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Media Portrayal of Kamala Harris in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Serbia, Poland, and Norway in Relation to the Gender Inequality Index

Members of the group (Minja Pavlović- coding the Norwegian articles, writing the paper; Marija Vuković- making graphs, using the Media Monitoring Tool, making the presentation; Maja Čatović- coding the Serbian articles, writing the paper; Karolina Zuzanna Piskorz- coding the Polish articles, doing the extra readings; Edvarda Iselvmo- collecting the articles, doing the extra readings)

Outline

“Kamala Harris’s rise from local to national politics marks her as one of the most successful women in U.S. politics” (Osei Fordjour, 2022). Harris represents an interesting political figure in the United States, but she also caught the attention of European media. As the first female elected Vice President of the United States, it is obvious that she has achieved something no other woman has. Considering all that, she is a great example to investigate on gender representation in political context and how female politicians are often misinterpreted in media, which amplifies the stereotypes and biased standards for women in “male dominated” fields.

Goal and target

The goal of this project is to explore how the media in Serbia, Poland and Norway choose to represent Kamala Harris. While the media may not directly dictate opinions about her, they focus on specific aspects of her identity and set the framework for public perception. As agenda setting theory implies- the media might not tell us what to think, but they tell us what to think about.

It is very important for those who produce media articles to be careful while framing and choosing words for representation of any minority group. Therefore, we would like to emphasize that our primary targets are journalists, but with this project we also are speaking to the general public.

By analyzing these portrayals, our project examines whether the results correlate with each country’s Gender Inequality Index (GII) rankings, which we use as a key measure to compare these countries.

Methodology

To see how Kamala Harris was reported on in various countries over a certain period, from October 29th to November 13th, we did the following:

1. Article Selection

With random sampling we selected 16 articles from three countries, namely Serbia, Poland, and Norway. Within each country 8 articles are state-owned news outlet selections, 8 were independent news outlets. Nevertheless, we faced some data limitations and were able to find only 4 articles from Serbian independent news outlet that reported about Kamala Harris in a given timeframe.

2. Sentiment Analysis

Kamala Harris's sentiment was determined in each article using a Google sheet. Sentiment classification was as follows: negative (-1), neutral (0), positive (1).

We coded the articles as negative, neutral, or positive based on the words used, tone, content, and framing. Articles were considered positive if they highlighted Kamala Harris's achievements or portrayed her in a favorable light, neutral if they maintained an objective tone without clear bias, and negative if they focused on her perceived weaknesses, challenges, or used language that could undermine her credibility. This classification was guided by both textual analysis and the overall sentiment conveyed in the articles. The graph was made to show results of sentiment analysis.

3. Gender Sensitivity Analysis

Articles were further analyzed using the Gender Media Monitoring guide and filling in the abovementioned sheet. Some of the questions from the sheet were: Does the article contain a picture of Kamala Harris?; Is Kamala Harris mentioned in the headline, in the first 20% or the rest of the text?; Does the article highlight any issues of inequality?; Does it challenge gender stereotypes? We also answered several key questions from the GMM framework that can be found on AGEMI Platform, as a means of determining whether these articles were good examples of gender-sensitive political reporting about Kamala Harris.

4. Compare and Visualize:

The paper therefore presents a comparison and visualization of the sentiment and gender sensitivity results from the three said countries, and comparison between these findings and official GII rankings that these countries have.

Challenges and limits

The main challenges in our paper are the potential subjectivity in coding the articles, as interpretations of tone and bias can vary among researchers. Besides, the limited sample size and focus on a short time frame may restrict the possibility to generalize our findings, making it important to place these conclusions into perspective within these constraints.

References and web resources

In this research, as a starting point we took the online platform [AGEMI](#) and the work of Cristina Fernández-Rovira and Santiago Giraldo-Luque on the treatment that women politicians have received in the media in Spain, United Kingdom, and France (Fernández-Rovira & Giraldo-Luque, 2021). Their use of sentiment analysis within text analysis guided our approach to studying the contexts in which Kamala Harris was mentioned. We also found helpful the article *Framing Madam Vice President: Global Newspaper Coverage of Kamala Harris in Her First Year* that delves deeper into the issue of framing and to focuses on how the media's portrayal of women in politics can be linked to shaping public perceptions of their effective leadership (Osei Fordjour & McIntosh White, 2024).