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Anita Lynn Herold

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MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF POLITICAL SPOUSE'S COMMUNICATION ON
THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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for the degree of

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This dissertation, submitted by Anita Herold in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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Anita L. Herold
June 6, 2012

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Who encouraged, assisted, and shoved me when I needed it most.

ABSTRACT

A good public image is important to everyone, but it is vital to political candidates. Media content has been the focus of much research, but most centers on the candidate as an individual. This research explores media portrayals of the communication that occurs between a candidate and their spouse.

A content analysis of newsmagazine articles from September 1, 2010 to November 1, 2010 was conducted exploring concepts relating to candidate status, spouse's sex, gender roles and stereotypes, acceptance, and media ideology.

Only 8.82% of the articles contained instances of spousal communication. All of these communication events portrayed in the article were non-controversial and verbal. In support of prior research this study also found that media ideology played a significant role in how the newsmagazines portrayed candidates and their spousal communication.

Contrary to expectations, the adherence to gender roles and stereotypes, although significant, did not result in perceptions of acceptance, but rather in rejection or non-committal latitudes. Another unexpected finding was that no newsmagazine articles covered incumbent candidates. This is due to a cultural/social event as a reciprocating influence, the emergence of the Tea Party.

The influence of the Tea Party resulted in relatively few incumbents on general election ballots and greater scrutiny of Tea Party candidates in the newsmagazine articles. This in turn resulted in no spousal communication events for incumbent candidates being present in the study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We all communicate a public image. We try to construct this image so that others see us in a particular way. This is communicated in what we say, in the ways we behave and how we react and respond to others. For most of us, this means creating an image we believe to be socially acceptable. Similarly, public image is a serious concern for political candidates, campaign managers, and political communication researchers. The public image candidates try to project is meant to build a connection to the voters who they hope will vote for them. Continuation of a positive public image encourages re-election by the citizenry.

Communication research in this area focuses on the construction of a particular image through both verbal and non-verbal cues, but focuses on the candidate individually, a spouse individually, and the media. The words candidates use, the clothing they wear, debate performance, political stance, current issues, venue and media selection, campaign financing, and physical attractiveness are all picked over as indicators of successful connection to voters.

The prior research does not encompass the personal communication that generally occurs between the candidate and their significant other.

The communication between significant others does however, also communicate information to the public. Most people have an innate sense used to determine the emotional disposition of others. This feeling is based on non-verbal and verbal cues. Consider the message conveyed by a couple holding hands walking down the street, a defensive stance with crossed arms, or a bored look. People communicate all manner of emotional states through these non-verbal cues. Communication scholars agree that non-verbal cues provide the majority of meaning in communication; from 65% to 95% (Wood, 2008). Added to these cues are the verbal utterances, tones of voice, and actual words used to communicate with or about the significant other. These all communicate something about the relationship and we draw conclusions based on our own experiences. We make assumptions about the people and relationship based on what we observe of their behavior and our perceptions of what that means. We then use those assumptions to determine their "acceptability" to us.

This constitutes a viable area of research. After all, every campaign cycle candidates parade their families before the public and the popular presses run stories concerning these sources of political support. Spouses are thrown into the unusual role of participating in interviews, conventions, and campaign functions.

These are organized by the campaign managers and candidates, but the communication that occurs between significant others in the public eye is harder to orchestrate. It would be important then to study what the effects of this communication are, particularly in an age where “family values” becomes a campaign issue.

Whether a voting citizen of the United States or not, the election of the President of the U.S., and to a lesser although important extent members of Congress, affects people in every corner of the world. Understanding how voters choose these powerful people is important. Voters choose the candidates whose image they perceive to be best according to their own system of standards and values. Part of that image is made up of, although not necessarily constructed, through how candidates relate to their spouses. Still, current research fails to address the communication of these individuals both with and about their political significant others and voters.

The questions this study centers around are how does the media portray this communication between politicians and their significant others? How do those portrayals relate to the “acceptability” of the candidate? Campaign managers and the candidates themselves would be those most directly benefitted by the answers. It would be useful to know if a spouse should join the candidate on the podium, remain in the background, or not be present at all.

In addition, the research is generalizable to anyone in similarly high profile positions. Any public relations advisor would be able to provide more informed recommendations to business CEO's, hospital or college administrators, even clergy. Anyone who finds themselves in the position of being scrutinized by their community would benefit from this research.

This line of inquiry is of interest to communication scholars and as is usually the case with communication research, sociologist and political scientists. Public relations, journalism, political communication, and mass communication are four common areas of academic communication programs that directly use this type of information.

Definitions

In this study, politician and candidate are interchangeable to indicate any person be they male or female, who has filed and announced they are running for elected office. This study does pertain specifically to political candidates, but as discussed earlier, could be expanded to include other high profile, public figures.

Although the term spouse, usually an indicator of legal marital status, is the most frequently used term in this paper, it is the intention of this researcher that the *significant other* (i.e., non-wedded lover, gay partner, etc.) of any candidate is included regardless of legal status. While this applies less to

Presidential candidates at this time, there are other political leaders for whom it does apply (e.g., Congressional members Tammy Baldwin, D-WI; Barney Frank, D-MA; former Congressman Jim Kolbe, R-AZ) and is more useful in expanding to other public positions that can be found in today's diverse world.

Communication is, and should be, inclusive of both verbal (utterances to and about the spouse) and non-verbal (handholding, glances, facial expressions, kissing, etc.) forms of relating to one another. The researcher considers communication in this case to be triadic in form; between not only the candidate and his/her spouse, but also between the couple, the media and the voters.

Acceptability in this study refers to the idea that a media portrayal of the spousal communication is more or less favorable regardless of the "acceptability" of the specific instance of communication taking place or the circumstances in a particular situation. In defining acceptability this study borrows heavily from Sherif's Social Judgment Theory's latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment (1965/1982). This theory is more thoroughly explored in the next chapter.

The literature review in the following chapter further illuminates how media portrayals and public image are related by looking at political spouses in terms of political communication, mass communication, interpersonal communication, and gender roles and stereotypes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed in the introduction, the creation of an acceptable image is the primary goal of not only political candidates, but in fact most people. The introduction briefly touched upon that to date these efforts in political campaigns and the research into producing a favorable candidate image is focused on attributes such as physical attractiveness, political stance, and debate performance.

This chapter focuses on prior research and provides the foundation for this study. The research questions and hypotheses were developed from a review of research in the areas of political communication, media effects, interpersonal relationships, and gender and stereotypes.

Political Communication

McNair (2003) states “political communication . . . is largely mediated communication” (p. 29). The media are the means by which politics happens, that is to say media is where the communication takes place. This is especially true during campaigns. Trent and Friedenber (2004) explain that “it is communication that occupies the area between the goals or aspirations of the

candidate and the behavior of the electorate, just as it serves as the bridge between the dreams or hopes of the voter and the actions of the candidate” (p. 15). The mediated communication is present from the beginning to the end of the campaign.

In the introduction I explained that image creation during a campaign is of utmost important for candidates both in obtaining and maintaining office. I also discussed the importance of spouses and the presentation of a certain image relating to the familial relationship. In fact, Trent and her colleagues found that perceived” honesty, faithfulness to spouse, and moral integrity” were the three characteristics voters considered most important for a candidate to possess (Trent & Friedenber, 2003, p. 75). As relations with the spouse (faithfulness) remained one of the three important characteristics supports my assertion spousal communication is of more importance and deserves more attention than prior political communication research has given.

It is through the mediated political communication that most voters determine how these characteristics apply to the candidates. Most voters never meet the candidates whom they are voting on so, they must rely, in part, on media portrayal and interpretations of political communication. Anderson (2003) and Leighley (2004) remind us however, that the goals and purposes of the

people using media are also important. One concern often noted is the constant complaint that media are biased.

This is in part based on the expanded roles of reporters and journalists in the political communication process. As Jamieson and Waldman state “although reporters pride themselves on being recounters of important fact, they increasingly take on the role of pundits . . . (2003, p. 93).” In this way reporters are not only influenced by their own beliefs, experiences, and ideas but also by the ideas and beliefs of the media for which they work. In business this is known as the company philosophy or environment, but we can better understand the idea by discussing media ideology.

Media Ideology

Research has shown that political coverage in newspapers is correlated with the political ideology of those papers (Barrett & Barrington, 2005; Kahn & Kenney, 2002). While Barrett and Barrington’s (2005) research was centered on visual political imaging (i.e. photographs used in news stories), an underlying foundation was that the political atmosphere of the paper and its relation to the political leanings of a candidate determined what type of photograph would be used; more favorable or more negative (p. 98). They found that the “favorableness of the candidate photograph evidently had a significant impact on evaluations of the candidate” (p. 103).

Magazines and newspapers share many qualities. They both combine text and images and like newspapers magazines also have an ideological identity. Some magazines proudly proclaim their ideology on their mast heads (e.g., the *Progressive*, the *American Conservative*), in the magazines mission statement, or on the official website. The *American Prospect*, for example, states in the About Us section of their webpage (<http://prospect.org/>) "We're liberal, progressive, lefty – call it what you want, we're proud of it." The *National Review* website (www.nationalreview.com) describes their publication and online edition as "America's most widely read and influential magazine and web site for conservative news, commentary, and opinion." Some magazines are more closed-mouthed with no overt declarations of ideology (e.g., Time, Newsweek). Logic suggests then, that magazines, like the newspapers discussed earlier, also reinforce their ideology through the selection of favorable or negative material, including images and characterizations of candidates and their spouses. Additionally, media often employ reporters and journalists who are at least basically in line with the company ideology. The importance of ideology is related to the portrayal of content and the effect it has in voters. The effect of media content has been of concern to political communication researchers for decades.

Media Effects

The prevailing approach to political communication research is media and media effects. Part of this close relationship between the media and political communication may in part be due to what Baker (2001) indicates is the responsibility of the media to provide for democratic discourse.

