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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTION IN TELEVISED POLITICAL ADVERTISING: PRESIDENTIAL SPOTS, 1960-1996

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

JAMES STEVEN O'GEARY
Norman, Oklahoma
2000

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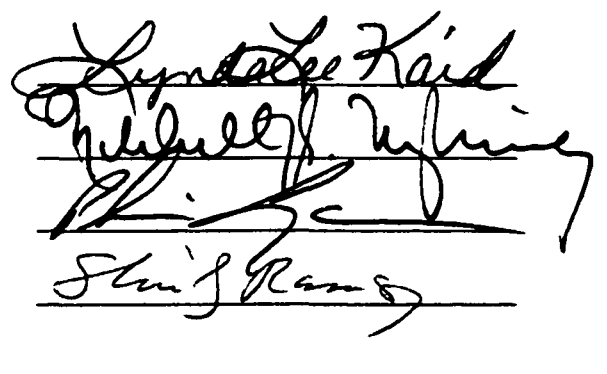
THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTION IN TELEVISED POLITICAL ADVERTISING: PRESIDENTIAL SPOTS, 1960-1996

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

BY



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ABSTRACT

Through computerized lexical analysis of 1,209 televised political commercials aired by the Democratic and Republican party's presidential nominees during general elections from 1960 to 1996, this study discerns which words thought to elicit emotional responses from audiences are present in these political messages. Quantifying the verbal content of these ads, using DICTION 4.0, yields substantive data about the nature of emotional appeals in televised political advertising. Findings reveal that the use of emotion-evoking language, a continual feature of presidential campaign commercials, has decreased since 1960. Findings also suggest that 50% of the political spots analyzed are characteristic of Agres' *wheel of emotions*. Results indicate significant differences between the use of emotional language in televised political advertising and whether a candidate for president of the United States is a challenger or an incumbent, whether an ad is positive or negative in tone, and whether an ad is issue or image focused.

The Language of Emotion in Televised Political Advertising: Presidential Spots, 1960-1996

Chapter 1

Introduction

> Citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for meaningful democracy.
>
> -Noam Chomsky

Television is the primary source of news and information about politics in the United States (Diamond & Bates, 1988; Graber, 1997; Hallin, 1992), and therefore plays a central role in the electoral process. Consequently, politicians increasingly rely on the medium to communicate with the public (Aldrich, 1980; Bartels, 1988; Shyles, 1983; Wayne, 1992). The dominance of television has resulted in one of the most significant changes in American politics to date. Electoral success is now largely contingent upon a candidate's use of the medium (Paletz, 1999).

Televised political advertising is a dominant form of discourse between candidates and citizens (Diamond & Bates, 1988; Kaid, 1981; Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Kaid &

Holtz-Bacha, 1995a,b). In fact, based on wide-ranging research and study, Kaid (1996) asserts that electronic advertising is the most important form of communication between candidates and voters. Televised political spots are a distinctive subset of electronic advertising that merits investigation. Political commercials act not only as a source of historical record, but they also provide valuable insights into the communication of cultural values (Sayre, 1994).

The goal of political advertising is persuasion. Therefore, these messages can be considered ecologically valid examples of persuasive messages (Chaudhuri & Buck, 1995). As defined by Andersen (1971), "persuasion is a communication process in which the communicator seeks to elicit a desired response from his [or her] receiver" (p. 6). Candidates attempt to design advertising appeals that attract support. Evidence indicates that persuasive messages frequently fulfill their persuasive objectives when a receiver's emotions are stirred (Arnold, 1985).

The escalating influence of commercial advertising that employs emotional appeals on behalf of political candidates led Kern (1989, 1993) to affirm that "a new political communication process, or 'New Mass Media Election' emerged in the 1980s..." (p. 133). Important to

commercial advertising appeals are the concepts of *referential* advertising and *wheel-of-emotions* advertising. Employing these two concepts, emotionally charged advertising messages are crafted on behalf of political candidates. A key component of the New Mass Media Election is advertising that is rhetorically emotional (Kern, 1993). Facets of televised political advertising such as emotion deserve careful scrutiny.

Social scientists have long studied political messages disseminated via the mass media. A significant portion of this research focuses on political advertising. The nucleus of the political advertising literature is presidential campaign commercials. Scholars view presidential campaigns as "our national conversations" (Denton, 1998, p. xv). The televised political commercial is the preferred communication device for modern-day presidential candidates (Jamieson, 1996). "Political science and communication research suggests a powerful match between television as a vehicle for emotional persuasion, and the levels of low information and involvement typical of people most likely to be watching" (Newhagen & Reeves, 1991, p. 201). Within this low-involvement environment, commercials present the viewer with content that triggers emotional responses

(Reich, 1995). The potential exists for voters' impressions of candidates to be affected. Therefore, the ways in which presidential candidates choose to present themselves to the American people via television commercials warrants study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze emotional appeals discernible through the language of televised political advertising. Specifically, this study analyzes the language of televised presidential campaign commercials and ascertains to what extent words believed to evoke emotional responses from audiences are present. Furthermore, this investigation provides insight into the use and evolution of emotion-evoking language in presidential campaign commercials from 1960 through 1996. This research compares and contrasts the verbal content of positive and negative television ads and image and issue television ads by searching for words that are considered to be emotion-evoking stimuli for eight specific emotions: four positive emotions (trust, hope, pride, reassurance) and four negative emotions (guilt, anger, fear, and uncertainty). In so doing, this investigation seeks to determine if Agres' (as cited in Kern, 1989) *wheel-of-emotions* commercial ad form exists

in televised political advertising. This study also explores the similarities and differences between incumbent and challenger uses of emotion-evoking language in political spots. It is hoped that this investigation contributes to scholarly research examining emotional appeals in political advertising and helps scholars reach a better understanding of this aspect of persuasion.

A review of germane literature follows, further developing the rationale for this investigation. Six research questions are proposed. Subsequently, the methodology intended to answer these questions is explained. Finally, the results and discussion sections provide analysis of the findings.

Chapter 2

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the ascent of television as the principal forum for national dialogue. West (1997) concurs stating that "after World War II, television emerged as the advertising medium of choice for political candidates" (p. 2). According to Thomas and Pika (1997), television is the chief source of presidential campaign information for most Americans, and has been since 1952. "In the 20 years from 1968 to 1988 television became increasingly central to the conduct of presidential campaigns" (Hallin, 1992, p. 5). Clearly, television plays a key role in defining how our republic elects its president.

Television News

In the United States, television news is perceived to be a highly credible and trusted source of information (Cundy, 1986). Since 1963, Americans have consistently named television as their primary and most believable news source (Nimmo & Combs, 1990; Thomas & Pika, 1997). Almost two-thirds of the American people rely on television for their news about the world (Roper Organization, 1987).

In recent years, television news coverage of presidential politics and elections has diminished considerably. In 1996, news coverage of the presidential campaign by the major television networks declined between 40% and 50% from 1992 levels (Denton, 1998; Lichter, Noyes, & Kaid, 1999). Research also indicates that the length of the average candidate sound bite on network nightly newscasts is on the decline. In an analysis of TV news coverage of presidential candidate speeches, Kendall (1993) finds that reporters replace the words of candidates with words of their own, thereby diminishing the ability of candidates to communicate with voters via free media. Adatto (1993) reports that journalists are responsible for the "shrinking sound bite" and concludes that television news coverage of elections has become journalist-centered.

Studies by Hallin (1992) and Lichter, Noyes, and Kaid, (1999) confirm this trend toward shorter presidential candidate sound bites on television newscasts. Hallin's investigation (1992) of network evening news broadcasts spanning the presidential election years from 1968 to 1988, finds that the average sound bite declined from a high of 43.1 seconds in 1968 to a low of 8.9 seconds in 1988. During the 1992

presidential campaign, the average length of candidate sound bites declined to 8.4 seconds (Lichter, Noyes, & Kaid, 1999). In 1996, the average shrunk to 8.2 seconds, leading Lichter, Noyes, and Kaid (1999) to remark that "the 1996 campaign offered no improvement in the ability of voters to hear the candidates' own messages without the networks' filter" (p. 6).

These findings suggest that the importance and significance of televised political advertising increases as candidate sound bites decrease. According to Kendall (1993), as candidates' verbal expressions become irrelevant to journalists, candidates find other outlets through which they can communicate with voters. Campaign advertising is the one outlet that is directly and completely controlled by the candidates (Kaid, 1981).

Television Advertising

Advertising is a basic component of television in the United Sates, as commercials finance the medium's output. More than 98% of American households have television and six out of ten of these households own two or more sets (Nielsen Media Research, 1993). While daily newspaper circulation has declined sharply since 1960 (Kern, 1989), television viewership has risen (Trent & Friedenberg, 1995). Americans typically watch 30 hours of

TV a week, 1,560 hours per year, encountering approximately 37,822 commercials each year (Pratkanis & Aronson, 1999). Television viewers in the United States are therefore accustomed to commercial messages.

Advertising is an impersonal message that is paid for and controlled by the sponsor and disseminated via mass media (Cook, 1992). Advertising effects are the responses elicited in people as a result of exposure to an ad (Chaudhuri & Buck, 1995). According to Packard (1957), advertising is a powerful persuader. The premise of advertising is that words and images change behavior. Apparently, advertisers believe these messages have considerable impact, as over $50 billion a year is spent on advertising in this country (McGuire, 1991). Advertising expands into all aspects of American life, including the functioning of our democracy. Whereas product advertising exerts political influence by reflecting society's values and beliefs (Schudson, 1984), political advertising attempts to influence politics directly.

Televised Political Advertising

Televised political advertising is a form of persuasion that is nearly 50 years old. The first major use of televised political spots or "polispots" was

during the 1952 Eisenhower-Stevenson presidential race (Barkin, 1983; Diamond & Bates, 1988; Jamieson, 1996; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 1995b; West 1997). The "Eisenhower Answers America" commercials revolutionized the way presidential candidates get elected (Trent & Friedenberg, 1995). Since 1952, the use of televised political advertising has grown in significance. Today, the televised political spot is the dominant form of presidential campaign communication (Diamond & Bates, 1988; Kaid, 1981) and plays a major role in electing government officials, especially, U. S. presidents (Devlin, 1995). "The television 'spot' is the haiku of political thought" (Biocca, 1991a, p. xi).

Kaid (1981) defines political advertising as "the communication process by which a source purchases the opportunity to expose receivers through mass channels to political messages with the intended effect of influencing their attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors" (p. 250). Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (1995a) broadened the definition to include "…all moving image programming designed to promote the interests of a party or candidate" (p. 2). Televised political advertising is paid media. Consequently, sponsors (usually a political

candidate or party) maintain control of these mass-produced messages (Kaid, 1981).

Significance, Effects, and the Utilitarian Value of Polispots

Emphasizing the perceived importance of TV spots in our national conversations, the 1996 presidential campaign involved more extensive use of televised political advertising, which appeared earlier in the campaign process (Trent, 1998). During the 1996 presidential campaign, the two major party candidates, Clinton and Dole, in conjunction with the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee respectively, spent more than $176 million on television advertising (Devlin, 1997; Kaid & Tedesco, 1999). Consequently, the 1996 presidential election was the most expensive in American history (Kaid & Tedesco, 1999) and continued the trend of ever increasing campaign expenditures for spot advertising (Devlin, 1993; Devlin, 1995; Shyles, 1983).

In 1956, Eisenhower and Stevenson combined to spend roughly a third of their campaign budgets on broadcast advertising (Anderson, 1980). According to Anderson, in 1980, the presidential candidates allocated more than half of their funds to broadcast advertising. Today,

roughly two-thirds of a presidential contender's campaign budget is spent on television advertising (Graber, 1997; Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996). Television spots are considered important tools in presidential elections. According to Kolbert (1992), "every advertising dollar spent represents a clue to a campaign's deepest hopes and a potential revelation about its priorities" (p. A21). Because televised political advertising is a significant campaign expense, candidates design spots to deliver messages in concise, dramatic ways (Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996).

Types of effects.

The significance of televised political advertising is distinguished by more than simply the vast amounts of money spent on it. Televised political advertising affects the functioning of our democracy by impacting the attitudes, opinions, and votes of citizens (Faber, 1992; Joslyn, 1981; Kaid, 1981). Numerous research studies document the power of this type of election communication to affect cognitions (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Hofstetter & Buss, 1980; Kaid, 1976; Ottati, Fishbein, & Middlestadt, 1987; Patterson & McClure, 1976), attitudes (Cundy, 1986; Meadow & Sigelman, 1982), and behaviors (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994; Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, & Sheinkopf, 1973;

Hofstetter & Buss, 1980; Kaid & Sanders, 1978; West, 1994). More specifically, findings indicate that political commercials influence awareness, knowledge, agenda salience, and election outcomes (Faber, 1992). Consequential research focuses primarily on advertising effects.

Voters rely on televised political spots for information and, consequently, develop candidate constructs (Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996). Patterson and McClure (1976) assert that televised political commercials are, message-for-message, more effective communicators than product ads or televised news stories. While television news tends to focus on the horse race aspects of the campaign, political spots focus on issues and candidate attributes (Graber, 1997; Hofstetter & Zukin, 1979). Hofstetter and Zukin (1979) find that 85% of the political commercials aired during the 1972 presidential election provided campaign issue information. The issue content of nightly network television news stories was only 59% to 76%, depending on the network. Kern (1989) finds that televised political advertising provides three times as much issue information as television news coverage of presidential campaigns. This research confirms Patterson and McClure's

(1976) findings that TV ads supply viewers with most of their information on candidate issue positions. Campaign commercials raise political cognition more than television news (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Schleuder, McCombs, & Wanta, 1991). Hence, people actually learn more about political issues and candidates from television ads than from television news.

