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Selling Australian Politicians
Political Advertising 1949-2001

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Abstract

This thesis reports the results of the most comprehensive study of political advertising in Australia. Over 1300 newspaper and television advertisements were analysed from the important post-war election of 1949 to the most recent federal election in 2001, using three complementary research methods—content analysis, discourse analysis and ad-mapping. The thesis engages with theoretical debates about the significance of elections, the 'effect' of political advertisements and the nature of civic discourse and political participation. It also examines claims of 'Americanisation', the impact of professionalisation, party convergence theory and theories of the mass media, including agenda setting, priming, framing and the impact of television.

The results reveal that political advertising is central to the conduct of modern election campaigns. In some respects, political advertising has changed markedly over the past fifty years. There has been a declining emphasis on party in conjunction with a heightened focus on image, negativity and personalisation—in particular, negative personalisation and a focus on the opponent party leader. Some of these changes are of concern as they may have a detrimental impact on the political system and the way Australians elect their politicians. However, there are also some long-standing features of political advertising which have remained the same including narrow targeting, use of ads to set the public agenda, a homogenous conception of the audience, use of hard-hitting, negative discourse, appeals to voters' emotions and self-interest, and a reliance on stereotypes to portray particular groups. These features demonstrate that many of the problems which have been identified as 'modern ills' are, in fact, deeply rooted in the past. Rather than spearheading any collapse of democracy, political advertisements are reflecting changes in the relationships between politicians, the media and the public.
Declaration

This is to certify that (i) the thesis comprises only my original work, except where indicated in the preface, (ii) due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used, (iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed /  /2003
Preface

Sections of this thesis have been previously published in the following sources but appear in this dissertation in a significantly revised format;


Other publications produced by the author during her candidature which are based on the research material collected for this dissertation (but not on sections of writing included in the thesis) are;

1) Sally Young, Scott McQuire, Tim Marjoribanks and Graham Willett, Political Advertising: The First Century, (a CD-Rom for use in three University of Melbourne subjects), 2002.

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Lynton Crosby, Federal Director of the Liberal Party of Australia, provided permission to access and copy parts of the Liberal Party Manuscripts held by the National Library of Australia (Collection MS5000). John Burston, Acting Federal Director of the Liberal Party allowed me permission to reproduce Liberal Party ads in this thesis. Geoff Walsh, the National Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, provided permission to reproduce Labor Party advertisements. Andrew Hall, Federal Director of the National Party provided permission to reproduce National and Country Party ads. Trish Shepherd of the Labor Party provided details of the advertising agents used by the Labor Party over the past thirty years.

Arts IT at The University of Melbourne allowed me use of their facilities and much hands-on assistance to digitise all of my television ads. The Arts Faculty provided an ITMM Grant to produce a CD-Rom so that I have been able to share some of these ads with students in three different courses. Sam at *Applied Digital Systems* scanned and digitised my 1200 print ads. The National Library of Australia provided me with a Summer Scholarship so that I could study their collection of political ephemera and election material. The Library provided much assistance and photography staff took many photos of ephemera, some of which are displayed in this thesis with permission of the National Library and the political parties.
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1 Introduction

Early political advertising, before 1901

On 15 June 1843, Australia's first election was held in New South Wales when twenty-four members were elected to the newly enlarged Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{1} A lengthy search of newspapers from this time yielded what may be the first newspaper advertisement for an Australian election (Figure 1.1). The ad was placed by a candidate, Henry Macdermott, six months before polling day.\textsuperscript{2} The ad was short and its content was simple—a request that supporters not pledge themselves to any other candidate. Closer to polling day, more lengthy advertisements were used, such as the one by William Foster in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1 – Australia's first political newspaper advertisement, Henry Macdermott, 1842

\begin{quote}
TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF SYDNEY.

GENTLEMEN,—As I intend offering myself as a Candidate at the approaching General Election of Members for the New Legislature, I beg that such of you as are inclined to support me will not pledge yourselves to any other Candidate.

I have the honour to be, Gentleman,

Your most obedient Servant,

HENRY MACDERMOTT.

Sydney, Dec. 17, 1843.
\end{quote}
Raguetville, Pemthith, January 10, 1843

TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

GENTLEMEN,—It having been intimated to me that my former address to you did not contain a sufficient exposition of my political views and principles, I now propose to give you an outline of the conduct I intend to pursue, should you put the honour of electing me your representative. 

I am no dead person, as the term is understood, and I imagine that no lawyer can send the distinction to which I aspire without being a plebeian; nor do I, as I have often said, intend to seek any applause or attention of any kind, under any circumstances. I further pledge myself, whatever my election or non-election, to appear before the Legislative Council, that nothing but the most important interests of the colony shall influence me in supporting or opposing its measures. In the next place, in order to show that I mean to be honest, I will not present any matter to the Legislative Council, that I believe to be incorrect, without the fullest investigation of it. And I will, in all cases, do my best to prevent the measure, and prevent or retard the legislation. Lastly, I hold that the very man who has the best respect for himself and means honestly to be elected by the persons whom he wishes to become his constituents, would, at the present moment, venture to give my policy and intentions, as much as I mean to depend on the peculiar opinions and preconceptions which may happen to exist in the colony at the present period when such measures are brought forward, whether they ought to be supported or opposed. On all such occasions I will be as open and as free as any of those who attend the House of Assembly. Should you do me the honour to elect me to give the most patient and respectful attention to all your wishes and suggestions.

North Pemthith, January 10, 1843.

WILLIAM FOSTER

As there were no organised political parties at this time, candidates placed individual advertisements. In keeping with the style of newspapers at the time, the ads were usually text-heavy and in small print. In their ads, candidates outlined their views on issues of the day such as taxation and religious freedom. Although by today’s standards, the ads were very long, William Foster pointed out in his 1843 advertisement that it was only possible to outline his views and intentions ‘as fully as the limits of an advertisement will permit’. So even in 1843 there was a recognition that advertisements had limitations and were not necessarily the best medium for delivering complex information. At this time, public meetings were one of the more preferred methods of political communication as these allowed candidates to deliver lengthy orations (Figures 1.3 and 1.4).

Figure 1.3 – ‘A public meeting near the Circular Quay, Sydney’, 1853

ADVERTISING METHODS

Newspaper advertisements were not the only method of political advertising. Banners, cockades, flags, handbills and posters were also popular. Banners were considered a form of both political and artistic expression. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported for example, that Mr Hannibal H. Macarthur’s banner in 1843 was ‘a splendid blue silk banner with white border’, bearing on one side the arms of the Macarthur family, with the motto, *Fide et Opera* and on the reverse, the arms, with the motto in English. According to the *Herald*, it was ‘elegantly painted, and reflected great credit upon the artist’.
Dirty tricks and negative advertising

Dirty tricks, false claims, lies and attack advertising have always been a feature of Australian politics. At the first election in 1843, one candidate published allegations that his opponent was a Roman Catholic. Another candidate ran advertising claiming his opponent lived outside the city and was not a native-born Australian. Yet another attacked his opponent for trying to cheat the electors with ‘empty words borrowed from books.’

In a later election in South Australia in September 1855, the opposing candidates for the seat of West Adelaide were Mr Fischer and Mr Forster. Their campaigns were masterful displays of early attempts at tracking public opinion and directing strategic messages to target audiences. A month before polling day, Forster placed the following advertisement in the South Australian Register:

‘Irishmen! Electors of West Adelaide...
Who would deny you vote by ballot?
Fischer, the Tory.
Who would protect you by ballot?
Forster, the Liberal.
Who is most likely to serve the working men, a Liberal or a Tory?
Answer the question yourselves at the poll, and vote for
Forster,
With political liberty and progress!’

Mr Forster’s campaign committee placed a rebuttal advertisement stating ‘Irishmen! Go to the meeting this evening at the Cumberland Arms... when Mr Forster will address you and hear from his own lips whether he is your friend or your enemy.’ Forster’s committee also placed a second rebuttal advertisement stating: ‘Irishmen! Beware of the insidious attempts to excite national hatred in this colony. The supporters of Mr Fischer represent Mr Forster as being opposed to your interests. The charge is false and ridiculous.’
Inventive political advertising

Aside from the use of traditional means such as posters, banners and newspaper ads, there was also some inventive political advertising in the late Nineteenth Century with the use of dogs as an advertising medium. Dogs would be adorned with ribbons and signs and placed outside polling booths for maximum visibility on election day (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5 – Dog advertisements, Victorian elections, 1894

Political advertising, 1901-49

By 1901, Australia still had a very small population. Individual electorates contained only a few thousand, or even a few hundred, electors. Electioneering was still dominated by live performances including town-hall meetings and stump speeches, and by printed media such as newspaper advertisements, posters, leaflets and handbills (Figure 1.6).11

Figure 1.6 – Early political handbill, the Commonwealth Liberal Party, 1910

Vote for your Local Liberal Ministerial Candidate
for the House of Representatives.
And for the Three Liberal Candidates for the Senate.

THE BUBBLE-BLOWER.

"The Bubbles - they're mighty pretty, but between you and me, they're only soap and water."

Authorised by O. A. Tunbridge, Sec. COMMONWEALTH LIBERAL PARTY, 200 Collins-st.
Printed by J. J. McIlwain, Alfred Place, Melbourne.

By the 1920s, however, new options for advertising were opening up. Cinema advertisements began to be used in campaigns, but only infrequently. Most campaigns would produce only one or two cinema advertisements of between three to ten minutes in length. One of the oldest surviving of these cinema advertisements is a 1925 silent film advertisement for the conservative government of Stanley Melbourne Bruce (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7 – National Party cinema advertisement, ‘S. M. Bruce’, 1925

Radio broadcasting began in Australia in 1923. In these early days, it was still accorded mystic properties including ‘the ability to contact the dead and cure cancer’. But by the end of the 1930s, radio was clearly established in Australian homes and two out of every three dwellings had a set. Radio became a major source of political news. The first transmission of Parliament occurred in 1924 and in the 1930s and 1940s, live radio would carry Policy Speeches at peak listening time. By the 1940s, party managers and journalists noted that attendance at political meetings had fallen off due to mainstream use of radio.
JOHN HENRY AUSTRAL (1949)

Colin A. Hughes points out that the 1949 Liberal election campaign was ‘unusually well funded’ by business interests in Australia and London who wanted to ‘get rid of an ALP government bent on socialist experiments’. The Liberals hired Sim Rubensohn of Hansen-Rubensohn to design their advertisements. Rubensohn usually worked for the ALP but had split from them in 1947 in protest at their bank nationalisation plan. (He was later re-employed by the ALP and went on to handle their advertising for several decades [see Table 2.1]).

Rubensohn advised the Liberal Party to buy air-time to run an eighteen month long series of fifteen minute broadcasts using the format of the then-popular weekly radio serial. In these advertisements, the fictional character ‘John Henry Austral’ would denounce Labor’s socialism. Ian Ward explains that John Henry’s part was written as a neighbourly, wise and ‘independent commentator’ who would ‘castigate Labor’s bureaucratic and socialist policies, and reveal the hidden influence of communism’ at every opportunity.

Between April 1947 and December 1948, John Henry Austral spoke to voters twice weekly on more than eighty commercial stations around Australia. There were 200 episodes spanning a twenty month season prior to the election. It was an extremely expensive campaign which some estimate to have cost a million pounds.

The John Henry Austral campaign marked a major turning point in electioneering. Stephen Mills notes that it made effective use of the only electronic medium available at the time through ‘saturation of time and imaginative dramatisation of political material’. It picked up on a dominant cultural form—the radio serial—at a time when it was ingrained in Australian life. Overall, it was an early prototype of the modern campaign whose hallmark is ‘a centralised and disciplined campaign of long-term electronic advertising’.
Political advertising in Australia

Unlike 1843, when public meetings were popular, today, most Australians never have any direct contact with election candidates. Instead, they rely on information gleaned from television, newspapers and radio. How candidates present themselves in these media has become increasingly important to the election outcome. In order to be successful, candidates need to receive favourable ‘free media’ including favourable coverage in television news bulletins, radio shows, newspaper editorials and articles. While candidates try to influence this coverage using increasingly sophisticated media-management techniques, ultimately, they can not control the content.

The ‘paid’ media of political advertising is, therefore, not the only means by which Australian political parties seek to persuade voters. However, as Mills points out, it is ‘the most expensive one, perhaps the most precise one and the only one over which the [parties] have complete control’. Candidates now spend most of their campaign budgets on advertisements and engage a host of professionals to ensure they are produced for maximum effect. In Australia, over $30 million is spent on advertisements during federal elections—with up to seventy per cent of the major parties’ campaign budgets devoted to television advertising alone. When one considers that ninety per cent of Australians are exposed to televised political advertising, the parties control over these messages takes on particular significance.

During a federal election campaign, many Australians are so bombarded by televised political advertisements during the last weeks of the campaign, that they become irritated by them. However, few would be aware that they are paying for these ads. Australian tax-payers now provide over $27 million for the major political parties to campaign and the parties spend most of this money on television advertising.

For Australians, it is therefore true that how we elect our representatives is just as important as who we elect. The manner in which politicians campaign and the extent to which they provide an informed choice for voters, is an important subject of study. Theoretically, political advertising is one of the main methods candidates can use to
outline their differences in terms of policy, philosophy and leadership. In practice, whether politicians actually use political advertisements for this purpose—to educate voters and aid informed decision making—or whether they use them for other purposes such as scaremongering, making false claims about their opponents or reducing complex issues to simplified slogans, is an important issue.

Over the past three decades, political advertising has become central to electoral politics in western democracies and Australia is no exception. Following the 2001 federal election, both Liberal and Labor Party leaders described political advertising as a key factor in the election result.28 Journalists are also frequently convinced of the power of political advertisements. In 1996, despite many opinion polls predicting a Labor Party loss, one newspaper headline claimed; ‘ALP comeback not impossible through TV ads’.29 In media accounts, the most common perception is that there is ‘no doubt that advertising has played a pivotal role in winning elections’.30 Yet in Australia, political advertising has been paid scant scholarly attention. Political advertisements have tended to be viewed as peripheral to the political process when their central role in election campaigns means they are in fact crucial to it.

The ultimate purpose of political advertising in elections is, of course, to win votes and while no researcher has been able to conclusively determine how, many have argued that advertisements do have an effect on voters and can even influence voting choice.31 Yet, there is also some evidence to suggest that political advertisements have other, perhaps unintended effects. It is alleged that they have contributed to the decline of the political parties, the rise of a cynical electorate and the ‘dumbing down’ of political debate. These are serious charges; however, Australian political scientists have not been able to test these claims. With no comprehensive study of political advertising in Australia, Australian political scientists have had to rely largely on American research. This is an unsatisfactory method which has left us with major gaps in our knowledge. On the surface, political advertising appears to have changed dramatically over the years and many commentators fear it has changed for the worst. However, in Australia, we do not know specifically how it has changed or what impact any changes have had upon our political system.
Aim

The aim of this thesis is, therefore, to discover how political advertising used in Australian federal election campaigns has changed over the past fifty years. By setting political advertising in an historical context dating from the important post-war election of 1949 to the most recent federal election in 2001, this thesis will show how the ways in which Australian politicians are packaged and promoted in ads have changed and how they have remained the same.

The broader purpose of this analysis is to uncover the impact of political advertising on the way we elect our politicians and on our political system as a whole. However, the intention is not to determine whether political advertising 'works' in the sense of whether it persuades voters to vote one way or another. Although this has become a popular topic for study in the U.S., no researcher has yet been able to conclusively determine the specific effects of advertising upon individual political behaviour. Overall, it remains virtually impossible to isolate the effect of advertising on voting choice as distinct from other elements of influence such as family, education, media and partisanship. Even the political parties have little data on advertising effects.32

This thesis does not attempt to measure the unmeasurable and nor does it view political advertising in such utilitarian terms. Instead, in this study, political advertising is viewed as a form of communication and more specifically, as a form of political communication. It is seen as a dialogue or conversation between politicians, political parties, their consultants and advertising agents on the one side, and voters or the general public on the other. This dissertation focuses on one side of this conversation—the political parties and their affiliates. It examines what they are communicating, how they are communicating it, whether and how their message and their presentation of that message, has changed over time. In other words, the goal is to 'make sense of the actions of [the] persuaders, as opposed to the reactions of their audiences'.33
The thesis engages with theoretical debates around political advertising, including debates about the significance of elections, the 'effect' of political advertisements and the nature of civic discourse and political participation. It also examines claims of 'Americanisation', the impact of professionalisation, party convergence theory and theories of the mass media, including agenda setting, priming, framing, and the impact of television.

**Research approach**

It is important to define the type of 'political advertising' which is investigated in this thesis as there are several contexts in which advertising might be considered 'political'. Firstly, there is government advertising which is used to promote or explain government policies or programs (such as the advertisements run in 1999-2000 to promote the GST). Secondly, there are the advertisements placed by lobby groups and private interests (such as unions, business leaders and 'issue' groups) which are designed to influence public opinion and persuade politicians. Thirdly, the term 'political advertising' is most commonly used to refer to *the advertisements produced by political parties and individual candidates which are shown during election campaigns in order to persuade voters to vote for them*. It is this type of political (election) advertising with which we are concerned here.

In order to understand how this type of political advertising fits in to Australian politics and society, Chapter two outlines the context of political advertising and provides crucial information about how political advertising is shaped by the Australian electorate, campaigning methods, political advertising regulation, funding and the mass media. This information is critical for understanding the role of political advertising in Australia. Chapter three then reviews political advertising theory and research. Major debates and issues are discussed and a brief outline of research
methods used in key studies is provided. Chapter four builds on this information and outlines the research design used in this thesis. It explains how over 1300 newspaper and television advertisements were analysed using content analysis, discourse analysis and ad-mapping. Chapters five to eight present the results obtained while chapter nine provides a discussion of the results and final conclusions.

One of the key findings of the thesis is that there never was any ‘golden age’ of political advertising. Although political advertising has, in some respects, changed markedly over the past fifty years, many of these changes have their antecedents in earlier political advertising. There are also some long-standing features of political advertising which have remained the same. These include narrow targeting, use of ads to set the public agenda, a homogenous conception of the audience, use of negative discourse, appeals to voters’ emotions and self-interest, and a reliance on stereotypes to portray particular groups. Some of the changes which have occurred in political advertising, although rooted in the past, are still of concern. A declining emphasis on party in conjunction with a heightened focus on image, negativity, personalisation and targeting, suggest a move away from policy, the parties and ideology, a greater focus on leaders as soft targets, and a closing down of political debate.

Throughout the thesis, over 200 examples of political ads are included as vibrant sources of information which help to explain, illustrate and interpret political advertising (a full list of these advertisements is provided in Appendix B).
Conclusion

Political advertisements have been in use in Australia since our first election in 1843. In early years, candidates for political office relied on live performances and printed information, their campaign expenditure was modest and campaigns were the work of an army of party members. Today, electioneering is big business. The two major parties spend over $30 million. They rely on a host of professionals including pollsters, focus group coordinators and advertising agents. They focus on television advertising, political marketing, direct-mail and new technology. The following chapter puts this background into context by explaining important features of Australia’s political system which have shaped the nature of political advertising.
Chapter one noted that a lack of research on political advertising in Australia has led to a reliance on American research. This reliance is unsatisfactory because the two countries electoral systems and political cultures are not directly comparable. In Australia, the political parties are stronger, there is a system of compulsory voting and publicly funded election campaigns and less choice of broadcasting and print media. There are only a handful of consultants in Australia compared to over 5000 in the United States and the Australian parties use advertising agencies whose commercial viability derives from their non-political business between elections rather than specialist campaign consultancies.

Before moving on to a review of the (largely U.S-based) theory and research on political advertising, it is therefore prudent to consider some of the unique features of the Australian political system in order to place political advertising in an Australian context. This chapter provides an outline of the Australian electoral system including the Australian electorate, electioneering techniques and the mass media which allows a more detailed understanding of the context of political advertising. It also provides specific information about the regulation of political advertising and how it is funded in Australia. An understanding of this background information is crucial in order to proceed to critically review the theory and research which has already been performed (Chapter three) and to design research which properly takes account of the Australian variations (Chapter four).
The Australian electorate

Australia is essentially a two-party system with the electoral battle to win government a contest between the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberal Party-National Party Coalition (Coalition).\(^1\) Appendix C provides background information about these political parties including their histories, ideologies and electoral fortunes.

Since the 1920s, there has been exceptional stability in voting patterns in Australia.\(^2\) Both major parties have traditionally been able to rely on the support of a core of at least forty per cent of the electorate with the election result determined by a comparatively small number of ‘swinging’ (or uncommitted) voters. However, this traditional pattern of remarkably strong party identification has begun to decline. In 1987, ninety-one per cent of Australians identified with either the ALP or Coalition. By 1996, this was down to seventy-eight per cent.\(^3\) The intensity of people’s identification has also declined. Twenty years ago, one in every three voters were strong partisans. Today, that is down to less than one in five.\(^4\)

This steady decline in party identification has been reflected in the membership of the parties. Ward notes that neither ‘now has a genuinely mass membership’.\(^5\) Despite the electoral success of the ALP in the 1980s, it had just 55,000 fee paying members in 1990—no more than it had had thirty years before and only ‘a small fraction of the 370,000 members it appears to have had in the 1940s, when it was undeniably a mass party to which one in every twenty Labor voters belonged’.\(^6\) The Liberal Party has experienced the same downwards trend. In 1967, it had some 130,000 members across Australia. By 1990, this had fallen to 69,000, leaving it, ‘a poor imitation of the robust mass party that Menzies had established in 1944, and which had quickly gathered some 100,000 members in Victoria and News South Wales alone’.\(^7\)

Despite this decline, party identification remains the single most important factor influencing a person’s vote in Australia—after all, about seventy-eight per cent of the electorate still consider themselves either Coalition or ALP voters. However, from the 1970s-1980s, the parties have faced a changing electoral environment. The number of
‘swinging’ and independent voters has increased. Voters are making their voting
decision later. There is increased cynicism towards politicians and politics in general. While the situation is still far from the weak party system of the U.S., declining party identification, a more volatile electorate and a more cynical mindset represent a challenge to the Australian political parties.

**Election campaigning**

In the U.S., television advertisements (‘spots’) are widely used, not only in presidential, state and local elections but even in local school board elections. There are thousands of political advertisements at all levels of government including a long series of presidential advertisements which can run for over twelve months from the primaries to polling day every four years.

In Australia, even in federal elections, individual candidates can rarely afford their own television advertisements. Most Australian House of Representative candidates run a comparatively cheap local media campaign supplemented by the more expensive national campaign which is coordinated by the party. This campaign is party-centred rather than candidate-centred, often has the party leader as the focus and runs in the most expensive media including major metropolitan television and radio stations and the top circulation newspapers.

Because advertisements are so widely used in the U.S., political advertising has become a big industry there. Translating the amounts into Australian dollars, in 1998, over A$900 million dollars was spent on televised political advertising at all levels of government. Looking solely at presidential campaigns, the Clinton and Dole campaigns combined spent over A$300 million on television advertising in 1996. In comparison, in the same year, the ALP and the Liberal-National Party spent a combined total of A$15 million on broadcast advertising during the Australian federal election.
Over the past three decades, campaigns in Australia have become characterised by greater professionalisation, the use of polling, market research and consultants, and the rise of political marketing strategies. There is an ongoing debate about whether these changes represent an 'Americanisation' of the Australian political system or rather, a convergence of modern campaigning techniques across many Western liberal democracies.

There is no doubt that Australian politicians have been influenced by the methods and strategies used by their American counterparts. Yet there are still vast differences between Australian election campaigning and campaigning practices in the US. One of the major differences concerns the amount of money which is raised and spent on election campaigning. In Australia, a House of Representatives candidate in a marginal seat might spend between A$50,000-$70,000. In the U.S., a House of Representatives candidate spends an average of A$1 million. Thirty-nine of the top fifty candidates spend over A$2 million and the top spending candidate in 1998 spent A$15 million (all figures in Australian dollars).

As yet, there are very few specialised political consultants in Australia and even the advertising agencies used are not specialists—rather, they derive their income from commercial advertising between elections. In the U.S., party elites have effectively lost control of the campaigning process to consultants from outside the party. In Australia, the political parties are still very strong. They exercise a tight reign over who becomes an MP and how they vote. Here, the parties hire consultants and advertising agencies—not the other way around—and it is the parties which disperse the publicly-provided campaign funds.

In Australia, although both major party campaigns are now centralised at the national level, traditionally, the ALP has been more centralised than the Liberal Party. In the 1950s, the ALP's state organisations often supplied their funds to the ALP federal executive in the belief that the money would 'be used more effectively from a central source'. It was therefore not uncommon for most ALP advertising in the 1950s to be produced centrally by the Hansen-Rubensohn agency and used across all states.
By contrast, the Liberals' election advertising was usually issued from state sources which, as D. W. Rawson points out, meant there was 'always a danger of embarrassing differences of emphasis appearing in different states.' In the 1958 election, the Liberal Party formed a central campaign committee to discourage state deviations. But the work of election campaigns still remained largely in the hands of the state machines with the state offices often working with different advertising agents in each state. In 1972, this was still the case with the federal party playing no part in the planning of the national publicity or advertising campaign—this was left to the state branches of the party and even to local candidates. As a result, 'campaign methods and issues varied greatly from state to state.' It was not until late 1973, spurred on by their loss in 1972, that the Liberals appointed a national advertising agency. By 1975, Michelle Grattan noted that their campaigns were run by a 'formidable national election organization which ran with military precision.'

The National Party has tended to rely on local electorate organisations and on local media in rural areas rather than metropolitan media. State branches often ran individual campaigns and placed greatest emphasis on country media and the provincial press. The emphasis of campaigns varied from state to state. For example, the Queensland branch often took a much stronger anti-socialist stance than other branches during the Whitlam years.

Scott Bennett notes that although centralisation has now taken hold, especially in the Liberal and Labor parties, the party organisations in the states still have much to do particularly in 'organising activities on behalf of the central organisation and in aiding local candidates, but they are supposedly working to the direction of the central campaign team'.

Traditionally in Australia, the fate of local candidates is 'very much dependent upon the performance of their party [with] any personal qualities they might possess simply “the final gloss” on their chances'. This is because, despite the recent decline in party identification, overall, the electorate is still 'partisan, already committed and indifferent to the particular claims of candidates'. Bennett notes that while the psephological concept of uniform swing is 'repugnant to all enthusiasts for participatory democracy [because] there should be a reward in votes for the dedicated
efforts of candidates and party workers,' most statistical analyses of Australian election results 'indicate a depressing absence of difference in the outcomes secured by energetic candidates and by idle ones.' Party membership is still the major determinant of electoral success. How well the candidate's party is perceived and how well the national campaign promotes the party as a whole, are effectively the most crucial factors in whether an individual party candidate wins his/her seat. Unlike the U.S., in Australia it would be unusual for a candidate to fail to include their party name or logo on their local advertising because being the endorsed ALP or Liberal-National Party candidate will be the major determinant of their electoral success. At the start of the Second World War, the population of Australia was eight million. By 2001, Australia's population had doubled to over nineteen million. As Australia's population grew, electoral boundaries were redistributed and the number of seats in Parliament increased from 123 to 150. However, the national distribution of electoral divisions has remained quite similar with over seventy-five per cent of electoral divisions still concentrated in only three states: New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. The parties' election campaign strategies have increasingly focused upon 'marginal' seats. These are seats where the winner receives less than fifty-six per cent of the vote as opposed to 'safe' seats where one party is practically assured of success. Because New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland contain most of the electoral divisions, they also contain the greatest number of marginal seats. Ultimately, advertising is, of course, only one component of electioneering strategy. A successful election campaign depends upon more than political advertising. It is also necessary to receive as much favourable coverage from unpaid media, particularly television (and particularly prime time television news). Unlike political advertising, the content and tone of these media reports is not within the party or candidate's control. However, politicians try to manipulate it through careful management of the media ('spin-control') including set photo opportunities, staged 'walks' and press releases. It has become increasingly important for politicians to garner as much favourable free media coverage as possible in conjunction with their expensive advertising campaigns.
In Australia, many advances in campaigning have been initiated by the ALP including the 1972 ‘It’s Time’ ads, the creation of a computer database to record voter details, a marginal seat strategy and other initiatives which generally led to a perception that the ALP was a more efficient campaigner. However, in recent years, since 1996, the Coalition has taken this mantle and is currently considered to be more technically proficient at campaigning.\textsuperscript{37}

The Liberal Party’s search for a candidate for the 1995 Canberra by-election provided a stark example of the extent to which political marketing now dominates their campaigning:

According to poll research, the candidate should be in his/her thirties, be married with children, be active in community affairs, be an employee, and be a resident of the Tuggeranong Valley... Brendon Smyth was the only candidate of five who fitted this profile, and although he finished third in the preselection ballot, the Party’s management committee intervened to ensure that he was nominated...\textsuperscript{38}

Advertising agents and ‘image makers’

Advertising agents have been important players in Australian election campaigns. Sim Rubensohn was one of the longest-standing advertising agents. He had worked for the Labor Party since Curtin became Prime Minister, but famously switched sides in 1949. After returning to the Labor Party in 1953, he remained its advertising agent for the next thirty years.

As soon as the parties starting using professional advertising agents, funding became an issue. In 1940, John Curtin established a large and secret fund, the sole purpose of which was to pay the Hansen-Rubensohn agency.\textsuperscript{39} Even as early as 1961, there was concern that the relationship between parties and their advertising agents was undemocratic and unaccountable. In Rawson’s study of the 1958 federal election, he noted that although advertising agents are outside the ranks of the parties and have
'only a temporal and commercial connexion with them', they have 'a much greater impact on them than all but a relative handful of party members'.

In 1969, Labor did not start preparing its campaign until six weeks before polling day. However, in 1972, Labor appointed a full-time campaign director a year before the campaign began, and Spectrum International had been conducting surveys for Labor for eighteen months. Labor's famous 'It's Time' campaign reflected a re-learning of two of the hallmarks of the John Henry Austral campaign—long term advertising and disciplined centralisation. This was the first time television commercials were made the centrepiece of the campaign. It was also the first campaign to be heavily based on market research—including surveys which generated the 'It's Time' slogan.

These new techniques were associated with a big rise in the use of advisers and professionals. Journalists noted this rise with some contempt. Laurie Oakes argued that during the 1972 campaign, Liberal leader Bill McMahon 'has not stirred out of Sydney without at least sixteen people with him' including speech writers, press officers and television experts. Another journalist declared: 'Mr McMahon clutches these people to his bosom like a security blanket'. Labor also appointed new image makers including its first federal publicity officer and a well-known TV reporter to help them produce radio and TV interviews. The publicity officer helped Whitlam make use of day-time radio programs to reach 'a vast, untapped audience of women, retired people and motorists'. When ALP NSW Secretary Peter Westerway was asked whether you could sell politics in the way that you might sell soap he replied 'on television, yes'.

After the success of 'It's Time', election campaigns became more centralised, there was greater professionalisation and greater reliance on polling and advertising professionals. Because these 'image-makers' and advertising agents wield such power in the conduct of election campaigns, it is important to be aware of their attitudes towards political discourse and the role of advertising. One Labor ad agent argues that politics is 'a campaign to sell the most highly organised, marketed, researched and advertised product this country has seen' (my italics). In 1975, the Liberals ad agent stated: 'The man in the street has his convictions and you won't
change that. You aim at the swinging voter. He will have ideas and it’s up to us to reinforce them. 49

Table 2.1 provides a list of the advertising agents used by the Liberal and Labor parties from 1972-2001. The list has been compiled from newspaper articles, books and other sources. It shows a move away from traditional loyalty to one advertising agent and a move towards the use of specialised ‘teams’ which are made up of individuals with different skills and talents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann Erikson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>No central advertising agency. Each state employed its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann Erikson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Berry Currie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Mullins, Clarke and Ralph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Masius-Wynne-Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Mullins, Clarke and Ralph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Masius-Wynne-Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann Erikson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>D'Arcy-Macmanus and Masius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Forbes Macfie Hansen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>D'Arcy-Macmanus and Masius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Forbes Macfie Hansen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>D'Arcy-Macmanus and Masius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>John Singleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>D'Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>John Singleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>D'Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>John Singleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>George Patterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>John Singleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>An in-house team – consisting of Mr Mark Pearson, managing director of Ammirati Puris Lintas; Mr Ted Horton, a freelancer; Mr Toby Ralph, a consultant with DDB Melbourne; and Mr John King of Adelaide-based Davies, Hutchens and Blackburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Saatchi &amp; Saatchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>In-house team from 1996 (as outlined above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Saatchi &amp; Saatchi plus Mr Bill Shannon from Shannon's Way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author from numerous sources including newspaper reports of election campaigns, advertising magazines, political party archives held by the National Library of Australia and television commercials (which sometimes include the advertising agency name in the introduction). In response to correspondence from the author, Trish Shepherd from the Australian Labor Party verified information provided above for the ALP and filled in gaps on ALP advertising for the years 1980, 1983 and 1993. Correspondence was also sent to the Liberal Party requesting verification of the data outlined above however, the Party did not provide a response.
The parties use polling and focus group research to provide fodder for their ads. After the ads are made, they are tested on target audiences for their effectiveness before being broadcast or published. During the campaign, they are re-tested for their ongoing effect. On several occasions, political advertisements have been leaked before their release on TV. In 1977, for example, the police were called in to investigate the Labor Party’s advertising agent because ads were leaked to the Liberal Party. Such leaks can be very damaging because advertising agents need to be able to make quick tactical changes to respond to the ads produced by the other side. An early leak can give an opponent a real advantage.

Advertising agents have favoured particular ad styles at different times. Over time, these styles have included ‘talking head’, cinema verité, vox pop, jingles or documentary style. In 1975 and 1977, the ads produced by Masius for the Liberal Party heavily favoured jingles—described as the ‘all-singing, all dancing’ style of ad. But by 1987, the Liberals were particularly proud of their more realistic documentary-style ad produced by D’Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowles. Mills notes that the ALP ads produced by Macfie in 1983 and 1984 had a typical style: jingle/vox pops, personal statements by the leader and then a concluding jingle. But by 1990, Labor had also abandoned the jingle style ad.

One of the reasons why many Australian advertising agents are unenthusiastic about taking on political advertising accounts is because sometimes the blame for an election loss has been placed firmly on the advertising agent. In 1983, the Liberals’ advertising agents received a great deal of criticism over their ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ ads. In 1993, newspaper headlines claimed that the GST was a ‘hydra that ate its own ad campaign’. In 1990, the Liberals’ researcher Ron Klein, who was conducting focus groups, warned the party it would lose if it did not change advertising direction. Rod Cameron, an ALP researcher, later agreed that 1990 was an advertising problem for the Liberals rather than a policy problem. He argued that it was their way of selling their message that was wrong. It was ‘a communications error [and] I blame the [advertising] agency fairly and squarely.’
The power attributed to advertising agents is quite immense. In 1993, when it was widely predicted that Labor would lose office, former ALP leader Bob Hawke commented that it was up to ‘Singo’ (advertising agent John Singleton) to ‘save Keating’. Singleton responded with a series of anti-GST ads which were described as ‘poll-based’, ‘hard-hitting’ and ‘ruthlessly crafted to win office’. Labor did win the ‘unwinnable’ election and Singleton’s ads were given much of the credit in newspaper articles with headlines such as: ‘Election ads helped Libs lose’.

Increasingly, the media is paying attention to the behind-the-scenes ‘image-makers’ who produce advertising, provide advice and even coach and dress the candidates. Behind this attention is a concern that: ‘The candidates themselves don’t have much to do with the election machine. What they do and what they say is skilfully engineered by “professionals”...the men who organise the campaign’.

According to the National Party’s state director, the Party’s 1993 ads were designed specifically to ‘tug at the heartstrings of a swinging electorate’. Such candour is rare among political officials but advertising agents are often more candid (and sensational) in their statements about political advertising. An ad agent for the National Party in 1996 revealed his view of the mentality of voters: ‘Voters are extraordinarily volatile. Yes, they might have made up their minds—at this time. But they could change tomorrow’.

In the political advertising literature, there has been much comment about the disreputable selling of politicians as if they were soap. It has become a well-worn cliché. There has also been a lot of debate about whether the comparison is apt or whether political advertising is actually very different from commercial advertising. One Australian advertising agent has argued: ‘People say [political advertising] is like selling toothpaste, but it’s not. Toothpaste doesn’t go on the news at night and make an arse of itself’.
Regulation of political advertising in Australia

In Australia, there are currently no legislative constraints upon either the volume of advertising or the amount that Australian parties may spend purchasing campaign advertising on commercial television. Similarly, in the United States, 'which has an express... constitutional guarantee of press freedom, candidates for public office may spend as much as they wish and run ads on television when they choose.' 66 Aside from Australia, the U.S. and Taiwan, in all other countries political parties face legislative restrictions on the purchase of television time for political advertising. 67

However, there have been some moves towards deregulation. In Canada, the parties had, until recently, faced a legislative ceiling on the amount which they could spend on campaign ads, and the period during the campaign in which "spot" ads could be broadcast. 68 However, a recent change to the law means it is now possible to buy unlimited television time in Canada for political advertising. 69 In Britain, political parties are prohibited from purchasing airtime for election advertising. However, a review by the Electoral Commission is currently considering the introduction of paid advertising in Britain. This is partly in response to a recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights which may mean the ban on paid advertising in the U.K. is unlawful, but there is also a view that the introduction of shorter 'American-style' advertising may be a way to combat voter apathy and make British campaigns more 'invigorating'. 70

In Australia, aside from paid advertising, free allocations are also given to the parties by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). This was introduced as a public service intended to educate the public and provide fair and equal access to the parties. Since the establishment of the ABC in 1932, leaders of the political parties represented in Federal Parliament have been given equal amounts of time during elections to present their policies on the public's network. 71 One hour of free time on the ABC is given to the government party and the main opposition party. This consists of a thirty minute 'election launch' and six five-minute 'policy announcement' slots for each party. These ads are therefore significantly longer than those produced for commercial
television and the audience who watches them are unlikely to be the preferred target audience of 'swinging' voters because the ABC's audience is predominantly older, educated, politically astute and usually partisan. The parties therefore focus relatively little attention on these unpaid five minute political statements in comparison to the millions which they spend on paid ads produced for commercial television.

The High Court has played a very important role in political advertising regulation in Australia. After the 1980 election, the Labor Party protested to the High Court under a provision of the Electoral Act. They complained that advertisements used by the Liberal Party were false and deceptive and had cost them victory. The case was thrown out. The High Court found that the provision 'was aimed at attempts to mislead voters about the process of actually casting their vote—such as wrong information about the hours of polling—rather than of deciding for whom to vote'.

In 1983, when the ALP was in government, this issue of truth in political advertising was picked up by the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Reform (JSCER) resulting in an amendment to the Commonwealth Electoral Act (section 329(2)) which outlawed 'untrue, misleading and deceptive' electoral advertising. Punishments for electoral dishonesty included large fines and strict penalties. However, Mills notes that MPs 'began to have second thoughts once the implications of the new law sank in'. Media companies claimed they would have to seek legal advice about every ad during a campaign at great cost. The law allowed any candidate to seek an injunction against allegedly untrue and misleading advertisements thus opening 'the doors for nuisance complaints and routine obstructionism'. Critics also pointed to the broader philosophical difficulties of defining the nature of political 'truth'.

In its second report in 1984, the Joint Select Committee concluded that it was not possible to legislate for electoral honesty:

Political advertising differs from other forms of advertising in that it promotes intangibles, ideas, policies and images... The Committee concludes that even though fair advertising is desirable it is not possible to control political advertising by legislation...
Parliament thus decided to scrap efforts at legislating for electoral honesty and leave the decision about the truth or falsehood of advertised claims up to the electors. This situation still applies today.

In 1991, the ALP government introduced the *Political Broadcasts and Political Disclosures Act*. This legislation ‘outlawed political advertising on commercial television and radio during state and federal election campaigns, and provided instead for blocks of free broadcast time to be allocated between parties according to their share of the primary vote at previous elections’. The Act was ‘vigorously opposed’, ‘widely painted as an undemocratic restriction on free speech’ and ‘a cynical attempt to [boost the Labor Party’s] own flagging electoral and financial position’. Once in place, the legislation was quickly challenged before the full bench of the High Court of Australia. In August 1992, in the case *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd. v Commonwealth*, the High Court ruled that the amended law was constitutionally invalid. This ruling guaranteed that paid televised advertising would remain a permanent feature of Australian election campaigns.

The declared unconstitutionality of a ban on broadcast advertising and the repeal of ‘truth in political advertising’ provisions has left only scant regulation of political advertising. Currently, there is no attempt to regulate the content of political messages contained in electoral advertising, except to ensure (1) ‘that such messages are properly authorised’—that is, contains the name and address of the person authorising the advertisement and the name and place of business of the printer. And (2), to ensure that such advertisements do not ‘mislead or deceive electors about the way in which a vote must be cast.’

The Australian Electoral Commission has stated that it:

has no role or responsibility in deciding whether political messages published or broadcast in relation to an election or true or untrue: that is a decision for the voters at the ballot box, and the law of defamation if necessary.
Aside from the High Court, other bodies such as the Advertising Standards Council and the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations (FACTS), have also played a role in determining political advertising standards and hearing complaints. However, these bodies have also frequently left determinations of 'truth' and 'fact' up to electors. In 1993, for example, the Liberal Party complained to the Advertising Standards Council that Labor's anti-GST ads were untruthful.\textsuperscript{86} The Labor Party also complained about a Liberal advertisement.\textsuperscript{87} The Advertising Standards Council dismissed both complaints. It found that political advertisements could not be expected to refer to 'all possible variables'. The Council stated that whether political ads were 'appropriate, unreasonable, exaggerated, manipulative or lacking in integrity is ultimately for the electorate to decide'.\textsuperscript{88}

**Funding political advertising**

In 1984, the ALP and Liberal parties spent $12 million on their campaigns, including $5.7 million on television and radio broadcasting. However, they were having difficulty financing these large advertising campaigns because of a shortfall in donations.\textsuperscript{89} In response, the Hawke government introduced public funding of election campaigns. Under this scheme, taxpayer funding is used to reimburse candidates for their campaigning expenses.\textsuperscript{90}

Although public funding legislation was supposed to address the high costs of campaigning, it did nothing to limit those costs. It set no legislative restrictions upon either the volume of advertising or the amount that the parties could spend purchasing political advertising. As a result, the parties soon found that the rate of public funding was not keeping up with their desire to purchase expensive television advertising. In 1990, for example, the ALP spent seventy per cent of its media budget on television\textsuperscript{91} but was only able to recoup $5.2 million of its total campaign costs from public funding, leaving the Party with a debt of $7 million.\textsuperscript{92}
By 1993, the role of television advertising as the central focus of election campaigns had been guaranteed both by the High Court’s ruling in *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd v Commonwealth* and by perceptions that advertisements used in the 1980 and 1993 elections had a major impact on the result. However, the rate of public funding was still failing to cover the parties’ increasing television advertising costs. In 1995, the Labor Government introduced legislation to raise the rate of public funding. Between the 1993 and 1996 elections, the amount of public funding rose by $17 million (or fifty-four per cent) allowing the parties to increase their spending on television advertising by $5.8 million (or thirty-eight per cent).\(^3\)

By 1996, electioneering was highly centralised, professionalised and expensive. Table 2.1 shows how the parties spent over $30 million that year on polling, research, broadcasting, publishing and direct mail. Use of direct mail was high and there were complaints that some marginal electorates were saturated with attention-grabbing postcards and high-impact leaflets.\(^4\) Significantly, due to the rise in public funding rates in 1995, the parties were reimbursed ninety-three per cent of these costs from taxpayer funding.\(^5\) Although over $2 million of public money was provided for party research, the parties are not required to make that research publicly available.

**Table 2.2 – Election expenditure during the 1996 federal election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Broadcasting</th>
<th>Publishing</th>
<th>Display</th>
<th>Direct Mail</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>9,037,759</td>
<td>840,223</td>
<td>6,444</td>
<td>1,981,931</td>
<td>751,490</td>
<td>1,188,245</td>
<td>13,799,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>6,652,777</td>
<td>2,723,082</td>
<td>58,298</td>
<td>2,929,342</td>
<td>1,296,122</td>
<td>3,032,473</td>
<td>16,692,096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2001, a number of sources claimed that the parties again spent more than $30 million on political advertising. This included reports that the Liberal Party was spending up to $1 million a day on a final ten day advertising blitz.

The mass media in Australia

Fritz and Gunda Plasser have argued that the characteristics of the media system in a particular country ‘have a tremendous effect on campaign styles and strategies’. It is therefore important to consider the types of mass media available to Australian politicians when they choose outlets and markets for their advertisements. Compared to their American counterparts, Australian politicians have a far more limited choice of media outlets. In Australia, there are only three commercial television stations per capital city and only ten daily metropolitan newspapers. In the U.S., in metropolitan cities, there are over eighty television stations and more than 100 newspapers.

Aside from newspapers, radio and television, which are explored below, other media such as magazines have, at times, been important for specific targeting. And, in 2001, the Labor Party launched the first Internet political advertisement in Australia. However, the three main mass media used for political advertising over the period 1949-2001 were newspapers, radio, and (from 1958 on) television.

NEWSPAPERS

Previous research has found that political consultants place great emphasis on newspaper ads because they believe that ‘newspaper advertising appeals to the rational voter’. Politicians, party officials and their advertising agents see television as a substantially different media than newspapers because it is about ‘emotional impact’ whereas newspapers are about ‘logical consideration’. Labor's pre-advertising research for their 1972 campaign, concluded that print is an automatic, mathematical, synthesised extension of speech. [It] is fragmented, exclusive and...is
excellent for disseminating “print logical” information, and demanding urgent action.\textsuperscript{103}

Politicians and their advisers view newspapers as an effective medium for reaching important voter groups such as split-ticket voters, swing voters, opinion leaders, elites and the elderly.\textsuperscript{104} In Australia, newspaper ads have been a consistent feature of election campaigns since the first campaign 1843. Despite the dominance of television advertising, both major parties still spend up to twenty per cent of their campaign budgets on publishing.\textsuperscript{105} While print advertising has certainly declined as a proportion of party campaign expenditure in recent elections (due to the significance placed on television advertising), newspapers are still an important medium.

Newspapers reach eighty-six per cent of Australia’s capital city population and eighty-five per cent of Australia’s non-capital city population each week.\textsuperscript{106} The Newspaper Advertising Bureau of Australia claims that; ‘On any given day, newspapers offer advertisers the opportunity to... persuade two-thirds of all adult Australians’.\textsuperscript{107} More detailed research suggests that newspaper readership may be slightly higher amongst Liberal voters.\textsuperscript{108}

The number and diversity of newspaper titles in Australia has steadily declined over the past century.\textsuperscript{109} There are now only ten capital city dailies owned by four different owners. Two of the owners, the Australian subsidiary of News Corporation Ltd (News Ltd) and John Fairfax Ltd., account for eighty-nine per cent of the total daily newspaper circulation in Australia.\textsuperscript{110}

Despite the doubling of Australia’s population between 1949 and 1999, newspaper circulation has remained static or has even decreased (Table 2.3).\textsuperscript{111} This long term trend in declining newspaper sales is linked to changing lifestyle factors such as declining use of public transport and the availability of alternative sources of information such as television. The format of newspapers has also changed considerably over time. When Henry Macdermott and William Foster placed their advertisements in 1843, the front page of the newspaper consisted of advertisements and shipping notices set in very small print.
Table 2.3 Daily circulation by individual newspapers, 1947, 1962 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Circulation 1947</th>
<th>Circulation 1962</th>
<th>Circulation 1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
<td>344,633</td>
<td>327,000</td>
<td>431,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
<td>301,348</td>
<td>304,458</td>
<td>229,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>261,329</td>
<td>576,048</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herald</td>
<td>350,874</td>
<td>480,605</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herald-Sun⁽⁵⁾</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>566,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>116,887</td>
<td>179,125</td>
<td>192,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier-Mail</td>
<td>165,334</td>
<td>235,000</td>
<td>219,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertiser</td>
<td>139,260</td>
<td>193,532</td>
<td>200,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australian</td>
<td>101,966</td>
<td>162,382</td>
<td>218,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>33,245</td>
<td>47,852</td>
<td>49,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT News</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra Times</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42,570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁽⁵⁾ the Sun and Herald combined in 1989 and became the Herald-Sun.


Australian political parties can choose between national or state-based metropolitan newspapers.¹¹² They can also advertise in local newspapers and there is some evidence to suggest that this is an increasingly popular option.¹¹³ In Melbourne and Sydney, the parties can choose between tabloid or broadsheet newspapers. While traditionally, the tabloid/broadsheet distinction was based on the size of the newspaper, it has also come to refer to the perceived ‘quality’ of its content. It is widely perceived that readers of ‘quality’ broadsheets such as the Age, are more educated and affluent than readers of ‘tabloids’ such as the Herald-Sun.¹¹⁴
RADIO

Traditionally, radio has been less significant in terms of political knowledge than newspapers. When asked in a 1950 survey for example, ‘where do you get most of the facts on which you base your opinions on current affairs?’, only nineteen per cent nominated radio compared to fifty-two per cent for newspapers. After television arrived, the use of radio as a prime advertising media was further diminished. By 1975, television had become the most popular medium. When asked in an ANOP survey ‘where do you get most of your political information?’, fifty-one per cent of respondents said television compared to forty-two per cent for newspapers and only fifteen per cent for radio.

There are however, different views about the value of radio. In Labor’s pre-advertising research in 1972, it was stated that ‘radio has more difficulty intruding than TV, but can induce multi-sensory response [and] when well used, can create visual images... [but] demands much of the imagination’. A later report by Labor’s advertising agency in 1979, argued that ‘Swinging voters...regard information from television as more reliable and more accurate, and less biased, than information from newspapers. Radio rates last on this scale. It is purely a background “entertainment” medium. They don’t even know who you are and probably care even less.’

This does not mean that radio is insignificant. Australians still spend over twenty-two hours per week listening to the radio and in remote areas of Australia, radio is still particularly important. In recent years, talkback radio has become a favoured medium for politicians—particularly party leaders. In 1987, one journalist argued that the radio ads used by the Labor Party may have been just as influential as their big budget television ads. However, overall, newspaper and television advertisements have been the more significant political advertising media and this thesis focuses on these two main media.
TELEVISION

In Australia, television receivers can be found in ninety-nine per cent of all homes.\textsuperscript{121} On average, Australians watch three hours and ten minutes of television a day.\textsuperscript{122} For two-thirds of Australians, television is their main source of news and information.\textsuperscript{123} This is despite the fact that there are still no more than three major commercial free-to-air television stations and two non-commercial stations in each capital city in Australia.\textsuperscript{124} While cable television (pay-TV) is now available, it has yet to be embraced comprehensively—only twelve per cent of Australians currently subscribe to it.\textsuperscript{125}

The first use of TV for a federal election campaign was in 1958.\textsuperscript{126} Ten and a half hours of political matter was broadcast on commercial television stations compared to radio which at that time, broadcast 510 hours of political matter.\textsuperscript{127} However, by the 1963 election, political matter broadcast on television had increased tenfold to 123 hours.\textsuperscript{128}

Politicians favour television because they know that at least ninety per cent of Australian voters are exposed to televised political advertising on commercial channels and this is twenty per cent more than for either press or radio.\textsuperscript{129} Television is also a medium which has high impact and, when combined with viewer statistics, can target particular voters. In particular, it is a very effective way of targeting the all important swinging voters—as ‘swinging voters are also frequently the ones who watch a lot of TV’.\textsuperscript{130}

Although spending on political advertising in Australia is only small in comparison to the U.S., it is still a major issue for the Australian political parties. Figure 2.1 illustrates how the parties’ broadcast advertising costs have risen 900 per cent between 1974 and 1996.
Figure 2.1 - Broadcast spending during federal election campaigns 1974-1996

Note: After 1996, it is not possible to compile this same data as the Australian Electoral Commission changed the manner in which it requires the parties to report their electoral spending.


A number of concerns surround the use of televised political advertising in Australia. The inability of minor parties and independent candidates to afford television advertising puts these candidates at a significant disadvantage in communicating with potential voters compared to the established major parties who receive the lion’s share of both public and private funding and are far better resourced to purchase television advertisements. There are also concerns that the lack of quality information in television advertisements ‘dumbs down’ political debate, that the increasing use of negative advertising fosters public cynicism, and finally, that false and misleading claims are made in televised advertising.
One of the biggest concerns about the use of expensive televised political advertising is that it can allow a party or candidate to gain an electoral advantage by ‘out-spending’ an opponent on TV advertising. This has the potential to distort the democratic process by giving an advantage to wealth. Before reliable figures were made public, the Liberal Party is believed to have outspent the ALP at least two to one in terms of expenditure on radio and TV advertisements in the decade from 1967 to 1977.\textsuperscript{133} Certainly, between 1974-1996, the Coalition outspent the ALP in seven out of the ten federal elections held.\textsuperscript{134} While this is unfair and therefore of concern, Mills points out that it does \textit{not} seem to be true that ‘elections can [simply] be “bought” at the whim of a political party’.\textsuperscript{135}

Mills examined twenty-seven state and federal election campaigns between 1974-84 and found that the ‘figures demonstrate the patchy electoral success of “outadvertising” your opponent’.\textsuperscript{136} Adding statistics from the next ten federal elections seems to confirm that there is no real correlation between the extent of electronic advertising and electoral success (Table 2.4).

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Election & Liberal & National & ALP & Biggest Spender also winner? \\
\hline
1996 & 5,321,521 & 1,331,256 & 8,974,799 & \textx \\
1993$^{(a)}$ & 4,101,761 & 698,467 & 4,991,114 & \textcheckmark \\
1990 & 4,671,355 & 159,322 & 1,584,630 & \textx \\
1987 & 2,653,074 & 1,869,865 & 5,219,405 & \textcheckmark \\
1984 & 1,835,081 & 897,590 & 1,757,981 & \textx \\
1983 & 2,382,232 & 488,475 & 1,411,288 & \textx \\
1980 & 1,474,207 & 314,213 & 937,020 & \textcheckmark \\
1977 & 957,623 & 303,349 & 728,830 & \textcheckmark \\
1975 & 936,043 & 283,021 & 808,557 & \textcheckmark \\
1974 & 592,368 & 291,549 & 381,469 & \textx \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Broadcast Advertising: Biggest Spenders and Winners in Federal Elections, 1974-1996 (in $)}
\end{table}

$^{(a)}$ Figures for 1993 disclosed by broadcasters in the 1993 AEC Funding and Disclosure Report.

Note: The final column indicates whether the biggest spender (underlined) was the winner of the election campaign.

The federal director of the Liberal Party later commented about their 1983 campaign that it was a prime example of how outspending an opponent does not necessarily mean an election win. Tony Eggleton stated: ‘we greatly outspent our opponents and because of the mood of the nation, we could have spent twice as much again and still not won’.137

Mills was among the first to note how the acquisition of ‘marketing techniques’ worked hand in hand with televised political advertising.138 He explained the process of tracking and targeting:

Tracking refers to the use of public opinion polls and other research methods to monitor changing attitudes in the population. Targeting is the use of TV advertisements to aim political messages at electorally strategic parts of the population. Separately, each half of this relationship is like a blunt scissors blade: advertising without research can be words into the ether, intuitive gambles that the public is paying attention; research without advertising can be a dry accumulation of statistics unchallenged by the demand of actually communicating with people. But together they add up to a new method of political campaigning.139

Tracking is now precise enough to discern movements of opinion even among small sub-groups of the population and, especially among the strategically vital swinging voters. When added with demographic and behavioural data such as where those sub-groups live or what they watch on television, this combination means ‘parties can target their messages to hit chosen recipients gathered before their TV sets in their own homes’.140

Today, ninety-nine per cent of Australians own television sets but very few Australians go to political meetings or read policy papers. Indeed, the declining circulation of newspapers shows that many do not even want to read newspapers anymore. Instead, two-thirds of Australians look to television as their main source of news and information.141 Many view television as ‘a more reliable and credible source of information than either radio or newspapers’.142
Conclusion

It is no longer possible to understand modern election campaigns without considering election candidates’ reliance on mass media and expensive television advertising. Political advertising is now central to the conduct, if not the results, of modern election campaigns.

The information provided in this chapter has demonstrated that it is not prudent to make inferences about Australian political advertising based on American research. It has also shown that Australian political advertising is an interesting phenomenon in its own right. There are many noteworthy election campaigns, interesting advertisements and important issues such as the use of television and laws and regulations. This is not to argue, however, that American research is without value for an Australian study. U.S. researchers have produced a remarkable body of literature on political advertising which can teach us much about issues in political advertising and research methods for investigating them. This body of research will be addressed in the following chapter. The aim of this chapter was to allow a more critical appraisal of this literature in light of Australian circumstances and to provide necessary background information about Australian political advertising which sets the context for this research.
3 Review of theory and research

Armed with a knowledge of the Australian political system, mass media and election advertising, it is now possible to conduct a meaningful review of political advertising theory and research—a review which stems from an understanding of some of the major differences between Australia and the United States, and an appreciation of the unique history and context of Australian political advertising.

The purpose of this literature review is to uncover the concepts, issues and debates which have been explored by political advertising researchers and to document their major findings. In order to place the literature review in an appropriate context, this chapter begins by providing an historical perspective of Australian literature on political advertising. This outline covers all known Australian literature. However, because this body of work is small, the review of the major issues and theoretical debates which follows also draws in overseas works—predominantly from the U.S., Britain and Europe—as well as other Australian literature which is related to broader issues such as Australian elections and electioneering.

The final section of this chapter outlines the major research methods used by political advertising researchers, both here and overseas. This yields important information which is built upon in the following chapter, where the author's own research method is outlined and discussed.

Australian Research

There are only a handful of works on Australian political advertising but amongst these are some exceptionally useful references including work by Henry Mayer, Stephen Mills, Ian Ward, Victoria Braund and Quentin Beresford. In particular, the work of Ian Ward is significant. Ward has been the most prolific writer on this topic.
As a result of the scant attention paid to political advertising, the number of Australian works is very limited. What does exist has tended to fall into one of three main categories: scholarly research, government commissioned studies and newspaper articles.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

In 1961, Rawson’s study of the 1958 federal election mentioned the importance of TV, radio and newspaper advertisements on the first page of his book. His study included several pages of analysis of election ‘propaganda’ and the role of advertising in the campaign.1 At this stage, although political advertising was viewed as an important part of the context and background of an election, it was not yet viewed as a subject worthy of study in its own right.

In 1968, an article by Andrew Kaldor about ‘Liberal and Labor Press Advertising’ spawned a response by Cyril S. Wyndham, who disputed Kaldor’s account of the relationship between Labor and their advertising agents.2 Soon afterwards, a fresh interest in political advertising was sparked by the 1972 ‘It’s Time’ campaign.

Victoria Braund, the daughter of Sim Rubensohn, wrote an article on ‘Timely Vibrations: Labor’s Marketing Campaign’ in the book Labor to Power: Australia’s 1972 Election, edited by Henry Mayer.3 Also appearing in Mayer’s book were a series of other articles which examined electioneering strategies. Articles such as those by Steve McLean and Paul Brennan included analysis of the political advertising strategies used during the 1972 election.4

In 1978, Braund completed a Masters thesis focussing on themes in political advertising used in federal elections from 1949-1972.5 This work has been a seminal one for later researchers as it contains insider accounts and interviews with key figures. Over twenty years later, it remains the only sustained and lengthy academic work devoted solely to Australian political advertising.
Braund attempted to discern themes in political ads over the period 1949-72, but did not use a rigorous, systematic analysis such as content analysis. Her research method was not defined and she did not explain the parameters of her sample of ads. Overall, the study seemed to consist of Braund analysing particular ads and drawing out interpretations of themes. The thesis was in a narrative, historical style but included a final section resulting from Braund’s interviews with six advertising agents. The interviews indicated that most were ‘firm believers in [voters’] self-interest (the “hip pocket nerve”) and fear as motivations for voting choice’. The agents all agreed that television ‘is the emotive medium and press is used primarily to communicate with and reinforce supporters’.

Braund found two different approaches to the production of ads in the period 1949-1972. She found that the parties used some advertising which included long lists of policy points and tried to appeal to the ‘rational’ voter; while other ads used basic appeals to voters’ insecurities and ambitions in a highly symbolic, emotive approach. Braund argued that the traditional approach based on long policy lists and appeals to rational voters was highly dull and uncreative and she saw the emotive, symbolic technique as more ‘imaginative’.

Writing over twenty years ago, Braund found that the parties were using unsophisticated and even ‘heavy handed’ techniques. She advocated a greater use of modern advertising/sales techniques in political advertising. Her thesis finished with a call for more ‘imaginative, people-oriented propaganda’. This is quite ironic given that many of the authors writing today, such as Ward and Quentin Beresford, express concern that the parties have now become too sophisticated in their use of manipulative and emotive sales techniques.

One of Braund’s key findings was the high degree of similarity of themes in Australian political ads from the period 1949-72. She found that both major parties used similar themes and symbols to manipulate voters. They both used fear and threats. The Liberals emphasised the threat of ALP communism/socialism; in the external form of red and yellow perils and the internal forms of unions and communism within the ALP. The ALP threatened voters with the spectre of fascism personified by Menzies in 1951 and thereafter the fear of economic disaster.
Although not an academic work, in 1977, Phillip Adams expressed his view of political advertising in a series of newspaper articles which spawned a response from academic Henry Mayer. In one article, Adams described thirty second political ads as ‘dangerous’. He stated: ‘what I am against is the 30-second slander which is unanswerable’. He argued that ‘If politicians had to speak for five or 10 minutes on TV they would have to give an account of themselves’. In another article, Adams argued that election ads were: ‘a danger to the democratic process because of the way they trivialise the issues…’ Adams stated that political ads were not ‘conducive to logical voting’.

Adams’ views were addressed in a 1980 article by Henry Mayer, a pioneer in the field of Australian media studies, titled ‘The Morality of Political Advertising’. Mayer argued that it is pointless to apply moral standards to political advertising. He questioned assumptions that regulation of political advertising content would make ads more ‘truthful’, ‘longer and more thoughtful’ and would enhance the rationality of voters. He argued strongly that in order to make political advertising rational and accurate, you would ‘have to eliminate politics as we know it’:

You would have to cut out all slogans, mood pieces and images. You’d have to cut out references to trust, leadership, loyalty, fear, conflict, commitment, solidarity, envy… You could not ‘Raise the Standard’ or ‘Turn on the Lights’ or follow ‘The Light on the Hill. You’d not be allowed to say that Liberals are in the “lead” without specifying where they are leading us and at what cost to whom. There could be no ‘Hamer makes it Happen’ without a long and detailed analysis of what ‘it’ was.

Mayer argued that ads would have to become ‘huge books… monsters in length, complexity and contingencies’ which would kill enthusiasm and commitment and actually lead to less interest in politics. Addressing criticism of negative advertising, Mayer noted that political advertising in a party system, by its very nature ‘must knock the other side’.
Of Adams' argument that longer ads would be better, Mayer stated; 'I am unimpressed by the people who don't mind political advertisements as such, but simply want them longer. Somehow, a 60 second job or a two minute one is supposed to take care of “complexity” and allow calmer reflection. Nonsense.'

Despite Mayer's spirited defence of political advertising, in 1981, Ian Ward continued to express concerns. He was particularly concerned about issues of fairness, equity, and the quality of political discourse used in advertising. Ward's 1981 article was titled 'Party Political Advertising and the Case for Disclosure of Electoral Expenditure' and in 1982, he wrote 'Big Spending on the Small Screen: Tevised Party Political Advertising and the 1980 Campaign.' Ward, a proponent of banning televised political advertising, has remained the most prolific writer on this topic in Australia. His most recent article compares the use of TV advertising in Canada in 1968 and Australia in 1972.

1986 had the potential to be a watershed period for research on political advertising. In this year, Stephen Mills' The New Machine Men: Polls and Persuasion in Australian Politics exposed the new elite of political professionals and their influence on Australian politics. Rather than focusing on issues of morality, equity and fairness, Mills addressed political advertising in its context—as a tool of electioneering. Some of Mills' main arguments are outlined in other sections of this chapter.

In the same year, Mills and Helen O'Neil published a chapter on Australian political advertising in the Lynda Lee Kaid, Dan Nimmo and Keith R. Saunders book New Perspectives on Political Advertising. This chapter represented the first attempt to discuss Australian political advertising in an international forum and was published in one of the most cited political advertising references. The chapter outlined the history of electoral advertising in Australia. The authors argued that Australian institutions and attributes have acted to modify and have also been modified by, political advertising. They found that the four principal aspects of Australian political life which have influenced political advertising were: the parliamentary system of government, the dominant role of party structures, widespread cynicism about advertising, and a tradition of parliamentary and judicial rule making.
Mills and O’Neil argued that there were still many differences between Australian and American political advertising. They stated: ‘Australian ads deal less with identification and more with arguing and attacking. Visionary ads do not occur as a quiet finale to a campaign but increasingly provide a theme for the entire strategy’.\textsuperscript{23} However, their basis for this claim was informal observation only. No content analysis or cross-cultural comparisons were performed.

Unfortunately, the 1986 works did not fuel a broader or sustained interest into the links between Australian political advertising and politics. Ian Ward was the only author to continue research into the 1990s. His 1990s works focused on televised political advertising (1992 and 1995), gender and negative political advertising (1994), and the early use of radio advertisements (1999).\textsuperscript{24}

Ward’s chapter on political advertising in his 1995 book \textit{Politics of the Media} gave a particularly strong account of his view of televised political advertising as ‘inimical to the health of democracy’.\textsuperscript{25} In 1999, Quentin Beresford outlined similar concerns about the nature of televised political advertising and the use of political marketing techniques in his article ‘Selling Democracy Short: Elections in the Age of the Market’.\textsuperscript{26} These works are addressed in some detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The most recent study of Australian political advertising, published in 2002, was written by the author and based on some of the material included in this thesis. Titled ‘Spot on: The Role of Political Advertising in Australia’, it was published in the \textit{Australian Journal of Political Science} (Appendix A).\textsuperscript{27}

Several other articles about Australian political advertising have been written outside of the political science sphere. From a marketing perspective, David S. Waller and Michael Jay Polonsky undertook a study in 1996 to explore why Australian ad agencies refuse political accounts.\textsuperscript{28} The authors found that many advertising agencies refuse political accounts because they are more difficult than commercial accounts. They involve a short time frame, dealing with committees of clients, are \textit{not} the same as selling a product and, if the party loses, the reputation of the ad agency involved can be damaged.
In the closest attempt yet to imitate the more quantitative effects-based research methods used in the U.S., human geographer James Forrest and researcher Gary N. Marks undertook an analysis of the impact of election campaign advertising on voter behaviour.\textsuperscript{29} This ambitious topic was to be measured by assigning numerical values to answers respondents had given in the 1990 Australian Election Study. From this analysis, the authors concluded that advertisements had a 'modest impact' on most voters but an important persuading role for the swinging voters who, according to Forrest and Marks, actively used the media for information about how to vote.\textsuperscript{30} This finding contradicts the research of other authors (such as Jaensch and Mills) as well as the political parties' own privately commissioned research, which suggests that swinging voters have little interest in politics and, rather than actively seeking out political advertising, it reaches them only because they cannot avoid it as it interspersed amongst their favourite TV programs and in the pages of their favourite magazines and newspapers.\textsuperscript{31}

Two journal articles have been written by Aaron O'Cass from a marketing perspective on 'Political Marketing and the Marketing Concept'\textsuperscript{32} and 'Political Advertising Believability and Information Source Value During Elections'.\textsuperscript{33} In 1999, Waller and Polonsky examined 'Student Attitudes Towards Political Advertising and Issues: A Cross-Cultural Study'.\textsuperscript{34} And, in 2002, Waller examined 'Advertising Agency-Client Attitudes Towards Ethical Issues in Political Advertising'.\textsuperscript{35} This article concluded that there were some attitudinal differences between politicians and advertising agency executives about ethical issues relating to political advertising.

**GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONED STUDIES**

The 1991 enactment of legislation banning televised political advertising (later repealed) was preceded by several important parliamentary reports. In particular, the 1989 report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters 'Who Pays the Piper Calls the Tune: Minimising the Risks of Funding Political Campaigns' was instrumental in providing information which boosted calls for a ban on televised political advertising.\textsuperscript{36} A list of other relevant studies is also available.\textsuperscript{37}
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Australian media interest in political advertising was sparse and disjointed until 1972 when interest in political advertising was fuelled by the success of ‘It’s Time’. At least 150 newspaper articles have since been written on political advertising in Australia. Early articles reported a new focus on ads and ad agents in campaigns and concerns that: ‘Image: That’s the thing now’.38

In 1983, newspaper articles were still proclaiming the rise of a new ‘image politics’ with several articles referring to ‘image makers’ and outlining methods of marketing the political leaders.39 Ten years later, after the Liberal Party’s loss of the ‘unloseable’ election in 1993, several newspaper articles focused on the Liberals’ advertising campaign to try to sell its Goods and Services Tax (GST). These articles declared the Liberal Party’s advertisements largely ineffective and reported a rift between the party and its advertising agency.40 Conversely, several articles suggested the ALP’s anti-GST ads were extremely effective and ‘swept the ALP to victory’.41

In 1996, newspaper articles referred to the negativity of the campaign with headlines focusing on the ‘Ad blitzes’ of the major parties and calls that; ‘It’s time to change political ads’.42 By 1998, a burgeoning media interest in political advertising was evident (even if one article reported that advertising agents had dubbed the 1998 campaign the most ‘boring’ they had seen).43 A separate article focusing on image politics asked: ‘why do all politicians need a stint at acting school? Because their radio and TV performances could sway more voters than their policies’.44 In 2001, there was an even more intense focus on political advertising. Reporters outlined the parties spending on political ads, tried to discern the strategies behind ads and even critiqued the merits of individual ads.45

The Australian media has tended to focus on political advertising in terms of its effectiveness in the context of the election. This type of coverage is not surprising given the ‘horse-race’ (who’s winning, who’s losing) account of politics generally used in journalistic accounts of elections. The sort of concerns expressed—about the impact of negative political advertising and about ‘image politics’—mirrors the type of coverage which is routinely seen in the U.S. However, in the U.S., the media has
paid a great deal more attention to political advertisements and even takes an active role in 'policing' the content and style of political advertisements. During presidential election campaigns, print and broadcast news stories (known as 'adwatches') critique candidate ads in order to inform the public about untruthful or misleading advertising claims. In the U.S., these 'adwatches' have become an increasingly important part of news coverage of presidential campaigns.46

Major Issues and Debates

The above outline includes all known works on Australian political advertising. It is a lamentably small collection and, throughout this review, it is necessary to bring in the work of other Australian authors who are concerned with broader issues (such as electioneering and voting behaviour) in order to elucidate the Australian issues and debates. In addition, this review will also address the large body of political advertising literature from the U.S, as well as studies from Britain and Europe. Although the British political system is, in many ways, more comparable to Australia, there is a far less relevant literature from Britain. This is largely because, as discussed in Chapter two, paid political advertisements are prohibited in the U.K. Although there are a few studies focusing on the unpaid party election broadcasts (PEBs) used in the U.K., the British literature has tended to focus more broadly on news management and political marketing.47

Firstly, however, political advertising research must be situated in context—for political advertising theory does not exist in isolation but rather, links with broader theories relating to elections and electioneering, communication, media and media influence. The theories and debates to be addressed here are those most relevant to Australia including 'Americanisation' and convergence theory, whether elections matter, mass media theories and political advertising 'effects'. Two competing conceptual frameworks about how to view political advertisements are also examined.
THEORIES OF THE MASS MEDIA

Denis McQuail points out that early theories of mass media attributed considerable power to the media "to shape opinion and belief, change habits of life, actively mould behaviour and impose political systems even against resistance." 48 'Bullet theory' and the 'hypodermic needle effect' theory saw the media as a powerful agent and believed that media messages were transmitted directly to the audience. Ward notes the media was seen to have a 'powerful, immediate and uniform effect on the opinions and behaviour' of audience members. 49

However, a second phase of media theory popular from the 1940s to the 1970s, held that the media had only minimal effects. This was based on the research by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet at Columbia University during the 1940-44 elections which found that exposure to the media had little direct influence on people's opinions or behaviour. In contrast to the earlier theories which viewed the media as a powerful force, the 'minimal effects' school held that media exposure was of minimal consequence, that it only reinforced the opinions that people already held.

In more recent times, there has been a renewal of interest in media influence and a repudiation of the 'minimal effects' school. While modern theories of the media have not returned to the all-powerful conception of the media which was evident in earlier times, there is an awareness of the extent to which the mass media is a major influence on people's daily lives and there is increasing interest in the way mass media influences the public through agenda setting, priming and framing. Unlike earlier theories of a powerful media, modern theories take into account audience diversity and the capacity of audience members to construct their own meanings from media representations.

Agenda setting refers to the ability of media coverage to influence what people think about. In determining news content, the media necessarily selects from a wide range of issues. Their selection is based on an agenda of what is considered to be most important. This agenda is transmitted to the public agenda so that issues which have been given prominence in the media are also considered to be the most important issues by members of the public. Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw tested
agenda setting theory by studying media content during the 1968 U.S. presidential election. They found that the news media had set the agenda particularly for undecided voters and had determined which issues were most important to those voters.\textsuperscript{50} Subsequently, there have been several hundred studies of agenda setting, most of which ‘support the thesis that the mass media influences the public agenda’.\textsuperscript{51}

**Priming theory** rests on a body of psychological evidence about how people process information. That evidence suggests that people pay only selective attention to information and ‘use “simple rules of thumb” when thinking about the complex world around them’.\textsuperscript{52} Priming involves setting the agenda in a particular way by focusing public attention on certain topics which then provide the main basis for evaluation of political leaders. D. V. Shah and D. B. Wackman note that a growing body of research has shown that media emphasis on particular issues, primes or ‘increases the accessibility of certain ideas for individuals, which then shape the factors considered in evaluations of political candidates’.\textsuperscript{53} Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro found that if the media has, for example, focused on the environment as a major issue, this issue is then incorporated into voters ‘judgements about, and ultimate choices of, candidates’.\textsuperscript{54} Priming is therefore, ‘the tendency of audience members to evaluate their political leaders on the basis of those particular events and issues given attention in recent news reports’.\textsuperscript{55}

**Framing** refers to the way in which people, issues and events are presented in the media. Frames draw attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which could lead audiences to have different reactions.\textsuperscript{56} Framing is the ‘selection of a perceived reality’ through a process of cognition, interpretation, presentation, selection, emphasis and exclusion.\textsuperscript{57} Research suggests that how opinions are framed affects people’s decision making.\textsuperscript{58} In terms of election campaigns, how an issue is presented or framed in the media can affect how the public will think about that issue. Media frames can be assessed in terms of the topic of the news item, how it is presented (such as size and placement), its cognitive attributes (what is included in the frame) and affective attributes (the tone of the news item).\textsuperscript{59}
Theories of agenda setting, priming and framing are relevant to political advertising. They suggest that through their paid advertising, the parties attempt to set the public agenda by focusing on particular issues at the exclusion of others. Priming theory suggests that the chosen issues may be selected on the basis that they form a favourable way of evaluating the personal attributes of the candidate. Finally, how political ads frame issues, leaders and events is an important element of how they are designed to influence and persuade voters. This includes factors such as how imagery and language are used.

AMERICANISATION

Several American authors have identified a process of ‘Americanisation’ with respect to electioneering practices. In 1996, David L. Swanson and Paolo Mancini identified features of campaigning that they understood to have originated first in the U.S. but which they argued, have since been ‘exported’ to other countries. These features included the use of mass media, the personalisation of campaigns, use of public opinion polls and the professionalisation of campaigning. Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha have also argued that: ‘Among Western democracies, there is no question when it comes to political television advertising that the United States has done it first, most and, arguably, best.’

Non-Americans such as Margaret Scammell have noted, however, that: ‘Americanization [sic], with respect to political conduct, is not a complimentary term...’ It is rarely explicitly defined but seems to be ‘shorthand for a list of features deemed undesirable [such as the elevation of personality, glitz, glamour, and emotional, often negative, appeals over the promulgation of policy].’ While for many authors, the exportation of American electioneering practices is responsible for these undesirable features, for others who ascribe to convergence theory, such as Pippa Norris, these changes represent the simultaneous emergence of these features in many countries rather than the deliberate appropriation of American techniques.

There are a number of significant differences between the Australian and American political systems which have led to differences in the content and style of
political advertisements. Some of these differences—such as campaign spending and
the use of consultants—were explored in Chapter two. Other differences include
voting and electoral systems and the way in which campaign activities are funded.

In Australia, on average, there is a federal election every 2.3 years. Compulsory
voting ensures high voter turn-out—usually over ninety-five per cent. Therefore,
unlike their American counterparts, Australian politicians do not need to spend a great
deal of time and money during election campaigns on encouraging voters to turn up to
vote; they can concentrate on persuading voters how to vote.

In Australia, the formal campaign period is around four weeks long—from the
issue of writs to polling day. However, the informal campaigning can start much
earlier. Indeed, it is generally agreed that modern campaigning practices have created
the sense of a ‘permanent campaign’ whereby politicians begin preparing for their
next campaign almost immediately as the last campaign is finished, and that this has
rendered the concept of a distinct formal election period less relevant. Nevertheless,
much of the American literature on political advertising is concerned with presidential
election campaigns which run over a period of at least nine months from the primaries
to polling day. The number of advertisements and the changes in content which
inevitably occur over a nine month campaign period are very different to the type of
advertising seen in Australia over a formal four week campaign period.

The type of electoral system in a particular country can influence the focus of
election campaigns and the content of political advertising. Unlike U.S. presidents,
Australian prime ministers are not directly elected. In order to form government in
Australia, the winner must obtain a majority of seats in the House of Representatives.
This has encouraged a system of strong political parties. While American
presidential advertisements focus on the individual presidential candidate without
much (if any) reference to the candidate’s political party. Australian political
advertisements tend to be more party-focused.

One of the most significant differences between American and Australian
political advertising concerns the manner in which campaign activities, such as
political advertising, are funded. In the U.S., despite moves to promote greater public
funding of election campaigns, there is still great reliance on private donations. Up to ninety percent of campaign funding comes from private donations.\textsuperscript{70} In Australia, the major parties raise up to $31 million each year from private sources.\textsuperscript{71} However, since the establishment of the public funding system in 1984, they have also been able to rely on public funding to reimburse most of their campaign costs, including advertising, direct mailing, opinion polls and research.\textsuperscript{72}

The Americanisation debate is a crucial one for the topic of political advertising in Australia. However, this review addresses Americanisation in terms of the specific claims which have been made—such as claims about personalisation and increased negativity in campaigns—rather than under the too broad rubric of ‘Americanisation’.

**DO ELECTIONS MATTER?**

There are many different debates concerning voting behaviour, voting systems and the importance of elections. For some authors however, the most basic question is: ‘do election campaigns matter’? The traditional view in Australia is that the majority of Australians identify with a particular party and will cast their vote for that party regardless of what occurs during the election campaign.\textsuperscript{73} For Rodney Cavalier and others, election campaigns are considered to be irrelevant to the outcome of elections because voters have already decided how they will vote.\textsuperscript{74} Consequently, for authors following this traditional view, little value is placed on studying a tool of electioneering such as political ads—for these and all other electioneering practices are understood to be of no consequence to the outcome of the election.

For many other authors however, elections do matter, and they matter a great deal. As the hallmark of democracy, the conduct of elections is a vital indicator of the ‘health’ of a democratic political system. Therefore, it is important that election campaigns are scrutinised and monitored. How elections are conducted and how the parties go about campaigning are critical in determining whether that election (and the broader electoral system) are ‘free’ and ‘fair’.
Elections also matter in practical terms—that is, in terms of voting behaviour. Shanto Iyengar and Adam F. Simon point out that 'the conventional academic wisdom is mistaken. Campaigns do matter and can be pivotal.' The increasing number of 'late-deciders' who decide their vote during the campaign, means that campaigns can be a major determinant of voting choice.

But it is not only this small group of 'late deciders' who are affected by election campaigns. As previously mentioned, the vast majority of Australians have no direct contact with election candidates but instead, receive their information from television, newspapers and radio. Whoever can best control the provision of this information via media, therefore has an inordinate advantage. Indeed, it has been well documented that how candidates present themselves in the 'free' and 'paid' media is increasingly important to the election outcome. This makes study of the mass media vital to understanding elections.

Political officials and politicians genuinely believe in the power of election campaigns. Former national secretary of the Labor Party Gary Gray argues that: 'Most people—seventy per cent—do not turn on to politics in any meaningful way until the election is announced. Most of them don't actually turn on until the last ten days.' Former Liberal Party federal director Tony Eggleton believes that even when a Party is very much in front 'even two days before the election it is conceivable that [they] could make a major mistake, and if the opponent is ready to capitalise on it quickly, it can make all the difference...'. In this view, the parties' ability to manage the election campaign is viewed as a major determinant of the electoral result.

Recent evidence challenges the conventional wisdom that campaigns have very little impact on electoral outcomes by demonstrating that exposure to campaign stimuli via the electronic media can have some influence on voting behaviour. For example, in 1987, fifty per cent of voters surveyed in the Australian Election Study acknowledged that television played an important role in influencing their voting decision. And, in a recent study by Forrest and Marks, print, radio and television advertisements were found to have played an important role in persuading undecided and swinging voters during the 1990 federal election.
Election campaigns are increasingly important in terms of voting behaviour. For although many voters are partisan and have determined their vote before the election campaign begins, many have not. And, this percentage of people—those who make up their mind during the election campaign—is increasing. Indeed, there are now a substantial number of people who decide during the campaign. In 1987, up to forty per cent of Australian voters decided their vote *during* the election campaign.

For a growing number of people, election campaigns are therefore a major determinant of voting choice and, when a difference of only a few percentage points (in some cases, less than one per cent), decides the outcome of an election, this group is large enough to be very significant indeed. Given that American ‘effects’ researchers have found that undecided voters and late deciders are the groups who are most likely to be influenced by political spots, this suggests the increasing importance of political advertisements in terms of election outcomes.

It is a truism that election results are determined by swinging voters. In accounting for their voting choices, the influence of short-terms factors particularly, party leaders and to a lesser extent, opinions about specific political issues and the state of the economy, are of considerable importance. As party identification declines, the *political* components of an electoral campaign become more important. As Dean Jaensch notes, without strong partisan ties, ‘issues, leaders, personalities, events [and] images become crucial for voters...’ Voters become ‘more open to the influence of campaign factors’ including the media. In this environment, political advertising takes on great significance as it is the most direct way of packaging and promoting short-term political factors to swinging voters and late deciders.
EXPLAINING ELECTION RESULTS

Lazarsfeld et al concluded from their research during the 1940-44 elections that the main impact of the campaign was 'reinforcement not change'.\(^{91}\) They found that partisan attachment was the main factor accounting for people's voting choice and that political propaganda was of little value—it just reinforced party support amongst committed partisans.\(^{92}\) This view was traditionally held in Australia where partisan voting was strong.

