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Rethinking Gender and Image politics on social media in the 2016 Presidential Election: A case study of Hillary Clinton's and Carly Fiorina's Twitter Accounts

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Rethinking Gender and Image politics on social media in the 2016 Presidential Election: A case study of Hillary Clinton's and Carly Fiorina's Twitter Accounts

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines how gender and image politics affect the issue ownership on the Twitter accounts of 2016 presidential hopefuls, Hillary Clinton (D) and Carly Fiorina (R). Drawing on Petrocik's Theory of Issue Ownership (1996), I found that Republican female candidates will be less likely to use her gender to discuss a non-gendered issue, that female candidates tweeting a woman's issues get more online engagement than when tweeting about male issues regardless of party and that, regardless of party, female candidates currently do not attack opponents on women's issues. From these results, I postulate that female candidates running on traditional women's issues on Twitter have a unique advantage if they (1) make gender part of their campaign and (2) connect women's issues with other policies such as immigration, the economy or foreign policy.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960's, John F. Kennedy was the first Roman-Catholic candidate to make a serious bid for the U.S. presidency. Traditional media sources, such as newspapers, that covered Kennedy's campaign created a national debate about whether or not a Roman-Catholic could be the next president (Harper & Row, 1965). Newspapers used Kennedy's faith as a roadblock during his campaign by propagating suggestive anti-Catholic rhetoric. For example, after Kennedy won his ninth consecutive primary victory, The New York Times reported his primary success on the front page with an article underneath titled: "Vatican Paper Proclaims Right of Church to Role in Politics (New York Times, 1960)." To circumvent this narrative, Kennedy used, the up and coming, broadcast media to speak directly to the American people about his faith and its role in government. In one televised speech made to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Kennedy highlights the traditional media bias using a non-traditional media source by saying that, "Contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic (Kennedy, 1960)." By going on to television and speaking directly to the American people, Kennedy created his own narrative rather than letting a newspaper do that job.

Fast forward to 2008. Barack Obama's, Hillary Clinton's and Sarah Palin's presidential (and vice-presidential) campaigns created a national debate in the United States about whether or not the American people could elect a president who identified as African American or a woman. In response to biases brought up in traditional media sources (such as television and newspapers) candidates, and voters, went to the up and coming social media as an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about their identity and governance. Barack Obama, for example, used Facebook and Twitter in order to disseminate his message of "Hope" and

“Change” to a larger audience without having it analyzed and re-packaged by traditional media sources (Baronn, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2009).

From Kennedy’s 1960 campaign to Obama’s 2008 campaign, the message is clear: identity matters in campaigns and has become an important part of the United States’ social and political dialogues. Whether a candidate is African American, Caucasian, Male, Female or Roman Catholic, voters use stereotypes of a candidate’s identification as heuristics to decide who they will elect to office. These identifications can be positive or negative depending how the candidate manages media. However, the use of heuristics and stereotypes may still leave some groups underrepresented (Bower-Bir, 2013). For example, Female candidates are not achieving national political office at the same rate as their male counterparts. Even though women make up 50.8% of the population, they only comprise 20% of Congress which leaves approximately 30% of women relatively unrepresented. This lack of representation is due to gender and image voting cues as well as a lack of motivation to run for office that stems from risk aversion behavior (not wanting to risk being stereotyped by media sources) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2014; Manning & Brudnick, 2015; Woods, 2015) . The constraints of traditional media makes it hard for a female candidate to choose their issue ownership (specifically that the candidate is a woman) because traditional media sources use the cultural analysis of females (as caregivers and subordinates) when presenting issues that female candidates are competent in. This analysis does not typically place a woman in a position of power, but constrains women to certain “women’s issues” such as education or childcare. Just as television was a way for Kennedy to speak without traditional media’s intervention, social media has the potential to allow women to own their image and circumvent traditional media to some extent. However, we know little about the strategic value of female candidate’s use of social media.

The goal of this research is to answer, “How does gender affect discussion of women’s issues on the Twitter accounts of 2016 presidential hopefuls, Hillary Clinton (D) and Carly Fiorina (R)?” This research examines how candidates in politically marginalized groups can use the social media market to their advantage. I will approach this topic by discussing the history of women in campaigns, media engagement and stereotypes, voter expectations and Twitter campaign rhetoric. Then I will conduct a case study of Hillary Clinton (D) and Carly Fiorina (R) using Petrocik’s Issue Ownership Model (1996) to determine whether female politicians are using gender related issues to get more online engagement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Women in Politics

The number of women who have run for and obtained national political offices such as Representative, Senator or President, has been steadily increasing since Victoria Claflin Woodhull became the first woman to run for president in 1872, 48 years before women had the right to vote. The first woman to obtain national political office was Jeannette Ranking in 1916. Ranking became a United States Representative for Montana. Women were not represented in the United States Senate until 1932 when Hattie Caraway was elected as Senator of Arkansas (Alonso, 1989; Ehlers, 2014).

Ranking and Caraway are part of a small minority of female United States Representatives and Senators. Of the 896 people elected to the Senate since 1916 only 46 were women. That means that only 5.13% of all people elected to the Senate were women. The average percentage of women in the House of Representatives in 1916 was 5.834%. This number is only slightly higher than the percentage of women who have been elected to the Senate.

Despite the low percentages of women in Congress since 1916, there has been a growing number of women entering Congress each session. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that the number of women elected to the House of Representatives and the Senate has been steadily rising after an initial spike in the 102nd (1991-1993) and 103rd Congress (1993-1995) (Manning & Brudnick, 2015).

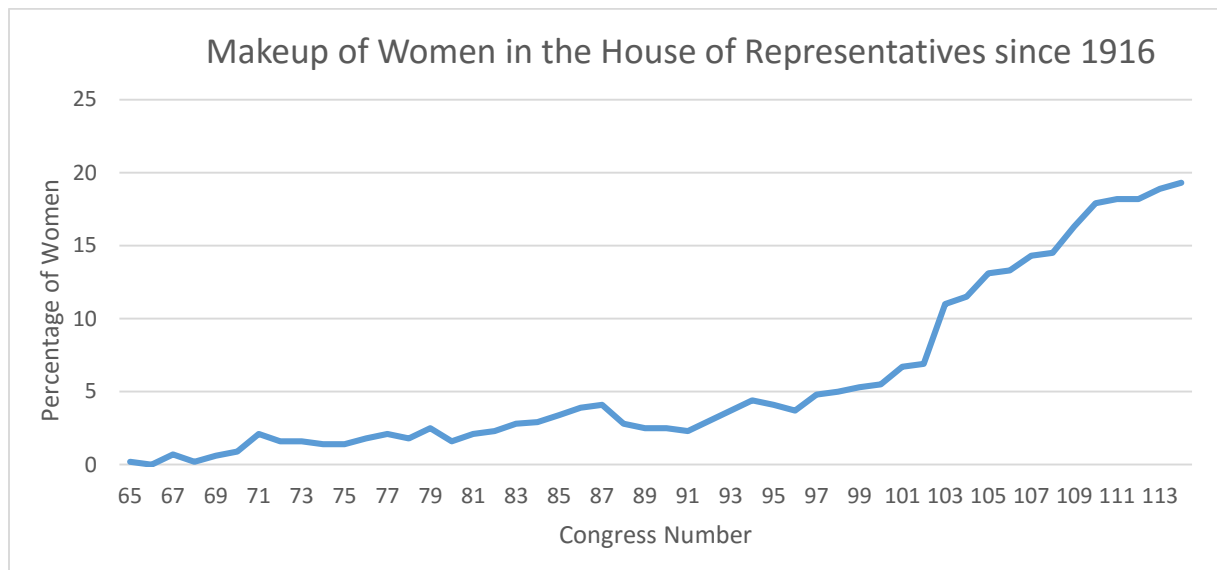


Figure 1. Makeup of women in the House of Representatives since 1916. This figure illustrates the number of women in the House of Representatives in each Congress since 1916

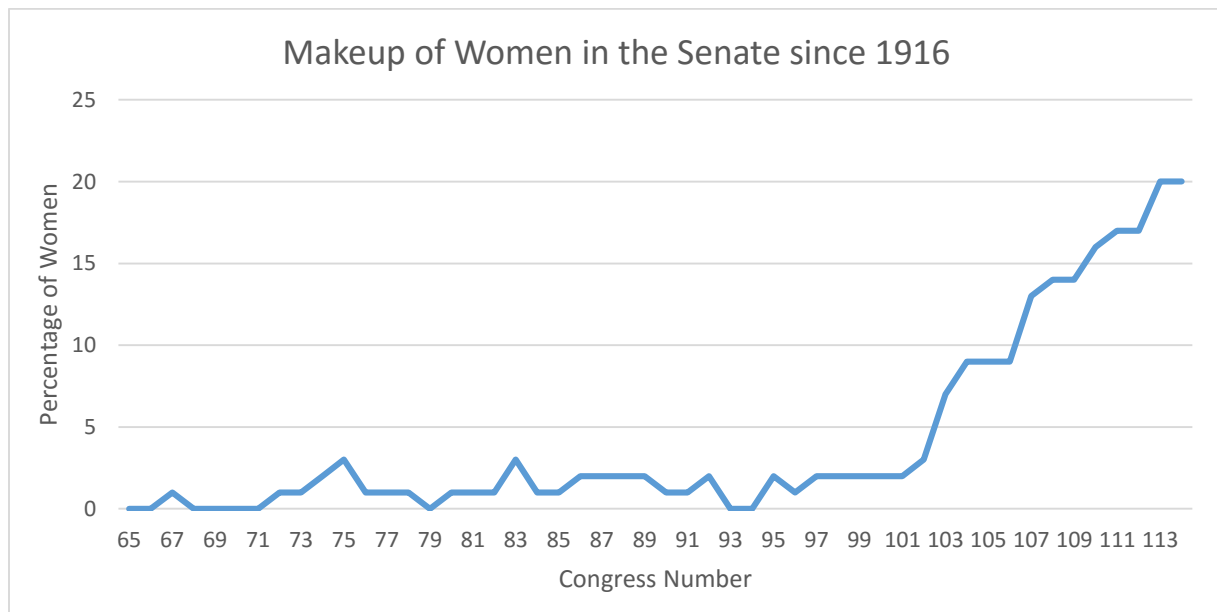


Figure 2. Makeup of women in the Senate since 1916. This figure illustrates the number of women in the Senate in each Congress since 1916.

This spike roughly coincides with the shift from second wave feminism (1960s-1980s) where “The personal is political,” into third wave feminism (1990s-Present) where women reaccepted femininity by redefining it in empowering terms. Second wave feminism, often referred to as radical feminism, focused on gender inequality as a class issue while third wave feminism brought back traditional, sometimes stereotypical feminine issues while being critical of, “True femaleness, of victimization and liberation (pg 17).” While second wave feminism essentially rejected traditional gender roles, third wave feminism accepted and redefined them. Both waves, however, advocated for women stepping outside gender expectations by creating a gender narrative through everything from protest to Internet literature. This shift of the feminist narrative changed how society viewed and treated women. This change also shifted the cultural shared expectations of women for some people, institutions and the media. This effect, combined with the media’s agenda setting power, changed the conditions under which female politicians were considered by shifting the cultural narrative for women (Krolokke, 2005).

