

## **Whose Bandwagon Is It Anyway? Empirical Findings from Taiwanese (ROC) Magistrates**

*Norman Peng, Hwei-En Peng, and Annie Hui-ling Chen*

### **Abstract**

As the effectiveness of short-term campaigns is uncertain, politicians and campaigners are increasingly adopting permanent campaigns. In this process, midterm elections are a cost-effective vehicle for senior politicians to build relationships with local candidates while promoting their own candidacies. Previous research on celebrity endorsement and the coattail effect has primarily focused on the results of political endorsement, while overlooking the process of such activities. More importantly, few studies have addressed how local politicians perceive the embedment of their own campaign into their senior colleague's permanent campaign.

The authors of this article conducted four in-depth interviews with local officials, the transcripts of which were analyzed using an interpretive approach. Our finding highlights magistrates and mayors' worries about being marginalized by the president. Furthermore, they believe that local affairs should be dealt with locally, and that involving the president is a sign of weakness. Theoretical and managerial implications of this research are discussed in relationship to the literature on coattail effect, endorsement strategy, and permanent campaigning.

**Key words:** Permanent campaign, midterm election, Taiwan, coattail effect, political endorsement.

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Midterm elections are sometimes perceived as a vote of confidence in the current presidency/premiership.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, such elections cannot be ignored by marketing-oriented politicians, who are thus more likely to adopt a strategy of permanent campaigning, as short-term campaigns often have limited effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> In this context, Franklin and Richardson's<sup>3</sup> observations regarding the inadequate understanding of local political communications remain critical. Current midterm election studies either adopt a macro-perspective<sup>4</sup> or often do not fully elaborate on these elections' relationship to general elections.<sup>5</sup> Those studies that do, frequently emphasize a top-down perspective, with the purpose of explaining the election outcome from the view of major office holders.<sup>6</sup> Although these approaches have their merits, they

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<sup>1</sup> Everett Carl Ladd, "The 1994 Congressional Elections: The Postindustrial Realignment Continues," *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no.1 (1995): 1-23; John Owens, "The Importance of Candidate Characteristics and Local Political Conditions in the 1994 US Mid-term Elections," *Political Studies* 46, no. 4 (1998): 766-776; David W. Brady, John F. Cogan, Brian J. Gaines, and Douglas Rivers, "The Perils of Presidential Support: How the Republicans Took the House in the 1994 Midterm Elections," *Political Behavior* 18, no. 4 (1996): 345-367; Edward Tufte, "Determinants of the Outcome of Midterm Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 3 (1975): 812-826; Gary C. Jacobson, "Does the Economy Matter in Midterm Elections?" *American Journal of Political Science* 34, no. 2 (1990): 400-404; Anthony Heath, Iain McLean, Bridget Taylor, and John Curtice, "Between First and Second Order: A Comparison of Voting Behaviour in European and Local Elections in Britain," *European Journal of Political Research* 35, no. 3 (1999): 389-414; David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1997* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 46-68, and 82-120; and David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1992* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), 10, 26, 69, and 155-210.

<sup>2</sup> Michael L. Rothschild, "Political Advertising: A Neglected Policy Issue in Marketing," *Journal of Marketing Research* 15, no. 1 (1978): 58-71; Dennis Kavanagh, *Election Campaigning: The New Marketing of Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 1-23; Margaret Scammell, *Designer Politics: How Elections Are Won* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), 118-164; Thomas M. Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 21-44; and Steve Hilton, "The Conservative Party's Advertising Strategy," in *Why the Labour Won the General Election of 1997*, ed. John Bartle, Ivor Crewe, and Brian Gosschalk (Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publisher, 1998), 45-52.

<sup>3</sup> Bob Franklin and John E. Richardson, "Priming the Parish Pump: Political Marketing and News Management in Local Political Communications Networks," *Journal of Political Marketing* 1, no. 1 (2002): 117-148.

<sup>4</sup> Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* 45-68; Pippa Norris, John Curtice, David Sanders, Margaret Scammell, and Holli A. Semetko, *On Message: Communicating the Campaign* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 1-52; and Cheng Hsiao-ling and Jr-Tsung Huang, "Economic Voting and Party Rotation: The Case of County Magistrates and City Mayors Elections in Taiwan," *Journal of Electoral Studies* 12, no. 2 (2005): 45-78.

<sup>5</sup> Ho Ching-ming, "A Preliminary Studies of Candidates Winning Factors Model [sic]: The 11<sup>th</sup> Mayor Election Case Study," *Journal of Electoral Studies* 1, no. 1 (1994): 111-146, and Emile C. J. Sheng, "Keys to County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan: From 1989 to 2005" *Journal of Electoral Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 1-18.

<sup>6</sup> James W. Ceaser and Daniel DiSalvo, "Midterm Elections, Partisan Context, and Political Leadership: The 2006 Elections and Party Alignment," *The Forum* 4, no. 3 (2006): 1-16,

can benefit from studies with an alternative perspective. According to Lees-Marshment,<sup>7</sup> campaigns at the local level are becoming more professionalized because more local-level candidates are seeking advice from specialized political consultants. Consequently, we propose that the literature on permanent campaigns can be enriched by examining local politicians' views on the influences of the president. In particular, we are interested in how political endorsements by senior colleagues during local elections, which previous studies generally have argued are a method for national-level leaders to build relationships with local-level candidates, are perceived by local politicians.

To contribute to the theory and practice of political marketing through permanent campaigning, this research examines a 2009 midterm election in Taiwan with an emphasis on political endorsement, meaning the endorsement of one politician made by another. This is narrower than the definitions of Grossman, Helpman, and Veer et al.,<sup>8</sup> which also include endorsements by celebrities and members of the social elite. The present study presumes that there are variations between endorsements by politicians and by other individuals that need to be addressed. Our findings make several significant contributions to the field of study. First, we address the existing gap in the literature with regard to the relationship between the coattail effect and celebrity endorsements. Second, this research extends our understanding of the relationship between midterm elections and permanent campaigning by revealing the challenges and opportunities associated with them. Third, the managerial implications of this research for politicians and campaign managers are highlighted. Before reviewing the relevant literature on political endorsement, the next section provides an essential summary of the context that will be examined in this work.

