# Internet Election Campaigns in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

Edited by
Shoko Kiyohara, Kazuhiro Maeshima, Diana Owen


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Shoko Kiyohara • Kazuhiro Maeshima
Diana Owen
Editors

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*Editors*
Shoko Kiyohara
School of Information and Communication
Meiji University
Tokyo, Japan

Kazuhiro Maeshima
Department of Global Studies
Sophia University
Tokyo, Japan

Diana Owen
Communication, Culture, and Technology
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C., USA

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# Preface

Research comparing campaigns in other countries against an American standard has been common since the late 1970s. American political campaigning became associated with an intensified role for mass media, especially television. This trend coincided with the declining influence of political parties, the professionalization of campaign personnel and organizations, increased prominence of commercial marketing techniques, rising costs of campaigns, and personalization of political appeals. Internet election campaigns began in the USA in the late 1990s prior to taking hold elsewhere (Bimber and Davis 2003; Foot and Schneider 2006). The American campaign further evolved with each passing election in the Internet era, as new technologies were used by candidate committees, political organizations, parties, journalists, and voters. The 2008 presidential election was a landmark in the American context as social media rose to prominence (Owen 2015).

Political communication research examining the impact of the Internet and digital media on election campaigns is robust in many countries. Most previous studies have been strongly influenced by the American case. Scholars have noted that some of these trends, such as the rise of political professionals and the use of market-driven campaign strategies, are apparent outside of the USA (Scammell 1997; Mergel 2009). This notion of the "Americanization" of electoral campaigns may be partially a consequence of a structural change in the relationship between politics and citizens worldwide, including in East Asia. At the same time, the traditional role of candidate selection by political parties in Asian democracies has

been changing. Furthermore, voter cynicism seems to be increasing in Asia as it is in the USA (Krauss et al. 2016).

Countries have experienced different patterns of online political development, and Internet election campaigns have unique, country-specific characteristics. Empirical research has established the importance of comparative studies on Internet elections. The Internet and Elections Project, which culminated in a volume edited by Kluver et al. (2007), is a noteworthy effort that examines how political actors and web producers from countries across the globe engage in online elections. Ward et al. (2008) highlight the importance of contextual factors when comparing Internet campaigns in 12 countries. Contextual factors are defined as characteristics of the political party system, regulation of electoral processes, political culture, the roles of old and new media in election campaigns, and Internet access levels. Anstead and Chadwick (2009) discuss the characteristics of Internet elections in the USA and UK from an institutional approach that revealed their similarities and differences based on political parties and political norms. Additionally, Vaccari (2013) conducted a comparative study of online political practices in seven Western democracies. He focuses on the characteristics of party and candidate websites and suggests that contextual factors such as the political and media environments should not be overlooked when comparing a diverse set of countries. An edited volume by Grofman et al. (2014) examines the Internet in elections and social movements from an e-democracy perspective.

Research examining Asian democracies, especially in conjunction with the United States, is rare. There are, however, some noteworthy investigations. Schafferer (2006) explores the question of whether there is a distinctly Asian style of electoral campaigning by analyzing of contextual factors. He concludes that there is no evidence of movement toward a standardization of campaign practices as suggested by the notion of the "Americanization" of campaigning in East and Southeast Asia. While not focused specifically on elections, a volume edited by Wei (2016) examines the ways in which the revolution in mobile technology in Asia has contributed to a rise in citizen engagement.

Our primary concern is to examine whether or not the "Americanization" of elections is present in East Asian democracies. The research question addressed by this volume is: Is there evidence of the "Americanization" of elections in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan? We hypothesize that distinct characteristics of the media and electoral contexts in East Asian democracies preclude wholesale acceptance of the Americanization hypothesis.

Stronger regulation of election systems and shorter election periods in Japan, for instance, exemplify Japanese uniqueness. Japan has been slower to develop Internet election campaigns compared with the USA, South Korea, and Taiwan. At the same time, some aspects of elections in the Internet era that are present in the USA are evident in Asian democracies. For example, voters' use of digital media to engage in campaigns is on the rise in Taiwan as it is in the USA.

The first section of the volume describes the political, institutional, and media backdrops shaping the Internet election in the USA and the three East Asian democracies—Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan—examined in this work. In the first chapter, Kazuhiro Maeshima identifies the characteristics of election campaigns in the USA that form the basis of the assumptions of "Americanization." Diana Owen (Chap. 2) focuses on the media-related aspects of American elections, tracing the evolution of the use of digital technology in campaigns from the early 1990s to the present. She identifies characteristics of American campaigns that have carried over from the mass media era as well as new traits that have emerged in the digital age. The volume also highlights how Internet election campaigns have developed in three East Asian democracies compared to the USA from an institutional and contextual perspective. Shoko Kiyohara (Chap. 3) explores how institutional differences, such as the role of political parties and the regulation of electoral systems, have affected the development of Internet election campaigns in the countries under study. While Japan is a parliamentary system, the USA and South Korea are presidential systems. On the other hand, Taiwan is a semi-presidential system which has a president along with a parliamentary system. The role of the president in each of the USA, South Korea, and Taiwan is quite different. Kiyohara examines how the electoral systems in each country are regulated with regard to issues, such as online paid advertisements. Morihiro Ogasahara (Chap. 4) observes how media environments in the East Asian democracies compare with the USA. He takes into account factors, such as media markets and Internet penetration rates.

The second section of the volume presents case studies of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan that reveal ways in which digital technology is used in election campaigns. Case studies are presented of digital developments in the three countries from 2012 to 2016. The year 2012 is a good reference point since major elections were held in many countries in that year. Between 2012 and 2016, there were important elections, including some local elections in the USA, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Established

trends in American campaigns continued to track. For instance, political fundraising in the 2014 US midterm elections reached new heights for off-year contests; fundraising in the 2016 presidential contest also set records as around $2 billion was raised by the two major party candidates (Federal Election Commission 2017). In Japan, after a long debate in the Diet, the Public Official Election Law was partially reformed to allow political parties, individual candidates, and voters to use the Internet and social media for the purpose of election campaigning in 2013. This was an obvious landmark in the history of Japan's electoral system.

Tetsuro Kobayashi (Chap. 5) studies the 2013 upper house election in Japan and tests the causal effect of the use of social media on political efficacy and voting. In South Korea, using smartphones has been a key characteristic in election campaigning since 2012. Hongchun Lee (Chap. 6) shows that there were many local elections being contested at the same time in 2014, and many candidates tried to use smartphone applications for the first time for their campaigns. During the 2014 Taipei mayoral election, use of the Internet was determined to have greatly affected the election result. Boyu Chen (Chap. 7) explains the mobilization mechanism underpinning citizen-initiated campaigning in the Taiwan. The authors have interdisciplinary academic backgrounds, and the case studies employ a variety of quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Morse 2003). In the final chapter, Kiyohara, Owen, and Maeshima examine the extent to which the "Americanization" hypothesis holds in the three East Asian democracies. They draw upon the case studies to illustrate how trends in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are consistent with and divergent from the American situation.

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Tokyo — Shoko Kiyohara
Tokyo — Kazuhiro Maeshima,
Washington, DC — Diana Owen

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CHAPTER 1

# The Internet and the Americanization of Electoral Campaigning in East Asian Democracies

*Kazuhiro Maeshima*

This chapter explores how the Internet has transformed electoral campaigns by comparing the cases of four advanced democracies (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States). It focuses on how the three East Asian democracies have adopted certain electoral campaign elements and strategies first developed in the United States. This has effected the emergence of what has been called an "Americanization" of various characteristics of campaigning in these countries. Major examples include the instrumental relationship between politics and the media and the professionalization of election campaigns, which happened much less in the Asian democracies before the Internet.

Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have taken different paths to democracy. Japan has had a considerable history of democratic politics since the end of World War II, although long one-party rule by the Liberal Democratic Party might have helped perpetuate a fairly idiosyncratic electoral culture. Korean democracy was intermittent and troubled at best

K. Maeshima (✉)
Department of Global Studies, Sophia University,
7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554, Japan



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until the late 1980s. Taiwan was viewed as an authoritarian regime at least until the early 1990s.

At present, however, the peoples of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan all enjoy democracy, and elections have become a special occasion for their political engagement as in other representative democracies. Regarding elections, an academic argument exists that similar characteristics of campaigning and electoral mobilization have permeated throughout the democracies in the world, and that styles are gradually becoming akin to that in the United States.

Elections in Asia may not be any exception. The Americanization of elections in these countries is brought about partly by the transfusion to Asian political contexts of modern ideas about electioneering and democratic political participation. It is a relative term, referring in practice to the hybridization of the US style of electoral politics and the indigenous way of conducting elections in each country. The pace of adaptation has been accelerated by electoral deregulation, especially deregulation of the scope of Internet use in campaigning.

There is a good chance that the advent of the Internet may promote the Americanization of election campaigns in other democracies. This is because Internet penetration in these countries or the state of the art of Internet use in elections should lead to a considerable leap forward in the sophistication of electioneering. Although South Korea and Taiwan do not have long electoral histories, the advent of the Internet there would in this interpretation be expected to quicken the pace of democratization there too.

However, there is not much research literature on the electoral impact of the Internet and Americanization within the East Asian context, especially literature in English. Many of the authors whose work is included in this book explored the electoral impact of the Internet in Japan and South Korea in our two previous books written in Japanese (Kiyohara and Maeshima 2011, 2013). We also investigated certain aspects of Americanization in Japan and Korea (Kiyohara and Maeshima 2013). Our next logical step is to continue this effort in an English publication—this book.

In addition, this chapter also considers the present and future potential of the emerging Internet-based way of campaigning in East Asian democracies by analyzing the truth of the claim that the Internet holds the promise of strengthening the public sphere, the realm in which well-thought-out public opinions are formed. Finally, I synthesize these discussions and argue for the importance of comparing online electioneering across the Pacific.

Before we begin, I would like to stress two points that are important for this chapter as well as for this book as a whole. First, the term "Americanization" needs some further clarification. Several scholars, especially in Europe, suggest that "modernization and professionalization" of campaigns is more proper usage than "Americanization" (Esser and Pfetsch 2004; Negrine et al. 2007). I don't disagree with their arguments; but I feel more comfortable using the term "Americanization," because in the countries under discussion the changes we are considering encompass more than modernization and professionalization—they also reflect the distinction between candidate-centered or party-centered campaign styles, for example, and perhaps most importantly the cynicism that may be heightened by the wide use of social media in campaign strategies.

Second, campaign styles must be modernized and professionalized not only in the United States but also in Europe and Asia. There are several previous studies comparing campaigning in the United States and European countries (Blumler and Gurevitch 1991, 1995, 2001; Semetko et al. 1991; Swanson and Mancini 1996; Hallin and Mancini 2004). However, there is not much literature comparing the cases of East Asian democracies (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) to that of the United States. As discussed in detail later, the three East Asian democracies have many things in common, which is another reason why this book focuses on them.

## The Americanization of Electoral Campaigns in Countries Other Than the United States

I should first discuss the basic hypothesis that election campaign communication in countries other than the United States is undergoing "Americanization." The hypothesis suggests that certain campaign elements and strategies developed in the United State are being adopted by other countries. It rests on three basic assumptions: that transparency in campaigning has become a universal democratic norm, that campaign strategies need to be modernized by utilizing innovative ideas and new technologies, and that the content of the news has been increasingly more internationalized.

First, the openness and transparency of the election environment in the United States still make it an excellent, if perhaps not ideal, model for democratic and civic engagement. The United States is the oldest and

most eminent continuous democracy in the world. Democracy, however, was invented in ancient Greece and we do not see modern Greece as a shining pillar of democracy, whereas America appears to be an exemplary democratic nation.

The media is the test bed of the maturity of a democracy, and freedom of the press is a sacred norm in American society, where (like in many developed countries) the media conveys election news without government censorship. Thus, if a nation has a mature democracy, a high degree of economic success, and its press enjoys considerable freedom, its citizens may demand more transparent elections with more room for civic engagement, as in the United States. In this regard, too, since the media plays a crucial role in electoral transparency, the media-centered American election style is highly respected in some parts of the world.

Second, improving electoral competitiveness against rivals will be a perennial matter of concern for political candidates everywhere. Simple and effective strategies for doing so will thus be valued. American elections are the best source of such strategies because the United States has arguably the most advanced campaign industry and is perpetually updating these tactics (Harfoush 2009; Issenberg 2012).

Third, the American election style may be familiar, and hence emulated, worldwide due to the global attention given to American political and electoral news, partly because of the dominant international role of the United States and partially because of the propensity of US elections for producing newsworthy spectacles. As our world has become smaller with every new advance in communications technology, such as the Internet, the pace of globalization of elements of US elections has been accelerated. Information on American campaigns, campaigning techniques, and their outcomes is widely available globally, which has also helped spur the spread of American-style electioneering.

All these factors have promoted Americanization of election campaign communication in other countries. However, one important note of caution is that none of these factors is static; during the past 50 years, there have been sizable changes, not only in American campaign styles but also in the political culture of and degree of citizen engagement in the United States. These changes have picked up steam with the advent and rapid growth of the Internet and online social media. Americanization of elections in other democracies may bring those changes to their political environments as well.

However, we must be attentive to the possibility of local transformations of electoral campaigning in the same direction as simultaneous developments in the United States due to shared underlying conditions, a situation which might make it difficult to speak of any "influence" of the US system or to identify to what extent "Americanization" has occurred (Negrine et al. 2007; Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 1996; Negrine 2008). It is also very likely that conditions in general will not always push elections into an "American" mold, as, because of the rapidly changing nature of campaign realities, candidates or political parties in a country may attempt to innovate and apply campaign strategies quite differently from those in the United States.

Another important feature of Americanization is the modernization of election campaigns worldwide, that is, their transformation from a traditional, time-consuming, way of proceeding, with unpredictable results, to more effective mobilization with more sophisticated strategies. Since each nation has experienced Americanization in a different way, campaign styles have become a hybrid between the American style and the indigenous ways (Swanson and Mancini 1996, 4).

This process of transferring American electoral approaches to other countries is akin to and occurs alongside of globalization, by which we mean here a process of interaction and integration among the peoples, companies, and governments of different nations, driven by international trade, information technologies, and people-to-people exchange. Globalization has required and continues to require almost unavoidable changes of many sorts in many parts of the world, in the face of which, however, local rules and traditions still persist. According to Benjamin Barber, tradition and traditional values, in the form of extreme nationalism or religious orthodoxy, may oppose globalization, but the power of globalization may ultimately win the struggle (Barber 1995).

## Four Elements of Americanization of Electoral Campaigns in Other Countries

Since the elements and strategies associated with electoral Americanization are varied and constantly changing, I will now consider features of American elections that have continued to be important. Various scholars have examined the extent to which electoral politics in a particular country have been affected by the US model (Blumler and Gurevitch 1991, 1995,

2001; Semetko et al. 1991; Swanson and Mancini 1996; Esser and Pfetsch 2004; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Negrine et al. 2007). These studies have compared election messages and depictions of public officials in the media in various countries and have paid attention to the following key elements of the modern US model of election campaigning that many countries have adopted in recent years.

In those studies, four particular reference points in US elections come up: (1) media-centered campaign practices; (2) declining influence of political parties in recruiting and selecting candidates, alongside increasingly candidate-centered campaigns; (3) professionalization of electioneering; and (4) increasing cynicism among voters. Some of those signs are clearly manifested in the Asian cases considered here, but others, especially declining influence, are not as yet.

These four elements of the Americanization of elections are closely connected. The growth of the media and the Internet has promoted professionalization with a strong emphasis on electoral marketing strategies and tools, such as frequent opinion polls. Marketing is effective in selling the face and name of a particular candidate rather than the party to which the candidate belongs. This leads to more candidate-centered elections, rather than party-oriented ones. Since each candidate runs his/her own style of election campaign, the candidates will depend more on campaign professionals, and those professionals have widely adopted expensive state-of-the-art marketing strategies such as incorporating big data analysis. This requires larger sums of campaign money, which has significantly worsened public political disillusionment. In this way, public cynicism about politics has become part of American political culture.

## Media-Centered Campaigning

American elections are extremely media-centric; indeed, this perpetual dependency on the mass media may be their most crucial characteristic. In American presidential and even Senate elections, the extensive use of information and communications technology in campaigning is almost a necessity, because there is no way most candidates can personally travel to cover all the locations where they hope to secure votes.

For candidates who seek public office in the United States, televised political commercials have been a must for more than five decades, and the continued strong dependence on televised political advertisements is probably the most noteworthy aspect of media-centric American elections.

The development of televised political advertisements in US politics coincided with the growth of the television industry. The first political spots on television were broadcast during the 1952 presidential election, and it was soon discovered that political ads are particularly effective in positioning candidates against their opponents. Since then, they have become an institutionalized part of the American electoral process because of the widespread reach of television airwaves (Diamond and Bates 1992; Hall Jamieson 1996).

As early as the 1970s, television ads amounted to nearly two-thirds of an average presidential campaign budget (Jamieson 1996). Thomas Patterson notes that in current political campaigns, political spots play a fundamental role, and political parties, which had functioned as the vital institutions to select and nominate candidates, began to take a backseat (Patterson 1994). According to Patterson, the 1976 presidential election was the watershed of media politics in the United States and the beginning of the "mass media election" (Patterson 1980). In 1976, nationally little-known candidate Jimmy Carter skillfully employed political advertising, secured the Democratic Party nomination, and finally rose to the presidency. As Patterson noted, "the media's attention help[ed] to turn a Carter boomlet into a bandwagon" (1994, 41). Since then, media has become the de facto kingmaker on behalf of party bosses (Kerbel 1995).

Indeed, recent political advertising has had systematic effects on the general strategy of campaigns, the overall style of electoral politics, the kinds of candidates chosen, and the shifting sources of their support. The greatest advantage of the televised political commercial is the power to command a large audience. With widespread accessibility, political spots on television can more effectively provide the electorate with vital information about issues and the candidates' positions, and perhaps influence individual voting preference. Political advertising can be a potent weapon for candidates, not only for publicizing their names but also for setting the campaign agenda (Diamond and Bates 1992; West 2013).

Over the history of American candidate advertising strategies, similar patterns have occurred. Diamonds and Bates (1992) have identified four phases in candidate advertising strategies in presidential elections. Early in a campaign, candidates are concerned with developing recognition and creating a positive image, so they run "identification" spots. These ads are followed by "argument" spots in which the candidates attempt to convey to the public what they stand for, whether by developing an emotional appeal, conveying their policy positions, or both. Next, "attack" spots

highlight the opponents' weak points. In the fourth and final phase, candidates conclude their advertising appeals by presenting their vision of the fate of the nation. In recent presidential elections, the candidates' advertising strategies, while employing different tactics, essentially conformed to these general patterns (Diamond and Bates 1992).

In more recent elections, the Internet and social media outlets have transformed candidates' strategies. The Internet has been utilized in a multifaceted way: candidates have used their campaign websites, Twitter, and Facebook to disseminate information to voters without a filter, encouraging voters to retweet or post it on their own social media (Davis and Owen 1998; Paletz et al. 2011; Ward et al. 2008; Oates et al. 2006; Kerbel 2009; Gainous and Wagner 2013; Bennett and Segerberg 2013). Some of this information originating with campaigns on the Internet may also be picked up by traditional news media. In this way, the difference in contents between traditional and digital media has blurred, as voters have been inundated by waves of campaign information from all channels.

## Candidate-Centered Over Party-Centered Campaigns

As indicated above, an important feature of US elections is that campaigns are basically conducted by individual candidates, not by political parties. In the United States, up until the 1970s, candidates were handpicked by local bosses of both major parties, and the role the parties played in recruiting and selecting candidates was crucial in all federal, state, and local elections. However, the abovementioned shift to media-centered elections has pushed individual candidates' personalities forward and left the traditional party role in elections secondary, especially in federal elections, such as those for president, Senate, and House of Representatives.

There are several possible explanations for why American elections have become more candidate-centered as opposed to party-centered. One of these is related to education; in this account, the establishment of broad-based public education in the early twentieth century and of greatly increased access to higher education after World War II made individual American voters more confident in using their own judgment, making cues by political parties less and less important in their ballot choices. Most studies of political behavior in America have found that individuals with higher education are more likely to participate in political activities than individuals with lower education (Dalton 2008; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993; Smith et al. 2009).

Perhaps a more direct impact on the shift to candidate-centered elections has been the one due to electoral reforms during the 1970s. The most notable of these was conducted by the McGovern–Frasier Commission within the Democratic Party after the party's defeat in the 1972 presidential election. One of the main goals of the McGovern–Frasier reform was opening up the party's internal nomination process, which was then mostly closed, controlled by party elites in a caucus system. A caucus is a system of local meetings where voters decide which candidate to support and select delegates for nominating conventions. Indeed, since the implementation of the reform in 1976, the influence of partisan elites in political recruitment has been significantly reduced (Polsby 1983). This is because the reform forced many states to switch to a primary system, in which voters choose a party's nominees for public office, since the reform guidelines were difficult to reconcile with a caucus system (Polsby and Wildavsky 1996; Lengle 1981).

The advent of "mass media elections," along with several presidential campaign reforms by the two major parties, has also unexpectedly weakened the control of the parties over who their nominees will be. The primary approach became popularized through extensive and favorable media coverage, prompting many states to switch to the primary system. As the number of primaries increases, the candidate selection schedule has become earlier and earlier ("front-loading"), because states have attempted to get involved in the earlier stages of the nomination process, since in this way they could be more influential (Lengle 1981; Mayer and Busch 2004). Early primaries, such as the New Hampshire primary, are far more than the chronological beginning of the process; according to Kathleen Kendall, they are "definitional beginnings," from which the images of candidates and constructions of their character that emerge will dominate the rest of the campaign (Kendall 1995, 30). This phenomenon of front-loading forces candidates into longer and much more advertisement-oriented campaigns. For example, (Bill) Clinton and Bush (senior) in the 1992 election spent $1.7 million between them in political spots to beat intra-party opponents in the New Hampshire primary, which is the first and one of the most influential primaries in the nation. This figure amounted to 25% of prenomination advertising spending, although New Hampshire contributes only 1% of the delegates to the major parties' conventions (Kendall 1995; Lichter et al. 1993). Also, during the primary season, candidates have come to more and more strongly attack other contenders within their own party, inundating them with political "attack ads." This

intra-party mudsliding in the media was much less frequent before the proliferations of primaries because the party had more control over the nominating process (Patterson 1994).

As presidential elections are becoming more candidate-centered, so are congressional elections. Congressional scholar Gary Jacobson expressed concerns about media-centered elections and the weakened party role in selecting candidates for Congress. According to Jacobson, media campaigns make incumbents' seats less secure and candidates have to pay excessive attention to their constituents' opinions (Jacobson 1992).

## Professionalization of Electoral Campaigns

The professionalization of campaigns in general and the advent of election consultants in particular is another important trend in American elections. More than a party-centered campaign, a candidate-centered campaign needs to mobilize effectively to increase the candidate's name-recognition and attack his/her rivals. Nowadays, no serious campaign is without "handlers" and other professionals who specialize in various aspects of political campaigning. The logical extension of candidate-centered campaigns is in this sense the rise of a campaign industry, and the rise of campaigning on the Internet may increase the level of dependency on ICT, online media, and online data-gathering and fundraising professionals as well.

New media environments require new campaign strategies and techniques. In order to secure more votes, campaigning professionals have developed many electoral marketing techniques based on the frequent use of public opinion polls. E-mails are very common tactics, and lists of not only the names of supporters and donors but also their demographic features have been accumulated in computerized databases. Data-based campaigning and big data analysis are ever more important, and this kind of "science-driven" campaigning has produced several innovative strategies, such as microtargeting in ground-wars and more extended opposition research.

## Increasing Negativity and Cynicism in Politics

The final, but very significant, characteristic of American elections mentioned above is increasing negativity and cynicism in politics. There is a fear that the media-saturated environment may aggravate a sense of cynicism toward politics itself. The possible causes of this cynicism are multiple.

Media-saturated campaigns with their heavy dependency on campaigning professionals may require ever-increasing campaign funds. Also, name-calling has become a conventional practice in electoral races and negativity has increasingly dominated, potentially causing public backlash. Even the basic practice of packaging and selling a candidate itself may sometimes backfire. We will discuss each of these phenomena in turn.

First, cynicism may be elicited by the increasing role of big money, reflecting the broader shift in American society toward plutocracy. A focus on high-profile paid advertisements orients politicians (even more) toward money, and expenditures for campaign advertising have grown exponentially since the 1960s. Since 1984, more than half of the budgets in presidential campaigns have been spent on media advertising, with television receiving the bulk of the expenditures (Wayne 2004, 245).

The advent of super PACs has greatly increased the funds involved, and required, in presidential campaigns over the past two election cycles. Super PACs are independent expenditure-only committees that can raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, associations, and individuals to advocate for or against particular candidates. Super PACs have been officially permitted since two landmark federal court decisions of 2010, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, and *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission* (*New York Times*, January 21 and March 26, 2010). Since large sums of super PAC money are spent on television ads, they have aggravated the media saturation of US elections: for instance, by December 31, 2016, the Republican candidate Donald Trump had raised $957.6 million, and the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, $1.4 billion, of which super PAC donations accounted for $79.3 million and $204.4 million, respectively, according to the *Washington Post*.[1]

In addition to ad expenditure, professionalization and extensive use of new technology both demand more money to operate a successful campaign. Because of these high costs, candidates are forced to devote a lot of their time to fundraising, to the detriment of developing policy proposals, speaking with the people, or traveling around to understand voters' economic and social needs. Although campaign professionals may be skillful at electoral marketing, their cost is the flipside of their mobilization.

Interestingly, although politicians and media pay great attention to political advertising, appealing to voters through advertising sometimes becomes ineffective and the ultimate nature of the effects of advertising in presidential elections is somewhat unclear. This tendency is most apparent in presidential campaigns, in which the media generates a large volume of

political information quite apart from that provided in candidate spots and the effects of political advertisements are hard to isolate as a result. In addition, when viewers are inundated by lurid political messages, their "defenses" against such advertisements are mobilized and they may tend to stop paying attention to them (Owen 1991).

Furthermore, coverage of elections in media does not always help to motivate people to cast a vote; as suggested above, obvious attempts to win votes may make people reticent, especially younger people. As in most democratic societies, youth are less likely to show up to vote in the United States than older groups; however, traditional news outlets have typically not aimed at young voters, and ad messages have sometimes led to a sense of lack of interest in youth from candidates and discouraged young people's participation and turnout (Owen 2008; Gainous and Wagner 2013).

Young people's lack of political motivation may relate to the fact that campaign ads contain a large amount of negative political messaging. A major difference between political advertisements in the 1950–1970 period and current spots, including Internet campaign ads, is that the number of negative ads has increased. Traditionally, challengers' campaigns were often underfinanced; therefore, challengers tended to more quickly turn to negative ads in order to crack incumbent opponents' public image. Also, negative ads tended to be aired near the end of political races to get blows in against the opponent at the final stage, where it would be too late for them to recover. However, beginning in the 1980s, Montague Kern finds two different tendencies concerning the use of negative ads. First, not only challengers but also incumbents now frequently use negative ads. Second, negative ads are now often deployed beginning early, to damage opponents from the outset of a campaign. Thus, she concludes that modern negative political advertising has become a regular American practice (Kern 1989).

During these early phases, political candidates often employ comparative strategies in their political advertising as a means of communicating negative information about a candidate's opponent to voters while avoiding the stigma attached to purely negative "attack" advertising (Pfau and Kenski 1990; Salmore and Salmore 1989). Direct comparative advertising contrasts the beliefs and platforms of candidates and differentiates their views rather than, for example, attacking opponents' misstatements, financial or marital scandals, or broken promises. The candidate sponsoring the ad claims to be a better candidate than his or her opponent typically based on both candidates' issue positions, experience, or voting

records. In this way, candidates achieve the goal of presenting a cleaner and less malicious image in contrast to opponents who resort to direct negative attacks (Pinkleton 1997).

Indeed, several studies conclude that negative political advertising is a high-risk approach because it may damage the popularity of those who engage in it. Political advertising researchers have identified three possible self-damaging effects as results of negative political advertising: the *boomerang*, *victim syndrome*, and *double impairment* effects. A boomerang or backlash effect is an unintended consequence of a negative ad consisting in or leading to more negative feelings toward the sponsor, rather than the target (Garramone 1984). When a negative ad is perceived as unfair or unjustified, then it may in fact give rise to a phenomenon known as "victim syndrome" and actually generate more positive feelings toward the target, who is sympathized with in the face of the attack (Robinson 1981). Finally, based on a survey in Southern California, Sharyne Merrit concludes that negative political advertising generally evokes a negative affect toward both the targeted opponent and the sponsor. According to her, this double impairment effect is conspicuous when negative ads are used by a minority party candidate (Merrit 1984).

While negative advertising may increase the likelihood of voter manipulation, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1997) suggest that it contributes to widespread voter disenchantment with the entire political process. According to their study, negative political advertising causes as many as 5% of voters to discard their intention to vote, which is a meaningful number, since many races are decided by small margins. Voters exposed to negative ads develop a cynical attitude regarding the responsiveness of politicians and the election process in general. For example, negative advertising has been shown to have been a significant deterrent to voting in the 1990 California gubernatorial election and in the 1993 mayoral election in Los Angeles (Ansolabehere et al. 1993). Thus, attack ads can be used to weaken the opponent's image, but may reduce voter turnout as well. Also, negative political advertising may well generate a boomerang effect that will hurt the popularity of the sponsoring candidate.

To recap this section, Americanization of elections in other countries may have several positive effects, but as discussed above, media-centered US-style campaigning has met with widespread criticism, partly because the results of the ever-increasing media dependency are costly campaigns, depressed voting participation, unsubstantiated attacks, mercenary political consultants, a citizenry disconnected from its representatives, and

increasing cynicism. Moreover, the ever-growing use of the Internet may also spread negativity. According to Cass Sunstein, the Internet has a polarizing effect on democracies because cyberspace fosters the formation of self-selecting groups with little diversity of opinion and oppresses different ideas inside the groups (Sunstein 2001, 2009, 2017). These negatives are also factors that characterize American electoral campaigns.

## Americanization of Asian Electoral Campaigns

The basic question considered by this chapter is whether these characteristics of American elections have transcended US borders and whether political campaigns in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan may tend to embrace Americanization. For citizens in these three democracies, the political discussions ongoing in the American electoral system have been revitalized since the Obama campaign in 2008, because open and democratic networks have become more important in mobilizing voters (Han 2012; Bennett and Segerberg 2013). The reasons some, possibly many, Asians have a high opinion of American-style political discussions are frequently reported in their media as well.

These three democracies have many things in common. They are developed economies. Although each has taken a quite a different path to democracy, now all three enjoy great degree of freedom and personal liberty. Japan has been a strong democracy since its defeat in World War II and the subsequent democratic reform. Political communication and politics in general in South Korea and Taiwan have drastically changed over the past 30 years. After a long movement for democracy in South Korea, government controls have been all but lifted since the 1990s; similarly, starting in the 1990s, a series of major democratic and governmental reforms were implemented in Taiwan, providing people with the right to directly elect their president and vice president beginning in the 1996 election, prior to which, the President was elected by the National Assembly.

Along with the Americans, Japanese, Koreans, and Taiwanese enjoy some of the highest media saturation in the world. For example, in 2015, Japanese watched 262 minutes of television on average per day, almost identical with the United States at 274 minutes.[2] The three Asian democracies have been competing to achieve the best Internet data speeds, and all of them frequently appear on top ten rankings of average data transfer rates for Internet access by end-users. In 2015, Korea secured the top spot.[3]

Thus, in any election season, citizens in the three Asian democracies are constantly bombarded by information from the media about parties, their policies, candidates, and so on. The media and entertainment industries are growing rapidly in Japan, Korean, and Taiwan. Not only Internet but also smartphones are ubiquitous in all three democracies, and digitalization has more permeated their societies than that of the United States.

The press–government relationship in the three Asian democracies shares striking similarities with that of the United States. Media organizations in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are basically free from government oppression at present. Regarding the government–media relationship, Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) point out that the media systems in different nations can be classified as more or less subordinate to, or autonomous from, political institutions, depending on the degree of state control over mass media organizations, the degree of media/political elite integration, and the nature of the legitimizing creed of media institutions (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995). According to their classification, the media in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are autonomous from political control, an independence that is valued in those Asian democracies. Given the rising importance of the media in all industrial societies, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan thus take on to some degree the role of laboratories for exploring the roles the media play today in democracies, in a context where the barrier between the news and entertainment has been eroded even in these three East Asian democracies.

The degree of candidate centeredness varies among the three democracies, but a candidate's personal characters, such as his or her eloquence and personal attractiveness, have long been regarded as a strong weapon to appeal to media attentions. Also, some recent East Asian office seekers have already experienced several official campaign events on the media and learned from them, most notably Korean and Taiwanese televised presidential debates (*Korea Times*, April 3, 2017).

Further, Asian elections have dramatically transformed themselves over the past 20 years, largely because of campaign deregulation. Japan has finally dropped restrictions on the use of the Internet as an election campaign tool, as has South Korea. Lagging behind American and European counterparts in electoral Internet use, tech-savvy Japanese and Korean lawmakers and voters have started to foster more robust online political discussion during campaigns. Taiwan's campaigning regulations seem to be more enthusiastic than those in the other two countries to accommodate

the growing use of smartphone technologies, extending campaign efforts through apps and social media.

The deregulation of Internet use during election campaigns in these three East Asian democracies may not merely bring about a transformation of their electoral systems, but may also have other negative ramifications, such as an increase in the level of campaign expenditures (Kiyohara and Maeshima 2011, 2013). One might assume that the unintended consequences we have observed in American elections, such as growing cynicism, will then be more pronounced in the future of East Asian elections.

## Factors that May Prevent Americanization: The Case of Japan

Although as traced above, some degree of Americanization is happening in each of these three East Asian democracies, different countries have different political and media systems that will cause it to play out in different ways. As discussed above, Americanization means both modernization of elections and hybridization between the US-style and traditional electoral elements (Swanson and Mancini 1996, 4). Mass media reporting on politics, similarly, is closely associated with a country's particular political structures and with the state of its society, culture, and public opinion. It is widely believed that differences in political communication systems produce differences in media coverage (e.g., Blumler and Gurevitch 1975).

A good example is the case of Japan, where the election environment was at least until recently quite different from that of the United States. Several factors have worked against Americanization in the Japanese case. First of all, the unchanged face of Japanese elections is manifested in the role(s) of political parties. Major parties, such as the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party, still control the recruitment of candidates, and party-centered rather than candidate-centered campaigns are still the norm. These unchanged elements include the strongly party-oriented campaigns, strict regulations, candidate strategies, and ways of media consumption.

First, as suggested, although candidate personalities have begun to play an important role in Japan, the Japanese election style is still more party-driven. Compared with the United States, Japanese political recruitment tends to proceed through the structures and under the imprimatur of political parties; that is, a candidate can run for an office under a party

name, but more importance is placed on the party's official endorsement and party campaign financial subsidies. Negotiations between candidates and their local and national party bosses are crucial for the fate of a Japanese political candidate, which is determined by to how close he or she is to the boss of the party—unless the candidate is someone with high name recognition, such as a television celebrity whose endorsement is meaningful enough to help the party as a whole.

Second, campaign regulations in Japan are still strict, even draconian—virtually banning campaign ads for individual candidates, except election posters during a short period of designated "campaign activities." According to the *Public Offices Election Act*, candidates for the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives have 17 days and 12 days, respectively, to campaign, and Japan strictly prohibits political advertising by any individual candidate for reasons of fairness, because candidates have access to unequal financial resources. Instead, the *Election Act* allows only "legislative/political activities" spots, mostly provided by political parties, not individual candidates.[4] By contrast, in the United States, such a ban on advertising could not be easily realized because as stated above the Supreme Court has ruled that federal limits on a candidate's advertising expenditures violate the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

There are heated discussions over the disadvantages of these tight election regulations for conducting elections in Japan. Some commentators have suggested that the current rules are seriously outdated (as in the *Japan Times* of December 11, 2012) and hamper citizens' active political participation (*Nikkei Asia Review*, January 23, 2017). Several scholars find that the Japanese media has less influence on voting behavior than in the United States due to this strict regulation of political advertising because of the limited role of media in Japanese campaigns (Flanagan 1996).

Third, campaign strategies have developed differently in Japan due to these constraints. Because the campaign period is short and candidate ads are virtually banned, Japanese political candidates have created a unique way to gain name recognition among their constituents: voters are highly aware of the identity of their candidates not because of television appearances but because of regular personal contact. Indeed, regular contact during the off-campaign period is considered key to winning public office in Japan (Curtis 1971, 1988). Also, there is considerable evidence that Japanese citizens are more homogeneous in their political as well as their demographic characteristics and American-style demographic-specific

election marketing strategies may not always translate into successful mobilization.

Finally, Japanese political media consumption has shown unique patterns. Even though the influence of print media has withered, it remains strong: the five national dailies had a total circulation of over 25 million in 2014, the highest per capita in the world.[5] Furthermore, features of Japanese political culture, such as strong value placed on privacy, group decision-making, sensitivity to others, respect for hierarchy, and avoiding confrontation, also militate against American big-data-based electoral campaigns. Just as in the United States, elections provide both excitement and entertainment in Japan, and are reported in the news in an accordingly dramatic way—but less so.

## In Search of the Public Sphere

Although, as seen with our examination of the Japanese case, some factors may hinder transformation in elections in East Asian democracies, these nations have nevertheless started to change their election systems. Japan finally dropped restrictions on the use of Internet communication during the campaign period in 2013 (Kiyohara and Maeshima 2011, 2013). As later chapters in this book explain, Koreans and Taiwanese are now enjoying more freedom in campaign communications than ever before, using their smartphone applications and other digital tools.

The transformation of campaigning in East Asia may also provide us with a great chance to see a politics from new perspectives, in that the transformation of campaign communication may possibly also revolutionize the nature of campaign communication itself. With the evolution of new instant, interactive media formats, such as Twitter and Facebook, the relationship of citizens in many countries to the electoral process has been transformed dramatically. These Internet-based technologies may enable freer and more interactive discussions among citizens. Many citizens, including young ones, have greater opportunities to disseminate their political opinions and establish a presence in election campaigns on their own terms (Davis and Owen 1998; Paletz et al. 2011; Stephen et al. 2008; Oates et al. 2006; Owen 2008; Kerbel 2009; Gainous and Wagner 2013; Bennett and Segerberg 2013).

In this way, multiple networks of political communications are established that function in interlocking ways on large and small scales; these communications may possibly be more egalitarian and spontaneous than

traditional offline communications. Those networks may then eventually influence political actions or policy formations from the ground up, leading to the onset of a "digital democracy."

The academic discussion of the public sphere has been revitalized by these hopes placed in new types of democratic activity online. The public sphere is the realm in which well-thought public opinions are formed. In his seminal work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991), Habermas discusses the advent of new types of political communication in eighteenth-century Europe. Political elites and members of the bourgeoisie spent many hours discussing what is important in society and sometimes reached novel public policy ideas as a result. Habermas calls such forums of discussion the "public sphere," in which the people who join in for the first time form a "public." Prior to the advent of the public sphere, the King was the only public person, and all others were spectators. One important characteristics of the public sphere are egalitarian and spontaneous communication; another is the formation of well-thought-out public opinion through meaningful discussion.

