**Write-up for Ads Project: ADS DUE MARCH 30th IN-CLASS, WRITE-UP DUE April 3rd**

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***SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: Please briefly describe the content of your ads*** *(summary of message, visuals, sounds, music, etc ; be specific)* ***What led you to make specific choices?***

Our ad was an attack ad against Ron DeSantis and tried to paint him in a negative light. We took advantage of the recent controversy surrounding the “pudding gate” and used that to try to classify Ron DeSantis as messy, arrogant, and not a good choice for the presidency. These are the messages already being pushed by the mainstream media so we wanted to amplify those messages. We choose to use images that fit into this frame of DeSantis with him looking angry, yelling, or generally looking bad. We also choose to try to compare Trump and Desantis and try to make the viewer begin to relate to them and conceptualize them as the same. This was mainly due to a big part of Biden’s success in the 2020 election being credited to people significantly disliking Trump. Now that Trump is not the favored candidate of conservative leadership and they are trying to move away from the “Trump era” of conservative leadership, if we relate Desantis to Trump and paint them similarly, it could potentially recreate the success seen in 2020 for Biden from people’s dislike of the other candidate. Biden’s campaign chose to stay away from negative ads in 2020 but in the case of “new blood” winning the primary for the Republican candidate, we thought that changing that strategy and taking a more negative approach could be beneficial. Also, this ad is meant to be dramatic, funny, and memorable. Ultimately, this ad is designed to take the worst part of politics and how it has become a reality TV show and play into that to generate buzz and hype for Biden’s campaign.

***TARGETING: Would you choose to target these ads? To whom? If so, how would you (realistically) be able to reach that target audience if you chose a targeting strategy? What programs would you choose and why? Which social media platforms? Be specific. You might need to do some research here.***

Because of the nature of the ad we were trying to target younger generations mainly millennials and generation z. Ideally, the ad was for those who are not politically active but voted for Biden because they disliked Trump so much. This ad would be online and focused on social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram but could also include ads on streaming services like Hulu and HBO Max. If we were on an actual campaign we could use those targeted interests, as we discussed in class, to reach our target audience and use stuff that is mainly of interest to younger audiences. Some of those targeted interests could be TikTok trends, recent graduates, those currently enrolled in university, and clothing brands mainly worn by younger people. Some other possible targeted interests we could do would be reality tv shows like *Too Hot to Handle*, *Love is Blind*, *Survivor, and Rupaul’s Drag Race,* we could also filter by those who like certain music like Sza, Doja Cat, Megan Thee Stallion, and Taylor Swift. All of these examples are stuff mainly enjoyed by the younger generations and not older so it would achieve our goal of reaching our intended audience.

***CANDIDATE RESEARCH: What are the strengths and weaknesses of your candidate and his/her opponent that you took into account when designing the ads? These can be both personal and policy-oriented.***

I have already alluded to some of Biden’s strengths. The most notable one that we discussed in class was his success in the 2020 election by electing to do ads focusing on unity and choosing to not publish many attack ads. However, we decided to switch up this strategy considering in this hypothetical Ron DeSantis won the primary and it would be new blood in the water. We also thought Biden’s main weakness was his age and how he is seen as "out of touch" and not in good mental standing. By doing an ad that is an attack ad targeting younger audiences we are hopefully reducing people’s perception of Biden as out of touch and mentally declining because he would be going on the offensive. However, our main focus was on his opponent's weaknesses since it is an attack ad. Ron DeSantis's main strength is his charisma and powerful presence. He has many notable weaknesses, mainly being heavily criticized by the media recently and also passing a lot of very far-right policies. This gives us ample material to classify him and Trump as one of the same due to his recent policies. Also due to the heavy criticism from the media, the themes our ad relies on are already present within people’s perception of Desantis so we do not have to reinvent the wheel so to speak. Instead, we can just amplify the current media frame of him being arrogant, messy, selfish, and rude.

***COURSE READINGS: How did the readings from the class, class discussions, and other ads watched in class inform your strategy for this project?*** *(Note: do not skimp on this section – it is one of the most important)*

The biggest influence on the strategy for this project was the multiple attack ads shown in class. Mainly the 911 ads against Biden but also the ads made by Ted Budd against Cheri Beasley for her being “soft on crime." These ads were very influential and we wanted to use a similar strategy because these are the ads we remembered from the previous election cycles while a lot of the more positive ads we could not remember. This ties into our readings and class discussion mainly the idea that negative ads have a longer-lasting effect than positive ads. Although all types of ads' effectiveness decays pretty fast. This ad also focuses a lot on the current media attention surrounding DeSantis and plays into the frame he is already receiving from the media. As discussed when talking about primaries people who do well in early states usually then get more media attention and then start gaining more voters. However, if they underperform then they will usually be criticized by the media like in the case of Pete Buttigieg. Similarly, we see a similar thing currently happening with Ron DeSantis who was the pick for the Republican nominee for a while and now is being heavily criticized by everyone. By using this relationship and making an ad that reinforces the current frame of DeSantis it’s further cementing this idea of who exactly DeSantis is.

