ABSTRACT

APPEALING TO THE YOUTUBE VOTER: AN ANALYSIS OF BARACK OBAMA’S 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENTS ON YOUTUBE

by Nicholas Andrew Bernard

Verbal, nonverbal, and production qualities of Barack Obama’s 2008 YouTube advertisements were examined using the videostyle method of analysis. The results of this analysis revealed that the advertisements featured a natural manner of speaking, used an informal setting, a cinéma vérité production style, and focused on Obama supporters. Together these findings suggest that the advertisements add more transparency to the campaign. Other qualities of the advertisements included a positive message, pop or rap music, and motivated the audience to act. These findings help explain the interplay between the YouTube pull medium and campaign advertisements.
APPEALING TO THE YOUTUBE VOTER: AN ANALYSIS OF BARACK OBAMA’S 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENTS ON YOUTUBE

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Introduction

The well known social scientist Harold Lasswell (1969) encouraged communication scholars to examine the source, message, channel, receiver and impact of communication by asking “who says what to whom in what channel and with what effect?” In this study I will revisit this question in the context of political advertisements, focusing on what is said with respect to the channel that is used. The artifacts in my study will focus on the relatively recent use of political advertisements posted to the website YouTube by Barack Obama and his campaign strategists in his 2008 Presidential contest.

The 2008 presidential election was the first U.S. Presidential election of its kind to take advantage of Internet sites such as YouTube (Ramirez, 2008). In the 2008 election, YouTube (released in 2005) was used as a video sharing website by political campaigns to post campaign video advertisements for voters to watch (Lizza, 2006). Additionally, an entire Presidential debate was generated from questions posted by users, and other user-generated viral videos such as “I Got A Crush On Obama” drove viewers to the site as a type of viral advertisement. All told, YouTube recorded 1.91 billion hits on Barack Obama videos (Ramirez, 2008). According to the Pew Research Center (2008) 39% of voters viewed at least one political Internet video during the 2008 presidential election cycle. With campaigns posting countless video advertisements to YouTube, and so many people viewing them, little is known about the specific content of these videos. More specifically, the messages about the candidate and the video persona he communicated in the videos remain unexamined. The purpose of this study is to analyze these videos to better understand the candidate’s YouTube video advertisement persona.

In the following section I will discuss how political campaigns use television advertising and the rising popularity of Internet video advertising as a campaign tool. I propose that by examining the videostyle Barack Obama used in his YouTube online advertisements we will be able to better understand the Internet video persona he created. These insights may help other candidates develop their own Internet YouTube advertising. Because the area of Internet campaign strategy continues to rapidly evolve, it is important to identify emerging trends. As the next election cycle approaches, candidates will inevitably turn to the Internet to build support. These candidates and their campaign advisors will likely look to a successful model, such as Barack Obama’s 2008 Presidential campaign. This study will help uncover just one facet of his successful and historic bid for President.
Chapter 1: Literature Review

Television and Internet use in Political Campaign

Today, media strategy in a national election is comprised of many components operating simultaneously to communicate with voters. Television advertisements constitute just one part of contemporary political campaign media strategy. The first televised political advertisement was aired in 1950 by Senator William Benton of Connecticut, and the medium was later used by both presidential candidates Adali Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 (Benoit, 2007). Today, it is considered the primary medium of campaign advertising, more than direct mailing, or even the Internet, and is widely used in most political campaigns (Devine, 2008).

The formatting of television advertisements has been limited to either 30 or 60 second segments (Benoit, 2007). Operating under tight time constraints, advertisers have a formidable task when developing advertisements. According to Trent and Friedenberg (2008) there are three key features to political advertising, in particular television advertisements. First, they are incredibly costly and time consuming to create. Secondly, television advertising is used alongside other types of media, and lastly, all of the media are used to communicate images and ideas about the candidate to the voters (Trent & Friedenberg, 2008).

Currently media strategists advise campaigns to dedicate large portions of their war chests to advertisement purchases on television. Some studies indicate that television advertisements in a typical presidential campaign consume nearly 60% of the campaign’s budget (West, 2001). In 2004, candidates spent over $800 million in television advertisements alone (Seelye, 2004). Such a large sum of money is a testament to the significance television advertising has in a political campaign.

With such a large sum of money dedicated to campaign advertising, candidates come to expect a return for their investment. Research by Franz, Freedman, Goldstein, and Ridout (2007) indicate that one objective of a campaign advertisement is to make the candidate appear similar to the viewer. Additionally, the favored candidate is made to appear closer to the viewer than the opponent in terms of values, geographic location, ideology, religiosity, or occupation and this similarity can increase the viewer’s liking of the favored candidate. For example, when a candidate discusses their upbringing in a small, rural town in the Midwest, and the viewer also grew up in a small, rural Midwest town, the viewer identifies with the candidate. The result is that the viewer feels closer to the candidate because of this similarity. The challenge is in
communicating enough information to ensure a connection with the audience in a 30-second or 60-second segment, and in exactly the way the candidate wants the audience to see and hear it.

Television political advertisements are a Presidential candidate’s primary way to reach out to otherwise passive voters and speak directly to them, conveying precisely the message the candidate wants the viewer to see and understand. The information a potential voter receives about a candidate is mediated by the television editors and writers if they were to watch or read the news. Other forms of political communication, either stump speeches, candidate websites, or news coverage all require active participation on behalf of the well-intended voter, whereas political TV advertisements come to the viewer regardless of their interest or disinterest in the campaign. Because of this, political strategists have traditionally viewed television as one of the fastest and most effective ways to reach a broad range of voters.

Media strategists strive to create television advertisements that receive free coverage on either the news or by word of mouth. The key, according to media consultant Tad Devine, is that the television piece must be, “memorable and visceral that connects with people in the most powerful way, a way that cuts through them” (Devine, 2008). The 2008 Presidential campaign offers a number of examples from both candidates of such advertisements.

In a 2008 30-second television advertisement by Senator John McCain, Broken, the narrator starts by saying, “Washington is broken and John McCain knows it. We are worse off now than we were four years ago” (McCain, 2008, August 5). In just these opening lines the advertisement uses “we” conveying a sense of identification that McCain has with the viewers by using inclusive language. Additionally, the advertisement conveys a sense of understanding that, like the viewer, McCain also knows that Washington is “broken”. The narrator goes on to tout McCain’s record as a crusader of the people, taking on such goliaths as “big tobacco, and corruption in congress”. The advertisement then turns its attention to what McCain plans to do in the future as he continues this crusade, fighting “big oil” and “reforming Wall-Street”. This ad targets viewers who are critical of the way Washington operates, who feel the pain of high oil prices, and want to bring America back to the prosperous “good ol’ days”. This 30-second advertisement illustrates how McCain is trying to frame himself as someone who sees the country headed down the wrong path. Additionally he attempts to identify with the working American in his distrust of large companies and the rising fuel costs, showing proximity to his targeted viewer all in a clear and concise format.
Historically, television advertising has played a role in the American political campaign landscape since the 1950s, and has become a costly aspect of a campaign. As an important medium for the candidate to communicate in an unmediated way with the public, these advertisements are carefully constructed to optimize the 30 seconds or 60 seconds of viewing time. In the same way that television is an avenue for the candidate to speak directly to the voter, the Internet also provides access to voters.

*The Overlap between Television and Internet Advertising.* Television and the Internet can both serve as mediums to communicate a candidate’s image and ideas to the voter. Television, as a medium, enable more passive audiences to get information about a candidate, whereas a print advertisement, such as a newspaper ad, requires active engagement of the audience. The Internet appeals to a viewer’s senses in much the same way that television does, and furthermore the Internet’s popularity and low cost is driving media strategists to post more content on websites such as YouTube. Additionally, these mediums often dynamically interact with one another as these technologies continue to evolve in a political context.

Trent and Friedenberg (2008) point out that the power of a television advertisement is its ability to appeal to two of the audience’s senses—sight and sound. This enables a television advertisement to convey more information than other advertising mediums which utilize just one of the senses. The same way that television advertising appeals to both the audience’s senses of visual images and sounds, so too does video Internet advertising.

The Internet does afford media strategists the opportunity to include video as part of their media campaign. Although the use of the Internet was limited at one time, it is gaining in popularity as the preferred new medium of media transmission. Television currently attracts more viewers than does the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2004). However, trends indicate that this is beginning to change. Since 2004 there has been a 13% increase in Internet as a source of campaign news (Pew Research Center, 2008). Advertisers who once relied on the traditional medium of television to air their commercials are now infiltrating the Internet. To help illustrate the ramifications of this change, one media strategist describes a hypothetical situation where one might see a “voter who is standing in line to vote with their iphone watching a political ad as they are deciding who to vote for” (Devine, 2008). As mobile devices become more powerful in terms of Internet accessibility as well as more economically accessible to a larger portion of the
population, this scenario may become more common. Although accessibility may be driving this change, it will inevitably affect the way voters educate themselves on candidates and issues.

According to the Pew Research Center (2004) younger demographics (ages 18-29) are the first to embrace Internet devices. In 2000, only 9% of 18-29 year olds reported receiving most of their information about the election from the Internet. In contrast, in 2004, 44% of that same demographic claimed to have learned something about the presidential campaign from the Internet and 28% received most of their information about the election from the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2004). Twice as many Americans, across age demographics, reported using the Internet as a source of political information between 2000 and 2004 (Pew Research Center, 2004). Although the popularity of the Internet is most evident in younger demographics, trends indicate that more Americans than ever before are turning to the Internet for their information on presidential races (Pew Research Center, 2008).

With more voters looking to the Internet for political information, campaign strategists have responded with Internet advertising. One type of Internet advertising is the use of the website YouTube to post campaign advertisements. Candidates can create their own YouTube Channel which is a webpage on YouTube. On this webpage the candidate can post videos of their choosing, some examples include videos of speeches given by the candidate, videos made by supporters, addresses specifically for YouTube audiences, and political advertisements.

*Push and Pull Advertising.* Messages can come to the consumer in a variety of ways; one way to look at this is to examine whether the medium pushes a message to a consumer or, whether the consumer self-selects the message. For the purposes of this research push advertising can be conceived as, “designed to broadcast or push messages to users” (Barnes & Hair, 2007, p. 6). Whereas “pull” advertising is occurs when the advertisement, “interactively let[s] [users] self-select information” (Barnes & Hair, 2007, p. 6). Television advertising is considered a type of “push” medium for advertisers because it broadcasts information to the user without regard for the users desire to attend the message. While some forms of Internet advertising, such as pop-up ads, and banner ads are also classified as “push” advertising (Barnes & Hair, 2007), websites such as YouTube can be used as “pull” advertising. In sum, traditional television advertising advances a “push” advertising technique as does some forms of Internet advertising whereas YouTube capitalizes on pulling an audience to an advertisement.
Viral Videos. When Internet videos viewers share the video with others, it becomes a “viral video”. In a broader context viral marketing on the Internet is defined as, “using customer communication as a means or multiplying a brand’s popularity through customers spreading the brand name” (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Fremler, 2004, p. 39). It is important to understand that while not all pull media content on the Internet becomes viral, this is often the objective of many media strategists (Devine, 2008). If a campaign video becomes viral it is advantageous to the candidate because others are doing the work of spreading the campaign message, all with little effort from campaign workers.

One of the first examples in which a YouTube became “viral” and impacted the course of a campaign was in the 2006 Virginia Senate race where Republican Senator George Allen was recorded using the slur “macaca” to one of his opponent’s supporters (Gueorguieva, 2008). The supporter later posted the video to YouTube (Gueorguieva, 2008). It became such an Internet phenomenon that it was picked up by major networks and broadcast by local news organizations. This incident demonstrates two important concepts: first, how the Internet, more specifically YouTube, can be used as a tool to disseminate information from one user to the next, and secondly, that the interplay between YouTube and the traditional television exists and can multiply a story.

In recent years, politicians have begun to use YouTube to their advantage by posting versions of their television advertisements online. YouTube has dedicated channels for political purposes where candidates can post videos to be viewed. Further enabling this feature, viewers can subscribe to specific candidate’s channels. When new material is posted, YouTube notifies the subscribers, prompting them to sign on and view the new content. Additionally, some media consultants design video advertisements specifically for YouTube in the hopes that once it is viewed the viewer will email it to someone else (Barnes & Hair, 2007). This captive audience comprises a base of support from which additional supporters can be sought.

The impact that this video had on George Allen’s Campaign illustrates the significance of the Internet medium to a political campaign. While in practice the similarities and differences between the Internet and television mediums are identified, the theory linking these two mediums and their connection to political communication warrants further exploration.

The Significance of Internet as a Medium. The medium by which messages are transmitted is important to understanding the message. McLuhan (1964) argues that the medium
and the message are inextricably tied to one another, and additional research has indicated that as consumers interact differently (based on the medium) to messages those messages change.

McLuhan (1964) proposes a rear view model where new technologies are viewed from the perspective of older ones. One new technology will embody aspects of the old one while adding additional features at the same time. For example, when television was introduced it captured the audio aspect of a broadcast, a feature of the radio, with the addition of an animated or moving visual representation. In this way the audio broadcast similarity between the two technologies linked them together but also demonstrates how television was viewed from the perspective of the radio. Barnes and Hair (2007) argue that advertising on the Internet can be understood in much the same way, by looking back at television advertisements one can best understand how Internet advertising will be used. With the video delivery commonalities between the Internet and television, it follows that advertisements will follow a similar format. One additional feature that Internet advertising, particularly on YouTube, offers is an interactive capability, with user-generated content not available on television.

The focus on channel differences in the media by McLuhan (1964) pointed out the perceptual differences as a result of the media channel communicating the message in his famous proclamation of the “medium is the message”. Perhaps the most well-known study comparing channel differences was in the study of the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates. When participants listened to the debates on the radio they thought that Nixon won the debate, while those watching it on television declared Kennedy the winner (Vancil & Pendell, 1987). This indicates that the channel differences between television and the radio impacted the message that consumers interpreted.

Channel differences can also be seen when comparing television and Internet advertisements. A study by Kaid (2002) found that undecided voters in the 2000 presidential race that were exposed to Internet ads changed their votes to Al Gore, while those exposed to the same advertisements on television preferred George W. Bush. Kaid postulates the reason candidates can have a greater appeal through an Internet media is due to the unique opportunity for relationship building in Internet use. Unlike television viewing, the process of watching videos online is perceived as a more intimate user experience (Germany & Grove, 2007).

Metallinos (1996) proposes the formalist media aesthetics theory stating that media technology has the power to influence each other, as well as numerous other institutions of the
society. This theory has three components, however only two concern political advertisements. They include:

(1) Every medium is unique in its own right; it is characterized by its unique features, instruments, material and techniques. as argued by Antin (1979), Newcomb (1987), Tarroni (1979), Toogood (1978) and Zettl (1978).
(2) There is a logic in the succession and progress of the media in which one form of art helps the development of another, as argued by Arnheim (1969), D’Agostino (1985), Dondis (1973), Innis (1951) and McLuhan (1962).

