

Constructing the Candidate:
Images, Experts and Campaign Advertising

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Abstract

Has television changed the course of presidential campaigns? Research shows television places an increased emphasis on the images of candidates, while not placing enough emphasis on political issues. This study explores the evolution of narrative structure in political advertisements through four presidential campaigns. Specific attention was accorded to the image qualities of believability, charisma, consistency, conciseness and organization. The study concluded that the differences between image and issue candidates have lessened over time. Today, as the emphasis placed on constructing a politically sellable image increases, issue candidates are disappearing.

Constructing the Candidate:
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Introduction

Late nights with Leno, interviews with *Oprah*, clipping on their microphones and smiling at the camera: this seems to be the new focus of presidential campaigns. At the dawn of the television age, in 1958, Holman Hamilton predicted, “It is likely that masters of merchandizing techniques will attempt to package and sell candidates as effectively as they package and sell breakfast foods and deodorizers” (Hess, 1978, p. 67). From then on, the inevitable link between TV and its “masters” was made. Today, with the airways as their main medium, political consultants, marketing teams, advertising executives and public relations personnel “invent and sell” their candidates (Waterman, 1999, p. 75). The birth of television and political marketing has brought a new emphasis on creating a good image; one that is perceived as charismatic, confident and strong. These created images have become so central to political campaigns that one could say they are the new issue (Friedenberg, 1994). “Whether he knows it or not, the impression (a presidential candidate) conveys are now the blood of presidential politics” (Beaubien, 1994, p. 53). With this change, the lines between television news and advertising, information and propaganda, the man or woman and the message, have become increasingly hard to draw (Bennett, 2001). Meanwhile, the United States - a country that claims to be the world’s most successful democracy, a country that expresses its yearning desire to spread democracy throughout the globe- ranks 23rd in voter participation among industrialized nations (Lordan, 2004). In fact, less than one in every four adults in this nation can name their own state senators. Clearly, something is wrong (Lordan, 2004). The evolution and mutual dependence of television and marketing has created a packaged candidate for whom image is everything.

Definition of the Problem

The Growth of Television, Marketing, and the Image Campaign

It is a commonly accepted notion that images are increasingly replacing issues in our modern world. In a sense, we could say that society's overall "substantive," nature has been reduced. In other words, reality is being replaced by appearance. Lash (1984), as quoted by Alvesson, describes this phenomenon as "the replacement of a reliable world of durable objects by a world of flickering images" (Alvesson, 1990, p. 379). The 'imagery' of today's society includes the impressions and pictures, not just of political leaders, but leaders of all types. Alvesson (1990) tells us that a modern trend in corporate life has been the shift in focus from 'substantive' issues to an increased emphasis on dealing with images. "This means, among other things, that pseudo-events, pseudo-action and pseudo-structures, i.e. phenomena which have the purpose to effect people's impressions and definitions of reality, are important features of modern management and organization" (p. 373). In the corporate world, this focus on image is exemplified by brand marketing and the need to create the right "image" for the corporation. Corporate image becomes particularly important for service-based corporations like insurance agencies (Alvesson, 1990, p. 373). People need "breakfast foods and deodorizers" (Hess, 1978, p. 67). They do not, however, need your service. Likewise, "the candidate is in reality a service provider and offers a service to consumers, the voters, much in the same way that an insurance agent offers a service to his consumers" (Newman, 1994, p. 9).

The importance of a public figure's image was first recognized by Aristotle, who "told his students that ethos was probably the most potent form of proof in persuasion. What he had in mind was the listener's collective perceptions of a speaker's character, intelligence, and good will" (Friedenberg, 1994, p. 37). Since then, the image of the public figure has been widely examined. According too Anderson, a study by Richard Boyd (1969) analyzed data from the

National Election Studies survey from 1956 through 1964. Boyd concluded, “attitudes toward the candidate [as opposed to attitudes towards the party or toward policy] are the major statistical explanation of voting defection” (Andersen, 1978, p. 6). This set the stage for the research of Nimmo, Mansfield and Savage, three researchers who have greatly contributed to the field of political communications and image formation. In a 1974 study, Nimmo, Mansfield and Savage discovered that “voters’ perceptions of candidates [have] influence[d] electoral decisions” (Andersen, 1978 p.6). They determined that this “perception” was based on “personal attraction,” or rather, the physical and personality attributes (Andersen, 1978, p. 6). In fact, Nimmo, Mansfield, and Savage (1974), as quoted by Anderson, found “the candidate with the higher perceived character won five of the last six presidential elections” (Andersen, 1978, p. 6). Later, in 1976, Anderson, Nimmo and Savage found that “candidate image provided the best single predictor of voting behavior” (Andersen, 1978, p. 6). Other researchers have followed the lead of Nimmo, Mansfield and Savage. Maddox (1980), as quoted by Dervin, noted the “continuing relationship of candidate images to voting behavior” (Dervin, 1989, p. 45). Dervin (1989) found that the important ingredient in campaigns was not issues, but rather what “the projected image” (p. 45).

Images are increasingly replacing issues, not just in presidential campaigns, but in our world as a whole. Natchez and Bupp (1968), as quoted by Zhu, maintain that images are easily accepted because of their simplicity. Issues, on the other hand, can become “so complex and abstract that they are simply ‘unintelligible’” (Zhu, 1994, p. 305). Issues take time and effort to understand. Issues can also “fractionate” viewers, causing them to turn away from the product or service (Dervin, 1989, p. 57). In terms of politics, “fractioned” issues can divide the public into supporters and non-supporters of a policy. In political advertising, advertising a favorable image

instead of a political position, a candidate is able to stay neutral on issues so as not to alienate voters who would disagree with his or her platform. Anyone can like a candidate who kisses babies or shakes the hands of grandmas. Not everyone, however, can like a candidate who favors issues they do not support.

Images are also easier to remember over time. Lodge (1995) focused on voters' ability to remember issues, both over long and short term periods. He found that, "while memory for the campaign issues declined steadily to low levels, memory for the overall evaluation of the candidates was remarkably robust and stable over time" (p. 309). An example of this is easily seen in the corporate world. Take the well-known *Verizon* commercial in which a man travels around the world repeating "can you hear me now?" into his cell phone. *Verizon* is attempting to show that they are a reliable phone service. By showing the image, however, the concept they are trying to impart to viewers is remembered more easily than if they were just to say "we are the most reliable phone service" (Lodge, 1995). And as we all know, seeing is believing.

Because of its emphasis on visuals, television has become one of the primary reasons why issues have taken a back seat to images:

At first, candidates were unskilled and clumsy at this new medium. In the pre-television age, even before the days of radio, a candidates' ability to deliver eloquent speeches and deliver his message by word was important...It is still important to be able to persuade people to a certain point of view with an intellectual reasoned argument, but television was a different animal, a visual animal, which put a premium on appearance. The substance of a candidate's words could be overwhelmed by the way he or she looked. Television introduces a whole new set of considerations to political campaigns. The wrong necktie or a big hat could totally distract viewers from the candidate's message or even convey the wrong impression.

(Black, 1994, p. 65)

In "television-lingo," this shift is one from "hard news" to "soft news." "Hard news" contains all the information an informed person ought to know (Bennett, 2001, p. 12). "This standard applies to many government activities, the positions of candidates in election

campaigns...policies that may change our lives” (Bennett, 2001, p. 12). Conversely, “soft news is emotional and immediate” (Bennett, 2001, p. 12). Bennet (2001) says:

It (soft news) requires no justification beyond grabbing the attention of an audience and, ideally getting them talking about what they saw on Peter Jennings, NBC, or Fox last night. Soft news stories have no general social significance beyond the intrinsic drama or sensational images that stir emotional reactions in audiences. (p. 12)

The shift from “hard news” to “soft news” came largely from two interdependent developments, the rise of television and the growth of commercialism. As Boorstin (1961), as quoted by Alvesson, says, “Real life events, of importance in themselves, without being orchestrated for a certain audience, have lesser impact than pseudo-events, which are more mass-medial. The communication of images then becomes possible and also crucial” (Alvesson, 1990, p. 391). Television, because of its power to reach millions with its advertisements, has undeniably contributed to the growth of commercialism:

Television is all about name recognition: It is about using niche marketing, demographics, and survey data to create images that are appealing and will capture market shares and sell products and television has been hugely successful in what it has done. Today many more people recognize Mr. Clean, Ronald McDonald, the Tidy Bowl Man, Mr. Whipple, Betty Crocker, Tony the Tiger, and the Pillsbury Doughboy than recognize their neighbors or public officials. (Schultz, 2004, p.x)

Political campaigns often must compete with these commercial images:

The average voter can best be reached in her living room, through her television, in much the same way that McDonald’s, Coke, and other advertisers reach their customers. Politics is thus in competition with the rest of popular culture for the attention of the American voter. It is a noisy, crowded competition, necessitating that candidates often ape themes from pop culture in order to cut through the crowd. (Schultz, 2004, p. xi)

Because of this stiff competition to increase ratings in order to win advertising dollars, television producers no longer view the audience as citizens who must be informed, but as consumers who must be attracted to their product (i.e. television program) (Schultz, 2004). And so, the media has forced itself to give viewers what they want most, entertainment:

Countless surveys indicate that media consumers, when asked, say they want in-depth analysis when it comes to presidential politics. But their behavior differs markedly from their stated preferences. Pure entertainment invariably wins out over policy analysis—witness the *65 million* votes cast in last year’s American Idol program. (Lordan, 2004, p.28)

This emphasis on entertainment may very well be one of the major reasons for the increase in “soft news” or what is known as “infotainment” (Bennett, 2001, p. 13). As quoted by Adatto, Michael Deaver, a political consultant to President Reagan, once confirmed this shift saying, “the media, while they won’t admit it, are not in the news business; they’re in entertainment” (Adatto, 1993, p. 86).” Using visuals, television simplifies stories because, in essence, the pictures explain the details. In doing so, much of the “substance” is cut out all together:

Stories that are complex (and many times, more important) are harder to capture in a single image or even series of images. Tax code changes, international trade, changing demographics, all are examples of issues that are important to the American public but difficult to put into visual form. (Lordan, 2004, p. 28)

McLuhan (1964), according to Rudd, contended that the “cool” medium of television also conveys feelings and emotions easier than it is able to convey information (Rudd, 1986, p. 113). Thus, the format of television is simply not conducive to “substantive” issue coverage.

When applied to a political setting, this shift to “infotainment” has been labeled “politainment” (Schultz, 2004, p. 224). Newman (1999) writes about this trend, saying, “Washington has become the Hollywood of the East, where image is more important than substance and the intensity of a politician’s charisma determines his power with the people” (Newman, 1999, 2). The president has become, in a sense, “America’s celebrity-in-chief” (Hacker, 2004, p. 134). An example of this shift to “politainment” is exemplified by the political career of Jessie Ventura. Ventura, whose real name is James Janos, rose to fame first through wrestling then by appearing in several movies. Later, Ventura became a controversial talk show

host in Minnesota. It was here that Ventura began to express his political views. Soon, Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota:

After his election he became an international celebrity, merging his role as governor with that of professional wrestler into a unique figure in American politics...While following in the foot-steps of such notable politicians (such as Reagan), who traded in their celebrity for political power, Jesse forged his own distinct political path. He took the trend of entertainer turned politician one step further because he was more than just a celebrity turned politician; he was simultaneously an entertainer *and* a politician; he is, in other words, a politainer. (Schultz, 2004, p. 220-221)

Much of “politainment” is based in the need for the viewing audience, not only to be entertained, but also to relate to the “politainer.” Because of this need to relate, a growing emphasis is put on personalities (Schultz, 2004, p. 226):

They are seen as personalities, not politicians or serious journalists, telling jokes and sitting next to rock musicians and actors, competing for the same viewers by projecting their personalities into the public mind in ways no different than product marketing and advertising! (Schultz, 2004, p. 226)

This situation is particularly well suited to the needs of a campaign because it grabs the attention of voters and sets campaign news in a story-like, good-guy/bad-guy format. “Television’s need to tell a story, to personalize lives, to define good versus evil-or David versus Goliath-is great drama that sells advertising and generates revenue” (Schultz, 2004, p.x). And so, television becomes the main medium for political campaigns. Theodore White, a journalist during the Kennedy-Nixon years, emphasized the impact this new medium could have on political campaigns:

The direction of television in a political campaign is comparably the most important. Here is where the audience is: here is where the greatest part of all money is spent: here is where creative artistry and practical commercialism must join to support the candidate’s thrust. (Bloom, 1973, p. 6)

In this world of television, marketing and its masters play an important role. They’ve been called “spin-doctors,” “handlers” and “puppeteers.” In reality, these experts in political

marketing range from speech writers to consultants, advertising executives to public relations experts, press secretaries to pollsters. Despite what you call them, they are masters in rhetoric; masters who are now indispensable to the modern campaign. The “expansion and mobility of the population and the consequent difficulty of conducting traditional, whistle-stopping, baby-kissing, hand-shaking campaigns for high office,” has made television, and not parties, the main campaign medium (Bloom, 1973, p. 19). And so, in the modern campaign, communication consultants have essentially replaced party organizations (Bloom, 1973). Rather than follow the dictates of their party, candidates now hire their own organization, in most cases, “as an actual substitute for the official party mechanism” (Bloom, 1973, p. 251).

Television’s emphasis on images has also increased the importance of consultants. This is because, as Sam Donaldson says, “a simple truism about television... the eye always predominates over the ear when there is a fundamental clash between the two” (Adatto, 1993, p. 92). This means that when the visual content of the news contrasts to what is being said, the visual content reigns. And so, the need to control these images becomes central to the modern campaign, so as to control the campaign itself. This is essentially what these ‘masters in communications’ do: they “work with the candidate to fine-tune his message and image and communicate his vision of the country’s future to the people” (Newman, 1994, p. 54). In other words, they help create and control, his image:

The public relations man (And his technically oriented colleagues) can go to work on a candidate in order to nurture and modify those characteristics of the candidate most likely to draw a positive reaction from the audience. His smile can be coached. His grooming and dress can be changed. He can be kept in front of a microphone and cameras for hours, just like an actor, in order to produce a result that satisfies the producer and the director. Scores of photographs can be taken in order to get the properly salable product for the billboards. (Bloom, 1973, pp. 256-257)

Before the “presidential image” can be further explored, it is necessary to define exactly what an image entails. An “image” refers to “the subjective record of sense-experience (which is not a direct copy of actual experience, but has been “projected,” in the process of copying, into a new dimension, the more or less stable form we call a *picture*” (Alvesson, 1990, p. 375). Or, in more precise terms, an image is a “holistic and vivid impression” held by a group of people about a person, product, service or organization based on the pictures and messages that this image projects through a communications medium (Alvesson, 1990, p. 376). There are several inherent qualities to images. Boorstin (1987) outlines these qualities:

- 1) *An image is synthetic.* It is planned: created especially to serve a purpose, to make a certain kind of impression...It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product, or service.
 - 2) *An image is believable.*
 - 3) *An image is passive...* Once the image is there, it commonly becomes the more important reality.
 - 4) *An image is vivid and concrete.* It often serves its purpose best by appealing to the senses...It is not enough if the product, the man, or the institution has many good qualities appropriate to it. One or a few must be selected for vivid portrayal. (i.e.: Kennedy’s hair)
 - 5) *An image is simplified.*
 - 6) *An image is ambiguous...* It must suit unpredictable future purposes, and unpredicted changes in taste
- (Boorstin, 1987, p. 185-193).

As Bill Kurtis said, however, “there is more to the game than the imagery through which the candidates associate themselves. There is also the image they personally project” (“The Living Room Campaign,” 1992). President Reagan’s speechwriter, Peggy Noonan, also stressed the need for certain inherent qualities:

In a president, character is everything. A president doesn’t have to be brilliant; Harry Truman wasn’t brilliant, and he helped save Western Europe from Stalin. He doesn’t have to be clever; you can hire clever...But you can’t buy courage and decency, you can’t rent a strong moral sense. A president must bring those things with him. (Pfiffner, 2004, p.4)

The important dimensions of a person's character that are perceived to be "presidential" can be divided into five categories:

1) Competence.

Competence refers to a candidate's past political experience, comprehension of political issues and perceived intelligence. Competence is a natural advantage for incumbent candidates (Miller et al., 1984).

2) Integrity.

Integrity includes trustworthiness, honesty, sincerity, empathy and candor. Candor refers to the person being frank and forthcoming about all significant aspects of a situation. Pfiffner (2004) says, "People want a president who can respond to their emotional needs, one who understands what and how they feel. As the government has become larger, more powerful, and more distant, empathy has become more important... Integrity implies a wholeness or consistency between one's outward and inner life and a consistent presentation of one's self from group to group" (Pfiffner, 2004, p. 13).

3) Reliability.

Reliability is based on a candidate's dependability, strength, assertiveness, consistency and decisiveness (Miller et al, 1984). A charge often brought against politicians is that they lack consistency, or are "flip-floppers." American's do not want a politician that sways with public opinion (Zhu, 1994).

4) Charisma.

Charisma deals with a candidate's social abilities: his friendliness, extraversion, humor, warmth and calm attitude in the face of tension and stress (Miller et al., 1984).

5) Personal.

The personal category combines all personal qualities: history, age, religion, and physical movements, appearance, and speech (Miller et al., 1984).

Studying the perceived trait characteristics of candidates helps us to engage in what is called "image formation" (Funk, 1996, p. 99). "Image formation is the process of inferring characteristics of the person based not only on what we observe, but also on implicitly held notions of the characteristics implied by what we observe" (Funk, 1996, p. 99). For example, when political candidates are kissing babies and shaking hands, many will infer that they are caring and friendly. Bob Squier makes the connection between inherent character and image clearer ("The Living Room Campaign," 1992). He expressed that in order for the image-formed persona to succeed, natural, innate qualities are necessary:

He could be the most brilliant candidate in the world, but if you don't have that charisma that ability to communicate and cut across through that 21 inches of television, you can't

win. You've got to have that personality, that television persona that very few candidates really have. ("The Living Room Campaign," 1992).

The natural persona and the image persona are mutually dependent upon one another and on the well televised persona in order to survive. This is because, new standards of what it means to be presidential have emerged from the television age. Candidates must not only transmit the qualities that appear "presidential," they must also transmit qualities that are telegenic. And in order to succeed in both of these tasks, natural abilities are necessary.

Those who are said to be "telegenic" are often physically attractive and have a cool, calm and collective way of speaking and acting in front of the camera. Waterman (1999) shed much light as to what composes a "telegenic" person. They say, a "telegenic" person is often outgoing, sociable, friendly, looks and sounds good on television and may be youthful, witty and intelligent (Waterman, 1999). Bucy (1999) sites a persons' "ability to connect with viewers through the camera lens" as an equally important "telegenic" quality (Bucy, 1999, p. 193).

