



***A REPORT ON PRESIDENTIAL ADVERTISING  
AND THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTION:  
A Referendum on Character***

Produced by

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***Executive Summary***

- *The Report's Scope:* This report analyzes 38 general election ads from the Hillary Clinton campaign, 17 general election ads from the Donald Trump campaign, 15 ads from the Clinton Super PAC (Priorities USA Action), and 13 ads from the Trump Super PAC (Rebuilding America Now).
- The 2016 campaign ads represented a referendum on the candidates' character. Ten Clinton ads (26.3 percent) were predominately issues-focused or issue-leaning while the other 28 (73.7 percent) ads were character-focused or character-leaning. Donald Trump's relied on character attacks as the subject matter for approximately 35 percent of the ads released; of 17 total Trump ads, six ads were character attacks.
- The Clinton and Trump campaigns attacked their opponent through fear and anger appeals. Fear (14 ads, 36.8 percent) and anger (14 ads, 36.8 percent) were the second most used emotions for the Clinton campaign. Ten out of 17 of Trump's ads were coded with the emotion of "fear" or "anger."
- Super PAC ads followed the same patterns as the campaign ads: Of the 15 television ads Priorities USA Action released since the Democratic National Convention, 14 have been strictly negative attack ads. Each of these negative ads featured an attack on the character of Donald Trump. Of the 13 ads released by Rebuilding America Now, 11 (85 percent) were negative attacks on Hillary Clinton.
- The takeaway message of the 2016 campaign ads is that *neither candidate is fit to lead*. These character attacks in the 2016 ads will make governing difficult no matter the election's outcome.

## ***A Report on Presidential Advertising and the 2016 General Election: A Referendum on Character***

Since 1952, campaigns ads on radio, television, and now the internet have become one of the major ways that voters learn about presidential candidates.<sup>1</sup> Campaign ads function as a “second voice” for the campaign – teaching voters about the important issues and activating political discussion among them.<sup>2</sup> This report is produced by the *Political Advertising Resource Center* at the University of Maryland and identifies what these voices say about the 2016 presidential candidates during the general election: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The focus of this report centers on the ads produced by both the Clinton and Trump campaigns as well as the Super PAC ads produced in support of Clinton and Trump by Priorities USA Action and Rebuilding America Now.

By analyzing the 2016 campaign advertising, we seek to understand what the advertising revealed and concealed about the candidates and the state of American politics. Our analysis examines campaign ads released after the major conventions through late October.<sup>3</sup> We argue that the 2016 campaign ads represent a referendum on the character of the candidates. Both campaigns used fear and anger appeals to assault the character of their opponent, elevating the anxiety and cynicism surrounding the campaign beyond levels in recent memory.<sup>4</sup> The takeaway message is that *no leader is fit to lead*. These character attacks will likely resonate long after Election Day, inhibiting the ability of the next president to govern a divided electorate, no matter the outcome of the election.

We begin this analysis by situating the 2016 election within a historical context of televised campaign advertising and finance reporting. We then examine the campaign ad strategies of Clinton and Trump, respectively. We end with an analysis of the campaign ads of two opposing Super PACs: Priorities USA Action and Rebuilding America Now.

### **Campaign Ads: Historical Context**

From the country’s first contested election, political strategists have offered voters advertising that venerated their candidate and vilified his opponents as an essential strategy of the campaign.<sup>5</sup> The earliest campaigns used handbills to hurl insults at the opposition, but by 1928 radio became the primary medium of mass communication, transforming the political landscape. In 1952 the first television ad appeared during the 1952 presidential election between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson.<sup>6</sup> From handbills to television and beyond, twenty-first century campaigns can communicate with voters over a variety of communication channels. But in this analysis, we will focus on television advertising as a primary medium of communication between campaigns and voters. The first campaign ad aired during the 1952 presidential election between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. In that year, both campaigns ran television ads evoking World War II memories.<sup>7</sup> In the 1960s, campaigns turned toward more character driven spots with the 1964 presidential campaign being one of the most negative races since the advent of television. Lyndon B. Johnson’s campaign “characterized Goldwater as an extremist not to be trusted with America’s future,” with Johnson’s “Daisy” ad making a similar point in a more striking manner.<sup>8</sup> From the 1960s to today, political strategists have used issue positions to undermine the character of the opposition. In 1980, Republican challenger Ronald Reagan used President Jimmy Carter’s mishandling of the Iran crisis to accuse the president of being a “diplomatic criminal” who is

“weak and manageable.”<sup>9</sup> In 1996, President Bill Clinton began circulating ads on the Internet as well as on television, where he successfully characterized his opponent, Bob Dole, as insensitive to women, children, and minorities. And in 2004, ads George W. Bush’s campaign depicted John Kerry as a “flip-flopper” using an image of Kerry windsurfing and the tag line, “John Kerry: Whichever way the wind Blows.”<sup>10</sup> While character attacks have always been a feature of campaign advertising, during the 2016 election character attacks were the main ad strategy for both campaigns.

In terms of financial strategy, the decision of “when, where, and how often to broadcast ads” are known as “ad buys.” These choices influence “how candidates are seen by the viewing public,” and can have a “profound effect on the outcome of elections.”<sup>11</sup> Ad buys can be broadcasted to general audiences, reaching millions of viewers at a time. This was a common practice of the 1950s and 1960s when television was the dominant medium with three networks reaching 95 percent of the news audience. As communication media have developed and diversified, campaigns have turned to using highly targeted ad buys that can be customized to the attitudes and values of a single individual.

Historically, it has been difficult to study ad buys because of the laborious process required to amass information. Researchers were required to compile data directly from “candidates, the national networks, local television affiliates, or ad-buying services,” and create detailed logs based on how often specific ads aired in particular television markets.<sup>12</sup> But with technological advancements, and the Federal Communications Commission’s 2012 passage of a rule requiring that broadcasters in the top fifty markets post their political advertising information online, researchers can track information efficiently.<sup>13</sup> Though television no longer dominates the communication channel between campaigns and voters, there is much we can learn about the election from the strategies used in television advertising.

The 2016 election began with an unusual primary. The Republican field included a whopping 17 candidates, while the Democrats quickly narrowed the field from four candidates to a two-candidate race between Sen. Bernie Sanders and Secretary Hillary Clinton. Real estate mogul Donald J. Trump accepted the Republican nomination at a contentious convention in Cleveland where primary dropout Ted Cruz refused to endorse the nominee and was booed offstage.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the general election, Clinton’s private email server and Trump’s income tax history remained key topics in the media.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Hillary Clinton Campaign**

Hillary Clinton’s campaign organization, *Hillary for America*, produced 38 televised ads between July 7 and October 25. Through negative character attacks and strategic emotional appeals, we argue that Clinton’s campaign had an effective and airtight ad strategy for the 2016 general election. We begin our analysis of this 16-week period by summarizing Clinton’s campaign funding and spending. Then, we examine the rhetorical strategies of her 38 television ads. Finally, we will discuss the circulation of the advertisements and the reception by viewers.

