

Notes on political persuasion

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0.1 Categories from Barbario and Lowe

- hard demagoguery - using fear/anger to solidify a political base
- soft demagoguery - softer appeals to general public to win hearts
- branding - appeals to segments of the public about true intent of certain policies or positions in a way that either resonates positively with the rest of the audience or does not affect them in a significant way
 - Essentially a highly specific reference.
 - Appeals to universally desired values, makes claims/offers comparisons, suggests some kind of future benefits.
 - Uses value-based language to gain support.
 - Example: Reagan emphasized visual imagery and poll-tested language for the first time
 - Example: Clinton used popular culture to appeal to specific sects and brand himself as modern
 - They tagged this content themselves and have a corpus of available data
 - *Tagging this is probably just a special case of value-based language that might apply in other places*

0.2 Most applicable categories from classification

- Name Calling - Giving a bad name to "individuals, groups, nations, races, practices, beliefs and ideals he would have us condemn" to "make us form a judgment without examining the evidence"
- Glittering generalities - Identifying one's message with virtue by appealing to good emotions. Virtue words include "truth", "freedom", "honor", "liberty", "public service", "the American way", etc.
- Testimonial - Using testimonials from trusted figures (celebrities, experts, people similar to those in audience) in support of one's message
- Plain Folks - Trying to win confidence by appearing to be like an average person (discussing "common things of life" - family, shared pastimes, experiences, etc.)
- Position Taking - I started off with this in the original list, but it's too common really, especially given the context.
- Credit Claiming - claiming responsibility for getting a specific outcome (e.g. getting a bill passed, etc.)
- Stereotyping - Conventional notion of an individual, group of people, country, etc. as held by a number of people. Stereotypes can be negative or positive. Stereotypical content can be explicit or implicit (in the form of "cues" - coded language, evocative visuals, etc.)
 - Slightly more nuanced than name-calling in that it's targeted at wider groups in general
 - I think this may be somewhat subjective to tag, but it should still be doable.
- Usage of slogans - brief, striking phrases
- Humor - in this case, taggers should probably be looking for things that are obviously jokes. This does not include wry humor or any kind of humor that's not entirely direct.
- Warmth - Unfortunately, after trying this for a couple of speeches, this did not end up panning out as something that was very easily reproducible. Judgements of how warm some speech is highly subjective.
- Patriotism - reference to patriotic appeal to appeal to the crowd ("flag waving") that involves mentions of patriotic emblems (flag, the veterans, eagle, etc.), how great the nation is, etc.

- Used very frequently - common phrasing that should be pretty easily classifiable.
- *So, don't let anyone ever tell you that this country isn't great, that somehow we need to make it great again. Because this right now is the greatest country on Earth.* (Michelle Obama DNC 2016)
- Repetition - repeating arguments with the same message
- Fear - usage of fear to motivate audience to support either a political strategy or a candidate in general.
 - *They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.*
 - *Today, millions of young people are scared, worried about the future, worried what the future will hold.* (Cruz)
 - *And yet, for so many Americans, the promise of America seems more and more distant.* (Cruz)
- Emotional Anecdotes - telling stories while leveraging value-based language to appeal to the emotions of voters to convince them of a candidate's humanity.