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FRAMING HILLARY CLINTON: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWS COVERAGE OF THE 2000 NEW YORK SENATE ELECTION

by

AMY BUSHER

Under the Direction of Cynthia Hoffner

ABSTRACT

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative content analyses to examine how news articles written by the *New York Times* portrayed Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate Election. The study combined research on political elections, gender stereotypes and an inductive analysis of coverage of the election to derive at four dominant frames. These frames, political activity, horserace, gender stereotype and traditional first lady were used to determine how the media responded to Hillary Clinton's unprecedented decision to run for election. Results show that Hillary Clinton received more coverage based on her political activity than any other frame. In addition, there was no significant difference in the frames used based on the tone of the articles.

INDEX WORDS: Framing, Political Elections, Gender Stereotypes, First Ladies, Hillary Clinton, Gender and Politics

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AMY BUSHER

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Master of Arts

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The role of the first lady is surrounded by gender constraints and expectations from the public and the media. Although First Ladies have been constrained by the assumed boundaries of the role, many of these women have made advancements to expand the role to include greater political activity. Whether it was growing up in a society more accepting of women in less traditional roles than her predecessors, or her own desire to participate in politics, Hillary Clinton has made several unprecedented moves to increase the political activity of the first lady. "Given her career and her resume, when Bill Clinton announced his candidacy for president, the stage was set for a dramatic change in the role of first lady" (Burrell, 1997, p. 25).

Advocacy and political involvement were not new for the role of first lady, but Hillary Clinton's took a more direct role in politics and her involvement was more visible to the public than her predecessors. Hillary Clinton openly showed her desire to be more involved in politics by taking an office in the West Wing of the White House, where political decision-making takes place, in addition to the traditional East Wing office of the first lady (Esterowicz & Paynter, 2003). In addition, she was appointment to head the Healthcare Task Force, which was the first time that a first lady was put in charge of a major administrative initiative, and testified on behalf of that initiative before a committee as the principle architect of a plan. In addition Hillary Clinton testified before congress numerous other times. While first ladies Eleanor Roosevelt and Rosalynn Carter also gave testimony during their time in the White House, Hillary Clinton went a

step further by offering solutions (Campbell & McCluskie, 2003). She was also given permission to attend staff sessions and cabinet meetings at her discretion, which no former first lady had been given. In addition, she also received consistent attention from polling organizations and media coverage that was unusual for a first lady.

On February 6, 2000, First Lady Hillary Clinton made another unprecedented move by announcing her candidacy for the seat of United States Senator from New York. While advocacy and political involvement were not new for the role of first lady, this was the first time that a first lady chose to become a political actor in her own right. This election provides an important opportunity to examine how news articles portray the first lady running for election. The media are the most powerful and pervasive conveyer of political information to the public. According to Graber (2002) this power is based in the media's potential to reach large audiences of ordinary people and elites, and their ability to convey information in a speedy manner. The media give insight into public and personal lives that people cannot experience themselves. Most people do not have the opportunity to meet with political figures to learn about their issue positions or get to know them on a personal level. Therefore, the public looks to the media for their political information.

The way the media portray an individual or event is referred to as "framing". Framing is defined as selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient. There is a large body of research that focuses on the way the media frame issues and events, but because Hillary Clinton's candidacy was a first, only one study has examined media coverage of Hillary Clinton during the election. Scharrer (2002) conducted a content analysis of the *New York Times* coverage of Hillary Clinton and her

initial opponent Rudolph Guiliani from October 1, 1999 to February 6, 2000, which was the day Hillary Clinton made her official announcement to run for election. Scharrer (2002) examined the tone of the news coverage of both candidates, which will be discussed in detail in the literature review. Hillary Clinton officially crossed the boundary between first lady and political candidate when she made the official announcement that she would run for senate. Hillary Clinton's announcement of her official candidacy is a definitive line, and the tone of the media coverage and the frames used to portray Hillary Clinton on the other side of that line is the focus of this study. In addition, this study examines news stories and omits editorials, columns, political cartoons, etc. to examine what information an individual would find when seeking out political information about a first lady running for election. It is important to examine the media's coverage of this event because research has shown that media coverage can influence the way the public feels about an event or individual (Iyengar, 1990). Thus, studying how the media framed Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election can provide insight regarding the ways the media may help shape public perceptions of candidates.

The literature review begins by defining media frames and examining research on how the media frame social issues. Then the way an event is framed over time is examined. The next section examines research on media frames in political elections with a discussion of dominant frames used by the media and a look at research on how the media frame female candidates. The literature review continues with research on frames used by the media when covering first ladies and dominant frames used by the media in covering Hillary Clinton as a first lady. The next section examines the study

conducted by Scharrer (2002) on media coverage of Hillary Clinton prior to her official announcement to run in the 2000 New York Senate election. Lastly, to show the importance of framing in the media, the literature review examines research on media effects or the influence of the media on public opinion. The literature review concludes with a discussion of this study and the research questions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Media Framing

Facts alone have no meaning of their own. It is only through being placed in some context through emphasis or focus as part of a frame that facts take on relevance (Gamson, 1989). It is through this process of framing that the media "select some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Frames reside in the specific properties of the news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them. "News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images influenced in a news narrative" (Entman, 1991, p. 7). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989) frames are journalistic descriptions embedded in news stories to create different depictions of news subjects. According to Gitlin (1980) frames provide, repeat and reinforce words and images that reference some ideas and not others. Through placement and repetition, the media increase the salience of certain ideas while decreasing the salience of others (Entman, 1991). This emphasis on, or exclusion of information may be either intentional or unintentional. The information that is de-emphasized or omitted can be just as important as the information that is presented in an article. According to Entman (1993) "most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omission of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience" (p. 52). In addition, several frames may

appear in a single news article. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989) a single news story can contain more than one frame because frames are elements that appear within a news story.

Framing of social issues. There is a large body of research that has focused on the way the media frame social issues, and because of the depth and quantity of this area of research, it is a good area to examine to see how media framing works. The well-known study conducted by Iyengar (1990) examined the frames used by the media when reporting on poverty. Iyengar (1990) found that poverty was covered in two distinct ways, which he termed episodic and thematic. In the episodic frames, the issue of poverty was covered in terms of personal experience, while in the thematic frames, the media focused on trends like the poverty rate or public policy issues. The same issue can be reported on by the media in multiple ways, which includes or omits parts of information about the issue. Therefore the reader only gets the parts of information that the media chooses to include and have to form and opinion based on this information or search out additional information. Another example of how the media can cover the same issue in multiple ways is a content analysis of regional, national, internet and Associated Press coverage of a legal dispute over the inclusion of a religious fish symbol on a city seal, Paxton (2004) found that the media covered the dispute using five dominant frames: framing the dispute as a trivial matter; framing the dispute in terms of the plaintiff's "unusual" religious beliefs; framing the plaintiff as an outsider; framing the dispute as a grass roots fight between locals and outsiders; and lastly framing the dispute as a war or battle. The coverage of this issue focused on one of these frames in each

article. According to Paxton (2004) by using these frames instead of giving a multifaceted account of the dispute, readers are given a skewed version of the event.

Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) conducted a content analysis of weekly print media's coverage of the women's movement. The content analysis examined news coverage in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* of the women's movement between 1950 and 1979. Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) found five unique frames that were used to describe the movement in the coverage: traditional gender roles, which framed women as the weaker sex and in terms of their physical appearance; anti-feminism, which framed emerging feminists against the norms of society; women's political roles, which was dominant during the campaign for women's suffrage, and later when women sought public office; feminist, which framed feminism as disrupting the status quo, and evolved to include sexism, gender discrimination, and the idea that feminists were lesbians; and economic equality, which included themes of women seeking higher wages and eventually general employment rights. Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) found that overall, the economic equality and feminism frames dominated coverage of women's rights, followed by women's political roles and traditional gender roles, anti-feminism, and divisions within the women's movement. Therefore, readers will get more information about the women's rights movement as a fight for economic equality or as a feminist movement, rather than learning about the other aspects of the movement.

