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**RE-FRAMING GENDER: AN ANALYSIS OF JOURNALISM'S SOCIAL  
MEDIA CHARACTERIZATION OF FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL  
CANDIDATES DURING THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

Taylor Kiernan

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RE-FRAMING GENDER:  
AN ANALYSIS OF JOURNALISM'S SOCIAL MEDIA CHARACTERIZATION OF  
FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES  
DURING THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

by

Taylor S. Kiernan

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Submitted to the Graduate School,  
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the media's coverage of three women who ran for president during the 2020 presidential election: Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren, and Kamala Harris. In addition, Kamala Harris' candidacy for vice-presidency was also analyzed. This research utilized framing theory and qualitative content analysis to examine how the top three news media outlets during the time (Fox News, CNN, and the New York Times) portrayed the candidates via their Twitter accounts. Results from 2,119 tweets indicated four major themes as frames by the media: *issue coverage*, *campaign updates*, *candidate qualifications*, and *candidate demographics*. Issue coverage appeared as the largest theme throughout the data, with an average of 33% of the candidate's coverage being allocated to their policy plans and viewpoints. This research found an increase from previous literature in the percent of media coverage regarding issue coverage that is traditionally considered men's issues. For both Klobuchar and Warren, *campaign updates* ranked as their second highest theme of media characterization, followed by *qualifications* and finally *demographics*. However, in the case of Kamala Harris, *campaign updates* ranked as the last theme, behind *qualifications* and *demographics* respectively. Much of Harris's campaign coverage, more so than Klobuchar and Warren, exemplified the intersectionality of both race and gender.

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## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

After news broke of Chelsea Clinton's pregnancy, headlines swirled around the future grandmother and potential 2016 presidential candidate, Hilary Clinton. The media questioned if becoming a grandmother might derail her political career. *The Christian Science Monitor* published a piece entitled, "*Chelsea Clinton Baby: Will Hilary Clinton Be Less Likely to Run in 2016?*" (Feldmann, 2014). An article in *USA Today* stated, "It's unclear how Chelsea's pregnancy will affect Hillary Clinton, who is considering a race for president in 2016" (Camia, 2014). Several other news outlets published rhetorically similar pieces. Outraged readers took to social media to share their concerns for this type of gendered framework and tone published by the news media. Television producer and screen writer Shonda Rhimes (2014) tweeted a link to the article with the message, "On another topic: This is incredibly stupid. No one would ever write this dumbass article about a MAN running." Many Twitter and social media users posted similar comments as well. Just days before this pregnancy announcement and the uproar it created, Clinton foreshadowed her own future when she answered a question at the Women in the World Summit in New York City, regarding the double standard for women. In her response, she stated that "the double standard is alive and well" and that, "the media is the principal propagator of its persistence" and should be more self-aware of how they promote gender standards (Reston, 2014).

Clinton is not the first to speculate, or experience, how the media is involved in perpetuating this double standard or gendered framing coverage. In recent decades, scholars and consumers alike have taken notice to this trend, analyzing the impact that this framework may have on political campaigns and voting behaviors. For example, the

persistent framing of female politicians as “firsts” in the media could de-normalize them in the field (Meeks, 2012), minimize their validity as candidates (Falk, 2010) and hurt their potential for winning an election. This idea of framing, or framing theory, theoretically is widely known across many disciplines and includes both disciplinary origins and explanatory models (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009). Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) argue that media may be structured around these primary frameworks to “influence audience interpretations.” It is story framing, like that of Clinton’s new title of ‘grandmother’ disrupting her political career, that is worrisome for the potential of influence voting behavior.

A study of the literature regarding historical analyses of female presidential candidates who came before Clinton, illustrate many different gendered categories the media inflict on female candidates which could negatively impact election outcomes for the women. Numerous female presidential candidates throughout history have faced discrimination due to gender, including but not limited to: Margaret Chase Smith (1964), Shirley Chisholm (1972), Patricia Schroder (1988), Elizabeth Dole (1999), Carol Mosely Braun (2003), and Hilary Clinton (2008, 2016).

Scholars such as Fox and Lawless (2004), Heldman, Carroll, and Olson (2006), Wasburn and Wasburn (2011), Larris and Maggio (2012), Wright and Holland (2014) and more, have proposed different classifications in which they believe women are often categorized or framed by the media. However, a sizeable gap or disagreement occurs among the literature regarding what these common media frames might be. Recognizing this disagreement amongst published literature, authors Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020) conducted an analysis of 90 studies, many of which were contradictory of each

other, regarding this topic. In their study, *Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis*, they developed a meta-analysis of over 750,000 media stories and found a difference amongst the coverage between men in women regarding appearance and personal life, viability, and stereotypical or trait coverage. These studies delivered counteracting research for a wide range of explanations for the underrepresentation and characterization of female candidates on behalf of the media.

Media coverage is essential during a political campaign in both the quantity and quality of the coverage. Much of the public obtain their information regarding the qualifications and characteristics of candidates directly from the news media, taking this information into account when deciding how to cast their vote (Kahn, 1992). They rely on the news media for evidence about the potential candidates (Chaffee and Kanihan, 1997; Gunther and Mughan, 2000; Kahn and Kenney, 2002; Meeks 2012), primarily in two categories: political issues and personal characteristics of each candidate (Braden, 1996; Hacker 2004; Louden and McCauliff, 2004; Meeks, 2012). Even with substantial coverage, it is crucial that the coverage is framed properly, with minimal gendered coverage to avoid bias or novelty framing, either intentionally or unintentionally by the media.

These patterns portrayed by the media which have been recorded and analyzed by scholars could have serious electoral impacts and are essential to understand. A goal of this research was to take what is previously understood research of how the media frames female presidential candidate's coverage in relation to gender to ultimately answer if this type of gender bias coverage is still occurring today, with a focus on the most recent 2020 presidential election. I sought to answer the question if this gendered language and

framing persists in the media today, particularly regarding the characterizations of three top 2020 female presidential candidates with similar qualifications and political status: Kamala Harris (D-CA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN). A goal of this research was to draw any similarities or differentiations between these recent campaigns and previously studied historical campaigns to determine if media frames for women continue to persist in the news media today.

With attitudes surrounding women in office taking a shift for the better, according to public polls, I hoped to find more differences among the historical categories than similarities, or even some new frames and categories all together. For example of this shift, the media have developed from asking questions like the 1937 Gallup poll (#28), “Would you vote for a woman for president if she were qualified in every *other* respect? (Gallup, 1937),” where a horrifyingly low 33% answered “yes.” In 2003, that number jumped to 87% of people who answered they would vote for a woman (Jones and Moore, 2003) and in a more recent 2015 Gallup poll, 92% of pollsters answered “yes” (McCarthy, 2015).

Attitudes are shifting and thus it stands to reason that the media’s coverage could and should reflect this shift. With women increasingly winning smaller local elections (Flammang, Seltzer, Newman and Voorhees Leighton, 2000), this could illustrate the potential growth that is yet to come on a national level. However, with knowledge of how the media covered Clinton becoming a grandmother, yet did not consider how the near dozens of grandchildren of Mitt Romney would impact him politically, it is possible that the gender frames produced by the media historically still linger today. It is important to understand this media framing regarding political figures and our democracy.

From Lippmann's argument in the 1920s, the role media play between external objective reality and social reality has unfolded into a century-long argument (Shaw, Weaver & McCombs, 1997). The political atmosphere is particularly affected by this relationship, since the public often turns to the media, both traditional and social, as its main source of political information. Stemming beyond the traditional media, political information may also be consumed via satire and punchlines, in addition to traditional news. Hoffman and Young (2011) found through their study of *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, *The Late Show*, and *The Tonight Show*, that exposure to even this type of programming can influence political participation. The media hold weight in both quantity and quality of coverage, including the nontraditional or newer sources of media.

Political news is also now consumed differently than it once was when traditional media was the only form available. In 2016, The Pew Research Center recorded how the public consumes news across all media platforms. 57% of consumers received their news via televised network, 38% percent of consumers collected their news online, 25% of consumers acquired their news via the radio, and 20% of consumers received their news from print news (Mitchell, Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). In 2021, the percentage of people who report consuming news via a smartphone or tablet increased to almost 86%, causing a massive shift over a short time period in the way news media sources have traditionally been consumed. In fact, 53% of consumers report getting their news on social media platforms (Shearer, 2021). This study took this knowledge of increased social media use by consumers and applied it to the 2020 election, with a focus on Twitter.

Understanding if these gendered frames by the media still impact female political campaigns may help future women structure their political campaign strategies, or at the

least open the eyes of the media consumer to potential bias that may influence their voting behavior. The research for this study examined the news media content on Twitter from popularly consumed news media accounts with a high number of followers, to gain a better understanding if these categories and frames from previous scholars were still applicable today. Analyzing the 2020 election brought new and relatively understudied information to this field.

In the following chapters, I advance my argument surrounding political news media coverage. In Chapter Two, I discuss the theoretical framework for this argument and the importance of the news media, including the potential impact on voting behavior based on framing and rhetoric. In Chapter Three, I discuss the framing historically placed on female presidential candidates through preceding literature and frames that have been proposed by previous scholars, particularly regarding the following candidates: Margaret Chase Smith (1964), Shirley Chisholm (1972), Patricia Schroder (1988), Elizabeth Dole (1999), Carol Mosely Braun (2003), and Hilary Clinton (2008, 2016). In Chapter Four, I provide the method chosen for this research. I describe the procedure used to collect and analyze the data, including framing theory and content analysis. In the following four chapters, I discuss the results of my findings, including the four frames found within the data. Chapter Five focuses on the frame *campaign updates*, discussing the overall coverage of each candidate's campaign. Chapter Six dives further with the next media frame, *issue coverage*, and analyzes the type of media coverage provided to the candidates based on their policy standings. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the third framework, *qualifications*, which was abundantly found throughout the data. Chapter Eight analyzes the final frame found among the data, *demographic references*. In Chapter

Nine, the Discussion and Conclusion, I summarize and discuss my findings, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of this research, while making suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II – WHY THE MEDIA MATTERS: THE POWER OF LANGUAGE AND THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

News media's influence have the potential to go far beyond just informing the public. The public relies heavily on mass media to obtain its knowledge for political figures, daily news, and the overall significance of what is culturally important. With traditional and new media repeatedly showing the power they possess for real-life repercussions; it would be irresponsible to ignore the media's potential influence during a political campaign. The coverage of a presidential candidate could influence voting tendencies or turnout, and ultimately political participation (Falk, 2010).

As the scholarship within gender and media studies develops around the political sphere, many scholars agree that voters are now more willing to support female candidates for president or vice president than in previous decades (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Streb et al., 2008; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; Brooks, 2013; Dolan, 2014). With voter's more willing to support female politicians, the lack of female representation for women holding these positions is a curious phenomenon. Is it a representation issue? A media framing issue? An incumbent situation? Are women just less likely to run in general? While scholars grapple with these questions, a myriad of different gendered frameworks for this gap have surfaced regarding news media coverage analyses.

Minorities have been underrepresented in politics throughout United States' history. In the case of gender, women were not legally permitted to even vote until 1920 under the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (U.S. Const. amend XIX). The U.S., and most of the world, has historically been a predominantly male-led political patriarchy. Over one hundred years after earning the right to vote, women remain a minority in the House of

Representatives, Congress, and in The White House. However, in an exciting turn of events for female politicians and those who fight for gender equality, 2021 brought the nation's first ever female vice president, Kamala Harris. Though her initial run for presidency was unsuccessful, she shattered the glass ceiling of The White House as the nation's first female vice president, serving under President Joseph Biden. This is a foundational step for the progress towards gender equality, regardless of political party affiliation or policy agreements and disagreements. A goal of this research is to continue to remain non-partisan, while recognizing and analyzing gender gaps and strides within political campaigns, unrelated to policy affiliation. To thoroughly understand political campaign characterizations by the news media, a thorough review of previous literature rooted in media studies, gender studies, and political science has been conducted to apply and analyze the 2020 election cycle.

Women are increasingly winning smaller local elections (Flammang, Seltzer, Newman and Voorhees Leighton, 2000). This evidence illustrates the potential growth that is yet to come on a national level. Gender norms that are deeply rooted within a society often take generations to evolve. As any type of discrimination that is deeply rooted into a culture, gender norms are persistent. Many passionate women have taken a seat at the once men's only table, proved their capabilities, and rejected being seen as having less value solely due to their gender. However, to achieve their status, many women have faced harsh criticism regarding their gender, particularly at a national level for women who run for president. For example, a *Denver Post* comment referred to shedding "a tear at this invasion of one of the last "men only"; preserves (Opinion of the Week, 1964)" during Margaret Chase Smith's candidacy for the presidency in 1964,

which took place during a time of the second wave of feminism. During this time, society was questioning what gender roles should be (Falk, 2010). During the 1972 presidential election, Shirley Chisholm was attacked in an editorial from the *Chicago Daily Defender* for playing “vaginal politics” (Blakemore, 2016) in an attempt to degrade her political value, ironically during the time Chisholm was already an elected and well-liked senator. A *Beavy County Times* article quoted, “We are, I fear, doomed to an era of female meddling in the electoral process (Tully, 1972),” expressing the horror of breaking the cultural norm and electing a female to the highest office. Not quite sure what to do with a female candidate, journalists also played a major focus on candidate appearance during campaigns, which is a common tactic afflicting many women who run for office.

While women have come a long way for the right to politically represent Americans, the data illustrate that equality has not yet been achieved. Currently, the ratio of men to women in the United States is nearly equal, falling closely to a one-to-one ratio according to the United States 2013 census. However, this equal ratio is not indicated by the government representatives who stand for the population. The House of Representatives (2019-2021) currently stands with 23% female representatives. Similarly, the U.S Senate has only 25% female members, again much lower than the one-to-one average of the nation (DeSilver, 2018). Only about one quarter of Congress is female. With an American population split seemingly down the middle, these numbers grimly misrepresent the nation’s people by gender, before even considering the underrepresentation of race, ethnicity, culture, etc. These discouraging numbers are significant and demonstrate a substantial flaw for democracy. With the nation’s individuals not properly represented, the very premise of democracy is threatened.

Without proper representation, those who find themselves underrepresented lose their voice in the system, and consequently policies are placed into effect that may not be in their best interest.

The purpose of this paper is not to diminish the incredible growth of women in the political sphere over the last few decades, which is truly groundbreaking, but to further understand the characteristics of the media coverage surrounding political campaigns to further analyze the potential explanations for the gender-gap of political representation during the 2020 election cycle. This research expands on previous explorations of past campaigns from literature to analyze potential reasons for the gender-gap politically through the lens of media framing techniques.

With this historically well-researched topic, scholar's results find many different conclusions for the gender inequality in politics. This ranges from lack of coverage provided to the female candidate, to the discrimination of breaking into a traditionally masculine position (Heldman, Carroll and Olson, 2005, Rosenwasser, Miller, Dean 1989), or the idea that women are merely "benchwarmers rather than as an integral part of government (Braden, 1996)". Alternatively, Brooks (2013) argues that gender has no impact at all on public attitudes about political candidates, or it is an incumbency issue (Fox and Lawless, 2020) which will take time to filter through the system. Some scholars believe that women are simply entering the political field later in life than men due to raising children, leaving less time to climb the political ladder (Mandel, 1993). However, with the 2016 presidential election of former President Donald Trump who did not have a lengthy career climbing the political ladder with a resume of a businessman, this claim is arguably lacking in substance.

