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# A gendered perspective of local news: NewsStyle analysis of 2016 presidential campaign coverage in the Des Moines Register

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**A gendered perspective of local news: NewsStyle analysis of 2016 presidential  
campaign coverage in the *Des Moines Register***

by

**Yao Liu**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:  
Kelly Winfrey, Major Professor  
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Tessa Ditonto

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2018

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Quantity of News Coverage .....	3
Quality of News Coverage .....	4
2016 Presidential Election .....	10
Local Press Influence.....	11
CHAPTER 3. METHOD .....	16
Overview .....	16
Sampling.....	16
Operationalization of Variables .....	17
Data Analysis.....	18
Intercoder Reliability.....	18
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS .....	20
Quantity of News Coverage .....	20
Favorable or Unfavorable Slant.....	20
Electability.....	21
Personal Attributes.....	21
Traits .....	21
Issues .....	23
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	26
Limitation and Further Research .....	35
Conclusion.....	36
REFERENCES .....	38
APPENDIX CODE BOOK.....	44

**LIST OF TABLES**

	Page
Table 1 Cross Tabulation Results of Personal Attributes Linked with Clinton and Trump in the <i>Des Moines Register</i> .....	21
Table 2 Cross Tabulation Results of traits Linked with Clinton and Trump in the <i>Des Moines Register</i> Articles Covering 2016 presidential campaign .....	22
Table 3 Cross Tabulation Results of Candidate Issues Linked with Clinton and Trump in the <i>Des Moines Register</i> Articles Covering 2016 Presidential Campaign.....	23

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**ABSTRACT**

The concept of NewsStyle was developed by Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid, and Robertson in 2004 to examine how media cover candidates in mixed-gender campaigns. The purpose of this study is to investigate the NewsStyle of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump' 2016 presidential campaign coverage in one local newspaper. The selected newspaper is the *Des Moines Register*, which is the most influential newspaper in Iowa. As a swing state, the voters in Iowa play a key role in the presidential election. Based on previous studies about women candidates' coverage, the quantity, slant, electability, personal traits, and issues coverage would be recorded. This project used content analysis of 100 articles in the *Des Moines Register* from July 28, 2016 to November 8, 2016 to provide insights about how media in Iowa covered the mix-gender campaign. The findings suggest that although Clinton still faced stereotypical bias in the news coverage, the gender gap in coverage between Clinton and Trump was less pronounced in this campaign. However, the *Des Moines Register* paid the most attention to Clinton's alleged dishonesty about her private email server and the Clinton Foudation, which may have negatively influenced the outcome of Clinton's 2016 presiential campaign.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Public opinion is shaped by what the media write about, how they write, and the language they use (Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997; Scheufele, 1999). During the political campaign, “the media not only tells us who our national candidates are, but they are also instruments in creating public common conceptions of them” (Falk, 2010, p.28). The role of the media in creating and communicating the NewsStyle of candidates is important to understand the interaction of gender and political campaigns.

The construction of NewsStyle during mixed-gender presidential campaign influences potential voters (Bystrom, Banwart, Kaid & Robertson, 2004). In the late twentieth century, a series of studies analyzing the newspaper coverage of women gubernatorial and U.S. senate candidates (Devitt, 1999; Kahn, 1992, 1994, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991), showed press had different treatments for male and female candidates during political campaigns. Although more women have run for political office since 2000 in the U.S., media continue to “cast women as novelties and norm breakers” (Meeks, 2012, p. 188).

One of the famous norm breakers is Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman who took part in the presidential general election as a major party candidate. Reviewing her 2008 campaign for Democratic nominee, media bias still was one barrier for Clinton to overcome in the election (Seelye & Bosman, 2008). In 2016, Clinton came back to run for her highest political position. As the first mixed-gender presidential general election campaigns, coverage in the 2016 Clinton-Trump race has referential value to current media attitude toward women candidates and might influence the choices from voters. Therefore, a content analysis is necessary to examine the NewsStyle used in media of coverage during the presidential campaign. Different than previous studies, this content analysis focused on a

local newspaper in Iowa. It is commonsense that the results of the Iowa caucuses “had the ability to alter pre-season rankings of candidates’ odds of winning the nomination” (Adkins & Dowdle, 2001, p.440). In addition, as a swing state, the voters in Iowa play a key role in the presidential election. In this way, how the local news in Iowa reported the campaign for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump should be researched.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the NewsStyle of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump’ 2016 presidential campaign coverage in one local newspaper. The selected newspaper is the *Des Moines Register*, which is the most influential newspaper in Iowa (Skinny, 2014). To compare the NewsStyle in the *Des Moines Register* of Clinton and Trump, the news quantity, slant, electability, personal attributes coverage, personal trait coverage, and issues coverage was recorded.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To explore differences in local press coverage between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential campaign, this analysis focused on how candidates were depicted by local newspapers. In other words, the main question of interest is: what is the NewsStyle constructed by local newspapers for female and male candidates? NewsStyle, by definition, is a framework that highlights “how the media respond to female and male political candidates in the coverage of their campaign presentation to potential voters,” and the basic elements include coverage’s quantity, slants, and the traits and issues associated with the candidates (Bystrom et.al, 2004). Based on systematic studies about NewsStyle, a clear media coverage style framework can be used in today’s political campaign research, especially in mixed gender campaigns. One group of these studies concentrated on how media portray female and male candidates in mayoral, gubernatorial, and congressional campaigns. The second group of studies focused on presidential campaigns. Most of this research, whatever types of campaigns, is interested in six general areas to investigate how media treat male and female candidates: media coverage quantity, favorable and unfavorable slant, candidates’ electability, candidates’ personal attributes, candidates’ issues, and candidates’ traits (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Bystrom, Banwart & Robertson, 2001, Bystrom et.al, 2004; Kahn 1992, 1994, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991).

### **Quantity of News Coverage**

Media coverage quantity is the frequency with which the candidates are mentioned in the news story. The proportion of stories covering each candidate can be calculated from the total paragraphs mentioning each candidate per article. In the 2000 presidential campaign, Elizabeth Dole received less media coverage than George Bush did, but also less than other

male candidates, who were behind her in the polls (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Heldman, Carroll & Olson, 2005). Following earlier research trends, Bystrom, Brown, and Fiddlke (2012) found that women running for governor and mayors of cities of 100,000 or more in 2008 still received less media coverage than their male opponents. Bystrom et al. (2004)'s study of NewsStyle found that in the 2000 and 2002 U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races, women received at least as much coverage as men. Meeks (2012) analyzed news coverage of Elizabeth Dole, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, who ran for presidential or vice presidential, and found these women received more news coverage than their male competitors.

Based on most comparative analysis in political election, media coverage quantity is the basic variable to detect the difference in coverage for female and male candidates.

