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Political Advertising In Kuwait - A Functional Discourse Analysis

Jasem Alqaseer
University of South Carolina

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**Political Advertising in Kuwait
A Functional Discourse Analysis**

By

Jasem Alqaseer

Bachelor of Arts
Kuwait University 2004

Master of Science - IMC
Florida State University 2008

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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University of South Carolina

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Accepted by:

Dr. John Besley, Major Professor, Co-Chair

Dr. Erik Collins, Co-Chair

Dr. Carol Pardun, Committee Member

Dr. Sei-Hill Kim, Committee Member

Dr. Subhash Sharma, Committee Member

Dr. Lacy K. Ford, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Dedication

To my mother and my father, to my wife and my son, thank you for everything.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I thank Dr. John Besley for the great help and support he provided during my Ph.D. program and during the work on this dissertation. His knowledge and skills combined with his down to earth attitude and sense of humor made working with him both a rewarding and pleasing experience. My thanks also go to my dissertation committee for the time and efforts they contributed to this work. I am grateful to the commitment and to the care they put towards the work and towards me.

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Abstract

Most political advertising studies focus on the U.S. or other western democracies like the U.K. and other European countries. In general, political advertising studies focused on the content of political advertising especially on the subject of issues vs. images in advertising. In addition, many studies of political advertising content focus on the topic of negative advertising. The practice of political advertising has been found to vary depending on the political and media structure within a country as well as cultural and legal elements. Therefore, the gap in the literature about the practice of political advertising in the Middle-East is worth examining as it is reasonable to expect differences in the use of issue vs. image appeals and in terms of the use of negative advertising.

This dissertation focuses on political advertisement content in Kuwait as one of the developing democracies in the Middle-East. One of the important cultural and political elements of Kuwaiti politics is the non-secular nature of the country according to the Kuwaiti constitution. The interest of the study is to explore the content appeals used in political advertising in Kuwait and compare it to relevant literature that examines advertising in the U.S and other parts of the world. In addition, comparisons of advertisements' content between winners and losers in elections will be made to explore possible differences.

Because of lack of previous studies about Kuwait, interviews with parliament members, candidates, campaign managers and advertising practitioners were done to give context and better understanding of the ads. Findings of both the qualitative and the quantitative parts of the study indicate a unique approach to political advertising in Kuwait including lack of negative advertisements, which is a significant characteristic of political advertisement worldwide. In addition, contrary to experts' suggestions in the interviews, political advertisements in Kuwait uses more character based discourse than policy based discourse.

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Introduction

Political advertising is one of the most essential vehicles that candidates and political parties use to communicate with voters, especially when party identification is in decline (Rothschild, 1978; Trent & Friedenberg, 2008). The practice of political advertising in the U.S. started with the use of posters, handbills and printed materials but it was not until the development of electronic media that political advertising became central to political campaigns (Kaid, 2006). In the past, candidates seeking nomination relied more on the internal politics of their political parties. According to Trent and Friedenberg (2008, p. 5):

The legendary party bosses once determined who would run for political office. In the national and state politics, these people were often called king makers, who form the sanctity of the so-called smoke filled rooms at nominating conventions handpicked “their” candidate to be the party nominee.
But the penetration of electronic media and decline of partisanship made candidates appeal to voters directly in order to get elected during the primary and general elections. That helped to make political advertising a dominant campaigning force in the elections (Rothschild, 1978). The nature of political campaigning is shifting from face-to-face interactions to mediated communications, which allows the electorate to follow political campaigns and campaign tactics via television broadcasts and political ads (Hofstetter, Zukin, & Buss, 1978; Joslyn, 1980) Early studies also found that political advertising expressed the strategy that candidates perceived to be important to win the hearts and minds of voters (Humke, Schmitt, & Grupp, 1975).

Political advertising practices in the U.S. have been the benchmark for comparison studies. According to Johnston (2006, p. 16), “Numerous studies have looked at the style and use of political advertising in various countries to understand the influence of an “American” style of campaigning or a “modernization” of campaign techniques.” Studies of political advertising and political communication in general have been conducted in Europe, Canada, Israel and East-Asian countries. However, no previous studies can be found examining political advertising in the Middle East, despite the number of elections held every year in the Arab world. This dissertation aims to shed some light on how candidates and political parties communicate with their audience in Kuwait, a Middle-Eastern country. Understanding of the practice of political advertising in Kuwait and the Middle-East will provide new insight into the political communication phenomenon. Johnston (2006) suggested that, “These types of studies have been useful in our understanding of how political advertising fits into particular legal, governmental, cultural, and communication environments.” And a better understanding of political communication in general in the Middle East is more relevant now than before because of the recent movement toward democracy known as the Arab spring, which swept Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and is ongoing in other Arab countries at the time of this writing

Chapter 1: Literature of Political Advertising:

Why Study Political Advertising?

Engaging with political campaigns used to require more face-to-face interaction with the candidate, campaign activities, or politically interested peers. During the 19th century, for example, a key tool used in campaigning was a handshake (Dinkin, 1989).

According to Dinkin (1989, p. 3):

people felt it important to be personally acquainted with the men for whom they voted. Having less populous election districts gave representation a greater personal meaning. Thus persons running for office sought to meet members of the electorate individually at church, at taverns, at court, or at a militia training. Candidates in urban areas often went from door to door or buttonholed voters in the street on the way to the polls.

Political advertising and political communication in general are gaining more significance as a core function in the campaign process (Kotler & Kotler, 1999). Humke et al. (1975, p. 499), note that political advertisements is “an established source of political campaigning which can be assumed to represent a “continuity of strategy,” an indicator of what is perceived to be important to win the election in the eyes of the purchasers”. The steady increase in advertising spending from one election cycle to another is also an indication of the prominence of political advertising in modern political campaigning. For example, \$3 billion was spent on the 2000 U.S. presidential election. Spending in 2004 was \$4.1 billion and \$5.3 in 2008 (Center for Responsive Politics, 2012b). In 2012, spending was over \$6 billion, (Center for Responsive Politics, 2012a) or nearly doubled over the past 12 years. Quinn and Kivijarv (2005) note that total

spending on political communication activities during the 2004 presidential campaign was 2.74 billion compared to \$1.21 billion in 2000. Spending on advertising and marketing grew four times faster than the spending for the whole campaign. The increasing role of political advertisements in modern political campaigns in addition to campaigns' increasing spending on marketing and advertising activities could justify the attention political communication scholars gave to the study of political advertising. I will discuss below some of the literature of political advertising effects, such as the agenda-setting function of political advertising and the influence of political advertising on voter turnout.

Political Advertising Effects

Research on media effects constitutes a large portion of mass communication studies. Communication studies witnessed several paradigm shifts from the magic bullet, Hypodermic needle, to the limited effects paradigm. Political advertising studies also went through the debate of what influence it has on the voter's decision and on the democratic process in general. Several studies initially found that political communication and political advertising have limited effects on voters (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Mulder, 1979). According to Rogers (2004), Paul Lazarsfeld intended to investigate the direct effects of the media and its influence on voter choices. But to Lazarsfeld's surprise, the shift in voting decisions during the campaign was less than initially expected. Only a fraction of that shift could be linked to media exposure.

But the limited effects of political advertisements may not explain the increasing expenditure in advertising and reliance on political advertising by campaigners (Newman & Sheth, 1987; Quinn & Kivijarvi, 2005). Researchers explored the effects of political

advertisements by investigating mediating factors that could give a better picture of the trend. The results indicated that political advertisements are more effective than initially thought. Some studies found that political advertising effects are moderated by political affiliation. For example, those who view competing advertisements from two opposing candidates evaluate their favorite candidate's advertisement as more persuasive and likable (Chang, 2003). In addition, viewing political advertisements was found to strengthen attitudes already held towards favored political candidates (Chang, 2003). Thus, political advertising is found to appeal to sympathizers and supporters to elicit more contributions and advocacy.

Reaffirming already held positions is not the only political advertising effect researchers found. Political advertisement may also be persuasive and informative to certain segments of voters depending on their level of awareness and involvement in politics. Valentino, Hutchings, and Williams (2004) argue that political advertising is persuasive to voters. In their experimental study, Valentino et al. (2004) found that support for candidates drops significantly among less involved voters when exposed to negative advertisements. Some studies found evidence that political advertisements help undecided voters make up their minds about for whom to vote (Tedesco, 2002). In addition, influence of political advertisements was also dependent on the perceptions about the ad sponsor. For example, when the candidate or his party has ownership of the issue being advocated in the advertisement, the influence is more significant (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994).

Communications and political scholars studied political advertisements because political advertisements play a large role in modern political campaigns. The increasing

media coverage of political advertisements, in addition to the increase expenditure documented by media scholars and media critics, is an indication of this increasing role. The study of political advertisements in any democracy captures an important part of that democratic process and discourse. Academic studies show that political advertising influences voters, as discussed above. But researchers also documented other effects of political advertisements that will be discussed below.

Agenda-Setting Effect

Persuading voters to make favorable decisions is not the only effect of political advertising. Political advertising was observed to have the ability to influence what topics voters discuss or which topics the media covers. This is known in mass communications literature as the agenda-setting effect (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Although communications scholars traditionally focused agenda-setting studies on the news, Kern and Just (1995) used a focus group with a simulation technique and found that political advertising messages are more likely to stimulate discussion about political matters than the news. Hong and Riffe (2008) found that exposure to television advertisements encouraged personal discussion about political issues during the campaign period and increased information seeking from television news and the Internet. Humke et al. (1975, p. 499) also indicate that there was a positive correlation between issues that appeared in political advertising and issues that were a concern of public opinion.

In addition to its influence on the public's agendas, political advertising was found to have inter-media agenda setting effects as well. Roberts and McCombs (1994) suggest that political advertising influences newspaper agendas. Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, and Lennon (1998) found evidence that newspaper's political advertising also

influences the television news agenda. However, Sweetser, Golan, and Wanta (2008) found that those inter-media agenda effects are subject to situational conditions. They explain that campaigns sometimes use political advertisements as a strategic tool to shift the media's agenda when it does not fit the campaigns' interest. Sometimes it fails to achieve the goal.

Effects on Voter Turnout and Engagement

The number of political advertisements published in an election cycle is directly correlated to voter turnout (Humke et al., 1975; Min, 2004). In addition, political advertising can have a positive effect on the campaign itself. It is found to bolster the morale and confidence of volunteering party workers (Sheinkopf, Atkin, & Bowen, 1972).

Political advertising found not only to provide citizens with information about issues of concern and the personality of candidates, it also encourages citizens to seek information from other sources and make them better users of that information. Jaeho (2008) notes that political advertisements stimulate political interest. The more advertisements one views, the more likely the voter is to seek more information from local and national news. In addition, there is a positive correlation between exposure to political advertisements and seeking political information on the Internet, as well as engaging in political discussions (Hong & Riffe, 2008).

Knowledge from Political Advertising

Political advertising is useful for voter education of political issues. Kaid (1976) noted that in some cases 52% of voters learned about candidates' issues from political advertisement. Exposure to political advertising was found to encourage citizens to

participate in the democratic process by raising their political information efficacy, which is the citizen's belief that he or she can understand how government works and that they have influence it (Lee Kaid, Postelnicu, Landreville, Hyun Jung, & LeGrange, 2007). Critics of political advertisements argue they deter people from participating in politics by trivializing it or through the use of negative political advertisements (Thorson & Ognianova, 2000). However, Lee Kaid et al. (2007) argue otherwise. Surprisingly, Valentino et al. (2004) found that highly-involved voters are more likely to extract useful information from political advertisements, and they also seek political knowledge from other resources. This finding is consistent with the knowledge gap hypothesis (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970), which predicts that educated voters of greater wealth usually learn more from exposure to the media. Valentino et al. (2004) found that this applies to political advertisements as well.

Due to the seasonal nature of political campaigns, political advertising can be recalled more easily than commercial advertising due to the novelty effect (Jablonski, Gome, & Galbraith, 1998). Unfortunately, not all voters benefit equally from political advertisements. Exposure and recall of political advertisement is influenced by selectivity. Voters remember more information from political advertising sponsored by their favorite candidates (Chang, 2001; Faber & Storey, 1984), which supports the reconfirmation effect. On the other hand, Surlin and Gordon (1976) found that less involved voters show more selectivity in recalling the ads. Selective retention was also found subject to the advertising clutter phenomenon meaning that the selective retention of favorite candidate weakens if the medium is overwhelmed with political ads. In addition, voters retain more information from political advertisements when they are

psychologically involved in politics (Chaffee, Saphir, Graf, Sandvig, & Hahn, 2001; Surlin & Gordon, 1976).

In addition, involvement affects the type of persuasive message that is likely to influence the voter. More involved and knowledgeable voters are more likely to believe incumbent's positive's advertising while less involved voters were more likely to be persuaded by negative advertisements from challengers (O'Cass, 2002).

The distribution of power in society is one of the key important features that characterizes the nature and future of countries and in a democracy, the ability to persuade or influence voters in a favorable way is an important manner in which societal entities effect that distribution. The previous literature indicates that political advertising has been a great influence in the democratic process. Thus, scholars from different streams of knowledge turn towards the study and documentation of the content of political advertising to further understand it as an important part of the political discourse within societies.

Content of Political Advertisements

Issues vs. Images

According to Kaid (2004b), studies of political advertising content in the U.S. focus mainly on issues and images appeals and negative and positive advertising. Although focusing on image instead of substantive issues is a major criticism of political advertising, systematic research found that the vast majority of political advertising in America focuses on issues rather than image (Kaid, 2004b). It was found that candidates are more likely to focus on issues over which their party has some sort of ownership. This

is particularly the case in primary elections when candidates are trying to appeal to core voters (Kaid, 2006).

Although 20% of political ads provided candidates' specific positions on certain issues, other mass media outlets, such as newspapers and television, provided relatively less issue-related material (Joslyn, 1980). Political ads were found inferior in providing information about issues and candidates' positions compared to televised debates (Joslyn, 1980). In regard to the number of issues discussed in a single ad, Camile Elebash and Rosene (1982) found that the complexity in production of a print advertisement correlates directly with the number of issues contained in a single advertisement. They noted that candidates tended to insert more issues rather than explaining an issue more thoroughly in a large ad. Latimer (1985) noted that candidates are more likely to communicate a clear position on an issue in lower level races. It was also found that when comparing content among winners and losers of a political race, advertisements of winners were found to have a higher percentage of image advertisements in noncompetitive races (Latimer, 1985).

