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Political Communications

Glantz

Negative Political Ad

When we were assigned this project we thought of all of the possibilities that we could do. We were wondering if we should create an ad against Trump or an ad against Kamala. With everything happening in today's politics we knew we had lots of options to choose from. We ultimately came to the conclusion of creating a negative ad against Kamala Harris. Our ad is based off of Trump's statement during the presidential debate of "They are eating the dogs". The point of our ad is to inform our audience that if they vote for Kamala Harris, then the illegal immigrants who are coming into the country will continue to "eat the dogs". The ad is to highlight one of the major arguments of policy in this year's election.

For our ad, we used lots of persuasive strategies and communication theories such as Appeals to Emotions, Slippery Slope, and Genetics. We thought these strategies and theories were essential to create a negative political ad. The ad starts off with clips of happy and cute-looking dogs enjoying their day-to-day lives then dramatically changes to the laughing Kamala Harris. Trump then claims that they are "eating the dogs". This would be an example of Pathos which is appealing to emotion. We know our viewers at home would be distraught to learn that people are eating their favorite furry companions which helps our argument of voting for Trump to stop all of this from continuing. This ad is the perfect example of a Slippery Slope as well. When one thing happens, a bunch of undesirable things happen next. For example, our argument is that if you vote for Kamala Harris, then illegal immigrants will continue to come into the country and eat dogs. There would be chaos for our pets. When you look at genetics,

illegal immigration is typically bad for most countries. Bad things will continue to happen if illegal immigrants come into the country is also a target of the ad.

Our goal for our ad is to target swing voters, pet owners, people who love animals, animal activists, and people who are unsure about Kamala Harris. According to the Top Pet Ownership Statistics and Facts of 2024,” Sixty-six percent of households in the U.S, or 86.9 million, own a pet and the average household spends \$741 per year on their pets (Miller, 2024).” If you’re a pet lover or owner like we are, you know how important our pets are to us. “They are eating the dogs,” is a very bold statement to make to such a huge audience of listeners and an issue that should be addressed. Our ad claims that if you vote for Kamala Harris, then these illegal immigrants will continue to eat our dogs. To get this message out there, we would plan to run this ad on channels like Animal Planet, National Geographic, and DOG TV commercials. Most animal lovers/owners tend to watch these shows and would be the perfect opportunity to inform them on what’s going on with “They are eating the dogs”. It could maybe make these target audiences second guess Kamala Harris's policies on immigration.

The whole point of this project was to create a negative political ad and our ad is definitely unethical and ineffective. In ways that our ad is unethical, not morally correct, is the fact that “they are eating the dogs,” is a false statement and untrue. According to Wall Street Journal, “local police have said there is no evidence to substantiate those claims (Vipers et al., 2024).” Given that this was such a big statement and for it to end up being untrue makes it unethical. One reason our ad is ineffective is that it is very unserious, cheesy, and can come off as a joke. Our ad was made to be funny and have a good laugh. Some people would think this is funny, but some others may take the joke the wrong way. Once Trump said that illegal

immigrants were eating the dogs, everyone knew that it wasn't true and we took that and made it into a joke in the form of a political ad.

As strange as it sounds, even though this ad was meant to be a joke, it is still very similar to many past political ads. Most political ads made by either party have no evidence of their reasoning for the ad or need to be fact-checked. When developing a storyboard for this ad, we reviewed what we learned from our class period on "Horror in Political Ads." After rewatching the ads from that class, we decided that we wanted to portray Kamala Harris as a mysterious but dangerous monster. This is because she is a relatively new face in politics and people have no idea what is going to happen if she gets elected. She has taken a lot of heat for many not knowing what her policies will be, as she hasn't said much about them. She is claiming that she is going to do things differently from Joe Biden and plans on making radical changes, and all this uncertainty can make people scared. So, appealing to these fears, we took inspiration from "The Joe Biden They Are Hiding From You" and the Trump "Unfit" ad and only showed small clips of Kamala (such as close-ups of her eyes, short clips of her smile, and the sound of her laughter echoing in the background) that were much more unsettling than looking at zoomed-out clips of her.

When looking at Benoit's reading on the *Functional Analysis of Political Television Advertisements*, page 189 discusses attacks and how they made their debut in political advertising. Since Kamala Harris is part of the current administration in office, our ad is supposed to be an attack on the current administration in office. We are trying to reduce Kamala Harris' credibility on her immigration policies, in a funny way. Our ad is different from most ads as it's a bit unethical, but a major controversial argument is what Kamala Harris is going to do with immigration and the crisis at the border. There are ads that attack her for this and how she

has never visited the border. There have also been ads that attack her “laugh” and how she says thank you all the time. Her laugh in our ad helps depict her as a “monster” figure.

Works Cited

Benoit, W. L. (2015). *A functional analysis of political television advertisements*. Lexington Books.

Miller, Mike. "Top Pet Ownership Statistics and Facts (2024)." *Top Pet Ownership Statistics and Facts (2024)*, MarketWatch - Guides, 30 Sept. 2024.