Running as a Woman (or Man): A Review of Research on Political Communicators and Gender Stereotypes

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Abstract

Women gained the right to vote nearly 100 years ago, but it was not until 1980 that political scholars and practitioners began paying much attention to the role of women in elections. Twelve years later it was the so-called "Year of the Woman" in 1992 that sparked increased scholarly attention on women as political communicators. A record number of women, 117, ran for the U.S. Congress in 1992, but the number of women running and serving has been slow to increases since that time. One reason may be the unique challenges gender poses for female political communicators. Over three decades of research has proven gender stereotypes and expectations play a key role in how women (and men) communicate with voters. This review of research summarizes major findings and changes in gender and political communication research over the past three decades. Our focus is on communication by candidates and how gender shapes that communication. In all, 133 scholarly sources were reviewed; these sources included scholarly journals from related disciplines as well as books using quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods. Our analysis demonstrates that gender stereotypes are still prevalent in American political campaigns, and women candidates must work to overcome the belief that they are not masculine enough to be political leaders. Additionally this review reveals two common strategies candidates use to negotiate gender stereotypes: feminine style and gender adaptiveness. We conclude that more research is needed to better understand how candidates navigate gender stereotypes in the 21st century, particularly in political debates and online communication

Highlights

• Gender stereotypes influence the content and effectiveness of men and women candidates' campaign messaging
• Gender stereotypes put female candidates in a double bind between being seen as capable political leaders and fulfilling gender expectations
• The U.S. Presidency is a particularly gendered office and poses unique challenges for women
• Feminine style in political rhetoric is one method women candidates use to gain authority and overcome negative gender stereotypes
• A communicative strategy of gender adaptiveness is frequently used by candidates of both sexes in advertising, debates, and online campaign communication
• Gender differences in political communication content have decreased over time
• More research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of political communication strategies by female and male candidates.
• More gender-focused research is needed in the areas of political debates, online, and emerging media.

Content

Introduction

"Although many Americans espouse equality between the sexes, women are not yet seen and for the most part do not yet see themselves as full public participants… The chief evidence of this is that the overwhelming majority of local, state, and federal elected officials still are male, like the top officials in most fields" (Buchanan, 1996, p. 18-19). While these words were written more than twenty years ago, the fact remains women in the United States lag behind men in holding elective office at every level of politics (Cook, 2016; Turcotte & Paul, 2015); and this is true even after the second so-called "Year of the Woman" in 2018 when a record number of women were elected to national and state offices. In 2019 women make up only 23.6% of the U.S. Congress, 18% of governors, and 28.3% of state legislators (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018a, 2018b). While these numbers are the highest in history, they demonstrate that we still have a long way to go before achieving gender parity in government. Not only are women underrepresented in elected office, they are underrepresented in elections. The 2016 election included the first major-party female presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, which made it a landmark election, but women's representation as a whole was still very low. In the same year only 168 women ran in the general election for the U.S. House of Representatives, which included races from all 435 Congressional districts. Additionally, there were 34 U.S. Senate races in 2016 and only 16 female general election candidates. The number of women running in the 2018 general election increased significantly from previous years, but women were still in the minority; 235 (28.7% of major party candidates) women ran for the U.S. House, 22 (32.4%) for the U.S. Senate, and 16 (22%) for governorships (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018c). The rarity of women candidates is nothing new, and it has always made them stand out. Furthermore, as Dolan (2005a) notes, the rarity of female candidates has shaped their relationship with the public; women stand out as different because of their gender, and this makes voters think about gender. Forty years of political communication research demonstrates that gender is a key variable in politics. These studies reveal that politics is a complex gendered space in our culture, entrapping all participants, at least to some extent, in the age-old stereotypes tied to each biological sex.

To date there have been few reviews of research that shed light on gender as a variable in political communication. As a part of Kaid's (2004) incredibly helpful *Handbook of Political Communication*, Dianne Bystrom (2004) wrote a thorough account of what our field understood with regard to the key differences between men and women political communicators. Twelve years later, Bystrom (2016) added a similar, updated chapter to the *Praeger Handbook of Political Campaigning in the United States*. These reviews, though incredibly helpful, provided a broad look into the content of a few types of political communication, specifically speeches, advertising, and websites. To broaden our lens, this review focuses on the gender stereotypes and subsequent biases that shape the campaign communication of female and male candidates.

This review of research includes 133 studies published between 1985 and 2018. The methodologies are varied and include experimental design, survey research, interviews, focus groups, content analyses, rhetorical/textual analyses, and historical/descriptive work. Table 1 displays the number of sources using each type of method; research using multiple methods are included in the count for each method employed. Given this essay's focus on the campaign communication of candidates, the majority of the studies analyzed employ either content analysis or rhetorical (including historical/descriptive) analysis. Political communication research spans beyond the discipline of communication studies, so research published in journals outside the field of communication is included, so long as basic communication elements were explained within the research (i.e., how stereotypes discovered in sociological research may influence the perception of gendered political messages). Sources from various types of scholarly product are included. If one seeks information about political communication and gender only from journal articles, for instance, the picture is limited. This review of research includes books, book chapters, monographs, doctoral dissertations, as well as journal articles culminating in a fuller picture of the topic. Research included in this analysis was gathered by searching common discipline databases (particularly Communication and Mass Media Complete) and helpful Internet research tools like Google Scholar. Search logics included broad searches such as "gender and political campaigns" as well as searches focused on specific types of political communication (e.g., advertising and debates) and audience perceptions of candidates' communication. Lastly, our analysis was limited to studies of political communication in the United States

because of the relatively low number of women running and serving in political office, the rarity of female candidates for president, and the uniqueness of the American political campaign. The U.S. political structure and electoral system are different from many countries, as there are now over 100 countries with some sort of gender quota system (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2018; Krook, 2006). Moreover, different culture and gender norms may affect women's political representation. Additional research is needed to understand how these norms have helped or hindered women in other countires. There is much to be learned from research on women running and serving internationally (e.g., Genovese, 2013; Kotzaivozoglou, Hatzithomas, L. & Tsichla, E., 2018; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Paxton & Hughes, 2017; Paxton, Hughes & Green, 1996; Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2009). Those interested in a comprehensive view of women's political campaigns and women in elected office should explore this research to understand how women's representation in government internationally has been influenced by the women's movement, electoral systems, and cultural norms.

Political communication research focused on gender includes three main foci: candidates, news media, and voters. All three of these areas interact and influence each other. Voter attitudes and perceptions both shape and are shaped by candidate messaging. Similarly, news media coverage influences how voters see the candidates, which can then shape candidates' communication, for example in speeches or debates. Given the complexity of political communication, one essay cannot adequately address all three foci. We have chosen to focus this essay on gender stereotypes, which effect and occur in both candidates' communication and the communication of news media. There is a good deal of research in both areas, so we have focused this article on the former: communication by candidates. First, we discuss the stereotypical beliefs citizens have about female and male candidates and how those beliefs relate to the communication of leadership traits and abilities. We then examine how these stereotypes create a double bind for female political communicators in general and candidates for the U.S. presidency in particular. An understanding of these areas then leads us to a discussion of the communication strategies of feminine style and gender adaptiveness and how they are implemented in advertising, debates and online media. Lastly, we conclude with a summary of findings and suggestions for future research.

Table 1. *Methodologies of Reviewed Research*

Methodology	Number of Sources
Content Analysis	30
Rhetorical: Historical/Descriptive	26
Rhetorical: Textual Analysis	20
Survey	26
Experimental/Quasi-Experimental	22
Theoretical	11
Interview/Focus Groups	3

Note. Multi-method studies were counted for each method used. (back to text)

Gender Stereotypes of Political Communicators

Understanding the stereotypes citizens attach to those running for office or currently serving in government is important as research indicates that there is a clear relationship between gendered beliefs and evaluations of political candidates (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a). Research in political science indicates that gender-based stereotypes are a central element in how the public views political candidates (Dolan, 2005b; Gibson & Heyse, 2010), and these stereotypes shape how a candidate must communicate to voters. As Clift and Brazaitis (2000) assert, "Candidates in the end are judged by the picture they paint of themselves and overcoming gender bias is like dealing with any other disadvantage going into a competitive race" (p. 20). Of these studies, a variety of research types and approaches have consistently concluded that citizens view political figures in stereotypical ways, and that these views privilege political men over their female counterparts. Research by McDermott (1998) demonstrated this reliance on gender stereotypes is particularly true in low information campaigns wherein voters may rely on such beliefs to fill in knowledge gaps about candidates. These stereotypes shape what people think is appropriate behavior from men and women, and what traits and abilities they possess, which in turn influences how voters assess candidates. These gender stereotypes serve as a significant rhetorical constraint (and opportunity) for candidates, and communication can activate these stereotypes affecting support for female candidates (Bauer, 2015b). The following section describes the gender stereotypes that shape how men and women are viewed as political leaders, and in turn shape candidates' communication.

