



**A “nasty woman”: Assessing the gendered mediation of
Hillary Clinton’s nonverbal immediacy cues during the 2016
U.S. presidential campaign**

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Abstract

Hillary Clinton's defeat in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was a stunning upset that confounded pollsters, pundits, and journalists predicting a solid win by the former secretary of state and Democratic candidate against businessperson and reality television star Donald Trump. This article uses the theoretical lenses of gendered mediation and the double bind to investigate how U.S. media framed Clinton's credibility and likability as a female candidate during the last six weeks of the election campaign. Employing a qualitative thematic content analysis, the paper examines how two regional daily newspapers in traditionally red and blue states assessed Clinton's credibility and likability through her use of nonverbal immediacy cues. It finds that though Clinton was able to gain credibility through her use of immediacy behaviours, the portrayal of her likability was still confined by gender norms and depicted as a barrier to her viability as a presidential candidate.

Keywords: Female politicians, nonverbal immediacy, double bind, gendered mediation, communication, qualitative content analysis

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3 It is clear, says Hillary Clinton, that “sexism and misogyny played a role in the 2016
4 presidential election” (2017, 114). The most blatant example of this, she suggests, is the
5 infamous recording of Donald Trump bragging about his sexual assaults of women, which still
6 failed to sway many voters from choosing his name at the ballot box. Since Clinton’s loss to
7 Trump, many researchers have attempted to explain why she was unable to win the White House.
8 The e-mail scandal, Russia’s involvement in the election campaign, lower-than-anticipated
9 turnout by some groups, cynicism regarding career politicians, and Trump’s groundswell of
10 grassroots support and capitalization on economic anxiety and racism have all been posited as
11 contributing factors (Molly Ball 2016; Clinton 2017; Matthew Cooper 2017; Ezra Klein 2017).
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24 In her memoir, Clinton (2017) also ruminates about another factor that likely influenced
25 the election: that the skepticism she’s encountered during her career is due in part to the visceral
26 discomfort many feel about having a female politician in the Oval Office, a subconscious bias
27 that has emerged out of societal and historical norms such as the sexism and misogyny that
28 Clinton refers to that expect women to stay silent and submissive even on the political stage. As
29 Clinton suggests, “When a woman lands a political punch – and not even a particularly hard one
30 – it’s not read as the normal sparring that men do all the time in politics. It makes her a ‘nasty
31 woman’” (121).
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42 As academic literature continues to examine the outcomes and implications of Clinton’s
43 loss and begins to explore the gendered nature of the election and its coverage (e.g. Dustin Harp
44 2019; Christine A. Kray, Tamar W. Carroll, and Hinda Mandell 2018), one area that is still
45 relatively unexplored is the mediated perception of Clinton’s nonverbal immediacy cues (e.g.,
46 body position, facial and verbal expressions, gestures, etc.) as a female candidate during the 2016
47 election campaign, and the kinds of gendered media narratives that were communicated to
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3 American voters about her credibility and likability. Specifically, a search of the University of
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5 Ottawa's journal database identified only four articles of significance that focused on Clinton's
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7 non-verbal immediacy cues that provided enough content to examine further (see McThomas and
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10 Tesler 2016; Romaniuk 2016; Sharrow et al. 2016; Shepard 2009).

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12 For the purposes of this paper, nonverbal immediacy cues will refer to the degree of
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14 closeness or separation between individuals that is expressed in their communication (Roberta
15
16 Gottlieb, Morton Weiner and Albert Mehrabian 1967). The definition of credibility will embody
17
18 Janis Page and Margaret Duffy's (2016) categorization of this trait as invoking expertise (e.g.,
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20 physically active gestures like shaking hands or gesturing, versus a lack of gestures which can
21
22 suggest a candidate is disengaged or unqualified) and trustworthiness (e.g., relaxed clothing,
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24 happy and serious or caring facial expressions). Likability, meanwhile, will be defined as the
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26 candidate's perceived level of warmth and approachability. This is based on Virginia P.
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28 Richmond, James C. McCroskey and Aaron D. Johnson's (2003) assertion that immediate
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30 communicators are frequently described as both.

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35 Looking at the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaign, this article uses a qualitative
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37 content analysis to examine how two daily newspapers in traditionally red or blue states assessed
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39 Clinton's credibility and likability as a political candidate through her use of nonverbal
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41 immediacy cues during the final six weeks of the campaign. Specifically, this article will attempt
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43 to address the question of how these media framed Clinton's credibility and likability based on
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45 her body position, facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal cues, through the theoretical
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47 lenses of gendered mediation and the double bind theory.
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51 **Media coverage of female politicians**