The notion of the public sphere has continued relevance, and free and equal discussion of politics and society is very important especially around election periods. This is because elections are the lifeblood of a democratic political system—the moment when ordinary people cast their vote to determine who leads the country. High-quality information is thus crucial to the election process and to allowing voters to hold leaders accountable. However, in practice, election information has been provided mostly unilaterally by the media.

Now, however, with the help of technological innovations, a strengthened public sphere based on more robust egalitarian communication may be possible. The diffusion of the Internet has created new venues for political communication, as new styles of campaign reporting have changed the nature and character of campaign communications. These changes further citizens' demand to express their opinions and have their voices heard by political leaders. Direct communication to voters on the Internet has now become an integral part of candidates' communication strategies in elections.

With widespread accessibility, the Internet can potentially provide the electorate with vital information about issues and perhaps in this way exercise an influence on their voting preferences. The Internet is an especially important source of information for voters who have only moderate or low interest in elections. These voters have less knowledge about candi-

dates and issues, and tend to take fewer cues from political parties than those who are highly interested and involved in campaigns, who tend to seek out campaign information from multiple media sources. The Internet has greater potential to influence the politically uninvolved and uninterested (Owen 2008/2009; Gainous and Wagner 2013) by heightening their sense of political efficacy—the belief that they can understand and influence political affairs. Also, ever-evolving Internet-based technologies will infuse political discussion with information otherwise unavailable. The theme of the online public sphere now has a permanent place on research agendas in political communications (Roberts 2014; Barlow 2007; Balnaves and Willson 2011).

An important note of caution here is that electoral discourse on the Internet is frequently fragmented—not only in Asia, but possibly even more in the United States. Several scholars suggest that the Internet has created more division in society (Sunstein 2001, 2009, 2017), by more clearly manifesting users' biases than consumption of traditional media. This mechanism can be explained by selective exposure theory, which suggests that an individual has a clear tendency to favor information that reinforces his/her preexisting worldview while avoiding information that contradicts it. Compared with traditional media outlets, the Internet is more accessible and, thus, the most "selective" option a user may possibly choose (Knobloch-Westerwick and Johnson 2014; Valentino et al. 2009).

The Internet may also foster enclave communication, as discussions become more and more ideologically slanted and the language used much cruder, reflecting a lowest common denominator. To a sophisticated audience, some social media interactions may seem unpolished and unappealing, but coarse tweets or comments on Facebook sometimes orchestrate a response much better than complex logical argument. This is especially true when people have strong sentiments about developments in their society—for instance, discontented feelings concerning America's direction and future have been used effectively to mobilize support on social media for both the Tea Party movement on the right and Occupy Wall Street on the left. Similarly, the campaign of the 2016 Republican candidate Donald Trump relied on crude supporters on social media, who may prefer to believe "fake news" as long as it suits their sentiments (Sunstein 2017).

## Comparing Political Communication Across the Pacific

To conclude, I would like to stress the importance of studying comparative political communication across the Pacific. Elections provide unique opportunities for political communication scholars to analyze the relationship between media, politics, and society. Understanding the nature of the "Americanization" of East Asian elections and trying to assess the degree of Americanization of East Asian elections will provide new perspectives in political communication study.

One of the more exciting developments in the political communication subfield in recent years is that it has become more intercultural, adopting new theories and methodologies to compare political communication systems across countries. Until the 1980s, most political communication scholars conducted their research within only one set of societal frames. Now, in contrast, political communication researchers tend to conduct more comparative research, examining differences in media content and systems among nations.

Comparative political communication studies examine political messages in diverse societies and study their effects and ramifications cross-culturally. Examining the relationship between politics and the media in other societies permits us to perceive a wider range of political alternatives and illuminates the virtues and shortcomings of our own political systems. By taking us out of the network of assumptions and familiar arrangements within which we generally operate, comparative analysis also helps expand our awareness of the possibilities of studies in political communication (Blumler and Gurevitch 1991). The style and content of news media reporting are closely associated with a given country's politics, society, culture, and public opinion, and it is widely believed that differences in political communication systems in particular produce differences in media coverage (e.g., Blumler and Gurevitch 1975). The comparative analysis of political communication has expanded its scope to cover the relationship between media and government as well as the influence of the media industry on politics. Yet, most of these studies remain focused within the boundaries of one particular country, and comparisons have chiefly been between European countries and the United States. Thus, I believe the analysis of new developments in elections across the Pacific will lead to

new horizons for the relationship between new technology and society, and provide more balanced perspectives for the ongoing discussion of the media-electoral nexus.

## Notes

1. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/campaign-finance/.
2. https://www.statista.com/statistics/276748/average-daily-tv-viewing-time-per-person-in-selected-countries/ (Accessed on February 2, 2017).
3. https://www.akamai.com/us/en/multimedia/documents/report/q3-2015-soti-connectivity-final.pdf/ (Accessed on January 20, 2017).
4. http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S25/S25HO100.html. (Accessed on February 3, 2017). See also https://www.loc.gov/law/help/campaign-finance-regulation/japan.php/ (Accessed on January 20, 2017).
5. http://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00084/ (Accessed on February 20, 2017).

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CHAPTER 2

# Characteristics of US Elections in the Digital Media Age

*Diana Owen*

American election campaigns have become increasingly media-centric, candidate-centric, and personalized since the late 1970s. These trends were precipitated in large part by advent of the mass media election where television became a primary conduit between candidates and voters (Patterson 1980). The role of political parties diminished as candidates circumvented partisan institutional gatekeepers and appealed directly to the public. Campaigns became more professionalized and focused on political marketing and branding. Political consultants and media strategists became central players in the electoral process (Patterson 1993; Owen 1991). American-style campaigns require significant funds to build and sustain their organizational apparatus and to finance extensive media operations and candidate advertising, which has driven election costs to astronomical levels (Campaign Finance Institute 2016).

The characteristics of American campaigns established in the mass media age have persisted—even intensified—in the new media era. At the same time, the strategies employed by candidates and political parties as

D. Owen (✉)
Communication, Culture, and Technology, Georgetown University, 3520 Prospect Street, NW, Suite 311, Washington, DC 20057, USA



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well as the information-gathering and reporting practices of the legacy news media have been transformed substantially in the Internet era (Kluver et al. 2007; Gainous and Wagner 2013; Owen 2013, 2014; Semiatin 2013; Denton 2014; Grofman et al. 2014; Farrar-Myers and Vaughn 2015). Since 1992 when Democrat Bill Clinton's campaign launched the first candidate website (Bimber and Davis 2003), digital media have become a more established and sophisticated element of elections. Presidential campaigns use social media extensively to target voters and generate stories that will be covered by the mainstream press, earning millions of dollars worth of publicity in the process (Neely 2016). The number of voters who follow the campaign online has grown precipitously in a short period of time (Smith 2014). In addition, the digital campaign has enabled voters to engage in the electoral process in new ways (Owen 2014; Grofman et al. 2014).

Scholars have advanced the notion that campaigns in democracies worldwide have become "Americanized" by adopting traits associated with US campaigns (Johnson and Elebash 1986; Denver and Hands 2000; Baines et al. 2001; Baines 2005). They observe that campaigns globally are becoming more alike, especially in their communications tactics (Brecic 2012). Campaign practices are converging despite vast differences in political culture, history, institutional structures, and election laws (Mancini and Swanson 1994; Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 1996). The Americanization hypothesis gained some traction by virtue of the fact that campaigns in other nations hired American political consultants to develop their media and advertising strategies (Perlmutter and Golan 2005).

The notion of Americanization has been rejected by observers who argue that other nations are not copying US campaign practices and adapting them to their needs. Fundamental differences in political systems and electoral circumstances, such as the election of candidates in the United States and France versus the choice between parties in the Netherlands and Greece, preclude the assumption that campaign strategies are readily transferrable (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 1996). Instead, the convergence of campaign trends across the globe can be attributed to more general developments in media and society, such as modernization and globalization (Meunier 2010; Xifra 2011). Technological developments, they argue, are more fully responsible for changes in campaign media than any modeling of American practices (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999). The professionalization of campaigns manifests uniquely in nations based on their particular electoral and party systems, campaign finance systems and

regulations, media ownership, and advertising practices (Hallin and Mancini 2004; vanHeerde-Hudson 2011).

Despite the critiques, vanHeerde-Hudson argues that "it would be unwise to dismiss Americanization—understood to reflect (a unique) set of processes or characteristics stemming from the American system—as a construct for analyzing change in campaigns and elections" (2011: 53). The American case clearly articulates developments both positive and negative that can be compared and contrasted across democratic contexts. Negrine and Papathanassopoulos (1996) contend that the increasing similarities in campaign communication practices in different countries heightens the need for comparative investigations. This volume explores whether or not elements of Americanization are present for Asian democracies, especially given their distinct campaign contexts and media environments.

This chapter examines the notion of the Americanization of campaigns in the Internet era in order to provide a framework for interpreting the Asian case study chapters that follow. It focuses primarily on the media-related aspects of the Americanization hypothesis. It builds upon Maeshima's foundational Chap. 1 that examines Americanization as it relates to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan and provides a segue to Kiyohara's (Chap. 3) on the institutional factors influencing campaigns in these countries. The core question guiding this chapter is: What are the characteristics of US elections that are fundamental to the notion of the "Americanization" with regard to the Internet and digital campaigning? I identify six major characteristics of American election in the Internet era: (1) technology-driven campaigning, (2) voter digital engagement, (3) hyper-personalized campaigning, (4) expanded campaign professionalization, (5) rampant polling and horserace media coverage, and (6) negativity and incivility. I examine these traits in light of presidential campaigns in the new media era from 1992 to 2016.

A second question I take up in this chapter is whether or not the 2016 presidential election was a game changer with regard to the digital campaign. The introduction of social media as a campaign tool in the 2008 presidential contest by both the Obama campaign and average citizens working independently marked a radical and lasting departure from established campaign procedures (Plouffe 2009; Heilemann and Halperin 2010). This trend has been witnessed in countries, including India (Gowen and Lakshmi 2014) and France (Issenberg 2012a). In 2016, the election of unconventional Republican candidate Donald Trump caught many

political practitioners and academics by surprise. Trump's campaign carefully targeted supporters on Facebook to an unprecedented degree. The candidate himself pushed the boundaries of campaign discourse beyond the limits of what was previously considered appropriate. But, did the 2016 presidential election contribute anything new to concept of the Americanized campaign?

## American-Style Media Campaigns

The notion of Americanization first was put forth in the era of mass media. Norris's concept of the "postmodern campaign" provides an apt characterization of the pre- and early-digital "Americanized" election. The postmodern campaign is run by professional consultants who direct advertising, broker relations with the news media, measure and manipulate public opinion, and market the candidate. Candidates tailor their activities and appeals to conform to the demands and expectations of visual media, staging events that will provide dramatic made-for-TV moments (Patterson 1980). Campaign discourse is reduced to short, catchy sound-bites of several seconds in length (Patterson 1993). The professionalization of campaigns has been accompanied by an increased reliance on social scientific techniques to target voters and gain their support. Candidates' relationships with voters, who are treated as "customers," are managed through market research that uses polls and focus groups to gain continuous feedback on their wants, needs, interests, and drives (Norris 2000; Scammell 2002). Voters are categorized into market segments, such as rural whites and inner city African-Americans, who are targeted with finely honed messages (Newman 1994).

The Americanization hypothesis can be extended to the digital age by taking into account the ways in which technological innovations have precipitated shifts in the communications environment for campaigns. Emergent technologies have added layers of complexity to the media ecology. The communications environment largely preserves the broadcast model associated with mass media, where general interest news items are disseminated broadly to the public through legacy outlets, such as mainstream newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, as well as network television and cable news, such as CNN and MSNBC. At the same time, the media system is populated by a growing diversity of broadcasting outlets as well as niche news sources (Stroud 2011), such as the conservative *Breitbart News* and the liberal *Talking Points Memo*.

Digital media facilitate narrowcasting by allowing users to craft messages that precisely target discrete constituencies. Voters increasingly are ensconced in "echo chambers"—sources that conform to their preexisting beliefs and ideologies (Jamieson and Cappella 2010). New media platforms, such as blogs, interactive websites, social media, and virtual communities, are able to transcend established hierarchies that privilege political and media elites to give some level of control over campaign communication to the mass public. These platforms offer novel opportunities for candidates and voters to interact online. Most remarkably, voters are able to actively engage in campaigns via media as opposed to being limited to passive consumption of messages distributed by the press and politicians. Average citizens can express their views, cover candidate events, create campaign ads, and share content with people in their networks and beyond (Owen 2015).

American elections exhibit vestiges of broadcast era media campaigns alongside Internet era developments. I will discuss six characteristics of the American digital media campaign in this chapter. Technology-driven campaigning, voter digital engagement, and hyper-personal campaigning are new developments that have taken shape in conjunction with new technological developments. Expanded campaign professionalization, rampant polling and horserace media coverage, and extreme negativity and incivility are campaign characteristics that have pre-new media roots, but have become more expansive, intensive, and sophisticated as technological affordances have become more astute.

### *Technology-Driven Campaigning*

Campaigning increasingly is driven by emergent communications technologies. Digital media—forms of communication that can be transmitted online or over the Internet, such as websites, blogs, online news platforms, social media, and apps—have become hallmarks of American elections. Since 1992, the Internet has moved from being peripheral to central to candidates' campaign strategies (Foote and Schneider, 2006). In 2008, social media were novelties in elections that have since become mainstays. With each passing campaign, the use of digital media has become more complex and refined. Innovations in campaigning have embraced the distinctive features of the ever-evolving communications technology.

An overview of the evolution of American election campaigns online illustrates the growing centrality of the Internet and digital media in campaigns.

The roots of the current American Internet election can be traced to the late 1980s and the advent of the new media era. Just prior to the arrival of the Internet for public consumption, entertainment media, like talk radio, television talk shows, print and television tabloids, and music television, took on prominent political roles. The first wave of new media used old media technologies, especially radio and television, to attract audience members that did not tune into news, but paid attention to entertainment programs. At its best, entertainment media provided voters with factual information, stimulated social and political debate, and offered a critique of government (Delli Carpini and Williams 2001). In a move that today seems rudimentary, but at the time was revolutionary, voters were able to insert themselves into the media discourse by calling in to radio and television talk programs and getting on air. Candidates used entertainment programs to get around mainstream media gatekeepers and take their message directly to voters. New media helped candidates speak for themselves rather than having journalists and pundits speak for them (Davis and Owen 1999). By mixing entertainment and politics, the first wave of new media set the stage for a "reality TV" candidate, like Donald Trump decades later.

The Internet debuted in American elections when Democratic candidate Bill Clinton launched the first presidential election website in 1992 to little acclaim. The rudimentary website—dubbed "brochureware"—posted basic biographical information, position papers, texts of speeches, and simple newspaper-style ads. A handful of voters, most attracted by the novelty, and some journalists accessed the website, which functioned more as an archive than a voter recruitment or publicity platform. By 1996, campaigns were experimenting with more elaborate, flashier websites, email outreach, and basic discussion boards. Interactive websites, political blogs, online fundraising, and volunteer recruitment platforms were well established by the 2000 presidential election.

The 2004 presidential election was important in the development of the American digital campaign. Prior to this time, candidates were reluctant to use the interactive features of the Internet because they feared they would lose control of their message, especially if they allowed voters too much freedom to comment or share their views. They also were concerned about being sabotaged by operatives from opposing campaigns. Candidates eventually realized that containing the interactive features of new media was an exercise in futility. Instead, they took advantage of the unique qualities of the Internet, and used their websites, blogs, and email to communicate more directly and interactively with voters. Voters began

to contribute to coverage of campaigns through blog posts and eyewitness reports of candidates on the stump. Candidates capitalized on the peer-to-peer nature of these reports that had the potential to influence voters who trusted the information disseminated by people like themselves rather than campaign officials, party representatives, or members of the established press (Shirky 2008).

Howard Dean, a contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, broke new ground with his online media efforts. He used the Internet to fundraise and recruit volunteers through "meet-ups," a precursor to Facebook for organizing networks. Dean supporters would connect online and meet up offline. Dean's campaign eventually was derailed by an incident that foreshadowed the current situation where viral videos proliferate constantly through online video hosting platforms, like YouTube and Vimeo, and social media accounts. Dean gave a pep talk to his campaign workers after a disappointing finish in the Iowa caucuses—the first contest of the presidential nominating campaign—and let out a scream that has become infamous. A video of "the scream" went viral and was repeated nonstop on cable news channels. While subsequent analysis has determined that the audio was an inaccurate amplification of his voice (Avirgan and Malone 2016), "the scream" made Dean appear unhinged. Dean, a medical doctor by trade, was considered an eccentric and unconventional candidate, and this video became the nail in his campaign's coffin. Still, the influence of the Dean campaign's innovation with new media cannot be underestimated. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's team consulted Dean's new media strategy when they were planning his bid for the presidency (Heilemann and Halperin 2010).

The Obama campaign's successful implementation of a new media strategy in 2008 was radical, and reshaped the way that candidates contest elections. His innovations have become trademarks of the Americanized campaign. First, Obama's campaign implemented an aggressive branding strategy. His team developed a unique and recognizable logo and slogan. Political branding is related to, yet distinct from, marketing which long has been a staple of American elections. Marketing views competing campaigns as goal-directed rivals who employ tactics aimed at winning the competition for campaign resources, such as controlling the issue agenda, gaining positive media attention, and gaining votes (Scammell 2014). Branding is the process of associating a candidate with an image that aims to instill in voters an overarching, supportive feeling or impression. It seeks to create a connection between voters and

candidates, to establish a short-cut for understanding candidates' goals and ideals, and to distinguish candidates from their opponents (Needham and Smith 2015). Obama's brand was anchored by a logo featuring an O representing a rising sun to symbolize newness, hope, opportunity, and change. The red, white, and blue color palette signified patriotism. The brand loyalty that Obama's logo helped to establish in 2008 carried over to the 2012 election. In the digital age, the best candidate logos are designed so that they can be readily adapted for display on multiple media platforms (Lewandowski 2013; Doom 2016).

In 2016, Donald Trump's campaign was able to establish his brand—"Make America Great Again"—without a distinct logo. He and his supporters wore red ball caps bearing the slogan. The slogan was previously used by Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush in their winning presidential campaigns (Tumulty 2017). Trump relentlessly repeated his slogan, making it his own, and thus reinforced his brand throughout the campaign. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton was less successful in branding her campaign. Her team tried out 84 different slogans before landing on "Stronger Together." However, this slogan competed with a variety of others, such as "I'm with her." Her logo was an H with an arrow through it. Neither her logo nor her official slogan was widely recognized, even by many of her supporters (Doom 2016).

Obama's team revolutionized the use of social media in elections, which has become a standard trait of the Americanized campaign. According to Michael Slaby, Obama's technology officer in 2008, his campaign operatives were "opportunistic consumers of technology" (Slaby 2013). Their social media strategy evolved along with the campaign. They experimented with social media in order to gain an advantage in an election that they felt they could not win using traditional techniques. The campaign made use of advanced digital media features including networking, collaboration, community building, and active engagement, which had not previously been employed by candidates in elections. The Obama website was a full-service, multimedia center that introduced voters and journalists to a candidate about whom little was known outside of his home state of Illinois. People could locate information about Obama's background and issue positions, access and share videos and ads, post comments, and blog. They could donate, volunteer, and purchase campaign logo items, like tee shirts and caps. Obama also was active on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, platforms that the campaign used to reach out to voters on a more personal level (Plouffe 2009).

In 2012, Obama's team was less willing to leave things up to chance, and sought to carefully manage all aspects of their candidate's media strategy. They integrated the digital operation more fully into the campaign's communication organization. The campaign became a "strategic integrator of media technology" that used extensive data analytics to develop social media tactics for grassroots organizing and voter messaging (Slaby 2013). Obama's organization and the Democratic Party provided platforms for voters to engage in the campaign. Unlike in 2008, however, the campaign carefully controlled the message. Supporters were encouraged to post messages to social media hosted on the campaign and party websites. Voters were less enthusiastic about Obama as a candidate in 2012 than they had been in 2008. They were less enthralled by the novelty of social media, and they were not as motivated to innovate on their own. Thus, their efforts did not compete with the campaign's tightly controlled agenda (Owen 2013).

The heavy reliance of news organizations on information from the Internet and social media for their stories is a trend that has become another pillar of the Americanized campaign. The pace at which news is disseminated has become increasingly rapid in the Internet era, and the number of outlets distributing campaign information has grown exponentially. In the 2016 election, news organizations' dependence on the Internet and digital media to "feed the beast" reached new heights. Social media's most powerful function for campaigns today is to provide information to the established press as well as niche sources in an effort to control the media agenda. This situation places candidates in competition with one another to attract media attention. During the nominating campaign, the Trump campaign employed an aggressive strategy of firing off provocative, personal, often offensive, tweets making unsubstantiated, outrageous claims so he could set himself apart from the large field of Republican contenders. He continued this practice during the general election again his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton (Owen 2017a).

While Hillary Clinton's digital strategy included tactics designed to garner press coverage, her team focused heavily on using social media to solidify her base. The Clinton campaign employed a digital team of over 100 people who were constantly channeling her message in multiple languages to targeted audience segments, like women, members of minority groups, and millennials. Clinton's social media accounts stimulated more voter interactions in terms of likes, comments, and shares, than Trump's accounts (Yack 2016). Under normal circumstances, a conservative social

media strategy would have been prudent, as it allows the candidate to control the message and avoid gaffes. However, this conservative inside strategy did not generate the kind of media attention that would carry Clinton's message beyond her committed constituency, especially as she was running against an opponent who made Twitter his personal megaphone.

Following the lead of the 2012 Obama campaign, both the Trump and Clinton teams sought to manage the input of voters to augment their messages. Trump regularly would retweet posts praising him from supporters, at times appearing ignorant of their affiliations with discredited groups, including white supremacists. A *Saturday Night Live* skit featured actor Alec Baldwin as Trump retweeting a high school student named Seth. The skit was based on Trump's actual retweeting of 16-year-old Seth's attack on CNN's negative coverage of the Republican presidential contender. Clinton's campaign asked supporters to pledge their allegiance by Tweeting "I'm with her" and show up for campaign events, but did little to encourage anything more (Rosenblatt 2016).

### *Voter Digital Engagement*

Another characteristic of the American campaign is voters' engagement in campaigns using the Internet and digital platforms. In 2016, record numbers of voters learned about the campaign from digital media. According to the Pew Research Center, 65% of the public followed the presidential election via some form of digital media. Nearly half the public got campaign information from news websites or apps, and 44% used social networking sites. Fewer people access issue-based group or candidate websites, apps, or emails. In fact, the percentage of the public consulting campaign-related websites has remained fairly stable since the 2000 presidential election (see Table 2.1).

Since 2008, the number of voters consulting social media during elections has grown rapidly. Data from the Pew Research Center indicate that 12% of the American public followed the 2008 presidential campaign—the first election where social media was used by candidates—through social media. Four years later, only 17% relied on social media during the presidential contest. In 2016, the number had skyrocketed to 44% (Pew Research Center 2016), and 14% of voters considered social media their most important source of campaign information (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). These figures reflect the fact that 78% of Americans had a social

**Table 2.1** Percentage following the 2016 Presidential election via digital media

| | *% of US adults* |
|---|---|
| All digital media | 65% |
| News websites or apps | 48% |
| Social networking sites | 44% |
| Issue-based group websites, apps, or emails | 23% |
| Candidate or campaign group websites, apps or emails | 20% |

Source: Pew Research Center, February 4, 2016

media profile at the time of the election, and over 162 million Americans logged onto Facebook at least once a month. As a result, voters now are almost as likely to encounter political information in their social media feeds posted by their contacts and political professionals as they are to get information from news websites (Herrman 2016).

Citizens' active engagement with digital media is one of the most distinctive aspects of the American campaign in the Internet era. The public uses digital media to emulate offline engagement as well as to participate in activities that are exclusive to the technology. As we have seen, candidates often seek exert control over the public's campaign-related social media activities. However, voters do engage on social media independent from candidate organizations, political parties, or issue and identity groups (Owen 2014).

Voters' social media use in campaigns can be conceptualized along a continuum ranging from low- to high-threshold activities. Low-threshold activities involve relatively little time, effort, skill, and commitment and include using social media to monitor, seek, and consume information. Medium-threshold activities are comprised of voters expressing their support or opposition to candidates and interacting with content that is posted by politicians, news sources, political organizations, and other users. They utilize Facebook, Twitter, and video sharing sites, like YouTube and Vimeo, for peer-to-peer outreach. Younger voters turn to Instagram, a site for posting photos, images, and video clips, to communicate campaign-related content. High-threshold social media activities encompass more active forms of engagement, such as creating videos and memes, covering campaign events live, and encouraging others to get involved in elections. Some high-threshold activities have offline counterparts, such as

donating to a candidate and hosting campaign event. In addition, voters set up their own organizations online with people who shared their views or group identities. These organizations often act like political parties by setting the issue agenda, hosting voter registration drives, and getting out the vote (Vaccari et al. 2015; Gibson and Cantijoch 2013).

Voters took part in a range of election-related activities using digital media during the 2016 election. I conducted a national survey of adults online in late August of 2016 following the Republican and Democratic national nominating conventions. The findings indicate that the online public was very inclined to use social media for low-threshold activities, especially following election news and finding out about candidates and issues. As Table 2.2 indicates, over 70% of respondents relied on social media to follow news about the campaign and learn about candidates and issues. The online public was moderately disposed to using social media for medium-threshold activities that involved interactive expression, or engaging with others to discuss the campaign and share views. Around half of respondents reported using social media to voice their opinions about the campaign. They were more likely to express opinions and participate in discussions than they were to use social media to convince others to take actions, such as voting for or against a candidate or to share campaign-related content. A much smaller percentage of voters used digital media to engage in high-threshold activities. Twenty percent or fewer of the respondents joined a campaign-related group or accepted "friend" request to join election-specific social media platform. Less than 15% of respondents used social media to donate to a campaign. Ten percent of people online created their own campaign content via digital media. Only 6% of respondents organized a campaign-related event. Thus, while the opportunities to engage actively in campaigns through digital media have been expanding with each election cycle, the number of voters who take part in activities that require a high degree of skill and commitment was limited in 2016.

### *Hyper-Personalized Campaigning*

The ability of campaigns to target media messages to voters with increasing precision is a unique characteristic of American elections in the era of professionalization and media management. Campaigns have designed specialized media appeals to reach particular voting blocs, such as working women and Evangelical Christians, for decades. Since the 2008 campaign,

**Table 2.2** Percentage of voters engaging in the 2016 election via digital media

| | |
|---|---|
| **Information seeking** | |
| Followed news about the campaign | 76% |
| Learned about candidates and issues | 73% |
| Looked for information about a candidate | 66% |
| Watched campaign ads | 56% |
| Followed those with opposing political views | 43% |
| **Interactive expression** | |
| Expressed an opinion knowing others might disagree | 49% |
| "Like" or "favorite" campaign-related content | 49% |
| Participated in election-related discussions | 42% |
| Tried to convince others to vote for/against candidate | 34% |
| Shared campaign-related content | 33% |
| Encouraged others to take action on behalf candidate | 26% |
| **Campaign engagement** | |
| Joined a campaign-related group | 17% |
| Accepted a "friend" request from a candidate/party | 14% |
| Donated to a campaign | 10% |
| Created campaign-related content | 10% |
| Organized a campaign-related event | 6% |
| $n = 1631$ | |

Source: Diana Owen, 2017b Post-convention survey, Georgetown University

however, campaigns have personalized their messages to voters based on data analytics and delivered them via digital communications technologies. Using microtargeting techniques, campaigns customized messaging to voters based on political profile data and other attributes. Hyper-personalized campaigning goes a step further, and combines more refined and complex data with direct outreach to voters through social media channels. Electoral appeals to individual voters are customized based on personal information gleaned from public and commercial databases. These data are collated and analyzed using sophisticated algorithms to develop tactics for political mobilization. Most Americans have little

knowledge that their personal data are being used by campaigns for hyper-personal targeting. To date these tactics are not prevalent in other countries as they are precluded by regulations surrounding individuals' privacy rights (Bimber 2014).

Advances in computer technology, the ability to accumulate and analyze massive amounts of data, and the development of machine learning algorithms that can process information on individuals' preferences efficiently have allowed campaigns to sharpen their approach to voter targeting. Hyper-personal campaigning integrates data analytic technological tools and digital media. Campaigns use "big data" to guide the customization of campaign messages to voters. Statistical algorithms developed with insights from behavioral psychology are employed to make sense of the massive data sets. Targeting voters has become so specific that candidates have been known to send upward of 75 different messages about a single issue (Issenberg 2012b). As Schipper and Woo note, "This fragmentation of the candidates' campaign communications leads to dog-whistle politics–targeting a message so that it can be heard only by those it is intended to reach, like the high–pitched dog whistle that can be heard by dogs but is not audible to the human ear" (2016: 3).

Databased microtargeting debuted in the 2004 presidential election and gained traction in the 2008 and 2012 contests. Obama's campaign teams honed the hyper-personal approach to retail politics by customizing messages to voters based on data they collected about their political beliefs, their demographic profile, consumer preferences, and taste in popular culture. They disseminated targeted messages to an extensive list of email addresses and cell phone numbers of supporters they collected online through their campaign website and offline at events (Bimber 2014). Both the Clinton and Trump campaigns devoted extensive resources to digital operations in 2016.

The Democratic and Republican candidates in 2016 employed hyper-personal techniques during the nominating campaign and the general election. Clinton spent $30 million on targeted digital ads in the final weeks of the general election campaign, while the Trump campaign invested approximately $70 million per month on its digital ventures. The national political parties provided the candidate with access to the voter files which consist of the public record of citizens' voter registration and turnout. The campaigns supplemented the voter file with information from commercial data brokers, social media analytics, and other sources. These data included demographics, occupational information, political

and charitable contribution history, memberships, home and property ownership, permits and licenses, magazine subscriptions, film rentals, political and community volunteer history, and indicators of political opinions. This information could be augmented by survey data designed to learn more about voters that were likely to support a candidate. The campaigns used this information to devise directed messages for all aspects of their campaign communication ranging from scripts for telephone banks to television ads and Twitter messages (Brown 2016).

Flying under the radar, Trump's digital team consisted of over 100 staffers who created a massive database of over 220 million Americans nicknamed "Project Alamo." The database contained between 4000 and 5000 data points that were used to generate online and offline profiles of individual voters. The team worked with Cambridge Analytica, a British data consulting firm, to target audiences with specific messages and ads based on psychographic traits, such as how open to new experiences and cooperative a person is based on their data-generated profile. Using Facebook analytical tools, such as Custom Audiences, Audience Targeting Options, Lookalike Audiences, and Brand Lift, the Trump team directed over 100,000 pieces of customized content at supporters and undecided voters. The campaign used "dark posts," nonpublic paid content that appeared on the Facebook accounts of specified users. The technique was employed to successfully mobilize voters in battleground states as the campaign was coming to a close (Lapowsky 2016; Winston 2016).

### *Expanded Campaign Professionalization*

The central role of political professionals is a key element of American campaigns. In the 1970s and early 1980s, reforms aimed at limiting the power of political party elites over the presidential nominating process expanded the public's influence over candidate selection. At the same time, television was assuming a prominent role in elections which made it possible for candidates to appeal directly to the voting public. Television advertising became the lynchpin of presidential campaigns. A consequence of these developments was the rise in candidate-centered campaigns which sparked the emergence of political consultants, campaign specialists who stepped into the breach left by political parties. The first wave of consultants consisted of campaign managers, opposition researchers, pollsters, direct mail specialists, ad makers, and media consultants (Sabato 1981).

Campaign professionalism has expanded markedly in the Internet age as candidates seek to capitalize on the affordances of technological developments. Digital directors, social media consultants, experts in media analytics, and big data analysts have joined the ranks of the campaign consultancy. In the 2012 election, the Obama campaign employed a chief technology officer, a chief innovation officer, and a director of analytics to coordinate their media and voter outreach initiatives. The team included software engineers, data experts, statistical analysts, digital designers, and video producers. Many of these new-style professionals came from outside the political realm and had no campaign experience. It has become common practice for these professionals to rotate between business and political positions (Agho 2015; Slaby 2013).

The market for political professionals has swelled beyond candidates' campaigns. Consultants work for political committees and super PACs, independent organizations that can spend unlimited funds on advertisements and get-out-the vote drives during elections as long as they do not coordinate their efforts with a candidate's campaign. Political professionals' influence on the electoral process and political decision-making has spread along with their infiltration of an expanding array of organizations (Sheingate 2016).

Some scholars lament that professionalization has led to campaigns being run by "hired guns" whose priorities are developing strategies that emphasize winning at all costs. They contend that the values and incentives underpinning the business of consulting shape the character and conduct of American elections. The ascendance of the political professional has contributed to the escalation of campaign expenses (Sabato 1981). Professionals are incentivized to focus on the media campaign, especially advertising buys, because they receive a percentage of the revenue. Thus, campaigns may place fewer resources on tactics, such as door-to-door canvasing, that may be more effective in getting voters to learn about candidates and participate in elections than television advertising or social media messaging (Sheingate 2016).

### *Rampant Polling and Horserace Journalism*

American media coverage of elections is saturated with polling reports that drive horserace journalism, the constant reporting of the candidates' relative standings in the race. Patterson (2016) argues that in the digital age entrenched strategies for political reporting remain intact. In fact, the

use of polls and the pervasiveness of horserace journalism have increased as digital technology has improved as it has become possible to sample public opinion quickly and inexpensively. Media coverage of the horserace places the focus on campaign tactics and strategic maneuvering. Voters receive little information about issues, especially in-depth analysis of candidates' positions.

Horserace coverage dominated the 2016 presidential campaign during the nominating phase and the general election. The media was obsessed with Donald Trump's unorthodox candidacy and heaped coverage on his campaign to the exclusion of other presidential contenders (Patterson 2016). The polling data that underpinned campaign reports in the press was volatile, especially during the general election. It has becoming increasingly difficult to obtain accurate poll data, especially as established sampling techniques have been undercut by personal technology. Fewer people use landline phones, and polling random and representative samples of voters using cell phones is difficult (Goidel 2011). Yet, as Nate Silver observes, "it's increasingly common for articles about the campaign to contain a mix of analysis and reporting and to make plenty of explicit and implicit predictions. Usually, these take the form of authoritatively worded analytical claims about the race, such as declaring which states are in play in the Electoral College" (Silver 2017: online). Editors and reporters devote resources to stories based on how they perceive the horserace is playing out.

### *Negativity and Incivility*

American campaigns are intensely negative. The general operating principle for campaigns is to deride the opposition rather than to present detailed issue or policy information. Media coverage focuses almost entirely on bad news, especially as it repeats the negative messages disseminated by candidates. The press is quick to give blanket coverage to anything that verges on controversy or scandal, and readily engages in "feeding frenzies" where a weakness or problem with a candidate is reported on relentlessly (Sabato 1991).

Political advertising contributes to the high degree of negativity in campaigns. "Going negative," using attack ads to undercut the opponent, forms the backbone of most campaign strategies. Some scholars argue that ads have become so acrimonious and focused on insults and haranguing that the considerate discourse essential to democratic societies

is compromised (Hill et al. 2015). In the Internet era, campaigns can deliver nasty ads to voters through a range of platforms beyond television, including through websites and social media, further contributing to the blitz of negativity (West 2014).

American campaigns also have become increasingly uncivil, violating established social norms for face-to-face communication by showcasing extreme rudeness and offensiveness (Mutz and Reeves 2005). Frequently candidates fail to exhibit even a minimum of decorum. Campaign discourse has coarsened, as candidates and their surrogates do not hesitate to use vulgar terms to address their adversaries. Members of the media, particularly "talking heads" on cable television, regularly display their lack of respect for those with opposing views to voters. Uncivil discourse populates online sources, and has proliferated among both political elites and average citizens (Anderson et al. 2014).

The 2016 presidential election was especially negative and contentious. Donald Trump's campaign, in particular, contributed significantly to the level of incivility. Trump and his surrogates repeatedly launched personal attacks against his primary opponents that were reported widely by the media. People who challenged him or who he perceived had affronted him were labeled "stupid," "bad," "crazy," "horrible," "dumb," "overrated," and worse. He referred to his Republican challengers as "Little Marco" Rubio, "Lyin' Ted" Cruz, and "Low Energy Jeb" Bush. He nicknamed the runner-up Democratic candidate as "Crazy Bernie" Sanders. His moniker for his general election challenger was "Crooked Hillary" Clinton. He used Twitter to reinforce his catch phrases, such as "Build the Wall" and "Lock Her Up."

Hillary Clinton attempted to counter Trump's diatribes, which propelled the discourse to even greater levels of degradation. To illustrate Trump's poor treatment of women during the first presidential debate, Clinton recounted how Trump, the former owner of a beauty pageant, had disparaged former Miss Universe Alicia Machado for gaining weight by calling her "Miss Piggy" and "Miss Housekeeping." Trump accused Clinton of helping the Venezuelan-born actress become a US citizen in order to use her as a prop in the debate. He called Ms. Machado "disgusting" and "a con," and told people to check out her nonexistent sex tapes.

Videos are now an integral component of campaign journalists' repertoire as they engage in "gotcha journalism" where they attempt to catch candidates in compromising positions. Television, especially cable channels, and digital media rely heavily on professional, amateur, and archival

video in their campaign coverage. Videos add drama, a sense of authenticity, and a degree of legitimacy to election reporting as the pictures are used to substantiate claims.

In 2016, volumes of archival footage of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were readily available, as both candidates had been in the public eye for many years. A prominent media frame characterized Donald Trump, who had a reputation as a womanizer and has been married three times, as anti-woman. A 3-minute, off-the-cuff, taped conversation that took place between Donald Trump and *Access Hollywood* correspondent Billy Bush was leaked to *Washington Post* reporter David Fahrenthold who had been investigating Trump's charitable contributions (later winning a Pulitzer Prize for his efforts). In it Trump brags about how his celebrity status allows him to do what he pleases with women. The video dominated news coverage for days, and the topic was raised by the moderator in the second presidential debate. Trump dismissed the statements as "locker room talk" despite the fact that several women came forward alleging that he had sexually harassed or assaulted them. On the surface, the subject matter of the *Access Hollywood* video was far more damning than the "Dean scream." Unlike Dean, however, Trump was able to survive the scandal with help from his coterie of consultants and spokespersons who managed to deflect much of the damage.

Donald Trump took aggressive action against the negative coverage he was receiving during the campaign. He used his stump speeches and Twitter rants to denigrate the press repeatedly. Trump bullied journalists when he felt that coverage had been negative or unfair. He made fun of a *New York Times* reporter with a disability who had written an article surfacing Trump's claims that Muslims in New Jersey openly celebrated the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Trump banned certain media organizations from his events, including legacy news outlets like the *Washington Post*. He rarely granted interviews, and gave reporters little direct access on the campaign trail. Trump refused journalists' requests for information, especially his tax returns. He repeatedly threatened to sue publications for stories about his finances and issues with women.

