A STUDY OF NEWSPAPER TREATMENT OF

MALE AND FEMALE POLITICAL CANDIDATES

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by

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And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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ABSTRACT

As greater numbers of women enter the typically male-dominated arena of U.S. politics, it is important to look at ways in which widely held gender stereotypes can affect the coverage candidates of either gender receive in newspapers. Journalists fall into the use of certain frames in their coverage of male and female candidates, which can result in imbalanced coverage along the lines of gender. This study compares the amount of personal coverage, issue coverage, types of issue coverage, and positive and negative coverage that male and female candidates receive.

This study conducted a quantitative content analysis of 84 newspaper articles culled from the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. The findings show there is a significant difference in the amount of personal and issue coverage male and female candidates receive, as well as significant differences in the amount of positive and negative coverage male and female candidates receive. The implications and limitations of this study are explained.

Chapter 1
Introduction

This study will examine whether the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* cover male and female candidates for political office differently during election cycles. This study will first examine whether male and female candidates receive different amounts of personal versus issue coverage. This study will then examine whether there is a difference in what types of issues are most often discussed when covering male and female candidates. Lastly, this study will examine whether there is a difference in the amount of positive versus negative coverage male and female candidates receive. By trying to understand what frames journalists employ most often for male and female candidates, this study will provide valuable information in understanding if newspapers cover female political candidates differently than male political candidates.

Many of the personality traits, emotions, and behaviors that people consider "female" or "male" are the result of societal gender norms, not any biological factor. In order to identify if the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* use gender stereotypes in reference to political candidates, this study will identify which characteristics are considered "female" and "male." This will be accomplished by researching gender as a social construct in American society. Once stereotypes of male and female behavior or male and female appearance are defined, this study will be able to determine if newspapers employ these stereotypes in coverage of men and women.

In order to understand how newspapers may cover male and female political candidates differently, framing theory will be defined for the purposes of this study. Once

the framing role of journalists is defined, this study will be able to more deeply understand gender stereotypes and how they are employed in the frame of a newspaper story.

Though the type of newspaper coverage female and male political candidates receive can affect the public's perception of them, this study will *not* examine the effects of political candidate coverage on the public. This study will only examine the quality and type of media coverage female and male political candidates receive, not the quantity or effects on the public.

This study is important to the field of journalism because it strives to answer whether journalists are living up to the standards they set for themselves: to be objective, fair, and balanced in their reporting. Journalists have the power to record history; they also have the power to change the course of history through their manner of reporting. As already stated, this study will not address how the public's perception of political candidates is affected by newspaper coverage, however this study will attempt to provide valuable information on whether the gender cues journalists present to the general public are in keeping with the industry standard of objective reporting. Mindich (1998) writes, "If American journalism were a religion… its supreme deity would be "objectivity." The high priests of journalism worship "objectivity"; one leading editor called it the "highest original moral concept ever developed in America and given to the world" (p.2). According to Mindich, there are many parts to objectivity, including detachment, nonpartisanship, and balance (p. 2).

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The timing of this study is particularly important because it follows the historic 2008 Democratic presidential candidacies of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. For the first time in American history, a male African-American candidate and woman campaigned against one another for the Democratic nomination. Historically, minorities and women have been rare faces in the American political arena. The candidacies of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton show that these groups are becoming more visible on the national political stage. Understanding how journalists cover these new political faces is important.

This study is limited in its ability to account for how the unique circumstances of an African-American male candidate running against a Caucasian female may change the gender frames employed by newspapers. However, this study will examine whether differences exist in the amount of attention paid to the African-American male candidate's ethnicity versus the attention paid to the ethnicity of the Caucasian female candidate. Previous studies have found that during political races between African-American and Caucasian candidates, newspapers have a tendency to mention the ethnicity of the minority candidate more often than the ethnicity of the Caucasian candidate (Major & Coleman, 2008). While differences in coverage of political candidates along ethnic lines are not the focus of this study, differences in the amount of personal coverage male and female candidates receive will be examined. Ethnicity is a personal attribute, thus differences in ethnicity coverage by newspapers will be examined in this portion of the study.

This study is also limited in its ability to account for how the national issues present during the primaries affected journalists' coverage of the candidates. The candidates' bid for the Democratic presidential nomination occurred during a time of national economic crisis and uncertainty about the future of the Iraq war. This reality may change the gender frames employed by newspapers; journalists may focus on Clinton's ability to handle "masculine" issues like the economy and national defense more during this election than they would in stable economic and military times. Nevertheless, differential coverage of male and female candidates could affect how the public views these candidates, and it is important that journalists control how they frame candidates and be conscious of the stereotypes they use.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature on framing theory and previous research on gender and gender stereotypes. This chapter also reviews scholarly articles on how journalists stereotype political candidates according to their gender. Finally, this literature review will discuss ways to define framing and gender stereotypes for the purposes of quantitative content analysis.

Framing

Framing theory is used in the communication field to discuss the composition of news and its presentation. Related theories include agenda setting and priming, which focus on how the public interprets news as a result of its presentation. As Scheufele (1999) points out, framing is not always clearly separated from these concepts by other studies. For example, Iyengar & Kinder (1987) used framing in combination with agenda setting and priming. Entman (1993) noted that the terms *frame, framing* and *framework* are commonly used terms outside of communication scholarship. Thus, definitions of framing theory have varied widely among researchers.

Scheufele (1999) divides the concept of framing into two categories to clarify its meaning. The first category, media frames, focuses on how journalists organize the information they present to the public. The second category, individual frames, focuses on how the public interprets the information that is presented to them. Scheufele (1999) believes these categories are linked concepts essential to a complete understanding of a frame, which Scheufele (2007) defines as "based on the assumption that how an issue is

characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences" (p.11). Schuefele's definition of framing consistently includes its *effects* on audiences. For Scheufele (2007), the difference between agenda setting and framing is not a separation between how journalists organize information and the subsequent interpretation by an audience, but differences in the origin of effect (p.14).

However, Scheufele's division of framing into two categories is a minority interpretation among scholars who have previously defined framing. Entman (1993) defines framing as the selection of certain aspects of reality and making them more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to an audience through a communicating text. The selected aspects of reality are communicated in a way that promote a certain "problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" for the particular item being described (p. 52). These four functions define the purpose of frames, however, a text need not include all four functions in order to be considered a frame.

Entman also defines the locations where frames exist in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (p.52). The role of the communicator is particularly important to this study because journalists are responsible for organizing the information that is transmitted to an audience. Communicators make framing judgments by deciding what details of a story to tell others; the details communicators choose are guided by the already existing frames that organize their own belief systems (p. 52). These guiding frames are alternately called schemata, which Entman (1989) defines as a person's reserve of beliefs, attitudes, values, and preferences

(p.349). Schemata are also responsible for the ways people link different ideas using already existing beliefs to focus attention on certain items, interpret that information, and fill in missing information (p. 349). Entman (1993) notes that what a communicator chooses not to highlight is as indicative of his or her chosen frame as the information that *is* highlighted.

Entman's definition of the receiver in the framing communication process is equally important, precisely because he separates the interpretation of the communicator from the interpretation of the receiver. He notes that the frames the communicator uses in a text may be interpreted differently than intended by the receiver, who uses his or her own frames to interpret the text. Thus, the receiver may focus on aspects of a text that do not reflect the framing intention of the communicator (p. 52).

Gitlin's (1980) analysis of news coverage during the early days of the antiwar movement focuses specifically on media frames. Gitlin describes these frames as ways for journalists to organize the world around them and process large amounts of information quickly. He defines media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (p. 7). Gitlin's approach to frames differs from Entman's (1993) approach in that he chooses to view the media as one entity, whereas Entman chooses to define frames on an individual level. Where Gitlin focuses on how the mass media - not any one journalist - packages information for dispersion, Entman focuses on the cognitive processes that take place within an individual to process information and relay it to others.

For the purposes of this study, framing will be defined as a combination of Scheufele's "media frames" category and Entman's selection of reality. In this study, frames will refer to the aspects of reality newspapers choose to highlight when discussing male and female political candidates. Unlike Scheufele, this study's definition of framing will not include the *effects* of framing on audience, it will only include how journalists organize information they present to the public. Entman's explanation of why individuals select certain aspects of reality over others is useful in this study because it will help explain why journalists choose to stress certain aspects of male and female political candidates' character.

Gender as a Social Construct

Gender is a term used to explain the socially constructed characteristics of femininity and masculinity. Unlike the term sex, which refers to the biological aspect of being male or female, gender refers to the social roles assigned to the biological sexes. West & Zimmerman (1991) rejected Goffman's (1976) gender display theory, which views the social roles assigned to the sexes as optional. Goffman (1976) believed that in every social interaction, people have the choice to "perform" conventional male and female roles. West & Zimmerman (1991) believe gender is not only an aspect of an individual's personality; it is something an individual acts upon repeatedly in interaction with others (p.27).

More importantly, West & Zimmerman (1991) point out that though Goffman's theory that people choose to display their gender is possible, it is not likely that people are able to control whether or not others see them as male or female (p.18). Lorber &

Farrell (1991) note that social ideas about what exactly is feminine or masculine evolve over time. In their view, there are multiple genders, because ideas of male and female change from generation to generation, or differ along lines of race, ethnicity, and religion (p.1). However, according to Lorber & Farrell, the binary distinction of masculine and feminine is constant, as well as the fact that these characteristics make men and women distinct from one another.

