

Content Analysis of Newspaper and Television Advertisements A Case Study of Taiwan's 2004 Presidential Election*

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Economic and political development not only led to democracy in Taiwan but also fundamentally changed the relationship between politicians and the electorate. Throughout the last two decades, Taiwan's mode of political communication has undergone manifold changes. One of these changes is certainly the increasing involvement of political advertising in electoral campaigns. In this paper, the political advertisements of the candidates contesting the 2004 presidential election are analyzed.

Part I: Background and Framework of Research

Political advertising from a global perspective

At the end of the twentieth century, political marketing appeared to have become a global phenomenon with more and more election campaigns resembling those of the US. Comparative research by Bowler, Farrell, Butler, Ranney and others has shown the existence of a so-called 'Americanization' of election campaign practices in other democracies.¹ This globalization of campaigning that can be best described as media and money driven has not only affected traditional democracies but also democracies of the Third Wave. The reason behind this world-wide proliferation of US campaigning is partly seen as the result of a modernization process and partly considered as a consequence of a transnational diffusion and implementation of US concepts and strategies of electoral campaigning. Modernization theorists claim that structural changes at the macro-level (changing media, political and social structure) have caused adaptive behavior at the micro level (parties, candidates, and journalists). Supporters of the transnational diffusion theory, however, focus 'on the micro-level of entrepreneurial actors, exporting their strategic know-how to foreign contexts by supply- or demand-driven consultancy activities, thus changing and modifying campaign practices in the respective countries.'²

Observations on developments in East Asia suggest that any change in electoral campaigning has had its roots in both the macro and micro level, and its boundaries are set by institutional, legal, and social factors.³ As to Taiwan, the lifting of martial law in 1987 paved

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1. Bowler, Shaun and David M Farrell, *Electoral Strategies and Political Marketing* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1992); Farrell, David, 'Campaign Strategies and Tactics,' in Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G Niemi and Pippa Norris (eds.), *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996), pp. 160-183; Butler, David and A Ranney, *Electioneering: A comparative study of continuity and change*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
2. Plasser, Fritz with Gunda Plasser, *Global Political Campaigning. A Worldwide Analysis of Campaign Professionals and Their Practices* (New York: Praeger, 2002), p. 17.
3. Schafferer, Christian, *Election Campaigning in East and Southeast Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming).

the way for a new era of electoral campaigning. Liberalization and democratization intensified political competition and with it the way electoral campaigns are conducted. Traditional forms of campaigning have either replaced or had to share the overall campaign strategy with modern campaign techniques, such as the utilization of mass media and mass communication. Liberal election laws —Asia's most liberal— and an affluent society have led to media and money driven electoral campaigns.

The rise of political advertising in Taiwan

During the martial law period (1949-1987), the utilization of mass media for electoral campaign purposes was illegal. In defiance of a complete ban on political ads, several candidates of the ruling KMT and the opposition began to place political advertisements in newspapers in the mid-1980s.⁴

In 1989, the election law was revised, allowing candidates to place political ads in newspapers and magazines. In local and national elections held that year, more than 1,000 political ads were counted in Taiwan's leading newspapers. KMT hopefuls placed some 36 percent of the ads, the DPP 45 percent, other parties 3 percent, and independents about 15 percent.⁵

Televised political ads remained illegal until 1991, when the election commission released several regulations governing the use of terrestrial television stations to air propaganda videos of political parties in the year-end national election. Each of Taiwan's three nation-wide terrestrial TV stations, Taiwan Television, China Television and Chinese Television System, were allocated 90 minutes to air the CFs of those parties nominating at least 10 candidates. The exact time each party was allotted was proportional to the number of nominees. In the 1991 National Assembly, only 4 out of the 17 participating parties fulfilled these requirements, namely the ruling Kuomintang (KMT), the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the National Democratic Non-partisan Alliance (NDNA) and the Chinese Social Democratic Party (ChSDP). The political ads aired by 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 stood 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 be 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. In their ads, the DPP questioned the KMT's interpretation of 'stability' and its implications for Taiwan's society by showing images of chickens being raised 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 people need freedom and dignity along with stability and prosperity.⁶ 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 ChSDP than towards the DPP.⁷

In the mid-1990s, government-funded TV ads lost importance. In 1991, there were only three terrestrial TV stations. A few years later, several dozen cable TV stations emerged, and soon political ads could be seen months ahead of the official ten-day parliamentary election

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

5. Chen, Yi-yan and Chen Shi-min, *Qi shi ba nian xuan ju de bao zhi xin wen yu guang gao nei rong fen xi* (Analysis of the 1989 Election News and Advertisements) (Taipei: Yie Chiang, 1992), 120-1; Chen, Shi-min Chen and Chen Yi-yan, 'Min guo qi shi ba nian xuan ju bao zhi guang gao nei rong fen xi' (Analysis of the 1989 Election Advertising in Newspapers), in Peng Yun (ed.), *Zhengzhi guanggao yu xuanju* (Political Advertising and Elections) (Taipei: Cheng Chong, 1992), p. 158.

