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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL
CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING OF THE 1972
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

THESIS

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The purpose of this research was to determine the aural and visual issues present in televised political campaign advertising of the 1972 Presidential election year. Content analysis was the method employed to determine these issues. The campaign commercials of George McGovern and Richard Nixon were the subject of the analysis. The issues coded were Social Welfare, Natural Resources, Labor, Management, Civil Rights, Economy, Foreign Affairs, Vietnam, Government, Public Order, Defense, Republicans, and Democrats. The results show that the campaigns used issues appearing in network news coverage, the percentage of time each campaign spent on the issues, and that the aural content was supported by the visual images in the commercials.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of political media during campaigns of recent elections has become immensely important to the business of politics as well as to broadcasters. The analyses of such campaigns have brought the issues of the content of the advertising to the forefront of articles debating the effectiveness of such campaigns. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects the right of free speech and allows such discourse in the form of political campaign commercials to air on radio and television stations without any regulation. The evaluation of political propaganda has been broken down into the study of individual components such as the frequencies of airing, content of, and repetition of themes and ideas of the advertising (1).

Although the population of the United States has many sources of information, the movement of the primary information source from newsprint to broadcasting has had the greatest impact upon political campaigns (4). The fact that more people than ever before rely on television as their main source of information lends itself to more concentrated scrutiny. The election campaign of 1972 between George McGovern and Richard Nixon, began the rise to

prominence of the political commercial. Along with the rise, the lowest voter turnout and the most lopsided victory of a Republican over a Democrat was in 1972 (8). The main issue of the campaign was Vietnam, an issue that manipulated the minds of the electorate because there were still over 280,000 troops in the southeastern Asian war-ground (9). Crime and its prevention was another issue the campaign addressed.

The study of the 1972 election therefore presents several questions that can be examined. Why did the issues of the coming disaster of Watergate never reach into the campaign? Why was crime such an important issue to the candidates? Did the personal attributes of the candidates decide the election or did the issues? An examination of the political advertising of the election period prior to the general election may hold the answer to these questions.

Statement of the Problem

The personalities of each candidate created the problem of running an issue oriented campaign. The intention of promoting a candidate through the television advertising system is to identify him with issues in the hope of persuading the electorate to vote for him. The selection of commercial material to promote a candidate's position on any issue is the basic problem of advertising. The campaigns must use the issues raised in the campaign to do this or

they may develop their own agendas for the election period. How the commercials used do this is the problem. Do they reflect the perceived issues of the time in question? Do they correspond with other agendas, such as news coverage or public opinion polls?

Purpose

In order to better understand the nature of political advertising and the way it affects the issues used by the candidates, the analysis will provide some understanding of the use of issues in political advertising. What makes one candidate seem more appealing than another has always been the question that researchers have tried to answer. Content analysis provides answers to questions concerning the role played by the advertising in the treatment of issues in the campaigning. Therefore, this study is to describe what the content was in the advertising (3). The examination of the content of the commercials by coding the images and messages will be used to try to answer the questions stated in the study. The results of the study can help to explain the political advertising methods employed and what conditions the promotions tried to resolve.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the content of the political advertising used during the National party conventions and the general election for the year of 1972. Through this analysis, an attempt will be made to define the

content of the commercials and how they dealt with or ignored the issues of the campaign. The reason for such a study is to attempt to describe this content and to code the findings to further the analysis of political campaign advertising. The study will analyze only paid political advertising broadcast both on local and national network television. The description of the content can show how the commercials related to the issues in the campaign. The findings from this study will describe how the slanting of the issues to a candidate's platform were used in each separate organization. The information should reveal how the issues were treated for the purposes of each campaign.

Statements

This content analysis will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Did the commercials reflect issues based on perceived public opinion polls and news coverage?
2. How much time did the advertising spend on an individual issue in the commercials?
3. Did the images projected in the commercials support the audio messages conveyed by the candidates?

Scope and Limitations

This study is limited to the videotaped commercials of Nixon and McGovern during the 1972 campaign. (The commercials are available from the Vanderbilt Archives in the form of videotapes for the purpose of academic study.) No other forms of advertising will be used in this study. Neither will appearances on television of the candidates or their spokesmen, agents, or supporters in any local or network television news reports, interviews, speeches, fund raisers, or convention related matters.

Methodology

The method of this study was to analyze the content of paid political advertising on videotape. The use of videotapes allowed for the coding of aural and visual elements. The issues used in the analysis of the commercials were social welfare, natural resources, labor, management, civil rights, public order, economy, Vietnam, foreign affairs, defense, government, Republicans, and Democrats (6, p. 20). The analysis of all elements of the political commercials was used to attempt to define and answer the research problems. The topics were chosen from issues that were present in the election of 1972; topics that were considered major issues of national importance to the candidates and the electorate (6).

The use of paid political advertising for public office has superseded all other forms of political advertising and expenditures of campaign funds to achieve political office. The power of television to lure an audience into the propaganda of political campaigns underlines the need for a greater understanding of how the electoral process has moved from the streetcorner to the living room, in living color. Television has removed all visual barriers and has carried the campaign to every corner of the nation. The analysis of commercials may shed some light on what changed an election to favor one man over another. The last notion is the one in which the case of the impact of television is felt the most, "The initial impression of a candidate, whether positive or negative, is impossible to change" (9, p. 193).

The use of information explaining how the campaigns used selected issues to influence the voter should be defined to a greater degree. The methods employed by the candidate and his managers to secure more votes by advertising should be more obvious from the results of this study. The study will define what the voter saw in the commercials and through this study the content of the commercials will be disclosed for study by others. Previous studies have centered on the voter's attitudes and behavior (5), and some have described the images and words that the voter received from the promotional messages paid for by the candidates (12). This research may help to describe just

what the voters saw in the commercials used in the campaigns.

