

**ATTACKING THE ISSUE: FUNCTION AND OWNERSHIP IN 2008 PRESIDENTIAL  
CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENTS**

Nicole R. Foster Shoaf  
University of Missouri

**Abstract:** Which issues do presidential candidates prioritize in campaign advertisements, and how are these issues addressed? This study utilizes Petrocik's theory of issue ownership and functional content analysis to examine campaign advertisements from the two major party candidates for the 2008 presidential general election. Advertisements from the campaigns of Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain are analyzed for function and issue content. Results are consistent with issue ownership theory; candidates prefer to address issues owned by their party. However, the 2008 presidential advertisements reflect an unusually strong emphasis on performance issues. Evidence also suggests that the recent trend of predominately negative presidential general election ads has continued into 2008.

Keywords: Issue Ownership, campaign advertisements, 2008 presidential election

## **Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigns**

This is a study that seeks to extend issue ownership into the 2008 presidential election and use issue ownership to advance our understanding of how candidates address issues in the context of campaign advertisements. The 2008 presidential election provides a wonderful setting for analysis of campaigns as the 2008 Democratic primary race featured legitimate candidates of unprecedented diversity- African American, Latino, female. The Republican nominee was a war hero with a reputation for being ideologically moderate, and often gave the then-current G.W. Bush administration trouble. The Democratic nominee was the first major party candidate for a major party who was not a white male.

Beyond the demographics of the candidates, the 2008 election also provides an exceptional opportunity to examine presidential campaign dynamics in the absence of an incumbent or clear successor from within the administration. This makes it more difficult for the Democratic candidate to tie the Republican candidate to the outgoing administration. Moreover, 2008 was also unique in that spectators saw early on that the next president would be a sitting US Senator for the first time since JFK.

This project is designed to determine which issues presidential candidates address and which strategies are employed to approach these issues. To examine the issues and strategies implemented by the candidates, this project examines an array of presidential campaign advertisements from the 2008 presidential general election between Sen. John McCain (R) and Sen. Barack Obama (D). While substantive policy issues are not the only relevant factor in political contests, they are always present, and candidates can strategically use issues by focusing on positions or relative issue emphasis (Page, 1978). Political advertisements have become a key feature in presidential elections and serve as an expedient way to distribute information to

audiences and take advantage of voters' predispositions. Candidates spend millions of dollars each election cycle on advertisements, suggesting that the campaigns sense their importance or utility. In the 2008 presidential election approximately 40 percent of the candidates' campaign expenditures were media-related expenses; a full 20 percent of campaign expenditures were linked to broadcast media alone<sup>1</sup>. The advertisements produced by the campaigns provide the candidates themselves some control over the content, tone, and imagery of the message. This degree of control over advertisements is distinct from the rest of the campaign environment where candidates lack the ability to rein in their media coverage, and little influence over advertisements created by 527 groups.

Advertisements also allow candidates to frame and present an idea without being interrupted by an opponent or being filtered through a reporter, providing significant information to the electorate (Freedman et al, 2004). Candidates have the ability to structure the advertisement to highlight the aspects of the subject matter that shine the most flattering light on the candidate, and minimize perceptible flaws. This candidate control over content and presentation makes presidential advertisements a unique measure of presidential strategy. While candidates are quickly losing control over the larger political advertising environment, they retain control over official campaign ads (West, 2001). Candidates have negligible influence over political pundits across mediums, no authority over interest groups and political action committees running independent advertisements, and a painfully limited ability to control reporters. The lack of candidate control becomes even more obvious when we consider the explosion of new media outlets, the internet, blogs, Twitter, and the like.

## **Issue Ownership**

---

<sup>1</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, 2011

Petrocik (1996) suggests that candidates work to structure campaigns in a way that focuses the electorate's attention onto issues their party "owns" (Petrocik, 1996). In this case, ownership refers to the perception that one party is perceived to be more qualified to handle some issues than others, and that the opposing party has a similar advantage on other issues (Table 1). This sense of qualification or ownership is based upon the historical records and the constituencies of each party, producing a remarkable stability in party ownership (Petrocik, 1996). In this way, parties act as strategic constraints on political candidates. While the trend of candidate-centered campaigns molds campaign dynamics in several ways, patterns of ownership make it difficult for candidates to successfully distinguish themselves from the reputations of their parties.

