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Women's Campaign Rhetoric: A Case Study of the 1998 Northup Congressional Campaign

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WOMEN’S CAMPAIGN RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF THE
1998 NORTHUP CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of
Communication and Broadcasting
Western Kentucky University
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Mary Christine Banwart

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WOMEN’S CAMPAIGN RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF THE

1998 NORTHUP CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

As more women seek election to national political offices, and as political spot ads continue to play a vital role as a major medium through which campaigns present their candidate, this qualitative analysis examines the image-building strategies one female candidate employed in her spot ads and the potential for such strategies to overcome gender-culture constraints. This study answers four research questions: 1. What rhetorical strategies does Northup employ to build an image in her televised campaign spot ads, 2. Do these strategies fulfill the six dimensions employed by this thesis to fulfill the voter’s image prototype of a candidate, 3. Do Northup’s rhetorical strategies provide a fitting response to the rhetorical situation of her 1998 congressional reelection campaign, and 4. Or, does Northup, through her image building
strategies, alter the rhetorical situation such that the original constraints are modified and the requirements of the fitting response thus shift to a newly created rhetorical situation?

In order to respond to these questions, I utilize Bitzer’s rhetorical situation construct to identify the multiple exigences, audiences, and constraints to which Northup must respond through her discourse. Additionally, I employ a candidate prototype that consists of the dimensions of competence, reliability, integrity, charisma, observable features, and consubstantiality, to identify Northup’s image-building strategies. Not only do I argue that Northup’s image building strategies fulfill the six dimensions of the candidate prototype but that two rhetorical situations evolve to which Northup must respond. Based on the fitting response criteria discussed, she provides correctives to the actual exigences and upholds the audience’s expectations that she respond appropriately in both the cultural and institutional senses.
CHAPTER 1
FROM DWIGHT EISENHOWER TO ANNE NORTHUP:
AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND POLITICS

Political candidates, as one of many campaign strategies, dedicate much attention to the image they present in their television campaign spots. Previous research provides validity for the emphasis on candidate image portrayal in television spots, as such spots have a significant influence on voter attitudes and perceptions (Armstrong, 1988; Ehrenhalt, 1985; Kaid, Myers, Pipps, & Hunter, 1984; Mann & Ornstein, 1983; Nugent, 1987; Pfau & Burgoon, 1989). Wadsworth, Patterson, Kaid, Cullers, Malcomb, and Lamirand (1987) recognize another significant reason for such emphasis, stating that “the control a candidate has over the content of a commercial is crucial, since it allows the candidate to communicate directly with the voters the candidate’s image and strategy” (p. 78). However, as Johnston and White (1994) note, “political advertising is still subjected to restrictions that arise
from cultural expectations of behavior and communication style" (p. 322).

Through an analysis of the political spot ads televised by Representative Anne Northup's (Kentucky) 1998 re-election campaign, this thesis examines the discourse presented in Northup's spot ads in order to analyze the rhetorical image building strategies she employs. In addition to exploring how the rhetorical image building strategies form Northup's image in her spot ads, this study examines the rhetorical situation surrounding Northup's race and Northup's use of image building to address the constraints presented by the rhetorical situation.

Rationale

Jamieson and Campbell (1992) contend, "Television has changed politics by changing the way in which information is disseminated, by altering the way politics happens, and by changing our patterns of response to politics" (p. 282). Evolving from the integration of television in the homes of a majority of Americans, the advent of the political spot ad not only affected political campaign budgets but also the creation of candidate images.
The Evolution of Televised Political Spot Ads

The 1952 presidential campaign recognized the importance of television in reaching a voting public, and thus each major party candidate began the campaign season utilizing television air-time to run thirty minute televised speeches (Wood, 1990, p. 266). However, Dwight Eisenhower’s campaign managers sought a unique approach for taking a message to the American viewing public. As Jamieson (1986) notes, the campaign managers faced a difficult task in gaining acceptance of this new concept:

In 1952, both Eisenhower and Stevenson recoiled at the intrusion of “spot advertising” into their campaigns. Both objected to the notion that complex ideas could be communicated in thirty or sixty-second snippets. Both felt uneasy talking to a camera lens instead of a visible audience (p. 14).

Wood (1990) cites four arguments used by the Eisenhower campaign managers in support of the spot ads: “1) spots represented a low cost per 1,000 homes reached, 2) people not already predisposed to Eisenhower could be reached, 3) spots were flexible for maximum effectiveness in targeting, and 4) spots were more memorable” (p. 269). The idea ultimately achieved acceptance, and the campaign managers
quickly took action. George Gallup provided the campaign with "three topics particularly salient to the voters: corruption, high prices and taxes, and the Korean War" (Wood, 1990, p. 270). From those ideas, the campaign created two slogans, "Eisenhower, Man of the Hour," and "Time for a Change," (Wood, 1990, p. 270). Based on these slogans, "[t]wenty-eight, twenty second spots and three one minute spots comprised the working ad campaign" (Wood, 1990, p. 271).

Interestingly, not only did the message play an important, carefully orchestrated role but Eisenhower's image also played a carefully orchestrated role in the creation of the first televised campaign spot ads. Wood (1990) notes:

To control the visual image the General projected, not only were his glasses removed, but Reeves insisted on and supervised complimentary lighting, utilized a Ted Bates make-up man, advised Eisenhower on the appropriate clothing and carefully coaxed the appropriate level of enthusiasm for each take (p. 271).

The structure of these first ads consisted of Eisenhower answering a question posed by a voter (Devlin, 1986, p. 25), filmed "some days" after the filming of
Eisenhower’s portion of the ad (Wood, 1990, p. 271). A “disembodied announcer led the audience into the ads with a voice of ‘suppressed excitement’ by intoning ‘Eisenhower Answers America’” (Wood, 1990, p. 271). Wood (1990) notes that the one minute spots are “actually ‘jazzed up’ twenty second spots” and that only one of the three one minute spots used “material not found in the twenty-second spots” (p. 271).

The launching of this new style of media campaign attracted both strong criticism from the opposition and eager attentiveness from campaign strategists. Although Adlai Stevenson objected to the creation of his own spot ads\(^1\), four years later he conceded to the phenomenon (Jamieson, 1986, p. 14).

Thus, the evolution of the televised spot ad campaign began. Devlin (1986) notes that in the 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns, the length of the spot ads consisted of either “twenty or sixty seconds” (p. 32). However, by the 1972 and 1976 presidential campaigns, the spot ads typically ran at either four minutes or twenty seconds (p. 32). By the 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns, the “thirty second spot was dominant” (p. 32). Thus, as Devlin (1986) summarizes, although “TV advertising spots have evolved in terms of length, and length preferences depend on
other factors of the campaign. ...[p]olitical advertisers have increasingly emphasized the use of the thirty second spot. ..." (p. 32).

Since the 1952 Eisenhower campaign created the "first political spot ad campaign broadcast on television" (Wood, 1990, p. 265), campaign television spots have become "the principal means of communicating with voters" (Hinerfeld, 1990, p. 1). Devlin (1986) notes, "Political ads are but one of the many influences on the outcome of a presidential campaign. ...yet campaigns have and will continue to spend a massive amount of their available money on political advertising" (Devlin, 1986, p. 34). Following this prescription, all three 1992 presidential candidates, George Bush, Bill Clinton, and Ross Perot, collectively spent $133 million on television advertising alone (Devlin, 1993, p. 272). As Kaid, Leland, and Whitney (1992) note, "Television has become the channel of communication in contemporary politics, and the message format most frequently chosen by candidates is the spot advertisement" (p. 285).

A Historical Review of Women in Politics

Increasingly, women play a more visible role as elected leaders in our American government. However, prior to the 1970's, female politicians were "largely invisible, with merely a name or two like Margaret Chase Smith and Frances

However, the past three decades have witnessed some change in American politics. For instance, in 1974, Ella Grasso became the first woman to win a governorship in her own right. Additionally, throughout the 1970’s “communities voted their ‘first woman’ into office ... as mayor ... as town councilor, here and there as county commissioner, state representative, lieutenant governor ... " (Mandel, 1981, p. 3). By 1979, the political strength of women had increased to seventeen members in the US Congress, 735 mayors, five of which served as mayors of “large cities,” six lieutenant governors, and 770 state legislators (Wadsworth et al., 1987, p. 77-78).

Although the 1980’s saw a growth in women’s political clout, the number of women elected to Congress did not significantly increase. Comparisons show that in 1979, women comprised 3.1% of the members of Congress, while in
1989, only 5.2% of its members were women—an increase of only 17 to 28 congresswomen overall. The increase of women elected to statewide positions suggests stronger growth, as in 1979 women comprised 10.3% of the state legislatures compared to 16.9% in 1989.

One decade later, the number of women elected to political office continues to grow, but at a slim rate. In 1999, women hold 65 of the 535 seats in the US Congress (Center for the American Woman and Politics [CAWP], 1999), an increase to only 12.1%. Specifically, women hold 9% of the seats in the Senate and 12.9% of the seats in the House of Representatives (CAWP, 1999). Statewide in 1999, women hold three governorships (National Governors Association [NGA], 1999), eighteen lieutenant governorships, and 22.3% of the seats in state legislatures (CAWP, 1998).

Compared to the percentage of women in the American population, currently totaling 52% (The White House Project, 1998), the percentage of women in congressional seats is stark at a mere 12.1%. Although the number of women elected to Congress has grown since 1917, the success of women running for statewide positions remains greater than that for women running for congressional positions. In order for women to compete in the national political arena, they must also compete in the media arena, utilizing strategies that
successfully communicate an electable image. As Wadsworth et al. (1987) note, "knowing the correct strategy or technique for an advertising campaign becomes of vital importance to the female candidate" (p. 78).

The Role of the Gender Co-culture and Political Spot Ads

The role of the gender co-culture in the creation and evolution of political spot ads provides another rationale for this study. Culture exists, whether consciously or subconsciously, as an omnipotent influence on communication in our daily lives. Fundamentally, "culture is a powerful vehicle for socialization . . . it shapes thinking, acting, and communicating according to group expectations" (Dodd, 1998, p. 36). Gudykunst (1997) adds, "The culture in which individuals are socialized influences the way they communicate, and the way that individuals communicate can change the culture they share over time" (p. 327).

Infante (1983) addresses the influence of the gender co-culture by stating, "Culture, in essence, defines what it means to be a man or a woman" (p. 97). Elaborating, Infante (1983) states, "Social approval and disapproval are used by various sources in society to encourage individuals to behave consistently with sex-role expectations" (p. 97). Wood (1997) concurs, stating that "we've been socialized
into gendered identities, ones that reflect cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity” (p. 172).

Gudykunst (1997) further acknowledges the issue of sex-role expectations, stating, “The traits and behaviors associated with being female or male are based on stereotypes learned growing up” (p. 341). Many scholars have devoted research to the issue of gender differences in communication, seeking to find validity for gender stereotypes in a controlled setting. Stereotypes and research findings supporting the communication differences among men and women consider men as more aggressive (Borisoff & Victor, 1998, p. 128; Burgoon, Dillard, & Doran, 1983; Monroe, DiSalvo, Lewis, & Borzi, 1990; Zammuto, London, & Rowland, 1979), ambitious (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkrantz, 1972), competitive, and dominating (Broverman et al., 1972; Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Monroe et al., 1990). Stereotypes and research findings identify women as more accommodating and compromising (Korabik et al., 1993; Monroe et al., 1990), more expressive of emotion (Baird & Bradley, 1979; Borisoff & Victor, 1998, p. 129; Broverman et al., 1972), and more person oriented (Korabik et al., 1993). Burgoon et al. (1983) add that “females are not expected to use such aggressive strategies [as men] and are penalized when they
are the source of unexpectedly aggressive and/or antisocial message strategies” (p. 292).

Such stereotypes of women do not place a female candidate on an equal level with a male candidate during a political campaign. As Wadsworth et al. (1987) note, one of the things which may inhibit women in politics is expectations on their behavior. Expectations of their role and style might set up preconceived notions of a "feminine style" style which if violated would incur negative responses. . . . Voters develop normative expectations about appropriateness of communication behavior that differ for males and females. Women, in fact, face a more difficult campaign than their male counterparts because their gender creates unique problems in formulation of a campaign style (p. 79).

