

Media used as a inspirational Factor for Future Women Candidates in Politics

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Abstract

Media continues to hold a negative depiction of women when running for elected office leaving to a great exposure. Although previous research has focused on using media exposure as a factor in why women do not run, I state to emphasize how media in fact influences women to run for office in strive for equal representation. There took place a study of three individuals political science majors through an interview process where each participant was asked a series of questions in regards to the correlation between media and their motive in one day running for office. Results stated that although all contestants would hope to see the media in a more positive light, women's portrayal through the media in fact encourages them to stand against the status quo where media can be used as a motivating factor in their decision to run as a potential candidate. By approaching the media's continuing negative bias as inspirational in itself, the media holds a counter effect by inspiring more women to gain interest and increase the number of women candidates for political representation.

Women Representation in Politics

“In 1968, frustrated with women’s slow progress over the years, Congresswoman Martha Griffiths asked congressional researchers to calculate how long it would take for women to become the majority if the incremental pace continued. The answer? Four hundred thirty-two years” (Ford 2006). Today alone, according to the Center for American Women and Politics, there are ninety women who serve in the U.S. Congress, seventeen women serve in the Senate and seventy-three women in the House. Women such as Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi hold the top House post as Speaker of the House and Sonia Sotomayor currently being sworn into the U.S. Supreme Court as Justice. Looking at the past 2008 election, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin was selected by Senator John McCain as his vice presidential running mate and became the first woman on a national GOP ticket. Serving as a great triumph, Hillary Clinton ran for president of the United States of a popular party, and now holds the position of Secretary of State under President Obama’s cabinet. The year 2009 marked a new beginning in the Presidential cabinet for women such as Janet Napolitano serving as Secretary of Homeland Security, Susan E. Rice serving as U.N. Ambassador, Hilda Solis serving as Secretary of Labor and Christina D. Romer serving as Chair on Council of Economic Advisers. One third of the cabinet members are women, a total of seven for the year 2009.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States holds a 50.7 percentile of woman in their population. Then the question rises, why is that percentage not seen within leadership positions. I define a leadership position as a politically elected office whether that be nationwide, state wide, or local. When analyzing the data, it shows that women yet still have a long way to go in reflecting their population percentile within elected positions. Although there are ninety women in Congress, in truth women only represent 16.8 percent of the 535 seats in the

111th U.S. Congress. In regards to the information provided before, the seventeen women in Senate represent only 17% of the 100 seats, while the 73 women in the House of Representatives only make up 16.8% of the 435 seats. Moreover, women hold a 22.9 percentage of the 314 statewide elective executive office positions across the country. In 2009, 1,791 of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States, 436 of the 1,971 state senate seats and 1,355 of the 5,411 state house seats are women. Although percentages of women in elective offices have nearly doubled, there still continues to remain a lack of representation from women. The next step is to see what factors are key to explain such uncertainties.

Factors that Discourage Women from Running for Elected Office

Lack of women representation within leadership positions affect future women running for candidacy because of the low amount of role models existing. A role model is key according to many researchers for young women. Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) found that where female candidates are due to viable campaigns for high-profile offices girls report increased anticipated political involvement. Having constant exposure to Hillary and Sotomayor is what is required for young women in aspiring to be in their shoes one day. Unfortunately, as Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) mention, the United States holds such a low number of women representatives within high political positions that there exists a smaller chance of women continuing to run for office. The truth is that there does exist an abundance of role models who may not have won elections but given the fact they had courage and the will to run for office is enough inspirational for future women leaders. The problem that continues is that these women who although have served as role models for many, become lost in the history books. The k-12 education focuses primarily on facts but mainly from a male perspective in making one believe the only leaders have been males. Falk (2008) discusses in her book how the media such as The New York Times

addressed Elizabeth Dole as the first serious woman to run for presidency and many referred to her as emphasizing the first. She mentions how Dole's own campaign manager states: "There isn't any history. There isn't any barometer. There hasn't been a candidate for The President who was serious"(Falk 2008). Proclaiming such statements are what led to many people in believing Dole was in fact the only woman who truly ran for Presidency and moreover, emphasizing how that political position is very unlikely if not unknown to female representation.