Because there are a set of issues candidates are already perceived as being more competent to handle than their opponent, candidates are expected to focus on the issues they own. Focusing on issues owned by the opposition requires candidates to overcome their opponent's perceived advantage, a difficult and resource-draining endeavor most candidates seek to avoid (Petrocik, 1996).

Informed candidates will understand that resources are used more efficiently when allocated to activities designed to energize the party's base or attract independent voters, rather than on attempts to entice voters from the opposition party. Further strengthening the salience of issue ownership, most partisan voters identify issues their party owns as being more important to them than the issues owned by the opposing party (Abbe, et al 2003). Rather than trying to change the minds of voters, candidates will seek to prime voters to see the issues their party owns as more important than the issues owned by the opposing party. Priming works by altering the standards by which individuals use to make political evaluations and by priming the

electorate to see some issues as important, campaigns can influence which issues voters use to select their candidate (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Campaigns may not be able to evenly prime the electorate<sup>2</sup>, but by strategically relying on priming to encourage voters to perceive the issues owned by the candidate's own party to be more salient, candidates have the opportunity to improve their chances at electoral success without wasting precious resources.

Focusing on party-owned issues helps candidates and parties to exert control on the agenda and draw considerable support from partisans who are well-primed. Concentration on owned issues also draws support of independent voters because there is an assumption of credibility in place (Abbe, et al 2003). Independent of party, candidates gain more when they advertise on issues their party owns (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994). Taken together, this evidence suggests that candidates will be more inclined to advertise on issues their party owns.

While candidates prefer to emphasize the issues they own in the campaign, they will often need to address issues they do not own. Research suggests that candidates have two options in a presidential campaign when the electorate's list of salient issues does not align with the issues a candidate's party owns. One strategy candidates can attempt is to change the policy preferences of voters- an extraordinarily difficult task in which even failed attempts can drain resource reserves. Alternatively, candidates can seek to alter the priorities of voters (Benoit, 2007).

When candidates find that it is necessary to address issues owned by their opponent, candidates are expected to frame the issues in a way advantageous to their own strengths (Petrocik, 1996). For example, Democrats may be forced to discuss drug abuse, an issue generally owned by Republicans. The Democratic candidate would be likely to frame drug abuse as a problem needing the attention of the medical community and rehabilitation programs,

---

<sup>2</sup> See Boyle, 2004

whereas a Republican candidate would be more likely to frame drug abuse as criminal activity and talk about law enforcement and mandatory sentencing.

### **Leased Issues**

There are some issues which are not owned by either party, but which advantage different parties under different conditions. These “leased” issues are subject to performance-based distribution and may benefit the Republicans in one election, and Democrats in the next (Petrocik, 1996). Unlike the constituency basis of issue ownership that lends stability to most issues, performance issues provide an opportunity for dynamic change. General economic issues and foreign policy are generally considered to be the primary performance issues (Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, Hansen, 2004).

Candidates may also find it necessary to address performance issues during the course of a campaign and rather than trying to convince voters that they want a different policy outcome, candidates seek to structure the public debate around issues their party owns (Petrocik, 1996). When discussing a performance issue like the economy, candidates generally focus on aspects of the economy they are perceived to be strong on, or most capable of handling- Republican candidates might discuss lowering taxes for small businesses and industries to stimulate the economy and Democratic candidates may focus on job training and middle-class tax cuts. In this way, candidates attempt to influence the issue agendas of voters, thus shifting their focus of concern (Benoit, 2007).

The issue ownership theory does not suggest that issues will overpower voters’ predisposition to vote in accordance with their party identification, rather it highlights how issues impact elections in a highly partisan environment (Petrocik, 1996). Like partisan identification itself, issue ownership is partially dependent on the social groups within partisan

coalitions. Strong partisans are likely to be reinforced throughout the course of an election, whereas weak partisans and Independents will be subjected to the full pressures of campaigns. By struggling to shape the parameters of the election debate, the candidates try to either align themselves with the voters' greatest concern, or shift that concern to an issue they own.

