U.S. VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMPARATIVE MEDIA ANALYSIS • 2016 vs. 2020
OBJECTIVE

Edelman Data & Intelligence, commissioned by TIME’S UP Now, analyzed media coverage of the announcement of 2020 Democratic VP candidate Sen. Kamala Harris compared to the announcement of VP candidates Gov. Mike Pence and Sen. Tim Kaine in 2016, to evaluate and compare the way in which the candidates are positioned and described overall, and with regard to potential racist or sexist stereotypes. Analyzed content includes mainstream U.S. top-tier media coverage from one-week prior and two-weeks following each VP announcement, sourced exclusively from the Factiva database. A sample of coverage was manually analyzed, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval. All articles contained at least two mentions of the candidates.

- 2020 analyzed time period: 8/4/20 – 8/24/20
- 2016 analyzed time period: 7/8/16 – 8/4/16

** 2016 sample pulled from a more limited population of coverage, due to access restrictions on older content. Pence and Kaine coverage was sampled together.

METRICS

Depth of Focus: Gender and Race

Key Topics: References to appearance/attire, family life, background/accomplishments, etc.

Policy Areas: Strong Positioning vs. Critical Positioning

Descriptors: Terms and phrases used to describe the candidates

Political Leanings: Influencer Commentary

*Image Analysis (2020 coverage only)
** See appendix for full list and definitions
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The VP candidacy of Sen. Kamala Harris dramatically increased media coverage focused on candidate race and gender

As expected, the entrance of Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) into the U.S. presidential race as the Democratic candidate for VP changed the media conversation of the U.S. election, with nearly two-thirds (61%) of analyzed coverage mentioning race or gender, compared to just 5% for candidates Mike Pence and Tim Kaine in 2016. Additionally, while journalists’ own language appeared generally neutral, subtle biases against Sen. Harris emerged in the frequent perpetuation of the more racist and sexist storylines, including the “birther” conspiracy theory and President Trump’s harsh commentary. This indicates that as more diverse candidates run for and win elections, mainstream media will be forced to re-evaluate how it covers candidates in local, state-wide, and national elections in the U.S.

2. Race and gender stereotypes were infused throughout coverage, in both subtle and more overt ways

Approximately a quarter of media coverage around Sen. Harris contained language, coded or otherwise, evoking at least one racist or sexist trope. References to Sen. Harris being “uncooperative” and “unlikeable” fueled the racist and offensive “Angry Black Woman” trope, while commentary calling her “too ambitious” and “competent” alluded to the question of her innate qualifications for the job. Journalists also very rarely discussed Sen. Harris’ race or gender independently of each other, with more than half of overall coverage (51%) discussing both, revealing an intersection of the topics in media. In comparing topics of focus related to the 2016 and 2020 candidates, the largest disparity emerged around ancestry and citizenship. So while Sen. Harris’ status as the first Black woman and first woman of Asian descent to be nominated for VP was recognized within coverage, it was also used by her political opponent to question her status as an American citizen, which appeared in widespread reporting in mainstream media.

3. Identity politics have become the default storytelling device, with 2020 reflecting a racial reckoning

While references to Gov. Mike Pence and Sen. Tim Kaine’s race and gender generated limited attention in 2016, discussion of their religious affiliations emerged more frequently (19% average) compared to 2020 announcement coverage (1%), where the focus turned to ancestry (36%) and race (56%). This suggests that no matter the candidate, the media will often identify their strongest or most unique personal aspects and will frequently frame the candidate through that lens. In particular, this occurs when hypothesizing on how their personal identity will inform policy decisions and potentially impact the voters’ decision-making process on whether to support a particular candidate. Additionally, the omission of race or gender in media conversations when the candidates are white men suggests that whiteness is viewed as the default, and not considered an important factor in governing.

EDelman DATA & INTEllIGENCE © 2020
Race and gender covered equally as often in 2020, with a disproportionate focus on both when compared to 2016

Well over half (61%) of 2020 VP announcement coverage of Sen. Harris discussed her race or gender, compared to just 5% of the 2016 coverage around candidates Mike Pence and Tim Kaine. Race and gender appeared equally in coverage (56% each) and were frequently linked together, as outlets lauded her as the first woman and the first person of color to receive a major party’s VP nomination. Comparatively, the topics of race and gender were not prevalent in 2016 and mentions tended to be passing in nature. The most attention paid to the candidates’ race and gender was speculation over whether the lack of diversity in the VP spot would be detrimental to the presidential candidate who selected them.

Ancestry conversation overshadowed Sen. Harris’ achievements

Sen. Harris’ family lineage gained attention in over one-third of media coverage (36%), with her professional background and achievements taking a secondary focus (31%). In contrast, Gov. Pence and Sen. Kaine’s career accomplishments led in media focus of the candidates (35% average). 2016 coverage was also much more likely to discuss the candidates’ religions (19% average) compared to coverage of Sen. Harris (1%), suggesting that in place of racial or ethnic identities, religion became one lens through which to examine the candidates in 2016.
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

President Trump was harsher on Sen. Harris than on Sen. Kaine, with gender and race speculated to be a factor

President Trump’s commentary on Sen. Harris garnered significant media attention due to its particularly severe nature. Media shared his quotes within 13% of coverage, with the term “nasty” emerging as the most frequently cited insult of Sen. Harris overall (9%). He and his advisors also emerged as the top right-leaning influencers whose commentary was picked up by the mainstream media. Journalists have speculated that President Trump’s derision of Sen. Harris is based in racially-motivated stereotypes about Black women. The contrast between President Trump’s treatment of Sen. Kaine, a white man, and Sen. Harris, a woman of color, reinforces that theory, as the president’s criticisms of Kaine were not nearly as harsh or pervasive.

