

The media's role in the use of gender and racial stereotypes in politics

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Objectives

- I Discuss the research on gendered language
- II Better understand gender stereotypes in the media and the implications for policy, candidates, and the public
- III Better understand racial stereotypes in the media and the implications for policy, candidates, and the public

Let's kick things off then

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A note on Social Identity Theory

- ▶ This is a key social-psychological concept used as the foundation to the understanding that many political scientists and other social scientists have on topics like race and gender. (Partisanship too.)
- ▶ Where did this come from?
 - ▶ Tajfel and Turner (1986) is the most common citation for this theory. (Though there are a number of articles on this.)

S.I.T continued

- ▶ Basically, the theory argues:
 - ▶ Groups do not need to be objective, they are usually quite subjective. But people recognize differences between these groups.
 - ▶ When people see greater differences between themselves and others based on these groups, people often create a narrative of "Us vs. them".
 - ▶ With this "Us vs. them" view of the world, people will be motivated to protect the interests of "us" or "we" (in-group favoritism) while also wanting to keep a hierarchical status over the "them".
 - ▶ In-group favoritism does not necessarily need to come at the cost of the other group, though. The animosity toward the out-group often comes when people feel that their group's status is threatened.

Group Activity

- ▶ **Type in the chat:** How do you feel about other the other Mountain West teams? (i.e. Airforce, Wyoming, San Diego State, Boise State)

Gendered Language

- ▶ Jones (2016) used transcripts looking at Hillary Clinton's career from 1992 to 2013 to determine whether Hillary Clinton's linguistic style became more like a man's over time.
 - ▶ It did. It appeared to be electorally beneficial to do so.
- ▶ Roberts and Utych (2019) wanted to figure out what masculine language actually looked like.
 - ▶ Is it enough to treat female politicians' linguistic styles as comparatively different or similar to their male counterparts?
 - ▶ Are their partisan differences that make the previous question somewhat hard to do from a research design prospective?
 - ▶ How do these partisan differences conform with partisan and/or gender stereotypes?

Group Activity

- ▶ Can you think of any masculine or feminine words? How and why would you define them that way?

Gendered Language cont.

- ▶ What are some implications of the use of gendered language in politics?
 - ▶ Thinking of what Roberts and Utych (2020) found, how might gendered language be used in politics in electoral contexts?
- ▶ How does the media fit into this?
 - ▶ What use does content analysis have in studying the media here and more broadly?

Political stereotypes based on gender

- ▶ Party based stereotypes rooted in gender:
 - ▶ Winter (2010) - Republicans are Masculine whereas Democrats are feminine
 - ▶ Comes from efforts by Reagan to emphasize that Republicans are the "Party of Men"
- ▶ Conroy and Green (2020) - It is easier for women candidates who use more agentic (considered to be masculine language) than communal.
- ▶ Lawless and Fox (2013) - Women participate in politics less due to a socialization that politics is a man's game.
- ▶ Women athletes are often infantilized in television commentary - this is not just in sports, though.

Gendered stereotypes in the media

- ▶ Differences in media portrayals
 - ▶ Kittlson and Fridkin (2008) - Looking in three countries, find that candidates are portrayed using traditional gender stereotypes in newspaper coverage
- ▶ Can we think of possible foils to this? Is it just based on gender?

Gendered stereotypes in the media

- ▶ Differences in media portrayals
 - ▶ Kittlson and Fridkin (2008) - Looking in three countries, find that candidates are portrayed using traditional gender stereotypes in newspaper coverage
 - ▶ Atkeson and Krebs (2008) - The presence of female candidates on local election ballots increase the number of policy areas discussed during campaigns (e.g., education, social services, etc.)
- ▶ Can we think of possible foils to this? Is it just based on gender?
 - ▶ Hayes and Lawless (2015) - Find that the sex of the candidate does not influence media portrayals when you take into account partisan and ideological differences.

Discussing Valentino and Vandebroek 2017

What about race?

