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Is She ''Man Enough''? Women Candidates, Executive Political Offices, and News Coverage

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This study analyzes news coverage of 4 female political candidates—Elizabeth Dole, Claire McCaskill, Hillary Clinton, and Sarah Palin—and their male competitors, as each competed in 2 elections between 1999 and 2008. Analysis focused on novelty labeling, and "feminine" and "masculine" political issues and character traits to determine whether the coverage of women and men differed in general, and across the offices of Senator, Governor, Vice President, or President. Overall, women received more news coverage, and the gendered gap in coverage was especially large for novelty, issue, and trait coverage when women sought the "executive" offices of Governor and in the White House. These findings provide insight into the evolving gender dynamics of women running within the masculinized domain of politics.

In 1984, Geraldine Ferraro became the first female nominee for the White House on a major political ticket when she was named the Democratic Party's vice presidential candidate. To some, gender equality in U.S. presidential politics seemed in sight. But it was not until the 2008 campaign that a woman from either of the two major parties was again seriously considered for the presidency or vice presidency. Even then, challenges abounded for these women via stereotypes in some news coverage. In 2006, *Washington Post* columnist Joel Achenbach wrote this about Hillary Clinton: "She's running. You can tell by the hair, which has finally stopped changing styles, every strand frozen in place, as though she's ready to be on a coin" (Achenbach, 2006). Two years later, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd said this about Sarah Palin: "Sarah has single-handedly ushered out the 'Sex and the City' era, and made the sexy new model for America a retro one—the glamorous Pioneer Woman, packing a gun, a baby, and a Bible" (Dowd, 2008). Scholar Melody Rose (2008) highlighted the difficulties faced by these candidates: "For all the ways in which Sen.

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Clinton and Gov. Palin surely differ, very little attention has been paid to the critical way in which they faced the same dilemma in 2008: the double bind of running, as a woman, for the most manly jobs on the planet."

Clinton and Palin are not the first to encounter such a challenge. The sparse representation of women in elected U.S. office, coupled with the tone of political discourse, can make it difficult to be a woman in the masculinized space of U.S. politics (Braden, 1996; Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005)—particularly at higher offices, where the levels of female representation are even lower. Consider that less than 17% of the U.S. Congress is female as of 2011, ranking the United States 70th out of 132 in an analysis of women serving in comparable positions (Center for American Women and Politics, 2011; Inter-Parliamentarian Union, 2011). With these dynamics in mind, this study examined U.S. news coverage of mixed-gender elections—those with at least one female and one male candidate—for four women who ran twice among the offices of Senator, Governor, Vice President, or President between 1999 and 2008. Citizens rely on news coverage to learn about politicians (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; Gunther & Mughan, 2000; Kahn & Kenney, 2002), and use this information in deciding how to vote (Kahn, 1992). Research has examined coverage of mixed-gender elections, comparing content in different news outlets of different women running for different offices (Anderson, 2002; Bystrom, Robertson, & Banwart, 2001). This study takes a next step and analyzes news coverage, across a decade, of the same female candidates as they compete across two elections, to gain insight into the dynamics women face as they attempt to ascend the political ladder.

Gender and American politics

The disconnect in America between women and political office is fed by the cultural premise that politics is a domain for masculinized behaviors, messages, and professional experiences—creating a masculine stereotype for politicians. We construct gender stereotypes by attributing certain characteristics to women and men,[1] and then employ these perceived attributes to process and easily recall meaning (Bigler & Liben, 2007), but stereotypes become problematic when they dictate the roles people are *expected* to fulfill. For example, stereotypes of masculinity and femininity suggest gender-specific rules and identities in society (DeSantis, 2007; Henslin, 2007), including expectations about professional roles. Social role theory, for example, posits that people expect men and women to fulfill gender-role stereotypes, and thus meet common gendered characteristics associated with certain occupations (Eagly, 1997). The theory is suggestive of how traditional gender differences in the division of labor are replicated over time. As a result, we create strong gender-role stereotypes regarding culturally appropriate professions for women and men.

One important implication of gender-role stereotypes is that *gender incongruencies* can arise as professional barriers. When the stereotyped gender of a professional role does not "fit" with the gender of the person seeking the role, discrimination often occurs in the form of negative evaluations (Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). Instances

of such incongruencies, based on U.S. stereotypes, could include *female* police chiefs or *male* nurses. Garcia-Retamero and Lopez-Zafra (2006) found gender-role incongruence to be more predictive of discrimination than the gender of job candidates, suggesting that people who seek to break with traditional gender roles face stiff professional hurdles. This is on point for female political candidates in America, who are seeking to enter a traditionally masculine domain (Connell, 2005; Heldman et al., 2005; Rosenwasser & Dean, 1989). Furthermore, voters appear to prefer candidates with more masculinized identities as those candidates transition to higher, executive offices, specifically from U.S. Senator or Governor to U.S. President (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b; Smith et al., 2007). This dynamic has led scholar Georgia Duerst-Lahti (2007) to go so far as to describe the job of U.S. President as "manly men, doing manly things, in manly ways" (p. 87). In short, politics is typically seen in masculine terms, and this impression appears to increase as candidates seek higher levels of office.

