

Trump Propaganda and Persuasion Techniques Used to Persuade and Manipulate.

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-Medium website, Oct 27, 2024

Here's is list of propaganda techniques associated with Trump, including both classic methods and adaptations for today's media landscape. This does not dismiss or ignore or forgive anyone else that uses these, but its intention is to shed light on what Trump and his surrogates are doing now and have been doing for 9 years or more. It is manipulative and dishonest, as it always is, but a distinction is the level of hate, bigotry and racism he has chosen to frame it all in.

1. Glittering Generalities

- **Definition:** Uses vague, positive phrases to evoke patriotic feelings without specifics.
- **Example:** "Make America Great Again," which appeals broadly without explaining what makes America "great" or how to achieve it
- [Truthout](#)
- [DW](#)

2. Name-Calling and Dehumanization

- **Definition:** Assigns derogatory labels to opponents, framing them negatively.
- **Example:** Terms like "Crooked Hillary" and "Radical Left," as well as calling immigrants "animals" or "vermin," dehumanize and isolate opponents
- [NECC Observer](#)
- [DW](#)

3. Fear-Based Rhetoric

- **Definition:** Portrays specific groups or situations as existential threats, often without basis.
- **Example:** Describing immigration as an "invasion" to instill fear and justify extreme policies
- [Truthout](#)
- [NECC Observer](#)

4. The Big Lie Technique

- **Definition:** Repeats a major falsehood until it becomes accepted as truth.

- **Example:** Persistent claims of voter fraud in the 2020 election, despite a lack of evidence
- [Truthout](#)

5. Firehose of Falsehood

- **Definition:** Overwhelms audiences with a high volume of false or misleading claims.
- **Example:** The sheer number of false statements made daily by Trump’s team, making it hard for fact-checkers to keep up
- [NECC Observer](#)

6. Bandwagon Appeal

- **Definition:** Encourages people to follow the majority, creating a sense of mass support.
- **Example:** Rally chants like “USA!” and referring to supporters as the “silent majority” encourage conformity
- [DW](#)

7. Plain Folks Appeal

- **Definition:** Frames the speaker as an ordinary person to gain trust.
- **Example:** Trump’s casual style and “man of the people” language create a relatable, outsider image
- [Truthout](#)

8. Card Stacking

- **Definition:** Selectively presents facts to support a narrative while omitting counterpoints.
- **Example:** Highlighting job growth without mentioning policies that primarily benefit the wealthy
- [PolitiFact](#)

9. Nationalism and Restorative Nostalgia

- **Definition:** Uses patriotic rhetoric to create a longing for an idealized past.
- **Example:** “America First” and “Make America Great Again” align with nationalist and isolationist ideals
- [Truthout](#)

10. Direct Communication and Echo Chambers

- **Definition:** Bypasses traditional media to speak directly to supporters, fostering unchallenged loyalty.
- **Example:** Platforms like Truth Social and Twitter (now X) allow for controlled narratives and closed feedback loops
- [NECC Observer](#)

11. False Equivalency

- **Definition:** Equates controversies to blur accountability.
- **Example:** Deflecting criticisms by suggesting opponents are equally or more corrupt, creating a “both sides” perspective
- [Truthout](#)

12. Projection and Scapegoating

- **Definition:** Accuses others of the speaker’s own faults.
- **Example:** Accusations of corruption directed at opponents, deflecting attention from similar criticisms faced by Trump himself
- [DW](#)

13. Appeal to Authority and Strongman Image

- **Definition:** Frames the leader as the only one capable of solving complex issues.
- **Example:** Referring to himself as the “law and order” candidate, suggesting he alone can protect America
- [Truthout](#)

14. Appeals to Victimhood

- **Definition:** Frames the speaker and followers as oppressed by an unjust system.
- **Example:** Claiming “fake news” or a “deep state” attack against himself and his supporters to justify actions
- [NECC Observer](#)

15. Demonization and Othering

- **Definition:** Frames groups or opponents as fundamentally dangerous or anti-American.
- **Example:** Referring to immigrants as criminals or opponents as enemies of the state
- [NECC Observer](#)

16. False Promises and Over-Simplification

- **Definition:** Makes grand promises that are easy to remember but unrealistic.
- **Example:** Promises like “drain the swamp” or “build the wall” simplify complex issues without viable plans
- [Truthout](#)

17. Gish Gallop (Overloading Arguments)

- **Definition:** Overwhelms with rapid-fire claims to distract or confuse.

