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Negative TV Advertising in the 2016 US Presidential Campaign
Telewizyjna reklama negatywna w amerykańskiej kampanii prezydenckiej w 2016 roku

Abstract

Presented research describes the character of message and techniques used in TV political advertising during the 2016 US presidential campaign. The results unambiguously indicate a steady increase in the use of negative ads during political campaign. Television commercials of Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump focused mostly on discrediting their political opponent. In addition, the content of negative ads more frequently referred to image characteristics than to issues.

Prezentowane badania opisują styl przekazu i techniki użyte w telewizyjnych reklamach z amerykańskiej kampanii prezydenckiej z 2016 roku. Wyniki jednoznacznie wskazują na postępującą negatywizację przekazu kampanijnego. Zarówno Hilary Clinton, jak i Donald Trump skupili się w spotach głównie na dyskredytowaniu politycznego przeciwnika. Dodatkowo treści zawarte w negatywnych reklamach telewizyjnych częściej odnosiły się do kwestii wizerunkowych (*image ads*) aniżeli problemowych (*issue ads*).

Key words

negative advertising, US presidential campaign, political advertising, issue ads, image ads
reklama negatywna, kampania prezydencka w USA, reklama polityczna, reklamy problemowe, reklamy wizerunkowe

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Negative TV Advertising in the 2016 US Presidential Campaign

1. Introduction

The 2016 presidential campaign in the United States was a historic one for several reasons. It was the first time a woman – a former First Lady, New York state senator and secretary of state, Hillary Clinton – was nominated in one of the two major parties. Her rival was Donald Trump, a businessman who received the presidential nomination from the Republicans despite the lack of support from Republican elites. Both candidates had to face strong negative electorate in the parties they were nominated by. In the case of the Democrats' candidate, this was the result of negative reception of her political achievements, beginning with the health care reform (so-called *Hillarycare*) from the time of Bill Clinton's presidency, through the responsibility for an attack at the American embassy in Benghazi, up to controversies connected with keeping confidential information on her private email account. In addition, negative attitudes to Hillary Clinton were intensified due to the case of million-dollar subsidies for The Clinton Foundation from Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Persian Gulf. Donald Trump, in turn, was charged with the lack of experience in politics (he had never served a public function before) and first of all, with negative traits of character and controversial expressions concerning e.g., women, the disabled, or immigrants. All these factors were reflected in communication strategies used during the electoral campaign, especially in the rhetoric of TV advertising. After the election, the 2016 presidential campaign was even deemed one of the most brutal campaigns in history.

The basic aim of the article was to find out to what degree negative content dominated political TV advertising. The analysis will also involve the character of advertising messages. The 2016 campaign ads, in according to videostyle concept (Kaid and Johnston 2001), were analyzed both from verbal and non-verbal (visual) perspectives. In political advertising, the verbal content consists of words,

phrases, sentences and texts in the message that are the source of information about personality of the candidate and political issues presented in advertising. An important element of the verbal dimension of the message is also the applied rhetorical figures. Non-verbal elements of political TV advertising include, among others, the ad format, the external appearance and dress of the candidate, facial expressions, body movement (e.g., hand gestures, posture), space usage, time symbolism, colour and sign symbolism, tone of voice, sound, music, silence usage. All this contributes to political rhetoric, which, according to Bitzer (1981, 225), "serves the art of politics at every turn, both as a mode of thought and as an instrument of expression and action".

Negative political advertising

Just like many other political phenomena, negative advertising is hard to define. Although there is no common definition of negative political advertising, most scholars agree that its content mostly concentrates on the political opponent (Merritt 1984; Gronbeck 1994; Kaid 2004). The main aim of negative advertising is to criticize the political rival and demonstrate their inferiority. This way of presentation is mainly aimed at evoking negative emotions in the voters, connected with the other candidate (Merritt 1984, 28). The aspect of purpose of negative advertising is also discussed by Ronald J. Faber, Albert R. Tims and Kay G. Schmidt (1990), who formulate the following goals of such messages: to discourage voters from voting for the attacked entity, to provide them with a comparison of the candidates, ensuring the sender of the negative message electoral support, and to polarize voters' attitudes, enhancing the support for the sender of the negative message.