Candidates' whose owned issues align with the issues voters are most concerned about have a distinct advantage in an election, yet if that party is facing serious performance issue problems, they can still lose. When the electorate is preoccupied with Democrat-owned issues, Democratic identifiers are reinforced, Republicans are at risk for defection, and Independents are more likely to vote for the Democrat, the same pattern occurs when Republican-owned issues are most salient (Petrocik, Benoit, & Hansen, 601). Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen (2004) found that Republican candidates have been more consistently focused on their party's owned issues than their Democratic opponents (Petrocik, Benoit, & Hansen, 2004). Moreover, research suggests that Democrats need a larger issue advantage to win than Republicans, possible due to the types of issues owned by each party and the general salience the issues hold in the electorate (Petrocik, 1996).

Benoit (2007) used Petrocik's issue ownership theory to analyze the content of presidential television ads 1952-2004. He found that winning candidates addressed issues owned by their party more frequently than losing candidates, and that the more heavily they emphasized their own issues, the more likely they were to win (Benoit, 2007). Benoit (2007) found that the candidate emphasizing their own issues the most in their television ads won 11 out of the last 14 elections. Benoit (2007) also found evidence that crossing over and using the opposing party's issues can be dangerous. Nine out of the 10 candidates who stressed the opposing party's owned issues lost (Benoit, 2007). Using the existing research as a baseline, I hypothesize that Senator

McCain and Senator Obama will address issues their party owns more frequently than issues owned by the opposing party.

Campaign advertisements frequently address two key characteristics of candidates- their personal qualities and their policy positions (Benoit, 2001). Statements regarding a candidates' integrity, morality, or personality are characterized as references to personal qualities. Mentions of candidates' plans for lowering taxes, improving education, or handling foreign policy are considered references to policy positions.

The trends on policy and character in presidential advertisements are less consistent than trends regarding ownership. From the inception of televised presidential advertisements through 1976, neither policy nor character dominated consistently; rather, the dominant topic varied across elections. Beginning in 1980, the pattern settled out and policy has been the primary focus on presidential advertisements ever since (Benoit, 1999). Benoit's (1999) results also indicate that the gap between the frequency policy and character statements has increased in recent elections increasing. These findings provide the basis for my second hypothesis: Senators McCain and Obama will address topics of policy more frequently than they address topics of character.

Benoit (1999) examined presidential television advertisements from 1952 through 1996 and used a functional content analysis to examine the function and topics of ads. He found that acclaims (credit-claiming or self-praise) were more common from 1956 through 1988; in 1992 and 1996, attacks were more common than acclaims (Benoit, 1999). Despite evidence that voters dislike negative advertisements (Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio, 2000; Lau et al, 2007), the trend outlined by Benoit (1999) suggests that televised presidential advertisements are becoming more negative over time. Therefore, I expect that the 2008 candidates will prefer to engage in more



negative advertising. This will be the basis for my third hypothesis: Senators McCain and Obama will attack more frequently than they acclaim.

In this article I seek to combine the issue ownership and functional content analysis literature and identify on what issues candidates are most likely to acclaim and which issues they are most likely to attack. The fusion of issue ownership and functional content analysis allows for an important step forward to be taken in our understanding of political advertising. Previous studies have examined which issues candidates addressed, but failed to address the strategic ways in which the issues were exploited. Alternatively, Benoit (1999) and others have scrutinized the strategies candidates adopt in presidential advertising, but omitted analysis of the specific issues addressed and how the issues are perceived in the context of presidential elections. I hypothesize that candidates will be more likely to attack their opponents on issues their party owns, and will be more likely to acclaim on issues owned by their opponent's party.

Democratic candidates enter into political contests with a significant advantage on issues like education, health care, and the environment. Because of this issue ownership advantage, they do not need to spend valuable resources convincing the electorate that they can adequately handle the issue. Instead, they can use their limited resources emphasizing their opponent's shortcomings on these issues. Candidates make strategic decisions to maximize their chances of electoral success, and issue ownership is helping to drive these strategic decisions. In this way, candidates will highlight issues owned by their own party, but they are expected to do so via attacks on opponents, rather than through credit-claiming. Thus, hypothesis 4 suggests that on issues they own, candidates McCain and Obama will attack more frequently than they acclaim.

