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AUTHOR Atkin, Charles K.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The effects of spot television commercials during political campaigns were studied. A telephone survey was conducted to see what effect such commercials had on voters in the 1970 Wisconsin and Colorado gubernatorial elections. The results showed that this approach is the most efficient way of reaching a vast majority of the electorate, although it may not reach voters who are politically uninterested or who are light television viewers. Frequency of presentation has a direct impact on frequency of viewer exposure but has no effect on the viewer's level of attention. Quality of presentation (whether the ads are perceived as informative, interesting, honest, entertaining, and professionally produced) combines with audience characteristics (personal interest, partisan preferences, and need for knowledge and enjoyment) to determine attention and information gain. These content factors then work indirectly to influence voting decisions or produce shifts in voting intentions. Based on this analysis, the most effective advertising strategy would be one that allocates campaign funds away from a high frequency of exposure into a more modest number of ads which contain substantive information content and are presented in an interesting and entertaining manner. (Author/JK)

ELECTRONIC POLITICS AND THE VOTER:

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

by

Charles K. Atkin
University of Wisconsin

Lawrence Bowen
University of Wisconsin

Oguz B. Nayman
Colorado State University

Kenneth G. Sheinkopf
University of Wisconsin

School of Journalism and Mass Communication

University of Wisconsin

Madison, Wisconsin 53706

International Communication Association

Phoenix, Arizona

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The implications of the increasingly pervasive use of television for political campaigning have been debated from many quarters in recent years. Some observers perceive a new "image politics" that poses a threat to the basic processes of a representative democracy requiring a well informed electorate. Others take a beneficient view, finding positive value in a more extensive opportunity afforded voters for candidate comparison and evaluation. While a number of election analysts and advertising practitioners argue that televised appeals have a major impact on the mass public, many social scientists feel that few voters are actually affected.

The present investigation grew out of a number of specific questions concerning voter reactions to political advertising, the predominant form of electronic politics over the past decade. This study attempts to assess how voters use political advertisements presented on television, focusing on exposure and attention patterns, information acquisition, and voting intentions.

A review of the literature reveals little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of mass advertising as a vote-getting strategy. While a steady procession of books and articles dealing with campaign advertising have appeared in the past few years, most authors present either a description of current techniques for "creating images" and "packaging candidates," or a delineation of social, ethical, and political ills resulting from such practices.[1]

The literature does contain a variety of untested assumptions concerning the interface between exposure to persuasive political communications and

behavioral tendencies. Collectively, these observations and expert opinions could reasonably be termed the "conventional wisdom" of political advertising and its presumed effects on the voter.

The Development of Conventional Wisdom[2]

Although paid political announcements were first broadcast on radio in the 1936 Landon campaign, candidates primarily relied on personal appearances, radio speeches, and local party worker activities during the first half of this century. It was not until the early 1950's that political advertising became a significant factor on the American political scene, with the emergence of television as a new and improved medium for reaching the mass public.

During the first Eisenhower campaign, advertising strategist Rosser Reeves introduced the concept of electorate "penetration" and offered the rationale and method for achieving this goal: the TV spot ad. He claimed that the spot ad was ideally suited to the needs of political aspirants because it provided low cost-per-thousand exposure potential, could reach uncommitted and opposite-party voters, and enabled the candidate to concentrate on closely contested districts.

In terms of reach and cost, the TV spot was without equal; however, nagging doubts remained about its effectiveness. Reeves argued that unlike the customary long-winded speeches that the audience could tune out, the spot ad was brief, to the point, and difficult to avoid. He even conducted some fragmentary research to support his approach. His evidence indicated that less than 10% of a sample of voters recalled content from Stevenson or MacArthur speeches, but more than 90% could recall content of Eisenhower spot announcements.[3]

Since that time, there has been an impressive increase in use (and the costs) of political advertising, particularly on television. In the 1968

campaign, office-seekers spent more than 80 million dollars in the broadcast media.[4] This was almost double the 1964 expenditures, even with adjustments for the rising cost of broadcast time.

About 200 organizations actively service the communications needs of political candidates;[5] many of these are advertising agencies wearing their political hats. As such, it is not surprising that many political ads bear a striking resemblance to commercial advertising.

The established advertising agency not only offers the candidate a full line of communication services but also provides research and media expertise that can deliver needed target audiences for the candidate's spot ads. Many candidates also employ campaign media specialists to produce their commercials.

Given the rapid growth and staggering costs of electronic electioneering, it is surprising that little empirical evidence on the impact of political advertising is publicly available. If current practices reflect the substance of the conventional wisdom, the following tenets seem to emerge regarding the effectiveness of political advertising: the brief spot ads reach a much larger proportion of the voters than longer programs; the greater the frequency of a candidate's ads, the greater the level of exposure and attention among voters; frequency of presentation is more important than quality of presentation; the candidate's personality image and symbolic appeals take precedence over specific issue positions; and getting the candidate's name across is only a few steps removed from having his ballot lever pulled.

These tenets are not based solely on common sense or random experience, but can be traced to certain generalizations from behavioral research -- venerable principles that have also attained a sort of conventional wisdom status among social scientists. Three key propositions are consistent with

the basic political advertising strategy: exposure to most types of information is highly selective; level of message availability is an important determinant of audience reception patterns; and concept familiarity leads to positive evaluation. Another basic principle places a limit on the ultimate effectiveness of advertising in converting voters: the electorate tends to vote along the lines of party identification.

The selective exposure principle predicts that individuals tend to be exposed to those messages that are expected to support their attitudinal predispositions. Although the proposition can be extended to include exposure that is consistent with personal interests in the message topic, most research has dealt with the attitudinal case.

Many field studies have demonstrated de facto selectivity, and social scientists have usually inferred a motivated seeking of supportive information and avoidance of discrepant material. Much of this research has focused on exposure to political communications. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948) reported that two-thirds of all Erie County respondents with consistent partisan preferences were primarily exposed to radio speeches, news stories, and editorial comment about their preferred presidential candidate, while one-fifth were exposed more frequently to material about the opposing candidate. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) also found a moderate level of selectivity in their investigation of Elmira, New York, voters. Schramm and Carter (1959) discovered that Republican respondents were twice as likely as Democrats to view the pre-election telethon of Republican Senator Knowland. Evidence of active selective exposure has also been found in controlled information seeking studies reported by Stempel (1961), Freedman and Sears (1963), and Atkin (1969).

Several experimental and field studies by Atkin (1969, 1970) indicate that selectivity seems to be manifested primarily in a strong relative preference for supportive over discrepant messages along ranking measures; when absolute levels of exposure are considered, a large majority of the subjects also want to read or see opposition material (typically afterwards). A re-examination of some of the previously mentioned selective exposure data shows that most voters are actually exposed to a substantial amount of material about both candidates, even though they may attend to a relatively greater amount of supportive information or initially select consonant messages in a forced-choice situation. These findings cast doubt on the validity of the standard corollary of the selective exposure proposition, which predicts an active avoidance of discrepant information.

This re-assessment of the nature of exposure patterns suggests a shift in focus from the current preoccupation with partisan predispositions to a consideration of general "political interest", since this latter factor is a prime determinant of absolute exposure levels (Lazarsfeld et al., Berelson et al., and Converse, 1962). Political scientists have generally found a strong association between degree of partisanship and campaign interest (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960); the "undecided" and "leaning" voters tend to be least interested, and are thus less likely to be in the audience for most types of political communications. In fact, commanding the attention of this highly attractive segment of the electorate probably poses the most difficult problem for media advisors.