Therefore, the study of image-building strategies employed by successful female candidates in an important medium, such as a political spot ad, proves useful in further understanding the influence of the gender co-culture on female candidates’ campaign rhetoric. Do female candidates respond directly to gender stereotypes and present a stereotyped image in their discourse to increase
acceptance? Or, do female candidates struggle to overcome such stereotypes and employ the more ‘masculine’ communication styles to overcome any weakness associated with culturally prescribed “feminine” communication stereotypes?

The issue of the co-cultural influence of gender on political spot ads deserves careful critique in order to begin to identify successful strategies used by women who attain election to national political office. Such information provides prospective female candidates not with a guaranteed format for success, but with valuable information to consider when addressing similar gender related constraints.

Anne Northup: Kentucky’s Second Congresswoman

In 1998, Anne Northup ran for reelection to the United States House of Representatives, representing Kentucky’s Third District. Northup’s campaign serves as an important case study of female political candidate campaign strategies for multiple reasons. First, in 1996, Northup became only the second female politician to represent Kentucky in the United States Congress. Therefore, her 1998 reelection bid allowed her the privilege of running as an incumbent, a position unique for female congressional candidates in Kentucky. Second, Northup’s 1998 campaign set a record in
the amount of financing raised, usually an obstacle for female candidates, and took the initiative to run the first spot ads of the race. Third, as a Republican, Northup ran in a predominantly Democratic district and emerged the only woman to win a 1998 congressional race in Kentucky.

The study of Northup's reelection campaign spot ads contributes a new perspective to prior research of female candidate rhetoric and strategies. First, this study explores how a female incumbent successfully addresses a culture unaccustomed to electing, or even reelecting, a female candidate to a national political office. Second, this analysis advances the study of successful rhetoric employed by female candidates in televised spot ads. Third, this study incorporates the elements of the rhetorical situation to provide an in-depth analysis of the use of image building strategies for female candidates.
CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL IMAGING, SPOT ADS, AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION:
A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC LITERATURE

The review of academic literature provides a theoretical foundation for this thesis. While a significant portion of the literature on political spot ads does not identify gender as a specific variable of study, that research which does focus on gender enhances the more intricate study of image strategies in political spot ads. This review includes (1) a discussion of political imaging; (2) an examination of critical gender directed studies of political spot ads; and, (3) a summary of theoretical perspectives on the rhetorical situation.

Political Imaging

Obviously, until more women campaign at that political level, such research will not offer an exploration of gender-related candidate issues. However, contributions of both presidential as well as non-gender directed political spot ad research provide important insights into the structure, strategies, and techniques of political spot ads. Two specific areas of discussion offer an important basis for this thesis and support the study of images in political spot ads: (1) a discussion of image/issue spot ads, and (2) a discussion of building the politician’s image.

**Image/Issue Spot Ads**

While there is little debate that political spot ads affect viewers, scholars debate the importance of campaign image spot ads versus campaign issue spot ads. Recent research, however, finds merit in image spot ads. In Kaid et al.'s (1992) study, "[i]mage commercials appeared to produce more visual recall than issue commercials" (p. 293). Cundy's (1986) research strongly concurs, noting, "paid political spot commercials can make a significant impact on voter images of political candidates. . . . clearly, it does pay to advertise" (p. 232, emphasis original).

However, an additional perspective requiring further attention suggests that issue spot ads do not exist in a vacuum separate from image spot ads, but instead provide the
viewer with additional data relevant to the candidate's image. Procter, Aden, and Japp (1988) argue that image and issues work together to form an "overall image, or political identity, of a candidate" (p. 192). Anderson (1973) suggests that candidates "refer to issues to implement characterization strategies; issue talk and characterization talk are obviously not exclusive" (p. 86). Procter et al. (1988) further the debate, defining political identity as "a composite cognitive picture a voter has of a candidate, based upon the interaction of issue position, image characteristics, and gender" (p. 191).

I also consider image spots and issue spots as inseparable in the development of an overall image. Each visual of the candidate, whether she speaks of her strength or her stand on crime, adds to the voter's perception of the candidate and thus involves image-building strategies. Based on this argument, the analysis of Northup's 1998 congressional campaign spot ads will include all eleven spot ads on the compilation reel, provided at the researcher's request by Northup's media producer.

Building the Politician's Image

Various communication scholars have sought to understand and identify the dimensions of a speaker's ethos or image. McCroskey and Young's (1981) study argues that
"while theoretically there are three dimensions in the source credibility or ethos construct, in terms of empirically based perceptions, these three collapse to two" (p. 33). In their study, McCroskey and Young (1981) examine the three constructs of competence, character, and intention, however, their findings indicate that only the two dimensions of competence and character emerge.

King (1976) proposes a slightly different perspective, suggesting that studies should explore "source appropriateness." King (1976) suggests the following:

The receiver's judgment of how well a particular source functions for him or her produces a conclusion of source appropriateness. As a first-order generalization one can posit that an appropriate source is one whose perceived attributes function to satisfy a receiver's needs in a given decision-making situation. (p. 220)

King's (1976) study examines the importance of expertise and coorientation as source attributes required by decision-making receivers, concluding that the "importance of each source attribute (expertise and coorientation) clearly differed according to the decision-making requirements of the receiver" (p. 225).
Both McCroskey and Young’s (1981) and King’s (1976) studies provide important considerations for this thesis regarding the receiver’s decision making process about a speaker. Although McCroskey and Young approach the decision making from a “source credibility” perspective, and King approaches the decision making process from a “source appropriateness” perspective, both points of view suggest that voters analyze the credibility and appropriateness of the source for which they cast their vote. I also argue, however, that the voter analyzing the candidate places the candidate’s appropriateness and credibility into an overall image construct from which the voter will finally cast his or her vote.

Anderson (1973) proposes that “image is more than what an audience sees in a candidate; an image is an orientation toward the candidate containing myriad perceptual expectations” (p. 76, emphasis original). Research literature does not offer a common, consistent definition of a political candidate’s “image.” Garramone (1986) suggests “[c]andidate image is defined as the sum of the perceived personal and professional characteristics of the candidate” (p. 236). Cundy (1986) considers image as “the personal traits of the candidate: such things as sincerity, honesty, experience, knowledge, leadership, etc.” (p. 214). Yet
another definition suggests image involves a "candidate's character attributes, personality traits, and accurate descriptions of their backgrounds" (Shyles, 1988, p. 18). Ultimately, image consists of the voter's positive or negative perception of the candidate, which has an effect on how that constituent casts his or her vote.

Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1984) argue that voters assess candidates along five dimensions that combine to form the candidate's image for the voter. Through a factor analysis of responses to the American National Election Studies surveys from 1952 to 1980, Miller et al. (1984) determine that "people think about candidates in terms of a limited set of broad categories" (p. 198). The first categorical dimension--competence--includes political experience, statesmanship\(^3\), comprehension of political issues, realism, and intelligence. The second dimension--integrity--includes the voter's comprehension of the candidate's trustworthiness, honesty, and sincerity. The third dimension--reliability--includes the voter's perception as to whether the candidate is dependable, strong, hardworking, decisive, and aggressive.

The fourth dimension--charisma--consists of the voter's perception of the candidate's leadership, dignity, humbleness, patriotism, and ability to communicate with
people and inspire them. Finally, the fifth dimension includes references to observable features such as "age, health, smile, speech pattern, or background factors like previous military experience, religion, wealth, earlier occupation, family, and so forth" (p. 197). Miller et al. (1984) note that the "structure of these criteria has remained quite stable over time" (p. 208).

Turning the perspective from the voter's view of the candidate to the candidate's perspective of building an image to capture the greater number of voters, this thesis proposes the addition of yet one final dimension to the prototype. King (1976) addresses the concept of coorientation as an identification strategy; however, Winn (1978) adopts the factor of consubstantiality, first introduced by Burke (1969). This thesis also adopts the addition of Burke's consubstantiality as an important acknowledgement of the need for voters to identify with their candidate's image, and the candidate's desire to create that identification. Burke (1969) states, "To identify A with B is to make A 'consubstantial' with B" (p. 21), and he further argues that "there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification ('consubstantiality') and communication" (p. 46). Burke (1969) clarifies this concept, stating:
... a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his [her] act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself [herself] and his [her] audience (p. 46).

Burke (1969) adds:

You persuade a man [woman] only insofar as you can talk his [her] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his [her's]. . . . True, the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he [she] can succeed only insofar as he [she] yields to that audience's opinions in other respects" (p. 55-56).

Undoubtedly, political candidates desire to establish a rapport with the voting audience and to persuade the voters to cast a ballot in the candidate's favor. Therefore, the dimension of consubstantiality demands addition to the candidate image prototype, as the voter's perception of the candidate's identification with him or her is fundamental in establishing approval and achieving persuasion. Through the adoption of Miller et al.'s (1984) prototype framework, with
the addition of Burke's (1969) consubstantiality dimension, this thesis examines how the discourse of Northup's 1998 campaign spot ads designs image building strategies that fulfill the six dimensions forming the candidate image prototype.

The following table summarizes the prototype utilized in this study:

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<th>Political Candidate Prototype</th>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observable Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consubstantiality</td>
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Gender Directed Studies of Political Spot Ads

Prior to the mid 1980's, research on political spot ads lacked a concentration on the candidate's gender. As Benze and Declercq (1985) note, "the omission is understandable. . .[u]ntil recently, there simply were not enough female candidates for higher offices that might require the use of television advertising" (p. 278). This section addresses those studies concerned with image styles of female political candidates in political spot ads. Of the eight studies covered in this review, two utilize fabricated spots ads while six analyze actual spot ads of female candidates.

Image Styles of Female Candidates:

A Fictional Setting

In the research of image styles for female candidates, two specific studies uniquely utilize fictionally produced spot ads in their research. In their 1984 study, Kaid, Myers, Pipps, and Hunter seek to identify "whether a male candidate will be evaluated differently than a female candidate when presented in an identical television commercial" (p. 42). The researchers wrote and produced six commercial settings, two "masculine," two "feminine," and two "neutral" (p. 43). The first masculine ad features the candidate talking about inflation and jobs with workers at a construction site, and the second shows the candidate
talking with farmers surrounded by farm machinery. The first feminine ad features the candidate playing with school children and discussing education, while the other ad features the candidate at a grocery store discussing high food prices. One neutral ad shows the candidate talking about inflation with a group of voters in a shopping area, while in the other ad the candidate “vaguely” discusses government with family. The researchers produced each 30-second spot ad with a female and male candidate such that “the only differences between the two spots [are] the candidates and their sex” (p. 43).

The results from the Kaid et al. (1984) study indicate that, overall, the female candidates receive more favorable reactions from the subjects compared with the male candidates in each of the three settings (p. 48). The study also finds that while the female is much more successful than the male candidate in the male settings, she is less successful than the male candidate in the female settings (p. 51). Additionally, the neutral setting poses no disadvantage (p. 51). Thus, Kaid et al. (1984) conclude that a female candidate “can expect very favorable reactions from subjects when compared to a male candidate in the same setting” (p. 50).
Similarly, Wadsworth, Patterson, Kaid, Cullers, Malcomb, and Lamirand (1987) “explore the effectiveness of masculine versus feminine strategies for female candidates” (p. 82). Wadsworth et al. (1987) outline six strategies on which to focus their research: aggressive, nonaggressive, career, family, ambitious, nonambitious. The researchers produced six 60-second spots, each emphasizing one strategy, and featuring a woman in her mid-thirties, unknown to the subjects. The content of each ad has a 72-75% consistency with all other ads (p. 82), and suggests the female candidate is the challenger against a male incumbent.