This does not mean, however, that women face an insurmountable challenge in politics. Research traditionally has suggested that professional women face "either/or" dilemmas in which they must be either feminine or masculine but not both (see Jamieson, 1995), but more recently scholarship has begun to suggest that while women and men do not occupy equivalent spaces, they have opportunities to incorporate both feminine and masculine aspects into their gendered identity. That is, the silos of feminine-only or masculine-only gender identities have given way, to an extent, allowing women to appropriate some masculine characteristics into their feminine identity and vice versa for men. This process, however, does not completely upend our notions of what it means to be a woman or a man. Rather, when confronted with disconfirming evidence—for example, a woman who is aggressive—we create "subtypes" (Schneider, 2004). Subtypes are subcategories within identity constructs that carve out room for mixed, or more complex, identities (Zemore, Fiske, & Kim, 2000). Such subtypes mean women politicians can exhibit some masculine characteristics while still retaining predominantly feminine identities.

Subtypes are contextual and situational. That is, we depend on contextual cues to determine which, if any, subtype is applicable (Zemore et al., 2000). For example, women in nontraditional work settings, such as a fire department, are considered more masculine and powerful than women in traditional work settings, such as an elementary school (Zemore et al., 2000). In the latter case, no subtype is necessary because the women are performing the more traditional feminine identity. On the other hand, in the former case we are confronted with disconfirming information—women working in *non*traditional settings—and thus we create a subtype for these women that includes more masculine attributes. Women and men in gender-*in*congruent professions, therefore, are seen as offering cross-gendered, more complex identities (Schneider, 2004). Subtypes, however, do not solve all of the challenges women face in masculinized domains, but they do help. Within leadership contexts, especially for executive roles, women performing masculine qualities have some latitude to gain positive evaluations, but if women go too

far they may be viewed negatively because they are seen as too severely violating gender-role norms (Eagley & Karau, 2002). Additionally, within American politics, the projection of a few masculine qualities may not be enough for a woman to thrive in a domain steeped in masculinity for over 200 years. Therefore, subtypes may allow women politicians to project a gender-congruent feminine identity and a politics-congruent masculine identity, but in doing so, they are still faced with certain disadvantages.

Furthermore, the process of creating and legitimately adopting subtypes is slow. For instance, the prototypical masculine identity, often epitomized by the rugged, frontiersman image of Theodore Roosevelt, has only partially given way to the recent subtype of the "new man," who embraces feminine qualities such as being family-oriented and empathic (Chapman & Rutherford, 1988). Recent examples include presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, who both incorporated and performed some feminine aspects into an overall masculine identity (Copper, 2009). For example, Obama in 2008 evoked the charisma and confidence of John Kennedy, while also embracing and performing the role of an involved, compassionate father—thus enveloping a traditionally feminine characteristic, compassion, *within* a traditionally masculine role, fatherhood. The relatively recent shift for men striving for the "both/and" approach to gender is something women candidates have continually tried to project. McGinley (2009) suggests that Sarah Palin, in her 2008 campaign for vice president, more effectively "walked a fine line between being assertive and masculine and retaining her femininity" (p. 719), than previous women. Given these recent shifts in gender performance, I was interested in examining how the news media portray women and men in three important, gendered rhetorical domains that dominate U.S. politics: novelty labels, political issues, and character traits.

Novelty labels

Political elections are newsworthy, and this is especially the case for mixed-gender elections. Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) condense newsworthiness to two factors: social significance and deviance. All elections are relevant to the social system, and thus are socially significant and newsworthy to some extent. But only a few elections are both socially significant *and* deviant. Deviance can be interpreted benignly, as someone or something that "merely" breaks the norm or is unexpected (Shoemaker, 1985), or more malignantly, as a bad thing. Shoemaker (1985) contends that the news media convey deviance through the application of labels that categorize events or people as incongruent with societal expectations—creating "norm breakers." Female politicians are by default norm breakers in the United States, and this empirical reality may compel journalists to describe women candidates, but not their male counterparts, in a way that conveys female politicians and mixed-gender elections as deviant. Such descriptions often take the form of specific labels that call attention to a candidate's deviant characteristics, for example, their gender or their status as norm breakers. These labels—what I call "novelty labels"—may include

references regarding a candidate's gender (e.g., "female," "woman") or "uniqueness" (e.g., "first female," "lone woman"). Men, because they are the norm within U.S. politics, are far less likely to be described using these labels.

To be clear, novelty labeling can positively or negatively frame women, depending on the context of news coverage. A more positive labeling may suggest a historic quality to a woman's candidacy, describing her as a transformative figure, which may be desirable to voters. However, all novelty labeling in news contexts go some significant distance toward suggesting—sometimes explicitly, much more often implicitly—that women are novel, unusual, *simply different* within the political arena. The result may be that voters are encouraged to see women as incongruent with politics, as "bench warmers rather than as an integral part of government" (Braden, 1996, p. 2). Further, because fewer women hold executive offices, we might expect an increase in novelty labeling in news when women run for offices of higher status. Whether this is so across a decade of recent news and across four women candidates running for offices in four differing regions of the country is important to examine. In particular, if there is a greater "gap"—that is, a greater gendered differential—in novelty labeling between women and men in news coverage of campaigns for higher offices, this might shed light on the challenges for women ascending political ladders. I offer, then, my first set of hypotheses: News articles in electoral campaigns will be more likely to contain novelty labels for women than for men (H1a), and this gender gap in news will be greater when candidates run for higher office (H1b).