Therefore, an effective campaign strategy must rely on communication techniques that can overcome the initial exposure barriers created by low interest and partisan selectivity. Practitioners recognize that spot advertising provides one solution to this problem, because even the most

apathetic or ideologically defensive viewer is unlikely to escape the pervasive assault of an intensive TV advertising campaign. The disinterested voter, who might ignore campaign speeches or election eve telethons, can be reached in the course of his routine viewing activities; the voter who identifies with the opposition party may find it difficult to avoid seeing the intrusive spot ad. According to Mendelsohn and Crespi (1970):

> "...viewers who normally would be reluctant to engage in sustained eye-to-eye contact with a candidate over lengthy periods of expository exposure did not appear to mind the miniscule perceptual brushes with candidates that were afford by 'commercials' in which their candidacies were featured"[6]

Another mass communications generalization that is consistent with spot advertising practices deals with the impact of sheer availability on audience exposure. After assessing the literature, Berelson and Steiner (1964) observed that "...people tend to see and hear communications to the degree to which they are readily available." Atkin (1969) showed that relative availability had a substantial effect on exposure choices of subjects who had no strong feelings on a particular political or social issue. This intuitively appealing concept of a hypodermic exposure effect seems especially applicable to the case of television advertising, where selectivity processes that might lead to deviations from an availability baseline are less operative.

The exact nature of the availability--exposure relationship is crucial to political advertising specialists, because this is one of the few communicator-controlled variables. Within the limits of campaign funds, media advisors can purchase television time and increase the frequency of spot ad presentation to a saturation level. However, there are several questions that can be raised about the value of such an approach: Are all voters eventually exposed to the candidate through his TV ads? Is there a point of diminishing returns when the vast majority of the electorate is reached? Are viewers really paying attention to the ads they encounter?

This last question leads to consideration of the issue of "quantity of presentation" vs. "quality of presentation." While media strategists recognize the importance of qualitative content attributes of spot advertising, they apportion most of the campaign budget into time buying rather than talent and production expenditures. The emphasis on display frequency as the best method for achieving access to the voters probably reflects an implicit acceptance of the availability notion, along with a realization of the inherent limitations of the brief spot announcement as a vehicle for dissemination of substantive messages. After all, the major strength of the spot ad is its reach, not its capacity for delivering a reasoned appeal, which can be more adequately handled through other forms of campaigning. Nevertheless, a voter's conscious decision to pay close attention to a political advertisement depends on his perception that the ad will provide him with relevant information and entertainment. To the extent that the TV ad meets his needs, the voter is more likely to tune in and process the material that is presented (see Atkin, 1971).

Once the task of gaining an attentive audience is accomplished, the political persuaders face the second hurdle of informing and influencing the electorate. At this level, a related issue can be raised concerning the relative effectiveness of "frequency of exposure" vs. "quality of exposure." Those who emphasize the importance of repetitive and frequent presentation of spot announcements hope to achieve greater name recognition and voter familiarity with the candidate's appearance, personality, style, experience, and campaign promises. This approach has a scientific basis in the psychological experimentation showing that mere exposure leads to positive evaluation change (Zajonc, 1968). Little is known about the cognitive or affective responses of voters to qualitative variations of political advertising, however.

Of course, the ultimate criterion of political advertising effectiveness is actual voting behavior. Although spot ads may lead to greater knowledge about the candidate and a more favorable attitude toward him, there is no guarantee that the viewer will go to the polls and vote for him. One line of current social science thinking suggests that there may be a distinct lack of correspondence between favorable evaluative change and correlative behavior changes (Hovland, 1959; Campbell, 1963; Festinger, 1964; Krugman, 1965; and Chaffee and Linder, 1969).

In addition, political scientists have found that party identification is the primary determinant of voting behavior, while short term factors such as candidate and issue orientations play a secondary role. Indeed, the impact of mass communications is usually assessed in relation to the partisanship variable; the classification of effects as reinforcement, activation, and conversion is based on the voter's initial party preference.

Thus, the importance of stable partisan inclinations tends to define the priorities of the advertising campaign. The strategist must first get the supporters out to vote, then stimulate the latent support of those who are affiliated rather weakly with either party, and finally try to entice occasional defectors from the opposition party. While many social scientists feel that interpersonal communication is the most potent mode of influence for these three types of voters, television advertising may also contribute by strengthening the intentions of the party faithful and swaying the decisions of the uncommitted voters. The nature and magnitude of this contribution is difficult to determine, however.

This paper attempts to provide evidence relating to some of these uncertainties by assessing the dimensions of voter reactions to the advertising campaigns of four gubernatorial candidates. It is an exploratory study,

seeking to examine the validity of various ideas and assumptions of campaign observers, practitioners, and researchers.

METHOD

Study Background: Two coordinated research teams investigated the 1970 campaigns for governor in Wisconsin and Colorado, two states with contrasting election situations. First, voters in the two districts surveyed have differing social and political backgrounds: residents of the northeastern Colorado area are primarily small town and rural Republicans, while those in the Madison area tend to be Democratic, well educated, and predominantly urban.

Pre-election news reports indicated that the Wisconsin gubernatorial race was a "toss-up" between Republican Lt. Governor Jack Olson and former Lt. Governor Patrick Lucey, the Democratic candidate. The Colorado campaign was generally considered to be an easy re-election bid for Governor John Love against Democratic challenger Mark Hogan.

In Wisconsin, the Republican candidate outspent his rival by a 2-to-1 margin in the local media, with most of Olson's budget devoted to television spots (Table 1). On the other hand, the Democratic candidate relied most heavily on television advertising in Colorado. In both states, the television campaigns were handled by local advertising agencies; however, the Wisconsin candidates also employed the services of two well-known media advisory teams, headed by Roger Ailes and Charles Guggenheim.

The spot advertising campaigns started in late September and reached a peak in the final days preceding the election, when the interviews were conducted. Analysis of the Wisconsin time buying patterns indicates an emphasis on 60-second spots in the early weeks of the campaign, followed by a shift to shorter announcements during the final three weeks of the campaign.

The Lucey strategists placed about two-fifths of their spots between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m., while less than one-fourth of the Olson ads appeared during the prime-time hours. The three Madison television stations carried more than twice as many Olson ads as Lucey ads, with Republicans spending $25,600 and Democrats spending $15,600 for TV time in the local market (Table 1).

The Wisconsin candidates also offered differing styles of television advertising. Olson's spot ads pictured him as the "man for the job," frequently showing him walking through the Statehouse, talking with the current governor, but rarely speaking directly to the issues. By contrast, Lucey's ads focused on his specific concerns for the farmer, high taxes, state budgetary problems, etc., in which he expressed his positions in conversation with typical voters.

The Wisconsin election was won by Democratic candidate Lucey, and Republican incumbant Love was re-elected in Colorado.

Procedure: Telephone surveys were conducted with 516 respondents living in the two counties surrounding the University of Wisconsin and Colorado State University.

In Wisconsin, 350 names were randomly drawn from the greater Madison telephone directory, and this sample list was supplemented by another 80 voters who had participated in a separate election survey conducted during the first week of October. Forty student interviewers recruited from an introductory Advertising course were trained in the use and administration of the telephone questionnaire.

The interview schedule contained items designed to measure exposure, attention, and avoidance patterns; self-reported learning of candidate qualifications and issue positions; candidate familiarity, affect, and preference; reactions to each candidate's ads and political advertising in

general; interest in the campaign and intention to turnout on Election Day; self-reported impact of spot ads on voting intention and decision-making; and standard demographic items. (The specific questions are presented in appropriate tables at end of paper).