Phalen and Algan (2001) conducted a content analysis of the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* coverage of the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women before, during and after the event to examine how journalists framed the event.

According to Phalen and Algan (2001) the journalists focused on incidents and problems related to logistics rather than on the issues that the conference was about. Journalists tended to frame the conference as an American foreign affairs problem between the United States and China, not on women's issues. The theme of western country vs. communist country dominated the news coverage along with a focus on the people with power to affect outcomes. In addition, journalists associated women's issues with radicals and failed to portray women's rights as a substantive issue. Phalen and Algan (2001) argued that the way the event was framed distanced readers from the issues concerning women. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the issues, but the way the media covered the event could have deterred readers from learning about the issues.

In a content analysis of news coverage of physician assisted suicide by the *New York Times* and *The Guardian* in Great Britain, Haller and Ralph (2001) found that there were six news frames: being for or against Jack Kevorkian; Kevorkian associates are prominent news sources and crucial to defining the assisted suicide issues; physician-assisted suicide is presented as an ambiguous legal and religious issue rather than a human rights issue; disability issues are medicalized in the assisted-suicide debate; better dead than disabled; and modern assisted deaths are different from past euthanasia of disabled people. Haller and Ralph (2001) found that these frames ignored or devalued disability.

From an examination of how the media frames social issues such as poverty, women's rights and physician assisted suicide, one can gather a more solid understanding of how news stories help to define public discourse. The inclusion of some information and not others give a skewed version of an issue. With regards to a political election, the way the media cover the election helps to define what the public will learn about candidates and their issue positions.

Reframing of an event over time. A single news event can be framed in a number of ways, which produces multiple versions of the event that contain different attributes. "During any news event's life span, the news media often reframe the event by emphasizing different attributes of the event-consciously and unconsciously-in order to keep the story alive and fresh" (Chyi & McCombs, 2004, p.22). This journalistic practice is referred to as "frame changing." Over time the media increases or decreases the salience of different attributes to keep the public interested. In a content analysis of the *New York Times* coverage of the Columbine school shootings, Chyi and McCombs (2004) examined the journalistic practice of frame changing based on the dimensions of space and time. The space dimension consisted of five levels of framing: individual level, where the event is framed as limited to an individual's involvement; community level, where the event is framed as important to a certain community; regional level, where the event is framed as important to a more general population; societal level, where an event is framed in terms of social or national significance; and international level, where the event is framed from an international level (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). The time dimension was measured by framing the event as: past, the story focused on previous events with no direct linkage to the key event; present, the story focused on

issues surrounding the event in time; or future, the story focuses on the long-term effects of the event and offers remedies. Chyi and McCombs (2004) found that the percent of individual frames decreased while there was a steady increase in the societal frame. The event was no longer being covered based on the details of the event, but more as a societal problem. With regards to the time dimension, Chyi and McCombs (2004) found that as time progressed, coverage of the past frame faded and coverage of the future frame became almost as dominant as the present frame. The coverage of the Columbine shootings had shifted from reports of background to discussion of preventative measures for the future.

Research on Framing in Political Elections

The public is dependent on the mass media for political information. Since only a small proportion of the public has the opportunity to meet candidates in person, voters rely on news coverage in forming their opinions of candidates (Devitt, 2002). Research on frames in political elections has found that there are dominant frames present in media coverage. With regards to presidential elections, Graber (2000) found that the media rely on four main themes. These frames include: trivia information, facts about pets etc.; horserace information, who is ahead and behind; issue information, candidate's issue positions; and candidate information, personal information. In an examination of campaign news stories, Rhee (1997) identified two major frames in campaign coverage, which are the horserace frame and issue frame. The horserace or strategy frame focuses on candidate strategy and win-or-lose aspects of the campaign, while the issue frame presents proposals for problems and information on the candidate's issue positions.

According to Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn (2004), the horserace frame has emerged within the last thirty years as the dominant frame in media coverage of political campaigns. "Today, by any standard, reports on the state of the horserace and analysis of the candidates' strategies are pervasive themes in news coverage of campaigns" (Iyengar et al., 2004, p. 158). In a content analysis of the *New York Times* and *USA Today's* coverage of the 1988 presidential primaries, King (1990) found that horserace coverage was the dominant frame on the front page of both newspapers. In a content analysis of national newspaper coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign, sixty percent of the articles were about horserace information (Buchanan, 1991). According to Lawrence (2000) the game frame or horserace frame is problematic because it crowds out issue based reporting. "When journalists concentrate on who is up or down in the latest poll or primary, the policy issues that politicians presumably are elected to grapple with fall out of focus" (Lawrence, 2000, p. 1059). Therefore, readers learn about the status of the election rather than the issues that may help them to make their voting decision, and either have to search out additional information or make a vote based on the information that they know.

A large amount of research on political elections has also focused on the differences in news coverage between male and female candidates. Research has shown that coverage of female candidates stems from gender stereotypes and the traditional roles of women (Bystrom, Robertson & Banwart, 2001; Carroll & Schreiber, 1996; Devitt, 1999; Kahn, 1992; 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kahn & Gordon, 1997; Norris, 1997). News coverage of female candidates makes attributes such as personal appearance and family life or "female" roles more salient. Devitt (1999) conducted a content analysis of

the Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, and Rhode Island gubernatorial elections during the 1998 general election and found that newspapers paid more attention to female candidates' age, personality and attire. Aday and Devitt (2001) conducted a content analysis of news coverage of Elizabeth Dole's presidential bid in the *Des Moines Register*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today* and the *Washington Post* and found that there were differences in the news coverage of Dole and the other candidates that the authors attributed to her gender. She received less coverage on her positions on the issues than Texas Governor George W. Bush, Arizona Senator John McCain and publisher Steve Forbes, but more coverage on her personal traits. She was often described by her personality, faith, and home. According to Aday and Devitt (2001) this difference in coverage means "readers of these five newspapers were more likely to learn about the policy positions of Bush, McCain, and Forbes than they were to discover what Dole stood for and how she planned to govern the country as president" (p. 61). When readers examined the coverage of the election, they were more likely to learn about the policy issues of Bush and McCain than they were for Dole. She received more coverage based on her gender, which may have affected the way the media perceived her as a candidate. Audiences may have interpreted the coverage to mean that Dole did not have solid issue positioning because there was no coverage of it.

Bystrom et al. (2001) examined news coverage of both male and female candidates in 61 campaigns during the primary race for Governor and U.S. Senate in 2000 and found that news coverage gave more attention to the female candidate's sex, marital status, and children. Bystrom et al. (2001) suggest "the attention paid by the print media to women candidates' marital status and children reflects the double standards still

in place in society when evaluating the ability of women to balance their professional and personal/family roles" (p. 2009). In a content analysis conducted by Banwart, Bystrom and Robertson (2003), female candidates were more likely to have their gender, children and marital status discussed in media coverage in both the primary and the general election. This type of coverage reinforces traditional public/private distinctions by implying that personal appearance and family are most prominent for female candidates instead of coverage on political issues that shows they have the knowledge to participate in politics.

