LOOKING THE PART: HOW APPEARANCE AND MEDIA COVERAGE AFFECT SUCCESS IN THE MASCULINE WORLD OF POLITICS

by

OLIVIA BARTRUFF

A THESIS

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Olivia Bartruff for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Journalism and Communications to be taken June, 2106

Title: Looking the part: How appearance and media coverage affect success in the
masculine world of politics

Approved: _____

Kim Sheehan

This thesis examines the role of appearance in candidate electability, particularly
for women who entre the male-dominated political realm. It primarily studies the
national political arena and inspects how the media influence the political discussion
through appearance-based coverage. This thesis was mainly an analysis of recent
political science and media studies literature as well as primary news and new media
sources. The literature findings were supplemented by a study on the effect of outfit to
public perceptions of candidates. This thesis combines the appearance-political research
with the appearance-media research to present a holistic picture of the role of
appearance in the political landscape and revealed the importance of media to
appearance-based judgments.

Research review revealed that split-second appearance-based character
judgments of political candidates are indicative of actual election outcomes, particularly
determinations of competence. Male faces are often rated as more competent than
female faces, indicating a bias toward masculinity in political candidates. However, the
study conducted for this thesis showed that female candidates may not be inherently at a

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disadvantage because of their femaleness, regardless of the femininity of their outfit. It also found that a suit does not necessarily make a candidate more electable. While the strength of inherent bias against female candidates is not conclusive, the media's discussion of female candidate appearance disadvantages women vying for political office and discourages them from running.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank Professor Kim Sheehan for her patient guidance since the beginning of the thesis process, her constant kindness and humor and for being a role model of intelligence and poise. My college experience would be undoubtedly altered and diminished if it were not for her friendship. Thank you to Professor Chris Chavez for fielding all of my questions with endless care and thoughtfulness. He has been an invaluable source of encouragement and counsel as I go through the thesis process and try to envision life after college. Thank you to Professor Tim Williams for agreeing to be part of my committee and taking the time and energy to help me cross the finish line.

Thank you to my parents for making college an easy option and for allowing me to come back for a gratuitous year and finish in style.

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Introduction

From split-second interactions people make decisive character judgments. These judgments, based solely on appearance, range from the obviously appearance-based cues, such as attractiveness, beauty and sexiness, to the complex – competence, trustworthiness, friendliness. These inferences can be so powerful that first impressions override additional, more relevant information (Antonakis & Dalgas, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that, in many settings important, positive inferences are based largely on attractiveness, giving attractive people an easier path to success (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972; Boyatzis, Baloff & Durieux, 1998; Reinhard, Messner & Sporer, 2006). By 9th grade, children know that attractiveness is more indicative of popularity than grades, especially for female students (Boyatzis, Baloff & Durieux, 1998). While attractiveness may be a strong factor in popularity ratings and work-place success, appearance-based inferences of assertiveness, friendliness and competence, which contribute to a perception of overall political demeanor, are more important when it comes to the success of political candidates (Todorov et al., 2005; Chiao, Bowman & Gill, 2008).

A candidate's appearance may have long-lasting effects on the public's perception of him or her, but the media's focus on candidate appearance figures more prominently into public perception and candidate success. Several articles find that the media's focus on appearance negatively affects candidate ratings, particularly if the attention is negative (Hayes, Lawless and Baitiner, 2014; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2011; Lake et al., 2010). In addition, when the media focus on a candidate's appearance they are taking time away from issues-related coverage that the candidate might have

otherwise received and drawing the public into an appearance-based discussion rather than an issues-based discussion. The way the media discuss political candidates and political issues frames the ways in which the American public views these people and issues.

Appearance-based and gendered coverage for women is more frequent and extensive than for men (Miller, Peake and Boulton, 2010; Conroy et al., 2015), perpetuating the notion that politics is a male enterprise. This focus on appearance not only damages female candidates' ratings (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Lake et al., 2010;), but also discourages women from running for elected positions because they want to avoid the biased attention (Lawless & Fox, 2012). This disproportionate focus on female candidate's physical appearance contributes to the continuation of politics as male-dominated, potentially exacerbating the lack of equal representation in the U.S. government. This focus on appearance may be even more prevalent in new media (Conroy et al., 2015). It is therefore increasingly important that regulated, traditional media sources seek to produce unbiased and issues-based news.

The power of the media to influence public opinion and dictate what issues are important is explained by cultivation theory, which states that people will adopt as their reality the most recurrent, common messages on television (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). For example, if a local news station is covering crime as their primary news category, people watching local news will have a higher fear of crime and believe that crime is an important problem in their city (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Gross & Aday, 2003). Likewise, if the media cover Donald Trump at a higher percentage than any other republican presidential candidates, voters will believe he is the most significant

candidate or if the media excessively discuss women's appearance, people will believe appearance is an important aspect of a female candidates' electability.

Structure and Methods

This thesis sets out to examine how appearance affects politics in the United States and how this might be contributing to the male dominance of American politics. Part one will delineate the basics of the male-framed political atmosphere. Part two will examine how appearance affects voter perceptions of candidates for U.S. elections and how those perceptions translate into actual voter decisions. Part three will explore how the media's focus on physical appearance affects this phenomenon and how, ultimately, these factors may be disadvantaging women in the political sphere and discouraging their participation. The goal of this thesis is to provide insight into how appearance affects political success and to remind the media of their power in affecting political outcomes and of their responsibility to issue fair coverage that presents women as equally competent and equally human as their male counterparts. The import placed on ratings and capital by the media is causing them to focus on the entertainment aspect of political debates and campaigns, favoring those who contribute to higher ratings. This is, in some ways, allowing more openly sexist comments. It is yet to be seen whether these help women confront issues head-on and overcome them, or whether they further disadvantage women trying to break into the political sphere.

This thesis consists mainly of review of recent political science and media studies literature. While I read research from the 1970s through 2000 I rarely cited these studies because of the rapidity with which the political sphere evolves and the changes gender equality has underwent within the last 10 years. This older body of research is

tempting to include because of the extremity of the findings concerning gender bias facing women in the media, but it is only truly relevant as a barometer of change. Most research and literature I included is, therefore, almost exclusively from within the last 10 years.

I also examined primary media sources, which served as case studies primarily to enhance findings from the academic literature. The examples from the mass media and Internet resources are in many ways more powerful in illuminating the current media and political atmosphere as it pertains to women than are numbers and statistics.

Women in politics

While women are gaining more powerful positions in U.S. society, the political arena remains a starkly male enterprise. Politics is not simply a world dominated by men, it is a hyper-masculine arena in which political candidates try to prove their manliness and emasculate one another to demonstrate their superiority. Reportedly, when journalists were pressing Lyndon Johnson on why the United States was at war in Vietnam, President Johnson unzipped his pants, drew out his penis and declared, 'this is why!'" (Dallek, 1998). A less graphic version of these antics continues in the 2016 election. Marco Rubio made a joke at the expense of Donald Trump's reputedly small hands, saying, "You know what they say about men with small hands? You can't trust them" to which Trump responded "He referred to my hands – 'if they're small, something else must be small.' I guarantee you there's no problem" (Krieg, 2016). A political environment in which calling into question an opponent's masculinity is sufficient means for questioning his political abilities is unlikely to be a friendly environment for women.

Data from the Inter-parliamentary Union places the United States 95th in the world for percent of women in the national legislature (Table 1). One hundred out of 545 members of the 114th US congress are women – less than a fifth. In United States history there has been a grand total of thirty-nine female governors, with the first elected in 1925. At the time this thesis is being written there are only six female governors. The higher rate of male candidates in elected political positions in the US perpetuates the perception of politics as male, while the reverse is also true. Lawless & Fox (2006) found that almost a quarter of the US populace thinks men are better suited

for political office than women. Considering this data, it is understandable that potential female candidates are twice as likely as men to believe their odds of winning are "very unlikely" (Lawless & Fox, 2012). Women are, unsurprisingly, more reluctant to run for political office, or to even consider running. They are 16% less likely to consider running than men and far less likely to take any of the steps necessary to put forward a political campaign. For instance they are 30% less likely to have discussed raising money or discussed running with family and friends and almost 40% less likely to have investigated how to get their name on the ballot (Lawless & Fox, 2012).

There is even a division in the language used to talk about certain political issues with certain issues coined "female issues". These issues are generally problems that are associated with social issues and care-taking – i.e. child care, unemployment, welfare, poverty, education, women's and minority rights, gun control, drug abuse and the environment – while "male issues" focus on financial issues, negotiating and protecting – foreign policy, defense, economics and finance, agriculture and crime (Jalalzai, 2006). This gendered coding of politics pervades how people process political information. Hitchon, Chang & Harris (1997) found that people remembered the ads of female candidates who focused on family and personal appearance while they remembered the men's ads that focused on the political campaign situation. Gervais & Hillard (2011) even suggest that Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin are "violating tradition gender roles because they are female leaders in a stereotypically masculine domain." However, it is hard to pin down the predominate stereotypes for female politicians. Trait associations for these women are nebulous and androgenizing. Schneider & Bos (2014) found that female politicians are seen as half as feminine as non-politician females and are not

associated with any of the positive "female" traits, yet they are also not associated with positive "masculine" traits. Male politicians are rated as significantly higher in all positive "masculine" traits – including three times higher for "leader", and over three times higher for "commands respect" than female politicians. Female politicians are seen as nearly 90% less gentle and loving than "women" and over 70% less caring and compassionate (Schneider & Bos, 2014). This lack of a clear understanding of female politicians – likely because of the dearth of successful female politicians – leaves more influence to the few visible female politicians and media portrayals thereof.