### **Quality of News Coverage**

The quality of the coverage, not just the quantity, is also important to candidates (Bystrom, Robertson & Banwart, 2001). Kahn did multiple analyses in the 1990s' on how female candidates were reported in the political campaign news by checking the tone and content of coverage. Most of her research found that differences in mixed-gender political election coverage did exist in U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races. During the 1984 to 1988 gubernatorial campaigns, media coverage often produced negative opinions of women candidates' political action and might have undermined the electability of women who sought positions in political field. Due to the unequal treatment by the media coverage, women candidates received less electability coverage during campaigns (Kahn 1992, 1994, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991). Although media portrayals of female candidates seemed to be more positive in the 1994 U.S Senate and gubernatorial races than before (Smith, 1997), there were still few opportunities to study the case of female candidates in presidential campaign. The 21st Century brought the first opportunity to study women running for major

parties' presidential nomination and only the second opportunity to study a female vice-presidential candidates, which can provide more examples to show how media covers women politicians.

The quality of news coverage can reinforce stereotypes of women to influence the public opinion. In the book *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1977) identified four common stereotypes for women: sex object, mother, pet, and iron maiden. Carlin and Winfrey's (2009) research on media coverage for Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin in the 2008 campaign indicated there was a considerable amount of negative coverage of both candidates and such coverage had potential to cast doubt on a women's suitability to be commander-in-chief or in the wings. Even though the styles of these two candidates are totally different, media still could find shortcomings in them. Therefore, "quality of coverage" refers to how the candidates are talked about (favorable or unfavorable slants) and includes mentions of electability, personal attributes, issues and personal traits.

### **Favorable and Unfavorable Slant**

Eagly and Karau (2002) proposed that the perceived incongruity between women's role and leadership role resulted in unfavorable attitudes toward female candidates, including news slants. Women candidates faced more stereotypical gender bias in media coverage, and journalists still discuss candidates in stereotypical ways that often favor the male candidate (Kahn, 1994; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b). News slants also reflected gender bias in issue and trait coverage, which enlarged the gendered gap in coverage (Meek, 2012). In this way, news slant had a timely role in shaping the ideas of people (Gunther & Christen, 1999). During the period of political campaigns, the editorial board is more active than usual, and political beliefs of newspaper owners and editors would be clearly articulated on opinion pages (Kahn & Kenney, 2002).

Returning to the case study of Elizabeth Dole, newspapers paid more attention to Dole's personal traits and appearance than other candidates. A number of the descriptions for Dole's personality and appearance were negative and demeaning, and probably would not be used when describing male candidates for most political election (Heldman, Carrol & Olson, 2000). Media bias continued to exist during the 2008 Democratic Primary. Many scholars found the media in 2008 campaign lacked objectivity and journalist automatically thought the victory of Obama was a good story (Sheckels, 2009). Miller, Peake and Boulton (2010) conducted a tonal comparison of traits between Hillary Clinton and her male rivals in leading U.S. newspapers. Hillary Clinton's coverage was markedly less positive in tone than Barack Obama's and her other Democratic rivals because of sexism, which disadvantaged for her campaign in 2008 (Uscinski & Goren, 2011).

### **Electability**

Electability is the voter's perceptions of the candidates' chances of winning the election (Abramowitz, 1989). In the process of presidential campaigns, many polling organizations attempt to predict the outcome of the U.S election. How journalists selected the different results of polling before election day for candidates would influence the NewsStyle. Greater ammounts of electability coverage can help candidates win more support from voters. The media coverage of Elizabeth Dole's running for Republican nomination of 2000 always focused the problems in her campaign, some coverage stated Dole's lower chances to win in the election (Andersen,2002; Heldman, Carroll & Olson, 2005). The situation would be better in sentorial elections. During the 2000 Senatorial political campaign between Hillary Clinton and Rick Lazio, most media coverage presented their similar electability as candidates in the polling. However, whether media now tend to give more

confidence to female candidates and consider them to be at least as electable as men is still lacking evidence.

### **Personal Attributes**

In the previous studies, no matter congressional or presidential campaigns, women received more media attention on their appearances, marriages and families than their male contenders (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Bystrom, Brown & Fiddelke, 2013; Falk, 2010; Stein, 2009). When Elizabeth Dole ran for the Republican nomination in 2000, the press paid a great deal of attention to the “first woman,” identity (Heldman, Carroll & Olson, 2005). One content analysis of coveraegs in newspapers, television news, and political blogs in the 2008 Republican vice-presidential campaign found that all three media “did tend to talk about family (newspaper and television) and physical appearance (newspapers and blogs) significantly more in coverage of Palin than Biden” (Bode & Hennings, 2009, p.236). Magazine coverage for Palin focused on more “relatively trivial topics” than Biden (Wasburn, P.C., & Wasburn, M.H., 2011). Besides that, among the newspapers coverages that mentioned Palin’s gender, appearance and family status, the tone was negative (Miller & Peake, 2013). Hillary Clinton not only received disproportionate coverage particularly on her clothing or appearance, but her family was mentioned more and coverage featured more negative tones than male candidates in the 2008 presidential campaign (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010). These earlier studies demonstrate that tones are often more negative in coverage of female candidates’ appearance and gender. Coverage for women candidates were likely to present women as novelties or norm breakers, and emphasize the word such as “the first lady”, “female” or “women”. (Falk, 2010; Meeks, 2012; Stein, 2009).

Besides personal attributes, candidates’ personal traits and perceived ability to handle issues are also important when the public evaluate candidates for president (Hacker, 2004;

Louden & McCauliff, 2004). Gender stereotypes about candidates' abilities and traits can influence the voters' attitudes, especially for women in office. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) first found voters' different perception in the handling issues for female and male candidates "stems from voters' gender stereotypes about men and women's personal traits" (p.140).

### **Traits**

Personality traits are associated with female and male candidates, which are identified by Meeks (2012) based on multiple previous studies:

More stereotypic "feminine traits" include warmth, compassion, emotionality, honesty, altruism, and congeniality. More stereotypic "masculine trait" include strength, assertiveness, independence, aggressiveness, and confidence. (p.180)

Much of these more recent studies were based on the work of Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) who found masculine traits were perceived by voters as more important to political leadership than feminine traits, especially in presidential campaigns. For instance, when researching Hillary Clinton's race for the White House, Meeks (2013) followed Huddy and Terkildsen's idea and found *The New York Times* strongly focused on masculine traits over feminine traits in the 2008 presidential election which helped Obama gain more credibility. Therefore, gender-trait stereotypes construct barriers for women candidates in campaigns (Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010). Schneider and Bos (2014) found female candidates actually do not have typical personality traits that are ascribed to normal women, such as warmth and empathetic. However, they also argued male stereotypical traits in female candidates would be easily lost by the public, which "not having any advantage on qualities typical of women" (p.245). To eliminate the barriers, women started to emphasize masculine traits, such as toughness and knowledgeability, more than male candidates in their campaign advertisements (Winfrey & Schnoebelen, 2018).

