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Kim K for Congress

I chose to write my essay on Kim Klacik, who is a republican running for U.S. Congress. Kim has lived in Baltimore with her family since 2010, and focuses her campaign on getting the city of Baltimore out of the hands of democrats. I believe that her main audience is black people and democrats in Baltimore that are in poverty. Her campaign website includes an abundance of ethos, as well as pathos and logos. After analyzing her website, I have decided that she does effectively communicate her message to her audience, and she does so ethically.

The first part I decided about Kim's website was what her message or purpose was. According to the textbook, a message "consists of the ideas or thoughts that they hope to send to the receiver" (Beeson, 2015). After looking at Kim's website, it does not take long to determine what her message is. While her main objective is of course to vote for her, the subobjective she has is much more important. Baltimore is historically a very blue city; it has been in the hands of democrats for years. The message that Kim wants to send to her audience is that people in Baltimore need to stop electing democrats if they want to see their city improve. She points out what awful condition Baltimore is, and credits that to democrats. This helps her main objective, which is to get elected as a republican.

Next I figured out who Kim's audience is. I decided that because her message is based on convincing people to vote for a republican rather than a democrat, her audience is mainly democrats in Baltimore. The republicans in Baltimore will already likely want to vote for her, so she does not really need to focus her campaign on them. While her main audience is democrats, I

believe that she also focuses her campaign on black people. Kim makes a very big deal about how she believes that black lives matter, but democrats do not, and they are fooling black people into thinking that they do care. In one of her viral ads listed on her website, she goes into depth on how if democrats cared about black lives, then black people would not be living in such poverty in blue cities. By recognizing that black people are getting the shaft and blaming it on democrats, I think that it absolutely shows that her target audience is democrats and black people.

I will now analyze the rhetorical appeals that Kim used on her website. I think that her most used appeal, or at least most effective appeal was her use of ethos. The textbook explains that ethos “can be described as the character of the speaker, which would be equivalent to the image of the speaker today” (Beeson, 2015). Kim includes a section on her website called “Meet Kim Klacik” that explains the type of person she is and what she has accomplished so far in life. I noticed a lot of things in this section that helped establish her credibility. The first part I noticed was that she is a black woman that has lived in Baltimore since 2010. This establishes her credibility because it demonstrates that she has lived in Baltimore for a while and knows what the conditions are in that city. I also honestly think that she establishes more credibility because she is a black woman that focuses a lot on how to make black lives better. Because she is black, she understands what black people are missing out on to be successful. Her “Meet Kim Klacik” section also says that she is the founder of a non-profit organization called “Potential Me, which has helped over 200 underserved women (many of whom are abuse survivors) in the greater Baltimore area to become financially independent through gainful employment” (“Be Part...,” 2020). This also helps her credibility because it strengthens any argument she makes about

wanting to help people in Baltimore get back on their feet, because she has already been doing that through her non-profit organization.

The second section of her website that gives her credibility is her endorsements page. This page includes many quotes from different political figures, including President Trump, that have endorsed her. One of the president's quotes states "Be smart Baltimore! You have been ripped off for years by the Democrats, & gotten nothing but poverty & crime. It will only get worse UNLESS YOU ELECT KIMBERLY KLACIK TO CONGRESS. She brings with her the power & ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. She works sooo hard. Baltimore will turn around, and I will help. Crime will go way down, money and jobs will pour in. Life will be MUCH better because Kimberly really cares. The Dems have had 100 years and they gave you nothing but heartache. Baltimore is the WORST IN NATION, Kimberly will fix it, and fast. The current recipient has no chance, and won't even try. As I have often said, Baltimore is last in everything, WHAT THE HELL DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE! Kimberly is fully Endorsed by me, something I do not do lightly. Take advantage of it and MAKE BALTIMORE GREAT!" ("Be Part...", 2020). The president mostly just stated everything she has promised to do, and said that she knows how to make those things happen. While this is good for establishing credibility with republicans who like President Trump, it may not be the best way to establish credibility with her target audience. Because her target audience is democrats in Baltimore and most democrats very strongly dislike the president, this could actually hurt her credibility. Though she does include quotes from other political figures, she seems to have her main focus on President Trump. I think that perhaps if she included less Trump and more of the other politicians, it might actually help her more.