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

7. Peng, Yun, *Zhengzhi guanggao yu xuanju* (Political advertising and elections) (Taipei: Cheng Chong, 1992), p. 233.

campaign period. Unlike the government-funded time slots for political spots, political ads on cable TV are mingled with commercial ones. People are thus more likely to watch those ads than the thirty-minute time slot reserved for political propaganda videos. In the 2004 parliamentary election, for instance, government-funded ads had viewing rates far below one percent whereas commercial breaks attracted between 2 and 6 percent of potential viewers.⁸

Previous research

The first research on political advertising in Taiwan's elections was conducted by Chen Yi-yan and Chen Shih-min.⁹ The two local scholars analyzed the newspaper reports and advertisements of the 1989 local and national elections. Peng Yun was the first to publish on the nature and effects of the televised ads broadcast in the 1991 national election and the role of mass media in Taiwan politics.¹⁰ Cheng Chi-long published extensively on the utilization of television in Taiwan's electoral campaigns.¹¹ Two other local scholars, Lin Hsiu-li (1993) and Chen Hong-chi (1995), and one of Taiwan's most successful political consultants, Wu Hsiang-hui, focused on political marketing strategies of Taiwan's political parties in their works.¹² Moreover, Niu Tse-shun (2002) analyzed the advertising strategies of the three candidates running for office in the 2000 presidential election.¹³

Research methodology

In this study, all political advertisements placed in Taiwan's leading newspapers and aired on Taiwan's most popular terrestrial and cable television stations during the official campaign period of 28 days (21 February – 19 March 2004) were analyzed.

According to a survey conducted by AC Nielsen, there are four leading newspapers in Taiwan. When asked which newspaper the interviewee had read the day before, 45 percent of the respondents mentioned the China Post, 34 percent the United Daily News, 32 percent the Liberty Times, 6.3 percent the Apple Daily.

A report on Taiwan's top 50 television stations released by the Government Information Office was used to determine which stations should be included in the analysis. Nine stations were selected according to their viewing rates. They were FTV (*min shi*), TVBS-N, CTI (*zhong tian xinwen tai*), SETTV (*san li xinwen tai*), CTV (*zhong shi*), FTV-N (*min shi xinwen tai*), CTS (*hua shi*), TTV (*taishi*), and TVBS.

Categorization

The coding unit used in this research was a theme, that is to say a coherent idea about the candidate and his party. Each theme (advertisement) was coded according to its function.

8. XKM, *Taiwan Xuanju tebaogao* (Taiwan Elections Special Report) (Taipei: XKM, 2004).

9. Chen, Yi-yan and Chen Shi-min, *Qi shi ba nian xuanju de baozhi xinwen yu guanggao neirong fenxi* (Analysis of the 1989 Election News and Advertisements) (Taipei: Yie Chiang, 1992).

10. Peng, Yun, *Zhengzhi guanggao yu xuanju* (Political advertising and elections) (Taipei: Cheng Chong, 1992); Peng, Yun, *Xinwen meijie yu zhengzhi* (News, Media and Politics) (Taipei: Liming Wenhua, 1992).

11. Cheng, Chi-long, 'Min guo qi shi ba nian xuanju zhengzhi guanggao xunxi zelue jixiao guo jian yan zhi yanjiu' (Analysis of the 1989 Election Communication Strategy and its Effects), in Peng Yun (ed.), *Zhengzhi guanggao yu xuanju* (Political Advertising and Elections) (Taipei: Cheng Chong, 1992), pp. 179-210; Cheng Chi-long, *Jingxuan guanggao* (Campaign Ads) (Taipei: Cheng Chong, 1995); Cheng Chi-long, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu taiwan shehui* (Campaign Communication and Taiwan's Society) (Taipei: Yang Chih, 2004).

12. Wu, Hsiang-hui, *Xuanjuxue* (Electoral Studies) (Taipei: Yuanliu, 2002).

13. Niu, Tse-shun, *Jingxuan chuanbo celue: lilun yu shiwu* (Campaign Broadcasts: Theory and Practice) (Taipei: Weber, 2002).

There were four different functions found in the commercials: The sponsoring candidate attacked the rival candidate (attack), rebutted criticism (rebuttal), created a positive image of himself (image), or tried to appeal to the electorate for support (appeal).

Newspaper ads were further categorized into three groups according to their size: half page, full page and smaller formats. Television ads were further separated according to the language used in the ads: Taiwanese, Mandarin or non-vocal.

Intercoder reliability

It is widely acknowledged that intercoder reliability is a critical component of content analysis. Neuendorf, for instance, notes that 'given that a goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least intersubjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount.¹⁴ Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless.' A large number of researchers, however, often fail to assess (or at least report) intercoder reliability.¹⁵

In this research, all collected newspaper and television ads were analyzed by two coders. Cohen's *kappa* was used to calculate intercoder reliability as recommended by most scholars.¹⁶ In the coding of the newspaper ads, kappa was 0.97, and in the coding of TV ads it was 0.94. Fleiss and others note that kappa values greater than 0.75 may be considered excellent agreement beyond chance.¹⁷ Thus, the kappa values obtained in this research indicate excellent reliability.

Political Background

In March 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected President of Taiwan. This marked the end of rule by the Kuomintang (KMT) and the beginning of a new era in Taiwan's politics. The KMT candidate, then Vice-President and Premier Lien Chan, had to admit a major defeat, whereas Song Chu-yu, who had left the KMT because of its failure to nominate him as the party's presidential candidate, took second place in the presidential election; and soon after formed his own political party, the People First Party (PFP).

Newly elected President Chen Shui-bian faced difficulties in implementing his proposed policies as parliament was still dominated by legislators of the KMT and its splinters, the New Party and the newly formed PFP. The government thus hoped to secure a majority in the upcoming parliamentary election of December 2001.

Support for the Chen administration came from Lee Teng-hui, the former president. In a speech held several months prior to the election, he announced the formation of a new political party (the Taiwan Solidarity Union) that would support the Chen administration and help Chen Shui-bian secure a majority in parliament. Although the DPP (with the help of the TSU) would increase its number of seats in the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's parliament) after the 2001 national election, it fell short of achieving a majority of its own. The two parties captured 45 percent of the seats at stake, the other parties 51 percent and independents the re-

14. Neuendorf, K. A., *The content analysis guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002)141

15. Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., and Bracken, C. C., 'Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability', *Human Communication Research*, No. 28 (2002), pp. 587-604; Riffe, D. and A. A. Freitag, 'A content analysis of content analyses: Twenty-five years of Journalism Quarterly', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (1997), pp. 873-882.

