

# Candidate 2 evidence

Politics Higher Research Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
<p>Source 1: Public opinion survey                      Do you feel women are treated fairly in the media?                      Do you think women are held to a higher standard than their male counterparts?                      Have you seen/read women receiving harsher treatment in the media?                      Do you think it is fair that women are treated more harshly?                      Do you think people would be upset if men were treated the same way?                      Can you think of any example of women being treated unfairly?                      Do you think there is a reason for the difference in treatment?                      Justify your answer?</p> <p>Source2: Mat leave Jacinda                      Link: <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/01/jacinda-ardern-in-interview-new-zealand-pregnant-sexism">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/01/jacinda-ardern-in-interview-new-zealand-pregnant-sexism</a>                      Last Date accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source3: Paternity leave Boris                      Link: <a href="https://www.politico.com/news/2018/01/17/prime-minister-boris-johnson-wont-be-taking-paternity-leave">https://www.politico.com/news/2018/01/17/prime-minister-boris-johnson-wont-be-taking-paternity-leave</a>                      Last date accessed: 24.03.25</p> <p>Source 4: Online hostility                      Link: <a href="https://m100k.org/pdf/EB_22.pdf">https://m100k.org/pdf/EB_22.pdf</a>                      Last date accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 5: abuse of speaking out                      Link: <a href="https://centralbylines.co.uk/society/social-media-abuse-the-perils-of-women-speaking-out/">https://centralbylines.co.uk/society/social-media-abuse-the-perils-of-women-speaking-out/</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 6: Sexist Remarks                      Link: <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/apr/25/less-it-calm-down-dear-she-times-uk-mps-faced-sexism-angela-rayner">https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/apr/25/less-it-calm-down-dear-she-times-uk-mps-faced-sexism-angela-rayner</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 7: Worsened stereotypes and sexism                      Link: <a href="https://www.aclac.uk/news/media-coverage-of-the-uk-female-prime-ministers-has-become-more-gendered-from-the-teacher-to-may">https://www.aclac.uk/news/media-coverage-of-the-uk-female-prime-ministers-has-become-more-gendered-from-the-teacher-to-may</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 8: Gender Bias- Hillary vs Pete Hegseth                      Link: <a href="https://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/other/pete-hegseths-reaction-to-top-secret-war-plans-revealed-in-group-text/ar-AA18vVv8">https://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/other/pete-hegseths-reaction-to-top-secret-war-plans-revealed-in-group-text/ar-AA18vVv8</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 9: Media Perception                      Link: <a href="https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/312/how-do-journalists-and-mps-perceive-female-politicians-to-be-represented-in-the-british-media-in-2017-and-could-these-perceptions-help-to-explain-why-fewer-members-of-parliament-are-women.pdf">https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/312/how-do-journalists-and-mps-perceive-female-politicians-to-be-represented-in-the-british-media-in-2017-and-could-these-perceptions-help-to-explain-why-fewer-members-of-parliament-are-women.pdf</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 10: Inappropriate MPs                      Link: <a href="https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tpw-minister-warn-men-would-parliament-b2059348.html">https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tpw-minister-warn-men-would-parliament-b2059348.html</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 11: Karl Marx Friedrich Engels                      Link: <a href="https://isj.org.uk/kyr-marx-engels-women-llh/">https://isj.org.uk/kyr-marx-engels-women-llh/</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 12: Aristotle                      Link: <a href="https://blogs.le.ac.uk/leupr/2022/01/28/aristotles-account-of-the-place-of-women-within-the-polis/">https://blogs.le.ac.uk/leupr/2022/01/28/aristotles-account-of-the-place-of-women-within-the-polis/</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 22.02.25</p> <p>Source 13: Kamala Harris                      Link: <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/no-one-more-qualified-white-house-on-kamala-harris-as-us-presidential-candidate-101721867097667.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/no-one-more-qualified-white-house-on-kamala-harris-as-us-presidential-candidate-101721867097667.html</a>                      Last Date Accessed: 19.03.25</p> <p>1981, EFA 1928, GRA 1832, MCA 1835, CM, NWA, ER MP-1929-1946, Kamala, P, DA, AG, VP ✓</p> <p>Appearance, Public engagement                      Less women = Male viewpoint, content                      Undeserving "The former by nature is superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject" (Aristotle 1981, 68)                      "Women influenced the development off Marxism, just as Marxism influenced some of the most dedicated socialist women."                      Gender stereotypes, social media, abuse, double standards                      Catalyst</p>	

## Higher Politics

## Assignment

**To what extent does the mainstream media affect representation of women in influential positions?**

**Factors:**

- Portrayal of women in leadership
- Representation
- Media stereotypes
- Public perception