- ▶ Racial stereotypes are everywhere in the media.
- ▶ Many scholars argue that race is central to American politics - not just because racial minorities make it so, but Whites make it quite important as well.
 - ▶ Hajnal (2020) - argues that although economic and class inequality is significant, race constantly drives a number of political attitudes among the public and political elites.
 - ▶ Hutchings and Valentino (2004) - provides a literature review showing how race touches every part of politics.
 - ▶ Jardina (2019 and 2020) - demonstrates that a number of whites evaluate racial differences and seek to find ways to bolster those in the same racial group.
- ▶ They are not just expressed by those outside the racial group
 - ▶ Stephens-Dougan (2020) - shows that Obama commonly chastised Black audiences and used racial stereotypes of African Americans. Why? They are electorally popular among whites.

Racial Stereotypes

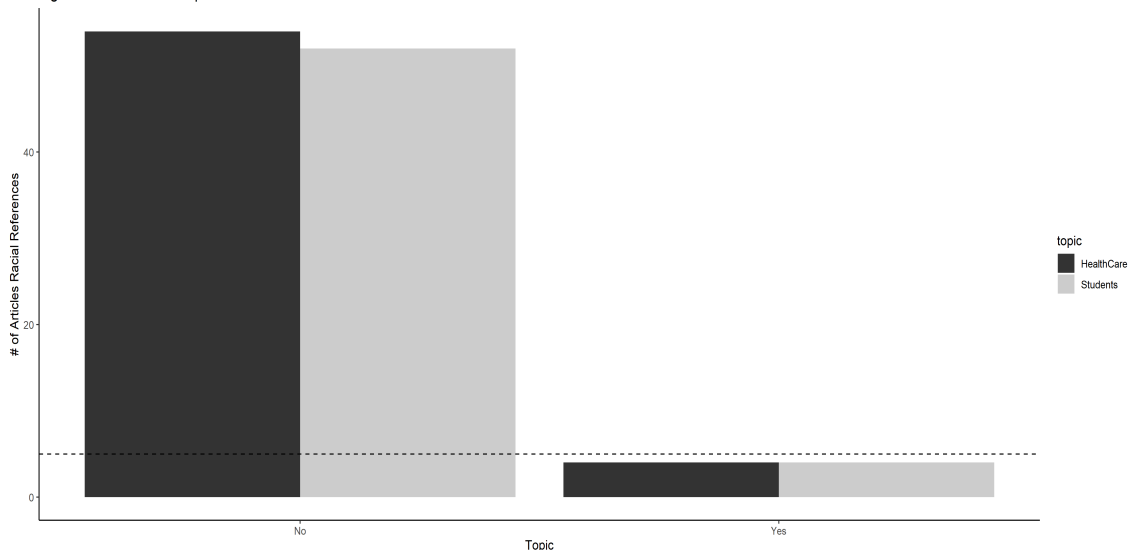
- ▶ We know that racial stereotypes are really common.
 - ▶ e.g. Evaluations of who deserves financial assistance from the government is rooted in people's evaluations of Black Americans as undeserving and the perception that these distributive policies are meant to help Black Americans (Gilens 1999).
 - ▶ For those interested in Latin American politics, evaluations of who should get what based on racial and ethnic divisions occur there too. Morgan and Kelly (2017) demonstrate that negative views of distributive policy is often due to feelings that either indigenous and other marginalized groups will benefit; or from the perspective of these marginalized members of society, they see that these policies will just help the already advantaged - as a result, in a context such as this, both the marginalized and advantaged groups disfavor these policies.
- ▶ They are not just expressed by those outside the racial group
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How are these used in the media?

- ▶ How common are they?
 - ▶ Winter (2008) - they are pretty common. Gilens (1999) also says that in terms of broader discussions of social welfare policy, when race is evoked for negative frames of these policies, the center of this negative coverage is disproportionately about African Americans.

Frequency for contemporary debates

Figure 1. Racialization of policies in the news



Q and hopefully A's



Contact - always feel free to reach out

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