(Metallinos, 1996, p. 7)

Establishing that different mediums are intrinsically unique and that these mediums evolve from one another is evident in a movement from television to Internet use. This is instrumental in developing taxonomies which aid in better understanding the techniques used and possibly explain why some are successful and others are not.

Information processing theory is also another possible explanation for these channel differences (Schunk, 1996). This theory says that when more attention is given to a particular task it influences the learning outcome (Schunk, 1996). According to information processing theory, attention and learning outcomes are positively correlated. The more attention leads to greater learning outcomes. In the context of Internet videos, when users select to watch an advertisement their attention will likely be focused on that video, because the user has chosen, on their own accord, to view the advertisement. As the user learns more about the candidate in these advertisements they are able to explore the candidate’s position on issues raised in the advertisement (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). Users of the Internet have a more readily accessible opportunity to engage in follow up research compared to their television watching counterparts, thus, the video experience on television is different than the Internet viewing experience (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). This suggests that the Internet as a medium warrants study separate from other types of mediums such as television or print.

The Internet and YouTube as an Advertising Medium

In a political campaign the Internet can serve a variety of purposes: helping to raise campaign funds, soliciting volunteers, and even as an educational resource for voters. The focus of this section is to understand the role of the Internet, specifically YouTube, as an advertising medium. I will first outline some of the potential difficulties relating to Internet advertising, then
discuss some of the opportunities afforded with Internet advertising, before finally explaining a criteria for a successful Internet advertisement.

Obstacles and Challenges of Online Advertising. Internet advertising remains a challenge for political campaigns. Some of the difficulties with Internet advertising include the low profit margins for media consultants compounded by the time-intensive process to design the advertisements which makes many campaign strategists hesitant to use them (Graff, 2008). Low profit margins are an issue for media consultants because in traditional television advertising a 10% profit margin is attached to the media purchase (Graff, 2008). If this same pricing structure were to be applied to Internet advertising, the fee would be considerably less because Internet advertising purchases are far less expensive when compared to television purchases (Graff, 2008). Additionally, campaign issues change quickly and are difficult to anticipate with an Internet advertisement already prepared. Internet users often have erratic consumption habits when it comes to their online use. It is difficult to determine what they will find appealing in an Internet advertisement.

Recently, online advertising has become a tactic used in political communication; media consultants, campaigns, and scholars have approached the area tentatively. Graff (2008) outlines numerous obstacles to political online advertising in his book The First Campaign. First, media consultants are reluctant to engage in this type of advertising because of the low profit margins, for reasons described above (Graff, 2008). Secondly, online advertising is time consuming to create (Graff, 2008). When campaign headlines change daily, producing relevant online advertisements poses a significant challenge (Benoit, 2007). The challenge lies in keeping current with the news headlines on current issues in relation to the production cycle for an advertisement, which often takes weeks if not months. Furthermore, paid advertising online is not intuitive; there are many options, and a multitude of websites with which to advertise, and each one has a particular target demographic. Currently not all of the voting population surf the Internet, those who do each have unique patterns in the websites they visit making it difficult to conduct a large scale advertising campaign (Graff, 2008).

The final, and perhaps most significant challenge, according to Graff, that online political advertisers face, is predicting the natural consumption pattern of Internet users (Graff, 2008). In other words, campaigns cannot buy viewers’ attention on the Internet the same way they can on television. As noted earlier, Internet content often operates as a ‘pull’ media rather than a ‘push’
media because users are drawn to content; they seek it out, rather than content being “pushed” onto them by including it as a hurdle the viewer must experience before getting to the content they seek. Therefore, the challenge for those developing political Internet advertisements is create advertisements which draw viewers to them.

The many difficulties of Internet political advertising are rooted in cost (both in dollars and time), the inability to foresee campaign events and issues, and the erratic consumption patterns of Internet users. Although this may be enough to prevent some campaigns from using the Internet to advertise, there are some significant advantages for those who choose to use Internet to promote their candidate.

**Benefits of Internet YouTube Video Advertising.** The Internet offers several advantages to both the viewer and the creator. With more Internet users than ever before, viewers can engage the video advertisement in ways that are not possible on television making them more of an active participant rather than a passive viewer. Advertisements can also be shared easily by viewers allowing them to forward the video to others via email. View counters also make it easier for campaign strategists to track the number of views. And perhaps the biggest advantage to a political advertiser is that on some platforms such as YouTube, there is no need to purchase airtime. All of these benefits help make Internet video advertising a viable option for many media strategists.

Internet videos can increase the accessibility of the candidate’s information to the audience. One of the benefits of online videos is that no longer is there a 30 second or 1 minute time restriction. This opens the door to much more creative and provocative pieces that will ideally create excitement in the viewer, something that is difficult to accomplish on television. Also, unlike television advertisements, online videos allow the viewer a number of opportunities. One is the ability to move through a video, watching some parts more than once, pausing the video and coming back to it later. Furthermore, these video advertisements can be emailed to other potential viewers at no cost to a video producer, all while increasing viewership.

In the 2004 presidential campaign, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) bought a number of ads online in support of John Kerry. According to follow-up research by Kaid and Postelnicu (2005), those who saw the ads had a higher favorability rating for Kerry, and were more likely to vote for and contribute monetarily to his campaign. Those who viewed online ads reported that that it helped them sort truth from falsity more than television advertisements (Kaid
& Postelnicu, 2005). The 2004 DNC advertisements showed how significant online advertising can be part of the campaign’s strategy.

In the 2008 Presidential Election, voters could use the Internet to supplement their information by viewing online videos. Both John McCain and Barak Obama made extensive use of online video and social media during their campaigns. Divinity Metrics, an Internet tracking company, found that as of September 10, 2008, Obama received over 500 million views of his Internet content and generated nearly 3 million comments (Divinity Metrics, 2008). For Obama, the single largest age demographic viewing this content was people aged 18-24 with 37% of the total and second most was the 25-34 age group, with 31% of the total (Divinity Metrics, 2008). Moreover, the most popular non-network platform used for viewing was YouTube (Divinity Metrics, 2008). The use of online video advertisements (like those posted on YouTube) has generated at least twice the response rate when compared to other online standard image advertisements (DoubleClick, 2007). Younger voters (ages 18-29) turned out to favor Obama by 66 percent and were some of the most actively engaged by volunteering in his campaign (Keeter, 2008). The sheer number of views point to the power of an Internet video to attract attention as well as engage the viewer by offering the opportunity to comment on the content.

Another advantage to advertising online is the ability of viewers to easily share videos. A recent study by Baumgartner (2007) which focused on the popularity of political humor websites and video clips found that these videos spread virally, where one user forwards the website on to friends and family. As the link to political website disseminates among social networks it logs more and more viewers. Other research suggests that in that way, the Internet can be used as an effective mobilization tool and increase interest and participation in politics among youth (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001).

One way to increase the interest of Internet video advertisements is to include an element of humor. Baumgartner (2007) found that those who view political humor websites were less likely to disagree with the message in the website so long as it was accompanied by humor. Additionally, if the viewer enjoys the humor, they will be less likely to counter-argue the point. Humor may lead the receiver to appreciate the source and, in turn, look favorably on the message. The use of humor has been shown to increase the trust of the source (Baumgartner, 2007). For example, when candidates engage in self-deprecating humor, it leads to a more positive impression of them. According to this study, political humor websites are persuasive,
particularly to a younger demographic (Baumgartner, 2007). It seems only reasonable for media
strategists to look to replicate the viral and persuasive power of humorous political websites in
the Internet advertisements they create. Judging by the success of political humor videos and
their viral nature as well as persuasive outcomes, these videos are one example of how a
candidate can create an image and frame issues in the campaign. Furthermore, these
advertisements fit the criteria of a good Internet advertisement as discussed above as both
compelling and amusing, all while giving viewers something to discuss.

One example of a viral advertisement was by Mike Huckabee in the 2008 presidential
primaries. Using famed action hero Chuck Norris in a 60-second piece titled, *Chuck Norris
Approved*, Norris and Huckabee go back and forth, exchanging compliments in a satirical “gun-
slinging, wild west” sort of way (Huckabee, 2007, November 18). Norris touts Huckabee’s
policy position and Huckabee promotes Norris’ law abiding practices; it was entertaining even to
those who are not Huckabee supporters (Huckabee, 2007, November 18). One commentator
responded to the YouTube ad by writing, “What a GREAT ad. I’m not voting for Mike, but I
thought the ad was marvelous” (Huckabee, 2007, November 18) While this commenter expresses
that he/she does not intend on voting for Huckabee his/her favorable reaction increases the
chances that the ad will be shared with others who, in turn might be persuaded. Moreover, this
demonstrates the interactive nature of YouTube and its ability for users to create a dialogue
between one another. In this example, it was clear that the candidate is using humor, making him
appear more humble, and increasing his perceived proximity to the potential voter.

One of the advantages to using the Internet is that it enables scholars and media
strategists (as well as the public) to easily track the number of views to an online video posted on
a website such as YouTube. For example, YouTube calculates the number of hits each video
receives on the video display page. Posting advertisements on YouTube is also made easier
because instead of buying airtime videos are posted for free. Using YouTube to post videos is
cost effective and the impact to campaign advertising budgets is minimal (Gueorguieva, 2008).

In short, the Internet offers political advertisers a number advantages, with unlimited time
constraints, more freedom for viewers to navigate the advertisement, and the ability to easily
share the advertisement are significant benefits. Additionally, tracking the number of viewers
helps campaign managers know if viewers are watching, and lastly posts to YouTube are free so
there is no need to purchase airtime. These are some of the advantages a media consultant must weigh when determining whether to create Internet video advertisements to post to YouTube.

_Evaluating Political Advertisements._ With the understanding of how Internet video advertisements differ from traditional television advertisements, criteria for a successful online video advertising has been established. According to Graff (2008) the advertisement must be, “amusing and compelling” (p. 266) while giving people something to talk about. Essentially, the successful campaign advertisement, either online or on television, draws people to the advertisement.

The goal is no different on the Internet, where the barometer of success is the number of hits accumulated. Each hit constituting a set of viewing eyes engaged in the content. This is a world that Graff (2008) refers to as a clickocracy, where advertisements that garner the most clicks (views) wins. This is consistent with the previous concept of creating a pull media, where content that draws people to see it is advantaged over that which pushes it onto viewers. Graff (2008) takes the concept one step further arguing that media, in particular Internet content, is legitimated by the support (in terms of viewers) it receives.

Ultimately, both television and Internet advertisements seek to draw viewers to the advertisement rather than push an advertisement onto them. Internet advertising presents the opportunity for the user to interact more intimately with the information that they receive in the advertisement, facilitating a learning process. Those who view online advertisements are more likely to seek out and examine the accuracy of the information presented (Cutbirth & Coombs, 1997). In this way users are in control of the information, enabling them to select for themselves what they choose to use (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). When advertisements are online, it increases the user’s ability to interact and react to that message by contacting the candidate’s campaign directly via email, exploring the candidate’s website, or even posting comments about the advertisement.

For instance, in the Huckabee example used above, the criteria for a successful Internet advertisement are well illustrated. It contains a necessary entertainment value to this advertisement, where viewers, as demonstrated by the YouTube post, do not necessarily have to be loyal to the candidate to _want to_ watch the ad and enjoy it. If the advertisement successfully entertains the viewer, it will likely be shared with their friends or family. The more potential voters the advertisement touches the greater the opportunity for it to impact someone’s vote.
Posting comments is just one way to interact with and support content on YouTube. The general premise of YouTube operates on a “pull” basis where videos with more views are rewarded by being placed at the top of query searches.

Creating a successful political Internet advertisement is no easy task, however those who successfully do so, often create an advertisement that is amusing and/or compelling. Videostyles is one tool to analyze an advertisement (discussed later) and that can provide a framework to determine the success or failure of it. Throughout these sections I have explained some of the challenges as well as benefits for political Internet advertising, and explained how to distinguish a successful from unsuccessful online political video advertisement.

**Videostyle as a Tool for Media Analysis**

It is well understood that the Internet can be a powerful tool to reach voters, but it is equally important to understand what the candidate communicates in these videos. More specifically, what are the issues and images the candidate uses to communicate to their voters’ via Internet videos? One way to determine this is to study the candidate’s “videostyle”. The concept of a videostyle was first introduced by Kaid and Davidson (1986) and defined as the persona a candidate creates for him or herself in video political advertisements. Later expounded upon by Kaid and Johnston (2001) “videostyle is the techniques, strategies, narratives and symbols that a candidate decides to use in television advertising to make up the candidates ‘videostyle’” (pg. 26) Each candidate uses these various elements to create a pattern of distinctive images by way of video representation (Kaid & Johnston, 2001). There are three distinct components used to identify one’s videostyle: verbal, nonverbal, and production qualities. Although previous studies examining a candidate’s videostyle have focused on television advertisements, I propose that the similarity in presentation format between Internet video advertisements and television advertisement necessitate a similar method of study. Political advertisements on the Internet as well as on television parallel one another in both the visual and audio components despite the different delivery channels.

Videostyle has been used in a wide range of comparison studies analyzing campaign advertisements in the U.S. over time (Kaid & Johnston, 1991) in specific presidential races (Kaid, 1994; Kaid, 1998; Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000; Kaid & Tedesco, 1999; Kaid, Tedesco, Chanselor, & Roper, 1993), and between U.S. campaigns and those in other countries (Holtz-Bacha, Kaid, & Johnston, 1994). Gender differences between a candidate’s videostyles
have also been explored (Banward, 2002; Bystrom, 1995; Bystrom & Kaid, 2000; Bystrom & Miller, 1999; Miller, 1996, and Williams, 1998).

Kaid and Johnston’s (2001) analysis of videostyles in a longitudinal study of presidential candidate television spots from 1952 through 1996 revealed several recurring elements. In the verbal content, candidate spots were issue-oriented, candidate-positive, and used emotional appeals. Additionally, they stressed economic concerns, and their own personal qualities of aggressiveness and competence. Candidates focused on “the importance of living comfortably, [having] material comfort, sense of accomplishment, change and progress, and patriotism” (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 180). The nonverbal elements most common to presidential spots included the use of an anonymous narrator, a formal setting as well as dress. The candidate looks attentive, speaks fluently with vocal variety in a serious manner, and maintains eye contact with the viewer. The most common production elements included: short spot lengths (under 60 seconds), the introspective style and of cinema verité approach to production, and using tight camera shots as well as close-ups. Increasingly, technology is used to add special production elements such as distortion, most often in negative adds (Kaid & Johnston, 2001).