16. (Dewey, 1983; Bakemann, 2000) Dewey, M. E., 'Coefficients of Agreement,' *British Journal of Psychiatry*, No. 143 (1983), pp. 487-489; Bakeman, R., 'Behavioral observation and coding,' in H. T. Reis and C. M. Judge (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 138-159.

17. Fleiss, J. L., *Statistical Methods for Ratios and Proportions* (New York: Wiley, 1981).

maintaining seats. The result did not improve the situation for the ruling DPP, so they focused improving their results in the 2004 presidential election.

Under current law, the president and vice-president are elected on a single ticket by plurality vote. The ruling DPP nominated incumbent President Chen Shui-bian and Vice President Lu Hsiu-lien. The two major opposition parties (the KMT and the PFP) formed an alliance and agreed to place their leaders on a joint ticket.

Several weeks before the election, two main issues dominated the political scene. The first was President Chen Shui-bian's plan to introduce a new constitution. The second issue dealt with President Chen's determination to hold two referenda concurrently with the presidential election. The first referendum asked voters whether Taiwan should purchase more anti-missile equipment to counter China's missile threat, and the second whether Taiwan should initiate negotiations with China and promote the establishment of a peaceful and stable framework. Both referenda were partly viewed as an election gimmick and a violation of the referendum law.

Part II: Research findings

A. Newspaper ads

There were a total of 120 different ads found in the four observed newspapers (see Table 1). As to the size of the advertisements, approximately one third were full-page ads, almost two thirds half-page and the remaining 5 percent were smaller in size.

In the following research, only full and half-page ads were included in the study, since smaller ads were rare and appeared below the horizontal fold where readership has been proven to be the lowest.¹⁸

Table 1: Newspaper ads by size and political affiliation

Affiliation	Size of Advertising			Total
	Full-page	Half-page	other	
KMT/PFP	19	28	-	47
Organisations	4	12	2	18
Subtotal	23	40	2	65
DPP	8	16	3	27
Organisations	2	7	-	9
Subtotal	10	23	3	36
Other	5	13	1	19
Total	38	76	6	120

Source: Author's own research

The alliance sponsored half of the different full-page ads, the DPP some 21 percent, individu-

18. Hsu, An-chi and Pan Chi-yu, *Guanggaoxue Yuanli* (The Principles of Advertising) (Taipei: Yang-Chih, 2002).

als and organizations neither supporting any of the two candidates 13 percent, and groups supporting either the candidate of the alliance or the DPP the remaining ones (Table 1).

On average, the 114 different full and half-page ads appeared twice in either the same newspaper on consecutive days or in different newspapers. The majority of ads had premium page positions and were placed once in one of the four observed newspapers. Some ten percent appeared on the same day in different newspapers, another five percent in different newspapers on consecutive days, and about three percent in more than one newspaper for several of days. The total observed frequency of the 114 different commercials in the four newspapers amounted to 235 (see Table 2). Some 37 percent appeared in the Apple Daily, 25 percent in the Liberty Times, 20 percent in the China Times, and 17 percent in United Daily News (Table 2). The United Daily News was the only newspaper where readers could find ads sponsored exclusively by either the alliance or its supporting organizations.

In the China Times, ads sponsored by the alliance amounted to over 50 percent, whereas ads placed by the DPP accounted for about 12 percent. The Liberty Times was the only newspaper where the number of DPP ads surpassed the alliance. Almost seven out of ten ads that appeared in the Liberty Times were sponsored by the DPP. The alliance placed slightly more ads in the Apple Daily than the DPP, whereas individuals and organizations not supporting either side sponsored almost half of the ads.

In four out of ten ads, the sponsoring candidate attacked the rival candidate (see Table 3). Almost three out of ten ads were designed to improve the image of the sponsoring candidate. In another 28 percent of the ads the candidate made appeals to the electorate. In only 3 percent of the cases, the aim of the ad was to rebut criticism. The alliance and its supporting organizations mostly relied on negative advertising to increase its popularity. Some 43 percent of their ads were attacking the rival candidate, incumbent President Chen Shui-bian (see Table 3). Moreover, the negative advertisements sponsored by the alliance accounted for 60 percent of the total number of observed negative ads. Organizations and individuals who did not support any candidate placed most of the remaining negative ads. The DPP and its supporting organizations mostly refrained from using negative ads and instead used image and appeal to attract the attention of the electorate.

Government policies, the two referenda, President Chen Shui-bian, the 3-13 rally, ethnicity, constitutional reform and the 2-28 rally were the salient issues mentioned in the ads.

Newspaper ads by the alliance

The election campaign committee of the alliance designed 18 different ads intended to polish the image of Lien Chan, 17 to make appeals to the electorate, and 8 to attack incumbent President Chen Shui-bian (Table 3).

In one of the negative ads, the alliance described President Chen as someone who opposes everything that would benefit the country. The ad made reference to Chen's reluctance to cancel the proposed referenda that were branded illegal. Other issues mentioned in the ad were Lien's proposal to increase the number of reserved parliamentary seats for females to 30 percent, and the introduction of a professional army. Since President Chen had previously questioned the necessity of such reforms (= oppose), the ad concluded that the electorate should therefore 'oppose' Chen.