Research has also shown that female candidates are framed less in terms of their issues than are male candidates. In a content analysis of the *Chicago Sun Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*'s coverage of the 1994 Illinois gubernatorial primary, Powers and Serini (1996) found that coverage of white male candidates was more issue oriented than coverage of female or minority candidates. In place of issues in media coverage of female candidates was the horserace frame. In a content analysis of newspaper coverage in 47 statewide campaigns between 1982 and 1988, Kahn (1994b) found that the press focused more extensively on the horserace aspect of the election in coverage of female candidates. Kahn (1994a, 1994b, 1996) suggests that the horserace coverage at the expense of issue coverage shows female candidates as being less viable than their male counterparts. In an experimental study conducted by Kahn and Goldenberg (1991), fictitious female candidates gained viability among the study participants when they received the same amount of issue coverage and type of horserace coverage as male candidates. According to Kahn (1994b), when the media give the most attention to the horserace aspect of the election, voters focus more on the candidate's viability or

likelihood of winning. It is also important to examine the type of horserace coverage a candidate receives. In Kahn's (1994b) study, female candidates were more often described as unlikely to win. According to Kahn (1994b), negative horserace coverage can lead to negative assessments of the female candidate's viability. "Voters who look to the news media for information may come to believe that women candidates are less electable, and they may be less likely to vote for these candidates" (Kahn, 1994b, p. 164).

Research on Framing of First Ladies

Traditional frames used in media coverage of first ladies. News coverage can be influenced by the various societal customs that the media themselves create (Winfield, 1997). "From the time of Martha Washington, news stories about the first lady have emphasized social and cultural roles (Winfield, 1997, p. 245). The cultural development of the role of first lady has established parameters that society assumes the first lady should conform to. Since the media reflects the views of society and pays attention to the news demands of the public, it is no surprise that media coverage of first ladies has coincided with these expected roles. The media coverage of first ladies has focused on their roles or what their roles should be, at the expense of discussing their work (Scharrer & Bissell, 2000). Winfield (1997) examined the making of a first lady's image through interviews with White House personnel, interviews with journalists who covered the first lady and an examination of the media coverage of the White House's efforts to manage news that was related to the first lady. Winfield (1997) found that news coverage about first ladies portrays them in five main areas or frames. The most dominant coverage focused on the traditional roles of women. These three roles were: an escort to her husband; a protocol role for leading fashionable, ceremonial and social events; and a

noblesse oblige role with charitable works (Winfield, 1997). The other two frames focused on the non-traditional roles of women, which were a policy making role of helping to formulate, develop, and influence issues, and a power role of having political influence and a following (Winfield, 1997).

When first ladies overstep boundaries, research has shown that they are portrayed more negatively than when they perform traditional roles (Scharrer, 2002, Scharrer & Bissell, 2000;Winfield, 1997). This is especially true for women who are known to the public for their traditional roles. "Women that develop their public image as wives usually evoke fierce public attacks partly because of a violation of society's stereotypical standards of proper behavior" (Winfield, 1997, p. 242). In a study by Scharrer and Bissell (2000), two content analyses were conducted to examine how the media covered first ladies Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, and Hillary Clinton. The two frames examined were politically active and non-politically active. The first content analysis examined articles in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* to see if political activity affected the tone of the news coverage. The results showed that the more politically active the first lady, the more negative the news coverage. The second content analysis examined photographs in *Time* magazine to see whether an increase in political activity would lead to more stereotypical depictions in news coverage. Political activity in photographs was measured by coding whether the activities or visual presentation of the first lady in the frame was political or not. Coders made judgments on whether the frame showed the first lady in political activities such as giving a speech or if photographs showed the first lady doing activities categorized as non-political. The results showed that the greater the political activity of the first lady, the less stereotypes were used in coverage. There is

limited space in an article, and from this study, we can gather that political activity and stereotypes compete for the same space. When political activity is dominant, stereotypes are covered less.

Framing of Hillary Clinton as a first lady. While most first ladies have been framed based on traditional gender roles, Hillary Clinton's activities have expanded the traditional coverage patterns of previous first ladies. "Hillary obtained much more news coverage that involved her being politically active and taking part in hard news issues than her predecessors" (Scharrer & Bissell, 2000, p. 71). During Bill Clinton's election and throughout his presidency, Hillary Clinton received news coverage unprecedented by any former first lady. "The campaign trail represented a turning point in commentary about first ladies; she was not being criticized for her clothes or her social life, but for her public policy stances" (Burrell, 1997, p. 32). According to Winfield (1997), covering Clinton demanded a new way of looking at the role of first lady as a political figure.

Research has also found that Hillary Clinton was framed more in terms of non-traditional roles than women in similar positions. In a content analysis, Marshall (1996) examined news coverage of Hillary Clinton and Marilyn Quayle, and despite their educational and career similarities, Hillary Clinton was framed as non-traditional, whereas Marilyn Quayle was framed as more traditional. In another content analysis that examined news coverage of Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole, Bystrom, McKinnon and Chaney (1999) found that while these women were equally likely to be discussed in terms of their image, the media framed Hillary Clinton as non-traditional, while Elizabeth Dole was framed as traditional.

In addition to being framed as non-traditional, this study also found that Hillary Clinton was significantly more likely to receive negative coverage. When comparing the types of frames to the coverage, it appears that because Hillary Clinton was framed as more non-traditional, she received more negative coverage. This struggle between the public and private roles of women is also apparent in a study conducted by Gardetto (1997) which found three narrative themes in media coverage of Hillary Clinton related to the public/private dichotomy which were: his strength/her weakness, where Hilary Clinton's strength made Bill Clinton appear weaker; comparison of women/wife styles, where Hillary Clinton was compared to other wives and suggestions were made about which was preferred; and a new kind of partnership, which discussed both partners having a career. Gardetto (1997) found that the coverage based on these three frames showed Hillary Clinton as "a 'new woman' who represented the tensions between the social imaginary family and contemporary women's lives" (p. 226). This coverage emphasized the struggle between the public and private roles of women.

Research on the media's coverage of Hillary Clinton shows that conflict surrounds her and her expected roles. Hillary Clinton has been a difficult news topic for journalists who are used to traditional first lady stories. For them, she was a surprise; they saw a contradiction between expected female roles and her policy making and political power, areas calling for more critical analysis. "The greatest news controversies about this first lady concern her policy making, her political power and influence, and her previous professional and financial work" (Winfield, 1997, p. 247). These topics are controversial for a first lady because these are non-traditional activities, and research has

shown that when women overstep traditional boundaries, there is negativity or controversy surrounding these actions.

Research on Hillary Clinton running for election. Hillary Clinton's decision to run for the seat of United States Senator from New York was an unprecedented decision. However there is only one study that has examined news coverage of Hillary Clinton in this election. Scharrer (2002) examined the media's coverage of Hillary Clinton to determine the tone of news coverage that she received as she made the transition from first lady to senate candidate. The content analysis examined media coverage of Hillary Clinton from October 1, 1999 until February 6, 2000. The sample began the day she unofficially said she would run and ended on the date of her official announcement. The articles were coded as showing the candidate as either politically active or non-politically active. Politically active included issue positions, poll results, campaign visits, and policy discussions, and non- political activity included traditional or expected gender roles such as hostess or entertainer. The coders then rated the tone of the story on a scale of 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive). In addition, Scharrer (2002) analyzed negative statements about Clinton in the news coverage. The study found that negative statements accompanied coverage for both Clinton and Guiliani. The most common topics for negative statements about Clinton were her issues, her campaign, and her likelihood of winning, while the most common topics for negative statements about Guiliani were his issues, his image, and his campaign. In addition, when Clinton was framed as being politically active, the tone of the story was more negative. Scharrer (2002) suggests that there are two explanations for the negativity in news coverage of Hillary Clinton. The first is that Hillary Clinton was being held to narrow definitions of gender roles and

because she was overstepping those roles is receiving unfavorable coverage, and the second is that the media coverage of Hillary Clinton was just "politics as usual" with the media exercising their role as the watchdog press and scrutinizing politicians.

