

A Woman's Place:
Gender Politics and Twitter in the 2012 Elections

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Abstract

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This dissertation examined how men and women candidates constructed their online self-presentations when running for U.S. Senate in 2012, and how such self-presentations impacted the public's perceptions of the candidates. Specifically, I employed a content analysis to examine how candidates communicated via their campaign Twitter accounts based on their gender and political party affiliation, and the gender and party affiliation of their opponent. As such, I analyzed tweets from 24 candidates running in 12 elections that featured male-versus-female, all-male, and all-female general elections, exploring their levels of interactivity and personalization, as well as their political issue and character trait emphases. Building on this analysis, I then implemented an experiment to examine the effects of personalized versus depersonalized tweets, in which personalized tweets connected campaign content to a personal aspect of the candidate. The experimental design also examined the effects of personalization across a candidate's gender and party affiliation. Overall, I found important differences across gender and political party in how candidates' Twitter communications emphasized my concepts of focus, and how the public evaluates personalized candidates. This work has several implications for our understanding of political communication, digital campaigning, and gender in American politics.

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Chapter One

Gender and Political Party in American Politics

Political campaigns are driven by communications, a lot of them: stump speeches, campaign slogans, TV ads, the list goes on. But in unexpected moments, it only takes a few words to bring a political engine to a halt. In August 2012 during a local TV interview, Missouri Republican Senate candidate Todd Akin was asked whether he supported abortion in the case of rape. Akin replied, “If it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down.” Akin’s words triggered a firestorm among politicians, journalists, pundits, women’s groups, and citizens. Much of this reaction, analysis, and reporting occurred in the emerging political hothouse of Twitter, a microblogging platform. Within hours, Akin’s electoral opponent, Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill, tweeted: “As a woman & former prosecutor who handled 100s of rape cases, I’m stunned by Rep Akin’s comments about victims this AM.” St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay tweeted, “The best answer to Mr. Akin is to elect @clairecmc in Nov.” Republicans, meanwhile, quickly distanced themselves. Akin’s former primary opponent Sarah Steelman tweeted, “Todd Akin’s remarks about ‘legitimate rape’ were inexcusable, insulting and embarrassing to the GOP. #MOsen.” Republican Senator Richard Burr of North Carolina tweeted, “Congressman Akin’s comments were offensive, outrageous, & wrong. I urge him to do the right thing & withdraw from MO Senate race now.” And from the Twitter handle of President Barack Obama came this: “The views expressed were offensive. Rape is rape.” Twitter was flooded with responses.

Akin’s remarks, and the fallout surrounding them, could not have come at a worse time for Republicans. For months Democrats had been accusing the GOP of waging a “War on Women” because of conservative policy positions and rhetoric such as talk radio host Rush

Limbaugh's epithet of "slut" toward Georgetown University Law student Sandra Fluke, who sought to testify about contraception before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Two weeks after Akin's comments, the national parties sought to entice women voters at their conventions. Republicans in prime time highlighted Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina, Governor Susana Martinez of New Mexico, and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and in her opening-night speech, Mitt Romney's wife Ann belted out, "I love you women!" Democrats were not to be outdone. Their convention schedule featured then-Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, first female Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi of California, then-Representative Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and even Sandra Fluke. The presence of these women, in combination with First Lady Michelle Obama's closing speech on Day 1, prompted Ron Fournier of the *National Journal* to characterize the DNC as an "all-out blitz for women" where "at times, it seemed like the women were everywhere." Actually, what was everywhere was *gender politics*. From abortion and contraception being debated on the national stage in a way they hadn't in decades, to Akin's and other male candidates' remarks on rape and pregnancy, politics was decidedly gendered in 2012.

With this in mind, this dissertation examined how candidates created and conveyed gendered personas in 2012, as well as how voters grappled with gender cues in making choices.¹ Specifically, I focused on a set of U.S. Senate elections to examine how candidates communicated their values and concerns, and how voters used this information to evaluate candidates. Three sets of elections were included. The first was commonplace in American politics: two male candidates competing for an office. The latter two types of elections included a female candidate: some were mixed-gender elections—a woman running against a man—and

¹ Throughout this dissertation I interchangeably use gender and sex terms. I employ this practice because understandings and conceptions of gender and sex are typically intertwined in contemporary American culture.

in others both candidates were women. When women enter political contests, they challenge norms and compel candidates, news media, and voters to move beyond simplified schema about politicians. In my analysis, I delved deeply into the rise of Twitter in political communication and conducted (a) a quantitative content analysis of candidates' Twitter feeds, with a focus on interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits, and (b) an experiment in which tweets from candidates were manipulated to determine whether tweets affect voters' general impressions of candidates and their perceived electability. Overall, each set of analysis was aimed at understanding whether men and women candidates implemented patterns of gendered communication styles and, if so, the effects of these communications in U.S. electoral politics.

Gender in American Politics

“What I want to know is, where are the women?” It was a question offered in February 2012 by New York Democratic Representative Carolyn Maloney during a House of Representatives hearing, called by Republican Party leadership, on a new Obama administration rule regarding contraception coverage. Maloney was addressing a House oversight committee that was especially notable for one thing—it contained only men. At the hearing, another Democrat, Washington D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, motioned to include a female witness, but her motion was ignored, prompting the two women to walk out. A photograph of the all-male committee debating female birth control circulated on the Internet and became a rallying point among supporters of the health care law and President Barack Obama. Nearly seven months later, Maloney again posed this question—this time while standing on stage at the Democratic National Convention. She was flanked by female House Democrats and the audience of delegates joined her in saying, “The women are here!” Well, at least some were: women made up 17% of the 112th U.S. Congress in 2012 (CAWP, 2012b). This representation is much lower

than many other western democracies, but the climb to even that position in the United States has been slow and contested.

A women's place for much of American history has been outside the political arena. Specifically, women have been located in the private domain, keepers of home and hearth, while men have been seen as the guardians of the public domain, which includes politics (Braden, 1996; Sanbonmatsu, 2004). This historic division of labor and the exclusion of women has fostered a male-centric characterization of politics where masculine values and political values are often interchangeable (Braden, 1996; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). In the words of masculinity scholar Raewyn Connell (2005), "public politics on almost any definition is men's politics" (p. 204). The cultivation of political masculinity in elected officials spans U.S. history. For instance, one of America's earliest presidents was military man Andrew Jackson, who earned his nickname "Old Hickory" because his no-nonsense personality made him as tough as a Hickory tree. Fast forward several decades, and President Theodore Roosevelt carried the masculinity torch as founder of the Rough Riders, a rugged frontiersman, and as leader of the Bull Moose Party—named for the male members of the species. Modern-day presidents keep the charge alive. President George W. Bush ushered the country into the 21st century with his cowboy diplomacy and the now iconic images of him in a flight suit aboard the U.S.S. Lincoln aircraft carrier declaring "Mission Accomplished." Put simply, masculinity is the norm in politics.

Slowly, though, over the last century women have started to assert themselves in this public sphere. At a time when women could not vote in most states, Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to U.S. Congress in 1917—over 125 years after the first U.S. Congress assembled. Montana women mailed thousands of postcards in

support of Rankin, and conducted a telephone campaign on Election Day (Braden, 1996). On the heels of Rankin's election, women obtained the right to vote in 1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Other iconic women politicians before and during the Women's Movement included Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York, who was the first African-American woman elected to Congress in 1969, and Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to serve in both chambers of Congress and the first woman to represent Maine. When the wife of one of Smith's opponents questioned whether a woman would be a good Senator, Smith replied, "Women administer the home. They set the rules, enforce them, mete out justice for violations. Thus, like Congress, they legislate; like the Executive, they administer; like the courts, they interpret the rules. It is an ideal experience for politics" ("First Woman Elected to Both Houses of Congress," 2012). Both women represented progress for women in politics, and both even sought the presidency; their efforts inspired many Americans.

The election of 1992 gained fame as the "Year of the Woman" because many women ran for office, in part due to frustration over the hearings for Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court and the treatment of Law Professor Anita Hill's charges of sexual harassment. After the election returns, the number of women in the Senate doubled from 3 to 6, and female representation in the House rose from 28 to 47 ("Women in U.S. Congress," 2012). Senator Barbara Mikulski aimed for a grander perspective when she said, "Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We're not a fad, a fancy, or a year" ("Year of the Woman," 1993). Women's advancement in politics stalled and stuttered in years following, but the 2000s brought new victories: Nancy Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House in 2007, Hillary Clinton received 18 million votes during the Democratic Party primary in her 2008 presidential bid, that same year Sarah Palin ran as the first

female vice presidential candidate for the Republican Party, and the “Mama Grizzlies” of the 2010 midterm elections carried a wave of firsts, including three women, all Republicans, who were the first female governors of their state: Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, and New Mexico Governor Susanna Martinez.

By 2012, women became far more than a fad in the political arena. That year, a total of 181 women were on U.S. House and Senate general election ballots—creating the biggest jump in representation on the ballot since 1992 (CAWP, 2012d). The 2012 Project, a nonpartisan campaign of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), launched the “20 Percent in 2012” campaign. Their aim was to increase female representation in the U.S. Congress by 3%. They fell short of this goal. The 113th Congress included the highest percentage of women to date, but even that record-breaking number is just over 18%. The progress of 2012 is laudable, but women remain a minority by far in politics. The low representation of women in Congress, as well as in other elected offices, is problematic and creates detrimental effects on the political process and on society at large. Scholarly research has shown that women politicians bring a wider array of political issues to bear in the legislative process than men, particularly issues regarding women, children, and families (Frederick, 2011; Thomas, 1991). Similarly, other research has shown that women introduce twice as many bills on civil rights and liberties, and significantly more bills on family concerns, immigration, labor, education, and health (Volden, Wiseman, & Wittmer, 2013). Women ultimately build a wider legislative portfolio than men that represents greater segments of the population’s needs and concerns. Also, women politicians emphasize different character traits in the legislative process; namely, women engage in more consensus-building activities that tend to keep their bills alive through later stages of the legislative process (Volden et al., 2013). Taken together, these findings suggest that women

politicians bring more issues to the table, and their approach to legislation increases the likelihood of success in passing legislation. As such, having women in office influences what gets done and how it gets done. For those who could benefit from this legislation—seemingly most Americans—the low percentage of women presents a profound loss.

A lack of women in office also reiterates the idea that politics is for men, and creates a gendered barrier for young girls and women to elected office. A recent report by Lawless and Fox (2013) found that 63% of women surveyed had never thought about running for office, compared to 43% of men. Additionally, 20% of men said they had thought about running for office many times, as compared to 10% of women (Lawless & Fox, 2013). They propose multiple reasons for this gender gap, including: young men are more likely to be socialized by their parents to consider politics, young women are less likely to receive encouragement to run for office, and young women are less likely to think they are qualified to run for office (Lawless & Fox, 2013). These reasons all go back to some form of socialization, to growing up in a society that is more apt to foster the idea of men in politics than women. Ultimately, women cannot bring new legislation to Congress or influence the legislative process if they never run for elected office. Therefore it is important to focus on the campaigning process, and examine how the minority status of women, rooted in the cultivation of masculinity in politics, impacts how candidates communicate, contributes to candidates' perceived electability, and influences whether Election Day will bring triumph or defeat. Expectations of masculinity also impact men and their ability to be “man enough” like their predecessors. Each set of expectations and challenges force candidates to navigate gender politics to effectively present themselves to voters.

Presentation of Self, Politics, and Digital Media

All candidates face many challenges when they choose to run for office. Foremost is

figuring out their public communications approach. A candidate's communication strategy determines the content of their stump speeches, television advertisements, campaign websites, debate answers, social media strategies, and even what they say when working the rope line and what surrogates say on their behalf. What candidates say, and how they say it is what scholars call a "presentation of self" (Kaid & Davidson, 1986). Goffman's (1959) seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, emphasized two types of public communication: The first, the expression one *gives*, constitutes verbal information that is intentional and managed; the second, the expression one *gives off*, consists of non-verbal messages that leak out in potentially conscious or unconscious ways (cf. Miller, 1995). Collectively, Goffman (1959) calls this "information game" a performance, which he defined as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (p. 25). The everyday presentation of self via strategic communicative performances is part and parcel of modern politics. McGraw (2003) called these performances "political reputations" and declared them to be a function of impression management, in which individuals try to control information they present to others, and impression formation, which is a process in which individuals construct a representation of another person based on knowledge and inferences (McGraw, 2003). As such, candidate communication impacts voters' knowledge about the candidates and which presentation of self they want to vote for (Sides, 2006). In turn, each performance by a candidate counts, and either contributes to a presentation of self worth voting for or passing up.

Twenty-first century politics presents candidates with many performance spaces. In today's Internet-driven, 24/7 communication milieu, many candidates communicate online first and most often. In the words of scholar Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "[I]nstead of working from spin rooms, [campaigns] try to push their views through Twitter" to control discourse in the fast-

paced environment (Ostrow, 2012). At first glance, digital media seem likely to both support the impression one chooses to give by controlling self-presentations, but also hinder the impression one gives off because it lacks the non-verbal richness of face-to-face communication. However, Miller (1995) argues, “people will construct expressive resources out of whatever facilities are available” (p. 3). And indeed research has shown that digital media can provide non-verbal cues via other expressive elements such as hyperlinks, emoticons, and images (Papacharissi, 2002; Walther, 1996). For example, Papacharissi (2002) states that a person who wants to appear as outgoing could provide links to friends’ webpages that include photos of gatherings as evidence. Miller (1995) suggested an even more expansive form of the impression one gives off online, including paralinguistic information—such as a manner of style, structure, or vocabulary—or paracommunicational information, including how individuals approach and utilize different features or functions of digital media in either conventional or unconventional ways. In other words, “there is still room for information about the self to be given off in the way people use the medium, in what they say as well as what they don’t say” (Miller, 1995, p. 7). Overall, this research suggests that the presentation of self via digital media can be deeply rich via textual information and a host of non-textual elements. Self-presentation has always been important for candidates, but given the increased use of digital media by the public, and the media richness available online, creating an effective communication style that cuts through the clutter, and positions the candidate in the most promising light is especially crucial and challenging today.

That challenge is particularly difficult for women candidates, who must navigate the heavily masculine space of public politics and work strategically to create electable personas. By and large, the public learns about politics via the news media (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; Gunther & Mughan, 2000). This source of information is particularly problematic for women

because it tends to skew negative, focuses on their physical appearance, and can be overtly sexist. Specifically, news media coverage includes more negative horse race coverage of women—often framing a woman’s viability for office in a negative light (Bystrom, 2006; Dolan, 2006). Additionally, news coverage regularly provides more appearance coverage of women than men, noting their dress, hairstyle, makeup, and level of attractiveness (Anderson, 2002; Braden, 1996; Bystrom, 2006; Dolan, 2006; Heldman, Oliver, and Conroy, 2009; Lawless, 2009; Wasburn and Wasburn, 2011). Such overt focus on and evaluation of physical appearance treats women as beauty queen contestants and objectified sexual objects rather than candidates running for elected office. Collectively, this type of coverage negatively affects women’s electability because it explicitly and implicitly sets them at odds with masculine politics. Digital media like Twitter, on the other hand, enables women candidates to create a line of communication that runs directly to the public, thereby circumventing news outlets, and thus facilitates more control over their self-presentation. In other words, it allows women to have significantly more control over their public narrative. In the words of Emin Milli (2013), speaking at a conference on policies to advance media freedom, “the point is not just using new technologies, it’s new ways of breaking the old narrative.” With Twitter, women candidates can break or counteract masculine communication norms in politics.

Twitter and Political Communication

Twitter enables new forms of self-presentation because it is changing the conversational dynamic. From ancient Greek forums to modern-day discussions around the dinner table, political discourse has been a fundamental part of democracies. Face-to-face political talk across these venues and timeframes affords a rich context for discussion. But in the 21st century, things are becoming decidedly digital, and face-to-face communication is giving way to more screen-

to-screen communication. The Internet, and social media in particular, have changed the conversational dynamic—aiding discussions and dialogue within and across human networks. Now almost anyone with Internet access, and a desire to engage, can connect online. The Internet and social media were of course not designed to facilitate only political conversations, but they have become a key way to participate in such dialogue. For example, many news organizations and political candidate websites now feature a social media widget on their home page, with streaming Facebook statuses or Twitter feeds. The presence of the widget allows users to engage with the organization’s content, and then immediately see and even join the conversation. Now, whether one is a politician, journalist, pundit, or citizen, social media have become a prominent forum for dynamic political conversations.

Twitter’s impact on political discourse has risen in breadth and impact over time. It launched in 2006, and allows users to exchange “tweets”—messages composed of 140 characters or less that may include text, links, or pictures. Like many other social networking sites, people’s usage of Twitter initially emphasized everyday happenings. But in 2009, activists in major cities in Iran employed Twitter as part of protests against the presidential election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, quickly disseminating information and coordinating events—so much so that one of the names given to their activities was the “Twitter Revolution” (Grossman, 2009; “Iran’s Twitter revolution,” 2009). In 2010, protestors employed Twitter again, this time beginning in Tunisia and spreading into the “Arab Spring” movement (Howard et al., 2011). Employing Twitter in these uprisings was crucial because “in some of the toughest authoritarian regimes... face-to-face conversations about political life are so problematic,” whereas mobile phone adoption is high, providing access to social media for grassroots activism (Howard, Agarwal, Hussain, 2011, p. 223). Over time Twitter became an important, instantaneous platform

and global meeting place for those seeking to engage in political discourse.

In American society there is often a progression from a technology's arrival in popular culture to its impact on politics, but for Twitter this process has been rapid. In 1960, for example, after a decade of adoption and technical improvement, television brought the presidential campaign into the home, and made candidate images a pivotal part of the evaluation process (Hayes, 2009). In the 2010s, the accessibility of Twitter via mobile phones and other web services brought campaigns into every nook and cranny of daily life. Candidates and campaigns took notice: In 2012, President Barack Obama and all of the Republican presidential candidates were on Twitter, and so too were 474 members of Congress (TweetCongress.org, 2012). Twitter has become a common way for many to engage in political conversations. David Mark, editor of the interactive U.S. political news website Politix, noted in an article about Twitter usage and the 2012 RNC and DNC that, "Twitter has become a lot more cutting edge for politics and for people who want to discuss political issues. It's real time" (Farah, 2012). The desire to engage in these real-time conversations is evident in Twitter's exponential growth in volume: On Election Day 2008, there were 1.8 million tweets published, but by 2012 that many were sent every *six minutes* (Tracy, 2012). Within this environment, the news culture also changed. In years past, political journalists covering the presidential campaign operated like a "boys on the bus" fraternity in which only agreed-upon stories and opinions saw the light of day (Crouse, 1972). In 2012, practically every political journalist had a Twitter handle, and many laid bare insights, opinions, and insider gossip for anyone connected to see. In the words of veteran campaign reporter Michael Hastings in October 2012, "Twitter *is* the bus" (Tracy, 2012)—and in this case, the technology put candidates, journalists, pundits, and citizens on the bus together. Simply put, the addition of Twitter to society's media ecology has changed the way Americans *do* politics.

With an abiding interest in the rise of gender politics and Twitter, and in particular the connection between the two, this dissertation is focused on examining the gendered content and effects of this new active form of conversation on Twitter for two key players: candidates and citizens. Most notably, Twitter provides an informal, direct line for politicians to communicate with citizens without delay, with the opportunity to engage both politically and personally. For example, Newark, New Jersey, Mayor Cory Booker, now Senator, is known for his hyperactive Twitter use and vigilant response to constituents' tweets: Most famously he once responded to Twitter snow-removal complaints by showing up to a constituent's house with a shovel (Scola, 2011). Regarding his use of Twitter, Booker has said, "I hope more elected officials discover the power of Twitter. It truly is an effective way to connect with the body politic" (Scola, 2011). Notably, scholarship has examined the effects of differential interactive Twitter styles by politicians. Lee and Shin (2012) presented people with either a highly interactive series of tweets in which a politician actively responded to followers, or a series of tweets with low interaction wherein the politician mostly posted one-sided messages. The highly interactive Twitter feed triggered a stronger sense of direct conversation with the candidates, more positive evaluations, and a stronger intention to vote for the candidate. A study conducted by Golbeck, Grimes, and Rogers (2010) examined how Congressional members used Twitter in 2009, an off-election year. Their analysis revealed that Congress members primarily used Twitter to disseminate information about themselves, but they also employed it to facilitate direct communication with citizens and to share personal information about themselves, and that just over one in ten tweets was either external communication with a member of the public or a personal message. Another study of candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012 found that 29% of candidates' tweets contained personal messages (Evans, 2013). The jump in personalized tweets

between these two studies' timeframes—2009 and 2012—suggests that politicians may be increasingly using Twitter to personalize themselves.

At the same time, Twitter offers candidates and campaigns a new technological channel within which to interact with news media. When a candidate tweets, they are essentially delivering the news media a neatly packaged sound bite. Now, instead of hoping their comments come off accurately or on message at a rally, a candidate can populate their feed, providing journalists with news-ready comments. Additionally, such interactions often get reported beyond Twitter. For instance, politicians' tweets are featured daily by online, politics-centric newspaper *The Hill* in a section on its website called the "Twitter Room," which contains "tweets you need to read." Furthermore, what politicians tweet about can become fodder for news stories and perhaps even set the news agenda because journalists employ Twitter in their newsgathering. For example, in a 2012 survey of American journalists, 52% said they check Twitter to see what's happening and use it as a source for story ideas (Oriella PR Network, 2012). Furthermore, Parmelee (2013) conducted several interviews with political journalists during the 2012 elections and found that tweets from political leaders contributed to first- and second-level agenda building for the journalists and their news coverage. All of these factors contribute to and highlight Twitter's broader impact on society and on politics.

These communication features are not entirely unique to Twitter, of course. But in many ways the medium is noteworthy. For example, candidate websites hold a large array of information on a candidate and their messaging. But limitless space can be problematic because if candidates want any new information to get noticed on a website, they need to dedicate valuable real estate on the homepage to that information. Furthermore, they have to get citizens to come to the page and then hope they see the information. Conversely, each tweet is a new,

discreet act of self-presentation that automatically populates a follower's Twitter feed. Followers know what is new because of the chronological order in which it appears in their feed. Consider another type of communication: Candidate television ads provide a rich combination of sound, visuals, and text, and a number of studies have shown that ads are highly effective, including in elections with women (e.g. Banwart, 2010; Sullivan, 1998). But ads are expensive and potentially less effective due to the increasing use of digital video recorders, which allow viewers to skip ads on prerecorded programs. Alternately, tweets are inexpensive and yet allow candidates to present their issue stances and challenge opponents' positions—a key component of opponent-centric or attack ads.

Candidate speeches are another form of communication, and might be considered the bedrock of campaigns. Speeches provide candidates with a literal and figurative platform to disseminate their message. However, speeches are highly choreographed events entailing numerous logistics and a physically present audience. On Twitter, the audience is always there, and there is no need to book a venue or coordinate travel plans. Candidates are able to disseminate the highlights of a speech one tweet at a time. Then there are debates, which provide a head-to-head forum for politicians to convey how they are distinct from their opponent. But like speeches, these events require logistics, and scheduling challenges mean they tend to be few in number. Conversely, on Twitter politicians square off everyday in a virtual back-and-forth, or in other creative debate-like approaches. For example, when President Obama delivered his 2012 State of the Union address, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum live tweeted a response to each of Obama's promises and stances with what he would do as president. Finally, interviews provide a candidate a chance for self-presentation, and typically aid candidates' relationship with the media by granting them access. However, in interviews candidates

relinquish some control over the message. On Twitter, candidates can engage in an “interview” at any time by interacting with or responding to a question—or not—in a tweet by the news, a pundit, or a citizen. To be clear, my goal here is not to promote Twitter, but rather to demarcate some ways it may be appealing to candidates and campaigns.

And indeed, I do wish to note that it is easy to get caught up in the hype of a rising star in society’s media landscape. Each new medium or platform brings a nuanced profile that prompts several promising advantages, and, perhaps only in hindsight, encumbering disadvantages. Just as television brought politics into the home, many at the time and thereafter worried that society would become too image- or personality-heavy in appraisals of candidates, and that a winning smile would equal a winning campaign (cf. Druckman, 2003; Hayes, 2009; McLeod et al., 1983; Ottati & Deiger, 2002). For social media like Twitter, scholar Sherry Turkle (2012) cautions that people are trading conversation for connection, and “we are tempted to think that our little ‘sips’ of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation.” She is correct that Twitter, and other social media, lack conversational cues and clues that create layers of meaning, such as facial expressions and body language. Instead, Twitter conversations are primarily text-based with potential inclusion of images or emojis and emoticons. That said, though, they *are* rich with meaning. Each tweet from a candidate contributes to that candidate’s self-presentation. And these contributions happen *daily*. Unlike television ads or website content that remains the same for days or weeks on end, tweets provide the opportunity for candidates to create daily touches from the campaign—creating a communicative space that facilitates higher levels of frequency and versatility in messaging. Analyzing tweets enables scholars to track on a daily basis what messages campaigns decide to emphasize. Ultimately, each tweet, each sip, feeds a reservoir of information that the public can pour into their online and offline political conversations and

evaluations. Twitter, at a minimum, is an important, emerging platform for U.S. politics.

To understand how candidates created virtual presentations of self on Twitter, I first focused on mixed-gender elections, then moved into same-gender elections. Mixed-gender elections involve at least one female and one male candidate, and are the most common electoral scenario that involves women candidates. The number of women on the ballot has increased over time, and the vast majority of women run against a man. For example, of 33 U.S. Senate races in 2012, roughly a third of them, 12 elections, included a woman running against a man. Mixed-gender elections are interesting conceptually because they represent a gender-fueled squaring off between tradition and novelty. That is, because men and masculinity are the norm and tradition in politics, women—and the social perceptions of them being feminine—mark a deviation from that norm. Such deviation can be perceived as beneficial, with women’s “outsider” status signaling the possibility of change once in office, and can be seen as a negative should voters favor tradition. Both candidates in such elections need to navigate all of these political landmines.

Same-gender elections represent two ends of the spectrum. Male-versus-male races are the historic and present electoral norm. Over half of U.S. Senate elections in 2012 were all-male elections, 18 total. Woman-versus-woman elections, on the other hand, are far from the norm: there were 3 female-only Senate elections in 2012. However, Palmer and Simon (2005) found that the presence of women running for House between 1956-2002 prompted an increase in the participation of female candidates in their own party as well as the opposition party. It seems plausible, therefore, that as more women run in and win some mixed-gender elections, they will compete in the future against another woman, and it is an electoral scenario rich in conceptual intrigue. In these instances women are not just entering a masculine domain, they are taking over the domain. This shift means that masculinity may not be the overriding norm, and that

communication styles and strategies may transform. Indeed, I expect this to be so: in mixed-gender elections, women and men can create electable personas by focusing on gender as a key distinguishing factor, while in same-gender elections, I contend that political party trumps gender and is the fuel for creating distinction and electability. The following sections delve into greater depth on both of these strategies.