Karen S. Johnson-Cartee and Gary A. Copeland (1991, 38) identify three kinds of negative advertising: negative advertising, attack advertising, and comparative advertising. The subject of negative advertising is a specific political party or opponent. In terms of content, two subtypes of such advertisements can be identified: issue ads and image ads. Issue ads include information concerning the candidate's or party's political achievements or the support for specific legal acts or drafts. Its goal is to show the volatility of the opponent's views or their failure to keep electoral promises (Dobek-Ostrowska 2009, 216). In image ads, the candidate expresses negative attitude to the opponent's traits, private life or associations with different social groups, disregarding their political programme.

The most extreme form of negative message is attack advertising. According to Bruce Gronbeck (1994, 67), the sender focuses on unilateral, aggressive attack so as to stress the weak points of the political opponent, either concerning

their character and private life or their political views. It is the most extreme and unethical form of expression. It is often called "mudslinging", the most venomous form of negative advertising (Stewart 1975). It includes extremely emotional arguments, the dissemination of gossip and insinuations, lies, and direct verbal attacks on the adversary (Dobek-Ostrowska 2009, 218).

Comparative (contrast) negative advertising presents the opponent in a way that shows their disadvantages and weaknesses while emphasizing the positive characteristics of the sponsor of the ad (Cwalina and Falkowski 2005, 481). Karen S. Johnson-Cartee and Gary A. Copeland (1991) identity two basic types of comparative ads: direct and implied ads. The first of them assumes comparing the political opponent with the ad sponsor and refers to the candidates' competence and personalities. The goal is to present the party behind the ad in a way that makes their choice look obvious and beneficial (Cwalina 2004, 117). Implied comparative advertising does not point to a specific opponent. Thus, the sender encourages the viewers to analyze the presented message on their own, using the knowledge they have, and to interpret the image they see. In the case of voters who are less familiar with the political situation, this may have an opposite effect.

The growing proportion of negative advertising, especially in American electoral campaigns, has also led to the growing popularity of studies concerning the effect of this kind of advertising. Byron Reeves and Cliford Nass performed a series of experimental studies showing that political TV ads arousing strong negative emotions are not popular with the viewers, but the contents in them are better remembered than the ads with neutral or positive contents (Skarżyńska 2005, 323). The tendency to remember negative advertisements better was confirmed for TV ads (Brians and Wattenberg 1996), radio ads (Shapiro and Rieger 1992), and advertising prints (Chang 2001).

Other studies indicate that negative ads do not give the candidates using them the expected benefits and actually lead to greater aversion to politics, demobilization of the electorate, and lower voter turnout. In some cases, the latter element is not present. It is so whenever advertisements manage to show clearer the differences between the candidates, which greatly facilitates the making of an electoral decision (Lau et al. 1999).

Undoubtedly, negative advertising requires some response from the attacked person, because negative advertising puts the opponent on the defensive, and if left unanswered, this kind of ads may be devastating (Sonner 1998). Failure to respond to such attacks was one of the main reasons for the defeat of Michael Dukakis in the 1988 election. Despite considerable advantage of the Democrats' candidate in polls, after broadcasting a series of George Bush's spots referring to fear of the changes included in Dukakis' programme (e.g., ads such as *Willie*

Horton, Revolving Door or *Boston Harbor*), his support dropped rapidly, which ensured Bush the office of the President.

Democrats used significantly more negative ads in presidential races from 1952 to 2000 (Benoit 1999; Johnston and Kaid 2002). But in the last three campaigns, the Republicans have more often resorted to negative messages. The significant increase in the use of negative advertising was noted the 2012 presidential campaign. According to Erika Franklin Fowler and Travis N. Ridout (2012, 59), almost two thirds of the ads aired in the 2012 presidential race were purely negative ads, those that mentioned only an opponent.