A total of 262 usable schedules were completed during the telephone interviewing period between 4 p.m. November 1 and 10 p.m. November 2, the final two days preceding the election. (This included 56 second wave interviews with respondents who had answered several items about exposure, attention, and candidate preference about one month earlier). All other interviews were conducted with the first eligible voter available at each household, and the average interview took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

A similar procedure was employed in the Colorado study, as student interviewers conducted 270 interviews with a sample of voters drawn from registration lists in the Ft. Collins area. (Twenty interviews were discontinued when respondents indicated that they had not seen TV ads for either candidate, so that a total of 250 schedules were actually completed). The identical schedule was used with this sample, except for a change in the question dealing with learning about candidate positions on local issues.

FINDINGS

Despite the saturation advertising campaigns in each state, only 76% of the Wisconsin sample and 74% of the original Colorado sample specifically recalled seeing television advertising for both gubernatorial candidates. Table 2 shows that the amount of daily television viewing time was the primary determinant of noticing political ads; among light viewers who watched TV less than one hour per day, almost half did not see ads for Lucey and Olson.

Interest in the election was also an important factor, as voters who were "not too interested" in the campaign had a lower rate of noticing political ads than the more interested respondents. There is also some evidence of predispositional selectivity in the Colorado sample, where voters who saw only one candidate's ads tended to notice the advertising of the man they favored.

For those voters who did view political ads, patterns of message reception will be examined at two levels: frequency of exposure, and closeness of attention.

Exposure to Political Ads: The relative frequency of raw exposure was measured by asking respondents to report whether they had watched a greater number of ads for the Republican or Democratic candidate (voters who saw only one candidate's ads were excluded from this analysis).

Reflecting the preponderance of Olson advertisements aired during the campaign, about half of the Wisconsin voters viewed more Olson ads and only one-tenth saw more Lucey ads; the others said they were exposed to the same number of ads for each man. Relative exposure was primarily determined by this availability factor, as illustrated by the upper set of data in Table 5-A. Respondents were asked to indicate which candidate they thought was advertising most frequently on television, and 46% said Olson had been doing the most advertising, 14% reported that Lucey ads appeared most often, and the rest thought the two candidates were advertising about the same amount. The correlation between perceived availability and relative exposure frequency was +.40. This relationship was even stronger in Colorado (Table 5-B), where the correlation was +.59.

Relative availability seems to overcome partisan selectivity at this level of message reception: Lucey supporters tended to watch a greater number of Olson ads and Love supporters tended to see a greater number of the more available Hogan ads (Table 6). The rates of selective exposure for these two groups were only 22% and 35%, well below the chance rate of 50% (see Table 6 for description of selective exposure calculations).

Attention to Political Ads: A far different pattern emerges when the quality of exposure is considered. Respondents who had noticed a candidate's ads were asked whether they gave close attention, some attention, or little attention to the ads. Averaging across the four sets of ads, only 28% of the exposed voters paid close attention; 42% paid some attention, and 29% paid little attention to the ads. The Wisconsin and Colorado samples tended to pay about the same amount of attention to each candidate's advertisements on television.

Table 3 presents the correlations between level of attention and a number of predictor variables, and Table 4 shows partial correlations with the strongest correlates. These data indicate that relative availability was unrelated to attention level on the average, with a slight negative relationship in Wisconsin and a slight positive relationship in Colorado. While relative availability had an average correlation of +.50 with relative exposure, it was correlated +.02 with relative attention. Voters who estimated that Olson ads were more highly available actually gave slightly more attention to Lucey ads, even though most reported seeing more Olson ads (Table 5-A). Thus, the purchase of large amounts of broadcast time apparently secures a clear advantage in quantity of exposure, but it does not assure attentiveness among those who are exposed.

Items measuring respondent evaluations of each candidate's advertisements along an entertaining-boring dimension provided the only qualitative reactions to political ads. Across the four sets of ads, the average correlation between entertainment value and attention level was +.25; the strength of this relationship held up well when seven other variables were controlled (partial r=+.18). The entertainment quality of TV spots seemed to play a greater role in attracting the attention of uncommitted voters (r=+.35) than partisans (r=+.20).

Most voters in Colorado and Wisconsin were unimpressed with the entertainment value of either candidate's advertising; averaging across the four sets of ads, 22% of the exposed respondents gave ratings of "generally entertaining," 24% thought they were "generally boring," and the rest said "in between." A comparison of each respondent's evaluations in Wisconsin shows that 37 voters gave Olson ads a relatively higher entertainment rating, and 54 rated Lucey ads higher (the others gave each candidate the same rating, as did almost all of the Colorado voters). Within these two groups, 18 of 20 people paying greater attention to one candidate watched the more entertaining ads more closely.

Many respondent characteristics were moderately associated with level of attention: information-seeking mode (average r=+.29), interest in campaign (+.28), strength of partisan preference (+.24), liklihood of voting on election day (+.20), direction of partisan preference (+.19), frequency of discussing the campaign (+.19), years of education (+.15), and level of occupation (+.13). Age and sex were unrelated to attention. The variables that remained the strongest correlates when the others were controlled were information-seeking mode, candidate preference, and campaign interest (Table 4).

Information seeking mode, the strongest predictor of attention, is a measure of why the voter watches political advertising. When offered three possible reasons for viewing, half of the respondents in each state said they watched spot ads because they "can't avoid" them, one-third watched for "information," and the others watched for both "information and enjoyment." An average of 35% of those giving informational reasons for viewing political ads paid close attention to the TV spots, compared to only 16% among the "can't avoid" group. Thus, the need for information or enjoyment appears to be a critical determinant of message reception; voters who feel little need for watching these spot ads but can't escape their pervasive presence tend to pay less attention.

The relationship between candidate preference and relative attention provides limited support for the traditional partisan selectivity proposition. Table 7 shows that selective attention was clearly demonstrated among a minority of the partisans in both Wisconsin and Colorado. Among the 74 voters who paid more attention to one candidate's ads than the other candidate's ads, the selective attention rate was 84%. However, a majority of all voters gave equal attention to each set of ads (either little, some, or close attention). The finding that almost three-fourths of the exposed partisans were equally attentive to both consonant and discrepant advertisements is consistent with the re-interpretation of the selectivity evidence discussed earlier.

Also in line with this re-interpretation is the data indicating the important contribution of campaign interest to attention patterns. Among those expressing low or moderate interest in the current campaign, an average of only 13% paid close attention; 40% of the highly interested voters attended closely. It seems that the media strategists were not able to fully overcome the low interest barrier with the spot ad approach.

Relative Avoidance: Voters who reported noticing a candidate's TV advertising were also asked if they had "made an effort to avoid watching" any of his advertising. Less than 5% of Colorado sample avoided each candidate's ads, but in Wisconsin 16% avoided Olson advertising and 15% avoided the ads of Lucey. These cases of message avoidance can be examined to isolate some of the determinants of absolute and relative avoidance.

The main corollary of the selective exposure hypothesis predicts that people will avoid material that is discrepant with their position on an issue, while attending supportive messages. The relative attention findings showed that most voters did not give lesser attention to opposition material, although a few were intensively selective in attendance. The same pattern is evident for relative avoidance. Only 23 of the 154 partisan respondents avoided one candidate and not the other. Table 8 shows a strong selective avoidance rate of 87% among this minority, but it must be kept in mind that the vast majority of the partisans made no attempt to avoid being exposed to counterattitudinal information.

The data indicate that most avoiders were motivated less by partisan considerations than a lack of interest in the political campaign or an antagonism toward political ads in general. Among those who were not too interested in the election, 27% avoided Olson and Lucey ads, almost double the avoidance rate for more interested voters. There was 28% avoidance among those who said that political ads bothered them when they interrupted TV viewing; in addition, 24% of the respondents who felt there were "too many" political advertisements were avoiders. Similarly, 37% of those who rated each man's commercials as generally boring made an effort to avoid, compared to only 3% of the voters who found the ads entertaining. Selective avoidance seemed to be comparatively less important, as just 22% of the partisan

respondents avoided the opposing candidate's advertising, while 11% avoided their own candidate's ads.