Candidate Communication in Mixed-Gender Elections

The dominance of men and masculinity in politics means that when women run in mixed-gender elections, gender often emerges as a salient feature in their candidate communications, producing what we might call a *gendered communication style*. A gendered communication style is one in which a “performance of gender” is a core component. By this I mean that gender is a “constructed identity” comprised of stylized, performative, and repeated acts that constitute what we as a society and a culture think it means to be a man or a woman, or to act manly or womanly (cf. Butler, 1986; 1988).² In the words of Simone de Beauvoir (1949), “one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman” through the appropriating and performing of cultural and historic discourses ascribed to gendered identities (p. 267). This performance takes shape via bodily gestures, movements, and, of particular importance for this dissertation, speech acts (Butler, 1988). The idea that individuals are driven to perform constructed identities aligns with Goffman’s (1959) conception of social roles, in which “the traditions of an individual’s role will lead him to give a well-designed impression of a particular kind” (Goffman, 1959, p. 21). In other words, one’s social role—defined as “the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status”—dictates to some extent an individual’s performance of self (Goffman, 1959, p25). It seems plausible, then, that men and women’s social roles, rooted in the separation of public and

² It is important to note that these perceptions are typically based on heteronormative understandings and stereotypes of being masculine or feminine and, correspondingly, being a man or woman in American society.

private domains, may influence their presentation of self. For instance, there was much media attention when Elizabeth Dole abandoned the podium at the 1996 Republican National Convention and descended the steps to get closer to the audience to introduce her husband, presidential nominee Bob Dole (Armstrong, 1996). It was a simple move, but nonetheless impacted the perception of her—it seemed more intimate, more personal, and some even called it an “Oprah-style stroll” (Armstrong, 1996). It was what might be called a “feminine style” of communication performed by a loving, supportive wife. In this dissertation I am interested both in *how* candidates communicate, drawing upon the concepts of interactivity and personalization, and *what* candidates communicate, with a focus on political issues and character traits. Together, these components create a gendered style of self-presentation. My focus is on the ways in which these components played out, and ultimately had impacts, in candidates’ Twitter communications in the 2012 electoral season.

Interactivity

Traditionally, to be interactive as a politician has meant getting out to events—be they campaign-generated events or events spurred by the community such as picnics or state fairs—to meet with constituents and potential voters, and to be “among the people.” After all, the “campaign trail” is not a figurative phrase; we expect politicians to travel for meet-and-greets whether it is down the block, or crisscrossing all 99 counties of Iowa, as Rick Santorum did in 2011. This expectation is part and parcel of representational democracy. We elect politicians—fellow citizens—to represent us and our values and concerns as a community, and we expect politicians to learn about those concerns by both being a member of that community and by getting out and talking with citizens. This is the general style of interaction in politics, but I am interested in the *gendered* style of interaction. In other words, are women or men more likely to

interact as part of their campaign style, and if so, are there notable patterns of differential kinds of interactivity? Research has not focused on this topic specifically, but an area of related research provides a valuable approximation.

Specifically, scholarship on gendered leadership styles indicates some potential differences in interactivity. Women are seen as more egalitarian, horizontal leaders—a leadership style that is based on the idea that American women are more interdependent than men and seek to develop and maintain relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997; Guimond et al., 2006). Furthermore, a more feminized leadership style is perceived to be more collaborative, cooperative, and democratic (Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006; Harriman, 1996; Powell, 1993). Based on these characteristics, some leadership scholarship has even called a feminized style an “interactive form of leadership, whose characteristics include encouraging participation, sharing information and power, and enhancing others’ self-worth” (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 591; see also Rosener, 1995). On the other hand, men are seen as more independent, hierarchical leaders—a leadership style based on the idea that American men are more autonomous and agentic (Cross & Madson, 1997; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Guimond et al., 2006). Additionally, a more masculinized leadership style is perceived to be more autocratic (Harriman, 1996). Based on these tendencies, a more feminized style looks outward for support and the distribution of agency, whereas a more masculinized style looks inward. With this in mind, I predicted that in mixed-gender elections women would be more interactive in their communication than men (H1).

Interactivity takes on many meanings in digital media research. In concrete terms in regard to Twitter, Lee and Shin (2012) conceptualized interactivity as the “extent to which a politician’s Twitter communication represents two-way conversations, as opposed to one-sided public addresses” (p. 515). More broadly speaking, Rogers (2003) defined interactivity as “the

degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles and have control over their mutual discourse” (p. 363). Steuer (1992) defined interactivity as the “extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time” (p.83). This dissertation combines Rogers and Steuer’s definitions, and defines interactivity as the degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles, and control and modify the flow and content of a mediated environment. As such, interactivity via Twitter includes different users taking on and exchanging the roles of mentioning another user, replying to another user, or reposting another user’s tweet content. My hypothesis is that women will offer more interactive tweets than men, with my specific operational definitions offered in Chapter Two.

Personalization

Candidates can also create a more intimate experience via personalization. Making the political personal is a long-standing political tactic. For example, Hillary Clinton, in her webcast announcement in January 2007 that she was running for president, had a setting that “looked like her [Clinton’s] living room in Chappaqua, and she came across as very warm and engaging. She was sitting on this big comfy sofa talking in a very conversational tone” (Liasson, 2007, as cited in Davisson, 2009) and “offered herself as an openhearted neighbor, eager to bond over coffee” (Fineman, 2007). Clinton explicitly invoked a personal tone by stating, “I’m not just starting a campaign, I’m beginning a conversation,” and also “used anecdotes from her life as evidence for her policy choices” (Davisson, 2009, p. 76). For example, Clinton talked about the American promise, the idea that if one works hard, a good life awaits. She then drew a direct connection to her own life, stating, “I grew up in a middle class family in the middle of America. And we believed in that promise. I still do. I’ve spent my entire life trying to make good on it.” The

conversational tone, domestic setting, and personal identification with fellow Americans working toward the same goal created a more intimate space. Her Democratic rivals, in contrast, announced their candidacies in very public spaces. Barack Obama spoke to a crowd of thousands outside the Illinois State Capitol, where Abraham Lincoln delivered his “House Divided” speech, and John Edwards stood in front of a home devastated by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans’s Ninth Ward, not in his home state of North Carolina (Balz, 2006). In both instances, these candidates’ speeches set out clear charges for their presidential ambitions and were grand—stereotypically masculine—entrances into an election, whereas Clinton opted for a more personal first step.

Indeed, a personalized communication approach commonly manifests in gendered ways. In particular, women are thought to engage in a communication style that is characterized as more personal, conversational, ornamental, inductive, anecdotal, and often brings the audience into the process (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2006; Campbell, 1989; Davisson, 2009; Jamieson, 1988; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Clinton’s announcement did not depend upon facts and figures; rather, it highlighted anecdotal information about herself as support for her presidential candidacy. Similarly, Elizabeth Dole’s move from the podium to the audience floor during the 1996 RNC made the physical space more intimate, and she also made it more intimate with her words. Dole said, “Now, you know tradition is that speakers at the Republican National Convention remain at this very imposing podium. But, tonight I’d like to break with tradition. For two reasons. One, I’m going to be speaking to friends and secondly I’m going to be speaking about the man I love and it’s just a lot more comfortable for me to do that down here with you.” On the other hand, men often implement a more masculinized speaking style that is more impersonal, straightforward, factual, and analytical (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom,

2006; Davisson, 2009; Jamieson, 1988; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). For example, Edwards' 2008 campaign kickoff focused on policies that were factual, analytical, and largely impersonal. This trend was supported empirically by an analysis of tweets by members of the U.S. Congress in 2009, which found that women politicians were twice as likely as men to reference a personal issue in their tweets (Lawless, 2012). Therefore gendered communication styles permeated online self-presentations.

With these patterns in mind, I predicted that in a mixed-gender election women would be more likely to personalize their communication than men (H2). Specifically, I expected women to write more personalized tweets than men. Conceptually I define personalization as the process of making something identifiable as belonging to a particular person. As such it involves referencing one's personal identity or life, or creating a personal connection via one's communication. Such personalization could manifest in a number of ways. Personalized tweets could include tweeting *personal messages*, such as personal photos of the candidates with their families, or non-work related notes such as holiday greetings. Personalization could also include candidates expressing some aspect of their *personal identity*. In other words, candidates could call upon a social group identifier—such as gender or religion—to create a more personal connection to fellow identifiers or constituents. For example, a candidate could tweet, “As a concerned mother, I will make sure education is a right, not a privilege, for all of our children.” In this case the woman candidate would be invoking her gender as a way to create a more personal connection between herself and constituents on a political issue. Further, a candidate's uniqueness—meaning the facet of their identity that makes them unique, new, or norm-breaking in a specific context—can also be used to personalize a message. For instance, since women are still culturally and statistically unique in politics, a woman candidate could tweet, “I am running

to become the first female Senator of Wisconsin to break down barriers for the next generation.” In these latter types of personalization, women would be taking on descriptors—their gender and its related uniqueness—that have been traditionally used in the news media to showcase them as deviant beings not fit for office (Braden, 1996; Falk, 2008), and instead, they would be applying these labels as a means to create potentially advantageous personalization. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, for example, has openly talked about women’s role in politics and many believe it has aided her rise in the Senate (Smith, 2012). Personalization once again allows women to bring their ownership of the private sphere into more public settings.

Political Issues and Character Traits

When voters are asked why they’re voting for a certain candidate, potential answers are boundless. But often, voters point to political issues or character traits (Louden & McCauliff, 2004; McGraw, 2003). For issues, a voter may say the candidate champions the issues that matter, or that the candidate’s stance on an issue aligns with the voter. For traits—defined as attributes of one’s personality or character—voters may say they like the candidate, they think the candidate is a good person, or they can identify with the candidate. Scholarship often puts issues and traits at odds with one another: Should citizens vote with their heads, or with their hearts? Many early forays in scholarship concerning how citizens *should* arrive at political decisions positively cast the ideal democratic voter as someone who relied solely on political issues (cf. Fenno; 1978; Hayes, 2009; Popkin, 1991). This research focused on the politician as someone who pushes policies, and therefore, citizens should cast their votes based on issue affinity. On the other hand, many have argued that voters should evaluate character traits as well. Barber (1972) stressed the importance of traits when he said, what we “first need is to see the man whole—not as some abstract embodiment of civic virtue, some scorecard of issue stands, or

some reflection of a faction, but as a human being like the rest of us, a person trying to cope with a difficult environment. To that task he brings his own character” (p. 3-4). Miller et al. (1986) contended that traits are indicative of how the candidate will perform in the future, and Glass (1985) argued that because issue stances often change a focus on character is a “rational response of intelligent political observers to a political system in which policy positions are often cloudy and candidate attributes are far more concrete” (p. 531). These studies suggest that the voter evaluation process is complex, and that both issues and traits matter.

At the same time, it is important to note that neither issues nor traits exist in a vacuum. Rather, both have deep connections to gender in American society. Specifically, men and women are seen as “owning” distinct issues and traits. The idea of ownership emerges from work by Budge and Farlie (1983) and Petrocik (1996), which suggests that particular political parties are perceived to be better able to “handle” certain matters. “Handling” is the ability to address and resolve problems, and is derived from a “history of attention, initiative, and innovation toward these problems, which leads voters to believe that one of the parties (and its candidates) is more sincere and committed to doing something about them” (Petrocik, 1996, p. 826). Herrnson et al. (2003) suggested this theory could also apply to gender. “Gender ownership” draws on a history of social sex roles and stereotypes that have fueled perceptions of men and women as differentially better at handling certain matters (Herrnson et al., 2003). Gender ownership provides a valuable framework for analyzing communication styles, and to better understand what challenges and opportunities exist for candidates at the nexus of issues, traits, and gender, and how these connections may affect electability.

In particular, political issues have divided along gender lines, and candidates employ these to their advantage if possible. Specifically, as supposed caretakers women are culturally

viewed as better at handling social welfare and “compassion” issues, such as education, health care, reproductive rights, and the environment, while as supposed protectors, men are viewed as better equipped to handle foreign policy, national defense, crime, and economic issues (Han, 2007; Heldman et al., 2005; Herrnson et al., 2003; Major & Coleman, 2008). One may imagine that the representational progress of women in politics, as well as in many other sectors, may have mitigated gendered ownership, but recent research shows that such stereotypes of handling persist. For example, Lawless (2004) found that in the post-September 11 era, citizens view male candidates as better equipped to handle matters of national security and military crises, and perceive women candidates as better at handling issues such as aiding the poor and abortion. Similarly, in a 2008 Pew Research Center survey citizens overwhelmingly said that men in public office are better at dealing with crime and public safety, and national security and defense, whereas women in public office were seen as better at dealing with social issues. This gendering was upheld in Sanbonmatsu and Dolan’s (2009) work, with women having a perceived advantage on education, and men having a perceived advantage on crime. Therefore gender ownership is still present in the 21st century.

Communication around and stereotypes regarding issue competencies matter because not all issues are deemed equal, and candidates may work this perceived hierarchy of importance to their advantage. Specifically, the public views masculine issues as more important than feminine issues, and increasingly so when higher offices are at stake (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988; Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). In a study focused on issue saliency, participants rated masculine issues as two of the three most important issues: economy (35%), national defense (14%), and education (14%) (Meeks, 2012). The importance of masculine issues to the electorate may prompt candidates to focus more on masculine than feminine issues.

Such a rationale is supported by the work of Druckman et al. (2010), who examined congressional campaign websites between 2002 and 2006, and found that the saliency of an issue in public opinion was the primary determinant for whether candidates engaged each other on an issue. In other words, candidates talk about what voters care about. The enduring importance of the economy and national security to the public may explain the heightened discussion of masculine issues for candidates. For example, Bystrom and Kaid (2002) examined television advertisements in mixed-gender Senate elections between 1990 and 1998, and found that men and women's advertisements leaned more toward referencing masculine issues. With this in mind, I predicted that *both* men and women candidates would discuss masculine issues more than feminine issues in their communication (H3).

Moving beyond the aggregate, men and women's comparative discussion of masculine and feminine issues will most likely play out along gender ownership lines. It is a strategic reality that candidates seek to highlight their "owned" issue strengths while skirting their opponent's issue assets (Petrocik, 1996; cf. Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008). In Hillary Clinton's announcement webcast she referenced multiple issues, often inviting the audience into the process by saying "let's talk." But once she came to health care, a feminine issue, she said "and let's definitely talk about how every American can have quality health care." Cunningham (2008) noted, "by saying 'let's *definitely* talk' she marked the importance of health care"—thereby highlighting an owned issue (p. 95, emphasis in original). Candidates can also bring more attention to owned issues by speaking about them more. For the purposes of this dissertation, this would manifest in candidates tweeting issue-oriented tweets. An example of an issue-oriented tweet regarding women's issues includes when Cynthia Dill, Senate candidate from Maine, tweeted: "49% of women support mandatory insurance coverage of contraception. I

do, too. Other candidates do not. [#dillforsenate](http://t.co/FvsM2YYF).” With this in mind, distinct from my expectation of both candidates emphasizing masculine issues over feminine issues, I expected in mixed-gender elections that women would discuss feminine issues more than men, and men would discuss masculine issues more than women (H4). This prediction has been supported in previous research on candidate communication across political offices, timeframes, and modes of candidate communication (e.g., Bystrom 2006; Dabelko & Herrnson 1997; Iyengar et al., 1997; Kahn 1992; 1993; Kahn & Gordon, 1997; Niven & Zilber, 2001). Further, Herrnson et al. (2003) found that women candidates gain a strategic advantage when they stress feminine issues that voters associate favorably with women (cf. Dolan, 1998; Paolino, 1995). This approach also allows women to gain an advantage with women voters who typically care more about such issues—a meaningful benefit because since 1980, women have been more likely to vote than men (CAWP, 2012c). Therefore women candidates profit from emphasizing the issues they are seen as most competent in handling, and this will most likely trigger them to focus relatively more on this distinct area of ownership in their communication.³

Character traits are also thought to be owned by men and women, and create distinctions for voters regarding candidate personas. Building on issue ownership, Hayes (2005) developed a theory of “trait ownership” which proposed that issues and behaviors could be the basis for trait assessments, creating an “issue-to-image transformation” (Louden & McCauliff, 2004). For example, because women often campaign on compassion issues, female candidates are perceived as owning warmth, compassion, congeniality, and empathy; whereas men often campaign on issues of business and industry, and defense, carving out images of individualism, toughness, and strength (Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Connell, 2005; Hayes, 2011). These

³ It is important to note that I do not expect candidates to focus *exclusively* on owned issues. Rather, the hypotheses in this dissertation are focused on the comparative proportion of emphasis.

gendered trait associations are built on a history of stereotypes, and even though many women have moved from the hearth to the boardroom, these perceptions endure. Lawless' (2004) survey found that respondents rated male candidates as more likely to possess stereotypically masculine traits, including being self-confident, assertive, tough, and aggressive, whereas women were rated as more likely to possess stereotypically feminine traits, including being compassionate, willing to compromise, sensitive, and emotional. The 2008 Pew Research Center survey found similar results: Citizens perceived men as more decisive and women were seen as more compassionate, emotional, and honest. As such, U.S. society continues to propagate gender-based conceptions of character. These conceptions carry benefits and drawbacks for candidates and their gendered communication styles.

Character traits present another avenue for candidates to project their persona and for voters to evaluate candidates, but this avenue leads to a familiar end: As with issues, voters tend to prefer masculine traits to feminine traits in political leaders (Hayes, 2011; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; McGinley, 2009; Meeks, 2012; Rosenwasser & Dean, 1989). This preference is perhaps why men and women candidates talk about masculine traits more than feminine traits in campaign advertisements (Bystrom, 2006; Kahn, 1993). For example, Kahn's (1993) analysis of U.S. Senate elections in the 1980s found that over 70% of trait discussion by women and men was devoted to masculine traits. Carrying that forward, Bystrom's (2006) analysis of campaign ads by women candidates between 1990 and 2002 showed that the most-emphasized traits were decidedly masculine: aggressive/fighter, toughness/strength, leadership, and being action-oriented, with honesty as the only so-called feminine trait to break the trend. Men also emphasized masculinity with their top trait mentions: leadership, aggressive/fighter, being action-oriented, and toughness/strength (Bystrom, 2006). Furthermore, an analysis of

campaign websites during this timeframe found that men and women emphasized more masculine than feminine traits (Bystrom, 2006). It is the classic idea of candidates wanting to be “tough enough” for politics because voters, and society in general, often crave this more masculinized persona. Given voters’ predilection toward masculine traits, and candidates’ willingness to recognize and abide by this preference, I predicted that *both* men and women candidates would discuss masculine traits more than feminine traits in their communication (H5).

That said, character traits in mixed-gender elections present a more complex situation for candidates than issues. With issues, I predicted that candidates would align along gender ownership to create clear distinctions, resulting in women emphasizing feminine issues more than men, and men emphasizing masculine issues more than women. With traits, I still predict that candidates will implement a gendered strategy, but this time, the gendered strategy will be decidedly masculine for men *and* women. This divergence from gender ownership is based on studies that show that women actually reference masculine traits in similar volumes to or more than men in campaign advertisements and in-office websites (Bystrom, 2006; Kahn, 1993; Lee, 2013). For instance, Kahn’s (1993) study showed that men and women Senate candidates mentioned masculine traits in their campaign ads in similar volumes: 71% and 78%, respectively. Furthermore, Bystrom (2006) found that women were significantly more likely to reference toughness/strength than men in their ads. I wish to suggest that women may eschew gendered ownership of trait references in mixed-gender elections because they see this distinction as a *deficit*, not as merely a *difference*.

To understand this rationale, it is first important to reflect on issues. Masculine issues may be preferred more than feminine issues, but both are seen as important, and while feminine issues do not top the list of most important issues, they are certainly not considered irrelevant.

National security and the economy are always perceived as important, but issues like education and health care also garner their share of attention—from health care reform and the Affordable Care Act, to No Child Left Behind and the focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) in education to help Americans “keep pace” with global employment needs. And in 2012, there was a distinct uptick in the amount of attention to matters seen as particularly important to women, such as contraception, funding for Planned Parenthood, rape-related pregnancy, and the Paycheck Fairness Act. Therefore, women candidates who focus primarily on feminine issues when running against a man may be seen as still addressing highly topical and important matters. For issues, gendered communication emphases are a difference, not a deficit.

Focusing primarily on feminine traits when running against men may be more marginalizing for women, however. Of feminine traits, the most highly desirable trait is often honesty (Pew, 2008; Meeks, 2012). For example, the 2008 Pew survey found that honesty was the highest ranked feminine trait, with 52% saying honesty was “absolutely essential” and 44% saying it was “very important”—that is a combined total of 96% of respondents saying honesty was highly important. However, other feminine traits are not nearly as prized. In Pew’s (2008) survey, 28% and 45% of respondents said compassion was “absolutely essential” or “very important,” respectively. Combined, that meant over a quarter of respondents saw compassion as *not* very important. As such, while it would behoove women candidates to champion the feminine trait of honesty in their communications, it seems their time is better spent *coupling* honesty with a host of masculine traits. An example of a woman candidate emphasizing the masculine trait of toughness is when Senate candidate Shelley Berkley tweeted about being a “fighter”: “Shelley knows we need new good-paying jobs here in NV that can’t be shipped overseas. That’s why she’s a #fighter 4 clean energy jobs #nvsen.” Further, given that previous

studies show that women emphasize masculine traits in similar volumes to or more than men in mixed-gender elections, it seems they have taken note of this benefit. Therefore, I predicted that in mixed-gender elections, women would discuss feminine traits more than men, and men and women would reference masculine traits in similar volumes in their communication (H6).

Collectively, these hypotheses predicted that women candidates in mixed-gender elections would align with gendered expectations to create distinctions between themselves and their male competitors regarding interactivity, personalization, and issue emphases. More specifically, I expected women to engage in a feminine communication style by being more interactive, more personal, and by focusing more on feminine issues than men. I then expected women to pivot when it comes to character trait portrayal and to emphasize masculine traits, such as toughness and assertiveness, in similar volumes to men. Overall, this communication style carves out distinct candidate personas based on gendered divisions and expectations, while also affording women the opportunity to fold into the mix some masculinity to create electable identities via their Twitter feeds. By and large, aligning with gender divisions allows women to create differences, not deficits, in mixed-gender elections.

Candidate Communication in Same-Gender Elections

In same-gender elections, gender is far less likely to be a distinguishing characteristic: Both candidates are either men or women, and both are therefore bound by and enabled by similar expectations, challenges, and opportunities. There are likely to still be some gendered dynamics, but I suggest that gender generally recedes as a critical factor. Instead, I argue it is political party affiliation that affords candidates the key opportunity to create distinctions in their self-presentations. In American politics, of course, candidates do not simply run as men or women; they also mostly run as Democrats or Republicans, which carry their own substantial set

of expectations that candidates have long sought to leverage. For example, Budge and Farlie (1983) and Petrocik (1996) drew upon all-male elections when building their theory of political party ownership, which suggests parties own different aspects of the political landscape and seek to use those assets to their advantage. Combining this perspective with the idea of gender ownership, I suggest we can build a framework for how candidates may position themselves in same-gender elections across this dissertation's core concepts.

This framework is founded upon the overlap between party and gender ownership. Specifically, feminine and Democratic styles intertwine, as do masculine and Republican styles. The following discussion will go into this alignment in greater depth, but it is important to note the historic and cultural circumstances that have cultivated these pairings. Since the 1970s, Democrats have politically supported the Equal Rights Amendment and women's rights, creating an alignment between organized feminism, women supporters, and Democrats (Sanbonmatsu, 2004). This coupling of support potentially explains why women are more likely to identify as Democrats, and since 1980 they have been more likely to vote for Democratic presidential candidates than men (CAWP, 2012c). Conversely, in the late 1970s, Republicans stopped politically supporting the ERA and moved to endorsement of a more traditional view of women and femininity (Domke & Coe, 2008; Sanbonmatsu, 2004). Therefore, as feminists and Democrats made the personal political, Republicans reinforced gendered domains, keeping femininity in the private sphere and championing masculinity in the public sphere, where politics lives and breathes. In same-gender elections, I predict candidates will build on these distinctions to create party-based communication styles.

Interactivity

Whether an election includes two men or two women, the long-standing need to be

interactive as a candidate remains the same. Candidates in any electoral context are expected to connect with their constituency via offline and online practices. That said, I expect a difference in interaction levels via Twitter based on a candidate's party affiliation. As mentioned previously, women candidates are expected to be more interactive than men because the feminine leadership style is more collaborative, egalitarian, and participatory, whereas masculine leadership is more autonomous and independent (Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006; Cross & Madson, 1997; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Guimond et al., 2006; Harriman, 1996; Powell, 1993). Notably, several of these gendered leadership traits align with why voters like a certain party's leadership style. For example, Winter's (2010) survey showed that participants who preferred the Republican Party did so because of leadership traits such as being independent, self-reliant, and not willing to compromise—a "stick to their guns" kind of leadership style that aligns with masculinity. In contrast, participants who preferred the Democratic Party did so because of leadership traits such as involving others in decision-making, listening to people, and taking into consideration others' wants and needs—a leadership style that is by the people, not just by the politician, and tends to align with femininity. Based on the alignment between feminine and Democratic styling, and masculine and Republican styling, I expected the following: in all-male elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans (H7a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans in their communication (H7b).

Furthermore, I posit that levels of interactivity may vary based on electoral context. Specifically, I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would be more interactive than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H8a). Generally speaking, I argue that women are more interactive than men. Therefore in a mixed-gender election, I expect women to include more interactive tweets to profit on this expectation.

For Democratic women, the expectation of greater interactivity of women is combined with the expectation of greater interactivity of Democrats since they too emphasize a feminine leadership style. There is full alignment based on gender *and* party for these women regarding social expectations. I argue that this alignment is elevated in same-gender elections because Democratic women are running against an opponent who also owns interactivity to some extent since they are *female* Republicans. This is not the case in mixed-gender elections since the opponent is a Republican man, and thus does not own femininity via gender or party. This intersection of expectations and electoral contexts may prompt Democratic women to intensify their interactivity in same-gender elections due to the gender and assets of their opponent. For Republican women, gender and party do not overlap, and instead create an area of negotiation. I predict that this conflict will produce a similar trend to that of Democratic women. Specifically, I expected that Republican women in women-only elections would be more interactive than Republican women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H8b). In a woman-only scenario, Republican women will recognize the advantages of trespassing party norms and engaging in interactivity to compete against fellow, interactive women. It is a cost-benefit analysis for Republican women. The cost: abdicating their party's leadership style. The benefit: potentially gaining ground against another woman on a campaign tactic that society generally expects from women. As such, Republican women must strike a strategic balance between gender and party when running against other women.