Hillary Clinton had her own challenging experience with video evidence. Speaking at a fundraising event with supporters, and unaware that she was being taped, Clinton stated that half of Donald Trump's supporters fell into a "basket of deplorables." The video was widely circulated and discussed nonstop in the media for several days. The statement, which was part of a sentence that was taken out of context, was interpreted as Clinton

calling Trump supporters racist, sexist, and homophobic. The "basket of deplorables" phrase played into the narrative that Clinton could not relate to—and even looked down upon—white, less educated, lower socioeconomic status voters who formed the core of Trump's base. Some of Trump's supporters co-opted the slogan, which appeared on tee shirts and hats, and even organized a "Deploraball" at the Inauguration.

On balance, the public was not receptive to the negative discourse that dominated the long presidential campaign. An October 2016 Pew Research Center study found that the majority of social media users during the presidential election were frustrated by the lack of civility on these platforms. Users became tired of the amount of political content they encountered in their feeds, especially when it was designed to spark argument. Some users found it stressful to deal with polarizing comments from family and friends and blocked or avoided political messages. Eighty-three percent of social media users ignored political content with which they disagree; fifteen percent posted a response at least sometimes. Forty percent of the public believed that the nasty tone of political discussion in social media reflects the wider political reality where the tenor is set by politicians and the news media (Pew Research Center 2016).

## The 2016 Election: A Game-Changer?

The 2016 campaign was a departure from past presidential contests as it featured a candidate, Donald Trump, who was a property developer and reality TV star with no prior political experience or close association with a political party. The election results upended expectations based on long-standing norms that Hillary Clinton, a political insider who had worked her way up the established political hierarchy, would prevail. The unique circumstances of the campaign give rise to the questions: Were the rules of American electoral politics rewritten during the 2016 presidential election? Did the campaign contribute anything new to the Americanization hypothesis?

These questions might be answered best retrospectively after the 2020 campaign and beyond. At this point in time, however, it appears that campaign tactics in 2016 generally conformed to the trends that typify those in American elections in the digital age. The developments in the media campaign were incremental, rather than pathbreaking, but they also were highly amplified.

Following the lead of the 2012 Obama campaign, both candidates ran coordinated professional campaigns. They established extensive, integrated media and technology operations. They used hyper-personal targeting techniques to appeal to and mobilize voters. Both contenders made extensive use of digital communication technology to promote their candidacies. They established brand identities, with Trump managing his "Make America Great Again" slogan more consistently than Clinton handled her slogan of "Better Together." The candidates used social media and televised campaign events extensively to generate press coverage.

The Trump campaign pushed the envelope beyond the norms of campaign decorum—which are low to begin with. Some observers have interpreted Trump's undisciplined and outlandish public statements as setting new parameters for campaign discourse. However, there is nothing new about running a negative campaign, and the only thing notable about Trump's exaggerated claims and personal attacks was their extremity.

The 2016 campaign will be remembered for the vast accumulation of misinformation, misleading stories, and outright lies that were circulated by candidates, political parties, issue organizations, and the media. False information is common during elections, but it reached new heights in the Clinton/Trump contest. Campaign coverage reflected reporting in post-truth America, a period where objective facts are subordinate to emotional appeals and personal beliefs in shaping public opinion. Donald Trump used his stump speeches and Twitter feed to disseminate outrageous claims that could not be verified or which were known to be entirely false. Journalists and organizations that check the veracity of public discourse, such as FactCheck.org, attempted to hold Trump accountable for his words, but they were ineffective when faced with the constant onslaught of fabrications and falsehoods.

Trumps misleading tweets coincided with the rise of "fake news" during the campaign. Prior to the campaign, fake news described parody news programs, like the *Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. In 2016, fake news was associated with fabricated, sensational stories made to appear as if they were real news articles on websites designed to look like legitimate news platforms or political blogs. Conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and lies were spread efficiently through Facebook, Snapchat, and other social media. Millions of people were exposed to fake news stories during the campaign. Fake news stories favoring Donald Trump were shared 30 million times on Facebook, while stories favoring Hillary Clinton were shared 8 million times. Almost all voters saw at least one fake news story, and half of them

believed fake news. Voters were most likely to believe a fake news story if it supported their candidate (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017).

While false stories have proliferated on social media for years, fake news was barely part of the lexicon until October when the campaign headed into the home stretch. There were reports that Pope Francis had endorsed Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton had sold weapons to ISIS, and an FBI agent was found dead after leaking Clinton emails. A fake site made to resemble *ABC News* posted an erroneous story that a protestor at a Trump rally was paid $3,500 by the Clinton campaign. The tale prompted Trump's son, Eric, to tweet, "Finally, the truth comes out"—a message he deleted after it was widely circulated. On Election Day, rumors of massive voter fraud were rampant on fake news sites.

## Conclusion

Advances in technology have reshaped the communications environment within which election campaigns take place in the United States (Bimber 2014). The Americanization hypothesis reflects the ways in which campaign organizations, the media, and voters have adapted to these changes. Some traits associated with American campaigns have emerged during the Internet era. Communications technologies have enabled candidates to reach out to voters in novel, more personalized ways. Campaigns used tools facilitated by advances in data mining and analytics to appeal to voters using hyper-personalized targeting tactics. At the same time, average citizens have the opportunity to subvert established political and media hierarchies and play an active role in shaping campaign dialogue and modes of activation. Other American campaign characteristics have carried over from the mass media era, but have become more prominent in the age of new media. The role of campaign professionals, the proliferation of polling and horserace journalism, and the abundance of negativity and incivility in election discourse are persistent features of US political contests.

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CHAPTER 3

# Comparing Institutional Factors That Influence Internet Campaigning in the US, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

*Shoko Kiyohara*

Political communication research on the impact of the Internet and digital media on election campaigns is an active field in many countries. Most previous studies have been strongly influenced by the situation in the US, as Internet-based election campaigning began in the US in the late 1990s, earlier than in the rest of the world (Bimber and Davis 2003). However, countries have experienced different patterns of online political development, and Internet election campaigns have unique, country-specific characteristics. Ward et al. (2008) highlighted the importance of contextual factors when comparing Internet campaigns in 12 countries. Contextual factors are defined here as characteristics of the political party system, regulation of electoral processes, political culture, the roles of old and new media in election campaigns, and Internet access levels. Vaccari (2013) also suggested that contextual factors should not be overlooked when comparing a diverse set of countries. Furthermore, an

S. Kiyohara (✉)
School of Information and Communication, Meiji University,
1-1 Kandasurugadai Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8301, Japan



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institutional approach revealed the respective characteristics of Internet election campaigns in the US and UK and their similarities and differences in terms of political parties and political norms (Anstead and Chadwick 2009).

Although most previous studies have compared the US and UK or Western democratic countries more broadly, Schafferer (2006a) explored the question of whether there is also an Asian style of electoral campaigning and demonstrated its existence through an analysis of several aspects of electoral systems and regulations, including Internet campaigning and its regulation. He concluded that there was no evidence of movement toward standardization of campaign practices, such as the "Americanization" of campaigning, in East and Southeast Asia (2006a, 135).

As digital media have developed, Internet election campaigns have become much more innovative. Since the 2008 US presidential election, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have dramatically changed Internet campaigning in the US. Thus, one may wonder, have there been similarly meaningful changes in Asian countries? Answering that question and considering those changes is the entire goal of this book, which will be especially important because research examining the state of online campaigning in Asian democracies in relation to the US is still rare.

There is indeed evidence that changes in election law and regulations related to use of the Internet and social media have affected online campaigning. For instance, until April 2013, using the Internet for election campaigns was prohibited in Japan by the *Public Official Election Law*. The 2013 upper house (House of Councillors) election was a landmark in Japanese election history, since it was the first election after the ban was lifted.

This chapter will consider institutional factors related to the development of Internet-based election campaigns in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan as compared to the US. I will indicate that Japan features unique factors among these four democracies, including the lack of primaries and short campaign periods as well as stricter regulations on practices, and that these factors affect the vibrancy of Internet election campaigns. Each of these countries has a different political and electoral system: the US and Korea have presidential systems; Taiwan has a semi-presidential system, in which the president, as head of state, nominates a prime minister to lead the cabinet and be responsible for a unicameral legislature (the Legislative Yuan); and Japan has a parliamentary cabinet system, similar to that of the

UK, in which the prime minister, as the top figure in the executive branch, is directly elected by Diet members.

This chapter will first consider the process of candidate selection as conducted by political parties in the four countries. Japan does not have a primary system as part of the candidate selection processes, but some political parties use a *kobo* system, while the US, Korea, and Taiwan all do. Next, I will consider the length of the campaign period in terms of electoral processes. The campaign period in the US is usually more than a year, whereas in Japan, it is strictly limited by election law to 12 days for the lower house and 17 for the upper house; outside this period, candidates and political parties cannot conduct campaign activities, such as asking voters to vote for them. Also, Japan often has snap general elections, which means it is not easy for prospective candidates who want to run for the lower house to confidently estimate when the next election will be held. A second crucial set of institutions is the ones surrounding public funding for elections. In the US, although there is federal funding available only for presidential elections, under the candidate-centered American political system, individual candidates have to raise a huge amount of money to compete with their rivals over the long election period. In contrast, the Japanese election system's fundraising mechanisms closely reflect the party-centered nature of Japanese elections. Third, I will look at the regulation of election campaigning online from country to country, with a focus on online paid advertisements. Paid advertisements are considered to be one of significant characteristics of "Americanization" of election campaigns.

On the basis of this material, the chapter will then address the following questions: What roles do political parties play in the process of candidate selection in the US, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan? What campaign finance mechanisms do they have? What regulations govern online election campaigns? The answers to these questions will provide a context for the following chapters. Through this investigation, the chapter will demonstrate the institutional uniqueness of Japan in terms of Internet use in election campaigns and indicate which regulations and restrictions can be viewed as factors slowing the development of Internet-based election campaigning in Japan compared with the US, Korea, and Taiwan. The findings from this chapter will in this sense contribute to a discussion of the differences in the Americanization of elections in the three East Asian democracies.

## Candidate Selection and Campaign Periods

### *Candidate Selection*

The American electoral system uses a single-member plurality (SMP) "first-past-the-post" criterion to determine election winners, and a two-party system is entrenched. Presidential candidates are selected by delegates who attend the national party conventions held every four years before presidential elections, although the role of national conventions is declining. On the other hand, the primaries are becoming more important for the process of candidate selection, not only for presidential elections but for congressional and state (gubernatorial and state-legislature) elections. Then, the important point here is that most of the Internet campaigning innovations have occurred during primaries in the US (Anstead and Chadwick 2009, 65). The primary is the election in which candidates secure the party's official nomination. Beginning in the 1920s, the two main parties have come to embrace a primary system in each state, and since the 1970s, primaries have been essential to American politics (Anstead and Chadwick 2009, 65). Due to the legal requirement that the candidate selection process be open among registered voters, political parties and the bosses and operators that previously controlled candidate nomination in the US are playing an increasingly minor role in the process. In some cases, only voters who are registered with a party can vote in a primary (closed primary), whereas other states have an open primary that enables nonparty registered voters and other party registered voters to vote (Medvic 2014, 138; Kiyohara 2011, 6). Thus, it is hard for political parties to obtain influence on candidate selection, especially presidential candidate selection (Kiyohara 2011, 4–5; Herrnson 2013, 135, 146; Plasser with Plasser 2002, 152), and Washington outsiders may be selected as official candidates for president. The 2016 Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, a businessman who had no political experience, is a good example. At lower levels, however, the nominating process is different from the presidential nominating process, in that most states use the direct primary to nominate congressional and state-level candidates (Medvic 2014, 137). National party organizations may participate in the nomination process for congressional and state-level candidates, and sometimes play an active role recruiting candidates to enter the primaries (Herrnson 2013, 146).

The Taiwanese system for electing legislators has used a mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system consisting of both single-member district (SMD) and proportional representation (PR) elements since 2005. On the other hand, they use only SMD for presidential elections. The president is elected directly (as also in Korea), and a robust two-party competition emerged in the 2008 and 2012 Legislative Yuan elections (Hsieh 2013, 77). Party leaders used to choose candidates for legislative elections, and the central party headquarters provided a candidate list for local party branches (Yu et al. 2014, 640). This pattern didn't change until the first primary was held, in 1989, by the governing Kuomintang party (KMT), among local party members. Although the final decision was still made by central party headquarters, these decisions in practice echoed primary results (Yu et al. 2014, 641); this power shift from the central party headquarters to local party organizations was a big change, and one followed by further changes; now, Taiwan uses a primary system to select election candidates from presidential to city council level.

Another major shift occurred in 2001, when the KMT's primary was opened to ordinary citizens (nonparty members) invited to join in the process by telephone poll (conducted by party members), in a "polling primary" (Yu et al. 2014, 641). The weight given to overall poll results was equal to that of party members' total votes (Yu et al. 2014, 641). The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) had also changed its candidate selection process, in 1998, when it began using polls as well (Yu et al. 2014, 642). Party member and primary voting were and are both weighted at 50% for this selection process. Since then, opinion polls have become the main method of candidate selection, and the candidates were fully determined by opinion polls in 2012 (Yu et al. 2014, 642). Through primaries, more citizens can participate in the process of candidate selection, which also makes it more inconvenient for party leaders to ignore the results. In this way, much of the power once held by party leaders in candidate selection in Taiwan has shifted to the local level (Yu et al. 2014, 642). Interestingly, after the KMT lost a lot of young voters in the Taipei mayoral election in 2014, KMT leader Eric Li-Luan Chu attempted to initiate Internet voting in primaries to select candidates for the 2016 national election (*Nownews*, January 25, 2015). However, this failed due to opposition inside the party (Kiyohara and Chen 2016).

Korea is also becoming a de facto two-party as opposed to multiparty system, although some other parties remain in existence (Hsieh 2013, 77) In Korea, some National Assembly members are elected under a single-member

district (SMD) method and others under proportional representation (PR), while the presidential election is a direct election. The 2002 presidential election was the first time a primary was conducted for candidate selection. In 2001, the Millennium Democratic Party lost all of the by-elections that occurred, and its approval rate was very low. Therefore, the party leaders decided to conduct a primary among the general public in order to raise popular support for the candidate and engage people in the party. Half of the Electoral College delegates (who select the presidential candidate (almost always) according to the votes of the people who selected them) were selected from among the general public, and a small percentage of these were allowed to vote online (Lee 2011, 53–4). The mood at the time similarly led the other major party, the Grand National Party, to conduct a primary as well.

Introducing primaries dramatically changed the candidate selection process in Korean politics. Before the primary was introduced, presidential candidates were selected by representatives who attended the national conventions, but this was only a formality; in reality, selection was part of a power contest among political operators as part of a system of "boss politics" (Lee 2011, 52).

In the 2007 presidential election, more diverse styles of primaries emerged. The Democratic Labour Party modified their party rules, and 48,000 party members participated in direct candidate election. The Democratic Party also changed, from a limited primary to an open primary, without boundaries between party members and general voters. Furthermore, they initiated voting by mobile phone to raise young people's participation in the primary (Lee 2011, 55). The most interesting characteristic of the 2007 primary was that subsequent primary voting was affected by the results of these polls (Lee 2011, 56), which were conducted over a period of time before the actual primary and the results of which therefore gained attention from media as an ongoing reflection of public opinion (Lee 2011, 57).

In Japan, some have identified a similar trend toward the emergence of a two-party system, and it is certainly true that the result of the 2009 lower house election showed a shift in political power with the change in the ruling party, but the actual situation is uncertain at present. The Japanese election system and campaign finance regulations were dramatically reformed in 1994; after intense controversy over corruption, high election costs, candidate-centered campaigning, and one-party dominance, the Japanese Diet reformed the election system from a single nontransferable

vote, multimember district (SNTV/MMD) system to a mix of SMD and nationwide PR districts, for the lower house election in 1994 (Carlson 2016, 103–5; Yu et al. 2014, 648). Candidates can only compete in SMDs, but the mixed system allows them to be listed simultaneously as SMD candidates and on PR lists—a system of dual candidacy. Thus, even if a candidate loses his or her SMD race, he/she can win a seat if ranked high enough on the party's PR list (Carlson 2007, 7).

Until this reform, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had been the long-time ruling party, since 1955; within the party, factions called *habatsu* recruited their own candidates under the SNTV/MMD system (Yu et al. 2014, 648). Unlike the other three countries considered here, Japanese political parties do not conduct primaries to select their candidates. Therefore, the *habatsu*'s influence was pervasive and decisive. Another method, the *kobo* system, was used by the opposition parties. The Socialist Party of Japan (SPJ, 1945–1996) suffered from a shortage of qualified candidates, and needed to use the *kobo* system to recruit candidates in 1990 at the local, city ward level. The Japan New Party (1992–1994) was the first political party to use the *kobo* system in national elections (Yu et al. 2014, 648); following this, since the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), an opposition party, had to overcome a serious shortage of candidates, they used the *kobo* system heavily every few years (Yu et al. 2014, 649). Their *kobo* system was managed directly by DPJ national headquarters. It is recognized that the DPJ won the 2009 lower house election because it had prepared by fielding candidates in most of the 300 SMDs with the help of the *kobo* system. After the DPJ became the ruling party in 2009, their motivation to use the *kobo* system decreased (Yu et al. 2014, 649); then, after they lost the election and again became an opposite party in 2012, they returned to recruiting their candidates through the *kobo* system to gain more and better candidates for 2015. Under the *kobo* system, people who would like to be nominated as candidates have to pass examinations such as interviews and essay assignments administered by the party (DPJ 2015). In partial contrast to the DPJ, the LDP as ruling party let its prefectural branches use the *kobo* system to recruit candidates in districts without incumbents in 1994 (Yu et al. 2014, 649); then, as an opposition party (2009–2012), it applied *kobo* in a more decentralized and diverse manner compared with the DPJ (Yu et al. 2014, 652). It was used in the 2012 general election, although the party had used to select candidates based on heredity (*seshu*) and on the wishes of representatives of interest groups, bureaucrats, and local public officers. It

was later revealed that newly elected Diet members who had been selected through the *kobo* system were implicated in a private scandal (*Sankei Shimbun*, April 16, 2016).

Then, in 2016, the LDP—again the ruling party—introduced a new online *kobo* system on for the 2016 upper house election, as part of the party's advocacy of digital democracy. The system was called "Open Entry 2016." In the first round, the LDP selected 12 finalists out of 458 applicants based on interviews and examination of documents (LDP 2016). Next, the 12 finalists gave speeches on the street to the public; the online *kobo* allowed even non-LDP-voters of voting age to vote for a finalist among the 12, who would then be nominated as an LDP candidate. The winner, Yosuke Ito, was placed on the party's PR list, but received only 0.6% votes and was not elected on voting day (*Asahi Shimbun Digital* 2016). Although Ito was not elected, the manner of candidate selection pioneered in his case was novel in Japanese political parties.

### *Campaign Period*

In the US, the period of time allocated for federal election activity is the period "beginning on the date of the earliest filing deadline for access to the primary election ballot for Federal candidates as determined by State law, or in those States that do not conduct primaries, on January 1 of each even-numbered year and ending on the date of the general election, up to and including the date of any general runoff" (Code of Federal Regulations §100.24 (a) (1) (i)). Individual states set deadlines for meeting the requirements to appear as a candidate on the ballot, but there is no limit to how far ahead a person intending to run for president can file as a candidate. A democratic media consultant, Colin Rogero said that candidates were willing to conduct "new model campaigns" using the Internet and mobile phones since they generally wished to make themselves better known by starting campaigns much earlier (Kiyohara 2013a, 41). Indeed, in the 2016 election, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton filed her candidature registration form 21 months before the election, and Trump, 19 months before. These long campaigns are one of the chief characteristics of campaigning in the US.

In Taiwan, after martial law was lifted in July 1987, the government decided to adopt more open and flexible policies, and the prohibition on "campaign activities in the pre-campaign period" was abolished in February 1989. As a result, any constraint on preparations prior to the

formal campaign period is perceived as inappropriate in Taiwan (*Epoch Times*, November 22, 2004), and it is common to see campaign advertising such as slogans and posters everywhere even before the official campaign period (Chen and Kiyohara 2015). For presidential elections, the campaign period is 28 days, and for the Legislative Yuan, 10 days. In the 2012 Taiwanese presidential election, Election Day was January 14, 2012; KMT and DPP candidates were determined in April 2011, making the start of the campaign, and the race heated up in September of that year (Ogasawara 2012, 27, 29).

In Korea, the campaign period is set by the *Public Official Election Act of Korea* (Article 59), and pre-campaign activities are not allowed. For presidential elections, the campaign period is 23 days, and for National Assembly members, it is 14 days.

However, there is an exception for preliminary candidates, a status that new National Assembly candidates can register for up to 120 days prior to Election Day and new presidential candidates, for up to 240 days prior, to help them get better known before the official campaign period starts. As preliminary candidates, they can establish a campaign office, distribute election campaign cards, produce and use campaign sashes or paraphernalia, make direct campaign phone calls, and send one campaign mailing to up to 10% of households within the constituency, as announced by the election commission. For example, the National Election Commission in Korea announced that preliminary candidates for by- and reelections to be held on April 13, 2016, could begin taking action from January 1, 2016. For the 2012 presidential election, it started on April 23, 2012, and Election Day was December 19, 2012. This campaign activity is thus limited, but on December 29, 2011, the Constitutional Court paved a new path to the online public sphere before the campaign period started. Therefore, using the Internet for the campaign purposes prior to the campaign period is not prohibited any longer. I will explain about it later.

In Japan, campaign periods are strictly set under the *Public Official Election Law* (Article 129), in which "election campaign" is defined as follows:

> the solicitation of voters to vote for or support a certain candidate. For lower house elections, the campaign period is 12 days, and for upper house elections, it is 17 days. As a result of a February 24, 1977 Supreme Court decision, campaign activities are prohibited prior to the formal campaign period (Kiyohara 2013b, 2). People who want to run for parliament need

to register as candidates on a specific day announced for that election (*Public Official Election Law* Article 86 Section 2, Section 3). Until then, they cannot launch campaign activities, except for some limited preliminary activities such as asking a political party to nominate them as an official party candidate, renting premises for an election campaign office and facilities, fundraising for the campaign, and printing posters and signboards for the campaign. These are not considered campaign activities per se but preparation, and are hence allowed (Senkyoseidokenkyukai 2014, 21–2).

## Public Funding of Campaigns and Restrictions on Campaign Expenditures

In the US, the amount of campaign expenditure is enormous because there is no cap on it. The *Federal Election Campaign Act* (FECA) of 1971 imposed strict contribution limits and disclosure requirements on candidates and national party committees, but no cap of campaign expenditure, a state of affairs confirmed by the Supreme Court decision *Buckley v. Valeo* in January 1976, which said essentially that limiting campaign expenditures would infringe on freedom of speech, protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution, and also limit quality of political speech (Kiyohara 2011, 9; Mann 2002, 89). The 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* further opened up the campaign financing regulatory environment by allowing federal political action committees called "super PACs" to use unlimited funds to expressly advocate the election of individual candidates (Corrado 2014, 46). Again, this is based on the Court's majority ruling that the First Amendment does not permit restrictions on speech based on the identity of the speaker (Corrado 2014, 49). Subsequently, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, the two major-party presidential candidates in 2012, spent almost $ 1.12 billion on their campaigns altogether, excluding money spent by the parties and external groups such as super PACs, although the role of these funds is crucial in the long American campaigns (Center for Responsive Politics 2012). In addition, although campaign expenditures in the US are huge in international context for all types of elections, the federal public funding is only available for presidential elections; other campaigns rely on contributions from individuals. Also, there are some states' subsidizing programs for candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, and the state legislature (Mutch 2016, 39). Congress created the

federal public funding program for presidential election campaigns in the 1970s, after the Watergate scandal, in order to reduce the role of large private contributions. The program is not financed by a standard Congressional appropriation, but by taxpayers' contributions (they can choose if they want to contribute three dollars to the fund when they file federal income tax forms.) Presidential candidates can qualify for primary matching funds if they meet certain criteria and agree not to exceed predetermined spending limits. As for the general election, if candidates receive the public grant of $20 million, they may not spend more than that and may not accept private contributions (FEC 2017). Candidates can choose to receive public funds for the primary only, the general election only, both, or neither (Medvic 2014, 72–3). For the first time in 2008, a candidate—Barack Obama—refused any public funds for the entire election in 2008, because he was able to collect a lot of money from small donors over the Internet. Following him, in 2012 all major party nominees opted out of the public funding program fully. Presidential candidates generally feel that public funding has few advantages, and all practical purposes for the presidential public funding have ended (Kiyohara 2011, 10–2; Mutch 2016, 45).

Parties' national committees could once also receive public funding for their national nominating conventions (Medvic 2014, 73); however, President Obama signed legislation that would end public funding for conventions on April 3, 2014 (FEC 2017).

In contrast to the US, the three Asian countries considered here all have substantial public campaign funding systems as well as limits on campaign expenditures. In Taiwan, public funding is provided to political parties that receive more than 3.5% of votes in the national election. Individual candidates are subsidized if they gain no less than half of the vote if there are two or more candidates in the same electoral district, or more than one-third of the vote when there is only one candidate in the district (Article 43, *Civil Servants Election and Recall Law*). However, it is hard to keep campaign expenditures within the limits of public funding, as campaign expenditures have increased immensely in Taiwan of late (Kiyohara and Chen 2016; Plasser with Plasser 2002, 165). In the 2012 presidential election, the KMT and the DPP spent US$14 million and $23 million, respectively, which exceeded the cap on campaign expenditures (Li 2015). However, Taiwan doesn't impose any punishments on candidates who exceed the cap, following an amendment of the the election law in 2007 (Li 2015).

Lax regulations on campaign finance also drive online fundraising activity. The DPP has relied heavily on small donations for mayoral and presidential elections since 2010 (for instance, they accounted for 80% of expenditures in the 2012 presidential election). Furthermore, Tsai Ing-wen, the DPP's presidential candidate in the 2016 presidential election, refused large donations from big entrepreneurs. The money candidates receive from the party is quite limited, especially since the *Political Donation Act* took effect in 2004, and candidates thus have to cultivate a loyal personal vote to raise funds, including online (Kiyohara and Chen 2016).

In Korea, the government is aiming to reduce campaign spending because there has been a big controversy on candidates exceeding the cap. Politics in the country was traditionally led by party bosses, and a huge amount of money was needed to win elections. The expectation was that Internet campaigning would decrease expenditures; however, in reality, expenditures increased because of the expense of primaries (Lee 2011, 57). Pressured by negative public opinion about expensive campaigns, in 1994 the government passed a new election law creating a tax-financed public subsidy system (Lee 2011, 58), although Article 116, Section 2 of the Constitution states that "expenditures for elections shall not be imposed on political parties or candidates." The National Election Commission announces caps on campaign expenditures every year (Lee 2011, 58) that differ by type of election, and there is penalty for any campaign if exceeds the limit of campaign expenditures (Article 258 of the *Public Official Election Act*). Article 122 of the *election act* also says

> when any election campaign manager or accountant in charge of election campaign office is sentenced to imprisonment or a fine exceeding three million won on account of an excessive disbursement of 1/200 or more of the restricted amount of election expenses publicly announced under Article 122, the election of the candidate concerned shall become invalidated.

As for presidential campaigns, the cap increased 36.3% from 2002 to 2007 (Lee 2011, 59), and the percentage reimbursed by the subsidy system after the election also increased. In 2007, total campaign expenditure by all candidates doubled, but the subsidy exceeded 90% of the expenditures. If a candidate has been elected or was deceased, or if a candidate obtained more than 15% of the total number of valid ballots, the full election expenses would be paid or 50% if a candidate obtained more than 10% and less than 15% of valid ballots (*Public Official Election Act*, Article 122, Section 2, 1. –(a)(b)).

In 2003, there was a big political scandal in which two major political parties, the Grand National Party and Millennium Democratic Party, didn't register a large proportion of their contributions, for which they were criticized by the public and for which the system that allowed corporations to contribute to campaigns was considered the main cause (Lee 2011, 59). In a resulting reform, supporting organizations by the headquarters of political parties, provinces, and cities were abolished, and donations from corporations were prohibited. That reform was aimed at increasing small donations from many individuals; however, the amount of contributions was less than the public subsidy, and there were regulations such as a cap on contributions. Thus, candidates didn't see the benefit of collecting contributions (Lee 2011, 59). Since 2010, the campaign fundraising regime has been the one of so-called election funds. In it, politicians open bank accounts and sell "election funds" to voters in order to raise cash from them as retail investors to finance campaigns (Go 2013, 80). Candidates face strict regulations related to receiving contributions from individuals, and companies are prohibited from making political donations (Song 2012). This makes using "election funds" very attractive to candidates. Investors are offered annual interest rates of 3%–6% by the candidates, who can pay them using the public subsidy after the election (Song 2012). "Election funds" thus enable voters to rent their money to candidates (by purchasing the funds), make some interest, and help their candidate win (Go 2013, 82–3).

In Japan, as mentioned earlier, the campaign period is strictly defined under election law, and during this period, there are many restrictions on what can be done. This includes limits on campaign expenditures, which differ between upper and lower house elections, however. Similar to the Korean punishment, if a candidate exceeds the limit, the persons in charge of accounts for the campaign will be punished and the candidates will be disqualified (Article 194; Article 247, Section 2; Article 251 of the *Public Official Election Law*). Until the election system was reformed in 1994, spending for campaigns was high, much like in the US with its candidate-centered election system (Taniguchi 2002, 73). The reform made the election system party centered and was intended to keep campaign expenditures low by prohibiting companies from contributing to candidates' supporter groups (*koenkai*) or to the factions (*habatsu*) within the LDP. Instead, corporations could make donations to political parties, political funding groups specified by the parties (*seiji shikin dantai*), and (until it was also

prohibited) related fund-management organizations by politicians (*shikin kanri dantai*) (Taniguchi 2002, 76; Schafferer with Kawakami 2006, 20).

Since the reformed *Political Fund Control Law* regulates private contributions and fundraising, a public funding system for political parties was created by the *Political Party Subsidy Law*, also in 1994. It was designed to help develop a robust democratic politics and to ensure the cleanness and fairness of political party activities (Article 1, the *Political Party Subsidy Law*). It dramatically altered the revenue sources of Japan's political parties, especially the LDP, which had used to collect a lot of contributions from corporations and individuals (Taniguchi 2002, 78; Mann 2002, 90; Carlson 2016, 114). The party subsidy system helped individual politicians form political parties to receive the subsidy (Carlson 2016, 116). There are no limits on the use of these public funds, which can be used for election campaigns or set aside for crucial elections in the future. The public fund is based on a pool of 250 yen per citizen. The conditions parties must meet to receive funding include holding more than 5 seats in the Diet or receiving more than a 2% share of the vote in the previous general election for single-seat electoral districts or for proportional-representation lists, or in the second-last upper house elections for proportional-election constituencies or electoral districts. In 2010, a total of 32 billion yen in public funding was handed out (MIC 2012). Political parties must report on their use of public funds to the minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC). The only party that does not accept public funds is the Japanese Communist Party, which believes the fund system is improper because funds are derived from taxpayer money (Japan Communist Party 2000). Thanks to the public funds, political parties and affiliated candidates do not need to put as much effort into fundraising for elections (Kiyohara and Chen 2016). For 2017, the LDP received about 17.6 billion yen, the highest in the history of the system (since 1995) (*Mainichi Shimbun*, April 4, 2017).

## Regulations for Internet Election Campaigns

A lax regulatory environment for online election campaigning may lead it to burgeon. The US has the laxest regulatory environment in this regard among the four countries considered here. The FECA, written in 1971, does not mention Internet campaigning, but the Federal Election Commission (FEC) has had rules in place on online campaign

communications since 1999. In the *Federal Register* of April 12, 2006, the FEC announced, "As a whole, these final rules make plain that the vast majority of Internet communications are, and will remain, free from campaign finance regulation." "Almost no regulatory burdens" was adopted as the principal concept for regulating campaign Internet activities in the US (*Federal Register*, April 12, 2006, 18590). This rule thus excluded most Internet communication (except "communications placed for a fee on another person's Web site") from "public communication," which was regulated and consisted of

> communication by means of any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication, newspaper, magazine, outdoor advertising facility, mass mailing, or telephone bank to the general public, or any other form of general public political advertising. (Code of Federal Regulations, §100.26 Public communication)

Thus, if an individual, political committee, corporation, or labor union pays for a banner, video, or pop-up advertisement for a party or candidate on someone else's website, the advertisement will be subject to FECA regulation in terms of contribution limits, source restrictions, and disclosure requirements (*Federal Register*, April 12, 2006, 18593–4). As Internet ads have more impact on campaigns, in 2014, the FEC released the file in order to reconsider matter on disclosure and disclaimer requirements for certain Internet ads (Ravel 2014). The debate has been clearly divided between Democrats and Republicans at the FEC; the Democrats, especially the former commissioner Ann M. Ravel, thought it was time to again consider regulation, while Republicans were very concerned to prevent regulation of all forms of online political speech (Shaw 2016).

Similar to the US, Taiwan has a very lax regulatory environment for online campaign communication, with no specific regulations—in general, online campaign regulations accord with offline ones (Chen and Kiyohara 2015). After Taiwan lifted martial law in 1989, laws on campaign advertising were made more flexible and relaxed (Chen and Kiyohara 2015; Schafferer 2006b, 41); previously, mass-media-based political campaigning had not been allowed. Newspaper advertising was legally used in election campaigns for the first time in 1989, and the first political ads on TV appeared in 1991 (Schafferer 2006b, 41–2). Cable TV also started to air debates between candidates and mount call-in talk shows with politicians

in the 1990s (Schafferer 2006b, 45). By 2000, about two-thirds of campaign ads were aired on cable TV (Schafferer 2006b, 48). As these changes imply, the lifting of martial law brought a general liberalization of media, which led to media-centered electoral campaigns in Taiwan and created a campaign environment more amenable to Internet campaigning. The freedom to purchase TV ads primarily benefits parties or candidates with more resources, leading those with less to turn to the Internet campaigning. Most parties and candidates establish websites or Facebook pages before the campaign period, as well as mobile apps, SMS messaging, and presence on messenger apps such as LINE (Chen and Kiyohara 2015). In 2012, KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou's campaign used the KMT's tremendous financial reserves to run more than 150 political ads online and on TV, which played an important role in getting him reelected (Matsumoto 2012, 74).

Since the Internet had a big impact on the 2002 presidential election in Korea, that country has had a stricter regulatory environment for online campaigning since then, with new regulations passed in 2005; it is now stricter than that in the US or in Taiwan. The reform considers Internet newspapers such as *Ohmynews* to constitute "Internet press agencies" (Lee 2011, 66; Hyun 2011, 88). First, it states that "the National Election Commission shall establish and operate Internet Election News Deliberative Committee in order to keep impartiality of election report stated on the Internet homepage of the Internet press agencies" (Section 5, Article 8, *Public Official Election Act*). Second, the Internet Election News Deliberative Committee is authorized to "inspect whether election reports that are run in Internet homepages of Internet press agencies are fair or not [and when unfair to] order the relevant Internet press agencies to take measures necessary to publish a correction report for such an election report" (Section 6, Article 8, *Public Official Election Act*). These regulations were reflected by the influence of Internet newspapers and portal sites (Lee 2011, 68). Third, "Identification of Real Names on Bulletin Boards or Chatting Pages" was introduced as a new rule:

> Every Internet press agency shall, if it allows anyone to post information including texts, voice, pictures or videos expressing his support for or opposition to candidates of political parties on the bulletin board and chatting page, etc., of its Internet homepage during the election campaign period, take technical measures to have his real name identified in the methods of identifying real names that are provided for by the Minister of Public Administration and Security or credit information business operator. (Section 6, Article 82, *Public Official Election Act*)

The "Real Names" regulation and broader crackdown by the election commission shrank campaign activities on the Internet in the 2007 presidential election as compared to 2002 (Hyun 2011, 91). On the other hand, an important deregulation of Internet campaign advertising was conducted in 2005, such that each candidate can now post advertisements for his or her election on the homepages of Internet press agencies (Section 7, Article 82, *Public Official Election Act*). After this change, in 2007, the main presidential candidates Lee Myung-bak and Chung Dong-young ran Internet advertisements on portal sites more than 3 billion times (Lee 2011, 68). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, based on a Korean Constitutional Court decision, the ban on Internet election campaigning has been lifted since 2012. On December 29, 2011, the Constitutional Court deemed unconstitutional Article 93 Section 1 and Article 255 Section 2 of the *election act*, which prohibited the act of distributing or posting, with the intention to influence the election, documents and pictures the content of which supports, recommends, or opposes a political party or candidate or refer to the name of a political party or candidate during a period of 180 days before Election Day, as it violates freedom of political expression and freedom to conduct election campaigns (Constitutional Court of Korea 2011). By this change, those who can conduct campaign activities, regardless of campaign periods (except for the Election Day), can update and post SNS and Homepage as well as they can transform e-mails for campaign purposes (Go 2013, 72-73). However, there are still various restrictions, such as prohibition of Internet campaigning on Election Day, mandatory real name authentication for writing comments on election reports by online newspapers and portal sites, and prior deliberation for opinion polls.

Japan had strictly prohibited Internet use for campaigning purposes until the election law was reformed in 2013. Prior to that, although some famous politicians had used Twitter for daily political communication to inform people about what they were doing in the Diet, Internet campaigning, using the Internet for election campaign activities, was not allowed based on the Ministry of Home Affairs' 1996 interpretation of the law. That meant candidates and political parties couldn't update their homepages or ask voters to vote for them by e-mail or post on Facebook and Twitter during the campaign period. Article 142 of the *Public Official Election Law* strictly controls details such as the number of postcards a candidate can distribute or the location and size of campaign placards, and at that time, the ministry considered an activity such as placing campaign material on a homepage to constitute distribution to an unspecified number of voters, which violated Article 142 (Kiyohara 2013b, 2–3).

As broadband penetration rose in Japan and the popularity of Internet campaigning in the US and Korea increased, discussion on opening the doors to online campaigning occurred in Japan; however, many senior Diet members were worried about the influence of online defamation and public ridicule their party candidates might be subjected to (Kiyohara 2013b, 4; Kiyohara and Chen 2016). As a result of the 2012 general election, the LDP once again became the ruling party, and after long discussion, the party pushed for a revision of the *Public Official Election Law* in light of ever-increasing social media use in order to open the possibility of Internet election campaigning. The 2013 upper house election became a landmark in Japanese election history: the first election in which candidates, political parties, and voters could use the Internet and social media during the campaign period. Japan still has the strictest regulations on Internet use for campaigning among the four countries considered here, however. Under the current law, politicians, candidates, and voters can open and update political homepages and blogs and post political messages and videos on social media. However, only political parties and candidates can send campaign e-mails, and only political parties are allowed to display banner ads which link to their campaign websites on paid Internet advertisements ( Article 142–6). If such an online ad stated, "please vote for our party," it would be considered an election campaign ad and prohibited, while if it said only "This is XX party," linking to the party's election campaign website, it might not be considered illegal immediately. In practice, this would be judged case-by-case, taking many aspects of the ad and context into consideration. This regulation is fundamentally based on the idea that election campaigns should not be expensive (Election Department, MIC 2015).