Similarly, Republican candidates begin with advantages on deficit reduction, national defense and crime. Rather than acclaiming on these issues where they have an advantage,

candidates are expected to attack on these issues. However, when campaign conditions require that candidates address issues owned by the opposing party, the candidates are expected to acclaim on these issues. For example, Republican candidates are expected to strategically acclaim on issues owned by the Democratic Party to reduce their opponent's advantage on these issues. When Republican candidates feel pressured to discuss healthcare we should expect the candidates to emphasize their own successes and innovative ideas for improvement, rather than attacking their opponent's failings on the issue. This provides hypothesis 5: On issues their opponent owns McCain and Obama will acclaim more frequently than they attack.

### **Data and Methods**

This study employs transcripts provided by the Museum of the Moving Image and candidate websites for 137 ads for each major party candidate in the 2008 presidential general election. Many political communication studies suffer from a lack of depth, often a result of large coding units. In fact, many previous studies have looked at political advertisements as a single unit (Brader, 2005; Jackson, 2009; Martin, 2004, etc.). However, since political advertisements often contain acclaims and attacks, as well as multiple subjects, analyzing each sentence or quasi-sentence within advertisements, rather than the ads as a whole is methodologically superior (Benoit, 1999). This allows for the identification of the functions, topics, and subjects of ads with more precision, and increases sample size. This is a common method for increasing the precision of content analysis, both within political communication and comparative political studies (Dinas and Gemenis, 2010; Holian, 2004; Kaplan, et al, 2006; Pogorelis, et al, 2005, etc.).

The substantive subject of each theme was coded by ownership. I pulled the 3 primary categories from the existing literature- Democratic, Republican, and performance (Table 1).

Democrats are generally perceived to be more competent at handling issues related to the environment, education, and civil rights, while Republican candidates are assumed to be more proficient at dealing with national defense, crime, and deficit reduction. In addition to the standard performance issues of general economic and foreign policy, I added energy policy. Energy policy often falls somewhere in between environmental policy and security policy, and is discussed frequently in the 2008 presidential advertisements. Although there is not a solid basis in the existing research to justify the inclusion of energy policy in the performance category, energy policy fails to fit squarely into the Republican or Democratic owned categories. Thus, rather than excluding this popular campaign topic, it is coded as a performance issue.

[Table 1 about here]

In addition to identifying which issues the candidates chose to address in their campaign advertisements, this project utilized functional content analysis to identify how issues are addressed by the candidates. Functional content analysis applies a simple coding scheme focused on the purpose of statements. Using Benoit's (1999) functional framework, each theme was identified as an acclaim, attack, or defense, and as a policy or character statement. Candidates may wish to draw positive attention to their own past successes, future goals, qualifications, or personal qualities. This focus on a candidate's own positive characteristics or policy positions is an "acclaim". For example, in an advertisement by the McCain campaign, Governor Charlie Crist appears on screen and says, "John McCain is an American hero<sup>3</sup>". This is a positive description of Sen. McCain and would be coded as an acclaim related to his character. Similarly, in a campaign advertisement by Sen. Obama's campaign, the narrator says, "Obama: He'll make

---

<sup>3</sup> 68 McCain RP08 "Crist" 10/30/08

energy independence an urgent national priority<sup>4</sup>”. Like the previous quote, this statement is an acclaim, but this time addresses a policy position of the candidate rather than his character.

Alternatively, candidates may wish to highlight the failures, inexperience, or questionable personal traits of their opponent. This negative focus on the shortcoming of one’s opponent is an “attack”. In an advertisement jointly sponsored by the McCain campaign and the Republican National Committee, the narrator says this regarding Sen. Obama, “He’s not truthful on taxes.”<sup>5</sup> This negative reference to Sen. Obama’s honesty is coded as an attack on his character. Similarly, this quote from an Obama campaign advertisement is coded as an attack on Sen. McCain’s policy position: “And since McCain won’t require coverage for pre-existing conditions, finding a new plan could leave you hanging by a thread<sup>6</sup>”.