The socially constructed distinction of being masculine or feminine affects men and women throughout their lives, both in how they choose to act and how they perceive others (Valian, 2). Men and women act, dress, and engage in activities that are culturally synonymous with their gender. For example, while men associate an enjoyment of sports with being male and thus engage in watching or playing sports, women associate being caretakers with being female, and may spend their time cooking or nurturing others. An interest in sports is considered masculine because people associate the quality of being aggressive - which is displayed when men watch *and* play sports - with being male (Valian, 49). Likewise, an interest in caretaking is considered feminine because people associate the quality of being a nurturer with being female.

Valian (1998) describes the modes of dress, action, and personal qualities that people associate with either gender as "gender schemas" (p.2). In each interaction with another individual, people have a pre-existing idea of how that person will - or should - act according to the social groups they belong to. These pre-existing stereotypes are "schemas", or ways of interpreting the people around us (Valian, 2). Thus, while men and

women may engage in activities associated with their gender, they also expect those around them to act in ways congruent with their gender.

According to Valian (1998), the ways people think about gender are established in childhood. Many gender cues about ourselves are established before people can even understand them. Valian uses the example of babies, whose sex is usually difficult for strangers to determine. Thus, parents use visual cues to establish the sex of a baby boy or girl by dressing them either in blue, for boys, or pink, for girls. The color of a baby's clothes does not simply signify its sex; the clothing allows strangers to interpret how the baby acts and looks. Valian writes, "The label allows the adult to categorize an attractive baby as "pretty," if it is a girl, or handsome, if it is a boy. The label brings into play the adult's pre-existing beliefs about differences between the sexes. Those beliefs- some conscious and some unconscious- constitute an intuitive conception, or schema, of gender" (p.24). Thus, before people are able to fully understand their own gender as babies, others are responding to them in ways that suggest how they should act. As people grow older, their identities are partially formed by the expectations of others (Valian, 13).

Though Lorber & Farrell (1991) believe there are multiple genders due to the evolvement of what constitutes being masculine and feminine over time, Valian (1998) holds that certain masculine and feminine traits are generally applicable to the sexes. Valian writes:

> In white, western, middle-class society, the gender schema for men
> includes being capable of independent, autonomous action (agentic, in
> short), assertive, instrumental, and task-oriented. Men act. The gender
> schema for women is different; it includes being nurturant, expressive,

communal, and concerned about others. Women nurture others and express their feelings (p.13).

Eagly et al. (2003) further address the concept of agentic and communal behavior in a study analyzing various types of leadership behaviors exhibited by men and women. According to Eagly et al., men are expected to exhibit the agentic qualities that make a good leader, such as being assertive, masterful, and instrumentally competent (p.572). Conversely, women are expected to exhibit communal qualities, such as being friendly, kind, and unselfish (p.572). In short, the qualities that compose "feminine behavior" are at direct odds with the behavior that people associate with being an effective leader.

Gender roles affect everyone's perception of themselves and others. Valian points out cultural norms regarding gender roles cross income level, educational level, and sex (p.30). She writes of gender schemas: "Adults cannot simply abandon them, especially when they are unaware that they hold them and that they conform to them in such matters as dress" (p.30). Thus, even parents who actively oppose the limitations of gender schemas when raising their children are unable to completely free *themselves* of those schemas, because they unconsciously employ those limitations upon themselves in their own actions.

As a result, children learn that objects, clothes and occupations are gendered. Valian (1998) uses the example of hammers and irons as gendered objects – hammers are associated with men, while irons are associated with women (p.48). When girls and boys learn what "being a boy" or "being a girl" means, they develop tastes that conform to those behaviors. Valian uses the example of a 1986 study that showed children who had mastered definitions of gender roles were more likely to exhibit characteristics associated

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with that role (p.49). For example, boys and girls who could distinguish between the sexes were more likely to play with members of their own sex than children who could not. Girls who were able to distinguish between the sexes were also more likely to be less aggressive than girls who did not reliably distinguish between the sexes.

The childhood establishment of gender roles affects women once they enter professional roles. The "feminine" qualities women have learned to exhibit throughout their lives are largely in conflict with the more masculine qualities seen as necessary to be a leader and to advance professionally. Women's slow advancement in the workforce may be due to their "feminine" behavior, but it is also due to unequal evaluation of their performance by peers, regardless of a woman's behavior (Valian, 127).

Embry et al. (2008) conducted a study in which they described feminine and masculine leadership styles to study participants without revealing the gender of the leader. The study was intended to determine if gender schemas about how men and women are expected to act in leadership roles was strong enough to allow study participants to assign a sex to the leadership style. Embry et al. categorized the feminine leadership style presented to study participants as "transformational", which focused on relationships with others (p.35). The masculine leadership styles presented to study participants were categorized as "transactional" and "instrumental trait" (p.34). The instrumental trait style focused on personal qualities seen as being necessary to success, such as aggressiveness and risk taking (p.34). The transactional leadership style focused on an incentive-based leadership style, where employees would be rewarded for accomplishing a certain task (for example, by receiving a bonus).

Embry et al.'s (2008) study found that there was a strong correlation between leadership styles and the gender attributed to that particular style (p. 41). However, the study also found that participants identified the leader as being male more times with each leadership style than they identified the leader as being female (p.41). Thus, regardless of a person's leadership style, people are more likely to view a man as a leader than a woman.

Valian (1998) discusses a similar experiment, in which people were asked to identify the leader of a group of mixed-sex people sitting at a table. When the person sitting at the head of the table was a man, people identified him as a leader. However, when a woman was sitting at the head of the table, people identified a man sitting elsewhere at the table as the leader (p.127). According to Valian, women are at an automatic disadvantage in the workplace:

> "A woman does not walk into the room with the same status as an equivalent man, because she is less likely than a man to be viewed as a serious professional. Moreover, since her ideas are less likely to be attended to than a male peer's, she is correspondingly less likely to accumulate advantage the way he might" (p.5).

People's perceptions of what is "female" and "male" means they interpret equal behavior from men and women differently.

Embry et al.'s (2008) study also had interesting results about which types of leadership with which gender were viewed more positively. A female leader using a masculine leadership style was viewed less positively than one who used a feminine leadership style, whereas a male using a feminine leadership style was viewed *more* positively than a male using a masculine leadership style (p.42). Embry et al.'s finding

differs from Johnson et al.'s (2008) study, which found that masculine male leaders were liked the most, female leaders were liked equally regardless of leadership style, and feminine male leaders were liked least of all (p.45). According to Valian (2008), men are the norm in Western culture, meaning that women who adopt masculine characteristics are more acceptable than men who adopt feminine characteristics (p.111). Thus, Embry's finding that men who adopt a feminine leadership style are viewed more positively than men who use a "gender-consistent" leadership style suggests that further research is needed.

Women are also affected by others' perceptions of them in the workplace when they are not in leadership positions. Valian (2008) suggests that when a man is successful, others attribute his success to his ability (p.169). This is because a man's professional success fits in with his peers' ideas of masculinity. On the other hand, peers often attribute a woman's success in the workplace to factors other than her ability. According to Valian, femininity is associated with incompetence, and thus when a woman succeeds it is *against* expectations (p.169). Valian writes of peers' reactions to a woman's success:

> "In order to maintain their hypothesis of male-female differences, people seek an explanation for her success that would neutralize it. Observers can attribute her success to luck, to the task's being easy, to the great effort she expended, or to all three" (p169).

Downplaying a woman's success allows people to maintain their gender schemas.

Women's progress in the workplace is affected by factors other than how people evaluate them; their progress is also affected by their evaluations of themselves. As mentioned previously, the feminine behaviors women learn as children are largely

opposite of the behaviors required for advancement in professional life. Thus, when a

woman *is* successful, she is at odds with her femininity (Valian, 20). Valian discusses the

complexity women face in the workplace between their established female roles and their

professional roles:

> If a woman is professionally successful, she must either see herself as
> having masculine traits-and thereby run the risk of seeming unfeminine to
> herself and others- or as having compensated in some way-through luck
> and extraordinary effort-for a lack of masculine characteristics. Unlike a
> successful man, a woman has something to lose from success: her gender
> identity or belief in her ability. Conversely, failure and femininity
> reinforce each other… A woman who fails is more of a woman than one
> who succeeds" (20).

Valian points out that for men, masculinity and professional success reinforce one

another (p.20). For the purposes of this study, gender will be defined as a binary concept

divided between men and women.

Gender Stereotypes and Political Coverage in Newspapers

Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) investigated how gender stereotypes may lead voters

to assume that male or female candidates hold certain strengths or weaknesses as political

figures. Huddy & Terkildsen call this "gender-trait" stereotyping because of the emphasis

on gender-based characteristics. Based on previous studies, they defined stereotypical

behavior for women and men as opposite of one another: "A typical woman is seen as

warm, gentle, kind, and passive, whereas a typical man is viewed as tough, aggressive,

and assertive" (p.121). The study found that gender-trait stereotypes did affect what

policy areas voters thought male and female candidates would be strong in. Because

women were seen as compassionate and sensitive, voters believed women would be

better able to handle "soft" issues like education and healthcare. In contrast, because men

were viewed as aggressive and self-confident, voters assumed they were better equipped to handle military and economic issues.

Huddy & Terkildsen's (1993) research may be helpful in understanding why journalists make certain framing decisions. Journalists are also voters and individuals, and their (conscious and unconscious) personal impressions of how each gender should act certainly can affect how they frame male and female political candidates as journalists. Huddy & Terkildsen's research helps to explain why journalists may focus on issues like education and healthcare when discussing a female political candidate, and why conversely, they may focus on "hard" topics like the military and economy when discussing male political candidates (Major & Coleman, 318).