Traits of Political Communicators

Traditional notions of gender attribute different traits to men and women based on stereotypical strengths and weaknesses. For women, these traits are often tied to their traditional roles as wives, mothers, and caretakers. As Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) found, women are most often associated with traits related to warmth and expressiveness. These traits include honesty, integrity, cooperation with others, sensitivity and understanding of others, a nurturing and gentle nature, emotional expressiveness, caring, helping, being involved, being responsible, warmth, passivity, and depen-

dence (Alexander & Anderson, 1993; Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bower, 2003; Bradley & Wicks, 2011; Buchanan, 1996; Burns, Eberhardt, & Merolla, 2013; Bystrom, 2003b; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dittmar, 2015; Dolan, 2005b; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Fridkin & Kenney, 2009; Han, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Kahn, 1994; Witt, Paget, & Matthews, 1994). Buchanan's (1996) historical research on women's political participation in the U.S. reveals that such stereotypes, when used strictly, leave women ill-equipped for the public sphere. Instead, those stereotypes relegate women to the private sphere of family and home where such traits are most valued. Han's (2003) descriptive analysis of a hypothetical woman running for president in the U.S. indicates such stereotypes will function as a primary way of understanding and reacting to a woman president since a woman has never ascended to this office. It is important to note the relationship between these traits and those qualities typically associated with leadership, particularly political leadership. In many cases, feminine traits such as emotional expressiveness, passivity, and even being cooperative are seen as negatives for a leader. Political leadership is more often associated with traits such as being energetic and aggressive (Trent, Mongeau, Trent, & Cushing, 1993). On the other hand, traits such as honesty, integrity, and cooperation might be desirable in a political candidate, particularly in certain electoral contexts and for certain offices. In short, the stereotypical feminine characteristics can both hinder and help a female candidate, and it is through her communication that she must overcome negative stereotypes and capitalize on positive ones. Furthermore, these expectations influence how voters interpret behaviors of female political communicators, particularly when they violate one of these expectations.

Witt, et al. (1994) observed that female politicians are still restrained by antiquated notions of propriety, hindering their abilities to engage the political process in the same manner as their male opponents or colleagues. They note, "…the woman candidate has to maintain some level of the traditional altruistic and apolitical above-it-all demeanor expected of a lady, all the while beating her opponents in what sometimes seems the closest thing to a blood sport that is still legal" (p. 215). Dow and Tonn (1993) argued in their oft-cited rhetorical analysis of Ann Richard's use of rhetoric, "…while the historical conditions of women have changed in many ways, their primary social roles have not. Women

still learn the 'crafts' of housewifery and motherhood…the traditionally female crafts of emotional support, nurturance, empathy, and concrete reasoning are still familiar requirements of the female role" (p. 287). Accordingly, the relevant research indicates that these expectations have led to both positive and negative interpretations of women's behavior in politics.

Studies have shown that, to the detriment of female politicians, women in politics can be perceived as "talkative, nagging, arguing without knowledge…and hyperemotional and overly concerned with trivia" (Beck, 2001, p. 57)—traits that are clearly negative. On the other hand, past scholarship has revealed that female politicians, when evaluated against male counterparts by their affiliated parties, are often perceived as more trustworthy and likely to share the concerns of voters (King & Matland, 2003; Matland & King, 2002). Accordingly, Bower (2003) has argued that stereotypical perceptions of women candidates both hurt and help their political aspirations, but maintains that stereotypes must be addressed via purposeful communication. For example, women are often assumed to be warm and caring, so they do not need to emphasize the qualities as much in their messaging. This, then, allows them to focus on displaying characteristics they are not assumed to have, like being strong or aggressive. Furthermore, these assumed characteristics, such as warmth and caring, could be particularly useful for female political communicators when they must attack their opponents. However, women in politics still face distinct challenges and may not always benefit from presumed positive traits like being warm and caring. Schneider and Bos (2014) found that political women do not fall into the same stereotypical categories associated with women generally, and are a subtype of women, similar to female professionals. This study found that political women were not perceived as having many of the strengths women generally possess, such as empathy and compassion. Political men, on the other hand, were perceived as having more in common with men generally, such as being driven and confident, and these were traits were also associated with good leadership. Schneider and Bos (2014) found,

> In addition to failing to possess the strengths associated with being women (e.g., sensitive or compassionate), female politicians lack leadership, competence, and masculine traits in comparison to male politicians. They are, however, associated with several negative traits (e.g., uptight, dictatorial, ambitious)" (p. 260).

The authors conclude, "in short, female politicians seem to be 'losing' on male stereotypical qualities while also not having any advantage on qualities typical of women" (p. 260-261).

Women are not the only ones affected by gender stereotypes. Studies have revealed that men in politics are most often associated with instrumental traits that indicate their rationality and competence (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a). For example, men are expected to be tough, strong, successful, aggressive, competent, experienced, knowledgeable, stern, autonomous, masculine, active, rational, self-confident, direct, and stress elements of past political successes (Alexander & Anderson, 1993; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bradley & Wicks, 2011; Bystrom, 2003b; Bystrom, 2004; Carroll & Dittmar, 2010; Carroll & Fox, 2010; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dittmar, 2015; Dolan, 2005a; Fridkin & Kenney, 2009; Han, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Kahn, 1994; Katz, 2016). These perceptions often benefit men over women in political contexts because leadership is often associated with these masculine traits. For example, Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) used an experimental design to demonstrate that voters use gendered stereotypes in assessing the electoral chances of men and women running for various political offices (president, mayor, member of Congress, and local council member). Their results concluded that politicians seeking executive offices must embody stereotypical male qualities. Dolan (2005a) reports that those qualities associated with what voters consider to be a "good politician" are often more masculine traits. Survey research of voters revealed that the traits voters most desire in a president are more often associated with men; specifically, voters are more likely to associate male candidates with the ability to lead the nation during a crisis and to make difficult decisions (Bystrom, 2003b). Banwart's 2010 study yielded similar results; male candidates were rated significantly higher than female candidates on instrumental traits (such as assertiveness and rationality) and higher in instrumental traits than on warmth and expressiveness traits. In other words, unlike women, men are often assumed to have many desired leadership traits by virtue of their gender. The importance of masculine traits in political leaders is further enforced by the nature of political campaigns in general and political debates in particular. As Banwart and McKinney (2005) concluded in their study of mixed-gender US Senate and gubernatorial debates, the confrontational and aggressive style of debates emphasizes stereotypically masculine

communication abilities.

Still, the measurable behaviors that related to these stereotypes are typically not overtly positive. As politicians, studies have discovered that men are more likely than their female counterparts to interrupt colleagues, especially when they are female, use longer speaking times, utilize more intimidating behavior, and embody a more power-oriented, authoritative model of leadership (Rosenthal, 1998a; Rosenthal, 1998b). Fridkin and Woodall (1998) indicate that men in the U.S. Senate to engage in "credit claiming" and blaming others for their failures more so than female Senators. These communicative behaviors reinforce beliefs that the political world requires masculine traits, and that men are the ones that possess those traits. For example, imagine a male candidate that often takes credit for successes, speaks for long periods of time, and interrupts others. This candidate might not be the most likeable person, but he appears strong and confident, traits that are often desirable in leaders. On the other hand, imagine a female candidate that is often interrupted, speaks less, and shares credit; she will appear less equipped to lead than the male counterpart. An important implication of this is that the negative traits associated with masculinity do not disqualify a man from office, but the negative traits associated with femininity often do.

Overall, the relevant available literature indicates that the content and form of political communication are often chosen as a response to these stereotypes, and those stereotypes shape how messages are perceived by voters. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993b) produced one of the most significant studies designed to systematically identify gender stereotypes and their influence on perceptions of political communicators at various levels of office. Their survey/experimental design revealed a clear bias for conventional male traits. Specifically, they found that the traits voters considered most important for national offices were traits considered to be masculine and associated more with male candidates. On the other hand, stereotypically feminine traits, such as being warm and caring, were not considered as important for national office, nor did they benefit women running for lower offices such as the state legislature or city council. Duerst-Lahti (2006) asserts that the American presidency in particular is an office that is distinctly gender-coded as masculine:

> Masculinity has been embedded through the traditions that dominate the presidency, but inside those traditions lie more implicit assumptions that make the presidential elections masculine space: the test of executive toughness, a preference for military heroes, the sports and war metaphors of debates, and more (p. 22).

Arguably, this overt preference in American culture for masculinity in government leaders can at least partially explain why women lag behind in electoral success.

The preference for masculine leadership traits and their association with men has mostly been studied using hypothetical or fake candidates, limiting our understanding of how trait preferences and gender operate with real candidates in real elections. The use of fake candidates in such studies may inflate the importance of gender if voters are not provided enough additional information. This is not to say that these studies' findings are incorrect; in fact, these studies do clearly demonstrate gender stereotypes play a role in selection of political leaders. However, the fact remains that real world conditions are impossible to replicate in an experimental setting. Real candidates come with baggage, good or bad, that influence how voters view them, how the media covers them, and, in turn, what role gender plays in perceptions of their leadership ability.

