actors.

Overall, this literature review provided a comprehensive understanding of FPDM through an in-depth exploration of the definitions of FP, the DM process, and the framework of FPDM, as well as an analysis of the domestic factors influencing FPDM. These studies are significant for understanding the complexity and diversity of FPDM and how FP is formulated and implemented under the influence of domestic factors.

### **3. Methodology:**

#### **3.1. Hypothesis:**

Through previous section, there are three hypotheses that can answer the research question (How domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDm?)

Hypothesis:

- When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, domestic foreign policy is more likely to be influenced by the interaction between domestic and international politics.
- As public interest in a particular issue increases/decreases, leaders are more/less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy.
- When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a greater impact on foreign policy.

#### **3.2. Introduction to Methodology:**

The objective of this thesis is to understand how domestic factors influence the Tsai Ing-wen administration's foreign policy decision-making (FPDM). This chapter argues that the thesis should use the case study method for its research. In the following part, this chapter presents the reason for using the case study as the methodology and choosing "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" during the Tsai administration as the cases for this thesis. Then, this chapter describes the limitations of the case study methodology (generalizability, rigor, and external factors) and how this thesis migrates those limitations.

#### **3.3. The Case Study Methodology:**

According to Van Evera (1997), the case study method involves the analyst exploring a small number of cases (as few as one) in detail to see whether events unfold in the manner predicted and (if the subject involves human behavior) whether actors speak and act as the

theory predicts. In this thesis, it uses this methodology to analyze the case study in detail to see whether the case meets the hypotheses this thesis argues, which are: 1. When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy; 2. As public interest in a particular issue increases or decreases, leaders are more or less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy; 3. When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy. In the following part, the case study analysis will use the case study method to see whether the case (events unfolding in the manner predicted) meets those hypotheses.

There are several reasons for choosing the case study method. First, it allows the integration of diverse sources of evidence to build a deep understanding of the subject (Stake, 2008). Second, through a realist or positivist perspective, the researcher holds the view that one single reality orientates the case study method, which is independent of the individual and can apprehend, study, and measure through a relativist or interpretive perspective (Harrison et al., 2017). This means that the case study method accommodates various philosophical positions (the belief about conducting the data, collecting it, and analyzing and using it), allowing researchers to tailor their approach to the study's needs. Third, it provides a comprehensive and holistic exploration of complex issues within the real-life context (Yin, 2018).

### **3.4. The Limitation of Case Study:**

The case study involves an in-depth study of a singular case, which is its strengths and limitations. On the other hand, such a study can clarify the causal relationships between the research question and the case under study. However, the findings of a case study may not be generalizable to other cases (Willis, 2014), which means that the results obtained from one case study may only apply to that specific case, and the findings may differ entirely or partially when applied to other cases. In addition, Aguinis and Solarino (2019) also suggest that using case studies may cause the process and the result lack of rigor. Apart from that, external factors, such as authors' preconceived notions, may influence findings from case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The limitations of the case study may occur in this thesis. Firstly, the finding may meet with the first hypothesis when using a case study to analyze the research question of how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM. However, when using another case, the finding may have different results. Secondly, when describing the subject of how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM is sloppy, the process and findings may contain numerous blemishes, causing this thesis to lack validity and reliability to convince the reader what result this thesis argues. Third, the authors' perspectives may influence the findings of this thesis, thus different authors have different outcomes in the same case. For example, in this thesis, when the author distrusts China, the findings may be adverse toward China. On the other hand, when the author distrusts Taiwan, the findings may be adverse toward Taiwan.

Although this thesis wants to eliminate these limitations, it is impossible. Generalizability is something that cannot be fully addressed in the case study method because if another case does not match the predictions, then those predictions are flawed. However, through analyzing the Tsai administration's two foreign policies (FPs) and analyzing them with the FPs of previous administrations. This will mitigate them to a certain degree because this method includes examining the origins of those FPs and the factors influencing them. The thesis can identify patterns and trends that have persisted or changed over time by conducting an analysis, providing a broader context for understanding the Tsai administration's foreign policies. This approach will also help in isolating specific factors that may have a consistent influence across different administrations, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings. Additionally, examining the origins of these foreign policies will shed light on the underlying motivations and objectives that shaped them. Understanding these motivations can help in evaluating the impact on Taiwan's FP. Analyzing previous administrations' FP will also allow for a more comprehensive analysis, as it will consider a wider range of variables and contexts. This broader perspective can help identify any unique aspects of the Tsai administration's approach and any recurring challenges or opportunities Taiwan is facing in its foreign policy endeavors. Overall, this detailed analysis will provide a more robust foundation for the thesis, helping to mitigate the limitations and enhance the reliability and validity of its findings.

For example, regarding the lack of rigor, when analyzing how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, examining the FP from previous administrations shows that the method does not simply describe complex situations but follows systematic procedures to analyze the thesis's research questions. Regarding external factors, personal bias in the case

study method is unavoidable because it involves in-depth research of individual factors, and the author's description of the case may align with their initial hypothesis. Personal bias remains inevitable since it is impossible to eliminate human factors in this thesis completely. However, suppose the findings for the two FPs of the Tsai administration and the FPs of previous administrations are consistent. In that case, it indicates that external factors may not significantly impact this thesis.

Comparing the reasons for using the case study method (offering a complete view of this subject by integrating diverse sources of evidence, accommodating various philosophical positions that tailor this thesis's approach to the study's needs, and providing a comprehensive and holistic exploration of the relationship between domestic factors and the Tsai administration's FPDM) and the limitations of the case study method (generalizability, rigor, and external factors), the thesis argues that even there are some limitations, this thesis should choose the case study methodology. Despite its limitations, the case study method is still valuable for the following reasons: 1. The primary research goal is to understand the intricate relationship between domestic factors and the Tsai administration's FPDM in a detailed and nuanced manner. This depth of analysis is challenging to achieve with other methods that prioritize breadth over depth; 2. the case study method uses multiple sources of evidence and various data collection methods (e.g., interviews, archival research, policy analysis) enriches the data and provides a more comprehensive view of the research problem; 3. the case study method's flexibility allows for adapting the research design to the unique needs of the study, ensuring that the approach aligns well with the specific research questions and objectives. 4. The research can mitigate some of the limitations related to rigor and external factors by analyzing two FPs of the Tsai administration and analyzing them with FPs from previous administrations. Consistent findings across different administrations can demonstrate systematic procedures and reduce the impact of external biases. Thus, while the case study method has inherent limitations, its benefits in providing a comprehensive, contextually rich, and flexible approach to understanding the Tsai administration's FPDM make it a suitable choice for this research. By carefully mitigating its limitations, this thesis can offer valuable insights that contribute significantly to the field of foreign policy analysis.