Year of presidential campaign	Candidate	Positive ads	Negative ads	Issue ads	Image ads
1952	Stevenson (D)	-	-	-	-
	Eisenhower (R)	34%	66%	40%	60%
1956	Stevenson (D)	67%	33%	80%	20%
	Eisenhower (R)	100%	-	-	100%
1960	Kennedy (D)	88%	12%	82%	18%
	Nixon (R)	92%	8%	82%	18%
1964	Johnson (D)	52%	48%	72%	28%
	Goldwater (R)	54%	46%	81%	19%
1968	Humphrey (D)	67%	33%	46%	54%
	Nixon (R)	85%	15%	31%	69%
1972	McGovern (D)	60%	40%	70%	30%
	Nixon (R)	80%	20%	54%	46%
1976	Carter (D)	81%	19%	64%	36%
	Ford (R)	73%	27%	49%	51%
1980	Carter (D)	64%	36%	45%	55%
	Reagan (R)	65%	35%	57%	43%
1984	Mondale (D)	46%	54%	92%	8%
	Reagan (R)	73%	27%	47%	53%
1988	Dukakis (D)	46%	54%	70%	30%
	G. Bush (R)	64%	36%	44%	56%
1992	Clinton (D)	31%	69%	67%	33%
	G. Bush (R)	34%	66%	50%	50%
1996	Clinton (D)	32%	68%	86%	14%
	Dole (R)	39%	61%	62%	38%

2000	Gore (D)	38%	62%	84%	16%
	G. W. Bush (R)	63%	37%	63%	37%
2004	Kerry (D)	66%	34%	79%	21%
	G. W. Bush (R)	42%	58%	85%	15%
2008	Obama (D)	34%	66%	60%	40%
	McCain (R)	45%	55%	53%	47%

Table 1. Presidential candidates' use of positive, negative, issue and image ads over the 1952-2008 campaigns
Źródło: Own preparation based on: Kaid, 2009, 215-218; Johnston and Kaid, 2002, 297; Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 2006, 42.

Methods

The main objective of the study was to test the level of negativization of the 2016 US presidential campaign in the context of contents presented by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in TV electoral spots. In addition, in-depth analysis was carried out to find out whether the negative appeals more often pertained to programme issues or image characteristics of the candidates and to test which of the candidates more often used negative rhetoric in their TV spots.

Due to the specificity of the campaign and the candidates, we made the following three hypotheses:

> H1: Negative contents will be dominant in advertisements presented as part of the 2016 presidential campaign.

This hypothesis is based on the growing level of negativization of American electoral campaigns.

> H2: Donald Trump and his electoral team will use negative messages in electoral TV ads more often than Hillary Clinton.

This hypothesis results from the conclusions made by Judith S. Trent and Teresa Sabourin (1993), who confirmed equality between men and women in the use of negative ads but noted that men used a much more hard-hitting, assaultive style in their negative ads.

> H3: Negative contents included in TV ads as part of the 2016 presidential campaign will more often refer to image characteristics than to issues.

Our hypothesis seems counter-intuitive, since research shows that negative political ads are more issue-oriented than positive ads because exposure to negative ads

results in higher levels of audience recall than exposure to positive ads (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1989; Basil, Schooler, and Reeves 1991; Kahn and Kenney 2000). In our opinion, however, the specificity of the candidates will cause more frequent use of negative image ads.

So as to verify the hypotheses, all the electoral TV spots broadcast between the beginning of June (when the dominance of Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton was ensured) and November 8, 2016 (the election day). The analyzed ads were obtained from the 2016 Campaign Ad Archive run by a liberal American biweekly New Republic. Finally, 84 campaign ads were analyzed, both sponsored by candidates' committees and by super PACs. Out of them, 53 spots promoted Hillary Clinton[1], and 31, Donald Trump[2]. The exact distribution of the spots, including the time of the first broadcast, is presented in the following chart.
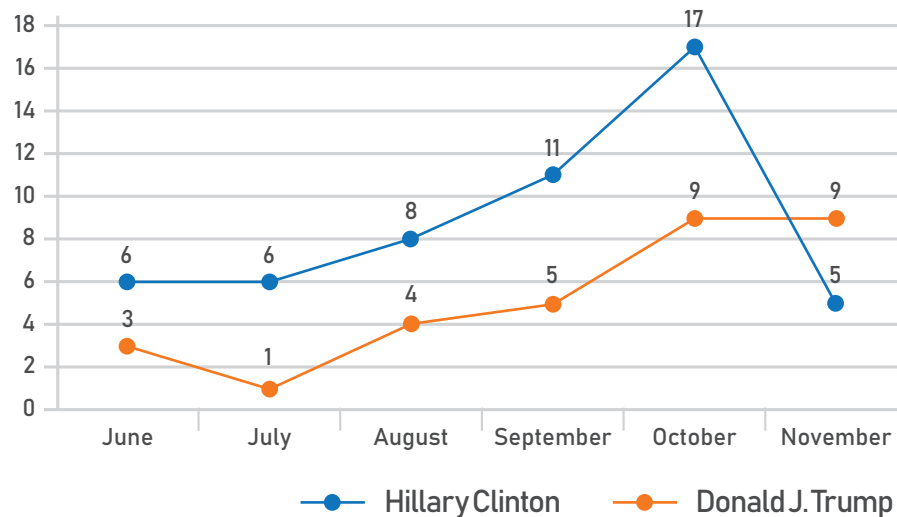