The younger generations being misinformed, may believe that the first woman to have run for presidency was from the past 2008 election when Hillary Clinton ran for the Democratic party. Yet what many do not know is that the first woman to run for presidency was back in 1872 when Victoria Woodhull run under the Equal Rights Party for the President of the United States. This is the type of information that society is not being informed about because history focuses primarily on those who won elections and not on those who although failed, strived to make a difference by being politically engaged. This loss of rich history has affected women from all ages because they feel they hold no guidance or help if they were to become politically active. As Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) point out, they feel the new environment they will be coming into, is a path never walked before but what they do not know is that many have.

History books do not emphasize stories such as in 1917 when woman such as Jeanette Rankin was the first woman elected into Congress. If anything, the only information provided is the statistics of female proportionality as opposed to focusing on how women in Congress is clearly significant. As mentioned earlier regarding the misrepresentation of the female population within political elected office, there exists a great need for an increase in woman role models within all leadership elected positions (Campbell & Wolbrecht 2006). A role model serves as guidance but if one is uninformed about these role models such Olivia Woodhull and Jeannette

Rankin, then there will no examples to uphold in demonstrating why political participation is crucial. The lack of history of women in political arenas whether those who failed but still held the will to run, are what the young women need to see in order to take the battle one step further.

HOW MANY PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES EVER CONSIDERED RUNNING FOR OFFICE?	HOW MANY OF THEM ACTUALLY RAN?	HOW MANY WON AND HELD ELECTIVE OFFICE?
Men: 1,107 (59 %)	Men: 219 (12 %)	Men: 131 (7 %)
Women: 705 (43 %)	Women: 112 (7 %)	Women: 73 (4 %)
Difference significant at $p < .01$.	Difference significant at $p < .01$	Difference significant at $p < .01$.

Figure 1: Candidate Emergence from the Pool of Prospective Candidates (Fox and Lawless 2004).

Self Confidence within Oneself as a Inspirationalal Factor for Women Candidates

There exists an equal chance of winning when running for office between men and women but unfortunately, women present a lack of self-confidence within their ability to run for office that further refrains them from running for office and continue the lack of women representation in politics (Fox and Lawless 2004). Simply looking at the table above, one can see how there is no significant difference between the number of male candidates who won office and the number of women as well who won office. Moreover, Fox and Lawless (2004) found that women perform as well as men do but do not hold the same interest in politics due to lack of encouragement and their portrayal of their personal ability. A research study was conducted between a poll of women and men all holding similar qualifications (Fox and Lawless 2004). According to

common characteristics of those in office, qualifications pertain to one's current position, education, experience, expertise and community involvement. Results showed that when asked questions such as interest for political leadership, women were about twenty percent short from men's interest in running. As for those women who presented interest in running, their preference primarily was at a local government and decreased as questions for congress and national office were held. Although, when pertaining to questions on qualified abilities, of the men polled, 26% described themselves as very qualified while only 14% of the women described themselves as very qualified for political positions. This provides interesting research because the men and women as mentioned before hold very if not exact qualifications in reference to common characteristics of those who are in political positions. The absence of history provides a sense of rarity in the political sector such as presidency in that it discourages many women in seeking candidacy alone (Falk 2008). The factor detaining the women from running moreover is their lack of confidence in their ability to run for office, win an election and moreover perform. What they require is encouragement from their peers, political leaders, their community because when asked whether they have ever been told to run for a leadership position, the women lacked in encouragement while the men held a higher rate (Fox and Lawless 2004). Overall, the main inspirational for a woman is to believe in herself whether that being self-motivated or support from those around her to form a foundation within her ability to run for office in the future.