## Issues

Most candidates mention their issue positions to win voter support. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) firstly found that female candidates were stereotyped as better at compassion issues, and males better at military issue, especially in presidential campaigns. As more women run for political positions, the types of issues that female and male candidates care about tend to be similar, but media coverage still present different issues based on candidates' gender. The media believe that males concentrate on "masculine issues" and females are more likely to be associated with "feminine issues." Kahn (1996) proposed that "women candidates are viewed as more competent in certain policy areas (education, health, environment, maintaining honesty in government, helping the disabled and aged) while the expertise of male candidates resides in alternative domains (e.g., military, farm policy, foreign policy, and the economy)" (p.9). Particularly, female candidates were considered as compassionate with helping "the weak". For example, women candidates were significantly linked with 'women's issues' in 1998, 2000 and 2002 U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races (Bystrom et al., 2004). Based on previous studies, Meeks (2012) concluded feminine issues and masculine issue:

Feminine issues align with stereotypes regarding a woman's compassionate and family-oriented roles in society, and are considered to include health care, education, woman's rights, environment and social welfare. Masculine issues align with stereotypes regarding men as financial breadwinners and protectors, and are considered to include military and defense, crime, the economy, and foreign policy. (p.179)

However, there are less advantages for female candidates who only focus on compassion issues. Dolan (2010) found "people who see women competent to deal with

things like the economy and terrorism are dramatically more likely to voice a willingness to support them for office and a desire for greater balance in government” (p.85). Major and Coleman (2008) did a content analysis in seven Louisiana newspapers that covered the gubernatorial runoff. They found most newspaper coverage still aligned the woman with feminine issues even though she had strong experience with typical masculine issues. Contradicting other studies, in the 2012 Republican presidential campaign, Michele Bachmann, as the female candidate, was aligned more to masculine than feminine issues (Bystrom & Dimitrova, 2013). Women candidates may be particularly disadvantaged when issues like the economy, military, defense and foreign policy dominate the political landscape during the campaign, (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).

### **2016 Presidential Election**

In 2016, one of the most popular news topics was the U.S. presidential campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. News and information about the 2016 presidential election was permeating the American public. Most adults used various media types to learn about the information of 2016 presidential election, including newspaper, television, radio and social media (Gottfried, Barthel & Mitchell, 2016).

For the study of gender, this U.S. election made history. The campaign became one of the most fierce gender-mixed presidential campaign between former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and businessman/reality TV star Donald Trump. Clinton has been in political office for many years. In the 2000 New York U.S. Senate Campaign, she had received almost equitable newspaper coverage to her opponent, Rick Lazio. Media still paid more attention to Clinton’s appearance, gender and marital status in her coverage (Bystrom et al., 2004). In the 2008 Democratic Primary, Clinton received more unfavorable coverage about her gender, appearance, her husband, and feminine traits (Meek, 2013; Uscinski & Goren, 2011). Even

though she had rich political experience, sexism in the coverage of 2008 was still alive and casted doubt on Clinton's ability to be the leader in Democratic (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009).

Sixteen years later, Clinton became the first female presidential candidate from a major U.S. party; it was the closest that any women had come to being elected president in the U.S. (Hughes, 2016). Besides her gender, Clinton's campaign was challenged by the controversy surrounding her private email server while Secretary State and the Clinton Foundation. These two issues gave fuel to Trump who argued extensively that Clinton was dishonest. Unlike Clinton, the nation had known Trump's political identity for only a short time. However, Donald Trump had been known as a wealthy businessman and reality TV star for decades. Trump's rhetoric was hypermasculine and included tough talk on his opponents, sexist comments towards women, and racist statements about immigrants and minorities (Katz, 2016), all of which influenced the NewsStyles of his coverage. All in all, the 2016 campaign was unique from any previous election because it featured the first female major-party candidate with a lengthy political resume (and baggage) and a hypermasculine political novice and reality TV star that bucked the norms of political campaigning.

Bock, Byrd-Craven, and Burkely (2017) used online survey to analyze the role of sexism in voting in the 2016 presidential election and found "greater hostile sexism and having traditional attitudes toward women served as strong predictor of voting for Trump" (p.192). Sexism still affected the outcomes of 2016 election. In this way, the NewsStyles for two candidates need to be analyzed to found whether sexism also existed in the 2016 campaign coverage.

### **Local Press Influence**

In addition to sexism, it was noted that there was a huge change in the 2016 election polling from June to Election Day, especially in Iowa. In the beginning of June, polls showed

Clinton leading by about 25 percentage points in Iowa, whereas in November, Trump beat Clinton by a wide margin - 69.8 percent to 30.2 percent ( "Who will win in Iowa", 2016). The surprising shift and outcome cast new light on how Iowan coverage portrayed Clinton and Trump leading up to Election Day.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Clinton and Trump traveled all around the nation and gave many speeches. For some swing states, both candidates would pay more attention and indicated their specific policies towards many issues. Iowa is a typical swing state in the U.S. Usually, presidential candidates spend at most 75 percent of their time in these swing states (Hoban, 2016). Since 1972, the Iowa caucuses have been very important electoral events in the presidential nominating process in the United States because of its accurate prediction of candidate's electability. Notably, the Iowa caucus plays an essential role in selecting the U.S president and receives noteworthy amounts of media attention during U.S. presidential election years (Hull, 2008; Redlawsk, Tolbert & Donovan, 2011). Certainly, Iowa was the one of sites where Hillary Clinton campaigned heavily (Conlen, 2016; "Hillary Clinton Speeches", 2016). Different from national newspapers' universality, the coverages in Iowa newspaper would be more targeted towards Iowans. The most influential newspaper in Iowa is the *Des Moines Register*.

The *Des Moines Register* is the daily morning newspaper of Des Moines, Iowa. After Des Moines banker Gardner Cowles purchased most Iowan newspapers, including the *Des Moines Leader*, the *Star*, and *Des Moines Tribune*, the *Des Moines Register* was officially constructed and focused more on Iowan news. The circulation is 146,522 in the six months ending Sept. 30, 2014, which included print and digital circulation (Skinny, 2014).

Previous research has found that some differences still exist in the NewsStyles of female and male candidates, but the findings have varied based on the particular election as well as the specific element of NewsStyle. Given this previous research and the uniqueness of the 2016 presidential election I pose several research questions and hypotheses to examine the NewsStyle of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

Previous research has been inconsistent in findings regarding the quantity of media coverage of men and women, sometime finding no difference and sometime finding women receive less coverage, particularly for higher level office. Additionally, early research found women often were covered with a more unfavorable news slant, but the situation has been better in recent elections. Findings have also been inconsistent in the electability coverage of female candidates, with some finding women are presented as less likely or able to win their elections and other studies finding no significant gender differences. Given this existing research, I pose the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the quantity of coverage for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register* during the 2016 presidential campaign?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the quantity of favorable and unfavorable newspaper coverage for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*?

RQ2a: Did Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump receive more favorably slanted news coverage in the *Des Moines Register*?

RQ2b: Did Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump receive more unfavorably slanted news coverage in the *Des Moines Register*?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the electability coverage of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*?

NewsStyle research has found some consistent gender differences in media coverage, which one would expect to find in the 2016 Clinton-Trump coverage. Women candidates have often received more coverage on their gender, appearance and family than men, and sometimes this type of coverage was the predominant focus in women's coverage.