Personalization

Political parties also highlight personalization differently, and their differing approaches once again align with gender. An iconic example of this difference occurred in the second 1992 presidential debate between George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. An audience member asked

the candidates how the national debt had personally affected each candidate's life, and if it had not, then how could they relate to Americans' struggles? Republican incumbent candidate Bush stumbled through his answer, first talking about interest rates, causing the moderator to repeat the question and prompting the audience member to recount how friends had lost jobs or could not afford mortgages. Bush then shared a story about *reading* in a church bulletin about families struggling to make ends meet, and stating, "everybody's affected by the debt because of the tremendous interest that goes into paying on that debt everything's more expensive." Overall, Bush's response employed a more masculine speaking style. In contrast, Democratic challenger Clinton responded in distinct feminine styling. He said, "Well, I've been governor of a small state for 12 years. I'll tell you how it's affected me...I have seen what's happened in this last 4 years when -- in my state, when people lose their jobs there's a good chance I'll know them by their names. When a factory closes, I know the people who ran it. When the businesses go bankrupt, I know them" (Transcript from Commission on Presidential Debates, 1992). It is highly unlikely that a governor of a state knows each employee laid off at a factory, but the personal appeal of Clinton's response was clear. Each candidate's response showed an alignment of gender and party, and how each party tends to employ personalization.

Based on the intertwining of femininity and Democrats, and masculinity and Republicans, I expected the following: in all-male elections, Democrats would include more personalization than Republicans (H9a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would include more personalization in their communication than Republicans (H9b). Further, following the same theoretical logic I employ above regarding women in differing electoral contexts, I also want to compare women in same- and mixed-gender elections. It is likely that Democratic women will adhere to the collective and aligned demands of gender and party regarding

increased personalization in same-gender elections, and it is also likely that Republican women will trespass party lines to engage in strategic personalization when running against another potentially personalizing woman. Thus, I proposed the following: Democratic women in women-only elections would be more personal than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H10a), and Republican women in women-only elections would be more personal than Republican women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H10b).

Political Issues and Character Traits

Scholarship on party ownerships of political issues and character traits has recognized distinctions in what Democrats and Republicans are perceived as owning. Furthermore, these ownerships directly align with gender. For example, Petrocik's (1996) analysis of multiple national surveys showed that Democrats were seen as better at handling social welfare issues—much like feminized “compassion issues”—such as improving education and health care, protecting social security, and helping the elderly and the poor. Republicans, on the other hand, were perceived as more successful at handling stereotypically masculine issues like foreign affairs, national security, crime, and economic matters, such as taxes, reducing the deficit, and controlling inflation (Petrocik, 1996). These perceptions in ownership relate back to the split between private and public spheres and their related social roles. By making the personal political, like children's well being or reproductive rights, women and feminists created a way to bridge the private with the public. Because Democrats have supported these efforts since the 1970s, Democrats are perceived as owning these more feminized issues (Sanbonmatsu, 2004). Conversely, because Republicans have politically distanced themselves from these domesticated issues, they are seen as owners of more public, masculine matters. As such, the dovetailing of gender and party ownership is rooted in cultural perceptions and historical acts.

Recognizing these ownerships, candidates in turn emphasize party issue ownership in their communication to attract voters. This has been found regularly in content analyses of candidate communication in all-male elections (Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen, 2003)—prompting the expectation that in all-male elections Democrats would discuss feminine issues more than Republicans, and Republicans would discuss masculine issues more than Democrats in their communication (H11a). Once we extend this pattern to women-only elections, I expected Democrats to discuss feminine issues more than Republicans, and Republicans to discuss masculine issues more than Democrats in their communication (H11b). Furthermore, based on the logic of the combined expectations of gender and party for Democratic women in same-gender elections, I expected Democratic women to “up the ante” so to speak when running against another woman and discuss feminine issues more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H12a). Republican women in same-gender elections no longer have to trespass party lines as they did on interactivity and personalization because masculine issues are seen as a strategic gain because voters see them as more important than feminine issues. Therefore Republican women may emphasize party-based issues more in women-only elections because in such contexts they are the only candidates who can lay claim to such issues of import—Democratic women have no ownership over masculine issues. In turn, I expected Republican women in women-only elections to discuss masculine issues more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H12b).

As with issues, party and gender ownership intertwine on character traits. Democrats and female candidates are perceived as owning warmth and compassion, and Republicans and male candidates are perceived as owning strength and assertiveness (Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Connell, 2005; Hayes, 2011). Based on Hayes’s (2005) theory that issues and

behaviors could be the basis for trait assessments, there is a strong “carry-over effect” for the alignment of gender and party on traits. For example, women’s ownership over the domestic sphere championed issues of social welfare and care—be it of children, the elderly, or the poor—and Democratic support of these causes helped to cultivate a nurturing image. Winter’s analysis of ANES data between 1972 and 2004 suggests that the political actions of both parties in the 1970s regarding women’s equality, as well as the issue of abortion, may have solidified the mapping of femininity and masculinity onto Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Both parties experienced a jump in the association between their party and gendered traits in the 1980s, and this association has remained stronger over the years as compared to the 1970s (Winter, 2010). In the aggregate, Winter (2010) also found that masculine traits were roughly seven times more likely to be mentioned as a reason to like Republicans than as a reason to like Democrats, and feminine traits were almost six times more likely to be mentioned as a reason to like Democrats than as a reason to like Republicans. Consequently, parties benefit when they meet and portray these trait expectations. I expected, therefore, in male-only elections for Democrats to discuss more feminine traits than Republicans, and Republicans to discuss more masculine traits than Democrats in their communication (H13a).

Regarding women I previously noted that feminine traits are viewed as less important and as a potential deficit to women. Therefore I predicted that in mixed-gender elections, women would avoid the perceived weaknesses of feminine traits, and emphasize masculine traits to show they can go toe-to-toe with a man. But in women-only elections, there is no need to “out man” the other candidate via a heavy focus on masculine traits. Therefore, in all-female elections, I predicted that Democrats would mention feminine traits more than Republicans, and Republicans would reference masculine traits more than Democrats in their communication (H13b). Finally,

in keeping with the rationale that Democratic women would act on the collective expectations of gender and party, I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would discuss feminine traits more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H14a). Furthermore, Republican women in same-gender elections can benefit from party preferences because masculine traits are favored and more exclusively “theirs” in same-gender elections, and thus I expected Republican women in women-only elections to discuss masculine traits more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections in their communication (H14b).

In sum, I expected men and women candidates in same-gender elections to employ party as their main means of crafting distinct self-presentations. Specifically, I predicted that Democratic men and women would implement a predominantly feminized communication style, and Republican men and women would execute a more masculinized communication style across interactivity, personalization, issues, and traits. When we compare women in same-gender elections to women in mixed-gender elections, the intersection of gender, party, and electoral context create a slightly more complex scenario. Democratic women in women-only elections experience alignment between social expectations regarding their gender and party—both are perceived as feminine—and are competing against fellow women who can also claim feminine styling to some extent. Therefore Democratic women in same-gender elections may elevate such a persona and be more interactive and personal, as well as emphasize feminine issues and traits more than Democratic women running against men. Republican women, on the other hand, encounter a conflict between gender expectations of femininity and party expectations of masculinity, all while keeping in mind the assets of their opponent. As such, when Republican women run against another woman, I expected them to cross party lines and engage in more feminine acts of interactivity and personalization than Republican women in mixed-gender

elections because they need to combat the heightened feminized style of their Democratic opponent. Regarding issues and traits, however, I expected Republican women to emphasize masculine content in these areas more in same-gender than mixed-gender elections because in women-only elections they have clear, unilateral ownership over these areas and the advantages associated with these areas. The same cannot be said when they run against a man. Overall, Republican women must create a more nuanced communication style in same-gender elections that negotiates gender and party. All of the expectations from this chapter—both for mixed-gender and same-gender elections—are recapped in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1
Content Analysis Hypotheses Across Mixed-Gender and Same-Gender Elections

Election Type	Interactivity	Personalization	Political issues	Character Traits
<i>Mixed-gender</i>	H1: Women > men	H2: Women > men	H3: <i>Total: Masculine > feminine</i> H4: <i>Feminine: Women > men</i> <i>Masculine: Men > women</i>	H5: <i>Total: Masculine > feminine</i> H6: <i>Feminine: Women > men</i> <i>Masculine: Women ≈ men</i>
<i>All-male</i>	H7a: Dem > Rep	H9a: Dem > Rep	H11a: <i>Feminine: Dem > Rep</i> <i>Masculine: Rep > Dem</i>	H13a: <i>Feminine: Dem > Rep</i> <i>Masculine: Rep > Dem</i>
<i>All-female</i>	H7b: Dem > Rep	H9b: Dem > Rep	H11b: <i>Feminine: Dem > Rep</i> <i>Masculine: Rep > Dem</i>	H13b: <i>Feminine: Dem > Rep</i> <i>Masculine: Rep > Dem</i>
<i>Women in all-female versus mixed-gender</i>	H8a: All-female Dem > Mixed Dem women H8b: All-female Rep > Mixed Rep women	H10a: All-female Dem > Mixed Dem women H10b: All-female Rep > Mixed Rep women	H12a: <i>Feminine: All-female Dem > Mixed Dem women</i> H12b: <i>Masculine: All-female Rep > Mixed Rep women</i>	H14a: <i>Feminine: All-female Dem > Mixed Dem women</i> H14b: <i>Masculine: All-female Rep > Mixed Rep women</i>

Communication Effects: The Personalization of Politics

As a final component of the dissertation, I conducted an experiment to examine the effects of candidates' self-presentations. In general, this dissertation is focused on the construction of and effects of self-presentations—presentations influenced by social and political expectations regarding gender and political party. As noted, McGraw (2003) calls these personas “political reputations” and claims they consist of two processes: *impression management* and *impression formation*. Impression management is when an individual tries to control the information they present about themselves to others (McGraw, 2003). The conceptual sections on communication styles in mixed-gender and same-gender elections focus on impression management by assessing candidates' Twitter self-presentations across interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits. The experiment examines the latter process by assessing how these self-presentations affect impression formation, in which individuals—in this case, potential voters—construct a representation of another person based on knowledge and inferences (McGraw, 2003). Impression formation is a crucial step in a citizen's evaluative and vote formation process. Ultimately, the experiment tested the effects of differing candidate self-presentations (impression management) on the public's perceptions of candidates (impression formation). In sum, the content analyses and the experiment sought to close the loop by examining what candidates said and to what effect.

Specifically, the experiment examined potential effects of personalized communication styles. As noted, personalization is when someone reveals some personal information about themselves or connects content to some aspect of their personal identity. The introduction to this dissertation featured a form of personalization in Senator Claire McCaskill's response on Twitter to Representative Todd Akin's “legitimate rape” comment. She tweeted: “As a woman & former

prosecutor who handled 100s of rape cases, I'm stunned by Rep Akin's comments about victims this AM." McCaskill personalized the tweet and her statement on Akin's comments by invoking her gender and previous profession; combined, these elements of her personal identity helped to distinguish herself from her competitor and his comments. Personalization can also add a sense of authenticity to the campaign, and the potential to break down barriers between private and public selves—both of which appeal to voters (Louden & McCauliff, 2004). Furthermore, Jamieson (1995) noted, "Because the mass media are fixated on differences between the private and public self of public figures, a comfort with expressing instead of camouflaging self . . . is useful for a politician" (p. 95). Personalization affords candidates the ability to express themselves and their personal characteristics. Therefore personalized self-presentations can highlight, rather than obscure, a candidate's self, and in turn, may attract voters who favor less of a divide between candidates' private and public selves.

It also seems plausible that personalization could create particular psychological effects. In particular, personalized self-presentations may elicit higher levels of parasocial interaction and social presence for voters—both of which could be crucial to campaigning via digital media. Parasocial interaction is a one-way, nonreciprocal, pseudo relationship the audience forms with a mediated personality—often called "intimacy at a distance" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215; Lee & Oh, 2012). Essentially, an audience member forms an interpersonal relationship with a mediated persona, and such relationships create a feeling of intimacy, the sense that the audience member really knows the mediated person and that the mediated person is talking directly to the audience member. More personalized communications would seem to create a more stimulating environment for the formation of such imagined relationships. Furthermore, personalization might engender a sense of social presence. Social presence is the extent to which

virtual/mediated communication simulates face-to-face interactions, which can inspire the “feeling that one has some level of access or insight into the other’s intentional, cognitive, or affective states” (Biocca & Nowak, 2001). Social presence can create the feeling of connecting and “being there” physically and mentally with the other person even though communication is occurring virtually (Nowak & Biocca, 2003). Collectively, then, it is plausible that these factors could generate a host of effects that could create a connection between candidate and citizen: Personalized self-presentations could prompt the public to feel like they are “there” with the candidate, and/or spur an imagined but still meaningful relationship with the candidate. The Internet has created a bounty of ways for candidates to campaign, but most of them replace physical contact with a screen. If the saying is true and politics is about relationships, then personalization could make mediated campaign spaces into prime relational spaces in contemporary politics.

And indeed it may be that the advantages of personalization could apply to communication styles on Twitter. For example, Golbeck et al. (2010) asserted “the intimacy of Twitter may provide a solution for citizens to feel more personally connected with their representative” (p. 1619). Recent research is showing empirically that more personalized tweets can be beneficial for candidates. For example, Lee and Oh (2012) examined the effects of personalized tweets by politicians in South Korea, and found that participants recognized issues more accurately and had better message recall after reading personalized versus depersonalized tweets. Furthermore, for people who value interpersonal connections and social interactions, personalized tweets heightened their perceptions of social presence, fostered parasocial interaction, and positively impacted their vote intention toward the politician (Lee & Oh, 2012). Therefore politicians may benefit from capitalizing on the potentially intimate dynamic of

Twitter via direct and personal communication interactions with voters.

With this in mind, the experiment in Chapter Five explored the potential effects of personalization in Twitter communication via references to political issues, character traits, and daily life—all of which draw on scholarship and are examined in the content analyses in Chapters Three and Four. This examination contained several expectations. First, I expected personalization to be generally advantageous for all candidates. This expectation was based on scholarship regarding the advantages of the personalization of politics (e.g., Lee & Oh, 2012; Warnick et al., 2005). Specifically, I predicted that participants exposed to personalized tweets would report higher levels of social presence (H15a), parasocial interaction (H15b), and vote intention for the candidate (H15c) than those who were exposed to depersonalized tweets. These predictions were fairly straightforward. Less clear was whether personalized communications would affect voter impressions of candidates' issue competency and traits. Lee and Oh (2012) and Warnick et al. (2005) found that forms of personalization increased message recall and issue accuracy, but they did not examine whether participants rated more personalized politicians as more competent in handling said issues. Furthermore, Han (2008) examined the effects of personal self-disclosure in political appeals, and found that self-disclosure did trigger the “liking heuristic,” meaning the person was perceived as more likable, but this study focused on political canvassers going door-to-door rather than candidates. Given the lack of scholarly clarity, I posed RQ1: Does exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets by candidates impact voters' perceptions of candidates on issue competency and trait portrayal?

Furthermore, to make the study more generalizable, I examined these effects for partisan men and women. Such analysis sought to determine to what extent gender- and political party-based expectations impacted the effects of personalization. First, I focused on gender. Initially,

one would imagine that women would reap the benefits of personalization more than men since they are seen as owning a more personalized communication style. In other words, women who emphasize a more personalized self-presentation may be rewarded by voters for fitting expectations. But even with the benefits of personalization and meeting expectations in mind, it would be imprudent not to recognize the continuing dominance of men in politics. In the 2013 political landscape, the U.S. Senate is 80% male, the U.S. House of Representatives is 81.5% male, gubernatorial offices are 90% male, and the U.S. presidency has been 100% male in historical totality. It is possible, therefore, that alignment of women and personalization is offset by a general perception that males are a better fit for office. This gendered preference, when combined with personalization, may result in men receiving more positive impressions from voters. Such conflict regarding gender led me to pose the following RQ2: Does exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of male and female candidates regarding social presence, parasocial interaction, vote intention, issue competency, and trait portrayal?

Expectations regarding political party provide some consensus and some conflict as well. Namely, I expected that Democrats would be rewarded for meeting personalization expectations more than Republicans. Unlike with male and female candidates, there is no general bias toward favoring either Democrats or Republicans. For instance, in 2013 the President is a Democrat and the majority of the U.S. Senate is Democrat, but Republicans hold majorities in the U.S. House of Representatives, in gubernatorial offices, and in both chambers of state legislatures. Therefore, I do not expect there to be any mitigating factors—such as the preference for males in the gender examination—that could undercut the potentially beneficial alignment between Democrats and personalization. As a result, I predicted that participants exposed to personalized tweets by a

Democrat would report higher levels of social presence (H16a), parasocial interaction (H16b), and vote intention for the candidate (H16c) than people exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican. Issue competency and trait portrayal present a less clear scenario since Democrats and Republicans own distinct issues and traits, which could intersect with personalization in important, yet unpredictable ways. Thus I put forward RQ3: Does exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of Republican and Democratic candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal?

At the intersection of gender *and* party, I expected Democratic female and male candidates to fare better than their Republican counterparts to some extent. Democratic women have the alignment of party- and gender-based expectations with personalization, whereas Republican women only have partial alignment via gender. Similarly, Democratic men have more ownership over personalization due to party than Republican men, who have no claim to personalization. Therefore I expected that participants exposed to personalized tweets by a Democratic candidate—female or male—would report higher levels of social presence (H17a), parasocial interaction (H17b), and vote intention for the candidate (H17c) than those who were exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican, female or male. When examining issue competency and trait portrayal, the advantages are less straightforward. Partisan women and men are seen as differentially better at handling and embodying different issues and traits. Thus an aggregate inspection concerning issues competency, trait portrayal, and personalization may intersect in unknown ways. I therefore posed RQ 4: Does exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of Republican and Democratic female candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal? And finally, RQ5: Does exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters'

perceptions of Republican and Democratic male candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal?

Chapter Outline

This dissertation explores how candidates navigated gender and party politics in their campaign communications on Twitter, and the effects of self-presentation styles on the voting public. Specifically, I examine whether men and women candidates utilized gender and political party ownerships to strategically craft self-presentations via emphases on interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits during the 2012 general election season. Furthermore, I explore whether personalization via Twitter communications can positively influence voters' impressions of candidates, while also examining to what extent such communication fosters a more intimate communicative and campaign setting. In addition to furthering scholarship on gender, political communication, ownerships, and strategic communication in American politics, it is my distinct hope that this research reveals how men and women can advantageously communicate their gender and party identification, either singularly or in tandem, to create electable personas. The news media plays an important role in American politics by both providing information on candidates and, at times, performing the critical role of the watchdog for the sake of informing the electorate. This crucial responsibility at times, however, can damage candidates and their chances by presenting and reinforcing narratives that emphasize hegemonic masculinity and horserace coverage. Digital media like Twitter enable candidates to construct their own narratives and self-presentations to overcome systemic disadvantages by directly communicating with the electorate. In this first chapter I introduced the conceptual framework that undergirds the dissertation, articulated my expectations, and sought to explicate the importance of this work.

Chapter Two explains the methodological approaches that constitute the dissertation. In this chapter I specify my study designs, explicate my process for selecting mixed-gender and same-gender elections, detail the specific methods undertaken, and present the advantages to the dissertation's multi-methods design in understanding the dynamics of gender politics.

I then move on to three data chapters. Chapter Three presents results of the content analysis of Twitter candidate communication in mixed-gender Senate elections. Chapter Four presents results for the content analysis of Twitter candidate communication in same-gender Senate elections. Chapter Five presents results of an experiment that tested the effects of personalized tweets on candidates' overall electability. Each chapter provides detailed analysis that corresponds with each of my hypotheses and research questions from Chapter One.

Finally, in Chapter Six I offer a discussion and interpretation of the data, connecting the results to my conceptual framework, and highlight the implications for scholarship and candidates. I conclude by offering suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Dissertation Design and Methodology

I employed three methodological steps to examine candidates' communication styles in different electoral contexts, and the effects of communication styles on voters' impressions. Step one is a content analysis of candidate communication on Twitter in mixed-gender Senate elections during the 2012 general election season. This analysis examined how men and women candidates infused their gender in their self-presentations. Step two is also a content analysis of candidate communication on Twitter, but the focus is now on same-gender Senate elections. This analysis uncovered how men and women candidates incorporated their gender and political party identification into their presentation of self when running against someone of the same sex. Finally, step three is a virtual laboratory experiment, examining the effects of different self-presentation styles on voters' impressions of partisan men and women candidates. This final analytic component examined the impact of personalization on several evaluative criteria. Together, these three parts offer a multi-methodological approach to understanding what candidates say during the election and how this communication affects potential voters. Each part is discussed in turn.

Content Analyses: Candidate Communications

For parts one and two, I conducted a quantitative content analysis. This approach enables systematic analysis and categorization of large volumes of communications that would otherwise be difficult to undertake utilizing more qualitative methods (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Riffe et al., 2005). Twitter volume reached new peak levels of activity in 2012; therefore being able to tackle large quantities of information is essential to examining communication styles on Twitter. In addition to aiding research feasibility, content analyses also propagate

reliability. Specifically, reliability is achieved by different coders implementing a clear, detailed codebook, which ensures an element of transparency into what each variable represents. By systematically and reliably applying quantitative measurements to the coding of variables, content analysts can then track the volume or frequency of certain variables, detect patterns across and relationships between these variables, and generalize these findings to the larger population of communication (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Riffe et al., 2005). Because of the reductionist and quantitative qualities of content analysis I am able to efficiently examine the phenomena of gender politics across multiple campaigns and elections.

Selected Elections. The content analyses focused on Twitter feeds for a collection of 12 mixed-gender and same-gender elections in 2012. The Senate elections were selected based on three criteria. First, competitiveness was essential. Close races, as compared to landslide victories, prompt candidates to focus on how they present themselves in an effort to create distinction from their opponent. Competitiveness was assessed by final election outcomes, as well as rankings from organizations such as *New York Times* or *Washington Post* during the elections. Second, I included a variety of types of elections—for example, incumbent versus challenger, open races, and Republican and Democratic winners. Lastly, I selected elections based on geographic region, spanning all five regions of the United States across 12 states. Including multiple types of elections across the United States allowed the results to present a more comprehensive, cross-sectional level of understanding regarding how candidates utilized Twitter. Regarding timeframe, I selected to analyze the general election for each campaign—that is, the dates following the primary contests through Election Day. Half of the elections held their primaries in the spring, and the other half held their primaries in the fall. Table 2.1 summarizes the selected elections.

Table 2.1
Selected Mixed-Gender and Same-Gender Senate Elections

Election Types	Winning Candidate	Followers	# of Tweets	Losing Candidate	Followers	# of Tweets	Election Dates
<i>Mixed-gender</i>							
Connecticut	Chris Murphy (D)	6,504	307	Linda McMahon (R)	37,201	754	8/15 – 11/6
Massachusetts	Elizabeth Warren (D)**	66,844	337	Scott Brown (R)*	54,093	170	9/7 – 11/6
Missouri	Claire McCaskill (D)*	1,584	157	Todd Akin (R)**	6,955	448	8/8 – 11/6
Nebraska	Deb Fischer (R)	3,465	132	Bob Kerrey (D)	3,423	866	5/16 – 11/6
Nevada	Dean Heller (R)*	7,065	1053	Shelley Berkley (D)**	1,557	669	6/13 – 11/6
New Mexico	Martin Heinrich (D)	1,939	454	Heather Wilson (R)	879	471	6/6 – 11/6
<i>Man-versus-man</i>							
Arizona	Jeff Flake (R)	2,096	83	Richard Carmona (D)	3,159	253	8/29 – 11/6
Indiana	Joe Donnelly (D)	1,471	121	Richard Mourdock (R)	4,563	1101	5/9 – 11/6
Pennsylvania	Bob Casey, Jr. (D)*	833	310	Tom Smith (R)**	2,536	423	4/25 – 11/6
<i>Woman-versus-woman</i>							
California	Dianne Feinstein (D)*	542	52	Elizabeth Emken (R)**	11,014	2347	6/6 – 11/6
Hawaii	Mazie Hirono (D)	1,517	338	Linda Lingle (R)	406	2303	8/12 – 11/6
New York	Kirsten Gillibrand (D)*	52,176	695	Wendy Long (R)**	1,959	818	6/27 – 11/6

* Incumbent, ** Challenger

Note. Follower counts collected after Election Day, and it is possible counts increased or decreased based on the electoral outcomes.

Data Collection. To analyze communications during these general election campaigns, I downloaded and collected the Twitter feeds for each candidate. Specifically, I downloaded their campaign Twitter feeds. When many incumbents run for office, they typically have a staff and set of communications for their existing position, and another staff and set of communications for their election. An example of this is that many incumbents have an official website for their House or Senate position, ending in .gov, and then they also have a campaign website for the election. As such, I downloaded the campaign Twitter feeds when applicable. Some candidates only maintain one Twitter feed that services their existing office and election, and therefore in those cases I downloaded the tweets of this account. I verified each Twitter account by matching them against the accounts specified on the candidate's campaign website.

I downloaded the tweets through the official Twitter API (Application Programming Interface) using a simple computer script that was verified by a professional software engineer.¹ The API limits access to 3200 historical tweets per account, but this easily accommodated the timeframe of the candidates' general election tweets. To ensure that the script collected all of the tweets, I conducted a manual check on a subset of the candidates in which I periodically compared tweets from the download to tweets on the candidate's actual Twitter page. For example, starting with the day after the primary election, I compared the 50th tweet in the download to the 50th tweet on the candidate's actual Twitter feed, then the 100th, and so. The manual check revealed a complete match between the two sources, thereby ensuring that the script pulled all of the tweets for each candidate for each timeframe.

For each candidate Twitter feed I coded the entire census of general election tweets. The third and fifth columns of Table 2.1 indicate the number of tweets per candidate during the general election timeframe. All of the tweets in the census were coded. In other words, I did not

¹ The source code used for this process is available online: https://github.com/Tashkant/twitter_archiver

screen tweets for relevance to the election. Rather, each tweet reflects some aspect of the candidate and their self-presentations, and is therefore relevant. In total, there were 14,662 tweets.