### **3.5. Case Selection:**

The focus of this thesis is to explain how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM. To analyze this subject, it should explain the relationship between domestic factors and the Tsai administration's FPDM to understand how the domestic factors influence it. For this objective, this thesis uses the Tsai administration's implemented FP. Analyzing the implemented FP can easily get the information and data about the reason for implementing the FP, what factors influence this FP, how factors influence this FP, and so on. Thus, choosing the implemented FP during the Tsai administration can explain the relationship between domestic factors and the Tsai administration's FPDM to understand how the domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM.

This thesis focuses on analyzing how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM. To analyze this question, it examines two FPs of the Tsai administration and analyzes them with the previous administrations having FPs. For this objective, it selects "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" as the cases for methodology.

There are two reasons for choosing the "Steadfast Diplomacy." First, Steadfast Diplomacy is the guiding principle of the Tsai administration's foreign policy. Many of the administration's foreign policies are formulated and decided based on this principle, forming the foundation of the Tsai administration's foreign policy-making (Executive Yuan, R.O.C. (Taiwan), 2024). Second, since the ROC. government retreated to Taiwan, from President Chiang Ching-kuo to President Tsai Ing-wen, each administration has had a diplomatic principle that serves as the guideline for its foreign policy actions. This continuity and significance of diplomatic principles are evident in Taiwan (Wang, 1990; Tsai, 1995; Jian, 2012; Shieh, 2023). During the Tsai administration, the diplomatic principle was Steadfast diplomacy. Therefore, analyzing the diplomatic principles of Taiwan's presidents helps to understand the development of those diplomatic principles and further understand what factors influenced the Tsai administration to make the decision to adopt the Steadfast Diplomacy.

There are two reasons for choosing "The New Southbound Policy." First, The New Southbound Policy is a significant part of Taiwan's external economic and trade strategy, focusing on diversifying its economic and diplomatic engagements beyond China, involving bilateral relations with ASEAN countries and extending to multiple fields such as technology,



tourism, education, labor, and culture (Executive Yuan, R.O.C(Taiwan), 2016). Second, from presidents Lee Teng-hui to Tsai Ing-wen have formulated Southbound policies(Chiu, 2019). Analyzing those Southbound policies can help understand their development, which gives these policies comparative and continuous significance in Taiwan. Therefore, when exploring how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, analyzing the background of the entire policy helps to understand how domestic factors influenced the Tsai administration in formulating this policy.

### **3.6. Conclusion to Methodology:**

In conclusion, this thesis employs a case study methodology to investigate how domestic factors influence the Tsai Ing-wen administration's foreign policy decision-making (FPDM). Selecting the "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" as cases, this thesis aims to comprehensively understand the relationship between domestic factors and FPDM within the context of the Tsai administration.

This thesis chooses the case study method for several reasons. It allows for the integration of diverse sources of evidence, accommodates various philosophical perspectives, and provides a detailed and holistic exploration of complex issues within a real-life context. These strengths make it an appropriate methodology for examining the intricate dynamics of FPDM.

Despite its benefits, the case study method has inherent limitations, such as potential issues with generalizability, rigor, and the influence of external factors. To mitigate these limitations, this thesis will analyze the two foreign policies of the Tsai administration and those with policies from previous administrations. This approach aims to ensure systematic analysis and reduce potential biases.

This thesis selects "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" as the cases for this study based on their significance and representativeness in the Tsai administration's FP. "Steadfast Diplomacy" serves as the guiding principle for the administration's foreign policy actions, and examining its formulation provides insights into the influence of domestic factors on this foundational policy. On the other hand, the "New Southbound Policy" is a key

component of Taiwan's external economic and trade strategy, diversifying its economic and diplomatic engagements beyond China.

Ultimately, this case study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, offering valuable insights into the interplay between domestic influences and FPDM in Taiwan.

## **4. The Case Study:**

In this part, this thesis uses two cases, “Steadfast Diplomacy” and “The New Southbound Policy” during the Tsai administration, to analyze the research question of how domestic factors influence the Tsai Ing-wen administration's FPDM.

At the time of completing this thesis, the Tsai administration had just concluded its term. Not many scholars had studied Tsai's foreign policy, making it difficult to analyze the factors that influenced her foreign policy completely. However, by the time of writing this thesis, the next president, Lai Ching-Te, had already been elected and was set to take over from the Tsai administration. Therefore, this thesis considers that since the Tsai administration has already gone through an eight-year term and has successfully transitioned out of office, there is sufficient information to analyze the domestic factors that influenced her FPDM during her tenure.

### **4.1. Steadfast Diplomacy:**

Before analyzing the Tsai administration's Steadfast Diplomacy, it is necessary to understand its background to gain deeper insights into the issues this thesis intends to discuss. Since the ROC. government retreated to Taiwan, from President Chiang Ching-Kuo to President Tsai Ing-Wen, each administration has had a diplomatic principle that serves as the guideline for its foreign policy actions. This continuity and significance of diplomatic

principles are evident in Taiwan (Wang, 1990; Tsai, 1995; Jian, 2012; Shieh, 2023). Understanding the Taiwanese government's diplomatic principles is an essential piece of information for analyzing how domestic factors influenced the Tsai administration. The reason is that the motivation or reasons behind changes in foreign policy are one of the important factors this thesis aims to discuss.