When crude correlational analyses were calculated to assess the comparative contributions of these variables, avoidance was found to be most strongly associated with entertainment value (r=-.35, partial r=-.31) and the index of antagonism toward political ads (r=+.34, partial r=+.26). The correlations between avoidance and campaign interest and candidate preference became negligible when other variables were controlled.

However, the most salient finding involves the comparative rarity of avoidance; this is probably due to the intrusive nature of the television medium and the heavy scheduling of political commercials between prime-time programs, which combine to require a considerable effort to screen out objectionable messages.

Information Gain: At the beginning of the interview, simple name recognition of each candidate was measured by the question, "Do you happen to know the name of the Republican (Democratic) candidate for governor?" Overall, 92% correctly identified the right candidate, while the others either didn't know or gave the wrong name. Voters who paid close attention to a candidate's ads could remember his name in 98% of the cases studied.

Three items tapped the basic informational impact of political advertising. Since before-after measurement was not possible in this single-wave study, respondents were asked to give a self-report assessment of the amount of increased knowledge they obtained from each candidate's ads. The questions involved (1) understanding each man's positions on major issues (Wisconsin only); (2) learning his qualifications for governor; and (3) becoming better acquainted with him as a person.

Table 11 shows that 64% of the exposed voters felt they learned something

about each candidate's gubernatorial qualifications, and 56% learned some information about candidate stands on the issues. Only 41% said they had obtained a greater familiarity with each candidate as a person.

Thus, candidate qualifications and issue positions seemed to be the most widely learned material from these political ads. The finding that the personal dimension was least affected while "hard" information was acquired by a majority of the viewers is inconsistent with much of the critical commentary regarding political advertising as an image-oriented and uninformative means of influencing voters. However, it is difficult to assess just how much substantial knowledge was gained beyond a few superficial slogans and the impression that a candidate possessed the necessary experience to handle the job.

Table 9 compares the relationship of information gain with relative frequency of exposure and attention. Comparatively greater exposure to the ads of one candidate was associated very weakly with the three measures of information gain. On the other hand, relative attention was moderately associated with information acquisition on each variable. This difference serves to underline the important distinction between sheer frequency of exposure and quality of exposure.

Table 9 and Table 10 present the raw and partial correlations between information gain and four other key variables. Again, entertainment value was a major predictor: across the three types of learning, the average zero-order correlation was +.25 and the partial correlation was +.19. Thus, quality of presentation appears to make an independent contribution to an increase in knowledge. The data also indicate that voters tended to learn more about the candidate they personally preferred, despite a possible ceiling effect; the average raw correlation of +.20 declined to +.13 when the other

variables were controlled. Those who viewed political ads for informational rather than captive audience reasons also tended to learn more about each candidate (r=+.18, partial r=+.12).

Voting Intentions: Data from both the Wisconsin and Colorado samples indicate that political advertising tended to "increase the likelihood that you will go out and vote on Election Day"for about one-seventh of the voters. Thus, a candidate's ads may have an activation effect on some potential supporters who might not otherwise bother to turnout, although the actual numbers affected might be limited.

Most of the questionnaire dealing with behavioral effects focuses on the respondent's view of the role of advertising in (1) decision-making and (2) strength of partisan preferences among those who had already decided before the advertising campaign began.

Less than one-quarter of two samples who expressed a voting intention said they had made up their mind after they were first exposed to political ads. This indicates the limited size of the late-deciding group which is so highly sought after by the campaign strategists. The effects of advertising on this type of voter appears to be substantial. Table 12 shows that 59% of the late-deciders reported that the chosen candidate's ads were helpful in coming to their decision to vote for him. Interestingly, almost as many indicated that the unchosen candidate's ads help them to decide not to vote for him. This was particularly true for Lucey partisans, as more than three-quarters reacted negatively to Olson's ads. In Colorado, this undesirable side effect of campaign advertising did not occur as frequently.

On the other hand, when late-deciders were asked whether TV ads or newspapers ads were more helpful in making up their mind, only three-fifths claimed

that television was most important; despite the fact that many times as much money was spent on TV as on newspapers, the effectiveness may not have been much more potent.

Among voters who decided on a candidate before seeing campaign advertising, 31% felt that own candidate ads strengthened their intention to vote for him, while very few said the ads served to weaken their intention. Again, opposition ads were a source of stregthened intentions, especially for Lucey partisans. The overall impact of opposition advertising was somewhat less counterproductive for voters who had previously made up their minds; only 26% said the opponent's spots stiffened their opposition to him. In fact, 12% felt that these ads eroded their support for the favored candidate to some extent.

Three predictors were closely associated with a favorable shift in voting intention among the early deciders, as described in Table 13. On the average, a strengthened candidate preference correlated +.27 with entertainment value, +.26 with information-seeking mode, and +.25 with level of attention. With the other two variables controlled, information-seeking mode remained the highest correlate (partial r=+.21). Among Wisconsin and Colorado partisans, 48% of those who watched for informational reasons said they became more committed to their candidate, compared to 17% of those watching because they couldn't avoid the ads.

Information gain was also related to voting intention shifts, with an average correlation of +.32 across the three items. It is difficult to determine whether knowledge acquisition should be considered as an independent variable, an intervening variable, or a co-dependent variable, on the basis of the correlational data gathered in this survey. It is clear that the two variables were moderately associated when other factors were controlled. In addition,

information gain seems to serve as an intermediary step between entertainment value of ads and the ultimate intention impact; the moderate contribution of entertainment quality faded to a partial correlation of +.08 when information gain was controlled. This indicates that entertainment value did not have a direct effect on voting intention, but may have worked through its relationship with attention and information gain.

Changes Over Time: In Wisconsin, 57 November respondents had also been interviewed during the first week of October in a separate public opinion poll. This subsample had answered three key questions that were eventually used in the main interview schedule: items dealing with candidate preference, noticing ads, and attention levels.

The two-wave candidate preference measure detected a slight movement toward Lucey during the last month of the campaign, reflecting a trend noted by most election observers. Of more relevance to this investigation is the comparison between exposure to political ads at these two points in time. After one to two weeks of advertising, 67% of these voters had noticed both candidate's ads. By the end of the campaign, 81% reported seeing both sets of ads. Three voters became exposed to Lucey ads and two first saw Olson ads during the month of October. Attention levels were similar on each occasion, with an average 31% paying close attention at Time 1 and 27% paying close attention at Time 2. Thus, the heavy schedule of spot advertising during October did not increase attention, and reached only a handful of additional viewers. Unfortunately, changes in knowledge and voting intention due to political advertising could not be assessed in this subgroup.

Opinions about Political Advertising: Several items tapped voter reactions to political advertising in general. Overall, 64% of the voters thought that there were "too many political ads on TV this fall." However, only 33% reported that it bothered them when political advertising interrupted their television viewing; within this hostile group, about one-third indicated that political spots bothered them more than the usual TV commercials and two-fifths found them less irritating. When asked to judge whether "political advertising is better or worse than most TV commercials," 36% replied better, 23% said worse, and the others thought the two types of ads were about the same. More than half reported that they paid greater attention to political ads than regular ads appearing on TV, 31% gave about the same amount of attention, and 15% attended less closely. In Colorado, voters were also asked to evaluate the complexity of the content presented in political advertisements; 26% felt that the spots were "too simple," 10% said "too complicated," and almost two-thirds thought the ads were "just about right."