Media's Negative Effect on Women Aspiring to be Future Candidates

Researchers argue that media is another key if not most impacting factor leading to this result of low women representation. Erika Falk (2008) argues how the media is the most significant reason for low women representation within politics because it discourages women from attempting to even consider candidacy. Falk (2008) focuses on the recent 2008 election in how

Palin's and Hillary's image was clearly exposed constantly but yet in a different light. Palin portrays the beautiful yet gullible female in politics where there was constant publicity headlines on her past focusing on her teenage daughter having a child or her supposed wild days of youth. Her beauty is very uncommon in women in politics leaving the media to use it their advantage and have it become a negative. Hillary's image was and still continues to be as the too demanding, opinionated woman in politics. The media strived to focus on Hillary's strong personality in having her portrayed as having an attitude in a feminist way. Her recent coverage of misinterpreting a question regarding the President's opinion as opposed to Bill Clinton's and hers, led to an outrage within the media. Her behavior was clearly emphasized as to being bad-tempered and holding a negative attitude that may not be the case. This constant negative exposure of the candidate's political as well as personal life has led researchers to argue that this is the key reason why women do not run for high ended political where national exposure is used (Falk 2008). As mentioned in her book, Falk (2008) argues how this negative exposure leads women to simply stray from high positions in the political sector because of the fear of criticism. Moreover, women tend to stay within their comfort levels where they are not being criticized. Overall, media will and has continued to portray women in such a light that deter women from gaining interest in the political sector.

Looking Past Why Women Do Not Run and Focus on Why Run Do

There exists a great emphasis on why women are not politically active due to lack of role models, low self-confidence and media's negative portrayal but there needs to be a greater focus on why women do run, and how to use these as motives for future candidates. Yes, there exists factors that deter woman from winning an election or simply believing she can take a higher political power but instead why do women run then? What are the motives behind these

women who are in high political positions? Simply in the beginnings of this paper, Googling the phrase: "Why Women Do Run," Google searches as well as those of BINX, MSN and Yahoo correct the phrase by providing searches limited to "Why Women Do Not Run," leaving one to see how there are great investigations on the reasons as to why women are too afraid to run, but this paper strives to argue that media may not be as damaging as one may think but instead women must see the portrayal as a challenge. Although, they continue to portray women in a negative light, why are there still women who refuse to hold that as an obstacle but continue to run for candidacy? This paper attempts in analyzing how women in power overcame the media and how the media's constant criticism of women may in fact serve as a inspirational for young women. Seeing leaders such as Palin being displayed in such a way, and yet she continued until the end may serve as inspiration for younger women to take initiative and see that there will be many obstacles but instead use that as a inspirational in itself.

A study took place in analyzing this proposal to investigate whether seeing women undergo the media's negative portrayal may serve as a inspirational in itself for future women candidates. Participants discussed their perspectives on women being politically active and how they themselves one day strive to be candidates for the top leadership positions. Based on past research as that presented in Falk's study (2008), it was expected for media to serve as a negative discouraging factor for young women to seek office.

Method

Participants

Participants were 3 female Latina undergraduate students who attended the University of California, Santa Barbara who aspire to become a political elected leader in the future. Participants were told that the study discussed why women ran for elected office and talk about their personal choice in seeking candidacy.

Materials

A written questionnaire was created for this study in regards to the participants' own personal journey and thoughts as to why they seek candidacy. This ten-item questionnaire assessed participants feelings behind the media's portrayal of women candidates, specifically the 2008 election. (e.g., In what ways have women in politics portrayed in the news have affected your viewpoints on women in leadership roles? How has that message affected you and your decision to pursue a leadership role on politics?). Participants were instructed to speak through the tape recorder to fully grasp all emotions and hold a conversation as opposed to a statistical study.

Procedure

An undergraduate researcher contacted current political science female students via mobile phone and asked whether they pursued a career in the political sector as a possible candidate for office. Three female undergraduates agreed to partake in the study and meeting times were scheduled between the researcher and the participant. Two of the interviews took place at the participant's apartment while the third interview was recorded at a nearby coffee shop. Before the interview began, participants were asked to refrain from any distractions such as mobile phones or IPODs to fully engage in the discussion. The researcher then asked the participants to hold the tape recorder near their voice for clarity and better quality of footage when assessing the question asked by the researcher. The participants were then asked a series of ten questions focusing on the correlation between the media's negative display of women political leaders and their own inspirational factors in seeking candidacy.