Furthermore, the work of Huddy and Terkldsen (1993b) and later Meeks (2012, 2013) found that the public expected that women candidates possessed more feminine traits and were good at compassion issues and male candidates possessed more masculine traits and were good at military and economic issues; these beliefs also translated into newscoverage that associated candidates with stereotypical traits and issues. Given these previous findings, I pose the following hypotheses.

H1: Hillary Clinton received more coverage on her gender, appearance and family than Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

H2: There is a difference in the types of traits attributed to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

H2a: Feminine traits were more often attributed to Hillary Clinton in the *Des Moines Register*.

H2b: Masculine traits were more often attributed to Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

H3: There is a difference in the types of issues attributed to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

H3a: Feminine issues were more often attributed to Hillary Clinton in the *Des Moines Register*.

H3b: Masculine issues were more often attributed to Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*.

## CHAPTER 3. METHOD

### Overview

In order to analyze how the *Des Moines Register* covered Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, a content analysis of news articles about the 2016 presidential campaign was conducted by applying the NewsStyle framework. Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond & McCroskey, 2008). Content analysis was used in this study to identify how print news in the *Des Moines Register* described both candidates used the dimensions of NewsStyles.

### Sampling

The population for this study consisted of all articles mentioning both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the *Des Moines Register*. The sample period was from July 28, 2016 to November 8, 2016. This time period allowed the newspaper to cover the initial events in the 2016 general presidential campaign and the follow-up reports and developments. Specifically, the reports began on July 28, 2016, when Clinton accepted the nomination from the Democratic Party and ended with the Election Day.

One database, ProQuest, was used to search published news reports about Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential campaign. This study used “*Hillary Clinton*” and “*Donald Trump*” in ProQuest-to search the *Des Moines Register* as the keywords and collected articles containing the keywords in the headline or body. A total of 411 reports were found for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Simple random sampling was used to select a 100 article sample from the *Des Moines Register*.

## **Operationalization of Variables**

In this study, several NewsStyle variables were measured, including quantity of newspaper coverage and quality of newspaper coverage. Each news report was examined based on the code book (See Code Book in Appendix) and as defined below.

### **Quantity of Coverage**

One article would include the contents about Clinton and Trump. Quantity of newspaper coverage was assessed based on the number of paragraphs per article that mentioned each candidate.

### **Quality of Coverage**

#### **News Slant**

A news slant could be analyzed in terms of its valence, whether it presents an idea in positive or negative construction (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). A favorable news slant was defined as expressing approval of the actions of candidates. In contrast, paragraphs with a unfavorable slant display criticism and rebuking of the action or ideas from candidates. A neutral tone means that article doesn't express favorability toward either candidate. The news slant was measured based on whether the tone of headlines and articles was favorable, unfavorable or neutral.

#### **Electability**

As the past research (Kahn 1996) found that females were not treated as normal candidates in the 1980s, electability was considered an important variable to test the NewsStyle. Electability referred to the candidates' chances to win the election, predicted by polling organizations. Electability was coded based on whether the article stated Clinton or Trump leading in polling.

### **Substance**

The content of coverage was measured in personal attributes, traits and issues. Appearance, gender, marital status/spouse, other family members of candidates, and health problems were coded for personal attributes. Based on previous studies' categories (Bystrom et al., 2004), this study explored the types of issues and traits associated with the candidates. A total of 29 issues were analyzed and were categorized as security issues, economic issues, compassion issues, and neutral issues. A total of 15 types of traits were coded for the obvious personalities that coverage mentioned for each candidate, summarized whether they are feminine or masculine traits. In the pre-coding, coders found many articles mentioned candidates' traits and issues with negative tones. To better understand the articles' attitude, this study coded traits and issues when they were described in a favorable or unfavorable way, which were attributed to each candidate. For example, honesty was coded as being attributed to Clinton if the article said she was honest or dishonest. Women issues was coded as being attributed to Trump if the article said he was good/poor at handling women issues.

### **Data Analysis**

This study used descriptive statistics, recording frequencies, and presence or absence in the defined categories. Frequencies and a two-sample *t* test were used to calculate quantity of newspaper coverage of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The chi square statistics were used to test for significant difference in the *Des Moines Register's* coverage of Clinton and Trump in the following categories: news slant, electability, personal attributes, traits and issues.

### **Intercoder Reliability**

To established intercoder reliability, the author and another journalism and mass communication second-year graduate student coded 20 percent of the total sample. After

coding training and discussion, reliability coefficient as a whole with Krippendorff's alpha was 0.93.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This study focused on the news coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign in the *Des Moines Register's* NewsStyle dimensions, including quantity, slant, and content for candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the data collection and analysis using R studio. The findings are summarized as below.

### Quantity of News Coverage

The first research question asked whether there is a difference in quantity of the news coverage for Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register*. Trump received more focused coverage than Clinton did (in 38 percent of the articles compared to 11 percent that focused predominantly on Clinton). However, most articles paid equal attention to both candidates.

In addition, the two-sample *t*-tests found a statistically significant difference in the number of paragraphs per articles for Clinton ( $M= 6.06$ ,  $SD = 5.48$ ) and Trump ( $M= 8.90$ ,  $SD= 7.966$ ),  $t = -2.937$ ,  $p= 0.0038$ . The results revealed Trump received more total coverage than Clinton did in the *Des Moines Register*.

### Favorable or Unfavorable Slant

The second research question asked whether there was a difference in the favorable and unfavorable newspaper coverage for Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register*. The chi-square test showed there was no statistically significant difference in articles' headlines for both candidates in terms of slant. Similarly, the slant of articles was not statistically different in slant between Clinton and Trump. It should be noted that Clinton received a favorable slant in 9 percent of the total articles, compared the 15 percent of Trump's coverage.

### Electability

The third research question asked whether there was a difference in the electability coverage of Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register*. In term of the quality of coverage, a chi-square test for electability category in this study revealed no significant differences between Clinton and Trump.

### Personal Attributes

The first Hypothesis, that Clinton received more coverage on her gender, appearance, and family than Trump in the *Des Moines Register*, is supported. Table 1 displays frequencies with five personal attributes related to each candidate. Based on the chi-square test, Clinton received more coverage on her marital status/spouse,  $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 7.12, \rho < .01$ . The difference between Clinton and Trump's coverage about gender is statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 4.5, p < .05$ .

Table 1 Cross Tabulation Results of Personal Attributes Linked with Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register*

	Clinton	Trump
	N=100	
Appearance	2%	0
Gender	7%*	1%
Marital status/spouse	14%**	3%
Other family members	2%	1%
Healthy problem	4%	1%

*Note.*\*p <0.05, \*\*p<0.01

### Traits

The second hypothesis, that feminine traits were more often attributed to Clinton and masculine traits were more often attributed to Trump, is not supported (Table 2). The traits most frequently attributed to Clinton were (1) honesty/integrity/trustworthy, (2) experience in politics, (3) qualified, and (4) action oriented proponent. The top four traits linked to Trump

are (1) action oriented proponent, (2) sensitive/understanding, (3) competency, and (4) newcomers in politics. It is important to note that these traits were coded whether they were mentioned as traits the candidate possessed or did not possess. In other words, honest was coded as attributed to Clinton if the article suggested she was honest as well as if it suggested she was dishonest.