Variables and Operationalization. To test the hypotheses I created the following variables and operationalizations (see Appendix A for the codebook). The unit of observation and unit of analysis for the variables was the individual tweet. The list of variables included both feature and content variables. Feature variables consisted of the paratext included in each tweet that provides additional content beyond the tweet content. Feature variables included a series of variables that were coded as “Not Present” (0) or “Present” (1), and included whether the tweet included a *hyperlink* ($M=.60, SD=.489$), an *audio/visual* element (e.g., photo, video, audio clip) ($M=.25, SD=.435$), or an *emoticon*—a picture composed of numbers, letters, or punctuation marks to depict some type of emotion, such as :) which is a smiley face—or an *emoji*—the Japanese term for a picture character ($M=.01, SD=.083$). Content variables included each of the categories discussed in Chapter One that corresponded to the hypotheses, including the following:

Interactivity: The degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles, and control and modify the flow and content of a mediated environment. Interactivity was measured via the following variables, which were coded as “Not Present” (0) or “Present” (1):

- *@mention/Mention:* When a candidate references another user(s), that is not their direct opponent, and includes the @username or a variation of the user’s name in the body of the tweet.
- *@reply:* When a candidate responds to a specific user’s tweet, and the @username appears at the beginning of the tweet.
- *RT or MT:* Retweet is when a candidate reposts another user’s tweet and “RT” appears at the beginning of the tweet, and a modified tweet is when a candidate reposts another user’s tweet, but has modified the original text in some way and “MT” appears at the beginning of the tweet.

- *Retweet Plus*: When a candidate posts a retweet or modified tweet and also adds some of their own content to the beginning of the tweet.
- *In situ photo*: Photo of the candidate “in position” interacting with people who are *not* family members or friends, such as the public, other politicians, etc.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for interactivity, ranging from 0 to 5

($M=.95$, $SD=.784$).

Personalization: The process of making something identifiable as belonging to a particular person by referencing the candidate’s personal identity or life, or creating a personal connection via the text of the tweet or the usage of a photo in the tweet. Personalization was measured via the following variables, which were coded as “Not Present” (0) or “Present” (1):

- *Gender*: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their gender—using words such as man, woman, male, female, father, mother, etc.
- *Uniqueness*: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their uniqueness in a certain context. Uniqueness could indicate a candidate’s novelty, meaning that they are the first, lone, or pioneer to do something based on gender, race, religion, etc., or that they embody a unique spirit, e.g. “march to the beat of their own drum.”
- *Hobbies and Sports*: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to personal hobbies or sporting events/teams.
- *Family*: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their immediate or extended family members.
- *Religion*: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their religion or religious practices, e.g., attending a religious service, participating in a religious activity or occasion, etc.
- *Signed Tweets*: When a candidate “signs” their tweet using a version of their name. Some politicians have their staff write their tweets for them, and when they decide to personally write the tweet, they indicate it by signing at the end of the tweet. Some politicians make this practice explicitly known in their Twitter bios.
- *Personal Photos*: Photos that include the candidate on their own depicting a personal activity, such as fishing or in their alma mater’s attire for a game, or a photo of the candidate with their significant other, children, other family members, friends, pet, etc. Also, the photo could include the candidate’s significant other, children, other family members, friends, pet, etc. posing on their own *without* the candidate.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for personalization, ranging from 0 to 6 ($M=.07$, $SD=.279$).

Political Issues: Any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate and their stance, plan for, or general statement regarding a political issue. Also, any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate's opponent or another person's stance, plan for, or general statement regarding a political issue. Political issues were measured via the following "feminine" and "masculine" variables, which were coded as "Not Present" (0) or "Present" (1):

- *Education*: Any discussion relating to teaching, creating a well-educated workforce, funding for higher education, budget or tax discussion regarding education, etc.
- *Health Care*: Any discussion relating to prescriptions, health care insurance, hospitals, vaccines, reform, or budget or tax discussion regarding health care, etc.
- *Women's Issues*: Any discussion related to a set of issues that are typically seen as concerning women, such as fair pay, maternity leave, reproductive rights, or budget or tax discussion regarding women's issues, etc.
- *Environment*: Any discussion related to the environment, emissions, climate change, environmental protection/preservation of land, plants, water, or wildlife, or budget or tax discussion regarding the environment, etc.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for feminine issues, ranging from 0 to 4 ($M=.09$, $SD=.290$).

- *Military/Defense/Security*: Any discussion relating to the state's army bases or reserves, border security, war, terrorism, preparedness for crisis, or budget or tax discussion regarding military/defense/security, etc.
- *Crime*: any discussion relating to safety, law and order, prisons, drugs (e.g., possession, trafficking, zero-tolerance, the "war on drugs"), or budget or tax discussion regarding crime, etc.
- *Economy*: Any discussion relating to employment/job growth, business and industry, tourism, debt, inflation, deficit, etc.
- *Taxes*: any discussion relating to taxes, levies, specific taxes, e.g. property taxes, windfall taxes, etc.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for masculine issues, ranging from 0 to 4 ($M=.20$, $SD=.450$).

- *Other Issues*: Any discussion relating to other issues not specified above, including, but not limited to, immigration, transportation, foreign policy, same-sex marriage, other LGBT issues, etc ($M=.07$, $SD=.247$).

Character Traits: Any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate and their ability to or lack of ability to portray or embody a character trait. Also any discussion in a tweet regarding the trait portrayal of the candidate's opponent or someone else. Character traits were measured via the following "feminine" and "masculine" variables, which were coded as "Not Present" (0) or "Present" (1):

- *Compassionate*: Any discussion including terms such as compassionate, caring, sympathetic, kind, warm, empathetic, etc.
- *Honest*: Any discussion including terms such as honest, upstanding, integrity, trustworthy, honorable, candid, authentic, phrases such as "straight talker," or "a stand up" man or woman, etc.
- *Congenial*: Any discussion including terms such as congenial, friendly, likable, personable, approachable, etc.
- *Collaborative*: Any discussion including terms such as collaborative, cooperative, phrases such as "reach across the aisle," or bringing people or parties together, etc.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for feminine traits, ranging from 0 to 4 ($M=.06$, $SD=.240$).

- *Leadership*: Any discussion regarding leadership skills, or whether the candidate is a good/bad or strong/weak leader, visionary, or phrases such as "guiding force," "leading by example," "being a role model," being "ready to serve," etc.
- *Strong/Tough*: Any discussion including terms such as aggressive, tough, strong, "finishing strong," "fighter," "fighting for," "don't back down," "standing up for" something, bold, audacious, etc.
- *Confident*: Any discussion including terms such as confident, self-assured, self-reliant, independent, poised, etc.

- *Decisive*: Any discussion including terms such as decisive, assertive, determined, focused, unshakable, unwavering, steadfast, etc.

These variables were used to create an additive scale for masculine traits, ranging from 0 to 4 ($M=.08$, $SD=.285$).

- *Other Traits*: Any discussion relating to other traits not specified above, including, but not limited to hardworking, intelligent/knowledgeable, capable, competent, etc ($M=.04$, $SD=.193$).

One additional content variable was included that did not fit within any of the previous categories. *Opponent @mention/mention* is when a candidate references their direct opponent and includes either their opponent's @username, a variation of their given name, or the content of the tweet explicitly references the opponent but does not use their name, e.g., they say "my opponent" in the body of the tweet ($M=.27$, $SD=.446$).

Coding Procedure. Prior to conducting intercoder reliability, I ran a two-stage pilot test of the codebook on 200 tweets. Specifically, I coded 100 tweets, made any necessary adjustments to the codebook, coded another 100 tweets, and again made any necessary adjustments to the codebook to ensure the precision of the codebook. I also ran a small pilot test with the other intercoder to ensure a base level of intersubject agreement and understanding of the codebook. Intercoder reliability was then conducted on a random subset of the sample ($n=735$) by two coders.² Calculated using Krippendorff's alpha, intercoder reliability coefficients ranged from $\alpha=.80$ for masculine issues to $\alpha=.99$ for links, thereby meeting appropriate acceptance levels (Krippendorff, 2004).

A small subset of the tweets were in a language other than English. In particular, some of the tweets included either Hawaiian or Spanish. Tweets that contained Hawaiian typically only

² This size met and exceeded the minimum required size determined by Riffe, Lacy, and Fico's (2005) equation for selecting an appropriate size.

include 1-2 words in Hawaiian, such as “mahalo” (thank you), “aloha” (greeting, such as hello or goodbye), “ono” (delicious), or “kupuna” (grandparents, elders, ancestors). Thus the majority of the tweet was in English, and typically the meaning of the tweet was easily discernible even with the inclusion of the Hawaiian words. I verified the meaning of these common Hawaiian words with a native speaker, and coded accordingly. The Spanish language tweets required a slightly different process. The majority of Spanish language tweets were completely in Spanish, and thus I had them translated and verified by a non-native speaker who grew up speaking Spanish, has a B.A. in Spanish, and uses Spanish on a regular basis in their profession. I compared these translations to the one’s provided by Twitter’s automated translation system, found content similarity/convergence, and then coded the translated tweets accordingly.³

Experiment: Effects of Personalization

The experiment examined the effects of personalized online self-presentations. Experiments provide several advantages to researchers, most notably exploring and establishing causality. Causality is possible because of the amount of control available in experiments, which includes control over the construction of stimuli, the construction of and implementation of the measurement instrument, the overall design of the experiment, and more (Grabe & Westley, 2003; McDermott, 2002; Morton & Williams, 2008). Grabe and Westley (2003) argue, “[t]he controlled experiment is, when carried out rigorously, the most powerful method of seeking answers to research questions about cause and effect available to the social scientist” (p. 267).

³ This dissertation employs inferential statistics to assess the relationship between opposing candidates’ communication patterns in Chapters Three and Four. The use of such analytics may be considered unnecessary or invalid since I am analyzing the entire census/population of tweets for each candidate’s general election. However, another way to interpret my approach is to view the general election tweets as a sample of the candidate’s overall electoral communications on Twitter, a timeframe beginning with the announcement of their candidacy and ending on Election Day. As such, the general election tweets are a subset of how the candidates communicated their online self-presentations across their entire candidacy. Furthermore, the 12 elections in this analysis are a sample of the population of Senate races in 2012, which included 33 in total. In turn, the analyzed communication patterns of men and women candidates represent a sample of gendered communication patterns present in 2012, and therefore my analysis makes inferences on the larger phenomena of gendered self-presentations.

This dissertation utilized the power and control of experiments by examining the effects of certain personalized communication on candidates' electability. Furthermore, a useful aspect of experiments is their ability to make incremental steps of progress and understanding through replication that slowly, but effectively, builds more comprehensive knowledge of larger phenomena. By conducting a controlled experiment, with random assignment of participants to treatment groups, this dissertation took notable steps of progress in understanding how personalized content on Twitter can affect candidates' electability.

Design and Procedure. The experiment employed a 2 x 2 x 2 design to examine the effects of personalized tweets on participants' impressions of partisan men and women candidates. Specifically, the experiment explored participants' perceptions of political issue competency, character trait portrayal, social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention. Table 2.2 depicts the eight treatment groups that were included in the experiment.

Table 2.2
Experiment Treatment Groups

Content of Tweets	Women Candidates		Men Candidates	
	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat
Personalized	T ₁	T ₃	T ₅	T ₇
Depersonalized	T ₂	T ₄	T ₆	T ₈

The procedure for the experiment was as follows. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight treatments (see Appendix B for stimuli and relevant questions). Participants were instructed that they would read a random selection of tweets from a male or female candidate of the Democratic or Republican Party running for the U.S. Senate. The gender of the candidate was conveyed via first names that are socially perceived as male or female in the United States. The male candidate was named Steve Adams, and the female candidate was named Sarah Adams. Participants then read a total of 14 tweets from the candidate's campaign Twitter feed. The candidate tweets were from a hypothetical candidate with the username

@AdamsForCongress. I verified prior to the experiment that this Twitter username, as well as any other usernames featured as @mentions or @replies in the tweets, were not currently in use by any actual Twitter users in case a participant knew this username/person.

The tweets included 10 treatment tweets and four “filler” tweets. Treatment tweets featured either depersonalized or personalized content, with personalized tweets connecting some aspect of the candidate’s identity or personal life to the content of the tweet. An example of a depersonalized tweet included: “Most farms are family owned. Farming is a labor of love. Support is needed for this vital part of America.” The personalized version of this tweet was: “Most farms are family owned--like my grandpa’s. I saw firsthand that farming is labor of love. Support vital part of America.” The main topic of the treatment tweets was held constant across treatments. For example, the example tweets above both focus on agriculture. I also included four “filler” tweets to make the Twitter feeds more realistic. Filler tweets were held constant across treatments, and included information that highlighted campaign events and activities that did not include any level of personalization. An example of a filler tweet from the candidate was: “Be one of the first to watch our new campaign ad, and RT to pass it along! AdamsForCongress.com/WorkingTogether.” Overall, all of the tweets were at or less than 140 characters, including spaces, which is the maximum on Twitter, and the order of tweets was held constant across all treatments. Furthermore, several of the treatment and filler tweets were based on actual tweets from the content analyses. Finally, I ensured that the average length of the tweets in the treatments was similar. In particular the average tweet length for personalized tweets ($M=114.50$, $SD=31.147$) was similar to the average tweet length for depersonalized tweets ($M=110.29$, $SD=30.555$).

Once participants finished reading the tweets, they filled out a questionnaire. This

questionnaire featured five sections that asked about the participants' level of agreement with various statements on a Likert-type scale, including: *Issue Competency*, which measured participants' perceptions of how competent a candidate was in handling various issues. For these measures, I asked about issue competency for all eight issues used in the content analyses, including the four feminine issues and four masculine issues. *Trait Portrayal*, which measured participants' perceptions of whether a candidate portrayed various character traits. For this set of measures, I asked about trait portrayal for all eight traits used in the content analyses, including the four feminine traits and four masculine traits. *Social Presence*, which measured how closely the virtual communication simulated face-to-face interaction and included measures such as "I felt as if the candidate was speaking directly to me" (adapted from Nowak & Biocca, 2003; Lee & Oh, 2012). *Parasocial Interaction*, which measured participants' sense of a one-sided interpersonal relationship with the candidate and included measures such as "The candidate made me feel comfortable, as if I were with a friend" (adapted from Thorson & Rodgers, 2006). *Vote Intention*, which measured participants' willingness to vote for the candidate, and included measures such as "I would vote for this candidate if they ran in the next election" (adapted from Lee & Oh, 2012). Each of the five sections featured a matrix question format, with the Likert-type scale of agreement running across the columns. Within each matrix, I randomized the rows to avoid order bias. For example, for the questions regarding issue competency, some participants would see "Economy" as the first issue stated while others would see "Education" first, and so on. Chapter Five provides further details on the descriptives for each individual item, as well as the reliability coefficients for each composite variable used in the analysis.

The questionnaire also included three additional sections. First, it included a manipulation check, which featured two seven-point semantic differential questions and asked

participants to evaluate Adams's tweets as non-intimate/intimate and impersonal/personal (adapted from Lee & Oh, 2012). The order of the semantic anchor points was flipped for each participant to avoid within-item bias. Then, *Social Media Use*, which featured questions gauging whether participants used social media, and if so, what kind and how often. Finally, I asked a series of general demographic questions.

Delivery, Sample, and Timeframe. The experiment was conducted via Survey Monkey—a web-based company that conducts surveys, polls, and experiments on a daily basis—and participants were also obtained via Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey regularly promotes surveys and experiments to a pool of opt-in participants for businesses, academic institutions, market research firms, and more. Participants are provided compensation—in the form of sweepstakes entries, credits for prizes, and the option to make charitable donations to the charity of their choosing—from Survey Monkey for completing a questionnaire. The sample for the experiment was obtained from this pool of opt-in, adult participants. Once participants completed a survey from one of Survey Monkey's other clients, they were then asked if they would like to take an additional survey. If they agreed, they would then be directed to my study and randomly assigned to one of the eight treatments. This recruitment process resulted in a 32.9% response rate, and a final sample size of $N = 843$.⁴ Survey Monkey allowed me to create a “virtual lab” experiment, in which I maintained several elements of control present in more traditional lab experiments (Morton & Williams, 2008). Furthermore, by executing the experiment via the Internet, I was able to include participants who were comfortable with the Internet, which is particularly beneficial for a study focused on an Internet-based platform. Additionally, roughly 30 million people take a Survey Monkey survey each month, creating a

⁴ The original sample obtained via Survey Monkey was $N=961$. This sample included 118 respondents who clicked on the study, but then immediately dropped out and did not complete the questionnaire. These 118 respondents were eliminated from the study, resulting in a final sample size of $N=843$.

sample of participants who are typically more politically, geographically, and demographically heterogeneous than a sample of undergraduate college students. This heterogeneity is particularly important because it added to the representativeness and generalizability of this dissertation's findings, and facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of candidates' self-presentation styles.

Finally, it is important to note the timeframe of the experiment and general demographics of the sample. After receiving approval from The University of Washington Human Subjects Division, the experiment was live from September 19, 2013 to September 24, 2013. The demographics across all 843 participants were as follows: 52.2% of respondents were female; the sample was relatively older ($Med=4$, "45-54 years old"; $Mode=5$, "55-64"); 7.0% lacked a college education, 31% had some college, and 62% had a four-year degree or more. In terms of race/ethnicity, 85.1% of respondents were White/Caucasian, 4.1% Black or African American, 3.6% Hispanic American, 3.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.9% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 3.3% identified as other. Just over half, 56.6%, made less than \$75,000 a year. Concerning political party identification, the sample was 45.6% Democrat, 31.6% Republican, and 22.7% no preference, and political ideology was measured on a seven-point scale, ranging from extremely conservative to extremely liberal ($M=4.17$, $SD=1.671$). Finally, geographical location was as follows, based on the Census regions: 28.1% in the South, 26.7% in the West, 23% in the Midwest, and 22.1% in the Northeast. Overall, there were minor demographic differences between stimuli conditions.⁵ This sample diversity, combined with random assignment of

⁵ There were no differences between stimuli conditions for age, education, income, or political ideology. There was one difference based on the racial identity of the participants: The depersonalized Republican man condition had more White participants (88%) than the personalized Republican man condition (74.3%), $p<.05$. There were also differences regarding the gender of participants: The personalizing Democratic woman condition (58.9%) had more women in the sample than the personalizing Republican man (43.8%) and the depersonalizing Democratic woman conditions (43.2%), $p<.05$.

participants to treatment conditions, increased the external validity of the study.

In addition to the usual demographics, I also asked participants about their social media use. Overall, the vast majority of the sample uses some form of social media (86.2%). Furthermore, I asked participants on average how often they use social media. In general, participants were active social media users: Nearly half of the participants use social media several times a day (49.8%) and an additional quarter use social media about once a day (24.6%). Overall, then, the sample was composed of mostly active social media users.

In summary, the content analyses of candidates' communications in mixed-gender and same-gender elections, along with the experiment, afforded the ability to explore how candidates positioned themselves in differing electoral contexts and the effects of this positioning on American citizens and their impressions of candidates. Specifically, by content analyzing candidates' Twitter feeds, I was able to explore how candidates employed this growing medium to build interactivity, create personalization, project issue competency, and portray character traits. Collectively, these components provide insight into how candidates cultivated a persona across multiple contexts. I also was able to assess how and to what extent candidates featured personalization in their communications, and, through the experiment, examine directly how personalization impacted both the perceived intimacy of Twitter and the perceived electability of partisan men and women. The growing presence of digital media in American politics demands that candidates effectively position themselves online, and through this mixed-methods approach, I was able to examine how candidates created self-presentations in 2012, and how these differing styles impacted candidate electability.

Chapter Three

Self-Presentations in Mixed-Gender Elections

The 113th U.S. Congress that convened in January 2013 contained 20 female U.S. Senators, an all-time high. Shortly after the 2012 elections, ABC World News anchor Diane Sawyer gathered 19 of the 20 and asked if there was a future president in the room. Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington, replied, “I think the thing is, is that every man wakes up in the morning and looks in the mirror and says, ‘I could be president.’ I think every woman looks in the mirror and says, ‘What can I get done for my country today?’” (“Female Senators sit down with Diane Sawyer,” 2013). More gender contrasts followed. Susan Collins, a Republican from Maine, said, “What I find is with all due deference to our male colleagues, that women’s styles tend to be more collaborative.” Missouri Democrat Claire McCaskill, fresh off a win over a male competitor, offered that women are “less confrontational” and “actually work together, Republicans and Democrats, and women try to look at solving the problem rather than just [scoring] political points.” Washington Democrat Maria Cantwell, like McCaskill a 2012 victor over a male opponent, said women “leave their ego at the door” and are “more natural consensus builders.” Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski pondered, “Maybe it is the testosterone ... or the ego that is attached there.” The message from these successful women politicians was consistent: Female politicians are more collaborative, more willing to reach across the partisan aisle, and more willing to do so for the sake of their constituents than male politicians.

The meta message was unmistakable. As these women gathered in this unprecedented moment, they de-emphasized their partisan affiliations and accentuated what they claimed were gender-driven similarities. The setting encouraged it, certainly, but they nonetheless made the choices to publicly speak in gendered ways. This moment and the Senators’ gendered discourse

cut to the heart of the dissertation, and particularly this chapter. In Chapter Three I argue that in mixed-gender elections, women and men candidates will emphasize their areas of gender ownership to create electable self-presentations. Specifically, women and men in their candidate communications will project predominantly gender-congruent personas in their interactivity and personalization, and in their emphasis on political issues and character traits. To examine these potential differences I conducted a content analysis of campaign Twitter feeds for six mixed-gender Senate elections in 2012. In total I examined 12 candidates' campaign Twitter feeds, analyzing every tweet during their general elections—thus starting with the day after the primary election and concluding on Election Day, November 6, 2012. All together I analyzed 5,818 tweets (Table 2.1 in Chapter Two provides full details on the campaigns, candidates, and number of tweets). In this chapter I explore how female and male candidates attempted to navigate their gender and that of their opponent to create meaningful distinctions.

Expectations for Gendered Self-Presentations

I had several expectations about how women and men candidates would construct gendered self-presentations in their Twitter communications. First, I predicted that women would be more interactive in their communication than men (H1). This expectation was based on research on gender differences in leadership styles, and how these styles develop from and incorporate common characteristics of women and men in society. Specifically, American women are seen as more interdependent than men in general and often exhibit a leadership style that is egalitarian, collaborative, and interactive, while men are typically seen as more independent, agentic, and autocratic, creating a foundation for a more hierarchical style of leadership (e.g., Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Guimond et al., 2006). For the purposes of this dissertation, interactivity included both Twitter-specific interaction and types of

interaction that are traditional but were communicated via tweets. For the former, interaction included Twitter users mentioning another user, replying to another user, or reposting another user's tweet content. For the latter, candidates in their Twitter communications emphasized off-line traditions of getting out and meeting with the public—by, for example, displaying the off-line exchanges with tweets of a photo of themselves interacting with supporters, voters, and the general public. Across both of these forms of interaction, I expected women to be more interactive in their communications than men.

My second prediction was that women would be more likely to personalize their communication than men (H2). This expectation drew from scholarship regarding gendered communication styles. In particular, women have been seen as keepers of the more private, domesticated sphere which sets the expectation that communication will be more personal, intimate, and conversational than in the public sphere, which evokes formality and is typically associated with men (Davisson, 2009). Thus women are thought to engage more in a “feminine” communication style that is characterized as more personal, conversational, and anecdotal, and men more often implement a “masculine” communication style that leans toward being more impersonal, factual, and analytical (e.g., Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Campbell, 1989; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Personalization in my analysis included both Twitter-specific actions and more traditional means of personalizing a message. The medium-specific personalizing function was signing a tweet, either with the candidate's full name, first name, or initials to indicate that they wrote the tweet. The more traditional methods included emphasizing some aspect of the candidate's identity or personal life in a tweet, by highlighting their gender, uniqueness, hobbies or sports preferences, family, religion, or a personal photo, such as posing with friends or family. Overall, I expected that women would employ these personalizing agents

more than men.

I also examined how candidates discussed two other omnipresent aspects of politics: political issues and character traits. Both are seen as being differentially “owned” by women and men, with the public perceiving women and men as distinctly capable in handling certain issues and embodying particular traits (see Herrnson et al., 2003). Such gender ownership is founded on women and men’s places in private and public spheres, respectively. I focused first on issues, then on traits. Women have historically been situated in the private domain as society’s caretakers, and thus have been culturally viewed as better at handling social welfare and “compassion” issues such as education, health care, and the environment; men are associated with the public domain, perceived as society’s breadwinners and protectors, and thus viewed as better equipped to handle foreign policy, national defense, crime/law and order, and economic issues (e.g., Heldman et al., 2005; Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009). It is important to note that masculine issues are generally seen by voters as more important than feminine issues, and that research has shown that men and women Senate candidates in mixed-gender elections tend to emphasize masculine issues over feminine issues in their communication (e.g., Bystrom & Kaid, 2002; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). As such, I predicted that *both* men and women candidates would capitalize on this perceived hierarchy of issues by discussing masculine issues more than feminine issues (H3). Beyond the aggregate, I expected candidates to emphasize gender-aligned issues because candidates typically highlight their owned issues as a way of creating an advantage over opponents (e.g., Dabelko & Herrnson 1997; Kahn 1992; 1993; Niven & Zilber, 2001; Petrocik, 1996). Thus my fourth prediction was that women would discuss feminine issues more than men, and men would discuss masculine issues more than women (H4).

Gendered character traits are also rooted in cultural and societal expectations, with a path through campaign issues. For example, because women have traditionally held domestic roles in society and often campaign on issues such as social welfare, female candidates are perceived as owning warmth, compassion, congeniality, and empathy; in contrast, men have traditionally held public-oriented roles and often campaign on issues of business and defense, so they are seen as owning individualism, toughness, and strength (e.g., Connell, 2005; Hayes, 2011; Lawless, 2004). As with issues, masculine traits are seen as more important than feminine traits for politicians and leaders, and candidates, both women and men, take note of this importance by emphasizing more masculine traits than feminine in their communication (e.g., Bystrom, 2006; Hayes, 2011; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a). Accordingly, I predicted that *both* men and women candidates would discuss masculine traits more than feminine traits (H5). Furthermore, I expected women and men to align with gender regarding traits but only to a certain extent. Specifically, my final prediction was that women would discuss feminine traits more than men, and men and women would reference masculine traits in similar volumes (H6).

The former part of this hypothesis aligns with women highlighting owned traits, while the latter part is based on the idea that focusing substantially more on feminine traits than on masculine traits may be seen as a deficit for women. Feminine *issues*, despite being seen as relatively less important when compared to masculine issues, are still seen as issues of import. For example, in the 2012 elections there was considerable discussion of the Affordable Care Act. Thus, focusing on such issues is still seen as an electable strategy for women. In contrast, feminine *traits*, such as compassion and congeniality, do not carry as much weight in the public's mind, and honesty is often the only feminine trait that rises among the most important traits in political leaders (Pew, 2008). Thus based on a desire to construct an electable self-

presentation, as well as scholarship that shows that women often emphasize masculine traits in similar volumes to men (Bystrom, 2006; Kahn, 1993), I expected women and men to incorporate masculine traits similarly so as to present themselves as “tough enough” for political office.