During the forty five-minute conversation, the researcher interacted with participants in seeking a full, in depth answer to provide clarity behind their perspectives. The structure of the questionnaire was designed in a way of how the participant developed their own personal

inspirational factors. The first series of questions assessed their current perspective in regards to leadership and politics, as well as why they planned to run for office. When asked "Name the first person that comes to mind when you think of your political hero", the researcher followed if necessary with a question asking the participant in what ways that person caused an inspiration. The following questions assessed the media's impact on their choice in candidacy and whether it held a positive or negative effect on their continuation in seeking office. The last section of the questionnaire focused on what the participants seek to do within the next five and ten years, as well as what change they hoped to see in regards to politics and women. The tape recorder provided an opportunity for participants to express their opinions fully by encouraging conversation as opposed to simply answering "yes" and "no" questions. After all questions were addressed, the participant was asked if she had any last comments thereafter ending the interview. Participants were then thanked and the researcher debriefed. In understanding, the results are not generalized because of the low number of participants. In regards to this study, the results are exploratory in nature as to provide evidence in stating how the media may work as a positive effect on future women candidates.

Results

When asked to name the first person who came to mind when thinking of a political hero, two of the three participants named male leaders while only one participant named a female leader. One participant named one older leader, Jacqueline Kennedy, while the other two participants named a current political leader, President Barack Obama. In regards to how that person has inspired them, the participants who chose Obama stated that he had revolutionized the way America thought and served as a role model for them. When asked as to why they thought they had chose a male leader, both participants discussed how it was due to the great amount of

exposure the media had given to him for the past two years. The participant who chose Jacqueline Kennedy discussed how the first lady had brought a unique approach to the Presidency regarding women issues.

When asked on the factors behind their decision to run for office, the participants mentioned the impact the lack of women representation within the political sector. All participants addressed the need for an increase in women in the political arena. One participant stated she hoped to see woman issues being addressed as to bringing the Equal Pay Amendment back into action. Two of the three participants mentioned how they see many older women in office at a local government level but have yet to see younger women in more state and nationwide offices. Moreover, all participants addressed the need for women role models to encourage more women to gain interest in political office.

Another factor participants addressed for being politically engaged was their own Latino background serving as an issue in itself. One of the participants saw her culture as a positive influence as to why she hopes to be elected for the purpose of addressing Latino and more specifically immigrant issues being discussed. Two of the participants viewed the Latino background as a discouraging factor in their decision because they stated that their culture still holds many patriarch beliefs where the woman's place exists within the household sector. The participants discussed how family obligations hinder their advancement in being politically engaged that it discourages them from running for candidacy at times.

In regards to how the participants receive information regarding political news, two of three receive updates through online while only one receives information through television news. The two participants discussed how they held busy schedules in that the only way of receiving political news was through the use of online sources such as CNN news, The Los

Angeles Times and one participant mentioned The Wall Street Journal. The third participant stated she used television news such as CNN and ABC to keep updated on current issues. She mentioned it was more helpful for her to view the issues via television as opposed to reading articles because it incorporated expressions and unbiased that could be stated through the use of writing. All three participants mentioned CNN news whether it be online or television as their primary source of receiving political updates.

Although all participants addressed the media's negative bias over women in politics, all participants used the media as a driving force leading to them desiring candidacy. The participants displayed feelings of anger towards the media and displayed a sense of pity for those women who underwent the media's exposure. One participant stated how Palin's image throughout the media angered her because the media, in her opinion, did not on what really mattered such as political stance. Another participant mentioned the past Hillary Clinton incident and how the media perceived her in a negative tone. The three participants stated although the media's exposure does at times discourage them from running for office, the media works in a counter effect for them. One participant discussed how she perceives the media's negative portrayal as an obstacle but yet more as a challenge. It served as a way of "tell me I can't do it, so I can prove you wrong." Another participant mentioned how seeing women like Clinton and Palin undergo such stress and negative representations but yet continue to strive for candidacy has in fact been an inspiration. One participant stated she has psychologically programmed herself because it works for her in that if someone states she is not capable of achieving something, the participant takes this as a inspirational in itself to prove the person wrong.