Concentrated focus on critical policy areas, with Democrats earning broader favorable coverage

For all candidates, media honed in on one critical policy area, which often fueled the narrative around the nominee. Critiques of Gov. Pence were related to his past endorsement of LGBTQ+ discrimination policies (20%), while media noted that Sen. Kaine’s support for more controversial trade deals opened him up for potential attacks (24%). For Sen. Harris, her criminal justice background elicited strong criticism from the Left related to her time as San Francisco’s district attorney and California’s attorney general (11%) but was partially balanced by her self-positioning as a progressive prosecutor. Overall, the Democratic candidates generated more favorable discussion around their policy areas, with Republican candidate Pence’s unfavorable stance on social issues fueling more critical coverage.
Coverage of Sen. Harris centered around her history-making run as the first Black woman and first woman of Asian descent to be nominated for Vice President. Mainstream media also covered President Trump’s “birther” conspiracy claims and offered mixed discussion of Sen. Harris’ qualifications and criminal justice record.

Coverage highlighted President Trump’s elevation of a “birther” conspiracy theory about Sen. Harris and noted Michelle Obama’s DNC speech did not reference Harris, as it was recorded pre-announcement.

Media covered Sen. Harris’ keynote speech on the third day of the 2020 Democratic National Convention. Outlets shared transcripts of the speech, mentioned it alongside former President Obama’s remarks and noted her message of inclusion.

RACE
% of coverage discussing the candidate’s race

56%

GENDER
% of coverage discussing the candidate’s gender

56%
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SEN. HARRIS FOR VP GENERATED A SUSTAINED FOCUS ON GENDER AND RACE, WHICH WAS NOT SEEN IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTION CYCLE

Despite the sustained coverage, race/gender discussion related to Sen. Harris primarily appeared as passing mentions, with limited in-depth analysis (7%) around the topics.

- Harris announcement
- Pence + Kaine announcement

2020 COVERAGE: VP ANNOUNCEMENT OF SEN. HARRIS

61% OF COVERAGE MENTIONING RACE OR GENDER

2016 COVERAGE: VP ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOV. PENCE + SEN. KAINÉ

5% OF COVERAGE MENTIONING RACE OR GENDER
Commentary on Sen. Kamala Harris’ race generated positive attention, celebrating her historic nomination as a major step toward racial inclusion and representation in leadership. However, a quarter of coverage still contained subtle or more overt references to racial or sexist stereotypes in relation to the candidate.

Mentions of Gov. Mike Pence’s race were minimal and largely predictable. Of note, while examining how his Indiana hometown molded the candidate, The New York Times juxtaposed Gov. Pence’s whiteness with the shifting racial demographics of Columbus, IN.

Sen. Tim Kaine’s VP nomination generated more criticism from the media compared to Gov. Pence, arguing that the selection was at odds with the Democratic party’s emphasis on racial inclusion. Additionally, political analysts voiced skepticism that Sen. Kaine would sway white male voters.
Mentions of Sen. Kamala Harris’ gender often appeared alongside her race to portray a well-rounded and inclusive vice-presidential nominee. When sexist gender descriptors were used, they were nearly exclusively derived from comments by President Trump.

References to Gov. Mike Pence’s gender commonly appeared alongside his race to describe an unremarkable, routine VP selection.

Similar to Gov. Pence, Sen. Tim Kaine’s gender was almost always noted in conjunction with his race, with some reports citing these characteristics as similarities between the two candidates.
AMPLIFICATION OF MISOGYNISTIC AND RACIST STORYLINES FUELED BIASED COVERAGE

- Within mainstream online and print media coverage, biases generally resulted from the perpetuation of racist or sexist storylines, rather than from the journalists’ own language. For instance, references to the “birtherism” conspiracy theory appeared in 10% of total coverage, with even the more left-leaning mainstream publications like CNN reporting frequently on the topic. While outlets often called out the unfounded and racist nature of the claims, including right-leaning Fox News, the coverage still served to promote the harmful narrative.

- Outlets also tied in discussion of Sen. Harris’ ancestry and immigrant parents within the topic of her citizenship, with this overlap occurring in 8% of total coverage. This demonstrates how the questions around her eligibility are largely linked to her non-white cultural heritage, further fueling a longstanding racist trope.