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3 A wealth of literature demonstrates that female politicians typically receive less
4 coverage than their male counterparts (Dustin Harp, Jaime Loke and Ingrid Bachmann 2017), are
5 more likely to be paraphrased rather than directly quoted (Charlotte Adcock, 2010), and are more
6 likely to be gendered and/or sexualized (Elisabeth Gidengil and Joanna Everitt 2003; Annabelle
7 Sreberny-Mohammadi and Karen Ross 1996). In fact, in their global study on the relationship
8 between media sexism and the share of candidates for the lower chamber of national parliaments
9 who are women, Amanda Haraldsson and Lena Wängnerud (2019) concluded that sexist
10 portrayals of women in the media reinforce traditional gender roles, dissuading women from
11 seeing themselves as equally suited to politics and thus discouraging them from running as
12 political candidates.
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26 Beyond the obvious implications, gendered mediation is problematic given that the media
27 help create norms and expectations, and thus determine what is socially acceptable (Harp et al.
28 2017). In vying for higher levels of office, most of what voters learn about candidates comes
29 from media coverage, with all of its limitations and biases. Subsequently, the presentations of
30 these candidates are shaped and framed by the media and thus selectively cultivate a perception
31 that is transmitted to the audience (Erika Falk 2010; Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2019; Sreberny-
32 Mohammadi and Ross 1996). These narratives propagate the stereotype that female politicians
33 are weak, overly emotional, and unable to make decisions, and prioritize less pertinent
34 information, such as their appearance or family life, over their policy platforms, damaging their
35 credibility and authority (Ette 2013; Melissa Miller, Jeffrey Peake, and Brittany Anne Boulton).
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49 **Nonverbal immediacy cues**

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51 According to Richmond et al. (2003), an individual's increased use of nonverbal
52 immediate behaviours (e.g., smiling, making eye contact, relaxed body posture) leads others to
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3 like and prefer them more. Nonverbal cues, including immediate behaviours, are “a constant
4 source of information” (Martha Davis 1995, 208) that can be used by individuals to curate their
5 own image and manage their social interactions (Miles L. Patterson 2014), and which may be
6 more believable than verbal messages (Adam Jaworski and Dariusz Galasiński 2002). For
7 example, cues such as facial expressions can communicate a range of emotions including anger,
8 happiness, and fear (Patrick Stewart et al. 2017). Linkages have been found between the use of
9 some nonverbal cues and increased likability and approachability; for example, a recent study on
10 the act of nodding found that positive nodding can increase subjective likability by
11 approximately 30 per cent and approachability by 40 per cent (Takayuki Osugi and Jun I.
12 Kawahara 2018). These cues, therefore, can be used to convince or persuade, and to become
13 more likable to others.
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28 In the political context, voters “make holistic judgments about candidates based on their
29 presentational style” (Michael Pfau 2002, 253), including about who they are on a more personal
30 level (Pfau 2002). This is critical for appealing to mass numbers of voters and garnering support;
31 voters evaluate candidates’ traits, including their nonverbal communication, to come to
32 conclusions about them and to determine their voting preferences (Stewart et al. 2017). In
33 examining expectations for women in politics, female politicians are presumed to be warmer,
34 most positive, and more community-focused than men – more likable, in effect (Laurie Rudman
35 and Kimberly Fairchild 2004) – which is expressed in terms of nonverbal immediacy cues
36 through more frequent smiling (Jennifer Jones 2016).
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49 Beyond how nonverbal cues can be performed by politicians and assessed by the public,
50 these behaviours can also be used by the media to persuade. This is done by strategically
51 reinterpreting facial expressions, gestures, and body movement in coverage, which helps to
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3 create impressions, impact voting behaviour, or support a newspaper's perception of an event,
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5 and to illustrate their ideological positions or reinforce a particular agenda (Jaworski and
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7 Galasiński 2002; Valerie Manusov and Jessica Harvey 2011). By embedding their own meaning
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9 into these nonverbal cues, outlets can direct their audiences – and voters – on how to perceive
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11 and assess candidates. For women in politics, this becomes especially problematic when those
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13 embedded meanings also carry the gendered norms and stereotypes that can negatively impact
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15 their chances at seeking office.
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18 19 **Theoretical framework**