This shift in the feminist narrative could have led to the spike in representation in the 102nd and 103rd Congress which is significant because feminist scholars are currently debating whether or not the movement is moving into a fourth wave (Munro, 2014). This argument that feminism is moving into a fourth wave is centered on the movement’s use of the Internet to create a “call-out” culture for misogyny while creating a global community of feminists to spread a unified message. If the spike in Congressional representation is in response to the change from second wave feminism to third wave feminism then we can anticipate a similar achievement in female politicians today. Specifically, a female candidate who supported the feminist movement, such as Hillary Clinton, would have, “A defense team outside of her official campaign apparatus, one that will be more concerned that she is treated, in their minds, fairly by the male-dominated

political establishment...,” according to Bacon (2014). This means that a shift of feminism to being a “call-out” culture paired with the rising use of Internet campaigning could positively impact how gender and image politics can affect female candidates for national office.

Image Politics: The Media’s Effect on Female Candidates

Image is everything, especially in politics. With the increase in the quality and quantity of visual media, politicians have increased pressure to look the part; making image as important, if not more important, than policy. This is especially true for low-information voters who use heuristics such as appearance, incumbency status and party affiliation to decide who they will support (Banducci et al., 2003). This section will examine the progression of the media in regards to its reach, role and effect.

The Internet has made everyone a journalist which means that normative views of media (such as they have agenda-setting power and serve a watchdog function) are becoming obsolete to some extent (Goode, 2009). We now have to regard media as an abstract concept that includes traditional journalists (professional journalists who work in broadcast, print and radio journalism), non-traditional journalists and, what I will call, self-reported journalists (professional or non-professional journalists who use new digital media to report on their own ideas, opinions and practices). With media’s new found ability to bypass traditional media filters, candidates are able to become self-reported journalists by directly telling their followers the news and information that they want their followers to know. The power of self-reported journalists directly messaging the populace to get across their ideas is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.¹:

¹ Tweets collected on November 5, 2015.



Figure 3. Hillary Clinton defining the economy on Twitter.

Clinton talks about the economy in terms of minimum wage.



Figure 4. Jeb Bush defining the economy on Twitter. Bush

talks about the economy in terms of an energy revolution.

Both Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush chose an issue and reframed it to present it to their supporters in a way that would help their campaign. Hillary Clinton aimed for the female vote by capitalizing on a “compassion issue” (Noveck, 2007) and redefining the minimum wage debate in that context while Jeb Bush equated economic growth with his energy plan. Both are opinions and policy ideas that were framed and presented to audiences of over 4.37 million (Clinton) and 323 thousand (Bush) Twitter followers as fact, thus undermining the normative role of media.² Media can no longer be defined as a singular entity or even multiple entities with a

² Data collected on November 5, 2015

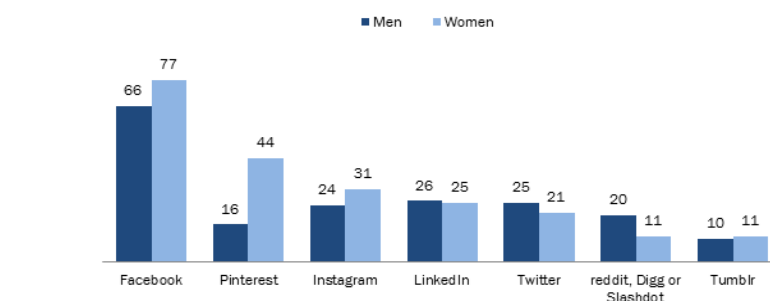
fundamentally singular purpose, so the remainder of this section will be dedicated to analyzing what demographics are attending to what type of media. This means that female candidates have the opportunity to create their own image despite traditional media's watchdog or agenda setting power. Social media allows female candidates to define how they want their supporters to view them (whether that be as a woman or not).

According to a Gallup Poll (2013), 55% of Americans get their news from television, 21% from the Internet, 6% from radio and the rest were either word of mouth (2%), media (non-specific) (1%), other (2%), none/don't follow the news (1%) and no opinion (3%). The demographics of who attends to which media can prove useful for a candidate when messaging to their social media audience compared to messaging to their traditional media audience. In traditional media TV is the primary news source for all age groups, regardless of education or employment status (Gallup, 2013). A Pew Research Poll (2008) (the latest data available) found that women were more likely to attend to broadcast media such as network morning shows, nightly network news, network news magazines and local TV stations while men were more likely to attend to cable news, newspapers, news online, talk radio and radio news. This poll also broke down the different types of stories that men and women attended to. Women were more likely to follow stories that related to families, tragedies and possible tragedies while men were more likely to follow sports, domestic policy and foreign policy (Pew Research Center, 2008). The content of what people on traditional media sources cover provides a basis for discussing what issues women consider important compared to men. This is useful when developing a social media narrative because a candidate can use the data to set their own agenda to reflect the issues that their desired audience find important.

Using the audience's traditional media preferences can allow a female candidate to market to a specific audience on social media, but to do that, a female candidate needs to understand her target audience. Pew Research Center found (2014) that there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in their social media usage. Online men who use social media is at 73% which is close to the 80% of online women who reported using social media. While the overall usage of social media sites has evened out between the genders, there are some differences. Figure 5 is Pew Research Center's (2014) breakdown of male and female usage of the different social media platforms.

Women Are More Likely to Use Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, While Online Forums Are Popular Among Men

% of online adults by gender who use the following social media and discussion sites



Pew Research Center surveys conducted March 17-April 12, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 5. Pew Research Center's breakdown of social media usage by gender.

Women use Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr more while men use LinkedIn, Twitter and Reddit more. This research specifically discusses how female candidates create and own issues on Twitter which is the audience this research will focus on. Gender is a relatively strong voting cue, and, currently, men are a larger part of the Twitter audience than women (McDermott, 1998). While social media sites, like Twitter give female candidates the ability to message directly to their followers, the composition of the audience (gender, race, income level,

etc.) could affect the issue which female candidates run on. This, ultimately, gives the candidate's agenda setting power to her followers.

The Media's Role in Campaigns

Historically, politicians and campaigns sought out the media when running for office in order to gain name and face recognition, but, as mentioned above, the rise of the Internet and social media has allowed campaigns and supporters to become citizen journalists and send their messages directly to the voter rather than being at the will of the traditional media (Storck , 2011; Meraz, 2009). Despite this change in who is providing the information and how, the media (whether that be traditional or social) has two basic roles in campaigns: recognition and reach. (Groseclose, 2009). These roles effect how a female candidate is portrayed depending on the source that provides their audience with the candidate "recognition."

Feminist scholarship proposes that, in the media, women are sexualized and stereotyped (whenever you say "scholarship" or research it should be followed by several cites indicative of what you're talking about, even if they're repeating cites from above). Piggy backing off of this scholarship, are dozens of actresses such as Emma Stone and Lena Dunham calling out the media for asking them questions such as, "What are you wearing tonight?" instead of questions about their current projects. These stereotypes spill over into the political realm when female candidates are asked about their outfits or competency instead of their policy. Perhaps the most famous and recent example is the media's brief obsession with Hillary Clinton's pantsuits and *Newsweek* Magazine's (2008) picture of Sarah Palin's legs. By focusing on image, female politicians may have to combat their perceived image-competency (ability to look good) with policy-competency (ability to discuss policy), but the degree and magnitude of the media's

ability to change voters' standard for female politicians is debated by mass communication scholars.

Bennet and Iyengar (2008) argue in their article that we are transitioning into an era where media has minimal effects because news has become, "Less of a habit and more of an afterthought," for voters who have the ability to choose the content with which they want to interact. This means that voters may not be as influenced by the traditional media's portrayal of women. Despite this, there may still be some aggregate effect of the media according to Shehata and Stromback (2013). Shehata and Stromback (2013) explain that the recent change in the media environment (namely the change to social media and citizen journalist) has made the media's agenda setting powers insignificant because of the increased opportunities for people to choose the type and content of the media they attend to. That means that partisan selective exposure is the "key mechanism" behind media effects making it imperative the female candidates tailor their message based on their gender and their audience.

The Internet has increased people's ability to choose the news they want to attend to which means that people do not tend to interact with programs that contradict their beliefs. This increase in choice allows viewers to selectively approach and avoid information that does not fit with their beliefs thus creating niche media markets which fundamentally change the way traditional media sources operate (Arceneaux and Johnson, 2013; Prior, 2010). For example, people who are more conservative will tend to attend to news organizations that are using a conservative lenses when reporting on the issues. This entire argument boils down to a fundamental change in how the media market operates. Instead of the audience trying to find a news outlets to get the information of the day, the news outlets are now trying to find an audience to give the information that the audience wants to hear. The clearest example is

MSNBC whose programming, according to a Pew Research Center Poll's 2013 State of the Media, is 85% commentary and opinion about liberal issues with a liberal audience (Pew Research Center, 2014). This tactic allows media outlets to stay financially viable, but also creates a fragmented media market that requires media outlets to find and court the audience they want (Pew Research Center, 2014). Social media campaigns face a similar problem. Social Media sites, like Twitter give users the opportunity to choose what they want to engage with. On a singular Twitter user's profile, they can choose whether or not they want to follow a candidate, read a candidate posts or retweet a candidate while having thousands of other tweets from other users flooding their feed. This makes it even harder for a candidate to successfully create an issue narrative on social media. Additionally, if a female candidate's campaign is to remain financially and competitively viable, the candidate needs to appeal to their audience who may or may not be motivated to engage in a political discourse that does not agree with their sentiments. This means that female candidate who are taking to Twitter to avoid the traditional media's portrayal of women may not be able to define their issue narrative independent of an outside organization. Social media still creates constraints because of the ability to choose however they want because, like traditional media, without supporters their campaign is over.

Voter Expectations in Campaigns: Stereotypes and Voter Cues

Societal roles for women and men have been long established in the United States' culture which makes them a common part of a female candidates' issue ownership. Typically, women serve the role of the "caregiver" and men serve the role of the "provider" and these "roles" have transitioned into stereotypes that have the potential to *subtly* impact a woman's campaign for national political office. Madeline Heilman notes that in our society,

Men are characterized as aggressive, forceful, independent, and decisive, whereas women are characterized as kind, helpful, sympathetic, and concerned about others. Not only are the conceptions of women and men different, but they also often are oppositional, with members of one sex seen as lacking what is thought to be most prevalent in members of the other sex. (Heilman, 2001)

Stereotyped beliefs such as these can be extremely resistant to change, so female candidates ultimately have to work within these stereotypes (Moreno & Bodenhausen, 1999). These stereotypes are a product societal expectations bred from years of reinforcement. Alice Eagly's Social Role Theory provides the framework in which to understand these ingrained gendered roles. The theory states that, "Focuses on interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems as developed by social systems in which people live (Dulin 2007)." In other words, social life is fundamentally gendered because the structure of our society is based on gender and gender roles that guide our behaviors.

