

Gender Stereotypes in the American Electoral Process

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Introduction

- Hypothesis: Gender stereotypes negatively affect public opinion of female candidates which decreases female politicians chances of running for, or being elected to, office.
- Why am I interested in this topic choice?
- Why are gender stereotypes important to consider in times of elections?

Literature Review

- Ideological Orientations
 - Individuals vote based on hard and soft characteristics.
- Gender-Trait Stereotype
- Gender-Belief Stereotype
 - Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen: Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Interpretive Effect
- Resource Effect
 - Eileen McDonagh: It Takes a State: A Policy Feedback Model of Women's Political Representation. *Perspective on Politics*

Literature Review (continued)

- Media

- What you watch can affect your perception of a female candidate.
 - Who said the quote, “I can see Russia from my house?”
- Where you get your news from can be biased.
- Amount of coverage on a female candidate.
 - Study conducted in 1982-86 of 26 Senate races.
 - A male and female candidate were given two separate codes if they were mentioned in a paragraph in a major newspaper or magazine article.
 - Concluded that male candidates were spoken of more often and female candidates were judged more on their viability rather than their stance on social and economic issues.
- Kahn, K. F. (1992). Does Being Male Help? An Investigation of the Effects of Candidate Gender and Campaign Coverage on Evaluations of U.S. Senate Candidates. *The Journal of Politics*.

Examples

- Recent race in Massachusetts Scott Brown vs. Martha Coakley.
 - Shannon O'Brien (state treasurer), "When you close your eyes and think of a governor or a president, immediately a picture comes to mind- for many people that is not a woman."
 - Katie Zezima: *After Senate Race*, "Some Say Barrier for Women in Massachusetts Still Stands." Retrieved February 24, 2010, from *The New York Times*.
- Women gaining recognition within their party
 - John Bailey, "The only time to run a woman is when things look so bad that your only chance is to do something dramatic."

Data & Methodology

- ANES 2008 data set.
- Created two variables to distinct between male and female house races among Democrats and Republicans.
- Difference of means analysis.
- Used the variable feeling thermometer towards House Democrats and Republicans.
- Feeling Thermometer of Democratic House Candidates (Table 1).
 - Among Democratic male and female respondents.
- Feeling Thermometer of Republican House Candidates (Table 2).
 - Among Republican male and female respondents.
- Feeling Thermometer by Political Party (Table 3).
 - All respondents.

Table 1. Difference of Means Analysis-Feeling Thermometer – Among Democratic Male and Female Respondents

		Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Candidate Gender		Mean	Mean
Democratic House Candidate	Female	55.65	62.29
	Male	60.76	63.22
Difference		-5.11*	-0.928
Republican House Candidate	Female	55.03	53.37
	Male	55.47	56.36
Difference		-0.44	-2.998

*Significant at .05 level

Table 2. Difference of Means Analysis-Feeling Thermometer – Among Republican Male and Female Respondents

		Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Candidate Gender		Mean	Mean
Democratic House Candidate	Female	60.23	61.88
	Male	59.35	63.02
Difference		0.88	-1.135
Republican House Candidate	Female	58.52	56.97
	Male	54.94	55.65
Difference		3.574	1.321

*Significant at .05 level

Table 3. Difference of Means Analysis-Feeling Thermometer – By Political Party

		Democratic Respondents	Republican Respondents
Candidate Gender		Mean	Mean
Democratic House Candidate	Female	59.24	61.17
	Male	62.16	61.42
Difference		-2.91*	-0.241
Republican House Candidate	Female	54.05	57.63
	Male	55.95	55.33
Difference		-1.9	2.326

*Significant at .05 level

Conclusion

- My initial belief was that women candidates would be affected by the gender stereotypes. Although the results show a slight significance with my hypothesis, it is not fully supported.
- Why?
- Further Research:
 - Use different variables to intercede with the variables already being used.

Questions?