In the “aggressive candidate” spot ad, the candidate attacks her opponent on his record, suggests he had betrayed the voters’ trust, and uses “sharp and forceful gestures, pointing several times at the camera” (p. 83). In the “nonaggressive candidate” spot ad, the spot ad is shot in exactly the same setting however the candidate does not attack her opponent, does not use gestures, and speaks “slower and softer” (p. 83). For the “career candidate” spot ad, the candidate stands in front of a bookcase in an office, emphasizes professional banking experience, and is dressed in a business suit. The “family candidate” spot ad features her sitting on a couch in a family room; she does not use gestures; and she emphasizes how “unemployment [has]
hurt families in the state” (p. 83). In the “ambitious
candidate” spot ad, the candidate emphasizes making changes
in government and “promise[s] to propose new legislation and
to implement changes in laws and lawmakers” (p. 83).
Finally, in the “nonambitious candidate” spot ad, the
candidate emphasizes that she will not make major changes if
elected, but instead she will work within government to turn
unemployment around.

Undergraduate students completed a questionnaire after
viewing the commercials. The quantitative analysis
indicates that the “career candidate” scored better than the
“family candidate,” and that the “aggressive candidate”
scored better than the “nonaggressive candidate.” However,
the “nonambitious candidate” scored higher than the
“ambitious candidate” on more measures “including overall
candidate image and voter likelihood” (p. 91). Moreover,
the study’s results indicate that the “career” style rates
as “the best strategy and style for a female candidate in
comparison with the other strategies in the study” (p. 91).

Image Styles of Female Candidates:

On the Campaign Trail

This review of research based on actual campaign spot
ads will describe in chronological order the contributions
of each study. Benze and Declercq (1985) incorporate 113
thirty-second ads from 41 male congressional candidates, 50 from female congressional candidates, and 22 from statewide candidates. The ads are chosen from submitted copies of spot ads covering 29 states from 1980-1983. The study codes the ads in "five general areas: partisanship, issue content, group references, candidate image, and nature of negative advertising" (p. 279). The authors view and code the ads "at least twice," compiling their results to conclude that "[t]he biggest differences [are] in terms of candidate image" (p. 283).

Benze and Declercq (1985) note that "the greatest emphasis on any category [is] in the area of candidate image" (p. 280). Specifically, the study indicates that "there appears to be more of a tendency for candidates to stress their strengths rather than counteract their weakness" (p. 283). While the research findings show male candidates as three times more likely to emphasize toughness, the findings also show females twice as likely to stress compassion and warmth (p. 283).

In their 1988 study, Procter, Aden, and Japp offer a unique study of female campaign spot ads in their analysis of the 1986 Nebraska Gubernatorial race between Helen Boosalis (D) and Kay Orr (R). The researchers note that image played a solid role in the outcome of the campaign,
stating that “[t]he Orr campaign was successful, in part, because of its ability to blend images associated with traditional female qualities and perceptions of leadership, thus creating an identity of a ‘compassionate leader’” (p. 193). Such strategies for creating the compassionate image include Orr’s use of a “soft and gentle tone of voice,” wearing clothes that “helped to soften her image,” and discussing “traditional values in traditional settings” (p. 194). Strategies for creating the leader image include Orr’s use of vague policy stands, and her use of incumbent symbols “to build a perception of incumbency,” such as “walking through the capitol directing workers, walking down the steps of the capitol, and working in an office on a budget with what appears to be a financial planner” (p. 195).

Procter et al. (1988) also argue Boosalis seeks to create an identity through images, noting “each image [is] gender-related” (p. 196). The first image Boosalis’ campaign seeks to create centers on experience; however, the study suggests all efforts revolve around verbal content versus visual images. The second Boosalis image involves her portrayal as “energetic” and a “people person” in order to counteract any images her age may create. Procter et al. (1988) note that spot ads designed to create this image do
so through “both visual and auditory” messages (p. 197).
Finally, the spot ads also seek to feature Boosalis as a leader, again employing verbal content messages aided by “a farmer telling an unseen viewer: ‘I think she’s tough enough to turn this state around” (p. 198). Procter et al. (1988) conclude that “[t]he Boosalis spots were generally successful in creating an identity of a female political leader” (p. 198).

Procter et al. (1988) suggest, however, that several strategies place Orr ahead of Boosalis for the final outcome, noting that “both Orr and Boosalis [try] to build a political identity as a strong female leader. . .[b]oth [try] to blend soft, ‘womanly’ images with more ‘male’ images of experience and leadership, yet Orr [is] more adept at blending the two” (p. 201). Procter et al.’s (1988) study offers this thesis valuable information for two reasons. First, they offer one of the few analyses of political spot ads from a qualitative perspective. Second, Procter et al. (1988) demonstrate the contribution such studies can offer in understanding how women actually use and create images through political spot ads.

Trent and Sabourin (1993) seek to determine if a female candidate differs from a male candidate, especially in the use of “aggressive campaign rhetoric,” defined in the study
as "negative televised advertising" (p. 26). The study analyzes spot ads from a combination of congressional and statewide campaigns, with all ads coded into one of three categories very similar to those of videostyle: verbal strategies, visual strategies, and production strategies. The verbal strategies category refers to verbal information regarding the type of negative ad (concept, testimonial, comparative, and assaultive), ending type (ends with attack, ends positive), reference to social welfare issues, reference to the candidate's competence, and reference to the candidate's experience (p. 30). The visual strategies category refers to "attributes of the ads which provide a primarily visual rather than verbal representation of the candidate," for instance, style of clothing and the type of people featured in the ads with the candidate (p. 31). Production strategies refer to voice-overs, music, setting of the ad, production techniques (p. 32).

Although this study specifically analyzes negative spot ads, the study adds additional, valuable information to the overall analysis of female candidate image strategies. Trent and Sabourin's (1993) study reveals that female candidates used "more variety in types of negative ads, showed the candidate in professional clothing less often, [do] not picture the opponent, and less frequently [show]
the candidate in a close-up at the time of the attack. . . . [are] more likely than males to use other people in the ad (both men and women), and to physically touch someone” (p. 36). Trent and Sabourin (1993) further suggest that the ads blend both masculine and feminine strategies to “accommodate gender-based stereotypes of femininity even while using a campaign tool that is inherently aggressive, confrontational, argumentative, or, in other words, stereotypically masculine” (p. 36).

Kahn’s (1993) comparison of the content of spot ads with candidate coverage in the news offers yet another discussion of female image styles. Kahn analyzes 81 spot ads for female Senate candidates and 324 spot ads for male Senate candidates. The study codes the ads as either candidate-oriented or opponent-oriented. Specifically, the study considers the candidate-oriented spot ads to discuss “the candidate’s qualifications, personality traits, or issue positions” (p. 487). Likewise, the study considers the opponent-oriented spot ads as “negative or ‘attack’ ads that emphasize negative aspects of the opponent’s candidacy” (p. 487).

Kahn’s (1993) study finds that while spot ads for male candidates utilize candidate-oriented appeals more than those of female candidates, male candidates appear more
likely to “discuss economic issues such as taxes and the federal budget. . .while [female candidates] spend more time talking about social issues and social policy, such as education and health policy” (p. 489). Additionally, Kahn’s (1993) study suggests that female challenger candidates discuss “male” traits in a significantly greater number of spot ads than do male challenger candidates (p. 491).

Johnston and White (1994) seek to explore female candidate communication strategies in the 1986 Senate races, content analyzing thirty-nine ads of female Senate candidates. The researchers code the ads for such items as the rhetorical style of the candidate or ad, production techniques, setting, the dominant speaker in the ad and the gender of any voice-overs, the issue/image emphasis and information present in the ad, and the presence of characteristics such as honesty, toughness, competency, and aggressiveness (p. 323).

In contrast to the Benze and Declercq (1985) study, Johnston and White (1994) find that “toughness was emphasized more than warmth and compassion” (p. 325). In addition, the results find a majority of the ads are “candidate-positive focused and concentrate on informing the viewers or showing them great qualities of the candidate, rather than faults of the opponent” (p. 324). In addition,
the candidates choose an office or professional setting more frequently, and a formal business suit or femininized suit considerably more than a dress or casual attire. Johnston and White (1994) note that "[t]he women candidates studied here chose strategies that focused on their positive attributes and used verbal, nonverbal, and production techniques which assisted in informing voters of their ideas, qualifications, and their competence" (p. 327).

The final study of this review establishes an organized framework for the study of gender differences in political spot ad styles, utilizing the model of videostyle. Bystrom and Miller (1999) content analyze 152 spots of candidates running in both gubernatorial and senate races in 1996. The researchers identify characteristics for the three videostyle categories with verbal content including "the presence or absence of negative attacks, political issues, candidate qualifications, and candidate performance and characteristics" (p. 296). The nonverbal category includes "advertisement setting, pictorial representation, and the candidate's vocal, facial, and kinesic behaviors" (p. 296). The production techniques category includes "advertisement format, use of special effects, and advertisement length" (p. 296).
Bystrom and Miller's (1999) study finds that female candidates run more negative ads than the male candidates, include "significantly more attacks," and discuss taxes more than men (p. 299). Additionally, as in the Johnston and White (1994) study, female candidates stress toughness and aggressiveness more than men, and stress their warmth and compassion less than men, although not at a level of statistical significance (p. 300). Yet, Bystrom and Miller (1999) find that the female candidates emphasize their own accomplishments, performance, success, and leadership significantly less than men (p. 300). Bystrom and Miller (1999) summarize their findings in the nonverbal category as suggesting that "women use a more 'up front and personal' style in their ads and they reflect the gendered norms they face in choosing attire that will communicate seriousness and legitimacy" (p. 302). Findings summarized in the production techniques category indicate that "men candidates in this study use montages significantly more often than women" (p. 302).

This review of gender-directed research on candidate image style in political spot ads offers a variety of prescriptions for female candidates to consider. As Trent and Sabourin (1993) conclude, "the results of studies that have in one way or another attempted to analyze the female
candidate's use of televised advertising provide somewhat mixed messages. . . .” (p. 25).

A final synopsis of these studies finds that while a female candidate “can expect very favorable reactions from subjects when compared to a male candidate in the same setting” (Kaid et al., 1984, p. 50), voters rate the career strategy as the best strategy for female candidates (Wadsworth et al., 1987). The findings of the five content analyses of actual spot ads suggest that female candidate strategies include a stronger likelihood to express warmth and compassion, with a greater emphasis on image (Benze & Declercq, 1985), a blending of masculine and feminine strategies to accommodate gender stereotypes (Trent & Sabourin, 1993), and spending more time talking about social issues and social policy (Kahn, 1993). Similar to Trent and Sabourin (1993), Procter et al.’s (1988) qualitative analysis suggests a blending of strategies also worked toward the success of Orr’s campaign, as the ads blended images associated with traditional female qualities and perceptions of leadership.

Johnston and White (1994), however, note that in ads viewed from 1986 (only three to six years after the ads of the Benze and Declercq study) female candidates emphasize toughness more than warmth and compassion, as well as
positive attributes, and choose a more formal style of dress. Bystrom and Miller (1999) concur, with ads of an electoral cycle ten years later, that women still stress toughness and aggressiveness more than warmth and compassion, and still choose a more formal style of dress. Although data from virtually all studies identify different strategies, a consensus seems to surface that female candidates more frequently blend strategies in image creation and presentation, many times employing masculine characteristics and styles as frequently or more often than do male candidates.

I propose, however, that a limitation arising from these studies involves the lack of a control for successful and unsuccessful candidates. Trent and Sabourin (1993) suggest that due to the wide number of variables outside the focus of the study that influence electoral success, research should not associate election outcomes with the strategies employed (p. 26). Yet, Bystrom and Miller (1999) specifically note in their study that only three of the thirteen female candidates whose ads the study analyzed achieved election to office. I contend that this limitation of control inhibits the researcher from identifying those image styles that may actually correlate with success. Therefore, this analysis of Northup's spot ads from her
successful reelection campaign contributes to the minimal but necessary research identifying successful female candidate campaign strategies.

