_____

Chair: [Dustin Harp](#), associate professor and director, Women's & Gender Studies Program, University of Texas at Arlington

- **[Regina Lawrence](#), professor/director, Agora Journalism Center, University of Oregon**
- **[Urszula Pruchniewska](#), assistant professor, Communication Studies, Kutztown University**
- **[Ingrid Bachmann](#), professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile**

_____

Amy Schmitz Weiss Good morning, everyone. We are so happy to have you with us for this special research breakfast session. We don't have the usual ISOJ breakfast tacos, but we hope you have a good cup of coffee. I've got my ISOJ mug ready to go here and breakfast snack with you there at home for the session. We're so excited to have an amazing group of women scholars from around the globe that will be talking about gender, media and politics in the digital age. Dr. Dustin Harp, who's an associate professor and director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at the University of Texas at Arlington, will be leading the session. Take it away, Dustin.

Dustin Harp Thank you, Amy. I want to start off by talking about women, politicians and media representation. Based on decades of research, here are some things we know about women, politicians and media. Journalists, their sources and politicians repeatedly reinforce culturally ingrained ideas about men and women, how they should behave and what they are good at. Years of research, not just in the U.S. but in other parts of the world, shows how women politicians are treated differently from their male counterparts by news media, often assessed for their appearance and clothing, and more often than male politicians associated with their familial and home status. Gendered language and stereotypical emotions or personality traits are highlighted as well. For example, calling a woman's voice shrill, a word reserved for women and framing women as weak and emotional. These are some of the most frequent and persistent media stereotypes about and frames of women in the political sphere.

Male politicians, conversely, are more often talked about in terms of their political achievements and masculine qualities associated with power. Now, I want you to read the first few paragraphs of this June 17, 2019 New York Times' magazine story about Elizabeth Warren. The story disproportionately hits on some of the top media stereotypes about women in politics and women generally. This trifecta of family, fashion and food succeeds in conjuring the most stereotypical images about women that their place is in the home, caring for family, and that how they look is important. Look at that first sentence. It's typical for news organizations to write about women politicians that lead with information about their families. In this case, situating Elizabeth Warren as a wife in the traditional roles of women. Then there's that second sentence of the article that describes what Warren is wearing. To round out the images of family and fashion in the third paragraph, the story offers an image of Warren in the kitchen. The article illustrates what is wrong with

much media coverage of women politicians in just the first three paragraphs. It invokes stereotypes. It reminds us of Warren's gender before explaining her politics.

Now, consider that this was published by one of the premiere journalism companies in the world just last year. That can give you a sense of how prevalent these types of gender stereotypes are in our news environment. And let me be clear, this type of reporting about a woman in isolation, it's not a problem. But within the context of how male politicians are written about and the persistence and pervasiveness of these gender stereotypes makes it a problem. Here's why.

People have ideas about politics, about who can and should use power. They have expectations about what it means to be a man and a woman, what it means to be a politician and who is capable of fulfilling that image. Power, particularly in the political sphere, is traditionally understood to be a masculine quality. Ideas of what it means to be a competent politician are associated with stereotypical masculine traits, including strong, decisive, assertive, competitive and ambitious. Feminine qualities are traditionally associated with the private sphere, home and family. It's hard for a woman to act feminine, which is a cultural expectation, while also showing political competence. To illustrate this point, we need look no further than the words associated with an assertive woman: pushy, bossy or bitchy. When media outlets treat women politicians as women first and politicians second, they are feeding into an already sexist culture where many voters believe that men make better politicians than women.

Need proof? A recent poll found 20% of Democratic and independent men responding to a survey agreed with the statement that women are, "less effective in politics than men." Here are more examples of stereotypical and sexist media content. In 2013, news reports of State Senator Wendy Davis's filibuster to block an abortion restricting bill in the Texas State Legislature focused on Davis's personal life and especially her pink shoes. Those shoes led just about every story and were present in just about every photo. In this case, cutting off everything about Wendy Davis except for her shoes. Newspapers and screens turned the filibuster into a gendered spectacle, ignoring or downplaying the bill that would restrict abortions. In doing so, the media highlighted Davis's gender, undermined her authority, denigrated her efforts and deviated attention from the actual issue.

We have decades of examples of news stories that remind us of Hillary Clinton's gender status. The pantsuits, the hairstyles, the shrill voice and cackle, her cleavage. And the picture with her in the pink is the image that spawned a whole discussion in media about her cleavage. More recently, we saw media discussions about the personal relationship between former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown and one time Democratic contender and possible vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris. Journalists asked readers to consider that Harris may have slept her way to the top. And there is no shortage of discussion about the appearances and stylistic decisions made by U.S. women in Congress.

On the bright side, digital media has allowed women to own their messages. As non-journalists have become more media savvy and have gained the ability to create content, political women have learned to subvert traditional media texts and refocus media messages. A couple of examples stand out from Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. Early in the campaign, Trump accused Clinton of "playing the woman card" as her campaign strategy. Clinton responded to the woman card accusation by posting a video to her campaign Twitter feed with the hashtag "woman card." She embraced the allegation, saying, "Mr. Trump accused me of playing the woman card. Well, if fighting for

women's health care and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the woman card, then deal me in." Just a couple of days later, Clinton's official campaign Twitter account tweeted an image of a bright pink card resembling a credit card with the message, "lower wages, no paid family leave, limited access to health care, just some of the perks of the hashtag woman card." Along with the image was a link to HillaryClinton.com, her official website. On the website, a box advertised, "get your free woman card" and ask for email addresses and zip codes. The campaign had turned Trump's accusation into a strategy to build a database of Clinton supporters and possible campaign contributors using digital media.

