

Gendered targeting:

Do parties tailor their campaign ads to women?

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FAZ, 1961 (colorized)



BBC, 4 Jan 2023

What is wrong with digital ads?

- Twitter bans political ads (not anymore)
- Facebook prohibits sensitive targeting criteria
- Plans for the regulation of targeting (European Commission 2020)

What we know

Targeting and message differentiation

- Campaigns use **targeting** to reach specific groups (Stuckelberger & Koedam 2022)
- Messages differ **between** campaigns (Windett 2014)

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→ **Tailoring within** campaigns?

Why (not) tailor

Why (not) tailor

+

- More efficient vote-seeking
- Provide voters with more relevant messages

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- Voters dislike being targeted (Hersh & Schaffner 2013)
- Ethical/ideological reasons (Pauly & Stotz 2019)

Research Design

Do parties tailor their ads by gender?

- Gender is an important political dimension
- Targeting by gender is easy online
- Parties profit electorally (Holman et al. 2015)

Data

- Facebook and Instagram
- > 65,000 ads from 146 campaigns in 25 countries
- 2019 EP elections

Measuring targeting

- Targeting \neq Algorithm (Fowler et al. 2021; Kaplan et al. 2022)
- An ad is targeted if its audience is 100% women (IV)

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Measuring tailoring

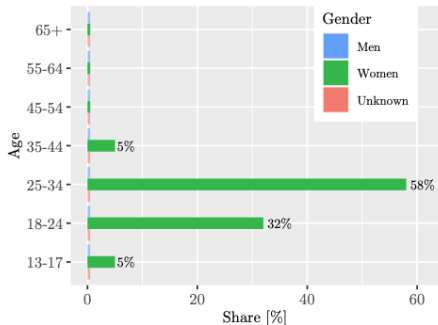
- **Dependent variable:** Inclusion of women on ad image
- Comparability across **25 countries**

Measuring tailoring

(a) Ad image with detected face



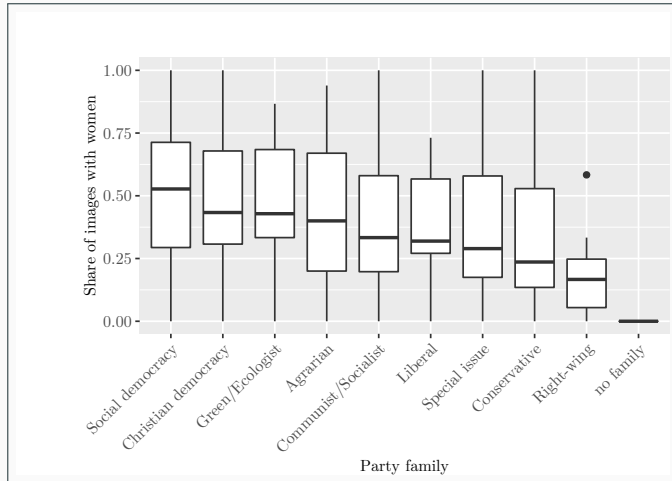
(b) Demographic audience composition



(c) Ad details

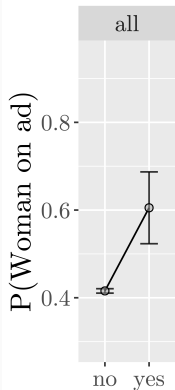
Party	SPÖ (Austria)	Start date	Apr 13, 2019
Amount spent	€ 400-€ 499	End date	May 7, 2019
Impressions	100K-125K	ID	274917136782587

Tailoring by party family



Results

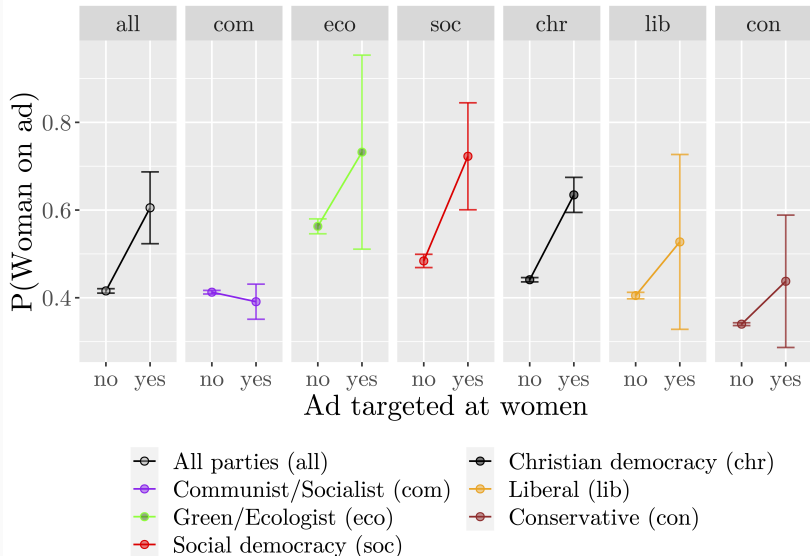
Logistic regression



Ad targeted at women

○ All parties (all)