The Rhetorical Situation as a Theoretical Perspective

This thesis looks to Lloyd Bitzer's essay regarding the rhetorical situation, "one of the most influential essays in the last twenty-six years" (Benoit, 1994, p. 342), as a foundational methodology for analyzing political candidate image-building strategies. Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation theory argues that rhetorical discourse "obtain[s] its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it" (p. 3). Bitzer (1968) further argues that "[s]o controlling is situation that we should consider it the very ground of rhetorical activity" (p. 5). However, not all "situations" qualify as rhetorical situations. Instead, Bitzer (1968) states:

Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring
about the significant modification of the exigence (p. 6).

With that in mind, Bitzer (1968) offers five fundamental "constituencies" of the rhetorical situation that exist "prior to the creation and presentation of discourse" (p. 6): exigence, audience, and constraints, followed by the orator and the speech. Bitzer (1968) describes the exigence as "an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be" (p. 6). In addition, Bitzer (1968) notes, "[i]n any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (p. 7).

Bitzer (1968) defines the second constituent, audience, as "those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (p. 8). The audience must specifically serve as a mediator of the change "which the discourse functions to produce" (Bitzer, 1968, 8).

Bitzer's (1968) third constituent, constraints, consists of "persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to
constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (p. 8). Further defined, constraints include “beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives,” the speaker’s “personal character...logical proofs...and style” (Bitzer, 1968, p. 8). Bitzer (1968) adds that although the exigence, audience, and constraints “comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation,” once the orator enters the situation and presents discourse, the speaker and the message become additional constituents (p. 8). Bitzer (1968) also argues that the rhetorical situation does not call for just any response, but for a “fitting response” (p. 10). In addition to a fitting response, Bitzer (1968) specifies that a rhetorical situation “which is strong and clear dictates the purpose, theme, matter, and style of the response” (p. 10).

Elements of the rhetorical situation are addressed in analyses of political spot ads, although no studies apply the rhetorical situation as a method of rhetorical analysis for political spot ads. Jamieson and Campbell (1992) describes the audience of mass communication as “anonymous” because audience members do not know the others watching, as “the opposite of a group” since members do not have interpersonal interactions, and heterogeneous, as “it is made up of all sorts of people...there are television sets
in 98% of US households” (p. 4). Jamieson and Campbell (1992) also elaborate on the political candidate’s audience as “voters who can be swayed to vote for him or her. . .the politician is interested in those who are likely to cast a vote” (p. 253). Thus, Jamieson and Campbell (1992) establish that the political candidate’s target audience functions as an agent of change.

In order for an audience to act as an agent of change, an exigence must instigate the rhetorical situation. Jamieson and Campbell (1992), although not directly, do illustrate that a political candidate operates on the electoral premises “that politicians in office can make a difference, that problems are solvable” (p. 256). In essence, the change “to be effected” involves either putting the power into the hands of the challenger or reducing the struggle to have the power taken away from the incumbent. Certainly more specific exigences influence each campaign. However, the election itself initially exists as the foundational exigence calling for the rhetorical situation.

of rhetorical and non-rhetorical discourse. Wilkerson (1970) charges that "Bitzer fails to consider sufficiently the responses audiences can and do make to information" (p. 86), and that Bitzer lacks a clear identification of what makes a situation rhetorical.

Miller's (1972) critique argues that under Bitzer's explanation, "the nature of the exigence limits what one may do or say about it" (p. 111). Miller (1972) disapproves, primarily because of his belief that "within the limits specified by each exigence, the ultimate or perceived nature of the exigence depends upon the constraints of the perceiver" (p. 112, emphasis original).

In another critique of Bitzer's rhetorical situation, Vatz (1973) argues, "meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by rhetors" (p. 157). Vatz (1973) also suggests that "there is a choice of events to communicate," and that "[t]he facts or events communicated to us are choices, by our sources of information" (p. 156). With an arbitrarily described context, Vatz (1973) adds that the communication of the situation relies on a "translation of the chosen information into meaning. . .an interpretative act" (p. 157).

Consigny (1974) offers a comparative critique of both Bitzer's (1968) and Vatz's (1973) descriptions of the
rhetorical situation, suggesting that "[t]he antinomy posed by Bitzer and Vatz is that either the rhetorical situation controls the acts of the rhetor or the rhetor freely creates the situation" (p. 185). Consigny (1974) suggests that this debate find resolution in considering rhetoric as an art of topics "applicable in a variety of novel situations," while "allowing the rhetor to become engaged in a novel situation and thereby to find and shape issues without predetermining what he will find" (p. 184).

Hunsaker and Smith (1976) offer yet another view of the rhetorical situation, as well as a critique of prior scholars' modifications. Hunsaker and Smith (1976) argue that Bitzer and many of his critics "devote remarkably little time to the problem of perception" (p. 145, emphasis original), and that Bitzer does not differentiate between different types of audiences involved in the same situation.

In 1980, Bitzer elaborates on his original rhetorical situation theory. Bitzer (1980) argues that "[s]ituations are not fixed or unchanging" (p. 24). Bitzer (1980) adds, "Nor are situations isolated from one another. . . . Any attempt to resolve one may well generate another" (p. 24-25). Bitzer (1980) also proposes four possibilities of a rhetorical situation in which a speaker and audience may agree or disagree. In the first possibility, "speaker and
audience agree on the factual condition and the related interest” (p. 29). Bitzer (1980) explains that when the speaker and audience agree on the factual condition and the interest, “both will experience the same exigence” (p. 29). However, the speaker and audience may agree on the factual condition but disagree on the interest; the speaker and audience may share the same interest but disagree on the factual condition; or the speaker and audience may disagree on both (p. 29-30). The issue of speakers and audiences perceiving the same exigences becomes important as the speaker needs the audience to respond and institute the required changes. This concept is important for political candidates simply because voters rarely vote for a candidate with whom they disagree.

Following Bitzer’s 1980 essay, Smith and Lybarger (1996) examine both Bitzer’s 1968 discussion of the rhetorical situation and his 1980 “reconstruction.” Smith and Lybarger (1996) criticize Bitzer’s 1980 discussion of his original theory, stating, that “it fails to take into account the potential of the rhetor to create an exigence and/or a situation within a rhetorical message” (p. 201, emphasis original). In their summary, Smith and Lybarger (1996) suggest four alterations to the rhetorical situation, two of which propose relevance to this thesis: first,
eliminate the term "controlling" from consideration of exigence to allow the critic to argue from several different perspectives in each situation; and second, account for multiple exigences, multiple audiences, and the plethora of constraints they impose on or derive from any situation (p. 210).

For the purpose of this thesis, the structural elements from Bitzer's 1968 essay, modifications from Bitzer's 1980 essay, and recommendations from Smith and Lybarger (1996) combine to form the framework through which this study examines the rhetorical situation of Northup's 1998 reelection campaign. While identifying and recognizing the fundamental components from Bitzer's 1968 essay, exigence, audience, constraints, speaker, and message, this analysis concurs with Bitzer's modification that acknowledges the potential of the situation to change and modify due to "changes in perspective, shifting interests, and recognition of new argument or maxims" (p. 24). This modification balances with Smith and Lybarger's (1996) suggestion that an analysis of the situation must allow for multiple exigences, multiple audiences, and multiple constraints to exist. This framework thus allows the analysis of Northup's spot ads to consider not only the political influences of the rhetorical situation, but also the gender co-cultural influences.
Through this analysis we can determine if a successful strategy for female candidates lies in modifying gender constraints through the use of specific image building strategies, thus placing the female candidate closer to an equal level with male candidates in political campaigns.

Methodology

Critical analyses of gender styles in political campaign spot ads traditionally have employed a content analysis. Certainly such information provides valuable insights into differences, correlations, and percentages of styles used. However, I believe that the addition of qualitative analyses that explore the rhetorical influences surrounding the artifact can only provide a richer understanding of gender styles that influence spot ads. The methodology of this thesis will borrow from Bitzer the framework of the rhetorical situation. Application of this perspective provides an understanding of the context of Northup’s 1998 congressional race, the exigences, the audience, the constraints, and thus the purpose behind the development of her image building strategies. Second, the methodology of this thesis will combine the five dimensions that Miller et al. (1984) argue voters use to form images of candidates with Burke’s (1969) consubstantiality dimension
to identify and analyze Northup's image building strategies. This analysis will then discuss Northup's rhetorical strategies that provided the fitting response to the rhetorical situations identified.

From the review of literature, this thesis answers the following research questions:

RQ1: What rhetorical strategies does Northup employ to build an image in her televised campaign spot ads?

RQ2: Do these strategies fulfill the six dimensions employed by this thesis to fulfill the voter's image prototype of a candidate?

RQ3: Do Northup's rhetorical strategies provide a fitting response to the rhetorical situation of her 1998 congressional reelection campaign?

RQ4: Or, does Northup, through her image building strategies, alter the rhetorical situation such that the original constraints are modified and the requirements of the fitting response thus shift to a newly created rhetorical situation?

**Data Collection**

This study analyzes political spot ads for Anne Northup, the Republican Representative from Kentucky's Third Congressional District. The producer of Northup's spot ads provided me with the compilation reel of eleven spot ads
used in Northup’s 1998 reelection campaign. I also obtained information regarding the context of the race from print media sources, but I was denied interviews with Northup’s campaign staff and her producer.

**Preview of Remaining Chapters**

In chapter one, I provided the rationale for this study, and in chapter two I provided a review of academic literature, research questions, and a description of the data. Chapter three of this study identifies the two rhetorical situations occurring within Northup’s 1998 reelection campaign, specifically each situation’s exigence, audience, constraints, and timeframe in which they arose during the campaign. The fourth chapter begins with an overview of Northup’s spot ad campaign, followed by a direct analysis of the rhetorical image building strategies identified in each of Northup’s eleven spot ads. Chapter five then discusses the image building strategies Northup employs as response to the rhetorical situations identified in chapter three, concluding that from my perspective and the criteria presented, such strategies provide fitting responses to the rhetorical situations. Chapter five further discusses the limitations of the research, and the implications and contributions to future research provided by this study.
Bitzer (1968) argues that "a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance" (p. 4). Arguably, political elections constitute a situation that invites utterance, and in his later work Bitzer (1980) specifically addresses the electoral rhetorical situation, noting:

Situations which are similar, and sometimes almost identical, occur time and time again: every four years presidential candidates compete by addressing thousands of messages to audiences. . . . Rhetorical forms thus arise as natural responses to situations, and their contents, structural features, and strategies are answers to demands imposed by recurring situations (p. 36).

This study first approaches the identification of Northup’s rhetorical situation from Bitzer’s recurring situation perspective. As presidential elections occur every four years, elections for congressional
representatives occur every two years and thus exist as a recurring situation requiring responses from candidates. Additionally, such structural features as campaign spot ads function as an answer to a demand imposed by the rhetorical situation of an election, due to the reliance of the current American culture on mass mediated messages.

In order to understand further the electoral rhetorical situations to which Congresswoman Northup’s campaign responds through her spot ads, and to identify additional rhetorical situations that may arise, this study first examines Northup’s background, the Third Congressional District, and the race itself.

Congresswoman Northup’s Background

In 1996, the voters of Kentucky’s Third Congressional District narrowly elected the second woman in Kentucky’s history to serve in the United States Congress. The first woman, Katherine Gudger Langley, served from 1927 to 1931, succeeding her husband upon his resignation and conviction for bootlegging (Gibson, 1996, p. 1). Although Northup’s election was a historical accomplishment, she did not win her first congressional election by an overwhelming margin. In fact, she won by only 1,299 votes out of 251,951 cast, totaling half of one percentage point.
Interestingly, although the results tallied too close for comfort, Northup established a stronger lead in other areas. First, and unusual for a female politician, Northup set a fundraising record for a United States House race in Kentucky (Cross, 1996a, B1). While her opponent, incumbent Mike Ward, raised $850,000, Northup raised close to $1.2 million (Cross, 1996b, B1). Second, and tied closely to her strong lead in fundraising, Northup hit the media market with campaign spot ads three weeks prior to Ward, outspending him $569,158 to $470,813 (Cross, 1996b, B1).