The study conducted by Scharrer (2002) left room for more research on the media's coverage of the 2000 New York Senate election. Scharrer (2002) examined the tone of coverage only until the date of Hillary Clinton's official announcement, and focused on whether Hillary Clinton's political activity was portrayed in a negative tone. The present study attempts to further research on first ladies as political candidates by examining how the media framed Hillary Clinton's run for political office, after she officially announced her candidacy.

The Influence of Media Framing on Public Opinion

It is important to examine the frames in the news coverage of Hillary Clinton during this election because numerous studies have shown that the way an event or individual is framed can have an influence on people's perceptions of that event or individual. An influence of the media lie within its ability to frame. "The manner in which a problem of choice is 'framed' is a contextual cue that may profoundly influence decision outcomes" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 11). The impact of these frames on public perception is termed framing effects. People tend to favor the facts that are brought to their attention through frames, and the way an event is framed by the media can affect how audiences understand the event (Scheufele, 1999). Frames put the complexity of the world into context to help individuals make sense of the world around them. Druckman (2001) suggested that framing effects occur because citizens do not seek out additional information, but instead look to credible sources for answers. The literature on the

impact of framing is extensive and shows that differences in framing can have influences on public perceptions. In the well-known study cited earlier, conducted by Iyengar (1990), the framing of poverty was examined to see if frames affect how people assign responsibility for the issue. Iyengar (1990) found that whether the issue was framed as episodic or thematic had an impact on the perception of responsibility. In the episodic frames, the issue of poverty was covered in terms of personal experience, while the thematic frames focused on trends like the poverty rate or public policy. When the media presented the issue of poverty as episodic, responsibility was assigned to the individual, whereas if the issue was framed as thematic, responsibility was assigned to society.

With regards to political elections, the media influence how voters think about issues and also how they think about candidates running for election (Ramsden, 1996). "There is little doubt that people learn about the candidates through the media. This learning in turn has an impact on perceptions and eventually on the choices voters make at the poll" (Ramsden, 1996, p. 66). Voters' evaluations of candidates are influenced by factors such as the voter's party identification, the voter's evaluation of the candidate's issue position, the voter's evaluation of the candidate's personality, and the voter's assessment of the candidate's viability (Kahn, 1994a, 1994b). According to Kahn (1994a, 1994b), the way the media frame political campaigns can influence the way voters perceive the candidate.

The media also have the ability to influence public perceptions of public figures such as first ladies. "The ways in which the photographers, journalists, and editors have chosen to present information regarding the activities of the first lady can result in specific interpretations or evaluations by readers" (Scharrer & Bissell, 2000, p. 81). Two

studies found that with an increase in the number of scandal stories about Hillary Clinton, she received lower ratings in public opinion polls. Winfield and Freidman (2003) and Buden and Mughan (1999) found that the larger the number of scandal stories about Hillary Clinton in the media, the lower the public's opinion rating of her, suggesting that the news coverage impacted public opinion.

This Study

This study examined a sample of 194 articles about First Lady Hillary Clinton in the *New York Times* during the election period, from February 6, 2000 through Election Day, November 7, 2000. The 2000 New York Senate race was an open contest to replace New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who was retiring after 25 years in the New York Senate seat. The race began as a contest between Democrat First Lady Hillary Clinton and Republican New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. When Giuliani dropped out of the race in May due to health reasons, Rick Lazio, a four-term member of Congress from Long Island replaced the Republican nominee (Online Newshour Election 2000). This election is important to study because it is the first time a first lady has run for elected office. It was also the most costly non-presidential election in United States history (Online Newshour Election 2000). In addition, Senate races receive a considerable amount of news coverage (Kahn, 1994a).

Hillary Clinton has been active in both the private realm as wife and mother and the public realm through her own career and as a political partner to Bill Clinton. This study examined how the media framed Hillary Clinton as a confirmed senate candidate. Research addressing news coverage of a first lady candidate during an election is limited since this is the first time that a first lady has run for elected office. Therefore, this study

attempted to further the research on media coverage of a first lady running for political office by looking at both the type of frames used in news coverage and the tone of the news coverage. To determine how the media covered Hillary Clinton, each article was coded for the dominant frame. The dominant frame within the article is the aspect of the event that is emphasized or made most salient within the article (Devitt, 2002). In addition, the headline and the lead paragraph may be useful in determining the dominant frame. Headlines act as a textual negotiator between the article and the reader (Dor, 2002). The headlines often summarize articles or highlight details. Research has shown that media coverage can influence the way the public feels about an event or individual (Iyengar, 1990). With regard to the 2000 New York Senate Election, the way the media framed Hillary Clinton could have influenced the way the public thought about her candidacy. Scharrer (2002) examined the tone of media coverage of Hillary Clinton as she transitioned into a candidate, but the sample stopped the day she officially became a candidate. Research has shown that when a first lady oversteps traditional boundaries, the media reacts by portraying her negatively (Scharrer, 2002; Scharrer & Bissell, 2000; Winfield, 1997). Her official candidacy is a definitive boundary, and the frames used to portray Hillary Clinton and the tone of the media coverage on the other side of that line are important because media coverage can influence the way a candidate is evaluated by voters.

Research Questions

This study addressed a number of research questions related to how the *New York Times* framed Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election. The sample was coded for four frames derived from a qualitative inductive analysis of coverage of

the election, and also research on first ladies, political elections and gender stereotypes. The four frames that the articles were coded for were “political activity”, “horserace”, “gender stereotypes” and “traditional first lady role”. The traditional political activity frame included coverage of Hillary Clinton participating in traditional political activities, which include the candidate’s stand on issues, campaigning, garnering/seeking support, debating and political ideology. The horserace frame included the candidate being portrayed as a winner or loser in the election or in political activity such as debates or any other reference to the competition of the election. The gender stereotype frame included coverage of the candidate in terms of her physical appearance or her role in family life. The first lady frame referred to the traditional roles of a first lady such as escort, entertainer, home decorator, and charitable works advocate (Scharrer, 2002). The purpose of this study was to examine the way the media framed a first lady running for political office. In addition, this study looked further into the coverage by also examining the subcategories within the dominant frames. Under the dominant frame political activity, the subcategories would be campaigning, seeking support, issues, and ideology. This study also examined which issues were most dominant in the New York Times’ coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election. Hence the following question was asked:

Research Question 1a: Which frames were most dominant in the *New York Time*s’ portrayal of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election?

Research Question 1b: Within these frames, which subcategories were most dominant in the *New York Times’* coverage of Hillary Clinton?

Research Question 1c: Which issues were dominant in the *New York Times’* coverage of

Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election?

In addition, this study looked at the secondary frames present in the *New York Time's* news coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate Election. For this study, secondary frames were defined as a frame within the article that was not the dominant frame of the article.

Research Question 1d: Which secondary frames were featured in the *New York Times*' coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate Election?

Research has shown that the type of frame used to portray an event by the media changes over time to keep the story interesting (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). There are multiple attributes of each event, which can be emphasized to produce multiple versions of the event. With regard to Hillary Clinton's candidacy for the New York Senate, the frequency of frames was compared across three time periods to see whether there was a difference in the coverage over time. Because the sample period was nine months long, it was divided into three equal intervals of three months each. These time periods separated Clinton's candidacy into three main stages: her initial involvement in the campaign, the middle of the election, and the end of the election. Hence the following question was asked:

Research Question 2a: How did the frequency of the dominant frames used to portray Hillary Clinton change during the election period?