Also, political parties run online spot ads promoting their image and explaning their stances on issues, meaning that the ads can't say "vote for our party." For example, on December 12, 2014, the Japan Communist Party posted a YouTube video with a "soft image" character, "*Kakusan bu*" as an ad presenting their stance on the issue of the right to collective self-defense (JCP 2014). Similarly, *KOMEITO* (New Komeito), a party forming a coalition with LDP, shared an online ad to deliver the message of the party in the 2015 nationwide local elections; the message was "People's Lives, Regional Revitalization" (*KOMEITO* 2015). Not only paid Internet Advertisements but also campaign advertisements in Japan are still restricted. On the other hand, the government funds some campaign advertisements; for example, newspapers advertisements of a limited number and size are provided for free to all candidates and political parties for upper house and lower house elections. There is also some free TV and radio time provided for election campaigns called campaign broadcast,

funded by the goverment. If broadcasters permit, political parties, candidates, and voters can distribute it on the Internet.

## Conclusion

Plasser with Plasser (2002) categorized 52 countries into those with strictly regulated campaign systems, those with moderate regulation, and those with only minor restrictions. According to them, Japan and Korea have strictly regulated campaign practices and Taiwan is a moderately regulated campaign environment, whereas the US has the least regulated campaign system in the world (138–41, 145, and 152). However, from the perspective of online campaigning, the four countries should be differently classified: the US is still the least regulated, but Taiwan is getting very similar to the US, and Korea is moving toward it as well and is currently less regulated than Japan and more regulated than Taiwan.

In this chapter, as Table 3.1 shows, I considered institutional factors related to online campaigning in the US, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. First, I looked at the process of candidate selection in the four countries. In Japan, which does not have election primaries, general voters cannot participate in the process of selecting a party candidate. The LDP conducted "Open Entry 2016," but it was not fully a "primary." In the US, Taiwan, and Korea, which have developed online election campaign processes to different degrees, each has different primary systems, but they are similar in that they have shifted some of the party's power toward the people. In this way, conducting a primary can be considered as one of the keys to galvanize the Internet election campaigns. The length of the campaign period is also important here. The longer the campaign period, the more intense battles the candidates will face. Then, they need more digital tools such as social media to communicate with their voters. The three Asian countries all have set campaign periods, although Taiwan does not constrain pre-campaign activities substantially, making its campaigns in practice lengthy, like in the US. Korea and Japan still regulate pre-campaign campaign activities, but preliminary candidates can engage in limited activity, including online activity, in Korea. Thus, Japan, which defines campaign activities strictly, can be said to have the shortest campaign period among the four countries in essence. Second, the US has the least public subsidies available to election campaigns, alongside no cap on campaign expenditures. Taiwan has a formal cap but no punishment when candidates exceed it; also, public funding in Taiwan is insufficient to carry on extensive campaigns. Therefore, campaign financing is similar in Taiwan and the US. It is very different in Japan and

**Table 3.1** Summary of comparison on institutional factors in the US, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

| | *Japan* | *South Korea* | *Taiwan* | *US* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two-party system | Currently unstable; 2009 election was an exception | De facto two-party, as opposed to multiparty, system | Yes | Yes |
| **Have a primary for candidate selection** | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Length of campaign period | For lower house elections, 12 days<br>For upper house elections, 17 days<br>(Pre-campaign activity is not allowed although some preparatory activities are allowed) | For presidential elections, 23 days<br>For National Assembly members, 14 days<br>(Pre-campaign activity is not allowed except for preliminary candidates) | For presidential elections, 28 days<br>For the Legislative Yuan, 10 days<br>(However, no constraint on pre-campaign activity) | No limit to how far ahead a person intending to run for a president can file as a candidate |
| **Have public funding** | Yes | Yes | Yes, but not sufficient | Limited to presidential candidates |
| **Have any cap on campaign spending** | Yes | Yes | Yes, but no punishment for exceeding the campaign expenditure limit | No |
| **Have a lax regulatory environment for online campaigning, including paid online ads** | Not completely; only political parties can display banner ads linked to their campaign websites as paid Internet ads | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Korea, which are similar to each other in that regard. Third, as to the regulation of online campaigning, Japan just established a new, more open regulatory environment in 2013, quite a bit behind the three other countries. Although it is largely deregulated, there are still restrictions on the actions of individual candidates and voters and on the types of ads that can be placed, reflecting the still party-centered campaign system.

Thus, to sum up, Japanese online campaign characteristics include no primary, short campaign period, and restrictions on practices, whereas the US, Taiwan, and Korea have some differences but share a long campaign period with primary and lax regulatory environment for online campaigning. These institutional factors reflect and perpetuate the less advanced and slower development of Internet-based campaigning in Japan compared to the US, Taiwan, and Korea. Furthermore, a two-party system is one of the common characteristics of the US and Taiwan. The findings of this chapter suggest that Taiwan is moving toward greater "Americanization of elections" than Korea or Japan.

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CHAPTER 4

# Media Environments in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

*Morihiro Ogasahara*

## How to Compare Media Environments

As Popkin (2006) commented, "politicians are crowd-seekers, and changing media creates audiences, so they adopt the strategy of media change." This means that politicians have strong motivation to optimize their campaign strategies and embrace new media environments. Each society forms distinct media environments through its own historical contexts. Although in recent years there has been a strong shift toward the commercialization of the media on a global basis, media systems across countries are likely to show divergence rather than convergence, which suggests "news media worldwide would be converging toward a single global model of journalism" (Hallin 2009). In this chapter, I will present an overview of media environments in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in order to provide backgrounds for understanding the Internet election campaigns pursued in these four countries. To begin, notable comparative media research that has attempted to summarize patterns concerning the

M. Ogasahara (✉)
Faculty of Sociology, Kansai University,
3-3-35, Yamate-cho, Suita, Osaka, Japan



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similarities and differences between media systems across countries will be reviewed; this is in order to consider the best means of describing the media environments of the countries in question.

The best-known, pioneering example of comparative media research is *Four Theories of the Press*, which was conducted by Siebeit, Peterson, and Schramm during the Cold War (Siebeit et al. 1956). In this work, the researchers classified the world's media systems into four categories, the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist press, based on two fundamental categories: the authoritarian model, in which the media serves the state, and libertarian model, in which the media serves the individual. Their theories greatly influenced comparative media researches; however, they had serious flaws. Since their theories were primarily derived from Western press perspectives, it is difficult to apply them to media systems in other areas that have non-Western cultural and historical contexts (Yin 2008). In addition, they are not "theories about how different media systems actually work," but normative theories: "theories about how the press should be organized" (Hallin and Mancini 2008).

As a result of these flaws, researchers began to propose alternative models for classifying media systems, and attempted to redeem the deficiencies of Four Theories of the Press. Yin (2008) focused on Asian cultural context and proposed a two-dimensional model that focused on the degree of press freedom and press responsibility; this contrasts with the traditional one-dimensional model, which primarily focuses on the degree of press freedom. As it is obvious that responsible press is not necessarily a product of press freedom, especially when we consider the flood of fake news currently present on the Internet, Yin's model appears to be more helpful than the traditional one. Yin also suggested that press responsibility could be measured using a combination of both universal values in journalism (e.g., truth, accuracy, balance) and current community standards, that is, the results of public-opinion surveys on press responsibility. However, his framework still presents some difficulties for those seeking to apply it to comparative media studies; for example, the concept of press responsibility includes many aspects of journalism, and some are difficult to measure (e.g., balance).

Solving this issue is one of the focuses of this chapter. Here, I propose the application of a less complex measure than press responsibility to perform such analysis: trust in news. Trust in news is considerably important,

not only from the perspective of press responsibility, but also from the perspective of the media's effects on voters. Media-effect research suggests that perceived trust in news media causes various types of media effects; for example, Miller and Krosnic (2000) suggested that trust in news media causes politically knowledgeable people to engage in agenda-setting first (McCombs and Shaw 1972) and priming later (Iyengar and Kinder 1987), while Tsfati (2003) noted that mistrust in the media mediates the agenda-setting effect.

Norris (2004) claimed that press freedom cannot guarantee positive human development if disadvantaged groups are excluded from the information provided by mass media, and proposed a two-dimensional model that focused on the degree of freedom and the degree of media access. Her analysis indicated that press freedom and widespread access to the mass media are strongly related to many indicators of good governance (e.g., rule of law) and human development (e.g., UNDP's human-development index). While media access is naturally an important factor for considering a media environment, media usage, not only the availability of media but actual interaction between audiences and media, could be more informative for comparing the media environments of the United States, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. This is because these four countries share comparatively high levels of economic development and media access, and the former and the latter are correlative.

The most successful research exploring alternative models is Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (Hallin and Mancini 2004). The researchers scrutinized media systems in 18 countries from Western Europe and North America according to four major dimensions, media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and state intervention in the media system, and then classified each system into one of three models: polarized pluralist, democratic corporatist, or liberal. However, while their models have been cited in thousands of papers and have guided numerous comparative media studies, there are still limitations to the extent to which this analysis can be applied in this chapter. Since Hallin and Mancini focused on contrasting models of media systems developed in the West, their models and variables are closely tied to Western media systems. In fact, a review by Hallin, Mancini, and a group of comparative media researchers concluded that although the applicability of their dimensions is universal, their models cannot be applied to media systems outside the Western world (McCargo 2012; Voltmer 2012;

Hallin and Mancini 2012). Moreover, their models pay little attention to oral communication and the Internet, including social media, which are critical in this volume. Despite these deficiencies, the approach of Hallin and Mancini's study, to be more empirical than normative in order to appropriately explain the normative function of media systems, may be useful in this chapter. Voltmer (2012) suggested that Hallin and Mancini's variables, instead of their models, could assist in developing an understanding of media systems in non-Western areas; this is because it is clear that media markets and commercialism are eroding press responsibility worldwide, political parallelism is affecting the objectivity and neutrality of the press, and state intervention is a primary factor for classifying degrees of press freedom. However, the journalistic professionalism variable should be excluded from this analysis because it is difficult to measure and can be overfitted when used in comparative analyses of Western media systems that share historical and cultural values in terms of journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2012). Additionally, applying political polarization, meaning the vast and growing gap between liberals and conservatives, would be better than utilizing political parallelism, meaning distinct political tendencies in media, for explaining media environments in the United States, Korea, and Taiwan, in which fierce disputes between liberals and conservatives are common.

Based on the situation and considerations mentioned above, I will now describe media environments in the United States, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, primarily focusing on the following four dimensions: (1) historical context and political polarization, (2) media markets (the degree of commercialism in the media environment), (3) intervention in press freedom (through the legal system and other methods of exerting undue influence), and (4) audiences (media usage and trust in news).

## Historical Context and Political Polarization

### *Historical Context and Political Polarization (United States)*

The United States has a long tradition of democracy and has a highly developed media market; however, with the continuing development and introduction of ICT technologies, it is now facing problems caused by the rise of a new media environment. For example, when we consider the impact of the increasing popularity of the Internet, we can see that the diffusion of social media and smartphones have shifted control of news

distribution from newspapers to IT platforms such as Facebook. As it is becoming common to read news online and many local newspapers have folded, there is concern whether the watchdog role of journalism can be sustainable (Freedom House 2016). Hallin and Mancini (2004) classified the United States' media system as a liberal model, which means it has medium newspaper circulation, neutral commercial press, strong professionalization, and market-dominated. In the early years of television, terrestrial television broadcasting was an oligopoly market consisting of the three nationwide networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, and competition for audiences between these networks resulted in the embracing of political neutrality. At this time, the Fairness Doctrine, created as a result of the low number of channels and designed to uphold the right of the public to freely access various ideas, was implemented and required television companies to assume politically neutral stances. However, the number of channels soon expanded with the rapid spread of cable television in the 1980s and the increase in public access under the Cable Communications Act of 1984; consequently, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) eliminated the Fairness Doctrine in 1987. Combined with the availability of multichannel services on cable television, the removal of the doctrine instigated the age of segmented audiences. By aligning themselves with a particular ideology, conservative radio talk shows and TV channels, such as Fox News, and liberal media, such as MSNBC programs, have gained larger audiences than traditional news programs on ABC and NBC, which have remained neutral. Today, the media environment is becoming divided into liberal and conservative segments, and the political polarization of the American public is being promoted (Pew Research Center 2014). Based on the above, the media environment in the United States should be categorized as "politically polarized."

### *Historical Context and Political Polarization (Japan)*

Japan is one of the world's fastest-aging societies, with the share of the population aged 65 and over accounting for 26.3% in 2015, over 10% higher than that of the United States, Korea, and Taiwan. This population composition affects the characteristics of the Japanese media environment, giving a higher newspaper subscription rate, lower penetration rate of smartphones and social media, and a smaller number of voters that can be mobilized by Internet election campaigns. When we consider Japanese politics, one of the most notable aspects is that for almost all of its postwar

history, the country has been ruled by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) (from 1955 to 2009, excluding a short interruption of less than 1 year, and from 2012 to the present day). This lengthy period in power has allowed the party to tame the media environment in its favor. As Japan's administrative authority for broadcasting licenses is not an independent organization like the FCC in the United States, but is the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), which was integrated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) in 2001, the LDP government is able to indirectly strengthen its influence on media companies by using its authority to provide and suspend broadcast licenses to pressurize newspaper companies. Even in 1993, when the LDP government was temporarily suspended, the media continued to be influenced, as in this year the MPT warned Asahi Broadcasting Corporation that it faced the suspension of its license because it was suspected of biased reporting in favor of opposition political parties. Although it can be suggested that the MPT was merely upholding the Broadcast Act here, the LDP has continued to use this tactic repeatedly since returning to power. In 2009, the political situation became more fluid with the change of government from the LDP to the Democratic Party; however, the Democratic Party's administrative capacity disappointed the electorate (Kouno 2015) and, in the next general election (2012), the LDP was reelected, restoring the situation where there was no political opposition force with comparable power to the LDP. When citizens passively accept stable political environments as a result of a lack of effective political options, it is economically rational for the mainstream media to maintain political neutrality, as this will allow them to attract a larger audience. In contrast to the United States, Korea, and Taiwan, major Japanese newspapers and television companies are politically neutral, meaning they show a far lower level of reporting bias in favor of specific political parties. Considering the historical context outlined above, the media environment in Japan should be categorized as "not politically polarized."

### *Historical Context and Political Polarization (South Korea)*

Under the military dictatorship administrations of Park Jeong Hee and Jian Doo Hwan (1963–1979, 1980–1988, respectively), South Korean mass media was subject to strict controls. During this period, the government did not allow newspapers to be issued freely, and promoted the consolidation of newspaper companies. As a result, the newspaper market

became dominated by conservative newspapers such as *Chosun Ilbo*, *Donga Ilbo*, and *Korea JoongAng Daily*. The government also integrated commercial broadcasting stations into the country's public broadcasting services, KBS and MBC, and the TV market eventually became monopolized by these public broadcasting services (Che 2012). However, with the declaration of democratization in 1987, the issuing of newspapers began to be liberalized, and the number of newspaper companies in the country consequently increased sharply, with the establishment of the Hankyoreh, a political left-wing newspaper, in 1988 being especially notable. Further, in the TV market, SBS, a commercial broadcasting station, was established in 1990, and the TV market eventually became a parallel public and commercial system. The liberal Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations (1998–2003, 2003–2008, respectively), which conflicted with conservative newspapers, regulated the market share of newspapers and banned newspaper companies from owning comprehensive channels, that is, channels that are permitted to broadcast programs of all genres, including news, education, and entertainment, and that benefit from the must-carry rule, meaning all cable television, satellite broadcasting, and IPTV services are obliged to broadcast them by law. However, these policies were reversed when the conservative Lee Myung-bak administration (2008–2013) gained power, as it pursued the deregulation of the media market and enabled conservative newspaper companies to enter the TV market. Based on the historical circumstances given above, the Korean media environment should be categorized as "politically polarized."

### *Historical Context and Political Polarization (Taiwan)*

The Kuomintang (KMT) dictatorship placed Taiwan under martial law from 1949 until 1987, and during this period mass media was controlled by the government, KMT, and the military. The number of newspapers was restricted, and those that were permitted were required to be registered; new radio stations other than those supporting the government, KMT, and the military, were banned, with a supposed lack of available frequencies given as the reason for such restrictions; and terrestrial television was dominated by TTV, CTV, and CTS, which were owned by the government, KMT, and the military (Lin 2013). When martial law was ended in 1987 and the ban on alternative political parties was lifted, the liberalization of the media environment advanced. The restriction on the number of newspaper companies was removed in 1988 and, consequently,

the number of newspaper companies, as well as newspaper circulation, increased sharply. As a result of opposition to the domination of television and radio frequencies by channels owned by KMT, illegal cable television and underground radio channels spread rapidly in the late 1980s and 1990s, and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) used these as a means of performing public relations; an example of such a station is FTV, a pro-DPP terrestrial TV station that was established in 1996. Further, in 2003, when the DPP was in power, it amended the Radio and Television Act and banned the owning of television companies by the government, political parties, or the military. As a result of these changes in the media environment, there are now over 2000 newspapers and 56 cable television stations providing 277 channels in Taiwan (Taiwan Business topics 2016). Both the political environment and the media environment in Taiwan are largely polarized into pan-blue, which is pro-unification with China and sympathizes with KMT, and pan-green, which is pro-independence and supportive of DDP. Additionally, increases in the number of media companies since the liberalization of media environment has intensified competition between media companies, and these media companies are now becoming vulnerable to commercial interference (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1** Overview of the traditional media market

| | *Population in 2015 (share of population aged 65 or over)* | *Newspaper circulation in 2015 (Average circulation/adult population (copies per '000))* | *Multichannel television subscribers (household penetration rate)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 321 m (15%) | 42 m (160) | 99 m[a] (79%) |
| Japan | 127 m (26%) | 44 m (401) | 14 m (27%) |
| South Korea | 51 m (13%) | 10 m (222) | 28 m[b] (100%) |
| Taiwan | 23 m (13%) | No data[c] | 5 m (60%/85%[d]) |

Sources: The World Bank (2017); NDC (2016) for population; WAN-IFRA (2016) for newspaper circulation

[a]The number of cable plus subscribers (inclusive of wired cable, telco, and satellite) according to Nielsen (2017)

[b]The total number of cable television, satellite, and IPTV subscribers exceeds the number of households in Korea; in 2015, there were 20 million households in the country (Statistics Korea 2016)

[c]WAN-IFRA does not have data on the daily circulation of newspapers in Taiwan.

[d]Including households that are viewing illegally

## Media Market

### *Newspaper Market*

*Newspaper Market (United States)*

In 2015, the number of daily newspapers in circulation in the United States was 42 million, and average circulation per 1000 adults was 160 (WAN-IFRA 2016). Until the 1980s, the vast size of the United States meant that national daily newspapers were not technologically feasible (Hallin and Mancini 2004), so most newspapers were local. However, at present there are two main national daily newspapers in the United States, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, while the *New York Times* also issues a national edition. The newspaper industry is currently facing a crisis as, due to the Internet's increasing in popularity and consequent changes in styles of reading news, the print circulation of newspapers is declining rapidly, which has affected advertising revenue. Since newspaper companies in the United States are highly dependent on this advertising revenue, such a sharp decline has severely affected newspaper companies. Although newspaper companies have attempted to compensate for their losses by increasing digital revenue, thus far they have been unable to offset the decrease in print revenue. Pew Research Center (2016b) reported that, in 2015, average weekday newspaper circulation fell 7%, with print circulation declining by 9% and digital circulation increasing by 2%. Further, advertising revenue decreased by 8% from 2014 to 2015, while the employment provided by the newspaper industry has decreased by 39%—20,000, over the past 20 years. These decreases in the number of local newspapers and reporters have weakened newspapers' ability to perform the role of a watchdog (Freedom House 2016); although NPOs such as ProPublica conduct excellent investigative reporting, they have not compensated for the weakening of newspaper companies.

*Newspaper Market (Japan)*

Japan has one of the highest levels of newspaper circulation in the world. In 2015, the circulation of its daily newspapers was 44 million, and the average circulation per 1000 adults was 401 (WAN-IFRA 2016). This huge level of sales is maintained by advanced home delivery networks developed by the newspaper companies; 95% of the newspapers bought in the country are delivered (Nihon Shinbun Kyokai 2016a). The national daily newspapers in Japan are the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the *Asahi Shimbun*,

the *Mainichi Newspapers*, the *Nikkei*, and the *Sankei Shimbun*, with circulation ranging from 1.6 to 9 million. Solidifying the significance of Japan's newspapers, of the ten paid daily newspapers that have the largest circulation in the world, Japanese national papers hold first, second, sixth, and tenth place (WAN-IFRA 2016). In 2015, the total revenue of the newspaper market was 1.8 trillion JPY (15 billion USD), with sales revenue accounting for 59% of this; the proportion of advertising revenue was relatively low, at 22% (Nihon Shinbun Kyokai 2016b). Even in Japan, the revenue of the newspaper market, especially advertising revenue, is on a downward trend, also suffering as a result of the spread of the Internet. Over 10 years, from 2005 to 2015, total newspaper revenue was found to have declined by 26%, advertising revenue by 46%, and sales revenue by 17%. Exacerbating this issue is the fact that Japanese newspaper companies have been slow to effect the digitalization of their businesses. The numbers of online paid subscribers to the *Nikkei* and *Asahi Shimbun*, the first and second largest paid newspapers in Japan, respectively, are 0.5 million and 0.3 million, respectively, which is far lower than their numbers of print subscribers, 2.7 million and 6.4 million, also respectively. In effect, the country's newspaper delivery networks, which have been very effective at maintaining existing print subscribers, can be considered to represent a hindrance to the digitalization of the newspaper companies' business models.

*Newspaper Market (South Korea)*

In 2015, the circulation of daily newspapers in South Korea was 10 million, and the average circulation per 1000 adults was 222 (WAN-IFRA 2016). The top five Korean daily national newspapers in terms of circulation are three major conservative newspapers, *Chosun Ilbo*, *JoongAng Ilbo*, and *Dong-A Ilbo*, and two liberal newspapers, the *Hankyoreh* and the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*. As mentioned in the previous section, in the era of martial law many newspapers were forced to fold, while major conservative newspapers enjoyed increased benefits thanks to financial support from the military regime (Cheon 2009). As a result of the legacy of this policy, the circulation of conservative newspapers remains larger than that of liberal newspapers. The newspaper market in Korea is experiencing difficulties: changes in news-reading styles as a result of the penetration of the Internet, increased competition between an excessive number of newspaper companies, reduction in trust in and satisfaction with newspapers, and declines in the subscription rate of consumers and

advertising revenue. Reuters Institute (2016a) reported that between 2011 and 2016, the weekly usage rate of newspapers in Korea declined from 45% to 28%. In order to address this decline, newspaper companies in Korea have become eager to digitize their business models, adopting a digital-first strategy and investing in digital technologies, including robot journalism; however, it is currently difficult for them to improve their business conditions because the initiative in terms of distributing news online has been gained by major portal sites such as Naver and Daum.

*Newspaper Market (Taiwan)*

Reuters Institute (2016b) reported that 44% of Taiwanese read newspapers at some point every week. The major national daily newspapers in Taiwan are *United Daily News*, *China Times*, *Liberty Times*, and *Apple Daily*. The *United Daily News* and *China Times* are pan-blue, meaning they have close relationships with KMT and, consequently, they enjoyed good circulation growth during the martial law period. Conversely, the pan-green publication *Liberty Times* was established in 1980, after the end of the martial law, and has been increasing its circulation in recent times. These three newspapers are political actors with a clear political slant, and their reporting is influenced by their owners or the politicians they align themselves with. *Apple Daily*, established in 2003 by Next Media, a Hong Kong-based media company, is politically neutral and has grown rapidly by reporting on the scandals of political and business establishments. Taiwanese newspaper readership and advertising revenue are declining because of cable television and the Internet, and newspaper companies' business is worsening as a result. Nielsen (2016) reports that between 2000 and 2015, the daily usage rate of newspapers dropped from 59% to 33%. This bad business environment is affecting the companies' reporting policies, as well as the reliability of their stories. Since the Want Want group, a Taiwanese food company whose business is highly dependent on the Chinese market, gained control of the *China Times*, the *China Times* has been criticized for increasing its number of pro-China reports. The Want Want group even attempted to take over *Apple Daily* in 2012; however, they were forced to abandon this as a result of a fierce protest movement organized by media watchdog groups (Yamada 2013). Finally, there is another issue present in the Taiwanese media market: placement marketing. This is advertising disguised as news reports and is considered a serious problem; it has been highlighted that Chinese local governments

regularly "buy" news articles in Taiwanese newspapers in order to promote China (Kawakami 2012).

## *Television Market*

*Television Market (United States)*

In 2016, the percentage of monthly television users in the United States was 94% (including playback viewing), and these people spent an average of 31 hours per week watching TV. Also in this year, the number of households with multichannel television was 99 million; 53 million had cable TV, 36 million had satellite television, and 10 million had some form of telecommunication connection (Nielsen 2017). The television market in the United States is highly oligopolistic; in 2015 there were 1390 terrestrial commercial stations in the country, and over 80% of them belonged to the big three networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, or to Fox or CW. Further, the top two cable TV companies have 64% of the total cable TV subscribers, and satellite broadcasting is dominated by DirecTV and Dish Network (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2016b). Such an excessive concentration of the television market has raised concerns that this situation could reduce viewers' opportunities to access diverse political opinions. Although the number of cable television subscribers is decreasing because of the diffusion of OTT (over-the-top) services such as Netflix and Hulu, television remains dominant as a news medium; the number of viewers of news programs on the big three networks and cable news has remained the same since 2007 to 2015 (Pew Research Center 2016b).

## *Radio Market (United States)*

Radio listenership in the United States is huge, dwarfing the radio audiences of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, as well as the political influence of those countries' radio stations. Hence, in this chapter the only radio market I will discuss is that of the United States. iHeartMedia (which has the largest AM/FM radio network in the United States), Sirius (which has 28 million satellite radio subscribers), National Public Radio (NPR) (which is a public broadcasting service), and Pandora (which is an Internet radio station that attracts 81 million active users) are the main players in the US radio market (NHK Broadcasting Culture

Research Institute 2016b). In regard to the country's listenership, Nielsen (2017) reported that in 2016 97% of Americans over 12 years of age listened to traditional AM/FM terrestrial radio at some point each month; further, the monthly listenership for online radio has also been reported to be at a high level, representing 57% of the population in 2015 (Pew Research Center 2016b). Despite these high listenership numbers, the American public's radio consumption continues to increase. Although AM/FM's spot revenue from advertising is declining, profit from both digital and off-air advertising has been increasing since 2012, creating a general balance in the radio market's total revenue (Pew Research Center 2013; 2016b). Lastly, if we consider the political aspects of the radio market, most evident is that political radio talk shows such as the Rush Limbaugh Show are quite popular among decided conservatives; these programs are considered to have pioneered the polarization of the United States' media environment, as they were the first to intentionally market themselves at a particular political position, showing that this method is more profitable than remaining neutral (Sobieraj and Berry 2011).

*Television Market (Japan)*

The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (2016a) reported that in 2015 85% of Japanese watched television, and they spent an average of 203 minutes per day doing so. However, despite this high viewership, the penetration of multichannel television in Japan was extremely low; although 29 million households subscribed to cable television in 2016, only 8 million accessed a multichannel service (Japan Cable and Telecommunications Association 2016). The estimated number of households with a multichannel television was approximately 14 million in 2015: 8 million with multichannel cable television, 3 million with satellite television (Japan Satellite Broadcasting Association 2017), and 3 million with a telecommunication connection[1] (NTT group 2016). In Japan, in terms of nationwide television networks, there are five commercial broadcasting networks (JNN, NNN, FNN, ANN, and TXN) and one public broadcasting network (NHK). Ninety percent of the 127 commercial television stations in Japan belong to one of these commercial broadcasting networks. Further, the top four groups of Multiple Service Operators (MSOs) in the cable television market account for 53% of subscribing households; however, the concentration of subscribers is not as high as that of the United States. In 2016, the revenue of the commercial and

cable television market was 2.2 trillion JPY (20 billion USD) and 1.3 trillion JPY (12 billion USD), respectively; both revenues have remained at the same level since 2010 (MIC 2016). Additionally, the Japanese television market is not segmented, in contrast to that of the United States, Korea, and Taiwan, because there are limited options for Japanese audiences in regard to television channels beyond the terrestrial television stations.

*Television Market (South Korea)*

KPF (2016) reported that in 2015 94% of Koreans watched television and that they spent an average of 163 minutes per day doing so; additionally, almost 100% of Korean households had access to a multichannel television service: 15 million subscribed to cable television, 11 million to IPTV, and 3 million to satellite broadcasting (MSIP 2015) (it should be noted that the number of IPTV subscribers is rapidly increasing as a result of bundled services available for mobile phones (FMMC 2016)). The terrestrial TV market in Korea is dominated by two public broadcasting networks, KBS and MBC, and a commercial broadcasting network, SBS. Until 2009, only terrestrial television stations were permitted to own comprehensive channels; however, The Lee Myung-bak administration amended the Broadcasting Act and permitted four newspaper companies to create new comprehensive channels: TV Chosun, Channel A, JTBC, and MBN, which are owned by *Chosun Ilbo*, the *Dong-a Ilbo*, *JoongAng Ilbo*, and *The Korea Economic Daily*, respectively. All of these newspaper companies are conservative and the transparency of the selection and licensing of these companies has been criticized by the opposition party (Tanaka 2013). In 2014, the total revenue of the broadcasting market was 5 trillion KRW (5 billion USD), and the public broadcasting service accounted for a large portion of this, 58%, with commercial broadcasts accounting for 21% and cable channels for 11% (KPF 2015). One notable decrease in terms of Korean viewership relates to TV news programs, with Reuters Institute (2016a) in 2016 highlighting the issue that the number of weekly viewers of TV news has been gradually declining since 2011, falling from 95% to 71%.

*Television Market (Taiwan)*

Eighty-eight percent of Taiwanese watch television every day and television remains the most popular news source in the country (Nielsen 2016). The terrestrial television market in Taiwan is controlled by four

commercial broadcasting stations, CTS, TTV, CTV, and FTV, and these are politically polarized (Reuters Institute 2016b); however, today, Taiwanese mainly watch television on cable television, and consequently the share of terrestrial TV companies in terms of television advertising revenue has declined sharply; from over 90% in 1993 to 28% by 2003 (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2004). According to the National Communication Commission (NCC), 5 million Taiwanese subscribe to cable television and the household penetration rate is 60%, but many additional households watch cable television illegally. When these extra households are taken into account, the substantial household penetration rate is estimated to be 85%. Further, CHT, the biggest telecommunications company in Taiwan, provides an IPTV service and has over one million subscribers. However, satellite television is not very popular in Taiwan (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2016b). In regard to Taiwan's public broadcasting service, PTS is politically neutral, but the average viewership is at a very low level, approximately 0.2% in 2009; hence, its influence is weak (Yamada 2011a). The percentage of daily television users is slowly declining; in 2010 it was 93%, and by 2015 it was 88% (Nielsen 2016). There are 300 TV channels in Taiwan, but excessive commercialism spurred by fierce competition is degrading the quality of TV programs and weakening the journalistic ability of the television companies (Yamada 2017). For example, placement marketing, which refers to advertisements disguised as news reports, is unfortunately becoming common in the Taiwanese media market (Yamada 2011b); further, to give another example of journalistic weakness, Sanlih E-Television terminated a popular political debate program that disputed the policies of Chinese government because it was concerned that this would have a bad influence on Taiwan's business in Chinese markets; a decision for which it was roundly criticized (Yamada 2013).

### *Internet Market*

*Internet Market (United States)*

The percentage of individuals using the Internet in the United States is 72% (ITU 2015); lower than that of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The most popular social media platform is Facebook, and GlobalWebIndex (2016) reported that 72% of Americans use it. The majority of US adults (62%) are

**Table 4.2** Overview of Internet markets

| | *Percentage of individuals using the Internet* | *Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants* | *Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants* | *Percentage of people who use smartphones*[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 74% | 31.0 | 117.6 | 72% |
| Japan | 91% | 30.6 | 126.5 | 59% |
| South Korea | 90% | 40.3 | 118.5 | 91% |
| Taiwan | 78% | 24.3 | 127.3 | 82% |

Sources: ITU (2015); [a]Consumer Barometer with Google (2017)

**Table 4.3** Penetration of the top three social media platforms in the four countries in 2016

| | *1* | *2* | *3* |
|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Facebook (72%) | Twitter (39%) | GooglePlus (29%) |
| Japan | Twitter (46%) | LINE (42%) | Facebook (38%) |
| South Korea | Facebook (64%) | Twitter (36%) | KakaoTalk (31%) |
| Taiwan | Facebook (82%) | LINE (69%) | GooglePlus (42%) |

Source: GlobalWebIndex (2016)

now receiving their news through social media, and this is reflected by the fact that the main news pathways on the Internet have been shifting from news websites to social media and mobile applications (Pew Research Center 2016a).For most news websites, access from mobile phones exceeds access from desktop computers (Pew Research Center 2016b). In response to this, in 2016 Facebook and Google launched Instant Articles and the Accelerated Mobile Page (AMP), respectively, which enable users to access news faster and easier with their mobile phones, and which also increase the control digital platforms have over news distribution. Facebook has positioned itself as primarily a platform for information distribution and does not accept responsibility for the dissemination of news on its site. However, such a policy meant that during the 2016 US presidential election fake news could be widely shared, especially among Donald Trump supporters, via Facebook and Twitter, and this negatively affected the democratic election process. Later, after receiving criticism of their policies, Facebook and Google announced measures to fight fake news (Tables 4.2 and 4.3).

*Internet Market (Japan)*

The percentage of individuals using the Internet in Japan is as high as 91% (ITU 2015), while the percentage of people who use smartphones (59%) and the penetration of the most popular social media platform (46% use Twitter) are the lowest among the four countries. This low penetration of social media is partly because of the high proportion of elderly in the population; the utilization rate of Twitter is 53% for Internet users in their 20s and 11% for those in their 60s and over, for LINE it is 63% for those in their 20s and 8% for those 60 and over, and for Facebook it is 49% for those in their 20s and 22% for those who are 60 and over (MIC 2015). The most popular portal site in Japan is Yahoo! Japan, and Yahoo! News, which attracts over 5 billion page views per month, has established its position as the dominant news website in the country. However, LINE NEWS, which was created in 2013 by LINE, the most popular messaging application/social media platform in Japan, in response to the increasing popularity of smartphones, attracted over 59 million monthly active users in 2017, threatening Yahoo! News' dominance in regard to online news distribution. Since the revenue of most online news sites depends on their page views, the posting of low-quality content, including fake news, is becoming a big problem worldwide, including in Japan. For example, in 2016 DeNA, one of the main players in the mobile content business in Japan, was criticized for posting false or illegally copied content on its medical information portal site and was actually forced to close the site.

*Internet Market (South Korea)*

Ninety percent of individuals in South Korea use the Internet (ITU 2015). To revive the economy after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the Kim Dae Jung administration made the IT industry the core of its industry promotion, and rapidly developed broadband Internet infrastructure. This early start has resulted in Korea still possessing one of the best Internet infrastructures in the world; both the penetration of fixed broadband (40%) and smartphones (91%) in the country is the highest among the four countries analyzed in this chapter. One of the characteristics of the Internet market in Korea is the high penetration of original Korean online services. Naver accounts for 77% and Daum for 20% of the search engine market (Return On Now 2015), and 99% of Korean messaging-service users use KakaoTalk, compared to just 29% using Facebook Messenger (Forbes 2017). Naver and Kakao are the two giants in the Korean Internet market. Naver provides "Naver," the largest portal in

Korea, "BAND" which is a social media platform, and "LINE," a messaging application/social media platform that is popular across East Asia. Meanwhile, Kakao provides "Daum," the second largest portal, and "KakaoTalk." Korea hosts many Internet news providers; however, most are experiencing financial trouble. Even OhmyNews, known for integrating citizen journalism and professional journalism, and also for contributing to the victory of Roh Moo-hyun in the 2002 South Korean presidential election, has been in financial difficulties. Since online news distribution in Korea is dominated by portals, Naver and Daum, low-quality articles designed to attract page views have represented a problem (The Hankyoreh 2015), similar to the situation in Japan mentioned earlier. In response, Naver and Daum jointly formed the Committee for the Evaluation of News Partnership in 2015, which examines the qualifications of news providers.

*Internet Market (Taiwan)*

Seventy-eight percent of Taiwanese use the Internet (ITU 2015). A notable aspect is that the proportion of mobile broadband is extremely large: 22 million mobile broadband connections in comparison to 5.7 million fixed broadband connections (NCC 2017). One of the primary characteristics of the Taiwanese Internet market is the remarkably high penetration of social media. The penetration of Facebook, the most popular social media platform in Taiwan, is 82%, the highest among the four countries, and the penetration rate of LINE (69%) in Taiwan is also higher than that in Japan. Reuters Institute (2016b), based on Alexa's traffic metrics, reports that the top three news sites in Taiwan are Now News, Apple Daily, and China Times.

## Intervention in Press Freedom

### *Intervention in Press Freedom (United States)*

Freedom House (2016) classifies press freedom in the United States as "free." Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are guaranteed under the First Amendment of the US Constitution; the courts give the press broad protection from libel and defamation suits; there is no regulation on issuing newspapers, and regulation of broadcast content is minimal; and the FCC, which is responsible for issuing licenses to broadcasting stations and regulating the broadcasting/communication

**Table 4.4** Press freedom status and scores

| | *Press freedom Status* | *Press freedom Score (0 = Best, 100 = Worst)* | *Legal Environment (0 = Best, 30 = Worst)* | *Political Environment (0 = Best, 40 = Worst)* | *Economic Environment (0 = Best, 30 = Worst)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Free | 21 | 6 | 10 | 5 |
| Japan | Free | 26 | 5 | 15 | 6 |
| South Korea | Partly free | 33 | 10 | 14 | 9 |
| Taiwan | Free | 26 | 9 | 9 | 8 |

Source: Freedom House (2016)

market, is an independent agency from the government. Although the FCC sets rules on the cross-ownership of television and newspapers and the number of local television stations that can be owned by one company, many media companies effectively circumvent these restrictions through service agreements, which are "arrangements among stations in the same television market through which they share newsgathering resources, video, and/or marketing and management activities" (Yanich 2015) (Freedom House 2016). However, this is not something to be encouraged, as excessive concentration of media ownership can negatively impact the diversity of the media and opinion markets (Table 4.4).

### *Intervention in Press Freedom (Japan)*

Press freedom in Japan is "free" (Freedom House 2016). The Japanese constitution guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and there is no regulation on issuing newspapers; further, the Japanese Broadcast Act stipulates that television programs must be politically fair and MIC has the authority to issue broadcasting licenses to television stations. However, the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications recently reiterated that the government has the right to shut down broadcasters that MIC judges to be politically biased, and this has raised concerns about the freedom of the press in the country (US Department of State 2017). Kisha kurabu (press clubs), which are organizations composed of journalists from major news companies, manage press confer-

ences featuring members of government, politicians, and companies; they are often criticized for discriminating against freelancers and foreign reporters and for promoting self-censorship and a lack of diversity in the opinion market (Freedom House 2015; Reporters Without Borders 2017). In many cases, governments pay the press-room expenses of the kisya kurabu. In fact, many Japanese media companies tend to conduct self-censorship in order to avoid offending the government; in 2014, the NHK president remarked that NHK could not report anything that disagreed with the government, but this was disputed.

