

The Use of Children as Props in Political Campaign Advertising

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Table of Contents

I.	Acknowledgements.....	3
II.	Abstract.....	4
III.	Introduction.....	4
IV.	Research Questions.....	5
V.	Theoretical Framework and Literature Review.....	6
	a. General campaign advertisement strategies.....	6
	b. Candidate Differences that Influence Advertisement Strategies.....	7
	c. Children in Commercial Advertisements.....	8
	d. Children in Political Campaign Advertisements.....	9
VI.	Hypotheses and General Expectations.....	10
VII.	Methods.....	11
	a. Empirical Process.....	14
VIII.	Results.....	18
	a. Data table.....	18
	b. Data described for candidates overall.....	19
	c. Data separated by candidate characteristics.....	21
	d. Qualitative Observations.....	28
IX.	Discussion.....	29
	a. Implications.....	29
	b. Limitations.....	36
	c. Future Research Recommendations.....	37
X.	Conclusion.....	38
XI.	Appendix.....	39
XII.	References.....	42

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Abstract

This project explores the ways in which children are used in political campaign advertising. Analyzing 97 videos from the 2016 presidential and congressional elections, I coded for the types of children that appeared in campaign advertisements, in what ways they appear, and what messages they are used to convey. I then determined how this differed based on candidate characteristics. I found that girls tend to appear more often than boys, that advertisements feature white children more often than they feature non-white children, that blonde children are disproportionately represented in ads, and that this all varies by candidate and by candidate's party. I also found that young children and adolescents appear more frequently than babies and teenagers, that the children featured are most often not related to the candidate, that children are generally featured with their parents more often than they are featured with the candidate, and that children very rarely speak in ads, which lends support to the idea that they are used as props.

Introduction

We have seen it dozens of times: a candidate kisses a stranger's baby on the head and poses for a quick photo. It is so clichéd, yet what would a political campaign be without candidates pandering to families? "Baby kissing" is part of a larger phenomenon in political campaigning—the use of children as props. This has been a common trend throughout much of recent political history. Most people are familiar with the famous Lyndon B. Johnson "Daisy Spot," which featured a little girl counting the petals on a daisy juxtaposed with a booming voice counting down to an atomic bomb explosion. More recently, Hillary Clinton's powerful "Our Children Are Watching" commercial featured wide-eyed children watching Donald Trump make some of his most infamous comments on television. So many campaign commercials today depict candidates on playgrounds, though in reality it is seen as strange for a grown man or woman to casually go to a playground. Additionally, if a candidate has a family, it is common for him or her to introduce family members to the voters in an advertisement. Even candidates that do not have their own children use children in their campaign advertisements. For example, Ben Quayle ran for Congress in Arizona and published an advertisement that featured him with

two young girls who appeared to be his daughters, though he was childless. This strategy of using children in political campaigns is prevalent in politics, but little research has been done to understand how or why children are used in campaign advertisements.

I argue that children are not simply *present* in campaign advertisements but rather they serve as props to convey a certain message about the candidate or his or her opponent. In other words, children function as a tool to aid the candidate in gaining votes. It is important to note that the children featured in campaign advertisements—especially young children and babies—likely did not have agency in deciding whether they wanted to be featured in an advertisement. Without this agency, children become more like a prop that the candidates employ to convey a certain message. Studying this phenomenon can reveal the types of messages candidates convey in their advertising and the ways that advertisements convey them. It also has implications for children's issues: do candidates use children in their advertisements to imply that children's issues are important to them, or are they simply hoping to catch the attention of family-oriented voters? Often, children help convey messages that are not specifically related to children's issues, such as those about climate change or war. Candidates make a conscious decision to use children in their advertisements, and the purpose of my project is to explore the reasoning behind this decision.

Research Questions

Central research question:

In what ways do politicians utilize children in their campaign advertisements?

Subsequent questions:

What kinds of images of children appear in campaign advertisements?

What sorts of messages are children used to convey?

How well do partisanship and other candidate characteristics predict the differences in the ways children are used and the messages they convey?

Political Campaign Advertising Strategies and the Use of Children in Advertising

Although the use of children in political campaign ads is a common technique that politicians use to appeal to a broad range of voters, the technique has been studied very little in academic contexts. To develop the theoretical framework behind this thesis, I have drawn from literature regarding campaign advertisement strategies in general, candidate characteristics that predict differences in campaign advertisement strategies, and the use of children in similar contexts, such as commercial advertisements.

General Campaign Advertisement Strategies

There has been a substantial amount of research on campaign advertisement strategies and on the ways politicians try to appeal to voters. One strategy that candidates use to persuade voters through campaign advertisements is appealing to their emotions; advertisements sometimes promote voter participation for those with existing loyalties and at other times invoke fear in voters (Brader, 2005). This idea is important for this thesis because children are often used in advertising to appeal to viewers' emotions.

There are also different strategies that candidates use to convey their message; they may make "issue ads"— which highlight issues that the candidate cares about— or "image ads"— which focus on curating the candidate's public image. Issue ads tend to feature the candidate speaking for him or herself and often utilize emotional appeals, while image ads more often feature an anonymous voice-over and appeal more to logic (Johnston and Kaid, 2002).

Researchers have also studied the different messages that political advertisements convey. One study found that one fifth of the political advertisements in its dataset conveyed information about a candidate's policy positions while half conveyed information about the candidate's personal qualities (Joslyn, 1980). Though not specifically related to advertisements that contain children, these ideas are useful for conceptualizing the types of issues politicians choose to utilize in their campaign advertisements— and how they utilize them to appeal to voters— as well as the strategies behind those choices.

Candidate Differences that Influence Advertisement Strategies

Research shows that certain differences in candidate characteristics can predict differences in campaign advertisement strategies. For example, gender can predict differences in the message content of campaign advertisements. While both male and female candidates generally mention policy issues in their advertisements, men tend to focus more on economic matters while women focus more on social issues (Kahn, 1992). Research also shows that partisanship can predict differences in the ways candidates strategize in their campaign advertising. Researchers compared the cultural images that candidates of different political parties used in advertisements to establish unifying themes in their campaigns, and they found that Republican advertisements utilized visual media to establish these themes better than Democratic advertisements do (Spiliotes and Vavreck, 2002).

Depending on party affiliation, the issues and positions that politicians highlight in their campaign advertisements diverge greatly. In fact, party is the central predictor of content of political advertisements. For example, Republicans are more likely to discuss the economy and tax cuts, and Democrats are more likely to discuss education and juvenile justice. However, candidates from both parties tend to discuss crime at about the same rate (Spiliotes and Vavreck,

2002). Democratic candidates also tend to discuss policy in their campaigns more often than Republicans do (Airne and Benoit, 2005). Finally, Democratic and Republican presidential candidates both tend to discuss more Republican issues than Democratic issues in their campaign advertisements. This finding could be related to the fact that federal issues are more often associated with the Republican Party, and presidential candidates tend to discuss those issues more often (Petrocik et al., 2003). These findings are useful in understanding how differences in candidate characteristics may also correspond to differences in the ways candidates utilize children in their advertisements.

Children in Commercial Advertisements

While little research explores the use of children in political campaign advertisements, there is research that examines the use of children in similar contexts, specifically commercial advertisements. Advertisers use children as a tool to appeal both rationally and emotionally to audiences. Children are effective vehicles to convey messages in advertising because their innocence is a source of credibility and because they appeal to an audience's paternal and compassionate nature (Kinsey, 1987). It is also useful to analyze the impact of race on children's presence in commercial advertisements; children of different races are used in different types of commercials and to convey different messages. For example, white children appear most often in positive commercials while black and Latino children comparatively appear more often in negative commercials, sometimes associating them with societal problems like poverty (Seiter, 1990). Paired with the literature on general campaign advertising strategies, these studies regarding strategies for using children in advertising will help guide my thesis' analysis of the use of children in political campaign advertisements.

Children in Political Campaign Advertisements

Previous research on the use of children in specifically political campaign advertisements is limited to a 1999 study by Susan A. Sherr. Sherr analyzes the different ideas that children symbolize in political advertisements and how the types of ideas have changed over time since the advent of television political advertisements in the 1960's. According to this study, children generally appear in advertisements to symbolize five different ideas: economic insecurity, poverty, crime, war, and hope for the future. Children symbolized poverty most often in campaign advertisements in the 1960's, while they have symbolized economic insecurity consistently over time. Additionally, candidates use children in both negative and positive ways in their advertisements. Campaigns sometimes use children to show that a politician's opponent will put children—and thus, the nation—in danger, especially in conjunction with images of war and poverty. Children are also often shown in positive lights, such as in school, with their families, on the playground, or reciting the pledge of allegiance, to convey patriotic and hopeful sentiments (Sherr, 1999).

