

The Effects of Televised Candidate Advertisements in U.S. Elections

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I : Introduction

This study examines the effects of televised political advertisements in current U.S. politics and assesses their advantages and disadvantages. Televised political commercials are unique channels of communication, and they have taken on increasing importance in both primary and general elections in America. They have become institutionalized events of the American electoral process because of the widespread reach of television airwaves (Diamond and Bates, 1992; Jamieson, 1996). Political advertising can be a potent weapon for candidates, not only for publicizing their names but also for setting the campaign agenda. Indeed, modern political advertising has had systematic effects on the general strategy of campaigns, the overall styles of electoral politics, the kinds of candidates chosen, and the shifting sources of their support (Diamond and Bates, 1992).

Although politicians and media pay much attention to political advertising, several studies find that advertising appeals are sometimes secondary because a large volume of other political information by the media dilutes the effects of the spots. This tendency is most apparent in the presidential campaign in which the media provides plenty of information, and the effects of political advertisements are hard to isolate. In addition, when viewers are inundated by the lurid political messages, their "defense" against such advertisements is mobilized, and they tend to stop paying attention to them (Garramone, 1984; Robinson, 1981; Merrit, 1984, Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991; Owen, 1991). The positive effects of political advertisements are exaggerated, and these spots should not be a be-all and end-all of campaign strategy. The results of overflowing political advertising are costly campaigns, depressed voting participation, unsubstantiated attacks, mercenary political consultants, and a citizenry disconnected from its representatives. Thus, reforms, such as spending limits

and tighter format regulations, are discussed by scholars and critiques, but they are so far difficult to be enforced.

II : Development and Patterns of Televised Candidate Advertisements

The development of televised political advertisements in the U.S. politics has coincided with the growth of the television industry. The first political spots on television were broadcast during Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 presidential election, and it was soon discovered that political ads are particularly effective in positioning the candidates against their opponents. *Eisenhower Answers America* consisted of several spots in which the candidate answered questions from ordinary citizens. To current viewers, the early efforts of his campaigns seem unpolished and unappealing, especially when compared with the slick campaign ads produced recently. However, the spots contained content similar to today's advertisements. For example in 1952, discontented feelings concerning commodity price increases and national security were used effectively to attack the Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson (Diamond and Bates, 1992).

By 1960, it was clear to all that television could "make or break" a candidate because of the sharply increased popularity of television. After the success of one of the most telegenic politicians, John F. Kennedy, more than one third of the national candidates' budgets was devoted to televised advertising. Also, this period was the beginning of an era where the image and ability to manipulate the image of a candidate became the center of the campaign strategy (Jamieson, 1996).

In the 1964 presidential campaign, a very elaborate and controversial television spot, known as the "Daisy," became famous overnight. It starts with a little girl peacefully plucking the petals from a daisy, counting from one to nine. Just as she reaches the number ten, the spot shows a close-up of her eye, and airs a booming voice. The voice now counts down: "Ten, nine, eight, seven . . ." At the end of the countdown, the flash of an atomic explosion reflects in the little girl's eye. Then, we hear president Johnson's voice saying: "These are the stakes—to make a world in which all God's children can live or to go into the dark. We must love each other or we must die." A voice-over then states: "Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home" (Diamond and Bates, 1992).

The spot attempted to attack the hawkish Republican contender, Barry Goldwater, implying that Goldwater might lead America into a nuclear war with Soviet Union. Arguably, the "Daisy" is the most negative political advertisement in American political history.

By the 1970s, television ads amounted to nearly two thirds of an average political campaign budget (Jamieson, 1996). One of the leading US political communication scholars, Thomas Patterson, notes that in current political campaigns, political spots play fundamental roles in elections, and political parties, which had functioned as the vital institutions to select and nominate candidates, began to take a backseat (Patterson, 1994). According to Patterson, the 1976 presidential election was the watershed of media politics, and it was the beginning of the "mass media election" (Patterson, 1980). During the 1976 presidential campaign, nationally unknown candidate Jimmy Carter effectively employed political advertising, received the Democratic party nomination, and finally rose to the presidency. Patterson noted: "the media's attention helps to turn a Carter boom let into a bandwagon" (Patterson, 1994, 41). Since then, the media has become the center of political recruitments (Kerbel, 1995).