Devitt's (2002) study of gubernatorial campaigns further explores the issue of how journalists cover male and female political candidates. His study found that newspaper readers *were* more likely to read about a female candidate's personal traits (Devitt calls this a "personal frame") than a male candidate's, and conversely, more likely to read about a male candidate's stance on political issues than a female candidate's. Specifically, newspapers focused on a female candidate's age, personality, and clothing, while focusing on a male candidate's stances on issues like education, health care, and taxes (p.457). However, independent of comparisons with men, female candidates received more issue coverage than personal coverage. The difference in newspaper coverage of male and female candidates Devitt identified is consistent with people's views on male and female political candidates, and could serve to only reinforce

pre-existing schemas on their strengths and weaknesses (p.448). Devitt's findings lead this study to explore the following research question:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the amount of personal coverage and issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

Devitt's (2002) study also revealed differences in how male and female reporters cover male and female political candidates. Devitt found that male reporters used more "personal frames" when covering female candidates (18.2%) than when covering male candidates (10.4%) (p.455). He also found that male reporters used fewer issue frames when covering female candidates (27.5%) than when covering male candidates (34.3%) (p.455). Devitt's results about male reporters differential coverage of male and female political candidates is particularly interesting because he did not find any significant differences in the type or amount of frames that female reporters employed when covering male and female political candidates (p.455). Devitt's finding that male reporters cover male and female political candidates differently leads this study to explore the following research question:

RQ2: Is there a difference in the type of issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

Identifying and defining gender stereotypes can be difficult because these stereotypes evolve over time. Some studies have tried to define gender stereotypes by using qualitative or quantitative methods. Sherriffs & McKee (1956) qualitatively examined the characteristics men and women assign to themselves and to the opposite

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gender. Their study found that both sexes characterized men as socially straightforward and outgoing, rational and competent, spirited and effective (p. 452). Adjectives ascribed to men by both sexes included easy-going, industrious, calm, stable, logical, and self-confident. The characteristics assigned to women by both sexes focused on social skills, grace, warmth, and emotional support (p.454). Adjectives used to describe women included well mannered, tactful, modest, lovable, and sensitive. The negative adjectives assigned to men and women by both sexes were mostly extreme displays of the positive traits. They were not opposite behaviors.

A later study by Broverman et al. (1972) used a quantitative method to study sex roles and found that typically masculine and feminine behavior were agreed upon by people crossing socioeconomic and ethnic lines. In this study, the stereotypically feminine items used were found by asking undergraduate men and women enrolled in psychology classes to list behaviors associated with men and women. Any characteristics that appeared twice among students were used in the study. Stereotypically feminine behavior was characterized, among many things, as "not at all aggressive", "not at all independent", and "very emotional." In contrast, men were described as "very aggressive", "very independent", and "not at all emotional" (p.63). These descriptions represent only three of the many markers that were used to determine the competency of men and women; the masculine traits in this cluster of behaviors were looked upon favorably more frequently than feminine traits.

However, among the markers that determined the "warmth" and "expressiveness" of men and women, feminine traits were looked upon favorably more often than

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masculine traits. Stereotypically feminine items included "doesn't use harsh language at all", "very gentle", and "very quiet." Stereotypically masculine items include "uses very harsh language", "not at all aware of feelings of others," and "very blunt" (p.63). Broverman et al. note that the stereotypical image of a woman as weaker, more emotional, and less competent than males conflicts with the image of competent adult behavior for both sexes. Thus, adult women are placed in a difficult position, because if they adopt the behaviors of a competent adult, they risk being seen as not feminine enough (p.75).

Ashmore et al. (1986) sought to elaborate the concept of gender stereotypes by developing what they called a "cognitive-social-psychological" framework. They devised four points of agreement on how to define a stereotype: 1) a stereotype is a mental process, 2) a stereotype is a belief about how individuals within a group act, 3) a stereotype is more likely to be a set of beliefs rather than just one belief, and 4) stereotypes are structured, rather than random, sets of beliefs (p. 89). Ashmore et al. make an additional point that for research purposes, a stereotype should not be defined negatively.

Ashmore et al. also point out that stereotype research is divided in approaches to understanding stereotypes. While some researchers seek to define what traits are characteristic of a certain group, other researchers seek to define differentiating traits between two groups (p.89). For example, while one researcher may look at what is thought to be typical behavior of women, another researcher may look at what traits distinguish men from women.

To develop the idea of the social and psychological functions of gender stereotypes, Ashmore et al. examine the relationship between two people, whom they call the "target" and the "actor." In any social situation, long-term memory of gender stereotypes influences how the actor processes information about the target, and also informs their actions towards the target (p.90). In the Ashmore et al. model, the target's cognitive social processes are also taken into account. As the actor is evaluating the target, the target is also using long-term memory to assess the actor and project a certain image (p.92).

Knowledge of how political candidates are stereotyped by gender in the media is also necessary to be able to identify differences in newspaper treatment of political candidates in this study. Kahn & Goldberg (1993) conducted a study examining newspaper coverage of U.S. Senate candidates during elections from 1982-1986. They used a content analysis to examine Senate candidates of both genders, and found that female Senate candidates were given less newspaper coverage than male candidates. According to Kahn & Goldberg's research, each day, newspapers published 3.5 paragraphs or more about male candidates' issue stances. Conversely, female candidates were allotted 3.0 paragraphs or *less*.

Based on past research, Kahn & Goldberg (1993) believe that gender stereotypes lead voters to think male candidates and female candidates will be effective in different policy areas. Because newspaper reporters and editors may also assume certain issue strengths or weaknesses in candidates according to gender, their coverage of male and female candidates will reflect these beliefs (p.191). Stereotypically "male" issues, such as

foreign policy and economics, receive more coverage from newspapers than "female" issues, such as education or welfare (p.192). Since "male" issues are naturally associated with male candidates, newspaper reporters may focus on issue coverage with male candidates more often than they do with female candidates.

Kahn & Goldberg (1993) also found that newspaper coverage of female Senate candidates focused on the candidate's ability to do well in office. According to Kahn & Goldberg's research, these viability assessments were negative for women more often than men (p.189). A heightened focus on a female candidate's viability, coupled with a lack of coverage on that candidate's issue stances, could result in a female political candidate appearing less qualified than her male opponent (Devitt, 448).

Bystrom et al. (2001) also examined newspaper coverage of male and female candidates for U.S. Senate in 2000, but expanded their research to newspaper coverage of races for state governor that year. Their research, which used descriptive statistics, found that newspapers mentioned children and marital status more in coverage of women than men (p.2005). In articles focused on female candidates, children were mentioned 13.3% of the time, whereas children were only mentioned 4.2% of the time in articles about male candidates (p.2006).

Bystrom et al. (2001) found that newspaper articles written about male candidates portrayed them as honest more often than articles written about female candidates (p. 2008). Endorsements of the candidate were also mentioned in newspaper articles about male candidates more than female candidates. Interestingly, Bystrom et al. found that newspapers discussed the appearance, personality, warmth, and competence of male and

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female candidates at similar rates. Bystrom et al.'s finding that competence was addressed equally in articles about male and female candidates is notable, because Kahn & Goldberg's (1993) research suggests there is a significant difference in coverage in this area.

Winfield (1997) analyzed media coverage of Hillary Clinton as First Lady, and suggested that Clinton's difficulty with the media may have been because she did not act in traditionally feminine ways that characterized the role of First Lady. Winfield describes typical First Lady behavior as supportive, nurturing, fashionable, sociable, and charitable (p.241). Winfield writes:

> "The first lady has been a difficult news topic for journalists who are used to traditional first lady stories. For them, she is a surprise; they see a contradiction between expected female roles and her policy making and political power" (p.243).

Winfield's study covers how the media frames women and what role gender stereotypes play in that frame.

None of the literature reviewed thus far has explicitly addressed an election in which a Caucasian male was not involved. Though this study will not research racial stereotypes in newspaper coverage, this study will examine differences in the amount of coverage given to each candidate's ethnicity. As mentioned before, this study seeks to determine differences in the amount of personal coverage male and female candidates receive; ethnicity is one of the personal attributes this study will examine. It is important to acknowledge that newspapers may cover an election between a minority male and Caucasian female differently than if the male candidate had also been Caucasian.

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Historically, most elections involve the presence of a Caucasian male candidate; the absence of this figure may alter the gender frames that are applied to each candidate.

Major & Coleman examined newspaper coverage of the 2003 race for governor in Louisiana. The political candidates were Bobby Jindal, a first-generation Indian-American, and Kathleen Blanco, a Caucasian woman. According to Major & Coleman (2008), newspaper coverage aligned both candidates with issues stereotypically assigned to each gender. Thus, newspapers discussed Blanco's stances on health care and education more often than Jindal's, and discussed Jindal's stances on topics like the economy and crime more than Blanco's (p.326). This finding is particularly interesting because it points to the power of gender schemas; both candidates were more familiar and experienced with issues stereotypically assigned to the opposite gender, yet newspaper coverage emphasized the issues the candidates were least familiar with because those issues fit into accepted gender schemas.

Major & Coleman (2008) also found that newspapers paid more attention to Jindal's ethnic background than they did to Blanco's (p.325). In essence, newspapers covered both candidates using the same stereotypes and frames previously used in media coverage of a minority or woman running against a Caucasian male for political office. Many of the references to Blanco's gender and Jindal's ethnic background were positive, however, Major & Coleman point out that gender schemas are deeply rooted. Stereotypical coverage, even when positive, can activate negative stereotypes, or cause a person to misremember information they've read so that it is more consistent with their gender schemas (p.328).

