Gender Assumptions, Public Trust, and Media Framing:
The Impact of Media-Constructed Gender Performance on Public Trust in a Candidate

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Abstract

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This study examines how conflict between public assumptions and media framing of a political candidate's gender performance impacts public trust in the candidate, building upon prior research concluding that the Republican and the Democratic Parties are linked cognitively with ideas about gender, with people often associating the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics. This study operates under the theory that conflict between media representation and participant assumptions will lead to lower levels of trust in a candidate whose gender is framed as conflicting with the underlying gendered assumptions of their party. In an experiment, subjects read one of six news articles describing a hypothetical presidential candidate and answered a questionnaire to measure their trust in the candidate. The results indicate that participants have a higher level of trust in the feminine-framed candidate and a lower level of trust in the masculine-framed candidate – in comparison to the baseline of a gender-neutral framed candidate – in both the Democrat and the Republican condition. Further analysis of the results suggest that while participants assume all candidates possess certain masculine traits often associated with leadership, the presence of feminine traits may increase a candidate's perceived likeability, which in turn leads to the perception that the candidate has a higher degree of integrity, is more responsive to public concerns, and is ultimately more trustworthy. Additionally, the presence of masculine traits may threaten the candidate's perceived trustworthiness without the presence of feminine traits to increase the candidate's likeability. This study

expands the current conversation about media and gender to look beyond a candidate's sex and consider the media's role in constructing and reinforcing a candidate's gender performance. It also provides a foundation for future research about the media's power to shape public perception of candidates and, by extension, the electoral process.

Introduction:

Throughout history, gender has played an important role in the way that people understand themselves, their culture and the world. Even in today's increasingly media-dominated society, "as a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives" (Lorber 1994, p. 56). In the political realm, "citizens tend to pay only passing attention to politics, retain only minimal amounts of political information and, oftentimes, lack the ability to organize the limited amount of political information they do have" (Lawless 2004, p. 480). Voters often use shortcuts, or heuristics, to make judgments about a candidate. Gender, in particular, often serves as a heuristic that influences voting behavior (McDermott 1997). Today, media play a significant role in the construction of identities based on characteristics, like gender, and also shape the development of public opinion. In political campaigns, news media "identify for citizens important character traits and the merits on which to evaluate political candidates" (Adams 2011, p. 4). By constructing gender as a fundamental issue of identity, the media therefore perpetuates and reinforces gender as a heuristic for making sense of complex subjects like politics.

Once an exclusively male-dominated field, women have played an increasing role in American politics since the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteed them the right to vote in 1920. More than fifty years later, in 1974, women comprised an average of 5 percent of state legislators and members of the House of Representatives (Wolbrecht 2007). Today, almost one hundred years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, women comprise 24.2 percent of state legislators and 19.3 percent of Congress (Rutgers 2015). While the number of women elected to political office has slowly started to grow,

much existing research on gender and politics has focused on identifying inherent sexism that prevents female candidates from making larger gains (Carlin and Winfrey 2009; Kimberly 2011). These individual case studies often blame the challenges faced by female candidates on media framing, which has led many researchers to draw conclusions about sexist stereotypes in media coverage.

Despite widespread conclusions about a sexist media putting female candidates at a disadvantage, "a significant body of work demonstrates that women candidates are just as successful as similarly situated men" (Dolan 2007, p. 111). Dolan explains that in relation to male candidates, female candidates actually "raise the same amounts of money, get the same share of the vote, and face a public largely free of bias toward them on account of their sex" (p. 111). Rosenwasser and Seale (1988) also find little evidence "to support a sexism interpretation for explaining the scarcity of women in prestigious political offices" (p. 596). These conclusions suggest that the relationship between gender and politics may be more nuanced than the idea of an underlying sexism in American culture reinforced by media coverage.

As the gender divide in American politics continues to shrink, researchers have considered different ways of looking at the role that gender plays in politics and political elections. In his analysis of the gendering of political parties, Winter (2010) concludes that ideas about the Republican and the Democratic Parties are linked cognitively with ideas about gender, with people often associating the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics. Using Winter's study as a foundation, I analyze the influence of media framing on the construction of candidate gender in relation to their political party. Considering the media's influence on

audience interpretation of a candidate, the theory underlying this study assumed that media coverage presenting an over-masculinized frame for a Democratic candidate or an over-feminized frame for a Republican candidate would conflict with audiences' existing cognitive framework for understanding political parties and candidates. For the purpose of this study, I defined trust as the perception that the candidate is reliable and can be anticipated to act as expected. I assumed media coverage conflicting with audience assumptions about the gendering of the political parties would likely decrease the public's faith in the candidate to act as expected. As such, I theorized that conflict between media representation and audience assumptions would likely result in lower levels of audience trust for a candidate whose gender is framed as conflicting with the underlying gendered assumptions of their political party.

Taking this idea a step further, this study assumes that media framing of a candidate's gender as masculine or feminine may not necessarily correspond to their identity as male or female. Gender studies scholars have suggested that rather than an innate characteristic, gender is a performance reinforced through repetition (Butler 1999). Assuming that gender is in fact a social construction rather than a fixed characteristic, it appears the media have a unique ability to influence public perception of a candidate's gender performance through framing. "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient," Entman explains, "in such a way as to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993, p. 52). By framing a candidate in masculine or feminine terms, regardless of the candidate's true sex, media therefore have

the ability to shape the candidate's gender either in agreement with, or in conflict with, their political party.

Considering the constructed nature of gender, this study looks beyond the sex of political candidates to consider their media constructed gender performance in relation to the gendered performance expected by each political party. This closer consideration of masculinity and femininity as characteristics that can be performed by both male and female candidates and the way that the media frame these performances expands the current conversation about sexism in the media to look beyond candidates' sex and consider the media's role in constructing and reinforcing candidates' gendered characteristics.

Literature Review:

Gender Associations and Political Parties

This study builds upon research previously conducted by Winter (2010), which concluded, "during the past three decades, Americans have come to view the parties increasingly in gendered terms of masculinity and femininity" (p. 587). Winter identifies political parties as a major heuristic that voters use to facilitate political decisions, but suggests that voters' ideas about masculinity and femininity also shape political evaluations at a deeper level. Winter bases his theory on the concept of heteronormativity, the idea that people tend to naturally apply gender stereotypes to objects that do not actually possess gender. He further supports his theory by highlighting Bern's 1981 conclusion that "there appears to be no dichotomy in the human experience with as many entities assimilated to it as the distinction between male and female" (qtd. in Winter 2010, p. 589).

Winter tests "how often stereotypically masculine or feminine traits are among the reasons that respondents like or dislike each party," by considering responses to an open ended question about respondents' likes and dislikes about the Republican and the Democratic Party available in American National Election Studies (ANES) data for presidential years from 1972 through 2004 (p.596). Winter then borrows the gender categories laid out in the Personality Attributes Questionnaire developed by Helmreich, Spence, and Wilhelm (1981) to identify stereotypical male and female characteristics. Through his analysis, Winter finds "masculine traits appear much more frequently as reasons to like or dislike the Republicans, and feminine traits appear much more frequently as reasons to like or dislike the Democrats" (p.598).

Winter concludes "Americans have absorbed the gendered discourses surrounding the parties, and associate stereotypically masculine and feminine traits with the Republicans and the Democrats, respectively" (p. 603). He further concludes that politically knowledgeable voters are more likely to hold gendered impressions of the parties than voters with little political knowledge. While Winter does not acknowledge the media's role in structuring political knowledge, it is likely that this conclusion results from more politically knowledgeable voters gaining their knowledge through exposure to gendered media frames. While other factors such as voters' sex and political affiliations did impact the ratio of positive and negative ideas that voters' held about each party, they did not appear to impact their gendered associations.

The idea that "Republican candidates – male and female alike – might be judged against a baseline expectation that they are relatively masculine, and Democrats against a more feminine baseline," lays a foundation for future research about the ways that this

implicit gender context shapes broader political cognition and behavior in the United States. While beyond the scope of his study, Winter explains that his findings suggest "a candidate's party affiliation might influence voters' perceptions of his or her enactment of masculinity or femininity" (p. 609). Although Winter here suggests that gender is a performance rather than an inherent trait, he does not further explore this issue nor does he consider the impact that the intersection of a candidate's gender performance and their political party may have on public trust in the candidate. Winter also fails to consider that the public receives most of their information about a candidate through a media filter, so voters likely develop an understanding of a candidate's gender performance through media frames rather than through direct contact with the candidate. My study thus builds upon Winter's conclusions by considering how media framing of a candidate's gender performance in relation to the candidate's party affiliation impacts voter perception of the candidate as it relates to trust.

Queer Theory: Heteronormativity and Gender Performance

Winter's findings about the gendering of political parties supports the concept of heteronormativity, "a social regulatory framework that produces binary sex division, normalizes desires between men and women, and marginalizes other sexualities as different and deviant" (Gregory, Johnston, and Pratt 2009, p. 329). Researchers in the relatively new field of queer theory have suggested that heteronormativity is a norm that creates a social order of compulsory heterosexuality, which serves an exclusionary and regulatory function in American society (Rich 1980; Butler 1988). This heterosexual framework then serves as a heuristic that people use to make sense of a number of complex issues in the world.

Winter's conclusion supports the idea that the tendency to assign binary heterosexual gender roles extends beyond the sphere of personal relationships to the realm of politics, where the media, and, by extension, most Americans, associate the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics. Media frames that present a candidate's gender performance as congruent with the underlying associations of the candidate's political party could also be described as presenting the candidate within the accepted paradigm of compulsory heterosexuality, which, as a social regulatory framework, likely has implications for trust as well. The present research expands upon the idea of heteronormativity by considering whether these gendered assumptions serve an exclusionary and regulatory function in the American political system as well.

Rather than considering candidates' sex, the current study considers the relationship between political parties and candidates' gender performance as constructed and reinforced through media frames. Simone de Beauvoir first hinted at the idea of gender construction when she argued "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (1949, p. 283). More recently, scholars have expanded this concept to propose that identity should be considered fluid, with gender existing along a spectrum that differs from person to person. Lorber (1994), for example, suggests that gender is a constructed social institution that people learn and legitimize through religion, law, science, and society's entire set of values. Lorber does not recognize the media's role in gender construction but does suggest that gender is socially constructed through culture. This construction provides a structured framework for making sense of a world that assumes an inherent difference between men and women. If gender signals are missing or

ambiguous, Lorber suggests people become uncomfortable "until we have successfully placed the other person in a gender status; otherwise, we feel socially dislocated" (p. 54).

Judith Butler (1999) extends the idea of gender construction by suggesting that rather than an innate characteristic, gender is a performance reinforced through repetition. While sex is a fixed attribute that people are born with, Butler suggests that gender is simply a performance with the potential for greater fluidity than the categories of male and female allow. As such, she argues that a person's biological sex becomes "the site of dissonant and denaturalized performance that reveals the performative status of the nature itself" (p. 146). Butler defines gender performativity as a circular ritual in which people reproduce and act out existing gender codes based on social norms. Although Butler does not reference the media's role in shaping social norms, Iyengar's 1991 research on framing established that "stereotypical media coverage often strengthens stereotypes and helps define what society deems as appropriate and inappropriate behavior" (qtd. in Major and Coleman 2008, p. 318).

While acknowledging the influence of cultural norms on gender performance, Butler challenges traditional feminist scholars who argue that gender is simply a cultural interpretation of sex. Butler suggests instead that sex itself is a gendered category. "When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one" (p. 10). In this way, Butler suggests the possibility that the genders of masculinity and femininity can apply to individuals of either sex. The present research therefore builds upon the idea of gender fluidity under the assumption that the

media has the ability to construct a candidate as masculine or feminine regardless of the candidate's sex. In this way, my research looks beyond the idea of underlying media sexism to consider the impact that gendered media frames may have on the perceived trustworthiness of a candidate of either sex.

Like Lorber, Butler does not acknowledge the media's role in perpetuating gender codes or in constructing and reinforcing a public figure's gender performance. She does, however, suggest that gender performativity has a theatrical and linguistic dimension, critiquing what she calls a language of presumptive heterosexuality and asking, "how does language construct the categories of sex?" (p. ix). In acknowledging the power of language to construct gender, Butler sets the stage for the idea that the media may play a role in constructing and reinforcing the gender performance of the individuals they cover. As a fundamental component of media framing, language appears to be a powerful tool that can shape candidates' perceived gender performance and impact public trust in the candidate.

My research further explores the role of language in constructing and reinforcing gender performance through the media and applies queer theory to the intersecting realms of media and politics. Butler acknowledges the political implications of her theory, questioning, "what political possibilities are the consequences of a radical critique of the categories of identity?" (p. ix). Additionally, Butler argues that social acceptance decreases when an individual's gender performance conflicts with traditional gender norms. The present research extends this idea to consider whether the same level of discomfort that occurs when an individual's gender performance conflicts with traditional gender norms also occurs when media framing of a candidate's gender performance puts

their gender at odds with their political party. Ultimately, this study applies the gender theories proposed by Lorber and Butler to explore the media's role in constructing and reinforcing a political candidate's gender performance.

Media Effects - Framing:

Framing describes the way in which communication can influence public opinions, beliefs, and behaviors by highlighting certain aspects of a subject and omitting others. Entman (1993) suggests that media framing involves selection and salience, a process of "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to an audience" (p. 53). He further concludes that in order to make certain information more salient than others, "frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication" (p. 53). Upon further consideration of framing, Scheufele (1999) concludes, "the framing and presentation of events and news in the media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events." (p.107).

Entman identifies communicators, text, receivers, and culture as four factors that contribute to frame development. Communicators, such as journalists, contribute to framing when they make choices about what information to communicate based on their belief system. Although most journalists pride themselves on objectivity, they must constantly make choices as they interpret the reality of current events for the public. The pattern of choices that journalists make to discuss and describe an event, issue or individual evolves into an overall frame. Once a frame is established, the media present this frame to the public, which Entman explains is "manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information,

and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman 1993, p. 52).

Assuming that gender is a constructed trait, it appears that media can play a key role in constructing a political candidate's gender by highlighting certain aspects of the candidate's personality and omitting others. As receivers of media frames, audiences contribute to framing as they interpret messages and make conclusions. Culture, defined as "the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping," then helps people within a population to process these frames (p. 53). Considering Americans' tendency to associate the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics, my theory assumes that cultural association will influence the way in which individuals process and interpret the gender frames that the media promote about each candidate.

Previous research has also emphasized the importance of media framing of political candidates, specifically. "Only a small proportion of the electorate has the opportunity to meet candidates in person," Devitt (1998) explains, "so voters rely on news coverage – and other forms of mass media – in forming their opinions of those running for office" (p. 446). Kerbel, Sumaiya, and Ross (2000) further highlight the importance of character evaluation in presidential elections, but suggest that media coverage focusing on these personality frames can become problematic by minimizing audiences' ability to make informed choices. Devitt (1998) suggests the relevance of framing to gender construction as well, explaining "communication research suggests framing provides an appropriate theoretical framework for exploring differences in

coverage between female and male candidates" (p. 449). My study expands upon this theory by analyzing the effect of gender framing on public trust in a candidate, based on the relationship between the candidate's political party and perceived gender performance rather than their sex.