### **The Period of Chiang Ching-Kuo (1978-1988):**

In the late 1970s, the stagnation of Sino-Soviet reconciliation and the normalization of Sino-American relations introduced new dynamics from both China and the United States. On January 1, 1979, the United States and China officially established ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations. The United States announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, decided to withdraw US military forces stationed in Taiwan within the year, and terminated the Mutual Defense Treaty signed with Taiwan in 1954. This shift in US diplomacy was another significant setback for the Republic of China government following its withdrawal from the United Nations. Consequently, the number of countries maintaining formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan dwindled to around a dozen. Undoubtedly, since the 1950s, the principle of "One China" and the insistence on "the Republic of China representing China" had been the core basis for the Kuomintang (KMT)'s internal authoritarian rule. However, the diplomatic consequences of this stance led to Taiwan's political isolation in the international community after the 1970s. Faced with significant diplomatic upheaval and domestic demands for democracy, President Chiang Ching-Kuo began to make necessary adjustments to the Kuomintang's internal and external policies. The so-called "flexible diplomacy" was proposed under this historical context (Wang, 1990).

The content of the Chiang administration's Flexible Diplomacy can be broadly divided into three points (Marčič, 2020):

1. Maintaining the ROC as the Sole Legitimate China: This principle was the bottom line. However, Taiwan assured Beijing that it would not engage in a separatist process, thereby politically disarming Beijing and reducing the likelihood of armed conflict between the two sides.

2. **Commitment to Democracy:** Through dedication to democracy and democratic causes, Taiwan would remain an ally of the United States and worthy of support even after the termination of official relations.
3. **Active Development of Non-Diplomatic Relations:** Taiwan proactively developed economic, cultural, scientific, and technological relations with non-diplomatic countries. At the same time, Taiwan strived to maintain its membership and rights in international organizations and to strengthen relations with its existing diplomatic allies.

The Chiang administration aimed to alleviate the Republic of China's diplomatic predicament following its withdrawal from the United Nations through economic trade and substantial exchanges with other countries.

#### **The Period of Lee Teng-Hui (1988-2000):**

For a long time, the Republic of China (ROC) adhered to the principle of "One China" and insisted on the legitimacy of the ROC representing China. Therefore, the ROC would sever diplomatic relations with any country that established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC). After the ROC's withdrawal from the United Nations, by 1988, it only maintained formal diplomatic relations with 22 countries. When President Chiang Ching-kuo passed away in 1988, Vice President Lee Teng-hui succeeded him and adopted a more pragmatic and open foreign policy, Pragmatic Diplomacy (Tsai, 1995).

The content of the Lee administration's Pragmatic Diplomacy can be broadly divided into four points (Tsai, 1995):

1. **The ROC as an Independent Sovereign State:** Emphasizing the Republic of China as an independent and autonomous sovereign state.
2. **Mutual Benefit and Equality:** Strengthening and enhancing cooperative relations with various countries based on principles of equality and reciprocity.
3. **Compliance with International Norms:** Participating in international activities and sharing international responsibilities in adherence to international norms.
4. **Active Participation in International Organizations:** Actively engaging in international organizations.

Although Flexible Diplomacy and Pragmatic Diplomacy appear similar, both aiming to resolve the ROC's diplomatic predicament through economic trade and substantial exchanges with other countries, the primary difference lies in the recognition of the legitimate government of China. Flexible Diplomacy considers the ROC as the only legitimate government of China, whereas Pragmatic Diplomacy acknowledges Beijing as a legitimate government of China but asserts that the ROC is an independent and autonomous sovereign state (Chen, 2002).

### **The Period of Chen Shui-Bian (2000-2008):**

In 2000, Chen Shui-bian won the presidential election, marking the first peaceful transfer of power and party rotation in the ROC. At the beginning of his administration, the Chen government adopted the principle of "All-People Diplomacy" to fully participate in the international community, combining the total strength of the government and the private sector to vigorously promote Pragmatic Diplomacy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China (Taiwan), 2000). This approach followed the Pragmatic Diplomacy route of the Lee Teng-hui administration, which did not pursue the establishment of formal diplomatic relations but focused on developing substantive bilateral exchanges, and was considered a continuation of Pragmatic Diplomacy. In Chen Shui-bian's 1999 campaign white paper, the Chen administration proposed to promote Democratic Diplomacy, Economic Diplomacy, Good Neighbor Diplomacy, All-People Diplomacy, Humanitarian Diplomacy, and Environmental Diplomacy as its foreign policy strategies during its tenure. In his second term, in response to China's continuous threats to Taiwan in the international arena and efforts to prevent Taiwan's participation in international organizations, the Chen administration adopted Democratic and Human Rights Diplomacy, Economic Co-Prosperity and Humanitarian Diplomacy, and Peace and Security Diplomacy as key foreign policies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China (Taiwan), 2005). In the Chen administration's final diplomatic policy report in 2008, it was mentioned that to cope with China's rise and the advent of the era of globalization, the Taiwan government adopted Soft Diplomacy and Multilateral Diplomacy in addition to Democratic and Human Rights Diplomacy, Economic Co-Prosperity and Humanitarian Diplomacy, and Peace and Security Diplomacy.

Although the Chen administration promoted many foreign policy principles during its tenure, such as Democratic Diplomacy, Economic Diplomacy, Good Neighbor Diplomacy, All-People Diplomacy, Humanitarian Diplomacy, Environmental Diplomacy, Democratic and

Human Rights Diplomacy, Soft Diplomacy, and Multilateral Diplomacy, the content of its foreign policy can be broadly divided into four points (Jian, 2012):

1. Continuation of Pragmatic Diplomacy: Continuing the pragmatic approach to diplomacy.
2. Integration of Taiwan into the International Human Rights System: Participating in international human rights activities, representing Taiwan in international organizations, especially emphasizing Taiwan and China as separate entities.
3. Economic Exchange, Cultural Exchange, Technical Cooperation, and Humanitarian Assistance with Diplomatic Allies: Engaging in economic exchange, cultural exchange, technical cooperation, and humanitarian assistance with diplomatic allies.
4. Promotion of Universal Values: Encouraging non-diplomatic countries to pay attention to the security of the Taiwan Strait and to advocate for universal values such as democracy and peace.

During the Chen administration, Taiwan's foreign policy gradually shifted its focus to Taiwan itself rather than emphasizing the Republic of China's participation in the international community. This shift, particularly the emphasis on Taiwan and China as separate entities, intensified China's efforts to suppress Taiwan's international space and made Taiwan a troublemaker in the international community (Hou, 2013).