## Context of This Research

This study examines political endorsement activities during Taiwanese midterm elections for three reasons. First, Taiwanese politicians are characterized by a client-patron relationship that emphasizes building relations through the exchange of interests.<sup>9</sup> Second, midterm elections are particularly suitable for

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and Jeffrey E. Cohen, Michael A. Krassa, and John A. Hamman, "The Impact of Presidential Campaigning on Midterm U.S. Senate Elections," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 165-178.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications* (Oxon, England: Routledge, 2009), 173-174.

<sup>8</sup> Ekant Veer, Iida Becirovic, and Brett A. S. Martin, "If Kate Voted Conservative, Would You? The Role of Celebrity Endorsement in Political Party Advertising," *European Journal of Marketing* 44, nos. 3/4 (2010): 436-450, and Gene M. Grossman and Elhanan Helpman, "Competing for Endorsement," *American Economic Review* 89, no. 3 (1999): 501-524.

<sup>9</sup> Cheng Tzu-leong, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu Taiwan shehui* [Election campaign communication and Taiwan society] (Taipei: Yangzhi Wenhua, 2004), 15, and Sheng, "Keys to County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan: From 1989 to 2005," 1-18.

studying strategic maneuvers. The intensity of the maneuvers is higher than during nonelection periods, but the voters have not yet been fully polarized as in the case of general elections. The third reason is related to Taiwan's party culture, specifically, the way in which the roles of the president and the ruling party leader have not been fully differentiated.<sup>10</sup> This adds to the complexity between governing and campaigning, a key feature of permanent campaigns.<sup>11</sup> For instance, all Taiwanese presidents after democratization have been party leaders during at least a portion of their terms,<sup>12</sup> whereas to date few presidents of the United States have held both positions simultaneously. Furthermore, there is a tradition to hold Taiwanese party leaders responsible for the midterm election outcome, regardless of whether he or she is a candidate in the election.<sup>13</sup>

This study examines the 2009 election for county magistrates, county councilmen, and township governors. Prior to this election, President Ma Ying-jeou and his party, the Kuoimintang (KMT), were losing momentum. President Ma, his cabinet, and his party were immediately challenged after their presidential election victory in March 2008, due to media coverage of the dual citizenship of several officials or their being permanent residents of a foreign state.<sup>14</sup> The global financial crisis and typhoon *Morakot* in the summer of 2009 further shook the stability of the government, as reflected in by-election defeats in Miaoli and Yunlin.<sup>15</sup> During this difficult period for the KMT, the return

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<sup>10</sup> Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 183-231.

<sup>11</sup> Huge Helco, "Campaigning and Governing: A Conspectus," in *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*, ed. Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institute, 2000), 1-37.

<sup>12</sup> Lee Teng-hui: seventh, eighth, and ninth president during 1988-2000, and KMT chairman, 1988-2000; Chen Shui-bian: tenth and eleventh president during 2000-2008, and DPP chairman during 2000, 2002-2004, and 2005-2008; and Ma Ying-jeou: twelfth president, first term, 2008-2012, and KMT chairman from 2009 to the present.

<sup>13</sup> Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, 183-231, and Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 55-90, and 173-205.

<sup>14</sup> Loa Iok-sin, "CEC Revokes Diane Lee's Elected Status," *Taipei Times*, February 2, 2009, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2009/02/07/2003435516> (accessed August 1, 2009), and Ko Ko Shu-ling, Shih Hsiu-chuan, and Flora Wang, "Nationality Probe Lists Names," *Taipei Times*, June 10, 2008 <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2008/06/10/2003414337> (accessed August 1, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> John Vause, Pauline Chiou, and Mike Mount, "Taiwan's Leader Takes Blame for Typhoon Response," CNN, 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/08/16/taiwan.president.typhoon/index.html> (accessed August 17, 2009); Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Morakot—The Aftermath: KMT Legislators Slam Slow Response by the Government," *Taipei Times*, August 17, 2009, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/08/17/2003451354> (accessed August 17, 2009); Ko Shu-ling, "Morakot—The Aftermath: Analysis: Disaster Calls Ma's Leadership into Question: Analysts," *Taipei Times*, August 17, 2009, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/08/17/2003451352> (accessed August 17, 2009); Ko Shu-ling, "DPP's Liu Wins by Landslide in Yunlin," *Taipei Times*, September 27, 2009, <http://www.taipetimes.com>.

to party leadership of President Ma, who earlier had vowed not to become involved in party affairs, can be seen as an attempt to prevent further political damage and to secure a unified government for the remainder of his first term, placing the party in a stronger position with regard to implementing policies and winning re-election.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Ma's popularity and ability to engage in reforms was overshadowed by scandals during the KMT's Central Standing Committee election and the controversy over the relaxation of restrictions on American beef imports.<sup>17</sup> While the KMT was losing ground, the main opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was recovering under the new leadership of chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen.

The essential context of the focal election now presented, the next section provides a brief review of the literature on midterm elections and permanent campaigns.

## Literature Review

Uncertainty with regard to the effectiveness of short campaigns is one of the reasons why politicians choose to campaign permanently,<sup>18</sup> and endorsement is one strategy that may be adopted to maintain and extend a major office