Research Question 2b: How did the frequency of the secondary frames used to portray Hillary Clinton change during the election period?

Research has shown that when women overstep traditional boundaries there is an increase in the amount of negative news coverage that she receives. Hillary Clinton's

decision to run for elected office was an example of a first lady overstepping traditional boundaries. Therefore it is important to examine the extent to which negative news coverage accompanied this move. The overall tone of each article was rated on a five-point scale with one being very negative and five being very positive. The tone of the articles throughout the election was examined to see whether there was a difference in the coverage over time. Again, the frames were examined in three-month intervals. In addition to examining the tone of the media coverage, this study examined whether there was an association between the type of frame used and the tone of media coverage. Hence, the following questions were asked:

Research Question 3: Did the tone of the coverage of Hillary Clinton change during the election period?

Research Question 4a: How did the tone of the media coverage differ based on the dominant frame used by the media to portray Hillary Clinton?

Research Question 4b: How did the tone of the media coverage differ based on the secondary frame used by the media to portray Hillary Clinton?

Chapter 3

Method

This study examined news coverage of the 2000 New York Senate Election by the *New York Times*. This study omitted content such as editorials, columns, and political cartoons because it intended to examine the information an individual would find when searching for political information about a candidate. According to Kahn and Goldenberg (1991), the papers with the largest circulations have the greatest potential to impact audiences. The *New York Times* was chosen for this study because of its size and central location to the 2000 New York Senate Election. The *New York Times* has the largest daily circulation in the state of New York (1,113,000) and had the largest daily circulation in the United States behind *USA Today* (2,136,068) and the *Wall Street Journal* (1,800,607) (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 2003). In addition, the *New York Times* is a newspaper of record in contemporary America, it is well indexed, and many researchers turn to it for clues about how media elites conceived an event at the time it occurred (Gardetto, 1997).

Selection of News Articles

Articles for this study were taken from the LexisNexis news database using a guided news search. For this study, an article is defined by each separate heading retrieved by LexisNexis through the search. The category “New York news sources” was chosen from the list of possible news categories and *New York Times* was typed into the space provided for specific news sources. The time frame chosen for the sample was February 6, 2000 through November 7, 2000. The date February 6, 2000 was chosen because it was the day Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy for the United States

Senate from New York (cnn.com). The date November 7, 2000 was chosen as the ending date because it was the day of the election. The single search term "Hillary Clinton" was used to search the *New York Times* archives. This study looked to examine news coverage of Hillary Clinton after she officially confirmed her candidacy. The search results were compared to eliminate any duplication. In addition, articles from the editorial desk, magazine desk, sports desk, arts/cultural desk and the business/financial desk were discarded to avoid other types of newspaper content such as editorials, letters to the editor, opinion columns and cartoons. From the remaining articles, the first two paragraphs of each article were read to determine whether the article had a primary focus on Hillary Clinton and should be included in the sample. The total number of articles included in the sample is 194.

Coding Procedure

The coding scheme was based on an inductive qualitative content analysis of news coverage of the 2000 New York Senate election and also prior research on news coverage of political elections, gender stereotypes and first ladies (Bystrom et al., 2001; Buchanan, 1991; Carroll & Schreiber, 1996; Devitt, 1999, 2002; Graber, 2000; Iyengar, Norpoth & Hahn, 2004; Kahn, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kahn & Gordon, 1997; King, 1990; Lawrence, 2000; Norris, 1997; Rhee, 1997).

Reliability

Two graduate communication students (including the author) coded the sample. They were trained by reviewing the coding scheme and instructions together to ensure that both understood the requirements. They practiced coding a sample of 40 articles about the 2000 New York Senate election from the *New York Post*. Agreement between

coders was checked to minimize error and increase intercoder reliability. The primary coder (the author) coded the entire sample, and the secondary coder independently reviewed and coded a random subset of 20 percent of the sample. Cohen's kappa for each variable is reported in the following descriptions of the coding scheme.

Article Background

For each article, the coder used Coding Sheet A (Appendix B) to record the article number, date of publication and main title of the article. Then the coder recorded the first and last name of author, and coded the authors as male, female, both or unknown (kappa = .93).

Dominant and Secondary Frames

For each article, the coder read the article looking for the dominant frame within the article, as well as any secondary frames (Yang, 2003). The dominant frame within the article is the aspect of the event that was emphasized most or made most salient within the article (Devitt, 2002). More than one dominant frame may appear in an article (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) (kappa = .71). A secondary frame is information that is emphasized or made salient in an article, but is not a dominant frame.

Political activity frame. The political activity frame involved traditional political activities, which included the candidate's stand on issues, campaigning, garnering/seeking support, debating and political ideology (kappa = .87). If the article framed Hillary Clinton in terms of her issue positions, then the issues emphasized were recorded. Examples of issues prominent in the 2000 New York Senate race include education and campaign financing. The coders also circled the type of political activity emphasized such as "issues," "campaigning," "seeking support," "political ideology,"

and "other." Researchers have found that there are issues predominately associated with female candidates and issues predominately associated with male candidates (Fox & Oxley, 2003; Kahn, 1992; Sapiro, 1982). "Female" issues include healthcare, abortion and education, and poverty while "male" issues include the economy, military or police issues, crime and business issues (Sapiro, 1982).

Horserace frame. Horserace news coverage selects and makes salient information about winning and losing and treats the candidates as engaging in a contest (Rhee, 1997). Horserace coverage included the candidate being portrayed as a winner or loser in the election or in political activity such as debates, or any other reference to the competition of the election. For example, an article that emphasized Hillary Clinton's success in the first debate would be coded as "horserace," while an article that emphasized the candidates speaking on the issues would be coded as "political activity". If an article contained information on who won or lost the debate and also covered the debate based on issues the coder recorded both "horse race" and "political activity". The coder also recorded whether Hillary Clinton is framed as "winning," "losing," or "neutral" (Kappa = .71).

Gender stereotype frame. The gender stereotype frame refers to media coverage that is typical of former female candidates. This frame included an emphasis on the candidate's physical appearance or her family role (Kappa = .68). For this frame, the coder also circled whether Hillary Clinton's "physical appearance" or "role in family life" was emphasized.

Traditional First lady frame. The first lady frame referred to the article emphasizing the traditional roles of a first lady such as escort, entertainer, home decorator, and charitable works advocate (Scharrer, 2002). For this frame the coder also recorded the first lady roles that were emphasized (Kappa = 73).

Tone of the News Coverage

In addition to the frames present in the article, the coder read each article to determine the overall tone of the article. The coder read the entire article then rated the tone of the coverage on a five-point scale with one being very negative and five being very positive (Scharrer, 2002). The coder marked 1 if the story contained clear and blatant words used to connote a sense of disapproval or disregard, accusations or unflattering comments, or words or phrases that portrayed the subject in a bad light throughout. The coder marked 2 if there were isolated examples of negativity, as defined above, somewhere in the story. The coder marked 3 if there was no indication of either a positive or negative tone. The coder marked 4 if the story contained less consistent positive indicators. Lastly, the coder marked 5 for very positive if there were clear words used to connote praise, approval, flattery, or any angle that portrayed the subject in a good light throughout (kappa = .72).

Chapter 4

Results

Overall, there were 194 articles included in the sample. Primary focus or dominant frame was assigned to the frames that were the main idea or most prominent in the article. Secondary focus or secondary frame was assigned to the frames that were present in the article, but were not the dominant focus.