#### **The Period of Ma Ying-Jeou (2008-2016):**

The Ma Ying-Jeou administration proposed "Viable Diplomacy" as its foreign policy principle to ease the high animosity across the Taiwan Strait and avoid causing further trouble for other countries. The administration aimed for a "Diplomatic Truce" in cross-strait relations (Hou, 2013). President Ma stated in his 2008 inaugural speech that his administration would use "dignity, autonomy, pragmatism, and flexibility" as guiding principles for handling foreign relations and international space.

The content of the Ma administration's Viable Diplomacy can be broadly divided into four points (Hou, 2013):

1. Pragmatism as a Guiding Principle: Similar to President Lee's Pragmatic Diplomacy but with a focus on "consolidating diplomatic ties, expanding foreign relations, participating in the international community, and defending dignity."
2. Based on the "1992 Consensus" (One China, Respective Interpretations): Emphasizing that Taiwan and China do not need to be in conflict, aiming for a "temporary ceasefire" in relations. This includes refraining from malicious competition in each other's diplomatic allies and handling affairs related to each other's people in allied countries with humanitarian principles.
3. Establishing Mutually Beneficial Relations with Diplomatic Allies: Building relationships based on mutual benefit, exchange, and assistance.
4. Conveying to Non-Diplomatic Allies that Improving Cross-Strait Relations is Taiwan's Responsibility: Considering humanitarian and rational factors rather than diplomatic recognition when assisting countries in need.

These points illustrate that the Ma administration's foreign policy, along with its cross-strait policies, aimed to establish a strong and glorious Chinese nation as China rose. Ma Ying-Jeou's vision served as a significant driving force for cross-strait relations during his presidency (Ji, 2010).

### **The Period of Tsai, Ing-Wen (2016-2024):**

During Ma Ying-Jeou's first term and re-election, he generally gained the trust of most Taiwanese people. However, in the latter part of his second term, a significant event occurred in Taiwan—the Sunflower Student Movement (March 18, 2014 – April 10, 2014). Simply put, the Sunflower Student Movement (hereinafter referred to as the Sunflower Movement) arose when the Ma administration, during his second term, passed the "Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement" under circumstances where the majority of the KMT legislators and flawed administrative procedures were involved. Shortly after the passage of this agreement, Taiwan witnessed a historic student movement that profoundly impacted Taiwanese society. The Sunflower Movement, also known as the 318 Movement or the Occupation of the Legislative Yuan, was a social movement jointly initiated by university students and civic groups in Taiwan from March 18 to April 10, 2014. The movement was led by protesting students who occupied the Legislative Yuan in Taipei and even attempted to occupy the nearby Executive Yuan. The primary cause of the movement was the forced review of the Cross-Strait Service

Trade Agreement, which opponents believed would harm their economy and strengthen the political influence of the People's Republic of China. Other reasons for participating in the movement included demands for democratic procedures and opposition to free trade. After the Sunflower Movement, the KMT (the ruling party at the time) lost the trust of the majority of the Taiwanese people, leading to significant defeats in subsequent presidential and legislative elections, allowing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), another Taiwanese political party, to become the largest party at the time (Zeng, 2019).

At that time, although cross-strait and Japan relations were relatively stable before the Tsai administration took office, China's military power had grown significantly, with its defense budget increasing annually by double digits, giving it the capability to seize Taiwan. Additionally, after the Trump administration took office, the U.-China trade war began, leading to a gradual deterioration of relations between the two countries (Shieh, 2023, pp. 303). Against this backdrop, the Tsai administration successfully became the ruling party, proposing the "Steadfast Diplomacy" principle during the campaign, which became the Tsai administration's diplomatic policy principle (Shieh, 2023, pp. 395).

The contents of the Tsai administration's Steadfast Diplomacy can be roughly divided into four points (Shieh, 2023):

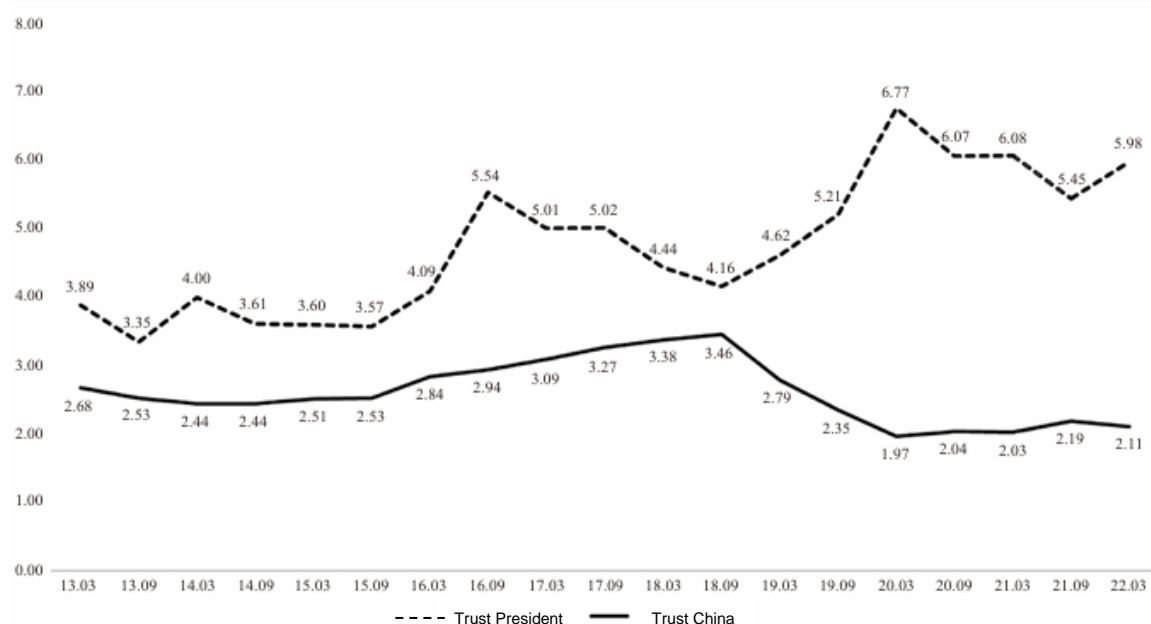
1. Adhering to the principle of pragmatism while emphasizing the concept of "mutual assistance and reciprocity."
2. No longer recognizing the "1992 Consensus."
3. Establishing sustainable partnerships with diplomatic allies.
4. Insisting on the values of freedom and democracy, closely cooperating with like-minded countries on the basis of mutual benefit, and making tangible contributions to the international community to strengthen the international status of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Particularly establishing value partnerships with countries like the United States, Japan, Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, actively engaging with the world, continuously striving for international participation, and making concrete contributions to the international community. This involves leveraging soft power through international cooperation and humanitarian aid to enhance Taiwan's positive international image, highlighting Taiwan as a force for good in the world.