In the recent "mass media elections," candidate advertising strategies have similar patterns. Diamonds and Bates have identified four phases that correspond to candidate advertising strategies in presidential elections. Early in a campaign, candidates are concerned with developing recognition and creating a positive image, so they run "identification" spots. These ads are followed by an "argument" spot in which the candidates attempt to convey what they stand for to the public. Candidates can use these commercials for developing emotional appeals or for conveying their policy positions. Next, "attack" spots highlight the opponents' weak points. In the fourth and final phase, candidates conclude their campaign advertising appeals by presenting their visions of the fate of the nation. In recent presidential elections, the candidates' advertising strategies, while employing different tactics, essentially conformed to these general patterns (Diamond and Bates, 1992).

Also, Hagstrom and Guslkind have analyzed 375 political commercials from 14 Senate and gubernatorial races. They conclude that there were three types of political ads: those that "acquaint voters with the candidate's personality and background," those that "extol his or her record or plans",

and those that "tear apart the opponent" (Hagstrom and Guslkind, 1986). These types of ads correspond with the campaign advertising phases identified by Diamond and Bates.

One great difference between the 1950-70 political advertisements and current spots is that the number of negative ads has increased. Traditionally, challengers' campaigns were often underfinanced; therefore, challengers turned to negative ads in order to crack the incumbents' public image. Also, negative ads tended to be aired near the end of the political race to attack the opponent at the final stage. However, after the 1980s, Montague Kern finds two different tendencies concerning the use of negative ads. First, not only challengers but also incumbents now frequently use negative ads. Secondly, negative attacks often have begun early to damage the opponents from the outset of a campaign. Thus, she concludes that modern negative political advertising has become a regular American practice (Kern, 1989).

During these phases, political candidates often employ comparative political advertising strategies as a means of communicating negative information about a candidate's opponent to voters while avoiding the stigma attached to purely negative "attack" advertising (Pfau et al., 1990; Salmore and Salmore, 1989). Direct comparative advertising addresses different beliefs of candidates and differentiates sponsor's views rather than attacking opponents' misstatements, financial or marital scandals, broken promises. The sponsoring candidate claims superiority over the targeted candidate, typically based on both candidates' issue positions, experience, or voting records. In this way, candidates achieve the goal of highlighting their cleaner images by contrasting it with those of opponents who resort to direct negative attacks. Thus, in contrast to ordinary negative advertising, direct comparative advertising conveys a less malicious impression to voters in its format and appearance (Pinkleton, 1997; Hill, 1989; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991; Merritt, 1984).

In the 1996 campaign, political analysts and observers find that a new type of political advertisement came to the public attention. Journalist Joe Klein claims that the Clinton 1996 campaign takes negative ads to a new artistic level, making them seem positive. He points out an ad attacking on Bob Dole which is sandwiched between heart-warming spots of president Clinton with dying children and calls it "the Empathic Negatives."

According to Klein, American people are "sick to death of bickering, hyperbole and partisanship," and they want "comity, inspiration and specifics." In this way, Clinton's "human interest" attack ads fit American citizens' sentiments and thus, Dole's media advisor had a difficult task responding to the ads (Klein, 1996).

III : The Effects of Political Advertising

The greatest advantage of the televised political commercial is the power to command a large audience. This observation is supported by the fact that daily television viewing time has been shown to be the primary determinant of individuals noticing political ads (Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, and Sheinkopf, 1993). With this widespread accessibility, political spots can potentially provide the electorate with vital information about issues and perhaps exercise influences on individual voting preference. Political commercials are especially an important source of information for voters who have only moderate or very low interest in these elections. These voters have lower levels of knowledge about candidates and issues, and they tend to take fewer cues from political parties than those who are highly interested and involved in the campaign. Highly interested voters tend to seek out campaign information from multiple media sources, while those less concerned about politics use more limited resources. Thus, ads have a greater potential for influencing the politically uninvolved and uninterested (Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, and Sheinkopf, 1993).

Lawrence Bowen finds that the impact of political advertising is different according to the time when a voter decides their choices. Those who decide during the campaign typically make use of available information from a variety of sources. Political advertising is only one of them, and its impact is limited. However, "late deciders," who come to a decision during the waning hours of the campaign are more likely to be affected by the candidates' last-minute advertising blitz. According to Bowen, in an exit-poll survey of 414 Seattle area voters for the 1992 US senatorial race, 102 voters were identified as "late deciders." They were more likely to mention that political advertising helped them decide. In addition, "late deciders" were better able to recall and identify specific political ads than those who decided either early or during the campaign (Bowen, 1994).