And then there's the moniker "Nasty Woman" that also started as an insult to Clinton. During a televised presidential debate between Clinton and Trump, while Clinton answered a question, Trump leaned into his microphone and interjected, "such a nasty woman." Immediately, Twitter lit up, and soon the statement became a feminist rallying cry. The hashtags "Nasty Woman" and "I Am a Nasty Woman" trended on Twitter. By the next day, National Public Radio declared the statement "the meme of the week." The events following Trump's insult illustrated how quickly a backlash against sexism and a robust pro-woman sensibility entered into the digital media conversation.

One last example of how women are using digital media to direct media messages. At one of President Trump's State of the Union addresses, most of the Democratic women in Congress wore white. They chose their outfits as a sign of solidarity and a nod to women's suffrage in the United States. The suffragists who wore white when they marched for women's right to vote. With a record number of women now serving in Congress, the sea of white proved impactful and garnered lots of press coverage. The House Democratic Working Group members, who reportedly invited women of both political parties to wear white, however, achieved more than simply drawing attention to women's rights and women in politics and power. The group used a sexist journalistic norm, the coverage of women's appearance, clothing and fashion choices, to their benefit, and it steered the media narrative.

Journalists writing about women politicians can and should do better. Women running for and already in office need to be treated like candidates and politicians, not like women candidates and women politicians. Reminding audiences of women's place in the home and family rather than the world of politics and drawing attention to gender attributes and stereotypes does little to break culturally steeped ideas about women, politics and power. When a woman is running for office or in an office and a journalist highlights that women's marital status, her appearance in shoes or the pitch of her voice, it is neglecting to place her politics, her platform and her record at the forefront. It's bad reporting, and it's bad for the world.

So how can we do better? And then my last slide just offers the sources for my presentation. Thank you. Now we will move on to Dr. Regina Lawrence, who's a professor and director at Agora Journalism Center, University of Oregon.

Regina Lawrence Thank you very much, Dustin, for the introduction, and I really appreciate your opening comments. I'm happy to be here. I was excited to be on this panel when Dustin and Amy asked because media, gender and politics is a subject I return to again and again in my own research.

I propose kind of a ridiculously long title for my presentation today. "Female candidates in the media before and after the onset of the digital age." I'm trying to broaden the topic just

a bit, as Dustin did in her comments, to include pre-digital age factors and to think about how they still matter or maybe matter differently in this hyper-digital era that we're in today.

So I'm going to start with a framework that Melody Rose and I developed in our book about Hillary Clinton's 2008 campaign. That's 2008, not 2016. Not exactly pre-digital era, but definitely before Twitter became the main arterial system for political reporting, before Facebook became the main purveyor of campaign information and misinformation as it has today and really way before platforms like Instagram became so central and popular.

And we offered this Venn diagram as a way of conceptualizing the overlapping factors that affect how female candidates are covered by the news media, and so it reminds us that there are these key foundational factors that predate the digital age. So there are the centuries old gender stereotypes that Dustin just discussed that kind of boil down to women are thought to be good at caring, competent at caring, men are thought to be competent at leadership. And of course, Kathleen Hall Jamieson developed the very famous notion of the double bind so that women who attempt to move into leadership roles have to somehow walk that line of seeming masculine enough for the job, so to speak, while also retaining a sense of their true womanhood. So that's an ongoing struggle struggle that female candidates and leaders have faced for a very long time.

There's also a decades old journalistic norms that you all in this audience are familiar with for how to cover electoral politics, focusing on conflict, strategy, tactics, the horse race, who's up, who's down in ways that can be particularly problematic for women candidates.

And then finally, we propose this third circle or bubble in the Venn diagram that we called the candidate and her context. And we use this to hold a number of factors, including the individual candidate herself, her own particular history, life story, experiences, and also importantly, the context, including the office that she is seeking because the research is becoming clearer that how women will fare in their bids for office and in how they are covered can be affected by the office that they're seeking, whether it's local, state, federal, whether it's legislative or executive. There's much research now to suggest that voters look for different attributes in legislative leaders versus executive leaders.

And of course, when we talk about the presidency, we're talking about the very most gendered office in the land. So we argued that in order to understand the struggles that Hillary Clinton faced in 2008, you have to consider how these three sets of factors overlapped. Hillary Clinton struggled and ultimately failed to win the nomination in 2008 for many reasons, not just because of sexism, although that clearly played a role, not just because of media, although media clearly played a role, and also because of the ways that gender stereotypes interacted with journalistic norms in the context of seeking the most masculinized and difficult to attain office.

It's astonishing now for me to think about how back in the book we only wrote one chapter about non-news media. We had one chapter where we kind of surfed the internet and looked for images. I don't even remember if we were calling the memes back then, but we looked for images and themes in how Hillary Clinton was being talked about and what we call the Wild West of the Internet. And of course, a lot of that, as you remember, was pretty ugly.

Since really the 2012 election, more and more attention has shifted away from traditional news media coverage among researchers, and more attention now on how candidates are being talked about on social media, as Dustin indicated. And remarkably, I have to note

that in 2020 we also had many more women on that presidential stage, at least for a while. We had several compelling female presidential candidates, and now it's back to two white guys battling it out. Two old white guys.

This headline from a study of the 2020 campaign by Lucina Di Meco really caught my eye because it raises the specter of these enduring gender stereotypes with this notion of a gender penalty online, and her study found that female candidates in 2020, particularly Kamala Harris, came in for particularly negative discussion, critical and denigrating discussion online compared with men. So many things are still with us from the pre-digital era.