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In an unpublished paper presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the American

Political Science Association, Dianne Bystrom analyzed newspaper coverage of Hillary

Clinton during the beginning stages of her bid for the presidency. Bystrom's study

compared coverage of Clinton with that of two male opponents, Senator Barack Obama

and former U.S. Senator John Edwards. Bystrom found that Clinton received more

coverage than Obama and Edwards in the *Concord Monitor*, but that more of her

coverage was negative than either of her male opponents. Out of 51 stories written about

Clinton, 11 were negative. Out of 41 stories written about Obama, only 1 was negative.

There were no negative stories written about Edwards (p.17). As Bystrom points out, the

amount of negative coverage Clinton received from the *Concord Monitor* is surprising,

considering the newspaper endorsed her for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Bystrom's findings lead this study to examine the following research question:

RQ3: Is there a difference in the amount of positive and negative coverage

written about Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in the *New York Times* and *Chicago*

Tribune?

In order to evaluate whether newspapers treat male and female candidates

differently, this study will look for differences in the amount of personal coverage

women receive, and the amount of personal coverage men receive. This study will also

look for differences in the amount of issue coverage women candidates receive versus the

amount of issue coverage male candidates receive. However, issue coverage will be split

into "feminine" and "masculine" issues to examine not only how much issue coverage

each candidate receives, but also what *types* of issue coverage each candidate receives

most. Lastly, this study will look for differences in the amount of positive and negative

coverage female and male candidates receive in both personal coverage and issue

coverage.

Chapter 3
Methods

Framing is a theory used in the communication field to understand the structure and content of news. A frame is a device used by journalists to process information: it helps them sort out which pieces of information are important to a story. The frames employed by journalists are usually unconscious, however, they affect the content of news by controlling what aspects of a story are told, and conversely, which are not.

Frames provide people efficient ways of processing information, which includes processing information about men and women. Gender schemas are frames that people use to infer information about men and women: they allow people to fill in gaps in information about other individuals according to gendered information they assume is true. In the political realm, people may infer information about a male or female candidate based on their gender. Though this study will not explore how voters respond to male and female political candidates, this study will examine newspaper coverage of male and female political candidates to examine differences in the type of coverage each candidate receives and the amount of negative and/or positive coverage each candidate receives.

Newspaper Content Analysis

In order to determine whether there is a difference in how male and female political candidates are treated by newspaper media, this study will use a quantitative content analysis method. This study will follow Wimmer & Dominick's (2006) outline of the five initial steps that should be taken in a quantitative content analysis:

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1. Formulate the research question or hypothesis.

2. Define the population in question.

3. Select an appropriate sample from the population.

4. Select and define a unit of analysis.

5. Construct the categories of content to be analyzed.

Following Wimmer & Dominick's statement that one should avoid "counting for the sake of counting," this study will examine a research question that is of use and interest to journalists and the public. Though this study will not investigate how journalists' use of gender stereotypes may affect public opinion of political candidates, there are certainly implications for interpretation. This study will provide journalists and the public one method of examining whether male and female candidates are treated differently in newspaper coverage.

To define the population used in this study, operational definitions are needed for two categories: political candidates and media. This study will collect data on media coverage of Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama. These candidates were chosen for a number of reasons, beginning with the fact that they were both candidates for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination. Also, comparisons of media coverage on male and female political candidates campaigning for the same position are more compelling than comparison of two candidates seeking different offices. The fact that Clinton and Obama sought the same office, in the same year, will serve as a constant in this research: media coverage of both candidates will be in relation to the same political

office. Any differences in media coverage found during the course of research will not be attributed to a difference in the political office sought by either candidate.

For the purposes of this study, coverage of the 2008 Democratic presidential campaign will be examined in two newspapers: the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. The *Times* was chosen because it is considered the United States' newspaper of record. The *Times'* motto, "All the news that's fit to print," reflects the newspapers status as a trendsetter among other newspapers. Instead of collecting data from newspapers that may be influenced by the *Times*, this study will examine the *Times* itself. Also, the *Times'* website has an extensive archive that allows web users to access articles written since 1987 at no cost. This means collecting data on the 2008 democratic presidential campaign from the *Times* is a feasible research goal. Lastly, Hillary Clinton has served as a New York Senator since 2000. Researchers in this study are unaware of any bias in the *Times'* coverage of Clinton's presidential campaign, however, it is useful to collect data from a newspaper located in the state in which Senator Clinton serves.

The *Chicago Tribune* was chosen because it is the major metropolitan newspaper of the Midwestern United States. As part of Tribune Company, the *Tribune* has one of the largest newspaper circulations in the country. Though much of the *Tribune's* coverage concerns local issues, it covers a wide range of national issues. However, the main reason for collecting data from the *Tribune* is because Senator Barack Obama's campaign for the democratic presidential nomination is both a local and national issue for Chicago newspapers. While Obama's presidential campaign is national news, he and his family are rooted in Chicago, thus the personal aspects of his success or failure in his

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presidential bid are local news. Because this study included the most influential

newspaper in Senator Clinton's home state of New York, it is equally necessary to

include the most influential newspaper from Senator Obama's home state. Thus, for the

purposes of this study, media will be operationally defined as two newspapers: the *New

York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

To select a sample from the population used in this study, an operational

definition is needed for the time period of data collection. This study will follow the

procedures outlined by Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993), which are specifically designed for

quantitative newspaper content analysis. Riffe, Aust, and Lacy determined that

constructed week sampling is the most efficient sampling method (compared with simple

random sampling and consecutive day sampling). Unlike simple random sampling,

constructed week sampling assumes that newspaper content will be cyclical on different

days of the week. Thus, each day of the week must be represented in a constructed week

sample (p. 134).

Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993) determined that for a six-month period, one

constructed week of sampling was an efficient sample to represent one month within that

period (p. 139). Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin, and Chang (2001) outline the procedures

for constructing a week sample: identify each day of the week for the time period that

you wish to research, then randomly select one day that represents each day of the week

(p. 837). Thus, this study will do one constructed week of sampling for each month of our

selected research time frame.

This study will examine the six-month period of January 3, 2008 to June 30, 2008, as its six-month sampling period. This study will begin research on January 3rd because it marks the first democratic primary in Iowa. This study will end research on June 30th because Hillary Clinton announced she would end her campaign and support Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination earlier in the month. Within each month, this study will identify all articles written on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Next, one Monday, one Tuesday, one Wednesday, one Thursday, one Friday, one Saturday, and one Sunday will then be randomly selected from the pool of identified days of the week. Each constructed week sample will represent one month.

In order to create each constructed week sample, this study will take all articles within one month and sort them according to the day of the week they were published. Then, the titles of all the articles written on one day of the week will be placed into a hat. One title will be randomly withdrawn. These steps will then be repeated in order to create a constructed week sample for one month. This procedure will be repeated for each of the six months.

Some news stories were not included in this study's pool of articles. Letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, news summaries, corrections, sports articles, and interview transcripts were not included. Anonymously written articles, reproduced Associated Press articles, and articles explaining polling procedures were also left out.

This study will use individual news stories within the *New York Times* or the *Chicago Tribune*. The unit of analysis, however, will be one paragraph. Within each

article, each paragraph that mentions a candidate will be coded. To qualify as an individual news story, a piece must appear in its entirety in either newspaper on one given day. This means that series pieces, which are written over time but discuss the same topic, will not be counted as a whole. Rather, each piece of the series, as it appears one day in the daily newspaper, will be considered an individual news story. Also, all letters to the editor will be eliminated from the newspaper story sample.

Within each news story, this study will seek to identify frames that signal the use of a gender stereotype by a journalist. This study will use a combination of the methods used by Major & Coleman (2008) and Devitt (2002). Following Major & Coleman, this study will divide newspaper content into two categories: individual attributes and issues (p.321). Individual attributes will include mention of a candidate's gender, experience, race, personal appearance, marital status, and any other issues that relate to a candidate's personal life. Issues will include any issue that is of interest to voters, including the economy, health care, crime, the environment, education, and national defense (p.321).

The issues category will be further divided into "feminine issues" and "masculine" issues. Major & Coleman (2002) defined feminine issues as those having to do with education, health care, and the environment; they defined masculine issues as those about the economy, national defense, and crime (p.321). Following Major & Coleman, only explicit mentions of individual attributes or issues will be coded. Issues are often linked with a candidate's experience. This study will follow Major & Coleman's guidelines for distinguishing issues from experience: If an issue is mentioned in reference to a candidate's past experience with that issue, it is categorized as

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experience. If an issue is mentioned in terms of the candidate's stance on the issue or their plans to deal with that issue in the future, it is categorized as an issue (p.322).

This study will also adopt Major & Coleman's operational definitions for each of the issue and individual attributes categories. The issues will be operationally defined as:

> " (a) economy – any topic relating to employment, business and industry, tourism, taxes, budgets, etc.; (b) education – teaching, creating a well-educated workforce, higher education funding, and so on; (c) health care-prescriptions, healthcare insurance, and hospitals, and so on; (d) crime-safety, statistics about crime, neighborhood watch programs, gun control, and so on; and (e) defense- the state's army bases, homeland security, etc." (p.322).

The individual attributes will be defined as:

> " Gender/gender role was operationally defined if the paragraph referred to the candidate as woman, man, female, male, daughter, son, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, wife, husband, spouse and/or married to… Experience was operationally defined as the candidate's education, experience, titles, jobs, and past positions. Appearance was operationalized by reference to a candidate's physical features: age, hair color or style, clothing, weight, height, size, grooming, or physical features" (p.322).