While there has been an improvement over the years in how the media treat female candidates, differential treatment of men and women endures, perpetuating the bias toward men in the political arena. Studies from the 1970s through the 1990s show that female candidates actually received less airtime than their male counterparts, but this has recently changed (Laverly, 2013; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010). This violation of the fair access regulations has since been corrected (Federal Communications Commission [FCC]). Between 1998 and 2000, there was a turn-around in terms of the amount of newspaper coverage for men and women, largely caused by Hillary Clinton's prominence (Bystrom et al., 2004). Despite her celebrity, the media did not hesitate to attribute Clinton's success to her relationship to her husband, Bill Clinton (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009).

Several studies show that the media continue to treat women less formally than men and place greater emphasis on their opinions about "female issues" (Jalalzai, 2006, Conroy et al. 2015). The media also continue to place less import on women's past achievements and positions of power and focus more on their appearance (Jalalzai,

2006; Conroy et al., 2015). This phenomenon does not seem to be improving. Bystrom et al. (2004) found articles that mentioned female candidate's sex went up from 8% in 1998 to 10% in 2002, while for men only 1% of articles mentioned their sex in each year. Nine percent of articles mentioned women's marital status in 1998, 12% in 2000 (an increase that is likely attributable to Hillary Clinton alone) and 8% in 2002, whereas for men their marital status was mentioned in 3% of articles in 1998 and 1% in 2000 and 2002. A study examining the only two female vice presidential candidates in US history found twice as many newspaper articles discussed the female candidates' families as those of their male counterparts (Conroy et al., 2015). This same study found, of the 67 openly sexist remarks they noted in newspaper articles, 94% were directed at Palin and Ferraro. They found gender to be the only significant predictor of sexist coverage.

Hillary Clinton is the most visible and viable female candidate in national politics to date. She has gained an increasing amount of attention and, as this is written, she is largely considered the likely democratic nominee for the 2016 presidential election. In last term's presidential election, news sources treated Hillary Clinton less formally than her male counterparts, primarily by referring to her by her first name, and mentioned her gender nearly thirteen times more often (Uscinski & Goren, 2011). The media used a more negative tone and significantly fewer positive trait references when discussing her candidacy than the candidacy of her male competitors (Uscinski & Goren, 2011). This is consistent with findings that the female vice presidential candidates, Ferraro and Palin, received nearly half the amount of positive news coverage as their male counterparts (Conroy et al., 2015). Perhaps most notable is that

articles that mentioned Clinton's gender were five times more likely to question her electability (Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010).

Notably, when the media discussed Clinton's traits, over 50% of the negative references were character related and only about 26% were job related, whereas for Obama less than 25% of negative trait references were character related and well over 50% were job related (Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010). Negative, character-related commentary of female candidates is often in language that is reserved exclusively for women. Some comments use subtle, female-coded language and some use blatantly sexist words. For example, on his radio show in 2007, then-ABC News commentator and CNN headline News host, Glenn Beck, stated, "Hillary Clinton cannot be elected president because…. There's something about her vocal range… it's not what she says, it's how she says it…. She's the stereotypical bitch" (Bielingmaier, 2007). MSNBC host Tucker Carlson asserted on his MSNBC show, *Tucker,* "There's just something about her that feels castrating, overbearing, and scary" (Groch-Begley, 2016). While these attacks on her personality seem extreme, there are dozens, and probably hundreds, of equally sexist remarks about her appearance, her laugh, her voice, that she is "hysterical" or even simply the fact that she is a woman (Groch-Begley, 2016). This variety of comment has continued with force into the 2016 election cycle, during which the media have been bombarding the public with negative female-coded adjectives. They have said that she has an evil laugh, a "cackle"; that she laughs only to soften her image; that she screams, shouts, shrieks and is shrill (Karet, 2016).

Uscinski & Goren (2011) examine how the media address and refer to candidates in order to examine gender bias as a whole, citing media choices as a

standard way of determining differential treatment. Standard style guides, such as AP

style, instruct journalists to use a subject's full title and name when they first mention

the subject (e.g. Secretary Hillary Clinton), and the subject's last name subsequently

(Clinton or Ms. Clinton). The authors argue that the informal references to female

candidates (referring to Clinton as Hillary, for example) infantilize the candidates and

detract from their legitimacy. They collected data from transcripts from ABC, CBS,

NBC, CNN, Fox News and MSNBC, with segments from 127 newspeople. They found

that the media referred to Obama by his first name 2% of the time, while they referred

to Clinton by her first name 8% of the time. Additionally, significantly more men than

women referred to Clinton by her first name, and significantly fewer men than women

referred to her as "Senator". This is particularly noteworthy because, according to

historical evidence, as the front-runner she should have received more deferential

treatment from the press.

How appearance affects electability

In political races, the snap-second conclusions people make regarding the competence of a candidate, based on appearance alone, are significantly telling of the candidate's actual success in a political race (Lenz & Lawson, 2011; Chiao, Bowman & Gill, 2008). Even when other information is available concerning likely traits, raters continue to over-rely on appearances to make character judgments (Olivola & Todorov, 2010). This phenomenon is increasingly prominent with more exposure to visual stimuli of a candidate (Lenz & Lawson, 2011). Studies agree that voter perception of overall political demeanor, based on appearance alone, is predictive of a candidate's success (Chiao, Bowman & Gill, 2008; Lenz & Lawson, 2011; Olivola & Todorov, 2010; Todorov et al., 2005). Most of these studies use static photographs of subjects from the shoulders up. However, raters had the same response, on average, to moving clips of subjects as they had for still photographs, suggesting that these ratings might apply to television clips as well as still images (Rhodes et al. 2011).

These studies use multiple characteristics to determine a politician's overall "political demeanor", such as likeable, sympathetic, honest, capable and experienced (Todorov et al, 2005; Riggio & Riggio, 2010; Praino, Stockemer and Ratis, 2014; Carpinella & Johnson, 2013). While all of these are arguably factors for a candidate's success, "competence" is the primary characteristic gleaned from photographs that indicates a candidate's actual success (Todorov et al., 2005). In a study comparing facial competency ratings to polling results of U.S. candidates, Hillary Clinton had the highest facial competency rating, at 6.9 (Wesley Clark had the next highest rating, at 6.6), whereas Obama had an average of 6.1 and John McCain had the highest

republican average at 6.0. These competence ratings were indicative of early polling averages for the democratic nominees: Clinton's polling average was 37.8 and Obama's was 19.8. Facial competence ratings were not related to republican nominee polling averages, but the authors of the study, Armstrong et al. (2010) suggest this could be because many people had not yet seen the republican candidates. As Election Day grew closer the republican polls showed a shift that reflected facial competency ratings. John McCain, who had the highest U.S. facial competency rating, gained ground, whereas Rudy Giulliani, who had the third lowest facial competency rating, but the highest early polling average, saw a 15% decrease in his polling averages by January.

Non-facial-based inferences are also important to the political demeanor of a candidate. It is possible that inferences from other appearance-based information – primarily hair, clothing and background context – also predict decisions of actual voters (Spezio et al., 2012). Christophe Schatterman, a hairstylist who has styled the hair of several politicians, noted the importance of hair in politics. For instance, he observed that shorter hair on women is seen as more credible and stately (Schwarz, 2015). Politicians obviously agree that their hairstyle will have an important impact: Christophe charges $800 a cut. Height is also a factor: Taller presidential candidates receive more votes and taller presidents are more likely to be reelected (Stulp et al., 2013).

How appearance affects women differently than men

For women there is a difficult balance between looking and behaving typically feminine and also eliciting traditionally masculine-associated perceptions of competence (Hehman et al., 2014). Friedman & Zebrowitz (1992) found that for both

men and women the less baby-faced people were, the more powerful and the more masculine they were thought to be. For men this also corresponded to being attractive and being typical, whereas for women, the less baby-faced they were the less typical and the less attractive they were thought to be. The authors sum this phenomenon up, saying, "Being warm, weak, and submissive is perceived to be both stereotypically feminine and characteristic of baby-faced people; being cold, strong, and dominant is considered stereotypically masculine and characteristic of mature-faced people." In the 1988 and 1992 presidential races, vice presidential candidate Dan Quayle received significantly negative media attention, much of which included "feminizing" him and commenting on his appearance (Heldman et al., 2009). A study comparing male and female candidate pictures explored this gender bias, showing that both male and female voters rated the male candidate more competent, more powerful and more dominant than the female candidate (Chiao, Bowman & Gill, 2008). It is interesting to note, however, that Hillary Clinton's photo elicited a higher average competency rating than her male competitors (Armstrong et al., 2010).

Carpinella & Johnson (2013) found a difference between how facial femininity and masculinity registered for liberals and conservatives. Facial femininity for women was associated with higher competency ratings among liberals, but lower competency ratings among conservatives. Higher levels of facial masculinity in men were associated with lower ratings of warmth for Liberals and made no difference among conservatives. Warmth ratings did not change among either group for women and competence ratings did not change among either group for men, suggesting that facial cues only affected ratings for traits that were counter to sex stereotypes.

Media

It is widely known that the first-ever televised debate, between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy in 1960, changed the nature of political campaigns forever. Those who listened to the debate on the radio would have asserted that Nixon had won, but the grand majority of households (88%) had televisions and those who tuned into the televised debate knew that Kennedy, the image of health and confidence, had bested the sickly, underweight Nixon. Kennedy himself said, in reference to his victory, "It was the TV more than anything else that turned the tide" (Webley, 2010).

