

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS IN THE TELEVISION
POLITICAL ADVERTISING IN THE UNITED
STATES PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

By

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1982

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 1997

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STATES PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Maureen Nemecek, for her intelligent supervision, guidance, assistance, and encouragement.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my other committee members, Dr. Charles Fleming and Dr. Steven Smethers, whose advice, assistance and friendship are invaluable.

I would also like to thank Mr. Charles E. Rand, Curator of the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma for his assistance in this study.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), whose financial support made possible the research and writing of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
General.....	1
Background.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Objectives.....	3
Methodology.....	4
Significance.....	4
Limitations.....	5
Organization of the Thesis.....	6
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Introduction.....	9
Historical Perspective.....	9
Issues in Television Political Advertising.....	21
Theoretical Approach: Agenda-Setting, Instrumental Actualization, Priming and Defusing.....	26
Summary.....	30
III. METHODOLOGY.....	38
General.....	38
Research Method.....	38
Research Questions and Null Hypotheses.....	39
Sample Selection.....	40
Content Analysis.....	41
Statistical Analysis.....	42
IV. FINDINGS.....	44
General.....	44
Methodology.....	44
Chapter Outline.....	45
Proportion of Commercials that Focus on or Mention Internationally Issues.....	45
Type of Political Commercials.....	50
Content of Commercials that Specifically Focus on or Mention International Issues.....	55
In Conclusion.....	64
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	67
General.....	67
Discussion of Findings.....	68

Limitations.....	70
Conclusions.....	73
Recommendations.....	76
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	79
APPENDIXES.....	83
APPENDIX A-CODING SHEET.....	84
APPENDIX B-CODE BOOK.....	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Commercials that Specifically Focused on International Issues and Commercials that Mentioned them among others.....	46
II. Proportion of Commercials that Focused on or Mentioned International Issues by Political Party.....	48
III. Number and Proportion of Issue- and Image-Oriented Commercials.....	51
IV. Proportion of Positive and Negative Commercials.....	53
V. Content of the Commercials that Mentioned International Issues.....	56
VI. Differences between the Political Parties in the Content of Commercials that Specifically Focused on or Mentioned International Issues.....	58
VII. War and Peace Category by Political Party.....	61
VIII. Candidate Qualifications/Character by Political Party.....	62
IX. World Problems, America's Position in the World.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Proportion of Commercials That Specifically Focused on and Commercials That Mentioned International Issues.....	47
2. Proportion of Commercials That Focused on or Mentioned International Issues by Political Party.....	49
3. Proportion of Issue- and Image-Oriented Commercials by Political Party.....	52
4. Positive and Negative Commercials That Focused on or Mentioned International Issues.....	54
5. Proportions of Campaign Commercials in the Content Categories.....	59
6. Proportion of Ads That Focused on or Mentioned Issues of War and Peace out of the Total Number of Campaign Commercials.....	60
7. Political Advertising in Campaign Agenda-Setting.....	74

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

Politics and media have long been closely related and although electoral campaigns continue to use newspapers, radio, and other traditional campaign media and adopted the Internet in the 1996 campaign, it is television that has become in the recent decades the dominant medium in an effort to win any political campaign and the presidential race in particular. Television is commonly considered basic to contemporary American politics. A common stereotype in presidential elections is that the key to winning office is an appealing and convincing television advertising. An analysis of campaign spending shows that the most significant part of a candidate's expenditures goes to produce and air television commercials.¹ Many researchers have demonstrated that such advertisements have significant voter effect.² A great number of research studies that have been done in the field of political advertising show that televised political advertisements can be a serious vehicle for setting the agenda of the electoral campaigns.¹

There is little reason, if any, to argue that political advertising has, indeed, become a major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters. Unlike television news or political programs, advertising can be controlled by candidates themselves and enable them to frame the questions they view as central to a particular election campaign and expose their personal qualities and agenda for the future in a favorable light. Moreover, political advertising campaigns on television have brought forth a totally new format of journalism called journalist adwatches. Adwatch journalism has become a substantial and ever growing part of presidential campaigns

coverage in both print and broadcast media and has attracted interest of many scholars.⁴

Televised political commercials in the presidential campaigns date back to 1952 when Republican candidate Dwight Eisenhower appeared in a series of advertisements called "Eisenhower Answers America." Ever since the first appearance of political advertising on TV, international issues, along with domestic ones, have become a substantial part of the television advertising campaigns of presidential candidates. In fact, Eisenhower himself became known and popular first of all due to his outstanding role in the World War II--a major world conflict. It seems of interest, therefore, to explore what place international or foreign affairs issues have occupied in the television political advertising during presidential campaigns in the U.S. starting from the 1952 presidential election up until the last one in 1996.

Background

Although political advertising has been accused of the selling of candidates like soap, the creation of candidates' images which bear no relation to reality and the destruction of the political system by emphasizing personalities over issues,⁵ some researchers also argued that political advertising is vitally important for the democratic process as a whole. John Hale, Jeffrey Fox, and Rick Farmer, for example, praised political advertising as a "dialogue of televised democracy," and "the political discourse most widely disseminated to the public during campaigns." Hale, Fox and Farmer stressed the importance of studies of political advertising arguing that its quality and content "says something about the quality and health of modern democracy itself."⁶

Richard Joslyn called political advertising "one of the most important vehicles for transmitting campaign information."⁷ Political

advertisements have become a means to communicate with a large proportion of most large audiences. They may be targeted to particular groups of voters and they are one of the few forms of communication over which the candidate has almost complete control.

Statement of the Problem

An impressive amount of research that has been done in the field shows that there is probably not much novelty in the idea of conducting another research study on political advertising. However, since political advertising campaigns bring always some new stuff to consider, the issue can hardly be exhausted. Moreover, the international aspect of U.S. political advertising has been less explored by researchers than other aspects. Therefore, it seems to be interesting to examine the way in which international issues have been dealt with in political campaign commercials.

Purpose of the Study

This study is intended to explore what niche the international aspects have taken in the television political advertising during the US presidential campaigns from 1952 until 1996. The study also examines the tendencies and changes in the way in which the international issues have been dealt with in television political commercials over these years. Further, the study dwells on mass communication theories that could be applied in analysis of the political commercials targeting international issues.

Research Objectives

There are several research objectives in this thesis: (1) The study will evaluate the number and the proportion of the campaign commercials that focused or mentioned international issues in the total amount of televised political ads during the United States 1952-1996

presidential campaigns. (2) It will examine what the tendency has been over forty-four years. (3) The study will try to establish the differences in the presidential campaign commercials that mentioned international issues based on political party and type of the commercials. (4) Furthermore, the study will explore the content of commercials that mentioned international issues and the differences in the commercials content based on campaign year and political party.

Methodology

Videorecordings of political advertisements are available at the Political Commercial Archive in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. The archive claims to be the largest and most complete set of presidential television advertisements in the United States from the very first ones in the 1950s to the most recent one in 1996.

This study uses a quantitative content analysis of political commercials by candidates during the United States presidential campaigns. It is a longitudinal trend study to provide information about the changes in the same population with time. The units of analysis in this study are the political advertisements themselves. To limit the scope of the research, only advertisements by the presidential nominees of the two major political parties--Republican and Democratic--are examined.

Campaign commercials are examined according to the following categories: campaign year, political party, type of commercials (image- and issue-oriented commercials, positive and negative commercials), and the commercials' content (particular issues emphasized in the commercials).

Significance

Although political advertising overall and of each presidential

election in particular has been carefully studied and analyzed, the international aspect of political advertising has not been studied as a separate issue and was only examined in context with other content categories. This study focuses specifically on the international aspect of television political advertising throughout the history of televised presidential campaigns up until the 1996 election.

The results of this study can be of interest to political candidates, campaign consultants, political analysts, scholars, and students. The significance of this study is also in that it can provide an interesting material for international comparisons. Although television spots have been a dominant part of U.S. elections for several decades, "American-style" television advertising has only recently gained significance in the political processes of Western European democracies and it is just emerging in the Eastern European countries. Several studies have been done so far comparing the differences and similarities of political advertising in the United States and other countries.¹⁰ An international aspect of political advertising may be an easier topic for comparison here bearing in mind the international background of the researcher and the fact that most global issues faced by different countries are the same.

Limitations

The data for this study are the advertisements obtained from the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma. Although the archive has a vast collection of the presidential campaign commercials, this collection is rather a convenience sample than a fully representative sample of the population. This is an obvious limitation of generalizability to all presidential campaign commercials.

Many researchers have emphasized that the analysis of televised political advertisements has inherent limitations. Some issue references

may be difficult to code and, depending on interpretations of the commercials audio and video content, could be reasonably coded into different categories by different coders. However, the methods used in this study replicate those used to assess political-issue content in a number of other research studies.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter II, the literature review, briefly describes the development of television political advertising as political campaign medium. It also discusses relevant mass communication theories and gives an overview of the dominant doctrines of the United States international policy over the years.

Chapter III explains the research methodology of the study.

Chapter IV reports the findings and the results of statistical analysis.

Chapter V is the summary of the study and also contains conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

Appendixes contain coding sheet and code book which provide operational definitions of the variables of this research.

ENDNOTES

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⁶John F. Hale, Jeffrey C. Fox and Rick Farmer, "Negative Advertisements in U.S. Senate Campaigns: The Influence of Campaign Context," *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (June 1996): 330; Darrel M. West, *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-1992* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1993), 78.

⁷Joslyn, 92.

⁸Lynda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha, *Political Advertising Across Cultures: Comparing Content, Styles and Effects* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995), 207-221.

⁹L. L. Kaid and A. Johnson, "Negative Versus Positive Political Advertising in U. S. Presidential Campaigns, 1968-1988," *Journal of Communication* 41 (Summer 1991): 53-63; Joslyn, 92-98; Shyles 333-343; Robert Pepper, "Election Night 1972: TV Network Coverage," *Journal of Broadcasting* 18, no.1 (Winter 1973-74): 27-38; Robert A. Wells and Erika G. King, "Prestige Newspaper Coverage of Foreign Affairs in the 1990 Congressional Campaigns," *Journalism Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 652-664; Tinyoung Tak, "A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study on Political Advertising between America and Korea: A Content Analysis of Presidential Campaign Ads from 1963 to 1992." Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1993.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter contains three sections. The first part is a brief summary of television political advertising during the presidential election campaigns in the United States from 1952 until 1996. This part also describes varied advertising and campaign methods used by the candidates in the television advertising campaigns in the presidential elections. The second part gives an account of research studies that examined the content and strategies of television political advertising. The third part gives an overview of the relevant mass communication theories--agenda-setting, instrumental actualization, and priming and defusing.

Historical Perspective

Although there is some disagreement about when the first television political ad was aired,¹ the 1952 Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign was the first one where television was broadly implemented in a presidential election campaign.² A substantial number of the households owning sets by 1952--over 18 million or about 39% of the total American homes--justified a television advertising campaign.³ The decision to use television was influenced by the hope that television spot commercials would deliver more listeners for less money than any other form of advertising.⁴

Eisenhower's advertising campaign was focused on a limited number of issues--the war in Korea, corruption in Washington, inflation, and taxes.⁵ This decision resulted from the first use of research to determine scientifically a political campaign strategy. The format of the Eisenhower Answers America spots was consistent throughout. People--

individuals or couples--looking off camera then asked a question to which Eisenhower responded. All the advertisements underscored the case that it was time for a change.⁶

The Republican advertising was concentrated in spot commercials that should be run in the middle of the most popular television programs. The Democrats formulated an advertising strategy that was more suited to the radio age. They produced into eighteen half-hour segments for speeches for Stevenson, Truman, and other prominent Democrats.⁷ The Republicans, on the contrary, largely used thirty- and sixty-second commercials.

Darrell West remarked that the commercials by both Republicans and Democrats did not contain any specific policies by the candidates on domestic or international matters. Instead, a problem was the just mentioned with no specific proposals to deal with it.⁸ Although Eisenhower's commercials have been characterized as "simplistic, innocuous, and even demagogic,"⁹ according to many scholars, they transformed the way Americans elected their presidents.¹⁰ In 1952, television arrived as an effective tool in political campaigning.