In very rare cases, candidates may even choose to use their limited campaign ad time to offer a defense. Here, the candidate may take the time to respond to an attack launched previously by their opponent. For the duration of the 2008 presidential campaign, the use of defenses in campaign advertisements was exceptionally rare. This may be due, in part, to the candidates’ reluctance to give their opponents’ criticisms any traction. Because of the exceptionally rare nature of defenses in campaign advertisements in the 2008 presidential election, they are not analyzed here.

Two trained individuals were used to code advertisements to ensure reliability. Kappa scores are used to approximate inter-coder reliability for both function and ownership. For function (acclaim, attack, defense), the observed Kappa between coders is 1. For ownership, the observed Kappa is .72. Both figures indicate acceptable reliability in coding.

---

<sup>4</sup> 5 Obama DP08 “National Priorities” 7/30/08

<sup>5</sup> 54 McCain/RNC RP08 “Tax Cutter” 10/3/08

<sup>6</sup> 63 Obama DP08 “Unravel” 10/9/08

Difference in proportion tests were used to test for divergences in the candidates' behavior. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between Sen. McCain's and Sen. Obama's advertising content and strategy. A two-tailed test is used, with the standard .05 threshold.

## **Results**

In line with issue ownership theory, the first hypothesis proposes that candidates will address issues their party owns more frequently than issues owned by the opposing party. The results in Figure 1 show support for hypothesis 1. Approximately 38 percent of all issues addressed in McCain's campaign advertisements are owned by the Republican Party, but only 21 percent of the issues mentioned are owned by the opposition's party- a 20-point gap. Sen. Obama's advertisements followed a similar but a more aggressive pattern. Nearly 50 percent of the issues mentioned in Sen. Obama's advertisements are owned by the Democratic Party, while only 15 percent are owned by the Republican Party. These results are statistically significant and in line with issue ownership theory and clearly indicate that candidates prefer to address issues their party owns<sup>7</sup>.

[Figure 1 about here]

These results also demonstrate the vital role played by performance issues in the 2008 presidential election. Although there is no significant difference between the candidates with regard to the proportion of focus given to performance issues, the economy, energy policy, and foreign policy together account for nearly 40 percent of both Sen. McCain's and Sen. Obama's issue mentions. Given the economic crises that shook the nation in 2008, the strong presence of the economy is not surprising. Perhaps more surprising is the incredibly limited focus foreign affairs received in this advertising sample; foreign policy was only addressed in 4 percent of Sen.

---

<sup>7</sup> See Table 2 for a summary table of results.

McCain's statements and 3 percent of Sen. Obama's. While presidents often struggle to accomplish large segments of their domestic policy agenda, they almost always have more flexibility in the foreign policy arena.

Despite a popular feeling that campaign advertisements are often too personal in nature (see Carnevale 2008; West, 2008), hypothesis 2 suggests that candidates will address topics of policy more frequently than they address topics of character. The results of this study support this intuition; approximately two-thirds of McCain's advertising statements address issues of policy (Figure 2). Sen. Obama's advertisements also lean towards policy, but his advertisements are slightly more likely to address character than Sen. McCain's, although the difference is not statistically significant.

[Figure 2 about here]

Hypothesis 3 predicts that the 2008 presidential advertisements will contain more attacks than acclaims, consistent with recent elections. The results in Table 4 clearly demonstrate that the advertisements from both campaigns are more likely to attack. While Sen. McCain only slightly leaned towards attack statements (56 percent attack), Sen. Obama was significantly more likely to use statements attacking his opponent (65 percent attack). The differences seen between Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama are statistically significant.

[Figure 3 about here]

Both Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama show a strong tendency to attack their opponent with regard to character. More than half of Sen. McCain's mentions of character attacked his opponent, and more than three-quarters of Sen. Obama's mentions of character were attacks (Figure 4). Sen. McCain's character attacks are proportional to his use of attacks on policy

issues, but the results indicate that Sen. Obama was significantly more likely to attack his opponent on character than policy ( $p < .000$ ).