Recent and Related Research

The 1972 campaign has been studied in various methods, such as the content analysis of news coverage (6), individual studies of the candidates (14), analysis of the candidate's views toward the results of the election (7), and campaign expenditures (13). The primary type of research, though, has been voter behavior analyses (10). The use of voter behavior data has been useful for political scientists and others who make it their business to determine why one candidate defeated another (4). The research on political campaigns converge on the attitudes of the voter and his perceptions of how a certain candidate will affect his immediate future. By relating previous studies of the voter's perception of the candidates through public opinion polls, the present study should define what issues were presented to the electorate by the advertising of each candidate. The result of this type of study can help to define the connection between the candidate's image and what was projected by the content of the advertising used in the campaign.

The first area of research discusses the images the candidates created or received and their dependency on press coverage. The treatment of news articles in content

analysis has generated this reaction, "Many citizens perceive favorable attributes of their opponents in media messages regardless of what news stories say about the candidates, since selective perception, retention, and recall tend to be influential in interpreting media messages (6, p. 9)." The use of this research finding can help establish a basis for the study of commercial images due to the similar nature of the visual images to be studied.

A second approach attempted to bind democratic ideals to voter behavior (14). The examination of how the issues in a campaign affect voting behavior is another area of research used to try to understand the voting process (7). The exploitation of issues by a candidate, or his campaign managers, constitute special questions that have been studied in depth. The traditional configuration of the research compares party ideologies with prevalent issues to see if the party platform is responsible for the election result or if the candidate and a single issue dominate the voting behavior (14). Another form of this type of research is the comparison of the economy and the voting outcome. Generally this is only a measurement of economic activity of the nation and its gross national product (14). The economy is such a prevalent issue because it relates directly to the candidates' abilities to improve or weaken a voter's income by their future decision making processes. Therefore, the use of content analysis in this study of the electoral

process can provide some insight into how the voter may have perceived the advertising designed to gain his vote of confidence for a candidate.

The third area of research is the studies of the endeavors to make each candidate more appealing and vice versa. One study examined how candidates were perceived from their initial announcements to run for office to the post election results (7). This type of study has been concentrated on small geographical areas, such as a county or city, that was selected for study due to the small size and ease of recording voter reactions.

The final type of research on political campaigns has been the use of the media by candidates and their campaign managers. The attempts by candidates to receive air time amid the local and national newscasts has always been a struggle. The relationship between the press and the candidates therefore presents ample room for study. The method by which the press was used by Nixon and his administration in the wake of the Watergate incident has received the majority of the research in this area (2). The image of the voter as perceived by the campaign managers has been studied, and the some claim, "It is easier to appease the voter's selfish interest than to ask him to share everyone's burdens (7, p. 34)."

The predominant thrust of the research concentrates on the electorate's perception of the candidates. However, the

present study will attempt to shed light on the images used in commercials of the general election of 1972. The study of how the issues and images used in the commercials for the Presidential campaigns will add to the research on political advertising and the use of television in politics. The information gained may relate to the study of voter alienation typified by Rubin's study (13, p. 145) of the media and politics where he states, "citizens have lost their sense of participation in elections and have become viewers via mass media." The present study will provide a basis for the study of the affects of advertising of political messages via mass media.

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This research design was intended to analyze the content of political campaign commercials. The first step was to determine the political issues of the campaign commercials. The second step was to establish the definitions of each issue under study. The third step of the design was to code the materials. The last step was to code the images of the commercials to discover the relationship of the images to the issues. The coding of the aural content of the commercials is designed to determine if the images in the commercials and the issues represented by them are consistent with the issue definitions.

Issue Definitions

The importance of issues in content analysis and their delineation into categories proper for study was established under the following guidelines. An issue is defined as a "point of discussion" recognized by candidates for elective office. Each issue has several areas where it may be placed in the analysis, but in order to make the study feasible, restrictions must be placed on the classification of each issue. Issues chosen for analysis therefore have to have definitions for the purpose of successful research (1).

The selection of issues for the coding scheme has to have some restrictions assigned to each issue in order to define the parameters of the study. "No issue can be used in more than one coding area, since the placement in more than one category would destroy the research design and yield the study to unacceptable scientific guidelines" (1, p. 15). Some of the decisions made for the purpose of the study are arbitrary in nature since several categories could fit one issue.

Image Definitions

Images are defined as visual stimuli contained in the commercials. The definition of an image is the likeness of an object or person that has been reproduced by a camera's lens. Images are used as a unit of analysis in the study as a means to measure the visual aspects of the commercial to the issues of the campaign. The use of images is to compare them with the audio messages to see if the visual aspects of the commercials are supported by the aural messages. The images are to be coded under the same guidelines as the issue coding definitions and are to be defined in the coding section of this chapter (4).

Issue Oriented Outlines

Following the issues selected by Hofstetter for coding news stories, the similar outlines for the issues are laid out in this design. The issues were social welfare, natural

resources, labor, management, civil rights, public order, economy, Vietnam, foreign affairs, defense, government, Republicans, and Democrats (3, p.20). The definitions of each issue, what is included in an issue, how it is referenced to the subject, and the limitations of the definitions are included in each separate issue category listed in this section.

The first issue of social welfare has obvious constraints placed on the coding classification. All terms and images that dealt with poverty, education, and health matters were subject to social welfare classification. Examples of images of social welfare are slums, hospitals, schools, and social service workers. Poverty terminology was strictly coded into social welfare because poverty does not discriminate. Any reference made to races and poverty are coded as social welfare. Medical issues dealing with the research of major health problems, distribution of services, and medical conditions or disease all are classified under social welfare. Educational issues such as the quality of schools and universities, teaching, and federal support of education qualified under social welfare. The second issue for coding was natural resources. Issues that fall under this heading are all references to farming production, use of federal lands, the environment, pollution, destruction of usable lands, water, fossil fuels, nuclear resources, and the population. Specifically, any

terms and visual images concerning farming production, price supports, or financing of farming are listed under the above issue. Examples of natural resources coded for visual images are forests, parks, nature areas, polluted rivers, smoke stacks, and garbage dumps. All types of fuel resources are of importance to the national economy, but the option of the placement into natural resources was made for this study on the basis of the natural resource that fossil fuels are by their nature. The population of the United States was a key resource in economic terms and therefore was set in the category of natural resources.