Traditional gender roles place women as caregivers and men as breadwinners. Heilman (2001) explained that gender roles, such as these, come from society's shared expectation of what a woman or a man should or should not do. Heilman (2001) elaborates that these expectations of men and women manifest themselves in a theoretical list of gendered tasks and expectations (Heilman, 2001). This theoretical "list" brings gender stereotypes into the political arena, causing news entities to characterize female candidates and politicians differently from their male counterpart. An example of this is showing emotions through physical manifestation (tears) in the media. A USA Today (2007) article aptly refers to this as, "The Crying Game (Noveck, 2007)." In other words, male candidates and politicians can cry, and they will be characterized as compassionate. On the other hand, female candidates and politicians will usually

be characterized as weak or hysterical. Hillary Clinton expressed this idea during her 2008 presidential primary run in New Hampshire when she said, “It’s that difficult position that a woman candidate is in, because if you get too emotional it undercuts you. A man can cry. We know that. Lots of leaders have cried. But, you know, a woman, that’s a different kind of dynamic (Clinton, 2008).”

Clinton may be working from the assumption that there is a societal shared expectation that men receive favor from the media when it comes to being emotional, but being emotional may not intrinsically be gendered (Brooks, 2013). Brooks (2013) explains that men can also experience negative effects of crying on the campaign trail. Specifically, she mentions, Edmund Muskie who cried as he was campaigning for the New Hampshire Democratic primaries after accusations that he referred to Canadians in a derogatory manner and that his wife was acting “unladylike” and “drunken (Brooks, 2013).” Muskie says that the crying incident undermined his candidacy despite his gender. This suggests that even issues or actions, such as crying, that are considered gender may still not significantly impact a woman’s ability to attain national political office.

This could be because gender bias does not play an obvious role in a person’s decision of who to vote for according to a study conducted by (Welch & Sigelman, 1982). Welch and Sigelman (1982) found that participants were not any more or any less likely to support a generic female candidate than a generic male candidate. Iyengar (2011) explains that female and males are considered differently based on issues that people perceive them as competent in. He names defense, terrorism and crime as male-issues while he names child care and educational policy as female issues (Iyengar, 2011). This means that the issues talked about in campaigns have the potential to be intrinsically gendered (help one gender over the other). For female candidates that

changes how they create and assert their issue ownership on social media because appearing issue competent can increase a person's likelihood for voting for that candidate Huddy and Terkildsen (2013) confirms Iyengar's (2011) finding after discovering that voters typically subscribe to a "gender-belief" stereotype (Petrocik, 1996). They found that women were seen as more compassionate and therefore had a perceived competency when discussing issues of poverty or education, but not when discussing military or economic issues (two issues that men have a perceived competency with) (Huddy and Terkildsen, 2013). As Eagly (1987) asserts in her Social Role Theory, women are the care-givers and therefore there is a shared expectation that they would be able to handle issues that center around "care-giving" and compassion (Noveck 2007) better than other issues thus giving them issue-competency.

There is a division between men's issues and women's issues which effects the issue ownership of a candidate. For women, this effect is negative because historically, the economy has been the number one issue that voters care (Gallup, 2015) about. In fact, Pew Research Center's State of the Media (2013) found that in 2012 the biggest topics for network news were the presidential election and the economy's slow recovery from the recession. This means that female candidates inherently do not have the perceived issue competency to deal with the country's number one issue, but social media sites allow candidates to construct a narrative that could include and control messaging that increases that competency. The media's agenda setting power inadvertently gives male candidates for national political office an upper hand because of these gender-belief stereotypes. If the biggest issue that year was an issue that is more female friendly, then we would most likely see the opposite effect. Because of this, we have to conclude that the difference between male and female centered issues is not intrinsically a systemic issue,

but a cultural problem based on a societal shared expectations about female stereotypes and roles. This means that this female candidates cannot fix the system, they have to work within it.

Additionally, voter expectations, and ultimately actions, are rooted in voting cues. Voting cues are heuristics that can allow voters to make thoughtful policy or candidate choices without being fully engaged in an election. Examples of cues that people use to decide who/what to vote for are age, attractiveness and, most importantly for our purposes, gender (Webster & Pierce, 2012; Chiao, Bowman & Gill, 2008). Having two X chromosomes can affect the turnout of an election. Plutzer (1992) identified this in his study of 14 statewide races. Each of these elections had a female candidate who ran “as a woman” (in other word the candidates made their gender a prominent part of their campaign) and a women’s representative (Plutzer, 1992). He found that there was a widespread party “defection” so that people could vote for the female candidate in the race. While these instances shows some favorability for women running as women, the use of strong gender voting cues can also turn some potential voters off. A study done by Stambough (2003) found that gender voting cues are an important factor among Republican voters (in particularly male Republican voters) when choosing who to vote for, thus for campaigns to successful use or subvert gender cues they must know who their audience is and whether or not these cues are important to them.

Election cycles combined with information availability and voter interest level can effect gender voting cues by making them more or less available depending on the voter. Currently, our fragments media environment (Bennet and Iyengar, 2013) is polarizing the populace by making voters either hyper-political with a lot of news knowledge or a-political with little new knowledge. This is the consequence of the Internet increasing the ability for voters to choose the type and political persuasion of the information they attend to (Arceneaux and Johnson, 2013).

This fragmented media environment leads to a political knowledge gap where there is a group of people who are well informed about the issues and stances they choose to be well informed about and there is a group of people who are not informed at all because they actively choose to avoid the information (Stroud, 2007; Prior, 2010). This political knowledge gap creates a “low-information” election for a segment of the population in every election whether it be a local, state or national election. This means that, for a segment of the population, the importance of partisan voting cues and, ultimately, gender voting cues increases. This means that people can choose whether or not they want to attend to media sources (traditional or not) that provide information and voting cues (such as gender) for elections which suggests that a female candidate using gendered messaging may only work for a niche group of her supporters and effect other groups vastly differently depending on that group’s political knowledge.

Considering the effect of gender voting cues in low-information elections can simulate the effect of the new polarized media environment because it provides a study of how those who are not engaging with the information about elections and the issues are using gender cues to vote (Mechtel, 2014; McDermott, 1998). Gender cues can also signal conflicting ideological voting cues because women are perceived to be more liberal than men which adds another cue for potential voters to consider (McDermott, 1998). These factors will vary in effectiveness for people depending on their level of engagement with election information and news.

Transition from Traditional Campaigns to Social Media Campaigns

In the last 20 years, campaigns have become a mixture of traditional media campaigns with social media campaigns. Part of this can be attributed to the changing ideas of what civic engagement is and how campaigns are using that to get potential voters to further their cause. Normative views on civic engagement and political participation include the idea that citizens

should be informed and vote. This does not account for non-traditional means of civic engagement such as online engagement on a female candidate's Twitter (retweets and favorites) which can still have an impact on a campaign (Best et al., 2005). Promoting online, non-traditional engagement methods can help spread and promote a female candidate's issue ownership.

Examples of impactful non-traditional means of civic engagement are protests, blogs or social media. Historically, non-traditional means of civic engagement has been a moving force in politics. One example is Susan B. Anthony's women's suffrage movement. Women did not have the ability to participate in the government in a normative sense, meaning that they could not vote or hold office. Instead, women with similar views banded together to enact change (Sherr, 1996). Fast-forward to the present and the Internet has increased the non-normative civic engagement. For example, In 2008 Barack Obama redefined political participation in campaigns by activating communities of activists that connected with potential voters instead of relying on a traditional media campaign with older professionals making decisions (Gelber, 2008; Chang 2010). Additionally, he engaged people on social media to share his message, pictures and calls for fundraising (Change, 2010).

The transition from historical non-normative means of civic engagement to the contemporary non-normative means of civic engagement is rooted in invention and proliferation of the Internet and social media. Campaigns now have the task of using those non-normative means of civic engagement to garner support, funds and followers (on Twitter) rather than just informed votes (Best et al., 2005). Today, every candidate for national political office has some form of social media to give viewers an opportunity to support them in non-traditional ways. Despite the increasing use of social media to engage voters in new ways by campaigns, it is

important to note that modern campaigns are still in the *transition* period, meaning that traditional media and social media campaigns must work with each other to create a campaign narrative that will influence non-traditional civic engagement for a campaign. For female candidates that means that their issue ownership choices will have to play into some traditional views of women. Social media sources have proven to be useful in activating those who are already engaged in the campaign, but not necessarily reaching those who are not engaged in the campaign or online.

The Social Media Campaign

Social media campaigns are a relatively new concept to the political world. The first successful use of the Internet in a political campaign was Howard Dean's use of the Internet to fundraise for his campaign (Wolf, 2004). Since then, the Internet has been growing in its importance to campaigns with the advent of social media platforms that had the potential to reach a relatively large number of people without having their campaign message filtered through traditional media sources. Social Media outlets', such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, potential was not harnessed until Barack Obama's 2008 campaign for president (Cammaerts & Anstead, 2012). In that election, Obama utilized Twitter Facebook and his own campaign website to engage and organize supporters around the "Obama" brand. Armed with social media outlets that reach thousands of people in the United States, data analytics and a more efficient version of Howard Dean's online fundraising, Obama was able to make a successful social media campaign that helped him target and convince likely voters to vote on election day. In order to discuss what makes a successful social media campaign, this section will dissect the elements that makes a general campaign successful, tailor the discussion in terms of adapting the campaign to be run on social media and discuss specific Twitter techniques candidates can use.

The National Democratic Institute (2009) created a six step plan to create a campaign to win an election (this report was targeted directly toward Malaysia and Burma elections, but the concepts are universal) (Lynn, 2009). It emphasizes knowing the political landscape, setting obtainable goals, targeting voter, developing a campaign message and a voter contact plan. This strategy in the context of social media requires that candidates consider the platform they are using (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), the people attending to their social media (age, race, gender) and the way in which they construct and send out messages on social media. This is in addition to keeping in mind message discipline and meaningful engagement (for example, 300 shares on Facebook would be preferable to 300 Likes since shares will expose more people to a candidate's message).

For a Twitter specific campaign strategy, Twitter created a 136 page handbook that breaks down some basic tips to help candidates create a successful Twitter campaign that can promote followers to share their message and participate in the campaign. This handbook provides candidate with basic Twitter setup and usage information and then makes suggestions for persuasion techniques on Twitter. Specifically, it found that photos got the most retweets (which is online engagement) which could help a female candidate reinforce her issue ownership through imagery because photos are 62% more likely to be retweeted. In addition to creating visual interest, the handbook stresses personalizing the biography section and tweets to include relatable information about the candidate (an opportunity for a textual reinforcement of their issue narrative). It also mentions creating a call to action by asking followers to engage by retweeting or asking them to take other actions (donate, post pictures, etc.). The handbook also stresses creativity, live tweeting and media variance (photos and short videos). These techniques can be used to create a visual and textual issue ownership that reinforces a candidate's narrative

based on their desired audience, but in order for a campaign to be successful it needs to be able to motivate their viewers to share their message (Twitter Government and Election Team, 2014).

Social media campaigns are unique in that they have to catch a viewer's attention AND prompt them to take action (I will define action as Like, Share, Retweet, Favorite or Comment) when a viewer is already surrounded by multiple different stimuli and distractions. On average, A GWI Social report found that people spend 1.72 hours a day on social media. The increase in people having multiple social media platforms means that this time is split between 2 to 5 other social media sources which means that a person is spending anywhere from 51 minutes to 20 minutes per social media site per day (Mander, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2009). In these twenty minutes, a campaign's social media message must compete against thousands of other posts, videos, pictures, etc. for the viewer's interest and engagement. This limited time spent on social media sites means that a social media campaign has a limited time in which to engage the viewer, especially one who is not already invested in politics/the election/the campaign. This lack of time and motivation to engage on the part of the voter allows female candidates owning gender issues to capitalize by providing voters with a heuristic that is easy to remember and proven to be strong (gender) (McDermott, 1998; Plutzer & Zipp, 1996).