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21 This article has employed two main theoretical lenses in looking at Clinton's bid for
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23 president and how media coverage assessed her likability and credibility via nonverbal
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25 immediacy cues: gendered mediation (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996) and the double
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27 bind theory (Kathleen Jamieson 1995).
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31 In Annabelle Sreberny and Karen Ross' (2000) view, gendered mediation operates from
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33 the standpoint that men are normative in areas of public life such as politics. These gendered
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35 media narratives emphasize social and cultural traditional standards for masculine and feminine
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37 roles and highlight an individual's gender regardless of its relevance to the story. This is done by
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39 focusing on real or perceived gender differences, using particular language, and giving
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41 credibility to stereotypes that privilege men over women and portray both genders in
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43 significantly different ways. For example, women may be portrayed as either invisible or as
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45 simply a human-interest story, where the emphasis on their personality and temperament detracts
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47 from focus on their achievements and contributions (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996).
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51 Gendered mediation is particularly insidious given that news production is presented as
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53 objective, but in reality still embodies the inherent biases created by framing that are typically
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3 defined through masculine norms (Ette 2013). Traditionally, the top tier of the media has been
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5 dominated by men who serve as gatekeepers and instil the masculine norms, narratives,
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7 priorities, or approaches that are perpetuated throughout the industry (Cindy Burke and Sharon
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9 R. Mazzarella 2008; Harp et al. 2017; Linda Trimble 2014). This gendered approach may not be
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11 a conscious effort but still influences how an audience understands and responds to the world
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13 around them (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996).
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17 These gendered media narratives can diminish the appeal of female politicians as they
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19 shift focus from the content of a message to how it is delivered (Gidengil and Everitt 2003;
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21 Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2019). When issue-based coverage is lacking and instead replaced
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23 by reporting that focuses on personality or personal circumstances, voters have no foundation for
24
25 assessing whether a female candidate is suitable for office (Burke and Mazzarella 2008). By
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27 focusing on their “sexed bodies”, women in politics continue to lose legitimacy and become
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29 further entrenched in the norm that men should be in public and women should remain at home
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31 (Linda Trimble et al. 2013, 665).
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35 Shifting to the second theoretical concept, the notion of the double bind has become a
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37 common term to describe the challenges facing women on a number of fronts, including those in
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39 positions of power. Gregory Bateson argued that a double bind involves the tension between
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41 social and institutional norms and a “vulnerable” group such as women, in which two or more
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43 persons repeatedly experience a “primary negative injunction” conflicting with a second
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45 injunction at the risk of being punished and which the victim cannot escape (Jamieson 1995, 13).
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49 Jamieson (1995) introduced a framework of five double binds that describe and depict
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51 various situations in which women must navigate these challenges. Of these, the most useful to
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53 this study is Jamieson’s (1995) femininity/competence double bind, which suggests that women
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3 are penalized whether they suppress or display their traditionally feminine qualities (e.g., a
4 female politician with a tough persona will be criticized for acting unnaturally masculine or cold,
5 while a leader who appears softer will be judged unfit for office): “By requiring both femininity
6 and competence of women in the public sphere, and then defining femininity in a way that
7 excludes competence, the bind creates unrealizable expectations. By this standard, women are
8 bound to fail” (Jamieson, 1995, 18).
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17 **Research design and methodology**

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19 This paper critically analysed media coverage over a six-week period from the *Boston*
20 *Globe* in Massachusetts and the *Houston Chronicle* in Texas. Massachusetts and Texas were
21 selected given that they were politically distinct states (i.e., one publicly recognized as
22 traditionally leaning Democrat and one known for its Republican support) that provided options
23 for two similar-sized daily newspapers (Randy Yeip, Stewart A. Thompson, and Will Welch
24 2016). For example, in the 2017 election, 52.5 per cent of Texan voters supported Trump (versus
25 43.5 per cent for Clinton), while in Massachusetts, 61 per cent voted for Clinton and 33.3 per
26 cent marked their ballots for Trump (CNN, 2016). In terms of the selection of the two
27 newspapers in question, it was made based on the following: the *Globe* goes to approximately
28 246,000 readers (CommonWealth, 2016) in a city of 673,000 (United States Census Bureau,
29 2016b) while the *Chronicle* has a circulation of 325,000 (Houston Chronicle Media Group 2017)
30 serving a population of 2.3 million (United States Census Bureau, 2016a), and though these cities
31 differ significantly in terms of population, their circulation size of their newspapers is
32 comparable and both outlets are the largest or second-largest daily newspaper in their state.
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51 Specifically, this article looked at non-news items (defined as commentary, columns,
52 opinion pieces, and editorials) published as original pieces in the *Globe* and the *Chronicle* during
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3 the final six weeks before the U.S. election (September 23, 2016 to November 7, 2016) using a
4 keyword search of “Hillary Clinton”. A period of six weeks was chosen to cover all three
5 presidential debates and also to provide enough relevant coverage to support the corpus, while
6 not creating one that was overwhelming in volume given the broad search terms. The corpus was
7 also based only on the articles’ texts, not on any multimedia images (e.g., photographs, videos,
8 etc.) that may have accompanied them. This was predicated on the fact that previous literature
9 focusing specifically on news imagery (e.g., Jaworski & Galasinski, 2002) has shown that a
10 significant breadth of analysis can be produced on media assessment and selection of images
11 alone; therefore, to keep the focus of this article more precise, it looks only at what findings can
12 be drawn from the texts themselves.
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26 During the sample period, 813 articles with a mention of “Hillary Clinton” were
27 published by the *Boston Globe*. These articles were selected by using the Factiva database, which
28 provided an all-encompassing search of the *Globe*’s database. Out of those articles, which
29 included wire copy, duplicates, letters, hard news items, and coverage that did not address
30 Clinton’s nonverbal cues or any other related elements, 27 articles met the criteria for inclusion
31 in the corpus.
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40 During the same time period, 130 articles that included a mention of “Hillary Clinton”
41 were published by the *Houston Chronicle*. A Eureka database search and a manual search of the
42 *Chronicle*’s website was done to ensure that all relevant articles were captured. This selection
43 was also vetted for duplicates, non-relevant articles, and items that were originally published by
44 other outlets and reprinted by the *Chronicle*. After review, 12 articles met the standards for the
45 corpus.
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3 To provide the same number of articles per newspaper for analysis while ensuring
4 selection remained random and not biased by the researcher, the first and last articles from the
5 *Globe* corpus were selected, as well as every third article in between (ranging by date from oldest
6 to newest). This totalled 10 articles. To produce the additional two articles needed, the second
7 newest and second oldest articles were also chosen. This ensured that the corpus selection
8 remained objective and was not accidentally influenced by author preference. In total, 24 articles
9 were included in the corpus – 12 from the *Globe* and 12 from the *Chronicle*. Though this
10 selection was done to create equal content from both outlets in the corpus, it is worth noting that
11 the significantly higher number of relevant articles to select from for the *Globe* may have shifted
12 the results towards the elements noted in that coverage and likely resulted in an additional theme
13 over the *Chronicle*.
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28 After assembling the corpus, a coding framework was developed based on Richmond et
29 al.'s (2003) Nonverbal Immediacy Scale, Page and Duffy's (2016) review of political social
30 media visual messaging, and Davis's (1995) and Tsfira Grebelsky-Lichtman's (2016)
31 investigations of self-presentation during political debates, which was also refined after a review
32 of the corpus and other relevant literature. This framework included 38 codes: 22 can be linked
33 to likability (positive (e.g. eye contact; smiling; nodding in agreement; leaning towards) or
34 negative) (e.g. aggressive/angry temperament; finger pointing; inappropriate/unflattering
35 behavior)); and 16 to credibility (positive (e.g. relaxed body position; steady and commanding
36 presence; waving or raising arms/hands) or negative (e.g. arms/hands at side or folded; sighing;
37 lack of ease of movement)).
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51 Using this coding framework, a qualitative thematic content analysis of the media
52 coverage was completed. First, each article was reviewed and manually coded wherein relevant
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3 text fragments were highlighted and numerated according to the framework. Next, the codes
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5 were placed into a chart and the text segments distilled down to short sentences or words, then
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7 added to the chart according to their corresponding code (e.g. eye contact). Then, reflecting on
8
9 the groupings of sentences/words and their relationships to the codes, five themes (three from the
10
11 *Globe's* coverage and two from the *Chronicle's* coverage) were identified based on the common
12
13 or particularly salient elements of the grouping.
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16 17 **Results and Analysis**