The concept of videostyle can be applied to the Internet as well. Specifically, Banwart (2002) proposed using a “webstyle” to examine candidates presenting-self on candidate’s campaign web-pages. Developed from videostyles, a webstyle examines the candidates website, again focusing on verbal, nonverbal, production, as well as interactive content of the websites. Her study examined Senate, House, and Gubernatorial candidate websites in 2000, noting differences between male and female candidate web pages. The research indicates that female candidates referenced authorities, smiled and dressed more formally compared to their male counterparts who were more likely to use statistics and identify party affiliation on their websites (Banwart, 2002). Additional research by Banwart and Kaid (2002) compared the webstyles of gubernatorial, senatorial, and house campaigns in 2000 and found that there was a significant difference between candidates’ videostyles and their webstyles. Although they set out to determine the role the candidate’s gender played with respect to their video self-presentation and web-site self-presentation, Banwart and Kaid found that there were more differences associated with medium rather than gender, where candidates web presenting-self was significantly different in the images used, issues discussed, and strategic appeals (such as “incumbant” or
“masculine” appeals) (Banwart & Kaid, 2002). This study illustrates the usefulness of analyzing Internet content to obtain an understanding of the candidate’s website persona.

**Verbal Elements.** The verbal aspect of videostyle examines the “text” of the advertisement focusing on the words that are displayed in addition to those which are spoken. Spoken narration includes that of the candidate as well as that of a voice-over. Verbal messages traditionally fall into one of two categories: those which focus on an issue (the economy, jobs, poverty) or of a candidate’s image (honest, caring, trustworthy). Additionally, the content can be either positive or negative, where positive advertisements focus on the favored candidate and negative advertisements focus on the opponent. Other descriptive qualities such as the types of evidence provided, and implicit as well as explicit values can also be associated with the verbal message.

A verbal message can also be communicated in the tone and emotion expressed in the advertisement. Distinguishing emotional appeals from the tone of an advertisement can be difficult. Oftentimes one advertisement can evoke a multitude of emotions, including: fear, hope, patriotism, belonging, passion, frustration, disappointment, anger, and freedom, to name a few. Turning again to John McCain’s advertisement *Broken* as an example, the images of McCain with his sleeves rolled up walking around factories combined with uplifting music, exuded emotions of nostalgia, assurance, patriotism, and optimism. While at the same time the beginning part of the ad is darker, eliciting a sense of frustration and helplessness in the dysfunctional government and a rising cost of living.

Scholars categorize the tone of an ad differently, generally falling into two areas, either positive or negative. The tone of an ad can be best understood as an overarching theme, within each positive or negative ad there may be a number of emotional appeals used in concert with one another to produce the desired effect. Negative ads are defined as “a sort of advertising in which the focus is on criticizing the opponent’s record rather than promoting one’s own record” (Franz, Freedman, Goldstein, & Ridout, 2007, p. 20). A positive ad does just the opposite, touting a candidate’s position, record, history, or some other desirable quality. Previous research finds that negative campaign ads can be more persuasive than positive ads (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Scholars also argue that negative ads stimulate voter turnout because they are more likely to be noticed and remembered, than raise anxiety levels which causes the viewer to engage the issue (Marcus & Mackuen, 1993), and often contain more information than positive ads (Franz,
Freedman, Goldstein, & Ridout, 2007). Other research by Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) asserts that exposure to negative advertisements reduces voter turnout at the polls.

Emotional appeals are by no means new to political television advertisements, a media often criticized for its propensity to encourage voting behavior void of logic and reason. In a country where the dominant school of thought follows the rational world paradigm, scientific fact is valued over emotion. Others may view a politician’s use of emotion as a crutch, when in fact recent research has shown that emotion enables movement between routine behavior and reasoned judgment (Huddy & Gennthorsdottir, 2000). Nevertheless, the presence of emotional appeals in campaign TV ads is undeniable. According to one media strategist, “Emotion is the most powerful force in political advertising. I think that if you can make an emotional ad, first of all it will be memorable, secondly it will affect people, hopefully in the way that you want it to affect them” (Devine, 2008). An examination of television advertisements aired between 1952 and 2000 found that over 79% of ads included emotional appeals, and in 40% they were the dominant appeal (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). In an advertisement, emotion can be conveyed through pictures and music; either in a negative or positive manner. Both strategies in advertisements are used to make the ad more compelling by appealing to the audience’s emotions. The power of the television as a visual and auditory medium enables the presentation of emotions in a way that is yet unmatched by any other medium. Neither modes (music or pictures) are intended to compete with the verbal message, instead they are used to enhance it (Brader, 2006).

For example, in McCain’s Broken advertisement the amount of information is limited. In essence, McCain opposes tobacco and oil companies, and corruption in government (McCain, 2008, August 5). However the emotional picture that he paints is reminiscent of a Washington Cowboy. The advertisement contains images of him in plaid shirts and jeans, talking to factory workers, walking down the street in small town America. To further drive home this point, at the end the narrator announces, “he is the original Maverick…he is John McCain” (McCain, 2008, August 5). In addition to learning, albeit a small amount, about the candidate, the ad provokes an emotional sense of comfort knowing that he is similar to the average American. The artful balance between emotional appeal and information serve to complement one another making the information more impactful to the audience (Franz, Freedman, Goldstein & Ridout, 2007).
Emotional appeal and technical information are dialectics which operate most effectively when a balance between the two is reached.

Although emotionally arousing messages are often used by political campaigns, there is some controversy about its effect on the democratic process. The idea is that voters, under the powerful spell of emotion, will behave irrationally resulting in wreckless decisions in the polling booths (Huddy & Gennthorsdottir, 2000). Research by Marcus and Mackuen (1993) found a very different outcome after examining dual emotions: enthusiasm and anxiety. Their study showed that the emotional presence of enthusiasm correlated to increased involvement in the campaign while subject-reported anxiety corresponded to greater learning. These results point to a powerful relationship between voters’ emotions and cognition as well as behavior.

Psychologically, emotions are conceptualized by several components (a) the stimulus is relevant to the person’s goals, (b) a pronounced physiological response which could include arousal (increased heart rate and breathing) (c) altered cognitive behavior including memory, attention, and thought process, (d) the desire to act a particular manner (called action tendancy), and (e) the inclination toward action (Brader 2006, Drever 1952, Frijda 1999, Lazarus 1991). Emotions channel mental and physical activity in various directions, acting as filters for a person’s senses (Izard, 1991). The impact of emotions is quite significant in a person’s cognition and it follows that such political advertisements would capitalize on this powerful characteristic of the neuriropsychology.

At this point it is also worth noting that there is a difference between an emotional trait and an emotional state. An emotional trait is a person’s predisposition to experience a particular emotion, doing so on a consistent basis, whereas an emotional state is an emotional process which is limited in its duration but varies in its intensity (Izard, 1991). Although part of the purpose of this study is to more broadly understand the usage of emotional appeals in political advertisements, the focus is on emotional states rather than emotional traits. The latter varies substantially from person to person and is believed to be related to one’s genetic makeup (Izard, 1991). The use of emotional appeals in advertisements serves to elicit an emotional state.

In Brader’s (2006) study of emotional appeals used in presidential campaign television advertisements between 1984 and 2004, his advertisement samples were grouped by emotional appeals into two categories: fear or enthusiasm. Fear appeals were defined by the author as those that elicit a sense of anxiety which ultimately encourages viewers to question their choices and
seek new information. Appeals to enthusiasm evoke emotions that are positive or uplifting, encouraging viewers to act on existing loyalties. Brader (2006) found that positive advertisements accompanied by enthusiasm cues produced advertisements that were more effective in encouraging viewers to volunteer for the campaign, to vote in the primary, and to vote in the general election compared to positive images alone. Negative advertisements accompanied by fear cues also had the same effect compared to negative advertisements alone, with the exception of encouraging viewers to vote in the general election. Similar studies exploring the use of emotion in advertising have also yielded similar dimensions as pleasure, akin to enthusiasm, and arousal similar to that of fear (Olney, Holbrook, & Batra, 1991).

**Nonverbal Elements.** Nonverbal components of political advertisements include visual non-word images, as well as musical components of the advertisement. In an interpersonal context Goffman (1959) argues that there are unique nonverbal characteristics each person uses which are often more subconscious but nonetheless present in their presentation. The same can be said about candidates who are campaigning. These nonverbal cues are often weighted more heavily against more easily manipulated verbal messages (Knapp, 1978). Nonverbal behaviors serve to regulate, repeat, contradict, substitute, complement, and accent verbal behavior (Knapp & Hall, 1992). More recent research by Aguinis, Simonsen, and Pierce (1998) found that nonverbal cues influence how an audience perceives a person’s credibility, competence, composure, and sociability. Furthermore, the same study indicated that some nonverbal cues, such as relaxed facial expressions increased the perception of legitimacy and expertise while direct eye contact increased the viewer’s perception of the subject’s credibility. Due to the vital role they play in an audience’s perception of the candidate as well as the influence on the overall message, it is equally important to include this aspect of a candidates’ presentation in a study which seeks to understand a candidate’s style.

**Production Elements.** This element of the candidate’s presentation influences how the advertisement’s creator constructs the message and images presented to the viewer in the advertisement. The production characteristics used by political advertisers is deliberate and purposeful with respect to the intended message as well as the overall campaign strategy. Zettl (2006) discusses in detail how the camera, lighting, and sound can be used purposefully to convey a particular feel, emotion, and to guide the viewer’s interpretation of the message. He states, “the basic purpose of framing a shot is to show images as clearly as possible and to
present them so that they convey meaning and energy” (p. 115). The positioning of object and people within a camera shot are important. The positioning of a camera can be used to manipulate the emotional impact of the video. Burrows, Gross and Wood (1995) explain the importance of production in this way, “Film, could use what humankind has always used to communicate, the expressions of the eyes and facial muscles. The subjective and the objective aspects of the visual narrative could now be easily combined” (pg. 235).

The distance between those being filmed and the camera can communicate different meanings to the audience, in much the same way distance communicates relationships interpersonally. Close-up shots with the subject are more intimate whereas distance shots are less personal and provide less of a connection to the audience. Wide-angle shots emphasize the scene; this horizon view distorts objects in the foreground making them look much closer than they are in reality. Narrow-angle shots emphasizes the depth of a scene in a narrow view, where objects in the distance are enlarged making the distance between the foreground and background appear more compact (Zettl, 2006). Low-angle shots position the camera looking up at the subject appears more dominant and powerful to the viewer. A high-angle shot, where the camera looks down on the subject conveys powerlessness and inferiority (Zettl, 2006).

Lighting also plays a pivotal role in the production of an advertisement. Manipulation of lighting can add sparkle and a sense of professionalism (usually when backlighting is used). Additionally, the use of background lighting can alter the mood by adding color or increasing shadow length can change the perception of the setting (Zettl, 2006).

Although lighting can impact a viewer’s mood so too can the strategic use of sound as powerful means of communicating a message. Zettl (2006) argues, “Sound is important for establishing mood and intensifying an event” (pg. 188). Particular sounds can be used to elicit the psychological response of danger or happiness (Zettl, 2006). Some sounds also provide viewers with a context, communicating a particular location, while others cue the audience to interpret ideas, thoughts and feelings in a particular way. Further explanation of the use of music in advertisements is provided in the section on emotional appeals.

Political advertisements can also have qualities which utilize more general production techniques signaling the viewers to interpret the content in a particular way. Jamieson and Campbell (2001) label advertisements which attempt to look real, “off-the-cuff,” or unrehearsed as cinéma vérité. This type of advertisement suggests to the audience that the piece is part of a
program, or even the news, and is used to add authenticity to the candidate’s message. This is characterized by the camera walking with the candidate through a typical day, overhearing conversations with members of particular groups, such as factory workers, doctors, or parents. These are short clip sequences used to create a narrative. Negative news clips of the opponent can also characterize this style (Jamieson & Campbell, 2001).

The way candidates present themselves to the public involves many elements, particularly when a candidate uses video advertisements. Broadly speaking this persona is a candidate’s videostyle. Operationally, this is comprised of three components within the advertisement: the verbal, nonverbal, and production elements. To understand the image that a candidate is presenting to the public one must first identify these elements.

*The 2008 Presidential Election, Barack Obama, and the Internet*

The Internet campaign Barack Obama used in his campaign for President is particularly worthy of study. Not only did his advertisements generate more views than his opponents (Pew Research Center, 2008), but he was able to create a winning combination of campaign tactics. Focusing on Obama’s tactics will bring research one step closer to understanding why Obama won and whether the same winning formula can be used by others campaigning for public office. The most significant reason to pursue this study is that it is the first step to understanding the impact of YouTube advertisements on viewers in a political arena. This can inform candidates in their allocation of resources to this unique Internet venue. In this section I will discuss the current body of research looking at the 2008 Presidential election, as well as studies regarding Obama’s campaign in particular. This would not be the first study which examined the role of the Internet in the 2008 Presidential campaign. Previous research has looked at the news coverage of candidates across mediums (Just, Crigler, & Belt, 2008), the advertisements aired on television (Kaid, 2009a), and the use of chain emails as a campaign strategy (Walsh & Hardy, 2009).

Advances in technology and the use of the Internet led Just, Crigler, and Belt (2008) to examine the coverage of the election cycle. They found that coverage in traditional forms of media (television and newspaper) were more negative in their criticism of the candidates, whereas Internet news was more neutral towards the candidates. The difference between these two mediums was small. Despite the expectation that new technological innovations may lead to new strategies in campaign advertising, preliminary research shows that this was not the case.
The campaign strategy remained relatively stable between the 2004 Presidential election and the 2008 elections; there were some differences that scholars have noted (Kaid, 2009b). However the tactics used by campaigns did change. Building on current trends, the 2008 general election cycle saw Presidential candidates spent more time attacking their opponent than discussing their own accomplishments in television advertisements (Kaid, 2009b). However, third party and PAC advertisements played less of a role in the 2008 Presidential election as opposed to the 2004 election (Tracey, 2008). Kaid (2009a) notes that Obama’s “rock star” image was solidified in some of his YouTube postings where never before had YouTube been used as a political tactic. YouTube was so significant that Obama dedicated resources to producing original advertisements purely for YouTube posting. This is just one indication of how significant YouTube was to the Obama campaign. In some respects there was very little difference in the advertising strategy used during the 2008 Presidential campaign when compared to previous campaigns; however the tactics used were different, as television advertisements consumed the greatest portion of the candidates’ campaign expenditures (Kaid, 2009a).

Another tactic used by both Obama and McCain was chain emails. One study looked at how the Internet impacted the election examined how chain emails effect voter’s perception of candidates (Walsh & Hardy, 2009). Although rumors spread via email have a negative effect on viewers’ perceptions of the target candidate, these effects can be diminished if the viewer also is exposed to the target’s webpage (Walsh & Hardy, 2009).

The current field of research surrounding Barack Obama’s use of the internet in the 2008 Presidential election is limited. Researchers have examined the differences in media coverage during the 2008 general election between print and television mediums (Just, Crigler, & Belt, 2008). They have also looked at the tone and funding sources of Presidential campaign advertisements (Kaid, 2009a), while another area of research tested the impact of chain emails on voters (Walsh & Hardy, 2009). This limited body of research has not examined the Internet content posted by candidates during the election cycle. Because of the potentially significant impact YouTube advertisements will have on future campaigns it is critical that we answer the following research questions.