- Media amplified the voice of President Trump much further than anyone else, with his commentary shared in 13% of total coverage. For comparison, Joe Biden was the next most quoted individual discussing Sen. Harris, appearing in just 3% of articles. As such, the media must be especially careful in choosing which President-related storylines to perpetuate moving forward, given the potential impact on the media cycle. In the days leading up to the election, this will become even more critical.
**STEREOTYPES INFILTRATED LANGUAGE USED TO DESCRIBE SEN. HARRIS, MOST COMMONLY SUPPORTING THE ‘ANGRY BLACK WOMAN’ TROPE**

A quarter (25%) of Sen. Harris’ overall coverage contained language, coded or otherwise, referencing at least one racist or sexist stereotype. Language evoking the racist ‘Angry Black Woman’ trope emerged most often (13%), largely fueled by reporting of President Trump’s comments calling Sen. Harris “nasty,” “mad,” and “mean.” Discussion related to Sen. Harris’ eligibility to run for office also fueled the use of more subtle biased language, generally through reporting around the “birtherism” conspiracy theory. Across categories, instances of racist and sexist stereotypes stemmed largely from third-party quotes included within more neutral media reporting. Of note, less than 1% of coverage referenced the phrase “Joe and the Hoe,” indicating social and broadcast media may play a greater role in perpetuating the more extreme storylines.

**PERCENTAGE OF COVERAGE CONTAINING LANGUAGE REFERENCING RACIST/SEXIST STEREOTYPES**

- **Angry Black Woman**: 13%
- **Citizenship/ Racial Identity Policing**: 7%
- **Oversexualization / Unqualified Based on Merit**: 6%
- **Deliberate Name Mispronunciation**: 2%

**25%**

**OF COVERAGE CONTAINED LANGUAGE REFERENCING AT LEAST ONE STEREOTYPE**

---

**EDelman DATA & INTELLIGENCE / © 2020**
TOPICS WITH TIES TO RACE AND CULTURE (ANCESTRY, CITIZENSHIP, RELIGION) SAW MORE ATTENTION THAN THOSE TRADITIONALLY LINKED TO GENDER (FAMILY, APPEARANCE, ETC.)

PERCENTAGE OF TOPIC DISCUSSED WITHIN VP ANNOUNCEMENT COVERAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>Kaine</th>
<th>Pence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancestry</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background/Accomplishments</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relationships</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/Health</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Ambitions</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse Reference</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Reference</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious background</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance/Attire</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Family Life</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notable discrepancies
WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES WERE POSITIONED AS A POLICY STRENGTH OF SEN. KAINES, NOT SEN. HARRIS

Sen. Kaine’s top positive policy areas reflected more traditional Democratic platforms and strengths, such as gun policy, women’s rights, and immigration. For Sen. Harris, her criminal justice background rose to the top, with outlets framing her time as San Francisco district attorney, California attorney general, and U.S. Senator as bringing valuable experience to the VP role. Despite her being the first female VP candidate of a major party, gender equality did not emerge as a key positive policy area for Sen. Harris.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Policy Areas in Candidate Coverage</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>Kaine</th>
<th>Pence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Gun Policy</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health/COVID-19</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Women’s Rights/Gender Equality</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street/Banking</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDelman DATA & INTEllIGENCE / © 2020
**SEN. HARRIS’ CRIMINAL JUSTICE BACKGROUND EARNED CRITICISM, BUT 2016 CANDIDATES ATTRACTED MORE CONCENTRATED DETRACTING COVERAGE**

While Sen. Kaine and Gov. Pence saw consistently negative reporting around their backgrounds on trade and LGBTQ+ rights, respectively, Sen. Harris’ criminal justice record earned more mixed positioning. So although media highlighted her somewhat polarizing history with criminal justice reform, coverage was not dominated by this critical view, and accounted for a much smaller percentage of coverage compared to the 2016 candidates’ top topics. Secondary negative topics were also more plentiful for Sen. Kaine and Gov. Pence, while Sen. Harris only had one notable area of criticism.

**NEGATIVE POLICY AREAS IN CANDIDATE COVERAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HARRIS</th>
<th>KAINES</th>
<th>PENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>LGBTQ+ Rights 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Wall Street/Banking 9%</td>
<td>Women’s Rights/Gender Equality 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Rights/Gender Equality</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Economy 5%</td>
<td>Economy 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Women’s Rights/Gender Equality 4%</td>
<td>Trade 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Environment 1%</td>
<td>Immigration 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEDIA RESPONDED MORE FAVORABLY TO POLICY AREAS OF DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES, WITH GOV. PENCE’S DISPARITY IN POSITIVE COVERAGE HEIGHTENED BY HIS UNFAVORABLE STANCE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Although all candidates saw a concentrated area of criticism, the Democratic nominees in both election cycles generated more overall positive positioning around their platforms, including criminal justice for Sen. Harris and gun policy for Sen. Kaine. These favorable policy areas spanned a larger breadth, without one focused topic driving the discussion.

In contrast, coverage around Republican candidate Mike Pence more frequently called out areas of criticism overall, particularly related to his stance on social rights.
2016 candidates described more positively, due to biased commentary of Sen. Harris from President Trump

**HARRIS**

- Nasty
- Radical
- Experienced
- Mad
- Fearless
- Extreme
- Phony
- Historic
- Tough
- Mean

Racially-motivated commentary from President Trump drove top descriptors for Sen. Harris.

**Kaine**

- Experienced
- Boring
- Nice guy
- Safe
- Smart choice

Sen. Kaine was viewed as an experienced choice, though concerns emerged around how energizing he was as a candidate.

**Pence**

- Experienced
- Safe
- Extreme
- Reassuring
- Thoughtful

Gov. Pence was lauded for the balance he brought to the ticket, in comparison to then-candidate Donald Trump.
Overall, third-party quotes within media coverage did not skew overwhelming right- or left-leaning in either election cycle. However, more liberal commentary did emerge in reference to Sen. Harris, often calling out how well-suited she is to take on President Trump.