Candidates aim to project images of themselves based on the above-mentioned qualities, even if they do not genuinely possess such qualities. Max Weber (1947), according to Kendall, draws this distinction in his evaluation of two different types of charisma:

Pure charisma is the result of a leader's exceptional qualities; routinized charisma occurs because of the authority inherent in an office or position. Even though today's political visions are sometimes offered up by "manufactured" charismatics (e.g., charisma based primarily on "photo ops" and staged "media events") rather than what Weber thought of as pure or genuine types, Weber's emphasis on the charismatic mission as one of the bases of organizational and political legitimacy suggests the importance of a vision. (Kendall, 1995, p. 95)

This "vision," also referred to as a "message," "theme," "style" or "image," has become increasingly more important in the modern political campaign. As Hacker (2004) notes:

Widely known and respected political campaign consultant Richard Wirthlin (2002), in a recent speech, drew attention to how much message strategies can affect the dynamics of

election campaigns and how important visions and themes are to producing changes in perceptions of the candidates. (p. 11)

In order for the image strategy to succeed, it must remain consistent and repeated throughout the campaign. “A single, repeated message has the greatest chance of influencing the public’s image of a candidate. A variety of messages may deter any single message from being retained, and may combine to create a confused and less persuasive image” (Miller, 1994, p. 92). Bennett (2001) further explores the components of image strategy. He refers to image consistency and repetition as “message composition,” composing a simple theme or message for the audience to use in thinking about the matter at hand” (p. 120). “Message composition” helps to assure that voters will retain this message and dismiss competing (negative) messages sent from the opposing candidate:

Continued repetition of a single issue by the candidate maximizes the likelihood that the public will learn about those things that the candidate considers important....the emphasis in a single issue prevents competing campaign messages from masking or diluting the candidate’s preferred message. (Miller, 1994, p.93)

Bennett (2001) calls this message salience, “Saturating communications channels with this message so that it will become more conspicuous than competing messages” (Bennett, 2001, p. 120).

Additionally, the image campaign often focuses more on “*how* a person talks about something rather than *what* he talks about” (Smith, 1994, p. 102). This strategy seems to succeed, given that the average American remembers this “overall impression.” Hiebert details some ingredients of this image:

They should exude confidence and assuredness, for it is the man we are looking at and not so much his message that is all important. We tend to like and judge people by their style and appearance. Our memories of words fade long before we forget the physical impression of an individual. We recall in terms of overall impressions. (Hiebert, 1975, p. 103)

Because of this emphasis on *how*, the modern campaign is often filled with symbolic action.

Often times, these images consist of a single or set of symbols. These symbols help the viewer to understand the larger message behind the image:

Symbols permit the recounting and vicarious sharing of experiences with people who did not participate in those experiences firsthand. Because of symbols, complex ideas and messages can be transmitted simply- as when the appearance of a uniformed police officer conveys a larger set of understanding to people at the scene of a crime. (Bennett, 2001, p. 125)

And so, as Kendall (1995) concludes, “Thus, even in its most facile manifestations, campaign communication can be analyzed as symbolic action that assists candidates in developing and maintaining public support for themselves and their policy preferences” (Kendall, 1995, p. 117).

The symbolic actions of the image campaign are often composed of emotional appeals (pathos), rather than intellectual appeals (logos) or appeals based on the speaker (ethos). Pathos bases an argument on emotions, whereas logos base an argument on intellectual facts and ethos on the credibility of the speaker (Golden, 1997). Hacker (2004) describes the use of pathos as central to the strategy of Wirthlin, a well-known campaign consultant. “The most central Wirthlin strategy is to persuade by reasoning and motivating by linking his candidates...to emotions and values” (Hacker, 2004, p. 11). Goodman, a political advertising specialist, also says, according to Diamond and Bates, that he “prefers music to issues in his advertising, and he bases his spots in emotions rather than research” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 293). One way in which consultants insert emotional appeals is by incorporating fear and connecting this fear to the political opponent:

Certainly, war and peace have traditionally been issues where fear appeals could be easily used in political spots...However, issues such as crime, Social Security, and health care have also provided ripe opportunities for fear appeals. A 1968 Richard Nixon took advantage of voter concerns about crime in an ad that showed a woman walking alone at night in a suspenseful situation, while a voice-over proclaimed:

Announcer: Crime of violence in the United States have almost doubled in recent years. Today a violent crime is committed every 60 seconds, a robbery every 2 ½ minutes, a mugging every 6 minutes, a murder every 43 minutes, and it will get worse unless we take the offensive. Freedom from fear is a basic right of every American. We must restore it. THIS TIME VOTE LIKE YOUR WHOLE WORLD DEPENDS ON IT. NIXON. (Johnston, 2002, p. 288-89)

Another way in which emotional appeals are conferred is through attempts at achieving identification with the voters. Identification is, according to Burke (1969), as quoted by Kendall, “a process of creating an ideologically based unity with an audience” (Kendall, 1995, p. 118). Kendall (1995) explains that by establishing this unity, “candidates also establish the dominance of their interpretation of the political world” (p. 118):

Identification draws its power from the fact that we are more likely to find attractive the positions presented by people we also find attractive or with whom we otherwise feel connection. When candidates seek political support from the broader society, they must grasp Burke’s central tenet of identification: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea *identifying* your ways with his. (Smith, 1994, p. 59-60)

This identification is often achieved by forming a “regular guy” persona. In doing this, candidates too often speak colloquially and act in a down-to-earth manner to which the average voter can relate. “It helps, obviously, if he listens to the same music. And jogs. And eats at McDonald’s” (Smith, 1994, p. 395).

The identification strategy is part of a larger narrative format often used by campaigns. As quoted by Mackey-Kallis, Fisher (1987), argues the importance of the narrative format to Western cultures. “We experience life as a series of ongoing narratives, as conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles, and ends” (Mackey-Kallis, 1991, p. 308). According to Bordswell (1985), as quoted by Mackey-Kallis, “narrative’s appeal lies in the audiences’ capacity and tendency to create coherence and meaning. A “canonical” story format, a string of events that reveals chronological order and linear causality, is either “discovered” or constructed by viewers in any

film (or television) experience” [parenthesis added] (Mackey-Kallis, 1991, p. 308-309). “A predominant American cultural mythology is the “West” or the “new frontier.” America...has often “drawn upon the frontier for its mythic identity... The pioneer spirit has shaped the American dream and infused its rhetoric” (Mackey-Kallis, 1991, p. 309). The central focus of any narrative is the good-guy, the hero. And so, campaign strategists build not just a presidential persona that the average voter can relate to, but also a persona that the average voter wishes they could become:

A candidate’s image- his narrative representation- in sum, must strive to evoke by parallel what we, ourselves- our personal selves- are trying to become. More important, that candidate must be similarly life-situated. Historied. Similarly pained. Scarred. Similarly conflicted. (Smith, 1994, p. 395)

The legacy of the American hero itself is a figure to be imitated and admired. Every child grew up with him: the rugged cowboy of *John Wayne* movies, the military hero of *The Green Berets*, the maverick cop fighting to keep law and order in *Dirty Harry* and *Die Hard*, the ordinary-extraordinary super-hero in *Indiana Jones* and Tom Cruise in *Mission Impossible* and the citizen hero beating the odds of the common man in *Rocky* and *Rudy* (Adatto, 1993). These central figures have all taken a chance, worked hard and battled adversity to succeed. According to Adatto, Fisher (1982) explains that to be an American hero one must “display the qualities of individualism, achievement, and success” (Adatto, 1993, p. 126):

They typically prove their strength through one-on-one combat with their adversaries...despite his fierce individualism, the maverick acts not for himself but on behalf of a community worthy of his efforts. He is at once an insider and an outsider, an insider in that he shares the highest ideals of the nation or community he serves, an outsider in that he is no organization man. He typically distrusts or disdains the officials with whom he must deal; more often than not, the institutions and organizations he encounters either corrupts the ideals he seeks to vindicate, or simply get in his way...The maverick hero could survive this loss of faith in institutions because he was not identified with institutions in the first place. His identity depended instead on a mystic marginality. As an insider-outsider, he had always vindicated American ideals while rebelling against institutional constraints (Adatto, 1993, pp. 126-127).

As we grow up with these mythical heroes, we begin to look for these heroes in our everyday lives. We look to similar such figures as we grow: maybe our fathers at first, then athletes, and finally, political leaders, “the maverick archetypes those movies defined have found their way, in new form, into our political imagination” (Adatto, 1993, p. 134). Darman (1996) describes his own experiences:

In America, we are conditioned to look for heroes. As kids, many of us start out with cowboys. My first heroes happened to be cowboys like Hopalong Cassidy and the Lone Ranger. They seemed real enough to me. I then moved on to baseball heroes, Ted Williams; and then, in my teens, to a President. So it is natural, perhaps, that in seeking to advance a public policy perspective, many of us continue to hope—even if only unconsciously—for the political equivalent of the cowboy hero on a great white horse. It is immature. But we do it. (Darmon, 1996, p. 346)

And so, political candidates are there for us; more than willing to give us the image of the hero, that we so desperately crave. They become the man on the “great white horse,” figuratively speaking (in most cases). They portray themselves “as defenders of law and order...as outsiders to Washington and the political establishment, as redeemers of the ideals betrayed by unresponsive political institutions” (Adatto, 1993, p. 134, 171).

These hero figures are essential ingredients to an overall narrative, the American Dream; “the American hero is the symbolic embodiment of this dream in a single person, most predominantly in certain presidents” (Adatto, 1993, 171). Like any story, this “American Dream” narrative often begins with the introduction of the main characters. The same remains true for the first step of a campaign strategy, as is most easily seen in the first political spots of the campaign:

The first act of the advertising strategy ensues that the voters have some sense of the candidate. At its most basic level this means establishing name identification as a foundation on which to build subsequent information. Spots aiming for name ID are easily recognizable; they hammer home the candidate’s name repeatedly and often show

it on screen as well. i.e. a 1960 John Kennedy used a two-minute jingle to repeat “Kennedy” dozens of times. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 297)

Mostly, however, the ID spot attempts to narrate the candidate’s life up until that point. “The ID spots trace compact narrative histories of the candidate’s life. Through film footage or stills, these spots frequently show the passages of childhood, school, military service, adulthood, family, and a life in politics” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 302).

The second phase in both the every-day narrative and in the campaign narrative strategy is building an argument. “We have been told who the candidate is; now we are supposed to be told what the candidate stands for” (Diamond & Bates, 1992). This typically consists of laying out the ideals and beliefs of the candidate, many times in the form of campaign issues (Diamond & Bates, 1992). These ideals and beliefs are often general and appeal to emotions, so as to allow voters to identify with the issues that this candidate supports (Diamond & Bates, 1992). Charles Guggenheim, who introduced filmmaking to politics, says of this phase, “I tend to use the candidate in real situations...This material shows the person in greater depth than just the fact that he’s for or against an issue” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 310). Additionally, Goodman says he uses spots that add an emotional element because “most people will agree that voting is a matter of the heart, what you feel about someone, rather than a matter of the mind...the mind takes what the heart feels, and interprets it”(Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 311).

The third phase of the narrative campaign is the attack phase (Diamond & Bates, 1992). This is when an “evil” is introduced in opposition to the ‘good’ candidate. Sometimes this contrast is explicit (hence the prevalence of negative ads), while at other times...it is only implied” (Schultz, 2004, p. 18).

The fourth and final phase of the narrative campaign is the visionary phase. Diamond and Bates (1992) call this the “I see an America...” phase (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 339):

At the very end of the modern media political campaign, as in conventional theater, there usually comes the quieter moment of resolution and reflection. This final phase is short and saccharine sweet...It remains now for each candidate to sum up, to appear on camera in repose, thoughtful and dignified without the overpowering visuals and the strident noises of the campaign. (Diamonds and Bates, 1992, p. 339-340)

The visionary phase allows voters to see how the future would look if they voted for this candidate on Election Day. It is most always a cheery and optimistic outlook (Diamonds and Bates, 1992).

The overall impression of these narrative formats, in a consistent and repeated manner, can significantly impact the election. This is because of “the way that familiar themes, genres, and images (visual, verbal, and aural) draw on our memories and understandings of the world to create rich and lasting impressions of the candidates and their opponents” (Schultz, 2004, p. 18).

According to long time political spot expert, Goodman, as quoted by Diamond and Bates, said campaigns are “really classical drama”:

You try to become the good guy. You dramatize virtue where it exists. You compensate for weakness, real or perceived. You draw a contrast, put the white hat on. You orchestrate it, almost like a production, so that they leave the theater singing your song-or singing your praises. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 297)

Of course, the success of the image-based candidate is often dependent on how much the narrative elements, identification and emotion-laden appeals succeeds. Kaid expresses this saying, “how the public interprets a candidate may well have something to do with how the ‘spinning’ succeeds or doesn’t succeed on the part of spin doctors”

(<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html>). This “image-controlled” environment can drastically affect our real world. An example of this is seen in a Doonesbury cartoon that was printed during the Gulf war. When the war effort was tarnished by news coverage that was sympathetic to the Kurds, the cartoon depicted the situation President George H. W. Bush faced:

“So what happened? What happened to my perfect little victory?” The President asks. His aides reply: “We lost control of the pictures, sir...During the war, we killed 100,000 Iraqis, but we controlled the media, so no one saw the bodies. With the Kurds, it’s a different situation. Every baby burial makes the evening news...I’m afraid we are just going to have to tough it out. At least until we can get the pictures back on our side. (Adatto, 1993, p. 13)

Furthermore, this tight image-control can become a major problem for television reporters who try to present an objective story (let alone those who try to expose the political reality- as harsh as that reality may be):

The problem for reporters is that picture-perfect images are not easy to puncture. Enchanted by the pictures, people don’t listen to the words. “You can do the hardest piece on a candidate,” says Susan Zirinsky, “and if a person isn’t paying attention, the message doesn’t get through.” (Adatto, 1993, p. 92)

The believability of the image is based on the hope that the people will automatically assume that the “candidates’ *visual images* equal their *personality images*, and verbal messages correspond to substantive issues” (Friedenberg, 1994, p. 37). Of course, this is not always the case. Journalists, however, can have a difficult time finding visuals to back up the reality. CBS News Correspondent Lesley Stahl learned this the hard way. Stahl put together a long report showing the gap between Reagan’s carefully styled news images and his actual policies. After the piece aired, Stahl got a call from a “senior White House Official.” This is how the conversation went:

Reagan official: “Great piece”

Stahl: “What?”

Reagan official: “Great piece”

Stahl: “Did you listen to what I said?”

Reagan official: “Lesley when you’re showing 4 ½ minutes of great pictures of Ronald Reagan, no one listens to what you say. Don’t you know the pictures are overriding your message because they conflict with your message? ...They didn’t even hear what you said. So in my mind, it was a 4 ½ minute free ad for the Reagan campaign.”

Stahl: I sat there numb. I began to feel numb because I had covered him for four years and I hadn’t figured it out. (Bennett, 2001, p. 136-137)

Stahl did not have the negative visual evidence she needed to back up her hard-hitting script because the images were never made available, they had been so tightly controlled by the Reagan team. After all, “as one of the Reagan news wizards put it bluntly, “What are you going to believe, the facts or your eyes?” (Bennett, 2001, p. 136-137).

Political consulting and image-control is nothing new to politics. In fact, Machiavelli once wrote, “Everyone can see what you appear to be...whereas few have direct experience of what (*sic*) you really are” (Adatto, 1993, p. 12). Centuries later, however, television has brought the political marketing and image-control industry to a new level. Perhaps one could even say that American politics has itself become “a contest for control of television images” (Adatto, 1993, p. 12).

Background

The Pre-1960 Era

The rise of the image-conscious, star-power politician has formed a new brand of politics in America. A politics in which citizens rely on their television sets to tell them who to vote for as their new leader. This “new politics” contrasts drastically to “old politics,” namely in regard to political parties. “For most of America’s history, campaigning was a party activity. The cultural assumption was that groups of like-minded *citizens* should articulate sets of ideas and policies (platforms) and then ferret out *representatives* who would further those ideas and seek to enact those policies when victorious at the polls” (Miller, 1994, p.16). In terms of strategy, this system depended on a person-to-person approach in which the candidates relied on direct contact with as many citizens as possible so as to spread their message. “Campaigns during this time were driven by the forces of distribution (what we in marketing refer to as the person-to-person contact)”

(Newman, 1994, p. 1-2):

Once upon a time long ago, before television, the leaders of the two political parties met in private and decided whom to put on the ticket; they ran the campaigns and made sure the faithful marched to the polls on Election Day. Then came television and...a new kind of politics. The power to tap this man as front-runner or that man as presidential timber deserving of the viewers’ attention passed from the parties to Walter Cronkite. (Diamond and Silverman, 1995, p. 5)

Television began to shape politics as early as the 1952 race between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. This year was the beginning of a growing trend toward political independence from party politics:

Candidates used to need the blessing of party leaders in order to run, and once running, they needed the help of party workers. That began to change in the 1950s, with the entry into politics of people like Rosser Reeves from ad agencies and later with the rise of the independent media specialists. Expertise slipped from the party’s grasp as new political tools became available, and the parties failed to adapt. Candidates no longer need parties in order to run. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 371-372)

The growth of television and political marketing influenced the 1952 campaign because of two landmark events:

As it happened, 1952 was a year of change for television, as well as for the advertising spot. The year 1952 also transformed the way Americans elected their presidents- a change directly related to the twin developments of television and the TV spot. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 37)

The first TV spot was used by Eisenhower to shape his “television image”

(<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>):

The Eisenhower campaign utilized the talent of successful product advertising executive Rosser Reeves to devise a series of short spots that appeared, just like product ads, during commercial breaks in standard television programming slots. Not only did this strategy break new ground for political campaigning, but many observers have credited the spots with helping Eisenhower to craft a friendly, charming persona that contributed to his eventual electoral success. Stevenson made it easier for the Eisenhower campaign by refusing to participate in this type of electronic campaigning. (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>)

Eisenhower spent between \$800,000 and \$1.5 million on his spots, that’s between ten and twenty times the \$77,000 spent by Adlai Stevenson (Patterson & McClure, 1976). Eisenhower’s Vice Presidential contender, Richard Nixon, also took advantage of the new medium. In an effort to combat corruption charges, Nixon “took his case to the people” on September 23, 1952 (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). In the “Checkers Speech” Nixon “used television in a way it had never been used before to lay out his personal finances and his cultural virtues” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). Nixon’s famous speech, as well as Eisenhower’s introduction of spot advertising, helped to turn the tide “from a party-based to a candidate-controlled political environment” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). By using television “personally, candidly, visually” Nixon and Eisenhower “single-handedly created a new political style” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). These changes, along with the addition of television cameras to press conferences during Eisenhower’s presidency, created a shift in

presidential power. It seems safe to say that the Eisenhower campaign was the beginning of the era of “new politics:”

In 1948 Harry S. Truman announced his determination to bring his presidential reelection effort to the villages and towns of America. He was able, by his own estimation to log 31,000 miles in 3 months and shake the hands of some 500,000 voters. Scarcely 4 years later, Dwight D. Eisenhower sat down in a New York studio to film three dozen television commercials...called “Eisenhower Answers America”...a new era of media campaigning began. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. ix)

The 1960's

As television grew, so did a new breed of Americans; a breed that knew the elements of the modern campaign and knew the importance of its medium: television. “Born in the twentieth century, these new leaders were less rooted than their elders. Freer of party commitments, comfortable on TV, they would embrace the modern campaign” (Troy, 1991, p. 208). John F. Kennedy “epitomized this new American;” making him “the first television president” (Troy, 1991, p.208; Waterman, 1999 p. 143). Kennedy himself described this fundamental change in political thought, saying, “The searching eye of the television camera scrutinizes the candidates- and the way they are picked. Party leaders are less willing to run roughshod over the voters' wishes and hand-pick an unknown, unappealing or unpopular candidate in the traditional “smoke-filled room” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). Kennedy understood, perhaps more than any of his predecessors, the importance of image and the tremendous influence television could have in shaping that image. And he did. “Say the word “president” and each of us conjure up an image. Until 1960, conventional wisdom had it that a president was tall middle-aged, heterosexual, Caucasian, Protestant, and male” (Jamieson, 1996, p. 122). Having two of those “presidential” criteria’s against him, that being his youth and Catholic upbringing, Kennedy knew he had to re-shape the “presidential” image or risk losing the election. Kennedy also understood that “political success on television is not, unfortunately, limited only to those

who deserve it. It is a medium which lends itself to manipulation, exploitation and gimmicks. It can be abused by demagogues (*sic*), by appeals to emotion” (“A force that has changed the political scene,” 1960). Using this knowledge as his guiding force, Kennedy helped to bring to power the modern campaign adviser:

The role of the campaign adviser quickly evolved from one of technical adviser unwelcome in the strategy sessions that governed the campaign to campaign insider responsible for the strategy for all campaigner’s advertising and, often, for its communication strategy, as well. In this evolution the power of the media consultant and the person’s autonomy progressively increased. Concurrently, in a story that requires another book, polling and media production moved from a passing acquaintance to an intimate liaison. (Blume, 1985, p. 13)

In this effort to paint a new concept of what it meant to be “presidential,” Kennedy’s advisers, with the help of Kennedy’s innate “telegenic” qualities, helped to form the lively, charismatic “presidential” image that we hold today. In doing so, they also helped to further a candidate-centered, rather than party-centered, approach to campaigning. No longer was the focus on creating a party platform, but rather, constructing an ideal candidate image. This shift represented a shift in marketing strategy from a person-to-person, distribution, approach, to one referred to as the “product concept, which stresses the importance of manufacturing a quality product” (Newman, 1994, p. 1-2).