Since the 2014 election cycle, I've been doing research with Shannon McGregor, focusing on how female candidates communicate via social media, and I was drawn to this subject in part because of the work that Melody and I had done on how female candidates must perform gender, particularly when running for the presidency. And I was really intrigued by the new stage that social media has created for female candidates and male candidates to perform on.

So Shannon and I argue that social media has opened up new possibilities and new challenges for female candidates, and we draw on a couple of key concepts here. Zizi Papacharissi's work on what she calls affective politics, the more emotion laid and intuitive style of politics that has emerged with online media. We draw on James Stanyer's concept of intamizing politics. He's a British political scientist who's studied how modern politics are very much infused with a focus on individual personalities and private lives of politicians becoming a key focus.

And finally, we draw on this intriguing notion by the political scientists Kim Fridkin and Pat Kenney of strategic stereotype theory, and what Fridkin and Kenney argue in a nutshell, I'm going to oversimplify a bit, is that, yes, gender stereotypes are a thing and they are things that female candidates have to strategize around. But in some contexts, for some candidates appealing to some kinds of constituencies, those dynamics could play out differently. So the standard theory always was that female candidates would and should try to downplay their femininity, downplay the fact that they were women in order not to remind voters of those stereotypes that women are good at caring, but maybe not good at leadership.

But in fact, Fridkin and Kenney suggest for some candidacies, for some constituencies, reminding voters that you are a woman and therefore a caregiver and supposedly good at caring could be advantageous, depending on the issues that are in the air, the type of office that you seek and who your voters are.

And so social media becomes really fascinating. We see this example on the side from Gina Raimondo's Instagram page from a few years ago. This is very common. Of course, it's common in all of our social media feeds these days, pictures from our personal lives, our family lives that are constantly reminding voters for female candidates, constantly reminding them that they are caregivers, they're moms, they're wives, they're caring for the elders, etc.. And so we've become really intrigued with this.

Just a couple of quick observations. We think that social media has really opened up new questions about gender and campaign communication from both female and male candidates, because it is possible that all of this intimate personalizing messaging online could be problematic because it intensifies the double bind for female candidates. But it

could also be that it's advantageous for women, and there are some women candidates who are doing this very skillfully. Kind of the blend of issue content, decisive leadership messaging and also, "Oh, yeah, my daughter just got her driver's license today. I'm so excited for her. So glad I don't have to drive around anymore." That kind of messaging balance, we've become really interested in.

I would just make one last observation. When we're talking about gender, it's very common, of course, that we focus on women. But of course there are many genders. And the way that this is all playing out for male candidates I also think is very interesting. There's the notion of the possibility Lindsey Meeks is one who's explored this, that there are new expectations for men, male politicians these days as well, that men are perhaps expected to also demonstrate competence at caring.

And so these social media feeds that reveal them as fathers and also as caregivers could play out in ways that are advantageous for them, and as a matter of fact, that's one thing we've been finding in our experimental research. So on the last slide, I just posed a few questions that perhaps we can discuss further about the enduring role of gender stereotypes, how those still continue to matter, and how have you noticed the 2020 female presidential candidates when we had them performing gender, so to speak? Has news coverage of female candidates really improved since 2008? Has social media made it easier or harder for female candidates to campaign successfully? So thanks for the opportunity, and I look forward to the discussion.

Dustin Harp Thank you, Regina. Next, we have Dr. Urszula Pruchniewska, assistant professor of communication studies at Kutztown University.

Urszula Pruchniewska Hi, everyone. Thank you for being here. I'm really excited to be at my first ISOJ. I wish we were all meeting in person, but this is as good as it gets for these times. So I'm happy to be here.

I'm going to use Dustin's and Regina's presentations as really a jumping off point to focus on how politicians can use digital or social media to take control of their own narratives by really circumventing traditional news media and directly connecting with their audiences.

So I'm going to start with a familiar face, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, or AOC, as I'll be referring to her from now on. All of you probably are familiar with her. She's a congresswoman from New York, who is the youngest woman ever to serve in Congress. She's very well known for being very active on social media and particularly for effectively using Instagram videos to communicate with the public, as you can see explained here in this tweet.

So what she does often on Instagram is stream something she's doing at home, such as cooking while talking about politics and social justice or holding a Q&A session with her audience. So what I want to focus on in this talk is thinking about the features and the possibilities of use that are embedded in social media technologies that allow women politicians such as AOC to promote important social change in understated, low key or non-explicitly political ways.

My research in general focuses on examining social media affordances that are present, in particular social media platforms, such as Instagram, or Facebook, or Twitter, and what people can do with them. So affordance are possibilities for use, and they can be either low level or high level. So we're talking about low level affordances of social media. We're

talking about the material or design features of a platform that suggests certain actions such as Instagram filters or the like button that can be pressed if the user approves of the post. And then this high level affordances, which are the more sort of abstract, communicative or social functions that a platform provides, such as being able to create a community with like minded individuals.

So broadly, I study what do social media affordances allow or do not allow people to do, and particularly how do people use social media affordances to promote or create social change? And as the topic of this panel probably suggests, I'm really interested in women's issues and women's lives, and how social media promotes social change for women.

So in this presentation, I'm going to give a really brief summary of some research I did previously on the affordances of women's private Facebook groups, and then I will talk about some preliminary findings from a new project that I'm currently doing, which is focused on AOC's Instagram.