Media effects have been studied for decades. General consensus is that the study of *media effects* specific to politics really began with Paul Lazarsfeld, who studied the Presidential Election of 1940 (for further discussions see Griffin, 2006; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McQuail, 2000). Media effects continue to be a prime source for communication and political science research; particularly in regards to political campaigns. Media effects refer to a collection of ideas that the content present in mass media influences people's thoughts and behaviors. There are four general classes of media effects; behavioral, attitudinal, cognitive, and physiological. This section discusses theories related to three of the four classes of media effects.

Cognitive. Cognitive effects refer to the way in which we change what we think, and what we know (Harris, 2004). The first step to understanding cognitive media effects is to understand how the media primes the audience and frames the story, thereby setting the agenda for changing what we think.

Priming. Priming is especially important to consider when looking at the relationship between media effects and politics. Priming is the process where individuals give salience to an issue because the media does. In this sense media acts as a filter for busy citizens who don't have time to pay attention to all issues in a campaign. Focus is given to those issues the media decides is important (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

Formulation of political opinion is influenced by media coverage. What the media chooses not to cover is not *known* to the citizenry at large, so opinion is based on what is known and that is what media covers. Political opinion is then strengthened through repeated exposure as a campaign progresses (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Dimman Carpentier, 2002). Priming is what sets the standards for judging presidential performance and the citizens evaluation is a result of priming (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002).

Media participates in priming by choosing which issues to talk about and how often to talk about them. There is another important aspect of media effects however and that is the way in which the media frames issues.

Framing. Framing determines which part of what story will be given the most prominent space, and in what context. Priming refers to inclusion of an issue in the media, but framing refers to how the message is organized and construed. This is particularly true of how the media portrays spousal

communication. Whether media addresses the spouse and the spousal communication of a candidate is priming, but how that message is portrayed (negatively or positively) is an instance of framing.

Journalism, broadcasting, and public relations students are taught to include the most important information first; and it remains the practice as those students become reporters and agents. This captures the public's attention and informs before interest can be lost. The public may or may not be aware that they know and understand this concept but it relates to framing. When and where in the message information is placed indicates the issues importance (Griffin, 2006; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

Some instances of framing are intentional and some are unintentional. Choice of what to cover is intentional. Unintentional framing may include word choices and non-verbal cues given by the media. Does a reporter look like they approve, disapprove, or even believe what is being said? For journalists, is the language they choose "pro" or "anti" language?

Framing is split into two categories; episodic or thematic. Episodic refers to those stories that relate to a single episode or event. Thematic relates to a series of stories that are all related to a particular theme. Political campaign communication can be either and is often both. For instance, covering a candidate's appearance at a cancer benefit would be episodic, with the benefit

appearance being the single episode. However, the appearance may be related by the media to a large thematic frame such as health coverage.

Thematic framing allows an issue to be discussed from many different angles and as such is better at informing the public. Spousal communication however, tends to be episodic in nature. Media may discuss that the spouse was on the trail with the candidate (episodic) but rarely includes that in any major theme. Rare occasions may expand the discussion temporarily, such as the discussion of family values in light of Newt Gingrich's leaving his second wife for his mistress, his ex-wife claims it was because he wanted an 'open marriage.' Even then however, such a discussion is brief and is abandoned for a broader discussion of family values in how the concept has changed over the years or what is meant by the term, or how do candidates relay their "family values" to the public as a whole.

This is important because as discussed earlier, the opinions we make about people and their relationships is based upon the communication, verbal and non-verbal, between those in the relationship. Yet, the media rarely includes such communication in its frames.

Agenda Setting Theory. One of the most prevalent theories concerning media effects is Agenda Setting Theory developed in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. Agenda setting is the idea that media tells us what to think

about (priming), what to think about it (framing) and possibly what to do about it (behavior) (D. Shaw, personal communication, May 2003). By influencing the way society and the larger environment is thought to be, agenda setting fulfills a social role of surveillance (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Transmitting culture and consensus building are also social roles linked to agenda setting.

The transmission of culture and consensus building are related to both ideology and acceptance or rejection of ideas presented in media. Media can set the agenda in political campaigns by how, where, and when they address an issue. Part of that decision is related to the ideology of the media; and the way it is portrayed relates to the acceptance or rejection of the ideas pursued.

There is disagreement on how much effect the media really has in agenda setting. The main argument as Leighley (2004) explains it is there may be different causal structures which account for correlations. The idea is that the media actually report on what the candidates and the public find salient, not the other way around. In that respect the media does not have a strong control over what issues are covered.

Agenda setting theory persists however and in considering priming and framing it is easy to see why. The amount of influence the media has in setting the agenda is proportional to the way the issue is framed and primed. After all,

“strong agenda setting effects are more likely if the news story is a lead story.”

(Kenski, 1996, p. 71).

Attitudinal. Harris (2004) explains that attitudinal effects include both an intellectual component and an emotional component. The intellectual component may come into play when we compare a candidate’s positions. The emotional component relates more to how we compare the candidates in terms of our liking them (p. 23). This relates to our decisions about the acceptability of a candidate. Sets of attitudes create a mindset of how we view the world and how we interpret what happens within it. How attitudes (or mindsets) can be shifted is addressed by social judgment theory.

Social Judgment Theory. When we are exposed to a message we subconsciously compare that message with our attitudes. We decide if the message is acceptable, something we would reject as not acceptable, or be neutral (non-committal). How acceptable, unacceptable (rejection), or neutral the message also depends on our ego-involvement in the issue to which the message relates. If ego-involvement is low (in other words we are not as concerned about an issue) we are more open to adjusting our latitudes based on new information or ideas. However, if our ego-involvement is so low that we simply do not care, then the message is likely to not be processed. If ego-involvement is high, it is more difficult to shift the latitude along the continuum. This is known as Social

Judgment-Involvement Theory or Social Judgment Theory for short (Griffin, 2006).

Developed by Muzafer Sherif in 1965, Social Judgment-Involvement Theory describes the cognitive structure of a person's attitude, and the mental process by which people move or re-affirm attitudinal positions. There are three attitude zones: acceptance, rejection, non-commitment. These three zones are not static, however, nor are they single points on a line. Attitudes have ranges and can be shifted, because of this Sherif refer to them as latitudes.

How wide the latitude, that is how many statements may be considered and accepted or rejected, is dependent on ego-involvement. When highly involved the latitude of acceptance is narrow and the possibility of rejection is high. When involvement is lower, the latitude of acceptance is generally wider and the possibility of acceptance is higher. Acceptance or rejection of a message moves the latitude along the continuum either towards or away from the attitude of the message sender.

In political campaigns, the candidate, their staff, volunteers, and supporters hope to move voters latitudes into such a position that they will vote for the candidate. In other words they hope to construct a favorable attitude (latitude of acceptance) with the voters. One way that media helps in this shifting of attitudes is by providing messages and cues regarding the acceptability of a

message or candidate. Media ideology is important because the manner in which media frames messages of acceptance, rejection, or non-committal depends in part on the media's own point of view. Deciphering whether a message is positive or negative can be difficult to ascertain, but some political communication scholars have devised a way to do so.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson and her colleagues at the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, utilize the instrument of an *idea unit* (Jamieson, 2000; Romer, Kenski, Waldman, Adasiewicz, & Jaimeson, 2004). Originally used in political campaign advertising, the concept of an idea unit is that instead of looking at exact wording or sentences, the research would look at the overall idea of the article. If the overall tone of the article or ad was positive then the idea unit was considered positive or more acceptable, if the overall tone is negative the idea unit was considered to be a latitude of rejection, and any ambiguous or even toned ad was considered to be in the non-committal latitude.

It is a short jump from using an idea unit in political campaign advertising research to research regarding spousal communication on the campaign trail. The positive or negative representations in a media message act to shift latitudes of acceptance and rejection creating a more positive (hopefully) attitude towards a candidate.

Behavioral. The final category of media effects addressed in this research study is that of behavioral. Behavioral effects include the “performance of a behavior after seeing someone do it in the media” (Harris, 2004, p. 22). He goes on to point out that while this is the most obvious type of effect it is difficult to prove a causal relationship. Researchers cannot be sure that a person voted the way they did *because* they saw a political ad, read an article regarding a candidate, or watched a negative instance of spousal communication through the media.

A good example, is in regards to polling, explicitly exit polling. Exit polling is conducted as voters leave the voting venues. This is a measure to see who is carrying a race. There are several problems with this however, the first one relates to timing. As Asher (2004) discusses exit polls are completed as people leave the voting booths, the results are then tallied and reported. Historically, problems have arose because voting booths close in the Eastern United States many hours before they close in the Western United States. The penchant of the media to use exit polling as a basis for declaring a winner instead of waiting for official results is thought to direct behaviors of voters who have not yet voted.

Asher uses the example of the 1980 Presidential election to explain the problem. In 1980, Reagan was declared the winner when half the country still

had voting booths open and would have for several hours. It was reported that people left voting locations without voting, or did not go at all because the race was already decided. While reduced number of voters probably had little effect on the Presidential race, the effect on smaller state and local races were “more consequential” (Asher, 2004, p. 136). The behavioral question then, is did citizens decide not to go to the polls at all, when they saw people leaving polling stations without voting? For some the answer is probably yes, but there could have been additional reasons for not going to the polls, and there is no way to determine how widespread the behavior was. One theory that looks at behavioral effects is Social Cognitive Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory. Although the name implies that this theory should be located in the cognitive effects section, Social Cognitive Theory specifically studies behavior effects rather than changing what we think or know.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura has its roots in Social Learning Theory. Social Cognitive Theory strives to understand, predict, and change behavior. Personal factors, an individual’s environment, and prior behaviors act together to develop what we call human behavior is the premise of SCT (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1989). These three categories are influences on behavior but Bandura (1989) explains that they do not have equal strength, nor do they all come into play at the same time. He also points out that single

incidences rarely develop into a determinate influence, but that it takes time in order for any factor to become a casual factor which exerts influence and activates reciprocal influence (1989).