18 19 **Theme 1: Impact of Gendered Perceptions of Clinton**

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21 The first theme that emerged from the *Boston Globe* was how gendered perceptions of
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23 Clinton's likability and credibility impacted her viability as a presidential candidate. The findings
24
25 suggest that coverage of Clinton was mediated in a way that held her to specific, gendered
26
27 standards regarding her credibility and likeability, and which cast doubt on the viability of her
28
29 candidacy. Because Clinton did not embody or appropriately perform the traits of warmth (Fiske
30
31 et al. 2007) to the levels expected of her as a woman, she was not considered likeable and her
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33 credibility was negatively impacted.
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37 For example, a sizeable amount of coverage referenced Clinton's inability to connect with
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39 Americans in a way that would translate into votes. Though the number of references to Clinton
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41 in relaxed postures or connecting with receivers was similar (and greater if factoring in coverage
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43 that noted her positive general temperament), even in articles where Clinton was generally
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45 supported her weakness was often identified as her stiff, unnatural, and overly prepared self-
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47 presentation. Clinton was also penalized in the coverage for her refusal to shake Trump's hand
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49 before or after most debates, though Trump was equally condemned. This aligns with the
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51 previously cited literature that shows female politicians are expected to be warmer, more
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3 positive, and more community-focused than men (Jones, 2016). In an example of the double bind
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5 (Jamieson 1995), Clinton is evaluated based on the gendered requirement to appear warm and
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7 approachable to voters (i.e., feminine) while also maintaining a high level of competency (i.e.,
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9 masculine), and is criticized for both.
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12 Another element of this theme referenced Clinton's stamina and physical health. The
13
14 credibility underpinning Clinton's campaign for president was linked to the coverage's
15
16 assessment of her physical form and nonverbal cues; if she appeared 'weak', it was posited that
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18 her viability as a candidate was undermined. This aligns with Rebecca Curnalia and Dorian
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20 Mermer's (2014) finding that coverage of female politicians is more likely to focus on their
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22 viability than their platforms. This also supports the notion of the double bind, where Clinton's
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24 inherent frailty as a woman was exposed, demonstrating that she could not be a credible
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26 presidential candidate.
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31 The final element of this theme expands on the finding that Clinton's likability and
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33 credibility were at least partly tied to her ability to garner meaningful support from voters, and
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35 that all of these traits were examined through a gendered lens. Somewhat surprisingly, the *Globe*
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37 coverage did not heavily feature Clinton's physical appearance or clothing choices, as might
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39 have been expected in examples of gendered mediation. Those references were most often
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41 highlighted as criticism from Trump; however, some of the coverage did engage with more
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43 gendered terms in this way, such as describing Clinton's jokes at a charity dinner as "dressed for
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45 the job", noting her appearance during the event, and quoting Clinton's self-deprecating jest that
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47 she considered tuxedos as "formal pantsuits" (Michael Andor Brodeur 2016). In addition to
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49 revealing some of the subtler uses of gendered mediation, the latter reference also highlights
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3 Clinton's willingness to lean into some of the female stereotypes and gendered talk surrounding
4 her candidacy, embracing her almost-iconic symbol of pantsuits and poking fun at it.
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7 **Theme 2: Perception of Clinton as an Emotional Deviant**