Chen's Hakka policy was criticized in another full-page ad, in which the alliance accused Chen Shui-bian of 'cheating' Taiwan's Hakka (an ethnic minority) out of their rights and creating racial division in Taiwan. The ad said that Chen Shui-bian's government only had one ranking official who was Hakka, whereas during Lien Chan's term as premier there had been nine.

Table 2: Newspaper ads by name of print media and political affiliation

Affiliation	United Daily News		China Times		Liberty Times		Apple Daily		Subtotal		Total
	Full	Half	Full	Half	Full	Half	Full	Half	Full	Half	
KMT/PFP	13	14	10	17	4	9	16	4	43	44	87
Organisation	1	8	1	7	1	3	4	-	7	18	25
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>112</i>
DPP	-	-	2	4	7	23	5	14	14	41	55
Organisation	-	1	2	3	1	5	1	1	4	10	14
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>69</i>
Other	2	2	2	1	1	5	24	17	29	25	54
Total	16	25	17	32	14	45	50	36	97	138	235
	41		49		59		86		235		

Source: Author's own research

Table 3: Newspaper advertisements by party and content

Main Issues		Type				Total
		Attack opponent	Rebut criticism	Create image	Make an appeal	
Alliance Organiza- tions	Government policies, referendum, ethnicity, President Chen, 313 Rally,	12	-	18	17	47
	Referendum, ethnicity, Lien Chan, President Chen	15	-	1	0	16
<i>Subtotal</i>		27	-	19	17	63
DPP Organiza- tions	Referendum, corruption, 2-28 Rally, KMT/PFP image	2	2	9	11	24
	Referendum, reform, corruption	1	1	7	0	9
<i>Subtotal</i>		3	3	16	11	33
Other	Legislative reform, clean election, 2-28 Incident, Taiwan's political situation	13	-	0	5	18
Total	Referendum, ethnicity, government policies, President Chen, 313 Rally, 2-28 Rally	43	3	35	33	114

Source: Author's own research

Three other full-page ads mocked Chen Shui-bian and his government officials, and described them as incompetent. One ad read ‘The Republic of Wulumuqi,’ and showed several leading DPP government officials and Chen Shui-bian sitting on a throne.

Other negative ads contained abstracts of newspaper articles about rising unemployment, an increase in the number of suicides, and seventy thousand pupils not being able to afford lunch. The commercials pinned the blame for these problems on President Chen’s incompetence.

At the end of February, the alliance was surprised when their own opinion polls suggested that more people would turn out in support of Chen Shui-bian’s hand-in-hand rally (2-28 Rally) than originally assumed. Marketing strategies were adjusted accordingly and the alliance put emphasis on the necessity of ethnic harmony among the people of Taiwan in their campaign messages. In several ads, the alliance asked the people to donate blood on 28 February rather than to take part in the hand-in-hand rally organized by the DPP. One full-page ad entitled ‘In my blood there is your blood and in your blood there is mine.’ stated that donating blood would symbolize ‘ethnic harmony.’ With over two million people joining the 2-28 Hand-in-Hand Rally, the DPP celebrated a temporary success. Consequently, the alliance came up with the idea of staging an even bigger rally. Subsequent newspaper ads exclusively focused on promoting this rally. The aim was to mobilize more people than the DPP did on 28 February. The tone and language used in the ads became more abrasive. The ethnic harmony that should have come with Lien Chan’s appeal to the people to donate blood was quick forgotten. Over ten different ads were placed in all major newspapers. They were entitled ‘Change the President, Save Taiwan,’ and contained short sentences stating that nobody believed Chen Shui-bian, that Chen Shui-bian was a liar, or, to put it bluntly, that incumbent President Chen Shui-bian was the scum of the nation. One full-page ad went further and urged the people to ‘end Chen’s dictatorship.’ The ad deliberately exaggerated a report by Freedom House, a US-based international political rights organization, saying that during Chen Shui-bian’s term as president, political rights had deteriorated because of widespread corruption within government circles. Moreover, the ad concluded that Chen more and more resembled Adolf Hitler, and that the people had the duty as citizens to ‘rescue’ Taiwan by making proper use of their ballots. A photo of Hitler was added to illustrate this insinuation clearly. After the 3-13 rally, the alliance placed several image ads. In the ads, readers could see photos of the event intended to illustrate the scope of support the alliance had received at the rally and to inform the electorate of further campaign activities. Photographic material included scenes of Lien Chan prostrating himself and kissing the ground in front of the presidential office. All of these ads were entitled ‘Dormant Volcano Erupted.’ Several short slogans saying that there was no brutality, no lies, and no hatred in ‘real’ Taiwan (meaning in a Taiwan controlled by the alliance) covered parts of the ads.

In another image ad, Lien Chan’s economic expertise was the theme. The ad showed Lien Chan together with Nobel laureate Lawrence Klein, with text stating that Klein had agreed to assist Lien Chan in improving Taiwan’s economic situation.

Several appeal ads appeared during the final days of the electoral campaign. In one, for example, the alliance urged the electorate to cast their votes. The commercial claimed that the gap between the two candidates would only be one percent and that the voter turnout of DPP supporters usually was 20 percentage points higher.

Newspaper ads by groups and individuals supporting Lien Chan

There were 26 different ads by groups and individuals supporting Lien Chan. Except for one, they all attacked Chen Shui-bian’s government policies. Organizations representing the aviation industry, businesses, academics, medics, and ultra-conservative members of society

blamed Chen for the “worsening relations with China,” high unemployment, the increasing number of suicides, and the loss of economic opportunities. The ads asserted that Lien Chan and his running mate Song Chu-yu were the only feasible solution to these problems. In one ad, a group of university professors, lawyers, and members of local election committees posed the referenda as the major issue and urged the people to boycott them since they were illegal.