The four main components of SCT include exposure to the behavior event, remembering the observed events, replicating and engaging in the event, and receiving reward for performance of the event. The first component means that an individual “must be exposed to the media example in order to attend to it” (Harris, 2004, p. 28) Next the person must be able to remember and cognitively rehearse the event. The third component includes the belief that one is capable of engaging in the behavior (self-efficacy), and actual performance of the behavior. The last component is related to conditioning, the individual receives the reward for performing the behavior or perhaps punishment for not performing the behavior.

Concern over the effects of violence in the media lead to the development of SCT, but as with most theories its sphere of influence has grown. In the context of this study, modeling of pro-social behavior is most relevant. Pro-social behavior is behavior that benefits one or both participants. This seems very individualistic but can also be expanded to include group cooperation where the attainment of a goal (e.g., electing a candidate) can be achieved. Individuals are conditioned to engage in pro-social behaviors from childhood.

Inclusion in a group (e.g., political party, grassroots movement), and observation of media to which the group approves reinforces pro-social behavior and provides instances for new behaviors. A sense of accomplishment (like winning an election) provides for reward. Alignment with a political party is generally born out of an individual's personal factors, their socio-economic status, and their background (e.g., voting as parents did). Joining a grassroots movement is more akin to responding to current cultural events and what is happening at any given time. These all fall into the reciprocal influences discussed by SCT.

Media effects research is important to political communication, but in terms of this research what does it really mean? The answer is this; media shapes how individuals process political campaign messages including those instances of spousal communication. What is deemed important is implied by media's priming and framing. What is deemed acceptable is influenced by the ideology of the media in combination with attitudes and behavior particularly within political group dynamics. Finally, the manner in which we decode the interpersonal relationship of the candidate and their spouse is in turn dependent upon our own experiences with interpersonal relationships and what pro-social messages we observe in the culture around us, as they are presented by the media.

Interpersonal Communication

I indicated in the introduction that the meaning we prescribe to a glance or other communication cues is determined by our own experiences especially with regards to interpersonal communication. Social realities inform us as to the meaning ascribed to actions and expectations from cultural narratives. The problem lies in what is social reality and where do cultural narratives come into play. The base answers are explored in interpersonal communication and the development of relationships.

Relationship development. Social information theory (SIP) was developed by Joseph Walther in 1992. SIP was developed mainly in response to criticism of computer mediated communication (CMC) and the development of close relationships. Because CMC lacked face-to-face communication and non-verbal cues it was thought to be incapable of generating intimacy. Walther however, claimed that even though computers were a restrictive medium they could be used effectively to develop close relationships (Griffin, 2006). Though SIP was developed as a means of understanding relationship development in terms of computer mediated communication which is not specifically related to the research study conducted here, his explanation of how relationships develop, regardless of medium, informs the research.

Walther (2008) explained that people can get to know each other online, without non-verbal cues and given time can develop and manage relationships in a computer mediated environment. As I did in the introduction, Walther notes that we all get first impressions of people we meet. Those first impressions are then altered and adjusted through conversations and other paralinguistic cues.

The first part to understanding relationship development is to understand that people want to develop relationships. Social information processing is labeled such because Walther believes “that relationships grow only to the extent that parties first gain information about each other and then use information to form interpersonal impressions of who they are” (Griffin, 2006, p. 143).

The extension of this idea for this research study is that we engage in the same process when developing opinions about a candidate for office and their relationship with their spouse. The imprint of first impression is the same whether we are face-to-face in our own relationships or other people’s relationships. Our first impressions are altered by extra information we obtain through observing other instances of interpersonal communication. This is true even for candidates for office.

The second reason I decided to include SIP in this discussion is because even though computer media and print media are different they share an interesting characteristic. Unless specifically included in the content by the

journalist, print media also lacks non-verbal cues, but as Walther argues for CMC this does not preclude the gathering of further information upon which to adjust impressions.

In fact, the two features of CMC that Walther highlights in SIP are verbal cues and extended time (Griffin, 2006). Walther states that the human need for affiliation is just as active whether face-to-face or not and suggests that “verbal cues of affinity” can replace non-verbal cues. Griffin (2006) gives as an example, that prior to electronic communication written communication (i.e., letters) were the norm rather than the exception and that the written word was counted on to express the appropriate affection. In this sense it does not matter that print media also contains few if any non-verbal cues.

The second feature, that of extended time, addresses that face-to-face communication is quicker, but not the only way to develop relationships and not necessarily better. In fact, Walther (2008) suggests that over an extended period of time CMC can develop relational bonds through SIP that are stronger overall than face-to-face communication. It takes longer to write a message than to speak the same message. Walther suggests that messages sent more often via CMC can make up for the difference in time.

In many ways, this relates to the extended period of time that campaign communication occurs. There are more opportunities to receive more messages

in the media over the duration of the campaign than say meeting a candidate and their spouse once while on the trail. Additionally, print media allows for the message to be re-read and considered at leisure. If an instance of spousal communication is missed in broadcast media, the opportunity is missed. A sort of epilogue goes with this feature in 2002 during an award acceptance speech, Walther discussed that ten years after the formation of SIP, empirical studies had found that relationships online did not in fact form slower than face-to-face, instead they were accelerated due to the anticipation of future messages.

So if it is possible for a “pair to fall in love sight unseen” as Griffin (2006, p. 147) surmises, it is not unreasonable to conclude that an affinity or acceptance of a candidate and spouse can be developed in a similar manner, through print media. What happens though, if the impressions are not favorable or violate a socially accepted norm of the voter observing the media? The affect of gender roles and stereotypes on impression is discussed in the next section.

Gender Roles / Stereotypes

Media portrayals of political spouses take the liberty of assigning roles and characterizations of the spouse. Take for example the article in *People* magazine by Meadows and Pedesta (2004) labeling Elizabeth Edwards a “secret weapon” and suggesting she was her husband John’s, then Vice Presidential candidate, greatest asset. Alexander (2004) wrote an entire chapter in his book

conferring the same title for John Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry although for entirely different reasons.

In the first case, it was Elizabeth's apparent commonality with mothers and wives across the country that lent her husband's campaign strength.

Although the ensuing years have altered our perceptions of the relationship between John and Elizabeth Edwards this remained true for the media, and voting public in the 2004 election year.

According to the Alexander book, Teresa was the kind of woman who would stand up for what was right, correct wrongs, and hold steady even if her course was unpopular. It did not hurt either that she controls a vast fortune, is multilingual, or that her first husband Jack (deceased), was also a well-respected Senator. Teresa knew people and had the time, energy, and money to campaign with both of her husbands, which she did in her own words "six out of seven days" (Alexander, 2004, p. 141). She has been criticized for being outspoken, wearing ethnic clothing (she is Latin), and being overly politically active herself, none of which appears to bother her. (Alexander, 2004; Brunius, 2004)

One spouse who is a political powerhouse on her own is of course Hillary Clinton. Both berated and adored she is a study in contradictions. Hillary propels the cause of women forward in that she is a successful, strong, competent woman. She lives and works within a less than perfect marriage, and

like most of the population sometimes appears to be doing the best she can under undesirable conditions. This is heartening to voters.

Yet, she is also criticized for being that strong, successful woman. Some self-proclaimed feminists suggest that she should have divorced her husband and that by staying married she actually goes against the betterment of women's lives and hurts the feminist cause. This is an extreme view of course, but a more generous criticism of similar arguments can be seen in the political cartooning of then Senator Clinton. Templin (1999) looked at these cartoons and suggests that this happens because Clinton defies what the American public defines as normal for women. Regardless, it cannot be denied she has had an impact on voters as a Presidential spouse, a Senator, a Presidential candidate, and now the United States Secretary of State. Hillary's campaign and swapping of roles with former President Bill Clinton adds a new and unexplored dimension to this discussion.

Lest this author be accused of favoritism, let's consider the impact of Republican spouses such as Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, and of course Laura Bush. Flanders (2004) article *Beware the Bushwomen* was not speaking just about Laura Bush, but also of other women in the cabinet and in President George W. Bush's political life. The article makes a point that as the subtitle suggests although the Bush women are "cast as moderate and benign, the White House's women are anything but." Flanders speaks to the almost unnoticed, but

important role that Laura Bush played in the White House. Her argument is that Laura Bush speaks to the moderates, allowing her husband to maintain a tie to the more extreme side of his party without alienating everyone else (Flanders, 2004, p. 26).

Laura's mother-in-law, former First lady Barbara Bush held a much more conventional role. She readily declared that she supported her husband and that was her job as his wife. It makes sense to conclude this might have made her seem similar to other wives in America, particularly those who hold a more traditional view of what it means to be a spouse. Both Mrs. Bushes centered a large portion of their First Lady Duties and efforts on children. This maintains a traditional gender role stereotype: wives and mothers are responsible for the welfare and upbringing of children. Grenier (2001) lends support to this idea in her article *Checking out presidential spouses*. Although the article is really a review of *Hidden power: Presidential marriages that shaped our world* by Kati Marton, Grenier subtly reasserts that perceived gender roles are the basis used for judging political spouses.

Similar to Teresa Heinz Kerry and Hillary Clinton, Nancy Reagan was a powerhouse beside her husband. She often went out and spoke on his behalf, and campaigned both with and without him. Marton suggests that Nancy and

Ronald Reagan had a more traditional marriage than most think because they “lived for each other” (as cited in Grenier, 2001, para. 4).

It would seem to make sense that following gender role expectations would result in positive outcomes. As can be seen from the previous examples, however not only does following gender roles not always result in positive outcomes, but also violating them can be viewed positively as well (e.g., Teresa Heinz Kerry, Hillary Clinton).