RQ1: What verbal elements did Barack Obama use in his 2008 campaign video advertisements on YouTube?
RQ2: What nonverbal elements did Barack Obama use in his 2008 campaign video advertisements on YouTube?
RQ3: What production elements did Barack Obama use in his 2008 campaign video advertisements on YouTube?

Understanding the answers to these research questions we will gain a better understanding of the messages in YouTube advertisements which will provide a foundation for future study in the area of YouTube advertising. It is the first step in identifying the various elements present in these advertisements, and is required before research on their possible persuasive impact(s) can be addressed.

**Summary of Literature Review**

When viewers are exposed to political advertisements online and on the television it elicits different responses from them, as well as different information seeking behaviors (Kaid & Postelnicu, 2005). Those viewing political video advertisements online were more likely to research information on television than viewers of the same spot on television (Kaid, 2002). Furthermore, Kaid and Johnston’s (2001) videostyle establishes a method to study a candidate’s unique style on video. As politicians begin to increase their presence on the Internet, the importance of understanding the content of their Internet video presence correspondingly increases (Davis, 1999; Tesdesco, Miller & Spike 1999). The effects of medium differences comparing Internet to television political video advertisements have been explored (Kaid & Postelnicu, 2005; Kaid, 2002) however, the content differences of these two mediums with respect to video advertisements have remained relatively unexplored. Using the videostyle method to analyze the candidate’s Internet video advertising persona, we will have a better understanding of this Internet content which is so popular with Internet viewers (Gueorguieva, 2008).
Chapter 2: Methodology

I analyzed a collection of Obama’s political advertisements posted on YouTube during the 2008 Presidential Campaign using videostyles analysis technique formerly used to analyze television advertisements. I identified the verbal, nonverbal and production elements to understand the content, context, and offer insight into the purposes of these advertisement’s messages.

Sample

Until this point, there was no classification for the types of advertisements found on a candidate’s YouTube page. Two general types of YouTube postings are present on Obama’s YouTube page: edited posts (also referred to as advertisements) and non-edited posts. Viral advertisements have subcategories of special issue advertisements, and motivational advertisements. In this study, the sample focused only on advertising content. While unedited posts are part of Barack Obama’s YouTube presence, they were not the focus of this study. Further explanation and working definition of unedited and edited posts are provided below.

Unedited posts. For the purposes of this study, an unedited post is considered any type of content that has been altered in a significant way from its originally recorded state. It is “raw” in the sense that it was cut directly from a preexisting video. Most (n=787) of the content on Obama’s YouTube channel are recorded stump speeches, or those speeches he gave as he traveled from city to city campaigning. These are unedited recordings of speeches, without graphics or music which involve a large audience, usually over several hundred people, and can be as many as tens of thousands. While they often featured Barack Obama, they sometimes included Joe Biden, Michelle Obama, and Jill Biden. Because these speeches were not edited but merely recordings, they were not considered a type of advertisement and were therefore not included in my sample. Clips of television appearances by the candidate were posted to YouTube. Often they included the candidate on a talk show or late night comedy show, where the candidate sometimes engages in self-deprecating humor. Because this study did not focus on unedited YouTube content, the posted television show appearances were not included.

Edited posts. An edited advertisement is defined by stylistic editing of video or audio elements. These included the categories of personal testimony, television advertisements, and intended viral advertisements. The second most frequent category of posting on YouTube was a
version of a television advertisement (n=121). These were often the exact same as those which aired on television however, some were extended versions, lasting longer than the usual 30 second or 1 minute interval. Television advertisements posted to YouTube were included in the sample because it met the editing requirement.

Personal testimony was also a common category of advertisements (n=107) where either a celebrity or a man-on-the-street campaign supporter, speaks directly to the camera about why they support the candidate. It is exemplified in the advertisement entitled *Orlando Bloom Needs You to Make Phone Calls* (Obama, 2008, November 3b). While the celebrity or non-celebrity status was not tracked specifically, it appeared that advertisements that featured celebrities were directed at Obama supporters and attempted to motivate them to volunteer for the campaign. Another type of personal testimony uses non-celebrity supporters who discuss personal stories which explain how they have come to support Barack Obama for President.

There were far fewer intended viral advertisements as opposed to the aforementioned categories (n=32). These advertisements are defined usually by large amounts of computer generated content, are put to music, and not available outside of YouTube. One example of this type of advertisement is the *When Robots Attack* piece that sheds an exaggerated light on the Republican’s use of “robo-calling” (Obama, 2008, October 30). Robo-calling is a term which describes the practice of using an automated message system to calls voters on the telephone. This humorous animated piece shows cartoon robots in mechanized voices taking over the world (Obama, 2008, October 30). This type of advertisement was used as part of the sample.

I used several criteria to select the specific Internet advertisements that were analyzed. First, only campaign sponsored advertisements were analyzed in this study. Because the campaign coordinated and controlled media strategy for both outlets, and is forbidden by law from coordinating with other nonprofit or PAC organizations, PAC advertisements were not included in this analysis. It is important to recognize that many PAC and nonprofit organizations produce YouTube advertisements in support of or against a particular candidate however this was outside the scope of this research. A stratified random sample of these advertisements was the basis for my analysis. To make the stratified random sample, I pulled the fifth post on each odd numbered indexed page which provides a complete listing of Obama’s posts. If the fifth post was not edited, then I found the next closest edited post.
Method of Analysis

To answer the three research questions regarding the various elements used in Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential election YouTube video advertisements, I used the category items of a candidate’s videostyle – a method delineated by Kaid and Johnston (2001). Coding of the verbal, nonverbal and production elements in Barack Obama’s 2008 election advertisements enabled me to answer the research questions.

Verbal elements are one category of analysis. Coding Obama’s 2008 advertisements for the verbal elements includes the types and number of issues (such as education, the economy, the military, etc.) discussed in the advertisement. The code sheet (see Appendix A) asked the coder to identify the advertisement as primarily focusing on issues or the candidate’s image. Furthermore, it identified the specificity of the issues or images in the advertisement. Coders also tracked the types of appeals used in the advertisement (eg. logical, emotional, or ethical appeal). Logical appeals use statistics and evidence to support the candidate’s position. Emotional appeals include particular language or images that evoke compelling feelings. Fear appeals were just one example of an emotional appeal if the advertisement was designed to scare the viewer. The use of ethical appeals relied on the credibility of the sources in the advertisement and included character appeals, qualifications of the candidate or even their integrity. Additionally, I examined the personal characteristics and values of the candidate as well as his qualifications or significant accomplishments. Another verbal element looked at the positive or negative tone of the advertisement. If the advertisement focused on positive aspects of the candidate it was coded as positive, whereas if the advertisements focused on negative qualities of the opponent it was coded as negative. The final verbal area tracked the specific values such as wisdom or freedom that are either present or absent in the advertisement.

Nonverbal elements present in Obama’s 2008 advertisements were examined by identifying four qualities of the advertisement such as the setting, the speaker(s), the dress of the speaker(s), and delivery qualities. The setting included the location of the advertisement, whether it was inside or outside, formal or informal. The number of speakers as well as their relationship to the candidate were also tracked. The dress of the speaker(s) as being formal or informal was tracked. Lastly, the delivery qualities of the candidate were examined. Delivery qualities include the facial expressions, eye contact, body movement, fluency, and speech rate were recorded.
Production elements present in Obama’s 2008 advertisements were examined by coding the format of the advertisement either as a documentary, video clip / music video, testimonial, introspection, question and answer, opposition focused, or issue dramatization. The presence and type of music is also part of the production elements, along with the camera techniques, dominant camera angle, and any special effects (see Appendix A).
Chapter 3: Results

The purpose of this study was to understand the characteristics of Barack Obama’s YouTube content associated with his campaign. The characteristics are identified by the verbal qualities, nonverbal qualities, and production techniques, which together define Obama’s videostyle. The first portion of the results focuses specifically on the verbal qualities of Obama’s videostyle. The second portion focuses on the nonverbal qualities and the last part addresses the production qualities of Obama’s YouTube advertisements.

Verbal Qualities

Verbal elements focus on the spoken messages that are present in the advertisement. Verbal elements examined include the tone, candidate image, issues raised, and appeals (emotional, logical, and credibility based) in the ads. Strategies, which are the ways the advertisements support the candidate and the overall message(s) communicated in the advertisements, were also examined. Each is described below.

Tone. Negative and positive tone was determined based on the dominant or overall tone of an advertisement. Thus, while some advertisements had aspects that were negative, they were coded as positive if a majority of the content was praiseworthy of Barack Obama. Most (80%, n=33) of the advertisements reviewed had a positive tone. One example of a testimonial advertisement with a positive tone is Ohioans Talk about Their Support for Barack Obama (Obama, 2008, February 18). This advertisement begins with a woman who appears to be exiting from an Obama rally after hearing him speak. She tells the camera, “I think he’ll [Barack Obama] be able to bring people together to get some issues done” (Obama, 2008, February 18). This advertisement goes on to feature two other attendees, also exiting the rally, who explain why they believe Barack Obama is best suited to be President. All but one of the 24 testimonial advertisements communicated positive tone about Barack Obama. Seven out of the nine intended viral advertisements had a positive tone.

A negative tone exposes negative elements, or faults of the opponent. Television advertisements posted to YouTube were most likely to have a negative tone with 5 out of the 7 (71%) communicating a negative message about the Barack Obama’s opponents. Only 29% (n=12) of the advertisements made a negative attack. In a negative tone ad, Obama took issue with his opponents. In a negative attack, the opponent was mentioned specifically. Due to the timing of the posts, in some instances Obama’s opponent is Hillary Clinton, while in those after
the Democratic and Republican Primary, it is John McCain. In this type of advertisement Obama pointed out flaws in this position and explained why his position was better than his opponent’s. When a negative attack was made, an anonymous male announcer was the voice talking in 60% (n=6) of the advertisements. Negative advertisements addressed the opposition’s issue stance in 81% (n=9) of the advertisements with a negative tone. Other attacks focused on the opponent’s group affiliations and the opponent’s past performance.

One strategy used when making a negative attack was to create a negative association between President George W. Bush’s policies and those proposed by John McCain (50%, n=6). One example was the 90 Percent advertisement (Obama, 2008, October 16). In it, an anonymous announcer countered a clip from John McCain where he claimed he was not President Bush by saying, “You’ve [John McCain] voted with the President 90 percent of the time” (Obama, 2008, October 16). Meanwhile, still photos of President Bush and John McCain together flashed across the screen as the announcer reminded the viewer of unpopular policy decisions made by President Bush, in particular the American presence in Iraq. This was just one example of how visually, as well as verbally, a negative advertisement made the association between John McCain and President George W. Bush.

**Issue and Image Focus.** The next verbal category looked at issue and image focuses of the advertisements. Image is defined as personal characteristics or elements that are present in the advertisement, whereas issue-focused advertisements emphasize the candidate’s position on issues of the candidate or opponent. In general, advertisements were more focused on issues (56%, n=23) than the candidate’s image (39%, n=16). The economy was the most talked about issue (31%, n=17). Often the ads included topics ranging from unemployment, to the recession, mortgage, and the economic stimulus. Furthermore, in advertisements that highlighted multiple issues, the economy continued to be the dominant issue in 57% (n=16) of the advertisements. For example, in the advertisement, Voting Begins in Ohio, a young woman explained why she supported Obama saying, “Obama has the right plan for the economy, supporting the middle class, I like his ideas about working from the bottom-up” (Obama, 2008, October 1). In this ad the issue of the economy was highlighted and she went on to voice her support for Obama’s proposed policies.

When the candidate, Barack Obama, appeared in an advertisement, the characteristic most commonly conveyed was that of warmth or compassion (25%, n=10). In the advertisement
Hope for Healthcare Obama discussed his mother’s battle not only with Ovarian Cancer but also with her health insurance company (Obama, 2008, October 20). In it he lamented, “I know something about the heartbreak caused not just by a loved one being sick but by our broken healthcare system” (Obama, 2008, October 20). This was just one example of an advertisement that conveyed warmth or compassion by Obama towards some of the issues that faced voters. Other characteristics conveyed included honesty (15%, n=6), toughness (12.5%, n=5), and aggressiveness (7.5%, n=3), which appeared less frequently.

Appeals. Several types of appeals were identified in the advertisements. Appeals are ways in which the advertisement attracts the audience. Advertisements used emotional, logical or source credibility appeals. Emotional appeals are the feelings or emotions that the advertisement arouses, logical appeals use facts and evidence, and source credibility appeals focus on the speaker’s reputation. Emotional appeals were used more frequently (56%, n=28) than appeals to personal credibility and logical appeals (both 22%, n=11). One example of an emotional appeal used in the ads was that of hope and optimism in the future. In the advertisement We Have to Work Like Our Futures Depend on it one interviewee described Obama’s candidacy saying, “It is very exciting, invigorating, and when I think about what it means to me and to my small kids for the next 30 years of their lives. It is very exciting, it is a crucial point in history and I’m glad to be a part of it” (Obama, 2008, November 2).

Fear appeals, another type of emotional appeal, were used in seven of the advertisements (17%) and usually referenced the adverse effects of the Bush Administration (and the policies of that administration), such as the American casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. In two testimonial advertisements, Road to Change Oregon (Obama, 2008, May 13), and Road to Change Indiana, the fear appeal was a reference to the past eight years of the Bush Administration, where Obama himself mentioned the “failed policies of the past eight years” (Obama, 2008, May 5).

Message Strategies. A variety of message strategies were used in the advertisements. A message strategy is the technique(s) used to achieve the candidate’s desired voter behavior, be it volunteering, donating money, or voting for the candidate. The strategy most commonly used was to call for change (59%, n=24) in which the advertisement highlighted changes in policy or direction of the country. For example, the advertisement Wisconsin Speaks out for Obama, featured a fireman, nurse, veteran, and teacher (Obama, 2008, October 5). Each person spoke about how changes that Obama proposed would benefit them and others in their professions
The fireman, Mike, explains, “The reason I am supporting Senators Obama and Biden this year is because they represent real change for working Americans. Firefighters have faced a lot of challenges since 9/11 with funding for local services and both of the Senators are supporters of bringing these services to the communities” (Obama, 2008, October 5).

Another strategy included relying on surrogates to speak (48%, n=20). These are supporters, both celebrity and ‘average’ voters who discussed issues most important to them. In the advertisement Matthew Broderick: “Take the Day off” the actor Matthew Broderick talked directly to the camera, and attempted to persuade the audience to take the day off of work or school to volunteer for the campaign (Obama, 2008, November 3a). An example of an average voter featured in an advertisement was William J. Rausch of Marengo, Ohio. In this advertisement a former officer in the military discusses Obama’s plan to keep Americans safe (Obama, 2008, February 26).

Emphasizing optimism in the future (34%, n=14) was a strategy that explained how American would be better off if Barack Obama were elected as President. For example, in the advertisement We’re in it Together Obama talked about the problem of poverty in America (Obama, 2008, October 15). He said:

We can’t. We can’t allow this kind of suffering. We can’t allow this kind of hopelessness to exist in this country. We can’t afford to lose a generation of tomorrow’s doctors, scientists and teachers… America we cannot turn back, not with so many children to educate, not with an economy to fix, and cities to rebuild, not with so many families to protect, and lives to mend, America we cannot turn back (Obama, 2008, October 15).