Issues vs. Images Findings Outside the U.S.

Some studies of issues vs. images also looked at political advertisements in countries other than the U.S. In the U.K., research shows that political advertisement is dominated by issues even for political parties that are "most overtly nonpolitical stylistically" like the Labor party (Scammell & langer, 2006, p. 78). A systematic study of political advertisements from 1997 to 2000 showed that 70% of political ads are issue centered (Scammell & langer, 2006). Research also indicates that political advertisement in France itself is also dominated by issue related content and that "presidential

candidates primarily use logical appeals to make their case to French voters” (Kaid & Gagnere, 2006, p. 89). Political advertising in Spain on the other hand was found to be more personal rather than issue centered. Rospir (1996, p. 163) suggests that the lack of “historical, ideological, or group based loyalties to parties” are the reasons campaign are not issue dominated. By comparing studies that look at the use of issues vs. images in political advertisements in different countries Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006) noted that issue dominated advertisements are more prevalent in developed western democracies. The comparison was done using studies of advertisements in 12 countries. The top 6 countries according to the percentage of issue-dominated political advertisements were the United States (81%), France (80%), Italy (71%), Germany (69%) and Spain with (67%). On the other hand, the lowest six countries were Russia (58%), Poland (56%), Israel (50%), Korea (47%), Greece (42%) and Turkey (33%). Although it is logical to expect that candidates and parties in developing democracies were to spend more effort in communicating their positions on issues that need change to achieve further development within the country, the study shows that candidates found it more important to communicate that they are capable of doing the job in the first place (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006)

Negative Advertising

Negative political advertising is defined as being opponent centered rather than candidate or party centered (Kaid, 2004a). Procter and Schenck-Hamlin (1996) defined negative advertisements as ads that try to blunt the opponent’s chances of winning instead on promoting the sponsor’s positions on issues or his image. Negative advertising has been under a lot of criticism for having negative effects on the democratic process

and for causing cynicism among voter that leads to the lowering of voter's turnout (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006). Exposure to political advertising has been associated with negative feelings towards political races and the state of the country in general. In addition, it has been found to lessen self-efficacy (Thorson & Ognianova, 2000). Negative political advertising focusing on personality is more likely to cause cynicism about the political process than what is caused by negative advertising focusing on issues (Schenck-Hamlin & Procter, 2000). Dardis, Shen, and Edwards (2008) note that although voters indicate dislike for personality attacks, issue attacks have a greater chance of lowering self-efficacy. This means voters will feel that issues are too complex, which will hinder their ability to make a judgment.

Garramone (1984) notes that voters perceive the negativity of ads to fit into one of five categories: performance of the opponent, orientation (the opponent's position on issues), ethics, qualifications, and mudslinging. Mudslinging is viewing an ad to be generally negative without falling in one of the previous categories. Garramone (1984) also finds that negative advertising has different effects depending on which category it falls into. Negative political advertisements work best when they amplify already existing negative ideas. However, negative political advertisements are less successful at creating new ideas or emotions (Underation, 2009). An interesting study done by Bradley, Angelini, and Sungkyoung (2007) investigated if political advertising elicited automatic responses associated with aversive motivations and found that it does. According to the researchers, the participants that watched negative advertising experienced the "initial physiological steps to prepare the body to move away" (Bradley et al., 2007).

In comparing studies of negative advertisements in different countries Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006) conclude that research does not reflect a meaningful distinction in use of negative advertising based on the development of the political system. They note that the majority of studies indicate that positive advertisements constitute the majority of political ads around the world. However, the U.S. and Israel are an exception.

Negative Advertising and the Third-Person Effect

Several studies focused specifically on the effects of negative advertisements. Cohen and Davis (1991) conducted a study investigating the role of the third person effect in anticipating the influence of negative political advertising on others. Voters report that negative advertising that targets a candidate that they favor has a little impact on them while expecting it to have stronger influence on others. Conversely, voters report that negative advertising that targets a candidate they dislike influences them more than it influences other. Consistent with the literature of the third person effect, exposure to negative political advertising was a predictor of supporting political advertising restrictions (Dermody & Scullion, 2000). In addition, the third person effect serves as a predictor for the likelihood to vote. The more someone perceives others as less competent in encountering misleading political advertisements the more likely this person expresses the need for her to take action and vote (Golan, Banning, & Lundy, 2008).

Negative Advertisement and Involvement

Voters who are less involved in politics are more accepting of negative advertising and more likely to indicate that negative advertising helped them in their decision-making process (Dermody & Scullion, 2000). On the other hand, Faber, Tims, and Schmitt (1993) argue that highly involved voters are more likely to pay attention to

political advertisement while voters with low-involvement are more likely to dismiss them. Voters with a low level of involvement are nevertheless more persuadable when they are actually exposed to the negative advertisements (Faber et al., 1993).

Negative political advertising appears to be more effective and harmful to the targeted candidate when it resonates with a schema about politicians in general such as ties to interest groups (Kern & Just, 1995). Chang (2001) finds that negative advertisements affect the evaluation of the targeted candidate when they succeed in evoking negative emotions. Weaver Lariscy, Ruth Ann, and Tinkham (1999) note that negative political advertisements gain more credibility over time due to the sleeper effect as the negative evaluation of the attacker fades with time and the attack message becomes more credible. Cross-gender negative advertising was found more effective contrary to what is expected. Dinzes, Cozzens, and Manross (1994) explain that less-involved voter pays less attention to negative advertising between candidates of the same gender but attack advertisements are more salient when it is exchanged between opposite gender candidates.

Effects of Negative Ads on the Attacker

Studies suggest that in some cases negative political advertising ends up hurting the sponsor of the advertisement (Hill, 1989). Garramone (1984) found that negative advertising is more harmful to the sponsor than the target. For practical purposes, it does a candidate a favor when independent or supportive groups broadcast negative messages against their opponents (Garramone, 1984). On the other hand, Meirick (2005) argues that attack advertisements sponsored by candidates gets them more positive evaluations than attack advertisements sponsored by their parties. Meirick (2005) explains that people

view the candidate as more frank and straight forward since she is not hiding behind her party. Ran and Ven-Hwei (2007) suggest that negative political advertising can be detrimental to the sponsor in more than a way. It could potentially alienate the candidate's supporters because of personal dislike of negative advertising. In addition, it might fire up the supporters of the targeted candidate (Merritt, 1984). One of the advantages to negative political advertising is that it leads to more image discrimination with more distinguished mental images and associations (Garramone & Atkin, 1990). By doing so, voters become more likely to participate in elections and more likely to vote.

Functional Analysis Theory of Political Discourse

This study uses the concepts and methods of functional analysis theory of political discourse (Benoit, Blaney, & Pier, 1998). The theory encompasses the analysis of positive and negative functions of political advertising and refers to them as acclaims and attacks. It also recognizes defense as an additional function found in political discourse but usually overlooked in the in previous studies (Benoit, McHale, Hansen, Pier, & McGuire, 2003). Political discourse analysis theory also addresses the image versus issues analysis of political advertising and adds subcategories to those topics. Benoit et al. (2003) note that image versus issue categories are problematic because they are intertwined. Devlin (1995, p. 203) argues that he makes no distinction between issue and image advertising because "issue ads really do create image impressions on the part of the viewer, and image ads can convey substantive information". Political discourse theory is different in that it categorizes advertisements on whether their topics are about policy or character considerations and the theory offer subcategories for each. Further discussion of those categories will be outlined below.

Benoit et al. (2003) explain that the discourse functional analysis theory is founded upon five key propositions:

- 1) Voting is a Comparative Act: neither voters expect nor candidates or parties achieve idealistic standards. In addition, voters compare and then compromise by choosing the preferable alternative among what is offered to them.
- 2) Candidates Must Distinguish Themselves from Opponents: In many elections the independents decide the outcome of the race. Candidates from different political parties are competing for the votes of those independents and thus are taking similar positions to appeal to that non-partisan group. Benoit et al. (2003, p. 3) note that “As a candidate, if you fail to articulate clear differences between yourself and your opponent, there is no reason for anyone to vote for you rather than for your opponent”. Thus candidates need to distinguish themselves from their opponents by character or policy.
- 3) Political Campaign Messages are Important Vehicles for Distinguishing between Candidates: although voters do learn from other sources than the campaign itself, studies indicate that political advertising provides relatively more information about issues than television newscasts and newspapers. The only method that surpassed political advertisements in informing voters was political debates (Joslyn, 1980). Benoit et al. (2003) explain that the reason television coverage is limited in relation to campaign issue coverage is due to its horserace handling of political contests. Moreover, political issue positions lack the novelty quality that journalists seek in their stories. That gives

political campaign messages relatively more importance as a source of information for voters.

- 4) Candidates Establish Preference through Acclaiming, Attacking, and Defending: Benoit et al. (2003) explain that distinguishing between candidates is not enough for winning elections. Campaigns use the three functions to establish preference.
- 5) Candidates Must Win a Majority (or a Plurality) of the Votes Casted in an Election: a candidate or a political party does not need to appeal or persuade all voters. As mentioned above, distinguishable positions are part of the political race and politicians deliberately go after groups and segments of voters that can secure them the win sometimes by alienating other groups. Benoit et al. (2003) note that candidates more specifically pursue the segments of the population that is more likely to actually vote on election days and use tactics to either encourage or suppress turnout according to their interests.

Functions of Political Advertisements

As mentioned above, the functional analysis theory of political discourse recognizes three functions of political discourse which are acclaiming, attacking and defending. Each of the three functions deals with one of two topics. Benoit et al. (1998) explain that they conceptualize a topic in their analysis as something candidates or parties can disagree on. This disagreement could take place upon policy matters or character matters. In policy topics Benoit et al. (1998) put forth three subtopics for policy and three subtopics for character that could be used as a topic for each of the functions. For policy considerations, the subtopics are past deeds, future plans, and general goals. For the

character considerations the subtopics are personal qualities, leadership ability, and ideals (principles, values).

Past deeds are based on positions that the candidate took in the past that were favorable to the candidate's target segment of voters. In addition, voters sometimes want to know the future plans of the candidate or the party which is trying to get their support. The candidate here would claim positions on specific issues that enhance their favorability and perhaps distinguish her from opponents. Claiming future plans includes mentioning the subject and specifying the plans to address the problem. On the other hand, Benoit et al. (1998) specify a type of a claim that a candidate makes toward a general goal without explaining the plan to achieve it. Policy attacking and defending also use the same categories of past deeds, future plans and general goals. Acclaiming, attacking and defending occur around character of the candidate or the political party. The subtopics for character are personal qualities, leadership abilities and ideals.

Applying the functional discourse analysis theory to presidential elections, Benoit and Pier (1997) found that the Republican and incumbents more frequently use acclaiming advertising while Republicans and challengers tended to use more attacking advertising. In addition, less than 1% of advertisements were defensive in nature. The findings were inconsistent with previous research that concluded that there is no difference between Republicans and Democrats in the percentage of negative advertisements. The authors suggest that it is due to the method of analysis they used, which is analyzing themes that occurred in an ad instead of treating a whole ad as a unit of analysis. Benoit (2000) found that political advertisements across different media forms were used as self-praise positive statements by 84% followed by attacks by 15%

and finally refutes of attacks made only 1% of the statements in ads. Most of the acclaims were in web advertisements while most of attacks were on television. Political advertisements of campaigns for different levels of office use the function of acclaims more than the function of attack or defense except advertisements sponsored by political parties which consistently were found to use more attacks than acclaims. In addition, on average political advertisements focus more on policy than they do on character (Airne & Benoit, 2005; Benoit & Airne, 2009).

As discussed above, this study seeks to shed light on the practice of political advertising in Kuwait. Political communication literature lacks examination of political advertising in the Middle East, an area that has been in the focus of political news for some time. And before going into detail about the research of this dissertation, background about Kuwait and its media system will be shared to offer relevance and context to the findings.

Political System in Kuwait:

Kuwait is a relatively small country in size, comparable to the state of New Jersey and totaling 6879 mi² (Casey, Thackeray, & Findling, 2007). As of July 2012, the total population of Kuwait is 2.6 million, though only 1.4 million are Kuwaiti citizens (CIA). Kuwait has three neighboring countries; Saudi Arabia to the southwest, Iraq to the north and Iran to the east across the Arabian Gulf (Ismael, 1982).

Kuwait's history started in the 1610s when several tribes from the Arabian Gulf areas found that piece of land appropriate for settling due to locations advantages (Al-Dekhayel, 2000). Later, those tribes decided to form a state-like system of government to put their internal and external matters in order. Although there is no historical consensus

on when the first prince of Kuwait was appointed (Mahmoud, 1968), it is recorded that he died in 1776 (Al-Dekhayel, 2000; Casey et al., 2007).

While the Ottoman Empire controlled Iraq and parts of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait was never a part of that empire (Mahmoud, 1968). Kuwaitis were not assured that the Ottoman Empire would not take over their land, so Kuwaitis sought the protection of the British (Casey et al., 2007). Great Britain saw an opportunity to gain more influence in the region as other players like the Ottoman Empire and Russia were on move. On January 23, 1899 Kuwait signed an agreement which explicitly submits to get permission from Great Britain for all its dealings with other countries in exchange for an implicit and non-written commitment from Britain to protect Kuwait against outside dangers (Al-Dekhayel, 2000).

During the next 60 years, Kuwait worked on building modern institutions that provide characteristics of a modern country (Al-Dekhayel, 2000). In 1959, Kuwait issued a citizenship law and in 1960 introduced a currency law. Kuwaitis understood that the agreement with the British provided great benefits for both parties however, considering the new situation both internally and externally, the agreement was not useful anymore to Kuwait. The Kuwaiti prince at the time communicated his people's desire to end the British control over Kuwait and the British agreed to break the previous agreement. Kuwait was declared an independent state on June 19, 1961 (Al-Dekhayel, 2000).