DISCUSSION

On the basis of the findings obtained in this exploratory investigation, some tentative implications can be drawn regarding voter response to electronic political advertising. The spot advertising approach does seem to be the most efficient method of reaching a vast majority of the electorate, although a substantial number of politically uninterested or light-viewing voters may not be reached. Despite the fact that the two Wisconsin candidates spent more than $41,000 to buy 710 time slots on the local TV stations in the five week period preceding the interviews, only three-fourths of the respondents could recall seeing the ads of both candidates. Nevertheless, this rate of voter contact is certainly greater than any other form of

political communication in the mass media. For instance, Schramm and Carter (1959) found that less than one-sixth of their California sample had seen any part of a pre-election telethon, and Atkin (1970) discovered that almost two-fifths of a statewide Wisconsin sample didn't view any of the 1968 Republican National Convention.

It is apparent that a relatively greater frequency of presentation leads to a relatively greater frequency of exposure; however, the greater quantity of advertising does not seem to produce a greater level of attention. Qualitative characteristics of the advertisements, such as the entertainment value, may be more important in securing an attentive audience. The role of this type of variable should be more fully examined in future investigations.

The spot ad tends to overcome the barrier of predispositional selectivity. Sheer availability overwhelmed any partisan defenses at the exposure level of message reception, and only a small minority of the voters gave closer attention to their favored candidate's ads or selectively avoided the opposition candidate's ads.

Most partisans are apparently willing to give the other side a hearing, but this attention to opposition messages does not mean uncritical acceptance of the material offered. For one thing, more than half of the partisan voters reported that they "argue against the claims that are made" in the other candidate's ads. Opposition information may actually be useful for the voter's cognitive activities, as indicated by the finding that one-fourth of the partisans strengthened their intention not to vote for the unchosen candidate as a result of seeing his ads.

Several other voter characteristics appear to be more potent than partisan preference in determining attention and avoidance patterns. As expected, personal interest in the campaign was a key factor, as those with

low interest paid little attention and the highly interested voters tended to give closer attention. Informational and enjoyment needs were important determinants of message reception patterns, and those who watched mainly because they couldn't avoid the everpresent ads paid little attention. The positive correlations between attention and liklihood of voting and frequency of discussing the campaign may also reflect voter needs for information to use in decision-making or social interaction. In the case of avoidance, the primary factor seems to be a basic antagonism toward political ads in general, rather than a partisan screening of discrepant material.

The information gain data indicate that voters learn more "hard" information about a candidate's qualifications and issue positions than his personal qualities. Less than half of the respondents felt that they became more familiar with the candidate as a person from watching his ads.

The quality of exposure was much more strongly related to learning than the quantity of exposure. The entertainment value of a candidate's advertising also appears to contribute to increases in knowledge about the candidates.

The campaign strategists are most concerned with turning out the vote and influencing voting intentions, however. This type of effect is difficult to measure under any circumstances, but the one-shot telephone survey provided particularly limited options. The approach used here involved asking the voter himself to report how he thought he was affected by political advertising, an interesting if less than valid technique. About one voter in seven felt that political ads increased the liklihood that he would actually go out and vote on election day, suggesting that spots may stimulate some potential supporters to cast their ballots rather than ignore the election.

The evidence shows that TV ads may be a contributing factor in the decision-making process of those voters who make up their minds during the

campaign. More than half of this group said that political ads for both the chosen and unchosen candidates were helpful in arriving at their decision. In addition, many partisans who decide before the campaign starts seem to be reinforced by each candidate's ads. The finding that voters may make use of the unchosen candidate's messages suggests an inherent liability in the political advertising approach: the same ads that serve to strengthen the commitment of the party faithful may offend voters who are slightly in favor of the opponent and motivate them to move further away from the candidate.

This tendency to react to ads of both candidates can be interpreted as evidence of a positive function of campaign advertising. The frequent juxtaposition of the two sets of spot ads may provide viewers with an opportunity to clearly deliniate the differences between the two candidates along a variety of attributes. These discriminations, which are certainly in the best democratic traditions, may be more influential than the one-sided messages designed to build positive response hierarchies for each candidate separately. In any event, the data showing that partisans tend to challenge the claims and generally react negatively to opposition advertising is inconsistent with the notion that most voters can be swayed by the "image" campaigns in the broadcast media.

What is the process by which political advertising affects voting behavior? Although correlational data based on self-report effects does not provide a sound basis for inferring causality, the preliminary evidence in this survey suggests the following model: frequency of presentation (relative availability) has a direct impact on exposure, but has no effect on attention levels; quality of presentation (whether the ads are perceived as informative, interesting, honest, entertaining, and professionally produced) combines with audience characteristics (personal interests, partisan preferences and needs

for knowledge and enjoyment) to determine attention and information gain; and these content factors then work indirectly through their relationship with attention and information gain to influence voting decisions or produce shifts in voting intentions. The importance of these qualitative aspects of political advertisements was demonstrated in a companion survey of party worker reactions to their own candidate's ads; increases in morale, confidence of victory, and utilization of information for persuasive purposes was closely associated with evaluative ratings of advertising quality (Sheinkopf, Bowen and Atkin, 1971). Thus, the most effective advertising strategy would be one that allocates campaign funds away from a high frequency of exposure approach into a more modest number of ads containing substantive informational content that is presented in an interesting and entertaining manner by skilled producers.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among other articles and books dealing with the uses and abuses of political advertising, see: Bruce L. Felknor, Dirty Politics (1966); Stanley Kelley, Jr., Political Campaigning: Problems in Creating an Informed Electorate (1960); Kurt Lang and Gladys Lang, Politics and Television (1968); Maurice McCaffrey, Advertising Wins Elections (1962); Joe McGinniss, The Selling of the President 1968 (1969); Harold Mendelsohn and Irving Crespi, Polls, Television, and the New Politics (1970); Ernest D. Rose and Douglas F. Fuchs, "Reagan vs. Brown: A Television Image Playback," Journal of Broadcasting (1968); Bernard Rubin, Political Television (1967); Walter Weiss, "Mass Communications," Annual Review of Psychology (1971), and Gene Wyckoff, The Image Candidates (1968).

2. Much of the material in this section can be found in Martin Mayer, Madison Avenue U.S.A. (Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 297-311.

3. Mayer, ibid., pp. 306-307. Reeves not only provided the form for subsequent political advertising, he also introduced the question-and-answer style that is characteristic of present-day efforts:

> "The spots would be the height of simplicity. People. . .would . . .ask the General (Eisenhower) a question. The General's answer would be his comprehension of the problem and his determination to do something about it when elected. Thus he inspires loyalty without prematurely committing himself to any strait-jacketing answer." (p. 305)

4. Newsweek magazine, "The Selling of the Candidates 1970" (Oct. 19, 1970), pp. 34-43. See also Time magazine, "Electronic Politics: The Image Game" (Sept. 21, 1970), pp. 43-48.

5. Advertising Age, June 1, 1970, p. 71.

6. Harold Mendelsohn and Irving Crespi, Polls, Television, and the New Politics (Scranton, Pa.: Chandler Publishing), 1970, pp. 284-285.

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TABLE 1

Political Advertising in Southcentral Wisconsin Market

	Patrick Lucey	Jack Olson
Total expenditures for TV spots	$15,600	$25,600
Total number of spot advertisements	227	483
Number of prime-time spots (7 - 10 p.m.)	81	99
Number of non-prime-time spots	146	384
Total amount of spot time purchased	166 minutes	301 minutes
Minutes of prime-time purchased	46	55
Minutes of non-prime-time purchased	120	246
Number of 60-second prime-time spots	15	11
Number of 60-second non-prime-time spots	96	108
Number of 30-second prime-time spots	56	88
Number of 30-second non-prime-time spots	43	276
Number of 20-second prime-time spots	10	0
Number of 20-second non-prime-time spots	7	0
Scheduling of 60-second spot ads: proportion of all spots presented between --		
September 22 - October 5	58%	100%
October 6 - October 25	30%	0%
October 26 - November 2	50%	0%

These figures represent spot advertisement placement on three television stations serving southcentral Wisconsin from Madison. They are WISC-TV (Channel 3), WMTV-TV (Channel 15), and WKOW-TV (Channel 27). The spot advertising campaigns began on September 22 and continued until November 2, election eve.

