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ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: GENDER, AUDIENCE, AND PROBLEMATIZING  
THE NOTION OF ‘CANDIDATE SELF-PRESENTATION’ ONLINE

By

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Susan J. Carroll

And approved by

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

One Size Does Not Fit All: Gender, Audience, and Problematizing the Notion of  
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Gender structures multiple aspects of how candidates present themselves to the public, and it is reinforced particularly by the media. However, I argue that it does not affect all aspects of self-presentation equally; that is, it may be easier for women to contest gender norms on some aspects than on others. I theorize that this is due to the public-private divide, which not only shapes expectations for how men and women candidates will present themselves on various aspects, but also the degree to which women will receive “backlash” for contesting those expectations. The closer to women’s essential private, domestic role an aspect of campaigns is, the more backlash they may receive, and the more complicated it may be for them to try to contest those norms. On the other hand, when aspects are more removed from their private role may allow for greater flexibility to contest norms. I investigate how gender structures three aspects of self-presentation – family roles, personality traits and issue competencies – to assess how men and women currently navigate self-presentation. I measure this by the degree to which women either contest gendered expectations by presenting themselves in gender-incongruent ways, or embody such expectations by pursuing a gender-congruent strategy. I understand candidates as reelection-seeking and backlash-avoidant. I rely on tweets, coded for mentions of family roles, traits and issues, from all major-party candidates for U.S.

House in 2016 to address these questions. My findings are complex and nuanced. Overall, they demonstrate that women are especially less likely to mention their marital role than men are, but candidates of both genders mostly minimize mentions of family, suggesting that, with respect to family roles, the balance of gender power is relatively even on Twitter. Gender may be less salient there. However, the aspects of self-presentation that I examine have been shown to carry gendered connotations, and candidates' minimizing them may be, in part, a reaction to those connotations. The aspects may receive less activity because campaigns perceive that they carry less salience when the balance of gender power is even. Thus, they are still strategizing around, performing, gender. In addition, women candidates tend to pursue gender-incongruent behavior in the personality traits they claim, avoiding even potentially positive feminine traits like "compassion." Finally, policy issues are the only aspect on which women can embrace gender-congruent behavior, which they do by emphasizing feminine issues. I also explore how party may influence strategy when navigating gendered norms. These findings suggest that norms that are more closely tied to women's private role are indeed more complicated to navigate.

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Completing a dissertation is a very unique experience in that, on the one hand, a student has sole responsibility for moving her project forward. It is up to the student to make progress, meet deadlines, and, as one professor put it, “drive the train.” But on the other hand, as much as one is responsible for her progress, no one completes a dissertation alone. I am no exception. I have completed my dissertation – and, indeed, my entire graduate career - in large measure thanks to the support of family, friends, and mentors.

I started my graduate career at San Francisco State University. There was only one person who really specialized in women in politics, Dr. Francis Neely. I am grateful to him for agreeing to be my advisor and for helping me “dig into” the women in politics literature. I am also grateful to Dr. Nicole Watts, my second reader, who always provided important insight and introduced me to the literature on women in Comparative Politics. My time in this program convinced me that I wanted to pursue graduate school further, and I am forever indebted.

I then went to Rutgers – New Brunswick in order to benefit from the excellent Women in Politics program there. I quickly learned that, in addition to the Women in Politics faculty, the Political Science department was full of other faculty members who have been critical to my journey, including Beth Leech, Al Tillery and David Redlawsk. Thank you also to Chairs Jan Kubic and Rick Lau, and to the administrative staff (Paulette and Alicia).

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Kelly had recently earned her Ph.D. with Rutgers’ Women in Politics program as I was applying for it. Sue Carroll suggested that I correspond with Kelly to gain her insight on the program. Her enthusiasm for it, and admission that she was experiencing “withdrawal” after leaving the Center for American Politics (for an APSA Congressional Fellowship), was crucial in convincing me that Rutgers would be the right place for me. Ever since, with her professionalism, insightful questions and talent for taking CAWP’s research to the media, Kelly has served as an example of what graduates of Rutgers’ Women in Politics program can do.

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In the end, all I can say is....*Sono grata*.



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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

When you think of a politician, whom do you envision? Until very recently, that image has been almost exclusively white, male, and middle-aged. We have given Him positive press coverage for His devotion to His family. We have imagined Him brokering deals in smoke-filled backrooms and convention centers. We have watched Him wave at crowds while marching in parades; deliver impassioned speeches while His wife gazes up adoringly; and smile for photographs with babies at pancake breakfasts. These images are emblazoned in our national consciousness and taken for granted as the norm.

Since the 1970s, this image had been slowly evolving to include women. They have gone from comprising 3% of Members of the U.S. House in 1970, to 6% in 1992, to 20% in 2016. A woman has been her party's nominee for Vice President (Geraldine Ferraro, 1984; Sarah Palin, 2008) and for President (Hillary Clinton, 2016). However, significant change – for example, gender parity in Congress - has been glacially slow to come. Until now.

In 2018, the pace of change shifted into high gear. Galvanized by the blatant misogyny of Donald Trump, the overtly gendered news coverage and devastating loss of Hillary Clinton in the presidential race, and the events of the #metoo movement, women are rushing forward to run for office. In fact, they are shattering records. In 2018, sixty percent more women than ever before filed to run for U.S. House (a record 476 women (CAWP, 2020a), up from the previous high of 298 women (CAWP, 2019)). The number of women who filed for U.S. Senate increased by a third; 53 women filed (CAWP, 2020a), up from the previous record of 40 (CAWP, 2019). This trend looks poised to

continue in 2020 and beyond; a record six women started a campaign for president in 2020, up from the previous high of one (Chappell, 2019).

Our expectations for what a leader “looks like,” or how she acts, or what policies he can best address, must now include these women. They must include women of color, who were over 35% of the women who ran for U.S. House in 2018. They must include women wearing a hijab, as Rep. Ilhan Omar does, and differently abled women like Sen. Tammy Duckworth. Our norms must include these new faces. But can our norms for candidate self-presentation realistically shift? If so, which norms? What might those new norms look like? How might women’s experiences be different from men’s as they contest these norms?

Previous literature highlights how candidate gender, and the public’s concomitant assumptions and expectations, structure various aspects of self-presentation; however, gender’s effects are not uniform. Aspects of self-presentation that have less stringent (masculinized) norms and expectations may be easier to navigate, and women candidates may have more flexibility on them. If women candidates engage with looser norms, perhaps they can cement their status as “belonging” in politics, and then, from within the system, challenge and evolve its norms (eventually enough so that “masculine” is no longer the default).

On the other hand, deeply entrenched norms, carrying high cost to women candidates who violate them, may be more difficult or impossible to navigate. Women candidates may be less apt to mention them or avoid doing so at all. If they cannot engage with it comfortably, or without risk, they likely will not navigate it or contest the norms; rather, they will either avoid it if the cost of mentioning it is too high, or they will

strategically re-deploy it as an asset, in a way that supports their image as someone who meets leadership norms. These more stringent norms may reinforce the difficulty of eventually expanding our image of “leader” to include anything but “masculine.”

In this dissertation, I ask, do women candidates present themselves in gender congruent ways, and, if so, when? I examine various aspects of self-presentation on one forum, Twitter. “Gender congruent” refers to being in accordance with the stereotypes for one’s gender – for example, a woman acting feminine. It can also be thought of as gender-stereotypic behavior. “Gender incongruent,” on the other hand, can be thought of as contradicting stereotypes for one’s gender. So, put another way, this dissertation asks: when might women embrace feminine expectations - and when might they contravene those expectations? And why might the behavior that I observe be occurring?

I investigate these questions through an examination of self-presentation by the candidates on social media, specifically Twitter. “Self-presentation” refers to how candidates build their image or persona, the characteristics they display. As opposed to other parts of campaign communication, like fundraising appeals and strategies or campaign events, “self-presentation” really focuses on the candidate as a person – and, especially, how the candidate wants others to see that person. Moreover, candidates may either actively navigate, or avoid, these gendered stereotypes through various aspects of their self-presentation. This dissertation investigates self-presentation on three of them. These include family roles, traits and issues. I chose these aspects of self-presentation because the literature identified them as domains in which gender differences were relatively salient, and likely to appear.<sup>1</sup> There are also other aspects of self-presentation,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see on family roles Bystrom et al., 2004; Robertson et al., 2002; Banwart et al., 2003; Witt, Paget and Matthews, 1995; on traits, see Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Alexander and Andersen, 1993;

such as likeability (Redlawsk and Lau, 2006) or appearance/dress (Hayes, Lawless, & Baitinger, 2014). And then there are also aspects of campaigns more broadly where gender may feature, such as “going negative” or other tactics, strategy or fundraising. However, the three aspects of self-presentation that I chose were the ones on which the literature suggested gender might be highly relevant, and therefore I might be most likely to capture gender effects (see later in this chapter for a literature review of how gender impacts those three aspects of self-presentation).

These gendered effects constrain both men and in myriad ways.<sup>2</sup> For example, gender stereotypes about men and women in politics’ personality traits are well-documented (Bauer, 2015; Burrell, 1994, 1996; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; Kahn, 1996; Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Across cultures, women are generally viewed as possessing expressive, caregiving and/or “other-centered” traits such as: gentle, kind, compassionate, passive, honest, caring and warm (Bauer, 2019; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). In contrast, men are presumed to embody more instrumental, active traits, including assertive, tough, logical, aggressive and more likely to behave in ways that signal power and authority (Heilman, 2001). These trait stereotypes may influence how women and men present themselves on the campaign trail. While, on the one hand, a body of scholarship argues that women candidates emphasize feminine traits more frequently than they do masculine ones (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003; Herrick, 2016), another one finds that

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Burrell, 1994, 1996; Matland, 1994; Kahn, 1996; McDermott, 1997; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009; on issues, see Evans & Hayes Clark, 2016; Bratton, 2002; Dodson & Carroll, 1991; Reingold, 2000; Swers, 2002; Thomas, 1991, 1994; Wolbrecht, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> For a full literature review of how gender constraints men and women in politics, please see the “theoretical justification” section in this chapter.

both men *and* women emphasize masculine traits (while minimizing feminine ones) (Bystrom, 2010; Dolan & Lynch, 2017; Dolan, 2005, 2014; Sapiro et al., 2011).

While there may be some debate about how pervasive its effects are, there is evidence that gender does constrain men and women's behavior. It does so in ways that help them align better with voters' ideals and expectations on two axes – the gender axis, and the leadership axis. While men have a high degree of alignment between these two axes, and therefore little conflict with voters' expectations, women candidates face pressure to reconcile the incompatibility between their feminized position on the gender axis, and having a strong position on the leadership axis (for more on this, please see a discussion, rooted in Eagly and Krause (2002), of these two axes on page 12 of this dissertation). For women, at the root of their gendered behavior lie efforts to reconcile the two axes, and move closer to being perceived as a suitable leader.

In addition, previous literature has tended to examine women in relation to masculinized leadership norms, rather than questioning how we can problematize those norms. This study includes some feminine stereotypes (in addition to masculine ones), as well as if and when candidates engage with them, to get a more comprehensive picture of the full range of possible leadership norms. By potentially highlighting aspects where feminine norms may appear, this dissertation calls attention to spaces where voters might be flexible on leadership norms, and where women candidates might therefore be more willing to contest or problematize them. If some norms are weaker and more flexible, perhaps candidates can use that momentum to shift society's broader expectations to include norms beyond masculinized ones. If so, they might make the political arena more hospitable to women. If, however, women do not reinforce the feminine, that may

suggest that they see it as costly in, and ill-suited to, public life. Such perceptions both reflect, and reproduce, masculine ideals in politics.

The media often portrays women and men candidates in gender congruent ways – that is, in accordance with the stereotypes for one’s gender.<sup>3</sup> For example, they disproportionately emphasize women candidates’ roles as wives and mothers (Bystrom, et al., 2004; Robertson, et al., 2000). These both reflect, and reproduce, gendered stereotypes, and often serve to disadvantage women. This raises the question: when women have the opportunity to communicate directly with voters, as they do on Twitter, do the media’s stereotypes hold true? Do women candidates indeed engage in stereotypically feminine behavior, such as focusing heavily on women’s and children’s issues, or appearing “warm” or “likeable”? Or, conversely, do they display masculine behaviors, perhaps in an effort to meet idealized leadership norms? This might involve developing issue competencies on “tough” issues related to crime or the military, or describing themselves as “strong” and “a fighter.” Either way, one thing is sure: candidates are highly motivated to win re-election (Mayhew, 1974), so they will likely portray themselves in ways that will give them the greatest electoral advantage, whether in accordance with gender expectations or not.

But what if it is not a question of gender congruence? What if women candidates simply minimize/avoid gendered norms all together? This may suggest that they do not see any electoral advantage to engaging with those norms. Gender may simply be less relevant overall on Twitter, making the balance of gender power more equitable.<sup>4</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>3</sup> Gender incongruent, on the other hand, can be thought of as contradicting stereotypes for one’s gender. See top of pp 3 for more information.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of the balance of gender power, as described by Kelly and Duerst-Lahti (1995), please see page 12 of this dissertation.



gender power may be so even, and candidates may feel so unconstrained by gendered expectations when communicating directly to voters, that they simply avoid gender (insofar as it relates to the aspects of self-presentation in this dissertation) altogether. For example, if the balance of gender power is relatively even, and gendered norms less relevant overall, how a candidate performs her duties as a mother (or his as a father) would be less relevant. As a result, a candidate's family may not be salient to the campaign, and therefore receive few mentions. Gender may be less relevant on Twitter in part because of the largely friendly, responsive audience there – that audience comes to the Twitter page already primed to be largely supportive of the candidate's image and candidacy, so there is little need to navigate gendered norms. If the balance of gender power is relatively even on Twitter, and gendered norms less relevant/powerful, it may not be an ideal forum for reinforcing gendered stereotypes, nor for challenging them. As a result, women candidates may be able to devote activity there to campaign aspects on which they can compete more equally, such as discussing their campaign activities, mobilizing followers or discussing personal matters (besides family) (Evans et al, 2016).

At present, much scholarly literature that examines gender and social media activity is framed as a question of whether women will act like men or not, or whether they will follow masculine or feminine norms. However, if gender is simply less relevant on social media, it becomes necessary to seek alternative explanations for candidate activity, given that research suggests there are reasons to expect that men and women may have different experiences in politics. As candidates are “single-minded seekers of re-election,” (Mayhew, 1974), a more appropriate question may be, what will yield women (or men) candidates the greatest electoral advantage in a given situation? For

example, when investigating candidate appearance on Twitter, a candidate from a rural district may benefit by wearing jeans and cowboy boots, and posing on a ranch. On the other hand, a candidate from an urban district may benefit by wearing formal business attire, posing with sweeping views of the city. This new approach suggests that gender may be far less relevant than other constraints, such as electoral and district factors, in shaping a candidate's self-presentation.

However, on the occasions when gender does become relevant (i.e., when candidates do mention gendered aspects of campaigns, such as family), if women behave in gender *incongruent* ways, this may suggest that they do not see feminine stereotypes as yielding the greatest electoral advantage. Instead, they may take advantage of social media to contest gendered stereotypes and show how they embody (masculinized) leadership standards. A campaign's largely responsive, supportive audience may make Twitter an ideal forum in which to craft an image that defies gendered expectations. Likely the backlash for violating gendered norms is less than on traditional media. Countering gendered norms in this way would underscore that Twitter is an ideal forum in which to do that, and that gendered norms are relevant there.

On the other hand, if they *do* behave in gender congruent ways, that would suggest that women see an advantage to being feminine and want to reinforce it in their own communications. Twitter may be an ideal forum for candidates to show how well they embody traditional gendered stereotypes and meet expectations of how they "should be" – perhaps thereby minimizing backlash and conflict that may arise if voters see a woman as abandoning her private role. In so doing, it would also help solidify support among an already friendly audience, and encourage supporters to spread their message. It

would suggest that gender is relevant on Twitter, and candidates must take it into account when developing their strategies.

### *Women's Representation in American Politics*

Women are dramatically underrepresented at all levels of government. For example, in the 1992 election, women doubled their numbers in the U.S. Senate from 2% to 4%, and finally saw a woman of color elected to their ranks. Not until the 2012 election did women reach 20% of the U.S. Senate; they were 18% of the elected U.S. House Members in that same election. In 2016, a record 23% of U.S. Senate was women, as were 20% of U.S. Representatives. These levels are similar at the state legislative level; nationally in 2016, 24.5% of state legislators in the United States (1,806 out of 7,383 total) were women (CAWP, 2020b). That same year, women constituted just 12% of governors nationwide (CAWP, 2020c).

Far more women candidates run in the Democratic party; as a result, the political opportunity structure for women candidates changes with the partisan tides. For example, women achieved record levels of representation in 2008 when the Democrats benefitted from support for Obama's election. Two new female Senators were elected, and women increased their numbers by 11 in the U.S. House. However, in 2010, the Democrats suffered from mid-term losses and frustration with the party in power. As a result, women's representation actually decreased in the U.S. House and Senate, as well as state legislatures (Carroll, 2010). Yet, in the next election, 2012, Democrats again benefitted from Obama's coattails, and women again reached new levels of representation (CAWP, 2012).

The truth remains that however the partisan winds may shift, and however women fare in any given election cycle, they remain strikingly under-represented. In part, we can attribute this to women making the decision to run less often than men do (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013; see also Lawless and Fox, 2005, 2010). More significant is the fact that, when they do run, they must navigate a political arena that has been constructed by men, for men (Carroll, 1994; Dittmar, 2015; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Kirkpatrick, 1974; Puwar, 2004). One of the first signals of this is that, when testing the political waters, women encounter political parties and networks that are more supportive of men (Sanbonmatsu, 2002, 2006). Moreover, masculinized expectations still drive what voters seek in their candidates and elected officials, especially in higher or executive offices (U.S. Congress, Governors, President) (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b; Meeks, 2012; Smith et al., 2007). The media reinforces this with phenomena like discussing women candidates' clothing or appearance instead of their stances on the issues, or reporting their stances on women's issues instead of the full range of issues that they work on. Women candidates must navigate this masculinized space as outsiders, and face concerns that men do not when doing so (Dittmar, 2015; Stalsburg, 2012).

Women's under-representation is problematic most obviously for our democratic norms and fairness. A society that ensures equal representation for all must strive for truly equal representation at all levels of government. More practically, descriptive representation – that is, the actual percentages of women in office - matters for substantive representation (the outcomes that public officials create, such as laws) (Dovi, 2002, 2007; Mansbridge, 2003; Pitkin, 1967). Women's unique life experiences and perspectives mean that they bring different insights and priorities to both policy and

procedures. They have the potential to shift both how politics is done, and which policy priorities are on the agenda (Barnes, 2016; Carroll, 2001, 2006a; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013; Dodson, 2006; Dodson and Carroll, 1991; Osborn, 2012; Reingold, 2000, 2008; Reingold and Harrell, 2010; Swers, 2002, 2013; Thomas and Wilcox, 2014). Seeing women's representation increase has significant implications for our democratic norms, our political procedures and institutions, and the policy agenda. Gendered assumptions about which personality traits, issue competencies, and family roles we should look for in our leaders too often complicate women's campaigns. But where do these gendered assumptions stem from? A deeper, more nuanced understanding of how these norms originate, how women navigate them, and which ones can even be navigated to begin with, can only benefit women's campaigns. Perhaps it may even help us begin the process of shifting our leadership norms so that a broader range of family roles, traits and issue competencies is represented among our elected leaders.

### *Masculine as the Default in Politics*

This project views women's electoral disadvantages and under-representation as the result of gendered stereotypes and beliefs about who is allowed to participate in the public sphere. Those, in turn, are rooted in the public-private divide. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, women have been associated with the private realm, the home, and related activities, such as caregiving, children and family. Men, in contrast, have given access to public sphere and perceived as agentic and leaders. This divide was theorized as early as Aristotle and Plato, up to more modern times with Rousseau and Mill, and persists today. Men's and women's roles, and their attendant duties, have shaped

expectations of them in different ways. The unique traits associated with women lead society to view them as better suited to certain activities, while men's traits make other activities more natural for them. Naturally, because men are presumed to fit better in the public sphere, and required to be more assertive and show strength, they are perceived as more fit for the political arena (Eagly, 2004; Eagly & Karau (2002). On the other hand, women's role at home, and focus on caregiving, mean they are viewed as ill-suited for politics.

As a result, politics, including campaigns, is a masculine world, created by and for men. This creates a masculinized culture (Carroll, 1994; Dittmar, 2015; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Puwar, 2004). Masculinized expectations are embedded in expectations for candidates, and visible in campaigns' strategic considerations (Dittmar, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 1974). Especially salient gendered aspects of candidate self-presentation include family roles, issue competencies and personality traits. Our masculinized leadership norms and expectations often directly contradict those for women. Obviously feminine, and clearly failing to embody preconceived norms, women's very bodies mark them as outsiders in the masculinized space of politics (Puwar, 2004). Indeed, they enter politics as "aberrant" or "deviant" at worst, "nonconformist" at best. They must confront gender early on and devise a plan to address the problems gender presents (Dittmar, 2015). As feminist scholars have highlighted, this exclusion of women only serves to reinforce gender's role in structuring power and politics (Acker, 1992; Dittmar, 2015).

An analytical framework for examining the gendered implications of power may prove useful here. Kelly and Duerst-Lahti (1995) offer one such tool. They describe gender power as the gendered implications of power in a given context. The *balance* of

gender power can favor one group over another – or it can be relatively even, meaning that various individuals or groups can access roughly equal power. In our traditional conceptualizations of public office and leadership, the balance of gender power tilts masculine (Kelly and Duerst-Lahti, 1995). This is in part because, as outlined earlier, those constructs of power are created by men, for men, and are exercised in a masculine world. Masculinity is a norm which candidates strive to embody; showing how one meets those masculinized norms become highly salient. As a result, women and femininity are generally marginalized, and must simultaneously show how they can meet masculinized ideals, while remaining feminine enough to not be deviant or threatening.

However, what if there were forums or spaces where the balance of gender power were even? What if men and women could exercise relatively even power there? What would that look like? As the traditional balance of gender power in politics tilts masculine because of the *masculinized* assumptions inherent in it, one can assume that a *feminized* balance of power would be characterized by feminine stereotypes and assumptions. In line with some of the assumptions of this chapter, that could include an emphasis on caregiving, and valuing traits like compassion and warmth.

There is a third alternative – an *even* balance of gender power. This would mean that neither masculine, nor feminine stereotypes guided expectations of how people would behave, nor were they more salient to any analysis of the forum. While gender could still be present, and impact how individuals behaved, it would not be inherent in the power structure, nor in any norms or expectations. As a result, gendered expectations would not cause any gender to have greater power. Neither gender group would be dominant, or embody more of the norms and expectations followers may have, on that

forum. There would be less need to meet a masculinized ideal – or, indeed, gendered norms of any kind. This means that women candidates could face less pressure to conform to masculinized norms; instead, they might have more freedom to present themselves authentically, and as they perceive would be most advantageous under the circumstances of their current electoral contest. With less pressure to meet masculinized norms, women may discuss different topics – issues like childcare or maternal leave – that previously were too far from a masculinized ideal. They may also discuss these topics in different ways, relying more on their lived experience as mothers juggling work and family. A more even balance of gender power, and shifting the power dynamics, changes the range of what is ideal, or even possible.

Of note, for purposes of this dissertation, the balance of gender manifests in particular on Twitter, and in three aspects of self-presentation: family roles, personality traits and issues. This dissertation cannot speak about gender power more broadly, or off Twitter. It is concerned with how the balance of gender power on Twitter, as it relates to those specific aspects of self-presentation, may or may not constrain women (and men) candidates.

However, research suggests that there is indeed an uneven, disproportionate balance of gender power in today's political arena. In part as a result of the gendered expectations in politics, and gender power tilting masculine, two axes emerge on which the public can evaluate candidates. On the one hand, there is a leadership axis, which is define and categorize expectations of leaders and leadership. This axis commonly requires displaying agentic traits such as competitiveness, self-confidence, objectivity, aggressiveness, ambitiousness, and willingness to lead (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman,



Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989; Massengill & di Marco, 1979; Schein 1973, 1975).

Individuals who score high on it exhibit idealized leadership qualities and congruence with expectations of leaders.

However, on the other hand, there is a gender axis. The axis is rooted in gender stereotypes, and attendant expectations about how individuals will behave, based on their gender (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Newport, 2001; Williams & Best, 1990a). Social role theory argues that most trait stereotypes about the two genders can be grouped as either communal or agentic (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987). Men and masculinity are predominantly associated with agentic characteristics like assertive, controlling, and confident, ambitious and prone to act as a leader. On the other hand, communal characteristics, most often associated with women, relate to a concern with the caring or concern for others. This includes traits like kind, sympathetic, warm, caring, gentle, and other related terms. Although there are, of course, other types of attributes that may be ascribed to either gender (Deaux & Lewis, 1983, 1984; Eckes, 1994), the communal and agentic attributes are especially relevant to this dissertation's framing.

Fortunately for men in politics, due in part to the balance of gender power leaning masculine, the leadership axis usually aligns with their end of the gender axis (i.e., men/masculinity) in a fairly straightforward way. That is, there is relatively high congruence between expectations of leaders and expectations for masculinity, which more closely describes their gender.<sup>5</sup> Men have high role congruity with leadership

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that men embody varying degrees of masculinity, or, put another way, different aspects of masculinity may or may not resonate with any individual man. Not all men are completely stereotypically masculine. *Masculinity*, not men in general, is really the underlying category that most

(Eagly and Karau, 2002). On the other hand, the femininity end of the gender axis does *not* align naturally with leadership axis. In fact, it often very starkly conflicts with the leadership axis (Eagly and Karau, 2002). As a result, women may be perceived as having role *incongruity* with leadership.

This poses dilemmas for women candidates. They enter an arena where the balance of gender power tilts *away* from them as non-conforming, yet need to demonstrate that they can be effective leaders (Dittmar, 2015). They must meet masculinized norms, but not be too masculine (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993b). They must signal that they can meet leadership norms in ways that will not overtly contradict voters' stereotypes and assumptions – whether by being too masculine, or too feminine - as well as avoid anything that will awaken negative affect, backlash or “cost,” with voters (Rudman and Phelan, 2008). Overall, women candidates have far more considerations than men when entering politics. Navigating gender is more salient for women, and in different ways (Dittmar, 2015).

Candidates, including women, are motivated to win election (Mayhew, 1974). Much of their behavior is geared towards winning election– which means earning or solidifying support from voters. Under this line of thinking, campaign communication, including on social media, is often shaped with voters' reactions in mind. This makes it especially crucial for campaigns to strategically navigate voters' gendered expectations in ways that will advantage them. They need voters to perceive them as leaders, and to have high favorability ratings. As a result, they will discuss more frequently those aspects that carry few or no “costs” for them. Politics, and our leadership norms, tend to be

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closely aligns with leadership. Thus, it is really the masculinity end of the gender axis that aligns with the leadership axis.

masculinized, while the feminine is often perceived as not belonging; “cost” emerges when voters’ gender norms on a given aspect are violated and they experience negative affect towards the candidate as a result. Importantly, women can violate gender norms either by being masculine, or simply by existing as feminine in the political arena. The stronger the norm, the more likely it is to be significant and personal to voters. It may also be more central to their conceptions of who belongs in politics. When that is violated, it evokes a negative internal reaction, or backlash, and then a high cost to the candidate who challenged their stereotypes (Okimoto and Brescoll, 2010; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Phelan, 2008).

In general, people who violate gender norms engender backlash (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). This is especially true of women in politics, who experience prejudice as a result of their role incongruity with leadership (Eagly and Karau, 2002). This may be somewhat proportional; that is, the intensity with which people hold gendered beliefs may mediate backlash somewhat (Rudman et al., 2012). As a result, if certain norms are less deeply ingrained or less stringent, there may be less backlash for violating them, and candidates may be *more* willing to “bend” those norms. On the other hand, when norms are deeply ingrained or sacrosanct, backlash for challenging them may be stronger – making candidates *less* willing to contest them. Therefore, aspects with looser, less ingrained, or weaker (masculinized) expectations about candidates might produce lower cost when women candidates discuss them. If so, a woman could more readily discuss those aspects.

Research has found, in another context, that women mediate, or adjust, their behavior as it relates to gendered expectations in response to fear of potential backlash. In

a study of business negotiators, Amanatullah and Morris (2010) found that women anticipated that assertiveness on behalf of *themselves* would evoke gender incongruent evaluations, negative attributions, and resultant “backlash.” As a result, they tempered their assertiveness, using fewer competing tactics and obtaining lower outcomes. However, when tasked with advocating for *others*, women did not temper their behavior. In fact, they achieved better outcomes as they did not expect incongruity evaluations or engage in hedging. Though it is in another context than politics, this is evidence that women may be aware of both gendered expectations, and the result of violating them. Furthermore, they may rely on that awareness to strategically adjust their behavior to maximize outcomes. When the risk of potential backlash is mediated, and therefore becomes less, they may be more willing to engage in gender incongruent behavior.

In the above example, backlash was mediated because women were negotiating on behalf of others, not themselves. But perhaps backlash could be mediated by other factors. Rudman and Phelan (2008) offer support for the claim that backlash can be mediated. They find that women can mediate backlash by displaying stereotypically feminine traits to counter any masculine traits that appear (for example, stereotypically warm, approachable, likable female managers received less backlash). They can also mediate by self-monitoring to adjust behavior for different contexts where backlash might be more or less likely to occur. Finally, they argue that backlash can be mediated by the share of women in an organization; once women achieve a 15% share of leadership positions in an organization, the risk of backlash is shown to decrease. This is additional evidence that many factors can mediate backlash against women for violating gender norms, and that women may adjust their behavior in ways that will decrease backlash.

Perhaps one of the factors that can mediate backlash is the strength of a particular gendered norm. Norms that are more deeply ingrained and more meaningful may be more resistant to change, and incur more backlash. Conversely, norms that are *less* strongly ingrained may incur less backlash, and be easier to navigate. An example comes from motherhood and policy issues. On the one hand, norms around motherhood are sacrosanct and deeply held (Dubin, 2020; Taylor Fleming, 2002; Warnock, 2001). In contrast, expectations for which policy issues men or women will discuss are less deeply rooted and ingrained. There may be comparatively less negative reaction, or “cost,” when a woman discusses traditionally “masculine” issues, such as the military.<sup>6</sup> When it is easier for a woman to address a given aspect, it may be easier for her to claim those norms by demonstrating that she meets them and belongs. And then, perhaps, that woman can leverage both her presence in the political arena, as well as voters’ likely flexibility on that norm, to re-define the norms surrounding that aspect on her own terms, and, in so doing, re-shape our vision of what it means to be a leader.

Of course, there is a third option. Perhaps a forum like Twitter is neither particularly conducive to women addressing aspects of self-presentation, nor is it particularly difficult for them to do so. There would be relatively few mentions of gendered aspects of self-presentation, in part because if those aspects have low salience, there is little electoral advantage to gaining them. However, given that those aspects

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<sup>6</sup> Of note, this refers specifically to the phenomenon whereby women may face relatively lower backlash for discussing masculine-leaning issues, than for violating norms on other aspects (i.e., family roles – motherhood). For example, it may be less costly for women to discuss the military than to show how they violate expectations for motherhood by leaving their children to run for office. That backlash is distinct from any backlash that may occur when a candidate mentions a controversial issue (whether it be masculine or feminine). For example, abortion and the ERA are controversial, but any backlash from discussing those issues would stem from their divisiveness, and the strong feelings they engender – not because, in mentioning it, a candidate was violating gender norms.

could still connote gendered assumptions elsewhere, their absence could still suggest gendered strategizing underlying. Given that it is the gendered assumptions and expectations underlying various aspects of self-presentation that give it higher or lower salience, candidates are still performing on gendered terms. Theories of gender power describe how gender affects power dynamics in an environment; when the balance of gender power tilts masculine, that is the ideal, and women must strive to demonstrate how they embody it. But even in the face of an even balance of gender power, when gender is not relevant to the power dynamics, gender as a construct may still be present. It may still shape how individuals conduct themselves. It just doesn't give either gender a dominant position. Thus, even when a particular forum has a relatively even balance of gender power, gender as a construct can still be present. As long as gender and related assumptions are present, and influence individuals' behavior, then gender as a construct is still present. It simply is less relevant to the power dynamics in the situation.

On the other hand, aspects with more stringent, deeply engrained (masculinized) expectations about candidates would likely produce higher "cost," or backlash, when women candidates discuss them. Indeed, Rudman et al (2012) argue that women who defy gender norms may incur penalties because doing so threatens the gender hierarchy; moreover, in a study, they found that the degree to which participants held gender system-justifying beliefs mediated backlash they felt towards candidates who challenged gender norms (that is, respondents with gender-system-justifying beliefs experienced more backlash towards candidates, while those with weaker gender beliefs felt *less* backlash). These findings suggest that women candidates may hesitate to discuss aspects which violate gender norms. An example comes from family roles; expectations for

which roles men or women will play, and what makes a “good” mother, are very deeply rooted, even sacrosanct (Taylor Fleming, 2002; Warnock, 2001). Penalties for violating those norms are high. As the author Anne Lamott points out, when mothers struggle, the “...myth of maternal bliss is so sacrosanct that we can’t even admit these feelings to ourselves” (Dubin, 2020). There may be a comparatively high negative reaction or cost when a woman shows her private role that conflicts with expectations for politics. When it is more difficult for a woman to address a given aspect, it may be more difficult for her to claim that she embodies related norms. If she does not discuss it, she has little presence on issues surrounding motherhood. She will have less credibility on it, and the public will not associate it as much with her.<sup>7</sup> That woman may have little she can leverage in an effort to re-define the norms surrounding that aspect on her own terms, or re-shape our vision of what it means to be a leader.

Importantly, gender still structures women’s experience on all these aspects - even those on which they have more flexibility and can work to re-imagine leadership norms - because they must strategize carefully around those norms, and because their experience as women is still unique. They still have considerations that men do not and are still marked by their departure from masculinized norms.

In contrast, men candidates do not need to navigate as strategically, as they are already presumed to meet leadership norms – but they do still need to navigate. They must still signal how they adhere to masculine ideals. It is just more straightforward for

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler has a daughter who was born with a life-threatening, rare disorder called Potter Syndrome. She was advised to have an abortion when the disorder was diagnosed, but did not. She is very vocal about her daughter’s health, and parenthood in general. In part as a result of all that, she has become very visible and credible on issues surrounding children, healthcare, and the right to life (Bash, 2017). In contrast, Rep. Liz Cheney has five children, but rarely mentions them. She is far more likely to tweet about jobs or the military. She does not have the credibility on the children’s, and other related, issues that Jamie Herrera Beutler does.

them, as their gender axis (masculine) aligns with the leadership axis (masculine is the ideal). As a result, when discussing a particular campaign aspect, they have more flexibility to situate themselves wherever would be most advantageous for them on a wide range of possible positions (i.e., showcase any relevant leadership personality traits). They are also freer to emphasize more heavily those aspects that will be most advantageous (i.e., more mention of family in a conservative, family-values district), or vice versa. However, overall, they will be most likely to emphasize aspects directly related to their public role, and those that will provide them some electoral advantage.

### *Methodology*

To test my hypotheses, I analyze tweets by all major-party candidates for U.S. House in 2016. I chose 2016 because it was the upcoming U.S. House election when I was developing this dissertation. I focused on only one election because it was the most feasible, given the time constraints of a dissertation. (However, studying multiple elections in the future could certainly be fruitful, especially as part of a time series examining shifts in gendered behavior over time.) Moreover, one election should be sufficient, given the vast amount of data - tweets - it generates. Of course, in retrospect, 2016 ended up being a rather unique election, given the historic candidacy of the first woman to be nominated for President by a major party, as well as the blatant misogyny of her opponent (Denton, 2017). Gender may have been particularly salient. On the one hand, given the criticism Hillary Clinton received, there may have been incentives for women candidates to re-double their efforts to appear as ideal women and minimize ways in which a run for office would be at odds with that role. On the other hand, anger at



Trump and excitement over Clinton's candidacy could have lowered barriers to meeting masculinized leadership norms. In hindsight, 2016 was not an ideal election in which to examine gendered patterns of behavior. All of this highlights that, in this, and future, research, it will be important to consider the context of the election/time period the data come from, and its implications for the findings. (This dissertation will engage in more of this discussion in the conclusion.) In addition, future research could examine data over time – use time series – to circumvent any issues related to the specifics of a time period. Looking at data over time – for example, several election cycles – may demonstrate that findings persist over time, in different contexts, and therefore are even more likely to truly exist.

Uncovering how the differential impact of various gender norms, and (perceived) reactions to them, structure campaign strategy is not straightforward. Such norms encompass a broad range of campaign activities, from esoteric concerns like which policy stances to emphasize, to more personal ones, like how to present the candidate's family. It can include the symbolic, such as candidate attire, and the substantive – the words the campaign uses to describe the candidate. This requires data on a number of different aspects of the campaign. This, in turn, may mean studying different types of output, managing data in different formats, and/or going to different sources for data. It is a more complex operation than focusing on data from one piece of the campaign. Gathering tweets is instructive because they can cover a broad range of campaign activities, thereby addressing the need for breadth. There are minimal restrictions on what a candidate can post. Obviously, tweets will not contain sensitive or confidential information, and must

be within 280<sup>8</sup> characters; apart from those minor restrictions, tweets cover all manner of topics, from current events, to the candidate's family, to policy priorities, to popular culture. Thus, they offer a window into multiple aspects of the campaign that gender might inform.

### *Coding and Quantitative Analyses of Tweets*

I began by using Python to scrape all tweets from all major-party candidates (that is, Democrats and Republicans) during the two months before the 2016 election (September 8, 2015 – November 8, 2016). That includes 709 candidates. The gender and partisan distributions are in line with what one would expect based on national averages; in 2016, Congress was 19.5% women, 80.5% men. Of the women, 63 were Democrats, and 22 Republicans (74.1% D, 25.9% R) (CAWP, 2020e). See Appendix 6 for details on the universe of candidates in my data. With few exceptions for extremely non-competitive races, Republicans and Democrats each nominate one candidate for the General Election, so 50% of General Election candidates are from either party. My time period of study includes the intense weeks directly preceding the election. I have a total of 54,120 tweets in my universe. I investigate three main aspects of self-presentation that might be related to gender: family roles, traits, and policy issues.

To describe my data set, the average candidate tweeted 79 times total over 60 days, with a range of 0 – 1,175 tweets over the time period. There was a standard deviation of 134 tweets. Women tweeted a mean of 115 times, with a standard deviation

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<sup>8</sup> While the limit was 140 characters per tweet at the time of these tweets (2016), it was raised to 280 characters as of November 2017 (Tsukayama 2017).

of 190 and a range of 0 – 1,175. In contrast, men tweeted an average of 70 times, with a range of 0 – 895 tweets. For more information, please see Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1: Descriptives for the Number of Tweets for Men and Women

	Women	Men	Total
Mean	115	70	79
Standard Deviation	190	113	134
Range	0-1,175	0-897	0-1,175

Women tweeted notably more often than men, 115 times to 70, and as a result, they drove up the overall total a bit (79 tweets), even though they were only 20% of the total universe of candidates. They also had a higher maximum number of tweets, or upper end up the range, at 1,175 tweets – whereas the maximum number of times men tweeted was only 897. Both women and men had a relatively large standard deviation – 190 for women, and 113 for men. Both figures are higher than the means for the respective means, indicating that there is significant variation in how often men or women candidates tweet.