Ads by DPP election campaign committee

The DPP election campaign committee placed 8 different full-page and sixteen half-page advertisements in all of Taiwan’s most popular newspapers except for the United Daily News.

More than half of the ads were appeals to the electorate. In two ads the DPP urged voters to call their friends and relatives in Taipei and convince them to vote for Chen Shui-bian. The ads stated that Taipei remained the only stronghold of the alliance and that DPP supporters should therefore ‘launch an attack’ on the greater Taipei area. One full-page ad asked DPP supporters to take part in the election rally to be held in Taipei on the eve of the election. Other ads urged citizens to take part in the 2-28 hand-in-hand rally, and to support the referenda. In total, there were eight different referenda ads, five of which were an appeal only, whereas the other three were designed to create the image that the referenda were necessary. In one ad, a photograph of a group of pregnant women lined up in a row was used along with text stating that in order not to have future generations exposed to Chinese missiles the electorate ought to take part in the referenda. In another ad with the slogan ‘Taiwan needs you,’ a young woman is shown pointing her finger at the reader and left to her several reasons were listed why the electorate should cast their ballots in favor of the referenda. The ad stated that a failure of the referenda would mean a victory for China and would send a clear message to the US that Taiwan did not care about its defense capabilities. To convince the electorate of the importance of the two referenda, the DPP also used photographs of three former US presidents (Kennedy, Roosevelt, and Wilson) and one of former Prime Minister (Churchill) next to Chen Shui-bian in one ad. Kennedy, for instance, expressed in an accompanying text that keeping silent while facing a missile attack would only benefit the opponent, and Roosevelt added that under permanent military threat true peace seemed impossible. The ad was entitled ‘Only true leaders know what peace is.’ Here the reader should not only get the impression that the four politicians support the referenda but also that Chen Shui-bian was a true leader and thus be put on equal footing with statesmen like Churchill, Kennedy, Roosevelt and Wilson. In another half-page ad, the DPP let Kennedy elaborate on his principles. Kennedy can be seen in the advertisement sitting in a chair explaining the Cuban crisis of 1962. In medium-sized characters, the ad stated that the current military threat posed by China was similar to the one Kennedy had had to cope with in 1962 when the Soviet Union planned to install nuclear weapons on the island of Cuba. The last commercial in this series made a reference to Neil Armstrong’s historic moon walk. In place of Armstrong, however, a woman was pictured holding a ballot in her hands and walking to the ballot box. The ad text stated that the voter’s small step to the ballot box would be a giant leap for Taiwan.

Another ad conveyed the message that Chen Shui-bian was the president of Taiwan and his rival Lien Chan was a representative of Beijing. The ad showed a map with China on the left and Taiwan on the right. Next to the map was a copy of a ballot with the DPP candidate on the right and the rival candidate on the left. The ad read, ‘Taiwan is on the right, so stamp on the right.’

The DPP used two newspaper ads to rebut allegations made by rival candidate Lien Chan. Chen Shui-bian’s campaign team cast doubt on the correctness/truthfulness of many of the statements made by Lien Chan during the two televised presidential debates. The party subse-

quently placed two full-page ads in the Apple Daily at the end of February ‘correcting’ Lien’s statements regarding various issues, such as women rights, Taiwan’s future relations with China, foreign investment, and government debts accumulated during Chen’s term as president.

Negative ads showed the candidates of the alliance together with their close friends who happened to be among Taiwan’s most wanted fugitives.

Ads by organizations and individuals supporting Chen Shui-bian

Religious organizations, lawyers, public accountants, and US-based organizations placed ten different types of ads in Taiwan’s dailies. Except for one ad placed in the China Times and one full-page ad published in the China Times and the Liberty Times, all the advertisements were designed to improve the image of the DPP candidate.

As to the negative ads, two organizations based in Houston and supporting Chen Shui-bian strongly criticized Lien Chan’s policies. The ad addressed several questions to the supporters of the alliance and unaffiliated voters. One dealt with the two referenda, one with the social welfare programs promised by Lien Chan, and two with Taiwan’s relations with the PRC. The ad stated that the referenda were necessary as Taiwan faced a serious military threat, and that Lien Chan’s welfare programs would not be financially feasible. As to the relations with the PRC, the two organizations predicted an influx of illegal Chinese immigrants if Lien Chan went ahead with his plan of annually letting one to three million Chinese tourists enter the country.

The Formosan Association for Public Affairs was another US-based organization utilizing Taiwan’s print media to support Chen Shui-bian’s two referenda. Each of the two half-page ads was an endorsement of the referenda by several dozen members of the US Congress. The first ad appeared on 16 March in the China Times and the second a day prior to the election in the Liberty Times. Two other half-page ads were sponsored by a group of forty-six businesspeople and forty-five companies, respectively. Both of these ads stressed the importance of continuing the DPP’s reforms and wiping out corruption, and the necessity of holding the two referenda.

A nation-wide Chen Shui-bian support committee formed by public accountants placed a similar ad in the Apple Daily at the beginning of March, and Chen Shui-bian’s re-election committee placed a full-page ad in the China Times with the names of over five hundred lawyers supporting Chen’s re-election bid. In another ad, over six hundred judges and lawyers tried to do away with the myth that the referenda were illegal as suggested by the alliance.

A group of religious organizations voiced their support for Chen Shui-bian’s reforms and his proposed law regulating religious organizations in Taiwan. The half-page ad that appeared in the Liberty Times one day before the election carried the names of over twenty renowned organizations and a lengthy explanation of why they supported Chen Shui-bian. Moreover, a public opinion leader, Ku Kuang-min, expressed his support for Chen’s policies, especially for the referenda and a new constitution, in a half-page ad that appeared in all three leading newspapers.