-Political Leaning

% OF INCLUDED COMMENTARY BASED ON POLITICAL LEANING

Pence + Kaine

- Right-Leaning Commentary: 39%
- Neutral / Balanced Commentary: 33%
- Left-Leaning Commentary: 28%

Harris

- Right-Leaning Commentary: 32%
- Neutral / Balanced Commentary: 30%
- Left-Leaning Commentary: 38%

-Mike Pence is a pro-life trailblazer and Mr. Trump could not have made a better choice.
- Marjorie Dannenfelser, President, Susan B. Anthony List
The Washington Post, 7/17/2016

-Kamala Harris has been fighting [racist stereotypes] her entire career rising to positions where she was the first African American woman time and time again. If there’s anybody that’s ready for this kind of mess, it’s Kamala Harris. And so Donald Trump can pick a fight if he wants. But he is the proverbial bully in the playground that is about to get knocked out when he steps up against this dynamic duo that will beat him in November.
- Corey Booker, Senator (IL) [CNN, 8/17/2020]
2020 ANALYSIS
KAMALA HARRIS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Focus on Sen. Harris’ ancestry overshadowed her professional accomplishments

Outlets frequently framed Sen. Harris as a “child of immigrants” and noted her Jamaican and Indian roots (36% of coverage), calling out the historic nature of the nomination. However, questions of her citizenship were also amplified by media (10%), despite proving to be unfounded.

2. Coverage acknowledged historic nature of the nomination, as well as the work left to do

Though limited (7% of coverage), in-depth discussion of Sen. Harris’ gender and race celebrated her monumental achievement, while also shedding light on the increased scrutiny women face in political positions of power.

3. President Trump’s racist, misogynistic comments drove the narrative

The President’s commentary describing Sen. Harris as “nasty,” “mad,” and “phony” garnered significant media attention (13% of coverage), eclipsing more favorable discussion from other prominent political influencers such as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2%).
RACE & GENDER | DEPTH OF FOCUS

SEN. HARRIS’ RACE AND GENDER WERE KEY FOCAL POINTS OF HER VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION COVERAGE

- Over one-third of the analyzed articles mentioned Sen. Harris’ race and gender in passing, appearing most prominently within coverage of President Trump’s reaction to news of her vice-presidential nomination. President Trump’s speculation on Sen. Harris’ citizenship status sparked discussion of the Senator’s race and gender, comprising 14% and 12% of coverage, respectively.

- Moderate discussion of Sen. Harris’ race centered around her status as the first Black VP nominee on a major party ticket and referenced the “historic” nature of her selection [The New York Times, 8/20/20]. Articles that contained moderate mentions of race tended to focus on how Sen. Harris is qualified to meet the current cultural moment partially due to her race. In-depth explorations of Sen. Harris’ race examined how her nomination may energize various voting blocs, such as Black-Indians [The Washington Post, 8/16/20], South Asians [Denver Post, 8/13/20], and Southern Democrats. In-depth analysis of Sen. Harris’ race at times contained criticism of her record as a prosecutor, often in the context of recent calls for criminal justice reform prompted by the shooting and killing of unarmed Black people by law enforcement across the country.

- Similarly, placements that had an in-depth focus on Sen. Harris’ gender emphasized the larger issue of sexism in society, hypothesizing that she has had to face more intense scrutiny than a male candidate in her position would. Sen. Harris’ selection as the VP candidate also generated optimism about reaching gender parity. Coverage speculated that the nomination sent a “message of hope” to young girls of color who may see themselves in Sen. Harris. Coverage with a moderate focus on gender partially stemmed from Democratic Party officials and placements on Sen. Harris’ marriage to husband Douglas Emhoff [The New York Times, 8/19/20].

- Articles that did not mention Sen. Harris’ race or gender tended to contain passing mentions of the candidate, including coverage of the Democratic National Convention that noted that the event aimed to “introduce” Harris to voters [Los Angeles Times, 8/17/20].

*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
KEY TOPICS

COVERAGE CELEBRATED SEN. HARRIS AS A CHILD OF IMMIGRANTS, WHILE AMPHILIFYING THE QUESTIONS OF HER CITIZENSHIP

- News outlets routinely pointed to Sen. Harris’ status as the daughter of immigrants when describing the vice-presidential candidate, driving ancestry mentions (36%) [Washington Post, 8/19/2020]. Sen. Harris sparked ancestry coverage in her speech during the Democratic National Convention in which she spoke about her mother’s migration to the U.S. [Wall Street Journal, 8/20/2020]. Although Sen. Harris’ race and ancestry is historic for both men and women, think pieces often emerged from women writers of color, celebrating and reflecting on what her nomination means for their communities. Some outlets addressed the “birtherism” claims, dismissing the conspiracy theory’s potential racist and xenophobic roots and comparing it to similar allegations made against President Barack Obama [The Orange County Register, 8/16/2020]. Discussion of the theory drove citizenship discussion (10%) and contributed to the overall ancestry conversation.