Logistic regression



▸ Videos

▸ Text content

▸ Tailoring by age

▸ Snapchat

▸ Targeting

Summary

- Many campaign ads are **targeted at women**
- Targeted ads are much more likely to include women

Implications

- **Parallel communication** of different messages
- **Gendered exposure** to partisan messages
- Fragmentation and polarization of the political debate

Thank you



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Videos

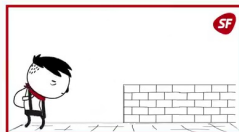
(a) Frame 1, 1 sec



(b) Frame 2, 6 sec



(c) Frame 3, 11 sec



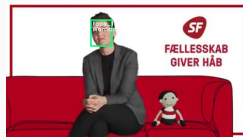
(d) Frame 4, 16 sec



(e) Frame 5, 21 sec

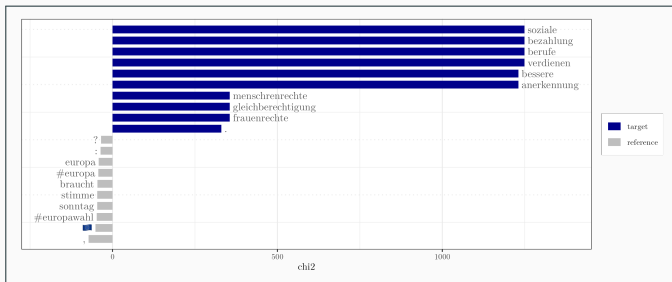


(f) Frame 6, 26 sec



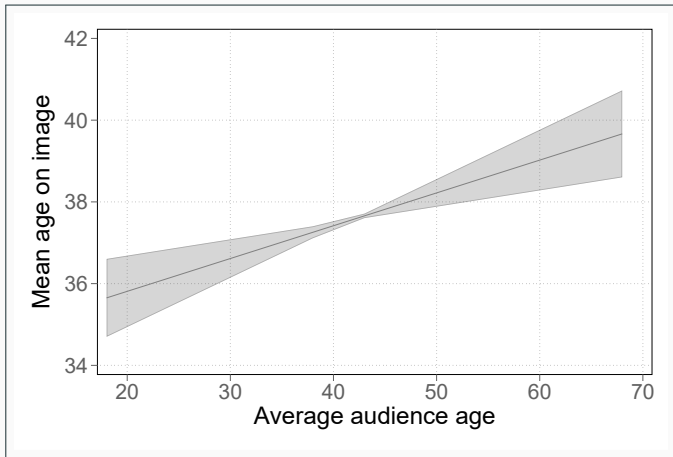
Go back

Text content

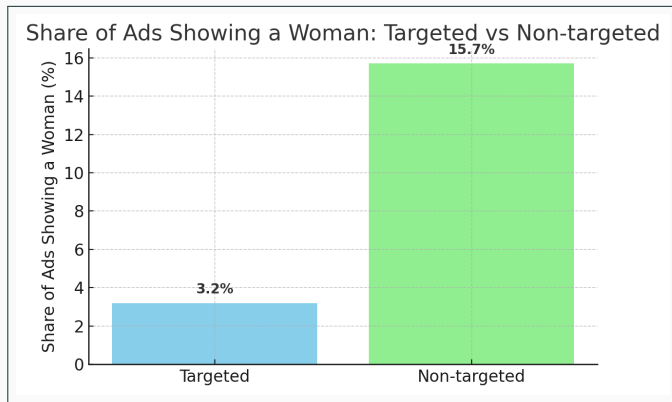


► Go back

Tailoring by age



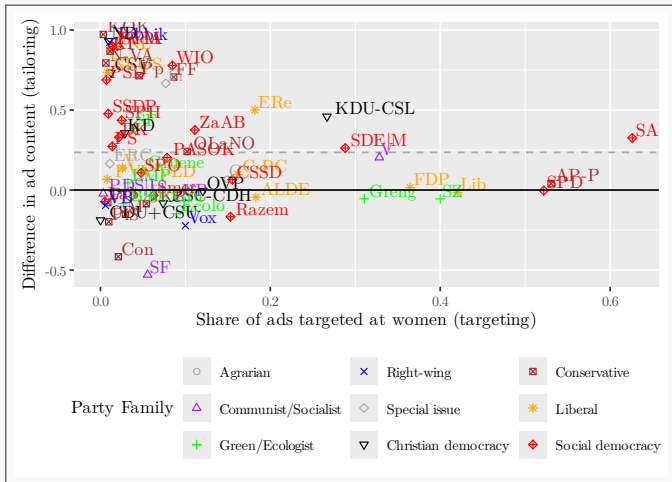
▸ Go back



$N = 483, N_{\text{targeted}} = 62$

› Go back

Targeting and tailoring



► Go back