Alternative theories of election results have emphasised the economy and perceptions of the government's record on economic matters. As Norris and others point out, this theory stresses the importance of 'pocket-book' voting.\(^{93}\) In this theory, it is believed that the outcome of an election can be predicted with accuracy before the campaign even begins, by using forecasting models based on economic conditions. These models are based on the notion that 'voting outcome can be predicted parsimoniously from a few economic indicators'.\(^{94}\) This theory reflects the 'It's the economy, stupid', school of thought and the belief that voters punish incumbent governments who are perceived to have failed to manage the economy. Theories of policy mood cycles, however, suggest that electoral outcomes are based on major changes which have occurred much earlier than this based on the 'underlying dynamics of public opinion, and the way parties have or have not responded to these tides'.\(^{95}\)

Finally, a more recent set of theories including theories of cognitive, agenda-setting and persuasion effects, looks at the impact of strategic communications and attributes victory to the party or candidate which has superior skills in 'image-making, news-management and political marketing'.\(^{96}\) This sort of analysis has been seen increasingly in accounts of American and British elections with much focus on the political machines of the Clinton and Blair governments, for example. Norris notes that theories of political communication focus on the period of the election campaign and the 'strategic decisions taken by party leaders and campaign professionals about the battleground issue agenda, as well as the pattern of news coverage and reports in the opinion polls'.\(^{97}\) Political advertisements have also been included in such analyses.
Australian results

In Australia, there have been twenty-two federal elections since 1949 (see Appendix D for further information on election results). More specifically, some election results have been identified as ‘crucial’ or ‘critical’. Table 3.1 shows that there are nine ‘large margin elections’ in which the winning margin was over five percentage points difference (in terms of the two-party preferred vote).

Table 3.1 – Large margin elections, 1949-2001 (percentage of two-party preferred vote)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Jaensch divides post-war party politics into three periods: ‘a period of electoral realignment, 1945-51; the stability of the record long-term Menzies era, 1951-66; and the politics of transition and instability, 1966-93’. 98
Jaensch points out that a whole range of factors affect election results including changes in partisan alignment, the state of the economy, television, political advertising, the influence of different election rules (such as the malapportioned zonal system in effect in Queensland for many years which advantaged the National Party), electoral laws and the state of the parties. He particularly points to the state of the parties and the conventional wisdom that Australian voters do not vote for divided parties such as Labor in the 1950s and the Coalition in 1987. He interprets the 1951, 1954, 1955 and 1958 election results as ‘the effect of the DLP and the ‘Communist can’. He argues that in 1961, Menzies’ ‘credit squeeze caused a swing to Labor’ and states that 1966 was ‘the Vietnam election’.

Jaensch identifies nine post-war elections as critical ones based on the criteria of either a change in government or on the basis of turnover of seats (Table 3.2). His analysis includes some different elections than those identified in the large margin elections. Based on Jaensch’s categorisations, we might add 1998 to the table also as the ALP won eighteen seats in that election.

Table 3.2 – Significant elections, 1949-1997 (according to Jaensch)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jaensch’s basis for defining election as critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>change of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>votes and seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>votes and seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>votes and seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-72</td>
<td>votes and seats/change of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>change of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-83</td>
<td>votes and seats/change of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>votes and seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>votes and seats/change of government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although opinion polls have become increasingly important to politicians and their advisers, predictions of electoral success based on polling often change during the campaign and that the predicted winner does not always win the election. Table 3.3 shows the predicted winner of each election from 1974 to 2001 based on Morgan Polls.

Table 3.3 – Predicted election winners (based on Morgan Polls on ‘Voting Intention in House of Representatives’), 1974-1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>6 months before polling day</th>
<th>2 months before polling day</th>
<th>1 month before polling day</th>
<th>1 week before polling day</th>
<th>Last (1 week) prediction correct?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Even</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(c)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(c)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(c)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(c)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(d)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>Liberal-National</td>
<td>ALP&lt;sup&gt;(d)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>(a)</sup> In 1980, Morgan was predicting an ALP win right up until the last two weeks of the campaign.

<sup>(b)</sup> In 1990, Morgan Poll had the ALP ahead of the Liberal-National Party by only one per cent in September 1989 (six months before the poll).

<sup>(c)</sup> During the last week of the 2002 election campaign, the Morgan Poll predicted the ALP would win by a large margin. It was the only polling organisation to predict an ALP win and was later heavily criticised for a very inaccurate prediction.


Table 3.3 shows that the Morgan Poll predicted that the ALP would win in 1980 and that the Coalition would win in 1993. On both these occasions, there were unexpected results which were attributed, at least in some part, to the political advertising used.
One of the criteria which might, ideally, be held to account for an election result is that the electorate has judged that the winner had better policies. In Australia, Paul Rodan argues that since 1951, only in two federal elections were the outcomes caused by the 'perceived policy superiority of the victor'. These were, he argues, in 1980 when Fraser was re-elected over tax policy and 1993 when Keating was re-elected for opposing the GST.\textsuperscript{101} In all other elections, Rodan argues the decisive factors were a combination of issues 'such as leadership, longevity, perceptions of competence, image and party unity (or lack thereof)...' He also points out, as have others, that many of the elections in the 1950s and 1960s were 'essentially non-events' because the Labor Party was too fragmented to be a real contender.\textsuperscript{102}

Overall, election results are complex and the outcome of any election is open to multiple interpretations. Many factors, both long- and short-term, can be considered when assessing Australian election results. But to what extent can election results be attributed to the political advertising which is used during the campaign?

**DO POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS 'WORK'?**

While in broader media theory, there has been much debate amongst academics about the extent of media influence on audiences, among political actors and the public, there seems to be a widespread view that media campaigns during elections do have important effects on their audiences. Indeed, the parties organise their entire campaigns around receiving maximum favourable media coverage on the assumption that media do have substantial effects on the electorate.\textsuperscript{103} As Duck et al point out:

whether political media content actually influences attitudes and behaviours as intended, the assumption that it does has a substantial impact on the conduct of election campaigns, on our perceptions of how people are thinking about election issues, and on our analysis of election outcomes.\textsuperscript{104}
Political advertising is only one example of political media content during elections (others include *The Great Debate*, stories on current affairs shows and news bulletins and articles and editorials in newspapers). As with all of the other media appearances, one of the major aims for the parties and candidates is to win votes. While broader media theory has focused on measuring media influence in a number of different contexts (for example, whether violence on television leads to violent behaviour), the main measure of political advertising influence has been ‘effect’ on voting choice.

A distinct body of mainly-American research is concerned with trying to determine whether political advertisements ‘work’ in the sense of winning votes. Researchers have tried to work out which ads work, how they work and who they work on (which types of voters or groups of people). This is usually measured through surveys or experiments or through a combination of surveys and experiments. The results of much of this research reads as if it were part of a ‘handbook’ for politicians and political consultants advising them about the ‘best’ types of ads to use and how to present themselves for maximum effect on voters.105

Although this body of work is quite considerable, it will be only briefly addressed here because, as stated in the first chapter, this study does not attempt to measure the ‘effects’ of political ads on voters. However, a brief outline of this type of research is necessary to provide some background and context about the study of political advertising.

Fifteen years ago it was quite common for researchers to argue that the significance of paid advertising was small, and that only unpaid advertising, particularly TV news, has a real impact on voters.106 Early American researchers, however, found that televised political ads do have cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on voters.107 And, later research seemed to confirm this. Using experimental methods, researchers have found that spots can have strong effects on candidate image.108
As with all researchers, there is a particular interest in establishing that a field of specialisation is important. More specifically to the U.S., where over US$900 million is spent on election advertising, and where there is a great deal of research and evaluation funding available, there are real incentives to conduct such research.

However, despite the host of research which has been performed, claims about political advertising effects are often contradictory and the findings from the survey and experiment studies, non-generalisable. Later in this chapter, an outline of ‘effects’ research which has been performed on negative political advertising demonstrates how contradictory the findings of ‘effects’ research can be.

While it does remain virtually impossible to isolate the effect of advertising as distinct from other elements of political behaviour, to admit that we do not know and perhaps, will never know, what effect political ads have on voters, is not to say that ads are worthy of study or that they make no difference at all. Even if they do not sway many (or even, any) voters, political advertisements are still extremely important to the politicians who produce, and spend millions on, political advertisements.

Despite the lack of any concrete evidence, many Australian politicians are convinced that advertisements such as ‘It’s Time’, the Liberal’s 1980 ‘wealth-tax’ advertisements and the Labor Party’s anti-GST advertisements of 1993, made a real difference to the election result—either in terms of which party won or in terms of the size of that victory.

Clearly, political advertisements are extremely significant to their producers—and by focusing on this group, we can still determine much about politics and elections. Their advertisements speak volumes about what our politicians want to tell us, how they want to present themselves, how they try to convince us, who they think their audience is, and their assumptions about that audience. By studying the content of political advertising we can learn much about Australian politicians including their messages, strategies and assumptions about their audience. This information is of
great significance to political scientists who are trying to make sense of political actors and their behaviour. Political advertisements can also tell us about the ‘new machine men’ in Australian politics—that secretive band of campaign professionals including political advisers, pollsters, psychologists and market researchers. Currently, we know very little about this group or their influence on Australian politics. However, by studying the advertisements that they help to produce, we can determine much about the type of advice they are giving our politicians.

For the producers of political advertisements, the intention is to win votes and the scholarly evidence suggests that political advertisements may have an effect on voters. But what of their broader effect on the political system?

**A conceptual framework: Idealism versus pragmatism**

Australian authors, such as Ward and Beresford, approach political advertising in terms of its fulfilment or hindrance of democratic ideals. This stems from an ideological concern that democracy better proceeds from an electorate which is well informed. In this respect, they mirror the concerns expressed by American authors such as Kathleen Hall-Jamieson, Robert P. Hart, Douglas Kellner and Sig Mickelson, who are primarily concerned with whether modern political advertising hinders the achievement of a healthy democracy.

In this ideal democracy view, political advertising is understood to be acceptable only so far as it fulfils its ‘democratic purpose’—which is, to provide citizens with an informed choice of political parties/candidates. Political advertising which fails to do this, which appeals to emotions rather than intellect, which distorts information, is attacking or negative, is undesirable. Likewise, advertising based on modern commercial sales techniques (‘political marketing’) is seen to degrade the electoral process—to be the equivalent of ‘selling candidates as if they were soap’.
For most of the ‘ideal democracy’ authors, political advertising falls far short of fulfilling its democratic purpose. Many of these authors perceive the past as a time when political advertising was more informative and dignified. Some prescribe a return to political advertising which is print-based, factual and contains as much information as possible to provide citizens with knowledge upon which to make an informed choice of candidates. Hall-Jamieson is, however, a notable exception. Although concerned with measuring political advertising in terms of democratic ideals, Hall-Jamieson argued in her early work that political advertising was fulfilling its democratic purpose.109

Aside from Hall-Jamieson, most other ‘ideal democracy’ authors argue that political advertising is no longer fulfilling its democratic role. Three claims are commonly made about modern political advertising and three main standards are used as a basis for these claims. Firstly, it is alleged that the information content of advertisements has declined and that modern political advertisements (particularly television advertisements) contain unsatisfactory information content—in terms of both quantity and quality of information provided. Secondly, it is alleged that there has been a rise in negative political advertising and that this kind of advertising degrades political debate—not least because it is emotive, rather than factually, based. Thirdly, it is claimed that advertisements which focus upon individuals (particularly, party leaders) rather than on policies, programs or the broader political party and its aims and philosophies, are populist, inimical to the notion of informed choice (and, according to some authors, even harmful to the two-party system).

A second school of authors with very different concerns can also be identified in both the Australian and overseas literature. This group is more concerned with the actual political advertisements and with analysing these in order to discover information about electioneering and election campaigns. Australian authors in this group include Braund and Mills. In the U.S., Britain and Europe, many authors could be included in this group including Kaid, R. John Balloti Jr., William L. Benoit, John Boiney and David L. Paletz, Dianne G. Brystrom and Jerry L. Miller, William G. Christ and Esther Thorson, Steve Hilton, Karen S. Johnson-Cartee, Gary A. Copeland, Chris Powell, Scammell and Leonard Shyles. Rather than examining political advertisements in terms of ideals such as fairness, equity, access or democracy, this
group pragmatically accepts that political ads are part and parcel of modern politics. From this perspective, political advertisements are seen to be valuable texts which can be examined in order to gain information about how politics is actually functioning rather than as a basis for discussions about how it should function in an 'ideal' democracy. On this basis, it might be appropriate to dub this group the 'pragmatic information seekers’ or ‘pragmatists’.

Having identified two broad schools of thought in the political advertising literature, attention can now be paid to their main concerns—information content, negative political advertising; personalisation and electioneering. For although the two groups are disparate in their approaches, both groups are essentially concerned with the same issues. Just as the 'ideal democracy' theorists are concerned about the information content of advertisements, the use of negative political advertising and the personalisation of political ads, so too are the 'pragmatists'—in fact, it is often these very issues which the 'pragmatists' seek to prove or disprove by analysing political advertisements. Likewise, just as the pragmatists are interested in electioneering strategies and the practice of politics, so too are the idealists—for whom the nature of modern electioneering practices is at the root of the crisis of democracy.

Information Content

In Australia, Beresford and Ward are the major proponents of the ‘ideal democracy’ view. Their theories about information content will therefore form the backbone of this section with other works supplementing their arguments and ideas.

Beresford argues that; '[p]olitical marketing strategies risk undermining... democratic qualities' such as developing an informed electorate and the promotion of vigorous, open debate about rival party policies ‘by placing undue emphasis on persuading voters rather than genuinely informing them.’ Beresford is particularly concerned that ‘voters are being encouraged to fix on a small set of issues deliberately marketed to them while failing to take into account a wider range of national
concerns’. However, Scammell has argued that political marketing makes politics more democratic because it is consumer-driven and concerned with tailoring ‘the product’ (parties and policies) to consumer taste. This, she argues, makes candidates and parties better informed and more responsive to the ‘needs, wants and views of the electorate at large’. She maintains that political advertising can capture the attention, and increase the awareness of, voters who ‘might otherwise shun dry debates, lengthy documentaries, dense pamphlets or manifestos’.

Ward fears that political ‘television advertising in general fuels voter disillusionment and is inimical to the health of democracy itself’. For Ward, Labor’s 1972 ‘It’s Time’ campaign represented a break with early forms of television advertising which, he claims, until then had mostly involved ‘clean, unemotional, factual presentation’. Ward argues that: ‘[m]ost of the election ads appearing in the often lengthy “Electoral Notices” columns of newspapers during the 1901 election campaign contained factual information’ [my italics] such as the locations, dates and times at which speakers would address voters, while others presented abridged addresses about policy positions.

Like many other ideal-democracy theorists, Ward has a view of the past as inherently superior. But in the American context, Hall-Jamieson warns not to idealise the political advertising of old because it was often not much better. She argues that those who long for a return to the ‘good old days’, long for a past that never was, as the messages contained in the banners, songs and cartoons of early election campaigns were often briefer, more extreme, and less substantive than today’s sixty second spot advertisements.

For Ward, the crucial distinction is that early print ads ‘all carried their message in words only’ whereas the ads of today often rely on visual images. Visual images are, according to Ward, inherently irrational as they can distort and deceive. Ward argues that television has an entirely different epistemology than print—that television ads seek ‘to persuade using images and sounds rather than informed, logical argument expressed in the form of written or spoken words’. Election advertising, he argues ‘is no longer, as it was when carried by the print media alone, intent upon persuading voters by informing them’. Words are clearly viewed as superior to
visual images and print is seen to be an inherently superior medium. There is no acknowledgment that the printed word can also be emotive or that it can also distort and deceive.

Ward sees ‘factual information’, ‘abridged addresses’ to voters and ‘policy positions’ as ‘good’ forms of information. Because Ward argues that the brevity of television ads is an indicator of their lack of information, we might also assume that the length of time (for a TV ad) or the print space (of a newspaper ad) is a good measure of its information content. From Ward’s focus on the word (as opposed to the image) we might also deduce that the number of words in an ad is a measure of information content. This has also been an issue for other authors such as Jack Waterford, who states that even a cursory look at modern newspaper ads shows ‘bigger pictures, fewer words, mostly loaded, are being used than ever before…’

Ward does not consider that impressions which voters form about a party or leader—such as encouraging a voter to like, trust or identify with a party or leader—to be the ‘same as imparting information which can be used rationally to consider issues or to weigh the merits of particular candidates’. Ward’s focus is on ‘rational’ information which aids ‘rational’ discussion and decision making. Rational is considered to be the opposite of emotive and the two are seen to be incompatible. Seemingly, one cannot make an emotive appeal which is rational.

Appealing to emotions is not however, a new phenomenon. As noted earlier, Braund found that even before the introduction of television to Australia, many political ads were based on appeals to the gut emotions of threat and fear. Nevertheless, Ward’s claims that television advertisements are more emotive than their print predecessors, has some support. Mills argues that the Australian parties:

have increasingly concentrated on the emotions rather than the intellect of voters... voters are thought to be susceptible to appeals to their values and feelings. So both tracking and targeting are affect oriented. Market research plumbs the depths of voter’s fears, perceptions and enthusiasms; television, a more emotional medium than cold, hard print, perfectly projects a personality-oriented, value-laden style of campaigning.
In the U.S., Kaid and Dorothy K. Davidson interviewed five producers of political ads. A theme which emerged from these interviews was that the producers were focused on reaching the voter/viewer emotionally. Their aim was to make them feel something—comfortable or confident, for example. In a later study of television ads from Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Israel and the U.S., Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that most leaders and parties rely on emotional, rather than logical, proof to make their points in television ads. Kaid and Holtz-Bacha also found that emotional responses elicited by ad viewing was a major determinant of candidate image. For instance, the more optimistic an ad made the viewer feel, the higher the image rating for seven of the eight candidates. These studies tend to confirm Ward’s belief that television advertisements are emotive-based. However, whether emotive appeals are not worthy sources of information is still open for debate.

The quality of information content in ads is open to interpretation. The Australian political parties still insist that their advertising is meant to inform as well as persuade. And, an advertising agent has praised the Australian parties for using ads which stick to the issues. He says Australia political ads are far better are focusing on issues than ads used overseas.

Mills takes a much broader view of information content than Ward. He argues that valuable information given in ads includes ‘[instructing] the voters about who is running for office, what they look like, what they are promising’. Unlike Ward, Mills does consider information about the candidate(s) as a potentially significant source of information for the voter. Mills also notes that if ‘communicating the partisan claims of the candidate’ is considered a source of information, political ads ‘may be more informative than the news media about the arguments and allegations the candidates are putting forward’.

Mills notes that parties use ads to ‘introduce their leaders and spell out their policy inducements [and] such ads have enormous potential for reaching voters who might not otherwise have watched or read a news service’. This issue of audience is an important one and one which Ward does not seem to consider in his push for the written word—the written word does not appeal to everyone. As outlined in chapter
two, newspaper circulation in Australia is declining. Despite academic prescriptions that people should get their information from the print media, many people clearly prefer to receive their information from other sources—including television.

As a source of information, television ads also contain particular advantages over other media sources. Richard Joslyn points out that when one realises:

‘that the typical length of time devoted to discussions of candidate characteristics, qualifications and policy positions on television network news is less than two minutes, and that many more voters are exposed to spot ads than to lengthy newspaper analyses because exposure to the latter is voluntary and to the former is involuntary, it seems quite plausible that spot ads contribute at least as much as these other media to the creation of an “informed” electorate.’

Mills and Ward have different views about what constitutes ‘information’. For Mills, partisan claims and information about candidates are sources of information which can fulfil an educative role. However, Mills makes no idealist claims about this educative role. As a pragmatist, he points out that if there is any educative function of political ads, it ‘is incidental to their main intended purpose of winning votes’. This purpose is, of course, the primary function of election advertising. It is also at the root of concerns about modern political advertisements which draw on commercial marketing techniques to ‘sell’ their candidate/party.

For Beresford, the use of marketing techniques in political advertising has meant that ‘image’ and ‘message’ now ‘compete with and even outpace information on policy’. Ward argues similarly that ‘with television, “style replaces substance” and image and personality become more important than ideas and argument’. In the American literature, these ‘style versus substance’ or ‘image versus issues’ arguments are encapsulated in an on-going debate known as the ‘issue-image’ debate.

In the ‘issue-image’ debate in American political advertising literature, the ‘image’ concept has been used in two different ways: firstly, to refer to the visual likeness of the candidate—that is, ‘image’ as a photo or a graphic representation; secondly, ‘image’ is used to refer to the character attributes of the candidate. In this
sense 'image' refers to the candidate's projected personality traits and character attributes (e.g. honesty, experience etc). 'Issue' information on the other hand has been used more consistently to refer to 'specific policy' stands on topics which are tied to the concerns of the citizenry. 'Issues' are therefore best defined as 'current topics linked to the national interest'. In Australia, this would include unemployment, inflation, health and Medicare, interest rates, education, taxation, immigration and industrial relations. The ideological assumption behind the issue-image debate is that 'issue' information is more valuable in terms of the democratic purpose of ads, than information related to candidate 'image'.

American researchers such as Joslyn, Shyles, Christ, Kaid, Holtz-Bacha and John C. Tedesco who have used content analysis to measure and compare the number of 'issue' versus 'image' appeals in political ads, have frequently found that contrary to the belief of those who argue that political commercials emphasise image-making while ignoring political issues, issues are emphasised more than images. Joslyn first identified that the dominant content of American political spots has been issue content. Other researchers have confirmed this emphasis on issue information in spots. A major cross-cultural study of political advertising also found that the majority of ads from Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Israel and the U.S. concentrated on issues rather than images of candidates or parties. However, other studies have noted that although issues are mentioned in political ads, issues are treated 'more in the form of vague policy preferences and that spots are replete with emotional and cultural images and symbols'.

The parameters of the issue/image debate are narrow and have confined the debate to one of 'issue versus image'. Subsequently, research has tended to involve comparative studies between these two elements in order to see which element features more in political ads. Significantly, what has not been addressed is whether issue frequency or intensity in political ads has declined over time. This is significant; for if any of these things have occurred, the ideal democracy theorists still have a point in their claims that information content and quality have declined. It would be beneficial to examine 'issues' in political ads in their own right as well as in terms of how they compare to 'image' appeals.
Another limitation of the American ‘issue-image’ research is that it has tended to involve selecting ads from a particular campaign year and then making a comparison of issue and image content for that year’s ads. This provides only a snapshot of that particular election year and of a particular campaign. It would be more beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study of political advertising in order to see whether, and how, the use of ‘issues’ in political ads has changed over time.

The American debate is a two-part proposition. While it has been appropriate to consider the ‘issue’ component of this debate as a concern about the information content of ads, the ‘image’ component of the American debate must also be addressed under a separate section dealing with ‘personalisation and party decline’. This is due to a difference in emphasis in the Australian and the American literature. In the American literature, the personalisation of political advertisements is understood to be at the expense of ‘issues’—that is, information content. In Australia, where there is still strong partisanship, image-making and the ‘personalisation’ of political advertisements has also been seen to be at the expense of the political parties. Here, the focus of attention is on the perceived decline of the political parties—a very recent phenomenon in Australia. Party decline is understood to be reflected in the personalisation of political advertisements or, even to have been exacerbated by it.

**Personalisation and Party Decline**

As discussed in Chapter two, a very gradual party decline has been documented in Australia since the early 1980s. Party decline refers to several different elements. Firstly, a decline in party identification refers to a decline in both the number of people who identify with a party, and the strength of people’s identification with a particular party. Secondly, party decline refers to the internal structures and organisation of political parties—the increasing centralisation, domination by party élites and lesser role for grass-roots members in campaigns. Thirdly, party decline refers to the increasing media focus on party leaders and individuals rather than the broader political party—the personalisation of politics.
It is now widely acknowledged that ‘Australian election campaigns are becoming increasingly presidential and leader-oriented in nature’. There were claims during the 1983 election that Hawke was being marketed as ‘sexy’ and that Labor exploited his cosmetic appeal in ads. There were also claims that the 1993 election was a ‘presidential’ style campaign of Keating versus Hewson. In particular, the 1996 federal election was seen to be a prime example of the ‘presidentialisation’ of Australian politics. Warhurst noted that Prime Minister Paul Keating was the centre-piece of the campaigns of both the government and the opposition, and argued that the negative Keating ‘bolt it in’ ads were a ‘decisive’ factor in the size of the Coalition’s victory. But despite the widespread perceptions, as Clive Bean notes, ‘hard evidence’ of increased personalisation is ‘difficult to come by and not at all conclusive’.

Hughes, Ward and Bennett suggest that an overt focus on party leaders is quite new in Australia. Ward also argues that in Australia, ‘political advertising which is quasi-presidential represents a significant shift away from the early informative style of advertising’. Yet, Australian print and cinema advertisements from as far back as 1924 were personalised in the sense that they failed to mention the leader’s party and focused predominantly on the leader of the party. The earliest cinema advertisement held in Australian archives, the S. M. Bruce cinema ad, is one in which the party leader is the sole figure shown. Even in countries with strong party systems, personalised ads have existed for at least fifty years. In Britain, Scammell found that it is ‘wrong to contrast the seedy present with an idealized [sic] past [because] there was no golden age when British campaigns were purely serious debates about policy differences’. Many Australian authors seem to have accepted that modern political advertisements are more leader-focused than in the past, but no evidence has been provided to show when or indeed, how, this occurred.

The traditional view of parliamentary government in Australia was that it was party government and that voters cast their ballot for a party regardless of who was at its head. However, as party identification has declined, other factors have come into play. There is now mounting evidence that party leaders matter for the outcome of elections. Bean’s research suggests that ‘issues debated in Australian federal election
campaigns do not generally have strong effects on electoral choices in the end". ¹⁵³ Whereas, 'there seems little doubt that some voters are influenced by leadership...'¹⁵⁴

Bean and Jonathon Kelley found that changes in voters' views between 1984 and 1987 'were influenced mainly by changes in their opinion of the key political leaders, not by their class, ideology or opinions on the issues of the day'.¹⁵⁵ In 1993, Ian McAllister conducted research which purported to explain why Australian voters supported a particular party in the 1993 election. This research can also be framed in terms of issue versus image. McAllister found that issues counted for only seven to nine per cent of the reason why people voted the way they did and attitudes to the economy between only six and nine per cent. The party leaders, however, accounted for between twenty-four and twenty-eight per cent—only one point less than for party identification.¹⁵⁶

In terms of the 'issue-image' debate, this research indicates the relative insignificance of political issues compared to party leadership. Australian politicians also seem to hold this perception—that voters are less interested in policy and more interested in 'personality'.¹⁵⁷ U.S. research has found that 'if leaders' personal qualities are highlighted, voters who are highly exposed to the media become increasingly likely to base their vote on personal evaluations and less likely to base it on party identification'.¹⁵⁸ In terms of how leaders present themselves, certain characteristics are particularly important. Research by Bean and Mughan suggests that candidates for Prime Minister 'are judged against some kind of well-defined schema in the public mind', and that their electoral impact is closely related 'to the extent that they conform to this mental image of what a leader should be like'.¹⁵⁹ The qualities considered most important were: being caring, determined, shrewd, likeable as a person, tough, listens to reason, decisive and sticks to principles.¹⁶⁰

This focus on the personal attributes of leaders is central to 'image' research and many researchers have tried to identify the personal attributes promoted in political ads. In American political advertising, Joslyn found that the same limited repertoire of traits—compassion, empathy, integrity, activity, strength and knowledge—were used time and again.¹⁶¹ In their cross-cultural research, Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that there were also remarkable similarities in the characteristics that political leaders
attempt to portray in their advertising. In most studies, there is a remarkably strong similarity of traits.\textsuperscript{162}

From the research by Bean and Kelley, Bean and Mughan and McAllister as well as research about party decline in Australia, one would assume that a focus on party leaders and on personality traits would have increased in Australian political advertisements. It is possible that this would become particularly evident during the 1980s, as the parties recognised from their own and academic research that party identification was declining and that party leaders and their traits were becoming more important to people’s voting choice.

While McAllister’s research indicates that leadership is now a major factor accounting for a person’s vote—only slightly less important than their partisanship—it must be remembered that the parties are still inordinately strong, particularly when compared to the position of political parties in other countries.

It should also be noted that for some authors, the parties are still too strong. Madison, Ostrogorski and Michels famously argued that ‘political parties are inevitably destructive of democratic government’.\textsuperscript{163} Mills argues that, in Australia, all of the new technology and electioneering methods have only increased the power of the political parties and that we should be concerned about the extent to which they dominate these methods and technologies and how secretive they are about it.\textsuperscript{164} Jaensch argues that in Australia ‘[t]he overriding theme seems to be government of the people, by the party, for the party’.\textsuperscript{165} For some commentators, the decline of the political parties represents a potentially positive step for Australian democracy. For others, ‘democracy is unthinkable, save in terms of party’\textsuperscript{166} and the decline of the two-party system is lamented because when party identification declines the ‘political components of an electoral campaign become more effective—issues, leaders, personalities, events, images become crucial for voters...’\textsuperscript{167}

The issue of party convergence is receiving increasing prominence in Australia. As Murray Goot has pointed out, in 2001, Robert Manne described the differences between the major parties as ‘narrower than I can ever recall’. In 2002, David McKnight wrote of ‘the increasing irrelevance of the old left-right division’, and Ray
Cassin described 'Labor and the Coalition' as 'virtually indistinguishable on broad economic policy'. Goot argues that the convergence theory is based on faulty assumptions and that election speeches since the war, along with studies of government expenditure patterns and tax schedules, cast doubt on the idea that the parties have converged or lost their traditional distinctiveness. Examining the parties' political advertisements can provide an important measure of the extent to which the parties have converged. A recent study by Spiliotes and Vavreck in the U.S. found that contrary to convergence theory, candidates of different parties do not highlight the same issues or positions in their campaign advertising.

Television is considered to bear a good part of the responsibility for the rise of 'presidentialism' or 'personalisation' at the expense of political parties. Authors such as Neil Postman, Douglas Kellner and Rodeny P. Hart blame television for a host of problems. Mickelson sums up many of these concerns when he claims that television is responsible for weakened political parties, for an era in which public officials are elected on the basis of popularity and their skills in performing on TV, and for the poor quality of today's political discourse where, he argues, set responses and stunts have replaced serious discussion. Ward sees television as particularly responsible for personalisation because it focuses upon the 'star qualities' of individuals and party leaders. Jaensch also links TV with personalisation arguing that 'especially after television... the image of the leaders of the parties has become more important'.

Television is generally understood to be better at projecting personalities rather than policies or parties. In fact, some authors claim that television cannot avoid focusing on individuals—that this is inherent in the medium itself. Using the 1924 Bruce cinema advertisement as an example, Mills argues that it is the camera itself which focuses attention on the leaders. He states that 'it is a given that filmed political propaganda will emphasise the presence of the leader. Newspaper columns can never emulate this inherent quality...'

Many authors have associated personalisation with television. If this perception is correct, an increased focus upon the party leader and on personality traits should be particularly evident after the introduction of television in Australia (1956) or more
specifically, after television became an important medium for political ads (usually identified as 1972). Personalisation should also be far more evident in television ads than in print ads because research performed in the U.S. has found that television ‘provides more information about candidates; newspapers, more about parties…’\textsuperscript{176}

While ‘personalisation’ is viewed as a ‘new’ phenomenon in Australia, in the U.S., candidate-centred advertisements are the norm and it is common for political advertisements to completely fail to mention the candidate’s political party. Less than ten per cent of political ads identify the candidate’s party.\textsuperscript{177} In Australia, there is a perception that ‘American-style’ candidate-centred ads which fail to mention the candidate’s political party are on the rise. This perception has been reiterated in ‘insider’ accounts of recent campaigns. Andrew Robb, federal director of the Liberal Party, noted about several ALP members in regional seats during the 1996 federal election that: ‘The ALP logo was rarely seen on any of their literature. They basically ran as independents.’\textsuperscript{178}

Such accounts give the perception that ads which fail to identify the candidate’s party are on the increase in Australia and that this is most likely to occur when a party is particularly unpopular. However, neither of these propositions have been tested. And, even if correct, ‘personalisation’ in this sense is not entirely new. The 1924 Bruce cinema ad and the 1943 John Curtin ‘Man of the Hour’ cinema ad both failed to identify the leader’s party.

Some attempts have been made to measure ‘partisanship’ in advertisements. Joslyn’s 1980 study of American political ads found that only ten per cent contained overt partisan identification.\textsuperscript{179} It is likely that this would have declined even further over the past twenty years. In Britain, where there are strong parties, Johnson-Cartee and Camille Elebash found that ninety-two per cent of political ads were ‘overtly partisan’ while eight per cent were of ‘marginal partisanship’. (However, Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that only thirty-eight per cent of British political ads emphasised political party, compared to only nine per cent for American political parties.\textsuperscript{180}) Ads with marginal partisanship were defined as ‘ads in which the party identification of the candidate was implied but not unambiguously presented (such as by criticizing [sic] the other party or by showing the candidate with a prominent member of the
While no attempt has been made to measure partisanship in Australian political ads, we might expect most ads to display ‘overt partisanship’ due to the unusual strength of party identification (by international standards) and the fact that party membership is still the major determinant of electoral success in Australia.

However, most Australian authors have agreed that the political parties in Australia are gradually declining and that politics is increasingly focused upon party leaders and their personality traits. If we accept this, we would expect that political ads would show a decline in the use of party logo and party name and an increase in focus on the party leader and on the personality traits of the leader. We would also expect that a decrease in party emphasis would be particularly evident in years where that party is particularly unpopular with the electorate.

What is more difficult to speculate about is the cause and effect of personalisation in political ads. Kaid and Holtz-Bacha concluded from their cross-cultural study that the trend towards personalised advertisement ‘may provide some evidence that spots are contributing to a declining emphasis on parties...resulting in a more personalized [sic] campaign system’.\textsuperscript{182} The authors draw a conclusion that declining emphasis on party in political ads ‘results’ in a more personalised system. However, while Kaid and Holtz-Bacha see personalised ads as ‘resulting’ in a more personalised system, they make no grand claims that political ads are the sole cause. Joslyn does see a correlation though. He argues that ‘it is hardly surprising that scholars have noticed a recent decrease in partisan voting, a decrease that begins and accelerates at the same time as spot ads begin to be used extensively’.\textsuperscript{183}

Despite such perceptions, it seems highly unlikely that television ads caused party decline because party identification also declined in many other Western democracies from the 1970s-1980s—and not all of these countries used television ‘spot’ ads or used them in the same way that they were used in the U.S. at that time. The causes of party decline are likely to be far more complex. So while it is reasonable to suggest that personalised ads reflect party decline and perhaps even, exacerbate it, it is unlikely that personalised ads are the sole or primary cause of party decline.
Negative Political Advertising

Of those who are currently writing about political advertising, it is nearly unanimous that modern political advertisements are more negative than those used in the past. This is a perception which, in the U.S. at least, is backed up by a body of research which has found that the use of negative political advertising grew dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s. For ‘ideal democracy’ theorists, this rise in negative political advertising is symptomatic of declining standards and represents a potential threat to ‘quality’ political discourse.

Yet, how ‘negative political advertising’ is defined is central to determining whether its use has actually increased. In 1984, Gina M. Garramone defined negative political advertising as advertising which ‘attacks the other candidate personally, the issues for which the other candidate stands, or the party of the other candidate’. This is such a broad definition that it seems most Australian political ads could be defined thus. In a strongly adversarial two-party system, attacking ‘the party of the other candidate’ has a long history.

Later researchers began to draw a distinction between different types of negative political advertising. One type—often referred to as ‘mudslinging’ or ‘attack advertising’—is defined by Bruce E. Pinkleton as containing ‘a one-sided, opponent-focussed assault designed to draw attention to a targeted candidate’s weaknesses, such as character flaws, public misstatements or broken promises’. Comparative advertising on the other hand, ‘communicates to voters a targeted candidate’s inferiority by contrasting the records, experience, or issue positions of each candidate’. John E. Newhagen and Byron Reeves use three categories of negative ads: ‘true negative’, ‘comparative ads’ and ‘hope or positive ads’ ‘in which the sponsor is promoted as the solution to some problem or issue...without explicitly attacking the opponent’. This last definition does not sound very negative at all.

In Australia, R.R Walker has proposed that Labor ads were more ‘gentlemanly’ between 1972 and 1983, while the Liberal approach was more negative and consistently tried to scare undecided voters who ‘scare easily’. However, many
Australian commentators view the Labor Party’s later 1993 anti-GST advertisements as a milestone in the use of negative political advertising in Australia. In accounting for Labor’s unexpected win of that election, the Party’s negative anti-GST advertisements were considered to be at least partly responsible. The election was described as a ‘fierce advertising war’ and ‘the mother of all scare campaigns’.

However, the 1996 election ads are generally held to have represented a new emphasis on negative political advertising. The election was described as ‘Australia’s most negative election advertising campaign ever’. Several of the ads were personally targeted against an individual (then Prime Minister, Paul Keating) so they seemed to be in the vein of American-style negative ads which use an opponent-focused assault designed to draw attention to a targeted candidate’s weaknesses, such as character flaws, public misstatements or broken promises. They seemed to be very different from the traditional style of party-focused attacks.

In the U.S., the increasing frequency of negative advertisements has been well documented in the press and in academic research. In Australia, there is a perception that this is occurring here as well. In 2000, Lynton Crosby, Federal Director of the Liberal Party, responded to criticism of negative ads by stating: ‘Election advertising is not designed to be liked but rather to have an effect on people’s voting behaviour.’ Of the Liberals’ 1998 campaign advertising, Crosby stated: ‘the whole focus of our national advertising was to remind people that if they voted Labor they would pay for it’. During the 1998 federal election, the National Party produced two sets of ads: one positive and one negative. Their research showed that the attack advertisements ‘received a more positive response than the positive “new deal” commercials’. It seems the Australian parties have become great supporters of negative advertising based on the perception that it ‘works’. Butler claims that spending ‘heavily on extensive and overwhelmingly negative television advertising’ is a trademark of Australian elections.

In other countries, the situation is not so clear cut as it is in the U.S., where most authors have agreed that negative political advertising has increased. In Britain, a 1986 study by Johnson-Cartee and Elebash found that British political parties make use of both positive and negative types of appeals in advertisements. However, like
the 1996 federal election in Australia, the 1997 British general election was said to display unprecedented levels of negativity. In a major cross-cultural comparison by Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, the dominant focus of ads from U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Israel was positive.

Most authors, but particularly ‘ideal democracy’ theorists, are concerned about a rise in negative political advertising, believing that it degrades political debate by focussing on ‘soft’ targets such as individuals and their character flaws rather than more important broader political issues such as party philosophy and policy. For many authors, there is a concern that use of negative political advertising exacerbates disillusionment with politics and discourages political participation. An Australian psychologist warned in 1987 that if the parties use too many negative ads: ‘you’ll end up with disillusioned people…’

In 1995, Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar attempted to determine the effects of negative political advertising on the American political system. They found that negative political advertising contributes to voter apathy and disillusionment with politics and, in a non-compulsory voting system, drives down voter turn-out. Ansolabehere and Iyengar even speculated that negative political advertising was deliberately used by some American candidates to discourage particular groups of people from voting.

In Australia, the compulsory voting system seemingly voids the possibility that people will not vote as a result of increasing disillusionment with the political system. However, given particularly high or sustained disillusionment, Australians could begin to question their system of compulsory voting or we could see a decline in voter registration and/or an increase in informal votes. During the late 1990s, it was apparent that Australians were more angry, cynical and dissatisfied with politicians than ever before. This period of heightened discontent coincided with the first real use of negative-personalised advertising in the 1996 federal election. It is less likely that the political ads used in that campaign caused the anger and cynicism and more likely that they cleverly tapped into and exploited that mindset.
In 1980, Henry Mayer argued that negative advertising was an inevitable part of an adversarial party system. An Australian advertising agent notes in more informal terms, that the parties ‘spend every day for four years bagging the crap out of each other so why should campaigns be any different?’ In the U.S., there has also been some defence of negativity. Hall-Jamieson has argued that rather than being harmful to democracy, negativity is essential for genuine debate and as a way of ensuring that policy promises and candidates’ reputations are examined. William G. Mayer published an article titled ‘In Defense of Negative Campaigning’ in 1996. Others have agreed that trying to prevent criticism during a campaign would constrain essential campaign discourse. Ann Crigler, Marion Just and Todd Belt argue that: ‘After all, challengers are expected to run against the incumbent’s record. Criticism, therefore, should be expected to play an essential part in campaigning’.

So while most social commentators have bemoaned the rise of negative political advertising, others have claimed that negative political advertisements are very beneficial to democracy. Joslyn argues that ‘blame-placing’ ads have considerable educative potential because they provide voters with information about how the candidates and their policies have performed. Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton and Cole argued similarly that negative ads ‘may have positive consequences that derive from the informativeness of negative political advertising’. These arguments recall the debates explored earlier concerning information content in political ads—they are debates about what is valuable information and about the importance of policy information versus information about personalities.

In 1999, Kaid and Tedesco noted that although American ads are becoming more negative, they do seem to be emphasising issues. This same finding—that negative ads largely focus on the candidate’s issue positions—has also been noted in Italian and German political ads. Kaid and Tedesco argue that negative ads which focus on the issues are still useful in terms of the democratic ideal because: ‘negative ads that discuss policy questions and provide voters with contrasting information can perform a useful function for democracy’. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland argue that spot ads which truthfully compare the political records or leadership qualities of two candidates ‘provide the electorate with a means to compare the candidates’ records on the issues, define the scope of the campaign, and help individuals decide which
candidate is more worthy of their vote. In all of these arguments, a value distinction is made that issue-attacks are acceptable, even useful, but personal attacks are not. Indeed, researchers acknowledge that 'it is when negative political advertising departs from the issues and becomes personal that [the ads] become most objectionable'.

Because political ads can tell us much about the parties' election strategies, a key issue in the literature has been whether incumbents or challengers make greater use of negative ads. In 1995, Spencer F. Tinkham and Ruth Ann Weaver-Lariscoy found that the choice to "go negative" is strongly predicted by both incumbency status and the perception of how much the incumbent in the race benefits from his or her tenure in office. Benoit found that challengers attack more than incumbent party candidates and that most attacks originate with candidates who trail throughout the campaign. This seems to bear out a 'common sense' view that in a party system, challengers will use attack advertising more because the incumbent government has been able to enact policies, has been the centre of media and public attention, and has a record of action (or inaction) which provides a basis for attacks.

In terms of electioneering strategy, studying the content of negative advertisements has been an increasingly popular topic of study. William L. Benoit notes that there has been a clear trend toward others speaking more than candidates in negative advertisements. This is presumably because the candidate wishes to distance themselves from the 'nasty' business of making negative attacks in order to avoid a 'backlash' against the sponsor of the ad. In Italian ads, the same method of using an 'anonymous announcer' to make attacks has been noted.

Kaid and Tedesco found that the most striking feature of negative ads is 'the tendency to use the opponents own words or appearances against him' in the production of new spots. Some of the other ways which researchers have identified include using negative association and humour/ridicule.

However, the majority of the latest American research on negative political advertising has focused on the 'effects' of the negative advertisements and how candidates can best deal with negative ads which are about them. As with broader
'effects' research, much of this then reads like a 'handbook' for politicians and political consultants—advising which negative ads are least damaging to use and how to rebut when you are attacked.

The findings of this research (like broader 'effects' research) is extraordinarily contradictory. A brief summary of 'negative effects' research is given below in order to show the type of research which has been performed and the opposing conclusions.

In the 1980s, Garramone consistently found that negative ads can affect sponsor and opponent images and vote intentions. Later research found that in some instances, negative political advertising does successfully reduce the targeted candidate's support. However, Kaid and John Boydston found that negative ads can actually hurt the sponsoring candidate's image, even with natural supporters and partisans because voters dislike and distrust negative political advertising. Other researchers have found that negative ads can cause a 'backlash' against the ad's sponsor and unintentionally increase support for the opponent (the 'boomerang' effect). Researchers who have focused on memory, have usually found that voters recall negative ads better than positive ones. But contradicting all of this research, yet other researchers have found that there is no difference at all in the effectiveness of negative and positive advertisements.

For their part, political consultants and advertisers are unanimous in proclaiming the 'brutal truth'—that negative advertising 'works'. In the words of one consultant; 'If it's negative, it works. If it's positive save it for your tombstone'. As flippant as this advice sounds, it is likely to be well-received by political candidates who are relying more and more on the advice of external consultants. In Australia, there are only a handful of 'political consultants'. There are, however, numerous advertisers, marketing experts, public relations advisers, pollsters, psychologists and other external outsiders, who play a major role in running the parties' election campaigns. In Australia, these consultants keep a very low profile so that we know little about them, but by analysing political advertisements, we can learn much about the electioneering strategies which have evolved since they came to play a central role in campaigning.
Electioneering

Ads can also tell us much about politicians' election strategies. Ads reveal who politicians target, in which areas and with what message(s). They can also tell us much about the advantages of incumbency and how different media, settings and production techniques are used. In order to draw out some of the major issues in the targeting of political ads, some psephological research about Australian voting patterns is provided below. However, as this thesis relates only to House of Representatives elections, the information provided relates to House of Representative elections only. It is important to note that many Australians vote differently in House and Senate elections (even those held upon the same day) with the major parties winning fewer votes in Senate elections.\(^{225}\)

GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

The political parties have a strong interest in ‘swinging’ or non-committed voters. One of the ways this interest is demonstrated is through the parties’ focus on marginal electorates during elections. A marginal electorate is usually interpreted as one where a five per cent shift will change the party representation.\(^ {226}\) Of course, not all of the voters in a marginal electorate are ‘swinging’ voters. As Jaensch points out;

An electorate where 49 per cent of the voters are committed to Labor and 49 per cent are committed to the Liberal Party is just as marginal as an electorate where 40 per cent of the voters have no party commitment.\(^ {227}\)

Because we know that marginal electorates receive particular attention from the political parties, we would therefore expect that there would be more political advertisements placed in states where there are many marginal electorates.\(^ {228}\) This means that the most populated states are likely to receive the greatest share of political advertising as these states contain the greatest number of seats and therefore the greatest number of marginal seats.
N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland contain up to eighty per cent of all House of Representative electoral divisions. The Northern Territory has only one House electorate division and would therefore be unlikely to be a major focus of expensive advertising campaigns. Geography is likely to play a particularly important role in the electioneering strategy of the National Party which has support in rural electorates which are relatively few in number and are scattered around New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.229

There are important state variations in federal election results. In some election years a specific issue (such as the Franklin dam in Tasmania in the 1983 election or the fall in support for the Cain-Kirner ALP state government in Victoria in 1990) affects the outcome for that state. However, other longer term variations also seem to be evident.

To summarise (from Bennett, 1996), the Labor Party has always done well in NSW. Over one-quarter of the Liberal Party's support has come from Victoria with Labor having problems in Victoria until the 1980s. For many years, the Coalition dominated the internal politics of Queensland and only in the elections of 1987, 1990 and 1993 did the Coalition fail to gain a majority of seats there. The National Party's strength is in regional Queensland. Since the 1980s, Western Australia and South Australia have seen a very even party struggle. Tasmania results tend to have an "all or nothing" quality about them—the party that has done best at each of the elections since 1975 has won either four or five of the five seats.230

Because there is a difference in the manner in which the major parties perform electorally around the nation, we would expect to see political parties concentrating their scarce resources on areas where they have a reasonable chance of winning seats and in areas where there are most seats to be won.
TARGETING

Swinging voters

Whether they are called ‘swinging’ voters, ‘floating’ voters,\textsuperscript{231} ‘switchers’ or the ‘uncommitted’, by all accounts, this group of voters are the major target of both of the Australian political parties’ election advertisements.

Converse stated as far back as 1966 that ‘floating’ voters ‘tend to be those whose information about politics is relatively impoverished’.\textsuperscript{232} They tend ‘to be “not the most rational of voters” and “seem to be less committed, not because of a genuine independence of mind, but more out of apathy”.\textsuperscript{233} Stated in even more elitist terms, Rydon claimed that ‘in Australia where the apathetic and ill-informed are forced to the polls by law... the “scum and dregs” of political life will decide who is to govern the country.’\textsuperscript{234}

Other descriptions of swinging voters describe them as ‘people who know little about politics and government, care less and may well vote only to avoid the prospect of a fine’.\textsuperscript{235} They are, according to one observer, ‘selfish, ignored and depressed... They vote on instinct for superficial, ill-informed and generally selfish reasons’.\textsuperscript{236} Bennett states that:

\begin{quote}
Because of the parties perception that the swinging voters are essentially ignorant of politics and hold a selfish view of what government might do, campaigns therefore tend to be shallow, designed to catch the attention of those who might change their vote, and avoiding any discussion of issues in depth.\textsuperscript{237}
\end{quote}

The parties guard their privately-commissioned research very closely but such information is of great significance to this research for it is the basis of the parties’ ‘tracking and targeting’ of voters and is the driving force behind the political advertisements they create. Mills uncovered a report of the ALP’s own research on swinging voters. According to Mills, this report (by Rod Cameron) helped to
‘fundamentally reshape’ the ALP in the period 1979-80 and drove the Party’s campaign advertising in the 1980s. The foundation of the report was Cameron’s profile of the swinging voter. It is worth repeating a large section of this report (from Mills) as this analysis has a significant impact on our study of political advertising.

Cameron’s report stated that for swinging voters:

Politics is dull, boring and largely irrelevant to their lifestyle. Politicians are held in low esteem. Politics is ‘out of touch’ with their interests and lifestyles. Interest in political philosophy, ideology, is very low. There is far greater involvement and interest in matters concerning their personal and their family’s financial well-being, and their day-to-day interests (sport, family concerns, leisure, recreation) than in even simple questions of ideology and government. Their catchcry is NON-INVOLVEMENT. They abhor political aggression, political rallies, anything which implies (irrelevant) political involvement. They are essentially the products (and supporters) of mass market commercialism, gaining their political information from Mike Willesee or his equivalent, the tabloid newspapers and the occasional commercial news bulletin.²³⁸

The demographic profile of the ‘typical’ swinging voter was a ‘30-40 year old parent (usually mother) of a young family, residing literally in the middle of all demographic categories, with a middle-class, middle-suburban, middle-education, middle-income, middle-employment lifestyle and middle-of-the-road politics’.²³⁹

Authoritarian, racist, hardline about “dole bludgers”, refugees etc. They want political stability, predictability, moderation… They are searching for a middle-ground Party, a moderate leader who is strong… but can understand and represent their value system… the value ideology of the swinging voter is Self Interest; interest in the maintenance of personal financial wellbeing.²⁴⁰

Because they hold no strong left or right wing views, the ‘swinging’ voters are invariably at the ‘centre’ of the political spectrum—the ‘middle-of-the-road’. The result of this and other factors has been the convergence of the parties; a shift to
‘catch-all’ parties which both aim for the middle ground of politics. Jaensch believes rhetoric is now the only major difference separating the ALP and Liberal-National Parties. He argues that:

With the undecided voters at the ‘centre’ and with both parties having a reasonable expectation of winning sufficient seats to form a government, the drive of the party system was centripetal…. the rhetoric was necessary to convince both members and voters that there was a ‘real choice’. 241

Indeed, Cameron’s report on swinging voters to the ALP advised that:

The Party must concede that rhetoric is more important to the swinging voter than the details contained in policy outlooks. Sloganised epithets, which reduce complex issues to oversimplified, often distorted, catchcry positions, represent eventually the real reasons why uncommitted, often apolitical swinging voters, cast their vote for a particular Party. 242

The Liberal Party’s own research (by pollster George Camarakis) in 1979, concurred with the traditional view of swinging voters as people who:

believe there is little between the two parties. Thus ideology to the swinging voter is of little consequence. What is of consequence however, is the way he [sic] thinks the application of an ideology will affect him [sic] personally or his [sic] family. 243

In 1975, the Liberal Party’s campaign centred on two television advertisements: ‘Turn on the Lights’ and the ‘Three Dark Years’ (described by Mills as ‘among the finest, most inventive and powerful [political ads] ever produced in Australia’). 244 Both ads were highly targeted towards swinging voters. A post-election report by the Liberal Party’s pollster noted about their success that the content of the advertisements was ‘nowhere near as important’ to swinging voters as ‘the emotive tone and form’ of them. 245
According to high-brow criticism of compulsory voting—‘forcing’ non-interested voters to the polls—has meant that political ads must aim at the lowest common denominator: the ignorant and uninterested who do not want to vote but are compelled to. Such a view fails to note that even partisan voters are anything but knowledgeable about politics. According to McAllister, the majority of Australians ‘know little about politics and possess minimal factual knowledge about the operation of the political system’.246 It also overlooks that in the United States (where there is no compulsory voting) public opinion surveys since the 1940s have consistently shown that American citizens in general (including those who vote) are ‘embarrassingly’ ill-informed and unknowledgeable about politics.247

Swinging voters do not have a monopoly on either ignorance nor selfishness. Despite their claimed allegiance to a particular party, most partisan voters in Australia have never attended a party meeting, never read the party platform and would have difficulty explaining their party’s ideology or history. Most Australians are not particularly active in the political system.

It has traditionally been argued that the ignorant and apathetic ‘can not...intelligently vote or participate in the democratic process’ because their voting decisions are based on ignorance rather than ‘rational choice’.248 For traditional commentators, the parties use of advertising targeted towards swinging voters and based on the shallow notion of ‘what’s in it for me?’, represents a sad departure from the ideal of informed, ‘rational’ debate about policy. For others, the distinction between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ is a false dichotomy. If emotive appeals and a ‘shallow’ presentation of politics strikes a chord with someone in their voting decision, this hardly seems any less ‘rational’ than the partisan voter who always votes for the same party no matter what they have done (or not done). As Mills notes: ‘emotionalism is not just the lazy citizen’s way of opting out of the hard choices but may be a fundamental way in which we respond to the world’.249
Gender

McAllister and Bean explain that:

Since the population divides almost equally on gender and since the proportions are fixed, relatively small changes in the party preferences of men and women can have significant implications for electoral outcomes.  

In terms of overall voting patterns, traditionally women have been more politically conservative—voting more for the conservative parties—than Australian men. However, ‘increasing levels of workforce participation among women and declining religiosity have weakened these gender differences in party preferences’.  

Opinion polls showed that women’s votes strongly favoured the Coalition in the early 1970s. Malcolm Fraser won the 1975 election with fifty-seven per cent of the female vote, but this went down to fifty per cent in 1977 and forty-nine per cent in 1980. Tony Eggleton believed that women’s support slid away in the later 1970s partly because of ‘perceptions the party was not keeping pace with the times and because women were feeling the pinch of the latter Fraser years’.

In the 1983 and 1984 elections, won by the ALP under the leadership of Bob Hawke, women’s votes favoured the ALP. The Liberals conceded in 1987 that it was probably the loss of the women’s vote in 1983 that kept them in opposition for nearly five years. But the trend changed in 1987 and 1990, when the female vote favoured the Coalition again, but only by around two to three per cent.

In 1993, the Liberal Party again lost the support of women. Lynton Crosby stated that ‘the swing against us amongst this demographic in 1993...cost us that election’. In 1996, the focus was on men. Crosby, argued that ‘in 1975 and 1983 it was women who changed the Government. [But] in 1996, it was men.’ In 1996, for the first time, the Coalition led Labor amongst males, including a twelve per cent swing amongst twenty-five to thirty-four year-old males. Crosby noted that this was unusual because ‘women voters have traditionally been the swing group’.
After the 1998 election, Crosby stated that the Coalition did well to hold favour with females over forty-five years. This is a popular perception resulting from a view that Labor specifically targeted female voters during this election. Labor was certainly successful in picking up votes from women in their 30s and 40s during the ‘GST elections of 1993 and 1998’ but as Jenny Macklin, the Deputy Leader of the ALP, recently noted, the Party was not able ‘to keep them for the 1996 and 2001 elections’.

The importance of gender is evident in the Cameron-ALP research on swinging voters, which indicated that many swinging voters are women—particularly mothers with young children. One explanation for the gender gap suggests that the Labor Party has been ineffective in appealing to women voters. If this is true, we would perhaps expect to see little emphasis on women in the ALP ads from 1949 until the 1980s when the gap started to close. From the 1980s, we might expect to see ALP ads target women as the ALP has always suffered from a gender gap with women voters preferring the non-Labor parties until this period.

**Race and Ethnicity**

Differences in voting patterns have been noted amongst Australian-born voters and Northern Europeans (including British voters), Southern Europeans, Eastern Europeans and Asian voters. McAllister and Bean note that ‘since the Whitlam years, the ethnic vote has been a substantial resource for Labor, and in the 1987 election it was considered to have meant the difference between electoral success and failure’. They claim that ‘both major political parties have gone to considerable lengths to court the ethnic vote in recent years, most notably the Liberals’ and particularly in 1996.

If we consider that the parties use ads to try to persuade non-supporters, we would expect Liberal ads to target ethnic voters. Alternately, if we consider that ads are used to reinforce already held opinions and attitudes, we would expect to see ALP ads focus on ethnic voters.
Social class and occupation

It was once held that ‘class’ was the prime influence on Australians’ voting behaviour. Under this traditional model, it was held that manual workers supported Labor while the Liberals represented non-manual workers. Over time this link seems to have dissipated, however, as Bennett points out, there ‘is still some importance to be attached to the fact that a majority of Australians of the “middle class”, however defined, seem to support the Coalition, while a majority of the “working class” support Labor...’ Nevertheless, this does seem to be changing. On Alford’s (1964) ‘index of class voting’, in the 1950s, Australia’s index was thirty-three (compared to Britain’s at forty, the U.S. at sixteen and Canada at eight). By 1979, the index for Australia was twenty-six—a significant decline. In 1993, Labor had a twenty-one per cent advantage among those who saw themselves as working class; in 1996 this had declined to twelve per cent. By the 1980s, surveys indicated that ‘on almost every measure that is conceivable, the links between class and party are weaker, and often much weaker, in 1979 than was the case in 1967’.

While the broad and difficult to define notion of ‘class’ voting appears to have declined, election studies do suggest, however, that occupation has a continuing impact and that there remains a strong connection between occupation and party preference. While manual workers once represented a stable base of support for the ALP, since postindustrialisation and the increasing irrelevance of the distinction between manual and non-manual workers, the proportion of manual workers voting Labor has decreased.

Two other categories of occupation have increased in importance; the self-employed and public servants. The self-employed traditionally favour the Liberal-National Parties while public servants support Labor. In recent times, the increasing number of self-employed and the decreasing number of public servants gives the Coalition an advantage. Based on popular views of the parties and their supporters, in political ads, we might expect to see ALP ads target ‘blue-collar’ manual workers and Liberal ads targeting business, small business and white-collar workers.
How to tell who is targeted in ads

One measure of targeting in advertisements is to identify who is shown in ads. Politicians may surround themselves with particular people in order to appear to have some connection with a particular group. Joslyn has tried to identify ‘group reference’ in ads to ‘see whether or not an attempt is made to link the candidate with certain demographic groups. This may either be done by showing the candidate with members of such groups or by orally claiming that the candidate is concerned about the interests of some specified group’.²⁷⁴

Some of the features worthy of examination include the use of women or children in ads, whether ads show people from different ethnic backgrounds, workers—manual or non-manual for example, or even houses and suburbia, in order to target particular audiences.

However, when a particular group features prominently in an ad this does not necessarily indicate that the parties are targeting that group. For example, children often feature prominently in political advertisements despite the fact that children cannot vote. The use of children in ads may be a symbolic appeal to women or may have another significance. Montague Kern found that symbols relating to personal experiences, such as childhood and family, are frequently used in ads.²⁷⁵ S. A. Sherr found that politicians make ample use of children in their visual rhetoric and that ‘by employing children as metaphor ... [relating to economic insecurity, poverty, crime, war and hope for the future] politicians may change the issue-specific focus of an argument to one that is driven exclusively by emotionality...’²⁷⁶

MEDIA AND OUTLETS

Darrell M. West, Montague Kern, Dean Alger and Janice M. Goggin were the first to study ‘ad buys’—the campaign decisions on when, where, and how often to broadcast particular ads. They argued that ‘ad buys represent a missing link by which candidates seek to shape the campaign-related impressions of voters. By the decisions they make on ad placement and airing, candidates have a powerful instrument for
altering subtle impressions of themselves and their opponents'. The decisions on when and where to place ads as well as the frequency with which particular ads are run can tell us much about the parties' electioneering strategies—who they are targeting and with which messages.

For example, it would be quite common to assume that the ALP would target 'working class' publications such as tabloids while the Liberals would aim for a different audience—perhaps, broadsheet newspapers. However, the research by Cameron indicated that swinging voters are major consumers of the commercial media—particularly current affairs, commercial news bulletins and tabloid newspapers. If we accept that both parties target swinging voters, we would therefore expect to see a large volume of newspaper ads in tabloid publications such as the Herald-Sun and Daily Telegraph and on commercial television channels such as Channel Nine or Channel Seven.

There may also be a trend towards politicians using local and regional media more often—particularly in vital marginal seats and in rural areas which have their own radio, television and newspapers. If true, this regionalisation would mirror what is happening in the U.S.

INCUMBENCY

It has been established in a number of different studies that there are significant differences between the advertisements of incumbents and challengers. Several political advertising researchers have used Judith S. Trent and Robert V. Friedenberg's breakdown between incumbent and challenger tactics. This involves checking for a number of traits which have been identified as challenger or incumbent tactics. For example, 'challenger' strategies include: calling for changes, emphasising optimism for future, speaking to traditional values, taking the offensive on issues and attacking the record of an opponent. Incumbent strategies include: using symbolic trappings in ads, emphasising competency and the office, consulting with world leaders and emphasising accomplishments. A study of Italian political advertisements
which used these criteria found ‘significant differences’ between incumbents and challengers ‘in almost all instances’.

In Australia, over the period 1949-2001, the government changed only four times (Table 3.4). The incumbent won eighteen of the past twenty-two elections. As past research suggests that the advertisements produced by challengers and incumbents differ significantly, we would therefore expect to see some important differences in the content of ads used by incumbents and challengers during this period.

Table 3.4 - Federal election results, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Challenger</th>
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<td>Chifley</td>
<td>Menzies*</td>
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<td>Evatt</td>
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<td>McMahon</td>
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<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Snedden</td>
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<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
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<td>Fraser</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* = challenger who won

(a) Prior to the 1975 election, a change of government had already occurred due to the ‘sacking’ of the then ALP government by the governor-general in the 1975 constitutional crisis.

SETTINGS AND PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that there are major differences in the settings of ads from Italy, Germany, Britain, Israel, France and the U.S. French ads for example, are nearly always in formal settings but British and U.S. far less so (only twelve to seventeen per cent). This may be changing however—or may be different for different candidates—because research in 1999 showed that Clinton used presidential settings often in his advertisements, and that patriotic symbols such as flags or famous buildings, featured in eighty-six per cent of his spots. Incumbents are generally held to make far greater use of official trappings in order to identify with the status of the office.

Mills notes that ads showing the national flag, the incumbent’s office or the Prime Minister viewing troops or meeting foreign leaders try to ‘depoliticise by co-opting the trappings of office as power props, telling us the politician is a national rather than a purely partisan figure’. Increasingly, content research has looked at the production techniques used in political advertisements. Significant areas which have been researched include ‘camera angles, cutting techniques, use of music, use of sound-on versus sound-over approaches, live (or natural) versus staged settings, and various special effects’.

In 1999, Kaid, Yang Lin and Gary A. Noggle were concerned with how new technologies such as film editing, electronic video editing, special effects generators and new digital and computerised alteration techniques, have made the manipulative potential of video images in ads almost limitless. Political consultants can use these production techniques to present their candidates in the best light and their opponent in an unflattering way. They can alter or reproduce voice prints, even make undetectable deletions of footage. This raises questions about the integrity of future communication including the possibility that such techniques may mislead voters.
Using content analysis, Kaid, Lin and Noggle coded video techniques including editing techniques, special effects, audio and video distortions. They found that there was a dramatic increase in manipulative technology use. Most of these distortions were in negative ads and the most frequent abuse was the conversion of colour footage to black and white in order to make the opponent look more sinister and negative.  

Slogans and jingles are another component of political advertising. Bennett claims that slogans were *de riguer* in campaign advertisements after Labor’s 1972 ‘It’s Time’ campaign.  

Cameron’s advice to the ALP about the use of simplified and repetitive slogans to get the message through to apathetic swinging voters seems to have been taken to heart by both sides with slogans forming a major component of political ads in the 1980s and 1990s.

Commercial marketing research has found that music, illustrations in print advertisements and pictures or visuals which represent ‘warm, human or generally pleasant’ emotions are associated with enhanced attitudes toward brands and with both choice of or intention to choose a brand. While music may have remained a key component of ads, Mills noted that by 1984, jingles were on the way out—they seemed old-fashioned and often did not ring true.

Under the broad question of electioneering strategy, there are many different elements of political advertising which can be investigated including targeting, geographical focus and production techniques.
Research questions and methods

There are many subsidiary issues which researchers have addressed in the political advertising literature. However, as this critical literature review has shown, there are four central research questions which researchers have focused upon;

1) Has the information content of political ads declined?
2) Is the focus now on personalisation rather than party?
3) Have political ads become more negative?
4) How have the electioneering strategies behind political ads changed?

Researchers have used various methods to investigate these questions. To conclude this chapter, an examination of these research methods explains the theories, techniques and tools which have been used in political advertising research.

RESEARCH METHODS

Australian academic works have predominantly used narrative or historical/descriptive methods to study political advertising. The narrative method promotes a point of view or tells a story about political advertising which includes recounting the author's own fears, concerns or personal observations. The historical/descriptive method gives 'facts', 'statistics' and historical information about political advertising in Australia. Some works have used both methods. Others (notably, Braund) have supplemented these approaches with other methods such as interviews.

Table 3.5 provides a list of the major Australian works devoted to political advertising and my categorisation of the research method(s) they have used. (Some judgement has had to be exercised in determining the research method used in these works as, interestingly, the authors rarely explicitly identify it themselves). From this
list, it is apparent that most Australian scholars have taken an approach which is primarily historical, critical or interpretive. Historical descriptive methods have been particularly popular, as have ‘narrative accounts’ in which the author relies on subjective analysis to promote a point of view about political advertising (that it is, for example, uninformative or too emotive).

Table 3.5 – Research methods used in major Australian works, 1968-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Comparative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest &amp; Marks</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Quantitative (based on survey results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beresford</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waller &amp; Polonsky</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Quantitative (based on survey results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward &amp; Cook</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Neill &amp; Mills</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayer</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braund</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braund</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Personal account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean &amp; Brennan</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad buys&lt;sup&gt;60&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaldor</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>60</sup> By focusing on ‘ad buys’, the researcher analyses where specific advertisements were placed (eg. in which publications/TV channels) and then maps and analyses advertising spending to try to determine the intentions or priorities of the ad producers.

Historical and descriptive information is important and much of the information gleaned from this type of research (such as facts, statistics, key people and events) has been included in the background chapters of this thesis (chapters two and three). This sort of historical information is important to give us context and background but alone, it cannot conclusively provide answers to the four central research questions. Narrative accounts of political advertising, on the other hand, provide some strong viewpoints about the research questions but lack systematic, rigorously obtained evidence to 'prove' their claims.

While overseas researchers have also used historical/descriptive and narrative accounts, these have now been largely supplanted by other methods including experiments, personal accounts and content analysis. Experiments, including laboratory experiments and public opinion surveys, are particularly popular methods in American 'effects' research.

Table 3.6 provides a list of key works in political advertising research including the most cited works. The country studied and the year of study are given with most recent works listed first. 'Content analysis' is highlighted in order to show its growing use as a research method over the past twenty years. (Full reference details for all works can be found in the References).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country studied</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hansen &amp; Benoit</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoit</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td>USA and Finland</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Johnston</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid, Lin &amp; Noggle</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Tedesco</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999a</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Tedesco</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999b</td>
<td>Experiment (survey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brystrom &amp; Miller</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoit</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloti</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Personal account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinkleton</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tak, Kaid &amp; Lee</td>
<td>USA and Korea</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinkleton</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson-Cartee &amp; Copeland</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Tedesco</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansolabehere &amp; Iyengar</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinkham &amp; Weaver-Lariscy</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Holtz-Bacha</td>
<td>USA, Britain, Germany, France, Italy &amp; Israel</td>
<td>1995a</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Holtz-Bacha</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1995b</td>
<td>Experiments (surveys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holtz-Bacha &amp; Kaid</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazzoleni &amp; Roper</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brants</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West et al</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Ad buys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scammell &amp; Semelko</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ, Thorson &amp; Caywood</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiney &amp; Paletz</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biocca</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mickelson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Personal account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid &amp; Davidson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimmo &amp; Felsberg</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyles</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Elebash</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joslyn</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joslyn</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6 indicates that political advertising garners a high level of interest overseas. The works listed represent a sample of over 400 works available. While American research dominates the field, studies have also been conducted in Britain, Europe, and Asia.

Six major research approaches have been used to investigate political advertising: interviews, surveys, experiments, historical/descriptive, narrative, personal accounts and content analysis.\textsuperscript{280} Table 3.6 shows that content analysis has become the predominant research method.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Most political advertising research falls into two categories: content/style or effects research.\textsuperscript{290} The content/style researchers can be divided into two broad schools of thought. ‘Idealists’ focus on political advertising from a perspective of concern about whether it fulfils its democratic purpose. ‘Pragmatists’ view political advertisements as valuable texts which can be ‘read’ and analysed for information about how politics functions in practice. Both groups are essentially concerned with issues of information content, personalisation, negative political advertising and electioneering strategies. These four major issues have been the focus of much of the political advertising literature and are also important issues in an Australian context. While there is some Australian literature available on political advertising, this review has shown both its strengths and weaknesses. Historical description and engagement with some of the key debates surrounding political advertising are strengths of the Australian literature, while a lack of systematic research is a major weakness. This thesis will contribute by building on the strengths and engaging with some of the limitations of the Australian research.
4 Research Design

While overseas researchers have traditionally employed one or more of six research methods to study political advertising, Australian researchers have tended to use only descriptive or narrative approaches. As a result, we have some historical facts, and some strong opinions about Australian political advertising, but we still have very little conclusive evidence about whether the information content of political ads has declined; whether political ads have become more negative; whether the focus is now on the party leader rather than the party; or whether the electioneering strategies behind political ads have changed. These questions can only be answered by examining the actual political advertisements which have been used during elections.

In this chapter, the research design which is used in this study is outlined. An understanding of this design and how it was applied, is vital to understand how the results which follow (in Chapters five to eight) were obtained. This chapter begins by revisiting the research questions which arose in chapter three, it moves on to outline hypotheses, set a broad research framework, explain methods of data collection and the research methods used for analysis, and concludes with a summary of the research design.

Research Questions

In the previous chapter, the central research question; ‘how has political advertising changed over the past fifty years?’ was broken down into more specific questions which reflect the most pressing issues about the role of political ads in Australian politics today. These questions are:

1) Has the information content of political ads declined?
2) Is the focus now on personalisation rather than party?
3) Have political ads become more negative?
4) Have the electioneering strategies behind political ads changed?

Based on the unique features of Australian politics discussed in Chapter two, and the literature explored in Chapter three, it is now possible to construct a set of hypotheses about the changes we would expect to see over the period 1949-2001. These hypotheses reflect the findings of the existing literature, but as we have seen, there are a number of limitations within this literature requiring further exploration.

**Hypotheses**

**1. Information Content**

Hypothesis 1. That the information content of political advertisements has declined.

Hypothesis 2. That television advertisements are more focused on image than print advertisements.

**2. Personalisation and Party Decline**

Hypothesis 3. That a focus on individuals—particularly political leaders—has increased over time and especially in television advertising.

Hypothesis 4. That emphasis on parties in political advertisements has declined.
3. Negative Political Advertising

Hypothesis 5. That the use of negative advertisements has increased.

Hypothesis 6. That there has been a rise in the number of ‘attacks’ directed at individuals rather than parties.

4. Electioneering

Hypothesis 7. That the ALP and Liberal Party place most ads in the states where there are the greatest numbers of seats to be won (i.e. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland). That the National Party concentrates ads in its traditional constituencies (Queensland, regional areas in NSW and Victoria).

Hypothesis 8. That the parties’ focus on different types of voters in terms of gender, ethnicity, occupation/class.

Hypothesis 9. That there are differences between the ads of challengers and incumbents.

Research framework

A study of political advertising could have taken one of many different directions and each would have required the use of a different research design. If the study intended to discover why politicians and their agents design advertisements in particular ways, then qualitative research such as observation and in-depth interviews would have been
appropriate. Alternatively, if the study had aimed to discover what effect political ads have on audiences, then surveys and experiments would have been useful. However, as we saw in Chapter three, previous studies suggest that this type of study would invariably yield results which are 'complex, difficult to interpret, and often inconclusive'.¹

Because this study is instead concerned with discovering how political advertising has changed over the past fifty years, it is based entirely on an examination of political advertisements which were broadcast or published during federal election campaigns between 1949-2001. It was felt that the best way to judge how political ads have changed was to examine actual advertisements to see what they say.

The post-WWII period was chosen because this has already been established as an appropriate timeframe for political advertising research by other Australian researchers (such as Braund and Ward). 1949 is the first major turning point in political advertising in Australia. Political scientists such as Jaensch have identified it as a 'critical' election in Australia's history.² Starting at this point also allows comparative analysis between the two major parties as it occurs just after the formation of the Liberal Party of Australia in 1945.

**Data collection**

There are many different forms of political advertising from handbills, posters, letters, ephemera and how-to-vote cards to radio, newspaper, magazine and television ads. While material from all of these categories was collected, the study focused particularly on newspaper and television ads. Radio ads were excluded because many are no longer available and there are prohibitive costs involved in obtaining copies of surviving ads from commercial radio station archives. While it would have been preferable to include radio ads, academic research reveals that television and print ads are the most important mediums for political advertising. In terms of political information during election campaigns, people 'rarely cite radio as a main source'.³
In order to investigate Australian political advertising, it was necessary, firstly, to establish an archive of television and print ads as no such collection had previously existed in Australia. This required many hundreds of hours of archival work to locate, catalogue and store a total of 1335 ads from twenty-two Australian federal elections between 1949-2001—including 1112 print ads and 223 television ads.

Collecting print ads from newspapers was particularly time-consuming. For each election year, the author looked through microfilmed copies of newspapers at the State Library of Victoria, located ads, made copies, recorded the ad’s details and then catalogued, labelled and stored all ads. In total, the researcher searched over 4000 newspapers to obtain the 1112 print ads. It is estimated that over 700 hours were spent collecting and cataloguing newspaper ads.

Television ads were collected from four different sources. Several weeks were spent at Screen Sound (formerly the National Film and Sound Archive) locating, viewing, time-coding ads and requesting copies. Seventy-three television ads were purchased from The Commercial Register using grants from the Arts Faculty and the Department of Political Science at The University of Melbourne. Several more television ads were obtained from Wayne Murphy of the University of Queensland and from the Labor Party’s website in 2001. Cataloguing the ads—including recording details, eliminating duplicates, time-coding, editing, placing ads in a chronological order and transforming them into digital format for safe storage—as well as transcribing and making shot-lists of many of them, took over 600 hours.

Copyright permission was sought and granted by the copyright holders in order to use and reproduce all material. Working with very large volumes of material created practical problems related to filing, retrieval and repetition and involved a considerable photocopy and video-copy budget. However, the process was also very exciting—each ad represented a source of original and largely undiscovered data. Also, as a result of this work, the author has created the largest single archive of political advertisements in Australia—The Political Advertising Archive. The Archive now holds 1300 newspaper ads; 290 television, cinema and radio ads; and over 500
pieces of political ephemera (including hats, T-shirts, posters, handbills, buttons and badges). The Archive can be examined by appointment with the author.

PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS (1949-2001)

A large sample of print ads was collected for this study from ten newspapers (the Age, the Sun (later called the Herald-Sun), the Sydney Morning Herald, the Daily Telegraph, the Courier-Mail, the Advertiser, the Mercury, the West Australian, the Canberra Times, the NT News). These ten newspapers represent a cross section of different geographical areas, different media owners, different formats and types of newspapers. The selection included at least one paper from each state and territory in Australia, a mix of ‘tabloid’ and ‘broadsheet’ papers and a mix of different owners (including Fairfax, News Ltd. and WA Newspapers). (A full list of newspaper advertisements is provided in Appendix H).

The campaign period was defined as the twenty-eight days prior to (and including) polling day. Therefore, for each of the twenty-two elections between 1949-2001, the author collected all newspaper ads which were published in the four weeks before polling day. A four week period was chosen as the campaign period because this corresponds with the popular understanding of the formal campaign period as the four weeks between the issue-of-writs and polling day. This is also the period politicians commit most of their campaign funding to. Politicians believe that it is during this period that most uncommitted electors finally determine their vote. Previous researchers have found that most political ads are shown during the last weeks of the campaign, so using this period also helped to ensure that a maximum number of ads were collected.

Because so many ads can be made during a campaign, it was important to set clear boundaries for the data collection. Because the purpose of the study is to determine changes in the major parties’ ads over the past fifty years, minor party ads and ads placed by individual candidates or interest groups were not collected. Only ads produced by the major political parties (the ALP and the Liberal-National Parties) were collected and the focus was particularly on their national advertising which
promotes the central theme of the campaign as opposed to *divisional advertising* which includes non-national elements such as issues of relevance only to a particular state: how-to-vote information, endorsements by state leaders, individual candidate promotion or Senate advertisements for each state. To ensure compatibility, only ads featured in the main pages of the newspapers (not in supplements or magazines) were collected. Table 4.1 shows the sample of major party advertisements used for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ALP</th>
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<td>1954</td>
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<td>1955</td>
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<td>1958</td>
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<td>1961</td>
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<td>1963</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author

The breakdown of print advertisements by party shows that sixty-two per cent of the print advertisements were Coalition advertisements (nine per cent National Party and fifty-three per cent Liberal) while thirty-eight per cent were Labor Party advertisements.
TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS (1972-2001)

Television has become the most significant medium for political advertising. However, 1972 was the first federal election in which significant use of televised political advertising occurred. Prior to this, television ads were used infrequently and with seemingly far less impact.

Two hundred and twenty-three television ads were collected for this study (Table 4.2). These ads were broadcast on commercial television stations during federal elections between 1972-2001. (A full list of television advertisements is provided in Appendix H).

While this collection represents, to the author's knowledge, most of the surviving television ads from this period, it is a sample which is inevitably incomplete. Many political television ads from the 1970s and 1980s have simply not survived, others could not be located. For example, no ads were located from 1974 or for the ALP in 1984 (including their famous 'Mastermind' ad). Another limitation of the sample was that the author could find few details about when ads were broadcast, on which TV stations or with what frequency.

Table 4.2 – Sample of television advertisements (by year and party), 1972-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author
The breakdown of television advertisements by party shows that forty-one per cent of the print advertisements were Coalition advertisements (thirty-eight per cent Liberal and three per cent National) while fifty-nine per cent were Labor Party advertisements. Overall, in terms of bias towards any particular party, the breakdown for print advertisements was a split of 62:38 favouring the Liberal-National Coalition while for television advertisements the split was 59:41 favouring the Labor Party. The principle gaps in data sampling were an overall lack of television advertisements for the National Party, a lack of television advertisements for the Liberal Party in 1972 and the Labor Party in 1984. The author was unable to access material from the political parties to fill these gaps as they do not keep an established archive of such material. Their main source of archival material on political advertising which is open to the public is held at the National Library of Australia and consists primarily of political ephemera and advertising in the form of posters and pamphlets.

**Research methods**

Many of the six major research approaches which have been used to study political advertising and which were listed in Chapter three, were unsuitable for this study. Methods used in 'effects' research—such as public opinion surveys and experiments—were particularly unsuitable, as these methods focus on audiences rather than on the content of political advertising and how it has changed over time.

One option was to conduct interviews with advertising agents, politicians and advisers to assess how they perceived political advertising has changed. However, because this study covers a long period of time, conducting interviews may have led to a biased sample. The data would be reliant upon the accuracy of the respondent's memory, respondents would probably be unable to openly discuss recent campaigns and would possibly present recollections which maximised how they appeared. For these reasons, a more unobtrusive research method which dealt with the actual output of advertising production (the advertisements themselves) was judged to be more appropriate. Analysis of existing documents can help to assess actual behaviour as opposed to self-reported behaviour.
As discussed in Chapter three, content analysis is one of the major research methods which has been used to study the content of political advertising overseas. However, because it is considered a 'quantitative' method, content analysis has not always been favoured in Australian political science circles. In a 1998 report, 'Challenges for the Social Sciences and Australia' by the Australia Research Council, Ian Castles noted that:

Some [Australian] researchers... eschew statistics to the point of seeing its use as evil. [Conversely,] qualitative and interpretive research is anathema to many researchers who do use quantification. The latter see the former as doing little more than recording ungeneralisable gossip.12

However, Castles also pointed out that it is now:

becoming generally better recognised that examples [of] quantitative research that is sterile and meaningless, or qualitative research which has no general application, are simply examples of bad research: they are not good or typical examples of a particular kind of research. Specifically, it is being recognised that the kind of research that one conducts depends on the questions to be answered...13

In this study, content analysis was considered a valuable tool for analysing the content of political advertisements. However, content analysis does have limitations and using this method alone would not have provided answers to all of the research questions. Therefore, a combination of three research methods—content analysis, discourse analysis and 'ad-buys'—was used. This approach is consistent with the growing trend towards social science researchers using mixed methods.14
COMPONENT 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis was the most appropriate research method for this study because it allows the researcher to describe trends and themes in political advertising content; identify the focus of the communicator’s attention; and compare different media (television and print) and different ‘levels’ of communication (‘quality’ and ‘tabloid’ newspapers).\textsuperscript{15}

Content analysis has been defined by Roel Popping as ‘the quantification of qualitative data for the purpose of affording statistical inferences’\textsuperscript{16}. It is ‘a phase of information-processing in which communication content is transformed, through objective and systematic application of categorization [sic] rules, into data that can be summarized [sic] and compared’.\textsuperscript{17}

Since the Second World War, content analysis has been used to study many different types of communication, including newspapers, political debates, speeches, party platforms, television and radio programs, films, books, letters, memos, and print and broadcast advertisements. It has been particularly useful in analysing the role of the press in electoral campaigns, the political rhetoric used by election candidates, and in studies of propaganda and advertising. All of these areas are closely related to the study of political advertising. It is therefore not surprising that content analysis has an established record of use in political advertising research.

In the previous chapter, Table 3.6 demonstrated how content analysis has been used to study political advertising since the 1980s and is now the predominant method in the field. Many recent studies on political advertising rely on content analysis.\textsuperscript{18} Because content analysis has been used in studies of American, British, European and Asian political advertising, using content analysis in this study of Australian political advertising offered the advantage of facilitating cross-cultural analysis.

