

Chapter 3

Electoral Campaigning in Taiwan

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Taiwan's political environment has undergone manifold changes during the last few decades. It developed from an authoritarian polity into one of Asia's most vibrant democracies. Since the early days of Taiwan's democratic development, elections have played a vital role in building and fostering democratic institutions. Socio-economic changes have not only contributed to Taiwan's rapid political development, but also influenced the nature of electoral campaigns. Taiwan's development of political marketing can be divided into two stages, namely into the martial law and the post-martial law era.

Martial law period (1949–1987)

During World War II, the United States reached an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek providing that Taiwan would be returned to China after the war. The agreement was confirmed in the Potsdam Declaration of July 1945. Soon afterwards, Chiang Kai-shek appointed a committee headed by Chen Yi to take over the island's administration. The regime's strategy was to infiltrate Taiwan's society by means of public participation in state-controlled elections and expanding the Kuomintang's party network. The first elections at grassroots level were held in 1946. Taiwan's local elite was not satisfied with these rather meaningless grassroots elections and asked for direct elections of all chief executive positions, such as the mayors of the island's largest cities and county magistrates. Rumors about a new constitution requesting direct elections of all executives including such positions as county magistrates, provincial municipality mayors and provincial governors let the Taiwanese vest new hope in the regime. After the new and permanent constitution of the republic came into force in 1947, the regime under Governor Chen Yi announced, however, that local self-governance as stipulated by the new constitution could not be implemented before the end of 1949 (Stuart, 1947). This and other overtly negative policies of the new regime culminated in the 2-28 Incident, in which mainland Chinese troops brutally killed several thousand Taiwanese. Aside from grassroots elections, national elections were held in 1947/1948, but there was hardly any campaigning. A year later, Chiang Kai-shek lost the civil war in China and martial law was declared in Taiwan.

Electoral campaigning in the 1950s: Gentry politics versus machine politics

In the early 1950s, chief executives of counties and the island's largest cities were elected directly for the first time as part of the newly implemented local self-governance law. In the mid-1960s, local scholars separated the first fifteen years of the new local self-governance system into three periods (Huang and Cheng, 1991: 16). During the first, candidates were well known for their expertise in fields valuable to the electorate, such as lawyers and doctors, or because of their previous engagement in community work. The second period started between the third and fourth elections of county councilors (1954–1958). Machine politics began to replace gentry politics, and with it the candidates' financial capabilities became one of the most crucial factors in electoral campaigns. In the beginning, the investments paid off. The electorate increasingly supported candidates because of their 'financial contributions' to the community. Less privileged but better qualified candidates got disillusioned or were discouraged by the new electoral culture. In the early 1960s—the third period—financial contributions were nothing special. On the contrary, they were commonplace and no longer guaranteed a candidate's success at the polls. Consequently, candidates nominated by the regime started to hire criminals to threaten other hopefuls and to convince undecided voters.

The Korean War (1950–1953) strengthened the diplomatic relations between the regime and the US, and highlighted the strategic importance of Taiwan. US support added to the legitimacy of the regime and provided it with new opportunities to suppress the people of Taiwan. The Kuomintang (KMT) more and more turned into a propaganda machine deeply rooted in Taiwan's society. Whenever there was an election, the regime would mobilize its party, military and governmental network at provincial, county and grassroots levels to guarantee the success of its candidates (Huang and Cheng, 1991: 18).

The worsening political culture of the late 1950s was addressed by a group of upper-class intellectuals who formed the first meaningful opposition movement in postwar Taiwan. At the core centre of the group was Lei Chen, a senior KMT member. The group started as a loosely connected network of several members of the two other legal political parties and unaffiliated local politicians. The major news organ of the movement was the bimonthly *Free China*. Lei Chen was the chief executive of the magazine and Hu Shi, another Mainland Chinese intellectual, the spiritual leader. The first edition was published in November 1949. About 260 issues were released until September 1960, when the KMT regime banned the magazine. Each issue had a circulation of between ten and twenty thousand copies (Pan et al, 2003: i–iii). In the beginning, the magazine was part of the KMT's anti-communist propaganda. After a year, however, the articles published in *Free China* were rather critical of the KMT and its organizations. In 1955, Lei Chen was expelled from the KMT and put under close surveillance by the Garrison Command, Taiwan's secret police. It was about that time that the magazine started to publish articles criticizing the nature of local elections and that Lei Chen seriously thought about the formation of an opposition party (Pan et al, 2003; Huang and Cheng, 1991: 22;

Lu, 1997: 26–32). Political analysts and local politicians contributed to *Free China*. Their essays highlighted the true nature of local electoral campaigning and how local self-governance (*difang zizhi*) developed into local party-governance (*difang dangzhi*) (Pan et al, 2003: xxii). According to the magazine, the KMT's interference in the electoral process ranged from kidnapping, physical attacks, bribery, and vote rigging to the involvement of the military. Lei Chen and his followers thought that a powerful opposition party could put pressure on the regime to improve the overall electoral process and eradicate obstacles to free and fair electoral campaigns (Pan et al, 2003; Lei, 2003). Over 30 non-KMT mayors, provincial assembly members and county magistrates joined the initiative. The KMT regime finally imprisoned Lei Chen and other senior members of the opposition camp and the hopes for a cleaner election environment were gone.

The 1960s: No sign of improvement

Throughout the 1960s, electoral campaigns did not change much. Leaflets, public speeches, magazines, and campaign vehicles were the only campaign tools available to opposition candidates. Nevertheless, a growing number of opposition candidates, influenced by US presidential campaigning, requested the holding of public debates between candidates, and some even asked for mass media advertising (Huang and Cheng, 1991; Chang, 1992).

The utilization of mass media was unrealistic for several reasons, though. First, the KMT would not have significantly benefited from political advertisements. Second, the KMT regime relied more on propaganda and traditional grassroots mobilization than on political marketing. Third, mass media advertising was in general restricted. There was a quota system in place, which only allowed for a certain number of ads per media, industry, and day. Political ads would have intensified the existing rough competition. Fourth, in the 1960s, there were only a few advertising agencies and the entire advertising industry was influenced by Japan rather than the United States. Fifth, advertisements would have been too expensive to become an alternative to conventional campaigning (Kuo, 2001: 8–9; Wang, 2002).

Debates between KMT and opposition candidates constituted a more reasonable approach and most of the opposition candidates challenged their rivals to join them. Opposition candidates needed the debates to get media exposure. During the election campaign, journalists were assigned to each of the KMT candidates. Their job was to write favorable stories about them. Opposition candidates, on the other hand, could only get media coverage by confronting their KMT rivals. Debates were one of the rare ways to get this confrontation. KMT candidates, however, were mostly reluctant to take part in debates for two reasons. First, they considered them as unnecessary. Second, they believed that by joining a debate they would put themselves on an equal footing with the other obviously inferior candidate. In all cases, the KMT candidates denied the requests; in several cases, the denial was used to attack the candidate, and

in some, such as the mayoral elections in Taipei (1964) and Kaoshiung (1968), the attack led to the defeat of the KMT candidate (Chang, 1992: 137–43).¹

The 1970s: A decade full of campaign innovations

At the end of 1969, limited parliamentary elections were held for the first time during the martial period. Further national elections were held in 1972 and 1975. The newly elected opposition figures were mainly individualistic and localized powerbrokers, such as Kang Ning-hsiang (Ai, 1997: 127–9).