Drawing from Sherr's research and others, this thesis aims to build on previous findings by exploring the ways children are currently used in political advertisements and to determine if certain candidate characteristics play a role in the differences in the ways that children are used. While much research has been done on campaign advertising general strategies and on the ways campaign advertisements differ based on candidate characteristics, less research has been conducted on the presence of children in commercial advertisements—more research analyzes the effects of advertising on children and not the effects of children on advertising— and even less so on the presence of children in political advertisements. Therefore, it is clear that more research is needed to better understand how politicians use children as political tools to connect

to voters and persuade them to vote a certain way. In addition, most of the research that has been conducted on political advertisements is somewhat outdated—all of the literature that I reviewed is from studies conducted before 2005, with several from studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. Because I intend to analyze campaign advertisements from the 2016 election, my analysis of the different ways candidates currently utilize children to convey certain messages in their campaign advertisements has the potential to make a significant contribution to the current body of literature.

Hypotheses and General Expectations

Hypotheses Based on the Literature

1. Children are used to convey a sense of patriotism.
 - Observable implications: children shown reciting the pledge of allegiance or with an American flag.
2. Children are used to invoke a sense of fear and an urge to protect our children from danger that may be caused by the opponent.
 - Observable implications: children shown as sad or in danger, accompanied by voice-over or text that is related to dangerous things, set to ominous music and dark tones on screen.
3. Differences in candidate characteristics, specifically political party, gender, age, race, and marital status, predict differences in the ways children are used.
 - Observable implications: patterns emerge in the different ways children are used when comparing candidates who differ in the aforementioned categories.

Other General Expectations

1. Children are used to convey that a candidate is family-oriented.
 - Observable implications: a candidate's children, parents, or other family members are introduced in the advertisement solely for the purpose of introducing them (not for the purpose of conveying something about a certain policy).
2. Children are used to convey a sense of hope for the future.
 - Observable implications: children are featured accompanied by voice-over or text that is related to the future or hope.

Methods

In order to analyze the use of children in political campaign advertising, I compiled a set of 180 campaign videos that contain or are related to children. I used a random number generator to select a smaller subset of those videos and conducted in-depth analysis on each one to determine 1) the different ways that children are used as props to convey a certain message to the voters, 2) the types of images of children that appear in advertisements, 3) the different messages which children are used to convey, and 4) how well partisanship and other candidate characteristics predict these differences.

The data source that I used to collect the advertisements for this study is the Political TV Ad Archive, which is a project of the Internet Archive. The Internet Archive is a non-profit digital library founded by Brewster Kahle in 1996 that works to give the public access to digitized material, such as music, books, and data ("About the Internet Archive"). The organization launched the Political TV Ad Archive in January 2016 to track political advertisement broadcasting for primary elections. The Archive is available online to the public

and contains records of more than 30,000 television campaign advertisements from both presidential and senatorial races (Watzman, 2016b). The website was launched again in September 2016 and tracked general election advertisements up until Election Day. The organization tracks advertisements using a system called the Duplitron 5000, which creates an audio fingerprint for each advertisement and uses it to count how many times it airs on television (Watzman, 2016).

The archive does not contain every political advertisement aired during the elections; it focuses on certain television markets—twenty-three markets during the primary elections and fifteen during the general elections. These markets are chosen because they are located in key swing states or have highly contested races. The archive also includes descriptive data for each advertisement, such as the network on which it aired, the type of program during which it aired, the sponsors, the type of election, the candidates involved, and the content of the advertisement. The project was funded by the Knight Foundation, the Democracy Fund, the Rita Allen Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and other donors (Watzman, 2016).

This archive includes a search function that allows users to filter by subject. There are 240 advertisements that have been coded to contain subjects related to “children,” and there are 267 that contain subjects related to “families.” First, I eliminated all advertisements within these two sets of videos that were not about a candidate but about a proposition or policy. I also eliminated advertisements made by interest groups and not made by the candidate committee because the strategies of the interest group may not reflect the strategies of the candidate. I then carefully watched each of the remaining advertisements to assure that they all physically contain children. This is the standard that I have set in this thesis for considering an advertisement to have used a child as a “prop.” The reasoning behind this standard is that, in order for children to

be used to achieve some end, they must be physically present in the video and not simply mentioned. For example, a candidate may talk about plans to improve schools, but advertisements like this have not been included in my study unless this mentioning of schools is accompanied by images of children. I also defined children as anyone younger than 18. Once I eliminated all advertisements that did not contain images of children, about 180 advertisements remained. Of these, 46 were Hillary Clinton advertisements and 11 were Donald Trump advertisements, and I decided to include all of these in my sample. In addition, I used a random number generator to select 20 Republican and 20 Democratic advertisements, creating a sample of 97 total advertisements. I then conducted more in-depth analysis on each of these videos.

I separated the advertisements for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump from the larger pool of Democrat and Republican advertisements because both candidates are anomalies from average political candidates. Specifically relating to this thesis, Clinton is different because much of her campaign was centered on children and families. Many political commentators and other politicians have also said that Trump is not a true “Republican” and that he is unlike any political candidate we have seen before in America (Danforth, 2016). For these reasons, I expect that Clinton’s and Trump’s use of children in advertisements may differ from the other presidential candidates as well as from the Democrat and Republican senatorial and House candidates in this sample.

I determined a set of codes that I used for each of the 97 advertisements to answer each of my research questions. First, I made note of various characteristics about the candidates, including political party, gender, race, age, and marital status. I then coded for how children appear in each advertisement. The questions that I asked of each advertisement included: What are the children doing? Do they speak in the advertisement? How old are the children? What race

are the children? What gender?¹ What percentage of the advertisement contains children on screen? I also determined for each advertisement what message the candidate conveys with his or her use of children. It should be noted that the message I assign to an advertisement is not necessarily the message that the candidate intended to convey, but I have determined what the message appears to be from the perspective of a viewer. While this determination could be somewhat subjective, I relied almost exclusively on the language of the advertisement (in the form of voice-overs and on-screen text). The only type of assumption I might make is that if an advertisement features the candidate eating dinner with his family, for example, then his message is that he is family-oriented. Finally, I created a short summary of what happens in the advertisement. Then, using the data from the coding, I compared the ways that children are used in advertisements between candidates of different parties, genders, and each of the other candidate characteristics. I have included a complete list of the codes used in this analysis in the Appendix.

Empirical Process

In the following section, I will demonstrate how my coding process works. I will give an example of an analysis of one Democratic advertisement, one Republican advertisement, one Clinton advertisement, and one Trump advertisement.

¹ When determining “race,” I simply noted whether the children were white or non-white. I did this in order to avoid misidentifying racially ambiguous children, though some error is unavoidable. In determining “gender,” I drew from clues that any viewer might use to determine whether a child is male or female—clothing, hair, etc. The general rule of thumb that I used was whether it would be obvious to a viewer that a child was white/non-white or male/female because if so, then it can be reasonably assumed that the creators of the advertisement may have been purposeful in featuring this particular child based on his or her race and gender. It is also important to note that I coded Hispanic children and candidates as “non-white” rather than as “white” throughout this project, though many Hispanics are technically white in race. I did this to simplify the coding process and because I thought it was important to separate out Hispanics from the white group in order to identify when advertisements purposefully featured a Hispanic child (such as in Spanish-language advertisements or in advertisements that are likely catered towards Hispanic immigrants).

Democratic senatorial candidate Katie McGinty (PA) ran an attack advertisement that criticized her opponent for being soft on gun control and putting families in danger. It contains a shot of the candidate talking to a family with two young daughters as the narration talks about a loophole in gun laws. I first coded for the candidate's characteristics: McGinty is a white, 53-year old married female who has children. I then determined that the advertisement in question contains two children and that children are on screen for 17% of the advertisement. I then coded for the characteristics of the children in the advertisement: they are both white girls (one is blonde); one is a baby and the other is young (see Appendix for coding for "young"). The advertisement contains no boys or children of color, nor any older children. These children were not identified as relatives of the candidate, though they are shown interacting with McGinty. They do not speak and are being held by their parents. The viewer is not shown their faces, so we do not know if they are smiling. This advertisement does not mention any policies that are directly related to children. Overall, the advertisement is negative in tone, and it utilizes fear to convey its message that we need better gun control to protect our families. I determined this message from the candidate's assertion that "we can't risk our families' safety on a loophole."

Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz features his wife and two young daughters in his advertisement. I coded for Cruz's characteristics: he is a Hispanic² male who is 46, married, and has children. Then I coded for the children in the advertisement; there are two, and they are on screen 10% of the time. They are both girls, ostensibly white, and blonde, so there are no boys or non-white children. One of the girls is young, and the other is an adolescent. They are

² It was difficult to decide whether to classify Ted Cruz as a Hispanic or as white. His father emigrated from Cuba, and his mother is $\frac{3}{4}$ Irish and $\frac{1}{4}$ Italian. It came down to whether the public perceives him as more Hispanic than white, and I decided that because his last name is Cruz and because he is often referred to as one of the Hispanic members of the Senate, he should be categorized as Hispanic instead of as white. I do not classify his daughters as Hispanic, however, because they are only $\frac{1}{4}$ Cuban and look more like their blonde, white mother than their father, so it can be assumed that the average viewer would perceive them as white.

both related to the candidate. In the advertisement, they are eating dinner with their parents (one of whom is the candidate) at home. Neither of them smiles or speaks. This advertisement does not mention any policies that are specifically related to children. The advertisement is positive, and it shows that the candidate is family-oriented, which corresponds to the stated message in the advertisement, which is that Cruz “understands that we need to [...] strengthen our families.”

Hillary Clinton ran an attack advertisement consisting of a series of images of people of different ages and ethnicities. The people stare solemnly into the camera with recordings of Donald Trump in the background saying some of his infamous quotes like, “He’s a war hero because he was captured; I like people that weren’t captured,” and “Putting a wife to work is a very dangerous thing.” Towards the end of the advertisement, all the images are of children, and Trump’s quotes are about war and violence, such as “I love war, in a certain way.” I coded the advertisement for the candidate, a married, white, 69-year old female that has a child. Then I coded for the children in the advertisement: there are eleven and they appear on screen for 53% of the advertisement. There are boys, girls, white children, and non-white children, and they are children of all ages. None of them are related to the candidate. None of them speak, and they stare unsmilingly into the camera. They are not shown interacting with their parents or the candidate. The locations of the children are not clear. This advertisement does not mention any policies that are specifically related to children. The tone of the advertisement is negative, and it uses fear in its references to war and violence to convey the message that Trump is not representative of the American people and that he is, consequently, dangerous for the American people, especially for children. I inferred this message from the on-screen text at the end of the advertisement that says, “We are not him,” and from the association of solemn images of children with ideas of war.

Donald Trump features a child in his advertisement about childcare. I coded Trump as a white, 70-year old male who is married and has children. This advertisement features one child for 55% of the time. The child is a young, white, blonde girl, so the advertisement does not feature any boys or non-white children. The child does not speak, though she does smile, and she is being taken care of by her mother at home throughout the advertisement. The child is not shown interacting with the candidate at any point in the advertisement. The advertisement has an overall positive tone. It also uses children in relation to a policy issue that specifically relates to children—childcare. The message of this advertisement is, as is stated by the woman in the advertisement, “Trump's child care plan will help hardworking parents, just like you.”

This process was repeated for all 97 of the advertisements in the sample.

Results

	Kids	%	G	B	%G	W	NW	%W	Bl	%Bl	Ba	Y	A	T	R	S	P	C	Sm	At	P/N	H	FO	Pa	Fe	CP	M
Total (97)	7.20	30.2	86.6	84.5	54.3	83.5	71.1	60.0	72.2	38.2	39.2	81.4	71.1	38.1	18.6	5.20	73.2	62.9	62.9	20.6	80.4	19.6	18.6	8.30	24.7	36.0	30.9
Dem. (66)	8.00	31.0	89.4	84.9	53.5	86.4	78.8	58.8	72.7	33.5	45.5	75.8	77.3	34.9	12.1	6.10	69.7	68.2	60.6	25.8	81.8	21.2	12.1	3.00	24.2	37.9	33.3
Repub (31)	5.50	28.1	80.7	83.9	50.7	77.4	54.8	62.8	71.0	48.3	25.8	93.6	58.0	45.2	32.3	3.20	80.7	51.6	67.7	9.70	77.4	16.1	32.3	19.4	25.8	32.3	25.8
Clinton (46)	9.90	36.7	91.3	89.1	52.9	91.3	78.3	59.4	73.9	31.2	45.7	80.4	82.6	41.3	4.40	6.50	65.2	69.6	65.2	32.6	78.3	23.9	4.40	2.20	26.1	43.5	37.0
Trump (11)	3.70	28.5	81.8	81.8	56.0	100	45.5	83.7	81.8	65.8	18.2	81.8	36.4	45.5	18.2	0	90.9	27.3	63.6	18.2	63.6	9.10	18.2	27.3	36.4	36.4	9.10
Dem (no Clinton) (20)	3.80	18.1	85	85	55.1	75	80	57.4	70	38.8	45	65	65	20	30	5	80	65	50	10	90	15	30	5	20	25	25
Repub (no Trump) (20)	6.50	28.1	80	85	47.8	65	60	51.4	65	38.7	30	100	70	45	40	5	75	65	70	5	85	20	40	15	20	30	35
Pres. (73)	8.30	34.5	90.4	86.3	54.3	86.3	72.6	59.5	72.6	37.0	39.7	83.6	74.0	45.2	16.4	6.90	74.0	60.3	65.8	23.3	78.1	24.7	16.4	11.0	26.0	38.4	31.5
Sen. (17)	3.80	19.2	76.5	88.2	44.8	64.7	76.5	54.1	64.7	35.7	47.1	70.6	58.8	17.7	17.7	0	70.6	82.4	52.9	17.7	88.2	5.90	17.7	0	17.7	23.5	35.3
House (7)	3.90	11.6	71.4	57.1	54.1	100	42.9	81	85.7	57.3	14.3	85.7	71.4	14.3	42.9	0	71.4	42.9	57.1	0	85.7	0	42.9	0	28.6	42.9	14.3
Female (53)	8.90	33.6	88.7	86.8	52.7	90.6	75.5	60.3	75.5	34	47.2	77.4	79.3	37.7	7.60	5.70	66.0	71.7	62.3	30.2	79.3	20.8	7.60	1.90	24.5	37.7	35.9
Male (44)	5.20	26	84.1	81.8	52.6	75	65.9	59.9	68.2	43.3	29.6	86.4	61.4	38.6	31.8	4.60	81.8	52.3	63.6	9.10	81.8	18.2	31.8	15.9	25	34.1	25
White (84)	7.50	30.6	86.9	84.5	52.8	85.7	71.4	61.4	72.6	37.3	40.5	79.8	69.0	38.1	13.1	6.00	72.6	61.9	61.9	23.8	78.6	17.9	13.1	7.10	26.2	39.3	28.6
Non-white (13)	5.40	27.2	84.6	84.6	51.5	69.2	69.2	51.4	69.2	44.5	30.8	92.3	84.6	38.5	53.9	0	76.9	69.2	69.2	0	92.3	30.8	53.9	15.4	15.4	15.4	46.2

*Kids= average number of children in ad
 %= average percent of ad time featuring children
 G= percent of ads containing at least one girl
 B= percent of ads containing at least one boy
 %G= average percent children in ad that are girls
 W= percent of ads containing at least one white child
 NW= percent of ads containing at least one non-white child
 %W= average percent children in ad that are white
 Bl= percent of ads containing at least one blonde child
 %Bl= average percent children in ad that are blonde
 Ba= percent of ads containing at least one baby
 Y= percent of ads containing at least one young child
 A= percent of ads containing at least one adolescent
 T= percent of ads containing at least one teen
 R= percent of ads where ad features at least one child who is related to candidate

S= percent of ads containing at least one child who speaks
 P= percent of ads containing at least one child with parent
 C= percent of ads containing at least one child with candidate
 Sm= percent of ads containing at least one smiling child
 At= percent of ads that use child to attack opponent
 P/N= percent of ads that are positive in tone
 H= percent of ads that contain a message of “Hope for the Future” relating to child
 FO= percent of ads that contain a message suggesting that the candidate is “Family-oriented”
 Pa= percent of ads that contain a message of “Patriotism” relating to child
 Fe= percent of ads that contain a message of “Fear” relating to child
 CP= percent of ads that contain child policy
 M= percent of ads that feature a child in the “I approve this message” portion of the ad

The above table represents a summary of all of my data, separated into categories for candidate characteristics. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Overall Findings

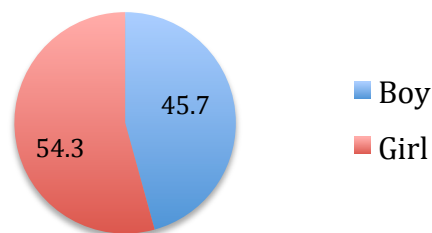
Overall, the campaign advertisements analyzed in this study contain an average of 7.2 children, and children are featured on-screen for an average of 30% of each advertisement.

At least one girl is featured in 86.6% of advertisements, which is similar to the percent of advertisements that feature at least one boy—84.5%.