The amount of media exposure and the type of content may play a role in voter behavior. The way media portrays candidates could have a substantial impact on the outcome of an election. Candidates play a political game with media for an adequate amount of coverage, while simultaneously being significant and respected in the content of the coverage. The amount of media coverage that a candidate receives impacts their campaign (Falk, 2010). Historically, much of the coverage of women is more family or attribution based than that of their male counterparts. Gender-bias media coverage is not a groundbreaking notion; however, it is still one of the most debated topics today ranging from why the coverage is gender-focused, the numbers behind the gap, potential avenues for women running for office to beat the gap, etc. With social media as rising tools for potential candidates to push policies and garner recognition, the platforms should be analyzed for their impact and effectiveness. While the use of social media during political campaigns is still in its infancy, there is a wealth of information applicable to the strategizing of social media efforts for political campaigns. For example, after comparing female politicians to male politician's posts, Yarchi and Samuel-Azran (2018) concluded that female posts generated significantly more interaction and engagement.

In addition, major media outlets tend to lean towards one political affiliation, attracting a partisan viewership (Pew, 2014). Birthed from subjective media outlets, is a public of voters who are increasingly polarized. The more polarized the media becomes, the more polarized the public becomes. Confirmation bias becomes a threat amongst a divided society that consumes news that portrays their viewpoints. This leaves voters without a full understanding of policy plans or characteristics of a candidate. An uneducated society is not able to make educated decisions regarding voting and candidate

elections. The very definition of a democracy lies within the equality of all people, stating it is “the belief in and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves” (Democracy, 1995). In a model society for democracy, fair voting through educated voters intends to let the people lead. Without educated voters who understand the candidates, due to media frames or exclusion of candidates, our dependence on democracy is at risk.

The question arises if it is the media that have an influence on public polls, or if the standing of the candidates in the polls have an increase on the media coverage. Filtering algorithms on the internet may be to blame for much of what voters see or even which candidates the voters are subject to view on their social media news feeds. Algorithms aside, it is the responsibility of journalists to cover elections fairly, or so the voter’s hope. The media influence what voters believe about a candidate and tell society what issues need to be advocated for (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988), thus framing the issues. If it is not covered by the media, it is deemed not important. As Bernard Cohen first theorized, news is only news if it is selected to be such (Falk, 2010). In the eye of the public, when media does not cover an issue, then the issue is either unimportant or nonexistent, setting the agenda for what voters should be concerned with. This stands true for political candidates. If a candidate is not covered by the media, they are not a viable or respectable option to vote for.

On average, men who run for political office tend to receive more issue coverage than women who run for office. National media coverage of a female candidate often describes physical appearances or family stories over policy issue coverage. Women are

also referred to more often by their first names, without their title if applicable, than their male counterparts. A National Women's Political Caucus found that the public believes it is harder for women to win elections (Newman, 1994) when in fact more women are winning smaller local elections (Seltzer, Newman & Leighton, 1997). There is a historical trend of male candidates receiving more media coverage than female political candidates, regardless of their popularity amongst the people. For example, in the 2008 presidential election, Hillary Clinton ranked higher by the voters in the polls, however Barack Obama still received more coverage quantitatively in the media (Falk, 2010).

Despite a rise in female candidates, the perception of political leaders is still most often associated with male traits (Schmitt & Brant, 2019). Bauer (2020) found that female candidates, particularly Republican candidates, benefit from portraying masculine stereotypes over feminine stereotypes. According to Falk's (2001) research of an analysis on media coverage of women running for presidential office between 1872 and 1999, three arguments exist by the news media to oppose women in office: Women are (1) unnatural in politics, (2) emotionally incompetent, or (3) all together unviable as candidates. Gutgold (2017) argues that women are held back from success by three structural barriers: (1) outsider status, (2) the structure of the electoral system, and (3) the inability to raise funds for their campaign.

### The Power of Language

The media have more of an impact on voter behavior than the average voter may wish to believe, specifically when it comes to stereotyping and societal norms. Aside from political standings, the media have the potential to shape the viewers outlook on

reality and cultural norms. The language and semiotics used, and how they are used, can construct the viewer's reality. Garret and Stecula (2018) argue that rhetoric is what continues to perpetuate women as the stereotypical gender roles. They argue it is rhetoric that attempts to normalize stereotypes through a subtle approach.

While quantity of media coverage in general is an essential piece of a successful presidential campaign, the quality of the media coverage plays a large role as well. It is not just the number of times a name reaches a headline; it is significant what the headline implies. Discussed in this body of research is often the impact of language. Language develops the capability to alter perceptions. When the public turns to the news media for political information, the choice of language could potentially alter their opinions of a candidate. Opinions and thoughts are constructed through language, which is constructed by society based on cultural norms. Language may be weaponized by either the news media or politicians themselves to sway voters, potentially in such a subtle way that it goes unnoticed.

While the country and voters have come a long way from its once outright sexism in politics, this does not mean it has reached equal gender representation. As previously mentioned, the news media have developed from asking questions like the 1937 Gallup poll (#28), "Would you vote for a woman for president if she were qualified in every *other* respect? (Gallup, 1937)" to a more subtle way of addressing the still novelty of a female presidential candidate.

Sapir and Whorf were among the first theorists to define the possibility that different languages may have different realities, developing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Sapir (1929) wrote through the culture of language, "we're taught to divide

linguistically,” where language is built to categorize. It is this idea of immediate categorization where language holds discrimination through its vocabulary (Fowler, 1991) and this process of labeling or categorizing which generates bias (Foster, Schmidt and Sabatino, 1976). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis postulates that people who speak different languages may have different perceptions of reality. For political voters, categorization happens through media consumption, potentially perpetuating stereotypes if the news media linguistically presents a candidate as such.

Gender stereotyping is easily found throughout a brief analysis America’s political history and media coverage. Conducting a content analysis of national survey data and news coverage of thirty senate campaigns, Hayes (2011) argued how the culmination of research that shows voters are more likely to believe that female candidates are capable of handling social issues, but less capable when faced with national security and foreign policy issues. In other words, women are “less tough but more empathetic” than their male counterparts (Hayes, 2011).

Kahneman and Tversky (1984) found through their research that merely altering word choice has the potential to alter a consumer’s understanding of an issue. This is particularly essential to understand while watching news media representation of political candidates. As Mathews and Prothro (1966) theorize through their foundational research, media influences political attitudes and behavior, including exposure to similar people. Thus, when women are underrepresented as politicians in the media it is reinforced women do not belong in the political sphere, further pushing the potential reason for the gap in gender within politics is the underrepresentation of women by the news media.

While in more recent years, the number of voters who claim they would vote for a female candidate have climbed to percentages in the nineties, the country is continuing to see a lack of success with women towards presidential office. There are many potential reasons as to why this may be. However, it is often subtle influences that have the possibility to affect the mindset of a voter, such as the Clinton and McCain example previously mentioned, from well renowned news media sources where voters depend on obtaining valuable information about candidates.

Both the language and the framing of the language utilized by the news media to describe candidates are overwhelmingly important. Language can shape the thoughts and concepts of culture. It can be used as an instrument to reach different types of voters, utilizing specific rhetoric for one specific voter group or demographic. Language could be weaponized against an opponent or an opposing political party to promote one politician over another. With the power of language, the news media's coverage of a presidential candidates holds the potential to influence voting tendencies or overall turnout and political participation. It is news media where most consumers and voters turn to form their political opinions and it is the news media that historically spreads stereotyping in regard to gender or minorities.

### Theoretical Foundations

Research shows that with increased media exposure, candidates have increased recognition with voters (Goldenberg & Traugott, 1987, Falk 2010). Without coverage, presidential hopefuls are left unseen and unheard of by the voters. Former President Trump's victory in the 2016 Republican Primary is often attributed to this recognition

through his ability to outperform his opponents in the quantity of news coverage, regardless of its quality. However, quantity of media coverage can be a double-edged sword. According to Patterson (2016), 77% percent of former President Trump's news coverage was negative. While the quality was predominantly negative, he is recorded as receiving much more coverage than his opponents.

The language media use when informing the audience about a candidate also may have an impact on the voter's understanding of a candidate. This escalates the importance of news media in all elections, especially within a presidential election, as candidates who do not receive an appropriate amount of representation do not stand a viable chance to be elected, since they are not as easily recognized by the voters. Bernard Cohen was first to popularly argue this to be true.

Cohen (1963) proposed that if something was not news-worthy or covered within the media, then it essentially did not happen in the eyes of the public. Therefore, the media provide "status conferral" by placing a status, or importance, on a wide range of subject that the media covers covers. The simple act of covering an issue or person applies a certain level of status to it, which tells the viewers that it is newsworthy and legitimate (Lazarsfeld and Martch, 1948). The media are essential to a fair and properly-functioning democracy (Peer and Chestnut 1995), which establishes vital political figures in American society. Scholars, such as St. George and Robinson-Weber (1983), argue that media could impact political attitudes and behavior. More notably and widely cited, McCombs and Shaw (1972) were among the first to determine that the media has a significant impact on voter's judgement.

This idea is reflected in Max McCombs and Donald Shaw's well-known agenda setting theory, debuting from the 1968 presidential election. In 1972, McCombs and Shaw recognized the media play an important role in shaping the mindset of the viewers. The question followed if media was dictating the public's conversation by implying what is important. Could the media be telling the public what to think about? The argument originally began in the 1920s when Lippmann (1922) advanced the understanding of the impact of media on social role. Following Lippmann's idea of the link between media and its consumers, the 1930s through the 1950s were filled with research that alluded to a similar notion, referred to as *persuasive communication* via media messages (Shaw, Weaver & McCombs, 1997).

McCombs and Shaw propelled the agenda-setting theory in 1972, which argued that media had a large influence on its audience by instilling in them what was important through the covering it. The more coverage an issue gets, the more the audience will regard it as an issue. Through framing, media show the public *what* to think about and imply *how* to think about certain issues. The information that the public garners from news media about a candidate is often the information that they readily believe about the candidate. When the media reflects the views of a candidate, they are determining the importance of the issues as well.

Media delineates how the public defines certain situations or depicts their environment, as Lippmann (1922) coined and McCombs and Shaw referenced, our *pseudo environment*. It is the voter's reliance on the media and the media's representations that dictate long term policy outcomes (Shaw, Weaver & McCombs, 1997), making the media an essential factor in political election outcomes. According to

agenda-setting theory, the media shapes reality rather than reflecting it. The public generally receives the issues that the media focusses on to be the most important issues. In accordance with agenda-setting theory, scholars in recent years continue to show media's capacity for manipulation consumers regarding this theory.

Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) claim that journalists take special care when selecting how to present a story. The headlines they create, the images they choose, etc. all come together to frame the story. The choice to include or omit information in the media subsequently impacts its framing (Ortega and Feagin, 2016). The choice to include or omit information may be either intentional or unintentional, but regardless has an impact on framing. This idea of framing, or framing theory, theoretically is widely known across many disciplines and includes both disciplinary origins and explanatory models (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009).

The sociological approach to framing theory acknowledges that humans minimize the processing of difficult or complex information and situations to judgement (Heider, 1959). According to Goffman (1974), individuals rely on "primary frameworks" to classify new information or complex situations based on common societal categories. Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) argue that media may be often structured around these primary frameworks to "influence audience interpretations." The way the media structure a message may lead the viewer to subconsciously interpret the message a certain way. In news media in particular, research has discovered that news stories are structured with both information and frames (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) argue that stories are comprised of packages that impact how people understand an issue. The packages include arguments, information, symbols, metaphors, and images.

A 1987 study by researchers Iyengar and Kinder, found that participants rated the topics that were most important to them as those that were portrayed in the news, confirming that media does play a role in what the public determines as important. Taking a step further, the researchers displayed that the framing of the story also has an impact on how important consumers believe issues to be (Iyengar, 1991). It is framing that may alter opinions on issues (de Vreese, 2005), as well as go unnoticed while fundamentally altering social reality (Ortega and Feagin, 2016). In a 2005 study, researchers Gerber, Karlan and Bergan found similar results. The researchers subjected participants to a subscription to *The Washington Post* and *Washington Times*. Their results found that those participants who received either paper led to more support for the Democratic party, potentially implying that the left-leaning framed media that was consumed by the participants impacted voting behavior or opinions (Gerber, Karlan & Bergan, 2009). Moreover, small presentation differences may influence how people understand the world around them (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), including how political candidates are portrayed to the public. For example, Simon and Jerit (2007) found that by framing articles using the word *fetus* or the word *baby* when discussing abortion, had an impact on the audience.

Research indicates that consumer thoughts and actions are substantially influenced by the way media frames issues. Media tell the public who the political candidates are and provides them with an appearance and frame. Media can define common conception about culture and shape how situations or people are viewed. What people see on television may impact their understanding of reality and concepts or may

confuse their mediated experience with their real-world experience (Falk, 2010). This potential confusion may be related to source confusion.

### CHAPTER III - MEDIA COVERAGE THEMES THROUGHOUT HISTORY: THE WOMEN WHO CAME BEFORE

Many women have attempted to fight their way into the previously-man's world of politics, dating back to Victoria Woodhall's presidential run in 1872, nearly 50 years before the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment that allowed women the right to vote. Victoria Woodhull's 1872 presidential campaign was arguably a symbolic one, since at the time, the idea of a woman as president was fundamentally laughable to most voters. However, many women who came after her argue against the notion of a symbolic campaign. In 1964, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith led the way as the first female candidate to seek the presidential nomination from a political party. She was successfully placed on the ticket as a contender. Following closely behind Smith's campaign, Democrat Senator Shirley Chisholm in 1972 was the second woman to run for a presidential nomination. She was also the first African American woman to run and the first woman to achieve placement on the Democrat's party ticket.

Each brave woman that runs for office, like Smith and Chisholm, lay another steppingstone to pave the way for the first female president and shift the cultural norm. Before analyzing news media coverage for the women of the 2020 presidential campaign, it was essential to have a historical baseline understanding of media coverage of previous female candidates. Understanding how the media have framed past candidates informed a more thorough groundwork for themes during the 2020 election.

## Margaret Chase Smith: A Chic Lady Who Fights (1964)

As the first female candidate to be seriously considered for a major party nomination and placed on the ballot for the running, Margaret Chase Smith's 1964 presidential campaign has been widely analyzed by scholars. Her campaign lasted from January 27, 1964 to July 16, 1964. Not so shockingly, much of the media coverage that surrounded Smith's campaign had a gender-focused framework to it. However, the results illustrated both gender-positive and gender-negative comments, as well as both shock and mockery of her campaign. It is important to note that specific language choice and rhetoric that may be classified today as sexist or gendered, was not always considered to be problematic at the time of her campaign in the 1960s. Looking through the lens of 2020 rhetorical recognitions, or the past scholars who have analyzed Smith's campaign in more recent years, it is easier to spot troubling word choice that are now understood to have an influence on voter choice.

While she was not the first female candidate to run for office, she was the first to have serious considerations. Margaret Chase Smith's candidacy for president in 1964 took place during a tumultuous time of the second wave of feminism, where many voters and the American public were questioning what gender roles should be. During a time where women were not meant to be anything more than housewives, Senator Smith was breaking the mold of the "traditional" woman and paving the path for women in what was seemingly a man's world in the 1960s. In fact, there was such a wide panic surrounding her campaign that harsh criticism was outwardly expressed in the media. Referenced in her book *Women for President; Media Bias in Nine Campaigns*, Falk (2010) quotes an unhappy reader in his letter to the editor for the *New York Daily News*

saying, “So now women think they are capable of holding the highest office in the land. It’s bad enough that we allow these female creatures to operate automobiles. Imagine what would happen if one of them became president! Let’s keep the women at home where they belong.”