While content analysis does not allow the researcher to assess how ads are understood by their audiences, it is very suitable for use in drawing conclusions about the source of the message—including sources which are (or were) a collectivity, such as governments and political parties.\textsuperscript{19} It helps to bring structure to unstructured
information which, as Poppin notes, 'allows the investigator to make explicit various aspects that may not be noticed by a lay observer.' Content analysis is particularly useful in cases when direct observation is not feasible. In this case, it was not possible to observe how ads were produced fifty years ago, nor would it be possible to observe ad production in future elections because the political parties are unlikely to allow an outsider to participate in such a confidential process.

Unlike interviews and questionnaires, content analysis is free of response bias because analysis of existing communication is done without the subject’s awareness. Because content analysis makes use of existing documents and is recorded and stored, it is easily checked for accuracy.

However, content analysis also has a number of limitations. Ole R. Holsti notes that content analysis:

has proved to be a valuable research method in many areas of inquiry. It has also been used to produce shelves full of unimaginative studies... According to one critic, 'In reviewing the work in this field, one is struck by the number of studies which have apparently been guided by a sheer fascination with counting.'

But, as Holsti points out the 'fault lies not with the method but with the users.' The major errors which content analysts seem to have made are loss of the context of complex communication when it is reduced to a quantifiable format, and presentation of results in a sterile, boring and sometimes even quite meaningless fashion.

Television advertisements are full of pictures, colours, images, words, music, sounds, lighting, settings and characters. Print ads can contain pictures, photos, cartoons, different type-faces, captions and lay-outs. When this material is reduced to a numerical format, much of this context is lost. Similarly, when the conclusions of a content analysis study are presented in numerical format only (as many political advertising studies are) the results can be rendered dull and sterile. For example, if a researcher states that 'fifty-six per cent of all ads in 1996 were negative', this, by itself, tells the reader nothing meaningful. It is only when this statistic is placed in
context, for example, when the use of negative ads by different candidates, or in
different countries, different campaigns or different time periods are compared, that it
takes on any meaning.

Due to these major limitations, many of the authors who study research methods,
suggest that content analysis works best when it is used in conjunction with other data
collection procedures and forms of analysis. Holsti, for example, argues that it is by
moving back and forth between qualitative and quantitative methods ‘that the
investigator is most likely to gain insight into the meaning of [the] data’. Qualitative
research can capture context and ‘bring to life concrete illustrations [which are]
glossed over in a quantitative text analysis’.

In this study, alternative research methods and multiple data sources were chosen
to complement content analysis and try to avoid the problems of: 1) loss of context
and 2) meaningless presentation of results, which plague so many content analysis
studies.

Application

This study uses the most common type of content analysis—often referred to as
‘traditional text analysis’—in which texts are coded according to a set of themes (in
this case, information content, negativity, personalisation and electioneering
strategy). In this study, political advertisements were coded in terms of absence or
presence of certain key symbols related to these themes, in terms of frequency (‘how
frequently does a specific word or theme appear?’ or ‘how many ads deal with this
specific topic?’), valence; (‘in which way are language, pictures and symbols used in
ads eg. positively or negatively?’) and space and time allocated (length or size of an
ad, size of pictures, etc).
In content analysis, it is imperative that the categories and variables measured correspond with the abstract concepts they purport to measure. They must reflect the purposes of the research, be exhaustive, mutually exclusive, independent, and derived from a single classification principle. The author devised a 'Political Advertisement Codesheet' (Appendix E) based on one which has been used for over twenty years to analyse political ads in American research including in recent American studies by Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston. Kaid is the most prolific researcher of political advertising. She has published extensively on political advertising and has used content analysis in most of her studies. Her work is considered exemplary in the field and a model for others. Some of the items on Kaid’s codesheet were copied verbatim in order to make cross-cultural comparisons possible but others were adapted to take account of Australian variations. Several elements were also adapted from other studies including the work of Trent and Friedenberg on incumbent and challenger strategies.

The Codesheet was designed to reflect the key issues in Australian politics which this study seeks to measure and was therefore designed to focus on four thematic areas: information content, personalisation, negativity and electioneering strategies (Table 4.3). A pilot study was conducted in January 2002 and, as a result, the Codesheet was altered so that it could pick up information it had originally overlooked.
Table 4.3 - Data collection using the ‘Political Advertising Codesheet’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question number(^{(a)})</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Information Coded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-38</td>
<td>Information Content</td>
<td>Length or size of ad, whether it is an ‘information ad’, number of pictures, size of pictures as percentage of advertisement space, number of policy issues mentioned, type of policy issues which dominate, whether emphasis is on issues or images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-67</td>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td>Whether party leader or other party representative appears in ad or is mentioned, whether there is a photograph of leader(s) and size of picture, whether leader is the speaker in television ad, candidate characteristics emphasised, mention of party (own and/or other), whether party logo and/or party slogan are included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-92</td>
<td>Negativity</td>
<td>Whether the ad is predominantly negative or positive in focus, whether an attack is made, who is attacked, who makes the attack, what is the purpose or nature of the attack, which strategies are used, what accusations or associations are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-113</td>
<td>Electioneering Strategy</td>
<td>What incumbent/challenger strategies are visible, which particular groups are targeted or appear in ad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{(a)}\) As visible on the Codesheet (Appendix E), some items are not in number sequence by category as they were added after the pilot study and altered the numbering system.

Source: Author

This study differed from others that have been performed (for example, by Kaid) because the unit of analysis in this study was the election year rather than the individual advertisement. This was because the aim of this thesis was to discover how political advertising used in Australian federal election campaigns had changed over time. Therefore, the content analysis needed to focus on discovering the nature of political advertisements in each election year and compare these advertisements as a group to the advertisements used in other years, in order to make suitable comparisons.
It is possible to use computer programs to perform content analysis on documents but this application method was not chosen. While ‘human’ analysis is far more time consuming, the type of analysis performed in this study is not easy to automate. It required more than just a ‘count’ of the number of times a word appears in an ad. It required judgement about concepts, pictures, images, symbols, language and how they are used. While even the simplest content analysis requires judgement (about what categories to include, for example), rigorous content analysis demands that the researcher’s judgement is exercised in a systematic, consistent manner. Although the author was the only coder in this study, a ‘Coding Instruction Book’ (Appendix F) with a set of detailed, explicit rules, procedures and instructions, was used. Including this instrument as an appendix makes these rules explicit and facilitates replication.

In this study, the content analysis was designed to yield quantitative, numerical data. A series of Excel spreadsheets (one for each election year) were used to record numerical results and make calculations. Information from all spreadsheets was then cross-referenced and compared. Many of these results appear in graphs and tables in the following chapters. The case for designing content analysis so that it yields numerical results is a powerful one. Numerical data allows for a degree of precision in making and stating conclusions, while statistical methods provide a powerful set of tools for precise summary of findings and for improving the quality of interpretation and inference.\textsuperscript{33} Yet, as emphasised above, such data can often lack meaning, context and illumination. Statistics by themselves do not tell us very much. It is often only when the data is compared, contrasted and contextualised that meaning is revealed.

Sample

The total sample of 1335 ads—including 1112 print ads and 223 television ads—was analysed using content analysis.

According to Popping, effective content analysis requires that ‘data be gathered covering a long historical period... The longer the time span, the better the investigator can demonstrate transformations...’\textsuperscript{34} Janowitz argued similarly that ‘quantitative studies ... have a value which is directly proportionate to the time span

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covered’. Yet, most text analysis studies cover a period of less than five years and many cover only a few weeks. In this study, a fifty year period allows the researcher to more confidently demonstrate trends, changes and transformations.

One of the concerns inherent when using samples for content analysis relates to whether the data format is standard. Content analysis presumes that all documents are of equal importance when in reality, there is often great variation in size and space. For example, the ‘It’s Time’ 1972 television ad was two minutes long while many recent ads are only thirty seconds long. Print ads also come in different sizes and take up different amounts of space in newspapers. Therefore, alternative methods (discourse analysis and ‘ad-buys’) were used to compensate for this limitation.

COMPONENT 2: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

While content analysis is an excellent method for identifying the messages produced by the communicators, for comparing sources and mediums and seeing trends over time, it is poor at capturing the context of complex documents. This is a major limitation when analysing television ads in particular, because ‘the importance of the visual and the sound dimension in audio-visual material cannot be overemphasised’. In televised political ads, there are a number of audio or video techniques which are used to strengthen the message. Lighting is made brighter or darker to create a particular mood. Different types of music or other noise add emphasis. Dan Schnur argues that: ‘Setting, clothing and even camera angles’ can dramatically alter the way a message is presented. In this study, it was important to illuminate this context.

Using content analysis alone also presents another problem. Because the content analyst approaches political ads with pre-structured categories, there is always a risk that the results will be only a summation of issues the researcher is interested in. A more inductive approach seeks to develop categories from the data so that the summary is guided by the communicator’s main points. Using an inductive approach therefore allows the researcher to uncover themes which appear to have been important to the author of the communication.
Inductive approaches to textual analysis stress that texts have to be understood in the contexts of their conditions of production and reading. Ian Hodder suggests that:

As Derrida has shown, meaning does not reside in a text but in the writing and reading of it. As the text is reread in different contexts it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded. Thus there is no ‘original’ or ‘true’ meaning of a text outside specific historical contexts.39

Understanding the production and context of a document affects its interpretation. By understanding the social and cultural framework when documents were produced, we can gain better insight into their meaning(s). For these reasons, this thesis has attempted to illuminate the historical context of political advertisements by outlining important features of the social and political context of the period 1949-2001, including the political parties, voting behaviour, the mass media and election results. Many different data sources have been used—including election results, demographic information, contemporary newspaper reports, press circulation figures, opinion poll results and political ephemera—to highlight context and to validate the results.

While this descriptive information helps set the social and cultural framework, a qualitative method was also needed to inductively investigate the sample of ads. There were a number of inductive methods that could have been used.

Narrative analysis is concerned ‘with the degree to which the internal coherence of the text is defined in advance with reference to codes, syntax, grammar, or forms’.40 Recently, this method has been most concerned with lives and lived experiences particularly, upon the study of lives from the narrator’s experience. However, as Peter K. Manning and Betsy Cullum-Swan point out: ‘To a striking extent, narrative analysis is rather loosely formulated, almost intuitive, using terms defined by the analyst’.41 With political ads, there is no single narrator. Ads have been produced by a number of people from ad agents, to politicians, directors, producers and graphic artists. Viewing ads as a narrative can take them out of their historical context and attribute meanings that the authors did not intend.
Semiotic analysis views language as a symbolic sign system where a sign is something that stands for something else. The classic work on advertising research which uses semiotic analysis is Judith Williamson’s (1978) *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. In this book, Williamson’s purpose was to ‘simply analys[e] what can be seen in advertisements’. What Williamson ‘sees’ is fascinating but highly intuitive. Indeed, Deeley has argued that semiotics is less a method than simply ‘a point of view’.

Discourse analysis was ultimately considered the most suitable inductive method for a study of political advertising because, as Keith F. Punch points out, it ‘looks above words, sentences and linguistic features and focuses attention on the way language is used, what it is used for, and the social context in which it is used’. Discourse analysis captures the broader focus, and refers to the ‘general framework or perspective within which ideas are formulated’. Discourse analysis embraces all aspects of communication—not only its content, but its author, its authority, its audience and its objective. It encompasses ideas, statements or knowledge that are dominant at a particular time among particular sets of people. Implicit in the use of such knowledge is the application of power. Indeed, for Punch, ‘the concept of power is vital to discourse analysis by way of the theoretical connection between the production of discourses and the exercise of power’.

Unlike other textual analysis methods, discourse analysis ‘is after the answers to social...questions rather than to linguistic ones’. Because it is often concerned with rhetorical or argumentative features of texts, it is useful for asking questions about how a particular discursive version is designed to counter alternatives or to compete successfully with alternative versions. This is particularly valuable when studying the discourse used by two competing political parties in an electoral contest.

A major challenge associated with discourse analysis is that it is not a unified body of theory and is therefore difficult to define. It is therefore important that the researcher be precise about the specific approach to discourse analysis that is being used to engage with the particular research problem. In this study, as in a recent study of Australian political discourse undertaken by Carol Johnson, the term ‘discourse’ is
used in a manner which relates most closely to the definition given by Steven Best and Douglas Kellner that:

Discourse theorists argue that meaning is not simply given, but is socially constructed across a number of institutional sites and practices. Hence, discourse theorists emphasize [sic] the material and heterogenous nature of discourse...analyse the institutional bases of discourse, the viewpoints and positions from which people speak, and the power relations these allow and presuppose. Discourse theory also interprets discourse as a site and object of struggle where different groups strive for hegemony and the production of meaning and ideology.\textsuperscript{52}

As Best and Kellner suggest, and the work of Johnson indicates, this approach to discourse analysis indicates that meaning is a site of struggle among groups in society, including political actors, and therefore an important area for political science research.

Because discourse analysis recognises that discourse at all levels is an important resource, it is a method which is sensitive to how spoken and written language are used, and how accounts and descriptions are constructed.\textsuperscript{53} While content analysis tends to view all items as having equal value or importance, discourse analysis does not accept that frequency is, in itself, a valid or reliable indicator of importance.\textsuperscript{54}

**Sample**

While the total sample of 1335 ads was used for the content analysis, the sample used for discourse analysis, by necessity, needed to be a smaller, more purposeful sample of information-rich cases which were suitable for in-depth study.

A sample of forty-one television advertisements was chosen on the basis of those ads which are most famous or (in)famous in Australian political history. The author established this sample by recording any references to individual televised political advertisements in over 200 newspaper articles on federal election campaigns from
1972 to 2001 as well as any references in the scholarly research. The sample therefore includes those ads which political folklore contends are the most successful as well as ads which have been criticised for being too emotive, too negative, untruthful, deceptive and uninformative. While the sample therefore includes what might be considered 'extreme' or 'deviant' cases, the purpose was to see what can be learned from some of the most successful and controversial televised political ads.

Figure 4.4 provides a list of these television ads. Some of the names given are in common use or were the original names supplied by the advertising agent. But more frequently, the ad name has been attributed by the author. The sample includes twenty-one Liberal ads and twenty ALP ads. It includes at least five ads from each decade. Each of these advertisements was transcribed and a shot-list was conducted in order to capture the imagery, scenes and sounds of each ad. Many of these transcripts are included in Chapters five to eight.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s Time</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn on the lights</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The three dark years</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor’s wealth tax</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re not waiting for the world</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hawke Show, It’s a Whitlam replay</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The job book</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser with cigar</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty factory caretaker</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older woman with assets test</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Woods</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s stick together</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A positive future: Family buys a car</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Labor spends your money</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia’s world heritage</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Hawke at desk</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray’s never worked so hard</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mother speaks out</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Dr Hewson’s GST would change your day</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Hewson’s GST goes on holidays</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunsight on unemployed</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor’s scumbag of scares</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing pretend: Bill Hunter</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM on Howard’s policies</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolt in</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposing a lie from the Great Debate</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family photo</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you trust Howard and Costello with a GST?</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man steps in GST</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor’s mess after 13 years</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor wants power again</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Beazley</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Beazley’s Plan</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Question</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Beazley: His record as Minister</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beazley on illegal immigration</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough Decisions</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: List compiled by the author using the method described on pp.124-25.
Discourse analysis was also performed on a larger sample of 250 newspaper advertisements. This sample was chosen in a less formal manner that that applied to television advertisements. It was chosen on the basis of print ads which were most vivid in illustrating findings about information content, personalisation, negativity and strategy. It was therefore a very purposeful sample. Many of the print advertisements used for discourse analysis are reproduced in Chapters five to eight. A full list of all advertisements used in the thesis is provided in Appendix B.

COMPONENT 3 – ‘AD-BUYS’

Despite the importance of advertising in contemporary Australian campaigns, little attention has been paid to the manner in which advertisement space is purchased. This is a major omission because, as West et al point out, the decisions on ‘when and where to place ads as well as the frequency with which particular ads are run determine how candidates are seen during their campaigns’.55

When a researcher analyses a particular advertisement in isolation, vital information about its context can be overlooked, including whether the ad was used only once or whether it was used many times, whether it was used in all states or only one, whether it was a full-page ad or only small, and whether it was placed prominently in the front of the newspaper or tucked away towards the back.

Ad-placement information can tell us vital information about who the parties target their ads towards—‘tabloid’ or ‘broadsheet’ newspaper readers—and in which states. The timing of ad placement is also significant. Data can reveal which days of the election period most ads appear, whether there are more ads in the last week of the campaign and which ads are saved for the most important final days of the campaign.

‘Ad-buys’ is a method for gathering and analysing such data. The term comes from a 1995 article by West, Kern, Alger and Goggin in which the authors defined ‘ad-buys’ as ‘the campaign decisions on when, where, and how often to broadcast particular ads’.56
Sample

In this study, the concept of ‘ad-buys’ was adapted for use with print ads rather than for broadcast (television) ads. This is because in Australia, there is no succinct, accessible data about when, where or how many times television ads were broadcast. The author designed an ‘Ad Placement Map’ (Appendix G) for collecting data about when, where and how many times newspaper ads were published in newspapers from 1949-2001. This map was used to plot when ads were published, in which newspapers and states, during what stage of the campaign, how large ads were, on which page of the paper they appeared, and the number of times an ad was repeated.

While the content analysis was selective about the type of ads used in the sample (omitting for example, how-to-vote ads), when mapping ad-buys, the author considered placement of all major party ads. In total, the placement of 3,263 advertisements was mapped between 1949-2001.

By the decisions they make on ad placement, ‘candidates have a powerful instrument for altering subtle impressions of themselves and their opponents’. Collecting this data enabled the author to determine much about election campaign strategies, about the priorities and assumptions of the ad producers.

‘Ad-buy’ mapping also added context to the study by focusing on the size of the newspaper ad and its prominence in the newspaper. Content analysis assumes that each individual count is of equal value or importance, when in fact, a large full-page ad on page two of a newspaper is likely to be of greater impact than a small ad on page thirty-two. Gathering data on the size and page number of each ad helps to fill in these knowledge gaps.
Research design

This study endeavoured to use research methods which suited the nature of the research problem and could gather all the data needed to answer the four research questions. As no one method was able to capture all of the data which was needed, three research methods were used. Each brought particular advantages to the study;

1. Content analysis – the major method used in this study, good for longitudinal studies, for seeing trends, for measurement of source and source message, good for accuracy of reporting, the most popular method in political advertising research literature, able to discern specific criteria set by the researcher.

2. Discourse analysis – is interpretive and inductive, tries to discern major themes from the producer’s perspective, illustrates the context of advertisements, focuses on language, imagery and context, illuminates the numerical data.

3. Ad-buys – fills in gaps about placement and context, helps determine the parties’ priorities and their target audience(s), fills in cultural context, shows regional differences in use of ads, does not presume that all ads are equal, shows differences in size and prominence.

By using a variety of data sources and multiple methods to study a single problem, a researcher is more likely to achieve triangulation. However, it must be noted that some authors have argued that the internal consistency and logic of each research approach mitigates against methodological mixing. In response, Michael Quinn Patton notes that the more important goals for a researcher are ‘to gain the most relevant information and to be open to what the world has to offer’, and these goals ‘seem to outweigh concerns about methodological purity which are based on epistemological arguments’. 
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to clarify how each of the three research methods fits into the overall research design, the following table illustrates the connections between methods, data, media, samples, instruments and measures. This Table also explains how the results of the study will be reported in Chapters five to eight.

Table 4.5 – Summary of research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Results Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Content analysis</td>
<td>ads</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Maximum variation</td>
<td>1112</td>
<td>Codesheet</td>
<td>1. Info content</td>
<td>Chapters 5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>Instruction book</td>
<td>2. negativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. personalisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. electioneering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discourse analysis</td>
<td>ads</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Transcribes &amp; shot-lists</td>
<td>Inductive under broad themes;</td>
<td>Chapters 5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Info content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. negativity</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. personalisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. electioneering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ad-buys</td>
<td>ad-buys</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Maximum variation</td>
<td>3263</td>
<td>Ad-placement map</td>
<td>4. electioneering strategy</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author
Conclusion

This study uses multiple research methods to investigate the content of political advertisements. As its main source, this study uses the actual ads that the major political parties broadcast or published during federal elections.

This chapter reveals how in one sense, the paradigm behind the research design is constructivist as it stems from an understanding that political parties try to ‘construct’ reality through political advertising and that communication is an interaction between the persuaders (political parties, their ad agents and advisors) and audiences (voters). Each audience member interacts with and interprets political advertisements differently and texts can be read in different ways and do not mean the same thing to all people at all times. However, constructivist studies usually place greatest emphasis on audiences and how they interact with communication, whereas this study stems from the premise that it is best to begin with the communicators (or persuaders) and try to understand their intentions. This study therefore focuses on political parties, what they communicate through ads and how this has changed over time. In this respect, the study is predominantly positivist as it seeks to measure how the political parties construct reality in advertisements, by studying the content of the ads that they have produced and shown during elections.

Most Australian scholars have taken an approach which is primarily historical, critical and interpretive—they have relied on subjective analysis. In this study, an attempt is made to link research methods which allow systematic, rigorous analysis with a new data collection method (ad-buys). The application of these methods on a collection of 1335 original ads yielded exciting results which are outlined in the following chapters. Some of these results challenge assumptions which have been made about political advertising, while others confirm some of the worst suspicions.
5 Informing Australian Voters

In Chapter three, the information content of political ads was identified as a crucial issue. For many of those who follow the 'ideal' democracy theory, political ads must provide voters with relevant, 'rational', factual information which helps them make an informed choice of candidates. In recent years, commentators have argued that political ads are no longer providing this type of information but are instead focused on exploiting emotions and on images rather than issues.

In Chapter four, a research framework for measuring information content and two specific hypotheses were outlined. The first hypothesis predicted that the information content of political advertisements has declined over time. The second predicted that television advertisements would be more focused on image than print advertisements. This chapter reports the results of research on information content of political advertisements. It is divided into two sections. Part one reports the results of the content analysis while Part two reports the results of the discourse analysis. The central conclusions of this chapter are that the ads used in earlier years never met the ideal of delivering rational, detailed policy information. However, by several different measures, the information content of political ads has declined over time and television ads do focus on image more than newspaper advertisements.

Part one: Information

Newspaper Advertising

Australian politicians have moved away from printed advertisements. Over the period 1949-2001, there has been a significant decline in the number of political advertisements placed in major metropolitan newspapers (Figure 5.1). In 1949, the
Labor, Liberal and National Parties placed a combined (gross) total of 209 advertisements in seven major metropolitan newspapers (the Age, Sun, Courier-Mail, Mercury, Canberra Times, Sydney Morning Herald and the Advertiser). Because many of the same ads were repeated, among these there were 118 different advertisements. In 2001, the parties placed a combined total of only forty-five advertisements in the same newspapers and among these, there were only ten different advertisements.

Figure 5.1 – Number of advertisements used by the major political parties in major metropolitan newspapers, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The parties' use of newspaper advertisements consistently declined between 1949 and 1972 until electoral competition was stimulated by a change in government in 1972 (Figure 5.1). As a result, newspaper advertising rose in 1974 but it really exploded in 1975. The unusual circumstances which precipitated the 1975 election made it one of the most fiercely contested elections in Australia's history. This was true not only of TV advertising but also in print where nearly 400 ads were placed in major metropolitan newspapers.
The high advertising of 1975 was an aberration and from 1980 to 1990, newspaper advertising dropped back to 1950s levels. In the past decade, it has continued declining and we are now seeing the lowest number of political advertisements in metropolitan newspapers. The major reason for this decline is undoubtedly the parties' increasing reliance on television. There is no doubt that TV is now the prime medium for political advertising. However, the parties' move away from major metropolitan newspapers may also be a response to their declining circulation and a move towards parties placing ads in smaller, local newspapers where they can reach a more specific, geographically targeted audience.2

Nevertheless, the decline of newspaper advertising suggests something important about the parties' focus on swinging voters and their move away from a medium that they believe 'appeals to the rational voter.'3 The parties are now less focused on reaching newspaper readers. In 1949, an Age reader could read twenty-five different advertisements during the four week campaign. In 1998, they would see only seven advertisements—and six of these would appear in the last three days of the campaign. This move toward saturation in the last few days of the campaign is called the 'Fast finish' strategy and is premised on a belief that the best way to achieve maximum impact is to surround voters with messages in the few days immediately prior to the election.4

The fast finish strategy suggests something important about changing attitudes towards voters. Once, politicians courted voters through a series of two hundred newspaper ads over the four week campaign period. Now, modern politicians run a quick and minimal newspaper ad 'blitz' in the last few days of the campaign. This suggests earlier politicians believed that voters needed a lengthy exposition over time, whereas today's politicians (or their advisers and ad agents) think that a last-minute appeal will suffice.

Over the past five decades, there has been a seventy-nine per cent reduction in the total number of newspaper ads and a ninety-two per cent reduction in the number of different advertisements published. Australian voters now receive less information in
terms of both the number, and variety, of newspaper advertisements they can read during an election campaign.

SIZE AND SPACE

While the number of newspaper advertisements has dropped dramatically, the size of newspaper ads has actually increased (Figure 5.2). In 1949, over sixty per cent of newspaper ads took up less than a quarter of the newspaper page. In 1998, all of the newspaper ads were full page and in 2001, most ads were either full page (fifty per cent) or three-quarter page (thirty per cent).

Figure 5.2 – Size of newspaper advertisements (as percentage of newspaper page), 1949-2001

Note: Two other categories measured (‘3/4 page’ and ‘half page’) are not shown.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
This trend towards larger advertisements has been occurring since the early 1970s. In 1975, advertising agents believed that Labor 'made up significant ground in the last week' of the campaign by using dramatic full page ads. Although expensive, it is believed that full page ads grab the reader's attention whereas smaller ads surrounded by editorial material are more likely to be ignored.

Although newspaper ads have become larger, with full page ads now the most common size, in terms of 'quality' political information, ideal democracy theorists would be concerned about what these full page ads actually contain. For many of these authors, there would be little point in having a large full page ad if it consisted only of visual images (such as a large photograph of the party leader). Instead, many would argue that the emphasis should be on words.

WORDS OR PICTURES?

The perception expressed by Ward and Waterford, that recent ads are more dominated by visuals such as photographs or drawings, is not entirely correct. Since the early 1950s, at least sixty per cent of advertisements have contained pictures—either photographs or drawings. Over time, this has remained fairly steady—with between sixty to eighty per cent of newspaper ads in every decade since 1949, including a picture. Only one particular era—between 1984 and 1993—stands out as substantially different. In that era, ads were unusually oriented towards the use of pictures. In 1984, 100 per cent of newspaper advertisements included a picture.

A small photograph in an advertisement might be considered acceptable by those who favour textual information as long as the majority of the advertisement still focuses on delivering information in words. Another consideration is therefore, the size of the pictures used. Advertisements which are dominated by pictures would be considered the least informative for those who believe that words are superior vehicles for delivering information.
In 1949, only twenty-seven per cent of ads included large pictures (defined as pictures which took up more than twenty-five per cent of the ad [Figure 5.3]). In 2001, fifty per cent of ads included large pictures. In this respect, modern ads are more likely to be dominated by large pictures. But there are again some distinct stylistic periods. Between 1980 and 1987, over sixty per cent of ads used large visuals and 1984 was, again, the high point for this type of ad. Then between 1990-1996, there was a return to ads with more text and less large photographs. In these years, the use of large pictures actually dropped back to below 1949 levels. This represented a new emphasis on a more informative-looking, text-based style of ad. Finally, however, during the last two elections in 1998 and 2001, the use of pictures has again risen back to the ‘norm’ of around fifty per cent.

Figure 5.3 – Newspaper advertisements with pictures taking up more than 25 per cent of the total ad space, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Pictures (particularly, photographs) are now a permanent stylistic feature of newspaper ads. However, the emphasis on pictures varies between election years depending upon the style of advertising used. In some elections, such as the 1990 election, the parties chose to use what they perceived to be a more informative style of advertising (this election is discussed in more detail in Part two of this chapter). Other years, they used ads with more pictures and visual images.

While it is true that, since 1949, most political ads have contained pictures, this does not mean that the balance between pictures and words has stayed the same. In 1949, the average newspaper ad contained 109 words with the extremes represented by a few ads which contained more than 300 words, and a few ads which had less than twenty words. In 2001, the average newspaper ad contained sixty-seven words. This represents a sixty-one per cent reduction in the number of words contained in political ads in newspapers. This reduction in text is related not only to the use of large photographs as has been suspected, but is also a result of the greater use of white space and larger text fonts. In 1949, many ads had a text-heavy appearance, using small fonts to incorporate large chunks of text. In 2001, the visual design of ads has seen the use of more white space and fewer words written in larger fonts.

JUST THE FACTS

During this study, ads which contained purely factual information were identified. These ‘information ads’ usually gave the dates of town-hall meetings, the details of radio and television broadcasts or the times and places for appearances by the party leader. In 1949, over thirty per cent of ads were of this type (Figure 5.4). This rose to fifty per cent in 1958 when the town-hall meeting and radio addresses were at their peak. In 1975 and 1977, there was a revival of public meetings particularly by the Labor Party, which advertised a number of rallies to protest against the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. There were also quite a few information advertisements in 1987, 1990 and 1993 (when the Liberal Party held some rallies attended by leader John Hewson). For many years, the Liberal Party used a small information ad containing a telephone number for voter information. But by 1998, all of these types of factual information ads had died out.
The non-use of purely factual 'information advertisements' in 1998 and 2001 possibly signals the end of this type of advertisement. Australian politicians are no longer using public rallies as they have in the past and their policy launches are now usually ticketed events for invited party members only. When politicians would appear on TV or radio in early years, this was a novelty which needed to be advertised, but this is no longer the case.
TELEVISION ADS

While newspaper ads have declined, television ads are now so frequent during the last weeks of election campaigns that TV viewers find them irritating and among the most hated of all TV advertisements. Table 5.1 helps to explain why. It shows political ads that were broadcast during the Channel Nine News program in Melbourne on Tuesday, 6 November 2001. This was four days before polling day and the last day before the electronic blackout.

Table 5.1 - Political advertisements broadcast during Channel Nine News on 6 November 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00:00</td>
<td>Channel Nine news commences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10:18</td>
<td>First commercial break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10:19</td>
<td>Democrats advertisement – <em>Two dogs barking</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:12:03</td>
<td>Democrats advertisement – <em>Two dogs barking</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:12:18</td>
<td>News recommences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:18:53</td>
<td>Second commercial break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:18:53</td>
<td>Liberal Party advertisement – <em>Beazley on illegal boat entrants</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20:39</td>
<td>Liberal Party advertisement – <em>Beazley on illegal boat entrants</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20:53</td>
<td>News recommences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:24:15</td>
<td>Third commercial break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:24:32</td>
<td>ALP advertisement – <em>GST Surprise</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:24:47</td>
<td>ALP advertisement – <em>GST off bills</em></td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:26:31</td>
<td>ALP advertisement – <em>Beazley’s Plan</em></td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:27:00</td>
<td>News recommences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30:00</td>
<td>News ends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s study of advertisements broadcast during the Channel Nine News program on 6 November 2001.

During the news, there were seven political ads out of a total of eighteen commercials. Political ads took up two minutes of the six minutes and forty-five seconds devoted to advertising (or thirty per cent of commercial break time). The parties buy advertising time in blocks with only one party’s ads shown per ad break, and there was much repetition with the Democrats and Liberals repeating the same ads within two minutes.

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While the frequency of TV advertising is high, in terms of information content, television ads have become much shorter. The past two decades have seen the rise of the thirty second TV spot and the past two elections have seen an increasing reliance on even shorter, fifteen second spots.

When cinema advertising was the only audio-visual media available, the major parties produced advertisements of between two and ten minutes long. When television was introduced, the parties continued to use ads which were up to four minutes long, but by the 1970s, one and two-minute ads were more common. The sixty second ad remained standard for some years, but the 1990s saw the death of the sixty second TV ad (Figure 5.5). By 2001, not one sixty second TV ad was used.

Figure 5.5 – Length of television advertisements (in seconds), 1972-2001

Note: Percentages do not always add up to 100 per cent as another category of forty-five second ads (relevant only for 1990, 1996 and 1998) is not shown.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
In recent elections, thirty second TV ads were most popular with a trend towards even shorter ads of fifteen seconds. In 1998, six per cent of TV ads were fifteen seconds long. In 2001, this was up to seventeen per cent of ads.

The use of very short TV advertisements is not entirely new. In 1980, the Liberal Party used some ten second advertisements. But there was some concern about this even within the Party. The Liberals’ advertising agent justified their use by stating; ‘why take 30 or 60 seconds to say something that can be put over succinctly in 10 seconds? What’s more, it’s much less boring for the viewers who are “turned off” by politics’.

In recent years, this view seems to have predominated as shorter ads become the dominant format.

ISSUES OR IMAGES?

One of the most crucial issues in the political advertising literature has been whether political ads focus on issues or on images. This study followed the well-known definitions of ‘issue’ and ‘image’ ads used by Lynda Lee Kaid and other authors in a number of different studies. Ads were coded as issue ads if they emphasised policy concerns or specific policy proposals as the dominant content of the ad. Image ads on the other hand, were defined as ads in which the dominant approach was to emphasise the personal characteristics or qualities of the sponsoring party/party leader or the opponent party/party leader, even if an issue was mentioned (see Appendix F).
Issue ads were once the norm. In 1949, over ninety per cent of ads focused on issues. But by 2001, this was down to only forty-two per cent (Figure 5.6). This is a significant decline, but it has not been a steady one. Before 1975, there was variation between election years. Approximately every third election would see a drop in issue ads and instead, the use of a more image-based style of advertising. But on average, before 1975, eighty per cent of ads were issue-focused. Only in 1955, 1963 and 1972, did less than seventy per cent of ads focus on issues.

Figure 5.6 – Advertising focused on issues (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
After 1975, issue ads stayed at low levels. Then, the 1983 election signalled another major turning point. In 1983, issue advertisements dropped below sixty-five per cent for the first time and since then, they have risen above this barrier only once in the unusual election of 1993. Over sixty per cent of ads in 1993 focused on an issue—overwhelmingly, they were about the proposed GST. As we shall see in Chapter seven, many of these ads were negative, yet they were still focused on an issue (tax) rather than on, for example, the character or qualities of the party leader. But since then, in the past three elections, more than forty per cent of ads have focused on image (Figure 5.7). In terms of policy information, this makes the past three elections the least informative.

Figure 5.7 – Advertising focused on image (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
In 1949, only eight per cent of ads were focused on image. In 2001, fifty-eight per cent of TV and newspaper advertisements were focused on image and many of these ads, as we shall see in the next chapter, focused on the party leaders. Yet, 2001 was not as image-focused as 1996, which, overall, was the most image-based advertising campaign. Sixty-six per cent of ads that year focused on image. This was mostly because of television advertising—particularly, the Liberals’ anti-Keating advertisements but also the ALP’s own TV ads, which focused on Keating under the theme of ‘Leadership’. After 1996, image advertising dropped back but it has still remained higher than any of the years previous, which suggests that 1996 was also a turning point which has seen higher levels of image advertising.

The difficulty with comparing 1949 and 2001, of course, is that there were no television ads in 1949. Figure 5.8 compares the use of image-based advertising by media. Significantly, it shows that the data overwhelmingly supports the hypothesis that television ads are more focused on image than print advertisements. It is not unusual for over fifty per cent of television ads used in any election year to be focused on image and this has gone up to a high of eighty per cent in 1996. In comparison, newspaper ads are still, generally, focusing on issues.

Figure 5.8 – Advertising focused on image by media (newspaper and television), 1949-2001
Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

It is apparent that television is almost entirely responsible for the trend towards image-based advertising. Only in 2001, have we seen an increase in image ads in newspapers to match the focus of television ads. In 2001, for the first time, over fifty per cent of newspaper ads were focused on image. It is too early to predict whether this is a trend, but with the exception of 2001, politicians have viewed newspapers as an entirely different media and have, accordingly, produced distinctly different ads for newspapers. These ads include more policy information than those ads on TV.
THE PARTIES AND IMAGE BASED ADVERTISING

Over the past five decades, one party has used image advertising more frequently than the other. In eighteen out of twenty-two elections, the Coalition has used a greater number of image ads in newspapers than the ALP (Figure 5.9). Their image ads have been both negative and positive, focusing on the image of their own leader as well as on their opponent. In 1955, for example, the Liberal Party used advertising which focused on the image of their party leader, Robert Menzies, but also produced a number of ads which focused on the image of the Labor Party and its leader, Dr. H. V. Evatt. Between 1975 and 1977, the Liberal Party's image ads were quite negative and there were attacks on the image of both the Labor Party and its leader, Gough Whitlam. In 2001, they used a high proportion of image ads about party leader, John Howard. Only in 1969, 1990 and 1984 has the ALP used more image ads. In 1984, the ALP used a very high proportion of image ads, many of which were focused on their party leader, Bob Hawke.

Figure 5.9 – Newspaper advertising focused on image: Comparison of political parties, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
It is more difficult to draw conclusions about television advertising as the sample is smaller. But the Coalition seems to have generally used more image advertising on TV as well (Figure 5.10), except in 1987, 1990 and 2001 (possibly, also in 1984 although no ALP TV ads are available to confirm this). It is notable that for both newspaper and TV ads, the ALP began to use more image-based ads during the Hawke years (1983-1990).

Figure 5.10 – Television advertising focused on image: Comparison of political parties, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The use of image-based advertising is not consistent, but instead varies between election years. Certain circumstances drive a party to rely more on images: for example, when a party wants to highlight a charismatic and popular leader.
ISSUES

Although there has been a clear increase in the use of image-ads, this does not mean that modern political ads totally ignore political issues. On the contrary, since 1980, usually over eighty per cent of newspaper ads mention at least one political issue (such as health, tax or employment [Figure 5.11]). Television ads are less likely to do so. The TV ads used in 1983 were particularly lacking—less than fifty per cent mentioned a political issue. But recent election ads have been comparatively more informative with over eighty per cent of TV ads mentioning at least one issue in 1998 and 2001. Of course, mentioning an issue is not the same as discussing it in detail or providing specific policy information. In the second part of this chapter, transcripts of TV ads are analysed to consider what sort of policy information they provide.

Figure 5.11 – Advertisements which mention at least one issue (newspaper and television advertisements), 1980-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Although most ads mention a political issue, very few mention more than one. Figure 5.12 shows that only a handful of advertisements mention more than five political issues. In the 1950s and 1960s this happened occasionally when newspaper ads would outline a series of party policies in lengthy, text-heavy advertisements. But this has not occurred since 1983.

**Figure 5.12 – Advertisements which mention more than five issues (newspaper and television advertisements), 1949-2001**

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Political advertisements no longer deal with a wide range of issues. This is due to the parties’ belief (revealed in their internal documents) that too many messages in ads are ‘confusing’ for voters and that ‘it is necessary to select a few central aspects... and keep repeating them...’ As agenda setting theory highlights, the parties try to focus voters’ attention on a few particular issues so that they can influence the importance that the electorate attaches to them.
ELECTION ISSUES

When discussing political issues in ads, the primary focus of the parties is not to inform voters or to have a quality political debate about policy. Instead, the aim—as noted in a Liberal Party internal memo—is to ‘create issues in the minds of voters.’ In this study, the coding process not only identified whether an ad was issue or image focused but also identified the dominant issue of each ad. The results reveal that at each election there can be a different emphasis (Table 5.2).

In 1949, the major issue of the day was socialism. In the 1950s, living standards and social security were paramount concerns. Defence was the focus of the 1963, 1966 and 1969 federal elections. In the 1970s, there was a range of concerns from the new Medicare system, to the problem of inflation, the tax system and unemployment. In the 1980s and 1990s, the debate narrowed to a focus on economic criteria, particularly tax (and especially after the 1984 election).

Table 5.2 – Major issues in political ads (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Major issue focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Social security/welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Social security/welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Medicare/health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Medicare/health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: This is an average of all ads. Major issue focus was calculated by determining the major issue focus of each separate advertisement produced by the major parties (both print and television).

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

While Table 5.2 gives an aggregate of the top election issue, looking separately at the two parties shows that they often focused on different issues. This is not surprising as we would expect the parties to emphasise issues on which they are advantaged and their opponents are less well regarded. Table 5.3 shows that from 1949-1961, the Liberal Party’s advertisements focused on the perceived scourge of socialism but also on living standards (often on claims of how living standards had improved under Coalition government). In this era, the ALP focused on social security/welfare and unemployment. Both parties focused on defence during the 1960s at the height of the Vietnam War when there were distinct differences in policy on conscription and engagement in the war. The Liberals are traditionally more concerned with economic issues. They fixed on inflation from 1974 to 1980. From 1984, they focused almost exclusively on tax with the exception of 2001 when they shifted their focus to immigration—in particular, illegal immigration and how to stop it.
Table 5.3 – Different issue focus of Labor and Liberal Parties, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>ALP main issue focus</th>
<th>Liberal main issue focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Social security/welfare</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Social security/welfare</td>
<td>Socialism and living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Social security/welfare</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Medicare/health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Foreign ownership</td>
<td>Inflation and living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Inflation, taxes and unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
<td>Living standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Industrial relations</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Taxes and education</td>
<td>Taxes and social security/welfare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Where more than one issue is mentioned indicates an equal amount of advertisements in these categories. Defence includes conscription. This table is based on both TV and print advertisements as these concurred except in 1983 (when TV ads of both parties focused most on unemployment and living standards) and 1996 when the ALP’s TV ads focused on Medicare/health whereas their newspaper ads focused on taxes.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The Labor Party has traditionally tried to package itself as a party of compassion associated with an emphasis on social security/welfare and unemployment. Other issues of concern in later years included education, the environment and industrial relations. The Liberal Party has sold itself as a party of competence rather than compassion—tough on socialism and defence, successful in obtaining rising living standards and later, as the party most able to successfully manage the economy, particularly in regard to taxation. Theories of priming help explain why the parties have these distinctive patterns of problem emphasis. The parties try to focus public attention on certain topics, hoping to make these topics the standard by which voters evaluate the parties. However, the way in which the parties both focus on the same
issues in recent years, and especially on tax in the last decade, provides some evidence to support convergence theory.

The Liberal Party had a great deal of success between 1949 and 1969, when it fought elections on issues such as socialism, living standards and defence. But it did not do so well when it fought the 1972 election focusing on the ALP’s proposal for a national health scheme (Medibank). Alternatively, the ALP did not have any success between 1949-1969 when they focused mainly on social security/welfare. Nor did the Labor Party have much success when they focused on defence. In 1975, the ALP tried campaigning on a traditional Liberal area of concern—taxes—and lost. But it won later in 1987 and 1993 when it focused on taxation by denigrating its opponent’s tax policies.

**Part two: Persuasion**

**THE IDEAL POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT?**

As we saw in Figure 5.5, the ‘information ad’ which deals only with dates, times and places, has died out. Figure 5.13 is an example of this type of purely factual advertisement. However, it could hardly be considered an ideal political ad as it does not offer any information for a voter to make an informed choice of candidate. It only gives a meeting time and place and broadcast details.

Figure 5.13 – Liberal Party factual ‘information advertisement’, 1951
Beyond trivial details of fact, political ads are, ideally, supposed to provide information about policies, candidates, parties and the political system. Information about policy could include identifying a policy problem, proposing a solution, giving details of the policy solution (such as the aims and benefits of the policy, how much it will cost, how it will be paid for, how spending will be allocated and how the policy will be implemented) and outlining the target achievement(s) and how (and when) this will be measured.

Information about candidates (or party leaders) could include their name, position, background, achievements, qualifications, character and family. Information about the party could include the party name, its ideology, history, values, aims, structure, organisation, priorities, policy platform and badging, such as its logo and slogan. Information about the political system could include details of how the political system works such as the bi-cameral nature of parliament, voting procedures (including details about preferential and/or proportional voting), the date of the election and the location of polls.

For ideal democracy theorists, the value of these types of information differs. The highest value is placed on policy information, while information about party ideology and the political system are also valued quite highly. Candidate information is not particularly well regarded, especially information about a candidate’s character or family. Many commentators do not value negative ads or consider them to be informative, although these ads may well include information about policy, parties and candidates. Instead, the ideal is for ads to be focused on the sponsoring party’s own policies and to provide detail about those policies.
This section will examine how the parties promote their own policies, whether they do so in an informative way, what information they include and how their ads measure up to the ideal standard. This section therefore focuses on a specific type of ad—that which focuses on the policies of the party sponsoring the ad. It does not look specifically at negative ads (although a few examples are included because it is difficult to omit them entirely) or image ads (image ads are addressed in Chapter six and negative ads in Chapter seven). The question of information content, although explored in detail in this chapter, is therefore also explored in subsequent chapters when the information content of image ads and negative ads, are considered.

REAL POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Ads which focus on the policies of the sponsoring party are the most idealised type of political ad. Stylistically, taking the criteria set out by others and discussed in Chapter three, the ideal political ad, as it is understood by ideal democracy theorists, uses words rather than pictures; focuses on the sponsoring party and its policies, philosophies, ideologies and intentions; and provides policy detail which informs voters. In a sample of over 1300 advertisements, very few ads—less than three per cent—could be judged to meet all of these criteria. This is true even in 1949, when ads were more text-based. In more recent times, it is even more difficult to find ads which meet the criteria.
Figure 5.14 perhaps comes closest to the ideal. This ad, from 1949, focused on outlining the Coalition’s policies—‘This is what a Liberal-Country Government will do’. It relied on words and it mentioned sixteen different policy areas. It contained no pictures. However, the ad used language which was clearly designed to influence the reader—‘Here are the answers to what every thinking person wants to know’ (my italics). It concluded with the statement ‘the above are some leading points in the Liberal-Country policy. The alternative is socialism. It is in your hands, Australia!’.

Figure 5.14 - Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
Figure 5.15, a Labor Party advertisement from 1951, also listed a series of different policies including fighting the rising cost of living by seeking an immediate referendum on prices, building up Australia’s defences, repealing the Wool Tax and free dental care for children. The ad no longer used text-only—it now included a photograph of the party leader. It also concluded with a statement that included an attack on the opponent leader that: ‘Labor will fight for a fair deal for the people and will end the Menzies muddle’.

Figure 5.15 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1951
In 1954, the Labor Party used a number of very text-heavy advertisements including the one shown in Figure 5.16. By now, a photograph of the party leader was standard. This ad listed a number of policies in words and went into detail about some of those policies, including specifics such as the amount of pension increases, the percentage of depreciation which would be allowed on machinery for taxation concessions and the amount by which war service home deposits would be reduced. It also included some information about voting procedures—telling voters that they ‘must number every square, otherwise your vote will be informal.’

Figure 5.16 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1954
This style of ad—based on text, policy promises and a photograph of the leader—continued for some time. But by 1969, there were stylistic differences in the way policies were presented. Figure 5.17 shows the move toward a different style of ad with larger headings, less text and a larger photograph of the party leader. In this ad, the text is given less emphasis than the slogan and photograph.

Figure 5.17 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1969

Progressive
responsible
government
vote Liberal Oct.25
By 1972, as shown in Figure 5.18, the party leader's face could now be the focus of the ad, along with a prominent slogan or quote. The language was personalised and directed to the reader of the ad, for example: 'This we promise you...'. Policies were described in dot points with little textual information.

Figure 5.18 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972

'Let's keep Australia moving forward - secure and prosperous'

We will maintain a social security with high levels of support to ensure the future security of you and your family.

We will continue to support the welfare of our community and its needs.

We will give equal rights for all Australians, regardless of race or creed.

We will work towards an Australia that is free from discrimination.

Vote Liberal
The 1972 election also saw a move toward targeting. In Figure 5.19, the Liberal Party promised ‘many new benefits for you and your family’. Each section of the ad was targeted towards a particular group including young couples, women and older Australians.

Figure 5.19 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972
Figure 5.20 from 1983, is a very unusual advertisement for its time. It tried to deal with multiple policies and although it included the standard picture of the party leader, Malcolm Fraser, it nevertheless contained a great deal of written information about policies. Less than three per cent of all ads studied used these methods.

Figure 5.20 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1983

Overall, these are the ‘best’ few examples of text-heavy, policy-oriented, information-rich ads. In many ways, the search for an ‘ideal’ political ad exposed the futility of such an exercise. Very few ads fulfilled the necessary criteria. While the ideal standard calls for text, rationality, policy detail and specifics, in reality, the parties use other methods to sell their policies. Case studies of four specific policy areas—tax, defence, social security and unemployment—show how political ads sell policy rather than provide information about it. These four topics are key policy areas that have been the focus of much advertising over the period 1949-2001.
Social security/welfare: From ‘helping hand’ to ‘hand-out’

As we have seen, the ALP has packaged itself as the party of social security/welfare—particularly during the 1950s. In the 1954 ad shown in Figure 5.21, Labor used both pictures and words to promote their social security policy. The language was focused on rights, entitlements and protections, including the concept of a ‘fair deal’ and a ‘right’ to welfare—that ‘Labor says these people must be protected’. Five separate photographs were used to show who the policy would benefit, including pictures of an ‘ex-serviceman’, a war widow, an aged pensioner and a young couple shopping for household furniture. There was a level of detail about policy given in point form at the end of the ad including specific detail such as a plan to ‘increase age and invalid pensions to four [pounds] a week’.

Figure 5.21 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1954
While the ALP ad relied on visuals of people, the Liberal ad in Figure 5.22 instead used tables and figures. It gave some policy detail about ‘Menzies Pension Plan’. This was an early example of personalisation, with the policy promoted as Menzies’ policy. The ad used a graph to show how the plan would ‘work’. The example given in the ad was relevant for ‘a retired man and his wife’ and the ad was clearly aimed at a male audience. It stated about the Labor plan, for example, that ‘every sensible man knows you can’t have it both ways’. In quite different rhetoric from Labor, the Liberal ad stressed that Menzies pension plan is ‘only for those who need it’. In a later 1958 ad, the Liberal Party also emphasised that social security was about ‘helping yourself’ and encouraging a ‘spirit of self-reliance’.15

Figure 5.22 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954
In the 1950s, when the Labor Party’s main policy emphasis was on social security/welfare, the focus of many of their advertisements was the family and how Labor’s policies would benefit family members. ‘When inflation hits the family, it’s Labor to the rescue’, stated one ad (Figure 5.23).

Figure 5.23 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1955
In 1958, two newspaper advertisements again highlighted Labor's focus on the family (Figure 5.24). One used photographs of families including parents, grandparents and children. The language included concepts of 'rights', 'fairness' and 'entitlements', including the entitlement to 'buy a home of your own and furnish it decently'. Both ads included some policy details, such as 'child endowment [will be] extended to include full-time students from 16 to 18', 'maternity allowances to be doubled' and all Widows' Pensions increased by 15/- a week'. One ad included some negative statements that, 'because of the Menzies Government’s bungling, most husbands, wives and mothers have to make sacrifices in order to live...' and 'The Menzies Government has denied you all these rights.'
An ad from 1987 shows how substantially different later ads became in terms of both style and content. In 1987, the National Party published an ad which ran across two-full newspaper pages (Figure 5.25). It emphasised large headings and photographs, and minimal text. On the first page, headed ‘handout economy’, young people are seen queuing for their ‘dole cheques’. One yawns lazily. All look downcast. This image is contrasted with the photograph on the second page, headed ‘working economy’, which shows a young worker smiling as he holds up his pay-packet.

Figure 5.25 – National Party newspaper advertisement, 1987

YOUR CHOICE
MORE HIGH TAX
HANDOUT ECONOMY

TOMORROW
A NEW LOW TAX
WORKING ECONOMY

The visual images took up most of the advertisement. Few words were given and no specific policy details were outlined. Early Labor ads portrayed social security recipients sympathetically, and outlined policy details (in words) about how it would ‘protect’ them. In this National Party ad, by contrast, welfare recipients are portrayed
as a group which should be condemned and the emphasis is on the photographs and the feelings these provoke, particularly feelings of disgust at the idleness of the ‘dole’ recipients.

In 1998, the Liberal Party used a vox-pop style TV ad which showed a number of young men talking about their experiences on the ‘Work-for-the-Dole’ program (Figure 5.26). By this stage, the word ‘dole’ was used openly instead of ‘welfare’ or ‘social security’. In the ad, a young man stated; ‘Before Work-for-the-Dole, I was doin’ nothing, basically, just sitting around on my backside, bludging all day’. The ad confirmed stereotypes of ‘dole bludgers’ and reinforced conservative individualist values about the importance of a strong work ethic and the need for government to compel people to work. The emphasis was again on pointing out the laziness of individuals on welfare rather than discussing policy in broad national terms.

Figure 5.26 – Liberal Party television advertisement, ‘Vox-pop work for the dole’, 1998
Health

Comparative ads can be useful in presenting information by showing the details of contrasting policies. Figure 5.27, from 1954, compared what the 'Liberals gave you' on the left side of the ad, to what 'Labor gave you' in the right column. The emphasis was notably on ‘you’, the voter and what had been ‘given to you’. For example, the ad stated that Liberals gave you ‘free milk for 750,000 school children every school day’ whereas Labor gave you ‘nothing’. The ad showed a graphic of a happy, healthy family and appealed to self-interest—the emphasis was on which party would provide the individual voter and their family with more benefits.

Figure 5.27 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954
A different way of presenting policy information was to use a question and answer format. In 1972, when the Labor Party was promoting a new health policy they used large text-heavy, full-page newspaper ads to explain the policy—Medibank, later called Medicare (Figure 5.28). The ad focused mainly on financial considerations and was personalized to the voter. There was particular emphasis, for example, on how much the scheme would “cost me”? Tables were again used to show details.

Figure 5.28 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1972
In 1974, the Liberals used a health policy advertisement which imitated the commercial sales techniques of promoting ‘three benefits’ (Figure 5.29). The ad promised ‘no extra tax’ and, using an individualistic style of language, stressed ‘freedom of choice’ including that ‘no bureaucrat will tell you what to do!’ Stylistically, it had moved away from text only to a heavy emphasis on the photograph of the party leader and the large slogan; ‘Think again’.

Figure 5.29 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1974
We will protect you: Defence

In 1951, the Liberal Party advertised its defence policy (Figure 5.30). The ad was personalised—‘training could save your son’—and it highlighted the nationalistic and patriotic symbol of the Australian flag. Nevertheless, a significant portion of the ad was devoted to explaining the Liberals’ defence policy in words. The ad explained that elements of the policy included a voluntary recruiting scheme, a National Service Plan ‘to train young men to defend their country and themselves’, the ‘launching of new ships for Naval services’ and ‘importation of “Meteor” jet fighters’. But it was also trying to evoke an emotional reaction with words stating, for example, that: ‘There is a very grim danger of another Great War...caused by Communist aggression...’ The ad was premised on fear and the need to ‘prepare’ and ‘defend’. The ad also included negative elements, claiming, for example, that ‘Mr Chifley wants to steal your vote by frightening you...’

Figure 5.30 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1951
By 1966, the Vietnam War and the issue of conscription had divided the major political parties and also caused significant division within Australian society. Figures 5.31 and 5.32 show how advertising had changed to a style now based on photographs and the emotions they evoke. The first ad (Figure 5.30), showed young men in uniform marching away under the caption ‘How many more will go?’ It stated two policy proposals: firstly, that ‘only a Labor government will end conscription immediately’ and secondly, that Labor would ‘spend Australia’s annual automatic revenue increase on the welfare of the people most in need’. The last point did not provide any explanation of how much money this was, how it was to be allocated or even who exactly it was to be spent on—who were ‘the people most in need’? But the rhetoric does show the ongoing packaging of Labor as the party of the disadvantaged, the protector and champion of the underdog.

Figure 5.31 – Labor Party newspaper advertisement, 1966

**HOW MANY MORE WILL GO?**

**ONLY A LABOR GOVT. WILL**

- End conscription immediately—and withdraw all other troops from Vietnam as soon as practicable after consultation with our U.S. allies and in such a way as not to endanger the lives of our Australian or allied troops.
- Spend Australia’s annual automatic revenue increase on the welfare of the people most in need.

**THE DECISION IS YOURS:**

**VOTE FOR YOUR A.L.P. CANDIDATE AND END CONSCRIPTION**
In a negative ad (Figure 5.32), the ALP used a photograph of a young man being dragged away by police. The ad stated: ‘a lad who conscientiously objects to the war in Vietnam is taken away to face two harsh years in a military detention camp. His crime: daring to oppose the policies of the Liberal Party’. The ad claimed that Liberal Party parliamentarians ‘conscript others for Vietnam, yet refuse to go themselves’. Again, the ad was focused on stirring emotions and the photograph is employed for this purpose.

Figure 5.32 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1966
In 1980, we see a move to an even less informative style of advertisement. The Liberal Party’s defence advertisement that year (Figure 5.33) consisted of a photograph of Malcolm Fraser, seventeen words and a party slogan and logo. The words used are not only scant but are also cryptic. ‘Defence is the courage to stand up for Australia’ is a statement without explanation or details about how the Liberal Party would ‘stand up for Australia’.

Figure 5.33 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1980

Defence is more than planes, ships and armies.

Defence is the courage to stand up for Australia.

LEAD ON, LIBERAL
During the 2001 election, Australian troops had just been committed to Afghanistan. However, there was little discussion of this in advertising. The parties certainly did not, as they had in 1966, take up opposing policy positions. Indeed, the only reference to Australia’s embarking on an overseas conflict was a visual one designed for emotional impact in an ad premised on fear and uncertainty. In the Liberal Party ad ‘Tough Decisions 2’, the shots in Figure 5.34 came up on screen when the voice-over stated; ‘The recent tragic events in the United States continue to touch our world’.

Figure 5.34 – Liberal Party television advertisement, ‘Tough Decisions 2’, 2001
Employment

In 1949, the ALP stated in their advertising that Menzies thought a ‘pool of unemployed’ was necessary to ‘discipline the workers’. The Liberal Party denied this (Figure 5.35) and used a full-page ad to outline their response. They emphasised ‘choice’ as opposed to Labor’s policy, which was described as ‘Industrial conscription’. Although the ad was headed: ‘Full employment and the avoidance of depression’, half of the ad was devoted to a section headed ‘Don’t trust the socialists’ and the closing statement was that ‘this election is a referendum on socialism!’. So although the ad seemed to be about employment policy it was really trying to put the Liberals’ preferred issue back on the agenda.

Figure 5.35 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
Unemployment was a major election issue in 1977. Both parties ran a series of ads focused on employment issues. The Labor Party criticised the Fraser Government’s record and used emotive images of a worker who had just lost his job (Figure 5.36). The ad was dominated by a large picture showing the down-cast man in a locker room, his bag packed and ready to go. The ad worked on voters’ fears of losing their jobs just as the early ad worked on the basis of fear of loss of freedom and being forced to take a job anywhere in the country at the direction of the Labor Party. Most of the text was negative, including a claim that ‘nobody has suffered more under the Liberal government than Australia’s wage and salary earners.’ The only policy detail which the ALP gave about their own employment policy was that: ‘The ALP’s solution is to create more jobs at a nett cost of $500 million’. But again, there was no explanation of how that money would be spent, how this would create jobs, when it would happen or how it would be implemented.

Figure 5.36 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1977
Five years later, in 1983, the ALP used a very similar visual to highlight unemployment in a TV ad called ‘The Empty Factory Caretaker’. This ad strongly evoked fear of unemployment through scary sound-effects and drab visuals of a rundown factory. There was a real contrast between the despair of the empty factory and a confident Bob Hawke. Hawke’s confidence that ‘we’ could ‘get our factories working again’ demonstrated a classic challenger strategy of emphasising optimism for the future. Because challengers spend so much time attacking the record of the opponent and pointing out how bad the status quo is, they also need to make sure that voters do not ‘turn off’ and think that things will never get any better. The challenger therefore must reassure voters that things could be better and they do this by emphasising optimism for the future.
Empty factory caretaker

Sound of wind whistling.

Cat screeches.

Male voice:

A few months ago, this factory was full of life.

Four hundred people were employed here.

Some had worked here for 30 years.

They thought they'd never lose their jobs.

Now, this factory only has one employee.

Sound of door creaking open.

Sound of key opening lock.

Wind is still whistling.

Caretaker (in sad, eerie voice):

That's me. I'm the factory caretaker.

Bob Hawke:

While the Liberals fumble, factories like this are closing all over Australia. The result... soaring unemployment. What Australia needs is a recovery program that will get our factories working again. It's not going to be easy. But if we all pull together we can do it.

Male voice over:

Bob Hawke. Bringing Australia together.

Through factory doorway, a shot of the street outside. It is empty and dusty. A cat runs through the doorway.

Shot of inside a factory.

Machines are idle.

Close up of cobwebs.

The shadow of a person walking past a cobwebbed sign.

Empty benches.

Inside a locker room.

Door opens and a middle-aged man in overalls walks in to his locker. He fiddles with lock then turns to look at camera.

He speaks to camera.

Close up of head and shoulders of Hawke. He is wearing grey suit, white shirt and dark tie. Hawke talks to camera.

Camera moves closer in on Hawke's face.

ALP logo, slogan and authorisation.
The ‘Empty Factory Caretaker’ ad did not give any specific policy details. It told voters that Australia needed ‘a recovery program’ but did not say what that program was, what it involved, how it would work or how much it would cost. Instead, it blithely reassured voters that somehow ‘if we all pull together we can do it’!

THE LURE OF THE DOLLAR: TAXATION

Over the past fifteen years, the Liberal Party has consistently tried to put tax on the agenda. Their advertisements try to convince voters that they would be better off financially under a Liberal government. Tables, figures and dollar signs are common design elements in Liberal advertisements on taxation. The Liberals used this approach in 1955 (Figure 5.35) and were still using it in 1977 (Figure 5.37). In the advertisement from 1955, falling coins and notes represent the windfall available for voters under the Menzies government (Figure 5.37).

Figure 5.37 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1955
In 1977, the Liberal Party used what would become known an infamous political advertisement. The Party's 'fistful of dollars' advertisements were criticised not only for appealing to greed but also for being highly misleading (Figure 5.38). In the ad, the money in the hand added up to $75 but the Liberals acknowledged that their tax cuts would see more like between $3 and $6 returned to the average Australian. Once re-elected, the tax cut promise was never fulfilled making the 'fistful of dollars' ads a notorious example of broken promises and misleading advertising.

Figure 5.38 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1977
This advertisement from 1977 (Figure 5.39), ran in conjunction with the ‘Fistful of Dollars’ newspaper ad (Figure 5.38). It used a table to show ‘your new tax savings’ under the proposed Liberal policy.

Figure 5.39 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXTRA SAVINGS FROM FEB 1</th>
<th>KEEP WEEKLY WAGE</th>
<th>YOUR NEW WEEKLY SAVINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$140</td>
<td>$1.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$1.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$180</td>
<td>$2.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$3.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$240</td>
<td>$4.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To pay for Mr. Whitlam’s wild and unproductive payroll plan you’d lose the lot.
These new Liberal tax cuts, beginning February 1, will release $26.7 million a week to boost demand and create jobs. Liberal. Doing the job.
Just as Labor ads on social security focused on the family, so too did Liberal tax advertisements. In 1984, a Liberal tax advertisement used a large photograph of a family in a picnic setting as the main emphasis of the ad (Figure 5.40). This ad mentioned ‘family’ or ‘families’ seven times.

Figure 5.40 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1984
Other advertisements used text as the main emphasis. The ad in Figure 5.41 states ‘A Liberal Government will be a smaller, more affordable, Government’ which will ‘spend less and waste less’. The ad emphasised a distinctive work ethic. It stated that because the Liberal tax cuts would give ‘everybody a real incentive to work harder. You’ll be able to work the whole weekend…’.

Figure 5.41 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1987

Advertisements on tax often work from an assumption that the voter is purely self-interested. Headlines state, for example: ‘Liberal tax cuts will give the average family an extra $26 a week’ (1987) and ask on behalf of voters; ‘Can you tell me exactly what my family will get?’ (1990).
In Australia, taxation has played a major role in recent election campaigns. Tax has not only been used as a way of promoting the party’s own policies but also as a weapon against the other party. In 1993 and 1998, the Labor Party ran a series of negative advertisements about the Liberals’ proposed GST. Many of these advertisements are discussed in Chapter seven. However, the Liberal Party has also used taxation as an issue against Labor in 1980 with their wealth-tax advertisements, and in 1998, when they again advertised claims that Labor was going to implement a ‘new capital gains tax’.17

In those years when the election has been about the Liberals’ proposed GST (1993 and 1998), the Liberal Party did not even attempt to sell its GST policy through TV ads. In 1993, the Liberals’ advertising agent prepared a number of TV ads on the GST. However, when these ads were tested, it was found that the GST was ‘a black hole. Everytime you tried to answer some questions, more raised their head’.18 The Liberals decided to avoid any mention of the GST in their TV ads. They did, however, try to rebut negative allegations in a series of newspaper ads (Figure 5.42). Newspaper ads were considered a more appropriate medium for giving policy details.

Figure 5.42 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisements, 1993
The newspaper advertisements which the Liberals used to promote the GST were highly unusual for modern ads because they were text-heavy. The ads still used small novelty graphics (a nutshell and a knight in armour) and commercial sales elements (such as ticks, numbered points lists and text boxes with the new prices of items). The small text boxes stated ‘save $33’ on a colour television or ‘save $50’ on a new stereo system. One text box was even headed: ‘More cash in your pocket’.

Interestingly, one of the points made in the second ad shown above, was a complaint against the way in which the ALP had set the agenda. It stated that the ‘attempt [by Labor] to uphold the GST as a major and key issue is a gross misrepresentation of the issues that are currently facing our virtually bankrupt nation’. This demonstrates that the parties are aware they are engaging in agenda setting and framing.

Tax seems to be one of the few areas where policy detail is given, because the parties believe that voters want to know ‘what’s in it for me?’. The emphasis is on showing voters how much money or other financial benefit, will be provided to them. The parties, particularly the Liberal Party, seem to think that voters want and will be willing to read this type of information.

**TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS**

Television ads are usually the major focus of criticism that political ads are uninformative. Partly this is due to the limitations of time which are inherent in this medium. Estimates suggest that a thirty second commercial usually equates to about fifty words.\(^{19}\) However, in this study, many thirty second ads contained up to eighty-seven words. In 2001, the average newspaper ad contained only sixty-seven words—so this was around the same, or perhaps even slightly less than, a thirty second TV ad.

The parties view TV as a significantly different media to print. When they want to appeal ‘to the logic of the electorate’ they use newspaper ads such as those explaining the GST.\(^ {20}\) This is based on their belief that ‘people wishing to read
political advertising are serious about the subject. Television ads broadcast on major television stations reach a wider and more diverse audience—an audience who may not be interested in the subject of the ad, so TV ads are designed accordingly.

Very few TV ads try to promote a specific policy. Instead, most are about broad themes, promoting images or are negative and focus on the opponent instead. This section examines the very few TV ads which try to promote a policy. Many of these ads are Liberal ads and many are on tax, as again, this is one of the few policies which is considered worthy of ‘detailed’ promotion.

In 1984, the ‘Liberal’s Family Tax Relief’ TV ad was thirty seconds long and contained seventy-five words of spoken text. The ad emphasised the financial benefits of voting Liberal but framed this in terms of ‘the family’. Visuals were very similar to the newspaper ad from 1984 (Figure 5.40) which also included a happy couple in an outdoor setting with their children. The rhetorical emphasis of the TV ad was fashioned on work, income, ‘the freedom to choose’ and ‘get a better tax deal’.
Liberal's Family Tax Relief

Male voice over:

The Liberal Family Tax Relief will help families on one income and families on two incomes, by letting you submit a joint tax return so you can ease the family tax burden.

If you both chose to work or if you're a sole parent, Family Tax Relief will also help you with child care rebates.

Andrew Peacock:

Our Family Tax Relief gives you the freedom to choose and get a better tax deal.

That's putting Australians first.
In 1990, the Liberals used another thirty second advertisement which contained eighty-two words of spoken information. This ad showed a man and his young son shopping for a new car. The implication was that people would be able to afford to buy new things if they received the Liberals’ tax cuts. The ad was clearly aimed at the aspirational voter who values material possessions and economic advancement with statements focused on the car, such as ‘there’s plenty of room in there’ and ‘if you like the red, you can have this one right away’.
A positive future: Family buys car

Car salesman:
You've picked a pretty good time as it happens.

Family man:
Yeah. We've been shopping around.

Male voice over:
The Liberal tax cuts will give the average family an extra $26 a week.

Car salesman:
There's plenty of room in there even with the seats in that position.

Male voice over:
Spending that money will help create new jobs.

Car salesman:
If you like the red, you can have this one right away!

Male voice over:
All we need to do is reduce government spending by just three cents in the dollar.

Child in man's arms:
Yes!

Male voice over:
Get in front again. Vote Liberal.
In 1990, the Liberals used a forty-five second TV ad which contained 105 spoken words (including the song lyrics). The ad was again focused on tax. The references were still focused on the family, on tax cuts and the financial benefits of Liberal policy, which ‘to a family... can mean a twenty per cent tax cut’. Just as the previous ad suggested the child’s happiness was premised on getting the car, this ad also played on a duty to the family, stating that ‘if you care for your family’ you must vote Liberal.
Andrew Peacock and family tax cuts

(Song):
There are questions that just have to be answered.
There are questions that just won’t go away.

Andrew Peacock:
Wherever I go I’m asked: ‘Why is the Hawke Government hurting families so much?’

Labor’s forgotten the family but we have the answer; a $2 billion tax cut to families with a child care rebate of up to $350 a child and a childcare tax rebate of up to $20 a week.

To a family, this can mean a twenty per cent tax cut.

(Song):
There are questions that just have to be answered.

Andrew Peacock:
The reality is, if you care for your family, the answer is Liberal.

Male voice over:
The answer is Liberal.
One of the more informative TV ads in terms of spoken word content was the ALP’s ‘Australia’s World Heritage’ ad. This sixty second TV ad, used during the 1990 election campaign, contained 121 words of information about the Labor Party’s record and stance on environmental issues. The emphasis was on trust—'who are you going to trust...?'—and ended with a plea not to ‘risk Australia’s world heritage to the Liberal and National policies...’ As with the social security ads of the 1950s, the rhetorical emphasis was on packaging Labor as the party that ‘protects’. This ad was the first to include a sole female voice over and this was probably a deliberate choice, considering the subject matter of environment, heritage and protection.
Australia's world heritage

('New age' music and instruments throughout).

Female voice over:

Who are you going to trust to protect Australia's precious environment in future years?

The Hawke Government legislated to safeguard world heritage areas like Uluru and the Daintree Rainforest.

The same Government is leading the world campaign to protect and preserve the Antarctic.

The Hawke Government fought against damming the Franklin and won.

The Kakadu National park has been protected from mining.

The area of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has been increased seven times.

Every one of these safeguards has been put in place by a caring, responsible government that's not prepared to stand by and watch Australia's environmental heritage threatened.

Please, don't risk Australia's world heritage to the Liberal and National policies of logging and national park mining.
In recent election campaigns, when parties have delayed releasing their policies until very late in the campaign, there have been concerns about the seeming convergence of the parties' policies, as well as confusion about what they stand for. In response to this, the parties have been outlining broad 'plans'. The word 'plan' is intended to convey that the party does have a strong vision for the future, despite the lack of policy detail released and the seeming similarities with their opponents' policies. In 1998, the Liberals used a thirty second TV ad containing sixty-seven spoken words to promote their 'Small Business Plan'.

The ad deals with few specifics. It mentions 'simplifying' fringe benefits tax, for example, but does not state how this will be done. The ad is targeted towards small business owners and uses language which it is perceived will appeal to them such as 'cut red tape', 'cut...tax', 'encourage...growth' and 'simplify taxes'. It ends with a 'guarantee' that 'there will be no new tax increases'. But it reminds viewers that this will only happen 'under the Liberal Plan for Australia'.
Small Business Plan

(Gentle music plays softly throughout).

Male voice:

The Liberal plan for small business will create jobs.

A Liberal Government will cut red tape and cut $180 million off provisional tax.

Cut capital gains tax by $200 million dollars by introducing rollover provisions.

Encourage the growth of jobs by modifying unfair dismissal laws.

Simplify taxes like FBT.

(music builds to a crescendo)

And, we guarantee that there will be no tax increases. But only under the Liberal Plan for Australia.
WE HAVE A PLAN

For the reasons already discussed, in recent years, the concept of having a 'plan' has been increasingly important for both parties, but traditionally this has been particularly important for challengers. Because challengers criticise the incumbent’s record and question the status quo, they need to convince voters that they have an alternative vision and the capacity to do better than the incumbent. As Trent and Friedenberg note: ‘the task of a challenger is not only to attack but to hold out the promise of a better tomorrow...’

The notion of ‘a plan’ has therefore been expressed in challenger ads for some time. In 1963, when the ALP had been out of office for fourteen years, it outlined ‘a plan for a great Australia’ (Figure 5.43). The text-heavy advertisement included details of a new federal ministry of education and science, a National Science Foundation, a National Planning Scheme, new Regional Development Authorities and a Conservation Authority ‘for the North’.

Figure 5.43 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1963
By 1969, the Labor Party was still out of office. It was now heavily criticising the Coalition Government and its leader, John Gorton, as well as outlining an alternative vision. The Labor ad in Figure 5.44 criticised the current situation but still expressed optimism for the future. In this ad, the text consisted entirely of quotations from Labor leader, Gough Whitlam. The ad was quite negative in tone including statements for example, that ‘John Gorton is a worried man. He has seen what Labor has to offer... And he compares this policy with his own—fumbling, inept and tired’.

Figure 5.44 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1969

“We plan a better Australia for all Australians.”

“I pledge that a Labor Government will carry out its policies without delay and without the HOME-bashing which has been such a feature of the many years of Coalition Government.”

Gough Whitlam

Why are they frightened?

They are frightened because Labor has “won” so recently.

They have already seen Labor win once, because there have been a number of victories of the party and government since.

Labor was elected in 1961, and with the ALP in the majority, they can see victory again.

Why are they afraid?

They fear Labor will get back in power and they will suffer the consequences.

The Coalition Government has been in power for years and has faced a number of challenges, but Labor has shown that they can overcome them.

200
In 2001, when the ALP was again in opposition (this time after five years of Coalition government), it used a TV ad to outline what had now become a very leader oriented plan—‘Kim Beazley’s Plan’. Whereas before it was ‘we plan…’, ads now stressed ‘what I [the party leader] stand for’. Beazley stated in the ad, in a very presidential manner, that ‘a vote for me is a vote for a real plan’. This statement is not only presidential in manner but, in Australia, it is only possible for the voters living in Beazley’s electorate to actually vote directly for him.

‘Kim Beazley’s Plan’ was meant to address perceptions that the party had no direction or any clear policies so the word ‘plan’ was mentioned seven times. The language made an attempt to be all-encompassing—that the plan would give ‘every child a fair chance’ and ‘a fair share for all Australians’. This emphasis on ‘fair’ also recalls the Labor Party’s promotion of itself as the party of social justice.
Kim Beazley’s Plan

Uplifting music plays throughout.

Kim Beazley:

The choice is clear.

A vote for me is a vote for a real plan.

A plan for schools that gives every child a fair chance.

A plan to end the crisis in our public hospitals.

A plan to take the GST off some of life’s essential items.

A plan to guarantee that Telstra remains in public hands.

A plan that has been costed down to the last cent.

A plan for a fair share for all Australians.

That’s what I stand for!
Beazley’s Plan presents only general policy preferences such as the need to ‘end the crisis in our public hospitals’. It does not give any detail about how this is to be achieved. The examples of TV ads discussed in this chapter represent the most policy-specific ads out of a sample of over 200. This shows that there are very few TV ads which focus on the sponsoring party and their policies and even less which provide any detail about these policies. Usually, only vague statements are provided about broad values or intentions. Policy detail is considered too dull to bore TV viewers with. As their internal notes reveal, the parties believe TV advertising should ‘crystallise the main issues... but is not suited to dealing with more complex and involved arguments’.23

As the content analysis and Part one showed, some of the least informative TV ads occurred around the mid-1980s. Many of these were purely image ads which promoted the party or the party leader—such as ‘Let’s Stick Together’ and ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’—which will be discussed in the next chapter. ‘When in doubt, sing’ was an ad industry maxim in Australia at this time.24

BACKLASH: THE 1990 ELECTION

By 1990, the parties were detecting a backlash from voters about the ‘all-singing all dancing style’ of political TV ad that had been used in the mid- to late-1980s. In 1990, ‘credibility was the buzz word of what the parties were trying to achieve’.25 Sixty-two per cent of ads that year focused on issues, which was a slight improvement on the previous three elections. The parties moved away from their previously blatant, ‘jingle-style’ image building ad.

The style and tone of their ads in 1990 was quite different. Under the slogan ‘The answer is Liberal’, the Liberals used what they considered to be an ‘information-oriented question and answer theme’. The ads contained questions that their research showed ordinary voters were asking.26 The Liberal Party tried to show it had the answers (Figure 5.45). Tony Eggleton said the Liberals had decided to use a question and answer theme, because their research had shown ‘people were worried about their future and wanted to see details of policy rather than superficial messages’.27 A Labor
spokesperson agreed that the base point for their campaign was also the belief ‘that people want information on policies rather than to feel a warm inner glow’ (Figure 5.46).
Why isn't my country respected anymore?

To restore our pride as a nation
The answer is Liberal

Why can't I own a home of my own?

To get a home of your own
The answer is Liberal

Do you know you pay capital gains tax on your super but Hawke and Keating don't?

For superannuation without capital gains tax
The answer is Liberal

Why does the family always miss out?

To put the Australian family first
The answer is Liberal

Liberals' answers
The answer is Liberal
Figure 5.46 — ALP newspaper advertisements, 1990

AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATION FUTURE.

1. We are increasing the great pool of scientific talent in our universities, for CSIRO and private industry to build on as we expand our high-technology economy.
2. We are investing $10 billion over 10 years in the development of Australian universities.
3. We are providing $300 million over 10 years in grants to universities, for new equipment, supplies, and research projects.

AUSTRALIA'S SAVINGS FUTURE.

1. We are increasing the great pool of scientific talent in our universities, for CSIRO and private industry to build on as we expand our high-technology economy.
2. We are investing $10 billion over 10 years in the development of Australian universities.
3. We are providing $300 million over 10 years in grants to universities, for new equipment, supplies, and research projects.

AUSTRALIA'S SCIENTIFIC FUTURE.

1. We are increasing the great pool of scientific talent in our universities, for CSIRO and private industry to build on as we expand our high-technology economy.
2. We are investing $10 billion over 10 years in the development of Australian universities.
3. We are providing $300 million over 10 years in grants to universities, for new equipment, supplies, and research projects.

AUSTRALIA'S WAGES FUTURE.

1. We are increasing the great pool of scientific talent in our universities, for CSIRO and private industry to build on as we expand our high-technology economy.
2. We are investing $10 billion over 10 years in the development of Australian universities.
3. We are providing $300 million over 10 years in grants to universities, for new equipment, supplies, and research projects.

BOB HAWKE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE.
What is most interesting about the 1990 election ads, is that both parties thought their ads were very informative. However, closer analysis shows that the ads still use the same sorts of techniques, including simplification, negativity, personalised messages, appeals to greed and self-interest and slick slogans. The main difference lay in the use of more text to expound on these strategies.

The ‘informative style’ of 1990 did not last. At the next election in 1993, there was a focus on the issue of the GST, but the focus was negative. In 1996, there was a rapid shift to image-based ads and image ads have remained high ever since.

PERSUASION OR INFORMATION?

The parties design their ads to persuade rather than inform. A 1972 report for the Labor Party recommended that in political advertising: ‘Each “big” subject [needs to] be reduced to a human equation...’29 This is why there are so many attempts to personalise information and use visual images. The Liberal Party’s own research similarly recommends that effective political advertising needs to ‘keep the visuals and the messages “people related”.’30

The language used in political ads is personalised, manipulative, simplified and vague about policy details. One of the recommendations which came out of the Liberal Party’s ‘Campaign wash-up seminar’ in 1980, for example, was that in political ads it was better to ‘use “might” or “could” instead of “will” or “would”.31

The parties are unwilling to provide too much detail about their policies in their advertisements for a number of reasons, including the constraints of the TV format, the expense of purchasing TV time, the stylistic device of using a lot of white space in newspaper ads in order to make them visually appealing, fear of making themselves an easy target by providing too much detail which can be criticised by their opponents and a perception that voters find policy detail ‘boring’. 
Very few ads meet the ideals set by ideal democracy theorists and, indeed, the
search for an 'ideal' political ad is somewhat futile. Ads are either purely factual—
providing only simple details such as times and locations of meetings or they discuss
policy. Once an ad starts talking about policies, it ceases to be factual. The language,
graphics, visual presentation and style of the ad are all designed to promote that
policy. Political ads try to promote, persuade and sell. They include a lot of emotive
and subjective content rather than policy information. The aim is to make voters feel
something rather than learn something.

Conclusion

The data in this chapter supports the hypothesis that, measured by criteria such as
word count and time length, the information content of political advertisements has
diminished over time. The major parties are providing far less printed information. They
are using less words, larger pictures and are saving ads up for a ‘fast finish’ in the last
days of the campaign. Their TV ads have also become shorter.

The hypothesis that television advertisements are more focused on image than
print advertisements was also supported. The last three elections held in Australia
were the least informative and most image-conscious we have seen over the past
twenty-two elections. Less than sixty per cent of ads focused on issues. TV
advertisements in particular worked on building images and soliciting an emotional
reaction from voters. Although it is still common for over eighty per cent of ads to
refer to at least one political issue, little detail is provided and voters are being
encouraged to fix on a much smaller set of issues. Since 1984, there has been an
overwhelming focus on tax and on competence in managing the economy. In earlier
years, there were a wider variety of issues debated, including social as well as
economic issues.

While it is apparent that ads provide little policy detail, they do communicate
other forms of information—although not all of these are valued by commentators.
For example, as we have seen, ads often include the name of the party leader, a
photograph of him/her, an outline of some of the political issues facing the nation and
an assessment of which are considered to be most important, highlights of a party’s achievements in office, slogans and, sometimes, details about the political system such as voting procedures and how to complete the ballot paper. Policy details are more likely to be provided in newspaper ads, and particularly when a party wants to promote a new and complicated policy—such as Medibank in 1972 or the GST in 1993.

In earlier years, shopping lists of policy promises were more common and ads were more likely to have more words and more policy detail. However, this seems to be due more to stylistic conventions rather than a commitment to providing information. Like commercial ads in earlier years, political ads were more likely to be text-heavy. But they were still manipulative, persuasive, negative and premised on creating emotional reactions. Many of the early ads about socialism for example, shown in Chapter seven, are some of the most negative ads ever seen in Australian politics.

While it is true that there are less words in modern ads, less policies mentioned and less written detail, this does not mean that there was any golden age of political advertising. Ads from 1949 and the 1950s were just as focused on persuasion as those of recent years—but they used less sophisticated techniques. Ads from these years also tried to sell policy rather than explain it, but stylistic convention at the time decreed that they mainly use words to do it. Closer analysis of these words shows their intent was the same as modern politicians—to sell and promote the party and its policies, by making the reader feel something—enthusiasm or contentment, fear or reassurance, desire and often greed.
6 Personalisation and the end of the party

Chapter three discussed how personalisation is perceived to be an important change in Australian politics. There is a popular belief that modern election campaigns focus on the party leaders at the expense of policy and party. However, as Clive Bean has noted: 'there is little if any clear-cut evidence that leaders are more influential nowadays than they were in the past.'