Furthermore, Bauer (2013 and 2015) argues that political science research on gender stereotypes is limited because of a lack of focus on what activates gender stereotypes. Bauer (2013) argues that while voters may hold stereotypes, they are not always activated. This means the effect of these stereotypes will vary. In fact, Bauer (2015a) found that variables such as attention to politics, political knowledge, and partisanship influence stereotype activation, and therefore the effect those stereotypes have on voters. Additionally, Bauer's (2015b) research found that activation of feminine stereotypes hurts female candidates but not male candidates, and that stereotypic advertising can reduce support for female candidates but increase support for male candidates. However, Mo (2015) found that voters primarily look at qualifications when selecting a candidate, but implicit and explicit gender stereotypes can influence vote choice.

Despite some limitations, the relevant literature suggests that the gender stereotypes discussed above are relevant both for those who meet and defy the stereotypes. These expectations affect various aspects of political communication, from style employed to communication form. Successful political candidates will address their stereotypical weaknesses and capitalize on strengths through communication. This task is often easier for male candidates since, by virtue of their

gender, they are assumed to have many leadership traits. However, they must also demonstrate they possess certain feminine traits such as being honest and compassionate. Female candidates, on the other hand, are presumed to have desirable traits associated with femininity, but they must work hard to communicate they also possess the masculine leadership traits required of a political officeholder. For example, counter-stereotypical messaging about female candidates has been found to help them overcome negative perceptions of their leadership ability (Bauer, 2017). This counter-stereotypical messaging includes emphasizing traditionally masculine traits, such as aggression and self-confidence, and focusing on issues men are perceived to be more competent at handling, like the military or national security. Research has shown that both men and women benefit from emphasizing traits of the opposite sex (Schneider, 2014), but women must also be careful not to violate gender expectations and appear too masculine. All of this is done through communication. For instance, Michael Dukakis was attacked effectively by the infamous "Willie Horton" ads alleging he was soft on crime, a criticism that characterized him as weak or not manly, and ultimately proved costly. Likewise, if a female candidate is seen as cold or lacking in compassion, she may scare away voters because she does not fit gendered expectations. In 2008 and 2016, Hillary Clinton faced criticism that she was cold, uncaring, and did not smile enough, all critiques tied to her violation of expected gendered behaviors. The stereotypes for both men and women must be considered when engaged in all manner of campaign and governmental communication, if for no other reason than these characteristics are habitually scrutinized. Similarly, the issues a candidate focuses on helps solidify their image as a candidate, and these too are gendered. Thus, the next section of this essay will explore the effect gender stereotypes have on issues discussed in politics.

Gender Stereotypes and Political Issues

Stereotypical expectations regarding the behavior of female and male political communicators heavily inform the issues candidates address and how they must address them. This is because gender stereotypes about candidates' traits influence how voters perceive their ability to handle issues. Over the past thirty years, numerous studies have concluded that such stereotypes encourage voters to believe that some issues are better handled and addressed by one sex over the

other (Alexander & Anderson, 1993; Dittmar, 2015; Dolan, 2005a; Dolan, 2008a; Kahn, 1994; Matland & King, 2002; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009; Thomas & Schroedel, 2007). Women are given more credibility to discuss and act on so-called "compassion issues" because they clearly link women back to conventional notions of nurturance and warmth. Often times these issues are also perceived as affecting women's roles in society (Niven & Zilber, 2001). Issues that are more typically associated with women include: education, health care, senior citizen issues, drug use, poverty, environmental protection, abortion, and reproductive rights (Banwart, Bystrom, & Robertson, 2003a; Banwart, Bystrom, Robertson, & Miller, 2003b; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Bystrom, Brown, & Fiddelke, 2013; Carroll & Fox, 2010; Davis, 2003; Dittmar, 2015; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Fridkin & Woodall, 1998; Palmer & Simon, 1996; Vigil, 2014). This focus on "compassion issues" likely explains why research indicates that women, regardless of political affiliation, are generally regarded as more liberal than their male counterparts (Carroll, 2010; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 2005b; Dolan, 2008a; Epstein, Niemi, & Powell, 1998; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Koch, 2000; Palmer & Simon, 1996; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009). However, Banwart's 2010 study found that women candidates were not perceived as better able to handle compassion issues than men; rather perceptions of male and female candidates' ability to handle compassion issues were statistically similar, indicating that women may be losing their advantage in this category.

On the other hand, masculine traits such as strength and assertiveness are often linked to perceptions that men are better able to handle certain issues. Generally these issues have fallen into two main categories; economic issues, such as taxes, unemployment, and budget, and military or security issues, such as crime, defense, national security, and international affairs (Banwart, et al., 2003a; Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Bystrom, Brown, & Fiddelke, 2013; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Davis, 2003; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Duerst-Lahti, 2010). These issues are also tied to stereotypical characteristics possessed by men. For example, issues like crime and national security require a leader that is strong and aggressive. International issues may also require a stern leader, and economic issues often require intelligence and reason. The traits required to handle all of these issues best are more often associated with masculinity. In fact, in many cases

feminine traits would be perceived as the wrong traits to handle these issues. Imagine the stereotypical emotional woman in charge of a military conflict, or a passive, overly-cooperative women dealing with foreign powers. These stereotypical images of female leadership have often been used to argue against a female president. However, it is important to remember that these hypotheticals do not easily translate into reality. Depending on a host of factors, including party, experience, and news media, real-world candidates may be more or less encumbered by gender stereotypes.

The perception that gender affects one's ability to handle political issues serves as another rhetorical constraint and opportunity for candidates. This is evidenced by what issues candidates talk about and how they frame them. At one time women candidates were more likely than men to talk about compassion issues, and male candidates were more likely to focus on economic and security issues. However, research over the past decade has found fewer differences in the issues most frequently discussed; the context of the election has more to do with the most talked about issues and those issues tend to be "masculine issues" such as the economy or national security. That said, some gender differences are still found in the lesser talked about issues. For example, an analysis of 2012 U.S. House candidates' websites found that female candidates more frequently mentioned compassion issues such as education and care for senior citizens (Banwart & Winfrey, 2013). Moreover an analysis of 2016 U.S. House advertisements found that women talked about economic issues more frequently than men, and men talked about the stereotypically feminine topic of senior citizen's issues more frequently (Winfrey & Schnoebelen, 2018). In these examples, it seems that candidates are attempting to overcome their stereotypical weaknesses through their campaign communication.

Research on stereotypes as they relate to political issues suggests that females and males should discuss certain issues in different ways so as to demonstrate they possess desirable traits and abilities not typically associated with their gender. An example is how Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders approached increasing the minimum wage during the 2016 Democratic presidential primary. Raising the minimum wage to $15 per hour was a frequent topic of speeches and debates, and gender stereotypes would suggest that the woman in the race would frame the issue in terms of caring for and assisting the poor, thus making Clinton look warmer and more nurturing. At the same time, stereotypes would dictate that her male rival, Bernie Sanders, would be more likely to frame the issue as sensible fiscal policy. However, framing in the 2016 election was the opposite; Clinton often spoke of the issue as practical economic policy and Sanders in terms of caring for the poor. This was likely because Clinton was attempting to demonstrate more masculine traits and seem more presidential, and Sanders was attempting to demonstrate the more feminine trait of compassion. This case provides one example of how candidates in a mixed-gender race might frame issues differently, but very little research has systematically evaluated issue framing by candidates and the relationship to gender; instead most research has simply examined which issues candidates talk about. Our understanding of gender and issue competence would be greatly enhanced by research that looked at how male and candidates frame so-called "masculine" and "feminine" issues and how voters evaluate that communication.

It is important to note that such stereotypes regarding political issues both help and hurt men and women. Fridkin and Kenny's (2009) analysis of gender stereotypes in U.S. Senate campaigns in 2006 revealed that because health care reform was a key topic, women were evaluated more positively by voters; specifically they were viewed as more caring since an issue gender coded feminine (health care) dominated the election. However, these same gender stereotypes hurt women's chances when running for the presidency because they are often seen as less able to handle military and international affairs. Scholars posit that such stereotypes stem from conventional notions about women's proper place in the private, rather than the public sphere, and thus, serves as a primary barrier to women's elective success (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005; Thomas & Schroedel, 2007). To counter this stereotype, women candidates often emphasize traditionally masculine traits, such as toughness and experience to demonstrate they can handle "masculine issues." For example, in her 2008 primary campaign, Hillary Clinton frequently ran ads focused on issues like the economy and the Iraq War and emphasized her leadership, experience in politics, and toughness (Banwart, Winfrey, & Schnoebelen, 2009). One such ad featured a red, ringing phone, followed by the narrator saying, "It's 3:00 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing. Something's happening in the world. Your vote will decide who answers that call. Whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military— someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world. It's

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3:00 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. Who do you want answering the phone?" ("Ringing Phone," 2008). This ad communicated Clinton's strength and preparedness to handle international affairs and military conflict, traits and issues essential for a president, but often associated with masculinity. This ad demonstrates the difficult terrain female candidates face as they must negotiate a double bind that positions their femininity in opposition to political leadership.