While facing sharp criticism from those uncomfortable with a shift in cultural norms, she was still openly recognized by those in power for her experience, grit, and political knowledge. The New York Times released an article “*A Chic Lady Who Fights*,” where the author quoted President Kennedy (a week before his assassination) referring to her as “a very formidable political figure (1964).” She was referred to in another article which discussed her effectiveness as a candidate for her ability to pull in votes, saying “Mrs. Smith’s vote-getting power has been demonstrated repeatedly in Maine.”

While she staunchly argued her platform based on her expertise, the media did not always keep her experience in mind, but rather focused more on her gender. Another article from The New York Times interviewed potential voters, where one voter, Asa, was quoted saying that he would, “Just as soon have a woman in the White House instead of somebody who goes around stamping his initials on everything” implying that to have a female president is not preferred based on gender, but considering the circumstances of the other candidates, he would accept this outcome. While not as outright hostile as others, this is still a clear framing of negative connotation for Senator Smith.

Other articles took a significantly harsher tone, mocking the idea of having a female president which would lead to the “first gentleman” as the spouse. One article, “*Observer*,” from The New York Times, was published merely two days after Smith announced her candidacy. Ironically at the time of this article publication, Senator Smith

had been a widow for years, with no first gentlemen to take the role. The possibility of a first gentlemen than Senator Smith's gender led the media to consider, steered some to shock and horror. The article discussed the characteristics that the first female president's husband must have, including his interest in politics stating, "the chances are that he will not have much interest in politics, since no smart woman ever surpasses her husband at his own game."

While she ran a campaign strongly situated on her experience and ambition, Smith's candidacy was regularly referred to as a symbolic act or a demonstration for gender equality, not a true competitive candidacy. This diminished her credibility as a true candidate in the race. Much of these statements referred to her existing as more of a symbol instead of a real contender for president, relating Senator Smith's campaign to a loss saying "...men of less competence than the lady from Maine were actually elected..." implied that regardless of having more experience and credibility, her gender would not allow her a win. The majority of Smith's media coverage may be classified as having a gendered frame. When articles were positive the authors often excitedly referred to her as the first possible female president, still inflicting the novelty frame. When articles were negative, the author's mocked the idea of a female president. However overwhelmingly, Smith's media coverage may be characterized as gendered (Rogers, 2020).

#### Shirley Chisholm: Unbought and Unbossed (1972)

Shirley Chisholm's candidacy for the presidency in 1972 was monumental on multiple platforms. She ran between January 25, 1972, to July 13, 1972. In her speech

announcing her candidacy, she argued that her candidacy was a campaign for all Americans. Her campaign fought for a unified America, reminding those during her candidacy announcement speech, “in the words of Abraham Lincoln, ‘a house divided cannot stand,’” receiving a roaring applause for this comparison. She was not only a woman running for president, but also an African American, making her the first Black major-party candidate to run for president. This “first” aligned Chisholm with the double disadvantage hypothesis, which postulates that Black female candidates are disadvantaged by both sexism and racism during their political careers (Springer, 1999) which was very apparent during the media coverage of Chisholm’s candidacy.

She set the tone of her own candidacy in this announcement speech by claiming, “I am not the candidate of Black America, although I am Black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women’s movement of this country, although I am a woman and I’m equally proud of that,” exclaiming she was proud to be both Black and a woman, but those were not the sole reasons to vote for her. She sought votes based on her over twenty years of experience in politics arguing, just as Margaret Chase Smith did, for votes based on her skill over her gender or color. Like Margaret Chase Smith, Chisholm’s campaign took place as the second wave of feminism was winding down, where many still grappled with what gender roles should look like. While Smith was the first female candidate to be seriously considered for the Republican Party nomination and placed on the ballot for the running, Chisholm was the first to be considered for the Democratic Party nomination.

The bulk of media coverage for Chisholm’s campaign did not focus on her merit and qualifications like she had hoped it would, as expressed through her candidacy announcement. Her race and gender were regularly discussed, in lieu of her policies and

affiliations. Chisholm's presidential campaign media coverage was plagued with a focus on the fact that Chisholm was Black, a woman, or both. Immediately after concluding her candidacy announcement, the first journalist to ask a question related it to her race and gender, asking if Chisholm would recommend a trend for more women of color to run for elected office. Shortly after her announcement, an article in the *Beavy County Times* quoted, "We are, I fear, doomed to an era of female meddling in the electoral process (Tully, 1972)," further expressing the cultural norm against a woman in office. Not quite sure what to do with Chisholm as a female candidate, journalists focused on her appearance. An *Oakland Post* article described her as "diminutive and short in knee-high laceup boots (Blakemore, 2016)." While this rhetoric may seem odd, or even inappropriate to mention a candidate's weight, it was not an uncommon quote during the time.

Even though much of the media coverage surrounding Chisholm held a focus on her gender or race, not all coverage was negative. She was referred to as being experienced, credible, and a serious political contender on many occasions in the media. She was referred to as a serious contender and someone worth the consideration of voting for. She was also mentioned as potentially being "the shot in the arm that restores some life to our tired political system (Steinberg, 1972)."

Like Margaret Chase Smith before her, Chisholm was also regularly referred to as a new or novel concept. While it is an exciting step to break a barrier to become the first female, particularly the first Black woman potentially elected to office, the stigma of being the first may be a double-edged sword, as the double disadvantage hypothesis speculates (Springer, 1999). Scholars have continued this research into more recent years,

with this idea of novelty potentially resulting in a negative impact on female presidential candidates (Falk, 2010). Being the first has the potential to alienate the candidate from the rest of the pool of candidates, as expressed in the comment “Best women candidates: Representative Shirley Chisholm or Representative Bella Abzug (Krebs, 1972),” separating both Chisholm and Abzug from the group of candidates. While this may not seem worrisome, this categorization may impact the voter’s subconscious mind.

Chisholm was regularly mentioned as the first Black woman to run for office including statements such as, “the first black woman to seek a major-party Presidential nomination (Lynn, 1972)” which again, separates her from the group of contenders. She was referred to as a sentimental character in the election coverage through The New York Times articles, with statements such as Chisholm being the “Big sentimental favorite among new-fashioned women and eggheads (Baker, 1972)” or even more hostile saying, “She is the latest symbol of the Negro quest for equal rights but many black leaders are obviously wary, if not outright hostile, to her candidacy” (Lynn, 1972). In an article even entitled *Symbolic Candidacy* (1972), Chisholm is referred to as being “not a venture on practical politics.” She is referenced as unelectable because she is merely a symbolic candidate and not a true contender for office.

Media commentary swirling around Chisholm’s campaign leaned more hostile, as Glick and Fiske would refer. Many comments related directly to Chisholm’s race or gender, attaching her as an ineffective leader due to the minority or underrepresented labels. Blatantly calling out her race and gender as issues, “even some of Mrs. Chisholm’s admirers conceded privately that she had at least two strikes—her sex and her race—

against her (Lynn, 1972)” quoted one article. She is also described as, “a militant feminist and she rubs us the wrong way (Lynn, 1972).

The media coverage surrounding Chisholm’s presidential campaign did not follow her tone that she attempted to set in the initial stage of her campaign through her candidacy announcement speech. She was regularly referred to as a symbol or having a symbolic campaign. This intersectionality played a major role in her campaign, regularly intertwining condemning her race and gender as “strikes” against her presidential campaign, ignoring her qualifications. While she did in fact have some positive media coverage associating her as a serious contender in the race, much of the coverage referred to Chisholm as a long shot. While Chisholm may have politically needed more support with an underfunded presidential campaign, much of the coverage linked the idea of her incompatibility with the intersectionality of both her race and gender.

#### Pat Schroeder: A Tearful Goodbye (1988)

Following Margaret Chase Smith and Shirley Chisholm, Pat Schroeder, a Harvard-educated Congresswoman, is often the next widely recognized female presidential candidate by the literature. She ran a brief, but memorable, presidential campaign, where if she had aggressively pursued her campaign, she would have been the first woman from a major party to run for office since Chisholm (Weaver, 1987). She was a supporter for other women during their candidacies and fought to disrupt underrepresentation. In an interview with Nichola Gutgold in 1998, she further explained her advocacy for women in the political field. Schroeder said, “What we have in our society is men going into the huddle, and then coming back to tell us what happened. We

as women have to get into the huddle. I want women in the huddle making decisions.” Schroeder made several stances against hostile constituents during her long political career and her short time running for president. Schroeder was firm in her stance on gender focused media questions. She was quoted in a rebuttal about gender, “Yes, I have a uterus and a brain, and they both work (Jamieson, 1988).”

Her behavior during the renouncement of her candidacy at a press conference was so memorable, from her seventeen seconds of crying, that it is often still analyzed today with regard to the “politics of crying” and showing emotion as a female politician. Men and women alike panicked at the signs of emotions, expressing the nightmare of a woman with such emotion in control of nuclear weapons. The media heavily covered her tearful goodbye as if it was a shameful branding on female politicians. Schroeder responded to the press with, “I will never apologize for my tears. I say, no tears, no heart” and later in an interview with P. Sue Hutchison from Mercury News (2008), remarked that tears were hardly taboo stating, “For years after that I kept a 'crying file' of all the politicians who choked up in public, from Margaret Thatcher to Ronald Reagan to George Bush ... the list goes on. It was hardly unique.” While Schroeder’s campaign was brief, she introduced the politics of crying as front-page news, tearing open the gender conversation and making herself an important part of the conversation regarding gender, emotion, and presidential campaigns.

#### Elizabeth Hanford Dole: It’s Her Turn

After being involved in the political scene in for nearly thirty years, a run for office for Elizabeth Hanford Dole was highly anticipated. Journalists speculated that she

had a better chance at winning, due to a shift in public opinion that was more accepting than ever to the idea of a female presidential candidate (Crawley, 1999). Following her announcement and during her exploratory campaign, Dole fared very well in the public polls. While she was consistently behind George W. Bush in the polls, she was the front runner to John McCain, Steve Forbes, Gary Bauer, and Alan Keyes. She also polled as the front-runner during a hypothetical race between Dole and Gore, illustrating her to be a strong candidate in the eyes of the media and the public. Also, implicating her as an excellent candidate for this research. When Dole decided to pull out of the race in October of 1999, she was in third place behind Bush and Forbes, according to an Iowa Gallup Poll.

Elizabeth Dole looked up to the women who came before her, as many aspiring female politicians do in the male dominant field. In an interview, Dole admits to leaning on Margaret Chase Smith for guidance the early 1960's, who was a senator and future presidential candidate of the time. Smith told Dole that to be taken seriously in the field, she should obtain a law degree. Shortly after, Dole began her journey at Harvard Law School. She makes sure that she takes the time to mentor young women, just as Smith did for her (Dole, 2007).

Like the many women before her, Dole was continuously described as a "first" for the campaign, reiterating the disruption of societal norms. Columnist Ellen Goodman said, "As long as there is only one woman in the pack, one skirt among the suits, she is always and forever going to be running 'as a woman.' Dole's own campaign manager dubbed her as a 'first' in the press, saying "There isn't any history. There isn't any barometer. There hasn't been a female candidate for president who was serious (Berke,

1999)” alongside the presidential candidate George W. Bush, who said Dole was the “first viable female presidential candidate (Glover, 1999).” In a study conducted by Shoop (2006), the author argued that articles covering Dole were stereotypically feminine in their descriptions. Like the women before her, Dole’s campaign took on a gendered-tone and novelty frame by the media, in addition to her own staff.

### Carol Moseley Braun: Ms. President

In a highly anticipated run for those who knew her, Carole Moseley Braun announced her bid for presidency on September 22, 2003. She stole the gender conversation surrounding the presidency and vocally intended to fight the gender norms of the office. Braun argued that being a woman was not a handicap towards the presidency, but rather an asset (Lee, 2003). Growing up during racially tumultuous time, Braun was no novice to the harsh world of discrimination. As *Brown et. al, vs. the Board of Education of Topeka* was passed when Braun was only seven, she found herself ducking from white children throwing rocks at her, while trying to learn at school. Even further, Braun’s own aunt was struck and killed by a white driver who was never brought to justice. It was these instances, and many more lived experiences, that propelled Braun into her passionate activism and outspoken nature on both race and gender (Gutgold 2017). She took to nonviolent protests for her activism and actively avoided violent organizations.

She dove whole-heartedly into the race for the White House, fighting against a symbolic candidacy and announcing that she planned to win. As a staunch opponent of the war in Iraq, her goal was a rebuild America, with the argument that if it’s possible for

America to rebuild other countries abroad, particularly Iraq during this time, that it was possible to focus and fix the issues at home. However, the media coverage of her campaign arguably resembled that of Shirley Chisholm in the 1972 election, considering the intersectionality of both her race and gender. A USA Today article stated that, “The former Illinois senator has two politically fatal flaws: she is black and female (Wickham, 2003)” eerily mirroring comments made about Chisholm during her presidential run for office. Braun ultimately withdrew from her presidential candidacy on January 15, 2004. It can be argued that much of Braun’s 2004 campaign coverage unfortunately mirrored Shirley Chisholm’s campaign coverage from 30 years prior with media frames surrounding both race and gender.

#### Hilary Clinton: Double Threat (2008, 2016)

Hillary Clinton played her hand in the presidential election with serious considerations for a potential win, not once, but twice. Almost winning the Democratic Party nomination in the 2008 election and actually winning the Democratic Party nomination in the 2016 election, she is considered by many the nation’s first *non-symbolic* front runner (Gutgold, 2017). While the numerous women who ran before her may argue their campaigns were not symbolic, Hillary Clinton succeeded her predecessors by winning the party ticket in 2016, allowing her to campaign against the Republican front-runner Donald Trump, who eventually won the presidency. The press coverage surrounding Clinton also acknowledged this. In general, Clinton was taken much more seriously than the women who came before her.

January 20, 2007, while Clinton was serving as a well-liked senator, she announced her formation of an explorative presidential committee. Although taken more seriously, Clinton still regularly faced press scrutiny for her appearance. Notably, the media roared about “cleavage-gate,” after the July 20, 2007 article on the Washington Post by Robin Givhan (2007). The article stated, “There was cleavage on display Wednesday afternoon on C-SPAN2. It belonged to Sen. Hillary Clinton.” The New York Times writer Sarah Wheaton (2007) responded a week later with an article claiming that the Clinton campaign was not happy with the original article. The campaign team countered with a fundraising email stating, ““Frankly, focusing on women’s bodies instead of their ideas is insulting.” In addition, Clinton’s Democratic running opponent, Barack Obama, received more press coverage quantitatively, even though Clinton ranked higher in public polls during the time (Falk, 2010).

In an assessment of Hilary Clinton’s media coverage, Lawrence and Rose (2010) found that the media framed Clinton’s 2008 campaign with sexism, although not perhaps as often as many critiques believed. They discovered that Clinton received a fair amount of coverage, an improvement from many women who ran before her, and found a distinction between how traditional news media and newer media played a role in the type of sexism. Traditional media framed the coverage with more benevolent, or less aggressive types of sexism, while the online world was much more outright or violent in their sexist media framing. The authors also found that media which held more “opinion” styles were more likely to display attacks framed with sexism, with MSNBC as a network ranking the highest in these remarks, as well as specific journalists, such as Times columnist Maureen Dowd. In an empirical study of 437 randomly sampled news stories

from the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, and the Washington Post or aired on ABC, CBS, and NBC regarding the amount of her coverage, the authors found that Clinton was substantially covered by the media since she was viewed as a front runner. Differing from many of the female presidential candidates who came before her, the authors found that Clinton experienced no disadvantage in the amount of media coverage compared to her male counterparts. However, in accordance with previous literature, like that of Falk (2008) reference by Lawrence and Rose (2010), the 2010 study found predictable gendered media coverage with regular mentions of Clinton's family, specifically her husband and daughter. The study also found the historically predictable mentions of her appearance in the mainstream media.