The increase of visual media has created a dominance of visual information. Olivola & Todorov (2010) note, "the widespread use of visual media and the growing popularity of the internet mean that appearances are increasingly the first cues we receive about another person" and increasingly the most important. In a political context this means that voters are more likely to immediately generate a judgment based on a candidate's appearance, especially when those voters are less informed. The more voters receive this visual information the more likely they are to be swayed by appearances. Zebrowitz and Montpare (2005) found that the votes of citizens who are less informed and citizens who watch substantial amounts of television are more susceptible to appearance.

While some studies that examined newspaper articles found that no undue attention was paid to the appearance of female candidates (Lavery, 2013; Atkeson & Krebs, 2008), other studies have found a significant difference between the amount the media discuss female and male appearance (Bystrom et al., 2004; Conroy et al., 2015). The type of election and the type of medium may explain these differences.

Furthermore, the studies that found no significant bias were done of mayoral and House candidates (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Lavery, 2013). Bystrom et al.'s 2004 study of nearly 600 articles found 5% of newspaper articles in 1998 mentioned female candidate appearance while only 2% mentioned that of male candidates. In 2000 and 2002 this was up to 6% for women and down to 1% for men. When the media focus on a candidate's appearance they are taking time away from issues-related coverage that the candidate might have otherwise received and drawing the public into an appearance-based discussion rather than an issues-based discussion. The studies covering higher offices seem to find a heavier disparity between appearance-based coverage of male and female coverage (Wasburn & Wasburn, 2011; Oliver & Conroy, 2009)

Women in the White House

There have only been two female vice presidential candidates in the United States, both of whom were relatively young and attractive. These factors became foci of news coverage and discussion during their campaigns. Heldman et al. (2009) studied news coverage of these two candidates, Geraldine Ferraro and Sarah Palin, and found that an average of 12% of newspaper coverage was appearance-based as compared with 4.8% appearance-based news coverage for their male counterparts. In 1984 Ferraro became the first woman chosen as a vice presidential candidate. Seven percent of newspaper coverage mentioned her dress and appearance. Over 20 years later, Sarah Palin became the second female vice presidential candidate and gendered, appearance-based news coverage increased to 14.5%. Rather than improving over the years, the focus on appearance more than doubled in force.

Between September 1 and November 3, 2008, the mainstream media

(represented by *Newsweek* and *Time* Magazine) featured pictures of Sarah Palin more prominently and more frequently than her opponent, Joe Biden. Palin's picture appeared 70 times where Biden's only appeared 15. The media also discussed Palin more, with 50 instances compared to Biden's 10. Despite this dominance, over 55.3% of Palin's coverage focused on her childhood, family, physical appearance and personality while only 13.1% of the coverage focused on her legislative experience and understanding of major political issues. Conversely, the only non-political coverage of Biden was of his personality (a total of 15.4%) and over half of his coverage focused on his qualifications and campaign issues (Wasburn & Wasburn, 2011). The media mentioned Palin's appearance four times more often than Biden's and the disparity in coverage remained statistically significant even when coverage was limited to the time before Palin's wardrobe scandal (Miller & Peake, 2013). Maureen Dowd of the New York Times frequently called Palin "Caribou Barbie". Similarly, Rush Limbaugh called her a "babe" (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2011). Sarah Palin took notice of what she perceived as biased, appearance-based coverage. She wrote, in reference to a *Newsweek* front-page photo of her, taken from a *Runner's World* photo shoot, "The choice of photo for the cover of this week's Newsweek is unfortunate… The Runner's World magazine one-page profile for which this photo was taken was all about health and fitness - a subject to which I am devoted and which is critically important to this nation. The out-of-context Newsweek approach is sexist and oh-so-expected by now" (https://www.facebook.com/sarahpalin/).

Clinton has experienced her own barrage of appearance-based and sexist coverage. Although one study examining newspaper coverage of the 2008 primaries

found that Clinton's clothing and appearance were not mentioned statistically significantly more than those of Richardson or Edward, her appearance was mentioned more than that of Obama (Miller, Peake and Boulton, 2010). One can easily find "news" coverage of Clinton's appearance and media figures and her fellow politicians acknowledge the unfair amount of appearance coverage she has received (Lawless, 2009). At the 2015 White House correspondents' dinner, comedian Cecily Strong asked the media in the room to raise their hands and repeat after her: "I solemnly swear not to talk about Hillary's appearance this election season because that is not journalism" (C-span). The media did not hold to their vow. While more regulated sources, such as print newspaper, may be mostly succeeding in leaving Clinton's looks out of the race, Internet sources and television news personalities continue to focus on her appearance as she vies to be the 2016 democratic presidential nominee.

New media

Despite some sexist, appearance-oriented coverage from traditional news sources this phenomenon may be more pronounced in new media sources, such as blogs. Appearance-based coverage of Sarah Palin, though she was the subject of the most notable bias from traditional news sources, is even more pronounced in new media (Conroy et al., 2015). Conroy et al. (2015) found that gender stereotypes would be more frequent in what they call "this new, more hostile news environment without editors at the helm." A study conducted by the Edelman Trust Barometer in January 2016 found that people trust "search engines" for their news more than they trust "traditional media" and they trust "online media" only slightly less than "traditional media" (Epstein, 2016). Heldman and Wade (2011) note, provocatively, the timing of the rise

of the Internet correlates with a stagnation in women's presence in congress.

A simple Google search reveals the focus on candidate and politician appearance is skewed toward women. "Sarah Palin president" returns 17,3000,000 hits (Sarah Palin vice president returned only 677,000 hits), yet "Sarah Palin hot" returns 18,600,000 hits, 108% percent of the "president" search. Likewise, "Hillary Clinton president" returns 124,000,000 hits and "Hillary Clinton hot" returns 72,200,000, 58% of her "president" search. "Barack Obama president" returns 170,000,000, whereas "Barrack Obama hot" only returns only 39,500,000 hits, 23% of his "president" search. When the search is scaled back to lower positions of power – "Sarah Palin governor," "Hillary Clinton secretary of state," and "Barrack Obama Senator" respectively – Obama receives barely more hits for the "hot" search than for the "senator" search, whereas Clinton received nearly twice as many hits for "hot" than for "secretary of state" and Palin receives 9 times as many hits as her "governor" search. The number of websites or stories available for a specific kind of appearance-based information for the two female politicians is far higher than for the male.

Multiple articles surround one photo of Secretary Hillary Clinton wearing what appears to be minimal makeup while on official secretary of state business in Bangladesh (see figures 1 & 2). Dozens more blog and news posts add to the pile of commentary – from Hollywood Life (Tzeses, 2012), Jezebel (Murdoch, 2012), CBS news ("Hillary Clinton's Natural Appearance Scrutinized", 2012) and the Huffington Post (Goff, 2012) – either posting a news story, responding to those news stories, or even responding to responses to the news stories. Some of these articles are clearly negative: Fox News reprinted a Daily Mail article that described Clinton as "tired and

withdrawn – far from the well-coiffed image she has maintained over the past two decades in politics" (Daily Mail Reporters, 2012). Some of these articles defend her appearance: the headline for the Washington Post reads, "Hillary Clinton, barefaced and bespectacled, is a refreshing image in politics" (Parker, 2012).

This undue focus on an innocuous picture of secretary incites a slew of comments from readers. The subsequent comments posted by readers illustrate the cultivation of appearance-based discussion and the conflation of appearance and competency appearance-focused coverage incites. One such comment reads: "Refreshing, she isn't. Did Pelosi give her beauty tips. She could use a little BOTOX" (Swampfoxx4, 2012). Other comments read: "SHE NEEDS A DECENT HAIRCUT AND IF SHE DOESN'T EVEN CARE ABOUT HERSELF – HOW CAN SHE CARE FOR HER COUNTRY" (Dixielee 1, 2012) or "There are many powerful woman who manage to get up in the morning; shower and look presentable… She looks like crap with make-up or without make-up" (Kaymad, 2012). One defender posted, "You look terrific when you let your hair down" (IreneR1, 2012). All of these comments, as well as the article, whether scathingly against or in favor of Clinton's stylistic choices, focus on her appearance rather than her political acuity, though some conflate the two.

Another image circulated of then-Senator Hillary Clinton speaking on the senate floor in 2007 about the cost of higher education (figure 3). The Washington Post ran an article titled "Hillary Clinton's Tentative Dip Into New Neckline Territory", which focuses exclusively on the fashion choices of Ms. Clinton and one shirt with a neckline lower than her usual choice. The article discusses the "small acknowledgement of sexuality and femininity" from Clinton's shirt choice. It describes her usual outfits as a

"desexualized uniform", presumably because of their resemblance to her male colleagues' suits. The article even asserts: "showing cleavage is a request to be engaged in a particular way." Although the author acquiesces that it "does not necessarily mean that a woman is asking to be objectified", it has not stopped this author from feeling free to do so, calling it "a provocation" (Givhar, 2007). It seems simpler, in light of articles such as Givhar's, for female politicians to choose a "desexualized" pantsuit over any other option. One slightly lower cut pink shirt opens the door for scrutiny of her fashion sense, assertions about her confidence as a woman and comments that she is asking for a certain type of attention and putting her sexuality on display. Ms. Givhar defended her piece, contending, "the tone of voice, the appearance, the context" of a delivery all affect how a message is consumed (Wheaton, 2007). This picture was not a public campaign speech or an image that the general public was likely to see were it not for Ms. Givhar's pulling it from the C-span coverage and publicizing it.