Expectancy Violation Theory. Expectancy violation theory (EVT), developed by Judee Burgoon in 1978, addresses how violating communication norms can be either favorable or unfavorable, it also addresses non-verbal communication specifically (Griffin, 2006). Originally the EVT concerned itself with spatial limitations, but grew to include other non-verbal cues such as facial expression, eye contact, physical contact, and stance (see Floyd, Ramirez, & Burgoon, 1999).

These cues were originally discussed in the introduction regarding our innate abilities to read a situation and develop opinions regarding the relationship we are watching. In other research, Burgoon and Le Poire (1999) studied the relationship between nonverbal cues and interpersonal judgments in observers’ perceptions of intimacy. Their research found that “many nonverbal cues have consensually recognized relational meanings” (p. 122). Their findings

support that social meanings are comparable across observers and participants of relational communication. This indicates that people can and do read the interpersonal cues between couples and form opinions about the relationship.

This ability to read a situation is part of the usefulness of EVT. As Burgoon explains if we know when to violate expectations so they will be received positively it is beneficial to our communication strategies. We take cues from (read) the situation; if things seem to be going badly violating expectations would result in a negative impression. If the communication relationship appears to be going well, violations may result in a positive impression. This partly answers the questions as to why the women in the prior discussion were met with opposing outcomes. The question of how we know what the expectations are is learned through our culture and includes questions of gender and stereotypes.

Gendered Communication. Sex and gender are different constructs. Sex refers to biology, whereas gender is a socially created construct. While gender is generally based on perceptions of sex it is described in terms of traits and behaviors that are either masculine or feminine. Masculine behaviors are valued more than feminine behaviors in our culture (Wood, 2011).

Dolan (2004) makes the link between sex stereotypes and the traits of being female and male. She explains that women are over represented as being

nurturing, compassionate and caring; and men are conversely identified with action, rationality, and leadership. More importantly research indicates that people “change their behavior to conform to the stereotyped expectations of others.”(Dolan, 2004, p. 61). She goes on to explain this is particularly true of women who are told the men they are interacting with hold traditional views of women.

Stereotypes link beliefs about sex and what roles each should play in society. Falk (2008) explains that information about ones gender affects the judgments others have about an individual. She also states that “by regularly gendering nouns, papers promote the link between women and their biology.” (p. 95) the same is not true for men who are the somewhat unspoken norm.

Gendered language implies that one is less than or more than another. If the norm is to be male, then to be specifically designated as ‘female’ or ‘woman’ is to be labeled as other. We gain our gender and are assigned our societal roles as we interact in society. This is what creates the expectations which are then used to decide if someone is acting consistent with or outside the expected.

Wood (1996) states that gender surpasses sex in society and that difference in perception regarding facets of western culture such as status, social life and roles, and self-concepts of individuals are due to gender. Media perpetuates the use of roles and expectations by use of gendered language, but also by the

inclusion of gendered non-verbal communication. As Wood (2011) discusses that non-verbal communication is also gendered. She states that social definitions of women include that they are deferential and decorative. This view can be seen in media portrayals of female political spouses very clearly. As already discussed, most media content on female political spouses cover what they wear (decorative) and their causes, which usually center on children (relationship-centered, nurturing), following normal social roles. Deviations from the norm cause a stir in the media (e.g., Teresa Heinz Kerry, Hillary Clinton).

The purpose of this discussion is to show that we do have expectations of political spouses based on their sex and gender. It also provides the foundation for determining if a spouse's behavior fits into their perceived roles and activates our attitudes and beliefs about those spouses.

Stereotypes. Cultural stereotypes about race and ethnicity are reinforced by media (Wood, 2008). She also touches briefly upon the idea that mass media reinforces perceptions of feminine and masculine ideals. It would be fair to say then that media perpetuates gender stereotypes as well as race and ethnicity.

We use stereotypes to make predictions and generalizations about groups that we often do not have complete information about. Stereotypes can be both accurate and inaccurate but the problem arises from applying them to each individual in a group. Regardless of group membership individuals vary, and

stereotyping emphasizes what we perceive the group to have in common and not the differences of the individuals. Stereotypes are selective, subjective, and not necessarily complete or accurate (Wood, 2008).

Perhaps even more relevant today in U.S. society are stereotypes concerning gays and lesbians. As the numbers of gay and lesbian candidates grow there is both a greater opportunity and a greater need to study the effects of stereotypes for these groups. Even as this study is not specifically related to gays and lesbians it is important to gain a basic understanding of how stereotypes of these individuals affect voter's points of views. After all, while some may not be in a relationship, in most cases homosexual candidates will have or be perceived to have a homosexual spouse. Expectations of spousal communication between these pairs are created through the cloudy lens of their culturally created group affiliation stereotypes.

In 2001, Ewa Golebiowska took a look at group stereotypes and political evaluation. She focused specifically on gay and lesbian candidates. She makes the point that traditionally political candidates are white, straight, Protestant men and anyone outside that norm is seen as other and described in terms of their group memberships.

We have seen this language in the media before; the female candidate for President, the first black candidate for President, the gay governor of New

Jersey, and the list goes on. Golebiowska (2001) discusses how candidate group memberships function as heuristics in low-information races when there is little or no other information about the individual. The problem of little or no information is something that gay and lesbian candidates often share with the spouses of any candidate.

While group stereotypes are predominately negative, Golebiowska found that the good politician prototype was a somewhat balancing influence. The good politician prototype is basically a stereotype about what traits a good politician possesses. In our culture:

Good politicians are expected to be assertive, active, tough, rational, and self-confident (or simply, masculine) and are generally not rewarded for stereotypically feminine traits (e.g., warm, gentle, emotional, talkative, compassionate, and cautious) particularly when they campaign for higher level and/or executive office (Golebiowska, 2001, p. 538).

Golebiowska suggested that because of differences in the stereotypes of gays and lesbians and the manner in which that overlaps with the good politician prototype, the gender of the gay or lesbian candidate made a difference. Differences were also noted in the way male's and female's applied stereotypes. Prior research by Kerns and Fine (1994 as discussed in Golebiowska)

shows that “men’s gender role expectations are significantly more rigid than women’s.” (p. 540)

Golebiowska found that the extent to which the candidate’s attributes matched their groups’ stereotype, coupled with their gender, and application of the good politician prototype did influence political responses. In general she found that women respondents applied the good politician prototype more consistently than men regardless of stereotype and gender of the candidate. Men were “marginally less willing . . . to vote for a stereotype-consistent candidate (whether gay or lesbian) . . . (p. 557).”

This meant that gay men who did not conform to group stereotype but lesbian women who did conform to stereotype fared much better with the women respondents in the experiment. What these three have in common is gay men and lesbian women stereotypes typically include masculine and feminine traits. A lesbian woman who conforms to her groups’ stereotype is seen to be more masculine (in line with good politician prototype), whereas a gay man would have to appear to go against his groups stereotype (that of femininity) to appear more masculine. The individuals who displayed more masculine traits were rated higher. For the male respondents they were less likely to vote for stereotype consistent candidates than stereotype inconsistent candidates.

As can be seen from the Golebiowska research, stereotypical generalizations have an impact on our perceptions of an individual's abilities and therefore their acceptability as a candidate. There is a saying that we do not elect a President, we elect a couple. I would argue that stereotyping extends to the candidates spouses as well, particularly in the case of female, gay, and lesbian candidates all whom fall outside the normative ideal of a political candidate.

It is widely accepted that spouses make a difference in campaigning (Graham, n.d.) What is not readily accepted and perhaps not known is in what way and why. The paucity of research on the spousal communication in the context of political campaigns is interesting in itself. Why do popular media report on the characteristics of spouses, particularly those who are controversial, but not on the communication between the two?

Is it possible that the public subconsciously notices communicative cues between the spouses and reacts to them? Burgoon and Le Poire (1999) show that observers perceive non-verbal relational messages between others in ways similar to those participating in the communication. Do we vote more for what we do not hear than what we do? What else might we find out about political spouses and ourselves by studying this communication? Many of these questions are beyond the scope of the present research, but given the important role

spousal communication plays we should begin to study what is out there and how it is portrayed by the media.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to explore the idea that media portrayal of candidate spousal communication indicates a level of acceptability this study will test three main research questions and four subsequent hypotheses.

R1: Do media portray candidate spousal communication?

R2: How do media portrayals of spousal communication relate to the acceptability of a candidate?

R3: Will the Media be more likely to portray verbal cues when the utterances are controversial than non-controversial?

Can we use these answers to indicate an acceptance of the candidate? In this study I suggest that we can. Based on what we already know and understand about media effects and the ways in which media set agendas (see McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs and Reynolds 2002), and prior research into political images it is reasonable to expect that the following hypothesis will be supported.

H1: Media will be more likely to discuss the spousal communication of incumbent candidates.

H2: Media will be more likely to discuss non-verbal communication cues than verbal cues.

H3: Media will portray spousal communication as more acceptable when spouses follow traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

H4: Media will portray spousal communication as more acceptable when the candidate is ideologically in line with the media reporting on the communication.

In the next chapter I will discuss the sample selection and coding scheme which will allow the hypotheses to be tested and answer the research questions.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In order to answer the research questions and hypotheses this research utilized a content analysis of popular print media; the exact selection process is explained under the section titled sampling. Studying all forms of media is well beyond the reach of this research project, but similar study of other types of media do provide additional areas for future research. This chapter discusses four main topics: the rationale for content analysis, sampling, the coding scheme, and data analysis. In addition, this chapter includes a more thorough exploration of the research questions and hypotheses and how they relate to one another.

Content Analysis

Print media, more than any other, is recorded and archived. Most newspapers and magazines maintain their own archives and often when video or audio recordings for television and radio are not accessible transcripts of the broadcasts can be obtained. These characteristics make print media well suited for content analysis (Babbie, 2004).