The remainder of this chapter is an examination of women and men’s gendered self-presentations, via three stages of analyses. First, I present general contours of the data on candidates’ Twitter activity. Specifically, I provide data on the volume and frequency of tweets for each candidate. Next, I address each of the specific hypotheses, and focus on the content of the tweets. The data will show that the majority of the hypotheses were supported, with some notable deviations. Lastly, I present some additional analyses beyond the expectations to explore nuances across these six mixed-gender elections. In particular, this analysis examines the self-presentation strategies of winning and losing candidates. These analytic sequences provide insight into gendered dynamics in candidates’ Twitter communications in the 2012 elections.

Contours of the Data: Tweet Volume and Frequency

For the first step in assessing the data, I examined how each candidate employed Twitter during their general elections. These data included two components: the volume and the frequency of tweets in candidates’ campaign Twitter feeds. Such an examination provided a general backdrop of candidates’ Twitter usage, and enabled me to explore whether there were any distinctions in terms of general tweeting habits. As a first step, I ran frequencies to determine the number of tweets by candidate (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Total Tweets and Tweets Per Day by Candidate in Mixed-Gender Elections

Rank	Candidate	Total Tweets	Rank	Candidate	Tweets /Day
1	Dean Heller (R)*	1053	1	Linda McMahon (R)	8.98
2	Bob Kerrey (D)	866	2	Dean Heller (R)*	7.16
3	Linda McMahon (R)	754	3	Elizabeth Warren (D)**	5.52
4	Shelley Berkley (D)**	669	4	Bob Kerrey (D)	4.95
5	Heather Wilson (R)	471	5	Todd Akin (R)**	4.92
6	Martin Heinrich (D)	454	6	Shelley Berkley (D)**	4.55
7	Todd Akin (R)**	448	7	Chris Murphy (D)	3.65
8	Elizabeth Warren (D)**	337	8	Heather Wilson (R)	3.06
9	Chris Murphy (D)	307	9	Martin Heinrich (D)	2.95
10	Scott Brown (R)*	170	10	Scott Brown (R)*	2.79
11	Claire McCaskill (D)*	157	11	Claire McCaskill (D)*	1.73
12	Deb Fischer (R)	132	12	Deb Fischer (R)	0.75

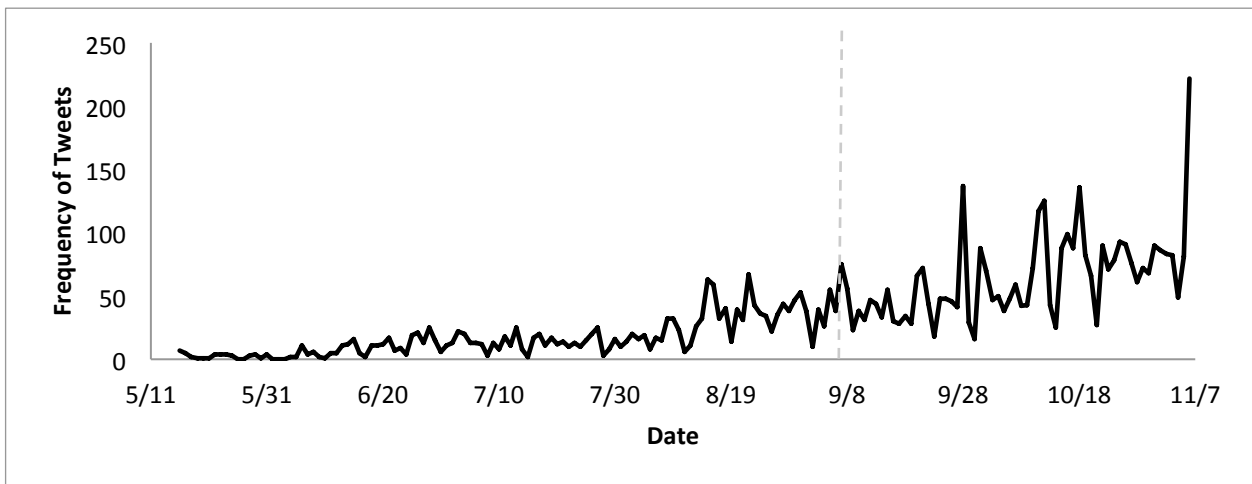
* Incumbent, ** Challenger

The frequencies in the left side of Table 3.1 show no discernible pattern in general Twitter usage. Dean Heller of Nevada tweeted the most at 1,053 tweets, and Deb Fischer of Nebraska tweeted the least with 132 tweets. The average across the candidates was approximately 485 tweets. The top six tweeters included an equal number of men and women, Republicans and Democrats, and incumbents and challengers, as did the bottom six tweeters. I also divided the candidates' overall number of tweets by the number of days in their general election, which is the right side of Table 3.1. Since some of the elections had a spring primary and others had a fall primary, this analysis provided a daily snapshot of usage. In tweets per day, Linda McMahon of Connecticut led the pack at about 9 a day, whereas Fischer came in last again with less than one a day. The average across candidates was 4.25 tweets per day. Again, the top six tweeters included an equal number of men and women, Republicans and Democrats, as did the bottom six tweeters per day. Notably, Heather Wilson and Martin Heinrich, both of New Mexico, dropped from the top six to the bottom six when moving from overall volume to number of tweets per day, whereas Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Todd Akin of Missouri took

their place in the top six. Furthermore, all three challengers were in the top six. This indicates that challengers used Twitter more often than incumbents in these six elections. Thus in general, Twitter seemed to be accentuated for some campaigns and not others.

I then examined tweet frequency over the course of the general election for all of the candidates to see whether Twitter usage varied over time. To do so, I combined all six elections and computed frequencies across their combined general election timeframes (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1
Frequency of Tweets for All Candidates Across 2012 Election Cycle



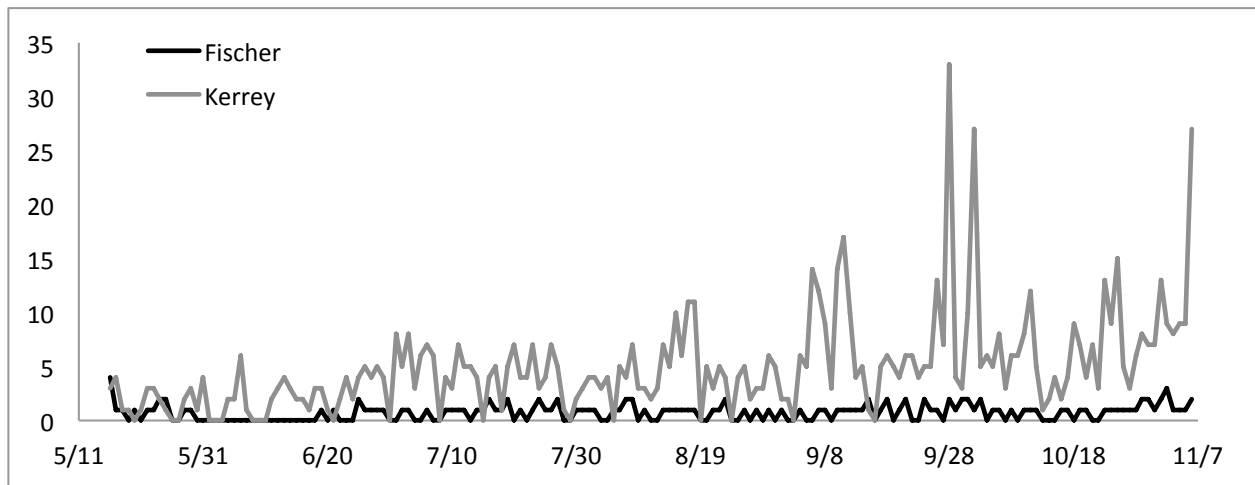
Note. The vertical gray dotted line indicates when all six elections had completed their respective primaries.

Data in Figure 3.1 show an increase in Twitter usage as candidates neared Election Day. The area to the right of the vertical gray dotted line indicates when all six elections had held their primary and were thus in their general election. Specifically, the first of the “fall primaries” was in Missouri on August 7, 2012, followed by Connecticut on August 14, and then Massachusetts on September 6. Consequently, the area to the left of the vertical gray dotted line only includes at most five of the elections. As such, the increase over time right of the gray line could be caused by the increase in included campaigns. That said, the relatively low usage from May to early August may also be indicative of the “summer lull” that often accompanies races which have a

spring primary. In such cases, campaigns often take the summer to regroup and recharge in preparation for the fall, when the public pays more attention. Ultimately, the heaviest tweeting day was Election Day, with 222 tweets spread across the 12 candidates. That number dwarfed the next heaviest day: September 28 with 137 tweets. Variance in frequency was common: the general election featured days with peak activity in the triple digits, whereas some days only had 16 tweets across all 12 candidates.

To further examine this data I conducted the same analysis but disaggregated the data to provide frequencies over time for each individual campaign (Figures 3.2 to 3.7). For all of the figures, the female candidate is the black line, and the male candidate is the gray line.

Figure 3.2
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Nebraska Candidates



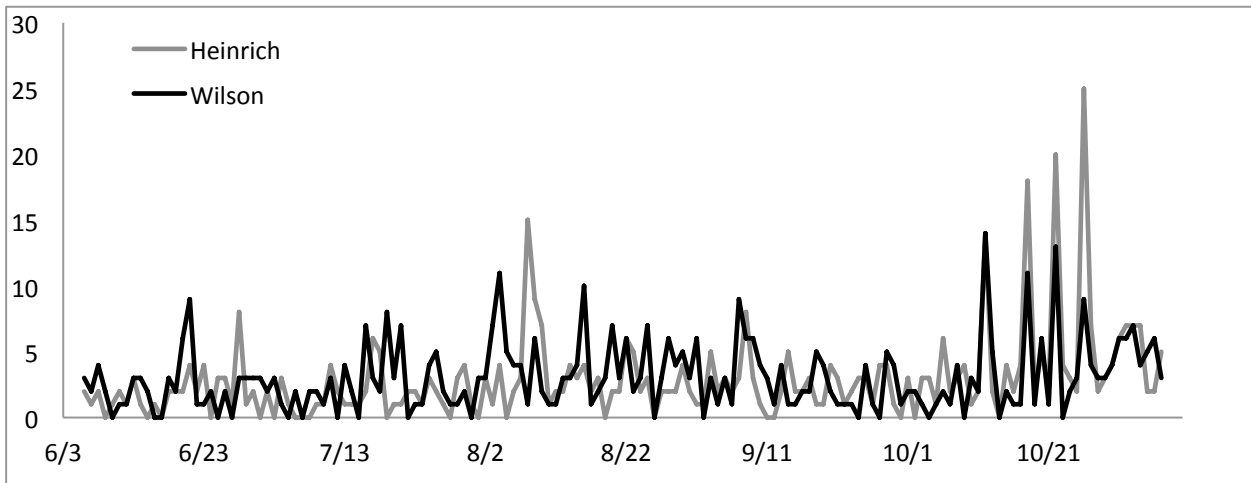
Data for the Nebraska Senate race in Figure 3.2 align with some of the previous results. The Nebraska primary took place on May 15, 2012, and from the day after the primary through Election Day, Fischer, who was the least active tweeter, offered a low stream of tweets—with her most active day being the day after the primaries, with a total of four tweets. Bob Kerrey was a higher-volume tweeter with several spikes of activity. Kerrey’s most active day was September 28 with 33 tweets, which corresponded with the race’s second Senate debate. The next most

active day was a tie at 27 tweets, including the day after the final debate on October 2, and on Election Day. The third most active day was September 11, with 17 tweets. Many candidates tweeted on the anniversary of that day's terrorist attacks, expressing messages of remembrance, support for first responders, or commenting on the resilient nature of the American spirit. For instance, Kerrey tweeted, "Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Mike Thornton and I at Memorial Park in Omaha honoring the lives lost on 9/11. <http://t.co/D99k6WEh>." Overall, the large and frequent spikes in activity suggest that Kerrey was more active as Election Day neared.

To examine whether there was a relationship between the candidates in daily tweeting habits, I correlated the candidates' frequency of tweets on each day of the general election. Such analysis afforded two advantages: (1) I was able to statistically assess whether commonalities in peaks and valleys in the figures were significant, and (2) this analysis illuminated patterns that were obscured by mere volume differences. In particular, because Fischer tweeted much less than Kerrey, it was hard to determine from the figure whether they tweeted in any form of synchronicity. The analysis yielded a significant positive correlation, $r=.328$, $p<.01$ —suggesting, for example, that as Kerry tweeted more on any given day, so did Fischer.

Data in Figure 3.3 show the New Mexico Senate race, which held its primary on June 5.

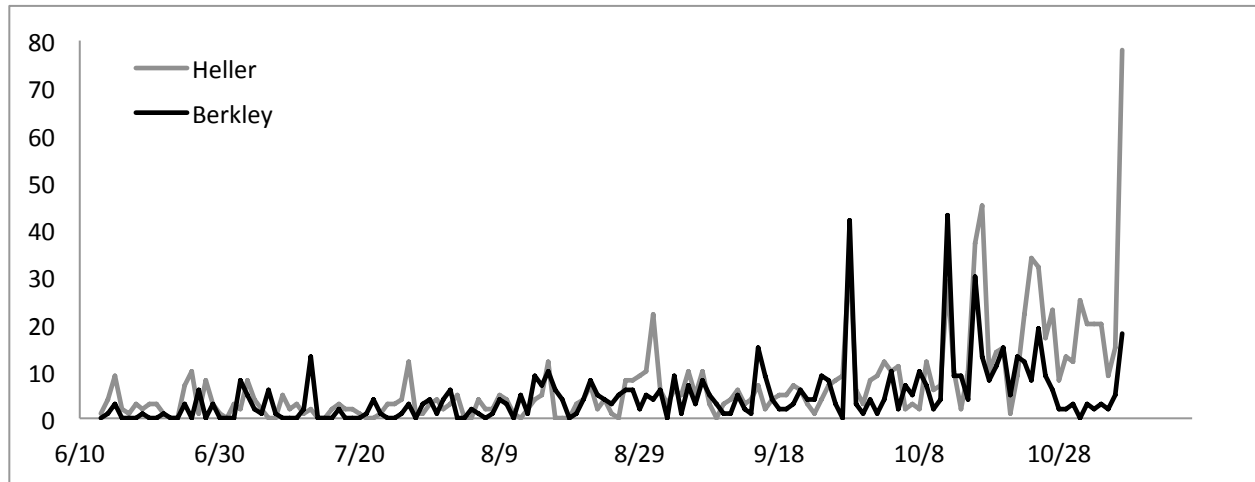
Figure 3.3
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for New Mexico Candidates



Similarly to Nebraska, each candidate’s most active day was not Election Day. Rather, Heather Wilson’s most active day was October 12 with 14 tweets, and Martin Heinrich’s was October 26 with 25 tweets—both candidates appeared to be more active in October than in the beginning of November. Further, candidates were also very active the day after each of their debates. The day after the October 17 debate, Wilson tweeted 11 times and Heinrich tweeted 18 times, and on the day after the October 25 debate, Wilson tweeted 9 times, and Heinrich tweeted 25 times. Candidates in these moments highlighted debate content in their tweets, either to reinforce their vision or to rebuke their opponent’s outlook. For example, Heinrich the day after a debate tweeted, “Wilson says she’d protect Medicare, but signed a pledge that would cut the program by as much as 25%. #NMSen #KOB4Debate.” This example also portrays how issues were brought up during the campaign—a topic I analyze later in this chapter. Notably, Heinrich and Wilson seemed to exhibit similar ebbs and flows of activity throughout the election, and analysis indicated a significant positive correlation between Heinrich and Wilson in their daily tweeting frequency, $r=.502, p<.01$.

Figure 3.4 shows the data for the Nevada Senate race, which had its primary on June 12.

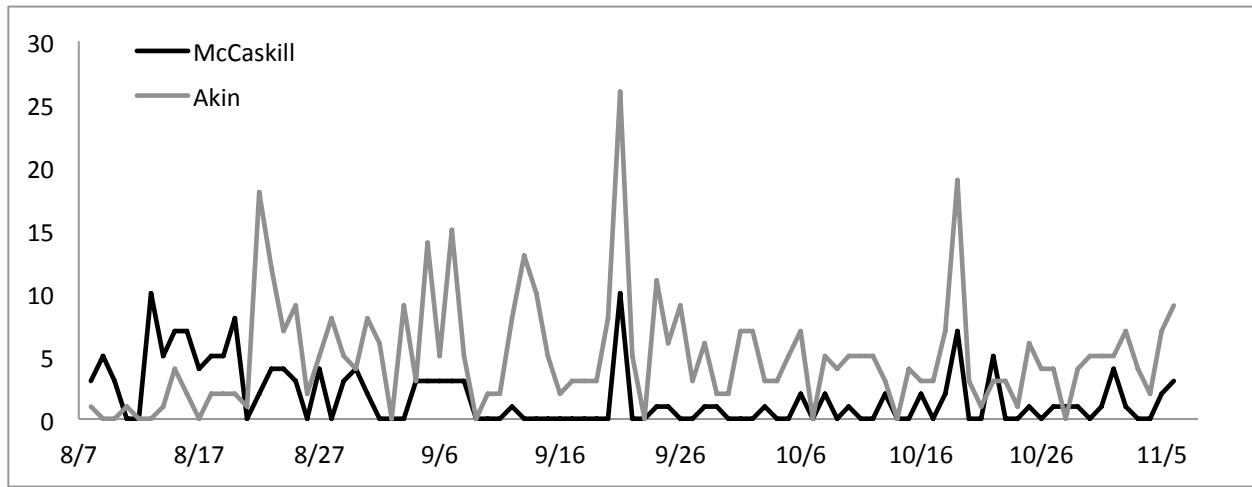
Figure 3.4
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Nevada Candidates



Both candidates tended to increase their activity as the election carried on, with the most notable spikes occurring in the last two months of the campaign. Shelley Berkley's most active days were after the two Nevada Senate debates, with 42 tweets on September 28 and 43 tweets on October 12. Dean Heller's most active day was by far Election Day with 78 tweets. Notably, while Heller maintained a constant Twitter presence in the days leading up to the Election Day, Berkley took her foot off the tweeting pedal, creating a noticeable dip that started on October 25, traveled downward and stalled for 11 days, and then rose up again for Election Day. Nonetheless, Heller and Berkley's daily tweeting patterns showed a significant positive correlation, $r=.590$, $p<.01$, over time.

Figure 3.5 shows data for the Missouri Senate race, which had its primary on August 7.

Figure 3.5
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Missouri Candidates

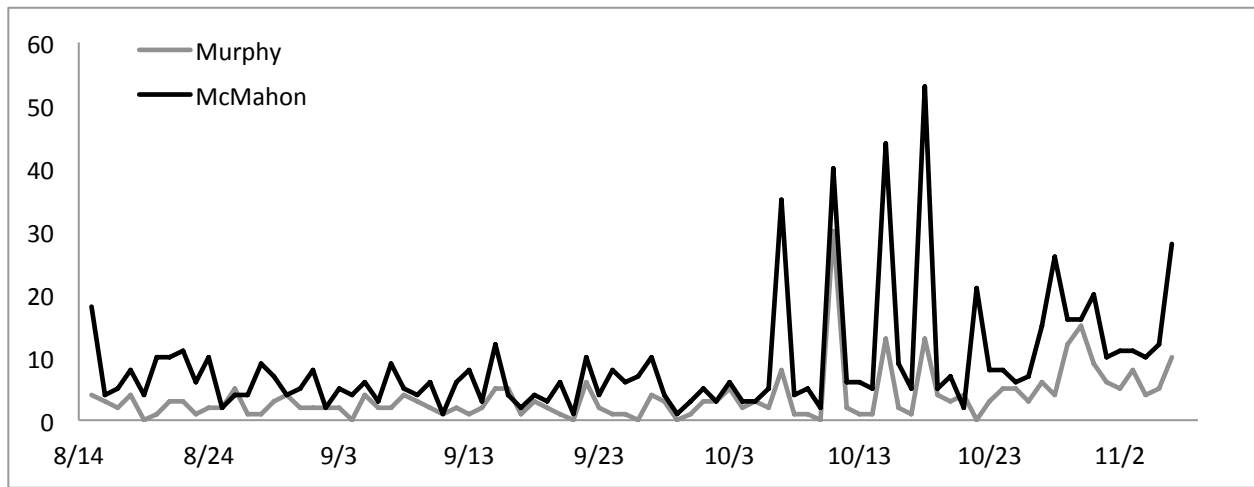


Both Claire McCaskill and Todd Akin had spikes in Twitter activity on or around the race’s two debates. Akin’s most active day was the day of the first debate on September 21 with 26 tweets, followed by the day after the October 18 second debate with 19 tweets. McCaskill’s most active day was a tie between the day of the first debate, as well as August 13, with 10 tweets. Reflecting on Akin’s comments regarding rape, which opened Chapter One, it is worth focusing on this time period to examine how each candidate tweeted. On both August 19, when Akin made the comments, and on the next day, McCaskill tweeted more than Akin: Five versus two tweets on the 19th and eight versus two tweets on the 20th. For example, McCaskill tweeted the following on the 19th: “Make a donation to help @clairecmc defeat Todd Akin, who thinks that ‘women can’t get pregnant from #legitimaterape’ <https://t.co/63GwTnuU>.” In an attempt to rebound, Akin on August 22 tweeted 18 times compared to two by McCaskill. For instance, Akin tweeted the following on the 22nd, “We can’t let McCaskill make political hay about the remarks I have apologized for multiple times. Help us fight back: <https://t.co/PZAfBLWg>.” Later portions of this chapter focus on the presence of women’s issues, but these daily Twitter patterns are suggestive of the strategic ways Twitter was employed by the campaigns. These different

strategies may suggest why the candidates had the lowest correlation of the six campaigns. There was still a significant positive correlation, $r=.243$ $p<.05$, but it was smaller and less significant relative to the other races.

Figure 3.6 presents data for Connecticut, which held its primary on August 14.

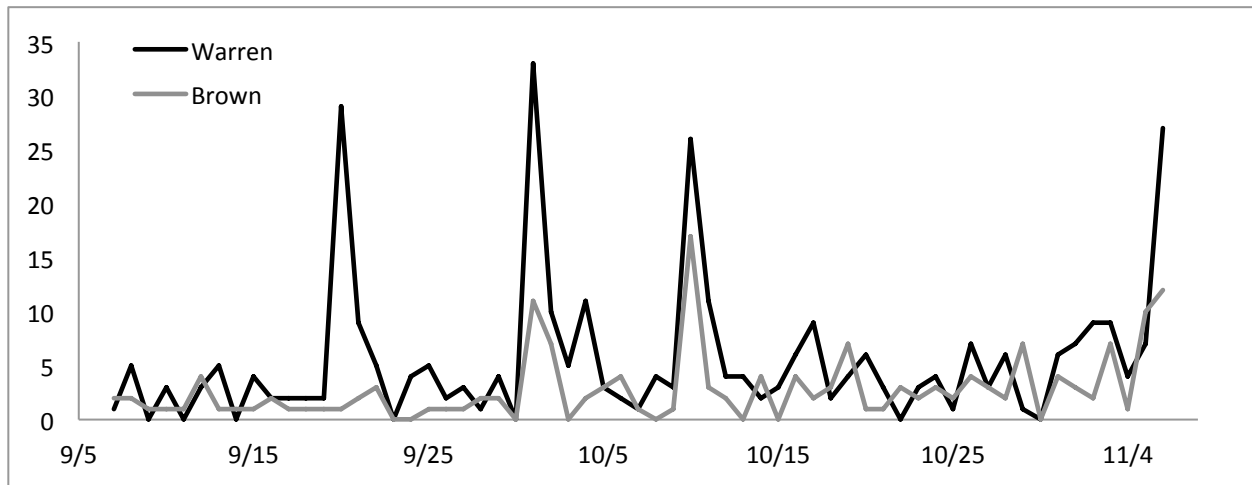
Figure 3.6
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Connecticut Candidates



Both candidates in Connecticut maintained a lower baseline of activity for the first month and a half of the general election, with noticeable peaks in activity starting in October. Three of the four climbing peaks of activity for Linda McMahon corresponded with the days of the Senate debates, with October 18 as her most active day, which was the final debate for the race, with 53 tweets. Chris Murphy also had peaks in activity surrounding the debates, with his most active day on the day of the second debate, October 11, with 30 tweets. The synchronicity of the two campaigns was evident in the results of the correlation test, which produced the highest correlation across all six elections, $r=.729$, $p<.01$.

Finally, Figure 3.7 provides data for the Massachusetts election, which held its primary on September 6.

Figure 3.7
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Massachusetts Candidates



The first three peaks for Elizabeth Warren took place on each of the three debate days, and the fourth peak was Election Day. Overall, her most active day was October 1, which was the second debate, with 33 tweets. Scott Brown also had notable upticks in activity on the last two debate days and on Election Day. His peak activity day was October 10, the day of the last debate, with 17 tweets. A correlation test supported the seeming synchronous rises and falls, and yielded the second highest correlation across the elections, $r=.639, p<.01$.

When viewed separately and then reflected upon in combination, these six figures show a few patterns that were not evident in Figure 3.1. Candidates were typically very active on Twitter on Election Day, but their most active days usually took place either on a debate day or the day after a debate. Furthermore, whether an election’s primary took place in the spring or fall, candidates tended to kick their Twitter campaigns into high gear starting in late September with a sustained burst of activity in October as they headed into the home stretch. And finally, candidates’ Twitter activity tended to be positively correlated in each election, meaning their peaks in volume rose together and their ebbs in activity dipped together, suggesting a general rhythm in Twitter communication across the election.

Test of Hypotheses: Content and Features

I now turn to tests of the hypotheses. First, I addressed each of the hypotheses, with a focus on the content variables of interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits. Then I examined the feature variables: links, audio/visual elements, and emoticons/emojis. The former set of analyses highlighted, to use Goffman’s terms, the impression a candidate *gives* in the direct content of their tweets, and the latter set of analyses examined the impression a candidate *gives off* with certain paracommunicational elements.