### *Funding and Spending*

Campaign finance reports are split on the final figures for Clinton's campaign ad spending. Advertising Analytics for NBC cites that Clinton's campaign spent nearly \$142 million dollars on TV and radio ads as of October 25, 2016.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Kantar Media/CMAG for Bloomberg Analytics indicates Clinton's spending could be as high as \$172 million.<sup>17</sup> In addition to *Hillary for America's* spending, Super PACs and other outside support groups have spent an additional \$103 million dollars. Combined, ad spending in support of the Clinton campaign was three times more than the money spent on Trump's ad campaign.<sup>18</sup> And while Trump's campaign focused on digital ad buys, the Clinton campaign channeled its dollars toward more airtime on more traditional media, like television and radio.<sup>19</sup> Through September, Clinton spent an average of \$9.1 million dollars a week on televised advertisements in comparison to Trump's \$3 million dollar average each week.<sup>20</sup> Recent data shows that Trump "has been making a late surge in national buys, spending more than \$1 million per day beginning Oct. 26."<sup>21</sup> Clinton is also spending more, increasing her spending by 86 percent in the final week of the election. Both campaigns are targeting five states in their final efforts: Nevada, Florida, Ohio, and North Carolina.<sup>22</sup>

Though the Clinton campaign has vastly outspent the Trump campaign in terms of TV ad buys, the overall spending by both campaigns is far less than we have seen in the last two elections.<sup>23</sup> Even Clinton's spending seems modest compared to Obama's \$378 million in 2012. Sujan Patel of *Entrepreneur* suggests that one reason for this drop in spending is that the 2016 candidates are focusing more energy on electronic ads and social media, than television spots.<sup>24</sup> For example, Clinton's primary YouTube channel has released over 70 videos since July and 116 videos on her secondary YouTube channel, *The Briefing*, which far exceeds her 38 televised ads.<sup>25</sup>

Despite less TV ad spending, Clinton's fundraising levels have not dropped. As of October 24, 2016, Clinton's campaign had raised \$766.6 million dollars from donors.<sup>26</sup> Most of Clinton's major funders come from large, coastal metropolitan areas, including Silicon Valley. In August and into September, the top 10 zip codes contributing to the Clinton campaign were all on the East Coast, including zip codes in New York City, Washington, DC, and Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>27</sup> Sixteen percent of the funding for Clinton's campaign derived from small donors (\$200 or less) by the end of September.<sup>28</sup> With such impressive resources at their disposal, Clinton's campaign has converted their funds into an effective ad strategy.<sup>29</sup>

Swing states are the primary target for the Clinton campaign's ad placement. According to Adam Pearce of the *New York Times*, "Mrs. Clinton's advertising strategy has been consistent over the course of the general election, focusing primarily on Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania."<sup>30</sup> In the final two weeks of the campaign, Clinton's team is expected to pay the most attention to Florida, Ohio, and Nevada.<sup>31</sup> Clinton's campaign has also outspent Trump's campaign in North Carolina, Arizona, Nevada, Nebraska, and Texas.<sup>32</sup> Clinton's decision to spend money on TV advertising in Texas led headlines in October. A Democrat has not won Texas in the general election since Jimmy Carter in 1976. However, as of the third week in October, Clinton was only down six points in the polls. For comparison, Obama lost Texas by 16 points in 2012. After the *Dallas Morning News* endorsed Clinton for the presidency, Clinton ran an ad for one week in the Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin markets, spending a total of \$46,000. The ad drew attention to the atypical endorsement to diminish Trump's reputation with Republican voters; the newspaper has not

recommended a Democratic presidential candidate since World War II.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, Clinton’s campaign released the same ad in Spanish to broaden its reach to Nevada’s large Latino/a population. In sum, Clinton has spent \$163,000 dollars in Nevada.<sup>34</sup> Clinton’s strategies underscore the significance of Latino/a voters in this election. With just days left in the election (as of this writing), the Clinton campaign is counting on big spending in battleground states to carry her through Election Day.<sup>35</sup>

### *Advertising Strategies*

In terms of content, the ad strategy for *Hillary for America* was airtight, frequently using the words and images of Trump as ammunition in attack ads. While both Trump and Clinton used fear and anger to attack the opposition, the Clinton camp coupled negative attacks with uplifting representations of Clinton as a source of joy, optimism, pride, and progressive leadership. The Clinton campaign released 38 television ads between July 7 and October 25 with each ad framing Trump as unfit to lead and Clinton as the moral, fit candidate for president.

One common theme of the Clinton ad campaign was a frame of Clinton as the only logical choice in light of Trump’s questionable character. Over half of Clinton’s ads overtly attack Trump and an additional 24 percent of the ads reflect a hint of negativity when Trump is juxtaposed to Clinton. For example, ads such as “Myself,” “Families First,” and “General Allen” serve as part of a series of comparative attack ads questioning Trump’s fitness. The focus addresses his temperament and intelligence, which is contrasted with Clinton’s moral character, government experience, and steady temperament. To attack Trump, the ads appeal to emotions of fear, sadness, and anger.

“[Role Models](#)” is an exemplar of the Clinton attack strategy. This particular ad shows children watching repeated clips of Trump making offensive statements, from misogynistic insults to overt racism, and asks audiences to consider the presidency as a role model for children. The ad aesthetics evoke emotions of fear, anger, and sadness. At the end of the ad, Clinton is shown smiling, dressed in white and surrounded by light. Clinton is contrasted to Trump’s allegedly backwards and negative comments as a symbol of joy, optimism, and progressive leadership.

These characterizations of the candidates are juxtaposed again in other ads, such as “Mirrors” and “America’s Bully,” which work to the same effect as *Hillary For America’s* ad strategy that is primarily focused on character attacks directed at the opposition. These ad tactics use video clips of his character and his improprieties instead of featuring ads more focused on issues. If, as Roderick Hart suggests, “campaigns teach” the public by bringing important issues to the surface – we must consider what the public has learned about the character of Donald Trump as seen through the lens of the Clinton campaign.<sup>36</sup> A coding analysis of the Clinton ads indicates that the campaign primarily used negative, character-based content, and made emotional appeals to joy, fear, anger, and sadness.

### *Negative Content*

When analyzing the content of all the televised ads released by Clinton’s campaign between July 7 and October 25, 55.3 percent (21 out of 38) contained negative content, 21.0 percent (8 out of 38) contained positive content, and 23.7 percent (9 out of 38) were comparative ads with both

positive and negative content. Comparative ads juxtaposed Trump (negative) and Clinton (positive). Clinton's use of negative ads is not unusual when historically situated. Elaine Kamarck writes, "Americans think the bloodbath between Trump and Clinton is unprecedented in American history, but the reality is that short term memories and a sugarcoating of our nation's presidential history mask some contentious races for the White House."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Clinton's negative strategy is unremarkable and can be understood as "politics as usual."

### *Character-Based*

Hillary for America specifically used negative ads to attack Trump's character, rather than his policy positions. Only ten ads (26.3%) were predominately issues-focused or issue-leaning while the other 28 ads were character-focused or character-leaning. While a character focus is not unique to this campaign, we argue that Clinton's campaign is more character-focused than previous elections. For example, while the 2012 Obama campaign aired ads questioning the *character* of challenger Mitt Romney, it was clear that the overall nature of the ads were issue led – they focused on the candidate's policies for the economy, healthcare, and employment.<sup>38</sup>

One way we can explain the centrality of character in the 2016 election is to understand Donald Trump as an "outsider" candidate who has broken with the customs of decorum as a challenge to how the American political system functions. Trump is a real estate mogul and reality TV star, not a career politician. The Clinton campaign has capitalized on his lack of experience and his fit-for-reality-TV past through character attacks. Trump's own words about immigrants, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and women during the campaign helped turn the campaign into a referendum on his character. If Clinton faced a career politician she may have focused more on an issues-based strategy.