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10 The second theme that arose from the *Globe* coverage was the perception of Clinton as an
11 emotional deviant. In looking at the findings from this network, it can be posited that if women
12 are expected to be warmer and more maternal even in the political realm – thereby increasing
13 their likability by adhering to social norms but losing credibility by performing immediacy
14 behaviours such as smiling that highlight their femininity – then Clinton is truly faced with the
15 no-win situation described by Jamieson (1995).
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23 The findings from this network more generally explored the assertion that Clinton's
24 displays of heightened emotion were seen as inappropriate; though her critics cited a range of
25 reasons for this in the coverage, it still evoked the double bind with the unspoken addendum of
26 'because she's a woman'. For example, Clinton was penalized in the coverage for displays of
27 emotion such as anger, coldness, and excitement, which were tied to her likability and credibility
28 and the expectations of her as a female candidate. One column, though mostly tongue-in-cheek,
29 referenced Clinton's "shoulder shimmy" (Matthew Gilbert, 2016) and exclamation of "Who!
30 OK!" from the debates, which became an online meme. By categorizing this movement as silly
31 or absurd, Clinton's actions and emotions – in this case, her excitement – are framed as
32 inappropriate, and a cue that could make Clinton more likable is now another point against her
33 credibility.
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49 Though the concept of Clinton's emotion as 'too much/not enough' – as described by
50 Jamieson (1995) – was not as common as others within the network, it provided an intriguing
51 viewpoint into assessments of her nonverbal cues and immediacy behaviours. Cues that should
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3 have encouraged likability were instead depicted in the coverage as inappropriate or negative,
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5 and Clinton is often expected to perform a spectrum of sometimes conflicting communicative
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7 cues to increase her likeability (and therefore her credibility). She is criticized for her ‘ice queen’
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9 persona, as seen in coverage of the 2008 campaign, while almost simultaneously being
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11 celebrated for it in the face of Trump’s often-emotional outbursts during the 2016 election.
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15 Smiling is one specific example of this. In the *Globe* coverage, Clinton is at various
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17 points lambasted by her critics for smiling too much, not smiling often enough, or smiling in an
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19 inappropriate way. One columnist pointed out the absurdity of this criticism, remarking that,
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21 “The Atlantic’s David Frum was booed for complaining that she kept “smiling like she’s at her
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23 granddaughter’s birthday party.” (This after Republican National Committee chairman Reince
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25 Priebus had criticized Clinton for not smiling enough during an NBC forum earlier in the
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27 month.)” (Ty Burr 2016). Though other coverage framed Clinton’s smiling as a signal of her
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29 comfort level and presentation of ‘presidentialness’ (Andor Brodeur, 2016; Don Aucoin 2016),
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31 there is still a gendered nuance that cannot be ignored. As previously discussed, women are more
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33 likely to use smiling as a nonverbal immediacy cue (Hecht and LaFrance 1998; Jones 2016) and
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35 are expected to embody communal traits such as appearing agreeable and yielding (Jamieson
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37 1995; Jones 2016).
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42 **Theme 3: Political Credibility through Immediacy Behaviours**