The first hypothesis predicted that women would be more interactive in their communication than men (H1). To test this hypothesis I first compared women and men in the percentages of their tweets containing interactivity. I then conducted the same analysis for each sub-component of interactivity (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2
Interactivity by Women and Men Candidates

	Women Candidates (<i>n</i> = 2520)	Men Candidates (<i>n</i> = 3298)	<i>p</i> Value
Interactivity	60.4%	53.2%	<.01
@mention	37.8%	38.1%	<i>n.s.</i>
@reply	3.8%	6.6%	<.01
RT/MT	12.9%	5.6%	<.01
RT plus	1.7%	2.0%	<i>n.s.</i>
In situ photos	24.0%	12.7%	<.01

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test for women and men within each category.

This analysis showed that, as predicted, women were significantly more interactive in tweets than men. The top line in Table 3.2 shows women included some form of interactivity in 60.4% of their tweets, compared to 53.2% for men ($p < .01$). A follow-up independent sample *t*-test to examine the density of interactivity references also revealed that women ($M = .80$, $SD = .764$) were significantly more interactive than men ($M = .65$, $SD = .691$), $t(5816) = -7.953$, $p < .001$. When I disaggregated the composite variable of interactivity, I found two notable

distinctions. First, women candidates were twice as likely as men to retweet or modify tweet. This means that women were more likely to raise other voices in tandem with their own in their feeds. Second, women candidates were also twice as likely as men to include in situ photos showcasing them interacting with the public. Thus women were more interactive both verbally and visually. For example, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts tweeted: “Shook hands at Broadway T Station today - same place I kicked off my candidacy for Senate a yr ago next week! #masen pic.twitter.com/03yeagJj,” which included the following photo (Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8
Senate candidate Warren interacting with voters

Notably, men were more interactive in one category: Men were significantly more likely than women to reply to fellow tweeters. Thus they engaged in more direct conversation with others on Twitter. Overall, women and men both engaged in interactivity, but did so in distinctive ways, with women offering more interaction overall.

Next, I examined personalization. I predicted that women would be more likely to personalize their communication than men (H2). As before, I first compared the overall percentages. Results in Table 3.3 show that, as predicted, women engaged in more personalized

tweets than men: Women included some form of personalization in 10.8% of their tweets, compared to 6.5% for men ($p < .01$). An independent sample t-test lent further support to these findings, showing that women ($M = .12$, $SD = .371$) included significantly more personalization than men ($M = .08$, $SD = .316$), $t(5816) = -4.913$, $p < .001$.

Table 3.3
Personalization by Women and Men candidates

	Women Candidates ($n = 2520$)	Men Candidates ($n = 3298$)	p Value
Personalization	10.8%	6.5%	<.01
Gender	0.8%	0.2%	<.01
Uniqueness	0.3%	0.0%	<.05
Hobbies/sports	1.0%	1.2%	<i>n.s.</i>
Family	1.2%	1.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Religion	0.4%	0.4%	<i>n.s.</i>
Signed tweet	6.7%	1.6%	<.01
Personal photos	1.9%	2.7%	<.05

Note: p Values based on difference of proportions test for women and men within each category.

I then disaggregated personalization to examine differences across the specific components. There were four significant distinctions in Table 3.3. Men were more likely than women to include personal photos. On the other hand, women were more likely than men to invoke their gender and uniqueness, and to sign their tweets. For example, Linda McMahon sent the following tweets: “This is a serious race with a serious woman. #ctsen #ctsendebate,” and “Thank you! RT @RyanJBingham: Good luck @Linda_McMahon you’ve got my vote. Hope we elect our first female Senator today. Lets make history.” The first invoked her gender, and the second was a “retweet plus” that invoked both her gender and electoral uniqueness. In sum, women candidates for the Senate were more personal in their tweets than men candidates.

Next, I examined political issues, and proposed that both women and men would discuss more masculine than feminine issues in their communication, due to the greater importance often

attributed to masculine issues (H3). This hypothesis was supported: among all candidates, masculine issues (21.9%) were emphasized twice as often as feminine issues (10.1%), and a one-tailed difference of proportions test showed that this difference was significant, $p < .01$. Thus, masculine issues predominated the candidates' self-presentations.

The next hypothesis went a step further and predicted, based on gender issue ownership, that women would discuss feminine issues more than men, and men would discuss masculine issues more than women (H4). The percentages for both sets of issues are in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4
Political Issues by Women and Men Candidates

	Women Candidates (<i>n</i> = 2520)	Men Candidates (<i>n</i> = 3298)	<i>p</i> Value
Feminine Issues	10.7%	9.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Education	2.4%	1.4%	<.01
Health care	5.6%	6.2%	<i>n.s.</i>
Women's issues	2.0%	1.5%	<i>n.s.</i>
Environment	1.0%	0.8%	<i>n.s.</i>
Masculine Issues	22.7%	21.3%	<i>n.s.</i>
Military/Security	3.4%	2.6%	<.10
Crime/Law and order	0.0% ^a	0.2%	<.05
Economy	18.1%	16.8%	<i>n.s.</i>
Taxes	3.9%	3.6%	<i>n.s.</i>

^a There was one reference to Crime/Law and order, but SPSS registered such a small frequency as 0.0%
Note: *p* Values based difference of proportions test for women and men within each category.

Results in Table 3.4 do not provide support for the hypothesis. Data in the top line show women (10.7%) and men (9.7%) were more or less equally likely to discuss feminine issues. An independent sample t-test confirmed this result: Women ($M=.11$, $SD=.324$) and men ($M=.10$, $SD=.301$) were similarly likely to discuss feminine issues, $t(5816)=-1.372$, *n.s.* Once the composite variable was broken down, the similarities remained. Specifically, there was only one significant difference: Women were more likely than men to discuss education. For example,

Claire McCaskill tweeted the following: “.@clairecmc worked as a waitress & used student loans to pay for college - that’s why she fights to protect them <http://t.co/yyFOXeyr> #mosen,” and Shelley Berkley tweeted the following: “RT if you stand with me, @BarackObama & NV students against Heller-Ryan-Romney agenda cuts to Pell Grants that help Nevadans pay for college.” As such, women were more active on Twitter in highlighting education.

Notably, I dived deeper into the data on the Missouri race given Todd Akin’s comments on rape and pregnancy. Overall, McCaskill and Akin discussed women’s issues in similar volumes, 3.8% and 3.1%, but they differed in *when* they did so. In total, *all* of McCaskill’s discussion of women’s issues highlighted Akin’s comments on “legitimate rape” and occurred on the day of and the day after Akin’s comments. Specifically, McCaskill tweeted six times regarding women’s issues, and each tweet included the hashtag “#legitimaterape,” and a call to donate to McCaskill’s campaign. Akin’s first tweet regarding women’s issues was on the day of his controversial comments. Akin then continued to discuss women’s issues, primarily abortion and his pro-life stance, periodically till November. For McCaskill, women’s issues were a strategic and short-lived strike, while for Akin they constituted a more prolonged focus.

For masculine issues, Table 3.4 shows a slightly different story. Women and men discussed masculine issues in relatively similar volumes, with women discussing masculine issues just over 1% more than men, but an independent sample t-test showed a marginal difference in the density of masculine issue references with women ($M=.25$, $SD=.493$) edging out men ($M=.23$, $SD=.467$), $t(5816)=-1.715$, $p<.10$. Once the composite variable of masculine issues was broken down, there were two notable results in Table 3.4. First, women were marginally more likely than men to discuss military/national security. Second, men were significantly more likely than women to discuss crime/law and order. Notably, the most

discussed masculine issue was by far the economy. Women discussed the economy over twice as much as the other three issues combined, and men discussed the economy more than three times as much as the other three issues combined. For example, Chris Murphy of Connecticut tweeted: “Murphy: I don’t just have a jobs plan, I have a jobs record. Buy American isn’t a slogan to CT workers—it’s their livelihood! #ctsen.” Across all of the feminine and masculine issues, the most talked about issues were first, the economy, and second, health care. The dominance of one masculine *and* one feminine issue may also have some impact on why there were no aggregate percentage differences between women and men regarding feminine and masculine issues.

In addition to feminine and masculine issues, I also coded for when another issue was mentioned that did not fit into either of the feminine or masculine conceptual groupings. Other issues were invoked in 6.6% of the tweets, regardless of candidate gender, and included references to, for example, foreign affairs, campaign finance reform, voter fraud, agriculture, infrastructure, urban renewal, same-sex marriage, and immigration, predominantly focused on the DREAM Act. For example, Elizabeth Warren tweeted: “Tday is 16th anniversary of #DOMA, reminder that fight 4 fairness is ongoing. I will fight 4 full equality 4 all Americans in US Senate,” and Claire McCaskill tweeted: “Keeping post offices open isn’t a Democratic issue, and it isn’t a Republican issue. It’s a rural issue, @clairecmc said in Warrenton #mosen.” A comparison of tweets that mentioned other issues showed no gender differences: Women included other issues in 6.6% of their tweets, compared to men at 6.5%. Thus, in the aggregate, women and men candidates talked about issues in similar volumes across feminine, masculine, and other issues.

The next set of analyses focused on character traits. I predicted that women and men would discuss masculine traits more than feminine traits based on voters’ preference for masculine traits in politicians (H5). This hypothesis was supported: Among all candidates,

masculine traits (7.5%) were discussed more than feminine traits (5.5%), and a one-tailed difference of proportions test showed that this difference was significant, $p < .01$. In sum, women and men candidates stressed masculine traits such as leadership and strength over feminine traits such as compassion and honesty.

The final hypothesis took the trait comparison another step and predicted that women would discuss feminine traits more than men, and that all candidates would invoke masculine traits in similar volumes (H6). The former prediction is based on gender ownership scholarship, and the latter prediction is based on candidate communication scholarship that has shown that women reference masculine traits in similar volumes to men, perhaps in an attempt to show that they can go toe-to-toe with men in this masculinized domain. Data in the top row of Table 3.5 show that women and men were equally likely to emphasize feminine traits. An independent sample t-test confirmed the lack of difference between women ($M = .06$, $SD = .232$) and men ($M = .06$, $SD = .231$), $t(5816) = -.125$, $n.s.$

Table 3.5
Character Traits by Women and Men Candidates

	Women Candidates ($n = 2520$)	Men Candidates ($n = 3298$)	p Value
Feminine Traits	5.6%	5.5%	$n.s.$
Compassionate	0.5%	0.4%	$n.s.$
Honest	4.0%	3.1%	$< .10$
Congenial	0.4%	0.2%	$n.s.$
Collaborate	0.6%	1.8%	$< .01$
Masculine Traits	9.0%	6.4%	$< .01$
Leadership	1.2%	1.5%	$n.s.$
Strong	6.2%	3.9%	$< .01$
Confident	0.4%	0.5%	$n.s.$
Decisive	1.8%	0.6%	$< .01$

Note: p Values based on difference of proportions test for women and men within each category.

The percentages in Table 3.5 revealed two notable results once feminine traits were disaggregated. First, women were marginally more likely than men to highlight honesty. For instance, McMahon's campaign questioned Murphy when they tweeted the following: "Has Chris Murphy answered a question without being dishonest about Linda? ~Staff." Second, men were significantly more likely than women to mention collaboration. Overall, honesty was the most discussed feminine trait.

Next, I focused on masculine traits. Percentages in Table 3.5 show that women (9.0%) more than men (6.4%) discussed masculine traits, which a one-tailed difference of proportions test indicated was statistically significant, $p < .01$. This finding was further confirmed by an independent sample t-test, which showed that women ($M = .10$, $SD = .313$) discussed masculine traits more than men ($M = .07$, $SD = .259$), $t(5816) = -3.951$, $p < .001$. Once masculine traits were broken down, there were two notable distinctions in Table 3.5. First, women were significantly more likely than men to emphasize strength. For example, McCaskill tweeted, "@SpringfieldNL endorses @Clairecmc: 'a tough, no-nonsense moderate whose views best reflect [MO's] independent' #mosen <http://t.co/iEFDtTBZ>." Second, women were significantly more likely than men to discuss being decisive. One trait dominated the field: Strength was the most discussed masculine trait. In sum, the final hypothesis was not supported, and women were more likely than men to include masculine traits in their tweets, and in particular, they focused on the traits of strength and decisiveness.

In addition, I also coded for when candidates mentioned traits that did not fit the feminine or masculine conceptual categories. Other traits were invoked in 2.9% of tweets and included, for example, references to being hardworking, pragmatic, smart, and creative. A comparison of tweets that mentioned other traits showed that women (3.1%) referenced other traits more than

men (2.6%), but this difference did not attain statistical significance. Therefore in the aggregate, women and men candidates discussed feminine and other traits in similar volumes, and women tweeted more masculine traits than men.

Lastly, I analyzed to what extent candidates incorporated feature variables in their tweets. Specifically, I examined their usage of links, audio/visual elements, and emoticons/emojis. Links often sought to drive traffic to the campaign's website to read more about an issue, to donate money, or to volunteer for the campaign. Links also often pointed toward news organizations' websites—typically featuring an article on the candidate or poll results. Audio/visual elements included photos, as well as YouTube videos, and on occasion, SoundCloud audio clips of speeches. Emoticons are pictures composed of numbers, letters, or punctuation marks to depict some type of emotion, such as smiley face :), and emoji is the Japanese term for a picture character. Taken together, these feature variables constitute what Miller (1995) called paracomunicational content, which is content that allows users to manage the impression one *gives off* by utilizing “expressive resources” (p. 3). Paracomunicational content, according to Miller (1995), enables users in a digital environment to gain a certain amount of media richness that mimics some of the vitality of face-to-face communication.

To explore these feature variables I examined the percentage of tweets containing each of the variables. Across all campaigns and candidates, the most employed feature variable was links (62.5%), followed by audio/visual (34.1%), then emoticons/emojis (0.2%). At least half of each candidate's tweets included a link—ranging from approximately 52% for Berkley to nearly 89% for Fischer. Thus candidates often sought in their tweets to drive traffic to a campaign website, a Facebook website, or news coverage. The heavy usage of links, which led to more content and context, makes sense on a platform designed to allow only 140 characters. Audio/visual elements

composed a smaller, but still substantial percentage of tweets—ranging from just under 24% for Fischer to approximately 52% for Brown. The sizeable presence of audio/visual elements also enabled candidates to add content and context to their character-limited tweets. The old adage is that a picture is worth a thousand words, but audio/visual elements also included campaign videos and advertisements, which afforded candidates the ability to elaborate on their tweet content. Emoticon and emoji usage lagged far beyond. Most candidates did not include either.

To further explore these features, I compared women and men candidates on the percentages of tweets containing each of these variables (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6
Percentages of Feature Variables by Candidate in Mixed-Gender Elections

	Women Candidates (<i>n</i> = 2520)	Men Candidates (<i>n</i> = 3298)	<i>p</i> Value
Links	64.4%	61.0%	<.01
Audio/Visual	37.5%	31.4%	<.01
Emoticons/Emojis	0.4%	0.0% ^a	<.05

^a There was one tweet with an emoticon, but SPSS registered such a small frequency as 0.0%

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test for women and men within each category.

Data in Table 3.6 show that women included more feature variables than men. Specifically, women (64.4%) significantly more than men (61.0%) included links in their tweets, $p < .01$; women (37.5%) significantly more than men (31.4%) included audio/visuals, $p < .01$; and women (0.4%) significantly more than men (0.0%) included emoticons and emojis, $p < .05$. The use of emoticons and emojis could be interpreted as informal and personal, characteristics that align with a more feminine communication style. Perhaps the more analytical and factual style associated with masculinity does not lend itself to the inclusion of a smiley face. Overall, candidates found ways to craft self-presentations in a digital environment by incorporating these feature variables, and women emphasized these features more than men.

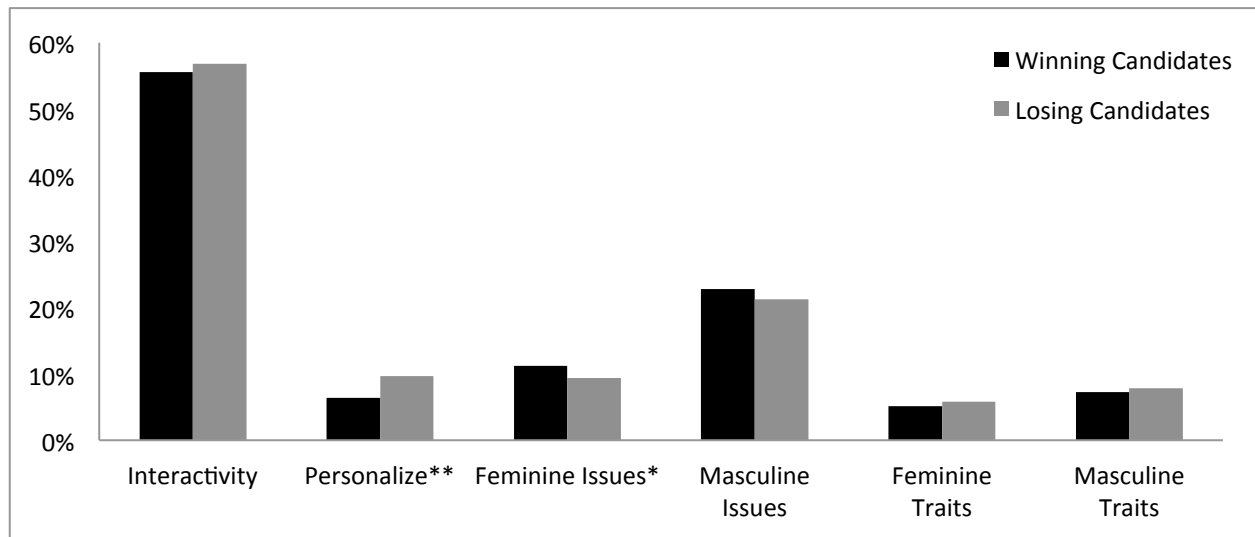
In sum, four of the six hypotheses were supported, and candidates employed both content

and feature variables in their self-presentations. As predicted, women candidates were more interactive and included more personalization in their tweets than their male competitors. Interactivity and personalization are both aspects of a more feminine style, and thus in this context, the results aligned with gender ownership. Also as predicted, candidates discussed more masculine issues and traits than feminine issues and traits—a finding that reinforces the enduring importance of masculinity in American politics. Hypotheses grounded in gender ownership regarding women and men’s emphasis on issues and traits, however, were not supported. Specifically, women and men discussed feminine and masculine issues, as well as feminine traits, in relatively equal volumes. Furthermore, women discussed masculine traits more than men. Thus women emphasized feminine aspects more than men—interactivity and personalization—as well as masculine aspects more than men—masculine traits. In the case of feature variables, women predominated with more links, audio/visuals, and emotions/emojis than men. Ultimately, women tweeted less than men in terms of sheer volume, but it appears as though they tended to pack each of those tweets with more content based on this dissertations’ variables.

Additional Analysis

As a final analytic move for this chapter I went straight to the heart of electability and examined the self-presentation styles of winners and losers—electorally speaking—in mixed-gender Senate elections. Twitter was certainly not the only dynamic at play in 2012 of course, but conducting this analysis illuminated what patterns of communication were aligned with victory. As before, I examined the impression a candidate gives and also gives off. Therefore I first examined the percentage of tweets containing each content variable, comparing winning and losing candidates (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9
Content Variable Percentages by Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections



* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note: Winning candidates $n=2440$; Losing candidates $n=3378$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

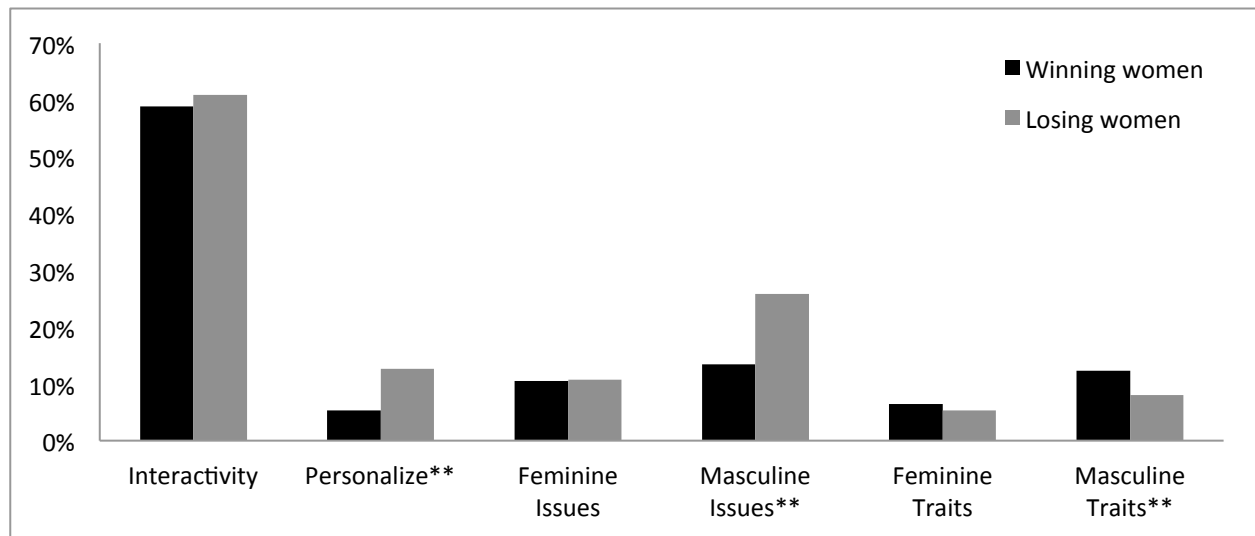
Aggregate data in Figure 3.9 show that winning candidates stressed more issues, and losing candidates were more interactive, personal, and emphasized more traits. Across these results, though, only two distinctions were significant: Losing candidates (in 9.7% of tweets) more than winning candidates (6.4%) personalized their tweets, $p < .01$, and winning candidates (11.2%) more than losing candidates (9.4%) emphasized feminine issues in their tweets, $p < .05$. Both personalization and feminine issues are seen as more indicative of a feminine communication style, and in this analysis these characteristics were differentially related to victory in the Senate elections.

To further understand the distinctions in communication strategies between winners and losers, I then examined the differences between winning and losing candidates separately by candidate sex. The first thing to note is that based on volume alone, winning women candidates tweeted a third as much as losing women, 626 versus 1,894 tweets, respectively. In this context, more was not necessarily better. Secondly, I then compared the percentages among specific

tweets for winning and losing women (Figure 3.10) and found that they emphasized different elements in their self-presentations.

Figure 3.10

Content Variable Percentages for Women Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections



** $p < .01$

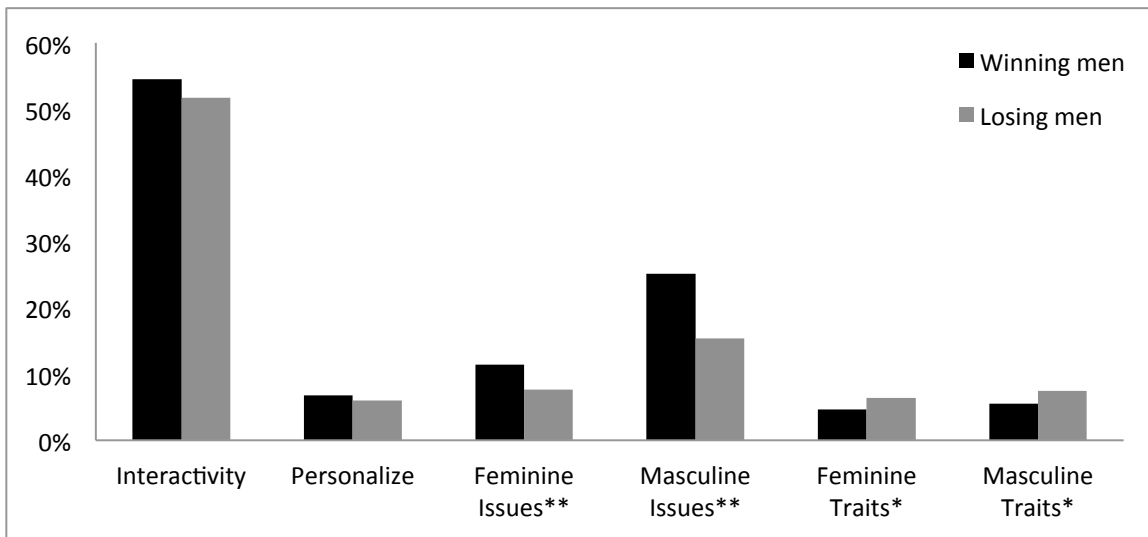
Note: Winning women $n=626$; Losing women $n=1894$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Specifically, winning women (in 12.3% of tweets) significantly more than losing women (8.0%) emphasized masculine traits, $p < .01$. On the other hand, losing women (12.6%) significantly more than winning women (5.3%) incorporated personalization, and losing women (25.8%) significantly more than winning women (13.4%) emphasized masculine issues, both significant at $p < .01$. Taken together, we can see that masculinity via traits aligned with victory for women, whereas masculinity via issues did not. Notably, the most talked about masculine issue and trait were the *same* for both winning and losing women, but there were significant differences in relative volume of tweets. The most discussed masculine issue for women was economy: losing women (21.4%) discussed it almost three times as much as winning women (8%), resulting in a significant difference, $p < .01$. The most discussed masculine trait for women was strength:

winning women (8.1%) discussed it significantly more than losing women (5.5%), $p < .05$. These results suggest that content *and* volume may be important factors.

Next, I moved on to the male candidates, and compared the percentages for winning and losing men across each content variable (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11
Content Variable Percentages for Men Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections



* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note: Winning men $n = 1814$; Losing men $n = 1484$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Data in Figure 3.11 show that winning men more than losing men were interactive and personal and emphasized issues, whereas losing men focused more on traits, both feminine and masculine. Of these six comparisons, four were significant. Winning men (in 11.4% of tweets) significantly more than losing men (7.7%) emphasized feminine issues, and winning men (25.1%) significantly more than losing men (15.4%) emphasized masculine issues, both at $p < .01$. Losing men, on the other hand, were significantly more likely (6.4%) than winning men (4.7%) to discuss feminine traits, and losing men (7.5%) were significantly more likely than winning men (5.5%) to emphasize masculine traits, both at $p < .05$. Essentially, winning for men was related to focusing on the issues, and losing for men was aligned with emphasizing traits. Furthermore, the

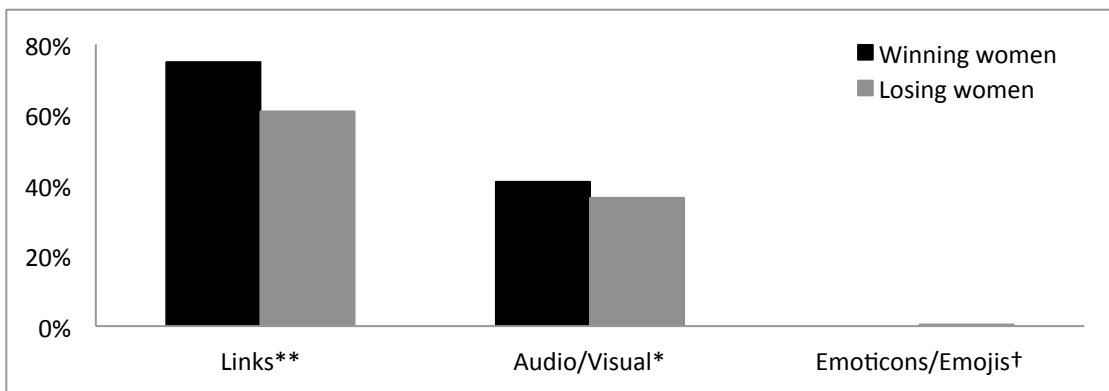
top sub-component for each significant difference was the same for winning and losing men, and again there were notable differences in volume. The most talked about feminine issue for men was health care, and winning men (7.8%) talked about it significantly more than losing men (4.1%), $p < .01$. The top masculine issue for men was economy, and winning men (21.2%) tweeted about it almost twice as much as losing men (11.4%), a significant difference at $p < .01$. For feminine traits, honesty topped the list, with losing men (3.6%) tweeting about it more than winning men (2.8%). And the most tweeted about masculine trait was strength, and losing men (4.5%) discussed it more than winning men (3.5%). Neither of the differences for traits were significant, but the pattern overall is telling. Just as with women, it appears as though both content and volume matter for men. Opponents may be talking about the same things, but how much they talk about them may matter.