Before the Tsai administration took office, its foreign policy differed from the Ma administration's Viable Diplomacy, which did not prioritize alignment with China. Instead, it aimed for close cooperation with like-minded countries, emphasizing collaboration with nations sharing similar values rather than emphasizing the so-called greatness and glory of the Chinese nation.

Although the Sunflower Movement significantly influenced the change of ruling parties in Taiwan, it did not make the distrust of China among the Taiwanese populace particularly evident. Polls in March and September 2014 showed that the trust level of Taiwanese people towards mainland China was 2.44. A poll in September 2013 showed that the trust level was 2.53. This decline in trust was not very noticeable in these polls (Chen, 2023, Figure 1). There is only related research on the Sunflower Movement's impact on university students' unification-independence stance. Tseng (2020) argues that major political events like the Sunflower Movement significantly influenced university students' stances on unification versus independence, but the factors influencing students' stances differed from those of the general electorate. Therefore, based on current data, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the Sunflower Movement led to a decline in Taiwanese people's trust in China, thereby affecting the Tsai administration's foreign policy.

Figure 1: The distribution trend of public trust in the President and the Chinese government



Resource from: Chen, 2023 (<https://www.airitilibrary.com/Article/Detail/10132716-N202309280005-00003>)

During the early period of the Tsai administration, Tsai Ing-wen claimed to "not provoke China" and acted cautiously. Having promised to "maintain the status quo" during her election campaign, Tsai kept her promise after taking office by controlling activities related to legal independence, which China was wary of. She also avoided criticizing China on sensitive issues such as the South China Sea. Tsai notably appointed David Lee, a diplomat with strong KMT ties, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2016 to 2018, in charge of cross-strait and foreign policies (OGASAWARA, 2017). However, despite the appointment of a diplomat with strong KMT ties to avoid provoking China and to maintain the status quo, the principles of Ma Ying-Jeou's Viable Diplomacy and Tsai Ing-wen's Steadfast Diplomacy revealed a shift from a vision centered on the Chinese nation to close cooperation with like-minded countries, emphasizing Taiwan's sovereignty.

It becomes evident that the primary factors influencing the Tsai administration's foreign policy decisions were domestic political turbulence (Sunflower Movement) and the international political climate (rising Chinese threat, deteriorating US-China relations). These factors led the Tsai administration to adopt Steadfast Diplomacy, seeking cooperation with like-minded countries. Public opinion and bureaucratic politics did not significantly impact the Tsai administration's foreign policy decisions. Trust in China did not significantly increase before Tsai took office, and during the early period of her administration, bureaucratic politics did not clearly influence foreign policy decisions. Even with David Lee, a diplomat with strong KMT ties, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan's foreign policy decisions did not continue the trajectory of the previous administration. Instead, the interplay of domestic and international political factors was the main influence on the Tsai administration's FPDM.

#### **4.1.1. Conclusion to Steadfast Diplomacy:**

The Tsai administration's Steadfast Diplomacy was formed against the backdrop of Taiwan's foreign policy evolution across several administrations. Understanding the evolution of previous administrations' foreign policies is crucial for analyzing the domestic factors influencing the Tsai administration's foreign policy. From Chiang Ching-kuo's Flexible Diplomacy to Lee Teng-hui's Pragmatic Diplomacy and Chen Shui-bian's various diplomatic policies, these policy principles were developed in response to China's diplomatic pressure and

the quest for international space. Ma Ying-Jeou's Viable Diplomacy, based on the 1992 Consensus, attempted to establish more stable cross-strait relations through a diplomatic truce with China. The Tsai administration came to power in this context, facing domestic political turbulence (Sunflower Movement) and the international situation (rising Chinese threat, deteriorating US-China relations), and proposed Steadfast Diplomacy. Tsai's foreign policy clearly departed from Ma's Viable Diplomacy, placing greater emphasis on cooperation with like-minded countries, such as the United States, Japan, and Europe, to elevate Taiwan's international status. This shift was not only a response to domestic political turbulence but also a message to the international community, showing a desire for stronger cooperation with countries that share similar values.

#### **4.2. The New Southbound Policy:**

According to Chiu (2019), the Southbound Policy has four periods, starting with President Lee Teng-hui's administration of the "Southbound Policy" in 1994, followed by President Chen Shui-Bian's revival of the "Southbound Policy," President Ma Ying-Jeou's "Viable Diplomacy" policy, and President Tsai Ing-Wen's "The New Southbound Policy." "In order to analyze how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, understanding the background of The New Southbound Policy during the Tsai administration is significant for this thesis because the transformation of policy shows the movement and relation between the domestic factors and the Tsai administration's FPDM.

##### **The Period of Lee Teng-Hu (1988-2000):**

The Executive Yuan of the Republic of China (Taiwan) formulated and promulgated the "Enhancing Economic and Trade Relations with Southeast Asia Policy" in January 1994, which is regarded as the starting point of the "Southbound Policy" under President Lee Teng-hui's administration (Ma & Cheng, 2019). Against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War, symbolizing a shift from politically dominated international economic relations to economically dominated ones, and the onset of the era of free trade globalization, there were two main forces within Taiwan that drove the Lee administration to promote the "Southbound Policy": international context and domestic economic factors (Hwang, 2008; Chiu, 2019).

In terms of international context, the era of free trade globalization was evident with events such as the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by the United States, Canada, and Mexico in 1992, the declaration of a single market by 12 European Community countries in 1993, and the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1993, making the Asia-Pacific region one of the three major economic communities dominating the world alongside Europe and North America. These developments demonstrated that regional trade increased global economic trade, ushering in the trend of free trade globalization (Frankel & Wei, 1998).