Once I had scraped all the tweets, I compiled them and hand-coded a sample. I did this to familiarize myself with the key words that might appear, and to develop a key that could aid in larger-scale coding. I coded for the three aspects mentioned, creating the coding scheme as I went, until key words started repeating themselves. My coded sample contained 2,200 tweets. I hand-coded for a variety of reasons; it allowed me to develop and refine a coding scheme for the full corpus and helped familiarize me with the data. I found a total of sixty-nine (69) issues, twenty (20) traits, and eight (8) gendered familial

roles. Once I had a reliable sample, I turned to coding the full corpus by searching for the keywords I had identified, and terms related to them (i.e., “mother” and “mom,” for the role “Mother”). Of note, some tweets contained more than one keyword; the range was 0 – 5 keywords. Tweets that contained more than one keyword had to be examined and coded separately for each individual keyword. Thus, one tweet could be counted multiple times, depending on how many keywords it contained.<sup>9</sup> When I adjusted the total number of tweets to reflect potential multiple occurrences of the same tweet (if it contained multiple keywords), the updated total of tweets was 54,426. Appendix 1 includes a list of all roles, traits and issues.

Due to the time and financial constraints of this dissertation, I was unable to conduct intercoder reliability checks in this project. According to Lacy, *et al.*, (2015), intercoder reliability refers to consistency between coders, or ensuring that different coders arrive at similar results. Best practice for reliability checks in content analysis calls for having every variable coded at by at least two different people, even if only for a sample of the data, and then using one or more reliability coefficients that takes chance into consideration. The coefficient will evaluate how similar their coding is.

However, in a future iteration of this work, I will have someone who has taken at least some college-level Political Science classes code the sample that I did, without showing her how I coded. I will provide the tweets in the sample and the key that I

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<sup>9</sup> For example, “Mr. Trumps (sic) recent comments are unacceptable and disrespectful to my mom, wife, daughters, sisters and all women” (Mark Assini, @Markassini, 10/8/16) would be counted as three tweets: once for “mother,” one for “wife,” and one for “daughter,” since they are all separate roles.

developed; ask my coder to code the sample to the best of her ability; and then conduct reliability tests and report them where appropriate, throughout the dissertation.

Note that I did not conduct any statistical tests on the observed differences, nor will I do so in any of remaining analyses in this dissertation (with one specifically stated exception). Significance testing is appropriate on a sample from within a larger universe to determine whether the differences observed within a sample are truly likely to occur in the universe as well, and are not simply due to sampling error. However, in almost all cases, with the exception of one sample that I use to analyze issues in more depth in Chapter Four, I analyze the entire universe of tweets, and there is no question of sampling error, so any observed differences are real. I rely on proportions and judgments to determine which differences are meaningful. Though I acknowledge that many in Political Science have come to expect statistical tests and, in particular, p-values, it is not simply appropriate for this dissertation.

### *Interviews*

I also conducted a series of interviews with campaign social media consultants and candidates. I reached out to 835 campaigns by phone and/or e-mail and conducted 27 interviews, for a response rate of approximately 3%. If the candidate was available, and/or if there was no social media consultant, I spoke to the candidate. If the candidate was not available, I spoke with the social media consultant. I conducted interviews between April 10 – August 11, 2017. Overall, I spoke with 9 candidates and 18 strategists, for a total of twenty-seven interviews. Twenty-five percent (25%) of my sample, or 7 respondents, were from a woman's campaign (this includes being either a

staffer or the candidate herself). Given that women constitute roughly 20% of Congress, that is close to representative of women's representation in that institution. Seventeen respondents, or 63%, were from men candidates' campaigns, and 3 strategists (11%) worked for multiple candidates during the election cycle. Seven respondents (26%) were from winning campaigns, three (11%) were consultants working on multiple campaigns, and seventeen (63%) lost their races. Twelve respondents (44%) were Republicans, while 15 were Democrats (55%). Nationally, approximately 40% of voters are Republican, 40% are Democrat, and 20% are Independent. I did not have a range of how active their campaigns were on social media.

I conducted semi-structured interviews; while my instrument contained six of the same questions, and suggestions for follow-up questions at relevant points, I also left some room for the natural flow of the conversation. This ensured that I asked all respondents the same most critical questions in the same way, but also allowed flexibility, so that we could respond to the specifics of the campaign in question. Interviews ranged from 21 minutes, 35 seconds to 96 minutes, 36 seconds. My IRB approval can be found in Appendix 5 of this dissertation. To best transcribe and analyze the interviews, I used the qualitative analysis software NVivo.

Because both my response rate, and my overall "n" are so low, I cannot use the interviews in any kind of systematic or generalizable way. They are not representative of the broader population of campaign consultants. However, I can, and do, call on quotes occasionally, in an anecdotal way. I do this only because I do not feel confident using them in a more systematic way, and not because they do not address the questions I am interested in. Including at least some quotes gives voice to the people who make the

social media decisions, and some of their reasoning. Their perspectives add richness and depth to the findings. This allows me to describe not only the behavioral patterns observed across tweets, at the “meta-level,” but also to suggest reasons for some of those patterns at the individual, campaign, “micro” level.

Moreover, bringing in anecdotes from people devoting so much of their life to the campaign provides a human, “real” element, which would otherwise be overlooked when discussing broad patterns of behavior of anonymous candidates. It also offers some insight into the motivation and strategizing behind the tweets. One cannot assume meaning or intent from coding tweets alone. Because coding relies on only the words present (or not) in the tweets, it provides insight into broad patterns in Twitter activity, such as identifying the words that appear and the presence or absence of gendered differences. But we cannot ascribe meaning or intent to the words themselves without more detail. To investigate *why* and *how* those differences may (or may not) appear, it is necessary to somehow hear from campaigns themselves. And, as previous work has demonstrated (Bossetta, 2016; Dittmar, 2015; Kreiss, et al., 2018), consultant interviews offer rich and in-depth insight into campaigns’ motivations and workings.

### *Self-Presentation in campaigns – theoretical justification*

I take a new approach on several gendered campaign aspects by analyzing the gender congruence of candidates’ behavior. I then examine all three aspects simultaneously to draw larger conclusions about how gender as a process shapes self-presentation. Do women and men candidates present themselves in gender congruent ways? On which aspects of self-presentation? Are there differences between men and

women? Why might these differences occur? And what might those differences tell us about women candidates' opportunity to claim that they meet extant norms and belong?

Campaigns in the United States are very focused on the individual candidate and his/her personality. As a result, effective self-presentation, especially via the media, is crucial for candidates seeking to build rapport and support among voters, and, in the end, ensure electoral success (Corner and Pels 2003). A growing number of studies investigates strategic candidate self-presentation, and suggests an increasing emphasis in candidate branding and image (Allum and Cileto 2001; Corner 2000; Pels 2003; Gulati 2004; Schutz 1995). Members of the U.S. Congress use many media to present themselves. In particular, the Internet has become an indispensable tool for doing so. One axis along which Members present themselves is "Insiders vs. Outsiders;" House members and Senators use a variety of words and images to present themselves as either Beltway "insiders" possessing "influence," or "outsiders," unafraid to challenge the status quo and knowing what their constituents really want (Gulati, 2004). Many House members post a biography on their website, and biographies are often used to signal their achievements and successes (Jarvis and Wilkerson, 2005). House Members' official pages have been found to present the Member/candidate in a favorable light, emphasizing his/her appealing traits, experience, family status (Bimber and Davis, 2000). These websites can also focus more on constituents' needs, discussing how the Member/candidate empathizes with constituents and finding common ground with them (Bimber and Davis, 2003). While there are many potential aspects of a candidate's self to present, and the calculus is highly contextual, personal and complex, the essential is this:



candidates use their self-presentation to present themselves in a favorable light to their would-be constituents.

There is much more to say on the subject of strategy and self-presentation, but for purposes of this dissertation, it is most relevant to understand it through a gender lens. This dissertation views the roots of gendered self-presentation as very, very, very deep – that is, going very far back in time. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, men’s and women’s roles – and expectations about their behavior – have been rooted in the public-private divide, or the idea of separate spheres. Under this paradigm, men and women filled essential roles, either as husband and father who participates in public life, or as wife and mother who cares for her family and their home. These roles have given rise to a second key element, assumptions about men’s and women’s essential nature or personality. That, in turn, has led to views about which issues people are more competent to handle – concerns about caregiving, home, family and welfare, or more substantive, more abstract, “tougher” issues of broad public concern (defense, military). These key elements are consistently present in theories of the public-private divide, across centuries and cultures.

This divide has long governed many aspects of men’s and women’s lives and roles, including political involvement, and structured how we understand men and women. Even today, when we have begun to problematize the divide, it persists (as evidenced by the fact that 49% of women in the U.S. report doing housework on the average day, but only 19% of men do; this is despite the fact that nearly 80% of American women work full-time, and increasing percentages of both men and women profess to want egalitarian gender roles (Carpenter, 2019)).

Importantly, the public-private divide, and the roles it prescribes for men and women, are at the root of all other expectations about them. The greater the distance from that metaphorical divide, and men's and women's roles under it, the more flexibility women may have to navigate norms. Conversely, when addressing aspects closer to the divide, women face a greater risk of violating norms and incurring cost.

How else might gender stereotypes influence campaign strategy? Given that women have the disadvantage of not having their gender stereotypes align with masculinized leadership stereotypes (while men's gender does align with leadership expectations), they may be incentivized to campaign differently from men in order to improve their standing with voters (Carroll, 1994; Fox, 1997; Hernson and Lucas, 2006; Kahn, 1996; Kahn & Gordon, 1997). Findings that, when they run, women candidates win at similar rates as men do counter arguments that gender stereotypes disadvantage women candidates (Burrell, 1994; Clark, Welch and Ambrosius, 1984; Dittmar, 2015; Fox 2010). And the former may not be seeing the full picture: Dolan (2010) reminds us that even if results find that women are not electorally disadvantaged, that does not imply that gender does not influence campaigns. Indeed, in a study, a majority of Democratic campaign consultants identified candidate gender as an "important" consideration (Dittmar, 2015).<sup>10</sup> Overall, gender influences many aspects of campaigns, and exactly how it does is highly complex contextual (Dittmar, 2015; Fridkin and Kenney, 2009; Fridkin, Kenney and Woodall, 2009).

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<sup>10</sup> (Of note, and highlighting partisan differences that will be addressed in more detail later on, a majority of Republican consultants rated candidate gender as "not important," and that may be due, in part, to the fact that fewer women run for office in the Republican party, and therefore, consultants have less experience considering it (Dittmar, 2015)).

### *Gendered roles*

Gendered roles within the family constitute the origin of the complications that women face when navigating the political arena. As Sue Thomas (2010) explains, “The corollary of masculinized understandings of political leadership is feminized understandings of women’s appropriate private roles and spheres of labor.” Simply put, women are supposed to be at home, not in politics. These expectations persist today, despite women’s increased educational and professional attainment (Lawless and Fox, 2010; Thomas, 2002). The time constraints associated with motherhood, especially when children are young and require intensive care, structure women’s political careers when they delay running for office, curtail their involvement, or do not get involved in politics at all.

Another major constraint on mothers’ involvement comes from voters’ expectations. When mothers with children at home run for office, they violate norms that require mothers to devote themselves fully to mothering; as a result, those who engage in demanding pursuits like politics may be seen as neglectful, or conflict with their private role (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Stalsburg, 2012). They violate stereotypes tied to these roles that shape voter expectations. Additionally, the logistical and time demands presented by motherhood make it difficult for mothers of young children to run for office. Thus, would-be candidates who happen to be mothers face two systems of constraints: voters’ stereotypes, and their own worries about being there for their families. As a result, motherhood is especially salient for mother-candidates (Stalsburg, 2016).

It may seem that being a mother is a disadvantage for potential candidates, and that childless women would fare better. However, even childless women face costs. This

is because having children is still viewed as “the norm.” Those who do need meet that norm may risk being viewed as an outsider, or deviant. This is even more true for women than for men. Because women’s traditional roles are so associated with home, family and caregiving, they may face even more pressure to have children and embody their role. Tellingly, women without children face negative judgments from society. In a study for the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (2004), participants expressed that childless women make them uncomfortable. Additionally, mothers are consistently rated higher on critical candidate traits such as leadership, qualifications, and competence (Stalsburg, 2012). They are also perceived as better to manage child-care and children’s issues than childless women are (Stalsburg, 2010). The effect is not limited to childless women; single women also made respondents uncomfortable, highlighting the impact of marriage – and, more broadly, meeting social norms - for women candidates.

There are important partisan differences in perceptions of women, and mothers in particular. Women have been shown to be at a disadvantage in more culturally conservative areas, where gender roles are stronger. These more conservative beliefs have been shown to affect voter perceptions of men and candidates (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Dolan, 2010). They also make it more likely that conservative women will seek to fill a traditional role in the home, rather than running for office (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). Because Republicans tend to hold more culturally conservative views than Democrats, there may be important partisan differences in how the two parties perceive women, especially mothers, in public life (Thomsen, 2015). In particular, Republicans may be less primed to accept women outside of their traditional role and running for public office, while Democrats may be more open to it.

However, as Sue Thomas's quote above highlights, it can certainly be argued that gendered expectations do not impact only women. They constrain men, too. This dissertation perceives those gendered expectations as different branches stemming from the same root – the public-private divide. If one is to truly understand gender as a phenomenon and a process that shapes human behavior, it is not sufficient to focus only on women's differences. We must examine in which ways gender impacts both men *and* women. We must ask deeper questions, such as how does either group respond in a given situation/circumstance, and why? What strategic calculations might each group be entertaining when building their brand, and why? When we uncover how gender operates differently for both men and women – what concerns and expectations men and women face, what motivates their reasoning - we gain insight into the multiple ways in which it constrains all people. And when we do that, we can begin to conceptualize ways to move beyond those constraints, or at least navigate them more effectively (i.e., for women candidates to more effectively reach their desired aim of reaching office). Otherwise, we risk simply examining the ways in which women are different from men, rather than interrogating the underlying processes that shape those differences.

In the case of family roles, investigating how gender impacts men (as well as women) is instructive because assumptions about who is suited to have a public (vs private) role is at the core of what makes it difficult for women to enter public life. However, investigating how men and women candidates present their family roles might shed light on the broader process that shape what allows a public figure to successfully (or not) integrate his family life with his public role. Questions such as what expectations or perceptions are men and women responding to when they discuss their families?,

which family members do they discuss?, and why those family members? all shed light on the underlying gendered assumptions that candidates navigate. With a deeper understanding of how men and women integrate family and public life, we can question and problematize some of the related assumptions that women face. These are some of the same assumptions that lead them to be perceived as ill-suited to politics, and only fulfilled by domestic life. Therefore, by disrupting those assumptions, we may be able to open up new ways for women and men to navigate the difference between public and private life, and be more readily perceived as leaders. We also understand gender more broadly, as a process, rather than simply how it impacts women.

Given the insight to be gained from examining men's experiences (in addition to women), let us now turn to them. Men face a far different reality when balancing a political career and their family role. If the *second* half of Sue Thomas' (2010) statement, "The corollary of masculinized understandings of political leadership is feminized understandings of women's appropriate private roles and spheres of labor," outlined *women's* roles, the first part highlights the fact that politics is presumed masculinized, and men are assumed to belong there. Therefore, they face little conflict when balancing politics and family – perhaps largely because, as one study finds, voters assume that men officials have "someone else" (likely a wife) at home to manage the domestic sphere, and therefore do not even question their ability to manage any conflict between the dual sets of responsibilities. At the same time, however, those study participants voiced doubts about women officials in executive positions, especially because of perceived difficulty of balancing their official and familial duties (Barbara Lee Family Foundation, 2001; see also Schneider and Bos, 2014).

Perhaps as a result of the two separate spheres – and the assumption that men do not face conflicts navigating the two, while women do - research finds that political fathers have a number of advantages (over political mothers). For example, outside of politics, research shows that fathers in the workplace are perceived as more competent, and are paid more, than childless men, and some argue that these same biases exist in the political world (Stalsburg, 2012). Fatherhood can function as an asset in part because it helps to “soften” the father-candidate, emphasizing a wider range of personality traits and making him seem well-rounded and wholesome (Dittmar, 2015).

Given that fatherhood can be such an advantage for men in politics, it is no surprise they are more likely to have children than women are, and to have more of them (Carroll 1989; Kirkpatrick 1974). Fathers are less likely to delay entering politics until their children are older (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013), and less likely to retain responsibility for the bulk of managing the home once in office (Thomas 2002). The end result of these disparities is that men are more likely to ever run for office, and to seek higher office (Sapiro, 1981-82; Blair and Henry, 1981), but they are less likely to cite “family obligations” as the impetus for their retirement (Blair and Henry, 1981). Overall, men have more flexibility to combine their public role with parental responsibilities (Stalsburg, 2012).

It is true that men, too, contend with the need to meet masculinized ideals, and ideals for leaders. In essence, they are also navigating gendered expectations of leaders (Dittmar, 2015; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995). Moreover, they certainly benefit from the alignment of leadership axis and their position on the gender axis, and from the fact that they are more likely to be presumed to meet masculinized expectations. It seems that

gender role expectations and family obligations are salient for men and women in different ways (Dittmar, 2015; Stalsburg, 2010, 2016). While women must navigate the incompatibility of their position on the gender axis with the leadership axis, and face significant *costs* for venturing away from their typical private role within their family, men can *benefit* from being seen as a “family man” and devoting any amount of time to their families. Doing so is positive and makes them seem more relatable. Women candidates face calculations and constraints that men do not as they navigate the gendered terrain that is the political arena.

Again, the media’s gendered biases may disadvantage women candidates. In a study of women running for US Senate and governor in 2000 primaries, Bystrom et al. (2001) argue that, on the positive side, women receive more coverage than men, and that the quality and emphases (on viability, appearance, personality) is roughly similar. Yet, on the other hand, the coverage emphasizes the women candidates’ private roles as wives and mothers, known to disadvantage them with voters by continuing to reinforce questions about their ability to balance both private and public roles (Banwart, et al., 2003). Robertson et al. (2002) echo this, finding that, while women gubernatorial and Senate candidates in 2000 received more coverage than their male colleagues, they were more likely to be described in terms of their gender and family roles. Similarly, Banwart et al. (2003) find that news coverage in the 2000 primaries emphasized women’s private roles as mothers and wives. Importantly, this may reinforce women’s outsider status in the masculinized political arena, and thereby putting them at a disadvantage (Witt, Paget and Matthews, 1995).



There is some hope that women may be able to overcome those aspects of motherhood that render it generally incompatible with politics and re-deploy it as an asset. For example, in 2008, Sarah Palin did this by terming herself, and other similar conservative women, “Mama Grizzlies,” suggesting that they would take tough actions to protect their families. Many female gun rights activists have declared that they seek to own guns as mothers, to protect their families. In both cases, motherhood, and the drive to protect one’s family, was used as the basis to justify “tough,” more typically masculine actions. Women candidates have also deployed motherhood in less masculinized terms, such as including footage of themselves breastfeeding or receiving ultrasounds in campaign ads (Kurtzleben, 2018; Selk, 2018). Deason, Greenlee & Langner (2014) term this usage of motherhood as a basis for political action as “politicized motherhood,” and suggest that its implications may be complex and contradictory. While on the one hand, it may motivate women (who also happen to be mothers) to run for office, it may also raise and reinforce gendered stereotypes that depict women and mothers as ill-suited for public office, thereby inhibiting their electoral success.

Though the impact of politicized motherhood may be debated, I argue that its very emergence is a signal that norms may be changing. Obviously, women cannot be “good family men,” but if women see it as potentially advantageous to call on such diverse aspects of motherhood as a basis for candidacy, perhaps there is room at the table for a “good family woman,” too, and we can reach a time when we no longer question how efficiently a mother can balance her private life and public office. Only time will tell, as we see candidates negotiate these norms over the next election cycles. All of this leads to four hypotheses.

### *Hypotheses*

*H1a. Women will rarely emphasize their roles as wives and mothers. In particular, they will mention their family roles less than men do. Not mentioning their private roles often will constitute a gender-incongruent strategy.*

*H1b. Men, too, will behave in gender incongruent ways, with respect to the masculine-feminine axis. They will highlight their roles as husbands and fathers more than women mention their own roles. This will be an example of an instance where the expectations for masculinity and leadership do not align.*

*H1c. Women will also be less likely than men to show their family's involvement on the campaign trail. This will be further evidence of their incongruity with gendered expectations for family roles.*

### *Traits*

Traditional gender roles may give rise to assumptions about how the men and women filling those roles will conduct themselves. Indeed, gender stereotypes about men and women in politics' behavior are well-documented (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Bauer, 2015; Burrell, 1994, 1996; Dittmar, 2015; Dolan, 2014; Dolan, 2018; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; Kahn, 1996; Koch, 2000; Lawless, 2004; Okimoto and Brescoll, 2010; Rosenwasser and Seale, 1988; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009; Sapiro, 1981–1982). Across cultures, women are generally viewed as

possessing expressive, caregiving and/or “other-centered” traits such as: gentle, kind, compassionate, passive, honest, caring and warm (Bauer, 2019; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). In contrast, men are presumed to embody more instrumental, active traits, including assertive, tough, logical, aggressive and more likely to behave in ways that signal power and authority (Heilman, 2001). As with women, the roots of the public’s stereotypes are in men’s (or women’s) roles and the behavior they require; we have come to conceptualize of these traits as “masculine” in large measure because men typically perform agentic roles that require leadership, strength, or decisiveness – ideal for a politician (Koenig et al., 2011; Vinkenburt et al., 2011). These personality traits are a core component of gender stereotypes; they directly inform how we expect women and men to behave (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a). I rely on the trait stereotypes and attributions in that previous literature to create my own groupings of gender stereotypic traits, which can be found in Appendix 3.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately for women, these trait attributions often carry consequences that limit their perceived suitability for public life. As we know, previous research has found that biases against women in public life are rooted in stereotypes about women’s traditional roles, which often conflict with public life. Moreover, backlash can result when women candidates act in ways that are gender incongruent. These gendered stereotypes carry other consequences as well. Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) find that evaluations of women leaders suffer compared to men’s when they lead with traits

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<sup>11</sup> I developed my own feminine/masculine groupings, guided by trait stereotypes and attributions, because I could not find such a typology or grouping. Previous scholarship described various traits, and the gendered assumptions associated with them, but did not go so far as to develop dedicated masculine/feminine groupings.

that are perceived as masculine, such “direct” or “autocratic;” this conflicts with expectations that women should be warm and likable. Notably, the backlash women suffered was greater when they occupied clearly male-dominated roles.

Interestingly, women who enter public life or hold high-status roles may still be seen as competent – even if not stereotypically warm and likable (Bligh, et al., 2012; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2001). The stereotype violation literature argues that gender incongruent behavior often results in backlash, and even outright dislike, toward the one who pursues such a strategy (e.g., Casad, 2007; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001).

All of this may tell us what stereotypes the public is predisposed to have about candidates, based on their gender – but what does research say about which traits candidates actually display? One school of thought, based largely on campaign websites and television ads, argues that women candidates emphasize feminine traits more frequently than they do masculine ones (Bauer, 2019; Fridkin & Kenney, 2014; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003; Herrick, 2016; Kahn, 1993; Schneider, 2014b). Importantly, those studies examine women candidates alone, asking whether they mention more masculine or feminine traits – as opposed to comparing women’s behavior to men. Indeed, a second school of thought finds that both women and men emphasize masculine traits (while minimizing feminine ones) (Bystrom, 2010; Dolan & Lynch, 2017; Dolan, 2005, 2014; Sapiro et al., 2011). These seemingly incompatible findings may arise from the fact that some compare members of the same gender, while others compare the two genders to each other. It may be that women candidates “own” (discuss more) feminine traits when compared to men, but also seek to embody masculine norms

more than feminine ones in their own branding. In sum, gender stereotypes likely impact the traits candidate display, but there is debate as to what results that leads to.

All of this literature suggests that there may be differences between the personality traits that men and women are socialized to develop, and potentially showcase as part of their “brand.” And, as with family roles in the previous section, if one is to gain a deeper understanding of gender as a process, a phenomenon, it is helpful to investigate both men and women’s traits. This is especially true with respect to personality traits. Such traits prescribe much about how men and women should act, how they will “be” in the world. Certain behaviors and ways of being are ideal for leaders, while others suggest that a person is not suited for such a role. In many cases, traits associated with men might signal that they are suited for public roles. But if men do not showcase such traits – if they do not exhibit typical masculinized traits that should be ideal for leaders – that would suggest that perhaps voters do not seek such traits in their leaders, or there is not much to gain by doing so. Either way, if men do not send these signals, it would suggest that they are not part of the masculinized leadership ideals; therefore, women would likely have little to gain by trying to showcase them. However, if one *only* focuses on women’s personality traits, one risks missing that understanding, and may mistakenly assume that women could gain by striving to meet a masculinized leadership ideal. These kinds of deeper understandings about gendered leadership expectations, and how they influence behavior, are only possible by examining both men and women.

Trait attributions – both masculine and feminine - are especially salient to candidates because some voters may have baseline preferences for candidates with either

masculine or feminine traits; those preferences may then impact their voting behavior (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Unfortunately for women candidates, the traits associated with men are also the ones that the public seeks in its leaders, while feminine traits often conflict with leadership expectations<sup>12</sup> (Conroy, 2015; DiTonto, 2016; Evans and Hayes Clark, 2016; Koenig et al., 2011; Lawless, 2004). The result is that, with few exceptions, most feminine traits are not associated with leadership. The few exceptions include “compassion” and “honesty” (Evans and Hayes Clark, 2016), traits which are often part of our conceptualization of leadership. The incompatibility of *most* feminine traits with leadership could potentially put women candidates at a disadvantage in an arena when masculinized visions of leadership are valued (Evans and Hayes Clark, 2016). Men, in contrast, face no such disadvantage. Instead, by virtue of being men, they are presumed to embody masculinized leadership ideals, and need only continue to meet those expectations to retain their advantage. The result is that, while candidates of both genders navigate masculinized expectations when they create their “brands,” men are the “default,” and largely assumed (by the public) to have the necessary – masculinized – qualities to be a leader. Women, in contrast, have to expend more effort and be more strategic in their self-presentation.

The media can compound this disadvantage. Its gender bias is well documented in past scholarship (Campus, 2012; Dolan, 2014; Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008; Kahn, 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b). In line with gendered stereotypes, the media tends to focus on “expressive” strengths, such as sentimental, emotional, or warm, when covering women candidates, while using active, instrumental traits, like experience and leadership, in their

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<sup>12</sup> While most feminine traits conflict with leadership expectations, there are some exceptions. Traits like compassion and warmth can be advantageous for leaders (Kahn, 1994b).

coverage of male candidates (Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008). Newspapers, in particular, emphasize both feminine traits and issues in their coverage of women candidates, as well as undermine their credibility as candidates with their language (Bystrom et al., 2001). They focus disproportionately on women's appearances, personalities and personal lives (Braden, 1996; Witt, Paget and Matthews, 1994), and can marginalize them with gender-specific slights, such as calling U.S. Senate candidate Carol Mosely-Braun "a den mother with a cheerleader's smile" (Witt, Paget and Matthews, 1994). These differences in coverage serve to trivialize women candidates, and highlight their traditional incompatibility with public office (Bystrom, 2001).

Yet, there may be some moments where this gendered coverage offers an advantage: in a study of U.S. Senate candidates, Kahn (1994b) finds that women can gain an advantage when the coverage emphasizes favorable typically feminine traits, such as warmth or honesty. She argues that reinforcing those traits can contribute to positive evaluations of women candidates, fostering a favorable electoral climate for them.

However, there is some hope that women candidates can overcome these biases, held by both voters and the media, and successfully display ideal, masculinized leadership traits. Some previous scholarship finds that the traits that a candidate displays may be as relevant as his/her gender, or even more so, in perceiving how voters view him/her. Put another way, it may be possible to override gender-based trait stereotypes. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) found that participants rated candidates described as stereotypically feminine, with traits such as compassion or warmth, higher on the expressiveness scale, regardless of their gender. Participants perceived them as more sensitive and emotive, and gentler, than other candidates. In contrast, candidates seen as

possessing stereotypically masculine, instrumental traits (ambitious or tough) were rated higher on the instrumentality scale than others, regardless of the candidate's gender. By displaying typically "masculine" leadership qualities, women candidates may overcome stereotypes that might otherwise limit them (Wagner, Gainous and Holman, 2017). Thus, who can embody these stereotypes may be somewhat open and flexible. Voters may be willing to loosen their norms.

That may allow women to successfully enter politics, and, once there, to problematize and shift norms. In so doing, they may redefine our expectations of leaders. This may open up participation to new, formerly marginalized, groups of people. In other words, it may be that women have to adapt to masculinized leadership norms to gain entry into political institutions – in order to then *challenge* those norms and institutions. It may be more effective to change gendered systems from *within*, rather than from the outside. But in order to gain entry to an elite world like that of electoral politics, one often has to play by the system's rules and gain admittance.<sup>13</sup>

Importantly, however, if women simply find acceptable ways to embody masculine traits, they would still be dealing in terms of our current masculinized leadership norms, rather than seeking to truly change the norms. However, if, once in politics, they find ways to show how new, more gender-neutral, non-traditional traits, such as "independent," "inclusive," and "courageous" can form the core of good leadership, that will be truly transformational. It would be even more transformational if they could contribute to changing expectations of leadership, so that feminine traits, such

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<sup>13</sup> As evidence of this, there is an extensive body of literature on political parties as "gatekeepers" who often end up making it more difficult for women to enter politics, in part because women candidates may not best fit their gendered expectations of who a public official is (Baer, 2013; Burrell, 1993; Crowder-Meyer, 2009; Fox and Lawless, 2009; Niven, 1998).



as compassion and warmth, were also deemed central components of leadership. Such traits would stem from basic functions of leadership, rather than conceptualizing it through a gendered lens.

### *Hypotheses*

*H2a. In reference to themselves, women candidates will pursue a mostly gender incongruent strategy, emphasizing mostly masculine traits, as well as a few feminine traits that are potentially advantageous for leaders, such as “honesty” and “compassion.” In essence, this will be a leadership-congruent strategy.*

*H2b. In comparison to women, men will have greater flexibility to mention a wider range of traits – masculine, feminine, or neutral. Any feminine or neutral traits mentioned will likely include those that are especially advantageous for leaders, such as “honesty” and “compassion.” This, too, will be a leadership-congruent strategy.*

*H2c. Women will mention their own traits more than other people’s in an attempt to build credentials and overcome their presumed “other-center” focus.*

*H2d. In comparison to women, men will mention themselves and others in similar proportions.*

### *Issues*

Previous scholarship suggests that voters may employ those trait attributions to make inferences about candidates’ policy competencies. They may even be central to assigning issue competency (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a). Although there may be some differences in how past scholarship defines “women’s issues,” there is also considerable

consensus in how they do so (Evans & Hayes Clark, 2016; Bratton, 2002; Dodson & Carroll, 1991; Reingold, 2000; Swers, 2002; Thomas, 1991, 1994; Wolbrecht, 2000). Most studies define “women’s issues” as a core set of issues that impact, either directly or disproportionately, people belonging to the category of “women” as a group. The definition can also include policy issues that have traditionally been associated, broadly speaking, with women, including health, welfare, education, and the environment. Voters have also historically viewed women candidates as strong on “compassion,” or social welfare, issues such as health, education, poverty, women’s issues, the elderly, and children/childcare. Men candidates, by contrast, are often perceived as more competent on “tougher,” weightier, more substantive issues like the taxes (Dolan, 2005), the military, big business, law enforcement/crime or national defense (Alexander and Andersen, 1991; Dolan, 2010; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993b; Lawless, 2004; Thomas and Wilcox, 2014). This dissertation draws from the definitions reflected in this previous scholarship.

One exception is economic issues.<sup>14</sup> Research offers little consensus on whether the public perceives women or men as stronger in that domain (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a); some studies find that men have an advantage (Leeper, 1991; Sapiro, 1981-82), but others do not (Sapiro, 1983; Alexander and Andersen, 1991). This may be because the traits that should be associated with competency on the economy, such as frugality or fiscal responsibility, are not typically associated with one gender or the other. It would

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<sup>14</sup> Of note, in this paragraph, “the economy” refers to the economy, broadly constructed, and as referenced in previous literature cited. It does not include “sub-issues” - issues which may relate to the economy, but be somewhat more specific. Such issues include big business or taxation. Those issues may indeed carry gendered competencies (such as big business (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Alexander and Andersen, 1991; Leeper, 1991) or taxes (Dolan, 2005)).

therefore be difficult for voters to make gendered trait attributions, or to infer competency on the economy (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a).

Again, there is evidence that gendered assumptions may constrain both men and women's issue priorities. Examining the multiple ways it constrains people of both groups is key to understanding gender as a broader process. A focus on men's issue competencies allows one to study which issues are "mainstream" and "the default." If women have a similar pattern of behavior to men, that would suggest that they are less constrained by gender, and have greater flexibility to mention whichever issues are relevant. If they follow a distinct pattern of behavior, that might suggest that women are more restricted, and highlight a pattern of "women's issues," perhaps because they are presumed as more competent on those issues. However, if one only focuses on women's behavior, one risks identifying women's behavior as a reaction to gendered expectations, when in fact it might be very similar to men's.

As with traits, the media's coverage of policy tends to have gendered biases. Kahn (1996) finds that the media disadvantages women by covering the issues they raised less, and providing more photos, than for men candidates, even though women discussed issues just as often. They assume men have greater competence on masculine issues, including foreign policy, trade or defense; women receive more coverage about their stances on health, education and welfare (Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008; Carroll and Schreiber, 1997; Kahn, 1996).

Evidence shows that women can be seen as competent on masculine issues. In an experimental study, Leeper (1991) found that in a low-information environment, when they had no cues to go on besides the candidate's name and the text of a speech attributed

to him/her, respondents were equally likely to rate candidates as competent on masculine and feminine issues, without detracting from their assumed feminine traits. Respondents were asked to read an identical speech, some with a hypothetical man's name as the candidate, and some with a hypothetical woman's name. Respondents were equally likely to rate both candidates as strong on the stereotypically masculine issues in the speech, such as crime – yet, they still rated the female-named candidate as possessing stereotypically feminine strengths such as honesty. Additionally, in an original phone survey, Dolan (2010) found support for the claim that women can be viewed as competent on masculine issues, and, furthermore, suggested that voters who do so may be more likely to support women candidates.

This all suggests that voters may be flexible on who can be competent on masculine issues. As in the previous chapter on traits, this is critical because, if voters are flexible, women candidates may be able to expand current leadership ideals to reflect more than masculine as the default, and hopefully even a broader variety of candidates from marginalized groups. Perhaps one day, our expectations of “who a leader is” and which issues are most substantive can better reflect our society. However, as established earlier in the traits chapter, if we simply see women expanding their issue portfolios to include masculine issues, that would again simply mean women meeting current masculine leadership norms. While that would be valuable, and allow more women to participate, it would not imply truly questioning or expanding the norms themselves.

Candidate party affiliation also constrains which issues women discuss. It conveys relevant information to voters about a candidate's potential ideology and policy positions (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Koch, 2000; Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Petrocik,

1996; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Voters employ candidate party as a heuristic to make judgments about how a candidate will act on a range of issues, especially social welfare spending and defense (Rahn, 1993). Typically, Republicans are seen as stronger on “tough” defense and security issues, while Democrats are perceived as more competent on social welfare issues (Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009).

Some authors argue that these partisan cues may override any influences from candidate gender (Dolan and Lynch, 2017; Huddy and Capelos, 2002; Matland and King, 2002). However, others take a more nuanced approach and suggest that the lenses of both gender and party can intersect and work together to shape how voters evaluate candidates. Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2009) and Winter (2010, 2007) find that gender stereotypes are still present, even when partisan ones enter the calculus, and that intersection of these stereotypes has implications for how citizens evaluate politics. Party does not preclude a role for gender stereotypes, with respondents evaluating the issue positions and ideologies of women and men of their own party somewhat differently. Republican respondents saw Republican women as more liberal than their male colleagues, and respondents were less likely (than Democrats) to view Republican women as well-qualified on a traditional woman’s strength, education. The opposite was true for Democrats, who were seen as more liberal (in line with their party’s ideology) and better able to address a traditional woman’s issue, education. Thus, it is possible that gender and party again intersect here to shape the issues that men and women discuss. It may be that Republican women, seeking to emphasize their conservative ideologies, are less likely to mention traditional women’s issues, which tend to be social welfare ones. On the other hand, they may be more likely to mention traditional women’s issues, as

they can benefit from the credibility that they have as women. At the same time, Democratic women have strong incentives, due to both their gender and their party, to mention traditional women's issues frequently, and will likely do so.

Finally, the current events, and/or the salient issues of the day, may also constrain which issues candidates of both genders emphasize (Dolan, 2005). This is highly logical, as candidates are highly motivated to win re-election (Mayhew, 1974), and voters may naturally respond better to the candidates who are addressing the most pressing, relevant issues. In 2016, registered voters cited a range of issues as "very important," including the economy (84%); terrorism (80%); foreign policy (75%) health care (74%); gun policy (72%) and immigration (70%) (Pew, 2016). Though many of those issues are stereotypically associated with men (terrorism, foreign policy, gun policy, immigration), given that all candidates have motivations to address the issues that are "very important" to voters, we can expect that men and women both will address these issues. Salience, in addition to party and gender, impacts which issues candidates mention. In particular, the economy, terrorism, foreign policy, health care, gun policy, and immigration should receive high mentions.

### *Hypotheses*

*H3a: Overall, I expect that both men and women candidates will prioritize the salient issues in 2016.*

*H3b: Republican women will focus more on traditionally Republican-owned issues, such as taxes, defense, and business than Democratic women will. On the other side, Democratic women will play to their party's perceived strengths in social welfare issues.*

*H3c: Within a party, some gender differences may exist. Republican women may mention traditional women's issues even less than their same-party male colleagues, as such issues are not their party's traditional strengths and they do not want to be "pigeonholed" on them. On the other hand, Democratic women may mention such issues more than men, as those issues are their party's strength, they are perceived as more capable on such issues, and they want to capitalize on that advantage.*

Please see Appendix 8 for a chart summarizing these aspects.

Social media, in particular Twitter, is a forum in which candidates navigate gendered leadership norms. Past scholarship has uncovered some of the ways in which “women’s issues” and women’s “outsider” status can advantage female candidates in some contexts (Dolan, 1998; Fridkin & Kenney, 2009) by investigating off-line media advertising (including printed mailers, television ads, etc.). However, scholars have relatively recently begun examining how candidates deploy social media in campaigns (Evans, Cordova, & Sipole, 2014; Gainous & Wagner, 2014; Smith & Rainie, 2008). Twitter, a microblogging platform, is one such site. Users communicate in “tweets,” short statements of 280 characters or less.<sup>15</sup> According to a study of 2012 U.S. House

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<sup>15</sup> While the limit was 140 characters per tweet at the time of the tweets I examine (2016), it was raised to 280 characters as of November 2017 (Tsukayama 2017).

candidates (Evans, et al., 2014), these tweets most commonly focus on the candidates' personal lives, with 29% of tweets dedicated to it. This includes everything unrelated to their campaigns, from going to football games, to friends and family, to remembering September 11th attacks. Also frequently mentioned are campaign events and activities (23%), the media (13%) and policy issues (12%) (Evans et al., 2014). This platform was launched in 2006, but was not mainstream in politics until 2012, by which time most candidates had profiles, and the site was the eighth most-visited one during the election (Hendricks, 2014). In 2017, 54.7 million Americans, or 16.7% of the U.S. population, used Twitter (Kats, 2018). However, activity on Twitter can have a much broader, nationwide "reach," even to those not on Twitter. A tweet can generate exponential news coverage when it "goes viral," is picked up by the mainstream media, and is reported as news. Legitimate candidates know that they cannot overlook the power of Twitter (Hendricks, 2014).