According to the study of Patterson and McClure, voters learn more issue information from television spots than from television news in presidential races. They conducted research during the 1972 election and concluded that the effect of spots exceeded that of television news (Patterson and McClure, 1976). A more recent research by Zhao and Chaffee, however, shows several contradicting results. In their research, the effects of advertisements are less than those of news, and sometimes they are insignificant. But in a hotly contested ideological race, the effect of campaign ads is more significant than that of TV news (Zhao and Chaffee, 1995).

Advertising may be more effective in low-level and local campaigns, which are considered low-visibility races. Rothschild and Ray tested the effectiveness of political advertising for high- and low-involvement races in an experimental setting and discovered that the effectiveness of political advertising is strongest in low-information, low-involvement campaigns such as primary elections, nonpartisan races, and races for state positions. These elections are not likely to be covered so much by news media, and voters can be heavily influenced by the information from the spots (Rothschild and Ray, 1974).

Another important factor of political spots is their news-worthiness. Campaign ads have become so important that they are now a common subject of news coverage in and of themselves. Therefore, campaign consultants consider political spots cost-effective because press coverage devoted to ads makes the ads more influential. Roger Ailes, George H Bush's communication director and the producer of the controversial "Willie Horton" spot, elucidates:

There is so much focus now by journalists on the ads that it is considered a major event of the campaign when you have a press conference to unveil your latest ads. . . I have known of campaigns that have made ads and only bought one spot but released it at major press conferences to get it into the news. . . It's become a fairly common tactic.(Rothenberg, 1990)

During the four phases described by Diamonds and Bates, especially from the second to the last, candidates set the public agenda. This is sometimes determined by the opposing candidates campaigning against each other.

Research shows that the effect of a political advertisement is most striking when both campaigns devote a considerable portion of their paid advertising to the same issue. In addition, there is considerable evidence that candidates shape voters' perceptions most effectively when their campaigns resonate with partisan stereotypes such as civil rights, environmental issues for Democrats, and defense issues for Republicans (Ansolabehere, Behr, Iyengar, 1993).

However, findings from several cases researched by political scientists suggest that the positive effects of advertising in presidential elections are unclear in some cases. First, during presidential campaigns, the media generate a large volume of political information quite apart from that provided in candidate spots. Voters are highly aware of candidates and often form concrete attitudes about them fairly early in the campaign. Secondly, individuals' defenses are mobilized against candidates' obvious attempts to win their votes (Patterson and McClure, 1976).

Even during the 1988 Bush campaign, which was believed as one of the most negative-spots-ridden campaigns in history, the effect of campaign advertising was not apparent. Immediately after the Republican convention, the Bush campaign began an unrelenting attack on Dukakis' positions on major issues, his record as governor of Massachusetts, and his commitment to basic American values. The Bush team's "Boston Harbor,"² and "Willie Horton" spots are considered among the greatest examples of negative tactics because part of their content was intentionally made erroneous to make Dukakis appear incompetent in political management. Nonetheless, the Dukakis campaign failed to respond directly to these charges for over a month. The Dukakis' campaign team was very disorganized and Dukakis himself often did not listen to advice from his campaign team (Jamieson, 1996). Although the negative attack effect has been reported and studied, the fall of Dukakis' ratings, however, started before the Bush team launched their negative attacks. A CBS News / New York Times opinion poll showed that 56% of the voters perceived Bush as attacking Dukakis throughout the campaign, whereas Dukakis was perceived as attacking Bush by 49% of the voters (Johnson-Cartee, Copeland, 1991).

While political ads may reach the uninterested and uninvolved, there is no guarantee that those voters will be receptive to spots. In fact, there is some

evidence that the continual barrage of ads during presidential elections alienates voters. Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, and Sheinkopf claim that people avoid candidate ads because they interfere with primetime programming. Moderate exposure to ads about candidates seems to produce more favorable ratings than high exposure, although there is some evidence to the contrary (Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, and Sheinkopf, 1993). According to Diana Owen, a number of respondents expressed annoyance at the frequency in which ads were run during the 1984 and 1988 election campaigns. Most of these respondents reported that they ignored ads when they appeared on television (Owen, 1991). Therefore, exposure to television spots is not necessarily related to effective political advertising.