So let's start with my past research. So private Facebook groups are groups that people can create on the platforms in which conversations are not visible to non members. I was interested how women use these groups for work, so how they use them for career purposes. And here on this slide, you can see some examples of these groups for professional women that are on Facebook. Tech Ladies, which is for women in tech industries, women in post-production, women writers, editors, agents and publishers. These are just very few of a lot of closed Facebook groups that create these communities of women online.

So for this particular study, I interviewed women who belong to these groups for professionals and I focused on the affordances of the Facebook platform itself. And what I found was that women use these groups both to benefit individual women, but also to create sort of broader social change for women as a group in society. So a lot of women use these groups as an online women's version of the old boys club, and they use specific affordances of Facebook to allow them to do this.

So, for example, there's a low level affordance of Facebook that allows people to tag other people that belong to the same group as them. So by connecting a large group of people in the same space and allowing the affordance of tagging, private Facebook groups become really valuable, personalized referral spaces for female members. So, for instance, if someone posts a job posting about a job that's open in TV editing, another person in the group can tag an acquaintance, a friend or a previous employee in the group whom she thinks will be a particularly good fit for the job, and she can also write a couple of words of recommendation to the original poster. And here you can see how Michelle, a young, reality TV editor, found this tagging particularly useful and got a number of jobs through this practice because the tag was seen as a personal referral that really boosted credibility.

And then aside from providing career resources to individual women, these group provide high level affordances of privacy and exclusivity around gender, which make these groups kind of safe spaces that benefit women collectively. So one thing, one sort of effect that these these groups have, is women talking a lot about sexual harassment in particular industries. I was doing this research around the time when Me Too was really big, and a lot of the women I spoke to talked about there being a really huge movement in these private groups online with women strategizing together for how to deal with well-known sexual harassers in particular industries.

So this research kind of gives you an illustration of how specific affordances of different social media platforms and how people use them can provide opportunities for social change around gender.

And now I'm focusing on studying how politicians, so public figures, which is different to ordinary people, can use social media affordances to actively and effectively promote social change. I'm just starting to really look at AOC's very popular Instagram account. As you can see here she is almost five million followers. She posts regularly. She's a bit of a social media darling in politics, especially for young people who are really active on these platforms. So she's a really interesting phenomenon for us to follow gender and social media.

And so I'm interested in how AOC uses the specific affordances of features of Instagram, particularly Instagram Live, Instagram Stories and IGTV, to subtly encourage gendered social change.

So just to clarify, Instagram Live is a live stream video. It is unedited when someone streams content directly to their followers, while Instagram stories and IGTV are videos that can be prerecorded. IGTV videos are preserved, but Instagram stories disappear after 24 hours unless they're added as a highlight to the user's account. So each of these formats is a video format but has different kind of affordances around being ephemeral or staying for a longer period of time.

So here are three screenshots of AOC's Instagram. The first one here you can see on the left is an Instagram story of her using a press-on manicure kit while on a train at 2 a.m. The next two are live stream videos. In the first one, she's putting together IKEA furniture and drinking wine. And in the second one, she's cooking macaroni cheese. And while she's doing these tasks at home, she's musing about politics to her live audience, who can also comment live, reply to her and she can answer their questions as they're posting, while she's doing these tasks. So Instagram Live, Instagram Stories, and IGTV provide many unique affordances, but for the sake of time, I'm going to highlight only three today.

So AOC effectively uses the mobility of Instagram, so the ability to carry it with you everywhere, at all times, to share content of her daily low-key activities from home, which has the effect of working like you're almost having a girls night with your fun, smart friend, which is a particular draw for young women who use Instagram as a platform pretty much for their daily activities. And this helps her come across as really authentic and build relationships with her audience while at the same time really softening the overt political messages that she's sharing while she's taking part in these activities.

Second, it's really important to consider the aesthetics or format of her content, which is largely shared in video form. So she is really a big proponent of using video over stills. She shares a news story pretty much every single day. And so her format is really visual, and this ability to share videos to effect social change, AOC really affects social change, just by her very presence. So that old adage goes, "you can't be what you can't see." And a lot of young people, especially woman on Instagram, are now being exposed to young Latina female politicians, so she's changing cultural ideas about what a politician looks like. She also shares a lot of videos from inside Congress, so she's demystifying the elite political process and visually juxtaposing her young brown female body with symbols of typically white male power.

And finally, the third affordance is this ability to post unedited direct videos on the go, particularly when we're thinking about Instagram Live. To me, this really exemplifies the idea of a woman speaking her mind, normalizing the fact that women have interesting and important things to say that they can share with confidence and without a lot of preparation ahead of time. And also the fact that these Instagram videos are often less polished and less perfect and that she uses these videos as her preferred mode of address to the public, might have some effects on her young female audience members in terms of their own social media practices. So I think she's really modeling how women can be less polished and less perfect on social media.

So in sum, by using Instagram videos in this way, AOC is subtly and almost intrinsically just by being there, promoting change around gendered social norms and cultures, as well as promoting her political ideas and ideas about social justice without being too on the nose, without seeming to explicitly political. So I'm really just starting this research, so these are some preliminary thoughts. And I would love to have more conversations with you all on this topic.

And another thing I'd like to talk about is kind of what do you see as some benefits of and some issues with politicians use of social media as it relates to journalistic coverage of politicians and also to the political process more broadly. Just to point out, it's not just AOC, right, who's very vibrant on social media. Trump on Twitter is a really good example of kind of the other side of the political spectrum, also using social media very effectively. So I look forward to having more discussions about this, and thank you.