TABLE 2-A

Proportion Noticing Political Advertisments on Television, by Amount of TV Viewing, Campaign Interest, and Candidate Preference

Ads Noticed, Wisconsin	Amount of TV Viewing: Light Viewers N=50	Moderate Viewers N=135	Heavy Viewers N=77
Both Candidates	56%	79%	84%
One Candidate Only	14	14	9
Neither Candidate	30	7	7

	Interest in Campaign: Low Interest N=24 *	Moderate Interest N=71	High Interest N=106
Both Candidates	71%	82%	86%
One Candidate Only	12	14	11
Neither Candidate	17	4	3

	Candidate Preference: Favor Olson N=46 *	Favor Lucey N=80	Won't Say, Undecided N=86
Both Candidates	83%	84%	78%
One Candidate Only: Olson	6	7	7
One Candidate Only: Lucey	3	5	7
Neither Candidate	8	4	8

* Analysis by Interest in Campaign and Candidate Preference excludes respondents in the "light viewers" category. These voters viewed less than one hour of television per day, and thus had a limited opportunity to see political advertisments.

TABLE 2-B

Ads Noticed, Colorado	Amount of TV Viewing: Light Viewers N=46	Moderate Viewers N=102	Heavy Viewers N=102
Both Candidates	74%	81%	85%
One Candidate Only	26	19	15

	Interest in Campaign: Low Interest N=22*	Moderate Interest N=85	High Interest N=97
Both Candidates	77%	82%	85%
One Candidate Only	23	18	15

	Candidate Preference: Favor Love N=100*	Favor Hogan N=51	Won't Say, Undecided N=53
Both Candidates	82%	80%	89%
One Candidate Only: Love	11	4	2
One Candidate Only: Hogan	7	16	9

* Excludes respondents viewing less than one hour of television per day, to help control the effect of the opportunity factor.

Interview Item:

Ads Noticed -- "In recent weeks, do you recall seeing any television advertising for the two candidates for governor?" IF YES: "Whose advertising have you noticed?"

Note: In Colorado, the interview was terminated if the respondent saw advertising for neither candidate. In Wisconsin, they were asked all interview items not directly relating to political advertising of each candidate, such as campaign interest and viewing time.

TABLE 3

Correlates of Attention to Political Advertisments

Correlation coefficients between Level of Attention to each candidate's ads, and:

	Olson Ads	Lucey Ads	Love Ads	Hogan Ads	Average Correlation
Relative Availability	-.02	-.16	+.02	+.13	-.02
Entertainment Value	+.14	+.22	+.31	+.31	+.25
Interest in Campaign	+.33	+.32	+.22	+.24	+.28
Likelihood of Voting	+.25	+.23	+.17	+.16	+.20
Discussion of Campaign	+.19	+.22	+.15	+.18	+.19
Information-Seeking Mode	+.33	+.29	+.22	+.30	+.29
Candidate Preference	+.08	+.33	+.17	+.18	+.19
Strength of Preference	+.24	+.28	+.16	+.29	+.24
Occupation	+.17	+.18	+.10	+.08	+.13
Education	+.16	+.14	+.09	+.20	+.15
Age	-.06	-.07	+.05	-.14	-.06
Sex	+.04	+.04	+.09	+.02	+.05

Interview Items:

Level of Attention -- (IF RESPONDENT NOTICED ADS) "In general, how much attention have you given to (Jack Olson's, Patrick Lucey's; John Love's, Mark Hogan's) advertisments on TV? Would you say you've given close attention, some attention, or little attention to these ads?"
3 levels: Little, Some, Close

Relative Availability -- "Which of the candidates for governor, (Olson or Lucey; Love or Hogan), do you think is advertising the most on TV this fall? Would you say he is advertising a lot more or a little more?"
5 levels: Candidate X A Lot More, Candidate X A Little More, About the Same, Candidate Y A Little More, Candidate Y A Lot More

Entertainment Value -- "Do you feel that (Lucey's, Olson's; Hogan's, Love's) advertisments have been generally entertaining or generally boring?
3 levels: Generally Boring, In Between, Generally Entertaining

(continued)

NOTE: Table values are zero-order Pearson r correlation coefficients, with variables scored according to the left-to-right description of response levels.

TABLE 3 (continued)

Interest in Campaign -- "Generally speaking, how interested are you in the current election campaign? .....very interested, somewhat interested, or not too interested?"
3 levels: Not Too Interested, Somewhat Interested, Very Interested

Likelihood of Voting -- "How likely is it that you will be voting in the election this month? Are you certain you will vote, very sure you will, or aren't you certain that you will be voting?"
4 levels: Won't Vote, Not Certain, Very Sure, Certain

Discussion of Campaign -- "Next, could you tell me about how often you have discussed the election campaign with your family or friends in the last week. Would you say never, once or twice, or more than that?"
3 levels: Never, Once or Twice, More Often

Information-Seeking Mode -- "Now we want to know why you watch political advertisments. Do you watch mainly for information, or for both information and enjoyment, or just because you can't avoid them?"
3 levels: Can't Avoid, Information and Enjoyment, Information

Candidate Preference -- "As of now, who do you think you will vote for, (Olson or Lucey; Love or Hogan)?" IF (OLSON; LUCEY; LOVE; HOGAN): "Are you strongly in favor or somewhat in favor of (Olson; Lucey; Love; Hogan)?"
5 levels: Strong Candidate X, Somewhat Candidate X, Undecided, Somewhat Candidate Y, Strong Candidate Y

Strength of Preference -- Component of above item.
2 levels: Somewhat, Strong

Occupation -- "What does the head of your family do for a living?"
4 levels: Lower Blue Collar, Upper Blue Collar, Other White Collar, Professional

Education -- "Finally, what is the highest grade of school or year of college you finished?"
9 levels: None through Post Doctoral

Age -- "What is your present age?"
8 levels: 21-30 through 91 and over

Sex -- 2 levels: Male, Female

TABLE 4

Partial Correlations for Variables Related to Attention

Partial r (controlling other seven variables)* between Level of Attention to each candidate's ads, and:	Olson Ads	Lucey Ads	Love Ads	Hogan Ads	Average Partial
Relative Availability	-.02	-.08	+.06	+.08	+.02
Entertainment Value	+.09	+.11	+.26	+.24	+.18
Interest in Campaign	+.21	+.17	+.10	+.12	+.15
Liklihood of Voting	+.16	+.09	+.05	+.02	+.08
Discussion of Campaign	+.03	+.06	+.11	+.11	+.08
Information-Seeking Mode	+.23	+.23	+.19	+.21	+.22
Candidate Preference	+.12	+.17	+.18	+.09	+.14
Education	+.15	+.09	+.01	+.11	+.09

* The eight strongest correlates of attention in the preceding table were entered into a multiple regression program, which yielded a set of partial correlations for attention to each candidate's ads. The table values represent the relationship between each correlate and the level of attention, controlling the other correlates. Only respondents with data on all variables were examined: Olson ads, N = 182; Lucey ads, N = 186; Love ads, N = 221; Hogan ads, N = 231.