Though Clinton did not successfully win the party ticket in 2008 against Barack Obama, or the presidential election in 2016 against Donald Trump, she was widely recognized as a strong contender for office. Although much of the coverage surrounding Clinton during both campaigns was more focused on family or traditionally feminine policies, there was a trend upward in her coverage, taking her more seriously than those who came before her. Clinton received less of the predicted media coverage framed with negative gendered stereotyping than the women who came before her (Lawrence and Rose, 2010) and "did better than the women who proceeded her (Falk, 2010)." With this progress for Clinton, this study was hopeful to continue to see an upward trend for the 2020 election.

## CHAPTER IV – METHOD: FRAMING THEORY AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

A goal of this research was to understand how female presidential candidates were portrayed by news media outlets during the 2020 election. After understanding how female political candidates have historically been portrayed by the media and the characterization of their coverage, an analysis was conducted regarding the progress of more recent news media coverage of female candidates. As more women begin to win elections than ever before, this research was hopeful that the trend of historically reported gender-bias media coverage during presidential campaigns had begun to dissipate for the 2020 election as gender equality continued to rise in society. The 2020 election saw one of the most diverse pools of presidential candidates in American history, with the appointment of Kamala Harris as the first female vice president. A key purpose of this research was to understand how depictions have changed, or not changed, for female candidates over time to further the research of how those depictions may impact a political campaign outcome. Thus, the importance of the established literature review for understanding female candidate's coverage historically was a key starting point for this research.

In this chapter, I introduce the methods of framing and content analysis. I explain the rationale for the specific candidates I selected for analysis, as well as their unique campaign time periods that were analyzed. I also explain how the data was selected and the justification for the specific data. It is my hope that this research will join an existing conversation for women in politics, as they craft and create potential runs for office. By understanding the impact of gendered media coverage through the history of women's campaigns and applying these understandings to campaigns now and in the future,

predictions of the media could potentially be made for the betterment of political campaign planning. These predictions may be weaved into the essence of political campaigning and strategizing, with the hopes of overcoming potential implications or harmful circumstances against political candidates due to their gender.

### Framing Theory

According to framing theory, the media strategically select certain events or concepts to place their focus, as well as set events within a particular context. Essentially, framing theory considers how a topic is presented to audiences (the frames), influencing the way that the audiences understand or consume the message. These frames are structured to organize a message with the intent of influencing the audience's opinion or understanding of the message. The media chooses the context. While framing resembles agenda-setting theory, framing theory expands on the traditional agenda-setting theory, usually through the conscious or subconscious choice on behalf of journalists or organizations. As human beings with lived experiences, it is nearly impossible to avoid bringing personal frames to an issue. Both theories suggest how the media control or draw in consumers by outlining a message within a particular context. Framing theory focusses on the overall substance and influence of an issue, not the issue itself, and the audience's attention to the message, while agenda-setting theory focusses more specifically on the selected topic and repeated exposure.

When Goffman (1974) proposed the theory, he argued that people see the world through two separate frameworks, natural and social, which come together to help people interpret a message. Natural frameworks are those which "identify occurrences seen as

undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, ‘purely physical.’” Whereas social frameworks “provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency” and can guide, or manipulate, the consumer while placing the social framework. It is these frames that guide how consumers interpret the world around them and the messages that they receive from the news media. Scholars such as Berinsky & Kinder (2006), Druckman (2001), Lecheler, Schuck, and de Vreese (2012), Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997), Slothuus (2008) and more have studied the effects of media framing, all resulting in an overarching conclusion of its existence. In a study testing the longevity of framing effects, Lecheler and de Vreese (2011) illustrated that framing effects on news media consumers were persistent over a period of time, particularly on consumers with moderate political knowledge. In a later study, Lecheler et. al. (2015) found that exposure to repetitive framing also leads to more persistent results. Similarly, researchers have found the persistent framing of women as *firsts* or *novelties* in political positions can cause problems for equality in the election process (Falk, 2010).

### Qualitative Content Analysis

The goal of this study was to analyze specifically the *quality* of coverage and the message through potential frames implied by news media throughout the coverage for the 2020 campaign, as it had not yet been widely studied. To do this, a qualitative content analysis was employed on the data to further understand the underlying meaning, if existent, behind media coverage and potential implications on its viewers. Studies show the use of language and word choice could have incredible cognitive implications (Garret

and Stecula, 2018; Sapir, 1929; Fowler, 1991; Foster, Schmidt and Sabatino, 1976; Kahneman and Tversky, 1984; Falk, 2010) as well as how the messages through language were framed (Ortega and Feagin, 2016; Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009; Heider, 1958; Goffman, 1974; Gamson and Iyengar, 1992). As this was a national presidential election, and this research was designed to understand the characterization of media coverage of each candidate, a national source accessible to all consumers was a necessary choice. During a national election, it is national media coverage that can carry a heavy influence in the minds of potential voters.

For each candidate, a qualitative content analysis was conducted of the tweets manually pulled through twelve separate searches listed below. A qualitative content analysis was chosen specifically to identify core consistencies and patterns in the news media's tweets to identify overall meanings. The results included 303 total tweets for Amy Klobuchar, 971 total tweets for Elizabeth Warren, and 845 total tweets for Kamala Harris, for an overall total of 2,119 individual tweets analyzed. While often a predefined codebook is established prior to the coding of the data for a content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), this research was conducted using a thematic analysis to search for themes or categories within the tweets, in the method described by David Thomas in the article, *A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data* (2006). Thomas described the purpose for an inductive approach for a qualitative content analysis:

To (a)condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived

from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data.”

The thematic analysis framework allowed for both a deductive and inductive analysis to organize and categorize results for common occurrences in the data. Deductively, overall themes were informed by the previous literature regarding prior historical thematic analyses of female presidential candidates. Inductively, new themes were allowed the space to form regarding the new data as it was analyzed (Joffe, 2011; Braun and Clark 2006, 2014; Southern and Harmer, 2019).

### The Candidates

To better understand the women of the 2020 presidential election, this research focused on three women in the race: Kamala Harris (D-CA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN). While more than these three women officially announced candidacies, including Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Marianne Williamson (D-TX), etc., this research focused on the top two women who remained active candidates through to the election year of 2020 (Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar). This research also focused on Kamala Harris’ run for president, as she was nominated as Joe Biden’s running mate and later became the vice president. While Harris suspended her presidential run substantially sooner than Warren and Klobuchar, her presence in the election is important to understand, as well as her media coverage after the announcement of her vice president running mate status. As Harris, Warren and Klobuchar were all senators during the time of their run for office, each woman was politically on a similar playing field regarding current positions held and level of

importance. Each candidate had successfully won campaigns for their senate position and were at similar profile levels, lending them to equal or similar comparison.

### Unique Time Periods

As the analysis of each unique campaign is a key component of this study, *time* was an important factor. Different time periods were selected and analyzed in cohesion with the individual political campaigns for each woman. Time periods were defined per each candidate analysis and their candidacy period, in accordance with each official candidate announcement through to the day they officially announced their resignation from candidacy. An additional period was included for Kamala Harris while she was campaigning as the running mate to Joe Biden and potential future vice president. Below are the unique time frames that were analyzed.

<b>Unique Time Period Data</b>		
	<b>Presidential Candidacy Announced</b>	<b>Presidential Candidacy Suspended</b>
<b>Amy Klobuchar</b>	February 10, 2019	March 2, 2020

*Table 1A: Unique Time Period Data Selection Amy Klobuchar*

<b>Unique Time Period Data</b>		
	<b>Presidential Candidacy Announced</b>	<b>Presidential Candidacy Suspended</b>
<b>Elizabeth Warren</b>	February 9, 2019	March 5, 2020

*Table 1B: Unique Time Period Data Selection Elizabeth Warren*

<b>Unique Time Period Data</b>		
	<b>Presidential Candidacy Announced</b>	<b>Presidential Candidacy Suspended</b>
<b>Kamala Harris</b>	January 21, 2019	December 3, 2019
	<b>VP Candidacy Announcement</b>	<b>VP Election Day</b>
	August 11, 2020	November 3, 2020

*Table 1C: Unique Time Period Data Selection Kamala Harris*

### The Data and Procedure

The data this research analyzed derived from social media. Social media are growing tools for political candidates to push their platforms and garner recognition. These platforms can dictate the tones of political discussion and have been shown to be powerful tools for campaigning (Chen, Deb and Ferrara, 2020), particularly for women (Yarchi and Samuel-Azran, 2018). While candidates use social media to further push their platforms, likewise, so does news media. Social media posts from news organizations may piggy-back from an original post from a candidate or create new posts of their own, sharing it to their millions of followers. Considering 53% of consumers report getting their news from social media (Shearer, 2021), the new platforms are essential aspects of any political campaign, and therefore important to understand their framing of each message. With over half of consumers getting their news from these platforms, it is necessary to study the content that is framed regarding political candidates and their possible characterizations that could influence a voter's cognitive ability to select a candidate.

While there are multiple social media platforms with the potential to be analyzed, this research drew from Twitter due its accessibility and volume of the data, as well as its representation, ease of use, and replicability. Without a direct interaction with human subjects, and with tweets being publicly available, this study was exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Moreno, Goniu, Moreno, & Diekema, 2013).

In a 2019 ABC News article, Wezerek and Roeder, argued that the 2020 candidates used Twitter to “announce policy plans, solicit donation, marshal their supporters and criticize the current administration,” speaking to their own “virtual village square” for those who wanted to learn more about them. The rapid nature of Twitter allowed political candidates to spread their information quickly to their followers and larger audiences (Yaqub, Chun, Atluri, & Vaidya, 2017).

Three different Twitter accounts were selected for the purpose of this sampling: CNN (@CNN), Fox News (@FoxNews), and The New York Times (@nytimes). These media accounts were selected to further understand news media representations of female presidential candidates. While there are many other news media organization’s accounts on Twitter, these three organizations were selected for their number of followers, with the ability to reach a wide audience. At the time of this study, Fox News (@FoxNews) had 20.1 million followers, CNN (@CNN) had 53.1 million followers, the New York Times (@nytimes) held 49.5 million followers. While other popular news outlets may have wide reaches as well, they did not reach the volume of these top three during the time of this analysis. For example, MSNBC (@MSNBC) held 4.1 million followers, The Washington Post (@washingtonpost) had 17.7 million followers, and so on.

The sample for this study consisted of tweets related to and mentioning each specific candidate. The tweets were manually collected based on the unique time periods of the individual politician’s official candidacy. The advanced search function of Twitter was utilized to pull the data. The advanced search included the name of each individual candidate under the “any of these words” search function, the news media source under the “from” section, and the specific campaign dates for each candidate under the “date range” section. The individual searches were as follows.

<b>Amy Klobuchar Data Analysis</b>			
<b>Analysis 1</b>		<b>Analysis 2</b>	<b>Analysis 3</b>
<i>From:</i>	@CNN	@FoxNews	@nytimes
<i>Any of these words:</i>	“Amy Klobuchar” “Klobuchar”	“Amy Klobuchar” “Klobuchar”	“Amy Klobuchar” “Klobuchar”
<i>Date Range:</i>	“February 10, 2019” – “March 2, 2020”	“February 10, 2019” – “March 2, 2020”	“February 10, 2019” – “March 2, 2020”

*Table 2A: Amy Klobuchar Data Analysis*

<b>Elizabeth Warren Data Analysis</b>			
<b>Analysis 1</b>		<b>Analysis 2</b>	<b>Analysis 3</b>
<i>From:</i>	@CNN	@FoxNews	@nytimes
<i>Any of these words:</i>	“Elizabeth Warren” “Warren”	“Elizabeth Warren” “Warren”	“Elizabeth Warren” “Warren”
<i>Date range:</i>	“February 9, 2019” – “March 5, 2020”	“February 9, 2019” – “March 5, 2020”	“February 9, 2019” – “March 5, 2020”

*Table 2B: Elizabeth Warren Data Analysis*

<b>Kamala Harris Data Analysis</b>			
<b>Analysis 1</b>		<b>Analysis 2</b>	<b>Analysis 3</b>
<i>From:</i>	@CNN	@FoxNews	@nytimes
<i>Any of these words:</i>	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”
<i>Date Range:</i>	“January 11, 2019” – “March 19, 2020”	“January 11, 2019” – “March 19, 2020”	“January 11, 2019” – “March 19, 2020”
<b>Analysis 4</b>		<b>Analysis 5</b>	<b>Analysis 6</b>
<i>From:</i>	@CNN	@FoxNews	@nytimes
<i>Any of these words:</i>	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”	“Kamala Harris” “Harris”
<i>Date Range:</i>	“August 11, 2020” – “November 3, 2020”	“August 11, 2020” – “November 3, 2020”	“August 11, 2020” – “November 3, 2020”

Table 2C: Kamala Harris Data Analysis

To ensure original data, only original tweets were the focus of this study. Likes, replies, and retweets were excluded from the data. Tweets were only analyzed if they related to the subject matter and candidate specifically. Tweets not in English were also excluded, to avoid rhetorical or language cues that could have potentially been lost in translation or misinterpreted. While some tweets included an additional link to an article, photograph, or video, the additional material was not analyzed. This study only analyzed textually material of the tweet itself, therefore external links to videos or pictures were excluded from the data. Articles linked to an original tweet were not analyzed.

While the substance of an article linked to a headline is important, a study of the literature illustrated that less than half of news consumers on Twitter regularly click through to read a story, making the tweet itself, not the linked article, the most important piece of the data. A poll reported by the American Press Institute found that a shockingly

low 7% of users claimed to “always” click through to read a news story. The poll found that 34% of users claim that they “usually” click through to read the stories, 51% of users said they “sometimes” click through, and 8% of users claimed to “never” click through to read an attached article (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). Meaning, more people admit to *not* clicking through and only reading the tweet, than those who admit to reading the story. These results show that more people are reading the tweet, absorbing the framing through the content and the language of the tweet, making the tweet itself to be more important than the linked article. In fact, retweeting or sharing a tweet without reading the linked story became so common that Twitter released a new feature which prompted and asked users to open the attached links or stories before retweeting in an effort to increase informed sharing (Porterfield, 2020). Due to the weight placed on the tweet itself from the literature and the idea that users share without clicking through, this research decided to focus solely on the 2,119 original tweets language, and not the potential linked stories or videos.

## CHAPTER V – ARE THE CANDIDATE’S CAMPAIGNS COVERED BY THE NEWS MEDIA?

After a review of the literature regarding historical presidential campaigns, it was a concern that there would be a lack of news media coverage for the 2020 female presidential candidates. As Goldenberg and Traugott (2016) argue, recognition plays a major role in voting behavior, thus the importance of media coverage for each candidate. According to Lawrence and Rose (2010), “the media have become the central conduit connecting voters with candidates, and media coverage is one of three essential factors.” If candidates are deprived of their status in the media (Lazarfield and Merton, 1948) and deprived of their ability to inform the public about their values and policy beliefs, this leaves an unfair advantage of news attention to share their policy beliefs and personal character. Studies have shown that candidates who are covered locally may be recognized as qualified candidates, but if left out of the national news coverage, they are delegitimized during a national run for office (Meyrowitz, 1998). Meyrowitz’s study presented that interpersonal contact by the candidate to the voters was not enough. Media, and more particularly national media, hold the control.