Table 2 Cross Tabulation Results of traits Linked with Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register* Articles Covering 2016 presidential campaign

	Clinton	Trump
<b>Masculine traits</b>	41%	48%
Action oriented proponent	8%	17%
Competency	7%	12%
Qualified	10%	6%
Experience in politics	10%**	1%
Leadership	4%	3%
Toughness/strength	0%	6%
Aggressive	1%	5%
Knowledgeable/intelligent	1%	3%
<b>Feminine traits</b>	35%	42%
Honesty/integrity/trustworthy	25%**	8%
Sensitive/understanding	8%	14%
Of the people	1%	7%*
Newcomers in politics	0%	8%*
Cooperation with others	1%	5%

*Note.* \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ . Characteristics coded for but not mentioned in any articles: Mother/Father trait.

Different than previous studies, Trump is linked to both masculine and feminine traits more frequently than Clinton, but this difference was not statistically significant. For specific traits, articles more frequently discussed the traits about Clinton's honesty, trust and political

experience. Chi-Square analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in coverage of honesty and trustworthiness between Clinton and Trump,  $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 8.76, p < .01$ , Clinton received more coverage about her honesty than Trump did. Political experience linked to Clinton was also significantly different from Trump,  $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 7.63, p < .01$ , it became the second frequently-mentioned trait for Clinton. Trump was associated more frequently with the traits ‘of the people’ ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 4.5, p < .05$ ), ‘newcomers in politics’ ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 8, p < .05$ ).

### Issues

The third hypothesis in this study is half supported. Masculine issues were more often attributed to Trump but feminine issues were not more often attributed to Clinton. Table 3 shows the frequencies with which issues and issue categories were mentioned. The top five most frequently discussed issues by the *Des Moines Register* for Clinton were (1) email/foundation, (2) international issues, (3) national security/defense, (4) economy in general, and (5) health care. The top five issues that attributed to Trump were (1) immigration, (2) women’s issues, (3) international issues, (4) national security/defense, and (5) racial issues and economy in general (tied).

Table 3 Cross Tabulation Results of Candidate Issues Linked with Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register* Articles Covering 2016 Presidential Campaign

	Clinton	Trump
<b>Military/Security Issues</b>	32%	58%**
International issues	13%	19%
Security/defense	12%	15%
Immigration	6%	22%**
Crimes	1%	2%

Table 3 continued

<b>Compassion Issues</b>	33%	51%*
Women's issues	5%	22%**
Racial issues	4%	12%*
Health care	7%	2%
Gun control	6%	6%
Children issues	6%	6%
Drugs	1%	1%
Education	2%	1%
Poverty/hunger/homelessness	1%	1%
Senior citizen	1%	0%
<b>Economic Issues</b>	19%	38%*
Economy in general	8%	12%
Taxes	4%	11%
Trade deficit	4%	11%
Federal budget deficit	2%	2%
Employment	1%	2%
<b>Neutral Issues</b>	36%	23%
Email/foundation	26%**	3%
Agriculture	3%	8%
Technology	3%	4%
Environment	3%	3%
The Supreme Court	1%	3%
Ethics/moral decline	0%	2%
Dissatisfaction with the government	0%	2%

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*Note.* \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ . Characteristics coded for but not mentioned in any articles: youth violence.

For the issue categories, Clinton was most attributed to neutral issues, followed by compassion issues, then military/security issues, and finally economic issues. Trump was most attributed to military/security issues and compassion issues, followed by economic issues and neutral issues.

The contingency table and Chi-square analysis for types of issues found there was a statistically significant difference in how frequently Clinton and Trump were associated with

some issues. Trump was linked with military/security issues ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 7.51, p < .01$ ) and economic issues ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 6.33, p < .05$ ) more frequently than Clinton. For specific issues, Trump was associated with immigration significantly more than Clinton, ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 9.14, p < .01$ ). Counter to previous studies, Trump was linked to two compassion issues significantly more often than Clinton: racial issues ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 4, p < .05$ ), and women's issues ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 10.704, p < .01$ ). Because of the higher percentages for racial and women's issues, Trump received more coverage about compassion issues than Clinton did ( $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 3.86, p < .05$ ). The only issue more frequently associated with Clinton was private e-mail and the Clinton's Foundation issues,  $\chi^2(1, N = 100) = 18.24, p < .01$ .

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This study is a NewsStyle analysis of the *Des Moines Register* for 2016 presidential campaign. Overall, evidence shows that there are differences in quantity, personal attributes, issues and traits in coverage for Clinton and Trump. This study found that gendered differences still present in personal attributes and issues coverage. However, the coverage of the candidates' traits did not align with previous studies on gender stereotypes and media coverage. These findings indicate that although Clinton still faced stereotypical bias in the news coverage, the gender gap in coverage between Clinton and Trump was less pronounced in this campaign.

First, over half of the articles paid equal attention to both candidates in the *Des Moines Register*. In the rest of the articles, Trump was more likely to be the dominant focus in articles than Clinton. Trump also received more paragraphs focused on him per article than Clinton did. The results fit the studies from 1990s that indicated women running for either U.S. Senate or gubernatorial seats received less or about equal coverage than men (Devitt, 1999; Kahn, 1994; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Smith, 1997). However, such findings contradict the research on Clinton's 2008 campaign that Clinton received more focus in media than her male competitors (Meeks, 2012; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010). The larger quantity of news coverage for Trump also explains why he had more coverage of both traits and issues. Also, Trump maintained a prominent place on the news agenda of the *Des Moines Register*, which helped him receive more exposure than Clinton. Voters could more easily get access to information about Trump, whatever coverage was positive or negative.

In addition to quantity of coverage, whether articles featured a favorable or unfavorable slant is still essential in researching NewsStyle because of the potential impact it

may have on voters in a swing state like Iowa. Favorable coverage may lead voters to develop more positive evaluations of candidates (Kahn & Goldberg, 1991). In recent mixed-gender campaigns, studies have indicated that female and male candidates were treated more equally by media than in political campaigns before the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Atkeson & Kerbs, 2008; Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003; Bystrom et al, 2004). This study is consistent with those research. It found there was no significant difference in headlines with favorable and unfavorable slants. For articles as a whole, both candidates were treated in a neutral manner in the majority of articles. The result of this study is different from the research that focused on Clinton's 2008 campaign, which concluded that Clinton was more likely to be negatively treated by media than Obama (Meeks, 2012; Meeks, 2013; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010; Uscinsk & Goren, 2011). The quantity of negative coverage for Clinton and Trump is almost equitable in the *Des Moines Register*. Most articles in the *Des Moines Register* featured neutral tones and kept to fact-based views of Clinton and Trump, rather than depending on gender stereotype.