The Double Bind for Women

The previous research and examples make clear that gender stereotypes operate on some level in politics, and scholarship has examined the extent to which stereotypes influence elections. A preponderance of research in communication studies and related fields conclude that stereotypical beliefs do, in fact, create several discursive challenges for political communicators. These challenges are rooted in the stereotypical belief that leadership is masculine, discussed earlier. Eagly and Karau (2002) label the relationship between masculinity and leadership "role congruity." They argue that there is congruity between masculine gender roles and leadership roles but incongruity between femininity and leadership. Furthermore, gender roles come with descriptive and prescriptive norms that disadvantage women when it comes to leadership. Descriptive norms tell us how a group is perceived to behave; hence the assumption that women candidates are warm and caring and male candidates are assertive and strong. Prescriptive norms tell us how a group should behave, and when someone violates these norms they are viewed negatively. For example, women are expected to be kind and cooperative, but if a woman does not display those traits she is viewed negatively, often called a "bitch." The incongruity between femininity and leadership puts women in a double-bind because they must both demonstrate (masculine) leadership traits while at the same time meeting the prescriptive norms of femininity (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafara, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004). This double bind creates real-world challenges for women candidates and necessitates a change in communication. Bower (2003) notes that it is often impossible for women candidates to successfully demonstrate expected femininity and leadership because the stereotypes are polarized. Women in politics face a unique challenge when they must appear tough on crime or knowledgeable on na-

tional defense while also appearing warm and nurturing to voters. Han's (2003) research sets this stage succinctly:

> These barriers, which either deter women from running for office or keep them from winning if they do run, include stereotypes (political participation is not compatible with the traditional female role in society), career choice and preparation (traditional female professions, such as teaching and nursing, are incompatible with political aspirations), family demands (the public perception that women with children cannot handle the responsibility of both family and elected position), sex discrimination (lack of party support for women candidates), and the political system (money, campaign finance laws, party organization, winner-take-all electoral systems, and incumbency) (p. 169).

This double bind was discussed in detail in Kathleen Hall Jamieson's 1995 book, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership,* where Jamieson explains five distinct double binds faced by women: womb/brain, silence/shame, sameness/difference, femininity/competence, and aging/invisibility. Each of these put women in a lose-lose situation because they force women into one of two categories that then shapes expectations and evaluations of them. For example, the womb/brain dichotomy is one where women are seen either as intelligent or as bodies meant for sexual desire and motherhood. Each of Jamison's dichotomies can be applied to women in politics and provides a frame for understanding how political women must strategically communicate.

A few recent studies have challenged the conventional wisdom that gender stereotypes matter in political races. Dittmar's (2015) mixed-method study analyzing the views of political consultants with regard to how voters perceive and respond to gender stereotypes found that consultants believe that gender is a factor for voters, though not a "top-of-mind consideration," (p. 78). In other words, gender stereotypes do not necessarily determine vote choice but can certainly influence it. This indicates that gender is an important consideration, even though it is not always clear when and to what extent it matters in an election. Kathleen Dolan has questioned the effect of gender stereotypes in her recent work. Dolan's (2014) argument, based on survey data of voters who experienced races involving women running for Congress and governor, indicates that scholars and practitioners alike over-estimate the centrality of gender to voters in making decisions. Dolan does not argue here that gender does not matter; rather, she found that a) "Gender stereo-

types appear to be easing, and general attitudes about women's integration into politics are largely positive or neutral" (p. 89); and b) that while some gender stereotypes persist, "attitudes are generally not important to shaping concrete actions such as vote choice" (p. 89). Indeed, Dolan argues that should women increasingly run for office, stereotypes should not impede their elective success, though she does acknowledge that political party is a key indicator not just of voting behavior but also the existence of negative stereotypes impeding women's elective success (e.g., Democrats are more likely to support and be female candidates than are Republicans). Finally, Brooks (2013) provides a convincing argument based on his experimental design that gender stereotypes may be used strategically by both politicians and voters, but they may not matter in terms of tangible effects on political races. These research results indicated that gender stereotypes were used only minimally in evaluating candidates with experience, that men and women are equally penalized for emotional outbursts (both crying and anger), that women can sometimes benefit from the gendered expectations regarding toughness, and that knowledge gaffes did not disproportionately harm women over men. Brooks concluded that lower levels of female recruitment and lower levels of confidence or ambition among women may be the ultimate explanation for women lagging in political representation rather than negative gender stereotypes. However, while some research has found that the role of gender stereotypes may be lessening, these studies have not found evidence that stereotypes no longer exist or play no role in how candidates are perceived by voters. It is worth noting that Brooks' research focused only on legislative offices, and thus, when looking at stereotypes as applied to executive races (mayor, governor, president), results may vary. In fact, the level or type of office may be an important factor in understanding the role stereotypes play in voters' perceptions of male and female candidates. Legislative positions require a skill set that may be more compatible with gender stereotypes, namely cooperation. Moreover, women in these offices are less threatening because they are not the sole leader and decision maker. Gubernatorial races are more similar to the presidency in terms of executive leadership, but do not require as many of the masculine traits and issue expertise as the presidency. Given the important differences between levels and types of office, the next section explores the unique relationship between gender and the presidency.

The Case of the U.S. Presidency

Lawrence and Rose (2013) suggest that "the strategies a female candidate chooses and the success of those strategies may vary greatly depending upon the office she seeks, the candidates' own particular attributes, the partisan and ideological identity of her key constituents, and the political context in which she competes" (p. 29). No office has proven more challenging for women candidates than the U.S. Presidency. Heading in to Election Day 2016 many believed the U.S. would elect its first female president, Hillary Clinton, but many were shocked as results poured in and news outlets began calling the election for political novice Donald Trump. Gender played a particularly important role in 2016, and Hillary Clinton exemplifies the challenges women face when running for the presidency while Donald Trump demonstrates how closely tied masculinity is to the presidency (Bracic, Israel-Trummel, & Shortle, 2018; Cassese & Barnes, 2018; Kenski, 2018; Pahlke, Bigler, & Patterson, 2018; Sheeler, 2018; Valentino, Wayne, & Oceno, 2018)

While women leaders at all levels face challenges based on gender stereotypes, the presidency (and vice-presidency) present unique gendered expectations and barriers. As the highest executive office in the land, the presidency is a uniquely masculine office (Gutgold, 2006; Gutgold, 2017; Scheckels, Gutgold, and Carlin, 2012). Sheeler and Anderson (2013) acknowledge in their work that there is a deep resistance to women assuming the presidency. As has been previously discussed, leadership is stereotypically coded as a masculine trait. And as the President of the United States is arguably the single-most visible leader in the country, our expectations of this position have necessarily become gendered. Duerst-Lahti (2010) attempted to define this concept against the backdrop of the historic 2008 election. Her content analysis of newspapers' use of the terms and ideas associated with "presidential timber" revealed that the presidency is defined by and through hegemonic masculinity, problematizing Hillary Clinton's bid for the Democratic nomination since she would have been a historic first for a presidential candidate from a major party. Indeed, though analysis indicated that Clinton attempted to counter stereotypes by presenting herself as a tough competitor—a trait many reporters wrote about more so than her opponent Barack Obama—she "may have lost the election in the process in part because, culturally, we do not necessarily want tough women, even though we want a tough president"

(p. 40). Arguably, Clinton in part lost the 2016 general election for the same reason. Critics have argued Clinton was a flawed candidate, but all candidates have flaws. As scholars unpack the 2016 election, they are finding that Clinton's biggest flaw may have been that she was a woman attempting to win the most masculine job in politics (Carroll & Fox, 2018; Horn Sheeler, 2018; Kenski, 2018; Pahlke, Bigler, & Patterson, 2018; Valentino, Wayne, & Oceno, 2018). Furthermore, sexism among voters, particularly white voters, played an important role in the outcome (Bracic, Israel-Trummel & Shortle, 2018; Cassese & Barnes, 2018). Scheckels, Gutgold, and Carlin (2012) argue that in order for a woman to win the presidency she must be dynamic, but "cannot push that requisite dynamism too far, for, fourth, women who are being considered for the presidency must not be overly assertive or aggressive. Should they do so, they run the risk of being dismissed with the b____ word [bitch]" (p. 170).

Katz (2016) more recently argued in his critical analysis of gender and the American presidency that "US presidential politics has long been the site of an ongoing cultural struggle over the meanings of American manhood" (p. 1). Katz provides a thorough historical analysis of U.S. presidents since Nixon arguing that authority tied up in the presidency is akin to that of an alpha male, with numerous (mostly negative) implications for presidential behavior and campaigns. He argues, "because of the great symbolic power of the presidency, the president has come to reflect US national masculinity and is judged by whether he lives up to that standard… In other words, the electorate invests in the president both the *constitutional* authority to protect Americans and American interests, and the *symbolic* authority to define the appropriate masculine response to the threat of violence" (p. 35-36). Katz argues that campaigns function as sites wherein Americans vote to elect the person (man) who most fits this definition, which often marginalizes and discounts women by sheer virtue of their biological sex. Similarly, Sheeler and Anderson (2013) argue in their analysis of the presidency via the lens of "postfeminism" that the presidency and first family are inherently defined by hegemonic masculinity. This rhetorical analysis also revealed that postfeminist ideology complicates perceptions of women who run for president since this conceptual lens assumes that rights for women have been established regardless of the gendered symbolic construction of the American presidency. As evidence of their argument, they point to the myriad ways in which Hillary Clinton was vilified and 'disciplined' by

political pundits, journalists, and popular culture when she ran for the Democratic nomination in 2008. Anderson (2002) argues "…as long as the ceremonial and symbolic role of the U.S. president is tied up with traditional masculinity, women candidates will face unique rhetorical challenges when they run for that particular office" (p. 126).

