SWIMSUITS TO PANT SUITS: THE 2008 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

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ABSTRACT

Following an established tradition in both voting behavior and political communication, we analyze the degree to which gender stereotypes were used in the news coverage of the 2008 Democratic presidential primary, a critical and unique electoral moment. We expect to find a heightened focus on Sen. Clinton as the novel "female candidate" including a greater emphasis on seemingly irrelevant traits, like clothing choice and hair style. This study incorporates news coverage of leading national and regional newspapers as well as television news transcripts from both broadcast and cable news networks. Our results reveal a subtle pattern of gendered language usage in newspaper coverage of the 2008 Democratic primary, with a more pronounced pattern of gender stereotypes in the television sample.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding how female candidates for high office are characterized in the news media is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of electoral outcomes, and several concerns arise when gender becomes salient in high-level political races. First, media emphasis of gender stereotypes may prime the electorate to evaluate candidates on traditional, stereotypical metrics and reliance on gender stereotypes may lead citizens to inaccurately attribute characteristics or competencies to candidates. Research indicates that Americans perceive men as more competent at handling certain policy areas than their female

counterparts (Sanbonmatsu, 2002), and gender stereotypes have largely endured in recent decades (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). This suggests that even when female candidates do not fit gender stereotypes, they must overcome this disadvantage to be competitive for office. Media coverage that employs gender stereotypes, or emphasizes the novelty of a female candidate's bid for office, may negatively impact perceptions of her viability, and by extension, her fund raising capability (Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005).

Second, a strong focus on gender stereotypes may distract citizens from candidates' objective qualifications or substantive policy stances in the campaign. Valence issues pull the focus off of those characteristics normative arguments suggest are most important for voters to consider. John F. Kennedy had to prove that he could be competitive, despite his religious affiliation; Barack Obama needed to show that he could appeal to the masses, despite his racial heritage. Similarly, research indicates that successful female candidates must overcome the "hair, husband, and hemline" problem and demonstrate they have those characteristics voters perceive as most salient for a president (Duerst-Lahti, 2006, p. 37; Macmanus, Dabbs, & Moss, 2013).

Finally, the presence of gender stereotypes in media coverage may have a substantial impact on the strategies employed by candidates: both female candidates and the men running against them. It is important to understand how the rules of the game change when the gender becomes imminently relevant. Early evidence suggests that male candidates running against female opponents adjust their strategies to counter any perceived advantages, and female candidates actively emphasize their masculine qualities (McKinney et al, 2009).

RESEARCH GAP

Professional conditions for women have improved considerably in recent decades, but significant gaps remain between the sexes. In the public sphere, just 18.5 percent of Congress is female and there are only 5 sitting female governors in 2013 (CAWP, 2013). Still, the playing field continues to level over time and we are seeing an increase in female presidential candidates in the major party primaries. Research on the treatment of female candidates at the Congressional and gubernatorial levels is rather

extensive, but our understanding at the presidential level is limited due to a historical shortage of viable female candidates. Sen. Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential run provides scholars with a rare research opportunity to study the media treatment of a competitive female candidate. Prior to Clinton's run, Geraldine Ferraro (1984 vice presidential candidate) and Elizabeth Dole (1996 presidential primary) were the only two competitive races available.

Studies of media coverage traditionally examined newspaper coverage because it was popular and easily accessible. However, the modern shift in technology demands an update and our inclusion of newspaper coverage, broadcast television news, and cable news networks helps us move towards a more comprehensive view of mass media coverage. Even some of the most extensive and recent studies have failed to take a broad look at the media environment, opting for a narrow focus only on newspapers, despite the fact that most Americans get the majority of their political and campaign news from television (Miller & Peake, 2013; Miller, Peake, & Boulton, 2010).

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

The media is a powerful priming tool that molds public perceptions about which traits, attributes, and issues are relevant to the evaluation of political candidates. Priming works by increasing the salience of some set of characteristics or issues, thus making them more likely to be applied to subsequently formed opinions (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). In the case of mixed-gender political contests, making gender a salient feature of campaigns through priming can have a significant effect on the opinions and judgments formed by citizens (Fridkin, Kenney, & Woodall, 2009). Burns, Eberhardt, and Merolla (2013) use an online experiment on voters to frame Gov. Palin using feminine or masculine attributes and a mixture of both. They found that the mixture of gendered attributes raised voters' overall evaluations of Gov. Palin, but that a feminine trait only frame raised voters' perceptions of feminine attributes. If we consider the pervasive gender stereotypes present in contemporary society, combined with the priming power of the media, the implications are clear and concerning.

Gender in political campaigns can also be approached as a heuristic that influences how new information is processed (Fridkin, Kenney, & Woodall, 2009). There is concern that gender

stereotypes may act as a heuristic for voters, independent of the actual qualifications of the candidates at hand. Popkin (1991) suggests that gender is sometimes used as a "low-information shortcut" to predict a candidate's stance on specific policy areas and competency in the same way that partisanship is used. In this way, voters can "simply transfer their stereotypical expectations about men and women to male and female candidates" (Lawless, 2004: 480; Dolan, 1998). Reliance on gender stereotypes as a substitute for factual knowledge may lead citizens to draw inaccurate conclusions about candidate political options and capabilities, and this may mean that even identical attacks from media or opponents may have different consequences for male and female candidates (Fridkin, Kenney, & Woodall, 2009). In general elections, citizens can use partisanship to better understand their options, but in primary elections, when ideological divides are less apparent, gender may play a more significant role (Fox & Oxley, 2003).