[Figure 4 about here]

Hypothesis 4 suggests that candidates will be more likely to attack than acclaim on issues they own. This is expected because candidates begin with a credibility advantage on issues their party owns, creating a situation where it is less necessary to tout their superiority on these issues. Instead, candidates can focus their limited resources on further reducing the perceived competence of their opponent. The results in figures 5 and 6 clearly demonstrate support for hypothesis 4. In figure 5 we can see mentions of Republican-owned issues by Sen. McCain's advertisements were overwhelmingly negative with 73 percent of all mentions being attacks. Sen. Obama's campaign advertisements trend in the same direction, but are much less skewed (figure 6).

[Figure 5 about here]

Finally, hypothesis 5 predicts that candidates will be more likely to acclaim than attack on issues owned by their opponents. Intuitively we would expect candidates to perceive a need to bolster their credibility in the issue areas owned by their opponents. Given limited campaign resources, it is likely to be more cost efficient to increase a candidate's own qualification on an issue that it is to demolish established credibility. Again, Sen. McCain's campaign advertisements produce results in strong support of the hypothesis (figure 5), while Sen. Obama's advertisements indicate significantly weaker support (figure 6).

[Figure 6 about here]

Although not addressed by the hypotheses in this study, it is interesting to note that Senators McCain and Obama approached the discussion of the economy very differently<sup>8</sup>. McCain chose to consistently focus on his ability to have a positive impact on the economy, rather than attack Sen. Obama on the issue, with only one-third of his mentions of the economy being attacks on his opponent (figure 7). This is in sharp contrast to Sen. Obama's treatment of the economy. When Sen. Obama's advertisements addressed the economy, more than 70 percent of the statements were attacks on Sen. McCain (figure 7). This extreme contrast might be directly linked to the backgrounds of the two candidates. Sen. McCain has a long history of public service in the US Senate, while Sen. Obama is a relative newcomer. It might have simply been easier for Sen. Obama to find legitimate ground on which to attack.

[Figure 7 about here]

## **Conclusion**

My results show robust support for hypotheses 1 and 2. The results for hypothesis 1 lend additional support for the core of issue ownership theory. In the 2008 general election advertisements, both Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama showed a strong tendency to focus on issues owned by their own party. Consistent with previous findings, the results support hypothesis 2; candidates are significantly more likely to focus on policy issues than character issues. Despite how personal campaign attack advertisements appear to be, candidates spend more time addressing issues of policy.

The data analyzed here also supports the functional hypotheses. Consistent with hypothesis 3, this sample of campaign advertisements are predominately attacks. This fits in well with existing research that suggests attacks have taken over presidential advertising since 1992.

---

<sup>88</sup> Vavreck (2009) came to a similar conclusion in her analysis of the 2008 election.



The fourth hypothesis also finds support in this analysis. Both candidates tend to attack on issues their party owns, and acclaim on the opponents' issues. Although candidates share the same pattern of behavior, Sen. McCain showed a much stronger tendency to attack on Democrat-owned issues than Sen. Obama with Republican-owned issues. The general pattern may be linked to the increasing negativity in presidential advertisements, but the variation in strength among candidates calls for further investigation. Finally, hypothesis 5 finds considerable support from Sen. McCain's campaign advertisements, and more modest support from Sen. Obama's ads. While both candidates were more likely to acclaim on issues owned by their opponents, the strength of this behavior is inconsistent and warrants further investigation.

Further research should expand this analysis to include advertisements for major party candidates for all available elections. Expanding the sample in this way would allow researchers to trace patterns of issue treatments across time, as well as determine which issues candidates perceive as best suited for campaign advertisements. In addition, weighting advertisements based upon the exposure the ad spot received may further our understanding of what the electorate is being exposed to during a typical presidential campaign.

In presidential elections, discussion of Republican-owned issues is more prominent for both Republican and Democratic candidates because the issues that are often perceived as most important in presidential elections are issues owned by Republicans (Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen, 2003). State governments are involved in a significantly different set of policy areas, and many of the issues most relevant to state governments are owned by Democrats. This suggests that state parties and candidates may diverge from the patterns seen in presidential elections. Future research should extend tests of issue ownership to the state and local level to determine if the theory can provide insight beyond the oddities of presidential elections.