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45 The final theme for the *Globe* coverage was much less bleak, exploring how Clinton
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47 gained political credibility through her use of immediacy behaviours. Overall, this theme paints a
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49 more positive picture of mediated portrayals of Clinton during the campaign. Though previous
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51 networks depicted how her lack of connection with voters negatively impacted her viability as a
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53 candidate, this network does uncover at least one manner in which Clinton improved her
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3 connections (and in turn, credibility) through the eyes of the media and provides another example
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5 of the causal link being found between likability and credibility, where the latter was used to
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7 improve the former.
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10 References to Clinton's laugh and sense of humour were some of the most common in the
11
12 *Globe* coverage. Though the articles that focused on her laugh sometimes included more
13
14 negative connotations, mentions of Clinton's sense of humour were overwhelmingly positive,
15
16 depicted as a valuable political skill and one that signalled her intelligence and wit. Interestingly,
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18 the coverage did not specifically frame Clinton's use of humour and laughter as a way to connect
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20 with voters, but instead linked it to improving her likability *through* her credibility.
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24 Another way the *Globe* portrayed Clinton as enhancing her credibility through self-
25
26 presentation was her attacks on Trump during the debates. Though some of this coverage focused
27
28 on her verbal messages, which is outside the parameters of this article, it is still relevant to note
29
30 this theme in regards to how those verbal expressions were described. In this case, though the
31
32 coverage did show some examples of what Gidengil and Everitt (2003) referred to as mediated
33
34 use of aggressive speech verbs for female politicians, Clinton was more often characterized
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36 positively; for example, she "pivoted" and "pounced" (Linskey and Viser, 2016) on Trump
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38 during one of the debates, emerging victorious.
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42 In another article, her strategic prowess was illustrated through her verbal expressions,
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44 where she "politely picked at" Trump with winking one-liners during a charity dinner (Andor
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46 Brodeur 2016). In this case, however, the presence of gendered mediation can be seen in the
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48 choice of 'picked at' as the verb expression and its connotation of hens (Tanya Romaniuk 2016).
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50 Even still, as a whole the coverage portrayed Clinton as a masterful politician who used
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3 nonverbal immediacy cues to her advantage and emphasized her communicative strengths to
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5 enhance her credibility and, by extension, her likability.
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8 The final element of this theme was the most prominent to emerge from the *Globe*. Much
9
10 of this coverage emphasized Clinton's composure, relaxed body position, and ability to maintain
11
12 her calm when confronted by Trump. She was described as "unflappable" (Vennoch 2016a),
13
14 "disciplined" (Joan Vennoch 2016b), "poised" (James Pindell 2016a) and, in one memorable
15
16 quote, that she "responded to [Trump's] blurts by calmly staring out at us in the audience, as if
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18 Jim on "The Office" were reacting to Michael Scott jamming two feet and both hands into his
19
20 mouth" (Burr 2016).
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24 In particular, the coverage appeared to link these cues and behaviours to a 'presidential'-
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26 like temperament, observing that Clinton was the candidate who conducted herself in a manner
27
28 that most aligned with typical expectations of a president. This is provided as evidence of her
29
30 credibility, also returning to the point that Clinton's likability is mainly accessible through that
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32 credibility. Interestingly, though this section of the coverage was uniformly positive, it again
33
34 offered a lens into gendered mediation; Clinton is praised for behaviours that are considered
35
36 presidential but also meet the norms expected of her as a woman (e.g., calm and composed, not
37
38 aggressive or angry). Clinton, therefore, is behaving appropriately as both a woman and a
39
40 presidential candidate and is subsequently rewarded.
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45 Looking at the *Boston Globe's* coverage, it appears that Clinton was perceived as gaining
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47 credibility through her use of immediacy behaviours (and subsequently increasing her likability
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49 by strengthening her credibility). However, her portrayal as a viable presidential candidate was
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51 still tempered by gender norms related to her self-presentation and behaviours, and how
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53 successful she was in embodying them. Overall, coverage of Clinton was fulsome and generally
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3 extremely supportive, which was in line with expectations for a newspaper in a typically
4 Democratic state. What was surprising, however, was that while multiple articles explored the
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6 Democratic state. What was surprising, however, was that while multiple articles explored the
7
8 double standards and hypocrisy confronting Clinton as a female politician, some of the coverage
9
10 did still give rise to subtler messages about how a woman in politics must behave.
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12 As previously discussed, the coverage also emphasized the link between likability and
13
14 credibility for female politicians in an interesting, if somewhat unexpected, way. In comparison
15
16 to earlier coverage where Clinton's perceived credibility was undermined by behaviours and
17
18 immediacy cues that typically increase likability (e.g., smiling, showing emotion, etc.), the *Globe*
19
20 articles illustrated how her likability was fuelled *by* her credibility. This deviation may have been
21
22 due to Trump, who was an abnormality himself in terms of traditional Republican candidates,
23
24 and who may have forced greater significance on Clinton's credibility due to his perceived lack
25
26 thereof. Finally, the coverage provided additional confirmation that Jamieson's (1995) concept of
27
28 the double bind – fuelled by enduring norms and stereotypes about women's self-presentation
29
30 and behaviour – is something that continues to challenge female politicians.
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35 **Theme 4: More Subtle Gendered Perceptions of Clinton**

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37 The first theme for the *Chronicle* coverage was the perception of Clinton as too 'nasty'
38
39 (i.e., unfeminine) to serve as president. Overall, the findings from this theme suggest that
40
41 Clinton's self-presentation and behaviours were positioned in the coverage as incompatible with
42
43 the presidency, impacting its assessment of her likability and credibility. Clinton was critiqued
44
45 for failing as a woman by acting unnatural or not adequately communal, or by appearing too
46
47 masculine in her aggression and other 'nasty' behaviours; ironically, however, she was also
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49 punished for being not masculine enough in her physical health. In this way, she was held to a
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51 higher standard than what is typically expected of her male counterparts, given that female
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3 politicians are presumed to be warmer, most positive, and more community-focused than men –
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5 more likable, in effect (Rudman and Fairchild 2004).
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8 Though Clinton’s physical health and stamina were a fairly significant element of the
9
10 *Globe*’s coverage, her perceived weaknesses appeared to be more plainly stated in the
11
12 *Chronicle*’s coverage, though this opinion was not presented by *Chronicle* writers themselves.
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14 For example, critics questioned whether Clinton was able to defend herself and noted that she
15
16 appeared “weak and reserved” in a debate (Dylan Baddour 2016), and photos and videos were
17
18 presented as evidence of her “failing health” (Carol Christian 2016). Like the *Globe*, this
19
20 coverage was linked to normative expectations of political leaders, who must appear strong (i.e.,
21
22 masculine) and viable (Falk 2010; Jamieson 1995; Jones 2016). By highlighting concerns about
23
24 Clinton’s health and physical appearance in this coverage, her critics attempted to undercut her
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26 credibility and remind voters of her illegitimacy as a presidential candidate given that she is a
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28 woman.
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33 In a similar vein, Clinton was also penalized for performing masculine behaviours during
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35 the campaign, in an illustration of the backlash effect where women are punished for acting in
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37 ways that fall outside feminine norms (Rudman and Fairchild 2004) and are therefore considered
38
39 ‘nasty’. Clinton, for example, was characterized by a local voter in one article as an
40
41 establishment politician who was no more than a “grumpy old white man with boobs and a
42
43 vagina” (Andrew Kragie 2016); other coverage observed her challenges in projecting personal
44
45 warmth during the debates (Kevin Diaz 2016). The *Chronicle* also cited Trump’s oft-repeated
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47 criticism that Clinton was a “nasty woman” (Kyrie O’Connor 2016; Mike Ward 2016), though
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49 the articles included counterpoints to and critiques of his comments.
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3 More provocatively, coverage within this theme also focused on Clinton's perceived
4 aggressive or inappropriate (i.e., 'nasty') behaviour. Negative descriptions of verbal expressions
5 were one of the most frequent categories to arise out of the *Chronicle* coverage, with Clinton's
6 speech being described as attacking, accusatory, sparring, interrupting, pushing, and shouting
7 almost as much as Trump. (Alternately, she was also accused of being too quiet during a debate,
8 in another illustration of Jamieson's double bind.) Though Trump was often criticized for the
9 same behaviour, there is an implicit assumption that Clinton should have known or done better
10 than her adversary, for whom the bar is already set low. This impacted both her credibility and
11 likability, further delegitimizing her candidacy.
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24 The final section of this theme advances the same thematic thread, highlighting Clinton's
25 failure to behave in an appropriately communal way. Like the *Globe*, importance was placed on
26 Clinton's ability to connect with voters and provide them with a perspective into her authentic
27 self. The *Chronicle* coverage highlighted Clinton's weaknesses in this regard, noting that she was
28 not as adept at connecting with crowds as her husband, Bill, and was not a natural campaigner or
29 speaker. Some articles represented her as mechanical or strained, while others perceived her as
30 calculated or inauthentic.
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40 Notwithstanding the potential accuracy of these assertions, it is interesting to consider
41 that all of these references are linked to the previously discussed expectations of warmth and
42 likability for women and female politicians in particular. Because Clinton is perceived as not
43 meeting the normative standard for women in terms of immediacy cues and interpersonal
44 communication and therefore given negative ratings on warmth, reflecting the often-repeated
45 'nasty' critique, she is criticized in the coverage (and penalized simply by having those
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3 deviations mentioned in a more understated form of gendered mediation, which subsequently
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5 undermines her likability).
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7 8 **Theme 5: Clinton's Credibility as a Prerequisite for her Likability** 9