Female candidates often face what is known as the "hair, husband, and hemline" problem (Duerst-Lahti, 2006, p. 37; Macmanus, Dabbs, & Moss, 2013). This overemphasis on gender in political races is, at best, a distraction, and at worst, an enduring hurdle to women in elite political races. There is clear evidence that mass media discuss female and male candidates in inequitable ways. When Geraldine Ferraro was a vice presidential candidate in 1984 she was frequently described as "slender" "blond and blue-eyed" and with "an adoring smile" – characteristics not typically discussed with male candidates then or now (Heldman et al, 2009). Research on Elizabeth Dole's 1996 bid for the Republican presidential nomination found that media paid less attention to her substantive policy positions and more attention to her personal traits and appearance than her male opponents (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Braden, 1996; Heith, 2001; Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005; Kahn, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1997). Early evidence suggests that this was repeated with Palin's vice-presidential bid in 2008 (Miller & Peake, 2013). One particularly insightful analysis of political cartoons from the 1996 primaries found that depictions of Dole were often sexual and domestic in nature, and focused heavily on her in relation to her husband, Robert Dole (Gilmartin, 2001). Uscinski and Goren (2011) found Sen. Clinton was referred by her first name only 6 percent more times than Sen. Obama in television news coverage. A similar pattern of preoccupation with the physical attributes of female candidates has been identified in a variety of

Congressional and gubernatorial races (Banwart, Bystrom, & Robertson, 2003). This fixation on the physical is more than just distracting; experimental research suggests that when voters are primed to focus on candidates' appearances, female candidates face negative electoral consequences – even within their own party (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2010).

Faced with the possible effects of priming, heuristics, and damaging distractions, female candidates may make strategic campaign decisions. In an attempt to overcome persistent gender stereotypes, Sanbonmatsu (2002) argues that a number of recent female candidates have sought to emphasize their more masculine traits. In doing so, female candidates hope to overcome the perception that they are less qualified to handle the important issues of the day. Analysis of speeches made at the 2008 Republican National Convention show that Gov. Palin emphasized her maternal and feminine characteristics while also highlighting her own masculine traits, building a hyper-masculine image of Sen. McCain, and emasculating Sen. Obama (Gibson & Heyse, 2010). Even if necessary, this strategy is not without risk. Too much emphasis on masculine qualities of female candidates can lead to an increased resistance and hostility among some, hurting them on "likeability" measures (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Lao, et al, 1975).

As their female competitors have adjusted their strategies to overcome persistent gender stereotypes, male candidates have reacted in kind. Male candidates running against women in highly visible state or national elections have shown a tendency to emphasize the feminine characteristics of sympathy and kindness (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; McKinney et al, 2009). Similarly, Banwart and McKinney (2005) found that in US Senate debates with candidates of each gender, male candidates were far more likely to discuss stereotypical "feminine" issues than their female counterparts[1] (73:46: pg 363). Banwart and McKinney (2005) summarize "that when female and male candidates meet face-to-

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[1] Examining advertisements by political candidates, Bystrom, et al (2004) found that successful female candidates are more likely to invoke fear appeals and emphasize qualifications, while successful males are more likely to emphasize accomplishments and accentuate their sensitivity. In addition, Bystrom, et al (2004) found a significant interaction effect between the partisanship and gender of candidates; specifically, female Republicans and male Democrats tended to utilize similar communication styles, while female Democrats and male Republicans used similar styles.

face on the debate stage, both seem mindful of gendered stereotypes and approach their debate task by generating a dialogue of *gendered adaptiveness"* (363).

Feminine Trait Stereotypes

Alexander and Anderson (1993) found that in the absence of additional information, voters attributed specific leadership qualities and issue competencies to hypothetical candidates based upon each candidates' sex. Certain traits are more commonly associated with females than males. Existing literature indicates women are often perceived to be more compassionate, sensitive, and communal than their male counterparts (Alexander & Andersen, 1993; Diekman & Eagly 2000; Falk & Kenski, 2006; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Kinder, 1986; Kinder, Peters, Abelson, & Fiske, 1980; Kittilson & Fridkin 2008; Lueptow et al, 2001; McDermott, 1998; Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk, 1986; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sczesny et al, 2004). For example, Alexander and Andersen (1993) found that citizens are much more likely to perceive women as more compassionate than men (67% to 1%) and more willing to compromise (43% to 8%).

Feminine traits range from positive characteristics like *compassionate, nurturing*, and *moral*, to more critical traits like *temperamental*, *timid*, and *unstable*. Here we see a reference to Sen. Clinton's *reserved* personality, as opposed to a more aggressive nature: "I think she's a woman who's got a really thick layer of Plexiglas between you and her heart.... Maybe that makes her a little more *reserved*" (CNN February 22, 2008). In many cases, masculine and feminine traits are used in close proximity: "She's *battle-tested.....* I have always found Hillary to be very *approachable*. She's a very *good listener*" (CNN April 6, 2008). Here we have one reference to Sen. Clinton's strength[2] and two separate references to Sen. Clinton's feminine traits.