The landmark event in the 1960 election was the “Great Debates,” particularly the first debate between Kennedy and Nixon. “The first Kennedy-Nixon debate remains to this day, for those who saw it as it happened, the most memorable event of the television era” (Plissner, 1999, p.131). Here, perhaps more so than in the other debates and campaign activities, the candidate’s image was the central focus. News coverage repeatedly emphasized the visually appealing qualities of Kennedy, such as his full hair and white pearly smile. Meanwhile, they criticized Nixon for his visually unappealing qualities, such as his sweaty forehead and pale face. In

showing us the power of images, the Great Debate provided a powerful lesson for future candidates; “a lesson not lost on the man who had been defeated by Kennedy in 1960- Richard Milhous Nixon” (Waterman, 1999, p. 50). Nixon quickly learned from his mistakes, and in subsequent debates prepared his image accordingly. He quickly realized the tremendous emphasis that television had placed on image. With this in mind, Nixon went on to run in 1964 and 1968 with a new strategy. As quoted by Newman (1994), this strategy was outlined by the journalist Joe McGinnis in his book *The Selling of the President*:

Work went into making Nixon look as good as possible on television by using persuasive appeals in commercials to convince people to vote for him. We label this the *selling concept*, in which the focus of the campaign organization shifts from an internally to externally driven operation. This is a significant shift in focus because it reflects the importance of relying on information generated from sources other than those within the campaign or party organization. Here the voter’s reaction to the candidate’s media appearance becomes critical. However, as with the product concept, the focus is still on the candidate. (Newman, 1994, p. 1-2)

Nixon, with the advice of his political consultants, put an emphasis on creating a “new Nixon,” one that emphasized a personalized and intimate approach to campaigning. “In 1960, Richard Nixon used still pictures to give himself a heroic, man on the cusp aura...In 1968 Nixon countered his impersonal image by being the first candidate shown through close-up” (“The Living Room Campaign,” 1992). By following the advice of his advisers and increasingly using the television as his main medium, Nixon continued the focus on political marketing; a focus television’s emphasis on image helped to create. Nixon, however, created a new way of communicating directly with the people during his time in office. With the aim of controlling the flow of information out of the entire executive branch and, thus, “going over the heads of the press,” Nixon created the Office of Communications (Bennett, 2001, p. 134). Creating the office was just one of the many signs that political marketing had become of vital importance to the modern campaign. It seems that somewhere along its evolutionary process, political marketing

became more than just a campaign activity. It became a profession. In 1957, just 41 public relations firms offered campaign services. By 1972, however, about 60 firms did the “bulk of their business in political campaigns” and at least 200 others “offering professional campaign management services as part of their business” (Bloom, 1973, p. 218). Furthermore, by 1969 former Humphrey media director, Joe Napolitan, had founded the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC). With the rise of both the television and the political marketing industries, “politainment” was born. Robert Ailes, one of Nixon’s main consultants, realized this shift and its foreshadowing of what was to come, “This is the beginning of a whole new concept. This is it. This is the way they’ll be elected forevermore. The next guys up will have to be performers” (Bloom, 1973, p. 218).

The 1980’s

The modern political campaign, an infant during the 1960’s, grew to reach full adolescence by the 1980’s. In fact, in 1968, the term “photo-op” was used just once. By the 80’s the term had become a popular turn of phrase (Adatto, 1993). “Staged photo opportunities, contrived media events, carefully crafted sound bites, and highly coordinated spin-control efforts had become standard tactics in the battle to control the image that appears on the evening news” (Adatto, 1993, p. 14). The 1980’s, the Reagan years, made it possible to point out specific political marketing “schools of thought... and strategies used to manipulate candidate images for television” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). The Reagan years also allowed the White House Office of Communications to fully develop “into the well-oiled public relations machine that helped turn Reagan into the Great Communicator” (Bennett, 2001, p. 134). The change to “new politics” had been made:

Most of what we observed in the 1980s—the pervasiveness of television, the skill of the political ad people, the clash between the old politics and the new politics, the growing

sophistication of the viewing public, the increasingly nasty tone of the attack ads-fits in with developments that began when the broadcast advertising arts first came to American politics. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 32)

Reagan, with a background in Hollywood, was the quintessential “performer” that Ailes had amazingly predicted would soon arrive to the political scene:

Ronald Reagan and television have become American clichés. Reagan grew up with television and television with him. By the time he became president, both had matured. Reagan brought to the camera what the camera most prized: a strong visual presence and a vaunted affability. (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>)

Reagan developed his own communications style, one that quickly added new qualities to the “presidential” image. This style was known as “Reaganesque: visual, touching, elliptical, never noisy or brash” (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). Much of this style focused on Reagan’s innate ability to concretize abstract issues, an ability that was central to success on television:

By finding the essential narrative in these matters, and then by humanizing those narratives, Reagan produced his own unique style. Television favors that style since it is, after all, the most intimate of the mass media, with its ability to show emotion and to do so in tight-focus. (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>)

With this shift, along with the economic pressures that followed from an increased deficit, stations shifted their coverage toward one that was even more dramatic, clear in message, and simple in plot:

By 1988, television’s tolerance for the languid pace of political discourse, never great, had all but vanished. Not only had the average sound bite for presidential candidates dropped from 42.3 seconds to 9.8 seconds, but in 1968 almost half of all sound bites were 40 seconds or more, compared to less than 1 % in 1988. In fact, it was not uncommon in 1968 for candidates to speak uninterrupted for over a minute on the evening news (21% of sound bites); in 1988, it never happened...While the time the networks devoted to the candidates’ words sharply declined between the two elections, the time they devoted to visuals of the candidates unaccompanied by their words increased by over 300%. (Adatto, 1993, p.25)

With “the continual blending of news and entertainment, a 20 year trend in American media...a growing number of Americans (started to) get their news from non-traditional news sources: The irreverent comedy of *The Daily Show*; the anecdote-oriented, confessional template of afternoon network TV” (Lordan, 2004, p. 28). These trends made politicians ever more reliant on communication professionals who designed their messages to keep them “on point,” and, above all, to keep them away from spontaneous exchanges with the press, the public and opponents; exchanges the “politainer” may not be able to handle even with the help of his (and no doubt one day her) “puppeteers.”

The 1990's and Today

The merger of politics and entertainment continued into the 1990's, as candidates took center stage on shows like the *Arsenio Hall Show*, *David Letterman*, *Saturday Night Live* and *Today*. This was part of the political marketing trend to decrease the amount of “spontaneous” appearances so as to decrease the control of television and journalists and increase the control of campaign consultants. The vital importance of campaign-centered control was made evident during the 2004 primaries with the media's exploitation of the “Dean Scream.” Had the event not been “spontaneous,” perhaps Dean and not Kerry would have been the presidential candidate.

It is not a coincidence that landmark events in the 1992 election between Bill Clinton, George Bush and Ross Perot, include Perot's announcement on *Larry King Live* that he was running independent and Clinton's sax performance on *Arsenio Hall*. These shows had a “cozy” “friendly” atmosphere, eliminated the criticism often sported by the press, and increased the control of the candidate. Schultz (2004) presents a market-driven reason why candidate controlled messages are now the norm:

Denying television news coverage forces candidates to buy ads on television, and candidate appearances on late-night television boost ratings, thereby increasing media

profits. Why give free candidate-centered coverage when one can force them to buy expensive air time? Why give face time on the 6:30 P.M. news when an appearance on *Letterman* or *Leno* will produce higher Nielson ratings and more profits. (p. 227)

Schultz's assessment does not explain the reasoning behind the 1992 election's second debate. During the second debate, which took place on October 25, a town hall format was used for the first time in presidential debate history. With this momentous debate, the public took the role of the press as they directly questioned the presidential hopefuls. This event and other new media formats "completed a cycle whereby the president became a rhetorical entrepreneur and the nation's press an afterthought" (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>). Using television in this way, political marketing consultants were able, not only to increase their own control, but also to target key demographics. For example, programs like the *Arsenio Hall Show* targeted the under thirty crowd, while early-morning shows like *Good Morning America* could be enjoyed by professionals before heading off to work. This was part of a new marketing scheme that had been adopted by political consultants in the 1990's:

Some organizations have discovered the value of focusing their attention not on production, product, or sales, but on meeting their customers' changing needs and wants. They recognize that production, products, and sales are all means of producing satisfaction in target markets. Without satisfied customers, these organizations would soon find themselves "customer-less" and tailspin into oblivion. (Newman, 1994, p. 31-34)

Using this new strategy meant consumer needs must first be identified, products (in this case the candidate) were then molded according to those needs and specific mediums were used to hit the key demographics. Thus, the campaign strategy shifted from a party-centered approach prior to 1960 and a candidate-centered approach through the 60's, 70's and 80's, to a consumer-centered approach in the 90's and today. The consumer-centered approach is based on the concept that consumers (or citizens, either works in the modern campaign) must be able to identify with their candidate. This has created a new image of what it means to be "presidential:"

Because of television's celebrity system, presidents are losing their distinctiveness as social actors and hence are often judged by standards formerly used to assess rock singers and movie stars (i.e. whether they wear boxers or briefs, as was demonstrated in Clinton's 1993 MTV appearance). (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>)

And so, just as rock singers and movie stars try to achieve the “we’re just like you” image to achieve identification, so do presidential candidates. This forms an image of the president, not as the Chief Magistrate, the King of Camelot or the leading actor, but as the “regular guy.” As Bill Kurtis said in a 1996 interview, “We started out looking up to candidates...then they came down to our level. Eventually they just became one of the guys” (“The Living Room Campaign,” 1992).

In emphasizing image over issue, television and political marketing have helped to create “new politics;” a system in which substance is usually lacking. Of the most recent presidential campaign, Lordan (2004) says:

Beyond the obvious- the implausible statistical distortions, the vicious personal attacks, the occasional flat-out lie- something far more damaging to the profession (public relations) and the political process, is happening in this year's election. We are witnessing yet another campaign that looks more like a game of Trivial Pursuit, with a great deal of fuss and bother about topics that aren't really that significant. This focus on the unimportant comes at an enormous expense, as larger, more complicated issues receive far less attention, or in some cases, get ignored completely. (p. 27)

Taking a quick look back at the 2004 campaign headlines brings us “The Dean Scream and W's ‘nuclear.’ Botox injections and snowboard photo ops. A vice president who drops the ‘F-bomb’ and the wife of a candidate who says ‘shove it’” (Lordan, 2004, p. 27). If this election really was “the most important election of a generation,” then where are social security, education and Medicare? (Lordan, 2004, p. 27). Where are the issues that actually make a difference in people's lives? Or perhaps more importantly, what impact are these changes having on our democratic process and our citizens? (Adatto, 1993, p. 25).

Significance of the Problem

As television increases the emphasis and importance of image, issues will continue to get lost in a “vast wasteland” of sound-bites, photo-shoots and pseudo events (Minnow, National Association of Broadcasters, 1961). The importance of issues is based on the democratic belief that “to make rational decisions, a voting public must be able to consider the candidates’ stands on the campaign issues” (Johnston, 2002, p. 282). These issues, however, are becoming lost. Bill McKibben emphasizes this loss in *The Age of Missing Information*. He says that, through television, we lose much of the information that matters most. McKibben attributes this to the idea that television has created, what McLuhan calls, a “global village,” or in the case of presidential campaigns, a “national village” (McKibben, 1992, p. 45). McKibben says there is a “political impulse toward globalization, toward standardization- and in the process creates the intimacy of a village” (McKibben, 1992, p. 45). Emphasizing the image of the candidate serves the needs of both the candidates and the network owners. Network owners are striving to appeal to this “national village.” In doing this, they must standardize the information so as to make it appealing to the viewing audience. Broadcasting issues fractionalizes society (Derving, 1989). Issues may also be too abstract and difficult for the whole viewing audience to understand (Zhu, 1994). For example, issues involving the economy are often hard for a typical citizen to grasp. Images, on the other hand, create identification, and thus, interest (Bucy, 1999). We can identify with a candidate that is portrayed as a strong father and loving husband. Whether or not the viewer agrees with the political positions of the candidate, they will probably watch the pre-planned photo-ops of the candidate visiting an elementary school. As McKibben says, in television “we can find subjects of interest to all only by erasing the content, paring away information- the things that interest me may not interest, or even be comprehensible, to you” (McKibben, 1992, p. 48). And so, television focuses on the image so as to interest everyone.

Meanwhile, station owners are doing a service to the candidates by presenting their personal side. In doing this, however, “we lose prodigious amounts of information” (McKibben, 1992, p. 41). Such information as the candidates’ positions on health care, social security, education and foreign policy are rarely emphasized over photo-ops. In addition, television’s sound-bite and quick visual format filters information to a bare-minimum. No matter how much we tune in, we continue to hear the same sound-bites and see the same visuals. “It’s not as if, by watching every moment of television...you can really glimpse what the future holds” (McKibben, 1992, p. 164). It seems that we are choosing candidates based on superficial and character-based qualities, rather than formulating our decisions on the issues that will affect our lives and our futures.

Bennett (2001) notes this change:

...as the diversity of audiences and channels increases, information about some of the most commonly shared and important aspects of our world is often produced in generic form, wholesaled to many outlets, and later dressed up or down, as the format of a particular channel and the profile of its audience dictates. (Bennett, 2001, p. 80-81)

A second concern is that the emphasis on visual aspects has made many possible candidates shy away from the position for fear of personal scrutiny or because of increased expectations (Patterson, 1989). Even Walter Cronkite, considered in the 50’s and 60’s the most trusted man in news, feared that television would cause the superficial charmer to always defeat the brilliant but “ugly little man with a bald head” (Troy, 1991, p. 202). “Unfortunately, in the television age a candidate’s appearance and style count for more than his ideas and record,” lamented Richard Nixon in a 1984 interview (Troy, 1991, p.252). Nixon went on to say, “An intelligent candidate who follows his conscience and runs a campaign based entirely in substance- who worries more about getting his views across than about what color shirt will look best on the evening news- is a sure loser” (Berry, 1987, p. 37). Nixon is correct in his assessment. As quoted in Diamond and Bates (1987), political scientists Steven Chaffee and Jack

Dennis conclude, “the electoral advantage of a good-looking face has remained approximately constant from one election to the next (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 385-386). Again Diamond and Bates quotes Fred Wertheimer, of *Common Cause*, who agrees, “any candidate who does not have a ‘pretty face’ and appealing television presence, even though that candidate might well be the most qualified and have positions most in tune with the constituency” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 385-386). Walter Mondale, after being defeated by Reagan, questioned this philosophy, saying, “If voters are really swayable (*sic*) by a smile and a commercial, what are we saying about our democracy?” (Troy, 1991, p.252). The idea that the more charismatic and good-looking candidate will win the election is a chilling thought. As Walter Cronkite said, “Television has made our 150 million citizens casting directors for a living drama. Our politicians, as they never had to be before, must be right for the roles they seek to fill” (Baird, 2003, p. 31). Pfau (2001) states that the rise of an image-oriented culture may also contribute to an increase in cynicism and a lack of trust in government figures. Pfau (2001) says that “national surveys document low levels of confidence in democratic institutions (Pfau, 2001, p. 90).

In a 1963 study entitled *The Civic Culture*, quoted by Diamond and Bates, Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba found “Americans felt proud of their political system” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 374). But Diamond and Bates found that in a 1991 study by the Kettering Foundation, a change had been detected. Citizens now agreed that there were “serious cancers in the body politic” (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 374). Certainly, television and political marketing cannot be the sole areas of which to blame. Vietnam and Watergate can be viewed as vital factors that influenced voter criticism. Dr. Lynda Lee Kaid, Professor at the College of Journalism and Communications in Florida, says, however, that her research does point to a link between voter criticism and the rise of new communication forms:

We hear a lot about political cynicism today, and about the fact that most voters may find themselves questioning whether or not they even need to vote or participate in the campaign. Many people blame that on the many types of media formats. Our own research has shown that there are some legitimate concerns there...some types of formats do a better job of lessening the voters cynicism...spots, for instance, can increase the amount of cynicism a voter feels. (<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>)

One reason for this may be the increased use of the “image.” As Bloom (1973) says:

The change in substance with which we are faced is one that removes the electorate one step further from the Chief of State...The gap between rhetoric and reality is widening. And more and more citizens perceive that a man and man’s “image” are not at all the same thing. (p. 275)

The rise in cynicism may also have contributed to the decrease in voter participation and involvement. As cited earlier, the U.S. ranks 23rd in voter participation among industrialized nations (Lordan, 2004):

Turnout in presidential elections has declined since 1960; barely more than half of eligible citizens voted in 1988, the lowest in 40 years. This is the same period when the amount of money spent on television political advertising has tripled in constant dollars. (Diamond & Bates, 1992, p. 374)

Lastly, with an emphasis on images, a rise of cynicism and a decrease in voter participation, party loyalty may have suffered. “At a point when television could have addressed the parties as institutions, it overwhelmingly focused on individuals...Of these 86% on CNN and 67% on ABC emphasized individuals instead of party institutions” (Kerbel, 1998, p. 192). And so, “the weakening of party ties has helped direct our attention away from long-standing partisan attachments as the sole determinant of vote preferences” (Funk, 1996, p. 98). Americans can now decide for themselves whether they want to support the democratic or republican candidate. Waterman (1999) shows that, in fact, a close-knit local party structure no longer exists to influence the votes. In the election of 1920, less than 5% of voters chose to “split their ticket,” that is, to vote for the candidate of a different party from the one with which they are affiliated. In 1984, however, well after the introduction of television, more than 40% “split their ticket”

(Waterman, 1999, p. 91). As of 1998, less than 1/6th of the population consistently voted for their party identification. “As the long-term influence of party affiliation has become less significant in determining voting behavior, short-term influences such as the images of the candidates...have become increasingly important with regard to structuring the vote”

(Waterman, 1999, p. 91).