When taken together, Figures 3.10 and 3.11 show suggestive contrasts in the Twitter communications associated with winning and losing in mixed-gender elections. Specifically, what was seemingly successful for women and what was seemingly successful for men were near opposites. Women who won had Twitter communications that placed greater emphasis on traits, while men who won were predominant in tweets on everything but traits. One of the most compelling distinctions was on masculine elements. Women who lost focused on masculine issues almost twice as much as women who won. Conversely, men who won were two-thirds more likely than men who lost to emphasize masculine issues. Causal claims are not possible, of course, but these data show that women candidates who lost communicated relatively more about an area of ownership they did not own, whereas men candidates who won talked about that same area—which they own. For a more direct comparison I ran an independent sample t-test to compare winning women and men. Winning men ($M = .29$, $SD = .507$) were significantly more

likely than winning women ($M=.14$, $SD=.377$) to invoke masculine issues, $t(2438)=6.432$, $p<.001$. The story was the opposite for masculine traits. Winning women ($M=.13$, $SD=.354$) were significantly more likely than winning men ($M=.06$, $SD=.235$) to invoke masculine traits, $t(2438)=-5.829$, $p<.001$. Therefore masculinity was key to both sets of victories, but the *type* of masculinity provided a clear distinction between winning women and men.

Next, I analyzed the differences between winning and losing candidates across the feature variables to assess the impression one gives off. First, I compared percentages for women (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12
Feature Variable Percentages for Women Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections



† $p<.10$; * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$

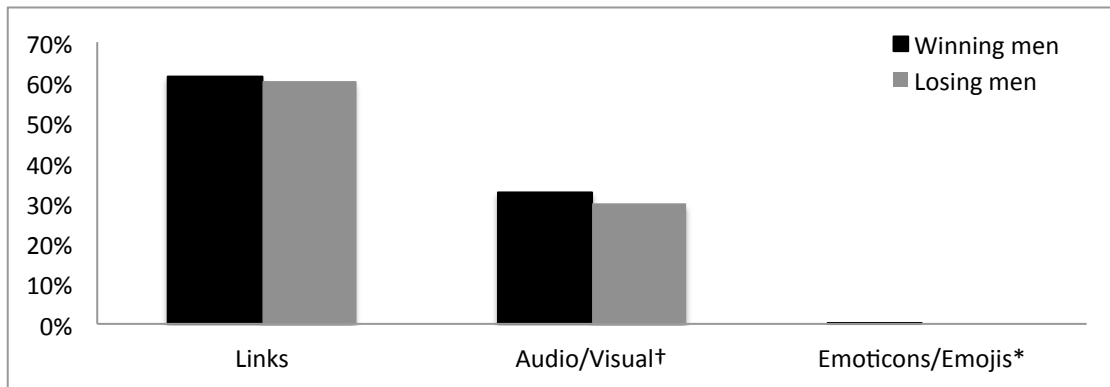
Note: Winning women $n=626$; Losing women $n=1894$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Data in Figure 3.12 reveal significant differences between winning and losing women. Winning women (74.9%) were significantly more likely than losing winning (60.9%) to include links in their tweets, and winning women (40.9%) were significantly more likely than losing women (36.4%) to include audio/visuals in their tweets. On the other hand, losing women (.5%) were marginally more likely than winning women (0%) to include an emotion/emoji in their tweets. Overall, winning women incorporated more feature variables in their tweets that

seemingly added context via links or photos, whereas losing women added what could be considered more informality in their tweets via emoticons and emojis.

Next, I compared percentages for winning and losing men (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13
Feature Variable Percentages for Men Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections



† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$

Note: Winning men $n=1814$; Losing men $n=1484$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Data in Figure 3.13 indicate two differences, both in favor of winning men. Specifically, winning men (32.7%) were marginally more likely than losing men (29.9%) to include audio/visuals in their tweets, and winning men (.1%) were significantly more likely than losing men (0%) to include emoticons/emojis.

The contrasts between winning women and men are less striking regarding feature variables as compared to content variables: winning women and men were both more likely to include links and audio/visuals than losing women and men. However, a series of independent sample t -tests did reveal significant differences between women and men regarding these variables. In particular, winning women ($M=.75$, $SD=.434$) were significantly more likely than winning men ($M=.62$, $SD=.487$) to include a link, $t(2438)=-6.102$, $p<.001$. Also, winning women ($M=.41$, $SD=.492$) were significantly more likely than winning men ($M=.33$, $SD=.469$) to include

audio/visual elements, $t(2438)=-3.699, p<.001$. As such, women utilized the features of Twitter more extensively than men to create personas that aligned with victory.

Beyond content and feature variables, I also coded any time a candidate mentioned their opponent in a tweet. Elections are comparative, and the context often prompts candidates to both construct their own identity and to try to shape their opponent's. Candidates may do so by discussing their opponents in their Twitter feeds. In this case, the opponent mentions were a separate variable from the @mentions in interactivity, and a tweet with an opponent mention was not coded as an interactive mention unless it contained elements earlier identified for interactivity. Opponent mentions were present when a candidate referenced either the full name, or the first or last name of their opponent, or when they used words such as "my opponent" in the tweet. Some opponent mentions were banal, and simply referenced that both candidates would appear in the upcoming debate. For example, Bob Kerrey tweeted the following: "The NET debate is tonight at 7pm! I am excited for the chance to show #Nebraska voters the differences between St Sen Fischer and myself." However, most of the opponent mention tweets were not banal and could be considered "attack tweets." These tweets often questioned or critiqued the opponent on some matter, or suggested that the opponent was contradictory, two-faced, or less than honest. For example, Linda McMahon tweeted the following: "Linda: Chris Murphy talks about 'Buy America' but he voted against it - TWICE. #ctsen #ctsendebate." Another example includes the following tweet by Dean Heller: ".@Berkley4Senate said in the #NVDebate that she is pro #NVjobs. Then why did she vote against 800 when Lyon County had 14.8% unemployment?" These types of tweets allowed candidates to go on the offense and explicitly call out their opponents' contradictory actions.

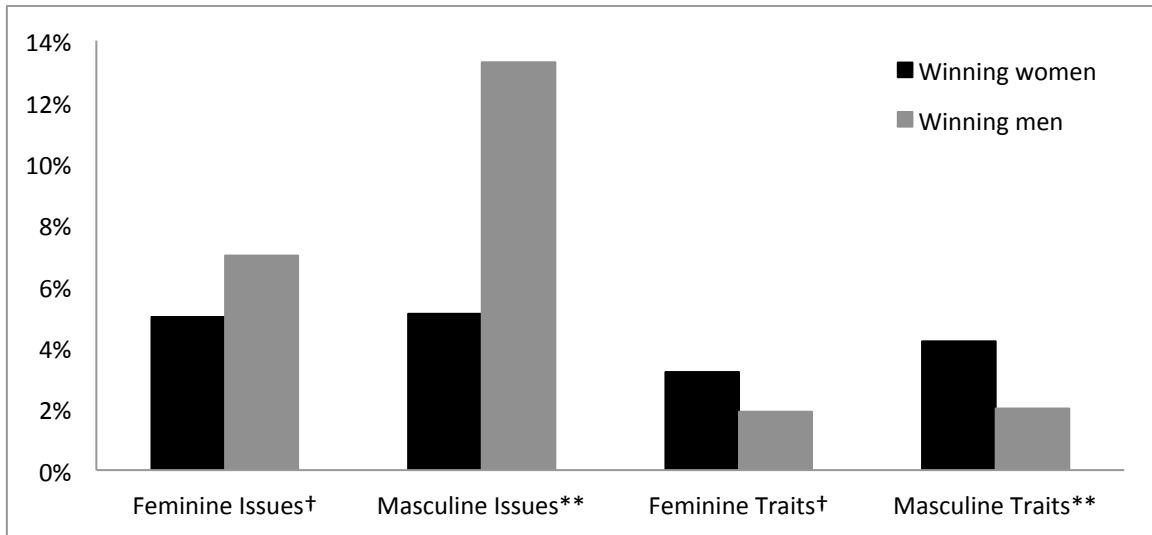
To examine the prevalence of these types of tweets, I first ran frequencies to determine

overall usage, and then conducted analysis to see whether usage differed for winning and losing candidates. Overall, approximately 25% of total tweets included an opponent mention. When I compared the percentage of tweets that referenced the opponent based on winning and losing women and men, there were some noteworthy distinctions. Losing women (30%) were significantly more likely than winning women (19.5%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. Conversely, winning men (24.9%) were significantly more likely than losing men (20.6%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. Once again, what aligned with victory for men did not do so for women. An independent t-test confirms this trend. Winning men ($M = .25$, $SD = .432$) were significantly more likely than winning women ($M = .19$, $SD = .396$) to reference their opponent, $t(2438) = 2.738$, $p < .01$. Therefore going on the offensive seemed to align with victory more for men than women.

Given this distinction, this analysis prompted one final question: When winning candidates tweeted about their opponent, what else did they discuss? To answer this question within the scope of this dissertation, I examined the content areas that previously resulted in the most significant differences between winning women and men: issues and traits. This analysis provided some insight about the circumstances or context when an opponent was mentioned. Specifically, I compared percentages between winning women and men for when an opponent mention was coupled with discussion of an issue or trait within a single tweet. In the aggregate, winning men (18.4%) were significantly more likely than winning women (13.1%) to discuss opponents with either issues or traits, $p < .01$. To further examine this difference, I compared percentages across each set of feminine and masculine issues and traits (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14

Percentages of Opponent Mentions By Content Variables for Winning Candidates



† $p < .10$; ** $p < .01$

Note: Winning women $n=626$; Winning men $n=1814$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Figure 3.14 shows some notable distinctions between winning women and men. First, winning men were more likely than winning women to discuss *issues* and opponents in the same tweet. Specifically, winning men (7%) were marginally more likely than winning women (5%) to discuss feminine issues and opponents, $p < .10$, and winning men (13.3%) more than doubled winning women's (5.1%) discussion of masculine issues and opponents, a significant difference, $p < .01$. Second, winning women were more likely than winning men to discuss *traits* and opponents in a single tweet. In particular, winning women (3.2%) were marginally more likely than winning men (1.9%) to reference feminine traits and opponents, $p < .10$, and winning women (4.2%) doubled winning men's (2%) discussion of masculine traits and opponents, $p < .01$. Overall, these findings support the emerging pattern of differences between winning women and men. When men engaged in discussion of their opponent, they did so in connection with issues; whereas when women went on the offense about their opponents, they did so in connection with traits. In sum, these additional analyses suggest that Twitter has quickly become a gendered

content domain in politics, and paths to victory for women and men may require different self-presentation strategies.

Discussion

This chapter presented a content analysis of 12 Senate candidates' campaign tweets across six mixed-gender general elections in 2012. I expected in such electoral contexts that women and men candidates would project distinct self-presentations heavily predicated upon gender. In other words, women would predominantly align with more feminine styles and areas of ownership, and men would align with more masculine styles and areas of ownership in interactivity, personalization, discussion of political issues, and emphasis on character traits. This perspective was founded on America's historical and cultural understanding of gender, and how these understandings have manifested in social and political expectations. For women and men in mixed-gender elections, fulfilling expectations creates two advantages. First, it means that candidates appear gender-authentic, which helps voters to feel that they know a candidate. Second, it enables candidates to carve distinct self-presentations that are based upon areas they are perceived as more competently owning. In a comparative context such as an election, owning an area that your opponent doesn't and owning an area that plays toward the electorate's expectations is a seemingly advantageous combination. Ultimately, the results of this chapter presented a more complex relationship between gender and electability. I discuss in this section the notable results and patterns.

First, women candidates were more likely to fully utilize the space and characteristics of Twitter to shape the impression a candidate *gives* and *gives off*. The nature of Twitter accommodates various forms of interaction and personalization that enable candidates to connect with individuals despite the presence of a mass-mediated platform. Scholarship has shown that

interaction and personalization hold substantial benefits for candidates (Lee & Shin, 2012; Lee & Oh, 2012). I predicted that women would be more interactive than men, and this expectation was borne out. Overall, women were more interactive: women included significantly more retweets/modified tweets, as well as more in situ photos than men. I also predicted that women would be more personal than men, and this expectation was supported as well. Women were more personal in their tweets, especially regarding gender, uniqueness, and signed tweets. Furthermore, women were also more likely to capitalize on the features of Twitter, and they included more links, audio/visuals, and emoticons/emojis than men. In short, women were consistently more likely to construct self-presentations that layered explicit content and connection, with more implicit paracommunicational content.

Second, candidates both aligned with *and* deviated from gendered expectations regarding political issues and character traits. Candidates fulfilled the expectation that they would focus on masculine issues and traits more than feminine issues and traits—thereby reinforcing the masculinized elements of politics. But the support for hypotheses ended there. Regarding women and men’s differential attention to issues and traits, I predicted that by and large, candidates would align with gender ownership when discussing these matters, but none of the hypotheses were supported. Specifically, women did not emphasize feminine elements more than men, and men did not focus on masculine elements more than women. Rather, women and men referenced feminine issues and traits, as well as masculine issues, in similar volumes. Additionally, women candidates focused on masculine traits *more* than men. I predicted that women and men would reference masculine traits in similar volumes, but I did not anticipate that women would outpace men. Previous work has found that women reference some masculine traits more than men (e.g., Bystrom, 2006; Kahn, 1993). Thus this finding falls in line with some scholarship, and suggests

that women make great efforts to eschew gender ownership of traits to appear “tough enough” for politics.

Finally, there were clear contrasts between winning and losing candidates. In particular, I found two notable themes. First, it matters what a candidate says *and* how much she or he says it. Winning and losing women discussed the economy the most out of the four analyzed masculine issues, and they also discussed the trait of strength the most out of all four analyzed masculine traits. Thus, the emphasis of their content was similar. What differed was the *amount* of attention paid to these shared emphases. Losing women discussed the economy three times as much as winning women, and winning women discussed strength more than losing women. Similarly, winning and losing men focused on the same top feminine issue, masculine issue, feminine trait, and masculine trait. Yet winning men’s predominant focus on health care and the economy, versus losing men’s predominant emphasis on honesty and strength, aligned in intriguing ways with who engaged in celebration come election night. Therefore women and men candidates have complicated challenges in balancing what they say and how often they say it in elections. This is not overly surprising, but in analyzing Twitter feeds we can see these dynamics play out on daily bases.

The second theme that arose was that what worked for winning women and men differed. For instance, winning women focused on traits more than losing women. Conversely, winning men focused on everything but traits more than losing men. Furthermore, winning women focused on opponent mentions *less* than losing women; whereas winning men focused on opponent mentions *more* than losing men. The differences for winning women and men were especially apparent with masculinity. Women’s route to success appeared to run through masculine *traits*, whereas men’s route ran through masculine *issues*. This finding highlights the

known importance of masculinity in politics, and also suggests that while women perhaps can cross gender lines on issues and traits, women's trespassing of ownership may pay off most when they present themselves using masculine traits such as being strong and decisive. This is not to suggest that women should avoid masculine issues; ignoring issues of such import would be detrimental. After all, winning women did still discuss masculine issues, just not as much as winning men. Rather, these results suggest that women benefit when their self-presentations include a higher ratio of masculine traits.

The analyses in this chapter indicate that women and men emphasized and downplayed gender ownership in their campaign Twitter feeds—in patterned ways that aligned with victory or defeat. Mixed-gender elections are becoming increasingly more common, but they of course do not cover the entire political landscape. In other electoral settings, women and men's gender ownership, and trespassing of said ownership, may lose or gain political potency when they face off against someone of the same gender. The next chapter seeks to broaden this examination of self-presentations by focusing on women and men in same-gender Senate elections.

Chapter Four

Self-Presentations in Same-Gender Elections

The 2012 New York Senate race featured just one debate during the general election. On October 17, Democratic candidate Kirsten Gillibrand and Republican Wendy Long squared off on topics such as gun control, hydrofracking, taxes, immigration, and reproductive rights. They then faced a lightning round of questions on matters from the death penalty to New York City's ban on large sugary drinks to whether the candidates wrote their tweets: Gillibrand said no but that she approved them, and Long said "sometimes." One question, however, brought everything to a halt. Co-moderator Liz Benjamin, journalist and host of *Capital Tonight*, asked, "Have you read 'Fifty Shades of Grey'?" The question—about a best-selling novel targeted to women that is heavy on erotic romance—surprised the candidates, and both answered "No." Almost instantly people took to Twitter. David Graham of *The Atlantic* tweeted: "Would anyone [ask] two male candidates if they had a subscription to Playboy? No? Then why ask about 50 Shades of Grey?" Government and media scholar Brendan Nyhan tweeted, "So...any guesses on how many male US Senate candidates have been asked if they have read 50 Shades of Grey at debates?" Feminist organizer and blogger Shelby Knox minced no words: "Gillibrand & female opponent asked if they have read 50 Shades of Grey bit.ly/R3ewRV. @CapitalTonight owes them an apology for #sexism." Throughout the Twitter explosion ran gendered claims: women are treated differently than men in politics, and only in an all-female election would such a question be asked.

This was not the first time a woman-versus-woman political context had drawn controversial public commentary. In the run up to the 2012 presidential campaign, when it was plausible that Representative Michele Bachmann might face Sarah Palin for the Republican ticket, a news headline asked whether the women were headed for a "cat fight," and a

Republican consultant in the article said, “The claws are out. It’s the cat fight everyone has been waiting for” (Harnden, 2011). Bachmann faced other sexist headlines: “Michele Bachmann, Wife In Chief?,” and “Bachmann Bats Eyes at Iowa” (Nadolny, 2011; Pollitt, 2011). Such discourse suggests that if women, already facing the challenge of the masculinized space of politics, compete *against each other* that gendered perspectives might escalate even farther—unless, alternatively, candidates drive the conversation in ways congruent with other self-presentations. For example, the day after the 2012 New York Senate debate, Gillibrand’s spokesperson offered this statement: “The only thing she found offensive ... was her opponent’s views that women shouldn’t have the freedom to make medical choices for themselves” (Lovett, 2012). Gillibrand and team wasted no time in framing the election as a candidate, not cat, fight.

In the context of a general election, if the candidates are of the same gender then party identification often becomes the overriding distinction. With this in mind, in this chapter I argue that women and men candidates in same-gender elections will predominantly emphasize *party ownership*, not the gender ownership in mixed-gender elections theorized in Chapter Three, to create electable personas in their interactivity, personalization, focus on political issues, and emphasis on character traits. To determine whether candidates accented party ownership I conducted a content analysis of campaign Twitter feeds for three all-male and three all-female Senate elections in the 2012 election cycle. In total I analyzed 12 candidates’ campaign Twitter feeds, examining every tweet during their respective general elections—starting with the day after the primary election and concluding on Election Day, November 6, 2012. This analysis covered 8,844 tweets (Table 2.1 in Chapter Two provides full details on the campaigns, candidates, and number of tweets). Overall this chapter focuses on whether candidates in same-gender elections offer personas that eschew gender similarities and embrace party distinctions.

Expectations for Self-Presentations in Same-Gender Elections

I had several expectations regarding how women and men in same-gender elections would create and implement self-presentations via their Twitter communication. The majority of these hypotheses were built around one core premise: Feminine and Democratic styling and ownership overlap, and masculine and Republican styling and ownership align. These couplings have historical roots in the late 1970s when Democrats stepped up support for the Equal Rights Amendment and women's rights, while Republicans went the other direction (Domke & Coe, 2008; Sanbonmatsu, 2004). These differing trajectories created and reinforced distinctions between the parties in gendered styles and platforms. Democrats have proceeded with a more expansive view of women's roles in society and politics, which is perhaps why women are more likely to identify as Democrats and have been more likely than men to vote for Democratic presidential candidates since 1980 (CAWP, 2012c). Conversely, Republicans have favored or at least been more supportive of traditional sex roles, with men and women occupying public and private domains, respectively (Sanbonmatsu, 2004). As a result, gender and political party are linked in important ways in politics today, and this tie undergirds this chapter.

I posited that these party differences would manifest in distinct ways across each concept of interest. As with mixed-gender elections, we can look to leadership styles accorded to political parties to suggest candidates' interactivity levels. For example, Winter's (2010) survey showed that participants who preferred the Republican Party did so because it aligned with masculine leadership traits such as being independent and self-reliant, whereas participants who preferred the Democratic Party did so because it featured feminine leadership traits such as evoking a more collaborative decision-making style that involves listening to and caring about people's concerns. Thus, Republicans' style is more individualistic, whereas Democrats' style is more collective and

intentionally inclusive. Therefore I expected in general that Democrats more than Republicans, much like women more than men in Chapter Three, would be inclusive and interactive in their communications. Specifically, I predicted that in all-male elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans (H7a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans (H7b).

Following this theoretic logic, I also sought to compare women candidates in same-gender elections with those in mixed-gender ones. That is, in this chapter I wanted to compare female candidates' communications on Twitter (a) within same-gender elections and (b) relative to mixed-gender elections, drawing upon data from the last chapter. With this in mind, I first predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would be more interactive on Twitter than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H8a). In both electoral settings for Democratic women the expectation of greater interactivity of women is combined with the expectation of greater interactivity of Democrats. I expected this compounded set of expectations to be amped up in a women-only election because in this setting Democratic women are facing an opponent who also is thought to own interactivity. In a mixed-gender election, Democratic women are in competition against Republican men who, based on party *and* gender, do not own interactivity. So, the bar for being more interactive is much higher in all-female elections, and thus I expected Democratic women in these elections to trump Democratic women in mixed-gender elections in their interactivity.

Additionally, I expected that Republican women in women-only elections would be more interactive than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H8b). Republican women do not have the same compounding effect as Democratic women because gender- and party-based styles conflict for Republican women. But when running against a Democratic woman, I posited that

Republican women would bypass party norms in favor of engaging in greater interactivity to keep pace with their competitor. As such, Republican women in women-only elections may downplay party ownership and elevate interactivity as compared to Republican women in mixed-gender elections. Overall, then, I posited that the demand for interactivity is higher in a women-only election, and women in such elections would rise to the same-gendered occasion.

My next predictions focused on the intertwining of gender and party for personalization in candidate communications. Specifically, women and Democrats have been found to offer a “feminized” communication style that is typically more personal, whereas men and Republicans have offered more of an impersonal “masculinized” communication style (e.g., Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Campbell, 1989; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Therefore I expected that Democrats would invoke more personalization in their tweets based on their alignment with a more feminized communication style, and Republicans would, comparatively speaking, include less personalization due to their embrace of a more impersonal, masculinized styling.

Specifically, I predicted that in all-male elections, Democrats would include more personalization than Republicans (H9a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would include more personalization than Republicans (H9b). Furthermore, I expected Democratic and Republican women in same-gender elections to offer more personalization than their counterparts in mixed-gender elections—following the same line of logic as for interactivity. That is, I expected the demand for personalization to be higher in a women-only election, and women in such elections to respond accordingly. Thus I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would be more personal than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H10a), and I predicted that Republican women in women-only elections would be more personal than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H10b).

My third set of predictions focused on political issues. These predictions were based in part on Budge and Farlie (1983) and Petrocik's (1996) theory of political party ownership, in which Democrats are seen as better at handling social welfare issues and Republicans are perceived as more successful at handling issues like national security and economic matters. Notably, party ownership and gender ownership of issues overlap with Democrats owning more feminine issues and Republicans owning more masculine issues. Thus I expected that Democrats would emphasize feminine issues more than Republicans and Republicans would focus on masculine issues more than Democrats. Specifically, I predicted that in all-male elections, Democrats would discuss feminine issues more than Republicans and Republicans would discuss masculine issues more than Democrats (H11a), and that in all-female elections, Democrats would discuss feminine issues more than Republicans and Republicans would discuss masculine issues more than Democrats (H11b). Overall, I expected candidates to focus on party-owned issues more than their opponents.

I also expected women candidates in same-gender elections to elevate their party ownership of issues relative to women in mixed-gender elections. Like before, I expected that agreement of party and gender ownership for Democratic women in women-only elections would prompt them to discuss feminine issues more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H12a). In women-only elections, Democratic women are squaring off against someone who also has some claim to ownership over feminine issues, thus the need for Democrats to escalate their party-owned issues. Unlike before, though, I predicted that Republican women would align with party ownership regarding issues. This expectation is based on research that shows that the public views masculine issues as more important than feminine issues (e.g., Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). Therefore Republican women no

longer need to eschew party lines to gain an advantage; rather, they can emphasize their party's ownership of important issues. Furthermore, unlike their female counterparts in mixed-gender elections, Republicans in women-only elections are the only ones who can "lay claim" to owning masculine issues. Both the importance of masculine issues and the sole ownership of these issues in women-only elections create a potentially strategic route for Republican women. Therefore I predicted that Republican women in women-only elections would discuss masculine issues more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H12b).

For character traits, I expected candidates to fully align with party ownership, just as they did with issues in same-gender elections. This expectation was based on Hayes's (2005) theory of trait ownership, which asserts that issues and behaviors could be the basis for party-based trait assessments. For example, Democratic support of social welfare causes can facilitate a nurturing image. Notably, party and gender ownership of traits overlap: Democrats and women are perceived as owning empathy and compassion, and Republicans and men are perceived as owning strength and self-reliance (e.g., Banwart, 2010; Connell, 2005; Hayes, 2011). Therefore I expected that in general, Democrats would emphasize feminine traits more than Republicans, and Republicans would discuss masculine traits more than Democrats. Specifically, I predicted that in male-only elections, Democrats would emphasize more feminine traits than Republicans and Republicans would emphasize more masculine traits than Democrats (H13a), and that in female-only elections, Democrats would emphasize feminine traits more than Republicans and Republicans would emphasize masculine traits more than Democrats (H13b).