Chart 1. Analyzed spots of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump including the month they were launched
Source: own construction.

Campaign ads of the two candidates running for the US presidential election were analyzed from two perspectives: the sound (audio) and the vision (video). First, the spots' verbal rhetoric was analyzed. All the ads were transcribed, which enabled us to identify the overtone of each message. Then, we analyzed the visual

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1. The 53 analyzed ads prepared by Hillary Clinton were: *Grace, Who We Are, Always, Quiet Moments, Kayla, Tested, Sidekick, Standards, Myself, The Shows, Role Models, Issue, Someplace, Unfit, Absolutely, For Those Who Depends on Us, Just One, Shirts, Everything, Hat, Sacrifice, Only Way, Agree, Low Opinion, Families Together, Children, Sees, Mirrors, Investigation, My Temperament, Watch, Silo, Measure, Values, Doug, Respected, The Right Thing, Nevadense, Show Up, America's Bully, A Place for Everyone, Captain Khan, Barbershop, General Allen, Example, Families First, On the Ballot, Daisy, What he believes, 27 Million Strong, We are America, Roar, Tomorrow*.
2. The analyzed spots prepared by Donald Trump were: *More of the Same, The Enemy, It Takes Two, Outsourcing, America Soaring, Dead Broke, Two Americas: Immigration, Two Americas: Economy, Deplorables, Movement, Bad Experience, Why, Motherhood, Listening, Kristi's Story, Consumer Benefit, Dangerous, Corruption, Deals, Change, Laura, Predators, Choice, Corruption II, United, Unfit, Donald Trump's Argument for America, Moving Vans, Inauguration, The Clinton Way, Bad News*.

rhetoric of the spots. Each single frame was a unit of analysis. The two-stage analysis of the campaign spots made it possible to identify the kind of content dominating in each of them. Based on that, each ad was classified in two dimensions: positive-negative, and image-issue. The negative ads were then divided into image ads, issue ads and comparative ads as proposed by Karen S. Johnson-Cartee and Gary A. Copeland (1991). This way of analysis also makes it possible to compare the outcome of the study with previous analyses concerning presidential elections of the years 1952-2012. Additionally, the classification of the ads was presented in the context of the time of their broadcast. This way, we wanted to find out at which stage of the campaign the candidates tended to use negative messages and when they focused on presenting their own proposals and accomplishments instead.
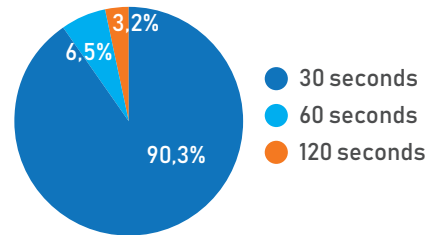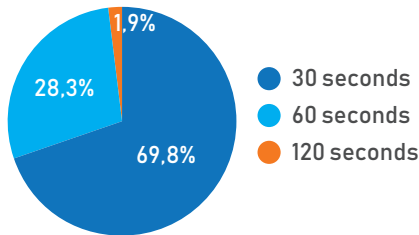
We also decided to analyze how often the ad sponsor and their opponent were mentioned in TV campaign spots. This analysis also involved the verbal and visual planes. We assumed that if negative ads dominated, it was more likely that in TV ads of the 2016 presidential campaign the image of the opponent would be presented more often than the image of the message sender.