The second use of appeals I found in Kim's campaign website was pathos. Kim emphasizes heavily with the people of Baltimore, and she makes a point to outline this on her website. According to the textbook, pathos is the use of "emotions or psychological appeals to arouse compassion, pity, or outrage; one of the three classical appeals used in persuasion" (Beeson, 2015). In Kim's issues section of her website, she has a section titled "Reduce Crime with Compassion" that says "Kim believes that we lose too many of our youth to violence each year. She will work to provide additional mental health services to our most vulnerable families" ("Be Part...", 2020). Just by choosing the word compassion, Kim is appealing to her audience's emotions. She also says that she wants to reduce crime, but she says that she wants to do this by providing additional mental health services for families in need. This is absolutely an example of pathos because she is saying that she wants to reduce crime, but she wants to do it in a way that benefits the mental health of the people of Baltimore.

I feel that this use of pathos resonates with her black audience very heavily. According to an article on "The Hill," black people are five times more likely to be arrested than white people (Srikanth, 2020). Some argue that this is because black people are targeted by police, others would argue that black people simply commit more crimes. Regardless of which is the case, Klacik's statement about crime shows that she does not hate those that have committed crimes in Baltimore; she wants to help them. Because more black people than white people are getting arrested each day, this was a smart move for Klacik.

The next set of appeals I found was logos. Most of Klacik's campaign that focused on logos was found in her advertisement videos that are on her website. One video that I found was practically jam packed with logical explanations for why what is currently going on in Baltimore is not working, and why her plan will work. The video starts off with her addressing her audience

by saying, “Do you care about black lives? I do. And unlike the people that currently run Baltimore, I actually have a plan to make life better for black people here” (“Be Part...,” 2020). She then continues to explain specific facts on what the democrats in charge have done to black people in Baltimore, and how she is going to fix it. This once again directly addresses her audience of democrats and black people that live in Baltimore.

In addition to logos, this ad also represents some of the American values that Redding and Steele highlight. In this case, I feel that it is an example of change and progress. Change and progress mainly means that “Change is inevitable. Progress is good and leads to success. If you do not keep up, you will fall behind. Newer is always better. The next version will be better than the last” (Steele et al., 1962). Klacik bases much of her argument on the fact that what the leaders of Baltimore have been doing is not working, so therefore her new plan is bound to work. Because she focuses on the fact that she has new ideas, it is an example of change and progress.

I do believe that this campaign was effective in accomplishing its purpose. Klacik’s target audience seems to be democrats and black people in Baltimore, and nearly every single argument she makes towards her campaign is directed towards her audience. She effectively addresses what her audience might be thinking and explains why they should listen to her. I do also think that Klacik does all of this ethically. While I did not go through the extent of fact-checking every single statement she made, her amount of ethos she used makes her seem very reliable. I also did not find any persuasion tactics that seemed to be unfairly targeting her opponent. In fact, she seems to have the same values that her democrat opponents have; helping the black community. According to Larson, the main reason political campaigns can be seen as unethical is because the two opponents have different values (Larson, 48). 8, but Klacik actually has the same values as

her opponent, she just presents a different plan for achieving these goals. This makes her argument much more ethical, especially to her audience of democrats.

The main thing I learned from analyzing this campaign is how important it is to know who your audience is. I do not think that Kim's campaign would be as strong as it is without having such a distinct audience. In addition to this, I learned how necessary it is to have a message that is more specific than just "vote for me." Kim's subobjective was very specific and it was what she focused on for most of her arguments, which made her far more convincing.

After analyzing Kim Klacik's campaign, I identified her audience, her message, and the different appeals that she used to accomplish this. Her main audience is democrats and black people in Baltimore, and the message she wants to get across is that the democrats have not been helping Baltimore the way they have promised. Kim is stepping in as a republican, explaining that she is the solution. Overall, Kim Klacik does a very effective and ethical job of persuading her audience.

References

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