In 1962 Kuwaiti put forth the country's constitution which is still unchanged to this day (Al-Dekhayel, 2000). The constitution made Kuwait a monarchy that has an elected parliament. The ruler of Kuwait, the Amir, is the president who, according to the constitution, does not practice his power directly but through the three branches of

government (Casey et al., 2007). The Kuwaiti constitution states that once a member of the royal family is named the Amir of Kuwait, he selects his successor and suggests his name to the parliament which votes to either approve him or not (*Kuwaiti Constitution* 1961). If the parliament did not approve the successor, the Amir then suggests at least three names from the royal family and the parliament then chooses one of them (*Kuwaiti Constitution* 1961). The Amir selects the prime minister, who is the president of the executive branch. When the prime minister is assigned, he is to form his government by choosing the ministers and then he is to get the Amir's approval on them. Historically, the prime minister has always been a royal family member (Tétreault, 2000).

The parliament on the other hand is formed mainly by elected members. Until recently, Kuwait was divided to 25 election districts. However Kuwait was recently divided into only five districts and expected to switch to be only one district. This is relevant to the study of political communication and political advertising because of the increasing need for a mediated communication among candidates and political movements with their voters. Parliamentary elections are the highest level race in the country. According to the Kuwaiti constitution, elections are held every four years to elect the 50 members of parliament. Each one of the five districts is to elect 10 representatives. The Kuwaiti parliament consists of 50 parliament members in addition to the ministers that are selected by the prime minister. These ministers normally have equal rights to vote on legislations as the elected parliament members.

Kuwaiti law does not acknowledge or deny the formation of political parties but currently political groups call themselves political movements. The government is reluctant to acknowledge the formation of political movements that use the term "Party"

since that political party is presumably pursuing power through the control of the executive branch of government. Just like in other countries, political group membership is weakening which means that some candidates that used to run under the umbrella of a political movement are now running as independents. Candidates are relying more on communicating their message directly to the voters instead of relying on a political movement for support.

The Media System in Kuwait:

The relationship between the press and the state varies from a country to another in the Middle East. For example, according to Rugh (2004), some countries follow the model of loyalist press. The most prominent characteristic of this model is that the press is consistently loyal to the regime although privately owned. Notably, Rugh (2004) lists under this model all the countries of the Corporation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) except Kuwait. The second model is the diverse media model which, according to Rugh (2004), has a bigger margin of freedom for newspapers to be loyalists for the regime or act otherwise. Countries that fall under this model are Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco and Yemen.

Until few years ago, the only television and radio stations that had the right to broadcast in Kuwait were government owned and operated stations (Casey et al., 2007). The law was changed allowing for private television channels to operate and broadcast in Kuwait. Governmental channels did not allow for political advertisements and still restrict it. However with the emergence of the private channels also came the emergence of political advertisements during election cycles (Alwqyan & Alsarraf, 2011). There are no specific laws in Kuwait for handling political advertisements in term of content

and funding. There are no limits on the maximum amount of advertisement airtime or size of print advertisements that a candidate can use.

As for newspapers, since the 1960s, the government has only issued five daily newspaper licenses to commercial newspapers. Those five newspapers competed among themselves until 2006 when a new law was passed and licenses for new daily newspapers were given to every applicant who met the conditions of newspaper ownership (Alwqyan & Alsarraf, 2011). Political advertisements were being published in the older newspapers even before the law has changed and new newspapers were circulating.

There are no specialized newspapers targeting specific electoral districts. Candidates who are running in a specific district are subject to the same advertising rates that companies advertising for the whole country pay (Alwqyan & Alsarraf, 2011). In terms of regulations, there are no restrictions on how much a newspaper can charge a candidate or a political party for advertising. It has been found that less restrictions on political advertising correlates with higher voter turnout (Baek, 2009).

Research Justification

The content of political advertising is influenced by many factors such as culture, communication environments and government structure (Johnston, 2006). As mentioned above, most of political advertising studies were done in the U.S., Europe, or Asia but there was nothing found in the literature that studied political advertising in the Middle East. A systematic study of political advertising in Kuwait, a country within the Middle East, would be a contribution to, or maybe the start of, a scholarly effort to understand how political communication functions within a different political and cultural setting than the traditionally examined like the U.S or Europe.

The study aims to explore the similarities and differences of the following issues in Kuwait as compared to what is found in current literature on political advertising in terms of the use of issue advertisement vs. image advertisement by systematically analyzing advertisements from the last two parliamentary elections. Second, the study seeks to understand the reasons behind the lack of negative advertising in Kuwaiti political campaigns.

Two methods will be used for this study. The first is an analysis of personal interviews conducted during a previous research project to develop this dissertation. These interviews are useful due to the lack of literature examining political advertising in the Middle East in general and in Kuwait in particular. The interviews were conducted with candidates, members of parliament, campaign managers, and advertising agency account managers political campaign experience. In addition, interviews with political science and communication scholars in Kuwait will give context and background to political advertising in Kuwait.

The second method is the content analysis of newspaper political advertisements using the political discourse functional analysis method. The content analysis is the main research effort in this dissertation and meant to provide a better understanding of political advertising in Kuwait, which is one of the main channels for political discourse in modern democracies. The analysis is made using a random sample of advertisements from two major Kuwaiti newspapers, Alwatan (The Homeland) and Alqabas (The Beacon). The analysis covers the elections held in May 2006 and February 2012.

Chapter 2: Interviews

As mentioned earlier, due to the lack of studies on mass communication and political advertising in Kuwait, it was appropriate to substitute an analysis of qualitative interviews with current members of the Kuwaiti parliament, previous candidates, campaign managers, advertising professors, and advertising agency practitioners who were involved in political campaigns. The interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Some of the interviewees represented more than one category of the above. For example, one of the interviewees was a college professor who worked on political campaigns as a volunteer or as a paid consultant for a political advertising agency.

Interviews method has been used to investigate various issues related to advertising in general. For example, Drumwright and Murphy (2004) interviewed advertising agency practitioners to examine their views about the role that ethical consideration play in their job. Hairong, Wenyu, Guangping, and Nan (2008), used interviews to investigate the relationship between advertising agency structure and the creative outcome of political advertisements. The interviews analyzed for this study included questioned the practitioners' theoretical knowledge of what is an effective political advertisements and what role do advertisements play in the bigger context of the campaigning efforts in Kuwait. Similar investigation was done previously by Nyilasy and Reid (2009) but they limited their scope to the senior-level advertising agency

practitioners. On the other hand, interviews in this dissertation explore further the opinions of the clients, parliament members and campaigning managers too.

Interviewing method is also found useful for studies of trends and changes in political campaigning efforts. For example when British campaigns began to use television commercials, staged media events, and newspaper advertisements, aka American-style campaigning, in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Camille Elebash (1984) documented the transition and the challenges faced by the political parties, advertising agencies and the public. Devlin (1994) did a study using the interviewing method about political advertisements the New Hampshire primaries. New Hampshire campaigning efforts share some similarities with the Kuwaiti campaigning efforts as will be discussed below. New Hampshire's "presidential primary campaign has long had a reputation for personalized campaigning" (Devlin, 1994, p. 81), which is similar to Kuwait. Yet, New Hampshire's primaries advertising spending indicated that mediated communication is important too. This dissertation, as the studies done by Camille Elebash (1984) and Devlin (1994), is interviewing parliament members, campaign managers and advertising agency creatives to explore their views on the current use of political advertising and political campaigning effort in general.

The interviews aim to answer three broad research questions, and several questions were asked in the interviews to satisfy each research question (See Appendix 1):

RQ1: What are the important political campaigning efforts in Kuwait and how have they changed through years.

RQ2: What role do political advertisements play in political campaigns in Kuwait and what do those advertisements have in common?

RQ3: What laws and cultural considerations influence the practice of political advertisements in Kuwait?

Method

To better understand the nature of political campaigning in Kuwait and what role political advertising plays in campaigning efforts, 14 interviews were conducted with individuals from different backgrounds with various roles in campaigning. The interviewees were involved in political campaigning and advertising in one or more ways. The participants included members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, a former secretary of information for the Kuwaiti government, experienced campaign managers or communication directors, advertising agency creatives with political campaign experience, and mass communication academics.

Interviewing

The interviews took place in various locations at the requests of the interviewees, including in their place of work, their home or in public places, such as coffee shops. The interviews ranged in time from 20 minutes to one hour and 25 minutes, and took place in one of two periods. The first group was interviewed between June and August, 2011, and the second group between February and April, 2012. The second group of interviews took place during an election season after parliament was dissolved.

The general purpose of the study was explained to the interviewees when they were contacted by phone. Those who agreed to be interviewed were given a more detailed explanation of the study and asked to provide their consent to have their

interview audio recorded. was Although each person contacted agreed to participate, some were not able to do so due to travel plans or other scheduling conflicts.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher explained the goal of the study and the nature of the questions. The interviewees were told to respond to the questions as if the researcher was never exposed to political advertisements in Kuwait. The purpose was to elicit as detailed answers from the participants as possible. Participants were asked to sign the informed consent form and told that the interview would be audio recorded for research purposes and deleted upon completion of the project. In addition, the interviewees were assured their identity would not be revealed during the research process or in the final product. In addition to the audio recordings, the researcher also took extensive notes during the interviews. The names mentioned in the discussion are not the real names of the interviewees to comply with confidentiality condition.

The interviews were semi-structured in style and re conducted in Arabic. The transcription of the interviews totaled more than 41,000 words. The researcher translated into English quotes from the interviews to best reflect the intended meaning. Each participant was first asked to introduce himself and talk about his personal political campaign experiences. The interview then took on a more formal structure with the interviewer posing questions based on the interviewee's narrative and responses to questions. Three major areas were discussed in the interviews, with specific questions asked in each area. The first area concerned political campaigning in general. The questions revolved around the central campaigning channels used in Kuwait and how they have changed over the years. The second area discussed was political advertising and the role it played within the campaign messaging mix. Interviewees were also asked

about their impressions of political advertisement content in Kuwait and whether there are common issues or personality traits promoted in the advertisements. The last area of discussion was about the legal and cultural environments in Kuwait and their influence on the practice of political campaigning and political advertising in Kuwait.

Results

Political Campaigning in Kuwait

Face-to-Face Campaigning

All the interviewees agreed that political campaigning in Kuwait is dominated by personal relationships rather than ideas and ideologies. Candidates are more likely to be guaranteed votes if they meet the voters personally. These meetings are not necessarily about discussing the candidate's platform, but are considered a social "duty" the candidate performs which puts the voter in a position of wanting to return the courtesy or honor by voting for the candidate. Fahad Alhazmi, a mass communication professor at Kuwait University stated "In Kuwait, I think socially meeting the voter in Diwania's, which is the place people gather socially, is more beneficial to the candidate than TV appearances." The reliance on face-to-face meetings with the voter has been a long-time practice in political campaigning for many reasons. Among those reasons is the fact that Kuwait is divided into small electoral districts, making it more feasible for the candidate or his supporters to reach out to voters directly. In addition, due to the lack of a targeted medium for the small districts, advertising in newspapers that covered all of Kuwait was not practical except for the very wealthy candidates.

Street Ads and Sign:

Ali Albanai, a Kuwait University advertising professor, divided the campaigning efforts in Kuwait into two categories: public relations efforts and advertising efforts. Campaigns have been relying on newspaper and outdoor advertising in addition to printing their own flyers and promotional give-away items (Mohammed Albahar). Albanai notes that government restrictions on outdoor advertising and the banning of advertising on official Kuwaiti TV stations continue to encourage public relations activities like face-to-face meetings with voters and public events at candidates' campaign headquarters. The banning of outdoor advertising deprived candidates from the best audience-targeting tool in their arsenal. According to Musah Alshatti, a former campaign communication manager for several candidates who now runs one of the biggest marketing communication agencies in Kuwait:

Advertising billboards are the most effective medium because the ad stays there for a month for maximum viewing. On the other hand, you don't keep the newspaper advertisement for more than a day. In addition, outdoor advertising can target the candidate's specific district, while newspaper ads are read by everyone.

Although Kuwaiti law regulates commercial street ads, political advertisements in the streets were not regulated for many years. During the election season, the streets, turns and roundabouts were filled with signs of different sizes without regard to traffic safety. Until 2009 candidates were permitted to put such big promotional signs on the streets sides that "there were days when you almost couldn't see the road in front of you" says Abdullah Alobaid, a former communications director and campaign manager with more than 20 years of experience. According to Alobaid, "some candidates believed that whoever's signs dominated the streets would win the election." Consequently, there was

a mad rush to populate the streets with distinguishable advertisement signs. Alobaid adds that:

After the rich candidates put their signs out there, other candidates try to mimic the color and design to benefit from the confusion. But we sometimes surprise everybody by replacing all our signs we with new ones three nights before the elections and change the face of the district.

Unfortunately, the intent to advertise was not the only goal in the race to fill the streets with candidates' signs, according to Alobaid. Due to corruption in the voting process in Kuwait, some candidates use the dominance of outdoors signs as a signal they have healthy budgets to potential voters who may cast their vote in return for money.

Mass Media Old and New

In the past, the state's official television stations in Kuwait, which were the only television stations licensed to broadcast, avoided lending themselves to political campaigning. Televised political advertisements, for example, were not permitted during election cycles. Therefore, televised political advertisements did not flourish or become commonplace in Kuwaiti as they did in Western democracies. Instead, political advertisements in Kuwait were traditionally newspaper advertisements. But with the rise in use of the Internet late 1990s in Kuwait, candidates found a new media outlet with which to reach out to voters.

In the early 2000s, web pages were the most widely used electronic outlet for candidates, according to Waleed Alroumi, a young political campaigner who worked as a communication director for several campaigns. After 2005, blog activists dominated the scene. According to Alroumi, blogs held great influence after the 2005 Naheeba 5 (translation: We Want It 5) redistricting campaign. However, with the rise in use of Facebook in 2008, blogging proved less effective. Also at this time, the Kuwaiti

government permitted operation of private satellite TV channels, which began to play a role in campaigns by retransmitting candidate speeches and debates.