This chapter addresses the hypotheses on personalisation outlined in Chapter four. The first hypothesis predicted that a focus on individuals—particularly political leaders—has increased over time and especially in television advertising. The second predicted that the emphasis on parties in political advertisements has declined. This chapter reports the results of research on personalisation in three sections. Part one reports the results of the content analysis in respect to how ads portray the political parties while Part two reports the results of content analysis in respect to how party leaders are presented. Part three then reports the results of discourse analysis and examines several case-studies of party leaders from Ben Chifley in 1949 to John Howard in 2001.

The central conclusions of the chapter are that the emphasis on parties in political ads has declined dramatically; that television ads are more leader-oriented than newspaper ads; and that there has not been any steady rise in the focus on individual party leaders but rather, this emphasis varies between elections. There has, however, been an important increase in the focus on opponent party leaders.
Part one: The end of the party

An important measure of the extent to which political parties are emphasised in election campaigns is whether they are named in political advertisements. When a party highlights its name in an advertisement, it acknowledges its party affiliation and emphasises the partisan nature of Australian politics. Conversely, ads which fail to mention the party's name conceal party identification and try to draw attention to other factors such as the party leader.

As mentioned in Chapter two, each political ad is required by law to have an authorisation notice stating the name and address of the person authorising the advertisement. On TV ads, these notices often take the form of hurried verbal statements accompanied by a written slide at the end of the advertisement. In newspaper ads, they are usually in small print at the top or bottom of the advertisement. These authorisation notices often include the name of the party; however, they were not counted as party-name mentions in this study because these notices are a legal requirement rather than a promotional device to identify and promote the party. During the coding process, only ads which mentioned the party name in the main text of the advertisement were identified.\(^2\)
In 1949, 100 per cent of ads mentioned the sponsoring party’s name in the text of the ad (Figure 6.1). At this stage, the parties were proudly and overtly partisan. But in 2001, only twenty-one per cent of ads mentioned the sponsoring party’s name. There has been a major decline in parties identifying themselves in ads which can be dated to the 1980s. Partisanship is no longer a key element of political discourse in ads.

Figure 6.1 – Advertisements which mention the sponsoring political party’s name (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Apart from identifying whether parties mentioned their own party name, the content analysis also measured whether *any* party name was mentioned. The results indicated that political parties were a consistent subject of dialogue in ads from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. But in the 1980s and 1990s, there was a steady decline in the percentage of advertisements which fail to mention *any* political party name—either the sponsoring party or the opponent (Figure 6.2). However, this drop is not as severe as the decline in self-naming (Figure 6.1). In 2001, thirty-six per cent of ads mentioned a political party name but as we saw in Figure 6.1, only twenty-one per cent of ads mentioned the sponsoring party’s name. This indicates that while the parties are reticent about mentioning their own party name, they are not so bashful about mentioning the name of their opponents.

**Figure 6.2 – Advertisements which mention *any* political party name (newspaper and television), 1949-2001**

![Graph showing the percentage of advertisements mentioning any political party name from 1951 to 2001. The trend shows a decline over time.]

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
The data on party-naming also supports the hypothesis that TV ads are less partisan. Television ads are far less likely to mention the parties (Figure 6.3). In this sense, TV ads are significantly more personalised than newspaper ads. In 2001, eighty-seven per cent of TV ads failed to mention any political party name compared to only ten per cent for newspaper ads.

Figure 6.3 - Advertisements which mention any political party name (by media), 1949-2001

![Graph showing the percentage of advertisements mentioning political party names by media over time.]

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 reveal that political advertising (particularly, TV advertising) started to become significantly less partisan around 1983. At the time, the Liberal Party complained that Labor’s advertising campaign was ‘very presidential’. Indeed, their advertising agent recommended that the Liberals raise the ‘question of whether Hawke is ashamed of the Labor Party’ and make a statement that ‘it’s a sad day in politics when a Prime Minister is so embarrassed by his own political party’s low public credibility/radical image that he won’t identify with it in his election advertisements’. However, as we shall see below and in Part two, the Liberals were also concealing their party name and playing up their party leader.
HIDING PARTY LABELS

Party identity seems to have been considered a liability in recent years. But it has been perceived to be a particular liability for the ALP. The Labor Party has usually tried to hide their partisan identity more. This is especially true in 1951, 1961-63, 1974-77 and 1984-93 (Figure 6.4). In 1951 and 1961-63, the ALP was dealing with the split from the DLP and the Coalition’s very effective characterisation of the Party as a communist/socialist menace. In 1974 and 1975, the party was going through a particularly turbulent era and faced an image of poor performance in government and the controversy following the dismissal. It is not unexpected, therefore, that the ALP considered its name an electoral liability during these periods.

Figure 6.4 – Ads which fail to mention own party name, comparison of major parties (newspaper ads), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
What is perhaps more surprising is that many of the ads the Labor Party produced between 1984 and 1993, when they were in government after their win in 1983, were also deliberately non-partisan. Bob Hawke was leader for all of these elections except for 1993. This does seem to support the perception that there was a more ‘presidential’ style of campaigning associated with Bob Hawke, based on his charisma and persona. The reason for the low partisan identification in 1993 may be the result of a different factor. Ninety-two per cent of ALP ads failed to name their party in 1993 when the ALP used many negative anti-GST advertisements. Overseas studies, such as Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, have shown that the concealment of the sponsor’s identity often goes hand-in-hand with negative advertising, because the sponsor of negative ads wants to avoid being associated with ‘mud-slinging’ and negativity.  

When the Liberals used a high proportion of negative ads in 1996, they also made sure that many of their ads omitted any reference to their own party.

The parties conceal their names far more in TV ads and especially in the past decade (Figure 6.5). From 1980-1987, the ALP was more concerned about hiding its party identity, but from 1990, both parties have fairly evenly tried to conceal partisan labels.

**Figure 6.5 – Ads which fail to mention own party name: Comparison of major parties (television ads), 1949-2001**

![Graph showing the percent of advertisements mentioning party names from 1975 to 2001 for ALP and Coalition parties.]

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
The data indicates that there are particular circumstances which may drive a party to conceal its identity, such as when a party is tainted by scandal or wants to be disassociated with the negative ads it has produced. However, in recent elections, the parties have taken to more consistently omitting partisan references as a general strategy rather than a crisis management strategy.

FREE PUBLICITY: HIGHLIGHTING THE OTHER

In commercial advertising, the advertiser will rarely mention an opponent product or company name. This reflects the old advertising maxim that it is best to avoid giving free publicity to a competitor. In political advertising, this was mainly true in the 1950s and most of the 1960s, when less than forty per cent or even less than thirty per cent of ads would mention the opponent's party name (Figure 6.6). But this began to change in 1969. Throughout the turbulent politics of the period 1972 to 1977, the parties were increasingly more likely to mention their opponent's party name. This increased again in 1983, when, for the first time, it became as popular for the sponsoring party to mention their opponent's name as their own.

Figure 6.6 – Advertisements which mention political party name: Opponent versus own name mentions, 1949-2001 (newspaper and television)

![Graph showing percentage of advertisements mentioning opponent's name and own name over election years from 1951 to 2001.]

Note: Ads which mention both party names are included in each category.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Mentioning the opponent’s party name is more likely to occur in negative advertising and this link will be discussed more in the following chapter. However, for the purposes of partisanship and personalisation it is important to note that in modern Australian politics, political parties are increasingly trying to conceal their own party identity while drawing attention to their opponent’s. The parties consider party names a liability not only for themselves, but also for their opponents. As a result, they increasingly mention their opponent’s name as much as, or even more than, their own.

PACKAGING THE PARTIES

Aside from party name, there a number of other important devices used to promote the parties. Slogans and logos have been key features of the way in which advertising agents attempt to promote the parties.

Party slogans!

In 1949, the Liberal Party’s slogan, ‘It’s time for a change’, was used only sporadically in a few newspaper advertisements. But by 1998, all parties used slogans and they often had two, or even three, each. Table 6.1 shows the slogans used by the ALP and Liberal Party over the past five decades.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>‘What Labor promises, Labor will do’</td>
<td>‘It’s time for a change’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Australia unlimited’ &amp; ‘Keep Australia on the march’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Build for tomorrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Secure your tomorrow today’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Keep Australia secure and prosperous’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– play it safe’ &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Let’s get on with the job’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>‘Labor puts people first’</td>
<td>‘Progressive responsible government’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>‘Time for action’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>‘Vote ALP and end conscription’ &amp; ‘What price freedom?’</td>
<td>‘Right today. Right for your future’ &amp; ‘Not yet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>‘Labor. Where the action is’ &amp;</td>
<td>‘Think again’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Join the swing to Labor’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>‘It’s time’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>‘Go ahead’ or ‘Give Australia the go ahead…’</td>
<td>‘Turn on the lights’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Whitlam: He’s so much better’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>‘Shame Fraser, shame’ &amp; ‘Advance Australia fair’</td>
<td>‘Liberals. Doing the job’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>‘Get Australia working’ &amp; ‘Uranium. Play it safe’</td>
<td>‘Lead on, Liberal’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>‘Raise the standard’</td>
<td>‘We’re not waiting for the world’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>‘Bob Hawke. Bringing Australia together’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>‘Put Australia first’</td>
<td>‘Stand up for your family. Vote Liberal’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>‘Let’s stick together. Let’s see it through’</td>
<td>‘Get in front again’ &amp; ‘Incentivation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>‘Bob Hawke for Australia’s future’</td>
<td>‘The answer is Liberal’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>‘Australia deserves better’</td>
<td>‘We can do it… together’ &amp; ‘Labor’s got to go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>‘Leadership’</td>
<td>‘For all of us’ &amp; ‘Tell Labor it’s not good enough’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>‘A safe and secure future for all Australians’</td>
<td>‘Keep Australia in safe hands’ &amp; ‘For a stronger Australia’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>A secure future for all Australians</td>
<td>‘Keep Australia in safe hands’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13).
The most famous slogan in Australian political history is ‘It’s Time’ in 1972. Laurie Oakes stated that even the Liberals conceded the brilliance of it. In response, the Liberals tried to convince people that, although desire for change was understandable after twenty-three years of Coalition government, the Labor Party was still not fit for office. This was the origin of the highly defensive slogan ‘Not yet’, and the more wordy slogan; ‘Right today. Right for your future’.

Advertising agents take great care with the party’s slogan. In 1983, the Liberals’ advertising agent brainstormed thirty different slogans before they finally settled on the highly abstract; ‘We’re not waiting for the world’. This was described by one advertising agent as ‘the most inappropriate [slogan] he had seen’ and by another as ‘completely wrong’. There has sometimes been controversy about particular slogans. In 1996, the Liberal slogan ‘For all of us’ was described by Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson as racist. Pearson stated that it was not inclusive but rather was ‘tapping an undercurrent of racism in Australia’. In 1998, there was criticism that Labor had stolen the British Labor Party’s 1997 slogan ‘Britain deserves better’.

The words chosen for slogans tell us much about the parties’ priorities and their intentions about the mobilisation of party support. Only three Labor slogans have ever used the word ‘Labor’ within the slogan and these were all before 1972. Yet, since 1972, three slogans have included the party leader’s name (in 1974, 1983, 1990) and even the opposition party leader’s name (in 1975). The Liberal Party has included its party name in four slogans but all were before 1993. In recent years, the parties have de-emphasised party labels in their slogans just as they have in the text of their ads. However, the Liberals have certainly not been afraid to emphasise Labor’s party name. They have included it in their slogans twice, in 1996 and 1998. This demonstrates again the de-emphasis of party except where the opponent party is concerned. Party name (especially for Labor) seems to be considered a liability.
There are a series of common themes in party slogans in Australia. One common image is of movement, progress, the future and going ahead. The words ‘forward’, ‘ahead’, ‘advance’, ‘future’, ‘action’, ‘march’, ‘tomorrow’ and ‘front’ are common. Another theme is of being a winner, reflected in the use of words such as ‘better’, ‘stronger’, ‘first’ and ‘in front’. In recent years there has been a desire to appear inclusive with terms such as ‘all of us’, ‘together’, ‘all Australians’. Nationalism is also a consistent and major theme with fifteen slogans using the word ‘Australia’.

In recent years, slogans have tried to tap into a desire for greater security and certainty. The words ‘safe’, ‘secure’, and also ‘strong’ or ‘stronger’ are particularly noticeable and slogans are very similar. In recent elections, the rhetoric used by the parties is very similar. Labor has used ‘A safe and secure future for all Australians’ (1998) and ‘A secure future for all Australians’ (2001) while the Liberals have used ‘Keep Australia in safe hands’ (1998 and 2001).

The National Party’s slogans are not shown Table 6.1 but they have included the simple ‘Be strong, be safe!’ (1966), the cryptic ‘Let’s live like Australians’ (1974), the strident ‘Stop Whitlam. Vote Nationals’ (1977) and concepts of strength, safety, security and appeals to patriotism with ‘Nationals for a safe future’ (1990) and ‘If you care for your country vote National’ (1993).

In recent years, there has been a trend towards using two slogans—a positive and a negative one. In 1993, for example, the Liberals’ positive slogan was ‘We can do it… together’ and their negative slogan was ‘Labor’s got to go’. In 1996, the positive slogan was ‘For all of us’ and the negative ‘Tell Labor it’s not good enough’. In 1998, the Liberals used three slogans but in 2001, returned to using only one slogan.
Party logos

The use of party logos began in 1974 when the Country Party used a logo in some of its newspaper advertisements (Figure 6.7). It was not a particularly polished logo but more of a graphic image play on words and it appeared in only two print ads. However, it seems to have been an early proto-type and only two elections later, in 1977, sixty per cent of newspaper ads included a party logo (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.7 – First use of a logo, the Country Party, 1972

Source: Newspaper advertisements from 1972. Reproduced with permission from the National Party of Australia.

Figure 6.8 – Use of party logo in advertisements, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
In 1980, when logos were just starting to become popular, the federal director of the Liberal Party wrote an internal memo stating: ‘As expected’ the ALP have incorporated the flag in their logo based on their agency’s assessment that it ‘has sound connotations for a middle-of-the-road electorate...’ His suggested response was that: ‘We would be wise to anticipate this move and to incorporate the flag in our own symbol...’ The early logo used by the ALP is shown in Figure 6.9. The Liberals’ response which is still used today in the same form, is shown in Figure 6.10.

Figure 6.9 – Early Australian Labor Party logo, 1980 to 1993


Figure 6.10 – Current Liberal Party logo, used since 1980

Recently, the ALP updated its logo. The new logo still uses the same red, white and blue colour scheme and still relies heavily on the Australian flag as a symbol (Figure 6.11). All of the logos are designed to draw on patriotic, nationalistic symbols and particularly, the national flag.

Figure 6.11 – Current ALP logo, used in 1996, 1998 and 2001


While a party logo in ads was de rigueur in the 1980s, in 1993 there was a massive decline. Since then, the use of logos has been consistent in newspaper ads but variable in TV ads. Logos are not as popular as they were in the 1980s which indicates another move away from emphasising party affiliation.
Part two: The leaders

We might assume that the steady decline in emphasis on party would see a steady rise in emphasis on the party leader instead. However, this would be a faulty assumption. Party leaders have always been a major focus of Australian political ads. Since 1951, it has been normal for party leaders to appear in between sixty to eighty per cent of ads—this includes either being mentioned by name or shown in a photograph (in newspaper ads) or appearing in person (in TV ads). Party leaders were particularly highlighted in 1954—the election with the highest percentage of ads focused on the leaders. Ninety-three per cent of ads that year mentioned or showed either Robert Menzies (Liberal) or H. V. Evatt (ALP). Leaders were also highlighted in 1977, 1983, 1987 and 2001 (Figure 6.12). However, the emphasis on leaders varies and leaders were de-emphasised in the elections of 1949, 1966 and 1980.

Figure 6.12 – Ads which mention or show a party leader (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
The second hypothesis predicted that television advertisements would be more personalised than newspaper ads. However, content analysis found that party leaders appear in both media in similar proportions (Figure 6.13). Leaders are present in both newspaper and TV ads. Only in the past three elections has there been a pattern of leaders appearing more in TV ads than newspaper ads. Content analysis can measure whether the leaders are present but it can not tell us how the leaders are presented. Part three indicates there are some important differences in how leaders are presented on TV compared to in print.

Figure 6.13 – Ads which mention or show a party leader (by media), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Generally, before the turbulent election of 1975, political ads focused on their own party leaders (Figure 6.14). But in 1975 and 1977, there was a more hostile style of campaigning and the parties started mentioning, and even showing, the opponent party leader more often. This subsided from 1980 to 1990 and the focus of ads returned to the party’s own leader. However, it rose again after the negative focus of the 1993 election and, for the past four elections since 1993, it has been more popular
for ads to focus on the opponent's party leader than their own. This indicates something important about personalisation; that personalisation is a negative phenomenon. That is, the parties are not focusing on their own leaders more than in the past, but they are focusing on opponent leaders more, and particularly in the past four elections (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14 – Comparison of ads which mention or show their own versus their opponent’s party leader, (newspaper and television), 1949-2001

Note: When the two categories are added together, the percentages may add up to over 100 per cent as this graph includes (in each category) ads which showed both party leaders.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

OWN PARTY LEADERS

The personalisation hypothesis suggests that parties would be increasingly emphasising their own party leaders in their advertisements. However, contrary to expectations, the evidence so far suggests that the focus on own party leaders in advertisements has not increased over time. In order to test this further, a more
specific way to measure personalisation is to examine whether political ads in newspapers include a photograph of their own party leader.

When the parties want to highlight their party leader, they include a flattering photograph of them in their newspaper advertisements or the leader makes an appearance in TV ads. Using this measure, the data again confirms that there has not been a steady rise in emphasis on the party leader (Figure 6.15 and 6.16). Instead, there are discreet periods of personalisation.

From 1969 to 1974, newspaper ads were quite leader-focused and the period from 1984-1990 was very leader-focused. But there has since been a decline in the number of ads which show the party leader. In 1993, 1996 and 1998, there were fewer ads with photos of the leaders than there were back in 1949 and 1951. Only in 2001 was there an increase in the focus on the party’s own leader.

Figure 6.15 – Percentage of newspaper advertisements which include a picture or photograph of the leader of the party supporting the ad (newspaper ads), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
In personalised TV ads, the party leader makes an appearance. The data on this criterion shows that, as with newspaper advertisements, there was a high degree of personalisation on TV between 1983 and 1990 (not including 1987). This again coincides with the Hawke years. But the focus on party leaders dropped in 1993. Since then, it has steadily risen but is still less than in 1983 and 1984 (Figure 6.16). Given the perception that TV is a highly personalised medium, it is somewhat surprising that since 1993, less than fifty per cent of TV ads show the party leader.

Figure 6.16 – Percentage of television advertisements in which leader of party supporting the ad appears (television ads), 1975-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

If less than half of TV ads show the party leader, who or what are they showing? Aside from the new emphasis on the opponent party leader, in the 1996, 1998 and 2001 elections, there was an emphasis, particularly in ALP ads, to show ‘ordinary’ or ‘real’ Australians. In 1996, there were a series of ALP ads titled ‘Australians talk about…’ and topics included Medicare, Telstra and leadership. Another series of ads featured two well-known Australian actors, Jackie Weaver and Bill Hunter, who accused John Howard of ‘pretending’. In 1998, the ALP produced several ads which
were focused on a photograph of an Australian family. In 2001, the ALP produced another series of ads from ‘ordinary’ Australians titled ‘Real Australians on...’. In this series, topics included education, health, aged care and the GST. The Liberals also produced ads showing Australians in various settings in 1996 and 1998, including parents with children, women, farmers and young people. This emphasis on showing ‘ordinary’ Australians in ads may be a response to cynicism towards politicians and an attempt to ‘de-politicise’ the message in ads by using non-politicians to speak as if they are the ‘voice of the people’ rather than polished political professionals.

HIGHLIGHTING PARTY LEADERS

The leaders most emphasised in newspaper ads over the past five decades, are both from the ALP. Both Gough Whitlam in 1969 and Bob Hawke in 1984 appeared in 100 per cent of the ALP’s ads that year (Figure 6.17).

During the Menzies era, the Liberal Party was more likely than the ALP to highlight its leader. But in 1969, the ALP emphasised Gough Whitlam. The Labor Party kept a high focus on Whitlam in 1974 but this dropped back in 1975 and 1977 when Whitlam was associated with a controversial period of government and his dismissal by the Governor-General. The ALP did not return to a highly leader-focused style of ad until 1983 when Bob Hawke took over the leadership. Labor’s ads during the Hawke era included a high degree of personalisation, but the Liberals matched this in 1990 when they emphasised Andrew Peacock.
Emphasis on the party leader in newspaper ads has declined in recent years (from 1993 to 1998). The 1990s were actually some of the least personalised years we have seen in terms of focus on the party leaders. There was a deliberate effort to conceal Keating, Hewson, Howard and Beazley between 1993 and 2001. In these years, the parties highlighted their own leaders less than they had in the 1950s.

Figure 6.17 – Newspaper ads which mention or show own party leader: Comparison of ALP and Liberal ads, 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Overall, the parties have taken a similar approach to showing their leaders in TV ads (Figure 6.18). There was a high emphasis on naming and showing their own leaders in the early 1980s and a comparatively low emphasis in the past four elections. The ALP has usually highlighted its leaders slightly more than the Liberal Party in TV ads, especially in 1980, when Bill Hayden was leader and in 1983, when Hawke was leader. While no Labor TV ads for 1984 were located, newspaper reports describing the ads indicate that these ads also emphasised Bob Hawke.

Figure 6.18 – Television ads which mention or show own party leader: Comparison of ALP and Liberal ads, 1975-2001

![Graph showing percent of advertisements mentioning or showing own party leader over election years from 1975 to 2001.]

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

We might have assumed that more personalised campaigning styles would see the parties showing their own party leaders more in recent advertising. However, there has not been any steady rise in focus on party leaders. Instead, the parties make careful decisions about whether to highlight or downplay their leader based on assessments of their popularity, electoral appeal, TV ‘presence’ and other factors which are discussed in Part three.
As noted, Hawke and Whitlam were highly emphasised in ALP advertising (Figure 6.2). However, in 1954, Evatt was also highlighted which indicates that a strong emphasis on the party leader in political ads is not entirely new.\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Labor Party’s most highlighted leaders, 1949-2001}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Leader \\
\hline
1990 & Hawke \\
1974 & Whitlam \\
1954 & Evatt \\
1969 & Whitlam \\
1987 & Hawke \\
1983 & Hawke \\
1984 & Hawke \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The Liberal Party has been less inclined to show their leaders. This may partly be explained by the fact that during the 1980s, there were many changes in leadership of the Liberal Party. However, there was great stability between 1949 and 1963 when Menzies was leader. Interestingly, Hewson appeared in a greater percentage of ads in 1990 than Menzies did in years such as 1955 and 1963 and Howard (in 2001) has actually become the most highlighted leader—his picture was in seventy-five per cent of the print ads for that year. However, it must be noted that there were only four different Liberal newspaper ads in 2001 so this means that Howard appeared in three. While in percentage terms this is high, in numerical terms it is less than, for example, the twenty-two ads Menzies appeared in during 1949.
Table 6.3 – Liberal Party’s most highlighted leaders, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Hewson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Howard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

When leaders appear in ads they often try to project particular traits in order to meet the ‘well-defined schema’ that voters have in their heads about what a Prime Minister should be like. In the content analysis, several traits were identified (see Appendices E and F). Table 6.4 shows how the traits the leaders try to project in ads have shifted over time. In the 1950s, it was acceptable to project warmth and compassion. These traits were especially emphasised by Labor leaders who, as we saw in the previous chapter, often focused on social security and welfare policies. But in recent years, leaders have instead been trying to project competency (particularly, challengers) while incumbents have been focusing on highlighting their performance and successes. In recent years, there has also been an emphasis on projecting toughness and strength. This was particularly true of the 2001 ‘Khaki’ election.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election year</th>
<th>ALP leader</th>
<th>Emphasised characteristic</th>
<th>Liberal leader</th>
<th>Emphasised characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Chifley</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Chifley</td>
<td>Honesty/integrity</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Evatt</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Evatt</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Evatt</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Calwell</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Calwell</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Calwell</td>
<td>Honesty/integrity</td>
<td>Holt</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Gorton</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
<td>McMahon</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Snedden</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Hayden</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Hawke</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Hawke</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
<td>Peacock</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Hawke</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Hawke</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Hewson</td>
<td>Warmth/compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Keating</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Hewson</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Keating</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Honesty/integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Beazley</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Performance/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Beazley</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Toughness/strength</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 'N/a' indicates no focus on party leader that year

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
PLAYING DOWN THE LEADER

Just as certain leaders have been highlighted in ads, others have been concealed. Table 6.5 shows that the most downplayed Labor Party leaders (those who appeared in less than twenty per cent of their party’s print ads) were Calwell, Keating, Beazley, Whitlam and Chifley. None of these leaders were shown in newspaper ads. Keating was also highly concealed in 1993 and 1996 in TV ads. Beazley did not appear in any of Labor’s print ads in 1998 and in 2001, but appeared in twenty-eight per cent of the ALP’s TV ads in 2001.

Most of these leaders, with the exception of Keating in 1993, and Beazley in 1998, had lost the previous election. This suggests one possible reason for their omission from political ads—that they were considered tainted by their prior electoral defeat.

Table 6.5 – Labor Party’s most downplayed leaders, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Calwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Keating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Keating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Beazley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Beazley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Chifley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Table 6.6 shows that for the Liberals, Menzies was unusually downplayed in 1961. In 1984, 1993 and 1998, Peacock, Hewson and Howard all failed to appear in any of the Liberals’ newspaper advertising. Peacock was a new leader in 1984, Hewson had lost the previous election in 1990 but in 1998, Howard had won the previous election, suggesting there was some other reason for excluding him from advertising that year. Although in 2001, as we have seen, there was a renewed emphasis on Howard in Liberal advertising.

### Table 6.6 – Liberal Party’s most downplayed leaders, 1949-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Peacock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Hewson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Snedden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The images of the leaders are neither static nor fixed. They may be highlighted during one election only to be deemphasised in the next campaign and vice versa. The qualities which are considered most important for a leader to project have overwhelmingly shifted to an emphasis on competency and performance rather than on qualities such as warmth and compassion. In Australia, very few ads emphasise a leader’s personal background such as their upbringing, schooling or family.
Part three: Packaging the leaders

While party leaders have always been present in ads, content analysis cannot tell us *how* they are presented or whether this has changed over time. This is a key element of personalisation. Chapter five demonstrated how image advertising has increased in recent years and been particularly high during the last three elections. This section examines how Australian politicians market themselves and their opponents in ‘image ads’ which focus on the image of the sponsoring party.

Image ads try to evoke particular feelings amongst viewers such as reassurance and confidence. Many try to be uplifting and inspiring, to reassure or to defend, to promote achievement and competency and to make voters feel safe and secure. The traits that U.S. leaders try to project in ads were identified in Chapter three as compassion, empathy, integrity, activity, strength and knowledge. The traits which Australian research found were most important to Australian voters were that leaders were caring, determined, shrewd, likeable as a person, tough, listens to reason, decisive and sticks to principles. As we have seen, the caring element has been considered less important in recent years than the perception of being ‘tough’.

The best way to examine how leaders are presented in ads and how this has changed over the past five decades, is to consider case-studies of individual leaders. Charting the packaging of leaders from Joseph ‘Ben’ Chifley in 1949 to Kim Beazley in 2001, shows how the promotion of party leaders in political ads has changed. Not all of the leaders of the past half-century are discussed in this section but the majority of those leaders identified as the ‘most highlighted’ in Part two, are examined. Some relevant information is given about each leader in order to put the ads into historical context; however, the focus is on how they are portrayed in their party’s advertisements rather than on providing biographical information which can be found in other sources.\[11\]
PARTY LEADERS

Joseph Benedict CHIFLEY (ALP)

Known informally as ‘Ben’, Joseph Benedict Chifley was Prime Minister from 1945 to 1949. After losing office in December 1949, he contested the 1951 election as Opposition Leader but died several weeks after the election.

The newspaper advertisement shown in Figure 6.19 is an early proto-type of later image ads which rely on the leader’s face to provide the main content of the ad. The hand-drawn picture of Chifley showed him in a benevolent pose which was both fatherly and statesmanlike. His tie and suit were visible and conveyed power, trust and authority.

The text message of the ad was a quote from Chifley, followed by his signature. The signature was not only a personal touch but by putting his name to the statement, signalled its veracity and truthfulness. Although the ad focused on Chifley, his quoted message mentioned the Labor Party three times in the twenty-six words of text. So while the ad is leader-oriented, at this stage the message was still; ‘Labor stands for the people’ rather than ‘I stand for the people’.

Figure 6.19 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1949
Robert Gordon MENZIES (Liberal)

Robert Menzies (later Sir Robert Menzies) is Australia’s longest serving Prime Minister, well-known for his election victory of 1949 and his record term in office after this point. When Menzies retired in 1966, he became one of the few Prime Ministers to leave of his own accord.

In political ads, Menzies was promoted as a statesman. He was rarely accorded any warmth and unlike other leaders (such as Evatt), he was not shown with babies or children to soften his image. Nor was Menzies portrayed as a ‘man of the people’ surrounded by ‘ordinary’ Australians. Instead, Menzies was overwhelmingly pictured by himself, in a close-up head-shot, unsmiling, serious and dignified. He was referred to in terms of his job performance and success in office rather than any personal qualities. Even as early as 1951, after only sixteen months in office, the focus was on achievement, prosperity and a better future.

Figure 6.20 used cartoons to promote Menzies’ achievements. It stated he has ‘abolished rationing’, provided ‘free drugs to all’, increased ‘age and invalid pensions’, set an immigration record (which the ad points out, includes ‘a record number of British’), introduced National Service for ‘home defence’ and provided ‘a record of full employment… a growing prosperity [and] higher living standards’. The ad finished with the promise that ‘with your help’ Menzies could ‘defeat the communists, free the trade unions and [achieve] peace and security’
A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT
in a short Sixteen Months of Office,
despite Labor's Obstruction in the Senate

AND ONWARDS WITH YOUR HELP TO—

REPEAT THE COMMUNIST.
PROTECT THE TRADE UNIONS.
PEACE AND SECURITY.

SECURE YOUR FUTURE—

NOTE LIBERAL
Menzies was presented in a very personalised manner. Achievements were listed as his personal achievements and the Coalition government was referred to as ‘the Menzies government’ (Figure 6.21). Menzies was described as a ‘great leader’ as early as 1954. His ‘achievement, leadership [and] integrity’ were highlighted.

Figure 6.21 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954

A GREAT LEADER FOR A GRAND COUNTRY

MENZIES IS AUSTRALIA'S CHOICE FOR

- ACHIEVEMENT
- LEADERSHIP
- INTEGRITY

1954 IS A HAPPY YEAR!
WITH THE MENZIES GOVERNMENT AUSTRALIA HAS REACHED A STATE OF PROSPERITY NEVER ENJOYED BEFORE.

- BUT REMEMBER 1949!
UNDER THE LABOR PARTY IN 1949 AUSTRALIA WAS THREATENED WITH BANK NATIONALISATION, YORK BY STRIKES CRIPPED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND SHORT OF EVERYTHING IT NEEDED TO EXPAND AND DEVELOP.

Keep going Forward with Menzies
vote LIBERAL on MAY 29
Jaensch has noted how the Liberal Party sought to appeal to middle-class values based on 'a promise of better times, more affluence [and] a better lifestyle.'¹² The themes of prosperity and moving forward were evident in many Liberal ads from the Menzies era. 'Forward with Menzies', stated a newspaper ad from 1954 (Figure 6.22). The ads were promotional vehicles which highlighted Menzies' achievements but they often contained a warning as well; 'Don't gamble with prosperity!'. The ad warned that 'the alternative' to Menzies was 'Dr. Evatt's wild-cat promises...inflation...higher taxation...a threat to every income and pension!'

Figure 6.22 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954

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In Figure 6.23, a number of achievements were again presented as Menzies' achievements rather than the government's; 'Menzies has led Australia to prosperity [and] given Australia powerful allies and great prestige abroad...'. This is contrasted with Evatt, who, the ad claimed, 'has wrecked his own party'. Even at this early stage, the electoral choice was presented as a choice between two men—Menzies or Evatt—rather than a choice between parties, ideologies or policies. In order to 'hold on to prosperity', the voter was told to 'trust Menzies' leadership'.

Figure 6.23 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1955
Progress and prosperity were still the themes of Liberal ads eight years later in 1963 (Figure 6.24). Interestingly, in this ad, the work of government was contrasted with that of a business—'successful organisations keep efficient managers'—with Menzies portrayed as manager of a successful government which has 'proved its ability'. Menzies was described as 'a man of prestige throughout the world'. Like the previous ad which told voters they needed to chose Menzies in order to 'hold on to prosperity', there was an underlying theme of threat and fear. Voters were warned to 'protect your future' and not to 'throw away the substance for the shadow'.

Figure 6.24 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1963

CHOOSE CONTINUED PROGRESS

VOTE LIBERAL

Successful organisations keep efficient managers.
The Menzies Government,
led by a man of prestige throughout the world, has
proved its ability...
Australia is enjoying great prosperity with full employment!

Protect Your Future
Don't Throw Away the Substance for the Shadow
VOTE LIBERAL
Dr. Herbert Vere EVATT (ALP)

Known as Dr. H.V. Evatt or, informally, as ‘Bert’ or ‘Doc’, Evatt was Opposition Leader from 1951 to 1960. He was a major target of the Coalition’s anti-communist rhetoric. Many of the ALP ads promoting Evatt are therefore defensive in nature. They try to counter criticisms of Evatt as a Communist sympathiser and as a leader whose policies were criticised for being economically irresponsible.

One of the methods which was used to promote Evatt as competent and lend legitimacy to his leadership was to associate him with successful Labor leaders of the past. Evatt was shown as the natural successor of John Curtin and Ben Chifley (Figure 6.25). His placement in the photograph used in Figure 6.25 is larger than the others and in front of them so that it appears Evatt is coming forward from great Labor traditions of the past. The message of the ad is defensive: ‘Despite the cries of “It can’t be done!”, great Labor leaders... invariably achieved what the Opposition said was “impossible”. To-day the great forward steps planned by Labor’s leader, Dr. Evatt, are again being decried by the same Opposition as “impossible”...’

Figure 6.25 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1954

Under LABOR leadership nothing is “impossible”
Many of Evatt’s policy proposals were concerned with social security and welfare issues. Priming theory suggests that candidates use particular policy issues to influence or ‘prime’ voters’ standards for assessing their personal qualities.\(^\text{13}\) If there is a high focus on social security for example, this can activate an individual’s interest in this area and become the standard by which s/he evaluates candidates/parties. In Evatt’s case, there was some attempt to link his policy stance on social security with a personal image of him as compassionate. In one advertisement, Evatt was shown holding a baby and, in an adjoining photograph, with Mrs Evatt and one of their grandchildren (Figure 6.26). The ad stated: ‘There is something about a baby... Yes, indeed! Anybody’s baby, regardless of colour, creed or race...There’s an infinite winsomeness...that touches the heart.’

Figure 6.26 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1955

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![ALP newspaper advertisement, 1955](image-url)
Evatt was also portrayed as a ‘fighter’. In one photograph he was shown talking and gesturing with his hand pointing upwards. The effect was to make him look like he was in the midst of a powerful oration (Figure 6.27). The tone of the ad was again defensive and tied Evatt to the past; ‘It is the fate of all Labor Leaders who fight hard to be subjected to virulent and malevolent attacks by their political enemies.... You know that this was true both of Curtin and Chifley’.

The emphasis of the ad was to portray Evatt as a ‘fighter’. The words ‘fight’, ‘fighter’ or ‘fought’ are mentioned eleven times. But the use of the heading ‘Australia loves a fighter’ and the image of the Australian flag next to Evatt are an appeal to patriotism and an attempt to depict Evatt’s actions as for the good of Australia. This ad also worked on Evatt’s image as compassionate. It described Evatt as ‘fighting for the underdog’ and ‘the rights of the little fellow’.

Although the ad was primarily about promoting the image of Evatt as the ‘fighter’, it still mentioned the Labor Party five times and the last sentence was: ‘The Labor Party and its leaders fight for you!’ In this sense, as with the ad promoting Chifley in 1949, there was still an attempt to put emphasis on the party.

Figure 6.27 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1955
A very defensive ad promoting Evatt in 1955 included the headline: ‘They’re not so much out to “get” Dr Evatt as they are to “get” you’ (Figure 6.28). The photograph of Evatt used in this ad was very unusual. It showed him with his elbow on a desk and his head resting on his clenched fist. This made Evatt look tired, sad and quite despondent. Most head shots of politicians try to portray strength and capability and politicians stand straight with their heads high whereas, resting your head on your hand conveys tiredness. It was an unusual choice and in keeping with the defensive nature of many Evatt ads, which stressed that the Coalition was ‘out to get’ him, was perhaps intended to evoke sympathy or portray Evatt as the lampooned underdog.

This ad accused Evatt’s opponents of launching a ‘political manhunt’ to the cry of ‘trounce Evatt’. It again compared his treatment to that of other politicians—in this case, U.S. President Roosevelt. The ad stated the reason for the campaign against Evatt was because ‘he has taken on the money-bags...’ and ‘they hate the [ALP] slogan “welfare not warfare”, it upsets too many applecarts’.

Figure 6.28 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1955
William McMahon (Liberal)

Known as ‘Bill’ or even ‘Billy’, McMahon was Prime Minister from March 1971 to December 1972. During the 1972 election, McMahon was viewed as a traditionalist, somewhat ‘old-fashioned’ compared to the modern agenda and style of Gough Whitlam. There was much comment about McMahon’s age, his intellectual grasp of high office, his ‘image-makers’ (discussed in Chapter two) and even his wife, Sonia McMahon, and her dress sense.¹⁴

Liberal advertising tried to counter the view that the Coalition government was stale and had been in government too long. One ad claimed that the ‘McMahons Government has proved to be the greatest reform ministry in 23 years’ (Figure 6.29). While most image ads emphasise only the party leader, when there are doubts about the electoral appeal of a particular leader, one strategy is to emphasise others in the party. In this ad, although there was a large photograph of McMahon, there was also an emphasis on his ‘team’ of Ministers. The team was purposefully described as a ‘young team’ and the age of each Minister was provided after his name. This emphasis on youth and the unusual step of pointing out the ages of various government Ministers, was an attempt to address concerns about McMahon’s age and associate him with youth, vigour and reform.

Figure 6.29 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972
Figure 6.30 is also a defensive ad which tried to highlight the 'team' at the expense of McMahon. The headline statement that: 'Gough would love a team like mine' is a very defensive, rebuttal statement. That an ad would mention the opponent, by his first name, in the headline of the ad, and with such a defensive statement, seemed to indicate a degree of desperation. This ad again emphasised age. Ministers' ages were provided under their photographs and there was even a section headed 'Libs younger' which stated that generally, Liberal candidates were younger than Labor's.

Figure 6.30 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972
Edward Gough WHITLAM (ALP)

‘Gough’ Whitlam was Opposition Leader from 1967 until his election win in 1972. He was then Prime Minister from December 1972 until his dismissal by the Governor-General in November 1975. He introduced rapid change during his time as Prime Minister but this short period in government was tarnished by a series of sackings and ‘scandals’ including the Gair affair and the ‘loans affair’.

Whitlam was seen as both physically and intellectually daunting. A former barrister, he was known to possess a formidable intellect and a manner which could be both cutting and abrasive. He was well-known, for example, for his vitriolic responses to hecklers at public meetings. In order to soften his public image, he was often shown with other people, particularly children but also with his wife, Margaret Whitlam.

In one advertisement, Whitlam was shown in nine different photographs representing different facets of his image (Figure 6.31). He was shown holding a little girl; in an open-necked shirt; smiling and with a drink in his hand. These photographs represented warmth and approachability, Whitlam as a ‘man-of-the-people’. But he was also shown talking to a foreign leader; at a microphone; and with fingers splayed on his face in a classic ‘thinking’ pose. These poses represented the competent, professional politician. Although the ad was clearly promoting Whitlam, the headline stated that the ad was ‘a message from some of the people who have joined the swing to Labor’. The ad worked on a powerful image in a democratic society; that the party’s program and leader were responding to and supported by ‘the people’. The ad included a number of quotes from ‘ordinary Australians’ given under different policy categories such as health, education and defence. Each quote was followed by the person’s name, their occupation and city. The ad was very modern in its design by late-1960s standards. It even used the word ‘swing’ and a ‘hip’ slogan: ‘Labor. Where the action is’.
Early political telecasts were usually of the dull 'talking head' variety which used a sole speaker to talk directly to camera. But in the early 1970s, the ALP began to acquire new skills in television by imitating American techniques. During the 1972 federal election, they unveiled the 'It's Time' campaign.

The famous television advertisements featured well-known celebrities such as Little Pattie, Bobby Lim, Bert Newton and Jack Thompson, singing the 'It's Time' theme song. The ads varied from thirty seconds to two minutes and there was a colour version made for theatres and drive-ins (Figure 6.32).
Mills notes about these advertisements that:

not a single policy is hinted at, not a single mention of Vietnam. not a single solid clue is given about the future of Australia... It's Time for what? No specific answer is given: indeed the slogan's ambiguity was intentional according to Paul Jones who invented it: 'You say 'It's Time' and they'll fill in what it's time for... whatever is important to the individual. There's nothing to disagree with. It's the perfect statement'.

At the time, Laurie Oakes described 1972 as the year of the 'soft-sell' campaign—a time when Australia caught up to the U.S. and Britain in electioneering techniques and scientific methods. He declared the campaign had 'been more about the presentation of issues than issues themselves, of style and technique rather than substance'.

The preliminary research behind the 'It's Time' advertisements is revealing. One recommendation was that the first phase of the ALP's campaign be aimed at advertising the Labor Party 'the way we want the people to believe it is... as they themselves perhaps would wish some party to be'. This recommendation reveals the purpose of image advertising: to portray not the reality but an image which accords with voters' desires.
The market research which was performed to gauge views about Whitlam found that voters did not feel connected to him, found him cold and distant, noted that he was rarely seen with women and indeed, many of the focus group participants saw him as asexual. Margaret Whitlam, however, was found to be a real asset for Whitlam’s image and a particularly good way of softening his image.

‘It’s Time’ was a promotional vehicle for Whitlam which included shots of him in early photographs as a schoolboy, a rower, a barrister and with Margaret on his wedding day. It is highly unusual for an Australian politician to use such personal images of his childhood, youth and wedding in advertising material. Whitlam was again promoted as a ‘man-of-the-people’ and shown with an elderly lady, with school children on the steps of Parliament and holding a baby over his head. Interestingly, as with the print ad from 1969 which showed Whitlam drinking, in ‘It’s Time’ he is shown holding a stubby of beer. This seems to be a quintessentially Australian symbol for conjuring impressions about ‘Austrianness’ and mateship in order to show that the leader is approachable and, as research has indicated, it is very important to Australian voters, that leaders are ‘likeable’. It is no accident that ‘It’s Time’ ends with a shot of Whitlam and Margaret together. Including Mrs Whitlam was, as the market research recommended, meant to show that Whitlam was ‘not a political automat, but has a wife and family’.

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It’s time

Female Singer (Alison McCallum):

It’s time for freedom
Time for moving
It’s time to begin
Yes, it’s time.

It’s time for freedom
Time for moving
It’s time to begin
Yes, it’s time.

‘Time for old folks
Time to love them
Yes it’s time to give
Yes, it’s time.

‘Time for loving
Time for caring
It’s time to move
Yes, it’s time.

It’s time for better
Days to be here
It’s time to move
Oh, it’s time.

Time for old folks
Time for children
Time for loving...
Stills from ‘It’s Time’ highlight the way Whitlam was packaged (Figure 6.33). Mrs Whitlam is shown with Whitlam and a group of schoolchildren in order to show him as both ‘family man’ and ‘father figure’. The inclusion of the photo of his wedding is an unusual inclusion because of the personal, biographical nature of such a photo. The shot of Whitlam in his office reminded voters that he was hard-working and capable. As usual, this shot includes all the symbols of power and authority—the desk, the books, and in this case, official looking documents and staffers complete the picture. The final shot of Whitlam holding a baby served to remind voters of his fatherly qualities and show a softer side.

Figure 6.33 – Shots of Whitlam from ‘It’s Time’: ALP television advertisement, 1972
As with all of the ads on Whitlam shown so far, Whitlam was often shown either holding children or surrounded by people. In Figure 6.34, as in ‘It’s Time’, the people include not ‘ordinary’ Australians but the extraordinary, including celebrities, TV stars, footballers and authors whose endorsement of Whitlam and the ALP provided credibility tinged with glamour.

Figure 6.34 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1972

Join us...

It’s time!

Once in government, ads promoting Whitlam changed from a focus on ‘softness’, change and modernity to a focus centred more on achievement and performance-based criteria. Then, after the dismissal in 1975 and the perception of scandals and poor performance on economic criteria which plagued his government, Whitlam was less likely to be shown in advertisements at all. In 1977, he was shown in a TV ad,
surrounded by other party figures including Bill Hayden and a series of endorsement ads made by key party figures such as Don Dunstan, Bob Hawke and Neville Wran. When a leader is shown surrounded by other party figures or not at all in ads, it signals a clear attempt to conceal what the party believes is an unpopular leader or one whose electoral image is in some way tarnished.

**John Malcolm FRASER (Liberal)**

Malcolm Fraser was Opposition Leader from March 1975 until his installation as caretaker Prime Minister in November 1975. After winning the 1975 election, he was Prime Minister until his electoral defeat in March 1983. Before politics, Fraser was a wealthy grazier. He was widely depicted in the media as emotionally aloof and having an arrogant demeanour.

Unlike Whitlam, representations of Fraser initially made little attempt to soften his image or show him with people. He was frequently shown alone and promotional ads for Fraser began a trend of using a large photograph of the party leader's face as the dominant content of the ad (Figure 6.35). Despite the compassionate rhetoric about protecting 'those in need', Fraser was shown as unsmiling, serious and responsible. The ad is very similar to the early prototype of Chifley in 1949 (Figure 6.19). It used a quote from Fraser as its only text content and included his signature to signal his official endorsement and personal touch. However, in this ad, there was no mention of any party name. The emphasis was entirely on Fraser as an individual, although he did use the word 'we'—'we will lead Australia...'—which is an extremely subtle reference to the fact that, despite the impression the ad gives, Fraser would not govern alone.
Figure 6.35 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1975

We will lead Australia to prosperity, creating jobs and opportunities. We will protect those in need of help. Medibank, potash, education and social welfare will all be strengthened by honest, responsible government.

Figure 6.36 also used a large photo of Fraser, again alone and unsmiling but this time he was shown in front of a microphone. This pose, along with the pin-stripe suit and tie, conveyed power and authority—the politician at work. This is also emphasised by the headline; ‘Doing the job’.

Figure 6.36 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1977

JOIN US IN DOING THE JOB.

Your vote for Liberal on Saturday is a vote for:


A new confidence in Australia’s future.
In 1980, there was finally an attempt to portray Fraser as warm and compassionate (Figure 6.37). The photo of Fraser still took up most of the ad, but in this photo, Fraser was smiling. The text content of the ad was very small and the visual emphasis on Fraser was overwhelming. The text of the ad contrasted Fraser's optimism about the future with his opponent, Bill Hayden's, alleged pessimism. Notably, it used Fraser's first name to make him appear more informal and 'likeable' but still referred to his opponent as 'Mr Hayden'.

Figure 6.37 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1980
The 1983 television ad, ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’, tried to promote a positive image for the Coalition government, but it was an ad which many advertising agents at the time lampooned.\textsuperscript{21} The full transcript and shot list of the advertisement provided below reveal how the words of the jingle bear little relationship to the Liberal Party or its policies. They bear only some marginal reference to Malcolm Fraser, the party leader. The reference about being ‘two metres tall’ for example, was clearly meant to evoke Fraser’s stature and, just in case the viewer missed the spoken reference, at that moment in the ad, Fraser was shown towering over a group of school children.

The imagery in the ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ ads (there were three TV versions) related predominantly to sporting images—golf, sailing, tennis, cricket, but particularly showed images of the Commonwealth Games. The Liberal Party considered these ads their ‘flagship’ ads and they wanted them to focus on sport, leadership, achievement and on winners. The message was supposed to be that ‘we’ve got the talent and skills’.\textsuperscript{22} Rather than spelling out those talents, skills and achievements specifically, they were communicated by showing skilled sportspeople winning various events. The ads were also supposed to capitalise on feelings about Australia’s success at the Commonwealth Games and also the bicentenary. They were, as the Liberals’ advertising notes reveal, designed to ‘plug into [a] latent but growing sense of nationalism and national pride’.\textsuperscript{23}
We’re not waiting for the world

Female singer (Colleen Hewitt):

There are some running fast,
And some who fall,
And some who stand two metres tall.

There are some who bowl,
And some who crew,
And some who fight for Aussie too.

There are some who use a bit of nous,
And those who know their game…

Fraser:

Despite the world recession and our own drought, we can and we will make a go of it.

Singer:

There are some who play the big boys,
But they’ve got to know the rules,
‘Cause it’s tough out there
When the pressure’s on,
You mustn’t blow your cool.

Fraser:

We’ve taken the initiatives, we’re not waiting for the world.

Singer:

We’re not waiting for the world,
We’re not waiting,
We’re doing it now,
We’re not waiting for the world,
We’re not waiting for the world.
On the surface, the lyrics of ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ seem obscure and of little relevance to the election at hand. However, within the lyrics were a number of veiled references. The line: ‘there are some who play the big boys, but they’ve got to know the rules’ referred to the opponent party leader, Bob Hawke, and his lack of experience. It was meant to remind voters about Hawke’s lack of experience and try to create doubts about his abilities. It implied that he was not qualified to ‘play with the big boys’ (and the accompanying visuals indicated the ‘big boys’ were foreign leaders such as the President of the United States). The song also cautioned that: ‘it’s tough out there when the pressure’s on’ and ‘you mustn’t blow your cool’. This was a reference to Hawke’s tendency to lose his temper and was also meant to create doubt about his ability to govern.

‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ attempted to sell Fraser as a successful, competent leader by associating him with the success achieved by others—particularly, Australian sportspeople. It used sport as a powerful cultural symbol in Australian society.

When Fraser was shown in the ad, he was shown in three main guises (Figure 6.38). In the first shot, he was shown in suit and tie in an office setting with two props highly visible—the Australian flag and a family photograph. This office setting conveyed power and authority, the incumbent politician at work. The family photograph reminded voters that Fraser was a family man and the flag symbolised patriotism and working for the nation. In the second setting, there was a small attempt to lighten Fraser’s image by showing him with schoolchildren. However, the attempt to convey naturalness and intimacy is thwarted by Fraser’s stance. He is shown standing quite a distance from the children and is towering over them. Finally, there is a shot of Fraser with U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Both are walking towards a microphone on the White House lawn. This was another ‘politician-at-work’ setting, but one that is particularly favoured by incumbents to demonstrate their power, status and competency by showing them with various world leaders.
‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ had a touch of negativity about it with its veiled references to Hawke. But the Liberal Party also used another TV ad in 1983 called ‘The Job Book’ which made a more blatant attempt to contrast Fraser’s long parliamentary record with Bob Hawke’s lack of parliamentary experience.
The job book

Male voice:

If you were going to give someone a job, you'd ask: 'how much do you know about the job?'

Malcolm Fraser has been in Parliament, serving Australia, for 28 years.

Shot of a hand opening a door. Camera enters a formal office with large desk, bookcases behind and Australian flag next to desk.

Camera moves up behind desk and focuses on a bound leather book.

Hand opens first page of book. It shows a photo of Malcolm Fraser on one page with text on the other page stating: '28 years in Parliament'.

Next page has a photo of Malcolm and Tammy Fraser with arms raised. Page states: 'Elected Prime Minister December 1975'.

Next page states '1976 Family Allowance introduced'.

The next pages have a photo of CHOGM conference and says: 'Key role in Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings'.

Next page states: '1982 introduces housing interest rate rebate to protect Australian families'.

Next page states: 'February 25, 1983, Malcolm Fraser becomes second longest serving Prime Minister' next to a photo of Fraser with Ronald Reagan.

Book opens on pages with no photos. Text States: 'ACTU President 11 years. Federal President of Labor in the Whitlam years'.

Other page states: 'Appointed leader of the Opposition February 8, 1983'.

Book shuts.
‘The Job Book’ advertisement used the powerful symbol of an empty chair to represent the seriousness of the choice ahead—a choice about who would lead the nation. The chair has been a powerful symbol in political advertising to represent the work of a politician. All of the props in this ad—the empty chair, the desk, bookcases and Australian flag—represent power and authority and emphasise the significance of the job of Prime Minister.

‘The Job Book’ was entirely focused on the party leaders. The achievements which were outlined—such as ‘1976—Family Allowance introduced’ or ‘1982—introduces housing interest rate rebate…’—were presented as Fraser’s personal achievements rather than achievements of the Liberal Party or the Coalition government.
Robert James Lee HAWKE (ALP)

‘Bob’ Hawke became Opposition Leader on the day the 1983 election was called. He was therefore Opposition Leader for just over one month before he became Prime Minister. The former ACTU leader was well-known for negotiating settlements to strikes and was seen as a skilled negotiator. His charisma or ‘sex’ appeal as it was dubbed by some journalists, was seen to contribute to his electoral success with women.26 But Johnson notes that Hawke was also able to rely on his ‘persona as a reformed larrikin and “mate” to appeal to particular images of Australian masculine identity.’27 Ultimately, his appeal was described as more like a ‘pop-star than a middle-aged politician’28

In 1983 and 1984, the Labor Party used a number of ads which focused heavily on Bob Hawke to capitalise on his electoral appeal. Full page newspaper ads used large close-ups of Hawke’s face (Figure 6.39 and 6.40). Figure 6.39 consisted of a large photograph of Hawke, twelve words of text and a slogan. The word ‘together’ was emphasised to capitalise on Hawke’s image as a successful mediator. Carol Johnson has also noted that because social harmony is such a pervasive theme in Australian political culture, Hawke’s ‘calls for consensus and national unity’ had ‘considerable electoral appeal’ and were a successful electoral strategy.29
Figure 6.40 used the same large photo of Hawke but quite ironically, the text immediately underneath the photo stated that: ‘The time has come to forget personalities and look at the policies’.

Figure 6.40 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1983
As we saw in Part one of this chapter (and also in Chapter five), 1983 was a key turning point in the personalisation of ads. At this point, ads became more image oriented, less partisan and more personalised with more appearances by party leaders in TV ads and the inclusion of more photographs of them in newspaper ads. Much of the blame for this move to a more ‘presidential’ style of political advertising has been attributed to the ‘presidential’ style used to promote Bob Hawke.

After Hawke won the 1983 and 1984 elections, advertising emphasised his incumbency. In 1987, the ALP used three TV ads with the jingle: ‘Let’s Stick Together’. With its uplifting and upbeat song, the ads were designed to make voters feel content and secure. They were meant to reassure people that the government was ‘on the right track’ and warn them not to ‘change horses in mid-stream’. In order to convey a feeling of reassurance and contentment, people in the ad were shown in happy, smiling and contented poses. Children and family were key symbols.
Let's stick together

(Sung):

We're on our way,
We're on the right track.
Australians have always been good at
fighting back.

With a little more strength and patience,
We'll see Australia right.
Nothing worth having ever happens overnight.

United we stand,
Divided we fall,
Together,
Let's stick together,
Let's see it through.

We gotta keep on holding tight,
To that great Australian dream,
Nobody ever got anywhere,
Changing horses in mid-stream.

Together,
Let's stick together,

Australians together,
Let's see it through.

Little girl in bed with her doll smiling.
Her Mum tucks her in and smiling, shuts door.
Family at breakfast. Wife smiles as husband
kisses her.

Truck driver gets into his truck.
Worker unloads bricks.
Three people working in a sound studio.
A ballet class with happy girls in pink tutus.

Mother picks up children from school.
A marathon run through the streets.
Hawke walking with two young people.
A father smiling at his blonde little girl
in his arms.

Boys playing football.
Hawke talking to two elderly women.
All are smiling.
An Australian flag.

A wedding and a photo of the wedding. Bride
and groom kiss.
An elderly couple hug and smile.
Hawke smiling and surrounded by
schoolchildren.
Hawke and wife Hazel, arms around each other
smiling.
Hawke raises his arm.
Australian flag.
Australian flag and ALP logo.
‘Let’s Stick Together’ showed many different stages of life from childhood ballet lessons and playing football with mates, to adulthood, marriage, parenthood and work, and finally, old age. Hawke was shown with three different age groups—schoolchildren, youngsters and the elderly. The emphasis of the ad was on family, security and togetherness—that we should all ‘stick together’. Unusually for an Australian political ad, there was a lot of physical contact between the people shown in the ad. People were hugging, kissing and holding hands. Hawke was shown with his arm around his wife Hazel, to reinforce his own status as a family man.

While many of the other leaders we have seen were promoted in particular ways to address shortcomings or highlight particular virtues, Hawke’s image was very malleable. He played the ‘statesman’, ‘friend-of-the-people’ and father figure. Stills from two 1987 TV advertisements which both used the ‘Let’s Stick Together’ jingle, reveal how Hawke was shown with foreign leaders, to emphasise his incumbency, power and authority, but also with school children and older women (Figures 6.41 and 6.42). Hawke’s pose next to President Ronald Reagan was very similar to the one used by Fraser in ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’. It again conveyed incumbency, power and competency. However, Hawke’s shot with schoolchildren was a more successful attempt than that used by Fraser as Hawke was shown sitting amongst the schoolchildren, down at their level, very close to them and laughing.

Figure 6.41 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Let’s Stick Together 1’, 1987
Figure 6.42 – ALP television advertisement, 'Let's Stick Together 2', 1987
John Winston HOWARD (Liberal)

John Howard was Opposition Leader from 1985 until 1989. He fought the 1987 election but after his loss, was deposed as Liberal leader for six years until a leadership come-back in 1995. He became Prime Minister in 1996 and has since seen further success in the 1998 and 2001 elections. Howard has been described as ‘ordinary’, but Michelle Grattan argues he has turned his ordinariness into a ‘political virtue’.30

When Howard ran for office in 1987, he appeared in very few print ads that year. Figure 6.43 was an unusual ad, not only because Howard appeared in it, but also because it was addressed directly to him. The ad stated: ‘Well done John!’ and congratulated Howard on having the virtues of toughness, honesty and resilience. It made the confident (and in retrospect, incorrect) claim that ‘we will see you as Prime Minister after Saturday’. The ad was very unusual and seemed to be aimed more at boosting the candidate’s self-esteem rather than persuading voters.

Figure 6.43 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1987
In the same year, Howard appeared in a ‘talking head’ TV advertisement (Figure 6.44). He spoke directly to camera to comment on Labor’s ‘Let’s Stick Together’ theme. He warned voters that: ‘Labor reckons you shouldn’t change horses mid-stream. But I tell you what, when that horse is stuck in the mud, you’d better get off’.

Figure 6.44 – Liberal Party television advertisement, ‘Horses mid-stream’, 1987

In the 1996 election, after Howard had regained the leadership, many Liberal ads were negative and focused on the opponent party leader, Paul Keating, rather than on Howard. He was also de-emphasised in advertising in 1998 when many of the Liberals’ positive ads used images of ‘ordinary’ Australians rather than showing Howard. However, in 2001, there was a new focus on Howard which emphasised not only his incumbency status but also his ‘toughness’ and ability to lead Australia in ‘uncertain times’. The ads also showed that Howard’s physical image had been given a style makeover—the dark rimmed glasses shown in Figures 6.43 and 6.44, for example, had been replaced.
One of the most controversial advertisements of the 2001 election showed Howard speaking at the Liberal Party’s policy launch and included a quote he had made about the Liberals’ policy on ‘illegal immigrants’ (Figure 6.45). The newspaper ad showed Howard in a much ‘tougher’ pose—speaking at a microphone, his fists clenched on the podium. His statement was also ‘tough’: ‘We decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come’. National flags had been placed prominently on either side of the leader. This is a very common strategy in American political ads where they are also meant to make a direct appeal to patriotism and nationalism. In terms of information content, there was no explanation of who Howard’s statement referred to when he stated ‘we will decide’ and no explanation of what the statement meant in terms of policy.

Figure 6.45 – Liberal Party newspaper ad, 2001

A vote for your local Liberal team member protects our borders and supports the Prime Minister’s team.
In TV ads in 2001, Howard appeared in very presidential poses and settings. He was shown walking into a press conference, at a meeting with advisers in his office and briefing a formal press conference (Figure 6.46). The TV ads were given a wartime 'feel'. They were sombre and serious. There was a black border around the edge of the screen and shots of Howard at work were often in black and white. The male voice-over was moderate and even-voiced. The camera angles were designed to look as if the viewer was seeing 'behind-the-scenes'. For example, seeing through the open doors of Howard’s office and from behind the stage before he walked out to brief the press.

Figure 6.46 – Liberal Party television advertisements, ‘Tough Decisions 2’ and ‘Liberal Coalition on Education’, 2001
A Liberal Party ad called ‘Tough Decisions 1’, used fear to promote Howard’s ‘strength’. The ‘tragic events’ which occurred in the United States in September 2001, the world recession, and future ‘uncertainty’ were outlined as a frightening background to showcase John Howard’s leadership credentials. Howard, the ad states, ‘has faced these sorts of challenges before.’ The ad included only one visual of a black screen with white text stating; ‘Who’ll make the tough decisions?’
Tough decisions

Male voice:

Even before the recent tragic events in the United States, the world was facing a period of recession.

The U.S economy was at a standstill. Asian powerhouses, Singapore and Japan, were officially in recession and most, if not all, European economies, were slowing – some to a halt.

John Howard has faced these sorts of challenges before.

He took the tough decisions to reduce Labor's debt, to fix the tax system, to protect East Timor, to take a strong stand against illegal entrants.

Now the world faces more uncertainty and more tough decisions will have to be made.

This election you must decide who is capable of making them.
Liberal ads in 2001 had a renewed focus on Howard as the party leader which was unusual in terms of both how Howard was portrayed previously and how other leaders have been represented in Australian political ads in recent years.

Paul KEATING (ALP)

Paul Keating was Treasurer for eight years including during a period of recession. His famous partnership with Bob Hawke collapsed when Keating challenged Hawke for the leadership and gained it in December 1991. Keating was then Prime Minister from December 1991 to March 1996. Keating was known for his immaculate grooming, sharp wit, infamous verbal comments and his collections of fine antique clocks. Although regarded as a strong leader, there were also perceptions that Keating was remote and arrogant.31

It is difficult to find many ads which show Keating because, as noted in Part two, Keating is one of the most concealed Labor leaders of the past fifty years. In 1996, there were, however, a series of TV ads which showed Keating designed around the theme: ‘At home with the PM’. These ads showed Keating in an open-necked shirt in a garden setting and were clearly designed to evoke a relaxed, informal, more friendly Prime Minister.

One ad, titled: ‘The Prime Minister on Howard’s Policies’, appeared in the last few days of the 1996 campaign. This was an unusual ad because it was by now very rare for ‘talking head’ ads which consisted only of the leader speaking directly to camera. It was also unusual for one party leader to directly criticise another leader. As we shall see in Chapter seven, they usually use surrogates to make negative attacks.
The Prime Minister on Howard's policies

Paul Keating:

For twelve months, Mr Howard refused to release his policies.

Now, just a few days from the election, he's offering not policies but promises.

Over $6 billion worth of promises.

And, promises he knows he can't possibly pay for.

He did this when he was last leader of the Coalition in 1987.

And, it cost him his job.

Mr Howard already has a $3 billion hole in his funding.

Yet he says he plans to spend more.

Unfunded promises are worth nothing.

They have no more status than bribes.

Mr Howard has shown us his promises and he's not entitled to be believed.
The clothing which Keating wore in ‘The Prime Minister on Howard’s Policies’ was significant. Keating was well-known for favouring expensive, tailored European suits. In this ad, he was shown wearing an open-necked shirt to represent ease, warmth and empathy with ‘ordinary Australians’. Throughout the ad, Keating spoke in an even, measured tone which contrasted with how he was often shown in the media and in the Liberal Party’s ads—as shouting, heckling or bullying. The ad showed Keating as ‘likeable’ and ‘one of us’. But the change in his clothing and manner of speech were noticeable and much-commented on in the media, because they were at odds with his usual attire and demeanour.\(^\text{32}\)

Although the ad consisted entirely of a close-up of Keating, it was still quite a negative ad. Keating’s comments focused on his opponent, John Howard. Keating claimed Howard was ‘not entitled to be believed’, which for Keating, was an uncharacteristically subtle way of saying that Howard was untrustworthy or a liar. Keating used the word ‘bribe’ to describe Howard’s promises. But in the same year, the ALP also used an endorsement advertisement which sought to emphasise Keating’s leadership in a positive manner. A series of ‘ordinary’ Australians made various claims about Keating’s leadership abilities. The ALP tried to deflect the criticism of Keating by re-packaging it so that Keating’s ‘arrogance’ was represented as ‘strength’. The ALP ads included ‘ordinary Australians’ stating that ‘you don’t have to like him, but you’ve got to respect him’. This was roundly criticised as a fairly desperate measure and a strategic ‘mistake’.\(^\text{33}\)
Leadership

Various people with studio or black
Background talk to camera.

Woman:
What makes a good leader?

Elderly woman:
Well, you need a good team for a start.

Man in glasses:
Strength.

2nd man in glasses:
Strength.

1st man in glasses:
A team needs strong leadership.

Man:
Our strongest political leader?

Young woman:
You don’t have to think too hard about that.

2nd man in glasses:
You can’t compare the team of Keating,
Beazley, McMullan and Evans…

Woman:
With Howard and Alexander Downer.

Young woman:
And Bronwyn Bishop.

1st man in glasses:
Yeah, one team just doesn’t stack up.

Elderly woman:
There’s no prize for second best.

Older man in glasses and suit:
Howard tried to lead before and got dumped!

Young woman:
Keating is a leader.

2nd man in glasses:
Who would you rather have leading Australia?

Young woman:
It has to be Keating.

Older man with glasses:
Keating.

Elderly woman:
It has to be Keating.

End: White text on black background:
‘Written and spoken by Australians
in their own words’.
In the ‘Leadership’ advertisement, the words ‘strength’, ‘strong’ or ‘strongest’ were used four times. Surrogates were used to speak on Keating’s behalf, because he was already perceived as arrogant and would be unable to talk about himself in the complementary manner which the surrogates used to describe him. The surrogates speaking on Keating’s behalf spanned a variety of age groups and included an elderly woman as well as a young woman and several men. Interestingly, three of the four men in this ad wore glasses. Without interviewing the ad’s producers, we can only speculate on why this is. However, it is unlikely to be a coincidence and may perhaps, be an attempt to convey the thoughtful nature of their comments.

‘Leadership’ was not a vox-pop ad where voters are stopped on the street and asked their thoughts on the party leader. It was clearly shot in a studio with the same background for each speaker. This gave it a scripted appearance. Yet the message at the end stated the ad was: ‘Written and spoken by Australians in their own words’ (my italics). This statement tried to situate the ad as if it was occurring naturally, from the mouths of ‘ordinary Australians’ rather than one that was designed, packaged and scripted by an advertising agency.

Kim Christian Beazley (ALP)

Kim Beazley was Leader of the Opposition after Labor’s election loss in 1996 until November 2001, by which time Labor had lost two further elections in 1998 and 2001. There was some focus in the media on Beazley’s physical appearance, including his weight and dress sense (which was sometimes described as ‘sloppy’). In terms of his policy stances and style as a leader, he was sometimes described as ‘indecisive’ and, quite infamously by his opponent John Howard, as having ‘no ticker’.

During the campaign, there was criticism that both leaders had run very stage-managed campaigns, but as the veteran of three highly choreographed ‘street-walks’, John Howard accused Kim Beazley of going through the entire campaign without meeting any ‘real people’. While Beazley may not have conducted any ‘street-
walks’, TV ads were at pains to show him as a ‘man of the people’ meeting Australians, talking to school children, the elderly, people in shops, signing autographs, shaking hands and having a cup of tea in someone’s kitchen (Figure 6.47).

Figure 6.47 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Kim Beazley Meeting Australians’, 1998

One of the most unusual image ads of the 1998 campaign was a TV ad set in a cemetery. Part of the background to this ad (which is not explained in the text of the ads) was that Beazley once worked part-time in a cemetery while studying at university. In the ad, the cemetery setting was used to fit with the claim that Beazley had a ‘plan’ to ‘dig’ Australia out of trouble. The ad included the quite bizarre image of an Australian political leader walking alone through a grave-yard with a shovel.
Cemetery

Lilting music plays throughout.

Male voice:

John Howard has strangled funds in everything from childcare and nursing homes to health and education.

And now he wants to add a 10 per cent GST to make sure the job market dies.

Kim Beazley has a plan to dig Australia out of this.

A plan for a nation not a job-killing tax.

Australia deserves better.

Vote Labor.

Black and white shot of a cemetery.

Camera moves back to see more of the cemetery.

The shot changes from black and white to colour.

Kim Beazley is seen in the background walking amongst tombstones.

Cut to a closer shot of Kim Beazley with shovel over his shoulder, walking through tombstones.
In 2001, there were several ads designed to address perceptions of Beazley as indecisive and answer questions about what he ‘stood for’. In ‘Kim Beazley on Education’, Beazley talked directly to the camera as he walked forward through a busy office. The final shot saw Beazley standing in front of a desk. A computer, flower arrangement and a family photograph are visible in the background (Figure 6.48).

**Figure 6.48 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Kim Beazley on Education’, 2001**

The emphasis in these ads along with the ‘Beazley Plan’ ad discussed in Chapter five, was to portray Beazley as a tough, capable leader. This was the context behind showing Beazley standing and walking throughout the ad, using a tough-talking voice and making strident comments about what he ‘stood for’. As Beazley spoke in the ad, ‘What I stand for’ and ‘What I won’t stand for’ came up in a text-box at the bottom of the screen to emphasise his commitment and strength.

‘Kim Beazley on Education’ reveals how personalisation has come full circle from the 1949 Chifley ad. That ad, although an image ad for Chifley, still emphasised that ‘Labor stands for the people... Labor stands on its achievements...’ (Figure 6.19). In 2001, there was no mention of the Labor Party, only an emphasis on the leader and what he, as an individual, stood for.
CASE STUDY OF 2001: THE PERSONALISED ELECTION

The 2001 election makes a very good case study of personalisation. The election saw the lowest emphasis on party ever seen over the past five decades. Conversely, over eighty per cent of TV ads featured a party leader. Liberal ads were particularly focused on John Howard, including the newspaper ad on immigration and the TV ads ‘Tough Decisions 1’, ‘Tough Decisions 2’ and ‘Liberal Coalition on Education’, which were discussed earlier. For Labor, there was also the ‘Beazley’s Plan’ TV ad discussed in Chapter five and ‘Kim Beazley on Education’, which was discussed above. However, a new emphasis on negative personalisation meant ads in 2001 were more likely to show their opponent’s party leader rather than own.

Many of the TV ads used in 2001 focused on individuals—particularly the party leaders but also the Treasurer, Peter Costello. ‘Posters’ used the familiar metaphor of travel and road signs which has been used in a number of ads. The metaphor signals travelling along the road of life and having to make choices about the correct path. The implicit threat in these ads is that the wrong path (choosing the opposition) leads to danger and despair.
Posters

Male voice over:

One thing's for certain in this election.

If you vote for Kim Beazley, you'll get Kim Beazley.

Not so with John Howard.

He has not committed to serving a full-term.

So a vote for him might well be a vote for someone else.

Someone who wants to sell Telstra.

And broaden the GST to include even more.

(Sound of car brakes and skidding to a halt.)

Male voice over:

If you don't want Peter Costello, don't vote for John Howard.

Camera is inside a car which is travelling along suburban streets. View is out the front and side windows of the car.

Car passes a poster of Kim Beazley.

Car passes a poster of John Howard.

A 'detour' sign forces the car down another street.

Car passes a poster saying: 'sell Telstra'.

Car passes a poster saying: 'more GST'.

Car stops in front of a poster of a smirking Peter Costello.

White text on black background states: 'If you don't want Peter Costello, don't vote for John Howard'.
The language in ‘Posters’ was very presidential: ‘If you vote for Kim Beazley, you’ll get Kim Beazley’. This almost, and quite falsely, implied that Australians could directly elect Kim Beazley as Prime Minister. Individuals’ names were mentioned five times but no party name was ever mentioned. The words ‘he’, ‘someone’ and ‘a vote for him’ personalised the message. While two policies were mentioned—the GST and Telstra—both were mentioned only in the context of what one person (Peter Costello, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) would do about these issues. The ad focused on the future and fear of the danger which would befall the voter if they took the wrong road by voting for Howard.

The Labor Party also used an advertisement called ‘The Big Question’ in 2001. It was a rebuttal ad which was designed to quickly respond to the Liberal TV ad ‘Tough Decisions I’ which used the black background and white text to ask: ‘Who’ll make the tough decisions?’ The rebuttal is even pointed out to the viewer—‘You may have seen a TV commercial asking...’.

‘The Big Question’ also used a simple sole visual. It started with a blurry photograph of a man whose face cannot be made out. At the end, accompanied by horror movie sound-effects, a photo of a smirking Peter Costello was revealed. The message was very similar to that communicated in ‘Posters’. ‘The Big Question’ also drew on a perception that Howard was planning to retire before he served a full-term of office and that his deputy, Peter Costello, would therefore take over the leadership.
The big question

Male voice over:

You may have seen a TV commercial asking ‘who will make tough decisions for Australia in the future?’

It’s a very good question... because John Howard has not committed to serve Australia as Prime Minister for a full term of government.

(Scary music starts and continues)

So if you vote for John Howard who will make the tough decisions?

Who will make tough decisions on funding for your child’s school?

On upgrading public hospitals?

On the Medicare levy you pay?

On worker’s entitlements?

On whether the rate of the GST will rise?

(Sound of dramatic horror-movie noise)

(in scared voice) Oh no, not him!

A blurry photograph of a man whose face can not be made out. A big white question mark is over the photo.

The photo gets larger and larger.

The question mark disappears and the picture starts coming into focus.

The picture is revealed as a smirking Peter Costello.
'The Big Question' used the very simple visual of an obscured face with a question mark. The question mark conveys uncertainty, confusion, a lack of direction and answers. The ad used a common negative strategy of showing an opponent's face at its most unattractive. In this case, it highlighted Costello's infamous 'smirk' and the accompanying perception that he is uncaring and arrogant.

The 'Big Question' mentioned a number of policy areas but these were mentioned in general and in negative terms. There was no mention of any of Labor's policies. Policies were again referred to in personalised terms; that is, what Peter Costello would do with public hospitals and schools. The scary music reminiscent of that used in the movie 'Jaws' and the horror movie noise at the end, are common devices used in negative ads to convey fear.

The Liberal Party used an ad in 2001 which was a slightly altered version of an ad they had already used in 1998. 'Anti-Beazley: His Record as Minister' is a negative ad, so including it in this chapter somewhat preempts the focus of the next chapter on negativity. However, this 'Anti-Beazley' ad is important evidence of the personalisation of political ads and the new negative emphasis on leaders. The ad focused entirely on the opponent party leader.
Anti-Beazley: His record as Minister

Male voice:

When Mr Beazley was running transport, Australian Railways had total losses of over $92 million dollars.

When he was running employment, unemployment hit 10.9 per cent. The worst in over 50 years.

As Minister for Defence, he approved the purchase of the Collins Class submarines which will cost up to $800 million dollars to fix.

When he was running finance, he left a Budget deficit of over 10 thousand million dollars.

Imagine running a country like that.

Picture of Beazley in black and white at top of screen. Caption states: ‘As Transport Minister, Australian Railways had total losses of $92,400,000. Source: Australian Railways Annual Report, 1990-91’.


Same picture of Beazley. Caption states: ‘As Defence Minister, he approved the purchase of the Collins Class submarines which will cost up to $800,000,000 to fix. Source: Department of Defence’.

Same picture of Beazley. Caption states: ‘As Finance Minister, he left a $10,077,000,000 budget deficit. Source: Budget Papers’.

Photo disappears. White text comes up on black background: ‘Imagine running a country like that’.
The ‘Anti-Beazley’ ad used a common negative strategy of taking the opponent’s face at its worst and using it as a background for words written on the screen which describe all the terrible things they have done.

In the ‘Anti-Beazley’ ad, there is no information about the sponsoring party’s policies or the opponents. Indeed, there is no mention of party at all. The focus is on the past (at least five years ago and even longer) to highlight the message that Beazley was not competent to run the country. The ad questioned Beazley’s ability by attacking his record in previous offices. The use of ‘official’ figures and statistics was meant to lend the ad credibility, to make the information which was presented seem objective as it came from ‘official’ non-partisan sources such as government departments. The words on screen emphasise what is being said in the voice-over and tell viewers to ‘pay attention’ to the facts presented.

Conclusion

The most startling evidence of personalisation in political ads is the extent to which partisan discourse is now suppressed. The evidence strongly supported the hypothesis that the emphasis on parties in political advertisements has declined. The parties are increasingly choosing to omit any mention of their party name. While the emphasis on party has strongly and steadily declined, there has not been any steady rise in the party leader as the focus of TV ads as we may have expected. Contrary to the hypothesis that a focus on individuals—particularly political leaders—has increased over time, the focus on party leaders varies between election years. In some years, the parties really highlight their leader, while in other years the leader can be almost totally concealed. It is possible that this difference is related to whether the leader is considered an asset or a liability.
What is very different, however, is a new and sustained focus on opponent party leaders. The parties are increasingly talking about and showing their opponent's leader, rather than their own. What has also changed is the traits the leaders try to project in ads. Originally in the 1950s, it was quite acceptable to project warmth and compassion (especially for Labor Party leaders). However, in recent years, leaders have been focused on trying to project competency and toughness or strength. Strength was particularly emphasised during the 2001 'Khaki' election.

Leaders have always been a key feature of Australian political ads. However, discourse analysis shows that early image ads were more subtle as vehicles for the party leader while later ads are more overt. In 2001, subtlety was gone. Leaders were by then, often the main focus of ads. Language and images were often highly personalised and even presidential in nature.

Part one of this chapter indicated there is little numerical difference between the extent to which leaders are highlighted in newspaper and TV ads. However, TV ads offer more scope for personalisation through the use of moving images, sound, music, lighting and different camera angles to achieve high impact in their presentation of leaders.
7 Ad Wars: The Rise of Negative Political Advertising

Negative advertising has been in use in Australia since our first election. However, as we saw in Chapter three, in recent years, there is a popular perception that negative advertising has increased. This chapter considers whether, as the hypotheses outlined in Chapter four predicted, the use of negative advertisements has increased, and whether there has been a rise in the number of ‘attacks’ directed at individuals rather than parties. This chapter is divided into two sections. Part one reports the results of the content analysis while Part two reports the results of the discourse analysis. The central conclusion of this chapter is that there is a long history of negative advertising in Australia; however, in recent years, the parties have used a much higher proportion of negative ads and there is a new emphasis on attacking party leaders in television advertisements.

Part one: The rise of negative advertising

In this study, negative political advertisements were defined as those in which the dominant focus of the ad was to criticise the opponent party, its leader or other opponent party members. This included attacks on policies, competence and/or credibility, including attacks on the issues for which the other party or leader stands (see Appendix F).

Negative political advertising is not a new phenomenon. The use of negative ads was high in 1949 when a change of government occurred, and even higher during the next election in 1951 when sixty-eight per cent of ads were negative. But the use of negative advertising declined during the late 1950s and early 1960s when electoral competition was less fierce and only began to rise again in 1963 (Figure 7.1).
On average, in the 1950s, forty-seven per cent of ads were negative. In the 1960s, this was down to thirty-eight per cent of ads. Between 1966 and 1990, negative advertising usually accounted for between forty to sixty per cent of all advertisements used. Only since 1993 have the parties begun to make over sixty per cent of their ads negative. The most striking aspect of Figure 7.1 is the rise of negative advertising in 1993 and its sustained use in 1996 and 1998. Although it declined slightly in 2001, negative advertising still remained relatively high compared to the advertising used in all earlier elections (with the exception of the unusually negative election of 1951).

The slight decline in negative advertising in 2001 may be a result of the unusual circumstances of that election. After the terror attacks of 11 September 2002, and with Australian troops off to Afghanistan during the election, too much mud-slinging would perhaps have been considered unseemly.

Figure 7.1 however, reminds us of some of the limitations of using content analysis on a sample of ads which, due to data collection limitations, cannot take frequency of broadcast into account. The data indicates, for example, that 1980 was not a particularly negative year. Yet, 1980 was the year of the Liberals' negative
‘Wealth-Tax’ advertisements. Because the results presented here reflect the percentage of all ads used during the campaign which were negative, the results tell us ‘of the total number of ads the parties produced, what percentage were negative?’. While the Liberals’ only produced one ‘Wealth-Tax’ television ad, they broadcast it heavily in the last week of the campaign. However, the 1980 election was a somewhat unusual case. Generally, the measure used is an appropriate one, because it looks at the extent to which the parties used negative ads as a proportion of the total ads they produced—and this does reveal the emphasis they placed on attacking their opponent.

TV AND NEWSPAPER ADS

There is seemingly little difference between the use of negative ads in print or on television (Figure 7.2). TV ads are only slightly more negative than newspaper ads. However, we must consider in Part two the differences in the production and use of negative TV ads compared to print.

Figure 7.2 – Use of negative advertisements (by different media), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
In modern elections, the parties are consistently using more negative ads than they did in earlier years. Since 1993, over sixty per cent of political ads are negative and this is true for both newspaper and TV ads. The parties seemingly make little distinction between these media. When they chose to run a negative campaign they use both media to get the message across.

LABOR V. LIBERAL

In 1983, R. R. Walker argued that Labor ads have traditionally been more 'gentlemanly' while the Liberals have consistently tried to frighten undecided voters who 'scare easily'.2 Similarly, Anne Summers has argued that the Liberal strategy 'has always been to use the final weeks before voting day to sow doubts [and] stir up fear...'.3

The data indicates that until 1984, the Coalition did traditionally use more negative ads in newspapers than the ALP (Figure 7.3). However, after 1987, the ALP has been the major advocate of negative advertising. As might be expected, the Party has been particularly enamoured with it since the perceived success of their negative anti-GST ads in 1993.

The ALP used a very high proportion of negative ads between 1993 and 1998. Indeed, in the elections of 1993 and 1998, 100 per cent of their newspaper ads were negative. But both parties returned to a more positive style of advertising in 2001.
Figure 7.3 – Use of negative advertising by political party (newspaper advertisements), 1949-2001

![Graph showing the percent of advertisements used by ALP and Coalition parties from 1951 to 2001.]