Although there was no breakthrough in terms of freer and fairer electoral campaigns, there were several notable changes. First, appearance began to play a more decisive role in the selection of candidates. The ideal KMT candidate at that time had to be educated, handsome, and Taiwanese, which was a phenomenon frequently referred to as the *cui tai qing* (handsome, Taiwanese, young) syndrome, from the name of a singer and movie star (Ai, 1997: 112). The KMT's new approach was part of an attempt to replace candidates nominated by local faction leaders with party cadres. Opposition candidates at that time paid less attention to appearance

¹ In 1964, the KMT nominated Chou Pai-lian. His rival candidate was independent Kao Yu-shu, who served as mayor of Taipei between 1954 and 1957. Since his defeat in 1957 (his re-election bid) the KMT controlled the city. Chou's success at the polls seemed to be a foregone conclusion. He was very wealthy and well-connected with the business community. Moreover, grassroots support was guaranteed by the borough chiefs who by that time were almost exclusively KMT members. Ten years ago things were different and it was much easier for Kao to escape the KMT's network. Kao knew that the only way to win was to focus his campaign on propaganda. His key strategy was to challenge Chou by requesting a public debate about the city's problems in one of Taipei's most popular temples. Kao asked for a debate similar to those held in the US during presidential campaigns. Chou responded by saying that the people would only have to elect a mayor of a small city and that there was thus no need for a debate. He agreed to send his campaign assistant to join the debate if Kao still insisted on it. Kao said he could also send his campaign worker but what would be the point of such a debate. He said that the candidates must of course take part in the debate themselves. The dispute caused a lot of media attention and the public felt that Kao was right and Chou too sure of victory. Kao unexpectedly won the election. Four years later, Chen Wu-chang was the KMT's hopeful in the Kaoshiung mayoral race. His challenger was Yang Chin-hu. Yang lost three times in the previous elections. Chen, like Chou, was financially well off and had the support of the entire KMT apparatus. Yang adopted Kao's campaign strategy and requested a debate at a stadium. Chen, aware of Yang's strategy, did not reply. He simply ignored Yang. Subsequently, Yang spread the rumor that Chen did not have the guts to join a debate. The negative voices got louder and louder but Chen kept silent. One day before the election, he finally agreed to a debate, but it proved to be too late. His campaign advisors could not but acknowledge that Chen's refusal to respond to Yang's demand worsened his image and finally led to his election defeat.

than the KMT. There were, however, some opposition candidates, such as Chao Hsiu-wa, who were elected just because of their looks (Chang, 1992: 145–7).²

Another change was that opposition candidates more openly criticized individual KMT politicians and government policies. The regime was more tolerable than a decade ago, but still would immediately imprison anyone criticizing the central leadership or openly questioning the legitimacy of the KMT government. In the early and mid-1970s, opposition candidates explored their boundaries, and some had no other campaign strategy than to attack local governments and their representatives. Chao Hsiu-wa, for instance, won her re-election bid just by verbally attacking the mayor of Kaoshiung (Chang, 1992: 147–9).³

Moreover, opposition candidates began to use the people's compassion as a tool to get elected. One of the early examples is independent candidate Tseng Wen-po. In 1972, he contested in the city council elections in Taichung City. He was anything but a promising candidate. His educational background was said to have been the only thing he could be proud of: Tseng graduated from National Taiwan University. His appearance and ability to speak in public were not good either. Nevertheless, Tseng succeeded in gaining publicity by distributing a pamphlet criticizing the government. Secret police asked him to suspend his activities or face imprisonment. For the rest of the campaign period, Tseng was not seen and there were rumors that secret police had caught him. He was also absent at the official political views presentations organized by the election commission. People began to feel sympathetic towards him. On election eve, he suddenly appeared. Few wondered where he had been, most were relieved that he was still alive. On election day, Tseng received enough sympathy votes to get elected. Five years later, Tseng challenged Chen Tuan-tang, incumbent mayor of Taichung, using a similar strategy. Chen's campaign managers predicted that he would receive overwhelming support at the polls. During his campaign activities, Chen would stand on his campaign truck, raise his hands and show the V-sign. Tseng, on the other hand, spread the rumor that he would possibly be caught by the secret police if not elected. He was frequently seen on his campaign truck together with his wife. Both were casually dressed. Tseng

² Chao Hsiu-wa got elected to the Provincial Assembly representing the industrial city of Kaoshiung in 1972. Aged 23, she was the youngest and probably most beautiful member of the assembly.

³ Chao Hsiu-wa got elected in the 1972 Provincial Assembly election just because of her looks. Five years later, she contested again to win her re-election bid. Her advisors told her quite frankly that she could not run a successful campaign based on her beauty again as she had turned older and appeared to be less attractive. Chao had to change her strategy and find a new and unique way to attract the masses. Her solution was to attack the incumbent mayor of Kaoshiung, Wang Yu-yun. Wang had a good record as mayor, but Chao thought that there would always be people who did not approve of him. The district magnitude in her constituency was five, and Chao calculated that she would only have to get the support of one fifth of the electorate. For the entire campaign period, Chao did nothing but condemn Wang Yu-yun. Her strategy worked out and she indeed won the election.

would look rather depressed and repeat his slogan '*dajia de wenbo*,' which means 'our Wen-po.' Unexpectedly, Tseng won the election (Chang, 1992: 153–9).

Tseng's case says much about the hidden power of the people's compassion. In the 1970s, this strategy was still at an experimental stage with only few candidates relying on it. A decade later, however, several dozen opposition candidates discovered the effectiveness of such a strategy, and in most cases, it was the only strategy the candidates had to offer.

The above-mentioned changes were mostly the results of the changing economic, social, and political environment. Politically, the KMT government under Chiang Kai-shek was more and more isolated. The dramatic decrease in the number of nations recognizing the legitimacy of the KMT government and the final expulsion from the UN put great pressure on the leadership. Chiang Kai-shek (and his successor) had to liberalize Taiwan's political system so as not to lose the support of the United States. Free and fair elections were one of the prerequisites for continuing US commitment to Taiwan.

Apart from the worsening international status, the KMT government's economic, social, and educational policies brought about several significant societal changes that were for the first time observable in the mid-1970s. The rising social problems were, however, hardly addressed by the candidates of the KMT. On the contrary, the KMT made every effort to discourage socially concerned politicians (scholars) from running for office and tried to diffuse criticism. The government, for instance, implemented 'reform' programs to meet with the growing discontent of factory workers. The *Teacher Chang* counseling program, for example, aimed at training college students to become volunteer counselors to workers. Their mission was not to solve conflicts but to emphasize that workers had to adjust to factory life. Candidates of the opposition took advantage of the KMT's ignorance and soon social problems and the government's failure to deal with them became a central theme among the new opposition. The time appeared to be ripe to address social issues and mingle them with political ones. Most of the opposition candidates were hardly interested in socialism. They rather tried to explore the power of the people; as one activist noted: 'A person with only a little capital and some education and earthy knack for speech-making can ride the wave of popular resentment against the regime in elections. Though the population generally appears cowed and quiescent, there is admiration and secret support for those who dare to step forward' (Ai, 1997: 107, 119).

Hsu Hsin-liang is certainly the best example here. Some say he was the first successful populist. Hsu was elected to the Provincial Assembly in 1972 under the KMT banner. He was a very ambitious young politician who sought to reach out to the masses. In this constituency, Taoyuan County, he spent hours talking with people from different walks of life. The farmers loved him and said that he was one of them. The business community loved him and said that he was one of them (Ai, 1997: 117). Wherever he gave a speech, he would make sure to mention the problems of the ordinary people, the *laobaixing*. In 1976, Hsu began to prepare for his participation in the 1977 county magistrate election. The KMT did not nominate him: Hsu appeared to be too critical of the KMT and its policies. Notwithstanding,

Hsu took part as an independent and worked out a campaign strategy that turned him into the political marketer of the century.