Given that all participants are political science majors, all participants addressed the need

for educating society specifically the younger generations regarding the structure of politics and issues that need to be addressed. When asked why they chose political science as their desired choice in study, all participants stated how the major focused on educating the students of governmental structure in connection to society. They emphasized the need for Americans to become informed of current issues. One participant was angered by the responses given when she asked her college-educated peers to name the senators of California. The peers did not know the answer and displayed a sense of ignorance as the participant stated.

Two of the participants differed in interest of elected office by seeking candidacy in statewide affairs while one participant chose political engagement in local government. The two participants did not know specifically the choice for what position they hope to run for, but they both stated how they hoped to partake in California legislature. The one participant responded by stating her choice to stay within local government back at her permanent resident because she was familiar with the territory and officials. When asked why not a nationwide office, all participants responded by stating they did not believe they could win.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was an attempt to answer the question of why do women run and does the media hinder their choice in seeking office. Finding potential participants for this study was a challenge in itself. The University of California, Santa Barbara holds a high ranking within the nation's best public schools but yet lack a number of women who one day hope to seek candidacy. These students represent the brightest and the next generation of future leaders, but there exists a concern as to the number of students who in fact may live up that belief. A college degree emphasizes theoretical learning but there does not exist a great emphasis on knowing essential information or simply developing the inspirational in running for candidacy.

In regards to the first question of the factors why women run, the participants displayed a pattern of a desire to have their voice heard. As expected, the participants see the need for issues such as those concerning women and Latinos to be represented within the political sector and moreover, the need for women to be elected into high powerful positions. As Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) discuss of the need for role models in order to encourage future woman candidates, the participants displayed the similar approach in their responses. The study demonstrated how although these participants held an ambitious attitude, they lacked the role models essential for their guidance. A mentor is seen crucial for these participants and not specifically for the purpose of simply having a role model one can view via television or online but moreover someone who shows how to get elected. The study displayed a desire for more women in political office but moreover a one on one personal relationship between the role model and she who is interested in running from office.

Moreover, the participants mentioned the need for educating the public about governmental structure and how society ties into governmental policies. As Falk mentions in her analysis regarding the loss of history, society continues to be misinformed of factual information regarding women and government history. The study worked as great evidence in showing how these undergraduate students acknowledge the lack of education within their own college level peers. How is it that these students who are considered the brightest students of the entire nation are not knowledgeable within their own political structure? The three participants emphasized how moreover their own people, Latino, hold no education in regards to updated information. The participants presented a sense of frustration on how many people are persuaded by the media or each other to believe information that does not hold true, or simply ignorant to what is happening across the nation. The study provided a great concern in that the education system

within the country may not be apparently successful in that its brightest students are not educated about their own political system. How can we have women run for candidacy if they do not know the history of woman role models or simply do not know the current political system?

Moreover, in regards to role models, how can there be discussion on having more women representation when the role models perceived by the participants are males. The question was used as a way to see how these participants viewed political hero and if the word leadership alone held any biases associated with it. The study in fact demonstrated just that. Two of the three participants named a male role model and when asked why, they stated because they simply referenced to those most current. It appears that the phrase political hero alone holds a relation in regards to the male sector. If political history emphasizes the male domination, as Falk (2008) mentions, then that is all society will know. There appears to exist a psychological correlation between the word male and political that must be deterred. Society and more specifically women, will never become politically engaged if all they know is male domination. The fact that the participants first thought of males is surprising in the fact that these are the women who one day seek to be elected into office. What hope is there for those who do not if they too may only view political heroes as Obama or Bush? It is not to say that these leaders are not political heroes or that they cannot be one's preference but it is essential to recognize that a role model must in fact hold similar characteristics for mentorship (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). A role model must be a mentor in that he/she will help the woman seeking office by not simply having been in office but reinforcing how they got to where they did and the obstacles to keep in mind. A future candidate would receive much more insight from a woman political leader because of the similar struggles they both endure, those sexist struggles that males do not know of.