Social networking sites became a game changer in political communication in Kuwait. Although websites and blogs were introduced earlier, Twitter in particular became very popular among Kuwaitis. Mohammed Alasfour, a member of the Kuwaiti parliament for 15 years, notes that since he began running for office, political campaigning practices can be viewed as two phases: The first phase was prior to 2006, when candidates relied mostly on face-to-face communication and newspaper coverage of campaign events to reach voters. The second phase began after 2006, when social media emerged as a major presence in Kuwaiti political life. Alasfour explains that in most recent years:

Reaching voters electronically became dominant. Although I had a website that was operated by my assistants, it was not as effective as my Twitter account, which I rely on heavily lately. I spend a lot of time communicating my ideas directly to voters and interacting with them on a regular basis. Some candidates began paying Kuwaiti Twitter stars to tweet to their thousands of followers in an effort to reach voters (Musab Alshatti). Ali Albanai states that there was less time to prepare media campaigns and messages because of the political instability in recent years. This was a result of the government and parliament dissolving several times and not completing their terms,. However, social networks provided much faster and more effective communication tools with potential voters. “When we were using SMS through cellphone carriers, I never imagined there could be a faster or more convenient way to communicate with voters. Twitter totally changed that” (Waleed Alroumi).

Although television is typically referred to as old media, in the Kuwaiti political context, television channels actually became more influential than social networks. As

mentioned earlier, the government-run television stations in Kuwait avoided heavy involvement in elections. But after the law changed in 2004, Alrai Sattelite Channel became the first privately-owned Kuwaiti television channel broadcasting in the Middle East. Several licenses were later given to other private channels. The late introduction of those media institutions also changed the dynamics of political communication and political discourse in Kuwait.

Television interviews became one of the most effective communication tools for the candidates with charisma and the knowledge to perform well in that venue, according to Musab Alshatti. Such interviews can be categorized as either public relations activity or an advertising tool because “television channels sell you an advertising package that includes advertising spots and interview appearances” Alshatti. According to Khaleefa Aqassar, the questions in such interviews are arranged previously with the candidate or his campaign staff and the interviews are intended to make the candidate look good.

Polls and Research:

In recent years, polls have become more prominent in Kuwaiti elections as more people pay closer attention to those polls (Alhazmi). The increasing number of private television satellite channels and the license of new daily newspapers may have contributed to that because of horse-race coverage. Mahmoud Alsayed finds polls to be quite influential on the outcome of the election. According to him, many people actually change their minds to support the person who appears more likely to win. But the general attitude expressed by the majority of the interviewees was cynical towards the validity and integrity of the majority of polls. There are three or four decent and objective polls, according to Mohammed Albahar. Ali Albanai also notes that the criteria for those polls,

such as the size of the sample, margins of error and dates when polls were taken, are not known to the public.

The interviewees agreed that internal polling, which is conducted by or paid for by the campaigns themselves, is not a common practice. Only a few examples were mentioned during the interviews of campaigns that actually sought to learn about voter perceptions and priorities using generalizable data. The campaigns that did were mainly for wealthy candidates who had the capacity to spend money for that purpose (Alasfour). Polls usually go no further than trying to predict the outcome of the election, but there is little done in terms of testing the public support for certain issues or the to help shape the message of the campaigns, according to Hamad Elenzi, an experienced campaign manager who also manages an advertising agency.

Some interviewees reported deliberate unethical use of polls by some organizations. Alhazmi, who worked as a campaign manager, reports that he was approached once by a newspaper to publish favorable poll results about his candidate in return for money. He stated that he:

Received a call from a representative of a respected newspaper in Kuwait. And when I say respected, I mean one of the first tier newspapers that dominate the majority of the market in Kuwait. The person who spoke to me was the head of the parliamentary section in the newspaper who wanted to make a deal with the campaign. They offered to publish favorable pieces about my candidate and two weeks prior to election day they would publish a poll showing my candidate holding the first or second place spot in the district.

Those who conduct legitimate polls are few and the rest are biased, according to Alhazmi. He adds that the fraudulent polls target the gray area of undecided voters not affiliated with a particular political ideology and not loyal to any specific candidate.

Political Advertising

The Role of Political Ads

Political advertisements play an increasing role in political campaigns in Western democracies and in other developed democracies around the world. Although political advertisements are a significant characteristic in Kuwaiti elections seasons, the general impression expressed by the interviewees regarding political ads is that advertising is nice to have in the campaign's toolbox, it is not very important in many cases. Several responses indicated that candidates do not expect advertising to persuade voters, although this notion is quickly retracted with further elaboration. Omar Alhamad notes "it is very difficult to change people's convictions through an ad. I find reinforcement to be a main goal of advertising, and advertising only plays a subordinate role to face-to-face visits and public relations events." The main element is the personal charisma of the candidates and their political, ideological and tribal ties. Advertising is only supplemental in getting some ideas and messages across, so candidates don't spend much on it," says Albanai, a professor of advertising.

There is agreement that the main use of political newspaper advertising is to invite voters to attend events held in the candidate's campaign headquarters. Candidates want to fill their events to show that they have a good chance, according to Ahmed Alibrahim. On the other hand, some campaigns wanted more from ads, but that was rare (Ali Albanai).

In general, other than invitations to events, which is a common method of political advertising, there seem to be two general reasons to use political advertisement. The first is to introduce a new candidate to the voters. According to Alhazmi, "the use of

advertising is dependent on the position of the candidate and how familiar he is to people.” Mohammed Alasfour notes that “if you are a new candidate, you need to distinguish yourself through heavy advertising to become a familiar candidate and eventually invited to appear on television talk shows.” But after attaining the necessary level of familiarity and name recognition, candidates, and even advertising agency managers, find it difficult to justify advertisement spending except for invitations for events (Mohammed Alasfour).

Campaigns also rely heavily on advertisements when a candidate’s chances of winning are at risk. Both Alasfour and Musab Alshatti thought that advertisements become less useful when a candidate is well known. However, they noted that in cases of some candidates, such as the well-known and influential member of parliament Ahmed Al-Sadoun, , the campaigns and candidates decided to run aggressive, well-budgeted campaigns. Both Alasfour and Alshatti agreed that advertising played a significant role in his comeback of Al-Sadoun in the election results.

Political advertising is also useful for reaching segments of the population that are not usually very accessible for the candidates, such as women. Abdullah Alobaid also notes that there are limited opportunities for candidates to meet face-to-face with voters, especially given the change in the district system. According to Alobaid:

There is a segment you can’t reach in the traditional ways. They don’t go to the Diwanias, they don’t pray at the mosque, they just don’t attend social events. We used to look hard to find those to communicate with them. So if you can’t reach them that way, you hope they’ll develop a positive attitude towards your candidate by being exposed to advertisements.

Campaign Funding

Kuwaiti law does not require candidates or their campaigns to make financial disclosures. Although there is a sense among the interviewees that there is a trend of

increasing expenditure, this cannot be officially confirmed. Interviewees were asked to estimate the average spending on a political campaign by a candidate seriously seeking office in Kuwait. Responses regarding campaign spending amounts were both extremely high and low, and served to provide an estimated average.

Interviewees were also asked to provide an estimate of the average percentage of campaign funds allocated to advertising of any sort. Advertising was defined as the placement of paid content in a mass communication outlet. Street signs, pamphlets and other similar methods were excluded. The lowest estimated average of a campaign budget was 50,000 Kuwaiti Dinars (KD), or approximately \$177,620. The highest estimated average was KD 400,000, or approximately \$1.4 million. The average of the estimates was KD 160,000, or approximately \$568,400. Interviewees' lowest estimate of the percentage of campaign funds allocated to advertising was 25%. The highest estimate was 80% making the average estimate 54%. These estimates are noteworthy if accurate. There were 389 candidates running for election in 2012. Considering the number of voters in each election (422,600 in the last election) (Alqabas, 2012), spending per voter in Kuwait is considered very high compared to that in the U.S.. According to the estimates, multiplying the number of candidates running by the estimated average campaign spending divided by the number of voters equals KD 147 or approximately \$522, per vote casted. The 2012 U.S. presidential election cost \$6 billion, or approximately KD 1.7 billion (Center for Responsive Politics, 2012a). The total number of voters in this election was 125.9 million (Huffington Post, 2012). The cost of the election divided by the number of voters is \$47.5, or KD 13.5, which is less than a tenth of the estimated cost per vote in Kuwait. It is necessary to keep in mind that the average

spending per candidate used here is only estimated by the interviewees with previous campaign experience, and should not be taken as a definitive estimate but an attempt to get perspective.

Content of Advertisemen:

Mass media effects and political advertisements gained more attention after the penetration of broadcast television. Criticisms of the limited effects perspective suggest that it did not account for the revolutionary change that broadcast media made. Thus, the majority of political advertising studies examined video style and other aspects of televised political advertisements. By comparison, political advertisements in newspapers received less attention. That is different in Kuwait, as explained earlier the dominant political advertisement method is newspapers.

Political newspaper advertisements share common elements in their layouts with little variance among them. The interviewees agree that the common elements of political advertisements are the candidate's name, a portrait photo, the Kuwaiti flag, and the candidate's district number (Abdullah Alobaid, Abdullah Alobaid). Mohammed Alasfour added that if the candidate is new to the scene, he/she will likely include more ideas and goals in the ad so people will learn more about him/her. Veteran candidates assume that because people already know them and their platform, they sometimes include only their names in the ad, omitting even a photo of themselves. Alasfour noted that in one of the biggest campaigns he ran, he tried something different, i.e. following the American style of making the advertisements more heavily issue-based. However, the electorate was not ready for that and the plan backfired.

Issues in Political Ads: The issues usually discussed in advertisements in Kuwait revolve around ideals such as nationalism and religion (Majed Alturkait). Mahmoud Alsayed notes that:

From 1980 through the 90s, the constitution has been the major issue left-leaning candidates tend to include in their slogans and advertisements. On the other hand, Islamic religious issues, such as ethics and Sharia law, are the main thrust of ads candidates with religious or tribal background prefer. After Kuwait's liberation following the Iraqi invasion, unity and the constitution became the general theme until the early 2000s, when jobs, services and standards of living became the main concerns. Khaleefa Aqassar, a campaign manager, notes that housing, healthcare, education, women's social rights, unemployment and corruption are currently the reoccurring themes in political advertisements.

Candidates Images in Political Ads: When asked what character-based claims political advertisements usually make, the majority of interviewees dismissed that notion entirely. In Kuwaiti elections "the personal element is not present in advertisements," says Albanai. Ahmed Alibrahim notes that "we didn't get to a stage where we have the slogan be about one's character. We say in Kuwaiti that a self-praising man deserves a kick by the foot." But the interviewee's answers quickly change upon further discussion. When asked if the advertisements include discussion about honesty and integrity, they quickly confirm that they do and even, in some cases, offer more character-based examples. Omar Alhamad, who finished his undergraduate studies in the U.S and volunteered with U.S. Sen. John Kerry's presidential campaign, emphasized the character-based communication efforts that his campaigns utilize in Kuwait. He said that they put out pieces of personal information about the candidate through different campaign channels in the hopes of forming a favorable personal image of Kerry. It was

necessary to overcome a stereotype that people usually associated with the candidate's ideology. According to Alahmad:

The happiest day in my campaign was after my candidate suffered a negative attack from opponents. One newspaper editorial defended him and reminded people where he came from and the type of a person he is. The editorial was great for me because it had all the different pieces of information that I had put out there in different channels. That's when I knew that I did a good job.

Negative Advertisement:

Negative advertising is a significant characteristic of political advertising practiced in most Western democracies. But, for several reasons, Kuwaiti campaigns do not employ that tactic, according to all the interviewees. Hamad Elenzi notes that:

It does not exist among the candidates. No one attacks directly. But there is a lot of attacking by partisan television channels directed towards certain candidates, political movements or parties. Even newspapers play a role and it gets uglier every election cycle.

Some candidates used to unlawfully distribute pamphlets that specifically attacked other candidates by name without identifying the attacker (Abdullah Alobaid). New media makes such anonymous attacks easier to execute. Online discussion forums and blogs became tools for such attacks. More developed use of YouTube videos and Twitter are expected (Waleed Alroumi, Majed Alturkait). Negative advertisements could fall under comparative advertisement, which is banned by Kuwaiti law, said Albanai in justifying the lack of any ads of this sort in Kuwaiti elections.

Legal and Cultural Environment

Recent legislative changes have influenced the political advertising practices in Kuwait. Kuwait electorates have been divided among 25 districts since the 1980s. Recent redistricting has reduced that to only five, which resulted in fewer door-to-door campaigning activities in favor of mass communication practices. Omar Alhamad notes

that “although our candidate has to make more personal visits to the people of the district, we are required to meet face-to-face with a smaller percentage of the electorate in our district than before.” The cost of campaigns has increased since the ban of street sign advertisements and the trend toward advertising in newspapers and private television channels (Waleed Alroumi).

The message of the advertisements also changed with the changing of the district system. Mohammed Alasfour notes that “the discourse was narrow and focused on the direct needs of a specific district.” Some of the candidates or past parliament members would mention paving streets or renewing the local mosque in their platforms according to Alobaid. But, as the electoral districts grew, more general and national discourse is dominating the campaigns and political advertisements. Additionally, with the passing of the new press law, the government allowed for more daily newspapers to be issued which changed the dynamics of dependency between the media and the candidates.

The interviewees did not agree on whether or not the new newspapers helped lower the cost of the campaigns. While campaigns now have more news outlet options, Hamad Elenzi suggests that it made things more difficult. He notes that “before we needed to satisfy five newspapers to make it less likely that they attack us but now we have 15.” On the other hand, Elenzi notes that “we are less stressed about maintaining good relationships with everybody because we can’t. If someone is going to attack our candidate, we have other newspapers that will be fair to us.”

There was agreement among the interviewees about the lack of laws pertaining to political advertising in Kuwait. The laws that apply to political advertising are the same laws that pertain to commercial advertisements (Ali Albanai). There are no laws

mandating that the campaign declare the money they spend on political advertisements, nor do campaigns declare the source of their funding (Hamad Elenzi).

Discussion

Although scholars gave considerable attention to political advertising in Western democracies, this is not the case in Kuwait. Interviewees responded with skepticism about the actual influence of political advertisings in Kuwaiti elections, which may provide some explanation why so little attention was given to political ads. Those involved in political advertising are of the opinion that it's not effective. This is likely so because political advertisements in Kuwait are regulated under the same laws that regulate commercial advertisements rather than laws guaranteeing political freedom of speech.