Political issues

Voters primarily draw upon two components when evaluating candidates for office: the candidate's perceived ability to handle political issues, and the candidate's apparent personal character (Braden, 1996; Hacker, 2004; Louden & McCauliff, 2004). Neither is gender neutral nor gender free. Notably, a division in U.S. politics has formed between "feminine issues" and "masculine issues." So-called feminine issues align with stereotypes regarding a woman's compassionate and family-oriented roles in society (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), and are considered to include health care, education, women's rights, environment, and social welfare (Han, 2007; Heldman et al., 2005; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003; Major & Coleman, 2008). So-called masculine issues align with stereotypes regarding men as financial breadwinners and protectors (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), and are considered to include military and defense, crime, the economy, and foreign policy (Han, 2007; Heldman et al., 2005; Herrnson et al., 2003; Major & Coleman, 2008). Further, research suggests that voters perceive feminine issues as less important than masculine issues, and increasingly so when higher offices are at stake (Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988). Issue domains, then, are deeply gendered in politics.

Such gender "issue ownership" may be reflected in and shaped by news content. Major and Coleman (2008) analyzed news coverage of a mixed-gender gubernatorial

election and found that news included more *positive* mentions of the candidates' experience with gender-*congruent* issues, even though the candidates had more experience with gender-*incongruent* topics. In creating a positive association between candidate gender and the gendered issues, the news media upheld gender congruency. At the same time, both the candidates received more coverage overall of gender-*incongruent* issues. For example, the woman candidate received more positive mentions than the man on three feminine issues *and* more emphasis generally than the man on the single masculine issue of economics. Therefore, the candidates received gender-congruent praise but gender-incongruent emphases. It may be important, though, that both the candidates were outside the norm: The woman sought to become the first female in this office, and the man sought to become the first Indian American in this office. Thus, it is possible that Major and Coleman's findings were due to the novelty and uniqueness of their selected candidates. One of the key elements in the current study is that the four women of focus were seeking to become the first female to gain both the offices for which they were competing, and therefore their novelty and incongruence were also potentially more salient.

One potential outcome that I expect, based on the shared uniqueness of the women in this study, is a more intense amplification of news coverage of women than of men regarding both feminine *and* masculine issues. I believe the news media will capitalize on the women's novelty in these electoral contexts and focus more of the issue-oriented discussion on them as compared to their male competitors. Such a dynamic, if present in news coverage, creates both opportunities and disadvantages for women. Feminine issue coverage conveys women as gender congruent and authentic, but it also aligns them with an issue domain perceived as less important by many voters. Further, the emphasis among voters on masculine issues means that women need to access a more masculine subtype—and thus risk being perceived as gender-inauthentic—if they want to be considered serious candidates, particularly for higher office. By tapping into this subtype, the news media may depict the woman as successful, and even offer the "compliment" of "running like a man," or as unsuccessful, and question whether when faced with a serious and typically masculine issue, whether she can "push the button," as was the case for Geraldine Ferraro with foreign policy in 1984 (Wingert, 2008). With this in mind, I propose my next set of hypotheses: News articles in electoral campaigns will be more likely to include feminine and masculine issue coverage for women than for men (H2a), and these gendered issue gaps in news will be greater when candidates run for higher office (H2b).

Character traits

Character traits have also split along gender lines based on gender-role stereotypes. More stereotypic "feminine traits" include warmth, compassion, emotionality, honesty, altruism, and congeniality (Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Connell, 2005). More stereotypic "masculine traits" include strength, assertiveness, independence, aggressiveness, and confidence (Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney,

2005). Furthermore, voters expect "good" politicians and leaders to possess more traditionally masculine traits than feminine ones, and masculine traits are considered more important as candidates run for higher office (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; McGinley, 2009; Rosenwasser & Dean, 1989). Additionally, character traits can be even more important evaluative criteria for voters than issues or political party affiliation (Louden & McCauliff, 2004), meaning that another crucial part of the public's evaluative process of candidates tilts heavily toward masculinity.

This heightened political importance of masculine traits may lead journalists to offer relatively little coverage of feminine traits, which is what Lawrence and Rose (2010) found in the analysis of the 2008 presidential campaign. If so, this will work to the disadvantage of women, in two ways. First, lesser coverage of so-called feminine traits will negate any political benefit women might accrue if they offer what scholars have called a "feminine style" of being more personal and self-disclosing (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1995). Second, news emphasis on masculine traits will compel women to again project a masculine subtype in an attempt to be "man enough" for political office, especially higher office. In America, citizens seek strong leaders that evoke the confidence of Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. Such iconic models of political masculinity further exacerbate women's novelty within the political arena, potentially spurring journalists to engage in greater speculation about—and therefore focus on—the traits held by women. I offer, then, my final set of hypotheses: News articles in electoral campaigns will be more likely to include feminine and masculine character trait coverage for women than for men (H3a), and these gendered character trait gaps in news will be greater when candidates run for higher office (H3b).