Research also indicates that political commercials impact voting intentions (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994; Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, & Sheinkopf, 1973; Faber & Storey, 1985; Kaid & Sanders, 1978: West, 1994) and voter turnout (Hofstetter & Buss, 1980). Kaid and Sanders (1978) suggest that following exposure to televised political advertising, the likelihood of voting increases. In addition, televised political advertising may overcome partisan selective exposure (i.e., the tendency of people to expose themselves to information with which they are most likely to agree) (Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, & Sheinkopf, 1973).

Clearly, the study of political advertising and its effects is well established. Research demonstrates that several contingent conditions influence the affects of televised political advertising. Political interest, political knowledge, level of involvement, level of the

election, audience motivations, partisanship, and the type of ad involved mitigate the influence of televised political advertising (Faber, 1992; Garramone, 1983; Hofstetter, Zukin, & Buss, 1978; McClure & Patterson, 1974).

Paletz (1999) asserts that there are three main reasons why political advertising is essential to politicians. First, candidates can disseminate their messages without interruption, interpretation, or analysis by reporters. Secondly, advertising can be targeted to particular segments of the population (e.g., soccer moms, retired persons, evangelical Christians) via different media buys (e.g., choice of station, airtime, and program placement). Finally, an advertising campaign that is deployed as part of a candidate's larger media strategy can be quite effective. Kern (1993) affirms that high level political campaigns have become adept at using the news media and political advertising in tandem. This integration of campaign communication centers on disseminating a single, coherent message that mingles issues with candidate character (Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996).

Image and issue distinctions.

The televised political ad is the primary channel through which candidates and their advisers attempt to foster carefully crafted images of the candidate in the minds of viewers. Sabato (1981) states that "…candidate advertisements…are perhaps the most precisely and carefully crafted part of a modern campaign. Nothing has been left to chance; every aspect has been included for some purpose…" (p. 111). According to Buss and Hofstetter (1976), "campaign advertising is a form of political propaganda that is designed to maximize the best features of one's own candidate and campaign, or the worst features of the opposition candidate and campaign, or both" (p. 367).

Image ads contain references that reveal a candidate's personal traits (Biocca, 1991b; Kaid & Sanders, 1978). Some scholars maintain that candidate image information is one of the most important factors in voter decision-making (Markus, 1982; Nimmo & Savage, 1976). Shyles (1984) asserts that candidate image characteristics may be more important, and thus more influential, than candidate issue stances, as political issues vary with each election. In one of the earliest studies of candidate image, Tucker (1959) finds that the

projection of positive personality traits via political advertising garners votes. The image characteristics most commonly represented in televised political advertising include leadership, competence, experience, honesty, trust, calmness, activity, intelligence, independence, friendliness, concern, responsiveness, strength, determination, perseverance, vigor, purpose, and altruism (Joslyn, 1980; Nimmo & Savage, 1976; Shyles, 1983).

To more fully understand the ways in which candidates portray themselves in televised political advertising, Kaid and Davidson (1986) investigated candidates' "videostyles." The three elements of a political spot that constitute videostyle are verbal content, nonverbal content, and video production techniques. Through their analysis of televised spots produced for senate campaigns, Kaid and Davidson (1986) report that incumbents and challengers use different audio and video techniques in their TV commercials. Whereas incumbents tend to produce longer spots that use more announcer voiceovers, more testimonials, more formal dress and emphasize competence, challengers are more likely to look directly into the camera and talk to viewers, dress casually, and use negative attack ads.

Kaid and Davidson (1986) assert that these message variables influence candidate images.

Camera angles also impact viewers' perceptions of candidates. Research findings indicate that with the use of frequent cuts, political ads can elicit emotional responses from viewers, which can reinforce an image of the featured candidate and may improve recall (Kaid & Davidson, 1986). According to Lang (1991) visual recall of TV ads is related to emotional valence (i.e., negative or positive), as negative commercials stimulate greater recall than do positive commercials. Faber (1992) is of the opinion that this may explain why some of the most vivid images from past presidential campaigns stem from emotion-evoking ads (e.g., "Daisy Girl;" "Willie Horton;" "revolving door").

Televised political advertising is often berated for its unequivocal attempts to influence voters (MacNeil, 1968; Wyckoff, 1968). Central to this recurrently raised argument is the claim that political commercials focus on candidate images, reducing the importance of campaign issues, thus impeding thoughtful discussion and voting (Kaid, 1991). However, research indicates that televised campaign commercials are a useful and effective way of

providing citizens with considerable candidate issue information (Faber, 1992).

Campaign issues are generally defined as any information concerning specific policy positions associated with elective office or topics of public concern (Faber, 1992; Kaid & Sanders, 1978). Issue ads are composed of statements concerning future policy action or issue stances (Biocca, 1991b). Numerous investigations affirm that issue references are common in televised spots (Buss & Hofstetter, 1976; Joslyn, 1980; Patterson & McClure, 1976). Analyzing the political messages of the 1972 presidential campaign, Patterson and McClure (1976) report that 70% of the televised political spots contained issue references. Of these spots, 42% focused primarily on campaign issues, while 28% contained copious amounts of information about these issues. Studying the same election, Buss and Hofstetter (1976) find that 90% contained some issue information. Clearly, a sizeable percentage of televised political advertising contains campaign issue information.

Previous and subsequent research supports these findings (Joslyn, 1980; Shyles, 1983). Joslyn (1980), employing a convenience sample of presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional campaign spots, asserts

that televised political advertising is primarily issue-oriented albeit lacking in substantive policy positions of candidates. Exposure to political advertising increases voter's familiarity with the candidates, permits them to compare candidate issue stances (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995), and raises citizens' evaluations of the candidates (Kaid & Sanders, 1985).

Shyles (1983) reports that presidential campaign spots not only express the issue concerns of the sponsoring candidate but also reflect the concerns of the public. In those ads in which campaign issues are stressed, candidates tend to focus on only those issues they feel most fervent about, usually choosing to concentrate on one issue per ad (Kern, 1989; Hofstetter & Zukin, 1979).

Research indicates that issue ads enhance citizen evaluations of candidates more than image ads (Kaid, Chanslor, Hovind, 1992), producing more positive attitudes toward candidates and generating greater interest in voting (Thorson, Christ, & Caywood, 1991). Conversely, image ads produce greater recall from viewers (Kaid & Sanders, 1978).

Considerable attention is given to issue versus image content of televised political advertising.

Underlying much of this research is the contention by some that issue information is more important to citizens as they decide for whom to vote. However, as delineated above, televised political advertising contains both candidate image and campaign issue information (Jamieson, 1996; Joslyn, 1980; Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996), and voters seem to learn both issue and image information from political spots (Faber, 1992). However, voters differ in their intentions to learn about issue and image characteristics from political messages (Vancil & Pendell, 1984). For example, audience motivations lead to differences in viewers' abilities to recall issue information from spots, but not image information (Garramone, 1984a). Kaid and Sanders (1978) and Meadow and Sigelman (1982) discovered that issue ads are more effective at changing viewers' images of candidates than image ads. Nonetheless, several studies indicate that candidate image is the strongest predictor of voter preferences (McLeod, Glynn, & McDonald, 1983; Natchez & Bupp, 1968; Nimmo & Savage, 1976).

Although some scholars question the reliability of classifying ads as either "issue ads" or "image ads" (Biocca, 1991b), other researchers make structural distinctions (Lang & Lang, 1959; Patterson & McClure,

1976). Still others posit that issues are important image building devices (Boiney, & Paletz, 1991; O'Keefe & Sheinkopf, 1974; Rudd, 1986) and are frequently used as such (Denton, 1982; Sabato, 1981). Rudd (1986) documents a candidate's use of issues in televised political commercials for the purpose of developing a particular image. Consequently, the division between image and issue advertising is increasingly blurred and many researchers no longer view these two concepts as dichotomous but as points on a continuum (Davis, 1981; Johnston, 1991).

Types of televised political ads.

Research indicates that different types and styles of political ads impact viewer assessments of candidates (Brownstein, 1971; Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Meadow & Sigelman, 1982). The ad format used most often in presidential campaigns to assist with creating an impression or feeling about a candidate is the talking-head ad. In these advertisements a candidate appears to speak directly to viewers about the candidate's issue positions, while demonstrating conviction, trust, competence and other personal qualities. By emphasizing particular personal characteristics, spot ads prime viewers' attitudes (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982). In presidential races, the ad's

purpose is to convey the impression that the candidate is capable of being president.

Various other types of ads used extensively during presidential elections include person-in-the-street ads, documentary ads, testimonials, and negative attack ads (Devlin, 1995; Paletz, 1999). Person-in-the-street ads depict real people enthusiastically endorsing the sponsoring candidate or maligning the opponent. Documentary ads, also known as biographical ads, present leadership accomplishments of the sponsoring candidate, often using visual images of the candidate demonstrating leadership qualities. Testimonial ads feature prominent people, such as entertainment personalities, other politicians, and family members, speaking on behalf of the sponsoring candidate.

Today, televised political advertising increasingly involves the use of negative attack ads (Kaid, 1994; 1997). Prior to the 1992 Clinton-Bush presidential contest, roughly 30% of commercials in presidential campaigns were negative (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). In the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, the use of negative TV advertising soared (Kaid, Chanslor, Roper, & Tedesco, 1993; Devlin, 1993; Kaid, 1997). The reason for this escalation is due in large measure to the fact that

negative ads are effective (Garramone, 1984b). In fact, there is considerable evidence that "when evaluating 'social stimuli,' negative information carries more weight than positive information" and "negative information seems better able than positive to alter existing impressions and is easier to recall" (Jamieson, 1992, p. 41). According to Newhagen and Reeves (1991), the degree to which the negative emotions of fear, anger, and disgust are contained in an ad determines the speed with which viewers accurately recall the message.

Kaid and Johnston (1991) distinguish between negative TV spots and positive TV spots by the emphasis placed on the candidate sponsoring the ad and his or her opponent. Whereas negative commercials focus on the opposition, positive commercials focus on the sponsoring candidate. Negative ads are defined as attack or refutation messages and positive ads are generally defined as bolstering messages (Kaid & Davidson, 1986). Positive ads focus on the strong character and accomplishments of the sponsoring candidate, while negative ads attack the opponent, the opponent's image, the opponent's positions on issues, and/or the opponent's political party (Garramone, 1984b; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991; Kahn & Geer, 1994; Surlin & Gordon,

1977). A combination ad employs both positive and negative appeals.

Gronbeck (1985) identifies three categories of negative political advertising. These are the implicative ad, which contains an innuendo about an opponent without use of a direct attack; the comparative ad, which includes a clear comparison between the candidates; and the assaultive ad, which involves a direct, personal attack of an opponent. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) rename these the implied comparison ad, the direct comparison ad, and the direct attack ad, so that each name defines what the ad does. Garramone (1985) adds a fourth category, the refutation or rebuttal ad. These ads refute claims made in an opponent's commercials.

Empirical evidence suggests that negative political advertising can have significant impact on perceptions and beliefs, especially for people who are less involved and less informed about politics (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). Attack ads negatively impact the image of the targeted candidate (Merritt, 1984), which is the intent of the sponsor. Negative spot advertising can erode a targeted candidate's support within his or her own political party and among their traditional constituency (Kaid & Boydston, 1987).

In general, negative spots are considered more damaging to the attacked candidate than to the attacker (Kaid & Boydston, 1987). However, a boomerang effect can result for the sponsoring candidate (Garramone, 1985). If the attack is of a personal nature, these negative spots result in greater backlash for the sponsoring candidate (Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton, & Cole, 1990).

Roddy and Garramone (1988) posit that negative spots are more effective when the message involves an issue attack. Consequently, negative political advertising frequently concentrates on issues (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). Candidates often use negative spots in an attempt to have campaigns focus on issues that they believe enhance their election chances (Nugent, 1987). Furthermore, Hagstrom and Guskind (1986) indicate that negative spots present greater issue clarity than do positive spots.

Challengers tend to produce more negative TV advertising than do incumbents, although vulnerable incumbents produce considerable negative spot advertising (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). Kaid and Davidson (1986) indicate that a small percentage of incumbent spots are negative while almost half of a challenger's TV ads are negative. More recent research shows that the use

of negative advertising is on the rise for both incumbents and challengers, with negative ads outnumbering positive ads. Advertising strategies of incumbents and challengers are now overlapping (Kaid, Chanslor, Roper, & Tedesco, 1993). It is interesting to note that people indicate that they dislike negative TV advertising. However, research demonstrates that they retain and recall the information presented in negative spots better than they do for positive spots (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1989; Newhagen & Reeves, 1991).

Negative political advertising tends to be most persuasive for acknowledged supporters of the source candidate and least persuasive for low involvement or independent voters (Faber, 1992). Furthermore, negative political advertising affects politically active people the most, as they appear to develop stronger negative feelings toward the targeted candidate (Garramone, 1985).

Basil, Schooler, and Reeves (1991) substantiate that the effects of negative and positive televised political ads differ depending on the criterion for effects. Findings demonstrate that political spot ad effectiveness depends on the ability of the commercial to interact well with surrounding TV spots. Political spots have greater impact on voting intentions when the ad's valence is the

same as accompanying commercials. However, the findings indicate that ad recall is enhanced when political spots contrast with the surrounding context, especially negative contexts.