Another disadvantage of political ads is the above-mentioned negativity. In recent years, consultants and campaign managers have been increasingly critical of attack advertisements that attempt to discredit a candidates' opponent rather than promote the sponsoring candidate directly. However, except for "adwatches," there is no established system that checks to determine whether or not candidates are falsely attacking their opponents. The right to advertising is protected by the constitutional guarantees of free speech: Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934 clearly forbids censorship of political broadcasts. In other words, the ads cannot be banned, no matter how untruthful they might be. In addition, the Supreme Court has said that because the television media is not allowed to censor political advertising, stations are given absolute protection from libel suits as the result of the dissemination of political advertising (*Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union v. WDAY, Inc., 1959*). This "non-censorship provision" is applied as long as the political advertising is sponsored by a legally qualified candidate. A number of states have campaign falsity statutes to forbid the declaration of false statements about a candidate for public office; however, the opportunities to enforce such laws are very limited because of their conflict with the "freedom of speech" (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 1991). Many campaigns have taken advantage of these facts. As a result, opposition candidates are left with the classic remedy of retaliatory free speech. Politicians may deliberately lie and create innuendoes about the opponents' political records or personal qualifications for office.

Furthermore, a number of studies conclude that negative political

advertising is a high-risk approach because it may damage the users' popularity. Political advertising researchers have identified three possible self-damaging effects as the result of using negative political advertising: the boomerang, the victim syndrome, and the double impairment effect. A boomerang or backlash effect is the unintended consequence of a negative ad, which results in more negative feelings toward the sponsor, rather than toward the target (Garramone, 1984). When a negative ad is perceived as being unfair or unjustified, then the ad may in fact create a phenomenon known as the "victim syndrome." The unfair negative ad may generate more positive feelings toward the target (Robinson, 1981). Based on her survey in southern California, Sharyne Merrit concludes that negative political advertising evokes a negative affect towards both the targeted opponent and the sponsor. According to her, this double impairment effect is conspicuous when used by a minority party candidate (Merrit, 1984).

On the other hand, Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar find that negative ads are more memorable than positive messages, based on their focus group research (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1993). Circumstances sometimes force candidates to highlight negative messages about their opponents. Thus, the negativity of political advertising has been intensified in recent years. In fact, not a few professional politicians and their advisors take for granted the efficacy of negative political advertisement. Moreover, some campaign strategists justify attack advertising because it captures more media attention toward the candidates, even if the coverage of the media is negative. This justification is closely related to the media culture of the United States. Kenneth Khachigan, a senior staff member of the Reagan-Bush campaign explains:

We, in politics, are competing with a real issue in journalism: the fact that the coverage, especially in the electronic media, has been on the sensational. . . . When candidates try to say something that is thoughtful or substantive, they don't get any coverage. Local television and newspapers are dealing with the more exciting elements of the world. . . . We have to get the media's attention. Negative coverage is better than no coverage. (Stein, 1996)

However, while negative advertising increases the likelihood of voter

manipulation, Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, and Valentino suggest that it contributes to widespread voter disenchantment with the entire political process. According to their study, negative political advertisements cause as many as five percent of voters to discard their intentions to vote, which is significant, since many races are decided by small margins. In addition, voters exposed to negative ads develop a cynical attitude regarding the responsiveness of politicians and the election process in general. For example, negative advertising was a significant deterrent to voting in the 1990 California gubernatorial election, in both of the state's 1992 US Senate races, and in the 1993 mayoral election in Los Angeles (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, and Valentino, 1994). Attack ads can be used to weaken the opponent's image, but they may reduce voter turnout as well.

Moreover, there is some evidence that passing negative or misleading ads through news coverage gains weight and credence, and further, actually amplifies the emotional effects. For the viewer, these ads are no longer partisan ads but now the products of the unbiased and legitimate news system itself. In order to correct misinformation in political spots, some news organizations (e.g. Fact Checks and Ad Watches) take voluntary actions to investigate ads and publicly disclose or condemn those that are false and misleading. Michael Pfau and Allan Louden investigated the effectiveness of three distinct television news "adwatch" formats in deflecting the influence of targeted political attack ads during the 1992 North Carolina gubernatorial campaign. The results clearly show that the use of adwatch reduces the effect of attack ads. It produces a boomerang effect, and this effect is most pronounced among female viewers. The results also suggest that adwatch programs do not affect viewer rating of news shows (Pfau and Louden, 1994).