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com/News/front/archives/2009/09/27/2003454582 (accessed August 17, 2010); and Editorial, "From Miaoli Blip to Da-an Boost," *Taipei Times*, March 27, 2009, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2009/03/27/2003439515> (accessed August 1, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Yang Yu-ching, "Ma Zongtong jianren dangzhuxi chengdan zeren: Zhongzhong tiaozhan cai kaishi" [President Ma takes on more responsibility as chairman: Challenges only begin], *Radio Taiwan International*, 2009, [http://news.rti.org.tw/index\\_newsContent.aspx?nid=208566](http://news.rti.org.tw/index_newsContent.aspx?nid=208566) (accessed August 1, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Ko Shu-ling and Mo Yan-chih, "Ma Rules Out New US Beef Negotiations," *Taipei Times*, October 30, 2009, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2009/10/30/2003457225> (accessed November 9, 2009), and Mo Yan-chih, "Feature: More Is Needed to End KMT's Bribery Culture," *Taipei Times*, October 25, 2009, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/10/25/2003456826> (accessed November 9, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* 21-68; Kavanagh, *Election Campaigning: The New Marketing of Politics*, 1-23; Huang and Chen, "Economic Voting and Party Rotation—The Case of County Magistrates and City Mayors Elections in Taiwan," 45-78; Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy, *Phenomenon of Political Marketing* (Hampshire, England: Macmillan, 1990), 1-16, 25-26, and 60-63; Larry Powell and Joseph Cowart, *Political Campaign Communication—Inside and Out* (Boston: Pearson Education, 2003), 69-88; Michael L. Rothschild, "Political Advertising: A Neglected Policy Issue in Marketing," *Journal of Marketing Research* 15, no. 1 (1978): 58-71; Sheng, "Keys to County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan: From 1989 to 2005," 1-18; Hilton, "The Conservative Party's Advertising Strategy," 45-52; Norman Peng and Chris Hackley, "Political Marketing Communication Planning in the UK and Taiwan: Comparative Insights from Leading Practitioners," *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* 25, no. 5 (2007): 483-498; Roy C. Fair, "Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 1 (2009): 55-72; James E. Campbell, "Explaining Presidential Losses in Midterm Congressional Elections," *Journal of Politics* 47, no. 4 (1985): 1140-1157; and Norris et al., *On Message: Communicating the Campaign*, 1-52.

holder's and/or party leader's influence between general elections.<sup>19</sup>

The origin of the permanent campaign can be traced back to Jimmy Carter's presidency, and the practice later spread to the United Kingdom and France.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the distinction between campaigning and governing has now become blurred in many democratic states. By definition, a permanent campaign refers to a politician's preparation for re-election long before the official campaign begins, essentially making campaigning a nonstop activity.<sup>21</sup> As a communication strategy, a permanent campaign can be advantageous, although it is a political strategy that is costly and complex, and requires the use of many resources.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the limitations of permanent campaigns, midterm elections provide a cost-effective opportunity for major office holders who are not running for office to prepare for their later re-election bid. First, major office holders can leverage the fact that part, if not all, of the cost will be borne by the local-level candidates who are running for office and/or by their affiliated party.<sup>23</sup> Second, major office holders can give favors to and build relationships with local-level candidates through their ability to stimulate voter involvement

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<sup>19</sup> John Bartle and Dylan Griffiths, "Social-Psychological, Economic and Marketing Models of Voting Behaviour Compared," in *The Idea of Political Marketing*, ed. Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy and Stephan C. Henneberg (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 19-38; Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* 21-68; Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy and Stephan C. Henneberg, "The Selling of the President 2004: A Marketing Perspective," *Journal of Public Affairs* 7 (2002): 249-268; O'Shaughnessy, *Phenomenon of Political Marketing*, 1-16, 25-26, and 60-63; Powell and Cowart, *Political Campaign Communication—Inside and Out*, 69-88; and Kavanagh, *Election Campaigning: The New Marketing of Politics*, 1-23.

<sup>20</sup> Darren G. Lilleker, *Key Concepts in Political Communication* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 143.

<sup>21</sup> Sidney Blumenthal, *The Permanent Campaign* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1982), 1-10; Helco, "Campaigning and Governing: A Conspectus," 1-37; Dan Nimmo, "The Permanent Campaign: Marketing as Governing Tool," 73-88; Charles O. Jones, "Preparing to Govern in 2001: Lesson from the Clinton Presidency," in *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*, ed. Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institute, 2000), 1-37; Catherine Needham, "Brand Leaders: Clinton, Blair and the Limitation of the Permanent Campaign," *Political Studies* 53 (2005): 343-361; Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, "Conclusion: The Permanent Campaign and the Future of American Democracy," in *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*, ed. Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 219-234; and Dunn K. Tenpas and James A. McCann, "Testing the Permanence of the Permanent Campaign," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (2007): 349-366.

<sup>22</sup> Judith S. Trent and Robert V. Friedenberg, *Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 191-398; Oliver H. M. Yau, "Chinese Cultural Values: Their Dimensions and Marketing Implications," *European Journal of Marketing* 22, no. 5 (1988): 44-57; Richard M. Perloff, *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and the Public in America* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1998), 263-416; Norris et al., *On Message: Communicating the Campaign*, 3-5, 293-302, and 319-345; and Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 173-174.

<sup>23</sup> Sheng, "Keys to County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan: From 1989 to 2005," 1-18.

and turnout.<sup>24</sup> Third, although midterm elections cannot be compared with national ones, the media and the public's attention are drawn to them to a relatively higher degree than to nonelection period and commercial marketing campaigns.<sup>25</sup> Last but not least, a midterm election is viewed as a vote of confidence in the incumbent and challengers. In other words, even if they wanted to, it is difficult for party leaders to be completely detached from the outcome of midterm elections.

Since it is unavoidable and sometimes advantageous to be involved in midterm elections, the best method of participation is thus a matter of some interest. Major office holders often choose to become involved in local-level elections by campaigning for a candidate.<sup>26</sup> In the United States, but also elsewhere, there are two reasons why the president may campaign for a local-level candidate: to try to replace a member of the opposition, or to strengthen links with a desirable candidate.<sup>27</sup> However, although the so-called coattail effect has been investigated by political scientists, historically the studies generally have been U.S.-based and concentrated on one question and two contexts: What is the percentage of votes or number of congressional seats that are swung during presidential and midterm elections because of the president's influence?

When presidential and congressional elections have been held simultaneously, which is the scenario that has attracted most attention in the literature, scholars across generations have undertaken empirical studies and agreed that presidential candidates have a positive influence on the voters' choice of congressional candidates.<sup>28</sup> As early as the 1950s, Miller<sup>29</sup> defined

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<sup>24</sup> Cheng, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu Taiwan shehui* [Election campaign communication and Taiwan society]; Cheng Tzu-leong, *Jingxuan wenxuan celue: Guanggao, chuanbo yu zheng zhi xing xiao* [Campaign propaganda strategy: Advertising, communication and political marketing] (Taipei: Yuenliu, 1998); and Campbell, "Explaining Presidential Losses in Midterm Congressional Elections," 1140-1157.