As Kathleen Jamieson noted, by 1956 politicians became convinced that "the presence of advertising for a candidate legitimized the candidacy and the absence of advertising undercut it."¹¹ The 1956 campaign by and large repeated the formula of the 1952 campaign.¹² The major innovation of the 1956 campaign was its increased reliance on the five minute spots. The Republican campaign designers thought they would be effective when running between popular programs.¹³

The Democrats also switched to shorter political programs than they broadcast in 1952 campaign.¹⁴ The main emphasis in their short commercials was that the promises on which Eisenhower had been elected had not been met by his performance. Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates

argue that the Democrats proved to be more innovative in their advertising. They introduced the negative commercial as a form, creating styles that would be repeated in years to come. Negative political advertising may achieve its intended effects, but it may also produce boomerang effects. An attack on an opponent, if perceived by the audience as untruthful, undocumented, or unjustified may create more negative feelings toward the candidate, rather than toward the target of the attack.¹⁵ Another innovation, which became a standard in subsequent campaigns, was to use film of the opponent's advertisements to attack the opponent.¹⁶

By 1960, nine out of ten American homes had television sets.¹⁷ Unlike during the previous two campaigns, the Democrats this time made a better use of television than the Republicans.¹⁸ They produced about two hundred commercials.¹⁹ Moreover, they suggested a new form of political television campaigning, the Kennedy-Nixon debates.²⁰ and, subsequently, used footage from the first Kennedy-Nixon television debates for their campaign commercials.²¹

A major innovation of the Democratic campaign ads was the use of local shooting. A series of spots showed Kennedy holding a microphone like a news reporter and talking with Americans.²² Another innovation largely used in the Kennedy campaign commercials was endorsements by former president Truman and other prominent politicians and public figures. Experimental research showed, by the way, that a former, retired politician or a person not directly associated with politics are perceived as more trustworthy source than a current office holder or candidate.²³ Democrats also used some commercials that targeted specific groups of American society--older people, Hispanics, and blacks.²⁴ Negative ads were questioning Nixon's qualifications, experience and his importance in the Eisenhower administration.²⁵

Nixon viewed his experience in foreign affairs as the mark differentiating him from Kennedy. As Jamieson remarked, "Nixon's broadcast ads translated questions of domestic policy into questions of foreign policy."²⁶ Nixon's advertisements repeated the form of the Eisenhower Answers America series.²⁷ The candidate was answering questions posed by an announcer off screen. The Republicans also used longer five-minute programs.

Overall, the Republican television advertising campaign was characterized as weaker than that of the Democrats. Kennedy won although by the smallest margin in the American history largely due to his effective television campaign. Kennedy was hailed as the "first television president."²⁸ He himself underscored the importance the impact of television on politics: "Television gives people a chance to look at their candidate close up and close to the bone," Kennedy told his advertising campaign manager Rowland Evans. "For the first time since the Greek city-states practiced their form of democracy, it brings us within reach of that ideal where every voter has a chance to measure the candidate himself." Diamond and Bates noted that the 1960 campaign "demonstrated that television had arrived as a significant force in American political life."²⁹ As Patrick Devlin pointed it out, television became so important for the political image building that "almost no politician dared to be without."³⁰

The 1964 presidential advertising campaigns had a number of characteristic features that distinguished them from the previous campaigns. Jamieson remarked that this was "a campaign in which one candidate sought to win the election while the other was more interested in winning the point." Republican candidate, Barry Goldwater, whose position reflected that of the right wing of his party, attempted to "move the vast majority in the middle to where he stood rather than

attempting to present his philosophy in terms palatable to the moderate middle.³¹

The Democratic ads were trying to show the Republican nominee as unreasonable and imprudent. Emphasizing the importance of presidency, they tried to convey the message that the presidency is a serious job that cannot be entrusted to a candidate like Barry Goldwater.³² A number of commercials presented efforts to magnify public fear about Goldwater's possible use of nuclear weapons were successful.³³ Characteristic of this campaign was an extensive use of negative advertising by the Democrats. Charles Thomson argued that the Democratic political advertising substantially lowered the tone of the campaign as a whole.³⁴

An anti-Goldwater Democratic spot called "Daisy" aired in 1964 was called the most controversial ad aired in the history of political broadcasting.³⁵ It never mentioned either Goldwater's name or any statement he made about anything. The ad was aired only once, but then it was used in its entirety on the newscasts on all three networks. Although Democrats were accused of unfair campaign practices, the commercial was considered as highly effective.³⁶ Theodore H. White claimed that this one, and another spot featuring a social security card torn apart were "masterpieces of political advertising."³⁷ Gina Garramone called it "the prototypical 'negative' political ad".³⁸ This and a number of other ads focused on Goldwater's opposition to the treaty to ban nuclear tests. Lyndon Johnson's 1964 advertising was widely touted as a textbook campaign on how to elect a president.³⁹

Joe McGinniss in *The Selling of the President* argued that, in a presidential race, advertising is sufficiently powerful to create important public perceptions of candidates that are fundamentally different from the candidates themselves. The book also implied that

1968 was the first year of "widespread efforts to transmit a preplanned image of a presidential candidate."⁴⁰ McGinniss quoted Nixon saying to his team at the beginning of the campaign: "We're going to build this whole campaign around television. You fellows just tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it."⁴¹

The main issues in the 1968 campaign were "Vietnam," and "crime and lawlessness."⁴² The Republican strategy was to construct spots with still photos rather than film. Dramatic music which had been seldom used in political spots before 1968, became a major part of the production.⁴³ Jamieson remarked that in the 1968 campaign advertising, "argument by visual association reached a new level of complexity and potential duplicity when patterns of images were created and repeated by the Republicans using still photos."⁴⁴ Still photos of the war in Vietnam, of poverty in America, and of the riots in the streets were rapidly intercut with pictures of Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey. The images in the ads moved with a speed that allowed voters little or no reflection.⁴⁵ Almost all the commercials ran sixty seconds.⁴⁶

Characteristic of the 1972 presidential campaign was an attempt to build positive images of the candidates. Creating a favorable impression of the candidate's personal and leadership qualities was one of the purposes of the advertising efforts of both Nixon and McGovern.⁴⁷ According to the advertising strategy that had been put together to reelect Richard Nixon, he was shown as a man above opposition. His television commercials were mostly be about him and not by him, where the president appeared only in a "presidential stance," never as a candidate "attacking" his opponent.⁴⁸ The advertising placed much emphasis on Nixon's foreign policy leadership. The McGovern campaign's advertising focused on domestic policy and on personal qualities of the candidates.⁴⁹

The Republican tactic was to produce the newslike, documentary style ads. This tactic was based on the research findings that "television news and documentaries and other specials were by far the most important media influences on the split-ticket voter."⁵⁰ Devlin argued that this technique was not too effective.⁵¹ However, research confirmed that Nixon's ads heightened their credibility with voters by using such documentary techniques that looked like a neutral reportage.⁵²

Democratic tactic was to use television ads that placed their candidate McGovern in the midst of a group of citizens in a non-studio environment. These ads were generally done in "cinema-verite" style, using footage of unstaged conversations.⁵³ The Democrats aired a number of negative ads. These ads were using crawls--the words of the announcer's script moving across the screen.⁵⁴ This unemotional, "factual" presentation of materials quickly became popular in political advertising and has been widely used since.⁵⁵ Overall, however, McGovern's advertising campaign for the presidency was widely characterized as "inept."⁵⁶ Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure characterized crawls and face-to-camera techniques as dull and visually uninteresting. However, when a candidate wants to reason with voters these techniques have a place.⁵⁷

Timothy O'Keefe and Kenneth Scheinkopf argue that in the 1972 election, "'imageering' by politicians and their advertising agencies reached such a level of sophistication, that voters were conditioned to reacting to images rather than issues."⁵⁸ Since the Watergate scandal shattered the trust in the honesty of the American political elite, the campaign advertising had to find a way first of all to communicate the trustworthiness of the candidates.⁵⁹ The stress in 1976 was, therefore, on the personal character and integrity of the two candidates. Carefully

scripted and professionally produced commercials in which the candidates themselves often neither appear nor spoke, could not be effective in a year in which the prime message of both campaigns was that their candidate was a person of integrity, leadership, and competence.⁶⁰ The result was that in 1976, advertising by both Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford returned to "direct, old-fashioned, personal appeals and the emergence of persons-in-the-street giving personal testimony and low-key, factual, neutral reporter ads as prime vehicles of attack."⁶¹

Carter's ads were trying to present him as the "anti-Washington outsider who had not been a part of the mess in Washington."⁶² His "cinema verite" commercials depicted him as an average citizen, a "common man," and a "man of the people."⁶³ Carter's commercials presented him shaking hands and talking with voters in unstaged situations in a way as if the television audience were seeing Carter in person. Ford's campaign commercials presented him in a presidential stance working in the White House, signing bills or making major announcements before the television cameras.⁶⁴

In 1980, advertising efforts by the Republicans and Democrats differed most significantly in their willingness to use research and testing. Reagan advertising largely used testing select markets or small focus groups of voters.⁶⁵ By contrast, the Democrats employed no focus group tests of their ads and conducted only small-scale market testing.⁷¹ The first full-scale testing of political advertising had occurred eight years earlier in 1972 in when alternative slogans, alternative designs, and concepts for ads as well as completed ads were pretested by Republicans before airing.⁶⁶

In the 1980 campaign, Democrats tried to the personal character of the Republican nominee one of the main issues of the campaign commercials. The Democratic ads depicted Reagan as dangerous,

unpredictable, and lacking in compassion. Other major issue concerns of Carter's commercials were the national well-being, national security, and foreign policy. In Reagan's commercials, federalism and national security were predominant.⁶⁷

The 1980 campaign was the first one when a large number of television commercials were produced by Independent Political Action Committees, such as Americans for Change, National Conservative Political Action Committee, Americans for an Effective Presidency and other.⁶⁸ Individuals also produced and aired television ads in support or against the candidates. These ads were often more sharp and harsh than the candidates themselves could allow without fearing a possible backlash. Experimental research indicated that independently-sponsored negative advertising attacking a targeted candidate resulted in a more negative perception of that candidate's image than negative ads sponsored by the opposing candidate.⁶⁹

Another factor decisively shaped the Republican presidential advertising. Reagan's strategists were confident in his abilities as the "great communicator."⁷⁰ As a result of this strategy, in 1980 voters saw more ads showing Reagan speaking directly to the camera than they had seen of any presidential candidate since the 1960 race.⁷¹ This tactic proved to be successful and Ronald Reagan clearly demonstrated that how a president communicates with the public is an important element to win an election.⁷²

More than in previous campaigns, in 1980 the press acted as a watchdog over the nationally telecast advertising. The ads were scrutinized by the *New York Times*. Additionally, *The Los Angeles Times* and *CBS Evening News* program documented the falsity of many claims contained in the campaign advertisements by both the Republican and Democratic candidates.⁷³

As Jamieson put it, the 1984 election was "reminiscent of the 1956 campaign when a popular incumbent parlayed peace and prosperity into election."⁷⁴ The Democratic tactic was to induce discomfort among voters about the looming economic catastrophes, unprecedented deficit, about the absence of arms control talks with the Soviet Union, and about the lowered standard of living for many Americans under the Reagan administration. Overall, the Democrats produced only half as many advertising commercials as Republicans. Their advertising campaign was criticized as inconsistent and lacking continuity and a core.⁷⁵ The research study by West, however, showed that in spite of the common view that commercials for Reagan were effective, some Mondale's commercials were much more effective than Reagan's on the same issues.⁷⁶

The Republican television advertising strategy in the 1988 campaign was built in a symbolic juxtaposition of two worlds: the Republican ads portrayed their world as "communal, filled with adoring women and children" whereas the Democratic world was depicted as "alien and alienating, uninhabited by any with whom we could identify."⁷⁷ Emphatic and emotional visual symbols were combined with narrative forms. Attack commercials by the Republicans in 1988 used dark colors, threatening sounds, and scary symbols to imply the message that the Democrat candidate seemingly cared more for criminals than for good citizens.⁷⁸ Some scholars consider George Bush's 1988 crime ads as the most effective commercials of recent campaigns.⁷⁹

Because the Bush campaign provided for the media more visually evocative pictures than did the Democrats, Bush's message was more often reinforced in news than that of Dukakis. Taken together the ads created a coherent narrative. Moreover, their messages in ads, news events, and debates were consistent. Some scholars stressed that the most successful political campaigns are those where advertising is "consonant" with

other sources of information, and in particular television news, calling it the "resonance model of campaign advertising." On the other hand, advertising that is not synchronized with other media and public agenda results in what has been called the "information clutter."⁸⁰ The evidence of the success of this tactic in 1988 was the fact that Democratic candidate Dukakis spent much of the campaign arguing on Bush's terms.⁸¹ But Dukakis' "talking head" commercials could not counterbalance the visual impact of the more sophisticated Republican ads.⁸² Although the Bush advertising campaign was successful, it was widely criticized for its negative and even deceptive attacks on the opponent.⁸³ A research survey found that the 1988 campaign was largely perceived by voters as more negative than past presidential campaigns.⁸⁴

Despite that George Bush's approval ratings reached 90% in the wake of the victory in the Gulf War, he could not use much of the legacy of his achievements in the foreign politics to his advantage.⁸⁵ By 1992, the economic recession became number one issue on the public agenda.⁸⁶ Although the Bush administration could claim successes in the realm of foreign policy--most notably, its invasion of Iraq and the end of the Cold War signaled by the dissolution of the Soviet empire--domestic issues became decisive for the voters' choice.⁸⁷ Clinton's strategy was to focus campaign advertising on the dismal results of Bush's economic, environmental, and educational policies.⁸⁸ Advertising by both candidates also devoted a great deal of attention to personal characteristics, such as leadership, trustworthiness, and experience.⁸⁹

The Clinton campaign consistently ran at least one positive message a day in the targeted states. This tactic was supposed to shield Clinton from the charge that he was running a "negative" advertising campaign.⁹⁰ The Democratic attack commercials also benefited from the ways in which they used Bush's own words. Those commercials used his

words, excerpts from his statements, clips of his television appearances interspersed with title cards with contradictory statistics of unemployment, higher taxes, and other things happening to the economy. Surveys showed that these spots were effective.⁹¹

Jamieson noted that the Bush 1992 campaign used proportionately more negative commercials than any prior campaign in the history of the American presidency.⁹² However, the Republican campaign had failed to persuade voters that Bush knew how to restore the economy.⁹³ In a campaign where the main issues were domestic policy and economy, this became a decisive factor.