### *Emotional Appeals*

We next turn to an analysis of how Clinton used emotion to shape perceptions of each candidate's character. A 2005 study has shown that emotional appeals are an effective way for political ads to change the way citizens get involved and make choices. The study suggests that "campaigns achieve their goals in part by appealing to emotions, and emotional appeals can promote democratically desirable behavior."<sup>39</sup> The Clinton ads most frequently appealed to perceptions of joy.<sup>40</sup> Appeals to joy, specifically, sought to elicit pride for Clinton, hope for the future, or patriotism for America. Within all of the ads that we coded, 17 (44.7 percent) evoked joy at some point during the ad. Our coding not only accounts for both positive and comparative ads, but also some negative ads which drew out feelings of joy at one point or another. One example of joy within a negative campaign ad is "Nevadense," a Spanish-language advertisement. "Nevadense" draws on the hope of the American Dream for the Latino/immigrant community in order to attack Trump's immigration policy.

As a comparative ad, "[Role Models](#)" also used joy to juxtapose Clinton to the fear, anger, and sadness associated with Trump's misconduct. Fear (14 ads, 36.8 percent) and anger (14 ads, 36.8 percent) were the second most used emotions for the Clinton campaign. Character attack ads such as "[Just One](#)," "Silos," and "America's Bully" highlight these emotions. Fear and anger appeals

frame Trump as threatening to the security and unity of the American people. The ads suggest that his behaviors and policies should be met with anger and concern.

Sadness was the third most common emotion coded within the ads (10 ads, 26.3 percent). In ads like “Captain Kahn” and “Sacrifice,” sadness was also used to frame Trump as a source of grief and shame for the American public. In sum, using both visual and aural strategies, Clinton appears as source of joy, hope, and pride with her ad campaign. These emotions frame Clinton as the moral, optimistic, and progressive leader when compared to Trump’s framing of fear, anger, and sadness.

### *Subject Matter*

Our final focus of analysis features the subject matter across all 38 ads. As previously discussed, character was the primary subject of the ads (25 ads; 65.7 percent). The second and third most prevalent subject addressed women/children issues (9 ads; 23.7 percent) and national security/foreign affairs (8 ads; 21.0 percent), respectively. This snapshot of the top three subjects mimics Clinton’s campaign strategies beyond TV advertising. For example, during the first general debate, Clinton made several pointed attacks about Trump’s character. Clinton deemed Trump’s participation in the birtherism movement a “racist lie.” She also “recalled Mr. Trump’s stream of insults to women over the years,” and challenged Trump for not releasing his taxes. Later, she responded to one of his jabs, declaring: “Donald, I know you live in your own reality, but that is not the facts.”<sup>41</sup> Clinton’s top ten campaign promises are directly tied to her interest in women, children, and families. On the stump, Clinton regularly discusses eliminating college tuition for families “making less than \$125,000 a year,” reforming immigration policies in order to “keep families together,” and closing the wage gap for women.<sup>42</sup> During the final presidential debate, Clinton warned the American public that Trump could not be trusted “to have his finger on the nuclear button.”<sup>43</sup>

In the debates and on the stump, Clinton’s campaign discourse echoes the subject trends in her campaign ads. Darrell M. West argues, “candidates use ads to convey major themes, make comments about the opposition, and discuss each other’s personal qualities.”<sup>44</sup> Clinton’s ad strategy has mimicked the broad strategy of her campaign: a cohesive narrative of Trump as an unfit candidate who poses a threat to the country, and Clinton as the strong moral leader, fighting for the most vulnerable member of society.

### *Circulation and Reception*

The *Hillary for America* campaign circulated their televised ads beyond the viewership of the traditional television medium. For example, Clinton’s YouTube channel included every televised advertisement and her social media accounts re-circulated the ads for an even broader reach. “[Role Models](#)” was the most highly circulated ad on both TV and digital markets. The ad reached 1,550,000 views on YouTube by the end of October, and by the end of September had been played more than 15,000 times on TV.<sup>45</sup> We have measured Clinton’s social media presence during the general election using Klout, a website and mobile app that uses social media analytics to measure social media influence. Clinton’s Klout score during the general election is an impressive 95 out of 100. This rating is six points higher than Trump’s score.<sup>46</sup> The circulation of the ads was

particularly important to reaching younger voters, who greatly rely on social media for news and information.<sup>47</sup>

Overwhelmingly, news outlets have lauded the Clinton campaign for its airtight advertising strategy. Particularly, campaign analysts applauded the Clinton campaign's "unusual and effective" strategy of using Trump's words against him in her ads.<sup>48</sup> The majority of Clinton's ads mentioning Trump feature "raw footage of him rather than others opining on his words and actions."<sup>49</sup> When Trump commented on Clinton's "very nasty commercials" during the first debate, viewers backlashed on Trump's criticism. For example, television producer Shonda Rhimes tweeted, "Wait. She did not run ads that say mean things. She ran ads that use audio of his own mean nasty statements."<sup>50</sup> Clinton's strategy has turned Trump into his own worst enemy.

Conservative news outlets and spokespeople have been critical of the Clinton's campaign heavy use of Trump footage. According to the American Trends Panel of the Pew Research Center, nearly half of Trump supporters believe that the media should not cover offensive statements made by the candidates; this compares with 26 percent of Clinton supporters who share the same sentiment.<sup>51</sup> Stephen Loiaconi of the Washington DC news source, *WJLA*, suggested that the "details of voting records and documented proof of hypocrisy generally work better than name-calling and personal attacks."<sup>52</sup>

### **The Donald Trump Campaign**

In July 2016, fewer than half of voters in the general election, both Republican and Democrat, reported that they were satisfied with their choice for president.<sup>53</sup> Critics have described this presidential campaign and election season as "the most negative campaign of our lives."<sup>54</sup> As of this writing, Clinton holds a 55.3 percent unfavorability rating amongst likely voters, to Donald Trump's 57.8 percent.<sup>55</sup> In his ad campaign, Trump sought to capitalize on voter dissatisfaction by identifying key differences between the two candidates. Trump's ad strategy exploited free media coverage and deployed negative content early in the race before taking a positive turn around October.<sup>56</sup> Like Clinton, Trump also made character-based arguments, and evoked fear and anger as primary emotions. In this section, we first trace the basic spending characteristics of Trump's advertising campaign through a content analysis. Then, we will explain Trump's ad strategies in fuller detail.

#### *Funding and Spending*

In December 2015, during pre-primary coverage, the editor of the *Daily Beast*, Lloyd Grove, claimed that although Trump spent much less than his rivals on advertising, he was still leading the pack. Grove questioned whether political advertisements have now become "obsolete."<sup>57</sup> Trump's low spending on political ads and free airtime by mainstream media has been a unique feature of the 2016 election. In terms of ad spending, Clinton has dominated the airwaves. According to Smart Media Group, until September 12th, Clinton's campaign had spent \$126 million on TV ads while Trump's campaign spent only \$17 million.<sup>58</sup> At an election rally in North Carolina, Donald Trump actually bragged about his low ad spending. He said, "If you can spend less and be winning, that's a positive thing, right? That's the person you want as your president, I think."<sup>59</sup>

While Hillary Clinton launched her first general election ad in June 2016, Trump’s first general election ad came out in the third week of August. Like Clinton, Trump targeted battleground states: Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, which together have 82 electoral votes. As Trump continued to release ads through September and October, he expanded his ad purchases to six new states: Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Virginia. It was only in the last week of September that the Trump campaign appeared to catch up with Clinton campaign in ad spending. On September 24th, Jason Miller – senior communications adviser to the campaign – announced that Donald Trump would purchase \$140 million worth of advertising in October.<sup>60</sup> Over the course of his campaign, Trump invested much of his ad resources in key states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, Wisconsin, California, Colorado, and Florida.<sup>61</sup>

With respect to the individual ads, the Trump campaign spent \$4.8 million on his first ad, “Two America’s: Immigration” and \$10 million on his second ad, “Two Americas: Economy.”<sup>62</sup> The campaign spent \$2 million on “Deplorables” and \$5 million on their “Why” ad.<sup>63</sup> “Motherhood,” featuring Donald Trump’s daughter Ivanka, was aired with an expenditure of \$7.5 million.<sup>64</sup>

### *Advertising Strategies*

Though Trump’s low spending greatly contrasted Clinton’s big budget, in terms of content, the candidates used similar strategies. While Clinton sustained her negative strategy, Trump turned negative before using more positive messages around October.<sup>65</sup> Trump’s subject matter echoed Clinton’s character-based arguments, but he primarily used fear and anger, not joy, to frame his messages. In this section, we use our coding analysis to discuss emerging themes in Donald Trump’s ad campaign.