<sup>25</sup> Kavanagh, *Election Campaigning: The New Marketing of Politics*, 177-218, and Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy, "The Marketing of Political Marketing," in *The Idea of Political Marketing*, ed. Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy and Stephan C. Henneberg (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 209-220.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, "Explaining Presidential Losses in Midterm Congressional Elections," 1140-1157; Jeffrey E. Cohen, Michael A. Krassa, and John A. Hamman, "The Impact of Presidential Campaigning on Midterm U.S. Senate Elections," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 165-178; and Cheng, *Jingxuan wenxuan celue: Guanggao, chuanbo yu zheng zhi xing xiao* [Campaign propaganda strategy: Advertising, communication and political marketing].

<sup>27</sup> John A. Ferejohn and Randall L. Calvert, "Presidential Coattails in Historical Perspective," *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (1984): 127-146; Richard Born, "Reassessing the Decline of Presidential Coattails: U.S. House Elections from 1952-80," *Journal of Politics* 46, no. 1 (1984): 60-79; and James E. Campbell, "Predicting Seat Gains from Presidential Coattails," *American Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 1 (1986): 165-183.

<sup>28</sup> Fair, "Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations," 55-72; Ferejohn and Calvert, "Presidential Coattails in Historical Perspective," 127-146; Stan Kaplowitz, "Using Aggregate Voting Data to Measure Presidential Coat-tail Effect," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35, no. 3

the coattail effect as a “vote in which the congressional vote decision (as well as the presidential) is motivated by the appeal of the presidential candidate.” As for the president’s influence during midterm elections, scholars have fewer findings to offer; nonetheless, the affiliated party of nearly all modern American presidents has lost seats during midterm congressional elections.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, presidents generally have been perceived as a negative force during such elections. The explanations offered in the literature for the coattail effect are surprisingly limited and superficial, with common ones being economic reasons and voters’ inability to cast a straight ballot for president and congressperson.<sup>31</sup>

While both explanations from political science are rational, they were unable to provide further insights until additional perspectives from celebrity endorsement were added. In principle, commercial, celebrity, and political endorsements overlap,<sup>32</sup> because they all aim to create a decision shortcut for consumers/voters by providing an inspirational figure as a medium. According to Erdogan, McNair, and Smith,<sup>33</sup> a successful endorser often has one or more of the following attributes: status, authority, fame, physical attractiveness, and likeable qualities. The implementation of this image-focused strategy is very broad, and it can be found in recent British, French, and Taiwanese elections.<sup>34</sup>

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(1971): 415-419; William N. Miller, “Presidential Coat-tails—Myth and Methodology,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 19 (1955): 353-368; Herbert M. Kritzer and Robert B. Eubank, “Presidential Coattails Revisited: Partnership and Incumbency Effects,” *American Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (1979): 615-626; and John A. Meyers, “A Reformulation of the ‘Coattails’ Problem,” in *Publication Opinion and Congressional Elections*, ed. William N. McPhee and William A. Glaser (New York: Free Press, 1962), 52-64.

<sup>29</sup> Meyers, “A Reformulation of the ‘Coattails’ Problem,” 52-64, and Kaplowitz, “Using Aggregate Voting Data to Measure Presidential Coat-tail Effect,” 415-419.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, “Explaining Presidential Losses in Midterm Congressional Elections,” 1140-1157; James E. Piereson, “Presidential Popularity and Midterm Voting at Different Electoral Levels,” *American Journal of Political Science* 19, no. 4 (1975): 683-694; Cohen et al., “The Impact of Presidential Campaigning on Midterm U.S. Senate Elections,” 165-178; Ceaser and DiSalvo, “Midterm Elections, Partisan Context, and Political Leadership: The 2006 Elections and Party Alignment,” 1-16; and Fair, “Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations,” 55-72.

<sup>31</sup> Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* 21-68, and Campbell, “Explaining Presidential Losses in Midterm Congressional Elections,” 1140-1157.

<sup>32</sup> Grossman and Helpman, “Competing for Endorsement,” 501-524; and Veer et al., “If Kate Voted Conservative, Would You? The Role of Celebrity Endorsement in Political Party Advertising,” 436-450.

<sup>33</sup> Erdogan, “Celebrity Endorsement: A Literature Review,” 291-314; Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Marketing* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 95-129; and Gareth Smith, “The 2001 General Election: Factors Influencing the Brand Image of Political Parties and Their Leaders,” *Journal of Marketing Management* 17, nos. 9/10 (2001): 989-1006.

<sup>34</sup> Dominic Wring, *The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 137-150; Natalie T. Wood and Kenneth C. Herbst, “Political Star Power and Political Parties: Does Celebrity Endorsement Win First-Time Votes?” *Journal of Political Marketing* 6 (2007): 141-158; Norman Peng, Annie Huling Chen, and Chris Hackley, “Audiences’

On the one hand, this development can be explained by the Americanization of electioneering. On the other hand, this image-focused, candidate-centered strategy has not yet been discussed in association with permanent campaigning.

In the case of Taiwan, the use of endorsements during election campaigns is common.<sup>35</sup> Former President Lee Teng-hui's endorsement of Ma Ying-jeou during the 1998 Taipei mayoral election is perhaps the most talked about endorsement in recent years, as it not only demonstrated the effectiveness of political endorsement in Taiwan,<sup>36</sup> but also suggests that the endorser in this research, Ma Ying-jeou, should be aware of the usefulness of this strategy. However, although it is widely used, few studies on Taiwanese elections have examined the development and application of a permanent campaign strategy.

With the gaps in literature identified, the next section presents the methodology used to obtain our data.

## Research Methodology

To contribute to the implications of the theory and practice of political endorsement in Taiwan's midterm elections, this study examines feedback from local officials regarding endorsements that they received. To gather local officials' opinions, in-depth interviews were conducted, as this method is appropriate for situations when the sample is small and the data are rich.<sup>37</sup> Interviews with four KMT officials—two county magistrates and two city mayors—were conducted in order to develop local case studies. The sampling method was a combination of purposeful and referral sampling;<sup>38</sup> because there were few suitable respondents, such individuals were unlikely to consent to being interviewed without references, and we wanted to recruit only participants who had been endorsed before or who might be endorsed during the focal midterm 2009 election.