The 1996 presidential campaign advertising was widely criticized in the media as soulless, mechanical, dry, and extremely negative by both Republican and Democratic candidates.⁹⁴ According to many publications in the press, the 1996 campaign advertising was dismal and disappointing. Political commercials lacked any sort of new creative ideas, instead relying on the well-worn theory of attacking opponents.⁹⁵ However, voters' disappointment and media "adwatches" made purely negative attack commercials a less appealing approach in the presidential race. Therefore, both the Clinton and Dole presidential campaigns somewhat toned down the negative ads by the end of the campaign.⁹⁶

Advertising by both candidates was primarily focused on issues of crime, drugs, taxes, and Medicare. Republican advertising was also focused on "moral crisis" and Clinton's credibility. Personal morals and values were in focused of both candidate's ads.⁹⁷ An aggressive commercial by the Republicans on Clinton's experimentation with marijuana was broadcast more widely than any in the campaign.⁹⁸ However, the campaign advertising by the Democrats and Republicans had also some distinctive differences. The advertising style reflected the

presidential candidates' distinct experience and their vision of America. For instance, in a move to reach young voters "where they live," the Clinton campaign created ads that were selling the president and his issues in bursts of music and computer-generated clips.⁹⁹ Both Clinton and Dole were using each the other's words against him concerning their differing approaches to drug policy and other issues trying to depict the opponent as untruthful.¹⁰⁰ Overall, negative advertising that became a of the 1996 presidential campaign was stressed in the media as a strong possibility for explaining the lowest voter turnout since many decades, as voters were turned off by the negative campaign.¹⁰¹

Issues in Television Political Advertising

Television political commercials are designed to give voters solid reasons why they should support one candidate instead of the other. Most of these reasons come through issue appeals. As Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure put it out, in commercials, political candidates attempt to link themselves with issue positions that they feel will win them voters and try to associate their opponents with issue positions that will cost them voters.¹⁰² In their book, *The Unseeing Eye*, Patterson and McClure, looking at both content and effects of political ads, sought to dispel the concerns of the public and journalists regarding political commercials. They examined whether television ads enabled voters to learn more about the policy views or personal qualities of campaigners. Basically, they found that voters learned more from the candidates' ads than from the news, because ads addressed some issues whereas news was dominated by coverage of the "horse race"--who is ahead at a given time.¹⁰³

Much work has been done examining the content of political ads and their influence on issue-based voting during elections. Darrell West,

pointing out that policy matters are central to democratic elections, argued that in spite of popular beliefs, most of the research found that ads presented more substantive information than viewers and journalists generally believe. West argues that "even mentioning issues allows voters to incorporate broader notions of accountability into their choices."¹⁰⁴ Although most commercials are not very specific, the ads can serve as agenda-setting or a priming function. Mentioning some issue in the ads may increase its importance in voters' priorities or in campaign coverage by the media.¹⁰⁵

According to Richard Joslyn, the content of political commercials reveals the nature of the American electoral process. The researcher believed that one can learn about the nature of electoral choices by studying the appeals made in commercials. Based on a sample of 506 televised political ads, Joslyn found that in spite of the common belief that commercials are mainly used to create an image of candidates sixty percent of ads contained policy appeals.¹⁰⁶ In another study using the content of 156 televised commercials from presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional campaigns, Joslyn found that 76% of ads were issue oriented, although only 20% contained specific issue positions.¹⁰⁷

The potential of political commercials for setting agenda and transmitting issue information to the electorate has been documented by many researchers. In many of the content analysis studies, researchers have found the issue content of political commercials to be quite high. A study conducted by Charles Atkin and Gary Heald showed that political commercials increase voters' knowledge about both candidates and issues and set issue agenda for a campaign.¹⁰⁸ Lynda Kaid stated that political commercials contain substantial issue information that can overcome selective exposure. She established that ads had a considerable effect

in increasing knowledge about candidates and issues.¹⁰⁹

McClure and Patterson found that political ads in the 1972 presidential campaign contained more issue information than did television news. The researchers concluded that political ads rather than news were primary source of information about election issues for American voters. However, McClure and Patterson discovered that political advertising had its strongest impact on issue awareness for voters who had a low exposure to newspapers and television news programs.¹¹⁰ Patterson and McClure reported that 42% of the 1972 election commercials were primarily issue commercials, while another 28% contained substantial issue material. Others have reached similar conclusions. Richard Hofstetter and Cliff Zukin found that 85% of their sample of political ads contained some information about issues.¹¹¹

In a study of 1988 presidential commercials, Kaid and Johnson compared the difference in content between positive and negative commercials. The researchers found that both positive and negative ads relied heavily on emotional appeals. However, they found that negative ads contained more issue information than did positive ads, and both negative and positive ads were equal in the content of candidates' image information.¹¹²

Anne Wadsworth examining presidential political ads from 1952 to 1984 found that in general presidential political commercials were designed to evoke voters' emotional reaction and to make voters feel about an issue rather than to learn something about it.¹¹³ Hofstetter and Zukin discovered in their analysis of the 1972 presidential race that about 85% of the candidates' ads included some reference to issues.¹¹⁴ Likewise, Patterson and McClure demonstrated, in a content analysis of the 1972 race, that issues received more frequent coverage in commercials than in network news coverage.¹¹⁵

Several researchers have mentioned international/foreign affairs issues among other categories in their content analysis studies. West in his study of "prominent" (mentioned by Jamieson in her *Packaging of the Presidency*) and "typical" commercials in the presidential advertising campaigns from 1952 to 1992 found that 8% of "prominent" ads focused on foreign affairs whereas 4% were focused on specific foreign policy, 11% of "typical" ads targeted international affairs and 7% specific foreign policy.¹¹⁶ "Prominent" ads for Republicans were more much likely to emphasize international affairs (13%) than "prominent" ads for Democrats (4%). West argued that the greater attention paid by Republicans to international affairs and by Democrats to domestic areas "helps to explain why Democrats are viewed as weak on foreign policy and Republicans are seen as inattentive to domestic matters."¹¹⁷

West's analysis showed that war and peace issues rose during the Vietnam period. Fifteen percent of "prominent" ads in 1964 and 25 percent in 1968 discussed war and peace topics. The total of international affairs accounted for 19% and 37%, respectively, with an average 13% of commercials focused on international affairs during the 1952-1992 campaigns.¹¹⁸ International relations were emphasized in "prominent" ads at about the same levels in the nominating contests and general election but were mentioned much more often in the nominating process among "typical" ads.¹¹⁹ The most critical "prominent" commercials during the period from 1952 to 1992 appeared on foreign policy 86% of which were negative) with the international affairs ranking third (56%) after domestic policy (67%).¹²⁰

Patterson and McClure analyzed the coverage of campaign issues by political spots during the 1972 presidential general election. They established that Nixon's policies on Vietnam accounted for 14% of the total number of issue mentions in the ads (all references to these

issues in televised political spots shown between September 18 and November 6, 1972) and for more than 10% of the advertising time. Nixon's policies on China accounted for 11% of issue mentions and for 17% of the air time. Policies on Russia accounted for 11% of the number of issue mentions and more than 9% of the air time and policies on foreign commitments for 3% of issue mentions and 5% of air time. McGovern's policies on Vietnam withdrawal accounted for 5% of the total issue mentions in the campaign ads and for nearly 6% of the total air time. Overall, during the period from September 18 to November 6, 1972, Nixon's foreign policies--Vietnam, China, Russia, and his commitments to America's allies--received more than 65 minutes of broadcast time in advertising (41%) and were mentioned in the commercials 120 times (39%).¹²¹

Patterson and McClure also established that Nixon's positive spots were strongly oriented toward foreign policy--emphasizing the administration's accomplishments and its commitment to an active role for the United States in world affairs. Nixon's negative spots criticized McGovern's military defense policy and his welfare proposals. McGovern's positive ads stressed Vietnam disengagement and domestic policies.¹²²

Leonard Shyles in his study discerned the issues of the 1980 presidential primary campaigns from a content analysis of the issues presented in televised political spot advertisements created for nine presidential primary candidates.¹²³ Proportions of issue mentions on foreign policy was 11.9% for the total population, 14.5% for Democratic nominees and 9.9% for Republican. Foreign policy/foreign relations shared the third-fourth rank with the energy category among other nine issue categories (Military defense was included in the national security category 10%). For individual candidates (nine candidates), the

proportion of foreign policy issue mentions in their commercials varied from 3.7% to 26.6%.¹²⁴

Montague Kern in his study of 30-second spots aired in the final ten days of the 1984 election on four varied market areas in Indiana, California, North Carolina, and Georgia (in minutes) of issues in ads for federal office (Presidential, Senatorial, Congressional, and National Republican Congressional Committee generic party spots) reported that few foreign policy issues were elaborated. Counting the total broadcast time of these commercials, Kern found that little airtime was devoted to such issues as arms control, Central American policy, hostages, or defense spending.¹²⁵

Theoretical Approach: Agenda-Setting, Instrumental Actualization, Priming and Defusing

The idea of agenda-setting is that the public's social or political priorities and concerns--their beliefs about what is a significant issue or event--are determined by the amount of news coverage accorded various issues and events. Significantly for this study, the concept was initially proposed by analysts pursuing the connections between public opinion and the course of American foreign policy. In his book *The American Public and Foreign Policy*, Bernard Cohen outlined the agenda-setting hypothesis as follows: "The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful in telling its readers what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling what to think about...." ¹²⁶

Agenda-setting research that deals with the media's ability to set the public's issue agenda has most often focused the content of television news programs. Iyengar and Kinder in their study of the television news impact on public opinion defined the agenda setting hypothesis as follows: "those problems that receive prominent attention

on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation's most important."¹²⁷ West pointed out that agenda-setting "refers to the process by which issues evolve from specific grievances into prominent causes worthy of government consideration."¹²⁸

Although much research has been done on agenda-setting and television news, until recently, there has been little extension of this work to political advertising. Several studies, however, were done in the 1990s that used an agenda-setting model to determine whether political advertising influences citizens' policy priorities.

West, in his comprehensive study of political commercials, has found that in advertising campaigns, agenda setting is potentially very important. Candidates often use advertising to dramatize issues that previously were not high on the public agenda or to show their awareness of issues that are. They also try to deemphasize matters that may be problematic for themselves.¹²⁹ West's analysis of the 1988 presidential campaign established that Bush's strategy clearly involved a redefinition of the agenda away from certain aspects of Reagan's record and toward Dukakis's vulnerable areas in an effort to move the campaign debate onto terms more advantageous for Republicans.