When Bernie Sanders is asked if he thinks it is fair that Clinton's hair receives more attention than his he snaps back an impatient retort: "I am running for president of the United States on serious issues, O.K.? Do you have serious questions?" He, as a man, is unaccustomed to this type of question and easily and quickly dismisses it as irrelevant and frivolous. The interviewer backs her question up as serious, beginning to say "There is a gendered reason…" before getting cut off by Bernie exclaiming annoyance that the media focus on hair rather than universal health care. It *is* annoying that the media find it worth the public's time to discuss hair over substantive issues (which was the interviewer's point), however, it is significant that Sanders has to be pressed multiple times to realize the implication of the interviewer's question. It has not

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occurred to him that the broad category, appearance, into which "hair" fits, is a serious problem in the intersection of politics and media. It is serious problem for women – women who are fighting to be seen as serious candidates "running on serious issues." The interviewer is finally able to point out the disparity between the media's focus on female over male appearance and Bernie states, "that may be, and it's absolutely wrong" (Cox & Sanders, 2015).

Male candidates are so seldom exposed to this type of personal scrutiny that it may be impossible for them to understand the power of this type of coverage. Obama notes that he only wears gray and blue suits because he is "trying to pare down decisions. I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing, because I have too many other decisions to make" (Lewis, 2012). One picture of Hillary Clinton wearing light makeup, glasses, jewelry and a prim suit with her hair neat and down, or a lower cut pink shirt, provokes dozens of articles and thousands of user comments. When CNN foreign affairs correspondent, Jill Dougherty, asked Clinton about the criticism she received for this picture, Clinton responded, "I feel so relieved to be at the stage I'm at in my life right now, Jill, because if I want to wear my glasses, I'm wearing my glasses. If I want to pull my hair back, I'm pulling my hair back" (Dougherty & Clinton, 2012). Clinton may not care about the criticism she constantly receives for her looks, but appearance-based coverage may have a significant effect on how voters respond to, and subsequently whether they vote for, candidates.

For women, appearance seems to be a losing battle. They are scrutinized and criticized for being too made up, not made up enough, too masculine or too feminine. Female candidates spend substantial amounts of money on their appearance in an

attempt to seamlessly fit into the political scene, but then they are condemned for

spending that money. D.C Image consultant, Christina Logothetis, noted that Bachmann

"transformed her look to remove her wardrobe from the conversation" (The Reliable

Source, 2012). However, she then received coverage for how much she spent to do it,

much like Sarah Palin (Kroll, 2011)

How outfit affects perception

While there are several popular articles and off-handed remarks about the importance of outfit to political demeanor, there is a dearth of academic articles and studies regarding how outfit affects constituents' perception of politicians. However, some studies related to perception and outfit give potential insight. For instance, one study shows that when professors wear professional attire student's not only view the professor more positively, but also the course, program and university with which the professor is associated (Carr, Davis & Lavin, 2009). Another study shows that even minor changes in a man's outfit can have a significant influence on how he is perceived (Howlett, Fletcher & Pine, 2013).

Because of the lack of studies examining the effect of outfit on perceptions of politicians, I conducted a survey to examine the generally accepted idea that outfit has an influence in politics. Based on previous research that shows that female faces are perceived as less competent than those of male faces, but are associated with higher ratings of warmth, I hypothesized that the pictures of the female candidate, regardless of outfit, would be perceived as less competent, qualified and skilled, but more approachable and friendlier and that this effect would be more prevalent when she was portrayed in a dress. I hypothesized that more formal attire would make both the male and female appear more competent and experienced, but less approachable.

Methods

This study, conducted through Qualtrics, portrayed one man and one woman in different outfits with the goal of assessing how outfit affects public perception and how

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this might change between genders. There were three pictures for the woman: one

picture of her in a casual outfit, one of her in a dress and one of her in a suit. Each

picture was accompanied with the caption: "This is Nancy Johnson, she is running for

Congress from Michigan. Based on this picture, what do you think of her?" There were

two pictures of the male: one picture of him in a casual outfit and one in a suit. Each

picture was accompanied with the caption, "This is John Freeman. He is running for

Congress from Michigan. Based on this picture, what do you think of him?" For each

picture of candidate Johnson and each picture of candidate Freeman the same head was

transposed onto each body using Adobe Photoshop in order to control for facial cues

and ensure judgments were based on outfit. There were 54 participants who completed

the survey. Each participant was randomly directed to one of the 5 pictures and given

the direction: "Rate each quality from 1 to 10. For example if you think she is extremely

unattractive, give a rating of 1 in the 'Attractive' section. If you think she is extremely

attractive, give a rating of 10 in the 'Attractive' section."

Each participant was asked to rate the image of the candidate from 1 to 10 on

whether they thought the candidate was: attractive, beautiful (for the female candidate)

or handsome (for the male candidate), sexy, friendly, approachable, dependable,

reliable, honest, sincere, trustworthy, experienced, an expert, knowledgeable, qualified,

skilled and competent. These attributes can be broken down into four main categories:

components of attractiveness (beauty and sexiness), factors of competence (expertise,

qualification, skill, knowledge) (Riggio & Riggio, 2010), trustworthiness (honest,

sincere, dependable, reliable) and warmth (friendly, approachable). These attributes

were gathered from several studies regarding the influence of appearance over character

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judgements (Todorov et al, 2005; Riggio & Riggio, 2010; Praino, Stockemer and Ratis, 2014; Carpinella & Johnson, 2013). The authors of these studies suggest different interactions between these characteristics and their "feminine" or "masculine" associations. Both Praino, Stockemer & Ratis (2014) and Carpinella & Johnson (2013) suggest that women are associated with warmth and beauty while men are associated with dominance and capability. The data was then analyzed using the mean value for each attribute and comparing it across attributes and between genders. The standard deviation was used to determine whether the data were significant.

This is a survey about potential candidates for congressional office. Thank you for participating!

What is your age?

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

>>

This is John Freeman. He is running for Congress from Michigan. Based on this picture, what do you think of him?

Rate each quality from 1 to 10. For example if you think he is completely unattractive, put "1" for the "Attractive" section , if you think he is extremely attractive, rate "10" on the "Attractive" section.

	Not at all									Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attractive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Competent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Handsome	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sexy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dependable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honest	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reliable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trustworthy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
An Expert	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Experiened	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Qualified	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skilled	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Approachable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Study as seen by participant (participants are sent to one picture of a candidate according to the Qualtrics randomizing algorithm)

The three pictures of candidate Johnson. From left to right: Casual, suit, dress

Pictures of Candidate Freeman. From left to right: Casual, suit.

Findings

Contrary to my hypotheses, the scores for the female were not statistically different across outfits and the male was not rated higher in male stereotypic traits than the female. In fact, he was not rated as statistically significantly higher in any category than the woman. Nancy, regardless of what she wore, was rated higher than John in the

categories: experienced, approachable, skilled, an expert, sincere and friendly. She was rated as more attractive, competent, beautiful, knowledgeable and qualified than John in a casual outfit. She was rated as more dependable, honest and reliable than John in a suit. The only significant differences for John between outfits were that casual John was rated as more honest and trustworthy than John in a suit (data details in tables 2-6 in tables index).
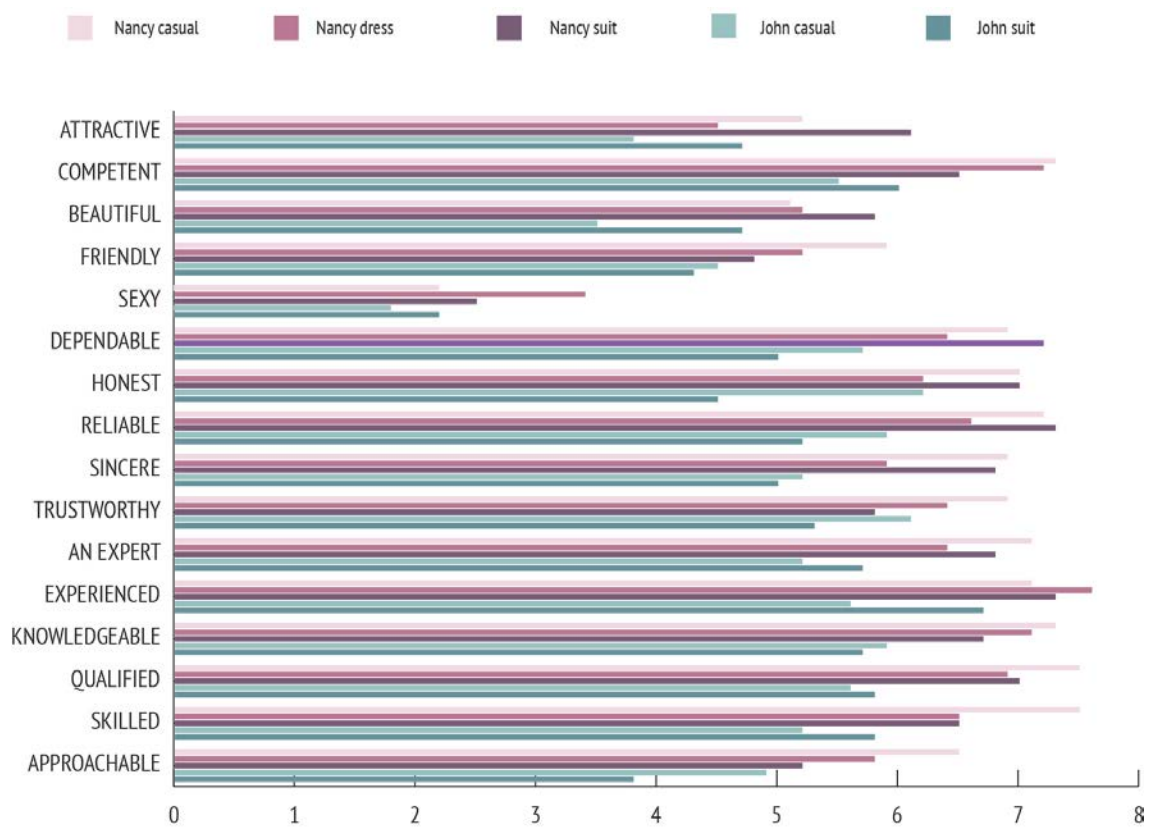
Graph shows means of survey responses (data details are in tables 2-6 in table index)

Conclusions

The female candidate was not rated lower just because she was a woman suggesting that, at least at the congressional level, there is not a significant bias toward female candidates that hinders their electability. Additionally, there was no significant

difference in the way the female candidate was rated when she was wearing a dress or any other outfit, emphasizing that femaleness is not a disadvantage in congressional elections. Oregon (where 41 of the 54 respondents live) has several women in prominent elected offices, such as Governor Kate Brown, Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins or Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. The number of women in elected offices in Oregon may give voters there a vision of political candidates that prominently includes women. It would be interesting, in further research, to ask respondents to name the female candidates with whom they are familiar before they take the survey. This would indicate how certain female candidates influence a voter's image of female candidates and judgments of their characteristics.