Media, Gender, and Politics:

Louden and Coleman (2008) stress the importance of a candidate's character traits, suggesting that voters judge candidates based on their perceived authenticity and character more so than their issue positions. Meeks (2012) further argues "character traits can be even more important evaluative criteria for voters than issues or political party affiliation" (p.181). This research suggests that a candidate's media-constructed gender performance and its associated stereotypes can therefore have major implications on public perception of a candidate by creating associations between the candidate and certain character traits and levels of authenticity, which likely have implications on trust as well.

Rather than considering Americans' unconscious cognitive connections between gender and party stereotypes, "most work on gender and political behavior has instead focused on the gender gap in partisan identification, vote, and public opinion; or on differences in how people react to male and female candidates" (Winter 2010, p. 588). Prior research focusing on the intersection of media, politics, and gender specifically has therefore largely centered on some aspect of media sexism, generally concluding that media coverage disadvantages female candidates (Kahn, 1992; Carlin and Winfrey, 2009; Adams, 2011). For example, Adams (2011) identifies an "inherent media bias and sexism

in its coverage of contemporary political figures" in her analysis of media coverage leading up to the 2008 presidential election (p. 20).

In another case study of the 2008 presidential campaign, Carlin and Winfrey (2009) conclude that Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were victims of sexism in media coverage, asserting that "the mainstream media finds it acceptable to be blatantly sexist and with few exceptions and suspensions of reporters, unapologetic" (p. 339). Specifically, Carlin and Winfrey conclude that negative media framing of what they call Clinton's masculine gender performance and Palin's feminine gender performance contributed to both candidates' downfall. While not acknowledged by Carlin and Winfrey, these findings also suggest that media framing of each candidate's gender performance conflicted with their political party. Although my research does not center around specific case studies, the media's gendered portrayal of Palin and Clinton in relation to public opinion polls about trust leading up to the 2008 campaign could provide for an interesting analysis of the relationship between gender framing, political party and public trust in the context of a real election.

While the present study does not consider stereotypes on the basis of a candidate's actual sex, I do not mean to discount the large volume of previous research of this nature as unimportant. Prior studies analyzing media coverage of different candidates based on their sex has provided and continues to provide valuable insight into the way that media cover elections in a world filled with an increasing number of female candidates. My study rather attempts to build upon existing research and expand the way in which the political community views gender in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of the way that gender may come into play at a deeper level during

political elections. As such, I look beyond the idea of a sexist media and consider how media framing of both male and female candidates' gender performance could potentially lead to differing levels of public trust in the candidates based on their political affiliation as either Republican or Democrat.

Danny Hayes (2011) also looks beyond media sexism to explore the intersection of gender and political party stereotypes in his content analysis of news coverage from the 2006 U.S. Senate elections. While he does not extend his findings to public trust in a political candidate, Hayes begins to explore the connection between gender, media and political parties by considering the news media's role in constructing a candidate's images. He disputes Dolan and Sanbonmatsu's (2009) argument that gender stereotypes, on the basis of a candidate's sex, have a greater influences on vote choice than the candidate's political party, and concludes that "party stereotypes are more powerful than gender stereotypes, and that assessments of candidate attributes can be affected by news coverage when candidates are portrayed in ways that challenge traditional partisan images" (Hayes 2011, p. 133).

In concluding that the application of gender stereotypes is limited by the salience of partisan stereotypes, however, Hayes does not consider the gender stereotypes that underlie the public's understanding of political parties. He ultimately fails to recognize that the party stereotypes he promotes are likely rooted in the same gendered stereotypes that he discounts. As a result, rather than assuming gender and partisanship to be two distinctly separate cues that voters use to form an opinion about a candidate, my research explores the point at which partisanship and gender intersect.

Although little research has considered the effect of candidates' media-constructed gender performance on voter trust, several researchers have acknowledged that candidates increasingly emphasize gender traits that may be incongruent with their sex. For example, Meeks (2012) argues, "while women and men do not occupy equivalent spaces, they have opportunities to incorporate both feminine and masculine aspects into their gendered identity" (p. 177). She supports this claim by referencing recent examples, such as Barack Obama incorporating feminine traits into his overall masculine identity by emphasizing his status as a compassionate parent alongside his charisma and confidence during his presidential campaigns. Although not acknowledged by Meeks, the feminine traits that Obama emphasized as a presidential candidate are congruent with the underlying feminine expectations of his Democratic affiliation.

Huddy, Leonie and Terkildsen (1993) echo Meeks' claim, pointing out that many women who had recently run for highly visible elected offices stressed typically masculine qualities such as aggressiveness, while male candidates placed more emphasis on typically feminine traits as they tried to appear sympathetic and accessible. As early as 1993, they acknowledged, "from even the most casual observation of recent political campaigns, it is clear that a candidate's gender is politically relevant, though not necessarily a harbinger of electoral success or defeat" (p. 120). Through their research, Huddy et al. (1993) find that female candidates can reverse gender-trait stereotypes by emphasizing typically masculine personality traits, leading them to concluded "the real struggle effaced by female candidates, then, is to convey successfully to voters that they possess masculine personality traits" (p. 142). Huddy et al.'s conclusions are based on the assumption that masculine personality traits are always more desirable in an elected

official, however, and neither they nor Meeks consider the relationship between gender and political party.

Additionally, a large body of previous research supports the idea that voters associate stereotypically masculine traits with political leaders and prefer these masculine traits in the political realm (Rosenwasser & Dean 1989; Huddy & Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004; Banwart 2010). Rossenwasser and Dean (1989) found that masculine descriptors were considered more important than feminine descriptors for all levels of political office, concluding, "it may behoove women to develop attributes traditionally considered 'masculine'" (p.83). Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) also concluded "typical 'male' qualities are considered crucial for higher office" (p. 518). Even in the post-September 11 era, Lawless (2004) concludes, "citizens prefer men's leadership traits and characteristics, deem men more competent at legislating around issues of national security and military crises, and contend that men are superior to women at addressing the new obstacles" (p. 479). Banwart (2010) further suggests that female political candidates face a double bind, because "to be successful, women must exhibit the traits that voters desire in a political officeholder, which typically are masculine, while still meeting stereotypical expectations of femininity" (p. 269).

Major, Hatley, and Coleman (2008) began to consider the relationship between news media and candidate gender in their study concluding that news media featured more positive mentions of candidates' experience with issues traditionally thought to be congruent with their sex. They argue that these results confirm "the media's reliance on stereotypes of male and female candidates, even when the evidence of their experience would lead us to expect the opposite" (p. 327). Meeks (2012) cites this research as well,

explaining how, "in creating a positive association between candidate gender and the gendered issues, the news media upheld gender congruency" (p. 180). The gender congruency highlighted by Major et al. as well as Meeks is based on the candidates' sex and political issues traditionally associated with each gender, however, and neither study considers whether this congruency extends to the candidates' political party. My study therefore builds upon prior research in realm of media, gender, and politics by looking beyond the idea of sexism and considering the impact that media portrayal of a candidate's gender in relation to their political party has on voter trust in the candidate.

Trust:

The concept of trust stands out as a fundamental component of this research exploring how media framing of a candidate's gender performance could potentially lead to differing levels of public trust in the candidate based on their political party. The majority of research about trust at the individual level has come from the field of marketing, with researchers looking at the relationship between consumers and service providers. The framework for individual trust established by marketing research can be extended to the realm of politics, however, using politicians as stand-ins for service providers and voters as the consumers who choose whether or not to use their services. Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002) define consumer trust as "the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver its promises" (p. 16). In the realm of politics, this would be the expectation held by voters that the politician can be relied upon to deliver their campaign promises.

One study that does measure trust in individual politicians is Merolla and Zahedzadeh's (2012) investigation of the effect of negative political ads on public trust in

a candidate. They acknowledge "the standard approach to measuring trust in political science is to directly ask subjects for their level of trust," but decide to adopt a behavioral measure of trust to minimize the risk of bias associated with attitudinal reports (p. 13). Merolla and Zahedzadeh conducted a variation of the trust game developed by Berg, Dickhaut and McCabe (1995), largely regarded as the standard laboratory experiment in economics for measuring trust, to test participants' trust in politicians. After the game, Merolla and Zahedzadeh asked participants to indicate their trust in the candidate on a five-point scale as well, using the attitudinal measure as a subjective measure of trust and the behavioral measurement as a quantifiable measure.

Teven (2008) employs trustworthiness as one component of his larger measurement of candidate credibility. Within a campaign, he defines trust as the level of trustworthiness that voters have in a candidate, borrowing Hovland, Janis, and Kelley's (1953) definition of trustworthiness as "the degree to which an audience perceives the assertions made by a communicator to be valid" (qtd. in Teven 2008, p. 386). He goes on to conclude that "if voters perceive that a candidate is not being truthful, that politician is regarded as less credible and citizens are less likely to vote for or re-elect that individual" (p. 386). In this way, Teven further validates candidate trust as a key component in the electoral process that is worth further study.

While few researchers have specifically considered the public's trust in individual political figures or candidates, a number of studies have considered the concept of overall political trust. Based on Barber (1983), Sherman, Schiffman and Thelen (2008) suggest that "trust is regarded as the belief that another person or entity is reliable – that is, the person or entity can be anticipated to act as expected" (p. 108). Similarly, Sherman et al.

argue, "political trust will increase or decrease depending on the relationship between citizens' expectations and their perceptions as to how well the government performs in order to meet those expectations" (p. 116). Their understanding of political trust encompasses trust as both a general and a specific construct, including citizens' trust of incumbents, office-holders, and political candidates.

Based on these definitions, a candidate whose gender is framed to conflict with the gendered assumptions of his or her political party would likely be perceived as unreliable as their character would appear to conflict with public expectations. In other words, if the public assumes that a Republican candidate will display masculine characteristics and a Democratic candidate will display feminine characteristics, media coverage that conflicts with these assumptions likely decreases the public's faith in the candidate to act as expected. This conflict between assumptions and perceived reality, as communicated by media frames, therefore has the potential to decrease public trust in a candidate when the candidate's gender is framed as conflicting with the gendered assumptions of their political party.

In this way, my study builds upon a large body of prior research in the fields of media, political science and gender studies. My theory and hypotheses extend conclusions from prior research about the gendering of political parties (Winter 2010) by applying elements of queer theory such as heteronormativity (Gregory et al. 2009) and gender performance (Lorber 1994; Butler 1999) to consider how media effects like framing (Entman 1993) impact public trust (Sherman et al. 2008) in individual political candidates. Figure 1 summarizes the dominant existing research that forms the basis for my theory.

Figure 1: Summary & Application of Existing Literature	
Political Science	The Republican and Democratic Parties are linked cognitively with ideas about gender, with people often associating the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics (Winter 2010). Political parties are a major heuristic that voters use to make political decisions, suggesting that voters' ideas about masculinity and femininity also shape political evaluations at a deeper level.
Queer Theory	Heteronormativity, the tendency to assign binary heterosexual gender roles to objects that do not actually possess gender, may explain the underlying gender associations of the political parties (Gregory et al. 2009). Also, rather than an innate characteristic, gender is a performance reinforced through repetition (Lorber 1994; Butler 1999). By framing a candidate in masculine or feminine terms, regardless of the candidate's true sex, media therefore have the ability to shape the candidate's gender either in agreement with, or in conflict with, their political party.
Media Effects	Media shape public opinion and play a significant role in the construction of identity. Framing, a theory of media effects, describes the way in which communication can influence public opinions, beliefs, and behaviors by highlighting certain aspects of a subject and omitting others (Entman 1993). Few people have the opportunity to meet presidential candidates in person, so media framing plays a major role in the way that most people come to understand political candidates.
Trust	Trust can be defined as the belief that an individual is reliable and can be anticipated to act as expected (Sherman et al. 2008). Based on this definition, a candidate whose gender is framed to conflict with the gendered assumptions of his or her political party would likely be perceived as unreliable as their character would appear to conflict with expectations that associate the Republican Party with masculine traits and the Democratic Party with feminine traits.

Theory and Hypotheses

Considering the powerful impact that trust can have on vote choice, I conducted an experiment to test whether and how media framing of a candidate's gender performance in relationship to the candidate's political party impacts participants' trust in the candidate. I applied Sherman et al.'s (2008) definition of political trust to the concept of candidate trust, defining voter trust in a political candidate as the belief that the candidate is reliable and can be anticipated to act as expected. Based on this definition of trust, I theorized that people would be more likely to trust a candidate when media

coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as congruent with the underlying gendered assumptions of the candidate's political party and less likely to trust a candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as conflicting with the underlying gendered assumptions of the candidate's party. For example, assuming a participant would expect a Republican candidate to exhibit masculine characteristics, exposure to a news article that uses a feminine media frame to describe the candidate would likely lead to the perception that the candidate is unreliable, and as a result, less trustworthy than a Republican candidate described through a masculine media frame.

This research is based on an understanding of sex and gender as described by researchers in the field of queer theory. It assumes that sex is divided into the subcategories of male and female, which are relatively fixed and based on biological facts. Gender, however, is understood as a constructed set of attributes that can be performed along a spectrum between masculinity and femininity. Considering the constructed nature of gender, media serve as a space in which a candidate's gender performance is constructed and reinforced. Due to the large volume of research already in existence on media representation of candidate sex, the present research considers candidate gender and assumes that the media can present any candidate through a more masculine or feminine frame, regardless of their sex.[1] For the purpose of this study, I regularly refer to candidate gender as gender performance to fully distinguish it from candidate sex and reinforce the concept of gender as a performance rather than an inherent trait.

[1] See Carlin and Winfrey (2009) for an explanation of how the media constructed gender and reinforced gender performance by framing Sarah Palin through a feminine frame and Hillary Clinton through a masculine frame during the 2008 election, despite the fact that both candidates were women.

Americans tend to receive the majority of their political information from the media, which frame the policies, events and people that they cover by highlighting certain aspects of a subject and omitting others. This study will specifically consider media framing as the process by which the media construct and reinforce a candidate's gender performance by highlighting certain traits and aspects of their personality while omitting others. Like Hayes (2008), this study will utilize prior research about gendered traits from sources such as the Personality Attributes Questionnaire (Helmreich et al. 1981), the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun 1965) and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem 1974) in order to establish a common vocabulary of words that the media may use to frame a candidate as masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral.

Additionally, this study assumes that the media ultimately controls and selects the frame through which audiences perceive a candidate's gender performance. In reality, however, the origins of frames are likely more complex, as the media may sometimes take framing cues from the candidate's gender performance promoted by their own campaign or by an opposing candidate's campaign. Indeed, much of a political campaign revolves around the struggle to control the narrative of the election by constructing a positive image of one candidate, and often, a negative image of their opponents. While mainstream journalists strive to be, by definition, objective, prior research suggests that they often construct stories based upon shared cultural myths and narratives (Kitch 2002; Lule 2002). The shared assumption that the Democratic Party is affiliated with feminine traits and the Republican Party is affiliated with masculine traits may lead journalists to subconsciously adopt a more feminized narrative when reporting on a Democratic candidate and a more masculinized narrative when reporting on a Republican candidate.

Although beyond the scope of this research, it is worth considering how a candidate's true sex influences framing decisions, especially when their sex conflicts with the underlying gendered assumptions of their political party.

Much prior research considering the origins of frames has been inconclusive, with Kenix (2011) asserting, "it is impossible to make any definitive claims as to whether media frames are based upon social and cultural narratives or whether these frames originated in the media" (p. 58). While I disagree that it is impossible to understand the origins of frames, this question is beyond the scope of the present study. Future research must consider where frames originate and how they spread to determine whether the media or candidates themselves have a higher degree of control over setting the dominant media-promoted gender-frame during an election cycle. Ultimately, the limitations of experimental conditions for my research allowed only for analysis of how gendered media frames impact a candidate's perceived trustworthiness under the assumption that these narratives are set by the media. While I acknowledge the potential risks in this assumption, the effects of gendered language on a candidate's perceived trustworthiness that this experiment reveals would likely exist regardless of where the frame originated.