Methods

To examine these expectations I conducted a content analysis of coverage of eight mixed-gender U.S. elections in eight U.S. newspapers between 1999 and 2008. Two elections were selected for four female candidates running for U.S. Senator, Governor, Vice President, or President. In this study, I categorized these offices into two groups: (a) legislative and (b) executive. U.S. Senator was classified as the former: it is in the U.S. Legislative Branch, and is a more communal office as members must assemble and vote as a body. Governor and positions in the White House were classified as the latter: a Governor is the chief executive of the state, and White House positions are in the U.S. Executive Branch. These offices are considered more executive because only one person at any time holds a state's governorship or is Vice President or President. Consequently, it may be that legislative offices are seen as more feminine, whereas executive offices are perceived as more masculine (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b). My expectation was that gender gaps in news coverage would be greater for executive offices.

The four candidates analyzed were Elizabeth Dole, Claire McCaskill, Hillary Clinton, and Sarah Palin. These politicians were selected for their similarities and differences. Similarly, all four sought offices that had not yet been occupied by women,

and each woman won one of the elections. Among their differences, McCaskill and Clinton are Democrats whereas Dole and Palin are Republicans, and two candidates "ascended" in their runs for office, meaning that their second campaign was for an executive level office, whereas two went the other way. In all cases, my expectations were the same: I posit that news coverage of women will be greater than that of men, and the gender gaps will be greater when candidates run for higher office.

Timeframes were also a consideration in the study design. Research has shown a positive relationship between how recently information was obtained and how likely people are to access it when making decisions (Zaller, 1992). To capture the news coverage that would have been most recent prior to the election, the timeframes for this study focused on the latest stage of the campaign in which the female candidate participated. The eight elections and timeframes were as follows. For Dole the focus was (a) from her announcement of an official exploratory committee for President in March 1999 to her formal campaign withdrawal in October 1999, against George W. Bush and Al Gore, and (b) the 2002 general election for Senator of North Carolina against Erskine Bowles. For McCaskill the focus was (a) the 2004 general election for Governor of Missouri against Matt Blunt, and (b) the 2006 general election for Senator of Missouri against Jim Talent. For Clinton the focus was (a) the 2000 general election for Senator of New York against Rick Lazio, and, similar to Dole, (b) from her announcement of an official exploratory committee for President in January 2007 to her formal campaign withdrawal in June 2008, against Barack Obama and John McCain. For Palin the focus was (a) the 2006 general election for Governor of Alaska against Tony Knowles, and (b) the 2008 general election for Vice President against Barack Obama and Joe Biden.[2]

In selecting newspapers I sought to ensure sufficient news coverage of both legislative and executive elections. This led to analysis in each election of the two largest circulation newspapers in the respective candidate's state, both serving different, large metropolitan areas (Burrelles*Luce*, 2010). The eight newspapers were: the *Charlotte Observer* and *News & Observer* for Dole; the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *Kansas City Star* for McCaskill; the New York *Daily News* and *Buffalo News* for Clinton; and the *Anchorage Daily News* and *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* for Palin.[3] Selection of these newspapers meant that if my hypotheses were supported, the gendered patterns would be found across a range of geographic locations and news outlets, thus adding a greater level of generalizability. The final sample of articles from each newspaper was collected via two steps. First, I conducted a keyword search with the female *and* male candidates' names during the timeframes to retrieve news stories. I then systematically randomly sampled within this content to select approximately 30% of the articles.[4] The final sample consisted of 706 articles across the eight elections.

The variables were coded as present or absent in each article. Novelty labeling included *gender labels*, which were explicit direct and indirect references such as "woman," "man," "mother," or "husband," and *uniqueness labels*, which were explicit references such as "first," "pioneer," or "lone." *Feminine issues* contained

any discussion of the candidate and the issues of education, health care, reproductive rights, and women's issues, which included a range of related matters, for example, equal rights and equal pay. *Masculine issues* contained any discussion of the candidate and the issues of military/defense/war, crime, foreign affairs, and economy. *Feminine traits* contained any discussion of whether the candidate conveyed compassion, emotionality, honesty, congeniality, and altruism. *Masculine traits* contained any discussion of whether the candidate conveyed leadership, rationality, decisiveness, aggressiveness, and independence. Intercoder reliability was conducted on 10% of the final sample ($n = 71$) by two coders. Calculated using Scott's π, intercoder reliability coefficients ranged from $\pi = .79$ for masculine issues for male candidates to $\pi = .96$ for gender and uniqueness labels for female candidates.

Results

This study focuses on two components: (a) whether female candidates for political office receive different gender-related news coverage than opponent male candidates, and (b) whether such "gender gaps" in news, if they exist, are greater when candidates run for higher, executive offices. The following analysis examines these components, starting with aggregate percentages of coverage, and then moving to a comparison of gender gaps in coverage across candidates.

Aggregate results

The first half of each hypothesis predicted that women would receive more gendered news coverage than men, including gender and uniqueness labels, and feminine and masculine issues and traits. To test these hypotheses I compared the percentage of news articles in which each of the categories occurred for women and men, and then used those percentages to conduct a one-tailed difference of proportions test to examine whether the differences between women and men in each category were statistically significant (see Table 1).