**Intro:**

Does the media mainstream media affect representation of women in influential positions? This is a huge political question that is still and increasingly more relevant today than ever before. Women are still underrepresented and criticised today. It is only in recent years there has been more representation of women and enablement of them joining influential positions. While that is a good thing, misogyny and sexism also arose to stop them from being able to do this. Women in the UK could not vote until November 1918, which meant they could not contest parliamentary decisions. In 1918, women over the age of 30 could vote and stand as a candidate. The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 meant that women over the age of 21 could vote and stand as a candidate in all elections. However, women did not lose their vote until 1832 with the Great Reform Act which meant they could not vote in general elections and then the MCA of 1835 which specified that only 'male persons' could vote at all. Constance Markievze was the first women in parliament in 1918, she was elected but due to

being a member of Sinn Fein she could not take a seat in parliament. Nancy Witcher Astor was an American Born, British politician. Born and Raised in Virginia. She was the first to take seat in parliament in 1919. Eleanor Rathbone was elected in 1929 in the 'Flapper' Election. She is said to be the most independent MP ever. She campaigned on problems outside of the home. From Female Mutilation in India and Kenya (which were still under Britain's rule) to women gaining more independence and the treatment of Refugees. She was very progressive for her time. She helped save refugees in Europe, specifically Czech refugees during WWII and Hitler's Regime. In 1946 at the time of her death she was at the forefront of the 'Save Europe Now' campaign. This is only what she did in her time as a MP. Despite this she is not known for her heroism and bravery, she pushed the boundaries of Britain forward and helped gain respect/independence for everyone who wasn't a white male.

Theresa May and Nicola Sturgeon are very prominent and influential women in today's society. They govern millions of people and yet are still not taken seriously. After a discussion on Brexit, The Daily Mail posted an article called "Never mind Brexit, who won legs-it?" (Source 6) This was an insanely inappropriate article and just solidified that women are not taken seriously despite very influential and high positions. It also shows that no matter a woman's status appearance and attractiveness are more important. Hillary Clinton was a very good candidate for the US presidential election in 2016 but due to false articles she was disliked. She was seen as against women and what they need as she was too unemotional and dedicated. Kamala Harris is the most qualified Presidential candidate in years but was seen as unqualified and clueless. She was a Prosecutor, District Attorney, Attorney General and then Vice President (source 13). Despite this she was "unqualified". Donald J. Trump however, has/had never held a government title before he ran for president. Something a woman could never do, he was severely unqualified but was somehow chosen. This just solidifies the fact that women have to work 10x harder than anyone else to achieve what men do. In 2024 there were only 263 Female MP's in Parliament. That is only 40%. Women are a minority when half the country is Female. This means that predominantly female issues/problems are not able to be brought up half as much as they should be.

**Portrayal of women in Leadership:**

The Media's portrayal of women is what leads to the underrepresentation. Karl Marx and his wife, Jenny, were political and emotional partners. They worked together on everything and she pushed him to help people more. Whereas nowadays it is seen that emotions cannot take place in politics, which is wrong. One has to care about policies and their people to do their job properly. If they did not care then they wouldn't bother. A survey (source 1) was conducted and 10 people were asked if they felt women were treated fairly in the media. 5 said no and 4 said somewhat. This shows that people feel women are not respected or taken seriously in the media. They are seen for their body and appearance rather than their intelligence. They are disrespected and undermined despite tireless efforts to prove themselves. This is furthered when Politicians speak down to female Politicians. For example, in 2011 David Cameron told shadow secretary Angela Eagle to 'Calm down, Dear.' This is an extremely rude and inappropriate comment which belittles her and what she is standing for. She will not be able to speak out on issues now without being seen as emotional and 'Just a woman'. This puts men in a bad light as it is clear they are more interested in what women are doing, what they look like and act showing that men are not that dedicated to what they are supposed to be doing.

However, the media cannot help public engagement. Aristotle believed that women's virtues did not benefit politics and the 'greater good'. The media will publish whatever they think will gain the most engagement and bring in the most revenue. If they think the public will engage with a specific topic over another then that will be chosen, no matter what it is. For example, Jacinda Arden was underestimated and received huge backlash when she announced her pregnancy as she was seen as 'un-invested' and 'undedicated' to her job/country. Whereas Boris Johnson did not receive backlash when he spoke of paternity leave to spend with his new-born. He did not end up taking leave due to The Covid19 Pandemic. He was not treated differently for getting his partner pregnant or wanting to spend time with his baby, despite Jacinda receiving harsh treatment. This shows the clear double standards in how they are portrayed and viewed. Jacinda did everything she could to show her dedication and commitment to the job. She proved herself over and over again, yet it was not enough.