The third issue of labor was based on any references by the commercials to the issue of labor as a term referring to any form of trades. Labor was represented in this study by all uses of phrases and images of unions, workers, and the individual employee of any business. Examples of visual images of labor are workers, factories, picket lines, assemble lines, and construction sites. In the case of comments or images that deal with contracts or strikes by workers the labor classification was used. When the use of labor was termed in reference to national concerns the economy issue was used.

The fourth issue of management was a classification reserved for all issues and images of decisions made in the interest of any size business and the affect the election will have on the general well being of the nation as a

whole. This decision was made to delineate from any references to labor that might cross the border of each parameter of the study. For example, a statement on a new labor contract would be put in the labor category since the initial affect was on the greatest number of people involved in the business affected, even though management will be affected and so will the economy. Examples of visual images used to code management are business parks, white collar workers, company logos, and products of business. Any quotations of visual images concerning the functions of management are included in this category.

The fifth issue was civil rights. Special guidelines are made for discussions of individual rights, race, busing, discrimination, and sexual references toward the women's movement. Any issue that concerned employment practices by management, when any semblance of discrimination appeared, is coded as civil rights. Labor does not include civil rights and on the same scale management was excluded from accepting civil rights as a sub-issue. Visual images used for this category are school buses, race riots, minorities, and other references to non-white America. All court decisions, either federal or state, concerning civil rights are coded in this category.

The sixth area, public order, was defined for this study as any action that affected a mass gathering or a possible intrusion of individual rights or security. Crime,

protests, law enforcement, fires, and natural disasters are coded as public order. By the definition of order any action other than accepted behavior falls under this issue area. Examples of visual images such as civil unrest, disobedience, crime sprees, and court actions concerning punishment or prison issues are coded in this category.

The seventh class, the economy, concerns all references to the gross national product, stock markets, and issues that concern the national wealth. Such issues are agricultural price supports, imports and exports, manufacturing yield, price controls, and unemployment levels. The economy was a classification that can cover several areas that could be coded in other areas, but only the concerns of the national interests can be placed here. The use of referring to all business interests as the economy must be outlined for the purpose of the research design. If a statement was made concerning one business or industry, for example the auto industry, the choice must be made as to what part of the economy will be affected. Was the affect upon a national industrial base or will the affect only touch a small portion of the economic base of the country? Examples of visual stimuli of the economy are graphics on the economy, the deficit, military equipment, and the United States as a business. The result of the reference must be considered to affect the country as a whole to fall into the category of the economy.

The eighth area, the subject of Vietnam must have express concerns due to the nature of the war. Therefore, any image, statement, or references to the war was classified as falling into the category of Vietnam. All messages concerning the draft, deaths attributed to the war, international relations dealing with the war, and military reports on the war all fall into the Vietnam category. The problem that was inherent in referring to a war is the magnitude of issues that relate directly and indirectly with the problem. In order to define these for the study, some decisions were made to categorize war-related subjects. Any dollar figure used to discuss the war and its cost was considered in the class of the government. The drainage of money due to the enormous cost of the war, however stated, is classified in the government because of the interest to the nation as a whole. Examples of the images used for the study of Vietnam are casualties, combat, troops, protesters, and prisoners of war.

The ninth category, closely related to Vietnam but separate from it, was foreign relations. Any messages that do not directly deal with the Vietnam war or the United States are placed in the foreign affairs classification. Any policies stated to deal with the war or a peace effort will fall under Vietnam. All policies of the candidates on foreign affairs and related problems are in this category. Foreign affairs was coded for any use of terms such as,

"foreign policy," relations with allies such as NATO, the regions of the world, i.e., the third world, superpowers, middle east, etc. Foreign affairs will not concern itself with Vietnam in any form or fashion because the use of information dealing with the war was included in the appropriate category. However, effects of the war upon relations between the United States and other nations due to the war fall into the foreign affairs coding. Examples of foreign affairs images are China, the Soviet Union, diplomatic meetings, state dinners, and terrorist acts.

The tenth category of defense refers to all statements and images of the security of the nation and its allies. The problem that is presented in this area is the difference between the interest of national security and the on-going war in Vietnam. The use of defense is used to have a place for any topic that concerns contracts to the defense industry, the sale of arms to other countries, defense organizations such as NATO, and the Pentagon. Examples of images used for defense are military figures, nuclear weapons and their affects, defense contractors, and images of the Pentagon.

The eleventh category of government includes all issues of interest to the operation of the federal system. Such issues as the size of the government, appointments to key positions, concepts and philosophies of the candidates on government, and areas that affect the operation of the

system. The enormous amount of business that the government performs forces this category to include all references to such performances that do not include previous categories. Examples of visual images of the government are landmarks in Washington, D.C., departments in the government, federal workers, and Congressmen.

The last categories are Republicans, Democrats, and other. The two party designations are used to classify political events and references to the opposing party. The information for these categories includes all visual images of party symbols, candidates, delegates, party workers, and conventions. The class of other includes all other images and issue references that do not fall into the previous categories. This was used as a fixed class for uncodeable data.

Public Opinion Polls

The public opinion polls used in this study were those conducted during the election year of 1972. The polls judged the public's perceptions of each candidate and the issues that Americans felt were important. The combined use of these sources (public opinion polls and news coverage) provided the research the framework needed for each issue and image to be classified for coding. The amount of network news coverage of issues was researched and tabulated

by Hofstetter (3, p. 82) and used as a comparison list for coding with the opinion polls.