Finally, this research is based on the assumption that ideas about the Republican and the Democratic Parties are linked cognitively with ideas about gender, with people often associating the Republican Party with masculine characteristics and the Democratic Party with feminine characteristics (Winter 2010). Considering's the media's influence on audience interpretation of a candidate, I theorized that media coverage presenting an over-masculinized frame for a Democratic candidate or an over-feminized frame for a Republican candidate would likely conflict with participants' existing cognitive

framework, based in the concept of heteronormativity, for understanding political parties and candidates. I further theorized that this conflict between media representation and participant assumptions would likely lower participants' trust in a candidate whose gender performance is framed as conflicting with the underlying gendered assumptions of the candidate's political party by decreasing the degree to which they can be anticipated to act as expected. Additionally, I assumed participants' mean level of trust in the gender-neutral framed candidate would likely fall between their mean level of trust in the masculine-framed candidate and the feminine-framed candidate regardless of the candidate's political party, because the gender-neutral frame should not directly support or contradict the gendered expectations of either party. As such, I chose to test the following three hypotheses in this experiment:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Participants will have higher levels of trust in a Democrat candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as feminine, rather than masculine.
>
> **Hypothesis 2:** Participants will have higher levels of trust in a Republican candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as masculine, rather than feminine.
>
> **Hypothesis 3:** Participants' level of trust in the gender-neutral framed candidate will fall between their level of trust in the feminine-framed candidate and their level of trust in the masculine-framed candidate, in both the Republican and the Democratic conditions.

Method:

Overview

Participants recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform participated in an online experiment in which they read one of six constructed news articles and then

answered a questionnaire.[2] The sample included 365 total participants recruited from all over the United States. Approximately 60 participants read each news article, each of which described a hypothetical candidate entering the primary race in anticipation of the 2016 presidential election. The articles were constructed to simulate media framing of a candidate's gender performance, with gendered or gender-neutral adjectives and the candidate's political party the only variation between each article. The articles did not state the candidate's actual sex, ensuring that any gender assumptions about the candidate that participants' developed resulted from the gendered adjectives alone.

The four treatment articles described a masculine-framed Republican candidate, a masculine-framed Democratic candidate, a feminine-framed Republican candidate and a feminine-framed Democratic candidate, respectively. The two control articles described a Republican and Democratic candidate, respectively, and replaced the gendered adjectives with gender-neutral adjectives. Qualtrics, the survey-building software used to administer the experiment, randomly selected one of the six articles to show to each participant. The questionnaire that participants completed after reading the article measured participants' trust in the candidate. In this way, the experiment assumed media framing of a candidate's gender performance and party membership as the independent variable and public trust in the candidate as the dependent variable.

As with all experiments, I acknowledge the existence of inherent limitations in my research design. External validity stands out as the largest limitation, as a controlled experimental condition in which participants receive a single news article about a candidate does not mirror the volume and variety of media coverage that most individuals

[2] See Appendix 2 for the full Questionnaire that participants completed after reading one of the news articles.

are exposed to throughout an election cycle. In reality, media coverage of candidates does not exist in a vacuum, so voters have generally been exposed to information about a candidate numerous times and in numerous ways before they cast their vote. Additionally, voters usually receive competing information about other candidates that allow them to compare each candidate against the alternatives in constructing their opinions. My research design attempts to control for this slightly by exposing participants to the constructed media frame on their own computer or tablet, but recognizes the ongoing existence of external validity challenges in any experiment involving simulated rather than real world conditions.

Despite these limitations to external validity, an experiment stood out as the best method to test for a causal relationship between media framing of a candidate's gender performance, political party, and public trust. The experiment allowed for high internal validity by permitting a high degree of control to ensure that factors other than media framing of a candidate's gender performance in relation to their political party did not influence individuals' trust in the candidate. Although conducting the experiment in a laboratory environment would have allowed for more control over experimental conditions, conducting the experiment online likely resulted in a diverse pool of participants that more closely mirrors the diversity of the voting public throughout the United States than a local sample would have allowed—augmenting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, allowing participants to read the news article online on their personal computers or tablets in their own home helped to increase the experiment's external validity as it simulated the way that many voters receive media frames about candidates during the course of a real election cycle.

Constructing Media Frames of a Candidate's Gender Performance:

To simulate media framing of a candidate's gender performance, I developed a news article template that I manipulated to simulate media representation of a candidate's gender performance as masculine, feminine or gender-neutral.[3] I created six unique news articles from this template, two control articles and four treatment articles, with gendered adjectives and candidate political party as the only variance between news articles.[4] Figure 2 displays the varied components in each of the six news articles.

Figure 2: Experimental Groups

Group	Media Framed News Article	Political Party
Control 1	Gender Neutral	Republican
Control 2	Gender Neutral	Democrat
Treatment 1	Masculine Gender Performance	Republican
Treatment 2	Masculine Gender Performance	Democrat
Treatment 3	Feminine Gender Performance	Republican
Treatment 4	Feminine Gender Performance	Democrat

Transcripts from current primary election media coverage informed the construction of the article template to ensure that the articles participants read in the experiment did not differ in any significant way from typical media coverage of current candidates during the presidential primary.

[3] See Appendix 1 for the template of the news articles that participants read.

[4] In order to increase the internal validity of the results, the framed news articles did not highlight different political issues in conjunction with the candidates so that the feminine framed article mentioned stereotypically feminine political issues and the masculine framed article mentioned stereotypically masculine political issues. While many researchers have found strong gender connotations with certain political issues, varying the issues mentioned in each article opened the possibility that issue-based rather than gender-based opinions would influence the results. Traditionally, stereotypically feminine issues include health care, education, women's rights, environmental issues, and social welfare (Major & Coleman, 2008; Meeks, 2012; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Herrnson, Lay & Stokes, 2003). Masculine issues traditionally include military and defense, crime, the economy, and foreign policy (Major & Coleman, 2008; Meeks, 2012; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Herrnson, Lay & Stokes, 2003). Although few researchers have identified gender-neutral political issues directly, Warren (2002) identifies business issues, with no particular relevance to any gender-based constituency, as relatively gender-neutral. While I chose not to vary the political issues mentioned in each article, this existing research on gender stereotypes associated with certain political issues did inform the construction of the articles in that the three issues mentioned in each article included one stereotypically masculine issue, one stereotypically feminine issue, and one gender-neutral issue.

The news articles I constructed as instruments for this experiment each explained that a candidate, identified as "Senator Templin," had announced their presidential bid in the 2016 primary campaign for either the Republican or the Democratic nomination. I conducted the experiment during the early stages of the 2016 primary season, lending external validity to an article about a candidate announcing a primary campaign. In addition to well-known candidates and assumed nominees, several unknowns often launch campaigns during the early primary season. As such, participants could have easily assumed Senator Templin to be a real politician, or a pseudonym for a real politician, who was seriously considering a primary run in 2016. Additionally, as individuals living in the United States, participants had likely already encountered early 2016 primary coverage in the media, so an article about a new primary candidate would have appeared consistent with recent media coverage. All of these factors together heightened Senator Templin's credibility and increased the articles' external validity.

The articles positioned Senator Templin as a presidential candidate rather than a candidate for a lesser office to ensure that all participants could assume that they may one day have the opportunity to vote for Templin. With participants recruited from all over the country, it seemed that a participant living in California, for example, would be less careful in considering their trust for a gubernatorial or a congressional candidate from Maine than they would for a U.S. presidential candidate. A U.S. President has much wider jurisdiction and more impact on Americans' everyday lives than most specific state senators or representatives, so participants likely considered their trust for Senator Templin more carefully knowing that the Senator could one day become the President. Additionally, a recent survey indicated that Americans' overall confidence in Congress is

currently only 7 percent, a historic low, while Americans' confidence in the presidency is 29 percent (Riffkin, 2014). To prevent an overall lack of trust in Congress from influencing participants' trust in the candidate, I therefore chose to position Senator Templin as a presidential candidate rather than a congressional candidate.

To simplify the treatment groups, I chose not to vary the candidate's actual sex in the articles. The articles made no mention of the candidate's true sex to ensure that participants' based their opinions of the candidate only on the media's construction of the candidate's gender performance rather than the candidate's true sex. In a real election, however, voters are aware of candidates' sex, and unlike the constructed news articles used in the experiment; media coverage does not omit pronouns. As a result, further research will be necessary to consider the impact of a candidate's actual sex on voter trust to determine whether media framing of the candidate's gender performance or a candidate's true sex in relation to their political party has a more significant impact on voter trust.

Additionally, due to resource constraints, this study fully considered only the effect of gender framing in relationship to political party and did not account for larger party effects. To account for potential party effects, the experiment would have needed three additional control groups for a total of nine conditions. The additional control groups would have included a masculine-framed article with no party specifically mentioned, a feminine-framed article with no party specifically mentioned, and a gender-neutral article with no party specifically mentioned. By omitting these categories, I cannot completely rule out the possibility that the candidate's political affiliation alone, rather than their media framed gender in relation to their political party, impacted voter

trust. This experiment is a valuable first step in considering the potential impact on voter trust that occurs when gender framing conflicts with gendered party stereotypes, but future research will need to build upon these findings by further emphasizing the party effect to ensure that gender stereotypes rather than party stereotypes is the factor with a true impact on voter trust.

I created the masculine and feminine gender performance frames by referencing the frameworks for masculinity and femininity identified in previous studies. The Personality Attributes Questionnaire, or PAQ, (Spence et al. 1974), revised PAQ (Helmreich et al. 1981) and Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun 1965) largely formed the basis for the gendered traits included in each article. I also considered the adjectives included in the gendered paragraphs that Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) and Hayes (2011) constructed to analyze gender-linked traits while choosing the traits to include in each gendered frame for my study. Figure 3 displays the specific

Figure 3: Gendered Adjectives
(where applicable, favorability scores are in parentheses)

Masculine	**Feminine**	**Neutral**
Positive Adjectives/Traits		
Active (629)	Patient (630)	Tactful
Engaged	Generous	Helpful
Intelligence	Trustworthiness	Sincerity
Tough	Compassionate	Truthful
Independent (612)	Pleasant (619)	Adaptable
Ambitious (599)	Sociable (599)	Friendly
Industrious (624)	Understanding (638)	Likeable
Confident (601)	Sympathetic (603)	Theatrical
Skills		
Administrative Skills	People Skills	Skills
Negative Adjectives/Traits		
Competitive	Excitable	Inefficient
Stubborn	High-strung	Conceited
Opportunistic	Indecisive	Unsystematic

gendered adjectives inserted into the constructed article for each gender-framed condition.[5]

Spence et al. designed the PAQ to measure the degree to which a person can be classified according to masculine or feminine adjectives. The PAQ identifies a total of 18 traits commonly associated with women, 23 traits commonly associated with men, and 13 androgynous traits commonly associated with both genders equally. Most researchers using the PAQ have ignored the androgyny subscale, but largely reference a short version of the PAQ that includes eight adjectives that reflect high masculinity and eight adjectives that reflect high femininity (Free University of Berlin; Beere 1990). On this short PAQ, masculine descriptions include *independent, active, competitive, can make decisions easily, never gives up easily, self-confident, superior,* and *stands up well under pressure*. Feminine descriptions include *emotional, able to devote self completely to others, gentle, helpful to others, kind, aware of feelings of others, understanding of others,* and *warm in relations with others*. (Spence et al. 1974).

The adjectives on the short PAQ are all positive, but the revised PAQ developed by Helmreich et al. in 1981 and used by Hayes (2011) includes both positive and negative gendered traits. Based on this scheme for identifying both negative and positive stereotypically gendered terms, feminine traits include: *compassionate, caring, patient, generous, respectful, weak, weak leader, passive, indecisive, incompetent* and *unintelligent*. Masculine traits include: *strong leader, tough, ambitions, decisive, independent, intelligent, competent, determined, confident, energetic, engaged, power*

[5] It is important to remember that the adjectives used in the female, male, and gender-neutral framed news articles are all based on traditional gender stereotypes. While the traits classified as "feminine" and "masculine" are not necessarily accurate for all or even most men and women in reality, they were chosen based on previous research about traditional gender stereotypes and associations held by the American public.

hungry, not compassionate, uncaring, and *stubborn* (Helmreich, et al. 1981). To simulate media framing of candidate gender performance, I pulled masculine adjectives for the masculine framed article and feminine adjectives for the feminine framed article from both the PAQ and the revised PAQ.

Additionally, I also pulled adjectives from Gough and Heilbrun's (1965) Adjective Check List (ACL) to construct the framed masculine and feminine news articles. Previous research has identified stereotypically masculine and feminine adjectives from this list through experiments in which subjects identified which of the 300 psychological traits they thought were generally descriptive of men and which of the traits they thought were generally descriptive of women (Williams and Bennett 1975; Williams and Best 1977). In one experiment, Williams and Bennett (1975) found 33 male adjectives and 30 female adjectives on which at least 75 percent of both sexes agreed. Based upon this study, they concluded that the ACL is a promising method for defining and studying sex stereotypes. In choosing the gendered adjectives for the candidate news articles, I gave preference to traits identified as masculine or feminine on both the PAQ and the ACL.

In a later experiment, Williams and Best (1977) re-examined the ACL and identified 48 stereotypically female adjectives and 42 stereotypically male adjectives. In addition to identifying adjectives with strong gender associations, Williams and Best (1977) also gave each adjective a favorability score based on whether subjects rated the adjective as *quite unfavorable*, *somewhat unfavorable*, *neutral*, *somewhat favorable*, or *quite favorable*. Where possible, I attempted to interchange masculine and feminine adjectives in the constructed news articles with similar favorability scores, as identified by Williams and Best. This ensured that interchanged words had similar valence. For example, the

word “ambitious” in the masculine framed article is replaced with the word “sociable” in the feminine framed article. In Williams and Best’s study, both words had a high favorability rating of 599, suggesting that the words have similar valence.

A potential shortcoming of referencing the favorability scores identified by Williams and Best (1977) is that their study considered favorability of each trait in general and not specifically as it applied to political candidates. It is possible that the traits that people consider more or less favorable for a presidential candidate may be different than those that they consider more or less favorable in general. Additionally, Williams and Best did not consider gender-neutral adjectives, so there was no empirical way to ensure the gender-neutral adjectives included in the articles had the same valence as their gendered counterparts. Although beyond the scope of this study, researchers who further investigate gender framing should pre-test each of the gendered adjectives prior to constructing the media-framed news articles to ensure that each interchanged set of masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral adjectives have similar valence.

