Reproductive Freedom on the Ballot

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Background (Abstract)

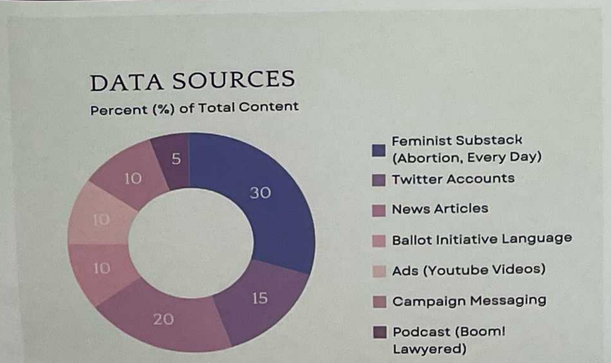
- Reproductive Freedom is inextricably linked to the politics of our modern day election. In the post-Dobbs era, we have seen the rise of criminalization, surveillance, ads and party politics targeting abortion like never before. The polarization of both Republicans and Democrats reproductive freedom has created a clear rift between what the future holds for the women of the United States.
- A recent poll from Axios shows that **81%** of Americans believe abortion "**should be managed between a woman and her doctor, not the government"**
- Increasingly, more polls point to how **7 in 10 Americans** support **abortion medication regardless of party affiliation.**
- An increase in ad revenue for states such as Nevada and Arizona for, with spending ramping up to as much as **17 million and 16 million dollars respectively**.
- There has also been targeted specific language in ballot initiatives in the following states: **Florida, Maryland, South Dakota, Colorado, New York, Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska and Nevada.**
- For women younger than 45, **abortion has overtaken the economy as the single most important issue for the upcoming election cycle.**

Skill: Critical Thinking

I primarily used the skill critical thinking throughout my research. I was able to identify and pivot our analysis based on the ever shifting political landscape throughout our data collection period. I also made several informed decisions based on the systematic analysis I conducted from multiple sources of data. Overall, my critical thinking skills helped me identify and consider the broader context to which research impacts electoral politics and reproductive freedom.

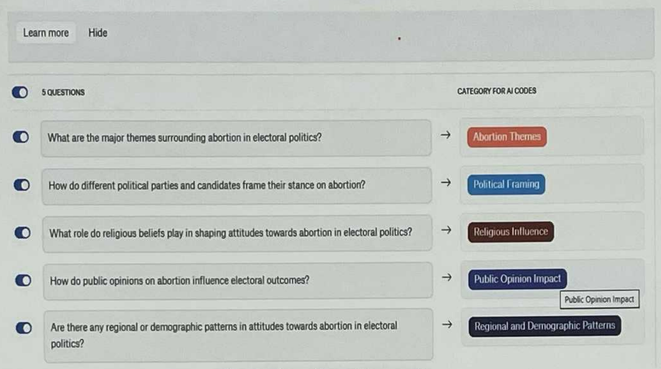
Methods

This poster is part of an ongoing study on reproductive freedom throughout the 2024 election cycle. We collected qualitative data from multiple sources (see chart below). We conducted our analysis from May 2024-August 2024. Using Atlas.ti, we used open coding of the text to help us generate a list of keywords. We also applied the softwares AI feature, to generate a list of recurring themes across our data sources. Further analysis of the thematic content led to the creation of our conceptual model.



Results

Using AI tools in ATLAS Ti to code



Quotations from Research

Republican Quotes

State Decisions:
Trump also states **"it's left up to the states and he supports the state's handling of it"**
Texas is going to track **"its own maternal deaths removing itself from the CDC system"** that every other state uses

Fetal Saviorhood
Emphasis on **"late term abortions"** and **"after birth abortions"**
Democrats are **"baby killers that want after birth abortions"**
"Protecting lives of the unborn children"

Democrat Quotes

Future of my grandaughter:

"Women's health is **essential to my daughter's freedom, my granddaughter's freedom."**

"We're already **moving backwards,** if we re-elect Trump, what are we going to lose next?"

Everybody's Daughter:

"This is to you, Daniel Cameron. **To tell a 12-year old girl she must have the baby of her stepfather who raped her is unthinkable."**

Conceptual Model of the role of reproductive freedom in the election cycle



Republican Political Framing

- Protection of fetal personhood
- Protection of unborn children
- Life begins at conception
- Using law enforcement and surveillance to silence women and control their bodies, actions and choices
- Sanctity of life = fetal saviorhood
- Failed abortion = doctors fault
- Fetus non-viable = patients fault
- Sepsis = healthcare system failing
- Project 2025 and Republican GOP platform: Recognition of fetal personhood and "restoration of the ideal American family"
- Avoiding addressing direct stance on abortion

Democrat Political Framing

- Healthcare rights are reproductive rights
- Reproductive rights are rights of the mother
- Women's bodily autonomy
- Women's private healthcare choice
- We trust women, Harris and Walz 2024
- Women's healthcare decisions for her own body should be a private decision between her doctor, not government dictation
- Protecting women's right to choose
- Individual autonomy over choice equates to control over healthcare decisions, bodies, and life
- Removal of autonomy = second-class citizenship
- Democrat party platform: "Every woman should be able to access the high-quality health care services, including safe and legal abortion"
- Actively campaigning on issue

Discussion- Deeper Dive

Our analysis identifies stark contrasts between the framing of reproductive freedom between the two major political parties in this election cycle. Democratic messaging reflected: **rights of the mother, private healthcare choice, trusting women**. Republican messaging showcased: **protecting unborn children, fetal saviorhood, failure of healthcare system**. Our analysis suggests if Republican campaigns are successful, major disruptions to women's reproductive freedom are likely. This analysis is consistent with others interpretations of **Project 2025**, which includes: plans to **control, restrict and downsize the presence of women in spheres of employment, education and family structures resulting in the evolution of second-class citizenship for American women.**

Conclusion- What's Next?

We will continue to **track, survey and analyze** the developments surrounding the election. With **reproductive freedom** taking center stage of each **presidential campaign**, it has become clear that this could be a deciding factor for voters and the election. The **language and wording** that constructs the storyline of **news headlines, court decisions and political party agendas** is inevitable in the creation and construction of realities for American women.