To determine if the commercial content reflected polls taken by independent polling organizations the polling results used for this study are from The Harris Survey Yearbook of Public Opinion 1972 (2). A combination of three public opinion polls were used as guidelines for the research. Two of the polls measured nationwide attitudes of the electorate and the third poll measured the public's perceptions of the candidates for the Presidency.

The first poll used, taken in May of 1972, was based on the public's opinion of the most important issues of national concern (2, p. 132). The issues measured reflected what the majority of Americans believed were the important problems the nation faced in 1972. The poll helped to clarify the issues the candidates needed to address. The results appear in Table I.

TABLE I
MOST IMPORTANT NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Nationwide - May, 1972	Total 100%
Inflation and Unemployment	58
Taxes and Spending	45
Vietnam War	29
Racial Problems	21
Drugs	9
Crime	16
Welfare Reform	15
Pollution	13
The elderly	10

TABLE I--Continued

Nationwide - May, 1972	Total 100%
Education	7
Health care	5
Political corruption	5
Housing	3

(2, p. 132)

A second poll, conducted in August of 1972 asked which candidate the public believed would tend to agree with their own personal beliefs on issues of national importance, and how each candidate could handle the issues (2, p. 63). In this poll, the respondents tended to agree with Nixon's stance on every issue except tax reform. The third poll was conducted in October of 1972 and also measured how the public felt each candidate would handle different issues (2, p. 64). The results of the October poll indicated the respondents believed Nixon could manage the nation better on most issues. Senator McGovern was perceived as being able to manage tax reform, defense spending, and big business.

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CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The first research problem encountered during the analysis created difficulties in the comparability of the commercial content of the two candidates. The analysis of the content was based on issues appearing aurally and visually. In the analysis, only 27:20 of commercials were available for George McGovern and 16 minutes of commercials for Richard Nixon. Therefore, the analysis was made by comparing percentages of the time each candidate spent presenting an issue.

The second research problem confronted in the analysis was the different presentational styles of the commercials. The McGovern commercials were presented with McGovern on camera discussing his position on the issues in face to face meetings with common people. The Nixon commercials were presented with documentary-style announcements with voice-over narration of the visuals. Nixon's commercials were not edited into shorter versions as were some of McGovern's spots. McGovern presented different versions of the same material in some of his commercials. This was taken into consideration and only the long versions were coded to insure that the same information was not coded twice.

Analysis of Individual Candidates

George McGovern

The analysis of McGovern's advertisements covered a total of 33 individual commercials totaling 27:20 of advertising. The number is not indicative of the actual number of commercials run or the total time presented in the actual campaign. Several of the commercials used by the Democrats for McGovern were repeated in different versions presenting the same theme and not all of the commercials in the campaign were available for the study.

The entire range of issues of the study was touched on by the McGovern campaign in one form or another except Civil Rights. The results for each issue appears in Table II. The table shows both aural and visual percentages for the McGovern campaign commercials.

Table II shows that the candidate's commercials used the highest percentage of aural and visual messages on the issue of Democrats. The most noticeable result is the percentage of visuals used on the Democrats, 52 per cent. The category included all references to the Democratic party, its candidates, and commercial tags appearing at the end of the commercials.

TABLE II

RESULT OF McGOVERN COMMERCIALS BY PERCENTAGES
OF AURAL AND VISUAL REFERENCES. N = 100

Issue	Aural %	Visual %
Social Welfare	14	6
Natural Resources	0	0
Labor	6	8
Management	0	0
Civil Rights	0	0
Public Order	4	2
Economy	14	8
Vietnam	4	3
Foreign Affairs	5	2
Defense	1	0
Government	9	2
Republicans	15	11
Democrats	25	52
Other	2	6
Totals	99*	100*

* (+/- 1%)

The figures reflect the attempt of each party to establish the party's campaign slogans, candidates, and promises through the commercials. The Republican issue, including all references to the party and its candidates and goals, received the second highest percentage, with the Economy and Social Welfare receiving about equal treatment. The issues of Management and Civil Rights received no references in either category.

The aural content in McGovern's messages was devoted mostly to discussing his goals for the Presidency and his

opponent's record. McGovern accomplished this by proclaiming, "He promised more jobs, not more unemployment." In other commercials, the McGovern campaign asked the audience, "To send your dollars to McGovern," in an attempt to reinforce the fact, since there were accusations of illegal campaign funds during the election, that the majority elects the president, not an elite few.

The visual coding revealed more about the commercials' attempts to influence certain social groups than the aural messages did. The advertisements appealed to the elderly, labor, and anyone opposed to spending too much on defense. The specific visual issues covered most of the topics of the study, but the topics of Management, Civil Rights, and Defense were never covered in any of the commercials that were coded. The final classification of Other included all the visual points of reference the issues did not cover, such as individuals asking McGovern a question about his campaign.

The style of presentation that stood out in the McGovern commercials was the attempt to project the candidate as a friend of the poor and working man. The method employed to accomplish this was by showing McGovern in face to face conversations with everyday people. There were several locations used for the campaign, a factory, a retirement community, a neighborhood, and a business luncheon.

In the factory setting, the issues of unemployment, defense spending, and welfare were raised by workers who are questioning McGovern. At the retirement center, McGovern replies to questions presented by the residents concerning social security and the future of the system under the current President. In a neighborhood setting, the issues of Vietnam, foreign affairs, and defense are presented by the group of citizens who have gathered to discuss the election with McGovern. The last location was a luncheon for businessmen. The issues of taxation and the economy are covered by McGovern at this meeting.