But what do users, in particular, find useful about Twitter? What do they go to the site to accomplish? Understanding the affordances of Twitter in more detail can shed light on these questions. Kreiss, Lawrence, and McGregor (2018) have recently defined affordances as "what platforms are *actually capable of doing and perceptions of what they enable, along with the actual practices that emerge as people interact with them*" (p. 12, emphasis in original). Put another way, what does an object allow users to do? With respect to Twitter in particular, research suggests that the options members make use of (hashtags, URLs, photos), and the ways in which they use Twitter, often reflects the communities and networks they are part of; that is, for example, a British politician will tweet very differently from a member of the (American) Black Lives Matter movement



(Bowman, 2015; Holmberg et al., 2014). Thus, Twitter affords a candidate the opportunity to identify herself as one of the people back home, and highlight her ties to the District.

Additionally, the ability to be viewed by an “audience” – that is, members of the public with their own Twitter accounts – has increased the popularity of tools that allow Twitter users to interact with others (likes, comments, retweets, “boosting” a particular post), and/or which facilitate a performer/audience relationship (algorithms, curators) (Bowman, 2015; Litt, 2012). As evidence of this, Twitter distinguishes itself from many social networks, such as Facebook, because a user does not have to follow her own followers – that is, a “relationship” does not have to be reciprocal. Instead, it is more of a sender-audience relationship (Schmidt, 2014). Moreover, Twitter uses those relationships (whether reciprocal or not) to calculate similarities with other users, and suggest potential people for both users to “follow” (Schmidt, 2014). In this way, users (candidates) can build unidirectional relationships - where they function as the “followee,” the “sender” - with countless others that they do not even know, and Twitter will continue to suggest still others with similar interests. This helps them build vast “audiences” of potential supporters, and then continue building on that support.

Overall, these affordances offer ways to showcase that the candidate reflects her community and is “one of them,” as well as ways to build relationships and interact with specific groups of followers. Moreover, these features are numerous,<sup>16</sup> and customizable – not only for the individual candidate/Twitter user to shape her usage, but also to shape

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<sup>16</sup> Though I mentioned several specific key Twitter features parenthetically in this section, there are many more. For a more extensive list of features Twitter users can employ to customize Twitter to best meet their needs, please see Bowman, 2015, pp 50.

how she interacts with different groups of followers (i.e., highlighting certain groups or individuals with hashtags; paying to “boost” posts to followers of certain demographics). Small wonder, then, that candidates seeking to build a public brand and engage with their followers perceive Twitter as so useful.

While Twitter’s affordances make it uniquely suited to be an important campaign tool, how do campaigns perceive social media in general from their end? In particular, what distinguishes it from other, traditional media? First, in terms of audience/followers, campaigns perceive it to be composed of generally favorable, informed and intentional (i.e., they have to truly want information about the candidate to take the time to go to his/her Twitter profile). These users may be the target of the information provided on Twitter (McGregor, 2018; Bimber & Davis, 2003; Foot & Schneider, 2006). They are perceived as largely supportive of the candidate’s viewpoints, “brand,” and candidacy, with campaigns at lower risk of alienating that audience (Evans et al., 2016). Moreover, campaigns can also “reach” those supportive followers multiple times with their message, and track which followers have seen it. In today’s increasingly information-saturated and busy world, where consumers (or voters) are bombarded with information, increasing repetition is required to “sell” a message. I interviewed 27 candidates or campaign strategists as part of this dissertation (see more in the Methodology section later in this chapter). As one of them, a Republican male, notes of social media,

“I think it’s probably the most powerful way of branding. When I was a child, I remember that it was eight times eight times that you had to see Frosted Flakes on TV before you went inside the supermarket and told your mom, ‘They’re great. I want those now.’ Now it’s thirty times, and I think by 2020...it’s expected to go up to fifty times. So that means in order for anyone to remember your name they’re going to need to see it fifty times before a race. Now think about that. That is huge. You could reach them one time in a mail piece, right. You reach them another time on a TV commercial. Maybe another time on a billboard. I’m just

saying there's different ways that you can reach them. But the best way that you can reach them, and know how many times they've seen it, is on Facebook or on Twitter where you know the reputation for repetition" (Participant 38).

Thus, the audience that Twitter provides makes it a forum in which to "rally the base" because of the intentionality of followers, and the possible repetition of one's message. This contrasts with television advertising, newspapers, or other forums where a general audience in the candidate's media market receives the message. On those forums, candidates may be more careful about appealing to a broad audience, including moderates, and earning support, rather than solidifying it (Evans et al., 2016). And of course, they can only reach potential supporters one time with each mailing, or several times with a TV or radio ad. The importance of earning and solidifying support is even more important, given the re-election motivations of candidates (Mayhew, 1974) that I discussed earlier. Thus, Twitter is a unique forum in which women have the opportunity to develop their "brand" in ways that may challenge gender stereotypes, and at a "low cost," among a generally supportive audience. At least one strategist feels it is the most powerful way to accomplish that.

A second advantage that social media offers is freedom from the media's gendered biases. Media bias, discussed earlier, is well-documented and pervasive. It often either reinforces gender stereotypes or marginalizes women candidates. It can marginalize them either by covering them less often or less substantively, or by focusing disproportionately on personal concerns. However, on Twitter, candidates can communicate directly with their followers. The ability to escape those biases is crucial. First, it allows the public and scholars alike to "... see the decisions candidates and their staffs make about how they present themselves to the public" (Dolan, 2005, pp 33).

Candidates have more control over how they are heard and the message they give out. This offers them an opportunity to present themselves the way they would like to be seen. For scholars and voters, this offers a window into the campaign's strategic thinking. Second, research suggests that gendered biases in media coverage do impact how women candidates are perceived. Bias is rooted in gender stereotypes and related expectations about how women and men will behave. These stereotypes are self-reinforcing: we see them around us every day, so we internalize and repeat them, and they become truer (Ashmore et al., 1986; Banwart et al., 2004; Bystrom et al., 2004). If voters see these biased expectations and assumptions in the media, it will become the expectation for women candidates, thereby reinforcing the disadvantage they face from not meeting masculinized leadership ideals. However, if women candidates can successfully develop and "sell" other images – ones that navigates gender stereotypes differently – then perhaps they can set and reinforce new norms instead of outdated ones. Escaping the media's gaze provides an opportunity for women candidates to define themselves and either meet, or redefine, leadership norms on their own terms, and likely in ways that will offer maximum advantage to their campaigns.

It must be acknowledged that women candidates may still encounter gendered bias or criticism from followers (Oates, 2019). However, at the same time, Twitter provides access to the most supportive members of their bases (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Evans et al., 2016; Foot & Schneider, 2006; McGregor, 2018), even as women candidates may face some of the worst kinds of abuse. But, by offering women candidates access to those supportive bases, and a forum in which to develop effective, authentic self-

presentations, Twitter may also offer them a means by which to combat the bias they find.

Evidence suggests that women in politics do use social media in different and sometimes innovative ways. In the general population, women are more likely to have a Twitter account, and to use it (Beevolve, 2012). This applies to campaigns in particular; research supports that women candidates are more likely to have a Twitter account (Evans et al., 2014; Wagner, Gainous & Holman, 2017). They are also more active users, as they tweet more often and have more followers (Evans et al., 2016). They are more assertive and interactive than men candidates; for example, greater shares of their tweets are about mobilizing voters and policy stances than among men candidates (Evans et al., 2014). Finally, women candidates are more likely to “go negative” on Twitter, although that affect is circumstantial and disappears after controlling for incumbency and competitiveness (Evans et al., 2014). Their advanced, skillful use of Twitter may be contextual, however; a study of 2012 House candidates’ Twitter usage suggested that female candidates may feel “compelled to ‘out tough’ their male opponents” during campaigns (Lau & Pomper, 2004, p. 33), but not so outside of the intensity of campaign season. For example, one study found that women candidates used Twitter more effectively and aggressively (had an account and tweeted about the campaign) than men *during* the 2012 campaign. However, in an analysis of tweets by the same candidates made seven *months* after Election Day (/the end of the campaign), the gender differences observed during the campaign had disappeared (Evans, Ovalle and Green, 2016).

There is some debate about the issues areas that women raise. Evans (2016) finds that women candidates are more likely than men to discuss “women’s issues,” but do not

focus on them exclusively; in fact, they tweet more about “men’s issues” as well, in particular about business (Evans, 2016). Similarly, Bystrom, Robertson, Banwart, and Kaid (2004) suggest that women candidates use social media to define themselves as strong and competent on “tougher” issues with which women are not generally associated, such as defense, the military, and the economy, as well as to articulate their own personal issue messages. However, Kathleen Dolan (2005) finds that, on their campaign websites, women candidates discuss a broad range of issues that is similar to that of their male opponents, whether that be health care, social security, or government ethics. Issues that receive high priority for women also do for their male opponent. These findings hold even when controlling for party, suggesting that the issue strengths and priorities are not simply a result of traditional party strengths, but are perhaps a result of the constituency in which candidates are running (Dolan, 2005). However, Dolan suggests that, even when focusing on similar issues as men, women may be navigating gendered expectations: by focusing on those issues in spite of expectations that they might focus on stereotypically feminine issues, they demonstrate that they are as equally equipped to lead as men and devote resources to high-priority issues.

Finally, differences in how society views men’s and women’s gendered roles are visible in how the candidates present themselves on social media. For example, a study of campaign advertisements for Senate and gubernatorial races found that, likely in an effort to navigate that double-bind, women candidates were less likely to showcase their families (Bystrom et al., 2004).<sup>17</sup> That study also found that women candidates were

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<sup>17</sup> Though these advertisements were on campaign websites, and not a social media site specifically, they are still relevant to this study and its framing. Campaign websites are also a means of presenting candidates to generally friendly audiences. They also are usually sought out by intentional, motivated supporters of the campaign (Taber and Lodge, 2006). They do not offer the interactive, responsive social aspect that social

significantly more likely than men to feature children in their ads – just not the candidates’ own children. The authors of this study explained these findings by saying, “Women candidates may want to show voters that they are more than wives and mothers and to dismiss any concerns voters may have over their abilities to serve in political office due to family obligations” (Bystrom et al., 2004, 44). Similarly, in a study of 2008 and 2015 campaign websites, women candidates de-emphasized their children compared to their male colleagues, especially with respect to the photos they posted (Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016). Apparently, some women candidates perceive that their families will lead voters to view them as weaker, or as not up to the task of governing. They view their private lives as potential liabilities. And yet, they cannot completely escape the power of gendered stereotypes that view them as caregivers and mothers first: witness the irony that they still feel compelled to feature (other people’s) children in their ads. This underscores the scrupulousness with which women must navigate the political arena.

Though there is some debate about how gender shapes women’s social media usage, and how that translates into campaign output, it is clear that women use social media differently from men. In general, they are more active and assertive users, suggesting that they strategically maximize the medium’s potential. In particular, they seek to define their “image” or “brand” in an advantageous way that will help them overcome gendered stereotypes. Social media is an ideal forum in which to define themselves on their own terms. They can escape the media’s biased filter, and in so doing, have a chance to shape the coverage of themselves favorably. Additionally, they

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media does (because users cannot “comment,” “like” or otherwise interact with the candidates’ information), but they do offer the elements that distinguish social media as a largely supportive forum. They can be, therefore, a relevant point of comparison.

can spread their message to a supportive audience, who will then share it with others.

Small wonder that women candidates have become such effective users of social media.

However, much of the extant literature investigates women's behavior in relation to men – whether they behave like stereotypical women, or men. That work overlooks a third option: that women (and men) candidates simply may not engage much with gendered aspects of campaigns at all. Perhaps these gendered aspects that they examine appear relatively infrequently. If that is the case, the balance of gender power may be more even on social media. If it is indeed more even, and there is less pressure to conform to masculinized ideals, women may have greater opportunity to define themselves as they want to be perceived, free of gendered assumptions or media bias. That alone is a huge advantage for them, allowing them to take steps to overcome one of the central barriers to running for office that they face.

Moreover, if the gender balance of power is more equal on social media, there is an opening for other such paradigms to take its place. For example, perhaps candidates could strategically emphasize aspects that emphasize directly the *functions* and *actions* of leadership themselves – listening to people's concerns, responding to crises or other events, making decisions – rather than how they embody gendered stereotypes. (This dissertation will explore such a paradigm in its concluding chapter.)



### *Roadmap*

I begin the following chapters by presenting my empirical findings. In Chapter 2, I focus on how frequently candidates display their gendered family roles. I use tweets to investigate men's and women's behavior surrounding their gender congruent roles, and any potential differences in how candidates navigate those roles. I examine the difference between how candidates discuss their own, versus other people's, roles, in order to draw conclusions about whether their behavior reflects their own personal roles, or the roles in general. I end this chapter by suggesting that norms surrounding gendered family roles may be the most resistant to change, the most rigidly held, of all those examined. Norms surrounding motherhood and wifehood, rooted in women's private role, pose the most cost, or risk the most potential backlash, for women candidates seeking to signal that they embody our current (masculinized) leadership norms of all three aspects of self-presentation that this dissertation examines.

Then, in Chapter 3, I describe and analyze gender differences in how men and women candidates discuss personality traits on Twitter. I examine gender differences in the traits they mention overall, as well as when they describe specifically to themselves, and analyze their behavior with respect to gender congruent traits. I also find that women are more likely to discuss their own traits than others' – the reverse of their behavior on feminine roles. I suggest that women do not hesitate to claim masculine traits, including in reference to themselves. Finally, I suggest that perhaps women candidates have more flexibility highlighting some masculine personality traits, and associated leadership norms, because those norms are held with only moderate strength. They are somewhat resistant to women candidates' presence, though perhaps less so than family roles are.

Next, in Chapter 4, I investigate potential gender differences in which issues men and women raise. I examine which issues candidates raise overall, their behavior on gender congruent issues, and their behavior on other issues. I find that women do “own” feminine issues, likely in an effort to play to the advantage that they are accorded on those issues, but they do not discuss them exclusively. They also emphasize several masculine and neutral issues. Men, too, have a focus on masculine issues, but not exclusively. I close this chapter by concluding that women candidates have the most flexibility to navigate on issue competencies, and I offer thoughts on why that might be.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I recap my findings. I discuss why some norms might be more or less resistant to women candidates’ presence and claims of belonging, including focusing on the norms surrounding motherhood, and how deeply, personally held they are. I examine various implications of the argument that gendered norms are held with varying strength.

I close by suggesting that if women can meet certain norms and demonstrate that they belong, then perhaps we can also re-imagine what leadership looks like, and who leaders are. We can work towards a point where women need not enter the political arena as outsiders, nor strive to embody masculinized expectations, but can problematize those norms. I consider why and how women might be able to redefine or expand our leadership norms. I call on examples from more egalitarian Native American cultures, where women have long served in leadership positions just as men do, to help illustrate what this might look like – and demonstrate that, in some contexts, our leadership norms have already shifted. Perhaps one day, when we think of leaders, our image can include

women, driven by their constituents' needs and priorities, finally claiming their rightful place in public life.

## **Chapter II: Will the kids be All right? Portraying candidate family roles**

When Hillary Clinton ran for President in 2008, she famously kept her husband, former President Bill Clinton, mostly off of center stage (Karni, 2015). Despite him being one of the most effective and popular politicians of their generation, her campaign rarely deployed him as a surrogate. Nor did she emphasize her maternal role, or call attention to her gender (Brice, 2016); as her strategist Mark Penn counseled in a memo, the country was not ready for a “first mama” (Green, 2008). Along with many prominent Democrats, Senator Dianne Feinstein voiced support for the strategy when she said that Mr. Clinton should campaign for his wife “with discretion” (Clift and Brazaitis 2016, 153). When pressed for further clarification, she stated, “It’s not my business, but I think he should do the fundraisers, but let her campaign alone. Because all women basically campaign alone” (Clift and Brazaitis 2016, 153). The strategies to minimize Mr. Clinton’s role and Mrs. Clinton’s maternal image were later questioned; the former President – and the Clinton’s daughter and grandchildren - would eventually have much more of a public presence in his wife’s 2016 campaign (Karni, 2015). However, Senator Feinstein’s maxim that women campaign alone remains relevant. One could argue that Bill Clinton might have taken on a more significant role than usual simply because of his extraordinary qualifications, background and people skills – but most women candidates’ spouses are not former Presidents. And for those women, to show their family is to raise questions about who is caring for the children, and whether they can manage both roles (elected official and mother/wife) effectively. As one male Democratic strategist put it,

“Men get it really easy. You have to be careful about stressing women candidates’ family and children because there is a very sexist sort of double standard here. ‘Well, how can she be a good mom and be in Congress?’ That’s a question that people have; people don’t look at guys and go, ‘How can he be a good dad and be in Congress,’ right? There’s a double standard that it just doesn’t come up (for men). For my female candidates, I always advise them, don’t bring your kids to anything, ever, if you can avoid it. Male candidates on the other hand, I tell them to bring their kids everywhere they go. It’s a cultural double standard, but a mom that brings her kid to a political event is somebody who’s maybe having trouble juggling both of these things, whereas a man who brings his kids to an event, ‘Look at dad, taking his kids out to church,’ right. Double standard” (Participant 14).

With such a double standard as part of their calculations, it becomes easy to see why women candidates might avoid their family roles. But which roles are most often hidden? Are there any that women can showcase similarly to men? And how does party impact women candidates’ strategic decisions?

#### *Which family roles appear?*

Guided by those questions, I analyze self-presentation on Twitter by examining differences in men and women’s self-presentation strategies, both overall, in reference to their own roles, as well as when describing others’ roles. As described in Chapter One, I used a small random sample to develop a code of key words related to family; there were a total of 8. I then coded the corpus of all tweets for those roles. I also examine instances where a candidate shows a family member’s involvement in their campaigns, and where they cite their familial roles as sources of credibility. Figure 2 below provides a list of all keywords I coded.

Figure 2: Roles Coded

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Mother  
 Father  
 Wife  
 Husband  
 Son  
 Daughter  
 Kids/Children  
 Parents

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To meet the requirements for coding, a word had to mention one of the aforementioned family roles. I coded all tweets that did. Then, I coded for to whom the mention referred. It could either refer to someone outside the candidate's family, or the candidate's own role ("As a mother..."), or someone else's role in the candidate's family ("Happy anniversary to my wife!"). While the former (candidate's own role, "As a...") may be more personal and direct, and show her own actions, the latter (showing family members, "My...") is also relevant. It reminds followers that the candidate is part of a family and has a private role, even if the subject of the tweet is someone else in the family. Finally, coding for families *outside* of the candidate's own allows us to observe how often families come up overall. If families come up very often, but their own family roles are a small percentage of mentions, that might suggest that candidates are disincentivized to mention their own families. For men, that would be very odd, because they have seemingly everything to gain from promoting the image of a happy family man. For women, it would further underscore the benefits of avoiding mentioning their private roles, which only reinforce how ill-suited they may seem for public life. Without a clear picture of how often family comes up overall – candidates' families, and others – we could only examine how the candidates discuss their families, and not make broader

claims about family roles overall. To get a full picture of how candidates tweet about their private roles, I had to be attentive to both.

In addition, I coded for variants of all roles, such as including “Mom(s)” and “Mothers” under “Mother,” or “wife” and “wives.” I grouped any related variants that appeared under the primary role – “Mother” in the preceding example. Such variants appeared in the sample of tweets from which I developed my key.<sup>18</sup> The tweets showed that there was no significant difference in the substantive meaning of any variants used. They all reflected back to the primary role of, for example, “Mother.” Therefore, I felt confident grouping all related variants under the primary role. For a complete list of all variants coded for, please see Appendix 9.

Family roles were the first aspect (of the three—roles, traits, and issues) for which I coded. It is the most closely tied to women’s private role, and therefore the one most likely to cause conflict for followers when they see women violating their stereotypical private roles. As such, it may also carry the highest cost for women candidates to showcase this aspect of their lives. Recall from Chapter One that I have three hypotheses about Twitter activity on roles:

*Hypotheses:*

*H1a. Women will rarely emphasize their roles as wives and mothers. In particular, they will mention their family roles less than men do. Not mentioning their private roles often will constitute a gender-incongruent strategy.*

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<sup>18</sup> To develop the “key” of keywords to code for taken from the list of tweets, I began coding tweets for the keywords that appeared, and continued until no new keywords had appeared in some time. I had exhausted the list of potential keywords that might appear. For more information on the sample used to develop the code, please see the methodology sub-section of this dissertation, especially page 16.

*H1b. Men, too, will behave in gender incongruent ways, with respect to the masculine-feminine axis. They will highlight their roles as husbands and fathers more than women mention their own roles. This will be an example of an instance where the expectations for masculinity and leadership do not align.*

*H1c. Women will also be less likely than men to show their family's involvement on the campaign trail. This will be further evidence of their incongruity with gendered expectations for family roles.*

*Which roles appear, and how often?*

Recall briefly from Chapter One that I expect that women will choose to avoid engaging with family role norms altogether, or at least less than men do. That is to say, as most strategists have long suggested (Dittmar, 2015), they will not emphasize their roles as wives and mothers – to do so would be to raise questions about how well they can fill the roles of both mother/wife and elected official. In some cases, particularly among more conservative, traditional voters, it could be seen as violating their gender role, and deviant (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). As a result, in a gender incongruent strategy for a group traditionally filling a private, supportive, caregiving role, they will also cite their roles as a source of credibility less often than men, and will showcase their family's involvement in the campaign less often. Men, however, will also behave in gender congruent ways, with respect to masculinity. While strong, agentic, public figures might not normally feature their private lives prominently



as part of their “brands,” men will highlight their roles as husbands and fathers, more than women do their own roles. They will also cite their wives as sources of credibility far more than women do their husbands. To rely on someone else for credibility is to ask for her support and approval, and to have her speak for the candidate, rather than having the candidate’s own word be sufficient. Given the long history of women being the ones for their husbands to vouch for them, this could indeed be seen as quite gender incongruent.<sup>19</sup>

Some may argue that whether candidates tweet in gender congruent ways or not is about more than simply whether they mention their family roles at all. Instead, *how* they mention/portray that role does a great deal to determine whether they either align with, or disrupt, gendered expectations of leadership. This may be especially true for women, whose strategizing is more complex.<sup>20</sup> For example, it may be one thing for a woman candidate to show herself helping her daughter with a Science fair project, and then to add support for women in STEM fields. Such a photo would demonstrate that she still does things mothers are “supposed” to, she’s filling her role, she can relate to other moms. On the other hand, simply posting a photo of herself with her children on Mother’s Day signifies far less about how she fills her role, and whether she can manage

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<sup>19</sup> In the U.S., a woman needed her husband’s approval to open a bank account until the 1960s, and to open a credit card until 1974. In the U.K., not until 1982 could women spend money in a pub without fear of refusal of service (McGee and Moore, 1974). In the U.S. in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is still not uncommon for OBGYNs to refuse tubal ligation or hysterectomy without a husband’s approval, though no laws require that approval (Feder, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> For example, it may be very different for a candidate to post a photo of the chaos of her three children getting out the door in the morning, versus a carefully posed Christmas photo in front of a Christmas tree and roaring fire. The first photo may send signals that she is having trouble balancing her two roles and keeping things under control (though it may also strike a chord with many parents, especially mothers, as relatable!), while the second one sends a signal of tranquil domesticity. For men, the calculus is less complex, and less potentially costly. That same photo of morning chaos from a male candidate would only make him seem like a good, involved Dad, rather than struggling to balance both roles, while he would also benefit from the Christmas photo.

both motherhood and public office. It simply shows that she has children, and that she is acknowledging the holiday.

While there may be variations in the significance of how candidates, especially women, portray their roles, I argue that, given the degree to which women, and especially motherhood, have historically been incompatible with leadership and public life, a women candidate mentioning her family role *at all* is significant, and potentially costly. A woman candidate showing her family at all still risks cueing concerns about her competence and ability to manage both roles. This project is primarily interested in whether women take that risk, are willing to perhaps incur a cost by showing their families. That is enough to shed light on whether they are engaging in incongruent behavior by mentioning their private roles. Exactly *how* they discuss those roles, and which portrayals may be more or less gender incongruent, is a subject worthy of future research; the concluding chapter of this dissertation will explore that in more detail.

Overall, I find that a very low proportion of tweets are about roles. Women tweeted about family roles in 1.32% of tweets (in 215/16,238 tweets), roughly the same as did men (493/38,138, 1.30%). Democrats tweeted about roles in 1.35% of tweets (471/34,933), and their Republican counterparts did 1.22% (237/19,493) of the time. Interestingly, women Democrats tweeted slightly more often about roles (1.41%, or 185/13,078) than their Republican women colleagues (.93%, or 30/3,210). There was no partisan difference among men, as men from both parties tweeted about roles 1.31%, of the time (Men Dems - 286/21,855; Men Reps - 207/16,283, 1.27%). Across all groups, roles were the subject of just 1.30% of tweets (708/54,426). Table 2.1 below shows full results.

Table 2.1 Proportions of Tweets About Family Roles, Overall		
	Raw number of tweets that mention roles (N)	Proportion of tweets about roles (%)
Women	215	1.3
Men	493	1.3
Dem	471	1.3
Rep	237	1.2
Women – Rep**	30	0.9
Women – Dem	185	1.4
Men – Rep	207	1.3
Men – Dem	286	1.3
Overall - All Groups	708	1.3
<p><i>Notes: 1) I used the total number of tweets by each sub-group to obtain the proportion. I did so because I wanted to compare the total number of times each group tweeted about roles, out of the total number of times they tweeted overall. In other analyses, it will be more appropriate to use the number of tweets about roles specifically (instead of the total number of all tweets) to obtain proportions.</i></p> <p><i>2) (N) Democratic men = 21,855 tweets; (N) Republican men = 16,283; (N) Democratic women = 13,078; (N) Republican women = 3,210.</i></p> <p><i>3) *** <math>p \leq .001</math>; ** <math>p \leq .05</math>; * <math>p \leq .01</math>.</i></p>		

The main finding is, of course, the low proportion of tweets about roles. This was not part of any of my hypotheses. This may be in part attributable to the forum of Twitter itself. Twitter has become a very effective, and critical, communication tool for campaigns (Evans et al., 2014; Glassman, 2010; Haber, 2011). While family is certainly personal, previous research has found that approximately 29% of tweets are personal in nature (Evans et al., 2014) - meaning that the vast majority (71%) are not. Evans et al (2014) included as “personal” many topics ranging from football games, family, to remembering the September 11th attacks (Evans et al., 2014). Family is a but small percentage of that broader “personal” category. Thus, the low counts may simply be due to the fact that, even among personal items, family is not a common topic on Twitter.

But what is the importance of family roles being largely absent from Twitter? When candidates – either men or women – devote little attention to family roles (or any aspect of self-presentation), it is less likely to be in the public’s political consciousness, less likely to be something they consider about when thinking about elections. In that case, they have no way to associate it with public life, no precedent for it belonging there. Thus, its absence might further reinforce and reproduce that aspect’s existing perceived incompatibility with the public sphere. That, in turn, only makes it more difficult to shift conceptions about the public sphere - who belongs, how s/he should act, and what counts as “political.”

This is especially important with regard to family roles. They are the aspect least salient to politics, and most deeply rooted in the private realm. The public is primed to conceptualize family roles and domestic concerns, and the people who manage them (women) as not belonging in politics.<sup>21</sup> Theoretically, then, one could expect that it would be the most difficult to shift expectations surrounding them. Therefore, the fact that the counts are indeed low suggests that it will continue to remain difficult to bring the private into the public, to expand what is expected – or even acceptable – in politics. If the counts were notably higher, but still low– say, appearing in 8% - 10% of all tweets – one might argue that there was some incentive to mention family roles, and that they could become more visible in politics. As they became more and more often associated with politics, norms could shift. But that does not appear to be the case.

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<sup>21</sup> This is not to say that men’s paternal role or fatherhood are irrelevant; fatherhood, leading the family, and being a “good family man” have long been part of the basis for men entering politics, and indeed, have served as an advantage for men who fill those roles well (Griswold, 1993; Stalsburg, 2012; Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016). It is simply to say that family roles are less salient to running for public office than other aspects of self-presentation.

Additionally, the low counts are significant because they suggest that family roles have low salience on Twitter. Therefore, to the extent that family roles represent gendered expectations and concerns, and required women to strategize in unique ways, the balance of gender power on Twitter may already be fairly even. Given that family roles, and the attendant gendered assumptions and stereotypes, are not very relevant on Twitter, it may not be a place where gender influences campaigns' strategic considerations much. If fewer resources are devoted to showing how candidates embody masculinized leadership norms, women candidates may have more resources, and be better able, to compete equally on a variety of other aspects, such as promoting their campaigns (Evans, 2016).

While we cannot be certain why the proportion of tweets about family roles is low, we do know that candidates spend at least some time discussing those roles. This project seeks to understand the times when they do tweet about them. It is most concerned with differences between men and women when they do mention the keywords, as well as how often candidates tweet about roles relative to other aspects, such as traits and issues. Therefore, low overall counts should not pose a problem, as the focus is primarily on the counts relative to other aspects' counts (rather than being concerned with tweeting about roles compared to overall tweets as the object of inquiry). This allows me to investigate underlying gendered dynamics, and, in so doing, shed light on how women navigate the difficult, sometimes controversial task of claiming a place in public life (when one has been associated with the private sphere).

Beyond the low proportion of tweets about roles, and the suggestion that Democratic women and men might mention roles at roughly equal rates, another

important finding to emerge is that there may be partisan differences. This, too, was not anticipated in my hypotheses. Women Democrats tweeted about roles notably more often (1.4% of tweets) than their Republican women colleagues (.9% of tweets). While I acknowledge that there is a small percentage of tweets about family roles, that difference is significant at the .05 level.<sup>22</sup> This partisan difference could be attributed to the Republican party's traditionally more conservative culture and voter base (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Bennett and Bennett, 1992). Republican women may be reluctant to tweet about family roles if doing so will reinforce their private roles and remind followers that they are violating those roles. On the other hand, the Democratic party is more progressive, especially on social issues, and has a culture that is more open to participation from various groups of people (Freeman, 1987). Therefore, women in that party may have more flexibility to tweet about gender norms, even if it does mean coming into conflict with traditional gender roles.<sup>23</sup>

Of note, due to time and logistical constraints, this dissertation can only investigate these potential gender and party differences at the broadest/overall level (that is, just the overall counts of family mentions, rather than breaking it down by specific words, as it will do later). However, this limited evidence suggests that it is worthwhile to

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<sup>22</sup> I have stated that statistical analysis is not appropriate for the data in this dissertation, and I still believe that to be true. However, I mention it here as another way to underline the difference between Republican and Democratic women.

<sup>23</sup> It is true that some may see a counter-argument: that Republican women candidates appealing to more conservative voter base may feel pressure to prove that they are good mothers and can meet that gender role expectations – thus, they might discuss roles more. While I acknowledge that argument, there results do not support it. Instead, it may be that Republican women candidates strive to strike a balance between mentioning their families a little bit, enough to demonstrate that they are in line with social norms – but not too much to draw significant attention to it, or raise questions about how well they can balance both private and public roles. Democratic women may face less – or no – such penalty from their voter base, leading to more flexibility to mention family more often. That could lead them to mention their families infrequently, and less than Democratic women counterparts.

investigate these differences more comprehensively, breaking them down by individual keywords. I hope to do that in a future iteration of this work.

Interestingly, however, to return to my first hypothesis: I find limited support for the expectation that women would mention roles notably less than men. Only Republican women do, while Democratic ones mention roles at similar levels. Though this is very limited by the low overall percentage of tweets about roles, the low raw counts, and the low number of Republican women candidates, it is still some evidence for my hypothesis, and for the impact of partisan differences among women. However, the finding in this analysis reflects overall mentions, in reference to anyone's roles, not specifically the candidate's perspective as a mother or father. That may be the reason behind the apparent inconsistency with previous findings. I will explore the difference between the candidates' discussing their own roles later in this chapter.

To the degree that Democratic women mention family roles "in general" at similar rates (as men do fatherhood), it may be because social norms are shifting; in the era of Sarah Palin and "Mama Grizzlies," and a website, "votemama.org," dedicated to supporting mother- candidates, it may actually be effective, rather than costly, for women to discuss motherhood and other family roles.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, given that Twitter behavior for men of both parties is similar, while partisan differences emerge among women, party may shape how women tweet about roles in a way that it does not for men. Perhaps women are driving the observed partisan differences. It adds support to the claim of differences between women Democrats and women Republicans because it shows that

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<sup>24</sup> Though norms may evolve, there may be partisan differences in how exactly they constrain men and women candidates. Republican candidates may face more of a penalty for having children, or face different perceptions, than Democrats. But that does not imply that the norms shifting would not affect both parties, and that women candidates of both parties would find ways to navigate said norms.

the differences between the groups of women probably cannot be attributed to party alone.

With respect to my second hypothesis, I also fail to find full support for it. As discussed earlier, men only mention their roles more than *Republican* women – they do so equally with *Democratic* ones. That is in line with previous scholarship that suggests that men would showcase their families more often than women (Dittmar, 2015; Stalsburg, 2010). Because previous research finds this, men – and Republican women – are probably acting consistently with past behavior. It is likely Democratic women – given their larger share of their party caucus, and their party base’s more progressive stances on women’s roles – speaking about their families more that drives any observed gender differences. Of course, all of this is limited by the low percentage of tweets about roles, and the low number of Republican women.

Because this project investigates only one election cycle, future study is needed to determine whether this is part of a broader pattern, or related to the specifics of Election 2016. Women have been using motherhood as a basis for running for office since at least 1992, when Patty Murray ran as a “just a mom in tennis shoes” (Egan, 1992), and punctuated by Sarah Palin running as a “Mama Grizzly” in 2008 (Miller, 2008). These results may very well be part of that pattern, as more women come into office overall, and in doing so, shift attitudes about who belongs in public life. Women have indeed been increasing their representation in elected office; in 2018, just one election cycle after this study’s tweets, women increased their representation in Congress by 15%, from 110 to 127. As our image of who belongs in office inevitably shifts, and gendered stereotypes



become less relevant, women candidates may feel that there is less cost to mentioning private roles.

*Mother, father, husband, wife - Gender differences in which roles candidates use*

While men and Democratic women tweet about family roles overall at similar rates, I also investigated potential differences in the rates at which either gender tweets about individual role keywords. There may be differences on individual keywords that are masked by looking at the difference in overall usage (i.e., total mention of all keywords by each group). If there are keywords on which men and Democratic women have notable differences, that could provide more evidence for, or against, my hypotheses. If these differences favor women, it would provide support for my first hypothesis, that women would discuss roles more; on the other hand, if the differences favor men, it would provide support for my second hypothesis, that men discuss roles more. Either way, it is a means of further investigating my hypothesis and refining my findings.

To explore this, I obtained the counts for each keyword, grouped by gender. This allowed me to investigate, for example, total mentions of “mother” by both women and men. Then I used the total number of tweets from both genders to turn their raw counts of mentions into proportions.

Of note, and in support of my first hypothesis, women used the keyword “mother” at a higher rate than men did (21.39% of tweets about roles to men’s 10.75%).<sup>25</sup> This

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<sup>25</sup> I did include variants of all key words – i.e., “mom,” “moms,” in addition to mother. For more information on variants, please see the paragraph beginning, “In addition, I coded for variants of the roles...” on or around pp 56 in this volume.

makes sense given their own family roles; women can speak about themselves as mothers (while men obviously cannot, though they can speak about mothers in other contexts).

Yet, men do not discuss “fathers” more than women, as one might expect them to do (the two groups mention it at similar percentages, 17.67% for women to 14.60% for men).

Moreover, women also use “mother” more than men do “father,” suggesting that the difference is deeper than just women’s ability to be mothers (while men cannot). When comparing how women speak about their gender’s parental role, to how men speak about theirs, differences emerge that show women discuss their gender’s role more frequently.

This may be because they perceive less cost or risk associated with doing so than previous generations of women candidates, as social norms evolve. On the other hand, it may be that women need to address their private roles more often because those private roles are perceived as more relevant to their time in public office (than men’s roles are). Women candidates may feel pressure to demonstrate, “Look, I have children, they’re doing well, we’re a happy family, I can manage both these roles.” At the same time, men do not feel pressure to show how they uphold norms or balance both roles, as it assumed that they have someone (usually a wife) at home taking care of things. Therefore, they would not feel that same pressure as women.

Moving on to marital status, I find that, supporting my second hypothesis, men are much more likely to mention the term “wives” than women are<sup>26</sup> (22.51% for men, 8.83% for women). This makes sense, given that men have incentive to mention their spouses and families in fulfillment of the “good family man” image. (Notably, the role of

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<sup>26</sup> I did include variants of all key words – i.e., “wife” and “wives.” For more information on variants, please see the paragraph beginning, “In addition, I coded for variants of the roles,…” on or around pp 56 in this volume.

“wife” does not carry the same benefits/advantages for women; as a result, they do not have the same incentive to mention it, and there is no “good family woman” image). However, men are also more likely to mention “wives” than women are “husbands” (22.51% to 9.76% for men). If they mention the term, they likely have an electorally based motivation, so this adds support to the claim that men see benefits to mentioning their spouses that women do not.

Countering my first and second hypotheses, candidates of both groups mention their children’s roles – “daughter,” “son,” or “kids/children” – in roughly equal percentages.<sup>27</sup> These roles are relevant because, in some contexts, they reflect how the candidate speaks about his or her own children. As these findings argue that women discuss “motherhood” more than men discuss “fatherhood,” one might expect that women discuss their children, or children in other contexts, more often as well. That does not seem to be the case. Women and men mention “daughter,” “son,” and “kids/children” all at equal rates. While this is not what one might expect, it does offer support for the claim that women do not perceive extraordinary risk or cost from mentioning their children’s various roles. Moreover, these results just examine how women and men use the terms in all contexts, not only the candidate’s own children. Differences may emerge when one breaks down the tweets by object – that is, whose child? We will investigate that later on in this chapter, but for more information on the above results, please see Appendix 2.

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<sup>27</sup> I did include variants of all key words – i.e., “mom,” “moms,” in addition to mother. For more information on variants, please see the paragraph beginning, “In addition, I coded for variants of the roles...” on or around pp 56 in this volume.

What are we to make of all of this? It complicates my hypotheses. When speaking generally, there is only support for my *first* hypothesis with respect to wifehood, but not motherhood (women mention wives less, but mothers more, than men). Similarly, there is not support for my *second* hypothesis with respect to being a husband, but not a father. There is no support for either hypothesis on several other family roles. In particular, women seem to be highlighting motherhood in general, but not necessarily their own personal situations, as an asset or qualification (the next section of this dissertation will examine how often they refer to their own families). As evidence of this, we learned earlier that they discuss roles as often as men. We learn now that they are more likely to mention “mother” than men are, and more likely to mention mothers than men are to mention fathers. They are as likely to use “motherhood” as a credential as men are to use “fatherhood.” Yet, women may not be ready to show their own personal motherhood as a qualification. They are more likely to mention “mother” in general, or in reference to other families, than their own roles as mothers (while the opposite is true for men – they are much more likely to mention their own role as fathers than they are “father” in other contexts). However, in a twist, they are equally likely to mention their own sons, daughters, or children than they are other people’s, and further study could investigate why. Perhaps there is a rhetorical or symbolic difference between identifying as a mother and speaking about that experience, compared to showing one’s family. In any event, it is clear that women no longer seem to avoid mentioning motherhood, even if perhaps it is not always in reference to themselves.