With this limited opportunity to catch the viewers' attention, candidates must optimize their online engagement on Twitter by using situational issues to attract the retweet and share by followers. Kreiss (2014) argues that campaigns are using Twitter as, "A tool to set the press's agenda and shape journalists' understanding of the election (pg. 3)," which gives female candidates the opportunity to insert their issues into the agenda. This method is effective if the candidate exercises a performative power over their followers to influence them to take actions they may not usually take (Kriess, 2014; Reed, 2013). Reed (2013) defines performative power

as power through the use of situational interactions that allows the actor to exert control independent of social structure and linguistic use. Performative power in terms of political interactions in social media is when a candidate or politician uses a situation unrelated to their expertise or campaign to garner more attention or engagement on social media. Kriess (2014) uses the example of President Obama tweeting out a picture of him sitting in his chair with the message “This seat’s taken” after Clint Eastwood gave a speech in which he conversed about Obama to an empty chair. This tweet was retweeted almost 60,000 times and got traditional media’s attention giving Obama and his tweet performative power. Female candidates can use this performative power to create a perceived competency in non-gendered or male-centric issues, but the tweets must have timely, valuable, insider and concise information to motivate engagement (Parmelee, 2013). Exercising their performative power can allow female candidates to mitigate the effects of intangible voter cues such as appearance, gender or party identification taking advantage of the situation and not the issue on Twitter and in the traditional media. This allows them to reshape how low-information voters view the candidate’s competency on complex issues (Banducci, Thrasher, Rallings, Karp, 2003).

THEORY

This research seeks to study how gender expectations affect a female candidate’s issue ownership on social media, specifically on Twitter. This research will use the Issue Ownership Theory created by John Petrocik (1996) to determine how female candidates are currently owning issues and if the use of issue ownership based on gender cues will increase online engagement on Twitter for them.

Petrocik’s (1996) theory of issue ownerships states that, “A campaign effect is when a candidate successfully frames the vote choice as a decision to be made in terms of problems

facing the country that he is better able to “handle” than his opponents (Petrocik, 1996).”

Specifically, Petrocik (1996) emphasizes the importance of a candidate focusing their messaging on solving a problem that they have issue competency in based on their party instead of creating policy. This theory provides the following four criteria to base a candidate’s chosen message on.

- First, a candidate must appear to “handle” issues better than their opponents with “handle” being defined as resolve a problem that voters care about.
- Second, candidates should run against the record and failings of the incumbent, especially if there is a party difference, because there is an increased “handling” advantage when the party mishandled a situation.
- Third, a campaign is a “marketing effort,” so campaign programs that reflect owned issues of the candidate and their party provides a strategic advantage and a criteria for voters to make their choice.
- Fourth, media voters don’t have a preference about social or policy issues, so a candidate should focus on issues that each party has a perceived competency in.

Petrocik’s (1996) criteria focus on messaging issues that a candidate can own in order to be successful. This makes his theory ideal to discuss gendered issue ownership on a female candidates’ social media page which is an extension of their actual campaign. While Petrocik (1996) discusses party as the cue for effective issue ownership, in this research the theory is using gender since, like with party identification, there are certain issues that are associated with a specific gender. This theory will serve as a framework to consider issue ownership based on Carly Fiorina’s and Hillary Clinton’s Twitter accounts. To use this as a theoretical framework, the following assumptions are made:

1. Gender and party are comparable issue ownership cues.

2. Engagement on Twitter is limited to a person or entity retweeting or favoriting a Tweet sent out by the candidate's official campaign website (subsidiaries such as, Iowa for Hillary, will not be considered in this analysis)
3. The more online engagement that a candidate gets is an indicator of a candidate's success in messaging despite the sentiment behind the engagement. This assumption comes from Indiana University study that found a strong correlation between the number of Tweet shares and the vote share, giving candidates who were mentioned more on Twitter a higher vote share.
4. Candidates only have issue competency based on party and gender perceptions. Outside experiences (such as previous jobs or titles) don't impact their issue competency in the eyes of the voters.

To test the framework, Fiorina's and Clinton's chosen issue ownership will serve as the constant. The independent variable will be the candidate's use of gender cues when expressing their issue ownership used to express it. I will then measure the online engagement and number of tweets about issues that females have a perceived competency with. To determine this, I will measure the amount of tweets (on certain issues) and online engagement for these tweets. This information will be used to test the following hypotheses.

H1: The Republican female candidate will be less likely to use her gender to discuss a non-gendered issue compared to the Democratic female candidate.

H2: A female candidates' tweets about female issues will receive more online engagement than tweets about male issues.

H3: If a female candidate attacks an opponent from the opposite party, they will focus on the opponent's record in regards to women's issues (focus means 51% or more of their tweets will relate include their opponents; records regarding women or women's issues).

DATA AND METHODS

This analysis will consider the number, content and online engagement on the Twitter accounts of the two female candidates in the 2016 presidential election: Carly Fiorina (R) and Hillary Clinton (D) to test my hypotheses. Clinton and Fiorina are the candidates used for this case study because as presidential candidates' social media is an integral to spreading their message nationally. This is in contrast with candidates for Congress who only need to reach their constituency in their district or state. Additionally, since both are running for the presidency, they have the same voting populace to target (even if they choose to message to different demographics). Candidates for Congress would not be comparable unless there were two female candidates running against each other or two candidates from different elections who are catering to a similar demographics and therefore are not tailoring their message to their state's or district's specific needs.

Of all the women who have run for president, I chose Fiorina and Clinton because they are the first prominent female candidates to run for president since Barack Obama's 2008 campaign revolutionized campaigning by using social media to connect to his supporters. Candidates before 2008 were not using social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram to campaign or spread their message and therefore may not have social media sites that focus on messaging their brand. Additionally, each candidate represents one of the two major political parties in the United States, Republican and Democrat, so they provide the

opportunity to compare how female Republican candidates use their gender to increase their issue competency compared to how female Democratic candidates do so.

Since this research is about a female candidate's issue ownership I used Petrocik's Theory of Issue Ownership (1996) as a guide to generate my hypotheses by replacing his steps for issue ownership for a political party with gender. This is appropriate because political party is considered a voting cue in Petrocik's theory (1996), so it is reasonable to use gender as a voting cue to replace it.

To test my hypotheses I obtained all the tweets and retweets of Carly Fiorina's and Hillary Clinton's official political Twitter (no subsidiaries such as Iowa for Hillary) from Twitonomy. The tweets considered in this study were obtained from the day the candidate announced to November 18, 2015. I define online engagement with the candidate's tweets as the number of "retweets" and "favorites." I defined "women's issue tweets" as tweets containing the following words or subject matter: women, childcare, education and family (as defined by Huddy and Terkildsen, 2013; Iyengar, 2011). To determine whether a tweet contained subject matter without one of the above words being delineated, I did a content analysis on the tweets in question. Below is the breakdown of my methodology by hypothesis:

To test H1 I examined each candidate's number of tweets and subject matter of tweets that specifically mention the word "Economy." I categorized each candidate's Tweet and compared the women's issue list to the list of topics covered in each candidate's Tweets about the economy. The hypothesis holds true if Clinton uses her gender more in her Tweets that mention the economy than does Fiorina.

To test H2 I searched both candidates' tweets for tweets that contained the word "Women" and the words "Economy" and "Budget" (the male issues). I found the mean number of favorites and retweets for both the female and male categories. I then compared the female favorites to the male favorites and the female retweets to the male retweets in order to determine which issues garnered more online engagement. I did not exclude duplicate tweets from the analysis (for example is a candidate sent out the same tweet twice) because each share and favorite still represented a new engagement on a new post. Fiorina and Clinton's cases were considered independent of each other. The hypothesis would hold if the average number of online engagements per tweet for candidates' tweets that contained the words "Economy" and "Budget" were lower than the average number of online engagement per tweet for candidates' tweets containing the word "women."

To test H3, I measured the number of mentions on Twitter of each candidate's opponents from the opposite party. The opponents chosen to be a part of this consideration are the top registered candidates as of November 15, 2015. For Fiorina, I measured the mentions of Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley. For Hillary Clinton, I measured the mentions of Donald Trump, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Carly Fiorina, John Kasich, Ted Cruz and Chris Christie. I then did an independent analysis of each mention to determine if a women's issue (defined as tweets containing the following words or subject matter: women, childcare, education and family). I found the percentage of opponent Twitter mentions that involved women's issues and then the overall percentage of opponent Twitter mentions that involved women's issues. To determine if my hypothesis held, I defined "focus" as 51% or more of their tweets will relate include their opponents; records regarding women or women's issues. This data was taken 11

weeks before the first presidential primary. Fiorina and Clinton were considered independent of each other.

CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

Before presenting the results of the hypotheses tests, I have created a summary of Fiorina's and Clinton's Twitter accounts to give more context to these results. To do this, I examined some basic information about Fiorina's and Clinton's Twitters (Twitter handle, image usage, biography), online engagement and stated issue ownership based on their campaign website. I chose the information from their website to use as a general guideline to understand which issues the candidates want to seem competent in so that I can consider this when discussing the results of my hypotheses tests.

Fiorina's and Clinton's Twitter handles are similar with Fiorina's being her name (@carlyfiorina) and with Clinton's being her name (@hillaryclinton). In terms of image usage on social media, Fiorina chooses to use her campaign slogan in her profile picture while Clinton uses her own picture. This is interesting because it shows that each candidate has a different emphasis. Fiorina is most likely aiming for more name recognition while Clinton is most likely using her already almost universal name recognition to allow her to emphasize her femininity through profile picture imagery.

Fiorina's biography on Twitter reads, "Businesswoman, wife, mother, & grandmother. A conservative who believes in unlocking human potential & holding govt accountable."³ Clinton's biography on Twitter reads, "Wife, mom, grandma, women+kids advocate, FLOTUS, Senator, SecState, hair icon, pantsuit aficionado, 2016 presidential candidate. Tweets from Hillary signed

³ Biography collected on November 5, 2015.

–H.”⁴ Both biographies contain overt references to each candidate’s gender (wife, mother, grandma, businesswoman etc.”) in the first sentence of each other their two sentence biographies on Twitter. Specifically Fiorina uses the first sentence to establish what she has done as a woman (run a business, have children and have grandchildren) and her second sentence describes her general ideology. Clinton’s first sentence also establishes what she has done as woman (wife, mom, grandma, women = kids advocate, etc.) and as a political figure (Senator and SecState). Her second sentences identifies the personal aspect of her future tweets, but does not give more information about her policy views or ideology (See more biography in Appendix A).

In terms of Twitter usage and online engagement, Clinton has tweeted more than Fiorina since she announced her candidacy on Twitter on May 4, 2015. She has tweeted 2810 times while Fiorina has only tweets 975 times. Consequently, Clinton’s average number of tweets per day is higher at 11.23 tweets compared to Fiorina’s 4.76 tweets per day. I also measured the overall online engagement (retweets and favorites) on Twitter to see which candidate is creating posts that are getting their followers to share their message. To measure this, I compared the percentage of retweets of Clinton’s tweets to Fiorina’s (Figure 6). Fiorina has more retweets and favorites than Clinton, but overall less followers.