One of the more interesting aspects of the commercials was the use of interviews with McGovern supporters. Two of the advertisements are presented as testimonials, one by a little old lady on social security and another by a black man who works in a factory for minimum wage. Each tells the viewer that they do not mind sending five or ten dollars to McGovern's campaign fund, even though they can not really afford to.

Video crawls (the rolling of script, as in the credits appearing at the end of a movie) depicting the Nixon administration as corrupt and ruthless were presented by McGovern to tie the President to Watergate. The use of voice-overs on several advertisements with newspaper clippings of Watergate, stories accusing Nixon's aides in the scandal, claimed, "This is not about politics, this is

about corruption." McGovern's name was never mentioned in the advertisements except for the tags at the ends of the commercials.

Richard Nixon

The Nixon commercials analyzed covered a total of 16 minutes of advertising. The commercials coded were in 30 and 60 second formats as well as three 4:20 documentary-styled commercials. The mini-documentaries analyzed were composite advertisements covering several issues at once. The 30 and 60 second advertisements contained concise issue representations covering specific topics. The Nixon commercials covered every topic except Management. The commercials produced for the campaign centered on the successes of the Nixon administration. The results of the analysis are shown in Table III.

The results shown in Table III show how Nixon's commercials balanced the aural and visual messages for most issues covered. The majority of Nixon's coverage was on the Republicans and Natural Resources, followed by the Democrats and Foreign Affairs. The issues of Labor and Management received little if any coverage in the advertisements coded.

TABLE III

RESULTS OF NIXON COMMERCIALS BY PERCENTAGES
OF AURAL AND VISUAL REFERENCES. N = 100

Issue	Aural %	Visual %
Social Welfare	6	4
Natural Resources	18	21
Labor	0	1
Management	0	0
Civil Rights	9	5
Public Order	6	6
Economy	2	1
Vietnam	6	7
Foreign Affairs	9	11
Defense	1	0
Government	6	6
Republicans	22	21
Democrats	12	13
Other	4	5
Totals	100*	101*

* (+/- 1%)

The aural messages appearing in Nixon's commercials supported the visual messages in most instances. The issue of Natural Resources was used with declarations concerning the deterioration of the environment. The only reference to Defense simply said, "President Nixon believes in a strong defense." The Democrats are mentioned in the commercials in reference to the condition of the economy prior to the Nixon White House. The references to unemployment, pollution, crime rates, and drug abuse are related to attempts to show the lack of the Democratic party's ability to handle severe

social problems. "Under President Nixon," is used to support the role of Nixon as a leader.

The issues of civil rights in the early seventies and the President's record are the subject of both visual and aural references. The fact that Nixon signed the 26th amendment to the Constitution lowering the voting age to eighteen is used in an attempt to enhance the President's image of a leader working for civil rights for all citizens. Restructuring of the draft laws to end discrimination under the Nixon administration is used to project Nixon's concern for racial equality in the selective service guidelines.

The visuals of the Nixon commercials follow the aural references and percentages of time devoted to the individual issues. The withdrawal of troops from Vietnam is used with both aural and visual messages to convey the fact that the Nixon administration keeps its campaign promises. The aural portions of the commercials states the President stands for peace and has worked vigorously to attain it. The images of troops coming home to their families is substituted for images of fighting. The only images of battle are used to make references, by direct accusation, to the Democratic party in power before Nixon took office.

The style of presentation for the Nixon commercials was the use of voice-over narration and documentary-styled visual presentation. The commercials contained several scenes exhibiting the natural beauty of the United States.

The issue of the environment was treated with visuals of nature and the resulting ravages of man-made pollution. The most stunning scenes show chemicals being dumped into rivers with factories belching smoke in the background. The narration tells of Mr. Nixon's fight to "clean-up" America and his achievement in establishing the Environmental Protection Agency.

According to Nixon's commercials, not only was nature suffering the effects of pollution, the people of the United States and the world were being affected by noise, water, and air pollution. One of the spots informs the audience of Mr. Nixon's record on pollution and the Environmental Protection Agency he created. The viewer was reminded of the stand he took against the automobile manufacturers and the airline industry to establish federal regulations on leaded engine exhausts and airplane noise abatement.

President Nixon's image does not overwhelm the viewer as McGovern's image did. Nixon is seen in matters of state, leading the country. The President is normally seen conducting his presidential duties, rarely is he shown as an individual citizen. The President is portrayed as a leader, with foresight, distinction, and diplomacy. To enhance the image of the President as a world leader, Nixon is shown with leaders from several nations, including the Soviet Union, China, and Canada. Even when he is shown relaxing, it is always at a government function or as the President.

The commercials attempt to show Nixon working hard as the leader of the United States, he is all business.

The commercials for Nixon had a more polished appearance than McGovern's commercials. Nixon is always busy in his advertisements, the narration is used to explain the visuals to the viewer. The President ran a commercial campaign based on his record and his duties as the President. The idea that Nixon was actually running for re-election is never used, except for tags which tell the audience, "President Nixon, now more than ever." The fact that Nixon was running a campaign just does not come up in the commercials. The issues presented by the Nixon commercials were evenly distributed in terms of aural and visual references. The commercials were well organized and delivered their messages in a manner appropriate to the campaign.

Comparison of Candidate's Commercials to Opinion Polls

The results of the analysis show how closely each candidate's commercials corresponded to the issues presented in public opinion polls. The polls rated topics of national importance and perceived leadership abilities of the candidates by presenting questions to the public. The questions appearing in the polls rated both candidates and the respondents were asked to agree, disagree, or answer undecided. The results of the analysis in this area shows

how each candidate's own agenda setting appeared in his commercials. The results of the polls are discussed in Chapter II.

McGovern

The issues covered by McGovern's campaign commercials corresponded with those in the polls in most instances. The major issues were inflation, unemployment, taxes, Vietnam, and civil rights (1, p. 132). McGovern was perceived as the candidate who would be best able to handle problems concerning the issues of Government, Management, and Defense. The results of the polls show that McGovern did not follow the lead of the polls and his commercials all but ignored these issues.