To write the gender-neutral control news articles, I pulled adjectives from the Bem Sex-Role Inventory, or the BSRI (Bem 1974). Similar to the PAQ, the BSRI identifies masculine traits, feminine traits, and gender-neutral traits. The masculine and feminine traits identified by Bem form the basis of the PAQ, but Bem’s original, robust list of androgynous traits provides a wider selection from which to draw gender-neutral descriptors. These gender-neutral traits include *adaptable, conceited, conscientious, conventional, friendly, happy, helpful, inefficient, jealous, likeable, moody, reliable, secretive, sincere, solemn, tactful, theatrical, truthful, unpredictable,* and *unsystematic*

(Bem 1974). Adjectives from this list replaced the gendered adjectives used in the treatment articles in the gender-neutral articles.[6]

Although also beyond the scope of this study, I developed the three gender frames for the article template with the realization of potential limitations in using adjectives identified by the ACL (1977), PAQ (1974), short PAQ (1981) and BSRI (1974). The largest problem with using these lists of adjectives commonly associated with gender stereotypes to construct gendered media frames in 2015 is that each list was identified in studies measuring male and female stereotypes 30 to 40 years ago. It is possible and indeed likely that the widely held stereotypes and corresponding adjectives associated with masculinity and femininity have changed in the time since these studies were conducted, although Banwart (2010) did suggest that Americans largely do continue to generate traditional gender trait stereotypes in their evaluation of female candidates. Aside from Banwart, few twenty-first century researchers have revisited the underlying traits and adjectives associated with gender stereotypes, highlighting a need for updated research on gender stereotypes to identify adjectives and traits that correspond with Americans' conception of male and female today. Because updated research on gender stereotypes is largely unavailable, however, most other modern researchers considering gender stereotypes have defaulted to similar studies of gender stereotypes from the 1970s and 1980s as well.

[6] The list of gender-neutral adjectives identified in the BRSI was much more limited than the robust list of gendered adjectives pulled from the PAQ and ACL. The limited number of gender-neutral descriptors to choose from in some cases therefore limited the degree to which I could control for valence between interchanged traits in each instance of the feminine, masculine, and gender-neutral traits.

Sample

I recruited participants for this experiment through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform, a crowdsourcing internet marketplace that connects requesters with MTurk workers who select Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) to complete for specified monetary compensation. I selected MTurk as the best way to recruit participants in part because this research has the potential to be generalized to the entire American voting public. MTurk allows for the recruitment of a broad sample because workers can access the experiment digitally from anywhere in the United States. An online experiment that recruited participants through MTurk therefore resulted in a diverse sample likely more representative of the American public than the sample that would have been compiled for an experiment conducted in a local laboratory.

The sample included about 60 participants for each of the six experimental conditions, resulting in a total sample size of 365. Figure 4 displays the exact breakdown of participants for each condition. Participants included American adults aged 18 and older. There was no significant difference in partisan distribution or ideology among the six groups. The ages among participants in each group were similar as well, with the only statistically significant difference being that participants who read the feminine-framed Democratic article skewed slightly older than participants who read the other five articles. The participants exposed to the other five

Figure 4: Breakdown of Sample

Party	Gender Frame	Sample Size
Republican	Masculine	n=58
	Gender-Neutral	n=61
	Feminine	n=62
Democrat	Masculine	n=62
	Gender-Neutral	n=63
	Feminine	n=59
	TOTAL:	n=365

conditions skewed about 7 percent younger than participants exposed to the feminine-framed Democratic condition, which although statistically significant, is a reasonably small substantive difference. In terms of gender, the only significant difference between groups is that the group of participants who read the gender-neutral framed Democratic article included 18 percent more men than the other five groups. To account for this difference, I ran additional tests using an OLS model controlling for the sex of participants, but this did not result in a single case in which controlling for the sex of participants changed the results of the primary tests.

To recruit participants through MTurk, I developed a survey link HIT and posted it on the MTurk website. After purchasing prepaid HITs on an MTurk Requester account and launching the HIT, I posted the experiment on the MTurk "Available HITs" webpage where workers can find HITs that they are eligible to complete. MTurk allows researchers to specify a limited number of Worker requirements, so Workers for this experiment were limited to individuals accessing the HIT from within the United States. There is no way to guarantee that all participants were U.S. citizens, but making the HIT visible only to those accessing it from within the United States increased the likelihood that participants were American, and therefore eligible to vote in the U.S., or at least somewhat familiar with American culture and politics. Additionally, I required workers to have a 95% HIT approval rate in order to view and participate in the experiment. This qualification helped to maintain quality control and increased the likelihood of valid results. MTurk keeps track of each worker's account statistics and attributes over time, so mandating a 95% HIT approval rate means that the work of each worker who completed

the experiment had been approved by at least 95% of other requesters for whom they had completed HITs.

Experimental Design

While MTurk can administer basic surveys, the needs of this experiment were more complex than the MTurk server would allow. Workers who clicked on the HIT were therefore directed to an external website hosted by the research software platform Qualtrics, where those who consented participated in the experiment. I decided to build the experiment on Qualtrics to allow for the randomization of the news article displayed to each participant, which would not have been possible in a survey directly embedded into MTurk. Despite the recognition that using two different websites to collect data has the potential for data collection error, the needs of the present experiment required both MTurk, to recruit and reward a large and diverse group of participants, and Qualtrics, to build and administer the experiment.

To minimize the potential for data collection error, I required workers to enter a unique survey completion code, provided at the end of the Qualtrics survey, to verify their participation in order to be compensated through MTurk. Qualtrics' forced validation feature prevented participants from skipping questions in the experiment by prohibiting them from answering any questions until they had submitted answers to all previous questions. Qualtrics' "prevent ballot box stuffing" feature as well as the MTurk feature that limits workers to one attempt per HIT also prevented any single participant from participating in the experiment more than once. These safeguards minimized the risk of data collection error in conducting the experiment through both MTurk and Qualtrics.

Workers who clicked on the Qualtrics link to participate in the experiment first viewed an informed consent screen, where they indicated their consent to participate in the experiment in order to proceed. After acknowledging their consent, participants viewed an instructional screen asking them to carefully read an article recently published in *The Washington Post* that would be displayed on the next page. Qualtrics then randomly selected one of the six constructed news articles to display, satisfying the condition of random assignment. The six potential articles included the four treatment articles and two control articles described above, all of which described Candidate Templin to simulate media framing of the candidate's gender performance.

The four treatment articles used adjectives to frame the candidate's gender as either masculine or feminine. The two control or gender-neutral articles, one labeling the candidate as a Republican and the other labeling the candidate as a Democrat, replaced the masculine or feminine adjectives used in the treatment articles with gender-neutral adjectives that are unlikely to evoke a media frame of the candidate's gender performance.[7] The inclusion of control groups provided a baseline from which to test whether participants' trust in the candidate is influenced more by their trust of politicians or the government, in general, or based on the relationship between individual candidates' political parties and media-constructed gender performance.

After reading their randomly assigned news article, participants clicked on an arrow to view a new screen where they answered five questions designed to measure their trust in the candidate. The following two questions provided a manipulation check to verify the internal validity of the experiment and allowed for a more nuanced analysis of the underlying character traits that may influence a candidate's perceived trustworthiness.

[7] Refer back to Figure 3 for a full list of adjectives used for each gender frame.

The first question helped to verify the experiment's internal validity by testing whether participants noticed the treatment. Participants were asked to select any adjectives that they felt describe Senator Templin from a list that included all 33 masculine, feminine and gender-neutral adjectives from each framed condition. I generated the initial list of adjectives with an online randomizer so that the masculine, feminine and gender-neutral adjectives were intermixed and displayed in a randomized order. The choice randomization feature on Qualtrics further randomized the order of the 33 adjectives each time they were displayed.

The second manipulation check question asked participants to identify whether they thought the candidate they had just read about was male or female. I included this question to test whether participants would interpret the media frames as applicable to candidates of either sex or whether they would draw a connection between the feminine-framed article and the female sex as well as between the masculine-framed article and the male sex. While the news articles did not expressly mention the sex of the candidate, I assumed that participants would likely assign a gender to the candidate as they read the article based on the information it contained. This question tested the internal validity of the news articles by testing to see whether the gender participants subconsciously assigned to Senator Templin was directly related to the gendered framing used in the article that they read.

Strong correlation between the feminine media frame and the perception that the candidate is a woman as well as the masculine media frame and the perception that the candidate is a man could suggest that any effects in terms of trust could be the result the candidate's perceived sex rather than the mediated gender frame. This experiment does

not consider candidate sex as a variable, so asking participants to identify the candidate's perceived sex allowed me to rule out a gender effect rather than a gender-framing effect. While beyond the scope of my experiment, this again highlights the need for further research to consider the impact of a candidate's actual sex in relation to the candidate's media-framed gender performance and political party, as full or partial agreement or conflict between all three aspects would likely have an effect on voter trust.

Finally, participants provided demographic information about themselves, including their own sex, their political ideology, the political party with which they are registered to vote, the political party they feel best represents their beliefs, and their age range. The questionnaire asked for this information last to ensure that participants' responses to these questions would not prime them to answer questions designed to measure trustworthiness in a biased way. For example, since the news articles stated the candidate's political affiliation, individuals may have based their level of trust in the candidate on whether the candidate's party aligns with their own political beliefs rather than the relationship between media framing of a candidate's gender performance and the candidate's political party if they had first been primed to consider their own affiliation. Collecting this demographic information from participants allowed for high internal validity by controlling for these potential confounding variables to ensure that the questionnaire truly measured the effect of media representation of a candidate's gender performance on public trust in the candidate rather than another outstanding factor.

The final page in the experiment debriefed participants and provided them with a unique survey completion code that they could enter on the MTurk web platform to verify that they had completed the HIT. Before verifying payment, I crosschecked the

codes entered on the MTurk website with those assigned to each completed experiment on Qualtrics to confirm that each worker who entered a code had in fact completed the experiment. Each worker who completed the experiment and entered their unique code in the appropriate box on the MTurk platform received $1.00 for their participation, a figure generally considered fair for MTurk workers.[8] Participants were compensated directly through the MTurk platform, with MTurk extracting $1.00 from the pre-paid account for each participant and depositing that $1.00 into the participants' requester account.

Measuring and Calculating Trust

Like Merolla and Zahedzadeh (2012), I chose to use two different measures of trust to gain a more nuanced understanding of the impact of gender framing on participants' trust in the candidate. The first, attitudinal measure simply asked participants to rate their degree of trust in the candidate on a scale of zero, indicating no trust, to ten, indicating extreme trust. I then recoded responses on a scale of zero to one, at integrals of 0.1. As such, one was the highest possible score, indicating extreme trust, and zero was the lowest possible score, indicating no trust. I chose to include this basic method of measuring trust as this method is the most common method of measuring trust in political science research (Sherman et al. 2008; Merolla and Zahedzadeh 2012).

An additive measure of trust, calculated based on participants' responses to four additional questions, served as a secondary measure of trust. This additive measure of trust is a variation of the measure of consumer trust developed by Sirdeshmukh et al.

[8] While many HITs reward workers only $0.05 or less, the general rule of thumb for fair payment on MTurk is $0.10 per minute spent completing a HIT. I estimated that reading the news article and completing the questionnaire would take each worker no more than 10 minutes, so each worker received $1.00 for their participation in accordance with the $0.10 per minute rate. Questionnaire completion time recorded by MTurk confirmed that participants, on average, were able to complete the task within 10 minutes, with the average total experiment completion time estimated at 7 minutes and 62 seconds per participant.

(2002), and asked participants to indicate the degree to which they felt the candidate was dependable, competent, of high integrity, and responsive to public concerns. Sirdeshmukh et al. conducted focus groups and personal interviews to develop their four-question measure of trust focusing in their study on consumer trust in a store. I adapted the resulting additive measure of trust to apply it to the realm of politics by substituting voters for consumers and the candidate for the store. The additive measure of trust provided a secondary and more nuanced picture of participant trust in the candidate, and allowed for further analysis of the individual components that participants' likely weighed when calculating the degree to which they trusted the candidate.

To create the additive measure of trust, participants indicated the degree to which they felt the candidate was dependable, competent, of high integrity, and responsive to public concerns on a five-point scale. For example, the first question asked participants to complete the phrase *I feel that the candidate is* with one of five multiple-choice options; *very dependable, dependable*, *neutral*, *undependable* or *very undependable*. The following three questions asked participants to do the same in regards to the candidate's competence (very competent-very incompetent), level of integrity (of very high integrity-of very low integrity) and responsiveness (very responsive to public concerns-very unresponsive to public concerns). I then coded responses on a scale of zero to one, at intervals of 0.25. To calculate the additive measure of trust, I averaged responses to the four questions together, so that four, the highest possible score, indicated the highest level of trust, and zero, the lowest possible score, indicated the lowest degree of trust.

I analyzed differences between participants' mean trust in the candidate in each condition by conducting *t*-tests comparing participants' mean trust in the candidate in the

masculine-framed and the feminine-framed condition. I conducted two *t*-tests for each measure of trustworthiness, one to compare differences in perceived trustworthiness between participants who read the Democratic masculine-framed article and those who read the Democratic feminine-framed article, and a second test to compare differences in perceived trustworthiness between participants who read the Republican masculine-framed article and those who read the Republican feminine-framed article. I also used an OLS regression to test for differences between perceptions of trust among participants who were exposed to each of the gendered conditions compared to a baseline of those in the control group, who were exposed to the gender-neutral condition, for both the Republican and the Democrat condition.

Results

Results of a *t*-test comparing the average degree of trust in the Democratic candidate indicated by participants exposed to the feminine-framed condition with the average degree of trust indicated by participants exposed to the masculine-framed condition support Hypothesis 1, indicating that participants do have a higher degree of trust in the Democrat candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as feminine, rather than masculine. There was a .11 differential in mean degree of trust between participants who read the feminine-framed Democrat article and those who read the masculine-framed Democrat article, with a higher mean trust among those exposed to the feminine-framed treatment. Based on the results of a one-tailed *t*-test, this substantive difference in means is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0006$), and suggests that participants indicated a higher degree of trust in Candidate

Templin when the candidate's Democratic affiliation was supported by feminine characteristics and traits.[9]

To compare the average degrees of trust indicated by participants in the Democratic gendered treatment conditions with the average degrees of trust indicated by participants in the Democratic gender-neutral baseline condition, I also performed an OLS regression.[10] Results of the OLS regression indicate that participants who read the Democratic gender-neutral framed article had a significantly higher average trust than those who read the masculine-framed Democratic article ($p \leq 0.09$), suggesting that participants who read the article describing Candidate Templin with a gender-neutral frame perceived the candidate as more trustworthy than those who read the masculine-framed article. Although not statistically significant in relation to the feminine-framed article, the average level of trust among participants who read the gender-neutral article does fall between the average level of trust indicated by those who read the feminine-framed and those who read the masculine-framed article. This supports Hypothesis 3 and suggests that a gender-neutral frame may have caused participants to see the Democratic candidate as slightly less trustworthy than the feminine frame and more trustworthy than the masculine frame. Figure 5 summarizes the results of the *t*-tests and OLS regressions considering participants' average reported attitudinal measure of trust in the candidate.

The results based on a *t*-test of the additive measure of trust for participants who read the gendered Democratic articles also indicate that participants had a higher degree of trust in the Democrat candidate when media coverage framed the candidate's gender

[9] See Appendix Table 3.1 for full *t*-test results.
[10] See Appendix Table 3.2 for full OLS regression results.

performance as feminine, rather than masculine.[11] A differential of .28 between mean levels of trust indicated by participants who read the feminine-framed Democrat article and those who read the masculine-framed Democrat article is statistically significant at the .01 level, based on the results of the *t*-test ($p \leq 0.006$). In this way, the additive measure of trust confirms that participants displayed a higher degree of trust in Candidate Templin when the candidate's media framed feminine traits supported the candidate's Democratic affiliation.