This may result from women simultaneously minimizing the cost of their own personal role, while trying to benefit from more indirect associations with motherhood

and family. By mentioning motherhood in general, and meeting its norms, they gain the benefits of doing so. They show voters how they can meet the expectations of traditional motherhood. But, if they mention their own maternal status/their own children infrequently, then they potentially face less “cost” or penalty for violating those role expectations in their own lives. This may be similar to how mothers of older children face less cost from voters than mothers with young children (Stalsburg, 2010). Mothers of older children show they can meet the expectations for that role, but without the worry of who is caring for young children at home.

When we place this in the context of our current political landscape, it makes sense. For example, in 2008, Vice Presidential nominee Sarah Palin compared herself and other mothers to “Mama Grizzlies” dedicated to protecting their young. In the 2016 presidential race, Hillary Clinton often cited credentials as a mother as a qualification for office. And in both 2007 and 2019, Nancy Pelosi – who often cites her credentials as a mother of five children and as a grandmother of nine – invited all children present on the House floor, including her own grandchildren, to join her at the rostrum as she took the gavel as Speaker of the House (McLaughlin, 2019). Moreover, as Neklason (2018) argues, while motherhood may have been a liability for candidates at one point, that may be changing. She points to several high-profile women politicians in the 2018 mid-terms (just one cycle after the tweets in this study), including Krish Vignarajah, a gubernatorial candidate who ran a campaign ad that showed her breastfeeding her toddler, and argues that those women are re-deploying motherhood as asset. The article also qualifies that while motherhood had slowly been evolving into something positive for candidates since the 1990s, the 2018 crop of women candidates were more daring and direct in how they

used motherhood than previous mother-candidates had been. Thus, the shift that this project finds may be another part of broader changes in public perceptions, wherein motherhood can be redeployed as an asset (Meeks, 2017; Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016), in the women candidates' perceptions about the costs they face for violating their stereotypical private role.

However, this does not seem to be the case with women's roles as wives. Women are still very hesitant to mention themselves as wives, or their husbands. As evidence of this, they are far less likely to mention "husbands" overall than men are "wives" overall. They are more likely to mention wives in other contexts than their own role as wife, though the opposite is true for men and their roles as husbands. They are also more likely to mention husbands in contexts besides their own family, though again, the opposite is true for men, who are more likely to mention their own wives (than wives in other contexts). Further, men are more likely to show their wives involvement in their campaigns than women are their husbands'. Finally, men are more likely to use their roles as husbands for credibility than women are to use their roles as wives – in fact, they do not do so at all.

Why this difference between showing one's role as a mother versus as a wife? It could be because the traditional role, and image, of "wife" are almost exclusively subservient. She is docile, she is obedient, she is judged more on her looks than her mind. Moms, however, are tough. They get things done. They develop skills that are needed in politics. Tying back to the idea that what we learn and absorb in our formative years, we have a stereotype of listening to mom, mom managing things, mom being the boss. Those behaviors can transfer over to a political role much more easily than the behaviors of a

wife. Whatever the reason, the case of “wife” is further evidence that, even if women might not shy away from mentioning their private roles, they do not face the same electoral environment as men. Moreover, all roles are not equal – candidates perceive that roles carry different costs and benefits, and therefore, they require different strategic calculations.

We now have an understanding of how often men and women discuss these family roles in general. Yet, we know that whether the candidate shows her own private role, and her own family members, is central to our inquiry. This raises the critical question of to whom candidates refer when they use keywords/roles. We will turn to that next. For now, it seems that women are more likely to highlight parental roles than men are, but not more likely to highlight marital status than men are.

*Candidates discussing only their own roles*

Given the differences in how men and women use keywords about parental and marital statuses overall, I also examined differences in candidates referring to their own role or family members, versus other people’s roles. If women candidates mention their own roles and families, they may risk creating cost and conflict with followers by reminding them how they are departing from their traditional private role. However, mentioning these private roles in other contexts – in reference to other families, or in the abstract, for example – carries less risk for women candidates. Yet, just mentioning the roles, even in an indirect, impersonal way, may remind followers of women’s private roles to some degree. It may be a means of absorbing any beneficial leadership qualities or perceived competencies that are ascribed to women candidates, without the cost of

reminding followers of the candidate's own family and role. Therefore, if women mention their own roles or families more often than others' roles, it is a sign that they feel it will be received well by followers and is not "costly to do so." However, if they mention other roles more often (than their own), it is a sign that mentioning their own roles is still costly, but women candidates may be seeking to benefit indirectly from some of their gender's perceived competencies and positive leadership qualities. I expect that women will mention other's roles more often, while the opposite will be true of men.

To test this, I obtained counts for how many times women mentioned their own roles or families versus other people's roles (totaled up across all keywords). To determine whose role the tweet discussed, I read the tweet, interpreted it, and coded it accordingly. It was straightforward to determine the difference between someone else's role and the candidate's own. For example, "'I support Bruce Davis because...I am a single, working, mother.' #49days #bruce4nc #vote <https://t.co/DnSBo26o1L>" (-Bruce Davis, @bruce4nc, 9/19/16, 16:04) is clearly in reference to someone *else* being a mother, and using her voice to give credibility to Bruce Davis. However, "As a mother, I understand the importance of quality public education. Honored to receive IL Education Association's endorsement. @ieanea" (Cheri Bustos, @cheribustos, 10/15/16, 19:02) just as clearly refers to the candidate's own role as a mother, and, in fact, uses it as a source of credibility.

Women candidates discussed their own roles 76 times, and other people's roles 139 times – so overall, women were nearly twice as likely to discuss other people's roles, a remarkable difference.<sup>28</sup> I also investigated this by each keyword. Interestingly, women

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<sup>28</sup>Just for interest, I used Chi2 to estimate how often women would discuss their own, versus other's, roles if they performed at the same levels as men (or, put another way, if all else were equal). It found that, while



are sixty-four percent (64%) more likely to discuss other people's roles as mothers (rather than their own maternal status) (28 times for others', versus 18 for their own). This suggests that women candidates may be attempting to capitalize on any advantages of motherhood, such as being protective, getting things done, or being tough, without reminding followers of their own private roles as mothers, and how they are deviating from that norm by pursuing office. They are also more likely to discuss other people's roles as kids/children (as opposed to their own kids/children) (15 to 2). Similar to with "mother," this may be an attempt to gain any advantage from their perceived competency with children and family without reinforcing their own family/private role. They also mention other people's daughters moderately more often (16-11). However, they are more likely to discuss their own sons than others significantly more often (16 – 5). Future study could explore why that difference exists, though one way it might arise is if several women candidates tended to tweet about their sons notably more than other candidates. Table 2.3 below provides full information.

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women discuss own role 76 times overall, we would expect that figure to be 112 if all else were equal. Relatedly, women discuss others' roles MORE than expected – 139 times, when one would expect 103 if all were equal.

Table 2.3: Women's Mentions of Their Own, Versus Other People's, Roles

Keyword/Role	Own Role (N)	Keyword/ Role	Other Role (N)
Mother	18	Mother	28
Son	16	Father	25
Father	13	Parents	18
Daughter	11	Wife	18
Husband	7	Daughter	16
Parents	7	Kids/Child ren	15
Kids/Children	2	Husband	14
Wife	2	Son	5
Total/Overall	76		139

With respect to marital status, women are far more likely to discuss other people's wives, rather than their own role as a wife (18 vs. 2). They almost do not mention their own roles at all. Similarly, they are also more likely to discuss other people's husbands, rather than their own (14 to 7). It seems that women are more comfortable mentioning other people's motherhood and children, either because they feel they can capitalize on the advantages associated with those roles by mentioning them in the abstract, or for some other reason. Yet, marital status is more complicated, and women are less likely to highlight their own roles as wives, or their own husbands, than other people's.<sup>29</sup> As discussed earlier, on or about page 63, due to time and logistical constraints, this dissertation could not break down these differences in spousal mention by party. However, given what we know about how party can influence how candidates discuss

<sup>29</sup> I did not have a chance to ask consultants about gender and party differences in showing the candidate's spouse. However, again, given what we know about how gender and party shape family presentation, it would certainly be a worthy line of inquiry.

their families, it is certainly a worthwhile line of inquiry, and I hope to attend to it in a future iteration of this work.

Let's move on to examine the rates at which men mention their own, versus other people's, roles. Men gain advantages when they highlight their attributes as a "good family man," a faithful husband and father. In contrast, they have little incentive to mention other people's roles, apart from the usual coverage they might gain from mentioning positive interactions with other people or groups on the campaign trail in general. I suspect that men will mention their own roles more than other people's.

To test this, just as I did with women, I first obtained counts for how often candidates mentioned roles overall. Men mentioned their own roles 262 times, and other people's roles 172 times; that is to say, they mention their own roles 34% more often than others'. While this is a smaller differential than I find for women (between their references to their own roles, versus others'; that difference was 54.6%), it is still a notable difference, with men being one-third more likely to mention their own roles.<sup>30</sup> I also examined differences in how often men use individual keywords/roles. Men mention their own mothers (28 own – 19 other) and their own roles as father (or their own fathers) (52-17) significantly more than other people's parental roles. This is a striking difference from women, who were more likely to mention other people's families with respect to these roles. This is especially true for "father," which has the largest differential of any role/keyword (in how often they mention their own, versus other's,

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<sup>30</sup> I again used the Chi2 to investigate how this might differ from the results we would expect to see if all else were equal and men performed the same as women. It found that men discuss other people's roles 172 times, we would expect that to be 208 times if all else were equal. However, men discuss own role 262 times, but we would expect it to be only 226. Thus, men discuss others' roles notably less (17.3%) than expected, and their own roles more (13.7%) than expected.

roles). Men may be aware of the potential benefit they can gain from highlighting their own family members and roles, as other research has found (Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016), and try to maximize it. They also mention their own sons (32-18) and daughters (39-27) more often than other people's at significant rates. Women did not demonstrate the same willingness to showcase their own children. Interestingly, men and more likely to use the words "kids/children" in reference to other people's roles; this may be because it is more likely to come up in the context of policy or public concern ("@leezeldin is still one of Trump's biggest supporters. How do we explain this to our kids?" Anna Throne Holst, @ Annathroneholst, 10/14/16, 22:51).

It must be noted that this analysis is limited by the fact that it does not take into account whether a candidate mentions his/her *young* children, versus *adult* ones. Past literature suggests that all mentions of children are not equal in the minds of voters; that is, children of different ages cue different concerns. Research finds that a woman candidate having *young* children, in particular, causes greater concern for voters over whether the candidate will be able to balance motherhood with public life, but the effect is not as strong when older children are involved (Stalsburg, 2010). Campaign consultants perceive this difference; in a survey, more than 40% of Democratic consultants, and 37% of Republicans, felt that it worked better to show *men* candidates (than women) with their children "*even if* children are young." Just over 8% of Democratic consultants, 4% of Republican ones, felt that it worked better for *women*. These differences did not persist when consultants were asked about adult children <sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Among Republican consultants, just 7% felt that it worked better to show male candidates with their children "*only when* children are grown," and 17% felt that was the case for women. In contrast, 5% of Democratic consultants reported that it worked better to show men candidates with their children "*only when* children are grown," and 13% reported that it worked better for female candidates.

(Dittmar, 2015, 44). That lack of concern when children are older may be part of the reason why women candidates typically enter politics later in life (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). Thus, it may be that the women candidates who mention their maternal status here would have been less likely to do so if their children were young. If so, that would be in line with this dissertation's expectations and previous literature; it would be a more flagrant, "costly" violation of women's private role, because childcare responsibilities are greater when children are younger. However, if that were *not* the case – if I did *not* find that women candidates were more likely to mention adult children – that would be less in line with this dissertation's expectations, and suggest that perhaps perceived "cost" is not tied to the ages of the candidate's children.

While this is a limitation of this study, there is still value in observing that women are less likely to mention motherhood in reference to themselves (than others), and less likely to mention *their own* children, while the opposite is true for men. It provides evidence that there are at least *some* gender differences in how candidates approach family roles, and therefore, in a future iteration of this work, it may be worth examining gender differences in how candidates discuss their own children by age bracket. I will discuss that in more detail in the "Future research" section of the conclusion of this dissertation.

In terms of marital status, men are statistically far more likely to mention their own wives than other people's (67-33), and their own role as a husband than other husbands (20 – 5). This is the opposite of what we find for women. While women were more focused on other people's roles as spouses, men highlight their own spouse, or their own role as a spouse. This may hearken back to the advantages of being a good "family

man,” and how followers have a stereotype of the candidate’s adoring wife smiling up at him. As these results suggest, there is no equivalent for women candidates. Please see the Table 2.4 for full details.

Table 2.4: Men's Mentions of Their Own, Versus Other People's, Roles

Keyword	Own Role (N)	Keyword	Other Role (N)
Wife	67	Wife	33
Father	52	Daughter	27
Daughter	39	Mother	19
Son	32	Parents	19
Mother	28	Son	18
Husband	20	Father	17
Parents	16	Kids/child	16
Kids/children	8	Husband	5
Total	262		154

In sum, being a woman means that you’re more likely to mention others’ family roles than your own; in contrast, being a man means that you are more likely to mention your own role than other people’s. This is especially true for women who are less likely to mention their own roles as mothers or wives, while men are more likely to mention their own experiences in those roles. This likely stems from the perceived cost to women of calling attention to how they are violating expectations for their private role, and the perceived benefit to men of having a strong family. It is clear that men and women do not have the same experience on the campaign trail when discussing family roles.

### *Family Involvement*

Establishing that women seem more likely to mention other's people's family roles in general, while men are more likely to mention their own roles, brings up the question of what candidates might aim to do when mentioning their family roles. It is one thing to mention family members and roles in general, but are they highlighting their family's involvement with the campaign? Showing family members "in the spotlight" highlights their participation and emphasizes in a very visible way the candidate's private roles and relationships. It is the ultimate test of how comfortable a candidate is showing her private role. For women, showing family involvement would highlight that they were violating their gender congruent role, even more powerfully than just mentioning it. Instead, as stated previously, in H1c, I expect that they will avoid engaging with these norms. For men, on the other hand, showing family involvement could reinforce how successfully they fill their gender congruent role, by showing the happy family they've created.

I acknowledge that there may be significant variation in how exactly family members get involved, and the degree to which they are involved. It may be very different to post the candidate's mother making GOTV calls, than to show her young children on the campaign trail with her. In particular, it may be very different to showcase young children versus grown ones. Previous scholarship suggests that women candidates showing young children, versus teens or adults, may lead to different concerns or reactions among voters. In particular, having young children may pose unique challenges for women candidates, and negatively impact how evaluate them, in ways that are not true for men candidates. At the same time, women candidates who do not have

any children face the greatest penalties with voters (Stalsburg, 2010l; Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016). Thus, the context of how the family is involved with the campaign, and in particular, the age bracket of the children, may be important considerations to control for. While this dissertation could not do so, it would be worthy for future related work to do so.

To investigate this, I obtained counts for how often candidates highlight their family's involvement when discussing their own family (only their own mother, wife, etc., not in general or overall) by keyword/role. I began with a list of all the tweets that I had identified as containing a family role. I then hand-coded those for whether they showed the candidate's own family, *and* whether the family was involved with the campaign. To be considered as exemplifying "family involvement," the family member had to be doing something with, or on behalf of, the campaign or candidate; for example, "My wife Ms. Becca had a wonderful reception at the Acadiana Republican Women luncheon today..." (Clay Higgins, @captclayhiggins, 10/18/16, 20:39). I also summed the counts for all keywords/roles to get a count for how often candidates highlighted their own family's involvement overall.<sup>32</sup> I found that men do mention their family's involvement slightly more often, but not extraordinarily so (18% to 16%). However, I was very curious about whether there were differences on the "wives-husbands" keywords/counts, or, indeed, any others.

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<sup>32</sup> I used the total number of tweets about the roles by each group to calculate the proportion that were about family involvement (as an example, women mentioned their daughter's campaign involvement three times, out of a total of 215 tweets about all roles). This is more appropriate (than using the total number of tweets as the denominator, as I did earlier) because the focus here is on understanding how often candidates tweet to show family involvement when talking about roles (not when tweeting overall).



I also examined gender differences on any individual keywords. I found that women show their fathers' involvement more often, while men show their mothers'. Similarly, women are also slightly more likely to show their sons' participation (but not their daughters'). These phenomena may be related to the tendency of male public figures to use female surrogates or validators, or vice versa. They can credibility and a more well-rounded image by featuring surrogates of the opposite gender.<sup>33</sup> As one would expect, and providing support for hypothesis 1c (though, again, these findings must be interpreted with caution due to the low percentages of tweets about roles), men are indeed notably more likely to show their wives' involvement than women are their husbands'. For more information, please see Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5. Family Involvement, by Keyword and by Gender

	Men (N)	Men (%)		Women (N)	Women (%)
Wife	38	7.7	Father	11	5.1
Daughter	13	2.6	Husband	8	3.7
Son	10	2	Son	8	3.7
Husband	9	1.8	Wife	5	2.3
Mother	9	1.8	Daughter	3	1.4
Father	7	1.4	Kids/children	0	0
Parents	2	0.4	Mother	0	0
Kids/children	1	0.2	Parents	0	0
Total	89	18.1	Total	35	16.3

*Note: I used the total number of tweets about the roles by each group to calculate the proportion that were about family involvement (as an example, women mentioned their daughter's campaign involvement three times, out of a total of 215 tweets about all roles). This is more appropriate (than using the total number of tweets as the denominator, as I did earlier) because the focus here is on understanding how often candidates tweet to show family involvement when talking about roles (not when tweeting overall).*

<sup>33</sup> I conducted several searches for literature on this topic, but could not find any, and had to stop due to time constraints. It would be worth including citations on this topic from a robust campaign literature.

Men may be more likely to mention their wives' involvement because they have an advantage to gain by embodying the image of a happy family man. Women have no such stereotype their husbands could help them fill. Indeed, to reinforce that she has a family and a private role to fill by mentioning her husband is costly enough for women candidates. Adding to the cost by showing him supporting her on the campaign trail would compound it. To do so is to show him supporting his wife – another violation of gender norms, this time his. It suggests she needs her husband with her on the trail, which raises questions about her competence and strength. Even worse, it may raise questions about which of the two is making the decisions and doing the governing. In actuality, probably all of those and other factors lead to the phenomenon that women cannot highlight their husbands' involvement the same way men do with their wives. Until that is no longer true, women will not be able to campaign on the same terms as men do.

To shed some light on the difference between a man showing his wife, and a woman showing her husband, one can turn to studies of Presidential spouses. They are certainly not the same as Congressional spouses. Presidential couples are far more high-profile and visible than Congressional ones; as a result, gender, and other aspects of their personas, may receive more attention, and be more salient. However, given the lack of information on Congressional spouses, Presidential ones can provide at least a window into how perceptions and implications of a candidate's marital status might be influenced by gendered expectations.

## *Conclusion*

Hillary Clinton's differing experiences in 2008 and 2016 may illustrate shifting realities for women candidates. While in 2008, the country may have been deemed not ready for a "first mama," by 2016, motherhood had become an advantage for her (Van Sickle-Ward and Greenlee, 2016). Dovetailing with that advantage, I find that women are more likely to mention "mothers" than men are to mention "fathers," and they are as likely to use "motherhood" as a credential as men are to use "fatherhood." (At the same time, while more commonly discussing motherhood, women may not be ready to show their own personal maternal statuses as a qualification: they are more likely to mention "mother" in general, or in reference to other families, than their own roles as mothers.) While attitudes towards mother candidates may be shifting, the same is not true with respect to marital status. Mrs. Clinton certainly never portrayed herself as a stereotypical wife – during the 2016 campaign, or, indeed, ever.<sup>34</sup> And that is in line with my results here, women are less likely to show their husbands' involvement in the campaign (than men are their wives'). Wifedom, more than motherhood, remains an aspect of their lives that women candidates do not emphasize, perhaps because it has overwhelmingly been constructed as a supportive, demure role, while some responsibilities of motherhood can transfer over to politics and leadership. All of this serves to constrain women candidates, as well as to both produce and re-produce gendered stereotypes.

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<sup>34</sup> In fact, back during her husband's 1992 campaign for President, Mrs. Clinton caused controversy by showing just how much she did not fit the mold of a traditional wife. In a T.V. interview, she said that she was not "...not sitting here, some little woman standing by my man like Tammy Wynette" (Kruse, 2016). The fallout from that comment, and violating expectations of a traditional wife, may have haunted her all the way through her own two Presidential campaigns (Kruse, 2016).

But why in particular might women downplay their marital status? One male Democratic consultant offered a potential explanation. The campaign he worked on used the (male) candidate's wife

“... to humanize him. He says she's been so supportive and has an amazing ability to connect with people, and they need a better and more empathetic human being and a better candidate. But I think a woman running for office would never talk about her husband that way. It would probably make her look weak, and...it just wouldn't be serving to humanize her every day...I don't think that he would use her to humanize him in the same way” (if genders were reversed) (Participant 4).

It is this fear of the candidate being perceived as “weak” that makes it difficult to sell a husband humanizing his wife who is a candidate. It is especially the *needing* of a spouse to fill a role, to complete the candidate, to make the candidate a better person, that would likely connote weakness. It is a reminder that there is someone else supporting the candidate, that she is not quite capable enough on her own. Men can and do benefit from having such a spouse because it allows them to better relate to voters' private concerns, to the other sphere. It makes them fuller, more complete people and candidates. However, for women struggling to convince voters that they *are* enough, that they *can* do the job, having someone else working with them is counterproductive. It reminds voters that maybe the candidate is not quite enough, maybe she does need someone else to get by – precisely the reactions she wanted to avoid. It is this fear of weakness that makes it so easy to see why women candidates avoid discussing their marital statuses.

The results presented here show that family roles rarely receive any attention on Twitter, either from men or women. However, on the very few occasions when family roles are mentioned, men do so more than women. This provides limited, partial support for my first hypothesis that women will not emphasize their roles as wives and mothers

(only true of Republican women), and therefore will not pursue a gender congruent strategy on this aspect. I also find partial support for my second hypothesis, that men will highlight their own roles more than women (only more than Republican women). Finally, in support of my third hypothesis, my results show that women are far less likely to show their husbands' involvement than men are their wives' (4% to 8%).

This dissertation's central question is whether women (and men) portray themselves in gender congruent ways. Overall, women do not do so with respect to their roles. Instead, by mentioning their own families rarely, and less than they do other families, their behavior is incongruent with expectations for people who are supposed to fill private, caregiving, domestic roles. Their incongruent behavior may stem in part from the high cost of showing their stereotypical role, and underlines how incompatible the feminine is with leadership. However, if the result of this incongruent behavior is that women simply minimize their families, the public cannot see examples of women successfully filling both roles. If we cannot see change, see examples of what else is possible, we can never work towards that change. Therefore, the absence of women's families serves to exemplify, reinforce and reproduce our current restrictive norms.

However, one must qualify those arguments – that women do not show themselves in stereotypical ways, and that that means we reinforce existing norms – by acknowledging that, simply by mentioning motherhood, women cue gender stereotypical expectations to some degree. Even if it is not in reference to themselves, it still conjures up ideas and expectations about what a mother should be. This may be, in part, why women appear to see value in mentioning other mothers more than their own maternal status – they can gain all the benefits, without raising concerns about their own personal

situations. However, even if these claims are qualified, the truth remains that there is something different and unique about showing one's own family, and claiming motherhood (or any family role) personally, actively, directly. (Indeed, part of what makes it unique lies in that increase in that perceived "cost" that may lead women candidates to mention others' roles more than their own.)

An important implication of these findings is that it is necessary to examine family roles with nuance. We need to carefully think through the stereotypes and assumptions underlying each role, and the associated costs or benefits to candidates. We also need to think about differences between showing the candidate's own role, someone in his/her family, or even in the abstract. We need to be attentive to what the tweet is trying to accomplish, and who is the primary actor (the candidate, or someone else on her behalf).

There is also the question of *how women present themselves* with respect to the feminine. While they present themselves here as minimizing it by simply *avoiding* stereotypically feminine roles, there are other means by which to minimize the feminine, including by embodying overtly masculine qualities, or by somehow not living up to expectations of women (such as women failing to be other-centered). Attention to various methods of minimizing will help uncover *why* women candidates might feel compelled to pursue such a strategy in the first place, in which ways they might feel perceived as ill-suited to public life. When scholars have a deeper, richer understandings of the strategic decisions women candidates make, we gain a better sense of how they are constrained. And then, perhaps, we can uncover ways to circumvent those constraints, and make the political arena more hospitable to women.

Of course, just because they tend to minimize their feminine roles here, does not mean they do so completely. They do display some mentions of their family roles. And even if they did completely minimize their family roles, avoiding them completely, that would not then imply that they minimized the feminine overall. It would only suggest that they avoided the feminine with respect to family roles. They could still embrace other aspects of the feminine, to varying degrees.

Moreover, there may be advantages to both motherhood and fatherhood. For women, being a mother affords some advantages over childless women. Childless women may be viewed as somehow deviant; as evidence of this, study participants have rated childless women candidates as “making them uncomfortable” (Barbara Lee Family Foundation, 2004). Hypothetical childless women have also been found to have lower overall ratings than otherwise equivalent mothers (Bell & Kaufmann, 2015). These negative impressions of, or reactions, to, women candidates may translate into real consequences for women candidates. For example, among women candidates, only mothers retain the so-called “female advantage” on stereotypically feminine issues of child-care and children. Childless women lose any such advantage (Stalsburg, 2010). And, in recent years, particularly with the advent of the Internet, motherhood has been used increasingly as a basis for political action, in what Deason, et al (2015) term “politicized motherhood.” In particular, mothers use the qualifications they have developed, such as management and organization, to help form the basis for their candidacy (Deason, et al., 2015). Thus, motherhood may reinforce women’s rationale for running, and even encourage them to run in the first place. When they do run, it may offer them credibility on some stereotypically feminine issues, especially those related to

children. Though women mention their motherhood seldom, there is evidence that doing so could offer them important advantages.

Similarly, research suggests that fatherhood has long been an asset for political men, and they are aware of this. Male candidates have long used fatherhood to “soften” their images and appear more well-rounded; one particular way they do this is via photographs (Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016). Fathers have also been found to be rated higher on a number of attributes than both childless women and mothers (of either young *or* adult children). It may be an such an asset for men because, similar to motherhood being a component of femininity, fatherhood is also associated with masculinity (Daniels, 2008); being an adult male has look been defined, in part, through being a husband and father (Griswold, 1993; Stalsburg, 2012). It appears that fathers, like mothers, have advantages to gain from sharing their parental status. While any advantage may be rooted in traditional expectations of either masculinity, or femininity, and how well the candidates may meet such norms, it affects men and women in different ways. While for a man, it is nearly always advantageous, is not likely to conflict with expectations for his gender role, and typically serves to soften his role, for women, the calculus is more complex. Mentioning children *can* call into question her commitment and ability to manage all her roles, and suggest a violation of her primary gender role of caregiving. On the other hand, it can serve as a qualification for running for office, and credential her, especially on children’s issues. Though parenthood may present advantages for both mothers and fathers, it operates in very different ways for them.

Though we may investigate with nuance, the truth is that, with respect to more than one family role, women are constrained differently than men are. That results in less



full, comprehensive, complete campaigns – or less than what the Barbara Lee Family Foundation terms a “360-degree campaign” (Barbara Lee Family Foundation, 2019). They are less likely than men show their complete, authentic selves to their followers. Most troublingly, given that Americans like to see their politicians as “good family men,” and discuss “family values,” women candidates may be at a significant disadvantage if they cannot discuss that aspect that their followers seek. If women are to run on equal footing, these expectations must shift.

These findings also imply that, when we think how a candidate’s family can fit into a campaign, we may be starting to move beyond simply the image of a polished candidate with an adoring wife and well-behaved children beside him. Our image may be expanding to also include a strong, competent mom qualified for public life by her private role. Of note, however, she is still different from her father-candidate colleague. Her status as a wife likely does not confer the benefit that being a protector and provider, but we cannot be sure of that, because women’s marital status is so often minimized. Additionally, a woman is unique because she is qualified on the basis of her private role, and not yet simply presumed to belong (like men are). Moreover, by relying on motherhood as a qualification and making it relevant to their campaign, as Hillary Clinton or Krish Vignarajah (the Maryland gubernatorial candidate) did, women are proving that motherhood still is noteworthy and consequential.

These findings demonstrate the possibilities for women’s strategies surrounding presentation of their families when they communicate directly to voters, rather than through the media.. While the media tends to reinforce women candidates’ families and personal lives more than men’s, on their own (Woodall and Fridkin, 2007; Devitt, 1999;

Heldman, Carroll, and Olson, 2005), women candidates' Twitter activity suggests a different pattern of behavior. When crafting an advantageous, authentic, idealized self for a friendly audience (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Evans et al., 2016; Foot & Schneider, 2006; McGregor, 2018), women tend to mention family infrequently, and their own families less than family in other contexts, while men – perhaps aware of the traditional advantage family can confer to them – emphasize their own families. These findings suggest that women's strategy on presentation of family may differ from our society's, and the media's, biases. Twitter would be an ideal forum in which to take chances and test the response when they show their families – but they do not. Instead, they pursue the opposite strategy of the media, who tend to focus disproportionately on women's private lives and family roles, to women's disadvantage (Bystrom et al., 2004; Robertson et al., 2002). When they define themselves on their own terms, it appears that women candidates simply do not see their families as advantageous in the way that men do.

I acknowledge that this claim is complicated by potential interaction between candidates' Twitter activity and media coverage. Campaign activity, including Twitter use, does not exist in a vacuum. Campaigns take note of what happens in the media, what earns them press coverage, and what they want the media to cover, and adjust their strategies accordingly (Kreiss, 2014; Kreiss, et al., 2018; Mourão, 2015). Therefore, if a campaign observed that the media was covering the candidate's family too often, they could potentially “compensate” by addressing the family rarely, and addressing other priority topics. Conversely, if a campaign felt that the media was not doing enough to showcase the candidate's family, they might tweet more about it. Thus, the findings here

that women mention family, particularly their own families, infrequently may be at least in part a reaction to the media.

Importantly, though there are some gender differences, in general, family roles appear infrequently on Twitter. This suggests that, as it relates to discussion of gender roles, gender may have low saliency on Twitter. Insofar as private family roles, and their accompanying stereotypes and assumptions, are concerned, gendered expectations do not figure prominently on Twitter (though, when they do, women's experiences are different from men's). This means that gendered expectations may be less relevant and constraining, and the risk of incurring cost with followers, lower. As far as family roles are concerned, the balance of gender power on Twitter may be relatively even. If the balance of gender power does not tilt masculine, there will be less pressure to conform to masculinized norms, and the feminine will not be as disadvantageous. There will be greater opportunity to present candidates in other, unique ways, as suits their electoral contest. Therefore, Twitter may be particularly well-suited to women candidates wanting to discuss *other* aspects (such as campaign activity or their opponents).

These roles clearly carry significant assumptions and expectations. Part of that includes expectations about how people filling those roles will conduct themselves. For example, we expect mothers to be nurturing, capable, caring, selfless and gentle, while fathers should be strong, protective, and hard-working. These roles carry significant implications for how we expect women and women to conduct themselves, and, therefore, the traits they might display. Understanding which traits they display, and any differences therein, will shed light on another way in which the political arena is different for men and women. We turn next to understanding those traits and their implications.

### Chapter III: But What is She *Really* Like? Candidate Traits

In the weeks before the chaos of Election 2016, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton gave a statement to the popular website Humans of New York. She explained, “I know that I can be perceived as aloof or cold or unemotional. But I had to learn as a young woman to control my emotions. And that's a hard path to walk. Because you need to protect yourself, you need to keep steady, but at the same time, you don't want to seem 'walled off'” (Scott, 2016). With that statement, she identified a key struggle for many women candidates. It is a disadvantage to embody feminine stereotypes and be perceived as too emotional, “shrill” or “nasty.” Yet, if one is not feminine enough, there are also potential consequences, such as being regarded as “aloof” or “butch” (Jamieson and Hall, 1995). Unfortunately, the traits that align with good leadership are often at odds with what one expects from a stereotypical, gender-conforming woman. This double bind traps many women in public life, leaving them in the middle of a complex balancing act. They must embody leadership traits, but not in ways that conflict too much with gender norms for women, or will leave unfavorable impressions with their followers. As Clinton went on to explain, for women who want to enter the public arena:

“...most of your role models are going to be men. And what works for them won't work for you. Women are seen through a different lens. It's not bad. It's just a fact. It's really quite funny. I'll go to these events and there will be men speaking before me, and they'll be pounding the message, and screaming about how we need to win the election. And people will love it. And I want to do the same thing. Because I care about this stuff. But I've learned that I can't be quite so passionate in my presentation. I love to wave my arms, but apparently that's a little bit scary to people. And I can't yell too much. It comes across as 'too loud' or 'too shrill' or 'too this' or 'too that'” (Scott, 2016).

So in the face of these conflicting expectations for how she should behave, what is a woman candidate to do?

The family roles that we discussed give rise to these expectations about women and men behaving differently. The ideal is that individuals will behave in ways that will help them best fill their role, whether it be public or private. The traits that candidates display are signals about how they fill their roles, as well as how they hope to be perceived by their followers. Given that expectations for traits needed by someone in a domestic role generally conflict with those for someone in politics (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Eagly, 2004; Koenig *et al.*, 2011; Stalsburg, 2012), personality traits represent, at best, an aspect that women must navigate differently; at worst, a significant barrier for women seeking to enter public life. A deeper understanding of how women and men candidates navigate these traits may shed light on the underlying gendered dynamics and processes that shape their experiences. That, in turn, will develop our understanding of gender more broadly, as well as perhaps offer insight into how women can campaign to improve their descriptive representation.

Yet, traits are not wholly structured by those expectations about how men and women will behave. With traits, let us posit that we remove women (and men) from their essential roles, but still perceive them in gendered terms, because humans tend to carry deeply held expectations and stereotypes. With this (metaphorical, theoretical) distance from their essential roles, women can take on new duties, including public office, but may still be perceived through a gendered lens. This may lead to new patterns of behavior because, free from the constraints of their private, domestic, caregiving role, they may have more time and energy to enter public spaces. They are less limited by the physical

and time constraints of total responsibility for child rearing. With this flexibility, they can explore interests, activities and roles beyond the private realm, all of which may be accompanied by their own range of advantageous traits and behaviors. Of course, as they develop a greater range of traits that helps them succeed in these pursuits (beyond the private realm), they may end up developing masculine or neutral ones, as befits their interests. And, given that leadership is coded masculine, women interested in it may have an incentive to display credentials and experience that reflect masculine traits. (For example, a woman who pursues a leadership role on a sports team will need athleticism, leadership and drive.)

Therein lies a second reason that traits may not be entirely structured by gendered expectations for behavior: their followers naturally seek out those candidates with traits that suggest that they will address issues that are most salient to those followers, so if women candidates take advantage of their newfound flexibility (that they attain with distance from their private, caregiving role, the duties it requires, and the traits that help them fulfill those duties) to develop traits that their followers are looking for, they will have an advantage. Under this framework, the traits that candidates display are more likely to reflect their followers' priorities and concerns, rather than gendered expectations.

When applied to campaigns and politics, this creates a conflicting set of expectations: will women behave like women, or like men?<sup>35</sup> That is to say, will women

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<sup>35</sup> There is a tendency in some scholarly literature to frame investigations of gender differences in candidate behavior along these lines; for its application to studies of public officials' voting records, legislative sponsorship and issue priorities, see Berkman and O'Connor, 1983; Dodson, 1998; Dodson and Carroll, 1991; Swers 1998). This research tends to suggest that women have different issue priorities and competencies, placing more emphasis on "compassion" issues (health care, education, social welfare, women's issues), and translating these priority differences into the legislation they offer and support. Other scholars find differences in how women conduct politics; they seek new solutions to problems and are more consensus-driven (Kathlene 1994, 1995; Rosenthal 1998). On the other hand, some research suggests that women and men can be similar. As examples, several studies do not find significant differences between women and men in the issues on which they campaign or govern, or in the way they govern

display gender-congruent traits on the campaign trail, perhaps in an effort to avoid cost or conflict with their followers' expectations? Or will they present with traits, developed through experience and interests, that align with masculinized leadership ideals and voter priorities? There is also another possibility: that women will seek to meet (parts of) both sets of expectations (gender and leadership/campaigns), likely to maximize their electoral advantage (Mayhew, 1974). Though few feminine traits are seen as advantageous in politics, some, such as compassion and honesty, are (Evans and Hayes Clark, 2016). Women may want to strive to meet those feminine stereotypes, in addition to those for leadership.

One female Democratic strategist identified the issue at the core of this conundrum. When discussing candidate personality traits, she explained,

“...The way women are portrayed can be very tricky...because you have to walk a very thin tightrope between being taken seriously, or kind of falling to where people think you're very harsh and they don't respond well to you. And the double-edged sword of that is where people think you're too nice and they do not think you're competent or qualified for the job” (Participant 27).

It is not just a question of image; a women candidate being too “nice” translates into doubts about her very ability to do the job she seeks. Earlier, we saw that competence can be questioned when a woman candidate appears to struggle to “juggle” dual roles as candidate and mother; now, when it comes to traits, competence becomes an issue if she seems too weak or soft (DiTonto, 2017). While questions about competence and ability can stem from different causes, they both pose challenges to the idea that women belong in politics.

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(Dabelko and Herrnson 1997; Fox 1997; Larson 2001; Niven and Zilber 2001a; Reingold 2000). And, coming from an altogether different framework, Dolan (2005) argues that any such focus on men's and women's differences is problematic because it contributes to a “shorthand,” over-simplified viewpoint of candidates, which obscures the full range of their activity.

Part of addressing this question categorizing all of these personality traits as either masculine, or feminine, or neutral. This tells us not just which traits men and women use, but specifically whether they present themselves in gender stereotypic ways. The traits that I found and coded for in the tweets do not fit neatly into any existing typology of masculine or feminine traits. As such, I have created my own groupings of masculine, feminine, and neutral traits, and classified included traits accordingly. Trait groupings are based on gender-stereotypic trait attributions observed in previous literature (for examples, see Kahn, 1996; McDermott, 1997; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Please see Appendix 3 for the full groupings.

The answer to the question of whether women will behave in gender congruent ways or not is complex. Given that women candidates may sense pressure to reassure voters that they meet masculinized ideals, while still meet stereotypically feminine expectations, and that they may have slightly more flexibility on traits (than on roles), I expect that, overall, women will pursue a strategy of gender incongruent behavior. However, a few feminine stereotypes may be positive for women leaders according to previous scholarship, including “honest” and “compassionate.”<sup>36</sup> They may want to capitalize on those traits. This is in line with Fridkin & Kenney’s (2014) “strategic stereotype theory,” which argues that women politicians may challenge or contest assumptions that associate men with agentic or assertive leadership traits, while capitalizing on gendered stereotypes that associate themselves (women) with warmth.

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<sup>36</sup> Most politicians want to be seen as compassionate on some level – remember George W. Bush and his “compassionate conservatism” in 2000? And though politicians are often perceived as dishonest, voters say they want honesty in their leaders. This works to women’s advantage in certain situations, such as when Elizabeth Warren was perceived as honest when reforming consumer protections and Wall Street after the 2008 recession.



Thus, expectations for women are mixed. While they may want to avoid most feminine traits, there are a few, particularly “honest” and “compassionate” (Evans and Hayes Clark, 2016), that they may want to reinforce; and they will likely use masculine traits at similar rates as, or even more than, men. On the other hand, men will have the flexibility in how they deploy personality traits to navigate gender; while they may display a wider range of traits, they will likely concentrate around masculine ones in an effort to reinforce their leadership qualities, as well as the few feminine leadership traits like “compassion.”

