

4.4: Women Political Leaders in the Media

Activity 1: Examine the Representation of Women Political Leaders in the Media

By: Anetia Rom

AOC Digital Media Collection

<https://padlet.com/arom4/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-ai23box1pk8za8c/slideshow>

Women In Politics

Women in politics are a force to be reckoned with yet they don't receive similar opportunities as their male counterparts in a society where representation is already lacking. They are often criticized for their emotions, attitudes, and physical appearance rather than the legislation they are bringing to the House or the knowledge they offer in politics.

Gender bias is one thing that negatively impacts politicians that are women regardless of their political beliefs. Some politicians as well as the general public are more prone to consider the opinions of men as reliable and are more responsive/supportive to their ideas for policies and legislation. Gender bias can even be broken down to the simplest idea of what politicians are wearing; women politicians have to carefully curate an image of themselves so that they are not [belittled](#) or dismissed. Clothing and makeup choices, for example, are both used often to unfairly judge the competency they have as politicians.

When describing women in politics, it is common to see them described for their actions instead of the important things that they are talking about. For example, in an article written by the [federalist](#), words like 'sassy' and 'tired tricks' are used to describe how AOC goes about legislating. This type gendered language portrays women politicians in a negative light and can impact how women are perceived throughout her career. Compared to male political leaders, when they are legislating, they are deemed to be strong and tough.

The usage of gendered language is something that many news outlets, journalists, and bloggers are guilty of using. Representatives voted to remove Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar from office; AOC made a statement on her opinion regarding that decision. Two different news articles, one from the [dailycaller](#) which is a more conservative news outlet and one from [Nbcnews](#), which is more of a liberal news outlet; used different choices of words to describe the way that AOC acted throughout the articles. The daily caller uses a picture of AOC and it is obvious that she is upset,

the title also describes her as having a “fiery fit” over the decision. NBCnews used the word “blasts” in the article to describe AOC’s speech, a video of the speech is also added into the article instead of a picture, presumably to give background information. The choice of words that a journalist uses is intentional because they want to please their target audience.

Media outlets must start to portray women as politicians and not just women that happen to be on the house floor and in meetings. They should be seen as equals and written in as equals, for their policies, for their speeches, and for their actions. Also not labeling women politicians the stereotypes that women in society are already facing because this diminishes their legitimacy to the public as well as to their peers.