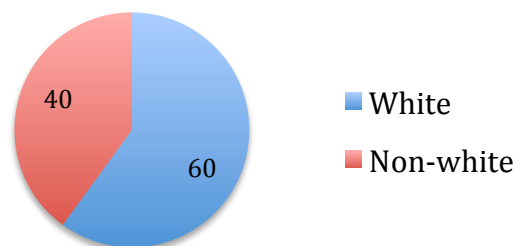
Along those same lines, girls make up an average of 54.3% of the children in each advertisement, meaning that on average, boys only make up 45.7% of children. 83.5% of advertisements feature at least one white child, while 71.1% feature at least one non-white child, and white children make up an average of 60% of the children in each advertisement, meaning that non-white

children only make up 40% of children, on average. 72.2% of advertisements feature at least one blonde child, and blonde children make up an average of 38.2% of children in each advertisement.

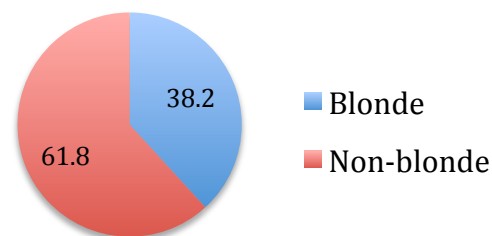
**Average Percent of Children in Ads-
Boy v. Girl**



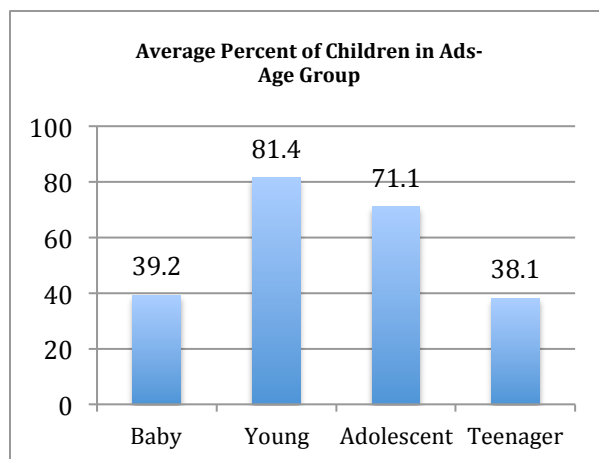
**Average Percent of Children in Ads-
White v. Non-white**



**Average Percent of Children in Ads-
Blonde v. Non-Blonde**

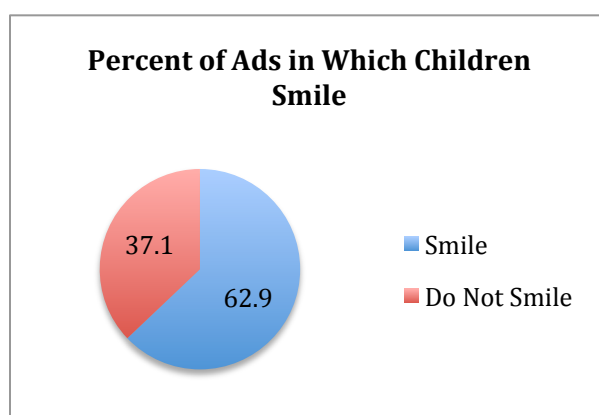


The percentage of advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 39.2%, 81.4%, 71.1%, and 38.1%, respectively. The children featured in the advertisements are relatives of the candidate for 18.6% of the advertisements. Children speak in 5.2% of the advertisements.



The children are featured with their parents in 73.2% of advertisements, and they are featured with the candidate in 62.9%.

Children are smiling in 62.9% of advertisements. Children are used to attack the candidate's opponent in 20.6%. 80.4% of the advertisements have a positive tone. 19.6% express a message of "hope for the future" in reference to the children in the advertisement.



18.6% suggest that the candidate is family-oriented based on interactions with his or her family in the advertisement. 8.3% express a message of patriotism in parts where children are featured. 24.7% utilize the children to convey a sense of fear. 36% mention child or family policy in the advertisement. 30.9% of "I am [candidate], and I approve this message" portions of the advertisements feature children.

In the following sections, I will mention the data for each candidate characteristic that is observably different from the overall data. In parentheses, I will note the difference from the overall data.

Democratic

Democrats feature white children in their advertisements 86.4% (+2.9%) of the time and non-white children 78.8% (+7.7%) of the time. They also feature at least one blonde child just as often as the advertisements overall (+0.5%), but blonde children make up on average 33.5% (-4.7%) of the children featured in each advertisement. The percentage of advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 45.5% (+6.3%), 75.8% (-5.6%), 77.3% (+6.2%), and 34.9% (-3.2%), respectively. Democratic advertisements feature children that are related to the candidate 12.1% (-6.5%) of the time, and the children are featured with the candidate 68.2% (+5.3%) of the time. Children are used to attack the candidate's opponent 25.8% (+5.2%) of the time in Democratic advertisements. Their advertisements use children to convey that the candidate is family-oriented 12.1% (-6.5%) of the time. 3% (-5.3%) of Democratic advertisements express a message of patriotism in parts where children are featured.

Republican

80.7% (-5.9%) of Republican advertisements contain at least one girl, and girls make up 50.7% (-3.6%) of the children in Republican advertisements. White children are featured in 77.4% (-6.1%) of Republican advertisements, and non-white children are featured in 54.8% (-16.3%). Blonde children are featured in advertisements about as frequently as overall, but they make up on average 48.3% (+10.1%) of children in each advertisement. The percentage of advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 25.8% (-13.4%), 93.6% (+12.2%), 58% (-13.1%), and 45.2% (+7.1%), respectively. The children in Republican advertisements are related to the candidate 32.3% (+13.7%) of the time. Children speak in 3.2% (-2%) of Republican advertisements. Children are shown with their parents in 80.7% (+7.5%) of advertisements and with candidates in 51.6% (-11.3%). Children are smiling

in 67.7% (+4.8%) of Republican advertisements. Children are used to attack the candidate's opponent in 9.7% (-10.9%) of Republican advertisements. Their advertisements convey that the candidate is family-oriented 32.3% (+13.7%) of the time, and they convey a sense of patriotism in relation to the children 19.4% (+11.1%) of the time.

Clinton

Hillary Clinton features an average of 9.9 (+2.7) children in her advertisements that contain children. She features at least one white child in 91.3% (+7.8%) of her advertisements and at least one non-white child in 78.3% (+7.2%), while white children make up 59.4% (-0.6%) of the children in each of her advertisements, on average. Therefore, she features more of both white and non-white children than advertisements do overall, but she features them in about the same proportions as overall. Blonde children make up, on average, 31.2% (-7%) of the children in her advertisements. The percentage of her advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 45.7% (+6.5%), 80.4% (-1%), 82.6% (+11.5%), and 41.3% (+3.2%), respectively. Clinton features a child that is related to her in 4.4% (-14.2%) of her advertisements. Children speak in 6.5% (+1.3%) of her advertisements. She features parents with their children in 65.2% (-8%) of advertisements and herself with children in 69.6% (+6.7%). She uses the children in her advertisement to attack her opponent in 32.6% (+12%) of advertisements. She uses children to convey patriotism in 2.2% (-6.1%) of her advertisements. She mentions child policy in 43.5% (7.5%) of her advertisements. She includes children in her "I'm Hillary Clinton, and I approve this message" portion of her advertisements 37% (+6.1%) of the time.

Trump

Trump includes an average of 3.7 (-3.5) children in his advertisements that contain

children, and they are featured in 28.5% (-1.7%) of each advertisement, on average. Trump features at least one white child in 100% (+16.5%) of his advertisements, and he features at least one non-white child 45.5% (-25.6%) of his advertisements; white children make up an average of 83.7% (+23.7%) of the children featured in each advertisement. He features at least one blonde child in 81.8% (+9.6%) of his advertisements, and blonde children make up an average of 65.8% (+27.6%) of the children in each advertisement. The percentage of his advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 18.2% (-21%), 81.8% (+0.4%), 36.4% (-34.7%), and 45.5% (+7.4%), respectively. Children speak in none (-5.2%) of his advertisements. Trump features the children's parents in 90.9% (+17.7%) of his advertisements and features himself with children in 27.3% (-35.6%). Trump's advertisements are positive 63.6% (-16.8%) of the time. They convey a message of "hope for the future" 9.1% (-10.5%) of the time, a message of patriotism 27.3% (+19%) of the time, and fear 36.4% (+11.7%) of the time. He includes children in his "I'm Donald Trump, and I approve this message" portion of his advertisements 9.1% (-21.8%) of the time.

Democrat (excluding Clinton)

With Clinton removed from the pool of Democratic candidates, Democrats include an average of 3.8 (-3.4) children in their advertisements, and they take up an average of 18.1% (-12.1%) of each advertisement. They feature white children in 75% (-8.5%) of their advertisements and non-white children in 80% (+8.9%), and white children make up an average of 57.4% (-2.6%) of children in each advertisement. They feature about the same amount of blonde children in their advertisements as Clinton does and as candidates do overall. The percentage of Democratic advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 45% (+5.8%), 65% (-16.4%), 65% (-6.1%), and 20% (-18.1%), respectively. Their

advertisements feature children related to them 30% (+11.4%) of the time. Children speak in 5% (+0.2%) of their advertisements and are smiling in 50% (-12.9%) of their advertisements. 10% (-10.6%) of their advertisements use children to attack their opponents, and 90% (+9.6%) of their advertisements have a positive tone. 5% (-3.3%) of their advertisements convey patriotism, and 25% (-11%) contain child policy. Children are featured in the “I approve this message” portion in 25% (-5.9%) of the Democratic advertisements.