He first relied on one simple book (*feng yu zhi sheng*), analyzing Taiwan's various problems, to boost his popularity. Hsu's publication was strongly criticized by other members of the assembly. The print media reported extensively on Hsu's new book and all the criticism. After a few days, Hsu was not only a well-known local politician but also a national hero. His popularity made him convinced that he could win the magistracy of Taoyuan, his home county. Things did not seem gloomy for Hsu Hsin-liang when he started his campaign, though. In Taoyuan, the KMT worked hard to discourage businessmen and property owners from renting offices to Hsu. But how could he run a successful campaign without a campaign headquarters? People felt sympathetic towards him but did not dare to challenge the KMT regime. Finally, Hsu rented a piece of land and erected a tent. His campaign headquarters looked like a trade fair. Huge banners, posters, and flowers were placed around the tent attracting the masses. His trade show had much to offer. Apart from a large variety of different campaign literature, local people would donate all types of food and drink, and spend hours at the campaign headquarters talking about life and politics. To attract different crowds of people, the decoration and the banners were changed every day. The electorate was curious to know what the slogan of today was, and marched in masses to the trade fair. The atmosphere at Hsu's campaign headquarters was beyond description. It was a 24-hour campaign event. Hsu's trade fair was the campaign invention of the decade, and his victory a foregone conclusion. The KMT tried to counter Hsu's campaign strategy by applying its traditional campaign techniques, such as vote rigging and buying, but massive protests against the rigged result forced the leadership to accept the victory of Hsu Hsin-liang (Chang, 1992: 193–8; Huang and Cheng, 1991: 35; New Taiwan Cultural Foundation, 1999b: 11–16). Hsu Hsin-liang's successful and extraordinary campaign style was part of the first campaign manual published on the island. After the 1977 election, Lin Cheng-chie and Chang Fu-chong traveled around Taoyuan and did extensive research on Hsu's campaign innovations. The government seized over ten thousand copies of their book entitled *Elections Forever* (*xuanju wanwansui*) in an attempt to prevent it from getting into the hands of future and current hopefuls. The book, nevertheless, was reprinted and distributed around the island and indeed served as a campaign manual (New Taiwan Cultural Foundation, 1999b: 44–5).

The 1977 local elections were a watershed in Taiwan's political development. Opposition candidates won two out of sixteen magistracies, two out of four mayoral posts, and twenty-one out of seventy-seven provincial assembly seats. This unprecedented electoral success gave the opposition confidence to challenge the KMT's ban on political parties. In the past, opposition candidates could not form coalitions, nor could they run on a common platform. They were isolated warriors. Any attempt to break these rules ended in unfortunate accidents. The campaigns for the 1978 parliamentary elections (National Assembly and Legislative Yuan) were groundbreaking. Several opposition leaders, such as Huang Hsin-chieh and Shih Ming-teh, jointly founded a special electoral campaign committee (*dangwai*

zhuxuan tuan). The aim of the committee was to maximize the support of the opposition candidates and to co-ordinate campaign activities throughout the island. Well-known opposition figures, such as independent legislator Huang Hsin-chieh, toured the island in a united effort to canvass votes. The committee also organized a series of fundraising banquets, which was still something new in Taiwan's electoral campaigns. (Opposition candidate Chang Chun-hong was the first politician in the country to hold fundraising banquets during his electoral campaign in 1973.) Another invention was the use of a common logo printed on all the various campaign materials (New Taiwan Cultural Foundation, 1999a: 21–3, 63–5).

In general, the electoral campaign environment appeared to be much freer than in previous elections. Opposition candidates were even allowed to make public the committee's common platform. US President Carter's decision to recognize the regime in Beijing and de-recognize Taipei as the only legitimate government of China just a few days before the election was a shock to the KMT government, and elections were postponed indefinitely. (In December 1980 the elections finally took place.) A year after the postponed elections, the opposition founded the *Formosa Magazine*. Branch offices were established around the island. The magazine sold well and focused on social, economic, and political problems. The *Formosa Magazine* was more than just a publication; its branch offices soon developed into community help centers, where ordinary people could get advice on legal, social and economic issues (Ai, 1997: 148–58). The KMT regime was aware of the fact that the magazine was a political party in disguise and staged the so-called Kaoshiung Incident to obtain legitimacy for the imprisonment of the magazine's leaders.

The 1980s: A new era of campaigning

On May 14, 1980, a new election law was promulgated by presidential decree. The law governed elections of public officials at all levels; it was thus the first unified law. The law was revised in 1983. Most of the 1983 revisions dealt with campaign activities and the punishment of offenses against election and recall. Article 45 originally only outlined the length of election campaign activities. The revision added further restrictions on campaign expenditures and demanded the keeping of records on campaign funds. The election law demanded the creation of a central election commission under the Ministry of the Interior (Article 8). It put restrictions on the duration of campaign activities: fifteen days for candidates of parliamentary elections, ten days for elections at provincial level, and five days for elections at local levels except for elections of borough and neighborhood chiefs (three days). For the first time, campaign expenditures were specifically mentioned in an election law. The maximum expenditure was calculated by a specific formula that included the total population, the number of officials to be elected, a basic amount, and the cost of living. The exact figures had to be announced by the election commission (Article 45-1). The law specifically mentioned what was legal and illegal in campaigns. Legal campaign activities included (Article 46):

- establishing campaign headquarters and employing campaign assistants
- holding political views presentations
- printing and disseminating name cards and handouts
- operating campaign vehicles and loudspeakers
- canvassing and visiting the electors in the candidate's constituency.

Moreover, the law stipulated that handouts printed and disseminated by a candidate had to be signed in person by the candidate. Name cards and handouts were not allowed to be posted at places other than those approved or assigned by the election commission. The sizes of name cards and handouts had to be decided by the election commission. The number of campaign vehicles was restricted. The exact number depended on the constituency and ranged from five to two. Candidates and campaign aides were not allowed to:

- incite people to commit offenses against the internal security or external security of the state
- incite people to undermine social order with violence
- commit other offenses set forth in the criminal code.

Moreover, it was not allowed to assemble a crowd for a parade or utilize the mass media for political advertising. There was thus still a complete ban on political advertising in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television. These restrictions disadvantaged the opposition since Taiwan's media was entirely controlled by the ruling KMT and opposition magazines were banned.

Passion, stunt politics, handbills, and social movements

Until the lifting of the martial law decree in 1987, several changes in electoral campaigning occurred. Attracting the people's compassion, for instance, turned into one of the most frequently used electoral strategies after the Kaoshiung Incident. In 1980, a year after the incident, the relatives of the imprisoned democracy activists participated in national elections in an attempt to keep the movement alive. Whenever there was a campaign activity, they only had to play the popular song *Hope You'll be Back Soon* (*wang ni zao gui*) and people would feel sympathetic enough to cast their votes for the relatives.

Another group of opposition activists, riding the wave of the people's compassion, comprised the defense lawyers of the indicted activists of the Kaoshiung Incident. Among the most prominent were You Ching, Chen Shui-bian, Hsieh Chang-ting, Su Chen-chang, Chiang Peng-chian, and Chang Chun-hsiung. All of them won elections consecutively; most of them were the highest vote getters in their constituencies. Their campaign strategy was to present themselves as the defenders of human rights. It was because of their willingness to defend the *Formosa* activists that the electorate was convinced about their honesty and commitment to democracy. Their popularity was beyond description. No matter where they went to give speeches,

tens of thousands of people would cheer enthusiastically (Chang, 1992: 185–92; Huang and Cheng, 1991: 150).

A further interesting development was the occurrence of stunt politics in electoral campaigns. The first cited example was the attempted return of blacklisted Hsu Hsin-liang in 1986, a few days before voting day. Thousands of supporters gathered around the airport to welcome Hsu. Cathay Pacific, however, refused to allow Hsu Hsin-liang to board a flight from Manila to Taipei allegedly at the request of the KMT government, which angered Hsu's supporters and led to violent clashes with security forces. Hsu's attempted return and the KMT's reaction boosted the popularity of the opposition. Hsu Hsin-liang once more proved that he was the master of electioneering.