⁴ Biography collected on November 5, 2015

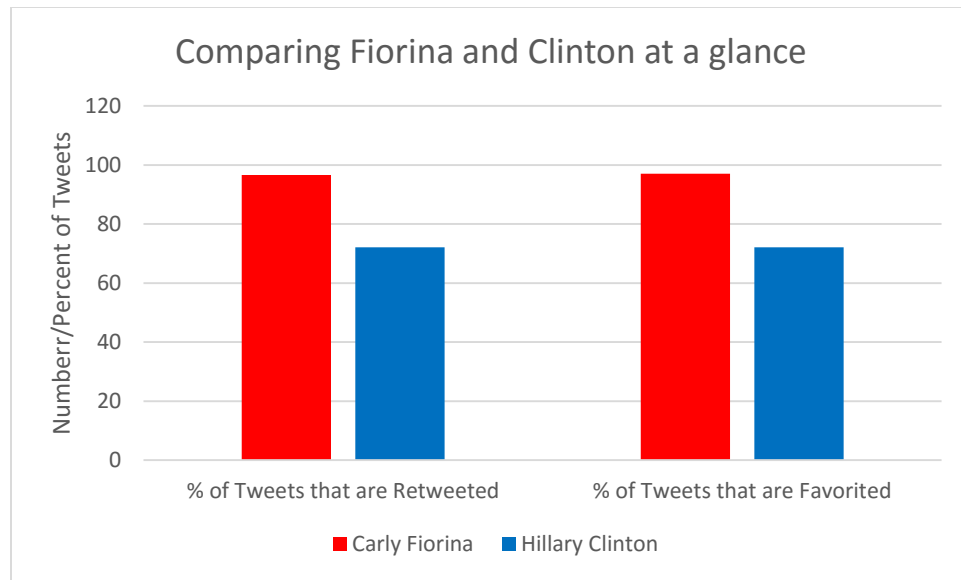


Figure 6. Carly Fiorina and Hillary Clinton's online engagement. Percent of Fiorina's and Clinton's retweets and favorites.

For issue ownership, according to Carly Fiorina's website, her general platform is the following, "It is time to declare the end of identity politics. It is time to declare the end of lowered expectations. It is time for citizens to stand up to the political class." These statements are on her website under the title "We can do this. Together." and she says them in her announcement video. More specifically, she has been an advocate for small businesses, No Child Left Behind/Race to the Top and equal opportunity for women. She opposes funding for Planned Parenthood, crony capitalism and inaction in Syria (as a few example). Her most frequent target in the Fox, CNN and CNBC debates was Hillary Clinton, mentioning her specifically 6 times, but stating in an interview with *People* that, "We as women especially in presidential politics, need to play by the same rules as the men. If we want to play this game as equals, we need to play by the same rule, and that means our track record is relevant. And so I never make a personal comment about Hillary Clinton – my criticism of her is fact-based, based on her actions

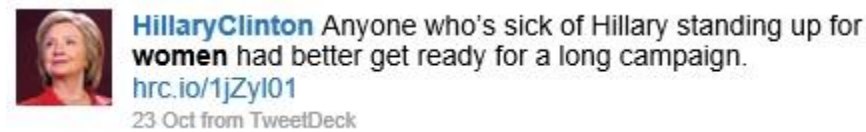
and track record. And that is fair game.” Fiorina seems to not directly run as a woman on women issues (See Appendix B for an analysis of how Fiorina is running as a woman).

For Clinton’s issue ownership, according to her website. Clinton’s website lists 24 issues under this headline: “Learn more about Hillary’s vision for America, and key policies she will fight for as president. As Hillary campaigns across the country, she’ll be talking about more issues—stay tuned.” The following is a list of the issues Clinton lists on her website (Figure 7).

1. Campaign finance reform	7. Early childhood education**	13. Labor	18. Substance use disorder and addiction
2. Campus Sexual Assault**	8. Economy	14. LGBT equality	20. Veterans, the armed forces, and their families
3. Climate change and energy	9. Gun violence prevention	15. National security	21. Voting rights
4. College	10. Health care **	16. Rural communities	22. Wall Street and corporate America
5. Criminal justice reform	11. Immigration Reform	17. Small business	23. Women’s rights and opportunity**
6. Disability rights	12. K–12 education	19. Social Security and Medicare	24. Workforce and skills

Figure 7. Issues on Hillary Clinton’s website. Issues that Clinton claims competency on outside her social media campaign.

Of the issues that Clinton listed on her website, I've placed two asterisk by the ones that are typically associated with women (Bennet and Iyengar, 2013). While she lists the above issues as the most important ones to her campaign with the majority of them not being "women's issues," but her primary focus for her campaign seems to be women's issues or issues that she could relate back to women in some way. In fact she tweeted the following (Figure 8):⁵



*Figure 8. Clinton is making women a part of her social media campaign.
This tweet solidifies Clinton's use of women in her social media campaign.*

Despite this, her issue ownership on Twitter seems to, for the most part, not be concerned with issues that female candidates have a perceived competency in (See Appendix C for an analysis of how Clinton is running as a woman).

RESULTS

My analysis of Carly Fiorina's and Hillary Clinton's Twitter account and tweets measured the way the candidates talked about gendered issues, the amount of online engagement for female centric issues and the way that the candidates used gendered issues when discussing their opponents (male and female). I tested the first hypothesis by analyzing the number and content of the tweets that Fiorina and Clinton sent regarding the economy to see if they used gendered issue when discussing a male-centric issue. I chose the economy because it is considered the top issue in the Gallup Poll, it's typically is an indicator of the success of a politician in office and it is not considered a female issue so gendered language

⁵ Tweet collected on November 5, 2015.

has to be purposefully placed in a tweet by the campaign. Since the economy touches almost every policy area in some way, this analysis only includes tweets in which Fiorina and Clinton specifically used the word, “Economy.”

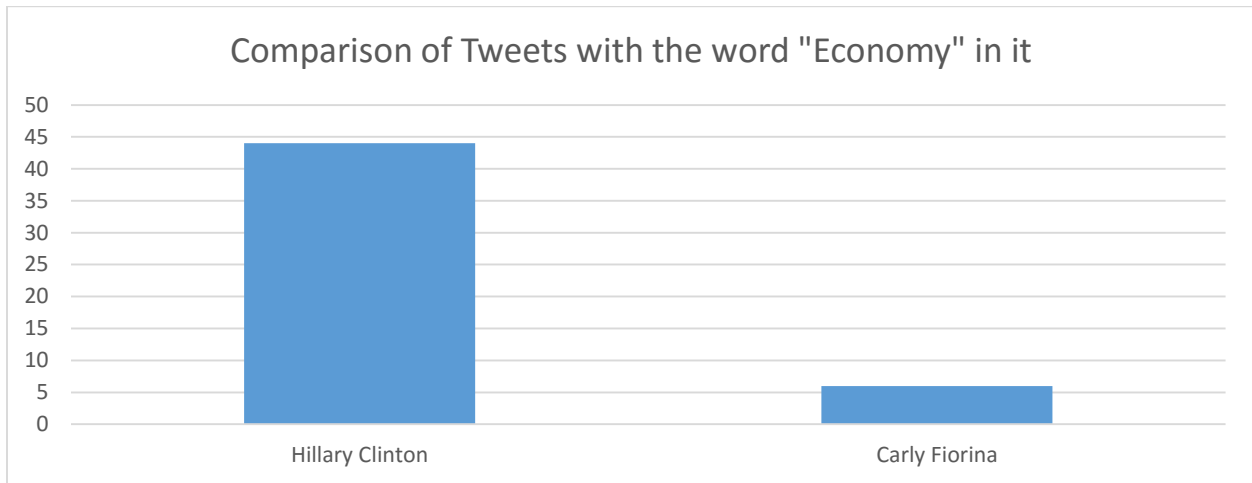


Figure 9. Comparing “Economy” mentions by candidate. This graph illustrates the number of times Fiorina and Clinton tweeted about the economy.

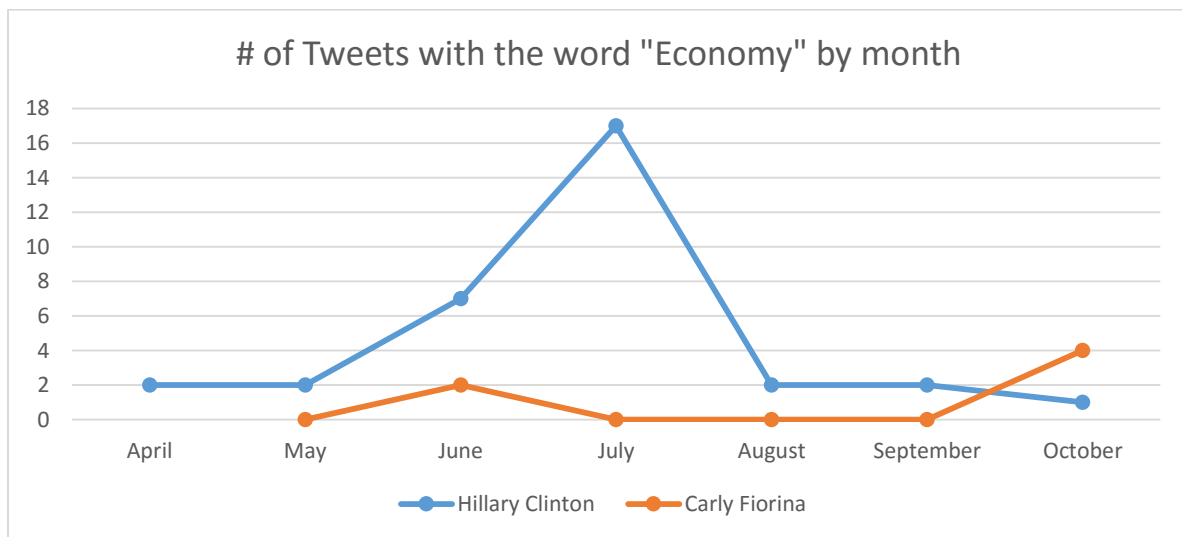


Figure 10. “Economy” mentions by month. This figure shows the number of times each candidate mentioned the economy, traditionally considered a male issue, by month.

By the sheer number of tweets, these results suggests that Clinton commands the economy issue better than Fiorina by actually using the word “economy” in her tweets. Clinton tweeted about the economy 44 times while Fiorina only tweeted six times. Clinton tweeted most about the economy in July while Fiorina remained relatively consistent in her tweets about the economy with a slight increase in October. Clinton’s tweets that used the word “Economy” made up about 1.6% of all her tweets while Fiorina’s made up about .6% of all her tweets. Though the number of tweets do not indicate whether or not one candidate used their gender more than the other, it suggests that the Democratic candidate has some perceived issue competency in regards to the Economy in comparison to the Republican candidate

How Fiorina talked about the Economy on Twitter

Fiorina tweeted mostly about running the domestic economy. She tweeted about domestic economics three times, general economy once, party issues once and government spending once. None of Fiorina’s tweets about the economy included women’s issues. When she tweets about the domestic economy, she would include statements about growing small businesses and cutting government regulation on business. She attempted to incorporate women specifically in the economy in the tweet in Figure 11.