In short, evidence suggests that gender stereotypes do inform how female and male candidates are perceived, especially in low-information elections (elections where voters know little about the candidates). The traits, behaviors, expectations and resulting constraints stemming from these stereotypes are obviously limiting for any person running for office, but they are particularly disadvantageous for female candidates, especially those running for the presidency. However, these challenges are, at least partially, known to candidates, allowing them to craft their communication to address these challenges. The next section examines how candidates navigate gender stereotypes in their strategic, political campaign communication.

Navigating Stereotypes: Feminine Style and Gender Adaptiveness

It is through communication that women and men seeking political office must communicate their leadership abilities, and, as the previous sections have demonstrated, gender stereotypes pose certain challenges and opportunities. Rhode (2003) asserts that while our culture now stresses that gender differences do not make a difference in most aspects of life, we do, indeed, have gendered expectations tied to our societal concept of political leadership. Many scholars who have studied political leadership have noted the constraints women face when in the public political sphere, particularly because women lack role models and are more likely to be constrained by gender stereotypes than their male counterparts (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Han, 2003). These stereotypes then lead to questions about the viability of women as political candidates and thus, constrain how they communicate with voters (Bystrom, 2003b).

The assumption that leadership is masculine demands a communicative response from all political communicators, but particularly from women. Bower (2003) argues that recognizing and adapting to how gendered stereotypes operate in the public political sphere is crucial for women seeking elective office in the United States. She notes,

For women to fully enjoy the possibilities of the public domain, they must be able to demonstrate their ability with masculine personality traits, since the male stereotypical traits dominate in most public venues. Therefore, a woman who runs for political office must display a balance of masculine and feminine traits in order to convey an 'acceptable' image (p. 108).

In other words, women must walk the line of the double bind by communicating they are masculine enough to lead without violating feminine gender role expectations. Male candidates have the benefit of assumed traits and abilities because of their gender, but in modern elections they also must demonstrate they have certain desirable traits that are often associated with femininity, such as honesty and the ability to cooperate. This section examines two primary ways that candidates use communication to navigate through and around the gender stereotypes they face: feminine style and gender adaptiveness.

Feminine Style

Since the start of American history women faced challenges when it came to political speech. Early feminist communicators faced the challenge of a culture that believed it was inappropriate for women to speak in public. Women's place was in the private sphere of the home, and the public sphere was a masculine space. Furthermore, the public sphere prioritized a masculine style of speech that was aggressive, competitive, and inherently unfeminine. Jamieson (1988) asserted that perceptions of such a style are inherently positive in a political context: "presumably driven by reason, the manly style was thought to be factual, analytic, organized, and impersonal. Where womanly speech corrupted an audience by inviting it to judge the case on spurious grounds, manly speech invited judicious judgment" (p. 76). To overcome this challenge early feminist communicators found the authority to speak in their traditional, private sphere roles. As Campbell (1989) outlined, feminine style is a unique rhetorical style characterized by the use of personal tone, personal experience, anecdotes, examples, and inductive reasoning. Feminine style is more personal than the traditional, masculine style of public speech, and relies on traditional feminine strengths. Campbell (1998) argues of suffragists, "…women speakers were expected to reaffirm their womanliness discursively at the same time that they demonstrated the ordinary rhetorical competencies—cogent

arguments, clarity of positions, offering compelling evidence, and responding to competing views—that were gender-coded as masculine" (p. 4). In a later text in which Campbell (1998) analyzed the feminine style operating in modern political settings, she set forth the primary tenants of this style succinctly:

In rhetorical terms, performing or enacting femininity has meant adopting a personal or self-disclosing tone (signifying nurturance, intimacy, and domesticity) and assuming a feminine persona, e.g. mother, or an ungendered persona, e.g. mediator or prophet, while speaking. It has meant preferring anecdotal evidence (reflecting women's experiential learning in contrast to men's expertise), developing ideas inductively (so the audience thinks that it, not the presumptuous woman, drew the conclusions), and appropriating strategies associated with women—such as domestic metaphors, emotional appeals to motherhood, and the like—and avoiding such "macho" strategies as tough language, confrontation or direct refutation, and any appearance of debating one's opponents. Note, however, that feminine style does not preclude substantive depth and argumentative cogency (p. 5).

Blakenship and Robson (1995) further clarify feminine style with their analysis of women's political discourse and articulate five characteristics of feminine style: political judgments are based on lived experiences, relationships and inclusivity are valued, power is used to "get things done," a holistic approach to policy, and women's issues are fore grounded.

A feminine style of communicating in political settings is something both men and women have utilized successfully in contemporary political contexts (Bystrom, 2003b; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Jamieson, 1988). This is wise, given the widespread use of electronically-mediated channels for political messages. Kathleen Hall Jamieson analyzed the effect television may have on the crafting and delivery of political messages. In her text *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*, she argues that a more feminine approach to mediated messages is desirable:

The intimate medium of television requires that those who speak comfortably through it project a sense of private self, unself-consciously self-disclose, and engage the audience in completing messages that exist as mere dots and lines on television's screen. The traditional male style is, in McLuhan's terms, too hot for the cool medium of

television (1988 p. 81).

Campbell (1998) agrees that traditionally feminine speech qualities, such as self-disclosure and use of narrative, are also those qualities that are best suited for television.

While political women and men today both utilize feminine style, it likely has different implications for men than women. For male candidates, it may serve to soften their image and assist in connecting with constituents. However, it may do more for female political figures; women, despite greater equality today, are still taught the "crafts" that Campbell (1989) argued brought about the feminine style. For instance, women are still taught how to be proper housewives and mothers, and they are still expected to fulfill these roles in addition to their public roles (Dow and Tonn, 1993; Kaml, 2000). As Eagly and Karau's (2002) work illustrates, women today are still expected to exhibit traditional feminine traits, or face social criticism. So, while men may utilize some elements of feminine style, the use by women is still strongly tied to their traditional feminine roles. Feminine style is one mechanism by which women political communicators can attempt to balance feminine and masculine traits, and navigate the double bind. Dow and Tonn's (1993) analysis of Ann Richards' rhetoric demonstrates the power of feminine style in modern political discourse by women. Richards relied heavily on personal experience in making political judgments. Her rhetoric relied on concrete examples to demonstrate the negative effect of Republican policies; she often told real and hypothetical stories to demonstrate the human consequences of policy. As Kaml (2000) highlighted, Richards utilized her experience as a mother and her common sense, rather than political reasoning, in making political judgments. This style of rhetoric served to connect Richards and her audience by explaining issues in terms average citizens could understand. Moreover, it articulated a feminine political philosophy that privileged personal experience. The use of feminine style is further demonstrated in the discourse of contemporary political speakers such as Virginia Brown-Waite and Diane DeGette who often merge the importance of private and public sphere concerns (Mayhead & Marshall, 2005).

Use of a feminine style has been shown to be useful for some political women who may have problems with perceptions of warmth and likeability. Several studies have analyzed Hillary Clinton's use of the elements of feminine style and have found that she has often been at least temporarily successful in using rhetoric to assuage expectations regarding her gender performance (Corrigan, 2000; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003). For instance, Kelly's (2001) rhetorical analysis demonstrated that Clinton was successful in establishing common ground in many of her speeches by accentuating her domestic roles as daughter, wife, and mother. Parry-Giles and Blair (2002) argue that Clinton's writing of *It Takes A Village* presented Hillary Clinton as relying on diverse resources of knowledge regarding the welfare of children (e.g. developing ideas inductively) rather than presenting herself as an expert at raising kids.

Modern male politicians are wisely tapping into the female voting bloc through various techniques including feminine style. For example, Carroll (2010) discovered that in 2008 Obama would bring up his grandmother's experiences and lessons as a form of narrative proof, would routinely bring up "women's issues" on the trail, and appeared on television shows with largely female audiences, like the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. This specific approach allowed Obama to step outside of conventionally male ways of communicating with voters (speeches, debates, political talk shows, etc.) and traditional modes of political proof (statistics or expert testimony used to establish expertise as a presidential candidate). This strategy alone likely did not win Obama the election, but adapting to a specific audience through the use of feminine stylistic elements certainly helped him connect with women voters as a male politician.