Northup was not a newcomer to politics in 1996, although prior to this campaign she had not run for a national office. Previously, Northup served nine years in Kentucky’s state legislature, first elected in 1987. She was born and raised in Louisville, although she attended college out of state at Notre Dame. Prior to her service in the state legislature, Northup taught high school for a period of time, worked at Ford Motor Company, and just prior to 1987 was “a stay-at-home mom with six children” (McDonough, 1996, A1).

Upon her 1996 election to Congress, Northup was recognized as “one of eight ‘frosh to watch’” (Brown, 1996, B3). In addition, she was one of only two freshman Representatives appointed to the “powerful” House
Appropriations Committee, "which controls a large share of the federal budget" (Shafer, 1996, B1). As a result of Northup’s first term appointment to the Appropriations Committee, she sat on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education subcommittee.

Also through her first term appointment to the House Appropriations Committee, Northup and an Indiana Democrat, Lee Hamilton, secured $40 million to assist Louisville in building two Ohio River bridges. Northup and her colleague included the Louisville assistance in a large transportation bill that ultimately passed both the House and Senate, and received President Clinton’s signature in the spring of 1998. Additionally, during her first term in the House, Northup secured federal funds to extend a Louisville parkway and "improve access to the riverfront" (Shafer, 1998, B3; Northup, 1998, D3).

A review of newspaper articles and Northup’s 1996 campaign spot ad compilation reel revealed that gender became an issue at specific points during the 1996 race. In Northup’s October 26, 1996, spot ad entitled “Silly,” a voice-over states that Mike Ward “has made gender a campaign issue.” No other spot ads on the compilation reel mention the gender issue, or make particular reference to the fact that voters should choose Northup because of her gender.
However, according to a Lexington newspaper article, Northup did run an ad stating that if elected she would serve as Kentucky's first congresswoman (Gibson, 1996, p. 1). Upon her realization that the reference was incorrect, Northup eliminated the ad from her campaign and thus from her 1996 compilation reel.

The gender issue also received some attention through press coverage. In a November 8, 1996, article from the Louisville Courier-Journal, the major area newspaper, Ward's aide, Linda Hennessee, indicated that Northup "won the gender war," further stating, "I don't think Andrew Northup would have won this race" (McDonough, 1996, A1). Just five days prior on November 3, 1996, the same Louisville newspaper quoted Hennessee's defense for Ward's use of a negative ad against Northup as, "Ward might have been more reluctant to run such an attack if Northup 'had run a more ladylike campaign'" (Bartlett, 1996, B11).

In addition to Northup's spending campaign funds to define her image through spot ads, Northup did not shy away from running negative spot ads against Ward. Ultimately, Northup's favorability drastically improved from an April poll that placed Ward 41 points over Northup. Northup's success in overturning the election made Kentucky history and set the stage for a historic reelection bid.
Kentucky’s Third Congressional District

Kentucky’s Third Congressional District encompasses 92% of Jefferson County’s population (McDonough, 1996, A1), and includes the city of Louisville. As cited in the Kentucky State Board of Elections report (1998), the Third District consists of 409,878 registered voters. Of those registered, the same report lists 242,863 as registered Democrats and 120,686 as registered Republicans. Comparatively, these numbers are only slightly more conservative than statewide statistics that list 69% of Kentucky’s registered voters as Democrats, 30% as Republicans, and 1% as independent of a major party (Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1999).

In 1996, Northup ran on the Republican ticket; however, for the twenty-six years prior to her election a male Democrat had secured the nod from Third District voters as their congressional representative. The Democratic preference also proved strong in the 1996 presidential election where Clinton carried Jefferson County by 30,000 votes (McDonough, 1996, A1). Across the state, Clinton received 50% of the Kentucky vote in 1992 and 53% of the vote in 1996 (Garrett, 1998, p. D1).

Although females outnumber males by close to ten percent in Kentucky’s population, the number of women serving in the state legislature after the 1994 elections
totaled 8%. After the 1996 elections, however, the number rose to 11%. Currently, the number of female legislators remains at 11%, and of the 16 women currently serving six (37%) originate from Northup’s Jefferson County (Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1999).

Election ’98: The Third District Congressional Race

Kentucky’s 1998 Third District Congressional race began to heat up in January 1998 when both Chris Gorman and Virginia Woodward kicked off their campaigns for the Democratic primary. Chris Gorman, a former Jefferson County commissioner and state attorney general, secured the vote and began a direct campaign against Northup in May 1998.

However, due to Northup’s early fundraising efforts, Gorman’s available campaign funds totaled twelve percent of what Northup had on hand (Jennings, 1998a, B1). Considering Gorman directed part of his campaign funds toward the primary, a six-month comparison of campaign funds raised from December 1997 to June 1998 narrows the gap. As the Courier-Journal reported, “Northup’s campaign had net contributions of $532,220, and Gorman’s [had] $327,992, over the six-month period” (Jennings, 1998a, B1).
Nonetheless, Northup's cash on hand allowed her the advantage in the media arena as she launched her spot ad campaign much before Gorman. A specific account does not exist as to the exact time advantage Northup's spot ad campaign secured over Gorman. Press accounts range from "about two months" (McDonough, 1998, A1), to two months (Jennings, 1998f, B1), to "more than a month" (Jennings, 1998e, X3). However, a comparison of one newspaper account indicating Gorman began running his spot ads early in the week of October 19, 1998 (McDonough, 1998, A1) and a dated spot ad from Northup's compilation reel establish the time at seven weeks.

The campaign was described by the press as "among the most lavishly paved in the nation" (Jennings, 1998f, B1), as a race "so civil that there was too little real debate" (Jennings, 1998d, B5), "too close to call" (Cross, 1998, B1), and as one that "pitted a rising Republican star against a candidate who for many voters remained a political unknown" (Jennings, 1998e, X3). Although no argument exists that disputes the wealth of funds in the race, due to Northup's substantial campaign account, not all polls agree that it was a close race.

A June 27, 1998, to July 3, 1998, poll, conducted for Gorman by Anzalone Research, reported Northup and Gorman in
a 51% to 40% matchup (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999). However, the poll also indicated that on a general ballot, a Democratic candidate would receive 49% of the vote compared to a Republican candidate’s 29% of the vote (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999). A later poll conducted from September 25, 1998, to October 5, 1998, by the Louisville Courier-Journal, reported the matchup between Northup and Gorman at 48% to 41%, respectively. At this point in time, Northup’s spot ad campaign had run for several weeks, while Gorman had yet to run an ad on television.

A follow-up poll conducted by the Courier-Journal, from October 20, 1998, to October 26, 1998, found the margin narrowing, with Northup receiving 47% of the vote and Gorman gaining with 43% of the vote and a 4.5% margin of error (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999). In further discussion of the poll, the Courier-Journal reported that Northup “remains better known than Gorman and has more support from those most likely to vote” (McDonough, 1998, A1). Notably, during this time, Gorman’s campaign had just released its first television spot ads. A comparison between the polls finds Northup’s eleven point lead from the summer shrinking to seven and then to four only days before the election. In the worst case scenario, with the margin of error included, Northup could fall half a point behind Gorman.
In contrast, Northup’s pollster conducted two polls during October that indicated a considerably cushioned lead for Northup. The first poll conducted from October 9, 1998, to October 11, 1998, by Voter Consumer Research (VCR) found Northup in a twenty-point lead at 56% to 36% (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999). Their follow-up poll, conducted from October 24, 1998, to October 25, 1998, did indicate a small dip in Northup’s lead at 53% to 38% (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999).

A poll conducted for the National Republican Campaign Committee (NRCC) by Zogby substantiated the VCR poll, although it did not replicate the numbers exactly. The Zogby poll, conducted on October 12, 1998, indicated a 68% favorability for Northup, a 55% to 31% matchup between Northup and Gorman, respectively, and 14% of the voters as undecided (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999).

Gorman began campaigning against Northup with messages such as “[she] doesn’t represent the core values we believe in” (Melnykovych, 1998, X2), that Northup “is too close to Newt Gingrich” (Cross, 1998, B3) and “very, very, very conservative” (Garrett, 1998, D1). Through such comments, Gorman clearly sought to create the perception of radical conservatism in a strongly Democratic district. As the campaign wore on, Gorman criticized Northup’s stand on
Social Security, stating during an October debate, "The Republicans have never liked Social Security, because they represent primarily wealthy people" (Jennings, 1998c, B1).

In one of his late October ads, Gorman also attacked Northup for her vote to begin an open-ended impeachment inquiry (Nord, 1998, B1). Only one of three Democrats in the country running in a "hotly contested" race to use the impeachment vote as a campaign issue, the Courier-Journal cites Gorman as stating the following in his spot ad:

If you want to spend another two years investigating the president’s sex life, vote for Anne Northup. After four years and $40 million, Anne Northup voted with Newt Gingrich to continue the investigation. They’re so focused on getting Bill Clinton that they’ve forgotten about the rest of us (Nord, 1998, B1).

As in 1996, Northup did not hesitate to run negative attack ads against her opponent. Running her negative ads in the last two weeks of the campaign, Northup not only used them to defend her position on specific issues but also to attack Gorman’s character and professional dealings. Ultimately, Northup secured the vote by four narrow points, the smallest margin of any 1998 Congressional House race in Kentucky.
Identifying Elements of the Rhetorical Situation

In order to identify the elements of the rhetorical situations to which Northup's spot ads respond, I rely on press accounts of the campaign, published polls, demographics, and historical records. Following the model provided by Smith and Lybarger (1996), this study will seek not just one "controlling" exigence. Instead, the analysis searches for multiple exigences to which Northup's ads respond, the multiple audiences she seeks to move, and the multiple constraints she must overcome.

Upon examination of the available data, I identify two rhetorical exigences in this campaign, the first of which is the underlying, foundational rhetorical exigence. The foundational exigence consists of the actual election process, identified by Bitzer (1980) as a recurring situation that demands response from the candidates. In other words, candidates who participate in the election and run for office must present their message through the avenues established by the recurring situation. This foundational exigence closely relates to Bitzer's (1968) controlling exigence, defined as that "which functions as the organizing principle. . .specif[y]ing the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (p. 7). However, this study considers an election as foundational versus
controlling because the use of foundational releases the critic to explore additional exigences as they arise within the framework of the election.

By its nature, this foundational exigence establishes the foundational audience and the change desired. The foundational audience consists of the constituents registered to vote in Kentucky's Third Congressional District. Throughout the election, sections of this audience may be asked to respond to other arising exigences, as only they can fulfill the responsibility of an agent of change. Nonetheless, by virtue of the election, the foundational audience will not differ; they are the only audience able to effect the outcome at the voting booth for this race.

For Northup, the decision she asks the voters to make in this situation involves voting for her reelection to Congress. However, as Bitzer (1968) explains, constraints contained in the rhetorical situation "have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (p. 8). The constraints that arise from this foundational situation arise from both the historical context and social culture of the state and the district, as well as the candidates. From 1931 to 1996, Kentucky voters did not send a woman to Congress. Only once, two years prior, had the
Third District elected a woman to win a national race, and clearly a woman had never been reelected to Congress from the District. Regardless of whether this first constraint results from beliefs, attitudes, traditions, interests, or motives of the audience or social culture, the fact that Northup’s gender may constrain the decision of the audience requires attention from her campaign to overcome possible objections.

A second important constraint evolves from the political demographics of the audience. Electorate registration data indicate that the registered voters overwhelmingly consider themselves Democrats, while Northup runs on the Republican ticket. One poll conducted during the campaign suggested that on a general ballot the Democratic candidate would receive 49% of the vote to the Republican’s 29% (National Journal Cloak Room, 1999), clearly a Republican defeat. Additionally, prior to Northup’s 1996 election, Democrats had represented the Third District in Washington for twenty-six years. Again, whether this constraint results from beliefs, attitudes, traditions, interests, or motives of the audience or social culture, Northup’s political affiliation may constrain the audience as voters in this race.
In addition to beliefs, attitudes, traditions, interests, and motives, Bitzer (1968) suggests that people who play a part in the rhetorical situation may create constraints. In this foundational situation, Northup's opponent, Gorman, therefore logically creates a third important constraint. Because Northup relies on the audience to modify the exigence by voting for her reelection, those who choose to vote for Gorman decrease her lead in the race and thus, potentially, her chance for victory.