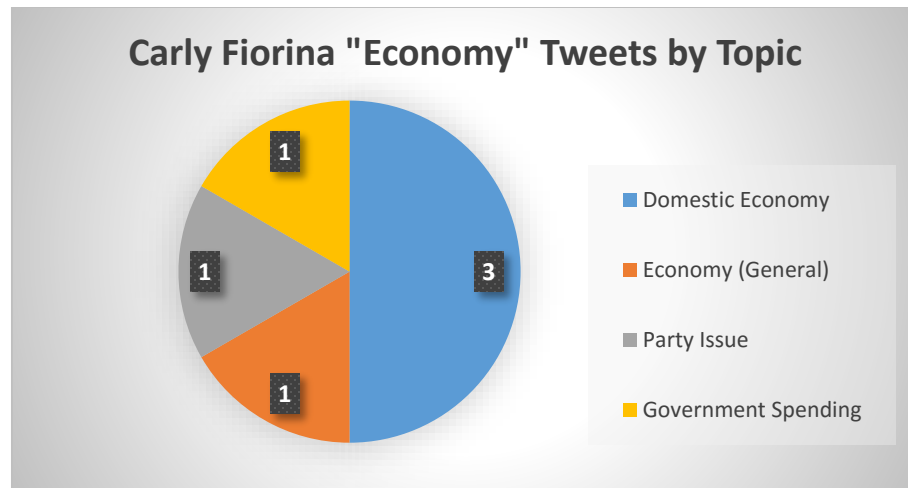


Figure 11. Content of Fiorina's "Economy" Tweets. This figure illustrates the way in which Fiorina brings in other issues when talking about the economy.

Overall, Fiorina's tweets were overly vague which does not indicate issue ownership. She seems to approach the economy very generally when tweeting about it and does not bring her gender or other gendered issues that could relate to the economy into the conversation. In other words, the economy is a multifaceted and complex issue that encompasses thousands of entities (almost everything can be related back to the economy), but Fiorina seems to separate her tweets that specifically mention the economy from every other issue including issues considered women's issues. This tactic is limiting because it doesn't directly tie the economy with her chosen issue thus fragmenting her issue ownership. For example, if she believes her policy on immigration will help the economy, but she doesn't connect the two by tweeting then she may lose strong issue ownership on both issues. Consider the following three example tweets.

- (1) "Smart immigration practices will grow our economy by making more jobs available."
- (2) / (3) "Smart immigration practices will increase job growth." / "Growing the economy will increase job growth."

The first tweet shows how Fiorina could connect two issues in a way that makes her seem like she has a plan to grow the economy. It answers the question of “How will smart immigration practices grow our economy,” with, “because it will make more jobs.” The next two tweets divide the first tweet’s content. Notice that each of the next tweets connect the economy and smart immigration practices with job growth, but not with each other. This makes it harder to create a narrative about the economy even if these tweets are sent out back to back. By not connecting the policies, Fiorina only creates the questions of, “How will smart immigration practices increase job growth,” and “How will growing the economy increase job growth,” without providing an answer to her audience.

How Clinton talked about the Economy on Twitter

Clinton’s tweets covered more issues than Fiorina because she typically connected her tweet about the economy with another related issue. She tweeted mostly about the economy in general, meaning that she mentioned the economy in a tweet without connecting it to any actionable policy or issue. She tweeted about the economy in terms of immigration five times, in terms of women’s issues once, in terms of domestic economy seven times, in terms of party issues twice, in terms of families and communities three times, in terms of foreign policy twice, in terms of climate change three times, in terms of general economy eight times and in terms of Wall Street four times. She tweeted about women’s issues six times (three women’s issues and three families/communities tweets) in her economy tweets. Of her Economy tweets, 17.14% of these were connected to women’s issues.

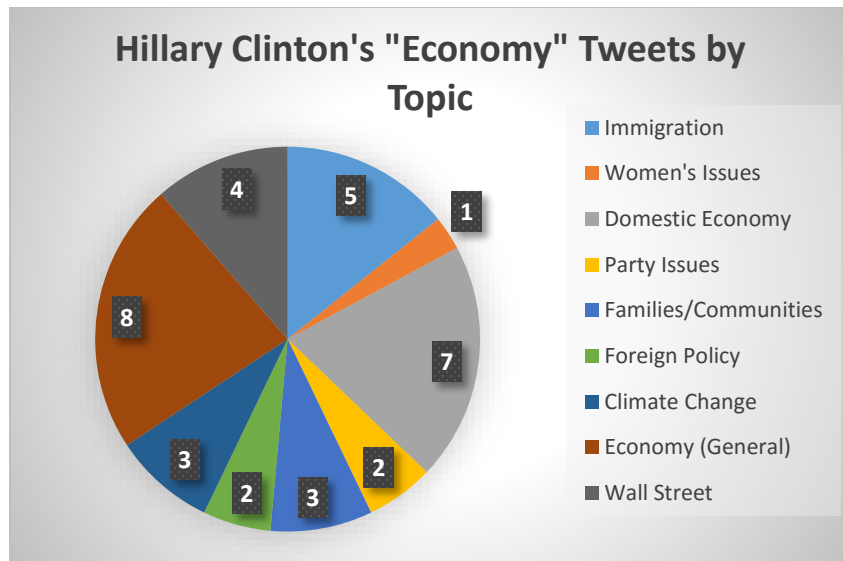


Figure 11. Content of Clinton's "Economy" Tweets. This figure illustrates the way in which Clinton brings in other issues when talking about the economy.

Even though she mostly tweeted about the economy in general, Clinton connected the word "economy" with both gendered and non-gendered issues. Specifically, she defined the economy as including immigration reform, women's equality, climate change, families, and getting rid of Wall Street. In her tweets she talked about growing the economy by fixing the mentioned issues. As a woman, Clinton has a perceived competency when talking about women's equality and families, making the connection between the economy and these issues she already owns, it creates the perception that she owns the economy issue as well and shows that she, as the Democratic candidate, made a concerted effort to insert her gender into non-gendered issues.

Since about 17.14% of Clinton's "Economy" tweets included women's issues and 0% of Fiorina's "Economy" tweets included women's issues, the results lend support to hypothesis 1. In general, Fiorina tweeted less about the economy and never inserted gendered issues into these tweets than Clinton did.

To test H2, I compared the average number of retweets and favorites (the metric used to measure online engagement) per tweet of the term “women” and “economy.” The term women was chosen for this consideration because the word provides the most direct connection to a female candidate’s gender. It represents “female issues.” “Economy” represents the male-centric issue since it is a typical metric of success for a politician and since it is the top issue for voters according to a Gallup poll (2015).

Fiorina’s tweets that included the word “women” received more online engagement than her tweets that included the words “Economy” or “Budget.” On average, each tweet that mentioned the word woman was favorited about 173 times and retweeted about 112 times. Each tweet that mentioned the word economy or budget, on average, was favorited only about 158 times and retweeted 108 times. Fiorina’s tweets that specifically measure the online engagement of tweets that contained the word “women” in it proves that my hypothesis correct.

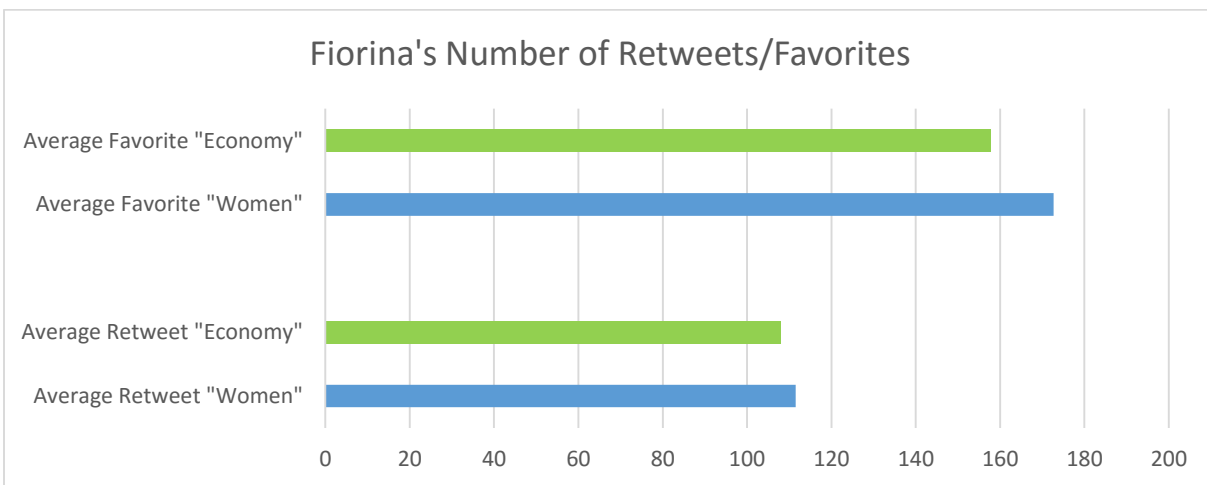


Figure 13. Fiorina’s online engagement. This figure compares the online engagement that Fiorina’s received for her tweets with women’s issues to tweets with economy issues.

Hillary Clinton’s tweets about women received more engagement than her tweets about the economy. On average, each tweet that mentioned the word woman was favorited about 2,207 times and retweeted about 1,319 times. Each tweet that mentioned the word economy or budget, on average, was favorited only about 880 times and retweeted 500 times. This suggests that my hypothesis is correct if the female candidate is a Democrat (keeping in mind that, according to Petrocik (1996), Democrats have perceived issues competency in social issues while Republicans have issue competency in economic issues). When a Democratic female candidate tweets about issues that directly relate to their gender, they receive more online engagement than when they tweet about a male-centric issue.

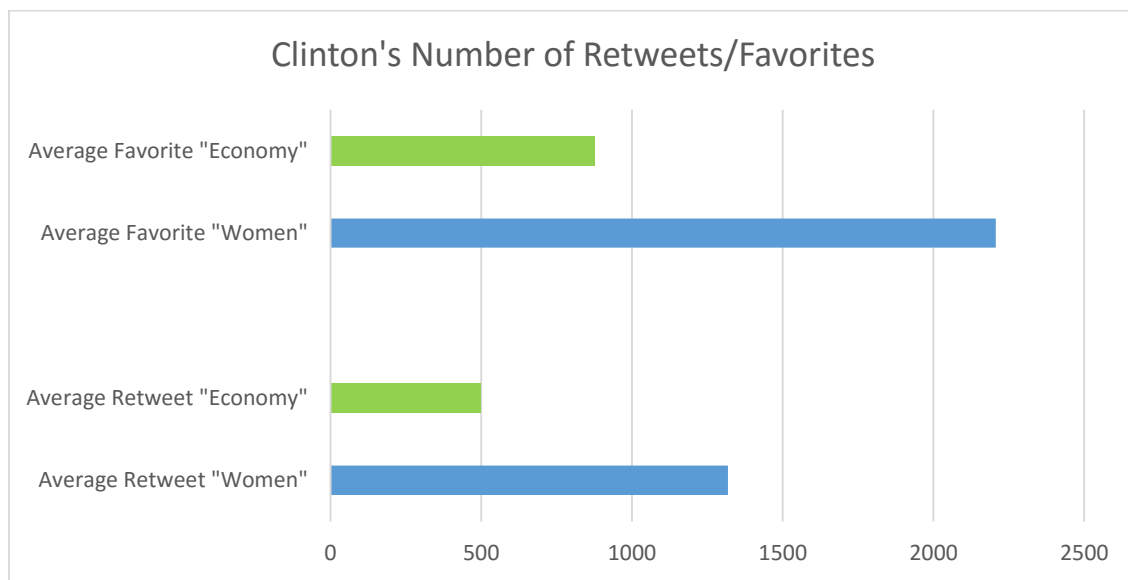


Figure 14. Clinton’s online engagement. This figure compares the online engagement that Clinton’s received for her tweets with women’s issues to tweets with economy issues.