Dustin Harp Thank you, Urszula. Next, we have Ingrid Bachmann, who is a professor at Catholic University of Chile.

Ingrid Bachmann Thank you, Dustin. Thank you for inviting me for this research breakfast. This is the first time in 10 years that I'm presenting at ISOJ. So it's a nice bookend, I guess, to the last 10 years. Although I have to admit, I would prefer to have breakfast tacos right there instead of having this being online only.

So I've been researching about how the media talk about women politicians, and actually it's in line with what everybody else has said today. And while doing this research, I started seeing other sides of the problem, I guess. So, yes, indeed, we have more women running for office. I mean, there have been inroads. We have many countries with increasing first female presidents and stuff like that, but overall, the numbers are still low, and that's kind of depressing and looking at the reasons for that. And, yes, it has to do at some point with media representations. I started looking at, I guess, the supply of candidates, and I started asking women, have you ever consider running for office? And why would you or wouldn't you? And yes, there's some research saying that there are like a political ambition gaps between women and men. But in my research, at least in the case of Chile, I found out that overall most people don't want to run for office, but actually women were more interested or at least they'd reported to be more willing to consider it to run for office, despite what they actually call like very negative coverage by media. They didn't like how the media treated politicians and candidates and stuff like that.

And then I started looking at other things. And one of the things that I kept running on is that women are less knowledgeable about politics. And it has to do I mean, they don't have, like, the basic resources to actually engage in politics, not only as a candidate, but just to be a voter, just be a citizen. One of the issues has to do, and this is actually what I mentioned there, it has been found in countries as different as Germany, Taiwan, the U.S.,

Chile, is that men are more interested and engaged in news than women. So there is a problem with the basic resources to engage with news. And yes, it has to do to a certain extent to what the media do with news and what they do with women.

So what I say this, is that this divides. I mean, yes, we have gaps in participations. We have gaps in actually get elected, and we have gaps in consuming news. Those have consequences, and I think it's important we start to worry about those. What I am saying is that when women report to consume news less frequently than men, they are actually missing out on the main sources of civic life and that's important. And this is actually as Dustin Harp has said, this is also suggesting that the news industry is not serving women well because I mean, women, when you ask them, "why are you not consuming as much?" And it's not only consuming news, they actually say they avoid news. They actually say they don't want to come in the news. They post on social media less often than men about politics. So it doesn't matter how you measure it, how you look at it, it's always women lagging behind on all of these things. So like Dustin actually has said, we have a problem with how the news industry is considering women, not only as sources, but also as users of news media. So we have to worry about that.

So the thing is that when I started actually looking at news consumption in Chile, I'd found the usual numbers in terms of women do engage less with traditional news sources. They watch less TV. They read less newspapers. They are not as often heard in news radio as men. But what I did find out is that they were very intensive, way more, and I'm talking statistically differences than men with regards to social media and especially mobile instant messaging services, chatting, messaging with others. And WhatsApp in particularly is wildly popular not only in Chile, but among women. For those of you who are not familiar with WhatsApp is like, soccer. It's popular everywhere but the States. And this is very intensive. When you ask women, we actually found women, and I'm talking about actual numbers, 84% of women in the National Representative Survey, say that they actually read news via WhatsApp daily every single day. Eighty four percent of women said that. This is way more than they say watching TV news, then they say reading newspapers or something else. So that was very interesting.

So I started asking why they were doing this and what kind of news, because what people call news is not necessarily what, I don't know, researchers call news. So we started asking about this, and they said, "no, we actually post about actual news. Like, OK, I send messages from news media. I comment whatever was in the news today." And they actually said that they have these chat groups where they actually discuss about politics and engage with others and have arguments. And usually they are actually very polite and very civil, and I thought that was fascinating. The most interesting part for me is when I was asking WhatsApp users what they were doing with this, I actually could tell that there were like two different kind of users.

One was sharing personal information with families, with friends, like, "Oh, I'm sick today," or I don't know "what a nice day" or "I'm sick of this pandemic" or something like that. And then there were the conversations that they actually said that they had sometimes with their friends and with other limited groups about politics, about public affairs. I cannot believe what is going on in this part of the world or about politicians. This was in the context of the last presidential election in Chile. And then I started seeing these numbers. I realized that people were actually talking about using WhatsApp and like sharing information, on the one hand, personal and on the other one political. Being a feminist scholar, the personal and the political actually sounded like a very cool idea. So we started asking what else could they do? And then they actually said, like, "no, I actually prefer

talking about politics on WhatsApp rather than, say, Facebook or Twitter because, yeah, it's too much negative stuff on Facebook. There's so much misinformation. I don't know. People are very aggressive. I can actually have good conversations and talk to others and understand somebody else's point of view while talking with this." And I thought that was great. I mean, there's a lot of literature saying that when people talk about politics, they actually can understand better. They have more information. They can process information at a higher level.

So my latest research on this topic is actually asking people, and I do see that there are breakdowns between women and men, what they do. And what we found out is that people who engage in political uses of WhatsApp actually learn about politics. They'll learn about the candidates, and they learn about their platforms. They even are able to better express an argument about their own points of view. And I think that's great. We need to focus more on that.

So what I say is what women are sharing on WhatsApp matters. It actually matters. Yes. I mean, the stuff that I saw is that when they mostly focus on personal uses of WhatsApp, there's not much gain in terms of political knowledge, but they are sharing news. They are discussing about politics with others. And that actually is very interesting. So at least in Chile, and I have to concede that, I think that we have to realize that digital media, something that we usually probably what I have seen is not much people are paying attention to these kind of services, but if we think of mobile messages affordances, to take the word that Urszula used, is that they are playing a role, a political role. They are among the repertoire of major news gateways for people, and they are having learning effects. People are actually learning about politics. It's part of that old dictum, "a good citizen is a well informed citizen." So if they are getting news about this, I think we should focus more on this and explore more about what is going on.