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Perspectives on Political Figures through Image-building Advertisements," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 1 (2008): 113-133; and Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 108-140, and 162-198.

<sup>35</sup> Cheng, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu Taiwan shehui* [Election campaign communication and Taiwan society], 15; id., *Jingxuan wenxuan celue: Guanggao, chuanbo yu zheng zhi xing xiao* [Campaign propaganda strategy: Advertising, communication and political marketing]; and Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, 183-231.

<sup>36</sup> Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, 183-231; Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 173-205; and Cheng, *Jingxuan chuanbo yu Taiwan shehui* [Election campaign communication and Taiwan society].

<sup>37</sup> Chris Hackley, *Doing Research Projects in Marketing, Management and Consumer Research* (London: Routledge, 2003), 79-80, and 121.

<sup>38</sup> Avi Shankar, Richard Elliott, and Christina Goulding, "Understanding Consumption: Contribution from a Narrative Perspective," *Journal of Marketing Management* 17, nos. 3/4 (2001): 420-453.

The interview arrangements were made by the officials' public relations offices, whose staff the authors already knew. Each interview lasted about two hours. After the interview, we asked the participants and their associates whether they could refer another candidate to us whom they thought would be interested in discussing endorsements during this midterm election. Of the four participants, two ran for re-election in 2009 (Interviewee A and Interviewee B), one was considering running for re-election in 2010 (Interviewee C), and one stepped down in 2009 (Interviewee D) because he had reached his term limit. This combination of varied circumstances offered an opportunity to make comparisons. The interviews took place during May 2009, either at the officials' offices or while the interviewees were commuting.

The interviews were conducted before the official campaign had begun. This timing was chosen because the interviewees might not have had the time or the inclination to discuss strategies once the official campaign had started. Second, we did not want to conduct the interviews after the election because of the potential for *post-hoc* effect. A set of open-ended interview questions was prepared; however, the researchers were aware of the need to be flexible, given that the context was unlike interviewing the general public.<sup>39</sup> Questions included items concerning the participant's background, previous political career, views on national-local relationships, the upcoming election, and future prospects. The transcripts were first divided based on themes and then examined using discourse analysis and an interpretive approach.<sup>40</sup> During interpretative analysis, transcripts were narrowed and organized into the following themes: (1) the official's experience; (2) the connection and rationalization of this experience with that of other officials and previous research, and (3) phenomena that had not yet been addressed in the literature.

## Research Findings

When discussing the upcoming midterm election and the role of President Ma, none of the interviewees disregarded the importance of the president or his endorsement. The immediate response was that he would be an influential factor in the pending local elections, which was anticipated by the researchers due to the sensitivity of the questions that were asked. However, after acknowledging the president's influence, the interviewees then changed their emphasis by listing their personal achievements and making claims about their

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<sup>39</sup> Chris Hackley, *Doing Research Projects in Marketing, Management and Consumer Research*, 79-80, and 121, and Phillip H. J. Davies, "Spies as Informants: Triangulation and the Interpretation of Elite Interview Data in the Study of the Intelligence and Security Services," *Politics* 21, no. 1 (2001): 73-80.

<sup>40</sup> Hackley, *Doing Research Projects in Marketing, Management and Consumer Research*, 79-80, and 121, and Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 640.

own popularity. Their rhetoric led to the interpretation that they did not feel that Ma's endorsement, although it could be valuable, was a priority at the time of the interview. In addition, although the interviewees acknowledged the potential positive impact if Ma decided to endorse them by undertaking a visit to their constituencies, they were concerned about a possible negative effect as well. Based on their concerns, a number of themes emerged.

First, the participants' relationships with the president and the central government were inevitably discussed when sharing their thoughts on political endorsement. It is of interest to note that all participants adopted the term "central government" as a substitute when expressing disagreement with President Ma. Moreover, based on their responses, this theme can be further divided into political structure and interpersonal factors. Regarding political structure, when asked about the central government's influence on local politics and elections, Interviewee B stated the following, referring to the consumption vouchers that already had been issued to boost spending and strengthen the economy:

People kept asking me to tell President Ma Ying-jeou to give out additional vouchers. It is understandable that they have these expectations... The central government has plans to increase domestic spending [but] it is the local governments that have to deliver... .

The interpretations of this statement are twofold. The first is that the central government needs to rely on local government cooperation to implement policies. At the same time, local politicians also require the central government's support to maintain economic prosperity, a key factor in the outcome of elections.<sup>41</sup> Interviewee D voiced a similar opinion when he was about to step down after his second term. He indicated that the actual execution of policies must be done at the regional level, regardless of how visionary President Ma might be as a leader. This view of local politics was also supported by Interviewee A, who used the 2010 Taipei International Floral Expo as an example. Interviewee A's constituency is a significant exporter of flowers and agricultural goods. In his opinion, although Taipei City is more suitable than other municipalities for hosting international events, the central government should have planned to purchase the necessary flowers from domestic sources, rather than from international suppliers.

Money cannot all go to foreign farmers. Any magistrate inevitably will need to protect the interests of his or her

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<sup>41</sup> Holbrook, *Do Campaign Matter?* 45-68.

constituency. If President Ma wants to be re-elected, then buying flora from aboard will seriously hinder his prospects.

Interviewee A's reference to President Ma's re-election is significant under Taiwan's client-patron relationship. Local politicians consider issues mainly on a local level. In contrast, the central government must evaluate the potential impacts of its policies on relationships with foreign states, although local government requests cannot be ignored because local politicians are key figures who can mobilize supporters during national campaigns. Differing aims and perspectives between local and central governments mean that political endorsements must be undertaken with caution. According to the participants, they were aware that their constituencies' interests did not always align with national interests; therefore, it was sometimes advantageous for them to keep some distance from the central government.