### *Intervention in Press Freedom (South Korea)*

Freedom House (2016) reports that press freedom in South Korea is "partly free," which means that there is less freedom in Korea than in the United States, Japan, or Taiwan. In South Korea, freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution; however, the legal system allows the government to interfere with the press. The Newspaper Act stipulates that print/online newspaper companies must respect human dignity, human values, and basic democratic order; however, this law can be abused by the government, allowing it to intervene in the press, and this has caused considerable concern. In a notable example of the government's powers, the Seoul bureau chief of the Japanese newspaper *Sankei Shimbun* was indicted for defaming President Park Geun-hye; the paper had cited rumors featured in the *Chosun Ilbo* concerning the president's activities on the day of the Sewol ferry disaster. The charge was criticized both in Korea and abroad. Local newspaper companies that are negatively affected by excessive competition can receive various support from the Korea Press Foundation (KPF), sourced from public funds. Providing this support can protect such local newspaper companies, but there is also a concern that it could weaken the watchdog role of news media (Cheon 2012). The election law that banned candidates from using the Internet and social media during election campaigns was amended in 2012, and candidates can now conduct Internet campaigns freely. Further, the real name net law, despite being effectively abolished in 2012, remains valid during election periods, meaning visitors to news media sites are required to record their real identities before they post on bulletin board systems or chatrooms.

### *Intervention in Press Freedom (Taiwan)*

The status of press freedom in Taiwan is "free," and Taiwan is one of the freest countries in Asia in this regard (Freedom House 2016). Martial law was ended in the country in 1987, and regulations on the issuing of newspapers were abolished the following year; most broadcast programs are excluded from preliminary censorship, except for programs produced in China; and the NCC, which was established in 2006, is an independent agency issuing licenses to broadcasting stations and regulating the broadcasting/communication market, although it is easier for the government to intervene in the process of selecting the committee members than it is for the US or Korean governments to interfere in the selection processes for FCC and KCC members, respectively (Yamada 2010). As previously mentioned, intense competition between media companies have made these companies vulnerable to commercial interference. The main threat to Taiwanese freedom of the press is not regulation by the Taiwanese government but the economic influence of the Chinese government. The US Department of State (2017) reports that some media companies continue to conduct self-censorship as a result of political considerations and the influence of local businesses that have close ties to the Chinese government.

## Audience

### *Audience (United States)*

A high number of Americans tend to actively obtain news and interact with news stories via social media. Reuters Institute's international comparative study (2016b) suggests that Americans use television and the Internet as their primary sources of news (Table 4.5), and the main methods of finding news online are social media and news sites/apps (Table 4.6).[2] In regard to interacting with news, in all four countries sharing news with friends and commenting on news are the first and second most popular methods, and these interactions are mainly conducted through social media. A much higher number of Americans tend to share and comment on news via social media than Japanese or Koreans (Table 4.7). Americans have low trust in news, journalists, and news organizations, although not as low as Koreans', and consider news media to

**Table 4.5** Primary sources of news

| | *TV* | *Radio* | *Print* | *Social Media* | *Online (incl. social media)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 44% | 5% | 5% | 15% | 42% |
| Japan | 42% | 2% | 15% | 8% | 40% |
| South Korea | 38% | 1% | 5% | 6% | 55% |
| Taiwan | 41% | 1% | 7% | 14% | 51% |

Source: Reuters Institute (2016b)

**Table 4.6** Methods of finding news online

| | *News web/apps* | *Search* | *Aggregator* | *Social media* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 35% | 30% | 9% | 35% |
| Japan | 12% | 38% | 43% | 14% |
| South Korea | 13% | 60% | 38% | 18% |
| Taiwan | 34% | 60% | 12% | 54% |

Source: Reuters Institute (2016b)

**Table 4.7** Interacting with news

| | *Commenting on news on social networks* | *Commenting on news on news websites* | *Sharing news via social networks* | *Sharing news via email* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 22% | 16% | 25% | 16% |
| Japan | 6% | 4% | 9% | 5% |
| South Korea | 9% | 8% | 13% | 6% |
| Taiwan | 26% | 10% | 34% | 13% |

Source: Reuters Institute (2016b)

not be free from undue political/commercial influences (Table 4.8). The political polarization of the American public is progressing over time, and conservatives tend to trust fewer news outlets than liberals (Pew Research Center 2014). Studies of the hostile media effect (Vallone et al. 1985) suggest that partisan audiences are likely to perceive politically balanced reporting as biased. Further, Arceneaux et al. (2012) also highlighted that

**Table 4.8** Trust in news

| | *Trust in news* | *Trust in journalists* | *Trust in news organizations* | *Free from political influence* | *Free from commercial influence* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | −6% | −11% | −10% | −29% | −23% |
| Japan | +26% | −11% | +7% | −6% | −10% |
| South Korea | −7% | −28% | −27% | −42% | −41% |
| Taiwan | +19% | −7% | +11% | −18% | −21% |

Note: Percentage of net agree (including "strongly agree" and "tend to agree") minus net disagree (including "strongly disagree" and "tend to disagree")

Source: Reuters Institute (2016b)

exposure to news that opposes one's political attitude lowers trust in news media in general. It is considered that the progress of the political polarization of American public and the diffusion of polarized media, such as Fox News, have lowered trust in news in general. It is also considered that the low level of trust in traditional news media has encouraged audiences to engage in selective exposure to pro-attitudinal news through social media. During the 2016 US presidential election, distrust in traditional media was particularly remarkable in Republican supporters (Gallup 2016), and the gap between traditional media coverage and voters' political attitudes was noticeable.

### *Audience (Japan)*

Reuters Institute's study (2016b) suggests that Japanese use television and the Internet as primary sources of news, and the rate of newspaper use in the country is over twice that of the United States, Korea, and Taiwan (Table 4.5). Although an aggregator (Yahoo! News) represents the main online source of news for Japanese (43%), only 26% of respondents who receive news through an aggregator notice the news media brand from which that information was originally sourced. In other words, the Japanese respondents tend to passively receive news distributed by traditional media or online news aggregators (Table 4.6). Japanese also tend to be passive in terms of news interaction; both

their rate of sharing news and commenting on news are the lowest among the four countries (Table 4.7). Some surveys have shown that Japanese have high trust in news and traditional media in general (Hashimoto 2016; Japan Press Research Institute 2016). Reuters Institute (2016b) reports that Japanese have the highest trust in news and news organization, as well as the highest belief that most news media are free from undue political/commercial influence, in the four countries (Table 4.8). It is considered that the low level of polarization in the Japanese media environment has maintained this trust in news at such a high level.

### *Audience (South Korea)*

Reuters Institute's study (2016b) suggests that, of the four countries, Koreans have the highest use of the Internet as a primary source of news (Table 4.5), and they mainly use search engines and aggregators (Naver News and Daum News) (Table 4.6). Although the penetration rate of social media is high in South Korea (Table 4.3), Koreans do not use social media for obtaining news, or for sharing or commenting on news, to any great degree (Table 4.7). Koreans' trust in news, journalists, and news organizations is the lowest of the four countries, and the percentage of respondents who consider news media to be free from undue political/commercial influences is also the lowest (Table 4.8). KPF (2015) noted that 73% of Koreans trust television coverage most, 17% trust the Internet most, and only 8% trust newspapers the most, provided those media cover the same issue. It can be relatively safely asserted that the root of Koreans' media distrust is the country's history of conservative newspapers sharing interests with military regimes that controlled the media market. Another feature of the Korean audience is its aggressiveness in relation to political activities on the Internet. For example, Roh Moo-hyun won the 2002 presidential election with the help of an Internet election campaign by mobilizing a protest against an accident in which two girls were crushed to death by a US army tractor (The Guardian 2003), and Park Geun-hye won in the 2012 presidential election by using KakaoTalk to mobilize senior voters (Lee 2013). Further, in 2016, large-scale candle rallies mobilized through social media occurred across Korea in response to

President Park Geun-hye's corruption scandal, and the president was consequently removed from power in March 2017 (The Washington Post 2017). Koreans' passiveness in regard to obtaining/interacting with news online seems to contradict their aggressive political Internet activities; however, it is natural that not only the media environment but also people's political interests influence their political activities on the Internet. The voter turnouts for the 2002 and 2012 Korean presidential elections were 70.8% and 75.8%, respectively. These numbers are far higher than the voter turnouts for 2012 and 2016 US presidential elections, 54.9% and 53.1%, respectively, and the 2014 and 2016 Japanese national elections, 52.7% and 54.7%, respectively. Although their online activities related to news are passive, Koreans' high degree of interest in online political activities gives them sufficient motivation to be aggressive in this regard.

### *Audience (Taiwan)*

The Taiwanese are active in regard to obtaining and interacting with news online. Reuters Institute's study (2016b) suggests that Taiwanese use the Internet and television as their primary sources of news (Table 4.5). They mainly use search engines and social media, but rarely use aggregators (Table 4.6), and they tend to regularly share or comment on news via social media (Table 4.7). Taiwanese have high trust in news, despite the media market being politically polarized (Table 4.8). The percentage of trust in the news, considering that news media are free from undue political/commercial influence, is the second highest in the four countries, and the percentage of trust in news organizations is the highest. The reason Taiwanese have such high trust in news is believed to be that both pan-blue media and pan-green media are free to report without intervention (except commercial intervention), and audiences recognize such polarization as natural because of their historical context and can actively select news outlets that conform with their political attitude. Similar to Korea, the Taiwanese audience has a high degree of political interest; voter turnout in the 2012 and 2016 Taiwanese presidential elections was 77.4% and 66.3%, respectively.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I described the media environments in the United States, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan from the perspective of historical context and political polarization, media market, intervention in press freedom, and audience. In order to help provide an understanding of the background of the Internet election campaigns in these countries, which are described in the subsequent chapter, I shall now summarize and consider the characteristics of the media environments in each country.

### *Conclusion (United States)*

The media environment in the United States is politically polarized, intervention in press freedom is weak, and the audience's trust in news is at a middle level (Table 4.9). It was previously economically rational for media companies in the United States to report politically neutrally and objectively, as this allowed them to obtain a larger audience. This changed, however, in the 1980s with the diffusion of cable TV, which allowed audiences to gain access to multichannel services. This multitude of new channels meant that the need for the Fairness Doctrine was decreased, and this led to its repeal in 1987. Further, the diffusion of cable television also caused audiences to become segmented, and it consequently became commercially advantageous for media companies to clarify their political positions and to promote themselves toward niche markets, as Fox News and MSNBC did. As the media environment became more polarized, it is

**Table 4.9** Differences between media environments in the four countries

| | *United States* | *Japan* | *South Korea* | *Taiwan* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political polarization in the media system | Polarized | Not polarized | Polarized | Polarized |
| Penetration of social media | High | Low | High | High |
| Status of press freedom | Free | Free | Partly free | Free |
| Importance of social media for obtaining news | Important | Less important | Less important | Important |
| Interaction with news online | High | Low | Low | High |
| Trust in news | Middle | High | Low | Middle |
| Voter turnout | Low | Low | High | High |

believed that voters, especially conservatives, lost trust in politically neutral news coverage, somewhat due to the hostile media effect. The penetration rate of social media and smartphones is high in the United States, and the usage rate of social media as a source of news and for sharing or commenting on news is also high. In other words, Americans are active in news consumption and interaction. Since the political messages of candidates are shared and diffused via social media and voters can be comparatively easily mobilized, it is considered that the media environment in the United States is suitable for Internet election campaigns. In fact, since the 2008 US presidential election, the ability to organize an Internet election campaign has had a strong influence on the victory or defeat of a campaign. However, in a media environment where polarized media acquires larger audiences and social media plays a major role in news distribution, both conservatives and liberals tend to enclose themselves in their "filter bubble" (Pariser 2011) and society is becoming more fragmented. The fact that most traditional media could not predict the victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election is an example of this.

### *Conclusion (Japan)*

The media environment in Japan is not politically polarized, intervention in press freedom is weak, and the audience has high trust in news (Table 4.9). Through democratic elections, not martial law or autocracy, the conservative LDP government has held power in the country almost continuously since 1955. Enjoying a situation in which it has no major political opposition, the LDP government is not required to strongly intervene in media coverage; hence, mainstream media has retained political neutrality in order to attract wider audiences (exclusive "kisya kurabu" (reporter's clubs) represent an advantageous system for the mainstream media to obtain political information from politicians and the government). This lack of political options also means that citizens are less motivated to actively collect news and participate in political discourses. The low penetration rate of multichannel television, along with the application of the Fairness Doctrine to television companies, has delayed the segmentation of Japanese audiences. A major characteristic of the Japanese media environment is not political polarization, but the lack of diversity. Another characteristic of the Japanese media system is that the influence of social media is quite weak in this field. The country's penetration rate of social media and smartphones is the lowest among the four countries,

and the usage rate of social media as a source of news and for interacting with news via social media is also at a very low level. This low penetration rate of social media lowers the number of voters whom politicians can mobilize through election campaigns based on social media. The Japanese audience's passiveness in relation to news consumption on the Internet also hampers the sharing of candidates' messages via social media and reduces the messages' reach. In summary, the media environment in Japan dissuades political candidates from engaging in Internet election campaigns.

### *Conclusion (South Korea)*

The media environment in South Korea is politically polarized, intervention in press freedom is somewhat strong, and the audience's trust in news is the lowest in the four countries (Table 4.9). The background of these characteristics is the following: A military dictatorship (1963 to 1987) aggressively controlled news media, and conservative newspaper companies dominated the Korean media market and grew with the support of the military regime (Cheon 2009). Although the strength of the liberal media increased after the end of the military regime, Korean governments, regardless of whether they were conservative and liberal, have used media regulation as a means of enhancing their own political power. The penetration rates in Korea of broadband Internet, smartphones, and social media are high; however, Koreans are highly dependent on television and aggregators on the Internet for obtaining news, and are passive in regard to interacting with news via social media. On the other hand, Koreans have a high degree of political interest, represented by their much higher voter turnout in comparison to that of United States and Japan, and the Internet has previously been used to influence election results in the country. The victories of Roh Moo-hyun and Park Geun-hye in the 2002 and 2012 Korean presidential elections, respectively, were largely influenced by their Internet election campaigns, which mobilized tens of thousands of voters. Further, the impeachment of Park Geun-hye in 2016 was also achieved as a result of nationwide rallies mobilized through the Internet. Although Koreans are passive in terms of obtaining news online and interacting with news, which suggests that, as in Japan, few voters can be mobilized through Internet election campaigns, Korean political candidates can, nevertheless, expect such Internet election campaigns to be effective

because Koreans' harbor a great deal of aggressiveness in relation to political activities.

### *Conclusion (Taiwan)*

The media environment in Taiwan is politically polarized, intervention in press freedom is weak, and the audience's trust in news is at a middle level (Table 4.9). Under the Kuomintang's one-party dictatorship and the martial law it enforced, lasting from 1949 to 1987, pro-government media companies dominated the media market and critical media were excluded. In response to the growing democratization campaign, the DPP was formed in 1986. The following year, martial law was lifted and pro-DPP media, such as illegal cable TV, diffused rapidly. The DPP eventually gained power, and in 2003 it banned governments, political parties, and the military from owning media channels and established freedom of broadcasting. The historical context of Taiwan's media environment seems to secure trust in news to some extent, despite the media environment being politically polarized between pan-blue and pan-green. The penetration rate of social media and smartphones in Taiwan is at a high level, and the usage rates of social media as a source of news and for interacting with news via social media are the highest in the four countries. The high penetration of social media and the Taiwanese audience's activeness in news consumption on the Internet suggests that candidates' political messages tend to be widely shared or diffused and that it is comparatively easy to mobilize voters. A good example is that during the Sunflower Movement, a 2014 protest movement against a trade pact with China, protesters actively used social media such as Facebook or Twitter to disseminate information of their activities and to mobilize the protest (Rowen 2015). Importantly, the high degree of political interest in Taiwan compared to that in United States and Japan means that a higher number of voters can be mobilized by Internet election campaigns in the country.In summary, it is considered that the media environment in Taiwan is, unlike that of Japan or Korea, suitable for Internet election campaigns.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, election campaign strategies are deeply embedded in the media environment of each country. The discussion in this chapter could help to provide an understanding of how, to what extent, and why Internet election campaigns have been conducted in certain countries.

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## Notes

1. Because there are no available statistics for the number of subscribers to telecommunication companies' multichannel services, the number of subscribers to NTT Group, the top player in the market, was used.
2. Pew Research Center (2017) also reported a high usage rate of social media for news: 35% of American online news consumers use social media to obtain news and 26% consistently obtained news primarily through social media.

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CHAPTER 5

# Is the Power of Online Campaigning in Japanese Electoral Politics a Myth? A Causal Inference Analysis of the 2013 Upper House Election

*Tetsuro Kobayashi*

In Japan, the ban on using the Internet for national election campaigning was lifted in 2013 for the upper house (House of Councillors) elections that year. The idea of such a ban may sound somewhat peculiar, but it was the result of a strict interpretation of the *Public Office Election Law*, which had placed stringent limits on the number of documents such as posters, flyers, and handouts candidates could distribute among the electorate, to preserve the fairness of elections. The Japanese government determined websites to be similar to these regulated documents in 1996, and so candidates could not utilize the Internet to communicate with the electorate during an election campaign (see Kiyohara (2013) and Kiyohara and

T. Kobayashi (✉)
Department of Media and Communication, City University of Hong Kong, 5/F, Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, 18 Tat Hong Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong



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Chen (2016) for a detailed discussion of the process by which the ban on online campaigning was lifted).

Although the upper house election in 2013 was the breakthrough election in which online campaigning was first deregulated, there was a record-low voter turnout (52.61%). Journalists and pundits, who had expected a higher turnout from online campaigning, which was expected to increase citizens' engagement in the election, expressed disappointment. However, during the ban on Internet campaigning, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs had become essential tools for people to communicate, to seek information, and to express their opinions. Thus, the evidence is mixed, and the effect of online campaigning on turnout in Japan has not been subject to rigorous empirical scrutiny, which has limited our understanding of this new form of political communication. Therefore, this chapter focuses specifically on social media, to answer the following question: Does the active use of social media for political communication during an election campaign enhance political efficacy and facilitate voter turnout?

## The Civic Virtue of Internet Use

A central question in studies of political communication is whether the use of the Internet, including social media, facilitates political participation (Holbert 2005; Holt et al. 2013). Studies focusing on the high-choice nature of the Internet suggest that Internet use is widening the knowledge and participation gap between those who are interested in politics and those who are not (e.g., Prior 2007): those with a strong interest in politics can seek detailed political information and engage in political discussions with other users via the Internet, which leads to more active political participation on their part (Boulianne 2011; Kruikemeier and Shehata 2016), whereas politically inactive people can tune out from politics entirely thanks to the high variety of content available on the Internet, instead tuning into apolitical content such as entertainment and sports, which leads to lower levels of political knowledge and participation (Prior 2005). Consequently, the gap in turnout between news-oriented and entertainment-oriented people has expanded due to the ways in which people use the Internet, and this has become a driving force of political polarization in the US Congress (Prior 2007). From this perspective, active social media use may boost turnout by promoting political knowledge and efficacy, but the effect would be limited to those who had already been attentive to politics.

Although it is true that the Internet provides a high-choice media environment, its other features have substantial potential to facilitate political participation by voters, including those with less political interest and efficacy. First, the multimodal nature of the Internet makes it easier to break through the "attention barrier" and to reach a wider audience with rich audiovisual information (Graber 2001; Knobloch et al. 2003). This is in contrast with print media, such as newspapers, because making sense of print journalism requires higher cognitive skills and continuous subscription (Tichenor et al. 1970; Jerit et al. 2006; Neuman et al. 1992).

The Internet is similar to TV in that its audiovisual elements are useful for attracting the attention of those with less political interest. However, the Internet differs from TV in its ability to further engage those who are already politically active. The search capability and hyperlinked structure of the Internet allow those with high interest—in particular "issue publics" who care strongly about specific issues (Krosnick 1990)—to delve into in-depth political information that is not readily available via traditional mass media (Iyengar et al. 2008; Prior 2007; Shah et al. 2005). In contrast, the range of political information available on TV is relatively limited compared with that of the Internet (Eveland and Scheufele 2000), so TV news exposure is less likely to engage politically savvy people. Furthermore, the negativity and scandal-oriented news reporting of TV news sometimes alienates people from politics and produces cynicism (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1997; Cappella and Jamieson 1997).

In addition to the low effort required from those with less interest in processing political information and the wide diversity of political information available for those with high interest, Internet use can facilitate political participation through incidental political learning. Although Prior (2007) argued that the wide variety of Internet content would reduce the chance of incidental political learning, especially among those with less interest, in reality the majority of Internet access is concentrated on a small number of popular portal sites, so audience fragmentation has not been observed on a large scale (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011; Webster and Ksiazek 2012; Webster and Lin 2002). Furthermore, because the major portal sites juxtapose political and entertainment news headlines on their home pages, even those with less interest have a high chance of incidental exposure to political headlines (Kobayashi and Inamasu 2015). Therefore, Internet use may enhance the political efficacy of less-interested people by creating an opportunity for passive learning, ultimately resulting in a higher voter turnout.

## The Impact of Social Media on Political Efficacy and Participation

Among the wide variety of Internet modalities, the increasingly popular social media have some notable features that are expected to promote political efficacy and participation.

First, as noted above, social media use facilitates incidental exposure to political information. A report from the Pew Research Center suggests that incidental news exposure on Facebook is not unusual (Mitchell et al. 2013), and a number of studies indicate that incidental exposure is likely to be high on various social media sites (e.g., Bode 2016; Kim et al. 2013). Valeriani and Vaccari (2015) demonstrate that incidental exposure to political information on social media facilitates online political participation, especially among those with less political interest, resulting in a narrower political participation gap.

Second, by using social media to disseminate political information, users are exposed not only to journalistic content from the mass media but also to the subjective opinions of other users. Those who post comments that many users "like" or retweet function as opinion leaders because they interpret the news from the mass media and convey it to their followers in plain language while adding their own opinions. Comments from online opinion leaders help users understand the personal relevance of political issues, resulting in greater efficacy and participation. The personal influence of opinion leaders prior to social media was limited to followers with whom they were personally connected, but now social media allow their personal influence to extend well beyond their own social circles, with fewer geographical and time constraints. In other words, social media realize the well-known two-step flow model of communication on a massive scale (Holbert et al. 2010).

Third, social media expose their users to messages from politicians without mediation by traditional news media. Politicians can engage in two-way communication with the electorate through social media, and the entire communication process becomes visible to other users. This visibility increases the social presence of politicians, so voters tend to feel greater intimacy with them. As an illustration, an experiment by Lee and Shin (2012) demonstrated that exposure to interactive Twitter messages from a politician (e.g., tweets answering followers' questions) induced a stronger sense of direct conversation with the politician (i.e., social presence) than exposure to messages without interactive elements. Heightened

social presence, in turn, led to more positive overall evaluations of the politician and a stronger intention to vote for him/her. Politicians can also send persuasive messages directly to voters without their being filtered and shrunk to sound bites by the mass media, making social media a mobilization tool.

Last but not least, social media can facilitate political participation through the homogenization of the information environment. Because social media users select whom they will follow, their information environment on social media is homogenized to the extent that they prefer the politically like-minded over those with whom they disagree (Barberá 2015; Conover et al. 2011; Himelboim et al. 2013; Hahn et al. 2015). Because people are more likely to participate in politics when their information environment is homogeneous (Bond and Messing 2015; Stroud 2011), the use of social media for political communication can be expected to boost political participation.

In summary, through incidental exposure to political information and social influence exerted by opinion leaders, social media users can, *ceteris paribus*, be expected to have a larger body of political knowledge than non-users. Social media users' higher levels of knowledge should help them discern the differences between parties and candidates, resulting in greater political efficacy, which in turn will foster higher levels of participation. In addition, direct mobilization by candidates with high social presence, as well as the homogenization of information environment on social media, can be expected to further facilitate voter turnout.

## Limited Empirical Support for the Power of Social Media

Although social media use may be expected to facilitate political efficacy and participation according to the theories and preliminary research outlined above, the empirical evidence for this hypothesis is mixed at best.

Some studies have demonstrated positive associations between social media use and political efficacy. Using nationwide US data, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) demonstrated that social media use for news is positively correlated with political efficacy. Analyses of a three-wave panel survey of Dutch adolescents also found a positive influence of active use of social media, such as posting a political message or video, on political efficacy (Moeller et al. 2014). That is, when adolescents take part in interactive

online political communication, their level of internal political efficacy rises significantly, leading to higher turnout among first-time voters. However, other studies cast doubt on the magnitude of the facilitative effect of social media use. Using an online survey data of American college students on the 2008 US Presidential election, Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) found no relationship between political efficacy and using Facebook. Vitak et al.'s (2011) research on the same election echoes Kushin and Yamamoto's (2010) null finding, failing to find a relationship between internal efficacy and Facebook use. Similarly, Pennington et al. (2015) reported that while political information efficacy and engagement increased over time during the 2012 US presidential election, it was not related to following candidates on Facebook.

Findings regarding the association between social media use and political participation are also mixed. A positive correlation between social media use and political participation has been reported in several studies (Bode 2012; Vitak 2012; Skoric and Poor 2013; Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2012). As an illustration, Vaccari et al. (2015) analyzed survey data regarding the Italian national election in 2013 and demonstrated that Twitter use for political information facilitated political participation such as contacting politicians and participating in offline political events. In contrast, Strandberg (2013) analyzed election survey data from 2011 and found that the effect of social media use on voting in Finland was limited. A meta-analysis by Boulianne (2015) also suggests that social media use has minimal impact on participation in election campaigns, with more than 80% of coefficients reported in previous studies being positive. However, questions remain about whether this relationship is causal and transformative; that is, only half of the coefficients were statistically significant, and studies using panel data are less likely than cross-sectional surveys to report positive and statistically significant coefficients between social media use and participation (see also Skoric et al. (2015) for a meta-analytic review of social media's impact on political participation).

Studies on the impact of social media use in Japan specifically are scarce. Ogasahara (2014), using two-wave online survey data collected before and after the 2013 upper house election, suggested that exposure to online campaigns through social media did not affect turnout, whereas posting comments on politics has a positive impact on voting. A recent experimental study also reported a null finding. Kobayashi and Ichifuji (2015) conducted a field experiment that tested the effectiveness of online campaigning in the 2013 election by using real tweets from Toru

Hashimoto, one of the most influential Japanese politicians online, as experimental stimuli. Their results demonstrated that his social media campaigning had no significant effect on knowledge or voter turnout. These findings suggest that the effect of social media use on political information is limited at best and that lifting a ban on online campaigning would not result in greater efficacy or turnout. If that is the case, is the power of online campaigning in Japan a myth?

## Methodological Limitations of Previous Studies

Most previous research on the effect of social media use on voting consists of observational studies, which typically estimate regression models using survey data because, in many cases, it is difficult to control social media use experimentally. However, observational studies have some serious drawbacks. First, because the independent variables are not exogenously controlled, such studies suffer an endogeneity problem in estimating the causal impact of social media use. For example, if politically efficacious people are more likely to use social media for political information, then the direction of causality is reversed and the estimated effect of social media use on political efficacy would be biased owing to endogeneity. Moreover, because the participants in observational studies are not randomly assigned to each level of the independent variable, there is omitted variable bias. To address such bias, regression models usually include a host of control variables, but these can never be exhaustive, and the estimated effect of the independent variable varies according to how they are specified; that is, there is a problem of model dependency (Ho et al. 2007).

Data quality is another issue, especially for previous studies in Japan. Ogasahara (2014) used a self-selected panel from a Japanese online survey firm, so that study is not representative of all Japanese voters. Kobayashi and Ichifuji (2015) addressed the problems of observational studies by conducting a field experiment, but their sample is unrepresentative, coming from a self-selected panel of participants from a Japanese online survey firm. In addition, their treatment consisted of Twitter messages from a specific politician; thus, their experiment cannot ascertain the effect of social media use/messages as a whole.

To address the methodological limitations of the previous studies, this study is intended to provide a stronger causal inference by addressing the weaknesses of observational studies with propensity score matching. To

do this, I use nationally representative survey data from Japan, as a partial remedy for the issue of data quality in the previous studies.

## Propensity Score Matching

Propensity score matching is a statistical tool used to draw reliable causal inferences from observational studies where random assignment is difficult. There are a number of variants in propensity score matching, but the basic procedure is as follows.

Suppose we have a dichotomous independent variable ("the treatment" hereafter) such as political use of social media during the campaign period, which takes a value of either 1 to indicate treatment or 0 for control. The dependent variable is an outcome such as political efficacy and voting. First, a logistic (or probit) regression model is estimated with the treatment as the dependent variable. The independent variables in this regression model are covariates that are expected to influence both treatment and outcome. For instance, those who are knowledgeable about politics are more likely to seek political information from social media and at the same time are more likely to vote. Therefore, political knowledge is a suitable covariate.

Once a logistic regression model that predicts treatment reasonably well has been estimated, it is used to calculate the probability of a participant being treated (i.e., the propensity score). In this case, the probability of each respondent's using social media for political information during the campaign period is calculated. Naturally, some respondents are expected to have a high probability of doing so, while others are predicted to have a low probability. Propensity score matching is intended to pair respondents who have the same propensity score, but one is treated while the other is not. Put differently, the paired respondents potentially have the same propensity to use social media for political information, but only one of them actually does so. Therefore, each of the two respondents is essentially considered to be randomly assigned to either the treatment or control condition. By pairing people who have the same propensity score, a subsample in which the treatment is "as-if randomly" assigned can be extracted from observational survey data. Once the matched subsample is extracted, the causal impact of treatment on the outcome, such as average treatment effect (ATE) or average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), is estimated in the same way as for experimental data.

It is important to note that the representativeness of survey data is undermined by reliance on a subsample. In other words, propensity score matching is intended to permit strong causal inferences with high internal validity at the expense of some external validity. The details of propensity score matching can be found in Imbens and Rubin (2015).

## Data and Measurement

The survey data used in this study were collected immediately after the 2013 House of Councillors Election in Japan as a part of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 4.[1] Nationally representative Japanese adults aged from 20 to 89 were randomly sampled and were interviewed in person. A total of 4184 potential respondents were approached, and 1937 valid cases were collected (response rate = 46.3%). Cases with any missing values for treatment, outcomes, and covariates were excluded from the analysis because propensity score matching is not feasible when scores are missing; ultimately, 1144 cases were analyzed. The treatment, outcomes, and covariates were measured in the following manner.

### *Treatment (Political Use of Social Media During the Campaign Period)*

The following nine items were measured using a survey item in a check-all-that-apply format: cited or referred to political articles on social media (2.19%), cited or referred to social articles on social media (1.57%), joined discussions about political issues on social media (0.44%), joined discussions about social issues on social media (0.52%), paid attention to political posts and opinions on social media (4.37%), cited or referred to political articles and postings in my own blog (0.96%), cited or referred to political articles and postings in my own blog (0.35%), cited or referred to the issues of the 2013 election in my own blog (0.70%), and paid attention to political posts and opinions in other people's blogs (5.42%). In general, the political use of social media during the campaign period was not a common activity. Among those who used social media for political information, paying attention to political information on social media was more common than two-way communication with other users. Because the selection rate of each individual item was quite low, a dichotomous

variable was created that was coded 1 if at least one item was selected and 0 if none of the nine items was selected. In all, 10.05% of the respondents were coded as treated.

### *Outcome (Political Efficacy)*

We first tested whether social media use facilitates political efficacy resulting from political knowledge gained during the election campaign. To measure political efficacy, two items with a five-point response scale were used. One item concerned the perception that who is in power can make a large difference; possible responses ranged from "1: It makes no difference who is in power" to "5: It makes a big difference who is in power." The other item concerned the perception that who people vote for has a strong impact on political outcomes, and possible responses ranged from "1: Whom people vote for will not make any difference" to "5: Whom people vote for can make a big difference." These two items were summed and rescaled to range from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83, Mean = 0.63, SD = 0.27). The degree of political efficacy measured with these items is most likely founded on political knowledge because, to perceive the difference between parties and candidates, voters need to possess at least some knowledge of politicians, such as their reputations, policies, and past performance.

### *Outcome (Voting)*

To test whether social media use facilitates political participation, voting was employed as an outcome, coded 1 if respondents self-reported voting in the 2013 House of Councillors Election and 0 otherwise (Mean = 0.80).[2]

The following section will outline the covariates that were used to calculate propensity scores, all of which are expected to influence both treatment and outcomes. For example, those who consume news media are also likely to use social media for political information. At the same time, news-oriented people are more likely to be politically efficacious and to cast a ballot. Factual knowledge and voting in the previous national election are expected not only to predict the political use of social media but also to predict short-term variations in political efficacy based on knowledge and voting in the next election (Price and Zaller 1993; Coppock and Green 2015).

### *Frequency of Internet Use*

Frequency of email use with a PC, web browsing on a PC, email use with a mobile phone, and web browsing on a mobile phone were measured using a four-point scale. These four items were summed and recoded to range from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.67, Mean = 0.60, SD = 0.28).

### *Frequency of Generic Social Media Use*

The frequency of use for eight types of social media—blogs, Facebook, Mixi, Twitter, Line, Google+, Gree, and bulletin boards—was measured using a four-point scale. (Mixi and Gree are local Japanese social networking services.) These four items were summed and recoded to range from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79, Mean = 0.31, SD = 0.13).

### *Newspaper Exposure*

Newspaper exposure was coded 1 if respondents read any newspaper regularly to obtain political information and 0 otherwise. In all, 83% of the respondents read at least one newspaper.

### *TV News Exposure*

Following the list technique proposed by Dilliplane et al. (2013), the respondents were presented with a list of 55 TV news programs and requested to select all the programs they had watched during the election campaign. The number of TV news programs watched was counted and log transformed (Mean = 1.78, SD = 0.80).

### *Factual Knowledge*

Respondents were asked four multiple-choice questions concerning the name of the Minister of Finance, the current unemployment rate, the name of the political party with the second-largest share of seats in the Diet, and the name of the Secretary General of the United Nations. The number of accurate responses was recoded to range from 0 to 1 (Mean = 0.50, SD = 0.30).

### *Voting in the 2012 House of Representatives Election*

In all, 84% of the respondents indicated that they had voted in the 2012 House of Representatives election.

In addition, the following demographic variables were included as covariates: sex (female: 52.36%), age (mean = 49.95, SD = 14.41), education (high school or less: 42.74%, college: 25.26%, bachelor's degree or higher: 31.99%), no occupation (29.37%), and married (74.30%).

## Analysis

### *Propensity Score Matching*

First, assignment to the treatment (use of social media during the campaign period for political purposes) was predicted by the covariates, and the respondents were matched using the nearest neighbor method. As noted above, 10.05% (n = 115) of the respondents used social media for political information during the campaign period. Each of the treated respondents was paired with the respondent with the nearest propensity score who did *not* use social media during the campaign period. The result of propensity score matching is illustrated in Fig. 5.1. Among the treatment units (i.e., those who are treated), the four respondents positioned in the top-right corner of the figure have an extremely high propensity to use social media, and control units with similar propensity scores could not be found, resulting in unmatched units. Each of the 111 matched treatment units was matched with the control unit with the nearest propensity

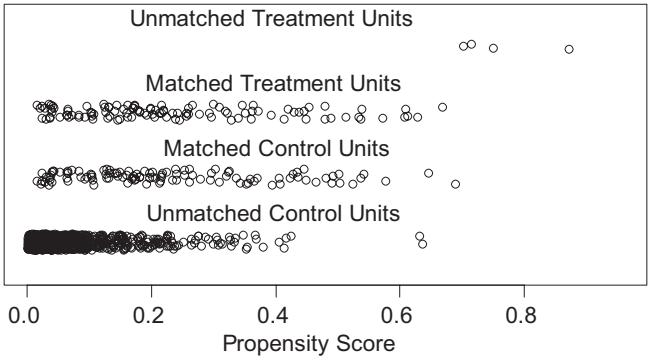


**Fig. 5.1** Distribution of propensity scores

score, so 111 pairs were created (n = 222). Control units that were not paired were excluded from the subsequent analyses. In essence, the two respondents in a pair are homogeneous in terms of their potential propensity to use social media for political information during the campaign period, but only one of them actually did so. Therefore, this subset of the sample constitutes a quasi-experimental dataset in which respondents are "as-if randomly" assigned to either treatment or control condition.

Covariate balance before and after matching is shown in Table 5.1. As expected, treatment units on average show a larger propensity score than control units in all data without matching. Other covariates show that males, the younger generation, those with higher education, those with-

**Table 5.1** Covariate balance in all and matched data

| | *All data* | | | | *Matched data* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Means treated* | *Means control* | *SD control* | *Standardized mean difference* | *Means treated* | *Means control* | *SD control* | *Standardized mean difference* |
| Propensity score | 0.25 | 0.08 | 0.10 | 0.89 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.16 | 0.02 |
| Sex (Female) | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.50 | −0.39 | 0.37 | 0.38 | 0.49 | −0.02 |
| Age | 43.99 | 50.62 | 14.32 | −0.48 | 43.92 | 43.81 | 14.33 | 0.01 |
| Education | 0.59 | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.36 | 0.59 | 0.55 | 0.43 | 0.07 |
| Having no occupation | 0.18 | 0.31 | 0.46 | −0.32 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.39 | 0.02 |
| Married | 0.61 | 0.76 | 0.43 | −0.30 | 0.60 | 0.64 | 0.48 | −0.07 |
| Frequency of Internet use | 0.80 | 0.58 | 0.27 | 1.11 | 0.80 | 0.82 | 0.18 | −0.13 |
| Frequency of generic social media use | 0.42 | 0.29 | 0.13 | 0.89 | 0.42 | 0.41 | 0.14 | 0.07 |
| Newspaper exposure | 0.69 | 0.84 | 0.37 | −0.33 | 0.70 | 0.66 | 0.48 | 0.10 |
| TV news exposure | 1.80 | 1.78 | 0.79 | 0.03 | 1.80 | 1.86 | 0.74 | −0.06 |
| Factual knowledge | 0.59 | 0.49 | 0.30 | 0.36 | 0.57 | 0.55 | 0.29 | 0.09 |
| Voted in the 2012 HOR election | 0.87 | 0.84 | 0.37 | 0.10 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 0.34 | 0.00 |

out children, and unmarried people are more likely than their counterparts to use social media for political information. In addition, treatment units generally use the Internet and social media more frequently, read newspapers less often, and have more factual knowledge than control units.

Conventional regression analyses with these covariates as control variables can provide unbiased estimates of treatment effects only if their true relationships with the outcome are linear. However, they are biased if the relationships between the control variables and the outcome are not linear (i.e., model dependency; Ho et al. 2007). In contrast, Table 5.1 shows that almost all the covariate balance is improved by using propensity score matching. Consequently, we need not worry about model dependency because the treatment and control groups are in effect randomly created.

To illustrate how much covariate imbalance was reduced by propensity score matching, each covariate's change of absolute standardized difference in means with and without matching is presented in Fig. 5.2.

