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Nicholas J. G. Winter. *Dangerous Frames: How Ideas about Race and Gender Shape Public Opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2008. 224 pp. \$18.00 (paper).

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Few observers would disagree that the 2008 presidential campaign brought issues of race and gender into American politics in new and meaningful ways. With the first African American nominated to lead a major party ticket, a drawn out primary contest with a serious female contender, and a female vice presidential nominee, there are many important questions about race and gender in politics to be explored over the next several years. Into this milieu comes Nicholas Winter's *Dangerous Frames*, a book that examines the remarkably subtle ways in which citizens' understandings of race and gender can change their attitudes about various political issues—even those that ostensibly have little to do with race or gender. Winter offers a new theory and a considerable body of empirical evidence in support of this theory; scholars interested in race, gender, political communication, and public opinion will likely find both compelling.

Winter spends the first portion of the book developing his theory of “group implication.” This is the process by which individuals' ideas about race and gender can influence their views on other, seemingly unrelated, political issues. As Winter explains

Group implication occurs when a subtly crafted issue frame shapes an issue to match the structure of a cognitively accessible race or gender schema. The issue is then mapped analogically to the race or gender schema, and feelings about race or about gender are transferred back to the issue, influencing evaluation of the issue. (p. 31)

Winter draws on work in political psychology and cognitive science to develop this theory, pulling together research on schemas, framing, and metaphorical/analogical reasoning to explain why and how group implication is likely to work. Some readers might take issue with Winter's decision to treat metaphorical and analogical reasoning as more or less equivalent, but this quibble will likely be ignored by those who consider the substantial breadth and depth of the literatures that Winter is synthesizing.

After explaining group implication, Winter reviews the literature on race and gender cognitions to develop a helpful and surprisingly simple typology identifying the basic structures of the race schema and the gender schema. The race schema is characterized by a hostile ingroup/outgroup competition, the outcome of which is inequality between blacks and whites. "Racial conservatives" attribute this disparity to individual-level factors such as personal effort, whereas "racial liberals" attribute it to structural factors such as institutionalized racism. The gender schema, which Winter treats separately, is characterized by difference and inequality between men and women, but with a sense of shared interest that generates paternalism rather than outright conflict. "Gender traditionalists" view this relationship as natural and appropriate, whereas "gender egalitarians" view it as unnatural and inappropriate. The structure of each schema is crucial to the process of group implication because it is these structures that an issue frame must map onto if it is to activate the relevant schema and affect public opinion.

With this theoretical framework in place, Winter turns to an extensive empirical test of group implication. He first conducts a well-designed, multiple-message experiment wherein participants read mock newspaper articles that subtly frame issues in ways that are consistent with the race or gender schemas. Importantly, the issues themselves—grandparent visitation rights, social security privatization, and the government's role in the economy—were not inherently racialized or gendered. Nevertheless, the implicit invocation of the race or gender schema was enough to polarize opinion along expected lines.

For example, one of the experimental manipulations framed the issue of grandparent visitation laws by emphasizing "cities" and "crime," which "links visitation with (symbolically white) intervention in (symbolically black) dysfunctional family dynamics" (p. 52). The result of exposure to this frame was that, in direct contrast to the outcome of the control condition, racial conservatives were more likely to support visitation rights than were racial liberals. On the whole, excepting a few "nuances" in the findings, the experimental results were strongly supportive of group implication.

Of course, it is one thing to generate a framing effect in the laboratory and quite another to show that such frames are present and consequential in real-world political communication. Recognizing this, Winter analyzes more than a decade's worth of American National Election Studies data to further support his theory. He devotes one chapter to the racialization of welfare and

social security, demonstrating how public attitudes on these issues were racially implicated. In another chapter he looks at the gendering of the health care debate in 1993–1994, showing how public attitudes during this time were influenced by the gender schema. In the latter case, for instance, Winter shows that the impact of gender ideology was nearly three times larger in 1994 than it had been previously.

Winter's use of multiple methods is certainly one of the strengths of his book and these two chapters go a long way toward demonstrating that group implication matters in American politics. Nevertheless, the connection that Winter attempts to draw between political discourse and public opinion is not as precise as one might hope. For example, when Winter used political engagement as a proxy to measure the likelihood that individuals encountered the specific political frames of interest, his findings were mixed. For gender, the results were fairly robust: more engaged citizens were more likely to rely on the gender schema in assessing health care, suggesting the frames present in public discourse mattered. For race, however, no similar statistically significant differences were found.

The difficulty of connecting specific issue frames to the opinion measures is furthered by the fact that the study undertook no systematic analysis of actual political discourse. Winter cited some previous work that had tracked public discourse on a few of the issues in question, and also included a serviceable narrative description of the subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—racialized and gendered frames that were present in political discourse at the time the surveys were conducted. Even so, this approach left it unclear exactly how much variance there might have been in the circulation of these themes through public discourse.

For example, the study made almost no mention of news coverage, presumably the channel through which most of the public would encounter political frames. Even a rudimentary content analysis of the rise and fall of these frames during the period of analysis would have better linked discourse to opinion. It also might have provided a theoretically coherent explanation of those years in which the opinion data were less consistent with the premises of group implication. It is possible that in those cases the issue frames were less present in public discourse and therefore less able to influence public opinion.

Still, in an already ambitious project, it is easy to look beyond this single issue and see the value of Winter's work. Taken together, the experimental and survey data leave little doubt that group implication is an important political phenomenon—one that scholars would do well to take into account as they continue to explore the roles that race and gender play in American politics.