Playing the Gender Card? Media, Strategy, and

Hillary Clinton’s Campaign for the Presidency

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Foundational Variables

Gender Stereotypes

Media’s Professional Norms & Routines

Candidate & Her Context
Double-Binds for the Female “First”

- Femininity vs. Competence
- Equality vs. Difference
- Experience vs. Change Agent
- Independence vs. Dependence
Hypotheses: How the “First” Should Run

- Female “first” will emphasize her experience, credentials, and policy positions.
- The “first” will draw upon the “sameness” of her qualifications for office, not her “difference” or historic qualities.
- The “first” will appear (particularly in ads) only in formal dress, and without her family.
Hypotheses: How the Media Will Cover “the first”

- less coverage than of male opponents
- emphasize candidate appearance and family status over policy positions or record
- more likely to use first name than official title
- narrative of “first,” emphasizing candidate novelty and difference
- question candidate viability more frequently than male competitors’ viability
Methodology

- Qualitative Analysis – Themes and Key Campaign Moments
- Sweeps and Content Analysis:
  - Campaign Speeches
  - Website Analysis
  - Advertisement Analysis
  - Campaign Staff Interviews
  - Media Coverage
    - 17 blogs
    - Newspapers
    - Television stations
Evidence: How She Ran

- Female “first” will emphasize her experience, credentials, and policy positions ✔

- The “first” will draw upon the “sameness” of her qualifications for office, not her “difference” or historic qualities ✔

- The “first” will appear in ads in formal dress, and without her family ✔
Key Moments in the campaign

- The Femininity Interregnum
- The Testosterone Blitzkrieg
Advertisements

- “Presents” ad
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzBvQ9EeF3k

- “3:00 a.m.” ad
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-VFA7L2RcE

- “Kitchen” ad
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ed1eKmh9cI
Exceptions: The Teary Moment & the Gender Card Episode
Evidence: How did the Media Cover Her?

- less coverage than of male opponents ✗
- emphasize candidate appearance and family status over policy positions or record ~✔?
- more likely to use first name than official title ~
- narrative of “first,” emphasizing candidate novelty and difference ?
- question candidate viability more frequently than male competitors’ viability ✓?
## Exhibit A: Prominence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Average mentions of candidate surname per story</th>
<th>Average # of paragraphs mentioning the candidate per story</th>
<th>% of stories with mention of candidate in headline/lede</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McCain</td>
<td>1.20**</td>
<td>3.64**</td>
<td>22.0**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exhibit B: Tone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Average # paragraphs per story with negative comments about candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McCain</td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-- NYT Columnist Maureen Dowd
Gender Strategy Theory

- Masculine
- Cross-over
- Feminine
So, about Sarah Palin...
“The Real ’08 Fight: Clinton v. Palin?”

- A contest between the two contemporary models of womanhood?
  - “The heels are on, the gloves are off.” (Palin, 10/5/08)
  - 'There's a place in Hell reserved for women who don't support other women.’ (Palin, “quoting” M. Albright)
  - “a Rachael Ray with a 4x4, who can not only make a meal in under 30 minutes but hunt and kill the main course.” (NYT, 9/8/08)
“Nobody knew how to run a woman as leader of the free world”

-- Writer Gail Sheehy