Furthermore, the core of women’s traditional private role socialization requires them to be other-centered (Staden, 1998). However, that is at odds with the self-promotion that politics – and particularly campaigns - involves. Though politics does require attention to one’s constituents and their concerns, it is also understood to be appealing to ego-driven people, confident in reinforcing why they are the most qualified to win for votes and asking others for funding to do so (Seltzer, 2011). Indeed, as stated in the Introduction, I predict that women will mention themselves more than others in an effort to overcome their followers’ expectations that they will always put others first and are primarily caregivers. Moreover, as relative newcomers to politics, they likely perceive a greater need to spend time crafting an ideal image to present to their followers. Men, however, as the dominant group, have no such need to reinforce to others that have their own identity. They are presumed to be assertive, agentic and individualistic. In fact, they may actually benefit from mentioning other people more frequently, because in doing so, they reinforce networks of support and build goodwill. All of these expectations give rise to a set of hypotheses, stated in Chapter One, about the traits men and women will claim; please see below for a reminder of those hypotheses.

*Hypotheses:*

*H2a. In reference to themselves, women candidates will pursue a mostly gender incongruent strategy, emphasizing mostly masculine traits, as well as a few feminine traits that are potentially advantageous for leaders, such as “honesty” and “compassion.”*

*H2b. In reference to themselves, men will mention a broad range of personality traits, including masculine, feminine and neutral ones. Any feminine traits mentioned will likely include those that are especially advantageous for leaders, such as “honesty” and “compassion.”*

*H2c. Women will mention their own traits more than other people’s in an attempt to build credentials and overcome their presumed “other-center” focus.*

*H2d. Men will mention themselves and others in similar proportions.*

In sum, the traits candidates provide insight about how they wish to be perceived, and, underlying that, what they think their followers seek. They provide insight into a candidate’s brand, as well as how s/he sees others. The associations and connotations behind the traits, especially as they relate to masculinity or femininity, are especially relevant. The calculus behind them is complex, as are the expectations for what we will find.

*How often traits appear, and which ones*

My approach to investigating women's and men's strategies with respect to traits required first analyzing which traits they mention at all. I obtained counts for how often both groups used each trait that I had come across. This included every time a trait was tweeted by a candidate to describe one or more people. To be considered a trait, a word had to refer to someone's characteristics or personal qualities, or how a person did some activity. As described above, sometimes it was in reference to themselves, sometimes other people; sometimes the trait attributions described a person in a broad, general sense; sometimes they were used more indirectly, such as describing how the subject of the tweet did something. I examined all uses of these traits, to whomever they referred, and however directly they described the person. Below, Table 3.1 presents data on how often women, men and both groups together used each term.

Table 3.1 Differences in Specific Trait Mentions, by Gender

	Women (N)	Women (%)		Men (N)	Men (%)
Strong	58	21	<i>Leader</i>	87	20.4
Hardworking	48	17.3	Strong	58	13.6
<i>Leader</i>	39	14.1	<i>Committed</i>	57	13.3
<i>Courageous</i>	30	10.9	Hardworking	49	11.5
<i>Committed</i>	29	10.5	<i>Courageous</i>	34	8
Independent	20	7.2	<i>Effective</i>	26	6.1
<i>Effective</i>	16	5.8	Focused	23	5.4
<i>Smart/intelligent</i>	13	4.7	<i>Honest</i>	19	4.4
<i>Bipartisan</i>	12	4.3	<i>Smart/intelligent</i>	19	4.4
<i>Honest</i>	11	4	Principled	15	3.5
Focused	0	0	<i>Bipartisan</i>	14	3.2
Principled	0	0	Fighter	13	3.1
Fighter	0	0	Integrity	12	2.8
Integrity	0	0	Independent	0	0
Total	276	100	Total	426	100

Notes: I used the total number of tweets about traits by each group to calculate the proportion that were about each trait. This is more appropriate (than using the total number of tweets as the denominator) because the focus here is on understanding how often candidates tweet to show various traits compared to others, when they are discussing traits to begin with - not of all tweets overall.

2. Traits mentioned by both men and women less than ten (10) times were coded, but omitted from this graph. For a list of all omitted traits, please see Appendix 3.1.

3. Italics indicate that men and women use the word at similar proportions.

It must be noted that, as with roles, these counts are very low. Trait words do not appear often in tweets – in only about 1% of tweets for both men and women. This may be because the unique constraints and norms on Twitter, with its 140-character limit on tweets,<sup>37</sup> does not render it the best platform from which to construct an in-depth personal brand. With so few characters available, there is little means of conveying the complexity, depth and uniqueness behind a personality. Moreover, so much activity is devoted to other tasks (just 29% of tweets are at all personal in nature, and much of that is devoted to football games and other activities; the vast majority are political/professional) (Evans et al., 2014) that little space is left to devote to the candidate's personality. Other platforms, such as Facebook, may be better suited for that task because they allow for richer description.

Of course, it must be noted that candidates can communicate traits without individual personality-related keywords, and that is a limitation of this research. Communication can be more complex and nuanced. For example, candidates can communicate traits with pictures or with phrases. Alternatively, they can emphasize certain activities or policy issues that also signal personality traits. What I code and examine in this study involves instances where they used obvious trait descriptors limited to one word. When I find that they use such words in roughly 1% of tweets, I refer to just that – uses of clear, one-word signals of personality traits. However, one should bear in mind that that does not mean that candidates do not signal personality traits at all in the other tweets.

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<sup>37</sup> While the limit was 140 characters per tweet at the time of these tweets (2016), it was raised to 280 characters as of November 2017 (Tsukayama, 2017).

However, this project is less concerned with how frequently candidates tweet about traits, or how often they tweet about traits compared to other aspects, than it is with gender differences in which traits are invoked, and in how traits are used whenever they do appear. Therefore, only a number of tweets, by both men and women, sufficient enough to examine gender differences is necessary (and not a large proportion of tweets about traits). I argue that the counts here are sufficient because they include the total universe of tweets by major-party candidates in 2016. No sampling was involved in obtaining the data set. Therefore, it is all we have to work with. Even though the counts are low, they are still present, and there are some gender differences – indeed, sometimes one group uses a keyword as much as twice as often the other. Moreover, tweets are instructive because of the nature of social media. Twitter is an ideal forum in which to examine how candidates want to be perceived.

Women mention ten traits overall, in reference to both themselves and others. They use seven (70%) of these at similar rates to men, including “Leader,” “Courageous,” “Committed,” “Effective,” “Smart/intelligent,” “Bipartisan” and “Honest.” Thus, their overall pattern suggests similar use. However, women do use three traits at higher rates than men, including “strong,” “hardworking,” and “independent.” These traits are not stereotypically feminine; rather, “strong” and “hardworking” lean masculine, while “independent” is neutral (recall that gendered trait groupings by coding/association reflect findings in past literature, identified in the Introduction; groupings are summarized in Appendix 3). They are also largely descriptors that reinforce credentials and show how the subject meets expectations of leaders, as opposed to more general terms such as “prepared” or “smart.” This suggests that, firstly, women

are highlighting traits that emphasize how they embody leadership expectations and are fit to lead, more than men feel compelled to do.

Additionally, women are reinforcing masculine or neutral traits, and not more stereotypically feminine, but potentially advantageous, qualities (such as “Compassion”). Perhaps they, like men, strategize that voters assume gender congruent traits, like compassion in women’s case, of them, and they do not see any advantage to reinforcing those traits further. As a result, they may have motivation to focus on reinforcing other – masculine or neutral – traits that would be advantageous for women in leadership. Whatever campaigns’ rationales may be, it is evident that they do not invoke stereotypically feminine words often, and certainly not more than men.

For their part, men use thirteen terms, seven of them (53.8%) at similar rates to women. Interestingly, while 53.8% is most terms, and greater than a majority (50%), it is less than the women’s proportion (70%). Women use a higher percentage of their trait keywords similarly to men, than men do with respect to women. Put another way, women are more similar to men than men are similar to women. Women also reference a smaller number of traits – just ten, compared to thirteen. This suggests that women may make more of a concentrated effort to conform to norms and build their images, while men have more flexibility to depart from norms. With regard to specific traits, men use the terms “focused,” “principled,” “fighter” and “integrity” more frequently than women. In fact, women do not use those terms at all. “Fighter” is a typically masculine word that women may shy away from as either not credible or too costly, but which, for men, may reinforce images of a leader fighting for what he believes in. “Principled” and “integrity”

both highlight a candidate's willingness to do the right thing and to behave morally, which may counteract stereotypes of politicians as dishonest and corrupted by power.

Women, already perceived as more honest, may not feel pressure to reinforce the honest, trustworthy, moral side of their persona. (This may be similar to their reasoning for not wanting to reinforce compassion, as discussed above.) Lastly, as for "focused," there is little theoretical or practical reason for which men would mention those words more than women, who do not do so at all. Future research could investigate in more depth the associations and stereotypes that accompany each trait.

Importantly, however, there is not a clear pattern of men obviously using either masculine or feminine terms much more often than women. They do not appear to feel a need to shore up their masculinity, nor to soften their images by using feminine words. In fact, of all words that they use more than ten times, they use most at similar rates as women (seven of thirteen traits). They also do not use many trait keywords more than women in general – only four of the fourteen that they use - suggesting they do not feel compelled to shore up their credentials. However, when there are differences in the two groups' behaviors, gendered stereotypes and associations may underlie those differences.

Overall, women and men use most traits at similar proportions. Women do not emphasize feminine traits; those that they do mention more tend to be masculine or neutral. The same is true of men – the words that they mention more tend to be masculine or neutral, with the feminine absent. However, while there may not be overt appeals to gender congruent stereotypes, gender's impact may be more indirect or subtle. In their emphasis on principles and integrity, men may be indirectly reflecting gender stereotypes – the trope of a dishonest, tricky politician is mostly male. Women do not demonstrate

the same tendency to compensate for that negative image. For their part, women mention masculine or neutral traits, such as “strong,” in an effort to dispel limiting feminine stereotypes and prove their suitability for office. Both groups may be using gendered trait associations to combat negative images or stereotypes, though the particular negative stereotype and strategy may differ. Importantly, neither group claims feminine words at significant numbers – even potentially advantageous ones like “compassionate.” Women do not hesitate to show they can embody leadership traits like men, and even to take masculine qualities, but shy away from behavior that may reinforce preconceived notions about women being too soft or other-centered, or in some way not cut out for public life.

*Candidate self-mentions specifically*

While this reflects the traits that men and women use overall, it leaves open the question of which words they use when referring to themselves in particular. They could seek indirect benefits by association when describing others – that is, they will be associated with the word and any positive associations it offers, even if they do not describe themselves. Mentions of self are the most personal and direct references to the candidate.<sup>38</sup> They provide insight into how the candidate wants to be perceived or branded, and which qualities they think will provide the most advantage with their followers. If the patterns of behavior are similar to overall mentions, that will reinforce those earlier findings as authentic, general candidate behavior across most circumstances. On the other hand, if either gender group pursues a different pattern of behavior, it will

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<sup>38</sup> However, mentions of other people are still instructive; for an explanation of why, please refer to the subsection entitled “Focusing on self, versus others,” which investigates how often candidates use trait descriptors in reference to other people.



suggest that they perceive themselves as unique from other potential subjects (of the tweets), and pursue strategies accordingly. They may be seeking to benefit indirectly, by association, from use of traits that they do not think are credible or viable when describing themselves, but are advantageous or ideal for candidates (such as women potentially wanting to be perceived as “strong”).

My approach to investigate which traits candidates used to describe themselves relied on counts for instances where the candidate referred only to her/himself - whether they retweeted it from someone else or said it themselves. I determined this by reviewing all tweets that contained a trait keyword, interpreting them and coding them for whether it referred to the candidate or someone else. I was able to tell easily by the content of the tweet – who was the subject, the central person, that other words in it referred to? I then obtained counts for only those tweets referring to the candidate for this analysis of self-references. Following the results in the previous section on overall keyword usage, I expect that men and women would use most words at similar proportions. However, I also expect that women would use some masculine words, like “strong,” at greater proportions to help demonstrate their suitability for office, while men would use some words, such as “principled,” to combat any potential negative stereotypes about male politicians.

In general, women performed similarly to men on nearly one-half of trait keywords used in reference to themselves – three of seven traits (42.9%). As with the previous section - on how the candidates used traits overall, in reference to any subject - we find that when describing themselves, women are more likely than men to use “hard-working,” “independent,” and “strong,” though when we examine references to

themselves only, they are also more likely to use “bipartisan.” As in the previous section, these words tend to be neutral or masculine, and reinforce their suitability for office without overly masculinizing them. When men reference themselves specifically, they only use “focused” notably more often than women. It is interesting that “principled,” “fighter” and “integrity” are no longer in the list of applicable traits, as they were in the previous section on overall references.<sup>39</sup> They are not mentioned enough to be potentially relevant – that is, mentioned more than ten times. This may be because “fighter” is too aggressive when in reference to themselves.<sup>40</sup> “Principled” and “integrity” may simply not be salient enough to have high counts. For more information, please see the table below.

Table 3.2: Traits in Reference to Candidate Herself, by Gender

Keyword	Women	Women	Keyword	Men	Men
	Count (N)	Proportion (%)		Count (N)	Proportion (%)
Strong	30	10.9	<i>Committed</i>	34	8
Hardworking	26	9.4	<i>Leader</i>	29	6.8
<i>Leader</i>	25	9.1	Strong	25	6
<i>Committed</i>	20	7.2	<i>Effective</i>	18	4.2
Independent	13	4.7	Focused	15	3.5
<i>Effective</i>	12	4.3			0
Bipartisan	11	4			0
SUM	137	50		121	28.4

<sup>39</sup> For reference, earlier, when referring to all subjects (not just themselves), women use “principled” (0% to 3.52%), “fighter” (0% for women, 3.05% for men), and “integrity” (0% to 2.81%) less than men. More information is available in Table 3.1.

<sup>40</sup> It is interesting women mentioned “fighter” enough to be reported for overall references, but not when in reference to themselves. This may be because women candidates could use it to refer to other people, thereby potentially benefitting from the positive associations it carries; in reference to themselves, they may have calculated that it would appear too aggressive.

*Notes: 1. I use the total number of tweets about traits by each sub-group to calculate proportions (as opposed to the total number of overall tweets.) This is because my aim is to examine how often they speak about themselves when talking about traits - not when tweeting about any subject. 2. (N) Women = 276; (N) Men = 476. 3. This graph includes only keywords where the difference between men and women was >5. For a full list of excluded words, where the difference between men and women's usage was <5, please see Appendix 3.2. 4. Italics indicate that men and women use the word at similar proportions.*

In general, the pattern when women characterize themselves is similar to when they use trait descriptors overall, suggesting that they are not seeking indirect benefits by associations. However, there are some important differences. Women use a lower percentage of traits at similar rates – from 70% percent of traits overall at similar proportions, to just 42.8% when the candidate refers to herself. There are fewer traits on which they behave similarly in reference to themselves. This suggests that, overall, in reference to a variety of subjects, women may use similar traits as men, but when they focus on themselves, the patterns of traits women use may shift to reflect that they perceive themselves differently. This makes sense, because both groups are candidates running in the midst of similar current events and political climates, with a similar range of conditions and people to respond to when tweeting. However, when they focus on themselves, they may be responding to gendered expectations and therefore follow a different pattern of behavior.

In support of this claim, when we look at the words that women use to describe themselves, they are similar to the words they emphasized overall. They are still using the same core words, presumably to describe themselves, but had more flexibility to use other words similarly to men in response to other subjects. For example, both overall and in reference to themselves, women use “strong,” “hardworking” and “independent” more

frequently than men; the only difference is that they use “bipartisan” more often in reference to themselves (that is not the case overall). “Strong” is particularly interesting, as it is typically male, and carries masculine connotations. But women use it more often than men, and in particular, describe themselves as a “strong woman” fifteen times (while men use the phrase “strong man” only four times, despite comprising 80% of the universe of candidates). Women are re-branding “strong” to convey more than traditional masculinity - to include women working hard on behalf of their families and communities, as well. In sum, though there are fewer traits on which women behave similarly to men when referring only to the candidate, women emphasize much the same words then as they do overall. This suggests that women may remain consistent and focused in the words they use to describe themselves, though the pool of other, possible traits shrinks when referring only to themselves. These words emphasize their viability and fitness for office, but in ways that do not overly masculinize them.

Women may be less likely to behave similarly to men when in reference to themselves, and avoid ultra-masculine words and behavior, simply because voters wouldn’t respond to it. In an interview, a male Republican candidate offers an example of how gender roles and expectations might make it more difficult for women to “sell” a masculine “brand.” He described how he used his experience as a Marine pilot to brand himself as tough, and then, when asked whether that would have worked for a woman Marin pilot, he said,

“Certainly in this congressional district it would have been (more difficult) just for the fact that there's a lot of traditional gender roles here and... there are so many people that still think women belong in the house and shouldn't be in the military. Things of that nature. So I definitely think it would be tougher for a woman to demonstrate her toughness just for the fact of the voting people in this area (Participant 11).

In this case, voters' gender roles play a direct role in shaping what types of images will be successful for men and women candidates. Women have a harder time selling “tough” because voters do not think women need it for their role. At the same time, however, the consultant allowed for the importance of context. The difficulty of “selling” women candidates as tough is largely a result of the specific district's values and culture, the people “in this area.” That leaves open the possibility of different contexts, and different possibilities for candidates, elsewhere. Perhaps in districts with weaker gender roles, it may be easier to convince voters that a woman can embody ideal leadership traits, even if they are masculinized. This underscores that gender is contextual, and that scholars need to be attentive to the totality of the context a candidate faces if we are to truly understand how gender constrains her. It also reinforces the idea that gender roles and assumptions underlie candidates' strategic decision-making.

For their part, when discussing themselves, men's pattern of behavior vis-à-vis women is similar to what it was overall. Of the five words that men use to describe themselves, they use three, or 60%, at similar proportions to women (“committed,” “leader” and “effective,” all of which they also use more often overall). This is compared to 53.8% of words they use similarly to women overall. They use only “focused” more often in reference to themselves. This is not an overly masculine word, and so would not make them appear overly masculine, but it does describe a competent leader who knows

his priorities. Interestingly, men use “strong” less than women do. The word carries connotations of physical force and aggression and is at the core of traditional masculinity. Men may avoid it at risk of appearing hyper-masculine or aggressive.

Importantly, no traits switch from being used by women more to being used by men more (or vice versa). No traits are “owned” by women or men overall, but then not when examining references to the candidate. Both groups still use some of the same words, including “committed,” “leader” and “effective,” at similar rates when describing themselves. Thus, there are no major shifts when candidates refer to themselves, but there is a winnowing of possible traits that may appear.

#### *Focusing on self, versus others*

Thus far, I find that women behave mostly similarly to men, but with some important differences. They are consistently more likely to claim ideal masculine traits when describing themselves, for example. However, these similarities and differences all involve traits being masculine or feminine, and all the related associations and stereotypes. But what about other ways that women might either contradict, or embody, gender congruent stereotypes?

One crucial signal is whether they show themselves as attentive to, or focused on, other people. Such a focus is entirely in line with women filling their traditional private role as caregivers and nurturers. To be good caregivers, one has to be in tune with the needs of others, and adept at anticipating and meeting those needs. As a sign of just how other-centered mothers in particular, and women in general, often become, many often feel that they “lose themselves” – their lives, interests, passions, friends – when they

become mothers (Davis, 2018). One journalist has even termed it the “Silent War” (Redrick, 2012). While such a focus is expected, and even advantageous, for those filling caregiving roles, it is less suited to being a candidate for office. While candidates do mention their work on behalf of others, they also devote tremendous resources to selling their brand and convincing their followers that they are the best choice to fill the office. Perhaps not surprisingly, politicians are often noted for their focus on themselves, their ego (Seltzer, 2011). Therefore, because they are tied to, even rooted in, gender roles, these two potential focuses (self and other) can shed light on how one navigates gender roles. Continuing to be other-centered in how they discuss traits may represent a gender-congruent strategy for women. Doing On the other hand, focusing on themselves more constitutes a gender *incongruent* strategy for women. (It does, however, suggest strong efforts to brand themselves as viable candidates and earn votes.)

It is worth noting that, if candidates focus on others more (than themselves) when using personality traits, that does not imply that they are other-centered in general. It does not capture the whole of being “other centered.” It only means that they focus on others when mentioning personality traits. It leaves out a great many other dimensions of others’ lives, such as their successes, achievements or struggles, which are important to being other centered. Conversely, if they are self-focused in their use of personality traits, it does not mean they are self-focused in other arenas, or in general. An understanding of whether candidates are self- or other-focused when discussing traits is relevant because, as discussed in Chapter One, traits are a key dimension on which gendered expectations

appear.<sup>41</sup> Thus, if gendered effects materialize here – that is, if women do turn out to tend other-centered, while men tend to be self-centered – that is evidence that they may be more likely to appear on other dimensions as well.

To investigate this, I examine gender differences in how often candidates discuss themselves versus discussing other people. I determined this by reviewing all tweets that contained a trait keyword, interpreting them and coding them for whether it referred to the candidate or someone else. I was able to tell easily by the content of the tweet – who was the subject, the central person, that other words in it referred to? I then obtained counts for only those tweets referring to other people for this analysis of other-references. I also obtained the proportion of usage for each keyword to facilitate comparison between the two genders. I find that, while women mention themselves notably more than they do others (140 times, compared to 61), men mention both groups in roughly equal proportions (149 self, 141 others). Additionally, while men and women mention others at similar proportions (22% for women, 33% for men), women mention themselves significantly more than men do (51% for women, compared to 35% for men). Women appear to have a greater, more consistent focus on themselves than men do. This offers support for real differences, unrelated to masculine or feminine word associations, between the two groups.

Women do indeed use some words more often in reference to themselves, but they were mostly neutral ones. They had a noteworthy difference on eight of ten (8/10) keywords that they used. They used almost all – seven of eight – words, including

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<sup>41</sup> See especially Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Bauer, 2015; Burrell, 1994, 1996; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; Kahn, 1996; Lawless, 2004; Leeper, 1991; Matland, 1994; McDermott, 1997; Rosenwasser and Seale, 1988; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009; Sapiro, 1981–1982.



“Bipartisan,” “Committed,” “Effective,” “Hardworking,” “Independent,” and “Leader” more to describe themselves, but “Courageous,” more often with respect to other people. The words that they use more to describe themselves are masculine (Hardworking, Leader) and neutral (Committed, Independent, Effective, Bipartisan), but never feminine ones.

For their part, men had a notable difference on twelve keywords that they used. Unlike women, they use roughly half – five of twelve - of those words to describe themselves, including “Accessible,” “Committed,” “Effective,” “Focused,” and “Responsive.” In contrast, they used seven of twelve words to describe others, including “Courageous,” “Trustworthy,” and “Smart/Intelligent.” They refer to others and themselves at similar rates (30% to 33%). They use mostly neutral words – four of them - to describe themselves, and one feminine word (“Accessible”). They use a variety of masculine, feminine and neutral words to describe others, including three masculine words, three feminine ones, and one neutral. For more information, please see the table below.

Table 3.3: Candidates Use of Traits in Reference to Themselves, Versus Others - by Gender

<u>Women</u>					<u>Men</u>				
	Refer to Self (N)	Prop (%)	Refer to Other (N)	Prop (%)		Refer to Self (N)	Prop (%)	Refer to Other (N)	Prop (%)
<i>Strong</i>	30	11	25	9.1	Committed	34	7.1	13	2.7
Hardworking	26	9	1	0	<i>Leader</i>	29	6.1	38	8
Leader	25	9	11	4	<i>Strong</i>	25	5.3	31	6.5
Committed	20	7	4	1.4	Effective	18	3.8	7	1.5
Independent	13	5	4	1.4	Focused	15	3.1	3	0.6
Effective	12	4	3	1.1	Bipartisan	8	1.7	2	0.4
Bipartisan	11	4	0	0	Accessible	7	1.5	0	0
Courageous	3	1	13	4.7	Honest	5	1.1	11	2.3
					Smart	5	1.1	12	2.5
					Courageous	3	0.6	13	2.7
					Kind	0	0	5	1.1
					Trustworthy	0	0	6	1.2
SUM	140	51	61	21.7		149	31.3	141	30

Notes: 1. This graph includes only keywords where the difference between self vs others was >10. For a full list of excluded words, where the difference between men and women's usage was <10, please see Appendix 3.4. 2. To obtain proportions, I divided by the total of all trait mentions (as opposed to all tweet mentions). I did this because my goal was to speak to how often they referred to themselves, or to others, among instances where they were discussing traits (not among all tweets). 3. (N) Women = 276; (N) Men = 426. 4. Italics indicate that women (or men) used a keyword approximately equally in reference to themselves and others.

When breaking the analysis down by keyword, women mention their own traits more than twice as much as others (140 times to 61). Additionally, their pattern of using masculine and neutral words, but no feminine ones, to describe themselves is in line with other findings in this dissertation, offering further support for the claim that they avoid claiming feminine traits and are unafraid to claim masculine ones. Some of the largest differences occur when women claim “hardworking,” “leader” and “committed” to describe themselves. There are no evident similarities between, nor is there a pattern to,

those traits; they may simply be the most advantageous or relevant when campaigning for office. Therefore, they may potentially provide insight into the qualities that candidates perceive their followers seek. Further research is needed to examine candidates' perceptions of the traits their followers reward.

With respect to men, traits that they use more to describe themselves are mostly neutral ones, with one feminine one. There is likely to need to shore up their masculinity, as they are already presumed to have those traits; certainly, they may seek to avoid overly reinforcing their masculinity at the risk of seeming boorish. They do, however, use some masculine words to describe others, so it seems that they do not shy away from the words completely – just in regard to their own image. Indeed, the words they use more frequently to describe others are a mix of masculine, feminine and neutral. There is no clear, gendered pattern in their references to others. For example, if they emphasized masculine words when describing others, but not themselves, it might seem that they sought to avoid being labelled as “aggressive,” “bitchy” or “butch” (one of the traps of the “double bind” (Jamieson & Hall, 1995)). Additionally, if the particular masculine words that they relied on did correspond well with ideal, masculinized leadership, one might suspect that women candidates sought to gain the positive, leadership associations of that word indirectly, without incurring any negative reaction by using it to refer to herself. This could function similarly to how women use “mother” more to refer to others, than to their own maternal status, if indeed they are strategizing to gain the positive associations of motherhood, without calling attention to how public office might conflict with their own role. Yet, that does not happen. Instead, men's usage of a wide range of traits – masculine, feminine and neutral – to describe others suggests that they

have flexibility to describe a variety of subjects whose trait descriptors need not be structured by underlying gender dynamics. Rather, the traits that candidates use to describe others are likely a function of how others perceive those other subjects, as well as what will offer the candidate an advantage in her particular district or electoral contest.

Women refer to themselves more than others, both in the aggregate and on almost all (seven of eight) specific keywords. This is in line with previous findings that they mention themselves more than men do, and others at equal proportions. Women do not avoid describing themselves with stereotype- and norm-defying words. Men, in contrast, as the “default” group or the “norm,” do not see such a need/advantage to characterizing themselves. They are as likely to mention others in the aggregate and on nearly all keywords.

Women’s emphasis on describing themselves may be because they have an incentive to show their fitness to lead and how they embody leadership qualities. It is congruent with expectations for leaders, but not for their gender. It is evidence of women candidates departing from expectations of caregivers and nurturers in the private sphere. On the other hand, men, the dominant group who wants to maintain the status quo, have an incentive to mention others who are like them, or who will help maintain the status quo. They have more flexibility to mention others in general, because they have less need to promote themselves. Importantly, women’s tendency to describe themselves (rather than others) is a gendered pattern of behavior that differentiates them from men. It may be a response to expectations about their followers’ deeply rooted gendered stereotypes, and concern that reinforcing feminine stereotypes could hinder women. It might subtly

reinforce assumptions that women are defined by, and focused on, others, and lack agentic traits.

### *Conclusion*

In the end, my primary finding is that, contrary to my expectations, there was very little mention of traits at all. Likely because its confines simply do not facilitate descriptions of personalities, Twitter is not a forum for such information.<sup>42</sup> Personalities can be complex, deep and multi-faceted, thereby requiring in-depth, detailed, rich descriptions, difficult to accomplish in 140 characters. Insofar as they are reflected in traits, gender dynamics are largely absent from Twitter. Therefore, it may not be the ideal forum in which to contest or expand gendered trait attributions. However, at the same time, because these findings suggest that gendered dynamics are not salient on Twitter, this is more evidence that the balance of gender power is relatively even there. Though it may impact individuals' behavior, it influences the power dynamics less, and so those dynamics are not masculinized. Therefore, there is more opportunity to discuss aspects of self-presentation *not* devoted to embodying masculinity (while balancing that with being feminine enough not to be deviant). The implication of that is that gender – to the degree that it relates to personality traits – is less relevant to determining the power dynamics, and what candidates need to emphasize to shore up their credentials as ideal, on Twitter. Because embodying masculinized personality traits is less relevant, women candidates are at less risk of backlash for having feminine traits (or defying norms and having

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<sup>42</sup> The apparent lack of discussion of traits may also be a function of the keyword methodology. Candidates can discuss and communicate traits without using a keyword – they can do so with phrases, humorous posts, images, and more. For more discussion of this, see the paragraph beginning “Of course, it must be noted...” beginning on or around page 101.

masculine ones). In that sense, Twitter is a relatively open, ideal, “equal opportunity campaign forum” for women. It allows them to compete more freely, without having to strategically navigate the double-bind that often finds them either too feminine, or too masculine.

But why is it important if traits are largely absent from Twitter? As mentioned in Chapter Two, broadly speaking, if an aspect is mentioned infrequently, it only becomes more difficult to shift conceptions about the public sphere - who belongs, how s/he should act, and what counts as “political.” With respect to traits in particular, they are only moderately rooted in the private realm, and thus idealized masculine leadership traits are only moderately incompatible with women. It could potentially be easier to shift expectations surrounding traits than for roles. But the fact that traits counts are still very low - and when they appear they are often ones that are coded masculine - suggests that women candidates are not taking steps to try to shift or expand those norms. With so little activity, and with the activity that does exist reinforcing masculine norms, it will be difficult to highlight other traits that might be applicable, and in so doing, expand expectations for traits that leaders exhibit.

Additionally, if gender, manifested through stereotypes about personality traits, appears so infrequently on Twitter, this suggests that it is simply not salient there. This does not imply that gender is not relevant on Twitter overall. It only suggests that gendered expectations of public officials’ personality traits are not very relevant. As a result, there may be little risk to women candidates of incurring cost by violating trait stereotypes, because they appear so infrequently. This makes Twitter a relatively friendly forum for women with respect to traits, one where the risks of causing controversy by

being “too feminine,” “soft” or “friendly” are low – as are the risks of coming across as “bitchy” or “too tough” or “schoolmarm-ish.” However, gendered attributions may still be present on the rare occasions when traits do come up – that is why women appear to strive to embody idealized masculine leadership traits, even to the extent of avoiding the few feminine traits that might be advantageous (“compassion”).

However, to the extent that traits do appear, I find support for this chapter’s first hypothesis, that women will pursue a gender incongruent strategy by emphasizing masculine traits on named traits only. They do so both overall, and in reference to themselves, suggesting that the pattern is pervasive and across potential subjects. I find limited support for my second hypotheses, that men will mention a broad range of personality traits. They focus mostly on masculine ones, but not exclusively – they do emphasize a couple of neutral traits, as well as the feminine trait “accessible.” I find support for my final two hypotheses of the chapter; women do devote more attention to themselves, while men split attention similarly between themselves and others.

But why might it be so effective if women display masculine traits? What about it resonates with voters? One male Democratic strategist suggested,

“...part of the reason I think that people do get as excited about how angry and feisty (she) gets when she's fighting for something in part is because she is somewhat diminutive and because she is an older woman. I don't know that people necessarily expect the fire out of her that they see, the intensity and the passion out of her...” (Participant 14).

For this strategist, it is the element of the “unexpected” that works to women’s advantage. Perhaps the public likes the surprise, the irony. It may also be somewhat related to Americans’ admiration for the “underdog” (Zimmerman, 2018) – perhaps the voters see an older, petite woman as disadvantaged, and appreciate when they see strength from her.

This highlights the salience of not only gender, but also its intersection with age, physical stature and potentially other variables (e.g., race/ethnicity, professional background) that shape perceptions of candidates. Either way, it is important to note that the strategist does not suggest simply contravening expectations just for the sake of doing so. Doing so is advantageous when used in ways that highlight the woman candidate's willingness to serve, to do the job in question.

Men and women use the vast majority of traits at similar rates in general, and many of those traits similarly when in reference to themselves. This suggests that women are aware of, and meeting, our current (masculinized) norms for leaders' qualities. They are competitive. Categorizing oneself, crafting an image and brand, are important signals of viability for their followers, party operatives and the media, and women are doing this at rates equal to, and sometimes exceeding, men. Importantly, this holds true when we look across a range of contexts - in reference to any subject, as well as when examining only references to the candidate him/herself, and especially in reference to other people. The similarity of the patterns in overall usage, as well as only in reference to themselves, suggests that those patterns are strong and persistent, and reflect their own image (rather than mentioning others and seeking trait attributions indirectly, by association). Most notably, women appear to be comfortable using even masculine words in reference to themselves; they are certainly not attempting to use the traits – especially more masculine traits - in reference to others, in hopes of gaining benefits by being associated with the word (but not actually seen as more masculine themselves, personally). Interestingly, neither gender uses feminine words often, or more than the other group; of the nine words that men and women use at similar rates, none is feminine in its associations, while four



are masculine and five are neutral. The highlights both the incompatibility of the feminine with the public sphere, as well as the resulting absence of feminine traits from our leadership norms.

However, when one investigates in more depth, it becomes evident that both women and men contend with gendered stereotypes. For example, both overall and only in reference to themselves, women use words like “strong” and “hardworking” more than men; these words are notable for the viability and credibility they afford to the subject. Some of these words are notably masculine in their association, some neutral, but all serve to construct and reinforce an idealized image of a candidate ready to serve. (Of note, neither gender uses feminine words frequently to describe themselves, either, which only underscores the incompatibility of the feminine and the private sphere with leadership.) Additionally, women devote more Twitter activity to describing their own traits than others’, which defies women’s stereotypical role of being supportive or other-centered and puts the focus on their own traits. And again, the words they use more than men to do so serve to shore up their credentials and image as a leader. Men, by contrast, use only one word – focused - more than women to describe themselves.

Men, too, demonstrate some awareness of gender stereotypes by not dominating the overall usage of masculine traits, perhaps in an effort to avoid seeming “macho” or be overly masculine. Likely, they are already perceived as “enough” – “tough enough,” “enough of a leader,” “man enough.” Instead, they use masculine keywords less than, or at rates equal to, women. This pattern holds when examining tweets in reference to themselves, when they again use masculine words at rates equal to or less than women. The only words they use more than women in reference to themselves are neutral ones

(“committed” and “focused”). They could use masculine words, like “strong,” “tough,” or “fighter,” more than women, but they do not.

Importantly, among a friendly audience, women portray themselves differently than the media does. While the media tends to reinforce gender congruent stereotypes by focusing on women’s expressive traits and feminine qualities (Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008; Kahn, 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Kahn and Goldenberg, 1991), when given the opportunity to define themselves, women candidates exhibit idealized, masculine leadership traits, like “strong” and “leader,” but few to no feminine traits. These different strategies suggest that women do not perceive the media’s approach as advantageous, but they do see advantages to a gender incongruent strategy. Furthermore, this is their strategy when among supporters (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Evans et al., 2016; Foot & Schneider, 2006; McGregor, 2018), and at their strongest. Twitter might be an ideal forum in which to potentially take risks and try different approaches; if their supporters do not respond positively, it is a good indication that the general population likely would not either. However, this is not women’s strategy. Instead, they focus on reinforcing their embodiment of ideal leadership masculine traits, even if they are incongruent with expectations for their gender.

For now, we will leave the constraints of family roles, the masculine or feminine traits they lead us to expect, and the ways in which candidates navigate those expectations to build their brands. The traits candidates depict, and the broader images they craft, convey to their followers a great deal about who that candidate will be once in office. A critical part of what a candidate does in office relates to policy – crafting legislation, working to pass it, and voting on it. Therefore, the images a candidate creates

have implications for not only which policies s/he will prioritize, as well as the positions s/he will take on it. Recall that, theoretically, I posit that if we remove women from their private roles and give them some distance from those roles, they likely will still be perceived through a gendered lens, because humans tend to rely on stereotypes as heuristics when evaluating others (Bodenhausen, 1993). But, removed from their role, they may no longer be so constrained by caregiving responsibilities, and may have more time to engage in other pursuits. They will naturally develop traits that will be advantageous for those pursuits. Will the same happen with respect to policy? Will they claim masculine policy competencies?

As Hillary Clinton and other women candidates look for role models to suggest what might work for them, I find that, at least in the traits they claim, though they use many of the same words at similar rates, but that is not the full story. This dissertation's findings suggest that Ms. Clinton may be right: what works for men doesn't always work for women. Instead of using a range of masculine and neutral traits to describe themselves, women focus mostly on masculine ones. They also devote more time to building their own brands, and describing themselves, than others. In these ways, we see that though women have indeed made remarkable progress, they still face a different environment than men do. While it is valuable to acknowledge the achievements of many trailblazing women, focusing too much on that progress can obscure the very real reality that women still are not equal in politics.

## **Chapter IV: A Woman as Commander-in-Chief? Navigating Gendered Issue Competencies**

Defense is certainly a masculine issue if ever there was one. The U.S. House's Committee on Armed Services makes many decisions related to the nation's service branches and national defense more broadly; just sixteen women sit on the Committee, out of fifty-eight total Members (and nearly all the women – thirteen – come from the Democratic party) (U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, 2020). Though that is still a long way from parity, it is also a long way from the situation that newly elected Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) found in 1972 when she was assigned to the Committee. The Committee was all male, but she sought and won a seat, along with African American and fellow "Freshman" Ron Dellums. Committee Chairman Rep. Hébert was so outraged at having both a woman and an African American foisted upon his committee that he forced the two new Members to share a single seat because "...women and blacks were worth only half of one regular Member" (U.S. House of Representatives, n.d.) and thus deserved only half a seat each. The two Members gamely made the best of the situation and ended up becoming close friends.

Today, while seeing a woman work on Armed Services may no longer as startling as Chairman Hébert found it, nor do the women on the Committee carry the burden of being "The Only," the truth remains that women are still vastly under-represented in the armed services or defense communities. For example, recalls Michèle Flournoy, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy from 2009 to 2012, "We had a women's leaders' lunch in the Clinton administration in the Pentagon on the civilian side, and like eight of

us had lunch together very conspicuously at one table” (Seligman, 2019). By the time President Obama left office less than a decade later, that same luncheon “would have filled much of the executive dining room,” Flournoy says – but she argues that it is still not enough. And perhaps more worrisome, the numbers of women in defense have stagnated under President Trump (Seligman, 2019).

Further supporting the claim that women may not be perceived as equally capable as men on all issues, in a 2018 study, the public saw both men and women as equally able to handle the vast majority of policy issues (including immigration, gun policy, and the economy), with two exceptions. One of those was the perception that men are better able to handle national security and defense, 35% - 6%. (The other one was the feeling that women are better able to handle social issues, 42% to 4%.) (Menasce Horowitz, Igielnik and Parker, 2018).<sup>43</sup> Add to that the fact that we have never had a female Secretary of Defense, and no woman in the military had achieved a four-star rank until 2008 (Scott Tyson, 2008), and it is clear that, while women may no longer be a novelty when defense or the military are concerned, they still are not perceived as equally capable on those issues.