TABLE 5-A

Relative Exposure Frequency and Relative Attention, by Perceived Relative Availability

Wisconsin Voters	Estimated Relative Number of Each Candidate's Ads on Television:				
Relative Exposure Frequency:	Lots More Lucey	Little More Lucey	About the Same	Little More Olson	Lots More Olson
	N=16	N=21	N=79	N=47	N=73
(1) Seen more Olson ads	25%	29%	19%	60%	79%
(2) Seen same number of each	13	29	65	28	12
(3) Seen more Lucey ads	44	38	6	11	7
NA	18	4	10	1	2
Mean exposure level ----	2.23	2.09	1.86	1.51	1.27
Relative Attention:					
(1) Closer attention to Olson	19%	10%	10%	9%	7%
(2) Equal attention to each	38	57	66	74	56
(3) Closer attention to Lucey	6	5	3	9	8
NA	37	28	21	8	29
Mean attention level ----	1.79	1.93	1.91	2.00	2.04

Interview items:

Relative Exposure Frequency -- (IF RESPONDENT NOTICED ADS FOR BOTH CANDIDATES) "Would you say you've watched a greater number of Olson ads or a greater number of Lucey ads in the last month?"
3 levels: More Olson, About the Same, More Lucey

Relative Attention -- This variable is computed by comparing the Level of Attention to each candidate's ads along two 3 level scales. If attention ratings for Olson and Lucey are both "close", both "some", or both "little", respondent is classified as paying equal attention.

TABLE 5-B

Colorado Voters	Estimated Relative Number of Each Candidate's Ads on Television:				
Relative Exposure Frequency:	Lots More Love N=20	Little More Love N=32	About the Same N=74	Little More Hogan N=53	Lots More Hogan N=69
(1) Seen more Love ads	45%	50%	11%	6%	4%
(2) Seen same number of each	20	28	70	36	15
(3) Seen more Hogan ads	5	13	14	57	65
NA	30	9	5	1	16
Mean exposure level ---	1.43	1.59	2.03	2.52	2.72
Relative Attention:					
(1) Closer attention to Love	5%	19%	9%	10%	7%
(2) Equal attention to each	55	59	72	64	49
(3) Closer attention to Hogan	0	6	9	13	19
NA	40	16	10	13	25
Mean attention level ---	1.92	1.85	2.00	2.04	2.15

TABLE 6

Relative Exposure Frequency to Each Candidate's Advertising, by Candidate Preference

Wisconsin voters	Favor Olson N=57	Undecided, Won't Say N=108	Favor Lucey N=97
(1) Seen more Olson ads	43%	42%	49%
(2) Seen same number of each	40	29	30
(3) Seen more Lucey ads	7	14	14
NA	10	15	7
Mean exposure score ---	1.63	1.67	1.58

Colorado voters	Favor Love N=120	Undecided, Won't Say N=70	Favor Hogan N=60
(1) Seen more Love ads	19%	11%	14%
(2) Seen same number of each	33	53	30
(3) Seen more Hogan ads	36	26	48
NA	12	10	8
Mean exposure score ---	2.19	2.16	2.38

Selective Exposure: More than half of the voters in Colorado and Wisconsin reported seeing a greater number of ads for one candidate than the other. For these respondents, the selective exposure rate can be computed by examining the proportion of cases where the favored candidate's ads were seen more often than the ads of the non-favored candidate:

Favor Olson	(N=27)	85%
Favor Lucey	(N=61)	22%
Favor Love	(N=66)	35%
Favor Hogan	(N=37)	78%
Overall	(N=191)	54%

TABLE 7

Relative Attention to Each Candidate's Advertising, by Candidate Preference

Wisconsin voters	Favor Olson N=57	Undecided, Won't Say N=108	Favor Lucey N=97
(1) Closer attention to Olson	29%	3%	2%
(2) Equal attention to each	47	59	61
(3) Closer attention to Lucey	0	2	12
NA	24	36	25
Mean attention score -----	1.62	1.99	2.13

Colorado voters	Favor Love N=120	Undecided, Won't Say N=70	Favor Hogan N=60
(1) Closer attention to Love	16%	5%	2%
(2) Equal attention to each	59	66	57
(3) Closer attention to Hogan	7	9	23
NA	18	20	18
Mean attention score -----	1.89	2.05	2.26

Selective Attention: Only 31 Wisconsin voters who indicated a partisan preference reported paying more attention to one candidate's ads than the ads of the other candidate. In Colorado, 43 partisans paid closer attention to one candidate's advertising on TV. The selective attention rate can be computed by examining the proportion of cases where the favored candidate's ads were watched more closely than those of the non-favored candidate:

Favor Olson (N=17)	100%
Favor Lucey (N=14)	86%
Favor Love (N=28)	68%
Favor Hogan (N=15)	93%
Overall (N=74)	84%

TABLE 8

Relative Avoidance of Lucey and Olson Advertising, by Candidate Preference

	Favor Olson N=57	Undecided, Won't Say N=108	Favor Lucey N=97
Tried to avoid Lucey ads only	12%	4%	3%
Tried to avoid Olson ads only	0	3	13
Tried to avoid both	9	10	9
Did not try to avoid either	56	50	53
NA	23	33	22

Selective Avoidance: There were 23 Wisconsin partisans who avoided only one candidate's advertising; 87% of these selectively avoided the opposing candidate's ads while watching the ads of the candidate they favored. (There were too few cases of selective avoidance in Colorado to analyse). Of the 80 cases of avoidance (41 for Olson's ads, and 39 for Lucey's ads), only 20 cases can be accounted for by a predispositional avoidance mechanism. More important factors are presented below.

Correlates and Partial Correlates of Political Advertising Avoidance

Relationship between avoidance, and:	Olson ads r	Olson ads partial r *	Lucey ads r	Lucey ads partial r
Entertainment Value	-.37	-.36	-.33	-.25
Interest in Campaign	-.16	-.01	-.16	-.07
Candidate Preference	-.17	-.12	-.14	-.01
Antagonism toward Political Ads	+.37	+.31	+.30	+.21

* The four strongest correlates of avoidance were entered into a multiple regression program, which yielded partial correlations between avoidance and each variable, controlling the other correlates. Only respondents with data on all regression variables were examined: Olson ads, N = 188; Lucey ads, N = 187. For correlations, avoidance = 1, no avoidance = 0.

Interview items:

Avoidance -- (IF RESPONDENT NOTICED ADS): "Have you made an effort to avoid watching any of (Olson's, Lucey's) advertising?"
2 levels: No, Yes

Antagonism toward Political Ads -- "Do you think there are too many political ads on TV this fall?" "Does it bother you when political ads interrupt your TV viewing?" (IF YES): "Does it bother you more or less than the usual commercials on TV?"
4 levels: No-No, No-Yes-Same/Less or Yes-No, Yes-Yes-Same/Less, Yes-Yes-More

TABLE 9

Correlates of Information Gain from Each Candidate's Advertisments

	Olson Ads	Lucey Ads	Love Ads	Hogan Ads	Average Correlation
Correlation coefficient between Learning Qualifications, and:					
Level of Attention	+.30	+.15	+.25	+.18	+.22
Rel. Exposure Frequency	-.06	+.08	+.16	+.02	+.05
Entertainment Value	+.23	+.17	+.31	+.21	+.23
Interest in Campaign	+.09	+.13	+.06	+.08	+.09
Information-Seeking Mode	+.28	+.10	+.25	+.21	+.21
Candidate Preference	+.24	+.18	+.08	+.25	+.19
Correlation coefficients between Becoming Better Acquainted, and:					
Level of Attention	+.21	+.22	+.21	+.12	+.19
Rel. Exposure Frequency	+.04	+.06	+.07	+.04	+.05
Entertainment Value	+.25	+.19	+.33	+.12	+.22
Interest in Campaign	+.12	+.16	+.15	+.11	+.14
Information-Seeking Mode	+.14	+.07	+.27	+.08	+.14
Candidate Preference	+.25	+.23	+.15	+.14	+.19
Correlation coefficient between Learning Issue Positions, and:					
Level of Attention	+.34	+.17			+.26
Rel. Exposure Frequency	-.02	+.04	Not asked		+.01
Entertainment Value	+.29	+.30			+.30
Interest in Campaign	+.16	+.11	in Colorado		+.14
Information-Seeking Mode	+.26	+.12	survey		+.19
Candidate Preference	+.22	+.19			+.21