Clearly, televised political advertising influences voters' impressions of candidates, even prominent, well known aspirants (Kahn & Geer, 1994). Through televised political advertising candidates define themselves to the electorate by providing information on their backgrounds, articulating their accomplishments, explaining their positions on issues, criticizing opponents, and responding to criticism, while at the same time demonstrating strengths of character and personality (Trent & Friedenberg, 1995). Candidates also use TV spots to cast negative images of their opponents.

Undoubtedly, televised political advertising performs many functions and serves various purposes during election campaigns, for candidates and voters alike. TV advertising plays a significant role during presidential campaigns and "is arguably the most important forum of discourse in contemporary American elections" (Ansolabehere, Behr, & Iyengar, 1991, p.116).

Critics argue, however, that most televised political advertising seems bent on turning complex

issues into emotion-laden appeals. According to Paletz (1999), the most effective political spots exploit the feelings, beliefs, and prejudices of viewers. McGinniss (1969) contends that Americans typically fail to put forth the effort to understand politics or political issues, and as such, "emotions are more easily aroused, closer to the surface, more malleable" (p. 38).

Emotion

Candidates and their media handlers clearly seek to use arresting phrases and eye-catching images in political spots in an attempt to sway opinions and votes. Aristotle is credited with developing a comprehensive theory of persuasion that still holds favor today. This theory established three components of persuasion: *logos* (rational evidence), *ethos* (source credibility), and *pathos* (the dimension of emotionality) (Jorgensen, 1998; Kennedy, 1991). *Logos* consists of logical proof based on sound reasoning, with the persuasive force generated from deductive and inductive logic (Jorgensen, 1998). *Ethos* consists of ethical proof and is dependent upon the listener's perception of the speaker's knowledge, enthusiasm, and trustworthiness to establish its persuasive force (Jorgensen, 1998). Speakers rely on

pathos to persuade listeners through appeals to feelings (Jorgensen, 1998).

In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle (trans. 1954) explains that people act on feelings and thoughts, reacting more fervently when feeling sad, happy, angry, afraid, excited, guilty, outraged, disgusted, envious, contemptuous, compassionate, and so on. According to Aristotle, whatever the targeted emotion, such appeals encourage listeners to act, motivated by new feelings and opinions. He believed that human emotions should be "appropriate to the situation - felt toward the right individual, under the right circumstances, and in the right amount, being neither too violent or too calm" (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984, p. 6).

Greek and Roman rhetoricians recognized the importance of emotions in ruling human behavior. Aristotle believed that rational argument is the one legitimate means of persuasion, but recognized that we are emotional creatures, certain to be swayed by emotion (Cooper, 1932). Although, emotion sways people more easily, logic is viewed as a superior component of persuasion (Jorgensen, 1998).

John Stuart Mill and other proponents of classic democratic theory argue that it is the free flow of ideas

in the search for truth and the rationality of man that sustain the democratic process (Kelley, 1960). "The 'free marketplace of ideas' is an indispensable condition for citizens of a democratic community to exercise intelligently their political role as decision makers" and consequently, "there is no substitute for practical reason" (Regan, 1986, p. 100). Haiman (1958) postulates that, in a democracy, political discourse should affirm the human ability to reason logically. Kaid (1996) states that "if voters are to make rational choices about leaders and policy issues, they must have access to information which is true and accurate, unambiguous, unclouded by emotion, and which therefore enhances, rather than undermines, the decision-making process" (p. 130).

Scholarly investigation (Kern, 1989, 1993) suggests that emotional appeals are frequently employed in contemporary political discourse. "Emotional appeals, used ethically, have the potential to realize great change for the betterment of society: however, such knowledge can also be abused for selfish gain" (Jorgensen, 1998, p. 418). Political advertising is most decidedly biased. Candidate-controlled messages that are emotionally charged in selfish attempts to provoke

reactions from viewers, all in an effort to win elective office, does little to nurture the power of reason. The fostering of individual decision making is paramount to keeping democracy alive. "Man is a highly rational being whose voting decisions are, or ought to be, the result of careful weighing of important public issues" (Kaid & Sanders, 1978, p. 60).

Emotionality is the least understood of Aristotle's three interrelated dimensions of persuasion (Jorgensen, 1998). Even though considerable research examines nonverbal communication of emotion, further explication of verbal communication of emotion is necessary (Sypher & Sypher, 1988).

Since Aristotle's day, a great deal has been written about human emotions, much of it published in the scholarly literature of various disciplines, particularly psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and linguistics. However, it has been exceedingly difficult to reach consensus on a definition of emotion. For example, according to Fehr and Russell (1984), "everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition" (p. 464). Even Aristotle and Plato debated the nature of emotions.

The following definition, adopted from Oatley and Jenkins (1996) but derived from Frijda (1986), is gaining acceptance. They state:

> An emotion is usually caused by a person consciously or unconsciously evaluating an event as relevant to a concern (a goal) that is important; the emotion is felt as positive when a concern is advanced and negative when a concern is impeded. The core of an emotion is readiness to act and the prompting of plans; an emotion gives priority for one or a few kinds of action to which it gives a sense of urgency - so it can interrupt, or compete with, alternative mental processes or actions. Different types of readiness create different outline relationships with others. An emotion is usually experienced as a distinctive type of mental state, sometimes accompanied or followed by bodily changes, expressions, actions. (p. 96)

Frijda's (1986) working definition of emotions states:

> *Emotional phenomena* are noninstrumental behaviors and noninstrumental features of behavior, physiological changes, and evaluative, subject-related experiences, as evoked by external or mental events, and primarily by the significance of such

events. An *emotion* is either an occurrence of phenomena of these three kinds or the inner determinant of such phenomena…. (p. 4).

Abstractly, an emotion is defined as "the agitation of the passions or sensibilities often involving physiological changes. Any strong feeling, as of joy, sorrow, reverence, hate, or love, arising subjectively rather than through conscious mental effort" (Morris, 1979, p. 428). Aristotle (trans. 1954) writes that the emotions "are all those feelings that so change [people] as to affect their judgments." Thus, an emotion is more than an inner feeling, it has an *outer* reference, to a situation, person, object, or state of affairs (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984).

For the purposes of this investigation, an emotion is defined as a unique and specific reaction to educing stimuli (Isen, 1984), the end product of an emotional appeal (Jorgensen, 1998). Emotional appeals, as viewed from a source-oriented perspective on communication, are deliberately used by a source to produce a change in the values, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, or behaviors of a receiver, whereas from the receiver's point of view, emotional appeals are seen as "elements of the message signifying or conveying intensity, concern, or need"

(Jorgensen, 1998, p. 406). Emotional appeals can be verbal, nonverbal, or both, possibly consisting of visual images or objects, or traditional language based appeals (Jorgensen, 1998). Frequently, the emotional content of ads is predominantly verbal.

"Emotion is the first language of us all" (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996, p. 162). Socialization determines how we respond to and manage emotions. Emotions are at the core of human mental and social life and are most often caused by cognitive evaluations that can be conscious or unconscious (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1998). Each type of evaluation brings on a distinct signal that travels through mental processors, producing an emotional feeling (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). Typically, during an emotional experience, people are aware of their emotional feelings and of some aspects of the evaluation that brought it about (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1998). Emotions, at least in Western cultures, are viewed as thought processes that affect us strongly (Jenkins, Oatley, & Stein, 1998).

One of the key components of emotion is "intentionality" (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984), as the decision to use emotional appeals is both a conscious and strategic choice on the part of the user (Jorgensen, 1998). Thus, emotional appeals are purposely included in

persuasive messages with the intent of affecting audience attitudes, the result of which Dillard and Wilson (1993) term the "message-induced" effect. The message-induced effect is an emotion or emotional state that arises in direct response to a persuasive message. On the other hand, the situation or condition existing prior to reception of the persuasive message is known as the message-irrelevant state.

Since the days of Aristotle and the Stoics, theorists of emotion have tried to list the *basic* emotions, those emotions inherent to human beings (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984). For example, Descartes believed that there are six basic human emotions: wonder, desire, joy, love, hatred, and sadness. Allport (1924) is considered the first experimental investigator to put forward a set of emotion categories. Today, theorists continue to ponder the question, "What are the basic emotions?"

Wierzbicka (1994) questions the idea of there being a "finite set of discrete and universal basic human emotions..." (p. 134). However, she notes that every language forces its own classification upon human emotional experience. She calls for scholars to recognize the relevance of emotion concepts that are lexicalized in

other languages and to create a universal lexicon of emotion.

Although emotion researchers actively debate whether or not emotions should be considered discrete, dimensional, and/or prototypical experiences, numerous scholars believe emotions can be viewed as such and emotion categories are increasingly being recognized by scholars (Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986). Davitz (1969, 1970) and Frijda (1970) assemble comprehensive lists the breadths of which are unmatched in terms of possible human affective responses. Davitz's (1969) analysis of the meaning of 50 emotion terms judged representative of a wide and varied range of emotional states derives from the linguistic material of more than 1000 written reports and a large number of personal interviews. Isolating 556 words and phrases that report human experiences associated with various emotional states, Davitz provides a basic vocabulary of emotion in the form of a dictionary that establishes both denotative and connotative meanings of emotion words.

Averill (1980, 1986) lists some 500 emotional terms. Smith and Ellsworth (1985), intent on identifying the underlying dimensions of emotions, identify 15 primary emotions. Other emotion researchers (Izard, 1977;

Woodworth, 1938), from the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology, posit that there are roughly seven basic or primary emotions (anger, fear, disgust, shame, guilt, sadness, and joy). Plutchik (1980) agrees that emotions are discrete, dimensional, and/or prototypical experiences but differs over which emotions are most fundamental. In identifying as many as 24 "different" emotions, Plutchik (1980) asserts that from the basic emotions other emotions are built, each determined by variations in intensity, similarity, and valence. This theory reinforces Descartes position that all other emotions are composed of the basic emotions (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984). Oatley and Johnson-Laird, (1998) contend that the four most common basic emotions are happiness, anger, sadness, and fear, because they are acknowledged at the conceptual level by most peoples of the world.

Other scholars (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1982; Ekman, Sorenson, & Friesen, 1969; Izard, 1977; Osgood, 1966; Tomkins, 1962, 1963), believing the face to be an exceptionally rich source for affect display, consider the basic emotions to be those manifested by explicit facial expressions. Ekman and Friesen (1975) maintain that the basic emotions are happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear.

Izard concurs but adds guilt, shame, distress, contempt, and interest.

Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1982) reveal that the various typologies of affect have frequently produced different categories of emotion because researchers with different theoretical viewpoints have used different stimulus domains and different methods. Those emotions not recognized as basic are frequently considered combinations or blends (Frijda, 1986). According to Davitz (1976), "emotional meanings obviously are communicated by verbal, as well as nonverbal, means" (p. 157).

Some scholars link basic emotions to discrete action tendencies (Arnold, 1960; Plutchik, 1980). According to Frijda (1986), the basic, primary, elementary, or fundamental emotions can be characterized in terms of action readiness. "Anger is the urge to attack or, more properly, the urge to regain freedom of action and control. Fear is the urge to separate oneself from aversive events…" (p. 72). Thus, emotions are acknowledged by action readiness change.

According to Jorgensen (1998), everyday persuasion attempts rely heavily upon the use of emotional appeals to achieve persuasive goals. Emotional appeals influence

opinions and reinforce attitudes (Burgoon, 1989; Lulofs, 1991). There can be little doubt as to why emotional appeals are used in advertising.

Televised Commercial Advertising and Emotion

Emotional content is frequently used in television messages to attract and maintain attention, to entertain, and to persuade (Lang, Dhillon, & Dong, 1995). Television commercials and news and entertainment programming often evoke emotional responses in viewers (Lang & Friestad, 1993). In fact, considerable research of television content demonstrates that emotional messages are remembered far better than non-emotional messages (Lang, 1991; Lang & Friestad, 1993; Lang, Newhagen, & Reeves, 1996; Newhagen, 1998; Newhagen & Reeves, 1991; Thorson & Friestad, 1989).

Historically, advertising was a verbal/textual medium that mainly employed logical appeals in an effort to establish brand superiority over competitors (Holman, 1986; Martineau, 1971). To distinguish a product from other brands, marketers eventually looked to communicate a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) (Moriarty, 1991). The USP was developed by Rosser Reeves, the creator of the "Eisenhower Answers America" advertising series of the 1952 presidential campaign (Jamieson, 1996). It was

during the 1950s that advertising began to appeal more and more to people's emotions (Caudle, 1989). Marketers began to view attitudes as emotional constructs that can be formed or altered by emotional appeals (Reich, 1995). Today, emotion is a key element of consumer behavior (Holbrook, 1986), and thus is a strategic tool of persuasion. To persuade effectively, television advertising must: 1) capture the attention of the audience, 2) establish a distinctive and desirable identity for the product, service, idea, or person it is promoting, 3) differentiate this product or person from competitors, and 4) provide the audience with a motive to buy the product or vote for the candidate sponsoring the ad (Reich, 1995).

Most commercial advertising is based on the assumption that people buy products for emotional reasons, not cerebral ones (Bogart, 1967). Evidence suggests that by generating emotional responses in viewers, marketers can increase the probability of respondent recall (Page, Thorson, & Heide, 1990), as emotional or affective appeals can influence memory (Thorson & Friestad, 1989). Thus, emotional ads are more likely to be remembered. Batra and Ray (1983) suggest that affective product advertising is effective because

people tend to pay more attention to it. Affect enhances processing, leads to increased positive judgements of the advertised message, and facilitates greater recall (Batra & Ray, 1983). Myriad product advertising investigations support these findings.