Although handbills were not an invention of the 1980s, they revived in popularity during the closing years of the martial law era. Handbills proved to be extremely effective if spread widely, quickly and shortly before election day. The most frequently cited successful cases were the 1981 magistrate election in Changhua County, and the 1986 parliamentary elections. In 1981, independent candidate Huang Shi-cheng distributed handbills attacking the KMT's centralized nomination system two days before the election in every one of the over twenty towns and townships of Changhua county.⁴ In 1986, three hopefuls contesting in the National Assembly election distributed identical handbills in their constituencies.⁵ The handbill was entitled 'We don't need a piglet president.' The candidates criticized the fact that the president was still elected by the National Assembly and not by the people. They argued that indirect elections would only lead to bribery and finally produce piglet presidents. The leaflet was extremely controversial, attracted the attention of the electorate, and all three candidates were elected partly because of it (Chang, 1992: 161–8, 211–18).

Campaign slogans became an important—in several cases, the most decisive—factor in elections of the 1980s. They substituted the lack of campaign issues and/or electoral experience. The 1981 magistrate election in Yilan County is a textbook example illustrating the power of a good campaign slogan. There was little doubt that the KMT nominee, Lee Tsan-cheng, would win. The opposition was short of well known and experienced candidates who could challenge Lee. Chen Ting-nan seemed

⁴ The handbill contained a table illustrating the fact that four of the five candidates the KMT nominated in recent national and local elections were natives of either Ershui Township or the neighboring town of Tianchong. The table showed that 94 percent of the county population lived in the other 24 townships of Changhua and posed the question why most nominees came from a township where only 6 percent of the population resides. The answer was that Vice-President Hsieh Tong-min was born in Ershui Township and that he wielded direct control over the nomination process, which angered not only opposition candidates but also a group of 39 local KMT politicians. The handbill was very convincing, stirred resentment against the KMT, and made the people reluctant to vote once more a candidate from one of the two townships into office. Consequently, independent Huang Shi-cheng won the election.

⁵ Hong Chi-chang (Taipei County), Weng Chin-chu (Changhua County), and Huang Chao-hui (Kaoshiung City).

to be the only possible candidate. Although Chen had gained some experience in electoral campaigning when he worked as a campaign assistant a year earlier, he was unfamiliar with elections. Unlike Lee, Chen lacked the institutionalized support of a powerful party. Chen nevertheless won the race. The only thing he did was create a slogan that would ridicule his opponent. The slogan was based on his rival's given name *zan cheng*, which happens to mean 'to be in favor of' or 'support.' Within a few days, the slogan '*li zan cheng, wo bu zan cheng, da jia dou bu zan cheng*' could be heard throughout the county of Yilan. The meaning of the slogan is very simple: 'Lee Tsan-cheng. I do not support, we all don't support.' Lee contested again in 1983 and 1989. In both cases, the slogan was used once more by opponents and led to his defeat.

A further new development was the increasing involvement of social movements in electoral campaigns. Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s, the working class increased from less than 15 percent to more than 40 percent of the total population, while Taiwan's middle class rose from about 20 percent to more than 30 percent (Hsiao, 1989: 157). Taiwan's middle class of the 1980s was characterized by Michael Hsiao, Taiwan's leading sociologist, as being pragmatic in expressing their opinion on political issues, supportive of political reform but by no means susceptible to any radical appeals (Hsiao, 1989: 159). The term 'middle class' was rather unknown to the public and scarcely used by politicians, the media, and the business sector in the 1970s. A decade later, it emerged as the catchword in all sorts of advertisements and speeches given by politicians. The opposition and the government tried to gain the support of the expanding middle class (Hsiao, 1989: 161). The middle class was the foundation of numerous emerging social movements. In the 1980s, there were at least eight major social movements promoting the interests of consumers, environmentalists, laborers, women, aborigines, farmers, students, and teachers. Even though some of these movements emerged earlier than the 1980s, they all gained considerable political significance in that decade. Moreover, they succeeded in determining election issues and thus the political agenda of the regime. In the 1983 national election campaign, consumer protection emerged as the issue. Three years later, 'environmental protection was the issue raised by almost every candidate' (Chang, 1994: 57). Opposition candidates benefited from the increase in social protests and the rising power of the movements. There was mutual support between the movements and opposition figures. Social movements helped the opposition candidates to enlarge popular support at constituencies previously controlled by the KMT, such as the functional parliamentary seats for labor organizations (Huang and Cheng, 1991: 148–50).

Post martial law era

In 1987, martial law was lifted. The first five years after the lifting brought about significant changes in electioneering.

Dramatized events, strippers, and direct action

The most obvious change was that it became more difficult for candidates to mobilize voters. During the martial law period, any political activity was severely restricted or even illegal, and thus was something out of the ordinary. Whenever a politician of the opposition camp appeared at a public place, openly attacking the government, 30 to 50 thousand people would show up to listen. After the lifting of martial law, things changed. Whenever a candidate could attract a crowd of 200 people, he or she was said to be fortunate. A speech attacking the ruling KMT was suddenly not enough to have tens of thousands cheering enthusiastically (Chang, 1992: 212).

The opposition adjusted itself to the changing environment by either holding a series of smaller events or by creating political stunts. Both of these new approaches became common at the end of the 1980s. Any election rally had to be dramatic, mysterious, and something out of the ordinary to attract the masses. Hsu Hsin-liang's failed attempt to return to Taiwan in 1986 and the subsequent riots that helped the opposition to win popular support soon served as a model. Numerous opposition figures of the late 1980s experimented with this promising campaign innovation. The most successful publicity stunt certainly was the Kuo Pei-hong case. Kuo was blacklisted by the KMT because of his involvement in Taiwan's opposition movement while studying in the US and banned from entering the country. Lu Hsiu-yi and Chou Hui-ying, both opposition candidates in the 1989 elections, announced days before their campaign rally in Taipei County that Kuo would show up and give a speech there. Thousands of people queued up in front of the stadium where Kuo's speech was to be held to find out whether Kuo Pei-hong indeed succeeded in illegally entering the country and whether he dared to give a speech in public. At 7.50 pm on November 22, 1989, Lu Hsiu-yi and Chou Hui-ying began with their campaign speeches. Several thousand people were already inside the stadium, and the number of people trying to enter the scene was increasing steadily. It was not before 9.20 pm that Kuo Pei-hong appeared on stage and delivered a highly emotional speech. The atmosphere was indescribable. Kuo's speech and his successful escape from the scene made news stories, and paved the way for Lu Hsiu-yi and Chou Hui-ying's election victory (Chang, 1992: 225–31).

The ruling KMT, on the other hand, adapted itself to the changing political environment in a different way: candidates fielded by the party had few policy issues to offer at campaign rallies. They began to hire professional entertainers instead. Campaign rallies resembled variety shows featuring pop stars and scantily dressed singers. Campaign strategists referred to them as *gewuxiu*, literally meaning singing, dancing, and acting. The candidates' campaign speeches were merely introductory. Some candidates of the ruling party even hired strippers to entertain the electorate. Wang Chun-yuan's variety-show style rally in the 1991 national elections, for instance, attracted huge crowds and news reporters. Media outlets soon discovered the hidden interest in news stories about strippers and scantily dressed singers. Candidates, consequently, got the needed media coverage and publicity. In the case of Wang Chun-yuan, the *China Times Express*, a mass circulation evening

newspaper, carried a front-page story about the event. The article included a large-size photo showing the nude stripper on stage and in the back a huge banner that was supposed to introduce the candidate. The banner read 'Graduate of National Taiwan University, Department of Political Science,' which caused amusement among the readers and extended Wang Chun-yuan's fame (Huang and Cheng, 1991: 145–6).

Minor parties adopted similar campaign strategies. The Labor Party, for example, fielded Hsu Hsiao-tan, an artist and former high-school teacher, who undressed publicly on various occasions and promised an *open* campaign. The party's strategy almost worked out in the 1992 parliamentary election, when Hsu succeeded in getting 32,349 votes and would have needed another 108 votes for her victory.