Frequency of Frames in News Coverage

Frequency of the four dominant frames. Research question 1a addressed which frames were dominant in news coverage of Hillary Clinton in the 2000 New York Senate election. The frames coded were: political activity, horserace, gender stereotypes, traditional first lady, and other. A total of 7 articles included more than one frame and these articles were omitted from this analysis because the frames were equally dominant and could not be analyzed. In addition, 11 articles coded as other were omitted because theses articles did not contain one of the dominant frames found through the inductive analysis or in previous research. The results show that the news media did not emphasize all frames equally, $X^2(3)=394.4$, $p< .001$. As shown in Table 1, the news media emphasized the political activity frame in 158 (89.8%) of the articles that had a dominant frame, far more than any other frame. In addition, the news media emphasized the gender stereotype frame in 9 (5.1%) of the articles, the horserace frame in 7 (4.0%) of the articles, and the traditional first lady frame in 2 (1.1%) of the frames. The data show that political activity was represented far more frequently than any of the other frames.

Table 1. Percent of Dominant Frames

Dominant Frame	Percent of Articles
Political Activity	89.8%
Horserace	4.0
Gender Stereotypes	5.1
Traditional First Lady Role	1.1
N	176

Subcategories of the four dominant frames. Research question 1b asked how the subcategories coded within each frame were distributed. Within the 158 articles coded as containing the dominant frame political activity, more than one subcategory (issues, campaigning, seeking support and ideology) could be coded in a single article, resulting in N=203. The analysis found that there was a significant difference in the frequency with which the articles mentioned the four subcategories of political activity $X^2(3)=16.5$, $p<.001$. These data are shown in Table 2. Issues (n = 66, 41.0%) and campaigning (n = 64, 40.5%) were mentioned more often than were seeking support (n = 40, 25.3%) or ideology (n = 33, 20.8%).

Table 2. Percent of Articles that Mentioned Each Category of Political Activity

Political Activity	Percent of Articles
Issues	35.0%
Campaigning	34.2
Seeking Support	21.4
Ideology	17.6
N	158

Regarding research question 1c, there were seven issues discussed in at least five percent of the 66 articles that included a focus on issues. These issues were economy, education, healthcare, taxes, gun control, soft money, and environment. The analysis revealed that the distribution of issues was not equal, with some issues mentioned more than others, $X^2(6)=952.6$, $p<.007$. These data are shown in Table 3. Of these seven

issues, soft money was mentioned most often, being discussed in 17 (25.8%) of the 66 articles. Economy, education, gun control, and healthcare were each present in 8 (12.1%) articles. Taxes were present in 6 (10.1%) of the articles. The environment was present least often in 4 (5.8%) articles.

Table 3. Percent of Articles With a Focus on Issues That Mentioned Each of Seven Issues

Issues	Percent of Articles
Soft Money	28.8%
Economy	13.5
Education	13.5
Gun Control	13.5
Healthcare	13.5
Taxes	10.3
Environment	6.9
N	59

Only 11 articles had the horserace as the dominant frame. Hillary Clinton was portrayed as the winner in 10 (91.0%) of these articles, significantly more often than she was portrayed as the loser (n = 1, 9.0%), $X^2(1)=7.364$, $p<.007$. Hence the articles that focused on the horserace overwhelmingly portrayed her as the winner, rather than the loser.

Within the 8 articles that featured the dominant frame of gender stereotype, the only subcategory that was present was Clinton's role in family life, included in all of the articles (100%). Her physical appearance was not present within any of the articles.

There were only two articles that focused on the frame of traditional first lady. One article focused on charity (50%) and the other focused on her role as an entertainer (50%). Neither the escort nor home decorator roles were mentioned in any of the articles.

Frequency of Secondary Frames

Research question 1d addressed which secondary frames were present in the news coverage of Hillary Clinton during the election period. Secondary frames were present in only 14 of the articles. The gender stereotype frame was present in 13 (90.0%) of these articles and the horserace frame was present in only 1 (10.0%). The two frames political activity and traditional first lady were not present as secondary frames. Hence, the data show that the secondary frame gender stereotype was represented far more frequently than any other secondary frame.

Changes in Framing Over Time

Frequency of dominant frames over time. Research question 2a addressed whether the frequency of the dominant frames changed during the election period. A chi-square was used to compare the dominant frames across three time periods starting on February 6, 2000 and ending November 7, 2000. The time periods were each three months long. The analysis was conducted using the four dominant frames: political activity, gender stereotypes, horserace and traditional first lady. The articles with dominant frames that were categorized as other were omitted from this analysis.

The analysis showed that there was a marginally significant difference in the dominant frames in news coverage across the three time periods, $X^2(6)= 12.213$, $p = .057$. The analysis showed that the percent of articles containing the dominant frame political activity tended to decrease from the first time period (94.0%) to the third time period (86.0%) as shown in Table 4. The percent of articles containing the frame horserace more than doubled from the first time period (2.0%) to the third time period (5.8%). The

same pattern was present for the frame gender stereotype (first time period, 4.0%; third time period, 8.1%).

Table 4. Percent of Dominant Frames Over Time

Frames	Time Period 1	Time Period 2	Time Period 3
Political Activity	94.0%	92.5%	86.0%
Horserace	2.0	2.5	5.8
Gender Stereotype	4.0	0	8.1
Traditional First Lady	0	5.0	0
N	43	41	74

Frequency of secondary frames over time. Research question 2b asked whether the secondary frames changed across the three time-periods. Only 14 articles contained secondary frames, and 13 of these featured the frame gender stereotypes. Due to this low frequency and limited variability, no comparison could be made across time periods.

Tone of News Coverage

Tone of coverage across time periods. The third research question addressed the tone of the coverage during the three time-periods. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the tone of the article during three time periods. The analysis showed no difference in tone over the three time periods, $F(2,173) = .263$, $p>.10$. The means are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Tone of News Coverage Over Three Time Periods

Time Period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	49	3.08	.57
2	42	3.04	.58
3	85	3.00	.71
Total Sample	176	3.03	.64

Note: Tone could range from 1, very negative to 5 very positive.

Tone of articles in the four dominant frames. Research question 4a addressed whether the tone of the articles varied based on the dominant frame. For this analysis, the category "other" was omitted. The analysis showed there was no significant difference in the tone of the articles in the four dominant frames $F(3, 172) = .404$, $p>.10$. The means are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Tone of the Articles Containing Dominant Frames

Dominant Frame	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Political Activity	158	3.01	.64
Horserace	7	3.14	.69
Gender Stereotypes	9	3.22	.67
First Lady Role	2	3.00	.00
Total	176	3.02	.64

Tone of articles in the secondary frames. Research question 4b asked whether the tone of the articles varied according to the secondary frames. Since only 14 articles included a secondary frame, and 13 of these featured the same frame (gender stereotypes), this question could not be addressed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The data revealed that the *New York Time's* coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate election differed from previous research on news coverage of political elections, news coverage of women in political elections and had some similarities with research on news coverage of traditional first lady roles.

Frequency of Frames in the News Coverage

Frequency of dominant frames. With regards to research question 1, which asked which frames were most dominant in news coverage of Hillary Clinton, this study found that the frame political activity was emphasized in nearly nine tenths of the articles, followed by gender stereotypes, horserace and lastly traditional first lady. This outcome is interesting because previous research on political elections have found that the "horserace" frame constitutes the majority of news coverage during a political election (Iyengar, Norpoth & Hahn, 2004; King, 1990; Buchanan, 1991). Horserace coverage can be problematic for a candidate and also the public because it can take up space that could be used to report on the issues or facts (Lawrence, 2000). Hillary Clinton received more coverage based on her political activities.