The results of an OLS regression comparing the average additive level of trust indicated by participants in the Democratic gendered treatment conditions with the average additive level of trust indicated by participants in the Democratic gender-neutral baseline condition also supports Hypothesis 3, as participants who read the gender-neutral framed article indicated an average trust that falls between the levels indicated by participants in the gendered conditions.[12] The differential of .18 between average trust among those who read the masculine-framed and those who read the gender-neutral framed article is statistically significant at the .1 level ($p \leq 0.08$). This suggests that participants who read the article describing Candidate Templin through a gender-neutral frame perceived the candidate as more trustworthy than those who read the masculine-framed article. Participants who read the gender-neutral framed Democratic article also perceived the candidate as slightly less trustworthy than those who read the feminine-framed article, although this difference was not statistically significant. Figure 6 summarizes the results of the *t*-tests and OLS regressions considering the average additive level of trust assigned to Candidate Templin.

[11] See Appendix Table 3.3 for full *t*-test results.
[12] See Appendix Table 3.4 for full OLS regression results.

Figure 5: Average Trust in Candidate Templin (Degree of Trust)						
Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Mean Trust	Sample Size	Mean Trust	Sample Size	Mean Trust
Republican	n=62	.59 (0.03)**	n=61	.55 (0.03)	n=58	.48 (0.04)**
Democrat	n=59	.64 (0.02)***	n=63	.60 (0.02)	n=62	.53 (0.02)***, +
Results of *t*-test comparing masculine vs. feminine frames *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01 Results of OLS regression comparing masculine/feminine, with gender-neutral control groups as baseline + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01 Standard errors are in parentheses.						

Figure 6: Average Trust in Candidate Templin (Additive Measure of Trust)						
Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Mean Trust	Sample Size	Mean Trust	Sample Size	Mean Trust
Republican	n=62	2.76 (0.09)***+	n=61	2.55 (0.07)	n=58	2.43 (0.09)***
Democrat	n=59	2.86 (0.06)***	n=63	2.77 (0.08)	n=62	2.58 (0.08)***+
Results of *t*-test comparing masculine vs. feminine frames *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01 Results of OLS regression comparing masculine/feminine, with gender-neutral control groups as baseline + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01 Standard errors are in parentheses. Evaluation scale is 0 (least trust) to 4 (most trust), based on the 4-question additive measure of trust.						

Results of a *t*-test comparing the average degree of trust in the Republican candidate indicated by participants exposed to the masculine-framed condition with the average degree of trust indicated by those exposed to the feminine-framed condition indicate that participants also indicated a higher degree of trust in the Republican candidate when media coverage framed the candidate's gender performance as feminine,

rather than masculine.[13] These results contradict Hypothesis 2, which stated that participants would have higher levels of trust in a Republican candidate when media coverage framed the candidate's gender performance as masculine, rather than feminine, based on the theory that conflict between media framing and audience assumptions would create cognitive dissonance that would lower participants' trust in a candidate whose gender performance is framed as conflicting with the underlying gendered assumptions of their political party. In reality, however, there was a .11 differential between mean degree of trust among those exposed to the masculine-framed Republican article and the higher mean degree of trust among those exposed to the feminine-framed Republican article. This substantive difference in means is statistically significant at the .05 level ($p \leq 0.02$), and suggests that participants had a higher degree of trust in Candidate Templin when the candidate's Republican affiliation conflicted with the feminine frame.

Although not statistically significant, the results of an OLS regression suggest that participants exposed to the gender-neutral frame may have perceived the Republican candidate as slightly more trustworthy than those exposed to the masculine frame, and slightly less trustworthy than those exposed to the feminine frame.[14] As in the Democratic condition, the gender-neutral framed Republican candidate's perceived trustworthiness fell between the perceived trustworthiness of the feminine-framed and the masculine-framed Republican candidate. This supports the theory underlying Hypothesis 3 and indicates that the gender-neutral media frame serves as a baseline, with a masculine media frame decreasing participant trust in the candidate and a feminine media frame increasing participant trust in the candidate.

[13] See Appendix Table 4.1 for full *t*-test results.
[14] See Appendix Table 4.2 for full OLS regression results.

The results based on a *t*-test of the additive measure of trust for participants who read the gendered Republican articles also indicate that participants had a higher degree of trust in the Republican candidate when media coverage framed the candidate's gender performance as feminine, rather than masculine.[15] The differential of .34 between mean levels of trust indicated by participants who read the Republican feminine-framed article and those who read the Republican masculine-framed article is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0074$), and confirms that participants had a higher degree of trust in Candidate Templin when the candidate's Republican affiliation conflicted with a feminine media frame.

The results of an OLS regression comparing the average additive trust in the Republican candidate indicated by participants who read the gendered treatment articles with the average additive level of trust indicated by participants who read the gender-neutral article also supports Hypothesis 3, with the average trust indicated among participants who read the gender-neutral framed article falling between the levels indicated by participants in the gendered conditions.[16] A differential of .21 between the average additive trust indicated by those who read the gender-neutral framed article and those who read the feminine-framed article is statistically significant at the .1 level ($p \leq 0.07$). This suggests that participants who read the article describing the Republican candidate with a masculine or a gender-neutral frame perceived the candidate as significantly less trustworthy than those who read the feminine-framed article. Participants who read the gender-neutral Republican article also perceived the candidate as slightly more trustworthy than those who read the masculine-framed article, although

[15] See Appendix Table 4.3 for full *t*-test results.
[16] See Appendix Table 4.4 for full OLS regression results.

this difference was not statistically significant. Once again, these results support Hypothesis 3 and the theory that the gender-neutral media frame serves as a baseline, with a masculine media frame decreasing participant trust in the candidate and a feminine media frame increasing participant trust in the candidate.

Overall, the results indicate that participants have a higher degree of trust in the feminine-framed candidate, regardless of the candidate's political party. While these results do support Hypothesis 1, the most significant finding appears to be the correlation between feminine-framed media coverage and higher levels of trust in the candidate for both a Democrat and a Republican candidate. On the basic trust scale, participants, on average, indicated a higher degree of trust in the feminine-framed candidate by about 0.1 for both the Democrat and the Republican candidate. The results from the additive measure of trust support the results from the attitudinal measure of trust, with participants indicating a higher degree of trust in the feminine-framed candidate in both the Republican and the Democratic condition. The resulting differences between participants who read the masculine-framed article and those who read the feminine-framed article were statistically significant in both the Republican and the Democratic condition. The results also support Hypothesis 3, as participants who read the gender-neutral framed articles indicated an average trust that fell between the levels indicated by participants in the gendered conditions in both the Republican and the Democratic condition. This suggests that the feminine frame increased trust in the candidate and that the masculine frame decreased trust in the candidate, as both were consistently higher and lower, respectively, than the gender-neutral baseline.

While participants did indicate a higher degree of trust in both the feminine-framed and the masculine-framed candidate when the candidate was said to be a Democrat than when the candidate was said to be a Republican, this is likely because the overall sample skewed slightly more liberal than conservative. About 45% of participants indicated that they were liberal or very liberal, in contrast to only 24% who indicated that they were conservative or very conservative. Additionally, 41% of participants said that they were registered Democrats, compared to 18% who said that they were registered Republicans. Of the remaining participants, 30% said that they were registered independents, 8% said that they were not registered to vote, and 3% said that they were registered with another party. With this in mind, lower overall levels of trust in the Republican candidate likely reflect the liberal-bias of the overall sample, and are therefore not relevant to the differences in mean trust based on the various gendered media frames.

As an additional analysis, I also performed OLS regressions for trust controlling for participant partisanship.[17] These results allow for analysis of the effect of participant partisanship on the difference in mean levels of trust assigned to Candidate Templin in each condition. The non-partisan baseline included participants who indicated that they are registered Independents as well as those who indicated they are not registered to vote. I chose to control for partisanship rather than ideology based on the assumption that partisanship is more concrete and easier for participants to self-identify than ideology.

Overall, the results of the regression controlling for participant partisanship confirm existing conclusions that a feminine-frame increases a candidate's perceived

[17] Results of these regressions are displayed in Appendix 5 (Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3), for the Democratic Condition, and Appendix 6 (Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3), for the Republican Condition.

trustworthiness, with participants responding more positively to the feminine media frame than the masculine or gender-neutral frame in each condition, regardless of their own political affiliation. There appeared to be an overall decrease in average trust for the masculine-framed candidate and an increase in average trust for the feminine-framed candidate even after controlling for the partisanship of the participants in each group. While these results do support my conclusions, interesting variations between how participants responded within each category suggest a potential correlation between partisanship and the resonance of certain gender frames.

Democrats exposed to the feminine-framed Democrat condition had a significantly higher average level of trust in Candidate Templin than non-partisans, while Republicans' average trust in the feminine-framed Democrat candidate did not differ significantly from the average trust among non-partisans. While the difference in mean levels of trust between Democrats and non-partisans in the Democratic feminine-framed condition is statistically significant, this difference is only a small substantive difference. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the way that Democrats, Republicans and non-partisans viewed the masculine-framed Democrat candidate, nor was there a significant difference between the average level of trust indicated by non-partisans and Republicans in the gender-neutral framed Democratic condition. Democrats exposed to the gender-neutral framed Democrat condition, however, had a significantly higher average level of trust in Candidate Templin than non-partisans. These results suggest that the most significant increase in trust in the Democratic candidate among Democratic participants compared to the level of trust indicated by non-partisan participants occurred in the gender-neutral condition rather than either of the gendered conditions.

In the Republican condition, Republicans exposed to the feminine-framed condition had a significantly higher average level of trust in Candidate Templin than non-partisans, while Democrats average trust in the feminine-framed condition was almost identical to the average trust of non-partisans. In the masculine-framed Republican condition, also, Republicans had a significantly higher average level of trust in the candidate than non-partisans, while Democrats average trust in the masculine-framed candidate did not differ significantly from the average trust indicated by non-partisans. There were no significant differences in trust between Democrats, Republicans and non-partisans exposed to the gender-neutral Republican frame. These results suggest that the most significant increase in trust in the Republican candidate among Republican participants compared to the level of trust indicated by non-partisan participants occurred in the gendered conditions rather than the gender-neutral condition.

As expected, Republican participants indicated higher average levels of trust in the Republican candidates than did the Democrat or non-partisan participants, while the Democrat participants indicated higher average levels of trust in the Democratic candidates than the Republican or non-partisan participants. An interesting difference, however, is that Democrats seemed to have a stronger, more significant response to gender-neutral frames while Republicans had a stronger response to gendered frames, compared to the non-partisan baseline. Compared to both Democrat and non-partisan participants, Republican participants appeared to respond positively to both masculine-framed and feminine-framed Republican candidates, while their response to the gender-neutral framed Republican candidate was insignificant. Democrat participants, however,

appeared to respond positively to the gender-neutral framed Democrat candidate, while displaying a weaker response to the candidate described through either gendered frame.

These variations within each group suggest that gendered frames used to describe a Republican candidate, particularly a masculine frame, may have a large positive effect on the candidate's perceived trust among Republican participants. Additionally, while Democrats indicated a higher level of trust in the Democratic candidate than Republicans or non-partisans in each condition, the differential between levels of trust indicated by Democrats and non-partisans shrunk in the gendered conditions and expanded in the gender-neutral condition, suggesting that a gender-neutral frame may have a more significant positive effect on Democrat participants than a gendered frame. While beyond the scope of this study, these apparent party effects evoked by gender frames could serve as the basis for future research exploring the possibility of partisan-dependent variation in gender frame resonance.

Also worth mentioning is that among the 350 participants, a large majority (77%) of participants indicated that they believed Candidate Templin's sex to be male, compared to only 7% who believed Candidate Templin's sex to be female, and 16% who were unsure. Overall, this suggests that most participants thought that the candidate was a man. This is beneficial as it allows for analysis of the impact of gender framing alone and rules out the candidate's perceived true sex as a potential confounding variable. Since most participants assumed that the candidate was a man, the only perceived variation was the mediated gender frame of masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral. The overwhelming assumption that Candidate Templin is a man was likely motivated by the fact that most American politicians, particularly presidential hopefuls, are men. The assumption that

Candidate Templin is male likely resulted from participants' default assumption about the typical presidential candidate based on real-world distribution of sex among politicians.

Figure 7: Participants' Assumption of the Candidate's Sex								
Condition/Article			Q. What do you think the candidate's sex is?					
Party	**Gender Frame**	**Sample Size**	**Candidate is Male**		**Candidate is Female**		**Unsure of Candidate Sex**	
			#	**%**	#	**%**	#	%
Republican	Masculine	n=58	50	86%	0	0%	8	14%
	Gender-Neutral	n=61	50	82%	3	5%	8	13%
	Feminine	n=62	44	71%	8	13%	10	16%
Democrat	Masculine	n=62	48	77%	4	7%	10	16%
	Gender-Neutral	n=63	47	75%	6	9%	10	16%
	Feminine	n=59	43	73%	5	8%	11	19%
	TOTAL:	n=365	282	77%	26	7%	57	16%

As Figure 7 illustrates, the majority of the twenty-six participants who did think Candidate Templin was female had read about a Democratic candidate. Considering the widespread assumption that at least one female candidate from the Democratic party would be running in the 2016 presidential election, it is not surprising that the majority of participants who thought the candidate was a woman believed the candidate to be a Democrat rather than a Republican. In the Republican condition, the majority of participants who identified Candidate Templin as a woman had read the feminine-framed article. This suggests that they not only noticed the feminine media frame, but also that they assumed the feminine frame described a woman. None of the participants who read the masculine-framed Republican article thought Templin was a woman, suggesting that a masculine media frame combined with the typical masculine associations of the Republican Party may have obscured the possibility that Templin could be a woman

among participants exposed to this condition. Neither political affiliation nor gender frame had a significant impact on the number of participants who said they were unsure of Candidate Templin's sex, with between eight and eleven participants selecting this option in each of the six conditions.

While the majority of participants assumed that Candidate Templin was a man, it is also interesting that the two conditions in which the fewest participants identified the candidate as a man were both of the feminine-framed conditions. About 73% of participants who read the feminine-framed Democrat article identified Candidate Templin as a man, compared to 75% of those who read the gender-neutral framed and 77% of those who read the masculine-framed article. In the Republican condition the difference is even larger, with 71% of participants exposed to the feminine-framed article identifying Candidate Templin as male compared to 82% of those who read the gender-neutral framed article and 86% of those who read the masculine-framed article. This suggests that the Republican candidate may have had slightly stronger masculine associations than the Democratic candidate, although the feminine-frame appeared to decrease this decidedly masculine association. Although the difference in percentages is not large, it is worth noting that in both the Democrat and the Republican conditions, the percentage of participants who identify the candidate as definitively male increases from the feminine-framed condition to the gender-neutral framed condition and from the gender-neutral framed condition to the masculine-framed condition. This suggests that some participants associated the gendered frames with the candidate's sex, at least to the point where their confidence in the candidate's assumed masculinity decreased when they were exposed to a gender-neutral or feminine, rather than a masculine, frame.

Extended Analysis:

The results essentially suggest that participants perceive a candidate described with a feminine media frame as more trustworthy than a candidate described with a masculine media frame, regardless of the candidate's political party. Conversely, the results suggest that participants perceive a candidate described with a masculine media frame as less trustworthy than a candidate described with a feminine media frame, regardless of the candidate's political party. A gender-neutral media frame appears to serve as a baseline, with participants perceiving a candidate described with a gender-neutral media frame as more trustworthy than a candidate described with a masculine frame and less trustworthy than a candidate described with a feminine frame. Although not directly related to the original hypotheses predicting a relationship between media-frame, political party and trust, these findings suggest an interesting effect in regards to gendered media framing and public trust. To test the potential mechanism driving this effect, additional analysis of the data illuminated several patterns that may explain why gender framing impacted the candidate's perceived trustworthiness, with feminine framing increasing measures of trustworthiness from the gender-neutral baseline and masculine framing decreasing measures of trustworthiness from the gender-neutral baseline.

