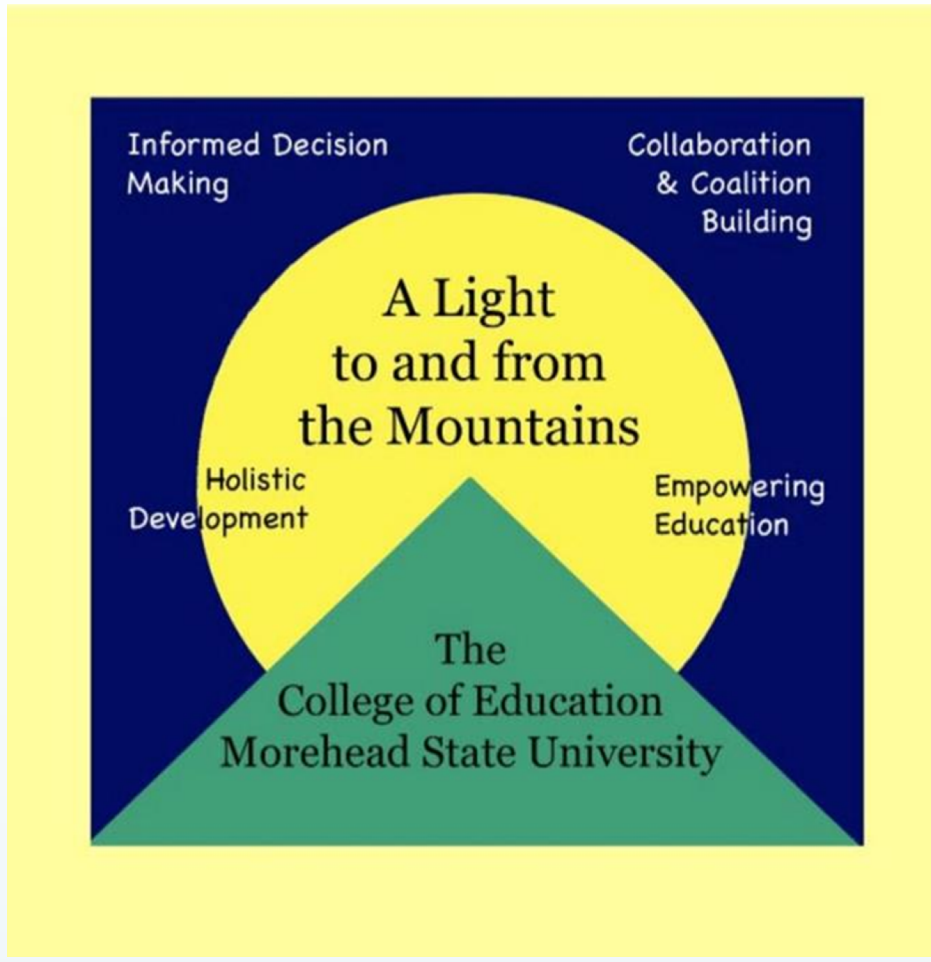


Examining and Identifying Components of Propaganda and Indoctrination

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Abstract

Indoctrination is the process where opinionated biases, methodologies, attitudes, and/or ideals are disseminated to others; it involves a disregard for evidence and reason. Further, it involves unsubstantiated conviction in one's beliefs and intolerance for opposing ideas, viewpoints, thoughts, etc. Propaganda is the purposeful promotion of certain beliefs and/or points of view and can be a political tool used rhetorically in speeches by those in positions of power, in order to sway public opinion about a certain issue. Critical thinking, which is a fundamental skill and a primary purpose of education, is needed to discern between indoctrination, propaganda, and knowledge. As such, and given the contemporary highly partisan political climate, we examined communications from current President Donald Trump and current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Methods

- We defined and identified components of propaganda.
- We then identified the types of these components as they occurred in education-centered speeches, statements, and interviews from Trump and DeVos.
- Next, we examined the frequency of these components using a checklist that was generated using the previously mentioned components of propaganda, which included: name-calling, glittering generalities, plain folks, testimonial, bandwagon, card stacking and transfer.
- Below are definitions of each component of propaganda looked for on the checklist¹:

Name Calling- giving a negative label to whatever the propagandist wants the audience to be viewed negatively
Glittering Generalities- using vague or abstract words to describe a person, place, or event in order to win approval
Plain Folks- presenting one's self as relatable in order to garner support
Testimonial- having someone credible to give a speech or statement in favor of the propagandist to help promote their cause
Bandwagon- using the mantra that, "everyone's doing it, so should you", appealing to people knowing that other people are doing it
Transfer- when the propagandist uses a device or symbol with positive qualities to relate to whatever the propagandist is promoting (e.g. the American flag)
Card-stacking- selecting facts and statements that support what the propagandist is wanting to get to the audience, also involves omitting facts and/or distorting the truth
¹ definitions formed from *Understanding propaganda from a general semantics perspective*.

Methods (cont.)

- A sample of three tweets, two speeches, and one interview were examined from all, and the frequency of the seven main propaganda techniques were examined.