### *Negative and Positive Content*

First, Donald Trump’s ads were a mixed bag of negative, comparative, and positive throughout the campaign. The news media have portrayed the Trump campaign as underfunded and haphazard.<sup>66</sup> Seemingly, Trump does not over rely on one approach across his ads. We certainly note Trump’s general trend of negativity in his ad strategies. Yet, during the end of October, the campaign increased its use of positive messages closer to Election Day. Overall, we coded three comparative ads, seven negative ads, and seven positive ads.

This strategy gives credence to recent analysis in the media that Trump’s ad approach is more, “on again, off again,” in nature.<sup>67</sup> We find that the Trump campaign releases their ads in spurts that lack a discernable pattern. For instance, Trump released two comparative campaign ads between August 19 and 29, and then waited until September 12 to release his next ad. From September 30 through October 5, Donald Trump released a string of three straight positive ads, but then waited until October 11 for another round of negative ad buys. Five out of the nine most recent Trump ads in October are negative in nature. These findings could explain Donald Trump’s more “narrowcasting” strategy, in which campaigns focus on hundreds of thousands as opposed to millions of viewers in media markets.<sup>68</sup>

Trump's three comparative ads juxtaposed his campaign to his opponent by negatively framing Clinton with fear and anger-based character attacks. During Donald Trump's "Economy" ad, for example, the narrator states, "in Hillary Clinton's America, the middle class gets crushed." The Trump campaign defines its tone through negative messages of contrast between the two presidential candidates.

### *Character-Based Content*

Like Clinton, Trump's campaign primarily made character-based arguments about himself and his opponent. Trump relied on character attacks as the subject matter for approximately 35 percent of the ads released, as of late October. In an analysis of 17 total ads, six ads were categorized as character attacks. In "Immigration," "Economy," "Dangerous," and "Changes," the Trump campaign contrasted the character of the candidates. But by the end of October, Trump released three positive character ads in a row that featured more "campaign biographies" of the candidate. Overall, Trump's campaign strategy focused on denigrating Clinton's character and building a more positive image of Trump.

### *Emotional Appeals*

Finally, Trump used emotional appeals to harness and enflame the fear and anger of the American public. Ten out of 17 of Trump's ads were coded with the emotion of "fear" or "anger." Through these emotional appeals Trump's campaign constructs the nominee as a true guardian of the people, and spurs them to action by exacerbating their fears and anger into action. For instance, in his "Deals" advertisement, the narrator states, "Today our jobs are gone. Factories closed...Donald Trump knows business and he'll fight for the American worker." The Trump campaign capitalizes on the economic anxieties of the American public. The ad then positions Trump as a source of power, success, and security – the only one who can fix the financial problems created by the Obama administration.<sup>69</sup> Trump's ad campaign emphasizes his business savvy and success, and frames him as the ideal candidate for president because he, alone, has the character and capacity to fix the problems and fulfill the wishes of the American people.<sup>70</sup>

### *Circulation and Reception*

The amount of free media coverage received by Donald Trump during this election has been a hot topic among news outlets. According to the *New York Times*, Trump had received \$2 billion in free media as of March of 2016.<sup>71</sup> Mainstream news organizations came under sharp criticism for giving Trump so much free airtime. In fact, a study by Harvard University's Shorenstein Center claims that Donald Trump's high volume of free news coverage in 2015 helped him get to the top of Republican polls.<sup>72</sup>

Predictably, the media coverage of Trump's campaign ads focused mainly on the funding and the number of states that aired his ads, rather than assessing the themes and issues mentioned in the ads. For example, *NPR* stated, "Trump has a lot of ground to make up in this campaign. The Clinton campaign outspent Trump on air \$61 million to \$0 according to data from Advertising Analytics/NBC news" in August of 2016.<sup>73</sup> *CNN* too confined itself to highlighting the amount of money Trump spent on his ads rather than evaluating the topics covered in the commercials. One

media analyst quips, “the ad, which begins airing this weekend, puts an end to an unprecedented advantage for Hillary Clinton in television spending.”<sup>74</sup> *NBC* news gave a breakdown of Trump’s spending on the same 30-second spot in Florida, Ohio, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Similarly, *ABC* news took a similar approach by comparing Trump and Clinton’s ad spending.<sup>75</sup>

Among the 17 commercials that Trump released after the Republican National Convention, five received wide media attention. While [“Two Americas: Immigration,”](#) received extensive coverage as Trump’s first ad, [“Movement”](#) also grabbed public attention with its positive tone. “Deplorables,” which highlighted Hillary Clinton’s remarks against Trump supporters, also received a lot of media traction.<sup>76</sup> The news media severely criticized Trump’s “Corruption” for falsely accusing the Clintons of pocketing money that was donated to the Clinton Foundation.<sup>77</sup> More recently, Trump’s special ad for Hindu-Americans received extensive media coverage. In this ad, he is seen speaking in Hindi and parroting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s campaign slogan.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to free airtime, Trump’s effective use of social media has given him high media visibility. By August 2016, Trump had over 22.7 million likes and followers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram while Hillary Clinton had a combined 15 million. A few media critics see Trump’s successful use of social media as one of the reasons why he spends so little money on his political advertisements.<sup>79</sup> However, when it comes to YouTube, Hillary is far ahead of Trump where her political ads have drawn 16.4 million views as compared to his 8.1 million.<sup>80</sup> Trump’s YouTube channel has over 72,500 subscribers while over 93,000 users subscribed to Clinton’s channel.

Overall, observers have called Trump’s ad strategy “extra confusing,” “unconventional,” and “bizarre” for its many paradoxes and contradictions.<sup>81</sup> Audience confusion can be attributed to his switching between negative and positive ads and his inconsistent time-release of ads. Trump’s campaign is notable for his combination of effective social media use and low ad spending. Historically, the reach of political ads has been proportional to the amount of money sponsors spend and yet, Trump seems to have overcome this by garnering free news space and airtime through provocative remarks. In that sense, political ads had uncharacteristically less relevance to Trump’s outreach efforts than is typical in most contemporary campaigns.

### **Super PACs: Priorities USA Action & Rebuilding America Now**

Super PACs have played a major role in advertising for both the Clinton and Trump campaigns. Hillary Clinton has benefitted from \$42,186,422 of spending support combined from all Pro-Clinton Super PACs, and an additional \$198,530,594 spent opposing Donald Trump. On the other side, Donald Trump has seen \$86,567,115 spent by Pro-Trump Super PACs in support of his campaign, and an additional \$60,434,870 spent in opposition to Hillary Clinton. This spending includes TV ad buys, mailing, digital media outreach, and other advocacy efforts. Altogether, Super PACs have spent almost 400 million dollars on the two presidential candidates during this election.<sup>82</sup>

### *Funding and Spending*

Priorities USA Action is the largest pro-Clinton super PAC this election. In total, it has spent \$108,403,714 on the presidential election.<sup>83</sup> The vast majority of expenditures went towards TV advertising and digital media outreach during the general election, particularly in critical swing states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida.<sup>84</sup> Wealthy individual donors, who donate \$1 million or more to the organization, are the primary funders of Priorities USA Action. George Soros is the PAC's largest donor, contributing \$6 million.<sup>85</sup> Other liberal political organizations, like the Emerson Collective and Working for Working Americans, also fund the organization through large donations. Election tracking websites like OpenSecrets.org (which is sponsored by the nonpartisan, nonprofit Center for Responsive Politics) have monitored the revenue and expenditures of Priorities USA Action. Mainstream media outlets, like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, have also tracked the PAC's money and frequently report on particularly large ad-buys that are widely viewed.