We also discussed how media frames have great power over people, specifically in the 2000 election where Al Gore was framed as a liar, know-it-all, and an out-of-touch elitist while Bill Clinton was dumb, but an all-American dude you would wanna have a beer with. This frame essentially created their campaign strategies and Al Gore reinforced these frames during a debate which could explain some of the reasoning behind his loss. Similarly, we are trying to set the frame surrounding DeSantis and paint him as arrogant, messy, unprofessional, and weird. Since the media was already running with that narrative, creating this ad would also reinforce that narrative in the minds of voters. Another strategy that stemmed from course material would be our choice to make our ad funny. In *The Bitter End*, the book discusses how Trump won in 2016 despite spending very little on ads compared to Hillary Clinton. He did this by using the media to get free media. Similarly, we wanted to try to do the same by making an ad that was a little outrageous and irreverent, but also funny and memorable. The hope would be that by making this ad news media would pick it up and show it to even more people making the ad reach a much further audience and further promote the narrative surrounding DeSantis.

***OUTCOME: Do you think your project was successful in its mission? Do you (realistically) think your project was effective? Memorable? Understandable to a mass public? Motivating and mobilizing to a mass public?***

I think our project was successful in its mission of attacking Ron DeSantis and reinforcing the current frame associated with him from the media. This is due to what we discussed in class about negative ads having a longer-lasting effect than “good” ads. I also think that we managed to make our ad humorful but not at the expense of Biden. For example, the ad involving the sheep and the ad about “The Bidening,” both of those ads also made a mockery of the candidate supporting them due to their poor design. Our ad was funny and therefore more memorable but not funny at the expense of Biden. We also made it understandable to the mass public because we included clips of DeSantis being interviewed about the pudding situation and avoided talking about specific policy so even if people do not know anything about politics they will see an ad about a politician who eats pudding with his fingers and associate that with DeSantis. However, I doubt that our ad was motivating or would mobilize the public. As discussed in class ads do not affect turnout or increase mobilization and have a small effect at the presidential level. The best hope for our ad would be this frame making DeSantis a joke and causing the media to continue to pump out the narratives in our ad changing the public perception of Desnatis as a candidate.

***GROUP DECISION MAKING : Did you agree or disagree with the direction your group wanted to go in for this assignment? Were you pleased, in the end, with any compromises that were reached?***

I did agree with the direction my group took for this assignment. I think we all were of a similar mindset and wanted to have fun making this ad. We had fun and were proud of the final product our goal was for it to be funny and memorable and I think it accomplished both of those things. There were many compromises, for example, we originally wanted to do a contrast ad and frame DeSantis negatively and then talk about why Biden is better. We decided that taking a funny approach and using the pudding situation at the beginning then talking about Biden and his policies after the pudding wouldn’t flow well. We also did not want people to associate Biden with that negativity or humor since he is running for president so decided to only have the beginning part about him approving this message.

***LEARNING: What is the biggest thing you learned in the process of completing this project?***

The biggest thing I learned from this process was just how difficult it is to edit videos together. Premiere is not the most user-friendly so there was a lot of trial and error.

***BIGGEST CHALLENGE: What aspect of this assignment did you find to be most challenging? In an ideal world (i.e. less limited resources), what would you have done differently for this project?***

In an ideal world, I think the voiceover would have been a lot more menacing. I am no voice actor so I struggled to set the tone we wanted of dramatics and villainizing DeSantis. I also think I would have included more stuff about DeSantis’s policies in Florida and how crazy restrictive that is. However, with the time constraint, we kinda had to pick one topic and focus on it so we chose the pudding fiasco.

***CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEMOCRACY: Do you think that viewers would be better informed or less informed after viewing/hearing your project? Would you be producing more or less informed citizens with your project? And how likely would ordinary people be to watch/listen to it in reality?***

I think after viewing our project viewers would be less informed. Our ad is essentially the embodiment of the direction politics has headed toward entertainment versus good. While we are talking about DeSantis it’s hardly educational and we focus more on tearing him down and making a mockery of him versus his leadership skills, policy, etc. This ultimately would be producing less informed citizens and just create more “calcification” of the parties as discussed in *The Bitter End*. The ad is relying heavily on partisanship to be deemed as funny because if you are Republican I doubt any part of the ad would be funny to you. Similar to how a Democrat feels when they see an ad tearing down their candidate. I do however think that ordinary people might be more likely to watch this ad since it is meant to be funny and irreverent. They might be less likely to skip the ad since it is so negative and also is making a mockery of Desantis.