

A STUDY OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE NEWS COVERAGE OF THE 1984 AND 2008 VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT

Although females have campaigned for offices in the executive branch of the U.S. government, none have been elected. According to some scholars and researchers, one of the reasons females have been unable to break through is due to the type of coverage they received from news organizations. Studies have shown gender stereotypes influence how political campaigns and policies involving candidates of the opposite gender are framed. The goal of this study was to determine if the coverage given to female vice-presidential candidates in the 1984 and 2008 presidential campaigns reflected gender stereotypes. This study conducted a quantitative content analysis of two sources from two elections for four candidates (two females and two males), evaluating the total coverage, policy coverage, character coverage, and tone of quotes coverage for males and females. The research found that females received more coverage on feminine policy, characteristics, and total coverage, while one dominated the masculine category and the other was equal to the male in negative quotes. The compiled findings indicate that gender stereotypes were applied within the sources' news coverage of female candidates.