Emotion, advertising, and communication researchers (Ellis, Thomas, & Rodriguez, 1984; Lang, 1985; Lazarus, 1984; Zajonc, 1984) classify message appeals according to emotions. Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing (1986) suggest that political advertising message appeals can be grouped into one positive emotion (hope), and three negative emotions (fear, anger, pity). Most germane to this investigation are studies by Batra and Ray (1986), Holbrook and Westwood (1989), and Aaker, Stayman, and Vezina (1988). These studies attempt to identify the emotions (or feelings) that are most relevant to advertising, so as to develop a better understanding of advertising's ability to generate or evoke emotions. Batra and Ray (1986) and Aaker, Stayman, and Vezina (1988) develop affect typologies specific to commercial advertising.

As summarized by Batra and Ray (1986), prior research demonstrates that the cognitive response paradigm pioneered by Greenwald (1968) and used in persuasion research (Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981;

Wright, 1980) is applicable to the study of advertising, as findings suggest that product advertising generates responses from message recipients (Wright, 1980). Categories of cognitive responses include support arguments, counter arguments, and source derogations (most often coded as consumer distrust of the ad) (Wright, 1973); ad-execution responses (Lutz & MacKenzie, 1982); and neutral, irrelevant thoughts (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979). Similarly, Batra and Ray (1986) assert that advertising can also be expected to "evoke moods and feelings that go beyond the evaluative reactions toward the commercial typically coded as source bolstering or source derogation statements" (p. 234-235). "…In addition to making us like and admire the execution, 'affective' ads can also make us happy, sad, warm, fearful, angry, and so on" (Batra & Ray, 1986, p. 235). Emotional ads stimulate strong emotions, both positive and negative, in television viewers (Moore & Harris, 1996).

In response to Lutz's (1985) proposal that the determinants of consumer attitudes toward an ad are not all cognitively based reactions to an advertising stimulus but also include affective responses as well, Batra and Ray (1986) merge five psychological typologies and three commercial advertising typologies to establish

thirteen categories of emotion. Their investigation, one of the first to explore emotions (feelings) evoked by product advertising, terms responses to emotion-evoking stimuli "affective responses" (ARs). Affective responses are not evaluative responses to an ad, but represent the emotions evoked by the ad (Batra & Ray, 1986). The evocation of emotions by stimuli is most likely involuntary and automatic (Izard, 1977; Zajonc, 1980). Batra and Ray's findings suggest that certain ARs can have significant influence on consumer attitudes. Their analysis does not, however, assess whether the effect of ARs is moderated by the motivational involvement of the receiver in the processing of the message.

In an attempt to apply Plutchik's (1980) typology of emotional responses to commercial advertising, Holbrook and Westwood (1989), employ eight categories of emotions arranged around pairs of polar opposites (accept-disgust; fear-anger; joy-sadness; anticipation-surprise) to assess the ability of 54 product advertisements to elicit emotional responses from audience members. Finding that numerous emotions were evoked, Holbrook and Westwood conclude that Plutchik's typology may indeed be applied to advertising. In this vein, Aaker, Stayman, and Vezina (1988) employ a multistage process resembling that used

in advertising research (Wells, Leavitt, & McConville, 1971) and in psychology (Davitz, 1969, 1970) to establish an extensive list of feelings that are likely to be evoked by exposure to advertising. A total of 655 feelings are identified and then reduced to a set of 180 feelings considered most likely by respondents to be induced by product advertising. This list was divided into positive feelings and negative feelings. Cluster analysis was then used to create small groups of feelings that produce unique responses (Aaker, Stayman, & Vezina, 1988). Aaker, Stayman, and Vezina's investigation produced a set of 31 emotional (feeling) responses deemed most applicable to commercial advertising, some of which had not been assessed in previous research efforts. Findings indicate that attitudes toward an ad can be influenced by the emotions elicited by an advertising message, suggesting that attitudes toward the sponsoring candidate of an ad may be affected in a similar fashion. In an investigation of public service advertisements, Bagozzi and Moore (1994) document findings similar to those of Aaker, Stayman, and Vezina (1988).

Product advertising makes use of classical conditioning approaches, rather than logical reasoning, in that messages seek to persuade audiences through use

of learned associations between emotional stimuli and a product (Jorgensen, 1998). Consequently, the concepts of referential advertising are important to commercial advertising. Referential advertising maintains that "positive and negative emotions associated with a symbol or sound can be transferred, or 'referred' to a product (or candidate) through the symbols and sounds that already have affective meaning to the viewer" (Kern, 1993, p. 133). Research findings indicate that pairing products with positive emotion-evoking stimuli is effective (Batra & Ray, 1986; Cohen & Areni, 1991).

The *wheel of emotions.*

Developed in 1984 by Stuart J. Agres, the *wheel of emotions* was devised in an effort to better understand how we organize our feelings and how advertisers can best tap into our thoughts (Kern, 1989). Applied to politics, *wheel-of-emotions* advertising "begins with symbols and sounds relating to uncertainty or even fear, and moves across an arc of emotions to a positive resolution at the end in the person of the candidate" (Kern, 1993, p. 133). Thus, in *wheel-of-emotions* advertising, tensions are initially escalated through rhetorical devices that evoke negative emotions in viewers, as these ads use symbols and sounds that already have meaning for audiences.

Subsequently, the ad provides resolution to the elicited negative emotions in the form of the product, which is coupled with positive emotions. In terms of political advertising, the candidate emerges as the resolution to the problem.

Agres (as cited in Kern, 1989) exposed the emotions appealed to in commercial advertising and classified these appeals as positive or negative. According to Agres, the most effective television commercials feature emotional messages that move across the *wheel of emotions*, from negative emotions at the outset to positive emotions by the end of the commercial. This communication paradigm is believed to produce better learning and recall. The *wheel of emotions* expounds on the old product advertising adage "get 'em sick, then get 'em well," which in political advertising is comparable to "buy me and you will overcome the anxieties I have just reminded you about" (Kern, 1989, p. 30). Thus, the concept is based on the premise that the product - or, in this case, a candidate - can resolve the problem or problems presented in the ad.

Televised Political Advertising and Emotion

The burgeoning influence of commercial advertising appeals on political campaigns caused Kern (1989, 1993)

to differentiate between elections held before 1980 and those held during the 1980s and afterward. Kern (1989) maintains that during the political campaigns of the 1980s "the world of political advertising absorbed its commercial counterpart and became as one" (p. 23). As a result, "a new political communication process, or "New Mass Media Election'" emerged in the 1980s, replacing the "'Old Mass Media Election' of the 1960s and 1970s" (Kern, 1993, p. 133). Fundamental to the New Mass Media Election are the values of commercial advertising. The values of news and documentaries underlie Old Mass Media Elections.

Kern (1989, 1993) contends that New Mass Media Elections are the result of media consultant philosophies permeating contemporary campaigns, particularly candidate advertising and even news coverage of the elections. Concurring with Kern's assessment are Nimmo and Combs (1990) who state that many of the techniques employed in political advertising are derived from commercial marketing. Prior to Nimmo and Combs' (1990) and Kern's (1989, 1993) work, Patterson and McClure (1976) make reference to the fact that some presidential commercials bear a striking resemblance to many TV spots for nationally advertised consumer products and that these ads are typically aimed at people's sentiments.

One of the first studies to content analyze political messages in an effort to distinguish between emotional and rational appeals was conducted by Hartmann (1936). However, this study failed to note the types of emotional appeals employed. More germane to the current analysis is Kern's (1989) comprehensive typology of emotional message appeals consisting of nine positive and five negative emotions. Kern's examination of televised political commercials and philosophical statements of media consultants led to the development of the following.

Table 1

Positive Affect-Laden Appeals

compassion	-	sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it
ambition	-	urgency to get something done
nostalgia	-	yearning for the past
reassurance	-	the feeling that everything is okay; includes the feelings of comfort and satisfaction
trust	-	confidence in the candidate
intimacy	-	close association, contact, or familiarity with those on screen
hope	-	desire accompanied by an expression of or belief in a good future
national pride	-	elation arising from some activity, possession, or relationship connected with the nation
local pride	-	elation arising from some activity, possession, or relationship connected with the local area

Note: From 30-second politics: Political advertising in the Eighties (p. 74), by M. Kern, 1989, New York: Praeger. Copyright 1989 by Montague Kern. Reprinted with permission.

Table 2

Negative Affect-Laden Appeals

guilt	- culpability for offenses, past and present
fear (strong)	- a strong emotion caused by extreme anticipation or awareness of danger bordering on doom
fear (unpleasant)	- an unpleasant emotion caused by awareness of a threat
anger	- strong feeling of displeasure or antagonism, "get 'em mad"
uncertainty	- feeling of anxiety, uncertainty, or suspicion

Note: From 30-second politics: Political advertising in the Eighties (p. 95), by M. Kern, 1989, New York: Praeger. Copyright 1989 by Montague Kern. Reprinted with permission.

Of these fourteen appeals, Kern (1989) derives ten categories of emotional appeals from televised political advertising, five positive appeals (trust, hope, reassurance, and local and national pride) and five negative (guilt, anger, uncertainty, and strong fear and unpleasant fear). Of these ten categories, nine correspond with Agres' (as cited in Kern, 1989) *wheel of emotions*. Anger is not represented on the wheel. However, it is a recurring theme in televised political spots (Kern, 1989). These "get 'em mad" commercials seek to

rouse viewer anger at the opponent's intentions, issue positions, or previous actions. Anger, then, is an emotion that is relevant to this analysis.

Kern (1989) finds that televised political ads of the New Mass Media Elections evoke emotions or experiences, employ messages where the candidate is intermingled with an issue, rely on visual and aural effects, and try to associate a candidate with an affect-laden symbol that possesses meaning for viewers. And according to Trent and Friedenberg (1995), the trend to develop televised political advertisements that provoke strong emotional reactions continues into the campaigns of the 1990s. The result of this commercialization of mediated political discourse is an upsurge in the use of emotional campaign advertising (Kern, 1989, 1993).

Kern's (1989) findings indicating that televised political advertising frequently relies on emotional appeals, led to the assertion that "the *wheel-of-emotions* commercial ad form may well exist in the world of political advertising as well" (p. 75). Ads that combine both positive and negative emotions are indicative of the *wheel-of-emotions* commercial ad form. Employing the concepts of referential advertising and *wheel-of-emotions* advertising, commercially oriented, emotionally charged

advertising messages are crafted on behalf of political candidates. These ads try to trigger responses from viewers.

Kern (1989, 1993) and Patterson and McClure (1976) contend that televised political advertising is built on the assumption that people develop candidate preferences for emotional reasons, not rational ones. Analysis of presidential spot advertising in the 1992 campaign reveals just how prevalent the use of emotional appeals is. Kaid (1994) reports that 46.2% of all the ads created for the Clinton campaign appealed to viewers' emotions, while 56.3% of all the ads produced for Bush appealed to people's fears. Fear is often used as an activation strategy in negative spots (Jamieson, 1996; Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Third party candidate Perot aired numerous TV ads during the 1992 campaign, of which 52.6% appealed to human emotions.

In an earlier investigation of presidential campaign commercials that focused on the Aristotelian appeals of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, Kaid and Johnston (1991) indicate that 89% of all negative ads and 86% of all positive ads aired between 1960 and 1988 appeal to *pathos* (emotions). When coding for the dominant appeal contained in an ad, they report that emotional appeals (pathos)

prevailed in both negative (50%) and positive ads (45%). This predominance of emotional appeals also held true on a campaign-by-campaign basis.

Television is considered especially effective in helping political candidates forge personal connections with viewers, as it enables candidates to communicate with viewers in a personal way (Alger, 1989; Graber, 1984; Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996; Kern, 1989). According to Just, Crigler, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West (1996), candidates use TV spots to establish trust between themselves and the public and to break or prevent the establishment of bonds of trust between the public and the opposition candidates. "Television stimulates intimate relationships" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1983, p. 45).

The political spot, as with any segment of videotape, can be broken into distinct entities: specific words, sounds, nonverbal gestures, and static images (Biocca, 1991b). Each of these is expected to generate certain meanings in the minds of viewers, as every aspect of a TV spot is included for a definite purpose. Hence, television commercials are composed of numerous discrete elements. Of these, the study of words provides the most

obvious and straightforward way in which a candidate can communicate emotions.

Words

"Politics is talk" (Smith, 1990, p. vii; also see Denton, 1998, p. ix). Today, political talk in the United States increasingly involves the TV spot ad (Jamieson, 1996). Kaid and Davidson (1986) state that "when candidates use television to project themselves to voters, they engage in a form of pseudointerpersonal communication..." (p. 185).

If, as Denton (1998) asserts, "the essence of politics is 'talk'" (p. ix), then surely the essence of dialogue is "the word" (Freire, 1989, p 75). Words help us to define our world. We use words to create and transfer meaning. It is this process that interests communication scholars.

Words, and thus language, cannot exist without thought (Freire, 1989). Politicians do not choose their words dismissively. In fact, it is wholly apparent that they select words with great care. These words come to represent particular positions - most likely remembered as campaign promises (e.g., George Bush's "Read my lips. No new taxes."). The underlying premise of this study is that analysis of the words selected for inclusion in

televised political commercials by presidential candidates can divulge information about the features of televised political advertising. According to Berger (1972), even though we see before we can speak, we explain our world with words. Language is a key issue in emotion research (Harkins & Wierzbicka, 1997).