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The two parties use similar proportions of negative TV ads (Figure 7.4). With the exception of the Coalition in 2001—which, as we saw in Chapter six, had a new focus on John Howard, strength and incumbency that year—since 1993, both parties have ensured that over sixty per cent of their TV ads are negative. In 1993 and 1996, the ALP ran a particularly negative campaign, as did the Coalition in 1996.

Figure 7.4 – Use of negative advertising by political party (television advertisements), 1987-2001

![Graph showing the percent of advertisements used by ALP and Coalition parties from 1987 to 2001.]

300
In the 1950s and 1960s, the Coalition were masters of negative advertising and used a number of very negative anti-socialist ads (some of which are shown in Part two). However, over the past decade, the ALP have been inclined to use more negative ads, both as incumbents (in 1987, 1990 and 1993), and as challengers (in 1998 and 2001). This quantitative finding does not, however, address the nature of those ads in qualitative terms. Several commentators have suggested that the Liberal Party’s negative ads have, in recent years, been more brutal and hard-hitting. So while the findings above indicate that the ALP has chosen to produce more negative ads than the Coalition, the stylistic differences between their negative ads is discussed further in Part two.

ATTACKS ON PARTY LEADERS

Chapter six revealed the parties are de-emphasising party labels and, in some years, highlighting party leaders—particularly, opponent party leaders, instead. In negative ads, this would also suggest, as one of the hypotheses outlined in Chapter four predicted, that there would have been a rise in the number of ‘attacks’ directed at individuals rather than parties, over the past five decades.

Figure 7.5 compares the percentage of ads which attack the opponent party with the percentage of ads which attack the opponent party leader. It shows that before the 1980s there were two distinct periods when party leaders were heavily attacked—between 1951-58 and 1975-77. The 1950s were a contest initially between Menzies and Chifley in 1951, but then between Menzies and Evatt. Between 1975 and 1977, there was also a quite personal battle between Malcolm Fraser and Gough Whitlam. This was undoubtedly made more intense by the extraordinary events of November 1975.
However, contrary to the hypothesis outlined in Chapter four, there has not been any steady rise in the number of ‘attacks’ directed at individuals rather than parties. Since the 1980s, there have been peaks of personal attacks, usually in alternate election years—1987, 1993, 1996 and 2001 saw a higher than usual percentage of ads attacking the party leaders.

Figure 7.5 – Attacks on party leader as opposed to attacks on party as a whole (newspaper advertisements), 1949-2001

Note: This data shows the percentage of all advertisements in each year which attacked the party leader compared to ads which attacked the party as a whole. Other categories (not shown) included attacks on ‘other opponent party representatives’ and ‘implicit attacks without specific mention of the object of attack’.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

In 1993, attacks on the leader were high because nearly all of the Labor Party’s newspaper and TV ads were focused on the GST and criticised it not as a party policy, but instead as ‘Dr Hewson’s policy’. Their negative ads were framed in a way which made it appear that the GST policy was ‘Dr Hewson’s’ rather than the Liberal Party’s and their attacks were on this basis. While these ads attacked the party leader they
were mainly focused on attacking ‘his’ policies rather than his personal attributes. As discussed below, this type of negative ad is considered less disgraceful (according to the literature on negative advertising) than ‘mudslinging’ which attacks the opponent’s character, physical appearance or personal attributes.

Until 1990, TV ads attacked both parties and party leaders in a fairly similar manner, with the object of attack usually alternating from one election to the next (Figure 7.6). But from 1993, TV ads have increasingly been used as a vehicle for attacking opponent party leaders. A large gap has opened up. TV ads are no longer used very much to attack the opponent party but they are increasingly used to attack the opponent party leader.

Figure 7.6 – Attacks on party leader as opposed to attacks on party as a whole (television advertisements), 1980-2001

![Graph showing the percentage of attacks on party leader versus attacks on party as a whole over election years 1980 to 2001.]

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

While the data in Figure 7.2 indicated that there was little difference between the use of negative ads in newspaper or TV, Figure 7.6 shows that there is a real difference in the type of negative ads used in these media. While newspaper ads are
still used to criticise the opponent party, TV ads are now far more likely to attack individuals than parties. This concurs with what we learned in Chapter six about the way modern political ads are more likely to mention their opponent party leader’s name than their own. It supports the suggestion made then, that the personalisation of politics is a negative one—it is less about promoting the party’s own leader than it is about criticising or demonising the opponent.

Personal attacks in TV ads were high in 1993, 1996 and 2001. Anti-Keating ads of 1996 saw the highest emphasis on personal attacks. But 2001 was also an interesting election because, although there were less negative ads, sixty-seven per cent of those ads were focused on attacking individuals—either party leaders or some other party representative. In TV ads, negativity is increasingly personal and focused on individuals. Attacks are not always directed at party leaders. Sometimes, other party representatives are the target—particularly, deputy leaders, Ministers or Shadow Ministers holding important portfolios. In 1998, for example, several Liberal Party ads focused on Gareth Evans as a reminder of the previous Keating Government and in 2001, several ALP ads were focused on Peter Costello as Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party.

TYPES OF PERSONAL ATTACKS: 1949-2001

In most cases, when a party leader is attacked in an Australian political ad, they are attacked on the basis of their policies. Over the past five decades, forty-five per cent of the negative ads which have been used were focused on the opponent’s issue stands or consistency. Attacks on issue stands include criticising the opponent’s policies or dissecting their promises. Criticisms about the cost of their policies or claims that the policies have not been properly costed, are common. Attacks on the party leader’s consistency have frequently included using quotes to show how the leader’s stance on an issue has changed or finding contradictions in a party leader’s public statements.

The opponent leader’s performance is the next most frequent target of negative ads. Twenty-five per cent of negative ads focus on this. Many of these ads criticise the
opponent’s performance in government. Overall, this seems to show something relatively positive about Australian political ads; that seventy per cent of negative ads which criticise the party leaders focus on their policies and/or performance.

Only twenty-one per cent of negative ads focus on the personal characteristics of an opponent. The 1970s were the worst era for this type of attack when ads which attacked the character of both Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser were used. A sample of these ads is discussed in Part Two. But 1996 also saw a large increase in attacks on personal characteristics, particularly of Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating.

Very few negative ads in Australia focus on an opponent party leader’s background or qualifications. This is possibly because most Australian candidates for Prime Minister already have lengthy parliamentary experience. In the U.S., presidential candidates can come from a wide variety of backgrounds and there can be a lot of scrutiny of this background. In Australia, there is little focus on this criterion although in 1983, a number of Liberal ads (particularly TV ads such as ‘The Job Book’ ad) questioned Bob Hawke’s ability, given his recent elevation to the party leadership.

In the 1950s and 1970s, there was some focus on criticising the opponent leader’s group affiliations. This strategy was usually used by the Liberal Party to criticise Labor Party leaders such as Evatt and Whitlam and their perceived links to communists or trade unions. This type of criticism was especially levelled at Evatt. In the 1980s, there was also some criticism directed at Hawke for his links to trade unions. More generally, however, issues, policies and performance have been the key foci of criticism rather than personal characteristics, background or group associations.
WHICH PARTY USES PERSONAL ATTACKS MORE?

Since 1983, the ALP has made more attacks on the opponent party leader in newspaper ads than has the Coalition (Figure 7.7). The only exception to this occurred in 1996, when the Liberal Party’s use of leader attacks was higher because of the anti-Keating focus of their advertising.

Figure 7.7 – Attacks on party leader, comparison of use by political party (newspaper advertisements), 1980-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Although the ALP uses more negative advertisements in newspapers, there is little difference between the use of televised negative ads (Figure 7.8). In 1987, the ALP was significantly more negative, but otherwise, the parties have used similar proportions of personal attacks in ads. The data again shows that personal attacks are more likely on television than in newspaper ads.
Figure 7.8 – Attacks on party leader, comparison of use by political party (television advertisements), 1980-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The political advertising literature suggests that when a party leader is the subject of attack, this is of concern because it moves politics away from party, ideology and policies, on to individuals. It personalises politics and makes it appear a gladiatorial contest between individuals. However, there are different types of attacks on a party leader and the literature suggests some are worse than others. At the least offensive end of the spectrum are ads which attack an opponent party leader’s policies such as the ALP’s 1993 anti-GST ads. While these ads deliberately used Hewson’s name in connection with the GST policy, and therefore personalised the attack, they still focused on attacking Hewson’s policy rather than his character or appearance. Some authors such as William G. Mayer, Hall-Jamieson, Joslyn and Garamone et al, even consider personal attacks which focus on policy to be useful, because they open up democratic debate and dissect policy ideas. But at the other end of the spectrum are attacks on an opponent’s personal character and characteristics called ‘mudslinging’. In the political advertising literature, these attacks are often considered to be the most unacceptable type of negative ads.
GETTING PERSONAL

Mudslinging is not very common in Australian political ads. In Australia, between 1949 and 2001, an average of only twenty-one per cent of negative ads have contained an attack on an opponent’s personal characteristics compared to fifty-two per cent of negative ads in the United States over a similar period of time, from 1952 to 1996. West found that during the 2000 U.S. presidential election, seventy-one per cent of American ads contained a personal attack, compared to six per cent of all ads used in the 2001 Australian federal election.

By Australian standards, 1951 saw a moderate degree of mud-slinging between the party leaders (Figure 7.9). In 1975 and 1977, personal attacks were particularly prevalent. They were also high in 1987 and especially, in 1996.

Figure 7.9 – Purpose or nature of attack on party leader as attack on personal characteristics (newspaper and television advertisements), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Since the late 1970s, attacks on personal characteristics have become more common, particularly in television ads. However, the use of this type of strategy is still quite low—especially in comparison to American political ads.

**MOST ATTACKED LEADERS**

On eight occasions, the Liberal Party has used more than twenty per cent of their ads to attack the opponent party leader. They were particularly critical of Paul Keating in 1996 (Table 7.1). But the 1950s were also an era of high attacks on Evatt and Chifley.

Referring back to Table 6.5 in Chapter six reveals that in the ALP’s own ads for these eight elections, they tried to conceal five of these seven highly-criticised leaders. This suggests that the Party was usually aware of how unpopular, or open to criticism, these leaders were and tried to draw emphasis away from them in their own ads.

**Table 7.1 – Most attacked Labor Party leaders, 1949-2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Keating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Evatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Evatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Chifley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Whitlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Hawke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Beazley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Keating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
The most attacked Liberal Party leader was Hewson because of the high focus on his name and association with the GST in Labor's 1993 ads. Menzies was also highly criticised—particularly, in 1951 but also in 1955, 1963 and 1949. Referring back to Table 6.6 shows that in only three out of these ten elections did the Liberal Party downplay this leader in their own ads. This indicates that, although the Labor Party criticised leaders such as Menzies, Howard and Fraser, the Liberal Party did not try to conceal them. Indeed, as some of the ads shown in Chapter six reveal, the Liberals often focused on Menzies in a positive manner.

Table 7.2 – Most attacked Liberal Party leaders, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Hewson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Snedden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Generally, the parties know which leaders are vulnerable to attack or are a liability, and accordingly downplay them in their own ads. This is particularly true of the Labor Party. However, sometimes attacking the party leader is a reflection of that leader's popularity and the opponent has no choice but to attack and try to dent their popularity. This would seem to be the case in 1983 when the Bob Hawke was clearly an asset for the ALP but Liberal ads attacked him anyway, and is also generally true of Labor attacks on Menzies.
NEGATIVE ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

The parties use a series of common strategies in their negative ads. The most popular strategy is to use negative association and associate the opponent party leader with something negative. This is a very broad-ranging category which can include associating the opponent with a bad performance in office, an unpopular policy or an inaccurate or embarrassing comment. Other strategies which are also common are name-calling and humour/ridicule. Name calling was most popular in the 1950s when labels such as 'communist' were used, but 'liar', 'big spender', 'failure' and 'pretender' are other negative labels that have been used over the years.

Humour or ridicule is particularly popular in TV ads from the 1980s and 1990s. Another popular strategy is to use the opponent's own words against him/her in both newspaper and TV ads. This has been very popular in the 1990s. Production techniques have also been used both in negative TV ads where there has been recolouring of footage, distortion of audio and repetition of footage. Distorting techniques also occur in newspaper ads where, for example, photographs have been digitally altered. Examples of many of these strategies are shown in Part two of this chapter.

When an attack on a party leader is made, it is interesting to consider who makes that attack. When the sponsoring party's leader appears on TV to criticise his/her opponent, this at least has meant that they must take accountability for making that criticism. In 1983, Fraser and Hawke both made direct criticism of each other in some ads. However, since then, it has been far more likely that an anonymous announcer will make the attack. It is likely that the parties do not want their leader associated with this type of negativity, so when they want to make a personal attack on the opponent leader, they frequently use an anonymous announcer to do it (Figure 7.10). In the past four elections, this has been an especially prominent strategy.
Figure 7.10 – Use of anonymous announcer to make attacks (on party leader) in television advertisements, 1980-2001

![Graph showing the percent of leader attack advertisements by party leader and anonymous announcer over election years 1980 to 2001.]

Note: Other category of ‘surrogate attack’ not shown.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Surrogates have also been used to make attacks on opponent party leaders. Actors, celebrities and ‘ordinary’ Australians have been used as mouthpieces to voice criticism. In 1983, for example, the Liberals used a series of TV ads which included sports-stars Tracey Wickham, Alan Jones, Peter Brock and John Newcombe to criticise Bob Hawke. In 1987, the Liberals used a series of documentary-style ads which had an Australian family sitting around a kitchen table criticising Keating and Hawke. In 1996, the ALP used actors Jackie Weaver and Bill Hunter to criticise Howard. In 2001, Labor used a series of ads with ‘real Australians’ criticising Howard’s record on aged care, health and education.

Surrogates were the most common method of making attacks in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, this changed in the mid-1990s and the anonymous attack is now the most common method.
PARTY ATTACKS

In Australian political advertising, there have been a series of ways in which the parties try to represent each other. One of the most common strategies is to attack the party’s record (if they are the incumbent) or to characterise them as inept and incapable of governing (if they are the challenger). Most party attacks are in this vein. However, there have been some other more specific representations and accusations.

From 1949 until 1963, the Labor Party was characterised as a socialist/communist party. From 1975-1987, this characterisation changed from being an overt accusation that the party had socialist/communist policies and/or sympathisers, to a characterisation of the party as one of central control and big government. However, some Liberal and National Party ads still used the word ‘socialist’ to describe the ALP right up until 1987.

Figure 7.11 – Use of specific associations/accusations (newspaper and television advertisements), 1949-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Another favoured strategy has been to label the opponent party as internally divided. This has been used at various times but particularly in 1955-1963 against the ALP over its split with the DLP. The split saw a new emphasis during the 1950s and early 1960s, on advertising which characterised the ALP as divided and unstable. However, this strategy was also used against the Liberal Party in 1987-1990 over its leadership woes. Advertising pointed out the internal competition which was taking place in the Liberal Party for the leadership. This strategy of highlighting a divided party is driven by one of the ‘accepted wisdoms’ of Australian politics that voters ‘do not support divided parties’.

The underlying message behind this technique is shown by the similarities between a 1955 Liberal Party newspaper advertisement which asked: ‘When the Labor Party can’t govern itself, how can it govern Australia?’ , and a 1990 Labor Party TV advertisement in which Bob Hawke stated: ‘If you can’t govern your party in Opposition, then there’s no way you can govern the country.’

Two other characterisations were identified in the coding process: firstly, ads which characterised the Coalition as being ‘for big business and/or elites’ and secondly, ads which characterised the ALP as being ‘for minority groups or special interests’. These were not major themes in negative ads, although there were some ads describing the Coalition as being for big business/elites in 1949, 1951, 1954, 1974, 1975, 1987 and 2001. There were ads describing the ALP as being for minority or special interests particularly in 1972 and 1983. In 1983 this was particularly in relation to Hawke and attempts to characterise him as being for unions and representing union interests. The characterisation was also made in 1990 and in 1996. In 1996, it was in relation to the perception that the Keating Government was captive to the ‘elite arts’ and arts community.
Part two: Mud-slinging

When Australian political parties package their opponents in negative terms they focus on a number of common targets and strategies including attacks on policy, the opponent’s record, disparagement humour, character attacks and production techniques. Most ads use a combination of these strategies. While both TV and newspaper ads use the same strategies, the two media use different means to achieve effect and TV has the undoubted advantage of being able to use visuals, sound-effects, music and lighting.

The effect that negative ads aim for is to create intense emotional reactions—particularly fear, uncertainty, anxiety, suspicion or anger—by using auditory and visual symbols to provoke the desired emotional response. These symbols are culturally recognised and political communication theorists have called them ‘hot-buttons’ or ‘responsive chords’.9 This section examines different types of negative ads and their ‘hot-buttons’. It begins with the most common and, in the political advertising literature, most acceptable form of attack—an attack on the opponent’s policies.

Policy Attacks

Negative ads which focus on attacking the opponent’s policies are prospective in nature—they focus on the future and what would happen if their opponent’s policies were implemented. These ads try to create fear, anxiety and uncertainty. They are often used by incumbents to attack the challenger on the basis of what they intend to do rather than on their record.10 Because the Labor Party was out of office for such a long period between 1949 and 1972, the Coalition often used this prospective approach in their advertising to create fear about what the ALP might do if they won office.
Policy attacks often try to appeal directly to the voter and use personalised language such as ‘you’ and ‘yours’ to point how the opponent’s policies will personally impact upon them. These ads focus on telling the voter what they will lose or miss out on, if their opponents are elected. The Coalition’s early negative ads claimed Labor’s socialist policies would cost the voter his/her individual liberties and freedoms, but two other fears which are commonly exploited by both parties are the fear of financial loss and the fear of job loss.

The hip-pocket fear

Because the parties perceive their target audience of swinging voters as fundamentally ‘selfish’, one of the many strategies they use to try to persuade them, is to appeal directly to the voter’s ‘hip-pocket’. As we saw in Chapter five, one of the techniques that an appeal to the hip-pocket can take involves ‘bribery’ or promising benefits. In negative ads, the opposite strategy is used. Negative ads focus on the opponent’s policies and their potential impact on voters. They tap into fears of rising prices, higher interest rates, higher taxes and the impact of the opponent’s policies or the voter’s own finances rather than their broader impact, for example, on the nation.
In 1954, the Liberal Party used an ad which attacked 'The high cost of Evatt' (Figure 7.12). It claimed Evatt's proposals would 'cost you an extra 371,000,000 [pounds] and could cost another 1,000,000,000 [pounds]'. The claim was personalised, indicating that: 'Evatt's policy would double your income tax'. The ad tapped into fear of loss of income and even used a quotation and photograph of the Labor Party's own former leader, the late Mr Chifley, to lend legitimacy to its claims and make it appear that there was bi-partisan consensus.

Figure 7.12 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954
In 1972, when the Labor Party finally appeared as if it might be a real contender to win government, the Coalition used a similar strategy. Ads warned voters that they would be financially worse off under Whitlam. In a Country Party ad, Whitlam was described as the ‘last of the big-big spenders’ (Figure 7.13). He was not only described in words as ‘a gamble’, but the visual image of the ad was a casino dealer and roulette wheel. This ad only ran in Queensland and was targeted to that geographic audience. It stated ‘Gough Whitlam has plans for this country...Big EXPENSIVE plans that are going to cost plenty. And we in Queensland will be the first to suffer...’ Of Whitlam’s health policy, it stated: ‘Someone has to pay for the southern hospitals—US!’. The ad thus created a sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’—an imagined community. The ad also made a direct appeal to the voter to ‘Look at Labor’s policies—think about the cost—and before it begins to hurt in your pocket region...’ One line in this ad quite neatly sums up the claim that many Coalition ads have made about the Labor Party over the past five decades, that: ‘Labor is after your money—and plenty of it’.

Figure 7.13 — Country Party newspaper advertisement, 1972
Some of the most famous, and arguably most effective, negative ads have preyed on fears about economic consequences if a challenger were elected. During the 1980 election, polls predicted an ALP win. But in the last week, the Liberals ran a series of ‘Wealth Tax’ advertisements on TV and in newspapers, which accused the ALP of planning a tax on wealth which would really attack ‘unwealthy’ people who owned modest homes (Figure 7.14). Mills points out that the ‘Wealth Tax’ advertisements were ‘superbly targeted to homeowners in the big city marginal electorates’. Both ALP and Liberal politicians believed that the advertisements were responsible for swinging the electorate back to the Liberals in the last week of the campaign. Labor officials suggested that the wealth tax ads ‘turned [then ALP leader Bill] Hayden from a winner to a loser’ in the last week of the election and they prompted Paul Keating (then an ALP Member of Parliament) to famously remark that ‘what Labor needs is a couple of vicious and utterly cynical admen to do to the Liberals what they do to us’.

Figure 7.14 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1980
The TV version of the ‘Labor’s Wealth Tax’ ad used the same simple visual of a suburban house and an ominous warning that ‘thousands of Australian families who own modest homes’ would become a ‘target’ under Labor’s ‘wealth-tax’ policy. In the sixty-six word ad, ‘Labor’ was mentioned four times and ‘tax’ or ‘taxes’ were mentioned five times to associate the party with the negative spectre of increased taxes. In Liberal Party discourse, tax is framed as a cost rather than as something that will ultimately benefit the community through better provision of services.
Labor’s ‘wealth tax’

Male voice:

Labor calls it the ‘Wealth Tax’ but it would really tax the unhealthy.

Labor’s so-called ‘wealth tax’ would hit hundreds of thousands of Australian families who own modest homes which have risen in value.

Under Labor’s 20 per cent inflation, they would become a target for Labor’s ‘wealth tax’.

Labor’s new taxes. Where else would they get the money for all their promises?

Lead on Liberal.
The ‘Wealth Tax’ ad used the powerful cultural symbol of a suburban home to create anxiety about the Labor Party’s policies. The ad also asked: ‘Where else would [the Labor Party] get the money for all their promises?’ In Australian politics, this question is frequently asked by incumbents, of challengers. It implies that the challenging party will have to increase taxation or reduce government services or subsidies in order to pay for their election promises. It therefore taps into voter’s fears of losing out if the challenger is elected. The Labor Party has also used the same strategy—perhaps most famously, in the ‘Wendy Woods’ TV advertisements from 1987.

Wendy Woods, or ‘Whingeing Wendy’ as she was unceremoniously dubbed in the media, was a potent symbol of suburbanism and family values. The setting of the ad was crucial to this. She stood in her kitchen and asked ‘Mr Howard’ questions about his policies. She asked on behalf of ‘me and my family’ to emphasise her family values and status as an ordinary, concerned, mother. Wendy stated she wanted to ask Howard ‘some real simple questions about [his] free money for nothing promises’. Her questions were accusatory and relentless. But her language was also unpolished and even grammatically incorrect, and reinforced her status as an average, ordinary and down-to-earth Aussie mum.
Wendy Woods

(Sung):

'We're on our way.
We're on the right track.'

Wendy Woods:

Mr Howard, me and my family want to ask you some real simple questions about your free money for nothing promises.

Where is your $8 billion tax cut money really coming from?

Will you cut out home nursing?

Will you cut out 2 million meals on wheels?

Will you cut out pharmaceutical benefits for prescriptions?

Will you chop out special allowances for chronic asthma and diabetic sufferers?

Will you cut pensions?

Will you destroy Medicare?

Will you close child minding centres?

Please tell us Mr Howard, we want to know.
Where is the money really coming from?

The fact is, Mr Howard, we won't get the tax cuts because you can't make the spending cuts.

(Choir singing):

Together,
Let's stick together.
The ‘Wendy Woods’ ads played on fear that if the Liberals were elected, they would cut services to some of the most vulnerable members of the community, including children, the elderly and the sick. While in Liberal discourse, tax is framed as a cost, in this Labor advertisement, tax was framed as a benefit and a way of paying for services which Wendy Woods claimed the Liberals would have to cut in order to pay for their promises. This sort of policy attack fitted in with the Labor ethos of protecting the ‘underdog’ and it ascribed a more benevolent concern for the good of the whole community rather than an individual concern about taxing ‘my’ house (as expressed in the Liberal ‘Wealth Tax’ ad). Yet, the Labor Party ads still essentially focused on two similar themes—that the opponent’s policies would hurt voters economically (the fear of losing out), and that the opposition intended to take something off voters in order to pay for their election promises.
Sometimes the imagery used in negative ads is overt and shows the party’s blatant attempts to appeal to the voter’s hip-pocket. In Figure 7.15, the incumbent Liberal Party warned voters that Labor’s policies would cost ‘$4000 million’ and that this would result in an ‘extra burden’ of $16 per week on ‘every Australian household’. The visual image of the ad showed a hand clutching money, and the word ‘grab’ reinforced this message. Voters were also warned that Labor’s ‘irresponsible spending’ would result in ‘higher inflation, higher interest rates... and higher taxes’. This threat was both nationalised and personalised: ‘Australia can’t afford Labor’s costly promises. Neither can you.’

Figure 7.15 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1983
Both of the major Australian parties use fear of personal economic consequences, and sometimes their claims are in direct contradiction. In 1983, the Liberal Party ran an ad which stated: ‘You would pay higher interest rates under Labor’ while the Labor Party ran an ad stating; ‘Mr Fraser will put your mortgage repayments up by $66 a month’ (Figure 7.16). The use of the personalised ‘you’ and ‘your’ tries to aim directly at the voter and tap into fears of paying more on home loans.

Figure 7.16 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement and Labor Party newspaper advertisement, 1983
One of the most famous series of negative advertisements is the Labor Party’s anti-GST ads of 1993. During the election, the Liberal Party ran on a program of economic reform called *Fightback!* which included the introduction of a broad based consumption tax—the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The GST allowed the ALP an easy target and Labor ran a series of anti-GST advertisements which focused on people’s fears about paying increased prices. Conventional wisdom holds that the GST was central to the Liberal’s loss of what should have been an ‘unloseable’ election. The Labor Party’s advertising seemed to play a role in this with post-election polls showing that concern over the GST more than doubled during the election campaign.\textsuperscript{17}

Labor’s anti-GST ads focused on fear of financial loss through increased prices. The Labor Party concentrated on TV ads that year,\textsuperscript{18} and their ads used an old-fashioned and repetitive cash register sound to signal how the GST would hit voters from the moment they got out of bed. The camera followed a man as he went about his normal daily activities of getting ready for work, getting a taxi, buying a newspaper, having lunch, making phone-calls, sending letters and buying groceries. Everywhere he went he was hit by the GST.
How Dr. Hewson’s GST would change your day

Male voice:

How Dr Hewson’s Goods and Services Tax would change your day.

Close up of man’s head and shoulders in shower washing his face. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up from bottom of screen.

Water rates ... up. (Sound effect of old Fashioned cash register)

Same man brushing teeth. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Toothbrushes ... up. (Cash register sound effect)

Man tying his tie. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Clothing ... up. (Cash register)

Man picks up newspaper from front doorstep on his way out. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Newspapers, books and magazines ... up. (Cash register)

Man gets into taxi. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Taxis ... up. (Cash register)

Hand is seen picking up receiver and dialing telephone. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Telephone calls and postage stamps ... up. (Cash register)

Hand puts letter in an envelope. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

Takeaway food ... up. (Cash register)

Shot of a sandwich being wrapped up. Sign: ‘+ 15% GST’ pops up.

That’s one day in the life of Dr. Hewson’s GST and not one new job created. (Rapid succession of cash register sound effect repeated four times)

A woman’s hand is scanning items through supermarket checkout.

Is this the sort of change you want to see in Australia?

Man’s hand opening wallet where cash is visible.

Zoom in on close up of man’s face looking worried.
As we saw in Chapter three, the parties perceive voters, particularly swinging voters, as concerned above all about their personal and their family’s financial well-being. The parties advertising clearly reflects this belief and, in negative advertising, is aimed at scaring voters into believing that their financial well-being is under threat.

**Job loss**

Aside from financial fears, political ads have also specifically exploited voters’ fears of job loss and unemployment. In 1949, the Labor Party published an ad which included an alleged quotation from Menzies that he believed: ‘A pool of unemployed is necessary to discipline the workers’ (Figure 7.17). The ad warned voters: ‘You’d find it mighty cool in Menzies’ pool’.

**Figure 7.17 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1949**
In 1949, the Liberal Party responded by placing ads which stated: ‘Chifley promises you a job. But what job?’ They claimed that Labor’s ‘socialist’ manpower policy would mean that Australian workers would lose the freedom to chose their own jobs. A Liberal TV ad in 1983 called ‘Labor’s hit-list’ also used a similar claim. The ad showed a written list of occupations, such as ‘pharmacist’, ‘newsagent’ and ‘butcher’ scrolling down the screen. The voice over asked: ‘Are you one of the self-employed people on this list?... Do you realise Labor’s deal with the unions would control you?... No matter how hard you work... Labor and the unions would tell you how much your business can make...’

Other newspaper ads have included headlines working on this same fear of job loss: ‘With Labor rule in the depression you lost your job’ (Liberal, 1949), ‘Shipping increases will destroy your jobs’ (ALP, 1972), ‘Snedden threatens your job’ (ALP, 1974) and ‘How to protect your job’ (Liberal 1983). But TV ads have also played on this fear and have used powerful visual and aural symbols such as those used in the Liberals’ 1993 ‘Gunsight on Unemployed’ ad.
Gunsight on unemployed

(Symbol clashes)

Male voice:

As you know, over a million Australians are out of work.

But did you know that because of Labor's mismanagement, even more are looking down the barrel of unemployment?

(Eerie sound effect becomes louder)

Worse still, no-one is safe.

(Sound of a gun firing)

Don't be next.

Labor's got to go.

Camera looks through gunsight at people in a city street who are walking toward the camera.

People are unaware they are being targeted.

Gunsight focuses briefly on one person and then moves on to others including men and women in business suits.

Gunsight moves around targets.

Gunsight focuses on businessmen in suits.

Gunsight closes suddenly.

Black screen with white message; 'Labor's Got to go'.
The ‘Gunsight on the Unemployed’ TV ad was designed in response to a recurring theme in the Liberals’ qualitative polling that people were very afraid of losing their jobs and the difficulty in finding another one.\textsuperscript{20} The symbolism in the ad was particularly vivid in playing on these fears. The gun was a ‘hot-button’ to evoke danger and fear. At the time, there was some controversy about the graphic depiction of people as targets. Public (and other political party) complaints were referred to the Advertising Standards Council but dismissed.\textsuperscript{21}

ATTACKS ON THE RECORD

While policy attacks are prospective, ‘on-the-record’ attacks are retrospective. This type of attack focuses on criticising the opponent’s record—usually, its record in office. For this reason, the strategy is usually used by challengers. Challengers can compare their opponent’s record in office with its earlier election promises to show how it failed to meet targets or broken promises. Information which sounds official and credible (such as statistics, newspaper headlines, economic or unemployment data) is often used to point out an incumbent’s poor performance so the negative claims sound reputable.
In 1949, the challenging Liberal Party attacked Chifley’s record in several different policy areas (Figure 7.18). Among other accusations, the ad claimed that Chifley ‘backed down to the Communists’ and ‘does nothing’ on ‘Red Unions’. His record was described as ‘tragic’. Pre-emptying Labor’s own slogan twenty-three years later, this Liberal ad argued: ‘It’s time for a change’.

Figure 7.18 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
In 1972, the ‘Its Time’ theme now belonged to the challenging Labor Party. In Figure 7.19, the Labor Party used an ad which was part of a series counting down the days to the election. This ad used statistics on prices, economic growth and unemployment to criticise the record of the government and call for change. It compared Australia’s prices and economic growth forecasts to overseas countries such as the U.S., Canada and Japan, in order to make the point that Australia was worse off. However, the ad did not use overtly negative language; neither the Liberal Party nor the government was specifically mentioned and half of the ad was devoted to giving an account of what Labor would do to ‘fix’ the problems. This was in keeping with Labor’s attempt to run a generally positive, uplifting campaign that year.

Figure 7.19 – Labor Party newspaper advertisement, 1972

Three days
to go...

The real issue
Get Australia going

LABOR WONT TOLERATE
High unemployment
110,700 jobs now
180,000 forecast by Mahanow
Institute of Applied Economics by June 1973

LABOR WONT TOLERATE
High prices
Australian prices up over 6% a year
US prices up 2.3%, Japan 4.1%, Canada 2.9%, UK 2.8%

LABOR WONT TOLERATE
A national growth slump
Australian growth 3.5% a year for the 1968-69 to 1971-72
Japanese growth 10.6% a year for the
1968-69 to 1971-72
France 4.4%, U.S. 3.9%

LABOR WILL
Restore employment, boosting consumer spending now.
Guaranteed jobs within six months, cut wages, economic management.

LABOR WILL
Act on price class through a Price Stabilisation Tribunal
Cheaper prices and products through
use of multinational power on tariffs, weights and measures, etc.

LABOR WILL
Double national productivity in 10 years with planned growth rate
Share benefits among all Australians
Labour ensure growth through
vocational training, planning for the future of business.

It's time!

Vote 1
Australian Labor Party
In 1975, it was an unusual situation with regard to incumbency as the elected incumbent had been recently dismissed and replaced by a caretaker Liberal government. The Liberal Party was therefore able to use a challenger style to criticise the record of the previously incumbent Labor Party (Figure 7.20). One ad used quotations in ‘speaker’ bubbles to contrast Whitlam’s statements in 1972 with later statements and official statistics in order to show that he had not fulfilled earlier promises. The heading: ‘Three dark years of broken promises’ above a large photograph of Whitlam’s face showed the ad was also an attack on Whitlam’s character and designed to fuel suspicions that he was not trustworthy or honest.

Figure 7.20 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1975
In 1975, the Liberal Party also used a TV advertisement called 'The Three Dark Years'. The sound track consisted almost entirely of a continuous and ominous drum-roll while the visuals used newspaper headlines, TV footage and still photographs to represent the Whitlam Government as a series of controversies, scandals and failings.
Drum roll sounds continuously throughout...

(all footage is in black and white)
Whitlam arms raised after victory.
‘It’s Time’ signs at a rally.
‘It’s Time’ balloon.
Two girls in ‘It’s Time’ t-shirts.
Shot of Whitlam and wife Margaret drinking champagne, glasses entwined.
Whitlam at meeting with Hawke visible behind.

White heading ‘ASIO row’ comes up over news footage.
‘Murphy’ comes up over footage of him.
‘Gair scandal’ comes up over newspaper headlines and footage.
Whitlam with arms raised. ‘Inflation up’ comes up over picture then: ‘No tax relief’.
‘Crean sacked’ over picture of Crean.
Newspaper headline: ‘Facing record unemployment’.

‘OUT OF WORK’ comes up over shot of Whitlam with hand on head looking bemused.
‘Jobs for the boys’ over footage of two men.
‘Cairns sacked’ over footage and headlines.
‘Cameron sacked’.
‘Cope sacked’.
News headline: ‘$200m loans’.
‘Khemlani tells’ over news headlines and close up of Khemlani.

Drum roll increases...
Symbol clashes

Male Voice:
What you have just seen, the three dark years of Labor Government, have been all their own work.
Let’s turn on the lights.

Shot of Hawke with ‘ACTU’ sign visible.
News headline ‘Connor crisis’
‘Connor sacked’ comes up over footage.
Shot of Whitlam with dark circles under his eyes. Camera zooms in on his eyes as:
‘315,000 unemployed’ comes up on screen.

Shot of ‘It’s Time’ balloon.
Balloon bursts suddenly.
Caption; ‘Turn on the lights. Liberal’
Two years later, in 1977, the Liberal Party used a very similar format of ad to remind voters of the crises affecting the Whitlam Government. This time however, the ad used photographs in an album accompanied by the song ‘Memories’. Although the ALP had been out of power since 1975, the ad still drew on their record in office of two years ago. This shows that incumbents will sometimes attack a challenger’s record in office, even if it occurred several years ago, so long as that record was sufficiently poor or controversial enough that the incumbent believes reiterating it will still arouse strong feelings in voters.
**Memories**

(Male voice singing slowly with no accompaniment):

Memories,

Memories,

Hmmm

Hmmm.

Memories,

Memories,

Memories of you.

Memories,

Memories,

Memories,

(Announcer):

‘On December 10 when you consider the future, Don’t forget the past.

Let the Liberals get on with the job.’

Red folder/scrapbook titled ‘Memories’. Hand reaches into shot and opens cover of folder.

Inside pages include newspaper headlines and some photographs.

First page headlines: ‘ASIO raid’, ‘hospital fees up’ and ‘Inflation 5%’.

Second page headline: ‘Gair affair’ and photograph of Gair.

Third page headlines: ‘Groceries up’ and ‘food rise’ and photograph of Whitlam with his hand on top of his head.

Fourth page headlines: ‘Murphy censured’ and ‘beer up’.

Fifth page headline: ‘Crean sacked’.

Sixth page headlines: ‘Speaker out’ and ‘Inflation 8%’.

Seventh page headline: ‘Now Whitlam sacks Cairns’.

Eighth page headlines: ‘Inflation 12%’ and ‘Cairns sacked’.

Ninth page: ‘4000 million dollar loan’ and ‘Khemlani tells’.

Tenth page: ‘Connor sacked’ and ‘Whitlam: I didn’t know’.

Eleventh page: ‘Hayden changes mind’.

Hand shuts folder, picks it up off desk and throws into the rubbish bin.
‘Memories’ made use of official-looking information from newspapers with the emotive context of the ‘Memories’ song. Several years later in 1996, when the Liberal Party was the challenger, they focused on personal attacks on Paul Keating as well as the use of ‘official’ statistics from third-party sources to attack the record of the Labor Government. The ad in Figure 7.21 shows elements of these attack strategies. The ad used information from official sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Attorney General’s Department to criticise the government’s record. It used numbers and statistics on unemployment, business bankruptcies and foreign debt to portray a society in crisis. However, the photograph and the use of language (‘he said...’ and ‘He still expects your vote’) focused on Keating. The representation of the government as having a bad record was attributed to Keating personally.

Figure 7.21 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1996
In 1998, the ALP had been out of power for two years, but the Liberal Party still referred back to Labor's record in office. As in 1977, they considered the events were still recent and painful enough to have emotional resonance. The TV ad, 'Labor's Mess after 13 Years', used a split screen to show scenes of Australian life such as a house, a farmer in an Akubra, and a woman collecting her mail. The bottom half of the screen, in red, used statistics and sources to portray the Keating Government's poor record in office: 'Under Labor mortgage rates hit 17%! Source: Reserve Bank of Australia', 'Under Labor sales tax increases on 100's and 100's of items. Source: Tax legislation', 'Under Labor $10,278,000,000 budget deficit! Source: Dept. of Treasury'. As these statistics came up, a yellow stamp stating: 'You paid for it' stamped the TV screen. 22 'Paid for' or 'pay for' were repeated six times in the ad to emphasise this message.
Male voice:

Never forget for 13 years Labor had you pay for their economic incompetence.

You paid for it with Labor’s record home loan interest rates.

You paid for it with Labor’s record increases in wholesale sales taxes.

You paid for it with Labor’s ten thousand million dollar deficit.

Labor had you pay for their economic incompetence time and time again.

And if they got back in they’ll make you pay for it again.

Don’t go back to Labor. Australia just can’t afford it.
What is noticeable about most of the attacks 'on the record' which have been described above, is that many of these have been in years when there was a change of government—1949, 1972, 1996 (as discussed, 1975 is an unusual case but could also be included). It bodes well for a challenger if there is strong material that they can use to attack the incumbent's record. Conversely, when there is a lack of strong, credible material for the challenger to use to attack the incumbent in their advertising (as there was for the Labor Party in the 1950s, 1960s and in recent elections such as 2001 when there was a noticeable lack of on-the-record attacks) the challenger will probably have difficulty convincing the electorate to throw out that incumbent using this specific strategy. It is also interesting to note that incumbents can also use 'on the record' attacks. If the challenging party's record in government was grievous enough and is still recent enough, it may continue to provoke a strong emotional reaction for at least another election and up to several years later.

CHARACTER ATTACKS

When ads focus on neither the policies nor record of the opponent, they may sometimes resort to attacks on the opponent leader's character. Comparatively few Australian political ads depend on 'mudslinging'. It is far more common for Australian ads to focus on attacking policies, issue-stands and consistency rather than personal characteristics. Nevertheless, there have been some noteworthy personal attacks. In 1949, Liberal Party ads described Calwell as 'the big standover man' and one Liberal Party ad claimed he had 'developed an appetite for power' and would 'never stop until you are bankrupt of every last vestige of Individual Liberty and Personal Freedom [sic]'. There were also (as discussed in Chapter six) many personal attacks against Evatt in elections in the early 1950s. However, as mentioned in Part one of this chapter, the 1970s were the worst era for personal attacks.
In 1974, a Labor Party ad dispensed with the usual polite formality of referring to the opponent leader by their title (Figure 7.22). It stated: ‘Can Billy Snedden, of all people, bring order...’ The ad stated even more rudely: ‘Billy Snedden for Prime Minister? You’ve got to be joking!’. This negative ad used a common strategy of showing newspaper headlines to reinforce the validity of its claims. In this case, the newspaper headlines referred to the in-fighting which had plagued the Liberal Party and tried to contrast this internal division with the ‘strong’ leadership and ‘united government’ of the Labor Party.

Figure 7.22 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1974
In 1975, the Coalition used many advertisements which attacked the character of Gough Whitlam, including ads which claimed he was a ‘liar’ (Figure 7.23).

Figure 7.23 – National Party newspaper advertisement, 1975

YOU LIE
MR. WHITLAM!

You said it and...  
YOU LIED

- DOUBLE TAXATION
  You state Queenslanders pay two lots of tax

- MEDIBANK
  You state the Liberal-National Government would abolish Medibank

- EDUCATION
  You claim that University fees would be re-introduced

- PENSIONS
  You claim that pensions will become selective handouts under a Liberal-National government

THIS IS THE
REAL TRUTH...

- The Commonwealth will collect all taxes. You will not pay extra tax. They will return approximately 20% back to Queensland.

- MEDIBANK will be maintained intact

- ALL EDUCATION ALLOWANCES WILL REMAIN

- PENSIONS WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY LINKED TO COST OF LIVING INCREASES THAT IS THE LIBERAL-NATIONAL PLEDGE

Deceit! Dishonest! Typical of Whitlam’s three years.
Remember Khemlani and the Loans? Morse? Gair? ACTU-Scold? The same deceit and lies continue

Let’s put Australia back on its feet
VOTE
NATIONAL PARTY
Get trust back into government

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In the personal contest of 1975, the ALP also used ads which attacked Fraser’s character. One double-page ALP ad included a full page photograph of Mr Fraser with his eyes shut which was intended to reinforce voter views of Fraser as aloof and arrogant (Figure 7.24). The ad asked: ‘Is it worth the risk?’ The concept of ‘risk’ or taking a gamble is a recurring theme in negative ads, but this ad used the word ‘risk’ ten times. It described Fraser as ‘aggressive’ and ‘cold’. It even warned that ‘the apparent coldness of the man may well take much of the joy and freedom out of living in Australia’.

Figure 7.24 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1975

Is it worth the risk?

The risk that this man may prove to be just as ruthless as many people fear.
The risk that Medibank, Education, Pensions, and free Legal Aid will all come in for the bucket.
The risk that aggressive confrontation with the unions will cause industrial chaos, even violence.
The risk that huge payments to big business and Country Party interests will aggravate the budget deficit, not reduce it.
The risk that Australian democracy will be permanently damaged.
The risk that the Australian people will be assuaged to the polls every six months, regular as clockwork.
The risk that the apparent coldness of the man may well take much of the joy and freedom out of living in Australia.

These are the risks you face if you vote for Malcolm Fraser.

Are you aware?

For the vague promise that he’s the only man in the world capable of controlling inflation?
Very few financial experts believe that, particularly as he’s paid the Whitlam Government the compliment of following the Hayden budget almost word for word.

Australia, please, think very, very carefully about what you’re doing to yourself and your country.

The risks are very grave.
If you think it’s worth the risks, that’s your democratic right.
But never say we didn’t warn you.
In 1990, the ALP used an ad which, unusually, seemed to be a personal attack from one party leader to the other (Figure 7.25). The ad was very personalised and made statements seemingly directed by Hawke to Peacock that: 'after all your promises...you still haven’t told us how you’re going to fund any of your policies'. Overall, the attack was less polite than most. It tried to make the opponent look foolish and used sarcasm: 'Come on Andrew, you must have one answer'.

Figure 7.25 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1990
In 1996, the Labor Party used award-winning Australian actor Bill Hunter in a series of TV advertisements. Hunter accused Liberal leader John Howard of 'pretending'. The ad was both criticised and applauded. Dennis Atkin stated: 'the strength of the Hunter ad is that its tough message has been delivered not by a politician but by a familiar and believable figure'. On the other hand, advertising agent Michael Lawrence argued the Labor ads were not effective because: 'People do not trust actors'.

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Playing pretend

Bill Hunter:

Acting is really just a grown-up word for playing pretend.

I suppose I’m lucky I get to do it all the time.

It’s fun pretending to be somebody you’re not.

But you know what?

Right now, I reckon John Howard is playing a game of pretend with the Australian voters and that’s just not funny.

I reckon Howard is pretending to wanna keep Medicare when for years he’s been saying he’ll tear it apart.

I reckon he’s pretending to be on the workers’ side when he’s always wanted to cut wages and put workers on contracts.

And I reckon he’s pretending again when he says he’ll protect the environment by selling off Telstra.

The environment? Hmmm! He just wants to sell Telstra.

There’s no harm in pretending in my game.

But when it comes to the serious business of who wants to lead Australia, pretending is a very dangerous game indeed.
The ALP continued its representation of Howard as 'pretending' or dishonest in newspaper advertising. One newspaper ad asked voters: 'Which John Howard do you believe?' (Figure 7.26). Two unflattering photographs of Howard were placed side by side. Underneath them, one column talked about the 'pretending John Howard' and what 'he'd like you to think', while the other column contrasted this with 'the real John Howard'. The ad was highly personalised, focusing on Howard—the 'policies he doesn’t believe in [and] promises he knows he can’t afford'. Borrowing a strategy the Liberals had used in their own ads against challengers (such as Hawke and Whitlam), this ad claimed Howard had made 'big spending promises' which 'Australia can’t afford'.

Figure 7.26 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1996
The Liberals' strongest ad in their anti-Keating campaign of 1996 was the 'Bolt In' ad which included footage of a smirking Prime Minister Keating saying that the ALP was going to 'bolt in'. The footage came from an appearance Keating had made on Channel Nine's *Sunday* program three months earlier. Laurie Oakes had challenged Keating's view of what voters thought of John Howard and stated: 'Australia knows Howard and knows he's not an ogre.' Keating had responded: 'If they know him as well as I do, we're gonna to bolt in.' However, in the Liberals' TV ad, only the words 'we're gonna bolt in' were used. The context or background to the statement was not explained.

The Liberal Party campaign team ordered the advertisements to 'be screened in ascending order of nastiness, with [this] ugliest assassination reserved for the final blitz'. The TV version of 'Bolt in' used production techniques to make Keating appear more sinister by changing the footage from colour to black and white. The repetition of the footage made him appear ridiculous as well as reinforcing the message. The ad also, however, continued the use of 'official' statistics in text boxes to try to lend the message some legitimacy.
Bolt in

Keating:
‘We’re gonna bolt in’
[repeat] ‘We’re gonna bolt in’

Male voice:
‘What when people can’t get jobs?’

Keating:
[repeat] ‘We’re gonna bolt in’

Male voice:
‘What when people can’t afford the health insurance they want?’

Keating:
[repeat] ‘We’re gonna bolt in’

Male voice:
‘What with Labor’s record foreign debt?’

Keating:
[repeat] ‘We’re gonna bolt in’

Male voice:
‘Even when people can’t afford to pay all Labor’s tax increases?’

Keating:
[repeat] ‘We’re gonna bolt in’

Male voice:
‘Sorry. But it’s just not good enough’

Black and white (B&W) footage of Paul Keating interviewed on Sunday program (8 October 1995).

White text on red background pops up:
‘777,000 people can’t find jobs!
Australian Bureau of Statistics’

‘1,533,000 people can’t afford health insurance!
Private Health Insurance Administration Council’.

‘Foreign debt
$180,000,000,000!
Australian Bureau of Statistics’.

‘Taxes up
$10,000,000,000!
Budget Papers 93/93, 95/96’

Over footage, red border with white text pops up at top and bottom of screen stating: ‘It’s just not good enough!’
A second ad focused on Keating in 1996 was the ‘Go and Get a Job’ TV ad. This ad also used archived TV footage. It represented Keating as rude, arrogant and a liar. It also used repetition to great effect and, in this case, added a text bubble coming from Keating’s mouth to reinforce the impact of his comment. Like the ‘Bolt In’ ad, this ad also changed colour footage to black and white. The two ads used a common negative strategy of using an opponent’s own words against him. It is not surprising that Keating would be the target of such a strategy as he was well-known for his strong language and stark verbal imagery including his colourful insults against opponents. Keating’s quotes were used against him not only in these two ads but also in other Liberal ads from 1996 and 1990.\(^28\)
'Go and get a job'

Keating:
I didn’t... that was ... I didn’t say ‘go get a job’.
[repeat] I didn’t say ‘go get a job’.
[repeat] I didn’t say ‘go get a job’.
[repeat] I didn’t say ‘go get a job’.

(Sound of protester screaming.)

Keating:
Go and get a job.

(Sound of gong).

Female voice over:
Imagine another three years of it.

Footage from *The Great Debate*. Keating is in black and white; the caption states; ‘The Great Debate. 11 February 1996’.

Footage repeated.

Footage repeated.

Footage repeated.

Another piece of footage (also in black and white) of Keating walking past protesters (obscured).

As Keating speaks, a bubble comes up on screen stating: ‘Go and get a job’.

The screen freezes on Keating and his voice bubble. The screen is split with the bottom half in red. White text states ‘Enough is enough’.
For many commentators, the anti-Keating ads of 1996 represented a worrying shift towards ‘American-style’ negative advertisements which focus on attacking the character of one’s opponent rather than the quality of his/her policies (Figures 7.27 and 7.28).^29

Figure 7.27 – Liberal Party election pamphlet, 1996

Source: National Library of Australia, Ephemera Collection
Figure 7.28 – Liberal Party outdoor advertising poster, 1996

Source: the Herald-Sun, 4 February 1996, p.17

Flip-flops

In the U.S., the ‘flip-flop’ became very popular in political spots in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It has recently become quite popular in Australia also. The ‘flip-flop’ ad is designed to demonstrate ‘inconsistencies in a candidate’s public performances during his or her political career’. Modern politicians are vulnerable to these types of ads because they make so many statements on TV including during interviews, The Great Debate and even in political ads themselves. Over the course of many years, hundreds of statements are made and when political advisers and ad agents search for material for their political ads, these statements are heavily scrutinised for any contradictions. ‘Flip-flop’ TV ads are then made up of this old footage to contrast previous statements with new ones in order to show the person as inconsistent and, therefore, untrustworthy. ‘Flip-flops’ are also used in print ads.
In 1993, the Liberal Party used a newspaper ad which was very similar to the anti-Howard ad in Figure 8.25. It duplicated a photograph of Paul Keating to reinforce the claim that he was ‘two-faced’ (Figure 7.29). This ad contrasted Keating’s earlier quote that ‘we won’t let there be a recession’ with his infamous later statement that it was ‘a recession that Australia had to have’. The ad was highly personalised; it was described as ‘Paul Keating’s Recession’. The word ‘Guilty’ at the bottom of the ad placed a criminal pronouncement on Keating’s record. This ‘Guilty’ label has been a potent term in Australian political ads, including in ads from the 1940s and 1950s, but most famously, in the anti-Labor ads used in the state of Victoria in the late 1980s which dubbed Labor ‘The Guilty Party’.

Figure 7.29 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1993
In 1998, the ALP used a TV ad to highlight a Liberal ‘flip-flop’. The ad showed party leader, John Howard, and deputy leader, Peter Costello, voicing contradictory views about Liberal Party plans to introduce a GST. After the 1993 election loss, the Liberals scrapped the GST policy but they re-introduced it in 1998. In this ad, statements made by Howard and Costello in footage from 1995 and 1996 were contrasted with later statements from 1998.
Can you trust Howard and Costello with a GST?

Female singing ‘la, la la...’ in mocking tone throughout.

Howard:
There’s no way that a GST will ever be part of our policy.


Reporter (off camera):
Never, ever?

Howard:
Never, ever. It’s dead.

Male voice over:
So what’s this new tax then Mr Howard?

White caption on black background:
‘So what’s this new tax then Mr Howard?’

Costello:
In our election in 1996, we indicated we wouldn’t introduce a GST. That finishes the matter. We won’t.

Footage of Costello but has been framed by newspaper layout headline above states:
‘May 29, 1996’. Caption below states:
‘ABC 4 Corners, May 18, 1996’.

Howard:
[repeat] Never, ever. It’s dead.

Repeat of Howard footage.

Male voice over:
So will the rate be fixed?

White caption on black background:
‘So will the rate be fixed?’

Costello:
The..errr..ughhh..errrr.

Footage of Costello with caption: ‘ABC 4 Corners, May 18 1998’.

Male voice over:
Well, Mr Costello?

White caption on black background:
‘Well, Mr Costello?’

Costello:
Oh yes, if errr we fix a rate for indirect tax, that’s it.


Male voice over:
Can you trust Howard and Costello with a GST?

White caption on black background: ‘Can you trust Howard and Costello with a GST?’

Footage of Costello who smiles then frowns.

Male voice over:
And, can you believe in the coming weeks they’ll spend millions of dollars of your taxes on ads aimed at persuading you to support this new tax?

White caption on black background: ‘Millions of dollars of your taxes to be spent on GST ads’.

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In 2001, the Liberal Party used a ‘flip-flop’ ad against ALP leader, Kim Beazley, which used a split screen to highlight his views on ‘illegal boat entrants’. As the voice-over stated how Beazley’s views and statements had changed, the unflattering picture of Beazley moved from one side of the screen to the other and then back.
Beazley on illegal immigrants

Male voice:

On the issue of John Howard's response to illegal boat entrants,

Mr Beazley was first for it,

then he was against it,

then he was for it.

And now he's saying it's "a failure of policy".

Imagine running a country like that.

A split screen. Red on top and black below. Headed: 'Illegal Boat Entrants'.

On the left hand side of the screen, there is a photo of a smirking Kim Beazley with the caption: 'For it', the other half is empty.

The photo of Beazley switches to the other side of the screen and is captioned: 'Against it'. A newspaper headline states: 'Labor reverses illegal policy'.

The photo switches back to left side with caption: 'For it'.

The photo switches back again to right side with caption: 'Failure of policy'.

Photo disappears. White text comes up on black background: 'Imagine running a country like that'.
Guilt by association

Guilt-by-association is a strategy which the Liberal Party has predominantly used against Labor. Evatt was associated with well-known Communists, Hawke was associated with ‘left-wing’ unions and Keating with the ‘elite’ arts. In 1983, the Liberal Party tried to associate Hawke with the unpopularity of the Whitlam government which, by that stage, had been out of power for eight years. The TV ad, ‘The Hawke Show’, used the familiar fear of financial loss as a basis for claims that Hawke would, as Whitlam had done, go on ‘a spending spree... with your money’.
The Hawke show

Male voice:

Oh no! Not another replay!

We've seen it all before.

Only then it was called 'The Whitlam Show'.

Hawke says big government spending can solve all Australia's problems.

Which is exactly what 'The Whitlam Show' attempted.

A spending spree... with your money.

The Hawke Show? Don't bother. It's a Whitlam replay.

Caption: 'The Hawke Show' comes up over closed red curtains.

The curtains open on a black and white photograph of a meeting. Whitlam is seated in foreground with Hawke behind.

The camera moves in to close up on Hawke's face behind Whitlam.

The red curtains close. Heading: 'The Hawke Show' is still visible.
In 1998, two years after taking office, the Liberal Party still used the spectre of the Keating Government, which had ended in 1996, to associate the Labor Party with an unpopular past. In ‘Labor Wants Power Again’, the Liberals’ focused on Gareth Evans who had been a senior Minister in the Keating government. Evans was shown ‘wild-eyed and dancing’ with a caption ‘Labor’s Gareth Evans’. Because Evans was associated with the Keating Government, his inclusion as a major feature in the ad was intended to be a reminder of the unpopularity of the Keating government.

The use of the music of *Auld Lang Syne* was similar to the use of music in the Liberals’ ‘Memories’ ad in 1977. Both songs were meant to evoke the past. The ad used the split screen and official statistics format that the Liberals used in several other ads that year. It also used a comparative style to highlight the Liberal Government’s performance compared to past Labor government records. For example, one part of the screen stated: ‘$46m a week saved on welfare’. The bottom half stated: ‘Under the Howard Government: Welfare rort crackdown. Source: Dept. of Social Security’. This again used official sources to lend the claims credibility. Above the screen a red stamp then stamped: ‘Under Labor back to record government debt?’
**Labor wants power again**

*Auld Lang Syne* plays throughout.

Male voice over:

Labor wants power again.

So will it be goodbye to crackdowns on welfare rorting and back to blowing out government debt?

Goodbye to Work for the Dole and back to policies that gave us record unemployment?

Goodbye to the lowest mortgage rates we've had in twenty-eight years and back to those incredibly high interest rates Labor gave us year after year?

And goodbye to fixing the tax system and back to Labor handouts for the elite arts?

Don't let Labor sneak back in on your preference vote.
INTERNAL DIVISION

This section moves away from character attacks to party attacks and the one major negative characterisation which has been used against both parties. As discussed in Part one, at various times, both parties have suffered from internal divisions, which the other party has been able to exploit in their advertising. In the 1951 Liberal Party ad shown in Figure 7.30, the ad claimed that ‘Labor is divided’. It stated that ‘Behind Chifley stand these three men’ and showed cartoons of Calwell, Evatt and Eddie Ward. Calwell was described as ‘The Standover man’, Evatt as ‘the Communist champion’ and Ward as ‘Irresponsible, hot-headed Eddy.’ The ad stated; ‘these are the real policy makers of the Labor Party’. It warned that they would be ‘frightening’ in government and implored voters to ‘keep these characters out’ in order to ‘Keep Australia safe’.

Figure 7.30 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1951
At the height of the split between the ALP and the DLP, the Liberal Party was able to capitalise on the Labor Party’s turmoil. In 1955, it ran an ad which asked: ‘when the Labor Party can’t govern itself, how can it govern Australia?’ (Figure 7.31). The ad included a big question mark as the traditional symbol of uncertainty, confusion and lack of direction. The ‘broken’ Labor Party was contrasted with the ‘united’ Menzies government.

Figure 7.31 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1955
In 1963, the Liberal Party took this theme further with their criticisms of Labor as a party controlled by 'faceless men'. In Figure 7.32, the ad presented a choice between a 'Government of tested integrity and proven capacity' as represented by Menzies, or a government 'controlled by 36 men not responsible to you'.\textsuperscript{32} The caption next to the photograph of Calwell and two other men stated: 'This is Mr. Calwell waiting out in the cold at 1.30am to be told by Labor's "bosses" to reject the agreement for the U.S. base.'

\textbf{Figure 7.32 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1963}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{liberal_advertisement}
\caption{Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1963}
\end{figure}
In the late 1980s, the ALP was able to characterise the Liberals as internally divided after a series of leadership disputes. Figure 7.33 contrasted a smiling full page photograph of Bob Hawke with a depiction of the Coalition as a falling house of cards. Labor was described as 'united' while the Coalition was 'divided'. Coalition members were depicted on playing cards and each had a text bubble with quotes which contradicted each other, included snide comments about colleagues to represent the instability which was occurring in the Liberal Party at the time.

Figure 7.33 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1987
The ALP was able to use a similar strategy in 1990 with a series of ads which asked (as Menzies had of the ALP in the 1950s) ‘how can they govern the country?’ (Figure 7.34). The ad showed contrasting statements made by members of the party on interest rates. Other ads were based on showing the contradictory statements which Liberal ministers had made on health policy and leadership issues.

Figure 7.34 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1990
NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES

Negative ads use a number of common techniques in both print and TV ads to reinforce their message. Faces are key symbols in political ads generally, but are particularly important in negative ads where they are duplicated, defiled and distorted. Production techniques, humour and guilt-by-association are other key strategies in negative ads.

Faces

The human face is one of the most powerful emotive devices. In negative ads, the face of the opponent is a powerful canvas which is often used as the basis for the negative message. Showing the opponent’s face in an unflattering pose is a very common strategy. Opponents are often shown smirking, snarling and frowning. But there are many other ways of using faces, including writing slogans on the face, drawing symbols on it, showing it as a mask, duplicating it, ascribing it with messages by including a ‘speaker box’ or even manipulating and changing the opponent’s face through production techniques. Many of these techniques are visible in newspaper ads, but faces are also very important in TV ads where, as we have seen, faces have been re-coloured, switched from side to side or shown in various unflattering poses.
The ALP newspaper ad in Figure 7.35 includes the powerful symbol of a black cross over Menzies’ face. This sort of symbol is culturally understood. We cross out our mistakes. We also see black crosses through an item when they are banned or finished. This is a common visual image on public signs. The text of this ad criticised Menzies for his ‘last-minute’ election promises and criticised the 1963/64 Budget. The criticism included a statement that the budget ‘brought no message of hope for a nation fed for years on empty promises’.

Figure 7.35 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1963
In 1972, the Liberal Party ran an ad with a powerful visual suggesting Labor leader, Gough Whitlam, was controlled by Bob Hawke, then president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) (Figure 7.36). The visual showed Hawke taking off a mask with Whitlam's face on it. The ad asked: 'When Labor speaks who's really talking?'. It described Hawke as Whitlam's 'master' and claimed: 'It's obvious a Labor Government led by Mr. Whitlam would be at the mercy of Mr. Hawke and his union machine'. The ad made a very powerful negative claim of 'outside control', which was reminiscent of the 'faceless men' claims made against the Labor Party in the 1960s.

Figure 7.36 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972
As we have seen, Whitlam was one of the most attacked Labor Party leaders and the 1970s were a time of more than usual personal attacks. In 1974, the National Party produced a two-page advertisement portraying Whitlam as a spider. The visual of Whitlam’s face in a web on one page was complemented by an appeal on the next page to ‘Keep Australian free of Labor’s sticky socialist web’ (Figure 7.37).

Figure 7.37 – National Party advertisement, 1974
In 1977, Whitlam was the target of a series of National Party ads which used Whitlam’s face as a canvas to ascribe with slogans or symbols. The first ad, shown in Figure 7.38, used a question mark over his face to reinforce the message that he was untrustworthy. In the text of the ad, Whitlam was described as ‘living proof you can’t teach an old dog new tricks’ and to reinforce the theme of age, he was described as ‘Old Gough... still sprouting the same insane socialist ideas’. Finally, with an appeal to the voter’s hip-pocket, Whitlam was described as the man ‘who wants to steal your tax cuts!’

In the second ad in Figure 7.38, the slogan ‘Taxes, Taxes, Taxes’ was stamped over Whitlam’s face. This ad was highly personalised and claimed that Whitlam ‘wants to take away your money!’ Whitlam was described as ‘the man who sent Australia broke’. In a precursor to a slogan the Liberals would use in 1998, the ad warned that ‘Australia can’t afford him’.

Figure 7.38 – National Party newspaper advertisements, 1977
In a final anti-Whitlam ad from 1977, the National Country Party used the visual of Whitlam’s ‘mask’ to claim that Whitlam was presenting a false image; that he really ‘hasn’t changed a bit’ (Figure 7.39).

Figure 7.39 – National Party newspaper advertisement, 1977
Faces are crucial to TV ads such as the ‘Gunsight on the Unemployed’ ad which focused on human faces as targets, ‘Posters’ which showed posters of politicians’ faces and the ‘Big Question’ ad which consisted of Peter Costello’s face obscured by a question mark. In 1983, the ALP used a TV ad which consisted only of a photograph of Malcolm Fraser with cigar (Figure 7.40). The photograph was in black and white. The cigar combined with its positioning and the expression on Fraser’s face signified status, power, wealth and arrogance. The camera zoomed in on the face as the voice over stated that: ‘Mr Fraser says his economic policies are responsible. They’re responsible alright. Responsible for the mess we’re in now.’

**Figure 7.40 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Fraser with cigar’, 1983**

**Production techniques and distortion**

We have seen some of the common production techniques used in negative TV ads, such as changing footage of an opponent from colour to black and white. This section looks at other production techniques including distortion. Distortion here refers to the manipulation of TV footage or photographs rather than factual
inaccuracies, lies or false claims; although there are, of course, both kinds of distortion in political ads.

In 1983, the Liberal Party used a series of ads which showed a close up of the face of opponent party leader, Bob Hawke. This photograph made Hawke appear quite sinister, but the cause was not immediately obvious. On closer inspection, it is possible to see that Hawke’s eyes had been digitally altered. They had been ‘coloured’ in so that there was no iris visible. The eyes appeared quite evil as a result (Figure 7.41).

Figure 7.41 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1983

OVERNIGHT THIS MAN HAS GONE ON A MULTI BILLION DOLLAR SPENDING SPREE.

DON'T RISK IT WITH LABOR.
In 1987, the Liberal Party used an advertisement which altered Hawke’s face in a far more blatant manner by attributing him with a Pinocchio-like nose (Figure 7.42). The symbolism of this was, of course, to portray him as a liar and the cultural reference is well-known. The ad also used Hawke’s own words to demonstrate a ‘flip-flop’ that he had broken his promise that there would be ‘no new Capital Gains Tax’.

Figure 7.42 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1987
During the 2001 election, the ALP used an ad which showed a fictitious event. It manipulated a photograph of Howard to place him in a setting he was never in and ascribe to him an imaginary reaction to an event that never happened (Figure 7.43). The fictitious event was Howard’s visit to an ATM and his shocked reaction to his unsatisfactory account balance as a result of an increase in the GST. This ad not only used production techniques but also humour and ridicule, to get its message across.

Figure 7.43 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 2001
Production techniques and distortion also play a large part in TV ads and have occasionally been responsible for creating some outright falsehoods. In 1990, for example, the ALP used a TV ad which showed Bob Hawke talking to Don Chipp, the leader of the Democrats, in a radio studio. Hawke asked Chipp who Democrat voters should give their second preference to. Chipp’s reply was edited and a statement inserted which made it appear that Chipp had recommended Democrat voters give their second preferences to the ALP.\textsuperscript{33}

Also in 1990, the Liberals used an ad which showed Hawke alighting from a car and walking into a building. The ad inserted voice-overs from ‘voters’ asking questions about various issues. By inserting this audio over the footage of Hawke walking away it appeared as if Hawke was ignoring their questions. This was, again, a dramatised, fictitious event which had never really occurred.
Humour

Humour, sarcasm and ridicule are other strategies that have been employed in negative political ads. In 1949, the Liberal Party ran an ad on polling day which made reference to popular culture, changing the movie title ‘Goodbye Mr Chips’ to ‘Goodbye Mr Chif!’ (Figure 7.44).

Figure 7.44 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
The Labor Party also used humour to disparage the opponent. The ad in Figure 7.45 used a cartoon to criticise Menzies and his economic policy. It portrayed Menzies' policy as an old run-down jalopy. The jalopy had cob-webs on it—the classic symbol of inefficiency and stagnation which has been used in other ads such as the 'Empty Factory Caretaker'. The petrol tank was filled with ‘stop-go mixture’ and ‘guaranteed to foul up anything’ while the car had a ‘spare credit squeeze in the boot’. The cartoon of Menzies characterised his physical appearance—his eyebrows, hair loss and weight. The cartoon Menzies was portrayed as indifferent to the damage his policy had caused to the unemployed men. He states, ‘sure it’ll only go backwards... but what do you want forward gears for?—you might run into prosperity or something!’ The text below the cartoon stated the Menzies Government had a ‘do-nothing’ policy and increased unemployment ‘doesn’t concern them in the least’. The sub-text behind the humour was that the opposition was represented not only as inefficient, but as indifferent and uncompassionate.

Figure 7.45 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1961

"Sure it'll only go backwards... but what do you want forward gears for—you might run into prosperity or something!"

The announcement of the Menzies Government's "do-nothing" policy PROVES that it is not only the Labor Party that is concerned about unemployment. Menzies himself has even admitted that his Government has had no policy for unemployment. Menzies' economic policy is a complete failure. The ALP has a policy to inject new life into industry -and will get people back to work!
In a later ad from 1963, Menzies was again represented as a cartoon figure. The eyebrows, suit and double chin are still emphasised (Figure 7.46). In this cartoon, Menzies was trying to push Harold Holt into the background so that people would not be reminded of his previous economic policies. The cartoon Menzies states: ‘Keep in the background, Harold, if they see you too much they’ll remember the whole ghastly business’. Harold Holt is referred to as ‘Harold “credit squeeze” Holt’.

Figure 7.46 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1963
In 1984, the National Party used a large photograph of Whitlam shearing a sheep to tell voters that ‘He’s fleecing you, too’ (Figure 7.47). As with other National Party ads focused on Whitlam at this time, the ad deliberately used the concept of voters’ ‘pockets’ to personalise the message. It stated Whitlam’s promises will take: ‘more tax out of your pocket’. The ad’s caption and photograph used humour to get this message across.

Figure 7.47 – National Party advertisement, 1974
Negative ads can use cartoons, ridicule, drama, satire and sarcasm to attack. Humour is a potent weapon against an opponent. In TV ads, humour has been almost exclusively used by the ALP in ads such as ‘Animated Man’ (1977), which showed a cartoon figure walking on a line which represented the state of the Australian economy. The ‘Magician on Liberal Tax Cuts’ (1987) showed a magician (an actor with a close resemblance to John Howard) pulling economic tricks out of a hat. The 1990 ‘LUPI’ ads showed a comedian dressed up as a newsreader reporting on an official-looking ‘Liberal Unfunded Promises Index’ complete with a graph titled the ‘LUPI Report’. These LUPI ads were roundly criticised and described as ‘strange’ in the media, and they disappeared early on in the campaign. In later years, there have been a series of ALP ads intended to be humorous, including the ‘GST fly’ (1998), ‘GST weightlifter’ (1998), and even one ad showing a man stepping in GST (1998).

CASE STUDY: SOCIALISM

Although negative ads have risen in the past decade, negative ads are not a new phenomenon. Some of the most vehement negative ads ever seen in Australia were anti-socialist ads produced by the Liberal and Country parties in 1949, the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, the Coalition was very successful in keeping socialism on the political agenda and packaging the ALP as a socialist party and a risk to voters’ personal freedom. Their advertising helped to convey a particular image of the Labor Party, which proved difficult for the ALP to dispel. The ALP was characterised as a party of Communists in a time of real fear about the Communist menace (Figures 7.48 and 7.49).
Figure 7.48 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1951

They walk along the political way
The bright pink Socialist three,
But what they carefully do not say,
Is how red they would like to be.

Socialism is the first step to Communism
Help menaces to destroy
The Red Menace in Australia.

VOTE LIBERAL

Figure 7.49 – Liberal Party promotional booklet, 1958

Who is the Most Dangerous Man in Australia?

- The Liberals don't love me
- The Victorian Branch of the A.L.P. doesn't love me
- The People don't love me
- The Electors of Barton don't love me
- But, oh, how the Communists love me

Note: Front cover and inside two pages of booklet

In 1949, Liberal Party advertisements sometimes relied on words to sell their anti-socialist message. In Figure 7.50, the words which were used were quite formal, ideological and even, academic. The ad stated for example, that socialism is 'the lineal descendant of the gross materialism of Karl Marx'. It is unlikely a newspaper advertisement would now use such language. The ad also stated that socialism 'tells me all the time that my brother is my keeper. It forbears to tell me that I am his keeper, that his rights are my duties. Honesty becomes old-fashioned. It becomes smart to break the Law and get away with it.' However, the language was also quite alarmist. The title stated that 'The case against socialism is a deadly one' with 'deadly' both italicised and underlined. The ad also stated that: 'The abolition of choice is the death of freedom' (my italics).

Figure 7.50 – Liberal newspaper ad, 1949
However, even in 1949, words were not the only tools available. Ads also used dramatic visual images. In Figure 7.51, the image which dominates the ad is of a baby with a numbered tag around her neck. The tag included a hammer and sickle. The message of the ad, and this visual, were designed to provoke fear and anxiety and the message was personalised for maximum impact: ‘Your baby is a person to you, under Mr. Chifley’s socialism she’ll be just a number’.

Figure 7.51 – Newspaper advertisement, 1949 (Liberal Party)
Figure 7.52 also relied on a visual image to sell its message. It used the metaphor of travel along a road (also used in ‘Posters’, for example) and coming to a fork in the road, to highlight the choice between ‘Prosperity’ at the end of the ‘Liberal road to freedom’, or the ‘Labour [sic] road to socialism’. The ‘Liberal road’ was represented by a bright, shining sun, while the Labor road was cob-webbed and dark. The ad also used a play on words about political ideology telling voters to ‘go right’ and ‘vote right’.

Figure 7.52 - Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
Figure 7.53 again used the metaphor of a road, but this time in a textual reference stating that ‘socialism is the road downhill to communism’. The ad also relied on a visual image to stir emotions—in this case, a sinister figure manipulating a voter at the ballot box. The shadowy man was shown with his arm conspiratorially around the voter’s shoulders. The naïve voter is unaware that, by voting Labor, he is ‘voting socialist’.

Figure 7.53 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
Sometimes Liberal ads used more personal attacks in their campaign against Labor socialism. In one advertisement, Chifley was shown with a large arrow pointing at him and ascribed with the label that: 'This man is an avowed socialist' (Figure 7.54). This ad also showed a little book with the cover stating: 'Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx'.

Figure 7.54 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949

![This man is an avowed socialist]

SOCIALISM and COMMUNISM!

FIGHT CHIFLEY'S SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST PARTY.

VOTE LIBERAL FOR LIBERTY!

SENATE

[Ad text and image]
Chifley was also ridiculed in a cartoon which mocked his famous, always-present pipe (Figure 7.55). 'Don’t be fooled by Chifley’s smoke-screen', the ad warned, ‘Socialism is the first step to communism’. The image of the hammer and sickle is a common symbol in these negative ads to represent the evils of communism.

Figure 7.55 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1951
A number of other visual images were also used to persuade voters of the dangers and inherent evil of socialism. Figure 7.56 used the hammer and sickle again but this time, on the back of a rat who was shown eating a pound note.

Figure 7.56 – Country Party newspaper advertisement, 1951

Another ad called on voters to: ‘smash communism to-day!’ (Figure 7.57). A clenched fist was shown to illustrate the point.

Figure 7.57 – Liberal Party advertisement, 1951
Figure 7.58 used both words and a large visual image. The image again ridiculed Labor leaders—Labor Party figures were labelled ‘Chif’ and Doc’. They were represented singing a disparaging song which stated that they were under the control of ‘Commos’. The Labor Party was referred to as the ‘Chifley-Evatt Socialist Party’. The ad stated that the ‘Menzies-Fadden way is to fight the fifth columnists and kick them out of Australia’. The language was again strong—smash, fight and kick were used to illustrate the Coalition’s hard-line on communism and to convey strength.

Figure 7.58 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1951
In 1954, after the Menzies government had been in power for over four years, the Coalition still relied on ads which foretold of the dangers of giving 'the reds' (i.e. the Labor Party) a second chance (Figure 7.59). Although the ad stated that Menzies ‘has defeated the communist conspiracy’, it also warned that the danger would rise again if Evatt was elected.

Figure 7.59 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1954
Returning briefly to the subject of Chapter five, these early negative political ads demonstrate that Australian political advertising was never based on delivering objective information in densely worded, factual accounts. Even in the 1950s and 1960s, negative ads tried to provoke emotions such as fear, anxiety and anger. They relied on highly emotive images and symbols and they used powerful, emotive language.

THE PERCEIVED POWER OF NEGATIVE ADS

In 1996, the Liberal Party’s campaign team sifted through political advertisements from the last twenty-five years to try and find the key to what made advertisements work. Their conclusion was that being ‘always negative and stressing the risk of voting for the opposition—was the only way to go’.  

Since the anti-GST ads of 1993, the media has taken an increasing interest in negative advertising. The general, overall view expressed in the media is that negative advertising is successful, albeit sometimes ethically questionable. This is indicated by headlines such as: ‘Defeated by fear, smear and cynicism’ and ‘Libs blame ads for loss’.  

Media analysis of negative advertising has included the views of advertising agents such as Malcolm McGregor. McGregor argued in 1998 that although there is much ‘pious hand-wringing’ among social commentators about the effect of negative advertising on our political culture, ‘the parties use it for the simple, brutal reason that it works’.  

McGregor argued that the very best negative ads ‘exploit underlying disquiet about a candidate or a party’. They ‘exploit an opponents vulnerability about charges already established in the free media by crystallising those inadequacies in the advertisements’.  

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The media are increasingly judging political advertising by the extent to which it is negative. There are assumptions that the party which makes the hardest-hitting ads has the most effective advertising. In 1996, there was a general consensus among advertising agents reported in the media that the Liberals had won that year’s ‘advertising war’. Agents stated that the Liberal ads were highly effective in reminding voters of Keating’s worst side. There seems to be a perception that the Liberal Party’s negative ads in recent years have been more stridently negative, better produced and more effective than the Labor Party’s.\textsuperscript{40}

Within certain elements of the media, there also seems to be disappointment when advertising is perceived as not negative enough. One headline in 1998 was: ‘$30m fails to buy a bit of biff’.\textsuperscript{41} There were also complaints that Labor’s 1998 ads were ‘almost polite’ compared to their 1993 anti-GST ads.\textsuperscript{42} Leading ad agencies declared them ‘too soft’.\textsuperscript{43}

This popular perception that negative ads are powerful, an exciting part of the campaign, a good indicator of who will win, and an effective strategy for parties to use, has possibly only encouraged the parties’ further reliance on negative advertising over the past decade.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The hypothesis that negative advertising has increased was supported. The most negative elections of the past fifty years include 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2001. While negative ads have a long tradition in Australia, in these recent elections the parties have used a greater proportion of negative ads. The second hypothesis was supported in relation to TV ads—there has been a rise in the number of attacks on individuals and party leaders. When personal attacks are made, most focus on the leader’s policy or performance and not personal characteristics and anonymous announcers are the preferred method of delivering such attacks.
In recent years, there has been a focus on competence, record-in-office and economic management as key criteria for assessing the success or failure of a government. The success of a government is often measured in economic terms using criteria such as interest rates, unemployment statistics, taxes and foreign debt. Even when a party has been out of office for some years, the other party is able to refer back to its record in office as poor and this can be a damaging claim even several years later.

Negative ads use a number of strategies and techniques but their aim is to arouse intense emotional reactions rather than provide voters with information about how their opponent has performed. There is a focus on swinging voters who it is perceived may be swayed by emotive appeals. Even policy attacks, the least objectionable type of negative ads according to many commentators, focus on making appeals to emotions such as fear and greed. There is a perception that negative ads are a powerful weapon. The media represents and fuels this belief with headlines such as: ‘Fright the key to success says ad man’.44
8 Winning elections: The secrets of their success

Among politicians, their advisers and many journalists, political advertisements are considered a key to electoral victory. This chapter examines what can be discovered about the parties’ political strategies by examining the advertisements they produce. It considers their use of different media, whether there are geographical variations in their advertising, how they use language, images, emotive appeals and production techniques and how they target various groups such as women.

This chapter explains whether the three hypotheses outlined in chapter four were supported. These hypotheses were: 1) that the ALP and Liberal Party place most ads in the states where there are the greatest numbers of seats to be won (i.e. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland). That the National Party concentrates ads in their traditional constituencies (Queensland, regional areas in NSW and Victoria); 2) that the parties’ focus on different types of voters in terms of gender, ethnicity, occupation/class and; 3) that there are differences between the ads of challengers and incumbents. This chapter is divided into two sections. Part one reveals the results of the content analysis and ad-mapping. It examines media, targeting, incumbency, success and advertising style. Part two reports the results of the discourse analysis and examines how particular groups are targeted.

The central conclusions of this chapter are that there are some important differences between the ads used by incumbents compared to challengers. However, the parties use very similar geographic targeting strategies and their advertisements are frequently targeted towards the same groups with use of the same key symbols.
Part one: Advertising strategy

ADVERTISING AND ELECTORAL COMPETITION

Chapter five noted that there has been a decline in political advertisements in newspapers as the parties have come to rely more on television as their preferred media. However, this decline has not been a steady one. Instead, there have been peaks of high newspaper advertising. These peaks are significant, because if we consider that the parties’ purchase of advertising is an indicator of the extent of electoral competition, these peaks reveal on which elections the parties have focused their attention.

The 1975 election saw a massive increase in spending on advertising.1 The election was not only heavily contested on television but also in print and in the use of political ephemera such as buttons, stickers and t-shirts (Figure 8.1).2 It was ultimately dubbed ‘the most expensive election campaign in Australia’s history’.3

Figure 8.1 – Australian Labor Party election buttons, 1975

Source: National Library of Australia, Ephemera Collection
Figure 8.2 demonstrates that the elections between 1972 and 1975 were hotly contested. Although the Liberal Party usually spends more on newspaper advertising, the ALP placed more newspaper advertisements in 1963, 1975 and 1990 (Figure 8.2). The most significant gap between ALP and Liberal Party ad placement was in 1963. The ALP placed fifty-eight ads compared to the Liberals thirty-eight. Although Labor out-spent the Liberals on newspaper advertising that year, they gained only 47.4 per cent of the two-party preferred vote and lost ten seats in the House of Representatives. In 1975, Labor lost thirty seats and in 1990, although the ALP managed to remain in office, it lost eight seats (see Appendix D). This confirms that out-spending an opponent on advertising is not a guarantee of success.

Figure 8.2 – Total number of ad placements by parties in major metropolitan newspapers, 1949-2001

Note: This table includes total ad placements (including how-to-vote ads, information ads and other ads which were not included in the content analysis).

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Newspaper advertising is favoured more by the Liberal Party than the ALP. This may be a result of the traditional view that newspaper readership is higher among Liberal voters. The National Party uses very few advertisements in major metropolitan newspapers and in recent years has not purchased any advertising space in the major metropolitan newspapers studied (the *Age*, the *Sun* [later the *Herald-Sun*], the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Courier-Mail*, the *Advertiser*, the *Mercury*, the *West Australian*, the *Canberra Times* and the *NT News*).

A final significant feature of Figure 8.2, is the major drop in the Liberal Party’s use of newspaper advertising in 1984, following their election loss in 1983. Liberal newspaper advertising was high compared to the ALP between 1980 and 1983 but it plummeted following their 1983 loss of government. This perhaps reflected an unwillingness to expend large amounts on advertising when success was unlikely only a year after a popular incumbent government had been elected.