A characteristic feature of the professionalization of campaign advertising is the shortening and maximum condensation of the message. This tendency was reflected in the analyzed campaign. Both candidates mostly broadcast 30 second-long spots. However, out of the two, Hillary Clinton more often used longer, one-minute ads. The team of Donald Trump focused on shorter messages, which rarely concentrated on the political programme (and if they did, they referred to a single specific issue). Instead, they mostly made the candidate's name stuck in voters' minds or they reminded them of some specific facts from the opponent's political activity. In the case of Trump, the vast majority of TV campaign ads followed the campaign strategy based on the catchphrase "Make America Great Again".

The analysis of institutions sponsoring the spots also leads to interesting conclusions. We find out that in the case of Donald Trump, only 61.3% of the analyzed ads were financed with the candidate committee's funds. More than one third were broadcast thanks to the resources of political action committees (PACs) created to support Donald Trump's presidential campaign, as well as the National Rifle Association, an organization that promotes the availability of guns.

Duration of TV ads

30 seconds
60 seconds
120 seconds

30 seconds
60 seconds
120 seconds

Sponsor of TV ads

Hillary for America
Priorities USA
DCCC

Donald J. Trump for President
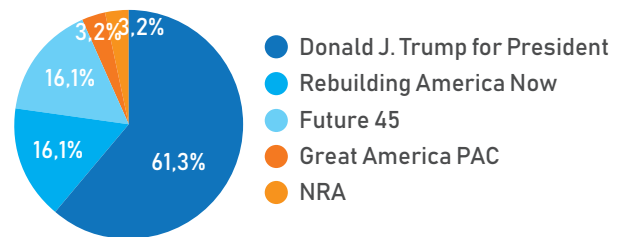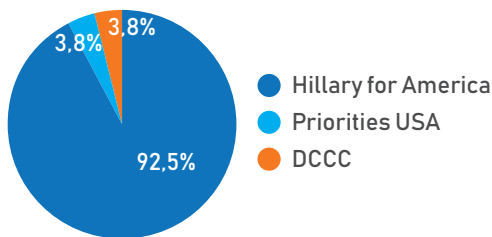Rebuilding America Now
Future 45
Great America PAC
NRA

Chart 2. Duration and sponsors of analyzed TV ads
Source: own construction.

Results and discussion

Of the 84 TV ads in our sample, 69% (58 spots) were classified as negative ads because they had been coded as dominated by negative characteristics of electoral opponent. Thus, the first hypothesis, "negative contents will be dominant in advertisements presented as part of the 2016 presidential campaign", was confirmed. Interestingly, most of the analyzed spots were classified as image ads. Hillary Clinton's ads dominate in this category, since 58.5% of them were spots with personality or image characteristics. Donald Trump's TV ads more often referred to programme issues, so 54.8% of them were classified as issue ads.

The second hypothesis was also confirmed. As the authors has supposed, Donald Trump and his electoral team more often used negative messages in TV campaign ads. In more than seven out of ten spots, negative elements which denigrated the opponent were dominant. The main way of attacking Hillary Clinton was to refer to her political past. Trump's campaign ads stressed the ambiguities connected

with the financing of the Clintons' foundation and the negative episodes from the time of Hillary Clinton serving as the secretary of state (i.a., email affair, chaos in Libya and Syria, the rise of ISIS, a failed reset with Russia, supporting the disastrous nuclear deal with Iran, a terror attack on US consulate in Benghazi). This way the Republican candidate tried to make the lack of political experience (of which he was accused by many political commentators) his asset and to discredit Hillary Clinton, who was presented in Trump's campaign as a member of corrupt establishment. It is perfectly clear e.g., in the Bad Experience spot, which vividly evokes all the failures of the former First Lady, and the message is even stronger thanks to Trump's statement from the first presidential debate: "Hillary has experience, but it's bad experience".

Surprisingly, the candidate of the Republicans used negative content in TV campaign spots only slightly more often than Hillary Clinton. In the case of the Democrats' candidate, 67.9% of the spots were classified as negative ads. This means that the 2016 campaign on TV was one of the most negative presidential campaigns in the history of the United States. Comparable intensity of negative messages in campaign spots was only present in the dirty Bill Clinton vs. George Bush campaign in 1992.