Langer's (1957) theory of language incorporates the concept of feelings. For Langer, meaning consists of feeling and conception, where symbols are tools of thought. We can trigger different thought processes, and ultimately feelings, by our choice and use of words. Through a *concept* (e.g., a word) a *conception* is created (i.e., an image created; a response stimulated) in the mind of the receiver (Langer, 1957). Consequently, meaning rests upon an individual's conception of the concept. According to Richards (1965), our reactions to and interpretations of stimuli are dependent upon prior knowledge and experiences. Advertisers, and apparently politicians, count on this. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) once wrote that "language is the armory of the human mind; and at once contains the trophies of its past, and the weapons of its future conquests" (Littell, 1971, p. 127).

According to Pei (1971), "the language of advertising comes at us in both spoken and written form" (p. 49). However, Kroker and Cook (1986) argue that television is a "pure image system" (p. 268). Conversely, Tony Schwartz (1973), a pioneer in political advertising, maintains that television is not a visual medium. He contends that once a visual image catches the eye, it is the sound that delivers the message. According to Schwartz, "the sound of speech, is the body language of the written word" (Rothenberg, 1989, p. 7). Schwartz believes that it is the received word that evokes emotional reactions from people. Alex Castellanos (Weiss, 2000), a Republican media strategist, concurs, stating that "good TV is not something you see, it's something you feel." This conviction is especially significant in an era that lauds the video image. Schwartz asserts that the most consequential aspect of recall in television advertising is not what is recalled after seeing a commercial but what is evoked while hearing the commercial.

Clearly, words have power, and word choices make a difference. Words are used to foster relationships between candidates and voters. For example, candidates frequently embrace the first-person plural "we" in this

effort to develop effective links with voters. Word choices shape perceptions and perceptions influence attitudes (Bernays, 1928).

Public dialogue is vital in an open, democratic society. Political commercials allow candidates to publicly establish self-identity. According to Cialdini, Finch, and De Nicholas (1990), the use of language to express emotions is central to the "indirect route" to self-presentation. As such, the language of presidential spots may reveal information about candidate self-presentation and divulge emotional themes and trends over time.

Investigation of affect-laden appeals is important, especially in a time of increasing voter alienation. Continued study of political advertising will better our understanding of the political communication environment, while hopefully benefiting the political process as well. Chaffee (1981) posits that television is the only source of political information for many citizens. Therefore, TV's potential for influence is enormous. If, as Sniderman and Tetlock (1986) assert, the great majority of citizens have limited knowledge and understanding of political ideas and details, the contents of political messages warrant extensive investigation. Research

indicates that less involved viewers learn more from political ads than those who are more involved and interested in the election outcome (Hofstetter & Buss, 1980; Hofstetter, Zukin, & Buss, 1978). At a time when citizens are less and less involved in politics and voting decisions reflect momentary opinions rather than true allegiances (Swanson & Mancini, 1996), the contents of political advertising becomes more and more important and should provide a coherent framework to assist scholars and citizens alike in understanding today's complex political environment.

Advertising need only grab people's attention for a moment to have an impact. It seems obvious then that those concerned with the future of our democracy recognize the importance of gaining a better understanding of the messages disseminated via political spots. "During election campaigns, single words can take on enormous importance" (West, 1997, p. 8). It is important to assess the ways by which the televised political commercial creates and transfers meaning. The systematic study of televised political advertising demands examination of verbal content. "Language tells us what features of an emotion are symbolically represented in awareness..." (Ekman, 1984, p. 330).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which televised political advertising contains words thought to evoke emotional responses from audiences. Specifically, this investigation examines all verbal copy (words) contained in the texts of 1,209 televised political commercials produced for the general election campaigns of 1960 through 1996 by the Republican and Democratic party nominees for president of the United States. According to Devlin (1995), the purpose of political spots is to not only define the candidates but "to evoke both positive and negative feelings in viewers and prospective voters" (p. 186).

Commercial advertising literature is replete with research that examines emotional aspects of ads. However, this research focuses primarily on the effects of emotional content on memory and attitudes without examining how emotion is communicated and without distinguishing between emotional content presented verbally and visually (Reich, 1995). Also, investigations of the evocation of emotions via language employed in television commercials are scarce. The current investigation looks to close this gap in the literature by providing insight into emotional components of

televised political advertising through the examination of the verbal content of the ads.

On the basis of a review of the literature, it is plausible and indeed appropriate for typologies of affect to be applied to televised political advertising. This study applies affect typologies to the texts of 1,209 presidential campaign commercials. Kern's (1989) categories of emotional appeals are used in this analysis, as is the work of emotion researchers Davitz (1969) and Plutchik (1980), who have examined the language of emotion and attempted to craft a comprehensive lexicon of emotions. Portions of Hart's (1984b, 1997) DICTION word lists supplement the emotion words used in this analysis.

Televised political advertising affects voting decisions (Faber, 1992). It is vitally important, then, that we fully understand all aspects of these messages. To paraphrase Smith (1990), we cannot effectively understand the ebb and flow of political life in the United States today without understanding the content of political advertising.

Most televised political spots are relatively simple messages (Faber, 1992). The current inquiry provides a

better understanding of what messages are being communicated in presidential political spots and the frequency within a given ad. By studying these political messages, inferences may be drawn about the nature of electoral choices and the importance of particular word choices and use of language.

According to Michael Deaver, the public relations practitioner who is credited with crafting Ronald Reagan's image, the American people just "want to sit in their living rooms and be entertained. They want 'feel good' and 'fuzz'…" (Weiler & Pearce, 1992). Clearly, media practitioners recognize the importance of emotional content in mass mediated political messages. Knowledge of the content of televised political advertising is of great importance. Understanding this content will be educative to the public and may lead to more informed individual and societal actions. As such, this study identifies emotional language of the televised presidential spot and seeks to answer the following six questions.

RQ1: To what extent are emotion-evoking words present in the televised political commercials of presidential candidates?

RQ2: Are the patterns of emotion-evoking language

representative of *wheel-of-emotions* theory?

RQ3: Has the use of emotion-evoking language in televised presidential campaign commercials increased over time?

RQ4: Are emotion-evoking words more likely to be present in the televised political commercials of challengers or incumbents?

RQ5: Do negative ads contain more emotion-evoking words than positive ads?

RQ6: Do image ads contain more emotion-evoking words than issue ads?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This investigation examines the particular verbal components of televised presidential campaign spots and ascertains which words thought to elicit emotional responses from audiences are present. A content analysis is used to count, categorize, and assess the words used in these political messages. The political ads from the presidential campaigns of 1960 through 1996 are analyzed.

Ads used in this investigation were obtained from the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma. The archive houses the most comprehensive collection of political commercials in the world (Kaid, Haynes, & Rand, 1996). Although commercials aired during the Eisenhower-Stevenson contests of 1952 and 1956, they are excluded from this analysis because only incomplete sets of ads are available. The Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma possesses nine ads supporting Stevenson's 1952 candidacy but it is believed that Stevenson did not sanction these ads; they did not run nationally. Also, the archive's set of Eisenhower's 1956 commercials consists of five-minute spots only and is thus not suitable for comparison with other years or

other presidential spots. As such, this study analyzes the most complete compilation of presidential advertisements available.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method highly evolved as a tool for mass-mediated message analysis and is one of the dominant communication research methodologies utilized today (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989; Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991). Communication content is the basis for inference as systematic counting reveals the characteristics of a text (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966). The crux of content analysis is quantification (i.e., the enumeration of communication phenomena). Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). Hart (1985) asserts that one of the advantages of using content analysis is that it "guards against the bias which so often results when something as volatile and emotional as politics is examined by something as volatile and emotional as a human being" (p. 101).

Many content analysts rely on computers as a more efficient and accurate means of studying texts,

particularly when examining sizeable texts (Sommer & Sommer, 1997). Studies that code for specific words, symbols, phrases, and numbers are especially well suited for computerized content analysis (Holsti, 1969). Therefore, this research technique is appropriate as the focus of this investigation is on the verbal content (the words) of political spots.

DICTION 4.0

This study employs the Windows-based microcomputer software package developed by Professor Roderick P. Hart, DICTION 4.0. This version supersedes the earlier mainframe-based program DICTION (Hart, in press). Hart (1984a, 1984b) designed DICTION to analyze the speeches of American presidents Truman through Reagan. It has also been employed by Hart (1984b) to examine the speeches of American business executives, religious leaders, social activists, and political candidates.

DICTION 4.0 is a vocabulary-based program that uses word-lists, referred to as dictionaries, to search texts for semantic features and verbal tone (Hart, 1984b, 1997, in press). These dictionaries act as sorting tools as they process submitted texts. Although DICTION 4.0 is equipped with 31 dictionaries that are designed to search a text for five qualities (certainty, activity, optimism,

realism, and commonality), a beneficial feature of the program is the user's ability to construct custom dictionaries (Hart, 1997).

Several factors support the decision to use computerized content analysis. First, the large number of commercials (N=1,209) to be analyzed and the vast quantity of verbal content contained therein make using a computer imperative. With the help of a computer, analysis can be performed with astonishing speed and accuracy, even when processing large bodies of text. Second, the use of computerized content analysis eliminates the possibility of bias as a particular word is either present or absent. Researcher subjectivity is greatly reduced. Lastly, computerized content analysis is more cost effective than hiring human coders. "Human coders are expensive and of questionable reliability" (Shapiro, 1997, p. 225). Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998) assert that computer programs employing dictionaries have the benefit of high reliability because "computers categorize only on the basis of their programs without human biases" (p. 186). For further explication of the benefits and advantages of using computerized content analysis see Hart (in press).

Factors contributing to the selection of DICTION 4.0 over other computer-based language analysis programs

include the ability of the user to build dictionaries (word-lists) that operate independent of the program's preinstalled dictionaries. A PC-based utility, DICTION 4.0 reads microcomputer ASCII (text) files. The user selects the desired input file on his or her computer and instructs DICTION 4.0 to search. No printed text material is required. No programming knowledge is needed. The program identifies texts' words according to the list of words contained in designated dictionaries (Hart, 1997) and produces a frequency of occurrences. DICTION 4.0 accepts verbatim transcripts of texts.

Another important feature is the program's ability to process an unlimited number of texts, analyzing 30,000 words in about 1 minute using a Pentium-based system (Hart, 1997). Moreover, DICTION 4.0 is capable of converting data output to a format readable by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS®) for Windows. DICTION 4.0, as was its forerunner DICTION (Hart, 1984a, 1984b, 1985), is expressly designed to analyze political messages, which will benefit additional research efforts.

The 4.0 version of DICTION inherited some of its predecessor's limitations. The context within which a given word is used cannot be analyzed (Hart, 1984b).

Also, DICTION 4.0 does not account for such subtle features of language as syntax, imagery, rhythm, and arrangement (Hart, 1984a, 1984b). Still, the huge quantity of verbal information that can be probed by computerized content analysis remains a great strength (Hart, 1984b, 1985). The strengths and weaknesses of DICTION 4.0 presented here are adapted from Hart (1997).

Current Analysis

Language analysis is the focus of the investigation as this study assesses the presence of words believed to evoke emotional responses from audiences. According to Hart (1998), "some of the most important political trends are best revealed at the lexical level" (p. 114). Whereas Hart (1984b), using DICTION, examined only the middle 500 words of a text when assessing presidential speeches, this investigation examines all the verbal content of each presidential advertisement analyzed.

Selection criteria

Employing DICTION 4.0, this inquiry applies computerized content analysis to the texts of 1,209 televised political commercials aired during the general election campaigns of 1960 through 1996 by the Republican and Democratic party nominees for president of the United States (see Table 3 for the total number of ads by

candidate for each election).[i] Traditionally, this campaign period runs from Labor Day through Election Day. Only ads 60-seconds or less in length that were authorized by the candidates or their respective campaigns were analyzed.

The principal advantage of political advertising is that candidates and their campaign advisers can control it (Devlin, 1995). Undoubtedly, candidates choose their words carefully and purposely. Therefore, in analyzing the language used in these commercials, it is imperative that only spots that were authorized by the candidates' campaigns be included. This investigation studies only those commercials that are 60-seconds or less in length that are available from the Political Commercial Archive and are identified as having been produced for use by the respective candidates' campaigns during general election campaigns. Third party candidate spots are not included in this investigation.

Although several ads are similar in content, there are no duplicates. Each spot is included only once. Information on the frequency with which each ad aired is unavailable from the archive. However, it is believed that the vast majority, if not all, of the ads included in this study aired. Nevertheless, each commercial

represents the verbal elements the candidates aimed to communicate to voters. Thus, whether an ad aired nationally or regionally, was shown numerous times or not at all is inconsequential to this research project.

Transcriptions

Transcriptions of the televised spots of the two major party presidential candidates of the last 10 general elections (Kennedy/Nixon, 1960; Johnson/Goldwater, 1964; Nixon/Humphrey, 1968; Nixon/McGovern, 1972; Carter/Ford, 1976; Reagan/Carter, 1980; Reagan/Mondale, 1984; Bush/Dukakis, 1988; Clinton/Bush, 1992; and Clinton/Dole, 1996) are analyzed in this study. Trained assistants compiled written transcripts of the verbal content of each spot. Employing the transcription model previously implemented by Ballotti (1997), specific labels are used to signify the speakers in each ad. The letter "A" identifies spot announcers and the letter "C" identifies candidates. The letter "O" signifies speakers other than a candidate or an announcer. Additionally, when people are speaking simultaneously, all verbal content is transcribed; each message is transcribed on a separate line.