Judgments of the female candidate were not statistically significant based on her outfit, however John was rated as les trustworthy and less honest in a suit than in a casual outfit. It is possible that people on the west coast are more wary of people in suits and more trusting of people in casual outfits because of state culture. This could also be a product of the level of office for which the fictional candidates are running. This study could be closely replicated, altering the level of office to include state office and president to determine how expectations change depending on the position. Voters may be more receptive to a state representative in jeans than a president.

Limitations

This study is limited in its breadth. It only portrays one man and one woman, leaving open the possibility that the individual female portrayed looks more competent than the individual male, rather than all females being perceived as more competent than all males. There is not complete continuity between pictures: there is some

variability between the poses of each candidate in each photo, which could account for some difference in how they are judged. The backgrounds are also not exactly the same. While these are small differences, it is impossible to know whether they factored in to participants answers. This study's participants were mostly college-aged students from Oregon. Lastly, the algorithm Qualtrics used to send participants to different pictures led to an uneven number of respondents for each picture (for example the picture of candidate Johnson in a casual outfit had 11 responses whereas the picture of candidate Freeman in a suit only had 6 responses).

  If I were to create a perfect study aimed at discovering the effect of outfit on perceptions of candidates, I would make sure that I had participants from around the country and from a larger range of ages in order to account for all constituents and to examine possible differences around the nation. I would exclude the faces of the candidates, better regulate the poses in the pictures, as well as the background and lighting to minimize extraneous factors and ensure that the only factor was the outfit.

Effect of media focus on appearance

While voters' perceptions of a candidate are swayed by appearance alone, the media discussing a candidate's appearance may have an even stronger effect on these perceptions. Cultivation theory suggests that society's construction of the world is shaped by what people see in and are told by the media (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). There is some disagreement about how the media discussing appearance affects the publics' perception of candidates – whether it affects women differently than men and if the coverage has to be negative in order to have a negative impact. Hayes, Lawless and Baitiner (2014) used positive and negative news articles of congressional candidates and found only negative appearance-based coverage had a negative impact on favorability ratings and impressions of candidates' professionalism. They found women were no more at risk than men. Another study, conducted by the Women's Media Center, found that any coverage of a female candidate's physical appearance is detrimental to her electability, whether the coverage is positive, negative or neutral, though the effect was stronger for positive and negative coverage than for neutral coverage (Lake et al., 2010). One explanation for this could be that the neutral description they used was half as long as the description for the positive and negative descriptions.

Heflick & Goldenberg (2011) examined the media's treatment of Sarah Palin in the 2008 election and how it might have affected election outcomes. They concluded that the objectification of Palin contributed to the public's objection to her. They found evidence that the media's focus on Palin's appearance undermined perceptions of her competence, warmth and morality and consequently her electability. Miller and Peake

(2013) note that because of Palin's relative obscurity in the political landscape before her vice presidential candidacy the media had a heightened ability to influence public perception. When participants were given articles that focused on her appearance and asked to rate Palin, they rated her as less human and less competent and also displayed reduced intentions to vote for her (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009).

Whether or not voter perception is skewed by the media coverage of candidate appearance, women's perception that the media are unfairly focusing on female candidates' appearance is discouraging them from running. Lawless and Fox (2012) found that female candidates are not suffering because of their ability to receive votes and fundraise, but because they are reluctant to run for office in the first place. The authors studied 4,000 males and 4,000 females whom they deemed viable "potential candidates" for office and found that significantly fewer (8%) women than men were interested in running for political office – an even larger gap than ten years prior. The contrast is a starker for statewide and national positions. Of the seven reasons they found for women being less likely to be interested in pursuing an elected position, the first two were that women were "substantially more likely than men" to perceive the electoral environment as biased against women and that Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin's candidacies for president actually aggravated women's perceptions of gender bias in the political sphere. Women explicitly did not want to be treated by the media the way they saw Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton treated. They felt that too much attention was paid to their appearances and that the media coverage was altogether sexist (Lawson & Fox, 2012).

Conclusion

While the public may always be inherently susceptible to candidate appearance, having citizens who are more educated about political issues and candidates' views could reduce the weight of looks to electability. The votes of citizens who are less informed and citizens who watch substantial amounts of television are more sensitive to appearance. Zebrowitz & Montpare (2005) suggest a political reform to "increase the likelihood of electing the most qualified leaders rather than those who simply look the part". While they refrain from any suggestions, cutting out unnecessary mentions of candidate appearance and focusing on substantive issues is a good place to start. If programs focus on informative content then heavy television watchers may move into the category of "informed citizen", minimizing the power of appearance that undermines citizens' ability to make judgments based on the actual quality of the candidate.

Unfortunately the United States media do not seem to be moving toward more informative coverage. Rather, they have been increasingly relishing spectacle every election cycle. Douglas Kellner, in his book *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy: Terrorism, War, and Election,* argues that Bush became the presidential candidate because he was affable and amusing in debates, if not impressive in argumentation and policy (2005). He connected better with the audience whereas Gore was policy-oriented and less charismatic (Kellner, 2005). The political arena is inescapably dependent upon and inseparable from the media. The rise of increasingly visual media and media that emphasize entertainment over information is changing the political arena and the way in which the public interact with politics and political

candidates. This media circus may be largely responsible for the popularity of Donald

Trump, a man whose fame rests on the ability to be interesting to an entertainment-

driven audience. He yells, he insults, he lambasts. He is, as John Oliver, the host of

Last Week Tonight, pointed out, "objectively funny" (2016). The chairman of CBS

himself called the 2016 campaign a "circus" and said, "It may not be good for

America, but it's damn good for CBS. The money's rolling in and this fun" (Collins,

2016). The media's obsession with entertainment and bankrolling, particularly that of

television broadcasting, favors flamboyancy and appearance over issues. This is the

perfect stage for Donald Trump who is, as put by Steve Schmidt, a Republican

strategist, "starring in a reality show of his own making, and treats every appearance

like an episode" (Solotaroff, 2015).

Perhaps the people have to stand up to the media and demand they cover real

issues and hold political candidates to standard. Ali Kashani writes in a media ethics

book, *Lost in Media,* "while it would be difficult for media to be completely free in a

capitalist economy, it is possible for citizens to press media to assume their ethical

responsibility and exercise and maintain a degree of freedom" (Kashani, 2013). This

statement assumes that citizens desire the media maintain a degree of freedom and

provide factual information, but the people want to see trump. The media are only a

manifestation of spectacle society that reverberates and perpetuates the power of

spectacle over reality (Frymer, 2013). The media, in their treatment of Trump, and in

their treatment of political debates and giving the attention, and thus power, to the

candidate who yells loudest and insults most, are allowing themselves to be dominated

by economic interests and feeding the spectacle.

The level to which the media are now beholden to ratings is evidenced by Donald Trump's successful showdown with Fox News. When Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly challenged Donald Trump during a debate over his blatant sexism, he responded that he "doesn't have time for political correctness" and then went on full attack. He retweeted a tweet that called Megyn Kelly a "bimbo" (figure 5), called her "crazy" (figure 6 & 7) and tweeted "I refuse to call Megyn Kelly a bimbo, because that would not be politically correct" (figure 8). He also re-tweeted an image of Megyn Kelly posing for GQ that suggested her GQ shoot made her unqualified for asking presidential questions (figure 9). Despite all of these outrageous remarks, when Trump held Fox News hostage by threatening to boycott a Fox News' debate, Fox put Kelly on paid leave, choosing the ratings and money that come with Trump over their newscaster who was challenging the candidate's views, setting a scary precedent.

The media are giving power to a man who either valorizes or discredits women because of their appearance or even accuses them of inadequacies because they are women. By giving Trump primacy in the news, the media are validating his damaging remarks. Even though there is evidence to suggest that women are at a disadvantage in the political arena because of their gender, Donald Trump declared that Clinton would be doing poorly if she were not "playing the woman card" and that "If she was [sic] a man and she was the way she is she would get virtually no votes" (Gass, 2016). In a more flagrant instance in 2015, Donald Trump re-tweeted, "'@mplefty67: If Hillary Clinton can't satisfy her husband what makes her think she can satisfy America?" @realDonaldTrump #2016 president'" (figure 4). Right before attacking Carly Fiorina in a debate he said, "I can't say anything to her because she's a woman" (Ungerman,

2015). Similarly, by way of apologizing for insulting Fiorina's face Mr. said, "I think she's got a beautiful face and I think she's a beautiful woman" Fiorina responded, "The point is, whether a man thinks you're homely or a man thinks you're beautiful, it's not a topic of conversation when a woman is trying to do a job – whether it's president of the United States or secretary or anything else" (Mcafee & Westfall, 2015).

