Attitudes towards Women in Power: How Conservative Religious Individuals Form Religious and Political Decisions

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ABSTRACT
The research questions of this poster examine whether attitudes towards women in power are similar in religious and political domains. A survey was designed to test whether or not there is a relationship between attitudes towards women in power in politics and attitudes towards women in power in religion. A list of questions specifically included two female political candidates (Sarah Palin, and Hillary Clinton) who were vying for political leadership. My sample was Seventh-day Adventists, a Conservative Christian religious denomination which does not currently ordain female clergy.

BACKGROUND

HYPOTHESES
1. Those who favor women’s ordination will have a higher favorability towards female political candidates.
2. Those who favor Sarah Palin will have a negative correlation with favorability towards female political candidates.
3. Those who favor Hillary Clinton will have a positive correlation with favorability towards female political candidates.

VARIABLES
Outcome Variable: Attitudes towards women’s ordination
Predictor Variables: Attitudes towards female political candidates (In general, Palin, Clinton)

PREVIOUS RESEARCH
- “Women occupy proportionally fewer positions of power in organizations, especially in the highest ranks” (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989)

METHODOLOGY
• Sample: American citizens, adult (18+), Seventh-day Adventists
• 5-point Likert scale [agree/disagree] format.
• 20 question survey (four questions of interest; 16 fillers).
• Administered via Limesurvey (Sample 1) and the Andrews University Research Participation Pool (Sample 2):
  - Sample 1: recruited through e-mail, Facebook, and other social connections.
  - Sample 2: recruited through General Education & Introductory classes at Andrews University, a Seventh-day Adventist liberal arts university.
• Analysis: Pearson’s correlation coefficient test (a non-parametric test Kendall’s tau_b showed the same relationship).

RESULTS
• First Hypothesis supported. Significant correlation between those who favor women’s ordination and their favorability towards female political candidates (Sample 1: r=.345, p<.01) (Sample 2: r=.605, p<.01)
• Hypothesis for specific candidates not supported
  - No significant correlation between favorability of women’s ordination with favorability of either Sarah Palin or Hillary Clinton
    - Sample 1: Clinton: r=.136, p=.19; Palin: r=.160, p=.13
    - Sample 2: Clinton: r=.142, p=.17; Palin: r=.045, p=.66

CONCLUSION
These findings suggest that the attitudes towards women (in the case of women’s ordination specifically) may be related to ideological or gender attitudes (i.e. attitudes towards women in power) rather than religious beliefs.

REFERENCES