After being checked for accuracy, each transcript is processed by DICTION 4.0. To be processed, transcripts

are converted into ASCII (text-only) format. Texts to be searched must be stored in program-defined directories and must carry the program-defined extension ".in" (e.g., C:\DICTION\TEXT\KENNEDY.IN).

Dictionaries

Customarily in content analysis, once the sample is established, categories are defined so as to investigate the unit of analysis, in this case, the political spot. However, since this study involves computerized content analysis of words, dictionaries supplant categories. Kern's (1989) ten categories of emotional appeals (trust, hope, reassurance, local and national pride, guilt, anger, uncertainty, and strong fear and unpleasant fear) constitute the dictionaries (variables) to be used in this analysis. However, the complexity of trying to differentiate between local pride and national pride makes it necessary to establish one dictionary for pride. Also, strong fear and unpleasant fear are combined to form one dictionary for fear. Consequently, eight custom dictionaries representing four positive emotions (trust, hope, pride, reassurance) and four negative emotions (guilt, anger, fear, and uncertainty) have been carefully assembled (in ASCII format). DICTION 4.0 requires that custom dictionaries be stored in the program's EXTRA

directory and carry the program-defined extension ".dic" (e.g., C:\DICTION\EXTRA\HOPE.DIC). Custom dictionaries are limited to a maximum of 200 words each.

Applying Davitz's (1969, 1970) research on the language of emotion and resultant lexicon, these eight dictionaries contain a list of key words that are considered emotion-evoking stimuli for the specific emotion, or label, represented by the dictionary. For example, the word "outraged" can be found in the dictionary labeled "Anger." In addition, the efforts of Plutchik (1980) and Hart (1984a, 1984b, 1985) supplements Davitz's work. Furthermore, synonyms of emotion terms, obtained from various thesauruses (Chapman, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 1999; Sutherland, 1997; Urdang, 1997), are incorporated into the dictionaries in an effort to extract more fully emotional language from the political spots. This multistage process resembles that of previous researchers, many of them listed here, (Aaker, Stayman, & Vezina, 1988; Averill, 1980; Davitz, 1969, 1970; Wells, Leavitt, & McConville; 1971) who toiled to establish comprehensive lists of emotion words. None of the words contained in the dictionaries is duplicated.

A panel of communication experts, consisting of scholars in rhetoric, mass communication, and political communication, helped analyze the list of words believed to communicate emotional meanings. Each expert, working independently, categorized words into one of eight dictionaries. Two panelists reached agreement on word classification 97% of the time, with all three experts agreeing 81% of the time. The words about which the panelists disagreed were excluded from this analysis.

Lexical analysis

The transcript of each presidential spot is processed separately, using the eight dictionaries to search the text for emotional language. DICTION 4.0 computes raw scores for each dictionary (emotion). These scores reveal how much or how little of each emotion is present in the ad, allowing for comparisons. The unit of enumeration is the frequency of occurrence.

Lexical analysis is conducted in this manner on the individual transcripts of each candidate's commercials by election year. Ads designated by the Political Commercial Archive as positive, negative, image, or issue are analyzed for emotional language content by ad type for the purpose of comparison to answer specific research

questions. Statistical tests are executed to test for significance.

Data Analysis

Once all texts are processed by DICTION 4.0, descriptive data analysis is completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS®) for Windows. To examine trends in the use of emotion words in presidential spots, frequencies for each of the eight emotions (trust, hope, pride, reassurance, guilt, anger, fear, and uncertainty) are obtained for each candidate by election year. Furthermore, to compare and contrast the use of emotion words by challengers and incumbents, including an incumbent party candidate such as a sitting vice president, cross tabulations are computed. Thus, chi-squares are used to test for differences in observed and expected frequencies. This procedure is also used to compare negative ads with positive ads and image ads with issue ads. To further illuminate differences between challenger and incumbent spots, the chi-square test for goodness of fit is computed for each emotion category (anger, fear, guilt, hope, pride, reassurance, trust, and uncertainty). The .05 significance level is used.

Table 3
Presidential Candidate Commercials for Each Election
(N=1,209)

Candidate	Year	Number of Commercials
Kennedy(D)	1960	60
Nixon(R)	1960	50
Goldwater(R)	1964	54
Johnson(D)	1964	25
Nixon(R)	1968	67
Humphrey(D)	1968	33
McGovern(D)	1972	44
Nixon(R)	1972	23
Carter(D)	1976	70
Ford(R)	1976	127
Reagan(R)	1980	181
Carter(D)	1980	102
Mondale(D)	1984	41
Reagan(R)	1984	73
Dukakis(D)	1988	44
Bush(R)	1988	33
Clinton(D)	1992	46
Bush(R)	1992	30
Dole(R)	1996	42
Clinton(D)	1996	64

Chapter 4

Results

Summary

Lexical content analysis that uses word occurrence as an indicator of emotional appeal, suggests an association between the use of emotional language in televised political advertising and whether a candidate for president of the United States is a challenger or an incumbent, whether an ad is positive or negative in tone, and whether an ad is issue or image focused. Analysis of 1,209 presidential campaign spots from the 1960-1996 general elections indicates that 1,140 (94%) of these texts contain emotional language. Hence, only 69 ads (6%) contain no emotion words.

Calculations of the kinds of emotion words (positive and negative) present within each presidential campaign commercial reveal that 608 ads (50%) are representative of Agres' *wheel of emotions*. In addition, results indicate that, from 1960 through the 1996 presidential election, the use of emotion-evoking language decreased over time. Findings also indicate that positive ads contain more emotion-evoking language than negative ads; issue ads contain more emotion-evoking language than image ads. More detailed analysis of results follows, as

findings concerning the six research questions are presented.

Presence of Emotion Words

Frequency counts, compiled by DICTION 4.0, reveal that 5,580 emotion words make up 4.2% of the 131,838 total words present in the analyzed ads, suggesting an affirmative answer to Research Question one that asked simply if political commercials contained emotion-evoking language. Taken at face value, this may seem an inconsequential percentage. However, if, as previous research suggests (Aaker, Stayman, & Venzina, 1988; Averill, 1980, 1986; Davitz, 1969; Plutchik, 1980; Wells, Leavitt, & McConville, 1971), particular words act as emotion-evoking stimuli, then 5,580 emotional appeals are contained in the language of 1,209 presidential campaign commercials analyzed during this investigation. Table 4 illuminates results of the lexical analysis, while Tables 5 and 6 display the results by emotion category.

Table 4
Word Content of Presidential Spots by Candidate

Candidate	Year	Commercials	Words	Emotion Words
Kennedy	1960	60	7,883	355
Nixon	1960	50	5,374	418
Goldwater	1964	54	7,912	276
Johnson	1964	25	2,216	63
Nixon	1968	67	8,309	421
Humphrey	1968	33	4,235	186
McGovern	1972	44	5,406	145
Nixon	1972	23	3,321	102
Carter	1976	70	8,885	360
Ford	1976	127	15,562	518
Reagan	1980	181	16,941	753
Carter	1980	102	11,515	448
Mondale	1984	41	3,345	148
Reagan	1984	73	7,432	360
Dukakis	1988	44	4,093	193
Bush	1988	33	2,929	146
Clinton	1992	46	4,482	150
Bush	1992	30	3,103	125
Dole	1996	42	3,888	178
Clinton	1996	64	5,007	235
Totals		1,209	131,838	5580
Overall mean per commercial			109	4.6

Table 5
Word Content of Spots by Positive Emotion Category

	Hope	Pride	Reassurance	Trust
Number of Words	1065	1671	729	612
% of Total Words	0.81	1.27	0.55	0.46
Total Positive Emotion Words				4077
% of Total Words				3.09

Table 6
Word Content of Spots by Negative Emotion Category

	Anger	Fear	Guilt	Uncertainty
Number of Words	324	652	65	462
% of Total Words	0.25	0.49	0.05	0.35
Total Negative Emotion Words				1503
% of Total Words				1.14

Of the 5,580 emotion words, 1,671 words (30%) are considered emotion-evoking stimuli for *pride*. Of all of the emotion inducing words employed by challengers and incumbents, pride-evoking words represent 31% and 29% of the total, respectively. Overall, pride exists in presidential spots at a frequency of 1.3 words per ad and is the most frequently elicited emotion.

Rhetorical appeals to *hope* comprise slightly more than 19% of the emotional language (1,065 words out of 5,580 emotion words) contained within the political spots analyzed. Within these campaign commercials, hope occurs at a frequency of 0.8. Furthermore, candidates use language to reassure viewers 13% of the time (729 words out of 5,580 emotion words). Reassurance occurs at a

frequency of 0.5 words per ad. Of the 5,580 emotion words present in the analyzed ads, 612 words (11%) are believed to evoke *trust* at a frequency of 0.5 words per ad.

Fear, the most common negative emotion (652 words/12%), occurs at a frequency of 0.5 words per spot, while *anger* words constitute 6% of the emotional language (324 words out of 5,580 emotion words). Anger occurs at a frequency of 0.4 words per ad. Presidential candidates use emotional language to appeal to *uncertainty* 8% of the time (462 words out of 5,580 emotion words). Uncertainty occurs at a frequency of 0.4. A rather dramatic finding is that presidential candidates are very unlikely to invoke feelings of guilt in their political spots. From 1960 through 1996, candidates used a total of 65 words associated with the emotion *guilt*. Overall, *guilt* words comprise 1% of all of the emotional language used in presidential spots. Within these spots, *guilt* occurs at a frequency of 0.05 words per ad. See summarized results in Tables 7 through 9.

Table 7
Mean Scores for Candidates' Use of Emotion Words

		Positive	Negative	Total
Kennedy/1960	M	5.067	0.850	5.917
	SD	3.344	1.087	3.651
Nixon/1960	M	7.260	1.100	8.360
	SD	4.149	1.389	4.776
Goldwater/1964	M	3.500	1.611	5.111
	SD	2.296	2.032	3.219
Johnson/1964	M	1.560	0.960	2.520
	SD	1.474	0.978	1.782
Nixon/1968	M	5.179	1.104	6.284
	SD	3.821	1.519	4.299
Humphrey/1968	M	3.788	1.848	5.636
	SD	3.080	2.033	3.983
McGovern/1972	M	2.068	1.227	3.295
	SD	1.371	2.044	2.593
Nixon/1972	M	3.043	1.391	4.435
	SD	2.722	1.777	3.382
Carter/1976	M	3.829	1.314	5.143
	SD	3.852	1.699	4.230
Ford/1976	M	3.113	0.969	4.079
	SD	2.963	1.652	3.525
Reagan/1980	M	2.503	1.657	4.160
	SD	2.514	1.678	2.998
Carter/1980	M	3.324	1.069	4.392
	SD	3.064	1.344	3.249
Mondale/1984	M	2.366	1.244	3.610
	SD	2.165	1.445	2.914
Reagan/1984	M	3.986	0.945	4.932
	SD	3.182	1.039	3.732
Dukakis/1988	M	3.534	0.955	4.386
	SD	3.038	1.077	2.998
Bush/1988	M	3.485	0.939	4.424
	SD	2.181	1.059	2.359
Clinton/1992	M	2.065	1.196	3.261
	SD	1.890	1.360	2.005
Bush/1992	M	2.867	1.300	4.167
	SD	2.360	1.822	3.281
Dole/1996	M	3.100	1.175	4.275
	SD	4.851	1.238	5.593
Clinton/1996	M	2.016	1.656	3.672
	SD	1.628	1.144	1.800

Table 8
Presidential Candidate Use of Positive Emotions

Candidate/Year	# of Spots	Hope Words	Pride Words	Reassurance Words	Trust Words
Kennedy/1960	60	79	97	66	62
Nixon/1960	50	148	109	78	28
Goldwater/1964	54	51	73	42	23
Johnson/1964	25	4	16	14	5
Nixon/1968	67	79	159	63	46
Humphrey/1968	33	31	56	18	20
McGovern/1972	44	19	36	25	11
Nixon/1972	23	23	31	6	10
Carter/1976	70	41	118	46	63
Ford/1976	127	65	168	87	75
Reagan/1980	181	103	201	110	39
Carter/1980	102	109	143	50	37
Mondale/1984	41	35	47	10	5
Reagan/1984	73	110	125	35	21
Dukakis/1988	44	42	88	12	9
Bush/1988	33	33	42	11	29
Clinton/1992	46	26	51	8	10
Bush/1992	30	13	38	4	31
Dole/1996	42	15	58	19	38
Clinton/1996	64	39	15	25	50
Totals	1,209	1065	1671	729	612
Overall mean per spot		.88	1.38	.60	.50

Table 9
Presidential Candidate Use of Negative Emotions

Candidate/Year	# of Spots	Anger Words	Fear Words	Guilt Words	Uncertainty Words
Kennedy/1960	60	3	27	1	20
Nixon/1960	50	10	20	4	21
Goldwater/1964	54	26	13	4	44
Johnson/1964	25	4	11	0	9
Nixon/1968	67	16	29	0	29
Humphrey/1968	33	11	33	3	14
McGovern/1972	44	8	20	4	22
Nixon/1972	23	6	6	2	18
Carter/1976	70	20	32	8	32
Ford/1976	127	23	69	6	25
Reagan/1980	181	63	165	12	60
Carter/1980	102	15	40	5	49
Mondale/1984	41	11	31	0	9
Reagan/1984	73	10	43	0	16
Dukakis/1988	44	12	22	4	4
Bush/1988	33	5	13	1	12
Clinton/1992	46	15	20	6	14
Bush/1992	30	3	20	0	16
Dole/1996	42	26	10	5	7
Clinton/1996	64	37	28	0	41
Totals	1,209	324	652	65	462
Overall mean per spot		.26	.53	.05	.38

Wheel-of-Emotions Theory

By individually processing the transcripts of each of the 1,209 ads, DICTION 4.0, employing both the four positive emotion dictionaries (hope, pride, reassurance, and trust) and the four negative emotion dictionaries (anger, fear, guilt, and uncertainty), assembled data on the presence of words believed to evoke each of these eight emotions. DICTION 4.0 calculated and reported the summed total of emotion words contained within each ad that are categorized in one of the eight dictionaries. Results were then probed for ads containing both positive and negative emotional appeals. Of the 1,209 presidential campaign commercials analyzed, 608 (50%) are representative of Agres' *wheel of emotions* (Table 10), in that both positive and negative emotional appeals, in the form of language, are present in the ads (RQ2).