## **Works Cited**

- Abbe, O., Goodliffe, J., Herrnson, P., and Patterson, K. (2003). Agenda Setting in Congressional Elections: The Impact of Issues and Campaigns on Voting Behavior. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56 (4), 419-430.
- Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S. (1994). Riding the Wave and Claiming Ownership Over Issues: The Joint Effects of Advertising and News Coverage in Campaigns. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58 (3), 335-357.
- Benoit, W. (2001). The Functional Approach to Presidential Television Spots: Acclaiming, Attacking, Defending 1952-2000. *Communication Studies*, 52 (2), 109-126.

- Benoit, W. (2007). Own Party Issue Ownership Emphasis in Presidential Television Spots. *Communication Reports*, 20 (1), 42-50.
- Benoit, W. (1999). Seeing Spots: A Functional Analysis of Presidential Television Advertisements, 1952-1996. Praeger Publishing, Westport, CT.
- Boyle, Thomas P. (2004). "Presidential Priming: Incumbent and Challenger Advertising." *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 12 (4). 200-215.
- Brader, T. (2005). Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (2), 388-405.
- Carnevale, Mary Lu (2008). "McCain Camp Intensifies Personal Attacks on Obama." *The Wall Street Journal*. Accessed: 08/22/2011. < [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2008-10-07/news/0810060130\\_1\\_john-mccain-barack-obama-obama-and-john](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2008-10-07/news/0810060130_1_john-mccain-barack-obama-obama-and-john)>.
- Center for Responsive Politics (2011) "2008 Presidential Election: Presidential Expenditures." Accessed: August 22, 2011. <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/expenditures.php?cycle=2008>.
- Dinas, E. and Gemenis, K. (2010). "Measuring Parties' Ideological Positions with Manifesto Data." *Party Politics*, 16: 427-450.
- Freedman, P., Franz, M., and Goldstein, K. (2004) Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 723-741.
- Holian, D. (2004). He's Stealing My Issues! Clinton's Crime Rhetoric and the Dynamics of Issue Ownership. *Political Behavior*, 26 (2), 95-124.
- Iyengar, S. and Kinder, P. (1987). News that Matters: Television and American Opinion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Jackson, R., Mondak, J., and Huckfeldt, R. (2009). Examining the Possible Corrosive Impact of Negative Advertising on Citizens' Attitudes toward Politics. *Political Research Quarterly*, 62 (1), 55-69.
- Kaplan, N., Park, D. and Ridout, T. (2006). Dialogue in American Political Campaigns? An Examination of Issue Convergence in Candidate Television Advertising. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (3), 724-736.
- Lau, R., Sigelman, L. and Rovner, I. (2007) The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: A Meta-Analytic Reassessment. *Journal of Politics*, 69, 1176-1209.
- Martin, P. (2004). Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects: Three Reasons Why Negative Campaigns Mobilize. *Political Psychology*, 25 (4), 545-562.
- Museum of the Moving Image, Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008. <<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>>.
- Page, B. (1978). Choices and Echoes in Presidential Elections: Rational Man and Electoral Democracy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Petrocik, J. (1996). Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections with a 1980 Case Study. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40 (3), 825-850.
- Petrocik, J., Benoit, W., and Hansen, G. (2004). Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952-2000. *Political Science Quarterly*, 118 (4), 599-626.
- Pogorelis, R., Maddens, B., Swenden, W. and Fabre, E. (2005). Issue Salience in Regional and National Party Manifestos in the UK. *West European Politics*, 28, (5), 992-1014.
- Thurber, J., Nelson, C. and Dulio, D. (2000). Crowded Airwaves. Washington DC: Brookings Publishing.
- Vavreck, Lynn (2009). The Message Matters. Princeton University Press.

West, Darrell M. (2001). "Television Advertising in the Presidential Campaign." *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 6: 74-81.

West, Paul (2008). "Personal Attacks Lead in to Debate." *Baltimore Sun*. Accessed: 8/22/2011.  
[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2008-10-07/news/0810060130\\_1\\_john-mccain-barack-obama-obama-and-john](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2008-10-07/news/0810060130_1_john-mccain-barack-obama-obama-and-john).