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[2] *Battle-tested* is coded as a masculine trait, akin to *strong*, rather than as a neutral trait, akin to *experienced,* because of the aggressive nature of the word "battle". In other contexts, references to a candidate being *untested* are coded as gender-neutral trait mentions in line with the topic of experience. We acknowledge this is a judgment call and opted for clarity and consistency, given the rarity of the issue in this particular dataset.

Masculine Trait Stereotypes

Traits coded as masculine are drawn from the literature (Alexander & Anderson 1993, Lueptow et al 2001, Langford & Mackinnon 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004) and include *tough, stable, decisive, aggressive, heroic, competitive,* and *reasonable,* as well as synonyms for each to account for the prodigious vocabularies of journalists. In addition to coding traits that are directly descriptive of candidates, descriptions of candidates' actions are also included in the analysis. While not calling Sen. McCain a hero, Sen. Obama refers to the heroic nature of Sen. McCain's actions: "John McCain won that contest, and I have great regard for John McCain's *heroism*" (CNN April 6, 2008). *Heroism* is coded as a masculine trait for Sen. McCain. This is also an example of trait mentions from direct candidate quotes. Candidates do not select the quotes which are used in newspaper articles or news segments; instead these are decisions made by journalists. Because of clear editorial control, the selection of specific quotations reflects on the news organization.

Gender-Neutral Traits

Traits that are not clearly shown as masculine or feminine are coded as gender-neutral. Two of the most common gender-neutral traits encountered this analysis were *experienced* and *competent*, and often occurred in the context of a lack of the trait: "Edwards, meanwhile, launched an eight-day Iowa bus tour today, meant to... position himself between doubts about Obama's *experience* and concerns about Clinton's *electability* (FOX December 10, 2007). While some of the existing literature identifies competence as a masculine trait (Sanbonmatsu, 2002), we chose to categorize it as neutral because research indicates that male and female candidates are perceived as more competent with regard to some issues than others. For example, women are often perceived to be more competent at handling like healthcare, education, and social welfare, whereas males are generally perceived as better suited for handling issues of national security, foreign trade, and agriculture (Alexander & Anderson, 1993). Other traits coded as gender-neutral

include *intelligent, educated,* and *funny,* as there is little evidence that these are consistently linked to one sex.

Gendered Trait Stereotypes Coded in This Study

Although there is some variation in the traits found to be linked to a specific gender, there is considerable consistency across studies. To compile the list of gendered traits used in this project, we examined the results of a dozen separate studies which utilized both surveys and experiments, and included the traits researchers consistently found to have a clear gendered link (Alexander & Andersen, 1993; Falk & Kenski, 2006; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Kinder, 1986; Kinder, Peters, Abelson, & Fiske, 1980; Lammers, Gordijn & Otten 2009; Lueptow et al, 2001; McDermott, 1998; Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk, 1986; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Close synonyms were included where appropriate, given the data and existing literature (for example: rational/reasonable; weak/lacking strength; nice/kind). Table 1 provides a sample of gendered traits supported by the existing literature.

Table 1: Gendered and Neutral Traits as Coded

Feminine	Neutral	Masculine
Warm	Disciplined	Confident
Nurturing	Funny	Power-hungry
Graceful	Passionate	Unemotional
Emotional	Committed	Strong
Mention of tears	Competent	Aggressive
(emotional)	Intelligent	Candidate attacks
Weak (lack of strength)	Educated	(aggressive)
Compassionate	Experienced	Tough
Honest		Decisive
Compromising		Assertive
Moral		Active
Nice		Rational / Reasonable
Social		Responsible
Sensitive		Dominant
Kind		Competitive
Temperamental		Independent
Moody		Able to handle crises
Sympathetic		Energetic
Accessible		Stable

Issue Competency and Gender Stereotypes

Given the perceived gender differences, how might these impact political campaigns? Although many of the characteristics attributed to women suggest female candidates would act to nurture their constituencies, Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) found significant evidence that voters prefer masculine traits when they select candidates for public office and this preference is stronger the higher the office. This suggests that even when female candidates are being evaluated on office-specific criteria, the pervasive stereotypes make them less appealing to voters.

Research suggests that citizens not only prefer masculine characteristics in their candidates, but they also perceive men as more competent in dealing with issues like national security and military affairs[3] (Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Unfortunately for female candidates, many of the issues deemed most important after September 11, 2001, are the very same issues voters tend to believe men have a better ability to handle (Lawless, 2004). It is not that women are perceived as incompetent in dealing with public issues, but women are seen as much more competent at handling issues of social welfare like helping the poor (47% to 2%), health care (45% to 3%), and education (45% to 5%) (Alexander & Andersen, 1993). Similarly, Leeper (1991) found that citizens believe females are better able to deal with poverty, education, and health care. These advantages may be real assets in state or local elections, but their relative incompetency regarding issues of foreign policy and strengthening the economy may be a severe liability for presidential bids (Alexander & Andersen, 1993).

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) argue that while there has been some narrowing of the gap in terms of citizens' perceptions of the competence of men and women on some issues, significant disparities still exist. For example, warmth is identified as a feminine trait, but there appears to be a negative relationship

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[3] Eagly and Karau (2002) provide an interesting assessment of the obstacles women face running for public office. They find that as a result of general gender-stereotyped biases, women are perceived as less effective in leadership roles.

between perceptions of warmth and perceptions of competence. Fiske, et al (2002) argue that social groups that are perceived as more competent are also perceived as less warm. They trace these linked opinions and find that "positive stereotypes of low-status groups' warmth may come at the cost of these groups' being perceived as incompetent and safely subordinated" (Fiske, et al, 2002: 899). In short, while not all of the characteristics attributed to females are negative, they may have a damaging effect on citizens' perceptions of candidates for high-level political office.