However, political advertisements repeatedly access and appeal to viewers with impressionistic directness whereas analytic messages of "adwatches" fail to grab attention and sometimes end up as rebroadcasting the subject advertisements in critique format. According to Diamond, Holkeboer, and Sandberg, exposure to an adwatch is tantamount to exposure to the ad's message, and so the result is usually the opposite of what was intended by the adwatchers (Diamond, Holkeboer, and Sandberg, 1996). In addition, an adwatch program is usually done by the arduous work of a handful of staff;

thus, it can not compete with the speed and volume of bold political messages. Also, sponsors of political spots freely utilize self-serving data with tricks of hidden disclaimers and subtle nuances making investigations matters of subjectivity (West, 1993; Kerbel, 1995; Diamond, Holkeboer, and Sandberg, 1996; Ansolabeher and Iyengar, 1995).

IV : Political Advertisements and Democracy

Some scholars, such as Darell West, contend that political advertising can undermine democracy. According to West, elections are the lifeblood of democratic political system because in the elections ordinary people cast their vote to determine who leads the country. Hence, the high quality of information is supposed to be provided during the election process. This information allows voters to hold leaders accountable. West claims that current political spots, nonetheless, sometimes manipulate the voters, and sounds, colors, and visual presentations on television are used in deceptive ways. For example, Pat Buchanan's ad consultants in 1992 occasionally speeded up or slowed down Bush's physical movements to create unfavorable impressions of the president. According to West, campaign advertisements are "slicing and dicing the electorate" in favor of a candidate's strategy (West, 1993, p.225). The public obviously feels the need to improve the quality of contents that spots deliver. According to the Yankelovich Monitor survey in 1996, 63 percent of respondents wanted the government to regulate truth in advertising (Crain, 1996).

Thomas Patterson also expresses a concern that the current "mass media election" is a danger to democracy. Patterson points out that media simultaneously serve both as presenters of candidates' advertisements and as the watch dogs for the candidates. In this situation, the role of the media cannot be held accountable for political campaigns. Patterson states : "they [the media] do not promote a consistent point of view, and they are not adequately accountable to the public" (Patterson, 1995, p. 333). Patterson proposes that a party must be returned as a political utility, which is more accountable than the media. Congressional scholar Gary Jacobson also expresses his concerns about the media-centered politics in Congress. Jacobson notes that recent congressional elections have become candidate-centered because of the weak power of the party leaders and frequent uses of

political advertisements. According to Jacobson, media campaigns make incumbents' seats unsecured, and candidates have to pay excessive attention to constituencies' opinions (Jacobson, 1992).

Political advertisements also pose problems for inequality of political resources among candidates. If political advertising is effective, candidates with greater resources buy more time and have an impressive advantage. Several countries such as Great Britain, Austria, and Japan strictly prohibit political advertising by any individual candidate because of the inequality of the candidates' financial resources (Faucheux, 1995). However, in the United States, the ban on advertising will not easily be realized because the Supreme Court ruled that federal limits on a candidate's expenditures for advertising violated the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

Concentration on paid advertisements orients politicians towards money. Expenditures for campaign advertising have grown exponentially over the past four decades from 1960 to 2000. Since 1984, more than half of the budgets for presidential campaigns have been spent on media advertising, with television receiving the bulk of the expenditures (Wayne, et al, 1995). In the 2000 presidential election, \$70.8 million was devoted to advertising out of the \$135 million expenditure of the major party candidates (Wayne, 2004, 245).

In addition to the ads expenditure, media "consulting" fees are soaring. Nowadays, no serious campaign is without its consultant, often referred to as "handlers." A handler may command as much as 15 % of the value of his candidate's advertising costs as well as a fee between twenty and seventy five thousand dollars for producing and placing the advertisements (Diamond and Bates, 1992; Jamieson, 1996). Because of the high mainly-media costs, candidates are forced to devote a lot of their time fundraising to the detriment of developing policy proposals, speaking with the people, and traveling around to understand voters' economic and social needs.