In sum, feminine style has been one strategy used by political women to overcome bias towards their participation in the public political sphere. It effectively turns the perceived disadvantages rooted in women's role in the private sphere and makes them an asset. Today, it provides a means for women to gain authority from their experience as women and privileges traditionally feminine ways of knowing. It also serves as a way for women to balance the gender double bind they face when communicating in the political world. Lastly, it provides a way for male candidates to soften their image and appeal to a broader audience in a mediated communication environment.

The effect of feminine style on politics and gender expectations is debatable and likely depends on how it is used. Dow and Tonn (1993) argue that feminine style may serve to feminize politics because it privileges traditionally feminine ways of knowing. The result of this could be to empower women to enter politics and for audiences to value

women's knowledge. Pierce (2000) explored the autobiography of Wyoming's first female governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross, and he argued that her use of feminine style demonstrated that all women had the knowledge to enter politics and women's experiences as wives and mothers are adequate qualifications for political office. Still, it is worthy to note, as Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (1996) do, that use of a feminine style by both men and women does not mean that political discourse is becoming feminized. As many of the studies previously presented discuss, politics is a gender-coded masculine space that requires appropriate adaptation. Use of the feminine style, however, indicates a savvy use of audience adaptation in a political context for men who wish to connect with female voting blocs and for women who wish to be taken seriously without being viewed as emasculating. Others have argued that reliance on feminine style can, depending on how it is used, serve to mask patriarchy and secure the consent of the oppressed. Gibson and Heyse (2010) highlight Sarah Palin's use of the style in her 2008 Republican National Convention speech and argue that her privileging of hegemonic masculinity in praising McCain and criticizing Obama undercut the liberating potential of feminine style. Instead, they argue, her speech serves to uphold traditional gender roles, devalue feminine values, and undermine women's role in politics. What's more, they argue the enactment of these qualities by a woman serves to naturalize hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the prevalence of feminine style by both sexes may demonstrate that it is no longer a strategy that uniquely benefits women as it did a century ago, or even twenty years ago. Rather, this style may simply be a fitting way of communicating given the modes of communication frequently used such as television and Internet. As the next section explains, male and female candidates today often adapt to the challenges posed by gender stereotypes through communication that emphasizes stereotypical strengths and addresses perceived weaknesses.

Gender Adaptiveness

Gender stereotypes held by voters and perpetuated by media affect the ways in which male and female political communicators present themselves. Research suggests that both men and women must meet yet also defy stereotypes associated with their gender. Communicating a balance of masculine and feminine traits and issues by candidates of both sexes is referred to as *gender adaptiveness* by Banwart and McKinney (2005) in their study of mixed-gender debates. They explain, "it appears that female candidates incorporate typically masculine attributes into their debate dialogue just as frequently as their male opponents, and male candidates incorporate typically feminine attributes in their debate dialogue just as frequently as their female opponents" (Banwart & McKinney, 2005, p. 363). In other words, men and women display both masculine and feminine traits and attempt to use communication to capitalize on their stereotypical strengths and compensate for their stereotypical weaknesses. For example, George W. Bush campaigned as a "compassionate conservative" in an attempt to demonstrate the feminine qualities he was not assumed to have. On the other hand, Sarah Palin campaigned as a tough-talking maverick to emphasize desirable masculine traits a woman is not assumed to have.

Stereotypes give men an edge since voters perceive them as apter for political leadership, but they must also be prepared to show a softer, more conventionally feminine, emotional side at times (i.e., when President Obama played "consoler in chief" after mass shootings) (Heim, 2013). Women must demonstrate they are worthy of elected office by presenting themselves as strong and independent, while not frightening or offending voters because they lack the appropriate amount of femininity. Buchanan (1996) argues that stereotypes associated with motherhood are particularly challenging in that they confine women to the private sphere, depriving women of a direct role in government. Within the realms of political communication and political science, we do know that men and women differ, at least perceptually, in their campaign strategies (Bystrom, 2004; Bystrom, 2016). Several studies have indicated women must balance the positive leadership traits and issues associated with both male and female styles of leadership effectively in order to gain elective success in any capacity, especially the U. S. presidency (Bower, 2003; Bradley & Wicks, 2011; Bystrom, 2004; Rosenthal, 1998b; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b).

Lawrence and Rose (2013) used the 2008 experiences of Palin and Clinton to re-evaluate the concept of "running as a woman." They offered suggestions based on historical and descriptive research for women who may run for national-level executive office. They argue that Clinton ran primarily as a feminist who could go toe-to-toe with her male counterparts, and championed many feminist issues, while Palin fully embraced her feminine roles of wife and mother

and stayed away from discussing 'feminine' issues. In short, each of these women "did gender quite differently" (p. 29). They indicate that women can be successful embracing traditionally feminine issues and traits, though recognize that this may be problematic in terms of the presidency. This finding was supported in part by Jones' (2016) content analysis that indicated Hillary Clinton altered her style of communication from feminine to masculine depending on political context. Furhtermore, Rhode and Dejmanee's (2016) study indicated Clinton used feminine stylistic elements by creating a sense of intimacy and interactivity between Clinton and her followers via Twitter.

While it has not always been the case, modern research of gender and political communication indicates that gender adaptiveness is the norm across various types of communication. Women must walk a delicate line in their communication and avoid activating negative, feminine stereotypes. The following section provides an analysis of gender adaptiveness and communication strategy in advertising, debates, and online communication.

Advertising.

Political advertising has long been a site of study with regard to gender and political messaging (Anderson, 2017; Bystrom, 2014; Strach, Zuber, Fowler, Ridout, & Searles, 2015). This is likely because of the prevalence and effectiveness of advertising. Numerous studies have found that political advertising is effective in swaying opinions and increasing knowledge (e.g., Kahn & Greer, 1994; Kaid, Fernandes, & Painter; Tedesco & Kaid, 2003; Valentino, Hutchings, & Williams, 2004), and the amount of political advertising has steadily increased (Overby, 2013). Early research found some important differences between men's and women's political advertising. For example, Kahn (1993) found that men and women emphasized different issues, with men discussing economic issues more and women focusing more on social issues; she also found that while both men and women discussed masculine traits more often than feminine traits, women actually stressed masculine traits more often than men. Other studies of candidates in the 1980s and early 1990s yielded similar results, commonly finding that women emphasized stereotypically masculine traits in an effort to overcome perceived shortcomings, women more often emphasized social issues while men more often emphasized economic and security issues, and women more frequently appeared in professional dress while men

were more likely to be seen in casual dress and with their families (Benze & Declercq, 1985; Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid, & Robertson, 2004; Dabelko & Hernson, 1997; Fox, 1997; Johnston & White, 1994; Robertson, Froemling, Wells, & McCraw, 1999). These differences demonstrate female candidates' attempts at gender adaptiveness; women demonstrated masculine traits and professional appearance in an effort to be seen as legitimate leaders while playing to their perceived strengths with issues associated with feminine abilities.

More recent research has found that male and female candidates are more similar than dissimilar in the content of their political advertising (Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Kaid, 2012; Lee, 2014; Winfrey & Schnoebelen, 2018). Bystrom's (2003a, 2014) longitudinal analysis of political advertising indicates few differences exist in how men and women use ads. Men and women both used negative or attack ads, and both groups were similar over time in terms of the issues most frequently discussed, styles used in the ads, and image traits emphasized. However, this research also indicates that male and female candidates often use ads to emphasize the traits they might perceptually be lacking (i.e., a female politician using ads to stress toughness and aggressiveness).

Recent research still finds some gender differences in political advertising content and strategies. For example, Bystrom (2003b) found that women's ads were significantly more likely to attack their opponent's character, which is noteworthy in that is contrasts with stereotypes regarding women's warmth and nurturance, but could be related to the fact that women are more likely to be challenging an incumbent, male candidate. This study also indicated that when attacks were made, it was more frequently done by a narrator or a surrogate, separating the female candidate from the attack. Winfrey and Schnoebelen's (2018) analysis of 2016 Congressional advertising found similarities in the most frequently discussed issues and traits, but differences in some of the less frequently mentioned ones. For example, they found that, contrary to previous research, male candidates more frequently discussed senior citizen's issues. Traits such as toughness, aggressiveness, and intelligence were also emphasized more often by women, likely in an attempt to overcome gender bias. Lee's (2014) experimental study indicated that positive ads are more likely to emphasize gender stereotypes, while negative ads feature messages that stress opposite-sex stereotypes. For example, ads by men might

feature story lines that emphasize their warmth and nurturance. Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" ad establishes his patriarchal warmth via heartwarming scenes of a young couple getting married, citizens buying new houses, and people raising American flags ("America is Back," 1984). Similarly, ads by women may include features that convey strength and assertiveness, as in Hillary Clinton's previously cited "It's 3am" ad. Fridkin & Woodhall (1998) note that both men and women will often emphasize the traits stereotypically associated with the opposite sex. For example, Bystrom (2003a) found that women often emphasize strength and toughness in political ads. Furthermore, the public reacts more positively to women who emphasize both masculine and feminine traits, and use less emotionally-driven political ads (Bystrom, 2004).