Additionally, the research questions and hypothesis in this study are based on the content presented in news magazines. Kaid (1996) discusses that the dominant line of inquiry for political communication is the way in which campaigns are covered by mass media. Most of these inquiries are about the content of the mass media. She states that media content questions are “generally answered by content analysis” (1996, p. 448). This view is also supported by Wimmer and Dominick (2000) who succinctly state “Content analysis is a popular technique in mass media research” (p. 156). Berg (2004) suggests that content analysis is a way to examine artifacts of social communication, and “listen to words of the text and understanding the perspective(s) of the producer or these words” (p. 269).

Qualitative content analysis “allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner.” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1). This content analysis is deductive because it draws from prior knowledge and theory, and hypotheses are established. It has a few qualitative properties because some codes are more subjective than others (e.g., latitude of acceptance) and what the summation of the data means is subject to the researcher’s interpretation; within guidelines (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

A clear set of rules, definitions, and criteria are essential for content analysis. These rules and criteria allow for well defined classifications (Kenski,

1996). Furthermore, due to these guidelines external validity (or the ability to generalize) is quite high with content analysis. Neuendorf (2002) reminds researchers that full reporting of content analysis procedures including definitions, codebooks, and protocols increases replicability and supports external validity (p. 115).

Sample

For this research, it was decided to use articles from a selection of top selling news magazines. There are a few compelling reasons to do this study with news magazines rather than newspapers; first the overall generalization of the findings and the randomness of the sample are both greater with magazines. Random sampling is necessary for content analysis to be generalized and every element in the population must have an equal chance of being selected (Neuendorf, 2002).

Second, most popular magazines are available at newsstands in any good sized town and city, whereas not all the top selling newspapers are available. I can, for example, walk into the bookstore or any convenience store in my home town and pick up a *Time* magazine, but I cannot buy an *L.A. Times* newspaper there. Third, magazines tend to be more nationally oriented than most newspapers (obviously there are a few exceptions; i.e., *U.S.A. Today*). Therefore news magazines are an exceptional choice for this research.

Interestingly enough the top selling magazine in the United States by circulation is *AARP the Magazine* (Magazine Publishers of America, n.d.); it is however, a membership only magazine and this research is best served by magazines that have the potential to be purchased by anyone (in order to be random) so membership magazines were not included as part of the sample.

Other considerations were also taken into account. *Soap Opera Digest* may be a bestselling magazine available in most grocery stores and bookstores, but it has yet to comment on politics or politicians and spouses unless they happen to be making guest appearances on a soap opera. Therefore, the decision was made to look only at news magazines because they would be most likely to follow the elections across the country.

Time Frame. The time-frame for the collection of the samples for the study was the period of two months, from September 1, 2010 to October 31, 2010. This time frame was chosen because it was the beginning of the final run-up to the November 2nd, 2010 election. All state primaries were completed by the end of August and the final candidates were more likely to be in the news in the final two months of the election cycle.

News Magazines. In order to determine which magazines to use two things needed to be determined: which magazines are considered news magazines and which of those magazines classified as news magazines have the

highest circulation. Circulation is the means by which print media is measured (Li, 2002), and circulation data is provided by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC).

Circulation is important because it affects random sampling and therefore research generalization. Circulation assists in random sampling because the magazines with the highest circulation are usually the magazines most commonly found in newsstands and convenience stores. What arrives and is available at any particular time depends on delivery, timely placement on the racks, and sales of a particular issue. What can be purchased one week may either not have arrived or be sold out the following week, but this is true for anyone wishing to buy the magazine. In terms of generalization higher circulation, particularly of single copies (i.e., non-subscription, sold at newsstands), indicates the magazine is readily available and sold to the general public. In other words they have an equal chance of being selected (generalizability).

In order to determine which magazines are considered news magazines a list was compiled using a web search under the key words of "newsmagazine," "magazine genres", and cross referencing with the Magazine Publishers of America website (www.magazine.org). This was an arduous process because the web search listed only individual magazines; no list of which magazines were

categorized as newsmagazines was located. The researcher went through the search results and compiled a list of magazines that indicated they were newsmagazines and used that list to compare to the Magazine Publishers of America reports regarding circulation.

To determine circulation the magazines identified as news magazines were then compared to the *Average single sale copy circulation of top 100 ABC magazines* report (Magazine Publishers of America, n.d). The resulting list of magazines appears in Appendix A.

Inquiries at two large local newsstands determined that both received their main shipments of magazines on Tuesday mornings. Therefore the researcher took the list of news magazines to both newsstands each Tuesday evening during the chosen time frame. Whichever magazines from the list were available at that time were purchased.

In this manner the ability to generalize is increased due to the fact that anyone could purchase any of the magazines available at the two newsstands, every Tuesday night. Random sampling is also improved because the researcher simply purchased what was available each week rather than ensuring there was every copy of every magazine every week. This method resulted in a total of 41 magazines being purchased. A complete list of the actual magazines purchased is given in Appendix B. This list deviates from the list shown in Appendix A

because two magazines from the list on Appendix A were not sold at the newsstand and were therefore never purchased by the researcher.

Articles. The focus of this research is on the content of the articles covering political campaigns. Therefore the magazines purchased were then reviewed with all articles pertaining to any U.S. election being selected. Due to lack of coverage in some magazines and multiple articles in others this resulted in a total of 34 articles being coded.

Coding

The method of analysis was to code for these classifications per media portrayal (each individual article): Spousal Communication, Candidate Status, Spouse's gender, Communication Source, Communication Cues (Verbal vs. Non-verbal), Gender Stereotyping, Latitude of Acceptance, and Ideology. Neuendorf (2002) indicated that coding protocols and procedures should be clearly laid out in a standard code book and coding form given to each coder. She states that the "goal in creating codebooks and coding forms is to make the set so complete and unambiguous as to almost eliminate the individual differences among coders" (p. 132). She further indicates that complete instructions on protocols and descriptions of codable units should be included in the codebook.

Codebook and Instrument. The coding scheme for this research is explained below. Where appropriate a discussion of the research question or hypotheses that apply to each code are included.

Spousal Communication. The first research question (**R1**) simply asks if media portrays spousal communication. This item is a simple yes or no answer, the media addresses the communication or it does not.

Candidate Status. The first hypothesis (**H1**) states: Media will be more likely to discuss the spousal communication of incumbent candidates. The logic in this hypothesis stems from the idea that there are a) more instances to observe and report on the communication between an incumbent candidate and their spouse than someone new to the race; and b) more is already known about the incumbent spouse and therefore the media may interpret their communication based on previous experiences covering that spouse. Due to this the samples must be categorized as incumbent, challenger, or comparison.

Incumbent (1) refers to a candidate (and /or spouse) who is currently in the position and running for re-election. Challenger (2) refers to the candidate (and/or spouse) of the opposing major party (Democratic, Republican, and Independent). Minor parties (i.e., Constitutional party, Libertarians, etc.) were not coded for because they have not historically been seriously represented in the media, although the formation of the Tea Party looks to change this in the future.

Additionally, the category of comparison (3) has been added for those articles which discuss the similarities and differences between candidate spouses within the same article.

Spouse's gender. The third hypothesis is also reliant upon identification of the gender or stereotype present within the content. Therefore the descriptive variable of sex will be coded for as female (1) and male (2). Although sex is a biological construct and gender is a social/ cultural construct female and male were used because gender ideals and stereotyping is built upon a basic identification of the biological construct of sex.

Communication Source. As discussed in the first two chapters, people make assumptions about a couple based on the communication they witness, and how the media primes and frames such communication (media effects). This item informs the research by identifying whether the source is direct (incumbent /spouse or challenger/spouse) or indirect (media description). Occasionally a candidate or their spouse may comment on the other candidate and his/her spouse. Therefore the research coded for incumbent/spouse (1), challenger/spouse (2), and other (3).

Communication Cues. The second and third hypotheses, (H2) Media will be more likely to discuss non-verbal communication cues than verbal cues, and (H3) Media will portray spousal communication more agreeably when candidate

spouses follow traditional gender roles and stereotypes, are built upon what we already know of image and media coverage. Prior coverage of political spouses includes such items as what outfit was worn and where, what education / employment does the spouse have, and even how notable their absence during campaigns (as in the cases of Dr. Judy Dean, M.D. and Dr. Jill Biden, Ph.D in the 2008 election cycle). Therefore the articles were coded for the presence of verbal (1) and non-verbal (2) communication cues. Additionally, since the possibility exists that spousal communication will not be present in an article a code of no spousal communication (9) was included.

Because this study is interested in spousal communication specifically the verbal code (1) will include utterances about the spouse, to the spouse, and by the spouse. The non-verbal code (2) will include references to gestures such as glances, kisses, hand-holding, touching, and physical placement in regards to the candidate (i.e., on stage, in the balcony, not present, etc.), about the spouse, and to the spouse.

Latitudes of Acceptance. In order to examine the acceptability of spousal communication, this research employs both Muzafer Sherif's Social Judgment Theory (1965) and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2000) and her colleagues Romer, et al. (2004) utilization of the *idea unit*. Borrowing from the Social Judgment Theory discussed in the previous chapter, this research used the terms and concepts of

the latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-committal to indicate acceptability. Combining Kathleen Hall Jamieson and her colleagues idea unit (Jamieson, 2000; Romer, Kenski, Waldman, Adasiewicz, & Jaimeson, 2004) with Sherif's latitudes the articles were coded with the idea that if the overall tone of the article was positive then the idea unit was considered positive or more acceptable (1), if the overall tone was negative the idea unit was considered to be a latitude of rejection (2), and any ambiguous or even toned ad was considered to be in the non-committal latitude (3).