This analysis suggests that H2 is correct. Female candidates’ tweets about issues that directly relate to their gender (in this case by using the word “women” in a tweet), on average, receive more engagement than tweets that include male issues (in this case the economy and the budget).

However, it should be noted that the differences for Fiorina's tweets is much less than for Clinton's. This may be supported by the belief that Democrats find gendered issues more important (Petrocik, 1996).

To test H3, I measure the number of times each candidate tweeted about each of their opponents and how many of those tweets mentioned their opponent's record in regards to women's issues. I included Barack Obama in Fiorina's analysis because Petrocik's Theory of Issue Ownership (1996) explains that a candidate can gain an advantage by capitalizing on a party's "mishandling" of a situation or issue and since Obama is the face of the Democrat Party, he would be the one most likely to "mishandle" a situation. Fiorina tweeted about Barack Obama 17 times, Hillary Clinton 29 times and she has not tweeted about Bernie Sanders or Martin O'Malley. Figure 15 illustrates this data. Of these 46 tweets that mentioned an opponent, only 5 mentioned women's issues. Three of those mentions were "women" and the other two were "family." Education and childcare were not mentioned in conjunction with Fiorina's opponents when she tweeted. Of Barack Obama's 17 tweets, two of them mentioned women's issues which means that about 11.76% of Fiorina's tweets about Obama referenced a women's issue. Of Hillary Clinton's 29 tweets, three of them mentioned women's issues which means that about 10.34% of Fiorina's tweets about Clinton referenced a women's issue. This proves my hypothesis incorrect because the average percentage of Fiorina's tweets that mentioned her opponents and a women's issue was 10.87% which is distinctly below the 51% necessary to prove the hypothesis correct.

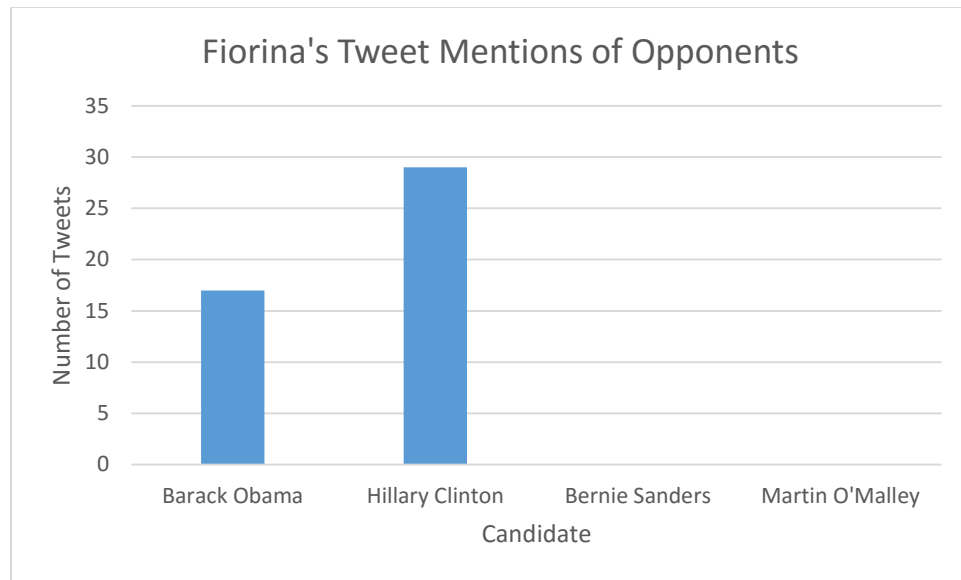


Figure 15. Fiorina's tweets that mention her opponents from the Democrat Party. Fiorina mentions Hillary Clinton more than any other opponent from an opposite party.

Clinton tweeted about Donald Trump 30 times, Jeb Bush 17 times, Marco Rubio 5 times, Carly Fiorina 4 times, John Kasich 4 times, Ted Cruz 3 times and Chris Christie 2 times. Of these 65 tweet mentions, 13 mentioned women's issues. Figure 16 illustrates this data. Five of those mentions were "women," seven were "family" and one was education. Childcare was not mentioned in conjunction with Fiorina's opponents when she tweeted. Of Donald Trump's 30 tweet mentions, three of them mentioned family and four of them mentioned women's issues which means that about 23.33% of Clinton's tweets about Trump referenced issues that female candidate are perceived competent in. Of Jeb Bush's 17 tweet mentions about 11.76% mentioned female-competent issues, one mentioned family and one mentioned women's issues. Of Marco Rubio's five tweet mentions, 40% mentioned female-competent issues, one mentioned family and one mentioned education. Of Carly Fiorina's 4 tweet mentions, 25% mentioned female-competent issues, one mentioned family. Of John Kasich's 4 tweet mentions and Ted Cruz's 3 tweet mentions, none of them mention female-competent issues. Of Chris Christie's 2 tweet mentions, 50% mentioned female-competent issues, one mentioned family. The average

percentage of opponent tweet mentions is 20% which proves my hypothesis incorrect because the average percent and actual percent of opponent tweet mentions that included a female-competent issue is distinctly below 51%.

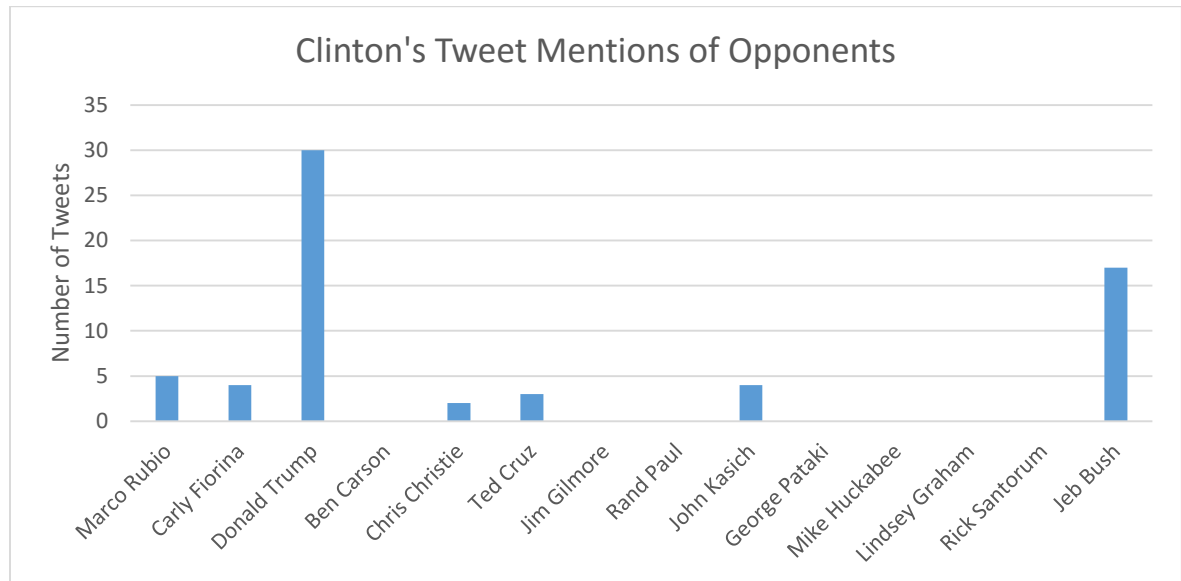


Figure 16. Clinton's tweets that mention her opponents from the Republican Party. Clinton mentions Donald Trump more than any other opponent from an opposite party

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis examined the strategic value of using gender and image politics when choosing an issue ownership model on Twitter for female candidates for national political office. This included an analysis of how Carly Fiorina and Hillary Clinton currently use their gender to prompt online engagement. This is important because as the Internet has increased in use making people more dependent on new, digital media sources (such as social media) than traditional media sources (radio, television, newspapers). This new dependence gives female candidates the unique opportunity to define their issue ownership through use of social media sites combined

with strategic message timing (Kriess, 2014) rather than have an outside media source define them (which they typically use the cultural definition of a woman). Additionally, women are not achieving national political office at the same rate as men which could be due to not being perceived competent in issues such as defense and the economy (Huddy and Terkildsen, 2013) as men. The literature suggested that there may be some strategic value in focusing on women-centric issues (childcare, education, women's issues and family) because gender can serve as an important voting cue in low-information elections (Banducci et al., 2003). If a female politician uses their gender as a voting cue she may be able to get more low-information voters who are using heuristics, such as gender cues, to make these decisions. To determine whether or not focusing on gendered issues (as defined by Huddy and Terkildsen, 2013; Iyengar, 2011) gave female candidates an advantage, I compared the likelihood of using gender by party when discussing issues on Twitter, the type of issue tweets (male competent versus female competent) issues the garnered the most online engagement and the use of issues in the attack tweets of Fiorina and Clinton's Twitter. In the analysis of their Twitters I discovered the following:

1. The Republican female candidate will be less likely to use her gender to discuss non-gendered issues on Twitter, but discussion of their gender is still present (it does not seem to be taboo).
2. Female candidates' tweets about female issues receive more online engagement than tweets about issues that female candidates were not perceived competent in. There does seem to be a difference between the Republican and Democratic candidate.
3. The female candidates of both parties did not appear to use gender in attack tweets against their opponents (from the opposite party).

This analysis leads me to the conclusion that female candidates for national political office (specifically Fiorina and Clinton) are currently using their gender as at least part of their issue ownership strategy on their Twitter platforms and that there is some strategic value to women utilizing their gender in this way.

While the Democratic candidate is more likely to use her gender in her Twitter campaign, female candidates' (regardless of party) tweets about female issues will have more online engagement than tweets not connected to their gender. This finding suggests that a Twitter campaign may not be the best alternative to traditional media campaigns if female candidates want to create an issue narrative separate from their gender. It seems that the societal shared expectation of women encroaches on a female candidate's ability to circumvent, via social media campaigns, traditional views and ideas of female issue competency (Eagly, 1987).

Additionally, scholars postulated that traditional media was losing its agenda setting power to online media which allowed a female candidate to set her own agenda but it seems like the candidate's audience has more control over that narrative (Shehata and Stromback, 2013). The candidate's audiences has the ability to set the candidate's agenda by picking and choosing the messages they want to share or attend to (in this case the messages related to female-centric issues). In other words, a female candidate who does not want to be considered by traditional female norms can turn to social media, but the candidate's followers seem to share the candidates' messages that conform to traditional female norms.