Rebuilding America Now is the largest pro-Trump super PAC.<sup>86</sup> Founded in June 2016, this new PAC spent \$16,941,538 on the election by October 27th. Of these funds, the PAC spent \$12,845,897 on efforts countering Hillary Clinton, and \$4,095,641 supporting Donald Trump.<sup>87</sup> Rebuilding America Now spent the third most of all organizations supporting Donald Trump's presidential bid (following Donald J. Trump for President--the official campaign--and Trump Make America Great Again Committee--the affiliated PAC).<sup>88</sup> Rebuilding America Now thus is the largest-spending independent super PAC supporting Donald Trump. While Rebuilding America Now does not report to the Federal Election Commission (FEC),<sup>89</sup> some its funding sources have been uncovered through a review of media coverage. In October 2016, *USA Today* reported that Home Depot founder Bernard Marcus contributed \$5 million to the PAC between July and September.<sup>90</sup> The *Washington Post* reported that World Wrestling Entertainment co-founder Linda McMahon donated approximately \$6 million to Rebuilding America Now—this single contribution accounted for one-third of the donations to the super PAC in August and September.<sup>91</sup>

### *Advertising Strategies*

In terms of strategy, the Super PAC campaigns echo the strategies of the candidates' official campaigns. Like Hillary for America, Priorities USA Action produced primarily negative, character-based ads that appeal to fear and anger. Rebuilding America Now, like Donald J. Trump for America, used a combination of positive and negative ads. The PAC broke from the official campaign by releasing both character and issues-based ads. Despite some positive ads from Rebuilding America Now, the tone of the ads produced by both PACs has been overwhelmingly negative.

### *Priorities USA Action*

Of the 15 television ads Priorities USA Action released since the Democratic National Convention, 14 have been strictly negative attack ads. Each of these negative ads featured an attack on the character of Donald Trump. In fact, most of the advertisements produced by Priorities USA Action do not mention Hillary Clinton at all. The ads are, instead, focused on promoting the message that

Trump is “dangerous” and “unfit” to be the president. These attack ads intersect with various other subjects, such as disrespect towards women, minorities, and disabled persons or the national security risk posed by Trump’s policy towards nuclear proliferation. The central argument of the ad campaign is that a Trump presidency would be dangerous and filled with hate. To underscore the peril of Trump’s presidency, Priorities USA Action features children in a few of their advertisements. In these ads, the PAC stresses the idea that “our children are watching.” This argument dovetails nicely with the official campaign’s argument that Donald Trump is not an acceptable “role model” for American children.

Priorities USA Action primarily appeals to emotions of anger, sadness, and fear in their ads. In many of the ads, the anger of the audience is enflamed through a series of Trump quotations in rapid succession. The strategy spotlights Trump as he insults women and minorities, and brags about not paying his taxes. Many of the ads feature the mothers of children who have been hurt, killed, or emotionally affected by the types of “hate,” “bullying,” or “disrespect” that Trump has exhibited. The audience is invited to empathize with the grieving mothers. Finally, appeals to fear are made in juxtaposing images of war and destruction with Trump’s comments about nuclear proliferation, war, and violence. These fear appeals accentuate Trump’s propensity for war and aggression, further stressing Trump’s inability to lead.

### *Rebuilding America Now*

Rebuilding America Now hired former Mitt Romney strategist and advisor Alex Castellanos to head the group and lead its advertising efforts.<sup>92</sup> The super PAC produced 13 ads between June and October 10, 2016, though only 5 of those ads aired more than 100 times by October 11. Those 13 ads feature an overwhelmingly negative focus that is decidedly centered on character attacks. Of the 13 ads released in the 2016 election cycle, 11 of them (85 percent) were negative attacks on Hillary Clinton. The two positive ads, “[America Soaring](#)” and “Education,” reaffirmed the PAC’s commitment to resolve domestic issues (manufacturing/jobs and education, respectfully) with oblique support for Donald Trump. The positive ads were almost identical, using the same graphic, design, vocal, musical, and structural motifs. While 85 percent of the ads feature character attacks on Clinton, seven of the 13 (54 percent) invoke national issues such as the economy, education, immigration, or foreign policy. Interestingly, none of the ads by Rebuilding America Now are comparative. The ads either attack Hillary Clinton with a negative tone, or address a domestic issue, like rebuilding the manufacturing industry or education reform, with a positive tone.

As with Priorities USA, the ads of Rebuilding America Now predominately trade on voter anger and contempt for Hillary Clinton. Nine of the 11 “negative” ads attack Clinton’s character in some way, frequently using Bill Clinton’s indiscretions as an index of her own immorality. The two “positive” ads—“[America Soaring](#)” and “Education”—present a list of woes for the perceived state of American industry and education, but do not mention the candidates other than a Trump/Pence banner at the end. Both positive ads also feature notable higher production values than the bulk of Rebuilding America Now’s ads. They also feature an absence of concrete statistics. This strategy, along with the aforementioned reliance on social media, is outlined by the super PAC in a slide presentation recently released online titled, “Rebuilding America Now: Digital Successes to Date.”<sup>93</sup> The slides suggest that 75 percent of advertising impact is determined by

creative quality, and that personal mobile devices and the internet have overtaken broadcast media as the primary medium to reach voters. The slides also indicate that positive, collaborative messages are more engaging to voters than attack ads. All of these strategies are manifest in “[America Soaring](#)” and “Education.” The positive reception of the ads reaffirm the PACs assertions: viewers of “[America Soaring](#)” reported a 10.7 percent improvement in public perception versus voters who had not seen the ad, and among voters aged 55 to 64, the improvement in public perception was 27.3 percent.

### *Circulation and Reception*

Priorities USA Action has produced more than 60 advertisements, and uploaded them to their YouTube Channel along with other videos and news clips. Only a fraction of these ads, however, made it onto television screens across the country. A large part of the PAC’s strategy seems targeted to online viewers. For example, the most-viewed video on the super PAC’s YouTube Channel, titled “Grace,” only aired 14 times on television. Online, it has been viewed almost one million times. The promotion of these ads as “viral videos” appears to be a key part of the PACs advertising strategy, with links to the YouTube videos being shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Priorities USA Action is routinely cited as “Hillary Clinton’s largest super PAC” in news stories. There have been two typical types of coverage of the super PAC. First, there are many stories about the fundraising efforts of the organization. For example, on October 27<sup>th</sup>, the *Huffington Post* ran an online story titled, “Hillary Clinton’s Super PAC Has Raised More Money Than Any Super PAC Ever.”<sup>94</sup> The byline under the article reads, “Nearly all of the money has come from seven-figure donors.” There has been a lot of coverage concerning the individual donors supporting the super PAC. The press has also paid a lot of attention to the horse-race style coverage of fundraising goals and expectations when compared to other super PACs. The news media have also published stories about particularly large media buys by Priorities USA Action, or about advertisements that have taken off online. These stories often attempt to analyze the power and political ramifications of a particular advertisement, or the strategic implications of a specific ad buy.<sup>95</sup> For example, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Clinton had launched a \$6 million ad campaign in Wisconsin, Florida, and Pennsylvania “to bolster the Democratic nominee in the final week of the election as she faces a new round of scrutiny regarding her private email server.”<sup>96</sup>

While Rebuilding America Now bought airtime for many ads, the super PAC appears to have relied primarily on social media, YouTube, and the organization’s website for circulation. A handful of markets accounted for the vast majority of the total 2,422 spots purchased by Rebuilding America Now: San Francisco (43 percent), Cleveland (26 percent), Tampa/St. Petersburg (23 percent), Philadelphia (4 percent), and Raleigh/Durham (3 percent). In comparison, the super PAC’s ads netted 1,325,736 YouTube views, and four of the group’s 13 ads were only released online. Despite their huge investment in online outreach, the PAC’s Facebook page has only netted 1,832 likes (approximately 2 percent of the likes on Priorities USA Action’s page), and its Twitter feed only has 4,185 followers (25 percent of Priorities USA Action followers).