In selected articles from the *Des Moines Register*, Clinton and Trump received almost the same quantity of articles mentioning their chances of winning the election. In the fifteen articles that stated Clinton ahead in polling, two articles were favorable toward Clinton and three articles were unfavorable toward Trump. An article written by Jason Nobel on August 10, 2016 featured different slants for Clinton and Trump, saying "The fact that Clinton could become the first female president is helping win over undecided or skeptical voters... Trump, meanwhile, is cast by the Clinton Campaign as a crass and misogynistic bully who sets a bad example for children... A May poll of Latino voters nationally found 67 percent favored Clinton compared to 23 percent for Trump" (para.8, para.23). However, half of the articles

that stated Trump ahead in polling were unfavorable toward Clinton and favorable towards Trump. Counter to Nobel's article, one article mentioned "rural America turns to Trump... An August NBC/Wall Street Journal poll found Trump outperforming Clinton in Iowa's rural western counties" (Hardy, 2016, para.24).

Unlike electability, in comparing coverage of candidates' appearance, gender, marital status, other family members, and health problems, Clinton received more articles that mentioned her gender and marital status than Trump did. The *Des Moines Register* still stereotyped Clinton by repeatedly mentioning her gender and marital status. Such portrayals deepened the gendered impression for voters, which may have disadvantaged Clinton's campaign. Over half of the articles that mentioned Clinton's gender featured an unfavorable slant. These articles characterized Clinton as unfit to be the nation's commander, even "a number of women don't feel like Hillary is enough of a woman to be president" (Noble, 2016a, para.24). One article wrote that "In Cedar Rapids, where fire officials estimated the audience at 3,000, Ernst belittled Clinton, a former secretary of state and the first woman to be nominated by a major party for the nation's presidency, as someone who has failed members of its military" ("Top GOP brass out", 2016, para. 6). Most articles that mentioned Clinton's marital status featured neutral tones. Although the results are consistent with the previous studies' finding that women's gender and marital status were more often mentioned by media than men (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Falk, 2010; Kahn, 1992; Kahn, 1996; Meeks, 2012; Stein, 2009), appearance, gender and marital status were not the focus of Clinton's coverage in the *Des Moines Register*. Clinton received more articles focused on dishonesty in relation to her private email server and the Clinton Foundation.

The feminine traits ‘honesty’ and masculine trait ‘political experience’ were more likely to link with Clinton than Trump. Although Clinton’s honesty was mentioned the most times, the tones for this trait were negative. For instance, the public’s dissatisfaction was shown in the articles: “McMullin noted he also has major differences with Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, calling her a ‘deeply corrupt’ politician who doesn’t believe she is accountable to the American people. He said her use of a private email server for government business...put the lives of some of his CIA colleagues at risk” (Petroski, 2016, para. 8). However, the tones of Clinton’s political experience, which are categorized as a masculine trait, were mostly positive stating, for example, “Clinton has the temperament and experience to lead the nation” (“Iowa native aims”, 2016, para.14). It is noteworthy that Trump received more attention to the trait of sensitivity, which featured more unfavorable slants and accused him of indifference or hostility towards women, minorities and children. For example, one article said “In at least 20 lawsuits, plaintiffs accused Trump and managers at his companies of discriminating against women, ignoring sexual harassment...” (Penzenstadler & Kelly, 2016, para.27). The traits of being a ‘newcomer in politics,’ and ‘of the people’ were more likely to link with Trump than Clinton.

The analysis of traits coverage adds more uniqueness into this study. The coverage in the *Des Moines Register* was likely to portray traits related to candidates’ previous experience, behavior, and communication, particularly amplifying controversial personal traits. In the *Des Moines Register*, Clinton lost more feminine traits, and Trump was accused of lacking caring attitudes towards women and minorities. Different from the recent study that found masculine traits play a key role in the media coverage (Meeks, 2012), this study

found feminine traits also provided a potential impact for candidates running for national and executive office.

Finally, significant differences were found in the issues linked with Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register*. Clinton was less likely to be linked with military/security and economic issues than Trump. As the former Secretary of State, Clinton should have been associated with military and security issues at least as much as Trump, but the *Des Moines Register* paid more attention to Trump's national security and immigrants policies. Still troubling, comparing men candidates, women are less associated with masculine issues in media coverage despite having rich political experience. However, Clinton also received less coverage about compassion issues than Trump did; this is contrary to previous studies that found women were more often associated with compassionate issues (Kahn, 1996; Coleman, 2008; Meeks, 2012). The dominant issue in the *Des Moines Register* attributed to Clinton was her private email server and the Clinton's Foundation.

Email and foundation issues that link to a dishonesty problem are predominant in Clinton's coverage. In the 26 articles that mentioned Clinton's email and foundation, half of the articles featured unfavorable slants. The style for the rest of the articles were neutral. For instance, most unfavorable articles pointed out that voters were bothered by email and foundation problems. One article said that "Poll respondent Richard Sternberg said it was concern over Clinton's trustworthiness and conduct in the email and Benghazi controversies that led him to cast a reluctant vote for Trump" (Noble, 2016b, para. 12). This type of coverage heavily disadvantaged Clinton's campaign. When the *Des Moines Register* gave Clinton's less issue coverage, voters received more negative news about Clinton's email and foundation scandals. Iowa Poll did a survey of likely Iowa voters before Election Day and

found 68% were bothered by Clinton's relationship with donors to the Clinton Foundation. Also, 63% of Iowans were bothered by the FBI investigation into Clinton's email. The negative coverage of Clinton on these issues may have served an agenda-setting function and perhaps intensified voters' distrust of Clinton, which was a key factor in Iowa voters' decision to support Trump (Noble, 2016c).

Trump also received some negative coverage in the *Des Moines Register*, especially related to compassion issues. Trump was more than three times likely to be linked with immigration issues and racial issues as Clinton, and more than four times as much attention to women's issues than Clinton did. In the 30 unfavorable articles about Trump, eight articles criticized his immigration policy, six unfavorable articles mentioned Trump's racial attitude, especially his accusation that President Obama was not born in the U.S., and 12 articles mentioned his disrespect toward women. For instance, an article quoted one Iowa native that called Trump a "petulant, dangerously unbalanced reality TV star" and described his stance on issues, stating "extreme positions with anti-immigrant, anti-gay and anti-women positions anchored by his 'fantasy wall at the Mexican border'" ("Iowa native aims", 2016, para.4). Another article questioned Trump's insensitive attitude towards racial issues, and said that "the New York businessman offered no apology or explanation for why he promoted the so-called 'birther' issue since at least 2011" (Jackson, 2016, para.5).

However, different from the women and racial issues, immigration issues were also mentioned in five favorable articles toward Trump. In one article, a Des Moines resident voiced his support for Trump's immigration policies. "We don't have a country if we don't have a border. Sanctuary cities are ignoring the law. I think he is a person that wouldn't ignore the law" (Pfannenstiel, 2016, para.29).

