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19 March 2018

Citizenship in a Democracy

The commercial of Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 titled "Ice Cream" makes a case for why the people should not vote for the Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. It informs the public of the danger that a pro-atomic bomb policy would bring to the citizens of the United States by poisoning its children. The commercial features a 60-second video of a little girl licking ice cream while a narrator tells us about what is at stake in the upcoming presidential election. The commercial enforces an urgent message of fear for voting age American parents to act in stopping Goldwater from starting a nuclear war and testing nuclear weapons which will presumably destroy the freedom liberty and lives of their children. The actions call for a vote for the Democratic incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson because the commercial suggests that "[t]he stakes are too high [to not vote for him]" (Johnson 0:57). The commercial implies that children deserve a happy, carefree life in an unpolluted and safe environment. This implication appeals to parents who are vulnerable and would be paranoid about Goldwater's winning the election because they are scared of his pro-atomic bomb policies and its possible effects on children. The girl in this commercial is used to set the stakes essentially for a country in which this little girl and children like her will be poisoned if the nuclear testing Goldwater supports occur. It is the goal of these commercials to persuade people of their interests because they may not know what they should be interested in like the nuclear testing issue. The point of this commercial is to make the testing of nuclear weapons personal through the child.

The commercial targets American citizens who are voting-age with children who would be most vulnerable to the message. This personalization of the child interests is evident in the fact that the little girl and narrator serves the parent demographic mentioned. The commercial asks us to define democracy as a place where citizens vote to get their interests represented. The narrator, for example, seems to have a voice of a mother or teacher appealing to parents of children. The commercial directly implies that sunshine exposure is suitable for children. The health benefits of Vitamin D formation, Calcium and Vitamin A from the milk in the ice cream will produce stronger bones — versus exposure to radiation that can kill them. The priorities for this demographic of parents is the protection of their interests in their children's health and their environment. This self-representative democracy leads us to a version of democracy in which citizens must choose the candidate based on the interests they protect and serve.

This form of a representative version of democracy creates strict implicit roles for the citizens and their elected officials. The self-interest represented version of democracy forms by serving the citizen by persuading them to vote on what is important to them. It is the goal of these commercials to dramatize peoples interests because they may not understand fully the issues that affect them most such as the nuclear testing issue. The presidential candidate in this example has to market himself or herself to the base voters to get elected into office. This marketing of the candidate is evident in the fact that this commercial has been paid for by, and made by the candidate for consumers such as us (the parents of children). The system of democracy implies that the power lies in the officials' who represents the interests that come from the population in general. The population, therefore, must act to enable the represented candidate in winning the election to make their version of democracy become represented. In

this case "[Voting] for president Johnson on November 3rd" implies a win for the parental demographic (Johnson 0:54).

The detail of muting the girl's voice was a well-planned tactic; it was employed to target the message for the specific parent demographic. The medium through which the commercial communicates the message gives us insight into how the candidate manufactured the message for a particular demographic (in this case concerned parents) . For example, we can assume that the narrator is reading us a script because this is a well-edited commercial. This suggests that individuals prioritize those ideas that serve their self-interest. Also, the girl does not have her hair tied up and makes her look more innocent and enforces the message of urgency in protecting the health of these children because the children cannot save themselves without the help of concerned parents. It also helps the candidate convey the message with fear which is a great and vital tactic used in this commercial. Lyndon B. Johnson is playing on fear rather than putting forth an alternative narrative. This version of democracy enforces a new meaning to the definition of democracy by making it open to the forces of fear and emotional manipulation.

In this commercial, we are voting to protect little children and their way of life from Goldwater's evil plan to start a nuclear war. The commercial works towards establishing an explicit definition of democracy which is the engagement of people by means of manipulating emotions. This manipulation becomes evident when we try to understand the implications of arguments such as those of this commercial. The advertisers have figured out that we make decisions on our interests rather than on a more rational base. Lyndon B. Johnson is manipulating our emotions and appealing to our fear rather than rationality. For example, this

commercial uses the fear of changing for the worst which is a psychological trick used to persuade the parental demographic to vote for Lyndon B. Johnson. The argument relies primarily on emotion rather than logic to convince its audience which candidate should get your vote. The emotional action to that is a vote for Johnson, who has the power to stop Goldwater from starting a nuclear Holo-cast.

The commercial makes a case for how powerful the presidency is, telling us what expectations we should have from him, mainly, that he has to have the temperament not to start nuclear testing even though it might be tempting in the case of advancing U.S military strength. This Also makes us assume that the presidency requires a high level of moral and self-control from the president. The commercial seems to suggest that there aren't a lot of checks in place to restrain a president once elected. The presidency also requires great ethical character which this commercial implies that Goldwater does not have. Additionally, this commercial makes us assume that the president is considered to be a significant part of life for every citizen. We see this evident in the fact that this commercial has been created to target the general population of voters. This commercial is explicitly saying that children will die that is what is at stake for all of us. Even though this is more specific than general, we can assume that the candidate wants to target the largest pool of people possible with the most efficiency. Everyone can unanimously agree that children dying from radiation is terrible for society. The presidential candidate's goal is to get as many people involved as possible.

The commercial's implicit definition of democracy is a representation of interests which leads us to a democratic system that has higher voter participation and sets the goal of the presidency to creating a public spectacle to increase voting participation. This system is better

than others because it forces people to vote because they better understand what is at stake. In this commercial, for example, we should know that the children's life and liberty are at stake and voters need to act to protect what is at stake. This voting leads to a better version of democracy in which more citizens are involved in the democratic process which is a government which seeks power from the people. In this commercial voting to protecting parental demographics interests above others.

The commercial does not seem to be entirely consistent with what it implies in general about democracy because it fails to recognize institutions that protect the interest of individuals out of the Presidency. Even though the commercial makes a case for why Strontium 90 and cesium 137 is bad ("because they can make you die"), it fails to address how these materials are heavily regulated in their use. The fact that other authorities regulate them in government means that even though the readers assume that our children will get exposed to these materials, that may not be the case. Meaning that civilians generally cannot get access and therefore exposure to them. For example, the tests of these materials can be done far away from the mainland and can be done with proper protocol to prevent exposure to parties involved. It is fair to assume that proper use of these materials may not be as harmful as the commercial suggests (Johnson 0:18).

By definition democracy is a "government of the people by the people". Representative Democracy starts from a core majority which is represented by officials such as Lyndon B. Johnson. This form of democracy has strict roles and rules for the citizens and the candidates as has been presented in this paper. In Johnson's commercial, the definition seems to be one of the representative interests where the candidate shows the citizens an issue such as children's

health and well-being followed by various scenarios that will occur based on election outcomes. The goal, in this case, is to dramatize the outcome so that citizens feel paranoid and forced to participate in higher numbers. In using a little girl to convey his message, Lyndon B. Johnson is capitalizing on the emotions of the population and reminding them of the future generations that could be at risk from a nuclear holocaust. The candidate also persuades us to have different expectations of the presidency and its implicit and explicit effects on every citizen. This system of democracy underestimates the power of democratic institutions that can be a barrier to extreme outcomes. As it also works to balance the power from the presidency to other forms of government. The ultimate goal however of these commercials is to personalize political issues and concerns as well as increase citizens engagement in mainstream politics.

Works Cited

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