Ads by NGOs and individuals not supporting either side

Apart from the 96 advertisements supporting either the alliance or the DPP, there were 18 commercials sponsored by individuals and organizations not explicitly mentioning whom the electorate should support.

Five ads were placed in the observed newspapers to make appeals to the electorate. A group of disillusioned citizens, for instance, urged the electorate to express their dissatisfaction about Taiwan's politicians by casting invalid votes. The Clean Election Committee placed a half-page ad in all three major newspapers urging the people to report cases of vote buying to the authorities. The ad said that whenever evidence was sufficient to bring a prosecution against the suspect, the informant would receive between NT\$ 200,000 to NT\$ 15 million depending on how serious the reported case turned out to be. The remaining three appeal ads were sponsored by Nobel laureate and head of the Academia Sinica, Lee Yuan-tse, and democracy activist Lin Yi-hsiung. The aim of the ads was to ask the public to sign a petition calling for parliamentary reforms, such as cutting the number of legislators by half. One of the ads carried the signatures of about one thousand intellectuals from all walks of life.

All of the 13 negative ads attacked Chen Shui-bian. Chen You-hao, one of Taiwan's most wanted fugitives, for instance, placed three full-page and two half-page ads in Taiwan's leading newspapers. The ads were lengthy explanations of why Chen rather he himself was a criminal. Other critics spent less money on trying to shed dark light on Chen Shui-bian's personality and leadership. The Labor Party and several other left-wing organizations claimed in one half-page ad in the United Daily News that Chen Shui-bian and his supporters distorted the truth about the 2-28 Incident. According to the ad, mainland Chinese had suffered equally under the rule of the KMT. The director of Taiwan National University Hospital shared the view of the left-wing groups and added that many mainlanders had been killed by Chiang Kai-shek's troops because of having voiced their concerns about what had happened in the province of Taiwan. Apart from that, Chen was accused of having caused numerous social problems during his term, such as rising unemployment and increased ethnic tensions. The referenda were portrayed as another step toward cheating the people of Taiwan of their bright future. In addition, Li Hsun-ching, a well-known author used a half-page ad in the United Evening News to publish his essay on how the Taiwan independence movement cheated the electorate.

Several former supporters of the DPP and its splinters distanced themselves from the party and made their discontent known to the public through newspaper ads. The group included Chen Cheng-fu, a former democracy activist, Leng Ren-zong, a leading member of the Kaoshiung county branch of the Taiwan Independence Party, and Wu Chang-sheng, who—according to his ad—had spent most of his life actively supporting Hsieh Chang-ting and other DPP politicians. Chen Cheng-fu blamed Chen Shui-bian for the death of his son who had committed suicide because he could not find a job. Wu Chang-sheng accused Chen Shui-bian of destroying the DPP because of his totalitarian leadership. He said, for example, that Chen had blocked the promotion of many talented party members, such as Hsieh Chang-ting, Chang Chun-hong and Hsiao Mei-chin. His two half-page ads were full of hatred for President Chen. Although his ads did not mention that he supported the alliance in this election, he became the leader of one of the alliance's support committees.

B) Television advertisements

During the election campaign period, a total of 44 different political ads were aired on the observed seven TV stations. Almost half of the commercials were ads placed by the alliance. Its interest groups refrained from utilizing television. The DPP produced 11 ads, the government 10, and a DPP-associated organization two.

Almost 4 out of 10 ads were of the image type, 3 out of 10 attacked the opponent, and the others were appeals to the electorate or rebutted criticism (see Table 4).

Unemployment, crime, suicide, Chen Shui-bian, the two referenda, and other government policies were the issues addressed by the alliance. The DPP concentrated on issues dealing

with its past achievements, women, the future of Lien-Song partnership, and the relationship between the alliance and Taiwan's most wanted fugitives. Ads sponsored by government agencies focused on vote buying, education, agriculture, and on the referenda. The remaining two advertisements were sponsored by a Taiwanese organization based in the US and appealed to voters to support Chen and his referenda.

The total length of the forty-four commercials was 24 minutes, with the average length being half a minute. The shortest clip was five seconds and the longest ninety seconds.

As to the language used in the ads, 36 percent were in Taiwanese and 27 percent in Mandarin. In three out of ten cases the ads were non-vocal, that is to say only background music or sound effects were used, and in the remaining two spots, English with Chinese subtitles, or both English and Mandarin was used. It is interesting to note that the alliance refrained from using Mandarin in their TV ads, except for one with Ma Ying-jeou asking the people to support Lien Chan. The DPP and various government agencies, on the other hand, predominantly used Mandarin in their ads.

Ads by the alliance

More than half of the ads attacked Chen Shui-bian's economic and social policies. In one advertisement, for example, the alliance claimed that during Chen Shui-bian's term the number of crimes had increased dramatically. The ad featured an ordinary citizen who constantly received phone calls from his relatives informing him about all the different types of crimes that happened to his relatives. At the end of the ad the man seemed exhausted and suggested that Taiwan needed a new president. The same conclusion was made in another ad where a chain reaction of small 'accidents' led to an office engulfed by chaos. The disaster started when a cigarette thrown into a trash bin ignited a piece of paper. An employee—by accident—hit a secretary on the head with a fire extinguisher and soon the whole office turned into a battlefield.

In another ad Chen Shui-bian's educational reforms were targeted. Young people could be seen dancing around and mocking Chen's reforms saying that since Chen was always talking about reform it seemed unclear to them why nothing had happened so far. The only observable change was that more and more students could not afford to study. (The ministry of education responded to the commercial. The minister himself talked for 55 seconds about the quality of the current education system and its reforms in a government-funded ad designed to rebut the attack.)