- Coverage also focused heavily on Sen. Harris’ career leading up to her vice-presidential nomination, discussing her time as a prosecutor and then as California’s attorney general (31%). Coverage of Sen. Harris’ career appeared mixed in sentiment, with some citing her credentials as proof she is qualified for the VP role, while others claimed her record would alienate voters concerned about criminal justice reform, especially related to Black communities [San Francisco Chronicle, 8/20/2020].

- Articles on Sen. Harris often cited her friendship with Joe Biden’s late son Beau Biden. The two worked together to fight big banks on home foreclosures [New York Times, 8/12/2020].

- Coverage of Sen. Harris’ age were mostly passing, factual mentions. However, some coverage did note that she is significantly younger than Joe Biden, who has referred to himself as “a bridge to the party’s next generation.”

PERCENTAGE OF VP ANNOUNCEMENT COVERAGE DISCUSSING KEY TOPICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancestry</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background / Accomplishments</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network / Relationships</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age / Health</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Ambitions</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse Reference</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Reference</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Background</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance / Attire</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Family Life</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage represents the percentage of all the candidate’s coverage. Content may contain multiple topics. *Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
POLICY AREAS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RECORD GENERATED MIXED SENTIMENT, WITH SUPPORT FROM BLACK AMERICANS CALLED INTO QUESTION

- Criminal justice emerged as Sen. Harris’ most discussed policy area overall. The topic was positioned as both an asset and a potential detriment due to the Senator’s record as a prosecutor and as California’s attorney general. Notably, detracting coverage of Sen. Harris’ criminal justice record outweighed the more favorable commentary, with outlets raising concerns around her potential support from Black Americans. An article in USA Today stated, “Harris had the opportunity to get out in front by prosecuting police officers who killed Black people in dubious circumstances, but she didn’t. She had the chance to be a pioneer in getting defense attorneys exculpatory evidence, but she didn’t. She had the chance to be a lawyer for the people and not for the police. She didn’t.” [8/13/2020]. Conversely, another article from the outlet framed Sen. Harris’ time as district attorney, attorney general, and a senator as experiences that would be valuable for the VP role, reading, “Her experience...digging into policy issues, handling controversies and campaigning in a state of nearly 40 million - should reassure Americans that Harris passes the most fundamental test for a vice presidential pick,” [8/12/2020].

- Strong positioning outweighed the more critical policy issues in every other category. Healthcare topics including the coronavirus pandemic appeared frequently and favorably for Sen. Harris. She and running-mate Joe Biden frequently referenced the U.S.’ continued struggle with the coronavirus pandemic as an indication that the nation needs new leadership, assuring the American people that a Biden-Harris administration would do more to contain COVID-19 [USA Today, 8/12/2020].

*Percentage represents the percentage of all the candidate’s coverage. Content may contain multiple topics.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
**LANGUAGE AND DESCRIPTORS**

**RACIALLY MOTIVATED COMMENTARY FROM THE PRESIDENT DROVE TOP DESCRIPTORS**

- Several top words associated with Sen. Kamala Harris within coverage had negative connotations, primarily from the inclusion of quotes by President Trump. President Trump described Sen. Harris as “nasty,” “phony,” “mad,” and “mean,” comments the media theorized stemmed from racially charged stereotypes about Black women.

- Additionally, President Trump and other detractors attempted to make the case that Sen. Harris’ political positions are too “extreme” for the American people. For example, Vice President Mike Pence said that Sen. Harris’ supporters represented the “radical” left, and other right-wing influencers such as Fox News personality Sean Hannity described Sen. Harris as a “radical” extremist.

- Many articles referred to Sen. Harris’ “historic” status as the first Black woman and the first South Asian woman to be nominated as a major party’s vice president [Los Angeles Times, 8/20/2020]. Influencers and journalists referred to Sen. Harris as experienced, citing her tenure as California’s attorney general as well as her time in the Senate. The word “tough” was also used in connection to Sen. Harris’ time as a prosecutor, referring to her experience leading tough investigations. Former Vice President Joe Biden referred to Sen. Harris as “fearless” in a frequently referenced tweet in which he announced he had chosen her as his running mate [San Francisco Chronicle, 8/12/2020].

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“Nasty”</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>“Mad”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Descriptors reflect top 10 by volume
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
RIGHT-LEANING VOICES TOOK AIM AT SEN. HARRIS, WHILE THE LEFT AMPLIFIED HER STRENGTHS

- Influencer commentary examined Sen. Harris’ qualifications and noted how her skillset enhances the Democratic presidential ticket. Sen. Harris’ age and sharp intellect were mentioned to offset concerns related to 77-year-old Joe Biden’s physical and mental stamina.

- Right-leaning criticism stemmed from influencers who issued detracting statements about Sen. Harris with the intent of elevating the Trump-Pence ticket. President Trump appeared most frequently within this group, describing Sen. Harris as “phony” and “nasty” [ABC News, 8/21/20]. The President also questioned Sen. Harris’ eligibility to run as VP, citing citizenship concerns [CNN, 8/15/20]. Those views were further amplified by those in President Trump’s inner circle, including Katrina Pierson, his senior campaign advisor.

- Left-leaning influencer commentary originated from the Democratic National Convention, where prominent Democrats spoke highly of Sen. Harris in order to energize voters to elect Biden in 2020. Influencers celebrated Sen. Harris’ “historic” nomination as the country’s first woman of color on a presidential ticket and praised her fearless, career-long pursuit of justice.