Finally, Bitzer (1968) includes the speaker's personal character as a constraint. This constraint plays an important role in all elections, and in response, campaigns produce image-building spot ads to convince voters that the candidate possesses the characteristics necessary to fulfill the role of an elected official. Although previously elected, Northup must build a new image during this campaign, that of an incumbent, not a challenger.

In any election, the foundational rhetorical situation exists until election night. However, as Bitzer's critics argue, additional rhetorical situations may arise that influence and interact with the foundational situation. As this study focuses on Northup's rhetorical discourse presented through her spot ads, the second rhetorical
situation examined in this analysis arises when Gorman begins his spot ad campaign. Until two weeks before the election, Northup dominated the paid media with her spot ad campaign. Beginning her spot ads in August, she took advantage of the opportunity to present an uncontested image to the television viewing audience. However, in late October, Gorman launched his media campaign, not only challenging the image Northup presented but also presenting an alternative image for the voters to consider.

Under Bitzer’s (1968) definition, Gorman’s launching of his media campaign responded to “a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 6), simply a one-candidate spot ad race. Therefore, by initiating the spot ad race, Northup placed Gorman in the response mode. However, once Gorman began running his spot ads, which press accounts indicate included negative attack ads against Northup, a new situation presented itself to which Northup had to respond. Suddenly, Northup’s image fell under attack through a very visible medium, creating an imperfection requiring urgent response.

The audience, or mediators of change, in this situation consisted of those voters potentially influenced by Gorman’s messages in his spot ad campaign and those on whom Northup’s response could have a positive influence. Certainly if the only audience for which Northup had concern consisted of her
strong and loyal supporters, she would not have a need to respond to the exigence at all. The strong and loyal supporters would not be swayed by the introduction of Gorman’s campaign, and thus would not require any additional influence to secure their vote. Neither would Northup consider Gorman’s loyal supporters capable of being influenced by her responsive spot ads.

However, one poll indicated that after Gorman launched his spot ad campaign Northup’s seven point lead narrowed to four points (McDonough, 1998, A1). Additionally, 32% of those polled had an unfavorable impression of Northup compared to Gorman’s 28% unfavorable rating (McDonough, 1998, A1). Therefore, many undecided and impressionable voters created the audience in this rhetorical situation.

The potential constraints in this situation consist of many similar constraints from the foundational rhetorical situation. Certainly, gender stereotypes present a constraint, as attacking the other candidate many times results in negative repercussions directed toward the female candidate sponsoring the ad. Cultural stereotypes of what it means to be a woman may present difficulties, and result in stereotypical comments such as those in 1996 that chastised Northup for not running a “more ladylike campaign.” Additionally, Northup’s political party may
create an additional constraint, depending on the image Gorman portrays of Northup in his attack ads. Finally, Gorman’s self-representation as possessing an understanding of the job responsibilities, providing answers to important issues, and possessing the characteristics that fulfill the voters’ ideal of who should represent their district present constraints to Northup. During the first seven weeks of her spot ad campaign, Northup had the luxury of presenting the only answer to the voters’ need to elect a candidate. With the entrance of Gorman’s spot ad campaign, the voters suddenly had an alternative image to consider.
CHAPTER 4

NORTHUP'S 1998 SPOT AD CAMPAIGN

The compilation reel of Northup's spot ads indicates that eleven ads ran during the campaign, with the first spot ad running August 26, 1998. Four additional ads began running throughout September, and the final six ads began running in October. The same media consultant produced all eleven ads.

The first seven ads that Northup's campaign aired focused on Northup, her personal character, issues, and her activities during her first term in Congress. Of the final four ads in Northup's spot ad campaign, two consist of negative attacks on Gorman, one summarizes Northup's record and accomplishments during her first term in Congress, and the fourth combines an attack on Gorman with an attempt to regain image on an issue.

Of the first six spot ads run in the campaign, five feature Northup, and she personally presents the message throughout the entire ad. One spot ad, the second launched in the campaign, features a mixture of Northup directly
speaking to the viewer and an announcer explaining her accomplishments. Of the five spot ads aired from October 15, 1998, until the election, two use an announcer to deliver the complete message, two combine the announcer with constituents or witnesses, and one features Northup delivering the complete message.

Image Building Strategies:
Televising the Northup Image

In order to analyze the image building strategies employed by Northup as a response to the rhetorical situations in her 1998 reelection campaign, this study presents a framework that consists of Miller et al.'s (1984) prototype dimensions and Burke's (1969) consubstantiality dimension, as discussed in chapter two. The prototype resulting from this combination consists of six dimensions: competence, integrity, reliability, charisma, observable features, and consubstantiality. I analyzed the discourse of each spot ad, identifying messages that emphasized the characteristics of the prototype dimensions.

The first spot ad, "Sentence," which began airing on August 26, 1998, emphasizes four of the six prototype dimensions: competence, reliability, charisma, and consubstantiality. Northup emphasizes her comprehension of
political issues, realism, and her willingness to work hard by stating, “I found the federal government had 27 reading programs, but none of them was [sic] based on the latest scientific research on how kids actually learn to read.” She further emphasizes her statesmanship and leadership by stating, “So I founded the reading caucus with a Democratic colleague,” and not only emphasizes statesmanship but aggressiveness and strength with the statement, “I pushed legislation to improve our reading programs.” Northup uses consubstantiality in phrases such as “our reading programs” and “our children,” combining it with reference to realism by stating, “It’s only common sense” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, “Sentence,” 1998).

In the second spot ad, “Flood,” both Northup and an announcer deliver the message. This ad began airing on September 2, 1998, and four particular dimensions, competence, reliability, charisma, and consubstantiality receive attention in this ad. Northup delivers two statements, both of which encourage the viewer’s identification with Northup and she with the viewers. Northup opens the spot ad with her first statement, “Louisville owes its life to the river, but sometimes the Ohio reminds us that it was here first.” Northup’s second statement notes, “Sometimes the river’s challenge is just
getting over it.” Although both statements subtly use identification, Northup acknowledges that her constituents understand and commonly identify with these issues, as she suggests “we’re all in this together” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, “Flood,” 1998).

The announcer’s statements remind the viewers of Northup’s first term accomplishments from which they benefit and emphasize her competence, reliability, and charisma. The announcer identifies her leadership in noting “When the floods came in 1997, Anne Northup made a difference”; he concludes that the difference consists of “[f]ighting for millions of dollars for Louisville’s flood cleanup and prevention.” The use of the word “fighting” emphasizes her aggressiveness and strength, and the illustration that Northup fought for “million of dollars” for the cleanup reinforces her as one who shapes policies and exercises political leadership. The announcer again promotes her statesmanship, comprehension of political issues, and political experience in stating, “There hasn’t been a new bridge over the Ohio in thirty years, until Anne Northup helped with the funds to begin work on two new bridges.” The announcer ends the spot ad with a reiteration of her leadership, concluding, “Anne Northup. Making a difference” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, “Flood,” 1998).
The media campaign released the third spot ad, “Kevin,” on September 10, 1998, featuring Northup, her son, and her parents throughout the ad. Northup verbalizes the entire message with discourse that promotes reliability, consubstantiality, and competence. By indicating that her son and her parents “remind me every day of the challenge to protect Social Security,” she begins to build consubstantiality with those voters who also have children in school and parents whom they take care of or may take care of in the near future. She further builds identification with the viewer by stating, “Our first priority is to protect our seniors’ benefits” (emphasis added). The conciseness of the statement and its conviction seem to suggest Northup’s strength and decisiveness in prioritizing political issues.

Northup further decisively states, “Social Security funds should go only to pay benefits and not for any other program,” followed by the statement, “Younger workers should have a choice of putting some Social Security money in investment accounts like IRA’s to earn higher rates.” Northup’s design of this argument presents an interesting identification strategy. In one statement, she seeks to align her views with those of seniors and middle aged constituents who may have concerns for their parents’ future
financial state. However, her next statement attempts to align her views with those of younger constituents as well as those middle-aged constituents who wish to invest their money elsewhere. In essence, Northup seeks to identify with several audiences, some of which may blend but all of which have a vested interest for various reasons. The combination of statements also insinuates that Northup believes she has researched and appropriately understands the political issue of Social Security.

Northup concludes the spot ad with the statement “Social Security is a lasting commitment, from one generation to the next.” This statement allows Northup to suggest that all generations can depend on her to protect their interests involving Social Security. This spot ad also references the observable features dimension. Throughout the ad Northup refers to her family through her discourse, including specific members as participants in the spot ad.

Northup’s fourth ad, “Shot,” also began airing on September 10, 1998, emphasizing the issue of health care. The discourse in this ad, presented by Northup’s voice, describes Northup’s stand on health care issues and emphasizes the dimensions of competence, reliability, and consubstantiality. In addition to her directing
identification discourse toward parents, the first sentences of the spot ad incorporate reference to family, an observable feature in the ad:

Sometimes, kids don’t like going to the doctor, because the shots hurt. And parents don’t like to go because the bills hurt. Woody and I have six kids. We know how much good health care matters (Gannon McCarthy Mason, "Shot," 1998).

Northup then stresses her political experience, comprehension of the health care issue, and statesmanship with such statements as, "I voted for the Patient Protection Act which gives every American the freedom to choose their own doctor, that makes insurance more affordable, and gives the doctors the last word on your care, not a clerk or bureaucrat." Finally, Northup expresses her decisiveness and strength, while attempting to emphasize leadership and foster identification with the audience by stating, "Every American deserves quality health care at affordable prices" (Gannon McCarthy Mason, "Shot," 1998).

Northup’s fifth ad, “Outtakes,” fully emphasizes consubstantiality through humor in an attempt to show a very human, approachable candidate. This spot ad began airing on September 20, 1998, and features outtakes from commercials Northup filmed with children. Although the discourse does
not have particular meaning, the viewer watches Northup struggle with saying her lines while the children act up and distract her, as many can empathize with the unpredictability of children. Yet, Northup handles all situations in a calm and cool manner. The ad does not generate the humor from Northup’s self-deprecation, or by making fun of the children; instead, the spot ad allows the audience to identify, through humor, with a realistic, normal, human candidate.

The sixth commercial to air in Northup’s spot ad campaign, “Better,” began running on October 7, 1998. Again, Northup discusses her stand on Social Security, while emphasizing competence, charisma, and integrity. Northup acknowledges that President Clinton requested $680 billion for Social Security, then states, “We did better. We dedicated more than twice that amount...” While indicating her statesmanship and political experience in the first statement, through the second statement Northup suggests that her constituents can trust her to make sound political decisions. Northup follows with the warning, “Don’t let others fool you,” suggesting again her trustworthiness and honesty in telling the voters the truth. She continues, “We passed a good plan and your Social Security is safer than it has been in twenty-five years,”
emphasizing her leadership, statesmanship, and comprehension of political issues (Gannon McCarthy Mason, "Better," 1998).

The seventh ad, "Sketch," began running on October 15, 1998, featuring an artist's hand sketching a picture throughout the announcer's message. The announcer begins by asking the viewer how they would describe a "good member of Congress," and then proceeds to provide a definition. Throughout the discourse, the announcer refers to the "good member" in female pronouns (she, her), and emphasizes the dimensions of competence, integrity, reliability, charisma, and consubstantiality. The announcer incorporates words such as "honest" and "fair" to fulfill the integrity dimension, and phrases such as "she should care about people," and "[she should have] taken the time to deliver on local concerns and projects" to suggest dependability, strength, sincerity, and statesmanship. The announcer further states, "She should have been singled out as a rising star in just her first two years in Congress," emphasizing both leadership and again statesmanship. The announcer also indicates identification as an important point, stating she should "share our community's values." When the spot ad reaches its conclusion, the audience can see that the artist has sketched a picture of Northup.
The eighth ad of the spot ad campaign, "Quotes," began running on October 22, 1998, launching Northup’s negative attack ads against her opponent. The ad features quotes from “the Courier,” the Louisville Courier-Journal, and an announcer presents the message. Although this ad does not mention Northup or present any information to fulfill the voters’ prototype of Northup, the ads attack Gorman within the four dimensions of competence, integrity, charisma, and reliability. The ad challenges Gorman’s competence with phrases such as, “not in touch with reality” and “doesn’t understand the magnitude of the problem.” The ad challenges Gorman’s integrity by stating, “with a tendency to shoot from the hip,” “turn disagreements into personal animosities,” and challenges his charisma by stating, “Gorman has engaged in bitter arguments with Jefferson County Judge Executive Dave Armstrong.” The announcer further raises questions about Gorman’s reliability by stating Gorman “behaved like a loose cannon” and “has acquired a reputation as a volatile personality” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, “Quotes,” 1998).