Research on presidential campaigns indicates advertising should be strategic and it can help candidates overcome, or capitalize on, gender stereotypes. Men are supposed to be decisive, so it was quite purposeful (and effective) when the George W. Bush campaign ran a commercial of a wind-surfing John Kerry whose vessel was "flip flopping" in the wind ("Historical Campaign Ad," 2004). Similarly, the McCain/Palin campaign ran an ad entitled "The Original Mavericks" which presented the ticket as individualistic pioneers of original thinking and action, enhancing the perception of this masculine appeal for McCain and providing a masculine quality to Palin ("Original Mavericks," 2008). McCain/Palin's ad strategy was, at least in part, an effort to counter negative gender stereotypes since Palin was only the second woman in history to serve as her major party's nominee for vice president. Hillary Clinton attempted to demonstrate she possessed the masculine traits and expertise necessary to be commander-in-chief in her 2008 primary ads. She most frequently emphasized leadership, experience, being a fighter, action oriented, and toughness, and while the stereotypically feminine issue of healthcare was the issue most often found in her ads, the masculine issues of the economy and war came in close behind (Banwart, et al., 2009). Crafting ad messages that directly tap into these stereotypes make the ads more impactful and help enhance or detract from candidate success. What all of this research shows is that men and women seem to agree on what issues and traits must be emphasized in advertising, but they also use advertising to address doubts or bias associated with gender stereotypes. Where our knowledge is lacking is in the effectiveness of gender adaptiveness in advertising. The studies cited exam-

ine ad content, either quantitatively or rhetorically, but they do not tell us which content is most effective. Studies that explore what types of content is most effective for male and female candidates would greatly expand scholarly knowledge and its applicability to political practitioners. For example, Fridkin, Kenney, and Woodall (2009) examined negative advertising and found that male candidates received more negative evaluations when they attacked a female candidate than a female did for attacking a male opponent. Krupnikov and Bauer (2014) examined the effect of negative campaigning and found that female candidates were punished most when they were seen as the instigator of negative campaigning.

Debates.

The role of gender in political debates has been examined, but only a few studies have been conducted in this area, likely due to a lack of opportunity since women are still underrepresented in elections likely to have debates, such as president, governor, and U.S. Senate. The limited research in this area has found few gender differences in debate style and content. One of the earlier studies (Edelsky & Adams, 1990) of gender in debates found some differences in turn taking and treatment by moderators such as men did more turn-stealing and women offered more "backchanneling," or short interruptions that supported, corrected or expressed agreement. Additionally, men's introduction of topics were more frequently followed-up on by moderators, and men often received more favorable treatment from the moderators including extra turns, follow-ups, and more time. However, more recent research has found few gender differences.

Banwart and McKinney's (2005) analysis of Senate and gubernatorial debates revealed that both men and women used negative attacks, similar persuasive appeals, and approximately the same incumbent and challenger strategies, though some differences were identified based on the political party and level of office (e.g., female Republicans stressed their own accomplishments and used anecdotes more than male Democrats). Furthermore, both sexes were found to emphasize masculine traits using a feminine style. The authors felt this might have been strategic; they "propose that when female and male candidates meet face-to-face on the debate stage, both seem mindful of gendered stereotypes and approach their debates by generating a dialogue of *gendered adaptiveness*" [italics in original] (p. 363).

There has been very little opportunity to investigate gen-

der and debates at the vice-presidential and presidential level. Geraldine Ferraro's participation in the 1984 vice-presidential debate against George H.W. Bush was the first opportunity to study gender differences in debate performance at that level. Sullivan's (1989) research found some important differences in how Ferraro and Bush framed their responses. She argues Bush used masculine sports metaphors and male camaraderie, which likely highlighted Ferraro's difference and outsider status. Bush also patronized or outright dismissed Ferraro. On the other hand, Ferraro used more references to personal experience and contact with voters, common elements of feminine style. The next opportunity to examine gender difference in vice-presidential debates did not come for 24 years, when Sarah Palin debated Joe Biden in 2008. Despite this rare opportunity little research has been published on the debate performance itself; most research has looked at the effects of viewing the debate (e.g., McKinney & Banwart, 2011; McKinney, Rill & Watson, 2011; Warner, Carlin, Winfrey, Schnoebelen, Trosanovski, 2011). Analysis of the communication strategies in the vice-presidential debate revealed both Biden and Palin acclaimed more than they attacked or defended, Palin acclaimed more than Biden, and Biden attacked and defended more than Palin (Benoit & Henson, 2009). However, these findings tell us little about gender since they likely say more about the specific race and candidates, and analysis of one debate is not enough to make generalizations about gender differences in debates.

The chance to examine gender in presidential primary or general election debates is a true rarity, making it difficult to generalize about gender differences. However, research has shown many similarities and a common strategy of gender adaptiveness. Greenwood and Coker's (2016) analysis of candidates in 2008 and 2012 primaries, which included Hillary Clinton and Michelle Bachman, found a complex relationship between gender, political party, and rhetorical choices, specifically in discussions of war. They also found evidence to support the idea of gender adaptiveness in debates. For example, Clinton and Bachman used personal experiences more frequently than male candidates, but that relationship was complicated by party.

McKinney, Davis, and Delbert (2009) analyzed the 23 Democratic primary debates of the 2008 election cycle and found few gender-related differences; rather, most differences in debate style were related to the frontrunner or contender status of the candidates. Their examination of the

final three debates, which included only Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, found few differences in debate style. Obama and Clinton used attacks similarly and focused on the same issues. However, this analysis also supported the idea of gender adaptiveness. Clinton frequently countered negative gender stereotypes by emphasizing her past performance and accomplishments as well as being aggressive and a fighter. On the other hand, Obama countered masculine stereotypes by emphasizing his traits of sensitivity, understanding, and cooperation. In other words, both candidates attempted to counter negative stereotypes associated with their gender and displayed positive stereotypes associated with their gender.

In sum, existing research on gender and debate style is severely lacking. The research that does exist suggests that there are few gender differences, but candidates use a strategy of gender adaptiveness. We hope that future research will capitalize on the availability of non-presidential debates online to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of gender and debates while taking into consideration the party and status (e.g., incumbent, challenger) of the candidates. This research would be an excellent addition to existing research methods examining debates' effects. Furthermore, research that tested the effectiveness of debate style would round out our understanding of gender and debates. For example, studies that used Real Time Response measures could help isolate specific communications' effectiveness or ineffectiveness. This type of research paired with qualitative methods such as focus groups or interviews could deepen our understanding of how and why certain communication is or is not effective.

Online communication.

Early research on candidate websites focused on Congressional representatives found that both men and women emphasized traits associated with the opposite sex on their websites, likely in an effort to overcome negative stereotypes (Fridkin and Woodall, 1998). Analysis of 2000 and 2002 congressional candidates' websites found more similarities than differences (Dolan, 2005a); men and women tended to have the same issue priorities, especially when looking at the issues most central to their campaigns. However, women in 2000 more frequently made health care a top concern, and in 2002 women more often mentioned abortion and women's issues though those issues were not central to their campaign. Dolan's study also tested the influence of opponent's

gender, finding that both sexes focus on similar issues on their websites regardless of their opponent's sex. However, women that ran against men were more likely to discuss agriculture and defense, likely to overcome negative stereotypes, more likely to discuss women's issues, and more likely to play up positive stereotypes. More recent research has found some difference in the discussion of women's issues on candidate websites. Herrick's (2016) study of state legislative candidates found many similarities in website content. However, the study found women emphasized women's issues more often than men, and men running against women emphasized these issues more than men running against men. Among U.S. congressional candidates in 2000 and 2002, men were more likely to discuss women's issues when running against another man (Dolan 2005b). Despite this, Dolan's (2008b) later research of U.S. Congressional candidates found that men did not pander to women voters by focusing on women's issues; rather, men, regardless of their opponent's sex tend to pay relatively limited attention to these issues. Analysis of 2012 candidates for the United States House of Representatives found that the traits candidates discussed on their websites were more tied to electoral context than gender (Banwart & Winfrey, 2013). Both sexes tended to emphasize similar character traits and most frequently focused on stereotypically masculine traits such as being aggressive and action-oriented. In all, candidates tended to emphasize the same issues and traits, and those tended to align with masculine stereotypes.

In addition to websites, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have become an important part of campaign messaging. Given that 2008 was the first presidential election to include broad use of social media, little research has been conducted on its content and effectiveness as related to candidates' gender. McGregor and Mourão's (2016) network analysis of Twitter conversations regarding state-wide offices found that women candidates were more central to the conversations about themselves and their opponents. Female candidates had a higher reply rate than male candidates, a finding that may be related to the stereotype that women are more relational. Future research will likely delve deeper into the content of candidates' social media use and how they are talked about on social media.

Research of online political communication is relatively new, and the topic of study is constantly changing, posing unique challenges to researchers. However, online communication will play an increasingly important role in political campaigns, making it an important site for scholarly research. The content and effectiveness of online communication should continue to be examined, but new techniques are also needed. Much existing research attempts to apply the same analytical tools used for advertising or debates, but the unique, interactive nature of online communication and the variety of outlets (e.g., websites, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram) call for a more tailored approach.