As indicated by the "overall" column in Table 1, at the aggregate level of analysis ($n = 706$), women received more gendered news coverage than men in each of the six categories, thereby supporting H1a, H2a, and H3a. Based on a one-tailed difference of proportions test, the difference in volume of coverage for five of the six categories was statistically significant at $p < .05$, with the difference for masculine issues at $p < .10$. The middle three columns of Table 1 show the aggregate percentages for women and men based on the type of office sought. Across these three offices, there are a few notable points. First, moving from legislative to executive, the amount of gender and uniqueness labels for women increases. Second, candidates running for the White House received considerably less feminine and masculine issue coverage. Third, there is approximately three times more masculine issue coverage than feminine issue coverage for the White House. In sum, these results support the first part of each hypothesis because women received significantly more coverage in each category, and these results also support scholarship (Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988) regarding

Table 1 Aggregate Percentages by Type of Office

		Senator (n = 262)	Governor (n = 113)	White House (n = 331)	Overall (n = 706)	p Value
Gender labels	Women	14.1%	18.6%	29.0%	21.8%	<.01
	Men	13.4%	3.5%	10.6%	10.5%	
Uniqueness labels	Women	1.5%	5.3%	6.6%	4.5%	<.01
	Men	0.8%	0.9%	3.3%	2.0%	
Feminine issues	Women	19.5%	38.1%	9.4%	17.7%	<.05
	Men	15.3%	28.3%	6.3%	13.2%	
Masculine issues	Women	37.0%	36.3%	25.1%	31.3%	<.10
	Men	36.6%	29.2%	20.5%	27.9%	
Feminine traits	Women	9.5%	3.5%	10.3%	8.9%	<.05
	Men	8.4%	0.9%	6.3%	6.2%	
Masculine traits	Women	12.6%	21.2%	16.6%	15.9%	<.01
	Men	13.4%	8.8%	10.9%	11.5%	

Note: p Values based on a one-tailed difference of proportions test between each overall percentage for women and men within each category.

the predominance of masculine issue coverage over feminine issue coverage in presidential politics.

Candidates across elections

The second half to each hypothesis predicted the gap in the volume of coverage between women and men would be greater when candidates ran for executive level offices. For this analysis I examined coverage of novelty labeling, political issues, and character traits for the same candidates across their two election contexts. To calculate these gaps I compared the percent of news articles in which each of the categories occurred for women and men in each election, and then subtracted the male's percentage from the female's percentage, resulting in either a positive or negative gendered gap for each office. A *positive* gap for an office indicates that the woman received more of a coverage type, and a *negative* gap indicates that the man received more of a coverage type. In all cases, the magnitude of the gap is indicated by the absolute value of the percentage. A zero percent gap indicates that either (a) the candidates did not receive any of a coverage type, or (b) the candidates received equal amounts of coverage. Additionally, to compare the gaps across election contexts, I calculated the percent change in gaps between offices. For example, if the gap was +3% for Senator and +16% for President, the percent change in gaps as the candidate ran for the executive office was +13% (see Table 2).

As indicated by the far right column in Table 2, as women ran for executive offices, the gaps in coverage grew: Women received a greater predominance of coverage at the executive office in 21 of 24 content comparisons (six categories for four candidates).

Table 2 Gendered Gaps by Type of Office

		Senator ($n = 262$)	Governor ($n = 113$)	White House ($n = 331$)	% Change to Executive
Gender labels	Dole	−3.7%	—	+14.0%	+17.7%
	McCaskill	+2.1%	+17.5%	—	+15.4%
	Clinton	+3.5%	—	+16.1%	+12.6%
	Palin	—	+12.5%	+39.5%	+27.0%
Uniqueness labels	Dole	+3.7%	—	+8.8%	+5.1%
	McCaskill	0.0%	+7.0%	—	+7.0%
	Clinton	−1.2%	—	+0.4%	+1.6%
	Palin		+1.8%	+13.2%	+11.4%
Feminine issues	Dole	+6.1%	—	+7.1%	+1.0%
	McCaskill	+1.1%	+7.1%	—	+6.0%
	Clinton	+5.8%	—	+3.0%	−2.8%
	Palin	—	+12.5%	−2.6%	−15.1%
Masculine issues	Dole	+6.2%	—	+7.1%	+0.9%
	McCaskill	−2.1%	+7.0%	—	+9.1%
	Clinton	−2.3%	—	−0.4%	+1.9%
	Palin	—	+7.2%	+31.6%	+24.4%
Feminine traits	Dole	−1.2%	—	+5.3%	+6.5%
	McCaskill	−1.0%	+1.8%	—	+2.8%
	Clinton	+5.8%	—	0.0%	−5.8%
	Palin	—	+3.6%	+26.3%	+22.7%
Masculine traits	Dole	+2.5%	—	+7.0%	+4.5%
	McCaskill	+4.2%	+14.0%	—	+9.8%
	Clinton	−9.3%	—	+2.9%	+12.2%
	Palin	—	+10.7%	+21.0%	+10.3%

These results provide strong support for H1b, H2b, and H3b. I will now present the findings for each category.

The findings in Table 2 show that as candidates ran for more executive levels of office, the gap for gender labels—for example, "woman" and "wife"—grew for all four women. The average percent change in gaps across offices in gender labeling, based on averaging the four gaps in the far right column, was +18.2%. Consequently, these women received more gender labeling coverage in general, and the disparity was particularly prominent when they ran for the White House. In particular, Sarah Palin received almost 40% more gender labeling coverage than her male competitors for the White House. The usage of gender labels by journalists is understandable; these women were running for offices never before held by women. However, the pattern of women receiving more gender labeling in general *and* so much more as they ran for executive offices raises questions for how voters

might interpret this type of coverage and whether it affects a female candidate's viability.