HYPOTHESES AND CODING

Using the exiting research as our guide, we test three general hypotheses for gendered traits: 1) There will be more mentions of feminine traits with references to Sen. Clinton than to Sen. Obama, or Sen. McCain; 2) There will be more mentions of masculine traits with references to Sen. Obama than references to Sen. Clinton; and 3) There will be more mentions of feminine traits with references to Sen. Obama than references to Sen. McCain.

Direct References to Candidates' Race and Sex

Two additional descriptive categories are included in this analysis – direct references to Sen. Obama as the African-American candidate and explicit references to Sen. Clinton as the female candidate. Mentions may be as direct as "Barack Obama made history last night -- you know that now -- big time. He's the first African-American presidential candidate for a major party in all 230 years of our history" (CNN June 4, 2008). In other cases, references may be slightly less blunt: "A lot of blacks want to vote for Barack Obama. People want to vote for a candidate, especially if they've never had one that *looks like them"* (FOX January 24, 2008). References coded as direct mentions of Sen. Clinton's sex also include both direct statements of her as a "female candidate" and more subtle statements: "When Hillary Clinton used the word glass ceiling, it struck a chord with many in the women's movement, who really fear that, if she doesn't get the presidential nod, that it will be a setback for women everywhere" (CNN February 20, 2008).

Media coverage of presidential campaigns is difficult for citizens to avoid entirely, and it is reasonable to suspect that even the most inattentive voter was aware of Sen. Obama's racial heritage

and Sen. Clinton's sex early in the primary season. This suggests that explicit mentions of race and sex may not have been used simply as informational descriptors, but also as purposive cues. We hypothesize that 4) references to race and gender should be more common in the early primary period than in the late primary period.

Fluff References

In addition to gendered traits and racial references, our analysis includes a category for those items colloquially referred to as 'fluff.' This category is intended to capture the "hair, husband, and hemline" problem of media overemphasis on female candidates' clothing, appearance, and family status (Duerst-Lahti, 2006, p. 37; Macmanus, Dabbs, & Moss, 2013). Print space and television airtime are limited, competitive, and expensive. Time spent discussing the clothing choices, hairstyles, and physiques of candidates could be directed to substantive, policy relevant material. Every article or on-air minute spent discussing the color of Clinton's pantsuit or the amount of her cleavage on display distracted from the campaign's message and wasted important time on issues that should not influence the vote. In this analysis, the 'fluff' category has a coding procedure that requires the researcher to assess the contribution of the information to the political campaign. Items typical of fluff mentions include: "Mr. Obama's too-long blue tie went nicely with Mrs. Clinton's blue pantsuit" (*New York Times* May 7, 2008) and discussions of each candidates' zodiac sign (*Denver Post* May 21, 2008). Not all 'fluff' mentions are as easy to dismiss: "Hillary Clinton has been derided on some right wing talk radio stations as being *unattractive*.... Calling her the Ice Queen isn't a personal attack. That is your interpretation of her demeanor. Saying that she has a *fat butt*...." (FOX January 15, 2008). The 2008 campaign appeared to receive an abundance of 'fluff' coverage, and consistent with the previous research on Ferraro, Dole and the emerging Palin literature, we hypothesize that (5) there will be more mentions of fluff with references to Sen. Clinton than references to Sen. Obama or Sen. McCain.

The "hair, husband, and hemline" problem encountered by female candidates includes an overemphasis on their familial relationships, especially attention to their husbands and children (Banwart, Bystrom, & Robertson, 2003; Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005; Kahn, 1996; Stalsburg, 2010). Because of the

identified negative consequences of this emphasis, research on gender stereotyping in the media includes references to family. For many reasons, Sen. Clinton is not the typical female political candidate (former First Lady, for starters). Some evidence suggests that gender stereotypes are most influential when female candidates are not well known (Alexander & Anderson, 1993). Sen. Clinton has a name recognition advantage relative to most female political candidates, but we still expect Sen. Clinton to be the most frequent recipient of feminine references. In an attempt to capture additional gender-relevant references and maintain comparability with other studies, this analysis includes a separate category for references to Sen. Clinton that are directly linked to her time as first lady or in the context as the wife of former President Clinton. Although beyond the realm of this study, references to her position as First Lady cover a spectrum from the positive frame of elevating her position-relevant experience to a negative frame of refusing to present her as an individual independent of her husband. We do not explore the impact of these references, but only aim to assess the degree to which Sen. Clinton was described as a wife and part of a political team, rather than an independent candidate (Miller, Peake, & Boulton, 2010).