The good news is that in the instances where women are directly confronted with comments about their appearance they are able to stand up for themselves and negate virtually any negative effects (Lawless & Fox, 2012). The more women are in power and empowered to stand up against these sorts of comments from fellow politicians or coverage from the media, the more they can combat objectification and encourage the country to see women as viable candidates. The way to fight gender bias in politics simply be to have more powerful female voices. Whether or not women win elections, a heightened, consistent presence from female candidates will normalize women as politicians and politicians as women. The rise of Hillary Clinton as the front-runner in the democratic presidential primary, the first time a woman has been in this position, is important for any woman vying for positions of power. Sarah Palin noted she would not be running for vice president, had it not been for Geraldine Ferraro and Hillary Clinton (Palin, 2008).

There is evidence to suggest that the role-model effect is present among young women and girls who see women in positions of high political power. When Nancy Pelosi was appointed speaker of the house and Hillary Clinton became a presidential candidate, anticipated political involvement spiked for young women who identified as democrats. However, anticipated political involvement among young women fell

somewhat after the vice presidential campaign of Palin (Mariani, Marshall and Matthews-Schultz, 2015). It is possible that the disparity in anticipated political involvement is a product of the type of candidate. Palin was not a candidate that was taken seriously by the populace or the media. In short, Pelosi and Clinton were figures young women found worthy of emulation and Palin was not. For girls, seeing women in high positions of political power increased their likelihood of discussing politics within their homes. Campbell and Wombrecht (2006) conjecture that, because political socialization is a possible explanation for a low level of participation in politics among women, heightened political discussion from a young age will increase long-term political participation among women. Hopefully the more women are in politics the more young women will be inspired and encouraged to run for political office. The more women are present in government and the more the country is accustomed to seeing women run for high political office, the less anomalous it will seem and the more serious and unbiased coverage of their candidacies will be.

Relevance

This election cycle, particularly on the GOP side, might be the most ridiculous to date. The media, rather than holding candidates responsible for behavior and wielding their power for the advancement of democracy, are ensuring they present the most entertaining material so they receives high ratings and more money. They continue to allow and propagate irrelevant statements about appearance and therefore objectify the few women fighting to be in positions of power in the United States government. The body of research that investigates the intersection of politics and the media are critical in this current political-media environment.

Most research includes either the intersection of politics and appearance or the intersection of media and politics. This thesis combines these elements to provide a holistic picture of the intersections of appearance, politics and media and to explain how women are disadvantaged in and discouraged from the political realm because of how these elements interact.

The importance of appearance is clearly felt in the political realm: all candidates for national positions wear prim suits, many opt for $800 haircuts and several more hire image consultants to ensure they look stately. Several studies have shown that ratings of competence based on a candidate's headshot alone are significant predictors of actual election outcomes and others have shown that female faces are rated as less competent than the male faces on average, suggesting women may be less electable just because of their femaleness. However, the study done for this thesis found that women are not always considered less competent just because of their femaleness. The study also showed that, despite the time and money spent on creating a political image, outfit might not have a considerable impact, particularly for the female candidate.

Long-lasting, split-second, unmerited judgments based on a person's appearance will probably always be a reality, but the increase in visual media and the high number of uninformed voters has been proven to increase the importance of facial judgments on voting decisions; if a person knows little about the candidate, but sees their face often, their facially-based character judgments understandably have more weight in their voting decisions. While the media are not able to change the persistence of initial judgments, if they change the way they cover elections and political candidates, with the goal of privileging substance, they could limit the power of

appearance. Currently, media coverage of appearance may be more important to voter perceptions than appearance itself. When the media discuss a candidate's appearance, ratings of a candidate's competence go down. The current reality is that the media discuss female appearance more than male appearance, which not only disadvantages women in their competence ratings, but it also discourages them from running for office.

While there is ample research on the importance of a politician's face for electability, moving forward there should be more research on the controllable aspects of appearance (i.e. outfit, hair and makeup). The first objective would be to see if these are important factors beyond the media's coverage thereof. The second would be how (particularly female) candidates can manipulate their appearance to present themselves as competent and electable. However, research examining and confronting the media with their bias and its detrimental effects will be even more important than research on the manipulation of actual appearance. The media ostensibly hold the government responsible for its actions, but academia, and particularly media studies, must hold the media responsible for presenting fair, informative coverage. This should come from research and from denouncing individual instances of bias and useless, appearance-based coverage. The best way to ensure a fair election playing field for candidates of all genders is for the media to leave appearance out of the discussion, whether it is Clinton's blouse choice or Governor Chris Christie's weight and the media will only change when they are made aware of and held accountable for their deleterious behavior.

Table index

Table 1

Women in National Legislatures: Rankings and Election Systems

Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Dec. 2013)

Rank (Lower House)	Country	% Women (Lower House)	% Women (Upper House)	Election System (Lower House)
1	Rwanda	63.8%	38.5%	PR
2	Andorra	50.0%	-	Mixed
3	Cuba	48.9%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD) (single-party)
4	Sweden	45.0%	-	PR
5	Seychelles	43.8%	-	Mixed
6	Senegal	42.7%	-	Mixed
7	Finland	42.5%	-	PR
8	South Africa	42.3%	32.1%	PR
9	Nicaragua	40.2%	-	PR
10	Iceland	39.7%	-	PR
11	Norway	39.6%	-	PR
12	Mozambique	39.2%	-	PR
13	Denmark	39.1%	-	PR
14	Ecuador	38.7%	-	Mixed
15	Netherlands	38.7%	36.0%	PR
16	Costa Rica	38.6%	-	PR
17	Timor-Leste	38.5%	-	PR
18	Belgium	38.0%	40.8%	PR
19	Mexico	36.8%	32.8%	Mixed
20	Argentina	36.6%	38.9%	PR
21	Germany	36.5%	27.5%	Mixed
22	Spain	36.0%	34.2%	Mixed
23	Tanzania	36.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
24	Uganda	35.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
25	Angola	34.1%	-	PR
26	Macedonia	34.1%	-	Mixed
27	Austria	33.3%	29.0%	PR
28	Grenada	33.3%	15.4%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
29	Serbia	33.2%	-	PR
30	New Zealand	32.2%	-	Mixed
31	Slovenia	32.2%	7.5%	PR
32	Algeria	31.6%	7.0%	PR
33	Zimbabwe	31.5%	47.5%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
34	Italy	31.4%	29.0%	PR
35	Guyana	31.3%	-	PR
36	Portugal	31.3%	-	PR

37	Cameroon	31.1%	20.0%	Mixed
38	Switzerland	31.0%	19.6%	Mixed
39	Burundi	30.5%	46.3%	PR
40	Trinidad & Tobago	28.6%	22.6%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
41	Luxembourg	28.3%	-	PR
42	Ethiopia	27.8%	16.3%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
43	Afghanistan	27.7%	27.5%	PR
44	Philippines	27.3%	25.0%	Mixed
45	France	26.9%	22.2%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
46	Lesotho	26.7%	27.3%	Mixed
47	Tunisia	26.7%	-	PR
48	Belarus	26.6%	35.1%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
49	South Sudan	26.5%	10.0%	Other
50	El Salvador	26.2%	-	PR
51	Australia	26.0%	41.3%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
52	Bolivia	25.4%	47.2%	Mixed
53	Iraq	25.2%	-	PR
54	Laos	25.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
55	Canada	24.7%	37.9%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
56	Bulgaria	24.6%	-	Mixed
57	Sudan	24.6%	17.9%	Mixed
58	Namibia	24.4%	26.9%	PR
59	Vietnam	24.4%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
60	Kazakhstan	24.3%	4.3%	PR
61	Singapore	24.2%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
62	Lithuania	24.1%	-	Mixed
63	Croatia	23.8%	-	PR
64	Poland	23.7%	13.0%	PR
65	China	23.4%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
66	Kyrgyzstan	23.3%	-	PR
67	Latvia	23.0%	-	PR
68	Israel	22.5%	-	PR
69	United Kingdom	22.5%	22.6%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
70	Malawi	22.3%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
71	Eritrea	22.0%	-	N/A
72	Uzbekistan	22.0%	15.0%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
73	Peru	21.5%	-	PR
74	Bosnia & Herzegovina	21.4%	13.3%	PR
75	Greece	21.0%	-	PR
76	Cape Verde	20.8%	-	PR
77	Dominican Republic	20.8%	9.4%	PR
78	Estonia	20.8%	-	PR
79	Monaco	20.8%	-	Mixed
80	Pakistan	20.7%	16.3%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
81	Cambodia	20.3%	14.8%	PR
82	Liechtenstein	20.0%	-	PR

