

政壇無小節： 政治糗聞在總統選舉報道中的角色分析

周樹華、Lindsey Conlin Maxwell、Yejin Kim、單舟

摘要

政治人物的一言一行皆受到公眾的嚴格審視，尤其在角逐政壇的關鍵時刻，小糗事也會成為大新聞，對其公眾形象以至政治生涯產生重大影響。本研究首先對政治糗聞進行闡釋和分類，並探討其在政治活動中扮演的角色，繼而以「期望違背」理論(expectancy violation theory)為應用框架，在大眾傳播的語境中，考察影響政治糗聞之所以成為重大新聞的因素。本文以四屆美國總統競選中的新聞報道為對象，通過內容分析法來檢驗本文對政治糗聞之分類法的嚴謹程度，考察政客的個體特質與當時的政治氣候如何影響政治糗聞的報道方式。結果表明，新候選人較容易犯「敘述失當型」糗聞、「金斯利糗聞」和「事實錯誤型」糗聞。政治糗聞的報道也反映出總統大選的「賽馬式」競逐本質。

關鍵詞：政治糗聞、偏差、政治形象、期望違背、總統競選

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More than a Mistake: The Role of Political Gaffes in U.S. Presidential Election Coverage

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Abstract

Small mistakes on the part of a politician can become huge media stories when these politicians are running for prominent office, as every movement and action of these public figures is scrutinized. The current study proposes an explanation and typology of political gaffes, and examines their role in the political process. Expectancy violation theory is applied in a mass communication context to understand how the temporary missteps of a politician can become huge news stories. Newspaper coverage of four U.S. presidential elections was content analyzed in order to determine whether the proposed typology was appropriate, as well as characteristics of the politician

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and political climate that play a role in how political gaffes are covered. Results indicated that new candidates were more likely than incumbents to commit narrative gaffes, Kinsley gaffes and factual error gaffes, and that coverage of political gaffes was used to emphasize the horse-race nature of presidential elections.

Keywords: political gaffe, deviance, political image, expectancy violation, presidential election

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