Moreover, political spots may lead us to doubt the integrity of politicians. This view comes from the very nature of advertising---the packaging of future political leaders as if they were consumer products, such as soap or cereal. From the start, strategies of televised campaign advertising are compared to the "marketing" of consumer products. Political advertising, however, might be much worse than product advertising. To begin with,

political marketing is a short-term proposition, in which consumers (voters) are subjected to brief bursts of communication that vanish without a trace after election day. As we previously examined, political ads are also different because regulation over their content is virtually nonexistent, as opposed to other consumer products, which are held to strict standard of accuracy. In addition, modern political spots tend to contain sophisticated and dramatic images, which merge political issues and feelings. Thus, the real arguments behind the spots become obscure. Similarly, conservative columnist George Will employs a view that current political campaigning causes public mistrust of government. Will uniquely suggests that this situation augments the trend toward conservatism because negative 30-second TV spots fit the conservative message of distrust of big government much better than liberalism (Will, 1994).

Campaign spots also accelerate the decline of major parties. The advent of "mass media elections" coincided with several presidential campaign reforms by major parties, which also unexpectedly weakened political recruitments of the parties. Most noted reform was conducted by the McGovern-Fraser Commission in Democratic party after the 1972 defeat in the presidential election. One of the main goals of the McGovern-Fraser reform was opening up the nomination process which was then mostly closed and controlled by party elites. However, since the first implementation of the reform in 1976, the influence of the partisan elites in political recruitment has been significantly reduced (Polsby, 1983). The decline of party control was caused by dramatic proliferation of the primary system in which voters choose a party's nominees for public office. When the McGovern-Fraser reform was implemented, many states were forced to switch to the primary system since the guideline of the reform was difficult to adopt in the caucus system (Polsby and Wildalsky, 1996; Lengle 1981). In addition, primaries became popularized through extensive and favorable media coverage, prompting other states to switch to the primary system. After the 1980s, primaries were more and more scheduled earlier ("front-loading") because many states attempted to be involved in the initial and influential stage of the nominating process (Lengle, 1981; Mayer and Busch, 2004). Early primaries, such as the New Hampshire primary, are not only the critical beginning of the drama, but far more than the chronological

beginning. According to Kathleen Kendall, these early contests are "definitional beginnings," whose character constructions will dominate the rest of the campaign (Kendall, 1996, 30). This "front-loading" symptom forces the candidates longer and much costly advertisement-oriented campaigns. For example, Clinton and Bush in the 1992 election spent \$1.7 million in political spots to beat intra-party opponents in the New Hampshire primary, which is the first and one of the most influential primaries in the nation. This figure amounted to 25% of prenomination advertising spending, although New Hampshire is only 1% of the delegates to the major parties' conventions (Kendall, 1996; Lichter, Amundson, and Noyes, 1993). Also, during the presidential primary season, candidates more and more strongly attack their intra-party contenders inundating them with political campaign advertisements. This intra-party media mudsliding was much less frequent before the proliferations of primaries because the party had more control over the nominating process (Patterson, 1994).

In order to reform the current problems of political advertising, three possible reforms have been discussed. These three reform plans are not easy to be implemented because they all require drastic changes in regulations. And they have been much argued by politicians, scholars, and political pundits during this ten years.

The first possible reform is that candidates must appear in a more substantial portion of the ad, such as 50 to 70% in the 30 seconds' commercials. It is generally true that the candidates hardly appear in the most negative and manipulative advertising (e.g. "Daisy" and "Willie Horton"). Candidates seem to avoid appearing in these spots because they are vulnerable to the side effects of the negative advertising (Mickiewicz and Firestone, 1992). Needless to say, these negative ads tend to be more image-oriented. Since candidates must appear in a higher percentage of the ads in the reformed format, candidates have to be more responsible for their opinion in the spots. Further, every advertisement must carry a clearer statement with bigger caption letters that the candidate is responsible for the ads. In this way, the candidates are less likely disavow his / her opinion later in the reformed spots. The reformed format limits the manipulative advertising and the content of the ad becomes more issue-oriented. Moreover, the ads will be more "down to earth," and they are less likely to

contain dramatic vignettes.

The second reform is to set a voluntary spending limit on TV campaign advertising. The purpose of setting the voluntary limitation is equalizing the candidates' advantages. If a candidate rejects and exceeds the spending limit, then his / her opponent receives matching public funds. The candidates eligible to require public funds would need to satisfy certain qualifications such as accessibility of ballots. The voluntary spending limit preserves as much as possible the candidates' freedom to conduct the campaign of their choice without contradicting the Supreme Court ruling about a candidate's expenditures for advertising.