Candidate	Positive ads	Negative ads	Issue ads	Image ads
Hillary Clinton	17 (32.1%)	36 (67.9%)	22 (41.5%)	31 (58.5%)
Donald J. Trump	9 (29.0%)	22 (71.0%)	17 (54.8%)	14 (45.2%)
Total	26 (31.0%)	58 (69.0%)	39 (46.4%)	45 (53.6%)

Table 2. Types of analyzed television ads during 2016 presidential campaign
Source: own calculations based on conducted research.

In the case of negative advertising, both sides of political competition rarely used the comparative form. Hillary Clinton a little more often compared her own achievements with those of her rival. In her case, 10 out of 36 negative ads (27.7%) were comparative. For Donald Trump's spots, this ratio was 22.7% (5 out of 22 negative ads were comparative). Interestingly, in the case of the Republican candidate, the whole negative advertising referred to issue characteristics: his spots were based on contrasting the present situation of the United States with the vision of the future (Hillary Clinton's America vs. Donald Trump's America). Trump's spots are built using the dichotomy-based antithesis, which is a juxtaposition of words, phrases or ideas which are strongly contrasting. The message

sender is associated with positive feelings or issues (e.g., prosperity, more jobs, safety, transparency), while his political opponent is shown in relation to negative ones (e.g., stagnation, unemployment, crime, corruption).

Another stage of the study was to determine the dominant profile of negative ads. Nearly 64% of them presented the image of the political rival in a negative way. This means that the third of our hypotheses was also confirmed. It shows the specific nature of the latest presidential campaign and changes the previous tendency of dominance of issue characteristics in negative advertising.

Candidate	Negative image ads	Negative issue ads
Hillary Clinton	24 (66.7%)	12 (33,3%)
Donald J. Trump	13 (59,1%)	9 (40,9%)
Total	37 (63,8%)	21 (36,2%)

Table 3. Presidential candidates' use of negative image and negative issue-oriented ads during 2016 campaign
Source: own calculations based on conducted research.

A persuasion technique that was especially often applied by Hillary Clinton was the use of endorsement (de Barbaro 2005, 150). The content of such a message is made up of people's positive statements about the candidate or negative statements about the rival. Their aim is to lend credence to the message, and they may come in three different forms depending on the person speaking. Endorsement may be given by celebrities (e.g., politicians, actors or sports people), by so-called "men in the street", or by a family member (Olczyk 2009, 66-68). Usually, the goal of endorsement is to highlight the candidate's strong points and to construct their positive image. But in the analyzed campaign, this pattern was largely reversed. The technique was very often used in Hillary Clinton's negative ads. The Democrats' candidate used "men in the street" to emphasize negative elements of Donald Trump's image. This was the case of i.a.: *Grace,* in which the parents of a disabled girl criticized Trump's statements ridiculing disabled people; *Standards*, made up of statements by resolute Republican voters who disapproved of Congress people's support for Trump; *Unfit*, including statements by foreign policy specialists; *Shirts*, showing an American shirt manufacturer criticizing Trump for manufacturing his products outside the United States; *Respected*, presenting a veteran and zealous Republican who disapproves of Trump's views; *Nevadense*, the only Spanish-language spot of the campaign, in which Trump is criticized by an immigrant whose family is at risk of deportation; or *Captain Khan*, presenting

the statement of a father of an American Muslim soldier who had been killed when defending his fatherland in Iraq.

The team of Hillary Clinton also used negative endorsement from Republican politicians, which is best illustrated by the spot *Agree*, transcribed below:

> Senator Lindsey Graham: *He's a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot.* Mitt Romney: *Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud.* Senator Ben Sasse: *He's not a serious adult.* Senator Jeff Flake: *I can't vote for Donald Trump given the things that he'd said.* Congressman Richard Hanna: *Trump should not be supported.* Congressman Reid Ribble: *I believe he's disqualified himself to be president.* Senator Susan Collins: *I just cannot support Donald Trump.*

An interesting trick used by the former First Lady's advisers to convince traditional Republican voters was endorsement spots in which the speakers sincerely admitted they did not agree with Hillary Clinton's programme at all but still were going to support her in the presidential election. This technique is best illustrated by the spot *Doug*, in which a former Ronald Reagan's advisor Douglas G. Elmets admits:

> I cast my first vote for president as a college kid at the University of Iowa. I voted Republican then and I have ever since. But I cannot vote for Donald Trump when I see him bullying people, trying to divide us. That's not the kind of country I want my kids to grow up in. So I'm putting party aside and voting for Hillary Clinton. I don't agree with Hillary on everything. But I know she has the judgment and the experience and she knows you need to bring people together to get things done.