Following Devitt (2002), if the male and female candidates are mentioned within with same paragraph, that paragraph will be counted under the appropriate content category for both the male and female candidate (p.451). Unlike Devitt, this study will include quotes from both candidates, since this study views these quotes as framing decisions that highlight differences in how

This study will also seek to determine if male and female candidates receive differing amounts of positive and negative coverage. In terms of issue coverage, this study will follow Major & Coleman (2008) and operationally define "positive" coverage as positive statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that would

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give a good impression of the candidate's ability to handle the issue being discussed (p.322). This study will operationally define "negative" issue coverage as negative statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that would give a negative impression of the candidate's ability to handle the issue being discussed (p.322).

This study will adopt and modify Major & Coleman's (2008) operational definitions of positive and negative issue coverage in order to assess positive and negative individual attributes coverage. Positive coverage of individual attributes will be operationally defined as positive statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight positive aspects of the candidate's personal life. Negative coverage of individual attributes will be operationally defined as negative statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight negative aspects of the candidate's personal life.

The methods outlined by Major & Coleman (2008) and Devitt (2002) will allow this study to gain further insight into the use of stereotypical frames by journalists when covering male and female political candidates. For example, should this study find that journalists refer to a female candidate in terms of her individual attributes and her stances on feminine issues more often than male candidates, this will provide evidence that journalists do cover male and female candidates differently, and in accordance with widely held cultural gender schemas.

Intercoder reliability was established by having a second person code 10% (9) of the selected articles. Holsti's formula was used to calculate the reliability:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

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Following Wimmer and Dominick (2006), M represents the coding decisions agreed upon by both coders. N1 represents the number of coding decisions made by the first coder and N2 represents the number of coding decisions made by the second coder. According to Holist's formula, reliability for the coding sheet was 86%.

In order to conduct statistical analyses on the research data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, commonly called SPSS, was used. The only statistical test used was the paired-sample t-test.

Chapter 4
Results

This study examines whether the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* cover male and female candidates for political office differently during election cycles. A content analysis was used to evaluate a randomly selected sample of newspaper stories on Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton during the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries. The content analysis evaluated issue coverage and personal coverage. Then, statistical analyses were used to analyze the results of the content analysis. This chapter reviews the results of the content analysis and statistical analyses.

Summary of Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed through a quantitative content analysis and statistical analyses:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the amount of personal coverage and issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the type of issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the amount of positive and negative coverage written about Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

This study also conducted an additional statistical analysis comparing the total amount of coverage given to male and female political candidates.

Findings

Stories that mention Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, or both were selected from the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. The randomized sample was determined using procedures outlined by Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993), who found one constructed week of sampling represented one month's worth of newspaper coverage. This method of sampling yielded a total of 84 stories, 42 per newspaper. A total of 1,734 paragraphs were coded (see Tables 1 and 2 for results by candidate). The first section of research looked at differences in the amount of personal coverage and issue coverage written about the candidates in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*. The results from each newspaper were grouped together.

Table 1 Breakdown of Obama Coverage by Paragraph

	Frequency	Percent*
Gender	7	0.8
Experience	15	1.7
Race	69	8.0
Other Individual Attribute	108	12.5
Education	0	0
Health Care	7	0.8
Economy	20	2.3
National Defense	36	4.2
Crime	8	0.9
Other Issue	93	10.7
Campaign	503	58
No Coverage	868	N/A

*Percentages of coverage were re-calculated to exclude the "no coverage" category. This allows the percentages to represent the coverage given to Obama out of the paragraphs in which he was actually mentioned.
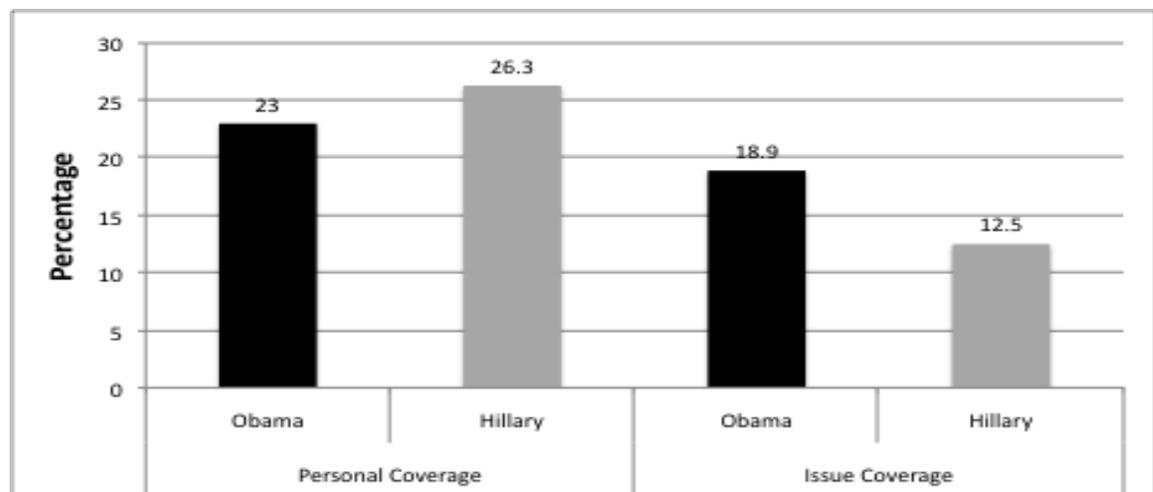
Paired sample t-tests show a statistically significant difference in the amount of total issue coverage Obama and Clinton received (p<.000), with Clinton receiving 12.5% issue coverage and Obama receiving 18.9% issue coverage. Paired sample t-tests also

show there is no statistically significant difference between Clinton and Obama in the

personal coverage category (p<.455), which is comprised of gender, experience, race, and

other individual attributes. However, Clinton did receive slightly more personal coverage

than Obama, with the former receiving 26.3% coverage and the latter receiving 23%

coverage. For a visual breakdown of differences in the amount of total personal and issue

coverage Obama and Clinton received, see Figure 1.

Table 2 Breakdown of Clinton Coverage by Paragraph

	Frequency	Percent*
Gender	81	11.5
Experience	25	3.5
Race	34	4.8
Other Individual Attribute	46	6.5
Education	0	0
Health Care	15	2.1
Economy	22	3.1
National Defense	27	3.8
Crime	1	0.1
Other Issue	24	3.4
Campaign	431	61
No Coverage	1734	N/A

*Percentages of coverage were re-calculated to exclude "no coverage" category. This
allows the percentages to represent the coverage given to Clinton out of the paragraphs in
which she was actually mentioned.

Figure 1 Differences in Personal and Issue Coverage

The second section of research looked at differences in the types of issue coverage Clinton and Obama received in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune.* Again, the results from each newspaper were grouped together. Paired sample t-tests on individual issue categories show Obama and Clinton did not receive statistically significant different amounts of coverage on crime (p<.008), the economy (p<.683), or national defense (p<.117). However, the same tests on health care and the "other issues" category yielded statistically significant results. Clinton received 2.1% coverage on health care, while Obama received 0.8% coverage on health care (p<.011). In the "other issues" category, which addresses issues outside the categories specified by this study, Obama received 10.7% coverage, while Clinton received 3.4% coverage (p<.000). A large amount of the data in the "other issues" category is comprised of news coverage of Obama's former pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright.

Overall, Obama received more coverage in the national defense, crime, and other issue categories, while Clinton received more coverage on health care and the economy (see Figure 2). Though education was an issue category specified by this study, neither candidate received any coverage on this issue. This finding was surprising, since the literature researched for this study suggested education is an important issue, and one in which female political candidates typically receive more coverage. The fact that neither candidate received any coverage on education is irregular.

Statistical analyses were not run on individual personal coverage items because this study focused on the effects of gender on issue coverage in newspapers, not the effects of gender on personal coverage in newspapers. However, the research data shows