Interestingly enough, all three participants did not state interest in one day running for

nationwide office but preferably statewide and local government given familiar ground. The study demonstrated the woman's willing to be within a comfort zone (Fox and Lawless 2004). This response alone shows why there exists no women representation within the political sector. Studies show that the higher the leadership position, the more exposure the individual will receive from the media. If as mentioned earlier, society will hold role models as those who are most currently being exposed, then it comes to explaining why there are hardly any women being exposed; there are very few who in fact run for nationwide office. There is no question asked that it is great that these three participants are taking initiative in pursuing leadership positions but the question remains why not nationwide? There will continue to be a lack of women representation in the history books as well because history as well as the media emphasize the highest positions in power because women are discouraged or uncomfortable in seeking candidacy for these positions. There needs to be a greater emphasis not merely on seeking candidacy but specifically seeking candidacy at the highest level possible because then exposure and recognition will be given to and serve as inspiration for many.

The results of this study demonstrated that the media's portrayal of women in political offices in fact served as a inspirational factor for the participants being studied. As expected, participants understand the obstacles that they will undergo when running for election such as the media but all participants use the media as a challenge in itself that will not deter them from achieving their goal. Past research suggests that encouragement from peers and political leaders is essential for future candidates to increase women representation (Fox and Lawless 2004). Yet what this study displays is that all three participants did not mention they received encouragement from family or peers, they in fact possess what is essential for women candidates: self-inspirational. This characteristic alone is what aided the participants in viewing

the media as a negative stance. Falk (2008) focuses primarily on how the media holds biases and how there needs to be a gender-friendly approach to female candidates. Yet the focus needs to be on self-inspirational and using the media as a challenge. All three participants demonstrated a sense of anger and frustration with the media in that they have programmed themselves to use it as a inspirational in itself. Portrayals of Palin and Clinton in fact served as an increase of respect for these leaders because they underwent all the stress and media exposure. This provides a counter argument for those previously mentioned who focus primarily on the negative factors behind the media. What the study demonstrates is that there are women such as the participants who are taking in the media's negativity and in fact using that energy to motivate themselves when seeking candidacy. More research is to be done on the psychological explanations for this correlation but what needs to be highlighted is that there exists a necessity for more research on why women do run and how to use that as an approach.

Conclusion

The study provided evidence in stating that the media's negative portrayal of women candidates does in fact serve as inspirational for some. Researchers have put too much emphasis on why women do not run and they are great at acknowledging the problem but it is essential to begin underlying the motives for those who have been elected. It seems that they hold a pessimistic overview such as the media's negative portrayal, lack of history, lack of women representation and this lack of encouragement. If the younger generations are to hold such a mindset, how are they ever to think positively and believe they can win elections. Perhaps the lack of confidence from women comes from the negative approach researchers and society has emphasized on so much. Focus on what the obstacles as opposed to the successes they will encounter, will deter women from candidacy.

As the study demonstrated, there is a necessity for future research on how to incorporate this psychological explanation of using media as a inspirational in itself and how women are able to possess characteristics such as self-inspirational. If one holds self-inspirational, nothing and no one will deter him/her from achieving his/her dream. There exists programs such as The White House Project and Every Woman Counts that encourage women to run for candidacy that serve as great inspiration. The root of the problem is that there exists no women in politics so one must go back and see why this occurs. As mentioned earlier, two of the three participants mentioned that their reasoning behind naming a male political leader was due to current exposure. In order to receive media exposure, one must be running for candidacy within a high political position. If women are only running for local and statewide office, how are women ever to receive such exposure? This is perhaps why there exists a lack of history. Moreover, characteristics such as self-inspirational and factors behind a woman's choice for candidacy must be analyzed further to begin educating the future generations of women leaders because it is true when they say: Success is the best revenge. With that approach, not even the media will hinder the next woman candidate for presidency.