Figure 5.2 shows that the absolute standardized difference in means is less than 0.2 for all covariates, which is roughly the same level as experimental data with random assignment. The only covariate for which the absolute standardized difference in means *increased* owing to matching is TV news exposure (the thick line in Fig. 5.2). However, this covariate is already well balanced in all data, and the increased difference in means is negligible. In summary, these results show that propensity score matching was successful, which makes the problem of endogeneity and omitted variable bias that has beset observational studies less of a concern.

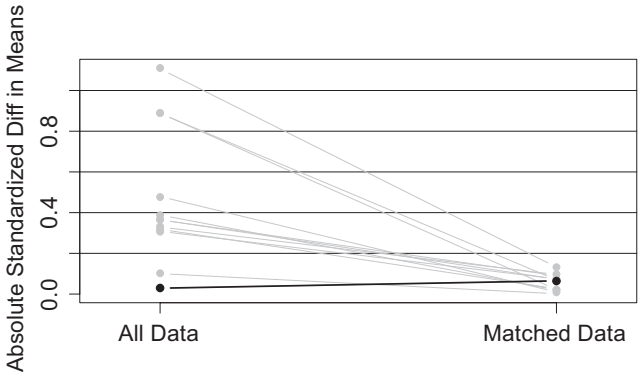


**Fig. 5.2** Change in absolute standardized difference in means

### *Effect of Social Media Use on Political Efficacy*

The treatment effect on political efficacy was estimated from matched data.[3] The estimand was the ATT; that is, the treatment effect was estimated to be the difference in expected means between the actual outcome of those who are treated and their counterfactual outcome that would have been observed if they had not been treated.

The result indicates that those who use social media for political communication during the election campaign increased their political efficacy by seven percentage points compared with sufficiently similar counterparts who do not use social media for political purposes (ATT, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.14]). This supports the view that the political use of social media during the campaign period enhances political efficacy.

To illustrate the difference between statistical causal inference using propensity score matching and conventional multiple regression analysis, an ordinary regression model was estimated using the outcome (political efficacy) as a dependent variable and the treatment and covariates as independent variables. The estimated regression coefficient of the treatment indicates that the political use of social media during the campaign period boosts political efficacy by five percentage points, which did not reach the conventional statistical significance level (5%). This comparison highlights that the causal impact of the political use of social media during the campaign period on political efficacy cannot be detected by conventional regression analyses.

### *Effect of Social Media Use on Voting*

The treatment effect on voting was estimated in the same manner as political efficacy. The result indicates that those who use social media for political communication during the election campaign had an increased likelihood of voting of 11%, compared with similar counterparts who did not use social media for political purposes (ATT, $p < .02$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.21]). This clearly supports the notion that the political use of social media during the campaign period facilitates voting.

Again, to illustrate the difference between statistical causal inference and conventional regression analyses, an ordinary regression model was estimated with the outcome (vote) as the dependent variable and the treatment and covariates as independent variables. The estimated regression coefficient of the treatment indicates that the political use of social media boosts turnout by 7%, which did not reach the conventional

statistical significance level of 5%. Once again, this comparison suggests that no causal impact of the political use of social media can be reliably detected without statistical causal inference methods such as propensity score matching.

## Discussion

Whether Internet use facilitates political participation has been one of the central questions in the study of political communication. Specifically, social media have great potential to boost political efficacy and participation through incidental exposure to political information, exposure to other users' persuasive messages, two-way communication between politicians and citizens, and homogenization of the information environment because of selective exposure. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence for the impact of social media use on political efficacy and participation has been equivocal.

By focusing on Japan, where a ban on electoral campaigning using the Internet was lifted in 2013, this study tested the causal effect of the use of social media on political efficacy and voting. A stringent empirical test using propensity score matching clearly demonstrates the power of online campaigning in Japan, so it is by no means a myth. With high-quality survey data and rigorous statistical causal inference, a significant causal impact of the political use of social media is reliably detected in Japan.

The positive impact of social media use on political efficacy indicates that Japanese electorates gained an additional tool for political learning during the campaign period, which in turn lowers the threshold for political participation by giving citizens the sense that voting makes a significant difference in political outcomes. This is especially meaningful in countries with multiparty systems such as Japan, where it is crucial for citizens to know the differences between more than two parties and candidates. As people perceive the substantial differences between parties and candidates through active use of social media for political purposes, the subjective utility of elections will be enhanced, leading to greater political efficacy. Japan is known to be a country where political conversations in daily life tend to be avoided (Wolf et al. 2010). Therefore, it is desirable from a democratic viewpoint that social media diversify Japanese people's sources of political information and broaden the scope of horizontal political communication by exposing them to others' political opinions.

Given that the turnout in the 2013 House of Councillors Election was 52.61%, the 11% increase in turnout attributable to social media use is

substantial among social media users, but the nationally representative sample used in this study indicates that only 10% of the Japanese electorate used social media for political information during the campaign period. Therefore, the net increase in voter turnout at the gross level because of social media use is estimated to be about 1%, which is within the margin of error in the survey data and thus hard to detect. However, the 2013 House of Councillors Election was the first election in which an election campaign using the Internet was permitted in Japan, so political parties, candidates, and voters are still in the process of adapting to this campaign tool. As an increasing number of people use social media to exchange political information, the impact of online campaigning on turnout will manifest itself more clearly.

Like many other studies, this study has some important limitations. First, because the political use of social media during the campaign period remains unpopular in Japan, the treatment group is defined as those who use social media in at least one of nine ways. As a consequence, the study cannot reveal which types of social media use affect efficacy and turnout positively.

Second, this study only investigated the direct effect of social media use on outcomes, so the process whereby social media use boosts efficacy and turnout still remains a black box. For instance, mediators such as increased political knowledge could explain the effect of social media use on efficacy and voting. Future studies should examine the mediating process more closely and articulate why social media use may enhance civic virtues.

Last but not least, statistical causal inference is not a panacea, although it is useful in addressing endogeneity and omitted variable bias in observational studies. Specifically, observed or unobserved covariates that are not included in propensity score estimation may remain imbalanced, which might bias the estimation of treatment effects. Likewise, omitted variable bias cannot be fully addressed if unobserved variables uncorrelated with the covariates used in this study affect both the treatment and outcome.

With that said, statistical causal inference can provide us with more internally valid evidence concerning the effect of social media use than conventional analyses, especially when experiments are not feasible. It is essential to track the effect of political use of social media in each election and accumulate evidence on its longitudinal causal impact. These constant efforts will eventually allow us to state with more confidence whether the power of online campaigning is a myth.

## Notes

1. This survey was fielded with financial support from a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI), project number 21223001, PI Ken'ichi Ikeda). I would like to express my deep gratitude for the use of the data.
2. The turnout among the sample for this study far exceeds that of the 2013 House of Councillors Election (52.61%). This is a well-known bias in survey data that rely on self-reporting (Holbrook and Krosnick 2013). It is possible to weight the results back to the distribution of population, but I did not do so because this study focuses on a subsample of data to match propensity scores, so the representativeness of the data was undermined anyway.
3. The Zelig package for R was used for estimation of treatment effects (Imai et al. 2009).

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CHAPTER 6

# A New Trend in Internet Election Campaigning: The Use of Smartphone Apps in the 2014 South Korean Local Elections

*Hongchun Lee*

Sadly, smartphones are bringing about a new form of digital democracy and South Korea is becoming a test ground for this phenomenon. South Korea has led the trend of Internet election campaigning in Asia and since 2012, it has shown new possibilities for digital democracy through the spread of smartphones. Based on one company survey, the adoption rate of smartphones in South Korea this year has reached 90%, the fourth highest in the world. Almost all adults have smartphones in their hands.

It is clear that smartphones have been a key characteristic in election campaigning in South Korea since 2012. The initial appearance of smartphones gave rise to a "device divide" between those who had smartphones and those who did not. A May 28, 2010, article in the *Maeil Business Newspaper* reported that over 70% of smartphone owners lived in city regions; thus, the information divide was significant.

H. Lee (✉)
Department of Sociology and Media Studies, Tokyo City University, 3-3-1 Ushikubo-nishi, Tsuzuki-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 224-8551, Japan



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Interest in the influence of smartphones and social networking services (SNSs) such as Twitter in South Korea has been high since the US presidential election in 2008. The initial response was skeptical, possibly because the number of users at that time was small (Keum 2010). One effect of the increase in smartphone use has been easier Internet access for elderly people. However, in the 2014 and 2016 elections, only the voting rate of young people increased, not that of the elderly.

This chapter will focus on the election apps used for the 2014 and 2016 elections. This chapter will also investigate the current state of smartphone use for election campaigning by political parties and candidates and will identify the factors that hinder Internet election campaigning.

## The Emergence of New Political Environment

There is no doubt that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has influenced elections in South Korea. Elections in South Korea from 2000 onward have been led by groups of young people drawing on new Internet technologies. In 2002, young people used the Internet to organize and mobilize themselves for the election. The selection of the minority candidate Roh Moo-hyun for president was in part due to the influence of the Internet. Subsequently, as new communication services such as blogs, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook were introduced, a new form of political voter participation emerged. Through this change, information dissemination to voters and interactive coordination between voters have increased. This chapter will give a broad overview of the development of Internet election campaigning in South Korea.

### *Increase in the Voting Rate of Young People*

In this section, we will focus on the increase of the voting rate among people in their twenties and thirties during the 2012 presidential election, as well as the 2014 regional elections and the 2016 general elections. Although significant changes were not observed in the voting rates of other age groups, the voting rate for people in their twenties, which had been decreasing steadily since 2000, increased from 41.5% in 2012 to 48.8% in 2014 and 49.4% in 2016. Below, I will analyze the factors related to the increase in the voting rate after 2012 (Fig. 6.1).

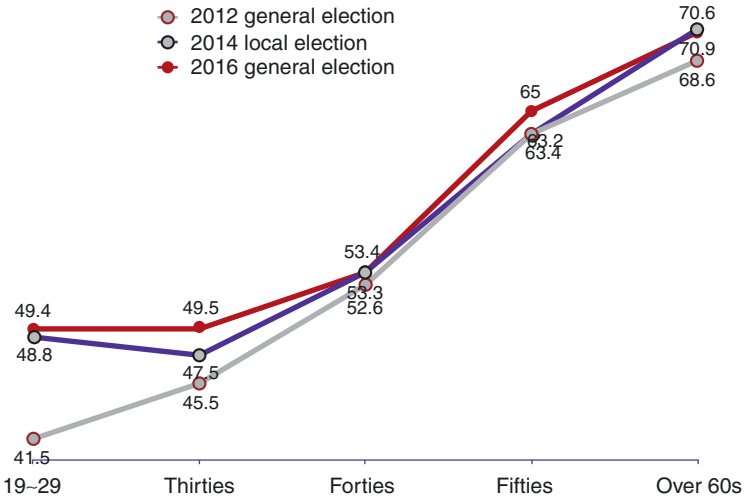


**Fig. 6.1** Voting rates for 2012 and 2014 were based on the survey of the NEC. The voting rate in 2016 was based on the exit polls by three broadcasting companies

### *The Emergence of a "Mobile Society"*

No country has transformed so completely into a smartphone society as South Korea. According to a 2015 survey by TNS Infratest, Korea's smartphone penetration rate put the nation fourth in the world, following the UAE, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. In South Korea, not only is the smartphone taking over traditional forms of media such as newspapers, television, and radio, it is also transforming several other facets of society, including political, economic, social, and educational sectors. A South Korean Internet White Paper (KISA 2016) says that the Internet use rate in 2016 was 85.1%. Additionally, a 2015 survey on Internet usage published by the Korea Internet and Security Agency (KISA) revealed that smartphones (86.4%) exceeded PCs (66.9%) as the device most often used to access the Internet. The digital divide is no longer an issue in these environments (Fig. 6.2).

The spread of the Internet began to increase in 1999 under the Information Promotion Strategies of the Kim Dae jung administration. The adoption rate of the Internet increased from 13% in 1999 to 58% in 2002, but the spread of smartphones has exceeded this rate. According to

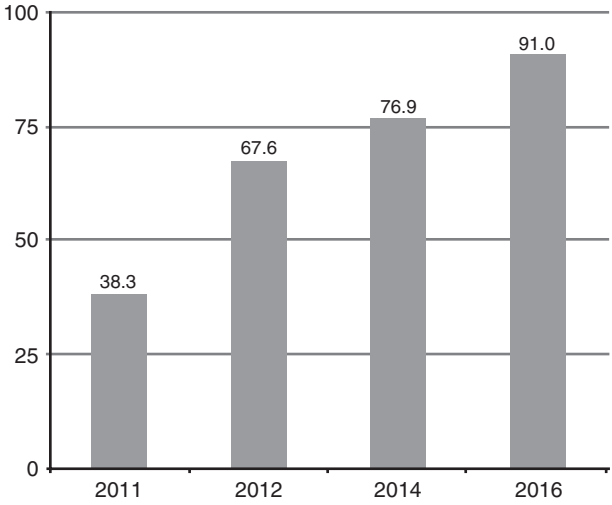


**Fig. 6.2** Data for 2016 adapted from TNS infra Test Germany and KCC report. Others adapted from Yonhapnews

a survey by the Korea Communications Commission (KCC), the adoption rate of smartphones was 1.7% in 2009, the first year they were available in the market. Mobile trends discussed in a 2016 Digieco report reveal that the adoption rate increased to 67.6% in 2012. The rate rapidly increased to 76.9% in 2014 and 91.0% in 2016 (Digieco 2016). In 2016, nine out of ten people over the age of twelve had a smartphone. In 2008, Samsung began seriously marketing its smartphones, which ignited fierce market competition with LG Electronics. The main reason for this was the importance of gaining new customers for telephone companies.

The spread of smartphones is solving two problems in Korean society that were brought about by the information age: the digital divide and the device divide. The increased adoption rate of smartphones increased Internet access as well. As a result, the digital divide and device divide between generations and regions has almost disappeared.

The increase in the adoption rate of smartphones has also brought about a change in media usage time. According to a survey by the mobile market survey company, Wiseapp, South Koreans use smartphones approximately 3 hours per day on average. The usage time by age group is the longest at

4 hours and 9 minutes for people in their 20s, 3 hours and 21 minutes for people in their 30s, 2 hours and 47 minutes for people in their 40s, and 1 hour and 46 minutes for people in their 50s. Korea Advertisers Association (KAA) Focus showed that the smartphone app with the longest usage time is the messenger app "KakaoTalk" (KAA 2016). According to the KT Economics and Management Research Lab, 85% of smartphone usage time is taken up by SNS apps. Comparatively, time used for Web surfing is only 15%. The importance of smartphones in daily life is also increasing. According to a survey by the KCC, 46.4% of respondents said that smartphones are necessary media sources for their daily lives; 44.1% said the same for regional TV, which is a decrease of 0.2% from the previous year. The transition of media use to mobile and individual platforms is progressing.

### *The Transformation to "Mobile" Election Campaigning*

Since 2011, SNSs have become the primary actor in Internet election campaigning in South Korea. Of course, the impacts of SNS have been confirmed in actions such as demonstration against South Korea's free trade agreement (FTA) with Us in 2008 and the Candle demonstration to demand impeachment of the president Park Geun-hye gathered more than one million people in 2016. SNS first displayed its full effect on mobilizing voters in the by-elections for the mayor of Seoul in October 2011. Using SNS to mobilize themselves and others, young people were able to get the candidate they supported elected.

Election apps first appeared during the general elections of 2012. In 2012, various types of election apps made their debut, including political party apps, candidate apps, citizen group election apps, and National Election Committee (NEC) apps. Influenced by the effects that election apps had on the 2008 US presidential election, the main political parties created apps for introducing sectoral and regional campaign promises. However, it is also surprising that a variety of election apps were created by entities other than political parties.

In 2012, if we include the 3 preliminary candidates, 52 candidates had created election apps (Kang et al. 2012). Through the use of election apps, candidates attempted to increase information dissemination to voters, while also attempting to understand the specific political interests of the voters (Ohmynews 2010). In addition, a wide range of other forms of SNS was being used for these purposes. Of the 902 candidates, more than 600 had Twitter accounts. In addition, the number of accounts on the

mini-homepage service "MeToday," which totaled 250 in March 2012, increased to 414 just before the election.

In addition to political parties, the NEC, television broadcasting companies, newspaper companies, universities, SNS-related companies, and portal sites created a total of 26 election apps. Most of these apps were "information dissemination type" apps that conveyed information about the candidates, voting locations, and laws related to the election. One example of such an app was created by the NEC to enable voters to confirm candidate profiles and campaign promises. Other types of apps included "SNS information analysis type" apps that analyzed discussion trends and points of dispute on the SNS, "platform" apps that mediated communication among voters and connected them with the candidates' SNS accounts and apps, and "manifesto type" apps that enabled voters to search the campaign promises of the candidates and even suggest their own policies.

By using these types of election apps, voters could access the individual profiles and campaign promises of the candidates more easily. The election apps made it possible for candidature and voters to communicate and discuss campaign promises. It was also possible for voters to share their opinions on the SNS through the apps. Other apps helped voters search for voting stations and obtain information about voting rates, exit polls, and ballot returns following the election. It was expected that the diversity of apps would increase the options for voters to obtain election information.

## The Development of Internet Elections in South Korea

The history of Internet election campaigning in South Korea can be divided into three stages (Song 2015). The first stage covers the period from when Internet election campaigning first gained attention to the first revision of the Public Office Election Law in 2005. The second stage is from 2005, when standards relating to the Internet were strengthened, to 2011. The third stage is from 2012, when the ban on Internet election campaigning was lifted.

Internet election campaigning in South Korea can be traced back to 1995, before the widespread popularization of the Web. The content was simple election information on the candidates, such as pictures, profiles,

and campaign promises, provided by private telecom companies at the request of the candidates.

The first election campaign to use a webpage was the presidential election of 1997 (Cho and Park 2012). While the adoption rate of the Internet was only 35.5% in 1997,[1] the candidates, Kim Dae-jung and Lee Hoi-chang, posted their campaign promises on their homepages in order to gain the support of young people. However, due to the influence of the first televised debate for a presidential election, attention on the Internet election campaign was low. During the election period, voters viewed three televised debates with bated breath. Six days of the 23-day election period were used to prepare for the televised debates. This was particularly disadvantageous for the ruling conservative party, which had in past years executed an election campaign centered on a large-scale stump speech and an organized election. The conservative ruling party was forced to change its election campaign strategy. At that time, I was participating in the process of bringing the televised debates into effect and was involved in the decisions of the form and content of the debates while working for the Journalists Association of Korea. In the midst of expectations for change in the administration in relation to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) financial crisis, the opportunity to see live debates between the candidates was epochal. I do not have any recollection of the Internet being raised as an issue at that time.

The Internet started being used seriously as an election campaign tool in 2002. In order to cheer for teams in the Soccer World Cup in 2002, an online community mobilized several million young people, which significantly impacted Korean society. Political parties, shocked by the effects of this type of Internet-based mobilization, began to seriously think about using the Internet for elections (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1** Internet election activities in 2002

| | *Rho Moo-hyun* | *Lee Hoi-chang* |
|---|---|---|
| Internet election campaigning | Internet TV, Internet radio, e-mail, homepage banners, newsletters | Internet TV, Internet radio, short message service (SMS), Internet polls, e-mail surveys, cyber election campaigning education |
| Characteristics | Film actors and singers, as facilitators, call for election fund support, and the mobilization of supporters | N/A |

There is another reason that Internet campaigning was introduced. As a result of the introduction of the televised debate, election campaigns changed. Due to the televised debate, past election strategies such as stump speeches and organized elections became less effective and the alternative election campaign mechanism that arose was Internet campaigning (Yun 2003). Stump speeches, which were held 49 times in 1 day in 1997, were reduced to just 3 in 2002. Additionally, the social atmosphere at the time favored the idea of election campaigns costing less money. The Internet was promoted as a medium for election campaigning at a low cost.

The Internet fan club for Roh Moo-hyun notably attracted attention during the 2002 presidential election. The online community "Nosamo" adopted an operation principle known as "communicative democracy" and became the de facto headquarters for the election campaign. The short-term mobilization activated by the Internet demonstrated the political power of online communities (Yun and Chang 2007). Roh Moo-hyun became known as the first "online president" as a result of Nosamo's activities.

A March 5, 2002, article in *Chosunilbo* reported that the approval rating for Roh Moo-hyun was 25.2%, which was considerably lower than the opposition candidate, Lee Hoi-chang; thus, he was not expected to win. However, the *Digital Times* reported that the approval rating was actually moving in the opposite direction. In addition to the young people's mobilization as a result of Nosamo, another important factor was emerging Internet newspapers such as Ohmynews. By creating an alternative public sphere online that actualized online agendas and opinions, Ohmynews undermined the agenda-setting and opinion-forming power that had been monopolized by the pre-existing conservative media. The activities of Nosamo and Ohmynews brought about a type of synergy that led to the election of the minor candidate, Roh Moo-hyun.

During the second stage, from 2005 to 2011, attention was drawn to videos and images created by users. The role of user-created content (UCC), which had become active during the US mid-term elections in 2006, received significant media attention in South Korea. During the extensive coverage by the Korean media of the US elections, it was predicted that the Korean presidential election in 2007 would be a "UCC election." However, the 2007 election did not become a UCC election.

In 2006, a manifesto emphasizing policies was introduced in South Korea and became popular in regional elections. Some of the candidates

established websites as a means for communicating their policies, but the ratio did not reach even 50% (Chang et al. 2010).

In 2008, due to general election regulations and the Election Law together with copyright infringement cases relating to the election UCC, only uniform entertainment-type content was available and voter participation was not active. From the 2010 regional elections onward, Twitter gained attention and supported enthusiastic murmurs of doubt and points of dispute regarding the candidates. These activities attracted public opinion, but during the election period, they began to contradict the regulations set forth in the Election Law (Kim and Cho 2011).

The role of the Internet as a provider of election information was increasing. According to surveys by the Korean Political Science Association and the Korean Social Science Data Center, the percentage of voters using the Internet as a source of information regarding the election had increased from 2.9% in 2002 to 9.0% in 2007. Of those voters, 36.5% responded that information from the Internet had affected their decision on which candidate to support. The information sites accessed the most were Internet newspapers including the online websites of newspaper companies (42.2%), portal sites (27.6%), candidate homepages (5.7%), and political party homepages (2.9%). According to the results of the Korean Social Science Data Center, the Internet achieved the goal of disseminating election information but failed in actually connecting the candidates with the voters (Yun 2008).

In the third stage, starting in 2012, the ban on Internet election campaigning was lifted and smartphone election campaigning in particular commenced. Smartphones had spread to almost all of the voters, making it possible for everyone to access election information easily.

This change in the media environment brought about changes in four special characteristics of election campaigning. The first was that election information was being consolidated in portal sites. The second was that a new voter movement toward increased political participation had not occurred since 2012. Until 2006, political participation led by voters had been conducted via alternative media and citizen movement networks (Yun and Chang 2007). The third was that Internet election campaigning came to be conducted in a closed space. The fourth was that Internet election campaigning shifted from being centered on voters to being centered on candidates. The New Frontier Party (NFP) established a committee for overseeing SNS strategies in 2012, and while on the one hand they chose the social media strategy of the 3As (Agreement, Advice, Always), on the

other hand, they established an "SNS clout index" as a criterion for authorizing candidacy.

In the 2012 presidential election, the SNS Support Headquarters was organized to oversee the SNS election, and in 2015, the "Social Pro Group" was organized. Among the different political parties, the NFP put the most effort into organization building and education within the party. The NFP networked with all of the regional organizations as well as members of the national Diet, and they set up the "i-Hannara" system that provided and shared information in real time. This was because there were strong feelings in the party that the setbacks in 2002 and 2004 were due, in part, to the failure of the Internet election campaign. In 2012, the opposition party, the "New Politics Alliance for Democracy" (NPAD), established the "Digital Strategic Department," and in 2015, they established the "Digital Communication Department." In 2014, a special committee was established for the purpose of creating a platform for the party based on mobile devices.

SNS first appeared as an election campaign tool in the local elections in 2010 (Chang et al. 2010). The SNS that attracted the most candidate attention was Twitter. The use of Twitter, which totaled just 4% for the country overall, was 23% among members of the national Diet. Twitter made it possible to confirm points of dispute in real time and the effect of this diffusion was significant. Because opinion leaders were active as Power Twitterians,[2] even though the usage rate was low in the general public, the reverberations of Twitter were significant. The political parties and candidates opened up their campaigns with homepages, mini-homepages, blogs, and so on in addition to SNSs. In comparison, voter activity was centered on fan cafes.

### *Changes in the Regulations for Internet Election Campaigning*

Regulations for Internet election campaigning accompanied the appearance and developments of new technologies. In 2000, a website that provided a list of unfit candidates became the object of regulation. In this "campaign to blackball election candidates deemed unfit for public office," prior to the election, the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections (Nakseonnakcheonundong) publicized on the Web a blacklist of 86 candidates who were associated with corruption, unethical conduct, and dictatorships, calling on the public not to vote for them. Fifty-nine of those candidates lost their elections.[2]

In 2002, the online community Nosamo, Internet newspapers, portal site message boards, and so on became targets of regulation. The NEC stated that the activities of Nosamo were in violation of the election law by publicly declaring support for Roh Moo-hyun, and the commission ordered them to disband and close their Internet homepage. Additionally, the NEC did not allow Ohmynews to hold discussions about the presidential candidates because Ohmynews was not regulated under the Election Law as a form of media permitted to hold such discussions. In response to this, Ohmynews decided to print a weekly paper in order to host debate discussions. In 2008, the "Cyber Supervisory Group of Vote Rigging" was established, and in 2014, the "National Election Survey Deliberation Commission" was established to deliberate on the opinion polls related to the election.[3]

There were two special features of the Internet regulations for election campaigning after 2005. First, Internet newspapers such as Ohmynews, which had significantly impacted the 2002 presidential elections, were regulated. Portal sites that disseminated election news were also added as objects of regulation. Second, the Internet Election News Deliberation Commission (IENDC), which deliberated over election news reports from Internet newspapers, was established under the umbrella of the NEC. The IENDC was also established under the NEC to manage newspaper and TV election news reports (Chang 2008); however, this temporary organization was only active during the election period. In comparison, the IENDC operated as a permanent organization.

The NEC gave the following reasons for establishing the IENDC[4]: political and social influence of Internet newspapers had increased and there was social consensus that this influence should be considered and managed. In addition, damage had resulted from the election reports published by Internet newspapers and it was necessary to address that damage.

In 2004, the "Internet Real Name System" was added, which required the authentication of one's real name when writing about the election on the Internet. In 2005, the period of time for real name authentication was limited to the election period and regulations for substantiating opinions and content related to the election were strengthened. In addition, real name authentication was required and the verification method provided by the Ministry of the Interior was mandatory; additionally, technologically appropriate measures were established for Internet newspapers. In 2006, the regulation of opinions against political parties and candidates was

extended to include information forms such as text, audio, photographs, and video (Cho 2011).

From 2005 to 2011, the content of Internet election campaigning became the object of regulation. By December 2, 2007, 65,108 posts and other UCC were deleted by the NEC. On December 3, 2007, the *Seoul Daily Newspaper* reported that the number of illegal Internet election activities had increased from 57 cases in 2002 to 1236 cases in 2016. The NEC announced three guidelines: the "UCC Guidelines" in 2007, the "Twitter Guidelines" in 2010, and the "SNS Use Guidelines" in 2011. Through these guidelines, Article 93 of the Election Law, which prohibited even a simple offline statement of opinion or manifestation of an intention on the election, was extended to include those made on the Internet.

As opposition to the regulation of UCC was strengthened, the NEC relaxed the regulations to permit the creation of UCC for content other than libel or falsehoods regarding the candidates and their families, but there was no UCC from voters through the end of the election. Instead, what increased in regional areas was camp-created content (CCC), which was created by the candidates.

The strengthening of NEC regulations reduced the activities of the portal sites. The portal site "Naver" announced its approach to information dissemination by a party or a candidate, an approach that attempted to balance the election information of the ruling party with that of the opposing parties. In addition, because of concerns over violating the Election Law, the comment field for election reports was deleted (Lim 2010).

Even after 2012 when the ban on Internet election campaigning was lifted, the regulations did not completely disappear (Cho and Shim 2012). The following Internet election campaigning regulations remained: (1) Internet election campaigning on the day of the election was prohibited (support, endorsement, and opposition against particular candidates were not permitted but calls to voters were allowed); (2) real name authentication was mandatory for writing comments in election reports on Internet newspapers and portal sites; and (3) prior deliberation was mandatory for opinion polls.

During the election period in February 2012, the NEC sent over 2000 notices to Internet newspapers stating that they must delete posts that did not have real name authentication. In addition, on March 5, 2012, the NEC called to improve the real name authentication by Internet

newspapers and portal sites. Real name authentication was required for posting opinions in the comment fields of election news reports, but the NEC determined that SNS accounts such as Facebook and Twitter did not use real name authentication, so they ordered the comment fields be closed during the election period.

Regulations regarding the publication of the results of opinion polls were also strengthened. The prohibition of distorted opinion survey reports was added to Article 96 of the Election Law, which prohibited falsified commentaries and reports. Criteria for publishing opinion polls, such as clarifying the main body, requisites, and process of the opinion poll, were also strengthened.[5] By changing the subject of the opinion polls to "anyone" in the Election Law, all opinion polls became subject to regulation. Within 180 days of election day, in order to conduct an opinion poll related to the election, authorization from the NEC was required at least 2 days before conducting the opinion poll.[6] In the general elections of 2016, 180 opinion polls were submitted for prior authorization and 48 were approved.[7]

The NEC's Cyber Supervisory Group of Vote Rigging deleted a total of 17,101 posts from December 2015 to April 13, 2016. Of those, 45% cited the results of opinion polls. The portal site "Daum" had the most posts deleted (992), followed by Twitter (699), Naver (451), and Facebook (235).

### *The Internet and Political Participation*

The main focus when Internet election campaigning was first introduced was what kind of effect it would have on election results. Thus, interest in the mobilization effect was high. During the first stage, focus was on the mobilization effects on the political participation of young people such as the rejection campaign in 2000 and the activities of Ohmynews and Nosamo in 2002. It was pointed out that initial impacts occurred via the digital divide. A trend was observed whereby the more voters accessed the homepages of parties and candidates, the higher their voting rate (Kim and Yun 2004). When we consider that most of the Internet users in 2002 were young people, we can conclude that Internet access increased the political participation of young people.

During the second stage, the following three factors influenced Internet election campaigning: the disappearance of the digital divide as a result of

the increased Internet adoption rate, the disappearance of ideological bias on the Internet, and a change in the age composition of voters.

A December 24, 2007, article in the Internet newspaper *DongAilbo* reported that the previous view that "Internet users are liberal" had changed and that the number of conservative Internet users had increased; thus, the views were more balanced. In other words, there was an increase of conservative users and elderly people in the Internet space that had previously been used primarily by liberal opposition parties and young people. An April 26, 2007, article in *Media Today* noted that the lack of the liberalists' momentum in 2002 was also thought to be due to the acquisition of a balance between liberal and conservative views.

In the third stage, the main characteristics were (1) lifting the ban on Internet election campaigning, (2) the disappearance of the digital divide and the device divide, (3) the overall composition of voters, and (4) an increase in the political participation of elderly people. In this stage, the relationship between the government, media, and voters became flat and voters could more easily get involved in the policy-making process of the government.

## Election Apps

### *Election Apps of Political Parties*

In the general elections of 2016, all three parties, the NFP, the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK), and the Justice Party created election apps. The Internet election campaign strategy for each party was reflected in its election apps but smartphone apps were a common factor in each strategy.

The election app (mobile app) of the NFP, "Ontong Sotong," is a modified version of the online site that had been in operation since 2012,[8] but it was completely revised to match the smartphone app. The homepage was coordinated with the app using the same content.[9]

The apps can be used irrespective of party membership and can be divided into four categories: SNS Nuri, opinion polls, debates, and information. In SNS Nuri, opinions can be submitted and shared using the SNS service and the trending opinions are shown. In the opinion polls and debates categories, users can freely propose topics. Party members with different login pages can join a community of party members and obtain information about the party chapter, depending on place of residence.

According to the Internet election campaign manager of the NFP, the number of Ontong Sotong users was lower than expected.[10] The reason given for this was that the average age of the supporters was higher than that of the opposition party. It appears that the Internet strategy based on smartphones was poorly suited to the supporting layer of the NFP. Ontong Sotong was designed primarily to allow users to express their own opinions, to discuss points of dispute, and to share that content using SNS, rather than functioning like a homepage to disseminate information. The NFP has a conventional homepage but they have also created a homepage that can be accessed by smartphones via apps such as Facebook and Saenuri TV on YouTube.

The DPK, which aims to be known as the network party, created three election apps: "Junggam,"[11] Thedangdang App, and Double App.[12] The main goals of "Junggam" are to network with candidates, to serve as election headquarters for voters, and to accept and reflect policy proposals in campaign pledges. Thedangdang App is used to recruit volunteers, provide information on the election campaign of the DPK, and to communicate with candidates. Double App has two roles. The first is to provide an election tool that can be used by preliminary candidates. After registering as a preliminary candidate with the DPK, when you upload your information to the app, you can immediately use it as an election app without paying a separate fee. After receiving party endorsement, it can also be converted into the Internet election campaign tool of the candidate. The second role is to support Internet campaigning by managing SNS accounts all together. When the candidate connects his or her Twitter, Facebook, and KakaoTalk accounts to the app, the candidate's election information can be easily disseminated via SNSs.

The People's Party, which was established 2 months before election day on March 13, 2016, did not have enough time to create an election app, so they used existing SNSs, such as YouTube, Facebook, and "Periscope," a live broadcast service for tweet videos. In addition to live broadcasting the election campaign using YouTube and Periscope, they held live interviews with Ahn Cheol-soo, a representative who was popular with young people, every night from March 1st to the day before the election.

### *Candidates' Election Apps*

In the 2014 regional elections, 81 candidates created election apps. Including those from non-endorsed candidates, a total of 108 election

apps were created. The ruling NFP party had 43 candidates, and the opposition party, the New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD) (which later became the DPK), had 35. Twenty-six independent candidates created election apps, which exceeded those from the two candidates from the Justice Party. The election rates of these candidates were 63% for the NFP, 88% for the NPAD, and 20% for non-affiliated candidates. The election rates of the NPAD and NFP were high. In the mayoral elections, 34 of the 72 candidates created election apps. In the metropolitan mayoral and gubernatorial elections, 14.5% created apps. The Internet campaign differed according to election type and region, but the candidates of the gubernatorial elections used the Internet more actively than the candidates for mayoral elections (Lee 2011). On the other hand, the ratio of election app creation in the provincial legislative elections and municipal legislative elections was low (Table 6.2 and Fig. 6.3).

OXMK created 40.7% of the election apps, not just for the ruling party but also for the opposition party and non-affiliated candidates. According to interviews of employees of OXMK, the cost to create an election app was one million won (as of 2012). The reason the cost was so low was that three types of previously created prototype apps were used. A candidate would choose one of the three types (A, B, or C) presented by OXMK and would use it as his or her own election app by uploading personalized pictures and election information. Thus, the Internet campaign strategy of the candidate was not reflected in the election app, and it was not downloaded or actively used by voters after it was purchased. Moreover, the user information collected during the period of the election was completely discarded after the election and was not used in the next election.

**Table 6.2** Election apps in the 2014 local elections

| *Type of election* | *Preliminary candidates* | *Approved candidates* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Lost* | *Won* | |
| Education superintendents | | 3 | 1 | 4 (6.6%) |
| Metropolitan mayoral and gubernatorial elections | 5 | 1 | 3 | 9 (4) |
| Provincial legislative elections | 5 | 6 | 13 | 24 (19) |
| Municipal legislative elections | 3 | 16 | 15 | 34 (31) |
| Mayoral elections | 14 | 9 | 14 | 37 (23) |
| Total | 27 | 35 | 46 | 108 (81) |

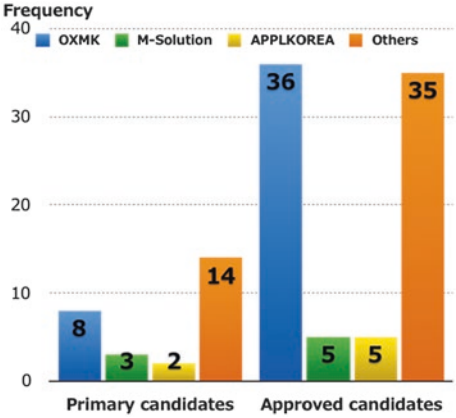


**Fig. 6.3** Candidate election apps by company

In comparison, during the general elections of 2016, not a single election app appeared from any candidate. One reason for this may be that party candidates were not selected until right before the election period due to internal conflicts over candidate nominations.

### *The General Elections of 2016 and SNS Use*

Internet campaigning in 2016 and 2012 differs in two ways. First, compared to 2012, homepage and Twitter use declined markedly in 2016. Prior to 2016, homepages served as a base for Internet campaigning that tied together blogs and SNS. However, as can be seen in Fig. 6.4, homepage use among elected candidates decreased from 76% in 2012 to 45.7% in 2016. The average use rate of the candidates was no more than 29.1%. The use rate for elected candidates was higher than this average; however, the main actor for Internet campaigning had shifted from homepages to SNSs such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. This was related to a change in the devices used to access the Internet. A survey on Internet usage conducted by KISA in 2015 shows that among the devices used to access the Internet, smartphone use at 86.4% was higher than personal computer use at 66.9%.

Next, special report published by National Assembly of South Korea reported among SNSs the user ratio was high for Facebook, where real names are often used, which makes it easy to analyze user information. For example, the use ratio of Facebook increased from 29% in 2008 to 86.3%

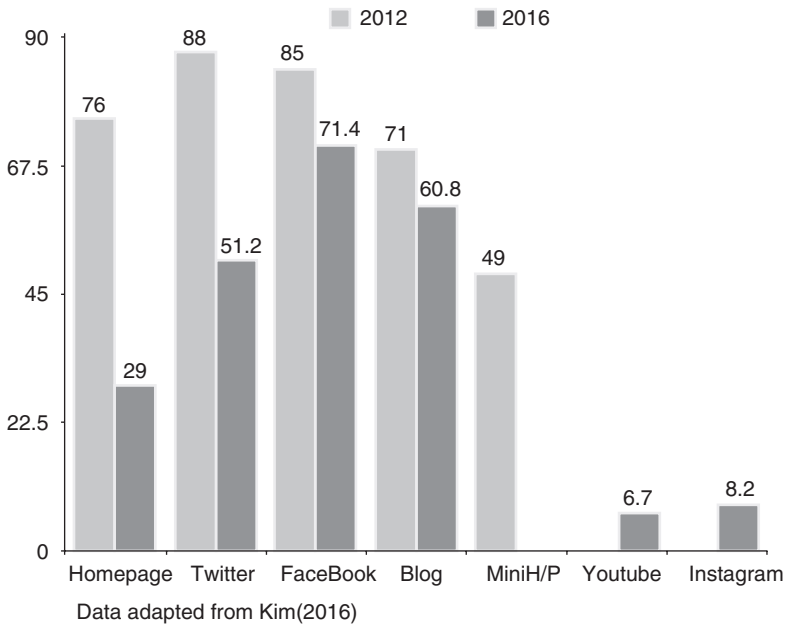


**Fig. 6.4** Comparison of 2012 and 2016 Internet campaigns

in 2016. One reason the use ratio of Facebook by candidates was high was the ability to broadcast live election campaigns.[13] In addition, videos were uploaded to YouTube and were disseminated via SNSs. The reason that candidates prefer using video services is related to the high use rate of videos by voters. A Netizen Profile Report (2016) stated that use rate of videos among South Koreans in 2016 was 87.2%, and 64.3% of users viewed videos on smartphones.