Education was also the theme in one of the six image-building ads aired by the alliance. In the spot, two mothers chat while doing their housework. One says that Lien Chan promised that families earning less than one million NT\$ per year would only have to pay half of the tuition if their children decided to continue to study after high school.

The referenda were the issue mentioned in one of the alliance's TV ads. In the kitchen of a small restaurant, a man is reading a newspaper and telling his wife and other people present about the government's plan to hold a referendum on the sale of more weapons, which would cost half a billion NT\$. A woman preparing some dishes seems to be very unhappy. While looking at her child, she asks the others how the government can hold such a referendum when there are so many pupils in Taiwan who do not even have enough to eat. The man replies that we do not need such a government.

Table 4: Television advertisements by party and type

Affiliation	Number	Length	Language	Main Issues	Type			
					Attack opponent	Rebut criticism	Create image	Make an appeal
Alliance	21	total: 11' 14" average: 32" shortest: 8" longest: 60"	Taiwanese: 12 Mandarin: 1 Sound effects: 8	unemployment, referendum, economy, government policies, crime, Chen Shui-bian	11	-	6	4
DPP	11	total: 6' 47" average: 37" shortest: 14" longest: 90"	Taiwanese: 1 Mandarin: 5 mixed: 1 Sound effects: 4	corruption, past achievements, women, Lien-Song	4	-	4	3
Government	10	total: 4' 41" average: 28" shortest: 5" longest: 55"	Taiwanese: 3 Mandarin: 6 Sound effects: 1	Education, agriculture, referendum, vote buying	-	2	4	4
Other	2	total: 1' 10" average: 35" shortest: 35" longest: 35"	English with Chinese subtitles: 1 Mandarin and English: 1	Support of overseas Taiwanese, Referendum	-	-	2	-
Total	44	total: 23' 52" average: 33" shortest: 5" longest: 90"	Taiwanese: 16 Mandarin: 12 Sound effects: 13 Mixed: 3	unemployment, Chen, Lien-Song, crime, corruption, government policies, referendum, vote buying	15	2	16	11

Source: Author's own research

The alliance produced a series of three ads entitled 'Divination' to make the electorate sympathetic to ordinary citizens portrayed as facing economic hardship because of President Chen's incompetence. The mothers of an unemployed son, a bankrupt factory owner, and a farmer unhappy about WTO regulations go to a nearby temple, pray to the gods and cast bamboo divination blocks to determine whether things would be better if they voted for Chen Shui-bian again. Unfortunately, the blocks land on the reverse side, indicating that the gods view the action unfavorably. Each of the mothers has suffered because they trusted Chen and voted for him in the last election. In another ad, a 'Mr. Tang' is depicted as having made the same mistake. When Chen won the 2000 presidential race, 'Mr. Tang' and his wife were very happy. But soon his company went bankrupt because of Chen Shui-bian's economic policies. The ad showed an unemployed and greatly depressed 'Mr. Tang' listening to President Chen speaking on television about his fortune to be the president. Nevertheless, Mr. Tang and his wife still had a chance to escape their miserable life. They could vote for Lien.

The good character of chairmen Song and his glorious achievements during his term as provincial governor were highlighted in one image ad. Lien Chan's historic mission to rescue the nation and his manifold abilities as a true leader were the theme of another 30-second image ad.

Among the six ads that aimed at polishing the alliance's image, there were three others that should be mentioned here. The KMT used one commercial to let 'history' speak for 55 seconds, showing footage from various documentaries illustrating the success of the KMT's economic, social, and political policies. At the end of the ad, an hourglass is intended to convey that time has run out for the DPP and that it is high time the KMT continued its sound reforms.

During the final days of the election campaign period, there were two ads frequently shown on TV. The first showed footage from the 3-13 rally, in which more than three million people were reported to have taken part. The ad was designed to portray Lien Chan as more popular than Chen Shui-bian with his two million people joining the 2-28 rally. The second spot frequently seen on television was the V-ad. In public places, such as bus stops, markets, and restaurants, people from all walks of life greet each other by raising two fingers indicating their support for number two, Lien Chan.

Apart from the image-building CFs, the alliance also placed a series of appeal spots. KMT vice-chair Wang Chin-Ping, for instance, appeared in one of them, urging the people to vote for Lien Chan. In the same spot, former DPP Chair Hsu Hsin-liang claimed that President Chen had wasted a lot of money and asked the people to support Lien. At the end of this 36-second spot, Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou said that people should vote for Lien 'because of our next generation.'

Somewhat more dramatic was the alliance's last appeal ad. For a total of eight seconds viewers were induced to think that they were watching a horror movie. Against a black screen, a ballot appeared and the viewer was reminded that because of not voting for Lien Chan Taiwan would suffer for another four years. The question whether the voter could accept such a situation was posed in large characters. The ad appeared after almost every other ad on all major TV stations during the last 24 hours before the election.

DPP ads

The campaign team of the DPP produced 11 ads, 4 of which were attacks, another 4 image building, and the remaining appeals to the electorate.

The latter urged the electorate to take part in large-scale rallies, such as the one in Kaoshiung on 13 March. Similar to the newspaper ads entitled 'Attack Taipei' the DPP had one short

spot frequently aired during the final days of the election campaign. In this ad, the audience was informed that Taipei was the last stronghold of the alliance. Viewers were exhorted to call their relatives and friends in Taipei and convince them to support Chen Shui-bian.

The image ads put emphasis on the ability of the DPP to reform the country. In one ad, the referendum law was mentioned as one of the results of the party's ongoing struggle for democracy. The ad recalled that in the past the alliance had always rejected the ideas of the DPP saying that such reforms would be dangerous.