DATA AND METHODS

Employing conventional procedures for analyzing news coverage, we conducted a manual content analysis of both print media and television newscasts[4]. Six newspapers were carefully selected for the study based upon rank in the top 31 newspapers according to circulation, geographic location, and full access inclusion in the Newsbank Database. *USA Today* was selected because it has the second-highest circulation rate in the United States and unlike the top circulating paper (*Wall Street Journal*), it

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[4] One advantage of manual coding is that more subtle characterizations can be identified than with the use of content analysis programs. Although they constitute only a small fraction of the trait mentions, manual coding allowed us to identify references to candidates' inexperience, even when the term "experience" did not appear. For example, "It is a remarkable thing that you can be a candidate for president never having run anything of any consequence" (*CNN* February 18, 2008). Here we have a reference to Sen. Obama's lack of experience, but not the word. This is coded as a gender-neutral trait mention.

is geared towards the general public. *The New York Times* is also included in the sample as a national news source that increases the comparability of this study with the existing literature. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Denver Post*, *St. Louis Dispatch*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer* were selected to allow for increased generalizability and to allow us to capture any significant regional differences, like those found by Fox and Smith (1998).

The newspaper data incorporates two independent samples taken from each of the six newspaper sources as part of a larger project. Because of this, slightly different search terms were used. For the early primary period (November 1, 2007 – March 14, 2008), "Giuliani or Romney or McCain or Huckabee or Obama or Hillary" was used as the search parameters. The articles in this date range including any of these names provided a sampling frame of 5,712 articles from which a random sample was taken from each newspaper. For the late primary period (March 15, 2008 – July 31, 2008), "McCain or Obama or Hillary" served as the search parameter[5]. This search produced a sampling frame of 6,361 articles from which a random sample was taken for each of the six newspapers. Only those articles that mentioned Sen. John McCain, Sen. Hillary Clinton, or Sen. Barack Obama were included in this study[6].

Despite our best efforts, some irrelevant articles appeared in the sample taken. Articles in the original sample that did not meet relevancy requirements for this study were not included. Letters to the editor are excluded from analysis, as are articles about the incorrect individual. In addition, articles that included the relevant candidates but did not relate to the ongoing presidential campaign were excluded. With the irrelevant articles removed, the sample

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[5] The inclusion of Obama and McCain should not distract from our focus. Their inclusion was deemed appropriate to offer comparative insight. The intersection of race and gender in the democratic primary provides a unique case study in a political system where the default presidential candidate is a white male and public expectations are shaped around this image (Carroll, 2009). Obama held a gender-privileged position relative to Clinton who held a race-privileged position relative to Obama. McCain was included in this study to serve as a control group: the race and gender-privileged candidate that the media and public are most often presented (Hancock, 2009).

[6] In both samples, "Hillary" was chosen as a search term, rather than "Clinton", to avoid capturing articles focusing only on former President Bill Clinton, who remains a popular news focus.

produced 239 articles with 557 total trait mentions (our unit of analysis). Surprisingly, the *New York Times* provided the fewest articles containing traits, as most of the articles discussing the relevant candidates did not include candidate characteristics, but instead focused on the political horserace. While some may suggest that the intense focus of the *New York Times* on the political horserace is evidence of a lack of gender bias, we disagree as evidence suggests that a horserace emphasis hurts female candidates' electoral chances (Kahn, 1994; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1997). Horserace journalism damages female candidates because they begin with certain set of disadvantages they need to overcome – including unflattering gender stereotypes and lower perceived competence on policy issues relevant to presidential campaigns.

The search parameters for the television sample are "McCain or Obama or Hillary" from November 1, 2007 – July 31, 2008. Four television sources were selected for analysis, including 3 cable networks and 1 broadcast network. The three cable networks were included to represent the ideological range of coverage, while the broadcast station is included as the traditional medium of comparison. A random sample of 30 transcripts was drawn from the Newsbank Database for each television source. After removing those that did not address the presidential campaign or our candidates of interest, we have valid transcripts containing 198 trait mentions for FOX News and 342 trait mentions for MSNBC[7]. The sample for the Cable News Network (CNN) was pulled evenly from Newsbank (daytime news programming) and Lexis-Nexis Academic (primetime news programming), using identical search parameters. For CNN, we have 30 valid transcripts and 663 trait mentions (168 from the daytime sample and 495 from the prime time sample). Like the CNN sample, the CBS news sample is drawn evenly from Newsbank and Lexis-Nexis Academic, providing for 30 transcripts and 241 trait mentions. After removing the transcripts

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[7] Programs in the television sample include: CBS: Evening News; CNN: Anderson Cooper, CNN Election Center, Larry King Live, CNN Live Events/Special, CNN Newsroom, Lou Dobbs Tonight, The Situation Room, American Morning; MSNBC: The Time Russert Show, Countdown, Hardball, Verdict with Dan Abrams, This Week in Politics; Fox News Channel: Fox New Watch, Journal Editorial Report, The Beltway Boys, Hannity and Combs, Your World with Neil Cavuto, Fox News on the Record with Greta Van Sustern, Special Report with Brit Hume.

that do not directly address our candidates of interest in the context of the presidential election, we have 111 valid television transcripts with 1,344 trait mentions.

Patterns of coded traits found in these newspaper stories and television news transcripts are examined to identify the degree to which gender stereotypes played a significant role in coverage. Cross-tabulations are effective in testing hypotheses rooted in this form of data. We used chi-square statistics to assess the statistical significance of our findings, and utilized Marascuilo Contrasts to compare proportions when appropriate. We utilize the field standard of 95 percent in assessing confidence in our findings. Content analysis requires a further test of inter-coder reliability. The two coders produced a value of .931 using Cronbach's alpha, suggesting that the trait coding was highly consistent between coders.