10 The second and final theme for the *Chronicle* focused on a concept that first emerged in
11 the *Globe* coverage – Clinton's credibility as a prerequisite for her likability. Looking at the
12 coverage from this network, support for Clinton in the *Chronicle* appeared to be somewhat
13 conditional, or at the very least dependent on external factors. Though the findings from this
14 network are similar to those from the *Globe*, and though the majority of the *Chronicle*'s coverage
15 was fairly supportive of Clinton, it appears that a different Republican candidate could have
16 meant a very different metapragmatic discourse from the newspaper.
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26 The most prominent element to emerge from the *Chronicle* focused on Clinton's
27 temperament. While the references were more general in nature, the coverage still provides
28 insight into how Clinton's nonverbal and immediacy behaviours were interpreted by the
29 newspaper. As in the *Globe*, Clinton was depicted by the *Chronicle* as sincere, disciplined, calm,
30 and at ease, with a measured and steady self-presentation that helped to project a sense of control
31 and power in the debate setting. Especially in comparison to Trump, who is labelled as
32 "temperamentally unfit to be commander in chief" (*Houston Chronicle* 2016a), Clinton is
33 presented in the coverage as the candidate with the disposition to serve as president. Her
34 likability is supported by the credibility gained from her composed demeanour which, as
35 previously discussed, may be another indication of Clinton being rewarded for behaving
36 appropriately as a female politician.
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51 One interesting element of the *Chronicle* coverage that was not as common in the *Globe*
52 was clothing and physical appearance. The presence of clothing is more concrete in the
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3 *Chronicle*, where Clinton's outfit – Republican red – (Wei-Huan Chen 2016) and “energetic
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5 coif” of hair are both referenced (*Houston Chronicle* 2016d). In particular, one article described
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7 how Trump's ‘nasty woman’ quote was reframed by individuals online into sartorial choices,
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9 such as dressing as a nasty woman for Halloween, wearing a nasty woman shirt while voting, or
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11 buying a pantsuit. The same article also noted that some companies were leveraging this trend
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13 into consumables, by offering ‘nasty’ necklaces, trucker hats, and t-shirts (O'Connor 2016).
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15 Given the repeated criticism about Clinton's lack of connection with voters, it is intriguing that
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17 some seemed to forge a connection – however temporary or fleeting – through the ‘nasty
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19 woman’ clothing trend and her symbolic pantsuits, which are typically considered a feminine
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21 domain.
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27 Finally, the last element of the *Chronicle* theme examined the sometimes-grudging
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29 acceptance of Clinton as the best candidate for president. Though this theme was not directly
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31 linked to nonverbal immediacy cues, it was derived from codes including Clinton's lack of
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33 connection with receivers and references to her tense, awkward, or unnatural postures. This
34
35 theme was particularly relevant given the political context; though all four *Chronicle* editorials
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37 (*Houston Chronicle*, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d) were unequivocal in their endorsement of
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39 Clinton, other coverage from the newspaper tempered this support with suggestions that its
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41 revulsion with Trump had a far greater impact than any wholehearted desire to see Clinton take
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43 the Oval Office. The *Chronicle* appeared to determine that she was credible and that her (lack of)
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45 likability did not impede her viability as president. In this instance, Clinton's candidacy was
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47 sustained only on its more masculine attributes (i.e., her competence) while her feminine
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49 attributes like warmth were judged to be less crucial.
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3 In the *Houston Chronicle*'s coverage it appears that Clinton's diminished likability as a
4 woman, including her failings on some immediacy cues, was portrayed as a barrier to her
5 viability as a presidential candidate, and was bolstered only by her self-presentation of
6 credibility. As previously noted, the coverage was surprisingly and primarily supportive of
7 Clinton, though with some caveats. It also appeared to make a greater point of the perceived
8 similarities or equivalencies between both candidates, such as being historically disliked, voters
9 finding neither option appealing, and use of negative behaviours during the debates. Given the
10 newspaper's location and history, more critical coverage was anticipated; instead, coverage was
11 relatively positive, though it still presented similar issues as with the *Globe* in terms of gendered
12 mediation and examples of the double bind.
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26 Looking at both newspapers comparatively, overall, the *Chronicle* coverage was clearly
27 smaller in quantity than the *Globe*'s and therefore resulted in fewer themes. This may have been
28 due to a number of factors, including Ette's (2013) assertion that gendered mediation can render
29 women invisible, as well as a common thread amongst the *Chronicle*'s coverage that both
30 choices of candidate (Clinton and Trump) were unappealing (Baddour, 2016). With Clinton often
31 positioned as the lesser of two evils in the *Chronicle*, this grudging endorsement may have
32 impacted the level of attention she received in the newspaper, while the *Globe* was
33 comparatively more supportive in their coverage. It is also worth noting, however, that the *Globe*
34 in general appeared to produce content about the presidential race on a much greater scale
35 overall.
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49 In terms of common themes that emerged from coverage, both the *Globe* and the *Chronicle*
50 noted criticism of Clinton's inability to appear communal enough as a female politician, her
51 perceived 'inauthentic demeanour' (e.g., lack of warmth, robotic behaviour, over-preparation for
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3 debate appearances), challenges in connecting on a more personal level with voters, and the
4 specific expectations held of her as a woman in these areas. Tied closely to this, both papers
5 explored how Clinton's emotional displays (e.g., anger, coldness, excitement) were often
6 penalized or framed as inappropriate, impacting her credibility and likability. For example, in an
7 illustration of Jamieson's (1995) double bind, Clinton was criticized both for losing her cool and
8 for not showcasing enough passion and spontaneity. In addition, both papers discussed how the
9 appearance of stamina and good physical health (or lack thereof) was a critical component of
10 Clinton's claim at credibility as a presidential candidate. Finally, on a more positive note, both
11 the *Globe* and the *Chronicle* lauded Clinton for her even, calm and steady temperament during
12 the campaign, suggesting that her composure and 'presidential' behaviour reinforced her
13 credibility as a candidate, though shades of both the double bind and gendered mediation could
14 be applied to this potential rewarding of appropriate womanly conduct.