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Appendix A
Annotated Bibliography

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There lacks a great deal of women representation within the political sector and there exists a great necessity to have role models for younger females who may be interested in the political sector. These women politicians hold a role model effect for the younger generations in that the girls have someone to look up to. The role model effect due to these women politicians instead works particularly due to family encouragement and discussion of politics. The study demonstrates that where female candidates receive more media exposure due to their high profile office, younger girls gain interest in becoming politically active. Yet there continues to remain a low percentage of women who run for these high-profile positions and remain active within local or statewide government.

Carlin, D., & Winfrey, K. (2009, September). Have You Come a Long Way, Baby? Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and Sexism in 2008 Campaign Coverage. *Communication Studies*, 60(4), 326-343. Retrieved September 5, 2009, doi:10.1080/10510970903109904

The 2008 U.S. elections provided many historical moments in such as electing the first African-American as President, the Republican nominating their first woman as vice president candidate, and Hillary Clinton as a democrat presidential nominee. Although such female candidates have come a long way, there continues to exist media framing in holding sexism within media coverage of the candidate. The media continues to hold stereotypes of women seen as emotional, naïve and gullible. An analysis was performed and found that due to this negative portrayal of female candidates, the coverage is able to have society doubt the female's ability in such high-ended positions. With this negative perception of women, future generations of women leaders will continue to remain low thereby lacking women representation within the political sector.

Center for American Women and Politics. Retrieved August 20, 2009, from the Center for American Women and Politics website: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/>

The Center for American Women and Politics was originally designed for the purposes in educating others about lost history and current status of women in politics. The website includes infinite amount of information such as who currently serves nationwide, statewide, and local government. With such statistics and facts that remain unknown in history books, one is able to become informed about the progress women have made in the political arena. Moreover, the website provides the encouragement and resources needed for female candidacy for high leadership positions. These resources work to inform and increase the number of female candidates within the political sector.

Every Woman Counts. Retrieved August 20, 2009, from the Every Women Counts website: <http://www.mylifetime.com/my-lifetime-commitment/ewc/index?q=my-lifetime-commitment/ewc/index>

Every Woman Counts is a coalition brought together by Lifetime in partnership with Hearst magazines Redbook, CosmoGIRL!, Marie Claire, and leading national nonprofit organizations that represent more than 10 million women. The purpose of the coalition is in efforts to increase women votership, ensure women issues are being discussed within

political agendas, and to encourage women in running for all elected offices. Throughout the 2008 election, Every Woman Counts conducted national polls, held training sessions for women who desire to run for candidacy, hosted events at both Democratic and Republican Conventions, and a voter registration nationwide drive for political engagement. The website provides a first hand look at what celebrities and women across the nation are saying when asked what they would do if they were elected as President of the United States. The program works as a great effort in increasing women participation in the political arena and thereby increasing women representation.

Falk, E. (2008). *Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Falk discusses the previous 2008 election and how the media has continued to frame the woman candidate in regards to political involvement. She recognizes there exists a lack of unknown history that is vital for America to become informed about because without such knowledge of women history, women candidates feel a lack of role models. If the media continues to present such negative coverage and the history of women who strove to run for elected office remains unknown, there will remain a lack of women interest for political engagement. Falk presents the need for media coverage to remain positive and for society to become aware of women progress throughout history for the purpose of encouraging women to become politically active. Yet the media will continue such portrayal so the question remains how to cope with such negativity.

Ford, L. E. (2006). *Women and Politics* (second ed. , pp. 81-176). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Media exposure discourages women from taking on candidacy and this leaving low numbers of women on the ballot. Unfortunately the majority of women have continue to use the media as a discouraging factor whether that be at a nation, state or local government office. Ford further emphasizes how some women have begun to take on a new attitude of finding their own independence and confidence within the political sector. These women are beginning to use politics to their advantage and see the necessity for women issues to be raised among political agenda. The attitude and perceptions these women have begun to take on, are what is essential in emphasizing for future generations as opposed to focusing on media negativity.