The data for this study produced a sufficient 2,119 total tweets from the top three news media outlet’s Twitter accounts. After retweets and overly vague tweets were removed, 1,757 tweets remained, making for a strong data set. The Twitter accounts for CNN (@CNN) and The New York Times (@nytimes) both produced a healthy number of tweets and coverage mentioning the three presidential candidates that were analyzed for this study: Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar, and Kamala Harris. However, Fox News (@FoxNews) produced a shocking lack of tweets for all three candidates. More

specifically, not a single tweet populated for all three candidates during their presidential candidacy. Tweets only appeared for Kamala Harris during her run for vice president, however there was no mention of her during her presidential campaign. Considerations for this lack of data on behalf of Fox News will be more thoroughly analyzed in the discussion, as there was a lack of Fox News coverage for each candidate under every theme and will be included as an overall discussion.

The news media coverage was substantial enough to produce the theme for this chapter, *Campaign Updates*. This theme included common codes found throughout the data such as: poll outcomes, debate lineup, debate outcome, campaign spending and fundraising, candidate banter, and coronavirus updates. Tweets under this theme were basic campaign updates, informing the Twitter users about the candidates most recent apprisers including what to expect in the upcoming debates, where candidates landed in the most recent polls, general campaign updates regarding fundraising and spending, etc. The theme *Campaign Updates* resulted in the second largest overall commonality found amongst the data, resulting in 498 tweets of the 1,757 tweets, or an average of about 28% between the candidates, that were analyzed and placed into a theme. These results show that a large portion of the tweets did not have a focus on the demographical aspects of each candidate regarding their gender or race, but rather a general focus on their overall campaign movements and status. The table below illustrates a breakdown of the percentage of the tweets for each candidate respectively under the *Campaign Updates* theme.

<b><i>Campaign Updates: Percentages Per Candidate</i></b>	
Elizabeth Warren	33% of total analyzed tweets
Amy Klobuchar	31% of total analyzed tweets
Kamala Harris	22% of total analyzed tweets

*Table 3A: Campaign Updates - Percentages Per Candidate*

33%, about 270 total tweets of Elizabeth Warren’s overall media coverage, related to her campaign movements and general campaign updates. Tweets mentioned a range of her campaign activity. For example, a tweet from CNN mentioned Warren’s fundraising efforts, “Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign has raised more than \$5 million since yesterday’s #DemDebate in Nevada, according to a tweet from the lawmaker (CNN, 2020).” The New York Times also tweeted about Warren’s campaign updates quite frequently, including tweets about general poll standings. Tweets regarding Warren’s campaign updates included tweets such as, “Joe Biden is leading the Massachusetts Democratic presidential primary, with 31% of precincts reporting. Elizabeth Warren, who represents the state in the Senate, is currently in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Follow more live results from Super Tuesday (The New York Times, 2020).” While CNN and The New York Times tweeted regularly about Warren’s campaign, Fox News did *not* tweet about her campaign standings or tweet regarding Warren in any capacity.

Following Warren, Amy Klobuchar’s media coverage from CNN, The New York Times, and Fox News, was slightly behind Warren’s, falling around 31% for the theme of campaign updates. Similar to Warren, Fox News did not cover her campaign on Twitter or mention her within any tweets during her candidacy. Campaign updates for Klobuchar

included tweets like the following from The New York Times, “A tracking poll of New Hampshire voters brought good news for Amy Klobuchar over the weekend: She’s climbed up to 3<sup>rd</sup> place ahead of Tuesday’s Democratic primary, behind Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg (2020)” and CNN’s tweet, “Sen. Amy Klobuchar raised \$4.8 million in the third quarter of 2019, her 2020 presidential campaign announced.” The bulk of tweets regarding Klobuchar’s campaign updates placed this theme second for her as well.

In the case of Kamala Harris’s presidential and vice-presidential campaigns, the theme of *campaign updates* ranked last for her amongst the four common themes found for the candidates. For Harris’ campaigns, only 22% of the tweets from CNN, The New York Times, and Fox News were categorized under the *campaign updates* theme. Tweets such as the following were categorized under this theme for Harris, “Senator Kamala Harris raised nearly \$12 million in the past 3 months, far below what some of her rivals reported this week (New York Times, 2020)” and “Elizabeth Warren surges and Joe Biden fades in close Iowa race, a new CNN/Des Moines Register poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers shows. Warren: 22% Biden: 20% Sanders: 11% Buttigieg: 9% Harris: 6% (CNN, 2020).” Like Warren and Klobuchar’s campaigns, Fox News did not cover Harris during her run for presidential office. However, Fox News did produce a total of thirteen tweets regarding her campaign during Harris’ run for vice-president, with four of the thirteen tweets falling under the *campaign updates* theme with general campaign updates like, “Pence, Harris test negative for COVID-19 ahead of VP debate (Fox News, 2020).”

During every presidential campaign through time, there are outstanding circumstances that each candidate must address, which may or may not hold precedent from past elections. Specific to the 2020 presidential election and not seen in the previous

literature, were tweets regarding the health status and updates about each candidate as mentioned above, including if they, or their staff, tested positive or negative for coronavirus. By election day of November 3, 2020, the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 was in its peak, with the death toll for Americans at 231,599 and over nine million Americans having contracted the virus (Watts, 2020). Understandably, this made an appearance on the campaign trail and in the media regarding the candidates. For example, a tweet from The New York Times on October 15, 2020, as Kamala Harris campaign for vice president read, “Sen. Kamala Harris has canceled in-person campaign events through Sunday after her communications director tested positive for the coronavirus. Harris tested negative on Wednesday.” This category of tweet was placed under the *campaign update* theme, as it was viewed as a health update and thus, if or if not, the candidates would continue their campaign appearances. An example of the tweets under the *campaign update* theme can be found in the table below.

Codebook

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Campaign Update</i></b>		
<b>Theme and Codes</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Example Tweet</b>
<p><b>Campaign Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poll</li> <li>- Outcomes</li> <li>- Debate</li> <li>- Lineup</li> <li>- Debate</li> <li>- Outcome</li> <li>- Campaign</li> <li>- Fundraising and Spending</li> <li>- Candidate</li> <li>- Banter</li> <li>- Corona Virus Update</li> </ul>	<b>Kamala Harris</b>	@nytimes: Final tally: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris got the most speaking time during the Democratic debate
		@nytimes: Senator Kamala Harris raised nearly \$12 million in the past 3 months, far below what some of her rivals reported this week
		@nytimes: Here’s a transcript of the exchange between Kamala Harris and Joe Biden
		@CNN: Former Vice President Joe Biden’s lead in the race for the Democratic nomination for president has rebounded, and now stands at its widest margin since April, according to a new CNN poll. Biden: 34% Warren: 19% Sanders: 16% Buttigieg: 6% Harris: 6%
		@CNN: Elizabeth Warren surges and Joe Biden fades in close Iowa race, a new CNN/Des Moines Register poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers shows. Warren: 22% Biden: 20% Sanders: 11% Buttigieg: 9% Harris: 6%
		@CNN: Here’s where Democratic presidential candidates stand so far for third-quarter fundraising. Sanders: \$25.3M Warren: \$24.6M Buttigieg: \$19.1M Biden: \$15.2M Harris: \$11.6M Yang: \$10M Booker: Roughly \$6M Williamson: \$3M Bullock: Nearly \$2.3M Bennet: \$2.1M
		@FoxNews: WATCH NOW: Kamala Harris, ACB set to speak at confirmation hearing
		@FoxNews: Pence, Harris test negative for COVID-19 ahead of VP debate
<p><b>Campaign Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poll</li> <li>- Outcomes</li> </ul>	<b>Amy Klobuchar</b>	@nytimes: At the end of tonight’s #DemDebate, here’s how the candidates’ speaking time compares: Elizabeth Warren spoke the most, followed by Joe Biden and Amy Klobuchar.

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Campaign Update</i></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Debate Lineup</li> <li>- Debate Outcome</li> <li>- Campaign Fundraising and Spending</li> <li>- Candidate Banter</li> <li>- Corona Virus Update</li> </ul>		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> An unspoken fact was driving Thursday’s Democratic debate: Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar are trying to knock each other out in the Iowa caucuses, where they need strong finishes to stay viable in the 2020 race</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> A tracking poll of New Hampshire voters brought good news for Amy Klobuchar over the weekend: She’s climbed up to 3<sup>rd</sup> place ahead of Tuesday’s Democratic primary, behind Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar joins @DanaBashCNN to take questions from South Carolina voters in a #CNNTownHall. Watch CNN:</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Amy Klobuchar has doubled down on her position that Sen. Bernie Sanders, her self-described Democratic socialist rival, would hurt the party if he becomes the nominee</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar raised \$4.8 million in the third quarter of 2019, her 2020 presidential campaign announced</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> The New York Times editorial board has endorsed Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar’s not-so-subtle troll of Hillary Clinton   Analysis by @CillizzaCNN</p>
<p><b>Campaign Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poll Outcomes</li> <li>- Debate Lineup</li> <li>- Debate Outcome</li> <li>- Campaign Fundraising and Spending</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elizabeth Warren</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> If hour one of Thursday’s debate was a substantive if sedate affair, hour two had significant and even sizzling moments for Pete Buttigieg, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar. Here are 6 takeaways from the debate.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Joe Biden is leading the Massachusetts Democratic presidential primary, with 31% of precincts reporting. Elizabeth Warren, who represents the state in the Senate, is currently in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Follow more live results from Super Tuesday.</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Campaign Update</i></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Candidate Banter</li> <li>- Corona Virus Update</li> </ul>		<b>@nytimes:</b> Supporters of Elizabeth Warren have formed a last-minute super PAC to boost her campaign in Nevada and are spending \$1 million in ads in the final days before the state’s caucus, despite her previous outspoken opposition to such groups
		<b>@CNN:</b> As of the first commercial break, Sen. Elizabeth Warren had the most speaking time during the #DemDebate with almost six minutes, followed by Sen. Bernie Sanders
		<b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign has raised more than \$5 million since yesterday’s #DemDebate in Nevada, according to a tweet from the lawmaker.
		<b>@CNN:</b> The 2020 Democratic candidates who qualify for CNN’s debate have been announced: Bennet Biden Booker Bullock Buttigieg Castro De Blasio Delaney Gabbard Gillibrand Harris Hickenlooper Inslee Klobuchar O’Rourke Ryan Sanders Warren Williamson Yang
		<b>@CNN:</b> Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren greeted one another on stage ahead of the #DemDebate

*Table 4A: Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: Campaign Update*

As framing theory suggests, these messages, or tweets in this case, have been structured to organize the message. When organizing the tweets, campaign updates appeared to hold true across all candidates as an emergent theme or common structure for many of the tweets. The amount of media coverage via tweets on behalf of the three news media outlets, is a promising outcome illustrating women running for president were in fact covered by the news media for the 2020 election on most top major media outlets.

The outcome of this coverage analysis could have an impact on previous scholar's notions that women may be deterred from running due to lack of coverage (Falk, 2010).

## CHAPTER VI - DO MEDIA COVER WHERE THE CANDIDATES STAND ON THE ISSUES?

A theme that commonly appeared characterizing Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris' 2020 campaign coverage on Twitter was *issue coverage*. The previous mentioned theme, *campaign updates*, covered the candidate's general campaign updates and movements, while tweets under the *issue coverage* theme took a further step to describe the candidate's political standings on many different issues. Tweets under this theme were categorized as quotes about an issue from the candidate themselves, a mention of the candidate's beliefs, or a link to an article to read further about a candidate's standing on the issues. The predominance of this theme from the data was exciting, as previous literature regarding historical analyses of female presidential candidates found a lack of issue coverage, or issue coverage regarding more "feminine" issues (women's issues, education, environment, healthcare, etc.) and not traditionally "masculine" issues (economy, domestic and foreign policy, business, military, taxes, etc.). Falk (2010) also argued that media coverage regarding what clothing women wear may lead to the idea that their ideas on issues and beliefs about the political policy is not important, but rather more what trends they are setting and following.

Falk's (2010) study illustrated that women's campaigns between 1872 to 2004 media coverage only saw 16% of the coverage containing the candidate's policy views. However, the results from this analysis illustrated exciting progress in the media coverage of where the women stand on the political issues. So much so, that the theme of *issue coverage* ranked as the largest common theme found for each of the media outlets regarding the three candidates in this study. Much of the media coverage on Twitter from

CNN, the New York Times, and Fox News regarding Harris, Warren and Klobuchar could be sufficiently characterized as a focus regarding where the candidates stand on the issues. On average, 33% of the coverage regarded the candidate’s policy views, more than double the percent found by much of previous literature. The table below illustrates the percentages for each candidate under this theme.

<b><i>Issue Coverage: Percentages Per Candidate</i></b>	
Amy Klobuchar	36% of total analyzed tweets
Elizabeth Warren	34% of total analyzed tweets
Kamala Harris	28% of total analyzed tweets

*Table 3B: Issue Coverage Percentages Per Candidate*

Codes under this theme recognized many of the policy issues including healthcare, foreign and domestic policy views, minority rights issues, views on political or corporate corruption, environmental issues, gun control right, education issues, economy, voting policies and rights, or multiple policy mentions included in the same tweet. For example, a tweet from the New York Times mentioned Kamala Harris’ policy regarding incarceration saying, “Senator Kamala Harris is releasing a sweeping proposal to overhaul the criminal justice system, vowing to end mass incarceration and revamp police practices. Her plan includes ideas she previously rejected in California.” Another tweet from the New York Times about Elizabeth Warren mentioned her plans for immigration saying, “Elizabeth Warren’s new border plan outlines an array of policies that would affect people living along the southern border.”

The media coverage for Kamala Harris regarding the issues and her policy opinions were broad. Tweets mentioning issue coverage included topic such as healthcare, foreign and domestic policy, minority and women's rights, government corruption, environment, gun control, education, voting rights, economy, and incarceration. In the case of Kamala Harris, a large portion of this coverage focused on both healthcare and government corruption. For example in a CNN tweet, Harris responds to Biden's criticisms: "Unfortunately, Vice President Biden, you're just simply inaccurate in what you're describing. The reality is that our plan will bring health care to all Americans under a 'Medicare for All' system (CNN, 2019)." Many tweets regarding government corruption focused specifically on her views of suspected corruption with the President at the time, Donald Trump. Government corruption coverage included tweets such as, "Sen. Kamala Harris has issued her most forceful call to date for the House of Representatives to begin impeachment proceedings against President Trump (CNN, 2019)."

In coverage similar to Harris, Amy Klobuchar's media coverage on Twitter from CNN, Fox News, and the New York Times included coverage regarding her views on healthcare, foreign and domestic policy, minority and women's rights, government corruption, environment, gun control, education, voting rights, economy, and incarceration. In the case of Klobuchar, the bulk of her media coverage regarded government corruption, followed by healthcare, foreign and domestic policy, and environmental issues. Tweets for Klobuchar regarding corruption were also focused on former President Donald Trump, "Amy Klobuchar on the Trump impeachment inquiry: "This president has not been putting America in front of his own personal interest (The

New York Times, 2019).” Klobuchar was also outspoken regarding domestic and foreign policy. This was reflected in her media coverage through tweets such as, “President Trump is “literally exporting intolerance,” says presidential candidate Amy Klobuchar on Israel barring Rep. Rashida Tlaib and Rep. Ilhan Omar from visiting the country. “You don’t ban them from visiting Israel. That makes you weaker, not stronger (CNN, 2019).””