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Clinton received more coverage in the gender and experience categories, while Obama received more coverage in the race and "other individual attribute" categories (see Figure 3).
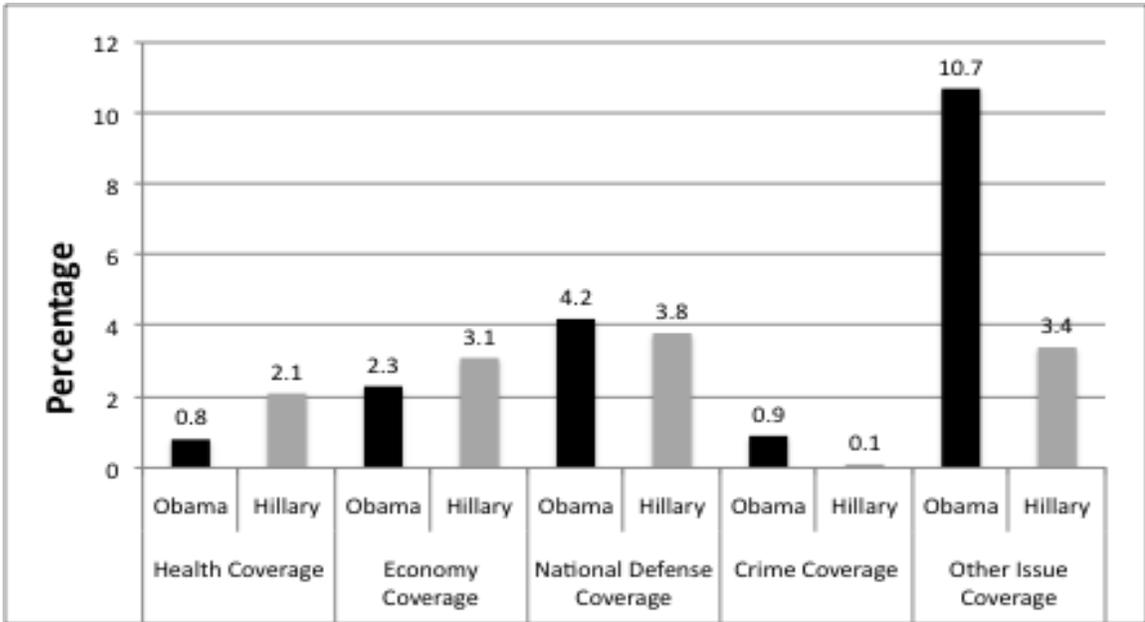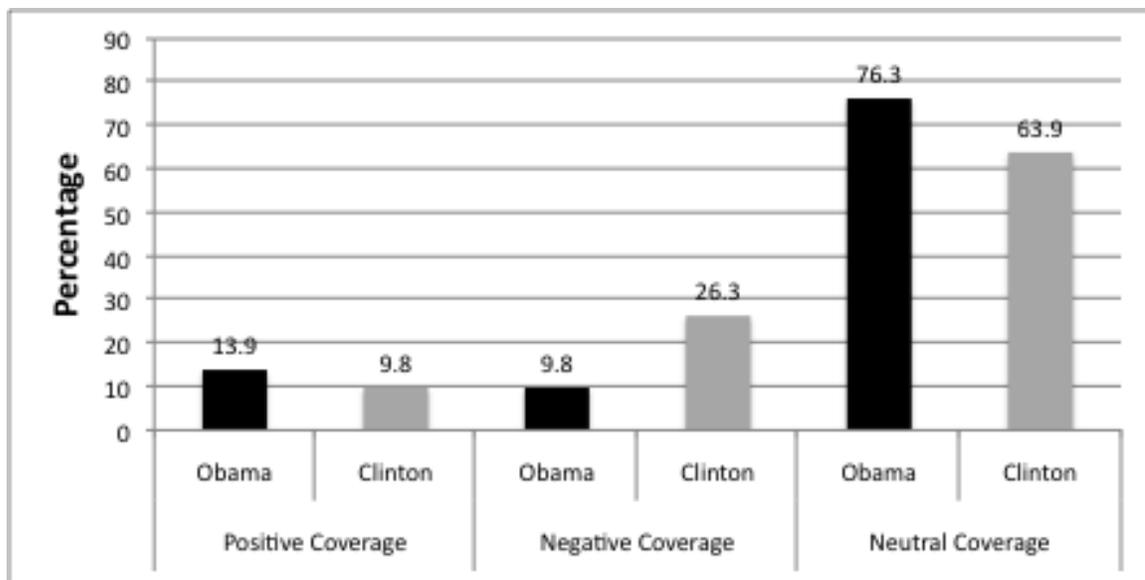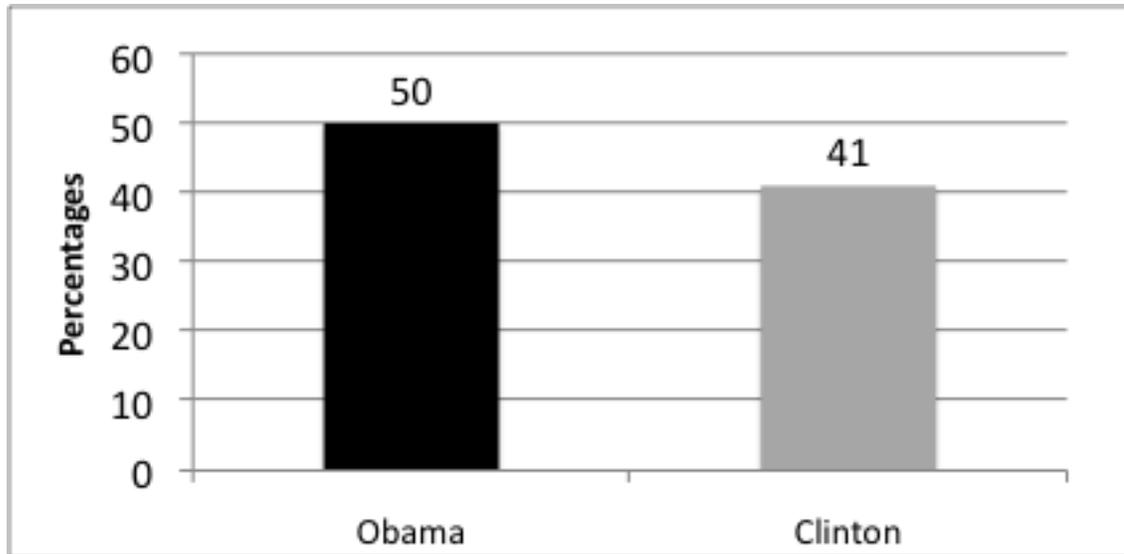

Figure 2 Issue Coverage Comparison
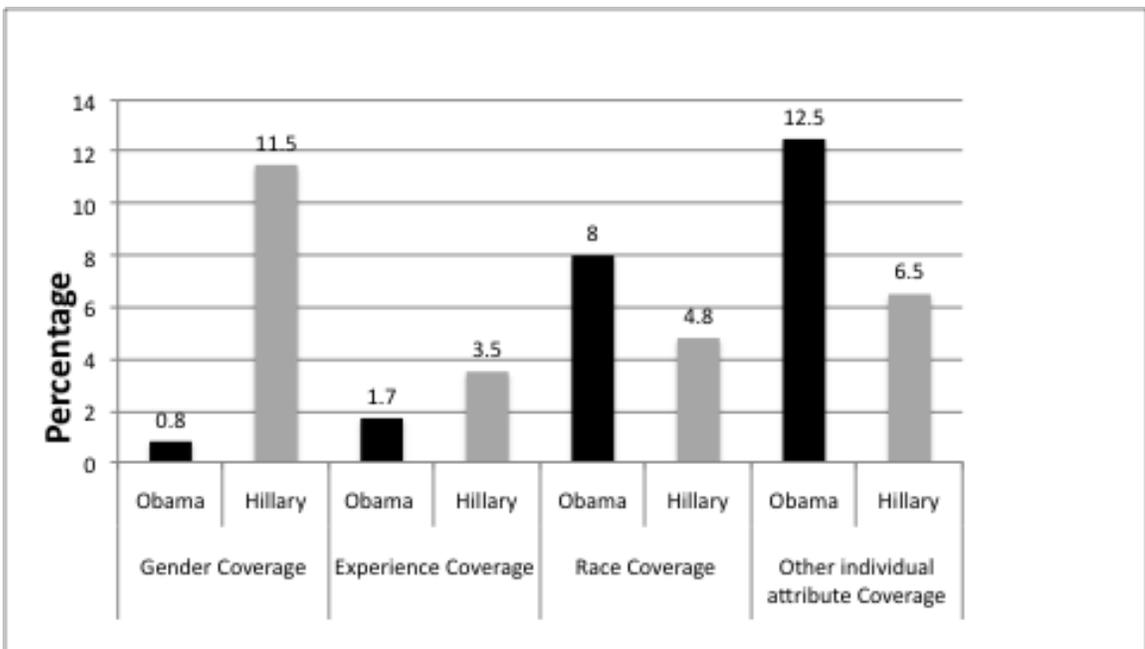
Figure 3 Personal Coverage Comparison

The third section of research examined differences in the amount of positive and negative coverage Clinton and Obama received in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. Results from both newspapers were grouped together. Paired sample t-tests show statistically significant differences in the amount of positive and negative coverage Clinton and Obama received. Obama received 13.9% positive coverage, while Clinton received 9.8% positive coverage (p<.000). Obama also received more neutral coverage than Clinton, with 76.3% neutral coverage to Clinton's 63.9% neutral coverage (no statistical analysis was conducted for this measure). However, the amount of negative coverage Clinton and Obama received is particularly interesting. Clinton received 26.3% negative coverage, while Obama received only 9.8% negative coverage (p<.000). Thus, Clinton received more than twice the amount of negative coverage written about Obama (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Positive and Negative Coverage Comparison

An additional statistical analysis was conducted to determine which candidate received the most total coverage. A paired sample t-test shows a statistically significant difference in the amount of total coverage Obama and Clinton received. Out of the total number of paragraphs coded, Obama received 50% total coverage, while Clinton received 41% total coverage (p<.000). For these results, see Figure 5.

Figure 5 Total Coverage Comparison

In summary, the data for research question 1 show there is a difference in the amount of personal and issue coverage male and female political candidates receive in newspapers. Obama received more issue coverage (statistically significant), while Clinton received more personal coverage (not statistically significant).

The data for research question 2 show there is no statistically significant difference in the coverage male and female candidates receive on "male" issues. This study tested specifically for coverage on the economy, national defense, and crime. However, there is a difference in the coverage male and female candidates receive on the

"feminine" issue of healthcare. In this category, Clinton received a statistically significant higher amount of coverage than Obama.

The data for research question 3 show there is a statistically significant difference in the amount of positive and negative coverage male and female candidates receive. Obama received higher amounts of positive coverage by mere percentage points, however, Clinton received more than double the amount of negative coverage that Obama did.

Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter will discuss the implications of the statistical analyses conducted and explain the outcomes using appropriate literature. Additionally, this study will examine the candidate's pictures that accompanied a few of the *New York Times* articles used for this study's research. Pictures from the *Chicago Tribune* were not evaluated due to an inability to acquire them in a financially feasible manner. The limitations of this study and possibilities for future research are also discussed.

Analysis of Research

This study used paired sample t-tests to evaluate the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the amount of personal coverage and issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the type of issue coverage Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama received in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the amount of positive and negative coverage written about Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*?

Explaining the Quantitative data

The differences in total personal and issue coverage received by Obama and Clinton support gender role and framing theories presented in the literature reviewed for this study. Socially constructed notions of gender affect not only how we see ourselves, but

also how we perceive other men and women. People of each sex act in accordance with their gender roles and expect others around them will, and should, act in ways that also reflect their gender roles (Valian, 1998).

When gender role expectations are applied to the world of newspaper coverage, individual journalists may use gender stereotypes - also called schemas - in their coverage. Previous research has shown that newspaper readers are more likely to read personal items about a female political candidate, and more likely to read about a male political candidate's stances on issues (Devitt, 2002). The reasons for this difference in coverage lie in widely held and culturally normative gender stereotypes, which place a premium on the social skills, grace, and warmth of a woman. The qualities most associated with men are self-confidence, logical thought, and industriousness (Sherriffs & McKee, 1956). In other words, the qualities associated with men are also the qualities most often associated with leadership, while the qualities most associated with women are not. Thus, even when women are in positions of leadership, as Clinton was in her pursuit of the presidency, gender schemas affect individual journalists' perception of her leadership. As the analyses in this study confirm, newspaper reporters covered Clinton's personal qualities more than Obama's. This study also confirmed that Obama received a statistically significant higher amount of issue coverage than Clinton, which reflects gender schemas that focus on leadership qualities in men.

The fact that the difference in personal coverage between Obama and Clinton was not statistically significant suggests that journalists may be closing the gap in the use of gender schemas in this area. Or, perhaps, the results were skewed by persistent coverage

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of Obama's long-time pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright. The long primary battle between Obama and Clinton appeared to contain more coverage of both candidates' personal lives than past elections, perhaps because of the historical nature of the contest.

The question remains, however, why journalists' coverage of male and female political candidates would differ at all, since journalists are supposed to approach their work with an ethos of objectivity. One explanation is that gender stereotypes are so deeply rooted that it is nearly impossible for people to separate themselves from them entirely, even when they consciously reject the stereotypes. Valian (1998) used the example of parents who try to raise their children without the constraints of gender stereotypes to illustrate this point: though the parents may consciously encourage their children to act outside of gender norms, it is likely that the parents still dress and act in ways consistent with their gender. Like the parent who believes they have shed their participation in gender norms, journalists' stereotypes of male and female political candidates are revealed in subtle ways. In place of obviously stereotypical coverage, journalists may simply show a higher interest in a male political candidate's stances on issues than a female political candidate's.

When the personal coverage categories are further broken down into specific items, most of the data continues to support the gender and framing theories in previous literature. Clinton received more coverage on gender and experience than Obama. However, Obama received more coverage in the race category and the "other individual attribute" category. The higher amount of race coverage given to Obama reflects the results of a study conducted by Major & Coleman (2003), who examined the

gubernatorial contest between Bobby Jindal and Kathleen Blanco. Jindal, an Indian-American, received more coverage on his ethnicity than Blanco, a Caucasian woman.

Though Clinton received less coverage in the race category than Obama, her race was rarely mentioned without some reference to Obama's ethnicity. In other words, Clinton's ethnicity as a Caucasian was rarely mentioned as a topic in itself, rather, Clinton's ethnicity emerged as an issue *only* when Obama's ethnicity was examined. Indeed, Clinton's ethnic identity was a non-issue in the articles examined for this study, which never referenced her as the first *Caucasian* female to possibly enter the White House; she was simply the first female. The opposite held true for Obama, whose ethnicity and gender were either mentioned together, or his ethnicity was mentioned without his gender.

The amount of race coverage Obama received was also higher than the results of this study suggest. The "other issues" category was largely composed of coverage of Obama's former pastor, the Reverend Wright, whose comments about the United States and Clinton caused him to be the subject of intense media scrutiny. Concern over Wright's comments was largely due to an uncertainty on the part of the American public over Obama's own racial views, thus, this category of coverage points to Obama having received more race coverage than the "race" category in this study suggests.

When the individual issue categories were broken down into specific items, however, some of the data diverged from previous literature. Following Kahn & Goldberg's (1993) research, this study expected Obama would receive more coverage on all three masculine issues – crime, the economy, and national defense. But, while Obama

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did receive more coverage on national defense and crime, and Clinton actually received more coverage on the economy, there was no statistically significant difference found in the amounts of coverage.

Obama may have received less coverage than Clinton on the economy precisely because it is considered a masculine issue. Kahn & Goldberg (1993) analyzed newspaper coverage of female senate candidates and determined that coverage of women focused on the candidate's ability to succeed in office. Clinton may have been asked more questions about the economy in order to determine her ability to handle the developing economic crisis once in office. Obama, on the other hand, may have received fewer questions relative to Clinton simply because his gender indicated success in handling economic issues.

Another possible explanation for Clinton's (slightly) higher amount of coverage on the economy may be that she was seen as more experienced than Obama. As this study shows, Clinton received more coverage related to her experience than Obama. Perhaps Clinton's image of experience led her to be questioned more on the economic crisis by journalists.

Of the feminine issue categories – health and education – Clinton received more coverage on health care. Neither candidate received any coverage on education. Voters believe female politicians are more able to handle "soft" issues like health care because gender stereotypes point to women as being compassionate and sensitive (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). Journalists also tend to assume the greater ability of female politicians to handle "soft" issues, and thus provide more coverage to female candidates in these

areas. Clinton's previous experience with health care as First Lady during her husband's administration may also explain her higher amount of coverage on health care.

Obama's higher amount of positive and neutral coverage, coupled with Clinton's higher amount of negative coverage, point to the fact that women still struggle with being seen negatively when in positions of leadership. The traits typically associated with successful leadership are masculine, thus a successful woman in a position of leadership is at odds with her femininity to some degree (Valian, 2008). Male commentators on news programs lampooned Clinton many times for her perceived lack of femininity. Other commentators questioned Clinton's political trajectory. Chris Matthews, host of MSNBC's "Hardball", suggested Clinton had ascended to being a presidential contender only because people felt sorry for the public embarrassment she endured during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Matthews' statement points to a cultural difference in peer responses to male and female success. When men are successful, the success reflects their masculinity and is attributed to the man's abilities. People *expect* men to succeed. When a woman is successful, her success is against expectations because femininity is associated with incompetence (Valian, 2008). Thus, when asked to explain a woman's success, people often label factors other than her abilities as the reason for success. For example, people may say the woman is lucky, or that she was given an easy assignment. Negative responses to a woman's success allow people to maintain their ideas about gender.

Clinton's perceived lack of femininity may have been further heightened by comparisons with Obama, who exhibited a leadership style more closely associated with

women than men. Obama's trademark patience, compassion, and easy interaction with voters on the campaign trail may have highlighted Clinton's stiff speeches and sometimes forced interactions with the public. Embry et al. (2008) found that a woman who used a masculine leadership style was viewed less positively than one who used a feminine leadership style. Conversely, a man who used a feminine leadership style was viewed more positively than a man who used a masculine leadership style. Based on Embry et al.'s findings, Obama's more feminine leadership style may have led to Clinton being viewed in a more masculine light, and thus, more negatively.

Finally, Obama received more total coverage than Clinton. This finding led to an interest in the number of times Clinton and Obama were quoted, respectively, and the placement of these quotes in the articles. This study found that out of 125 total quotes, Obama was quoted 83 times, while Clinton was quoted only 42 times. Of the articles in which both candidates were quoted, Obama's quotes appeared before Clinton's 79% of the time. Where an item is placed in a newspaper article denotes its importance; the higher an item, the more important it is. Thus, Obama's higher placement, combined with his overall higher amount of talking time, suggests that reporters often considered Obama's opinion more important than Clinton's.

Implications

Journalists who cover any future political campaign that includes candidates of both genders must pay attention to the ways they shape the discourse on those candidates. This study's research shows that, for the most part, gender-related assumptions affect female candidates far more negatively than males. Clinton received much less coverage

on her issue stances than Obama and far more negative coverage. While this study did not account for how readers interpreted these differences in coverage, journalists need to recognize imbalances in their coverage in order to prevent the possibility of affecting a candidate's campaign.

Every journalist should understand the basis and consequences of their personal beliefs about gender in order to do their jobs more effectively. As Valian (1998) points out, people have deeply held gender schemas that affect how they believe other people should conduct themselves. When a woman enters the typically male-dominated arena of politics, deviating from gender stereotypes can result in poor press coverage for a woman simply because she isn't fulfilling gender stereotypes.

On the July 16, 2007 episode of MSNBC's now defunct "Tucker", the host claimed he felt the urge to cross his legs when he saw images of Clinton on television, a clear reference to Clinton's supposedly masculine, and thus anti-feminine behavior. During the April 23, 2008 episode of MSNBC's "Countdown", host Keith Olbermann posited the only way Clinton could be persuaded to leave the presidential race was by someone who would be able to take her into a room and be the only person who left. The comment again points to the negative press Clinton received as a result of her not falling into traditional female roles. For Olbermann, Clinton's supposed lack of traditional female qualities translated into her needing to be figuratively beaten into withdrawing her name from the nomination process.