Clinton also applies traditional endorsement in her TV ads. Her positive qualities are emphasized among others by Barack Obama (*On the Ballot*), Michelle Obama (*Watch*) or the famous actor Morgan Freeman (*Example*). The Democrats' candidate did not decide to use the endorsement of her husband, who had served as the President for two terms before. Donald Trump, in turn, did decide to use family support: his programme for mothers was recommended in the spot *Motherhood* by his daughter Ivanka. Apart from that, Trump used the endorsement of "men in the street" in his spots (e.g., *Listening*, where a supporter of Republicans' candidate recommends his childcare plan; *Kristi's Story*, in which another supporter shows how happy she is that Trump defends the right to use guns, or *Laura*, where a devastated mother tells the story of her son being killed by an illegal immigrant).

An interesting though risky idea of Hillary Clinton was to use spots composed exclusively of Trump's controversial statements in the media (e.g., *Role Models, Someplace, Just One, Everything, Low Opinion, Mirrors, My Temperament*). In this case, Democrats' candidate uses rhetorical figure consisting in quoting a fragment of the opponent message and giving it a short commentary. On the one hand, constant repetition of the same Trump's media speeches made voters remember

better his controversial statements concerning women, immigrants or the disabled, consolidating the image of candidate who divides American citizens, which Clinton's team wanted to underscore. On the other hand, negative advertising that is perceived as extraordinarily harsh or unfair may backfire on a candidate. This phenomenon is called *backlash effect* by the scholars who study the effect of political advertising (Roese and Sande 1993). In extreme cases this may even result in the syndrome of victim support, when voters develop a liking for viciously or unjustly attacked candidates or parties. Then, it does not only fail to improve the support for the party behind the ad, but even leads to greater support for the attacked political entity (Pietraś 1998, 443). This is even more probable given that, as Todd L. Belt (2017) rightly points out, "In the US, a candidate's own campaign ads are easily identified by a quote heard at the end of their ad that states *I'm* [candidate's name] *and I approve this message.*" Trump's team also resorted to presenting edited statements of the rival in his TV spots (i.a., *More of the Same, Deplorables, Why*), but they did so on a much smaller scale.

In the 2016 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton referred to the most famous negative message in American presidential campaigns ever – the spot *Daisy*, created before the 1964 election involving the competition between Barry Goldwater and Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson's team hired Tony Schwartz, one of the best specialists dealing with advertisement production, who modified a previously prepared ad ordered by the United Nations. It shows a little girl on a meadow, who tears off daisy petals counting down from ten. At the end of the countdown the girl's voice is replaced by a strong voice of a reader, and at one we can see in the girl's eye an atomic bomb explosion and the mushroom cloud. During the explosion, we can hear Johnson's voice: "These are the stakes. To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die." The ad was broadcast only once. It was on the NBC channel, in the evening of September 7, 1964, without any explanation. This way, the Democrats' team effectively played on the emotions of American voters, suggesting that Barry Goldwater's political proposals can lead to an outbreak of a nuclear war.

In this case, Hillary Clinton uses anamnesis, a rhetorical figure consisting in recalling past events, motifs and characters. She tried to refer to the same emotions in her spot Daisy, presenting the utterance of Monique Corzilius Luiz, who played the main role in the spot from 1964. In the context of Donald Trump's announcements connected with the use of nuclear power in a potential conflict, we can hear the following words: "The fear of nuclear war that we had as children. I never thought our children would ever have to deal with that again, and to see that coming forward in this election is really scary".

Another technique that was commonly used by both candidates was the support of independent sources, whose aim is to stress the authenticity of the message (de Barbaro 2005, 154). It is also sometimes called the "propaganda of facts" (Adamik-Szysiak 2012, 126). In political ads it has the form of presenting titles or fragments of press texts, politicians' statements, or the use of logos of popular TV stations. It can be used as redundancy of advantages of the message sender or of the lack of competence and credibility of the rival. In the analyzed campaign, its application was limited to highlighting negative characteristics of the political opponent (e.g., Clinton's spots *Who We Are, Everything, Tested*, or Trump's spot *Bad News*).