Direct action was another form of political campaigning that proved highly effective during the first few years after the lifting of the martial law decree. A number of politicians gained cult status through violence. The most prominent case certainly was DPP legislator Zhu Gao-zheng. His campaign promise was to 'make noise' until those members of parliament elected on the mainland be expelled from office (*yao jiang wan nian guohui naofan tian*) (Peng, 1994: 79). Zhu used violence not only in parliament but also in his home county of Yunlin to force the KMT regime to alter its policies. The voters in Yunlin were all well acquainted with Zhu's outbursts of violence during the various local protests he led. Zhu's violence turned him into a national hero, and he was frequently referred to as 'Taiwan Number One Battleship' (*taiwan di yi zhanjian*) (Peng, 1994). Direct action as an electoral tool lost most of its fame in the mid-1990s, though.

The emergence of political advertising

The lifting of martial law was expected to have a profound impact on the utilization of mass media for campaign purposes. At the end of the 1980s, Taiwan had three terrestrial television stations and several mass-circulation newspapers. All of these TV stations and most of the newspapers were either directly controlled by the KMT or favorable to it (Wang, 2002: 392–459).

Political advertisements seemed to be one way for the opposition to make use of Taiwan's mass media for campaign purposes. During the martial law era, political ads were illegal. Notwithstanding, political ads in newspapers could be found in the mid-1980s. Most of those ads were placed by candidates loyal to the KMT regime. It was difficult for opposition candidates to find newspapers willing to print their ads. In the 1986 national elections, for instance, only one mass-circulation paper, the *Independence Evening Post*, agreed to print ads placed by the opposition.⁶ It was not before 1989 that the election law was revised, allowing candidates to place political ads in newspapers and magazines. Newspaper advertising was first legally used in political campaigns in the 1989 local and national elections. Campaigning officially started on November 23, and the election took place on December 3. During the campaign, more than one thousand political ads were counted in Taiwan's leading

⁶ *Taiwan Communiqué*, January 1987 (28).

newspapers. Some 53 percent were front-page ads, and 48 percent in color. More than half of the ads were posted by parliamentary hopefuls, 38 percent by candidates of council races, and 6 percent by participants of the mayor and magistrate elections. Thirty-six percent of the ads were placed by KMT hopefuls, 45 percent by the DPP, 3 percent by other parties, such as the Labor Party, and 15 percent by independents (Chen and Chen, 1992a: 158; Chen and Chen, 1992b: 120–21).

Televised political ads were illegal until 1991, when the election commission made public several regulations governing the use of terrestrial television stations to air propaganda videos of political parties in the year-end National Assembly election. It was the first time in the history of Taiwan that television could legally be used to broadcast political ads. In the past, only political advertising in magazines and newspapers was legal. Each of Taiwan's three nationwide terrestrial TV stations, Taiwan Television, China Television and Chinese Television System, were allocated ninety minutes to air the political ads of those parties nominating at least ten candidates. The exact time each party could use was proportional to the number of nominees. In the 1991 National Assembly, only four of the seventeen participating parties fulfilled these requirements, the ruling KMT, the DPP, and two minor parties. The aired political ads of the KMT put emphasis on the party's ability to transform Taiwan from an agrarian society into a modern state. The dominant theme was that the KMT stands for reform, stability, and prosperity, and that the KMT should be viewed as 'a faithful old friend.' Moreover, the ads pointed out that a vote for the DPP would imply a vote for a future full of social and economic disorders. This was illustrated by dramatic scenes of suffering, civil war and chaos in other countries such as Haiti, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The DPP in their ads questioned the KMT's interpretation of 'stability' and its implications for Taiwan's society by showing images of raised chickens living in cages juxtaposed with chickens allowed to run free. The ad continued by telling the audience that stability is more than living in affluence and that man needs freedom and dignity besides stability and prosperity.⁷ The political ads of the parties had a viewing rate of about 20 percent. In general, people who watched the ads tended to have a more favorable impression towards the KMT and the CDSP than towards the DPP (Peng, 1992: 233).

In the mid-1990s, public funded TV ads lost in importance. In 1991, there were only three terrestrial TV stations. A few years later, cable TV emerged and was legalized. Political ads could soon be seen months ahead of the official ten-day parliamentary election campaign period. Unlike the public-funded ones, these ads do not differ much from commercial ones and are not aired separately. The electorate is thus more likely to watch candidate and party-sponsored political ads than public-funded ones. In the 2004 parliamentary election, the latter only had viewing rates far below one percent and thus can be considered insignificant in Taiwan's electoral campaigns of the twenty-first century (XKM, 2004).

⁷ *Free China Journal*, December 17, 1991.

Underground radio and taxi drivers

Although the political ads helped the opposition to influence the voting behavior of the masses, there were critical voices demanding the liberalization of the broadcasting industry. In the early 1990s, opposition figures attempted to break the KMT monopoly on the island's broadcast media by illegally setting up their own TV and radio stations. Soon, underground radio stations and later cable TV networks became an important and new campaign tool.

The first important underground radio stations went into operation in 1992. All People Radio was one of them. Chang Chun-hong, a DPP candidate contesting the year-end national elections, set up the station. Hsieh Chang-ting and Chou Hui-ying, both DPP hopefuls, followed the example of Chang and launched their own underground radio station in Taipei County. It could be heard within a range of 60 kilometers, and was shut down after the election (Chen, 1994: 15).

In 1993 and 1994, several dozen other underground radio stations went into operation around the island. Some of these were set up by opposition candidates following the example of Chan Chun-hong. Taiwan independence activist Chang Chin-tse, for instance, operated the People's Voice (*qunzhong zhi sheng*) to boost his popularity in Taipei County where he contested the 1994 Provincial Assembly election. Legislator Weng Chin-chu's Greater Changhua (*da zhanghua*) broadcast in central Taiwan. In the south, Chen Kuang-fu and Chen Che-nan established the Voice of Sweet Potato (*fanshu zhi sheng*), and legislator Huang Chao-hui together with National Assembly member Chen Chu the Voice of Southern Taiwan (*nantaiwan zhi sheng*). Other radio stations were partially financed by opposition figures, such as TNT Radio (*baodao xinsheng TNT zhadan diantai*), the Hsinchu and Miaoli branch of Sweet Potato, and the Voice of Formosa (*meilidao zhengyi zhi sheng*).⁸ All of these underground radio stations were anti-KMT and supportive of the DPP, except for one: New Thought (*xin siwei zhi sheng*). In 1993, the New Party, a KMT splinter, was founded. The party first distanced itself from underground radio stations, but soon discovered its usefulness in countering the KMT-controlled legal media outlets. In September 1994, party members led by Lee Cheng-long began to operate the first and only important underground radio station that would target both the KMT government and Taiwan's largest opposition party, the DPP. The station served primarily as a campaign tool for Jaw Shao-kang, the party's candidate in the year-end Taipei mayoral election. New Thought became very popular with the residents of Taipei and soon developed into the New Party's major news organ (Chen, 1994: 51–68).

⁸ TNT broadcast in the Taipei area. Chen Shui-bian and Peng Pai-hsien, both DPP legislators, were among the major financial contributors. Sweet Potato was sponsored by several local politicians, such as Ke Chian-ming, Ling Kuang-hua, Du Wen-chin, and Wu Chiu-ku, and served as a common platform for opposition figures in Hsinchu and Miaoli. The Voice of Formosa was mostly financed by local DPP officials, Chou Chia-chi, a delegate to the National Assembly, and Lin Fong-hsi, a county councilor (Chen, 1994: 51, 61, 62).

The most popular and most influential radio station at that time was, however, Hsu Rong-chi's Voice of Taiwan, which went on air in November 1993. Hsu's radio station was the first equipped with powerful transmitters and could be received in most parts of Taipei. His Voice of Taiwan soon became an inspiring example all over the island. Hsu himself hosted most of the programs that focused on various social and political problems. The public could actively take part by calling in and voicing their opinion. Hsu's station as well as others became popular because the common people could publicly and anonymously air their grievances against the ruling KMT (Chen, 1994; Lu, 1994). They were, thus, an important campaign tool for the opposition in the early and mid-1990s.