Could this one day lead to the collapse of the party system? Kaid, of the University of Florida, thinks it may:

So important has television news coverage of politics become that some observers suggest its growth has been accompanied by and perhaps caused the demise of political parties in American politics. Media producer Tony Schwartz has commented that in the past "political parties were the means of communication from the candidate to public. The political parties today are ABC, NBC, and CBS."
(<http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/>).

Statistical evidence agrees with these observations (Kerbel, 1998; Funk, 1996; Waterman, 1999).

Research Question

In studying the construction of an organized, consistent and concise “presidential” image through the use of the narrative format, I am looking to answer the following:

Do “image candidates” and “issue candidates” form in presidential campaigns?

If so, what are their distinguishing qualities and ultimately who wins the election?

Theoretical Framework

Because so much emphasis is placed on image, the American people may come to believe that this is the most important aspect of a campaign. This based upon the agenda-setting theory. The agenda-setting theory says that, “by focusing more on some issues than others, the media may help set the agenda by influencing how important certain issues are perceived to be” (Sayre, 2003, p. 108). The theory emphasizes that the more the media exposes the people to

certain issues, the more these issues become the main focus of the public's attention. For example, during the 2004 presidential campaign, the media put a heavy focus on the military record of Senator Kerry. By placing much emphasis on this record, television persuades its viewers to believe that this is an important "issue." Cohen explains, "The media may not tell us what to think, but they are stunningly successful at telling us what to think about" (Sayre, 2003, p. 109).

As political marketers tightly control the images of the campaign, they form an agenda. In constructing this agenda, however, it may become increasingly difficult to distinguish the image from the "objective reality it is assumed to illuminate" (Alvesson, 1990, p. 377). And so, in the world of image-making, the lines between reality and fiction become increasingly blurred, until "stories move from truths to fact, not the other way around" (Bennett, 2001, p. 64). For example, scary images of enemies killing innocent Americans (or even their own people) can promote war. This tactic was used by President George W. Bush to foster support for the war in Iraq. By showing 9/11 images and distant car bombs, Bush gained support for America's invasion into Iraq (Norris, 2003). When viewing such images, however, citizens must be aware of their constructed quality:

Such television coverage conveyed, in effect, the paradoxical message: "Behold these striking pictures. But as you behold them, beware of them, for they are not real. They are fake, the products of media consultants and spin-control artists who are trying to move you or deceive you or persuade you. So do not take these pictures at face value. They are setups, contrived for the sake of our television cameras, and in this sense, our cameras lie." (Adatto, 1993, p. 3)

Such, "invented realities" have an equal importance when it comes to political campaigns (Miller, 1994, p.6). When viewing the images of campaign events, like the images of war, citizens must understand that they are created images. In becoming the agenda of the campaign,

however, such images quickly lose their “image” quality and quickly become “real” to much of the American public. Bloom (1973) explains this “image” quality:

The American people will elect as President of the United States in November a nonexistent person- and defeat, likewise, a mythical identity. They will vote for and against a picture that has been painted for them by protagonists and antagonists...The electorate really does not know a candidate- particularly a Presidential candidate-except through his projected image. Most candidates thus tend to become mythical characters in almost the same sense as many Hollywood stars. (pp. 256-257)

We must also keep in mind that “these invented political realities are precisely that- realities.

What is real in political society is that which is paid attention to, defined, valued, disputed, and ultimately seized powerfully by some segment or another of political society” (Miller, 1994, p.6). With the increase in media-driven campaigns and image-conscious coverage, comes the “deepest danger for politics in a television age”- the loss of objectivity in its most literal sense- the “loss of contact with the truth” (Adatto, 1993, p. 27). This “loss of contact with the truth,” says Bennett (2002) may “give audiences a distorted view of power and political consequences.”

He quotes Paletz and Entman:

Power seems to be understood in a limited sense by the media...Stories emphasize the surface appearances, the furious sounds and fiery sights of battle, the well-known or colorful personalities involved-whatever is dramatic. Underlying causes and actual impacts are little noted nor long remembered. Without a grasp of power structures, it is virtually impossible to understand how the political system really works. As a result, the political world becomes a mystical realm populated by actors who either have the political “force” on their side or do not. (Paletz & Entman, quoted in Bennett, 2002, p. 51).

In creating this “mythical realm,” the American public is not exposed to the truth. Perry

puts it this way:

Each of these new-style campaigns is a little like a magician’s act. What you see is the candidate out there on the stump, delivering speeches and making statements...But what the reporters and commentators don’t see- what they don’t report or assess- is that hand under the table, selling the voters through the mass media in their homes...This second campaign is just as important as the first. Probably more important, for the dirt is usually found under the table...and, the dirt these days is usually part of this second, and largely

unobserved, campaign, while in the days gone by it was all part of one campaign. To this extent, the new techniques are responsible for a new and subtle kind of political dirt. (Bloom, 1973, p. 269)

This may have drastic political consequences. If the public understood that these “images” were fake there would not be a problem. Because, however, they do not see the true “reality” this lack of exposure can effect the real world. As Bloom (1973) says:

We may be dealing with managed mythology...but a presidential candidate unlike many performers, is likely to be placed in *some* situations where he must rely upon his own character and intellect and resourcefulness in order to acquit himself decently. (Bloom, 1973, p. 256-257)

Bennett (2001) expresses a similar fear:

If the images contained in official political positions were mere entertainment fare floating about in the electronic ether, there might be less cause for concern. As long as the images in the news are treated as real, however, people may be inclined to respond to them. Even, and perhaps especially, those images with the most dubious links to reality can generate actions in the real world, actions that have real effects: the election of corrupt leaders, the acceptance of oppressive laws or ideas...support of wars...Thus, the news images of the political world can be tragically self-fulfilling. Dominant political images can create a world in their own image- even when such a world did not exist to begin with...Thus, the illusions of news become translated into political realities (Bennett, 2001, p. 117).

Viewing the creation of campaign images through the lens of agenda-setting theory raises the concern that an agenda, created largely through image, may very well become the new “reality.”

Three top British observers Chester, Hodgson, and Page, according to Bloom, agree that, this very area-which they call “the gap between rhetoric and reality”- is “the most disturbing problem in American politics” (Bloom, 1973, p. 260):

The President is an elected politician...Like any other politician in a democracy, he is supported by people who think he will uphold their interests...But the President is not only an elected politician. He is also magic. He is the monarch, emblem, and protector of national unity, defender of the American faith. And so the gap opens again between the rhetoric and reality. It is not enough that he should be a decent, honorable, sensitive man who has succeeded, as Disraeli said when he became Prime Minister “in climbing to the top of the greasy pole.” He must be the divinely ordained leader. (Bloom, 1973, p. 260-261).

This distorted view of the president may significantly change the way citizens regard the democratic practice. According to a study by Pfau (2001):

Just as communication forms can influence people's perceptions of candidates, they also may affect people's attitudes about the democratic process...in the long term, potential influences involving the democratic process are more important than those dealing with candidate perception because...alienation from the political system may challenge its legitimacy and, ultimately, its very existence. (p. 90)

What is needed to prevent this alienation? Hacker (2004) explains, "if we take seriously the notion that image is a set of perceived rather than actual qualities of candidates, we may inquire more abstractly into the typicality of images of winning versus losing candidates" (p. 179).

As a result of the interrelationships among the key elements of the American information system- namely, the people, politicians, and the press- the American democracy has entered a vicious political cycle:

- As news space shrinks, political players hire communication experts to devise strategic political messages to capture it.
- How do they capture news space? By using technologies of market research and persuasion to stage, script, and spin news for its most dramatic media effect.
- Given the changes in the news business, the news-making potential of political messages and staged events goes up as the complexity and information richness of those messages goes down.
- The result is ever-greater public disillusionment with both politics and the news (Bennett, 2001, p. 105).

Review of the Literature

Today, the perceived character of a candidate is considered by voters to be an important quality in choosing their president. Pfiffner (2004) explains why this may be true:

From the perspective of citizen voters, character is crucial because no one can predict the situations that will confront a president once in office. The issues that were pressing in a campaign may no longer be important, and the promises made in a campaign may not be appropriate for new circumstances. New and unforeseen crises may face the country. (p. 6)

Pfiffner's conclusion has been corroborated by other studies (Hacker, 2004; Funk, 1996).

According to an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* study of the 1996 presidential campaign, between 24% and 27% of respondents reported that their voting decision was based more on the character of the candidate rather than on issue positions (Hacker, 2004). Furthermore, "Across more than twenty years of NES surveys in the United States, Miller and Miller found personal characteristics to have a greater relative impact on vote choice than did either issues or references to party affiliation of the candidate" (Funk, 1996, p. 102).

What characteristics are considered most important? Andersen, Bales and Slater (1955), and later Hare (1962), confirmed the studies of Nimmo, Mansfield and Saveage, saying that "persons often select leaders who are socially liked or attractive" (Hacker, 2004, p.31). Outside the political arena, physical attraction has been noted as the key ingredient to success, as Aronson (1972), quoted by Andeso says, "Physical attraction has been found to lead to success in salary, grades and social advancement" (quoted in Hacker, 2004, p.31). Other qualities were also deemed as important. In a study conducted by Percy Tannenbaum, Bradley Greenberg, and Fred Silverman (cited in Hacker, 1977), respondents were requested to report their conceptualizations of the ideal president against two presidential candidates, Richard Nixon and John Kennedy. The researchers found that the ideal president is positioned, first and foremost, as

wise, fair, strong, active and calm (Hacker, 2004). Miller et al. (1984) found similar results, dividing these qualities into the sub groupings of personal characteristics, as well as competence, integrity, reliability and charisma (Miller, 1984).

Not only were these image qualities perceived as important, they were also found to be stressed over issues in broadcast news programs, talk shows and paid campaign advertising. In fact, “a content analysis of 1,559 stories about the 1992 nomination campaign on ABC, NBC, and CBS from January 1 to the end of the Republican convention on August 21 showed that only 544 stories dealt with policy issues” (Waterman, 1999, p. 93). This means as many as 1,015 stories could have been used to cover the “image” of the candidate. The different media forms may produce different levels of image formation. Pfau (2001) found that, out of 450 voters surveyed the final weeks of the 2000 campaign, nontraditional communication forms (i.e. talk shows) “exerted the most influence on perceptions of presidential candidates. Among traditional communication forms, people’s use of television debates exerted considerable influence, but newspapers, magazines, and television news exerted very limited impact” (Pfau, 2001, p. 88). A CBS poll found similar results, finding debates as the most considerable influence (60%), followed by talk shows (45%), conventions (25%) and political advertising (23%) (Jamieson, 1996).

Spot Advertisements

Political advertising merits scholarly attention because of the proven affect it has on candidate assessment and vote choice. Mulder (1979), according to Benoit, found that “advertising in a Chicago mayoral campaign correlated positively with attitudes toward the candidates” (Benoit, 1999, p. 5). Furthermore, according to Benoit, West (1993) analyzed data

from 18 campaigns, and concluded that “political advertisements affected candidates’ images of likeability, elect-ability, and assessment of policy positions” (Benoit, 1999, p.4).

At the heart of the concern, however, is the idea that political spots overemphasize image. If this is true, an emphasis on image may demean the importance of the issues and may result in an electorate that is not well versed on the issues. Hacker (2004) says, “there is no doubt that the rise of televised political ads has helped generate research interest in the images of political candidates” (p. 133). Kaid and Davidson (1986), according to Hacker, analyzed fifty-five radio and television ads of a senatorial race. They found that “television advertising may indeed uniquely qualify as a medium for carrying substantial image information” (cited in Hacker, 2004, p. 136-37). A study by Hacker (2004) confirmed that “exposure to political advertising messages does appear consistently to have a direct effect on candidate image evaluations” (Hacker, 2004, p. 141).

Research studying issue and image advertising, however, seems to be at odds, as several studies have found that issue spots predominate over image spots. “Most research on televised political spots has reported a heavier emphasis on issues than on image” (Benoit, 1999, p. 9). Rudd (1986) agrees, “Many of these content analyses have found the issue content of political commercials to be quite high...Such findings have led researchers to suggest that concerns over the image orientation of political commercials may be exaggerated” (pp. 102-103). Benoit, Hofstetter and Zukin (1979) reported that, in the Nixon/McGovern campaign, 85% of the ads addressed issues (Benoit, 1999). A study by Benoit (1999) found the opposite. Studying image and issue ads over several campaigns, Benoit found that “These campaigns had a slight tendency to prefer character (52%) over policy (48%)” (Benoit, 1999, p. 45). As quoted by Benoit, Joslyn (1986) also reported a slight emphasis on image-oriented spots, “57% of the spots

from 1960 to 1984 mentioned personal qualities... These spots tended to emphasize past deeds (45%) and leadership ability (41%) and personal qualities (37%) when addressed character” (Benoit, 1999, p. 46).

Other researchers have determined that the amount of issue ads decreased during the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. Recently, however, issue ads have shown to be on the rise. Johnston, Kaid & Sanders (1978) confirm this trend, finding “in the 1960 Kennedy vs. Nixon campaign, 84% of the ads were coded as issue ads, whereas in the 1968 campaign of Humphrey and Nixon only 47% of the ads were coded as issue ads” (Johnston, 2002, p. 284). Meanwhile, during the 70’s and 80’s, image ads were shown to increase, perhaps because “many of the special effects technologies began to appear,” and so, “advertisers were experimenting and applying advertising strategies to all types of advertising, including political” (Johnston, 2002, p. 295-60). The campaigns of the 1990s to today show a resurgence of issue ads. One explanation for this is that “the public’s use of alternative media sources and programs such as talk shows” has decreased the need to use these spots as image-building vehicles (Johnston, 2002, p. 295-60).

The findings have much to do with how one defines issue and image spots. According to Rudd (1986), ‘issue’ commercials are those which address specific policy questions, such as taxes or defense, while “image” commercials “focus on the candidate’s personal characteristics and leadership qualities” (Rudd, 1986, p.102). Meanwhile, Johnston (2002) has different definitions:

Of the 1,213 ads in our sample, 35%, or 429 ads, qualified as image ads because they had been coded as dominated by personality characteristics of the candidate. 65% or 784 ads, qualified as issue ads because coders identified them as dominated by issue-related concerns (vague concerns, policy preference, or specific proposal). (Johnston, 2002, p. 286)

Johnston (2002), however, postulates that a dichotomous approach may skew the results:

Because image ads and issue ads sometimes contain elements of both types of information, trying to dichotomize image ads and issue ads may become increasingly difficult. Image ads, for example, may contain some mention of issues, whereas ads coded as issue ads may also address the candidate's personality characteristics. (Johnston, 2002, p. 283)

Rudd (1986) takes a different approach. Instead of dichotomizing the issues and images, Rudd studies how "issue" commercials may influence the image of the candidate, thus becoming a form of the "image" commercial. He found that in "the 1982 gubernatorial campaign of Republican Phil Batt of Idaho...a series of six "issue" commercials- television spots addressing specific policy issues" (Rudd, 1986, p. 102). Although these "issue" ads mentioned a specific political issue, and thus would be defined as "issue" ads, only one actually outlined the candidate's position. Instead, these "issue" ads were designed "to build a positive public image for the candidate in three areas: basic human and social values, personality, and leadership" (Rudd, 1986, p. 103). An example of such an ad is illustrated by Johnston (2002):

This 1968 Humphrey ad focused mostly on Humphrey's personal qualities, but it used the issue of civil rights as an illustration:

Humphrey: Uh, I was brought up in the spirit of, uh, well really, to put it simply, of brotherhood. We never, we had no real religious or racial prejudice in our home. I've had many people ask me how I got interested in civil rights, I said, well just because I'm a person... I guess we just were brought up to believe that people are people.

Announcer: Humphrey-Muskie, two you can trust. (pp. 286-287)

In 1974, O'Keefe studied the television advertisements during the 1972 Nixon-McGovern campaign. Here he was attempting to examine whether or not "the majority of voters base their voting decisions on a candidate's image rather than on knowledge about the candidate's stance on specific issues" (O'Keefe, 1974, p. 404).

Despite the number of clear issues about which the voters could be informed...the "imageering" by politicians and advertising agencies would have reached such a level of sophistication, and voters would have become so conditioned to reacting to images rather than issues, that the majority of voters would be unable to name, much less discuss, three important issues. (O'Keefe, 1974, p. 405)

O'Keefe found that, when asked to name one important issue 38% of those who were able to name one issue cited the "likeability or trustworthiness" and only 27% were able to name a substantive issue (e.g. Vietnam, the economy, social security concerns) (O'Keefe, 1974). Thus, for those who named an issue garnered from the advertisements, clear image characteristics were cited. From this study O'Keefe concluded that "commercials did a poor job of informing the voters about the facts and issues...this lends credence to the criticism that TV ads...serve primarily as image builders rather than vehicles of voter information" (O'Keefe, 1974, p. 410).

Method

During campaigns, details count. Every televised expression, movement and verbal exchange combines to form the "image" of the candidate. This "image" is often part of a larger, what I have labeled, "image scheme." The image scheme is used by the campaign team to produce and control positive exposure, and thus, favorability. In my research, I studied "image schemes" across four presidential campaigns: the Kennedy-Nixon campaign of 1960, the Reagan-Mondale campaign of 1984 and the Kerry-Bush campaign of 2004. The 1960 and 1984 campaigns were chosen because of the innovative ways some of the candidates used the TV medium. For example, in 1960 the Great Debates affected the way we evaluated candidates. In 1984 we had our first actor turned presidential candidate. The 2004 campaign was chosen to compare our process today to previous campaigns.

In my research, I looked to establish a relationship between election winners and a successful narrative image scheme. In order for an image scheme to be successful, it must be consistent and concise. A consistent and concise image is one that is simple, easy to understand and repeatedly shown. Much of the success of this image is based on the creators and molders of the image itself, the campaign advisors and marketing men. Having a skilled, consistent team,

combined with a simple, consistent and repeated message is important to the overall cohesiveness of the image and of the campaign. A variety of images can confuse citizens and may not be as persuasive (Miller, 1994). Much of my research on campaign cohesion stemmed from an extensive amount of secondary research. This research was collected by using the *Quest* and *Metaquest* search engines of a prestigious university in the North East. I used key terms such as: “television,” “media,” “presidential campaigns,” “elections,” “image,” “issue,” “public relations and elections,” “Kennedy, Nixon, 1960 campaign,” “Reagan, Mondale, 1984 campaign,” “Clinton, Bush, 1992 campaign” and “Kerry, Bush, 2004 campaign,” to find the necessary related material. Here, I found a variety of books, journal articles and popular press works that have helped me to gain an in-depth understanding of the campaigns and background information on my problem.