The potential conflict of interest between local and state governments can be an obstacle to national politicians who would like to adopt a permanent campaign strategy by collaborating with local-level candidates; however, this also can be affected by issues related to the candidate and endorser's interpersonal relationship. Interviewee C, who succeeded President Ma in one of his previous posts, discussed the adjustment period during his first year in office. In his experience, following such a popular individual placed considerable pressure on him, especially when comparisons between the two men often were made by the public, media, and officials within the city government itself. Interviewee D echoed this view, as he started his first term while President Ma was still the mayor of the capital, and often felt that his constituency was being compared to the capital city in every aspect. Although we need to be cautious when interpreting the opinions of these four political figures and making generalizations about them, given (1) that President Ma frequently has been perceived as a charismatic figure, (2) that all the interviewees had worked with the president previously, and (3) that the interviewees did not want to be perceived as weak in their constituencies, the hesitation expressed by the local politicians is explored. Their transcripts illustrate that a popular peer's/predecessor's endorsement can be as tricky as an endorsement coming from a less popular source, because a popular endorser can marginalize the candidate who is actually running in the election. This analysis is grounded in the literature on commercial endorsement. In Carroll's<sup>42</sup> work, she compared the impact of using a celebrity or lesser known model, and suggested that although a celebrity's endorsement might be effective in terms of drawing the public's attention, it also could overshadow the actual brand and product being sold.

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<sup>42</sup> Angela Carroll, "Brand Communication in Fashion Categories Using Celebrity Endorsement," *Journal of Brand Management* 17, no. 2 (2009): 146-158.

Related to the endorser's popularity, the participants were concerned about President Ma's and the KMT's unpopularity, which is this study's second theme. As stated earlier, at the time of the interviews, President Ma and the KMT were facing both domestic and international crises, while the interviewees were enjoying a relatively comfortable lead in the polls. When asked if Ma's falling popularity was going to influence her re-election, Interviewee B's reply was "of course." Considering this mayor's response and the fact that incumbents are generally more conservative than national candidates with regard to their campaign strategies,<sup>43</sup> it can be expected that they would prefer to safeguard the status quo.

In other words, even if a president's endorsement could generate media attention and arouse voter interest, as documented in election studies conducted in Western contexts, these benefits were not the top priorities for this study's participants at the time of the interviews. Instead, President Ma's endorsement only added to the incumbent candidates' uncertainty. For instance, they did not know how the media would cover Ma's visit, how the voters would perceive the visit, or whether the president's endorsement would attract unnecessary attention to the election. It is worth noting that all of the officials, except for Interviewee C, who was not running in the focal election, mentioned their high public approval rating in a national survey conducted by Global View<sup>44</sup> in 2008, as supporting evidence of their good performance.

We have several interpretations of the local officials' emphasis on their own good performance. First, it was a political speech to reaffirm for the audience that they were confident about their election prospects. Second, this behavior could have been a result of the interviewees' concern that the voters might not cast their votes based on the candidates' performance and accomplishments, but instead on the performance of national politicians (e.g., the performance of the president or of the opposition leader). In addition, it is likely that our participants believed both favorable and unfavorable attributes could be transferred to them, depending on the popularity of their endorser. Based on this assumption, our participants' attitudes can be explained by the fact that the president's popularity was low at the time of the interviews. By accepting the possibility that President Ma could be a negative influence, we propose our third interpretation of the participants' responses, which was to divert voters' attention. In other words, by highlighting their own good performance, our participants might have believed that they would have been less likely to have been affected by Ma and his fluctuations in popularity. Based on the above analysis, this research highlights another issue surrounding the strategy of

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<sup>43</sup> Trent and Friedenberg, *Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices*, 72-118.

<sup>44</sup> In the national survey on public satisfaction by Global View, July 2008, Interviewee D was given a rating of five of five stars, Interviewee A and Interviewee B received four of five stars, while Interviewee C received three stars.

permanent campaigning which previous literature rarely has discussed.

To address the candidate's concerns, an endorser who is adopting a permanent campaign strategy must evaluate the endorsement context, which is the third theme discussed by the interviewees. In their view, the context of the endorsements and how the endorsements would appear to local voters were important. For instance, Interviewee B disclosed a tour that she gave to President Ma when they attended a local musical event sponsored by and held in her city. Without a doubt, she was enthusiastic because the event was part of her pledge to promote educational reform; however, the research also suggests that she was delighted because the president was a polite guest who made her appear to be a capable host and mayor. Similarly, Interviewee A described a disaster relief mission for which he acted as the deputy officer-in-charge. At one point during the mission, he confronted a central government bureaucrat in a fight for the resources needed to alleviate the situation. He thought that this was a significant moment in his political career because he had demonstrated to his superior officer (then the magistrate), his staff, and the public within this constituency that he was not afraid to speak out to protect the public interest. It should be noted that this incident was before Ma's presidency; however, in the view of the interviewees, appearing to be independent from the central government is a favorable attribute for political hopefuls in Taiwan. Although the other two campaigning participants did not disclose any similar specific experiences, the overall consensus on the purpose of endorsement was that it elevated them to the national level and/or allowed them to be perceived as someone who could act as an advocate for local interests.

The last theme that emerged from the interviews was about the upcoming election. When asked about it, the interviewer expected the candidates to discuss the ethnic divide on the island, which many scholars believed had polarized voters in Taiwan,<sup>45</sup> especially for the races of the two candidates from constituencies in which the previous incumbents had been DPP members, and the third constituency, where there was an open office. Although confident, the interviewees' replies were cautious and still focused on local politics. Interviewee B provided the following comments:

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<sup>45</sup> Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, 3-7, 13-15, 94-96, 184, and 240-242; Stephane Corcuff, *Fenghe rinuan: Taiwan waishengren yu guojia rentong de zhuanbian* [Light wind, warm sun: Taiwan's mainlanders and the transition of national identity] (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2004); You Ying-lung, "Taiwan zuqun rengtong: Zhengzhi xinli fenxi" [Ethnic identity in Taiwan: A politico-psychological analysis], *Taiwan Zhengzhi Xuekan* [Taiwan Political Science Review] 1 (1996): 41-84; Shyu Huo-yan, "Taiwan xuanmin de guojia rentong yu dangpai toupiao xingwei: 1991 zhi 1993 nian jian de shizheng yanjiu jiegou" [National identity and partisan voting behavior in Taiwan: Evidence from survey data between 1991 and 1993], *Taiwan Zhengzhi Xuekan* [Taiwanese Political Science Review] 1 (1996): 85-127; and Chang Ching-ching, "Party Bias in Political-Advertising Processing: Results from an Experiment Involving the 1998 Taipei Mayoral Election," *Journal of Advertising* 32, no. 2 (2003): 55-67.