Stressing that "setting the agenda allows candidates to define the terms of debate and to dictate the dynamics of the campaign,"¹³⁰ West argues that political advertising "should be assessed to gauge its ability to change citizens' perceptions of what is important and how the campaigns are run."¹³¹

Having studied the impact of agenda-setting on voters' behavior, Roberts reported that her findings suggested that political advertising "shares the agenda-setting function with general editorial content in its ability to transfer issue salience to the public mind."¹³²

Hans-Bernd Brosius and Hans Mathias Kepplinger complemented the

agenda-setting theory with a theory of instrumental actualization. Their argument was that in a political campaign "the decisive point is not whether an event does in fact speak in favor of or against a candidate, but how the general public perceive it." Therefore, as Brosius and Kepplinger put it, the objective of the candidates and their media campaigns is "to give publicity to events which help one's own side or damage the other side. This is described as instrumental actualization."¹³³ The researchers argued that "the more frequently the recipients are confronted with events supporting the point of view of one of the adversaries, the more likely they are to adopt that point of view and thus strengthen that position."¹³⁴

Priming is a new theoretical model that builds on this way of thinking about political information. Developed in regard to the evening news, the priming model proposes that people use readily available material to evaluate candidates and that in the media age one of the most accessible sources is television.¹³⁵ This theory is based on the psychological assumptions that people do not pay attention to everything, their attention is highly selective, and that people notice only particular features of special consequence. Therefore, arguing that there is always only a limited number of themes--standards against which presidents are measured--Iyengar and Kinder defined priming in the following way: "By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged."¹³⁶

By its patterns of coverage, television can influence voters' choices between candidates by elevating particular standards of evaluation. West found that television shows that devote extensive coverage to defense matters can increase the importance of defense policy in voters' assessments. Likewise, news accounts that dwell on

environmental concerns can raise the salience of those matters in voting choices.¹³⁷

Schleuder, McCombs, and Wanta in their experimental study of evaluated the effect of priming in political advertising. Studying the effect of advertising on the subjects' memory structures they have found a significant priming effect, arguing that "if an individual pays more attention to and better remembers an issue, it is more likely that the information about that issue and semantically related information will be easily activated in memory just prior to a salience decision."¹³⁸

Stressing that priming is really an extension of agenda-setting, Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar underscored its importance for political advertising. Political campaigns constantly strive to focus the voters' attention on selected issues to reflect the public's most pressing concerns. Incumbents emphasize issues and policies that they can claim success, while challengers point out policies that have failed. In 1992 the Bush campaign continually attempted to remind voters of the war in the Persian Gulf, while the Democrats worked hard to focus attention on the weakness in the economy. Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar argued that during campaigns, paid media are even more important sources of political information for agenda-setting than "free" media.¹³⁹

The selection of campaign issues is also affected by partisanship. Republican presidential candidates are likely to play to their strengths and dwell on foreign policy and defense; Democrats gain from campaigning on domestic issues such as education and the environment.¹⁴⁰

Priming refers to the efforts of the media to isolate particular issues, events, or themes in the news as criteria for evaluating politicians. In the context of campaigns, priming means that the issues that receive heavy news coverage or campaign advertising are likely to determine voters' evaluations of the candidates. By reminding voters of

some issues, advertising can elevate the importance of these issues as a criterion for choosing between the candidates.¹⁴¹

West has suggested to extend priming with its conceptual counterpart, defusing. This term refers to efforts on the part of candidates to decrease the importance of particular standards of evaluation. Candidates often have problematic features, such as being seen as weak on defense or lacking a clear vision for the future. It obviously is in their interest to defuse their shortcomings. They can do this either by lowering the overall salience of the topic to the public or by shortening the distance between the candidates to the point where the subject no longer affects the vote.¹⁴²

Summary

Many scholars stressed that political advertising on television has become indispensable for any candidate to win office. Ever since the first appearance of political advertising on television, political commercials of each presidential campaign have been studied and analyzed. Numerous research studies have been done on various aspects of political advertising: its effectiveness, persuasive appeals, target audiences, production techniques. Many research studies were attempted in order to dissect political commercials in terms of whether they were trying to convey a message on specific policy issues or create an image of a candidate. Many research studies were focused on the negative political advertising and on whether the negative ads are more or less effective than the positive and whether negative advertising is necessarily a bad thing at all. Some research studies have analyzed whether political advertising was deceptive or not. A number of studies were focused on political advertising and the agenda-setting and priming and defusing. The agenda-setting research in the field of political advertising showed support for the notion that the priorities of the

advertising agenda influence the priority of issues on the public agenda. Studies on priming and defusing indicated that increase in advertising emphasis on some issues led citizens to think more about these issues.

The studies that examined the content of political advertising were probably the most numerous. Among those were studies in which the international aspect of political advertising was examined in context with other content categories. However, analysis of the literature suggests that the international aspect of political advertising has been less explored by researchers than other aspects. Not many studies, if any at all, have examined the international aspect of political advertising as a separate issue. A study specifically focused on the international aspect of television political advertising throughout the history of presidential campaigns seems, therefore, justified as another contribution to the body of research that has been done so far in the field of political advertising.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General

This study is intended to explore what niche the international aspects have taken in political advertising during the U.S. presidential campaigns from 1952 until 1996. It has examined the tendencies and changes in how the international issues have been dealt with in presidential campaign commercials during this period. The study has also examined the types of political commercials--issue- and image-oriented commercials and positive and negative commercials. Furthermore, the study examined the content of presidential political commercials that specifically focused on international issues or mentioned international issues among others.

Research Method

To assess how the issues of international policies were reflected in political commercials during the presidential electoral campaigns, a content analysis was performed. According to Bernard Berelson's definition, content analysis is "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."¹ Generally, content analysis has been used to determine the characteristics, forms or styles of message content.² Content analysis has been one of the most widely used research techniques for understanding and evaluating broadcast messages.³ It has also been used by many researchers in political advertising research. This study used content analysis of political commercials by candidates during United States presidential campaigns. It is an example of a longitudinal trend study that provides information about the changes in the same population over time.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

This study examined the international affairs issues in the televised political advertising during the United States presidential campaigns.

The research questions were:

- a. What has been the total number of presidential campaign commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues?
- b. What has been the proportion of commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues out of the total number of presidential political commercials?
- c. What has been the tendency between the years 1952-1996?
- d. What have been the differences in the proportion of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues based on political party (Republican/Democratic)?
- e. What has been the type of commercials' content (issue- and image-oriented commercials)?
- f. What has been the proportion of positive and negative commercials on international issues?
- h. What has been the content of campaign commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues?

Null hypotheses:

H₀1. There is no difference in the proportion of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues based on the campaign year and political party.

H₀2. There are no differences in the type of commercial content (issue- and image-oriented, positive and negative commercials) based on the campaign year.

H₀3. There is no difference in the content of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues based on campaign year and the political party.

Definition of Terms

The coding design and definition of terms basically came from Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston's study on negative and positive political advertising in U.S. presidential campaigns.⁴ Other political advertising studies, such as Joslyn's⁵ study on appeals of political commercials, Shyle's and West's⁶ studies on issues in the political advertising, also were considered in designing this study.

Sample Selection

The data studied here are contained in political commercials used by presidential candidates during the 1952-1996 presidential campaigns. To limit the scope of the research, the researcher decided to exclude political spots from primary campaigns. Political advertisements by independent candidates or by the candidates of minor political parties were also excluded. Only advertisements by the presidential nominees of the two major political parties--Republican and Democratic--were examined.

This study examined 1399 different political commercials from twelve presidential campaigns. The sample was obtained from the Political Commercial Archive in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. According to Anne Wadsworth and West who also used the collection of the Archive for their studies,⁷ the Political Commercial Archive contains the largest and most complete set of presidential ads. However, although the advertising collection examined in this study was assumed to be relatively complete, it should be considered rather a convenience sample than a fully representative sample of the population.

Content Analysis

Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis in this study are the political commercials themselves.

Categories of Analysis

The categories of analysis are:

1. International and foreign affairs issues presented in the ads.
2. Type of commercials (issue- and image oriented, positive and negative commercials).

Coding

A coding sheet was developed for this study (see Appendix A). The format of the coding sheet was derived primarily from Kaid and Johnston's study on the types of presidential political advertising.⁸ However, the design of the coding sheet and the definitions of terms merged several other studies in the field of political advertising as well.

A pretest had been conducted before the actual content analysis took place. All political commercials of the presidential general elections obtainable from the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma were reviewed. Only the commercials that focused or mentioned international issues were coded.

The commercials were classified according to the campaign year and candidate's party affiliation. Commercials were also coded according to their (image- or issue-oriented). The rationale was that from the Kaid and Johnston's study which defined issue commercials as those that "emphasize specific public concern," and image commercials as those that "stress the candidate's characteristics, personality, human qualities."⁹ A commercial could contain both types of information.¹⁰

Many researchers have investigated the difference in positive and

negative political ads, and the strategy used in negative political advertising.¹¹ Thus, the researcher intended to assess the direction of ads (negative, positive) and strategies used in the sample ads.

Commercials were coded into content categories on a code sheet according to the operational definitions of categories in the code book (Appendix B). The content analysis took place at the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Statistical Analysis

The frequency count of terms in each category is nominal data; therefore, the researcher used simple and complex Chi-square analysis to examine differences in internationally oriented political commercials. The 95 percent level of confidence was used to determine which differences were statistically significant.

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ENDNOTES

¹Berelson, Bernard. *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952), 18.

²O. R. Holsti, "Content Analysis," in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (Reading, MN: Addison-Wesley, 1968), 596-692.

³Joseph R. Dominick and James Fletcher, *Broadcasting Research Methods* (Newton, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1985), 7.

⁴Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston, "Negative versus Positive Television Advertising in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-1988," *Journal of Communication* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 53-64.

⁵Richard A. Joslyn, "The Content of Political Spot Ads," *Journalism Quarterly* 57 (Spring 1980): 92-98.

⁶Leonard Shyles, "The Televised Political Spot Advertisement," in *New Perspective on Political Advertising*, ed. L. L. Kaid, D. Nimmo, and K. R. Sanders (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986); Darrel M. West, *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-1992* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1993).

⁷Anne J. Wadsworth, *Incumbent and Challenger Strategies in Presidential Communication: A Content Analysis of Television Campaign Ads from 1952 to 1984* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1987); West, *Air Wars*.

⁸Kaid and Johnston, 53-64.

⁹*Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰Shyles, 107-137; Deirde D. Johnston, "Image and Issue Information: Message Content or Interpretation?" *Journalism Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 379-382.

¹¹Lynda Lee Kaid, Mike Chanslor, and Mark Hovind, "The Influence of Program and Commercial Type on Political Advertising Effectiveness," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 36, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 303-320; Esther Thorson, William G. Christ, and Clarke Caywood, "Effects of Issue-Image Strategies, Attack and Support Appeals, Music, and Visual Content in Political Commercials," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 465-486; Gina M. Garramone, Charles K. Atkin, Bruce E. Pinkleton, and Richard T. Cole, "Effects of Negative Political Advertising on the Political Process," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 34, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 299-311.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

General

This thesis is an attempt to investigate how international aspects were reflected in political advertising during presidential campaigns in the United States. The study has examined the tendencies and changes in the way in which international issues have been dealt with in political campaign commercials from 1952 until 1996. The study also examined the differences between the two major political parties, Democratic and Republican. Specifically, the study focused on the proportion of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues out of the total number of political commercials by candidates. Furthermore, the study explored the differences in the commercials focusing on or mentioning international issues based on the political party affiliation, commercial type (issue- or image-oriented, positive and negative commercials), and the content of commercials.

Methodology

The research method of this study was a technique of content analysis, known as "contingency analysis." According to this technique, the data were coded and scored depending on the absence or presence of the attribute within the unit of measurement.¹ The unit of measurement in this study was a political commercial. To record the data, a raw-data matrix was constructed according to the generally used contingency technique with units serving as rows and the categories as columns.²

The data were collected from the political advertisements by the presidential candidates during U.S. presidential campaigns from 1952 until 1996. The sample used in this study was the collection of political advertisements in the Political Commercial Archive in the

Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. The study examined only political commercials by the presidential candidates of the two major political parties, Democratic and Republicans. In addition, the sample was limited to the advertisements used during the presidential general elections. Commercials more than five minutes long were also eliminated, since such commercials usually contain a multiplicity of issues.

Chapter Outline

This chapter describes and interprets the research findings of the study. The first part contains an analysis of the overall number and proportion of campaign commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues based on the campaign year and the political party. In the second part, the data are analyzed based on the type of political commercials--issue- and image-oriented, positive and negative commercials--and the campaign year. In the third part, the commercials are analyzed based on their content. The operational definitions of the variables--type of commercials (issue- image oriented commercials, positive and negative commercials) and categories of the content analysis--are listed in the code book, Appendix B.

Proportion of the Commercials that Focus on or Mention International Issues

This part examines the amount of commercials that specifically focused on international and foreign affairs issues and those that mentioned them among other issues in the presidential advertising campaigns from 1952 until 1996. This part also evaluates the proportion of commercials that focused on or mentioned international and foreign affairs issues out of the total amount of political commercials during presidential campaigns. Next, this part examines the difference in the amount of political commercials that mentioned international and foreign

affairs issues between the Democratic and Republican parties.

The number and proportions of the political television ads that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues during the presidential general elections are presented in Table I.

TABLE I
COMMERCIALS THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES
AND COMMERCIALS THAT MENTIONED THEM AMONG OTHERS

Campaign year	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	Total
Number of ads specifically focused on international issues	1	1	25	18	13	9	9	49	14	13	1	0	153
Percent	2%	6%	21%	26%	15%	13%	6%	14%	10%	7%	1%	0%	11%
Number of ads mentioning international among other issues	7	6	23	8	14	19	12	38	26	10	5	0	170
Percent	14%	35%	20%	12%	17%	26%	8%	11%	20%	6%	7%	0%	12%
Total number of ads mentioning international issues	8	7	48	26	27	28	21	87	40	23	6	0	321
Percent	16%	41%	41%	38%	32%	39%	14%	25%	30%	13%	8%	0	23%
Total number of ads	49	17	117	69	84	72	146	350	135	178	71	111	1399

The data show that 11% of the political commercials in the presidential campaigns specifically focused on international and foreign affairs issues. Another 12% of the commercials mentioned some international issues among other. Overall, about 23% of the commercials in the sample mentioned international and foreign affairs issues.