In addition to secondary research, I also conducted primary research in the form of a textual analysis of twenty-four spot advertisements. I chose this format, as opposed to news coverage, talk shows and debates because spot ads are the easiest for campaign staffs to control. Additionally, the American people are repeatedly exposed to such spot advertisements during the campaigns. The twenty-four ads that I viewed were selected from the “EASE History” (<http://www.easehistory.org/castream.asp?id=2>) and “The Living Room Candidate” (<http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php>) websites on the World Wide Web. These sites provide citizens with a selection of the most popular campaign ads from 1952-2004. I chose ads based on the image formation process known as the narrative format. The narrative format is detailed by Diamond & Bates (1992):

Phase One (Biography): Introduces the main hero; detailing who he is and where he came from.

Phase Two (Argument): Builds an argument; telling what he stands for.

Phase Three (Attack): Structures the main conflict; setting up who he is against, and thus, creating a good versus evil dichotomy.

Phase Four (Visionary): Creates a visionary ending; describing the America he sees. (i.e. what the “happy ending” looks like with him as president).

(Parenthesis added)(Diamond & Bates, 1992)

Thus, I chose four ads for each candidate that would most likely fit the description of a biography ad, an argument ad, an attack ad and a visionary ad. Within these ads I coded for what shall be referred to in this study as, “image qualities.” The image qualities themselves were coded based on Daniel Boorstin’s (1987) definition of an image:

- 1) *An image is believable.* (Competence, Integrity and Reliability)...
- 2) *An image is vivid and concrete.* It often serves its purpose best by appealing to the senses...It is not enough if the product, the man, or the institution has many good qualities appropriate to it. One or a few must be selected for vivid portrayal. (Charisma)
- 3) *An image is simplified.*(Consistent and Concise)
(parenthesis added) (Boorstin, 1987, p. 185-193).

The above qualities were further divided, counted and recorded into the following image qualities:

Believability:

Competence:

Indications of competence were based on: the number of unplanned pauses a candidate used, as well as the amount of concrete examples, and the clarity, annunciation and articulation of the candidate in relaying an argument. Competence was also based on verbiage and shots that project political experience. For example, if a candidate was said to be a good vice president, words or images would be used to demonstrate this experience.

Integrity (trust/sincerity)

Indications of integrity were based on: the amount of eye contact the candidate gave to whomever he was talking to (in most cases this is the camera) and by the amount of supporters he was shown to have had. I measured the amount of supporters by counting any large groups of people that were pictured within the spots attending an event of the candidate's, holding campaign signs or chanting the candidate's name.

Reliability (strength, assertiveness and confidence)

Indications of reliability were based on: gestures (finger pointing, the use of hands/arms for emphasis, head movement for emphasis) and posture (an upright versus slouched position, a raised head). Gestures are common ways of suggesting strength (energy) as well as assertiveness. An upright posture and raised head is also a sign of strength, as well as confidence.

*Vivid & Concrete:**Charisma*

Charisma deals with a candidate's social abilities: his friendliness, extraversion, humor, warmth and calm attitude (Miller et al., 1984). I measured charisma based on: an extensive amount of interaction (candidate shown talking or shaking hands with a crowd), smiling/laughing (done by the candidate or any of his supporters), humorous statements and the lack of stuttering, sweating and gaze changes (negative characteristics associated with uneasiness). The warmth and calmness of the candidate were also measured by the general warmth and calmness demonstrated in the ad overall (aspects of the ad we would then attribute to the candidate). This was measured based on any soothing music, mood lighting (lighting in the spot that gives a warm feeling) and peaceful scenes (for example, a sunset over the ocean or a quiet home).

*Simplified:**Consistent and Concise*

Consistency and conciseness of the campaign image is often accomplished using a campaign theme. For example, in Nixon's 1960 campaign the goal was to demonstrate that Nixon was remaining strong to preserve peace. This image was conveyed in every ad by repeating the campaign slogan, "They understand what peace demands." In each ad, I recorded any words or images that referred to the overall message strategy of the candidate.

Narrative Format:

In seeking to attain a consistent and concise image, campaigns often use a narrative format. Thus, I measured how well each ad succeeded in being a biography, argument, attack or visionary ad (Diamond & Bates, 1992).

The amount of narrative included within the spot itself was also coded. The predominate narrative format that arose within my research was, what Fisher (1982) refers to as, the American Dream motif. I coded for the American Dream motif based on what Fisher perceives to be the common elements of this format: patriotism (i.e. flags, red, white and blue, "freedom" "liberty"), upward mobility (i.e. symbolic movements upward as well as aspects like saving for college), family imagery (i.e. husband, wife, children, dog, white picket fence or front porch) and signs of working to succeed.

As part of the narrative format technique, I also coded for any "hero" image that may become consistent throughout the spot ads. The "hero" was another important aspect of the narrative format that was found in the literature I researched. In measuring this "hero" image, I watched for the qualities Smith (1994) assigns to the typical narrative hero, these being a display

of shared national ideals, success and one who works outside the established organization in order to help the community. The hero must be shown to have worked hard, taken chances, battled adversity and ultimately to have succeeded in achieving the “American Dream.” Adatto (1993) cites the most common “hero” formats:

- The American Cowboy
- The Military Hero
- The Maverick Cop
- The Superhero (common man with unique qualities, beating the odds for others)

Another common narrative figure for which I coded was the “regular guy” (Smith 1994). This figure was introduced by Smith (1994) and was judged based on the candidates’ interactions with others and by the environment. For example, a family or work environment was often seen as portraying the candidate as a “regular guy.” Additionally, his language, clothing and the way he acted were also recorded as image qualities.

I coded for the above image qualities by identify and recording the frequency of these qualities within each spot. I then created a table recording this data and comparing the two candidates from each election year. Candidates with the largest amount of image qualities are what I have termed “image candidates.” With newspapers and radio, the voters are made to concentrate on issue positions. When it comes to television, however, “it’s all about show biz” (Sperling, 1988, p. 12).

Findings

The 1960 Kennedy-Nixon Campaign

The introduction of television and marketing men to American politics began to stress the importance of creating a TV friendly image. Kennedy, perhaps more than any of his predecessors, understood the necessity of this image. According to Marshall McLuhan, as quoted in Berry (1987), “John Kennedy can be perceived as a cool candidate on a cool medium; television. Knowing the effect of TV on politicking, he took full advantage of it. Campaigning for president, Kennedy demonstrated a futuristic understanding of television” (Berry, 1987, p. 36). Kennedy not only had the “cool” image, but he also knew how to use it. He perfected his image to every last hair and began to develop a new speaking style that would suit the common American television viewer, “He slowly developed a style of direct, informal, simple speaking, without high-blown rhetoric or bombastic exaggeration, that to some of his listeners was in happy contrast to the oratory of the old-fashioned politicians” (Lansford, 2004, p. 188). This simple style of speaking allowed viewers to easily relate to Kennedy. Kennedy, however, may not have won the election of 1960 without his skilled and consistent team of advisors. Unlike Nixon, Kennedy was careful to listen to his advisors. He knew how important his image was and how important his advisors were in shaping and controlling that image. Bloom (1973) confirms this, “There is evidence that the candidate himself was keenly aware of the importance of his own image and heeded the advice of those who spoke with authority in this subject” (Bloom, 1973, p. 94). Because he listened to his advisors, Kennedy was able to understand and establish control of many of his images:

All presidents throughout American history, before and after John F. Kennedy, have attempted to manage the news to serve their political interests. Kennedy was the master. Management of the news was a daily concern of Kennedy’s... Kennedy once asked Jacqueline Bouvier to postpone announcing their engagement until the *Saturday Evening*

Post printed an article about him, “The Senate’s Gay, Young Bachelor” (Berry, 1987, p. 1).

In addition to listening to his advisors and controlling his already “cool” image, Kennedy also knew how important a simple, planned and consistent message strategy was to the cohesiveness of his overall image. Kennedy, using this cohesiveness, was able to develop, and control his public image. Both his image-making process and his image itself demonstrate the truth behind Kennedy’s campaign theme “a change for the 60’s” (Troy, 1991, p. 208).

Nixon also understood the need for a planned message for his campaign. In fact, more so than the Kennedy campaign, Nixon’s campaign focused on the theme of remaining strong to preserve peace. What Nixon did not realize, however, was the importance of controlling his image, listening to his advisors and paying close attention to his physical appearance and its connection to his overarching theme (Troy, 1991).

In analyzing the Kennedy and Nixon image schemes, I counted and recorded the image qualities of the candidate in each of the ads. Each candidate had: a biography ad that introduced the candidate, his basic qualities and gave a brief history of the candidate; an argument ad that laid down one or more basic platform positions of the candidate; an attack ad which lowered the credibility of the opponent, thus raising the candidate’s credibility; and a visionary ad which focused on the “America” the candidate would create through an abstract, “happy ending” layout of his agenda. The image qualities I recorded are numerically documented, using frequency counts, in the following chart:

Kennedy (K)
Nixon (N)

	Biography Ads	Argument Ads	Attack Ads	Visionary Ads
Believable	K= 22 N= 9	K= 10 N= 7	K= 3 N= 4	K= 10 N= 8
Vivid & Concrete	K= 17 N= 1	K= 7 N= 1	K= 0 N= 1	K= 4 N= 0
Simplified	K= 2 N= 1	K= 0 N= 1	K= 0 N= 1	K= 0 N= 1
Narrative	K= 23 N= 1	K= 10 N= 1	K= 1 N= 1	K= 11 N= 1

Altogether, Kennedy had 45 image appeals in the category of “Believability,” while Nixon received 28; Kennedy had 28 in “Vivid & Concrete,” while Nixon had 3; Kennedy received only 2 appeals in “Simplified,” as opposed to Nixon’s 4 appeals; and Kennedy had 45 appeals in “Narrative,” in contrast to Nixon’s 4. In total, Nixon has 39 image appeals, while Kennedy far outnumbers that at 120 appeals for all the ads.

Biography Advertising

Kennedy’s biography ad was entitled “Jingle.” This ad is composed of a catchy, fast-paced “jingle,” and pictures crowds of Kennedy’s supporters. An animated sequence of banners and state signs is repeated several times over the course of the commercial.

The “Jingle” ad, aside from introducing Kennedy’s name through repetition, emphasizes his experience and trustworthiness. Thus, Kennedy’s biggest strength is in “Believability.” Here, he has 22 image qualities. Lines in the jingle like, “do you want a man for president who's seasoned through and through,” and “do you like a man who answers straight, a man who's always there?” are examples of image qualities coded under the category of “Believability.” Also image qualities for “Believability” were his upright posture and upturned head. Additionally, the use of crowds of supporters was also evidence of “Believability.” The Kennedy team assures that in his ad every segment of the population is represented: African Americans, old women, old

men, college-aged men and women, groups of women, groups of men, men in hard hats (working-class) and men in suits (business class). In one instance, a group of women wore campaign hats and carried “Vote for Kennedy” signs.

While “Believability” is the main focus of this ad, Kennedy holds the majority of image qualities in the other categories as well. In the category of “Vivid and Concrete,” Kennedy’s ad contains 17 instances of image qualities. Many of these recorded qualities were of Kennedy or supporters smiling. In the “Simplified” category, Kennedy’s ad contains signs reading “Leader for the 60’s” as the jingle sings “A change that’s overdue.” Finally, in terms of “Narrative,” Kennedy repeats his name and gives a basic description of his arguments. The ad also displays the “American Dream” motif by using 22 American flags or instances of red, white and blue. Additionally, the final frame of Kennedy, Jackie and Caroline shows the ideal “American Dream” family.

Nixon’s biography ad is entitled “Best Qualified.” The Nixon ad actually contains only two images of Nixon himself. Most of the commercial consists of a press conference with President Eisenhower assuring the American people of the integral role Nixon has played during his past four years in the White House.

Like Kennedy, the “Believability” category seems to be Nixon’s strongest. Nixon has 9 image qualities in this category. The phrase “All of America is going for Nixon and Lodge,” is an example of one of these image qualities. In terms of experience, an example of a coded factor was the segment, “He has traveled the world, studying at first-hand the hopes and the needs of more than fifty nations. He knows in person the leaders of those nations, knowledge of immeasurable value to a future president.” Nixon has only one instance of a positive image quality in both the “Vivid and Concrete” and the “Simplified” categories. These positive images

are mainly associated with the smiling, friendly-looking picture of Nixon in one of the clips and his “They understand what peace demands” campaign slogan.

Argument Advertising

Kennedy’s argument ad is entitled the “Sills Family.” In this ad, Kennedy visits the home of the Sills in order to discuss the economy with the family. Kennedy’s strengths in this ad are in the “Believability” and “Narrative” category, each of which has ten qualities. In terms of “Believability,” Kennedy never stutters or makes unplanned pauses. Instead, he is clear and gives direct eye contact to the family or camera (depending on whom he is speaking to). As far as “Narrative,” the ad contains a strong use of the “American Dream” motif. The ad itself tells a story. It is the story of a family that has worked hard to achieve upward mobility, struggling to send their children to college. Additionally, Kennedy’s “regular guy” image is enhanced by the family environment. He sits directly with the Sills, on their living room couch, discussing their problems.

The “Vivid and Concrete” category was the most striking. In the ad, Kennedy asks questions like, “What’s been your experience, Mr. Sills? How are you keeping those two daughters of yours going?” He is attentive to the family when they are speaking; giving them, and not the camera, direct eye contact. Kennedy even shakes his head several times throughout the commercial. These examples, and others, gave Kennedy seven image qualities within this category.

Nixon’s argument commercial, entitled “Economic Strength,” tackles the same general policy: the economy. The ad (as well as his attack and visionary ads) features a talking head format. Simply speaking, the ad is of Nixon in his office, leaning against his desk, talking about the subject at hand (in this case the economy). In the “Vivid and Concrete” category, Nixon had

only one positive image quality. The low number was caused by negative visuals in the environment. The office itself is very empty. It contains no family photos, no American flag and no work or papers on the desk.

The ad contains only one quality of “Narrative,” simply because it succeeds in being an argument ad but contains no further “Narrative” elements. Nixon’s biggest strength in this ad seems to lie in his verbal argument under “Believability.” Nixon lays down his argument in a flat, basic and easy to understand way by showing what has been done and what he will continue to do. Nixon succeeds in this issue-based quality.

Attack Advertising

Most attack ads contained what is termed in this study “reverse trait association.” This means, when a candidate establishes that an opponent does (or does not) possess a certain trait, one is also inferring that the candidate does not (or does) possess the trait. Reverse trait association is the most dominant characteristic of Kennedy’s attack ad, “A Week.” In “A Week,” President Eisenhower is being interviewed at a press conference. The ad questions Nixon’s “experience,” as a reporter asks Eisenhower for an example of a major idea of Nixon’s that was adopted by the administration. Eisenhower responds, “If you give me a week of my time I might think of one, I don’t remember.”

With three image qualities for Kennedy in the category of “Believability,” Nixon’s image suffered because of statements like, “Every republican politician *wants* you to believe that Richard Nixon is quote “experienced.” They *even* want you to believe that he has *actually* been making decisions in the White House” (Italics added to express the emphasis given to the words in the ad). With Eisenhower’s testimony, Nixon’s image decreases. Thus, the ad is a good attack ad because it uses reverse trait association, giving one point in “Narrative.”

Unlike the Kennedy attack ad, Nixon's ad fails to use personal (or image) characteristics for reverse trait association. Rather, Nixon's ad, "Taxes," lays out the specific problems with Kennedy's economic platform. In the category of "Believability," Nixon immediately receives an image quality for the line, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the vice-president of the United States." Nixon also gives eye contact and seems to break down the argument into a clear and detailed fashion. In fact, Nixon even uses examples the viewers might relate to, "...that means raising your prices, robbing you of your savings, cutting into the value of your insurance, hurting your pocketbook everyday at the drugstore, the grocery store, the gas station." This example gives Nixon one image quality in the "Narrative" category because he achieves some consubstantiality with the audience, adding a "regular guy" appeal. Nixon does slouch and speaks monotonously. He also does not use gestures. Overall, however, Nixon's detailed, issue-specific argument and his articulate style give him four image qualities in "Believability" and one in "Vivid and Concrete."

Visionary Advertising

The Kennedy vision ad, "Issue," accomplishes the "happy ending" feel necessary for a visionary ad. In this ad, Kennedy is giving a speech to a crowd of supporters. His speech details the steps American's must take to ensure freedom around the globe. In the ad, Kennedy quotes Thomas Paine and calls Americans to help in preserving freedom. He says, "If we bare our burden then I think freedom succeeds here and also it succeeds around the world."

Kennedy never stops to think about what he will say next, never pauses or stutters and never shows a drop of sweat. Instead, his head is slightly raised, his eyes are averted to the crowd and not the camera, he speaks slowly and his voice is strong. Kennedy's Boston accent personalizes his character and gives a "regular guy" impression. For emphasis, Kennedy moves

his head and makes frequent gestures. All of these attributes add ten image qualities to “Believability” and four to “Vivid and Concrete.”

Kennedy’s greatest strength in this ad is in the “Narrative” section. Here, Kennedy demonstrates eleven image qualities. A major example of an image quality in this category is the repeating theme of working hard to achieve freedom, a component of the American Dream motif. An example of one of these image qualities is in the line previously mentioned, “If we succeed, if we meet our responsibilities, if we bare our burden then I think freedom succeeds here and also it succeeds around the world.” In building this image, the ad repeats such words as freedom (four times), succeed (three times), United States or Country (six times) and revolution (once).

Nixon’s visionary ad, “Peace,” has very much the same theme of defending our country from communism. Yet, Nixon presents his vision in his customary “talking heads” format. Immediately, one can see the strength’s of Nixon’s ad in terms of “Believability.” Phrases like “Mr. Nixon, what is the truth?” and “Well, the truth is” give Nixon two image qualities in this category. Additionally, Nixon’s knowledge of Khrushchev demonstrates his experience. These examples, and others, give Nixon eight total image qualities in “Believability.”

In “Peace,” like in Nixon’s previous two ads, the office backdrop is sterile; Nixon has a stern expressionless face; and Nixon and his environment lack energy, warmth and friendliness. Nixon’s monotonous voice, his lack of hand gestures and lack of head movements are negative impressions that give Nixon no “Vivid and Concrete” image qualities. Despite these factors, Nixon’s ad still lends itself to imagery. In fact, it seems to lend itself to imagery more so than his other three ads. This is because of the vision it succeeds in constructing. This image involves a God/Devil dichotomy, not between Nixon and Kennedy, but between America and the

Communists. This dichotomy gives Nixon one quality in “Narrative.” For example, Khrushchev is labeled a “cold, hard, ruthless man.” To combat this, America “must never make the mistake of letting him think we are weak. We must show him we are strong economically and militarily, that we will not be coerced, that we will not tolerate being pushed around.” The dichotomy also supports his campaign theme of remaining strong to protect peace, giving Nixon one image quality in “Simplified.”