Conclusion

This essay demonstrates two important findings: a) gender stereotypes still play a role in how candidates communicate and how that communication is perceived, and b) there is a need for more research if we are to understand and overcome gender stereotypes in the political arena. As Bystrom (2004) noted more than a decade ago, "compared to women political candidates, women elected to political office have received much less attention from researchers" (p. 447). While there are many studies featured in this review, it is important to remember that this represents a chronological span of four decades. By comparison to other areas of study in political communication, scholarly focus on gender is still severely lacking. Additionally, while women's place in society has improved since the 1980's there are many ways in which women are still viewed through the lens of gender stereotypes, and political women face unique challenges. As Schneider and Bos (2014) found, "political women" are viewed much more negatively than women generally, and they are often seen as lacking both desired feminine traits and desired leadership/masculine traits. Many voters know relatively little about the candidates running in non-presidential races, whether that be because they lack time, interest, or some other reasons. This lack of information increases reliance on stereotypes. Petty and Cacioppo (1984) explain this phenomenon in their Elaboration Likelihood Model by outlining the use of the peripheral route of cognitive processing that is often relied upon when motivation to think complexly about an issue is low; in this situation mental shortcuts, like stereotypes, are used to make judgements.

The historic 2008 presidential race reminds those who study political communication and gender of the importance this factor still has in terms of influence on the communication process. As Sheckels (2009) has noted:

All political campaigns teach lessons, but some do so

more than others. I would suggest that Hillary Rodham Clinton's quest for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination is one of the richest in recent history insofar as it reinforces what we know about political campaigns and sheds considerable light on how gender still affects such campaigns (p. 211).

Like 2008, the 2016 election was another landmark election, with Hillary Clinton emerging as the first woman ever to win a major party's nomination for president in the United States. Clinton's 2016 campaign provides a unique opportunity for researches because she had vast political experience and lost to a political novice. We suggest that scholars interested in political communication and gender examine Clinton's communication as well as communication about her by media, opponents, and voters. Studying Clinton will provide the first opportunity to examine the influence of candidate gender at the level of president, but it is only one case. It will take many more women reaching the level of presidential contender before scholars can make generalizable claims about female candidates at that level.

While higher level races generally garner more attention from scholars and the news media, research at the Congressional, state, and local level should be conducted to understand effective and ineffective campaign messaging for male and female candidates. While much recent research has found little gender difference in content at the Congressional level, slowly increasing numbers of women running for those offices may affect how candidates communicate in speeches, advertising, debates, and online. Numerous studies have examined the content of campaign communication; few studies have explored the effect of those communications. Additional scholarly research is needed to understand whether the tactics used by men and women are effective. This would require more complicated research designs, similar to those employed by Brooks (2013) and Dolan (2014), but could provide a wealth of information that would be relevant not only to scholars but also to practitioners. This work has been started by scholars like Bauer (2014, 2017) who found that the use of stereotypes to evaluate female candidates depends on context and communication tactics, and that women are evaluated more positively when they emphasize masculine leadership traits. Furthermore, additional research is needed of lower level races such as state-wide or local elections. Gender stereotypes are most prevalent when voters have less information about a candidate, and state and local races are often among the most low-information elections. These elec-

tions are more likely to include less experienced campaign strategist, which may translate into gender differences in campaign messaging and effect of messaging.

Our analysis revealed that research on gender in political debates is woefully lacking, just as Banwart and McKinney (2005) found over a decade ago. In order to study gender in political debates, researchers must look beyond presidential races, which is the focus of most studies of political debates. Women are running for the Senate, House of Representatives, governorships, and state legislatures, and often these candidates participate in political debates. Historically accessing these debates for analysis was rather difficult since these debates often take place on local television stations or are not aired on television at all. Today many of these debates are accessible online, either through the television stations' website, candidates' websites, or YouTube. Political debates are an extremely important part of a campaign, and that they have been proven to increase voter knowledge and sway voters to support a candidate. Because of this, debates should be a greater portion of gender related political communication research. Additionally, the form and expectations associated with debate are often tied to traditionally masculine behaviors and speaking styles, so studying how women negotiate the double bind in debates as well as how voters view women and men in debates could reveal a great deal.

The channels by which politicians and candidates communicate with the public are changing. As such, attention should be paid to how these channels may alter how gender is communicated and communicated about. Kaid (2012) rightly argues that web-based media, including candidate websites and YouTube channels demands scrutiny in general and with regard to gender specifically. Cook (2016) believes that social media is under-studied with specific regard to how it may act to perpetuate or combat gender stereotypes. Indeed, candidate websites and social media made up a small percentage of the topics featured in this review. Accordingly, we encourage scholars to focus on how existing and new forms of media affect how we communicate gender in political contexts. Most existing research on how candidates communicate online has looked at the content of candidate websites using similar types of analysis to advertising research. While this method is important, it would also be fruitful to develop new forms of analysis that are tailored to the uniqueness of websites. This might include analysis of website traffic, interactivity, and design, to name a few. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have become

staples of most political campaigns, and new tools such as Instagram and SnapChat are constantly being developed and adopted. Each of these requires scholarly analysis. It is important to note that each social media site is unique, and it is likely campaigns use them differently. Rather than looking at social media as a whole, research should examine content and effect of campaign communication on each medium. Social media research also allows scholars to examine voters. Future research should explore how the public interacts with or about candidates on social media.

Our analysis reveals that while scholars who study political communication scholarship and gender have utilized a variety of methods, greater attention to under-represented methodologies would enrich this discussion. Qualitative research using focus group and interview-based data make up only approximately three percent of studies featured here, and mixed-method approaches were used in less than five percent of studies. An attempt to flesh out our descriptions and explanations regarding gendered behavior in political communication would certainly be valuable, and triangulating results through mixed methods approaches might add a deeper dimension to such a complex subject matter as gender in politics. Content analysis and survey research make up a large portion of gender-related political campaign research, but studies that look at message effect are lacking. More research exploring how candidates' messages are evaluated, whether or not they are effective, and how they make the audience feel about a candidate is needed. Furthermore, effects research in political communication *about* the candidates is needed, including effects of news coverage, humor and entertainment programs, and social media discussion.

Finally, scholarship that is more inclusive of diversity is also in order. In an editor's note in a Quarterly Journal of Speech edition focusing on the changing political landscape in 2016, Mary Stuckey (2017) argued, "these essays collectively point to the ways in which our current politics are both more open and more closed; more communal and more individualized; more inclusive and yet dismayingly exclusionary" (p. 5). Melody Rose (2013) echoed these sentiments in her work, as well, when she argued, "Understanding…the interactivity of office, party, gender, and ethnicity will continue to be the frontier in our research" (p. 261). Thus, we encourage the scholarly community to focus not just on gender, but the intersection of gender and other major identity markers as they further complicate and enrich the field of political communication. In fact, some scholars are con-

tributing to this growing area of research. Several studies have looked at the intersection of political party and gender (e.g., Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Brians 2005; Bystrom, et al., 2005; Kind & Matland, 2003; Koch, 2000, 2002; Norrander, 2003; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009). Others have examined the intersections of gender and race (e.g., Bedolla, 2014; Bejarano, 2013; Casellas, 2011; Major & Coleman, 2008; Philpot & Walton 2007; Stokes-Brown, 2010), and gender and sexual orientation (e.g. Doan & Haider-Markel, 2010; Golebiowska, 2001, 2006; Haider-Markel, 2010; Haider-Markel & Moore Bright, 2014). The opportunity to examine the campaigns of individuals with these and other intersectional identities has been limited by the number of candidates (openly) holding these identities. However, opportunities continue to grow. In 2018, Americans elected the most diverse incoming group of U.S. House representatives in history; their campaigns and those in the future provide rich opportunities to deepen our understanding of identity, stereotypes, and campaigns.

Gender focused political communication research has only been a focus of scholars since the 1980s, and much has been learned since that time; much has changed since that time. Candidates have long faced stereotypes that influence how voters view their character and ability to handle issues. Those stereotypes have influenced how men and women must communicate in their campaign messaging. These stereotypes effect women candidates greatly because expectations for femininity are counter to those seen as necessary for political leadership, and this fact creates a difficult double bind for female candidates that must be negotiated through communication. Additionally, years of research exploring specific types of political communication, such as advertisements and debates, have shown fewer gender differences as time has gone on. This research has made clear that a strategy of gender adaptiveness is necessary for male and female candidates, and use of feminine rhetorical style has been one strategy for adapting. Despite this wealth of knowledge, gender dynamics are constantly in flux and communication technologies are constantly changing, providing the need for scholarly analysis. The 2016 presidential election was a landmark election because of Hillary Clinton's Democratic nomination, her frontrunner status, and her ultimate defeat and will be an excellent case for scholarly analysis. While Americans did not get their first female president in 2016, the results have motivated a record number of women to consider running for elected office in the future (Ripley, 2017).

We hope that the number of women running at every level of government increases and provides new opportunities to study gender and political communication.

Acknowledgement

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