This advertisement illustrated optimism by using positive language about the future generation of individuals in successful careers such as doctors, scientists, and teachers. At the same time it evokes fear by saying that if nothing is done, poverty will continue to be a social problem in the US. This is made possible as Obama indicated that he plans to educate children, fix the economy, and rebuild cities.

Messages. The messages of each advertisement were categorized in the following areas: the specific purpose and messages of cynicism. The specific purpose looked at what the overall intended behavioral or attitudinal change was for the viewer. In other words, what was the
motivating message or desired outcome from the viewer? The most common specific purpose of the advertisements was to recruit volunteers for the campaign (32%, n=13). In the advertisement, Unite for Change House Party – Golden, CO a group of middle aged women sat in what appeared to be someone’s living room and discussed reasons they decided to volunteer for Obama’s campaign (Obama, 2008, July 11). One of the women described how she felt so compelled by the campaign that she cut back the hours she worked to make time to volunteer for it. She also talked about the gratification she received as a result of the connections she made with other community members (Obama, 2008, July 11). Other specific purposes included: convincing non-supporters to vote for Obama (27%, n=11), explaining Obama’s position on (an) issue(s) (27%, n=22), encouraging supporters to vote (17%, n=7), attracting supporters to Obama’s online store (7%, n=3), dispelling rumors about Barack Obama (5%, n=2), and encouraging people to register to vote (5%, n=2).

Three types of cynical messages were most commonly present, however each time a cynical statement was made in an abstract sense it then explained how Obama did not match the cynical feelings express. These cynical statements included: the feelings that ordinary people are not able to influence the government or politics (26%, n=9), a distrust of government or politicians in general (29%, n=10), and a reference to the consequences of alienation (29%, n=10). For example, in the advertisement, David from Johnstown, PA, an average voter, David, explained how he lost faith in the election process (Obama, 2008, April 8). He said, “The normal BS that come from a lot of politicians who dance around uncomfortable issues – Who dance around but they don’t quite know what you want to hear, that just isn’t there with him (Obama)” (Obama, 2008, April 8).

Verbal elements examined the messages and text present in advertisements. With a positive tone and a limited number of negative advertisements, Barack Obama called for changes in his YouTube advertisements. The advertisements featured supporters of Barack Obama and occasionally (15%, n=6) the slogans of “hope”, “change”, and “yes we can”. These typified the verbal elements of Barack Obama’s YouTube advertisements.

Nonverbal Elements

Nonverbal elements encompass the images and musical elements of advertisements. There were musical, setting, and speaker components to the advertisements, all of which constitute nonverbal elements examined. The focus of music and text was determined by two
factors, first, the volume of the music (when it was present) and secondly, the prominence of music with respect to the text or spoken words. If the volume of the music drowned out the words of people speaking then the musical element was the focus over the text.

Music. While most of the advertisements (61%, n=25) did have a musical element, many did not (39%, n=16). When music was used, it was less often the focus of the advertisement (17%, n=7) while verbal or textual messages were emphasized over music in 49% (n=20) of the advertisements. When music was used it was likely to be of the modern variety, either pop or rock which was the case in 24% (n=10) of the ads. The modern music featured in these advertisements was usually instrumental, with no vocal component, an upbeat tempo and a heavy emphasis on guitar, drum, and piano instruments.

Setting. The formality of a setting is determined by the décor of the setting, as well as the attire of those present in the advertisement. Formal décor would have fine furniture, lavish decorations, with expensive looking items. In contrast, Informal décor included outdated, disheveled or minimal furniture, and settings seemed less contrived or staged and appeared as they would naturally. The setting in most (71%, n=29) of the advertisements was informal. People appearing in informal advertisements wore shorts, jeans, and t-shirts. One example of an indoor informal advertisement was North Carolina House Party which showed people dressed casually in jeans and t-shirts with Obama logos at a party at a supporter’s house watching the televised Democratic National Convention (Obama, 2008, September 13). People included in this advertisement were shot in a kitchen, family room, and basement locations. Often in the background there are used dishes, drinks, and furniture out of place. In contrast, a formal setting was clean and orderly; often bookshelves full of books surrounded the speaker. People in this setting were often dressed formally, in suits.

Several other setting qualities were also identified, such as the location, and symbols present in the advertisements. Approximately the same number of advertisements were shot outdoors (n=19) as indoors (n=18). American symbols, such as flags, national colors, and famous landscapes were used in 63% (n=26) of the ads. An American Flag was present 41% (n=7) of the time, and was the most common symbol used. One way that the American Flag was used was as a backdrop next to Barack Obama, either on stage with him or off in the distance. The candidate’s family appeared in only 9% (n=4) of the advertisements.
Speaker. The YouTube advertisements featured a variety of speakers, not just Barack Obama. A supporter of Barack Obama appeared most frequently as the speaker (37%, n=15). This supporter was often a non-celebrity, “man-on-the-street” (MOS) without apparent formal connections to the campaign. For example, in the ad, *USC Students get out the Vote*, a male and female USC student were interviewed (Obama, 2008, January 26). They discussed how they are students at the University of South Carolina spreading the word about Obama (Obama, 2008, January 26).

Obama himself was the speaker in 27% (n=15) of the advertisements. More often than not, Barack Obama was not present in the advertisements (58%, n=22). When he was in the advertisement, he almost never (87%, n=13) had eye contact directly with the viewing audience, the gaze of his eyes was on the audience off stage. He most often wore a serious or attentive expression on his face (73%, n=11) and was formally dressed (75%, n=12). His formal attire was generally a dark colored suit, white button down shirt and a blue tie. One example, which typified Obama’s dress and the setting, was in the advertisement *We Have to Work Like our Future Depends on it* (2008, November 2). In this advertisement Obama, dressed in dark suit with a dark blue tie, spoke to several audiences throughout the piece and each time, in the background, an American flag was featured, either as part of the stage or waving in the hands of his audience. This is an example of how a formal setting and candidate dress parallel one another.

In summary, the nonverbal elements of Barack Obama’s YouTube advertisements often featured no music. If they did it was of the modern or pop variety. The advertisements were set in an informal setting that used Obama supporters as speakers.

Production Elements

The production elements analyzed how the creator of the advertisement constructed the images and messages. Three categories comprised the production aspect of the advertisements. These included: the format of the advertisement, the sound effects used, and the camera positioning.

Format. The average length of an advertisement in the YouTube advertisements was 2 minutes and 11 seconds. Advertisements ranged from 6 seconds in length to 7 minutes 6 seconds, with the most frequent time at 30 seconds. The most common format of the advertisement was as a testimonial (49%, n=19) where a Barack Obama supporter, either a
celebrity or non-celebrity, talked to the camera about why they supported Barack Obama. For example, the advertisement, *Iron Range Votes for Obama* voters in Minnesota where interviewed and one talked about Obama’s stance on the Environment, the other encouraged viewers to vote for him (Obama, 2008, November 4). Other formats were a video clip or music video (17%, n=7), opposition-focused pieces (12%, n=5), documentary style (7%, n=2), introspection (7%, n=3) where Barack Obama discussed why he decided to run, as well as satire which was used in one advertisement. Satire was the focus of the advertisement, *When Robots Attack!* which resembled a 1950s space invasion theme that featured robots (Obama, 2008, October 30). The robot characters repeated a “robo” message that John McCain’s campaign used in their practice of “robo-calling” voters (Obama, 2008, October 30). This advertisement exaggerated the fear that the “robo-calls” sought to promote and called on voters to, “defeat the robots!” (Obama, 2008, October 30).

**Effects.** The use of sound effects and special effects were also tracked in this analysis. Special effects are defined as qualities in the advertisement which are not found in raw video format. Most advertisements were recorded live (66%, n=27) as opposed to voice over recordings. A live recording showed the person whose voice was audible. However, if the voice did not match the images in the sense that the speaker was not visible on the video; it was considered a voice over recording, which occurred in 33% (n=14) of the advertisements.

A number of special effects were used in Barack Obama’s YouTube advertisements. Of the special effects used, computer graphics were most common (44%, n=26). This often appeared as computer generated text superimposed onto the video recording, or a black screen. The computer-generated text usually described the location that the advertisement was recorded, as well as the date. This type of computer-generated text was frequently used in testimonial advertisements (70%, n=17) as the only special effect in the advertisement. For example, the advertisement *Governor Kathleen Sebelius in Pittsburg*, opened with a black screen where the typed words “Pittsburgh, PA April 19, 2008” appeared in the center of the screen (Obama, 2008, April 19). The only other type of special effect used in that advertisement occurred during a transition when another campaign organizer began speaking. At this time the speaker named “Julie Niemi Field Organizer” appeared in typed text at the bottom left corner of the screen over the video (Obama, 2008, April 19). As the previous example illustrates, the use of a testimonial
format most commonly used computer generated text to describe the setting and identify the
speakers of the advertisement.

Other types of special effects were more commonly found in intended viral and television
advertisements. Almost two-thirds (64%, n=11) of intended viral and television advertisements
used multiple types of special effects in the advertisement. These included slow and fast motion,
freeze frame, split screen, superimpositions, montage, and the use of still images. In the three
times that a split screen was used, the tone was negative, and was used all three times to show
contrast between the candidates. In two instances an advertisement appeared over the Obama
YouTube advertisement and was a hyperlink to the Barack Obama online store, this occurred in
the ads, *We Have to Work Like our Futures Depend on it* (2008, November 2) and *Artists for

*Camera position.* Camera location and thereby the angle of the shot was examined. The
analysis revealed that if the candidate was in the advertisement, there was most often a low
camera angle (59%, n=9); in other words, the camera shot up towards Barack Obama. This has
the effect of making the candidate appear larger and more imposing in the shot. Additionally,
Barack Obama was filmed from the waist up, in a medium shot in 63% (n=10) of the
advertisements in which he appeared. It is also worth noting that in two advertisements, the
candidate appeared but his face was never revealed. In these instances merely his silhouette or
back was shown.

With all three areas of a YouTube political campaign video taken together, the videostyle
of Barack Obama on YouTube is apparent. As explained in the previous section outlining the
types of YouTube advertisements and postings, the three general categories of YouTube
advertisements included: testimonial, television, and intended viral advertisements. In these three
categories the verbal elements, nonverbal elements, and production elements of Barack Obama’s
2008 YouTube advertisements were analyzed.
Chapter 4: Discussion

Obama’s YouTube videostyle illuminates two unique elements of his advertisements. First, the results of this analysis suggest that advertisements posted to YouTube added transparency to his campaign enabling a “behind the scenes” look at the true feelings of campaign participants. Secondly, this analysis provides a clearer understanding of videostyle qualities found on YouTube that could be attributed to the pull medium of the advertisements. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of this study as well as several opportunities for future research.

Adding Transparency to the Campaign

Using Goffman’s (1959) concepts of frontstage and backstage I argue that the videostyle qualities in Obama’s YouTube advertisements increase the campaign’s transparency. Transparency means the ability for a voter to clearly see and understand many facets of the campaign’s operation. These qualities include: the natural manner in which people spoke, the informal settings, the production techniques, and the focus on Obama supporters. Taken together, these elements present a videostyle that is somewhat distinct.

In Goffman’s (1959) book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, he postulates that individuals (as well as groups) have a presenting front, where people act “in character” according to their social roles and the corresponding expectations. He describes this as,

One’s activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression are suppressed. It is clear that accentuated facts make their appearance in what I have called a front region (pg. 111).

Goffman (1959) goes on to explain that individuals (and groups) consider a “backstage”,

It is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of action and characters… Here the performer can relax, he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character (pg. 112).

Put another way, in the backstage people can act “out of character” without suffering consequence. The implication for Obama’s advertisements is that they may foster a backstage appearance to create a sense of authenticity about his campaign. If viewers believe the backstage cues present in Obama’s YouTube advertisements, they could perceive the campaign as more
genuine or authentic because even when characters step out of character their support for Obama is unwavering.

*Natural Speech.* I will begin by addressing the natural manner in which people in the advertisements speak about Obama. In just over one-third of the advertisements, the speakers appear to be average voters who support Obama and use natural speech in the advertisement. A natural manner of speech is one that can include slang, or improper grammar usage, and sounds unscripted. The natural manner of speech is further bolstered when it was live. Live speech is in sync with the images on screen as opposed to voice over speech where the narration does not correspond to the images on screen. Using a live voice in two thirds of the advertisements was another way to foster informality and, at the same time, increase the spontaneous feel of the advertisement. A live voice is more informal because the language does not appear planned and so it sounds “off the cuff”. The unplanned and informal sound gives credence to the viewers and that provides them a “backstage” look into the campaign. As mentioned before, it is customary for advertisements to be scripted or carefully cut to eliminate any of the typical errors one might encounter in an average conversation. Thus the natural speaking manner in Obama’s YouTube advertisements contrasts with the contrived sounding messages present elsewhere in a typical campaign advertisement. This is one aspect of Obama’s videostyle that could leave viewers with the impression that his YouTube advertisements offer a backstage perspective of the campaign.

*Setting.* The setting of Obama’s YouTube advertisements is another videostyle element which is informal and gives the ads a “backstage” feel. An outdoor setting appears in many of the advertisements (39%, n=16), some evoke images of backyard cookouts and friendly neighborhood conversations due to their informality. Additionally, the outdoor setting appears more spontaneous and natural as opposed to an easily manipulated indoor setting. There were some informal indoor advertisements, and they were used in approximately one-third of the advertisements.

Furthermore, the informality of the settings in the advertisements creates a backstage feel to the advertisements. This is made clear in two examples: The first, *Vote in Minnesota,* features Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison set behind the stage of an auditorium (Obama, 2008, November 1) with people in the background talking feverishly to one another and the sound of an announcer and cheering in the distance he excitedly comments to the camera, “We are backstage here at the Bill Clinton rally [for Barack Obama], we’ve got a capacity crowd here and
the electricity is in the air” (Obama, 2008, November 1). The backstage feel is also found in the title of the advertisement, *Backstage with Barack: Lenny* (Obama, 2008, August 25). It features a veteran who is interviewed before he has the opportunity to meet Barack Obama in a personal visit (Obama, 2008, August 25). Both of these examples demonstrate how Obama used the overt reference to a behind-the-scenes setting, suggestive of a backstage feel in his YouTube advertisements.

*Cinematic Technique.* The use of the cinéma vérité video production technique is yet another way that YouTube advertisements furthered a transparent image to its viewers. This technique is meant to look as if the video is live, where the video is following the campaign on the campaign trail, as well as being privy to overheard conversations (Jamieson & Campbell, 2001). Another aspect of this technique is the use of man-on-the–street (MOS) testimonial which is used in nearly half of the advertisements reviewed. Jamieson and Campbell (2001) also identify this type of cinematic technique as effectively communicating a sense of authenticity to the audience. Correspondingly, the use of this technique in the advertisements suggests that it could have a similar effect on viewers. Nevertheless the use of this technique is consistent with Goffman’s (1959) backstage because in the live feel, as well as the appearance that the camera is following the campaign, the possibility of seeing people (supporters and volunteers) out of character becomes more apparent.