I want to finish this presentation actually wondering, and this is kind of an interesting question, because I actually think this is more like a research question, and I would love to hear your input about this. But what is it about the news that people are sharing on WhatsApp that leads to a better recall of information? I mean, people are learning. They are actually understanding better. And because we know that there are gaps in political knowledge, and I think we should pay attention to what is it that people are sharing, because they are sharing news sources, Twitter accounts, data, sometimes misinformation as well, and they are very aware of that. But I think we have to start to focus on these kind of things because it's the source, I guess, or it's the space for digital media. Now we haven't considered much up to this point. So that's my presentation, and I'm looking forward to the conversation.

Dustin Harp Thank you, Ingrid. And again, thank you to all three of you for your really interesting insights.

Next, we're going to open up a conversation. I'm going to get started, and then we will take questions from the audience. You know, as I listen to the three of you talk and thinking of my decades of doing research about women and gender and politics and, yes, I do want to reiterate Regina's point that when we talk about gender, we are not just talking about women, though, that's what we focused on in this presentation.

But I think that that point goes to a point that we all reiterated over and over in our presentations, which is this is a very complex topic and there are a lot of ways we can think about it. I think going back to Regina's Venn diagram is particularly important as we

think about when we're talking about women or gender and media and politics in the digital age, we're talking about the context of the particular politicians. So we are not going to see that every politician is covered the same. There's gender stereotypes. There's plenty of masculine stereotypes that are harmful to men, less harmful in the political sphere, where they're expected to act a certain form of masculinity. And then there's the news culture and how that has changed over the years, and with digital media.

Ingrid brought up some really interesting points about how women talk about politics amongst themselves. And I think that in general, the discussion from all of us highlights that there have been and still are some problems with traditional journalism and how it covers people through gender stereotypes and gender lenses.

But also Ingrid brought in, which I think is super important, is how women don't engage as much with traditional news. My historical research, I came up with the idea that news has traditionally constructed women as consumers and men as citizens. And so if you think about that and there's no wonder women aren't now going to and listening to or looking at traditional news as much, because that's not where they've traditionally gotten news or felt like it's for them.

I think that some questions we can ask are what is the biggest problem with traditional news and its relationship with women? And then what does it mean to journalism that women consume more news via digital apps? And then really thinking about how social media has made it easier or more difficult. What are the benefits and problems with what we're seeing, which is women in this case moving to social media where they have more control over content, both what they receive, how they talk about it and how they will be constructed within the content?

Does anyone want to, on the panel, speak to any of this before we open it up to the audience for questions? And if you want to raise your hand or somehow jump in. Regina.

Regina Lawrence I guess I would just quickly echo some of what I think you're getting at there, Dustin, to say that compared to when I started doing research on gender, media and politics a long time ago, there is a sense that things are moving. Things are more complex. Things are not as simplistic as they seemed a couple of decades ago. I was asked to write and then revise a book chapter, and I have written it a couple of times now, about can female candidates get a fair shake in the media? And the research just keeps moving in the direction of it's more complicated now. It's not all about gender. It's very much about office. It's about party. I think that's one thing we haven't talked about today when we're talking about politics is to talk about political party, and the way that at least in the U.S. context, female candidates have to perform their gender and strategize around gender stereotypes quite differently, depending on the party that they belong to, for example. So I guess I just I would want to emphasize that note of the beauty of the complexity, and for us as researchers, the joy in figuring out more complex patterns of what's happening today.

Dustin Harp Yeah, and I think that it's more encouraging since women have been able to take control of some of the conversation. But you're right, when you talk about it depends on the party, Ingrid and I did a research project about Sarah Palin, who was running for vice president a few years back. And what was so interesting about that, because she was running from the Republican Party, which has very different ideologies, right, and that she really did perform this interesting balance of femininity and toughness. So she was a pitbull with lipstick. Right. So the toughness of the pitbull, the masculinity of toughness, but she's still going to put on her lipstick. And that worked for her. So, you know, I think Ingrid would

agree that when we did the research on that, that she did a pretty brilliant job of balancing those two gender perspectives.

Ingrid Bachmann Yeah, I remember with Sarah Palin, she really will, like, brag about shooting the moose and then cooking it or something like that.

Dustin Harp Well, going back to thinking about, I mean, we've talked a lot about the benefits. It seems like, you know, it's actually kind of nice to have a presentation where we are able to celebrate something about women in media. Right. So the benefits that we've seen and about social media and how women are able to take control of that message, do any of you want to talk about where that ends up being a problem? And what are some of the besides the benefits of social media, are there downfalls?

Urszula Pruchniewska Well, I think it's it's kind of we can see that with Trump's use of Twitter, or, and I just lost my train of thought. There's problems in that there becomes PR spin, right. That there is no kind of outside control of the message, that once you control your message fully and can talk directly to the audience, you can say whatever you want. And it's not sort of fact-checked by people who are reporting the news. I think that's one big problem is really cutting out the middle people.

Dustin Harp Yeah, that's certainly a problem. Well, why don't we go ahead and open this up to the audience now for some questions.

Dustin Harp Hi, good morning. First question from our audience is, was race also a factor in increased scrutiny toward Kamala Harris? And who would like to answer that?