This is useful in determining acceptability because in some cases (e.g. some instances of Hillary Clinton or Teresa Heinz Kerry) the specific actions or utterances themselves may be considered inappropriate or unacceptable as a single event, but the overall sense of the coverage is one of approval or generally acceptable. Application of the idea unit allows for an examination of acceptability in the fourth hypothesis, **(H4)** Media will portray spousal communication as more acceptable when the candidate is ideologically in line with the media reporting on the communication. Acceptability is most directly related to the research questions, and the basic question of this study, candidate's positive campaign image.

Ideology. The last piece of the coding scheme relates specifically to the fourth hypothesis **(H4)** ideology. The samples of print media were coded as

Conservative (1), Liberal / Progressive (2), and Neutral / Unidentified (9).

Whenever possible the mission statement, mast head, or subtitle of the magazine was used as a “self-identifier” of ideology. In cases where the magazine did not self -identify, the code Neutral/Unidentified (9) was used.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was achieved through the use of two external human coders, who were trained via the use of pilot coding. Two volunteers, a college student (coder A) and a middle-aged professional (coder B) were employed as coders. The basic premise of the research was explained to the coders during training but they did not receive any information regarding the research questions or hypotheses. Neuendorf explains that this type of blind coding is desirable because it helps to “reduce bias that compromises validity” (2002, p. 133). Revisions to the codebook and coding instrument were made after the pilot, assuring validity through overall agreement on structure and content of the codebook and coding forms (see Appendices D [codebook] and E [coding instrument]).

Once the pilot coding and codebook revisions were complete, the coders coded the magazine articles independently from one another. Consistent with preferred practices the coders both coded the same units. Periodically during the

study the coding instruments were turned in and tested by the researcher for inter-coder reliability in order to prevent deviations across the time of the study.

Upon completion of the final coding, the researcher collected the coding instruments and tabulated inter-coder reliability. Inter-coder reliability is the “amount of agreement or correspondence among two or more coders” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 141). The tabulation consisted of dividing the total number of coder agreements by the total number of number of responses. Neuendorf (2002) indicates that the most popular coefficient is simple agreement (p. 149). She also states that it is the most popular “in business and the social and behavioral sciences. . . (p. 148).” The formula for this raw percent agreement is:

$$PA_o = A / n$$

PA_o refers to the *proportion agreement observed*, A is the number of *agreements*, and n is the *total number of units coded* or in other terms the maximum possible agreement. Using this formula a result of 91.54% inter-coder reliability was obtained. Krippendorff (1980) suggests that 67 to 79 % is acceptable and anything above 80% is good. As inter-coder reliability in this study is above 80% it is at an acceptable level.

This chapter discussed why this research is well suited for content analysis. It describes how sampling was conducted and how coding was established with plans for obtaining both external validity and inter-coder

reliability. In order to determine how these steps answered the research questions and hypotheses the next chapter discusses the data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Research questions and hypothesis were tested using Chi-square analyses. The data in this study are nominal meaning the numbers assigned are arbitrary. As the numerals simply name and do not have a specific value or order there is no way to calculate an average between them (means) or how widely dispersed they will be (standard deviation; Pyrczak, 2004). The Chi-square test is an appropriate test for nominal, nonparametric data (Pyrczak, 2004).

As a rough guideline, Agresti and Finlay (2009) state for a Chi-square analysis the expected frequency for each cell should exceed five. The largest design in this analysis is a 3X2 design; therefore the sample must have more than 30 units of analysis. There were 34 units of analysis in this study, coded under eight variables. There were two independent variables, candidate status (incumbent, challenger, other) and spouse's gender (male, female); and six dependent variables, presence of spousal communication, communication source, communication cues, gender stereotyping, latitude of acceptance, and ideology.

Research Question 1. *Do media portray candidate spousal communication?*

A Chi-square test comparing the occurrences of spousal communication in the data was conducted. For comparison the researcher divided the resulting frequency (6) by the total number of units coded (68) to determine that spousal communication was present only 8.82% of the time (see Table 1). No cells contained an expected count of less than 5. A significant difference from the expected value was found $\chi^2 (1, N = 68) = 46.111, p < .001$ (see Table 2).

Table 1
Frequencies for Spousal Communication in Newsmagazines.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	6	34.0	-28.0
No	62	34.0	28.0
Total	68		

Table 2
Chi-square Test for Spousal Communication in Newsmagazines.

	Spousal Communication
Chi-square	46.118 ^a
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 34.0.

What this means is that even though political spousal communication was reported in the newsmagazines it was at a much lower level than expected. So

for research question 1, do media portray candidate spousal communication, the answer is yes, but at a very low rate.

Research Question 2. *How do media portrayals of spousal communication relate to the acceptability of the candidate?*

As Table 1 indicates, the frequency rate of spousal communication in the data was only 8.82% so it is expected the cell counts will be low for research question 2. A Chi-square test was conducted using the variables of spousal communication versus latitudes of acceptance. Half of the cells had counts less than 5. The results of the Chi-square are significant $\chi^2 (2, N = 68) = 8.654, p < .05$ (see Table 3), indicating that how the media portrays spousal communication is related to the acceptance represented in newsmagazines.

Table 3
Chi-square Test for Spousal Communication vs. Latitudes of Acceptance.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.654 ^a	2	.013
Likelihood Ratio	6.825	2	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.634	1	.201
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

Research Question 3. *Will the media be more likely to portray verbal cues when the utterances are controversial than non-controversial?*

The crosstab count resulting from the Chi-square test conducted for communication sources vs. communication cues show that all of the reported instances of spousal communication in this study were verbal (See Table 4).

Table 4
Crosstab for Communication Cues vs. Communication Source.

	Communication Source			Total
	Incumbent / spouse	Challenger / spouse	other	
Communication Verbal Cue	2	4	0	6
No spousal communication	0	0	62	62
Total	2	4	62	68

Non-verbal cues had no data and therefore did not compute on the table. There were six instances of spousal communication none of which were controversial. The analysis indicates that verbal cues were not only used more than non-verbal cues but they were also used when the communication was non-controversial.

Hypothesis 1. *Media will be more likely to discuss the spousal communication of incumbent candidates.*

A Chi-square test was calculated comparing spousal communication and candidate status. Four cells (66%) had less than the expected count of 5. There were only 2 instance of incumbent spousal communication coded for in the data (see Table 5).

Table 5
Crosstab of Spousal Communication vs. Candidate Status.

		Candidate status			Total
		Incumbent	Challenger	Comparison	
Spousal Communication	Yes	0	4	2	6
	No	2	31	29	62
Total		2	35	31	68

No significant relationship was found $\chi^2 (2, N = 68) = .706, p > .05$ (see Table 6), therefore the hypothesis was not supported by the data. The data indicated that the media covered challengers more than incumbents, and subsequently the spousal communication was from the challengers.

Table 6
Chi-square Test for Spousal Communication vs. Candidate Status.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.706 ^a	2	.703
Likelihood Ratio	.879	2	.644
Linear-by-Linear Association	.185	1	.667
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

Hypothesis 2. *Media will be more likely to discuss non-verbal communication cues than verbal cues.*

A Chi-square test was conducted comparing the type of communication cue (verbal, non-verbal, no cue) with the source (incumbent/spouse,

challenger/spouse, or other). The Chi-square results are significant, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 68.00, $p < .001$ in regards to verbal versus non-verbal communication cues (see Table 7). No non-verbal cues were coded for in the data set (see Table 4). The data do not support the hypothesis because the data support that verbal, rather than non-verbal, cues are more likely to be portrayed by the media.

Table 7

Chi-square Test for Communication Cues vs. Communication Source.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	68.000 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.587	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	58.922	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

Hypothesis 3. *Media will portray spousal communication as more acceptable when spouses follow traditional gender roles and stereotypes.*

For the third hypothesis a Chi-square test was conducted comparing the variables gender stereotypes and latitudes of acceptance. The analysis shows acceptance was higher when there were no stereotypes present, and that when present the latitudes of rejection and non-committal were more likely to be portrayed (see Table 8).

Table 8

Crosstab for Gender Stereotype vs. Latitudes of Acceptance

		Latitudes			Total
		Acceptance	Rejection	Non committal	
Stereotype	Yes	1	4	4	9
	No	19	5	35	59
Total		20	9	39	68

The results from the Chi-square however, are significant, $\chi^2 (2, N = 68) = 9.116, p < .05$ (see Table 9). This supports that stereotype and acceptances are related, just not in the way the researcher anticipated. Hypothesis 3 is not supported in that the results of the test show that media portrayals of acceptance are not greater when gender stereotypes are followed.

Table 9

Chi-Square Tests for Gender Stereotypes vs. Latitudes of Acceptance.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.116 ^a	2	.010
Likelihood Ratio	7.055	2	.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	.038	1	.846
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.19.

Hypothesis 4. *Media will portray spousal communication as more acceptable when the candidate is ideologically in line with the media reporting on the communication.*

A Chi-square test was conducted comparing the ideology of the newsmagazines to the latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-committal. The Chi-square results show that there is significant interaction between ideology and latitude of acceptance, $\chi^2 (4, N = 68) = 9.865, p < .05$ (see Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10
Crosstab for Newsmagazine Ideology vs. Latitudes of Acceptance

		Ideology			Total
		Conservative	Liberal/progressive	Unable to determine	
Latitudes	Acceptance	4	8	8	20
	Rejection	4	2	3	9
	Non committal	4	8	27	39
Total		12	18	38	68

Table 11
Chi-square Test for Newsmagazine Ideology vs. Latitudes of Acceptance

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.865 ^a	4	.043
Likelihood Ratio	8.992	4	.061
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.189	1	.023
N of Valid Cases	68		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.59.

These results support hypothesis 4 in suggesting that media is more likely to portray spousal communication as acceptable when the candidate is ideologically in line with the newsmagazine

In the following chapter, I will discuss the importance of the results. I will also address the limitations of the study, and suggest areas for further research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Prior research indicated that media portrayals of spousal communication were more likely to be non-verbal than verbal, occur when gender norms and stereotypes were violated thus creating a controversy, and that the media would in turn present these communication events as more or less acceptable depending on the ideology of the candidate and the media reporting. The three research questions and four hypothesis developed based on this prior research were tested in this dissertation using Chi-square tests. As a whole, my empirical findings did not support many of these expectations. Further discussion of the results and the limitations of the study are illuminating and provide the impetus for more research.