Media coverage for Elizabeth Warren mirrored Harris and Klobuchar’s media coverage, with a wide range of tweets covering the issues including healthcare, foreign and domestic policy, minority and women’s rights, government corruption, environment, gun control, education, voting rights, economy, and incarceration. Like Harris, Warren’s coverage included substantial mentions of both healthcare and government corruption. However, the largest category for Warren under this theme was the economy, followed by corruption and healthcare. A significant number of tweets mentioned Warren’s policy ideas in reference to her economic views, for example a CNN tweet, ““It’s a statement of our values.” Sen. Elizabeth Warren discusses her plan to tax fortunes above \$50 million two cents for every dollar (CNN, 2019)” and in another tweet, “Sen. Elizabeth Warren on her proposal to overhaul and expand Social Security: “It will literally lift millions of people out of poverty. And you know who is going to pay for it? The top 2% (CNN, 2019).””

The theme of *issue coverage* ranked as the largest theme found for each candidate across the data. *Issue coverage* is not a new framework to this type of research. Many scholars have focused on this idea, either in a theme emerging for the characterization of women’s media coverage, or within a comparison between the men and women’s

coverage. The framing of media coverage that contains a candidate's ideas and policies is often common during an election cycle. While *issue coverage* may not be a new theme to arise from the data, the results are often contradictory depending on the study. As an exciting result from the data on Twitter, this research found an increase in the percent of media coverage regarding issue coverage that is traditional considered "men's issues." An example of the tweets under the *issue coverage* theme can be found in the table below.

Codebook

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Issue Coverage</i></b>		
<b>Theme and Codes</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Example Tweet</b>
<p><b>Issue Coverage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthcare</li> <li>- Foreign and Domestic</li> <li>- Minority Rights</li> <li>- Corruption</li> <li>- Environmental</li> <li>- Gun Control</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Economy</li> <li>- Voting</li> <li>- Multiple Policy Mentions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kamala Harris</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> A new health care proposal by Senator Kamala Harris uses the “Medicare for all” mantra as a long-term target while also seeking to keep a significant role for private insurers — which Bernie Sanders’s plan would eliminate</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> “It’s not an exaggeration to say women will die because these Republican legislatures in these various states who are out of touch with America are telling women what to do with their bodies,” Kamala Harris said at the #DemDebate</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Senator Kamala Harris is releasing a sweeping proposal to overhaul the criminal justice system, vowing to end mass incarceration and revamp police practices. Her plan includes ideas she previously rejected in California.</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris says President Trump’s descriptions of his dealings with Ukraine indicate “that he believes he is above the law, that he can engage in blatant misconduct... and he thinks he can get away with it.”</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Kamala Harris on her visit to a migrant detention facility: “I saw children lined up single-file. ... These children have not committed crimes and should be not treated like criminals.” #DemDebate</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Kamala Harris says if she is elected President, she will give Congress 100 days “to get their act together and have the courage to pass reasonable gun safety laws, and if they</p>

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Issue Coverage</i>		
		fail to do it, then I will take executive action”
		@FoxNews: Dem VP nominee Kamala Harris blasts ‘reckless’ hearing, urges COVID delay
<b>Policy Recognition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthcare</li> <li>- Foreign and Domestic</li> <li>- Minority Rights</li> <li>- Corruption</li> <li>- Environmental</li> <li>- Gun Control</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Economy</li> <li>- Voting</li> <li>- Multiple Policy Mentions</li> </ul>	<b>Amy Klobuchar</b>	@nytimes: Amy Klobuchar criticized Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders in tonight’s #DemDebate over the cost of their health care plans and how they say they’d pay for them
		@nytimes: Senator Amy Klobuchar has banked her presidential campaign on the idea that voters want a more moderate approach in a Democratic Party moving rapidly left, and her CNN town hall on climate change fit that mold neatly
		@nytimes: Amy Klobuchar on the Trump impeachment inquiry: “This president has not been putting America in front of his own personal interest.”
		@nytimes: At CNN’s marathon of 5 town halls on Monday night, Senator Amy Klobuchar stopped short of calling for President Trump’s impeachment and expressed skepticism about tuition-free public colleges
		@CNN: Amy Klobuchar says “there’s a lot we should do” to promote women’s equality, including: ▪ Passing the Equal Rights Amendment ▪ Increasing the federal minimum wage ▪ Getting universal child care ▪ Protecting reproductive freedom
		@CNN: “We need to fully fund education”: Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Amy Klobuchar unveils her education plan at the National Education Association presidential forum in Houston <a href="https://cnn.it/2Jetnwd">https://cnn.it/2Jetnwd</a>

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Issue Coverage</i>		
		<p>@CNN: If elected president, Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota wants a federal funding match to increase teacher salaries, while Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee plans on enlisting the US Education Department to help fight climate change.</p>
<p><b>Policy Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthcare</li> <li>- Foreign and Domestic</li> <li>- Minority Rights</li> <li>- Corruption</li> <li>- Environmental</li> <li>- Gun Control</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Economy</li> <li>- Voting</li> <li>- Multiple Policy Mentions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elizabeth Warren</b></p>	<p>@nytimes: Elizabeth Warren’s new border plan outlines an array of policies that would affect people living along the southern border</p>
		<p>@nytimes: Some small and medium-size business owners say that while they’re not fans of President Trump, they’re wary of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren’s proposals, too</p>
		<p>@nytimes: This was the answer that earned Elizabeth Warren the loudest applause during a #DemDebate discussion on abortion rights and the Supreme Court. Follow more of our live coverage.</p>
		<p>@nytimes: Senator Elizabeth Warren said that light bulbs, plastic straws and cheeseburgers are “exactly what the fossil fuel industry hopes we’re all talking about.” She said that instead we should focus on 3 industries that produce “70% of the pollution.”</p>
		<p>@CNN: Turns out there’s at least one area where Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and President Trump are in sync – making hearing aids more affordable.</p>
		<p>@CNN: Elizabeth Warren demands answers on the suspected retransfer of arms from US allies to third-party actors in Yemen, citing evidence of arms deal violations uncovered by a CNN investigation</p>
		<p>@CNN: Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar addressed the laws being passed around the country that have rolled back the protections of Roe v. Wade. #DemDebate</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Issue Coverage</i></b>		
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> “When you’ve got a government that works for the rich and it’s not working nearly as well for anyone else, that’s corruption. ... I have the biggest anti-corruption bill since Watergate,” Elizabeth Warren says about her plan to make sure the rich pay fair taxes. #WarrenTownHall</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Elizabeth Warren explains how she’ll pay for her new student debt cancellation and free college plan, saying billionaires will have to “pay something back so everybody else gets a chance.”</p>

*Table 4B: Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: Issue Coverage*

The predominance of this theme that emerged from the data seems to illustrate exciting progress for issue coverage of female presidential candidates. While issue coverage is rooted in previous literature as a common theme of media coverage, this research showed a much higher percentage of the coverage as issue coverage. So much so, that even the candidate with the lowest percentage of issue coverage, Kamala Harris at 28%, ranks significantly higher than percentages for elections as recent as 2004. This continuation of issue coverage could be essential for a future female president, as voters need to know where candidates stand on the issues.

## CHAPTER VII - DO MEDIA PUT AN EMPHASIS ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CANDIDATE?

A theme that emerged throughout the data for all three candidates regarded their *qualifications* and thus received a theme of its own. Similar to the *issue coverage* theme, the *qualifications* theme is a common framework found throughout the gender and politics literature when analyzing the media coverage of the candidates. Much of the research focuses on the coverage regarding the viability of the candidates (Van der Meer et. al, 2016, Falk 2010, Schmitt-Beck, 1996,). Another sector of this area of research where qualifications is a framework, focuses on the own candidate's views of their qualifications. In a study conducted by Fox and Lawless (2004), the authors found in a survey of emerging candidates, that women with the same qualifications as their male counterparts, often viewed themselves less qualified than men do. Scholars have also analyzed the candidate's qualifications regarding the characterization of the coverage, as well as a comparison between male candidates and female candidates for qualifications. Historical analyses across female presidential campaigns exposed a frame where the media highlighted the female candidate's personal and family lives over that of their political accomplishments and qualifications (Van der Pas and Aldering, 2020, Falk, 2010). Media coverage was more likely to focus on a candidate's gender rather than their qualifications. However, in more recent political campaign research regarding Carol Mosely-Braun and Elizabeth Dole's campaigns, Shoop (2006) found more equality within this coverage when comparing the female coverage to that of their male counterparts during an election.

In line with previous research, *qualifications* was a strong emerging frame by the media of how it characterized the news coverage of the candidates. From this research, this theme of *qualifications* emerged both *positive qualifications* and *negative qualifications* as sub-themes. While some tweets regarding the candidates were positive or negative, many held an overarching idea that fell into a different theme. For example, in a tweet from CNN (2019), “Kamala Harris: "Had those segregationists [had] their way, I would not be a member of the United States Senate. Cory Booker would not be a member of the United States Senate. And Barack Obama would've not been in the position to nominate him to the title he now holds." #DemDebate” was instead labeled under the theme *demographic references*, covered in the following chapter. While this tweet does discuss her own qualifications to hold office, along with Booker and Obama, the main idea behind this rhetoric speaks to race issues over that of qualifications.

The distinction was made between negative tweets and sexist or racist tweets, following Lawrence and Rose (2010) argument that negative refers to “content or tone that criticizes the candidates,” while sexist coverage “devalues female politicians” which in turn, may also be negative (but is not always). The table at the end of this chapter provides a more detailed example of tweets in this theme. The below table (3C) provides the average percent of tweets per candidate in this category.

<i>Qualifications: Percentages Per Candidate</i>	
Kamala Harris	26% of total analyzed tweets
Amy Klobuchar	20% of total analyzed tweets
Elizabeth Warren	18% of total analyzed tweets

*Table 3C: Qualification Percentages Per Candidate*

This theme created a substantial number of tweets for each candidate, ranking third among the four themes for both Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar and second for Kamala Harris. Since the coverage of Harris also included her run for vice-president, it is possible that the focus on her qualifications was more predominant as she reached the next phase of the election cycle which Warren and Klobuchar did not. It is also possible that the discussion of her qualifications was more predominant due to the media’s focus on the intersectionality of her race and gender during the election cycle, that was not as applicable to Warren and Klobuchar who were regularly referred to by gender but not race. In almost all cases, positive qualifications were much more common among the tweets for each candidate than were negative comments. The only instance in which negative qualifications comments were more common for a candidate than positive qualifications was with tweets about Kamala Harris on behalf of Fox News. Both CNN and The New York Times included more positive qualification tweets for all three candidates than negative qualification tweets.

Media coverage on Twitter which framed the content as positive qualifications included tweets comprised of content relating the candidates as accomplished or qualified, with codes relating to their dedication, strength, viability, or notable

endorsements. In a CNN tweet which included a snippet of an opinion piece by Dean Obeidallah (2019), he argued for the leadership strength of Harris saying, “California Sen. Kamala Harris, a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, gave a master class on Saturday in what real leadership looks like and offered a sharp contrast to President Trump's style of governance, writes Dean Obeidallah for @CNNOpinion.” In another CNN (2020) tweet, Warren quotes her own determination, “Sen. Elizabeth Warren touts her progressive track record: “I did the hard work, I dug in, I took on Wall Street, I took on the big banks.”” Klobuchar also made the case for her qualifications, reflected in a tweet by The New York Times (2020), “Here's how Amy Klobuchar touted her effectiveness in the U.S Senate and made her case for electability in Tuesday's Democratic debate.”

Negative qualifications included codes regarding the candidate to be unelectable, a failure, a liar, or weak. A tweet from CNN (2019) gave Joe Biden a platform to insult Warren and her lack of specifics about her policies when addressing the nation saying, “Joe Biden is expected to use this week's debate to argue Democrats should select a nominee able to offer "more than plans," an adviser says, previewing a potential line of attack vs. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, whose mantra has been, "I've got a plan for that.”” Kamala Harris was also regarded as untruthful in a New York Times tweet “Kamala Harris made a misleading claim about the Trump administration’s response to the pandemic. Find all of our fact checks for the #VPDebate here (The New York Times, 2020).”

With attacks on Warren’s transparency and Harris’ truthfulness, Klobuchar was not immune to negative tweets about her qualifications to be president. She faced her

own scandal when members of her staff came forward degrading her ability to be a leader and a boss. The New York Times (2019) tweeted about some of these grievances from past employees of Klobuchar, saying “As Amy Klobuchar runs for president, former aides tell The New York Times she ran a volatile, distrustful workplace, and often dehumanized her staff.” An example of the tweets under the *qualifications* theme can be found in the table below.

Codebook

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i></b>		
<b>Theme and Codes</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Example Tweet</b>
<b>Qualifications</b>		
<p><b>→ Sub-theme: Positive Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dedicated</li> <li>- Strong</li> <li>- Qualified</li> <li>- Endorsement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kamala Harris</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Kamala Harris was ready to brawl from the start of her first campaign, Matt Flegenheimer wrote last September. As Joe Biden’s running mate, Harris may have to call on the same bare-knuckle tactics she displayed when she ran for San Francisco DA in 2003.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Kamala Harris’s impact was astronomical. The Biden campaign raised an average of \$8.1 million a day online in the last three weeks of August, \$2.5 million more than the campaign’s previous biggest day.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> “I’m speaking.” Minutes after Kamala Harris reprimanded Mike Pence during the #VPDebate, the phrase was all over merchandise being sold online.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Kamala Harris tends to fare slightly better than Mike Pence in terms of public perception, and on average national polling shows more Americans viewing her positively than negatively.</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> The influential Iowa political couple Sue and Bob Dvorsky announced their endorsement on Saturday of California Sen. Kamala Harris for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Kamala Harris defines her role: A prosecutor who will take the fight to Trump ‘for the people’   Analysis by @MaeveReston</p>

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i>		
		@CNN: Former Vice President Joe Biden used his opening remarks at a campaign event in Wilmington, Delaware, to praise Sen. Kamala Harris, calling her “the right person” for the role of vice president. “She’s ready to do this job on day one.”
<p>→ Sub-theme: Negative Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure</li> <li>- Unelectable</li> <li>- Liar</li> <li>- Weak</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kamala Harris</b></p>	@nytimes: Kamala Harris made a misleading claim about the Trump administration’s response to the pandemic. Find all of our fact checks for the #VPDebate here.
		@CNN: “The bipartisan refusal to answer Susan Page’s basic question on the possible transition of presidential power is an abject failure on the part of both Vice President Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris,” @CillizzaCNN writes.   Analysis
		@CNN: Why, exactly, does Donald Trump think electing Kamala Harris would be an “insult to our country?”   Analysis by Chris Cillizza
		@CNN: President Trump said to supporters at his campaign rally that Sen. Kamala Harris isn’t competent enough to be the Democrats’ vice presidential nominee, suggesting that his daughter and adviser, Ivanka Trump, would be a better candidate for such a role
		@FoxNews: EXCLUSIVE: Kamala Harris dodges questions on court packing, claims Biden ‘has been very clear’
		@FoxNews: Kamala Harris’ past comments on key issue come back to haunt her during debate
		@FoxNews: Trump campaign leaves ticket for Tupac at VP debate after Kamala Harris named him ‘best rapper alive’