According to Agres' *wheel-of-emotions* theory (as cited in Kern, 1989), the most effective television commercials feature emotional messages that move across the *wheel of emotions*, from negative emotions at the outset to positive emotions by the end of the commercial. Although DICTON 4.0 is designed to search a text for individual words, which are listed in discrete word-lists or dictionaries, the text analysis program is not

equipped to report the precise location of these words within a given text. Therefore, through inference, findings indicate that 50% of the ads analyzed during this investigation are characteristic of Agres' *wheel of emotions*.

Table 10
Political Spots Characteristic of the *Wheel of Emotions* (N=1,209)

Candidate	Year	Total Spots	Ads Characteristic of *Wheel of Emotions*
Kennedy(D)	1960	60	31
Nixon(R)	1960	50	27
Goldwater(R)	1964	54	29
Johnson(D)	1964	25	9
Nixon(R)	1968	67	34
Humphrey(D)	1968	33	20
McGovern(D)	1972	44	17
Nixon(R)	1972	23	10
Carter(D)	1976	70	35
Ford(R)	1976	127	37
Reagan(R)	1980	181	101
Carter(D)	1980	102	51
Mondale(D)	1984	41	20
Reagan(R)	1984	73	45
Dukakis(D)	1988	44	20
Bush(R)	1988	33	20
Clinton(D)	1992	46	22
Bush(R)	1992	30	13
Dole(R)	1996	42	18
Clinton(D)	1996	64	49
Totals		1,209	608

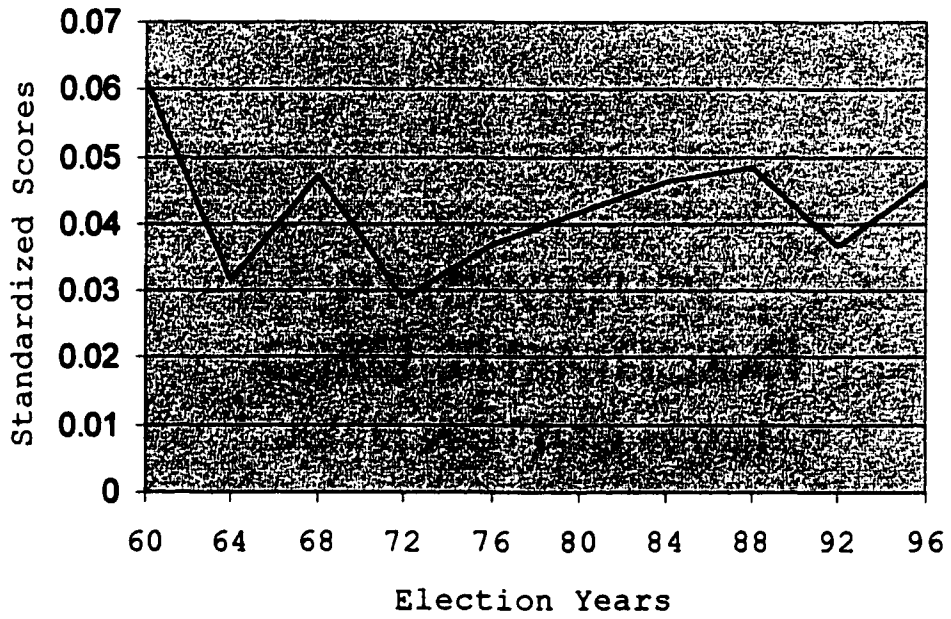
Note. These 608 ads are characteristic of the *wheel-of-emotions* ad form in that they all contain positive and negative emotional appeals.

Use of Emotion Over Time

Results for RQ3, how the use of emotion-evoking language has changed over time, do not confirm contemporary wisdom that the use of such language has increased steadily over time but do lend credence to Kern's (1989, 1993) assertion that an upsurge in emotional campaign spots occurred in the 1980s. Means (M) of the proportion of emotion words compared to total words used per election disclose that the use of emotionally charged rhetoric in televised presidential spots has declined since 1960 (see Table 11). Of the elections studied (1960-1996), the peak of emotional language use occurred in 1960 (M=0.0614), between Kennedy and Nixon, and the low point in 1972 (M=0.0287), between Nixon and McGovern. Further analysis reveals that the use of emotional language, a recurring feature of presidential spots, at least since 1960, began to increase with the 1976 election, between Carter and Ford. From its ebb in 1972, candidate use of emotional language began to rise in 1976 and continued to increase through the 1980s. In fact, Bush and Dukakis combined to use more emotional language in their spots during the 1988 campaign than any election studied except 1960. Thus, Kern's (1993) "New Mass Media Election" was born.

However, the 1992 presidential contest between Bush and Clinton witnessed a drop in the use of emotion words in televised spots. This decline returned emotional language use to a level similar to that of 1976. However, with the 1996 election, the use of emotional language by candidates Clinton and Dole returned to levels similar to that witnessed in the 1980s.

Table 11
Presidential Candidate Use of Emotion Words over Time



Challengers vs. Incumbents

Prior research indicates that a candidate's televised political advertising may differ, depending upon whether the candidate is the incumbent or challenger (Trent & Friedenberg, 1995). Statistical analysis reveals significant differences in the use of emotional language by challengers and incumbents in presidential spots (RQ4). Cross tabulation shows that challengers are significantly more likely than incumbents to employ emotion words in their ads, $\chi^2(7, \underline{n} = 5580) = 47.362$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$ (Table 12). Subsequently, chi-square tests for goodness of fit, computed for each emotion category (anger, fear, guilt, hope, pride, reassurance, trust, and uncertainty), reveal the greatest differences to be with the use of *pride* and *anger* words (Table 13). Anger and pride categories were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Challengers also show the propensity to employ more emotion words to evoke fear, guilt, and reassurance. Guilt and fear categories were statistically different at the 0.05 level of significance, while no significant difference was found between incumbents' and challengers' use of reassuring language. Analysis also reveals no significant differences between incumbents and

challengers in their use of words evocative of hope, uncertainty and trust.

This investigation finds that all candidates, regardless of incumbency, used positive emotion words more frequently than negative emotion words. Incumbents, including sitting vice presidents, used words believed to evoke positive emotional responses from audiences 1,952 times (3.2% of total words/75% of emotion words) and words believed to evoke negative emotional responses 649 times (1.1% of total words/25% of emotion words). Thus, when employing emotion words, incumbents used positive emotion words 75% of the time and negative emotion words 25% of the time. As for challengers, they employed words believed to evoke positive emotional responses from audiences a total of 2,125 times (3.0% of total words/71% of emotion words) and words believed to evoke negative emotional responses 854 times (1.2% of total words/29% of emotion words). Consequently, when using emotion words, challengers chose positive emotion words 71% of the time and negative emotion words 29% of the time.

Comparisons of individual candidates who ran first as a challenger and subsequently as the incumbent president indicates that these candidates tended to use more positive emotion words in their spots when running

as challengers than as incumbent presidents. This is noteworthy given that conventional wisdom would suggest that a challenger is more likely to cast a negative pall over the national state of affairs. The lone exception to this pattern was Reagan, who followed conventional thinking and employed more positive emotional language as the incumbent president than as a challenger.

Of the eight emotions studied, frequency counts reveal that candidates appealed to pride most often. In terms of the overall emotional language present in the ads of challengers, challengers used words to stir pride in potential voters more often than any other emotion (31%). Likewise, incumbents attempted to evoke pride in potential voters more often than other emotions as well. In terms of emotional language, incumbents appealed to voters' pride 29% of the time. Of the emotional language employed by incumbents, 22% is expected to invoke hope. Challengers also appealed to voters' hopes by calling on the emotion 16% of the time, when employing emotional language.

Both incumbents and challengers looked to reassure voters. Of the emotional language employed by the presidential candidates, both incumbents and challengers used reassuring words 13% of the time. However, in terms

of actual frequencies, challengers looked to reassure voters more often than incumbents.

Whereas incumbents looked to generate trust in the minds of voters more than fear, challengers attempted to generate more fear than trust. Frequency counts reveal that challengers used fear words (12%) more often than trust words (10%), whereas incumbents used more trust words (12%) than fear words (11%). Challengers were significantly more likely ($p < 0.05$) to employ fear-evoking language in their spots than were incumbents. However, no significant difference was found between challengers' and incumbents' use of trust words.

Of the emotional language present in the ads of incumbents, 9% is believed to provoke uncertainty. Challengers attempted to rouse uncertainty 8% of the time. In addition, 7% of the emotional language used by challengers is believed to summon anger. Incumbents attempted to summon anger 5% of the time. Challengers and incumbents rarely use words to elicit guilt. In terms of the exact percentages of emotional language used, challengers call upon guilt 1.48% of the time, while incumbents do so only 0.81% of the time (see Table 12).

When the eight emotion categories are rank ordered in terms of the total percentage of emotion words used by

each group of candidates (challengers and incumbents), the top three emotions emphasized by incumbents and challengers are identical (pride, hope, and reassurance). The only place the lists diverge is in the fourth and fifth rankings (trust and fear). See Table 14 for further explication.

Table 12
Challengers' and Incumbents' Use of Emotion Words

	Anger	Fear	Guilt	Hope	Pride	Reassur	Trust	Uncert	**Totals**
Challengers									
Frequency	200	369	44	490	928	401	306	241	2979
% of Emotion Words	3.58	6.61	0.79	8.78	16.63	7.19	5.48	4.32	53.39
% of Challenger Emotion Words	6.71	12.39	1.48	16.45	31.15	13.46	10.27	8.09	
% Usage by Challenger	61.73	56.60	67.69	46.01	55.54	55.01	50.00	52.16	
Incumbents									
Frequency	124	283	21	575	743	328	306	221	2601
% of Emotion Words	2.22	5.07	0.38	10.30	13.32	5.88	5.48	3.96	46.61
% of Incumbent Emotion Words	4.77	10.88	0.81	22.11	28.57	12.61	11.76	8.50	
% Usage by Incumbent	38.27	43.40	32.31	53.99	44.46	44.99	50.00	47.84	
Totals	324	652	65	1065	1671	729	612	462	5580
	5.81	11.68	1.16	19.09	29.95	13.06	10.97	8.28	100.00

Chi-Square: DF=7, Value = 47.362, Probability = 0.001

Table 13
Goodness of Fit Measures of Emotion Word Usage

	Challenger	Incumbent	Chi-Square	Significance
Anger	200	124	9.038	0.003
Fear	369	283	5.697	0.017
Guilt	44	21	4.201	0.040
Hope	490	575	3.397	0.065
Pride	928	743	10.272	0.001
Reassurance	401	328	3.664	0.056
Trust	306	306	0.000	1.000
Uncertainty	241	221	0.433	0.510

Table 14
Comparison of Emotions Appealed to via Language by Incumbents and Challengers based on Frequency Counts

Rank	Incumbents	Rank	Challengers
1	Pride	1	Pride
2	Hope	2	Hope
3	Reassurance	3	Reassurance
4	Trust	4	Fear
5	Fear	5	Trust
6	Uncertainty	6	Uncertainty
7	Anger	7	Anger
8	Guilt	8	Guilt

Positive and Negative Ads

Previous research indicates that certain types of televised political advertising, such as negative spots, use particular strategies and appeals to convey candidate messages (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Of the 1,209 ads analyzed in this investigation, 492 (41%) are negative and 717 (59%) are positive, as classified by the Political Communication Center of the University of Oklahoma and confirmed by this researcher. Incumbents and challengers use roughly the same mix of positive and negative spots (60% positive and 40% negative). In this investigation, the incumbent candidates' positive ads total 329 (59%) and their negative ads total 231 (41%). As for challengers, 388 spots (60%) are positive and 261 spots (40%) are negative. Thus, 560 incumbent ads (46%) and 649 (54%) challenger ads make up the sample.

Research Question five suggests that negative ads contain more emotion-evoking verbal content (words) than positive ads. However, statistical analysis does not support this perception. A chi-square test for goodness of fit reveals that positive ads have significantly more emotion words than negative ads, $\chi^2(1, \underline{n} = 5580) = 529.876$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$. This finding is true for both

challengers, $\chi^2(1, n = 2979) = 341.115$, $p = 0.001$, and incumbents, $\chi^2(1, n = 2601) = 268.761$, $p = 0.001$.

Image and Issue Ads

Research indicates that candidate image characteristics may be more important, and thus more influential, than candidate issue stances, as political issues vary with each election (Shyles, 1984). Tucker (1959) posits that projection of positive personality traits via political advertising garners votes. The image characteristics most commonly communicated via emotional language in the televised political ads of the Republican and Democratic presidential nominees since 1960 are pride, hope, reassurance and trust, all positive emotions.