While gender may constrain perceptions of issue competencies, party identification is also highly salient, and may even be a more significant predictor than gender of which issues candidates will discuss. To review from Chapter One, party conveys relevant information to voters about that candidate’s potential ideology and

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<sup>43</sup> Those perceptions may be especially influenced by partisan leanings. In a 2005 Gallup poll, just 8% of Republicans said a woman would handle national security better, while the majority – 57% - said that a man would (Jones, 2005). And though Democrats showed a slight preference for women to handle national security (37% said a woman would handle it better, and 31% said a man would) (Jones 2005), it is still far less than a majority of them who believes a woman would handle it better.

policy positions (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Koch, 2000; Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Petrocik, 1996; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Voters therefore use candidate party as a heuristic to make judgments about how a candidate will act on a range of issues, especially social welfare spending and defense (Rahn, 1993). Typically, Republicans are seen as stronger on “tough” defense and security issues, while voters attribute competency on social welfare issues to Democrats (Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Some authors go so far as to argue that these partisan cues may override any influences from candidate gender (Dolan and Lynch, 2017; Huddy and Capelos, 2002; Matland and King, 2002). However, others take a more nuanced approach and suggest that the lenses of both gender and party can intersect and work together to shape how voters evaluate candidates (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009; Winter, 2010, 2007). In sum, though party may be more influential than gender in evaluating candidates, that does not preclude a role for gender stereotypes, with respondents evaluating the issue positions and ideologies of women and men of their own party somewhat differently.

Also as a brief review, both men and women may seek to establish their credibility on the salient issues of the day (Dolan, 2005), perhaps because they are re-election motivated (Mayhew, 1974), and perceive that voters seek candidates who are discussing the salient issues of the day. In 2016, such issues included the economy (84%); terrorism (80%); foreign policy (75%) health care (74%); gun policy (72%) and immigration (70%) (Pew, 2016); one can expect that they receive significant attention from candidates.

I analyze both gender and partisan differences in how candidates tweet about their policy issue competencies in this chapter. Specifically, I ask whether women present

themselves as having gender-congruent issue competencies by emphasizing certain stereotypically “feminine” issues. These questions allow me to shed light on whether women representatives claim unique issue portfolios.

Issues competencies are often assumed or assigned based in part on the personality traits candidates display, discussed in the previous chapter (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a).<sup>44</sup> They are the least directly related to the public-private divide of the three aspects examined in this dissertation. The need to address salient, current events of the campaign cycle (Dolan, 2005), as well as partisan cues (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Koch, 2000; Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Petrocik, 1996; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009), give them the most (metaphorical) distance from gendered ideas about men’s and women’s roles. As a result, gendered stereotypes and expectations may be the least stringent or powerful here of any of the three aspects. They may also be the least salient with regard to issues, implying that women would face the least “cost” for reminding their followers of their femininity. Moreover, issues require experience, knowledge and credibility to address them, and carry real implications for their followers’ lives; all of that is not true of roles or traits. Some feminine issues, such as social welfare, are particularly salient to their followers’ wallets and daily lives; to systematically neglect a specific group of issues (masculine ones, for example) that is relevant to their followers would be inconsistent with expectations of re-election-oriented candidates. Both women

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<sup>44</sup> Certain issues may be more salient to candidates possessing related traits; for example, someone signaling her “compassion” may be in an ideal position to claim competency on issues relating to children, families, or health care. The traits that candidates advertise give rise to expectations about which issues they are interested in and competent to lead on. Those traits, in turn, stem from the family roles that men and women are expected to fill. Women are seen as naturally behaving in ways that befit one in a private, domestic, care-giving role, while men benefit from having traits that help them fulfill their more active, public roles. Those roles are deeply rooted in the public-private divide, and related views about men’s and women’s essential duties.

and men should have motivation to mention feminine issues, but women especially may want to capitalize on any presumed competence they have. These requirements may override any potential negative voter reaction to women or feminine stereotypes in politics. Therefore, if women are ever able to use the feminine without cost or even to their advantage - issues could be the ideal forum in which they do so.

As I explained in Chapter One, I expect that women will seek to capitalize on the advantage they have as women by emphasizing feminine issue competencies, but not exclusively. That will be partly driven by party, with women of both parties more likely than their same-party male colleagues to discuss women's and social welfare issues. At the same time, because Democratic women benefit from assumed competence on those issues for both gendered and partisan reasons, they have a "double advantage," and will be even more likely than Republican women to mention such issues. Also, women will understand that other issues are also salient to their followers and devote attention to some masculine and neutral issues as well (though less attention than to feminine issues).

By contrast, men, already the "default" in politics, do not need to navigate gendered biases so strategically, and face no cost for "intruding" in the public sphere. As a result, these questions are less salient for them. Moreover, as mentioned previously, issues arise because they are salient to their followers, so to focus on one specific group of issues (either masculine or feminine ones) at the expense of others would be unwise for candidates who are motivated to win. I expect that men will therefore be free to mention a range of issue competencies. At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that men are already assumed more competent on masculine issues, and probably would not want to sacrifice that advantage, so they may have somewhat of a



focus on masculine issues. Therefore, as a reminder of my hypotheses from Chapter One, I expect that:

*H3a: Overall, I expect that both men and women candidates will prioritize the salient issues in 2016.*

*H3b: I expect that party will be another primary constraint, with candidates prioritizing their party's traditional strengths. Republican women will focus more on traditionally Republican-owned issues, such as taxes, defense, and business than Democratic women will. On the other side, Democratic women will play to their party's perceived strengths in social welfare issues.*

*H3c: Within a party, some gender differences may exist. Republican women may mention traditional women's issues even less than their same-party male colleagues, as such issues are not their party's traditional strengths and they do not want to be "pigeonholed" on them. On the other hand, Democratic women may mention such issues more than men, as those issues are their party's strength, they are perceived as more capable on such issues, and they want to capitalize on that advantage.*

*Which issues appear, and how often?*

My approach to investigating how candidates tweet about issues began with coding tweets for any issues mentioned. I defined an issue as any public issue that could have a policy written about it, OR a population group that could be disproportionately

affected by a policy. I counted as distinct any separate law, policy or proposal. For example, “VAWA” is coded separately from “sexual assault.” I did this to follow the typology by which I was guided (Evans, 2016), which adhered to the same protocol.<sup>45</sup> That study assigned a new issue every time there was anything new about it, even for differences in the punctuation or spelling. Additionally, even slightly different policies or issues may have underlying differences that create gendered or partisan distinctions in how candidates mention them (for example, men and women may be equally likely to mention “VAWA,” as it has been a proposal before Congress on which Members and candidates may want to credit-claim or position-take; in contrast, as the overwhelming majority of victims of sexual assault, women candidates may be more likely to discuss “sexual assault” or frame related issues in terms of “sexual assault”). Grouping even seemingly similar policies or issues together risks potentially masking any underlying differences in similar – but not identical - issues. Therefore, it is most scientific to keep every new category separate, even if it is related to another, to ensure high degrees of precision and specificity, as well as to follow precedent set by past scholarship (Evans, 2016).

I developed a key of sixty-nine issues that appeared at least ten times. For a full list of issues and their associated counts/frequencies, please see Appendix 4.1. My approach required grouping all of these issues as masculine, feminine or neutral. In doing so, I was guided by the typology developed by Evans (2016). For full information on Evans’ (2016) typology, please see Appendix 4.2. I chose Evans’ because

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<sup>45</sup> For example, Evans (2016) even codes “9-11” and “9/11” (references to the attacks of Sept 11th) separately; this dissertation did not go quite that far, and grouped together mentions of September 11th in any form.

hers was the only grouping of issues that men and women mentioned on Twitter that I could find. While there were many groupings of stereotypically masculine or feminine issues in general, off-line (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Alexander and Andersen, 1991; Leeper, 1991), and one on candidate websites (Dolan, 2005), Evans (2016) appears to be the only article to categorize issues that candidates tweet about according to those issues' masculine or feminine associations. I wanted to utilize the groupings that were most appropriate for my particular study. When an issue appeared in my tweets, but was not included in Evans' (2016) typology, I grouped it as feminine if it was a social welfare issue, including those pertaining to marginalized groups, or related directly to women as a group. In contrast, I coded as masculine any issues that I hadn't encountered in Evans (2016), but which had to do with "toughness" or conflict. These policies allowed me to follow the underlying philosophy of Evans' (2016) protocol. They are also in line with the gender stereotypic issue competencies identified in previous literature (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Shapiro and Mahajan, 1986; Alexander and Andersen, 1991; Leeper, 1991). Of note, I code both gun control and *Citizens United* masculine. This may seem counter-intuitive to some, and indeed, I find that women discuss them more. However, I code them this way for specific reasons. I code gun control as masculine because, first and foremost, it relates to guns, and guns are definitely coded as masculine. It also relates to violence and crime, both of which are generally coded masculine. Though some may feel that gun control is about protecting people from violence, and that could be feminine, I argue that the former connotations outweigh the latter. With respect to *Citizens United*, I code it as masculine because it relates primarily to big business and corporations, which are generally coded masculine.

However, I wanted to account for neutral issues, which that typology does not do.<sup>46</sup> I also wanted to have some flexibility to let my groupings address the particular issues that arose in my data so that the tweets could “speak for themselves” (Gibson and Ward, 2000: 302). Issues were coded neutral if they did not carry obvious gendered associations, and/or affected a wide range of people equally. Therefore, my groupings are based on Evans (2016), but with some modifications. For full information on my gendered groupings, please see Appendix 4.3. Please note that this Appendix also contains rationales for why each issue was coded as it was (i.e., as either masculine, feminine or neutral).

Among issues appearing more than ten times, again, a total of sixty-nine issues appeared. Overall, candidates tweeted a total of 9,119 times about issues (out of a total of 54,426 tweets, or 16.8%). Of those, 6,172 tweets were from men (out of their total 38,138 tweets, or 16.1%), and 2,926 from women (out of 16,288 total, or 18%). This is not a meaningful difference because the two groups tweeted about issues at such similar rates (18% for women, 16.1% for men).<sup>47</sup> Men discussed sixty-eight issues, women fifty-eight

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<sup>46</sup> How men and women behave in the neutral spaces, where there is little to no risk of gendered stereotypes interfering, is central to understanding how they navigate these gendered questions. If women and men behave similarly in the neutral spaces, but follow rigidly gendered stereotypes on the masculine and feminine issues, that implies that there is indeed something unique about the effect of gender when discussing those particular issues, and there are situations where those norms do not apply. Because there are neutral issues where the gendered rules do not apply, there are more openings for women to assert competence and compete equally with men. On the other hand, if gendered patterns emerge even on the neutral issues (i.e., if men mention them more often), that suggests that there is some deeper, underlying issue shaping candidate Twitter behavior.

<sup>47</sup> As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, statistical analysis is not appropriate for this data. Instead, for purposes of this chapter, I consider a meaningful difference one where women discuss an issue twice as much as men, or more than half the issues in a given category (i.e., feminine issues). If women tweet two times about an issue for every one time men do, that is a high enough rate to suggest that some gendered phenomenon is occurring, irrespective of any potential confounding factors. At the same time, it is not such a large difference as to limit our ability to identify potentially meaningful differences. Similarly, less meaningful, but still noteworthy, differences will occur if one group discusses an issue one-third as much, or at least one-third of the issues in a given category. While this difference is less significant (than 50%), it is still a significant number, and enough to suggest that some real differences may exist.

– also not a meaningful difference given that women comprise a much smaller share (20%) of the candidate/tweeter universe. Again, for a full list of issues and their counts, please see Appendix 4.1.

The primary finding on issues is that like private life roles and traits, the counts are low. Issues are mentioned relatively infrequently on Twitter. Though issues appear more than the other two aspects, the numbers of mentions are still low, and lower than one might expect, given the centrality of policy to candidates’/public officials’ roles. Why might this be the case? As Evans (2014) found, of all of the activities in which candidates engage on Twitter, they spend the greatest amount of time – nearly one-third of their tweets – discussing their personal lives, rather than anything related to the campaign. She also finds that they devote time to several other important activities, such as mobilizing voters/GOTV or attacking their opponents. They spend just 10 – 15% on issues, slightly less than, but similar to, my findings (and that difference may have to do with the fact that my findings are from several years later, and Twitter has expanded its reach and influence in that time). Thus, though it may seem that candidates spend a low proportion of time on issues, that is actually in line with other findings, and may be explained by the variety of other activities in which they engage, and in particular, discussion of the candidate’s personal life. Moreover, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, this project is more concerned with differences between men and women when they do mention the keywords, as well as which key words they mention, than it is with the frequency of keywords. Therefore, low overall counts should not pose a problem.

*The “Top Five” – the most common five issues for men and women*

So which issues do candidates discuss when they do focus on issues? The economy, taxes, and healthcare were among the most commonly mentioned. For a “snapshot” of which issues men and women discuss, please see Table 4.1 below, which provides a list of the top five issues for men, women and overall.<sup>48</sup> Alternatively, for the full grouping of issues as masculine, feminine and neutral, please see Appendix 4.3.

Table 4.1. Top Five Issues, by Gender

Women	(N)	Men	(N)	Overall	(N)
Women	263	Veteran’s Issues	382	Women	491
Education	162	Economy	352	Education	488
Economy	134	Education	326	Economy	486
Taxes	133	Taxes	263	Veteran’s Issues	479
Health Care	111	Obamacare/ACA	244	Taxes	396

Table 4.1 suggests that women do not discuss only women’s issues – though they do devote more attention to those issues than to others, and more than men do. Their top five include the masculine issues of the economy and taxes. The two gender groups are moderately similar in the issues they discuss, sharing three of five issue topics. However, I note that “women” is not in the top five for men’s issues, although it is the number one issue among women. Men cannot have simply ignored “women,” because it is number one overall, but women are clearly the ones driving attention to that issue.

Men’s Twitter activity on women’s issues may be influenced by partisan dynamics; in particular, Democrats are seen as stronger on health, education, welfare and social issues in general, which would include women’s issues. On the other hand,

<sup>48</sup> I use five as the number of issues in my snapshot to follow Evans (2016).

Republicans “own” issues like crime, defense and business (Bratton, 2002; Petrocik, 1996; Pope and Woon, 2009; Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Thus, it is likely that Democratic men contribute more to discussion of women than Republicans do. The total presented above is not broken down by party, but further analyses in this chapter will take into account partisan differences.

Additionally, current event, and which issues are salient in the current climate, play a strong role in which issues receive attention (Petrocik, 1996). The social issues that appear among the “Top Five” were highly salient to their followers in 2016.<sup>49</sup> They affect their followers’ families, pocketbooks and daily lives. Incentives to mention them are high for both men and women, but especially for women, who are already presumed more competent on these issues. Moreover, because the issues are so salient, the risk for emphasizing the feminine – usually perceived as at odds with the public sphere – may be lower than with other issues.

### *Who is discussing masculine, or feminine, issues?*

Though the top five issues suggest that women discuss gender-congruent issues<sup>50</sup> significantly, but not exclusively, it is certainly not a definitive measure. To explore this in more depth, I also examined differences in mentions of feminine and masculine issues. This offers insight into who is actually discussing feminine or masculine issues. As a

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<sup>49</sup> According to a 2016 report, the top 5 issues for voters in 2016 were: Economy (84% said it was “very important”), Terrorism (80%), Foreign Policy (75%), Healthcare (74%) and gun policy (72%). Education (66%) was #8. Perhaps surprisingly, given its prominence that I observed on Twitter, “women” was not on the list, but many stereotypically feminine issues were; of the fourteen issues listed by voters, seven were traditionally feminine, meaning social welfare or compassion issues (Pew 2016).

<sup>50</sup> “Gender congruent” referring generally to social welfare issues; specifically, among the “Top Five,” this includes women’s issues, education, and health care excluding ACA.

reminder, my feminine-masculine-neutral groupings are based on Evans (2016), but with some modifications.

There was a total of twenty-seven stereotypically feminine issues. They range from abortion, to domestic violence, to education. Please see Appendix 4.3 for a full list, as well as brief rationales for how each issue is coded. Women mention a significant majority – eighteen of the twenty-seven issues, two-thirds (66.6%) – of feminine issues more frequently than men. Among the feminine issues that women discuss more, LGBT issues, social justice/discrimination, and sexual assault all appear. Analyses later in this chapter will break down and examine partisan differences. These totals here are presented to gain an understanding of overall trends, and to determine whether there are any differences that might merit further investigation along partisan or other lines.

Women mention nine feminine issues (of twenty-seven, 33%) at similar proportions to men. Of those, several are surprising. As suggested by the “Top Five” issues earlier, men and women perform similarly on education, health care (general, NOT including Obamacare), Medicare, and Social Security. While it may be surprising that women do not “own” these issues, one must note that men do not mention them more. It is not that men now own the issues. Women are performing equally to men. This may be because it was a presidential election, and the issues were receiving more focus in general, so men had a motivation to speak about them more than usual, at equal rates to women. It may also be because women are still talking about those issues often, and at the same time, are also devoting more energy to the contemporary, newsworthy issues mentioned. Lastly, there is only one “feminine” issue that men mention more often, and that is Obamacare. This is likely because Republicans have a higher percentage of men



candidates than Democrats do (so more Republicans are men), and Republicans were running a strong PR campaign to repeal Obamacare, led by then-candidate Trump, at the time these tweets were scraped (Greenberg, 2019).<sup>51</sup>

With respect to masculine issues, there were thirty-six. For a full list, please see Appendix 4.3. That list also contains the rationale for each issue's coding as masculine, feminine or neutral. Men mentioned less than half, only fourteen issues (38.8%), more often than women. This includes concerns such as immigration, coal, and crime. Many issues, seventeen of thirty-six (47.2%), were mentioned equally by both genders, including banking/finance, criminal justice, and farming/agriculture. There were some surprises – women mentioned five issues, 13.8% of masculine issues, more often, including *Citizens United*, gun violence and gun control.<sup>52</sup> This may be because women are more often seen as “honest” (or as “cleaning house,” as people said of Elizabeth Warren regulating Wall Street after the 2008 recession), so they have more credibility on

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<sup>51</sup> Of course, this analysis does not control for position on any issues – that is, whether the candidate is pro or con. It only examines the broadest level, whether they mention the issue. Some may argue that issue position could be relevant if the candidate takes a (either pro or con) stance that is less favorable to women. For example, if a candidate mentioned parental leave, she would be coded as mentioning the issue, and there could appear to be in line with feminine stereotypes. However, if the candidate's position was actually not supportive of parental leave, she would be actually be working against women's interests and feminine stereotypes. However, I argue that by highlighting family leave (or any gendered issue) at all, the candidate would be cueing gendered stereotypes. It is just that some candidates may have a different view of what is in women's interests. Some – largely Democrats – may perceive a “pro” family leave stance as in line with feminine stereotypes and interests, while Republican women may perceive a “con” stance as truly in line with feminine stereotypes, because it would not create a culture that facilitated norms around working, and needing leave, for women; thus, women would have more flexibility to not work at all, or to take more or less leave, as best met their family's needs. Thus, I argue that a pro-con stance is actually more relevant to examining the intersection of gender and party, rather than what is in line with feminine stereotypes.

<sup>52</sup> Following Evans (2016), and because guns are related to crime, which is typically coded masculine, this paper classifies anything related to guns as masculine. This includes gun control, gun violence and the Second Amendment. While the groupings are debatable, and one could argue that gun control is more feminine, this dissertation continues to classify anything related to guns as masculine. The groupings are inherently imperfect, but follow previous scholarship as much as possible. For a comprehensive explanation of why gun control and *Citizens United* are coded as they are, please see the paragraph beginning “I developed a key of sixty-nine...” that begins on or about pp 131.

regulating money in politics (the subject of Citizens United). Moreover, as discussed earlier, women may be assumed more competent on issues surrounding ending violence and compassion for the victims of violence, which gun control and gun violence would certainly encompass.

On the six neutral issues, there is no clear pattern. Two were mentioned equally by both genders (“millennials” and “SCOTUS”). Women dominated two (“climate change,” “Transportation”), while men also owned two (“term limits,” “Hurricanes”). Please see Appendix 4.3 for full details. It may be that, among issues that are freer than most other issues of gendered associations, there is less motivation for women (or men) to navigate as strategically around these particular issues. Salience to constituents or relation to current events, or some other electoral motivation, may be greater concerns (more than gendered associations) for campaigns when developing strategy on these issues.

When we examine masculine, feminine and neutral issues, women “own” their gender-congruent issues, and more convincingly than men do. There is only one feminine issue that men mention more often, Obamacare; as discussed, that is likely due to partisan concerns, as Republicans lean male, and were fighting to repeal Obamacare. On the other hand, women mention five masculine issues more than men do. Women have tighter control over their gender-congruent issues than men do; while women discuss two-thirds of feminine issues more, men only discuss 40.5% of masculine ones more. Women are less likely to discuss their gender-congruent issues at similar rates to men – while they discuss 33.3% of feminine issues at similar rates to men, men discuss 45.9% of their issues at similar rates as women. I take that to imply that women are less likely to “share”

their gender congruent issues. Thus, from multiple angles, it seems that women do dominate feminine issues.

Men do mention many, almost half (15/36), of masculine issues more than women, as one might expect. It is only surprising that this effect does not carry over to more issues. It may be that men, long accustomed to being in public life, feel less pressure to reassure their followers that they can handle the tough issues and meet leadership norms. Those issues that they do mention more tend to be ones related to violence, war or crime, as the previous section identified. This includes crime, Iraq, ISIS, the Second Amendment, and law enforcement. This is in line with previous findings.

Among masculine issues that men and women mention at equal proportions, many but not all are related to the society or the public good in some way. This includes the economy, energy, job creation, banking/finance, or government efficiency. This is unsurprising, as women have long been associated with social issues, so it may be more credible for them to stake out ground on those somewhat-related issues. They might also ensure that they are as active as men on these masculine issues simply to reinforce their competency to lead in general, on a wide range of issues, and avoid being “pigeonholed” as only interested in women’s issues. Indeed, if anything, it is somewhat surprising that they do not mention these issues more than men, assuming that masculine issues represent the “tougher,” more substantive, ideal for leaders. It might also be surprising when one considers that women in politics have occasionally been shown to strive to outperform men, especially in situations that display competence and leadership (Anzia & Berry, 2011; Evans et al., 2014; Volden, Wiseman and Wittmer, 2013). This is true of many marginalized groups competing against dominant ones (Karpf, 2012).

All of this reinforces the findings from the “Top Five” issues. Women tend to dominate the discussion of feminine issues, while men do for masculine issues, though the effect is less pronounced among men. There are some nuances to this, as women, encouraged by our current socio-political climate, carve out space on more urgent, contemporary issues, and men are especially likely to discuss conflict or violence.

Women share three of their top five most common issues with men, suggesting that they do have some common issue priorities. However, when examining only feminine issues, it becomes clear that women dominate such issues: they mention eighteen of the twenty-seven feminine issues more frequently than men do. They do still mention some of the issues traditionally associated with women, such as women, families and children – but there appear to be some new issues on the agenda. This may be in an attempt to maximize any perceived competence or “ownership” women have on those issues. If women candidates speak out on issues that their followers assume they are more competent to lead on, and knowledgeable about, they may reinforce their followers’ pre-existing beliefs about them and strengthen their own viability.

At the same time, men mention at equal rates some traditionally feminine issues that one might think women “own.” This includes education, health care and Social Security. There are few of these traditionally feminine issues that men mention at equal proportions, however – only seven out of thirty. Moreover, there are no stereotypically feminine issues that men mention more than women. Thus, it does not appear that women are somehow either losing, or giving up, their voice on the issues they are traditionally presumed competent on. It is simply that they mention some other issues as well.

*Men, women and which issues they discuss*

A snapshot of the “Top Five” issues that both genders mention, and analyzing whether which gender discusses more masculine or feminine issues, may both offer support for the claims that men and women behave similarly on many issues, and that women drive attention to feminine issues. However, by examining only the gender-congruence of issues, one risks missing a broader, comprehensive view of women’s and men’s activity, especially on gender-incongruent issues. Such a focus can shed light on how men and women behave on their own gender-stereotypic issues, but not on other issues. For example, women do “own” feminine issues – but is that all they discuss? Examining the full range of women’s activity can shed light on whether they only discuss those feminine issues they “own,” or highlight other issues as well. On the one hand, if they primarily or exclusively discuss feminine issues, that may suggest that they have a reason to avoid masculine issues. In the case of issues, perhaps they either want to reinforce the advantage they have on feminine issues, or fear potential cost from their followers for defying stereotypes (by discussing masculine issues). On the other hand, if they discuss more than feminine issues, that will offer support for the viewpoint that they face little backlash when doing so, much like they faced little backlash for embodying masculine traits. Of course, literature suggests that party also plays a role in which issues candidates discuss (Bratton, 2002; Petrocik, 1996; Pope and Woon, 2009; Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). If the results here in this section suggest overall interesting differences in issue competencies are present, I will pursue a separate partisan analysis in the next step.

To gain insight into the full range of their issues stances, I investigate specifically which issues women and men emphasize. I obtained the proportion for how often each issue was mentioned and then created lists of issues on which either women or men had a much high proportion of Twitter activity. Women mentioned a total of twenty-five issues more often than men did (out of the sixty they mention overall). Most notably, they emphasized, or “owned,” abortion, equal pay, sexual assault, LGBT issues, climate change, Native American rights, and the Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) more than men. Nearly all (18 of 25) of these issues that women mention more are feminine; just four are masculine, and two neutral. For a full list of issues that women mention more, please see Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Issues that Women Mention More

Women	Women (N)	Women (%)	Men	Men (N)	Men (%)
Women	263	8.9	Women	228	3.7
Taxes	133	4.5	Taxes	263	4.3
Families	87	3	Families	158	2.6
National Parks/ Environment	87	3	National Parks/ Environment	114	1.8
LGBT Issues	87	3	LGBT Issues	104	1.7
Children	77	2.6	Children	104	1.7
Social Justice/ Discrimination	67	2.3	Social Justice/ Discrimination	114	1.8
Climate Change	71	2.4	Climate Change	109	1.8
Sexual Assault	89	3	Sexual Assault	66	1.1
Gun Control	60	2	Gun Control	68	1.1

The issues that they highlight tend to be stereotypically feminine issues, or issues associated with women or social welfare – and they do mention other, non-feminine issues, as well. Of note: women mention gun violence and gun control more than men, while men mention the Second Amendment more. This may have to do with gun violence involving calls to restrict guns and related violence, and to have compassion for victims of gun violence and their families, which could easily be constructed as a feminine issue – whereas the Second Amendment, and protecting gun rights, is more easily perceived as a masculine one.<sup>53</sup> Future research could consider problematizing and potentially re-coding these issues. For more on why these issues were coded as they were for this project, please see Appendix 4.3 and/or the paragraph beginning “I developed a key of sixty-nine...” that begins on or about pp 131. In general, however, the issues that women “own” include typical, traditionally feminine issues like social security or education. But they also include social welfare issues that were contemporary and salient in the 2016 election, such as social justice and LGBT Rights (Pew, 2016).

As for men, they mention just sixteen issues more frequently than women do, out of the sixty-eight they mention overall (far less than the twenty-five issues that women mention more). Only one issue, “hurricanes,” is not typically “coded” masculine; the other fifteen are, including issues like the military, crime, terrorism, and veteran’s issues. Notably, this list includes all issues where there was violence or conflict – topics such as Syria, Iraq, the Second Amendment, the military and terrorism (that is, except for

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<sup>53</sup> While gun violence, gun control and the Second Amendment do all relate to guns, they are distinct, unique concepts, with different phrases to identify them. Each one carries different connotations and implications – for example, while the mention of gun violence may remind people of Columbine or Sandy Hook, and is often invoked in discussions of needing to protect citizens from random violence at the hands of people who should not have guns. In contrast, the Second Amendment often calls to mind gun-owners organizing to defend their right to bear arms. These concepts, and the discussions they lead to, are different enough that they all are coded as separate issues.

September 11th – men and women mention that at equal proportions – likely due to its unifying, patriotic significance). For a full list of issues that men highlight, please see Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Issues that Men Mention More

	Men (N)	Men (%)		Women (N)	Women (%)
Veteran's Issues	382	8.2	Veteran's Issues	97	3.3
Law Enforcement /Police	192	3.1	Law Enforcement /Police	40	1.4
Marijuana Legalization	154	2.5	Marijuana legalization	0	0
Military	148	2.4	Military	47	1.6
Foreign Policy	98	1.6	Foreign Policy	26	0.9
ISIS	91	1.5	ISIS	0	0
Terrorism	86	1.4	Terrorism	13	0.4
Second Amendment	74	1.1	Second Amendment	13	0.4
Homeland Security	70	1.1	Homeland Security	0	0
Hurricanes	57	0.9	Hurricanes	11	0.4

Interestingly, men “own” (discuss more often) fewer issues than women – just fifteen, compared to women’s twenty-five. Put another way, men own 22.1% of the issues they mention, compared to women owning 41.6% of the issues they mention.<sup>54</sup> This is even though men are generally perceived as “the norm,” and as having competency on a broader range of issues, than women. Their behavior might be

<sup>54</sup> Women discuss more frequently twenty-five of the sixty (25/60) issues they mention; men do just sixteen out of fifty-eight (16/58).



attributable to the fact that, already the norm and assumed to be credible, men have less need to establish their brands and credentials. As evidence of this, women work to carve out authority on several masculine issues, but men do not do so with feminine or neutral issues. Additionally, the issues that men dominate were more concentrated (around masculine ones) than women's were (which included feminine, masculine and neutral issues, though the majority were feminine ones). This may be because men seek to reinforce their advantage by continuing to focus on the issues that have always worked for them. Dominant groups are less likely challenge the "status quo" from which they have benefitted (Karpf, 2012). Women, however, as relative newcomers to politics, and often disadvantaged, may mention a wide range of issues in an effort embody both expectations for typical women, competent on social welfare issues, and for ideal leaders, competent in "tougher," weightier issues. They may be trying to balance those often-conflicting expectations by simply addressing many issues.

I did not ask practitioners about this, but it is a question worthy of future research. Why might women emphasize their stereotypical feminine strengths (in addition to showing they can lead on masculine and neutral issues)? It may be related to the fact that women candidates seek to capitalize on their perceived strengths/competencies as women, and, in doing so, motivate women to turn out (and men who support their stances) to turn out. In addition, because men do not share women's presumed competence on social welfare issues, women reinforcing those strengths could be a way to differentiate themselves from their opponents (if male). The converse could be similar for men; they strive to emphasize their gender congruent issue strengths in order to capitalize on the advantage afforded them by their presumed competence on their issues.

However, because men are the “default,” and already presumed to belong in politics, they face less scrutiny and questions over competence for voters. They have less need to demonstrate that they can lead on gender *incongruent* issues, while still remaining sufficiently gender congruent.

All of this suggests, first, that women are competing with men as viable candidates. As evidence of this, almost half the issues they mention are at similar rates to men (twenty-seven out of fifty-eight, 46.6%). Those issues that both groups mention at similar rates tend to be ones that are very common and important to their followers (as a reminder, this includes issues like education, the economy, and protecting Social Security and Medicare). There are, in fact, relatively few issues where men are significantly more vocal (just fifteen out of sixty-eight, 22.1%). Moreover, women seek to maximize any credibility they may have as women on feminine issues by emphasizing issues like abortion, equal pay, sexual assault, LGBT issues, equal pay, and VAWA.

That is a departure from how they minimize the feminine when discussing family roles – they were less likely to mention their roles as wives or mothers (than men were to mention their roles as husbands or fathers). It is also a departure from how they minimize feminine traits, and a slight departure from when women seek out “neutral territory” with more neutral descriptors. While women are quite comfortable using neutral traits, the results showing that they mention neutral issues are more limited.

In contrast, men still embrace the masculine, as they did in the roles and traits chapters. They embraced their parental and marital status more than women did, and claimed some masculine traits (but also sought to soften their image by using a few feminine traits); when it comes to issues, nearly all (14/15, or 93.3%) of the ones they

“own” are masculine. Thus, the trend for men seems to be a continued embodiment of masculine leadership ideals with a concentrated focus on masculine issues. Being the “default” means that men have less strategizing to do around gender, and can simply embrace what people “expect” from them.

Why these departures from previous findings? Why might women be more likely to embrace the feminine now, and men more likely to claim a wide variety of issues, but still with a masculine focus? Given that much of candidate behavior is structured by what they perceive their followers seek, it may be because candidates believe that these behaviors represent their followers’ ideals. Women may believe that emphasizing mostly feminine issues will be credible and give them an advantage. This may be especially true as more women are Democrats (than are Republicans), and many of the issues women mention are Democratic issues. This is part of the reason for which this dissertation will investigate the interaction between gender and party later in this chapter. They may be trying to benefit from the intersection of assumed gender and partisan issue competencies. Men, already the “norm” in politics, can simply continue embodying extant masculinized expectations for them.

These perceptions about their followers’ beliefs may be rooted in gendered expectations about men and women stemming from the public-private divide, and the conflict that emerges when women deviate from their assigned roles. When we are closer to the root of the public-private divide, and see women in their private roles as mothers, there is significant conflict for those mothers or wives who seek to enter the public arena – so they avoid mentioning their roles. When we step away from the root of the divide, and free women candidates from the constraints of a female-bodied role, they seek out

the neutral ground by emphasizing neutral traits – but still mention a few feminine traits. When we step even farther away, to examine the issue priorities their roles and traits have helped to shape, we see that the feminine no longer need be avoided. Now, women can embrace it by emphasizing mostly feminine issues. They have more credibility on those issues because of their experiences, and the issues are relevant to their followers, so they have an advantage to be gained by mentioning them.

While the media tends to portray women as most interested in, and qualified on, traditionally feminine issues, when given the opportunity to present themselves directly to their followers, women depart slightly from that portrayal. They emphasize more masculine and neutral competencies in addition to the feminine ones. However, this is impacted by party, with Democratic women being especially likely to mention feminine issues, and Republican women less so. Analyzing authentic, direct self-presentation over Twitter allows us to capture the subtle way in which women depart from the norms that the media might reinforce.

#### *Gender, Party and women's issues*

Results suggest that gender affects candidates' Twitter activity on issues in 2016. Women “own” mostly feminine issues. However, the vast majority of those women candidates are Democrats (71.2%).<sup>55</sup> At the same time, previous literature suggests that partisan differences will impact behavior on women's or social welfare issues, on which the Democratic party is often presumed to be more competent (Bratton, 2002; Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). Part of the reason for this could be that women

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<sup>55</sup> There were 114 Democratic women and 46 Republican ones (28.8% of all women) in my data.

candidates (of both parties) are perceived to be more liberal than men, which could mean they are seen as “fitting” better ideologically with the Democratic party (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; McDermott 1997; Koch 2000, 2002). Given that partisan concerns, as well as gendered ones, shape Twitter activity, and that the vast majority of women candidates examined were Democrats, one may wonder: how much of the finding that women “own” feminine issues is due to party?

To address this question, let us examine how often women and men of both parties tweet specifically about women’s issues. These issues concern women directly, such as women’s health, or disproportionately, such as parental leave and minimum wage.<sup>56</sup> I focus on these issues because, as they relate specifically to women, gender may be most salient in these domains. I obtain counts for Twitter activity on a total of ten issues. For the full counts, please see Table 4.4 below.

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<sup>56</sup> While 90% of new fathers take some time off following the birth of a child, the majority of them take less than 10 days (Grose, 2020). With regard to minimum wage, women constitute 69% of employees in occupations that typically pay less than \$10 per hour – the equivalent of \$20,800 annually, assuming a 40-hour workweek. Moreover, this disparity is raced, with black and Latina women significantly overrepresented in the low-wage workforce compared to their share of the overall workforce (Patrick, 201

Table 4.4 Partisan and Gender Differences in Discussion of "Women's Issues"

	<u>Overall</u>		<u>Democrats</u>				<u>Republicans</u>			
			<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Domestic Violence	19	0.2	3	0.1	15	0.4	1	0	0	0
Equal Pay	78	0.8	25	0.9	51	1.4	2	0	0	0
Livable/living wage	29	0.3	12	0.5	15	0.4	2	0	0	0
Minimum Wage	46	0.5	25	0.9	16	0.4	5	0	0	0
Parental leave	34	0.4	9	0.3	20	0.6	2	0	3	0.8
Sexual Assault	155	1.7	59	2.2	84	2.3	7	0.3	5	1.3
Social justice/discrimination	181	1.9	86	3.2	66	1.8	28	1.1	1	0
VAWA	41	0.4	19	0.7	22	0.6	0	0	0	0
Women	491	5.3	177	6.7	245	6.7	51	2	18	4.7
Women's health	101	1.1	28	1.1	65	1.8	6	0.2	2	0.5
Sum	1175	12.6	443	16.7	599	16.5	104	4	29	7.6

Notes: 1) To calculate proportions, I used the total number of tweets about issues by each sub-group. For Men Democrats, (N) = 2,661 tweets; Women Democrats, (N) = 3,638; Women Republicans, (N) = 384; Men Republicans, (N) = 2,620, Overall (N) = 9303.

Women's and social welfare issues were the subject of 12.6% of all tweets about issues, with "women" being the most common issue, at 5.3%. Of all four sub-groups, Democratic men and women devote the greatest percentage of their issue discussion to these issues – 16.7% and 16.5%, respectively, a negligible difference. In particular, Democrats of both genders devote the most attention to "women," at 6.7% for both genders. For Democratic women, other top women's issues are sexual assault (2.3%), social justice/discrimination (1.8%) and women's health (1.8%). Democratic men prioritize the same three issues, but in a different order (social justice, 3.2% of tweets; sexual assault, 2.2%, and women's health, 1.0%). In sum, Democrats of both genders appear relatively similar in their behavior on women's issues. For example, such issues make up similar proportions of their activity on issues. Both groups mention "women"

more than any other issue, and at relatively similar proportions. They both prioritize sexual assault, women's health and social justice.

On the Republican side, women discuss these issues overall more than the men of their party, 7.6% to 3.97%. The most common issue for Republicans, men and women, is "women" (1.9% and 4.7%, respectively). For Republican men, this is followed by social justice/discrimination (1.0%), and for Republican women, is followed by mentions of sexual assault (1.3%). All other issues receive attention in less than 1% of tweets among Republicans. Republican men do not mention two of the twelve issues, while their same-party women colleagues do not mention seven of the twelve issues.

Overall, Republican women's behavior seems more in line with the men of their party than with other women. For example, Republican men mention eight of the twelve issues five times or less; their women colleagues mention eleven issues five times or fewer. Republican men only devote anything resembling attention to two issues – women (51 times, 2.0%) and social justice/discrimination (28 times, 1.0%). Similarly, Republican women mention only two issues in more than 1% of tweets (women, 4.7%; sexual assault, 1.3%). Thus, overall, Republican activity on these issues is minimal to nonexistent, and both men and women of the party have similar behavior.

There is, however, one exception to that observation. Republican women mention "women" more than twice as much as their same-party male colleagues (4.7% to 2.0%). On all other issues, they are comparable to the men of their party. But on "women," they are more similar to their Democratic women colleagues than to the men of the same (Republican) party. Of note, "women" is a fairly broad, general term, and refers to women as a group, or when policies or issues were mentioned as impacting women

disproportionately. This suggests that Republican women may have a broad identification as women, and may seek to benefit from any perceived credibility they have as women – but they are not the ones acting on more specific policies related to women that may also involve social welfare, such as equal pay or VAWA.