The popular understanding expressed by Mills and many others, is that during an election campaign, the parties target swinging voters. Swinging voters are more likely to read the more popular and larger circulation, tabloid newspapers. But in 2001, the parties placed as many ads in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as they did in the tabloid *Daily Telegraph* and they placed more ads in the *Age* than they did in the *Herald-Sun* (Figure 8.3). A comparison of the number of ads placed in the broadsheet *Age* and the tabloid *Sun* (later called the *Herald-Sun*) in Victoria over the period 1949-2001, also indicates that in most years, the parties placed almost precisely the same number of advertisements in the two newspapers. This reveals that the broadsheet/tabloid distinction is not overly significant for the parties. This seems to support the finding discussed in other chapters, that the parties view newspaper advertising as having a specific purpose. They see the medium as a way to reach voters they perceive as ‘rational’ and more inclined to ‘logical consideration’ including opinion leaders and elites. They therefore target broadsheet readers with newspaper ads even though these readers are unlikely to be the target audience of swinging voters, whom the parties primarily try to influence through TV advertising.
Figure 8.3 – Comparison of number of newspaper advertisements placed by all parties in 1949 and 2001

Note: No result is given for 1949 for the Daily Telegraph as data was not available from this newspaper for that particular year.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Interestingly, in 2001, there were more ads placed in the Mercury than in most of the newspapers found in more populous states such as Victoria and N.S.W. This was generally consistent over the period 1949-2001. This is unexpected given the relatively small electoral value of a state such as Tasmania which has only five House of Representative seats. It also seems odd considering the circulation of the Mercury is only about 49,882 compared to 431,847 for the Daily Telegraph or 566,500 for the Herald-Sun (see Table 2.3). This unusual finding could be related to the way in which the parties allocate their funding. As discussed in Chapter two, the Liberal and National parties have traditionally been less centralised and left more funding in the hands of state branches, so this finding may reflect the influence of state branch
spending. It may also reflect the fact that each state in Australia has an equal number of Senate votes and the parties may see a need to advertise even in small states in order to secure Senate votes.

The National Party

The National Party has stopped advertising in major metropolitan newspapers (Table 8.1). Over the period 1949-1993, the Party placed the bulk of its major metropolitan newspaper advertisements in the *Courier-Mail* in Queensland. The Party also focused on Victorian newspapers—the *Age* and the *Sun*—and made some sporadic attempts to court votes in other states and territories including Tasmania, Canberra and South Australia.7

Table 8.1 – National Party ad placement in major metropolitan newspapers, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>SMH</th>
<th>CM</th>
<th>Mer</th>
<th>CT</th>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>195</td>
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</table>

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Overall, the most noticeable element of the National Party’s advertising strategy is the move away from advertising in major metropolitan newspapers including the Queensland *Courier-Mail*. One of the major reasons for this is its increasing reliance on local newspapers. Local regional newspapers are now considered to be a far more effective media for targeting people sympathetic to the National Party’s rural agenda.

CENTRALISATION

In 1949, many of the ads which appeared in major metropolitan newspapers were produced in the state where they were published. There were differences in style and content. Some ads had a distinctive local flavour and dealt with matters of local or state interest. The ads produced in Queensland, for example, varied markedly from those in other states such as Victoria. But by 2001, all states and territories received most of the same generic, nationally produced advertisements. As campaigns have become more centralised, the parties have taken to using the same handful of newspaper advertisements which are repeated across the country.

The state of Queensland provides an interesting example of centralisation. Of the thirty-five ads placed in the *Courier-Mail* in Queensland in 1949, nine were national advertisements used across the country, but twenty-six were used only in Queensland. These ads were designed by the parties’ state branches and they differed from ads placed in other states. In particular, the ads produced in Queensland were often more sensational in their use of language and imagery. But by 1998, the five ads placed in the *Courier-Mail* were exactly the same ads published on exactly the same days, as those in the *Age*, the *Daily Telegraph* and other publications that year.
GEOGRAPHY

The parties use similar strategies when targeting different geographical areas. During the 1990s, the ALP and Liberal Party focused heavily on Victoria. The Liberal Party placed twenty-nine per cent of its ads in Victoria compared to twenty-six per cent for the ALP. In comparison, the parties both placed nineteen per cent of their ads in N.S.W. They also placed the same percentage of ads in Western Australia and South Australia (fifteen per cent and eleven per cent, respectively). The only very minor differences in geographical targeting were that the ALP placed slightly more ads in Queensland, Tasmania and the A.C.T. However, overall, the percentages were extremely similar, which indicates the parties have corresponding strategies on targeting geographical areas. During the 1990s, they both targeted exactly fifty-eight per cent of their advertisements to Victoria, N.S.W. and Queensland. Interestingly, this is somewhat less than might have been expected given that these states contain seventy-five per cent of the electoral divisions. Along with the finding discovered earlier about the high emphasis on some small states, this also indicates that the parties give consideration to other factors aside from a state’s perceived electoral value in terms of seats available to be won.

TARGETING

Although most literature suggests that both major parties focus on swinging voters during an election campaign, based on the different backgrounds, supporter bases and policies of the parties, it would be reasonable to expect that their advertisements might focus on different types of voters in terms of gender, ethnicity and occupation/class.

During the content analysis, ads which showed specific groups were identified. These groups included children, women, white-collar workers, blue-collar workers, elderly people, farmers, young people, and people from a non-English speaking background. The analysis showed that children have been a major theme of newspaper advertisements. In some years, such as 1958, over a quarter of political ads showed children.
In political ads, white-collar workers are shown more than blue-collar workers. This is perhaps because of an appeal to the ‘aspirational’ voter who wishes to be white-collar and may also reflect the fact that the majority of MPs are themselves middle-class and in a white-collar profession. Since 1980, no newspaper ads have shown blue-collar workers. Contrary to the Labor Party’s historical status as a party of the working class, blue-collar workers are not commonly shown in the Party’s advertisements. Although traditionally the ALP has shown this group slightly more than the Liberal Party, in recent years the presence of this group in ALP ads has declined.

Farmers were shown in some newspaper ads in 1949 and the 1950s but have never been a major theme. It was very popular to show young people, including students, in ads in the 1970s and there was also a focus on the elderly in the early 1970s. However, since 1993, there has been a noticeable decline in showing any of these major groups. Newspaper ads are showing white-collar workers and elites such as politicians and party leaders rather than members of broader Australian society. They are showing white Anglo Australians. Not one newspaper ad in the sample of over 1200 ads showed a Southern European, Eastern European, Middle-Eastern or Asian person, for example.
While in recent years, the parties have stopped using newspaper ads as a way of showing these groups, they are still showing them in TV ads. This again reveals some distinct differences in use of the two media. TV ads are viewed as a better vehicle for showing people-oriented themes and for creating emotional responses. They are therefore used to target particular audiences by representing members of that target group. In particular, women feature prominently in the TV ads of both major parties (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Most targeted group in television advertisements, 1972-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>White-collar workers</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Blue-collar workers</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women and elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Elderly and young people</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Women and blue-collar workers</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Most’ has been defined as the group which was shown most frequently out of all of the defined groups. In years left blank, no one group stood out as several (often up to five groups) were targeted or alternately, none of the listed groups appeared in ads that year.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
The parties show workers more in TV ads than in newspapers and, surprisingly, it is the ALP that shows white-collar workers most often (Figure 8.4). This perhaps suggests a middle-classification of the ALP. The prominence of white-collar workers in ALP TV ads rose steadily from 1990 to 1998. But in 2001, Labor’s focus on white-collar workers declined and it instead, focused on showing women in its TV ads. Contrary to what might have been expected, the Liberal Party rarely shows white-collar workers in TV ads. Only in 1993 did it emphasise this group.

**Figure 8.4 – Targeting of white collar workers in television ads, 1990-2001**

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
As befits a ‘labour’ party, the ALP is more likely to show blue-collar workers in TV ads as well as in newspapers (Figure 8.5). However, their prominence in ALP ads is only minor and the Liberal Party has also consistently shown blue-collar workers in its TV ads between 1990 and 1998. Indeed, Liberal advertising has been more likely to show blue-collar workers than white-collar workers. This may suggest that rather than appealing to their core supporters, the Liberal Party takes the white-collar voter as a given and uses TV advertising to focus on persuading non-supporters.

Figure 8.5 – Targeting of blue collar workers in television ads, 1990-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Both parties have maintained a fairly consistent focus on women in their TV advertising over the past decade (Figure 8.6). In 2001, this focus was at its peak with around eighty per cent of both parties' TV advertising showing women. The way in which women are portrayed in ads, including the settings in which they are shown, is discussed in Part two of this chapter.

Figure 8.6 – Targeting of women in television advertisements, 1990-2001

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp. 113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp. 110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Just as people from a non-English speaking background are not shown in newspaper ads, they have also been largely omitted from TV ads (Figure 8.7). However, in 1996, both parties showed people from a non-English speaking background in their TV advertisements: the Liberals in only one ad (‘For All of Us’) and the ALP in four advertisements which showed ‘Real Australians’. The ALP continued this focus in 1998 with advertisements such as ‘Kim Beazley Meeting Australians.’ In such ads, people from a non-English speaking background were shown only briefly and it was only in the ALP’s 1996 advertisements that a member of this group actually spoke.

Figure 8.7 – Targeting of people from Non-English speaking background in television advertisements, 1990-2001

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
INCUMBENCY STRATEGIES

In order to discover the incumbency strategies used in political advertising, television ads from 1980 to 2001 were assessed. Television was chosen because it is the most significant medium in political advertising in Australia and provides a good indication of the most recent strategies. The nine elections between 1980 and 2001 also included an appropriate mix of the parties as incumbents. During this period, the Liberal Party was the incumbent in four elections (1980, 1983, 1998, 2001) and the ALP was the incumbent in five elections (1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996).

Analysing TV ads over this period indicates that there are a number of strategies which are confined to incumbents (Table 8.3). These strategies were identified by Trent and Friedenberg and discussed in Chapters three and four. The most common incumbency strategy is to depend on surrogates to speak. This is particularly in relation to the use of testimonial ads where prominent people speak on behalf of the incumbent. In 1983, for example, the incumbent Liberal Party used ads which featured well-known sporting identities praising the Government.

Table 8.3 – Strategies used in television ads, 1980-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incumbent strategies</th>
<th>Incumbent n = 106</th>
<th>Challenger n = 96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of symbolic trappings</td>
<td>11 (10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency stands for legitimacy</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency and the office</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting with world leaders</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasising accomplishments</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on surrogates to speak</td>
<td>21 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenger strategies</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling for changes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasising optimism for the future</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking to traditional values</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the offensive position on issues</td>
<td>21 (20%)</td>
<td>25 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacking the record of opponents</td>
<td>23 (22%)</td>
<td>38 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results do not add up to 100 as some ads used none of these strategies.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Incumbent ads sometimes use the symbolic trappings of office, such as setting the ad in the Prime Minister’s office in order to convey power and authority. By focusing on the work of the incumbent Prime Minister, ads can imbue him/her with a sense of competency that comes with the office. This can be represented in a number of ways, such as showing the Prime Minister in a meeting with advisers, signing papers, making speeches or performing other ‘official’ duties.

Surprisingly, and contrary to the findings of Trent and Friedenberg, few incumbent ads emphasise the government’s accomplishments. While this strategy does occur more regularly in newspaper ads, it does not appear to be a particularly common feature of incumbent TV ads in Australia over the past two decades. This seems to be partly because many ads are negative and focus instead on denigrating the opposition, but also because many incumbent ads are prospective and emphasise the future rather than the past. They focus on setting out promises and stating what the government will do rather than on what it has already done.

Trent and Friedenberg point out that the office of the U.S. President evokes a number of strong associations, including a sense of mythology surrounding the roles of commander-in-chief and leader of the free world. Although this is obviously very different from the office of Prime Minister in Australia, the strategy of representing incumbency as standing for legitimacy is still possible. The strategy aims to evoke a sense that ‘the person who holds the office is perceived as the natural and logical leader.’ One way to do this is to show the incumbent consulting with world leaders. We have seen this strategy used in ads featuring both Fraser and Hawke when they were incumbents. These strategies are exclusive to incumbents as challengers can not appropriate the sense of legitimacy or the symbolic trappings of incumbency. The only incumbency strategy which challengers have used is to depend on surrogates to speak, and they have used this much less frequently.
Challenger strategies are not as exclusive and, with the exception of calling for changes, many challenger strategies are quite regularly used by incumbents also. The most common challenger strategies are to attack the record of the opponent and to take the offensive position on issues. These strategies are key elements of the challenger style in Australian ads and account for sixty-six per cent of challenger ads. It is not unexpected that challenger ads would focus foremost on attacking the record of the opponent. When the opponent is an incumbent government there is fertile ground for probing, challenging and attacking their record. Taking the offensive position on issues allows a challenger to point out what is wrong and cast doubt on the effectiveness of the government.

A close analysis of the incumbent and challenger TV ads from 1980 to 2001 also reveals that incumbents are more likely to focus on images rather than issues (Table 8.4).

Table 8.4 – Emphasis of ad (issue or image) in television ads, 1980-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis of the ad</th>
<th>Incumbent $n=106$</th>
<th>Challenger $n=96$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>issues</td>
<td>43 (41%)</td>
<td>46 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>images</td>
<td>63 (59%)</td>
<td>50 (52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See Appendix F for detailed information about how ‘issue’ and ‘image’ were defined and measured.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Neither incumbents nor challengers used many positive ads from 1980 to 2001. However, because of their emphasis on attacking the record of the opponent, challengers were more likely to use negative ads (Table 8.5). They also used slightly more rebuttal ads in order to counter criticisms from their opponent. Incumbents used more positive ads, because of their emphasis on having surrogates praise them, on showing the symbolic trappings of office, and on emphasising competency and their record in office. Incumbents were also slightly more likely to use comparative ads in order to contrast their record, policies, experience and qualifications with their challenger’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis of the ad</th>
<th>Incumbent $n = 106$</th>
<th>Challenger $n = 96$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>24 (23%)</td>
<td>16 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>65 (61%)</td>
<td>64 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuttal</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See Appendix F for detailed information about how ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ were defined and measured.

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

While neither incumbents nor challengers tried to emphasise their partisan ties, incumbent ads were significantly more likely to focus on their own party leader (Table 8.6). The incumbent party leader, as Prime Minister, usually has a higher profile than the challenger. They are able to draw on resources such as high name recognition and be associated with the symbolic trappings of the office, such as consulting with world leaders and fulfilling official duties. Many of these incumbent strategies rely on using the Prime Minister as the face of the incumbent government. However, as we saw in Chapter six, if leaders are particularly unpopular, even if they are prime ministers, they can be de-emphasised or even entirely omitted from their party’s advertising.
Table 8.6 – Emphasis of ad (party or leader) in television advertisements, 1980-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis of the ad</th>
<th>Incumbent $n = 106$</th>
<th>Challenger $n = 96$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>35 (33%)</td>
<td>23 (24%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Party’ ads were defined as those where the ad mentions the party’s own name (Question 65 on Codesheet at Appendix E). ‘Leader’ ads were defined as those where the ad shows the party’s own leader (Question 40 on Codesheet at Appendix E).

Source: Original data derived from author’s application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

Regardless of incumbency status, the parties share a number of common strategies. They both place great emphasis on evaluation and testing of advertising effectiveness and on flexibility in producing and scheduling ads. The parties use various methods to evaluate the effectiveness of ads, including focus groups before the ads are aired and telephone research after the ads are broadcast.¹⁴

Flexibility is a key element of modern campaigns. It has become crucial to be able to produce ads quickly in response to changing circumstances and get them to air quickly.¹⁵ As Craig Johnstone points out, in terms of scheduling, both parties avoid ‘locking themselves into a rigid schedule of ads preferring to wait for the results of focus group testing to determine an ad’s impact on the electorate’.¹⁶

While great emphasis has been accorded to how the parties use political ads to win votes, ads also have other, less obvious, uses. According to internal Liberal Party research, political ads play an important role in promoting satisfaction among party workers.¹⁷ Political ads can keep up the morale of party workers and provide information which campaign workers need to persuade voters.
SUCCES S

It is interesting to consider whether any political advertising strategies are more associated with election victors. Therefore, comparison was made of the strategies used by winners and losers of each election between 1980-2001. For most of the elections in this period, the incumbent was the winner—the only exceptions were the Liberals in 1983 and the ALP in 1996. Therefore, many of the findings were very similar to that found for incumbents and challengers. As with incumbents, the ads used by electoral winners were more often based on image. Both winners and losers used a high proportion of negative ads, over sixty per cent, and winners ads were slightly more likely to be positive. Interestingly, the only major difference was that the ads used by the losing party were more likely to emphasise party affiliation (twelve per cent compared to six per cent for winners). It was only on this criterion that there was an important difference between incumbents/winners and challengers/losers. Winners deemphasised party (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7 – Emphasis of ad (partisan or leader) in television advertisements, 1980-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis of the ad</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Loser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partisan</td>
<td>n = 82</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>26 (32%)</td>
<td>32 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: As for Table 9.1, ‘party’ ads were defined as those where the ad mentioned the party’s own name (Question 65 on the Codesheet at Appendix E). ‘Leader’ ads were defined as those where the ad showed the party’s own leader (Question 40 on Codesheet at Appendix E).

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).
Chapter six revealed that there is decreasing emphasis on party in advertisements and this is fuelled by a perception that attaching partisan labels is detrimental. This perception seems to be supported by this finding that deemphasising party identity is a strategy which is favoured by electoral victors.

Winning campaigns

Because incumbents generally win elections, it is also worth very briefly considering what was special or unique about the ads used in elections which saw a change of government: that is, 1949, 1972, 1983 and 1996.\(^\text{18}\)

In both 1949 and 1996, when the Coalition was successful in defeating an incumbent Labor government, they used more negative ads than the ALP. In 1996, the negative ads were more personalised and focused on the opponent party leader. Conversely, in both 1972 and 1983, when the ALP was successful in taking office from the Coalition, it used more positive advertising. In both of their winning campaigns, the ALP’s ads were more personalised but in the positive sense of highlighting its own leader rather than the negative sense of denigrating the opponent party leader. In 1972, the Party emphasised Whitlam and portrayed him as warm and approachable. In 1983, there was a major emphasis on Hawke, who was portrayed as the leader with the ability to bring people together and unite Australia.

Aside from these elections which changed the government, there were also other important years for political advertising—years where ads were thought to have made the difference to the election result, in particular, 1980 and 1993. A common theme among ads in these elections was the use of fear. In 1980 and 1993, the challenging party was perceived to be ahead in the polls and was viewed as likely to win the election. However, a strong scare campaign mounted by the incumbent government, based on the ‘risk’ of electing their opponent and paying more taxes, was communicated through advertising.\(^\text{19}\)
SIGNIFICANT ELECTIONS

In Chapter three, significant elections were defined in terms of election outcomes and voting, such as whether they were large-margin elections, whether they saw a significant change in seats or whether they were part of an electoral realignment. Combining data from the previous three chapters provides some insight into which elections have been most significant in terms of changes in political advertising. Table 8.8 outlines significant elections over the past fifty years in terms of electoral competition, image advertising, personalisation and negativity.

Table 8.8 – Significant elections for changes in political advertising, 1949-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most newspaper ads placed</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most personalised ads(a)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most negative ads</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Defined as those ads with no mention of any political party. Note this also could have been defined in a different way such as those ads which show their own leader the most.

Note: The table represents the major parties combined and TV and newspaper ads combined.

Source: Original data derived from author's application of the research method (outlined pp.113-28) on the data sample for this study (outlined pp.110-13). A full list of all advertisements used in the sample is also outlined in Appendix G (pp.622-75).

The combined data reveals that the 1970s saw some of the most fiercely contested elections, but the election of 1949 was also highly contested. Image-based advertising was high in 1955, re-emerged in 1983 but was particularly high in 1996 and 2001. The most non-partisan advertisements were used in the past four preceding elections between 1993 and 2001. Negative advertising was high in 1951 but became a significant force in the 1993, 1996 and 1998 elections. This reveals that despite conceptions about a 'golden age', the 1949, 1951 and 1955 elections were among our
most fiercely contested, image-based and negative campaigns. However, it also shows that the 1990s saw significant changes which led political advertising to become more consistently personalised, negative and image-based.

AD STYLES

A number of different styles of television ad have been identified in overseas research.20 Many of these styles are also evident in Australian political ads. Some styles, such as the ‘talking head’ or ‘jingle’ ad, are now out-dated and rarely used. Other styles such as the vox-pop and cinema verité continue to be popular.

Talking head

The ‘talking head’ style of ad was once the most common type of cinema or TV ad. It continued to be used into the 1980s and 1990s. In 1983, Fraser was shown in one Liberal ad making a mini-policy speech on unions in which he talked directly to camera. In 1987, Howard was shown in a classic talking head pose, only his head and shoulders visible and speaking directly to camera. In 1990, the ALP also used some talking head ads in which Bob Hawke was shown seated at his desk.

This style of ad was still in use in 1996 when the ALP did a series of ads showing Prime Minister Keating ‘at home’. Keating talked directly to camera, but the setting had changed from the prime ministerial office (used for Fraser and Hawke), to the garden setting of Keating’s home. The ALP also made one talking head ad in 2001, the ‘Kim Beazley’s Plan’ ad discussed in Chapter five. However, this was a more modern take on the style—it included uplifting music, shifting camera angles and a bank of TVs showed Beazley in the background as the real Beazley talked. Unlike earlier ads, Beazley did not talk directly to the camera, but off to the side.
Testimonial

The testimonial or endorsement ad is, as we saw, a popular incumbent strategy in which prominent people speak on behalf of the party or party leader. One of the most famous examples of this is the 1983 series of testimonials made on behalf of the Liberal Party, performed by Alan Jones, Peter Brock, Tracey Wickham and John Newcombe. The ALP used testimonial ads in 1977 featuring South Australian Premier Don Dunstan, N.S.W Premier Neville Wran and the then ACTU leader, Bob Hawke. In neither of these cases did the testimonials afford the party any success—the Liberals lost in 1983 and the ALP lost in 1977. In both cases, the party leader’s unpopularity was a driving force behind the need for others to give testimonials. If the leaders were popular, they would have been the focus of the ad. Instead, resorting to engaging others to speak on their behalf, signals that this strategy is more about crisis management, to be used when the leader has a real image problem, rather than a winning strategy.

Dramatised

Dramatised ads are obviously staged and use actors to act out a fictitious, dramatised event. Perhaps the most famous example of this was the 1984 ALP ad that dramatised a segment of the TV show Mastermind, which saw the host ask the contestant a question about who would be the better Prime Minister. The contestant replied: ‘Bob Hawke’. The Liberal Party responded with a rebuttal ad of its own version of Mastermind which screened after The Great Debate. In its version, the contestant answered: ‘Yes, I saw the Debate. Andrew Peacock would make a better Prime Minister’.
**Jingle ads**

The slogan ad has been defined by Montague Kern as ‘those that contain no policy statement, why statement nor any answer’. Although many ads would adhere to this definition, the slogan ad is usually positive and uplifting and relies on a slogan or jingle to carry the message. ‘It’s Time’ would be the most famous example of this type of ad, along with the Liberals’ 1975 ‘Turn on the Lights’, and the ALP’s ‘Let’s Stick Together’ ads in 1987. In the 1980s and 1990s, the slogan ad became much less popular. However, the importance of this type of ad and its function is revealed in an internal Liberal Party document, which recommended in 1980 that, ‘if jingles have dated, a new method of “uplifting” the voters needs to be found’. But in 1996, the Liberals’ ‘For all of Us’ ad still relied on a jingle to ‘uplift’ voters.

**Documentary**

L. Patrick Devlin described a documentary ad as one which presents the accomplishments of the candidate. In Australia, documentary style ads have been focused less on presenting the life-story of the party leader than on showing the lives of ‘real Australians’. Camera angles, lighting and editing give the ad a ‘documentary’ feel.

This style of ad has been particularly popular with the Liberal Party, which has used it to show a family finding it difficult to pay their bills under a Labor Government in 1987. In 1993, it also showed a woman voicing concern that her son could not find a job. In 1990, the federal director of the Liberal Party, Tony Eggleton, described one of the Liberals’ documentary-style ads as ‘the strongest piece of political communication in Australia’s history’.
Vox-pop

Vox-pop (voice of the people) ads are called ‘man [sic]-in-the-street’ ads by Devlin who defines them as ads in which ‘real people talk positively about the candidate or negatively about the opponent’. These ads have been particularly popular in Australia. Unlike some of the earlier styles such as jingle and talking heads, which are now considered old-fashioned, the popularity of vox-pops has been maintained.

In 1975 and 1977, the ALP used vox-pop ads including an ad with three workers describing how they had been unable to find work in their chosen fields because of high unemployment. The 1987 ‘Wendy Woods’ ad also used a vox-pop style. In recent years, we have seen not only the ALP’s ‘Australians talk about...’ series of ads in 1996, but also the similarly titled ‘Real Australians talk about...’ series in 2001.

The Liberal Party has also used vox-pop ads. In 1993, the Liberal Party used an ad which had a ‘rough and ready’ edge to it because it was shot on a hand-held camera. The ad showed a worker in a hard-hat complaining about the Labor government, including his comment that ‘they’ve lost the plot. They’ve been in too long.’ In 1998, the Liberals used a vox-pop ‘Work for the Dole’ ad, which showed young people in work settings commending the ‘Work for the Dole’ scheme.

Cinema Verité

Devlin described cinema vérité as ads which showed the candidate interacting with people in a real-life setting. There are a number of ads from both parties which attempt to do this. In 1977, in ‘Get Australia Working’, Whitlam was shown at a conference table meeting with his Ministers. In 1990, Andrew Peacock was shown talking to men and women at a function. In 1998, Kim Beazley was shown meeting Australians and speaking at a lectern at the ALP Policy Launch. In 2001, in ‘Tough Decisions 2’, John Howard was shown meeting with advisers and walking on stage to deliver a speech. These ads purport to show a ‘slice of life’ which is unscripted.
Other ad styles

In recent years, the Liberal Party has tended to use an advertising style which is quite distinct. Starting in 1996, the party’s advertising agents suggested a style which was ‘like a doughnut...[The ads] would all have the same overall shape, but depending on the issue each would have “different jam” in the middle.’ It used a basic construction style and formula so that ads could be put together and tested very quickly.28 Both parties have also gravitated to a more ‘street-smart’ style of ad which uses hand-held cameras, vox-pops or street and home settings rather than studio settings. The parties have moved away from the jingle and dramatised ads. There is a perception that a more low budget, unpolished look comes across ‘as more sincere’ 29

In 1996 and 1998, the Liberals came up with a distinctive style of quick ads with split screens, written text popping up from the bottom of screen, bold white lettering on bright red backgrounds and screen stamps such as the stamp stating; ‘You paid for it!’. The 1993 election convinced the federal director of the Liberal Party that he wanted ‘retail’ not ‘corporate’ advertisements. He wanted to scrap the big-budget look and instead get ‘hard, fast ads belting out the message—as he put it, “some guy screaming about soap powder...”30 In 1996, the Liberals ads were hard-hitting, cheap and with a quick turn-around time. They were played only for as long as was needed to get the message across. But by 2001, when the Liberals had been incumbent for six years, this style was no longer appropriate and instead we saw, softer, more documentary-style ads with soothing voices amid talk of terror, insecurity and ‘tragic events’.
Part two: Winning strategies

We have seen in Part one of this chapter, that women are a major target of political advertising. This section considers how women and other groups have been represented in political ads.

WOMEN

Even in 1949, women were a major target audience and political advertisements would appeal to them in quite direct ways. In Figure 8.8, a direct appeal to women seems to come from Menzies himself. Menzies appealed to women on the basis of their self-interest claiming, for example, ‘Australian women! This is what we offer you...’. Promises made in the ad included to ‘end shortages and blackmarkets’, ‘lower prices’ and ‘homes and home ownership at reasonable cost’. Shopping and homes were seen as key feminine interests.

Figure 8.8 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949

![AUSTRALIAN WOMEN! THIS IS WHAT WE OFFER YOU...]

- An end to shortages and blackmarkets.
- Lower prices... I.E. WORTH FOR EVERY £ YOU SPEND.
- Child endowment for the first child (and no deduction on the basic wages).
- Preventive medicine, diagnostic clinics.
- New hospitals and nursing...
- Homes and home ownership at reasonable cost.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO FULL EMPLOYMENT, HIGHER REAL WAGES, EXPANDED SOCIAL SERVICES.

VOTE 1 LIBERAL

AND FOR THE SENATE
- SPOONER
- REID
- McCALLUM
- TATE

AND BE SURE TO PUT AN 'X' NEXT TO YOUR NAME ON YOUR BALLOT PAPER.
Political ads tried to empathise with women in order to win their support, but this was often done in a manner which was patriarchal and both reflected and reinforced broader gender relations. The ‘Housewife’s headache’, represented in Figure 8.9, was making ends meet and paying bills. The text of this ad was targeted to housewives, in particular: ‘The problem of high living costs presses more heavily on the housewife than on anyone else... when she has finished her purchases, she is shocked at the little she has left. She knows too the hopelessness of providing for adequate household replacements—linen, floor-coverings...to say nothing of the children.’ This ad was also aimed at financial self interest: ‘Work it out for yourself...Are you really better off?’

Figure 8.9 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
The Liberal’s campaign of 1949 emphasised the plight of women who were ‘tired of strikes, shortages [and] high prices’ (Figure 8.10). The key promises offered to women were: ‘lower prices, more homes, schools, hospitals.’

Figure 8.10 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
By 1954, the Menzies Government had been in power for six years and the Labor opposition questioned the Government's fulfilment of promises made to women back in 1949, particularly their promise to 'put value back into the pound' (Figure 8.11). Labor advertising also targeted women, telling them: ‘The housewife is always better off under Federal Labor Government’. It also appealed to them in much the same way as the Liberal Party had—through their purses and as the person in charge of household duties. Labor also saw women as consumers, used shopping as a key theme and promised to give women 'a better deal'.

Figure 8.11 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1954
The Country Party expressed a similar view of women. In Figure 8.12, the economic prosperity of the country is represented as being a well-dressed, happy woman whose arms are full of shopping purchases. Unlike the food items shown in the Labor Party ad which were basic items for daily survival, this ad represented the purchase of luxury items and used them to signify prosperity.

Figure 8.12 – Country Party advertisement, 1961
In political advertising, women’s happiness often equated to a load of parcels or a full shopping trolley which signified abundance (Figure 8.13). The happy mother dressed in heels to go to the supermarket. She was decidedly middle-class, the custodian of the family’s household finances and the loving mother. Two themes were linked—money and happiness—with claims that: ‘The ALP will put buying power back in the family purse!’, ‘Vote Labor for a happier way of life!’.

Figure 8.13 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1961
By 1975, there was a new emphasis on issues other than the home and household finances, and a new attempt to appeal to a burgeoning feminism (Figure 8.14). The ALP asked women whether is was ‘worth the risk… that a Liberal Government would put women back into what Malcolm Fraser consider their place’. It warned that ‘equal pay for women and no sales tax on the pill’ would come under threat. The ad also included a critique of Fraser as sexist, which was designed to provoke women’s wrath: ‘Fraser has already stated that women members of parliament “add a bit of colour” to the place. That’s about the extent of his understanding of women.’ It also warned women to ‘Remember, The Labor Government was the first Government in Australia’s history to recognise the equality of women, Do you really want to go back to the “good old days”. Well, do you?’

Figure 8.14 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1975
The 1975 ad mentioned equal pay suggesting women had begun to be considered as workers, but it also mentioned mother’s benefits and maternity leave and, in many ways, women were still viewed primarily as mothers. In Figure 8.15, a woman was shown with her children. This Liberal ad contrasted what the mother ‘with two kids’ would receive from Labor as compared with the Liberal Party. The headline appealed again to financial self-interest and the text of the ad pointed out that there would be: ‘$28 more in mother’s hand, every month.’

**Figure 8.15 – Liberal newspaper advertisement, 1977**

![Liberal Advertisement](image)

For a mother with two kids, the difference between Labor's child endowment and Liberal's family allowance is $7 per week. $28 more in mother's hand, every month. If politicians talk in deep numbers, Malcolm Fraser gets on with the job.

**LIBERAL. DOING THE JOB.**

In 1993, the ALP also used the image of a pregnant mother in a matronly smock in a TV ad titled: ‘A Mother Speaks Out’.
A mother speaks out

Mother:

My baby's due in August.

It'll be our third.

With Medicare the way it is now, all I need when the kids are sick is this card.

Dr Hewson would change all that.

He'd take away bulk-billing and dismantle Medicare.

One sick kid, that's $32 cash up front to see the doctor.

If they all get the flu at once, $96 up front.

Ordinary Australians can't afford you Dr Hewson.
‘A Mother Speaks Out’ appealed to women on an emotive level of protecting their children but also on another level of financial self-interest about how much that care would cost. The woman speaking in the ad changed from happy and shy about her new baby, to fiercely protective about what would happen to her children without Medicare. She indicted Dr Hewson personally: ‘He’d take away bulk-billing...’ She purported to speak on behalf of ‘ordinary Australians’ who ‘can’t afford’ Dr Hewson. In order to represent this ‘ordinariness’, her language was unpolished: ‘One sick kid, that’s $32...’

The unpolished speech of the mother is very reminiscent of ‘Whingeing Wendy’ in the 1997 ‘Wendy Woods’ ads. Although Wendy’s criticism of John Howard was strident, she was not shown on a podium, making a speech to a crowd. Instead, she was shown in her kitchen. In 1987, the Liberals showed a woman at home in her kitchen talking with her husband about family finances. In their 1993 documentary style ads, the Liberals showed a woman in her kitchen talking about her son’s future. In 1998, a woman was shown talking to Kim Beazley in her kitchen. In 2001, in the ALP’s ‘Real Australians talk about...’ TV ad series, a woman talking out about education talks directly to camera but the setting is, again, her kitchen (Figure 8.16).

Figure 8.16 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Real Australians talk about education’, 2001
Women are frequently shown in the kitchen, or sometimes in supermarkets or shops, but they are rarely shown in industry or in their places of employment. In political advertisements, they are often defined in relation to others; in particular, by their relationships with men or their family relationships—as wives, partners and mothers.\textsuperscript{31}

**CHILDREN**

Part one of this chapter outlined how children have been frequently represented in political ads and particularly in newspaper ads. In a 1999 study of the symbolic use of children in U.S. presidential campaign advertising, Sherr found that children are often used symbolically in ads in conjunction with certain issues. Sherr found these issues could be divided into at least five major categories: economic insecurity, poverty, crime, war, and hope for the future.\textsuperscript{32}

In Australian political advertising, no ads were located that associated children with crime. The only major example of associating children with war was in 1966 in ALP TV advertisements on Vietnam, which showed emotive images of Vietnamese children. In Australia, it has been far more common to use children to symbolise hope for the future and the need for parents to act responsibly. However, children have also been used to symbolise concern for the future, while some ads use all of these strategies.
A 1958 Labor Party ad (Figure 8.17), showed a group of children at a school crossing and asked: ‘What is best for your children?’ Fear and threat were implicit in the question: ‘What kind of Australia will your children inherit? Is their legacy to be one of unemployment, of a struggle to live decently, of domination by governments of the selfish Menzies type... in a country virtually defenceless...’ The children also symbolise hope for the future, expressed as a place where Labor policies will ensure ‘contented family life, full employment...security and happiness’.

Figure 8.17 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1958
The 1958 ALP ad show in Figure 8.18 used the same strategy of firstly pointing out the fear and pessimism. 'This could be your child, born into a time of gross inflation, where the rearing of children is too often a difficult struggle... He has been born under a Government which has been callously indifferent to the urgent needs of parents and families...' Then, the positive hope for the future followed: 'Labor will re-create the kind of Australia in which you will be proud and contented to rear your children'.

Figure 8.18 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1958
In the same ALP 'Is it worth the risk' series which targeted women in 1975, the ad shown in Figure 8.19 used a child to symbolise 'risk'. In this ad, the risk was identified as: 'The risk that the children of Australia will once again be treated like second class citizens.' This ad used a traditional criticism of the Liberal Party. It stated: 'You only have to look at the record of the Liberals in the twenty-three years they were in office. They always put big business a long way in front of children on their list of priorities'. The ad targets a number of voters by stating: 'If you're a parent, or a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle, please think very carefully about the way you vote...The risks are very grave.'

Figure 8.19 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1975
In 1977, the ALP used children to symbolise the danger of uranium mining. In a TV ad called ‘Babies’, two babies in nappies were shown playing with a hand grenade. One child puts the grenade in his mouth (Figure 8.20). This ad used a deliberately shocking image to arouse an intense emotional reaction.

Figure 8.20 – ALP television advertisement, ‘Babies’, 1977
In 1980, the Liberal Party used images of children playing on a beach to underscore their message: ‘Make sure they grow up in a growing Australia’ (Figure 8.21) The children were used to highlight the threat of economic insecurity if the Labor Party was elected: ‘Labor’s government interference would hold back our economy, our nation and our children’. Showing the children naked was probably meant to symbolise the carefree and innocence of childhood. However, it is unlikely such an image would be used in a political ad today.

Figure 8.21 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1980
The main example which used children to represent poverty was a National Party advertisement from 1987 (Figure 8.22). The ad contrasted a photo of three children—messy, glum and destitute under Labor—with another photo showing the children smiling, neatly-dressed and well-groomed, representing ‘a future of jobs’ under the National Party. The ad included an appeal from the children to voters that ‘Today, our future is in your hands.’

Figure 8.22 – National Party newspaper advertisement, 1987
RELIGION

Very few Australian political ads have dealt with the topic of religion directly. The separation of church and state is a strong and enduring theme in Australian politics and even when an ad did deal with the two themes, the Labor Party felt obliged to point out that ‘Labor strongly resents any intrusion of Religion into politics’ (Figure 8.23). The ad included a quotation from ‘His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy’ that ‘he wishes the A.L.P well’ and asked Queensland Catholics to consider whether Cardinal Gilroy would make this statement if there were Communist influences in the party as claimed by Labor’s opponent. The ad finished with a final regret that Labor had to ‘enter this distasteful issue’.

Figure 8.23 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1958
FARMERS

Farmers and farming have not been major topics of political ads. However, farmers have appeared—usually in a stereotypical manner—in some ads. In 1949, the Liberal Party warned farmers that the ALP could collectivise farms if it gained government. In Figure 8.24, a farmer in Akubra hat and checked shirt states: ‘We’re the “Bunnies” under Socialism’ and ‘I’m voting Liberal because if the rabbits don’t get my land the SOCIALISTS will!’

Figure 8.24 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949

![Image of Liberal Party advertisement]
Figure 8.25 was a more optimistic, patriotic version of the farmer, who also wore an Akubra, but this time, he was pictured on a tractor. He stated: 'There's a great future for this country—your land and mine!' However, the threat was still made explicit. Voters were warned: 'Don't let socialism destroy our heritage.' This ad promised farmers a Liberal Government would spend 250 million pounds on national works such as water, light and power. It also made reference to the White Australia policy. It promised that the Liberals would have a 'vigorous immigration policy, but with 'migrants of the right type' and there would be 'preservation of White Australia [but] with a humane approach.' This indicated that the Liberals viewed non-white immigration as a key concern for farmers.

Figure 8.25 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
In 1977, the ALP used an image of a locked farm to represent rural decline (Figure 8.26). The headline of the ad described how ‘every three hours...a farmer stops working his land.’ As with the other ads discussed, farmers are presumed to be men. The text of the ad described the Fraser Government’s failure to assist farmers and claimed that farm incomes had fallen by nine per cent in two years.

Figure 8.26 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1977
One of the most recent representations of a farmer was in a 1998 Liberal TV advertisement. It was the same standard representation of the farmer as a white male with an akubra, sitting on a tractor that has featured since 1949 (Figure 8.27).

Figure 8.27 – Liberal TV advertisement, ‘Only the Howard Government’, 1998
ELDERLY PEOPLE

In political ads, older people are alternately represented as happy and content as a result of government policy or vulnerable and in need of protection. As with other groups, the aim of many ads is to appeal to their financial self-interest but also to use them as a symbol of how much the party ‘cares’. In positive ads, there is an attempt to show happy older people who have benefited from the Government’s initiatives, particularly financial benefits such as pensions increases (Figure 8.28).

Figure 8.28 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1972

In less than two years
the McMahon Government
has increased
pensions by 29%
(up $4.50 per week)

Most importantly, the
increase in standard age
pensions has been more
than three times the
amount of any previous
increase. All pension levels
have been increased to
give pensioners the
highest buying
power ever and ensure
we are on our way to
increasing that power
even more. The amount of
increased pension
will be visible in
weekly pay cheques.
Superannuation
pension and supplement
will be increased
— the range that many
people will notice in a
large increase in their
pensions and many
people will benefit
for a pension for the first
time.
And the Government
has also greatly increased
benefits for those people
receiving over pensioner
benefits, and some former
superannuation recipients
will receive a pension for
the first time.

109 Community Dr., St. George. N.B.
In challenger ads there is an attempt to portray older people as vulnerable, worried and neglected by the incumbent government. Figure 8.29, a Labor Party ad, promises older Australians an automatic pension. The woman shown in the ad looks concerned and vulnerable. She has with her the standard prop of a cup of tea, which was also present in Figure 8.28.

Figure 8.29 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1972

From the people who pioneered pensions: now, the automatic pension.

It's time. Vote 1
Australian Labor Party
In 1984, the Liberal Party used a TV ad focusing on Labor’s plans to introduce an ‘Assets Test’. The ad emphasised the vulnerability of an elderly woman in understanding how the form related to her. Distressed, she phones her son for help.
Assets test

(Sound of letter shoved through mail slot).

Elderly woman (thinking):

Where are my glasses?
I hope it's not that new assets test.

Elderly woman (reading from form, sounding confused):

"Value of assets.
Jewellery... what?
Stamp collections..
Coins...
Vehicles...
Boats...
Is my home on a normal size block?"

Elderly woman (speaks into an old fashioned black telephone):

What do these questions mean, son?

Male voice over:

If you want to stand up for your family against Labor's cruel assets test... vote Liberal.

Andrew Peacock:

Because we'll get rid of Labor's assets test.

Elderly woman (still on telephone, sounds distressed):

You'll have to help me son.
In 1987, the Liberal Party as the challenger also viewed elderly people as a group in need of protection. The text of the ad was a personal statement from Howard that: 'I will never turn my back on the elderly...Older people have worked all their lives. They’ve earned the right to a secure, peaceful life, and I’m going to protect that' (Figure 8.30).

Figure 8.30 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1987
The elderly were also used as a means of criticising the Labor government in 1990 (Figure 8.31). Using a question and answer format, the Liberal ad asked: 'Why does Labor turn our Elderly into second-class citizens?' The stated answer was that 'Labor has deserted our elderly people... they have been short changed.' The use of a money metaphor—'short changed'—taps into themes of discontent, neglect and unfairness as well as missing out financially. The ad was personalised to older voters and promised that a 'Liberal Government will give you back your rights and dignity.'

Figure 8.31 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1990
For incumbent governments, showing older people in happy poses is a way of pointing out the government’s compassion and success in taking care of older people by, for example, increasing pension entitlements. More frequently however, elderly people are used as a tool for criticising the incumbent government—to claim that the government has failed to protect the elderly. Older people are portrayed as frail, vulnerable and dependent on others. This fits in with the social construction of what it means to fall within this particular social category.
RACE AND ETHNICITY

As discussed in Part one, very few political ads show members from a non-English speaking background. It is also true that there have rarely been any ads printed in other languages in the mainstream press. Figure 8.32, a Liberal Party ad run in Tasmania, is one such ad. It included messages in several different languages however, the last portion of the ad was in English and stated: ‘Vote Liberal. Because a vote for the Labour [sic] Party is a vote for Socialism, and Socialism leads to Communism. You know what Communism means—poverty’. It exploited fears of communism as people had experienced it in their own countries.

Figure 8.32 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1963
Although the vast majority of ads focus on a perception of Australia as white, in recent years, there has been a very small attempt to show people from other backgrounds. In the 1996 ALP TV ad, 'Australians Talk about Industrial Relations', after one woman stated: 'I reckon we'd all need lawyers to explain Howard's work contracts', the woman pictured in Figure 8.33, sounded very worried and replied: 'We can't afford lawyers'.

Figure 8.33 – ALP TV advertisement, Australians talk about Industrial relations, 1996
Of the entire sample of TV ads, only one Liberal TV ad showed people from a non-white background and this was in 1996. In the one ad designed to be positive and uplifting that year, 'For all of Us', a smiling mother, father and son are shown in a shop (Figure 8.34). This shot was immediately followed by a shot of a smiling John Howard in order to make a positive association between Howard and the family.

Figure 8.34 – Liberal Party TV advertisement, For all of us, 1996

'For All of Us' also showed a young man running to catch up with Howard as he was walking down the street (Figure 8.35). The moment appears totally unscripted as the camera was focused on Howard and had to turn to capture the man running up. Howard turned around, waited and then talked to the man—both were shown smiling. This was the last shot of the ad and the slogan 'For all of Us' came up over this last visual of the man with Howard. The deliberate inclusion of this man and the family in the shop were unusual and the discrepancy was noted by some journalists who saw it as a cynical tactic. Niki Savva stated the Liberal ad had featured Asian Australians 'in an obvious attempt to counter any lingering resentment' over Howard's 'disastrous 1988 foray into immigration control' when Howard had recommended limiting Asian immigration.34
Although four ALP ads in 1996 and seven ads in 1998 showed people from a non-English speaking background, the ALP did not show any members of this group in their 2001 ads. In the wake of public concern about border security and ‘illegal’ immigration, the ALP may have chosen to deliberately avoid showing members of this group in order to avoid association with immigrants.

When people from a non-English speaking background were shown in ads such as the 1998 ‘Kim Beazley Meeting Australians’, as with the ‘For all of Us’ ad, the people shown were only featured in a second’s glimpse and they did not speak. Their inclusion was more about symbolism—to represent Australia’s multi-culturalism and its supposed openness, tolerance and inclusion. It was more about window-dressing than giving them an ability to speak about their concerns, as other Australians such as Wendy Woods or the mother who ‘spoke out’ had been given.
BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS: THE WORKING CLASS

Most political ads are focused on representing the middle-class and avoid representing blue-collar workers. However, there have been some representations of this group. In 1975, a Liberal Party advertisement showed a man in a hard hat, an open-necked shirt, with his sleeves rolled up and carrying a shovel on a building site (Figure 8.36). The ad was about strikes, 'wages lost' and 'working days lost' so the worker is actually shown as idle and not working, as a result of Labor's 'three dark years'.

Figure 8.36 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1975
In 1993, the ALP used an advertisement called ‘Just Sign Here, Adam’ to show a young male worker who was being pressured to sign an employment contract (Figure 8.37). In the ad, ‘Adam’ was concerned about the new contract he was being forced to sign by his employer, as it cut his wages. The young worker was shown as vulnerable and a target of exploitation.

Figure 8.37 – ALP TV advertisement, ‘Just sign here, Adam’, 1993

The Liberals’ ‘For All of Us’ ad aimed at representing inclusiveness. Apart from showing Asian Australians, it also showed a group of blue-collar workers (Figure 8.38). The men were only shown for a moment, and although they were looking directly at the camera, they were shown in a street setting to give the moment the appearance of being spontaneous, unscripted and unpackaged. The moment seems to be an attempt to show an endorsement of the Liberals by a group more traditionally associated with their opponent.

Figure 8.38 – Liberal Party TV advertisement, For all of us, 1996
The rare representations of blue-collar workers shown in political ads are all masculine representations. Like farmers, blue-collar workers are perceived to be men. Although the group is a traditional Labor constituency, the Liberal Party has also appropriated images of them.

THE FAMILY

One of the most common visual images and rhetorical devices in political ads centres on the family. In 1949, the Liberal Party claimed that the family is 'socialism’s no. 1 target' (Figure 8.39). The ad used the stark symbolism of a black cross through a happy photograph of a family. Like many of the ads seen in Chapter seven, it also used the symbol of a hammer and sickle to represent the threat of communism. Four small cartoons were included. The first showed a man being separated from his family to go off to work 'where he is told'. The second showed food coupons and stated: 'You’ll eat what socialism wants you to eat'. The third warned that: 'Your child’s choice of a career could vanish' while the fourth showed a man on a platform being dragged off by police. The caption warned that: 'Freedom of speech could be gone forever.'

Figure 8.39 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1949
In 1955, the incumbent Liberal Party told men that: 'If you're a family man, it's the standard of living that counts!' (Figure 8.40). Their advertising again included cartoons, but this time the cartoons were happy ones showing the prosperity created under the Liberal Government. An image of a happy family showed the man in a suit with his wife and two children outside their house. The savings bank was bursting at the seams with money. Children are shown walking hand in hand. The elderly are shown tending their garden. The ad showed a conception of the ideal family and happy society: marriage, family, wealth, home, health and children.

Figure 8.40 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1955
This conception of the importance of the family was continued in a number of Liberal ads from the Menzies era. Judith Brett has noted the importance of Menzies’ conception of the middle-class as the ‘forgotten people’. In his famous radio address, Menzies described the home as ‘the foundation of sanity and sobriety…its health determines the health of society as a whole…’ In political ads, it is notable that a man was always shown at the head of this ideal family. In Figure 8.41, although the man’s wife and baby are standing right behind him, the newspaper receives his attention. The ad promised that the Liberal Government would continue to ‘lighten the burden for the average family.’ This prompts the question of what the Party offered, if anything, to the non-average family and again reflects the way in which the parties actively construct particular social categories.

Figure 8.41 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1958
Labor used similar images of happy families and promised them that Labor would: ‘Make life happier’. Figure 8.42 showed an image of a family having a picnic. The text was targeted to men: ‘Labor will help relieve you and your wife of the unnecessary worries which have been callously inflicted upon you during nine years of Menzies mismanagement.’

Figure 8.42 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1958
Family and home are key symbols in Australian political ads. In Figure 8.43, the
father, mother and two children are gazing at a house: ‘Can you afford the deposit on
a home?’, the headline asks. Home ownership has been a key issue in political ads. In
early political ads, it was seen as a government responsibility to help families own a
home through financial incentives and payments.

Figure 8.43 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1966
By 1983, the parties were less likely to promise direct financial assistance to help families own their own home and more likely to criticise their opponents for making home ownership difficult. The message of the 1980 Liberal ‘Wealth Tax’ advertisement was that Labor’s ‘wealth tax’ would really threaten the unwealthy family. The image chosen to represent this threat was a suburban home. In Figure 8.44, the Liberal Party told voters that their home repayments would go ‘through the roof’ if Labor was elected.

Figure 8.44 – Liberal Party newspaper advertisement, 1983
In 1987, the Liberal Party used a TV advertisement to prompt voters to ask: ‘How Labor Spends Your Money’. The ad used gloomy lighting and close-ups of the concerned parents as they discussed how they would pay their bills. The ad mentioned a number of Government projects to contrast spending on those seemingly irrelevant or luxurious projects, with the couple’s inability to pay their basic household bills.
How Labor spends your money

(Sound effect like that used to signal danger in horror movies. Then, sound of children playing and giggling).

Male:
  Did you go to the bank?

Female:
  Yeah. This morning (sounds glum).

Male voice over:
  Last year, your taxes were used to develop a special surfboard for women.

Female:
  Karen needs seventeen dollars for an excursion.

Male voice over:
  An artist in residence for the BLF.

Male:
  Have to wait 'til Thursday.

Male voice over:
  And your money was used to translate Bob Hawke's biography into Japanese.

(sound of children giggling)

Female:
  And the phone bill again…

Male:
  Didn't we just pay that?

Male voice over:
  So before you ask where the money's coming from.. ask Mr Keating where it's been going.
In 1998, the ALP used a family photograph to criticise the Liberal Government and show the impact of different government policies on each member of the family. The family included all age spectrums from a pre-schooler, to a teenager, young adult, parents and grandparents. As the voice-over described how each person in the photo had been affected by the Government’s policy, a black cross was drawn over their face. At the end of the ad, every member of the family had been crossed out.
Family photo

A family photo of an extended family.

Male voice:

John Howard was elected on a promise of taking care of Australian families. And, he's done a pretty good job... errr, with the exception of the old folks who've had to endure the scare of the nursing homes debacle and cuts to the health system.

But the rest of them are O.K.
Errr, the preschooler because of the cuts to childcare funding. But apart from the old folks and the littlies, the rest of them are O.K.

Errr, except Mum who had to give up looking for a job so she could take care of them. Oh and the Uni students have got a little bit of a problem now that education funding's been cut.

But Dad's O.K. Ahh well, actually he's worried about whether he'll keep his job. He's seen a lot of his workmates and friends get retrenched.

Yep. Apart from the old, the young, anybody who's sick or studying, anyone who's got a job or is looking for one, everyone in the family feels pretty secure under John Howard.

(The dog looks at family and groans.)
The 'Family Photo' ad used a number of negative words to describe the impact of 'Howard's' policies on the family such as 'scare', 'cuts', 'debacle', 'problem', 'worried' and 'retrenched'. The dog groaning at the end of the ad (in some versions he covered his eyes with his paws and in others he ran out of the photo) was described by one commentator as the 'creative highlight' of a 'rather dull' advertising campaign.37

'The family' is portrayed very idealistically in political ads. In early ads, a common representation of the family was of a father in a suit, a well-groomed mother in a dress, and two children, inevitably, a boy and a girl. The family is seen as sacrosanct and the foundation of a good society. Like elderly people and children, the family is seen as something which is in need of protection. It is both a way of showing a government which 'cares' and a target for criticising opponents in negative advertising where a party will claim their opponent is attacking the family.

Andrew Jakubowicz, Heather Goodall, Jeannie Martin, Tony Mitchell, Lois Randall and Kalinga Seneviratne point out that, in commercial advertising, the family is shown to represent 'the Australian way of life as a uniformly Anglo country based on the "typical Aussie family". The family is the 'sentimental core of Australian social life' and 'the source of what is consistently Anglo'.38 This is true also of political advertisements, where there is an association of family and nation with the 'Aussie Mum' as 'the mainspring' of the Australian family and 'the total embodiment' of Anglo Australian tradition.39 Jakubowitz et al point out that the Aussie Mum as blonde is 'critical' and a 'potent symbol' which signifies the 'nation's undifferentiated and exclusive ethnicity'.40 Wendy Woods is a striking example of this.

Ghassan Hage has also noted that the discourse of 'home' is 'one of the most pervasive and well-known elements of nationalist practices'.41 In Australian political ads, the 'family of the nation' is an Anglo conception centred around the suburban home which does not include Aboriginal people or members of ethnic minorities.
SPORT

Sport is another expression of nationalism found in some Australian political ads. In 1951, the Liberal Party used an advertisement which contrasted the voter’s role with that of an umpire in a football match (Figure 8.45). In the ultimate gesture of unsporting behaviour, the Labor player was shown pushing the L.C.L. player in the back (the Coalition was known as the Liberal Country League in South Australia). The ad stated: ‘Again, you are the umpire!’ and claimed that when last the umpire in the 1949 election, ‘you...recorded an emphatic vote against communism...[but] Labor has obstructed the government of your choice and has refused to accept the umpires decision’.

Figure 8.45 – Liberal newspaper advertisement, 1951
In 1975, the ALP used an advertisement which stated that: ‘Champions, champion the ALP’ (Figure 8.46). It associated the party with rugby, football and swimming stars.

Figure 8.46 – ALP newspaper advertisement, 1975

As we have seen in previous chapters, the 1983 Liberal ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’ ads used sporting identities and the Commonwealth Games to associate the party with nationalism as well as success and achievement. But in that same year, the Party also used a series of testimonial ads in which sporting celebrities discussed the merits of the Liberal government and the dangers of electing Bob Hawke. Sporting metaphors and props such as trophies, tennis rackets and motor cars, were used to enhance the message.
In his testimonial ad, motor racing champion Alan Jones stated: 'The track ahead for any government these days is long and hard. In conditions like that, I wouldn't trust my country to an inexperienced driver or an engine that's been known to blow' (Figure 8.47). This reference, like the one in 'We're Not Waiting for the World' cautioning that 'you mustn't blow your cool', was meant to refer to Hawke's tendency to lose his temper and cast doubts about his ability to govern.

Figure 8.47 – Liberal Party advertisement, Alan Jones Testimonial, 1983

In Peter Brock’s testimonial, Hawke’s lack of experience was called into question. Brock stated that big races are tough and 'you have to call on all your experience. New drivers have problems keeping control...it's more than risky, it's downright dangerous... I go for tested experience and that's Malcolm Fraser' (Figure 8.48).

Figure 8.48 – Liberal Party advertisement, Peter Brock Testimonial, 1983
Sport is an important cultural symbol in Australian society and some political ads have employed this symbol in order to tap into popular cultural values.

Conclusion

Perhaps surprisingly, considering their extensive tracking and targeting, the parties make little distinction between tabloid and broadsheet readers. They place the same number of ads in both types of papers. Centralisation has also meant that they use the same ads across the country. Political ads are now standardised and generic. Contrary to the first hypothesis, the parties do not place ads in states in proportion to the number of seats available for winning in that state. Indeed, they place a much larger proportion of ads in small states such as Tasmania and South Australia, despite the relatively small electoral value of these states. The hypothesis regarding incumbency was, however, supported. There are some key differences in the ads used by incumbents and challengers. Although, incumbents and challengers also share some common strategies.

Political ads have been cleverly targeted since 1949. Specific messages, policy announcements and criticism of opponents have been targeted towards particular groups. Contrary to the hypothesis that the parties focus on different voter groups, their advertising indicates that they both tend to target the same groups with only minor variations. In recent years, women have been highly targeted and children and the family are very common images. However, it is important also to consider who is not shown in political ads. In the total sample of over 1700 ads, not one ad showed an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander, a homosexual couple, a sick or disabled person, anyone in poverty or anyone who was homeless. The people shown in political ads and the concerns expressed are white and middle-class. Patriotism, sport, suburban homes and outdoor life are idealised themes.
9 Five decades of political advertising

Democracy and the process of public communication are inseparably linked. Parties communicate their intentions, priorities and abilities to voters during election campaigns and voters then cast their judgement of the parties at the ballot box. Shifts in the way the parties communicate with voters are therefore of potentially great significance to Australian democracy. The previous four chapters outlined how political advertising has changed over the past five decades. This chapter now draws out the significance of those changes. It situates the research findings in the context of the background set out in Chapter two, and the theory and research presented in Chapter three. It provides a final analysis of what impact changes to political advertising have had on our political system and on the way we elect our politicians.

The chapter begins with a summary of the research findings in relation to the hypotheses outlined in Chapter four. It then discusses the significance of changes in political advertising in terms of election campaigns, media theory, civic discourse and deliberative democracy, professionalisation, Americanisation, partisanship, negativity, the role of television and political marketing. The last section provides the final conclusions of this dissertation.

This chapter highlights the central contention of the thesis that, although some elements of change in political advertisements are of concern, many of the problems which have been identified as ‘modern ills’ are, in fact, deeply rooted in the past. While many authors have taken an ‘all or nothing’ approach—either condemning political ads in an almost superstitious fashion or alternatively, praising their virtues without recognising their shortcomings—this study recognises that the way political advertising is practised in Australia presents both problems and advantages.
Summary of results

Of the nine hypotheses outlined in Chapter four, six hypotheses were supported. The other three hypotheses were either not verified or were contradicted. Some of these contradictions are very revealing and challenge some of the conventional wisdom about political advertising.

HYPOTHESES AND FINDINGS

The first hypothesis predicted that the information content of political advertisements would have declined. The data supported this hypothesis. Measured by criteria such as word count and time length, the information content of political advertisements has declined over time. The major parties are providing far less printed information. They are using less words, larger pictures and are saving ads up for a ‘fast finish’ in the last days of the campaign. The last three elections held in Australia were highly focused on image rather than issues.

The second hypothesis anticipated that television advertisements would be more focused on image than print advertisements. The data strongly supported this hypothesis. Television advertisements focus more on image than newspaper advertisements.

In relation to personalisation and party decline, the third hypothesis predicted that a focus on individuals—particularly political leaders—would have increased over time and especially in television advertising. The findings indicate that there has not been any steady rise in focus on the party’s own leader. Instead, this varies between election years depending upon whether the leader is considered an asset or a liability. However, there is a new and sustained focus on opponent party leaders. The parties are increasingly talking about and showing their opponent’s leader, rather than their own.
The fourth hypothesis predicted that an emphasis on parties in political advertisements would have declined. The evidence strongly supported this hypothesis. The parties are increasingly choosing to omit any mention of their own party name.

In relation to negative political advertising, hypothesis five predicted that the use of negative advertisements would have increased. This hypothesis was supported. Although there is a long tradition of negative political ads in Australia, recent elections such as 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2001, are some of the most negative elections of the past fifty years.

Hypothesis six predicted that there would have been a rise in the number of ‘attacks’ directed at individuals rather than parties. This hypothesis was supported in relation to TV advertising, where there has been a steady rise in the number of attacks on opponent party leaders. Most of these attacks are still based on the leader’s policies or performance rather than personal characteristics. However, there has also been an increase in this type of ‘mud-slinging’ attack since the 1970s.

In relation to electioneering, the seventh hypothesis anticipated that the ALP and Liberal Party would place most ads in the states where there are the greatest numbers of seats to be won (i.e. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland) and that the National Party would concentrate ads in its traditional constituencies (Queensland, regional areas in NSW and Victoria). The results suggested that while the parties do target geographical areas in a very similar fashion, they do not place ads in proportion to the electoral value of each state. Centralisation has meant that the parties now use the same ads across the country.

Hypothesis eight predicted that the parties’ focus on different types of voters in terms of gender, ethnicity, occupation/class. Contrary to this hypothesis, the parties’ advertising indicates that they both tend to target the same groups with only minor variations. In recent years, women have been highly targeted. Children and the family are very common images. A white middle-class conception of voters is evident in political ads.
The final hypothesis predicted that there would be differences evident between the ads of challengers and incumbents. This hypothesis was supported. There are some key differences in the ads used by incumbents and challengers. Incumbency strategies are quite exclusive to incumbents. However, incumbents and challengers share some common strategies.

Discussion

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Elections matter—not only in practical terms of election results—but also in terms of ideals and the practice of democracy. Campaigns are crucial in an era of increasing electoral volatility, rising swinging voters, reliance on the mass media and increasingly sophisticated media management techniques. More Australian voters are willing to switch voting preference based on the appeal of particular issues or leaders, and based on the messages and images communicated via the mass media during the election campaign.¹ Within this context, political advertising is critical because it is pervasive, precise and expensive.

Election campaigns are important occasions for rival parties to outline their competing policies. The parties may not always do this in a manner which is informative, accurate or fair, but nevertheless, election contests are still significant occasions for the parties to communicate an electoral choice for voters, however that choice is phrased. At the very least, election campaigns have the potential to encourage civic engagement and to achieve political persuasion.
Political officials and politicians genuinely believe in the power of election campaigns and their spending is a major indicator of their confidence in political advertising. Advertising is seen as a crucial way of delivering messages, persuading voters and selling policies. Indeed, politicians have become so fixated on advertising that they no longer confine ads just to election campaigns. Governments are now using their incumbency advantage to fund massive, publicly-funded ‘government information’ campaigns such as the ‘Unchain My Heart’ tax reform advertising campaign funded by the federal government in 2000 just prior to the introduction of the GST, and the lengthy series of government ads used in the state of Victoria immediately prior to the 2002 state election.²

Political advertising is not only an important campaigning method but in many ways, it is also a barometer of the extent to which Australian elections conform to democratic ideals that they be conducted in a manner which is free and fair. Issues such as the extent to which all candidates have equal access to this method of communication, the manner in which they use it and the manner in which it is funded, are crucial issues which have a major impact on the conduct of modern elections.

In Australia, there is very little regulation of political advertising. This could be viewed as appropriate in order to encourage free speech and wide debate. However, the lack of regulation and spending limits combined with the public funding system and the fact that the major parties can also accept unlimited private donations, means that the major parties are highly advantaged. Since the introduction of the public funding system in 1984, the major parties have been strengthened financially. Conversely, minor parties and independent candidates are severely disadvantaged in terms of their access to political advertising. This is significant given that Jurgen Habermas argues that power in a liberal democracy is maintained ‘less through coercion than by restricting access to political communication channels’.³ In Australia, the public funding system reinforces the major parties’ dominance by allowing them access to the most expensive forms of political communication while others, who are unable to afford access, are unable to distribute their messages as widely or effectively.
MEDIA THEORY

Given the focus of this thesis on the production and content of political ads, it has not attempted to measure the effects of political ads on voters. However, numerous academic studies have identified political ads as an important influence on voters and voting behaviour. Australian politicians and their advisers believe that some advertising campaigns have been crucial to particular election results. Australian news reporters also view political advertising as persuasive. At various times, reporters have declared that a party which is trailing in the polls can make a comeback if only its advertising is good enough. These views attribute political advertising, and the media generally, with considerable power to shape people’s thoughts, beliefs and behaviour. However, it is wrong to suggest that this view represents a return to the ‘hypodermic’ or ‘bullet’ schools of media theory. In recent accounts of the power of political advertising, there is an awareness that different voters respond differently to ads and that Australian voters are active consumers of media. Indeed, their dislike of political ads suggests a great deal of scepticism about the content and aim of political ads.

The Australian media are paying increasing attention to political advertising and this is part of a change in media focus to behind-the-scenes of campaigns. As politicians and political professionals use more sophisticated media management techniques, the media increasingly delight in pointing out those techniques to the public. In some accounts, this is viewed as the media ‘fighting back’ to reestablish control over their own products. There is a new media emphasis on ad strategies—showing the public how politicians attempt to manipulate them through advertising, and on assessing the merits of particular ads. This fits in with the increasing dominance of interpretive media accounts and a perception of election campaigns as a strategic game. While in media accounts, political ads are now viewed generally as a very important facet of the campaign, there has not yet been a move towards American style ‘ad-watches’ to routinely examine the accuracy and truthfulness of ads used during the campaign.

Agenda-setting, priming and framing are important elements of media theory.
Agenda setting

Political ads are a key means of attempting to set the agenda with the voting public. The parties use political ads to highlight issues they want the public to focus on. They emphasise those issues on which they are advantaged and their opponents are less well regarded. In the 1950s and 1960s, the parties tried to set the public agenda in quite disparate ways by emphasising different policy issues in their advertising (only in 1963, 1966 and 1969 did the parties focus on the same issue—defence—at the height of the Vietnam War). But since the late 1970s, the parties have increasingly focused on the same issues in their advertisements. In particular, tax has been of overwhelming prominence in recent campaigns. Although not defined as a ‘policy’ issue, leadership is also receiving increasing attention. As part of the public agenda, the parties are urging voters to consider which individual party leader is best equipped to lead the nation.

Priming

As Jacobs and Shapiro note, ‘[a]mple’ studies show that focusing voters’ attention on a few particular issues ‘influences the importance that the electorate as a whole attaches to them’. Through priming, the parties aim to activate an individual’s interest in the area they highlight so that it becomes the standard by which s/he evaluates the party and its leaders. In political ads, the ALP has traditionally tried to package itself as the compassionate party while the Liberals have emphasised their economic competence. These stances have been used to prime voters’ attention to certain topics such as social security for the ALP or inflation and taxation for the Liberals. The parties also use issues to form voters’ standards for assessing the leader’s personal qualities. They attach certain issues to a party leader in order to promote a particular image for that leader. For example, Howard’s focus on security in 2001 showcased his ‘toughness’. Evatt’s focus on social security/welfare was run in conjunction with ads which showed him as compassionate. Image and issue are therefore not entirely separate.
Framing

The parties use a number of different strategies to frame information. Language, photographs, images, colours, graphics, sounds, music, lighting, camera angles, settings, special effects and editing and production techniques are just some of the many features of advertising which the parties use to frame information. What is excluded can also be a crucial element of framing. The tone of ads can be varied from positive to comparative, rebuttal or negative. A number of different formats for TV ads have been used from uplifting ‘slogan’ ads to serious, documentary style ads, and cinema verité which purport to show the leaders in unscripted, ‘natural’ poses and settings. Ads are carefully designed and produced. In particular, because of the expense involved in producing and broadcasting TV ads, each second of the ad is carefully crafted, tested and re-tested in order to ensure that information is framed in a manner that the party considers is most effective to get its message(s) across. Framing is important because it relates to the content of ads and what information voters are led to think about, as well as what they are led to overlook or disregard. Of course, this is also closely related to agenda setting.

CIVIC DISCOURSE AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Ever since John Stuart Mill, a long tradition of liberal democratic theory has emphasised the educative benefits of citizen participation. For some authors, this goal has been viewed in light of rational choice theory and a notion of an ideal voter. It was, however, always somewhat naïve to suggest that the citizenry was made up of a body of ideal voters, who scanned printed information, weighed up the pros and cons and made a ‘rational’, informed voting decision. Nevertheless, commentators have frequently judged political advertising on this basis. They have criticised the extent to which it caters and conforms to this ideal when, in reality, political advertising has always been an imperfect way of distributing detailed policy information to educate citizens. Even in 1843, William Foster, the candidate from Australia’s first election, pointed out the limitations of trying to spell out policies in the confines of an advertisement.
Just as the ideal voter has always been a romantic myth, political ads have always been primitive vehicles for undertaking the important democratic functions of mobilising, educating and informing voters. This is because the primary purpose of political ads, for politicians and their advisers, is to win votes. If there is any educative function of political ads, it is entirely incidental to this major purpose. Political ads have never been designed to provide voters with a complete suite of information framed in an objective, balanced manner and nor could they. Ads have instead always been about selecting key pieces of information and presenting these in a persuasive manner which convinces voters to cast their vote for the sponsoring candidate or party. When assessing the quality of democratic discourse contained in political ads, this political reality must be kept in mind.

Quality of discourse in ads

There is no doubt that Australian politicians are moving away from delivering information in newspapers and have come to rely on television. For those who demand that voters need written information in order to be informed, this move represents a serious problem. But for those who accept that many Australians enjoy watching television and choose to receive their political information from this medium, the move is less worrying. It is also relevant to note that, in conjunction with the parties moving to TV as the prime medium for their advertising, they have also moved towards using the Internet as a way of delivering more complex and detailed information, such as party platforms, policy papers, media releases and party conference proceedings. The parties are also sending large amounts of direct mail. Written information, is therefore still available and, indeed, may be even more accessible than in the past. It is important to recognise that political advertising, while important, is not the only form of communication between voters and candidates. The media still play a crucial role and voters still receive information from news bulletins, newspaper articles, editorials, magazines, talkback radio and television programs.
As swinging voters are those who are the least likely to seek out political information (and especially in the print media), the move to TV advertising could be viewed as a 'consumer-driven' attempt to reach those who have the least stake and interest in politics. As others have noted, televised political ads have 'enormous potential for reaching voters who might not otherwise have watched or read a news service'. After all, ninety per cent of Australian voters are exposed to televised political advertisements. However, while televised political advertising may be able to be defended on the grounds of its ability to reach a large number of voters, it is more difficult to defend it in terms of content. Examining political ads reveals that the quality of political discourse in both TV and newspaper ads is not particularly high. The same themes keep emerging, the same few issues are discussed, leaders focus on the same traits and use largely the same tactics. The parties' focus on repetition, centralisation and a narrow target audience impede a wide-ranging debate.

It is true that 'image' and 'message' in political ads 'compete with and even outpace information on policy'. However, to some extent, it was always thus. Since 1949, ads have used images, targeted messages and snappy slogans to win over voters. Many of the ads from 1949, such as the Liberal Party's anti-socialist ads, were based on highly emotive images. Even in the 1950s, the 'policy list' style of ad favoured by some commentators, was not all that common and even these ads used language which provided limited detail, were highly selective in their use of material, sometimes negatively phrased and often targeted to particular groups.

While we have seen the end of the purely 'factual' ad, this is not a great loss in terms of information content and political discourse. 'Factual' ads included only the most rudimentary details such as the date of the poll or the time of a radio address. When the parties stuck only to 'facts' such as these they neglected vital information about policy preferences, party philosophies and qualifications. The 'factual' ad was never a good vehicle for political education. While confining political discourse to the 'facts' might seem desirable, what can be broadly agreed on as facts include only the most trivial pieces of information. Once the parties move beyond these facts to talk about their policies, they, by necessity, have to select particular policies, talk about why these are important and how they will benefit people. This is subjective. Policies
are based on philosophies, values, conceptions and projections. It is simply not possible for the parties to be both factual and talk about their policies. As long as we have rival political parties outlining competing policy programs, the way in which they explain their policies will never be balanced nor objective.

Political ads in recent years use less words, often have larger pictures and more white space. TV ads are shorter. Modern styles of commercial advertising have been imitated by the parties and these leave little room for lengthy, wordy, text-based expositions. Advertising style is at the heart of changes in information provision and no matter how much we may lament its decline, it is highly unlikely that we will ever see a return to the more text-heavy style of old.

There has been an assumption that length or time is a good measure of quality information. However, this assumption is questionable. As Henry Mayer has pointed out, political ads are not books. Nor are they hour-long documentaries. Political ads have never, and will never, be able to provide complete policy information. Nevertheless, it is notable and unfortunate that the diversity of issues addressed in political ads has narrowed. The parties usually deal with only one issue per ad and they are often focusing on the same issue. They are also dealing with a very narrow set of topics, and none are covered in any great detail or depth. Policy detail is rarely given in ads. None of this is very conducive to an educated citizenry or an informed choice of candidates based on policy and a wide-ranging debate.

The parties are saving ads up for ‘fast finishes’ to try to sway voters in the crucial last days of the campaign. The parties conduct advertising ‘blitzes’ in which voters are bombarded by advertisements during the last week. This leaves little room for deliberation, contemplation or comparison. The fast finish strategy suggests that voters are not being encouraged to consider issues, weigh options or seek out more information. Yet, to call for the parties to have more ads broadcast over a longer period of time, would involve greater expense and this would mean raising the amount of public funding or the parties becoming more reliant on private donations. Both of these options present problems, but the later is particularly worrying because a reliance on private donors can lead politicians to feel obligated to particular sections of the community or to powerful individuals or companies.
It is far easier to criticise individual political ads than to point to good examples of political advertising. Few ads, if any, meet the ideal democratic criteria. It is extremely difficult to point to ads which are ‘good’ examples of detailed policy information, for example. Yet, even the lightest, most image-conscious, jingle-style political ads present voters with a choice. To what extent this choice is ‘informed’ depends upon how much information we expect political ads to provide. As we recall from Chapter three, ideal democracy theorists frequently do not consider that impressions which voters form about a party or leader—such as encouraging a voter to like, trust or identify with a party or leader—to be the ‘same as imparting information which can be used rationally to consider issues or to weigh the merits of particular candidates’. However, it is increasingly difficult to sustain distinctions between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ information.

**Assessing ads: Rational and irrational, logical and emotive**

A focus on ‘rational’ information that aids ‘rational’ discussion and decision making fails to recognize that it is possible to make an emotive appeal which is also rational—the two are not entirely incompatible. Appealing to emotions has always been a key part of politics despite the higher idealistic emphasis given to reason, evidence and the rule of law. As Henry Mayer argued very persuasively in 1980, in order to make political advertising rational and accurate, you would ‘have to eliminate politics as we know it’.

No one is fully informed and choices are not always rational. Instead of rational choice, many people may instead be largely motivated by values and norms. The determinants of political action are just as likely to be emotion, identity, and the search for meaning as they are to be reason, interest, and the pursuit of personal gain. Critical reasoning need not always take the form of verbal argumentation. Visual representations such as pictures, photographs and moving images may also present ideas and information.
Taking a much broader view of information content suggests, as Mills argued, that ads do provide voters with valuable information such as ‘who is running for office, what they look like, what they are promising’. The parties are using ads to ‘introduce their leaders and spell out their policy inducements’. They are also using them to criticise their opponent’s policies, their record in office and their ability to govern.

At a minimum, political ads alert voters to the imminence of an election. They signal the existence of the election campaign. They usually mention at least one issue facing the nation—even if this is not discussed in any detail or is the major emphasis of the ad. Some ads provide polling details, voting instructions and basic information about the nature of the Australian political system such as the need to number all squares on the ballot paper in order to cast a formal vote, or the existence of the bicameral nature of parliament and the need for two separate votes for the House of Representatives and the Senate.

**Emotion and learning**

While much attention has been paid to reason, emotion is also important to learning. Sympathy, fear, desire and sentiment are key elements of political participation. Rousseau, for example, argued that certain kinds of passion are crucial to a healthy political society. He challenged the rationalist argument that ‘good behaviour depends primarily on the use of reason’ and argued that ‘with all their mores, men would never have been anything but monsters if nature had not given them pity to aid their reason’.

Emotion can act as an important driver of action and change. Rousseau argued that: ‘We seek to know only because we desire to have enjoyment; and it is impossible to conceive why someone who had neither desires nor fears would go to the bother of reasoning.’ Far from constituting a threat to political life, passion is crucial to it. A commitment to justice and to the common good depends upon citizens’ passions as well as their reason.
There is no question political ads are designed to be emotional—to reinforce enthusiasm of supporters, to reassure about the performance of the incumbent or to arouse or reinforce concerns about opponents. Ads do try to press ‘hot-buttons’ and use key emotive symbols. In many cases, ads are trying to make voters feel something rather than learn something. In some respects, this is not such a problem because politics is about passion as well as reason and it is nonsensical to suggest that people pursue politics only with logic, rationality and objectivity. Feeling is a valid response to politics and it would be impossible and even undesirable to take the passion out of politics. However, it is also notable that political ads often seek to exploit feelings such as anxiety, fear, selfishness and greed. Fewer ads are about motivating enthusiasm, encouraging activism or feelings of awareness and concern for others in society.

There is an emerging study of emotion and its relation to political learning, candidate evaluation and political advertising in general. Some studies point out that ads play a valuable role if they create the enthusiasm needed to gain voter support and create interest in the election. Others note that anxiety ‘stimulates attention toward the campaign and political learning’. There are now claims that emotion is good for information seeking, that ‘issue-based anxiety-laden communications, can actually benefit democracy. Concern about the economy, for example, increases information-seeking behavior [sic] during an election campaign’. Mackuen et al have found that ‘subjects who are made anxious by controversial policy-related materials not only expand their information searches but are more likely to seek alternate political views and to pursue compromise or alternative solutions to a policy dispute’. Anxiety is said to motivate ‘people to pay attention to the political world and to learn things they would otherwise ignore’.
Emotions play a critical part in the way politics is conducted. While rational choice proponents believe that emotions get in the way of clear thinking, others suggest that ‘one way to get people to pay attention to politics beyond their habitual monitoring is to frighten them’. While there are undoubtedly problems with this view and it is unlikely that we would want to create a citizenry of alarmed and anxious voters, it is an interesting challenge to the assumption that emotion is dangerous to politics.

While it is reasonable to engage voters on an emotional level, it is also true that there must still be relevant information to complement the emotional investment once aroused. There must still be some way to channel interest into knowledge, emotion into action, passion into activity and purpose—to allow citizens to participate in political life.

**Vigorous, open debate**

It is a key tenet of democratic theory that election campaigns promote vigorous, open debate. The parties are expected to outline problems facing the nation, propose solutions, encourage discussion, facilitate debate and provide information.

Political advertising is not a very effective communication method for encouraging debate or public participation, because it is a one-way form of communication with no ability for voters to question, challenge, heckle or otherwise engage with the sponsors and creators of the ad. Ads can put issues on the agenda and therefore launch debate, but they cannot act as an open forum in which to conduct that debate, because ads are one-sided, party-controlled propaganda. Indeed, rather than opening up debate, in many ways, ads actually seek to close it down by staying ‘on message’, targeting narrowly, focusing on only one issue and, increasingly, focusing on image instead of issues.
In particular, the debate which is spurned by political ads shows an exclusive conception of issues of interest. Ads are not inclusive—and this is patently apparent in the types of images and language used. Ads ignore diversity and the multi-cultural nature of Australian society. The discourse used does not open up debate on issues of concern to many groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from a non-English speaking background, the poor and sick. These groups and their concerns are overwhelmingly ignored. Instead, ads deal largely with the financial self-interest of white middle-class swinging voters. In this push for the middle-class swinging vote, many other people and issues have been overlooked or deliberately ignored.

The rise of image ads is of serious concern to democratic theory which emphasises parties, policies and ideologies. However, there has always been an emphasis on leaders in Australian political discourse, including political ads, and particularly on strong, charismatic or controversial leaders such as Menzies and Evatt. A focus on the party leader can, depending upon the qualities of that leader, motivate, inspire, communicate vision and outline policy solutions. However, a focus on leaders to the exclusion of all other aspects of politics can create a cult of personality and a perception that Australian politics is a contest between two individuals. This perception ignores the whole structure of Australian politics, its institutions, structures and processes such as Cabinet, Ministers, shadow ministers, parliament, the role of the Senate, the High Court and the Constitution. Encouraging such a perception, therefore, does nothing to address low levels of political knowledge.

While commentators demand that politicians tell the ‘truth’ in their advertisements, regulating for truthfulness has proven to be both difficult and largely unsuccessful. Even the Federation of Commercial Television Stations (FACTS), which has traditionally taken a watch-dog role in determining the claims made in political ads, has recently withdrawn from this role due to legal advice.\textsuperscript{28} Although in practice, FACTS seems to have upheld very few of the complaints it received and rarely called for ads to be withdrawn, the parties did have to supply written material to FACTS to substantiate their claims and were able to complain if they believed an opponent’s advertisement was misleading.
While the nature of ‘truth’ is difficult to define, factually false assertions obviously cross the line, as do more modern variants such as using a computer to manipulate footage. These more overt falsehoods are uncommon in Australian political ads but they do occur occasionally. Because the ‘truth’ of an advertisement has been left for voters to determine, the media have an important role to play in policing the truthfulness and accuracy of political advertising. By writing articles pointing out false claims or reporting complaints about advertisements, the media already do play this role to some extent. But introducing ‘ad-watches’ devoted to policing ad content (as occur in the U.S.) might be a more formalised, devoted and routine way of fulfilling the ‘watch-dog’ function.

The ‘good old’ days

It is wrong to idealise the past. All of the antecedents of the modern ‘malaise’ of political ads—a lack of policy detail, a focus on image, negativity and personalisation—are evident in ads from half a century ago. However, it is also true that many of these themes have become more frequent and more intense in recent years and that these trends need to be noted, observed and critiqued. It is inaccurate, however, to see modern political ads as totally disconnected from some ‘golden age’ of political advertising.

Nostalgia for a more informative era is somewhat misplaced. It is simply not true that before Labor's 1972 ‘It’s Time’ campaign, advertising had mostly involved ‘clean, unemotional, "factual" presentation’. One has only to look at the anti-socialist ads produced by the Liberal Party from 1949 through to the 1960s, to see that ads were often based on visual images, emotion and subjective presentation. Even when talking about so-called ‘facts’ such as economic indicators, ads were selective, facts were distorted, taken out of context, given an emotive theme, used to promote a point of view or disparage an opponent. The parties have always used ads to appeal to emotions, to sell policies, promote leaders and scare voters.
Election advertising was never ‘intent upon persuading voters by informing them’. And, it was never about providing ‘informed, logical argument expressed in the form of written or spoken words’. Placing ads in the print media did not ensure that they were all factual or unemotional. Just like visual images, the printed word could be emotive and could be used to distort and deceive.