This study applied the NewsStyle framework into 2016 U.S. presidential campaign coverage in the *Des Moines Register*. Although the NewsStyles in the *Des Moines Register* were different between Clinton and Trump, the “feminine” and the “masculine” categories did not often line up with the candidates’ gender. Based on the Iowa Poll in November 2016, the issues that most bothered voters were Clinton’s handling of private email, her handling of the Benghazi attack, her honesty, and her family’s foundation. Voters also were bothered by Trump’s odd temperament and attitude toward women (Noble, 2016c). All of the Iowan voters’ concerns correspond to the coverage focus of the *Des Moines Register*, especially in the last month before the election. McCombs (2014) argued that the ways people think and talk about public issues were affected by how the mass media presented those issues. During the 2016 presidential campaign, the *Des Moines Register* certainly played a timely role of reinforcing Iowan voters’ ideas of candidates.

Contradicting recent research on presidential campaign coverage, this study found little gender difference in media coverage. Although Clinton still received significant coverage about her “first woman” status, coverage of Trump’s campaign seemed to focus on the novelty and newcomer status, and Trump received more total coverage than Clinton in the *Des Moines Register*. Clinton was less likely to be associated with feminine traits and issues than her previous campaigns. Several reasons might explain fewer gender difference in the coverage. First, Clinton was not a typical women candidate. She had rich political experience and featured many masculine traits. Rather than linking Clinton’s to stereotypically feminine traits and issues, the *Des Moines Register* focused more on the scandal surrounding her email and the Clinton’s Foundation, perhaps because it was more newsworthy given voters’ interest in the topics. Second, people were familiar with Clinton’s

political identity, so newspapers, including the *Des Moines Register*, relied less on gender stereotypes and focused more on the specifics of the candidates and election. Third, the public was more familiar with Trump's celebrity status than his political beliefs. Unlike most male candidates, Trump did not receive as much coverage of his masculine traits, likely because the press focused more on the novelty of his candidacy than on his position on issues. In another words, the uniqueness in 2016 presidential campaign likely shaped the NewsStyle of both candidates.

Similar to Bystrom et al.'s NewsStyle research (2004), this study found there were still many gendered stereotypes in the coverage of Clinton and Trump, but the findings also indicate NewsStyles are influenced by multiple factors in the electoral context. The sexism in coverage is less common than previous mixed-gender presidential or vice presidential campaigns. As a local newspaper in a swing state, the *Des Moines Register* provided NewsStyles of Clinton and Trump based on real-world developments about candidates, not just gendered stereotypes. Although voters perceived women and men candidates differently in political campaigns (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b), the *Des Moines Register* did not heavily emphasize these gendered expectations when covering Clinton and Trump's campaign. Comparing to previous studies of NewsStyle and gender, the *Des Moines Register* provided a more evidence-based NewsStyle of Clinton, including facts about the FBI's action and voters' opinions. Fact-based and evidence-based NewsStyle would avoid more misleading information, especially in the gendered stereotype coverage. In addition, more fact-based NewsStyles can improve the quality of women candidates' coverage during mixed-gender campaigns.

However, Clinton may have suffered more from her negative coverage and that it may have been remembered more by the voters. The *Des Moines Registers* gave less quantity of coverage towards Clinton, and paid attention to Clinton's dishonesty traits in private email server and Clinton's Foundation issues, which featured negative slants. The coverage of her email and foundation was repetitive, which stuck in the public's mind. On the other hand, Trump's coverage featured more diversity and voters seemed to easily forget his unfavorable coverage. The different NewsStyles of Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register* may have influenced Iowa's outcome in the 2016 election. It might explain why Clinton's chances of winning in Iowa rapidly decreased from June to Election Day ("Who will win in Iowa," 2016). In future elections, females will still face gendered stereotypes and bias in media coverage, but this study gives hope that the situation will be better than previous mixed-gender campaigns. However, in addition to gendered bias in media coverage, women candidates may suffer from negative coverage more than men.

This study also demonstrated the importance of feminine issues and traits in a presidential election. This study found most unfavorable articles in the *Des Moines Register* casted doubt on Clinton and Trump's feminine traits or issues. In addition to Clinton's dishonesty, Trump was criticized by the *Des Moines Register* because of his inappropriate behavior towards women and the minorities, which disadvantaged his campaign. Based on a national study, the FBI announcement about Clinton's email and Trump's Access Hollywood tape produced a significantly negative effect on voters' attitude toward Clinton and Trump (Thorson, Tham, Chen & Kanuri, 2018). Different from the previous studies that femininity is antithetical to leadership (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b; Meeks, 2012), this study found some feminine traits- empathy, honesty, cooperation, and

understanding also become valuable leadership traits in media coverage. When candidates, especially women candidates, blindly embrace masculinity and reject femininity, the NewsStyles of their campaigns still will be negative. Sometimes, feminine traits and issues are considered central to politics when women and men candidates seem to lack in those areas. Although masculine traits and issues are still important, lacking feminine traits or ability to handle feminine issues will hurt the candidates' chances of electoral success.

### **Limitation and Further Research**

The election surrounding the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign attracted attention around the nation. This content analysis included only around four months of news coverage in only one local newspaper. Long-term and multi-newspaper observations could provide a more accurate comparison of how media in Iowa or swing states construct the NewsStyle for Clinton and Trump. Also, this study selected all article samples from the *Des Moines Register* randomly to conclude a whole NewsStyle for candidates. However, the presidential campaign is a long-term issue, some coverages would change their NewsStyle for both candidates based on the real-world development. For example, most favorable coverages to Clinton were published in July, August and September, whereas in the busy October and November, more unfavorable coverages were published. It seems that NewsStyle for Clinton in the *Des Moines Register* changed from favorable to unfavorable. Future research should sort articles according to published dates to see how many favorable and unfavorable coverages distributed in every month, then analyzed the NewsStyle trends and reasons for each candidate. Then, for the traits and issues coding, this study coded candidates' favorable and unfavorable traits/issues into one category. As has been discussed this led to some unexpected results, like Trump receiving more coverage on women's issues. To make it

easier to interpret findings, future research should code positive and negative coverage of traits and issues as separate items.

Another limitation in this study was only using text material to check the NewsStyle. Besides text, further study can also explore the differences of visual content in the news coverage. For instance, during the analysis, researcher noticed that the *Des Moines Register* used some photos to show the issues or traits for the candidates. However, this type of NewsStyle did not show up in the text. Barrett and Barrinton (2005) found newspaper photographs could influence voters' perception towards candidates' personal traits, and female and male candidates were affected differently by photographs. In the future studies, photos that are used in articles also should be coded to exam the whole NewsStyle for Clinton and Trump.

In addition, whether the NewsStyle for Clinton and Trump in the *Des Moines Register* is consistent with the most national newspaper should be examined. Future studies can collect more data about national newspaper's NewsStyle to confront the local newspaper. In this way, the analysis would be more complete. In the future research, researchers also need to compare voters' opinions with the content of news coverage to better understand the effect of NewsStyle.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the *Des Moines Register* paid more attention to Trump, because his campaign is more novel than Clinton's. Still, Clinton received more attention on her gender and marital status than Trump, but it was not the predominant focus in Clinton's coverages. Clinton received the most coverage about her dishonesty in private email server and Clinton's Foundation issues. Articles in the *Des Moines Register* did not specially differentiate masculine and feminine issues or traits for Clinton and Trump. Although gender bias still

exists in media coverage, Clinton and Trump receive more fact-based NewsStyles with improvement in quality. To follow the fact-based NewsStyle, journalists are good at collecting the data about candidates' previous experience, behaviors and sayings, especially for some controversial issues. However, when female and male candidates received the similar quantities of negative coverage, women candidates may be disadvantaged more in their campaign than men, which will influence the outcome of elections.