RESULTS

Figure 1: Gendered Traits by Candidate & Medium, Proportions of Trait Mentions
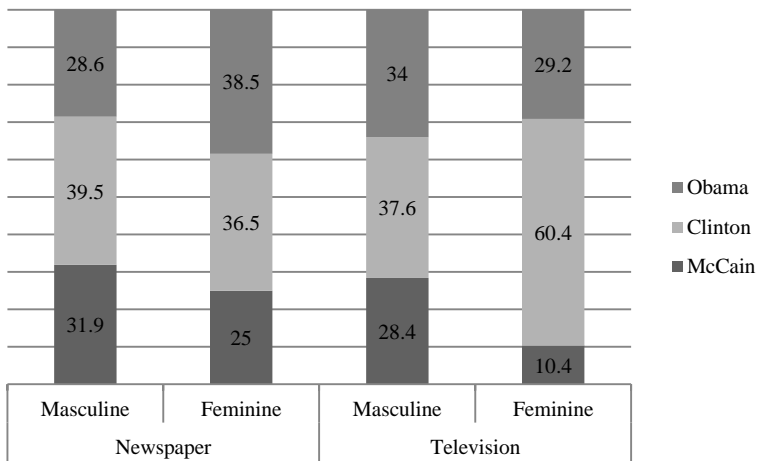
Newspaper: χ^2=1.79, df=2, p = 0.41
Television: χ^2= 21.23, df=2, p = .000

The results for the first hypothesis can be seen in Figure 1. Within the newspaper sample, the distribution of feminine traits across candidates is not jointly significant, and contrary to our expectations, Sen. Obama receives the largest proportion of feminine trait mentions. Examining the data from another angle, we can see that a larger proportion of Sen. Obama's gendered traits

from the newspaper sample are feminine (Figure 2). The findings for the newspaper sample provide no support for our first hypothesis. However, the results for the television sample are more substantive, and the differences between Sen. Clinton and her male counterparts are statistically significant and consistent with our expectations. Of the 106 feminine trait mentions coded in the television sample, more than 60 percent are in reference to Sen. Clinton (Figure 1). If we look at the proportion of gendered traits for each candidate (Figure 2), the results are similarly dramatic. Approximately one-third of Sen. Clinton's gendered trait mentions are feminine, compared with 20 percent of Sen. Obama's and less than 10 percent of Sen. McCain's (Figure 2). Together, these results indicate support for hypothesis 1 in the television sample, but not in the newspaper sample.

Figure 2: Proportion of Gendered Traits by Candidate within Mediums

χ²=1.79, df=2, p=0.41   χ²=21.23, df=2, p=0.00

Marascuilo Contrasts   *Marascuilo Contrasts*
Clinton vs. Obama: χ²= .96, df=1, p < .250   Clinton vs. Obama: χ²= 6.44, df=1, p < .010
Clinton vs. McCain: χ²= .16, df=1, p < .910   Clinton vs. McCain: χ²= 26.64, df=1, p < .000
Obama vs. McCain: χ²=1.7, df=1, p < .130   Obama vs. McCain: χ²=7.49, df=1, p < .000
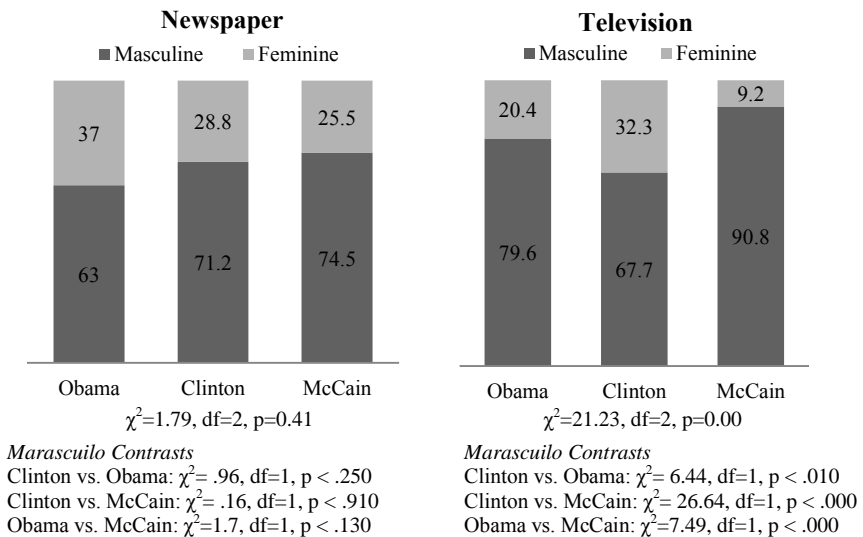
The results drawn from the newspaper sample fail to reach statistical significance for the second hypothesis that there would be more mentions of masculine traits with references to Sen. Obama than references to Sen. Clinton. Even so, if we examine the distribution of the 119 masculine traits in the newspaper sample, we can see that nearly 40 percent are in reference to Sen. Clinton, compared to less than 30 percent in reference to Sen. Obama (Figure 1). Similarly, if we examine proportion of gendered traits

that are masculine for each candidate, we see that more than 70 percent of Sen. Clinton's gendered traits were masculine, compared with 63 percent of Sen. Obama's traits (Figure 2). Although the results fail to reach statistical significance, the pattern for the newspaper sample mirrors the trends found by McKinney et al (2009) and Sanbonmatsu (2002), where candidates in mixed-gender races embraced the stereotypes of the opposite gender.