A closer look at the four components of trust

Participants' responses to the four questions used to calculate the additive measure of trust - considering the candidate's perceived dependability, competence, integrity, and responsiveness to public concern; showed variation between each of the

framed conditions. [18] The candidate's average level of perceived dependability, summarized in Figure 8, varied little based on the gendered frame. Results of a *t*-test considering the Republican candidate's perceived dependability in the masculine-framed condition and the feminine-framed condition are statistically significant at the .05 level ($p \leq 0.049$), but this is a small substantive difference as both mean levels of dependability are approximate to the response *dependable*. Results of the OLS regression indicate that any difference in the candidate's average perceived dependability between participants who read the Republican gender-neutral framed article and the gendered articles are insignificant.

Differences between the candidate's perceived dependability based on a *t*-test comparing those who read the feminine-framed and those who read the masculine-framed articles in the Democratic condition were not statistically significant, nor were there differences between those who read either gendered article compared through an OLS regression to the gender-neutral baseline. This suggests that gender frames did not impact the Democrat candidate's perceived dependability. Despite statistically significant differences in the Republican condition, the average level of perceived dependability in each condition for the Republican and the Democratic candidate was approximate to the response *dependable*, suggesting that gender framing had little impact on the candidate's perceived dependability. These results therefore indicate that conflict between media framing of a candidate's gender performance and the underlying assumptions of the candidate's political affiliation have little to no effect on the candidate's perceived dependability.

[18] See the full results of each *t*-test and OLS regressions in Appendix 7 (Tables 7.1 to 7.5) for the Democratic Condition, and Appendix 8 (Tables 8.1 to 8.5) for the Republican Condition.

Figure 8: Average level of perceived Dependability

Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Ave. Depend.	Sample Size	Ave. Depend.	Sample Size	Ave. Depend.
Republican	n=62	.69 (0.03)$^{**+}$	n=61	.64 (0.02)	n=58	.62 (0.02)**
Democrat	n=59	.67 (0.02)	n=63	.69 (0.02)	n=62	.65 (0.02)

masculine vs. feminine *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01
masculine/feminine vs. gender-neutral + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01
Standard errors are in parentheses.

Figure 9: Average level of perceived Competence

Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Ave. Confidence	Sample Size	Ave. Confidence	Sample Size	Ave. Confidence
Republican	n=62	.70 (0.03)	n=61	.66 (0.02)	n=58	.69 (0.02)
Democrat	n=59	.74 (0.02)	n=63	.73 (0.02)	n=62	.71 (0.03)

masculine vs. feminine *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01
masculine/feminine vs. gender-neutral + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01
Standard errors are in parentheses.

Figure 10: Average level of perceived Integrity

Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Ave. Integrity	Sample Size	Ave. Integrity	Sample Size	Ave. Integrity
Republican	n=62	.67 (0.02)$^{***+}$	n=61	.62 (0.03)	n=58	.55 (0.03)$^{***+}$
Democrat	n=59	.72 (0.03)$^{***++}$	n=63	.65 (0.02)	n=62	.58 (0.02)$^{***++}$

masculine vs. feminine *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01
masculine/feminine vs. gender-neutral + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01
Standard errors are in parentheses.

Figure 11: Average level of perceived Responsiveness to Public Concerns						
Political Party	Media Frame					
	Feminine		Gender-Neutral		Masculine	
	Sample Size	Ave. Respon. to Pub. Con.	Sample Size	Ave. Respon. to Pub. Con.	Sample Size	Ave. Respon. to Pub. Con.
Republican	n=62	.70 (0.03)$^{***+}$	n=61	.64 (0.03)	n=58	.57 (0.03)$^{***+}$
Democrat	n=59	.74 (0.02)***	n=63	.69 (0.03)	n=62	.64 (0.02)$^{***+}$
masculine vs. feminine *= p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01 masculine/feminine vs. gender-neutral + = p < 0.1; ++ = p < 0.05; +++ = p < 0.01 Standard errors are in parentheses.						

The candidate's average level of perceived competence, summarized in Figure 9, was almost identical regardless of the candidate's gender frame or political party. Results of a *t*-test and an OLS regression reveal that the average level of perceived competence varied less than 0.05 between those exposed the feminine-framed, gender-neutral framed or masculine-framed Republican or Democratic condition. In each condition, the average level of perceived competence was approximate to the response *competent*. None of the differences between mean level of competence perception were statistically significant, suggesting that gender framing, in isolation, does not impact a candidate's perceived competence. These results further indicate that conflict between media framing of a candidate's gender performance and the underlying assumptions of the candidate's political affiliation also have little to no effect on the candidate's perceived competence.

While the gendered frame used to describe the candidate had little effect on the candidate's perceived dependability or competence, gendered frames appeared to have a large effect on both the candidate's perceived integrity, summarized in Figure 10, as well as the candidate's perceived responsiveness to public concern, summarized in Figure 11. In the Republican condition, the average level of perceived integrity among those who

read the feminine-framed article was approximate to the response *high integrity*, compared to a level of perceived integrity approximate to *neutral integrity* among those who read the masculine-framed article. The difference of .9 between means is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0027$). The average level of perceived integrity among those who read the gender-neutral framed Republican article is also statistically significant to the mean level of perceived integrity in both the feminine-framed ($p \leq 0.133$) and the masculine-framed ($p \leq 0.089$) Republican condition at the .1 level. This suggests that the gender-neutral media frame serves as a baseline, with a masculine media frame lowering the Republican candidate's perceived integrity and a feminine media frame increasing the Republican candidate's perceived integrity.

In the Democratic condition, the average level of perceived integrity among those who read the feminine-framed article was also approximate to *high integrity*, compared to a perceived level of integrity approximate to *neutral integrity* among those who read the masculine-framed article. The difference of .14 between means is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0001$). The average level of perceived integrity among those who read the gender-neutral framed Democratic article is statistically significant to the mean level of perceive integrity in both the feminine-framed ($p \leq 0.053$) and the masculine-framed ($p \leq 0.026$) Democratic condition at the .05 level. As such, gendered media frames appear to have a strong effect on the candidate's perceived integrity, with feminine-framed candidates perceived as having higher integrity than the masculine-framed or the gender-neutral framed candidate, regardless of their political affiliation. This suggests a positive correlation between feminine media framing and a candidate's perceived integrity.

Participants also perceived the feminine-framed candidate as more responsive to public concerns than the masculine-framed or gender-neutral framed candidate, with the candidate's average level of perceived responsiveness to public concerns among those who read the Republican feminine-framed article approximate to *responsive to public concerns*, compared to a level of perceived responsiveness approximate to *neutral responsiveness to public concerns*, among those who read the masculine-framed article. The .14 difference between means is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0012$). The candidate's average level of perceived responsiveness to public concerns among those who read the gender-neutral Republican article is also statistically significant to the candidate's average level of perceived responsiveness among those who read the masculine-framed ($p \leq 0.082$) and those who read the feminine-framed ($p \leq 0.096$) articles at the .1 level.

Among those exposed to the Democratic condition, the candidate's average level of perceived responsiveness to public concern among those who read the feminine-framed article and those who read the masculine-framed article are both approximate to the response *responsive to public concerns*. Despite their parallel approximate response, the difference of .1 between means is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p \leq 0.0041$). The mean level of perceived responsiveness among those who read the gender-neutral Democrat article was insignificant in relation to the mean among those who read the feminine-framed article but statistically significant in relation to the mean among those who read the masculine-framed article at the .1 level ($p \leq 0.133$). This indicates that participants who read the gender-neutral Democratic article perceived the candidate as more responsive to public concern than those who read the masculine-framed article.

Although insignificant, the fact that the mean perception of candidate responsiveness among those who read the gender-neutral articles falls between the mean perception of the candidate's responsiveness among those who read the gendered articles suggests that the gender-neutral media frame mays still serve as a baseline, with a masculine media frame decreasing the candidate's perceived responsiveness and a feminine frame slightly increasing the candidate's perceived responsiveness.

These results suggest a strong correlation between gendered media frames and a candidate's perceived level of both integrity and responsiveness to public concern. The gendered media frames appear to have little to no effect on participants' perception of the candidate's competence, and, to a lesser degree, dependability. Participants exposed to the feminine-framed candidate associated the candidate with a higher average level of perceived integrity and a higher average level of perceived responsiveness to public concern, regardless of the candidate's political party. When compared to a gender-neutral baseline, Participants exposed to the masculine-framed candidate also associated the candidate with a lower average level of perceived integrity and responsiveness to public concern, regardless of the candidate's political party. This suggests that while gendered media framing has little effect on a candidate's perceived competence or dependability, a feminine media frame increases a candidate's perceived integrity and responsiveness to public concerns while a masculine media frame decreases a candidate's perceived integrity and responsiveness to public concern.

I deliberately omitted a definition of trust from the questionnaire, allowing participants to rate their degree of trust in the candidate based on their own preconceived conception of trust. The inclusion of both the additive measure of trust as well as a self-

reported measure of trust controlled for any differences in participants' conception of trust and my working definition of trust, and the overall results for both measures of trust support one another. The fact that participants indicated a higher degree of overall trust in the feminine-framed candidate, however, suggests that participants likely assigned more weight to the candidate's perceived integrity and level of responsiveness to public concern when deciding the candidate's trustworthiness than they assigned to the candidate's perceived dependability or competence.

Interestingly, the candidate's perceived dependability did not appear to be negatively affected when the typical gender associations of the candidate's political party conflicted with the gendered media frame used to describe the candidate. Although beyond the scope of this study, it is likely that stating the candidate's true sex may have had a more significant impact on the candidate's perceived dependability, as a clash between political party, gender-frame, and sex has the potential to cause greater cognitive dissonance than conflict between assumptions about political parties and gender-frames alone. Additionally, the results suggest that the public may perceive a candidate described through a feminine media frame as having a higher degree of integrity and being more responsive to public concerns than a candidate described through a gender-neutral or a masculine media frame, regardless of the candidate's political affiliation. The mechanism underlying this effect is best explored through an analysis of the candidate's perceived character traits in each condition.

Impact of Gender Framing on Perceived Character Traits

After participants completed the questionnaire to measure their trust in the candidate, participants selected adjectives they felt best described the candidate from a

randomized list that included all masculine, feminine and gender-neutral adjectives used to frame the candidate in the articles. This list of 33 adjectives was partially intended to serve as a manipulation check to verify the experiment's internal validity, and the results confirm that in relation to participants in the other media-framed conditions, a higher percentage of participants who read the masculine-framed article selected masculine adjectives to describe the candidate, a higher percentage of participants who read the feminine-framed article selected feminine adjectives to describe the candidate, and a higher percentage of participants who read the gender-neutral framed article selected gender-neutral adjectives to describe the candidate. As expected, these results confirm that participants noticed the treatment, as they were more likely to select gendered adjectives to describe the candidate that had been included in the article they read than they were to select adjectives that corresponded to one of the gender frames that they had not encountered.

In addition to serving as a manipulation check, further analysis of the adjectives that participants selected to describe the candidate allowed for the exploration of the underlying language that may cause participants to have a higher level of trust in a feminine-framed candidate and a lower level of trust in a masculine-framed candidate in comparison to a baseline of a gender-neutral framed candidate. The percentage of participants exposed to one of the three gendered media frames who indicated that each trait described the candidate are displayed in Figure 12 for masculine adjectives, Figure 13 for feminine adjectives, and Figure 14 for gender-neutral adjectives. Although in most cases a higher percentage of participants associated the candidate with adjectives directly included in the article they read, the adjectives that participants did, and did not, select

beyond those directly stated in their article provide a telling illustration of the specific associations of each gendered frame as well as traits that participants may have inherently associated with political leadership and trust.

The most salient perceived character traits among participants exposed to the masculine frame were *ambition*, *competitiveness*, and *competence*. Among participants exposed to the feminine frame, the most salient traits were *sociable*, *pleasant* and *compassionate*. Among those exposed to the gender-neutral frame the most salient traits were *likeable*, *friendly*, and *adaptable*. It therefore appears that these specific adjectives stood out most to participants who read the masculine-framed, feminine-framed and gender-neutral framed articles respectively.

On a very basic level, this may suggest that these terms had an impact on participants' trust in the candidate. Within the masculine-frame, while competence is a positive trait, *ambitious* and *competitive* are traits that sometimes have negative connotations. A competitive candidate especially may have been perceived as less trustworthy if participants assumed that the candidate would do anything necessary to get ahead rather than emphasizing consistency or personal relationships. This could also

Figure 12: Salience of Masculine Adjectives

Adjective/Trait	Media Frame		
	Masculine (n=120)	Gender-Neutral (n=124)	Feminine (n=121)
Active	56%	44%	34%
Engaged	51%	40%	40%
Intelligent	65%	48%	53%
Tough	66%	19%	12%
Independent	44%	18%	18%
Ambitious	78%	52%	43%
Industrious	53%	18%	12%
Confident	68%	51%	44%
Competitive	78%	32%	25%
Stubborn	60%	6%	4%
Opportunistic	50%	27%	22%

Percentage of participants exposed to each media frame who said the trait describes the candidate.

explain why the masculine-framed candidate was viewed as having less integrity and being less responsive to public concerns. Additionally, participants may have viewed this competitive candidate as less reliable and may have had less confidence in the candidate to act as expected due to the belief that the candidate would do whatever necessary to get elected. In direct contrast, the most salient feminine terms are sociable, pleasant and compassionate. All three terms have a strong association with personal relationships and imply a sense that the candidate cares about others, which may have a direct tie to perceived trustworthiness. This may also explain the feminine candidate's perceived higher integrity and responsiveness to public concern.

Beyond the most salient adjectives in each condition, almost half of the participants exposed to the feminine-framed article described the candidate with the masculine adjectives *intelligent* (53%), *confident* (44%) and *ambitious* (43%), although none of the adjectives were specifically mentioned in the feminine-framed article. The same was true with the gender-neutral framed candidate, with about half of participants describing the candidate with the same masculine adjectives: *ambitious* (52%), *confident* (51%) and *intelligent* (48%). One reason for this could be that these masculine traits are also frequently associated with leadership, so participants may have ascribed these traits to the candidate simply because the candidate was running for political office and not in response to the gendered frame used to describe the candidate. The fact that most participants assumed the candidate was a man might also have heightened the assumption that the candidate possessed masculine traits.

There were only four masculine adjectives that fewer than 20% of participants used to describe the feminine or gender-neutral framed candidate. Interestingly, these

adjectives selected by fewer than 20% of participants exposed to one of the non-masculine frames were the same for the feminine-framed and the gender-neutral framed candidate as well: *tough, independent, industrious,* and *stubborn*. It therefore appears that these four traits may have a weaker association with leadership and a stronger association to masculine stereotypes than the other seven masculine adjectives used in the masculine-framed article.