Republican (excluding Trump)

Not including Trump, Republicans feature an average of 6.5 (-0.7) children in their advertisements. They feature at least one white child in 65% (-18.5%) of their advertisements and at least one non-white child in 60% (-11.1%), and white children make up an average of 51.4% (-8.6%) of children in each advertisement. Republicans feature at least one blonde child in 65% (-7.2%) of their advertisements, and blonde children make up an average of 38.7% (+0.5%) of the children in each advertisement. The percentage of Republican advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 30% (-9.2%), 100% (+18.6%), 70% (-1.1%), and 45% (+6.9%), respectively. Republicans feature their own children or grandchildren in their advertisements 40% (+21.4%) of the time. Children speak in 5% (-0.2%) of Republican advertisements, and they smile in 70% (+7.1%). Republicans use children to attack their opponents 5% (-15.6%) of the time. They use them to show that they are family-oriented 40% (+21.4%) of the time and that they are patriotic 15% (+6.7%) of the time.

Presidential

The presidential candidates’ data is generally very similar to the overall data. One noticeable difference is that presidential candidates convey a message of “hope for the future” through children 24.7% (+5.1%) of the time. The percentage of presidential advertisements that

feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 39.7% (+0.5%), 83.6% (+2.2%), 74% (+2.9%), and 45.2% (+7.1%), respectively.

Senatorial

On average, senatorial candidates feature 3.8 (-3.4) children in their advertisements, and children are featured in 19.2% (-11%) of each advertisement, on average. 76.5% (-10.1%) of senatorial advertisements feature at least one girl, 88.2% (+3.7%) feature at least one boy, and girls make up an average of 44.8% (-9.5%) of the children in each advertisement. At least one white child is featured in 64.7% (-18.8%) of the advertisements, 76.5% (+5.4%) feature at least one non-white child, and white children make up an average of 54.1% (-5.9%) of the children in each advertisement. The percentage of their advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 47.1% (+7.9%), 70.6% (-10.8%), 58.8% (-12.3%), and 17.7% (-20.4%), respectively. None (-5.2%) of the senatorial advertisements feature a child that speaks. 70.6% (-2.6%) feature parents with the children, and 82.4% (19.5%) feature the candidate with the children. 52.9% (-10%) of the advertisements feature a child that is smiling, 88.2% (+7.8%) have a positive tone, 5.9% (-13.7%) convey a message of “hope for the future,” none use the children to convey a sense of patriotism, 17.7% (-7%) contain a component of fear relative to the children, and 23.5% (-12.5%) contain child policy.

House of Representatives

House candidates feature an average of 3.9 (-3.3) children in their advertisements, and children are featured in an average of 11.6% (-18.6%) of each advertisement. 71.4% (-15.2%) of House advertisements contain at least one girl, 57.1% (-27.4%) contain at least one boy, and an average of 54.1% (-0.2%) of the children in each advertisement are girls. 100% (+16.5%) of the House advertisements feature at least one white child, and 42.9% (-28.2%) feature at least one

non-white child; on average, 81% (+21%) of the children in each House advertisement are white. 85.7% (+13.5%) of the House advertisements feature at least one blonde child, and blonde children make up 57.3% (+19.1%) of each advertisement, on average. The percentage of advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 14.3% (-24.9%), 85.7% (+4.3%), 71.4 (+0.3%), and 14.3% (-23.8%), respectively. 42.9% (+24.3%) of their advertisements feature a child that is related to the candidate. Zero (-5.2%) House advertisements contain a child that speaks, and zero (-20.6%) use the children to attack their opponents. None contain a message of “hope for the future” (-19.6%) or of patriotism (-8.3%), while 42.9% (+24.3%) use the children to show that the candidate is family-oriented. 14.3% (-16.6%) of the House advertisements’ “I approve this message” segments contain children.

Female

Female candidates’ data are generally very similar to the overall data. Some differences include the percentage of their advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen, which is 47.2% (+8%), 77.4% (-4%), 79.3 (+8.2%), and 37.7% (-0.4%), respectively. They feature children that are related to them only 7.6% (-11%) of the time. They feature the children’s parents 66% (-7.2%) of the time, and they feature the candidates with the children 71.7% (+8.8%) of the time. Female candidates use children to attack their opponents 30.2% (+9.6%) of the time. They use children to convey patriotism 1.9% (-6.4%) of the time.

Male

Male candidates feature an average of 5.2 (-2) children in their advertisements, and children take up 26% (-4.2%) of each advertisement, on average. They feature at least one white child in 75% (-8.5%) of their advertisements and at least one non-white child in 65.9% (-5.2%). The percentage of male advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent,

and teen is 29.6% (-9.6%), 86.4% (+5%), 61.4% (-9.7%), and 38.6% (+0.5%) respectively. 31.8% (+13.2%) of male advertisements feature children that are related to them. 81.8% (+8.6%) feature parents with the children and 52.3% (-10.6%) feature the candidate with the children. 9.1% (-11.5%) of the advertisements use the children to attack their opponent. 15.9% (+7.6%) of male advertisements convey patriotism.

White

White candidates' data is very similar to the overall data. The one discernible difference is that the children featured in their advertisements are related to them only 13.1% (-5.5%) of the time.

Non-white

Non-white candidates feature at least one white child in their advertisements 69.2% (-14.3%) of the time and at least one non-white child 69.2% (-1.9%) of the time, and white children make up 51.4% (-8.6%) of the children in their advertisements, on average. The percentage of their advertisements that feature at least one baby, young child, adolescent, and teen is 30.8% (-8.4%), 92.3% (+10.9%), 84.6% (-13.5%), and 38.5% (+0.4%) respectively. The children featured in non-white candidates' advertisements are related to them 53.9% (+35.3%) of the time. Zero (-5.2%) children speak in non-white candidates' advertisements, and none (-20.6%) are used to attack the candidates' opponents. 92.3% (+11.9%) of their advertisements have a positive tone, 30.8% (+11.2%) convey a message of "hope for the future," 15.4% (+7.1%) convey patriotism, 15.4% (-9.3%) convey fear, and 15.4% (-20.6%) mention child policies. 46.2% (+15.3%) of the non-white candidates' advertisements include children in the "I approve this message" portion of the advertisement.

Qualitative Observations

The observations I made about what the children are doing and where they are depicted in the advertisements were fairly consistent across all advertisements. While children are shown doing a wide variety of things in each advertisement, certain activities arose repeatedly across all candidate groups. The most common activities that children are depicted performing are meeting and interacting with the candidate, being held by a parent or holding a parent's hand, staring at the camera silently, doing school work, and posing for a picture with other people. The location of the children in the advertisements also revealed commonalities across all advertisements. Aside from the advertisements where the location is ambiguous, which I coded as "unclear," the most common locations of the children were at home or outside the home, outside in a general sense, at school, and at a campaign event.

The one qualitative observation that does differ by candidate is the advertisement's message. While each advertisement's message is unique, certain patterns arose. Many of Hillary Clinton's advertisements either contain a message that conveys her passion for children or one that attacks Donald Trump and his bad influence on children. Donald Trump's advertisements often talk about his plan for a childcare tax credit, about helping hardworking families, or about keeping children and families safe. Democratic advertisements often contain messages about schools and education, gun violence, immigration, and health care, while Republican advertisements often contain messages about the threat that the national debt poses to our children's futures, education, and family values. Overall, advertisements from each group of candidates frequently use children to convey the message that the candidate is family-oriented,