Clinton was often criticized for her stiffness on the campaign trail, a quality that usually does not serve presidential candidates well, but seemed doubly offensive because

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Clinton was a woman. Her stiffness pointed out her lack of femininity, particularly in light of Obama's honed ability to connect with voters. Thus, Clinton's public display of emotion during a New Hampshire campaign stop on January 7, 2008, became an instant news sensation.

Men, however, are not the only perpetrators of sexist talk. In a November 4, 2007 editorial article for the *New York Times*, Maureen Dowd casually referred to Clinton as "girlfriend" and wrote that Clinton's strategy for obtaining her position as U.S. Senator was to play the female victim card. Dowd asserted this strategy had worked for Clinton then, and it could for her now in her pursuit of the presidency.

The above examples show a clear theme: people's gender schemas – even those who consider themselves journalists- affect how they perceive female political candidates. While one could argue that these examples were drawn from cable television programs and an editorial article, and thus contain more opinion than typical news programs and newspaper articles should, the point of these examples is *precisely* that they are opinion-laden. The fact that a typical newspaper article requires the writer to be objective doesn't mean the writer ever actually achieves that standard, or that the writer has different reactions to Clinton than Dowd, Matthews, or Tucker Carlson. Journalists may not display their deeply held gender schemas in so bold a manner as these three, but in more subtle ways: Obama received nearly twice as many quotes as Clinton in the newspaper articles selected for this study. Once journalists are able to understand what gender schemas exist and which schemas they subscribe to, they will be more able to write truly balanced articles.

This study did contain some unknowns, however. Obama had a compelling personal story that generated widespread interest in him. It is possible that a different male candidate would have produced different editorial judgments by journalists, and thus completely different results. Under other circumstances and against a different candidate, Clinton may have received less negative attention and more overall coverage.

Lastly, most of the articles chosen for this study had little to do with *any* of the issues. Rather, they focused mostly on the horse race aspects of the political trail; which candidate was winning in polls, which candidate appeared where and when. Though there is much, much literature available on this topic, this study overlooked this predictable aspect of newspaper articles.

Limitations

This study is limited by its inability to account for how the unique circumstances of an African-American male candidate running against a Caucasian female may change the gender frames employed by newspapers. This study is also limited in its ability to account for how the national issues present during the primaries affected journalists' coverage of the candidates. The candidates' bid for the Democratic presidential nomination occurred during a time of national economic crisis and uncertainty about the future of the Iraq war. This reality may have changed the gender frames employed by newspapers; journalists may have focused on Clinton's ability to handle "masculine" issues like the economy more during this election than they would in stable economic and military times.

This study is also limited by the selection of data from only two newspapers. While the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* are major newspapers, smaller, regional papers may have covered the candidates differently. Regional newspapers tend to focus on aspects of the news that are of direct interest to the lives of their readers: this may translate into a different balance of coverage between the candidates along gender lines. For example, Clinton's display of emotion during a campaign stop in New Hampshire was likely covered differently, and more positively, in local newspapers than it was by national newspapers. It should also be noted that newspapers in New Hampshire and Iowa play far different roles than other newspapers during the presidential primary season due to their states' pivotal roles in the political trajectory of a candidate.

Possibilities for Future Research

The lack of a Caucasian male presence in the 2008 democratic presidential primaries may have altered the gender frames journalists applied to each candidate. Though the results from this study seem to suggest small differences in the total amount of personal coverage male and female candidates receive, the unique contest between an African-American male and Caucasian female may have heightened interest levels in the personal aspects of both candidates. Past research has examined contests between Caucasian male and female political candidates; perhaps future research should re-examine similar races to explore whether gender stereotypes are more prominent in races that include a Caucasian male presence. Another possibility would be to examine contests in which a minority female candidate ran against a Caucasian male candidate, or a contest in which a minority male and female ran against one another. Future research

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should examine how the intersection of a candidate's race *and* gender impact the gender stereotypes applied to that candidate.

Future studies should also account for the high profile nature of the 2008 democratic presidential primaries. Perhaps the degree to which gender stereotypes are applied is related to the level of interest in a particular political contest. For example, had Obama and Clinton been competing for a mayoral position instead of the presidency, there may have been less interest in Obama's personal life. Were this the case, differences in the amount of personal coverage Obama and Clinton received may have been more pronounced.

Another possibility for future research may include usage of a different set of content categories. A high amount of data fell into the "other individual attribute", "other issue", and "campaign" categories, while no data fell into the "education" category. Perhaps future research could design a more comprehensive set of content categories that leaves less room for data to fall into broad "other" categories that provide no real insight into differences in coverage. At the same time, future research could adapt the content categories to reflect the content that is actually covered in newspaper articles – this study did not foresee the possibility that education would never be mentioned in the selected newspaper articles.

Finally, future research should address how differences in coverage of male and female political candidates can affect voter preferences. Content analysis can provide insight into *how* male and female political candidate are covered differently in

newspapers; it cannot provide insight into how these differences are perceived by

newspaper readers.

Appendix 1
Coding Instructions

Code all paragraphs within the assigned articles. Complete one sheet per paragraph that is coded.

A. Select the newspaper source of the article from the two given options.

B. Candidate mentioned in paragraph:
      0 – *Neither candidate*: Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are not mentioned in the paragraph. When this is the case, skip to question E.
      1 – *Male:* Barack Obama is mentioned in the paragraph; Hillary Clinton is not. If the candidate is referenced by something other than his name, for example: "The former president of the Harvard Law Review spoke to voters in Florida."
      2 – *Female:* Hillary Clinton is mentioned in the paragraph; Barack Obama is not mentioned. If the candidate is referenced by something other than her name, for example: "The former first lady campaigned in New Hampshire."
      3 – *Both candidates:* Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are both mentioned in the paragraph. If the candidates are referenced by something other than their names, for example: "The top Democratic candidates campaigned tirelessly."

C. Paragraph Content: References can be made by the reporter or another person, including the candidates themselves.
      0 – *No coverage:* No reference to candidate.
      1 – *Gender:* Reference to the candidate as woman, man, female, male, daughter, son, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, wife, husband, spouse, and/or married to.
      2 – *Experience:* Reference to the candidate's education, experience, titles, jobs, and past positions. This includes mention of Hillary Clinton as the former first lady.
      3 – *Race:* Reference to the candidate's ethnicity or any of his/her family member's ethnicity, including spouse, parents, and children.
      4 – *Personal appearance:* Reference to the candidate's physical features, age, hair, style, clothing, weight, height, size, grooming, posture, or facial expression.
      5 – *Other individual attribute:* Reference to the candidate in a personal manner that is not covered by options 0 – 4.
      6 – *Education:* Reference to teaching, creating a well-educated workforce, higher education funding, and so on.
      7 – *Health care:* Reference to prescriptions, healthcare insurance, hospital funding and quality, and so on.

8 – *Economy*: Reference to employment, business and industry, tourism, taxes, budgets, and so on.

9 – *National defense:* Reference to the state's army bases, homeland security, war, and so on.

10 – *Crime:* Reference to safety, statistics about crime, neighborhood watch programs, gun control, and so on.

11 – *Other issue:* Reference to the candidate's stances on an issue that is not covered by options 6 – 10.

12 – *Campaign*: Reference to the candidate's campaign that does not fall under the issue or individual attribute categories. This category includes horserace coverage, such as mention of campaign slogans, and poll numbers.

D. Coverage in this paragraph is:

0 – *Neutral:* Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that do not give a positive or negative impression of the candidate's ability to handle a particular issue. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that do not give a positive or negative impression of the candidate's personal characteristics or personal life. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter that do not give a positive or negative impression of the candidate's campaign or candidacy.

1 – *Positive:* Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that would give a positive impression of the candidate's ability to handle an issue. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight positive aspects of the candidate's personal characteristics or personal life. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight positive aspects of the candidate's campaign, such as successful campaigning and positive voter response.

2 – *Negative:* Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person that would give a negative impression of the candidate's ability to handle an issue. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight negative aspects of the candidate's personal characteristics or personal life. Statements or descriptions made by the reporter or another person intended to highlight negative aspects of the candidate's campaign, such as infighting.

9 – *No coverage*: no reference was made to the candidate.

Coding Sheet

Article Number _____

Paragraph Number _____

A. Newspaper:
     1 – The Chicago Tribune
     2 – The New York Times

B. Candidate mentioned in paragraph:
     0 – Neither candidate
     1 – Male
     2 – Female
     3 – Both candidates

C. Paragraph Content for Obama:
     0 – No coverage
Individual Attribute:
     1 – Gender
     2 – Experience
     3 – Race
     4 – Personal appearance
     5 – Other individual attribute
Issue:
     6 – Education (feminine issue)
     7 – Health care (feminine issue)
     8 – Economy (masculine issue)
     9 – National defense (masculine issue)
     10 – Crime (masculine issue)
     11 – Other issue
     12 – Campaign

Paragraph Content for Clinton:
     0 – No coverage
Individual Attribute:
     1 – Gender
     2 – Experience
     3 – Race
     4 – Personal appearance
     5 – Other individual attribute
Issue:
     6 – Education (feminine issue)
     7 – Health care (feminine issue)

8 – Economy (masculine issue)
9 – National defense (masculine issue)
10 – Crime (masculine issue)
11 – Other issue
12 – Campaign

D. Coverage for Obama is:
0 – Neutral
1 – Positive
2 – Negative
9 – No coverage

Coverage for Clinton is:
0 – Neutral
1 – Positive
2 – Negative
9 – No coverage

E. Where is this paragraph located in the article?
1 – top
2 – middle
3 – end

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