Regina Lawrence I think I was the one who discussed her just a little bit in the context of the so-called gender penalty in online discussion, coming out of another scholar's study. Absolutely. There's no question that race must have played a role in all kinds of ways that I'm sure we could all speculate about. It's important to remember that the challenges that women face are, of course, multiplied by the intersectional connection between their various or among their various identities. So there's no question that race played a role in her ultimately unsuccessful bid to become the presidential nominee.

Dustin Harp Right. Thank you. Yeah, but that notion of intersectionality is very important. And I think all of us on the panel would agree that you can't just look at someone's gender, but all these different intersectional identities. Ingrid or anyone else want to say anything about that, or should I go ahead and move on? OK, I'm going to move on.

Here's a question, "I studied on Me Too and gender stereotypes in Indian media industry. One theme was women support. Most of the women said they don't get it in office. What's your thoughts on this? How should media work on that? How can media themselves break the path of gender stereotypes in their office?" Now, that's exactly a question I had posed as well, which is what can media do differently? What do they need to be doing? And I think I'd like to hear from all three of you on that, if you have something. Ingrid, do you want to start?

Ingrid Bachmann And I don't want to like preach or something like that, but the thing is like, OK, we know that media can do better. Some of them have been doing better, and I do think that the audiences are holding the media more accountable than they used to. And at least in in my perspective, one of the things is that, I mean, the stereotypes are easy, to get into that. But we've seen that. And we all know, I mean, just look at the people

right here that media insisting in treating women in a monolithic way, like all women are the same, or just one women represents everybody around the world. I'm not being very articulate right now, but I guess what I'm trying to say you just have to open your eyes and see that there are differences, and just to strive for that. And I've seen many initiatives about people like actually trying to do that. OK, I'm going to have diversity, not for the sake of diversity, but for the sake of better reporting, like different perspectives, like different points of view, like different experiences. And when you look at it that way, not as a checklist, as, "OK, do I have women? Do I have I don't know people of color? Do I have I don't know people from the left, from the right." But when you go like, "OK, what about if I have different experiences, different ways of seeing," you have a more complete story, and I think that's the goal. And we've seen some of those stories. I mean, and I think that at least from my side as a journalism educator, I actually have to teach my students that and remind them that is the goal. I mean, just like they strive to have, I don't know all the sides of the story or have an interesting lead, and a good headline. OK. What about having different points of view, a different perspective and a more complete story, because that is better journalism.

Dustin Harp Yeah. Regina or Urszula, would you like to add to that?

Urszula Pruchniewska Yeah, I think I mean, this is probably an obvious point, but diversifying newsrooms like newsrooms are still run, you know, predominantly by certain races and certain genders and certain classes of people, and I think just continually adding more diverse voices into newsrooms and changing the culture from the inside, and having people with different experiences writing the news will diversify and help with gender stereotypes in some way, but it is also related to education.

And I think that's, you know, like as a journalism educator, it's important to teach the people who are coming up as a new wave of journalists to think in different ways, because it's really easy to get stuck in kind of the the norms around journalism that just repeat the same patterns, especially when it comes to looking at sources and asking the same elite sources to comment on, you know, to be part of stories instead of looking at diverse sources.

Dustin Harp Regina, do you have anything to add?

Regina Lawrence Yeah, I'd add a couple of things. This is a great question, and I'm glad it was asked.

First of all, if if folks in the audience aren't aware for working journalists, there are several guides that you can easily find online that are really helpful in thinking about how to monitor for sexist language, common stereotypes, et cetera, when covering women in particular. Secondly, I would recommend that newsrooms consider using some kind of source audit or individual journalists can do a source audit of their own work to understand better the kinds of sources that they are turning to, how often they are turning to women as sources, not just men, particularly in the coverage of politics. That's a pretty predominant pattern. And then thirdly, I would build on the point that Urszula just made and to say, absolutely, we need greater diversity in our newsrooms in all kinds of ways. But let's also remember that the power of journalistic norms and newsroom culture can persist even when we diversify the bodies in the newsroom, so to speak. And so there's been some good research to suggest that just because women are the ones reporting on a political story, a female candidate, does not necessarily mean that they will cover it differently because the power of the norms. I think you mentioned this as well, Urszula, that the

power of the norms can be so strong, the power of the habit, the pattern, the typical way of covering the story can persist. And so it's not just about diversifying the people and personalities, the bodies in the newsroom, but also shaking up our thinking and being more thoughtful in how we approach covering politics.

Dustin Harp Right. And I'll add to that and say that, you know, not only how news is constructed is steeped in traditions, but also when we're talking about gender stereotypes and ways people believe and see the world, which is ideologies. Right. And so those are not easily changed either. And so notions of gender and where women belong in the world and how we talk about women or men influence greatly how journalism gets produced. And so I think that even a simple check and not to be too prescriptive, but a simple check of "would I use this language to describe a man that I'm using to describe a woman? Would I use this language to describe a white person if I'm using this language to describe a Black person or an African-American?" If journalists can even just make those checks, because when you're using a word, and it's only being used for one identity and you wouldn't use that word for another identity, then you're probably working toward stereotypes. So I think that checking language and checking our stereotypes, really, our biases. So because like you said, even when a woman comes into a newsroom, that doesn't mean she's not going to produce sexist content.

And let's move to another question. This is a question for Ingrid, taking into consideration the research question she posed at the end. "Two possible explanations I would like you to comment about. Is it possible that instant messaging apps feel safer to women since they provide a way to avoid exposure or conflict? Another person even pointed out that could it be that they trust or feel comfortable with the people on their WhatsApp? And the second question is whether you have found differences related to the ages of women. Is it possible that older women, less familiar with social media platforms prefer closed safer spaces such as WhatsApp, more than younger women?"