The findings of research question 1 also contrast with previous studies on news coverage of women running for political elections. Previous research has found that female candidates receive more horserace coverage than coverage of their political activities (Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996). When the horserace frame is dominant for coverage of female candidates, it shows female candidates as being less viable than their male counterparts (Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996). While the amount of horserace coverage

Hillary Clinton received was minimal compared to the frame political activity, of the articles with horserace as the dominant frame, she was portrayed as the winner in the majority of these articles. This is contradictory to previous research where female candidates received more negative horserace coverage, which can lead to negative assessments of the candidate's viability (Kahn 1994b). Being portrayed as a winner may have led to positive assessments of her viability as a candidate.

There are at least two explanations for the frequency of articles with political activity as the dominant frame. One explanation is that the media broke from conventional coverage because the first lady running for election was an unprecedented event and there were no guidelines for covering this type of candidate. Therefore, they strayed from conventional news coverage to suit this new type of candidate. Another explanation is that the type of news coverage received by Clinton was due to the nature of her campaign. Throughout the campaign, Hillary Clinton campaigned for an election about the issues. She consistently reinforced this message during campaign speeches and interviews, and the message was also reinforced in comments by her campaign committee. Hence, the Clinton camp framed her candidacy in terms of issues and the media mirrored this frame (Graber, 2002). According to Graber (2002) the media not only report on the issues of the day, but they can also be influenced by the information that they are given as well. Therefore, the Clinton campaign also played a role in the way she was framed during the election.

Frequency of secondary frames. Secondary focus or secondary frame was assigned to the frames that were present in the article but were not the dominant focus. These frames are still important to analyze because they send a message to the reader

about what else is important. There was a similarity between this study and previous research on the traditional roles of first ladies. While the majority of articles with a secondary frame focused on the gender stereotype frame, it was a small number of articles compared to the number of articles with a dominant frame on political activity. The findings of this study agree with previous research conducted by Bissell (2000), who found that the more politically active a first lady, the less gender stereotypes in the coverage. Hillary Clinton received far more coverage on her political activity than based on gender stereotypes.

Frequency of Frames Over Time

Frequency of dominant frames over time. With regard to research question 2, which asked how the frequency of dominant frames used to portray Hillary Clinton changed over the election period, the analysis showed a marginally significant change over time. Horserace and gender stereotype frames tended to increase from the first time period to the last, while the amount of coverage of political activity tended to decrease from the first time period to the third time period. It appears that as the amount of coverage of political activity decreased, there was an increase in the amount of coverage of the horserace and gender stereotype frame. This tells us that there is limited space and that information competes for the space available. The problem with competing frames is that with certain frames, the negative effects can be doubled. For example, when the gender stereotype frame is present in coverage, the negative effects are doubled because the article is conveying stereotypical information and at the same time replacing political information about the candidate.

Tone of News Coverage

With regards to research question 3, which asked whether the tone of coverage of Hillary Clinton changed during the election period, the analysis showed that there was no difference across time periods. With regard to research question 4, which asked how the tone of the media coverage differed based on the dominant frame, the study again found no significant differences. There was no difference in the tone of the articles with different dominant frames.

These findings, especially the fact that the tone of the articles was unrelated to the type of coverage, are inconsistent with previous research. Studies on gender stereotypes and first ladies have shown that when a woman oversteps traditional boundaries the media react by covering her more negatively. Scharrer (2002) conducted a study of the tone of coverage of Hillary Clinton in the beginning of the 2000 New York Senate election while Rudolph Giuliani was her opponent. Scharrer (2002) found that, overall the coverage of Clinton was more negative when she was portrayed as politically active than when she was portrayed as a traditional first lady. In addition, the tone of the coverage was most negative when she was covered in terms of issues, her campaign, and her likelihood of winning. Scharrer (2002) suggested that when a first lady oversteps traditional boundaries, and becomes more politically active, the news media react more negatively.

This study also found that the majority of the articles had a neutral tone. Based on previous research on gender stereotypes that have found that women are viewed negatively when they participate in non-traditional activities, it could be expected that the media would react negatively to the first lady running for election. Hillary Clinton has

continuously overstepped traditional boundaries throughout her time in the public eye. An explanation for the tone of the coverage being neutral instead of negative may be that Hillary Clinton's political activity was becoming more accepted. As this type of activity became common with Hillary Clinton, the coverage moved away from negativity. In addition, Scharrer's study was conducted when Hillary Clinton was considering running for election. Therefore when Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy it may not have come as a surprise and thus the media may have chosen to accept her in this position. Another explanation may be that since the articles were news stories the journalistic style of writing omitted positive or negative feelings. It is also possible that the tone of the articles could have been affected by other news events such as problems in the Middle East. The conflict and violence overseas may have made citizens more sensitive to negative coverage, and therefore the media chose not to cover the election with negativity.

Limitations of the Study

A significant limitation of this study was that it examined only *the New York Times* and thus offered only a glance at the news coverage of the 2000 New York Senate election. There are many other newspapers in New York and thousands of newspapers nationwide that may have contained news articles about the election. This study examined the news coverage in the *New York Times* because of its central location to the event, its circulation, and because it is a reputable newspaper. Examining other newspapers published in New York or other regions of the country would provide a more complete analysis of the coverage. In addition, only hard news stories were included in this study. This could be limiting because voters also read other types of stories such as

columns and editorials that discuss candidates and may that impact their decision-making process.

Another limitation to this study is that it is a case study of one unique event, conducted to get a better understanding of that event. While Hillary Clinton is female and was a political candidate, her title as first lady put her into a separate category. Therefore, this study is not generalizable. Nonetheless, it is important because according to Jamieson (1995) when one woman oversteps a boundary, she leads the way for others to follow. According to this line of thinking by Jamieson, Hillary Clinton's candidacy may make it easier for others to follow. Therefore, by studying the type of coverage the media gave to Hillary Clinton during this unprecedented candidacy, it gives a comparison point for future research.

Another limitation to this study was that this study focused on news articles, which are designed to be neutral and avoid stereotypes. While other types of news articles such as editorials, columns, and feature stories are more likely to contain more opinions and stereotypes, the purpose of this study was to examine what types of frames readers searching for political information are exposed to. Since news stories contain the most factual political information, this study sought to examine only news stories.

This study also did not examine the effects of certain events or circumstances on the news coverage. For example, during this time frame there was controversy over Elian Gonzales and also conflict in the Middle East. These events could be responsible for less coverage of the election and also the tone of the coverage when these events were prominent in the media. They may have also affected the issues that were being discussed by the candidates and also in the media.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are numerous additional studies that could be conducted to increase the body of research on this benchmark analysis. Researchers interested in the presence of gender stereotypes in news coverage or how the media cover political elections and cover first ladies could conduct qualitative analyses to take a more in-depth look at what was written in the articles. While this study focused on classifying the features of the news coverage, counting the frequency and using statistics to explain what happened, a qualitative analysis would give a more complete and detailed description of the news coverage. Researchers could analyze statements in a sample of articles to get a more detailed illustration of the way gender stereotypes are used in news coverage or how candidates or first ladies are framed in news coverage.

In addition, while this study focused on hard news stories, researchers could also examine how Hillary Clinton was portrayed in different types of articles such as editorials or opinion articles, letters to the editor, or political cartoons during the election period. The style of writing differs in hard news stories and editorials, which may have altered how Hillary Clinton was portrayed. For this type of analysis, researchers could use the same coding scheme as the present study as a comparison to examine if the type of article altered the coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 2000 New York Senate Election.