Results drawn from the television sample provide mixed support for the second hypothesis. Figure 1 indicates that within the television sample, masculine trait references were distributed nearly evenly across candidates. However, when we look at the trait distributions by candidate, we can see that nearly 80 percent of Sen. Obama's gendered traits were masculine, compared to 68 percent of Sen. Clinton's (Figure 2). Implementing Marasculio Contrasts, we can see that these later results provide clear support for hypothesis 2 and are highly significant (χ^2=6.44, df=1, p < .010).

Although the results for the newspaper sample are statistically insignificant, the pattern of results is supportive of the third hypothesis that there would be more mentions of feminine traits with references to Sen. Obama than references to Sen. McCain. Sen. McCain received fewer feminine references than Sen. Obama (Figure 1) and a smaller percentage of Sen. McCain's gendered traits are feminine (Figure 2). Even so, we are unable to reject the null for the newspaper sample. The television news transcripts provide a more convincing argument for the third hypothesis. Only 10 percent of the feminine traits were used in reference to Sen. McCain, but Sen. Obama was referenced with a feminine trait three times as often (Figure 1). Similarly, approximately 20 percent of Sen. Obama's gendered traits are feminine, compared with less than 10 percent of Sen. McCain's (Figure 2). Further analysis using Marascuilo Contrasts highlights the significance of these findings. Further research is needed to determine whether this pattern is a result of Sen. Obama running against a female opponent, evidence of Sen. Obama's potentially more feminine nature, or an artifact of partisanship.

The differences among the newspapers are statistically insignificant and fail to uncover even timid regional differences. Interestingly, *USA Today* printed the most references to both Sen. Obama's race and Sen. Clinton's gender (Table 2). However, newspaper coverage performed consistent with the fifth hypothesis that references to race and gender would be more common in the

early primary period than in the late primary period. References to Sen. Clinton as the former first lady were also more common in the early primary (Table 3). Nearly 60 percent of the newspaper mentions of Sen. Obama as the African-American candidate occurred in the early primary, suggesting that his race may have been a more dominant theme early in the race.

Table 2: References to Race and Gender Across Newspaper Sources

	African-American	*Female*	*First Lady*
New York Times	2.3% (1)	16.7% (5)	21.4% (15)
USA Today	32.6% (14)	30.0% (9)	37.1% (26)
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	18.6% (8)	16.7% (5)	5.7% (4)
Denver Post	7.0% (3)	6.7% (2)	8.6% (6)
Philadelphia Inquirer	18.6% (8)	20.0% (6)	17.1% (12)
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	18.6% (8)	10.0% (3)	10.0% (7)
Total	**100% (43)**	**100% (30)**	**100% (70)**

Chi-Square: 11.74, df = 10, p = .30
Numbers in parentheses are trait mentions.

Table 3: Prevalence of Candidate-Specific Traits Across Media Type

	Television	*Newspaper Early Primary*	*Newspaper Late Primary*	*(Newspaper) (Combined)*	*Total*
African-American Candidate	74.1% (123)	15.1% (25)	10.8% (18)	(25.9% (43))	100% (166)
Female Candidate	68.1% (64)	23.4% (22)	8.5% (8)	(31.9% (30))	100% (94)
First Lady / Wife of President	76.4% (226)	15.5% (46)	8.1% (24)	(23.6% (70))	100% (296)

Numbers in parentheses are trait mentions.

Even with the early and late newspaper samples combined, three-quarters of the race mentions came from television news transcripts (Table 3). Sen. Clinton was referred to as the "female candidate" in both the television and newspaper samples less frequently than Sen. Obama was identified by his ethnicity, and

these references were twice as common in the television transcripts. References to Sen. Clinton as the former first lady were also more than three times as frequent in the television sample. Although some of the differences can be attributed to the sheer length of television news transcripts, the newspaper sample contained only one-third of the mentions. Taken together, these findings suggest that newscasts focus on candidate characteristics like race and sex more than traditional print news coverage. More analysis should be done to understand the messages citizens are getting from television news.

Table 4: Prevalence of "Fluff" References Across Media Type

	Television	*Newspaper*	*Total*
Sen. Obama	50.0%	60.0%	(42)
	(24)	(18)	
Sen. Clinton	43.8%	30.0%	(30)
	(21)	(9)	
Sen. McCain	6.2%	10.0%	(6)
	(3)	(3)	
Total	*100%*	*100%*	*(78)*
	(48)	*(30)*	

Chi-Square: 1.8, df = 2, p =.41
Numbers in parentheses are trait mentions.

Neither the television sample nor the newspaper samples support the sixth hypothesis that there would be more mentions of fluff with references to Sen. Clinton than references to Sen. Obama or Sen. McCain. In each sample, Sen. Obama was the most common subject of fluff references (Table 4). Although taken together, the differences are not statistically significant; it is obvious that Sen. McCain received very few fluff references when compared to Sen. Obama and Sen. Clinton. Again we see a substantial divergence between newspaper and television coverage; fluff references were more common in the television sample.