From the analysis of his commercials, McGovern tried to cover each area both aurally and visually, but he spent most of his commercial time on his own image and campaign rhetoric. The polling results indicated the respondents had some confidence in McGovern's abilities, but the candidate failed to support his strong points in favor of boosting his weaker aspects. The results of the analysis and poll results appear in Table IV.

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF ANALYSIS RESULTS WITH OPINION
POLLS FOR GEORGE McGOVERN

Issues	Poll Results		McGovern Commercials	
	% of favorable responses		Aural %	Visual %
Management	44		0	0
Government	40		9	2
Defense	37		1	0
Vietnam	33		4	3
Social Welfare	32		14	6
Foreign Affairs	26		5	2
Natural Resources	25		0	0
Economy	24		14	8
Civil Rights	23		0	0
Public Order	23		4	2
Labor	*		6	8
Republicans	*		15	11
Democrats	*		25	52
Other	*		2	6
Totals			99**	100**

*Not covered

**(+/- 1%)

Selected from from July and October 1972 Harris Polls (1).

Nixon

The results of the study of Richard Nixon's commercials are quite different than those of McGovern. The polls show the issues most important were again, inflation, unemployment, taxes, Vietnam, and civil rights (1, p. 132). In Nixon's commercials the messages appearing do not follow the agenda set by the polls. In the advertisements, Nixon used

more time covering his own campaign, natural resources, and the Democrats.

Nixon was viewed as having the best ability and leadership qualities to handle everything but taxes, defense spending, and big business on perceived problems facing the next administration (1, p. 62). On issues of Foreign Affairs, Public Order, Natural Resources, and Civil Rights Nixon was considered by far more qualified than his opponent. The results of his commercials reflect this public support by spending a fair amount of time on each of the issues Nixon is perceived as supporting. The results of the polls and commercial content appear in Table V.

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF ANALYSIS RESULTS WITH OPINION
POLLS FOR RICHARD NIXON

Issues	Poll Results		Nixon Commercials	
	% of favorable responses		Aural %	Visual %
Foreign Affairs	58		9	11
Vietnam	52		6	7
Social Welfare	49		6	4
Civil Rights	49		9	5
Public Order	47		6	6
Economy	47		2	1
Natural Resources	42		18	21
Government	40		6	6
Defense	38		1	0
Management	30		0	0
Labor	*		0	1

TABLE V--Continued

Issues	Poll Results		Nixon Commercials	
		% of favorable responses	Aural %	Visual %
Republicans	*		22	21
Democrats	*		12	13
Other	*		4	5
Totals			100**	101**

*Not covered

**(+/- 1%)

Selected from from July and October 1972 Harris Polls (1).

The comparison of the content of the two candidate's commercials shows that both spent a large percentage of time on their own parties. The most significant difference in aural content appears in Nixon's use of the Natural Resources issue and the ignoring of the issue by McGovern. The results of the comparison appear in Table VI.

TABLE VI
COMPARISON OF BOTH CANDIDATE'S AURAL CONTENT

Issue	McGovern	Nixon
Social Welfare	14	6
Natural Resources	0	18
Labor	6	0
Management	0	0
Civil Rights	0	9

TABLE VI--Continued

Issue	McGovern	Nixon
Public Order	4	6
Economy	14	2
Vietnam	4	6
Foreign Affairs	5	9
Defense	1	1
Government	9	6
Republicans	15	22
Democrats	25	12
Other	2	4
Totals	99*	100*

*(+/- 1%)

The visual comparison of the two candidate's commercials shows McGovern used a high percentage of his visual content on his own party, over 50 per cent. The visual content of Nixon's commercial campaign was more evenly distributed. Twenty-one per cent of Nixon's visuals covered the issue of Natural Resources while McGovern opted to ignore the issue visually. The results are listed in Table VII.

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF BOTH CANDIDATE'S VISUAL CONTENT

Issue	McGovern	Nixon
Social Welfare	6	4
Natural Resources	0	21
Labor	8	1

TABLE VII--Continued

Issue	McGovern	Nixon
Management	0	0
Civil Rights	0	5
Public Order	2	6
Economy	8	1
Vietnam	3	7
Foreign Affairs	2	11
Defense	0	0
Government	2	6
Republicans	11	21
Democrats	52	13
Other	6	5
Totals	100*	101*

*(+/- 1%)

News Coverage

An analysis of the network news coverage of 1972 was undertaken by Hofstetter (2) to establish the agenda setting of each network. The results listed political parties, the economy, foreign affairs, and Vietnam as the major stories of the election year (2, p. 82). The results of the present study were compared to Hofstetter's results (2) to see if the commercials reflected the agenda setting of the three networks. The coding used by Hofstetter combined both audio and visual references in the same category. The present study separated the aural and visual content; thus the comparison will reflect this difference. The comparisons for McGovern's results are in Table VIII and Nixon's in Table IX.

TABLE VIII
 COMPARISON OF GEORGE McGOVERN'S COMMERCIAL
 CONTENT TO NETWORK NEWS COVERAGE OF 1972

Issue	CBS %	NBC %	ABC %	McGovern Commercials	
				Aural %	Visual %
Social Welfare	2.6	2.3	2.8	14	6
Natural Resources	2.9	2.4	1.8	0	0
Labor*	1.0	1.2	1.2	6	8
Management*				0	0
Civil Rights	3.9	3.3	2.7	0	0
Public Order	7.9	7.8	6.5	4	2
Economy	12.6	11.6	9.0	14	8
Vietnam	16.9	19.4	18.4	4	3
Foreign Affairs	11.5	15.5	13.6	5	2
Defense	3.4	3.3	2.8	1	0
Government	5.6	3.9	4.7	9	2
Republicans	13.7	12.3	13.9	15	11
Democrats	16.1	14.3	20.8	25	52
Other	2.1	2.7	1.8	2	6
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	99	100

*Labor and Management were coded together in Hofstetter's study (2).