Fox, R., & Lawless, J. (2002, August 28). *Entering the Arena: Gender and the Initial Decision to Run for Office*. Conference Papers -- American Political Science Association, Retrieved September 1, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database.

Fox and Lawless acknowledge the misrepresentation of women within the American political system being dominated by males. Eighty-seven percent of U.S. senators, eighty-six percent of the members of the House of Representatives, ninety percent of state governors, eighty-eight percent of big city mayors, and seventy-eight percent of

state legislators are currently all male leaders. The authors conclude that despite the difference between male and female representation, there exists no bias against female candidates prior to election. The two most crucial indicators of winning an election are vote totals and campaign, and yet women and men do not differ in these areas. There requires more investigation on the personal reason as to why these women continue not to take on candidacy.

Fox, R., & Lawless, J. (2004). Why Don't Women Run For Office? Retrieved August 25, 2009, from the Taubman Center Website:
http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Taubman_Center/womeninoffice.pdf

A study was conducted to analyze why qualified men and women differ in interest for political involvement. Both men and women analyzed held similar qualifications and acknowledged that from those who ran for elected office, both men and women held about a fifty percent win. Fox and Lawless propose that a lack of encouragement and self-confidence is what refrains qualified women from running for candidacy. The authors propose encouragement from peers, family and political leaders to increase the self-confidence in the woman's ability to run for office. Having done this, more women will be encouraged and motivated to become politically active.

Ondercin, H., & Welch, S. (2009, July). Comparing Predictors of Women's Congressional Election Success. *American Politics Research*, 37(4), 593-613. Retrieved September 1, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database.

Ondercin and Welch examine the reasons as to why certain districts hold a higher number of women in office in comparison to those who hold very few women in office. A woman's winning ability is due to the success when running, within the primaries and lastly, at the general election. They find that different factors such as image and campaign money predict success at each stage and that the predictors of women's candidacies and success in open seat races are different than in others due to incumbency. If the winning process is similar to that of a male candidate, then the questions remains as to why women remain misrepresented.

Palmer, B., & Simon, D. (2008, Fall2008). BREAKING THE POLITICAL GLASS CEILING: INCUMBENCY, REDISTRICTING, AND THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN CANDIDATES. *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, 31(1), 29-52. Retrieved September 1, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database.

Palmer and Simon take on a positive approach in evaluating women success throughout history within the political sector. The article highlights women participation from the past and their influence over the political system, as opposed to emphasizing women's obstacles along the way. Women have brought much success through taking on leadership positions within the Senate, Congress or simply being a part of the Women's movement for equal rights. The article calls for a necessity of such history to be emphasized to see how much progress women have come to attain. Such positive emphasis may be what the future generations and society need to deter from perceived conceptions of women in politics.

Ziegler, K. (2009, July). Hitting the Glass Dome. *State Legislatures*, 35(7), 30-32. Retrieved September 1, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database.

The article discusses the status of women in politics in the U.S. as of 2009 given statistics. Ziegler analyzes the study on potential candidates performed by political scientists Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox that found a gender difference in political interest. Ziegler acknowledges that the number of women Democratic legislators are increasing while women Republicans are declining for the reason being of family obligations. The effect of family obligations pertaining to a married woman is what may hinder them from running for candidacy. An approach to emphasizing young women in politics regardless of their obligations at home due to role models such as Hillary Clinton.

Appendix B QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) Who is the first person that comes to mind when you think of your political hero?
Talk about why you first thought of that person. In what ways has that person inspired you?
- 2) What is your year and major? What were inspirational factors that influenced your decision
- 3) In what ways do you inform yourself about current events? What do you watch?

- 4) Does TV news such as CNN affect you in any way? If so, how?
- 5) In what ways have women in politics portrayed in the news have affected your viewpoints on women in leadership roles?
- 6) What are your views about the media?
- 7) How has that message affected you and your decision to pursue a leadership role in politics.
- 8) Have you ever taken on a leadership position? If so, what were your motives and inspiration? What was the context?
- 9) What career path do you seek to take? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 Years?
- 10) Any last comments?