Importance of the findings

Spousal communication portrayals. I asserted in the introduction that spousal communication was important but largely ignored by the media; research question 1 addressed this claim. The assertion was supported by the data showing that only 8.82% of the articles contained any instances of spousal communication. This percentage was well below the expected results, but there is

more to the story. While this occurrence rate is important in and of itself, I would also point out that instances of spousal communication were coded for only in their presence within the article, not for what percentage of the article included spousal communication. To include the percentage of coverage within articles would reduce this percentage even further. As an example, the *Time* October 11, 2010 article, *A Blast from the Past. Fearless Jerry Brown campaigns for governor of California, but can he save his state?* was a full page, three column article; the only instance of spousal communication was the single statement “I now have a wife” (p. 23). As such the coders appropriately coded that spousal communication was present in the article. However, a five word comment in a full page article is an extremely small percentage of content and the number of utterances, or percentage of content, was not included in this study.

Given that the review of literature covered in the first two chapters sets the foundation that spouses and spousal communication are important to political campaigns, such lack of coverage is and should be somewhat disconcerting to political communication scholars and campaign managers alike. There is a small caveat to this discussion; the 2010 election was a mid-term election and not a Presidential election. It could be argued that more coverage of spousal communication occurs in a Presidential election, and I will concede that point. I do however, put forth two small rebuttals for consideration; first, the

total number of articles during a Presidential election is also exponentially increased, and tend to run campaigns for a longer period of time. The mere fact that more articles are produced does not necessarily indicate that a better overall percentage of spousal communication coverage will occur.

Second, non-Presidential elections are more common and occur with much greater frequency throughout the United States. For every President elected there are 56 governors (one for each of the 50 states, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and one for each of the 5 U.S. territories: Guam, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa), 100 United States Senators, 435 members of the U.S. Congress, and a plethora of other state and local races.

My argument is that during mid-term elections there are more candidates running for more offices, presumably with a larger number of spouses to campaign with and more opportunity to discuss spousal communication in the media. Is it really an accurate reflection that only three candidates nation-wide deserve to have reference to a spouse mentioned in the media because it is not a Presidential race? I suggest that it is not, particularly in light of what prior research has shown; spouses matter in a campaign.

Prior research also indicated that non-verbal communication cues were most prominent in campaign coverage. As discussed in the first two chapters,

there is extensive research and discussion of the campaign communication based on what a first lady, or potential first lady wears, how they look, what their careers are, what their causes might be, and whether or not they are present at a campaign stop. When verbal cues were covered by media it was generally because the spouse made a controversial statement (e.g., Teresa Heinz Kerry's telling a reporter "You said something I didn't say. Now shove it", then First Lady Hillary Clinton's well known "We are the President" comment). Coupled with the communication standard that non-verbal cues constitute the majority of meaning in communication I made the assumption for research question 3 that verbal communication would occur when the utterances were controversial and additionally, for hypothesis 2 that non-verbal communication cues would be portrayed more often than verbal cues. These assumptions were not supported by this study.

One of the reasons, for this may be the sheer paucity of spousal communication even present in the sample. Only three articles were coded for spousal communication. All of the cues coded for were not only verbal, but also benign; "I have a wife," and "my husband is home with Cole." Another reason for this apparent discrepancy may be the lack of spouses being on the campaign trail with the candidate at this level. After all, if the husband is home with the child, it is neither necessary nor possible for the media to discuss what they are

wearing, their demeanor and emotional states, facial expressions, or connection with the audience. Finally, the nature of this election was different from prior elections and as Bandura (1986) explained in social cognitive theory, cultural events can alter the reciprocal influences on individuals.

The event I am referring to here is the emergence of the Tea Party. As the first, apparently viable third party (although it has been argued they are simply the right-most wing of the Republican Party); the Tea Party has changed the landscape of U.S. campaigns. That change is apparent in the 2010 election cycle.

To begin with, the Tea Party put forth a number of candidates whom voters knew nothing about. Issues and standpoints may have out-weighted reflection on spouses as getting to know the candidate concerns. Many of the Tea Party candidates were women, and supported quite vociferously by Sarah Palin. While this may intuitively make one think spouses and interpersonal relationships would be more important, more article space was given to the discussion of these candidates as viable candidates.

In the second chapter, Golebiowska (2001) showed that women candidates (and other minority candidates) are other; that is outside the norm of traditional politicians, who are seen as less viable due to their sex, sexual orientation, race, or ethnicity. In support of her findings many of the articles in this study spent time explaining the candidate's qualifications or lack thereof, (viability) for the

job. For example, the September 18, 2010 *Economist* ran an article covering the Mike Castle vs. Christine O'Donnell race in Delaware; the article described her as a former abstinence counselor who had never even come close to securing a nomination in prior attempts at being elected, even using the term not viable. The article discussed the boon O'Donnell received from money and support from Palin and the Tea Party organization (O'Donnell won the nomination). A spouse or lack of a spouse was never mentioned for either candidate in this race.

The influence of Tea Party candidates can be seen not only in the issues covered, and in promoting the viability of the candidates but also in the lack of incumbents on tickets. Hypothesis 1 was not supported by the data in this study because the lack of incumbents precluded the assumption that the media would be more likely to discuss the spousal communication of incumbents. The Tea Party insurgency took out a number of long standing Republican incumbents. Take former Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT) for example; Senator Bennett had been in the Senate for 18 years, usually secured his party nomination without serious challenge, and held several key committee appointments within the Senate, traditionally an enviable position.

In 2010, that all came crashing down as Senator Bennett not only did not secure his party's nomination, he did not even come in second. He came in third. While Utah did not lose the Republican seat, some states did (Delaware, New

Jersey, and Colorado to name a few). The point for this research however is not who won or lost Senate seats; the demonstration was that incumbents such as Bennett were not on the general election ballots as they normally would be, hence the usual discussion of the incumbent and spouse by the media was not possible. The lack of support for hypothesis 1 is not surprising then given that incumbents such as Bennett were beaten at the primary level and because the rising stars of the new Tea Party movement were more interesting than politics as usual. In this case the cultural event appears to have an astounding reciprocal influence just as SCT suggests.

Acceptability. Research question 2 and both hypotheses 3 and 4 are related to one another in that they address the acceptability of a candidate based on a variety of factors; namely gender roles / stereotypes (H3) and the media ideology in comparison with that of the candidates (H4), which in turn answer research question 2 how do media portrayals relate to the acceptability of the candidate. The findings in this research show that these are related items; all the results for these measures were significant.

As with the study on newspaper ideology discussed in chapter two the results indicate that the ideology of the newsmagazines influences the portrayal of spousal communications acceptance as well as the overall acceptability of the candidate. Research question two asked how media portrayals of spousal

communication relate to the acceptability of the candidate. Empirical data can only answer part of this question. The results show that they are related, but there is no further indication of how the two measures in the study are related. In order to answer this we have to take a qualitative look at the articles in question.

The results from the Chi-square for ideology versus acceptance show that conservative newsmagazines had 4 articles coded for each of the three categories of latitude (Table 11). If I simply left the empirical findings as the answer to my query, it would appear that these were all equal and therefore acceptability was not dependent upon ideology. All things are not equal however, so it becomes necessary to address that whether the article was overall positive (acceptance) or negative (rejection) was dependent upon several factors, the most notably factor is who was the target of the article.

Logic, and past research, dictates that when the candidate is ideologically in line with the media doing the reporting the overall tone of acceptance would be higher than if they were opposite ideologies (hence hypothesis 4). The only way to determine if this holds true is to compare the details of an articles to the empirical findings of the study. For example, while coding a *National Review* article, one coder made the note on her coding sheet "very anti Barbara Boxer." It was clear to the coder upon reading the article that the conservative

newsmagazine had a negative (wide latitude of rejection) position concerning the Democratic Senator.

These findings hold true for the media identified as and coded as conservative and progressive, with each being positive towards candidates who shared their ideological leanings and negative towards those who did not. I must however address the more numerous instances of non-committal codes.

Thirty-eight of the 68 units were coded as unable to determine ideology. Additionally, 39 of the articles were coded as being in the latitude of non-committal. Considering newsmagazines in the unable to determine ideology category either do not have or strive not to appear to have a particular ideology these figures make sense. Magazines that try to be more objective are bound to have a more measured tone to their articles. They make a more concerted effort to discuss all candidates equally in terms of standpoint, or engage in less discussion about the appropriateness of those standpoints. In either case, the overall tone is muted and not as clear to the coders, resulting in the larger portion of non-committal codes, for the larger amount of ideological ambiguous newsmagazines.

This was also apparent when figuring inter-coder reliability. The variable that produced the most inconsistency between coders was coding the latitude of

acceptance for those magazines whose ideology was coded as unable to determine. The overall tone was more difficult for the coders to discern.

Acceptance was also compared with the maintenance of gender roles and stereotypes (hypothesis 3). While the results here were significant they were actually opposite those I predicted with the hypothesis. Granted the literature on this issue is mixed. The bulk of research on political campaigns suggests that following the gender roles and stereotypes (being a wife and mother, looking the part, demurely supportive) would be viewed more positively, which is what I predicted would occur in this study. However, also discussed in chapter two were the exceptions to the rule (Clinton, Heinz Kerry, etc.) and expectancy violation theory, which may be at play here.