In addition, many aspects of political advertising financing and buying in Kuwait are unregulated and not transparent. The interviewees discussed several unethical practices, such as selling advertisements to candidates bundled with prime time television appearances where the audience is unaware they are watching an infomercial, not a journalistic interview. Mention was also made of candidates being approached by newspapers to make deals where falsified favorable polls results are published to improve their chances of winning. Such practices not only threaten the integrity of the media and the candidates, but also threaten the integrity of the political process in Kuwait through false methods of political communication and advertisements. These interviews provided better understanding of political advertising in Kuwait and an important perspective that wouldn't yield itself to content analysis only.

The Development of Political Advertisements Practice

According to Dinkin (1989, p. 3):

“The main method of campaigning during the colonial period was canvassing and handshaking. Probably more so than today, people felt it important to be personally acquainted with the men for whom they voted. Having less populous election districts gave representation a greater personal meaning. Thus persons running for office sought to meet members of the electorate individually--at church, at taverns, at court, or at a militia training. Candidates in urban areas often went from door to door or buttonholed voters in the street on the way to the polls.”

Although some elections results are still influenced by face-to-face campaigning,

mediated communication is a significant part of modern campaigning efforts. The interviewees had mixed opinions about the role of public relations efforts, such as meeting the candidate in person and mediated communication efforts such as political advertisements and television appearances. Some of the interviewees emphasized what practices are most important in Kuwaiti campaigning practice and they sounded like the quote above about the colonial period campaigns.

There are indications that the practice of political advertising is developing in Kuwait. The use of polls, for example, is more present in shaping the campaign message. In addition, more campaigns are seeking assistance from communications professionals. And although character-based advertising was dismissed by most of the interviewees, some of them who are familiar with American campaigning styles indicated the deliberate use of personal characteristics in various communication channels, including advertisements that appeal to voter emotions.

Development of Political Ads in Kuwait's Media System

Studying Kuwaiti political ads offers an opportunity to examine how campaigners perform in cultures with legal limitations different than Western environments. Because

of media ownership and governmental restrictions, the use of websites and social networks in communicating with voters preceded the use of the most effective political communication in the western democracies, television advertisements. This delay in the use of TV and the ineffectiveness of newspaper ads may explain why political campaigners do not view the role of political advertisements favorably.

In addition, there might be other institutional effects caused by the lack of televised political ads. Televised political advertisements are expensive to produce. Although they might be affordable to wealthy candidates, the majority of candidates can't afford a sizable campaign on their own. It could be argued that the increase in the cost of campaigning due to the use of TV ads might restructure the way candidates campaign. While candidates currently run as individuals for the most part, the rising cost of campaigns may lead to the institution of a political parties election system, which is a more advanced democratic practice than is currently used in Kuwait.

Content of Political Ads

Political advertisements in Kuwait can't be described as attack ads, according to all the interviewees. Although campaigns and the media are accused of negativity and attacks on candidates and on the government, political advertisements have not historically been used for that purpose in Kuwait. This is mostly because there is no precedent in the region. Kuwait is the first country to hold parliamentary elections among the countries of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). Geographically, Kuwait has no close neighbors with more advanced campaigning practices to model, so worldwide practices such as negative advertisements have not yet made their way into Kuwaiti political discourse yet.

Voters in other democracies may complain about the disadvantages of negative ads, but the lack of negative political advertisements has its disadvantages, too. Negative political advertisements are more informative to voters than positive ads. In addition, issue-based attack advertisements are a useful part of political discourse that helps voters to see all sides of the issues. Finally, negative political advertisements might give what candidates say about their opponents more credibility, i.e. goading them to put their campaign money where their mouths are.

Chapter 3: Content Analysis

Content of political advertisements received much attention from political communication scholars (Kaid, 2004b). Studies of political advertisements examined the politicians' discourse in the ads and compared it to the discourse in other frequently used campaign channels. Though some might view political ads with cynicism, Joslyn (1980) found that political ads are the most informative means of communicating a campaign message to voters, second only to political debates. Yet, in light of this, the systematic examination of political advertisements in Kuwait, an Arab and populated mostly by Muslims, cannot be found in previous literature. This dissertation aims to begin filling that gap.

The second method used for this study is content analysis of political newspaper advertisements from the 2008 parliamentary election. Drawing from previous literature, the research questions posed are:

RQ1a: What are the most common functions in political discourse of acclaim, attack or defense in Kuwaiti political advertisements? How does that compare to findings in literature?

RQ1b: What are the most common policy or character topics in the political discourse of political advertisements in Kuwait?

RQ2a: What policies do candidates find most appealing to Kuwaiti voters as indicated by the candidates' political advertisements?

RQ2b: What character qualities do candidates find most appealing to Kuwaiti voters as indicated by the candidates' political advertisements?

RQ3A: What are the differences between incumbents and challengers in regard to functions, and topics used in political advertisements?

RQ3b: What are the differences between winners and losers in regard to functions, and topics used in political advertisements?

RQ4: Do candidates make changes in their use of political discourse functions and topics during the campaign?

Method

Sampling

The researcher initially intended to choose one of the largest newspapers in Kuwait from which to draw advertisement samples. However, during the interviews, several participants indicated that there are political candidates who boycott specific newspapers. It was suggested samples be taken from two newspapers for a better representation of the content of political advertisements in Kuwait. The two newspapers selected are Alwatan and Alqabas. PDF file copies of every issue of those two newspapers for the months of March, April and May 2008 were obtained. That was the period when parliament was dissolved and elections were held. In addition, PDF copies of every issue of the two newspapers for the months of December 2011 and January and February of 2012 were obtained. This is also the period when parliament was dissolved and elections held.

The 2009 election cycle lasted for 31 days. Of those days, political advertisements appeared in every issue of Alwatan newspaper and appeared 25 days in Alqabas newspaper. The 2012 Election cycle lasted for 58 days. Of those days, political

advertisements appeared in 37 days in Alwatan newspaper and appeared in 29 days in Alqabas newspaper. In 2009 election 322 pages from alwatan newspaper contained political ads, which are 14.32% of the 2248 total number of pages for that period. On the other hand, 113 pages of Alqabas newspaper contained political ads, which are 6.80% 1661 of the total number of pages for that period. In 2012 election cycle, 276 pages of Alwatan newspaper contained political ads, which are 10.83% of the 2548 total number of pages for that period. On the other hand, 112 pages from Alqabas newspaper contained political ads, which are 7.46% 1500 of the total number of pages for that period. The 400 advertisements analyzed for this study came from 319 pages from both newspapers in both election cycles. The total number of pages that political advertisements appeared in is 817 pages.

The sampling procedure consisted of identifying every page on which a political advertisement appeared between the day following parliament being dissolved and election day. For each of those days, a page was randomly assigned as the first page to start analyzing when the specific date is randomly chosen. If the date appeared again in the random selection process, the next page that contained one or more political advertisements is analyzed, and so on. If the pages of one specific date were all analyzed, that date is skipped when it appeared in the random selection process. Sampling stopped when the total of 400 randomly chosen advertisements were selected to achieve a 5% margin of error at 95% confidence level.

Within each selected page, advertisements were numbered according to their appearance order from the right side of the page to the left side of the page. When

advertisements are chosen horizontally we move vertically to the next advertisement closest to the right edge of the page and so on.

Analysis procedures

In consideration of the goals of the study, analysis procedures were adopted from the works of Benoit et al. (1998) and Benoit et al. (2003) as follows:

The first step is unitizing the messages into themes. The political discourse analysis theory does not consider a whole advertisement as a unit of analysis. Rather it breaks down every advertisement into the smallest unit of communication. These units are called themes. A theme should be able to stand alone as an expression of a coherent idea. It should also serve one of the three discourse functions of acclaiming, attacking or defending.

A theme may constitute one short phrase or be several sentences in length. Benoit et al. (1998, p. 49) followed a rule “to break each part of the passage into a separate theme whenever [they] would have considered that part to be a theme if that part appeared alone.” If several utterances appeared to express the same topic, it would be coded as one theme, even if the theme stretches through several sentences.

According to the codebook provided by Benoit (see Appendix 2):

A theme is the smallest unit of discourse capable of expressing a coherent idea (in this case, not just any idea, but acclaims, attacks, and defenses). Because discourse is enthymematic (an enthymeme is an argument which is incomplete; the assumption is that the audience will supply the missing parts) -- and because several sentences can work together to develop a single idea -- themes can vary in length from a phrase to a paragraph (several sentences).

After an initial examination of Kuwaiti political advertisements, it was decided that a unit of analysis can be smaller than a phrase. Several candidates published advertisements that included only a one or two-word slogan, their name, and district

number. It was found appropriate to treat the slogan as a unit of analysis even if it was only one word, because the candidate was making an argument about a policy or a character quality by focusing the advertisement around the slogan. For example, a candidate might use the slogan of “trustworthy” or “hope.” Such phrases were considered for this study to constitute a theme or an acclaim that the candidate is making to be viewed more favorably by voters. But typically units of analysis were full sentences like “Our unity is our path to prosper” or “we work for values.” Examples for themes about character qualities are “Someone you know and trust” or “Representing everybody with truthfulness and honesty.”

The second step is the classification of functions. Each theme identified in the first step is then classified as an acclaim, attack or defense. An acclaim theme portrays the candidate favorably. In contrast, an attack theme is a one that portrays the opponent unfavorably. A defensive theme is one that explicitly responds to a prior attack. Any theme that didn’t fit into one of these categories was excluded from the analysis.

The third step is identification of the theme topic. Each theme topic is then categorized as either policy centered or character centered. In addition, each theme is assigned a subtopic category. Policy theme subcategories are past deeds, future plans, or general goals. The difference between the latter two is that future plans include specifics. For example, cutting taxes is considered a general goal while cutting taxes by 15% is considered a specific plan. Future plans can also be considered as a means to an end, or a step towards a goal.

Character themes sub-categories are personal qualities, leadership abilities, and ideals. Personal qualities refer to intrinsic characteristics, such as compassion and

trustworthiness. Leadership abilities are qualities deemed specifically necessary to perform well in office, such as past experience or a vision for the future. Experience in the private sector is considered a personal quality while experience in the public sector is coded as leadership ability. Finally, ideals are values and principles that the candidate holds and aspires to.

The fourth step in the analysis is summarizing each utterance by key word(s) to find out which policies candidates find most attractive to Kuwaiti voters during that election. This same step is taken for personal characteristics.

The functional analysis approach uses functions as units of analysis rather than the whole advertisement. In the 400 political advertisements analyzed, the average number of functions was 2.1. There were a total of 896 functions in the sample used in the analysis.

In 2009, a total of 86 out of the 293 candidates, or 30.38%, who ran advertised. The total number of candidates who advertised in the 2012 election was 93, which is 23.9% of the 389 candidates running in that election. Of the 400 advertisements analyzed, 364 were for individual candidates and 36 sponsored by two or more candidates. Advertisements sponsored by more than one candidate will be indicated in the results and discussion sections when relevant to the analysis. Of the individual candidates who advertised, 25.5% were incumbents. Of the 364 advertisements put forth during both election cycles, 32.3% were sponsored by candidates who won. The total number of candidate who registered to run for office for district 1 is 79, districts 2 is 156, district 3 is 249, for district 4 is 292 and for district 5 is 380 for the 2012 election.

Coding and Inter-Coder Reliability

The researcher was the first coder for all the coding steps. The first step was unitizing the functions, which was done with a second coder. The coders discussed each advertisement to identify the smallest parts that could constitute a discourse function. The maximum number of functions that were found in a single advertisement was 35 and the minimum number was zero. On average, advertisements had 2.11 functions with 3.287 Std.

In their study, Benoit et al. (1998) did not use traditional coder reliability methods in their study. Instead of using outside coders, the authors coded all the materials themselves. All the content was coded at least by two of the authors and the analysis was compared. When there was disagreement among them, the coders discussed their analysis decisions until one coder was convinced that the other was correct. The analysis for this dissertation did not follow this method because there are no multiple authors (Benoit et al., 1998). Instead I used the traditional independent coding as discussed below.

The total number of advertisements analyzed for this study was 400. Of those advertisements, 100, or 25% of the sample, were chosen randomly and coded with two more coders. A random number was generated to count 100 advertisements to be coded by second coders. The second and the third coders analyzed 50 advertisements each, and their analysis was tested for intercoder reliability against the first coder's analysis. A total of 214 functions were co-coded. The variable analyzed in this step was the function, deciding it to be an acclaim, attack or defense. There was a 100 percent agreement among coders that all functions occurring in the 100 advertisement subset were acclaims.

The next step involved coding the topic of the function as either policy-centric or character-centric. Three codes were missing codes from the second coders, making the number of valid cases in this analysis 211 functions. The Cohen Kappa inter-coder reliability for this variable is .843.

The coders coded the subtopic variable which had six choices based on the topic variable. If the coder determined the topic to be policy-centric, the coder then chose 1 for past deeds, 2 for future plan, or 3 for general goal. Likewise, if the coder determined the function to be character-centric, 4 was chosen for personal quality, 5 for leadership ability or 6 for ideals. Each option was coded in the same variable with the Cohen Kappa intercoder reliability value of .765.

The second research question concerned the policies and character qualities candidates think are important to Kuwaiti voters and which are therefore put forth in their political advertisements. To code these, the researcher compiled a list of 113 potential subtopics that appeared in the advertisements. Each subtopic was given a code and the material was co-coded accordingly. The Cohen Kappa inter-coder reliability value for this variable was .856.

The smile variable also was coded as to advertisements with no picture of the candidate, and pictures with no smile, smile, a smile showing teeth, or a mix (i.e. an advertisement with more than one candidate in the advertisement where each has a different facial expression). The Cohen Kappa inter-coder reliability value for this variable is .876 for 99 advertisements. One advertisement was missing the smile code from the second coder's sheets.