PROFESSIONALISATION

In popular accounts, professionalisation seems to bear a great deal of responsibility for encouraging a system of politics which is based more on image and targeted messages. However, by ‘professionalisation’, it is inaccurate to infer that the practices of the past were amateurish. The evidence suggests that the advisers of the 1950s, for example, were focusing on ad design and targeted messages in what was, for those times, a cutting-edge manner. These professionals were amateurish only in comparison to today’s methods.

Ever since ad agents entered the political scene in Australia, they have made themselves indispensable. Even as early as the 1950s, they were criticised for being an undemocratic feature of contemporary politics and for having too much control over elected officials. Although some ad agents have undoubtedly suffered when held responsible for an ineffective or ‘losing’ ad campaign, many more agents have profited greatly from political advertising. Funding has become a key issue because of the use of professionals such as ad agents. As soon as ad agents became important, new and secretive funding sources were set up to pay for them. Now public funding is contributing a large amount to advertising agents’ profits.

The content and style of the political advertising they produce reveals that ad agents and political advisers have a very distinctive, narrow view of voters and electorates. They assume that some voters are open to change and that their voting choice can be changed by effective advertising. They, and the politicians they serve, assume that Australian voters (especially swinging voters) are more likely to be
persuaded by TV ads, are bored by onerous policy detail, can be influenced by who
the party leader is, and can be persuaded in the last few days of the campaign.

The content of political ads from 1949 to 2001 with its emphasis on personalised
messages about the financial impact of policies confirms Braund’s findings that key
advertising figures are ‘firm believers in [voters’] self-interest (the “hip pocket
nerve”) and fear as motivations for voting choice’.\textsuperscript{37} It also tends to support David
Butler’s view that Australian politicians assume that each voter is ‘an accountant
totting up a hypothetical balance sheet’.\textsuperscript{38}

Flexibility is a key element of modern campaigns. It has become crucial for the
parties to be able to produce ads quickly in response to changing circumstances and
get them to air very fast. In terms of scheduling, both parties are reliant on the results
of focus group testing of ads and they wait to see these before setting timeslots and
approving ads.\textsuperscript{39} The implication of this need for flexibility is greater expense and
greater reliance on political professionals such as ad agents and pollsters. Where once
the parties remained loyal to one ad agency for many years or even decades, they are
now increasingly willing to shop around, change agencies and even to create their
own in-house teams made up of different specialists. The content of political
advertising is tightly controlled by a handful of elites and the process bypasses
ordinary party members and even middle-ranking party officials.\textsuperscript{40}

Overall, a study of political advertisements reveals that political professionals
play a very powerful role in Australian politics. Political advertising is a form of
completely controlled communication—it is completely controlled by the party, their
advisers and ad agents. Although in Australia, these professionals still work closely
with centralised party organisations and in conjunction with key party officials, these
élites hold sway over the identification of interests, the definition of problems and the
production of solutions in political advertising.
AMERICANISATION?

There is no doubt that Australian politicians and their advisers are influenced by American trends. Many Australian political professionals go overseas to observe American election campaigns and American advisers have come to Australia to give electioneering advice.\(^4^1\) However, Australia’s electoral system, party competition, legal regulation of election campaigns, degree of professionalisation and media system, differ from the U.S.

As Mills and O’Neil outlined, Australia’s parliamentary system of government, the dominant role of party structures, widespread cynicism about advertising, and a tradition of parliamentary and judicial rule making have influenced the content of Australian political advertising.\(^4^2\) Compulsory voting, public campaign financing, a much smaller electorate and fewer media outlets, are also significant differences and these differences will always mean there are variations in the content and style of Australian political ads compared to American advertising.

Australian ads have demonstrated a high reliance on negativity as part of a fiercely combative adversarial, two-party parliamentary system. This was evident as early as 1949 and 1951. The perception of Australia as a vulnerable and isolated outpost influenced the way in which issues, such as defence, were discussed in advertising. In ads from the 1950s and 1960s, there was an early focus on socialism and fears of both a ‘yellow peril’ and a ‘red peril’. Australian ads have frequently focused on suburbia, the middle-class, women and, sometimes, on sport and on a rural ideal of the ‘bush’. While patriotism is present in Australian ads in the form of national symbols, flags and sporting pride, it is not overtly emphasised as it is in American political ads.\(^4^3\)
Unlike American presidential ads, Australian political ads were once strongly partisan. However, in recent years, this has declined and the move toward less partisan, more personalised discourse and the use of quite 'presidential' language in Australian ads, may be features of change which are most likely to yield charges of 'Americanisation'.

In Australian political ads, there is still very little focus on the personal backgrounds of candidates, their childhood or family. There has, however, been a move towards more focus on their 'values'. Ads such as the anti-Keating 'Go and Get a Job' ad of 1996 and the focus on 'flip-flops' may suggest a move into 'values' such as honesty and trust, and a heightened emphasis on the moral fortitude of potential national leaders which are more akin to concerns seen in American ads. However, there are still important cultural differences in the way morals and leadership are presented. As Plasser and Plasser have noted, American politicians sometimes frame issues by reference to 'private experiences', try to make connections with 'great heroes of the past' or stress 'personal religious beliefs to demonstrate personal credibility'. While these have been 'effective rhetorical tactics in the United States', Plasser and Plasser note that they 'would fail in the context of Australian... parliamentary campaigns'.

We can note the salience of features such as an increase in focus on image ads, personalisation, negativity and high spending, which some commentators would undoubtedly consider forms of Americanisation. However, it seems more likely that, as other scholars have argued, these developments have been occurring as part of a modernisation process brought about by technological developments (such as the development of television, talk-back, the Internet and strategic communications) and political developments (such as changes in campaign financing, mass media management, emphasis on polling) which are also common to many other liberal democratic societies. We can also see that many of the developments which have been dubbed 'Americanisation' actually have their antecedents in early Australian political ads. While the borrowing of techniques and advice from the U.S has undoubtedly occurred and shaped political advertising in Australia, the Australian parties have also observed British and New Zealand campaigning practices, and the
nature of our political system and the context of Australian politics and society has meant that Australian ads retain unique features.

AUSTRALIA IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Comparative studies of television advertising in different countries have found that there are distinct culturally specific styles. De Mooij claims that American advertising style is assertive, direct, competitive, highly verbal, stresses a hard-sell approach, patriotism and traditional values. British advertising is highly individualistic, uses direct communication, presenters, testimonials, humour and parody. German advertising stresses structure, explicit language to avoid ambiguity, a factual style with 'little humor [sic]'. Italian advertising focuses on 'drama, theatre and emotional appeals'. Spanish advertising emphasises 'beauty, warm feelings and social gatherings'. French advertising uses theatrical types of presentation, metaphors and emphasises logical proof. Japanese advertising style is highly formalised, ritualised, distant and avoids emotional empathy. Of these, Australian advertising seems to align most closely with American and British styles, as it emphasises direct talk, competitiveness and individualism.

There is a perception that Australia political ads are better at focusing on issues than ads used overseas. While perceptions of superiority exist, this study can now situate research findings in an international context to directly compare Australian political ads with those used in other countries.

The most relevant cross-cultural studies of political advertising were published by Kaid and Holtz-Bacha in 1995 and Kaid in 2000. Kaid and Holtz-Bacha’s 1995 study examined TV ads from election campaigns in the U.S., Britain, Israel, Italy, France and Germany between 1988 and 1993. This section compares Australian TV ads from the same time period in order to make cross-cultural comparisons.
Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that issue focus was a common element of television advertising in Western democracies between 1988 and 1992. Comparing Australian political TV ads from 1990 indicates that only fifty per cent of Australian TV ads were focused on issues that year compared to the U.S. (sixty-one per cent), Italy (seventy-one per cent), Britain (eighty-eight per cent) and France (100 per cent). This suggests Australian ads were more likely to de-emphasise issues and focus on image than American ads or those used in other Western democracies.

It is difficult to directly compare levels of ‘partisanship’ in advertisements, as different measures have been used in different studies. Kaid and Holtz-Bacha found that only nine per cent of American political ads emphasised political party, compared to thirty-eight per cent for British political parties. This study identified specific elements of partisanship, such as whether ads included the name of the party. This indicated that in 1990 about thirty-nine per cent of Australian political TV ads were overtly partisan in the sense that they included the name of the party in the body of the advertisement. This is similar to Kaid and Holtz-Bacha’s finding for Britain, which has a similarly strong party system. However, this overt partisanship has dropped to only thirteen per cent of TV ads in 2001. This is now very similar to the level of non-partisanship seen in American TV advertisements. This decline corresponds with Plasser and Plasser’s finding that in many countries across the world, political parties and leaders have taken to de-emphasising their party links in their advertising.

In the cross-cultural comparison by Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, the dominant focus of ads from U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Israel was positive. Using the findings from the 1990 Australian election again for comparative purposes, shows that in 1990, forty-six per cent of Australian TV ads were negative compared to Israel (forty-two per cent), the U.S. (thirty-seven per cent), Germany (thirty-two per cent), France (twenty-five per cent), Britain (twenty-five per cent) and Italy (fifteen per cent). In 1993, negative advertising in Australian TV ads rose to seventy-five per cent and has stayed above sixty-five per cent ever since. This indicates that Australian political ads may be more negative than those used in other Western democracies.
While the TV ads in other countries were overwhelmingly positive, Australian ads were more likely to use a hard-hitting, negative style.

Comparing Australian and American political ads directly lends some more specific evidence to accusations of Americanisation. However, these comparisons have limitations because the Australian ads are from House of Representatives elections, whereas the Kaid and Holtz-Bacha study examined presidential advertisements from the 1992 Bush and Dukakis campaigns. Nevertheless, bearing in mind this difference, the comparison yields some interesting results. In 1992, thirty-seven per cent of American political ads were negative. In comparison, in Australia in 1993, the nearest election year, seventy-five per cent of ads were negative. Australian ads were less image-focused however, with only twenty-one per cent of ads focused on image compared to thirty-nine per cent in the U.S.

A final comparison of content can be made from the updated cross-cultural comparison by Kaid and Johnston in 2000. A comparison of Australian ads from the 1996 election with those from elections in the U.S. (1996) and Britain (1997) shows some interesting results. Bearing in mind that the 1996 election was a turning point with its high use of anti-Keating advertisements, it is still remarkable that eighty per cent of Australian TV ads that year were focused on image compared to twenty-one per cent in the U.S. and thirty-seven per cent in Britain. It is also significant that seventy-three per cent of Australian ads were negative compared to sixty-five per cent in the U.S. and only thirty-one per cent in Britain.

No strong conclusion can be drawn from the cross-cultural comparison of issue versus image focus in Australian ads, as this varies. However, in both major cross-cultural studies performed, Australian political ads were more negative than those in the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Israel, Korea and Poland. This was true in both the first early-1990s study and the later mid-1990s studies of these countries.

In terms of Americanisation, these results tend to confirm Mills and O’Neil’s informal observation that ‘Australian ads deal...more with arguing and attacking’ than American ads. Indeed, negative political advertising is higher in Australia than in most comparable Western democracies. While some commentators have feared the
importation of harmful features of American political advertising style to Australia such as negativity,\textsuperscript{60} it seems negativity is already a quite distinctly Australian feature. If anything, Australia seems to have anticipated or led the trend towards more negative advertising rather than to have followed it. However, while negativity in Australian political ads is comparatively high, there are still important differences in emphasis. Negative ads used in the U.S. focus more on the personal characteristics of opponents (as discussed on p.308), whereas, in Australia, negative ads still generally focus on policy and performance issues.

PARTISANSHIP

We had expected most Australian ads to display ‘overt partisanship’ due to the unusual strength of party identification in Australia (by international standards) and the fact that party membership is still the major determinant of electoral success. However, the decline of party identification in ads has been one of the most striking findings of this dissertation. It seems image-making and ‘personalisation’ in Australian political advertisements have indeed been at the expense of the political parties. Ads which fail to identify the sponsoring party’s name have dramatically increased. The parties are no longer identifying themselves and the discourse of their ads is now essentially non-partisan. Indeed, they are more willing to mention their opponent’s party name than their own, which suggests that party name is considered a liability.

This has serious implications for the political system in Australia. The parties are responding to partisan decline and the non-allegiance of voters—particularly swinging voters and their disdain for party politics—by de-emphasising their partisan identities in advertising. This is quite an odd response for the parties to make, because ignoring party labels can only make party identity seem less relevant to voters. We are seeing political discourse in advertising based less on party ideology—for the parties cannot articulate their core values and philosophies when they do not even mention their party name. More focus is being placed on the leaders (particularly opponent leaders) or the parties are turning the camera’s lens back on ‘ordinary’ or ‘real’ Australians to portray politics as non-partisan.
The decline of partisan discourse from the major parties has major implications for the Australian political system. It suggests they may be undergoing a 'crisis' about what they stand for. This is interesting in view of the decline in major-party identification and the fact that we are currently seeing the highest number of non-major-party members in Australia's parliaments 'since the modern party system became evident in 1910'. The concealment of party labels also suggests that the parties are buying into the 'horse-race' view of politics as a competition between individual leaders.

While the deemphasis of party is a clear trend in advertisements, personalisation in terms of promoting the party's own leader varies between election years. This is based on whether the party leader is considered an asset or a liability. A focus on individuals and party leaders has its antecedents in earlier elections. There have always been charismatic, influential figures highlighted in Australian politics including Chifley, Menzies and Whitlam. However, when leaders are shown in modern political ads, the language has become increasingly presidential. There has been a shift away from asking voters to 'vote for my party' and a move to language which asks voters to 'vote for me'.

The qualities Australian politicians try to emphasise in ads has changed. Warmth and compassion are no longer highlighted and the emphasis is now on competency, performance, toughness and strength. This emphasis could be viewed as beneficial in democratic terms because it focuses on governance issues rather than personal qualities. However, the move away from warmth and compassion has occurred in conjunction with a move away from interest in social policies such as welfare, housing, education and health. This is because the parties used projections of the leader's warmth and compassion to prime voter's interests in social issues. The move away from compassion therefore suggests a hardening of Australian politics and a move towards a less compassionate society which is more interested in economic indicators than social issues and in which no connection is made between the two.
Denigrating the opponent leader is an increasingly popular strategy. It is easier to point out his/her deficiencies than to promote the party’s own leader. This fits in with the traditional negativity evident in political ads but suggests a new emphasis on personalities rather than parties. Both of these trends—more presidential language when leaders are highlighted and focus on the opponent party’s leader—again show the declining party emphasis and a rising personalisation which is negative in nature. Opponent leaders are soft targets and the debate about ‘leadership’ and the emphasis on leaders, is an increasingly negative one. This may fuel voter cynicism towards politics and politicians, as voters are increasingly led to focus on a potential leader’s shortcomings and mistakes. It could also make politics a contest of hostilities between individual leaders, which would make deliberation difficult and solutions harder to find.

Overall, the trends of partisan decline and negative personalisation suggest a declining focus on party ideology. This is of concern because ideology causes people to ‘care about issues in which they have no direct stake’. Ideologies can create coalitions based on common goals that otherwise might not exist. But currently, the parties’ overwhelming emphasis on swinging voters means they are unwilling to be too strong on issues, particularly controversial issues, for fear of losing votes.

**Compassion versus competence**

Over the past fifty years, there have been some significant differences in the way the two major parties have been packaged in political ads. The ALP has presented itself as compassionate, for the ‘underdog’ and has traditionally been concerned with social policy, although this has lessened in recent years. Alternatively, the ALP has portrayed the Coalition as lacking compassion, failing to look after health and education, and being for big business and the big end of town.

The Coalition, particularly the Liberal Party, has portrayed itself as a party of competent economic managers and successful on economic criteria. Alternatively, the Liberal Party has portrayed the ALP as economically incompetent. The ALP has been
criticised for being too strongly influenced (firstly, by the socialists and later, by unions). They have been packaged in Liberal ads as big spenders who are unable to manage money.

The choice for Australian voters has traditionally been promoted as a choice between compassion versus competence. However, the emphasis has shifted to competence in recent years and this has been defined very narrowly—as economic competence—the ability to manage the economy rather than on other measures such as redressing problems facing the poor, assisting the disadvantaged, or creating opportunities for a fairer, more equitable society. Politics is increasingly being presented as a contest between parties and leaders who, voters are being told, should be judged by the state of the economy and their economic management credentials above all. The parties and leaders are therefore being judged by quite abstract criteria such as the level of government debt (which has little direct impact on most voters), or the level of interest rates (which is of relevance to some voters but not all), rather than broader, more difficult criteria such as living standards and the well-being of the nation's citizens.

Convergence

There are two views about partisan rhetoric. One view suggests that there are few real differences between the parties. This fits in with Anthony Downs economic theory of democracy 'which argues that policy convergence is expected when the majority of voters fall toward the middle of the political spectrum'. The other view, often expressed in media 'horse race' coverage and by commentators observing recent elections, is that Australian politics is a war between the two major parties and the parties are fundamentally different.

Put another way, a key question about partisanship is whether the parties use the same rhetoric in an attempt to court the moderate swinging voter or whether they use different divergent discourse in order to 'rally each party's base of loyal supporters'? Looking at their election ads over the past fifty years provides rich evidence about whether the rhetoric and policies of the parties diverge or converge.
Their ads indicate that the parties make an attempt to differentiate themselves from their competitors. In political marketing terms, they try to project a unique brand by using different slogans, logos and ad styles. However, ideological and policy differences are no longer as evident as they were in earlier ads.

Political ads seem to tentatively support a view of policy convergence in recent decades. Once ads emphasised partisanship, policy programs and ideological differences. But as the parties have increasingly taken a middle-road, catch-all approach of trying not to offend anyone, they have had difficulty distinguishing themselves except in terms of their leaders or in terms of one or two key policies. They are increasingly focusing on the same issues but expressing divergent policies (as on the GST) or different rhetoric. The parties highlight a few key points of difference in order to promote themselves as dissimilar. But there is little focus on longer term factors such as their partisan identities or on the ideological differences which separate them.

This convergence trend is reflected in the fact that the parties sometimes have had to rely on ad style to differentiate themselves rather than policy differences. In 1998, the Liberals used split screen TV ads. According to an advertising insider, these ads were designed as a result of deep cynicism in the electorate and the 'compare and contrast' style tried to use 'basic facts to reinforce the difference between the major parties for voters who see little to distinguish them'.

NEGATIVE POLITICAL ADVERTISING

There is a perception that confrontation and negativity are a key element of Australian politics. There are even claims that 'the bulk of aired TV spots [in Australia] can be regarded as hard-hitting, negative...'. In an international context, it is true that negative advertising in Australia is comparatively high. In the U.S., in the period from 1952 to 1996, only in three elections were more than fifty per cent of ads negative. In Australia, from 1949 to 1996, this was far more common with nine elections using more than fifty per cent negative ads.
As Mayer has noted, in an adversarial party system, political advertising by its very nature ‘must knock the other side’. Negativity is an important part of a democratic system. It is important for an opposition to hold governments accountable, to scrutinise, question, prompt, remind, criticise and critique. In this view, negative advertising can be seen as a robust exercise in free speech. After all, the case against a party running for public office can be as important a part of the voting decision as the case for a particular party. But negative advertising can also been viewed as an abrogation of the democratic responsibility that a party enunciate and explain its own policies.

Although negativity is high in Australian political ads, around seventy per cent of negative ads are critical of the party or leader’s policies or performance. Academics and commentators can rest assured that few Australian ads attack party leaders on the basis of their personal characteristics. Statistically, Australian political ads use far less attacks on personal characteristics than American ads. In Australia, there have not been any advertisements attacking potential leaders on the basis of their sexuality, family members, alleged drug use or military service as have been seen in the U.S. Generally, Australian ads have stuck to trustworthiness, honesty in public statements, parliamentary record or record in office.

In 1996, the Liberals designed an ad which focused on Labor members’ personal property assets. However, their focus group research found that voters ‘went crazy’ about the ad and they had to drop it, because, although voters ‘would respond well’ to negative advertising based on a party leader’s actions or public comments, they ‘regarded personal attacks as below the belt’. American studies, including a recent study by Crigler, Just and Belt, have found that voters are able to distinguish between ‘negative information which is presented in an appropriate way and mudslinging which is harsh and unsubstantiated’. In Australia also, voters seem to have an ability to differentiate between ads which ‘cross the line’. As a result, attacks on personal characteristics are not common.
Modern ads are more consistently negative than the ads of earlier years. However, it is again wrong to assume any glorious past when advertising was positive and the parties focused on their own policies. Negative ads have always been in use in Australian politics. One of the most negative elections was in 1951 with a particular focus on the contest between Menzies and Chifley. In 1949, negative ads were also very high, in particular around issues of socialism. Negativity dampened down during the 1950s and early 1960s when the ALP was not a real contender for office, but once the ALP was back in the race, high proportions of negative advertising returned. Electoral competition breeds negativity and when the electorate is more volatile and elections are more difficult to call, as they have been in recent years, negativity is high.

The ads used in 1998, 1996 and 1993 were the most negative we have seen over the past fifty years. While negative ads have always been part of the parties’ arsenal of weapons, they are now relying on them far more. This needs to be monitored to ensure that attacks remain relevant, focused on policies and performance. The rise in negative ads focusing on party leaders already suggests a move away from these traditional targets. But the rise in negative political advertising is not necessarily symptomatic of declining standards and does not necessarily represent a potential threat to ‘quality’ political discourse. Because negative political advertising has been a long-standing feature of Australian electoral competition, there never was any mythical ‘quality’ discourse which focused only on positive ads. Negativity does not really represent a departure but a revival of earlier advertising trends.

In Australia, negative ads have tended to stick to the issues. This concurs with international research such as that by Kaid and Tedesco, which noted that although American ads are becoming more negative, they do seem to be emphasising issues.\textsuperscript{75} Kaid argues that negative ads ‘that discuss policy questions and provide voters with contrasting information can perform a useful function for democracy’.\textsuperscript{76} Johnson-Cartee and Copeland argue that spot ads which truthfully compare the political records or leadership qualities of two candidates ‘provide the electorate with a means to compare the candidates’ records on the issues, define the scope of the campaign, and help individuals decide which candidate is more worthy of their vote’.\textsuperscript{77}
While negative ads do provide voters with information about how the parties, their leaders and policies have performed, this is often done in a superficial or uncontextualised manner. Criticism can be based on one statement the leader has made or one statistic taken out of context. In TV ads, these tidbits are then framed using sounds, images and music to sharpen the message. While policy attacks are the most common type of attack, these ads are often focused on the voter’s own self-interest, particularly their hip-pocket and fear of financial or job loss. They work on exploiting emotions such as fear, anxiety and insecurity.

While the discourse in negative ads may not be of a particularly high standard, it is impractical and undesirable to wish to do away with all criticism in political advertising as this would constrain essential campaign discourse. Crigler, Just and Belt point out that: ‘challengers are expected to run against the incumbent’s record. Criticism, therefore, should be expected to play an essential part in campaigning’. Hall-Jamieson has argued that, rather than being harmful to democracy, negativity is essential for genuine debate and as a way of ensuring that policy promises and candidates’ reputations are examined. However, the strategy of parties making themselves a ‘small target’ by releasing their own policies late and focusing almost exclusively on the opponent, present major problems. This is particularly true where negative ads rely on exploitative means and, in particular, on exploiting voters’ fears and anxieties.

As negative ads appear to be a long-standing and permanent feature of political advertising in Australia, it is important for voters to be aware of the production techniques, messages and appeals used in negative ads. Some ads use gimmickry and strategies which are not particularly ethical, such as distorting footage or images as in the ‘Bolt in’ TV ad or the newspaper ad showing Howard at an ATM. Other ads put words in an opponent’s mouth, use name-calling and ridicule. Australian ads, like those in the U.S. and Italy, have tended increasingly to use anonymous announcers to voice attacks. Presumably, this is so the sponsor of the ad can distance themselves from the ‘nasty’ business of making negative attacks and avoid a backlash. However, in terms of information content and democratic ideals, this means less accountability as the parties or party leaders are not taking responsibility for making negative claims about their opponent.
This thesis can make no conclusions about the effects of negative ads on voters or on the political system. It has noted, however, two opposing views of the impact of negative ads. For one set of authors, there is a concern that use of negative political advertising exacerbates disillusionment with politics and discourages political participation. Ansolabehere and Iyengar's research found that negative political advertising contributes to voter apathy and disillusionment with politics and, in a non-compulsory voting system, drives down voter turn-out. However, other researchers have found that 'negative campaign charges are just as likely to engage potential voters, leading to a stimulation effect when it comes to turnout'. One recent study claims to have found 'unambiguous evidence that exposure to negative campaign ads actually stimulates voter turnout'. These contradictory findings require further exploration in an Australian context where voter turn-out is less of an appropriate measure. In Australia, it would be useful to measure the effect of negative political ads on voters' perceptions of politicians and the political system and their engagement in political activities.

IS TV TO BLAME?

TV has been blamed for a host of ills plaguing the democratic system. Just as Neil Postman was concerned about the impact of TV on public discourse, Robert Putnam has more recently argued that TV has contributed to the decline in civic engagement, political participation and community involvement. More specifically, televised political advertising has been the target of similar criticisms.

In information terms, for those who would want the parties to impart maximum information and judge this by length or word content, the parties' increasing reliance on TV ads to inform is of concern, because TV ads are becoming much shorter. However, the length of TV ads has never been a very accurate indicator of its information content. 'It's Time' was two minutes long but did not mention a single policy. Calls to make ads longer would make them more like the free-time broadcasts aired on the ABC, which do not attract a very large audience. Mayer warned that such
ads would would kill enthusiasm and commitment and actually lead to less interest in politics.\textsuperscript{85} So in one sense, the brevity of ads may actually be an advantage in terms of educative benefit, because more people see the short thirty second ads interspersed during the nightly news or their favourite programs. To make ads any longer would make them easier to ‘turn-off’ and would also mean more expense.

While estimates have suggested that a thirty second commercial usually equates to about fifty words,\textsuperscript{86} in this study, many thirty second political ads contained up to eighty-seven words. In 2001, newspaper ads held an average of sixty-seven words. This means that in modern times, TV ads contain around the same or even more, words as a newspaper ad. The distinction between print and TV regarding word content is therefore not as significant as some have feared. TV ads use words as well as images and sounds to communicate ideas.

Television ads are, however, less focused on issues and more focused on image than print advertisements. Image ads try to evoke particular feelings amongst viewers such as reassurance and confidence. Some try to be uplifting and inspiring, to reassure or to defend, to promote achievement and competency and to make voters feel safe and secure. Alternately, some focus on the opponent party or leader and on disparaging their images.

It is not unusual for over fifty per cent of modern television ads to be focused on image and this has gone up to a high of eighty per cent in 1996. This has its antecedents in ‘policy-free’ ads such as ‘It’s Time’, ‘Let’s Stick Together’ and ‘We’re Not Waiting for the World’. Although these ads were notably absent of any policy detail, very few TV ads actually do try to promote a specific policy. Instead, most are about broad themes and use only vague statements about values or intentions. Policy detail is considered too dull to bore TV viewers with.\textsuperscript{87}

The parties view TV as a significantly different media to print. When they want to explain a complicated new policy by appealing ‘to the logic of the electorate’, they use newspaper ads as they presume this audience is more likely to be interested in political issues.\textsuperscript{88} Television ads, on the other hand, are broadcast to an audience who may not be at all interested in the subject of the ad. Ads are therefore designed to grab

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uninterested viewer's attention and use personalised human visuals. Because they are designed to reach an audience that the parties themselves believe is 'shallow' and motivated by self-interest, televised political ads are certainly not the highest form of political treatise. For this reason, it is very easy to criticise them, as indeed many commentators have. Brian Costar, for example, argues that 'most paid political advertising is pitched at so low a level as to insult the intelligence of the vast majority'.

The parties and their ad agents view TV as a better vehicle for showing people-oriented themes and for creating emotional responses. They are therefore used to target specific audiences. In particular, women feature prominently in the TV ads of both major parties. Braund's call, made over twenty years ago, for more 'imaginative, people-oriented propaganda' has been well and truly answered.

Although TV ads are only slightly more negative than newspaper ads, there are major differences in the impact which can be made in TV ads compared to print. Most of the ads which Australian political folklore contends are the most successful have been negative TV ads. In recent years, TV ads are far more likely to attack party leaders than newspaper ads. The significance of this is that politics is becoming, at least on television, more of a gladiatorial contest between opponent party leaders.

TV ads are more personalised and less partisan; most now omit any mention of the political parties. And, while party leaders are present in both newspaper and TV ads, there are important differences in how leaders are presented in the two media. On TV, the leaders are increasingly presented as solo figures bereft of parties. This seems to suggest that television does provide more information about candidates or leaders, and newspapers provide more information about parties.

On television, Ward argues, "style replaces substance" and image and personality become more important than ideas and argument. However, we must dismiss any assumption that early ads were necessarily about substance, ideas and argument—they were not. And yet, it is true that, since the rise of television, we have seen more image ads and less partisanship. TV ads are short, sharp and slickly produced. They are a modern side-show of politics and a spectacle which shows in short-hand only
some of the issues, leaders and events of the day. While they should be monitored, critiqued, and criticised, political TV ads should not be overly feared. Fear of TV ads has frequently been based on questionable assumptions that TV is all-powerful and affects people and democracy in dangerous ways (the sort of thinking that was behind the ‘hypodermic’ school and the blackout on electronic media in the 1940s). Fears have also been based on a rather high-brow and elitist assumption that moving images and sounds are irrational and not as worthy or valuable as printed, textual information.

Although TV ads are based on images and visuals, this does not mean that they are unsuitable vehicles for political communication. In the 1950s, many commentators hoped that television would revolutionise politics and create a more responsive democracy. Later, many of these commentators were disappointed.\textsuperscript{93} But the technology by itself was never going to automatically change the political system for the better. Everything depended upon how it was used. Televised political ads have the potential to inform, inspire, encourage, mobilise, critique and encourage debate. Indeed, some TV ads have probably achieved many of these things but not in the manner which some academic commentators recognise and not in ways that they would count as relevant. Using measures of word content, length and an academic preference for the printed word has denied an objective examination of any of the benefits of TV advertising.

At present, the parties are in complete control of the content of their advertising and there is little motivation for them to design their ads any differently. They have come to put a great deal of faith in TV advertising and the advice of their ad agents. Attempts to regulate the content of TV advertising—bans on dramatisation and regulations on truth, for example—have been consistently unsuccessful. Henry Mayer questioned assumptions that regulation could ever make ads more truthful, longer or ‘more thoughtful’\textsuperscript{94} While the Australian public express annoyance at political TV ads, there has been no real public outcry about changing the current system or any debate about what the public wants to see in political ads.
ELECTIONEERING

In an analysis of the 1929 federal election, Dagmar Carboch outlined a ‘recipe’ that, it was claimed, the Australian parties had used in ‘most federal elections since Federation’. This recipe, written in 1958, is very interesting, because it indicates the very early presence of many of those facets of electioneering which have been most criticised in modern campaigns. Carboch’s recipe for parties during an election campaign was: 1) appeal to fear, ‘try and create a scare, any scare, and always represent your opponent as an “extremist”; 2) ‘keep a “What about...” file consisting of what your opponents, or anyone remotely associated with them, said and did in the past. Then select what may appear unpopular, disreputable, or at least contradictory to their present policy’; 3) ‘paint your own side as moderate, decent and respectable to attract the “swinging” middle-class voter’ and 4) ‘try and pick a single, simple-sounding “issue” and build your campaign around that. Don’t confuse voters and don’t get side-tracked on to dangerous ground’. This analysis indicates the long existence of many electioneering strategies which are assumed to be ‘modern’ and the result of new political marketing strategies.

Targeting

Flexibility, scheduling, targeting and testing are crucial elements of political advertising strategy. This dissertation used ad-maps of major metropolitan newspapers to uncover data about the parties’ geographical targeting of advertisements. It discovered that the parties’ strategies are not as straightforward as might have been expected. When choosing media outlets, the parties consider more than just the number of House of Representative seats in a particular state. The reasons behind this need to be further explored and interviews with party officials would be beneficial to uncover more information about this. However, the analysis did show that the parties use almost identical strategies when placing newspaper ads in different states and territories. This indicates there is an agreed, fixed logic behind their targeting strategies. While the major cities and states receive most attention as we would expect based on a pragmatic strategy of reaching the maximum number of voters, they did not receive as much as their relative electoral importance would
suggest. However, the main limitation of the research performed in this thesis, was that it focused on newspaper ad placement. There is only a small sample of newspaper ads in recent years and further research is needed on ad placement on television in order to uncover greater information about the parties’ targeting.

Scammell has argued that political marketing has the potential to create a more genuinely popular democracy. Political marketing, she claimed, makes the parties put the ‘customer’ first and be driven by ‘customer needs’.\(^6\) As a result of this customer driven focus, the parties are supposedly able to develop better ‘products’ and policies. The content of the major parties’ political advertising in Australia suggests that political marketing strategies have led the parties to put only some customers first and then to deal with only some of those customer’s needs and interests. Political ads concentrate overwhelmingly on white, middle-class Australians and their economic aspirations. A whole suite of other people, needs and issues are overlooked, because the parties only try to appeal to those who ‘count’ electorally.

In their advertising, the parties try to appeal to the aspirational voter. They disassociate themselves from the poor and disadvantaged and try to appeal instead to middle class voters’ social and economic aspirations. They use the language of ‘opportunity’ to appeal to the upwardly mobile.\(^7\) Contrary to Plasser and Plasser’s argument that in countries with high voter turnout, it would be ‘risky’ for the parties to ‘neglect specific groups of the electorate’,\(^8\) both the major parties in Australia tend to target the same groups and show the same stereotypes in advertisements.

While targeting and political marketing may theoretically have the potential to enhance democracy, what is actually occurring is a constraint on discourse, a narrowing of options and a segmenting of political messages to discreet targeted audiences. This segmentation makes it difficult for a democratic public to effectively identify either itself or its interests. In particular, the focus on short-term, selfish, financial interest makes it difficult to define the more enduring interests of broader society. What is visible in ads is a focus on short-term interests which are of relevance only for some. Beresford is right to be concerned that ‘voters are being encouraged to fix on a small set of issues deliberately marketed to them while failing to take into account a wider range of national concerns’.\(^9\)
The parties' ads demonstrate all too well their assumption that swinging voters are ignorant about politics, apathetic, 'selfish, ignored and depressed...'. Ads mirror the swinging voters' perceived lack of interest in politics and policy by deemphasising these aspects and instead play on their 'greater involvement and interest in matters concerning their personal and their family's financial well-being...'.

Women voters, particularly mothers with young children, 'have traditionally been the swing group'. Children are therefore an enduring symbol in political ads and are used to alternately, represent hope or fear. But even in 1949, women were a major target audience and political advertisements would appeal to them in quite direct ways. Menzies 'was one of the first federal party leaders who actively targeted women's votes...[and] was always careful to emphasise how issues...were of concern to women'. Nevertheless, his appeals were also conventionally addressed to 'traditional male heads of households'. Shopping and homes were seen as the key feminine interests. The woman was viewed as a consumer and mother whose happiness often equated to a load of parcels or a full shopping trolley.

The family is one of the most common visual images and rhetorical devices in political ads. As Johnson argues: 'One should not underestimate the power of appeals to family life'. The family is, she notes, not only an important site of 'identity and self worth' but also wields the 'emotional power to evoke stability, safety and security...'. Johnson points out that the family can also act 'as a code for traditional gender relations designed to make those challenged by social change feel relaxed and comfortable'. In political ads, the family has been seen in narrow terms as a nuclear family and issues such as home ownership have been accorded special importance. Like children, older people are alternately represented as happy and content as a result of government policy or vulnerable and in need of protection.

Blue-collar workers are not common in Australian political ads and if judged by their inclusion of this group in their advertising, the ALP's blue-collar credentials have weakened significantly. Labor's ads indicate they are increasingly showing, and therefore presumably aiming for, white-collar workers instead. This has significance
for the on-going debate about the extent to which Labor is still a party for the working class. It indicates a withdrawal from this perception to a more ‘catch-all’ approach.

Issues of race and ethnicity are almost totally absent from Australian political advertising. It is extremely rare for an ad to show a person from a non-English speaking background and no ads were found which showed an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This is a noticeable omission given Australia’s self-proclaimed status as a great multi-cultural nation. Political ads indicate that Australian politicians still essentially view Australia as a white middle-class nation. This conforms with Alyson L. Greiner’s study which found that the image of Australia as a ‘white-only realm’ was ‘powerfully portrayed’ in ads promoting Australia on American television. The parties’ narrow conception of the Australian electorate in their advertising suggests their election policies are constructed with this one group in mind while the problems facing other groups are given less priority or even ignored.

Stereotypes—of women, farmers and older people, for example—are also manifest in political ads. This is interesting in view of Lippmann’s argument that elites protect their positions by representing situations ‘in stereotypical terms likely to generate popular responses based on prejudice rather than on critical appraisal.’

Constructing reality

The parties try to project memorable messages and break through people’s barriers to advertising. In political marketing terms, they ‘try to link their brand’ to the consumer’s aspirations so that through the product (the party) ‘the consumer is invited to share in its attributes, be they youth, beauty, sophistication...’ This is why advertisements so often show that which it is perceived voters most desire—a happy family, a suburban home, consumer items, a white-collar job or a new car.

Benedict Anderson explained the idea of the nation as an ‘imagined community’. According to Anderson, the nation ‘is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’.
concept is evident in political advertising where notions of community were created in ads. Some people were included in the community while others were excluded. Non-Anglo Australians were portrayed as ‘others’ by virtue of their exclusion. Sometimes, this was highlighted more directly, such as in ads about the White Australia policy which called for immigrants of ‘the right type’. In recent ads, the unemployed are a group demonised as the ‘other’. In some ads, geographical location was seen as the key divide and ‘us’ included Queenslanders, while ‘they’ were people living in the southern states.

Because most Australians will never meet, political ads try to construct a common bond. Their logos are carefully designed to reflect patriotism and national symbols, particularly the Australian flag, which is also used as a background prop in several ads. Sport has also been used to tap into cultural symbolism and national pride. Songs such as ‘Let’s Stick Together’ also seek to create a sense of community and cohesiveness.

Overall, ads construct reality for viewers. They use fears, concerns and narratives that already exist in Australian society and in Australian voters and they rely on shared understandings. Language and visual symbols in Australian political ads work on the basis of cultural codes and values. While policy platforms may not hold much interest for many voters, the use of popular culture allows political advertising to connect and resonate with voters very quickly. Richardson Jr. and Jasperson note that even in a thirty second ad, voters can ‘readily recognise the plots, characters and settings of popular culture, which are frequently deployed in political advertising and serve to fuse pre-existing cultural knowledge with claims about candidates [or parties].’

The benefits of incumbency

In Australian political ads, incumbency offers a number of symbolic advantages. Incumbent ads can use the symbolic trappings of office, such as the Prime Minister’s office and the Australian flag, to convey power and authority. By focusing on the work of the incumbent Prime Minister, ads can imbue him/her with a sense of
competency that comes with the office. This offers incumbents a key advantage. However, challengers also have an advantage because they are able to attack the record of their opponents. Because the incumbent government has been able to enact policies, has been the centre of media and public attention and has a record of action (or inaction), there is a fertile basis for attacks by a challenger.

Often the biggest problem challengers face during elections is to get sufficient financing to disseminate their messages through expensive advertising campaigns. Incumbent Australian politicians already receive quite generous public entitlements to print and send direct mail, newsletters and other types of advertising to their constituents. In recent years, there has also been concern about the extent of government advertising and its use as political propaganda to secure political advantage. All of these benefits combined can make it quite difficult for challengers to compete. This thesis has not looked at government advertising but there is an urgent need to do so. Misusing government ‘information’ campaigns as pseudo-political advertisements can put challengers at an extreme disadvantage.

Australian politicians already enjoy a major incumbency advantage. In the past five decades, only four federal elections have resulted in a change of government. A system where incumbents almost never lose elections is obviously potentially corrupting. It has dire implications for accountability, representation and the party system. It stifles the possibility of rotation of office, new ideas and innovative policy. If we do not want to see a system which entrenches the power of incumbents, we need to make sure that incumbent governments do not use regulations—including political advertising, government advertising and public funding entitlement regulations—to make it difficult for other candidates and parties to compete.

The commodification of Australian politics

The ever-larger advertising budgets of the Australian political parties and their increasing reliance on advertising as a means of political communication suggests a commercialisation of the public sphere. Financially, it is media proprietors, advertising agents and other political professionals who benefit the most from this
greater reliance on political advertising. For political elites, advertising is seen as a key means of communicating ‘to’ citizens (rather than ‘with’ them). Advertising, as a one-way means of communication is not an effective means of encouraging full political participation and debate. Indeed, some may argue that the ‘commodification of politics’ is a deliberate denial of full political participation.\textsuperscript{114}

Politicians, and to a lesser extent, political parties and policy ideas, have come to be viewed as the ‘product’ while the ‘public’ is increasingly viewed as a ‘market’. Citizens are seen as consumers who can be ‘sold’ ideas, images and even, emotions. Viewing citizens in this manner, as people whose allegiances can be bought through large advertising budgets suggests that the political economy of communications in Australia is a driving force behind the types of political communications citizens receive.

**Final Conclusions**

This thesis has both built on, and extended, existing research. In particular, it has extended the small body of Australian research on political advertising. It has provided an historical account and critical analysis of the past fifty years and contributed to key theoretical debates. While other Australian studies have relied on narrative accounts alone, this study has used comprehensive and detailed research methods. These methods allowed the researcher to outline how political advertising used in Australian federal election campaigns has changed over the past fifty years and answer key theoretical questions about information content, personalisation, negativity and electioneering strategy. This final chapter has drawn conclusions about the impact of these changes on the way we elect our politicians and on our political system as a whole.

The approach taken in this thesis demonstrates the value of using multiple methods. Combining research methods to study political advertising was an effective way of analysing political advertising and provided a more complete picture. Content analysis alone would have missed important information while discourse analysis
alone would not have provided enough information to draw comprehensive conclusions. Content analysis was a very valuable method because it allowed the researcher to measure key features of change over time, yielded quantitative results and allowed international comparisons to be made. Discourse analysis provided another layer of information which took into account the context of political advertisements and how they construct meaning. Discourse analysis also helped to uncover themes which appear to have been important to the parties as the authors of those advertisements.

The ad-buys method was quite limited in terms of what it could reveal about political advertising, because the sample used was confined to newspaper advertising data. Further study into television ad buys would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the parties’ strategies. This could involve, for example, mapping when and where ads appear and with what frequency. Interviews with advertising agents and political consultants would also be a useful method for aiding understanding about the strategies and choices behind political advertising. This would also help to gain a better perspective about the intentions and motivations of the parties, their advertising agents and advisers.

As stated in the introduction to this study, political advertising has been viewed as a form of political communication—a dialogue between, on the one side, politicians, political parties, their consultants and advertising agents and, on the other side, voters or the general public. This dissertation has focused on only one side of this conversation—the political parties and their affiliates. While it has helped to make sense of the actions of the persuaders, further research needs to consider the other side of the coin—Australian audiences and their reactions to political advertising. In particular, the impact of negative advertising is crucial, as this has been a key feature of political advertising in Australia.

The impact of political ads on learning and the impact of emotional messages are also areas requiring further examination. Watching, reading and talking about political ads may not be the most ‘ideal’ way for citizens to participate in politics. For example, they certainly do not have the interaction of a town-hall meeting or street-corner speech, methods which have recently been viewed with some nostalgia.
Nevertheless, it is possible, and perhaps even likely, that Australian audiences view political ads critically, sifting through information, discarding some parts, absorbing others, and interpreting the messages contained in them. This process needs to be better understood.

Aside from the production and content of political ads, this study has highlighted the importance of the institutional context. Over the past fifty years, political, social, technological and regulatory changes have impacted upon how political advertising is used by the major parties in Australia. Elections have become more critical as partisan identification has declined and there are more swinging voters and late-deciders. There is a much greater reliance on the mass media to communicate with voters and on political professionals to craft those messages. The High Court’s decision in *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd v Commonwealth* (1992) has ensured the continuation of televised political advertising and public funding has made it more affordable for the major parties.

The content of political advertising has changed in some significant ways over the past fifty years. There is a declining emphasis on party in conjunction with a heightened focus on image, negativity and personalisation (in particular, negative personalisation or a focus on the opponent party leader). There has been a dramatic move away from using newspaper ads and much greater emphasis on TV advertising. There are fewer issues covered in political ads and some evidence for party convergence with both parties increasingly dealing with the same issues. There are fewer words in newspaper ads and shorter TV ads. There is a strategic emphasis on a ‘fast finish’, with the parties bombarding audiences with messages in the last days of the campaign.

Many of the key changes identified have their antecedents in earlier political advertising. There are also some long-standing features of political advertising in Australia over the past fifty years, such as narrow targeting, a homogenous conception of the audience and appeals to voters’ emotion and self-interest. The parties have always used political ads to try to set the public agenda. They have used them to prime voters and framed their messages very carefully. Political ads have always been an imperfect method of political education and have long failed to live up to
democratic ideals. The discourse in political ads has never been particularly high quality. In Australia, there is a tradition of negative ads but political advertising has also been used to promote particular leaders where those leaders are considered popular and to emphasise traits which are considered most important to voters. Political ads have traditionally relied on stereotypes to portray particular groups, such as women, older people and farmers.

There are some features of political advertising which have been overstated or misinterpreted. Significantly, although there have been changes, there was never any golden age of political advertising. It is also naïve to blame the modern malaise of Australian political ads on Americanisation. Australian political ads have always had distinctive qualities, because of political, social and cultural differences between the two countries. Negativity, in particular, seems to be a signature of Australian politics. While negativity has worried many commentators, so long as negative accusations are truthful and focused on policies and performance, they do not seem to be particularly harmful to democracy. Indeed, negativity is an essential part of political discourse and outlining an electoral choice for voters. What is of concern however, is that the ability to afford expensive television advertisements as a means of expressing concerns about the political system is an avenue only open to those with the means to afford it. In Australia, the financial means necessary for this are essentially confined to the two major parties.

Many of the measures of information content which have been used to assess political ads—such as ‘rationality’, word count and time length—do not always accurately reflect information content. Making ads longer will not necessarily make them any more thoughtful or accurate and may cause the ads to reach a less comprehensive audience. TV is used in a significantly different manner from newspapers and some of the more worrying aspects of change are, indeed, more evident in TV ads. However, it is wrong to assume that TV is necessarily an inferior medium to print. One major advantage of television is its ability to reach a much larger and wider audience.
There are, however, some key changes in political advertising which may have a negative impact on the political system and the way Australians elect their politicians. Of major concern is the closing down of political debate through strategies such as targeting, fast finishes and convergence. While the quality of discourse has never been particularly high in political ads, the rise of image ads is of concern, because it suggests a move away from emphasis on policy and political issues. The rise of television advertising has also contributed to a focus on image and on the leaders, compared to newspaper advertising, which is still based more on issues and parties. The decline of partisan identification in ads is also a major concern, because it has meant a move away from parties and ideology towards the more ephemeral and short-term issues and events which occur during the campaign. This move away from partisanship could have major repercussions for the traditional stability of Australian politics.

Although negative personalisation has focused mainly on leaders’ policies and record rather than personal characteristics, this greater focus on leaders as soft targets has seen a more cynical and personalised political discourse arise. In their advertising, politicians have also moved away from talking about social issues. Instead, voters are being asked to judge politicians on economic indicators and the individual voter’s financial self-interest. This focus on individualistic, materialistic discourse, along with the narrow targeting and use of stereotypes, excludes others and means many important issues are ignored and left off the political agenda.

While these key issues are of concern, it must be noted that ads do not meet democratic ideals and never have. This does not mean that we should ignore democratic ideals but rather, that we need to encourage greater public debate about what the public want to see in political ads and what they want for their public funding contributions. This must stem from a basis of realistic expectations. Political ads cannot cover everything and it is difficult to police the content of political advertisements without infringing free speech. Attempts at regulating content have proved largely unsuccessful. While many commentators have criticised political advertising, few have been able to outline an alternative vision of how political ads ought to be.
It would be tempting of course, to call for an alternative vision of political advertising which includes a number of prescriptions—that the parties should discuss a wider range of issues, should give policy detail, identify their partisanship and ideologies and avoid attacks on party leaders. But while it is all very well to call for such changes to make ads ‘better’, in reality, a number of things prevent change, including the adversarial party system, the High Court’s constitutional ruling, politicians’ reliance on ads and the difficulty of using regulation to enforce content conditions.

Public debate and media scrutiny of political advertising are the best options for achieving changes to political advertising and these need to begin with an understanding of the motivations, intentions and strategies behind political advertising. A key factor in creating an informed public in today’s political climate is for the public to be aware of the quality of reasoning and evidence in political ads. This thesis has provided key information, and analyses of, these features but we also need greater scrutiny of Australian politicians and their communication strategies. To combat the brevity of political advertising, we need to demand that the parties offer alternative sources of information and that this is in a format which is widely accessible; including Internet website addresses in political ads is one way the parties could facilitate this although this is still problematic in terms of access for all citizens. In terms of narrow targeting, public and media scrutiny needs to be vigilant about whether political advertising considers the needs of all members of society and not just the ones who are electorally significant to the parties. We must also consider the cost of political advertising and beware that the parties do not keep raising the amount of public funding to suit their fondness for expensive TV advertising. If they do want to raise it, public debate needs to focus on what conditions might reasonably be demanded of political advertising content, how these would be enforced and policed and, perhaps, even what limits should be placed on spending.
Rather than spearheading any collapse of democracy, political advertisements are reflecting changes in the relationships between politicians, the media and the public. They must be seen in a context of mass media management, ‘spin’ and highly stage-managed campaigns. While political ads are not always pleasant or high-brow, they do seem to be fairly effective in terms of reaching a wide audience, who might otherwise abstain from receiving other forms of political information. Nevertheless, the nature of public debate that political advertising encourages is of concern. Political advertising promotes a commercialised, highly stage-managed and one-sided public debate with little opportunity for citizens to respond or interact. It is true that during a campaign, a series of ads are used by both sides—some positive, some negative, some about policies, some about leaders, most mention at least one issue—and taken as a whole, these ads do transmit information and provide a picture of current issues, leaders and debates. But could political ads be better? Of course. So we need to be aware of their shortcomings, call the parties to account for the content of their ads and the manner in which they are funded, as well as questioning the choices and methods they use.
Endnotes

Chapter one

1 The election was both riotous and violent. On polling day there was a massed attack on a polling booth which resulted in the Riot Act being read and at least one fatality.
2 Lengthy advertising campaigns have therefore existed since as far back as the 1840s.
3 Ribbons, a knot of ribbon or a rosette worn in the hat.
4 the Sydney Morning Herald, 15 June 1843, p. 2
5 the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 June 1843, p. 2.
6 the Sydney Morning Herald, 12 June 1843, p. 3.
7 ibid., p. 1.
8 the South Australian Register, 31 August 1855, p. 1.
9 the South Australian Register, 10 September 1855, p. 1.
11 Marian Simms notes that the campaigning for the 1901 election was 'intense' and candidates 'kept up heavy schedules of daily meetings, mostly held in the evenings' (M. Simms, 'Election days: Overview of the 1901 election' in 1901: The forgotten election, M. Simms, (ed.) University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland, 2001b, p. 10). Simms also notes that negative advertising and slanging matches were still in use (ibid.).
12 By the 1940s, cinema proprietors were only allowing political advertisements to be screened in the last two weeks of a campaign (S. Mills, The new machine men: Polls and persuasion in Australian politics, Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria, 1986, p. 138).
14 ibid., p. 51.
15 Hughes, 1992, p. 93.
16 ibid.
17 ibid., p. 92.
21 ibid., p. 212.
22 ibid.
26 In 2001, a study of 1300 people by advertising agency Magnum Opus found that the Liberal, Labor and Democrat television advertisements were among the top five most hated ads in Australia (A. Lawson, 'Thumbs down for ad nauseam', the Age, 8 December, 2001, p. 7).


29 D. Atkins, 'ALP comeback not impossible through ads', the Courier-Mail, 8 February, 1996a, p. 10.

30 M. Lawrence, 'Admen cometh with bad tidings', the Herald-Sun, 9 March, 1993, p. 44.


Chapter two

To recognise this is not to ignore that other political parties in Australia achieve regular success in having candidates elected to Parliament (the Australian Democrats and the Greens, for example). Nor is it to miss the fact that there are a growing number of independents in the federal Parliament. Despite these features however, the choice of government for Australian voters is essentially a choice between the ALP or the Coalition. (See Appendix C for more information on the major parties).


3 ibid., p. 251.


6 ibid.

7 ibid.


9 Although the parties may produce advertisements for individual candidates in rural seats (where airtime on regional television is cheaper). See L. Crosby, 'The Liberal Party' in Howard's agenda: The 1998 Australian Election, M. Simms and J. Warhurst (eds), University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2000, p. 68.


11 Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, 'Attitudes to the media', Mosman, N.S.W., 1994.


Mills notes that 'Australia's oldest political tradition is borrowing and adaptation' (Mills, 1986, p. 11.)


Although some states chose to supplement this with their own additional local advertising (ibid.).

ibid., p. 32.

ibid., p. 77.


ibid., p. 124.


Rawson, 1961, p. 78.


S. Bennett, Winning and losing: Australian national elections, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1996, p. 110. The parties tend to be more generous with their advice than with providing funds for local campaigns. Simms argues that in some cases only one third of a candidate's funding comes from national/state sources (M. Simms, 1997, p. 51). Local candidates therefore still need to perform fund-raising activities to pay for much of their local advertising (such as pamphlets, local newspaper ads and how-to-vote cards) (Bennett, 1996, p. 128).

Bennett, 1996, p. 129.

ibid.


Although Bennett notes that some rural Members of Parliament do 'attempt to become known simply as "the local Member", who is, in some way, above normal party politics'. Such members 'hope that such an approach will help them survive in the event of a fall in popularity of their party [and] it is not unknown for [them] to produce campaign literature that makes no mention of their party'. This was particularly noticeable in the 1996 election when several rural ALP members tried to distance themselves from an unpopular federal government (Bennett, 1996, p. 126).


ibid.

Crosby, 2000, p. 68.


For example, in 1984, twenty-eight of NSW's fifty-one seats were marginal along with twenty-four of Victoria's thirty-nine seats and twenty-one of the twenty-four seats in Queensland (Australian Electoral Commission, 'General election for the House of Representatives 1984: Result of count of first preference votes and distribution of preferences', Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1985b).

J. Warhurst and A. Parkin (eds), The machine: Labor confronts the future, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, p. 15.

Bennett, 1996, p. 98.

Rawson, 1961, p. 76.

ibid., p. 11.

L. Oakes, 'An image-making, soft-sell campaign', the Advertiser, 2 December, 1972, p. 5.
42 Mills, 1986, p. 95.
43 Oakes, 1972, p. 5.
44 A. Barnes, "Image: that's the thing now", the Age, 10 November, 1972, p. 9.
45 ibid.
48 J. Murphy, 'All they need is you!' the Sun, 22 November, 1975, p. 27.
49 ibid.
50 Even back in 1983, the Liberal Party had no fewer than three polling agencies doing quantitative surveys and qualitative research during the campaign (M. Grattan, 'Liberals take aim at Hawke image', the Age, 14 February, 1983, p. 13).
55 V. Lawson, 'GST: The hydra that ate its own ad campaign', the Australian Financial Review, 6 April, 1993, p. 22.
56 ibid.
57 ibid.
58 M. Lawrence, 'Admen cometh with bad tidings', the Herald-Sun, 9 March, 1993, p. 44.
61 See for example, Oakes, 1972, p. 5; N. Savva, 'Minders make leaders look like one of us', the Herald-Sun, 8 February, 1996, p. 17.
62 Murphy, 1975, p. 27.
64 M. Farr, 'Fright the key to success says ad man', the Daily Telegraph, 14 February, 1996, p. 6.
65 ibid.
71 Mills, 1986, p. 171.
72 Specifically, the 'Wealth Tax' advertisements discussed in later chapters.
73 Mills, 1986, p. 171.
74 ibid., p. 177.
75 ibid.
76 ibid.
The 1993 election was one of the most criticised on the grounds of truth. Jaensch notes that one commentator called it ‘the deception campaign’ and states the five weeks were ‘full of dissembling, half-truths, fudging, questionable statistics and plain, straight lies’ (D. Jaensch, The Liberals, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1994b, p. 214). See also N. Savva & P. Lyons, 'Labor ad 'lies' fury', the Herald-Sun, 19 February, 1993, p. 5.


They complained that the ads left people with the impression that everything would go up by fifteen percent when ‘not one thing will go up by fifteen per cent because of the taxes we are taking off’ (N. Savva and P. Lyons, 'Labor ad 'lies' fury', the Herald-Sun, 19 February, 1993, p. 5).

Particularly, the Liberals ‘Gunsight on the Unemployed’ TV advertisement (discussed in Chapter seven).


To qualify for public election funding, a candidate must obtain four per cent or more of the first preference vote. The entitlement is then calculated on the total number of votes won with the number of first preference votes obtained multiplied by the rate of payment. This method for calculating public funding clearly favours the major parties with the ALP and Liberal-National Party receiving up to eighty-eight per cent of all public funding (See Australian Electoral Commission, 1996).

D. Atkins, 'Letterbox overkill heightens voter distaste for politics', the Courier-Mail, 7 February, 1996c, p. 25.

Australian Electoral Commission, 1996.


In 1972, for example, Labor spent an unprecedented amount advertising in national women's magazines in order to counter findings that women did not like Whitlam (Barnes, 1972, p. 9). In 1996, Labor placed a number of advertisements in influential youth street magazines including ads designed like a flyer for a 'rave' party ('Labor pitch at youth', the Herald-Sun, 23 February, 1996, p. 18).

Information provided by The Hon. Bob McMullan MP in an interview with the author in February 2002.


Solomon, 1972, p. 2.


Australian Electoral Commission, 1996.


ibid.

109 In 1923, there were twenty-six capital city dailies owned by twenty-one different proprietors. By 1960, this had declined to fourteen newspapers (House of Representatives Select Committee on the Print Media, 'News and fair facts: The Australian print media industry report', Australian Parliament, Canberra, 1992).

110 News Corporation Ltd. with Chief Executive Rupert Murdoch, is now one of the largest media companies in the world but originally grew from owning an Adelaide afternoon newspaper. John Fairfax Ltd is still known mainly for its newspapers which it has been publishing since 1831 (J. Schultz, 'The Press' in The media in Australia: Industries, texts, audiences, S. Cunningham and G. Turner (eds), 2nd edn, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, N.S.W., 1997, p. 36).

111 House of Representatives Select Committee on the Print Media, 1992.

112 In recent times, two daily national newspapers have also entered the market; the Australian and the Australian Financial Review. However, both are broadsheets with small circulations and select readerships. The author found that political parties place very few, if any, advertisements in these publications.

113 T. Eggleton, 'Campaign 'wash-up' seminar: Record', Liberal Party of Australia, Canberra, Box 1361 in Manuscripts (MSS000) at the National Library of Australia, 1980b.

114 In 1960, before the merger of the Sun and the Herald, a survey of readership by class seemed to confirm this popular assumption when readers of the Age were compared to readers of the Sun (Mayer, 1968, p. 231).


116 Ibid., p. 183.


118 Australian Labor Party, 'ALP campaign planning: Summary', Box 1352 of Manuscripts Collection (MSS000) at the National Library of Australia, 1979.


120 R. R. Walker, 'Walking advertisements step up the pace', the Age, 9 July, 1987, p. 25.


124 Commercial channels, Channel Nine and Channel Seven remain the most watched television stations (S. Cunningham, 'Television' in The media in Australia: Industries, texts, audiences, S. Cunningham and G. Turner (eds), 2nd edn, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, N.S.W., 1997, p. 108).


126 In 1958, the Coalition parties and the ALP were allocated equal free time on commercial television with the DLP given a smaller allocation. The ABC gave the Coalition and ALP two hours each and the DLP half an hour (Rawson, 1961, p. 118).

127 The parties received professional advice on how to use television from their advertising agents and other professionals. Mostly, the parties used their time for short talks by a single speaker (the 'talking head' format) or discussions between the party leader and a 'tame' interviewer (ibid., p. 121).


131 Tucker and Young, 2001.


133 D. Solomon, 'Funding's a political minefield', the Age, 2 December, 1977, p. 9.

Chapter three

5 Braund, 1978.
6 ibid., p. 348.
7 ibid., p. 350.
8 ibid., p. 372.
9 ibid.
10 'Quickie TV ads a threat', the Sun, 23 November, 1977, p. 32.
12 ibid.
14 ibid.
15 ibid., p. 116.
16 ibid., p. 117.
17 ibid., p. 115.
18 ibid., p. 118.
23. ibid., p. 337.
27. Young, 2002 (Appendix A).
30. ibid., p. 110.
33. This study, published in 2002, was based on an Australian state election (which oddly enough is unnamed, but seems to be Queensland). The research method was the administration of two questionnaires to a convenience sample of 348 voters which was heavily skewed towards voters with a university education. O'Cass' major finding was that voter involvement, satisfaction and emotion affected the believability of the positive campaign run by the incumbent state government but only involvement affected the negative campaign run by the opposition (A. O'Cass, 'Political advertising believability and information source value during elections', *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2002, pp. 63-75).
38. A. Barnes, "Image": that's the thing now", the *Age*, 10 November, 1972, p. 9.


52 Ibid., p. 55.


56 Ibid., p. xii.
57 ibid.
58 See ibid., p. 7.
59 ibid., p. 10.
63 ibid.
67 However, if we consider the formal campaign period as the period between the Prime Minister's announcement of the election date and the date of polling, the average length of campaigns since 1984 has actually been forty-one days (with the trend towards shorter campaigns of thirty-five to thirty-seven days) (Bennett, 1996, p. 109).
68 In determining how votes translate into seats, Australian House of Representatives elections are conducted according to the single-member preferential voting method rather than the first-past-the-post system used in the US. Under the single-member preferential voting system, voters are required to rank all of the candidates in order of preferences. These preferences can assume great significance in determining the outcome of an election contest. For example, between 1972 and 1990, preferences changed the outcome of an election division in seventy instances (C. A. Hughes, 'The rules of the game' in The greening of Australian politics: The 1990 federal election, Bean, McAllister and Warhurst (eds), Longman Cheshire, London, 1990, pp. 141-2). Preferential voting has also had an impact on the content of Australian political ads because the parties often play a role in directing voters about the process of casting their vote. 'How-to-vote' cards are thrust into voters hands as they enter the polling station and are also often reprinted in the parties' newspaper advertisements. These can be an important form of political advertising in Australia which are not seen in the U.S. 
69 Because no matter how popular an individual candidate for Prime Minister is, s/he cannot win the election alone but must instead ensure that their party as a whole polls well.
72 In 1996, the two major parties were reimbursed ninety-three per cent of their campaign costs. By 1998, concerns were raised in Parliament and the media that in at least one case, a party was able to make a profit because the party spent less on its election campaign than it received in public funding. See section 2.7 of Australian Electoral Commission, '1998 Federal Election Report', Canberra, 1999.
78 See Bean, Gow and McAllister, 1998.
81 R. Thomson, 'inside the bunker, the Liberals are on top', the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 November, 1984, p. 7.
84 See Forrest and Marks, 1999.
85 Compare McAllister and Mughan, 1987; Bean, Gow and McAllister, 1998.
87 Kaid and Johnston, 2000, p. 20.
90 Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell and Semetko, 1999, p. 7.
91 Quoted in Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell and Semetko, 1999, p. 5.
92 The study claimed that if voting behaviour is stable, there is little room for voters to be influenced during the course of the campaign. In contrast to earlier studies and concerns about propaganda and brainwashing, this led to a belief that political communication during elections was of minimal consequence and downplayed the significance of the media.
93 ibid.
94 ibid., p. 8.
95 Norris, 2001, p. 566.
96 Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell and Semetko, 1999, p. 9.
100 ibid.
102 ibid.
104 ibid., p. 45.


ibid.


ibid.


ibid., p. 181.

ibid.


ibid., p. 195.

ibid., p. 205.


See Braund, 1978.


Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995b.

Forrest and Marks, 1999, p. 221.


A. Meade, 'Last week of campaign and we've ad enough', the *Australian*, 30 September, 1998, p. 13.

Mills, 1986, p. 163.

ibid., p. 164.

ibid., p. 165.


ibid.

Bean and McAllister, 1997, p. 197.


Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a, p. 211.


Even the National Party used a thirty second advertisement featuring leader Tim Fischer 'in all styles of “leadership”: listening leadership, honest leadership, commonsense leadership' (C. Ferguson, 'The National Party campaign' in *The politics of retribution: The 1996 federal election*, C. Bean, M. Simms, S. Bennett and J. Warhurst (eds), Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, N.S.W, 1997, p. 43).


Hughes claims that in early Australian elections the 'press reported what was said in manifestos and at campaign meetings and wrote strong editorials; they did very little to personalize [sic] contests between either local candidates or the party leaders' (Hughes, 1992, p. 89). See also Bennett, 1996, p. 114.

Ward, 1995, p. 188.


Quoted in Bennett, 1996, p. 165.

ibid., p. 167.


Quoted in Bennett, 1996, p. 167.


ibid., p. 232.


Jaensch, 1994a, p. 236.

ibid.


Ward, 1995, p. 188.


Mills, 1986, p. 133.


Joslyn, 1980, p. 94.


Joslyn, 1980, p. 93.

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a, p. 212.

Joslyn, 1980, p. 93.

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a, p. 213.

Joslyn, 1980, p. 98.


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Peter Reith quoted in Bita, 1993, p. 10.

D. Atkins, 'Labor brings Hunter in for the kill, but Singo's move may backfire', the Courier-Mail, 14 February, 1996b.


Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995b, p. 211.

D. Walker, 'It's about time for another 'It's time' campaign', the Advertiser, 6 July, 1987, p. 21.

See Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1995.

See Young, 2000.


Johnson-Cartee and Copeland make a distinction between 'negative political issue appeals' pertain to 'political record and stands on issues' while 'negative personal characteristic issue appeals' pertain to 'medical histories, personal life, religion, sex life, family members and current or past marriages' (K. S. Johnson-Cartee and G. A. Copeland, Negative political advertising: coming of age, Communication Series, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1991, p. 11).

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995b, p. 211.


ibid., p. 271.


217 Kaid and Tedesco, 1999b.


224 Quoted in ibid, p. 851.

225 For the major parties there can be a difference of between one and six per centage points in the House of Representatives vote compared to the Senate vote (Bennett, 1996, p. 174).


227 ibid.

228 This is likely to be particularly true for ALP ad placement during the period 1983-1996 as a focus on marginal seats was a major element of the Hawke-Keating led Labor Party.

229 Bennett, 1996, p. 120.

230 ibid., pp. 171-3.

231 Floating voters are usually defined as those who decide their vote during the campaign.


233 ibid., p. 139.

234 ibid.

235 Bennett, 1996, p. 166.

236 ibid.

237 ibid.


239 ibid., p. 23.

240 ibid.


243 ibid., p. 18.

244 ibid., p. 100.

245 ibid., p. 158.


248 ibid.

249 Mills, 1986, p. 82.


251 ibid.

252 Jones and Stubbs, 1993, p. 35.

253 S. Pekol, 'Women's vote a vital poll factor', the Courier-Mail, 24 June, 1987, p. 9.

254 ibid.

255 Jones and Stubbs, 1993, p. 35.

256 L. Crosby, 'The Liberal Party' in Howard's agenda: The 1998 Australian Election, M. Simms and J. Warhurst (eds), University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2000, p. 65. Carol Johnson notes that selected Labor Party advertising targeted women and asked them 'to reject key features of the

237 Crosby, 2000, p. 65.
258 ibid.
259 ibid.
260 However, Bennett disputes this view (Bennett, 1996, p. 159).
262 McAllister and Bean, 1997, p. 178.
263 ibid., p. 179.
264 ibid.
265 See Aitken, 1977.
266 Although Marian Simms notes that the traditional model fails to reflect that forty per cent of manual or blue-collar workers do not support Labor and this has been consistent over a thirty year period (M. Simms, 'Australian elections: Research and debate [Address to The Sydney Institute on 30 January 2001]', *The Sydney Papers*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2001a, p. 119).
268 Quoted in Jaensch, 1994a, p. 229.
269 McAllister and Bean, 1997, p. 185.
270 Jaensch, 1994a, p. 229.
272 ibid., p. 185.
273 ibid.
274 Joslyn, 1980, p. 94.
280 Mazzoleni and Roper, 1995, p. 103.
281 Kaid and Tedesco, 1999b.
283 Kaid and Davidson, 1986, p. 189.
285 ibid., p. 247.
286 Bennett, 1996, p. 113.
289 Two other methods are rhetorical analysis and case study.
290 Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995b, p. 207.
Chapter four


4. Including presenting ads in an appropriate format—one hardcopy and one softcopy in an electronic database.

5. Three of these newspapers (the NT News, West Australian and Daily Telegraph) were only accessed for the years 1990-2001 as earlier editions of these papers were not available at the State Library of Victoria. All of the other seven newspapers were collected for all election years from 1949-2001.


8. Individual candidate ads—most of which were present only in the Mercury and the Canberra Times—were not collected.


10. It would be beneficial to show a breakdown of advertisements by state or newspaper however this is not practicable as the same advertisement was often repeated in different newspapers in different states. This is especially true after 1990 when one ad could be placed in many different newspapers.


13. ibid.


15. ibid., p. 12.

16. ibid., p. 7.


20. ibid.


22. ibid.

24 Holsti, 1969, p. 11.
25 Popping, 2000, p. 5.
26 Coding is best defined as 'the process whereby raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant content characteristics' (ibid., p. 19).
27 Holsti quoted in Sedlach and Stanley, 1992, p. 266.
30 As evidenced by her very lengthy publications list and the number of citations her work receives in other sources.
31 Trent and Friedenberg, 1995.
32 An 'information ad' was defined as an advertisement which focused on providing information of a factual nature such as date and place of meetings, time of radio address, etc. These advertisements were predominantly factual and did not contain much detailed information such as policy preferences. Once counted and recorded, these advertisements were therefore excluded from the further content analysis process (see Appendix F - Coding Instruction Book).
34 Popping, 2000, p. 10.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Kellehear, 1995, p. 87.
41 Ibid., p. 465.
43 Quoted in Kellehear, 1995, p. 43.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 227.
49 Ibid., p. 228.
50 Ibid.
Chapter five

1 As described in Chapter three and Appendix G, this refers only to party advertisements and does not include individual advertisements by party members or advertisements which only include how-to-vote information (these type of ads were often placed in the last one to two days before polling day).
2 As discussed in Chapter two.
7 D. Jaensch, '100 years later, our campaigns are driven by the jet set', the Advertiser, 4 January, 2001; S. Green, 'The long and short of policy speeches: elect me', the Age, 2 November, 2001; S. O'Brien, 'Party faithful deliver glitzy US-style launch', the Advertiser, 22 October, 2001.
8 And, such appearances are now, often, heavily advertised by the TV or radio stations themselves, so there is no need for the parties to pay.
10 In 1966, for example, the Labor Party used a number of TV ads about the Vietnam War which were up to four minutes long. One of these anti-Vietnam War TV ads, shows Gough Whitlam talking to the camera continuously, and unedited, for over four minutes.
12 For example, see Kaid and Bystrom, 1999, p. 211; but also Kaid and Johnston, 2000.
13 Liberal Party of Australia, Contingency: The advertising campaign, Box 1351 of Manuscripts Collection (MS5000) at the National Library of Australia, 1980b.
15 Liberal Party of Australia, 'Your vote for LCL Government is a vote of confidence in yourself', the Advertiser, 15 November, 1958, p. 4.
18 V. Lawson, 'GST: The hydra that ate its own ad campaign', the Australian Financial Review, 6 April, 1993, p. 22.
19 M. Lawrence, 'Admen cometh with bad tidings', the Herald-Sun, 9 March, 1993, p. 44.
21 ibid.
22 Trent and Friedenberg, 1995, p. 84.
25 ibid.
26 S. Rodgers, 'Before a poll the best policy is to win hearts', the Mercury, 21 March, 1990, p. 9.
27 ibid.
Chapter six

1 Bean, 1996, p. 25.
2 See Appendix F.
3 C. Moffat, 'Libs happy with Masius, (newspaper unknown), clipping located in Box 1357 of Manuscripts Collection MS5000 at the National Library of Australia', the 1983.
4 'Bill', 'Responses to Labor advertising', Liberal Party of Australia, Canberra, Box 1360 of Manuscripts Collection (MS5000) at the National Library of Australia, 1984.
7 R. Eccleston, 'Tony Eggleton defends election ads', the Age, 14 March, 1983.
8 'Liberals: Racist slogan claim is outrageous', the West Australian, 22 February, 1996, p. 27.
9 Eggleton, 1980a.
10 Using the other measure of when party leaders are mentioned or pictured in ads gives the same leaders and years but places Whitlam first in 1969, followed by Hawke in 1987, Whitlam in 1974, Hawke in 1983, Hawke in 1990 and Evatt in 1954.
12 This, he notes, was attractive to the working class who sought to be upwardly mobile, as well as to those who believed they had already arrived in the middle class' (Jaensch, 1994b, p. 189).
13 See Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994.
14 'The campaign points go to Whitlam', the Age, 29 November, 1972, p. 8; Oakes, 1972, p. 5; Barnes, 1972, p. 9; Solomon, 1972, p. 2.
16 Oakes, 1972, p. 5.
17 Yet, Oakes also acknowledged that 'Labor's advertising... [has] for the most part, concentrated on the party's plans for Government action in fields such as health, education, social welfare, transport, urban development and decentralisation' (ibid).
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 Eccleston, 1983.
22 Liberal Party of Australia, 'Agency brief', Liberal Party of Australia, Canberra, Box 738 of Manuscripts Collection (MS5000) at the National Library of Australia, 1983.
23 ibid.
27 C. Johnson, 'Shaping the future: Women, citizenship and Australian political discourse' in Gender, politics and citizenship in the 1990s, B. Sullivan and G. Whitehouse (eds), UNSW Press, Sydney, 1996, p. 27.
Chapter seven

It was unusual because the Liberals only designed their ‘wealth-tax’ ad very late in the campaign after a major change in strategy and when the ad proved successful, re-played it heavily.


A. Summers, Gamble for power: How Bob Hawke beat Malcolm Fraser, the 1983 federal election, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1983, p. 120. This may be because, as Jaensch notes, the Liberal Party has consistently defined itself in terms of the ‘twin appeals of being anti-Labor and anti-Socialist’ (Jaensch, 1994b, p. 189).


Kaid and Johnston, 2000, p. 128.


Although, it is impossible to attack a challenger’s record in office, even if it was several years ago, so long as that record was sufficiently poor that they can still be associated with it several years later.

The context behind this statement was that Queensland already had a public health system (free hospitals for all) before the introduction of the national public health system Medibank (later called Medicare).


In reality, there never was any such policy—the ad was triggered by a throw-away line from a junior Labor frontbencher.

Mills, 1986, p. 158.

ibid., p. 153.


Bennett, 1996, p. 165.

Their newspaper ads were of the same format—very small ads saying how the GST would impact on various products and services. These ads appeared on the inside few pages of major newspapers.


22 The ad also included two final shots; a photograph of an angry Kim Beazley and a smiling Gareth Evans dancing at an ALP function.

23 Atkins, 1996b.

24 Pristel, 1996, p. 15.


26 And in the newspaper ad version (shown in Figure 7.21), the word 'it' was also added to the statement so that it was in fact, a misquotation.


28 One Liberal ad from 1996 repeated footage of Keating saying shortly after winning the 1993 election that the people of Australia had taken the Labor Party on trust and 'we'll return that trust'. In 1990, the Liberal Party made a TV ad about Keating based on his statement that he was such a good Treasurer people should be 'lighting candles to him'.


32 The thirty-six 'faceless' men were state delegates (six from each state) to the ALP conference.


34 J. Conley, 'A very unexciting year for political advertising', the *Age*, 23 March, 1990, p. 22.

35 Williams, 1997, p. 159.


38 Ibid.


**Chapter eight**

1 See Table 2.4 in Chapter two and Mills, 1986, p. 184.

2 Labor had over 36,000 'We want Gough' buttons and more than 100,000 car stickers produced (J. Murphy, 'All they need is you!' the *Sun*, 22 November, 1975, p. 27).

3 C. Anderson, 'Six days to go - and it's - all stops out', the *Sun-Herald*, 7 December, 1975, p. 69.

4 See Gallup poll reported in Mayer, 1968, p. 234.


6 Interestingly however, they did not use the broadsheet the *Age* between 1972 and 1977 which was one of their most successful periods in terms of representation in the House of Representatives (see Appendix D).

7 For example, from 1974-1980, they advertised in the Tasmanian paper, the *Mercury*. In 1966, 1974 and 1975, they advertised in the *Canberra Times* and in the South Australian newspaper, the *Advertiser*, in 1972, 1974 and 1980.

8 Even in 1972, for example, the Country Party ads were predominantly local (J. Jost, 'The party machines get into top gear', the *Age*, 7 November, 1972, p. 9).

9 Examining the parties' advertising for the four elections held during the 1990s (the elections of 1990, 1993, 1996 and 1998) reveals these strategies. However, when considering these results it must
be taken into account that there were two newspapers examined in Victoria and N.S.W. However, as other states have only one major metropolitan newspaper (as discussed in Chapter two), this is still an appropriate measure of advertising placement.

10 Whereas looking at newspaper ads over the past few elections does not yield enough newspaper ads to be an appropriate sample.

11 Trent and Friedenberg, 1995, p. 75.
12 Ibid., p. 74.
13 Ibid., p. 75.
14 Eggleton, 1980a.
15 Even in 1977, the Liberal Party’s ad agency was proud of their ability to conceive and produce a 30 second TV ad in 24 hours (Liberal Party of Australia, 1980a).

18 The 1975 win to the Coalition is not considered to accurately represent a change of government because the Coalition was already acting as a caretaker government at the time of the election due to the unusual circumstances of that election.
22 Trent and Friedenberg, 1995, p. 126.
23 Eggleton, 1980.
26 Trent and Friedenberg, 1995, p. 126.
27 Ibid.
28 Williams, 1997, p. 60.
30 Williams, 1997, p. 58.
31 Johnson notes women have, in political party discourse, also been ‘incorporated into nationalistic, economistic conceptions of personal identity…’ (Johnson, 1996, p. 26).
33 See C. Johnson, ‘John Howard and the mainstream’ in Howards agenda: The 1998 Australian election, Simms, M. & Warhurst, J. (eds), University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland, 2000b, pp. 18-24. Johnson notes how, during the 1996 campaign, Howard ‘tried to win over the majority of the electorate by arguing that a Coalition government would represent the “mainstream”, or “all of us” (Johnson, 2000b, p. 18).
34 Savva, 1996, p. 17.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.

Chapter nine

1 See McCarthy, 1993; McAllister and Mughan, 1987; Forrest and Marks, 1999; Bean, Gow and McAllister, 1998.


Atkins, 1996a, p. 10.


Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994, p. 528.

7 This conforms to U.S. research which shows candidates 'use popular policy issues to influence (or 'prime') the electorate's standards for evaluating their personal attributes' (ibid., p. 112).

8 In this thesis, comparative and rebuttal ads were identified but not discussed in any detail. More should be said about these specific types of advertising.


Although the parties' use of direct mail also has problems including the use of over targeting of marginal seats so that not all voters receive this type of information at every election.


Mayer, 1994, p. 117.


Mills, 1986, p. 163.

ibid., p. 165.


ibid.

This is despite former national secretary of the ALP Gary Gray’s view that: ‘political communication is best when it’s emotional, relates to people, communities and national aspirations [and] not personal gain’ (Gray, 2001, p. 123).

ibid.

Crigler, Just and Belt, 2002, p. 4.

ibid. in ibid.

ibid., p. 23.


ibid., p. 2.


For example, the Liberal Party ran a TV ad on crime which included an incorrect statistic in the months prior to the 2002 Victorian state election. The ad was withdrawn but the mistake made front page news and received attention on the nightly news. So in some cases, this could be beneficial as the point of the ad—a rise in crime—is put on the agenda as a result of attention paid to the ‘mistake’ (E. Hannan, 'Liberals withdraw TV ads', the Age, 4 September, 2002).

For example, see 'ALP talks of photo change', the Age, 26 November, 1966, p. 3; C. Wockner, 'ALP commercials don't add up all the facts - experts', the Daily Telegraph Mirror, 18 February, 1993, p. 10; Steketee, 1993, p. 5; Savva and Lyons, 1993, p. 5; Douez, 2001, p. 8; T. Colebatch, 'Labor GST hike claims don't stand up to political analysis', the Age, 7 November, 2001; Editorial, 'Repeated deception weakens democracy', the Age, 27 November, 2002.


ibid., p. 205.

ibid., p. 195.


Rawson, 1961, p. 11.

ibid., p. 76.


45 See ibid., p. 16.
46 ibid., p. 266.
47 ibid., p. 92.
48 Quoted in ibid.
50 Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a.
51 ibid., p. 211.
52 Joslyn’s 1980 study of American political ads found that only ten per cent contained overt partisan identification (Joslyn, 1980). In Britain, where there are strong parties, Johnson-Cartee and Elebash found that ninety-two per cent of political ads were ‘overtly partisan’ (Johnson-Cartee and Elebash, 1986).
53 Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a, p. 212.
55 Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995b.
56 Kaid and Johnston, 2000, p. 171.
57 ibid., p. 172.
58 In the 2000 U.S. presidential election, West found that sixty-eight per cent of TV ads were negative (West, 2001, p. 79). In Australia, in 2001, a similar proportion of sixty-five per cent of TV ads were negative.
60 See Plasser and Plasser, 2002., p. 95.
61 B. Costar, The vote market is open, let the auction begin, the Age, 26 November, 2002.
63 ibid.
68 Bennett has claimed for example, that: ‘Exaggeration, distortion and lying is part and parcel’ of Australian elections (Bennett, 1996, p. 77).
69 Plasser and Plasser, 2002, p. 211.
70 Kaid and Johnston, 2000, p. 110.
71 Mayer, 1994, p. 115.
72 Kaid and Johnston, 2000, p. 112; West, 2001, p. 79.
74 Crigler, Just and Belt, 2002, p. 6.
75 See Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995a.
78 Crigler, Just and Belt, 2002, p. 2.
80 Benoit, 1999, p. 201.
81 See Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1995.
85 Mayer, 1994, p. 117.
86 Lawrence, 1993, p. 44.
87 Liberal Party of Australia, 1980b.
89 Costar, 2002.
93 Mickelson, 1989.
96 Scammell, 1995.
100 Bennett, 1996, p. 166.
102 Crosby, 2000, p. 65.
105 ibid, p. 87.
106 Johnson, 2000a, p. 83.
112 S. Young, 'No competition: Changing the rules to benefit incumbency', Newspaper op-ed piece (yet to be published), 2003b.
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Appendix A - Journal article

This Appendix is a copy of the journal article by Sally Young, ‘Spot on: The Role of Political Advertising in Australia’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol.37, no.1, March 2002, pp. 81-98, referred to in the Preface, Chapter three and a number of footnotes.
Spot On: The Role of Political Advertising in Australia

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University of Melbourne

During an election campaign, political advertising is not the only means by which the Australian political parties seek to persuade voters but it is "the most expensive one, perhaps the most precise one and the only one over which the parties have complete control" (Mills 1986, 132). Over $30m is now spent on advertisements during federal elections, with up to 70% of the major parties' campaign budgets devoted to television advertising alone. When one considers that 90% of Australians are exposed to televised political advertising, the parties' control over these messages takes on particular significance. This article explores the apparently limited interest among academic analysts in political advertising in Australia, explains that advertising now has a central role in the political process and argues that this needs to be recognised in scholarly research.