Another suggestion for future researchers would be to compare a local news source to a news source further away to see if the first lady was framed differently. It would be interesting to see whether the coverage differed based on the region of the

country. This would be informative because certain areas of the country are known as being more conservative or liberal than others, which may affect the coverage. In addition, it would also be useful to examine how other newspapers within New York covered the election.

Future research could also focus on the authors of the articles and whether the gender of the author had an influence on how the article was written. The gender of the author could be compared to tone, and also the dominant frames used. Future researchers could also conduct a qualitative analysis of the tone of the articles. This would allow a more in-depth analysis of the tone of the news coverage and a more detailed explanation of what negative or positive things were written in the coverage.

Conclusions

This study advances the scholarship on media framing by addressing the media's portrayal of a first lady running for political office. The study examined the frequency of the frames present in the *New York Time's* news coverage of Hillary Clinton in the 2000 New York Senate election, what time-period the articles were printed in, and the tone of the coverage within the frames and across the time-periods. It demonstrates that Hillary Clinton running for political election was depicted more in terms of her candidacy than in terms of her role as a first lady or based on gender stereotypes. This study also contradicts previous research that has found that when a woman oversteps traditional boundaries the media react by covering her more negatively. In this study, the majority of news coverage was neutral. In addition, this study also confirms the findings of researchers who have found that the horse race is becoming less prominent in news coverage.

This study is important for several reasons. First, it quantifies news coverage of an unprecedented event: a first lady running for elected office. Second it examines the type of news coverage that a first lady transitioning into political candidate receives. Third, this study provides a benchmark analysis, which can be used as a point of reference or comparison for future studies to examine a first lady running for elected office.

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Appendix A

Coding Instructions

CODING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Record the article number located on the upper-right hand corner of the first page of the article.
2. Record the date of the publication in a two-digit format. For example, May 31, 2000 would be 05/31/00.
3. Record the main title of the article.
4. Record the first and last name of the author(s) of the article. Also, record the sex of the author(s) by circling "male" if the author(s) are male, "female" if the author(s) are female, "both" if the article was written by both male and female authors, or "unknown" if the author(s) sex cannot be determined from the first name or the initials of the author(s) were used (Aday & Devitt, 2001) for example A. Busher. If an article has multiple authors, mark unknown if the sex of any of the authors cannot be determined.
5. For each article, read the article looking for dominant frames. The dominant frame within the article is the information that is emphasized most or made most salient within the article (Devitt, 2002). The headline and the lead paragraph may be useful in determining the dominant frame. Headlines act as a textual negotiator between the article and the reader (Dor, 2002). The headlines often summarize articles or highlight details. On the coding sheet circle the dominant frame in the article. If two or more frames are equally dominant, circle these frames under "dominant frame(s)" on the coding sheet.

A. *Political Activity.* The traditional political activity frame emphasizes traditional political activities, such as the candidate's stand on issues, campaigning, garnering/seeking support, and political ideology. Also circle the activity that was discussed in the article from the list above. If the article frames Hillary Clinton in terms of her issue positions, then record the issue(s) emphasized. Examples of issues prominent in the 2000 New York Senate race include education and campaign financing.

B. *Horserace.* Horserace coverage selects and makes salient information about winning and losing and treats the candidates as engaging in a contest. Horserace coverage includes the candidate being portrayed as a winner or loser in the election or in political activity such as debates or any other reference to the competition of the election. For example: an article that portrays Hillary Clinton as the "winner" of the first debate would be coded as "horserace", while an article that discusses the candidates speaking on the issues would be coded as "political activity". If an article contains information on who won or lost the debate and also covers the debate based on issues the coder should record both "horse race" and "political activity". In addition, record whether Hillary Clinton was portrayed as a "winner", "loser", or "neutral".

C. *Gender stereotypes.* The gender stereotype frame refers to media coverage that is typical of former female candidates. This frame includes coverage of the candidate in terms of her physical appearance or her role in family life. Physical appearance refers to Hillary Clinton being covered

in terms of her clothing, hairstyle etc. Family role refers to the article framing the candidate in terms of her role as a wife or mother. For example: An article that discusses Bill Clinton is not coded as "gender stereotypes" unless the article is portraying Hillary in her role as wife to Bill Clinton. For each article, circle whether the gender stereotypes frame was present. In addition, for each article, record whether the gender stereotypes frame discussed Hillary Clinton's "physical appearance" or her "role in family life".

D. *First lady role.* The first lady frame refers to the article emphasizing the traditional roles of a first lady such as escort, entertainer, home decorator, and charitable works advocate (Scharrer, 2002). The escort refers to the first lady serving as an escort to the president. The entertainer refers to the first lady hosting parties or events. The home decorator refers to renovation of the White House and the charitable works advocate refers to the first lady supporting or advocating charitable issues. In addition, circle the type of first lady role emphasized in the article. If an article portrays Hillary Clinton as hosting a party for a charity, circle both "entertainer" and "charitable works advocate". Example: an article in which Clinton visited a school would be coded as first lady if it were described in terms of charitable roles that were common to first ladies, but it would be coded as politically active if it were discussed in terms of campaigning.

6. For each article circle any secondary frames. The secondary frames can be defined as information that is emphasized or made salient in an article, but is not the dominant frame. Circle the secondary frame present based on the definitions of frames given in number 5 above. If there is more than one secondary frame, circle all of the secondary frames on the coding sheet.
7. For each article, circle the tone of the media's portrayal of Hillary Clinton in the article. Read the entire article then rate the tone of the coverage of Hillary Clinton on a five-point scale with one being very negative and five being very positive. Circle one if the story contains clear and blatant words used to connote a sense of disapproval or disregard, accusations or unflattering comments, or words or phrases that portrayed the subject in a bad light throughout, and two if there were isolated examples of negativity, as defined above, somewhere in the story (Scharrer, 2002). Circle five for very positive if there were clear words used to connote praise, approval, flattery, or any angle that portrayed the subject in a good light throughout, and will circle four if the story contained less consistent positive indicators (Scharrer, 2002). Lastly, the coder will circle three if there was no indication of either a positive or negative tone (Scharrer, 2002). Even if the topic of the article is negative such as scandal in the White House, the tone of the article should be judged on the way Hillary Clinton was treated in the article. In addition to the overall tone of the article, circle whether the article includes both positive and negative coverage.

Appendix B

Coding Sheet

1. Article number_____
2. Date of publication_____
3. Main title of the article_____
_____
_____
4. A. First and last name of author(s) _____
   B. (1) Male (2) Female (3) Both (4) Unknown
5. Dominant frame(s):
   (1) Traditional political activity
      a. Issues_____
      b. Campaigning
      c. Seeking support
      d. Political ideology
      e. Other _____
   (2) Horserace
      a. Winner
      b. Loser
      c. Neutral
   (3) Gender stereotypes
      a. Physical appearance
      b. Role in family life
   (4) First lady role
      a. Escort
      b. Entertainer
      c. Home decorator
      d. Charitable works advocate
   (5) Other_____
6. Secondary frame(s):
   (1) Traditional political activity
      a. Issues_____
      b. Campaigning
      c. Seeking support
      d. Political ideology
      e. Other_____
   (2) Horserace
      a. Winner
      b. Loser
      c. Neutral
   (3) Gender stereotypes
      a. Physical appearance

b. Role in family life

(4) First lady role

a. Escort
b. Entertainer
c. Home decorator
d. Charitable works advocate

(5) Other_____

7. Overall tone of the article

(1) Very Negative (2) Negative (3) Neutral (4) Positive (5) Very Positive

Includes both positive and negative elements

a. Yes
b. No