Despite the tendency for female candidates' tweets about female issues to receive more online engagement than tweets about male issues, the results from my third hypothesis suggests that female candidates still are not using their gender as a comparative standard for their audience to use to assess their opponents. These results showed that female candidates, 11 weeks

out from the primaries, do not tend to attack their opponents, male and female, on gender-related issues. This is particularly interesting that they do not attack their male opponents' record on women's issues because my research suggests that a tweet about a female issue would be shared more by their supporters. This means that a tweet that attacks an opponent on their record regarding female issues should be seen and engaged with by more people, thus creating a standard with which their audience can consider the candidate's opponent. This standard would prove hard to rebut because, as Bacon noted, female candidates, such as Hillary Clinton, would have an outside defense structure concerned about how she is treated. This, presumably feminist, defense infrastructure could prevent rebuttals from their male counterparts for fear of backlash from 50.8% of the voting population thus giving female candidates a campaign advantage on social media (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2014).

With social media being a relatively new introduction to the political sphere, further research should be done to better assess and utilize Twitter as a campaign platform as more women enter the political world as candidates for national political office. This research was limited in that there was only access to a female candidate's basic Twitter accounts. From this limitation, more research needs to be done on partisan views on gendered candidacies, the likelihood of Twitter to influence the vote outside of supporters, whether or not reframing male-competent issues in terms of female competent issues on Twitter increase the competency of female candidates and the "retweet" effect on the issue ownership of a female candidate for third-party viewers of these tweets.

This research showed that there is some positive correlation between female candidates using female issues to engage their users on Twitter. Candidates defining their own issue competency through ownership can be crucial to how they are viewed and shared on social media, but self-

defining a narrative has the potential to exclude and overlook the power of people to pick and choose the aspects of the candidates they like. This gives more credence to the school of thought that believes that female politicians should use their gender because this research has indicated that female politician's tweets about female-centric issue generate more online engagement. This increase engagement could allow a candidate to capitalize online and offline by drawing a story about their abilities on social media. Overall, it is clear that gender matters and can be used to promote a female candidate on Twitter, but how and when gender matters seems to be up to the viewers and not the candidate.

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APPENDIX A

Who is Carly Fiorina?

Carly Fiorina is 61 year old women born in Austin, Texas running as a GOP candidate in the 2016 Presidential Election. She is described as a conservative Republican. She announced her run for president in a video on released on May 4, 2015. Her biography on her campaign website carlyforpresident.com touts that she started out as a secretary for a small real estate business and in 15 years became the CEO of Hewlett-Packard (commonly referred to as HP), a global information technology company, in 1999. After being asked to leave HP in 2005, Fiorina served on advisory and policy-making positions for national and state governments as well as led a number of charities and non-profits. She specifically mentions on her website serving as a Member of the CIA External Advisory Board, the Chairman of the American Conservative Union Foundation, Chairman of Opportunity International and Chairman of Good360. She also made an unsuccessful run for the Senate in California against Barbara Boxer (D) in 2010 while fighting breast cancer.

Who is Hillary Clinton?

Hillary Clinton is a 68 year old female born in Chicago, Illinois running as a Democrat candidate in the 2016 Presidential Election. She is currently the front-runner (as of November 2, 2015). She is described as a liberal. She announced her run for president in a video released on April 12, 2015 on her website. She then launched her campaign on June 11, 2015 at a major rally in New York City. Her biography on her campaign website, www.hillaryclinton.com, touts that she champions children's issues and public service because of her mother's experiences as a child. Clinton was the first lady, a U.S. Senator for New York and secretary of state under President Obama in his first term. She made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 2008.

APPENDIX B

Is Carly Fiorina Running as a woman?

On Twitter, Carly Fiorina does not run as a woman. In other words, she doesn't capitalize on "women's issues" in order to entice people to support her. In fact, in a video posted on her Twitter, she said,

Frankly, I am tired of being insulted by liberal feminists who talk about women's issues when the reality is that every issue is a women's issue from the economy to ISIS to Russia to Healthcare to education to the national debt, women care about all of that (Fiorina 2015).

The most notable aspect of that quotation was that when listing issues, Fiorina only listed one issue, education, that's considered a woman's issue. This just reinforces her dedication to not running on her gender. Her tweets share a similar story. A majority of them are video answers to questions that were submitted by supporters. These answers cover topics from growing the economy to dealing with Russia to her faith to social security, but they create no specific women's issue narrative. More than just her issue choice for her Twitter messaging, Fiorina also actively denies and refuses to participate in identity politics. For example, during CNN's GOP debate on September 16, 2015, when asked to respond to Donald Trump saying the following quote about, what Trump claimed, was her persona and not her face, "Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?" Fiorina said, "I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said." By saying this, she didn't play into image and identity politics. A clearer example comes from a video clip posted by her on her Twitter of a Fox News interview where she responded to "The View" calling her face

demented by saying, “I think what this points out is that liberals, and unfortunately that includes liberal women, when they don’t like the message they attack the messenger, so my message to the ladies of the view is man-up.” Fiorina then pivots the conversation and talks about policies that have been bad for women. The rhetorical use of the phrase “man-up” allows Fiorina to take this societal female discussion of appearance and, in a sense, demand that she be considered the same as a man without saying she is being treated differently. These subtle gender cues are also present through her fundraising attempts and critiques of Hillary Clinton.

While her actual tweets don’t use overtly gendered messaging, her fundraising attempts through social media tend to mention her gender in a non-traditional way in order to entice supporters to donate. For example, after the Associated Press did a story on Fiorina’s body person, Rebecca Schieber, Fiorina’s campaign posted a video of both of them going through Schieber’s purse that she carries with her to every event to make sure that Fiorina has what she needs. The video showed the pair pulling out items spare American Flag pin, pantyhose, lotion, nail polish remover, chargers and hand sanitizer and explaining why they has them. This video garnered some interest and led to a fundraising “game” where Fiorina gave people the opportunity to win her spare American Flag pin by guessing how heavy the purse was. People guessed by donating the amount they thought the bag weighed (so if a person thought the bag weighed three pounds then that person would donate \$3.00 to enter for a chance to win the pin). Purses are gendered objects that are associated with females and therefor will garner the most support from people who can relate to the experience of carrying heavy purses in order to be prepared. This allows her to implicitly appeal to her donation base while not running her campaign on her gender.

Her fundraising is not the only subtle nod to her gender. Fiorina takes advantage of being a woman by critiquing Hillary Clinton's (D) policies on and for women. I use the word "advantage" because her male counterparts (i.e. Donald Trump (R), Ben Carson (R), Bernie Sander (R), etc.) are unable to critique Clinton's policies concerning women because as Bacon (2014) explains, Clinton would have, "A defense team outside of her official campaign apparatus, one that will be more concerned that she is treated, in their minds, fairly by the male-dominated political establishment..." These candidates run the risk of being characterized as a part of "the male dominated political establishment" or being accused of what has become known as "mansplaining" (a slang term that means: (of a man) explain (something) to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing) if they try to critique the policy. Fiorina can and has critiqued Clinton's policies on and for women.

In conclusion, Fiorina is trying to have the best of both worlds when it comes to running as a woman. She wants to address policies that males typically have a perceived competency in while using her gender to raise money and female support as well as to critique the Democratic front runner in a unique way that her GOP male counterparts are unable to do. By being vocally against running on women's issues, Fiorina has received backlash from women. In one video posted to her Twitter she explains that, "My candidacy has been called 'offensive to women' by women. I have been told that I hate women because I am pro-life by women." The potential for Fiorina to have a perceived indifference toward women's issues could lose her votes and support since women tend to lean Democrat assuming that those votes were not already lost due to partisanship. While she espouses her desire to not run solely on women's issues, the media's critique of the position keeps her gender a subtly important part of her campaign.

APPENDIX C

Is Hillary Clinton Running as a Woman?

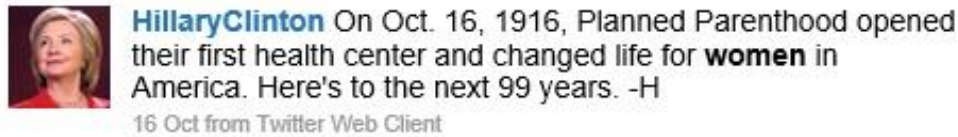
Unlike Carly Fiorina, Clinton is running as a woman and making her gender an issue in the race. This tactic takes advantage of low-information voters produced by the partisan media environment by giving them a simple soundbite that is attached to her name to take into the voting booth, “Ready for a woman president?” Her women’s issue campaign strategy is not only composed to clever soundbites for low information voters. She also (1) actively champions what are considered traditional “women’s issues” and (2) puts a female bent on non-women’s issues.

Clinton’s women’s campaign has policy appeals. For example, she frequently tweets about policies such as equal pay reform, healthcare, paid family leave etc. that affect women. In these tweets she often simplifies her position to make it digestible to the low-information voter. This is presumably because she knows that those who want to know her full position on an issue would be more likely to seek it out. An example of making the issues digestible is this Tweet:



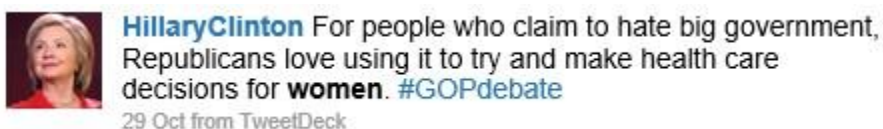
The link is to a 30 second video that asks viewers to support equal pay. While the simplicity of the message may not cover all aspects of pay equality, the use of the coded word “equal” creates a stark dichotomy of being for or against equal pay while taking out the nuances of the issue (for example, is it that on average women are getting paid less or that less women hold positions that get paid more), thus making harder to attack her stance without seeming like one is against equal pay. Additionally, Clinton’s persistent use of active voice implies action that she is taking or will

take to get the policy passed. Consider her use of active voice in the last sentence of the following tweet.



Clinton uses the active voice to imply action and suggests the efficacy of herself and her campaign. This is in stark comparison to Fiorina's Twitter which consist mostly of messages similar to the ones on the right. Rather than consistently making a stand in her Tweets, like Clinton does, Fiorina's Twitter tends to be very passive.

In addition to tweeting about what is typically considered "women's issues," Clinton uses her gender combined with the issues to attack her opponents. For example, as shown in the tweets below, during CNBC's GOP debate, Clinton would capitalize on GOP candidates talking about women's issues by simplifying and then criticizing their positions on issues that she has already staked her claim in.



The above tweet is an example of Clinton pivoting an issue to make another issue that is not traditionally a woman's issue into a woman's issue. She does this by inserting her women's healthcare narrative into the "big government" debate that the GOP has owned as one of their policies.

In conclusion, Clinton is not only running on women's issues, but she is making that the center piece of her campaign. She has also made attempts to inject "women's issues" into other

policy suggestions that do not traditionally fall in that category in order to gain some sense of issue ownership over it (for example, the big government tweet above). By running solely as a woman, Clinton gives herself a broad narrative in which she can discuss policies that may or may not be traditional women's issues. Additionally, she simplifies and codes her messages and narratives in a way that will most likely appeal to low-information voters either because they feel they can understand her stances on the issues or because they fear being on the other side of gendered policies (like her "equal pay" policy). By doing this, she stands a chance of selling her women's issues narrative to a wider selection of people.