Apart from the call-in programs, the Voice of Taiwan indirectly contributed to another major campaign invention of the 1990s, namely the involvement of taxi drivers in electoral campaigning. Probably in no other city in the world were taxi drivers so much engaged in electioneering than in Taipei. It was none other than Hsu Rong-chi who stimulated the taxi drivers' interest in politics.

In early 1994, Hsu's programs more and more dealt with the hardship of taxi drivers who were financially disadvantaged by the licensing and third-party insurance system. Angered taxi drivers kept on calling in expressing their dissatisfaction. On February 22, Hsu finally posed the question why the taxi drivers should not protest in front of the ministry of finance. Within an hour, several hundred taxis surrounded the ministry urging the minister of finance to amend the relevant insurance regulations. Hsu's interest in the lives of ordinary taxi drivers and his determination to stand up for them made him a hero. A month later, Hsu for the second time mobilized Taipei taxis to protest the policies of the KMT government. But this time, the issue was unrelated to the lives of ordinary taxi drivers. The protest was against the KMT's decision to tear down the old KMT headquarters. The demolition had been very controversial for some time, given the fact that the building was of historic value. Hsu and his supporters were annoyed when they learnt that the KMT planned to tear the building down in the middle of the night to avert protests. This time, again, it did not take long and the building was surrounded by hundreds of taxis that tried to prevent construction workers from demolishing the building (Lu, 1994: 52–64).

From then on, Taipei taxis become the guardian angels of underground radio stations. Whenever the government ransacked their offices, the city's taxi drivers would show up and protest, sometimes violently (Lu, 1994: 101–30). Moreover, they soon began to play a key role in electoral campaigns in the capital. In the 1994 mayoral election, Taipei's taxi drivers were mostly divided into two groups, those supporting Chen Shui-bian (DPP) and those favoring Jao Shao-kong (NP). Taxis turned into 24-hour campaign vehicles. Party flags were attached to the cars, and campaign literature placed on the backseats. As soon as a passenger entered a taxi, the driver would either start talking about politics, or force the passenger to listen to underground radio stations. In the mid-1990s, taxis became an indispensable part of any electoral campaign in the capital (Huang and Cheng, 1991: 156–8).

Cable TV and call-in programs

Apart from the underground radio stations, the opposition was also active in establishing illegal TV stations to counter the terrestrial network's pro-government election coverage. The first attempt was made by You Ching (DPP) in 1989 when he successfully contested the magistrate election in Taipei County. On November 30, 1989, he broadcast live from his campaign headquarters (Feng, 1995: 102). The opposition noticed, however, that a cable network would be much easier to set up than terrestrial TV stations. Taiwan's first experience with cable TV dates back to 1969, when the first cable networks went into operation in Taipei and Hualian. These were makeshift networks and broadcast movies only (Wang, 2002: 576).

At the end of February 1990, DPP supporters launched the first political cable network, Democratic Cable TV (*zhonghe minzhu youxian dianshitai*) in Taipei County. In October, other networks were set up around the island (Wang, 2002: 574–5). By the end of 1993, 54 cable systems labeled themselves as 'Democratic Cable TV.' These operators soon allied themselves as the 'League of Taiwan Democratic Cable Television,' and initiated the 'Congressional Channel,' similar to C-SPAN in the US (Chiu and Chan-Olmsted, 1999: 494). Cable TV also had a profound influence on election campaign strategies. It was cable television that first aired debates between candidates and call-in talk shows with politicians. These call-in programs had a tremendous impact on the outcome of elections. Candidates who participated in call-in programs during election time had a far higher chance of success than those relying on traditional campaign methods, such as newspaper ads, street rallies, etc. For instance, among the candidates participating in TVBS's *2100 Call-In*, the most popular talk show, during the month prior to the 1995 national election, over 90 percent were elected (Chiu and Chan-Olmsted, 1999: 495). Moreover, call-in programs on cable television gave smaller parties that lacked the financial resources to place ads in the mass media the unique opportunity to present themselves to the electorate for free. The NP had the fewest candidates among the parties presenting themselves on cable TV. Nevertheless, the party received an equal opportunity to participate in call-in talk shows. Some NP hopefuls could be seen in more than fifty cable programs during a two-month period prior to election day (Chiu and Chan-Olmsted, 1999: 503). For the DPP, cable television took party leaders from the streets, turning 'street politics' into 'media politics.' Cable television, especially the call-in programs, fundamentally changed the DPP's campaign style. Sisy Chen, former director of the party's public relations department, said that these changes included: (1) to be brief and to the point, (2) to modify the party's campaigning emphasis from negative personal attacks to issues and credentials, and (3) to reposition the party as a 'rational' party rather than street protesters by softening the gestures and expressions of its members appearing on television. Sisy Chen acknowledges that without cable television, the 1997 landslide victory of DPP would not have been possible.⁹ In local elections held that year, the DPP for the first time garnered more votes in

⁹ Sisy Chen cited in Chiu and Chan-Olmsted (1999: 502).

an election than the KMT. Cable television was excessively used in this election. Apart from participating in dozens of free call-in programs, candidates allegedly had contributed NT\$ 1 billion advertising revenue to the cable industry (Chiu and Chan-Olmsted, 1999: 497). The KMT itself admits that the DPP's dominance of the cable industry had contributed to the party's 1997 election dilemma and to the party's steady decline in popular support.¹⁰

At the beginning of the 1990s, cable television was illegal. The KMT, thus, refrained from including cable television in their campaign strategy. Another reason was that the party was confident of winning electoral support through traditional methods. In 1993, the cable television law was passed legalizing cable networks, and a year later the election law was amended lifting the restriction on the involvement of cable television in election campaigns. These two changes caused the KMT to include this medium in their campaign strategies for the 1994 provincial governor race and the elections of the mayors of Taipei and Kaoshiung, which were held simultaneously in December that year. Moreover, the party launched its own cable channel, *Po-Hsin Channel One*, a year later, and started to offer seminars focusing on the strategic use of call-in programs offered by cable networks.

Independent candidates also noticed the importance of cable television as an election campaign tool. The most prominent case is Chen Lu-an, who ran as an independent in the 1996 presidential election. Almost half of the total airtime of two weeks aired on cable television during the 1996 presidential campaign was ads by Chen Lu-an (Rainmaker, 1996).

Political fashion shows and campaign merchandise

In the 1997 local elections, the DPP electoral strategists modified their traditional campaign rallies to attract younger voters and to bring campaign rallies home on the TV screens. The new format should guarantee maximum entertainment for both the audience at the campaign site and the viewers at home. Shortened campaign speeches, direct interaction between the politician and the audience, and scantily dressed dancers were the features of this new format. *The Spice Girls Campaigning Team* performed around the island and attracted large crowds of voters. This new style of campaigning was, however, strongly criticized by elder party members as trivializing politics. But the leadership justified the new approach with the claim that conventional campaigning was no longer appropriate and that it had caused the party's defeat in the presidential race a year earlier.