The 1984 Reagan-Mondale Campaign

The 1960 presidential campaign helped to establish the importance of the TV image. It was not until 1980, with the introduction of Ronald Reagan on the national political scene, however, that the importance of image was fully recognized. Reagan was the first candidate since President Kennedy to use the television medium and its image-making capabilities effectively (Darman, 1996). This was never more obvious than in Reagan’s 1984 campaign against Walter Mondale. As a former actor, Reagan knew how to perform in front of a camera:

There was probably no American who had risen to the presidency who was better prepared than Ronald Reagan for the splicing together of illusion and reality. In the television era, that splicing had become a special requirement for effective performance in the Washington wonderland. For Ronald Reagan, it had been his life. He had done this splicing again and again as boy dramatist, radio announcer, movie star, television personality, promoter, and politician. He had made a successful life out of fictionalizing, turning unattractive realities into one or another version of the mythic American Dream. He himself personified the splicing together of Hollywood West, cowboy hero, citizen-statesman, and Hollywood East...Better than most, he understood the connection between illusion, reality, and governance. (Darman, 1996, p.121)

In addition to having an innate sense of the ideal TV image, Reagan was also sure to listen to his well-trained advisors. “His campaign organization represented a well-oiled marketing machine that relied on simple themes, such as patriotism and family, to convey a single and consistent image at every campaign stop and in every commercial” (Newman, 1994, p. 18). Reagan’s aides, along with Reagan himself, added a “Hollywood flair,” “understanding of

media needs” and “attention to detail” that allowed the team to create “a great show” (Troy, 1991, p.249). As Darman says:

Perhaps more than any modern presidential campaign, the 1984 Reagan campaign-the forty-nine-state win-managed to bypass conventional substance altogether. It highlighted American flags and American heroes; Western rodeos and the Grand Ol’ Opry; the simple repetitive chant of the Los Angeles Olympics, “U.S.A., U.S.A.,” and the more melodious Lee Greenwood theme song, “God Bless the USA. (pp. 140-141)

As in the Kennedy/Nixon campaign, I counted and recorded the image qualities of the candidate in each of the biography ads, argument ads, attack ads and visionary ads. The image qualities are recorded in the following chart:

Reagan (R)
Mondale (M)

	Biography Ads	Argument Ads	Attack Ads	Visionary Ads
Believable	R = 15 M= 5	R= 2 M= 1	R = 2 M= 3	R = 3 M= 6
Vivid & Concrete	R = 13 M= 11	R = 12 M= 0	R = 0 M= 0	R = 16 M= 5
Simplified	R = 1 M= 2	R = 1 M= 1	R = 1 M= 0	R = 1 M= 1
Narrative	R = 28 M= 0	R = 22 M= 1	R = 3 M= 1	R = 30 M= 9

Overall, Reagan had 22 image qualities in “Believability,” while Mondale had 15; Reagan had 41 qualities in “Vivid and Concrete,” as opposed to Mondale’s 16; Reagan and Mondale both had 4 image qualities in “Simplified;” and in “Narrative” Reagan had 83 appeals, while Mondale had only 11. This gives Reagan 150 image qualities as opposed to Mondale’s 46.

Biography Advertising

In the case of an incumbent, like Reagan, the candidate and the candidate’s history has already been introduced. Thus, in such cases, the biography ad seeks to show Americans what their president has done in the last four years. This is exactly what the Reagan spot accomplishes. A good example is his “Prouder, Stronger, Better” ad, one of several in a “Morning in America”

series executed by the campaign team, Reagan gives citizens a look at what America looks like today through a series of video clips cast with soft music. From a tractor working on a farm to a steamboat sailing from a port, Reagan's ad shows images of a prosperous nation. The ad displays many happy, smiling, busy citizens: business men and women, elderly people and young adults, children, mothers, fathers and grandparents. In one clip, a bride runs to hug her grandmother while the sunset glow sheds upon them. Happy and successful images, like these, along with the narrator's information that employment rates and interest rates have increased, are some examples of Reagan's 15 image qualities in "Believability." In the "Vivid and Concrete" category, the calm soothing music, hugging, kissing, overall warm glow (caused by the lighting), along with other factors, give Reagan 13 image qualities. Furthermore, the narrator states "It's morning again in America and under the leadership of President Reagan our country is prouder and stronger and better. Why would we ever want to return to where we were less than four short years ago?" This emphasizes Reagan's campaign scheme, giving him a point in "Simplified."

Reagan's strongest area, in this ad as well as in later ads, is in the "Narrative" section. "Prouder, Stronger, Better" shows what would be considered traditional American Dream themes: a paper boy on a tree-lined street, boys raising a flag at a summer camp, firefighters at work, business men and women crossing a busy taxi-filled street. The ad also shows six flags (three of which are flags raising, showing upward mobility), six family scenes, five working scenes and two picket fences. All of these images combine to give Reagan 28 image qualities in "Narrative."

Mondale's biography ad is, in fact, very weak in its biography elements. "Ticket" seems at first to introduce Mondale and Ferraro. After watching it in full, however, the ad combines bio, argument and attack elements. The ad also contains no internal narrative sequence or hero

imagery. Thus, the ad has no “Narrative” elements. Essentially, the ad compares Reagan’s issue platform to Mondale’s policies while showing Mondale and Ferraro at campaign events and speeches. Because the issues are stated clearly, simply and with emphasis, and because of the many cheering crowds with Mondale/Ferraro signs, the ad contains five image qualities in “Believability.” In addition, the ad emphasizes Mondale’s campaign theme twice, through the lines, “bringing a new fairness to America,” and “They’ll be taking the first step in a new direction for America. Mondale/Ferraro—for your future.” These examples give Mondale two qualities in “Simplified.”

Mondale’s strongest category is “Vivid and Concrete.” Mondale never stutters, never sweats and never has any unplanned pauses. He uses gestures, smiles, and often shakes hands or waves to his many supporters. Even in this category, however, Mondale is not as strong as Reagan, with only 11 image qualities.

Argument Advertising

Reagan’s argument ad, “Peace,” contains many of the same elements as “Prouder, Stronger, Better.” The ad shows video clips of children playing while Reagan resolves to remain strong to preserve peace. Reagan’s strongest area is “Narrative.” The ad shows children wearing their red, white and blue in almost every clip. These children are doing traditional American activities: a girl and a boy fish together, a boy gets his haircut at a local barber, children run through their sprinklers, a boy waves from his white front porch (next to an American flag). All of these scenes convey the traditional aspects of the American Dream. Thus, Reagan receives 28 image qualities for “Narrative.”

Also like “Prouder, Stronger, Better,” the argument ad contains many smiling faces, soothing music and warm lighting. These elements, and others, give Reagan 12 image qualities

in “Vivid and Concrete.” Furthermore, the same “Prouder, Stronger, Better” theme is emphasized for the “Simplified” category. “Believability” is seen in Reagan’s strong voice saying, “We will negotiate for it (peace), sacrifice for it. We will NOT surrender for it- -now or ever.”

Mondale’s argument ad, “House,” differs greatly from Reagan’s spot. The ad has three simple video clips: a house at night with a single light on, the White House and a bullet list graphic of what Mondale will do to improve the deficit. Throughout the ad, a deep voice and slow piano are in the background, as though from a horror movie. There are no smiling people, no peaceful scenes- giving Mondale no image qualities for “Vivid and Concrete.” The ad seems to be attempting to create a sense of fear that we will associate with Reagan. Meanwhile, Mondale sets his agenda by abstractly putting bullet points. The points, however, are made clearly, giving Mondale one point in “Believability.” Mondale also has one image quality in the “Simplified” category because his campaign theme, “fighting for your future,” is announced at the end of the ad.

In terms of the narrative format itself, the ad receives one image quality because it achieves the basic objectives of the argument ad: that being, to lay down the policies of the candidate. The ad does not, however, contain any internal narrative.

Attack Advertising

In “Right,” Reagan’s spot contains two mini-narratives: a man paving a road and a mother spreading peanut butter on bread. Along with the visuals, the narrator states Mondale’s economic policies in a simple and easy to understand manner. For example, he says, “Walter Mondale thinks it would be nice if you put in some more overtime and helped pay for his promises with your taxes, what do you think?” The easy manner in which the Reagan ad presents

Mondale's policy, as well as the use of regular people who are opposed to these policies, give Reagan's ad two image qualities in "Believability." The spot also has three image qualities in "Narrative." These qualities were largely because of the use of the mini-narratives, both of which are elements of the American Dream because of the home and work environments (important coding factors for the American Dream motif). Lastly, the ad reiterates Reagan's campaign theme "Leadership that is working," both implicitly in the ad itself and at the end with a presentation of the slogan.

Choosing a Mondale attack ad was difficult, as every Mondale ad could easily be considered an attack ad. This ad in particular, "Line," attacks Reagan's competence and reliability as the president, saying, "This president (meaning Mondale) will know what he is doing, and that's the difference." This is an example of one of the image qualities coded under "Believable" for the ad, the strongest category. In terms of "Narrative," the ad does succeed in attacking Reagan, and thus, receives an image quality. Otherwise, no other narrative qualities exist within the ad.

Visionary Advertising

Reagan's visionary ad, "Pride," shows pictures of several American landscapes, people and scenes: the Rocky Mountains, the Great Lakes, New York City, farms, white steeple churches, smiling families etc. Along with the flashing pictures, the song "God Bless America" plays. In terms of "Believability," Reagan's picture appears several times. He is seen greeting soldiers, working in the Oval office and shaking hands with the crowd. All of these factors are examples of Reagan's "Believability," as they demonstrate experience and reliability. Like his "Prouder, Stronger, Better" and "Peace" ads, "Pride" implicitly conveys Reagan's campaign theme of "Leadership That's Working." In addition, for the "Vivid and Concrete" section,

Reagan receives 14 image qualities. Much of these qualities were the same as in the previous ads: smiling faces, warm lighting and calm soothing music. Additionally, what makes this ad have even more image qualities than the previous two is the use of Reagan himself. Reagan is always smiling and always shaking hands or waving to the crowd of supporters.

Also like Reagan's previous ads, this ad is dominated by the "Narrative" category, with 30 image qualities. The ad conveys the "Visionary" theme by displaying an America that has been and will continue to be maintained under Reagan. This America contains many of the attributes of the American Dream. Each image shows Americans happy, working and succeeding. For example, in one picture a family is fishing together. In another picture, a high school football team has just won a game. Additionally, traditional images of America flash before the screen, as though we are looking at Norman Rockwell pictures: a farm, a white steeple church covered by foliage, covered wagons and a white front porch complete with its American flag. To add to this, five flags and the Statue of Liberty are shown. Within the ad, Reagan takes the form of the cowboy hero several times. For example, in one sequence, a cowboy is shown followed by a picture of Reagan that looks almost identical to the cowboy. Toward the end of the ad, this same picture of Reagan reappears.

Mondale's vision ad, entitled "Arms Control," presents an image of America that we will get if Reagan wins. Reagan's world, according to the spot, has children playing while bombs explode and the song "Teach your Children" plays. During the segment a narrator tells viewers about the world Reagan wants to create. It then shows and describes what Mondale will do differently. Mondale's world has couples hugging and workers tending to wheat fields. The narrator says, "We must choose which kind it will be. A future filled with killer weapons orbiting

above us or the promise of a better future.” Implicitly, the Mondale message of “bringing a new fairness to America” runs throughout. This gives an image quality for the “Simplified” category.

In “Arms Control,” Mondale is serious, sweats mildly, blinks often, stutters, pauses and moves his head unnecessarily. All of these are negative image qualities associated with discomfort. Countering these images, however, he uses strong emphasis on certain words, speaks articulately and uses gestures. The children add a lighthearted feel to the ad as well. These and other qualities combine to make five image qualities for “Vivid and Complete.”

Mondale fares better under the category of “Believability.” Here, Mondale is compared to Kennedy twice. The narrator says, “Like Jack Kennedy we must deal with the Russians with strength.” Mondale’s experience is further detailed in, “And that’s the kind of leadership you’ll get with Mondale, an army man, senator on the National Security Council, vice president.” These are two of the six examples of “Believability” in the ad.

The strongest category for Mondale was “Narrative,” with nine qualities. These qualities stem mostly from aspects of the ad that are actually much like Reagan’s: children playing, a couple hugging, people working a farm, a football team winning. Flags are also used three times in the ad, all of which were seen in military tribute scenes. The narrative itself, however, is disorganized. The ad, for example, goes from children playing and bombs exploding, to Kennedy speaking, to Reagan’s “Star Wars” policy, to the debate, to a mini-Mondale biography, to couples hugging and children playing again. The narrative sequence is disjointed. Much of this may have to do with the length of the ad, as it was over four minutes. The disorganized nature of this ad, however, hinders the narrative format and forms a complex web of many messages compounded together.

Overall, Mondale's campaign was one of issues, "reenacting the rituals of elections past" (Blume, 1985, p. 13). Reagan, on the other hand, pointed "the way toward the campaign techniques of the future" (Blume, 1985, p. 13).

The 2004 Bush-Kerry Campaign

From Kennedy to Reagan and beyond, image has become a central component of the modern political campaign. It is unlikely today that a candidate and his team would be ignorant of the importance of a consistent and concise image. What makes the difference, however, is whether or not they create an image that is successful. In the case of George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, much of the image consisted of Bush's innate abilities. As Moore (2003) says, "Bush had an innate gregariousness, though, and a powerful personal charm that helped him rise to governor of Texas and, eventually to president of the United States" (p. 6). The success of Bush's campaign also had much to do with his campaign team, "Better organized than the Kerry campaign, more clever and quicker to respond...It was almost too successful in creating, in the public mind, a caricature of Kerry as a loser: (Thomas, 2004, p. xxiv). By framing Kerry's image and emphasizing Bush's friendly charisma, the Bush campaign was able to sculpt their campaign images in 2004. Meanwhile, Kerry and his team may have taken the wrong approach. As Thomas (2004) states:

Kerry's closest friends and family were worried. "Too much senatese," Senator Edward Kennedy scolded him in May. Kerry's daughter Alex, a filmmaker, often critiques her father's wooden TV performances- so much so that she began to worry that her criticism was coloring her relationship with her father. (p. 79)

Kerry's team was unable to keep him focused on a consistent message. Instead, his "intellectualism" got in the way (Thomas, 2004). While Bush repeated his message over and over, Kerry hated to repeat himself (Thomas, 2004). When Kerry finally did find a message to stick with, it was ambiguous to the American public. As Thomas (2004) says:

At one point, Kerry did fasten on to a line from Langston Hughes poem, “Let America Be America Again.” It sounded uplifting, at least to Kerry. But voters, who by and large had never heard of Hughes, were confused; some of them were even offended. Was Kerry saying that supporting Bush was un-American? Kerry dropped the line. (p. 78)

The Kerry team, unlike its Bush counterpart, was disorganized and often fought amongst themselves, making it difficult to keep consistency within the campaign itself. As in the Kennedy/Nixon and Reagan/Mondale campaign, I counted and recorded the image qualities of the candidate in each of the biography ads, argument ads, attack ads and visionary ads. The image qualities are recoded in the following chart:

Bush (B)
Kerry (K)

	Biography Ads	Argument Ads	Attack Ads	Visionary Ads
Believable	B= 18 K= 12	B= 15 K= 14	B= 8 K= 6	B= 19 K= 14
Vivid & Concrete	B= 19 K= 17	B= 8 K= 15	B= 4 K= 11	B= 10 K= 15
Simplified	B= 1 K= 1	B= 0 K= 1	B= 0 K= 0	B= 1 K= 1
Narrative	B= 22 K= 18	B= 8 K= 13	B= 11 K= 16	B= 27 K= 19

Overall, Bush had 60 image qualities in “Believability,” while Kerry at 47; Bush had 41 in “Vivid and Concrete,” as opposed to Kerry’s 58; Bush had 2 image qualities in “Simplified,” with only 3 for Kerry; and Bush had 68 image qualities in “Narrative,” while Kerry came close behind at 66 appeals. This gives Kerry 174 image qualities as opposed to Bush’s 171.

Biography Advertising

Like many incumbents, Bush’s biography ad highlights his experiences from the past four years. In “Whatever it Takes,” the specific experiences Bush highlights are related to the September 11th tragedies and to the Iraq war- both key events during the Bush administration. Bush demonstrates in the spot that he has learned from the events, is experienced to handle any

further crises and asserts that his actions were correct. He says, “I’ve learned first hand that ordering Americans into battle is the hardest decision, even when it is right.” His statements are also spoken with clarity and are filled with vivid examples that most Americans could relate to in some way. These examples are filled with pathos. For example, Bush says, “I have held the children of the fallen who are told their dad or mom is a hero but would rather just have their mom or dad.” Such statements may allow listeners to soften to Bush’s words and feel as though he is speaking from the heart. All of these factors give Bush 18 image qualities in “Believability.” Bush also demonstrates his strength (a “Believability” quality) and extroversion by vocally and visually (through head movement) emphasizing words. This, along with the calm music, is an example of one of the 19 “Vivid and Concrete” qualities.

Bush’s greatest strength was in the “Narrative” category. Aside from achieving the fundamental purpose of emphasizing the past, the ad also contains mini-narratives and American Dream qualities (with at least 12 American flags flying). Perhaps most striking was the creation of Bush as a military hero. The spot demonstrates that Bush has worked hard to fight tough times and is on the road to success. Fighting adversity and succeeding are two important qualities for an American hero. An example of the traditional American hero is shown in the line, “I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.” The final shot shows Bush with his arm around his wife on their front porch. The backdrop gives an American heartland feel, as the background looks like a wheat field. These examples all help to give Bush 22 image qualities in “Narrative.”

Kerry’s biography ad, “Heart,” introduces us to John Kerry, his parents, his friends and his family. Like the Bush ad, “Heart” is strongest in the “Narrative” category, with 18 image qualities. A quintessential biography ad, Kerry begins with “I was born in Fitzsimmons Army

Hospital.” It then continues to highlight his military and Yale days, his time as a prosecutor and then his time as a Senator. With eight references to military service, Kerry too has a strong military hero image. Furthermore, the focus of the ad is on Kerry’s public service in general, an important component for any hero image.

Another strong category for Kerry was “Vivid and Concrete.” Here, Kerry demonstrates his friendliness and warmth by smiling or laughing six times, by hugging his wife once and by delivering pathos statements like, “We’re a country of optimists. We’re the can-do people. And we just need to believe in ourselves again.” Kerry also exhibits extroversion and strength (a “Believability” quality) through gestures. Another important sign of “Believability” was the frequent use of testimonials. Military comrades and family vouch for the credibility of Kerry saying, “The decisions that he made saved our lives...When he pulled me out of the river, he risked his life to save mine...he has shown an ability to fight for things that matter.” These examples, along with other aspects of the spot, give Kerry 17 “Vivid and Concrete” qualities and 12 in “Believability.”

Argument Advertising

In Bush’s “Health Care Agenda” ad, the plan is broken down and made simple to understand as the spot uses a trail of pictures and words to support the main points of what is being said. Additionally, this visual outline gives an abstract issue a concrete feel. For example, when the ad talks about children and health care it says, “Every eligible child with health coverage.” This is supported visually with a picture of smiling children and with the words “Every Child Covered.” The visual examples, quickness and clarity of the argument are all important coding factors for the “Believability” category. Additionally, the last shot shows Bush

in his office on the phone. The workplace environment gives Bush an image quality for experience. Because of these qualities, there were 15 image qualities for “Believability.”