While Rebuilding America Now has received frequent coverage by the news media, the majority of the coverage is limited to fundraising figures and brief announcements of ad releases.<sup>97</sup> Of

particular note, an October 28th article in the *Washington Post* noted that the super PAC has been supplanted as top fundraiser for Trump in October.<sup>98</sup> This continues a pattern of lukewarm news coverage of fundraising. The super PAC, highly touted upon its June launch and consistently cited as the top-spending super PAC for Donald Trump, falls short of spending benchmarks of other organizations. For example, an October 25<sup>th</sup> article in the *Wall Street Journal* noted that Rebuilding America Now's \$17 million spending was significantly less than the \$26.8 million spent by the National Rifle Association.<sup>99</sup> This consideration must be tempered, however, by the super PAC's stated "new" strategy of leveraging online and social media platforms rather than placing all of their attention on conventional broadcast advertising. Previous coverage includes an announcement of the super PAC's launch in June,<sup>100</sup> and the donation made by Trump supporter Linda McMahon.<sup>101</sup> Since assuming the position of chairman in late July,<sup>102</sup> Florida Governor Rick Scott has been the public face of the super PAC. Events in which he participates or attends comprise a significant portion of the remaining news coverage of Rebuilding America Now.

### Conclusion

To close, the 2016 campaign ads are a referendum on the character of the candidates. Both the Clinton and Trump campaigns, as well as their Super PACs, attacked the opposition through appeals to fear and anger. Through negative character attacks, both campaigns have promoted the message that neither candidate is fit to lead. Going forward, the character attacks of the 2016 campaign ads will likely make governing difficult no matter the outcome of the election.

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**Appendix A: Explanation of Methods**

**Research Teams**

The authors of this paper include eight graduate students and one faculty member from the Department of Communication and the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at University of Maryland, College Park. Researchers were placed into three research teams who each separately coded the advertisements from Hillary for America, Donald J. Trump for President, and the Super PACs – Priorities USA Action and Rebuilding America Now. Within the Clinton and Trump teams, the responsibility of coding was shared by splitting the collection advertisements among team members. Priorities USA Action and Rebuilding America Now were each coded by a single researcher.

**Coding Strategies**

To best understand the patterns and strategies of each campaign, we coded the content of each ad using four tenets: 1) whether the content was positive, negative or comparative, 2) whether the ads focused on issues, character, or combination of the character and issue, 3) the emotional reactions evoked from the content based on five primary emotions: anger, fear, sadness, joy, love, and surprise and 4) the topic of the ad. Together, these tenets aid in revealing the patterns and strategies of each ad campaign.

*Positive, Negative, & Comparative*

Coders determined whether an ad was positive or negative by considering the subject as well as the visual and aural content of the ads. An ad was coded “comparative” if there were moments of both positive and negative tone. The ad did not need to be equally positive and negative to be considered comparative.

*Emotion*

To code emotion, the authors decided to use the affective model created by Shaver et al (2001). A breakdown of Shaver et al.’s affective model can be found below in Table 1.

Primary emotion	Secondary emotion	Tertiary emotions
Love	Affection	Adoration, affection, love, fondness, liking, attraction, caring, tenderness, compassion, sentimentality
	Lust	Arousal, desire, lust, passion, infatuation
	Longing	Longing
Joy	Cheerfulness	Amusement, bliss, cheerfulness, gaiety, glee, jolliness, joviality, joy, delight, enjoyment, gladness, happiness, jubilation, elation, satisfaction, ecstasy, euphoria
	Zest	Enthusiasm, zeal, zest, excitement, thrill, exhilaration
	Contentment	Contentment, pleasure
	Pride	Pride, triumph
	Optimism	Eagerness, hope, optimism
	Enthrallment	Enthrallment, rapture
Surprise	Relief	Relief
	Surprise	Amazement, surprise, astonishment
Anger	Irritation	Aggravation, irritation, agitation, annoyance, grouchiness, grumpiness
	Exasperation	Exasperation, frustration
	Rage	Anger, rage, outrage, fury, wrath, hostility, ferocity, bitterness, hate, loathing, scorn, spite, vengefulness, dislike, resentment
	Disgust	Disgust, revulsion, contempt
	Envy	Envy, jealousy
Sadness	Torment	Torment
	Suffering	Agony, suffering, hurt, anguish
	Sadness	Depression, despair, hopelessness, gloom, glumness, sadness, unhappiness, grief, sorrow, woe, misery, melancholy
	Disappointment	Dismay, disappointment, displeasure
	Shame	Guilt, shame, regret, remorse
	Neglect	Alienation, isolation, neglect, loneliness, rejection, homesickness, defeat, dejection, insecurity, embarrassment, humiliation, insult
Fear	Sympathy	Pity, sympathy
	Horror	Alarm, shock, fear, fright, horror, terror, panic, hysteria, mortification
	Nervousness	Anxiety, nervousness, tenseness, uneasiness, apprehension, worry, distress, dread

Table 1: Model of the Shaver et al. (2001) Basic Emotions. Chart source: ChangingMinds.Org, “Basic Emotions,” accessed November 5, 2016, <http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/basic%20emotions.htm>

*Character-Issue*

To code the focus of the advertisements, we distinguished between whether ads focused on the character of the candidates or the issues of the election. Advertisements could be categorized as “character,” “issue,” “character-issue,” or “issue-character.” Ads that are coded as “character-issue” and “issue-character” discussed both the character of the candidates and the issues of the election. “Character-issue” ads spent more time discussing the character of the candidates. “Issue-character” ads spent more time discussing the issues of the election.

*Subject Matter*

The subjects of the ads were coded under broad categories of the issues of the election. Ads that emphasized children as impressionable viewers of a vicious election, or asked viewers to consider the implications of the election on generations to come, were coded as “Children.”