Ingrid Bachmann So what I found, I will say we because we are a team of people working on this, I mean, WhatsApp use is almost universal. Everybody uses it. It's more intense in terms of hours a day with younger people. But everybody and I mean everybody uses WhatsApp. And whether it's safer, nobody has used those words, but they do say stuff like, for example, "OK, these are my contact. These are the people that have my phone number." And that is not something you share widely. You select people. And we actually had discussions about how you can leave a chat group and abandon or block people, stuff like that. So, yeah, they don't use the word safer. But especially when they compared with, for example, Facebook or Twitter, the kind of language they use actually suggests that they are at least more confortable discussing with a tighter group, even if they know not everybody get alongs with them. Some users have said like, "oh, I have this cousin that keeps posting fake news, and I have to debunk those. Or like I just don't reply whenever my cousin says this or that, stuff like that." But I guess it's like when you have like a family gathering, you always have that annoying cousin or uncle or something like that.

What I am more interested in is what are they calling news? Because, I mean, some of that is not what we journalism practitioners or professors call news, but some of that makes it to WhatsApp. And what I want to know is, I mean, what is it about that? They are using that for arguments to converse with people to, like, trying to persuade other people, I don't know, just yesterday in Chile there was a vote, an important vote in the Senate, and all my chats were going crazy, posting information like a live post like, "Did you see that?" And that's the thing that I think is very interesting, because you have people, I mean, for many people, this is not their second screen it's their main screen. And I think that's

interesting as a chance to like to talk to discuss and all of that. There is the risk of misinformation. Yes, fake news are rampant everywhere, not only on WhatsApp, but users also have mentioned that they try to take measures to prevent that. Like if they see something they consider fake news, they usually try to either avoid it or tell other people, "no, that's not true," or try to find out whether it's true. I mean, "OK, that sounds fishy. I'm going to check." I've seen a lot of that, especially with coronavirus information lately.

Dustin Harp We have four minutes left, and I'm going to throw this question out, because this moves to talking a little bit about social media and also how women politicians, what they need to do to work to better lessen stereotypes in their coverage, et cetera. So this question is "Joe Biden has announced that he will name a woman as his VP candidate in the U.S. for Democratic Party. How will this woman need to portray herself to be able to be elected, you know, portraying herself in a way that then will get reflected in media?" Does anyone want to start off, Regina?

Regina Lawrence I'd love to take a crack at that because actually, it's a fascinating and really important question, because, you know, not only has Biden basically committed that he will select a woman, but he's also subtly indicated himself as simply a bridge to the future and to whatever the next presidency might be in the next Democratic presidency, he hopes. And this is super interesting because there is good research on the vice presidential role and the particular constraints that that holds, because in a sense, that is both a helping role, you know, the notion of the partner to the helpmate to the main candidate, has some gendered notions to it potentially. And yet at the same time, the vice presidential role in reality, as we all know, is the role of a surrogate and somebody who can in some ways say things that the presidential candidate himself cannot say to be tougher and more combative, perhaps, than the president.

So we haven't had enough cases of female running mates, notice that language "running mates," to really have any strong, firm conclusions based on research. But I would predict this is going to be a fascinating year. This is going to be a fascinating election as we see a woman, Democratic vice presidential nominee try to balance these competing roles of being the running mate, being the aggressive surrogate, and also positioning herself to be a very credible and viable candidate for the presidency in the near future.

Dustin Harp Right, right. Right. And at the same time, tackling and embracing female stereotypes, you know, because women have to do both, as you pointed out, with the point of the double bind. I think we have about a minute left. Does anyone have any closing statements they want to make?

Urszula Pruchniewska I mean, I guess I just want to add to what will the female vice president have to do, particularly using social media? Number one is learn about social media and know how to use the variety of features, a variety of platforms to their best advantage. And of course, they don't necessarily run their own social media accounts at this point, but they need to have really savvy social media managers. And I think using it in the way that AOC uses her, direct to the audience as much as possible, is kind of going to be the way going forward, especially if are trying to capture a younger voting base.

Dustin Harp And I think that you point out something really important, which is there are different demographics and even a candidate needs to be a different kind of persona dependent on those demographics, right? And so for the young voter, it's really helpful to be, I mean, women, I think it's easier for women to be tough and be accepted by the younger voter.

Urszula Pruchniewska Yeah, I agree with that.

Dustin Harp Well, our time is up, unfortunately. This has been such a great experience getting to be on a panel with the three of you, and I appreciate everything. I hope everyone here continues to have a very good conference. Thank you so much.

Amy Schmitz Weiss Thank you. Thank you so much, Dustin, and a big thank you to all of our scholars this morning for this great session. So much has been discussed, and it's just making my mind wonder and brainstorm about all the things that we can still do and move forward with. This has really been a great conversation and a great way to kick off day four of ISOJ. We really thank you all for joining us today.

Just a few things to to wrap up here as we end our session. I just want to encourage everyone to join us for the keynote that's coming up here shortly. There's a brunch workshop today too, our afternoon panels, and we also have a research panel this afternoon that features research that's in our journal as well. Very exciting. So please grab another cup of coffee and join us shortly here for the keynote panel featuring the call, Nikole Hannah-Jones from the New York Times Magazine in a conversation with Jenn Jarvis from CUNY's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, which will start shortly. Thank you all for being with us this morning, and we'll see you shortly.