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**APPENDIX CODE BOOK**

**Coder Initials:**

**Publication date:**

**Article number:**

**Select all of the candidates mentioned in the headline**

Hillary Clinton

Donald Trump

**Select all of the candidates mentioned in the article**

Hillary Clinton

Donald Trump

**List the number of paragraphs that mentioned Hilary Clinton**

**List the number of paragraphs that mentioned Donald Trump**

**Who does the article predominantly focus on?**

Hilary Clinton

Donald Trump

Equal focus on both candidates.

**Did the headline frame Clinton with a?**

Favorable slant

Unfavorable slant

No slant

**Did the headline frame Trump with a?**

Favorable slant

Unfavorable slant

No slant

**Did the article frame Clinton with a?**

Favorable slant

Unfavorable slant

No slant

**Did the article frame Trump with a?**

Favorable slant

Unfavorable slant

No slant

**Does the article state that Hillary Clinton is ahead in polling?**

Yes

No

**Does the article state that Donald Trump is ahead in polling?**

Yes

No

**Does the article mention Hillary Clinton's personal attribute (select all that are mentioned)?**

Appearance

Gender

Marital status/spouse

Other family members

No

**Does the article mention Donald Trump's personal attributes (select all that are mentioned)?**

Appearance

Gender

Marital status/spouse

Other family members

No

**What characteristics about Hillary Clinton are emphasized in the article (select that all apply)?**

Aggressive/fighter: need for aggressive action, candidate will fight for constituents

Action oriented proponent: candidate has a plan, is no just complaining about the problem

Cooperation with others: candidate will work with others to find solutions to problems

Competency: assertive, confident, will get the job done

Experience in politics: candidate has the political experience, connections, to best represent constituents

Honesty/integrity/trustworthy: truthful, honest, has personal integrity

Knowledgeable/intelligent: candidate is smart, knowledgeable on the issues

Leadership: candidates is a recognized leader, on the forefront of issues, others follow his/her lead

Mother/father: it is noted that the candidate is a mother/father, has children

Of the people (commonality/commitments): emphasizes that he/she relate to the people of the state or district

Qualified: gives reasons or makes statements why this candidate is best qualified for office, based on past record and experience

Sensitive/understanding: candidate understands, cares about, and is sensitive to the needs of others with strong emotion.

Toughness/strength: tough on violence and powerful

Newcomers in politics: no more “politics” as usual (opposite-politics as usual, part of the Washington establishment)

Other characteristics not listed above (specify)

**What characteristics about Donald Trump are emphasized in the article (select that all apply)?**

Aggressive/fighter: need for aggressive action, candidate will fight for constituents

Action oriented proponent: candidate has a plan, is no just complaining about the problem

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Other characteristics not listed above (specify)

**Which issues are associated with Hillary Clinton (select that all applied)?**

Crime/prison: mentions the crime rate, criminals, incarceration of criminals, building of prisons, capitol punishment, victim’s rights, etc.

Drug/drug abuse: mentions drug use/abuse, consequences of drug use/abuse, programs developed to assist those with drug problems, or programs to fight drugs, stop drug trafficking, the drug war, or education about drug abuse

International issues (foreign relation, war, potential conflict, arms control): mentions foreign relations with other countries, foreign affairs, fear of war, arms control, keeping peace, etc.

National security/defense: mentions or discusses the nation's security, defense, military bases or spending, terrorism.

Gun control: mentions the need for or argument against gun control and related measures such as trigger locks, the Brady Bill, waiting periods, bans on selling guns at gun shows, etc.

Youth violence (includes school violence, juvenile delinquency): mentions school violence or other juvenile violence and/or the need to control youth violence.

Economy in general: mentions or discusses the state or district's economy in general, recession and or depression in discussion the economy of the state, district, nation/inflation, compares cost of living now to previous time.

Economic-Federal budget deficit/failure to balance: mentions federal budget deficit, failure to balance the national budget, or may focus on the cost of the deficit to future generations

Economic-taxes: mentions federal income taxes on individuals and/or corporations, death tax, marriage tax penalty, gasoline tax, or some other tax and may offer an opinion

Economic-Trade deficit: mentions trade deficit between US and another country, may argue for or against opening/increasing/decreasing trade to other countries

Jobs: mention employment rates, increasing lowest wages, enlarge positions for all fields.

Welfare/welfare reform: mentions reforming the welfare system or promote success reforming the welfare system, focus of the discuss must be on the "welfare system" not helping poor people in general.

Women's issue (general): mentions women's issues generally or specific issue including equal pay for men and women or abortion, women's right to choose

Poverty/hunger/homelessness: mentions or discussed homeless people, poor people, hungry people and/or the need to help these people (excluding specific reference to welfare reform)

Children issues/problem (child poverty, obesity, children health care, nutrition, early education for children only): mentions concern of children such as children poverty, obesity, children health care, nutrition, early education.

Education: mentions the state or district's elementary, secondary, vocational schools or programs, or colleges and universities; the need for quality teachers, funding or preparing students for the future, need for teacher qualification exams (excluding specific references to youth violence in school).

Health care: mentions health care in general, cost of health care, hospitals, health insurance, specific diseases, affordable Care Act/Obamacare: mentions the act as a whole or specific parts.

Racial issue: mentions racial equality, relationship with minorities, policies to solve racial problems, etc.

Immigration: mentions illegal immigration, controlling illegal immigration, and the problems illegal immigration causes on education and/or healthcare system, employment taxes, etc.

Senior citizen issues/problem of elderly (social security, Medicare, prescription drug for senior citizens only): mentions concern of senior citizens such as Social security, Medicare, government pensions.

Dissatisfaction with the government: mentions city, state, or federal government, and/or their agencies/representatives as problematic, out of touch with the average citizen, in need of reform.

The Supreme Court: mentions the Supreme Courts justice, releases nominees to the court, commitment to quality justice.

Environment/pollution: mentions environment issues, such as preserving a clean environment, keep water clean, or cleaning up pollution.

Ethics/moral decline: mentions a decline in ethical and moral values of the country or state and/or citizens and/or the need for stronger values.

Agriculture: mentions the agriculture benefits, the population and income of farmers, modern farm reform.

Technology: creative innovation, technology reform and technology cooperation.

Private email server and Foundation issues

Other issues.

**Which issues are associated with Donald Trump (select that all applied)?**

Crime/prison: mentions the crime rate, criminals, incarceration of criminals, building of prisons, capitol punishment, victim's rights, etc.

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Technology: creative innovation, technology reform and technology cooperation.

Private email server and Clinton's Foundation issues

Other issues.