**Representation:**

There is a limited representation of women in the media. Karl Marx's wife promoted political engagement. Their house was a hub/meeting point for them to discuss plans and Jenny often took part. The media publish whatever they feel will be engaged with the most instead of what is politically correct as it often seen as 'boring'. If a project is overseen by women then it will be very different than if it were by men. A lack of female Journalists creates a gap in what is actually produced/published. A survey was conducted and when asked 8 out of 10 people felt that women are held to a higher standard than their male counterparts and 1 said somewhat. Again when all 10 people asked felt that women were treated worse than men in the media. This shows that women aren't given the same chances and respect as men. They have to do more to achieve the same goal and reaction from the public, yet have less to do to be berated. They are underrepresented and when they are it is often unfairly compared to men.

However, men are held accountable. They are brought up when they act out or are inappropriate. For example, A MP warned new MPs to avoid certain individuals and behaviours after a MP was found and dismissed over inappropriate behaviour during parliament/work hours. This shows that men are held accountable when something happens although it is completely different. Men are allowed to get away with things as long as it does not put others in a bad light. When it starts to affect their parties reputation that is when something is done about it. Not when it impacts people who are 'not important' or women.

**Media stereotypes:**

Friedrich Engels loved his wife, He was smitten by her. He helped refugees because she was once one and wanted them to be treated right. When a women has an influential position she is immediately seen as unworthy, even more so if she has a higher position than her male counterpart. The first thought is how she got that position, what she had to do to get there. Even if years of hard work was put in, it is not enough. Since Margaret Thatcher the relevance

of gender has risen. When she was PM gender was mentioned 44% of the time in articles whereas May's gender was mentioned in 48% of articles during the first three weeks of their respective terms. They were often referred to as school girls as well (source 7). This shows that they are undermined and seen as unworthy just because of their gender, for prominent influential women to be seen as 'children' is frankly disgusting and shows that they really do not care about their careers and achievement. They are more interested in producing content that belittles them and what they do.

However, the media is not entirely at fault. They just publish what the public want to see and often how they secretly feel. Aristotle believed that women were only good for taking care and maintaining what men earned. "The former by nature is superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject." (Aristotle 1981, 68). The media just enables people's sexist and hateful opinions to be spread. For example, Tony Blair was often criticised for being too focused on gaining power during his time as PM and being too direct. This shows that men are criticised for their behaviour, but it is not enough. Women cannot have a career without being asked about personal affairs and are often seen to have a job as a pass time, something that is not serious.

#### **Public Perception:**

The treatment of women is a problem ingrained in society. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels loved women. They were inspired by them. "Women influenced the development of Marxism, just as Marxism influenced some of the most dedicated socialist Women." Social media is a useful tool to promote women rights and remove barriers that stop people from achieving. Social media has specific Algorithms that are tuned to every different person. They show what a person will engage with more even if they don't necessarily enjoy or agree with it. Social media creates a safe space for hatred. It is often not controlled or regulated and means that people can say things they would never dream of saying out loud. For example, Diane Abbott faced relentless Misogyny and Racism despite her policies that helped public life. When

Female Journalists would defend her and breakdown rumours they were faced with abuse as well. This just shows that women must work harder than anyone else and it is still not enough in the end. Unless women are absolutely perfect, it is not enough. This puts women in a box and makes them uncomfortable to speak out when they know something is wrong. They cannot share their voice without being harassed.

Similarly, Hillary Clinton was berated over sharing an email not through her political account but through a private account. She was seen as a safety threat and received a lot of backlash. Whereas Pete Hegseth shared war plans to bomb Yemen in a group chat where a high profile and well paid Journalist was 'accidentally' added (source 8). While he has received backlash, it is not nearly as much as Hillary Clinton did and shows a huge Double standard. Women are unfairly held to a much higher standard than men ever will be and forced to apologise for things that are often not their fault or unnecessary. Whereas men are not nit-picked and often left to do/say whatever they feel like with little to no repercussions.

#### Conclusion:

It is clear that the Medias portrayal of women is a huge problem in today's society. The media- specifically newspapers can put out whatever content it wishes as long as it is not inherently harmful, meaning they have no boundaries. While the media is not the cause of this problem it is a huge catalyst. They should not be enabling sexism just because it sells better than being 'woke'. It allows women to experience abuse for standing up for each other. The media should be held accountable for its actions and realise that engagement is not worth more than peoples livelihoods. The media deters Young women from achieving and striving for more. Young women who dream of making a difference and helping people do not due to the media. If the media did not produce disparaging images about women than the sexism that is ingrained in society would reduce greatly and improve women's lives and careers. Violence against women was lower and influential positions would be evenly matched in gender.