Finally, some variables were coded by only one coder because they were not subjective, but directly described what was in the ad. Those variables are the newspaper the ad appeared, date the ad appeared, page number, section name, height and the width of the advertisement, district the candidate is running to represent if mentioned in the ad, gender of the candidate, and presence of any communication channel with the campaign or the candidate, such as phone, email, web page, Facebook account, Twitter account, Blackberry messenger pin, etc.

Results

RQ1a: What are the most common functions of acclaim, attack, or defense in the political discourse of Kuwaiti political advertisements? And how does it compare to findings in literature?

The results (Table 3.1) indicate that Kuwaiti political advertising is the least negative campaign discourse documented in the literature, with only one negative utterance during the 2012 elections and no negative discourse in the political advertisements during the 2009 elections. The differences in the variable distribution were significant using one-sample binominal test with $p < .000$.

Table 3.1: Political Discourse Functions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Acclaim	837	93.5	99.9	99.9
Attack	1	0.1	0.1	100
Total	838	93.6	100	
Ads with no Functions	57	6.4		

RQ2b: What are the most common topics of policy or character in political discourse in Kuwaiti political advertisements?

Topics can be either policy-centered or a character-centered and are usually referred to in the political advertisements literature as issue vs. images. Political advertisement practitioners, campaign managers, and candidates indicated in interviews that political advertising in Kuwait is mainly issue-based because of the political culture in Kuwait. The content analysis of the ads revealed otherwise, as shown in Table 3.6. The differences in the variable distribution were significant using one-sample binominal test.

Table 3.2: Political Discourse Topics

	Frequency	Percent
Policy	184	22%
Character	654	78%
Total	838	100%
Ads with no functions	57	

The functional analysis theory sub-categorizes the policy and character topics for further detailed understanding of the discourse. The three subcategories of policy topics are past deeds, future plans, and general goals. As shown in Table 3.3, 94.6% of the policy discourse concerns general futurist goals. Only 5.4% discussed past deeds with no mention of future plans. Future plans are different from general goals in providing specific measurable goals. The differences in the variable distribution were significant using one-sample binominal test with $p < .000$.

Table 3.3: Subtopics for Policy Functions

	Frequency	Percent
Past Deeds	10	5.4%
General Goals	174	94.6%
Total	184	100%

The character subtopics are personal qualities, such as leadership abilities and ideals. The relatively large percentage of personal qualities discourse is inconsistent with the expectations from the interviews (Table 3.4). The differences in the variable distribution were significant using one-sample binominal test with $p < .000$.

Table 3.4: Subtopics for Character Functions

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Personal Qualities	279	42.7%	42.7%
Leadership Abilities	145	22.2%	64.8%
Ideals	230	35.2%	100%
Total	654	100%	

RQ2a: Which policies political do candidates find most appealing to Kuwaiti voters as indicated by the candidates' political advertisements?

According to Table 3.5, approximately 40% of the political discourse in Kuwaiti political advertisements focuses on economic prosperity. The constitution and respect for the constitution was the fourth most important topic overall in the two election cycles included in the analysis.

RQ2b: What character qualities do political candidates find most appealing to Kuwaiti voters as indicated by the candidates' political advertisements?

According to the operational definition used in this study, when a candidate used phrases such as "it's your country and you should do the best for it" or "your country needs you," they were coded as a portrayal of leadership. The candidate or the campaign was found to enable and encourage voters to take action. Such discourse was the most used choice in the character functions. Second was the display of previous job experience. These were coded as personal qualities when the job is related to the private sector experiences, or as leadership abilities when the job is related to the public sector, according to the functional analysis definitions. (See Appendix 2)

Table 3.5: Topics for Policy

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Development	43	23.4	23.4
2	Economy	17	9.2	32.6
3	Corruption	13	7.1	39.7
4	Constitution	11	6	45.7
5	Stability	10	5.4	51.1
6	Fix_Country	10	5.4	56.5
7	Parliament	7	3.8	60.3
8	Education	7	3.8	64.1
9	Health	7	3.8	67.9
10	Law	6	3.3	71.2
11	Youth	5	2.7	73.9
12	Women	5	2.7	76.6
13	Housing	4	2.2	78.8
14	Family	3	1.6	80.4
15	Other	36	19.6	100
	Total	184	100	

Table 3.6: Character Qualities in Political Ads

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Enabler	94	14.4	14.37
2	Job	88	13.5	27.83
3	Nationalism	85	13	40.83
4	Degree/ Certificate	52	8	48.78
5	Religion	32	4.9	53.67
6	Unity	28	4.3	57.95
7	Optimism	17	2.6	60.55
8	Values	16	2.4	63.00
9	Justice	13	2	64.98
10	Faithful	11	1.7	66.67
11	Change	11	1.7	68.35
12	Democracy	10	1.5	69.88
13	Sincerity	10	1.5	71.41
14	Work	10	1.5	72.94
15	Independence/free will	9	1.4	74.31
16	Stability	9	1.4	75.69
17	Good selection	9	1.4	77.06
18	Everyone's-Kuwait voice /for you	9	1.4	78.44
19	Responsibility	9	1.4	79.82
20	Credibility	9	1.4	81.19
21	Other	123	18.8	100
	Total	654	100	

RQ3A: What are the differences between incumbents and challengers with regard to functions and topics used in political advertisements?

Previous literature indicates that differences can be found between incumbents and challengers in percentages of images vs. issues. Yet, that was not found to apply in Kuwait. According to our data, incumbents and challengers use the same strategies.

RQ3b: What are the differences between winners and losers with regard to functions, and topics used in political advertisements?

According to the analysis, winners and losers do not differ on the use of policy and character functions, as they do not differ in the use of negative and positive discourse in political advertisements.

RQ4: Do candidates make changes in their use of political discourse functions and topics during the campaign?

In examining the political advertising conduct in Kuwait, this research question examined the political discourse changes through the period of the election cycle. Responses to RQ3 revealed there were no differences detected between winners and loser or incumbents and challengers with regard to the use of policy and character in their political discourse. This lack of differentiation might suggest that the campaign is not interactive with the candidate's situation and that it isn't taken into account. To further examine the variance in campaign political discourse, the study looked at the change in the topics discourse through the campaign cycle. The results for the 2009 election cycle do not indicate a significant difference in the use of topics of policy and character during the campaign. On the other hand, examination of the 2012 campaign, which lasted about two weeks longer, showed a significant difference in the use of policy and character functions $\chi^2 = 29.52, df = 6, p < .000$, Nagelkerke Pseudo $r = .17$ through the weeks of the campaign. Figure 1 is a visual demonstration of the variance.

Table 3.7: Use of Topics During 2012 Campaign

	Weeks							
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	Total
Policy	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)	12 (44.4%)	8 (19%)	14 (16.7%)	4 (10.3%)	5 (12.5%)	43 (15.5%)
Character	39 (100%)	6 (100 %)	15 (55.6%)	34 (81%)	70 (83.3%)	35 (89.7%)	35 (87.5%)	234 (84.5%)
Total	39	6	27	42	84	39	40	277

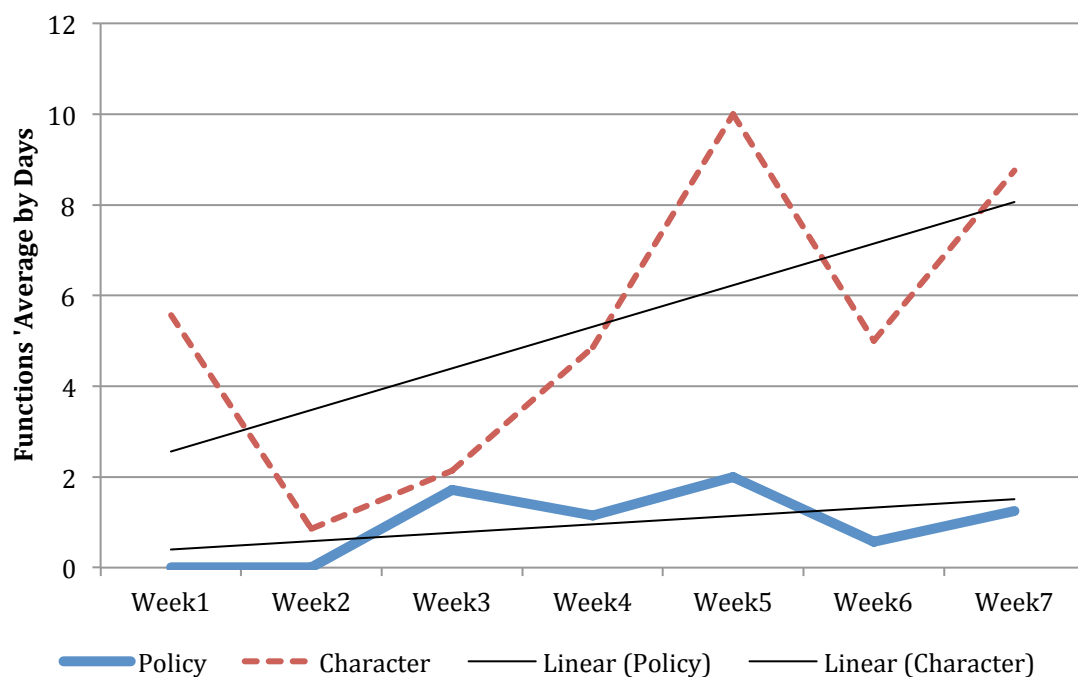


Figure 3.1: Topics Appearance in 2012 Election

The interviewees indicated that campaigns use political advertisements in Kuwait to draw audiences to events. The idea was that candidates and campaigns are less likely to advertise for image or issues. This was examined in the content analysis to give a more

accurate account for this description. Ads containing an invitation for attendance to a physical event were recorded (Table 3.8). The differences in the variable distribution were significant using one-sample binominal test with $p < .000$.

Table 3.8: Events Advertisements

	Frequency	Percent
No Event	157	39.3%
Event	243	60.8%
Total	400	100%

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusions

The goal of this study is to provide a systematic examination of one of the political discourse channels in Kuwait. Political advertising is an integral part of the political discourse in democracies around the world, and countless scholarly studies have examined it in America, Europe, and East Asia. This study aims to help bridge the gap in the literature by widening scope of to available studies to understand the practice of political advertising.

Political advertising can be an important tool for advancing democracy as it increases interest in political issues (Hofstetter et al., 1978) and helps educate the public (Kaid, 1976). This section discusses the findings from both the interviews and the analysis of political discourse in Kuwaiti advertisements, and contrasts that with the literature in political advertisements.

The exploratory interviews with candidates and practitioners of political campaigns gave a glimpse of the importance of political advertising's role in campaigning efforts in Kuwait. Several interviewees expressed their skepticism that political advertising influences voters, but the same interviewees contradicted themselves, noting that advertising was a key reason why some of the candidates won in critical tight races. There are several explanations for this view held by practitioners. For example, Kuwait used to be divided into 25 electoral districts, making it more feasible for a candidate to rely on other (sometimes unethical) methods of persuasion. Some

campaign managers thought that meeting voters in person to be a more effective and targeted method of campaigning than political advertising. On the other hand, the small districts made buying votes with money or favors easier. Yet, there was a rise in political advertisement when the districts system went from 25 districts to five, according to the interviewees. Because they had a smaller chance of meeting a significant percentage of the voters, candidates became more reliant on political advertising.

As discussed earlier, the functional analysis theory of political discourse combines the study of negative and positive political advertisements in addition to image vs. issue content. Previous studies found several advantages and disadvantages in the use of negative advertisements in political campaigns. For example, the effects of negative political advertisements can extend beyond the target of the attack and backfire on the sponsor of the ads (Ran & Ven-Hwei, 2007) or turn voters off by raising negative attitudes towards the political process in general (Thorson & Ognianova, 2000). On the other hand, an unintended advantage of negative advertisements is that sympathizers of the targeted candidate are encouraged to vote and be more politically active (Garramone & Atkin, 1990).

Negative and Positive Advertising

The systematic examination of political advertisement in Kuwait found that the use of negative political advertisement to be practically nonexistent. This is consistent with previous research that indicated that political advertisement is positive in the majority of political systems except in the U.S. and Israel (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006). Yet, political advertisements in Kuwait stand out as the most positive political advertisement discourse. The study examined 400 randomly selected advertisements from

two election cycles which had 838 functions. Of those 838 functions only one was found to be negative. In this single phrase, the candidate specified a target of his attack, which was the executive branch of government, calling it out on its passive role in dealing with an urgent internal issue.

Information from interviews conducted with practitioners of political campaigning in Kuwait indicated that an absence of negative advertising is expected in political advertisements. The structure of the elections system is one reason why negative advertisement is not used. There can be dozens or even more than 100 candidates running to win one of ten seats assigned to each elective district. Candidates in such circumstance would have no interest in exerting effort and money to demote a competitor and alienating anyone who eventually share a common electoral base. Interviewees also indicated that the lack of negative advertisements should not imply a lack of negative political discourse. To the contrary, discourse in press releases, television interviews, and campaign events contain negative discourse towards the executive branch of the government and often towards other candidates. The lack of negative advertisements stands as a unique characteristic of Kuwaiti political campaigns compared to what is found in the literature.

Image vs. Issues

The second area of study in the analysis of functional political discourse is the policy vs. character or issue vs. image dichotomy. Although the common approach in the study of issue vs. image content in political advertising to use the whole ad as a unit of analysis, this study treats every word or phrase that appears in an advertisement as a unit of analysis if it served one of the three functions: acclaim, attack or defense. Political

advertisements in the U.S. are usually accused of focusing on image rather than issue and substance. But a systematic examination of political advertisements found the opposite (Kaid, 2004b).

In terms of issues vs. images debate, practitioners of political campaigning who participated in the qualitative interviews for this study offered high praise for the content of political advertisements for being strictly issue-based. Some referred to the culture of modesty in Kuwait that prohibits someone from self-appraisal. Yet, the systematic examination of the advertisements found that those perceptions were not accurate. According to the operational definition of policy topics and character topics, the majority of discourse functions in political newspaper advertisements is character based, constituting 78% of the total functions.

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006) conclude that the more democratically developed the country is, the more likely political advertisements are to be issue-centric. Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006) compared the outcome of several studies where the lowest percentage of issues to character-based advertisements was 33%. This study found that political advertisement content in Kuwait to be less than 22% issue-based.