In 2016, the number of candidates using videos and photographs in their election campaigns had increased, and YouTube and Instagram were introduced as campaign tools. The use rate of YouTube for all candidates was 6.7%, but the use rate among elected candidates was higher, at 14.3%. Additionally, a use rate of 12.8% by the opposition party, the DPK, was higher than the use rate of the NFP at 10.1%. On the other hand, the difference in the use rates of Instagram by elected candidates at 10.3% and for all candidates at 8.2% was smaller.

One factor leading to increased SNS use by candidates could be that the information technology skills on the candidate side had increased. The NFP conducted educational sessions multiple times for Diet members and election staff. For that reason, the flow of information became easier as the skill level on the candidate side increased. Rather than depending on information dispersal by volunteers like before, the trend of strategically developing Internet campaigns became stronger on the politician side.

Table 6.3 shows clear differences in the Internet election strategies of the political parties. The main Internet campaign tool of each party switched from homepages to Facebook. As mentioned above, homepages previously played a central role in Internet campaigns. Election pledges, election campaign schedules, proclamations, and other official information were initially placed on the homepage and then were disseminated via SNSs.

As the adoption rate of smartphones increased, the device for connecting to the Internet changed from personal computers to smartphones. For that reason, homepages passed on their roles as contact points for providing election information to smartphone apps. Homepages were well suited to provide information, but smartphones are better at enabling two-way interactions between users.

**Table 6.3** Internet campaign usage by party

| *Party* | *Total* | *Homepage* | *Twitter* | *Facebook* | *Blog* | *Instagram* | *YouTube* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saenuri | 248 | 52.0% (114) | 52.0% (129) | 83.5% (207) | 77.0% (191) | 14.1% (35) | 10.1% (25) |
| DPK | 234 | 36.3% (85) | 73.1% (171) | 83.3% (195) | 76.1% (178) | 9.4% (22) | 12.8% (30) |
| People's Party | 171 | 19.3% (33) | 49.7% (85) | 62.6% (107) | 57.3% (98) | 7.6% (13) | 1.8% (3) |
| Justice Party | 51 | 11.8% (6) | 39.2% (20) | 74.5% (38) | 47.1% (24) | 2.0% (1) | 0.0% (0) |
| People's United Party | 56 | 1.8% (1) | 21.4% (12) | 94. 6% (53) | 14.3% (8) | 1.8% (1) | 0.0% (0) |
| Independent | 133 | 18.8% (25) | 39.8% (53) | 50.4% (67) | 45.1% (60) | 3.8% (5) | 3.8% (5) |

Source: Data adapted from Kim (2016).

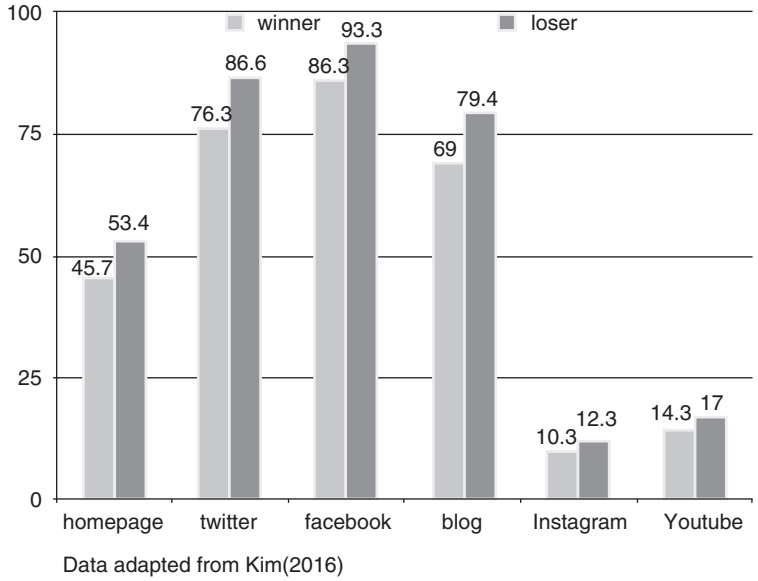


**Fig. 6.5** Internet campaigns by candidate

A commonality between the NFP and the DPK is that both parties use all types of Internet services as election tools. However, while the NFP tends to use Facebook, blogs, homepages, and Instagram as primary election tools, the DPK tends to rely more on Twitter and YouTube. The People's United Party (PUP) uses Facebook extensively as a campaign tool. The PUP rarely uses SNSs other than Facebook. Of the 56 candidates, 53 used Facebook. From this, it appears that the more a party is in the minority, the fewer SNSs are used and the stronger the tendency to use Facebook among the SNSs.

The use of Twitter and YouTube by the DPK is higher than the other parties. The use rate of Twitter in the DPK is 73.1%, which is higher than NFP's use rate of 52%. This means that the DPK put greater emphasis on the distribution of election information than the NFP. However, the manager of the DPK's Internet campaign said that a major characteristic in 2016 was an emphasis on the content of the election information over distribution. Card Stacks were heavily used in the 2016 election. Card Stacks were used as a means of introducing policies, and each party created several Card Stacks, which were distributed using SNSs (Fig. 6.5).

## Discussion

Above, we examined the Internet campaigns of the 2014 and 2016 elections. Compared to previous elections, there is a clear difference between political parties' Internet election campaigns after 2012. The main feature is likely the shift to centering Internet campaigns on smartphones. This change is related to a variety of factors, including laws and regulations surrounding elections, the information environment, voter composition, and changes in the political culture.

Now, I would like to examine the factors that have affected Internet election campaigning. Specifically, I would like to address the following questions. What are the differences between Internet election campaigning in 2014 and in 2016? What changes in the environment led to those differences? Are those changes temporary or fixed for the long term? What kinds of changes will occur in Internet election campaigning in the future? I would also like to consider how Internet election campaigning in these two elections differs from previous elections.

### *Internet Campaigns That Increased Exclusivity*

One characteristic of the 2016 Internet campaigns is that homepages and Twitter use have faded. What does this situation imply? Is this simply a change in technology trends or is it a precursor to some type of structural change?

In interviews with people related to political parties, one keyword commonly appeared, that is, the "exclusivity" of Internet election campaigns. The point that these interviewees were making is that because messaging apps such as KakaoTalk, which are used between individuals, have been used as election tools, it has become impossible to grasp a complete picture of the election.

Since 2002, Internet election campaigns in South Korea have been conducted in the open space of homepages, blogs, message boards, and Twitter, which anyone can access. From 2002 through today, Internet election campaigns had a strategy of influencing election goals by ensuring that information dominated and public opinion supported the goals in cyber space. To this end, Internet election campaigns had to quickly and widely "spread" information, comments, and public opinion and had to seize control of cyber space. The triumph of Roh-moo hyun through the anti-America demonstrations by Nosamo and Ohmynews in 2002 is a

typical example of the influence that a successful Internet strategy can have on offline voting behavior.

However, since the presidential election in 2012, KakaoTalk has been used as an election tool, and the pattern of the election battle has changed. KakaoTalk, which automatically connects people via their telephone numbers, had a mobilization effect on elderly people. However, KakaoTalk is a tool for relaying communication between individuals and it is illegal for others to view that content. Therefore, it is impossible to analyze trends in content the way one can with Twitter or Facebook.

### *Changes in the Device Environment*

After 2012, the device divide disappeared as the adoption rate of smartphones increased. What changes did this produce? The disappearance of the device divide implies that rather than just young people, elderly people's adoption rate of smartphones also increased. In 2012, 93.5% of people in their 20s and 93.7% of people in their 30s already had smartphones.[4]

Due to the disappearance of the device divide, elderly people are now able to participate in the formation of social relationships while sharing information and opinions. Following the disappearance of the digital divide, the disappearance of the device divide further increased the political participation of elderly people, and these elderly, now-networked people became more mobilized. It has been suggested that one of the reasons that Park Geun Hye won the 2012 presidential election is the successful mobilization of elderly people.

### *Systematic Barriers Blocking Internet Campaigns*

Despite new services and technological advancements, no new movements have occurred since 2012. Changes in the information environment, such as the lifting of the ban on Internet election campaigning and the disappearance of the digital divide and the device divide, greatly broadened the space for the free political participation of voters. However, with this expansion in the possibilities for political participation, we are seeing something akin to a loss of vigor in Internet campaigning. Through interviews with members of various political parties, we found the following three reasons for this phenomenon.

*Short Election Campaign Periods*

The shortness of the election campaign period is referred to often as a problem. The period set forth in the Election Law for presidential elections is 23 days and 14 days for Diet and regional elections. This works against new candidates who are not well known. The reason that the Election Law sets such short election campaign periods is to prevent excessive campaign spending from long-running election campaigns and harmful effects from overheated elections.

In order to remove any inequality between preliminary candidates and current Diet members, the Election Law was revised. If one registers with the NEC as a preliminary candidate, one can start election campaigning 180 days before voting day. The problem is that party endorsement of the candidates is determined right before the election campaign period commences. Even a preliminary candidate cannot aggressively pursue an election campaign because he or she will not have received endorsement. As long as the timing of endorsement decisions does not change, the situation will remain the same.

*Limits on Campaign Financing*

Internet election campaigning was promoted due to the ability to campaign at a low cost. In order to hold large-scale gatherings, which require huge funding investments, one must conduct campaign fund raising, often in questionable ways. This is because there is a legal limit on campaign expenditures. Expenditures of campaign funds exceeding that limit is a violation of the law. Thus, even if the candidate is elected, not only will the election be nullified, the candidate will also be subject to criminal prosecution.

The reason that televised debates were introduced in the 1997 presidential election was because there was strong public opinion calling for election campaigns that did not require huge amounts of money. This is the same reason why Internet election campaigning was encouraged. According to the NEC, the limit for campaign expenditures for the 2016 general election was 170 million won (170,000 US dollars; 1 US dollar = 1000 won). Actual campaign expenditures by the candidates totaled 121,160,000 won, or 69.1% of the limit.

In South Korea, 100% of campaign expenses for candidates who receive more than 15% of the vote and 50% of campaign expenses for candidates who receive 10% to 15% of the vote are reimbursed by the state. This is so that anyone can have the opportunity to be a candidate in an election.

However, not all expenses are reimbursed. Only those items included on the compensation list set forth by the NECC are subject to reimbursement. On that list, there are only a few items related to Internet election campaigning.

According to that list, fees for creation, management, and updating of Internet homepages and apps are not subject to reimbursement. Election content for smartphones using 3D Augmented Reality technology, personnel costs for managing the candidate's homepage, creation and management fees for election information shown on webpages, and apps for smartphones are also not subject to reimbursement. Moreover, costs for employing Internet experts are not subject to reimbursement.

Expenses related to e-mail, phone calls, and SNS during the election campaign period are subject to reimbursement. Also included are e-mail design and editing fees, installation and use fees for Internet campaigning during the election campaign period, production fees for videos transmitted over the candidate's mobile messenger service (KakaoTalk), fees incurred when transmitting election information using KakaoTalk Friends, and SNS transmission costs.

*Prohibition of House-to-House Visits*

According to Article 65 of the Election Law, house-to-house visits are prohibited. Even individual visits informing people about gatherings and so on are prohibited. In South Korea, voters and politicians are not permitted to meet individually. Additionally, only one type of election campaign bulletin may be prepared and candidates cannot distribute those directly to voters. Instead, the NEC sends all of them out in one bundle. The bulletins are distributed by the NEC no later than 10 days before election day[14]; however, that is not sufficient time to read, investigate, and discuss all of the election pamphlets.

An election app can solve this type of systemic problem. In order to use an election app, it is necessary to register using personal information. Thus, the ability to analyze the personal information of voters is a benefit of using election apps. In addition, one can provide election information tailored to particular voters. Finally, it is possible to collect opinions from voters regarding various election pledges. These election app functions are equivalent to the functions of individual canvassing efforts. However, irrespective of this type of environment, no real effect was seen. The fact that the costs to employ expert staff related to the construction, management, and operation of a system to garner the effects of individual canvassing are

not considered election expenses is also a problem. These issues can be considered reasons why election apps were not created for individual candidates in 2016.

## Conclusion

Above, I explained the development of Internet election campaigning in South Korea and investigated the changes and problems that election apps bring to election campaigning. From the discussion above, we can see that regulation of Internet election campaigning has changed from focusing on the system to focusing on the content. This means that the object of regulation has changed from the organization to the individual. In addition, we can see that the initial movement of Internet election campaigns occurred in response to an unbalanced situation. Through the revision of the Election Law in 2012, regulations focused on individuals in Internet election campaigning were abolished, but not all of these regulations were completely removed.

The relaxation of the regulations and the increase in the adoption rate of smartphones made it possible to conduct the individual canvassing prohibited by the Election Law online. Furthermore, the main focus of Internet election campaigning changed from voters to political parties and became connected to the platform of each party's election campaign. That platform was the political parties' election apps. In the 2014 local elections, some individual candidates attempted to use election apps, but in the general elections of 2016, election apps were actually created by the political parties as a part of their campaign strategies. However, even though the possibilities of Internet election campaigning were broadening, Internet election campaigns were not activated. The Personal Information Protection Act for protecting individual privacy and limits on the election period and campaign funding to prevent overheated elections are possible reasons for this.

With the disappearance of the digital divide and the device divide, it has become easier for political parties to include voters in their election strategies and the level of freedom in the parties' Internet strategies are increasing. The parties are attempting to conduct activities online, such as individual solicitation activities, which are prohibited offline, and it is thought that this movement will accelerate in the future. As a result, we can speculate that Internet election campaigns will be conducted on the

platforms of the political parties. Even now, mechanisms are being created and pursued with an eye toward the 2018 presidential election.

By coordinating smartphones and SNSs, it will become easier for individuals and groups to connect with the Internet election strategies of the political parties.[4] However, these connections are emerging in a closed environment that is difficult to see from the outside. The characteristics of the Internet are the sharing and dissemination of information, but smartphones moved these characteristics to a closed space. This will hinder the free discussion of politics and policies and will stunt the growth of a healthy democracy.

In future research, I would like to consider the following questions. How will smartphones exert influence on digital democracy? How will they change the election space and campaigns? What kind of campaign space will they create?

## Notes

1. See https://www.nia.or.kr/files/ko/nia2009/html/nia01/010503_cont.html#num2 (last accessed on March 22, 2017).
2. Lee (2016) defines a Power Twitterian as a Twitter user with a significantly large number of followers.
3. Details are available on the NEC website, available at http://www.nesdc.go.kr/portal/main.do (last accessed March 22, 2017).
4. The establishment of a committee was added to Article 86 of the Election Law and was revised on March 12, 2004. Election news coverage in Internet newspapers came to be regulated during local elections in 2006.
5. Article 108 of the Election Law.
6. See http://www.nesdc.go.kr/portal/main.do (last accessed March 22, 2017).
7. For more details, see http://www.nesdc.go.kr/portal/bbs/B0000006/list.do?menuNo=200469 (last accessed March 22, 2017).
8. See eDaily, March 13, 2012.
9. See http://www.ontongsotong.kr/index.snp (last accessed March 22, 2017).
10. For this information, we interviewed the manager of the NFP's Yeouido Institute, who was also in charge of the Internet election campaign.
11. This means being sympathetic toward public policy.
12. For this information, we interviewed the manager of the Digital Media Bureau of the DPK, who was also in charge of the Internet election campaign.

13. It began in January 2016.
14. Article 65 of the Election Law: Election Campaign Bulletins.

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CHAPTER 7

# When Elections Become Social Movements: Emerging "Citizen-Initiated" Campaigning in Taiwan

*Boyu Chen*

## Introduction

Citizens have become more engaged with election campaigns in democracies nowadays due to the ubiquity of social media and smartphones. When citizens are empowered by changing modes of communication, the unilateral, hierarchical structure of campaign activities is challenged by citizen's autonomy and external efficacy in cyberspace. It is thus more difficult for political parties to control and dominate election campaigns. "Citizen-initiated" campaigning (Gibson 2015) has been emerging in democracies and challenges professionalized and centralized campaign management by "surrendering some control over core campaign tasks to non-members" (Gibson 2015, 184). Interactive campaign activities between campaign organizers and citizens have four main functions: community building,

B. Chen (✉)
Department of International Studies and Regional Development, University of Niigata Prefecture, 471 Ebigase, Higashi-ku, Niigata-City, Niigata 950-8680, Japan



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getting out the vote, generating recourse, and message production (Gibson 2015). The political parties and candidates have adopted different strategies to cope with the spontaneous engagement of non-members in Internet election campaigns. Examples include MyBO website built up by the Obama camp for the 2008 US presidential election, which allowed users to create their own personal profile, connect with other user, and generate their own contents of campaign. The website attracted 2 million registers, volunteering over 2000,000 offline events, and generated $30 million donations (Aaker and Chang 2010, 16).

Recent studies about Internet-based social movements have provided a good theoretical framework for understanding how citizens are connected with each other to achieve a common goal. As a result of Internet technology development, the appearance of social media and the popularity of big data analysis technologies, social movements are transformed dramatically with respect to communication methods and organizational modes. These trends are evident in movements ranging from the Arab spring and Occupy Wall Street, to anti-austerity movements in Europe.

Bennett and Segerberg's notion of "the logic of connective action" (2012, 2013) explains well the way citizens today engage with political movements, and the same logic applies to election campaigns. In examining several social movements worldwide, Bennett and Segerberg explain how netizens express themselves to achieve collective actions through personal action frames, and how the Internet itself has become a new mode of organization. Networked crowds achieve a common good through multiple resource production (Bennett et al. 2014). Political parties and candidates nowadays have been learning how to engage more people in election campaigns and harness the social movements-like engagement in favor of them to win the election.

Taiwanese society has witnessed the formidable mobilizing force of the Internet in past social movements. Of these, two are most remarkable. One is the "White Shirt Army" movement of 2013 calling for the improvement of human rights in the military after a conscript's death caused by abuse of authority (Wan 2013), and the other is the "Sunflower movement" of March 2014, a protest of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, hereafter, the KMT) administration's service trade agreement with China, and made history with a 24-day occupation of Taiwan's Congress, the Legislative Yuan. Both movements manifested the significant role of Internet technologies in bringing about success: the resignation of the Minister of Defense in the former case, and the suspension of the agree-

ment in the latter (Chao 2014, Wan 2013). The movement was characterized by Internet-based citizen-initiated campaigning in a number of ways. First, a group of tech-savvy citizens built a website as a platform to provide channels with live broadcasts allowing viewers to witness the student movement. These channels were provided by freely participating individuals. Furthermore, this platform also coordinated man power so that participating students and citizens in the student movement could go to the places where there was the greatest need to assist the movement.[1]

Second, the platform provided a news aggregator to release news reported by participants on the spot, so that the mainstream media would present the student movement in an unbiased manner while it was happening. It created a large information network which presented news to Taiwanese and foreign media sources. An increasing number of websites spontaneously joined the student movement after it started to organize and provide information. At the same time, whenever the mainstream media or government presented news disadvantageous to the movement, these sites provided rapid response fact-checking. For example, during the 24-day occupation of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, the students made a video titled "Anti-Black Box Service Trade/The Truth about Mobs," demonstrating what was going on inside the Legislative building to refute negative news that attempted to smear the occupation movement.[2]

The two social movements were also directly or indirectly attributed to another historic event: the Taipei mayoral election in November 2014. For the first time, an independent candidate, Ko Wen-je, then a physician at National Taiwan University Hospital, was able to win the Taipei mayoral election by a wide margin. Taipei city had long been ruled by the KMT, the largest political party that was originally led by Chiang Kai-shek when it retreated to Taiwan from Mainland China in 1949. Rather than top-down mobilization methods, bottom-up citizen-initiated activities prevailed in the 2014 local election. An unprecedented number of citizens volunteered in support of online and offline campaigns, events, and activities with a plethora of materials, including online donation to support Ko Wen-je. Taiwanese political parties have been influenced by the above-mentioned social movements and the successful story of Ko's mayoral election. Facing emerging citizen engagement in election engineering, political parties have become aware of the importance of building up cooperative relationships with netizens who are not party members.

Using case studies as its research method, this chapter explains the emerging characteristics of citizen-initiated political campaigning utilized

in the 2014 Taipei Mayoral election and the 2016 presidential and legislative elections in Taiwan, and aims to answer two questions. First, though citizen-initiated campaigning can be identified, the mechanism and process of mobilization remains unknown. This study applies the logic of connective action to explain the mobilization mechanism under citizen-initiated campaigning. Second, it analyzes Taiwanese political parties' response to citizen-initiated campaigns in the election engineering.

## Citizen Engagement in Internet Election Campaigns

There has been a debate on the impact of the Internet on political campaigning. Has information technology been a boon for participatory democracy that encourages more citizen participation in election campaigns, or does it merely represent a more professional and centralized, top-down form of campaign politics (Gibson 2015)? No matter which is closer to reality, we have witnessed the changes brought on by information technology in election campaigns. Before the social media age, communications were highly centralized in political parties, and the ability to engage politically was largely limited to professionals. Today, communications are more decentralized. What is more, effective communication is often produced by amateurs rather than professionals.

A more open, de-centralized cyberspace created a "networked public" (Castells 2008), which allows netizens to organize themselves and connect with each other (Gerhards and Schäfer 2010). Citizen-initiated campaigning has emerged because citizens are able to deeply engage with election campaigns accompanied by the development of social media. As mentioned in the previous section, there are four main functions of citizen-initiated campaigns: community building, getting out the vote, generating recourses, and message production (Gibson 2015). The Obama campaign of 2009 was a good example of citizen-initiated campaigning. In 2007 and 2008, Obama's camp provided supporters easy access to tools for campaign activities from the official website so that those volunteers could organize, donate, and contact voters. The Obama camp built up their first social networking website, which was entitled MyBO. The scale of mobilization went far beyond what the websites of previous elections had ever achieved. The site received 500 million dollars in donations from 3 million voters and recruited a large group of volunteers (Talbot 2008).

"Citizen-initiated campaigning" indicates citizens are more engaged in election campaigns because of the innovation of information technology.

Bennett and Segerberg (2012, 2013) provide further explanation of how citizen-initiated campaigns work to achieve their common goal. Based on the logic of collective action, the two scholars propose the "logic of connective action" to explain how citizens connected to achieve collective action in an individual manner (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 2013). Here, they provide an analysis for group organization methods in the Internet era and undertake a dialogue concerning the logic of collective action.

Because the Internet breaks down temporal and spatial limits and connects its users, the name "connective action" itself, which Bennett and Segerberg (2012, 2013) propose, points to the uniqueness of the Internet as a tool. Their research involves the demonstrations at the 2009 G10 Summit in London, and the "indignant ones" *(los indignados)* protest in Spain, as well as the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States. Most of these protests occurred because governments were unable to undertake measures to solve economic problems precipitated by the 2008 economic crisis. Citizens were enraged and took to the street as a result of being asked to accept austerity measures. Bennett and Segerberg find the participation of organizations with longer histories in demonstration activities decreased substantially. Only 38 percent of participants were key organizations with brick and mortar addresses, and only 13 percent came from groups with memberships or affiliation. In addition, the average age of protest organizations was not over three (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 741).

These facts demonstrate large-scale actual organizations with memberships are on the decline in social movements during the Internet era. Given this, what is replacing these organizations which once played an important role in collective action? Bennett and Segerberg put forward these central tenets concerning the logic of connective action: (1) personal action frames and (2) communication technology as the prominent part of organizational structure.

### *Individual but Collective Action*

Bennett and Segerberg (2012) emphasize the shift from group-based to individualized society resulting from the formation of an online society. There are several differences between the connective action created by this individualized society and traditional collective action: firstly, connective action emphasizes personal frame action, while collective action requires collective frame action (p. 747). Community websites ensure individuals

have a place in the virtual world and provide a space in which the individual can express himself or herself. What is more, these personal expressions are imparted to the individual's friends in the community website, and this becomes an online social network.

Social media sites are also a natural channel for expressing political dissatisfaction. Netizens desire to receive feedback from others through sharing news, videos, pictures, and script. If they are acknowledged by other netizens, then the abovementioned information is disseminated very quickly. As such, the flow of information expressing protest starts with self-motivated sharing and then finds force in the cyberspace. Once the first person has sent out a message, others who agree with the message need not share it with others in original form. Rather, each person can use any method they like in expressing his or her opinion about the message, and can even alter or recreate the expressive form. This communication process itself involves further personalization.

One example involves the Occupy Wall Street Movement, in which netizens used various memes to express protest on the Internet. A "meme" here refers to an idea, usually being demonstrated as a phrase or picture, spreading from one person to another via social media, by remixing and reworking on the original text (Meikle 2016, 50–56). Among these, the most famous was "We are the 99%." Many posts described in detail the personal challenges of living in an economically unbalanced society. As soon as a meme starts to be echoed, it gains force on the Internet and even becomes a central tool in mobilizing for on-the-ground action. The mobilizing power of the meme does not require a centralized organization to initiate a common slogan for people to follow. In the age of social media, anyone can initiate and participate in the process of generating a powerful mobilizing tool with their own style.

Meikle (2016) identifies four dimensions of Net activism to further illustrate the intercreativity existing in the process of message dissemination. First, intercreative texts: the original texts and images are reworked and reimaged, and new texts or hybrid subversions of existing texts are created. During Taiwan's Sunflower movement, the photos of national leaders, and even the names of the leaders, were revised in a sarcastic manner and became memes that rampantly spread in social media. Second are intercreative tactics, as activists developed new variations on established tactics and protest or campaign gestures. Examples include hacking activities to paralyze government websites in order to demonstrate online civic disobedience. Third are intercreative strategies, which emphasize an open,

participant-centered media space that represents a strategic alternative to the established media. During the Sunflower movement, many newly-established online forums invited people to join deliberations on the free trade agreement with China. Fourth, intercreative networks refer to those that link open source software to experimental online publishing practices. During the Sunflower movement, programming-savvy participants built up open source software such as "hackfoldr" to connect scattered files together for easy access, and "hackpad" to allow every participant to collectively edit a document (Hsu 2014).

### *Communication Technology as Organization*

Within the theory of connective action, Internet technology is the networking agent and is communication technology as organization, which means it does not require the large-scale organizational operation necessary for collective action to provide resources, or central coordination of all actions (Bennett and Segerberg 2013, Chap. 3). In addition, the Internet is not monolithic. Rather, it is a "network of networks" created between various sites.

These networks, created through communication technologies, have the following utilities: first, they distribute resources; provide reporting from the scene of events; circulate mass media reports, especially those from independent media; create new discourses; allocate money; and provide information regarding lodging, medical aid, food, and so on. Second, these digital networks can respond rapidly to emergencies and coordinate action, alert people to show up, avoid or confront police, take new action, and so on (Bennett and Segerberg 2013, Chap. 3).

Like the functions of social media in social movements (Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012), communication through technology in organizations demonstrates four characteristics:

1) Instantaneity: news from the forefront can be disseminated and responded to by organizers;
2) Crowdsourcing elite: organizers have to rely on these elites to establish online platforms in setting up participant-driven activities.
3) Solidarity: while communication technology makes organization more porous and flexible, it does not lower the level of solidarity among supporters. Virtually connected individuals can be united to achieve the common goal.

4) Atmosphere: netizens repeatedly disseminate news even though they might be redundant. And the sustained, 24-hour news environment creates an atmosphere in which it is easier to support or smear a target. The virtual organization thus plays an essential role in spinning messages to netizens and creating an environment to favor or smash the target.

During the Sunflower movement, those technology-savvy participants, mainly from *g0v*[3] contributors, demonstrated the power of digital networks. The *g0v* started the Congress Occupied website[4] during the student movement. Within this project, the *g0v* contributors provided the following while the Sunflower Student Movement was going on:

First, they set up a Wi-Fi base station Wimax action wireless Internet base. Hereafter, they provided a wireless Internet to the occupied congress floor feed in addition to the wired one. Second, they created the information portal *g0v.today*. This innovative network was the result of many hackfoldrs being reorganized on the *g0v* portal. People could use the fastest Ustream to view video broadcasts, text broadcasts (including English), video recordings, and news excerpts regarding the service trade agreement between Mainland China and Taiwan (Atticus 2014).

Campaign activities and organizations have experienced changes similar to those accompanying the development of information technology in social movements in the digital era, and these changes have pushed candidates and political parties to contemplate the role of the Internet in engaging more citizens in campaign activities, as well as building up structural relationships with supporters taking on campaign activities. Political parties facing emerging citizen-initiated campaigning must learn to strike a balance between centralized control in campaign activities and Meikle's notion of intercreativity, which stems from citizens. The following section provides cases to illustrate the aforementioned theories on citizen-initiated election campaigning.

## The Development of Internet Election Campaigns in Taiwan

Political campaigning changed considerably in Taiwan in the early 1990s as a consequence of accelerated democratization and media liberalization. After martial law ended, the prohibition on "campaign movements in the pre-campaign period" thus was lifted in February 1989. As such, any constraint on preparations prior to a campaign period is perceived as

inappropriate.[5] Since there is no constraint on campaigning before this period, it is common to see slogans and posters in places where local governments allow campaign advertising to be placed.

The beginning of Internet election campaigns in Taiwan came not long after Bill Clinton's use of the Internet to communicate with the electorate in the 1992 presidential elections. The Internet was first introduced in the 1994 Taiwanese provincial gubernatorial and mayoral elections. Shui-bian Chen, from the largest opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (hereafter, the DPP), was the first mayoral candidate to establish a BBS (Bulletin Board System) station for providing information regarding City government (Chuang and Cheng 1996). Many people may not be familiar with BBS, which is an old-fashioned Internet tool in terms of its interface and is popular among young people in Taiwan. Even today, while social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter have seen a rapid increase in users in the past decade both in China and Taiwan, BBS still plays a significant role in netizens' daily lives. Many news released by TV channels or newspapers are originally from BBS posts. The largest and most popular BBS station in Taiwan is PTT, with the number of registered users reaching 1.5 million (Wu 2015; Kiyohara and Chen 2016).

Political parties in Taiwan have been building up their websites since the mid-1990s. The New Party, which broke away from the KMT, was the first political party to establish an official party website in 1995, followed by KMT and DPP. The 1996 presidential election was the first election for which all candidates established formal campaign websites (Chang 2009; Kiyohara and Chen 2016).

Although the KMT and the DPP created party websites in 1995, it was not until the late 2000s that both parties established Internet departments within their party organizations. One of the reasons for the late establishment of Internet departments in both parties was low Internet user penetration rates in Taiwan, which did not exceed 15 percent before 2000. Cable TV ads and newspaper ads were the main media for campaigning at that time, and political parties devoted more resources to traditional methods of mobilization and organization (Fell and Rawnsley 2004; Kiyohara and Chen 2016).

Obama's successful online strategies in the 2008 US presidential election have sent shock waves across the Pacific Ocean. The establishment of the Internet units by both the KMT and DPP in 2009, 1 year after the US 2008 presidential election, reveals that both the major parties noticed the formidable role of the Internet in Taiwan's politics.

Both of the parties aimed to get their message out and gather young people's voices by means of the Internet. In 2004 the penetration rate reached 51 percent, a sharp rise from 1999, as a result of the growth of broadband Internet service. The penetration rate jumped to 84 percent in the year of 2016.[6] This meant the importance of Internet users' potential votes could no longer be overlooked.

The advent of social media allows people to engage in elections much more easily than they could in the past. While Twitter is the most popular social media in Japan, Facebook is the most widely-used in Taiwan with 18 million active subscribers, more than 70 percent of the total population (He 2016). Compared to the high popularity of Facebook and LINE, only 5 percent of Taiwanese use Twitter. As the most popular social media, Facebook's penetration rate in Taiwan is much higher than in any other Asian country. The freeware app for instant communication, LINE, originated from the unit of South Korea's NHN Corporation in Japan and introduced to Taiwan in 2011. One year later the number of registered accounts in Taiwan reached 10 million, almost half of the population. More than 70 percent of Internet users access Facebook and LINE on a daily basis in Taiwan.[7] Due to the high penetration rates of Facebook and LINE, most of Taiwanese politicians have their own Facebook fan page and LINE account, especially for campaign activities. The utilization of advanced communication technology in mobilizing and organizing people reached its peak during the Sunflower movement in March 2014. According to data released by Taiwan Communication Survey in the year of 2015, 22 percent of respondents used social media to transfer information concerning social movements in the past year (N = 1296), and nearly 50 percent of those people were between the ages of 18 and 29 (Yu 2016). The model of citizen-initiated campaigns for the movement was utilized by the Taipei mayoral election in the same year.

The "White Shirt Army" Movement in 2013 and the Sunflower movement in 2014 were both social movements that contributed to the making of history in the Taipei mayoral election of November 2014. For the first time, an outspoken independent candidate, Ko Wen-je, then a physician at National Taiwan University Hospital, won the Taipei mayoral election by a wide margin. Taipei city has long been ruled by the KMT. The DPP ruled Taipei from 1994 to 1998 only because of a split in the KMT at that time. Rather than top-to-bottom mobilization methods, bottom-to-top citizen-initiated activities prevailed. Ko's success by obtaining 57 percent of the votes, followed by Lian Sheng-wen with 40 percent, in the 2014

local election caused political parties to pay attention to the effect of citizen-initiated campaigning.

In retrospect, it is fair enough to conclude that social movements play a crucial role in the development of Internet election campaigns in Taiwan. From the "White Shirt Army" to the Sunflower movement, the formidable mobilizing power of digital tools has forced political parties and candidates to examine their relations with netizens and develop their Internet campaign strategies.

## Emerging Citizen-Initiated Campaigns in Taiwan: 2014 Taipei Mayoral Election

Bennett and Segerberg (2012, 2013)'s notion of the "logic of connective action" indicates how individual citizens display individual characteristics in producing online campaign messages and connect with each other to achieve a common goal. On top of that, communication technology has been transformed into networked organizations to generate resources, organize volunteers, and mobilize people. Meikle (2016) also shed light on the process and strategy of how citizens reproduce campaign messages in an interactive manner to engage with election campaigns. Both of these insights are helpful for understanding the characteristics of citizen-initiated campaigning in Ko's election.

### *Individual but Collective Action*

In the Taipei mayoral election, the KMT candidate Lien Sheng-wen was perceived as representing the upper socioeconomic class in Taiwan. Lien Sheng-wen is the eldest son of Lien Chan, the former KMT Chairman and Vice President of Taiwan, who is extremely wealthy according to his reporting of assets to the government. Class cleavage and distribution issues have emerged in the recent Taiwanese elections of the past decade, in addition to the China cleavage, which splits political actors over whether to adopt a more pro-China policy. Accompanied by an increasingly aggravated wealth gap, class politics have given impetus to Taiwan's party politics (Wu 2013). The KMT camp is thought to be more closely tied to wealthy enterprises or people with vested interests in Taiwan. Lien thus was tied to the image of people with vested interests, while Ko, as a doctor with no political background, was perceived as representing ordinary

Taiwanese citizens. Though Ko's camp never launched negative campaign against Lien, netizens created various photos and videos by sarcastically revising campaign materials released by Lien's camp. These "interactive texts" added to the image of Lien as rich and out of touch.

One of the well-known examples was the video advertisement released by Lien's camp titled "If you had a lot of money (like Lien)," which emphasized that, even though Lien was a wealthy and resourceful man, he chose to give up a comfortable life and become the mayor to fight for his ideals. The video was immediately altered by netizens to ridicule Lien. The edited video was retitled as "I don't want to become Lien Sheng-wen." The video went viral on YouTube and Facebook, resulting in Lien's plummeting support rate among young voters during the month after the video advertisement was released.[8]

Interactive strategies, which emphasize an open, participant-centered media, together with interactive networks linking open source software to experimental online publishing practice (Meikle 2016), both played important roles in Ko's online election campaigns. Ko's camp initiated its "wild official website" movement to mobilize netizens with diverse talents, such as web designers and programmers, to fully participate and contribute their ideas and techniques in determining what the official website would look like. The chief of the new media sector first found these talented people through the online community and contacted them in person. He commented that the spirit of open data was essential for these enthusiastic programmers and that all the campaign organizer had to do was release all the data to them so that they could create the "wild official websites" (Liu 2015). In other words, the campaign organizers reached out to the developer community and asked for their help in creating citizen-initiated websites.

In the past, candidates usually held news conferences or resorted to legal means after being attacked through negative campaigning or news. However, the 2014 Taipei mayoral election was largely different. Lee, the chief of propaganda for Ko's camp, noticed online supporters lost no time in responding to negative news or campaigns spontaneously through Facebook, LINE, YouTube, PTT, and so on. Ko's supporters would collect authoritative documents and perform fact-checking to contend for him. They even counterattacked on occasion. Lee recalled that this was never the case in the past, and thus the opponent's camp accused Ko's camp of raising "net armies" (Liu 2015, 129–130).

How was Ko able to mobilize so many online volunteers? His camp did not even know who these volunteers were. The attractiveness of Ko may lie in his idea of "Publicity, transparency, Openness" which was perceived as essential to progressive politics by those tech-savvy and anti-KMT citizens. The two big social movements—the 2013 "White Shirt Army" demonstration and the 2014 Sunflower movement—did not translate into institutionalized power before the 2014 local election. Ko's election bid for Taipei city mayor thus became an outlet for the outrage felt by voters. Volunteers mostly came from the abovementioned social movements and were transformed into the stronghold of Ko's camp even though they had never directly met before. Ko himself did not know where his "net armies" came from. Furthermore, his camp doubted it could exercise direct control over these "armies" of netizens who were obviously not driven by material interest.

### *Communication Technology Transformed into Campaign Organizations*

While a social network page has become a must for candidates, a main official website remains important for voters to donate money, volunteer, and receive messages. For example, in 2012 Obama's campaign underscored the centrality of the campaign websites (Pew Research Center 2012). However, in Taiwan Facebook has become the website primarily used for campaigns in recent years rather than an official website. At the beginning of the campaign, Ko's campaign team found their official website was viewed less often than expected. They soon made their Facebook fan page the central campaign website and found this worked to increase the number of views.[9] The fan page, as well as the official website, provided the following functions: dissemination of messages from campaign headquarters, manifesto updates, responding to breaking news unfavorable to the candidate, recruitment of volunteers, calling for donations, and so on. The speed of message transmission, as well as flexibility in responding to various situations, has outperformed traditionally functioning physical campaign headquarters (Chang 2014). The latest posts on candidates' Facebook fan pages were oftentimes covered by TV news and newspapers before going viral in cyberspace. Ko's wife, a pediatrician as well as a mother of three children, was very active on her Facebook page. Her posts were covered by the news media on an almost daily basis during the election period.[10] Her Facebook posts chiefly covered issues of the medical

system, education, and the election (Kao 2016). That TV correspondents and newspaper journalists now directly report information from a candidate's website is far beyond what people living in the late 1990s could have imagined. At that time most of the up-to-date information about candidates was conveyed via telephone, even though candidates all had official websites at that time (Peng 2000).