Appendix B: Coding Charts

Table 1: Hillary for America Advertisements

<u>Advertisement Name</u>	<u>Character vs. Issue</u>	<u>Emotion</u>	<u>Positive/Negative</u>	<u>Subject Matter</u>
"Role Models" July 7	Character	Sadness	Negative	Character Attack/Children
"Myself" - July 7	Character - Issue	Anger, Joy	Comparative	Character Attack/Foreign Policy (National Security?)
"The Shows" - July 7	Character - Issue	Anger, Joy	Comparative	Character Attack/Foreign Policy (National Security?)
"Issue" - July 16	Character - Issue	Fear, Joy	Comparative	Character Attack/National Security
"Confessions of Republican" - July 18	Character	Fear	Negative	Character Attack
"Someplace" - Aug. 3, 2016	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack
"Unfit" - Aug. 5, 2016	Character - Issue	Fear	Negative	Character Attack/National Security/Foreign Policy
"Absolutely" - August 18	Character	Fear	Negative	Character Attack; Domestic Policy
"Dependen de nosotros" - August 19	Issue	Joy	Positive	Women's Issues; Children; Education; Economics
"Just One" - August 22 2016	Character - Issue	Fear; Security	Negative	National Security; Character Attack
"Shirts" - August 24	Issue - Character	Joy; Sadness	Negative	Character Attack/Economics
"Everything" - August 26	Character	Anger; Fear; Sadness	Negative	Character Attack
"Hat" - August 27	Character - Issue	Anger	Negative	Economics; Character Attack
"Sacrifice" - September 6	Character	Sadness; Surprise; Anger	Negative	Character Attack
"Only Way" - September 9	Issue-Character	Joy	Comparative	Healthcare; National Security; Children
"Agree" - September 10	Character	Anger; Sadness	Negative	Character Attack
"Low Opinion" - September 13	Character	Anger; Fear; Surprise	Negative	Character Attack
"Families Together" - September 19	Issue	Fear; Joy; Love	Comparative	Immigration; Children; Healthcare; Biography
"She Always" - September 20	Character - Issue	Joy	Positive	Economics/Biography
"Sees" - September 21	Issue - Character	Love; Fear	Comparative	Character Attack/Disability
"Children" - September 21	Character - Issue	Joy	Positive	Biography/Children
"Mirrors" September 23	Character	Fear	Negative	Character Attack/Women
"Investigation" - September 25	Character	Fear	Negative	Character Attack
"Watch" - September 27	Character - Issue	Joy	Positive	Children
"Measure" October 6	Issue-Character	Anger, Joy	Positive	Children/Economy
"Silo" - October 1	Character-Issue	Fear	Negative	Character Attack/Security
"What will you say?" October 5	Character: Issue	Sadness, Love	Positive	Social Issue; Race Issues
"Values" Oct 10	Character	Fear; Sadness; Joy	Negative	Character Attack
"Doug" October 10	Character	Sadness, Love	Comparative	Character Attack
"Respected" - October 10	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack/Children Issues/Women Issues
"The Right Thing" October 10	Character	Anger, Love	Comparative	Character Attack/Social Issue; Ableism
"Nevadense" (in Spanish) - Oct. 12	Issue	Sadness; Love; Joy	Negative	Immigration
"Show Up" - Oct. 14	Issue	Joy	Positive	Voting

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“America’s Bully” - Oct. 17	Character	Anger, Fear	Negative	Character Attack
"A Place for Everyone" -Oct. 19	Character-Issue	Joy	Positive	Community Values/Economy
“Captain Kahn” - Oct. 21	Issue-Character	Sadness, Love	Negative	Character Attack/Veterans, Islamophobia
“Barbershop” - Oct. 24	Character	Joy; Anger	Positive	Voting
“General Allen” - Oct. 25	Issue-Character	Anger; Joy	Comparative	National Security

Table 2A: Donald J. Trump for President, Ad Circulation

<b><u>Advertisement Name</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency of Ad (# of times run)</u></b>	<b><u>Length of Ad</u></b>	<b><u>Location of Ad</u></b>	<b><u>Length of Circulation</u></b>	<b><u>Ad Spending (US Dollars\$)</u></b>
Two Americas: Immigration	1044 for 30 second, 818 for 15 second ad	30 seconds	Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, New York, Arizona, California, Washington DC	August 19-August 29	4.8 million
Two America’s: Economy	3216 times, most often in Colorado, Florida, Ohio, PA	30 seconds	Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, New Hampshire, Iowa, Nevada, Virginia and Colorado, California	August 29-September 13	10 million
“Deplorables”	765 times, most often in PA, North Carolina, and Florida	30 seconds	Massachusetts, Iowa, Ohio, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California and Florida	September 12-October 13	2 million
“ <a href="#">Movement</a> ”	433	30 seconds	South Carolina (only once), Iowa, Ohio, Massachusetts, Colorado, North Carolina, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida	September 20-October 4	Part of larger ad buy
“Why?”	1	30 seconds	Colorado and nationally	September 30	Part of 5 million per week
“Motherhood”	528	30 seconds	Nationally, specifically also in Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada,	September 30-October 13	Part of a 7.5 million ad buy

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			Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida		
“Listening”	113	30 seconds	Nationally, and in Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida	October 4-October 14	Part of larger ad buy
“Consumer Benefit”	862	30 seconds	Nationally, and concentrated in Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida	October 5-October 14	Part of larger ad buy
“Dangerous”	605	30 seconds	Nationally, and Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida	October 11-October 14	Part of larger ad buy
“Corruption”	189	30 seconds	Nationally and Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida	October 12	Part of larger ad buy
“Deals”	124	30 seconds	Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin	October 18	Part of larger ad buy
“Change”	930	30 seconds	Nationally	October 18	Part of larger ad buy
“Laura”	289	30 seconds	Florida, Iowa, Maine, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin	October 19	Part of larger ad buy
“Predator”	245	30 seconds	New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania	October 19	Part of larger ad buy
“A Leader”	1	30 seconds	Nationally	September 26	Part of larger ad buy

“Hindu American”	1	30 seconds	Nationally	October 27	Part of larger ad buy
“Builder	199	30 seconds	Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, North Carolina, California	October 20-October 27	Part of larger ad buy

Table 2B: Donald J. Trump for President, Ad Strategies

Trump Ad Name	Character vs. Issue	Emotion	Positive, Negative, Comparative	Subject Matter
<a href="#">Two America’s: Immigration</a>	Issue	Fear	Comparative	Immigration
Two America’s: Economy	Issue	Fear/Joy	Comparative	Economics
“Deplorables”	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack
“ <a href="#">Movement</a> ”	Character	Joy (celebration)	Positive	Campaign Biography
“Why?”	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack
“Motherhood”	Issue-Character	Love	Positive	Women’s Issues and Healthcare
“Listening”	Issue-Character	Love	Positive	Women’s Issues and Health Care
“Consumer Benefit”	Issue	Joy	Positive	Economics
“Dangerous”	Character-Issue	Fear	Negative	National Security
“Corruption”	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack
“Deals	Character-Issue	Anger	Negative	Character Attack
“Changes”	Character-Issue	Anger	Comparative	Biography
“Laura”	Issue-Character	Anger	negative	Character Attack
“Predators”	Character	Anger	negative	Character Attack
“A Leader”	Character	Joy (Celebration)	Positive	Campaign biography
“Hindu American”	Character	Joy	Positive	Campaign biography
“Builder”	Character	Joy	Positive	Campaign biography

Table 3A: Priorities USA Action, Ad Campaign Reach and Circulation

Advertisement Name**	Date Aired*	Frequency of Airing*	Locations aired*	Length of Regular Circulation *	Date Published (on YouTube)**	YouTube Views**
"Danger"	September 15, 2016	1	1 (California)	1 day	August 7, 2016	44,645
"Michelle"	August 7, 2016	295	12 (Ohio, Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Colorado; Nevada; Wisconsin; New York; Pennsylvania; Arizona; North Carolina; California; and Florida)	17 days	August 7, 2016	67,211
"Watching"	August 22, 2016	849	4 (Ohio; North Carolina; California; and Florida)	23 days	August 22, 2016	49,694

