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Of Fixing Washington and Farm Equipment: How Political Campaigns Employ Archetypal Narratives of Place

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Narratives have been increasingly subject to study within social science disciplines. However, research pertaining to narrative within political campaigns is incomplete. My paper addresses campaign narratives, with special attention paid to the role of the identity of place. Specifically, I will examine and code the content of televised advertisements for U.S. Senate campaigns in 2008 for discourse and symbols related to archetypal and/or stereotypical identities within their states. I will also analyze the role of public land concentration, population growth, and election competitiveness relating to the frequency of place based narrative in each campaign. I argue that campaign advertisements are more likely to craft a narrative entailing the archetypal and/or stereotypical qualities of their states in states with growing populations, high public land concentration and closely contested elections. By closely examining the relationship between place and campaign narratives, this study sheds new light on a phenomenon that has been largely overlooked.