It is particularly noteworthy that Republican women do not mention five of ten (50%) women's issues at all. This does, admittedly, include many social welfare issues that might be “assigned” to the Democratic party, such as equal pay and a minimum wage. However, Republican women are also silent on issues related to violence against women. In the current political climate, even preventing such violence has become partisan (Pyati, 2019), though one might expect that if gender would outweigh party on any issue, that would be it. Instead, Republican women do not mention either VAWA or domestic violence at all (Republican men do not mention VAWA, and only mention domestic violence once). Though it is understandable that Republican women might not mention social welfare issues more often associated with Democrats, and their behavior can be perceived as efforts to align with the men of their party, it is somewhat surprising that even preventing violence against women has become a partisan issue, and Republicans do not mention it. When VAWA originally passed in 1994, it had broad bipartisan support (Pyati, 2019), but it has become increasingly partisan ever since.

On the whole, Democratic women “own” these issues related to women and social welfare. They mention nearly all of the ten issues (9/10, 90%) significantly more often than Republican women, who do not even mention five of them at all. Their behavior is far more similar to the men of their party than it is to the Republican women colleagues. This is true not only of social welfare issues, which is to be expected – but



also of preventing violence against women, an issue which should be as likely as any to receive broad, bipartisan support from many women. If women cannot unite around that issue, which one can inspire any unity among them? Even when discussing “women” broadly, Democratic women do roughly twice as often as their Republican counterparts. From every angle, then, it appears that on issues related to women and social welfare, partisan concerns outweigh gendered ones.

Because differences in men’s and women’s activity on Obamacare stood out earlier, I also present partisan counts of tweets on that issue. It is especially important to consider both gender and party on Obamacare, because there are conflicting stereotypes and norms at work; while healthcare is usually a feminine and Democratic/social welfare issue, many Republicans were vociferous in their opposition to it, and unrelenting in their efforts to repeal it (Greenberg, 2019). Moreover, Republicans are much more likely to be men. These facts make it likely that partisan, as well as gendered, concerns shape activity on Obamacare. For a summary of the counts on that issue, please see Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Partisan and Gender Differences in Discussion of Obamacare

Overall		Democrats				Republicans				
		Men		Women		Men		Women		
(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	
Obamacare/ACA	302	3.2	26	1.0	19	0.5	218	8.3	39	10.2

Note: To calculate proportions, I used the total number of tweets about issues by each sub-group. For Men Democrats, (N) = 2,661 tweets; Women Democrats, (N) = 3,638; Women Republicans, (N) = 384; Men Republicans, (N) = 2,620; Overall (N) = 9,303.

It is evident from the graph that partisan concerns trump gendered ones on Obamacare. Republicans, both men and women, mention it far more than their

Democratic counterparts. While Republican women mention it in 8.3% of tweets, and Republican men do in 10.2%, for Democrats those figures are less than 1% each (.5% for women, 1.0% for men). Thus, Republicans are much more likely to mention Obamacare, likely a result of their strong campaign against it. At the same, notably more Republican (than Democratic) candidates in my universe of data are men - 88.7%, compared to just 11.3% women. (Democrats, by contrast, are 72.3% men, 27.7% women.) Not only are Republicans more likely to mention the Obamacare, but those Republicans are mostly men, whereas Democrats are almost 1/3 women. Thus, the disproportionate number of men in the Republican party likely increases the effect, observed earlier in this chapter, that men mention it more than women.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, women and men both mention issues infrequently - in less than 15% of tweets. Though this is more often than other aspects, it is still relatively infrequently, and less than one might expect, given the importance of policy issues to the role for which these candidates are campaigning. This is important because it suggests that gender, at least as manifested in gender stereotypic issue competencies, is not very prominent on Twitter. Thus, Twitter may be a relatively gender-neutral forum, one where women may be able to compete without fear of invoking cost.

That being said, when women do mention issues, they stress primarily feminine ones – nearly all (18 of 25) of the issues that they mention more than men are stereotypically feminine. Yet, they do not totally avoid venturing into masculine or neutral issue domains. They mention two of seven (28.5%) of neutral issues notably more

often than men, while men mention no neutral issues more often. They also mention more often five of the nineteen (26.3%) masculine issues where there is a significant difference between the genders. Thus, while women's ownership of female issues is strong, it is not at the expense of other types of issues.

Of note, those other types of issues are still relevant. They send signals about what to expect from a candidate – and when she deviates from that (by engaging with non-“feminine” issues), it can be a powerful signal to voters, and increase engagement levels. As one Republican male strategist explained, he had indeed observed those gender-stereotypic issue competencies, and found that they “...allow us to do over-the-top type of shocking things that go against (those stereotypes) because there's such strong prejudice to start off with. For example, put a gun in a female candidate's hands. That's something that you would normally expect to see a guy with, and it's a little ‘over the top,’ so it gets a reaction” (Participant 38). (Presumably, that gets a positive reaction from a Republican voter base.) Therefore, women mostly embracing gender-stereotypic behavior on issues probably works to increase the power and symbolism of occasions when they do not do so. This may be a particular advantage for Republican women, whose party is often perceived as better able to address “masculine” issues. They can gain attention and “shock value” for boldly addressing certain “masculine” issues, which will be appreciated by their voter base – but their male colleagues likely cannot benefit in the same way. There is less novelty and interest when they address such issues.

I find that women's ownership of most feminine issues is due to partisan stereotypes and differences. Because they are related to social welfare and marginalized groups, feminine issues are associated with the Democratic party. For example, when one

examines “women’s” issues in particular, women of the Democratic party are far more likely mention them; such issues account for over 16% of Democratic women’s issue tweets, but less than 4% of Republican women’s tweets. In fact, Republican women do not even mention 5 of 10 “women’s issues.” Party appears to be a clear driver of issue priorities.

For their part, men tend to focus on masculine issues, especially those involving conflict, more often. Fifteen of the sixteen issues that they mention more than women are masculine (the only one that is not is neutral, hurricanes), and all but three (hurricanes, marijuana legalization and coal) related to conflict in some way. They mention only one feminine issue, Obamacare, more than women do. That may be because more Republicans are men, compared to Democrats, and Republicans were arguing vigorously against Obamacare in the run-up to the election. In any case, their issue ownership is more concentrated around gender-congruent competencies than women’s is.

With respect to my hypotheses, I find support for the first and second ones. Women do indeed “own” feminine issues, and this is driven by Democratic women. Essentially, Democrats own women’s issues. However, women are not limited to feminine issues. They also discuss masculine and neutral ones. They’re multi-faceted. This may reflect a strategy of developing broad issue competency to avoid being “pigeonholed” as only qualified on “women’s issues,” and nothing else. It may also reflect a drive among women candidates to demonstrate competence and viability on a wide range of issues, in order to reinforce their qualification for office.

I did not, however, find support for my third hypothesis, that men would have a broad issue portfolio concentrated around masculine issues. Instead, they focus almost

exclusively on masculine issues. This is due to the fact that men are much more likely to be Republican, and, as this analysis also shows, Democrats “own” women’s issues. It makes sense, then, that if a much greater share of men are Republicans, they would not have a strong presence on Democrat-owned women’s issues.

In addition, they have a much more concentrated issue portfolio than women do. This may be because men seek to continue a strategy that has historically been successful – namely, discussing masculine issues. They may perceive it as the area on which they are most credible and successful. Moreover, as the dominant group, they have no need to seek out other strategies or devote time to new issues when they know what has been well-received by their followers in the past.

I find support for my fourth hypothesis – women do indeed discuss feminine issues more than men, and at the same, time discuss many masculine issues at about equal rates as men (17/37 masculine issues, or 46%). This suggests that, overall, women discuss a broader range of issues, while men tend to be more focused on what has been successful for them in the past.

Examining their direct, authentic self-presentation via Twitter suggests that women see little to no cost with their followers to owning gender-congruent, feminine issues. They challenge norms the least on this aspect of any of the three examined in this dissertation. Indeed, their strong issue ownership implies that they see it as quite advantageous. This is different to the suggestion of perceived costs when discussing motherhood or feminine traits. The difference may be due to the fact that they are already perceived as more competent on these feminine issues by virtue of their gender. At the same time, these feminine issues are very salient for their followers, and have real

implications for their lives; they therefore have motivation to prioritize voting for the most competent individual over any potential negative reactions to seeing a woman in a public role. Finally, issues are removed enough from the public-private divide that seeing a woman taking on a public role by mentioning them will create little or no negative reaction for their followers. Similarly, their followers have that motivation to support for the most competent candidate on masculine or neutral issues as well. Because policy issues are somewhat removed from the public-private divide, experience and credentials can enter the equation and mediate their followers' choices, making it possible for women to occasionally claim masculine and neutral issues as well.

Importantly, however, these strategic choices are all likely still structured by perceived cost with their followers. Women candidates are only free to mention the issues that they do because they perceive little or no cost to doing so. As we saw with roles and traits, if women candidates perceived a cost to mentioning feminine issues, they would likely be much more hesitant to mention them. It may be that women's assumed competence on these issues, the issues' salience for their followers, and the distance from the public-private divide all contribute to afford women the flexibility to mention these issues.

These strategic choices are also shaped by partisan concerns. On many issues coded "feminine," and especially in regard to "women's issues," it is Democratic women (rather than Republican ones) driving observed activity. This is likely because issue competencies have partisan stereotypes attached to them. Democratic women may be trying to benefit from a "double advantage" on those issues, presumed competent on account of party and gender – while Republican women do not have any such partisan

advantage on those issues. Indeed, the norms, interests, and priorities of their party's more conservative voter base may make it a disadvantage to speak out on such issues (Freeman, 1987) (either coded feminine in general, or related specifically to women).

The centrality of cost is reinforced by the fact that this gender congruent behavior occurs on Twitter, where there is a supportive, friendly audience. Their followers there are as likely as anywhere else to respond positively to the candidate's strategy. If a candidate ever wanted to take a risk with respect to self-presentation in a low-cost environment, their supportive their followers would make Twitter ideal place to do so. However, party shapes whether and how women can embrace such a strategy. Partisan norms and voter priorities incentivize Democratic women to "own" expected, gender congruent issues that maximize their perceived advantages on certain issues – rather than, for example, developing credibility on "weighty," substantive issues, or a broad issue portfolio encompassing many types of issues. The opposite is true for Republican women, who, by and large, discuss more masculine issues, in line with partisan expectations – with one exception. They do mention "women's issues" more than their same-party male colleagues, and that is likely due to the perceived advantage and competence they have as women on the issue. Interestingly, this is the only aspect where women's direct strategies appear to be in line with the media's strategy. The media, too, reinforces women's gendered issue competencies. Thus, issues are the only aspect for which women do not have an incentive to present themselves directly to their followers, with the hopes of overcoming gendered biases, and shaping how they are perceived. Issues are also the aspect on which the media most accurately reflects the candidate's brand.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

When a woman leaves her natural sphere,  
 And without her sex's modesty or fear  
     Assays the part of man,  
 She, in her weak attempts to rule,  
 But makes herself a mark for ridicule.  
     A laughingstock and sham.  
 Article of greatest use is to her then  
 Something worn distinctively by men –  
     A pair of pants will do.  
 Thus she will plainly demonstrate  
 That Nature made a great mistake  
     In sexing such a shrew.  
*-Anonymous letter to Susanna Salter, first U.S. Mayor,  
 Argonia, Kansas, 1887<sup>57</sup>*

In more than 130 years since Susanna Salter became the first woman mayor in the United States, a great deal has changed for women in public life – but many inequalities stubbornly persist. They navigate gender congruence on Twitter differently from men on all three aspects examined, when they do address those norms. The overwhelming finding is that candidates do not devote significant amounts of Twitter activity to these three inherently gendered aspects. Twitter does not appear to be a forum where gender figures prominently, or where gender norms are significant considerations. It does not shape the power dynamics on Twitter, in the sense that candidates may feel less pressure to embody masculinized, ideal leadership norms, and need to mention those aspects less often. These findings may constitute yet more evidence that the gender balance of power may even on Twitter, as it relates to these three aspects of self-presentation. Therefore, women may have more opportunities to compete equally on a variety of other aspects, such as promoting their campaigns (Evans, 2016).

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<sup>57</sup> Holman 2014, 10



However, when women do discuss these three gendered aspects, their experiences are distinct from men's. Women are less likely to discuss their own family roles than others' roles, whereas the opposite is true for men. They are also far less likely to show their husbands' involvement than men are to feature their wives'. And, while women strive to embody masculinized ideal leadership traits that conflict with the stereotypes for their gender, men have the flexibility to embrace gender congruent traits, because they already represent the ideal. Finally, just as women seek to maximize the advantage they have from presumed competence on feminine policy issues, men "own" masculine issues.

Though Susanna Salter would probably be shocked to see women running "as a mom in tennis shoes" like Patty Murray, or breastfeeding in a campaign spot like Krish Vignarajah (the Maryland gubernatorial candidate), she would also likely relate to women candidates' apparent perceptions that their marital status is best overlooked, and that their followers hold masculinized expectations for candidates' personality traits. In many ways, we are still suspicious of women who "leave their natural sphere," and, as a result, women candidates expend significant resources in their efforts to "fit the mold" for leadership.

### *Summary of findings*

Recall from Chapter Two that women minimize their roles as wives by not mentioning them much at all, and in particular, less than other family roles (such as discussing their parents or children). They also minimize their personal roles as mothers, though perhaps less so than in previous years. They are also less likely than men to use role their marital status for credibility. Men, by contrast, are somewhat more likely to

mention their roles as fathers and husbands (though still do not mention them much overall, as a proportion of tweets). Women's strategy may be one of avoidance of their personal roles, while men may seek to *embrace* theirs, perhaps because of the benefits they stand to gain. These marked differences show how unique women's experiences in politics still are. While women candidates likely seek to avoid reinforcing their departure from woman's traditional private role, it is doubtful that men have to strategize around that. As part of that strategizing, the feminine is minimized in the discourse, with the result that current, masculine norms are reinforced.

It also bears mentioning that both genders mention roles on Twitter infrequently; for both men and women, they are a very low proportion of tweets, and the subject of fewer tweets than either of the other two aspects. In part, this may be because the nature of Twitter simply does not lend itself to showcasing the candidate's family. Whatever the reason, the lack of Twitter activity about roles contributes to a general minimizing of the feminine and its "sphere" in politics. With respect to family roles, this is a good thing for women; it levels the playing field for them, in the sense that their family roles are simply less relevant, and therefore the gender balance of power may be more equal. It demonstrates how women (and men) can reinforce that the feminine is incompatible with politics by simply not mentioning it, as opposed to doing so by replacing it with masculine characteristics, as we see with respect to traits.

Chapter Three demonstrates how, when analyzing traits, strategies and behavior seem to shift. Perhaps in part because traits are somewhat removed from the essential roles under the public-private divide, women may have more flexibility to navigate its norms. There may be less cost to violating their followers' gendered expectations.

Women appear to navigate by again violating gender norms, but this time by actively embracing gender incongruent traits (whereas on roles, they just overlooked the fact that they were violating traditional roles of mother and wife). Additionally, with respect to the individual trait keywords examined here, women mention themselves more than others – the opposite behavior of someone filling their traditionally private, caregiving roles.

Women highlight masculine traits more than feminine ones, but do mention a few feminine traits. For their part, men discuss others' traits more than their own, and emphasize traits in line with gendered expectations (i.e., masculine ones). While women's Twitter activity highlights gender incongruent stereotypes, perhaps in order to establish viability and credibility, men appear to simply reflect what is already expected of them. This underscores how women's experience is unique, and how, as a result, the feminine is often minimized.

As with roles, candidates of both genders mention traits infrequently, and less than expected. As with roles, this may be because the nature of Twitter does not make it an ideal forum in which to discuss personality traits. Television advertisements, which involve more time, as well as more methods to send a message, may be better suited to “selling” the candidate's personality to their followers.<sup>58</sup> Candidates have roughly thirty seconds, as opposed to 140 characters;<sup>59</sup> they can include commentary from others to make their message more credible, or visual (or other) signals to reinforce their message.

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<sup>58</sup> Of course, most candidates now share their Television ads on Twitter, so this is a limitation of what one can study via textual analysis, and therefore a limit of this study.

<sup>59</sup> While the limit was 140 characters per tweet at the time of these tweets (2016), it was raised to 280 characters as of November 2017 (Tsukayama, 2017).

Whatever the reason, traits appear little on Twitter. However, this dissertation concerns itself with gender differences in the traits that are mentioned, despite low counts.

In Chapter Four, I ask whether there are gender differences in how candidates tweet about policy issues. Given that women generally are presumed competent on feminine issues, they may be seeking to maximize that advantage; on the other hand, they often minimize the feminine, as it is perceived as ill-suited to politics, so it may be instead that they build masculine issue portfolios. While both genders mention issues at greater rates than gender roles or traits, issues are still a low percentage of overall activity, especially given the centrality of policy to the roles for which these candidates are campaigning.<sup>60</sup> This may be because the constraints of Twitter, especially its 140-character limit, do not lend themselves to complex discussions of policy.<sup>61</sup> However, when candidates do mention roles, women pursue a strategy of highlighting gender-congruent issues, while men do not, again reinforcing women's different experiences in politics. This may be because, with issues, women have the greatest metaphorical distance from their essential, private, reproductive roles, and no longer have to overcome gender norms, nor minimize the feminine. There is the least cost to violating feminine issue norms. Women's Twitter activity suggests that they are free to, and do, embrace the feminine by prioritizing feminine issues. They do also claim some masculine and two neutral issues, however, so their focus is not exclusively on feminine issues.

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<sup>60</sup> Of note, women and men in this dissertation mention issues at proportions consistent with other research (Evans et al., 2014).

<sup>61</sup> While the limit was 140 characters per tweet at the time of these tweets (2016), it was raised to 280 characters as of November 2017 (Tsukayama, 2017).

By contrast, men’s tweets focus mostly on masculine issues, while emphasizing a few feminine issues, perhaps in an effort to “soften” their images. Alone among all three aspects, women can embrace the feminine and bring it into the public sphere – and indeed they do, as they are most often the ones mentioning feminine issues, such as “families,” “living wage” and “gun violence.” For a review of the major findings of each chapter, please see the chart below.

Figure 5: Summary of Findings

	Women’s behavior	Men’s behavior	Relationship to masculine (for men)	Relationship to feminine (for women)
Roles	<p>*Mention most roles at similar rates, but not their own roles as mothers or wives.</p> <p>*They are more likely to mention “mother” in general, or in reference to other families, than their own roles as mothers</p> <p>*Women are</p>	<p>*Men are much more likely to mention their own role as fathers than they are “father” in other contexts.</p> <p>*Men are more likely to mention their own wives (than wives in other contexts).</p> <p>*Further, men are more likely to show their wives involvement</p>	<p>*Advantage – mention own roles more than others</p>	<p>*Disadvantage – mention others’ roles more than own</p>

still very hesitant to mention themselves as wives, or their husbands. Far less likely to mention “husbands” overall than men are “wives” overall, or to use role as wife for credibility in their campaigns than women are their husbands’.

\*Men are more likely to use their roles as husbands for credibility than women are to use their roles as wives – in fact, they do not do so at all.

Traits	*More likely to mention self than others.	*Discuss others more than themselves.	*Use of traditionally masculine words at equal rates as women suggests a reluctance to appear overly masculine, as well an effort to address followers’ gendered stereotypes.	*They do not hesitate to show they can lead like men, and even to take masculine qualities, but shy away from terms that may reinforce preconceived notions about women being too soft or other-centered, or in some way not cut out for public life.
	*Overall, use ten traits, seven (70%) of these at similar rates to men (e.g., “Leader,” “Courageous”). Thus, the overall pattern suggests similar use. However, women do use three traits at higher rates than men, including	*Overall, men use seven of thirteen (53.8%) terms at similar rates to women. While that is most terms, and certainly greater than a majority (50%), it is less than women’s score (70%).  *Like women, men use masculine		*No association with feminine stereotypes.

“strong” and  
“hardworking”  
(masculine)  
and  
“independent” (neutral).  
traits to  
describe  
themselves, at  
equal rates to  
women  
(“strong,”  
“hardworking,”  
“leader”).

\*When  
referring to  
themselves  
in particular,  
women use  
mostly  
masculine  
words,  
sometimes  
more often  
than men  
(“strong,”  
“hardworking”),  
sometimes at  
similar rates  
(“leader”)  
and none at a  
lower  
proportion.  
They also  
use some  
neutral traits  
(“independent,”  
“bipartisan,”  
“committed”).  
They also use  
some neutral  
traits  
(“independent,”  
“bipartisan,”  
“committed”).

\*Mention no  
feminine  
traits in  
relation to  
themselves,  
and few  
overall  
(“honest,”  
“integrity”).

\*No evident  
pattern of  
behavior on  
gender-  
neutral traits  
(men and  
women  
similar on 2/5  
traits; women  
use 2 more  
often, men 1).

\*Mention no  
feminine  
traits in  
relation to  
themselves,  
and few  
overall  
(“honest”).

\*No evident pattern of behavior on gender-neutral traits (men and women similar on 2/5 traits; women use 2 more often, men 1).

Issues	<p>*Mention feminine issues more than masculine ones, but not afraid to mention some masculine.</p> <p>*When feminine issues arise, they are the ones who mention them (rather than men).</p> <p>*No clear pattern on neutral issues.</p>	<p>*Mention many, almost half (15/37), of masculine issues more than women.</p> <p>*Still the ones who mention most masculine issues more.</p> <p>*Mention no feminine issues more than women do.</p> <p>*No clear pattern on neutral issues.</p>	<p>*Acceptance, but also carving out other spaces where they can show competence.</p>	<p>*Embrace masculine issue profile that has historically been advantageous for them.</p>
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A central, overarching finding is that candidates do not often discuss these three aspects on Twitter. Instead, they spend more time discussing other things, including



general personal items (approximately 29%),<sup>62</sup> campaign happenings (23%), media (12%) and attacks against their opponents (11%) (Evans et al., 2014). Moreover, the restrictive nature of Twitter may make it difficult to engage in meaningful discussions about the rationale behind support for certain policy items, or developing a candidate's personality. Thus, other forums, like Facebook or Television ads, may be better suited to investigating these activities. This is especially true if one wants to understand gender differences in the degree to which candidates prioritize various aspects.

However, even though there are relatively low mentions of these aspects of self-presentation, especially roles and traits, that does not necessarily imply that gender is not present on Twitter. Instead, as Eagly and Karau (2002) would argue, it implies that the balance of gender power is relatively even, and thus gender is less salient, and plays less of a role in shaping the power dynamics, and how candidates need to present themselves to be successful, on Twitter. Gender is, of course, still present. It is the gendered expectations that these aspects of self-presentation connote that render them low salience (and therefore minimized). As long as an aspect is acknowledged to carry strong gendered expectations, candidates will still strategize around it. It is just that, when the balance of power is more even, it plays less of a role in determining what is ideal, how candidates need to act, what voters look for – and therefore, what is highly salient. (And, on the other hand, it plays less of a role in determining what is undesirable or deviant, and to be minimized). Thus, though the gender balance of power may shift, and, in so

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<sup>62</sup> Evans et al (2014) included in the “personal” category “...items not related to their campaigns, such as reflections on the September 11 attacks, pictures of their family and friends, and football games.” Thus, they approached it more broadly than this dissertation does. Perhaps if I had included personal items beyond family, such as football games, in my coding, I would have had results closer to Evans et al (2014) (29.7% of tweets by men were personal in nature, 26.5% of women). However, the research questions of this dissertation required a focus on how candidates navigate family roles specifically.

doing, make gender higher- or lower-salience, as long as the particular aspects of self-presentation are acknowledged to carry gendered expectations, candidates will still perform gender. Future Twitter studies should consider that gender balance of power when investigating a given phenomenon. This can help guide expectations of the degree to which gender might be salient. For example, with respect to candidate dress: dress and appearance still carry fairly strong gender norms. Thus, one might be more likely to observe gendered effects.

As mentioned, Twitter is noted for its restriction to 140-character tweets at the time of this study, though the platform has since increased this limit to 280 characters (Tsukayama, 2017). Allowing a greater number of characters may allow for longer tweets, but there is little reason to think that it would change them significantly, aside from being slightly longer. With longer tweets, candidates may use more words, becoming more descriptive and specific. For example, they could describe their family roles in more detail and provide more context about what prompted the tweet. When describing traits, they could use more words to describe themselves. And when describing issues, they could explain more about their actions on the issues, or what motivated them to be concerned with certain issues. Thus, the content may become richer and more detailed, and do more to contribute to campaigns' goal of using social media to personalize the candidate (Kreiss, 2017). However, there is little reason to suspect that they might tweet more or less often about these aspects of self-presentation when allowed more characters – or that they might change substantially in other ways.

However, the general absence of gendered aspects means that gender may simply be less relevant on Twitter. It is likely not a place to challenge gender norms, but neither

is it a place to reinforce them; gender may simply be less relevant. To that degree, the balance of gender power may be equal on Twitter. Women candidates may be able to devote activity there to campaign aspects on which they can compete more equally, such as discussing their campaign activities, mobilizing followers or discussing personal matters (besides family) (Evans et al, 2016).

Of note, while this dissertation focuses on Twitter activity, other social media sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram, have also been receiving increasing scholarly attention (Bossetta, 2018; Gulati and Williams, 2010; Munoz and Towner, 2017; Wattal, Schuff, Mandviwalla and Williams, 2010; Williams and Gulati, 2013; Williams and Newman, 2018). How might these findings have been different on another platform? To begin, campaigns often conceptualize social media across two dimensions. On the one hand, there is a specific style, personal and intimate, conveying a sense of the candidate being present and involved (Kreiss, et al., 2017; McGregor et al., 2017; Myers & Hamilton, 2015; Stanyer, 2013; van Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2011). Thus, the overall language and style of the posts might remain very similar, no matter the platform.

On the other hand, campaigns also perceive social media on a platform-specific dimension, where the specifics unique to each platform may come into play. For example, Facebook may be the broadest platform with the widest audience reach. One consultant compared it to a map of America, because the majority of Americans are on Facebook and it allowed them to reach so many demographic groups (Kreiss, et al., 2017, 9). This wide reach also makes it the most versatile, used for many purposes, like targeting specific groups of voters with specific messages relevant to them, encouraging

people to vote, sharing updates from the campaign trail or “boosting”<sup>63</sup> ads among key demographic groups. As a result of its wide reach and versatility, Facebook is often seen, along with Twitter, as the two most essential platforms for campaigns (Kreiss, et al., 2017).

Thus, while results here suggest that gendered expectations, insofar as they relate to discussion of family roles, personality traits and issue competencies, were limited on Twitter, the results might be different on Facebook. Given that there tends to be discussion of a wider, broader range of topics – like a cocktail party, in the words of one candidate – there may be more room for discussion of *all* topics, including family roles, traits and issues. Rather than focusing on topics that will rally and reinforce the base, such as “personal” topics other than family, candidates may focus on a more general discussion that will resonate with a broad audience. This may open space in their posting strategy for more frequent discussions of “surface” topics, those that are broadly relevant to a wide audience, in an effort to somehow connect with the largest possible percentage of followers. Thus, while activity on Twitter has been found dominated by several topics like personal activities (aside from family), campaign happenings, media, and attacks against their opponents (11%) (Evans et al., 2014) that will rally the base, Facebook may well offer an opportunity to focus less on a few specific topics, and post about a wider range of topics. This would leave campaigns free to devote more social media space and attention to topics, such as the candidate’s family or personal traits, that receive little attention on Twitter.

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<sup>63</sup> “Boosting” refers to the practice of a campaign paying a social media platform to show their ads more often to specific groups of users, nearly always for key reasons – i.e., a Democrat “boosting” a message to turn out on Election Day among voters in low-income, inner city districts.

To continue the cocktail party analogy, when one is at such an occasion, conversation revolves around a variety of different topics, with a variety of different conversation partners. One circulates among guests, determining who she might want to talk to – or not. Conversation ranges from small talk to more in-depth conversations between guests who might already be good friends. And so it is on Facebook – little conversation about a wide range of topics, sometimes including the personal, sometimes not. However, at an event to rally the base, such as a campaign fundraiser, conversation will be focused around a few topics – negatives about the opponent, positives about the campaign, the candidate herself, other political happenings. Though there may be some attention to the candidate’s self-presentation, such as a family member introducing her, on the whole, there is less metaphorical space for that self-presentation. And indeed, at an event to rally the base, presumably most guests already are familiar with the candidate’s self-presentation and don’t need the focus on it.

With regard to Instagram and Snapchat, they have fewer users, and those users skew younger. They also revolve around photographs – text is limited, and when present, secondary to the photos. Consultants see these last two platforms as means to reach younger audiences seeking “backstage” or “behind the scenes” looks at life on the campaign trail, and candidates themselves (Kreiss, et al., 2017). Because they skew toward limited, smaller audiences (younger), and require visually richer content, consultants often see these platforms as restricted to campaigns with significant war chests who can afford to create rich content for them. The results here would have perhaps included discussion of more issues relevant to youth, such as student loan forgiveness or job training programs. In addition, because photographs are essential to

these platforms, my results would have had to include photos. Text would be insufficient. I could have coded photos to see what types of images candidates present; for example, especially in the section on family roles, accompanying analysis of what types of family photos were presented would have been possible. Whether they were formal vs casual, posed vs candid, the whole family or just the candidate and children, would all have been interesting dimensions of self-presentation to examine. Because the young tend to be more open and progressive, especially on social issues that might be related to gender (Parker, Graf and Igielnik, 2019), women candidates in particular might have felt less pressure to show how they embody *masculinized* leadership norms. For example, they might have felt less pressure to avoid showing their children because younger voters may be less concerned with whether they are balancing both family and official roles; in fact, those who happen to also be parents of young children may relate to that “balancing act” themselves. Relatedly, if younger voters have more flexible ideas about gender roles, they may also have more flexible ideas of what a true leader “looks like,” and therefore, candidates may have felt less pressure to embody traditional leadership qualities like strength and toughness – though how else they might define themselves is, of course, up for debate.

*Self-presentation as a gendered phenomenon: an argument*

What does all of this tell us about how gender structures campaigns? First, and most fundamentally, the literature has established multiple factors, including gendered leadership expectations, the incompatibility of the feminine with running for public office, and the electoral cost of violating those gendered leadership expectations, that

disadvantage women.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps as a result of those disadvantages, women often minimize the feminine when navigating public life. In some cases, they minimize by failing to mention an aspect; in others, they minimize by embracing the atypical, masculine side of the aspect. But both serve to minimize the feminine. Only with the most distance from the public-private divide, and their essential roles, can women embrace the feminine – and then, only because they have perceived competency on feminine issues, and those issues are highly salient to their followers. Whether candidates embrace the feminine - or, more often, minimize it – past scholarship suggests that their followers’ beliefs about who belongs in the public sphere, and their potentially negative reactions when candidates challenge those expectations, play a significant role in shaping candidates’ strategies of self-presentation. Some reactions engender negative reactions and cost the candidate support, while others reinforce their advantage. Candidates will seek to behave in ways that minimize cost or maximize advantage. Thus, because mothers, and especially wives, do not typically “belong” as actors in the public sphere, women candidates avoid those roles; similarly, because leaders are often constructed as masculine, with little place for a “warm,” “other-centered,” “stereotypical” woman, woman candidates emphasize masculine traits. But because their presumed competence on feminine issues affords them an advantage, they have motivation to embrace the feminine side of that aspect.

An implication of pursuing gendered strategies of self-presentation is that both groups minimize the feminine, but in different ways (for example, mentioning

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<sup>64</sup> On gendered leadership expectations, see Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Bauer, 2015; Bell and Kaufmann, 2015; Burrell, 1994, 1996; Dodson & Carroll, 1991; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Stalsburg, 2012; Thomas, 2010. On electoral cost of violating norms/backlash, see Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Nauts, 2012; Rudman, L. A., & Phelan, J. E. (2008).

motherhood, but not their own identities as mothers; never mentioning “wives”). This minimizing tends to take the form of either mentioning an aspect rarely, or emphasizing gender incongruent traits. Different strategies both result in minimizing. Men, already possessing the characteristics of ideal leaders, simply reinforce their masculine advantages (the exception being when they highlight a few feminine traits in an effort to soften their image).

However, the degree to which women minimizing or highlight the feminine may be partially contextual. Women tend to mention feminine issues when relevant, such as climate change or sexual assault in the Trump era. When feminine issues become less relevant, the feminine may be even further minimized. Candidates wait to address issues until the public demands actions, often as a result of cultural shifts. While this makes sense from a re-election-oriented candidate’s standpoint, the result is that female issues can sometimes be kept silent and buried until significant controversy drives them to the forefront. For example, sexual assault and LGBT rights were always present, but rather than being mainstream, they were lower salience, perhaps even controversial, peripheral issues until the culture changed. Had they been “mainstream,” and not marginalized as “women’s issues,” perhaps policy could have addressed those issues before they became larger problems needing more complex solutions. The contextual nature of these issues means some issues can become more significant, limit more people, and require more effort to solve.

It is worth noting that, even when context renders gendered stereotypes and/or feminine issues less salient, gendered dynamics still underlie the choices about which issues to mention. It is those gendered concerns, and the incompatibility of the feminine



with public office, that sideline the feminine (Mothers – “in tennis shoes,” like Patty Murray, or otherwise; feminine issues; compassion and caring) to begin with. If that were not the case, the feminine side of these aspects of self-presentation would not have been marginalized or trivialized to begin with – and thus, they would have been part of our cultural script for public officials in the first place. Context never would have impacted their presence or absence from the discussion. Even when the salience of the feminine is contextual, gendered concerns still shape that salience, too.

Minimizing the feminine is also contextual in the sense that it is impacted by candidate party identification. It shapes the degree to which they discuss family roles, with women Republican women slightly less likely (.93% of tweets overall, or 30/3,197) than their Democratic women colleagues (1.41%, or 185/13,041) to tweet about their roles. This may be because the more conservative, family-values culture of the Republican party make the potential risks of showing a wife and mother departing from her private role even higher (than for a Democratic woman). Additionally, Republican women are more likely to minimize women’s issues; they far less likely to mention women’s issues, even protecting women against violence. If our leadership norms are to expand and become more inclusive, these results suggest that Democratic women may lead that change.

The two parties have different cultures (Freeman, 1987); while the Republican Party tends to be hierarchical, closed and authoritative, the Democratic Party is characterized as “open, loud and contentious” (Freeman 1987, 223). These cultural differences may mean that it is easier for non-traditional, marginalized people to enter into the arena and take on meaningful roles in the Democratic Party; a focus on following

the wishes of higher-ups and taking time climbing the ranks may make it more difficult in the Republican Party. Cultural differences also play a role. The Republican Party is more traditional and family-values oriented; it is perhaps no surprise that Republican women are more likely to see themselves as belonging in the domestic sphere (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013, 71; see also Thomsen, 2015). This may pose unique disadvantages to women running for office in places with more culturally conservative voter bases (Bell and Kaufmann, 2015). Whatever the cause, the message remains that partisan constraints may influence how women navigate gender. In particular, Republican women may be more likely to minimize the feminine, especially when it comes to issues. In contrast, Democratic women may have some advantages that make it easier for them to expand current leadership norms to include the feminine.

For those aspects where women do currently minimize the feminine, they do so in different ways. While in some cases, doing so involves avoiding an aspect, in others, women embody gender-incongruent, masculine norms instead of feminine ones. Avoiding an aspect makes it hidden. If it not discussed at all, then no one can start to discuss it differently, and potentially question or shift current norms. In contrast, embracing masculine traits allows women to show how they can meet some norms. They are engaging with norms (surrounding traits). While they currently do so in ways that minimize the feminine, at least they are engaging with expectations for leaders, and therefore may become more credible, mainstream candidates – as long as they do not incur high costs. From within the system, the establishment, they may eventually have the opportunity to mention other, feminine traits, and, in the process, shift expectations for

which traits are ideal in leaders. Overall, though these approaches have different implications, both serve to minimize the feminine.

The result of this minimizing is that women are missing out on some potential advantages. If, once within the system, they could define more feminine roles and traits as ideal for leadership, and emphasize more of them, they could potentially shift ideas about what is acceptable or ideal for our leaders to include behavior beyond the default “masculine.” They might even capitalize on the advantages afforded them by those newly desirable roles and traits. However, it is true that the feminine, and women’s restriction to the private sphere, render them incompatible with the public sphere. There are not many feminine traits which could currently be advantageous for women candidates, nor is there a template for how they could successfully integrate their families into their campaigns.

And yet. Certainly some traditionally feminine traits could be advantageous in politics – for example, compassion. While I find that the few candidates who do display it tend to be men, the fact that they do so suggests that at least some candidates may perceive understanding and sympathy for others as desirable in leaders. However, overall, few candidates seek to claim that trait. One male Republican consultant who I interviewed offered an explanation for why few men mention compassion or warmth. He explained, “...men don’t really have to compassionate as much...they aren’t really held to that standard” (Participant 37). It may be that men do not mention “compassion” much, even though it seems desirable for a leader, simply because it is not relevant for them – while women minimize it to avoid being seen as too “soft,” too feminine.

Similar to compassion, a few men candidates – but no women – characterize themselves as “accessible.” Being available to constituents is surely a cornerstone of

good representation – but one from which no women candidates currently benefit, likely because they fear it may paint them as too other-centered. Moreover, Sarah Palin’s successful comparison of herself to a “Mama Grizzly,” and this project’s finding that women are becoming more daring in how they deploy motherhood, suggest that there may be a place for a “good family woman” in our political landscape. But by defining masculine traits as the norm and seeking to meet them, candidates – both men and women - reproduce and reinforce those gendered expectations.

The environment in which candidates are presenting themselves matters. The data from this study come from a low-cost environment where the audience is largely supportive and intentional (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Foot & Schneider, 2006; Evans, 2016; McGregor, 2018). They are sympathetic to the candidate in question and seek information on her purposefully. Candidates go to this forum to spread information that will “rally the base.” If ever there were a place to flout gender norms, or take risks, using self-presentation, Twitter would be it. Women could do that by showing themselves as mothers and wives, who do not generally belong in the public sphere as it is currently constructed. It would also mean bending gender norms by embracing masculine traits or issues, when they are expected to embody feminine ones. Yet, with respect to two of three aspects, women do not appear to pursue those revolutionary, and potentially costly, strategies, even among likely supporters (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Evans et al., 2016; Foot & Schneider, 2006; McGregor, 2018). They continue to avoid their families, to embrace traditional (masculine) leadership traits, and to maximize the advantage they have on feminine issues. They define themselves in these ways when they have maximum

flexibility to do so in whatever ways they think would afford the greatest advantage. This only reinforces this paper's findings.

Another forum, such as television ads, might be distributed to a general audience of all subscribers to the channel. Findings might be confounded or complicated by the fact that candidates would likely be seeking to appeal to a wide audience of viewers, especially moderates or undecideds, in an effort to win votes, rather than solidify support. They would therefore be more likely to reflect traditional, masculinized leadership norms and gendered expectations of men and women. They would be even more likely to, for example, minimize/avoid their parental or marital roles in such a forum, because the costs would be higher. Findings from such a forum would do well to account for the fact that they likely reflected the higher cost of navigating gender norms. Candidates' true, idealized, or authentic self-presentation could very well be less traditional than findings indicated.<sup>65</sup> Investigating self-presentation in a supportive environment where candidates can reinforce their support/base allows a more unfiltered, authentic picture of self-presentation.