Statistically significant differences were found in the proportion of the political commercials that specifically focused on international

issues, mentioned international issues among other issues, and overall in the proportion of commercials that either focused on or mentioned international issues based on the campaign year. The highest percent of ads that specifically targeted international or foreign affairs issues was in the 1960s. The highest percent in a particular campaign was in 1964 (26%). Beside the 1996 campaign, where no ads on international issues were found, the lowest percent of such commercials was in the 1992 (1%) and in 1956 (2%) presidential campaigns.

The proportion of commercials that either specifically targeted or mentioned international issues combined was rather high from 1956 until the 1972 campaign. The highest percent of these commercials was in the 1956 and 1960 campaigns (41%). A rather low percent of these commercials was found in the 1952 (16%), 1976 (14%), 1988 (14%), and 1992 (8%) presidential campaigns. Figure 1 illustrates the percent of commercials that specifically focused on international issues and those that focused on or mentioned international issues among others combined by the campaign year.



Figure 1. Proportion of commercials that specifically focused on and commercials that mentioned international issues.

Figure 1 indicates that the international aspect was most salient in the presidential campaign advertising from the late 1950s until the early 1970s with a significant decline in the 1970s followed by a relative increase in the 1980s. In the 1992 political campaign it was barely present and totally disappeared in the 1996 campaign ads.

The number and proportions of the commercials that either specifically focused on international issues or mentioned international issues among others for each of the two political parties by the campaign year and the political party are presented in Table II.

TABLE II
PROPORTION OF COMMERCIALS THAT FOCUSED ON OR MENTIONED INTERNATIONAL ISSUES BY POLITICAL PARTY

Campaign year	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	Total
Number of ads mentioning international issues by													
Democrats	1	2	17	7	8	8	8	48	22	17	0	0	138
Republicans	7	5	31	19	19	20	13	39	18	6	6	0	183
Percent of ads mentioning international concerns by													
Democrats	8%	17%	23%	25%	26%	20%	14%	30%	44%	14%	0%	0%	20%
Republicans	19%	100%	70%	46%	36%	62%	15%	20%	21%	11%	19%	0%	26%
Total number of ads by													
Democrats	13	12	73	28	31	40	59	159	50	122	39	69	695
Republicans	36	5	44	41	53	32	87	191	85	56	32	42	704
Total number of ads	49	17	117	69	84	72	146	350	135	178	71	111	1399

The data show that 20% of the political commercials by the Democratic presidential candidates mentioned international issues. For the Republican presidential candidates, commercials that mentioned international issues accounted for 26% of the total of their campaign

commercials. Statistically significant differences were found in the proportion of the political commercials mentioning international issues for each political party based on the campaign year. The Democrats had the highest percent of commercials that either specifically focused on or mentioned international issues during the 1984 presidential campaign (44%). The Republicans had the highest percent of such commercials during the 1956 (100%), 1960 (70%), and 1972 (62%) presidential campaigns. Statistically significant differences were also found between the political parties based on the campaign year and between the political parties overall. The Republican presidential campaign commercials had overall a higher proportion of ads that focused on or mentioned international issues (26% versus 20% for the Democrats). Figure 2 illustrates the proportions of the campaign commercials either specifically focused on or mentioned international issues for each political party.

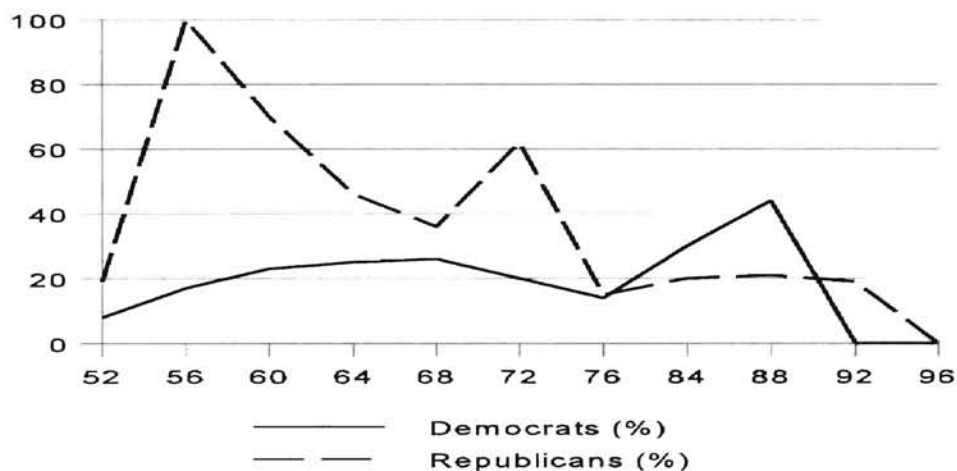


Figure 2. Proportion of commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues by political party.

Figure 2 indicates that the Republican presidential campaign commercials had a higher proportion of ads that mentioned international issues in the campaigns during 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. (A high

percent of international content in the Republican commercials in the 1956 campaign can be explained by the small number of Republican commercials in the sample for this year (5) and their length--five minutes. They focused, therefore, on a multiplicity of issues with international issues among others.)

The 1976 presidential campaign was characterized by an equal proportion of attention paid by the two political parties to international problems with a decline in comparison with previous years for both parties. This decline was followed by a relative increase in the 1980s with the Democrats having during this period a higher proportion of commercials mentioning international issues than the Republicans. In the 1992 presidential campaign, however, international issues were mentioned only in the Republican campaign ads, and in 1996 were not found in the commercials of the presidential nominees of either party.

Type of Political Commercials

This chapter examines the differences in the political campaign commercials that either specifically focused on or mentioned international issues based on the commercial type--issue- versus image-oriented commercials, and positive versus negative commercials. The issue-oriented commercials are those that focused on specific political problems or on the candidate's policies or stand on the issues. Image commercials are those that focused on a candidate's qualifications, character or personality. Some commercials can focus on particular policy issues as well as on candidate qualifications or character simultaneously. Such ads are referred to in this paper as both image- and issue-oriented commercials. The number and proportions of issue- and image-oriented commercials and those that combine focus on specific policy issues with that on candidate image are presented in Table III.

TABLE III
NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF IMAGE- AND ISSUE-ORIENTED COMMERCIALS

Campaign year	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	Total
Number of issue-oriented ads	4	3	32	17	17	22	15	21	19	16	0	0	168
Image-oriented	2	2	7	4	2	2	4	35	2	5	2	0	68
Both issue- and image-oriented ads	2	2	9	5	8	4	2	45	3	2	0	0	85
Percent of issue-oriented ads	50%	33%	66%	65%	62%	79%	71%	24%	40%	69%	33%	0%	52%
Image-oriented ads	25%	33%	15%	16%	7%	7%	19%	40%	5%	22%	0%	0%	22%
Both issue- and image-oriented ads	25%	33%	19%	19%	30%	14%	10%	36%	8%	9%	67%	0%	26%
Total number of ads mentioning international matters (100%)	8	7	48	26	27	28	21	87	40	23	6	0	321
Total number of ads	49	17	117	69	84	72	146	350	135	178	71	111	1399

Statistically significant difference was found between the issue-, image-oriented commercials, and both issue- and image-oriented commercials overall. The data show that commercials focused on specific international problems, policies, or candidate's stand were used most (52%) in the presidential campaign advertising. Commercials that focused on a candidate's qualifications, character, or personality in relation to some foreign or international concerns accounted for 22% of the total of commercials that mentioned international issues. Commercials that mentioned specific issues and at the same time emphasized the candidate's image accounted for 26% of the total of commercials mentioning international issues. The trend over the years indicates a similar pattern throughout all but two presidential campaigns (in the 1980 campaign commercials, personal image of candidates was emphasized

more than their policies and in 1992 most of the commercials (67%) emphasized both the candidate's image and specific international issues. Figure 3 illustrates the proportions of issue- and image-oriented commercials by political party (commercials that are both issue- and image-oriented are omitted).

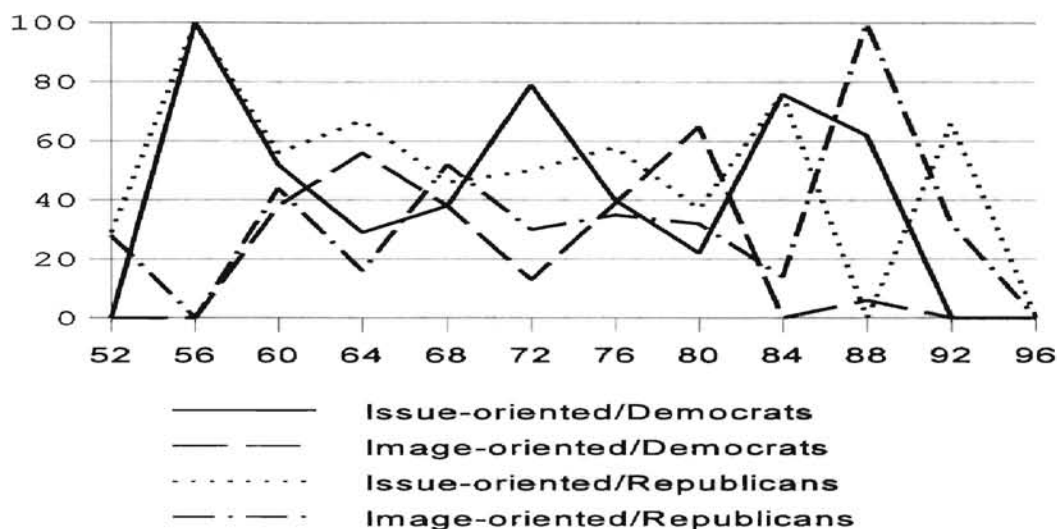


Figure 3. Proportion of issue- and image-oriented commercials by political party.

Figure 3 indicates that both the Republican and Democratic advertising campaigns differed in their emphasis of either specific political issues or candidates' images based on campaign year. In 1956, 1972, 1984, and 1988 Democratic advertising was primarily focused on policy issues whereas candidates' image was more emphasized in the 1964 and 1980 campaigns. Republican commercials were primarily issue-oriented in most campaigns. However, in 1992 Republican ads were mainly focused on candidates' image as related to international and foreign affairs. The two parties also differed among themselves, particularly, during the 1964 and 1988 campaigns.

Table IV presents the number and proportions of positive and

negative commercials and those that combine focus on candidate's own policies and image with attacks on the policies and image of an opponent.

TABLE IV
PROPORTION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMERCIALS

Campaign year	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	Total
Number of positive ads	2	5	30	12	14	14	8	35	15	10	6	0	150
Number of negative ads	4	0	4	9	8	7	4	29	9	8	0	0	82
Both positive and negative ads	2	2	14	5	5	7	9	23	16	5	0	0	88
Total of ads containing attack on the opponent	6	2	18	14	14	14	13	52	25	14	0	0	170
Percent of positive ads	25%	71%	63%	46%	51%	46%	38%	40%	37%	43%	100%	0%	47%
Percent of negative ads	50%	0%	8%	35%	30%	25%	19%	33%	23%	35%	0%	0%	26%
Percent of both positive and negative ads	25%	29%	29%	19%	19%	25%	43%	27%	40%	22%	0%	0%	27%
Total percent of ads containing attack on the opponent	75%	29%	37%	54%	49%	50%	62%	60%	63%	57%	0%	0%	53%
Total number of ads mentioning international matters (100%)	8	7	48	26	27	28	21	87	40	23	6	0	321
Total number of ads	49	17	117	69	84	72	146	350	135	178	71	111	1399

Statistically significant difference was found in the proportions of positive commercials, negative, and both positive and negative commercials based by campaign. Commercials that focused on candidates' policies or image accounted for 47% of the commercials that mentioned international issues versus 27% of commercials focused on criticism of

the opponents' policies or image. Commercials that exclusively attacked opponents' policies or image and those that combined attack with candidates' own positive policies or image were found to have nearly equal proportions (26% and 27% accordingly). No statistical difference was found between these categories. The data showed that overall attacks on the opponent were found in 53% of the commercials that mentioned international issues. However, in four presidential campaigns (1956, 1960, 1968, and 1992) most of the commercials were positive (71%, 63%, 51%, and 100% accordingly). Figure 4 illustrates the proportions of positive and negative commercials by political party (commercials that are both positive and negative are omitted).