*Focus on Campaign Supporters.* The advertisements feature a wide variety of speakers, ranging from MOS supporters to volunteers as well as campaign organizers. The inward focus on Obama supporters as they operate inside the campaign creates the impression that these videos reveal backstage elements of the campaign, possibly communicating transparency to the viewer. This is evident through the prominent use of testimonial messages, the absence of Obama from many of the advertisements, and his off-stage eye contact when he is present. The focus on campaign supporters in Obama’s YouTube advertisements further suggests Goffman’s (1959) backstage concept.

Nearly half the advertisements depend on surrogate testimony. Surrogate testimony is the use of celebrity as well as non-celebrity speakers speaking on behalf of the candidate. This is complemented by the finding that in more than half the advertisements Obama is not the focus, instead the campaign supporters are emphasized. Understanding the views, feelings, attitudes
and opinions about Obama spoken from their perspective is a glimpse which could be perceived as a backstage portrayal of the candidate.

Another indication of the supporter focus in the advertisements is illustrated through Obama’s use of eye contact. When Obama is seen talking to an audience (usually in a large auditorium setting), he rarely looks directly into the camera. Instead, he is focused on the audience members in the auditorium. As Obama’s eyes drift to an off-stage audience, it shifts the focus off of him and onto audience members. Naturally, one is inclined to follow another’s eyes as they move. The camera then pans to the scores of cheering supporters and the feeling that the viewer is part of the crowd becomes clear. Obama’s eye contact is yet another example of how focusing on the supporters, volunteers, and campaign organizers suggests viewers are watching a “behind the scenes” look at the campaign. Since much of the operation of a political campaign sometimes occurs out of public view, these YouTube advertisements afford the viewer a different angle on the campaign.

Exposing cynicism. Elements of the advertisements’ messages suggest transparency as well as a backstage focus. One message present in the advertisements is one of cynicism, which the speaker later debunks. Some of the prominent cynical messages that are used include: the feeling that ordinary people are not able to influence the government, distrust in the government or politicians, and references to the consequences of alienation. These are general sentiments that the speaker voices then goes to on explain why Obama’s campaign is different. These messages represent a backstage look at the campaign because they expose commonly held cynical views and later refute them. Speaking frankly, or without reservation, as is often the case when speaking cynically is something often reserved for private conversation or backstage conversation (Goffman, 1959). Instead, putting these messages in front of YouTube viewers could foster the impression that they are part of a private conversation, one reserved for backstage. In one advertisement, Stephanie from Pittsburgh, the speaker reveals that on occasions when she volunteered for politicians she has found,

Most politics to me do not pass the smell test…and even the campaigns that I have been involved in before, I can only stand to go so far before I start seeing things that make me think, ‘I can’t watch this I can’t be a part of this’…not so with this [Obama’s] I am happy to say (Obama, 2008, April 18).
This advertisement suggests that some politicians’ campaigns are run unethically. However, the supporter claims that she has not run into these problems with the Obama campaign. As someone who would know where to look to find unethical practices, Stephanie shares with the audience what it is like backstage working for other politicians and conveys as well as contrasts her experience working on the Obama campaign. Her perspective and other advertisements that dispel cynicism offer viewers an authentic window into the “real” campaign.

A transparent campaign is one feature which emerged through a videostyle analysis of Obama’s YouTube advertisements. This transparency conceptually parallels Goffman’s (1959) backstage. The elements supporting this conclusion include the use of natural speech, an unplanned setting, the cinematic technique of cinéma vérité, a focus on Obama supporters, and dispelling cynical attitudes.

*Pulling the Audience*

The videostyle techniques Obama uses in his YouTube ads seem to operate in concert with its attribute as a pull medium. More specifically, these techniques, also consistent with this pull medium, suggest YouTube may be used to connect with a younger audience. Pull advertisements draws users to their content, whereas push advertisements propel messages onto users (Barnes & Hair, 2007). These differences are customarily attributed to various mediums. In accordance with Barnes and Hair’s (2007) definition, television is generally considered a push medium, whereas Internet content is often categorized as a pull medium, of which YouTube is one example. The findings suggest that the content and format associated with a candidate’s videostyle may be connected to the medium through which advertisements are presented.

*Television and YouTube.* Kaid (2009b) examined Obama’s television advertisements and found that 66% of them had a negative focus. This is far fewer than the percentage found in this study. One possible explanation for this dissimilarity is in the different medium. As noted previously, research by Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) indicates that viewers reportedly dislike watching negative advertisements, and this effect may extend to YouTube advertisements as well. If voters would prefer to avoid negative advertisements then it follows that they will be less inclined to seek out negative advertisements, alternatively they would be more drawn to those advertisements that are positive. This is one example of how push/pull medium differences might explain content differences between YouTube advertisements and advertisements that aired on television.
Yet another difference which could be attributed to push/pull mediums was that advertisements posted on YouTube were far less likely to use specialized production techniques when compared to those which aired on television. Television advertisements posted to YouTube averaged 2.7 special effects per advertisement, whereas the other advertisements (testimonial and viral) averaged 1.2 special effects per advertisement. There are a number of possible reasons for this difference; one might be the associated high cost when it comes to specialized productions techniques. To add special effects to the hundreds of advertisements on YouTube would be a much greater investment of resources in a relatively unproven medium. Moreover, as mentioned above, YouTube viewers are accustomed to more rudimentary production style. The cinéma vérité production style used in Obama’s ads resemble a video blog or diary style, using raw video rather than a video with the frills that a television advertisement commonly features.

Push/pull factors however do not explain the similarities between the YouTube and television. In both of these mediums, the economy was mentioned most often, and the use of emotional proof occurred most frequently. If the advertisements are focused on a younger audience, one might expect there to be content differences with respect to the subject(s) featured in the advertisements. However, this is not the case. Despite the fact that YouTube advertisements are more frequently viewed by younger audiences, the subject of these advertisements remained unchanged. One possible explanation for this is that the economy was an issue that crossed all demographics. Therefore, raising that issue in both mediums may be relevant to the viewers.

Pulling a Younger Audience. Results from this analysis suggest that Barack Obama’s YouTube advertisements used a variety of techniques oriented towards younger viewers. This is reflected in the outcome of the election where people aged 18-30 years old voted for Obama 2 to 1 over McCain (Winograd & Hais, 2008). Research by Divinity Metrics (2008) also confirm that the largest demographic of YouTube users for Obama’s content was viewers ages 18-24. Obama used a variety of technique to create a Videostyle that is oriented towards younger demographics. He does this by using pop and rap music, as well as cues of activeness in his YouTube advertisements.

Music. Although the absence of music was most frequent in the advertisements, modern (pop, rock, and rap) music was present in many of the advertisements. Obama, known for his connections to the pop and rap music industries capitalized on these connections in his videos.
Although this was not examined in this study, some of the advertisements that featured modern music also had the artist and song posted next to the advertisement in an information box on the screen adjacent to the advertisement. In using these techniques, Obama can benefit from the support of a younger demographic of techno-savvy voters who enjoy pop and rock music, many of whom also turn to YouTube to see their favorite new artist’s music video or peer-to-peer file sharing (Winograd & Hais, 2008). By combining music with the YouTube medium, Obama could connect with a targeted young audience.

**Activeness.** Obama’s YouTube advertisements also targeted young viewing audiences as volunteers for his campaign. He did this by often featuring young volunteers in his advertisements. Two examples of this include *USC Students Get Out the Vote* and *America’s Youth Come Together for Barack*. Both advertisements interview young people who claim to be volunteers for his campaign and show them canvassing or holding up signs in support of Obama. The most common purpose of the advertisements was to recruit volunteers, and over half of the advertisements overtly asked the audience to do something. Whether calling the audience to register to vote, or encourage supporters and non-supporters alike to vote for him, the sample advertisements call the audience to action. Obama communicated the characteristic of activeness in the advertisements through his interaction with voters. One example of this occurs in the advertisement, *Road to Change: Oregon*, where Obama is seen going through a solar panel manufacturing plant, while discussing solar energy with the company’s employees (Obama, 2008, May 13). In just over half of the advertisements in which he appeared, Obama lends to his credibility as he demonstrated activeness in his advertisements at the same time calling on supporters to do the same. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the advertisements called for change, which points to a concerted effort by Obama to motivate his audience into action (e.g., voting, volunteering or shopping) that would in some way help his campaign.

The strategy of combining a positive message along with cues of enthusiasm has proven to be effective in encouraging viewers to volunteer for the campaign in previous research (Brader, 2006). Obama’s use of positive advertisements explained above as well as a call to action and call for change, represents two examples of enthusiasm in his advertisements. Calling the audience to volunteer, appears in both Brader’s (2006) analysis and Obama’s advertisements.

The push/pull differences between television (as a push medium) and YouTube (as a pull medium) imply there may be corresponding differences in videostyle qualities. The selection of
specific music types as well as the active message suggests two qualities of Obama’s YouTube advertisements which may have helped to draw a younger audience.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

With little formal research into the use of YouTube as a political tool in Presidential campaigns, this study seeks to lay a foundation for future research into the burgeoning area. This research examined Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign advertisements on YouTube, focusing only on edited posts. This is just one step in understanding the role of the Internet in campaign. Much more needs to be examined to gain a fuller understanding of this area. To that extent, a broader sample of YouTube content and an investigation of the impact of YouTube advertisements as a campaign tool are two avenues of further exploration into this area of study.

This study focused specifically on video content; other content present on a YouTube page was not included in the analysis. This includes elements of voter interaction in the “comments” area as well as the “explanation” box that describes the video. Both of these areas appear on the screen while the YouTube video is playing. Understanding these areas of YouTube content in conjunction with the results from this study is important because viewer interaction is one distinguishing feature of the YouTube medium. In the “comments” area viewers are able to editorialize about the advertisement and provide feedback that can be read by other viewers. This type of dialogue appears to be fairly common on YouTube. Furthermore, the interplay between video content and YouTube users is a window into the thoughts and feelings of the viewer. This could provide candidates with a type of feedback that would allow them to modify campaign strategy based on viewer reactions.

The “explanation” box is another content area on the YouTube page that warrants analysis. Unlike the “comments” section, this area is accessible only by the party who posts the advertisement and usually is used to explain the content. An understanding of how the candidates describe their videos may shed light on the intended persuasive effects of the video. Both the “comment” and “explanation” boxes are part of the YouTube page and something with which voters may interact and may aid or hinder the persuasive process.

The number of hits each advertisement garnered was also not included in this research. Understanding the relationship between the number of hits an advertisement receives and its content will help evaluate the appeal or impact of an advertisement. Another way to help
evaluate the effectiveness of these advertisements would be to compare it with other campaigns, both those that were successful and unsuccessful.

Yet another direction for future research would be to compare Obama’s YouTube advertisements with John McCain’s YouTube advertisements using Kaid’s (2009b) television videostyle research. This would provide a useful comparison between the two mediums, and a broader understanding of both candidates’ media strategy across mediums. Additionally, this could prove essential in further understanding the way each medium contributes to the candidates’ media strategy.

Thus opportunities for future research are plenty. Some of these areas include the persuasive effects, and the entire page content of YouTube advertisements as well as examining John McCain’s YouTube videos. With YouTube now part of a candidate’s arsenal of media tools, we will likely see more advertisements posted in the next campaign as it wages online. Some further limitations to this analysis could include the possibility of coder bias. Because there was only one coder, bias is more difficult to isolate and intercoder reliability is not available as a tool to avoid such biases.

In summary, Obama’s YouTube advertisements contain elements which parallel Goffman’s backstage. A theme of transparency further supports conceptual similarities between Goffman’s backstage and the videostyle of Obama’s YouTube advertisements. These elements included a natural speaking pattern, unplanned setting, a cinematic technique which mimics reality, the inward focus on campaign supporters, as well as the exposure and refutation of cynicism. Additionally, this research suggests a number of videostyle attributes which could be associated with the “pull” nature of a YouTube medium. These qualities included positive messages, as well as a limited number of special production techniques used in the advertisements. More specifically, pulling a younger demographic could be attributed to the music selection, as well as a call to action present in the advertisements.

On a broader level, this research suggests that as technology continues to change the use of a candidate’s videostyle changes correspondingly. The results of this study indicate that technology available to candidates has two implications for the associated videostyle and means of connecting to the audience. First, how candidates present themselves to the audience is a function of the technology available to them. The YouTube medium lends itself to videostyle techniques that are not typically seen in TV and print advertisements alone. Specifically, it
provides opportunities to present backstage features of the candidate’s campaign which provide
authenticity and show viewers unique aspects of both the campaign and the candidate.

The way viewers access technology is a second implication. This analysis reveals the
there are techniques associated with pull technology, where audiences come to campaign content
differently than technology associated with a pull medium. Specific techniques in YouTube
campaign advertisements can target precise groups of the voting population. This targeting
makes YouTube a potentially powerful resource for political campaigns. In summary, different
media change how the candidates present themselves, as well as how the viewers come to the
candidate.
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Appendix A

Videostyle Code Sheet

Commercial Name: ______________________________________

A. Length of commercial:
   (1) Two to five minutes
   (2) 20-30 seconds
   (3) 60 seconds
   (9) Other (specify) __________

B. Format of the commercial?
   (0) Documentary
   (1) Video clip/ Music Video
   (2) Testimonial (reaction)
   (3) Introspection
   (4) Issue Statement
   (5) Staged Press Conference
   (6) Opposition focused
   (7) Issue Dramatization
   (8) Question and Answer / Confrontation
   (9) Other (specify) __________

C. Is there any music present in the commercial?
   (0) not present
   (1) classical
   (2) modern (pop, rock, jazz)
   (3) Instrumental (background but cannot be defined as classical or modern)
   (4) marching music
   (5) trumpet or announcing music
   (6) folk music / country / western
   (7) national anthem
   (8) other
   (9) combination

D. What is the relationship between music and text?
(1) more music than text
(2) more text than music
(3) balance between text and music

E. Is the ad candidate or opponent focused?
(1) Candidate-positive focused
(2) Opponent-negative focused

F. Is there a negative attack made in the ad?
(0) No
(1) Yes

G. If an attack is made, who makes the attack?
(1) Candidate attacks opponent.
(2) Surrogate attacks opponent.
(3) Anonymous announcer attacks opponent.
(0) no attack

H. If a negative attack is made, what is the purpose or nature of the attack?
(code 1 if present, 0 if not present)
(1) Attack on personal characteristics of opponent.
(2) Attack on issue stands / consistency of opponent.
(3) Attack on opponent’s group affiliations or associations.
(4) Attack on opponent’s background / qualifications.
(5) Attack on opponent’s performance in past offices / positions

I. If negative attack is made, is it
(1) direct attack against another politician / candidate
(2) direct attack against another party
(3) more general, indirect attack against government and other parties
(4) indirect / implicit attack without specific mention of the object of the attack
(0) no attack is made in the ad

J. What strategies are used in making the negative attack?
(Code 1 if present, 0 if not present)
(1) Use of humor / ridicule
(2) Negative association
(3) Name-calling (using negative labels)
(4) Guilt by association

K. Production technique (code for dominant technique):
   (1) Cinema vérité
   (2) Slides with print and voice-over or slides with movement, print, and voice-over.
   (3) Candidate head-on
   (4) Somebody other than candidate head-on
   (5) Animation and special production
   (6) Combination (specify)

L. Setting of the ad (code for dominant setting):
   (1) Formal indoors
   (2) Informal indoors
   (3) Formal outdoors
   (4) Informal outdoors
   (5) Combination (specify)
   (8) Not applicable

M. Any dominant inanimate object with which the candidate interacts? (Code 1 if yes, 0 if no) If yes, describe below:
____________________________________________________________________________

N. Can American symbols be seen in the ad?
   (0) no
   (1) yes

O. If yes, mark present or absent for the following:
   (1) Flag
   (2) National colors / red / white / blue
   (3) National bird – eagle
   (4) Famous American landscape
   (5) Famous documents (such as constitution or declaration of indep.)
   (6) Representations of prior presidents / famous figures
   (7) Other famous patriotic symbols

P. Who is speaking? (Code for dominant speaker).
(1) Candidate.
(2) A government official or office-holder
(3) An anonymous announcer
(4) Non-government celebrity
(5) Spouse or family member.
(6) Combination (specify):
(9) Other: some other category than those above.