The ninth ad of Northup’s campaign, “Suspicious,” ran just days later on October 26, 1998. The ad again attacks Gorman, and in addition to the announcer verbalizing the message, three constituents provide comments. The attacks
focus on three dimensions, Gorman's competence, reliability, and integrity. The announcer launches the first attack on both dependability and statesmanship, noting that in response to complaints filed against a homebuilder during Gorman's tenure as Attorney General, "Gorman did nothing."

The ad then features a female constituent who states, "It makes me very suspicious of Chris Gorman," attacking his honesty, dependability, and trustworthiness. In response to the announcer's statement that Gorman then took a high paying job with that same home building company, the ad features a second female constituent who raises question as to his honesty by stating, "When he said that he was for the consumers, it just blew my mind."

The announcer then states, "Now, Gorman falsely attacks Anne Northup on Social Security" to indicate Gorman's lack of dignity, honesty, and comprehension of political issues. The ad then features a male constituent who suggests a lack of trustworthiness, honesty and dependability by stating, "I think Chris Gorman would play dirty politics" (Gannon McCarthy Mason, "Suspicious," 1998).

The announcer's final statement reinforces the attack on Gorman's trustworthiness, dependability, and strength by stating, "He didn't protect consumers, and he won't protect seniors." By presenting these selected attacks on Gorman,
Northup's ads clearly insinuate that Northup presents the preferred alternative and possesses the characteristics required to fulfill the prototype.

Northup launched the final two ads on October 29, 1998. The tenth ad, "Making a Difference," features Northup presenting the message and focuses on the characteristics of competence, reliability, and charisma. Northup begins by acknowledging that her opponent attempts to link her with Gingrich and Clinton's scandal; however, she provides a strong response, stating, "But neither one is on the ballot here, I am." In her statement, "And I am proud to have helped pass the first balanced budget in thirty years," Northup emphasizes her statesmanship, leadership, and political experience. In Northup's next statement, she cites her leadership and strength, respectively, noting that she "co-founded the Reading Caucus" and "pushed for better reading programs." Northup reinforces the characteristics of strength, leadership, and statesmanship as she states, "I helped win funds for two new bridges and for flood prevention," and "I voted for the biggest financial commitment for Social Security in American history." Northup's ad concludes with a reference to humbleness as she states, "You elected me to make a difference. If you
believe I have, I really need your vote” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, "Making a Difference," 1998).

The eleventh and final ad compiled for Northup’s spot ad campaign, “Home,” again combines the presentation of the message with an announcer and secondary sources. This ad was produced in response to an attack Gorman launched on Northup regarding the possible relocation of a Home of the Innocents shelter to her neighborhood.

Home of the Innocents is an organization that “cares for teen-age mothers and children who are bedridden by multiple handicaps or have been abused or neglected” (Bartlett, 1995, B1). In 1995, the organization sought to purchase land located near Northup’s home from the Ursiline Sisters, with plans to build a new shelter. A January 18, 1995, Louisville Courier-Journal article quoted Northup, a State Representative at the time, as stating, “All of us believe that these children deserve emergency shelter. What we don’t believe is that their families need to be coming in and out of our neighborhoods” (Bartlett, 1995, B1).

Ultimately, the Louisville-Jefferson County Planning Commission denied Home of the Innocent’s request to build their new shelter on the Ursuline campus, citing “problems with the network of narrow roads that lead to the site” (Walloort, 1995, B1). Northup’s 1996 opponent launched a
spot ad that listed her quote and suggested the Courier-Journal criticized her stand, to which Northup responded through her own campaign spot ad, denying that she had any role in the Planning Commission’s decision.

Although the issue was over three years old, Northup responded to Gorman’s attack, combining an attack on Gorman with an attempt to vindicate Northup after Gorman’s attack. The announcer begins by acknowledging Gorman’s attack on Northup regarding the Home of the Innocents, then suggests the viewer should listen to the next two speakers because they “were there.” The first speaker, an attorney who “represented the Home of the Innocents in this case,” indicates Northup “had nothing to do with it.” The second speaker, indicates that “Anne Northup had no role in the Home of the Innocents’ movement to the Ursuline campus, none whatsoever.” The announcer concludes by attacking Gorman’s integrity, stating, “Gorman’s attack is nothing more than a desperate lie, exploiting innocent children. . .Chris Gorman, a mean politician you can’t trust” (Gannon McCarthy Mason, “Home,” 1998).
Image Building Strategies:
Fulfilling the Prototype?

Throughout her spot ad campaign, Northup's messages fulfill the six dimensions of the prototype described for this study. However, the emphasis Northup places on the dimensions differs throughout her campaign, as the following table summarizes:

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<tr>
<th>Ad No.</th>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Charisma</th>
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Y = Northup's use of image building strategies that emphasize the dimension
XX = Northup's use of a negative attack on Gorman that falls within the dimension

The dimensions on which Northup's spot ads place the strongest emphasis consist of competence, reliability, and consubstantiality. Northup emphasizes her statesmanship and comprehension of political issues throughout the campaign,
as well as her political experience. Additionally, Northup’s messages stress her reliability through illustrations of her strength, aggressiveness, decisiveness, dependability, and hard work. Northup’s spot ads also employ rhetoric to establish identification between herself and the audience. Through humor, reference to specific Louisville concerns (flood, traffic), familial concerns, and use of the inclusive pronoun “our” Northup’s spot ad messages seek to facilitate audience feelings of likeness and similarity. More importantly, Northup seeks to indicate that she identifies with the audience.

Under the charisma dimension, Northup’s spot ads emphasize leadership; however, the spot ads do not reference this characteristic consistently throughout the campaign. The other characteristic expressed under this dimension, humbleness, does not appear in Northup’s messages until the tenth spot ad.

Interestingly, the integrity dimension receives attention in Northup’s spot ads just prior to her launching negative attack ads against Gorman. In the ad released on October 7, 1998, an inference to the audience’s ability to trust Northup is used. In the ad released eight days later, the message emphasizes her honesty, trustworthiness, and sincerity. Certainly, Northup may have employed this
strategy to establish her integrity with the voters prior to Gorman’s launching of negative spot ads. Additionally, the strategy could have been used to soften the potential backlash once her negative ads against Gorman aired. Nonetheless, the positioning in this strategy’s use deserves attention.

Finally, Northup’s rhetorical references to observable characteristics occur twice through references to family. As Northup presents the family reference, the spot ad uses pictures to reinforce the observable reference and support the message.

Therefore, in response to the first research question of this study that asks what rhetorical strategies Northup employs to build an image in her televised spot ads, Northup’s main rhetorical strategies include consistently emphasizing her competence, reliability, and developing consubstantiality with her audience. Northup also employs rhetorical messages to emphasize her possession of charismatic characteristics; however, she does not emphasize charisma as a dominant strategy. Finally, Northup strategically chooses her use of rhetoric to emphasize integrity, and sparsely employs a reference to only one observable characteristic, her family.
The second research question of this study asks if Northup's image building strategies fulfill the six dimensions employed in this thesis to complete the voters' image prototype of a political candidate. Through her utilization and development of these strategies, Northup's rhetorical image building strategies emphasize characteristics that fulfill the six prototype dimensions employed in this study. Clearly, each dimension receives differing levels of emphasis; however, ultimately Northup builds the image required by the prototype.
CHAPTER 5
RESPONDING TO THE RHETORICAL SITUATIONS: FITTING RESPONSES?

This analysis defines two rhetorical situations to which Northup’s spot ads must respond. The first consists of the foundational situation, in other words, the election itself. As this study examines Northup’s spot ad campaign and the strategies employed by that campaign, a second rhetorical situation arises that revolves around the introduction of Gorman’s spot ad campaign. However, responding to the third and fourth research questions requires an analysis of the relationship between the elements of the rhetorical situations and the strategies of the spot ad campaign. As presented in chapter two, the third research question asks if Northup’s rhetorical strategies provide a fitting response to the rhetorical situation of her 1998 Congressional reelection campaign, and the fourth research question asks if Northup, through her image building strategies, alters the rhetorical situation such that the original constraints are modified and the
requirements of the fitting response thus shift to a newly created rhetorical situation?

In order to establish criteria for determining if Northup responded fittingly to the rhetorical situations, I first looked to Bitzer’s 1968 article that introduced the rhetorical situation theory. Bitzer (1968) notes that “the second characteristic of [the] rhetorical situation is that it invites a fitting response, a response that fits the situation” (p. 10, emphasis original). However, Bitzer does not elaborate on how the critic determines the fitting nature of the response. Bitzer’s 1980 essay provides some additional discussion, indicating that “[r]hetorical messages are corrective” in two ways:

First, messages are invited by situations presenting an actual or potential exigence which the messages will correct or positively modify. . . . Second, messages are invited by situations as a requisite for continued and successful situational activity: if the messages were not uttered or were not fitting, then latent exigences would come into existence (p. 37, emphasis original).

Following Bitzer’s (1980) identification of the first manner in which rhetorical messages are corrective, he provides the following examples:
For example, a charge made in a political campaign discredits the motives of a candidate, who responds to the actual exigence he [she] perceives; a candidate anticipates that his [her] voting record will be attacked and thus sees a potential exigence, which he [she] checks by means of speeches favorably interpreting his [her] record (p. 37, emphasis original).

Therefore, Bitzer offers criteria that a fitting response provides corrective action to an actual or potential exigence, and that it must contribute to the success of the situation's activity. To add another dimension to these criteria, I draw from Jamieson's (1973) discussion of generic constraints and antecedent rhetoric. Jamieson (1973) states, "A genre of rhetoric contains specimens of rhetoric which share characteristics distinguishing them from specimens of other rhetorical genres" (p. 162). Jamieson (1973) further states that "perception of the proper response to an unprecedented rhetorical situation grows not merely from the situation but also from antecedent rhetorical forms" (p. 163). While Bitzer (1968) tells the critic that the situation invites response and that the responses must fit the situation, he does not take into consideration those dichotomous
situations in which the institution may call for a response and yet the speaker must consider the cultural implications of providing such a response in the manner established by the antecedent rhetoric. Jamieson (1973) begins to provide us with that qualification as she proposes:

One element in the implied contract between rhetor and audience is a clause stipulating that he [she] fulfill rather than frustrate the expectations created for the audience by previous rhetoric generated in response to similar situations (p. 167).

Jamieson’s (1973) point is important for the critic to consider when studying female candidate spot ads. In regard to negative spot ads, not only must the female candidate respond to the institutional situation that has perpetuated in modern campaigns--responding to attack ads with attack ads--but she must also avoid violating the implied contract of cultural expectations, causing the audience to become frustrated and thus relinquish their vote. In their study of negative spot ads, Trent and Sabourin (1993) note that “it is reasonable to assume that women may well make an effort to avoid the appearance of defying normative behavior even while using a campaign tool as blatantly ‘unfeminine’ as negative advertising” (p. 23).
Therefore, I propose that while a critic must focus on the corrective nature of the response, the genre of the situation also requires consideration in accordance with cultural expectations. Jamieson (1973) cautions, "Genres should not be viewed as static forms but as evolving phenomena" (p. 168).

