Political Advertising in Kuwait

A Functional Analysis

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Abstract:

Most political advertising studies focus on the U.S. or other western democracies like the U.K. and other European countries (Kaid, 2006). In general, political advertising studies focused on the content of political advertising especially on the subject of issues vs. images in advertising. In addition, many studies of political advertising content focus on the topic of negative advertising (Kaid, 2004b).

The practice of political advertising has been found to vary depending on the political and media structure within a country as well as cultural and legal elements (Johnston, 2006). Therefore, the gap in the literature about the practice of political advertising in the Middle-East is worth examining as it is reasonable to expect different in the use of issue vs. image appeals and in terms of the use of negative advertising.

The study will focus on political advertisement content in Kuwait as one of the developing democracies in the Middle-East. One of the important cultural and political elements of Kuwaiti politics is the non-secular nature of the country according to the Kuwaiti constitution. An early examination shows use of religious references in Kuwait political
advertising such as the use of verses from the Koran as campaign slogans. This is quite
different from what is found in about political advertising in Western cultures.

The interest of the study is to explore the content appeals used in political advertising
in Kuwait and compare it to relevant literature that examines advertising in the U.S and other
parts of the world. In addition, comparisons of advertisements’ content between winners and
losers in elections will be made to explore possible differences.