83	Saudi Arabia	19.9%	-	Other
84	Moldova	19.8%	-	PR
85	Bangladesh	19.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
86	Czech Republic	19.5%	17.3%	PR
87	Tajikistan	19.0%	14.7%	Mixed
88	Mauritius	18.8%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
89	Slovakia	18.7%	-	PR
90	Indonesia	18.6%	-	PR
91	Kenya	18.6%	26.5%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
92	San Marino	18.3%	-	PR
93	Sao Tome & Principe	18.2%	-	PR
94	Albania	17.9%	-	PR
95	**USA**	**17.8%**	**20.0%**	**Winner-take-all (SMD)**
96	Madagascar	17.5%	12.2%	Mixed
97	Paraguay	17.5%	20.0%	PR
98	UAE	17.5%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
99	Morocco	17.0%	2.2%	PR
100	Venezuela	17.0%	-	Mixed
101	Turkmenistan	16.8%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
102	Barbados	16.7%	28.6%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
103	Saint Lucia	16.7%	18.2%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
104	Libya	16.5%	-	Mixed
105	Montenegro	16.0%	-	PR
106	Chile	15.8%	18.4%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
107	Gabon	15.8%	17.6%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
108	Thailand	15.8%	15.4%	Mixed
109	Burkina Faso	15.7%	-	PR
110	Ireland	15.7%	31.7%	PR
111	South Korea	15.7%	-	Mixed
112	Azerbaijan	15.6%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
113	North Korea	15.6%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
114	Togo	15.4%	-	PR
115	Chad	14.9%	-	Mixed
116	Mongolia	14.9%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
117	Turkey	14.4%	-	PR
118	Malta	14.3%	-	PR
119	Guinea-Bissau	14.0%	-	PR
120	Somalia	13.8%	-	Mixed
121	Russia	13.6%	8.0%	PR
122	Guatemala	13.3%	-	Mixed
123	Niger	13.3%	-	PR
124	Romania	13.3%	7.4%	Mixed
125	Bahamas	13.2%	25.0%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
126	St. Vincent & Grenadines	13.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
127	Djibouti	12.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
128	Jamaica	12.7%	23.8%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
129	Dominica	12.5%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)

130	Sierra Leone	12.4%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
131	Jordan	12.2%	12.0%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
132	Colombia	12.1%	16.0%	PR
133	Equatorial Guinea	12.1%	7.9%	PR
134	Uruguay	12.1%	12.9%	PR
135	Georgia	12.0%	-	Mixed
136	Syria	12.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
137	Suriname	11.8%	-	PR
138	Zambia	11.5%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
139	India	11.0%	10.6%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
140	Liberia	11.0%	13.3%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
141	Ghana	10.9%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
142	Armenia	10.7%	-	Mixed
143	Cyprus	10.7%	-	PR
144	Antigua & Barbuda	10.5%	29.4%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
145	Cote d'Ivoire	10.4%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
146	Malaysia	10.4%	27.1%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
147	Bahrain	10.0%	27.5%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
148	Ukraine	9.4%	-	PR
149	Dem. Rep. Congo	8.9%	5.6%	Mixed
150	Hungary	8.8%	-	Mixed
151	Kiribati	8.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
152	Brazil	8.6%	16.0%	PR
153	Panama	8.5%	-	Mixed
154	Benin	8.4%	-	PR
155	Japan	8.1%	16.1%	Mixed
156	Botswana	7.9%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
157	Gambia	7.5%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
158	Congo	7.4%	13.9%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
159	Nigeria	6.7%	6.4%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
160	St. Kitts & Nevis	6.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
161	Tuvalu	6.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
162	Maldives	6.5%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
163	Bhutan	6.4%	8.0%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
164	Kuwait	6.2%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
165	Swaziland	6.2%	33.3%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
166	Myanmar	6.0%	1.8%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
167	Sri Lanka	5.8%	-	PR
168	Nauru	5.3%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
169	Haiti	4.2%	0.0%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
170	Samoa	4.1%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
171	Tonga	3.6%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
172	Belize	3.1%	38.5%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
173	Iran	3.1%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
174	Lebanon	3.1%	-	Winner-take-all (MMD)
175	Comoros	3.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)

176	Marshall Islands	3.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
177	Papua New Guinea	2.7%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
178	Solomon Islands	2.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)
179	Oman	1.2%	18.1%	PR
180	Yemen	0.3%	1.8%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
181	Micronesia	0.0%	-	Mixed
182	Palau	0.0%	23.1%	Winner-take-all (SMD)
183	Qatar	0.0%	-	Other
184	Vanuatu	0.0%	-	Winner-take-all (SMD)

The IPU did not list data for the Central African Republic, Egypt, Honduras, Mali, Mauritania, and Nepal in December 2013.

Key:

PR – proportional representation (with multi-member districts)
Mixed – a combination of proportional representation and single-member districts
Winner-take-all – whichever candidate gets the most votes wins
SMD – single-member districts
MMD – multi-member districts

Ranking of nations based on number of women in legislature (Representation 2020)

Table 2

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	Attractive	0	1	1	1	4	1	2	1	0	0	11	5.18
2	Competent	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	2	1	2	11	7.27
3	Beautiful	0	0	2	2	4	2	0	0	0	1	11	5.09
4	Friendly	0	0	1	1	4	1	2	1	0	1	11	5.91
5	Sexy	5	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	11	2.18
6	Dependable	0	0	0	1	1	4	2	0	1	2	11	6.91
7	Honest	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	2	0	2	11	7.00
8	Reliable	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	1	1	2	11	7.18
9	Sincere	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	0	2	11	6.91
10	Trustworthy	0	0	0	0	3	2	3	1	0	2	11	6.91
11	An Expert	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	4	1	0	11	7.09
12	Experienced	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	4	1	0	11	7.09
13	Knowledgeable	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	3	1	1	11	7.27
14	Qualified	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	4	0	2	10	7.50
15	Skilled	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	4	0	2	11	7.45
16	Approachable	0	0	0	1	2	2	5	0	0	1	11	6.45

Statistic	Attractive	Competent	Beautiful	Friendly	Sexy	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy	An Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled	Approachable
Min Value	2	4	3	3	1	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4
Max Value	8	10	10	10	5	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	10
Mean	5.18	7.27	5.09	5.91	2.18	6.91	7.00	7.18	6.91	6.91	7.09	7.09	7.27	7.50	7.45	6.45
Variance	3.16	4.02	3.69	3.89	1.96	3.89	3.40	3.96	3.49	3.29	1.49	1.89	2.62	3.39	2.87	2.47
Standard Deviation	1.78	2.00	1.92	1.97	1.40	1.97	1.84	1.99	1.87	1.81	1.22	1.38	1.62	1.84	1.69	1.57
Total Responses	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	11	11

Data for Nancy Johnson in a casual outfit

Table 3

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	Attractive	0	1	1	6	2	2	1	0	0	0	13	4.46
2	Competent	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	2	3	13	7.15
3	Beautiful	0	0	1	4	3	2	2	1	0	0	13	5.23
4	Friendly	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	13	5.15
5	Sexy	4	3	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	13	3.38
6	Dependable	0	0	1	0	4	2	2	3	0	1	13	6.38
7	Honest	1	0	0	0	3	3	3	2	1	0	13	6.15
8	Reliable	0	0	1	0	2	2	4	3	1	0	13	6.62
9	Sincere	0	0	1	2	3	1	4	2	0	0	13	5.85
10	Trustworthy	1	0	1	0	2	1	4	2	1	1	13	6.38
11	An Expert	0	1	1	0	5	0	0	3	1	2	13	6.38
12	Experienced	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	4	1	2	13	7.62
13	Knowledgeable	0	0	1	0	3	2	1	2	1	3	13	7.08
14	Qualified	0	0	1	1	3	0	2	2	2	2	13	6.92
15	Skilled	0	0	2	0	4	0	2	3	0	2	13	6.46
16	Approachable	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	3	0	13	5.77

Statistic	Attractive	Competent	Beautiful	Friendly	Sexy	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy	An Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled	Approachable
Min Value	2	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	3	1	2	5	3	3	3	1
Max Value	7	10	8	8	8	10	9	9	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	9
Mean	4.46	7.15	5.23	5.15	3.38	6.38	6.15	6.62	5.85	6.38	6.38	7.62	7.08	6.92	6.46	5.77
Variance	1.77	5.97	2.19	4.47	6.76	3.42	3.97	2.59	2.64	5.92	6.76	2.42	5.24	5.41	5.44	6.86
Standard Deviation	1.33	2.44	1.48	2.12	2.60	1.85	1.99	1.61	1.63	2.43	2.60	1.56	2.29	2.33	2.33	2.62
Total Responses	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13

Data for Nancy Johnson in a dress

Table 4

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	Attractive	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	7	6.14
2	Competent	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	6	6.50
3	Beautiful	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	6	5.83
4	Friendly	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	6	4.83
5	Sexy	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2.50
6	Dependable	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	6	7.17
7	Honest	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	6	7.00
8	Reliable	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	6	7.33
9	Sincere	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	6	6.83
10	Trustworthy	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	6	5.83
11	An Expert	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	6	6.83
12	Experienced	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	6	7.33
13	Knowledgeable	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	6	6.67
14	Qualified	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	6	7.00
15	Skilled	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	6	6.50
16	Approachable	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	6	5.17

Statistic	Attractive	Competent	Beautiful	Friendly	Sexy	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy	An Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled	Approachable
Min Value	3	5	4	2	1	6	5	5	4	3	5	6	5	5	5	3
Max Value	10	8	9	7	4	8	8	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	9
Mean	6.14	6.50	5.83	4.83	2.50	7.17	7.00	7.33	6.83	5.83	6.83	7.33	6.67	7.00	6.50	5.17
Variance	4.81	1.90	3.37	2.97	3.00	0.97	1.60	1.87	3.77	2.97	2.17	0.67	2.27	2.40	1.90	4.57
Standard Deviation	2.19	1.38	1.83	1.72	1.73	0.98	1.26	1.37	1.94	1.72	1.47	0.82	1.51	1.55	1.38	2.14
Total Responses	7	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Data for Nancy Johnson in a suit