The study also involved checking whose image dominated in TV campaign advertising in the 2016 presidential campaign. The results were surprising. We found that Donald Trump's spots more often showed Hillary Clinton than the Republican candidate. His image was presented on average 2.42 times in each spot, and the former First Lady, 3.42 times. It emphasizes the tendency identified before that the goal of TV ads from the 2016 campaign was first of all to discredit the political rival.

Candidate	The average number of advertising sender's appearance in campaign ads	The average number of rival's appearance in campaign ads
Hillary Clinton	2.91	2.30
Donald J. Trump	2.42	3.42

Table 4. The average number of candidates' appearance in 2016 presidential campaign ads
Source: own calculations based on conducted research.

This is also confirmed by the analysis of the verbal plane of TV spots. It proved that in Hillary Clinton's ads her opponent was mentioned more often than herself. The same was true for Donald Trump's spots.

Candidate	The average number of advertising sender names' appearance in campaign ads	The average number of rival names' appearance in campaign ads
Hillary Clinton	0.51	0.91
Donald J. Trump	0.74	1.68

Table 5. The average number of candidate names' appearance in 2016 presidential campaign ads
Source: own calculations based on conducted research.

The broadcast time of each spot is also important in the communication strategy. Therefore, we decided to check what kind of ad dominated in each period of the 2016 presidential campaign. Surprisingly, in the case of Donald Trump, negative spots dominated in all six analyzed months. It was not so in the case of Hillary Clinton, who more often broadcast positive ads at the very beginning of the campaign (in June) and at its conclusion (at the end of October and in November). The difference in the adopted strategies was especially visible in the last week before the election, when Trump's campaign team decided to broadcast mostly negative image ads. At the time, positive issue ads dominated in the former First Lady's campaign. As the election result showed, the strategy of escalation of conflict applied by Trump gave him the victory in most swing states.

Our study has several limitations that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Firstly, scholars studying political ads often criticize the very categorization of spots into positive-negative and issue-image categories. As Glenn W. Richardson (2001) rightly observes, researchers tend to perceive the negative message too narrowly, only focusing on the verbal component and ignoring audio-visual elements. Therefore, coding spots just as positive or negative may be an oversimplification. Similar problems occur when we attempt to categorize political ads as image ads or issue ads. Frank Biocca (1991) argues that few ads can be explicitly attributed to one of the two categories. Analyzing smaller components of spots shows that most of them are made of references both to specific political issues and image components. We believe we managed to avoid the above-mentioned problems thanks to analyzing both the verbal and the visual planes of the ads at the same time and creating coherent categorization keys. The character of the 2016 presidential campaign, in which the overtone of the ads was clearer than in the previous campaigns, facilitated coding the ads in the analyzed dimensions. Secondly, the problem scholars from outside the United States have with directly following the campaign on TV seems to be an important limitation of the research. However, we think that thanks to new technologies and professional accounts of the campaign events, it is possible nowadays, and modern technology shortens the distance even between the farthest places in the world.

Conclusions

Our research confirmed that the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States was highly negative as regards TV campaign ads. Negative messages were dominant in the campaign run by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. This was determined by the responses to candidates' mutual attacks, since neither of them was going to surrender and go on to the defensive. Thus, the words of Bruce E. Gronbeck (1994, 76), who stated that "candidates are afraid of the power of their

opponents' negative polispots and believe they need strong negative defenses for uses in cases of preemptive first strikes by the other party" are still valid.

In addition, the ads in the campaign even more concentrated on the candidates and presented them from the perspective of their character traits (both positive and negative) instead of programmes or strategies. Image-oriented messages in TV political ads clearly dominated in the analyzed spots. Campaign strategies also determined the applied rhetorical figures, among whom the antithesis was most often used. We are still to find out whether the tendency to broadcast more negative and more personal messages in TV ads will remain in the future campaigns. It seems that the phenomenon was only characteristic of the latest campaign, in which the Democrats' and Republicans' communication strategies were largely dependent on the specificity of the candidates representing the parties.

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