The landslide victory in the year-end local elections seemed to confirm the strategists' new approach and inspired them to develop further the new show-oriented marketing concepts. In December 1998, Chen Shui-bian had to stand for re-election in the capital. His campaign team used the election to try some of the newly developed concepts. The campaign itself was later considered a failure, since Chen lost the election. Nevertheless, there were several innovations that are worth

mentioning. The campaign mostly focused on voters of the younger age group and was based on the assumption that the electorate would like to be entertained rather than be active in politics and listen to serious political discussions. When Chen Shui-bian's campaign headquarters at Tunhua North Road was ready for use, the campaign team came up with the idea of setting up a second headquarters for the younger voters in the heart of the city—a seven-story building at the corner of Hsinsheng and Renai Road. The youth headquarters was named *a-bian Factory* (*A-bian* is Chen Shui-bian's nickname), and looked like a fancy restaurant (*a-bian Factory*, 1999: 214). The place soon became very popular among young people. Surrounded by modern décor, they were served free coffee and could share views on topics ranging from politics to daily life. The *a-bian Factory* brought back memories of Hsu Hsin-liang's trade-fair style election headquarters of the late 1970s. Moreover, young voters waited in line for hours to purchase campaign merchandise. This was a new phenomenon. In the past, campaign merchandise hardly existed. T-shirts, caps, pens and other small items were mostly distributed for free, and—what is more important—their design and quality were inferior to brand-name products. Chen's campaign team went to Hsimenting, a shopping area popular with Taipei's youngsters, to find out what products were fashionable. Based on that analysis, Luo Wen-chia, one of the campaign strategists, came up with the idea of producing olive green bonnets with a cloth tag featuring *a-bian*. The bonnet soon became Chen Shui-bian's main campaign merchandise. Soon, other products were added. After Chen Shui-bian's election defeat in the 1998 mayoral race, *a-bian* campaign merchandise developed into the new brand name *a-bian Family* (*abian zu*). Each season, new products with the *a-bian Family* effigy were sold through the internet or at the various stores around the island to provide the electorate with *a-bian* products. Soon, voters identified with the products and the effigy and there was the feeling among the consumers of belonging to one big family, the *a-bian* family. Luo Wen-chia said that the identification factor was the most important message conveyed by the merchandise. Products ranged from watches, caps, T-shirts, dolls, umbrellas, jackets, and belts, to mobile phone straps, bags, stationery products and notebooks. Unlike the T-shirts and caps of other candidates, *a-bian* products looked like those of international brand names. Indeed, people uninterested in politics thought that *a-bian* was a new foreign brand. Chen Shui-bian's campaign merchandise was extremely popular with the electorate; some were even counterfeited (*a-bian Factory*, 1999).

In the 1998 election, serious political discussions seemed obsolete. Every activity had to be a show. Chen Shui-bian's campaign rallies, for example, were entitled 'Political Fashion Shows.' This phrase (in English) was used in newspaper and TV ads to let the people know where and when Chen would show up next wearing his green bonnet and staging a performance. The whole campaign was indeed a show only and the streets of Taipei were part of it: huge colorful banners could be seen around the city, each carrying an image of different famous people expressing their support for *a-bian*. Sun Yat-sen said that *a-bian* did a good job. Charlie Chaplin was stunned by the mayor's work and was speechless. Mona Lisa explained that she

¹⁰ Interview by the author with several ranking party officials in June 2003.

smiles because Chen did a superb job. As to political marketing, the 1990s were, without doubt, the nation's most creative era.

The rise of populism and the dual process of campaigning

Electoral campaigns in the first five years of the twenty-first century experienced several changes. As for the DPP, electoral politics got serious again—a policy shift from the fashion shows of the late 1990s. Electoral strategies concentrated more on content than on creativity. This more conservative approach helped Chen Shui-bian to win the presidential race in March 2000.

A further change was the tremendous increase in the amount of money spent on political advertising and the increasing political power of the media. The 2000 presidential race set off these changes.

In presidential elections, candidates are free to place mass media advertisements. Usually, ads can be found several months prior to the official campaign period of three weeks. Expenditures on political advertising in presidential races increased drastically between the first direct presidential election held in 1996 and the year 2000 election. The 2004 estimates suggest only a slight increase, about 4 percent, in the amount of money spent on political ads on television, radio, in newspapers and magazines (see Table 3.1).

In 2000, about two-thirds was spent on ads aired on cable television. The DPP candidate even allocated almost 80 percent of his media budget to ads on cable TV. Four years later, cable TV was still the number one media, but the share of newspaper ads doubled, whereas radio and magazine ads continued to play a minor role in the marketing mix.

This advertising war is only part of the picture. At least a dozen political talk shows are available on 24-hour cable TV networks. Moreover, placement marketing has become popular. Political parties, especially the DPP and KMT, buy airtime on cable and terrestrial TV stations. Government representatives, party officials and candidates are invited to show up as guests on various entertainment programs. Moreover, entire campaign rallies are aired as part of special news programs. This political advertising in disguise has become the issue of numerous confrontations between the DPP and the two major opposition parties, the KMT and PFP. Each side accuses the other of manipulating and controlling Taiwan's media outlets.

It is interesting to note that the KMT lost the 2000 presidential race despite its financial capabilities. Expensive political advertising wars failed to help the party win the election. The KMT's campaign team spent more than half of the total amount spent on political ads during that election, the DPP 24 percent and Song Chu-yu some 21 percent (see Table 3.1). Nevertheless, the KMT candidate performed worst. The party's defeat seems to confirm that political advertising alone cannot guarantee victory in Taiwan's elections. Other factors seem to play an equally important role. The mass mobilization of the electorate, for example, is still at the core of any electoral campaign. The 2004 presidential election is an excellent example showing the importance of mass campaign rallies in combination with a

24-hour media war. During the three-week 2004 election campaign period, there was a competition between the two presidential candidates as to who would attract a larger crowd of people. The competition started at the end of February, when the DPP asked its supporters to form a human chain from the very north of Taiwan to the very south of the island. The human chain should symbolize resistance to China's military threat and be in remembrance of the 2-28 Incident. Two million people took part in the rally, which surprised the rival presidential candidate Lien Chan (KMT) and his running mate Song Chu-yu (PFP). To counter the success of the DPP, the KMT/PFP planned to stage a rally on March 13 attracting even more participants. The rally itself resembled a revolution more than an electoral campaign activity. It attracted four million people around the island, which marked a new record in Taiwan's election history. The rally showed that electoral decisions are still made on the streets and not yet at home in front of the TV set.

Moreover, the 2004 election confirmed the trend in negative advertising. After the 2000 presidential election, there was agreement among media and law experts, that negative advertising had reached new and worrisome dimensions.¹¹ The 2004 presidential race, however, broke all records. During the final stage of the campaign, the KMT/PFP had no other electoral strategy than to blacken the image of Chen Shui-bian (DPP). In the run-up to the March 13 rally, for instance, the blue camp started a media war against President Chen. More than a dozen different ads were placed in Taiwan's leading newspaper and aired by major television stations, most of which were entitled 'Change the President, Save Taiwan,' and contained the message that incumbent President Chen was the scum of the nation. The tone and language used in the campaign leaflets and ads were without doubt the worst ever found in any electoral campaign on the island. Newspaper ads even compared President Chen Shui-bian with Adolf Hitler and asked the electorate to end Chen's dictatorship by voting for Lien Chan and his running mate Song Chu-yu. A photo of Hitler was added to make the message better understood. In central Taiwan, the KMT campaign headquarters distributed posters showing terrorist Bin Laden expressing his admiration of Taiwan's 'dictator' Chen. In another ad, Chen's leadership style was compared with the authoritarian rule of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein (Schafferer, 2004).

Another striking feature of Taiwan's recent elections is the rise of populist rhetoric. Populism entered Taiwan's politics in the 1970s amidst rising social and economic problems. Although opposition candidates, such as Hsu Hsin-liang, incorporated populism into their electoral strategies far earlier, populism at that time was single-issue oriented and local in nature. The 2004 presidential election transformed the KMT and its splinter, the People First Party, into full-fledged populist parties without any real political goals and issues. During the presidential campaign, there seemed to be no other strategy than to discredit the incumbent president by constantly conveying the message that Taiwan's economy would collapse soon, and the People's Republic of China would soon attack Taiwan because of dictator Chen.

¹¹ *Brain*, April 2000 (288), 77–84.

The propaganda created an atmosphere of anger and fear, which should have secured the victory of Lien Chan and his running mate. Both Taiwan's mass media and huge rallies were indispensable parts of their electoral campaign strategy.