Some studies examined how much candidates communicate specific positions in their advertisements. For example, according to Joslyn (1980), only 20% of political ads specified candidates' positions on issues. The functional discourse analysis of this study categorizes policy functions into three categories: past deeds, future plans, and general goals. The difference between future plans and general goals is providing specific measurable goals instead of general directions. This study found that 5.40% of policy

functions in political advertisements mention past deeds, 94.60% mention general goals, no mention was made of specific measurable goals.

Previous studies indicate that political advertisements are the most informative discourse channel, second to political debate. Although political advertisements in Kuwait are expensive per vote to produce, as interviewees' estimates show, such ads do not serve Kuwaiti voters well in educating about policy matters. In addition to the low percentage of policy-centric discourse in political ads, further examination of that discourse shows that candidates mainly communicate vague hopes for the future rather than detailing specifics on how they will serve the public.

Winners, Losers, Incumbents and Challengers

In terms of negative and positive political advertisements, the data indicates that there is no variance to analyze. Of the 838 functions analyzed, all were positive in nature except for one. However, in terms of image vs. issues, previous studies found that when comparing winners and losers, advertisements of winners had a higher percentage of image advertisements in non-tight races (Latimer, 1985). Our examination of political advertisements in Kuwait did not yield the same results. There was no significant difference in the use of character and policy discourse in the advertisements of winners and losers.

Likewise, our data show no variance among incumbents and challengers when using acclaim, attack and defense. In addition, the data found no significant difference in the use of policy and character-based discourse. The lack of any meaningful difference in these comparisons may suggest that messaging in political advertisements is not adaptive to the candidate's situation. Interviewees indicated that although polls sometimes indicate

that current strategies and messages are not effective, they were reluctant to make bold moves for fear of making things worse.

Strategic communication goals such as targeting audience segments and message differentiation were not presented strongly in interviewees responses. Such advanced communication skills are usually associated with professional communication campaigning practices, of which Kuwaiti campaigns show no evidence. General cynicism towards the effectiveness of political advertisements may be why campaigns don't invest heavily in messaging. Perhaps, as one interviewee indicated, political advertisements are used the same way street signs were used before they were banned. Frequency and quantity of political ads might have more impact on campaigns than the content of the messages.

Change During Campaign

To further examine how dynamic the advertising political discourse is during the campaign, an attempt was made to determine any changes during the weeks of the campaign. Each election cycle was tested separately to determine if the use of acclaim and attack functions and the use of issue-centric and character-centric topics, actually vary.

Because the functions did not vary for both election cycles, all being acclaims but one, there was no change in its use during the period of the campaign. The topic variable issue vs. policy was also examined for changes. In the first election cycle of four weeks and two days, there was no significant change found. But in the second election cycle, which ran for six weeks and four days, there was a significant statistical difference in the use of topics of issues and character. In the first two weeks only advertisements

containing character-based functions were present (Figure1). In the third week candidates began introducing policy discourse in their political advertisements, though not during the weeks where more policy topics than character topics were included. Interviews indicated that new candidates use political advertisements to introduce themselves to voters. This observation appears to be correct, especially in the early weeks of the campaign. New candidates present themselves to voters early in the campaign in an attempt to get name recognition. And only later, the rest of the candidates join and advertise for themselves.

It is worth noting that the last two election cycles examined in this study were held in the wake of an unexpected dissolution of parliament by the Kuwait government. This is not an ideal political situation, according to the constitution, and, as indicated by the interviewees, put added pressure on that campaigns that need to get their message out quickly. Perhaps this also helps explain the lack of variance when comparing winners to losers and incumbents to challengers. The short election cycle may also explain the lack of variance in the use of discourse topics.

The search for meaningful trends in the use of the functions and the use of topics is not related to previous literature, but sparked an interest as to whether a collective pattern can be detected in the use of political advertisements in Kuwait. Assumptions based on previous literature of challengers and incumbents or winners and losers differing in their use of political advertisements were not confirmed in our sample. Thus the data provided showed a trend of the collective use of ads.

Professionalism

Modern campaign practices, sometimes referred to as the Americanization of political campaigning, are characterized by the use of sophisticated marketing research and voter- targeting techniques. For example, during election seasons, campaigns rely heavily on pollsters and marketing researchers to craft a sense of voter preferences and campaign message. The interviewees explicitly indicated, as can be understood from the content analysis of the advertisements, that Kuwait's campaigning efforts have not adapted to these techniques. Campaigns are run mostly by amateurs and volunteers, with little internal research being conducted to map out a campaign strategy. The structure of the election system is a key contributor to this situation. Kuwait being divided into 25 election districts makes it less feasible to rely on mass campaigning efforts. In addition, the lack of a formal party system constrained campaign budgets.

The lack of professionalism in Kuwait's elections is also indicated by the suspicious advertising activity reported in the interviews. It has been said that the major newspapers and private television channels include interviews in the advertising packages marketed to candidates and campaigns. In those interviews, the reporter is expected to relax his journalistic style and try to present the candidate favorably without informing the viewers that the segment is a semi-infomercial. One interviewee in the study indicated that newspapers also approach campaigns with advertising packages that include releasing false poll results that show the candidate in an a favorable position.

This research is a only a starting point in the examination of Kuwaiti political advertising in that only newspaper advertisements, the most common venue, were analyzed. The findings provided a description the utilization, management and role of

political advertisements in Kuwait. The lack of appropriate regulations certainly has affected the utilization of political advertisements. While political advertisements in the U.S. fall under the guarantee of free speech, in Kuwait they fall under commercial advertisement regulations. While this research is descriptive in nature, it can be concluded that Kuwaiti political communication in general and political advertisements in particular are in need of attention for their full potential to be realized within the Kuwaiti political system.

Future Research

An attempt was made to document the status of political campaigning in Kuwait that was not found in previous literature. Political advertising in Kuwait, an Arabic and Islamic country, shares attributes found in the literature focused on similar countries. It has also proved to have unique characteristics that were unexpected and perhaps not previously documented, such as the high level of positivity of in the political discourse. Modern political campaigns have significant influence on the distribution of power in democracies. Future research can direct more attention to the effects of advertisements and their role in the persuasion of Kuwaiti voters. Future research might also examine how paid interviews affect voters in an effort to provide scientifically proven grounds for legal intervention if needed.

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Appendix 1: Interviews Questions

Political Campaigning in Kuwait

1. Describe political campaigning communication channels, emphasizing their importance in reaching and persuading voters in Kuwait.
2. What changes have occurred in campaigning practices over the years since your involvement in politics? And what led to those changes?
3. What is the average amount you estimate are spent on political campaigns? How much usually goes toward advertising?
4. What research do candidates usually conduct to help them form their campaign messages?

Political Advertising in Kuwait

5. What roles does political advertising play in political campaigns?
6. What is the dominant content of political advertising? What do candidates usually say to their voters?
7. What issue do candidates usually address in political advertising?
8. What personal qualities do candidates usually address in political advertising?
9. Negative advertising is a significant characteristic in political advertising in Western democracies. Is this type of advertising used in Kuwaiti campaigns? And if so, why?
10. Please identify the most effective political advertisements you were exposed to. What made them effective?
11. Identify the least effective political advertisements you were exposed to. Why were they ineffective?

Cultural and Legal Environment

12. How did the districting changes affect political advertising efforts?
13. How did the changes in press law and new newspapers being permitted to publish in Kuwait affect political advertising efforts?
14. What laws currently deal with aspects of political advertising in Kuwait (purchase, content, sponsorship, funding)? What needs to be changed about them and why?
15. Which cultural factors affecting political advertising do you think are specifically unique to Kuwait?

Appendix 2: Functional Analysis of Political Discourse Codebook

The coding unit is the *theme*. There are four basic steps in coding. First, the messages must be unitized into themes. Then themes are classified into function (acclaim, attack, defend). Third, themes are classified by topic (policy, character). Next, the proper sub-form of policy (past deeds, future plans, general goal) or character (personal quality, leadership ability, ideal) is identified. It is possible that Research Questions or Hypotheses might call for addition steps (see “Other Possible Coding Decisions” at the end of this document).

1. *Unitizing Themes*. A theme is the smallest unit of discourse capable of expressing a coherent idea (in this case, not just any idea, but acclaims, attacks, and defenses). Because discourse is enthymematic (an enthymeme is an argument which is incomplete; the assumption is that the audience will supply the missing parts) -- and because several sentences can work together to develop a single idea -- themes can vary in length from a phrase to a paragraph (several sentences).

Examples of Themes

In 1996, a Clinton spot acclaimed his accomplishments:

Ten million new jobs [T1]. Family income up \$1,600 (since 1993) [T2]. President Clinton cut the deficit 60% [T3]. Signed welfare reform -- requiring work, time limits [T4]. Taxes cut for 15 million families [T5].

This passage contains five themes: T1 jobs, T2 income, T3 deficit reduction, T4 welfare reform, T5 tax cuts.

Richard Nixon’s Acceptance Address attacked the failures of the Democratic Administration in 1968:

When the strongest nation in the world can be tied down for four years in a war in Vietnam with no end in sight [T1], when the richest nation in the world can’t manage its own economy [T2], when the nation with the greatest tradition of the rule of law is plagued by unprecedented lawlessness [T3], when a nation that has been known for a century of equality of opportunity is torn by unprecedented racial violence [T4], and when the President of the United States cannot travel abroad or to any major city at home without fear of a hostile demonstration [T5]. (p. 675)

This passage contains five themes: T1 Vietnam, T2 poor economy, T3 crime, T4

racial violence, T5 demonstrations against the President.

A message which said “I will reduce taxes, create new jobs, and keep our country safe from terrorism” would be unitized into three themes, one for each topic (taxes, jobs, terrorism), even though these are all contained in a single sentence.

On the other hand, a statement which said “Jobs are the backbone of a strong economy. We cannot have economic recovery without jobs. That’s why I will increase jobs” would be coded as one theme, jobs (the first two sentences explain why jobs are important, but do not comment on a problem or a solution for jobs).

Finally, a message which said “The present administration has lost over a million jobs. If elected, I will create new jobs” would be coded as two themes: the problem of lost jobs under the current administration; my solution to create more jobs if elected.

The *context unit*, used to interpret the theme, consists of the rest of the message; the part of the message that preceded and/or followed the theme. In a debate, the context unit could be other statements from the candidate on the same topic as the theme being coded; the context unit in a debate could also include a question prompting a candidate’s statement or the statement of an opposing candidate which prompted the theme. If a television spot has more than one theme, the rest of the spot can be used to interpret the theme. Other portions of a speech (or any other message form) relevant to the theme constitute the context unit.

2. *Classifying Themes by Function: Acclaims, Attacks, Defenses.* Some themes do not function as acclaims, attacks, or defenses (themes which do not enact these functions are not coded). For example, “Vote for Smith” does not give any reason to prefer Smith over other candidates and should not be coded. “I am happy to be here to speak to you” similarly does not give a reason to prefer one candidate over another and should not be coded. Coders must decide whether a theme performs one of these functions, and, if so, identify which one.

Acclaims are themes that portray the candidate (or the candidate’s political party) in a favorable light.

In the first 1960 Nixon-Kennedy debate, Nixon acclaimed the past deeds of the Eisenhower administration, when he was Vice President:

We have built more schools in these last seven and a half years than we built in the previous seven and a half.

It is obvious that Nixon believes building more schools is a desirable accomplishment, one that “we” accomplished.

Attacks are themes that portray the opposing candidate (or that candidate’s political party) in an unfavorable light.

In the third 1960 debate, Kennedy attacked his opponent by declaring that

I don't think it's possible for Mr. Nixon to state the record in distortion of the facts with more precision than he just did.
Distorting the record is clearly considered to be an undesirable act. Kennedy adds a touch of humor, saying that Nixon distorts the record with great precision.

Defenses are themes that explicitly respond to a prior attack on the candidate (or the candidate's political party).

Later in the third debate, Nixon responded to Kennedy's accusation, denying that he had distorted the record:
Senator Kennedy has indicated on several occasions in this program tonight that I have been misstating his record and his figures. I will issue a white paper after this broadcast, quoting exactly what he said. . . and the record will show that I have been correct.
Nixon explicitly denies that he misstated the record, promising to prove this claim later

Themes that do not perform one of these functions are ignored. Mark P (acclaims [praise]), A (attack), or D (defense).

3. *Classifying Themes by Topic: Policy or Character.* These themes may address either policy or character.

Policy: Utterances that concern governmental action (past, current, or future) and problems amenable to governmental action.

George Bush touted his past deeds:
Over the past six years, eighteen million jobs were created, interest rates were cut in half. Today, inflation is down, taxes are down, and the economy is strong ("Bush Positive Economy").
Jobs, interest rates, inflation, taxes, and the economy all concern policy.

Michael Dukakis stressed his future plans:
Mike Dukakis wants to help. His college opportunities plan says that if a kid like Jimmy has the grades for college, America should find a way to send him (Dukakis, 1988, "Jimmy").
Education is also a policy topic.

In 1984, Republican Katherine Ortega's Keynote described President Reagan's general goals:
President Reagan is a candidate who can and will achieve peace without caving into Soviet threats (p. 12).
Peace without caving in is obviously a desirable state of affairs.

Character: Utterances that address characteristics, traits, abilities, or attributes of the candidates (or their parties).

In 1988 George Bush lauded his preparation for office:

“Perhaps no one in this century is better prepared to be President of the United States” than Bush (Bush, 1988, “Oath of Office”).

This does not tell what he will do (policy) but his (personal) preparation for office.

Bill Clinton listed one of his positive personal qualities in 1992:

“I care so much about people” (Clinton, 1992).

Again, he does not tell how he plans to help people (policy), but discusses his character.

In the 1988 presidential debates, Michael Dukakis proclaimed that:

I desire “a future in which there is opportunity for all of our citizens.”

“Opportunity for all” is an ideal and not a policy proposal.

Every acclaim, attack, or defense should concern either policy or character. Mark each utterance as P (policy) or C (character).

4. Classify each Policy or Character Utterance According to the Forms of Policy and Character.

4A. Classify Form of Policy Utterance. Policy utterances can address Past Deeds, Future Plans, or General Goals. Past Deeds are, of course, actions taken in the past, while future plans are proposed actions. Both PD and FP are more specific than GG.