- Left-leaning voices also campaigned in favor of Sen. Harris directly following her announcement, such as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tweeting. “She’s already proven herself to be an incredible public servant and leader...Please join me in having her back and getting her elected.”

*Percentage represents the percentage of all third-party influencer commentary. Content may contain multiple influencers.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
TOP INFLUENCERS

Politicians and political staff appeared most frequently as top influencers, and their commentary tended to lean right or left based on party affiliation. President Donald Trump led coverage amongst top influencers, followed by Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. Notably, neutral/balanced discussion focused on Sen. Kamala Harris’ marriage to husband Douglas Emhoff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEFT-LEANING</th>
<th>NEUTRAL/BALANCED</th>
<th>RIGHT-LEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe Biden</td>
<td>U.S. Democratic Presidential Candidate</td>
<td>Lori Poloni-Staudinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>Former U.S. Secretary of State</td>
<td>Chris Dodd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Bates</td>
<td>Biden Campaign Spokesman</td>
<td>Maya Rudolph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>44th U.S. President</td>
<td>Alex M. Weingarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ro Khanna</td>
<td>U.S. Representative (CA)</td>
<td>Joshua Benton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Top 5 by volume. Reflects title/role at the time of article publishing.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
Online coverage of Sen. Harris predominantly featured close-up images of the candidate, including a mix of her on her own and with running-mate Joe Biden. Media most often included photos of Sen. Harris smiling or speaking mid-sentence, which has potential to be misconstrued as angry or yelling.
2016 ANALYSIS
MIKE PENCE & TIM KAINE
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. **Race and gender not a key part of the conversation; religion more of a focus**

   Media rarely referenced Sen. Kaine and Gov. Pence’s race or gender, with occasional passing mentions of the two as white men serving to call out the lack of diversity in both political parties. This demonstrates media does not think critically about how being white could impact governing — white is seen as the default. Notably, the 2016 candidates’ religious backgrounds garnered more attention instead, referenced in approximately 20% of discussion.

2. **Gov. Pence and Sen. Kaine viewed as the “experienced” and “safe” choices**

   Media positioned both candidates as bringing experience to the position. The description of Gov. Pence as a “safe” choice for vice president was a positive one, framed as a healthy balance to then-candidate Donald Trump. However, the description of Sen. Kaine as “safe” carried more negative connotations, as coverage described him as a “boring” choice.

3. **LGBTQ+ rights and trade agreements emerged as critical policy issues**

   Both candidates saw concentrated areas of policy criticism. Media highlighted Gov. Pence’s anti-LGBTQ+ legislation endorsements (20% of coverage) and Sen. Kaine’s support of the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (24%). However, Sen. Kaine generated more favorable policy discussion overall, including his records on gun policy, women’s rights, and immigration.
**RACE & GENDER | DEPTH OF FOCUS**

**RACE AND GENDER HARDLY SURFACED WITHIN THE 2016 CONVERSATION**

- Although little discussion of either race or gender appeared in the coverage of the 2016 vice presidential candidates, some pieces acknowledge that white men have historically been the only people nominated as vice president on either of the major parties’ tickets. Coverage speculated on why both presidential candidates did not vary from the race/gender status quo with their VP pick. Overall, coverage tended to associate issues of race and gender with the Democratic party.

- Outlets discussed race (6%) and gender (5%) within coverage of Sen. Tim Kaine slightly more than in coverage of Gov. Mike Pence (3% and 2%, respectively), offering varied criticism about the Democratic party’s lack of diversity. The New York Times pointed to Sen. Tim Kaine’s race and gender as “drawbacks,” stating, “The selection of a white man might do little to electrify a party that prides itself on its diversity” [7/15/2016]. Another article from the Times read, “The members of his natural demographic - white men - aren’t going to forget their problems with Mrs. [Hillary] Clinton just because Mr. Kaine is on the ticket,” meaning that Sen. Kaine’s status as a white man may not serve to draw those from his demographic to vote Democrat in the 2016 election [7/23/2016].

- Media demonstrated less scrutiny of Donald Trump’s decision to choose a white man in comparison to Clinton. However, The Washington Post said, “The Democrats will have a field day with two white males, pointing to the party’s lack of progress (indeed, regression) on its own stated diversity objectives,” implying that Clinton would use the Republican ticket’s lack of race and gender diversity as a point of attack [7/14/2016].

---

*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.*

---
KEY TOPICS

COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTED TOPICS RELEVANT TO THE ROLE OF VP, WITH RELIGION EMERGING AS A KEY FOCUS OVER ANCESTRY

- In 2016, personal topic discussion within coverage of the vice-presidential candidates focused on the candidates’ backgrounds, network connections, and religious affiliations. Gov. Mike Pence and Sen. Tim Kaine received comparable coverage in most categories.

- Of note, limited coverage remarked on the most intimate personal topics relating to the candidates’ families or personal appearance. Under 5% of the candidates’ coverage included mentions of parenting, physical appearance, ancestry, health, or balancing family life and their political careers.

- Gov. Pence led Sen. Kaine in discussion of his network/relationships. Coverage noted his connections with important GOP donors such as the Koch brothers, which made him an attractive VP pick for a non-establishment candidate like Donald Trump [Wall Street Journal, 7/17/2016].