Q. If the speaker is an anonymous announcer, is the announcer a male or a female?
   (1) male
   (2) female

R. Does a candidate or party representative appear in the spot?
   (0) No.
   (1) Yes, candidate or party sponsoring ad
   (2) Yes, opponent(s) or candidate or party sponsoring ad
   (3) Yes, both candidate and opponent appear.

S. If yes (1 or 2), is the candidate or party member presented:
   (1) positively
   (2) negatively
   (3) neutrally
   (4) both positive and negative

T. Does family appear in the spot?
   (1) spouse
   (2) Other family member
   (3) Children
   (4) Spouse and children
   (5) Spouse, children, and other family member(s)
   (6) Other combination of family
   (0) No family

U. Does candidate have eye contact directly with the viewer? This would be the camera if candidate is head-on. (Code for overall eye contact)
   (1) Almost always.
(2) Sometimes.
(3) Almost never
(8) Not applicable

V. Is candidate usually: (Code dominant expression)
   (1) Smiling
   (2) Attentive/serious
   (3) Frowning/glaring
   (8) Not applicable
   (9) Other (specify)

W. Body movement of candidate:
   (1) Never
   (2) Moderate
   (3) Frequent
   (8) Not applicable

X. Fluency: (Code for candidate only)
   (1) Fluent
   (2) Stumbling/hesitant/non-fluent
   (8) Not applicable

Y. Rate of speech: (Code for candidate only)
   (1) Slow
   (2) Moderate
   (3) Fast
   (8) Not applicable

Z. Pitch variety: (Code for candidate only)
   (1) Monotone
   (2) Pitch variety
   (3) Combined monotone and pitch variety.
   (8) Not applicable

AA. Dress: (Code for candidate only; dominant attire in ad)
   (1) Formal
   (2) Casual
(3) Varied
(8) Not applicable

AB. Staging of ad
(1) All obviously staged
(2) Natural appearing
(3) Combination.
(8) Cannot be determined.
(9) Other (specify)

AC. Candidate or commercial (if candidate not present) sound characteristics: (dominant sound characteristics).
(1) Live
(2) Sound-over
(8) Not applicable

AD. Special effects/production techniques used:
(Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)
(0) Computer graphics
(1) Slow motion
(2) Fast motion
(3) Reversed motion
(4) Freeze frame
(5) Split screen
(6) Superimpositions
(7) Montage
(8) Stop motion photography
(9) Use of stills
(10) Changing Color to B&W

Any other special effects? __________________________________________________________

AE. Is the emphasis of this ad/broadcast on: (Code for dominant emphasis)
(1) Issues
(2) Image
AF. Types of appeals used in ads: [first code if the appeal is present (1), or not (0) in the ad, then code for the dominant appeal in the ad].
   (1) Logical appeals (use of evidence in ads)
   (2) Emotional appeal
   (3) Source credibility/ethos appeals (appealing to qualifications of candidate)

AG. Are fear appeals used in the ad? (Code 1 if yes; 0 if no):

AH. Content of appeal of the ad: [First code if the appeal is present (1) or not (0), then code for the dominant content of the appeal].
   (1) Emphasis on partisanship of candidate
   (2) Issue-related appeal (candidate's issue concern)
   (3) Issue-related appeal (vague policy preference)
   (4) Issue-related appeal (specific policy proposals)
   (5) Personal characteristics of candidate
   (6) Linking of candidate with certain demographic groups

AI. Is there a particular issue emphasized in this ad
   (1) International or foreign affairs
   (2) Military or defense spending
   (3) Economic concerns (inflation, unemployment, jobs)
   (4) Deficit / need to balance budget
   (5) Crime / prisons / penalties / gun control
   (6) Drugs
   (7) Concern for children or children’s issues
   (8) Medicare / social security / problems of elderly
   (9) Other social policies (ex. Family leave)
   (10) Abortions
   (11) Environmental concerns
   (12) Health care
   (13) Problems with immigrants
   (14) Smoking / tobacco abuse
   (15) Taxes
   (16) Welfare reform
(17) Education
(18) Civil rights / affirmative action / special rights for minority groups

AJ. Which of these issues is dominant in the spot? List the number of the issue from the list provided in #30. ______________

Which strategies are present in the ad. (Code 1 if present, 0 if it is not present)

AK. Use of symbolic trappings to transmit importance of office
AL. Incumbency stands for legitimacy
AM. Competency and the office
AN. Charisma and the office
AO. Calling for changes
AP. Emphasizing optimism for the future
AQ. Speaking to traditional values
AR. Appearing to represent the philosophical center of the party
AS. Consulting or negotiating with world leaders
AT. Using endorsements by party and other important leaders
AU. Emphasizing accomplishments
AV. Creating and maintaining "above the trenches" posture
AW. Depending on surrogates to speak
AX. Taking the offensive position on issues
AY. Attacking the record of the opponent
AZ. Other (specify).

What candidate characteristics are emphasized in the ad: Remember to code this ONLY if the sponsoring candidate is present and conveying a characteristics. Do not mark this for the opponent. (Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)

BA. Honesty/integrity
BB. Toughness/strength
BC. Warmth/compassion
BD. Competency
BE. Performance/success
BF. Aggressiveness
BG. Activeness
BH. Qualifications

BI. Dominant camera angle used in ad. (Code only for the candidate)
   (1) High: camera
   (2) Straight-on
   (3) Low
   (4) Movement combination (specify)
   (8) Candidate not present

BJ. Dominant type of camera shot used in ad (Code only for the candidate)
   (1) Tight (head and shoulders)
   (2) Medium (waist up)
   (3) Long (full length)
   (4) Movement combination (specify)
   (8) Candidate not present.

BK. Is a candidate or party slogan used in the ad?
   (0) no    (1) yes
   If yes, what is it?

BL. Is the term "values" used explicitly in the spot?
   (0) no    (1) yes--code yes if the spot visually, verbally, in print, uses the actual word values

BM. Does the spot actually discuss or relate to values?
   (0) no    (1) yes--code yes only if the spot actually discusses values, not specific issues.

BN. From the following list of values, mark present or absent if the value appears or is mentioned in the spot, verbally or visually or both. These are based on/excerpted from Milton Rokeach's list of terminal values. Code the value as present verbally if the ad makes explicit or implicit reference to this value, its importance, and/or how the candidate/party is helping to achieve it. Code the value as present visually if the value is represented by the pictures or video in the spot. The value may or may not be verbally mentioned for it to be visually present. For example, the spot might show a student graduating from college, wearing a cap/gown but refer only to education as an issue. This spot could be said to include a visual representation of "a sense of accomplishment."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbally</th>
<th>Visually</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a comfortable life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a sense of accomplishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. a world at peace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. family security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. an exciting life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. a world of beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. national security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. pleasure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. self-respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. true friendship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. wisdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BO. Then, rank order the three that are the most dominant or important in the ad; there is no need to distinguish here between verbal or visual dominance; simply consider the significance or dominance of the value to the ad's message:

1. (most important value) ________
2. (second most important) ________
3. (third most important) ________

Is a sense of alienation or cynicism referred to in the spot in any way? Mark any references or statements that apply. Mark present (1) or absent (0) for each statement.

BP. feelings that ordinary people are not able to influence government or politics
BQ. politicians are not responsive to what the people want; politicians aren't willing to do what people want
BR. distrust of government or politicians in general
BS. reference to consequences of alienation--might not vote, might as well not bother, no need to participate

BT. What is the purpose of this advertisement?
   (1) Encourage supporters to vote
   (2) Recruit volunteers
   (3) dispel rumors
   (4) Encourage people to register
   (5) Explain position on issues
   (6) Other:________________

BU. Who is the target audience?
BV. On what date was this advertisement posted?
Appendix B

*PRIVATE*

**Codebook**

Coder Name:  Your name or initials  
Spot/Commercial I.D.:  Number of commercial given on your list of ads.

1. Candidate name:  Use your list of ads for this category.
2. Length of commercial:  Use codesheet choices for this category.
3. Format of commercial?  (Code for dominant format)
   
   **(0)** *Documentary*:  describes or documents the life of the candidate; supplies background information on the candidate; describes some event in the candidate's career.
   
   **(1)** *Video Clip/Music Video*:  a preproduced visual segment without a dominant verbal messages; video accompanied only by music or similar
   
   **(2)** *Testimonial (reaction)*:  shows the responses of people to the candidate or provides an endorsement by groups/individuals of the candidate in the form of talking about the candidate's virtues; man-on-the-street interviews; some politician or famous person endorsing.
   
   **(3)** *Introspection*:  largely a spot in which the candidate reflects on his/her own campaign, his/her job in office, his/her mission as a candidate, his/her philosophy of government.  Might be just candidate or candidate talking to other people about this.
   
   **(4)** *Issue Statement*:  visual or verbal statement of candidate or party position on one or more specific issues
   
   **(5)** *Staged Press Conference*:  shows candidate answering questions--not in a hostile situation.  The candidate is answering questions from media people.  This ad looks like a press conference and people asking the questions look like journalists or media people.
   
   **(6)** *Opposition focused*:  a negative attack on the opponent's record/campaign/issue stands that is not clearly one of the other format types described here.  Always choose one of the other format types, even for a negative ad, if you can clearly identify another format type.  If not, and the ad is negative, then this option may be appropriate..
   
   **(7)** *Issue dramatization*:  emphasizes or illustrates some issue or problem; may or may not offer a solution; this is done in a dramatic way--not just candidate talking about it only.
(8) **Question and Answer/Confrontation:** in this situation, the candidate is being asked questions (non-hostile, non-confrontational) by either one person made to look like the average "guy" off the street or by several people as he/she talks with them; or candidate is confronted with hostile questions or groups demanding answers.

(9) **Other (specify):** none of the above.

4. **Is there any music present in the commercial?**

   (Code 1 if present, 0 if not present)

4a. **If music is present, style of music?** Use (0) if no music is present in the ad. If music is present, mark the dominant type of music; use combination category only if the types of music are so balanced between more than one that it is impossible to tell type.

   (0) not present
   (1) classical
   (2) modern (pop, rock, jazz)
   (3) Instrumental (background but cannot be defined as classical or modern)
   (4) marching music
   (5) trumpet or announcing music
   (6) folk music/ country/western
   (7) national anthem
   (8) other
   (9) combination

5. **What is the relationship between music and text?** Mark category according to how much the music vs. the text is dominant in the ad. This category is meant to capture the relative importance of the music to the spot. If the music is simply background music and is not particularly important in getting the meaning of the spot, you would mark "more text or content than music." However, if the music is central to the conveying of the message and overpowers the message in the spot or is critical to interpreting or generating emotions in the spot, then you would mark "more music than text." If there seems to be a true balance between the two, if the music and message together create the dominant meaning in the spot, then choose "balance between music and text/content."
6. Is the spot candidate or opponent focused?
   (1) **Candidate-positive focused:** emphasizes the virtues and good qualities of the candidate. Not an explicit attack on the opponent.
   (2) **Opponent-negative focused:** emphasizes the negative qualities, the faults of the opponent. Explicit attack on opponent's record, character, campaign, etc.
   (3) **Comparative--Balanced between positive and negative information**--mark only if there is no dominance of one over the other. Use this choice only rarely; usually only in a long spot where one type of information is not clearly dominant.
   (8) **Cannot determine.**

7. Is there a negative attack made in the ad? Does the ad make a negative, derogatory, or unflattering statement or references to the opposing candidate or party?

8. If an attack is made, who makes the attack?
   (1) **Candidate attacks his/her opponent.**
   (2) **Surrogate attacks opponent:** someone other than candidate appears as attacker. This should be an identifiable other person, even if you don't know who the person is.
   (3) **Anonymous announcer attacks opponent:** attacker is unknown and is not actually seen or identified. Anonymous announcer attacks opponent--use only for candidate ads. If ad is sponsored by a non-candidate source, choose "4" (independent group) even if the group spot uses an anonymous announcer.
   (4) **Independent group or sponsor attacks opponent.**

8a. Who is the target of the attack?
   (1) the opposing candidate
   (2) the party of the opposing candidate
   (3) An associate of the opponent--such as a staff member, a colleague, a business partne, a cabinet member, etc.
   (4) A family member of the opponent
   (5) Combination

9. If a negative attack is made, what is the purpose of the attack?
   (Code 1 if present, 0 if not present)
(1) **Attack on personal characteristics of opponent**: an attack on the personality characteristics of the opponent; use of negative words denoting flaws in character of opponent.

(2) **Attack on issue stands/consistency of opponent**: criticizes the issue or policy stands of the opponent; criticizes the opponent's inability to "make up his/her mind" where he/she stands on an issue; may use quotes from opponent to show him/her switching a position.

(3) **Attack on candidate's group affiliations/associations**: attacks the opponent's ties to certain groups which have undesirable characteristics, members, philosophies.

(4) **Attack on opponent's background/qualifications**: criticizes the opponent for something in his/her background, family ties, prior job or office (or lack thereof).

(5) **Attack on opponent's performance in past offices/positions**: attacks opponent's performance or job accomplishments in prior offices such as voting record.

10. What strategies are used in making the negative attack?

   (Code 1 if present, 0 if not present)

(1) **Use of humor/ridicule**: making fun of the opponent by laughing, ridiculing things he/she has said, or what he/she stands for.

(2) **Negative association**: associating negative images or phrases with the opponent.

(3) **Name-calling**: using negative labels or unflattering labels for the opponent. The spot must use a name or label to attack the opponent in the spot, not just imply that the opponent is a bad person. For instance, calling the opponent a "liberal" of a "tax and spend liberal" or a "liar" or a "misleader" would qualify as name-calling.