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"Pledge"	January 24, 2016	515	4 (Ohio; Iowa; Nevada; California)	37 days	August 24, 2016	68,639
"I Love War"	September 7, 2016	2079	9 (Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Iowa; Ohio; Nevada; Pennsylvania; North Carolina; California; Florida)	23 days	September 6, 2016	823,826
"Then and Now"	September 13, 2016	1250	8 (Iowa; Ohio; Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Nevada; North Carolina; California; Florida)	17 days	September 13, 2016	20,977
"Donald's Pay to Play"	September 6, 2016	1	1 (California)	1 day	September 13, 2016	3,843
"Most Racist Person"	September 17, 2016	5	1 (California)	3 days	September 16, 2016	8,156
"My Temperament"	September 27, 2016	1188	9 (Iowa; Ohio; Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Nevada; Pennsylvania; North Carolina; California; Florida)	20 days	September 27, 2016	350,109
"\$0 in Taxes"	September 30, 2016	1	1 (California)	1 day	September 28, 2016	32,405
"Smart"	September 28, 2016	3	2 (Iowa; California)	6 days	October 3, 2016	18,889
"Votes Matter"	September 18, 2016	93	12 (Ohio; Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Iowa; Colorado; Nevada; Wisconsin; Pennsylvania; Arizona; North Carolina; California; Florida)	27 days	October 14, 2016	5,622
"Respect for Women"	May 30, 2016	2	1 (California)	1 day	October 11, 2016	22,252
"Hate"	February 23, 2016	105	7 (Ohio; Colorado; Nevada; Pennsylvania; North Carolina; California; Florida)	15 days	October 18, 2016	149,653
"Grace"	June 6, 2016	14	2 (California, Oakland)	10 days	June 12, 2016	966,958
"Dante"	November 26, 2016	2210	10 (Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Iowa; Ohio; Colorado;	19 days	June 23, 2016	189,335

			Nevada; Pennsylvania; North Carolina; California; Florida)			
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\*Ad Archive: <https://politicaladarchive.org/data>

\*\*Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/prioritiesUSAaction>

Table 3B: Rebuilding America Now, Ad Campaign Reach and Circulation

Ad title	Frequency of Airing		Location of Airing (markets)	Length of Circulation
	Broadcast	YouTube (views) <sup>102</sup>		
“More of the Same”	180 <sup>102</sup>	349,389 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (171) <sup>102</sup> Woodbridge, VA (5) Philadelphia, PA (4)	21 days: 6/5/2016 to 6/26/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“It Takes Two”	52 <sup>102</sup>	577,486 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (52) <sup>102</sup> Woodbridge, VA (1)	6 days: 6/23/2016 to 6/29/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Breeding Ground”	1 <sup>102</sup>	4,623 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (171) <sup>102</sup>	1 day: 12/1/2015 <sup>102</sup>
“I Did Not”	735 <sup>102</sup>	3,597 <sup>102</sup>	Cleveland, OH (261) <sup>102</sup> Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (236) San Francisco, CA (233) Woodbridge, VA (3) Philadelphia, PA (2)	86 days: 6/5/ 2016 to 8/30/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Transcripts”	[Information not found]	312,038 <sup>102</sup>	[Information not found]	Published 7/25/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Outsourcing”	457 <sup>102</sup>	11,499 <sup>102</sup>	Cleveland, OH (119) <sup>102</sup> San Francisco, CA (116) Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (107) Raleigh-Durham, NC (63) Philadelphia, PA (52)	22 days: 7/25/2016 to 8/16/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“ <a href="#">America Soaring</a> ”	137 <sup>102</sup>	33,628 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (71) <sup>102</sup> Philadelphia, PA (36) Cleveland, OH (11) Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (10) Raleigh-Durham, NC (9)	21 days: 7/25/2016 to 8/15/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Dead Broke”	650 <sup>102</sup>	29,250 <sup>102</sup>	Cleveland, OH (240) <sup>102</sup> San Francisco, CA (201) Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (199) Las Vegas, NV (2) Philadelphia, PA (2) Raleigh-Durham, NC (2) Cedar Rapids, IA (1) Denver, CO (1) Milwaukee, WI (1) Phoenix, AZ (1)	32 days: 8/7/2016 to 9/19/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Five Requests”	[Information not found]	417 <sup>102</sup>	[Information not found]	Published 9/17/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Classified”	25	540 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (25) <sup>102</sup>	8 days: 9/30/2106 to 10/7/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Bear”	0 <sup>102</sup>	460 <sup>102</sup>	Online only	Published 9/20/2016 <sup>102</sup>
“Education”	0 <sup>102</sup>	926 <sup>102,102</sup>	Online only	Published 9/20/2016 <sup>102,102</sup>
“Always”	15 <sup>102</sup>	1,883 <sup>102</sup>	San Francisco, CA (9) <sup>102</sup> Denver, CO (1) Las Vegas, NV (1) Milwaukee, WI (1) Phoenix, AZ (1) Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (1)	7 days: 9/30/2016 to 10/6/2016 <sup>102</sup>

Table 3C: Priorities USA Action, Ad Strategies

Advertisement Name	Character vs. Issue	Emotion	Positive/Negative	Subject Matter
"Danger"	Character	Fear	Negative	Character Attack, National Security
"Michelle"	Character	Anger, Sadness	Negative	Character Attack, National Security
"Watching"	Character	Sadness, Anger	Negative	Character Attack, Children
"Pledge"	Character	Anger, Fear	Negative	Character Attack, Children, Patriotism
"I Love War"	Character - Issue	Fear, Security	Negative	Character Attack, National security
"Then and Now"	Character	Sadness,	Negative	Character Attack
"Donald's Pay to Play"	Character	Anger, Surprise	Negative	Character Attack, Corruption
"Most Racist Person"	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack, Race
"My Temperament"	Character	Anger, Security	Negative	Character Attack
"\$0 in Taxes"	Character	Anger	Negative	Character Attack, Taxes
"Smart"	Character	Anger,	Negative	Character Attack, Taxes
"Votes Matter"	Issue	Joy, Civic Responsibility	Positive	Voting
"Respect for Women"	Character	Anger, Sadness	Negative	Character Attack, Women
"Hate"	Character - Issue	Sadness, Fear	Negative	Character Attack, LGBTQ+
"Grace"	Character	Sadness, Anger	Negative	Character Attack, Children
"Dante"	Character	Sadness, Anger	Negative	Character Attack, Children

Table 3D: Rebuilding America Now, Ad Strategies

Advertisement Name	Character v. Issue	Emotion	Positive/Negative	Subject Matter
" <a href="#">More of the Same</a> "	Character	Anger/ contempt /irony	Negative	Character attack
" <a href="#">It Takes Two</a> "	Character	Anger/ contempt /irony	Negative	Character attack
" <a href="#">Breeding Ground</a> "	Issue		Negative	National security
" <a href="#">I Did Not</a> "	Character	Anger/ contempt /irony	Negative	Character attack
" <a href="#">Transcripts</a> "	Character	Anger/ contempt /irony	Negative	Character attack
" <a href="#">Outsourcing</a> "	Character/issue	Derision	Negative	Economics
" <a href="#">America Soaring</a> "	Issue	Hope	Positive	Economics
" <a href="#">Dead Broke</a> "	Character	Anger/contempt	Negative	Character attack
" <a href="#">Five Requests</a> "	Character/issue	Anger/sadness	Negative	Character attack/ national security
" <a href="#">Classified</a> "	Character/issue	Contempt/ disbelief	Negative	Character attack/ national security
" <a href="#">Bear</a> "	Character	Upbeat/irony	Negative	Character attack/ national security/ economics
" <a href="#">Education</a> "	Issue	Hope	Positive	Education
" <a href="#">Always</a> "	Character	Contempt/irony	Negative	Character attack/ national security