While many masculine adjectives were selected by at least 20% of participants to describe the feminine-framed and gender-neutral framed candidate, very few participants selected any of the feminine adjectives to describe the masculine-framed candidate. There was not a single feminine adjective that 20% of participants selected to describe the masculine-framed candidate, and less than 10% of participants described the masculine-framed candidate as *patient, generous, compassionate, pleasant, understanding, sympathetic, excitable*, or i*ndecisive*. A higher percentage of participants selected feminine adjectives to describe the gender-neutral framed candidate than the masculine-framed candidate, with several traits associated with the feminine-framed and the gender-

Figure 13: Salience of Feminine Adjectives

Adjective/Trait	Media Frame		
	Masculine (n=120)	Gender-Neutral (n=124)	Feminine (n=121)
Patient	3%	10%	33%
Generous	3%	11%	44%
Trustworthy	13%	40%	47%
Compassionate	6%	20%	57%
Pleasant	6%	33%	58%
Sociable	16%	54%	64%
Understanding	8%	25%	46%
Sympathetic	3%	20%	42%
Excitable	8%	14%	39%
High-strung	13%	7%	46%
Indecisive	1%	5%	36%

Percentage of participants exposed to each media frame who said the trait describes the candidate.

neutral framed candidate by a similar percentage of participants exposed to each frame. For example, 64% of participants described the feminine-framed candidate, 54% described the gender-neutral framed candidate, and 16% described the masculine-framed candidate as *sociable*. A significantly higher percentage (more than 20%) of participants who read the feminine-framed article in comparison to the gender-neutral or masculine framed article described the candidate with most other feminine traits.

As with the feminine adjectives, very few participants selected any of the gender-neutral adjectives to describe the masculine-framed candidate. In contrast, participants associated the feminine-framed candidate with a number of gender-neutral adjectives, even though these traits were not directly mentioned in the feminine-framed article. For example 42% of participants described the gender-neutral framed candidate and 37% described the feminine-framed candidate with the gender-neutral adjective *sincere*, compared to just 8% who described the masculine-framed candidate as *sincere*. As a synonym of genuine and honest, sincerity has strong ties to the concept of trust, so a candidate perceived as sincere would likely also be perceived as trustworthy. The most

Figure 14: Salience of Gender-Neutral Adjectives

Adjective/Trait	Media Frame		
	Masculine (n=120)	Gender-Neutral (n=124)	Feminine (n=121)
Tactful	21%	48%	25%
Helpful	8%	40%	37%
Sincere	8%	42%	37%
Truthful	8%	39%	26%
Adaptable	20%	57%	28%
Friendly	5%	60%	52%
Likeable	17%	68%	66%
Theatrical	5%	51%	6%
Inefficient	3%	24%	2%
Conceited	14%	36%	6%
Unsystematic	1%	28%	4%

Percentage of participants exposed to each media frame who said the trait describes the candidate.

dramatic discrepancy, and possibly the most closely related to trust, was the gender-neutral trait *likeable*, which 68% of participants exposed to the gender-neutral framed condition and 66% of participants exposed to the feminine-framed condition used to describe the candidate, in contrast to just 17% of those exposed to the masculine-framed condition. This may suggest that participants may simply have had greater trust in the feminine-framed candidate due to the candidate's perceived personality and likeability.

Based on this analysis, it appears that all of the feminine adjectives that make up the feminine media frame may have increased the candidate's perceived trustworthiness, rather than any one trait individually. Between 33% and 64% of participants selected each feminine trait to describe the feminine-framed candidate, with the strongest associations for the traits *compassionate*, *pleasant*, and *sociable*. Few participants associated the masculine-framed candidate with any of the feminine traits. Participants also indicated a strong correlation between the feminine-framed candidate and the gender-neutral trait *likeable*, with more participants selecting the adjective *likeable* to describe the feminine-framed candidate (66%) than any of the feminine adjectives expressly stated in the article. This suggests a strong correlation between a feminine media frame and likeability, as well as a corresponding relationship between a candidate's perceived likeability and participants' trust in the candidate.

The feminine-framed candidate was also perceived as more well-rounded in terms of gendered traits, with a higher percentage of participants exposed to the feminine-framed article selecting masculine characteristics to describe the candidate than participants exposed to the masculine-framed article who selected feminine or gender-neutral characteristics to describe the candidate. This is likely because the masculine

adjectives supported participants' preconceived ideas of leadership, so participants assumed that any candidate running for president would be *intelligent*, *ambitious*, and *confident*, even if not expressly stated in the article. An even higher percentage of participants who read the masculine-framed articles, in which these traits were expressly mentioned, selected adjectives such as *ambitious* (78%) and *competitive* (78%) to describe the candidate.

Considering the higher percentage of participants who selected masculine traits to describe the gender-neutral and the feminine-framed candidate, it seems that while participants assume that all presidential candidates possess masculine traits traditionally associated with leadership, the presence of feminine traits such as *compassion* and *sociability* can increase the candidate's perceived likeability, which in turn leads to the perception that the candidate has a higher degree of integrity, is more responsive to public concerns, and is ultimately more trustworthy than a candidate who does not appear to possess these traits. In this way, it appears that feminine media framing can have a positive impact on public trust in a political candidate.

Additionally, it appears that while masculine media framing reinforces the candidate's leadership qualifications, this masculine language does not convey a sense of the candidate's likeability or increase the public's trust in the candidate. Certain salient masculine terms, such as *competitive*, may decrease a candidate's perceived trustworthiness, as the assumption that an overly competitive candidate, with none of the feminine traits that tend to soften the candidate's image, will be less likely to act as expected or to respond to the public interest rather than their own self-interest. Another explanation could be the absence of certain language in the masculine-frame that

increases a candidate's likeability. Participants were much more likely to identify the feminine candidate and the gender-neutral framed candidate as *likeable* than they were the masculine-framed candidate, so there is likely a correlation between likeability and trust as well. In this way, it appears that masculine media framing can have a negative impact on public trust in a political candidate just as feminine media framing can have a positive impact on public trust in a political candidate.

Discussion

This study analyzed whether and how media framing of a candidate's gender performance in relation to the candidate's political party impacts public trust in the candidate. I began with the theory that media coverage presenting an over-masculinized frame for a Democratic candidate or an over-feminized frame for a Republican candidate would lead to decreased trust in the candidate by conflicting with participants' existing cognitive framework for understanding political parties and candidates. As such, Hypothesis 1 stated that participants would have higher levels of trust in a Democrat candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as feminine, rather than masculine. Hypothesis 2 stated that participants would have higher levels of trust in a Republican candidate when media coverage frames the candidate's gender performance as masculine, rather than feminine. Hypothesis 3 stated that participants' level of trust in the gender-neutral framed candidate would fall between their level of trust in the feminine-framed candidate and their level of trust in the masculine-framed candidate, in both the Republican and the Democratic condition. To test these hypotheses, I conducted an experiment that asked participants to read one of six news articles about a hypothetical candidate running in the presidential primary, with variation

in the article's gendered media frame and the candidate's political affiliation, before answering a questionnaire to measure their trust in the candidate.

While the results of the experiment do support Hypothesis 1, the most significant finding appears to be the correlation between feminine-framed media coverage and higher levels of trust, as well as masculine-framed media coverage and lower levels of trust, for both a Democrat and a Republican candidate. A large body of previous research suggests that voters typically associate stereotypically masculine traits with political leaders and prefer these traits in the political realm. The results of this study, however, contradict the theory that masculine traits are always more favorable for a political candidate and suggest that Americans' understanding of leadership may be changing. While Americans have historically associated political leaders with male characteristics, the results of this experiment suggest that a candidate framed as having feminine characteristics may now be viewed as more favorable than a candidate framed through a masculine frame or even a gender-neutral frame, at least in terms of trust.

Considering the isolated nature of media coverage that participants viewed in the experiment, it is possible that the apparent effects of gender framing are, to a certain extent, context-dependent. I chose to develop the article as a campaign announcement due to the assumption that journalists often fall back on existing stereotypes and establish the dominant gender-frame that will be used to describe the candidate throughout their campaign during the early stages of primary season. Audiences likely also rely on these frames to a larger extent during the early stages of a political campaign when they may be looking for heuristics to help them interpret potentially unfamiliar candidates than when

they have already been exposed to extensive media coverage of the candidates over several months or years.

While the largest effects likely occur during the early primary stage of a presidential campaign, I believe that the effects of gender framing – with participants having a higher degree of trust in the feminine-framed candidate and a lower degree of trust in the masculine-framed candidate, regardless of the candidate's political party – are not limited to this context. First of all, the effects present at the beginning of the presidential primary campaign would likely extend for the duration of the campaign even after the public is familiar with the candidate. Once several journalists begin to collectively use a certain gender-frame to describe a candidate, subsequent media coverage often adopts and reinforces that frame as well rather than presenting a counter-frame. If anything, I therefore believe that the gender frames assigned to a candidate early in the primary campaign may become stronger and more repetitive as the campaign progresses, impacting the candidate's perceived trustworthiness by reinforcing the words and concepts that lead participants to have a higher degree of trust in the feminine-framed candidate and a lower degree of trust in the masculine-framed candidate when first introduced.

It is possible, however, that the apparent effects of gender framing displayed in this experiment may be somewhat dependent on the dominant campaign issues that participants perceived as most important at the time that they participated in the experiment. My experiment measured participants' trust in the candidate in general, but did not consider the political issues that participants' currently believe to be the most important problems facing the nation. A large body of previous research suggests the

unconscious tendency for people to think of certain political issues as women's issues and other political issues as men's issues. For example, stereotypically feminine issues often include health care, education, women's rights, environmental issues, and social welfare (Major & Coleman, 2008; Meeks, 2012; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Herrnson, Lay & Stokes, 2003). As such, an individual who believes healthcare to be the most important issue facing the country may have perceived the feminine-framed candidate as more trustworthy than a male-framed or a gender-neutral framed candidate due to the candidate's perceived association with feminine issues like healthcare.

Masculine issues traditionally include military and defense, crime, the economy, and foreign policy (Major & Coleman, 2008; Meeks, 2012; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Herrnson, Lay & Stokes, 2003). In this case, an individual who believes crime to be the most important issue facing the country may have perceived the masculine-framed candidate as more trustworthy due to the candidate's perceived association with masculine issues like crime. Research conducted by Lawless (2004) shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 serves as a further example. Lawless discovered that Americans believed men would be better able to handle the security issues facing the nation due to their perceived advantage, in comparison to women, at legislating around issues such as national security and military. While Lawless considered the candidate's sex, it is likely that the candidate's media constructed gender performance may have the same effect.

In this way, the effect of gender framing on a candidate's perceived trustworthiness may depend on the specific issue that participants perceived as most important at the time that they participated in the experiment. While beyond the scope of

my study, future researchers may want to ask participants to select from a list the political issue that they believe to be the single most important problem facing the nation. This would allow for further analysis of how the weight that participants assign to stereotypically gendered issues relates to a candidate's media constructed gender performance as well as how this relationship impacts the candidate's perceived trustworthiness.

Despite the potential for the effects of gender framing that I identified through this study to be somewhat context-dependent, the results still suggest an evolution in how gender frames shape media coverage of and attitudes about political candidates. The effects of an article announcing a candidate's entry into the primary race would likely persist throughout the primary and general election campaign, as the media continue to reinforce the initially established gendered frame to construct a cohesive narrative about the candidate. While a candidate's perceived trustworthiness may depend partially on the specific issues being discussed within the campaign or the issues that participants view as most pressing, gender framing of the candidate would ultimately remain the key mechanism driving the effect. For example, even if participants' average higher level of trust in the feminine-framed candidate resulted from their belief that one or several women's issues are the most important problems facing the country today, these higher levels of trust still result from the feminine-frame and contradict prior research suggesting that Americans always prefer masculine traits in the political realm.

Extended analysis of the individual components of trust suggest that gendered media framing has little effect on a candidate's perceived competence or dependability, but a feminine media frame may increase and a masculine media frame may decrease a

candidate's perceived integrity and perceived responsiveness to public concerns. Considering that participants also indicated a higher degree of overall trust in the feminine-framed candidate and a lower degree of overall trust in the masculine-framed candidate, it appears that the candidate's perceived integrity and responsiveness may impact the candidate's perceived trustworthiness as well. Additionally, there appears to be a strong correlation between a candidate's perceived likeability and participants' trust in the candidate, with more participants describing the feminine-framed candidate as likeable compared to any of the feminine traits directly mentioned in the article. A significantly smaller percentage of participants describe the masculine-framed candidate as likeable, which correlates to the masculine-framed candidate's lower perceived trustworthiness.

Upon further analysis of the hypothetical candidate's perceived traits, it appears that feminine traits increase the candidate's perceived trustworthiness and masculine traits decrease the candidate's perceived trustworthiness, in comparison to a baseline of gender-neutral traits, confirming Hypothesis 3. While very few participants selected feminine or gender-neutral terms to describe the masculine-framed candidate, a higher percentage of participants selected masculine traits to describe the gender-neutral and the feminine-framed candidate, even though these traits were not expressly mentioned in the article that they read. This is likely because many participants assumed that the candidate possessed certain masculine traits commonly associated with leadership simply because they were running for political office. The candidate's true sex was omitted from the article, and the large majority of participants also assumed the candidate was a man, regardless of the gendered media frame used to describe the candidate. The assumption

that the candidate was a man could also explain the subconscious association of the candidate with traditionally masculine characteristics even when the candidate was described with a feminine or a gender-neutral media frame.

These results suggest that while many assume that all presidential candidates possess masculine traits traditionally associated with leadership, the presence of feminine traits such as compassion and sociability can increase a candidate's perceived likeability, which in turn leads to the perception that the candidate has a higher degree of integrity, is more responsive to public concerns, and is ultimately more trustworthy than a candidate who does not appear to possess these traits. The absence of these feminine traits can lead to decreased trust in a candidate, as a combination of masculine adjectives such as *competitive* and *ambitious* without the presence of feminine adjectives to soften the candidate's image and increase their likeability may threaten the candidate's perceived trustworthiness. In this way, feminine media framing appears to have a positive impact on public trust in a political candidate, while masculine media framing appears to have a negative impact on public trust in a political candidate.

These conclusions support observations from several individuals working in the field of political media as well. After reporting on politics for more than fifty years, Roberts and Roberts assert that likeability is a vital character trait for any presidential candidate. "Personality often trumps policy," they explain, as voters "want someone they can count on to protect their interests as new challenges emerge" (Roberts and Roberts, 2015). In this way, Roberts and Roberts highlight the value of the perception that a candidate will be responsive to public concerns, a trait that participants more strongly assigned to the feminine-framed candidate than the masculine-framed candidate. ABC

pollster Gary Langer also supports this observation, suggesting, "the sense that elected leaders understand the problems of average Americans can be an indispensible asset in election politics" (Langer qtd. in Roberts and Roberts, 2015). Roberts and Roberts further suggest the importance of a candidate's perceived empathy, a characteristic likely associated with traits evoked through the feminine-frame, including the candidate's perceived compassion, connectedness, sincerity and sensitivity. The results of the present experiment support these observations, with voter trust in the candidate increasing along with the candidate's likeability when the candidate is described through a feminine frame and decreasing when the candidate is described through a masculine frame.

These observations from political journalists suggest that personality and trust may be important factors in political elections, but it is important to remember that likeability and trust are not synonymous with electability. While my study specifically considers trust, future research must look beyond an individual's trust in a candidate to consider how gender framing impacts an individual's willingness to vote for the candidate. While it is important to trust an elected leader to act as expected, trust stands out as just one of many complex factors that influence vote choice. Voters may trust a candidate without necessarily believing them credible and qualified to serve as the President of the United States, so future research may consider whether a feminine media frame, which increased participants' trust in the candidate, compromises the candidate's perceived credibility. Especially when a candidate is identified as a woman, it is worth questioning whether the absence of what are assumed to be key leadership traits, commonly associated with masculine framing, compromise the candidate's perceived

credibility. Further exploring these and other questions will facilitate analysis of the broader implications of gender framing on a candidate's electability.