In four commercials the DPP attacked the rival candidate. In a 35-second spot, for example, the party questioned the stability of the alliance. The spot showed footage from campaign speeches given four years earlier, when Song and Lien had competed against each other in the 2000 presidential election. At that time, Lien Chan described Song Chu-yu as deceitful, cruel, and unscrupulous. Song Chu-yu, on the other hand, claimed that Lien Chan was incompetent and posed the question of how such a failure could become president. Newspaper articles about crumbling governments in Indonesia and the Philippines were also shown. The ad referred to these two countries as examples where failed co-operation between ruling coalitions led to crisis. The spot concluded that Taiwan would be unstable with a Lien-Song coalition and people were urged to support the DPP to guarantee political stability.

Two ads tried to confirm the public feeling that the KMT maintains good connections with the criminal underworld. The first spot aired in this series showed a man, presumably Lien Chan, looking at his remaining wealth and remembering the times when he and his five old friends did business together. An introduction of his friends followed, with the friends being criminals who were among Taiwan's most wanted fugitives. The man blamed President Chen for his misery. At the end of the 58-second commercial, Lien Chan appeared receiving a phone call on his cellular phone. The caller expressed his hope that Lien Chan would win the election to safeguard his return to Taiwan. The second spot was similar in style and posed the question why those involved in economic criminal activities tended to be associated with the alliance.

Government agency ads

Government agencies aired ten different advertisements. Some 60 percent of the ads dealt with the issues of vote buying and the referenda. The length of the ads ranged between 5 to 38 seconds. The referenda spots were all 25 seconds in length and stressed the importance of the two referenda. The Department of Agriculture (under the Executive Yuan), Taipower, and the Ministry of Education produced several spots explaining their policies. Moreover, in one advertisement, the Council of Labor Affairs rebutted the alliance's claim that Taiwan's unemployment was the highest in the world. The council listed the current unemployment rates of several leading economies, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, the USA and Germany. Viewers were informed that among the listed countries, Taiwan had the second lowest unemployment rate.

Conclusion

In this research, all political advertisements placed in Taiwan's leading newspapers and aired on Taiwan's most popular terrestrial and cable television stations during the official campaign period (21 February – 19 March 2004) were analyzed.

There were a total of 120 different ads found in the four observed newspapers: the China Post, the United Daily News, the Liberty Times and the Apple Daily. The total observed frequency of the 114 different commercials in the four newspapers amounted to 235. Some 37 percent appeared in the Apple Daily, 25 percent in the Liberty Times, 20 percent in the China

Times, and 17 percent in United Daily News. In the latter, ads were sponsored exclusively by either the alliance or its supporting organizations. The DPP refrained from placing ads in that newspaper because of its boycott of the paper, which it viewed as the mouthpiece of the alliance. In the China Times, ads sponsored by the alliance amounted to over 50 percent, whereas ads placed by the DPP accounted for about 12 percent. The Liberty Times was the only newspaper where the number of DPP ads surpassed the alliance. Almost seven out of ten observed different ads that appeared in the Liberty Times were sponsored by the DPP. Individuals and organizations not supporting either side placed three quarters of all their ads in the Apple Daily.

During the election campaign period, a total of forty-four different political ads were aired on the observed seven TV stations: FTV, TVBS-N, CTI, SETTV, CTV, FTV-N, CTS, TTV, and TVBS. Almost half of the advertisements were ads of the alliance. Its interest groups refrained from utilizing television. The DPP produced eleven ads, the government ten, and a DPP-associated organization two. The KMT and its allies, thus, put slightly fewer different ads on Taiwan's TV channels. Notwithstanding, ads by the alliance were aired far more often than those of the DPP and government agencies (see Table 5).

Table 5: Effective advertising expenditures presidential elections (2000, 2004)

Presidential candidate and running mate	Media (%)					Total (%)	NT\$ (milli- on)	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	19.93	66.23	12.51	0.45	0.88	100	544.66	100.00
Lien-Song	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	13.09	53.06	28.48	4.07	1.31	100	565.34	100.00

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

About 35 percent of the newspaper ads and ads contained negative messages about the rival candidate. Over 90 percent of the negative ads attacked incumbent President Chen Shui-bian and his government. Only 2 out of the 120 different newspaper ads and 4 out of the 44 television spots conveyed negative messages about the candidates of the alliance.

The issues mentioned in the DPP newspaper ads differed from the TV advertisements. Most of party's newspaper ads made reference to the two referenda and the 2-28 rally. The 11 TV advertisements, on the other hand, focused on the party's past achievement and the alliance's close relationship to the underworld. The content of newspaper ads and TV advertisements sponsored by the alliance did not differ much. The alliance's key strategy was to

blacken the image of Chen Shui-bian. During the first few days of the official campaign period, the alliance used ads to convey the image of an incompetent president who was to blame for all the misery ordinary people faced. After the successful 2-28 hand-in-hand rally, the content of the ads became more abrasive. The strategy of the alliance was to create an atmosphere of hatred and fear among the electorate. The alliance portrayed President Chen Shui-bian as an unscrupulous dictator like Adolf Hitler and appealed to the public to help the alliance to put an end to Chen's dictatorship.

Compared with the previous presidential election, fewer negative ads appeared in the observed media, but the tone and language used in the ads (especially those of the alliance) became coarser.¹⁹ Moreover, the content of the political ads seem to indicate a drastic decrease in the moral and professional standards of most parts of the electoral campaign industry in Taiwan.

19. A detailed analysis of the advertising strategies of all candidates contesting the 2000 presidential race can be found in Niu, *Jingxuan*.

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