In terms of “Vivid and Concrete,” the ad is filled with happy, smiling people and a lighthearted, soft musical cord. These factors give Bush 8 image qualities in “Vivid and Concrete.” As for the “Narrative” category, each of the pictures depicts a mini-narrative. These mini-narratives give Bush 8 image qualities in “Narrative.”

The Kerry commercial, “Across,” takes a very different approach. Rather than spotlight one issue, the Kerry team decides to lay a general agenda: middle class tax cuts, lower prescription drugs and a strong military. The category that contains the greatest image qualities is “Narrative,” with 13 qualities. Like the Bush ad, mini-narratives are used. In addition to these mini-narratives, however, Kerry’s team inserts the American Dream motif. Each shot shows this motif: a young family holding a baby, workers in hard hats, a child learning how to ride a bike, parents reading to a child, firefighters heading to work and a child on a swing. Additionally, there are three instances of flags, one of which is a raising of a flag (which often indicates upward mobility). The words support this American Dream motif. For example, Kerry says, “I believe it’s the middle class that needs a tax break,” signifying upward mobility for the middle class.

In the “Vivid and Concrete” category, Kerry has 15 image qualities. Kerry himself speaks clearly and with an upright posture. He, however, never smiles, never uses gestures, never changes expressions. In other words, Kerry doesn’t do anything to harm his image (like sweating or stuttering), but he doesn’t do anything beneficial either. The other aspects of the ad lend more to the “Visual and Concrete” category. For example, there is soft music, warm lighting and many smiling people. In terms of “Believability,” Kerry is clear in his argument, uses pauses and has

many supporters (indicated by several crowd scenes). Furthermore, the agenda is general, but easy to understand. These are some of the examples of the 14 image qualities under “Believability.”

Attack Advertising

Bush’s attack ad, “Mom,” shows a mother in a mini-van driving home from work with her two children in the backseat. As she drives, the radio talks about Kerry’s tax plan. She comments in her head as she listens. Because of this construction, the largest portion of image qualities is in the “Narrative” category, with 11 qualities. The ad basically revolves around this mini-narrative of the working middle-class mother. The story is very much characteristic of the American Dream, as the mother works hard to balance her life, support her children and succeed. The ad insinuates that Kerry’s tax increases, however, may hinder this American Dream from being fulfilled. Additionally, the main character of the narrative, the mother, is someone many Americans would relate to. She is a “regular” person. Like most Americans, she has plenty of things to worry about. For example, she says, “5:30, I need to get groceries...I'm gonna be late.” And as the radio tells her Kerry’s plans, the woman thinks in her head, “What were they thinking?” This, along with the clear argument, the use of simple examples within the ad and the use of text to outline the argument, are all examples of the ad’s 8 image qualities in “Believability.” In the “Vivid and Concrete” category, the ad has only 4 image qualities. These qualities related to the peaceful scene and warm lighting.

The Kerry attack ad, “Outsource,” says that millions of jobs have moved overseas because of Bush’s outsourcing and his tax breaks favoring companies with headquarters overseas. While presenting this, the visuals are dark and dreary. They show a “danger” sign and are mostly all in black or white with splashes of yellow or red. The music has an ominous feel as

though from a horror movie. When Kerry's plan is then presented, the visuals and music become more uplifting. The music is lighthearted and the colors are vivid. A warm glow also fills the Kerry portion of the ad. When Kerry is pictured, he is always smiling, shaking hands or making gestures as he speaks. All of these elements give the spot 11 image qualities in "Vivid and Concrete." Furthermore, in terms of "Believability," the ad is presented in a clear and simple format with text used to outline the main argument that is being heard. Crowds of Kerry supporters, illustrating the Bandwagon effect, are used four times throughout the ad. In these crowd shots, the supporters wave flags and "John Kerry" signs. These are all examples of the 6 image qualities in "Believability."

The category with the most image qualities was "Narrative," with 16 qualities in total. One reason for this was the dichotomizing of Bush and Kerry. With its dark colors and gloomy music, the ad sets up Bush as evil. Meanwhile, the warm glow and uplifting music of the Kerry portion is seen as good. This good versus evil dichotomy is often presented in successful attack ads. Kerry is not only presented positively, however, he is shown to be the candidate that supports the American Dream motif. Much of this is due to the red, white and blue seen in each of the Kerry shots and at least 10 flags are evident. Moreover, while Bush is never pictured, Kerry is always seen with no tie and with his sleeves rolled up. He often wears khakis and in one shot even wears jeans. Because of this portrayal, Kerry is being portrayed as the "regular guy."

Visionary Advertising

The Bush visionary ad, "Tested," shows several shots of what America looks like today after four years with President Bush. The category with the greatest image qualities was "Narrative," with 27 qualities. One image quality in this category is associated with the "Visionary" aspect of the ad. The ad begins with dark colors, serious expressions and slow

music. This portion of the spot tells about the past, saying, “The last few years have tested America in many ways.” With a flash of light, the ad quickly shifts to the present and future. These segments contain faster music and warm bright colors. Additionally, the shots following the flash of light all lend to the American Dream motif: a family hugging, eating dinner together, and enjoying ice cream. The ad expresses traditional American ideals saying, “What gives us optimism and hope? Freedom, faith, family and sacrifice.” Five scenes with firefighters, one military scene and three scenes with American flags also add to the American Dream motif. Additionally, words such as, “*Rising* to the challenge, *standing up* against terrorism, *working to grow* our economy,” suggest upward mobility. All of these examples are then connected with President Bush, as the narrator says, “President Bush, moving America forward.”

In the “Believability” category, the ad has 19 image qualities. These qualities are all associated with the many shots of regular people who are smiling. These people are mostly all blue collar workers. Because these regular blue collar workers are happy and successful, it is thought that all blue collar workers should vote for Bush in order to be happy. The seven smiling faces that are shown in the ad account for some of the image qualities in the category of “Vivid and Concrete.” Other examples of the “Vivid and Concrete” category, which had 10 image qualities, were the warm lighting and soothing music.

“Optimists,” the Kerry vision ad, also shows shots of “regular” Americans. In many of these shots the Americans are busy working, in others they are shaking hands with Kerry. All of these Americans (9) are smiling and Kerry shakes hands with supporters six times. Meanwhile the music is soothing and upbeat. All of these factors help to give Kerry 15 image qualities in “Vivid and Concrete.” The category with the most qualities, however, is “Narrative,” with 19 image qualities. Most of these qualities are associated with the American Dream motif. The shots

show Americans going about their daily lives: a veteran saluting a flag, a child with a soccer ball, a child learning, a man working. Along with this American Dream motif, there are eight American flags pictured. Moreover, the “Visionary” appeal of the ad is strong, lending much to the “Narrative” category. The use of children (especially Kerry helping a child) is important. Also important are some of the things Kerry says, “We are a country of the future, we are a country of optimists. We're the ‘can-do’ people.” These lines are delivered with an optimistic air, to demonstrate the vision Kerry has for the future.

Also strong in image qualities was the “Believability” category. This category had 14 qualities. Much of these qualities were associated with Kerry’s reliability (strength, assertiveness and confidence). Kerry is always shown with an upright posture, his head slightly tilted up and his hands always making gestures. One sign in the backdrop reading “the real deal” and the narrator’s description of “real plans” also contributes to the believability category. Furthermore, Kerry is often surrounded by supporters (I counted six group shots), lending to the bandwagon effect.

Discussion

One of the major themes of the Kennedy campaign was a “change for the 60’s.” The campaign, however, not only preached change, it delivered it. As Lansford (2004) said, “There was not a great deal of talking about “style” in politics before the Kennedy’s. The campaign had an élan, a dash and flair, flowing outward from the brave-young-candidate to his audience” (p. 189). Thus, it is of no surprise that Kennedy, the election winner, had more image qualities than Nixon in the 1960 campaign. Nixon’s ads were centered largely on issues, while Kennedy’s spots were focused on developing an image. With this focus on developing and controlling Kennedy’s image, the campaign made drastic changes; changes not only for the citizens of the 60’s, but also for the future of campaigning itself. With the growth of television and the concurrent birth of public relations, America began to emphasize image. As this “image revolution” rocked America during the 60’s and 70’s; the stage was set for Ronald Reagan. From 1960 to 1984, the image qualities of the candidates significantly increased, demonstrating that both Reagan and Mondale understood the importance of image. Only Reagan, however, with a 104 point lead in image qualities, succeeded in maintaining a controlled consistent image. In fact, while polls showed that Mondale was more trusted on issues than Reagan, voters seemed to prefer Reagan’s optimistic image of America (Blume, 1985). It was this image that helped Reagan return to the White House.

Based on the findings of these two campaigns, several similarities arise between Kennedy and Reagan, the “image candidates.” Of utmost importance, both candidates used visuals to make abstract issues or ideas concrete. The most obvious example of this in the Kennedy ads was the Sills family spot. Here, the abstract issue of the economy is made concrete through the example of the Sills family. Reagan also makes the economy a concrete issue by adding images.

For example, in “Prouder, Stronger, Better,” the narrator says that more Americans are working than ever before in our country’s history. As this is said, men and women are shown in their business suits heading to work. The significant difference between the two ads, however, is that, while Kennedy’s ad focuses on a conversation, Reagan’s ad is filled with a succession of images and general statements. The images, with music in the background, are so strong and move so quickly that the words can easily be overshadowed. This is the case in Reagan’s Biography, Argument and Attack ads. Reagan’s Visionary ad has no supporting dialogue; it is constructed solely of images and the song “I’m Proud to be an American.” Thus, this Visionary ad demonstrates the utmost importance of image for the Reagan campaign and the precedence image had taken since 1960.

A second commonality between the two ad campaigns is that both candidates present images and situations of which viewers can identify and relate. The Kennedy “Jingle” spots makes sure to show supporters of every age and race. Therefore, the thought was that if every viewer could identify with the supporters, so too could they identify with Kennedy. Reagan also uses this technique, as every demographic is seen in most of the Reagan ads.

Additionally, in Kennedy’s “Sills Family” spot, we see the typical nuclear American family, struggling to obtain the American Dream. Kennedy sits and talks casually with this family, making him appear to be a “regular guy.” Furthermore, Kennedy is seen as a “regular guy” himself, as he fights for the American Dreams of his citizens. In doing so, Kennedy’s team extends his “regular guy” image to make Kennedy appear to be an idealized figure of the American dream. For example, in “Jingle,” the Kennedy family appears to be the quintessential American Dream family. All three (John, Jackie and Caroline) look perfect and pure. With

Jackie's pearls and Caroline's golden locks, one can easily imagine the white picket fence to complement the image.

Reagan's team also presents visions of America that which viewers can relate, either because they immediately identify with the scene or because the scene describes an aspect of life that is commonly thought of as American. From raising a flag at summer camp ("Prouder, Stronger, Better") and children running through a sprinkler ("Peace"), to a mother spreading peanut butter on a sandwich ("Right") and a football team smiling for the camera ("Pride"), these scenes present a continuity of life that the average citizen would want to continue. As Shyles (1988) says, "Instead of substantive discussion, Reagan's televised political advertising presented patriotic and romantic pastiches of vintage Norman Rockwell-like symbolism and images of traditional Americana" (p. 29).

The Normal Rockwell America that Reagan paints- the white steeple church, the picket fence, the port town- also presented this idealized image of America that citizens hoped to acquire. A vote for Reagan would be a vote for their American Dream. In fact, many times the words of the spot had nothing to do with this American Dream theme. For example, in "Peace" the ad centers on foreign policy. The visuals, however, are of children playing. Yet, the images of the ad are all one needs to be persuaded that Reagan stands for the American Dream.

Both Reagan and Kennedy present personal qualities or feelings within the ads that we associate with the candidates themselves. The Kennedy team fully demonstrated their image know-how with the association tactics they used to emphasize Nixon's weaknesses and downplay his strengths. Meanwhile, they heightened the strengths of Kennedy and countered any weaknesses. "Believability," namely Kennedy's experience, was thought to have been one of Kennedy's main weaknesses. Kennedy's youthful image, while boosting his charisma, did not

help to enforce his experience. This is especially true considering Nixon's inevitable strength in experience as Vice President. "Jingle" spot was a good example of an ad that increased Kennedy's "Believability" image, with 22 image qualities in that category. Additionally, Nixon was often criticized for lacking sincerity and trustworthiness, while his strengths were his experience and decisiveness (<http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php>). Because of this, the Kennedy team targeted his experience and decisiveness in their attack ad, "A Week." They used Eisenhower, a great tactical decision on the part of the Kennedy campaign, who said he needs a week to think of Nixon's contribution to the White House. Kennedy also uses the image association tactic in "Issue." Here, Kennedy's gestures and vocal emphasis support his strong position against communist. This helps to make Kennedy's image appear strong and decisive.

Reagan also improves his "weaknesses" through the association tactic. One of Reagan's weaknesses was thought to have been his age. In an effort to make him appear young and energetic, Reagan associates himself with the cowboy image. The strongest example of this was in the "Pride" spot, where Reagan is preceded by a cowboy that looks very similar to Reagan. Additionally, Reagan's ads give a warm and fuzzy feeling to the viewer. The scenes are all happy and uplifting: a bride hugging her grandmother ("Prouder, Stronger, Better"), a little boy waving from a white porch ("Peace") and a white steeple church surrounded by fall foliage ("Pride"). And so, the viewer is inclined to connect this warm and fuzzy, uplifting feeling with Reagan.

The "image candidates" also focus their ads on people or personal characteristics rather than issues. In the case of Kennedy, this is clear in all of his ads. The Sills family is an example of this, as the focus is on the family itself. In "A week," the Kennedy team targets, as mentioned above, Nixon's personal quality of "Believability" by questioning Nixon's apparent "experience"

and “decisiveness.” Surprisingly, the Reagan attack ad targets an actual issue rather than personality characteristics. It does, however, present these in a very general way and strongly connects the issue to the average citizen. Again, the narrative elements of the ad are so strong that the sneak peak we get into the lives of regular Americans is the main focus of the “Right” ad.

While Kennedy and Reagan work to maintain a consistent image, Nixon and Mondale stick to the issues. These “issue candidates” differ from the “image candidates” in several ways. Unlike Kennedy and Reagan, issues are at the forefront of the Nixon and Mondale campaigns, even if they do not mean for these issues to take precedent. In the case of Nixon, he obviously does not understand the importance of image formation, as three of the four Nixon ads analyzed in this study used the talking head format. The talking head format does not allow any images other than Nixon to be introduced. Because of this, viewers are not distracted from the issue at hand because of “quick and pretty” images. Total focus is turned to Nixon’s words.

Unlike Nixon, Mondale seems to understand the importance of image, as he hugs babies, uses upbeat music and shows children playing, farmers working and couples hugging. Actually, many of the image scenes look like replicas of Reagan ads. Mondale uses music and symbolism in much the same way. Unlike Reagan, however, the ads have no narrative sequence. For example, “Arms Control” quickly jumps from images of children playing to bombs exploding without the necessary transition. And so, the image technique does not succeed. Mondale also inserts a strong policy agenda in each ad. In fact, not only does he insert these strong agendas in bland ways, he also attacks Reagan in almost every ad based on Reagan’s issue positions. Thus, the Mondale ads try to apply image and issue, vision and attack. For the close listener, the

arguments make sense. The image, however, cannot compare to the warm fuzzy feelings of the Reagan spots, despite how copied they may look.

Because the issues are placed above the images in the spots, the candidates fail to make the issues concrete. For example, unlike Kennedy's "Sill Family" ad, Nixon does not succeed in hardening the abstract issue with the visuals of a real American family in "Economic Strength." He does not show us a specific family. Rather, he asks us to "look at your own paycheck." The lack of visuals hampers any connectivity we may feel with Nixon. The same is true for Mondale. While Reagan shows Normal Rockwell images and families sitting at the dinner table to illustrate the American Dream, the Mondale ad "Ticket" says outright "You want more for your kids than you had, and that's the American Dream." Simply telling us does not work; Mondale must show viewers the American Dream in order to make us believe him and in order for us to feel connected to him.

While Nixon does not give us visuals outright, Mondale attempts to create images to make his issues concrete. This tactic fails miserably for Mondale. In "Line," for example, a red phone is used for the visual. The issue of the ad is remaining strong against communism. The meaning behind the phone, however, is not clear. In fact, it seems that the symbolic use of the phone makes the issue even more abstract. Rather than choosing to adapt narrative elements to the ad in order to create viewer identification with the issue, as Reagan does, Mondale introduces vague symbolic elements to this and other ads.

Kennedy and Reagan establish the importance of viewer identification with the supporters and/or candidate. In order to create this identification, Kennedy and Reagan focus on adding, and becoming, "regular people." Nixon does not use this image tactic. "Regular people" are never introduced in any of the ads that were analyzed. The main characters of the ads are

either Eisenhower or Nixon himself. Perhaps Nixon has not realized the importance of identification. Instead, it seems he is too busy focusing on emphasizing his experience. In the “Best Qualified” ad, as Eisenhower testifies for the experience of Nixon. In the “talking head” ads, this emphasis on experience is also obvious as Nixon outright talks about his time in the White House and is seen in an office. This image of the experienced official, however, may not be a particularly good one. In fact, it may conjure images of a political insider- an image that is often associated with sneakiness. Thus, “Tricky” Nixon comes across as the very opposite of the “regular guy” and his image is weakened. Moreover, his talking head format, with no movements (not even gestures or expression changes), gives him a statue-like image. This too is the very opposite of the “regular guy” and contributes to negative image qualities.

Mondale, like Nixon, fails at creating the “regular guy” image. His symbolic imagery in “Line” and “House” weaken the impact of the ads. Mondale, however, does seem like he understands the importance of the “regular guy.” Unfortunately, his outright attempts to foster this image fail as Mondale seems to create a forced image. This is especially true in Mondale’s biography ad, “Ticket.” Here, Mondale waves to the crowd, rolls up his sleeves and even picks up a baby to demonstrate that he is “regular.”

Neither Nixon nor Mondale create an idealized view of America. Nixon’s ads are too image-less and Mondale either uses symbolism or bombards us with so many quick and varying images that we can’t form a united picture. In fact, Nixon and Mondale may actually instill fear in place of the warm fuzzy American Dream. This not only hampers the American Dream image, but also creates a negative trait association. For example, in Nixon’s Visionary ad “Peace,” he constructs a “big bad monster” instead of the “happily ever after” feel it really should. The villain figure, Khrushchev, we are told “is a cold, hard, ruthless man” who “feeds upon weakness

and doubt.” The villain comes at the very end of our tale, creating an image that would send a viewer to bed with nightmares. It certainly doesn’t achieve its Visionary ad’s desired “happily ever after” effect.

Mondale also has this trait association problem. In “House” and “Line” both are reminiscent of scenes from horror movies, music and all. Mondale means for us to associate these feelings of fear with Reagan. There is, however, no visual connection between the white house, the president, and the fear we have from the ad itself. Additionally, this tactic seems not to be very successful because Mondale’s picture is often followed by the scenes. Thus, while the scene may be inferring Reagan, the direct connection made is with Mondale. This is one example in which Mondale’s trait association does not succeed.