Notably, whether women embrace the feminine or not, all of these aspects are still constructed in terms of gender. These aspects still rely on stereotypical, socially constructed and reproduced understandings of masculine and feminine - and of politics as a male domain. This can be attributed in part to the fact that the public-private divide, and

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<sup>65</sup> For example, facing pressure to win undecided votes with a TV spot, a woman candidate would be more likely to follow the traditional strategy of avoiding her family, reinforcing feminine traits and issues competencies. That strategy has been proven successful in the past. It is not likely to be controversial. It will appeal to a wide range of voters, including supporters and undecideds. Thus, such a result would have to acknowledge that that self-presentation could be impacted by the need to avoid controversy and garner support. That version of the candidate's self-presentation could be far less disruptive of gendered leadership expectations than she would ideally have it be. But by examining behavior in a low-cost, low pressure environment, this dissertation seeks to gain a more accurate understanding of how candidates want to be perceived.

men's and women's essential roles under it, are so deeply entrenched in our collective consciousness. They are engrained early in childhood, absorbed as part of one's most formative experiences. They form the core of people's understandings of who they are and what their places are.

Our current model takes "masculine" as the norm. As outlined in the Introduction, politics is a masculinized space, created by and for men. Women candidates are judged in large measure on how well they balance competing expectations of them to embody both stereotypical, private women - and public-oriented, masculine leaders. As a result, their behavior differs from men's on family roles, traits and issues. However, moving to a new model that is free of gendered stereotypes, and evaluates candidates based on how well they fill the essential functions of leadership, would lessen the difficulties of balancing competing expectations for women. It might make the political arena more welcoming to women – certainly they would no longer arrive to politics as "deviant" or "outsiders." Without the necessity of navigating gendered stereotypes and avoiding cost/backlash, it would be much less complex, strategically, to "sell" a woman candidate's "vision," or plans, to her would-be constituents. And if politics was more welcoming to women, then perhaps more would run and win election, thereby achieving greater levels of descriptive representation. This would have positive implications for our democratic legitimacy and norms.

But what might these new, more inclusive models of leadership look like? As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, it is not enough to simply have women expand their issue portfolios to address masculine issues, nor to embody masculine traits. While that might be valuable, and allow more women to participate, it would not imply truly

questioning or expanding the norms themselves. To do that, we would have to evaluate issues free of their current gendered associations. We would have to conceptualize issues through some other lens besides a gendered one – perhaps one based on the essential functions or tasks of leadership, as well as the context of the specific race/contest. Recall that, while an examination of all the essential functions of leadership is beyond this project, a discussion of several functions for argument’s sake is possible. One such function of leadership is understanding the implications of, and connections between, various policies. So, too, is listening to the concerns and priorities of people, and understanding their needs. Relating to others, overall, is a second essential function. Third, and finally, being able to do what one feels is right, even when it is difficult, is crucial. And, as always, re-election motivated candidates will do what they perceive will yield the greatest electoral advantage, and be focused on their individual race.

Thus, their followers wouldn’t really have a need to evaluate candidates on family roles. It wouldn’t be relevant. For example, this is the case in France, where voters place a high premium on individual rights, and this extends to politicians’ private lives – their families would never appear in a campaign ad (Kuhn, 2004). Family could perhaps become relevant in a district with a high percentage of young families, but in that case, policy issues relating to families, children and education would be relevant, rather than the candidate showing his/her own family role.

With respect to traits, the essential functions of leadership require being independent, inclusive, and courageous. Ideal traits could be further determined by the particular district – for example, candidates in the inner-mountain West (Montana, Wyoming) could portray themselves as rugged and tough, while candidates in New

England might portray themselves as hearty, solid and independent. Of course, in practice it would be difficult to separate issues from long-standing, deep-seated gendered associations. This alternative model simply explores another possibility of evaluating leaders. Their followers would evaluate candidates based on how effectively they portrayed these traits relating to the essential functions they would fill, and/or their particular contest, rather than how well they met our current masculinized ideals. Lastly, with respect to traits, their followers would conceptualize policy issues in terms of how salient they were to the district and the nation, rather than in terms of masculine or feminine. They would evaluate their leaders on how well they addressed those issues, rather than whether they addressed gender-stereotypic issues. For example, their followers would expect a candidate from an urban district to prioritize public transportation and housing, while a candidate with a national laboratory in her district would be expected to prioritize technology, nuclear concerns, and national security.

With its focus on the individual district/race, this new model would encourage candidates to be even more responsive and accountable to their followers, in order to best meet these new standards. They would also have more time to devote to ensuring their responsiveness and accountability because they would not have to strategize around gender. This could improve their job approval ratings, as well as their followers' satisfaction with their representatives. In moving away from a gendered lens, and toward an understanding of leadership focusing on its core functions and individual contests, gender would be a far less powerful, if not irrelevant, constraint. As a result, politics would be more open to women, and men would not face the few gendered concerns that they currently do (for example, mentioning a few feminine traits as part of their



overwhelmingly masculine “brand” to “soften” their images). Ideally, the candidates who best fill the essential functions of leadership, and best understand their districts, would be successful, rather than those who best meet our current masculinized ideal. Perhaps most importantly, the essential functions of leadership, as well as the concerns of specific districts, would become the overwhelming focus and priority in evaluating leaders, rather than gendered stereotypes interfering with what leaders really need to do.

Though some may feel that, if personal identities and experiences matter, it could be appropriate to consider a politician’s family roles when evaluating him/her. It is really how we evaluate them that disadvantages women. However, it should be a candidate’s performance in office, and the concerns of her district, that are more relevant. If a candidate can demonstrate empathy with families’ concerns, and successfully address those concerns, why does her personal status matter? Moreover, if she represents a highly urban district with relatively few families, those issues are simply less salient. Therefore, a candidate’s actual accomplishments and experience, as well as what is salient to her district, should be much more relevant than personal identity.

There may already be signals that the political realm is shifting, and perhaps, in so doing, disrupting the current model. This dissertation finds that, while we have not fully reached the gender-free, “essential functions” model above, some changes are visible. That is to say, I find that women are becoming more daring in how they navigate politics. Whether that means being more overt and real on Twitter in their depiction of motherhood, as this dissertation finds, or embracing (masculinized) leadership ideals, or taking on some masculine issues, women candidates are becoming more daring. That may be simply because there are more of them in office. As women in politics become

more routine, they may expend fewer resources simply trying to overcome their novelty and convincing their followers that they do belong. They may become more confident in themselves and their place in public life. With a stronger footing, and more confidence, they may be able to shift from simply defining themselves and staying viable, to being able to take risks in their self-presentation. And as, in 2020, women still constitute just 23.7% of Members of the U.S. Congress (CAWP, 2020d), 26.1% of State Senators (CAWP, 2020d) and 30.1% of State Assembly members (CAWP, 2020d), there may be quite a bit of room for more continued growth in their self-presentation. This underscores the importance of descriptive representation. Having more women visible in public life has implications for how they present themselves and the policies on which they focus.

Women becoming more daring in their self-presentation may also be the result of the changing socio-political climate. Since the early 2000s, and especially since Donald Trump's candidacy and the #metoo movement, women overall have become bolder. More attention is devoted to gender-based inequality and violence in most realms of public life, including the news media, business, sports and academia. The highly publicized fates of Jeffrey Epstein, Brock Turner, Dominique Strauss-Kahn and others bring these concerns into the public consciousness, and motivate action to combat them. Perhaps as gender-based inequalities gain attention, and related norms shift, women are enabled to be bolder in their self-presentation.

Of note, none of these findings implies that gender-based inequalities are significantly less common or restrictive than in the past. Nor do they suggest that women have somehow overcome the obstacles that they face in public life. Indeed, this project underscores some of the ways in which women must navigate differently from men, and

in which those strategic decisions are more salient for them. But they do imply that women have increased flexibility to navigate as they gain distance from their essential, reproductive roles, and they are becoming bolder and more daring in how they navigate. This may help us understand the strategic choices underlying some of their decisions, and the ways in which their navigation may continue to evolve.

This dissertation has devoted much of its focus to women; it seeks to understand the constraints they face, and how they navigate a sometimes-unwelcoming public sphere. So where does this leave men? For them, gendered stereotypes and assumptions are simply less complicated overall. They are freer to mention a wider variety of masculine and feminine aspects of their personas – for example, while women mention mostly masculine traits, and few feminine ones, men have the freedom to mention mostly gender-congruent ones, with a few feminine ones to soften their image. Moreover, gendered concerns are also less salient for them – they will influence their electoral fortunes less. As evidence of this, men are freer to mention their own roles as fathers and husbands, while women much less rarely mention their family status. Yet, there is no evidence that men face a penalty for failing to show their family roles if they do not.

There are fewer risks and costs for men. Already the “norm” and assumed competent, they can devote fewer resources to navigating the concerns that women do, potentially leaving more resources for campaigning and governing. As a result of their greater flexibility to present themselves, men rarely have to minimize their expected (masculine) traits in the way that women may seek to minimize the feminine. To the extent that men do minimize, as they do when it comes to hyper- masculine traits, it is to soften and polish their image. Thus, it is done in an effort to maximize their advantage, as

we see with the feminine traits they mention. They do not “soften their images” as a form of “damage control,” or to minimize potential costs, as women do when they de-emphasize the feminine. This both reproduces and reinforces men’s dominant, normative position, while women continue to strategize to avoid disrupting those norms.

*Connecting to other literature on self-presentation*

These findings have implications for other research on gender and politics. Perhaps most significantly, I offer a unifying explanation for sometimes conflicting results on how women navigate politics. Some research finds that they embrace masculinized leadership ideals as they do with traits in this study, as well as other aspects like wearing formal attire or showing themselves in professional settings (Bystrom, 2006). However, other research argues that women pursue feminine strategies – for example, on issue competencies in this study, but also on aspects of self-presentation like constituent service/relations (Beck, 1991; Richardson and Freeman, 1995; Carey, Neimi, and Powell, 1998; Epstein et al., 2005), and legislative style (Reingold, 2008). Some of these behaviors represent gender-congruent self-presentations, while others are gender-incongruent. As a result, much of the literature is framed in terms of whether women will either pursue unique, feminine strategies, or act like men. But why would women choose to act “like men” with regard to some aspects, and not on others?

I offer a unique, unifying answer to that question. Based on my results in this study, I argue that women’s self-presentation can be understood not simply as a question of whether they embrace masculine norms or feminine ones, but as a function of the public-private divide, and how significantly women violate their traditional role when

they embrace leadership norms for that aspect. Understanding women's self-presentation in this way means that one categorizes candidates' actions not as simply either "like men" or more traditionally feminine, but based on how far from women's traditional private role the aspect is, how much cost/backlash it produces within their followers, and what that implies for candidates' electoral fortune. We move from a binary, male-female scale for evaluating their actions to an ordinal one with a range of possible outcomes (that reflects distance from the public-private divide). It therefore offers more nuance and possible answers when evaluating candidates. This alternative scale also allows us to examine behavior on aspects in relation to each other, based on how deeply rooted to the public-private divide an aspect is, more readily than a binary scale permits.<sup>66</sup> Examining many aspects at once, and in relation to each other, leads us to conceptualize women as crafting a cohesive, complex strategy for navigating gendered norms, rather than analyzing their strategy on one or two aspects as either "like men" or not. We see the bigger picture of how gender underlies and influences multiple aspects (rather than sometimes conflicting results on individual aspects). This approach leads us to see that what may sometimes seem like inconsistent results are actually very consistent. Women are strategically responding to their followers' (perceived) leadership expectations and trying to give themselves the greatest advantage at the ballot box, rather than embodying masculine leadership norms (on some aspects, but not on others).

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<sup>66</sup> For example, an ordinal scale calls us to evaluate how closely tied an aspect is to women's private roles, and where on the scale it falls in relation to other aspects.

### *Limitations*

First, given the low percentage of tweets relating to the aspects that I examined, this dissertation cannot make strong claims about gendered behavior on Twitter. That is to say, it cannot identify strong, distinct differences in behavior between men and women and analyze them as gendered patterns of behavior. For example, some studies of Twitter have found that women are more active and effective users of Twitter. They are more likely to have a Twitter account (Evans et al., 2014; Wagner, Gainous & Holman, 2017). They are also more active users, as they tweet more often and have more followers (Evans et al., 2016). They use it more to mobilizing voters and communicate policy stances than do men (Evans et al., 2014). This dissertation does not observe enough gendered behavior to make such claims. (As discussed previously, however, it does suggest that gendered expectations still influence how candidates strategize, and thus, though the gender balance of power may be even, it is still relevant.)

### *Future research*

This projects highlights the public-private divide as a major constraint underlying men's and women's self-presentations. It shapes their followers' expectations and perceptions about who is fit to lead, and how those leaders should act. Future research could investigate whether there are additional aspects in which women's private role leads to perceptions of them as ill-suited for public life, and how women navigate those aspects. For example, this project finds that women present themselves with masculine traits in an effort to adhere to (masculinized) leadership standards; do women pursue idealized, formal styles more than men do, especially in terms of clothing, the settings

they present themselves in, or the tone of their communication? Previous evidence suggests that they do pursue many masculine strategies, especially on the Internet or in videos (Banwart, 2002; Bystrom, Banwart, Robertson & Kaid, 2004; Mandel, 1981). This suggests that women perceive advantages to fitting masculinized molds of what a leader is by, for example, showing themselves hard at work, in professional attire, and speaking in a formal, assertive tone. To wear dresses or overly feminine clothes, or to show oneself at home, or to speak too timidly or casually, might be perceived as a lack of strength, competence and viability. Such a project could investigate gender differences in campaign style and tone across a range of outputs, from photographs on mailings or the campaign website, to television ads. It could analyze any potential differences within framework of the public-private divide, and place them on a continuum with roles, traits and issues. This would extend our understanding of the public-private divide's effects, as well as shed light on the relationship between style (or any other new aspects) and the aspects that this project examines.

Next, future research could investigate the impact of other, mitigating variables besides gender. Previous scholarship suggested that party might influence both men and women (see Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Jungherr, 2016; Koch, 2000; Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Petrocik, 1996; Rahn 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009; Winter 2007, 2010), so I included analyses of it in this project. I did indeed find that party interacts with gender to constrain Republican and Democratic women (as well as men of both parties) in different ways; for example, Republican women are generally much less likely than Democratic women to mention stereotypical women's issues, such as healthcare, and tend to behave more like the men of their own party than like Democratic women.

Yet, Republican women have more flexibility to mention “Women” than do the men of their party. Due to the time and financial constraints of this project, I was not able to investigate additional variables that might potentially impact candidate social media self-presentation. However, previous scholarship suggests that variables such as competitiveness and incumbency may interact with gender to shape candidate Twitter activity (Evans et al., 2016). In more competitive races, candidates of both genders may feel even stronger to pressure to embody ideal leadership norms, resulting in even more ideal, “masculinized” Twitter activity. In contrast, incumbents may feel more secure, and see less need to show themselves in idealized ways, so effects may be weaker – while their challenger opponents may have incentives to show just how strong a leader they are, resulting in more idealized, masculinized behavior. Whether a race is single- or mixed-gender (Dolan, 2005), whether a candidate runs under a third-party label (Evans, Ovalle and Green, 2015), campaign financial resources (Jungherr, 2016) and candidate age (Jungherr, 2016) also may interact with gender to influence observed Twitter behavior. Understanding how these variables interact with gender to shape men’s and women’s experience in unique ways is worthy of future research.

Additionally, this dissertation finds that woman candidates mention their families less than men do, perhaps because, if they do, they may still risk raising questions about their competence and ability to manage both roles. This project is only interested in whether women take that risk overall, are willing to perhaps incur a cost by showing their families. While this can shed light on whether they are engaging in incongruent behavior by mentioning their private roles, it cannot investigate these tweets in more detail. Future research could study this. *How* do women (and men) discuss their family roles, and which



portrayals may be more or less gender-incongruent? For example, are women more likely to post carefully posed photographs of their well-dressed children at family events and holidays than men are, while *avoiding* images of chaotic mornings rushing out the door? The former would certainly contribute *less* to questions about whether she could successfully manage both home and public life. In contrast, are *men* more likely to employ those carefully posed photos of well-dressed children at holidays, in hopes of reinforcing the “good family man” image? These more in-depth questions about how they present their roles – with which words, under which circumstances, what types of photos and words – are beyond the scope of this dissertation, and worthy of future research.

Future work could also examine these questions with the candidate as the level of analysis, rather than the tweet. In this analysis, it would have been useful to include the percentage of the men and women in my data made it into each chapter’s dataset. Put another way, women mentioned roles 215 times – but what percentage of the women does that include (and what percentage did not mention them at all)? This would shed light on how widespread any observed behavior is among women or men, and whether a small percentage of users might be driving up the total numbers of mentions for their group. Logistical and time constraints did not allow that for this iteration of the project, but I plan to address it in a future iteration of this project.

Finally, as noted earlier, when investigating how candidates discuss their family roles, this dissertation does not control for the age of candidate’s children. However, evidence suggests that women candidates showing young children, versus teens or adults, may lead to different concerns or reactions among voters. In particular, having young children may pose unique challenges for women candidates, and negatively impact how

evaluate them, in ways that are not true for men candidates. At the same time, women candidates who do not have any children face the greatest penalties with voters (Stalsburg, 2010l; Stalsburg and Kleinberg, 2016). It may be that women are wearier than men of showing their young children, while presenting their adult children is a “sweet spot” – the (mother) candidate has done her job well, she has raised her children successfully. They still have a strong relationship, evidenced by her children helping her campaign, but she is now free of the demands of childrearing. In any event, whatever the strategic considerations are, it very well may be that the age of a candidate’s children influences how she involves them on the campaign trail. Therefore, gender differences in how candidates with children of different age ranges discuss those children is an area ripe for future research.

### *Conclusion*

I began this dissertation by asking whether women would present themselves in gender-congruent ways on social media. Social media provides them with an ideal opportunity to be seen as they want to, free from the media’s filter or other constraints. They have a generally favorable audience, and therefore do not have to worry about winning votes or changing minds. On the one hand, one might expect that the media, as well as other constraints, do not impact their self-presentation so much as to meaningfully alter it. Under this perspective, if women do ever adjust their self-presentation to reflect gendered, electoral, local or other constraints, they do not do so to such a degree that it would change how they are perceived; nor are the media’s biases ever so strong as to significantly distort candidates’ images. On the other hand, given the media’s biases and

the multiple, strong, conflicting constraints that candidates face, social media may be an ideal forum in which to craft an advantageous self-presentation. That self-presentation would enable women to most effectively navigate gendered political/leadership norms, and any potential cost for violating them.

My findings demonstrate that women do indeed craft their self-presentation uniquely on social media. Whereas, to women's disadvantage, outside of social media the media often focus disproportionately on their parental or marital status (Bystrom et al., 2004), I find that women choose to avoid their marital status all together when communicating to their followers on Twitter. Interestingly, however, they may be finding some strength and credibility in motherhood; I find that they are as likely to mention "motherhood" as men are "fatherhood," and as likely to cite it as a source of credibility. Some evidence suggests that they might also be becoming more daring in the ways they discuss it. Thus, women's self-presentation with respect to family roles is different on Twitter in important ways, and also potentially still evolving. More investigation in future election cycles is needed.

Additionally, with respect to traits, the media tends to focus on stereotypically feminine "expressive" strengths (honesty and compassion) when covering women candidates, to those women's disadvantage (Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008; Bystrom et al., 2004). But when women have direct control over their image, I find that they tend to emphasize words, such as "leader," "strong" and "hardworking," that show how they embody masculinized leadership ideals. They also use these words to describe themselves more than other people, which is incongruent with expectations for how stereotypically other-centered, selfless people they would build their image. This suggests that women

do not fear the cost from using these words in reference to themselves, nor from any cost that might arise from focusing on their own images.

Finally, when investigating issues, I find that, when speaking directly and authentically to their followers on Twitter, women choose to dominate the discussion of stereotypically feminine issues, especially related to women's health or safety, or social welfare issues like education, health care or social justice. Interestingly, and differently from the two findings above, this resembles how the media characterize women candidates. While the media and the public often assign greater competency to women on health, education and welfare (Kittilson and Fridkin, 2008; Carroll and Schreiber, 1997; Kahn, 1996), they tend to assume that men have greater competence on masculine issues, including foreign policy, trade or defense. It may be that issues are the domain in which the media most authentically portrays women candidates. Issues have the greatest metaphorical distance from their essential reproductive roles; they also carry the least "cost" when women violate expectations of their gender, and are the most open to mediating influences such as the candidate's experience, assumed competency, or issue salience to their followers. As a result, women are (metaphorically) closer to leadership norms on issues than on other aspects. They may not feel a need to devote resources to convincing their followers that they embody leadership expectations.

These findings have a number of implications for the study of gender and politics. Firstly, though women's descriptive representation has made incredible strides, they still must contend with deeply engrained, socially constructed and powerful gendered expectations for who is fit to lead and who is not - as well as the reactions that their followers have when women defy those expectations. When we envision a leader, our

image still does not quite include the women of 2016 who are rushing forward to run for office. One consultant for an African American woman candidate explained it thus: “...when we went up places where the population was predominately Caucasian men, audiences were very negative. They were very...you could tell they were agitated that she even had the audacity to run for an office of this magnitude” (Participant 1). For some voters, it is not only that their “default” is male, and they do not expect a woman to run for office – it is also that, when a woman does run, it so troubles them that it evokes a strong negative reaction. When that intersects with race, a minority woman “double-violates,” so to speak, their expectations, and those reactions might become even stronger. This underscores the even higher barriers that minority women candidates face.

While some women do successfully navigate those constraints, if they are ever to achieve equal representation, we must expand our image to include them. We must define a “good family woman” – or even beyond that, where family status is no longer as relevant in evaluating a candidate. We must value feminine leadership traits like warm, accessible, or honest, and others that may not carry gendered associations, but reflect core tenets of good leadership. Women must feel less pressure to show how they embody masculinized leadership ideals and be able to spend more time highlight others in their campaigns (like men do).

Next, these results demonstrate that women may be able to use direct communication with their followers, especially over social media, to overcome media bias. Their self-presentation is notably different from media portrayal on two of three aspects examined here, their family roles and personality traits. It is different in ways that allows them to craft images of themselves that counter their followers’ stereotypes and

show how they are viable leaders. This is true primarily because of the direct nature of social media – it goes straight to a candidate’s followers, who then continue to “share” the message, increasing its “reach” exponentially. Women are also able to use social media in this way because of the supportive nature of the audience. Many of their followers are supporters (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Evans et al., 2016; Foot & Schneider, 2006; McGregor, 2018) who are primed to accept and spread their message. There is little concern about alienating undecided followers or wasting resources on apathetic ones, for example, and candidates can focus on reinforcing a brand that the supporters are predisposed to embrace. Says one Republican candidate who I interviewed, “...Our average follower is someone who is, for me, politically engaged, typically a partisan on one way or the other. So I actually find that social media is incredibly effective at engaging and building a base” (Participant 19). Social media’s unique nature makes it a powerful tool that women candidates can deploy to overcome media and voter biases.

A final implication is that “self-presentation” can be understood as a carefully crafted strategy, rooted in gendered stereotypes and encompassing multiple aspects (rather than referring to behavior on one or two aspects). When we conceptualize it as a broad strategy, we can rely on it to explain multiple aspects of behavior. We can then examine the aspects in conjunction with one another and search for common, underlying links between them. That endeavor uncovers their followers’ gendered leadership expectations - and women’s efforts to avoid cost from deviating from them – as central, guiding principles underlying the strategy. This moves the focus from individual aspects (as it is when “self-presentation” reflects presentation on one or two individual aspects) to the gendered dynamics that structure campaigns.

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## Appendix 1: List of All Keywords Coded, Including Roles, Traits and Issues

Roles	Traits	Issues	Issues	Issues
Wife	Leader	Women	Transportation	Iraq
Father	Strong	Education	Gun Violence	Trade
Mother	Hardworking	Economy	TPP	SCOTUS
Daughter	Committed	Veteran's Issues	Women's Health	Cyber Security
Parents	Courageous	Taxes	Farmers	Min Wage
Son	Effective	Health Care (General, NOT ACA)	ISIS	Criminal Justice
Husband	Smart/intelligent	Obamacare/ACA	Terrorism	VAWA
Kids/ children	Focused	Families	Medicare	Middle East
	Honest	Law Enforcement/ Police	Abortion	Parental Leave
	Independent	Small Business	Job Creation	Pro-Choice
	Bipartisan	National Parks/Environment	Second Amendment	Millennial
	Fighter	Social Security	Opioid Crisis	Livable/Living Wage
	Principled	Military	Campaign Fin. Reg	Term Limits
	Experienced	Energy	Homeland Security	Fish, Game, Wildlife
	Integrity	LGBT Issues	Citizen's United	Domestic Violence
	Thoughtful	Sept 11th	Equal Pay for Equal Work	NATO
	Tough	Immigration	Zika	Marriage Equality
	Compassionate	Children	Manufacturing	Roe V Wade
	Bold	Social Justice/ Discrimination	Govt Efficiency	Social Safety Net
	Prepared	Climate Change	Hurricanes	Crime
		Seniors /AARP	Banking/Finance	
		Marijuana Legalization	Syria	
		Sexual Assault	Coal	
		Labor/ Unions	Housing	

Gun Control

Native  
American Rights

Foreign Policy

Day of The Girl

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## Appendix 2. Differences in Specific Role Mentions, by Gender

	Women - (N)	Women - (%)		Men - (N)	Men - (%)		Overall - (N)	Overall - (%)
Mother	46	21.4	Wife	111	22.5	Wife	130	18.4
Father	38	17.7	Father	72	14.6	Father	110	15.5
Daughter	28	13	Daughter	70	14.2	Mother	99	14
Parents	26	12.1	Mother	53	10.8	Daughter	98	13.8
Husband	21	9.8	Son	53	10.8	Parents	77	10.9
Son	20	9.3	Parents	51	10.3	Son	73	10.3
Wife	19	8.8	Husband	42	8.5	Husband	63	8.9
Kids/ children	17	7.9	Kids/ children	41	8.3	Kids/ children	58	8.2
Total	215	100		493	100		708	100



Appendix 3: Nevin's Traits Groupings as Masculine,  
Feminine and Neutral

Masculine	Feminine	Neutral
Leader	Kind	Focused
Tough	Thoughtful	Outsider
Hardworking	Compassionate	Forward-thinking
Charismatic	Honest	Independent
Strong	Trustworthy	Committed
Courageous	Accessible	Bipartisan
Fighter		Pragmatic
In Command		Bold
		Principled
		Effective
		Smart/intelligent
		Capable
		Responsive
		Experienced
		Integrity
		Honor
		Prepared
		Inspiring
		Steady
		Competent

## Appendix 4.1 Full List of Issues and Associated Counts

	Women (N)	Proportion - (%)		Men (N)	Proportion - (%)
Women	263	9	Veteran's Issues	382	6.2
Education	162	5.5	Economy	352	5.8
Economy	134	4.6	Education	326	5.3
Taxes	133	4.5	Taxes	263	4.3
Health Care (General, NOT ACA)	111	3.8	Obamacare/ACA	244	4
Veteran's Issues	97	3.3	Women	228	3.7
Sexual Assault	89	3	Health Care (General, NOT ACA)	221	3.6
Families	87	3	Law Enforcement/ Police	192	3.1
LGBT Issues	87	3	Families	158	2.6
National Parks/Environment	87	3	Marijuana Legalization	154	2.5
Children	77	2.6	Small Business	150	2.5
Climate Change	71	2.4	Military	148	2.4
Social Justice/ Discrimination	67	2.3	Energy	145	2.3
Women's Health	67	2.3	Social Security	145	2.4
Gun Control	60	2	Sept 11th	137	2.2
Obamacare/ACA	58	2	Immigration	132	2.2
Transportation	55	1.9	National Parks/Environment	114	1.9
Small Business	53	1.8	Social Justice/ Discrimination	114	1.9
Social Security	53	1.8	Climate Change	109	1.8
Gun Violence	52	1.8	Seniors/AARP	108	1.8
Equal Pay for Equal Work	51	1.7	Children	104	1.7
Labor/Unions	51	1.7	LGBT Issues	104	1.7
Seniors/AARP	50	1.7	Foreign Policy	98	1.6
Sept 11th	50	1.7	ISIS	91	1.5
Energy	48	1.6	Terrorism	86	1.4
Zika	48	1.6	Labor/Unions	85	1.4
Military	47	1.6	Second Amendment	74	1.2
Abortion	46	1.6	Homeland Security	70	1.1

TPP	46	1.6	Medicare	69	1.1
Immigration - general	45	1.5	Gun Control	68	1.1
Law Enforcement/ Police	40	1.4	Farmers	66	1.1
Farmers	34	1.2	Sexual Assault	66	1.1
Citizen's United	33	1.1	Job Creation	59	1
Campaign Finance Regulation	30	1	TPP	58	0.9
Opioid Crisis	30	1	Hurricanes	57	0.9
Job Creation	29	0.9	Transportation	57	0.9
Medicare	28	0.9	Gun Violence	56	0.9
Foreign Policy	26	0.9	Opioid Crisis	55	0.9
Native American Rights	25	0.9	Manufacturing	54	0.9
Day of The Girl	24	0.8	Syria	52	0.9
Parental Leave	23	0.8	Coal	51	0.8
Govt Efficiency	22	0.7	Campaign Finance Regulation	50	0.8
VAWA	22	0.7	Abortion	49	0.8
Banking/Finance	21	0.7	Govt Efficiency	46	0.8
Housing	20	0.7	Citizen's United	45	0.7
Manufacturing	19	0.6	Banking/Finance	44	0.7
Min Wage	16	0.5	Iraq	43	0.7
Pro-Choice	16	0.5	Trade	40	0.7
Domestic Violence	15	0.5	Cyber Security	37	0.6
Livable/Living Wage	15	0.5	Housing	37	0.6
Second Amendment	13	0.4	SCOTUS	36	0.6
Terrorism	13	0.4	Women's Health	34	0.6
SCOTUS	12	0.4	Criminal Justice	33	0.5
Coal	11	0.4	Middle East	31	0.5
Criminal Justice	11	0.4	Min Wage	30	0.5
Hurricanes	11	0.4	Day Of The Girl	29	0.5
Syria	11	0.4	Native American Rights	28	0.5
Cyber Security	10	0.3	Equal Pay For Equal Work	27	0.4
Trade	10	0.3	Zika	26	0.4
			Millennial	21	0.3
			Term Limits	20	0.3

			Fish, Game, Wildlife	19	0.3
			VAWA	19	0.3
			Pro-Choice	15	0.2
			Livable/Living Wage	14	0.2
			NATO	13	0.2
			Crime	12	0.2
			Parental Leave	11	0.2
SUM	2935	100		6111	100

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Appendix 4.2: Evans' Typology: Female  
and Male issues

"Female issues"	"Male" issues
Healthcare	Defense
ACA	Military
Obamacare	Veterans
Affordable Care Act	VA
Social security	Vets
Medicare	Weapons
Medicaid	Nuclear
Welfare	Biological
Food stamps	Chemical
SNAP	Terrorism
WIC	Foreign policy
TANF	International relations
Children	Foreign affairs
Kids	War
Women	Iraq
Female	Afghanistan
Girls	Syria
Poverty	Iran
Family	Benghazi
Families	Homeland security
Education	9-11
Abortion	9/11
Pro-choice	Dream Act
Pro-life	Border security
War on women	Immigration
Birth control	Amnesty
Plan B	Agriculture
Rape	Legalization
Domestic violence	Pot
Gay marriage	Marijuana
DOMA	Liberty
Prop 8	Guns
Environment	Business
Binders full of women	Economy
Equality	Taxes

Budget  
Wages  
Government  
spending  
NSA  
Spying  
Debt  
NATO

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Feminine Issue		Masculine Issues		Neutral Issues	
Women	Rationale Per Evans (2016)	Veteran's Issues	Rationale Per Evans (2016)	Climate Change	Rationale Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally
Education	Per Evans (2016)	Citizens United	Tougher, weightier issue	Hurricanes	Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally
Health Care (General, NOT ACA)	Per Evans (2016)	Taxes	Per Evans (2016)	Millennial	Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally
Sexual Assault	Women are the vast majority of victims of sexual assault (WHO, 2003).	Homeland Security	Per Evans (2016)	SCOTUS	Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally
Families	Per Evans (2016)	Economy	Per Evans (2016)	Term Limits	Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally

LGBT Issues	Social welfare issue, and one related to a marginalized group; both qualities make it more appropriately coded as feminine.	Criminal Justice	Tougher, weightier issue; men generally associated with things related to crime	Transportation	Neither overtly masculine, nor feminine; affects a wide range of people equally
National Parks/Environment	Per Evans (2016)	Military	Per Evans (2016)		
Children	Per Evans (2016)	Gun Control	Per Evans (2016)		
Social Justice/ Discrimination	A social welfare issue	Marijuana Legalization	Per Evans (2016)		
Women's Health	Related directly to women; also, health in general is a social welfare issue and, as such, generally associated with women.	Law Enforcement / Police	Tougher, weightier issue; men generally associated with things related to crime		
Obamacare/ACA	Health in general is a social welfare issue and, as such, generally associated with women.	Terrorism	Per Evans (2016)		
Social Security	Per Evans (2016)	Foreign Policy	Per Evans (2016)		
Equal Pay for Equal Work	A proposal directly relating to women and their salaries.	Manufacturing	Tougher, weightier issue		
Seniors/AARP	A social welfare issue	TPP	Tougher, weightier issue		



Zika	Health in general is a social welfare issue and, as such, generally associated with women; Zika was a significant health issue. Also, because Zika could cause microcephaly in a pregnant women's fetus (CDC, n.d.), the issue disproportionately affected women.	Immigration	Per Evans (2016)
Abortion	Per Evans (2016)	Syria	Per Evans (2016)
Opioid Crisis	Health in general is a social welfare issue and, as such, generally associated with women; the opioid crisis was a significant health issue.	Banking/ Finance	Per Evans (2016)
Medicare	Per Evans (2016)	Trade	Tougher, weightier issue
Native American Rights	Related to a marginalized group.	Energy	Tougher, weightier issue
Day of the Girl	Related specifically to girls/females.	Gov't Efficiency	Evans (2016) codes "government spending" as masculine, and it's related to government efficiency.

Parental Leave	A social welfare issue	Second Amendment	Evans (2016) codes "guns" masculine, and the Second Amendment relates to gun ownership.
VAWA	The Violence Against Women Act specifically pertains protecting women from violence.	Gun Violence	Per Evans (2016)
Housing	A social welfare issue	Crime	Tougher, weightier issue; men generally associated with crime
Minimum Wage	The majority of low-wage workers are women (Patrick, 2017); also, this is a social welfare issue.	Small Business	Tougher, weightier issue
Pro-Choice	Per Evans (2016)	NATO	Per Evans (2016)
Domestic Violence	Per Evans (2016)	Job Creation	Tougher, weightier issue
Livable/Living Wage	I code "living wage" feminine because the majority of low-wage workers are women, and they are also the ones most often responsible for raising children; thus, they bear a disproportionate share of the burden of having a low-wage job.		

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*Notes: Only issues mentioned more than ten times (>10) are listed.*

## Appendix 5: Rutgers' IRB Approval



Office of Research and Regulatory Affairs  
 Arts and Sciences IRB  
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
 335 George Street / Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200  
 New Brunswick, NJ 08901

<https://orra.rutgers.edu/hssp>

732-235-2866

March 15, 2017

Jessica V. Nevin  
 89 George St  
 New Brunswick NJ

P.I. Name: Nevin  
 Protocol #: E17-501

Dear Jessica V. Nevin:

This project identified below has been approved for exemption under one of the six categories noted in 45 CFR 46, and as noted below:

Protocol Title: "One Size Does Not Fit All: Gender, Audience, and Problematizing the Notion of Candidate Self-Presentation Online"

Exemption Date: 3/13/2017 Exempt Category: 2

This exemption is based on the following assumptions:

- **This Approval** - The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted.
- **Reporting** - ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications** - Any proposed changes **MUST** be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form (s)** - Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;

Additional Notes: ■ None

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.

Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Tepper".

Acting For--  
 Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.  
 Professor, Department of Food Science  
 IRB Chair, Arts and Sciences Institutional Review Board  
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

cc: Susan Caroli (MW:hb)

Appendix 6: Gender Breakdown of Candidates

	Women		Men		Overall	
	(N)	(%) (of total candidates)	(N)	(%) (of total candidates)	(N)	(%) (of total candidates)
Dems	114	14	298	36	412	50.4
Reps	46	5.6	360	44	406	49.6
SUM	160	19.6	658	80.4	818	100

## Appendix 7: Party Breakdown of Candidates

	Democrats		Republicans		Overall	
	(N)	(%) (of total candidates)	(N)	(%) (of total candidates)	(N)	(%) (of total candidate)
Women	114	14	46	5.6	160	19.6
Men	298	36.4	360	44	658	80.4
SUM –						100
Gender	412	50.4	406	49.6	818	

## Appendix 8: Summary of Aspects

	Men	Women
<b>Roles</b>	<p>*No conflict with gender role, least mentions/activity</p> <p>*Least relevant to their stereotypical public role</p> <p>*Mention more than women do, but still mention least of all aspects *Still, can gain some advantages from showing “good family man,” and can use female family members for credibility, suggesting awareness of gendered identities and trying to gain some advantage from credibility of others.</p>	<p>*MOST conflict with their gender role / LEAST mentions</p> <p>*Mention roles less than men do</p> <p>*Most closely tied to their private role under public- private divide – hence, more conflict</p> <p>*Voters have most rigid norms on this aspect</p>

<b>Traits</b>	*No conflict, moderate mentions/activity	*MODERATE conflict, MODERATE mentions
	*Only moderately relevant to their traditional public role	*Women will mention most traits in similar numbers to men, while maximizing advantage from few positive feminine traits – mention those more than men.
	*Mention wide range of traits to show credibility, but mention feminine ones less than women do - less credible coming from men	*More distant from traditional private role than family roles; trait expectations stem from the behavior we expect of people filling women's (or men's) traditional role.
		*Norms less rigid, personal, deeply embedded than with roles
		*Can re- deploy masculine terms to their advantage, such as “strong woman.”

<b>Issues</b>	*No conflict, most mentions/activity	*LEAST conflict with their gender role / MOST mentions
	*Most relevant to their public role	*Women will discuss issues with similar frequency as men, while maximizing advantage from credibility on feminine issues – mention those more than men do.
	*Mention wide range of issues, but mention feminine issues less than women– less credible	*Most distant from private role; Tied to the gendered assumptions about roles and traits men and women have, and which issues they are best suited to handle as a result
		*Norms the least rigid, personal, embedded mentions

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## Appendix 9: Variants of Family Roles

Keyword/Role	Variants
Mother	Mothers, Mothers', Mother's, Mom, Mom's, Moms <sup>1</sup>
Son	Sons, Son's
Father	Fathers, Fathers', Father's, Dad, Dad's, Dads
Daughter	Daughters, Daughter's, Daughters'
Husband	Husbands, Husband's, Husbands'
Parents	Parents, Parent's, Parents'
Kids/Children	Kids, Kids', Kid's, Child, Children, Children
Wife	Wife's, Wives, Wives'

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<sup>1</sup> Because "Mother" is at the root of "Mothers" and "Mother's," the "Find" feature in Excel that I used to find uses of the keywords picked up those variants. It included all words that *contained* the original word that I "Find." For this reason, I entered the shortest root word, which would then pick up all the related variants, when searching. So, for example, I would "Find" "Child" so that Excel would also pick up "Children" and "Children's" (the latter encompass the former). Obviously, when the root word was different from its variants, I searched it separately, as in the case of "Wife" and "Wives." Note that I include all potential variants in this Appendix, however I searched for them, for clarity's sake.