Novelty labeling also included uniqueness labels, such as "first," "lone," or "pioneer." The average percent change in gaps across offices in uniqueness labeling was +6.3%. Notably, for executive offices, Clinton received the smallest uniqueness gap in news coverage, +0.4% in her 2008 campaign for the presidency—most likely due to the comparatively unique presence of Barack Obama, who became the first African American U.S. President. Things changed dramatically, though, during the general elections. Over approximately two and a half months of general election news, 13.2% ($n = 38$) of coverage of Sarah Palin's campaign for Vice President included uniqueness references, but her male competitors, including Obama and Joe Biden, did not receive a *single* uniqueness reference. This analysis includes almost the entirety of Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, and these findings suggest either that Obama's uniqueness was much more salient in news during the primaries, or that the Alaska-based news media, which were the source for Palin's news coverage, considered only her novelty worth mentioning.

Regarding feminine issue coverage—women's issues, health care, education, and reproductive rights—Table 2 shows that Dole's and McCaskill's feminine issue gaps were greater when they ran for higher office, but Clinton's and Palin's gaps were smaller. In Palin's case, she went from a gap of +12.5% in her gubernatorial race to −2.6% when running for Vice President, meaning the men received more feminine issue coverage than her. Notably, additional frequency analysis revealed that Dole and her male counterparts running for President in 2000 received two to four times more coverage of feminine issues than Clinton and Palin and their male competitors in the 2008 presidential election. These findings—the decrease in feminine issue coverage at the White House level and the negative percent change across offices for the most recent candidates, Clinton and Palin—may indicate a general diminishing emphasis in news on feminine issues, and the possibility that the Obama-Biden ticket in 2008 was discussed in news coverage as the more feminine subtype of the "new man."

For masculine issue coverage—military/war/defense, crime, foreign affairs, and economy—the gap grew for all four women when they ran for higher offices, and the average percent change across offices was +9.1%. The White House gaps for Clinton and Palin, however, show striking differences. For Clinton, she received 0.4% *less* masculine issue coverage than her male competitors, whereas Palin received nearly 32% *more* masculine issue coverage over her male competitors. In addition, across all of the six categories, Clinton was the only candidate to experience two negative gaps within the same category of coverage, although the magnitude of the negative gap was smaller when running for the presidency. As a result, Clinton's male competitors received more masculine issue coverage than her in both election contexts. Despite this anomaly, the masculine issue gap grew as all four women ran for executive level offices.

Concerning feminine traits—compassion, emotionality, honesty, congeniality, and altruism—the gap was greater for three of the four women when they ran for higher offices, producing an average percent change across offices of +6.6%. Once again, Clinton was an outlier. She did not incur any negative gaps, but she decreased from a +5.8% gap when running for Senator to a 0% gap for President. As a result, she received more feminine trait coverage than her male opponent at the legislative office, but equal amounts of such coverage at the executive office. Once again Palin exhibited a large percent change, culminating in her receiving over 26% *more* feminine trait coverage than her male competitors when running for Vice President. These findings suggest a potential pattern, at least in the news outlets analyzed, in which within the 2008 presidential election, Clinton and Palin received substantially different amounts of types of coverage as compared to their male counterparts, with Barack Obama present in both contexts.

Finally, for masculine traits—leadership, rationality, aggressiveness, decisiveness, and independence—the gap was greater across offices for all four women, with an average percent change of +9.2%. Therefore, the three most gender-incongruent areas for women and politics—gender labels, and masculine issues and traits—produced the largest average percent changes in news content when these candidates ran for higher offices. Similar to previous findings, Palin received the largest gap when she ran for higher office: She received 21% *more* masculine trait coverage than Barack Obama or Joe Biden. Additionally, Clinton once again had different results than the other three women: She went from a large negative gap of −9.3% to a relatively small positive gap of +2.9%, meaning she went from receiving substantially less coverage than the male opponents to slightly more. Although Clinton's coverage showed the smallest gap at the White House level, such a swing created a large percent change in gaps across offices of over +12%. Overall, the pattern was clear that women received more masculine trait coverage than men, especially when running for higher, executive level offices.

Discussion

This study extends scholarship on gender norms, news media studies, and political communication, and offers insight into the portrayal of gender identities in news coverage of mixed-gender elections in the United States. Two key patterns were present in the data. First, overall news coverage emphasized women's novelty more so than men's, and regardless of perceived gender congruence, women received more political issue and character trait coverage than men. Second, analysis across election contexts revealed that gendered news gaps were consistently greater when women sought higher, more executive offices, indicating an increasing emphasis in discussion regarding these women in this study's six categories of coverage. The consistent pattern of women receiving more gendered news coverage—in general and especially when they ran for executive offices—across eight elections and eight newspapers, in differing regions of the United States, and over a 10-year time

span suggests the dominant role these female norm breakers held in electoral news coverage. These findings have broad implications.