The candidates' commercials closely follow the agenda set by the networks except for the results of the visuals for Democrats. In most issue categories, the agenda set by McGovern responded to the same agenda set in the news coverage. However, most of McGovern's time was used on his own party, 25 per cent aurally and 52 per cent visually. On the other issues, McGovern's spots lead in percentages with Republicans, Economy, Foreign Affairs, and Vietnam in that order.

TABLE IX
 COMPARISON OF RICHARD NIXON'S COMMERCIAL
 CONTENT TO NETWORK NEWS COVERAGE OF 1972

Issue	CBS %	NBC %	ABC %	Nixon Commercials	
				Aural %	Visual %
Social Welfare	2.6	2.3	2.8	6	4
Natural Resources	2.9	2.4	1.8	18	21
Labor*	1.0	1.2	1.2	0	1
Management*				0	0
Civil Rights	3.9	3.3	2.7	9	5
Public Order	7.9	7.8	6.5	6	6
Economy	12.6	11.6	9.0	2	1
Vietnam	16.9	19.4	18.4	6	7
Foreign Affairs	11.5	15.5	13.6	9	11
Defense	3.4	3.3	2.8	1	0
Government	5.6	3.9	4.7	6	6
Republicans	13.7	12.3	13.9	22	21
Democrats	16.1	14.3	20.8	12	13
Other	2.1	2.7	1.8	4	5
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	101

*Labor and Management were coded together in Hofstetter's study (2).

The comparison of Nixon's commercial content to the results of Hofstetter's analysis (2) shows that Nixon did not follow the agenda of the networks. Nixon set his own agenda for the commercials, using more of his advertisements for his own party and for Natural Resources. In most other issues, Nixon did follow the networks' lead by at least paying attention to most of the issues in the news.

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CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of the analysis was to discover if the candidates for the 1972 Presidential election campaign ran issue-based television commercials. Three questions were asked:

1. Did the commercials reflect issues based on perceived public opinion polls and news coverage?
2. How much time did the advertising spend on an individual issue in the commercials?
3. Did the images projected in the commercials support the audio messages conveyed by the candidates?

The method employed was a content analysis of the Democratic and Republican parties' television broadcast commercials from the 1972 campaign for the Presidency. The analysis was based on issues established through Hofstetter's content analysis of television news coverage of the same year (1). Hofstetter's study covered issues appearing in television news coverage to establish how the network's agenda setting process worked. For this study, the same issues were used as those appearing in Hofstetter's content analysis.

The design of the analysis was separated into two categories for the coding of the content of the commercials of George McGovern and Richard Nixon. The first category coded was the aural content of the commercials. The second category coded was the visual content of the commercials. The purpose of separating the two categories was to see if the aural messages appearing in the commercials were supported visually. The messages occurring in the advertisements were coded under thirteen different issue classifications.

The analysis of the content was then compared to public opinion polls and news coverage to discover if the issues in the commercials coincided with the polls and news reports. The content was examined to determine whether or not the candidates followed examples set by the independent polls and news reports on issues appearing in the polls and television newscasts. News coverage was used to find out how the candidates commercial agendas compared to news coverage.

The analysis was designed to attempt to answer questions concerning the use of issue oriented campaign commercials and opinion polling (3). The research questions covered the types of messages appearing in the commercials and similar issues in polls and news coverage. The analysis identified those issues appearing aurally and visually in the 1972 Presidential commercial campaigns,

examining the commercials of both candidates of the two major parties and comparing the results to each other, to opinion polls, and to news coverage.

The results of the analysis reveal the differences between the two commercial campaigns. McGovern's campaign commercials were based on issues that reflected the social consciousness of the candidate. Nixon, however, ran a commercial campaign based on his abilities as a world leader. The candidates each spent a large percentage of commercial time, both aurally and visually, on their own parties and the opposition, as could be expected. The findings, when compared to opinion polls, show the commercials did not use issues based solely on public opinion.

The results indicate the candidates followed their own agendas, based on the issues covered by news organizations of the three networks, rather than those of public opinion polls. Over fifty per cent of McGovern's visuals were devoted to Democrats. The Natural Resources issue, in Nixon's commercials, was the only one appearing that varied greatly from the news coverage figures. For all the other issues coded and compared both candidates followed the news coverage to a similiar degree. The second research question is answered by reporting the percentage of time spent on individual issues by each candidate in the campaign. The last research question concerning visual support of aural

messages, confirmed that in the majority of the issues the commercial's visuals supported the audio information.

McGovern covered issues that appealed to minorities and liberals, i.e., social programs. When McGovern discussed the issues, he always related social programs to the well-being of the economy. This was done by comparing the defense budget to the budgets for social programs. Nixon covered issues that projected him as being in control of the country. Foreign affairs and leadership issues dominated his commercials.

These observations seem to support statements made by the men in charge of the campaigns for both candidates. A former Nixon staff member, Jeb Magruder, stated that early in the election the decision was made to present the President as a professional in the world of politics (4, p. 197). Magruder explained after the election that the re-election effort tried to avoid any issues of weakness and touch only issues they could use from a position of strength (4). The emphasis on leadership in the Nixon commercials was based on an assumption that the 1972 campaign was centered on three variations of one central theme. The first was competence, the second was trust, and the third was who was perceived as the most "Presidential" (4, p. 234). Therefore, the results of this study reflect and help explain the decisions leading to the Nixon commercial campaign and the desire to present a theme of leadership.