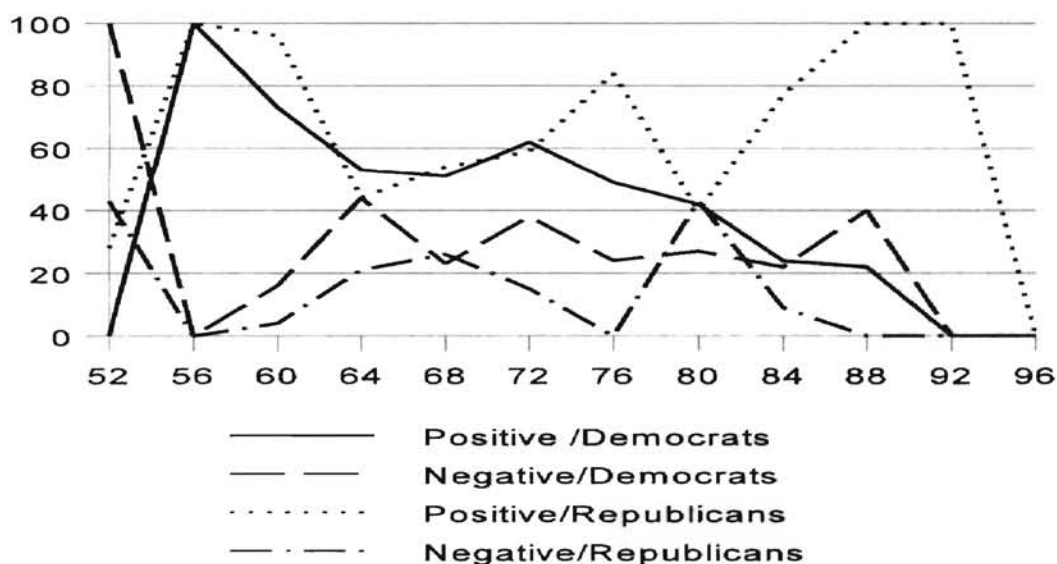


Figure 4 Positive and negative commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues.

Figure 4 indicates differences between the Republican and Democratic presidential advertising commercials in their emphasis of either candidates' own policies or image, or attacks on the policies or image of opponents based on campaign year. Commercials that focused or

mentioned international and foreign affairs by the Democratic nominees were predominantly positive from the 1956 until 1980 presidential campaigns and predominately negative during the 1952 and 1988 campaigns. Commercials by the Republican nominees were predominantly positive during most campaigns except the 1952 and 1980 campaign. Democratic advertising was primarily focused on policy issues whereas candidates' image was more emphasized in the 1964 and 1980 campaigns. In 1988, Republican commercials that focused on or mentioned international and foreign affairs were primarily positive, whereas those by the Democratic nominee were primarily negative. Overall, Figure 4 shows that presidential advertising campaigns used different tactics by placing more emphasis either on promoting candidates' own policies and image or on attacking those of opponents.

Content of the Commercials that Specifically Focused on or
Mentioned International Issues

This part examines differences in the content of political commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international and foreign affairs issues. The differences are examined overall between the content categories. The content categories are also compared based on the campaign year and on the political party. Next, the differences between the political parties are examined in more detail in three content categories that accounted for more than a third of commercials that mention international issues.

Table V lists the number and proportions of presidential campaign commercials that focused on or mentioned international and foreign affairs issues in different content categories. The operational definitions of the content categories are formulated in the code book (Appendix B). Each commercial could be coded in one or many content categories depending on its content but only once in each category.

TABLE V
 CONTENT OF THE COMMERCIALS THAT MENTIONED INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Campaign year	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	Total
1 War and peace	7	6	15	9	13	21	8	40	25	0	1	0	145
Percent (%)	88%	86%	31%	36%	48%	75%	38%	46%	63%	0%	17%	0%	45%
2 Candidate qualifications	2	3	16	9	10	6	6	45	5	5	2	0	109
Percent (%)	25%	43%	33%	35%	37%	15%	29%	52%	13%	22%	33%	0%	34%
3 World problems, position in the world	2	2	24	8	4	11	3	32	6	0	3	0	95
Percent (%)	25%	43%	50%	31%	15%	39%	14%	22%	15%	0%	50%	0%	30%
4 Arms Control	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	14	12	3	0	0	36
Percent (%)	0%	0%	0%	8%	15%	4%	0%	16%	30%	13%	0%	0%	11%
5 Threat to America	0	1	4	2	1	0	3	0	5	14	2	0	32
Percent (%)	0%	14%	8%	8%	4%	0%	14%	0%	13%	61%	33%	0%	10%
6 Foreign aid/sanctions	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	3	0	6	0	0	17
Percent (%)	0%	0%	0%	8%	7%	4%	14%	3%	0%	26%	0%	0%	5%
7 Terrorism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	12
Percent (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	17%	0%	0%	4%
8 Economic relations	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	10
Percent (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	3%	0%	9%	33%	0%	3%
9 Other	0	0	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
Percent (%)	0%	0%	0%	15%	7%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Total of ads in categories	11	12	59	36	36	40	27	145	53	34	10	0	463
Percent (%)	138%	171%	123%	138%	133%	143%	129%	167%	133%	148%	167%	0%	144%
Total of ads mentioning international issues (100%)	8	7	48	26	27	28	21	87	40	23	6	0	321
Total of ads	49	17	117	69	84	72	146	350	135	178	71	111	1399

Statistically significant difference was found between the

content categories in the political commercials mentioning international issues overall. Commercials mentioning issues of war and peace made up the largest category (45%). Commercials that mentioned candidates qualifications as related to international and foreign affairs issues were the second largest category (34%). The third largest category was made up of the commercials that mentioned world problems and America's position in the world (30%). Arms control ranked fourth (11%), followed by the external threat category (10%), foreign aid/economic sanctions (5%), international terrorism (4%), and international trade relations (3%). Other international issues mentioned in the commercials (3%) were drug trafficking, international environment treaties, refugees, United Nations, poverty and overpopulation.

Statistically significant differences were found in the three major content categories--war and peace, candidates' qualifications, and world problems/America's position in the world--based on the campaign year. War and peace problems were most salient in the 1952 (88%), 1956 (86%), 1972 (72%), and in the 1984 (63%) presidential campaign commercials. In other years this category accounted for less than 50% of the commercials mentioning international issues and in 1988 and 1996 no commercials were coded in this category. Candidates' qualifications as related to international issues were mostly the focus of campaign advertising in the 1980 (52%) and in the 1956 (43%) presidential campaigns. No commercials were coded in this category in 1996. World problems and America's position in the world were most emphasized in the 1960 (50%), 1956 (43%), and 1972 (39%) campaigns. These issues also accounted for 50% in the 1992 campaign, but the total number of commercials mentioning international issues in this campaign was not significant (8%). No statistical differences were calculated for other content categories since they do not have any entries in many years.

TABLE VI

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CONTENT OF
COMMERCIALS THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON OR MENTIONED
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Content categories	Democrats	Republicans
1. War and Peace Percent (%)	61 44%	84 46%
2.Candidates Qualifications Percent (%)	46 33%	63 34%
3.World Problems, Position in the World Percent (%)	37 27%	58 22%
4.Arms Control Percent (%)	29 21%	7 4%
5.External Threat to America Percent (%)	22 16%	10 5%
6.Foreign aid/sanctions Percent (%)	13 9%	4 4%
5.International Terrorism Percent (%)	2 1%	10 5%
9.International Trade Relations Percent (%)	7 2%	3 2%
10.Other Percent (%)	2 1%	5 3%
Total of categories Percent (%)	204 148%	244 133%
Total number of ads mentioning international matters	138	183

Statistically significant difference in the commercials mentioning international issues was found between the content categories for each of the political parties. Statistically significant difference was found between the political parties. However, the table shows that there was no difference between political parties in such categories as "candidates qualifications" and "international trade relations." Both

Democratic and Republican campaign commercials paid most attention to the war and peace problems and candidates qualifications with approximately equal share of these categories for both parties (44% and 46% in the war and peace category, and 33% and 34% in the candidates qualifications category). World problems/America's position in the world was the third ranked category for both parties, with more difference between the parties than in the first three categories (27% and 22% accordingly). Of other categories, most difference between the parties was found in the arms control category with 21% of ads in this category for Democrats and 4% for Republicans, and in the external threat category (16% and 5% accordingly). The Democratic campaign commercial placed more emphasis on foreign aid and economic sanctions and on international trade relations than the Republican commercials. The Republican ads, however, emphasized international terrorism more than the Democratic commercials. Figure 5 illustrates the proportions of the commercials by the two political parties in each of the above content categories out of the total number of campaign commercials that mentioned international issues.

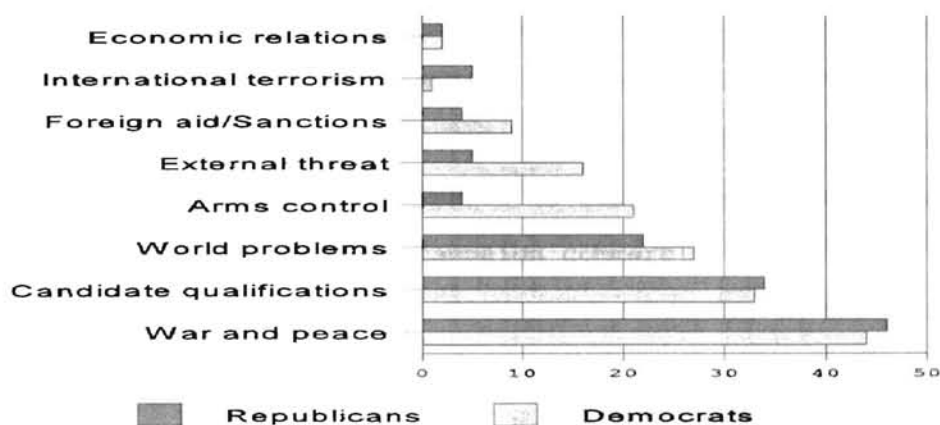


Figure 5. Proportions of campaign commercials in the content categories.

Three categories that accounted for most of the commercials--"war and

peace," "candidate qualifications," and "world problems" were examined in more detail. Figure 6 illustrates proportion of commercials that mentioned war and peace issues out of the total number of campaign commercials by the presidential candidates of the two parties.

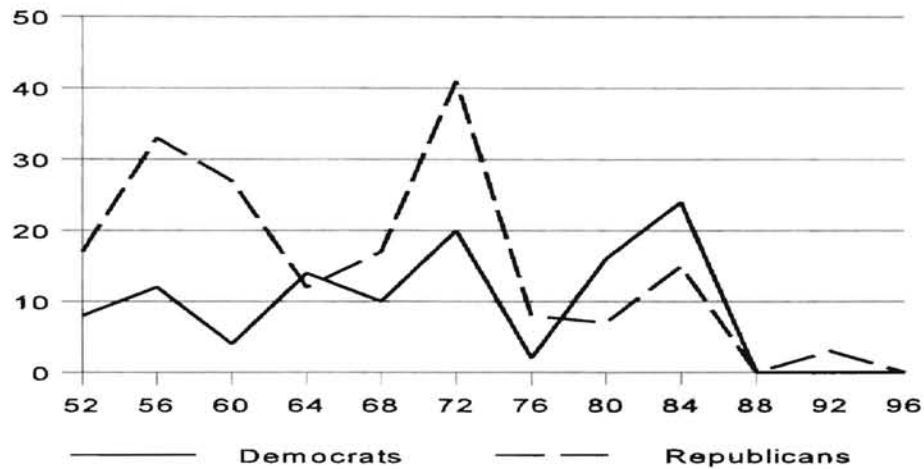


Figure 6. Proportion of ads that focused on or mentioned issues of war and peace out of the total number of presidential campaign commercials.

Figure 6 indicates that in seven campaigns war and peace issues were more salient in the campaign commercials of the Republican candidates and in three campaigns by the Democratic candidates. No commercials that mentioned issues of war and peace were found in the 1988 and 1996 presidential campaign commercials.

Table VII examines the differences between in the War and Peace category based by the political party. The operational definitions of the content subcategories in the War and Peace category are formulated in the code book (Appendix B). Each commercial could be coded in one or many content subcategories depending on its content but only once in each category.

TABLE VII
WAR AND PEACE CATEGORY BY POLITICAL PARTY

Content category	Democrats	Republicans	Both parties
a. Keep America in peace, stop war	26 43%	51 61%	77 53%
b. Peace by being strong	7 11%	36 43%	43 30%
c. Opponent may start war	25 41%	8 10%	33 23%
d. Negotiate for peace	2 3%	13 15%	15 10%
e. Leadership for global peace	2 3%	12 14%	14 10%
f. Mediate in world conflicts	6 10%	2 2%	8 6%
h. Other	1 2%	1 1%	2 1%
Total	69 (113%)	123 (146%)	192 (132%)
Total of ads in Peace and war category	61 (100%)	84 (100%)	145 (100)

Statistically significant difference was found between the subcategories of the commercials mentioning issues of war and peace for each of the political parties. Statistically significant difference was also found between the political parties. Both Democratic and Republican presidential commercial categories emphasized the necessity to keep peace or stop an ongoing war (43% and 61% accordingly). The necessity of being strong to keep peace was more stressed in the Republican presidential advertising campaigns (43%) than in the Democratic advertising campaigns (11%). The necessity to negotiate and compromise for peace was stressed much less by both parties, however, the Republican ads also stressed the necessity to negotiate and compromise for peace (15%) more than the Democratic ads (3%). Concerns that the opponent may start war were more mentioned in the commercials by the

Democratic candidates (41%) than in those by the Republican candidates (10%). In other subcategories, Republican campaign ads mentioned American leadership for a global peace more often than the Democratic (14% and 3% accordingly), but the latter ads mentioned more America's role in mediating the local conflicts between third countries (10% and 2% accordingly). However, due to small number of entries in these subcategories, the difference may not be representative.