Table 5

47

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	Attractive	0	3	3	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	13	3.77
2	Competent	0	0	1	0	8	2	0	2	0	0	13	5.46
3	Handsome	1	4	2	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	13	3.54
4	Friendly	0	3	1	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	13	4.46
5	Sexy	7	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	1.77
6	Dependable	0	0	0	3	3	4	2	0	1	0	13	5.69
7	Honest	0	0	0	1	2	4	5	1	0	0	13	6.23
8	Reliable	0	0	1	2	1	4	4	0	1	0	13	5.92
9	Sincere	0	1	2	1	3	2	3	1	0	0	13	5.23
10	Trustworthy	0	0	1	0	4	2	5	0	1	0	13	6.08
11	An Expert	0	1	2	1	5	0	2	1	1	0	13	5.23
12	Experienced	0	0	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	0	13	5.62
13	Knowledgable	0	0	0	2	5	2	1	2	1	0	13	5.92
14	Qualified	0	1	0	4	3	0	1	3	1	0	13	5.62
15	Skilled	0	0	1	4	4	0	1	2	0	0	12	5.17
16	Approachable	0	2	0	4	3	0	3	1	0	0	13	4.92

Statistic	Attractive	Competent	Handsome	Friendly	Sexy	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy	An Expert	Experienced	Knowledgable	Qualified	Skilled	Approachable
Min Value	2	3	1	2	1	4	4	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	3	2
Max Value	5	8	6	7	4	9	8	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	8
Mean	3.77	5.46	3.54	4.46	1.77	5.69	6.23	5.92	5.23	6.08	5.23	5.62	5.92	5.62	5.17	4.92
Variance	1.69	1.77	2.77	3.27	1.03	2.06	1.19	2.58	3.36	2.24	4.19	4.26	2.58	4.69	2.70	3.58
Standard Deviation	1.30	1.33	1.66	1.81	1.01	1.44	1.09	1.61	1.83	1.50	2.05	2.06	1.61	2.14	1.64	1.89
Total Responses	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	12	13

Data for John Freeman in a casual outfit

Table 6

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	Attractive	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	4.67
2	Competent	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5	6.00
3	Handsome	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	4.67
4	Friendly	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	4.33
5	Sexy	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2.17
6	Dependable	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	6	5.00
7	Honest	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	6	4.50
8	Reliable	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	6	5.17
9	Sincere	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	6	5.00
10	Trustworthy	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	6	5.33
11	An Expert	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	6	5.67
12	Experienced	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	6	6.67
13	Knowledgeable	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	6	5.67
14	Qualified	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	6	5.83
15	Skilled	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	6	5.83
16	Approachable	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	3.83

Statistic	Attractive	Competent	Handsome	Friendly	Sexy	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy	An Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled	Approachable
Min Value	4	4	4	4	1	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	2
Max Value	6	8	7	5	3	8	7	8	8	8	8	9	8	9	8	7
Mean	4.67	6.00	4.67	4.33	2.17	5.00	4.50	5.17	5.00	5.33	5.67	6.67	5.67	5.83	5.83	3.83
Variance	0.67	2.50	1.47	0.27	0.97	3.20	2.70	2.97	2.80	2.27	3.87	3.87	2.67	4.57	3.37	3.37
Standard Deviation	0.82	1.58	1.21	0.52	0.98	1.79	1.64	1.72	1.67	1.51	1.97	1.97	1.63	2.14	1.83	1.83
Total Responses	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Data for John Freeman in a suit

Figures

Figure 1

Clinton in Bengladesh (Daily Mail Reporters, 2012)

Figure 2
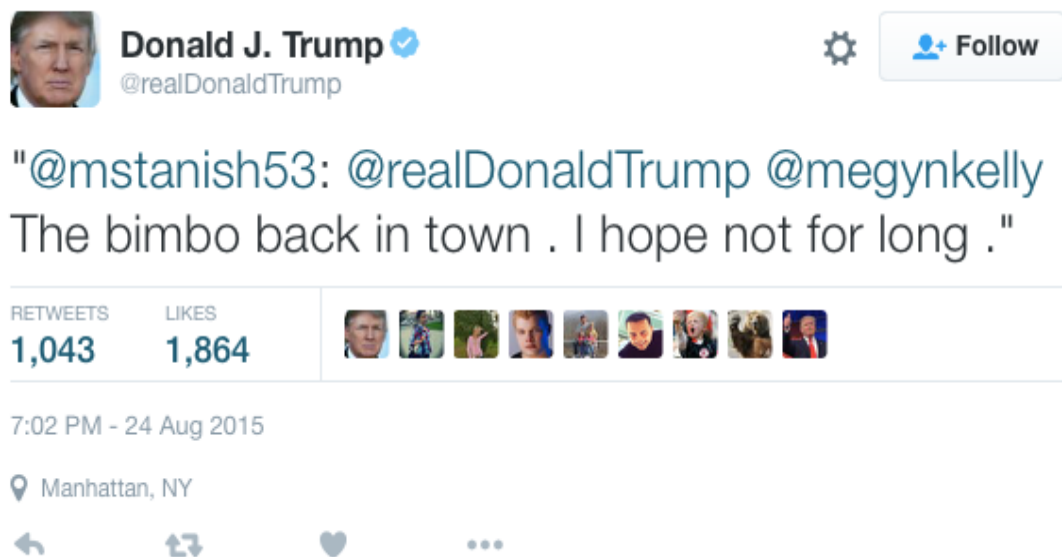
Clinton in Bengladesh, (Misener, 2012)

Figure 3

Senator Clinton – Wednesday, July 18, 2007 talking on the senate floor about cost of higher education (Givhan, 2007)
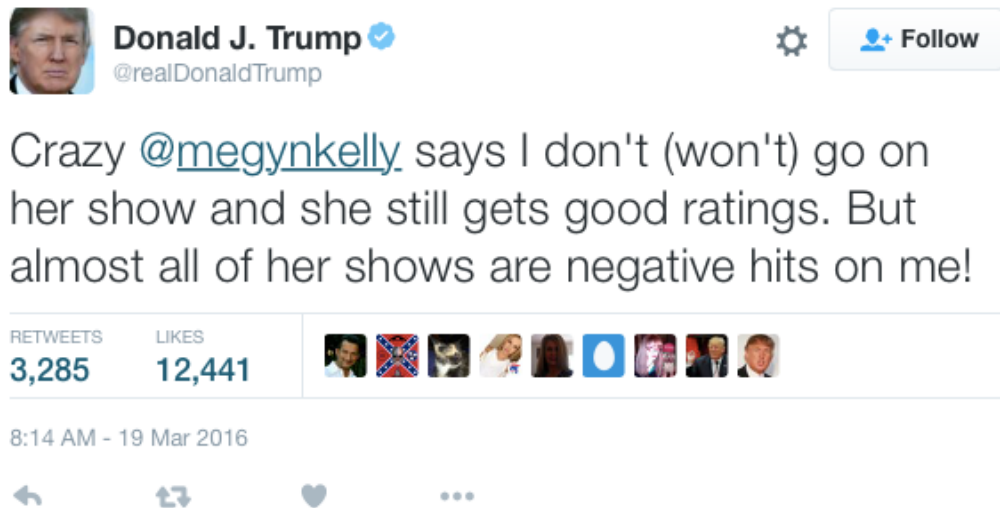
Figure 4

Tweet from Donald Trump's official Twitter Account (Trump, April 16, 2015)

Figure 5

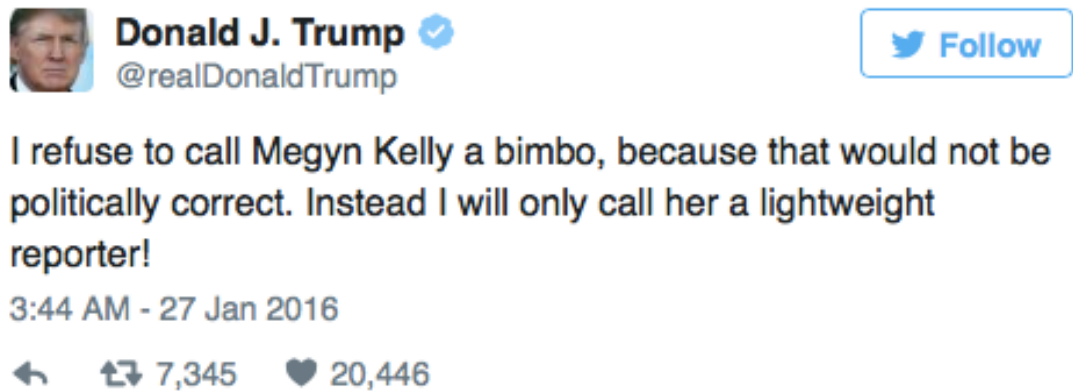Tweet from Donald Trump's official Twitter Account (Trump, August 24, 2015)

Figure 6

Tweet from Donald Trump's official Twitter Account (Trump, March 19, 2016a)

Figure 7

If crazy @megynkelly didn't cover me so much on her terrible show, her ratings would totally tank. She is so average in so many ways!

8:16 AM - 19 Mar 2016

4,325   17,271

Tweet from Donald Trump's official Twitter Account (March 19, 2016b)

Figure 8

I refuse to call Megyn Kelly a bimbo, because that would not be politically correct. Instead I will only call her a lightweight reporter!

3:44 AM - 27 Jan 2016

7,345   20,446

Tweet from Donald Trump's official Twitter Account (Trump, January 17, 2016)

Figure 9

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