

Brown, Christopher, Ohio State University, United States

(Re)presenting Race and Constructing Leadership: White-male elite discourses on President Obama

The presidential election of Barack Obama constitutes a historical and cultural shift by loosening the hegemonic white male grip on U.S. social and political initiatives. Yet, during his short-time as President of the United States, we have observed that President Obama is not absolved being *race(d)* to which he often yields to preserving the illusion of racial transcendence. In this paper, I examine how white males in leadership positions in their organizations communicate *race* by reworking the contemporary racial reality through the iconic subjectivity of leaders of color. The objective of the present analysis, then, is to see if and how interview discourses from white-male leaders reveal how they naturalize dominant ideologies through their constructions of President Obama. These discourses recapitulate in dominant cultural codes of colorblind ideologies, which portend to rectify the atrocities of modern racial history. Examining white-male leaders' discursive constructions of President Obama provides attention to how they understand present and future U.S. race relations.