- **Example:** Using multiple unrelated accusations in debates or speeches to bog down opponents
- [DW](#)

18. Ad Hominem Attacks

- **Definition:** Focuses on personal attacks to divert from policy or substance.
- • **Example:** Insults like “Sleepy Joe” aim to belittle rather than engage on issues
- • [NECC Observer](#)

Additional Techniques in Modern Propaganda

1. Dog-Whistle Politics

- **Definition:** Uses coded language understood by certain groups but perceived as benign by the general public.
- **Example:** Racist “jokes” about Puerto Ricans can be brushed off as humor while subtly reinforcing harmful stereotypes
- [Truthout](#)

2. Weaponized Humor

- **Definition:** Dismisses harmful statements as jokes to deflect criticism.
- **Example:** Statements that mock ethnic groups framed as “just a joke” to trivialize and desensitize audiences to prejudice
- [NECC Observer](#)

3. Gaslighting

- **Definition:** Manipulates others to question their perceptions, making them doubt their reactions to offensive statements.
- **Example:** Dismissing critics as “too sensitive” to downplay offensive remarks and invalidate their response
- [FactCheck.org](#)

4. Normalization Through Repetition

- **Definition:** Repeats offensive language or stereotypes so frequently they become normalized.
- **Example:** Consistent references to certain groups in derogatory ways normalize stereotypes over time
- [Truthout](#)

5. Hyperbolic Praise

- **Definition:** Uses exaggerated claims to cast the leader in an unrealistically positive light.
- **Example:** Statements like “healthiest president ever” aim to create an idealized image, regardless of facts
- [DW](#)

6. Cult of Personality Tactics

- **Definition:** Continuously praises the leader to elevate them as exceptional or indispensable.
- **Example:** Presenting Trump as uniquely capable of saving the country, framing his leadership as beyond ordinary limits
- [Truthout](#)

7. False Comparisons

- **Definition:** Draws unrealistic comparisons to elevate the leader or position others negatively.
- **Example:** Claiming Trump is healthier or stronger than previous presidents to emphasize his supposed superiority
- [DW](#)

8. Historical Revisionism

- **Definition:** Reinterprets or distorts historical facts to align with a specific agenda, often minimizing or denying oppressive systems, contributions of marginalized groups, or uncomfortable truths about past events.
- **Examples:**
- **Downplaying Racism’s Role:** Claims that the U.S. was solely “built on merit” ignore the exclusion of marginalized groups like Black Americans during slavery and segregation eras, masking systemic inequities.
- **Minimizing Colonial Impacts:** Recasting colonization as “civilizing missions” instead of exploitation, thereby ignoring the oppression of Indigenous populations.
- **Holocaust Denial:** Attempts to dispute the scope or reality of the Holocaust promote anti-Semitic narratives and undermine the historical suffering of Jewish communities.
- **Purpose:** Alters history to create a favorable narrative for specific ideologies, justify inequality, and foster positive views of particular groups or systems, thus influencing public perception of current and past power dynamics
- [Truthout](#)
- [NECC Observer](#)

Gaslighting Critics

- **Definition:** Manipulates critics by invalidating their concerns and making them doubt their perceptions, especially regarding serious criticisms of policies or ideologies.
- **Examples:**

- **Reversing Racism Accusations:** When accused of racism or bigotry, flipping the accusation by claiming critics are the “real racists” gaslights the public into questioning who is actually at fault.
- **Labeling Opponents as “Paranoid”:** When people raise concerns about systemic issues, dismissing them as “overreacting” or “conspiracy theorists” deflects scrutiny and undermines legitimate criticism.
- **Purpose:** Creates confusion, delegitimizes opposition, and places the blame back on critics, making it harder for them to hold the speaker accountable for their statements or actions
- [Truthout](#)
- [NECC Observer](#)

10. Victimization Narrative

- **Definition:** Frames the speaker or their supporters as victims of an oppressive system or unfair persecution, often by elites or “fake news.”
- **Examples:**
- **“Witch Hunt” Claims:** When investigated or challenged, labeling it as a “witch hunt” creates a narrative that the individual is unfairly targeted.
- **Attacking Media and Institutions:** Claiming to be persecuted by “biased media” or “rigged” institutions portrays critics as oppressors, reinforcing group loyalty among supporters.
- **Purpose:** Creates solidarity among supporters and deflects accountability by shifting focus to an imagined or exaggerated “oppressor”
- [NECC Observer](#)
- [Deutsche Welle](#)

11. Normalization of Conspiracy Theories

- **Definition:** Promotes unfounded theories as plausible explanations for complex events, creating doubt in established facts and institutions.
- **Examples:**
- **Election Fraud Theories:** Spreading claims of widespread election fraud, even when unsubstantiated, erodes public trust in electoral processes.
- **Deep State:** Referring to a “deep state” undermines trust in government by suggesting that hidden forces are working against the people.
- **Purpose:** Undermines trust in democratic institutions and creates a ready-made explanation for political or social setbacks
- [Truthout](#)

12. False Balance

- **Definition:** Gives equal weight to opposing viewpoints, even if one is clearly less factual or credible, creating a misleading sense of equality.
- **Examples:**

- **Both-Sides Reporting:** Suggesting that “both sides” of an issue like climate change or election fraud deserve equal consideration misleads the public about consensus and evidence.
- **Purpose:** Skews public perception, making less credible or fringe views appear equally valid
- [Truthout](#)

13. Character Assassination

- **Definition:** Uses personal attacks and accusations to discredit and undermine the credibility of opponents.
- **Examples:**
- **Attack Ads and Social Media Campaigns:** Personal attacks on political opponents’ appearance, intelligence, or personal lives detract from substantive policy discussions.
- **Mocking Nicknames:** Labels like “Sleepy Joe” or “Crooked Hillary” are intended to reduce opponents to simplistic caricatures.
- **Purpose:** Distracts from policy discussions and focuses the public’s attention on personal failings or perceived flaws of opponents
- [NECC Observer](#)