In terms of domestic economic factors, Taiwan's overall investment environment was changing, with factors such as the appreciation of the New Taiwan Dollar, rising land prices, and increasing environmental awareness leading to increased industry competition (Hwang, 2008). These changes in Taiwan's overall investment environment prompted many small and medium-sized enterprises to invest in Southeast Asia even without government assistance. At the same time, with Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping's promotion of the "Reform and Opening Up" policy starting in 1978, the situation across the Taiwan Strait eased. Additionally, due to linguistic and cultural similarities, many small and medium-sized enterprises gradually shifted their focus from Southeast Asia to China (Chen, 2004).

However, the PRC continued to suppress the PRC, and the threat of forcibly unifying Taiwan by military means persisted. Despite this, Taiwan's economic dependence on the PRC was increasing. Therefore, in order to reduce the negative political impact of Taiwan's economic reliance on the PRC, the Lee administration promoted the policy of developing industries in Southeast Asia (Chiou, 2017).

The content of the Lee administration's The Southbound Policy can be broadly divided into four points (Chen, 2021):

1. Diversification of trade risks: The aim was to avoid over-reliance on a single trading partner.
2. Response to changes in Hong Kong post-1997: In response to Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, Taiwan hoped to replace Hong Kong's role.
3. Rescuing industries facing closure: Labor-intensive industries that were unable to upgrade or lacked the resources to do so were relocated overseas.

4. Response to economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region: The implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area plan by the ASEAN group starting in 1994 made the trend of economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region more evident. Taiwan needed to transfer industries to ASEAN countries to gain business opportunities and benefits from this plan.

The Lee administration hoped to stimulate Taiwanese investment in Southeast Asian countries through the Southbound Policy and thereby reduce the strong inclination of Taiwanese businesses to invest in China. However, its effectiveness did not meet expectations (Chen, 2021, pp. 23).

#### **The Period of Chen Shui-Bian (2000-2008):**

The Southbound Policy of the Lee administration experienced a decline starting in 1997, following the Asian financial crisis that severely affected Southeast Asian economies, coupled with political instability in some Southeast Asian countries and the economic rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Chiu, 2019). When the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election in 2000 and initially took office, there wasn't a particular emphasis on the Southbound Policy. However, with the Chen administration's open approach to cross-strait economic and trade relations, Taiwanese investment in the PRC increased annually, although cross-strait relations did not improve. Additionally, in 2002, Taiwan officially joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the name "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu," which required opening up its domestic market, impacting the need to reevaluate its foreign trade strategy. This prompted the Lee administration to decide to relaunch the Southbound Policy in 2003 (Chen, 2021).

The content of the Chen administration's Southbound Policy can be broadly divided into three points (Chu, 2017):

1. Official guidance: Establishing a Southeast Asian Taiwanese Business and Trade Network website to provide investment information to Taiwanese businesses. The government also provided assistance to Taiwanese businesses investing in Southeast Asia through financing, taxation, and counseling measures.

2. Focus on six Southeast Asian countries: In December 2002, Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs identified Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia as key countries for promoting the Southbound Policy.
3. Promotion of free trade agreements with ASEAN countries: In response to the PRC's political pressure on Taiwan, the Chen administration aimed to avoid Taiwan's marginalization in the regional economic integration trend in the Asia-Pacific region. They sought to achieve this by signing free trade agreements with major ASEAN countries.

Unlike the Lee administration's Southbound Policy, which focused on diversifying industries and seeking different production environments, the Chen administration's policy emphasized economic and trade aspects and aimed to find suitable production environments. However, both administrations were aware of China's increasing trade dependence (Chu, 2017, pp. 40).

### **The Period of Ma Ying-Jeou (2008-2016):**

During the Chen administration, which ran from 2000 to 2008, there was a push for Taiwan's independence through measures like the "One Country on Each Side" proposal, the termination of the "National Unification Council," and actions to promote Taiwan's international identity. These moves strained cross-strait relations and Taiwan's diplomatic standing (Kou, 2020). In response, Ma Ying-Jeou, who became president in 2008, introduced the "Viable Diplomacy" strategy. This approach aimed to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, using the "1992 Consensus" as a basis for negotiations with China. The goal was to ease tensions and enhance Taiwan's international space (Office of the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), 2008; Hou, 2014).

During the Ma Ying-Jeou administration, there was less emphasis on the Southbound Policy compared to previous governments. However, the administration did pursue foreign policies related to the Southbound Policy under the framework of "Viable Diplomacy." These policies can be summarized into three points:

1. Strengthening ties with diplomatic allies and non-diplomatically countries: This included signing the Taiwan-Singapore Economic Cooperation Agreement and

exploring the feasibility of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) or Economic Cooperation Agreements (ECA) with countries like Indonesia, India, Malaysia, and Thailand.

2. Enhancing Taiwan's participation in international organizations: For instance, in 2015, Taiwan's Vice President represented the country at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.
3. Increasing cultural, academic, and other exchanges internationally: Efforts were made to boost cooperation with ASEAN countries in areas such as economy, trade, investment, technology, labor, and agriculture. This included the establishment of the Taiwan-ASEAN Studies Center in 2009 and organizing forums or seminars on "ASEAN plus Taiwan" regional issues.

Unlike the previous Chen administration, which faced tensions with China and international challenges, the Ma administration aimed to reduce tension and international complications by pursuing foreign policies related to the Southbound Policy under the framework of Viable Diplomacy (Chu, 2017, pp. 44-45).

### **The Period of Tsai Ing-Wen (2016-2024):**

With the reorganization of global supply chains, emerging countries like ASEAN and Southeast Asian nations are rising. Taiwan's economic development is closely linked to many countries in these regions. For instance, ASEAN countries are Taiwan's second-largest export market and the second-largest destination for foreign investment (Chan, 2019, pp. 39). Excluding the aforementioned international circumstances, as described in the Steadfast Diplomacy content earlier, the rising Chinese threat, deteriorating US-China relations, and the Sunflower Movement within Taiwan led the government to gradually distance itself from China and align with other like-minded countries. This can also be understood from Tsai Ing-wen's presidential inaugural speech, where she emphasized in 2016 the promotion of the New Southbound Policy to enhance the structure and diversity of external economics, moving away from over-reliance on a single market (Office of the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), 2016). In 2014, Taiwan's trade dependence on China was 22.2%, while its trade dependence on ASEAN countries was 15.7% (Chen, 2021, pp. 56-57). To respond to the aforementioned international and domestic factors, the Tsai administration pushed for the New Southbound Policy after taking office.