Additional future research must consider the relationship between a candidate's actual sex, media-constructed gender performance, and political party. In a real election, voters are aware of a candidates' true sex in addition to the media construction of their gender, so the level of agreement or conflict between a candidate's true sex and their media-constructed gender performance could also influence voters' trust in the candidate. Langer explains that "experimental research shows that when women are perceived as competent and powerful, they are less apt to be seen as warm and friendly, compared with identically described men." (qtd. in Roberts and Roberts, 2015). This suggests that there may be a more complex relationship between a candidate's actual sex, media-constructed gender performance, and political party, and highlights the need for future research to explore this relationship.

Additionally, some voters may be more or less likely to trust a candidate based simply on their sex, regardless of their political party or the way that the media present their gender performance. The large majority of participants in this experiment believed the candidate was a man, so higher levels of trust in the feminine-framed candidate essentially suggest that participants had a high a higher level of trust in what they assumed was a feminine-framed man, rather than a masculine-framed or a gender-neutral framed man. It would be interesting to see how participants perceived a female candidate, in relation to the gendered media frame used to describe her as well as her political affiliation. For example, it is possible that participants prefer a candidate who appears to possess both masculine and feminine traits, which could mean that participants would

prefer a masculine-framed female candidate to a feminine-framed female candidate. In this way, the consideration of candidate sex would allow for a further nuanced analysis of the intersection between media framing, political party and trust.

This research ultimately provides a foundation for future study about the media's power to shape public perception of candidates and, by extension, the electoral process. Although the results of this experiment bring up more questions than answers, they are an important first step in expanding the current conversation about sexism in the media to look beyond candidates' sex and consider the media's role in constructing and reinforcing candidates' gender performance in relation to their political party. With an increasing number of women emerging as serious contenders for the country's highest elected office in addition to the evolution of an increasingly media-driven society, it is important to expand the conversation about the media's role in constructing and reinforcing gender performance and the way it interacts with the American public's underlying stereotypes and assumptions about gender and politics.

Appendix:

1. Article Template

Templin Announces Presidential Bid; First Interview to Air Tonight

By Chris Johnson
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON, April 8 – Democratic/Republican Senator Templin formally announced a presidential bid on Monday, launching the first official campaign in the 2016 primary race. Others will likely join Templin shortly in the race to become the Democratic/Republican Party's nominee in next November's U.S. presidential election.

As Templin enters the primary campaign, strategists say the **active**/patient/*tactful* Senator's background will likely inform campaign strategy.

Templin was elected to the Senate in 2008 and has since built a reputation on Capitol Hill as **engaged**/generous/*helpful* with policy matters. In the Senate, Templin has concentrated on a variety of legislation related to economic, social and business issues. Templin has continued to emphasize these issues on the campaign trail, with supporters praising the Senator's experience and **intelligence**/trustworthiness/*sincerity*.

Colleagues describe the Senator as **tough**/compassionate*/truthful*, **independent/**pleasant/*adaptable* and **ambitious**/sociable/*friendly* with proven **administrative**/people skills.

Despite recent character attacks, such as the claim that the Senator is **competitive**/excitable/*inefficient,* **stubborn**/high-strung/*conceited* and **opportunistic**/indecisive/*unsystematic* when it comes to policy positions, Templin's **industrious**/understanding/*likeable* and **confident**/sympathetic/*theatrical* character seems to have only benefited the Democratic/Republican Senator's reputation.

Templin's first official interview as a candidate in the Democratic/Republican primary race will air tonight at 9PM EST. The interview will likely delve deeper into the candidate's background, experience and character.

KEY:
• **Bold** = Masculine • Underlined = Feminine • *Italicized* = Gender-Neutral

2. Questionnaire

Questions to measure trust in the candidate:

Please answer the following questions based on the news article you read about Senator Templin.

1. I feel that this candidate is…
    a. Very dependable
    b. Dependable
    c. Neutral
    d. Undependable
    e. Very undependable

2. I feel that this candidate is…
    a. Very Competent
    b. Competent
    c. Neutral
    d. Incompetent
    e. Very incompetent

3. I feel that this candidate is…
    a. Of very high integrity
    b. Of High integrity
    c. Neutral
    d. Of low integrity
    e. Of very low integrity

4. I feel that this candidate is…
    a. Very responsive to public concerns
    b. Responsive to public concerns
    c. Neutral
    d. Unresponsive to public concerns
    e. Very unresponsive to public concerns

5. Please rate the degree of trust that you have in the candidate on a scale of 0 (no trust) to 10 extreme trust)

Degree of trust in the candidate:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Manipulation Check:

Based on what you read, please check all adjectives that describe Senator Templin.
(Order of the adjectives was randomized for each participant)

1. High-strung
2. Intelligent
3. Compassionate
4. Helpful
5. Patient
6. Pleasant
7. Theatrical
8. Inefficient
9. Indecisive
10. Tactful
11. Unsystematic
12. Friendly
13. Confident
14. Adaptable
15. Active
16. Excitable
17. Sociable
18. Sympathetic
19. Conceited
20. Trustworthy
21. Understanding
22. Likeable
23. Independent
24. Truthful
25. Stubborn
26. Sincere
27. Industrious
28. Opportunistic
29. Tough
30. Generous
31. Engaged
32. Ambitious
33. Competitive

Based on the news article that you read, what do you think Senator Templin's sex is?

- Male
- Female
- Unsure

Demographic Information:

Now, please tell us a little bit more about yourself.

1. Sex:
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Other
    d. I choose not to respond

2. Political Ideology you feel best represents your beliefs:
    a. Very liberal
    b. Liberal
    c. Moderate
    d. Conservative
    e. Very Conservative
    f. Unsure

3. Political Party with which you are Registered to Vote:
    a. Democrat
    b. Independent
    c. Republican
    d. Other (please specify) _____
    e. Not registered to vote

4. Political Party which you feel best represents your beliefs:
    a. Democrat
    b. Independent
    c. Republican
    d. Other
    e. Unsure

5. Age:
    a. 18-24
    b. 25-44
    c. 45-64
    d. 65+

3. Average Trust in Candidate: Democratic Condition

Table 3.1 Paired *t*-test of the difference in degree of trust reported by participants exposed to the Democrat feminine-framed group and the Democrat masculine-framed group

Media Frame	Number of Observations	Mean Trust	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	95% Conf. Interval
Feminine	59	.64	0.02	0.14	0.61 to 0.68
Masculine	62	.53	0.02	0.19	0.49 to 0.58
Difference		.11	0.03		0.05 to 0.17
Probability (feminine trust > masculine trust) = 100% p-value < 0.0006					

Table 3.2 Democrat Trust Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .54	-0.06	0.035	-0.13 to 0.01	0.09
Feminine Mean = .65	0.05	0.035	-0.02 to 0.12	0.184
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	0.60			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.05				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average degree of trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 3.3 Paired *t*-test of the difference in level of trust based on additive measure of trust (a composite of the variables *dependable*, *competent*, *high integrity*, & *responsive to public concerns*) indicated by participants exposed to the Democrat feminine-framed group and the Democrat masculine-framed group (scored on a range of 0-4).

Media Frame	Number of Observations	Mean Trust	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	95% Conf. Interval
Feminine	59	2.86	0.06	0.49	2.74 to 2.99
Masculine	62	2.58	0.08	0.60	2.43 to 2.74
Difference		0.28	0.10		0.08 to 0.48
Probability (feminine trust > masculine trust) = 99% p-value < 0.006					

Table 3.4 Democrat Additive Trust Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = 2.58	-0.19	0.11	-0.40 to 0.02	0.08
Feminine Mean = 2.86	0.09	0.11	-0.12 to 0.30	0.40
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	2.77			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.04				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average additive trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-4 range.				

4. Average Trust in Candidate: Republican Condition

Table 4.1 Paired *t*-test of the difference in degree of trust reported by participants exposed to the Republican feminine-framed group and the Republican masculine-framed group

Media Frame	Number of Observations	Mean Trust	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	95% Conf. Interval
Feminine	62	.59	0.03	0.22	0.53 to 0.64
Masculine	58	.48	0.04	0.28	0.40 to 0.55
Difference		0.11	0.05		0.02 to 0.20
Probability (feminine trust > masculine trust) = 98% p-value < 0.02					

Table 4.2 Republican Trust Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .48	-0.07	0.04	-0.16 to 0.02	0.11
Feminine Mean = .59	0.04	0.04	-0.05 to 0.12	0.38
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	0.55			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.02				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average degree of trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 4.3 Paired *t*-test of the difference in level of trust based on additive measure of trust (a composite of the variables *dependable*, *competent*, *high integrity*, & *responsive to public concerns*) indicated by participants exposed to the Republican feminine-framed group and the Republican masculine-framed group (scored on a range of 0-4).

Media Frame	Number of Observations	Mean Trust	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	95% Conf. Interval
Feminine	62	2.76	0.09	0.68	2.58 to 2.93
Masculine	58	2.43	0.09	0.67	2.25 to 2.60
Difference		0.34	0.12		0.09 to 0.58
Probability (feminine trust > masculine trust) = 99% p-value < 0.0074					

Table 4.4 Republican Additive Trust Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = 2.42	-0.13	0.12	-0.36 to 0.11	0.28
Feminine Mean = 2.76	0.21	0.12	-0.02 to 0.44	0.07
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	2.55			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.045				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average additive trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-4 range.				

5. Democrat Condition Trust Regression Controlling for Effect of Participant Partisanship

Table 5.1 Feminine-Framed Democrat Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean = 0.68	0.07	0.04	-0.01 to 0.15	0.08
Republican Mean = 0.61	-0.001	0.06	-0.11 to 0.11	0.98
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.61			
Number of Observations: 59 Adjusted r-square: 0.03				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 5.2 Masculine-Framed Democrat Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean= 0.59	0.07	0.05	-0.03 to 0.18	0.18
Republican Mean= 0.50	-0.02	0.06	-0.14 to 0.11	0.79
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.52			
Number of Observances: 62 Adjusted r-square: 0.01				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 5.3 Gender-Neutral Framed Democrat Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean=0.69	0.20	0.06	0.08 to 0.32	0.002
Republican Mean=0.55	0.06	0.10	-0.15 to 0.26	0.57
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.49			
Number of Observances: 63 Adjusted r-squared=0.13				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

6. Rep. Condition Trust Regression Controlling for Effect of Participant Partisanship

Table 6.1 Feminine-Framed Republican Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean = 0.56	-0.01	0.06	-0.13 to 0.11	0.88
Republican Mean = 0.70	0.13	0.08	-0.01 to 0.29	0.11
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.57			
Number of Observations: 62 Adjusted r-square: 0.025				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 6.2 Masculine-Framed Republican Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean= 0.48	0.07	0.08	-0.1 to 0.24	0.398
Republican Mean= 0.59	0.18	0.09	-0.002 to 0.35	0.053
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.41			
Number of Observances: 58 Adjusted r-square: 0.0324				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 6.3 Gender-Neutral Framed Republican Trust Regression of Democrat Participants on Republican Participants, with Non-Partisan Participants

Participant Partisanship	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Democrat Mean=0.55	-0.01	0.06	-0.13 to 0.12	0.91
Republican Mean=0.52	-0.04	0.07	-0.19 to 0.11	0.59
Intercept (Non-Partisan)	0.56			
Number of Observances: 61 Adjusted r-square=0.005				
Notes. Dependent variable is the participant's average trust in the candidate, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

7. Breaking down the additive measure of trust – Perceived Dependability, Competence, Integrity and Responsiveness to Public Concerns among participants exposed to the Democrat Condition

Table 7.1 Paired *t*-test of the difference in candidate's perceived level of each trait reported by participants exposed to the Democrat feminine-framed group and the Democrat masculine-framed group

	Dependable	Competent	Integrity	Responsive to Public Concerns
Feminine Framed Group	.67 (n=59, SE=.02)	.74 (n=59, SE=.02)	.72 (n=59, SE=.03)	.74 (n=59, SE=.02)
Masculine Framed Group	.65 (n=62, SE=.02)	.71 (n=62, SE=.03)	.58 (n=62, SE=.02)	.64 (n=62, SE=.02)
Difference	.02 (p-value = 0.52)	.02 (p-value=0.45)	.14 (p-value=0.0001)	.10 (p-value=0.004)

Table 7.2 Democrat Dependability Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .65	-0.04	0.03	-0.10 to 0.02	0.19
Feminine Mean = .67	-0.02	0.03	-0.08 to 0.04	0.52
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.69			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.01				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived dependability, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 7.3 Democrat Competence Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .71	-0.02	0.03	-0.08 to 0.04	0.51
Feminine Mean = .73	0.003	0.03	-0.06 to 0.07	0.92
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.73			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.004				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived competence, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 7.4 Democrat Integrity Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .58	-0.07	0.03	-0.14 to -0.01	0.03
Feminine Mean = .72	0.07	0.03	-0.001 to 0.13	0.05
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.65			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.08				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived level of integrity, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 7.5 Democrat Responsiveness Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .64	-0.05	0.04	-0.12 to 0.02	0.13
Feminine Mean = .73	0.04	0.04	-0.03 to 0.11	0.23
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.69			
Number of Observations: 184 Adjusted r-square: 0.03				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived level of responsiveness to public concerns, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

8. Breaking down the additive measure of trust – Perceived Dependability, Competence, Integrity and Responsiveness to Public Concerns among participants exposed to the Republican Condition

Table 8.1 Paired *t*-test of the difference in candidate's perceived level of each trait reported by participants exposed to the Republican feminine-framed group and the Republican masculine-framed group

	Dependable	Competent	Integrity	Responsive to Public Concerns
Feminine Framed Group	.69 (n=62, SE=.03)	.70 (n=62, SE=.03)	.67 (n=62, SE=.02)	.70 (n=62, SE=.03)
Masculine Framed Group	.62 (n=58, SE=.02)	.69 (n=58, SE=.02)	.55 (n=58, SE=.03)	.57 (n=58, SE=.03)
Difference	.07 (p-value = 0.05)	.01 (p-value=0.74)	.12 (p-value=0.003)	.14 (p-value=0.001)

Table 8.2 Republican Dependability Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .64	-0.02	0.03	-0.09 to 0.05	0.58
Feminine Mean = .69	0.05	0.03	-0.02 to 0.12	0.14
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.64			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.02				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived dependability, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 8.3 Republican Competence Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .69	0.03	0.03	-0.04 to 0.09	0.45
Feminine Mean = .70	0.04	0.03	-0.02 to 0.10	0.27
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.66			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.0072				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived competence, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 8.4 Republican Integrity Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .56	-0.06	0.04	-0.14 to 0.01	0.09
Feminine Mean = .67	0.05	0.04	-0.02 to 0.13	0.13
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.62			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.0439				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived level of integrity, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

Table 8.5 Republican Responsiveness Regression of Masculine Frame on Feminine Frame, with Gender-Neutral Frame

Media Frame	Slope	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	Statistical Significance
Masculine Mean = .57	-0.07	0.04	-0.15 to 0.01	0.08
Feminine Mean = .71	0.07	0.04	-0.01 to 0.14	0.10
Intercept (Gender-Neut.)	.64			
Number of Observations: 181 Adjusted r-square: 0.05				
Notes. Dependent variable is the candidate's average perceived level of responsiveness to public concerns, scored to a continuous 0-1 range.				

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