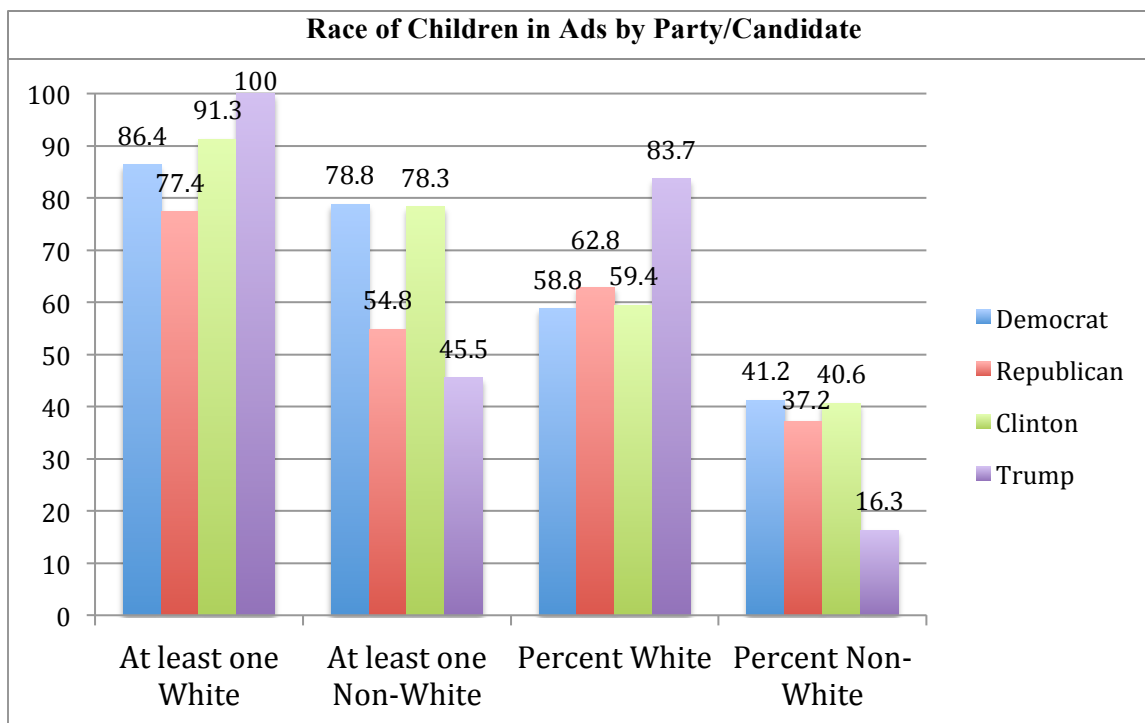
with the exception of Hillary Clinton, who conveyed this message in only 2 out of her 47 advertisements.³

Discussion

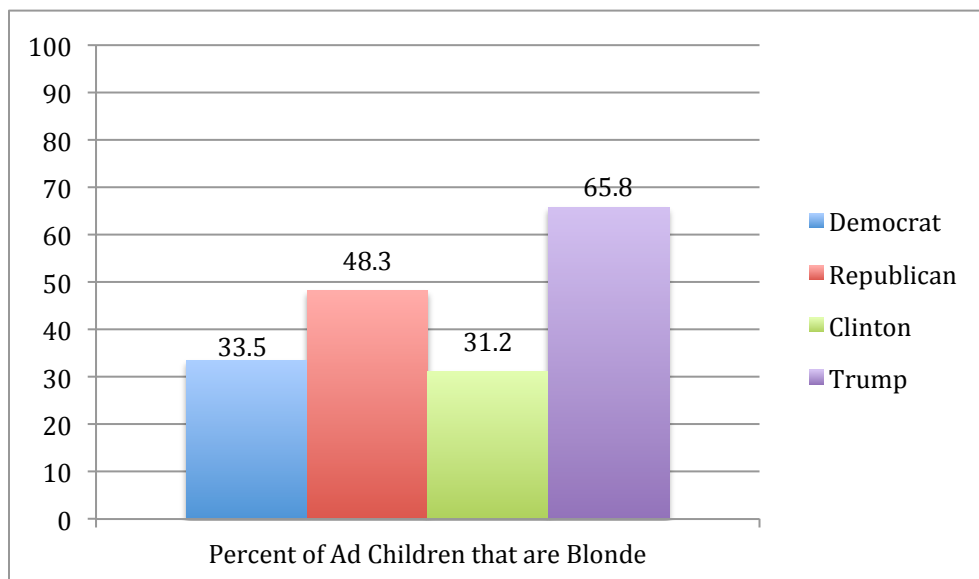
Implications

Overall, the advertisements in my study feature at least one girl about the same amount as they feature at least one boy, but on average, girls appear more often than boys in all groups except for Republicans (excluding Trump) and the Senatorial candidates. Even more notable was the featuring of white children versus non-white children; while 83.5% of advertisements overall feature at least one white child, 91% of Clinton's advertisements feature at least one white child, and every single one of Trump's advertisements did the same. When Clinton and Trump are removed from the pool of Democrats and Republicans, these numbers are much lower—Democrats feature at least one white child in 75% of their advertisements and Republicans feature at least one white child in 65% of their advertisements. When it comes to featuring non-white children, Republican advertisements only do so in 54.8% of their advertisements while Democrats do so in 78.8% of theirs. Clinton features non-white children in 78.3% of her advertisements—above the overall number of 71.1%—while Trump features them in only 45.5% of his advertisements, a striking contrast to the fact that he features white children in 100%. It is also notable that non-white candidates feature at least one white child in 69.2% of their advertisements, which is somewhat lower than the overall number, but they also feature non-white children in only 69.2% of their advertisements.

³ Clinton did mention her mother in many of her advertisements, but I did not classify this as a message that she is family-oriented because I considered family-orientation relative to the candidate's spouse, children, and grandchildren.



The frequency with which advertisements feature blonde children stands out in this analysis. Just 5% of Americans are naturally blonde (Lehnardt, 2016). This number could be higher for children because some people are born blonde and become brunette later in life, so they may not be classified as “naturally blonde,” though they may have been blonde as a child. Assuming this number is somewhere around 5-10%, or at least not above 20%, it is significant that the advertisements in my study featured at least one blonde child 72.2% of the time, and blonde children represented an average of 38.2% of the total children in the advertisements. In Trump’s advertisements, blonde children make up an astounding 65.8% of the children featured. While my study does not say anything about the reasons why blonde children are featured so often in these advertisements, I can only hypothesize that this pattern arises because people may perceive blonde children as cuter, more pure, or more vulnerable than non-blond children (Riding, 2003).

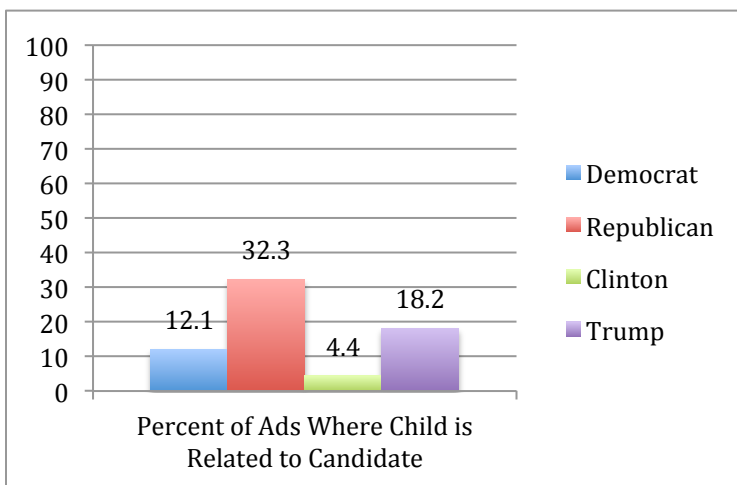


The advertisements in my study feature young children and adolescents much more frequently than they feature babies and teenagers. Before conducting my analysis, I would have assumed that babies were featured in advertisements most often because of the stereotype of “political candidates kissing babies.” It seems logical, however, that teenagers are featured less often because they are less cute and tend to appear less vulnerable, considering that they are relatively close to adulthood.