Statistically significant difference was found between the subcategories overall. The necessity to keep peace or end a war was mentioned in the campaign commercials that accounted for 53%, peace by being strong was mentioned in 30% of commercials, concerns about an opponent willing to risk starting a war accounted for 32%, and the necessity to negotiate for peace and to be the leader for peace in the world accounted for 10% of campaign commercials each.

TABLE VIII

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS/CHARACTER BY POLITICAL PARTY

Content category	Democrats	Republicans	Both parties
a.Candidate's qualifications in foreign affairs	12 26%	42 67%	54 50%
b.Candidate's character	6 13%	12 19%	18 17%
c.Attacks on opponent's qualifications	4 9%	2 3%	6 6%
d.Attacks on opponent's character	33 72%	8 13%	41 38%
Total	55 (120%)	64 (102%)	119 (109%)
Total ads in the category.	46 (100%)	63 (100%)	109 (100%)

Statistically significant difference was found between the

political parties, between the subcategories for each party, and between the subcategories for both parties together. Candidates' qualifications were most emphasized in the commercials by Republican nominees, and overall by both parties together (67% and 50% accordingly). Positive candidate character was mentioned in 19% of ads by the Republicans and in 17% overall. Democratic ads, however, were found to place more stress on attacks on the opponent's personality and character (72% vs. 13% by the Republicans) than on positive candidate qualifications (26%) or character (13%).

TABLE IX
WORLD PROBLEMS, AMERICA'S POSITION IN THE WORLD

Content category	Democrats	Republicans	Both parties
a. Respect and influence in the world	7 19%	22 38%	29 31%
b. Contain Communism in the world	10 27%	12 21%	22 23%
c. Leadership for the global peace	7 19%	11 19%	18 19%
d. Commitments to allies	2 5%	9 16%	11 12%
e. America as leader of free world	5 14%	2 3%	7 7%
f. Set up an example to world	2 5%	9 16%	11 12%
g. Choice of American president as important to the world	7 19%	1 2%	8 8%
h. Other	11 30%	18 31%	29 31%
Total	51 (138%)	84 (145%)	135 (142%)
Total ads in the category	37 (100%)	58 (100%)	95 (100%)

Statistically significant difference was found between the

political parties, between the subcategories for each party, and between the subcategories for both parties together. Respect and influence in the world was most emphasized by the Republican presidential commercials (38%) and overall by both parties (31%) and was the second ranked subcategory in the Democratic commercials (19%). The necessity to contain Communism in the world was most stressed in the Democratic commercials (27%) and was the second ranked subcategory in the Republican commercials (21%) and overall for two parties (23%). Leadership for the world peace was equally mentioned in commercials by both parties (19%). Candidates' qualifications were most emphasized in the commercials by Republican nominees, and overall by both parties together (67% and 50% accordingly). Positive candidate character was mentioned in 19% of ads by the Republicans and in 17% overall. Democratic ads, however, were found to place more stress on attacks on the opponents' personality and character (72% vs. 13% by the Republicans) than on positive candidate qualifications (26%) or character (13%). The importance of being strong was most emphasized (9%), with America's position as the leader of the free world being the second frequent category. Commitments to protect and help allies ranked third.

In Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate how the international aspects were reflected in political advertising during the U.S. presidential campaigns. The data show that 23% of the commercials in the presidential campaigns specifically focused on or mentioned some international issues or concerns. The international aspect was most salient in the presidential campaign advertising from the late 1950s until the early 1970s with a decline in the 1970s followed by a relative increase in the 1980s. It totally disappeared in the 1996 campaign ads.

The data show statistically significant difference in the proportions of commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues between the Democratic and Republican parties. The findings also indicate that presidential campaign commercials that focused on specific issues rather than on the candidate's image were used most by presidential candidates in emphasizing international concerns. More than a half of the campaign commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues were focused on positive policies or image of the candidate.

The problems of peace and war were the top priority in the internationally oriented political advertisements during presidential campaigns. Of the external threats, Communism was most frequently mentioned as the major threat to the world and America.

ENDNOTES

¹ Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, MN: Addison-Wesley, 1969), 7.

² Richard W. Budd, Robert K. Thorp and Lewis Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications*, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 78.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The purpose of this study was to determine the content and strategy differences in the televised political commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues during the U.S. presidential campaigns. The researcher conducted a content analysis study that examined a total of 1399 television political commercials of the presidential general election campaigns from 1952 until 1996. This chapter is a summary of research methodology, a discussion of findings, and recommendations for future research.

Methodology

This study used content analysis of political commercials by candidates during the United States presidential campaigns. It is an example of a longitudinal trend study to provide information about the changes in the same population over time. The data were collected from the political advertisements by the presidential candidates during U.S. presidential campaigns. The population of the study was the television political commercials by presidential candidates during United States presidential elections. The research sample was the collection of political advertisements in the Political Commercial Archive in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. The study was limited to the advertisements used during the general election by the candidates of the two major political parties--Democratic and Republican.

The research questions were:

- a. What has been the total number of presidential campaign

commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues?

b. What has been the proportion of commercials that specifically focused on or mentioned international issues out of the total number of presidential political commercials?

c. What has been the tendency between the years 1952-1996?

d. What have been the differences in the proportion of commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues based on political party (Republican/Democratic)?

e. What has been the type of commercials content (issue- and image-oriented commercials)?

f. What has been the proportion of positive and negative commercials on international issues?

h. What has been the content of campaign commercials that focused on or mentioned international issues?

The null hypotheses in the study were:

H₀1. There is no difference in the proportion of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues based on the campaign year and the political party.

H₀2. There are no differences in the type of commercial content (issue- and image-oriented, positive and negative commercials) based on the campaign year.

H₀3. There is no difference in the content of commercials that focused or mentioned international issues based on campaign year, political party or their combination.

Discussion of Findings

The data show that 11% of the commercials in the presidential campaigns specifically focused on international and foreign affairs issues or concerns. Another 12% of the commercials mentioned

international and foreign affairs issues among others. Overall, about 23% of the commercials in the sample were found to mention some international and foreign affairs issues. Statistically significant difference was found in the proportion of commercials that specifically focused on international issues as well in those that mentioned international issues among other based on the campaign year. International aspects were most salient in the presidential campaign advertising from 1956 until the 1972 campaign, with a significant decline in 1976 followed by a relative increase in the 1980s. In the 1992 political campaign it was barely present and totally disappeared in the 1996 campaign ads.

Statistically significant difference in the proportions of internationally oriented commercials was found for each of the political parties based by the campaign year and between the Democratic and Republican parties. Null hypothesis one was, therefore, not supported. However, the data did not show any distinctive trend. In seven campaigns the international aspect was more emphasized in the Republican commercials and in four campaigns in the Democratic commercials. This difference, however, as well as the overall higher share of internationally oriented commercials by the Republicans (26% versus 20% by the Democrats) is in accordance with a general perception of the Republican party as to be stronger in international affairs and foreign relations.

The data also showed that issue commercials, focused on specific problems, candidate's position or stand, or policies, were used more often (52%) than those focused on candidate's qualifications, character, or personality in relation with foreign or international concerns (22%). More than a half of commercials (53%) that focused on or mentioned international concerns contained attacks on the opponent's policies,

qualifications, or personality. Statistically significant differences were found between issue- and image-oriented commercials based on the campaign year and between positive and negative commercials based on the campaign year. Null hypothesis two can be rejected. A distinctive pattern, however, was found in the issue vs. image category, where in all but one campaign (1980) political issues were more emphasized than the candidate's image. A similar pattern was also found in the positive vs. negative commercials category with the positive ads prevailing in all but one (1952) presidential campaigns.

Statistically significant difference was found between the content categories of the political commercials that mentioned international issues. Problems of peace and war were the top priority in the internationally oriented political advertisements during presidential campaigns. The commercials that emphasized candidates' qualifications or character were the second largest category. America's position in the world was the third category. Arms control ranked fourth followed by external threat to America, foreign aid and economic sanctions, international terrorism and international trade problems. Statistically significant difference was also found between the content categories based on the political party. Null hypothesis three can be, therefore, rejected.

Limitations

Limitations of the Sample

The sample used in this study was obtained from the Political Commercial Archive in the Department of Communications at the University of Oklahoma. Although the Archive is probably the largest collection of the presidential campaign advertisements in the United States, this is a convenience sample. It is less complete for some campaigns, especially the early ones, than for others. Moreover, it is difficult to assess the

whole population of the political commercials produced for the presidential campaigns as hardly any complete and exhaustive list of them can be found.

Limitations of the Method

This study used frequency count and Chi-square statistics to establish differences in the research findings. Although the sample of this study was initially fairly large--1399 commercials--only 321 of them fit into the category of those focused or related to international issues. With a wide array of international issues in the commercials and, subsequently, a large number of content categories, the number of entries in the contingency table would be too small to make valid statistical computations. Some issue categories were emphasized only in individual or few campaigns and, thus, they would not have any entries many cells of the contingency table at all. The data, therefore, had to be collapsed into fewer content categories that resulted in a higher degree of abstraction of the content of campaign advertising. Even after this, only three content categories had enough entries to apply statistical procedures in evaluating differences between these categories and their subcategories.

Moreover, a simple count of ads that fall in each issue category does not enable the researcher to reveal different and often opposite points of view of the candidates on these issues.

Limitations of the Procedures

A large number of commercials used as the sample in this study, required considerable amount of time to review and code them. Thus, only one coder was used in this study. The findings of the study, therefore, may be influenced by the coder's subjective judgments, even though the coder made an earnest effort to avoid any bias or prejudice when coding

the advertisements' content.

Limitations of Approach

Speaking about the truth and the power of appearance in influencing people's decisions and in assigning the proper value to their judgements, Socrates said:

If... our well-being depends upon this, doing and choosing large things, avoiding and not doing the small ones, what would seem to be our salvation in life? Would it be the art of measurement or the power of appearance? While the power of appearance often make us wander all over the place confused and regretting our actions and choices, both great and small, the art of measurement, in contrast, would make the appearances lose their power by showing us the truth, would give us peace of mind firmly rooted in the truth, would save our life. (Plato *Protagoras* 356d)

Bearing in mind the importance of measurement underscored by Socrates as the only safe way to establish the truth, the author undertook an earnest attempt to measure advertising efforts of presidential candidates to shape an advantageous agenda in the volatile fortunes of election campaigns. The author counted the commercial spots of the candidates in each of the various categories of the international domain and applied statistical procedures to the findings. However, the author should admit that quantitative data and statistical coefficients could hardly serve as the only real measure of salience that specific international problems and concerns had in the agenda of election campaigns. A qualitative study of the international aspect of political advertising in the U.S. is needed to complement this quantitative analysis. This study should analyze the advertising efforts of agenda-setting, priming and defusing in the context of particular campaigns.

Further, there is no complete and verifiable record of how many of these commercials were actually aired, how many times they were aired, and to what audiences. Some of the campaign commercials were never aired due to various reasons--insufficiency of campaign funds, insignificance

of issues they targeted, strategic, or ethical reasons. Campaigns often concentrate their advertising efforts in few states, important for the campaign outcome. The advertising, thus, can be shaped to appeal to voters in these key states rather than to the nation as a whole. And finally, the advertisements differ in their impact and effectiveness. Just one effective spot by a candidate may, therefore, influence voters' decision more than a score of less effective spots by the opponent on the same topic.

An archive of political commercials is, by itself, rather a collection of campaign artifacts than a true mirror of the diversity of their agendas. Moreover, political advertising itself not only sets up a public agenda, and the campaign agenda in particular, but it is also a reflection of those issues and concerns that are in the public agenda. Thus, if Socrates described the way men perceive the world, as from shadows cast across the cave wall before them which are just distorted images of the world outside the wall,¹ the author, when judging about the campaign agenda from a collection of campaign ads, found himself in a position of someone measuring the shadows of shadows. Nevertheless, with all its limitations and bearing in mind that no knowledge can be absolutely complete and exhaustive, the author believes that this study is a valuable contribution to the body of political advertising research, and agenda-setting research in particular.