Most Australians never have any direct contact with election candidates. Instead, they rely on information gleaned from television, newspapers and radio (Bean, Gow and McAllister 1998). Consequently, how candidates present themselves in the 'free media' (such as nightly news bulletins) and in the 'paid media' (political advertisements) are increasingly important to the election outcome. Political parties and election candidates place great emphasis on political advertisements because these are the most direct method for communicating with voters. Unlike other media appearances, the content of advertisements is entirely within the candidate's—or the candidate's party's—control. Most of the major parties' campaign budgets are now spent on advertisements, and a host of professionals are engaged to ensure that the advertisements are produced for maximum effect. The intention, of course, is to win votes and, while no researcher has been able conclusively to determine how, many have argued that advertisements do affect voters and can even influence voting choice (see, for example, Kaid, Nimmo and Saunders 1986; Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995a, b; Kaid and Bystrom 1999).

Considering their significance to modern campaigns, it is not surprising that a literature search can uncover more than four hundred scholarly references on political advertising. But fewer than 30 of these are Australian. Compared to the

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Sally Young is a doctoral candidate and tutor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne. She acknowledges the contribution of Dr Ian Ward, who generously shared his views about why political advertising has been largely ignored in Australia and thus encouraged this article. She also gratefully acknowledges the contribution of Dr Timothy Marjoribanks and this journal's anonymous reviewers who commented on earlier drafts of this work.

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United States, Britain and Europe, political advertising has been paid only scant attention by scholars in Australia. This article explores some of the factors behind this apparent low level of interest, including low public and media engagement with political advertisements, practical research constraints, disdain for the type of quantitative research which has dominated political advertising literature, and a conventional view of election campaigns as insignificant. The article argues that these impediments should no longer discourage research, and that it is timely to recognise the central role of political advertising in Australian elections and to scrutinise this role more thoroughly.

It is necessary to begin by defining 'political advertising'. There are three main contexts in which advertising might be considered 'political'. First, there is government advertising used to promote or explain government policies or programs (such as the GST advertisements run by the Australian government in 1999–2000). Second, there are the advertisements placed by lobby groups and private interests (such as unions, business leaders and 'issue' groups) that are designed to influence public opinion and persuade politicians. Third, the term 'political advertising' is most commonly used to refer to the advertisements produced by political parties and individual candidates that are shown during election campaigns in order to persuade voters to vote for them. It is with this type of political (election) advertising that we are concerned here.

Public and Academic Interest in Political Advertising

In the United States, political advertising has captured the public imagination. Dramatic, negative, and sometimes shocking advertisements are frequently used in American presidential elections. Members of the public can often recall some of the more (in)famous advertisements—such as the Johnson campaign's 'Daisy girl' ad of 1964 or the Bush campaign's 'revolving door' ad of 1988. This level of awareness is reflected in the amount of media attention which political advertisements receive. During presidential election campaigns, American media commentators take an active role in 'policing' political advertisements in 'ad-watches'—print and broadcast media segments in which reporters critique political advertisements and comment on the claims made in them (Kaid, Tedesco and McKinnon 1996).

American academics are also very active in scrutinising political advertisements. Indeed, most of the over four hundred scholarly references on political advertising come from American researchers—most of whom are engaged in investigating the content of political advertising, or its effects on voters and the American political system.

In contrast, in Australia, political advertisements have tended to be viewed as only peripheral to the election, with academics and media outlets focusing instead on opinion polls, the activities of the party leaders and or 'unpaid' media events such as the now-entrenched televised debate between the leaders. Only the Labor Party's 1972 'It's Time' advertisement seems to have ever captured the public (and academic) imagination in quite the same way. Compared to the United States, Australian political advertisements receive far less public or media attention. Partly, this may be due to some major differences in the way advertisements are used in the two countries.
Political Advertising Differences between the United States and Australia

In the United States, television advertisements ('spots') are used widely, not only in presidential, State and local elections but even in local School Board elections. There are thousands of political advertisements relating to elections at all levels of the political system, including a long period of presidential-election-related advertisements which can run for over 12 months from the primaries to polling day every four years.

In Australia, even in federal elections, individual candidates can rarely afford their own television advertisements. Most Australian House of Representative candidates run a comparatively cheap local media campaign as a supplement to the more expensive national campaign coordinated by their party. This campaign is party centred rather than candidate centred, often has the party leader as the focus and runs in the most expensive media, including major metropolitan television and radio stations and the top-circulation newspapers.

Because advertisements are used so widely in the United States, political advertising has become a big industry there. Translating the amounts into Australian dollars, over A$900m dollars was spent in 1998 on televised political advertising at all levels of the political system (TBA 2000). Looking solely at presidential election campaigns, the Clinton and Dole campaigns combined spent over A$300m on television advertising in 1996 (Kaid and Johnston 2000, 7). In comparison, in the same year, the ALP and the Liberal–National Party spent a combined total of A$15m on broadcast advertising during the Australian federal election (AEC 1996). The United States is, of course, a substantially more populous and wealthier country than Australia, so such comparisons need to be treated with caution. But a rough comparison is that this US spending is equivalent to about A$3.30 per capita and A$8.50 per voter (taking into account voter turnout at the presidential level), compared with Australian figures of about A$0.80 and A$1.20, respectively. The US–Australia disparity of 400–700% is substantially greater than, for example, the approximate 55% advantage that the United States enjoys over Australia in GDP per capita.2

In the United States, there are over 5000 full-time political consultants and a significant number of advertising agencies which specialise in election campaign advertising. In Australia, there are only a handful of full-time political consultants (IAFC 2001). The major political parties use advertising agencies whose commercial viability derives from their non-political work. Political advisers who work on Australian election campaigns are usually loyal partisans and are often reluctant to discuss their roles. This is in contrast to the United States, where many political consultants have acquired their own celebrity status in the media and talk quite openly about campaigning strategy and tactics. Their personalisation of campaigning has helped to fuel interest in political advertising and other facets of electioneering in the United States. Conversely, the lack of openness about electioneering in Australia has discouraged attention.

Although there are fewer advertisements and fewer resources devoted to political advertising in Australia compared to the United States, in one important respect

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1 The parties may produce advertisements for individual candidates in rural seats, where airtime on regional television is cheaper (Crosby 2000, 68).

2 Population and GDP per capita figures are derived from CIA (2001).
Australians actually have a greater stake in political advertising. This is because, in Australia, election campaigns are publicly funded. In 1996, for example, the ALP and the Liberal-National Party coalition were reimbursed 93% of their campaign costs—including advertising, direct mail, opinion polls and research—from public funding (AEC 1996). Australian taxpayers provide over $27m for the major political parties to campaign, and most of this money is spent on television advertising (AEC 1999).

Because election campaigns are publicly funded, there would seem to be a legitimate public interest in investigating how the parties go about campaigning, how they spend their funding and the extent to which they provide an informed choice for voters through political advertising. However, Australian political scientists have shown little interest in political advertising. Although there are excellent studies of voting behaviour and public opinion, there has been little attention to studying the other side of the coin—politicians, their ‘handlers’ and their electioneering methods. When attention is paid to this group, political biography and descriptive accounts are often the norm rather than systematic, investigative studies of actions, methods and behaviour.

Political Advertising Research

There are only a handful of works on Australian political advertising but amongst these are some exceptionally useful publications including work by Henry Mayer (Mayer 1973, 1980), Stephen Mills (Mills 1986; O’Neil and Mills 1986), Victoria Braund (Braund 1973, 1978), Quentin Beresford (1998), Ian Ward (Ward 1981, 1982, 1995, ch. 8, 1999; Ward and Cook 1992; Ward and van Acker 1996) and others (Wallace and Polonsky 1996; Williams 1997a, b; Forrest and Marks 1999). Ward’s work in particular has been the most prolific and significant on this topic. Relevant reports have emanated from several parliamentary committees (JSCER 1983, 1984; JSCEM 1989; SSCP/CP/PD 1991) and from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC 1998).

Table 1 lists the major Australian works devoted to political advertising and my characterisation of the research method(s) used. From Table 1, it is apparent that most Australian scholars have taken an approach which I categorise as primarily historical, critical or interpretive. Historical descriptive methods have been particularly popular, as have ‘narrative accounts’ in which the author relies on subjective analysis to promote a point of view about political advertising (for example, that it is uninformative or too emotive).

Outside Australia, researchers have also used historical/descriptive and narrative accounts over the past 20 years but these methods have now been largely supplanted by other methods. Table 2 outlines 38 of the most cited references in the international political advertising literature, selected from a larger body of over four hundred articles and books uncovered in a literature search. It shows that, over

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3 The public funding system was introduced in 1984. To qualify for public election funding, a candidate must obtain 4% or more of the first-preference vote. The entitlement is then calculated on the total number of votes won with the number of first-preference votes obtained multiplied by the rate of payment. (This method for calculating public funding clearly favours the major parties: the Labor, Liberal and National Parties receive up to 88% of all public funding. The payment rate is indexed every six months to increase in line with the Consumer Price Index (AEC 1999).)
Table 1. Research methods used in Australian academic publications on political advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest and Marks</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Quantitative (based on survey results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beresford</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive, Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waller and Polonsky</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Quantitative (based on survey results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive, Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward and Cook</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Neil and Mills</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayer</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braund</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive, Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braund</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Personal account, Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean and Brennan</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive, Ad buys*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaldor</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*‘Ad buys’: the researcher analyses which specific advertisements were located in which publications and then maps advertising spending in different areas (eg States) to determine the intentions or priorities of the advertisement producers.

This most recent 20-year period, public opinion surveys, experiments and content analysis have become the most popular research methods.

**Australian Research Constraints**

There are a number of possible explanations for what seems to be the under-researching in Australia of political advertising. First, Australian political parties have little funding available for research and tend to conduct their own ‘in-house’ appraisals of advertisements. In the United States, by contrast, one of the driving forces behind academic interest in political advertising is the availability of funding for research. Because so much is spent on political advertising in the United States, there is a great deal of interest amongst candidates and political parties about whether they are ‘getting their money’s worth’. Research on the ‘effects’ of political advertising on voters is therefore better funded and has been a particularly popular topic amongst communication researchers. Indeed, this type of research has tended to dominate the political advertising literature.

A second factor may be the relative lack of prominence within Australian political science, in comparison with the American profession, of the quantitative methods that predominate in the US research in this field (Ward 2000).
Table 2. Research methods used in selected international academic publications on political advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Countries studied</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaid and Johnston</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid, Lin and Noggle</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiment (survey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid and Tedesco</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999a</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid and Tedesco</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999b</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brystrom and Miller</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoit</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Personal account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinkleton</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinkleton</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson-Cartee</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson-Cartee and Copeland</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid, Tedesco and McKinnon</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansolabehere and Hyengar</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Experiments (surveys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid and Holtz-Bacha</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1995a</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazzoleni and Roper</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brants</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West et al</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Ad buys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaid and Holtz-Bacha</td>
<td>United States, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Israel</td>
<td>1995b</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scammell and Semetko</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Experiments (surveys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ, Thorson and Caywood</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boney and Paletz</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biocca</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mickelson</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Personal account</td>
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<td>Nimmo and Felsberg</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
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<td>Shyles</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
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<td>Johnson and Elebash</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
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<td>Joslyn</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hall-Jamieson</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joslyn</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Historical/descriptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to research materials is another factor which encourages research in the United States but probably discourages it in Australia. In the United States, the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma contains more than
56,000 commercials dating back to 1936 for radio and to 1950 for television. These advertisements represent candidates running for offices ranging from the US presidency to School Boards throughout the country (PCA 2000). The cultural significance of these items is recognised under the 'Saving America's Treasures' program.

This is in stark contrast to the situation in Australia where there is no single repository of political advertisements. Screen Sound (formerly the National Film and Sound Archive) has around 40 cinema, film and television advertisements from federal elections between 1925 and 1998. However, there are at least 100 other film and television advertisements held in private collections which are not easily obtainable nor stored on a format which preserves them for future use. Australian researchers who wish to investigate radio or print advertisements face an even more difficult task. Currently, they have to trawl through archived radio tapes and old newspapers in order to locate individual political advertisements. This is a time-consuming and expensive process which has undoubtedly contributed to the lack of research which has been undertaken on Australian print and radio advertisements.

Australia has a history of vivid, dramatic and important political advertisements including not only 'It's Time' (1972) but also the 1949 John Henry Astral radio campaign, the 1990 wealth tax advertisements, the 1993 anti-GST advertisements and the 1996 anti-Keating advertisements. All political advertisements are cultural documents which represent in miniature the issues, major players, debates and circumstances of the day. In 60, 30 or even 15 seconds, television advertisements encapsulate a great deal about politics, history and society.

It is important that Australian political advertisements are collected, preserved and studied. Because political advertisements are central to Australian election campaigns, it is unfortunate that difficulties in accessing information sources about electioneering—both research materials and interview subjects who are willing to discuss their roles—have evidently discouraged greater study.

Political Advertising in Australian Elections

The conventional view of voting behaviour in Australia was that the majority of Australians identify with a particular party and will cast their vote for that party regardless of what occurs during the election campaign (see Cavalier 1997; Hughes 1966; Aitkin 1977). However, this view has been challenged by evidence which suggests that there are now fewer partisan voters, more swinging voters and more people deciding their vote during the campaign. Recent research also demonstrates that exposure to campaign stimuli via the electronic media can have some influence on voting behaviour (McCarthy 1993, 206). For example, in 1987, 50% of voters surveyed in the Australian Election Study acknowledged that television played an important role in influencing their voting decision (McAllister and Mughan 1987). Forrest and Marks (1999) found that print, radio and television advertisements played an important role in persuading undecided and swinging voters during the 1990 federal election.

Election campaigns appear increasingly important in terms of their effect on voting behaviour. Although many voters are partisan and have determined their vote before the election campaign begins, many have not and their proportion is increasing (McAllister and Mughan 1987; Bean, Gow and McAllister 1998). There are now a substantial number of people who decide during the campaign. In 1987,
for example, up to 40% of Australian voters apparently did so (McCarthy 1993, 206; Bean and McAllister 1997, 194).

For a growing number of people, election campaigns are therefore a major influence on voting choice and, when a difference of only a few percentage points can determine the outcome of an election, this group is large enough to be very significant. Given that American ‘effects’ researchers have found that undecided voters and late deciders are the groups who are most likely to be influenced by political advertising spots (Kaid and Johnston 2000, 20), it seems increasingly important to pay attention to how advertisements are used.

The traditional view of voting behaviour in Australia stressed partisan identification above all else (Hughes 1966; Overacker 1952; Aitkin 1977). But Australia’s pattern of remarkably strong party identification has been declining. In 1987, 91% of Australians identified with either the ALP or Liberal–National coalition. By 1996, this was down to 78% (McAllister 1997, 251).

The behaviour of swinging voters is of course a major influence on an election result. In accounting for the voting choices of swinging voters, the influence of short-term factors—particularly party leaders and, to a lesser extent, opinions about specific political issues and the state of the economy—are of considerable importance (McAllister 1997, 265). As party identification declines further, election campaign content and strategy will become even more important. Without strong partisan ties, ‘issues, leaders, personalities, events [and] images become crucial for voters’ (Jaensch 1995, 140). In this environment, political advertising takes on even greater significance as the most direct way of packaging and promoting short-term political factors to a growing number of swinging voters and late deciders.

A report by Rod Cameron on swinging voters, which drove the ALP’s campaign advertising in the 1980s, advised the party that

rhetoric is more important to the swinging voter than the details contained in policy outlooks. Sloganised epithets, which reduce complex issues to oversimplified, often distorted, catchcry positions, represent eventually the real reasons why uncommitted, often apolitical swinging voters, cast their vote for a particular Party. (Mills 1986, 22, emphasis added)

One of the major criticisms of modern political advertising is that it is emotive and manipulates people’s feelings. For those who view modern political advertising in this light—as essentially trivial, exploiting emotions and substituting catchcries and slogans for real political debate—Cameron’s analysis explains much.

Idealists might hope that political advertisements will encourage informed decision-making, educate voters, stimulate debate and promote participation. However, political parties are less concerned about these civic functions; for them, the primary aim of political advertisements is to win votes. It is therefore appropriate to examine political advertising from this perspective to see what scholars have discovered about its effects.

Do Political Advertisements ‘Work’?

Fifteen years ago, it was quite common to argue that the significance of paid advertising was only small, and that only unpaid advertising, particularly TV news, had a real impact on voters (Diamond and Bates 1984; Forrest and Marks 1999,
However, early American researchers found that televised political advertisements do have cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on voters (Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995b, 209). Later research seemed to confirm this, with researchers using experimental methods continuing to find that spots can have strong effects on candidate image and on vote intent (Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995b, 209).

Yet, despite the host of research which has been performed, no researcher has been able to determine conclusively the ‘effects’ of political advertising on voters. Findings from surveys and experimental studies are largely non-generalisable and, in some cases, research results have been blatantly contradictory (particularly in regard to the effects of negative political advertising). Overall, it remains virtually impossible to isolate the effect of advertising on voting choice as distinct from other elements of influence such as family, education, media and partisanship. Even the parties have little data on advertising effects (Powell 1998).

However, to admit that we do not know and perhaps will never know what effect political advertisements have on voters, is not to say that advertisements are unworthy of study or that they make no difference at all. Even if they do not sway many (or even, any) voters, political advertisements are still extremely important to the politicians who produce them.

The political parties spend millions of dollars on political advertisements and many Australian politicians are convinced that advertisements such as ‘It’s Time’, the Liberal’s 1980 ‘wealth tax’ advertisements and the Labor Party’s anti-GST advertisements of 1993 made a real difference to the election result—either in terms of which party won or in terms of the size of the victory (Mills 1986).

Clearly, political advertisements are extremely significant to their producers—and by focusing on this group we can still determine much about politics and elections. Their advertisements speak volumes about what our politicians want to tell us, how they want to present themselves, how they try to convince us, who they think their audience is and their assumptions about that audience. By studying the content of political advertising we can learn much about Australian politicians, including their messages, strategies and assumptions about their audience. This information is of great significance to political scientists who are trying to make sense of political actors and their behaviour. Political advertisements can also tell us about the ‘new machine men’ in Australian politics—that secretive band of campaign professionals including political advisers, pollsters, psychologists and market researchers. Currently, we know very little about this group or their influence on Australian politics. However, by studying the advertisements that they help to produce, we can determine much about the type of advice they are giving our politicians.

For the producers of political advertisements, the intention is to win votes and the scholarly evidence suggests that political advertisements may have an effect on voters. But what of their broader effect on the political system?

Fairness, Equity and Access: The (Ethical) Costs of Political Advertising

The manner in which politicians campaign and the extent to which they provide an informed choice for voters is an important subject of study. Advertising is one of the main methods by which candidates can outline their differences in terms of policy, philosophy and leadership. Do politicians use political advertisements to educate voters and aid informed decision making or do they use them for other
purposes such as scaremongering, outlining deceptive claims about their opponents
or reducing complex issues to simplified slogans?

A number of concerns surround the use of political advertising in Australia. One
major concern relates to the inability of minor parties and independent candidates
to afford television advertising. These candidates face a significant disadvantage in
communicating with potential voters compared to the established major parties that
receive the lion’s share of public and private funding and are far better resourced
to purchase television advertisements (Tucker and Young 2001). There are also
conscerns that the lack of quality information in television advertisements ‘dumbs’
down political debate, that the increasing use of negative advertising fosters public
cynicism, and that false and misleading claims are made in political advertising
(Ward 1995; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Many of these concerns relate to the
use of television advertising in particular.

**Political Advertising on Television**

Television is a remarkably popular medium in Australia. Receivers can be found
in 99% of all homes (Ward 1995, 208). On average, Australians watch three hours
and ten minutes of television a day (Turner and Cunningham 1997, 11). For
two-thirds of Australians, television is their main source of news and information
(FACTS 1994, 2).

At least 90% of Australian voters are exposed to televised political advertising—
20% more than for either press or radio (Beresford 1998, 25). Television is also a
medium which has high impact and, when combined with viewer statistics, can
target particular voters. In particular, it is a very effective way of targeting
swinging voters, since ‘swinging voters are also frequently the ones who watch a
lot of TV’ (Mills 1986, 159).

Although the level of spending on political advertising in Australia is only
relatively small in comparison to the United States, it is still a major issue for the
Australian political parties. The parties’ broadcast advertising costs rose 900%
between 1974 and 1998, as charted in Figure 1.

Fortunately for the Australian parties, the Australian public has largely borne
these increasing costs since the introduction of the public funding system in 1984.
In 1995, Australian politicians legislated to increase the amount of public funding
available for their campaigns. The 54% increase in public funding allowed the
parties to increase their spending on television advertising at the next election by
38% (or $5.8m), showing that there is a strong connection between public funding
and the scale of television advertising (Tucker and Young 2001).

One of the biggest concerns about the use of expensive televised political
advertising is that it can allow a party or candidate to gain an electoral advantage
by ‘outspending’ an opponent on TV advertising. This has the potential to distort
the democratic process by giving an advantage to wealth. In Australia, the Coalition
usually outspends the ALP. Between 1974 and 1996, the Coalition outspent the
ALP in 7 out of the 10 federal elections held (Mills 1986, 132; AEC 1985; AEC
1987, 1990, 1995, 1996). However, it does not seem to be true that ‘elections can
[simply] be “bought” at the whim of a political party’ (Mills 1986, 132). Mills
examined 27 State and federal election campaigns between 1974 and 1984, and
found that the ‘figures demonstrate the patchy electoral success of “outadvertising”
your opponent’ (Mills 1986, 154). Adding data from the past 10 federal elections,
as reported in Table 3, seems to confirm that there is no real correlation between the extent of electronic advertising and electoral success.

Originally, another major concern regarding the high cost of television advertising was that it encouraged reliance on private donations. However, since the introduction of public funding of election campaigns in Australia, Mills (1986, 189–90) has expressed a different concern, that

under the public-funding rules the public is effectively being hoodwinked. ... Television airwaves belong, in theory, to the community. ... So public

Table 3. Expenditure on broadcast advertising by political party: biggest spenders and winners in Australian federal elections, 1974–1998 ($)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Liberal Party</th>
<th>National Party</th>
<th>Labor Party</th>
<th>Biggest spender won election?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5,321,521</td>
<td>1,331,256</td>
<td>8,974,799</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,101,761</td>
<td>696,467</td>
<td>4,991,114</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4,671,355</td>
<td>159,322</td>
<td>1,584,630</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2,653,074</td>
<td>1,869,865</td>
<td>5,219,405</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,835,081</td>
<td>897,590</td>
<td>1,757,981</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2,382,232</td>
<td>488,475</td>
<td>1,411,288</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,474,207</td>
<td>314,213</td>
<td>937,020</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>957,623</td>
<td>303,349</td>
<td>728,830</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>936,843</td>
<td>283,021</td>
<td>808,557</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>592,368</td>
<td>291,549</td>
<td>381,469</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amounts shown in bold indicate the biggest spender.

election funding means the Australian public is spending large amounts of money to buy back their own airwaves. ... This is indefensible in principle, but it is made more pressing by the reported incidence of TV stations charging political clients—that is the taxpayer—more than they charge their commercial advertisers. One advertising agent suggested political parties pay up to 50% more for advertising time than do private companies.

Regulation of Political Advertising in Australia

There are currently no legislative constraints in Australia upon either the volume of advertising or the amount that Australian parties may spend purchasing campaign advertising on commercial television. However, this has not always been the case. For a short period of time between 1991 and 1992, all televised political advertising was banned in Australia under the Political Broadcasts and Disclosures Act 1991. In August 1992, however, the High Court ruled that this law was constitutionally invalid in the case Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd. v Commonwealth.4 In practice, then, Australia is very similar to the United States, where an 'express constitutional guarantee of press freedom' guarantees that 'candidates for public office may spend as much as they wish and run advertisements on television when they choose' (Ward 1995, 225).

However, legislation in the United States ensures that broadcasters cannot 'hoodwink' political advertisers, by including a requirement that broadcasters sell advertising time to candidates at the 'lowest rate it has charged other commercial advertisers during the preceding 45 days, even if that rate is part of a discounted package rate' (Kaid and Johnston 2000, 9). Such a system would be unpopular with broadcasters, but Australian legislators would do well to consider it anyway in order to ensure that Australian political parties (and the taxpayers who fund their campaigns) are no longer charged exorbitant rates for what is essentially an important civic function.

The Future of Political Advertising Research

As political advertising seems to have become increasingly negative, driven by political marketing and targeted towards swing voters and undecided voters (apparently, the groups most vulnerable to its effects), it has become imperative to scrutinise it more closely. While this is important in any democracy, Australians have a particularly high stake in what is communicated through political advertisements, as their taxpayer funding pays for most of it.

There are some hopeful signs of a burgeoning interest in the subject. In the 1990s, the Australian media have themselves taken an increasing interest in political advertisements (see, for example, O'Neill 1984; Singleton 1990; Kemp 1993; McNicoll 1993; Warneford 1993; Walsh 1995; Hornery 1998; Jellie 1998; McGregor 1998; SBS 2001). New academic research on political advertising is also being conducted with at least two doctoral theses currently under way.5 A number of other postgraduate students are undertaking research on related political com-

4 Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd. v Commonwealth (1992) 177 CLR 106.

5 One of these is in the communications field (by Wayne Murphy at University of Queensland) and the other is in political science (by the author at the University of Melbourne).
munication topics. The rise of new teaching subjects in universities (even in the
more ‘traditional’ universities) also seems to indicate a change in attitudes.

Longstanding suspicions about the all-encompassing claims of quantitative
methods still remain in Australian political science circles, and this is appropriate.
We should, for example, remain suspicious about the ability of self-reported
surveys to capture what is really going on and about claims that lab-based
experiments can faithfully represent real-life experiences. However, researchers
must use the methods which are most appropriate for answering their research
questions and, if we avoid the use of some research methods, we necessarily limit
the types of questions we can ask. There is already increasing use of certain
quantitative methods in political science research, particularly content analysis
(Henningham 1996, 22). We do not want to use quantitative research methods as
ends in themselves. However, if we want to ask new questions about political
communication, we need to consider the full range of research methods available.

Finally, there is also cause for optimism regarding the accessibility of political
advertising research materials. This article has argued that political advertisements
are valuable historical texts which should be preserved and made available for
public education and scholarly research. Driven by this belief, the author is in the
process of establishing a single repository—a Political Advertising Archive—which
will preserve the hundreds of film and television advertisements which still exist in
Australia as well as some of the thousands of print advertisements published in
newspapers. The archive also holds handbills, buttons, posters, stickers and even
T-shirts from election campaigns.

Conclusion

It is no longer possible to understand modern election campaigns without consider-
ing election candidates’ reliance on the mass media and on expensive television
advertising. Political advertising is now central to the conduct, if not the results, of
modern election campaigns. Significantly, some of the old impediments which
discouraged academic research on this phenomenon—such as lack of access to
materials and the constraints of conventional theoretical assumptions—are breaking
down. A new and burgeoning interest in this area reflects a growing awareness of
the crucial role that political advertising currently plays in Australian politics and
of its likely increasing importance in the future.

References

Election 1984. Canberra: AGPS.
Election 1987. Canberra: AGPS.
Election 1990. Canberra: AGPS.

6 For example, there is now a subject specifically on political communication in the new BA Media and
Communication degree at the University of Melbourne, and over three hundred students chose to take
the ‘Media, Politics and Society’ subject offered by the Political Science Department in 2000. This
indicates a strong interest in media and political communication amongst young scholars.


Kemp, D. 1993. 'Defeated by Fear, Smear and Cynicism.' Australian 18 March.
Walsh, K. 1995. 'Money War Turns Real.' Bulletin 7 November.
Ward, I. 2000. Personal e-mail correspondence.
Appendix B — List of political advertisements included in thesis

Over 200 political advertisements are shown in this thesis. This Appendix provides a list of all advertisements including the source of newspaper advertisements and the length of TV advertisements. Part one lists the advertisements in order of their appearance in the text. Part two lists them by political party in chronological order.

Part one: List of advertisements in order of appearance in the text

CHAPTER 1

Henry Macdermott, the *Australian*, 26 December 1842, p.1.
William Foster, the *Australian*, 2 February 1843, p.1.
National Party, 1925, S. M. Bruce (cinema advertisement).

CHAPTER 5

Liberal Party of Australia, 1951, *The Prime Minister's Policy Speech*, the Age, 3 April, p.16.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, *Here are the answers to what every thinking person wants to know*, the Advertiser, 19 November, p.5.
Australian Labor Party, 1954, *Tomorrow your vote for Labor will help to secure these positive, practical benefits*, the Age, 28 May, p.5.
Australian Labor Party, 1954, *Labor will protect these people! These are the people who have been neglected and ignored*, the Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May, p.5.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1954, *Good health for all is the policy of the Menzies Government*, the *Age*, 18 May, p.3.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1951, *We are proud of the L.C.L Government's defence policy*, the *Advertiser*, 23 April, p.7.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1980, *Defence is more than planes, ships and armies*, the *Age*, 7 October, p.15.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1984, *Liberal's family tax relief*, (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1990, *Andrew Peacock and family tax cuts*, (broadcast advertisement), 00:45.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1990, *Do you know you pay Capital Gains Tax on your Super but Hawke and Keating don't?*, the *Age*, 13 March, p.10.


CHAPTER 6


Liberal Party of Australia, 1963, *Choose continued progress: Vote Liberal*, the *Age*, 27 November, p.11.


Australian Labor Party, 1955, *There is something about a baby!*, the *Sun-Herald*, 4 December, p.46.


Australian Labor Party, 1955, *They're not so much out to 'get' Dr Evatt, as to 'get' you*, the *Age*, 9 December, p.5.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1972, *The McMahon Government has proved to be the greatest reform ministry in 23 years*, the *Age*, 16 November, p.11.

Australian Labor Party, 1972, *Join us... It's time!* *Age*, 1 December, p.10.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1975, *We will lead Australia to prosperity*, *Age*, 11 December, p.16.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1983, *We're not waiting for the world* (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.
Liberal Party of Australia, 2001, *We decide who comes to this country*, *Age*, 9 November, p.9.
Australian Labor Party, 1996, *The PM on Howard's policies*, (broadcast advertisement), 00:45.

**CHAPTER 7**

Australian Labor Party, 1993, *How Dr Hewson's GST would change your day* (broadcast advertisement).
Australian Labor Party, 1949, *Here it is, Menzies said - 'a pool of unemployed is necessary to discipline the workers'* , *Age*, 29 November, p.5.
Australian Labor Party, 1972, *Three days to go... Age*, 29 November, p.15.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1975, *The three dark years of Labor*, (broadcast advertisement), 00:60.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1996, *'After 3 years of this', Age*, 1 March, p.4.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1996, 'Go and get a job', (broadcast advertisement), 0:15.
Liberal Party of Australia, outdoor advertising billboard, the *Herald-Sun*, 4 February 1996, p.17.
Australian Labor Party, 1998, *Can you trust Howard and Costello with a GST?*, (broadcast advertisement), 00:45.
Australian Labor Party, 1990, *If they can't agree on interest rates, how can they govern the country?*, Age, 27 February, p.22.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1951, *They walk along the political way, the bright pink Socialist three... the Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April, p.6.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, *The case against socialism is a deadly one*, Canberra Times, 1 December, p.2.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, *Your child is a person to you, under Mr Chifley's socialism she'll be just a number*, Courier-Mail, 29 November, p.10.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, *This man is an avowed socialist*, Courier-Mail, 2 December, p.4.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1951, *Don't be fooled by Chifley's smoke-screen*, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 April, p.4.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1951, *We promise if you vote for us*, Courier-Mail, 17 April, p.4.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1954, *Don't give the reds a second chance*, Mercury, 26 May, p.5.

CHAPTER 8

Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, *Australian women! This is what we offer you... Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December, p.5.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, I'm voting Liberal because I'm tired of strikes, shortages, high prices, Mercury, 23 November, p.17.


Country Party, 1961, Our Country prosperity is our country's prosperity, Age, 8 December, p.19.


Australian Labor Party, 1993, A mother speaks out, (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.


Australian Labor Party, 1958, What have we to offer this young Australian?, Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November, p.6.

Australian Labor Party, 1972, From the people who pioneered child endowment... Mercury, 23 November, p.11.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1980, Let's all make sure they grow up in a growing Australia, Age, 17 October, p.17.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1972, $1375 interest subsidy to young homebuyers!, Courier-Mail, 21 November, p.11.

Australian Labor Party, 1958, A message to Queensland Catholics... Courier-Mail, 21 November, p.10.

Australian Labor Party, 1972, Education - Catholic and non-Catholic, Mercury, 29 November, p.3.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, We're the 'Bunnies' under socialism, Mercury, 29 November, p.22.

Australian Labor Party, 1949, It has been estimated that since the Labor Government came to office the farmers of Australia... Advertiser, 18 November, p.9.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, There's a great future for this country - your land and mine!, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 November, p.4.

Australian Labor Party, 1972, The ALP will free farmers from the cost-price squeeze, Sun, 29 November, p.16.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1998, Only the Howard Government..., (broadcast advertisement), 00:60.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1972, In less than two years the McMahon Government has increased pensions by 29%, Age, 22 November, p.5.

Australian Labor Party, 1972, From the people who pioneered pensions... Mercury, 28 November, p.15.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1984, Assets test, (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1987, Only we will protect the elderly, Sun, 4 July, p.6.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1990, Why does Labor turn our Elderly into second-class citizens?, Age, 10 March, p.15.


Australian Labor Party, 1996, Australians talk about Industrial Relations, (broadcast advertisement), 00:45.

Australian Labor Party, 1996, Leadership 2, (broadcast advertisement), 00:45.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1996, For all of us, (broadcast advertisement).


Australian Labor Party, 1993, Just sign here, Adam, (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1998, Vox pop work for the dole, (broadcast advertisement), 00:30.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, The family: socialism's number one target, Courier-Mail, 9 December, p.4.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1949, All we have is worth holding. Let's keep it secure from the dry rot of socialism, Mercury, 8 December, p.19.

Liberal Party of Australia, 1955, If you're a family man - its the standard of living that counts!, Sydney Morning Herald, 28 November, p.5.


Liberal Party of Australia, 1958, This is where you come into the picture of Australia today, Age, 10 November, p.5.


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Part two: List of advertisements by party and year

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

Australian Labor Party, Here it is, Menzies said - 'a pool of unemployed is necessary to discipline the workers' Age, 29 November, 1949, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, It has been estimated that since the Labor Government came to office the farmers of Australia... Advertiser, 18 November, 1949, p. 9.
Australian Labor Party, Labor will protect these people! These are the people who have been neglected and ignored Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May, 1954, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, Tomorrow your vote for Labor will help to secure these positive, practical benefits Age, 28 May, 1954, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, There is something about a baby! Sun-Herald, 4 December, 1955, p. 46.
Australian Labor Party, They're not so much out to 'get' Dr Evatt, as to 'get' you Age, 9 December, 1955, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, When inflation hits the family, it's 'Labor to the rescue' Sun-Herald, 27 November, 1955, p. 42.
Australian Labor Party, A message to Queensland Catholics... Courier-Mail, 21 November, 1958, p. 10.
Australian Labor Party, Think of your family's future Age, 21 November, 1958, p. 12.
Australian Labor Party, What have we to offer this young Australian? Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November, 1958, p. 6.
Australian Labor Party, Menzies economic policy Advertiser, 7 December, 1961, p. 15.
Australian Labor Party, We plan for a great Australia Age, 18 November, 1963, p. 6.
COUNTRY PARTY

Country Party, It's your pound, give him a holt on April 28 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 April, 1951, p. 4.
Country Party, Our Country prosperity is our country's prosperity Age, 8 December, 1961, p. 19.

LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Liberal Party of Australia, All we have is worth holding. Let's keep it secure from the dry rot of socialism Mercury, 8 December, 1949, p. 19.
Liberal Party of Australia, Australian women! This is what we offer you... Sydney Morning Herald, 2 December, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, The case against socialism is a deadly one Canberra Times, 1 December, 1949, p. 2.
Liberal Party of Australia, Chifley stands on his record - a tragic record indeed Sydney Morning Herald, 15 November, 1949, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, Here are the answers to what every thinking person wants to know Advertiser, 19 November, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, I'm voting Liberal because I'm tired of strikes, shortages, high prices Mercury, 23 November, 1949, p. 17.
Liberal Party of Australia, Study the signs. Go right, vote right Mercury, 7 December, 1949, p. 12.
Liberal Party of Australia, There's a great future for this country - your land and mine! Sydney Morning Herald, 29 November, 1949, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, This man is an avowed socialist Courier-Mail, 2 December, 1949, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, We're the 'Bunnies' under socialism Mercury, 29 November, 1949, p. 22.
Liberal Party of Australia, When you vote Labor, you vote socialist Age, 2 December, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, Your child is a person to you, under Mr Chifley's socialism she'll be just a number Courier-Mail, 29 November, 1949, p. 10.
Liberal Party of Australia, Again, you are the umpire Advertiser, 28 April, 1951, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, Don't be fooled by Chifley's smoke-screen Sydney Morning Herald, 18 April, 1951, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Labor is divided Courier-Mail, 24 April, 1951, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, The Prime Minister's Policy Speech Age, 3 April, 1951, p. 16.
Liberal Party of Australia, A record of achievement Sydney Morning Herald, 22 April, 1951, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, Smash Communism to-day! Courier-Mail, 28 April, 1951, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, They walk along the political way, the bright pink Socialist three... Sydney Morning Herald, 15 April, 1951.
Liberal Party of Australia, We are proud of the L.C.L. Government's defence policy Advertiser, 23 April, 1951, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, We promise if you vote for us Courier-Mail, 17 April, 1951, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Don't give the reds a second chance Mercury, 26 May, 1954, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, Good health for all is the policy of the Menzies Government Age, 18 May, 1954, p. 3.
Liberal Party of Australia, 4 great leader for a grand country Courier-Mail, 7 May, 1954, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *This is where you come into the picture of Australia today Age*, 10 November, 1958, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *In less than two years the McMahon Government has increased pensions by 29% Age*, 22 November, 1972, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *The McMahon Government has proved to be the greatest reform ministry in 23 years Age*, 16 November, 1972, p. 11.


Liberal Party of Australia, *We will lead Australia to prosperity Age*, 11 December, 1975, p. 16.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Defence is more than planes, ships and armies Age*, 7 October, 1980, p. 15.


Liberal Party of Australia, *1983, We're not waiting for the world*, (broadcast advertisement).


Liberal Party of Australia, *Only we will protect the elderly* Sun, 4 July, 1987, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, 1996, *'Go and get a job!* , (broadcast advertisement).
Liberal Party of Australia, *'We decide who comes to this country' Age*, 9 November, 2001, p. 9.

**NATIONAL PARTY**

Appendix C – The political parties

First referred to in Chapter three, this Appendix provides background information about the major political parties. A number of other sources are available which examine the parties in more detail.¹

THE LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

While the Liberal Party of Australia was formed in 1944-45 under the leadership of Robert Menzies, it was the continuation of a political tradition which stretched back to the late eighteenth century with antecedents to the free-trade movement, the Fusion Party and the Liberal Party of 1910-1917.² The catalyst for the founding of the modern Liberal Party was the 1943 federal election—a low point for non-Labor in federal politics with the party (then known as the United Australia Party) winning only fourteen seats and the Country Party only nine. The choice of the word ‘liberal’ to describe the party points to the importance of the political tradition of liberalism—a ‘tradition of political thought which places the rights and interests of the individual at the centre of its political thinking, and is suspicious of the State’s power’.³

After a resounding victory in 1949, the Liberal Party dominated federal politics for twenty-three years (Menzies serving as prime minister for sixteen years). Aided by Cold War politics, the Liberal Party had established a clear electoral ascendancy over the Labor Party by the 1950s. However, after Menzies resignation in 1965, the Liberal Party underwent a period of crisis and leadership instability. None of the leaders who succeeded Menzies were able to maintain the cohesion of the party.⁴ As Judith Brett points out, Australia had changed a great deal since 1949 and new social movements (such as feminism and multiculturalism) were challenging many of the assumptions of conservative Australians.⁵ The Party was ill-placed to deal with these changes, particularly when faced with widespread protest about the Vietnam War.
After the defeat of Malcolm Fraser in 1983, the Liberal Party experienced thirteen years in opposition until John Howard’s victory in 1996. This was a period of crisis for the Party which was not only having difficulty accommodating the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s but was also experiencing debilitating internal conflict about the role which government should play in the economy. Economic liberalism eventually triumphed over social liberalism and in the fervour of this victory—during the 1993 election—the Liberal Party ran on a program of economic reform called *Fightback!* which included the introduction of a broad based consumption tax (the Goods and Services Tax or GST). The GST was an easy target and the Liberal Party was defeated. But in March 1996, after less emphasis on economic reform and more effort at pitching their campaign to ‘mainstream’ Australia, the Liberal Party won its first federal election in thirteen years in a landslide. Some commentators argued that the most significant aspect of this victory was the significant swing of blue-collar voters (a traditional Labor Party constituency) to the Liberal Party. However, Marian Simms has pointed out that this situation was not particularly new as forty per cent of blue-collar workers do not support Labor and this has been consistent over a thirty year period.

In 1998, the Coalition scraped back into office, surviving on just forty-nine per cent of the two-party preferred vote (see Appendix D). In 2001, the Coalition won again but this time in unusual electoral circumstances. The election was described as a ‘khaki’ election following the September 11 attacks on the U.S. and Australia’s commitment of troops to the ‘war on terror’. In a ‘khaki’ election, the incumbent usually benefits as people are less inclined to risk change. But the MV Tampa incident and allegations that asylum seekers had thrown their children overboard meant that the issue of asylum seekers or ‘illegal immigrants’ also dominated the election. Howard’s tough stance on this issue was reflected in Liberal Party advertising. Election results showed that ten per cent of voters stated they voted for the Liberal Party because of the illegal immigrants issue.
THE NATIONAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Australian electoral contests tend to be viewed as a battle between the individual leaders of the ALP and Liberal Party.\textsuperscript{11} As the Liberal Party's coalition partner, the National Party tends to be seen more as an 'appendage' of the Liberal Party rather than as 'a separate entity'.\textsuperscript{12} Dennis Woodward notes that: as a separate entity, the National Party only ever attracts a small percentage of the vote—'at times less than minor parties... who fail to win seats in the House of Representatives'.\textsuperscript{13} The National Party remains, however, a significant player in federal politics. In 1997, it boasted 'the largest membership of any Australian party'.\textsuperscript{14} Originally called the Country Party, it emerged as the political arm of rural interest groups such as the Australian Farmers Federal Organisation.\textsuperscript{15}

The Party has undergone several name changes. From 1920-1974 it was called the Country Party; from 1975-1980 was the National Country Party and from 1982 onwards called the National Party (except in the Northern Territory where it is known as the Country Liberal Party).

From its inception, the National Party has relied on the support of farmers and graziers and those living in regional Australia generally.\textsuperscript{16} It has, therefore, a base which is progressively diminishing.\textsuperscript{17} The depopulation of rural areas through a long term drift to the cities has also made the National Party vulnerable. For a long time, the Party was able to benefit from a 'bias' in the electoral laws which allowed 'the number of votes in each federal electorate to vary by as much as twenty per cent from the average with rural electorates consistently below average'.\textsuperscript{18} However, subsequent changes to the electoral laws have diminished that advantage.

Woodward points out that the National Party is one of the most conservative parties—'socially, morally and politically, represented in the federal Parliament...'.\textsuperscript{19} 'Defence of the traditional family, a dim view of multiculturalism and at times attitudes associated with racism, are often associated with the Party'.\textsuperscript{20}
Traditionally, it has been necessary for the Liberal Party and the National Party to be in coalition in order for them to have enough seats to form government; but this marriage of convenience has been turbulent. Between 1922 and 1946, the coalition was dissolved several times. It was restored after the 1949 election ushering in a twenty-three year period in government. However, after defeat in 1972, the coalition was again dissolved until the 1975 election. Since then, the National Party’s inclusion in the coalition has been troublesome. The slump in its election fortunes in 1990 reduced its bargaining power and Liberal gains in the 1996 election victory were so large that the Liberal Party could have governed alone. In 1998, the National Party lost a further two seats and in 2001, a further three seats.

THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) is Australia’s oldest political party. Originally, the Party was created by the labour movement as ‘a political strategy at the time of the great industrial troubles of the 1880s and 1890s’.\textsuperscript{21} In a famous speech, Ben Chifley elaborated Labor’s ‘great objective—the light on the hill...’ as ‘the betterment of mankind... to bring something better to the people, better standards of living, greater happiness to the mass of the people’.\textsuperscript{22}

John Warhurst argues that one of the most distinctive features of the ALP is ‘its status as one of the world’s few genuine labour parties. It was created by the organised labour movement and, to this day, affiliated trade unions continue to supply the bulk of the Party’s membership and financial support.’\textsuperscript{23} However, in recent decades, the Labor Party has faced a major challenge to its voting base as blue-collar trade unionism has shrunk dramatically as a proportion of the Australian workforce.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, the ALP has become less recognisably a trade unionist or working class party. It is, however, still ‘at the reformist end of the political continuum and [is] within the broad social democratic tradition...’\textsuperscript{25}

Labor has survived three major splits. The first was during the First World War over the issue of conscription. The second was in the 1930s when Joseph Lyons left the party to head a revamped conservative opposition. The third, and worst, split was
during 1954-58 over the influence of the Communist Party and the Catholic Social Studies Movement within the labour movement. This split produced the breakaway Democratic Labor Party (DLP), a largely Catholic and primarily anti-Labor Party, which ‘came to hold the balance of power in the Senate and successfully managed to direct a very large proportion of its second-preference votes at elections to Coalition parties’.26 The electoral impact of this split was a gain of thirteen seats for the Coalition between 1955 and 1958 as a result of DLP preferences.27

In the mid-1960s, under the leadership of Gough Whitlam, the ALP experienced a period of massive change. Although it was over in less than three years, the Whitlam Government attempted radical developments in areas such as women’s rights, health policy and Aboriginal land rights. This was a period of major social transformation. The dismissal of the Whitlam Government in 1975 precipitated a constitutional crisis which shook Australian politics and Labor remained out of office until 1983.

Upon regaining government in 1983, the ALP held office until 1996. Although this was one of the Labor Party’s most successful periods—it was in government for thirteen years and won five elections—in many ways this period heightened debate ‘about what the Party stands for’.28 The Hawke-Keating Government’s focus on ‘new politics’ such as issues of race, gender and the environment, and the strategy of concentrating on marginal seats, fuelled allegations that the ALP had neglected its working class supporters. The Liberal Party was able to exploit this perception in 1996 by tapping into dislike of Keating and portraying the ALP as a party for sectional interests such as ‘minority groups’ and the ‘elite arts’.

In 1998, the ALP bounced back quite quickly from their 1996 loss and actually won fifty-one per cent of the vote. But they failed to win the election because their vote was concentrated in particular geographical areas. In 2001, the Labor Party followed what was described as a ‘me too’ policy on illegal immigrants by supporting the Howard Government’s policy on off-shore processing of illegal immigrants. The policy alienated some of the party’s core supporters and saw an unusually large vote for the Greens which was interpreted as a protest vote by traditional Labor supporters. In the aftermath of the 2001 election, the ALP undertook a major review.


3 ibid., p. 149.


5 Brett, 1997, p. 158.

6 ibid.

7 ibid., p. 163.

8 Simms, 2001a, p. 119.

9 In August 2001, the MV Tampa, a Norwegian cargo ship which had rescued Afghan asylum seekers from their sinking boat, was prevented by the Howard Government from landing in Australia. According to Manne, the Government rushed through 'border protection' legislation and 'bribed' the Nauru government to take the asylum seekers for processing in 'a manufactured atmosphere of crisis' (R. Manne, 'Howard's victory stoke', the Age, 8 October, 2001).

10 Solomon and others argue that this was more than enough to give the Liberal Party its majority and its election victory in 2001 (D. Solomon, "Electoral race or race election?" in Howard's Race: Winning the unwinnable election, Solomon (ed.) HarperCollins, Sydney, 2002, pp. 242-52).


12 ibid.

13 ibid.

14 ibid.

15 ibid., p. 189.

16 ibid.

17 For example, farm employment constituted twenty-eight per cent of total employment in 1933 but only five per cent by 1988 (ibid).

18 ibid., p. 190.

19 ibid., p. 194.

20 ibid.


24 ibid., p. 168.

25 ibid.

26 ibid., p. 170.


## Appendix D – Election results

This Appendix provides (first referred to in Chapter three) provides further detail about the major parties' electoral success over the period 1949-2001. It shows the proportion of the two-party preferred vote each party secured and the number of seats they won or lost at each election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
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<th>Coalition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two-Party Preferred vote</td>
<td>Seats won/lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>*50.7</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>*50.5</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>*50.2</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>52.7</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>+24</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>51.7</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>*51.0</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* occasions when the party with the majority of the two-party preferred vote failed to win a majority of seats in the House of Representatives.

<sup>(a)</sup> the number of seats had increased by forty-eight from the previous election in 1946.

Note: Factors affecting win/loss of seats include changes in number of seats in Parliament (see last column). Win and loss figures between Coalition and ALP are not exclusive because seats were won (and lost) from other parties in the Parliament including Independents.

Appendix E - Codesheet

This Appendix, referred to in Chapter four, is the ‘Political Advertisement Codesheet’ which the author used to undertake content analysis of advertisements. It is based on one which has been used for over twenty years to analyse political ads in American research including in numerous studies by Lynda Lee Kaid.
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th>% of ads</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot. %</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUMMARY</strong></td>
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<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot. %</td>
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<td>Nat</td>
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<td>2. Over 60 seconds long</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>3. 60 seconds</td>
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<td>5. 30 seconds</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>6. 15 seconds</td>
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<td><strong>Size of ad</strong></td>
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<td>8. ¾ page (75%+)</td>
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<td>9. Half page (25-50%)</td>
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<td>Number of pictures in ad</td>
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<td>11. Not present</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. One</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Two</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Three or more</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Size of pictures in ad (as % of total ad space)</td>
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<td>15. Not present</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Small (0-25% of ad)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>17. Medium (25-50%)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Large (50-75%)</td>
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<td>19. v. large (75-100%)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ads with more than 1 issue</td>
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<td>101. Ads with more than 1 issue</td>
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<td>20. International or foreign affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Defence (incl. conscription)</td>
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<td>22. Inflation</td>
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<td>23. Taxes</td>
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<td>24. Unemployment</td>
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<td>% of ads</td>
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<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Deficit/need to balance budget</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Crime</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Medicare/health</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Social security/welfare (incl.</td>
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<td>29. Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Immigration</td>
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<td>31. Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Civil rights/special rights for groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Industrial relations (incl. unions,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>strikes)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Living standards (incl, prices, wages,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>home ownership)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. System of government and voting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emphasis**

|                  |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |
|------------------|-------|----|-------|---------|
| 37. Issues       |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |
| 38. Images       |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |

Does party leader or other representative appear?

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |
|                  |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |
|------------------|-------|----|-------|---------|
| 39. No           |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |
| 40. Yes, leader of party |       |    |       |         |     |     |     |      |       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<th>TV</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>TOT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting ad</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Yes, leader of opponent party</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Both leaders appear</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Other (own) party representative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Other opponent) party representative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a photo of party leader?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, is the photo:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Small</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Medium</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Large</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is speaking in the ad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Party leader</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Other party member/candidate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Anonymous announcer(s)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Non-government celebrity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Combination</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>PRINT</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of ads</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>55. Other</strong></td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What candidate characteristics are emphasised?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Honesty/integrity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>57. Toughness/strength</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>58. Warmth/compassion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Competency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>60. Performance/success</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. Aggressiveness</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Activeness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>63. Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What emphasis is placed on party?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Party logo present</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>65. Own party name mentioned</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>66. Opponent party name mentioned</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>67. Party slogan given</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>67(a) Both party names mentioned</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>PRINT</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of ads</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the dominant focus of the ad?</td>
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<tr>
<td>68. Candidate-positive focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>69. Opponent-negative focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>69(a) Comparative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>69(b) Rebuttal</td>
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<tr>
<td>If an attack is made, who/what is attacked?</td>
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<tr>
<td>70. Party leader</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>71. Other party representative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>72. Party as a whole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>73. Implicit attack without specific mention of object of attack</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If an attack is made, who makes the attack?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. Party leader</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. Surrogate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. Anonymous announcer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>PRINT</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of ads</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If an attack is made, what is the purpose or nature of the attack?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>77. Attack on personal characteristics of opponent</td>
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<tr>
<td>78. Attack on issue stands/consistency of opponent</td>
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<tr>
<td>79. Attack on opponent's group affiliations or associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>80. Attack on opponent's background or qualifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>81. Attack on opponent's performance in past offices/positions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What strategies are used in making attack?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>82. Humour/ridicule</td>
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<tr>
<td>83. Negative association</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>84. Name-calling (using negative labels)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>85. Guilt by association</td>
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<tr>
<td>86. Using opponent's own words against him/her</td>
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<tr>
<td>87. Production techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot.</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are any of the following associations/accusations made?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>88. Socialist/communist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>89. Inept/poor record</td>
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<tr>
<td>90. For minority of special interest groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>91. For big business/eldites</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. Out of touch with ordinary Australians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92(a) Internally divided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who appears in ad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94. Women/housewives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>95. Workers (white collar)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. Workers (blue collar)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. Elderly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>98. Person from ethnic/racial group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>99. Farmers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>100. Young people (incl. students)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>100(a) Celebrity</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>PRINT ALP</td>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Tot. %</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which strategies are present?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>103. Use of symbolic trappings to transmit importance of the office</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104. Incumbency stands for legitimacy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105. Competency and the office</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106. Calling for changes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107. Emphasising optimism for the future</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108. Speaking to traditional values</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109. Consulting or negotiating with world leaders</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110. Emphasising accomplishments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111. Depending on surrogates to speak</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112. Attacking the record of the opponent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113. Taking the offensive position on issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F - Coding instruction book

First referred to in Chapter four, this Coding Instruction Book was designed in March 2002 to make explicit the rules for undertaking content analysis of Australian political advertisements. It was used in conjunction with the Codesheet (Appendix E).

Instructions

1. Use total sample of newspaper advertisements and total relevant sample of television advertisements

2. Sort advertisements into five different categories;

   1. Excluded ads: remove any ads which are not of major parties or are outside time frame – eg. union or other third party ads, individual candidate ads, Senate ads, requests for donations or How-to-vote ads (defined as print ads which have how to vote information—usually a list of candidates and the preferences the party would like assigned to them—as the dominant focus of the ad. Also see point 20 of this booklet). Also exclude ads which are state based (ie. focus on individual state candidates rather than party as a whole. In other words, the only ads remaining should be national based political party advertisements.

   2. Information ads: remove any ads which are limited only to providing factual information such as date or place of meetings, times of radio addresses etc.

This leaves three categories for analysis:

3. ALP ads
4. Liberal ads
5. National ads

3. Count number of information ads

4. Do no further analysis on information ads – only record raw numbers and the percentage of all ads for that year which were information ads

5. Use only remaining ads from categories 3, 4 and 5 for content analysis
6. Apply Coding Sheet to remaining ads – analyse ALP ads first, then Liberal, then National

7. When assessing dominant issue, record only the one dominant issue of the ad (even if three issues are mentioned record only the dominant issue as the number of issues will be recorded under a separate criteria (see also point 12).

8. When assessing whether emphasis is on issues or images consider use of pictures, language, design to assess whether the emphasis is on policy issues or on personality or image of leader or party. Eg. ads which focus on image may not mention any policy issues at all but instead include only a near full-size portrait of the leader or other image-making device (such as logo, flag, etc) (see also point 16).

9. When assessing whether party leader of other representative appears in ad, consider not only photographs but also mention of name of the person (ie. quote from leader or name of opposition leader counts as an appearance). However, do not count any individual candidate photos or names which appear as an adjunct to the generic party ad (see point 1:1 and footnote 1)

10. When assessing what candidate characteristics are emphasised, assess in relation to portrayal of the sponsoring party leader only. I.e. the question is what candidate characteristics are emphasised in relation to the party leader. Therefore, only ads with appearance of leader (see point 9) are assessed for this criteria. Chose only the main characteristics per advertisement (ie. one value only per ad). When trying to assess which is the major characteristic emphasised consider language, photo, design, use of quotes or own words, whether any values (eg. ‘honest’) are stated outright etc.

11. When assessing ‘if an attack is made, what is the purpose of this attack?’, assess only ads where the opponent party leader is attacked. I.e. the question relates to personal attacks and not party attacks (see also point 15)

12. There are a number of ads where it is difficult to assess the dominant issue of the advertisement because several are mentioned. Consider space devoted to issues, emphasis in placement (ie. order) and the prominence attached through design (eg. use of larger heading). Sometimes the first issue mentioned may be considered the most emphasised due to prominence and order attached.

13. When considering ‘issue versus image’, image can also refer to the image of the opponent party.

14. When assessing whether dominant focus of the ad is candidate-positive or opponent-negative, negative political advertising is defined as advertisements in which the dominant focus of the ad was to criticise the opponent party, its leader or other party members. This includes attacks on policies, competence and/or credibility including attacks on the issues for which the other party or leader stands. Other categories are comparative ads which or rebuttal ads as not all ads can be accurately described as either positive or negative.
15. When assessing the purpose or nature of the attack it can be difficult to separate eg. is an accusation that someone has broken their promises an attack on their personal characteristics (lack of honesty and integrity) or an attack on their past performance? Consider whether personal qualities or job performance is most emphasised eg. in above example – their dishonesty or their record.

16. When assessing the purpose or nature of the attack ‘performance in past offices/positions (Criteria 81 on Codesheet), include performance in jobs still held at the time of the election (eg. if incumbent is still prime minister and attack is on his performance as prime minister). The criteria refers to the positions prior to the election so candidate still may hold position at time of election.

17. When assessing ‘what strategies are used in making the attack?’, all negative ads use some strategy so all negative ads should be coded for this criteria. If none of the specific strategies seem applicable, ‘negative association’ is used to refer to the strategy as this is a more generic description of a strategy which is used in all negative ads.

18. When assessing ‘are any of the following associations/accusations made?’ consider all negative ads – both anti-party and anti-party leader - not just leader focused ads.

19. When assessing whether the ad is candidate-positive focused this means focused on the party’s own policies and stances.

20. When removing How-to-vote ads, these are defined as ads where the majority of the content or dominant focus is on How-to-vote information. Where an ad includes some other statement, graphic etc and the ad is considered to be more than just a how-to-vote ad, it can be left in for analysis but only analysis of the part of the ad which is relevant (ie. ignore the how-to-vote component of the ad). Usually this will mean that the ad left in for analysis contains is less than fifty per cent dominated by how-to-vote information.

21. When assessing ‘who appears in ad?’, some ads have multiple pictures or appearances of different groups, only select the main or dominant group eg. first shown or group given most space/time in ad.

22. When assessing whether party name is mentioned do not include party logo as a name mention as party logo is recorded separately. Also, do not count the party name appearing in the authorisation - only count name mentions which occur in the body (or main text) of the advertisement.

23. When analysing TV ads, it is difficult to isolate the main issue focus when there are several mentioned or appearing. Again, as per print advertisements, select the main policy issue focus – either space devoted, time accorded, or first mentioned (priority given).

24. With television ads, it is difficult to separate issue from image as TV ads are based on images – ie. picture images. This criteria refers thought to image as the party or party leader’s image as in pictures or images per se.
25. To refine point 24 as it is a point which occurs throughout the TV ad analysis, note that there is a definite tendency to see TV ads as image-based and the coder must make a deliberate conscious and continual effort to separate images/imagery from image of the party leader or party. Eg. in 1983 Hawke ads, issues are mentioned but focus in terms of time and screen space is on Hawke and his image as party leader, as competent, warm, etc.

26. The criteria on ‘does leader appear in ad?’ as with newspaper ads, refers to both physical appearances in TV ads and name mentions by some other party or announcer.

27. After counting all 102 items for all three categories is complete, record raw scores in the Excel spreadsheet for that year. Use spreadsheet to calculate percentages and other statistics.

28. Complete a summary sheet of discoveries about the ads in that year.

29. Put the counting sheet used, the print out of the Excel spreadsheet and the summary sheet in folder divided by year. Store analysis sheets and record all data.
Appendix G - Ad placement map

This Appendix, referred to in Chapter four, is the ‘Ad Placement Map’ designed by the author for use in mapping ‘ad-buys’ in newspapers. It enabled the author to collect data about when, where and how many times, particular ads were published in newspapers from 1949-2001. This helped to uncover when ads were published, in which newspapers and states, during what stage of the campaign, how large ads were, on which page of the paper they appeared, and the number of times an ad was repeated. Some of the ads shown in the example given, from 1955, have been highlighted in different colours in order to identify the ads of the different parties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of ads</th>
<th>the Age</th>
<th>Herald-Sun</th>
<th>Courier-Mail</th>
<th>Mercury</th>
<th>Canberra Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>11/12</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>13/14</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>15/16</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>17/18</td>
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Appendix H – Full list of all advertisements studied

Newspaper advertisements (by political party, in chronological order)

Australian Labor Party, Tonight Mr J. B Chifley, policy speech Sun, 14 December, 1949, p. 12.
Australian Labor Party, Don't vote yourself into Prof. Hytten's pool Age, 23 November, 1949, p. 4.
Australian Labor Party, Labor will continue to ensure jobs for all Age, 2 December, 1949, p. 4.
Australian Labor Party, Here it is, Menzies said - 'a pool of unemployed is necessary to discipline the workers' Age, 29 November, 1949, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, Tonight. Come and hear Prime Minister Chifley Age, 23 November, 1949, p. 32.
Australian Labor Party, Mr J. B. Chifley, policy speech Age, 14 November, 1949, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, Tonight at 7.15, Dr H. V. Evatt Sun, 22 December, 1949, p. 8.
Australian Labor Party, 4KQ will broadcast Chifley at tonight's meeting Courier-Mail, 16 November, 1949, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, 'I believe in the right of every head of a family in this country to own his own home' Courier-Mail, 6 December, 1949, p. 10.
Australian Labor Party, A Liberal-Country Party government would inflict conscription upon you Courier-Mail, 8 December, 1949, p. 16.


Australian Labor Party, *Tonight, don't miss these important addresses Mercury*, 7 December, 1949, p. 30.


Australian Labor Party, *It has been estimated that since the Labor Government came to office the farmers of Australia... Advertiser*, 18 November, 1949, p. 9.

Australian Labor Party, *To make life outside the cities better for all Advertiser*, 14 November, 1949, p. 11.


Australian Labor Party, *Labor appeals to all the women of South Australia Advertiser*, 7 December, 1949, p. 15.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Socialism is so permanent* Age, 30 November, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, *This is the Liberal's policy* Age, 3 December, 1949, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Socialism is still the issue* Age, 5 December, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Policies and promises are all very well...* Age, 7 December, 1949, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, *This man is an avowed socialist* Courier-Mail, 2 December, 1949, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Your child is a person to you, under Mr Chifley's socialism she'll be just a number* Courier-Mail, 29 November, 1949, p. 10.
Liberal Party of Australia, *ustralians must be fed up with men like this!* Courier-Mail, 22 November, 1949, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Every Labor candidate is a socialist candidate!* Courier-Mail, 14 November, 1949, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *This is our policy Mercury*, 21 November, 1949, p. 8.

Liberal Party of Australia, *I'm voting Liberal because I'm tired of strikes, shortages, high prices Mercury*, 23 November, 1949, p. 17.


Liberal Party of Australia, *We're the 'Bunnies' under socialism Mercury*, 29 November, 1949, p. 22.


Liberal Party of Australia, *All we have is worth holding. Let's keep it secure from the dry rot of socialism Mercury*, 8 December, 1949, p. 19.


Liberal Party of Australia, *The case against socialism is a deadly one Canberra Times*, 1 December, 1949, p. 2.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Australian women! This is what we offer you... Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December, 1949, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Lunch hour meeting owing to the indisposition of Mr Menzies* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November, 1949, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *This is our policy - put the shillings back in the pound!* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November, 1949, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Chifley stands on his record - a tragic record indeed* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November, 1949, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Liberal policy is sound insurance* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November, 1949, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *It is in your hands Australia!* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 December, 1949, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Socialisation or freedom - you can't have both* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 December, 1949, p. 6.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Here are the answers to what every thinking person wants to know* *Advertiser*, 19 November, 1949, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Let's stop this messing about with petrol* *Advertiser*, 22 November, 1949, p. 11.


Liberal Party of Australia, *There's no doubt about it Labor's objective is complete socialism* *Advertiser*, 26 November, 1949, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Here is proof that Labor prefers communists to decent Australians* Advertiser, 3 December, 1949, p. 9.
Liberal Party of Australia, *We will get petrol* Advertiser, 6 December, 1949, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, *This is what we stand for...* Advertiser, 9 December, 1949, p. 7.
Australian Labor Party, *Only Labor can smash communism!* Age, 2 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *We ask you - did Menzies put value back in the pound?* Age, 9 April, 1951, p. 4.
Australian Labor Party, *Pension rises will help meet living costs* Age, 12 April, 1951, p. 4.
Australian Labor Party, *How to vote Labor and fight the rising cost of living* Age, 27 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *Communism, secret ballots, the Senate, prices* Age, 18 April, 1951, p. 7.
Australian Labor Party, *10/- endowment for first child* Age, 17 April, 1951, p. 4.
Australian Labor Party, *Menzies has broken his promises to the women of Australia* Age, 24 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *The truth about the Senate!* Age, 23 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *Menzies' inflation is destroying the value of your savings, pensions, superannuation, insurance* Age, 26 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *See why I dumped the helpless Liberals? They can't even get an advertising campaign idea of their own. Disillusioned Dan. Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April, 1951, p. 5.
Australian Labor Party, *You broke most of the promises you made last time Mr Menzies. Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April, 1951, p. 9.
Australian Labor Party, You forgot to make it clear enough Mr Menzies... Sydney Morning Herald, 5 April, 1951, p. 10.


Australian Labor Party, A vote for Menzies is a vote for conscription for overseas, re-armament of Japan, warmongers Sydney Morning Herald, 20 April, 1951, p. 5.

Australian Labor Party, Now then, Mr Spender - stop patting yourself on the back! Sydney Morning Herald, 23 April, 1951, p. 7.

Australian Labor Party, Wanted - the guilty men responsible for blackouts Sydney Morning Herald, 27 April, 1951, p. 5.


Australian Labor Party, Mr Menzies, why did it take you 15 months to introduce your Secret Ballot Bill Sun, 16 April, 1951, p. 11.

Australian Labor Party, Big unions support Chifley Sun, 27 April, 1951, p. 17.

Australian Labor Party, Why should I vote for you, Mr Menzies? Courier-Mail, 20 April, 1951, p. 2.

Australian Labor Party, This is how inflation is used against the wage earner and housewife Courier-Mail, 16 April, 1951, p. 2.


Australian Labor Party, A great Australian's appeal to the electors of South Australia Advertiser, 27 April, 1951, p. 8.

Australian Labor Party, Labor's how to vote guide for next Saturday Advertiser, 26 April, 1951, p. 5.

Australian Labor Party, Here are your Labor candidates Advertiser, 24 April, 1951, p. 6.

Australian Labor Party, Labor will repeal the Wool Tax Act Advertiser, 24 April, 1951, p. 5.

Australian Labor Party, Australian Labor Party - Town Hall, Adelaide Advertiser, 10 April, 1951, p. 5.

Australian Labor Party, Labor needs your help to fight the rising cost of living Advertiser, 2 April, 1951, p. 9.


Australian Labor Party, Rt. Hon. J. B. Chifley will speak at the city hall Mercury, 16 April, 1951, p. 17.

Country Party, It's your pound, give him a bait on April 28 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 April, 1951, p. 4.

Country Party, The President of the Country Party... invites listeners to hear Fadden and McEwan Age, 24 April, 1951, p. 4.

Country Party, Tonight, hear A. W. Fadden Sun, 9 April, 1951, p. 18.

Country Party, Rt. Hon. A. W. Fadden will be heard from 4QR Courier-Mail, 24 April, 1951, p. 3.
Liberal Party of Australia, *The Prime Minister's Polich Speech Age*, 3 April, 1951, p. 16.

Liberal Party of Australia, *End Labor obstruction Age*, 10 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *The secret ballot will destroy the communist conspiracy Age*, 12 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Your security is at stake Age*, 16 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Labor is hopelessly divided Age*, 19 April, 1951, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *On prices and inflation the Labor Party stands condemned* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *How to vote for the joint Liberal and Country Parties' Senate Team Age*, 20 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *These are the real issues of the Election! Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 April, 1951, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *A Liberal Government is your only protection against Communism and Inflation Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 April, 1951, p. 8.

Liberal Party of Australia, *The key to freedom in the trade unions Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *They walk along the political way, the bright pink Socialist three... Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April, 1951, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Listen in to-night hear the Prime Minister Sydney Morning Herald*, 1951, p. 17 April.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Don't be fooled by Chifley's smoke-screen Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *McGirr has Price Control.. he can't even keep train fares down! Double Dissolution Dan Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April, 1951, p. 8.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Labor has no policy - except obstruction! Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *See and hear the Prime Minister Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April, 1951, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *To-night - see and hear the Prime Minister Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *You can't be too careful! Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April, 1951, p. 4.


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Liberal Party of Australia, *To-night the Prime Minister makes his final radio broadcast to the nation* Sydney Morning Herald, 24 April, 1951, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *You can't be too careful! An informal vote is a wasted vote* Sydney Morning Herald, 26 April, 1951, p. 6.


Liberal Party of Australia, *To-night at 8, the Prime Minister* Courier-Mail, 3 April, 1951, p. 3.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Don't hand Australia over to Moscow's fifth columnists!* Courier-Mail, 10 April, 1951, p. 2.


Liberal Party of Australia, *We promise if you vote for us* Courier-Mail, 17 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *This is the issue: Chifley, Evatt versus the people* Courier-Mail, 23 April, 1951, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Wipe out these pests in industry* Courier-Mail, 20 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *What Labor promises - Labor will do... Double Dissolution Dan* Courier-Mail, 24 April, 1951, p. 3.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Labor is divided* Courier-Mail, 24 April, 1951, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *This is Labor's 'plan' Courier-Mail, 26 April, 1951, p. 7.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Vote against Communism* Courier-Mail, 27 April, 1951, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Smash Communism to-day!* Courier-Mail, 28 April, 1951, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *All this in fifteen months despite the Labor-dominated Senate Mercury, 9 April, 1951, p. 16.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Menzies or Moscow?* Mercury, 23 April, 1951, p. 10.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Cut it out!* Mercury, 26 April, 1951, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Smash the reds and free the unions!* Canberra Times, 13 April, 1951, p. 3.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Come and hear Menzies. Advertiser*, 16 April, 1951, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Come and hear Deputy Prime Minister Fadden Advertiser*, 18 April, 1951, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Will you allow Labor to increase taxation by 200,000,000 pounds? Advertiser*, 19 April, 1951, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Labor's declared policy on price control by Canberra obviously must mean wage pegging and direction of manpower Advertiser*, 20 April, 1951, p. 6.


Liberal Party of Australia, *We are proud of the L.C.L Government's defence policy Advertiser*, 23 April, 1951, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Communism is out to stamp out Christianity and all religion Advertiser*, 24 April, 1951, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Again, you are the umpire Advertiser*, 28 April, 1951, p. 5.


Australian Labor Party, *Dr H. V. Evatt will speak on Labor's policy Age, 11 May, 1954, p. 4.*


Australian Labor Party, *Labor declares that a retiring allowance is the inalienable right of every citizen Age, 20 May, 1954, p. 8.*


Australian Labor Party, *Tomorrow your vote for Labor will help to secure these postive, practical benefits Age, 28 May, 1954, p. 5.*
Australian Labor Party, *Labor will protect these people! These are the people who have been neglected and ignored Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May, 1954, p. 5.*
Australian Labor Party, *Proof that without increased taxation... Mercury, 26 May, 1954, p. 18.*
Australian Labor Party, *Tomorrow your vote for Labor will help to secure... Mercury, 28 May, 1954, p. 8.*
Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight! Listen to the Prime Minister Age, 4 May, 1954, p. 4.*

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Liberal Party of Australia, A great leader for a grand country Age, 5 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, The Menzies government has delivered the goods! Age, 6 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, A threat in every word Age, 7 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, You know! That Menzies secret ballots gave unionists the power to get rid of the reds Age, 10 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Australia is on top of the world with the Menzies Government Age, 13 May, 1954, p. 3.
Liberal Party of Australia, Don't you give the reds a second chance Age, 17 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Good health for all is the policy of the Menzies Government Age, 18 May, 1954, p. 3.
Liberal Party of Australia, These are the issues - consider them carefully! Age, 27 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Compulsory unionism is a federal issue! Sydney Morning Herald, 14 May, 1954, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, 14 pounds a week for husband and wife (tax-free) Sydney Morning Herald, 23 May, 1954, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, the *Menzies Government has delivered the goods* *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May, 1954, p. 7.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Australia is on top of the world* *Courier-Mail*, 20 May, 1954, p. 9.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Be sure to hear the Prime Minister's final broadcast* *Courier-Mail*, 25 May, 1954, p. 6.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Don't give the reds a second chance* *Courier-Mail*, 25 May, 1954, p. 7.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Evatt forgot to tell you what responsible Labor men have said* *Mercury*, 12 May, 1954, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Don't give the reds a second chance* *Mercury*, 26 May, 1954, p. 5.


Australian Labor Party, *They're not so much out to 'get' Dr Evatt, as to 'get' you* *Age*, 9 December, 1955, p. 5.
abor Party, **Vote Labor for family security** Age, 9 December, 1955, p. 12.
abor Party, **Listen to Dr Evatt** Sydney Morning Herald, 21 November, 1955,
abor Party, **Attend the monster Labor rally** Sydney Morning Herald, 26 Nov., 1955, p. 4.
abor Party, **When inflation hits the family, it's 'Labor to the rescue'** Sun., 7 November, 1955, p. 42.
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abor Party, **Listen tonight - Dr Evatt** Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Nov., 1955, p. 9.
abor Party, **There is something about a baby!** Sun-Herald, 4 December, 16.
abor Party, **Say no to the 'no-hopers'!** Sydney Morning Herald, 6 December, 4.
abor Party, **How to vote Labor** Sydney Morning Herald, 10 December, 5.
abor Party, **Menzies makes misery out of prosperity** Sun, 2 December, 1955,
abor Party, **50,000 homes that were never built** Sun, 7 December, 1955, p.
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Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight! Listen to The Prime Minister Age*, 15 November, 1955, p. 3.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight The Prime Minister will broadcast to the nation! Age*, 17 November, 1955, p. 3.


Liberal Party of Australia, *The family man has Menzies to thank Age*, 29 November, 1955, p. 3.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Dr Evatt may see red - but Australia says Communism is a foreign growth Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 December, 1955, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Dr Evatt may see red - but Australia says Communism is a foreign growth Courier-Mail*, 5 December, 1955, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *To-night at eight, the Prime Minister Courier-Mail*, 15 November, 1955, p. 4.


Liberal Party of Australia, *If you're a family man, it's the standard of living that counts! Advertiser*, 29 November, 1955, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Your Senate vote is vital to Australia Advertiser*, 1 December, 1955, p. 6.


Country Party, *Tonight at 8:45 John McEwen speaks on the substance or the shadow Age*, 19 November, 1958, p. 15.


Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight at 8pm: Hear the Prime Minister Age*, 29 October, 1958, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, "Australia unlimited" is the Liberal slogan for 1959 Age, 5 November, 1958, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight at 8pm come and hear The Prime Minister Age*, 7 November, 1958, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *This is where you come into the picture of Australia today Age*, 10 November, 1958, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *You can't afford to risk a change in Government Age*, 18 November, 1958, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, The Prime Minister, tonight 7.15 Sydney Morning Herald, 30 October, 1958, p. 5.
Liberal Party of Australia, See and hear Mr. W. McMahon Sydney Morning Herald, 3 November, 1958, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, See and hear Mr. F. M. Osborne Sydney Morning Herald, 7 November, 1958, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, You cannot afford to put the clock back Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November, 1958, p. 5.
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Liberal Party of Australia, This is where you come into the picture of Australia to-day Sydney Morning Herald, 14 November, 1958, p. 9.
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Liberal Party of Australia, Australia unlimited means your security, your job Courier-Mail, 4 November, 1958, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, You cannot afford to put back the clock... from this, to this Courier-Mail, 10 November, 1958, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, The unity ticket... spells danger to Australia Courier-Mail, 14 November, 1958, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, To-night at 8 pm City Hall Courier-Mail, 17 November, 1958, p. 12.
Liberal Party of Australia, It's forward with Menzes or back to Left-Wing Socialism with Evatt Courier-Mail, 22 November, 1958, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, Wednesday, November 5, Listen to the Prime Minister Mercury, 1 November, 1958, p. 29.
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Liberal Party of Australia, This is the test... Mercury, 5 November, 1958, p. 11.
Liberal Party of Australia, How to vote Liberal on Nov. 22 Mercury, 15 November, 1958, p. 17.

Liberal Party of Australia, The Communist objective in Australia, Unity Ticket with the ALP Mercury, 15 November, 1958, p. 18.

Liberal Party of Australia, This week's LCL election meetings Advertiser, 27 October, 1958, p. 8.

Liberal Party of Australia, The Prime Minister will address the electors at Glenelg Town Hall Advertiser, 30 October, 1958, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, Are we to march ahead... or limp on the shaky crutches of unsound promises? Advertiser, 4 November, 1958, p. 15.

Liberal Party of Australia, Don't let it happen here! Advertiser, 6 November, 1958, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, Australia's development charts the only real road to better living for all Advertiser, 8 November, 1958, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, The Prime Minister will address the electors at the Adelaide Town Hall Advertiser, 10 November, 1958, p. 8.


Liberal Party of Australia, Your vote for LCL Government is a vote of confidence in yourself Advertiser, 15 November, 1958, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, An evenly divided or hostile Senate can hold up the Menzies Government's policy for Australia's progress Advertiser, 19 November, 1958, p. 13.


Liberal Party of Australia, How to vote for your LCL candidates Advertiser, 22 November, 1958, p. 4.

Liberal Party of Australia, Mr Menzies speaks tonight Sydney Morning Herald, 29 October, 1958, p. 15.

Townley, A., Since you elected me in 1949... (individual candidate ad), Mercury, 21 November, 1958, p. 2.

Australian Labor Party, Tonight at 8 o'clock Hon. A. A. Calwell, MHR Age, 16 November, 1961, p. 5.


Australian Labor Party, Remember this? Full employment... Age, 30 November, 1961, p. 10.


Australian Labor Party, Were you one of the 142,000 who wasted their Senate vote in 1958? Age, 9 December, 1961, p. 4.


Australian Labor Party, Remember this? The cost of living... Sun, 29 November, 1961, p. 23.
Australian Labor Party, *Were you one of the 142,000 who wasted their Senate vote in 1958?* Sun, 8 December, 1961, p. 17.
Australian Labor Party, *We will take positive steps* Canberra Times, 1 December, 1961, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Tonight at 8pm: Hear the Prime Minister deliver his Policy Speech Age*, 15 November, 1961, p. 3.
Liberal Party of Australia, *This is the record Age*, 30 November, 1961, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Development is vital! Age*, 4 December, 1961, p. 4.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Prosperity and stability stem only from good government* Courier-Mail, 8 December, 1961, p. 9.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Your vote will govern Australia for the next three crucial years Advertiser*, 6 December, 1961, p. 13.
Australian Labor Party, *Labor's past history is the guarantee... Age*, 29 November, 1963, p. 10.
Australian Labor Party, *You won't have to wait three years for a home Sun*, 25 November, 1963, p. 10.


Liberal Party of Australia, *You can only enjoy prosperity at home if you have strength and security abroad* Advertiser, 22 November, 1963, p. 6.
Liberal Party of Australia, *Only the Menzies LCL Government can provide security...* Advertiser, 29 November, 1963, p. 4.
Country Party, This is the Country Party's constant aim... Age, 25 November, 1966, p. 8.
Liberal Party of Australia, A Liberal vote means better educational opportunities for all Age, 22 November, 1966, p. 7.
Liberal Party of Australia, *ALP defence policies are disastrous Canberra Times*, 17 October, 1969, p. 4.


Australian Labor Party, *Five days to go... Age*, 27 November, 1972, p. 10.

Australian Labor Party, *Four days to go... Age*, 28 November, 1972, p. 15.


Australian Labor Party, *Three days to go... Age*, 29 November, 1972, p. 15.


Australian Labor Party, *Two days to go... Age*, 30 November, 1972, p. 15.


Australian Labor Party, *Four days to go... (2) Sun*, 28 November, 1972, p. 43.

Australian Labor Party, *The ALP will free farmers from the cost-price squeeze Sun*, 29 November, 1972, p. 16.

Australian Labor Party, *Two days to go... (2) Sun*, 30 November, 1972, pp. 76-77.


Australian Labor Party, *Shipping increases will destroy your jobs* Mercury, 30 November, 1972, p. 11.


Country Party, *Think hard. This is an election, not a lottery! Sun*, 30 November, 1972, p. 22.


Country Party, *This country needs the stability of Doug Anthony* Advertiser, 29 November, 1972, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, *The McMahon Government has proved to be the greatest reform ministry in 23 years* Age, 16 November, 1972, p. 11.


Liberal Party of Australia, *In less than two years the McMahon Government has increased pensions by 29%* Age, 22 November, 1972, p. 5.


Liberal Party of Australia, *In less than two years...* Sun, 9 November, 1972, p. 13.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Mr Whitlam we challenge you to deny...* Courier-Mail, 30 November, 1972, p. 17.


Liberal Party of Australia, *'Private hospitals .. are irrelevant'* Courier-Mail, 10 November, 1972, p. 11.


Liberal Party of Australia, *All the children in all the schools* Courier-Mail, 17 November, 1972, p. 7.

Liberal Party of Australia, *$1375 interest subsidy to young homebuyers!* Courier-Mail, 21 November, 1972, p. 11.

Liberal Party of Australia, *Good health costs less with the Liberals* Courier-Mail, 23 November, 1972, p. 5.

Liberal Party of Australia, Retiring soon - well then, rest easy Courier-Mail, 27 November, 1972, p. 5.


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