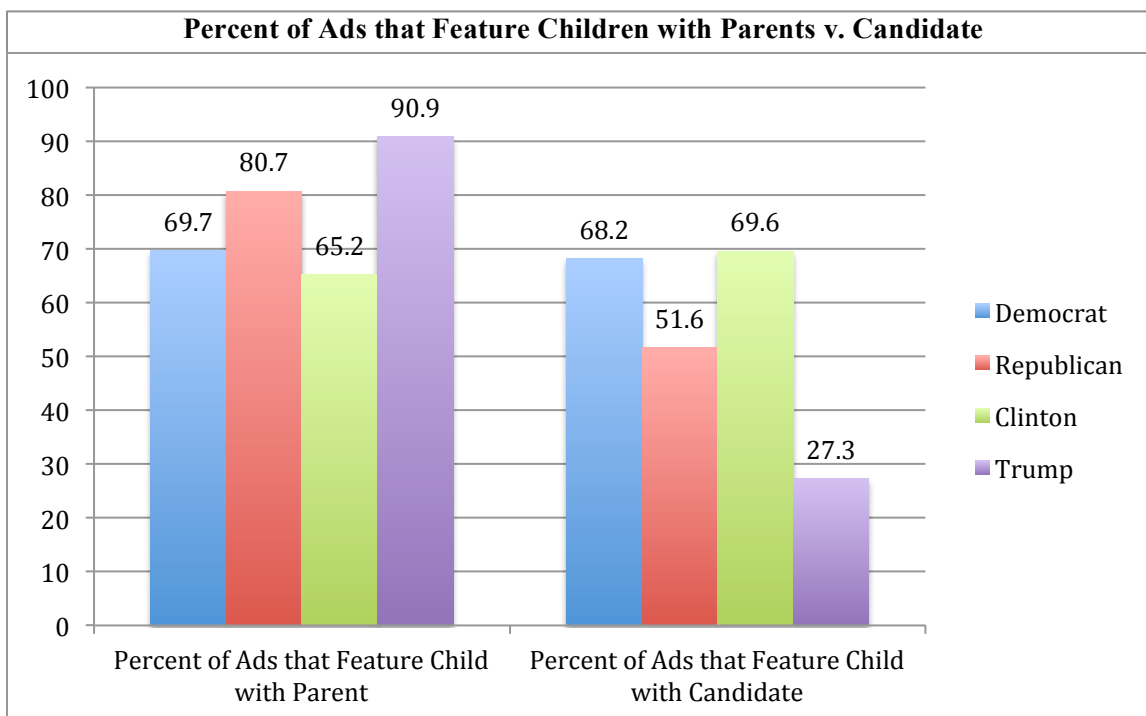
It is notable that the children featured in these advertisements are overwhelmingly not related to the candidate—only 18.6% are. This finding lends support to the idea that these children are props, considering that the candidate’s children and grandchildren are likely very involved in the candidate’s campaign and are willing or at least accustomed to participate in the advertisements. Children who are not related to the candidate are usually simply chosen by the advertisement’s creator and featured as an unnamed “child.” It is also interesting that Democratic candidates tend to feature their own children or grandchildren in their campaign advertisements less often than do Republican candidates. This is especially true of Hillary

Clinton, who features her own child or grandchild in only 2 of her 47 advertisements.

Considering that Clinton features children in so many of her advertisements, it is notable that the children she features are not related to her 95.6% of the time, which is significantly more than the overall number.



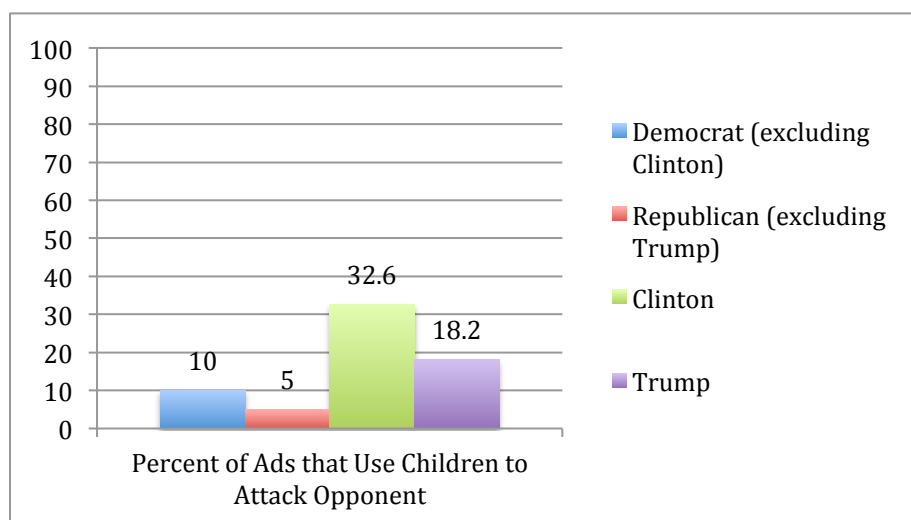
It is somewhat surprising that candidates feature children so often with their parents in advertisements (73.2%). In almost all candidate groups, children are featured with their parents at least once in an advertisement more often than they are featured with the candidate at least once. In fact, in Trump's advertisements, children are featured with their parent 90.9% of the time, while they are featured with Trump himself only 27.3% of the time. Clinton's advertisements, on the other hand, feature children with Clinton herself at least once slightly more often than they feature children with their parents at least once (69.6% to 65.2%). This



information is important because it could be inferred to suggest whether a candidate's message is related more to families or just children themselves.

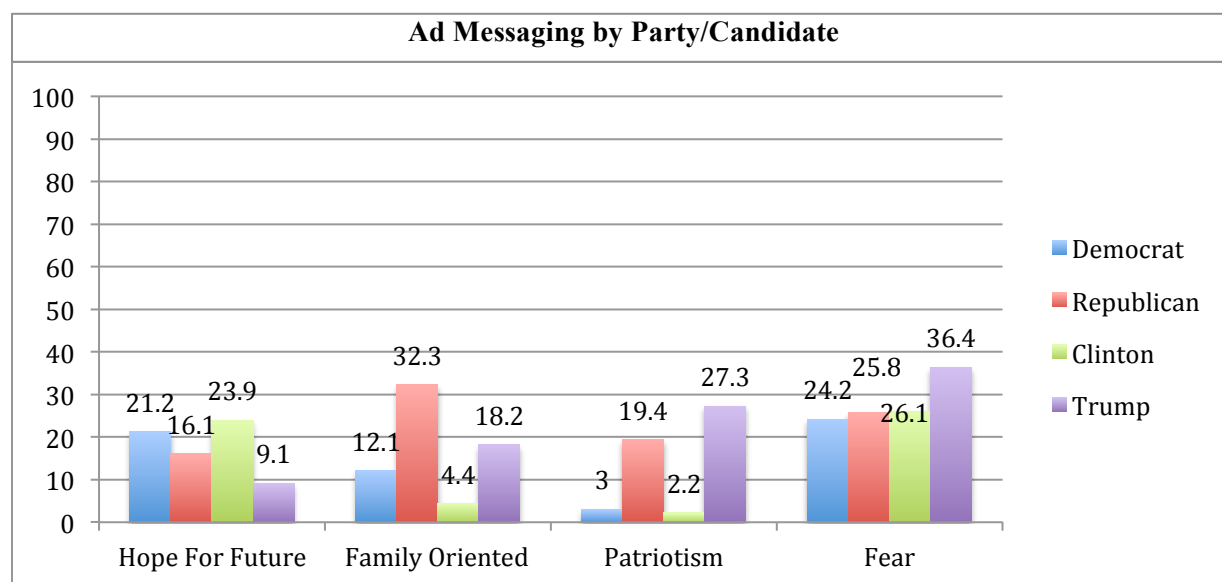
Children smile in 62.9% of advertisements, which is lower than I would have hypothesized prior to conducting the research. Based on preconceived notions of children in political campaign advertisements, one might imagine that they are always smiling and happy, but I was surprised when analyzing these advertisements to find that many of the advertisements featured children staring stoically into the camera. This finding could be related to the data on

how many advertisements used children in an attack on the opponent—20.6% overall. The number was somewhat higher for Clinton; 32.6% of



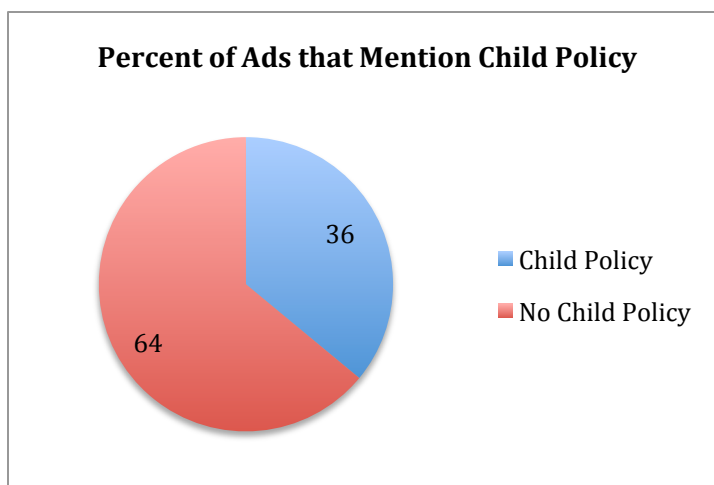
her advertisements deploy children in an attack on Trump. This result makes sense, given that a central message in Clinton's campaign was the idea that a President Trump would be a bad influence on children's innocent minds, emphasizing his lack of respect for women, rude and brash discourse, and support for violence. Trump used children in attacks on Clinton 18.2% of the time, and the numbers are much lower for Republicans and Democrats when Clinton and Trump are removed—Democrats used children in attacks on their opponents 10% of the time and Republicans used them in this way 5% of the time. This finding suggests that children were brought into political attacks more often in the presidential race between Clinton and Trump than they were in the other races.

The messages that children invoked in the advertisements were compelling as well. Candidates used children to convey a sense of “hope for the future” fairly consistently across candidate groups (around 20% of the time), though Trump only did so 9.10% of the time. They also were uniform in their use of children to evoke a sense of fear in the viewer. Candidates were less consistent when conveying “patriotism.” Clinton did so in only 2.2% of her advertisements while Trump did so in 27.3% of his; excluding Clinton and Trump, Democrats conveyed patriotism in only 5% of their advertisements, while Republicans did so in 15% of theirs.