Conclusions

The study showed that international and foreign affairs issues had been for almost four decades a major or the most important topic of the political advertising in the United States. Throughout this period, no advertising campaign by a major presidential candidate did ignore the international aspects. In the 1992 campaign the proportion of advertisements that mentioned international issues in the total number

of advertisements shrank to 8% and in the 1996 such commercials were totally absent.

The theoretical foundation of the study was the assumption that candidates in accordance with the agenda-setting, instrumental actualization, and priming and defusing theories, would try to emphasize some issues of the campaign advantageous for them trying to make them salient on the agenda or to show their awareness of them. They will also try to emphasize the issues where their opponent is more vulnerable. Alternatively, they would try to defuse and lower in significance those matters that may be problematic for them.

According to agenda-setting theory, by calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, campaign advertising can influence the standards by which political candidates are judged by voters. The advertising, however, not only is an attempt to shape voter's agenda, but is itself influenced by the voters' concerns and the real world events.

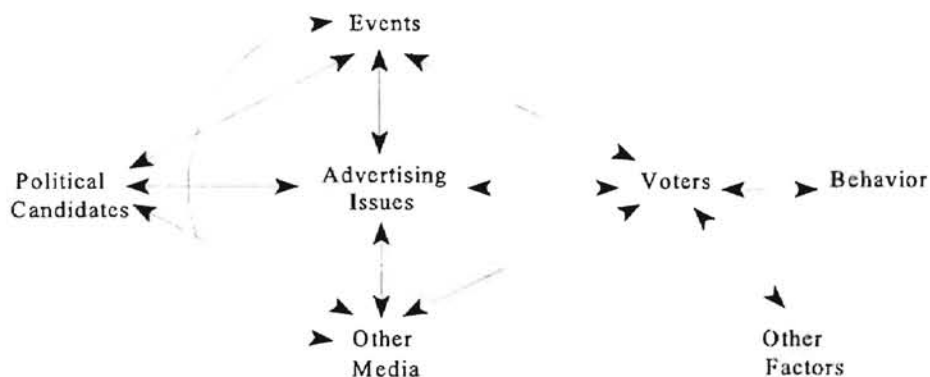


Figure 7. Political advertising in campaign agenda setting.

Fig. 7 depicts graphically the role and position of political advertising in setting the agenda of electoral campaigns.² This diagram underscores interdependence of several key factors of the process.

The underlying postulate of instrumental actualization theory is that the more frequently the voters are confronted with commercials supporting the point of view of one of the adversaries, the more likely they are to adopt that point of view and thus strengthen that position. Priming theory is based on the psychological assumptions that people do not pay attention to everything, their attention is highly selective, and that people notice only particular features of special consequence. Therefore, there is always only a limited number of themes, or standards, against which presidential candidates are measured. Television political advertising by candidates can increase the importance of specific issue, policy, or concern and make them important for voting choices.

Priming refers to the efforts of the media to isolate particular issues, events, or themes in the news as criteria for evaluating politicians. In the context of campaigns, priming means that the issues that receive more attention in advertising and other media are likely to determine voters' evaluations of the candidates. A conceptual counterpart of priming is defusing. Candidates who have problematic features, such as being seen as weak on some issues should find it obviously in their interest to defuse their shortcomings. They can do this either by lowering the overall salience of the topic to the public or by shortening the distance between the candidates to the point where the subject no longer affects the vote. Since all the above theories imply that candidates should give publicity to events which help their own side or damage the other side, the author's assumption was that different amount of attention to various issues and problems and different patterns of advertising content would signify candidates attempts to prime, defuse, or put on agenda specific issues or concerns.

The study, indeed, showed clear distinctions in what issues and

problems were emphasized in different campaigns and by different candidates. These differences can be attributed to the efforts of candidates to shape advantageous agendas for their electoral campaigns and serve as a confirmation of assumptions set up by the agenda-setting, instrumental actualization, and priming and defusing theories.

The study has also found a distinctive change in the international content of the political advertising throughout the period studied. It seems that the historical perspective traced in this study reflected not only the changes in the real world, but also the changes in its perception and interpretation by such a specific medium of mass communication as political advertising. For instance, until the 1970s it was easy to invoke through the media, and political advertising campaigns in particular, a sense of national unity, a common loyalty to American values and to the nation. The collapse of the Communist system in the late 1980s and the demise of the Soviet empire has removed one of the major arguments from the political advertisements rhetoric of the past decades: the conflict of the "free" and the "slave" worlds. At the same time, historical development has also brought some delusion in the concept of "democracy-as-progress" that for many years had been a major point in the rhetoric of American political advertising. There is no longer that much consensus about, or coherence to, the organizing principles of America's foreign policy.³ These changes have no doubt contributed to the made an impact on importance of international issues on the agenda of political advertising as well.

Recommendations

To explore the agenda-setting, instrumental actualization, priming and defusing through the political advertising in the domain of its international content in more detail, a new study is needed which should use a qualitative approach and examine the advertising content in

context of particular campaigns. A comparative study of international issues in advertising and other media--such as, for example, television news and newspaper articles--seems also to be of interest.

Further, this study can provide interesting material for some international comparisons. Although television spots have been a dominant part of U.S. elections for several decades, "American-style" television advertising has only recently gained significance in the political processes of Western European democracies and it is just emerging in the Eastern European countries. Several studies have been done so far comparing the differences and similarities of political advertising in the United States and European countries.⁴ A comparative cross-cultural study, thus, can be suggested comparing the international issues in the political advertising across countries.

ENDNOTES

¹Plato *The Republic* 7.514.

²Some basic elements of this scheme come from Shaw and Martin's study of group influence and media agenda setting. Donald L. Shaw and Shannon E. Martin, "The Function of Mass Media Agenda Setting," *Journalism Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 902-920.

³John Mueller, "Policy Principles for Unthreatened Wealth-Seekers," *Foreign Policy* no. 102 (Spring 1996): 22.

⁴Lynda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha, ed., *Political Advertising in Western Democracies: Parties and Candidates on Television* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995); Tinyoung Tak, "A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study on Political Advertising between America and Korea: A Content Analysis of Presidential Campaign Ads from 1963 to 1992." Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1993.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CODING SHEET

1. Commercial's number _____
2. Campaign year _____
3. Political party _____
 - (1) Democratic
 - (2) Republican
4. Commercial's length _____
 - (1) 30" or less
 - (2) 60'
 - (3) From 1' to 5'
5. Focus of the commercial _____
 - (0) Does not mention international or foreign affairs issues;
 - (1) Focused specifically on international/foreign affairs issues;
 - (3) Mentions international/foreign affairs issues among others.
6. Type of commercial's content--issue- or image-oriented commercial _____
 - (1) Issue-oriented commercial;
 - (2) Image-oriented commercial;
 - (3) Both issue- and image-oriented commercial;
 - (4) Cannot determine.
7. Type of commercial's content--positive or negative _____
 - (1) Positive commercial;
 - (2) Negative commercial;
 - (3) Both positive and negative commercial;
 - (4) Cannot determine.
8. Content of the commercial if international/foreign affairs issues are mentioned _____
 - (1) War and peace;
 - (2) Candidate qualifications;
 - (3) World problems, America's position in the world;
 - (4) Arms control, disarmament;
 - (5) External threat to America;
 - (6) Foreign aid, sanctions;
 - (7) International terrorism;
 - (8) International economic relations;
 - (9) Other (specify) _____
9. "War and Peace" category _____
 - (1) Keep peace, stop war;
 - (2) Peace by being strong;
 - (3) Opponent may start war;
 - (4) Negotiate for peace;
 - (5) Leadership for global peace;
 - (6) Mediate in world conflicts;
 - (7) Other (specify) _____

10. "Candidate qualifications/personality" _____
- (1) Candidate's qualifications;
 - (2) Candidate's character;
 - (3) Opponent's qualifications;
 - (4) Opponent's character;
 - (5) Cannot determine.
11. "World problems/America's position in the world"
- (1) Respect and influence in the world;
 - (2) Contain Communism in the world;
 - (3) Leadership for the global peace;
 - (4) Commitments to allies;
 - (5) Set up an example to the world;
 - (6) Choice of America's president as important to the world;
 - (7) Other (specify) _____

APPENDIX B

CODE BOOK

1. Commercial's number: the number of the commercial on the list of ads.
2. Campaign year.
3. Political party: specify the party affiliation of the candidate
 - (1) Democratic;
 - (2) Republican.
4. Commercial's length (commercials more than five minutes long are not included in this study):
 - (1) 30" or less;
 - (2) 60";
 - (3) From 1' to 5'.
5. Focus of the commercial: based on the audio and visual content of the commercial, specify the following
 - (0) Commercial that does not mention any international or foreign affairs issues or candidates' personality as related to foreign or international issues;
 - (1) Commercial that is specifically focused on international/foreign affairs issues or on candidates' qualifications as related to foreign or international issues without mentioning others;
 - (2) Commercial that mentions international/foreign affairs issues among other issues or as additional arguments.
6. Type of commercial's content--issue-/image-oriented commercial: commercial that primary stress the following:
 - (1) Policy issues, problems, or the candidate's concern or awareness of them;
 - (2) Qualifications or candidate's (opponent's) character, personality, human qualities as related to international or foreign affairs;
 - (3) Commercial that combines both of the above;
 - (4) Cannot determine.
7. Type of commercial's content--positive or negative: commercial which primary goal is
 - (1) To promote or emphasize candidate's policies, stand on issues, qualifications, or personality, or any combination of the above;
 - (2) To attack or criticize opponent's policies, stand on issues or awareness of them. Qualifications, personality, or any combination of the above;
 - (3) To present a comparison or juxtapose candidate's and opponent's policies or images;
 - (4) Cannot determine.
8. Content of commercial that mentions or focuses international issues (one commercial can be coded in many categories if applicable, but only once in each category)
 - (1) Any commercial that deals with problems of war and peace, either global or local;

- (2) Any commercial that emphasizes candidate's (opponent's) qualifications or character, personality, human qualities as related to international or foreign affairs;
- (3) Any commercial that emphasizes world problems as being of concern or America's position, influence, or respect in the world;
- (4) Any commercial that emphasizes issues of arms control, arms non-proliferation, or disarmament;
- (5) Any commercial that emphasizes external threat to America either military or non-military (ideological, economic, etc.);
- (6) Any commercial that deals with issues of economic aid to other countries or economic sanctions against other countries;
- (7) Any commercial that deals with the problems of international terrorism;
- (8) Any commercial that deals with international economic or trade relations (does not include policies of export/import, trade deficit, taxation, capital flow, or investments unless clearly resulting from international agreements, treaties or negotiations);
- (9) Others (specify) _____

9. "War and Peace" category (for the commercials coded (1) in the previous paragraph). One commercial can be coded in many subcategories if applicable, but only once in each subcategory.
- (1) Any commercial that emphasizes the need to keep peace, prevent or stop an ongoing war or military involvement;
 - (2) Any commercial that stresses the necessity to be strong to keep peace;
 - (3) Any commercial that emphasizes that the opponent is risky to start a war, military intervention, or send troops for military missions overseas;
 - (4) Any commercial that emphasizes the need to negotiate or compromise for peace;
 - (5) Any commercial that stresses America's leadership, responsibility, or quest for global peace;
 - (6) Any commercial that deals with bringing peace to local conflicts in which America's role or candidate's (opponent's) role is emphasized;
 - (7) Others (specify) _____

10. "Candidate qualifications/personality" (for commercials coded (2) in the paragraph 8). One commercial can be coded in many subcategories if applicable, but only once in each subcategory.
- (1) Any commercial that emphasizes candidate's qualifications, competence, skills, effectiveness, or experience in world or foreign affairs;
 - (2) Any commercial that emphasizes candidate's character, personal characteristics, personality traits, responsibility, integrity, or trustfulness as related to foreign and international affairs;
 - (3) Any commercial that emphasizes or attacks opponent's qualifications, competence, skills, effectiveness, or experience in world or international affairs;
 - (4) Any commercial that emphasizes or attacks opponent's character, personal characteristics, personality traits, responsibility, integrity, or trustfulness as related to foreign or international affairs;

(5) Cannot determine.

11. "World problems/America's position in the world" (for the commercials coded (3) in paragraph 8). One commercial can be coded in many subcategories if applicable, but only once in each subcategory.

- (1) Any commercial that deals with America's position, influence, leadership, or respect in the world;
- (2) Any commercial that emphasizes the need to contain Communism in the world either peacefully or by force or stresses the threat of Communism to the world (this category does not include issues of domestic Communism);
- (3) Any commercial that stresses America's role, leadership, or initiative to achieve or keep global peace;
- (4) Any commercial that emphasizes the need to protect, help, or not to betray America's allies;
- (5) Any commercial that emphasizes the need to set up an example to the world to follow in economy, democracy, freedoms and civil rights, or other fields;
- (6) Any commercial that stresses the importance of American presidency or the choice of America's president to the world;
- (7) Others (specify) _____

2

VITA

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