The content of the Tsai administration's The New Southbound Policy can be broadly divided into three points (Chan, 2019, pp. 46-81):

1. Expanding integration of industrial supply chains with partner countries, linking domestic markets, and cooperating on infrastructure projects to establish new economic and trade partnerships.
2. Emphasizing talent exchange.
3. Leveraging soft power in areas such as culture, tourism, healthcare, technology, agriculture, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to seek bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
4. Expanding multilateral and bilateral institutional cooperation with partner countries, strengthening negotiation and dialogue, and utilizing civil society groups, overseas community networks, and third-country forces to jointly promote regional stability and prosperity.

Unlike the previous Ma administration, which sought to respond to the rise of ASEAN and Southeast Asian emerging countries, the Tsai administration also recognized the risk of over-reliance on the Chinese market (Chan, 2019, pp. 39; Chen, 2021, pp. 56-57). Moreover, the Tsai administration's New Southbound Policy places a stronger emphasis on people-to-people connections, including tourism, educational exchanges, cultural exchanges, and the cultivation of talent for the New Southbound Policy, distinguishing it from similar policies promoted by previous administrations (Chen, 2021, pp. 57).

#### **4.2.1. Conclusion to The New Southbound Policy:**

The Tsai administration's New Southbound Policy represents a significant shift in Taiwan's strategic and economic relations with Southeast Asian countries. It inherits elements from previous governments' southbound policies while introducing unique focuses. The evolution of these policies reflects the changing domestic and international environments during different periods and the corresponding strategic adjustments by each government. These policy shifts highlight that domestic and international environments and internal economic pressures are crucial factors influencing the formulation of government foreign policies. The New Southbound Policy under the Tsai administration particularly emphasizes the interplay of



domestic and international factors, especially in the wake of the Sunflower Movement and the early international situation during Tsai's tenure, prompting the government to adopt a more independent economic strategy away from China.

## **5. Analyzing Case Study:**

### **5.1. Analyzing Steadfast Diplomacy:**

From the above case study, it can be observed that the foreign policies of Taiwanese presidents are influenced by both international and domestic factors. However, domestic factors were not particularly evident during the Lee and Chen administrations. Returning to the main theme of this thesis, which explores how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM), only one domestic factor stands out. The Sunflower Movement in 2014 significantly altered Taiwan's political landscape, leading to the ruling party (KMT) losing the subsequent presidential election.

Although the literature review indicates that public opinion and bureaucratic politics can also influence a country's FPDM, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that public opinion directly impacted the Tsai administration's FPDM. While the Sunflower Movement did affect university students' views on unification and independence, these views do not necessarily reflect those of the general populace. Therefore, it is difficult to prove that the Sunflower Movement directly influenced the Taiwanese people's stance on unification and independence and influenced the Tsai administration's FPDM. Moreover, public distrust of China did not significantly increase before the Tsai administration took office, indicating that public opinion had a limited impact on FPDM. Regarding bureaucratic politics, existing research, government documents, and media reports do not provide substantial evidence of the influence of bureaucratic politics on the Tsai administration's FPDM.

There are two potential reasons for the lack of information on how relevant departments discuss foreign policy principles. First, such information might be classified and not publicly

available. Second, these discussions might occur privately between departments, leaving no formal records in government meeting minutes or published research. Although some insights can be drawn from the appointment of key officials, such as David Lee as the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the early Tsai administration (2016-2018), who was closely aligned with the KMT and more China-friendly, this did not result in a continuation of the pro-China policies of the previous administration. Instead, the Tsai administration's Steadfast Diplomacy emphasized close cooperation with like-minded countries and prioritized Taiwan's sovereignty.

In this case study on Steadfast Diplomacy, it can be determined that only one hypothesis fits the case: "When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy." Firstly, this hypothesis posits that the interaction between the international factors of the rising threat from China and the deterioration of US-China relations, and the domestic factor of the Sunflower Movement influenced the Tsai administration's formulation of its foreign policy principles, namely the Steadfast Diplomacy. Regarding the other two hypotheses, firstly, "As public interest in a particular issue increases or decreases, leaders are more or less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy," although the Sunflower Movement changed Taiwan's political landscape, it did not significantly increase Taiwanese public distrust of China. The movement mainly influenced the unification-independence stance of university students, whose perspectives differ from the general electorate, so this hypothesis cannot be substantiated in the case of the Tsai administration. Lastly, "When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy," due to the lack of research and related information on how bureaucratic politics influenced FPDM during the Tsai administration, this hypothesis cannot be directly concluded to be applicable in this case study.

Therefore, the analysis reveals that only the hypothesis that "When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy" fits the Tsai administration's Steadfast Diplomacy case. Specifically, the interaction between the international factors of the rising threat from China, the deterioration of US-China relations, and the domestic factor of the Sunflower Movement prompted the Tsai administration to propose a more stable foreign policy that emphasizes cooperation with like-minded countries.