Evidence Samples:

Tweet A Trump

Tweet B Trump

Tweet C Trump

Tweet A DeVos

Tweet B DeVos

Tweet C DeVos

Speech A DeVos

Speech B DeVos

Public Forum A DeVos

Speech A Trump

Speech B Trump

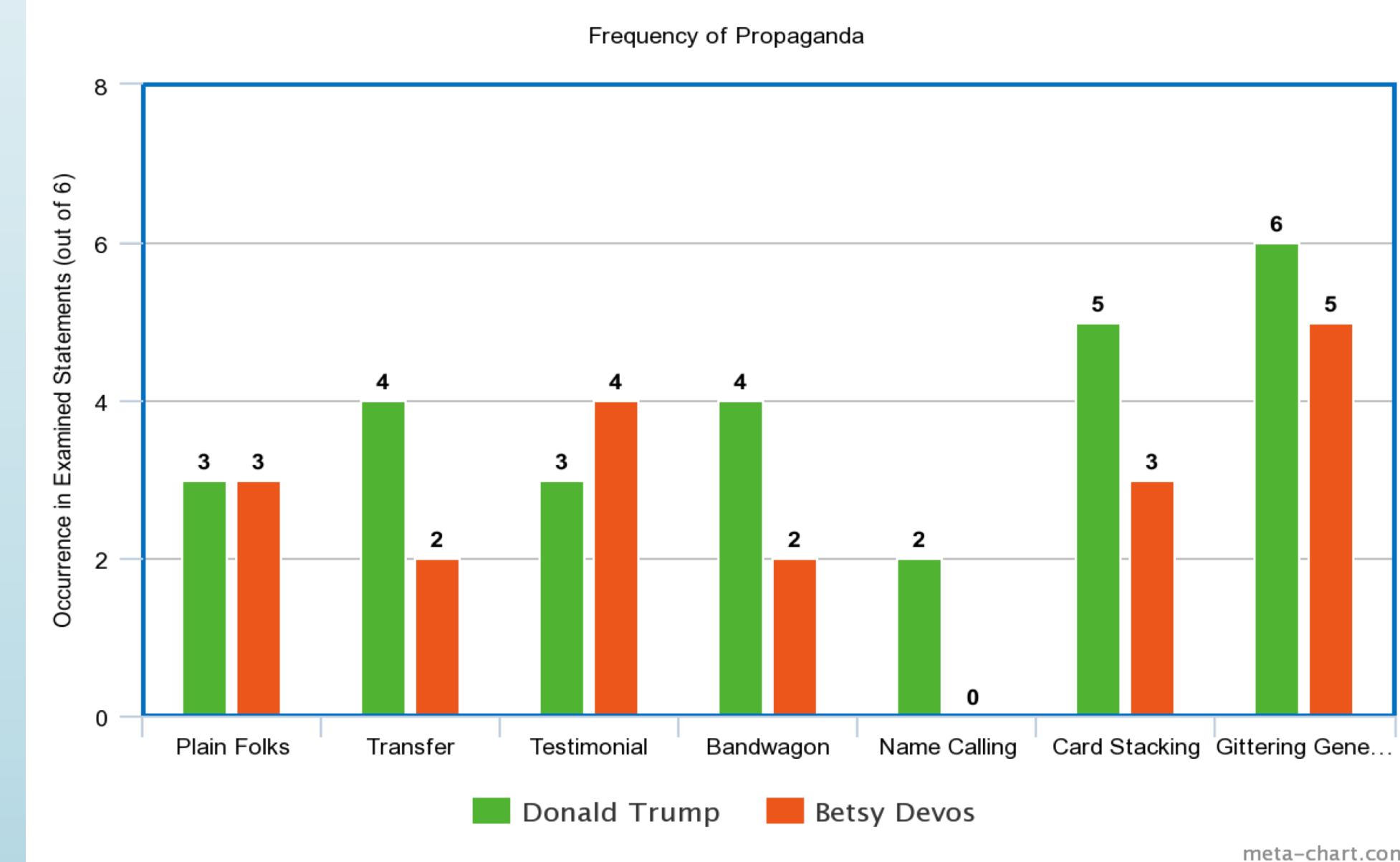
Public Forum A Trump

Results

Below is a sample analyzed statement, the one below is Tweet C DeVos:



- Red- *card-stacking*
- Yellow- *glittering generalities*
- Green- *plain folks*



- Name-Calling was least used in both Trump and DeVos
- Glittering Generalities were most used in both Trump and DeVos
- In Trump's analyzed statements, tweets, and speeches, propaganda was more frequent

Checklist A

	Name Calling	Glittering Generalities	Plain Folks	Testimonial	Card-Stacking	Bandwagon	Transfer
Tweet A DeVos							
Tweet B DeVos							
Tweet C DeVos							
Tweet A Trump							
Tweet B Trump							
Tweet C Trump							
Speech A DeVos							
Speech B DeVos							
Speech A Trump							
Speech B Trump							
Public Forum A DeVos							
Public Forum A Trump							
Public Forum B Trump							

- This was the checklist used during analysis while reading statements and comparing to definitions given by Fleming!

Conclusion & Discussion

Results suggested that all elements of propaganda were evident in the selected statements, with glittering generalities being the most used and name calling being used the least amount. The seven main techniques were searched for in the public statements, some appeared in the same analyzed document for Trump and DeVos, respectively, while other documents only possessed one technique of propaganda. However, none of the samples examined lacked one or more forms/types of propaganda. When these types of opinions are repeated, this then poses the question as to how the population internalizes and arrogates received information. Further, it begs the question as to where else such information is communicated, and in what ways. The question can then be raised about how the public can be aware of such propaganda and be able to discern between what is indoctrination, propaganda, and knowledge.

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