With these criteria in mind, the first rhetorical situation identified in this study contains the foundational exigence that arose from the electoral event. The election served as a rhetorical exigence for Northup because the positive modification, her reelection to Congress, required discourse to confirm with the voters that she had represented them successfully, fulfilled her responsibilities, and that they should vote for her because she was the best candidate in the race. In this rhetorical situation, the audience to which Northup needed to direct her discourse consisted of Kentucky’s Third Congressional District voters, as they were the only voters able to change Northup’s uncertain electoral situation into a confirmed reelection. Additionally, the potential constraints in this situation consisted of Northup’s gender, her political party affiliation, and her personal character.

Regarding the foundational rhetorical situation, I argue that Northup’s image-building strategies did provide a
fitting response. Northup’s use of consubstantiality encouraged identification between herself and her constituents on issues stressed during the campaign. Such issues included health care, social security, reading programs, and local concerns. Northup constructed an image that showed she understood how her constituents felt and that indicated her views supported their needs. In addition, she encouraged a feeling of community in the district, as she used “our” to express shared concern for children and seniors, for reading programs and social security benefits.

Northup’s strategy of emphasizing competence and reliability not only built her personal character but also assisted in overcoming any potential gender constraints. If any gender-related culture stereotypes existed regarding her ability to be aggressive, decisive, or strong in representing the voters’ concerns, Northup responded to the constraint. Consistently she emphasized an image, stemming from her first term accomplishments, that she had successfully handled the job. Additionally, with the strength of incumbency, she emphasized and reemphasized her experience in statesmanship and comprehension of political issues.
Interestingly, prior to the time when her personal character came under attack, Northup had already launched two ads that included references to her honesty and trustworthiness. By claiming these qualities, Northup continued to build the image of her personal character, and reiterated to the audience that they could trust her to represent them honestly and respond to their concerns.

These strategies provided a fitting response by building the prototype dimensions that scholars argue fulfill the voters' image of a successful political candidate, providing a corrective action to an actual exigence. In accordance with Jamieson's (1973) discussion of the implied contract between the rhetor and audience, Northup fulfilled the audience's expectations for a candidate qualified to represent them in Congress. In support of this analysis, a poll conducted by the Courier-Journal from October 20, 1998, to October 26, 1998, reported Northup as better known than Gorman and as receiving more support from "those most likely to vote" (McDonough, 1998, A1). Arguably, at that point in the race, her spot ads had assisted the campaign in positively building the Northup image.

The second rhetorical situation identified in this study revolved around the introduction of Gorman's spot ad
campaign during the race. Bitzer's (1980) example of a candidate responding to an actual exigence acknowledges that when a charge is made against a candidate, the situation invites a response. In this race, this situation presented a rhetorical exigence for Northup in two ways. First, the situation suddenly required discourse to repair and defend Northup's image from Gorman's attacks. Second, Northup was required to refute the "qualified" image of Gorman presented by his ads in order to keep him from developing a competing image.

In this rhetorical situation, the audience Northup needed to direct her discourse toward consisted of undecided Third District voters. Such voters qualified as mediators of change because, without a firm voting decision already made, they were the most likely to be in search of information on which to base their voting decision; they may have been less involved than other voters, and thus may have received much of their candidate information from television. Because the race remained close, Northup had to respond to the exigence and appeal to the voters through her discourse to ensure that her image remained electable. Additionally, the constraints that Northup had to overcome again involved her gender and political party, as well as her opponent, Gorman, and his attack against her image and
presentation of an alternative image for the voters to consider.

Northup’s strategy of employing negative attacks against Gorman involved her attack on his character, as well as her attack on his professional dealings while in a public office. Her first attack ad did not air until three days after Gorman’s spot ad campaign aired, and her second ad aired a full seven days after. In both ads, Northup attacked Gorman’s personal character using third party quotations. A third ad defended Northup from an attack delivered by Gorman, used testimonial third party speakers, and finished with another attack by the announcer against Gorman’s personal character.

Granted, these three ads did not incorporate direct image building strategies for Northup’s benefit. However, by arguing Gorman’s lack of positive characteristics in the dimensions of competence, reliability, integrity, and charisma, these ads served to infer Northup possessed such positive characteristics. Requiring consideration, however, is the risky nature of a female issuing an attack against her opponent. Cultural gender stereotypes may caution against this practice, as females may be perceived negatively when attacking. However, several of the
strategies Northup used in issuing her attacks deserve further attention.

First, Northup did not deliver the attacks. The only mention of Northup in the first ad occurred on a small sponsor's by-line at the bottom of the last frame. In the second ad the announcer mentioned Northup by stating Gorman "falsely attack[ed]" her on Social Security, and included the same sponsor's by-line that mentioned her name. A male announcer delivered both messages, and in the first ad all attacks were credited to major newspaper quotes. These strategies served to distance Northup from the negativity of the attacks, potentially seeking to lessen the response toward a female issuing negative attacks, as well as serving to increase the perceived credibility of the attacks.

One of the last two ads of the final four that Northup released after Gorman aired his spot ad campaign offered the only direct reinforcement of her image. I am unaware of the full extent of the media buys that occurred in this campaign, and thus cannot suggest that these four ads present the only ads Northup ran during the last two weeks of the campaign. Realistically, previously successful ads that produced the necessary message, as determined by Northup's campaign staff, ran during this time, offering the audience additional reinforcement of her image. However, it
is apparent that this later ad was the only new ad containing discourse directed by image building strategies.

This tenth ad, as listed in the compilation reel and so numbered by this study, emphasized Northup’s competence, reliability, and charisma. She opened the ad with a reference to “my opponent,” and designed the ad’s discourse as a combination of refuting an attack by Gorman and fostering her own image. Northup’s use of image building strategies defined her as strong, decisive, and as possessing statesmanship. Such strategies assisted her in overcoming stereotypes of the gender culture.

Northup’s discourse also emphasized her political experience, leadership, and willingness to work hard for the voters’ concerns. Such strategies suggested an effort on Northup’s behalf to express to the largely Democratic audience that her concerns and successful record had encompassed a wide variety of issues, and represented a broad range of constituents, both Democrats and Republicans. Due to the attacks that presented Northup as an extreme conservative, this strategy was required in order to overcome the political party constraint.

In a response to the fourth research question, which asks if Northup, through her image building strategies, alters the rhetorical situation by modifying the original
constraints and creating a new rhetorical situation, I conclude that from the research data available Northup does not alter the foundational rhetorical situation through her image building strategies. Although a second rhetorical situation did arise that required a response, the action needed to modify the exigence had to come from Northup. Northup's spot ad campaign focused strictly on creating and reinforcing her image prior to the launch of Gorman's spot ad campaign. Only shortly after the airing of Gorman's spot ads did she air the first negative attack ads of her campaign.

However, in response to the third research question, which asks if Northup's rhetorical strategies provide a fitting response, I also argue that in response to both rhetorical situations, Northup's spot ad campaign provided fitting responses. Certainly, one could assume that because she defeated Gorman, her strategies proved successful. However, such an analysis would be both near-sighted and irresponsible. Undoubtedly, as the academic literature indicates, spot ads play a significant role in the political candidate's campaign. However, such messages do not provide voters with the only source of voting information. Therefore, although a candidate's responses through one medium may critically appear fitting to the situation, other
campaign activities may present stronger influences and thus alter the final outcome of the election. In this case, however, Northup successfully achieved reelection. Through this analysis of her spot ad campaign, I have shown that she met the criteria for fitting responses by providing correctives to actual exigences, and by upholding the audience's expectations that she respond appropriately in both the cultural and institutional senses.

Limitations

Because the focus of this study revolves around the discourse presented in Northup's reelection spot ad campaign, the varied campaign speeches, debates, newspaper coverage, mailings, and other campaign influences were not explored in this study. Although I sought interviews with Northup's campaign staff to improve my understanding of her strategies, I was denied access. Additionally, I was unable to acquire Gorman's spot ads and their release dates in order to coordinate specific spot ad content and responses.

Future studies seeking to analyze the rhetorical situations of this election race should explore not only additional campaign events but also Gorman's campaign speeches, spot ads, and mailings. Such an analysis would provide an understanding of the evolution of the full
discourse of the race, allowing the scholar to determine additional rhetorical exigences and constraints, and to explore potentially fitting responses presented by Gorman as he tightened Northup’s lead between the primary and general election.

Implications

As more women enter the political arena, as voters become more accustomed to electing women to prominent political offices, and as more women receive the financial support necessary to compete in the media arena, critical studies of successful strategies for female candidates’ campaign spot ads become increasingly important. Although many academic studies explore the design and influence of political spot ads, this analysis contributes to the field of growing research on female candidate spot ads. Specifically, this study begins to remedy the minimal amount of research that explores successful female candidate spot ad strategies, as well as the qualitative analyses of their discourse. The qualitative focus on such ads not only allows for a deeper exploration of the influencing variables, constraints, and situations to which the spot ads respond but also offers a specific understanding of the
rhetorical strategies employed by the candidate and their effectiveness.

This study also contributes to the debate surrounding the recognition of image-building strategies as a focal point for study. While the voter may expect the candidate to expound on his or her stand regarding platform issues, I have illustrated how image-building strategies clearly weave throughout the candidate's message, ultimately seeking to fulfill the voter's mental prototype and win over another vote. However, I do recognize that undoubtedly the image-building strategies in the spot ads remain only one area of voter influence within the scope of a comprehensive political campaign.

In addition, by using Bitzer's rhetorical situation theory as an analytical framework, this study offers a unique application of his concepts. By combining the fundamental elements of Bitzer's 1968 and 1980 essays with the additional insights of his critics, I have illustrated that the rhetorical situation construct provides another valuable method through which the critic may choose to analyze influential discourse. Although this analysis makes evident the minimal direction Bitzer presents to the critic for determining a fitting response, Jamieson (1973) offers the critic a step toward defining the issue more clearly.
While Bitzer's (1980) criteria assert the need for a corrective response, Jamieson (1973) offers the qualification that the response must not frustrate the audience's expectations that arise from antecedent rhetoric. Analyzing the rhetorical situations and responses in this way illuminates the double bind in which many female politicians have found themselves. While they must respond to the institutional expectations, they must also consider the culture's gender expectations.

Through this analysis, I have highlighted Northup's rhetorical strategies that, in the situations identified, provide her with the means to meet her audience's expectations of both the institutional situation and its antecedent rhetoric, as well as the gender expectations arising from cultural variables. The study of this particular spot ad campaign, therefore, ultimately offers female candidates a unique view of how to provide successfully fitting responses through the art of spot ad image building.
References


D., & Sanders, K. R. (Eds.), New Perspectives on Political Advertising, (p. 21-54).


Endnotes

1 The Democratic party produced a small number of late running spot ads in the 1952 campaign, however none of the spot ads featured Stevenson. For more information, see Wood, 1990, p. 279-280.

2 The study identified expertise through the following semantic differential scales: competent-incompetent, trained-untrained, and qualified-unqualified (p. 224). The study identified coorientation by the following semantic differential scales: thinks like me—doesn’t think like me, similar to me—dissimilar to me, and attitudes like mine—attitudes unlike mine (p. 224). An objective decision and a subjective decision were presented to the participants, with the participant rating the source appropriateness of an identified expert or “cooriented peer” (their best friend).

3 The use of the word “statesman” or “statesmanship” is certainly incongruous with the study of a female politician. However, Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1984) incorporated “statesmanship” into their prototype based on a factor analysis of responses to questions involving male presidential candidates. For the purposes of this study, “statesmanship” will be used in the non-gender specific context derived from Webster's (1983) dictionary: 1. One versed in the principles or art of government; esp: one
actively engaged in conducting the business of a government
or in shaping its policies; 2. One who exercises political
leadership wisely and without narrow partisanship.

4 The authors argue that the "passive policy solutions
are consonant with traditional female qualities" (p. 196),
citing research to validate the need for female candidates
to refrain from appearing tough.

5 Bitzer (1980) notes that factual condition means "any
set of things, events, relations, ideas, meaning—anything
physical or mental—whose existence is (or is thought to be)
independent of one's personal subjectivity" (p. 28). Bitzer
(1980) defines interest as "any appreciation, need, desire,
or aspiration which, when related to factual conditions,
accounts for the emergence of motives and purposes" (p. 28).