Apart from the size of campaign rallies, there was also the question of whose rally would be more passionate. In the past, the DPP was the undisputed master at stirring emotions at campaign rallies. (In more recent history, the 1997 electoral campaign serves as an illustrative example here.)¹² In 2004, the DPP claimed that the KMT and its splinter, the PFP, did not love Taiwan but China. In response, Lien Chan made a dramatic gesture in Taipei and prostrated himself, kissing the ground alongside his wife and KMT Secretary-General Lin Fong-cheng in front of the Presidential Office during the March 13 rally. Shortly before Lien's surprise prostration, Song Chu-yu, leading the march in central Taiwan, also knelt on the ground with his wife and kissed it. Song and Lien said that the move was meant to demonstrate their love for Taiwan.

¹² In 1997, local elections were held throughout Taiwan. In the county of Taipei, the KMT candidate was expected to win. However, the situation changed when one of the most prominent former DPP legislators joined the campaign in the largest electoral district in Taipei County, Panchiao, on the eve of the election. When Lu Hsiu-yi, suffering from cancer, appeared at about 10.00 p.m. at the election rally, thousands of people cheered enthusiastically. People were most impressed by the fact that, even though Lu's health did not allow him to walk on his own, he decided to take part in the rally. Because of his poor health, Lu left the rally soon. At about 11:30 p.m., Lu returned, however, and gave a speech that would, on the following day, decide who would run Taipei County for the next four years. He said that while watching television he had realized that the election result would depend on a small number of votes. He thought that the 3.4 million people living in Taipei County must be ruled by the DPP. Thus, he had decided to come back to persuade the people to vote for Su Tseng-chang, the DPP hopeful. He continued his speech by saying that this might be the last time for him to take part in a rally due to his poor health. Then he said that since his grandmother had died 25 years earlier, he had never kneeled down again, but that night he wanted to kneel down for the sake of the future of the DPP, for the future of Taipei County and for the future of Taiwan. As he kneeled down, people could not but weep. The scene was shown time and again on all major television channels and several major newspapers printed detailed stories and photos of the event. Finally, the DPP won by a small margin of only 2 percent. Local analysts agreed that Lu Hsiu-yi's 'begging for votes' was decisive in determining the outcome of Taipei County's electoral contest (*China Times Express*, November 29, 1997; *Taiwan Daily News*, November 30, 1997; *Journalist*, November 30, 1997).

Table 3.1 Effective advertising expenditures in presidential elections (2000, 2004)

Expenditure on advertising expenses in Presidential elections (2000-2004)								
Presidential candidate and running mate	Media (%)					Total (%)	NT\$ (million)	Subtotal (%)
	Terrestrial TV	Cable TV	Newspaper	Magazine	Radio			
2000 Presidential Election (1 December – 18 March)								
Chen-Lu (DPP)	7.91	78.97	12.68	0.35	0.09	100	121.49	22.31
Lien-Siew (KMT)	27	58.34	12.54	0.65	1.46	100	290.01	53.24
Song-Chang (ind.)	15.18	72.3	12.22	0.04	0.26	100	133.17	24.45
Total expenditure 2000	19.93	66.23	12.51	0.45	0.88	100	544.67	100.00
Lien-Song combined expenditure	23.68	62.27	12.45	0.48	1.12	100	423.18	77.69
2004 Presidential Election (1 December – 20 March)								
Chen-Lu (DPP)	11.77	65.34	19.89	2.84	0.16	100	245.44	43.41
Lien-Song (KMT, PFP)	14.11	43.57	35.11	5.02	2.19	100	319.91	56.59
Total expenditure 2004	13.09	53.06	28.48	4.07	1.31	100	565.35	100.00

Source: Table compiled by the author based on data provided by Rainmaker and XKM, Taipei.

Conclusion

Electoral campaigning in Taiwan has changed considerably since the KMT takeover in 1945. During the first two decades, elite politics dominated the political scene. Martial law was imposed in 1949 and deprived opposition candidates of their rights to campaign freely. Magazines and handbills were the only available media. The opposition candidates were isolated and co-ordination between them illegal. Electoral strategies included attacks on government policies, and the utilization of the people's compassion. The 1970s and 1980s were the era of popular politics. The social and economic consequences of Taiwan's rapid economic growth became more and more evident and caused tensions between the people and the government. The opposition benefited from these changes. Mass rallies, fundraising banquets, stunt politics and trade-fair style campaign headquarters were the campaign innovations of that era.

The lifting of martial law in 1987 led to a liberalization of Taiwan's media and to the formation of various political parties. Within a few years, the society became over-politicized. Populism and political fashion shows emerged as key campaign strategies. In the following decade, cable TV, underground radio stations, televised debates and rallies, and political advertising were the campaign innovations. The 1990s was the era of commodification politics. The dual process of campaigning, that is the utilization of mass media and the staging of mass rallies, developed during that decade. The early years of the twenty-first century consolidated this dual process. Contrary to conventional wisdom, mass media did not replace mass rallies in Taiwan's electoral campaigns. Mass media became an electoral tool of equal significance, only. Active participation of the electorate in campaign activities is necessary and, in general, a prerequisite for hopefuls to be elected. The mass rallies of the 2004 presidential election confirm this assumption. Passionate speeches and political stunts have to take place outside in front of huge crowds and aired live on cable TV to be effective. A media-centered electoral campaign alone would not encourage many voters to cast votes, as the 2005 National Assembly election clearly showed. In that election, delegates to the National Assembly were for the first time elected based on a party-list proportional representation system. Unlike other elections, the voter had to vote for a party and not a candidate. Consequently, individual candidates did not engage in campaigning at all, grassroots campaign activities were non-existent, and political parties engaged in media-oriented campaigning only. Unsurprisingly, voter turn out dropped to a historic low of 23 percent.

As to future electoral campaigns, there seems to be no reason to assume that the current dual process of campaigning will become insignificant.

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Chapter 4

Electoral Campaigning in Malaysia

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Malaysia is unique among the countries in Southeast Asia in that it—except for the city-state of Singapore—is the only country in the region to have been governed by the same ruling party since achieving independence. Malaysia has held eleven post independence general elections.¹

Between 1957 and 1969, the ruling government in Malaysia was a coalition comprising of UMNO (United Malay National Organization), MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) and MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress). After the post election riots on May 13, 1969, the coalition was expanded to include more parties from within Peninsular Malaysia as well as from Sabah and Sarawak. The renamed coalition, Barisan Nasional (BN), is currently comprised of 14 parties and they are organized predominantly along ethnic lines.²

With the sole exception of the 1969 election that sparked off racial riots resulting in the infamous May 13 tragedy, elections in Malaysia have by and large been spared the violence that has accompanied elections in many other developing countries.³ Several times, a state of emergency was declared, such as in Sarawak in 1966 and in Kelantan in 1978 as a result of political differences between federal and state forces. On all these occasions, political legitimacy was restored within a year or two via fresh elections (Crouch, 1996).

The occurrence of elections, even uninterrupted ones, does not guarantee that the conduct of elections is free and fair. In this case, Malaysia has a much more mixed record. By and large, elections in Malaysia can be considered free in so far as 'parties which contested had no problems in fielding their chosen candidates' and 'the vast majority of voters who wanted to vote were not prevented from doing so.'⁴

However, the curtailing of certain freedoms and rights through legislation such as the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), the Sedition Act 1948, the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 (PPPA), the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (UUCA), the Official Secrets Act 1972 (OSA), as well as the Elections Act 1958 and

¹ Malaysia achieved independence in 1957. Post independence general elections were held in 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995, 1999, and 2004.

² The history of the formation of the BN is given in Mauzy (1983).

³ For more background on the May 13 racial riots, see Tunku (1969), National Operations Council's 'The May 13th Tragedy' Report and Comber (1983).

⁴ Election Watch Report, 1990 General Elections.