I am not thinking much [about re-election]. Just taking one step at a time at my own pace... . I just hope conflicts between parties can come to an end and ethnic issues won't be invoked... . I feel what I do here gains support regardless of partisanship... . When my family started serving as local representatives, we helped everyone regardless of their partisanship. There are people we know who won't vote for us even though we have repeatedly helped them in the past, but we still help them. Hopefully, one day they will know we are sincere about them and this place. Some of them actually have now changed affiliations.

When asked about re-election and the possibility of being offered a cabinet post by President Ma, Interviewee A answered:

When my grandfather was a local representative, he used to ride his bike around the village to help people to sort out their issues. People respected him, even though some did not vote for him. My plans are for the time to come... . I will choose to stay here in the next four years because it is more important to do something than to be someone [in the cabinet]. Being a responsible magistrate is to bring honor to my ancestors and children... . I will continue to serve this constituency with gratitude, if given the opportunity.

Both replies can be regarded as public speeches; nonetheless, they underline three critical issues regarding local elections in a Taiwanese context. First, it is known that both candidates have deep family connections with their constituencies, going back several generations. Given their popularity at the time of the interviews and their local connections, it is not surprising that they believed that local issues should be decided by local people, rather than by outsiders. Second, given that some of Taiwan's southern constituencies have traditionally been more pro-DPP than pro-KMT, a strong KMT presence, including President Ma's endorsement, might have rallied the opposition and this could have been a disadvantage for the interviewees. Third, scholars' observations regarding the polarization of Taiwanese voters are valid; however, the voter base also needs some stimulus when the election is a local one. This part of the analysis provides additional insight into our earlier interpretation. Given the circumstances, the interviewees were not concerned just about Ma's or the KMT's declining popularity, but also about the overall uncertainty of the effect Ma and the party might have on their campaigns.

Interviewee D believed that his successor, to be selected from a pool of several KMT politicians who had expressed an interest in running, would have a fairly easy job—as long as the primary was a fair one—due to his contributions

to this constituency and because the district was a KMT stronghold. He also mentioned several projects of which he was proud; these could be another source of endorsement in this open-office election, because his previous performance was tangible, and thus more credible with voters than the track record of the political opposition. When asked to summarize President Ma's impact, Interviewee D gently pointed out that Ma and his team currently were weak in both their prioritization and implementation of their stated political and electoral agendas. This view again highlighted that candidates in local elections depend more on regional efforts than on hope for endorsements from external sources.

## **Implications and Discussion**

Based on the analysis of the narratives provided by Taiwanese local politicians prior to the 2009 midterm elections, it can be confirmed that a permanent campaign is not a unilateral effort but rather a joint one, with evaluations and decisions made by both sides. The purpose of this section is to connect our findings to the literature on the practice of endorsement, coattail effect, and permanent campaigning. First, this study narrows the conceptual gap between coattail effect and celebrity endorsements by examining the scenario when one politician is endorsed by another. As stated earlier, most American-based coattail effect studies have emphasized the president's influence on election outcomes, without much elaboration on the details of execution, whereas celebrity endorsements in the marketing literature tend to include multiple scenarios under one concept. This study addresses the strategy of political endorsement, which we argue will be more prominent when more politicians want to campaign permanently in a cost-effective fashion.

Second, based on the interviewees' transcripts, we highlight the obstacles that arise when adopting the strategy of permanent campaigning, which have not been fully addressed in previous literature. The potential conflict of interest between state and local politicians is one structural issue that neither endorser nor endorsee can resolve with ease. On the one hand, local politicians have to demonstrate that they can be advocates for local interests, otherwise they may not be able to win the election. On the other hand, the president or premier must consider the impact of his decisions from both national and international perspectives. For this reason, even though client-patron relationships have been used to describe Taiwan's political environment, it is still sometimes advantageous for local politicians, especially incumbents, to maintain a distance from the central government. In addition, the local politicians interviewed in this work were all aware that elections had to be fought by the candidates themselves, and thus that they could not rely on the endorsement of a senior figure or on subsidies from their party. However, despite these difficulties, endorsement as a strategy still has a role in elections, as all the participants recognized President Ma's potential impact on the voters. As they

suggested, an unpopular president and ruling party would certainly negatively affect their electoral performance, but a popular president could marginalize them and/or elevate their campaigns to the national level. In the former case, the voters might perceive the candidate as weak or unable to fight for local interests. In the latter, the public's vote would not be based on the candidates' performance or agenda, but instead on the issue of partisanship, which placed the KMT at a disadvantage. For these reasons, contrary to some studies on endorsement which emphasize the senior politician's opportunity to establish a closer relationship with a local-level candidate by providing support, and thus a boost in the polls, the interviewees in our research believed that they were giving President Ma an opportunity to reach out to voters and gain media exposure because of their popularity, local connections, and political strength. These arguments may need further examination and can be context-dependent, but because the interviewees were experienced politicians, local candidates should still carefully evaluate the potential impact of a major office holder's endorsement before allowing him or her to join their campaigns. Because more local politicians than previously have their own campaign consultants,<sup>46</sup> this evaluation can be made before the campaign begins.

As for senior politicians and their campaign managers, although there are limitations associated with implementing a permanent campaign strategy through endorsing a local-level candidate, they should not automatically forgo the opportunity to gain extra publicity. Instead, a major office holder who plans to conduct a permanent campaign through offering endorsements in local-level elections must first identify the constituencies in which he or she can be effective by reviewing different regions' relationships with the central government. The second variable that needs to be evaluated is the potential endorsee's local connections and political strength. Other things being equal, a candidate who is from the constituency will perceive an endorsement rather differently than one who is less known by the local voters. As the interviewees who had grown up in their constituencies suggested, local affairs, including elections, should be dealt with locally. Being endorsed by an outsider is a sign of weakness that could lead voters to doubt the candidate's ability to lobby for local interests. Lastly, while a weak endorser is less likely to be welcome than a popular one, candidates are also worried about a popular political figure's hijacking their campaigns. For this reason, it is important for the endorser to establish him/herself as someone who is genuinely interested in promoting the candidate rather than using a local-level campaign as an opportunity for self-promotion.