Frequency counts reveal that issue spots possess 4,239 words thought to evoke emotional responses from audiences, while image spots possess 1,341 words. The issue ads of challengers contain 2,391 emotion-evoking words and the issue ads of incumbents contain 1,848. On the other hand, image ads of challengers possess 588 words believed to evoke emotional responses from audiences and incumbent image ads possess 753 such words.

Contrary to the suggestion made by RQ6, statistical analysis reveals that issue ads contain more emotion-

evoking language than image ads. In fact, a chi-square test for goodness of fit shows that issue ads possess significantly more emotion words than image ads, $\chi^2(1, \underline{n} = 5580) = 806.960$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$. This finding is true for both challengers, $\chi^2(1, \underline{n} = 2979) = 600.625$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$, and incumbents, $\chi^2(1, \underline{n} = 2601) = 241.179$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$.

Discussion of these findings, limitations of this investigation, and ideas for further research follows in Chapter V.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

Considerable research analyzes the creation of emotional bonds between political candidates and voters. However, sparse scholarship exists on the language used to establish these emotional bonds. This investigation assesses emotional language employed by U.S. presidential candidates in televised political advertising by quantifying the verbal content of these ads.

The fundamental premise of this investigation is that computerized content-analysis procedures, used in this study to count and categorize emotion words employed by presidential candidates in their campaign commercials, can reveal something about the nature of emotional appeals in televised political advertising. The specific objectives of this study were to: (a) ascertain to what extent words believed to evoke emotional responses from audiences are present in the televised political ads of U.S. presidential candidates; (b) analyze the ads for the *wheel-of-emotions* ad form; (c) examine the use of emotion-evoking language over time; and (d) compare and contrast the emotional language of challenger and

incumbent political spots, positive and negative political spots, and issue and image political spots.

Three conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. First, the use of emotion-evoking language decreased after the 1960 election, although a steady increase in its use began with the 1976 campaign and continued through 1988 (see Table 11). Second, 50% of the political spots aired by the two major party's presidential nominees since 1960 are representative of Agres' *wheel of emotions*. Third, there is an association between the use of emotional language in televised political advertising and whether a candidate for president of the United States is a challenger or an incumbent, whether an ad is positive or negative in tone, and whether an ad is issue or image focused.

This chapter summarizes findings pertaining to presidential candidates' use of emotional language in televised political advertising. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are identified.

Summary of Findings

Language and politics are interdependent, as language is central to democracy. Consequently, language wields power. Words are chief components of television

commercials. As such, examination of the language of political spots provides insight into the lexicon of American democracy. Computerized lexical analysis reveals how political candidates present themselves to the American electorate. Through this type of analysis, researchers can be exact about rhetorical distinctions.

By isolating distinct features of language, communication scholars can better assess the status of civic engagement. Results of the current investigation demonstrate that the types of emotional appeals employed by presidential candidates in televised political advertising are more likely to be positive rather than negative, found in positive issue ads rather than negative image ads, and to be aired by challengers rather than incumbents.

Of the eight emotions studied (anger, fear, guilt, hope, pride, reassurance, trust, and uncertainty), the emotion most likely to be employed in presidential campaign commercials is pride. Candidates' high reliance on pride, when compared with the other categories of emotion, pays tribute to the fact that U.S. presidential elections are the province of historical continuity. The common bonds of American political culture foster pride in the American political system. Political candidates

are wise to attempt to tap the American spirit, given the fact that our cultural beliefs and core values are so intertwined. It is these beliefs and values that give Americans political identity. Although, voters may disagree with candidates on particular issue stances, national pride is generally not a divisive campaign theme, but one of unity, harmony, and agreement.

Inherent in the request for votes is the statement "trust me." However, research indicates that the American people have experienced a steep decline in political trust since 1964 (Luttbeg & Gant, 1995). As such, it seems particularly meaningful that presidential candidates do not invoke more words of trust in their political ads than they do, especially given the fact that they seek to take charge of the nation.

One political spot, titled "The Better Man" by the Political Communication Center at the University of Oklahoma and aired by Bob Dole in 1996, makes obvious use of the four positive emotions studied. Speaking about Dole, former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell states the following (emotion words italicized): "Bob Dole is the candidate most qualified by *virtue* (trust) of his *beliefs* (trust), his *character* (trust), and *confidence* (reassurance) to be the next

President of the *United States of America* (pride)." An announcer concludes the spot with the following: "Bob Dole, the only man who would restore the *American* (pride) *dream* (hope). The better man for a better *America* (pride)."

Two campaign spots aired by Barry Goldwater in 1964 provide examples of three of the four negative emotions studied. Speaking about the Vietnam War, Raymond Massey states the following: "I don't like our policy and I don't like no win wars, especially wars our men are getting *butchered* (fear) in." Speaking on his own behalf in a different ad, Barry Goldwater says the following: "There's a growing *resentment* (anger) against this government, grown too big and too arrogant, against taxes grown too high and morals sinking too low. It's a *resentment* (anger) against a government of slogan and *deceit* (anger), against cynicism and *indecision* (uncertainty)."

It is noteworthy that presidential candidates appeal to positive emotions more frequently than negative emotions. This is surprising, given that previous research findings suggest that people put negative information to use faster than positive information (Reeves, Thorson, & Schleuder, 1986). This study's

findings suggest that televised political advertising, from the perspective of emotional language, may not be as vicious as previously believed. This conclusion conforms to Hart's (1984a) assertion that the mantle of the presidency is not meant for the shoulders of "naysayers" and "doomsayers."

Findings demonstrate that particular communication behaviors may be attributable to whether a candidate is an incumbent or challenger. In other words, the manner in which incumbents seek reelection and their challengers seek to replace them is, at times, dissimilar. The common stereotype is of incumbents portraying themselves as the "steady hand" on the wheel of the ship of state, while challengers portray themselves as the sensible alternative. Stereotypes of one candidate demonizing the opposing candidate in the most venomous and course language possible seems less plausible in light of the current findings.

Remarkably, positive ads contain more emotion-evoking language than negative ads and issue ads contain more emotion-evoking language than image ads. This result is contrary to prevailing expectations. Clearly, there is a difference between perception and reality.

Theodore Sorensen (1988) asserts that John F. Kennedy believed in the power of words "to win votes, to set goals, to change minds, to move nations" (p. 1). According to Sorensen, Kennedy "consistently took care to choose the right words in the right order that would send the right message" (p. 1). It is likely that most, if not all, candidates for high elected office do the same. In fact, it seems obvious that politicians would select their words with care. Surely they are cognizant of the fact that people's reactions to political messages are affected, in part, by prior experience, as previous experiences pervade current contexts.

Limitations

The methodology employed in this investigation, computerized content analysis, has inherent limitations. DICTION 4.0 searched for emotion words without regard to a supporting context. As previously noted, this is an explicable limitation of the DICTION program and similar text-analysis programs. Moreover, neither DICTION nor other vocabulary-based software packages can account for consequent language features such as syntax, imagery, rhythm, and arrangement (Hart, 1984a, 1984b). In addition, any study that employs computerized lexical analysis must acknowledge that a different lexicon will

most assuredly produce a dramatically different outcome. Conversely, great care was taken to assemble word lists representative of each specific emotion. In particular, a Delphi Panel confirmed placement of words on individual emotion word lists, referred to as dictionaries throughout this manuscript.

DICTION 4.0, though able to processes large bodies of text quickly, thoroughly, and accurately, proved less than ideal for assessing the presence of the *wheel-of-emotions* ad form in the text of political spots. The DICTION program is incapable of reporting the exact location of word occurrence within a given text. Television commercials that fully utilize *wheel-of-emotions* theory begin with negative messages, such as those involving uncertainty, anger, guilt, or fear, and move across an arc of emotions ultimately ending with a positive message (hope, pride, reassurance, trust) and resolution in the form of the candidate (Kern, 1993). To fully confirm the presence of the *wheel-of-emotions* ad form in presidential campaign commercials, the researcher must be able to identify where each negative and positive emotional appeal occurs within each political spot. It is impossible to do so by means of this investigation.

Notwithstanding, the fact that 50% of the ads analyzed contain both positive and negative emotional appeals, lends credence to the fact that, to some extent, *wheel-of-emotions* theory has been put to use. Future investigations must attempt to identify where each negative and positive emotional appeal occurs within each presidential TV spot, so as to more fully answer this question.

Additionally, only eight emotions were studied (anger, fear, guilt, hope, pride, reassurance, trust, and uncertainty). It is not clear if other emotions are basic to televised political advertising. However, selection of these eight emotions was based on published scholarly research, that suggests that six of the emotional appeals used in this study represent the basic emotions out of which all other emotions are built.

The findings presented in this work apply only to the televised political commercials of presidential candidates aired during general election campaigns. Thus, claims are limited to this study's data set. No claims are made about television spots aired in other national, state, or local campaigns.

Contemporary beliefs about televised political advertising are likely detached from the actual findings

of this research study. Nevertheless, the results of this investigation provide justification for future inquiry.

Future Research

Quantifying emotion in presidential campaign commercials is only an initial step in the process of gaining a better understanding of the use of emotionally charged language in televised political advertising. Scholars should endeavor to test the connotations that underlie emotion words, in an attempt to distinguish particular emotional dimensions. By exploring these dimensions, researchers enhance the probability of truly understanding the impact of emotional language.

Clearly, the foundation is established for typologies of affect to be applied to political discourse. As such, future investigations should continue to study human emotion and the language used to communicate it. The current study is grounded in prior research and subsequent literature. Follow-up research questions concerning televised political advertising might assess the impact of emotional language on election outcome (i.e., whether the televised political commercials of victorious candidates differ from those of losing candidates in terms of emotional language) and whether more emotional language is present in shorter

spots (30 seconds compared to 60 seconds) or longer spots (greater than one minute).

Scholars involved in discourse analysis should continue to examine the language of other political documents as well, such as interviews, debates, and speeches, assessing in particular the emotion-laden lexicon of these texts. If, as Diamond and Silverman (1997) assert, there is no longer a difference between campaign discourse and governing discourse in the United States, such study will prove enlightening to scholar and citizen alike.

Linguists recognize that relationships exist between language, speech, and social structure. The relationship between emotional language and citizen engagement is worthy of study, as is the linguistic construction of political identities. By identifying the avenues by which citizens become involved in public dialogue, scholars enhance the possibility of producing further engagement. Continued study of the evolution of emotional language usage in political advertising and public debate may well lead to more informed individual and societal actions.

Understanding the language of one's "national conversation" (Denton, 1998, p. xv) is necessary for transforming public discourse for the better. Continued

study of political advertising will better our understanding of the political communication environment, while hopefully benefiting the political process as well.

Conclusion

It is commonly believed that Americans are becoming less and less adept at deconstructing political argument, as our society becomes more and more dependent upon the electronic media. When public debate, in the form of televised political advertising, appeals to the emotions, logical arguments may be muted. Still, the need to reengage citizens in public dialogue leads this researcher to intimate that possibly more people would vote if they felt emotionally connected to the process, and/or to the candidates. Still, we must consider whether democratic values are not undermined by emotional discourse.

Scholars such as Aristotle, and countless others who came after him, valued discourse that clarifies issues. Aristotle believed this type of discourse was educative to the public and to participants alike. Those who shaped the government of the United States also believed in the ability of public discourse to enlighten.

Politics provokes strong feelings. Surely there is no other aspect of language that is as provoking as words

laden with emotion. However, language, regardless of emotional connotations, provides the guidance needed to direct viewers to a full understanding of an advertisement's message. Despite this fact, some will question this study's lack of attention to the visual aspects of television. Obviously, words are only one element of how emotion is communicated via TV spots. Visuals are emotive as well. Emotive moments like Reagan's "Morning in America" spots and Bush's "Revolving Door" spot are etched in the memories of countless Americans. Indeed, these commercials had vivid visuals. However, words provide these pictures with meaning. Clearly, responsive chords await the resonance of specific emotion words.

Contemporary perceptions may avow that television visuals are more influential than verbal content, but empirical research has yet to prove this assumption. In an experimental study of viewer response to emotion-laden television commercials, Reich (1995) failed to demonstrate a clear difference between advertisements in which emotional content was presented visually and advertisements in which emotional content was presented verbally. The visual aspect of how emotion is displayed

via televised political advertising remains to be studied.

The near future of political campaign communication and governance will continue to reside with television. However, we must actively use television and other media to make sense of our political world. Given the fact that candidates need to keep viewers interested and attuned to the campaign, possibly more today than in the past due to declining interest and the advent of the remote control combined with vast viewing options, means the rhetorical war of words will no doubt continue.

Reliance on commercial advertising techniques by politicians began with the advent of the televised political spot (Faber, 1992). Gaining attention is what advertising is all about. So, it is no surprise that politicians use emotional appeals to solicit votes.

Television is a powerful tool that affects people's perceptions of reality. Understanding the affective force of emotion words employed in televised political advertising may well enhance our knowledge of why people vote the way they do. Might there be a magic formula of words to get elected? Hence, another research inquiry is at hand.

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Footnotes

[i] The total number of commercials obtained from the Political Commercial Archive differs slightly from this list. Targeting Spanish speaking voters, Kennedy, Ford, Reagan (1984), Bush (1988), Dukakis, and Clinton (1996) ran a combined total of 21 ads in Spanish. These 21 commercials are excluded from this study. Four are duplications of the original English versions and thus, the discourse contained in these spots corresponds to the English versions. The remaining 17 commercials are also excluded from this study due to concerns about word choices and problems inherent in translation. A limited number of ads are not included in this study because of insufficient verbal content.