(4) **Guilt by association**: showing the opponent with undesirable groups or individuals. Implying that the opponent associates with these groups or people.

11. Dominant production technique.

(1) **Cinema verite**: viewer has a window on the world; filmed live or made to look live; viewer feels as if he/she is following the candidate during a campaign trip; or following the camera as it is viewing something (man-on-the-street interviews would be coded in this category).
Slides or video clips with print and voice-over or slides or video clips with movement, print, and voice-over: slides may be used to create movement or still photos may be cut together to create movement. The video clips would not usually be live video but edited snapshots that have voice-over of candidate/opponent or an announcer.

Candidate head-on: Candidate talking directly into camera (to viewer).

Somebody other than candidate head-on: public official or celebrity talking directly into camera (to viewer). Do not code "man-on-the-street" interviews in this category.

Animation and/or special production: cartoon-like, non-live figures or fantasy figures. Special production is unique camera or video technique: unusual use of lighting, use of different focuses on camera; use of split-screen or superimposition of one figure on another.

Combination (specify): some other technique not described above or combination of techniques described above. Describe.

Dominant setting of the ad.

Formal indoors: institutional setting, indoors (office, Congress, school).

Informal indoors: non-institutional setting (home, grocery store, party)

Formal outdoors: candidate acting in official capacity but while outdoors, speaking to a crowd, talking with voters.

Informal outdoors: candidate not in a formal role as candidate; (walking, playing, jogging).

Combination (specify): some combination of the above or no one setting dominant, or setting other than those mentioned above.

Not applicable: candidate not in ad or can't be determined.

Any dominant inanimate object with which the candidate interacts?

(Code 1 for yes, 0 for no); if yes, describe. Inanimate object might be something that the candidate focuses on or the camera focuses on as the candidate is talking about the object. Example: a flag.

Can American Symbols be seen in the ad? (code 1 for yes and 0 for no) Are there any traditional symbols of the United States pictured in the ad, such as flag, U.S,
Capitol or White House, etc. (Mark 0 No or 1 Yes). In other countries outside the U.S., adapt as appropriate to symbols of country in which ads appear.

13b. Is yes, mark present or absent for the following:

(1) flag--American flag; if state ad, state seal or flag
(2) national colors--presence or use of red/white/blue
(3) national bird--American eagle (or representation)
(4) famous American landscapes or buildings (Mt. Rushmore, U.S. Capitol, White House, monuments, memorials, etc.)
(5) famous documents (Declaration of Indep., Constitution, Bill of Rights, or other famous American document)
(6) representations of prior presidents or famous political figures (pictures or video of former presidents, Supreme Court Justices, women's suffrage activists, heroes/heroines, etc.)
(7) other famous patriotic symbols


(1) Candidate.

(2) A government official or office-holder: some other politician.

(3) An anonymous announcer: you do not see or do not know the announcer as he/she is talking during the ad.

(4) Non-government celebrity: film star, singer.

(5) Spouse or family member.

(6) Combination (specify): if cannot determine dominant speaker or if the ad is a combination of the above categories.

(9) Other: some other category than those above.

14a. If the speaker is an anonymous announcer, is the announcer a male or a female?
Mark the appropriate choice on the codesheet.

14b. Does a candidate or party representative appear in the spot?
Code 0 if No. If yes, code (1) yes, candidate or party sponsoring ad or (2) yes, opponent(s) or candidate or party sponsoring ad, or (3) yes, both candidate and opponent appear.

14c. If yes (1 or 2), is the candidate or party member presented:
(1) positively--portrayed visually and/or verbally in an approving way, doing good things or with good things said about the person/party.
(2) negatively--portrayed visually and/or verbally in a disapproving way, doing bad things or with bad things said about the person/party.
(3) neutrally--neither positive nor negative
(4) both positive and negative--both sponsoring candidate and opponent appear in the ad and sponsoring candidate is portrayed positively and opponent negatively

14d. Does family appear in the spot? Mark according to which family members or combinations of members appear in the spot.

15. Does candidate have eye contact directly with the viewer? This would be the camera if candidate is head-on. (Code for overall eye contact)
   (1) Almost always.
   (2) Sometimes.
   (3) Almost never: candidate never looks at camera if head-on or candidate is not head-on.
   (8) Not applicable: candidate is not in the ad.

16. Is candidate usually: (Code dominant expression)
   (1) Smiling
   (2) Attentive/serious
   (3) Frowning/glaring
   (8) Not applicable: candidate not present.
   (9) Other (specify): expression not described above or a combination of expressions so that dominant one cannot be determined.

17. Body movement of candidate:
   (1) Never
   (2) Moderate
   (3) Frequent
   (8) Not applicable: candidate not present.

18. Fluency: (Code for candidate only)
   (1) Fluent: candidate speaks clearly without hesitation, stammering, stuttering.
   (2) Stumbling/hesitant/non-fluent: candidate hesitates, stumbles, speech is non-fluent.
(8) **Not applicable**: candidate not present or not speaking.

19. Rate of speech: (Code for candidate only)
   
   (1) **Slow**
   
   (2) **Moderate**
   
   (3) **Fast**
   
   (8) **Not applicable**: candidate not present or not speaking.

20. Pitch variety: (Code for candidate only)
   
   (1) **Monotone**: no change in voice pitch.
   
   (2) **Pitch variety**: vocal variety or close to normal speech.
   
   (3) **Combined monotone and pitch variety**.
   
   (8) **Not applicable**: candidate not present or not speaking.

21. Dress: (Code for candidate only; dominant attire in ad)
   
   (1) **Formal**: coat and tie, suit.
   
   (2) **Casual**: sweaters, shirt sleeves, tie only.
   
   (3) **Varied**: combination of above with neither one dominating.
   
   (8) **Not applicable**: candidate not present.

22. Staging of ad: This category should be marked even if the Candidate is NOT in the ad. It applies to the overall ad approach.
   
   (1) **All obviously staged**: staged press conference, candidate addressing camera, other video which appears staged.
   
   (2) **Natural appearing**: natural or live scenes.
   
   (3) **Combination**.
   
   (8) **Cannot be determined**.
   
   (9) **Other (specify)**: combination of above, no one dominant theme, staging other than that mentioned above.

23. Candidate or commercial (if candidate not present) sound characteristics: (dominant sound characteristics).
   
   (1) **Live**: person on camera is speaking (either candidate or other person featured in ad.
   
   (2) **Sound-over**: candidate or announcer talking over some other pictures or video.
   
   (8) **Not applicable**: no one is speaking in the ad.

24. Special effects/production techniques used:
(Code number if present)

(0) **Computer graphics**: letters or words growing or shrinking, pictures grow or shrink.

(1) **Slow motion**: motion is slower than normal.

(2) **Fast motion**: movement is speeded up.

(3) **Reversed motion**: causing movement to be produced backward.

(4) **Freeze frame**: action or motion during ad is stopped and frozen for a time.

(5) **Split screen**: two or more sections of screen each showing separate scene.

(6) **Superimpositions**: one picture on top of another, one picture may be fading out as another is imposed on to it.

(7) **Montage**: either rapid succession of brief shots (usually stills) with a common theme or showing several images on the screen at once.

(8) **Stop motion photography**: series of frames shown one frame at a time, put together to show motion.

(9) **Use of stills**: still photographs used in the ad.

(10) **Changing Color to B&W**

**Any other special effects?** (describe): use of historical footage (like explosion of nuclear weapons), talking animals, etc.

25. Is the emphasis of this ad/broadcast on: (Code for dominant emphasis)

   (1) **Issues** (ad emphasizes broad issue concerns or specific policy issues or positions of the candidate or opponent)

   (2) **Image** (ad focuses on the personal characteristics, background or qualifications of the candidate or opponent)

26. Types of appeals used in ads: [first code if the appeal is present (1), or not (0) in the ad, then code for the dominant appeal in the ad].

   (1) **Logical appeals (use of evidence in ads)**: facts are presented in ad in order to persuade viewer that the evidence is overwhelming in favor of some position. This can be use of statistics, logical arguments, examples, etc.

   (2) **Emotional appeals**: appeals designed to invoke particular feelings or emotions in viewers. Could include happiness, good will, pride, patriotism, anger, etc.

   (3) **Source credibility/ethos appeals (appealing to qualifications of candidate)**: appeals made to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of candidate by telling all he/she
has done, is capable of doing, how reliable he/she is; endorsements or testimonials
are often in this category, particularly if they rely on the credibility of a famous
person to enhance the candidate or attack the opponent.

27. Are fear appeals used in the ad? (Code 1 if yes; 0 if no): appeals meant to scare viewer about
possible consequences of some action.

28. Content of appeal of the ad: [First code if the appeal is present (1) or not (0), then code for the
dominant content of the appeal].

(1) **Emphasis on partisanship of candidate:** ad identifies the candidate's party, mentions
other members of the same party.

(2) **Issue-related appeal (candidate's issue concern):** ad reveals that candidate cares about
the issue and the issue is salient to candidate, but nothing said about how to solve
problem. May mention who should be held responsible for problem.

(3) **Issue-related appeal (vague policy preference):** reveals policy preference of candidate,
but in a vague, ambiguous, or symbolic way. "I oppose inflation" or "I favor
medical care."

(4) **Issue-related appeal (specific policy proposals):** relates more specific policy proposals.
May suggest precise legislation or action he/she will take.

(5) **Personal characteristics of candidate:** ad attempts to convince audience that candidate
has good personality traits or qualities, such as honesty, intelligence, or that
opponent does not have these characteristics.

(6) **Linking of candidate with certain demographic groups:** candidate is shown as being
sympathetic to the problems, goals, needs, of certain groups in U.S. Candidate is
portrayed as being a good friend to these groups.

29. Is there a particular issue emphasized in this ad: Mark present or absent from the list of issues
contained on the codesheet.

29a. Which of these issues is dominant in the spot? List the number of the issue from the list
provided in #30.

Which strategies are present in the ad. (Code 1 if present, 0 if it is not present)
30. **Use of symbolic trappings to transmit importance of office**: surrounded by bodyguards, use of title in addressing candidate, travel with entourage, images used that somehow signify the candidate's official government position.

31. **Incumbency stands for legitimacy**: emphasis on incumbency in Presidency or Senate (or other office), its legitimacy, the support and respect it is afforded is emphasized.

32. **Competency and the office**: candidate relays image of a competent world leader: capable of managing the highest office.

33. **Charisma and the office**: uses the excitement and glamour afforded the office in his/her ads. Shows the hoopla that follows him/her when he/she arrives in a town.

34. **Calling for changes**: things need to be done differently; changes need to be made.

35. **Emphasizing optimism for the future**: things can and will get better in the future; things are already on an upswing now.

36. **Speaking to traditional values**: reinforcing majority value, the American dream, traditions, and a past.

37. **Appearing to represent the philosophical center of the party**: has support of his political party and represents its policies and platforms.

38. **Consulting or negotiating with world leaders**: appears in ads with other world leaders.

39. **Using endorsements by party and other important leaders**: party leaders used to speak on behalf of candidate; linking of candidate with established, highly respected leaders.

40. **Emphasizing accomplishments**: stressing the achievements of the candidate.

41. **Creating and maintaining "above the trenches" posture**: candidate remains removed from politics, aloof from political battle, rarely acknowledges existence of any opponent, refrains from confrontation with opponents.

42. **Depending on surrogates to speak**: uses others to speak in the ad.

43. **Taking the offensive position on issues**: probing, questioning, challenging opponent's position on issues.

44. **Attacking the record of the opponent**: reviewing and criticizing the past accomplishments (or failures) of the opponent.

Other (specify).
What candidate characteristics are emphasized in the ad: Remember to code this ONLY if the sponsoring candidate is present and conveying a characteristics. Do not mark this for the opponent. (Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)
45. **Honesty/integrity**
46. **Toughness/strength**: e.g., "tough on crime" or other issues where the candidate emphasizes his/her ability to be strong, steadfast, tough, a fighter
47. **Warmth/compassion**: focus on human relationships; e.g., showing concern for elderly, children, victims.
48. **Competency**: assertive, confident.
49. **Performance/success**: accomplishments, achievements.
50. **Aggressiveness**: need for aggressive action, need drastic change to solve problem(s).
51. **Activeness**: have a plan, not just complaining about a problem.
52. **Qualifications**: record.
53. Dominant camera angle used in ad. (Code only for the candidate)
   (1) **High**: camera is looking down on candidate in ad.
   (2) **Straight-on**: camera is level with candidate.
   (3) **Low**: camera is looking up at candidate.
   (4) **Movement combination (specify)**: not one dominant theme, combination of those listed above.
   (8) **Candidate not present**.
54. Dominant type of camera shot used in ad (Code only for the candidate)
   (1) **Tight** (head and shoulders)
   (2) **Medium** (waist up)
   (3) **Long** (full length)
   (4) **Movement combination (specify)**: cannot determine dominant camera shot, or is a combination of those listed above.
   (8) **Candidate not present**.
55. Is a candidate or party slogan used in the ad?
   (0) no  (1) yes (if slogan is contained in the spoken or visual aspect of the ad, including the use of a slogan at the end of the spot-- Ex: Bob Dole: A Better Man for a Better America) If yes, what is it?
56. Is the term "values" used explicitly in the spot?
   (0) no   (1) yes--code yes if the spot visually, verbally, in print, uses the actual word values

57. Does the spot actually discuss or relate to values?
   (0) no   (2) yes--code yes only if the spot actually discusses values, not specific issues.

58. From the following list of values, mark present or absent if the value appears or is mentioned in
the spot, verbally or visually or both. These are based on/excerpted from Milton Rokeach's list of
terminal values. Code the value as present verbally if the ad makes explicit or implicit reference to
this value, its importance, and/or how the candidate/party is helping to achieve it. Code the value as
present visually if the value is represented by the pictures or video in the spot. The value may or
may not be verbally mentioned for it to be visually present. For example, the spot might show a
student graduating from college, wearing a cap/gown but refer only to education as an issue. This
spot could be said to include a visual representation of "a sense of accomplishment."

1. a comfortable life
2. a sense of accomplishment
3. a world at peace
4. family security
5. an exciting life
6. a world of beauty
7. equality
8. happiness
9. national security
10. freedom
11. pleasure
12. self-respect
13. true friendship
14. wisdom

58a. Then, rank order the three that are the most dominant or important in the ad; there is no need to
distinguish here between verbal or visual dominance; simply consider the significance or dominance
of the value to the ad's message:
   1. (most important value)
   2. (second most important)
3. (third most important)
Is a sense of alienation or cynicism referred to in the spot in any way? Mark any references or statements that apply. Mark present (1) or absent (0) for each statement.
59. feelings that ordinary people are not able to influence government or politics
60. politicians are not responsive to what the people want; politicians aren't willing to do what people want
61. distrust of government or politicians in general
62. reference to consequences of alienation--might not vote, might as well not bother, no need to participate