The number of women running for and winning political office grew over this study's 10-year analytical timeframe, but this research provides evidence that news media continue to cast women as novelties and norm breakers. The finding that women were treated as novel much more often than men aligns with earlier work (Heldman et al., 2005), but also extends such research by systematically tracking and analyzing the volume of novelty labeling as candidates pursue higher office. In particular, the "novelty labeling gap" between the candidates grew as women ran for higher office, meaning that these women received an increasingly larger share of this discourse. This finding highlights the potential challenges women face when they run for the highest office in the country, or in Palin's case, may be a "heartbeat" away. When women seek to gain higher executive offices, the news media may depict these pursuits positively as historic moments, or less positively as novelties or abnormalities within the norm of male-centric politics. This illustrates the important ways in which journalists may contribute to normative social assumptions that position women as socially incongruent with political office.

Women in this study also received more feminized and masculinized political issue and character trait coverage than men. The gender-congruent connection between women and femininity may benefit candidates because voters make positive associations with women who emphasize feminine issues and traits (Herrnson et al., 2003), but they must also accept the consequences. Specifically, in this study, feminine issue coverage decreased over the last 10 years and as women ran for higher office. This means that women who seek a gender-congruent strategy may receive less coverage of their more "feminized" platform. Masculine issues and traits garnered approximately twice as much coverage as feminine issues and traits, providing a potential benefit for women seeking a more "masculinized" platform. Kahn (1992) suggested that when female candidates were covered in the news like prototypical male candidates, which included an emphasis on masculine issues and traits, the women were considered more viable. However, in keeping with Eagley and Karau (2002), the greater amount of coverage linking women to masculine issues and traits found in this study may suggest for voters the presence of gender *in*authenticity and trigger greater skepticism and criticism of the woman. On the other hand, men "running as men" are both gender *authentic* and gender *congruent* with politics, and thus may not encounter this type of skepticism.

The type of office also produced consistent patterns regarding gendered news coverage. When candidates ran for the executive offices of Governor and President/Vice President, the gaps were greater, with women receiving even larger volumes of coverage than men. Recall that legislative offices are seen as more feminine, and executive offices are perceived as more masculine (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b). In this study, women won all three of the Senate races, whereas a woman only won one of the two gubernatorial elections and none of the White House elections. As this study focused on the volume of coverage as opposed to the tone of coverage, it cannot reasonably

claim that gap size or "gendered" type of office positively contribute to or hinder a woman's likelihood of winning, but it does provoke an interesting line of future research, especially considering that four of the last six U.S. Presidents ascended from Governor seats, as compared to one who moved up from the vice presidency and one from the Senate.

Additionally, the findings that women received more novelty, political issue, and character trait coverage overall provide potential support for this study's overall prediction that women's novelty may spur more gender congruent and incongruent coverage then men. Though this study cannot support a direct, causal relationship, these findings, and Elizabeth Dole's and Sarah Palin's campaigns in particular, offer notable evidence toward this notion. Across the three White House elections contained in this analysis, Sarah Palin and Elizabeth Dole, in that order, received the most novelty coverage of all of the women and men candidates. Across issue and trait coverage, Palin and Dole dominated coverage, with Palin receiving 13 to 23% more coverage than Dole's second-ranking percentages. Palin was not predominant in only one of the six categories, feminine issues, in which case, Dole received the most coverage. Palin's relatively small amount of feminine issue coverage was potentially the result of her coming on board an established, primarily masculine-issue-focused presidential ticket for John McCain. In the end, Republicans Palin and Dole, though separated by almost a decade, received the most novelty coverage, and also received the most issue and trait coverage, suggesting an interesting interplay between partisanship, novelty, and coverage.

These findings are not without limitations. For example, the use of "local" news sources and the lack of primary election season coverage for some of the candidates may have stripped away some of the more introductory coverage of the candidates because the newspapers and the surrounding areas were at least somewhat familiar with these candidates. However, the use of local newspapers, rather than more national newspapers such as The New York Times, afforded more coverage of both elections of each candidate.[5] Further, by using these geographically diverse newspapers, with varying circulation sizes, the findings suggest that the emphasis on novelty for women, as well as the greater volume of issue and trait coverage for women, is potentially commonplace across a range of news outlets.

This research is based on the premise that American politics is highly masculinized, especially at higher levels of office where men continue to dominate the landscape. The predominating emphasis in electoral news coverage on masculinized political issues and character traits in this study, accompanied by the greater application of novelty labels for women, support this social stereotype by bolstering the masculine aspects and norms of politics. However, many changes have occurred for women in politics since Geraldine Ferraro ran for Vice President almost 3 decades ago. In particular, through her 2008 campaign and her public endorsements in 2010, Sarah Palin may have created a new subtype for female politicians. Specifically, her "mama grizzlies" persona embodies and projects aspects of both femininity and masculinity: aggressive behavior deemed appropriate for a mother protecting her children, and