31 **Conclusion**

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33 It was anticipated that this investigation would uncover gendered coverage, where Clinton
34 would be framed in a way that left no space or possibility for success. However, it appears that
35 some space was indeed left for Clinton to succeed – both newspapers, in fact, surprisingly and
36 enthusiastically endorsed her for president – but only within the confines of the norms and
37 expectations available to her as a woman. For the *Globe*, while Clinton was perceived as gaining
38 credibility through her use of immediacy behaviours (and subsequently increasing her likability),
39 her portrayal as a viable presidential candidate was still tempered by gender norms related to her
40 self-presentation and behaviours, and how successful she was in embodying them. For the
41 *Chronicle*, Clinton's diminished likability as a woman, including her failings on some immediacy
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3 cues, was portrayed as a barrier to her viability as a presidential candidate, and was bolstered only
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5 by her self-presentation of credibility.
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8 These findings confirm that the theories put forward through the double bind and gendered
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10 mediation concepts to account for the challenges being faced by women both in media coverage
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12 and public life are alive and well, and that the 2016 election coverage echoed, to some degree, the
13
14 same problematic, gendered content that Clinton experienced in 2008. Though this iteration of
15
16 gendered election media coverage may not be as overt, Clinton continued to be treated as a
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18 candidate whose gender was central to how her credibility and likability were portrayed. Two
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20 outlets cannot be considered representative of U.S. newspaper coverage or even regionally based,
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22 Democratic- or Republican-leaning coverage; however, this article still provides an illustrative
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24 example of how media continue to approach Clinton from a gendered perspective, albeit an often
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26 well-intentioned one.
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31 It also supports the assertions put forward by previous literature on media coverage of
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33 female politicians, especially by traditionally Republican media. This would appear to indicate
34
35 that the media industry's foundational issues, as previously identified by Ette (2013), have not yet
36
37 been dismantled or altered in a meaningful way, at least in the realm of U.S. presidential campaign
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39 reporting, and that the gender norms and expectations that confront women in their day-to-day
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41 lives continue to be persistently legitimized and imbued with power by the media, even as the U.S.
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43 almost elected its first female president.
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