- Sen. Tim Kaine received slightly more coverage than Gov. Pence on his background and accomplishments. Coverage analyzed his tenure as governor of Virginia as well as his law career in order to familiarize the public with his record on important policy issues such as gun control, the death penalty, and reproductive rights [Los Angeles Times, 7/15/2016].

- Coverage frequently noted how Gov. Pence’s religious beliefs have affected his governing on LGBTQ+ issues [New York Post, 7/15/2016] and how Sen. Kaine’s Catholic roots affect his thinking on issues such as abortion and the death penalty [New York Times 7/23/2016].

PERCENTAGE OF VP ANNOUNCEMENT COVERAGE DISCUSSING KEY TOPICS

- Background/Accomplishments: 37%
- Religious Background: 20%
- Network/Relationships: 17%
- Age/Health: 13%
- Spouse Reference: 11%
- Appearance/Attire: 5%
- Parenting Reference: 3%
- Balancing Family Life: 2%
- Future Ambitions: 0%
- Ancestry: 2%
- Citizenship: 0%

*Percentage represents the percentage of all the candidate’s coverage. Content may contain multiple topics.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
Critical Positioning of LGBTQ+ and Women’s Rights Dominated Gov. Pence’s Coverage

- Coverage often featured criticism of Gov. Mike Pence’s record on civil rights issues due to his endorsement of various pieces of discriminatory legislation surrounding LGBTQ+ rights (20%) and women’s rights (10%). Articles frequently discussed Gov. Pence’s involvement in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Gov. Pence signed the measure into law in 2015, allowing businesses to discriminate against LGBTQ+ citizens due to their religious beliefs. Some worried that this history in promoting and endorsing discriminatory policies would detract voters from the party. The Washington Post wrote, “Pence could turn some gay people against the [Republican] party altogether,” [7/21/2016].

- Criticism of Gov. Pence’s record on reproductive rights stemmed largely from a law he passed that required those who had an abortion or a miscarriage to hold a funeral for the fetus [The Sacramento Bee, 7/14/2020]. Gov. Pence also received negative coverage for his involvement in attempts to strip government funding from Planned Parenthood [Washington Post, 7/17/2016].

- Economy, trade, and immigration topics generated mixed positioning for Gov. Pence. Critical coverage on economic issues stemmed from instances in which Gov. Pence’s voting record differed from Trump’s stances. Gov. Pence voted for the 2008 bailout, which President Trump has spoken vocally against [New York Times, 7/16/2020]. However, the economy also appeared as Gov. Pence’s most favorable topic, with Republican influencers praising him for his pro-business economic policies [Dow Jones Institutional News, 7/17/2016].
**POLICY AREAS | TIM KAINE**

**SEN. Kaine’s Top Positive Policy Areas Reflected More Traditional Democratic Platforms and Strengths, Despite Lack of Diversity**

- Trade surfaced as Sen. Kaine’s most frequently discussed detrimental policy area, appearing in nearly one-fourth of the candidate’s coverage. Sen. Kaine’s support of the Trans-Pacific Partnership arose as an area of interest due to Hillary Clinton’s public condemnation of the trade deal. The New York Times hypothesized that Donald Trump would use the contradiction within the Democratic ticket as a place to attack [7/23/2016].

- Sen. Kaine also attracted critical coverage on his relationship with Wall Street and the banking industry. Sen. Kaine has a record of advocating for looser regulations for financial institutions, a position which coverage framed as antithetical to the Democratic base [Washington Post, 7/25/2016]. Additionally, it came to light that Sen. Kaine received the bulk of his campaign contributions from entities in the financial sector, raising suspicion that his policy decisions may be influenced by big banks [MarketWatch, 7/27/2016].

- Gun policy appeared most favorably for Sen. Kaine, appearing in 8% of the candidate’s coverage. Sen. Kaine’s stances on gun control aligned with mainstream Democratic party values, resulting in favorable positioning. The media highlighted his efforts to tighten gun control laws during his tenure as governor of Virginia. New York Daily News lauded his potential “as a powerful surrogate on gun control.” [7/23/2016]

---

*Percentage represents the percentage of all the candidate’s coverage. Content may contain multiple topics. Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.*
LANGUAGES AND DESCRIPTORS

TOP DESCRIPTORS SUGGESTED THAT BOTH VP CANDIDATES WERE THE EXPERIENCED CHOICES, IF SOMewhat UNINSPIRING

- Gov. Mike Pence’s descriptors often stemmed from influencer commentary by establishment Republicans who remarked on the balance that Gov. Pence brought to Donald Trump’s presidential ticket. Next to the bombastic then-businessman, Republican leaders felt “reassured” by Gov. Pence’s years of political experience [Washington Post, 7/16/2016] and his “thoughtful” nature [Washington Post, 7/15/2016]. Journalists found Gov. Pence to be a “safe” VP choice for then-candidate Trump because of how ingrained he was in the Republican party machine [New York Post, 7/15/2016]. “Extreme” referred to Gov. Pence’s conservatism, which some perceived as radical, especially pertaining to his stances on LGBTQ+ rights [Washington Post, 7/16/2016].