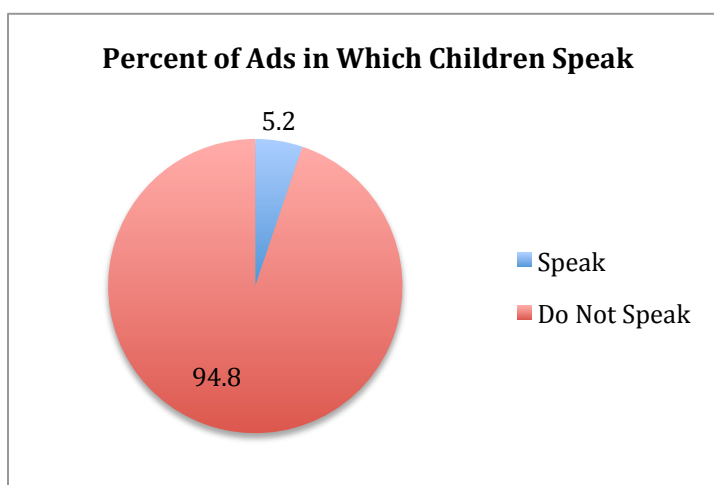


Children were featured in the “My name is [candidate], and I approve this message” portion of advertisements 30.9% of the time overall. It is notable that children were featured in this portion of Clinton’s advertisements 37% of the time while they were featured in Trump’s 9.10% of the time. This message is usually at the very end (or sometimes at the beginning of an advertisement), so they are what the viewer sees last (or first). This gives the candidate an opportunity to leave an image in the mind of the viewer of what the candidate is all about, and if they include children, it suggests that they care about children.

What is most fascinating in the messaging of these advertisements is that the candidates were fairly consistent across groups in the frequency with which they used children when conveying a message about a child-related policy. They did this only 36% of the time overall. This number was slightly higher for Clinton—she did so 43.5% of the time. This finding is striking because one might assume that children are featured in an advertisement to convey that the candidate cares about children’s issues, but without any mention of child policy in the advertisement, this message is misleading.



Finally, one of the most notable findings is that children speak in only 5.2% of advertisements overall. They speak in 6.5% of Clinton’s advertisements, which is fairly high, considering that they do not speak in any of Trump’s advertisements. While there could be many reasons that the children do not speak in most advertisements they are featured in, this fact lends support to the idea that children are merely “props,” or just present to convey a certain message, in the same way that featuring an American



flag serves to convey a message that the candidate is patriotic. Like an American flag, children do not perform an active role in most of the advertisements, and it can be assumed that most of

the younger children—especially the babies—do not have a say in whether they will be in the advertisement or not.

Limitations

Given that I was the only one analyzing these advertisements, it is difficult to guarantee objectivity and accuracy. It was surprisingly difficult to decide if some children were blonde or just light brunette, and there may have been times when I misjudged a child's ethnicity. I attempted to analyze these advertisements from the perspective of the average viewer, but it would have been helpful to have a multi-person research team so that we could have multiple opinions and control for errors. Another difficulty that I did not consider before beginning this project was that some of the children's faces were not visible enough to tell their ethnicity, hair color, or age. Some advertisements featured babies in strollers and were obscured by blankets, others showed only children's feet running on a playground, and still others showed children from the back. In these cases, I made my best guess on the children's features, but it would have helped to have multiple opinions.

I made note of a few things that puzzled me while analyzing the advertisements. One pattern that arose often was that candidates featured their grown children in the advertisements, such as Ivanka Trump. I chose not to include these "children" in my analysis because I had defined the children I was going to include as being younger than 18, but it still raises the question of what the candidate is trying to accomplish by including their children. It could be inferred that they wanted to show that they are family-oriented in a similar way to when they include their younger children, but these adult children do not have the vulnerability, cuteness, and lack of agency that minor children do. Another pattern that I noticed was adults' use of pictures of themselves when they were children in the advertisements. Sometimes these adults

were the candidates themselves, and other times they were other adults. It is certainly meaningful that they chose to show themselves as children in the advertisements—one could speculate that their strategy is to humanize the candidate or to show them as coming from humble beginnings. However, these children are still different from the children I did include in my analysis because the viewer knows that these children in the pictures are now adults, so they do not consider them or their future the same way they consider children who are children today. Therefore, I left these “children” out of my analysis as well.

Future Research Recommendations

Aside from the factors that I was able to analyze in this project, there are many more that I think would be interesting to explore in future research. For example, I recommend that future researchers analyze if children are featured more often with their mothers or with their fathers. It would also be compelling to analyze what the children say when they speak and not just if they speak or not. Future research could also spend more time analyzing the messaging of these advertisements in general—I felt constrained to just looking at the actual words on the screen or in the voice over because I did not want to make any subjective inferences about the candidate’s message. It also was difficult to come to meaningful conclusions on these messages because they varied so widely from advertisement to advertisement. However, if a researcher were to spend more time analyzing the words said in conjunction with the images shown on screen and how those both relate to the children in the advertisements, there would be a lot more to say about the messages that candidates use children to convey. Finally, it would be interesting to look at advertisements in elections during other years and in districts other than the limited ones that the Political TV Ad Archive contained.

Conclusion

While this study did not tell us anything about why political candidates use children in their advertisements, it does shed light on what ways candidates use children and how that differs based on candidate characteristics. With our nation growing ever more diverse, it is notable that we see so many young, blonde girls in our campaign advertisements. It is also important to bring to light the fact that we see so many candidates including children in their advertisements yet do not mention intent to work on children's issues. Ultimately, the use of children in campaign advertisements reveals as much about us as viewers as it does about the candidates. Candidates include children for many reasons that are unknown to us, but one thing that we know for certain is that they include children the way that they do because they think it is what viewers want to see and what will motivate viewers to vote for them. My hope is that this thesis will provoke thought about the nature of political campaigns as well as about our values as a society.

Appendix

Name: candidate's name

Party: candidate's party affiliation (Democrat or Republican)

Race Type: type of race (presidential, senatorial, or House)

Gender: candidate's gender (male or female)

Race: candidate's race (white or non-white)

Age: candidate's age

Marital Status: candidate's marital status (married or unmarried)

Has children: whether or not the candidate has children (yes or no)

Ad Children: number of children that appear in the advertisement (do not count the same child more than once if he or she appears multiple times)

Percent: percent of the advertisement that contains children on screen

Girl: whether or not the advertisement contains any female children (yes or no)

Boy: whether or not the advertisement contains any male children (yes or no)

%Girl: percent of children in the advertisement who are female

White: whether or not the advertisement contains any white children (Caucasian, not Hispanic)
(yes or no)

Non-white: whether or not the advertisement contains any non-white children (yes or no)

%White: percent of children in the advertisement who are white (Caucasian, not Hispanic)

Blonde: whether or not the advertisement contains any blonde children (yes or no)

%Blonde: percent of children in the advertisement who are blonde

Baby: whether or not the advertisement contains any children that appear to be babies, or children under the age of 1 (yes or no)

Young: whether or not the advertisement contains any young children, or children that appear to be between the ages of about 2 and 8 (yes or no)

Adolescent: whether or not the advertisement contains any adolescent children, or children that appear to be between the ages of about 9 and 13 (yes or no)

Teen: whether or not the advertisement contains any teenage children, or children that appear to be between the ages of about 13 and 18 (yes or no)

Relative: whether or not the advertisement contains a child that is the child, grandchild, niece, or nephew of the candidate (yes or no)

Speak: whether or not the child speaks in the advertisement (yes or no)

What is child doing: description of what each child is doing in the advertisement

Parents: whether or not the child is with his or her parents in the advertisement (yes or no)

Candidate: whether or not the child appears with the candidate on screen together in the advertisement (yes or no)

Where: description of the setting in which each child appears in the advertisement

Smiling: whether or not at least one of the children is smiling in the advertisement (yes or no)

Attack: whether or not the advertisement is attacking the candidate's opponent (yes or no)

Pos or Neg: whether the tone of the advertisement is positive or negative (pos or neg)

Hope for future: whether or not the advertisement conveys a sense of hope for the future regarding the children in the advertisement (yes or no)

Family-oriented: whether or not the advertisement conveys that the candidate is family-oriented using the children in the advertisement (yes or no)

Patriotism: whether or not the advertisement conveys a sense of patriotism using the children in the advertisement (yes or no)

Fear: whether or not the advertisement conveys a sense of fear using the children in the advertisement (yes or no)

Child policy: whether or not the advertisement mentions a policy that directly affects children (yes or no)

I approve this message: whether or not children are featured in the candidate's "I approve this message" portion of the advertisement (yes or no)

Message: the message of the advertisement conveyed by the presence of children, as perceived by the viewer

Summary: summary of what occurs in the advertisement

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