The potential implications of this study now presented, the next section provides the limitations of this research, which offer some directions for future studies.

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<sup>46</sup> Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 173-174.

## Limitations, Future Studies, and Conclusions

Because the design of this research was based on in-depth interviews with four politicians, there are several limitations of this study that need to be addressed in future works. The most prominent issue is related to the characteristics of the interviewees. As discussed by several researchers,<sup>47</sup> interviews are an exchange between the interviewer and interviewee. In the case of this research, because of the scarcity of interviewees and the sensitivity of the subject,<sup>48</sup> sometimes the respondents avoided questions that they were reluctant to answer. When this occurred, it was difficult for the interviewer to further probe these matters due to the unequal status between the president and the interviewees. This led to partial or sometimes incomplete answers, of which Davies<sup>49</sup> warned in his work. Consequently, interpretations based on shared knowledge and taken-for-granted assumptions were made.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, limited alternatives are available for future researchers, unless they adopt a framework that involves multiple sources, such as interviews, memoirs, and other documents.

Another limitation of this research is that it does not include viewpoints from DPP candidates. Although we contacted several DPP candidates during fieldwork, none of them agreed to take part in this study. Based on the literature regarding the DPP's party culture and structure,<sup>51</sup> we propose that DPP politicians should be studied more closely in the future. In particular, we suggest that DPP politicians are likely to make more creative use of the endorsement strategy, place a stronger emphasis on their preferred endorser and format, and attach more meaning to this strategic maneuver than their counterparts. This is because the DPP has been more innovative, in general, than other political parties in Taiwan regarding its campaign strategies. Moreover, due to the limited resources that DPP candidates had during the party's early days,

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<sup>47</sup> Peter Reason, "Three Approaches to Participative Inquiry," in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 324-339, and Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "Interviewing: The Art of Science," in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 361-376.

<sup>48</sup> Susan A. Ostrander, "Surely You're Not in This Just to Be Helpful? Access, Rapport, and Interviews in Three Studies of Elites," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22, no. 1 (1983): 7-27, and Robert Phillips, "The Politics of History: Some Methodological and Ethical Dilemmas in Elite-based Research," *British Educational Research Journal* 24, no. 1 (1998): 5-19.

<sup>49</sup> Davies, "Spies as Informants: Triangulation and the Interpretation of Elite Interview Data in the Study of the Intelligence and Security Services," 73-80.

<sup>50</sup> Hackley, *Doing Research Projects in Marketing, Management and Consumer Research*, 79-80, and 121.

<sup>51</sup> Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001); Cheng, *Jingxuan wenxuan celue: Guanggao, chuanbo yu zheng zhi xing xiao* [Campaign propaganda strategy: Advertising, communication and political marketing]; and Peng and Hackley, "Political Marketing Communication Planning in the UK and Taiwan: Comparative Insights from Leading Practitioners," 483-498.

endorsing local-level candidates has long been part of the DPP's culture. The influence of factions within the DPP can make endorsement decisions during elections more complicated, however, than for counterparts. For these reasons, future studies can further our current understanding of Taiwanese politicians' endorsement behavior by examining these issues.

Last but not least, although local visits have long been an important part of Taiwanese election campaigns and were used by Ma Ying-jeou during his Long-Stay program prior to the 2008 presidential campaign, financial endorsements from the party can be equally important. Future studies should compare different endorsement formats to further explore their usage and effectiveness.

Even though there are limitations to this work, it is undeniable that today's political campaigns are essentially continuous, regardless of whether there is an upcoming election. This research thus offers insights into regional politics and its relationship to the national government, which the existing literature has not yet fully explored.<sup>52</sup> By focusing on the 2009 Taiwanese midterm elections, we examined the priorities and dilemmas of local officials when evaluating the potential impact of gaining the endorsement of the president. This research makes the following contributions regarding the concept of permanent campaigns. First, the existing gap in the literature with regard to the relationship between the coattail effect and celebrity endorsements has been narrowed. Second, this research extends our understanding of the relationship between midterm elections and permanent campaigning by revealing the challenges and opportunities associated with them. Third, a strategic proposition regarding the use of endorsement has been suggested to politicians and campaign managers.

## Epilogue

Despite Ma's efforts, the KMT lost two seats and received a lower percentage of the popular vote compared to the previous election. Those two seats were captured by the DPP and an independent candidate.<sup>53</sup> The KMT's defeat by an independent candidate in Hualien County was the most significant result, because it highlighted the potential detachment between voters and central and local governments.

Within two weeks after the 2009 midterm elections, King Pu-tsung, a former top aide of President Ma Ying-jeou, took over as the KMT's secretary-

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<sup>52</sup> Franklin and Richardson, "Priming the Parish Pump: Political Marketing and News Management in Local Political Communications Networks," 117-148.

<sup>53</sup> Central Election Commission, "The 2009 Election of County Magistrates, County Councilmen and Township Governors," *Central Election Commission*, 2009, [http://210.69.23.140/menu\\_main.asp?titlec=第%2016%20屆%20縣\(市\)長選舉&pass1=F2009A0000000000aaa%20%20&pdf=F200900](http://210.69.23.140/menu_main.asp?titlec=第%2016%20屆%20縣(市)長選舉&pass1=F2009A0000000000aaa%20%20&pdf=F200900) (accessed December 5, 2009).

general. Because King is renowned as a campaign strategist, this appointment was seen as Ma's attempt to improve the party's public image,<sup>54</sup> prepare for the midterm elections in 2010, and subsequently get ready for Ma's 2012 re-election bid. In order to build a successful permanent campaign, however, Ma Ying-jeou will have to improve his communications with the public, local officials, and legislators regarding his strategies and policies. Of considerable interest to scholars examining Taiwan's continued process of democratization will be how Ma approaches subsequent elections, the political marketing techniques that he adopts, and how local candidates perceive Ma and his actions.

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<sup>54</sup> Mo Yan-chih, "King Pu-tsung Starts KMT Role," *Taipei Times*, December 17, 2009, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/12/17/2003461175> (accessed November 9, 2010).