The third reform plan is the allocation of "free airtime" to political candidates. This free airtime reform commands broadcasters to offer ad space to candidates. In recent presidential elections, some television news media actually attempted to provide several free presentations in their news shows. The effects of these trials were possibly tiny. Thus, some pundits, such as Ron Faucheux, the publisher of *Campaign & Elections*, claim that the free time ad is almost meaningless because of the size of audience (Faucheux, 1996). However, if the free air time becomes institutionalized in the election process, these presentations will generate more viewers and eventually contribute to issue-oriented discussions among citizens. In recent years, free airtime was one of the hottest issues in the campaign finance reform. For example, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) introduced a bill in the 105th Congress, which requires broadcasters to provide 30 minutes of free airtime during primetime and other discounts to presidential candidates who volunteer to abide by spending limits.

V : Conclusion

Political advertising on television plays an important role both in selling candidates' name-recognition and in shaping agenda. To viewers, these spots have created an important means of judging candidates and be their policies. People who would permit paid political advertising argue that it allows a candidate direct access to the electorate. It can be a measure of the freedom of the election itself and of the right of candidates to get their messages to the voters with few or no restrictions on setting and format. However, the final impact of such advertising is hard to measure. In a campaign so much

is happening simultaneously—speeches, debates, media coverage, advertising—that it is almost impossible to assess the impact of a single isolated phenomenon like TV advertisement. Television advertising is not the be-all and end-all of a political campaign. It is only one component—and a terribly expensive one— of an election contest. In the United States, television advertising accounts for the largest single expenditure in a political campaign. It increases the need and time to raise money. Moreover, negative political advertising may well generate a boomerang effect that will hurt the popularity of the candidate. Thus, while advertisements on television have some basic benefits, their positive impact on a candidate's campaign is very much exaggerated. Under the current circumstances, attempt to ban advertising is unrealistic because it provides direct appeals to the voters, and a paid political advertisement has already become a regular and vital part of the campaign for office in the United States. However, some kinds of reform, such as a limitation on spending and tighter format regulations, have been seriously discussed in political circles.

Notes

- 1 The spot by Bush supporters features a mug shot of Willie Horton, an African American prisoner who had raped a Caucasian woman while he was on a weekend furlough from Massachusetts jail. It obviously aimed at those who were fearful of crime, of African Americans, and of liberals and their "do-good" social policies, labeling Dukakis, the Democratic candidate and the governor of Massachusetts, as "soft-on crime liberal" (Sabato 1993).
- 2 The spot attacks Dukakis's environmental policy in Massachusetts, pointing out that Boston Harbor has been polluted unlike Dukakis's promises. It shows the Harbor in "vibrant color on oil-like water floats an accumulation of waste" (Jamieson 1996, 470).

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(日本語要約)

アメリカの選挙スポットの効果と問題点

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アメリカでは、テレビにおける選挙CM（選挙スポット）は大統領選挙だけでなく、連邦議員選挙や州知事選挙など、さまざまなレベルの選挙で広く利用されており、選挙活動の中心に選挙スポットが位置している。選挙スポットは、候補者にとって、自分の名前を一般に広く知らしめるだけでなく、自分の政策をPRし、相手候補と争う道具となる。そのため、選挙スポットが選挙戦の争点を設定する機能がある。さらに、政治に関する知識が少ない層にとって、選挙スポットが果たす啓蒙機能も少なくない。

しかし、有権者は選挙期間中に他の多くの情報の影響の中にさらされているため、選挙スポットが直接、視聴者の投票行動に与える効果については、限定されている。この傾向は特に大統領選で顕著である。また、自己正当化が目立つ「売らんかな」的な選挙スポットの内容に対して、「防衛機能」が働くため、視聴者は選挙スポットそのものに注目しなくなるという現象もある。相手候補を中傷する「ネガティブ・スポット」については、選挙や政治そのものに対する嫌悪感を生んでしまうため、投票率の低下につながるという研究もある。さらに、政党に頼らない候補者個人の選挙戦術として、選挙スポットを放映するケースが多いため、「選挙運動の個人化」を生んでいる。これは国民の政党離れとも無関係ではない。

このように、選挙スポットは広く利用されているに関わらず、様々な問題点を抱えている。現在、アメリカ国内でも様々な改革案が出されているが、実行に移すのはいずれも難しいのが現状である。