CONCLUSION

The 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary provided a rare opportunity to examine media contributions to critical presidential campaigns. Sen. Obama was the first African American presidential candidate for a major party and Sen. Clinton was one of the first competitive, female presidential candidates for a major political party. Her status as a woman makes her both a statistical aberration

and a key focal point for what other women may experience in the coming years.   Analysis of her bid not only furthers our understanding of how dependent candidates are on media presentations of them at the critical primary period, but also opens a valuable window in terms of what we may expect to see in the coming years as more women seek public office.

During the time covered in this study, both candidates campaigned heavily against one another and their Republican counterpart Sen. McCain. This analysis examined both newspaper and television coverage in order to obtain a representative sample of the candidate characterizations presented to the national voting public. We expected to find that both media outlets treated the candidates differently. While studies frequently have found newspaper coverage to be biased, and often sexist, our results suggest that television is a more serious culprit and the primary source of gendered characterizations.

For both newspapers and television news, pointed mentions of gender and race were considerably more common in the early primary period than in the later primary period. However, our sample indicates that television news relies more heavily on gender stereotypes than newspapers and we are seeing evidence that the television news media is drawn to focus on personal characteristics, rather than policy positions, even more than their print counterparts. We know that the television news business is under considerable pressure and the implications of commercial bias and the 24-hour news cycle are well documented (Bennett, 2011). Most Americans (particularly those who are less knowledgeable and less engaged) get their political news from television and we can clearly say that during the 2008 Democratic primary race, gender stereotypes were on display here more than in the newspapers we so often study.

Interestingly, Sen. Clinton was covered using masculine traits at a rate comparable to her male counterparts. This reflects on the unique political environment in which Sen. Clinton was engaged. In her discussion of *presidential timber*, Duerst-Lahti (2010) notes that the 2004 presidential campaign was hyper-masculine, even relative to past presidential campaigns between two men. As Sen. Clinton made the decision to run for president and begin her campaign, she did so in a political environment where masculinity and toughness won elections. However, in "the gendered space of presidential politics, the facts that women and men do not 'do' dominance in the same way and that women are not

culturally allowed to dominate in the public world like men matter greatly" (Duerst-Lahti, 2010, pp. 36-37). Sen. Clinton was caught between the need to present the masculine traits that are so highly associated with expectations of leadership and to protect her femininity or risk alienating the cultural sensitivities of the electorate. Our analysis suggests that Sen. Clinton was successful in accumulating masculine trait descriptions in the media, but the outcome of the primaries indicate that finding the magical, election-winning balance between masculinity and femininity will continue to be an additional roadblock for female politicians.

These findings give credence to arguments asserting deferential treatment between candidates by the media. As political races become more diverse, the implications of priming will become more important. Future research should assess context because femininity may be used in a more positive frame than masculinity. Media analyses of Sen. Clinton may have been derogatory towards her masculine traits because they were unexpected. The source of the gendered trait should also be examined. Some of the traits used were from candidate quotes about themselves or each other. Knowing that he needed to capture more women's votes, Sen. Obama might be the source of his feminine trait references. Similarly, Sen. Clinton may have stressed her masculine traits in order to capture some of the issue competency that voters relate to those traits. Most importantly, future research should assess the impact of media characterizations on voters. We have shown that there were noticeable differences in the treatment of the minority candidates compared to their traditional counterpart, but did these differences affect Election Day? We should assess whether the media was successful in communicating gendered traits to viewers and readers. Our analysis opens the door for future research into this historical election.

We recognize that the research we review and present here is limited and we are not concluding that sexist treatment of Clinton cost her the nomination in 2008. Whether or not the overt sexism we saw manifest in the news media's agenda setting and priming roles led to a specific defeat is not the only metric by which to judge the pervasive and destructive nature of sexism in America. At the systemic level, we know that when women run for political office, they tend to be as successful as their male counterparts, but we also know that women are less likely to run for public office at all levels of government, producing an anemic candidate pool for elite

political offices. The behavior of the news media may help us better understand why this pipeline problem exists.

As we move into the next stage of inquiry into the prevalence and impact of media's stereotype addiction, there are a few improvements we can make. This area of research needs to incorporate more studies that include multiple female candidates, like Carlin and Winfrey (2009). The rarity of female candidates in elite political races has previously been an issue, but we are beginning to see more women throwing their hats in the ring, making such an endeavor possible. We also need to better incorporate the role of partisanship in our examinations as Hayes (2011) suggests. There is early evidence that suggests that partisanship may play a moderating role in the effects of media framing and gender stereotyping. (Burns, Eberhardt, & Merolla, 2013). Previous research has found that Republican voters have had stronger preferences for masculine qualities in candidates, but the candidacies of Palin and Bachmann may indicate some movement (Banwart, 2010; Hayes, 2005; King & Matland, 2003; Koch, 2003; Sanbonmatsu, 2002). It appears that Palin might have avoided much of the harm from gender stereotypes by emphasizing her toughness, while regularly reminding the electorate of her traditional feminine values – motherhood, wife, beauty queen (Gibson & Heyse, 2010; Harp, Loke, & Bachmann, 2010). Combining our understanding of Clinton's 2008 run, the vice presidential candidacy of Palin in 2008, and Bachmann's 2012 run may provide us with the ability to better assess how much of what we see is gender bias, and how much is partisan bias. Looking forward to 2016, we may even have new women to add to our analysis.

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