The public was impressed with the performance of Facebook as virtual headquarters, and Facebook caught the attention of the media as a new electoral battlefield (Liu 2014). However, the use of Facebook fan pages as primary campaign websites did not mean official websites became obsolete. Rather, campaign teams utilized social media to activate official websites. Facebook functioned to redirect viewers to official websites so they could read lengthier information.

In addition to the link between Facebook fan pages and official websites, in Taiwan campaign organizers must be aware of a unique online platform—Taiwan's largest bulletin board system (BBS) Station named PTT—in which anything can flare up. BBSes were originally bulletin boards to be used as information sources, in addition to serving as interactive forums for public discussions and debates on a broad range of topics. BBSs, like social media, enable participants to keep pace with current events and news in real time. The emergence of social media did not consign BBSes to the dustbin. On the contrary, its users have kept growing. In 2015 the number of users reached 1.5 million.

The PTT and the mobile messenger LINE together made history in Taiwan's electoral politics. Three months before election day, Ko's camp called for volunteers to scrutinize balloting in a message posted on Ko's official website. They received little response after releasing the message in the initial stage. However, once they circulated the message on PTT, 1100 people registered as volunteers in just 3 days. In less than 3 months, they gathered approximately 2800 volunteers and assigned them to 1534 polling stations in Taipei city (Liu 2015, 552). On election day, each volunteer reported back to Ko's camp the results of votes in each polling station through LINE immediately after vote counting had finished. The response rate reached 99.7 percent, meaning almost every volunteer had completed their duty. The success of the PTT in recruiting volunteers lies in the interactive design of its BBS station. People can receive detailed information about scrutinizing balloting, an activity rather unfamiliar to young voters, through interactive discussions with campaign organizers, as well as other netizens, on the BBS forum (Liu 2015, 501–502).

Campaign organizations have been comprised of official websites, Facebook, PTT, and LINE in Taiwan's elections since then.

## Adaption and Adoption: Political Parties Facing Citizen-Initiated Campaigning

The landslide victory of the independent candidate Ko Wen-je astonished the two major parties. Taiwan's 2016 presidential and legislative elections witnessed citizen-initiated campaigning with the two major parties applying the strategies learned from Ko's camp. The result of the 2016 presidential and legislative elections was an extension of the KMT's defeat in the 2014 local elections. The DPP presidential candidate, Tsai Ing-wen, won the presidency by 56 percent of votes over KMT candidate Eric Chu with 31 percent (n = 18,782,991). The DPP also won a majority in the Legislature. It was the first time that the DPP won both executive and legislative powers.[11]

After the 2014 local elections, both the KMT and DPP subsequently reorganized their Internet sectors, developed strategies of citizen-initiated campaigning, and worked on building up connections with active online supporters. However, the process of adaption and adoption varied significantly between the two major parties.

### *Organizational Reform*

While suffering a crushing defeat in local elections, the KMT became determined to win back the support of the younger generation. During the 2016 presidential and national elections, the KMT started to build up connections and network with active online supporters. The party claimed to "Get back Blue net armies" (Yang 2015).[12] As a conservative leaning and near 100-year-old political party, the KMT went through a difficult time in adapting the party to citizen-engaged election campaigns. During the 2014 local election, the KMT accused Ko's camp of raising "net armies" to launch a negative campaign against the KMT candidate (Chang 2014). The party had no clue as to where the netizens who supported the rival candidate came from. After the local election, the KMT started to learn from information technologists, especially those involved in social movements, for example, *gov* contributors, about "open government" and crowdsourcing. It was hoped that the KMT could extend their hands to

the younger generation and not lose their votes to the DPP (Liu 2015, 111–113). However, the method KMT adopted to strengthen online campaigning is in opposition to the spirit of "open government," which emphasizes more horizontal than hierarchical communication. The KMT's idea of strengthening its new media sector relies more on centralized control under the Institute on Policy Research and Development, which is directly responsible to the party chairperson. Both the Youth Department, which is supposed to take on youth mobilization, and the new media sector originally affiliated with the Culture and Communications Committee were merged into the Institute on Policy Research and Development after the 2014 local election (Lo 2015). In so doing, centralization, rather than intra-party democratization, was further strengthened in response to the new campaign environment.

During the 2016 national election, the KMT chairman was willing to try using an online primary one time for candidate selection to promote E-democracy. However, the proposal failed under the opposition of core party members, who had suspicions concerning the fairness of Internet voting.

The DPP, on the other hand, has learned from the past experience that to raise so called "net armies" to manipulate the online opinions is not workable. Lin Ge-yong, then DPP Chief of the Department of Internet founded in 2009, pointed out that to manage voters via the Internet does not always work, especially for those median voters who are fed up with politics. He stressed that the contents and acceptable messages should always take precedence over the management of a supporting group or community. For him, it is easy to test if the message is acceptable and effective just by asking netizens with a low level of political interest to see if they feel fine with the content or not.[13] The party has realized that, to gain supporters in cyberspace, it should first provide attractive ideas and issues—the essence of winning followers both online and offline. Good issue-framing strategy could attract citizens without party identification. The party's next step was to cultivate those followers into active netizens to respond to rumors and questions against the party. The DPP has been discussing methods to engage supporters who are not party members for years. For example, the party has applied the methods of intraparty promotion via an online platform adopted by Germany's Pirate Party, the technology-savvy political party which has allowed supporters to have a say on promotion online in the past 5 years. In an attempt to build up relations with active netizens, the DPP also applied online tools to finding

online opinion leaders and contacting them. Unlike the KMT, which adopted centralized organizational reform in new media sectors, the DPP's organizational change regarding new media sector after the 2014 mayoral election involved full devolution of power with respect to decision-making. The Department of the Internet and the Department of Propaganda were merged and reorganized into two different departments: The Department of News and Information was put in charge of propaganda and reacting to negative news and information against the party, and the Center for Media Innovation of mobilization and strategies of Internet election campaigns. The more horizontal organizational arrangement fully empowers those new media sectors.[14]

### *Strategies of Citizen-Initiated Campaigning*

In the 2016 presidential election, the KMT camp initiated a campaign logo generator provided by its official website, which allowed supporters to generate the logo and circulate in their social media to campaign for the KMT. The logo was designed from the two rainbow-colored words "One Taiwan" to express the notion of a varied but united Taiwanese society. However, the consequences of citizen-initiated campaigning were contrary to what the party expected. Netizens ridiculed the logo by reproducing it with various altered slogans, such as "One China," to criticize the KMT's one China policy that downplays Taiwan's status and flatters Beijing's unification policy; another example is "One Night in Beijing," a popular song in China. Similar with the case of Lian Sheng-wen's video campaign, the campaign logo generator of the KMT turned into a negative online campaign tool used against the party that went viral in the social media.

Though the political atmosphere did not favor the KMT during the period of the presidential and legislative elections, the party did receive support from volunteer netizens. There was a Facebook fan page called "Smurfs" (the Blue genius in Chinese. "Blue" refers to the KMT, the Blue camp). The fan page, set up by KMT supporters, aimed to refute the rumors by providing fact-checking posts. Former KMT International Information and Events Center director Hsu Chiao-hsin told the author that in the 2014 local election, after witnessing the power of netizens, some KMT members realized the importance of netizens and tried hard to build up new relations with those potential supporters who were extremely active in the virtual world. The party would provide detailed information

as resources for supporters to engage in the fight against rumors once it found online activists who volunteered to speak for the KMT on the Internet, like the initiator of "Smurfs." The firsthand information provided to these active supporters was mostly lengthy articles on the KMT's official website. The detailed information in these articles could be tailored into concise and illustrative language by active supporters, which made the information more approachable to the public.[15]

Some of the successful ideas regarding campaign advertisements came from anonymous netizens. "3-D Xiao-Ing" (Xiao-Ing is Tsai Ing-wen's nickname), in which the DPP presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen was turned into a cute catgirl, became a successful campaign advertisement. This was originally the creation of netizens who observed Tsai's resemblance to a Japanese anime character, "Kirishima," who had cat-like characteristics and cat ears in particular. They edited the picture of "Kirishima" by fitting Tsai's face on the figure to create "3-D Xiao Ing." The photo soon trended in social media. In addition, Tsai showed up at an anime and manga exhibition event to build good relations with potential supporters and activists (Baseel 2016; Lin 2016).

As Gibson (2015, 183–184) mentions, citizen-initiated campaigning does not easily succeed for those parties "with more clearly defined boundaries and formal membership." Political parties with longer histories, hierarchical power structures, centralized organization, as well as conservative ideology seem less likely to manage citizen-initiated campaigning well. The DPP emerged from social movements and is characterized by elements which are more grass root in nature, and intraparty decision-making processes which are more democratic, while the KMT, Taiwan's most senior political party, tends to be more conservative and centralized, with hierarchical intraparty decision-making.

According to Taiwanese journalists, it is more difficult to interview or request information from the KMT because the higher echelon decides almost everything without devolution or power sharing.[16] The former PTT moderator indicated that the KMT has not awakened after two electoral defeats. The DPP is still 10 years ahead of the KMT in utilizing the digital tools (Hsu 2016).

While Taiwan's political parties and candidates are now devoting more resources to online strategies to mobilize and engage more people in the campaigning process, let us not forget the chief contribution of factors pushing this mobilization and engagement, for example, large scale of social movements before or around the election period, which lead to a

successful citizen-initiated campaigning. The following facts explicitly illustrate the importance of pushing factors to elections: during the Sunflower movement, the DPP received $6 million donations, far more than the amount of $4 million that the party received during presidential election period.[17]

## Conclusion

This chapter explains the emerging characteristics of citizen-initiated political campaigning for the 2014 Taipei mayoral election as well as the 2016 presidential and legislative elections, and aims to answer two questions. First, if citizen-initiated campaigning can be identified, then what is the mechanism of mobilization? This study explains the logic behind "citizen-initiated" campaigning from the perspective of "the logic of connective action." In light of the logic of connective action, this study explains how personal frame action transformed into collective force in the process of citizen-initiated campaigning and how communication technology has transformed into networked organizations. The aforementioned characteristics featuring recent digital mobilized social movements have been demonstrated in election engineering in Taiwan. Second, it analyzes how Taiwanese political parties responded to rising citizen's engagement in campaigns and adapt and adopt tools and strategies emerged from social movements in the election engineering.

High penetration rate of social media and mobile communication messenger usage has transformed the relations between voters and candidate/political parties/campaign organizers into a more interactive pattern which encourages more engagement from ordinary people. The impact of digitally mediated social movements and Obama's election campaigns has fostered innovation in online campaign strategies among Taiwanese political parties and politicians. The two major political parties have adjusted and reorganized Internet sectors twice based on the influence of Obama's election in 2008, the Sunflower movement in 2014 and Ko Wen-je's landslide victory. However, the varied political cultures of the parties lead to different adjustment paths. The KMT regards the "net armies" as a paid, fixed, loyal workforce to support a certain candidate or party and thus it reorganized the Internet sectors toward more centralized management of Internet election campaigns. In contrast, the DPP, with rich social movement experience, seems more skillful in drawing more energy from people by the empowerment of individuals and devolution of power.

Nonetheless, both parties are adapting the new campaigns' environment and adopting citizen-initiated campaigns, which have significantly brought new life to election campaigns.

## Notes

1. http://g0v.today/congressoccupied/project (Date of Access: January 2, 2017).
2. *Apple Daily*, March 20, 2014. "The occupying students made and uploaded the video. Netizens: they are not violent mob, but heroes."http://www.appledaily.com.tw/realtimenews/article/politics/20140320/363968/ (Date of Access: January 2, 2017).
3. The *gøv* website (http://g0v.tw/zh-TW/) platform was originally a crowdsourcing site. When it was founded, it emphasized its members came from across Taiwan. There guiding principles were freedom of speech and information transparency, as well as the pursuit of independent and transparent information concerning government. They also emphasized a goal of bringing about change and an unwillingness to resort to cynicism or apathy. Furthermore, this organization was decentralized in nature; it sought free participation and discussion in decision-making.
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9. I conducted an in-depth interview with Chou Te-wang who was the Chief Executive of Ko Wen-je's campaign office. The interview was done at National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung city on December 20, 2014.
10. *Liberal Times*, October 25, 2014. "Lianshu tiewen pin renqi kewenzhe bei laopo dapa." (Competing Popularity of Facebook Fan Pages. Ko Wen-je was Defeated by His Wife). http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1140737. (Date of Access: January 2, 2017).
11. Central Election Commission, http://db.cec.gov.tw/histMain.jsp?voteSel=20160101A1. (Date of Access: Jan. 2, 2017).
12. In Taiwan, the KMT, which tends to advocate for a Chinese identity and adopt more pro-China and proactive Cross-Strait policies, is coined the "Blue Camp," while the DPP which stresses Taiwan's independence from Mainland China and maintains a cautious attitude toward Cross-Strait relations, is referred to as the "Green Camp." Any other pro-China political parties are also ascribed to the "Blue Camp," while pro-Taiwan's independence to the "Green Camp."
13. *Nownews*, September 27, 2010. "DPP Chief of the Internet Sector, Lin Ge-yong: Ebb and Flow in Cyberspace: The decline of the Blue Camp and the Growing of the Green Camp." http://www.nownews.com/n/2010/09/27/643835. (Date of Access: Jan. 2, 2017).
14. Interview with Edgar Chan who was Deputy Director of Center for Media Innovation at the DPP headquarter in Taipei on February 16, 2016.
15. Interview with Hsu Chiao-hsin who was Director of Youth Department of the KMT as well as the spokesperson of KMT's presidential candidate Eric Chu. The interview was conducted in Taipei on February 17, 2016.
16. Interview with Edgar Chan on February 16, 2016.
17. The number of donation derived from the annual reports of political donation balance released by the DPP, which are open to the public in Taiwan's Control Yuan.

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CHAPTER 8

# Conclusion: The Development of Digital Democracy in East Asia

*Shoko Kiyohara, Kazuhiro Maeshima, and Diana Owen*

The Internet election has been evolving in somewhat different ways across East Asian democracies. We have presented case studies of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to examine whether the "Americanization of elections" is present in East Asian nations. As mentioned in the preface, the research in this volume employs a multimethod approach and includes both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Each case study uses a method that is appropriate for empirically analyzing the aspect of the digital campaign that is examined. In this chapter, we consider the research question guiding this study by discussing the ways in which campaigns in the three Asian countries resemble and diverge from elections in the United States. We

S. Kiyohara (✉)
School of Information and Communication, Meiji University,
1-1 Kandasurugadai, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8301, Japan

K. Maeshima
Department of Global Studies, Sophia University,
7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554, Japan

D. Owen
Communication, Culture, and Technology, Georgetown University,
3520 Prospect Street, NW, Suite 311, Washington, DC 20057, USA



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also explore the possibility of East Asian elections becoming more Americanized in the future.

## The "Americanization of Elections" in the Internet Era

We begin by discussing our observations regarding the "Americanization of elections" in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The notion of Americanization was put forth in the era of mass media and professionalization of electoral campaigns, which began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Kazuhiro Maeshima (Chap. 1) suggests four noteworthy characteristics of elections in the United States: (1) media-centered campaign practices; (2) the declining influence of political parties in recruiting and selecting candidates, along with campaigns that are becoming increasingly candidate-centered; (3) the professionalization of electioneering; and (4) the growth of cynicism among voters. Diana Owen (Chap. 2) further elaborates these points by focusing on the media-related aspects of American campaigns, especially with respect to the Internet age. Technology-driven campaigning, voter digital engagement, and hyper-personalized campaigning associated with the micro-targeting of voters are developments that coincide with the emergence of new media.

American elections are believed to be most effective if they are run by experienced professional consultants who can market their candidate by successfully mobilizing public opinion through paid and nonpaid media outlets. The emergence of the Internet and new technologies has opened vast opportunities for modernizing campaign strategies. Initially, candidates, campaign professionals, and political parties approached novel communication technologies with some trepidation as they were concerned about losing control over campaign messaging. However, by 2008, campaign operatives had adapted to the new communication environment and employed the interactive features of media technologies to enhance their voter outreach. Now, the digital media campaign is a highly contested electoral battleground where candidates and political professionals invest considerable time and resources.

It is important to note that the elements and strategies of electoral Americanization are varied and constantly changing. As illustrated by Owen in Chap. 2, the rules underpinning the Internet election changed to

some extent during the 2016 US presidential campaign due to the nontraditional strategies followed by the Republican candidate Donald Trump. Undoubtedly, his use of Twitter was unprecedented. Even during the very early days of his campaign, Trump intentionally posted a continuous barrage of offensive tweets. His retweets were limited largely to supporters' posts singing his praises (Pew Research Center 2016a). Although the content of a good number of Trump's tweets was unsubstantiated, his messages received constant media and public attention. When traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, network television evening news programs, and cable news shows, were critical of his populist social media strategies, Trump took aggressive action against the negative coverage. He positioned himself as a crusader against those he labeled as the liberally biased traditional media.

Regular tweets were one of the most important elements in Trump's arsenal for solidifying his core supporters. Although his strategies may represent short-term, candidate-specific trends, it is at least noteworthy that the new post-truth development may have the potential to alter how a future candidate runs for office. The term "post-truth" was named by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the international word of the year for 2016 following the contentious US presidential election and "Brexit" referendum. *Oxford* (2016) defines "post-truth" as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." Fueled by the rise of social media as a source of election news and political discourse inundated by partisan information incessantly created by campaign handlers, post-truth has become a key political concept in political discourse. The post-truth phenomenon is not confined to the United States alone. In fact, the emotional appeals that characterize the post-truth trend are becoming evident elsewhere.

In East Asia, the term post-truth media has entered the lexicon, largely as a result of publicity surrounding the term's inclusion in the *Oxford* dictionary. It is often used by journalists in reference to the US presidential election and Brexit. Post-truth news has yet to become a major concern in Japan. This is partly because the current Japanese political environment is not as polarized as that of the US, and it is not as contentious as those of many European countries. There are some concerns about rising negative attitudes toward foreigners, most notably Korean and Chinese, that may be caused and augmented by online discussions, some of which are factually incorrect. In South Korea, the term has

become synonymous with "fake news" and is rarely applied to the country's own media. The country has a strong aversion to false reporting and has ousted administrations that have averted the truth. Election law prohibits publishing fake news, especially misleading polls results. False statements by politicians face strong criticism by the media. Korean political parties often respond to fake news reports on social media, amending them to reflect the facts. Post-truth media have made some inroads into debates over issues, such as marriage equality, in Taiwan, the country in our study with the most similarities to the United States. There also have been instances where the press has spread information, including from the Presidential Office, that was later found to be false. While journalists and the public have decried these developments (China Post News Staff 2017), the examples are relatively few, especially when compared with the United States.

## The Presence of "Americanization" in East Asian Elections

The findings of the studies presented in Chaps. 5, 6, and 7 indicate that Taiwan and South Korea have more experience using the Internet and social media for election campaigns than Japan. As mentioned by Boyu Chen concerning Taiwan (Chap. 7), Obama's successful online strategies in the 2008 US presidential election seemed to be a great inspiration to Taiwanese political parties. Both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have had Internet operations units since 2009, 1 year after the 2008 US presidential election. Both the parties have attempted to take advantage of blogs and social media for mobilizing younger generations, who are more interested in using new technologies than older generations. With the increase in the penetration rate of the Internet and growth of mobile phone use, social media campaign strategies are becoming increasingly common in Taiwan. Today, digital media platforms are an indispensable part of Taiwanese elections. In keeping with the American election of 2008 when voters used social media to support Democratic candidate Barack Obama, citizen-initiated online political campaigning was evident in the 2014 Taipei mayoral election as well as in the 2016 presidential and legislative elections. Since all the major Taiwanese political parties are aware of the new campaign environment, they increasingly promote citizen-initiated political campaigns in the Internet era.

Regarding South Korea, Hongchun Lee (Chap. 6) also notes that political parties have been adopting more online activities coinciding with the deregulation of Internet use in election campaigns and disappearance of the digital divide. Due to the diffusion of high-end smartphones, the older generation today has more opportunities to access digital election information than in earlier times. The divide between younger and older voters' use of digital media has been closing and is now minimal. Smartphones have become a major campaigning tool in South Korea. According to Lee, these trends have brought to light another aspect of digital democracy. The new forms of digital engagement appear to be political party oriented. Parties have the upper hand in cyberspace because they can conduct voting mobilization activities including individual solicitations, which are banned offline. While individual voters can form online associations during elections, their activities appear to be limited since most smartphone groups are closed and do not attract many members. Participants' voices cannot be heard outside the confines of the group.

The case of Japan illustrates how indigenous ways of conducting elections persist even after the 2013 electoral deregulation, when the Internet was used for the first time to convey the messages of political parties and candidates to voters. Compared to Taiwan and South Korea, Japan has only recently started adopting online election campaigning. Although they lag behind their American and European counterparts in electoral Internet use, tech-savvy Japanese lawmakers and voters have started fostering more robust online political discussions during campaigns. For example, from the candidates' side, an Internet election campaigning consultant company shows that 74% of candidates had websites and 70% had Facebook accounts for the 2014 lower house election. Furthermore, the company points out that 82% of the Diet members had Facebook accounts in March 2016 (Katsu! Seijika.com 2014, 2016).

Tetsuro Kobayashi (Chap. 5) studied the 2013 upper house election, which was the first election utilizing the Internet in Japan. He tested the causal effect of the use of social media on political efficacy and voting. He discovered that the power of online campaigning in Japan was not a myth. Voters who used social media for political communication during the campaign exhibited higher levels of political efficacy than those who did not use social media for politics. Importantly, campaign social media users were significantly more inclined to turn out to vote than their nonuser counterparts. The increased election information that was imparted to social media users contributed to voters' ability to recognize the differences

between parties and candidates, thus increasing their sense of political efficacy and their propensity to vote.

Kazuhiro Maeshima (Chap. 1) claims that although Japan removed its restrictions on the use of the Internet as an election campaign tool in 2013, Japanese campaign strategies have developed differently compared to the other two East Asian democracies. This is because the campaign regulations in Japan are still draconian: the campaign period is short, and individual candidate advertisements are virtually banned. Campaigns can put posters on boards along streets, although the size and number of the posters are strictly limited. They can distribute postcards as part of election campaigning, although the number of postcards are limited, and they can place advertisements in newspapers. Further, for upper house elections, individual candidates can use campaign broadcasting free of charge. For lower house elections, only political parties can take advantage of free broadcasts.

Despite the fact that social media have become an element of Japanese campaigns, the tendency toward "Americanization" is limited. Political candidates still emphasize the maintenance of regular personal contact with constituencies during the off-campaign period, rather than online activities. In addition, Japanese citizens are more homogeneous in their political and demographic characteristics than their American counterparts. Thus, American-style demographic-specific election marketing strategies may not always translate into successful voter mobilization in Japan.

## Contextual Factors Shaping Elections in Asian Democracies

The Internet's role in campaigns is influenced by the contextual factors that define a country's electoral environment. We now examine the characteristics of Asian democracies in light of the traits associated with American elections. The political and legal parameters identified by Shoko Kiyohara (Chap. 3) and the media environment discussed by Morihiro Ogasahara (Chap. 4) provide insights into the aspects of elections that are unique to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Table 8.1 provides a summary comparison of the institutional factors and characteristics of the media environment in the three East Asian democracies and the United States that were discussed in detail in

**Table 8.1** Summary of institutional factors and media environments in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States

| | *Japan* | *South Korea* | *Taiwan* | *United States* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two-party system | Unstable | De facto two-party system | Yes | Yes |
| Hold primary | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Length of campaign | Short | Short | Short | Long |
| Pre-campaign activity | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Public funding | Yes | Yes | Yes, but not sufficient | Limited to presidential candidates |
| Cap on campaign spending | Yes | Yes | Yes, but not enforced | No |
| Lax regulatory environment for online campaigning | Not completely | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Internet penetration[a] | 91.06% | 89.65% | 78.04% | 74.45% |
| Facebook penetration[b] | 20.6% | 33.5% | 76.9% | 62.0% |
| Active or passive social network users | Passive > Active[c] | Active > Passive[d] | Active > Passive[e] | Active > Passive[f] |
| Media polarization | Not polarized | Polarized | Polarized | Polarized |

[a]International Telecommunication Union (2015)

[b]Internet World Stats (2016a, b)

[c]Ministry of Internal Affairs (2015)

[d]Statista (2016a)

[e]Statista (2016b)

[f]Greenwood et al. (2016)

Chaps. 3 and 4. The greatest contextual similarities exist between Taiwan and the United States, especially as both countries operate under a two-party system. While Taiwan's election campaigns are nowhere near as lengthy as in the United States, they are longer than in Japan or South Korea. Neither the United States nor Taiwan places constraints on pre-campaign activities. The "continuous campaign," where there are no limits on how early a candidate can begin running for office, is a distinct characteristic of the American case. Presidential elections in Taiwan formally last for 28 days and legislative elections take place over 10 days, although candidates can actively campaign before that time.

Pre-campaign activities are limited with some exceptions in Japan and Korea. Lower house elections in Japan are 12 days in duration, and upper house elections take place over 17 days. In Korea, presidential elections last for 23 days, and elections for National Assembly members are contested over 14 days. Several factors have worked against Americanization in the Japanese case. In particular, Japan has an unstable party system, and campaigns are short in duration. Although South Korea technically is a multiparty system, two major political parties dominate. Election campaigns are longer than in Japan, but shorter than in Taiwan or the United States. All three East Asian democracies are distinct from the United States in that they cap campaign spending, which the US Supreme Court has equated with free speech and thus prohibits its regulation (Buckley v. Valeo, 424 U.S. 1, 1976).

### *The Role of Political Parties*

There are significant differences in the structure and organization of political parties that affect the Japanese electoral system with respect to Internet election campaigns compared with the United States, Taiwan, and South Korea. The unchanged face of Japanese elections is manifested in the role of political parties. As mentioned in Chap. 3, the two-party system has contributed to the development of Internet election campaigns. In the United States, the two major political parties set the rules and provide the mechanism for selecting the presidential candidates who will contest in the general election. Although the parties act in this way as "public utilities" (Epstein 1986), presidential elections are candidate-centered and the parties' influence over the electorate is subordinate to that of the media (Patterson 1993). In contrast, the major parties in Japan, such as the Liberal Democratic Party and Democratic Party, control the recruitment of candidates. Party-centered, rather than candidate-centered, campaigns are the norm.

The length of campaign periods and the use of primary elections and caucuses for party candidate selection also are important considerations. Digital media have become more prominent in electoral systems, such as in the United States and Taiwan, where there is a need to sustain interest in a lengthy campaign that consists of both a nominating campaign and general election. Candidates can use the Internet and social media to maintain contact with voters and to generate stories that are picked up by the mainstream media (Owen 2017). As we have seen with the 2016 US

presidential contest, social media messages can stir conflict that can keep the campaign at the forefront of the news agenda over the long haul.

Further, the regulatory environment for online campaigning in Japan remains stricter than it is in the United States, Taiwan, and South Korea. Japan has partially abolished regulations on using the Internet for election campaigning, but the regulations favor parties which alone are permitted to display banner ads linked to their campaign websites on paid Internet ads.

### *Media Environments*

There are clear differences in media environments across countries, as depicted in Table 8.1. Our observations suggest that the media environment in Japan varies substantially from that in the United States and Taiwan, in particular. Internet use and the penetration rate of social media are indicators of the media environment with respect to elections as they measure the potential reach of the audience for digital campaigning. The percentage of people using the Internet in Japan (91.06%) and South Korea (89.65%) is greater than in Taiwan (78.04%) and the United States (74.45%). The penetration rate of Facebook in Japan is 20.6%, which is somewhat lower than the rate for South Korea (33.5%), and much lower than the rate for Taiwan (76.9%) and the United States (62.0%). Thus, while electioneering via the Internet is viable across all of the countries, running a social media campaign in Japan and South Korea would not be particularly effective in terms of reaching a large portion of the electorate.

As Ogasahara (Chap. 4) mentions, the media environment largely is divided into liberal and conservative segments in the United States. Having a highly polarized press has become a defining characteristic of the American media system. It is well known that liberal audiences tend to watch the news channels CNN and MSNBC, whereas conservatives prefer Fox News (Stroud 2011). From the perspective of having a polarized media, the Taiwanese and Korean media environments are more similar to the United States than is Japan. Media in Taiwan, including TV channels and newspapers, are partisan and polarized along the lines of the Blue (Pro-KMT) and Green (Pro-DPP) camps (Kiyohara and Chen 2016). In South Korea, Hongchun Lee, the author of Chapter 6, says that major newspapers are more conservative, which has precipitated the development of liberal online newspapers, such as *Ohmynews*. With respect to broadcasters, KBS

and MBC support the government, whereas SBS is neutral. News programs on TV tend to provide more information about candidates who are selected to attend debates on TV by the National Election Commission. However, today, Internet TV, such as *Ohmynews* TV, is becoming more popular because it is based more on journalists' independent reports than on government messaging. Therefore, the functionality of *Ohmynews* TV lies between that of mainstream TV and Internet TV (Lee 2017).

On the other hand, the Japanese media environment should be categorized as "not politically polarized" as Ogasahara (Chap. 4) points out. Japanese broadcasters are sometimes exposed to political pressure to act in an unbiased and politically neutral manner based on the political parties' interpretation of the Broadcast Law. Article 3 of the Broadcast Law states that the freedom of broadcast programs may not be abridged as long as broadcasters do not present false information or harm election fairness by abusing the freedom of expression. In addition, the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association has established a broadcast guideline that requires commercial TV stations to be politically neutral, guarantee their impartiality, and prohibit broadcasting about a presumptive candidate for the coming election if there is doubt concerning their participation in the preelection campaign (Kiyohara and Chen 2016). These elements also suggest that Japan is very different from the United States, Taiwan, and South Korea.

A consideration of various contextual factors points to some reasons for the delay in establishing robust online election campaigns in Japan. As discussed in Chap. 3, Taiwan is moving more rapidly toward the "Americanization of elections" than Japan or South Korea. The similarities in the contextual factors associated with American and Taiwanese elections offer a partial explanation. Since lifting its ban on Internet use for election campaigns, Japan has been moving slowly toward the "Americanization of elections" as the digital age advances.

## A Look into the Future Evolution of the Internet and Elections in East Asian Democracies

Trends established in the era of the mass media election have intensified with the rise of the Internet and digital media. As noted above, American political parties' ability to organize the electorate has declined, as parties now serve largely as public utilities, providing the infrastructure for con-

testing elections and supplying recognizable labels under which candidates strive to get elected (Epstein 1986). Television gave rise to elections where outsider candidates, like Democrat Jimmy Carter in 1976, could circumvent political party hierarchies and take their message directly to the voters. Political talk radio, which experienced a resurgence in the late 1980s, provided a megaphone for lesser-known candidates like Democrat Bill Clinton and Independent Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential campaign. Similarly, the Internet has become a platform for the promotion of political outsiders. Digital media helped Barack Obama, a little-known Senator from Illinois, to gain the Democratic nomination and ultimately to win the presidency. American elections are increasingly being driven by technology and data, requiring a growing cadre of campaign professionals with specialized skills, often with limited political allegiances, who have wrested control of campaigns from parties and the press.

### *The 2016 US Presidential Election: Game Changer or Anomaly*

US campaigns in the digital age have become more personalized, customized, and reflective of the eccentricities of individual candidates. During the 2016 campaign, the norms that established a loosely bounded decorum were eradicated. Donald Trump's candidacy epitomized these trends, especially as he used Twitter extensively to lodge sensationalized, personal attacks and spread unverified information. Twitter—as a social medium with a 140-character limit—is not conducive to thoughtful discourse or polite political conversation. The platform now accommodates polls, photos, and videos that are ready fodder for malicious captions and cruel memes. Trump's Twitter behavior was emulated by his campaign surrogates and carried over to the general population. Public shaming on Twitter of people on the opposite side of the political spectrum became commonplace.

Similarly, on Facebook there was a strong uptick in the number of political posts during the 2016 election, many of which were incendiary. Facebook functioned as a political "echo chamber," as the platform is based on connecting people with others having similar interests and orientations. A record number of users accessed campaign content through Facebook's News Feed, which is tailored to their political ideology. Fake news, a good deal of which was posted by paid entrepreneurs from outside the country, was plentiful on Facebook (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017).

Some voters purged their social media contacts of polarizing friends or dropped off social media entirely (Pew Research Center 2016b).

Some trends that were present in the 2016 US presidential election have appeared in other countries. Populist candidates in Europe gained more traction on social media than their more moderate counterparts, much like Donald Trump. In the United Kingdom, the Independence Party had a far stronger following than the Conservative Party as it campaigned in favor of Brexit. Dutch populist, anti-immigration candidate Geert Wilders, who ran under the Party for Freedom label, had an extensive social media presence, although he was defeated in the 2017 national election. The far-right German Alternative for Germany party attracted twice as many Facebook followers as President Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Party (Hendrickson and Galston 2017). During the 2017 French presidential election, wrong information and fake news stories proliferated on social media. The campaign included a far-right candidate, Marine Le Pen, who was praised by Donald Trump for being "the strongest candidate" in the field. Le Pen's National Front Party used social media extensively and employed creative hashtags, memes, and animated videos. A study by researchers at Oxford University found that a quarter of political links shared on Twitter during the campaign were deliberately false and expressed "ideologically extreme, hyper-partisan or conspiratorial views" with opinion presented as fact (Howard et al. 2017). Despite their dominance on social media, the populist, outsider candidates lost these elections. It is evident that contextual factors, such as party-centric, relatively short campaigns, may inhibit the effectiveness of a social media campaign. In addition, the comparison of these candidates to Donald Trump did not sit well with many voters in these countries.

There is evidence of populism in East Asian democracies, although it has not reached the level in the United States. Evidence of populism is less prominent in Japan than in the other two countries in this study. The ruling LPD is a conservative party, although it has taken a liberal position on some issues. Some journalists have speculated about the rise in Japanese populism as a result of Prime Minister Abe's cordial relationship with Donald Trump. Whether it is appropriate for politicians or the Prime Minister's wife to use Twitter or Facebook rather than press conferences to communicate with the public has provoked controversy. Populist sentiments have been growing in South Korea, although they are not necessarily associated with the right wing. Thousands of Koreans waged protests that urged the impeachment of the center-right president over corruption

charges, leading to the election of Moon Jae-in, a left-leaning politician (Fisher 2017). The populist movement in Korea is sustained by public anger at government corruption and has contributed to a rise in outsider politicians. Populism has been on the rise in Taiwan since the 1970s in conjunction with the move to democratization, and has played a role in electoral decisions. The term often is evoked when discussing Taiwan's relationship with mainland China. The Pro-independence DPP party and its supporters have been associated with populism, which has taken the form of extreme reactions against mainland China's economic power and encroachment on Taiwan's independent status. Grassroots protests by students and members of vulnerable social groups have been sparked by decisions fostering cooperation between Taiwan and other countries, such as joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Kai 2015).

### *The Future of American-Style Elections in East Asia*

Then, to what extent can the developments endemic to the ever-evolving American campaign translate to East Asian democracies? In countries where the political and media contexts are fundamentally different from those of the United States, such as Japan, traits associated with the Americanization of campaigns have been slow to develop. This is especially true for countries where the political parties' involvement in candidates' campaigns remains vigorous. Therefore, who will take the lead in online election campaigns—parties, candidates, journalists, or voters—in the future remains an important consideration.

As discussed in Chap. 7, political parties in Taiwan are rapidly adopting citizen-initiated campaigns. The parties in South Korea are conducting more online activities as part of election campaigns using smartphone apps, as described in Chap. 6. Even in Japan, as mentioned in Chap. 3, political parties such as Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), DPP, and Japanese Communist Party (JCP) are adopting more online campaigning activities, such as conducting online *kobo* and website advertisements. These developments may transform the relationship between political parties and voters so that we may witness more robust Internet election campaigns in the near future. The evolution of social media as a force in Japanese elections, however, likely will be slower to materialize.

The "Americanization of elections" in the Internet era may significantly change the relationship between political parties and candidates. The Internet and digital media already have started gradually transforming the

candidate-centered American style of elections, especially during the general election period after primaries. In fact, a two-tiered system of media politics during campaigns has been emerging. During the primaries, when candidates are running for their party's nomination, campaigns often take a more outwardly aggressive position on social media as they are trying to attract voters than during the general election, when they are working to solidify their base. Candidates dare to experiment with digital media in an effort to gain an edge on their opponents (Owen 2009). In 2008, Democratic candidate Barack Obama's early digital media strategy took a grassroots approach. It focused on using social networks to reach out to potential supporters and have them spread the word to their online associates. He sought to engage in conversations with voters using social media in a way that at the time was considered atypical for a candidate and a risky strategy (Kenski et al. 2010). Since that time, this approach has become the norm.

During the general election, candidates typically switch gears and concentrate more of their online and digital efforts at attracting mainstream press attention (Price 2012). The interparty competition of the general election requires candidates to reach out to a broader constituency, especially as they court new voters, undecided voters, and switchers who will cross party lines. In the 2016 US election, the traditional news media devoted considerable resources to covering the two presidential candidates, and journalists relied heavily on material gleaned from social media (Boczkowski 2016).

This complex dynamic that rewards creativity in campaign communication during the presidential nominating campaign and urges a shift in orientation to the established press during the general election phase may be viewed as uniquely American. The extreme length of the campaign creates a need for the press to keep the information fresh to maintain public interest which fosters a reliance on alternative sources of information. At the same time, the mainstream media assert their prominence during the general election when the broader electorate is more fully tuned in to the campaign.

Parties in the United States have taken on new roles in the online era. They are better-suited than individual candidates or campaign managers to maintain continuity of data between election cycles. Databases are produced at a rapid pace and contain an ever-expanding number of entries; they need to be curated and made readily accessible to facilitate mobilization. Parties can facilitate the transfer of data from one candidate to another once an election is over. In addition, the single center would

enable the innovation of more sophisticated uses of digital media and empower candidates in the political parties.

Even in the United States, where candidates reign supreme, both the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee have gained more initiative and influence compared to 40 years ago. This trend is partly because of the availability of unlimited "soft money" from corporations, labor unions, and wealthy individuals. Although soft money is officially regulated today, the national organizations were firmly structured before the ban. Political parties have been able to use unlimited soft money contributions for various activities, most notably, fees for GOTV (get-out-the-vote) efforts. Although soft money has enabled the development of stronger party infrastructures that are invested in participatory forms of electoral activity, it is a double-edged sword. Soft money can hurt parties because it allows outside organizations to control the message.

The continued evolution of Internet election campaigns is strongly related to the circumstances we have discussed in this volume. Contextual factors, especially the regulatory environment for technology and campaign finance, substantially influence the ways in which the electoral process in East Asia and the United States will uniquely adapt to the fast-changing digital environment. It will be important to observe how the power of political parties might change with the continued evolution of Internet election campaigns. The defining characteristics of the media environment and audience orientations in each nation also are integrally related to the development of the digitally connected campaign. Countries where the media are largely unfettered by government intervention and the public is heavily invested in social media are likely to be at the forefront of digital campaign innovation and proliferation of the election online.

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[1]Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to End notes.



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