- Much like Gov. Pence, Sen. Tim Kaine’s coverage focused heavily on his wealth of political experience [Los Angeles Times, 7/15/2016]. Democratic influencers often described Sen. Kaine as a likeable person and agreed that he was well qualified to do the job of vice president [Washington Post, 7/15/2016]. However, whereas Gov. Pence’s description as “safe” had a positive connotation due to Donald Trump’s outlandishness, the word carried a negative connotation for Sen. Kaine, who was considered too “boring” to enhance establishment candidate Hillary Clinton’s presidential bid [USA Today, 7/25/2016].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIKE PENCE</th>
<th>TIM KAIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. “Safe”</td>
<td>2. “Safe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Reassuring”</td>
<td>5. “Nice Guy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Descriptors reflect top 10 by volume
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
POLITICAL LEANING | INFLUENCER COMMENTARY

INFLUENCER COMMENTARY TOUTED EXPERIENCE AND APPTITUDE

• Influencers most frequently appeared within coverage praising the vice-presidential candidates’ backgrounds and accomplishments. Similar to references about Sen. Harris’ generational contrast and intellect as traits to strengthen Biden’s campaign, top influencers detailed the ways in which Sen. Kaine and Gov. Pence counterbalanced their respective running mate to offer a more well-rounded, mass appeal ticket.

• Influencers described Gov. Pence’s calm, collected temperament and steady, traditional personal background and applauded his governmental experience, contrasting him with political outsider Donald Trump’s unrestrained and unconventional approach to leadership and communication [Washington Post, 7/15/2016]. Right-leanig influencers who thought Trump too moderate found Gov. Pence’s long history of conservative values reassuring.

• Influencers described Sen. Kaine’s even-keeled approach to politics, noting his personal balance between his Catholic faith and progressive politics. Influencers thought Sen. Kaine would appeal to moderate voters concerned with Hillary Clinton’s “liberal” views.

OVERALL POLITICAL LEANING OF INFLUENCER COMMENTARY

- Left-Leaning: 39%
- Right-Leaning: 28%
- Neutral/Balanced: 33%

Mike Pence is a pro-life trailblazer and Mr. Trump could not have made a better choice.

-Marjorie Dannenfelser, President, Susan B. Anthony List [The Washington Post, 7/17/2016]

Trust me, on—on his worst, worst, worst day, Tim Kaine is 100 times better than Donald Trump will ever be.

-Bernie Sanders, Senator (VT) [The Wall Street Journal, 7/25/2016]

*Percentage represents the percentage of all third-party influencer commentary. Content may contain multiple influencers.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
TOP INFLUENCERS

Politicians and political activists emerged as top influencers and commentary was often informed by their personal political affiliation. Commentary from neutral influencers centered around fact-based political analysis and made comparisons between VP candidates or against the influencer’s own political views.

LEFT-LEANING

Hillary Clinton | Former U.S. Secretary of State
Bernie Sanders | U.S. Senator (VT)
Chad Griffin | President of Human Rights Campaign
Robby Mook | Campaign Manager for Hillary Clinton
Scott Pelath | Former Minority Leader of House of Representatives (IN)

NEUTRAL/BALANCED

Martin Garcia | Director of Campaigns, Latino Victory Project
Charles Chamberlain | Executive Director, Democracy for America
Bernie Sanders | U.S. Senator (VT)
Pablo Ryan | Former House Speaker
Barack Obama | 44th U.S. President

RIGHT-LEANING

Paul Ryan | Former House Speaker
Donald Trump | 45th U.S. President
Marjorie Dannenfelser | President, Susan B. Anthony List
David M. McIntosh | Former U.S. Congressman (IN)
Mitch McConnell | U.S. Senator (KY)

*Top 5 by volume. Reflects title/role at the time of article publishing.
*Data reflects analysis of a sample of coverage from August 4, 2020 – August 24, 2020, using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.
FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Amanda Harrington | VP of Communications, TIME’S UP Now
amanda.harrington@timesupnow.org
## Coding Framework

### Race/Gender: Depth of Focus
- None - no mention of race/gender related to the candidate
- Passing - single mention of race/gender
- Moderate - paragraph or multiple mentions of race/gender
- In-Depth - race/gender focus of the article

### Key Topics
- Age/Health
- Ancestry
- Appearance/Attire
- Background/Accomplishments
- Balancing Family Life
- Citizenship
- Future Ambitions
- Network / Relationships
- Parenting Reference
- Religious Background
- Spouse Reference

### Policy Areas
- Civil Rights
- Climate Change
- COVID/Public Health
- Criminal Justice
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Foreign Affairs
- Gender Equality / Women’s Rights
- Gun Policy
- Healthcare
- Immigration
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Labor Rights
- LGBTQ+ Rights
- Military
- Misc. Social Issues / Civil Rights
- Poverty / Income Inequality
- Racial Issues
- Trade
- Wall Street / Banking

### Political Leanings: Influencer Commentary
- Left-Leaning - influencer likely a Democrat or liberal – commentary may be overly critical of Pence/Republicans, or overly favorable toward Kaine/Harris/Democrats. References to the other side, winning, etc.
- Right-Leaning - influencer likely a Republican or conservative -- commentary may be overly critical of Kaine/Harris/Democrats, or overly favorable toward Pence/Republicans. References to the other side, winning, etc.
- Neutral/Balanced - factual or balanced commentary toward candidates; can be critical or favorable of either side, but without showing explicit bias