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Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Different methods of persuasion are used to appeal to the different senses of the audience. Logos appeals to logic and reason, ethos appeals to ethics and credibility, and pathos appeals to emotions. This essay will talk about the rhetorical devices used in the article by *The Sentencing Project* titled, *Capitalizing on Mass Incarceration: U.S. Growth in Private Prisons*. The authors used these modes of persuasion to influence opinions and to inform the general public, which is the intended audience of this article. These devices are presented by showing data and talking about personal experiences in these prisons to argue that, for-profit prisons negatively affect public safety and inmate rehabilitation by putting financial gain above everything else. The use of these techniques increases the persuasive aspect of this article by appealing to the sense of reason and emotions which shapes the audience's views on the argument.

Logos is defined as the means to appeal to the intended audience's sense of logic and reason. This is done by presenting factual information, logical arguments, and data. In the article, logos can be seen throughout to persuade the general public. One example of logos is the graphs and tables in the article. One data table titled, *Population in U.S. Private Prisons and Immigration Detention Centers*, presented data on the total prison population from 2000-2016 in comparison to the change in population in various types of for-profit prisons. This data table, it showed that the total prison population from 2000-2016 increased by 9%. Under that, it showed

the federal private prison population increased by 120%, and the private immigration detention population increased by 442%. This is logos because it shows data and facts. The article by *The Sentencing Project*, successfully used logos to persuade their audience because it used data to show the disparity in the percent increase in total prison population and the population percent increase in the for-profit prisons, from 2000-2016. Showing the significant difference between these prison populations over time, helped persuade the general public because it makes the audience question why the total population increased only slightly, but the population in the for-profit prisons increased dramatically. Another reason behind the authors using a data table to display data about for-profit prisons, it gives the audience an easy way to interpret the information which influences the audience's stance on the argument.

Pathos is another mode of persuasion found in the article. Pathos is defined as a way to appeal to the intended audience's sense of emotion. This is done through the manipulation of emotions like tone, emotional examples, etc. An example of pathos in this article is in a section titled, *Private Immigration Detention*. In this section, the authors talk about the mistreatment of immigration detainees. It mentions that a for-profit prison, GEO in Colorado, forced thousands of detainees to work for \$1 a day. After being sued by 9 of these detainees, they said that they were paid in chicken, candy, potato chips, or soda. This successfully used pathos to appeal to the emotions of the intended audience by shedding light on the mistreatment by using emotional examples. By mentioning that people were forced to work for very little, it makes the audience have empathy for the mistreated detainees. Pulling at the heartstrings of the audience persuades them by shifting their perspective, and emotionally connecting them to the cause.

In conclusion, the author was successful in informing the general audience about the

negative impact of for-profit prisons, by using persuasion. This article used pathos and logos to persuade the general public, and the audience into going against for-profit prisons. The author used logos by displaying data to compare the total prison population percent and various for-profit prison populations, from 2000 to 2016. The data table was used to persuade the audience by illustrating the drastic difference in prison populations, which makes the audience question why there's such an extreme difference. The author used pathos by giving an example of the mistreatment of detainees at for-profit detention centers. By bringing up personable examples, the author invoked empathy within the audience, which connects the reader to the cause. The author was successful in using these rhetorical devices to persuade the audience because it gained the empathy of the audience as well as made the audience question for-profit prisons.

Works Cited

Gotsch, Kara, et al. "Capitalizing on Mass Incarceration: U.S. Growth in Private Prisons." *The Sentencing Project*, 2 Aug. 2018,
www.sentencingproject.org/publications/capitalizing-on-mass-incarceration-u-s-growth-in-private-prisons/.