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i>		
<p>→ Sub-theme: Positive Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dedicated</li> <li>- Strong</li> <li>- Qualified</li> <li>- Endorsement</li> </ul>	<p>Amy Klobuchar</p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Amy Klobuchar sees humor as a strategy, a way she can charm voters and undercut President Trump on the debate stage. “When things are so divided in politics it helps to warm things up a little bit and find something that people agree on,” she said.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Here’s how Amy Klobuchar touted her effectiveness in the U.S Senate and made her case for electability in Tuesday’s Democratic debate</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Amy Klobuchar argues that she can win back Rust Belt independents and break through the partisan logjam in Washington, writes @lerner</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> “I am your neighbor,” Amy Klobuchar told voters in Des Moines recently. “I think you all know we had some difficulty in some of the states in the heartland in 2016. But I’m someone who’s been able to win in difficult counties.”</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Hillary Clinton was criticized for not campaigning in Wisconsin. Amy Klobuchar made her first campaign stop there Saturday, casting herself as a Democrat who can win in the heartland.</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar speaks amid the delay in Iowa results: “We know one thing: We are punching above our weight. ... Somehow, some way I’m going to get on a plane tonight to New Hampshire” #cnnelection</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy <b>Klobuchar</b> on the future of her campaign: “There were a lot of people that didn’t predict I would get through that initial announcement speech ... and every single time, I have exceeded expectations.” <a href="https://cnn.it/31uZcIU">https://cnn.it/31uZcIU</a> #CNNTownHall</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i></b>		
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar’s bid to prove she’s the most electable of the Democratic presidential aspirants began with a message to voters in Wisconsin: She’ll get right what Hillary Clinton got wrong in 2016</p>
<p><b>→ Sub-theme: Negative Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure</li> <li>- Unelectable</li> <li>- Liar</li> <li>- Weak</li> </ul>	<p><b>Amy Klobuchar</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Sunny Hostin pressed Senator Amy Klobuchar on her record as a county prosecutor, including the fact that the office did not prosecute any of the more than two dozen killings by police officers in the county in the 8 years Klobuchar was in charge</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> With polls showing her at 5<sup>th</sup> place in Iowa, Amy Klobuchar’s biggest challenge is translating voter curiosity into support. “Everyone always says, ‘I like you, you’re in my top 3,’” Klobuchar said this weekend. “We don’t have time for that anymore.”</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> As Amy Klobuchar joins the 2020 U.S. presidential race, former aides say she was not just demanding but often dehumanizing, the steward of a work environment colored by volatility and distrust</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> 2020 Democratic hopefuls Amy Klobuchar and Tom Steyer both couldn’t name the president of Mexico when asked during a Telemundo interview while campaigning in Nevada this week</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar finally got the moment she desperately needed. Now the question is whether she can hold on.</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar, former Rep. Beto O’Rourke, former HUD Secretary Julián Castro and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard walked onto the debate stage with a stark reality looming: This could be their last debate, as none of them have yet qualified for the November contest</p>

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i>		
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar tells @jaketapper there’s still plenty of time for Democratic voters to change their minds, despite a CNN poll which puts her at 2% among Democratic contenders with 44% of voters saying they’ve made their decision on who they’ll support.</p>
<p><b>→ Sub-theme: Positive Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dedicated</li> <li>- Strong</li> <li>- Qualified</li> <li>- Endorsement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elizabeth Warren</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Jennifer Siebel Newsom — the wife of Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, and the state’s first partner in official parlance — announced Friday that she was endorsing Elizabeth Warren in the Democratic presidential primary</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Elizabeth Warren took the debate stage Wednesday with one task: to reassert herself in a race where attention had slipped away from her. She did not wait to be called on.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> This week’s Democratic debate suggests the 2020 race has shifted since the summer, with Elizabeth Warren drawing the kind of fire a leading candidate usually attracts. Our tracker on the state of the race shows why.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> In Opinion Elizabeth Warren “stayed cool and confident under fire, sounding more grateful for the spotlight than fearful of the microscope. It was, for the most part, a fine performance. But it was also, at first, an exasperating one,” writes @frankbruni.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> In Opinion @PaulKrugmanwrites, Elizabeth Warren “needed to show that she was working the problem. And she did.”</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Elizabeth Warren is running a brilliant campaign   By @davidaxelrodfor @CNNOpinion</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Elizabeth Warren touts her progressive track record: “I did the hard work, I dug in, I took on Wall Street, I took on the big banks.”</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i></b>		
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Warren on the wave of Biden endorsements: “What we’ve seen so far is that the Democratic Party is a progressive party, progressive ideas are popular. And we need someone who will get the progressive ideas done. And that’s the reason I’m in this race.”</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Elizabeth Warren said she is ready for a convention floor battle this summer if none of the Democratic presidential candidates reaches a delegate majority during the primaries. #CNNTownHall</p> <p><b>@CNN:</b> Elizabeth Warren took on nearly the entire Democratic debate stage at once on health care, unloading a scathing attack on three of her rivals’ plans. The remarkable moment left nearly every other candidate asking for an opportunity to respond to Warren.</p>
<p><b>→ Sub-theme: Negative Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure</li> <li>- Unelectable</li> <li>- Liar</li> <li>- Weak</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elizabeth Warren</b></p>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> In Miami on Tuesday, Mike Bloomberg had to be corrected by a reporter who reminded him that Elizabeth Warren, and not just Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, was still in the race. “I didn’t realize she’s still in,” Bloomberg replied. “Is she?”</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> “I think you called me a liar on national TV,” Elizabeth Warren told Bernie Sanders post-debate</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> Critics have complained Warren is too rigid and radical in her liberal ideas at times. Even some admirers worry that such perceptions could make it difficult for her to win an Electoral College majority if she is the nominee.</p> <p><b>@nytimes:</b> In Opinion Peter Suderman writes, “Throughout her campaign, Elizabeth Warren has attempted to occupy a middle ground between the party’s moderate wing and its progressive base. But her have-it-both-ways strategy may well have backfired.”</p>

Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Qualifications</i>		
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> A billionaire money manager wrote a letter to Elizabeth Warren saying she sounded like “a parent chiding an ungrateful child” when she encouraged him to “pitch in a bit more.” It’s the latest example of Wall Street criticizing her presidential campaign.</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Elizabeth Warren accused Bernie Sanders of calling her a liar on stage after Tuesday’s debate. Here’s the tense moment</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Hedge fund billionaire Leon Cooperman escalated his fight with Elizabeth Warren on Friday by calling the Democratic presidential candidate a “superficial, nasty hater” who isn’t interested in dealing with facts.</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> For months, it has been a behind closed-doors, off-the-record conversation. Bankers and money managers grumbling that a President Warren would be bad for business. More recently, bankers and money men are saying it out loud.   Analysis by @ChristineRomans</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> @jaketapper: “What about the language the President uses and the joking references to genocide against Native Americans?”  <b>@RepLizCheney:</b> “Elizabeth Warren has made herself a laughingstock.”</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Joe Biden is expected to use this week’s debate to argue Democrats should select a nominee able to offer “more than plans,” an adviser says, previewing a potential line of attack vs. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, whose mantra has been, “I’ve got a plan for that.”</p>

Table 4C: Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: *Qualifications*

The theme of *qualifications* separated into the sub-themes *positive qualifications* and *negative qualifications*, produced substantial data for these candidates. This theme

resulted in 380 total tweets, or about 21% on average for the candidates of their total tweets. However, on average during her presidential candidacy, Kamala Harris experienced additional media coverage which framed her qualifications, more so than Amy Klobuchar or Elizabeth Warren. There was also a heavy focus on her qualifications during her time on the ticket for vice-president, which could be anticipated since qualifications are often more of a focus during a run for higher office that is viewed as viable or as strong a potential.

## CHAPTER VIII - ARE CANDIDATE DEMOGRAPHICS A FOCUS OF MEDIA COVERAGE?

In the meta-analysis of 90 different studies regarding gender and political coverage, the authors found an emergence of three categories for women in the media: “women politicians receive more media coverage that focuses on their looks than male politicians, woman politicians receive more family-related personal coverage than male politicians, and gender is mentioned more often for women politicians than their male colleagues (Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020).” The research that female politicians are separated by the media as a new or novel idea is abundant in the literature (Gutgold, 2017, Falk, 2010, Lawrence and Rose, 2010). Lawrence and Rose (2010) argued, in the case of Hillary Clinton and more generally for all female candidates, that to win an election a female candidate will deal with the dynamics of three dimensions: gender stereotypes, media routines, and the candidate and her context.

While this particular study of Amy Klobuchar, Kamala Harris, and Elizabeth Warren did not compare the women to their male counterparts and rather sought to summarize the characterization of the coverage of female politicians, an emerging theme which referenced the candidate’s demographics surfaced in alignment with the previous literature. This theme is referenced in this research as *demographic references*. In the case of this 2020 presidential election, it was nearly impossible to separate the intersectionality between gender and race within an abundance of the tweets, especially regarding Kamala Harris, who is African American and South Asian American. Tweets regarding Elizabeth Warren also contained a strong tie between her gender and claim to be Native American over a period of scandal during her candidacy. Thus, due to the

nature of gender and race being so deeply intertwined during the Twitter data of the 2020 presidential election, a theme to encompass all demographic references emerged.

<b><i>Demographic References: Percentages Per Candidate</i></b>	
Kamala Harris	24% of total analyzed tweets
Amy Klobuchar	12.5% of total analyzed tweets
Elizabeth Warren	12% of total analyzed tweets

*Table 3D: Demographic References Percentages Per Candidate*

This theme ranked around 12% of the total tweets analyzed for both Warren and about 12.5% of the tweets for Klobuchar, generally with a focus regarding their gender. In a tweet by the New York Times (2019), Klobuchar made the claim herself, “At the Democratic debate, Amy Klobuchar stood by her comments that a woman with the same credentials as Pete Buttigieg would struggle to run for president” arguing that the political arena is different as a woman. Warren also stood up for her feminine strength, expressed in a tweet by CNN during a townhall event saying, “Sen. Elizabeth Warren says she won't get "Hillary'd" in 2020, which is how a student participating in the #WarrenTownHall described sexist attacks (CNN, 2019).”

In addition to the tweets focused on gender, Warren also faced backlash after her claims of her Native American heritage. She addressed these concerns during a town hall event, tweeted by CNN (2019), “Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren on her handling of her Native American heritage assertions: “I learned about my family from my family. Based on that ... that’s just kind of who I am and I do the best I can with it.”

As shown through the table above (Table 3D), it was clear that Harris' demographics played a much heavier role in her media coverage on Twitter than that of Klobuchar or Warren, with nearly double that of female competition. Much of Harris' campaign coverage (about 24%) referenced her race or gender. Much of this coverage was focused on both race and gender in the same tweet, making it difficult to separate the two or determine which aspect played a heavier role. For example, in tweet by the New York Times, the author noted the intense moment saying, "The selection of Kamala Harris — a senator from perhaps the most solidly Democratic state — marks the latest evidence that gender and race have now surpassed geographic balance when it comes to building a ticket for the White House."

Harris was regularly referred to as "the first Black woman" standing her apart from the crowd as both the first woman and the first Black woman. The initial tweet announcing her appointment for vice-president on behalf of both CNN and the New York Times called attention to this. The New York Times announced her candidacy in a tweet saying, "Breaking News: Sen. Kamala Harris of California is Joe Biden's pick for vice president. A pragmatic moderate, she is the first Black woman on a major party ticket (New York Times, 2020)." Similarly, CNN called attention to her race and gender more specifically in its tweet, "BREAKING: Joe Biden has named Kamala Harris as his running mate, making the California senator the first Black and South Asian American woman to run on a major political party's presidential ticket (CNN, 2020). An example of the tweets under the *demographics* theme can be found in the table below.

Codebook

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Demographic References</i></b>		
<b>Theme and Codes</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Example Tweet</b>
<p><b>Demographic References</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Race Reference (not related to policy)</li> <li>- Gender Reference (not related to policy)</li> <li>- Family Ties or Story</li> </ul>	<b>Kamala Harris</b>	<p><b>@nytimes:</b> The field of Democratic candidates for president is more diverse than ever. But candidates such as Julián Castro and Kamala Harris, who have pitched themselves partially on being a “first,” have struggled to gain traction.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> The selection of Kamala Harris — a senator from perhaps the most solidly Democratic state — marks the latest evidence that gender and race have now surpassed geographic balance when it comes to building a ticket for the White House</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Kamala Harris pitched herself as a history-making candidate when she ran for the Democratic nomination for president. As Joe Biden’s running mate, she has become the first woman of color to be nominated for national office by a major party.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Senator Kamala Harris is the most high-profile and politically connected black woman ever to run for president. One of her political tests will be trying to secure the overwhelming support from black voters that buoyed Barack Obama in 2008.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> As a campus leader and member of the Howard debate team, Kamala Harris had a reputation for academic intensity and a sense of style to match — neatly pressed slacks, dress shoes and a “Snatch Back” haircut that was the rage in the early 1980s.</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Demographic References</i></b>		
		<b>@nytimes:</b> Doris Alkebulan, 58, who was bused to a majority white school like Kamala Harris said that the experience profoundly shaped her life and that it was emotional watching Harris call upon that history. “She got it right.”
		<b>@nytimes:</b> Donald Trump Jr., the president’s eldest son, shared another person’s tweet during the Democratic debate this week that falsely claimed Senator Kamala Harris was not black enough to be discussing the plight of black Americans. He later deleted it.
		<b>@CNN:</b> “Sen. Kamala <b>Harris</b> held her ground at the #VPDebate, was firm without falling into any of the traps that could tack her to labels — emotional, angry, nasty — reserved for women, especially Black women,” @BrandonTensley writes.   Analysis
		<b>@CNN:</b> Kamala Harris isn’t the only one who would make history if Joe Biden wins in November. Her husband Douglas Emhoff would also be “a barrier breaker” as America’s first “second man.”
		<b>@CNN:</b> “Joe, I’m so proud to stand with you, and I do so mindful of all the heroic and ambitious women before me. Whose sacrifice, determination, and resilience makes my presence here today even possible,” Kamala Harris says about being Joe Biden’s running mate.
		<b>@nytimes:</b> “The only people on this stage who have won every single election that they’ve been in are the women, Amy and me,” Elizabeth Warren said. At the #DemDebate, Warren and Amy Klobuchar said it shouldn’t be a question whether a woman can win an election.
<b>Demographic References</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Race Reference (not related to policy)</li> <li>- Gender Reference (not</li> </ul>	<b>Amy Klobuchar</b>	<b>@nytimes:</b> Civil rights leaders in Minneapolis say the Myon Burrell case is just one example of how Amy Klobuchar’s office focused

**Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: *Demographic References***

<p>related to policy) - Family Ties or Story</p>		<p>disproportionately on prosecuting black people while declining to bring charges in dozens of police shootings</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> At the Democratic debate, Amy Klobuchar stood by her comments that a woman with the same credentials as Pete Buttigieg would struggle to run for president</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota is running for president. A moderate with a bipartisan record, she is the 5<sup>th</sup> woman in Congress to announce her candidacy.</p>
		<p><b>@nytimes:</b> Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Kamala Harris and Amy Klobuchar can all claim this distinction: They have never lost an election in their political careers. All of the most prominent male Democratic candidates, have lost at least one.</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar’s message to white Americans who are uncomfortable with the idea of becoming a racial minority: “I say, this is America. You’re looking at it.” <a href="https://cnn.it/2sHvljc">https://cnn.it/2sHvljc</a> #DemDebate</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar: “We come from a country of shared dreams, and I have had it with the racist attacks. I have had it with a President that says one thing on TV, that has your back and then you get home and you see those charges for prescription drugs and cable &amp; college.” #DemDebate</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Sen. Amy Klobuchar argues there’s a “double standard” for women in politics, but says she expects to win the 2020 Democratic nomination because she’s “the best person for the job.”</p>
		<p><b>@CNN:</b> Amy Klobuchar on Elizabeth Warren: “People told me, just like they told her, that they didn’t think a woman could be elected. In my case, it was</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Demographic References</i></b>		
		<p>elected to the US Senate. No woman had ever done it before. But I came back, I defied expectations, and I won.”  <a href="https://cnn.it/39vxKxA">https://cnn.it/39vxKxA</a></p> <p>@CNN: “I don’t know what happened in that room...But I have made this point before...a woman can win the White House. A woman can beat Donald Trump.” Sen. Amy Klobuchar weighs in on the dispute between Sens. Warren and Sanders over what was said in a private meeting in 2018. #DemDebate</p>
<p><b>Demographic References</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Race Reference (not related to policy)</li> <li>- Gender Reference (not related to policy)</li> <li>- Family Ties or Story</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elizabeth Warren</b></p>	<p>@nytimes: “I’d like to talk about who we’re running against,” Elizabeth Warren said early in tonight’s #DemDebate, “a billionaire who calls women fat broads and horse-faced lesbians. And no, I’m not talking about Donald Trump; I’m talking about Mayor Bloomberg.”</p> <p>@nytimes: “Can we just address it right here?” Elizabeth Warren said in Iowa on Sunday when asked whether she could win the U.S. presidential election in November. “Women win.”</p> <p>@nytimes: All through this Democratic primary, voters have expressed concerns about if a woman — even a woman they might support — would be able to defeat President Trump. In her exchange with Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren hoped to turn the issue on its head.</p> <p>@nytimes: According to 2 people familiar with the discussion, Bernie Sanders told Elizabeth Warren in a private meeting in 2018 that a woman could not be elected president. Sanders denied making the remark.</p> <p>@nytimes: Critics called Hillary Clinton “shrill” and “unlikable.” It’s no coincidence that the same words are being used against Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris. @MaggieAstor on how sexism plays out on the campaign trail.</p>

<b>Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: <i>Demographic References</i></b>	
	<p>@CNN: President Trump’s eldest son made light of the US government’s history of genocide against Native Americans as part of a slam against Sen. Elizabeth Warren and her claims of American Indian heritage</p>
	<p>@CNN: Sen. Elizabeth Warren says she won’t get “Hillary’d” in 2020, which is how a student participating in the #WarrenTownHall described sexist attacks</p>
	<p>@CNN: “You stay after it... One might say you persist. Organize...fight for working people and that’s how I am going to the the first woman elected President.” Sen. Elizabeth Warren addresses concerns that sexism could hinder her in her 2020 run #WarrenTownHall</p>
	<p>@CNN: “What a great weekend for America.” Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand lauded Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar on Twitter after both senators officially kicked off their campaigns for the 2020 presidential race this weekend.</p>
	<p>@CNN: Amid personal attacks from VP Joe Biden about her policies and her campaign, Sen. Elizabeth Warren was asked by a voter about how to get men to vote for a woman for president. “How about we give them a tough, smart woman to vote for?” she responded.</p>

*Table 4D: Example of Tweets Coded for Theme: Demographic References*

While all three women battled with gender coverage as shown throughout the data, it is clear that the combination of Kamala Harris’ both race and gender amplified her media characterization under this framework. It is apparent from previous research (Falk, 2010) that being framed as a first, novelty, or new type of candidate may be off-

putting to voters who are consciously or subconsciously comfortable with the status quo or gender and racial societal norms, and thus may negatively impact voting behavior. It may be inferred that this type of coverage, even when framed positively, could still negatively impact a candidate's campaign.

## CHAPTER IX - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research focused on the three different Twitter accounts CNN (@CNN), Fox News (@FoxNews), and The New York Times (@nytimes) due to their number of followers and wide audience reach at the time of this research. The results both aligned with previous literature, while illustrating a positive growth in areas like that of overall issue coverage for female candidates, as opposed to media's past focus on traditionally feminine issues. The difference in this study, however, was a focus on social media and the media's use of Twitter. Further research should be conducted to determine if the media utilize Twitter with a more narrowed focus on the issues, compared to that of traditional media or social media with the ability to share more than a certain amount of characters.

The results of this study also produced a suspicious lack of data on behalf of Fox News (@FoxNews). More specifically, data only appeared for Fox News regarding Kamala Harris after the announcement of her appointment as the candidate for vice-president on the ticket with presidential hopeful Joe Biden. In total, Fox News only produced 13 total tweets of the total 2,119 tweet for this data. There were no tweets regarding either Elizabeth Warren or Amy Klobuchar during their presidential campaigns. As previously discussed from the literature, the lack of coverage of female candidates could have a serious impact on election outcomes. If candidates are not shown in the media, they are often disregarded as unviable candidates according to the literature (Falk, 2010). While Fox News did not tweet about Klobuchar or Warren, this is not to say the media outlet did not discuss either candidate through more traditional channels. However, the candidates were not provided a platform on the network's Twitter account.

While the lack of tweets from Fox News about the presidential candidates is concerning based on the previous research on the importance of visibility, it is not overly surprising. Fox News is generally considered to be a more conservative media outlet, commonly in favor of Republican candidates. It is a network aimed “particularly for those on the ideological right,” according to a Pew Research article and as of April 2019, 39% of adults interviewed received their news from Fox News (Gramlich, 2020). With all three women registered candidates for the Democratic party, it is less shocking that a conservative outlet would provide substantial coverage for the more liberal or left-leaning candidates. However, the lack of any tweets at all, is concerning, with only 13 tweets over the three-month period for Kamala Harris, the potential vice-president.

While much of this research was focused on gendered media coverage, it is impossible to ignore the intersectionality of race and gender for these campaigns. The results of Kamala Harris’ campaigns for both president and vice-president regarding the demographic references were interesting in comparison to that of Warren and Klobuchar. While both Warren and Klobuchar tweets averaged around 12% for demographic references, the focus of demographic references for Harris’ campaign through the tweets was nearly doubled. This may show that while voters are becoming more comfortable with the idea of a woman in office or a minority in office, the combination of a candidate who is both a woman and a minority is a novelty and highly newsworthy. As Springer (1999) argues, “racism rather than sexism has always been a more oppressive problem” for Black women running for office. This was apparent through an analysis of the literature regarding both Shirley Chisholm’s presidential campaign in 1972 and Carol Mosely-Braun’s presidential campaign in 2004 and how these campaigns were framed

through the media. Concerningly, much of Chisholm and Mosley-Braun's coverage from previous decades mirrored the Harris 2020 campaign. However, Chisholm herself argued in *The Good Fight* (1973), gender was potentially more of an issue for voters during the time of her campaign than her race seemed to be, referencing that Black women must hold the stamina to defend themselves against the sexist attacks on top of the racial slurs.

Through this study, it can be inferred that this media framing remains true today through the analysis of Kamala Harris's run, both for president between January 21, 2019 through December 3, 2019, and her vice-presidential campaign between August 11, 2020 through November 3, 2020. High levels of demographic references were found throughout the tweets by CNN, The New York Times, and within the few tweets from Fox News. A significant portion of the literature argues that mentioning a candidate as "firsts" or "novelty" could have the potential to negatively impact their campaign. Interestingly, while tweeting about the novelty of the candidates, the New York Times recognized this through their tweet, "The field of Democratic candidates for president is more diverse than ever. But candidates such as Julián Castro and Kamala Harris, who have pitched themselves partially on being a "first," have struggled to gain traction (The New York Times, 2019)."

This research also found a trend upward for issue coverage in the media coverage for each female candidate. *Issue coverage* was on average the largest theme found for the candidates in this study. This finding differs from much of the previous literature which typically found issue coverage to be rather low in terms of the characterization of the coverage for past female politicians. A study regarding Hilary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign took note of an increase in issue coverage (Shoop, 2006), which coincides with

the findings of this research to continue this upward trend as gender equality becomes more of a societal norm. Previous research argued that women were more likely to be covered on their campaign strategies than on the issues, with a heavy focus on the “feminine” policy issues (Kahn, 1996). However, some research, like the meta-analysis of 90 different studies conducted by Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020), argues the evidence that female candidates suffer from mainly feminine issue coverage is “not overly convincing.”

Through the study of tweets from CNN, Fox News, and The New York Times, the findings of this research is promising that an upward trend is continuing in congruence with the findings of Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020), illustrating women do not suffer a focus on the “feminine issues” as they once did. With widespread data regarding all issues for Warren, Klobuchar and Harris, a specific focus on feminine issues was not found during this study. While healthcare (a traditionally designated feminine issue) was amongst the top issue coverage for the three candidates, so was internal government corruption, foreign and domestic policy, and the economy (traditionally men’s issues). This research found no lack in the media coverage to weigh more heavily for what is commonly designated as “men” or “women” issues. The findings of this research aligned with more recent researchers who are beginning to find more gender equality within issue coverage (Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020, Shoop, 2006, Bystrom, 2005, Heldman et al., 2000).

Substantial events also occurred during the 2020 election or shortly before, which may have resulted in an increase in the discussion of certain issues for the candidates. For example, the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 may have increased healthcare issue

coverage for the candidates. The impeachment hearings of Donald Trump may have increased the discussion surrounding corruption and legalities for those in higher-office. 417 mass-shootings took place during 2019 (Gun Violence Archive, 2021), with a couple garnering mainstream media attention, potentially resulting in more frequent discussion of gun-rights and the second amendment.

#### Limitations, Potential Implications and Future Research

As previously stated, a goal of this research was to summarize how female political candidates have historically been portrayed by media through an extensive review of previous literature. A main purpose of this research was to understand how depictions have changed, or not changed, over time and how those depictions may impact a political campaign through an analysis of the 2020 presidential election. This research should join an existing conversation for women in politics, as they craft and create potential runs for office. By understanding the history of these campaigns, predictions of the media may be weaved into the essence of political campaigning and strategizing, with the hopes of overcoming potential implications or harmful circumstances against political candidates due to their gender.

While considerations and ideas may be considered, only the essence of time will more thoroughly explain if some scholars, like Fox and Lawless (2004), are correct in their incumbency theories, and as such is a limitation on the outcome of this research. Some scholars postulate that the lack of women in higher office is simply an incumbency advantage situation, since reelection rates are generally around 90% according to the Fox and Lawless (2004) research. Too few women hold higher office currently, and incumbents are on average more often elected, thus resulting in the continued gap of

women in office. As time passes and incumbents are filtered out of office, this will become clearer.

Future research should consider incorporating additional news media outlets when conducting an analysis on Twitter. While three major outlets with a high following were selected for this research, additional outlets with which hold a high reach should be considered, such as MSNBC (@MSNBC) with 4.1 million followers and The Washington Post (@washingtonpost) with 17.7 million followers at the time of this research. While these outlets are not as large as the studied Fox News, CNN, and The New York Times, they do still hold a large enough following to potentially make an impact on voter knowledge or understanding. A quantitative study may also be considered on this data set to analyze specifically gendered language rather than context.

Future research could also expand beyond Twitter and analyze additional platforms (i.e., television, radio, other social media platforms, podcasts, etc.) as well as how the 2020 female presidential candidates may have viewed their own campaigns through the lens of gender or race. Candidacy announcement videos could potentially be analyzed, in correspondence with their additional public acknowledgements to compare how the candidate wished their campaign was framed in comparison to how the media characterized their campaign. Additional material linked to the tweets could also be analyzed, including linked articles, pictures, and videos. The results of this may shed light on the increase under the theme of *issue coverage* for this research, to more thoroughly understand if issue coverage is rising across all platforms, or just online.

## Closing Thoughts

My hope for women running for office in the future is to stop being a woman in the race, but rather just a candidate in the race. It is my hope that this research will eventually be a window into the past of what once was underrepresentation in our democracy. We should have a field of candidates whose gender, race, ethnicity, etc. is so thoroughly represented amongst our political representatives, it does not need to be a focus of the media coverage. The focus of each candidate running for office should center around their standing on the issues and their qualifications to hold such a position. Judgement and media frames based solely on demographics, in my opinion, should not produce enough content to be a theme of media coverage, but rather focus on the candidate's ability to represent all people and fight for what their constituents believe to be right, regardless of demographics.

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<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1219117299820584960>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 3 February). *Amy Klobuchar speaks amid the delay in Iowa results: "We know one thing: We are punching above our weight. ... Somehow, some way I'm going to get on a plane tonight to New Hampshire"* #cnnelection

*https://cnn.it/37VDArF [Tweet]. Twitter.*

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1224555937186361347>

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*"There were a lot of people that didn't predict I would get through that initial*

*announcement speech ... and every single time, I have exceeded expectations."*

<https://cnn.it/31uZcIU> #CNNTownHall [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1225627258452348928>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 7 February). *Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar*

*addressed the laws being passed around the country that have rolled back the protections of Roe v. Wade. #DemDebate* [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1225977944868368385>

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*desperately needed. Now the question is whether she can hold on.* [Tweet].

Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1227468911286812674>

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*me, just like they told her, that they didn't think a woman could be elected. In my case, it was elected to the US Senate. No woman had ever done it before. But I came back, I defied expectations, and I won."* <https://cnn.it/39vxKxA> [Tweet].

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*Klobuchar has doubled down on her position that Sen. Bernie Sanders, her self-described Democratic socialist rival, would hurt the party if he becomes the nominee* [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1229159782256381960>

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<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1230676021319553025>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 25 February). *As of the first commercial break, Sen. Elizabeth Warren had the most speaking time during the #DemDebate with almost six minutes, followed by Sen. Bernie Sanders. <https://cnn.it/2ViM20B> See the full breakdown: <https://cnn.it/2HT0kgo>* [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1232482206422982656>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 26 February). *Sen. Amy Klobuchar joins @DanaBashCNN to take questions from South Carolina voters in a #CNNTownHall. Watch CNN:*

<http://CNN.it/go> [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1232848929810763776>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 27 February). *Elizabeth Warren said she is ready for a convention floor battle this summer if none of the Democratic presidential candidates reaches a delegate majority during the primaries. #CNNTownHall* [Tweet].

Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1232848929810763776>

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*"What we've seen so far is that the Democratic Party is a progressive party, progressive ideas are popular. And we need someone who will get the progressive ideas done. And that's the reason I'm in this race."* <https://cnn.it/2vy1qM0>

[Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1234687432865521666>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 2 March). *“Sen. Elizabeth Warren touts her progressive track*

*record: “I did the hard work, I dug in, I took on Wall Street, I took on the big*

*banks.”* [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1234688608176656384>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 11 August). *BREAKING: Joe Biden has named Kamala Harris as*

*his running mate, making the California senator the first Black and South Asian*

*American woman to run on a major political party's presidential ticket* [Tweet].

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1293282181784240133>

CNN [@CNN]. (2020, 12 August). *Former Vice President Joe Biden used his opening*

*remarks at a campaign event in Wilmington, Delaware, to praise Sen. Kamala*

*Harris, calling her "the right person" for the role of vice president. "She's ready*

*to do this job on day one."* <https://cnn.it/2POdnne> [Tweet].

<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1293714156990926859>

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*mindful of all the heroic and ambitious women before me. Whose sacrifice,*

*determination, and resilience makes my presence here today even possible,”*  
*Kamala Harris says about being Joe Biden's running mate.*

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@CillizzaCNN writes. / Analysis [Tweet].

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