Analyzing Election Campaign Narra- tives



Name: Date:

USA! Trump Will Fix It!

In a whirlwind of slogans, Donald Trump's 2024 campaign has gripped the nation with promises to "Make America Great Again" and "Never Surrender!" The former President, known for his fiery rhetoric, has taken aim at the crises of inflation, border security, and global uncertainty. With chants like "USA!" and a theme song "God Bless the U.S.A.," Trump rallies have become a spectacle of nationalism and resolve.



Trump at a rally in Rochester, New Hampshire, in January 2024. Source: Wikipedia

Trump has addressed inflation as a nightmare, promising sweeping economic reforms and a return to energy independence under the mantra "Drill, baby, drill." His campaign has been marked by attacks on his opponents, framing them as part of a corrupt elite that has failed America. Trump claims he will fix it, invoking his past experience to reassure voters of his capabilities.

His knowledge on trade and border security has been highlighted, as he vows to impose tariffs and expand deportations, making America safer and more prosperous. Despite facing legal troubles, Trump positions himself as a political martyr, using these challenges to rally his base.

The campaign has seen Trump promise to restore American values, with pledges to end diversity programs and roll back transgender rights. Trump's strategy focuses on the public's grievances, presenting himself as the answer to their struggles. His rhetoric remains a blend of patriotism and fierce opposition to the Democratic candidates, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz.



Analyzing Election Campaign Narratives

Election Campaign Narratives are stories that politicians use to explain **why** people should **vote for them**. These stories help voters understand **who** they are and **why** they are **the best choice**. Here is a list of **five** very important and **often used narrative types**:

1. Hero Stories 🤶

A hero story is when a politician presents themselves as the "hero" who will save the day. They tell stories about the good things they've done or how they will help solve a big problem, like improving schools or making neighborhoods safer.

2. Crisis Narratives M

A crisis narrative is used when the candidate talks about a big **problem**, or crisis, that **needs to be solved right away**. They explain how the crisis is affecting people and how they are the best person to fix it. It could be about a serious issue like bad roads or unsafe communities.

3. Issue Ownership 🤶

In an issue ownership narrative, the candidate focuses on a specific **problem** or issue **they are really good at solving**. For example, one candidate might focus on improving education, while another might be known for protecting the environment. They **"own"** that **issue** because they are seen as the **best at handling it**.

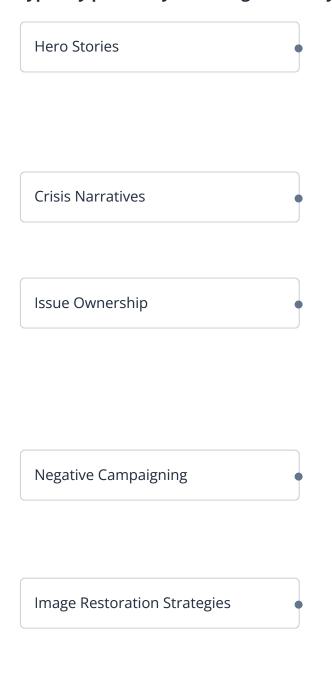
4. Negative Campaigning 889

Negative campaigning is when a **candidate talks about** their **opponent in a bad way**. They might say their opponent did something wrong or isn't fit for the job.

5. Image Restoration Strategies 😇

Image restoration strategies are used when a candidate has **made a mistake** or done something people didn't like. The candidate tells a story to **explain what happened** and how they've learned from their mistakes. They t**ry to fix their image** so people will trust them again.

Task 1: Find out about the objectives that the five types of campaign narratives typically pursue by matching the five types to their objective description.



Voters may start to see the opponent in a negative light and believe the
candidate speaking negatively is the better choice because they pointed out problems with the other person.

Voters see the candidate as brave,
 strong, and capable of making their lives better—like a hero in a movie.

Voters associate the candidate with solving that specific problem and trust them to be the expert. For example, if you care about education, you'll think of the candidate who 'owns' that issue as the best choice.

Voters might forgive the candidate and believe that they have changed or learned from their errors, giving them a second chance to lead.

Voters see the candidate as someone who understands the problem and has the solutions to get things back to normal. They feel the candidate is the right person for the job in a tough situation.

Task 2: Match the statements extracted from the newspaper article to the five types of election campaign narratives.

| Hero Stories | Trump labeled Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as threats to democracy. |
|------------------------------|--|
| Hero Stories | Trump highlighted issues like immigration and crime that he claims he can resolve. |
| Crisis Narratives | Trump promised to end the war in Ukraine within 24 hours. |
| Crisis Narratives | Trump dismissed controversies like the Stormy Daniels scandal and January 6 attack as politically motivated. |
| Issue Ownership | Trump said he is going to boost the American economy by implementing a 'universal baseline tariff' on imports. |
| Issue Ownership | Trump framed his legal challenges as political persecution. |
| Negative Campaigning | Trump pledged to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. |
| Negative Campaigning | Trump vowed to enforce strict immigration policies. |
| Image Restoration Strategies | Trump addressed concerns about immigration, economic instability, and crime. |
| Image Restoration Strategies | Trump portrayed his opponents as dangers to the nation's values. |

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☐ Task 3:

Search the newspaper article for another campaign narrative. Assign it to one of the five narrative types and make a hypothesis about the goal the narrative is pursuing.