The election campaign of George McGovern faced different problems and the results of the study show how his campaign commercials attempted to solve some of these problems. The first area of major concern to the McGovern campaign was the candidate's problem of recognition (4). The McGovern campaign commercials used over 50 per cent of their visual content on images of Democrats. The commercials were purposely made this way because studies performed during the primaries showed that in some states, over 65 per cent of voters could not identify McGovern.

The second area of the campaign was attracting the traditional Democratic voter base (8). Since 1932, most Americans identify themselves as Democrats and the use of a large percentage of visuals identifying McGovern as a Democrat attempted to attract these voters. The issues relating to social programs and common people appearing in the results of McGovern's commercials were directly connected to attracting this group. The McGovern campaign commercials relied heavily on issues which concentrated on human value and dignity. The thrust of the commercials was deliberate and according to one McGovern memorandum, "McGovern and the Democratic party . . . deeply care about the well-being of decent hard-working people (8, p. 217)."

A third area was the issue raised in McGovern's advertisements of campaign spending. In some of McGovern's commercials, appeals are made to the voters to support his

campaign. McGovern had problems with his campaign financing and this forced the pleas for money appearing in the commercials (4, p. 202). The negative commercials McGovern used against Nixon's funding were based on accusations of illegal campaign contributions the Nixon campaign was supposedly receiving.

One of the most notable aspects of the commercials were the presentational styles. The presence of George McGovern in most of the commercials is very noticeable. The candidate's image or name appears more than any other issue in the commercial campaign. It is obvious that he was attempting to gain recognition and respect from the voters (5, p. 229). A large portion of the advertisements used by McGovern showed the candidate surrounded by common people. McGovern tried very hard to look sincere and interested when any questions are asked by the participants in the advertisements. Although he answers all the questions directed to him, he always asked the questioner to look at Nixon's record on the issues.

The significance of social welfare issues, labor, and reducing tax dollars for defense was brought to the forefront of McGovern's campaign in the hope of winning the election. The presentation of these issues to those he believed had the most to gain from them, i.e., labor, the elderly, and women, was readily apparent from the audiences appearing with McGovern in his crusade. The tags used at

the end of his commercials reflect his position of placing human dignity before the sometimes questionable national interests, again with the announcement, "The people are paying for this campaign with their hard earned dollars; send what you can to . . . ," end the majority of his commercial announcements.

Nixon's position as the incumbent was not ignored in Nixon's commercials and the images of Nixon with world leaders is shown often. While McGovern is seen with the common man on the street, Nixon is never shown with the common voter, only leaders. Nixon's use of environmental issues reinforced and promoted his administration's record on a positive program he created, the Environmental Protection Agency. By using the office of the President as the center of the commercials, the advertisements allowed Nixon the opportunity to avoid any negative commercials and therefore he was better able to plan announcements that were more balanced. Nixon's campaign strategy was based on his decision to avoid the press and his commercials follow this strategy, showing him as alone as the leader of the free world (5).

The two commercial campaigns avoided the issues centering on Vietnam, although it was an issue most Americans were concerned about. McGovern rarely discussed Vietnam; his messages spoke more about simply reducing defense expenditures. Nixon did not attempt to resolve the

Vietnam issue in his commercials, other than referring to troop withdrawals from the region. The commercials for Nixon reminded the audience who the Republicans felt were responsible for the war.

The one area of significant historical impact neither candidate apparently considered was Watergate. The news coverage in the election year reported the issue of Watergate as a minor story compared to the general election. The resulting damage of Watergate to the Presidency and the country went largely unnoticed until after the general election (5, p. 270). The only mention of Watergate in the commercials was in one McGovern spot where the voice-over narration discusses a Nixon campaign based on corruption while showing newspaper clippings of the Watergate investigation.

The commercials for both candidates show the different approaches taken to win the election. The results show that McGovern ran a human issue based commercial campaign and Nixon ran advertisements based on leadership. The commercials present the images and messages the campaign committees designed to support their candidates. Finally, the commercials reflect the major campaign themes as McGovern's "new politics," and Nixon's "out there" attitude, as Theodore White described them, as the real issues in the 1972 election (8, p. 316).

Conclusion

The study of any political advertising can possibly answer questions raised concerning the political implications of broadcasting "paid for" political commercials. Since the 1972 election, the political commercial has grown from a simple "vote for" announcement to commercials produced by political action committees and single issue interest groups (6, p. 272). Today, both major parties utilize their own polling organizations and design their commercials from their poll results (2). No longer do presidential campaigns rely on speeches and public appearances; commercials have taken over the major operation of promoting the political campaign (2). The commercials analyzed in the 1972 election were produced, paid for by each party, and used for fundraising as a part of the commercial messages. The changes in election laws have now given the political candidate a much more restrictive financial base (7, p. 238). Another problem is the polarization of conservative and liberal political action committees candidates rely on for support. The increases in campaign costs have forced candidates to depend on such committees for funding (6, p. 274), therefore, creating a need for the further analysis of political advertisements.

Implications for Further Research

The research covered the content of 1972 political commercials both aurally and visually. To further an understanding of the campaign commercial, new questions have been raised from this research project. The analysis of the aural and visual messages can only define the issues covered by the candidates, but it cannot explain the actual agenda setting process used in selecting which issues to discuss (6). The comparison of the candidates' messages to opinion polls can only reflect whether the content of the commercials was designed to follow issues the public perceived as important or those issues the campaign managers selected. How the commercials used the opinion polls for content is another question to be answered in greater detail.

This study followed established methods for the study of commercial content and issue oriented political campaign commercials (7). The continued study of this subject will aid explaining the use of campaign commercials and their enormous impact upon the American political system. The increases in political campaign spending for television time has created more problems and situations lending themselves to critical analyses (6). The analysis of the television political campaign commercials of 1972 will provide the information needed for comparative studies of political advertising and the trends of recent campaign commercials.

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