	International Factor	Domestic Factor
Chiang Ching-Kuo (1978-1988)	ROC withdrawals from the UN	Domestic demands for democracy
Lee Teng-Hui (1988-2000)	ROC's diplomatic predicament	Not significant
Chen Shui-Bian (2000-2008)	1. China treats rising 2. The advent of the era of globalization	Not significant
Ma Ying-Jeou (2008-2016)	1. Easing the high animosity across the Taiwan Strait 2. Avoiding causing further trouble for other countries	Domestic think too radical FP
Tsai Ing-Wen (2016-2024)	1. China treats rising 2. The deterioration of US-China relations	Sunflower Student Movement

## 5.2. Analyzing The New Southbound Policy:

From the above case study, it can be observed that the factors influencing the Southbound Policy of various Taiwanese presidents include both international and domestic elements. Returning to the main topic of this thesis, which is how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's foreign policy decision-making (FPDM), there is primarily one domestic factor involved. Similar to the formulation of foreign policy principles, the 2014 Sunflower Movement significantly altered Taiwan's political landscape, leading to the defeat of the then-ruling party (KMT) in the subsequent presidential election. However, there is no evidence to suggest that public opinion directly influenced the Tsai administration's FPDM, nor is there sufficient information to demonstrate the impact of bureaucratic politics on the FPDM during Tsai's administration. Therefore, consistent with the case analysis of foreign policy principles,

in the case of the New Southbound Policy, there is no evidence proving that public opinion influenced the Tsai administration's FPDM, and the lack of sufficient data on bureaucratic politics prevents a direct conclusion on whether this hypothesis applies.

In this case analysis of the New Southbound Policy, it can be concluded that only one hypothesis fits the case: "When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy." Firstly, the interaction between the international factors of the rise of ASEAN countries, the increasing threat from China, the deterioration of US-China relations, and the domestic political factor of the Sunflower Movement intensified, influencing the Tsai administration's FPDM, which led to the proposal of the New Southbound Policy.

A notable difference is that the New Southbound Policy emphasizes economic factors, particularly Taiwan's reliance on a single market. In 2014, Taiwan's trade dependency on China, its largest market, was 22.2%, while its trade dependency on ASEAN countries, its second-largest market, was 15.7%. These economic factors, however, do not fall within the scope of the hypotheses this thesis aims to prove.

	Internation Factor	Domestic Factor
Lee Teng-Hui (1988-2000)	International context Ex: Trend of free trade globalization	Domestic economy Ex: The appreciation of the New Taiwan Dollar, rising land prices, and increasing environmental awareness
Chen Shui-Bian (2000-2008)	Cross-strait relations did not improve	The impact of opening the domestic market to foreign competition

	Internation Factor	Domestic Factor
Ma Ying-Jeou (2008-2016)	1. Cross-strait relations hit a freezing point 2. Plunging Taiwan into diplomatic difficulties	Domestic think too radical FP
Tsai Ing-Wen (2016-2024)	1. The rise of ASEAN 2. China treats rising 3. The deterioration of US-China relations	1. Sunflower Student Movement 2. Over-reliance on a signal market

## 6. Conclusion:

### 6.1. Chapter Introduction and Summary Answer to the Research Question:

Taiwan's actions are becoming increasingly important to the world, whether due to its strategic position amid the highly competitive US-China relationship or its proximity to the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Taiwan's significance is becoming more evident. President Tsai Ing-wen's tenure coincides with the critical period transitioning from the Obama administration to the current Biden administration, a key era marked by the shift from US-China amicable relations to the outbreak of a trade war and the current strategic competition. Thus, studying Tsai's FPDM helps understand Taiwan's stance and strategy in international affairs, predict future policy directions, and comprehensively assess Taiwan's role in international affairs. Domestic factors are seen as priority factors in foreign policy decision-making (Katzenstein, 1977; Krasner, 1977; 1982; Hussain, 2011). Therefore, this thesis primarily discusses how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM.

From the Literature Review, it is found that factors influencing a country's FPDM can be broadly categorized into three parts: domestic politics, public opinion, and bureaucratic politics.

This thesis proposes three hypotheses based on these theories: 1. When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy; 2. As public interest in a particular issue increases or decreases, leaders are more or less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy; 3. When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy. It posits that domestic factors will influence Tsai's FPDM in these ways.

This thesis employs the Case Study Methodology to test whether these hypotheses hold true. The reasons for using the Case Study Methodology are: first, it allows the integration of diverse sources of evidence to build a deep understanding of the subject (Stake, 2008); second, through a realist or positivist perspective, the researcher views that a single reality guides the case study method (Harrison et al., 2017); finally, it provides a comprehensive and holistic exploration of complex issues within the real-life context (Yin, 2018). Although the Case Study Methodology has some limitations (generalizability, rigor, and external factors), the benefits of the Case Study Methodology outweigh them for this thesis. As for case selection, this thesis chooses "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" due to their significance and representativeness in Tsai's foreign policy.

The cases of "Steadfast Diplomacy" and "The New Southbound Policy" reveal that the interaction of the international polity (rising Chinese threats, deteriorating US-China relations) and the domestic polity (the Sunflower Movement) influenced Tsai administration's FPDM. These findings support the first hypothesis: When the interaction between domestic and international politics intensifies, it is more likely to influence foreign policy.

As for the second and third hypotheses, 2. As public interest in a particular issue increases or decreases, leaders are more or less likely to consider public opinion when formulating foreign policy, and 3. When participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy, there is insufficient relevant information to prove that these factors significantly influenced Tsai's FPDM. There are no direct data to confirm the impact of public opinion, nor are there records of internal bureaucratic discussions and decision-making processes to suggest these influences (if they exist) are documented or classified, making it impossible to prove these hypotheses.

Finally, while this thesis discusses how domestic factors influence the Tsai administration's FPDM, it is evident from the case studies that Tsai's FPDM is not solely influenced by domestic factors; international factors also play a crucial role. In the case study of Steadfast Diplomacy, the domestic factors during the Lee and Chen administrations were not very apparent, making it difficult to judge their impact on FPDM. Therefore, the notion from the Literature Review that domestic factors are prioritized in foreign policy decisions may not be entirely accurate for Taiwan. It can only be confirmed that domestic factors do influence the Tsai administration's FPDM.

## **6.2. Suggestion to Future Research:**

There are two suggestions for future research:

1. Regarding the third hypothesis of this thesis, when participants in foreign policy formulation act more on behalf of organizational interests rather than national interests, bureaucratic politics has a more significant impact on foreign policy, there is insufficient data in this thesis to prove this hypothesis. Future research could interview relevant government department heads and President Tsai to understand whether bureaucratic politics influenced the Tsai administration's FPDM during policy-making decisions.

2. This thesis has proven that international factors, along with domestic factors, significantly influence the Tsai administration's FPDM. However, which of these two factors is more influential or important, or whether there are other more significant influencing factors, remains an open question worth exploring in future research.

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