To further explore what is occurring I need to refer to the in depth discussion quality of the articles not just the empirical presence of a variable. A good example of expectancy violation theory comes from the *American Spectator* wherein one coder noted that the gender roles of mother and grandmother were evoked (and properly coded as present), but the coder also noted that the article sarcastically stated that it was “with a distinct female bent.” This insinuates that being a wife and grandmother could be espoused without a distinct female bent. In this article the candidate was also Democrat Barbara Boxer mentioned earlier in the *National Review* article. Gender roles were present but the differing

ideologies outweighed the acceptability of the role in the article. In other words, the following of expected gender role did not produce a positive effect, but rather, because of other factors, a negative one. This is consistent with expectancy violation theory.

In another instance, the gender stereotype was benign. In this case the coder noted the article discussed a woman candidate (although not spouse) in pearls and a proper skirt suit. The difference however, was that the magazine was *Time* (an ideologically ambiguous newsmagazine) and other than the word proper there was no indication whether these were positive or negative attributes. The *American Spectator* article was coded as latitude of rejection, whereas the *Time* article was coded as non-committal by both coders.

Limitations of the Study

I have already alluded to some of the limitations of this study. The limitation which deserves the most focus here is the sample size.

Sample Size. The size of the sample in this study was just adequate with only four units of analysis more than was required by the design. There are some problems with having such a small sample; most notably generalization is more difficult, although not impossible. I would hesitate to generalize these findings to Presidential elections, which generate a larger number of articles and a larger number of portrayals of spousal communication. I would argue that the results

are generalizable with reference to other mid-term elections, and as I discussed earlier there is no reason to believe a larger sample would produce different results, especially in percentage of spousal communication portrayals, than those found in this study.

The research could be supplemented by a content analysis of archives from previous mid-term election cycles. This would be useful in a comparative sense, but was unnecessary for this first look at the questions. Media portrayals of spousal communication have not specifically been studied prior to now so, a baseline from which to start is needed. This study provides that starting point.

Additionally, as discussed earlier a cultural event (i.e., emergence of the Tea Party) occurred between the 2008 and 2010 elections. The election and the media portrayals of it are apt to be quite different between the election studied here and prior election cycles.

Areas of Future Research

This study expands our understanding of political communication and the role media portrayals have on our attitudes and behaviors. The results of this study also suggest interesting expansions of prior research.

Expectancy violation theory is normally applied to interpersonal communication, regarding interpersonal space and interpersonal relationships (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). This study shows that expectancy violation also occurs

at the mass media level. Study into how the expectations are transmitted, and upheld or violated through the mass media and to what effect would improve understanding of how people negotiate relationships with people who are not face-to-face. The impact on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and podcasts would constitute another interesting area of study to benefit from these findings.

Given that the results of this study related to gender roles and stereotypes was opposite than predicted, it would interesting to know if there has been a cultural shift, as SCT would suggest. Did the Tea Party and the elections of 2010 bring about a shift, or highlight a shift already occurring in the way society sees gender roles and stereotypes? Comparative study would show if such a shift was episodic or real change has occurred.

Additionally, it would be enlightening to find out if these results would hold across cultures. Studies on media portrayals of political spousal communication in other countries might illuminate significant similarities across nations, or highlight what differences occur in representations or importance of different factors.

Finally, I would add that more research needs to be conducted on this spousal communication on the campaign trail. There are no other studies specifically on this topic. As communication scholars in general further research

on this topic can inform our knowledge of how communication builds culture and consensus. As political communication scholars further research provides a better understand of campaign dynamics, spousal communication, and media presentation.

Conclusion

Exploring uncharted territory is always risky because the researcher is never really sure what he or she will find. It is necessary however, in order to build understanding of how we come together to make decisions regarding the people who will lead the country, states, and towns. Too often research in political communication focuses on factors such as debate performance, socio-economic status, and looks. While issue standpoint and financial disparity are important, focus on arbitrary factors such as height, and whether a candidate is good looking does not address the “honesty, faithfulness to spouse, and moral integrity” characteristics that Trent and Friedenber (2003, p. 75) found most important to voters.

Understanding that communication is mostly non-verbal and that human beings interpret personal character based on judgments about those non-verbal cues was the starting point for this research. This study begins a discussion about how interpersonal relationships (i.e. spousal communication) between a candidate and their spouse are portrayed by the media and to what effect.

This research was set in motion from the idea that political spouses were important to perceptions about the candidate, and that the communication most important to those perceptions were under-represented in the media. That relational cues and communication are not a focus in media portrayals of political spouses indicates a disconnect between what scholars and media believe is important and what the public thinks is important. This researcher believes that spousal communication is more important to the creation of public image than previously realized. Every person has the instinctive ability to read non-verbal cues and along with verbal cues determine the status of a relationship. If faithfulness to a spouse is important, as shown by Trent and Friedenber (2004), then more attention should be paid to spousal communication, particularly during mid-term elections. I do not wish to down play the role of the First Spouse of the nation, but the First Spouse of a state has more direct influence on our lives (local laws, taxes, policies, etc.) as individuals, than even the Presidential spouse. Therefore, in this researcher's opinion it is more important for media to give more focus to the first spouse of a state. Inherent in that is more research into the effects of spousal communication on voter perceptions of candidates for office.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

U.S. Newsmagazines

Atlantic

American Conservative

American Prospect

American Spectator

Economist

Harpers

Mother Jones

National Review

New Republic

Newsweek

New Yorker

Progressive

Time

U.S. News & World Reports

Utne Reader

Appendix B

Specific Newsmagazines Used in Study

Atlantic	September 2010; October 2010.
American Prospect	September 2010; October 2010.
American Spectator	September 2010; October 2010.
Economist	September 4 -10, 2010; September 11-17, 2010; September 18-24, 2010; October 2 – 8, 2010; October 9 -15, 2010.
Harpers	September 2010; October 2010.
Mother Jones	September 2010; October 2010.
National Review	August 30, 2010 (was on the newsstand September 1st); September 20, 2010; October 4, 2010; October 18, 2010.
Newsweek	September 13, 2010; September 20, 2010; September 27, 2010; October 11, 2010; October 18, 2010.
New Yorker	September 13, 2010; September 20, 2010; September 27, 2010; October 11, 2010; October 18, 2010.
Progressive	September 2010; October 2010.

Time	September 6, 2010; September 20, 2010; September 27, 2010; October 11, 2010; October 25, 2010.
U.S. News & World Reports	September 2010; October 2010.
Utne Reader	Sept – Oct 2010; Nov – Dec, 2010.

Appendix C

Magazine Ideology

Atlantic	Unable to determine
American Conservative	Conservative
American Prospect	Liberal / Progressive
American Spectator	Conservative
Economist	Unable to determine
Harpers	Liberal / Progressive
Mother Jones	Liberal / Progressive
National Review	Conservative
Newsweek	Unable to determine
New Yorker	Unable to determine
Progressive	Liberal / Progressive
Time	Unable to determine
U.S. News & World Reports	Unable to determine
Utne Reader	Liberal / Progressive

Appendix D

Codebook

Unit of Data Collection: Each magazine article reporting on a political candidate and/or their spouse. As magazines may have multiple articles, each article will be coded on its own code sheet even if located within the same magazine as another article.

Title of Publication: The title of the magazine in which the article coded is located.

Date of Publication: The date indicated on the magazine in which the article coded is located.

Page number of Article: The page number in the magazine on which the article coded is located.

Coder ID: Indicate the letter of the individual who coded that sheet, according to the coder ID list.

Spousal Communication: Report if the article discusses / mentions a political candidate's spouse, conversation or communication between a candidate and spouse, or comments by or about the spouse or candidate by the other.

- 1) *Yes.*
- 2) *No.*

Candidate Status: Report the status of the candidate at the time the article was written.

- 1) *Incumbent* = Article is about the individual holding the office.
- 2) *Challenger* = Article is about the individual(s) not currently in the office being pursued, or is running for an office different from the one currently held.
- 3) *Comparison* = Article compares or discusses both the Incumbent and the Challenger.

Spouse: Indicate the sex of the spouse if mentioned in the article. The *significant other* (i.e., non-wedded lover, gay partner, etc.) of any candidate is included in the term “spouse” regardless of legal status.

- 1) *Female*
- 2) *Male*
- 9) *Unable to determine*

Communication Source: Indicate the source of communication the article addresses.

- 1) *Incumbent / Incumbents Spouse.*
- 2) *Challenger / Challengers Spouse.*
- 3) *Other (e.g., journalist, moderator).*

Communication Cues: Report the type of communication cues indicated in the article. If the answer in the previous “spousal communication” box is a **1**, there should be a **1** or **2** answer for this question; otherwise it should be a **9**.

- 1) *Verbal*. Indicate if vocal utterances, statements or quotes by, to or about the spouse are included in the article regardless of source.
- 2) *Non-verbal*. Indicate if any non-verbal communication cues are included in the article. Examples of non-verbal communication cues include: attire, gesturing, Proxemics (physical positioning), facial expressions, eye contact, body movement / stance.
- 9) *No Spousal Communication present*. Indicate if there is no communication cue present.

Gender Stereotyping: Indicate if there are examples of gender stereotyping in the article. Examples would be women as stay-at-home mothers, men as “breadwinners,” etcetera.

- 1) *Yes*.
- 2) *No*.

Latitude of Acceptance: Estimate the overall tone of acceptance of the communication cues by the news magazine article.

- 1) *Acceptable*. The overall tone of the article or ad was positive.
- 2) *Rejection*. The overall tone of the article was negative.

3) *Non-committal*. The overall tone is neither positive nor negative.

Ideology of News Magazine: Report the ideology of the news magazine. Use the guide provided by the researcher (Appendix C).

1) *Conservative*.

2) *Liberal / Progressive*.

9) *Unable to determine*.

Appendix E

Coding Instrument

Title of Publication _____ Date of Publication _____
Page number of article/ad _____ Coder ID _____

	Indicated in the article?	Notes / Examples
Spousal Communication		
Candidates status		
Spouses' gender		
Communication Source		
Communication cues		
Gender stereotyping		
Latitude of Acceptance		
Ideology		

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