Learning Qualifications -- "How much have you learned about (Olson's, Lucey's; Love's, Hogan's) qualifications for governor from his TV ads? Have you learned a lot, a little, or nothing at all?"
3 levels: Nothing at All, A Little, A Lot

Becoming Better Acquainted -- "Do you feel that you have become better acquainted with (Jack Olson, Pat Lucey; John Love, Mark Hogan) as a person from watching his TV ads?" IF YES: "Would you say you have become a lot more familiar with him as a person, or somewhat more familiar?"
3 levels: No, Somewhat, A Lot

Learning Issue Positions -- "Has (Olson's, Lucey's; Love's, Hogan's) advertising helped you to understand what his positions are on such issues as taxes and campus problems?" IF YES: "Would you say you have learned a lot or a little about his positions on these issues?"
3 levels: No, A Little, A Lot

TABLE 10

Partial Correlations for Variables Related to Information Gain

	Olson Ads	Lucey Ads	Love Ads	Hogan Ads	Average Partial
Partial r (controlling other four variables)* between Learning Qualifications from each candidate's ads, and:					
Level of Attention	+.18	+.04	+.12	+.07	+.10
Entertainment Value	+.18	+.15	+.22	+.11	+.17
Interest in Campaign	+.02	+.08	-.02	+.05	+.03
Information-Seeking Mode	+.20	+.06	+.20	+.11	+.14
Candidate Preference	+.16	+.10	+.09	+.15	+.13
Partial r between Becoming Better Acquainted, and:					
Level of Attention	+.09	+.09	+.04	+.05	+.07
Entertainment Value	+.20	+.14	+.24	+.06	+.16
Interest in Campaign	+.13	+.13	+.07	+.10	+.11
Information-Seeking Mode	+.09	+.02	+.24	+.01	+.09
Candidate Preference	+.19	+.11	+.19	+.11	+.15
Partial r between Learning Issue Positions, and:					
Level of Attention	+.23	+.02			+.13
Entertainment Value	+.24	+.26	Not asked		+.25
Interest in Campaign	+.03	+.03	in Colorado		+.03
Information-Seeking Mode	+.15	+.10	survey		+.13
Candidate Preference	+.14	+.09			+.12

* The five strongest correlates of information gain measures in preceding table were entered into a multiple regression program, which yielded a set of partial correlations for each measure. The table values represent the relationship between each correlate and the information gain measures, controlling the other correlates. Only respondents with data on all variables were examined: Olson ads, N = 193; Lucey ads, N = 192; Love ads, N = 222; Hogan ads, N = 232.

TABLE 11

Proportion Reporting Information Gain from Each Candidate's TV Advertising

	Olson Ads N=205*	Lucey Ads N=203	Love Ads N=222	Hogan Ads N=232	Average Proportion
Ads helped in Learning Qualifications:					
Nothing	41%	34%	38%	33%	36%
A Little	43	55	53	56	52
A Lot	16	11	9	11	12
Mean level** ------	1.75	1.77	1.71	1.78	1.75
Ads helped in Becoming Better Acquainted:					
No	52%	60%	71%	51%	59%
Somewhat	39	30	22	36	31
A Lot	9	10	7	13	10
Mean level ------	1.58	1.50	1.36	1.61	1.51
Ads helped in Understanding Issue Positions:					
No	44%	45%			44%
A Little	39	41	Not asked in		40
A Lot	17	14	Colorado survey		16
Mean level ------	1.73	1.69			1.71

* Only those respondents who reported paying attention to a candidate's television advertising were asked about the impact of the ads on information level.

** In computing the mean level of information gain, No or Nothing = 1, A Little or Somewhat = 2, and A Lot = 3.

TABLE 12

Self-Reported Impact of Political Advertising on Candidate Preference

Voters who decided before seeing political ads--	Favor Olson N=48	Favor Lucey N=74	Favor Love N=108	Favor Hogan N=44	Overall Proportion N=274
Favored candidate's ads:					
Strengthened intention	23%	32%	22%	57%	31%
Had no effect at all	69	64	76	41	65
Weakened intention	8	4	2	2	4
Opponent's ads:					
Strengthened intention	21%	50%	17%	11%	26%
Had no effect at all	71	43	66	75	62
Weakened intention	8	7	17	14	12

Voters who decided after seeing political ads--		Favor Olson N= 9	Favor Lucey N=22	Favor Love N=11	Favor Hogan N=14	Overall Proportion N=56
Favored candidate's ads helped in making voting decision:	Yes	78%	41%	64%	71%	59%
	No	22	59	36	29	31
Opponent's ads helped in making decision:	Yes	44%	77%	27%	29%	50%
	No	56	23	73	71	50

Interview items:

Time of Decision -- "Did you decide to vote for (Lucey, Olson; Hogan, Love) before or after you saw the TV advertising that has been shown in the last few weeks?"

IF BEFORE: "Have (favored candidate's) ads strengthened or weakened your intention to vote for him, or had no effect at all?"

"Have (other candidate's) ads strengthened or weakened your intention not to vote for him, or had no effect?"

IF AFTER: "Would you tell me if (favored candidate's) TV advertising has helped you in making your decision to vote for him?"

"Has (other candidate's) advertising affected your decision not to vote for him?"

TABLE 13

Correlates of Strengthened Candidate Preference Among Partisan Voters

Correlation coefficient between change in strength of candidate preference, and:

	Favor Olson	Favor Lucey	Favor Love	Favor Hogan	Average Correlation
Level of Attention	+.30	+.06	+.34	+.31	+.25
Entertainment Value	+.25	+.24	+.30	+.28	+.27
Interest in Campaign	+.22	-.10	+.10	-.06	+.04
Information-Seeking Mode	+.19	+.13	+.48	+.25	+.26
Candidate Preference	+.49	+.00	+.13	+.12	+.13
Information Gain Index	+.47	+.37	+.32	+.30	+.37
Learning Qualifications	+.36	+.18	+.23	+.22	+.25
Better Acquainted	+.42	+.26	+.34	+.33	+.34
Issue Positions	+.43	+.30	--	--	+.37

Partial correlation coefficients (strongest independent variables controlled):

Level of Attention	+.10	+.09	+.12	+.25	+.14
Entertainment Value	+.17	+.18	+.17	+.19	+.18
Information-Seeking Mode	+.12	+.19	+.40	+.14	+.21

Partial correlation coefficients (also controlling information gain):*

Level of Attention	+.03	+.02	+.11	+.24	+.10
Entertainment Value	+.02	-.01	+.13	+.17	+.08
Information-Seeking Mode	+.08	+.18	+.38	+.09	+.18
Information Gain Index	+.30	+.30	+.07	+.24	+.23

Information Gain Index -- This is the sum of the three items measuring the self-reported increase in knowledge about one's favored candidate. In Colorado, only two items were used.

Candidate Preference -- In this analysis, candidate preference indicates whether the respondent is somewhat in favor or strongly in favor of the candidate.

Note: Only respondents with data on all variables were examined: Favor Olson, N = 37, Favor Lucey, N = 58, Favor Love, N = 102, Favor Hogan, N = 50. The dependent variable in this analysis was the change in strength of candidate preference due to favored candidate's ads, ranging from "weakened" to "no effect" to "strengthened."

* Since information gain is considered to be both a dependent and independent variable, it's contribution to intention change is analysed separately to assess how the other independent factors are affected.