Past Deed

Dole attacks Clinton’s record on teen-age drug abuse in 1996:

The stakes of this election? Our children. Under Clinton, cocaine and heroin use among teenagers has doubled. Why? Because Bill Clinton isn’t protecting our children from drugs. He cut the drug czar’s office 83 percent, cut 227 Drug Enforcement agents, and cut \$200 million to stop drugs at our borders. Clinton’s liberal drug policies have failed. Our children deserve better (Dole, 1996, “At Stake”)

These are listed as failures of the Clinton administration (undesirable past deeds).

This spot acclaimed Clinton’s accomplishments on welfare reform, also in 1996:

He signed tough welfare reform. Work requirements. Time limits. Force teenage mothers to stay in school or lose benefits (Clinton, 1996, “Responsibility”).

These are touted as positive accomplishments of Clinton’s first term in office.

Future Plan

Bob Dole’s Acceptance Address in 1996 explained that if elected, he will reduce taxes 15% across-the-board for every taxpayer in America” (1996, p. 7).

This is a specific future plan for tax relief, one that was attractive to many voters.

In 1996, Bill Clinton's Acceptance attacked Bob Dole's future plans, his proposed tax cut:

our opponents have put forward a very different plan, a risky \$550 billion tax scheme that will force them to ask for even bigger cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment that they passed and I vetoed last year" (p. 9)

Clearly, Clinton portrays this proposal from Dole in an unfavorable light.

General Goal

George McGovern's Acceptance Address describes general goals in 1972:

It is also the time to turn away from excessive participation overseas to rebuilding our own nation" (p. 611).

An emphasis on domestic, rather than foreign, policy is a general goal.

George Bush's 1992 Acceptance Address attacked the general goals of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Congress:

Clinton and Congress don't want to close legal loopholes and keep criminals behind bars" (p. 709).

Bush does not specify which legal loopholes would be closed by the Democrats.

Code each policy utterances for form of policy (PD, FP, GG).

4B. *Classify Form of Character Utterance.* Character utterances can address Personal Qualities (e.g., courage, compassion, honesty), Leadership Ability (e.g., experience, vision), or Ideals (e.g., values, principles).

PQ (Personal Qualities)

In 1976, Gerald Ford discussed the personal qualities important to him in his Acceptance Address:

I have demanded honesty, decency, and personal integrity from everybody in the executive branch of the Government (p. 708).

Honesty, decency, and personal integrity are elements of character (personality).

John Kennedy's Acceptance Address attacked his Republican opponent's personal qualities, explaining that the Republicans

will invoke the name of Abraham Lincoln on behalf of their candidate-- despite the fact that his [Nixon's] political career has often seemed to show charity toward none and malice for all (1960, p. 610).

A lack of charity and malice are personality traits.

LA (Leadership Ability)

George Bush's 1988 Acceptance Address touted his leadership ability when he declared that

I have held high office and done the work of democracy day by day (1988,

p. 5).

Surely this experience would serve him well if elected.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan attacked the Carter Administration's (and the Democratic Congress's) leadership abilities in his Acceptance Address when he declared that

The major issue of this campaign is the direct political, personal, and moral responsibility of the Democratic Party leadership--in the White House and in the Congress--for this unprecedented calamity which has befallen us (1980, p. 642).

Reagan indicts Carter's leadership ability.

ID (Ideals)

In 1980, Reagan's Acceptance Address declared that his party is

ready to build a new consensus with all those across the land who share the community of values embodied in these words: family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom (p. 642).

These values represent ideals toward which he strives. These passages illustrate acclaims on character grounds.

Barry Goldwater's Acceptance Address criticizes the ideals of his opponents in this passage:

Their mistaken course stems from false notions, ladies and gentlemen, of equality. Equality, rightly understood as our founding fathers understood it, leads to liberty and to the emancipation of creative differences; wrongly understood, as it has been so tragically in our time, it leads first to conformity and then to despotism (1964, p. 643).

These excerpts reveal how attacks may be advanced on character grounds.

Code each character utterance for form of character (PQ, LA, or ID).

Other Possible Coding Decisions

5. *Target of Attack*. In the primary campaign – or in a multiparty election with more than two contenders – the target of each attack can be identified. The possible target includes other candidates (for example, in the 2004 American Democratic presidential primary, Kerry could have attacked another Democrat such as Dean, Edwards, Clark, or Lieberman or Kerry could have attacked President Bush (of course, Dean, Edwards, Clark, and others could also attack another Democrat or Bush). It is also possible to attack the status quo generally (e.g., attacking the war in Iraq, which was approved by Bush and Congress, including many Democrats).

The basic idea is that it makes a difference in the primary whether Democrat Edwards attacks another Democrat, such as Kerry, or a Republican (President Bush). Similarly, in a multiparty system, it makes a difference which candidate is being attacked. For example, in the 1992 presidential debates, we argued that both Clinton and Perot attacked Bush; Bush attacked Clinton (but Perot rarely attacked Clinton) and neither Bush nor Clinton attacked Perot. This meant Bush had about twice as many attacks to

contend with as Clinton, and Perot almost never had to respond to an attack. The situation would have been different had each candidate attacked his two opponents equally.

6. *Issue Topic*. Each policy theme can be coded by issue topic, such as jobs, education, health care, terrorism, Social Security, environment, crime. Usually this analysis is guided by a public opinion poll which determines the issue categories. A correlation between the public opinion poll data and the candidates' frequency of addressing each topic can be used to answer the question of which candidate devotes the most themes to the issues that matter most to voters. If public opinion polls are available before and after the message, these data could be used to study agenda-setting.

Issues can also be divided into those "owned" by the Democratic and Republican parties (Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, & Hansen, 2003-2004: Issue Ownership theory). Democrats are considered by more (American) voters to be best able to handle problems/issues including jobs, education, environment; Republicans are considered by more voters to be best able to handle problems such as war, crime, and business.

We've also been using Peterson's (1995) theory of Functional Federalism. The U.S. government allocates different responsibilities to different levels of government (e.g., for the most part the federal level handles defense and foreign policy; local governments handle most of education). Candidates for federal office (Senate, House) should discuss national issues more, and local issues less, than candidates for local office (Governor). We have extended this to argue that candidates for president (because they seek federal office AND have a national constituency) should discuss national issues even more, and local issues even less, than candidates for U.S. Congress.

7. *Personal Qualities*. Specific personal qualities (one of the forms of character) can be coded just as specific issues can be coded. Four global dimensions of character have been identified:

Sincerity (trust, honesty, consistency, openness), Morality (decency, integrity, responsibility, fairness), Empathy (understanding, similar to voter, fights for voter, compassion), Drive (courage, work, strength, determination). See Benoit and McHale (2003, 2004).

8. *Classifying Form of Defense*. Defenses are relatively rare so we rarely classify them. However, the theory of Image Repair Discourse (<http://www.missouri.edu/~commwlb/research.html>) can be used to classify the forms of defense. When done, bolstering and corrective action are considered acclaims and attack accuser is considered an attack, so this leaves 11 potential defense forms that can be classified. (One could also classify the topic of defense as policy or character and one could classify which form of policy or character is being defended.)

9. *News Coverage of Campaigns*. We've started analyzing news coverage of campaigns. Several studies have compared the content of debates (functions, topics) to the content of news stories about those debates (Benoit & Currie, 2001); Benoit, Hansen, & Stein, 2004; Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, 2004; Reber & Benoit, 2001). We've also looked at *New York Times* coverage of presidential campaigns (Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, 2005). New

categories were added to reflect horse race coverage.

Excerpts from the First 1996 Clinton-Dole Presidential Debate: 10/6/96, Hartford, CT

CLINTON: Now there's a record: Ten and a half million more jobs, rising incomes, falling crime rates and welfare rolls, a strong America at peace. P Pol PD x 5

P Pol PD

We cut the deficit by 60 percent. Now, let's balance the budget and protect Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment. P Pol GG x 5

P Pol PD

We cut taxes for 15 million working Americans. Now let's pass the tax cuts for education and child rearing, help with medical emergencies, and buying a home. P Pol GG x 4

P Pol PD

We passed family and medical leave. Now let's expand it so more people can succeed as parents and in the work force. P Pol GG

P Char PQ

DOLE: Now, I'm a plain-speaking man and I learned long ago that your word was your bond.

P Char ID

A Char ID

I think the basic difference, I trust the people. The President trusts the government.

A Pol PD

I look at the slowest growth in the century. He inherited a growth of 4.7 4.8 percent, now it's down to about 2.4 percent.

A Pol PD

We're going to pass a million bankruptcies this year for the first time in history.

A Pol PD

We've got stagnant wages. In fact, women's wages have dropped 2.2 percent. Men's wages haven't gone up, gone down. So we have stagnation.

A Char PQ

A Pol PD

They talk about family income being up. That's not true in Connecticut, family income is down.

P Pol GG

We're going to give them tax cuts so they can spend more time with their children, maybe even take a vacation. That's what America is all about.

A Pol PD x 2

Drug use has doubled the past 44 months all across America. Cocaine is up 141 percent -- marijuana, cocaine up 166 percent.

P Pol FP

Well, the people need it. This is a family tax cut, 15% across -- let's take a family making \$30,000 a year, that's \$1261. Now, maybe some [here tonight think] that it's not a lot of money, but people watching tonight with a couple of kids, a working family, that's four or five months of day care, maybe a personal computer; it's may be three or four months of mortgage payments.

P

Pol FP

This economic package is about families but it's a six-point package. First of all, it's a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution which President Clinton defeated. A Pol PD

P Pol FP

P Pol FP

It's balancing a budget by the year 2002. It's a tax cut, cutting capital gains 50 percent. So you can go out and create more jobs and more opportunities.

P Pol FP

P Pol FP

P Pol GG

It's a state tax relief. It's a \$500 per child tax credit. It's about litigation reforms. Now that the President gets millions of dollars from the trial lawyers, he probably doesn't like this provision.

A Char PQ

A Char PQ

The administration says they support the instant check [for buying guns]. They've appropriated about \$200 million, but only spent about \$3 million to get it underway.

A Pol PD

P Pol GG

In our administration, in my administration, we will expedite. This keeps up with technology. It keeps guns out of the hands of people who should not have guns.

P Char PQ

I care about people. I have my own little foundation that's raised about \$10 million for the disabled.

A Char PQ

DOLE: Well, there he goes again, that line has been used before, I mean, exaggerating all the things that he did. He didn't do all these things.

D [Char PQ]

CLINTON: I do not for a moment think I'm entitled to all the credit for all the good things that have happened in America.

D [Char PQ]

I also personally took responsibility tonight when Senator Dole asked me about the drug problem.

Coding Rules

1. Function can be identified in two ways

A. target

1. acclaims are about self
2. attacks are about an opponent
3. defenses responses to an attack by opponent (or journalist who repeats attack)

B. tone

1. acclaims are positive
2. attacks are negative
3. defense are rejection of criticism

2. Although candidates use the present tense in speaking, there is no “present tense” in the coding system. If something has been done, it is a PD; if it is something the candidate is working on, it is FP if specific or GG if general. When candidates use the present tense (“I am creating jobs” instead of “I have created jobs” -- PD -- or “I will create jobs” -- GG) codes must decide whether it sounds like something has already been accomplished.

3. Campaigning is not policy (even though making and airing an attack ad, for example, is a action). Attacks on campaign style are coded PQ (my opponent is a nasty person). Even “My opponent ignores the issues” tells us about the candidate (Char, PQ) and nothing about any issue such as jobs, education, or health care.

4. “It has to be in the talk.” For an utterance to be considered a defense, it must allude to the attack in the discourse (otherwise, virtually any acclaim could be considered a defense). Sometimes the attack lurks in the defense: “I am not soft on crime” rejects the accusation that the candidate is soft on crime. “I am a staunch crime fighter” does not allude to an accusation and should be coded as an acclaim.

5. We unitize an utterances as a theme if it could have been an utterance on its own. So, “I created jobs, reformed welfare, and lowered taxes” is three themes (not one), because each one could have been worded as an utterance on its own: “I created jobs. I reformed welfare. I lowered taxes.”

6. The idea is to try to put your self into the state of mind of the audience. How would an “average citizen” have interpreted a message? Would a voter have caught the allusion that you noticed? For example, if the audience probably thinks Dole has a *plan* to cut taxes 15%, it is a plan not a goal even if he doesn’t always give the details. Of course, saying “I will cut taxes 15%” sounds more like a specific plan, whereas “I will cut taxes” sounds more like a general goal.

7. General goals can sound like Ideals. Goals tend to refer to policy (cut taxes, improve education, reduce the deficit, create jobs) while Ideals concern principles and values (the government should work for the people not the other way around, everyone has the right to an education, it is wrong to mortgage our children’s futures, the American dream includes the chance to find a decent job).

GG: I will reduce taxes. We will create better jobs. We can improve the quality of education.

ID: It is wrong for people to work four months of the year to pay taxes. Everyone has a right to a good paying job. Everyone has a right to a decent education.

8. Generally, government experience is LA, while private work experience is PQ. However, if the candidate says something like “I can run this country because I have run a company,” or “I can create jobs as president because I created them in the private sector,” code the theme as LA.

9. If a candidate refers vaguely to decisions without providing any specifics, that utterance is probably trying to show experience in office (LA).

I’ve had to make thousands of decisions since I’ve been President, serving in the Oval Office. And with each one of those decisions that affect the future of my country, I have learned in the process (Carter, 1980)

Code this as LA, not PD

10. PD means *accomplishments*. If a candidate says he’s (she’s) been working or fighting, but doesn’t tell that he’s (she’s) actually done something, code as GG not PD.

“I’ve been working on protecting the environment since day one” = GG

“I’ve signed three bills for clean air and water” = PD

(And “I’m fighting for you” is PQ because no issue is mentioned.)

11. If a campaign promise is specific, code it as FP; if it is general, code as GG. FP generally are *means* to an end, whereas GG are *goals* or ends.

“I want to improve health” GG

“I want prescriptions covered under Medicare” FP

“We must improve morale in the armed forces” GG

“We must pay our enlisted personnel enough to bring them above the poverty line” FP