While Mondale at least attempts to achieve visual trait associations, Nixon fails miserably. The reason for Nixon’s failure seems to rest solely on his lack of understanding of image formation. An example of this was the office background of the “talking head” ads. The office backdrop, with no pictures or even work on the desk, seems to give an immediate feeling of coldness and stiffness that we automatically associate with Nixon. Also interesting to note in these ads is a deeper image that emerges, that being the paternal figure. Nixon’s stern look and harsh, yet calm, voice seems to give him the “Leave it to Beaver” father figure. This concept goes well with Nixon’s overall theme of having strength to protect the country and keep peace, qualities of the stereotypical father. It, however, may not necessarily be a positive image. After all, at this time in history, a “Leave it to Beaver” figure was probably not the “change” America was quite looking for.

Also, unlike Kennedy and Reagan, Nixon and Mondale use concepts and objects rather than people and personal characteristics. Nixon’s ads all focus mainly on him and the issues he is

talking about (his office certainly does not provide a distraction or added image effect). Mondale, while straying slightly from strict issue-talk, does not usually add a personal feeling to the ads. This is obvious in “Line” and “House,” where a telephone and a house are the “main characters.” “Arms Control” does feature people several times throughout the ad. These small doses of personalization, however, are strongly and quite awkwardly contrasted to strict policy talk, saying, “Killer weapons in space, layer upon layer, orbiting, with a response time so short, there will be no time to wake a president. Kennedy's hotline will be obsolete. Computers will take control.” Modale uses strictly issues, not personal characteristics, to combat Reagan.

According to my limited research, a few hallmarks of the “image candidate” and the “issue candidate” have emerged. It is likely that the image candidate:

- 1) Uses images so strongly that the issues become a secondary force.
- 2) Turn issues from abstract ideas to concrete images.
- 3) Create viewer identification through the use of “regular” people and a “regular” candidate.
- 4) Foster the image of the American Dream to create an idealized America that voters will associate with the candidate.
- 5) Use trait association to improve weak image areas and strengthen the overall image.
- 6) Focus on people and/or personal characteristics as opposed to objects and concepts.

The introduction and subsequent prominence of “image candidates,” along with the invariable emphasis the media has placed on the importance of creating a politically sellable, simple and consistent image, has helped to fuel the image campaign of today. With this heightened awareness and importance of image, it is difficult to imagine that a presidential candidate would not have most, if not all, of the qualities of an “image candidate.” It appears as though survival of the fittest would today weed out any likely “issue candidates” before he or she

rose to the ranks of presidential nominee. This seems to have been the case in the most recent presidential campaign, the 2004 Bush/Kerry campaign. In terms of image qualities, Kerry barely outnumbered Bush. This difference, however, is so slight that it is easy to argue that both candidates are in fact “image candidates.” This is true, at least, in terms of their campaign advertising.

Through a mini-narrative format, both Bush and Kerry transform abstract issues into concrete, relatable forms. The Kerry ads, like the Reagan ads, use a succession of images and general statements. The images, with music in the background, are so strong and move so quickly that the words can easily be overshadowed by these appealing mini-narratives. For example, as Kerry says in “Across,” “I believe it’s the middle class that needs a tax cut.” With these words, a mother helps her son learn to ride his bike and then the mother and father are shown reading to the little boy. Thus, the viewer is able to see and comprehend what Kerry means by the middle class. They are able to see exactly who would benefit from Kerry’s plan. The same is true for the Bush ads. Bush, again with a Reaganesque style, uses music and a succession of mini-narratives to make ideas concrete. This was seen in the “Health Care Agenda” ad. As the narrator says “every child with health coverage,” a group of smiling children is shown. Conversely, in Bush’s “Whatever it Takes,” he does not use visuals to make the issue concrete. This ad is in the form of a speech Bush gave to supporters. Although the ad has no visuals other than Bush speaking, it is not the strict “talking head format.” Rather, like Kennedy’s ad “Issue,” the speech is so eloquent that visuals would only take away from the words. The pathos of the statement alone creates the emotions needed to support Bush.

Bush and Kerry present images in their ads of which viewers can easily relate. For Bush, this is most obvious in the attack ad, “Mom.” Here, much like Kennedy’s “Sills Family,” Bush

focuses on the economic concerns of a family by giving the example of a mom in her mini-van with children in the background. Like Kennedy's ad, the mother expresses her concerns with the policy of the opponent. Because it is easy for viewers to relate to the woman, it is likely most would also automatically agree with her. In addition, because the woman is on a Bush ad, many Americans might associate Bush with representing the "regular" citizen. This image of Bush as a "regular" guy is something that has marked the persona of President Bush. As Liebowich (2001) says, "Bush was the folksy, down-to-earth outsider who understood the common person" (p. 237). Bush seems to have mastered this "regular guy" image. His Texan twain and easy mannerisms give a charismatic quality to Bush that voters like and associate with. The image, however, was not made the focus of many of Bush's ads, with the exception of "Mom." This was something I found to be surprising.

Even more surprising than Bush's lack of a "regular guy" image, was the heightened "regular guy" image in the Kerry ads. Throughout the campaign, Bush was often framed as the "regular guy," while Kerry was the stiff statesman like figure. The roles seem to have reversed in the campaign spots. Bush, for example in "Whatever it Takes," is the experienced statesman. On the other hand, three out of four of the Kerry ads have Kerry as the narrator and he is seen repeatedly throughout the spots shaking hands with supporters and speaking to crowds, similar to Kennedy's "Jingle." The casual way about these encounters, along with the identification factor viewers can associate with the supporters, greatly increase Kerry's "regular guy" image.

Both candidates, in an attempt to follow Reagan's "Morning in America" ads, highlight the American Dream. Reagan did this by emphasizing continuity and providing a vision of what America would look like with him as president. Bush adopts Reagan's continuity method. His main theme is that America is remaining strong after tragedy. This strength will continue with

President Bush. This is particularly clear through images in “Tested.” Here, we see typical American scenes: a diner opens, a child hops off a school bus, and the traditional nuclear family sits around a dinner table. Meanwhile, the fear of lack of continuity is expressed in Bush’s “Mom” ad and is associated with Kerry. The ad shows the traditional American family, the working mother in her mini-van with children tossing a soccer ball in the back seat. The mother listens to the plans of “Kerry and the Liberals in Congress” and expresses her own fear. Thus, Bush succeeds in connecting himself with continuity and Kerry with discontinuity.

Kerry, rather than using a continuity method, uses Reagan’s visionary method to connect himself with the American Dream. In describing the American people, Kerry encourages the ideals of the American Dream: hard work, social mobility, opportunity and freedom. He says, “We’re a country of optimists, we’re the can-do people.” As a young couple holds their baby, Kerry says, “Here’s what I’ve heard from families all across America, you need someone to fight for you.” Kerry, however, does not quite show this America as Reagan does. With the exception of some children playing and people working, the shots are mostly of Kerry shaking hands with supporters. This increases his “regular guy” appeal, but does not display a vision of America that voters can associate directly with Kerry. Kerry may tell us directly that we are a “country of optimists,” but he does not show us what this country looks like.

Trait association, something of which I have already touched upon with both Kerry and Bush, is clearly a very strong component of both team’s strategies. As mentioned, Bush’s “Whatever it Takes” increases his weak spot in intelligence. Meanwhile, the frequent shots of Kerry shaking hands with supporters strengthen his weak “regular guy” image. Other trait association tactics, however, are used by the candidates. For example, in Bush’s “Tested” the narrator says, “freedom, faith, family, President Bush.” Thus, the ad connects Bush with

freedom, faith, family and the happy visuals that are displayed along with the three ideas.

Kerry's ads achieve the same trait association. In "Across" and "Heart" Kerry says, "We're a country of optimists. We're the can do people." By saying these words one can also infer that Kerry is an "optimist" and a "can-do" person. Furthermore, Kerry, like Nixon, uses a "talking head" format that is scattered for brief segments within each of his ads. Unlike Nixon, however, Kerry accompanies the "talking head" with other visuals. Additionally, the setting is a warm environment with soft lighting and curtains, a plant, pictures and books. The "homey" environment makes the viewer associate Kerry with this soft, warm feel. In fact, it is very much the "warm and fuzzy" feeling we get with Reagan's spots.

Both candidates also use trait association to form hero images. This is clear in Kerry's "Heart" ad, in which the testimonies of Vietnam veterans and the frequent use of Kerry in uniform attribute to his military hero image. This is an image, however, that was strengthened in greater detail through other media events during the campaign. Likewise, Bush adds several images of firefighters to his ads to create a hero appeal. In 1984, firefighters would have been of little significance to the Reagan ads. In a post-9/11 world, however, firefighters symbolize heroic valor and strength. Bush uses these images to associate himself with these traits. He plays upon the tragedy of 9/11 to increase his own heroic image. Bush becomes, not the cowboy or even the war hero, but the firefighter. He acquires that "superman" image vows to protect us from dangers like the terrorism of 9/11.

It is difficult to find any aspect of either Bush's or Kerry's ads that are not in some way related to trait association. But perhaps no ad demonstrates trait association more than Kerry's "Outsource." Here, Kerry uses the first half of the ad to create an evil fearful frame of Bush. This is obvious by the black and white, dull images of an empty factory. The images quickly change

to bright and warm hues once the ad switches to Kerry's agenda. Again, the supporters return and Kerry is present. Unlike Mondale, who used vague symbolism or unclear fear tactics that backfired, Kerry presents obvious symbolism and a clear dichotomy. Kerry succeeds in connecting Bush with fear and himself with hope and happiness.

Perhaps more so than any other campaign spots, the focus of the 2004 television ads was on people and personalities, rather than issues. Bush does this by making the war about soldiers and the families of soldiers ("Whatever it Takes"); by making healthcare about doctors, families and children ("Health Care Agenda"); and by making the economy about working mothers ("Mom"). The Kerry ads have a very different method from Bush's; however, they are no less focused on personalities. For the most part, the Kerry ads either focus on Kerry's personality or on the personality of America itself. Kerry is the strong decisive war hero; America is an optimistic country that will be respected abroad with Kerry as president.

Both teams seem to have mastered the technique of creating "image candidates" within the television advertising. The question is how do these "image candidates" affect election results? In the 1960 campaign, Kennedy was the clear "image candidate," as he far outshined Nixon in image qualities. Kennedy, however, barely won the election with only 84 more electoral votes. But times have since changed. Image was not as important to the American people back in 1960, and so, it was not so important who the "Image candidate" was and who the "issue candidate" was. In fact, image, one could say, was on the brink of becoming the newest American commodity in 1960. By 1984, however, image had been drained into the hearts and souls of Americans. Reagan proved this, as this strong "image candidate" triumphed over Mondale with 512 more electoral votes. By 2004, both campaign teams proved that they understood the importance of images, and the dynamics of the campaign changed. Suddenly, we

were faced with two “image candidates.” With two “image candidates,” the election results were close. In fact, Bush barely won the election with only 22 more electoral votes.

Many could argue the reasons for Bush’s win in the 2004 campaign. One reason could be that, since we were in a time of war, the country didn’t want to change presidents. This is often the case in times of a crisis; for example, during the Great Depression and World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt was able to serve for twelve consecutive years in order to maintain stability within the country. Additionally, 9/11 and the Swift Boat Ads probably did have some effect on the campaign. One factor, however, seems to dominate, that being, inconsistent image portrayals. The Bush team constantly framed Kerry as indecisive and wooden in appearance. This framing may have skewed Kerry’s overall image. It might be said, however, that Kerry’s overall image was wooden and stuffy and that Kerry’s ads did not demonstrate the image that was seen across every other TV format. In this way, the campaign team succeeded in the spots in constructing the image they wanted the American public to see. They did not, however, succeed in keeping this image consistent across other formats. This may, of course, had to do with the fact that the team had little, if any, control of the candidates in the other formats.

Kerry’s inconsistency here is coupled with the otherwise consistent image of Bush. Overall, Bush was the “regular guy.” The article “Why we lost” quotes Resnicow (2004), who says, “To me, it comes down to salesmanship. Which candidate would you rather drink a beer with? Seriously speaking, most Americans prefer a president who struggles in pronouncing the word “nuclear” and maybe screws up every now and then” (“Why We Lost,” 2004). In the spot ads, this “regular guy” image was not made as clear as it could have been. I do not, however, see this as a failure on the part of the Bush team. Bush himself succeeded so well in forming this image, that his team had little need of re-emphasizing an image that was already the predominate

image of Bush. Instead, the team used the spot ads to emphasize qualities of Bush's that needed to be strengthened in order to improve his overall image (i.e. intelligence).

Both the Kerry and Bush teams succeeded in emphasizing the qualities of their candidates that needed to be emphasized in order to improve the overall image. The problem with the Kerry campaign was that Kerry had a negative image (partly because of the Bush team) to begin with, while Bush's image was very positive. These images seem to have more to do with inherent qualities of the candidates, and not with the campaign teams. And so, a study that encompasses the inherent qualities of the candidates, along with the fabricated images, is needed. Furthermore, in order to fully generalize the image and the election winner, a study that includes a broad range of mediums and formats is also necessary.

Limitations

This study analyzed the portrayal of presidential candidates across three campaigns, paying special attention to their image characteristics. In doing so, an "image candidate" and an "issue candidate" emerged. The qualities of the "image candidate" were discovered and elaborated upon in the discussion of the findings. These characteristics, however, are limited by several factors.

First and foremost, I must state upfront that I am a democrat and was a press intern for Senator John Kerry throughout the writing of this study. To limit my own personal biases from influencing the study, however, I chose campaigns in which both Democrats (Kennedy) and Republicans (Reagan and Bush) were victors. In terms of the Bush/Kerry campaign, I quantified my results as best as possible. In fact, I actually coded for the image qualities in the Bush/Kerry campaign twice in order to further prevent any personal biases from slipping through.

The study focused solely on television advertising because they provided a completely controlled environment where the constructed image could be evaluated. The image created in a spot, however, may not be completely representative of the entire campaign. Additionally, the spots chosen may also have limited the study. They were chosen based on a convenience sample. Because of this, the ads may not have been entirely representative of the overall campaign ads from each year. Furthermore, the narrative format used to choose and evaluate the ads typically lends itself to a chronological order. I was not, however, able to choose ads based on their release dates. This, however, proved inconsequential due to the nature of campaigns themselves. Ads generally do not run in consecutive blocks of time. Rather, they may run sporadically throughout the campaign, or appear in the beginning only to reappear at the end. Still others may appear in one part of the country at a point and another part of the country at another point (W.E. Stanwood, Personal Conversation, 9/28/05). Thus, the time viewers saw the ads may not have been in the correct narrative sequence anyways. In addition, the location in which the ads played must be taken into account. Some of the ads may have been created for a specific segment of the population. Other ads may help to create a different image for the candidate depending on where they were played. For example, a Bush ad on 9/11 may create a different image if it were played in New York as opposed to Nevada. This is because of the different emotional connections the viewers would have had toward the events within the ads themselves.

Lastly, because this was a small project, just three campaigns were studied. Thus, only the dynamics of three winners and three losers were explored. In a study with such limited subjects, any outside factors could have easily swayed the results. For example, in 1960, the presence of an additional powerful image was added to the campaign: Jacqueline Kennedy. It is quite possible that any positive feelings American's had of Jackie Kennedy were extended to her

husband. In 1984, the position of Reagan as an incumbent may also have swayed results. Furthermore, in 2004, 9/11, the war in Iraq and the Swift Boat ads all probably had an impact on the images of the candidates, as well as on the election results. It is impossible, however, to determine all of the outside influences present in a campaign, let alone to elaborate upon their significance within the context of the election. After all, influencing factors in campaigns, such as the influence of first ladies, incumbents, wars and support organizations themselves warrant full research.

Further Research

Aside from studying the various influences present in campaigns, there were other topics for further research that arose from this study. In addition to studying image formation within campaign spot advertising, it would prove useful to study other media formats as well. For example, formats such as debates may divulge more of the natural qualities of the candidates. Meanwhile, combining debates with ads, along with news coverage, talk shows and pseudo-events gives a more complete picture of the candidate. This complete picture would most likely be the image available to the viewing public. Thus, this general view of the candidate could have impacted vote choices more so than the image created solely by the campaign spots. Future research could also benefit from a more diverse array of media formats, as well. Such formats may include radio and print ads, as well as talk and news radio, editorials, and newspaper coverage. Research in the realm of issue and image relationship, such as how images contradict issue positions or how issue positions are created to compliment an image, would also be a promising course of study. Additionally, research that follows the images and issues of a candidate throughout his presidency would be of interest to the field of political communications.

Conclusion

Since its birth, television has affected the political affairs of our nation. In fact, at the dawn of television's influence, in 1960, John F. Kennedy predicted the "revolutionary impact of television" as he said, "TV has altered drastically the nature of our political campaigns...Some candidates have benefited by using it- others have been advised to avoid it. To the voter and vote-getter alike, TV offers new opportunities, new challenges and new problems" ("A force that has changed the political scene," 1960). By the 1980's, however, there was no avoiding television. It had become more than a piece of furniture in the living rooms of Americans; it had become a lasting social structure. And so, marketing consultants adapted television to their campaign strategies. Kissing grandmothers and holding babies moved from supportive rope lines to the homes of millions of Americans; followers, foes and undecided alike. Today, with the average American watching 7.2 hours of television per day, much of which includes advertising in some form, the planned "image" of the candidate is all most voters can see. In 1987, Boorstin said that "more important than what we think of the Presidential candidate is what we think of his "public image" (Boorstin, 1987, p. 204). The "public image" of the candidate and the candidate himself, however, have become so intertwined that it is virtually impossible for the average citizen to separate the two. This creates a dilemma for the American democratic system.

As Waterman (1999) said:

The central dilemma for the American presidency is that the development of the image-is-everything presidency has put the public relations cart before the policy horse. The end result: an image-driven presidency in which policies are often mere props for presidents and their image makers. Substance has been devalued and replaced with symbolism and style. In the process, the world of the image maker has become increasingly confused with reality. (pp. 3-4)

In presidential politics, television brings Americans an image similar to *The Wizard of Oz*. We, like Dorothy, must realize we are "not in Kansas anymore." The heartland of America

has turned into a constructed reality. It has turned into a fantasy land where all seems ideal, Oz. This land is run a single man, the great and powerful Wizard, our president. Behind the curtain, however, lays just a man. It is the smoke and mirrors, the advertising executives and marketing consultants, which create the Wizard that we have all come to respect and fear. It is not until Toto tugs back the curtain that “the human being behind the smoke and mirrors” can be revealed (Schroeder, 2004).

Unveiling the truth behind the “image-is-everything” presidency is a difficult task. But, the survival of our democracy may be at stake (Waterman, 1999). It is necessary for Americans to tug back the curtain; to strike a balance between substance and style, between issues and images, “between the man and the message” (Troy, 1991, p.267). Only then can the Wizard be exposed as a man. Only then, can we restore America with a brain, a heart and some courage. Only then can we click our ruby red slippers and return home.

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