even, the whole of American values (Lopez Torregrosa, 2010). The 2010 midterm elections saw three states elect female Governors for the first time—all Republicans and all endorsed by Sarah Palin as "mama grizzlies." Politics in America has been and remains a "gendered space" (Duerst-Lahti, 2006), and this study explores how this domain is changing as more women enter politics and as more subtypes enter political discourse. Future research should capitalize on the increasing amount of mixed-gender elections at various levels of office, and examine how the news portrays gender identities in this both static and dynamic arena of American politics.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1   For this study, gender is defined as the socially constructed categories of masculine/masculinity and feminine/femininity that are culturally connected to men and women, respectively.
2   Only one or two men were included per election—ensuring a more comparative dataset of news coverage. For Dole and Clinton's presidential primary elections, the eventual general election candidates were selected.
3   The *Daily News* is the largest circulation newspaper in New York State after the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, and was selected for its more local focus. The *Buffalo News* was selected because it is the highest circulation newspaper in New York that serves a different metropolitan area. Daily circulation and national rank, as of 2010, for each selected newspaper is as follows: *Charlotte Observer*: 167,585, 47th; *News & Observer*: 139,826, 62nd; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: 213,472, 30th; *Kansas City Star*: 216,226, 29th; NY *Daily News*: 544,167, 6th; *Buffalo News*: 165,511, 49th; *Anchorage Daily News*: 57,622, not ranked; and *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*: 18,000, not ranked.
4   Before random sampling I excluded Letters to the Editor because these are not generated by news organizations. Most election samples were 30%, but due to the relatively lower volume of articles for Dole's presidential election, I sampled 95% of the retrieved articles. Also, due to the larger volume of articles for both of Clinton's elections, I sampled approximately 20 and 15% of the retrieved articles for her Senate and Presidential election, respectively. The final sample size for each election was as follows: Dole: Senator $n = 81$, President $n = 57$; McCaskill: Governor $n = 57$, Senator $n = 95$; Clinton: Senator $n = 86$, President $n = 236$; and Palin: Governor $n = 56$, Vice President $n = 38$.
5   For example, McCaskill's (2004) gubernatorial campaign accrued only two articles across the three highest circulation newspapers in the United States, and Palin's 2006 campaign for Governor netted only 12 in those same newspapers.

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그녀가 남성으로 충분한가: 여성 후보들, 최고직 정치인들, 그리고 뉴스 보도

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요약

본 연구는 1999 년과 2008 년의 선거에서 4 명의 여성 정치후보들- Elizabeth Dole, Claire McCaskill, Hillary Clinton, 그리고 Sarah Palin 과 그들의 남성 경쟁자들의 의 뉴스 보도 내용을 분석한 것이다. 분석은 여성적인 그리고 남성적인 정치적 이슈들과 여성과 남성의 보도형태가 일반적으로 다른지, 그리고 그 형태가 상원, 주지사, 부통령, 또는 대통령에 있어서 그 성격이 다른가에 초점을 두었다. 전체적으로, 여성들이 보다 많은 뉴스 보도의 대상이 되었으며, 보도에 있어서의 남성과 여성의 차이는 여성들이 고위직을 추구할때 더욱 관심을 받았다. 이러한 발견들은 남성들이 지배하고 있는 정치계에 여성들이 출마하면서 생기는 젠더 동력의 진화에 대한 성찰을 제공하였다.

Est-elle assez virile? Candidates, élections politiques et couverture médiatique

Lindsey Meeks

Cette étude analyse la couverture médiatique de quatre candidates aux élections (Elizabeth Dole, Claire McCaskill, Hillary Clinton et Sarah Palin) et de leurs rivaux masculins, alors que chacune participait à deux élections entre 1999 et 2008. L'analyse a porté sur l'étiquette de la nouveauté et sur des enjeux politiques et des traits de personnalité jugés « féminins » et « masculins », pour déterminer si la couverture des femmes et des hommes différait de façon générale et entre les postes de sénateur, gouverneur, vice-président ou président. Dans l'ensemble, les femmes ont fait l'objet d'une plus grande couverture médiatique, et le fossé entre les genres dans la couverture était particulièrement important en ce qui a trait à la couverture de la nouveauté, des enjeux et des traits de caractère lorsque les femmes visaient les postes « exécutifs » de gouverneure et à la Maison-Blanche. Ces résultats donnent une idée de la dynamique des genres qui se développe alors que des femmes se présentent comme candidates dans le domaine masculinisé de la politique.

Mots clés : candidates, concordance de genre, rôles féminins et masculins, couverture médiatique, élections

Ist sie "Mann genug"? Kandidatinnen, politische Ämter und Nachrichtenberichterstattung

Die Studie untersucht die Nachrichtenberichterstattung über vier weibliche Präsidentschaftskandidaten, nämlich Elizabeth Dole, Claire McCaskill, Hillary Clinton und Sarah Palin, und ihre männlichen Mitstreiter, jeweils in den zwei Wahlen an denen diese zwischen 1999 und 2008 aufgestellt waren. Die Analysen fokussieren auf die Zuschreibung von Neuartigkeit sowie „feminine" wie „maskuline" politische Themen und Charaktereigenschaften, die einen Einfluss darauf hatten, ob die Berichterstattung über Frauen und Männer im Allgemeinen und im Speziellen in Abhängigkeit von der Art des Amtes als Senator, Gouverneur, Vizepräsident und Präsident Unterschiede aufwies. Insgesamt wurde über Frauen mehr berichtet, wobei diese geschlechtsspezifische Kluft bei Neuartigkeit, Thema und Charaktereigenschaft besonders groß war, wenn die Frauen für das Amt des Gouverneurs und für Ämter im Weißen Haus kandidierten. Die Ergebnisse bieten Hinweise auf Geschlechterdynamiken von Frauen die sich in maskulinen Politikdomänen zur Wahl stellen.

Schlüsselbegriffe: weibliche Kandidaten, Geschlechtskonkruenz, Geschlechterrollen, Nachrichtenberichterstattung, Wahlen