Thinking about women in mixed-gender and same-gender elections, I expected women candidates in women-only elections to amp up party-owned traits more than women in mixed-gender elections. For Democratic women in women-only elections, the dual ownership of

feminine traits based on gender and party, coupled with the prospect that their fellow women competitors have some claim to feminine traits, could compel them to elevate their discussion of feminine traits. Democratic women in mixed-gender elections are competing against a candidate who does not culturally own femininity, thus the necessity of emphasizing feminine traits is lessened. As such, I predicted that Democratic women in all-female elections would emphasize feminine traits more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H14a). Finally, I expected Republican women in all-female elections to amplify their ownership of masculine traits. This prediction is based on the public's favoring of masculine traits over feminine traits in political leaders (e.g., Hayes, 2011; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b). This favoring affords Republican women in same-gender elections the opportunity to align with party expectations, and create a self-presentation that corresponds with the public's preferences for masculinity. Republican women in mixed-gender elections do not have an exclusive hold on masculinity due to their opponent. With this in mind, I predicted that Republicans in women-only elections would discuss masculine traits more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H14b).

In the following pages I analyze women and men's self-presentations in their Twitter communications within same-gender elections, with some comparisons to tweets of the already-analyzed mixed-gender election contexts from the previous chapter. The flow of the analysis roughly parallels that of Chapter Three. Specifically, I first present the general contours of the data regarding candidates' Twitter communication. This analysis includes an examination of the volume and frequency of candidates' Twitter activity. Then, I address and test each of the hypotheses, finding results that both align with and depart from my expectations. Finally, I provide additional analysis that examines the self-presentations of winning and losing candidates in same-gender elections. Each stage of analysis illuminates how candidates in 2012 tried to

navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise when party and gender intersect.

Contours of Data: Tweet Volume and Frequency

I began by looking at the volume of Twitter usage for each candidate. For this initial slice of the data I first present patterns for the all-male elections (see Table 4.1), followed by patterns for the all-female elections.

Table 4.1
Total Tweets and Tweets Per Day by Candidate in All-Male Elections

Rank	Candidate	Total Tweets	Rank	Candidate	Tweets /Day
1	Richard Mourdock (R)	1101	1	Richard Mourdock (R)	6.05
2	Tom Smith (R)**	423	2	Richard Carmona (D)	3.61
3	Bob Casey, Jr. (D)*	310	3	Tom Smith (R)**	2.16
4	Richard Carmona (D)	253	4	Bob Casey, Jr. (D)*	1.58
5	Joe Donnelly (D)	121	5	Jeff Flake (R)	1.19
6	Jeff Flake (R)	83	6	Joe Donnelly (D)	0.66

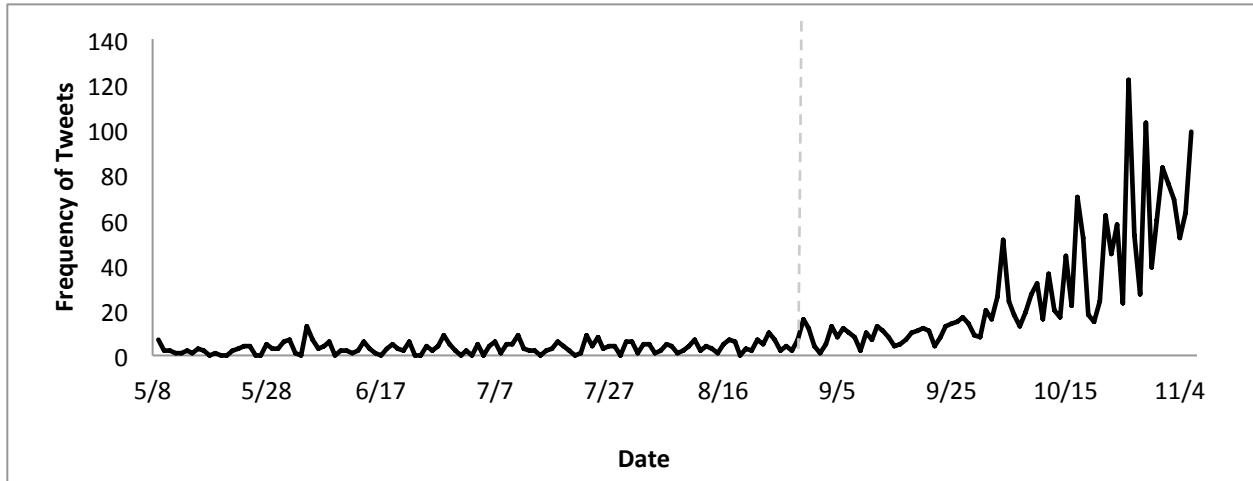
* Incumbent, ** Challenger

The frequencies on the left side of Table 4.1 show that Republicans were the highest and lowest volume tweeters. The highest volume tweeter was Republican Richard Mourdock of Indiana with 1,101 tweets, and the lowest volume tweeter was Republican Jeff Flake of Arizona at 83 tweets. The average across the six men was approximately 382 tweets. The right side of Table 4.1 shows the number of tweets per day—calculated by dividing each candidate’s number of tweets by the number of days in his respective general election. Two of the top three tweeters were Republicans. Mourdock tweeted the most at six a day, and Mourdock’s Democratic rival Joe Donnelly tweeted the least at less than one a day. The average across the men was 2.54 a day. Overall, these findings suggest that Republican men tweeted more than Democratic men in all-male elections, since they held two of the top three positions in both volume and tweets per day.

Next, I examined the frequency of tweets over the course of the candidates’ general elections to assess whether Twitter usage fluctuated as the campaigns came to a close. To

examine these general tweeting habits, I combined all three elections and ran frequencies across their general election timeframes (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1
Frequency of Tweets for All Candidates Across All-Male 2012 Elections



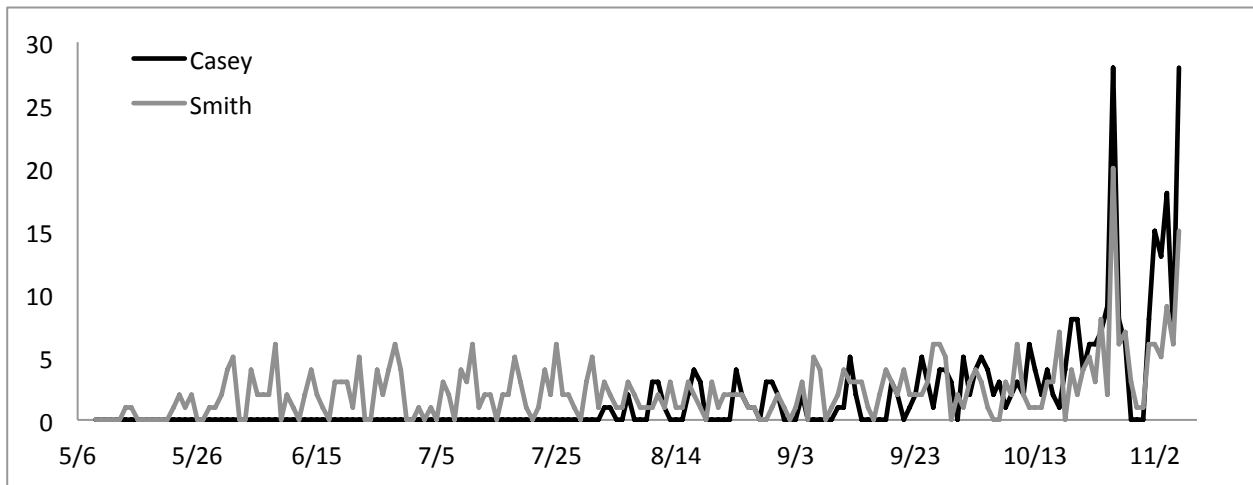
Note. The vertical gray dotted line indicates when all three elections had completed their respective primaries.

Data in Figure 4.1 show an increase in the frequency of tweets as the elections came to a close. The area to the right of the vertical gray dotted line indicates when all three elections had completed their primary. Pennsylvania went first on April 24, then Indiana on May 8, and finally, Arizona held its primary on August 28. With these dates in mind, there are a few notable observations in Figure 4.1. First, even though Pennsylvania's general election started on April 25, neither of the candidates started tweeting till weeks later in May. Second, even once all of the three elections had held their primaries, the candidates' Twitter usage did not pick up in a noticeable way till October. Specifically, October 1 was the first day the candidates' combined frequency rose above the teens and hit 20 tweets for the day. This trend supports the idea of a summer lull in campaigning, with a ramp-up period as the general election kicked into high gear in October. Finally, the most active day was not Election Day, but instead October 26 with 122 tweets, followed by October 29 with 103 tweets. Election Day came in third with 99 tweets.

Overall, men in all-male elections seemed to take a more delayed approach to integrating Twitter into their campaigns.

To dive deeper into the data I conducted the same analysis by individual election, to provide the frequencies over time for each campaign (Figures 4.2 to 4.4). For all of the figures, Democratic men are the black line, and Republican men are the gray line.

Figure 4.2
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Pennsylvania Candidates



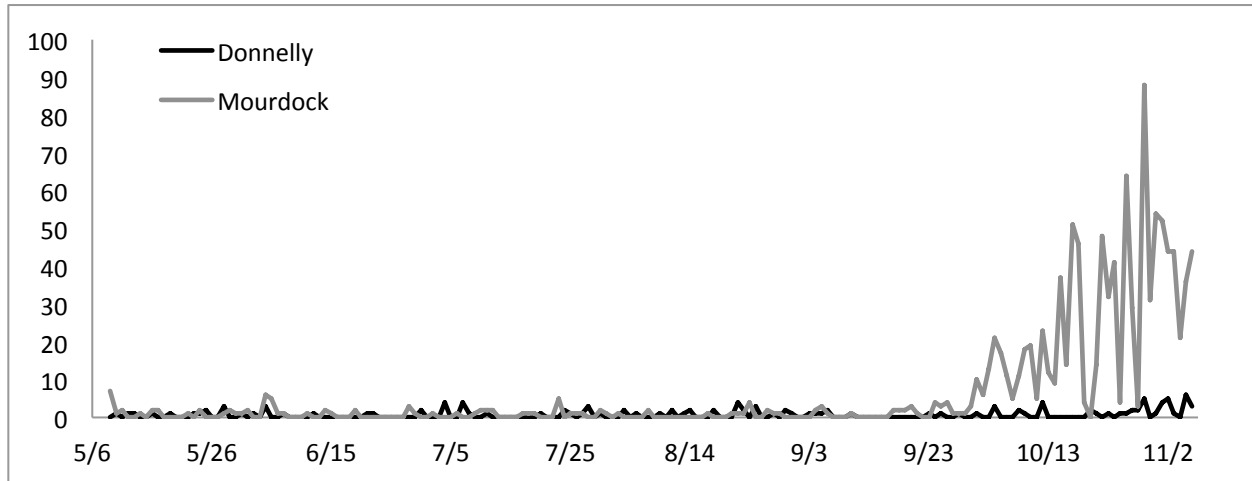
Data in Figure 4.2 show Twitter usage in the Pennsylvania Senate race, which held its primary on April 24. Republican Todd Smith sent his first general election tweet on May 14, and Democrat Bob Casey Jr. sent his almost three months later on August 2. Smith's most active day was October 26, the date of the second debate, with 20 tweets. His next most active day was Election Day with 15 tweets. Similarly, Casey's most active days coincided with the second debate and Election Day: 28 tweets each. Notably, neither candidate was a particularly active tweeter during the first debate on October 16: Smith had three tweets, and Casey had two. This low level of activity on the first debate day, coupled with the late starts in general election tweeting, suggests that both candidates did not initially embrace Twitter as an important tool in their campaigning. This similarity was supported by a correlation test, which showed a

significant positive relationship, $r=.697$, $p<.01$.

Figure 4.3 presents data for the Indiana Senate race, which held its primary on May 8.

Figure 4.3

Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Indiana Candidates



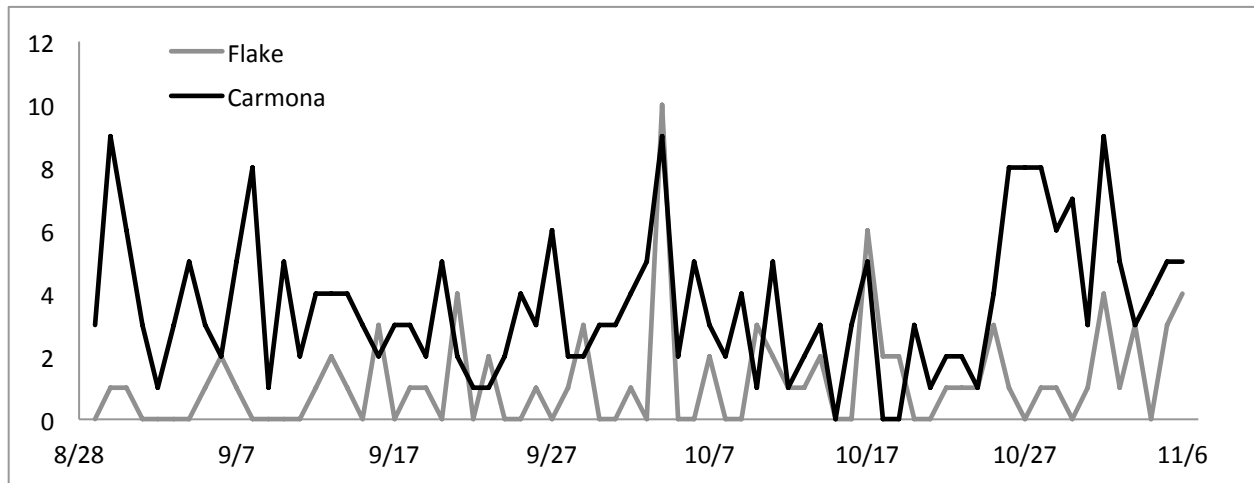
There are two notable patterns in Figure 4.3. First, both Democrat Joe Donnelly and Republican Richard Mourdock were low volume tweeters for the majority of the general election, which is surprising given that Mourdock tweeted the most overall. Mourdock did not have a double-digit day till October 1 with 10 tweets, and Donnelly never had a double-digit day on Twitter. Second, the candidates employed different tweeting strategies in October. Donnelly continued to have a low baseline of activity—his most active day topped out at five tweets on November 5, election eve. Mourdock, on the other hand, ramped up his Twitter account as the election went on. His most active day was October 29 with 88 tweets. Mourdock was in a different Twitter universe than Donnelly on debate days: 37 versus zero on October 15, and 32 versus one on October 23. Neither of these days, though, ranked in the top ten most active days for Mourdock. Despite Donnelly’s low volume of tweets and the lack of matching spikes for debates, analysis revealed a significant positive correlation in Twitter usage between Donnelly and Mourdock, $r=.356$, $p<.01$.

Notably, Mourdock had what some called a “Todd Akin moment” during the second

debate when he discussed his opposition to abortion. He said, “Life is that gift from God that I think even if life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen.” In Chapter Three we saw that when Akin, in the Missouri Senate race, made his comments on rape and pregnancy, competitor Claire McCaskill escalated her tweeting immediately, while Akin waited a few days before engaging in higher Twitter activity. For the Indiana race, we find an opposite pattern. Donnelly tweeted only once on debate day and sent zero the next day. Conversely, on the day of the debate Mourdock sent 32 tweets, and on the day after he had 41. Mourdock’s tweets on these days fell into three categories: restating his position, blaming Democrats, and showing that he had support from fellow Republicans. An example of the first category included the following tweet: “God creates life, and that was my point. God does not want rape, and by no means was I suggesting that he does. <http://t.co/j2TsuedH> #INSen.” He went for blame in the following tweet: “The NRSC Chairman called Democratic attacks on Mourdock’s controversial comments ‘irresponsible and ridiculous’ <http://t.co/0THSud00> #INSen.” Support from Republicans came in this tweet: “Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is standing behind Indiana GOP Senate candidate Richard Mourdock- <http://t.co/iqdKPJVF> #INSen.” Eventually, Mourdock, like Akin, lost the election even though he had been considered the initial favorite.

Figure 4.4 presents data for the Arizona Senate race, which held its primary August 28.

Figure 4.4
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Arizona Candidates



Data in Figure 4.4 present a different story than the other two all-male campaigns. First, there is no ramp-up to Election Day. Rather, candidates’ Twitter usage ebbed and flowed throughout the general election. Second, the scale on the vertical axis indicates that neither candidate was a particularly heavy tweeter. Republican Jeff Flake’s top day was October 4 with 10 tweets. Democrat Richard Carmona had a three-way tie for his most active day at nine tweets: August 30, October 4, and November 1. None of these most active days for either candidate corresponded with the three debates. In fact, on October 15, the date of the second debate, neither candidate tweeted at all. The lack of activity around major campaign dates, and the lack of a shared ramp-up period, perhaps explains why the positive correlation between the two men was only marginally significant, $r=.208, p<.10$.

When all of these findings are combined, one pattern becomes apparent: Richard Mourdock displayed different Twitter habits than the other five men. In general, men in the analyzed all-male elections were relatively low tweeters, while Mourdock was much more active. Combined, the five other men posted 1,190 tweets, compared to 1,101 by Mourdock. Further, Mourdock was the only one who ramped up activity as Election Day neared. The other five men

were fairly constant in their Twitter usage throughout the campaign, with a spike here and there, but no consistent build-up in Twitter activity.

I then examined the general Twitter contours of the all-female elections. I began with the volume of Twitter usage for each woman (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2
Total Tweets and Tweets Per Day by Candidate in All-Female Elections

Rank	Candidate	Total Tweets	Rank	Candidate	Tweets /Day
1	Elizabeth Emken (R)	2347	1	Linda Lingle (R)	26.47
2	Linda Lingle (R)	2303	2	Elizabeth Emken (R)	15.24
3	Wendy Long (R)**	818	3	Wendy Long (R)**	6.15
4	Kirsten Gillibrand (D)*	695	4	Kirsten Gillibrand (D)*	5.23
5	Mazie Hirono (D)	338	5	Mazie Hirono (D)	3.89
6	Dianne Feinstein (D)	52	6	Dianne Feinstein (D)	0.34

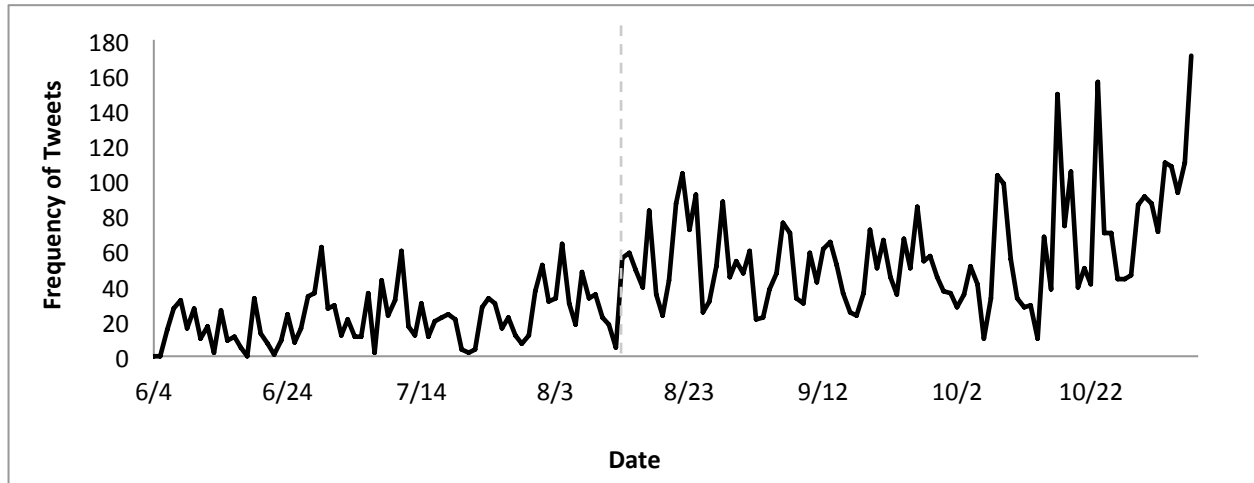
* Incumbent, ** Challenger

Frequencies in the left side of Table 4.2 show that Republican women in all-female elections were the more prolific tweeters: they held the top three positions. Republican Elizabeth Emken of California was highest with 2,347 tweets, and her rival Democrat Dianne Feinstein tweeted the least with a total of 52. The average across all six women was just over 1,092 tweets—twice the average of mixed-gender elections and almost three times the average of all-male elections, driven in large part by Emken and Linda Lingle of Hawaii. Rankings stayed almost the same moving from total tweets to tweets per day—the only difference was that Lingle replaced Emken for the No. 1 position. Lingle far surpassed all other candidates in all of my data with an average of over 26 tweets a day, and Feinstein came in the lowest of the women with less than one tweet a day. In two typical days, Lingle tweeted as much as Feinstein did in the entire general election. The average across all six women was 9.55 tweets a day. In sum, Republican women tweeted more—and in two instances, *way* more—than Democratic women in all-female elections.

I then examined the frequency of tweets over the course of the general elections. To

examine whether Twitter usage varied over time, I combined all three elections and ran frequencies across their combined general election timeframes (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5
Frequency of Tweets for All Candidates Across All-Female 2012 Elections



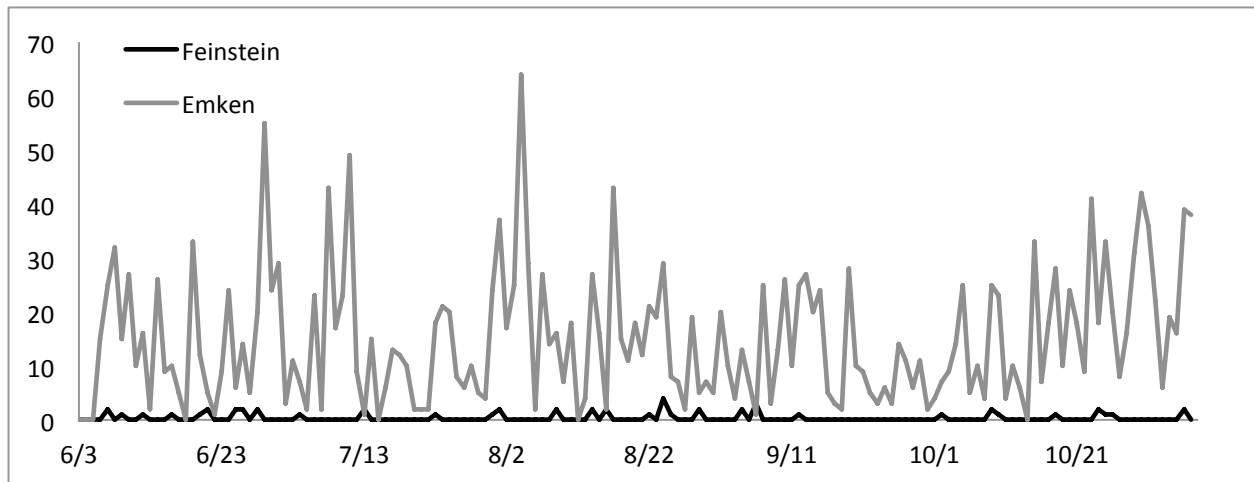
Note. The vertical gray dotted indicates when all three elections had completed their respective primaries.

Data in Figure 4.5 show a slight increase in the frequency of tweets as Election Day approached. The vertical gray dotted line again indicates when all elections had completed their primaries. The highest volume day was Election Day with 171 tweets, followed by October 23 with 156 tweets, and October 17 with 149 tweets. Therefore the most active days were later in the election.

Next, I plotted the frequencies on a daily basis for each candidate in each campaign (Figures 4.6 to 4.8). For all of these figures, Democratic women are the black line, and Republican women are the gray line.

Figure 4.6

Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for California Candidates



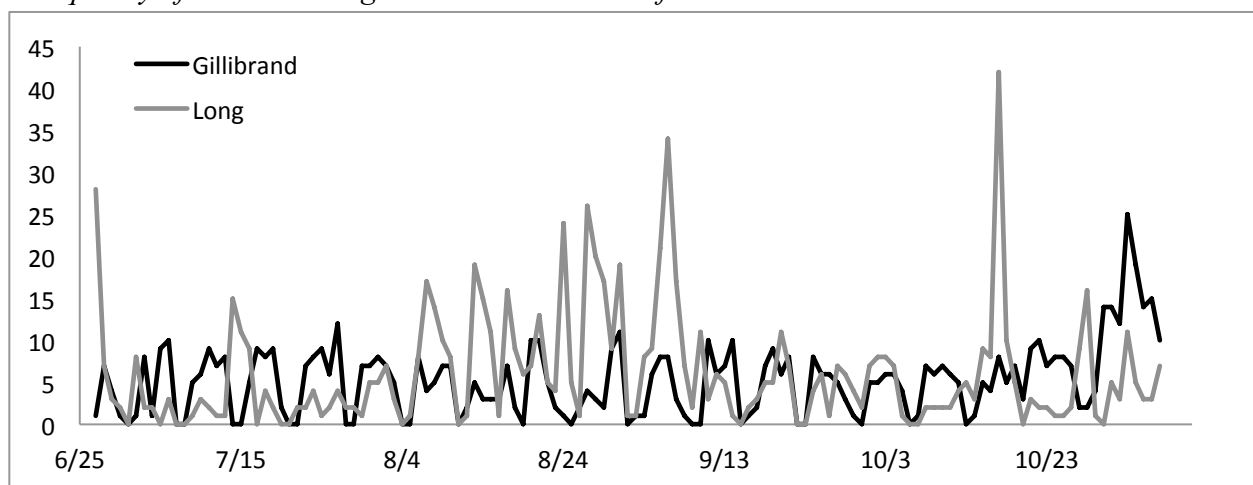
Data in Figure 4.6 display the tweeting habits of Republican Elizabeth Emken and Democrat Dianne Feinstein. As we've seen, Emken had the most tweets in the analyzed elections and Feinstein had the least. Emken hit numerous peaks throughout the election—starting with 15 tweets on day one of the general election, June 6. Emken's peaks were all the more substantial when compared with Feinstein's almost flat line of activity. There was no summer lull for Emken: her most active day was August 4 with 64 tweets, followed by June 29 with 55 tweets, and then July 11 with 49 tweets. Feinstein's most active day was August 24 with four tweets, followed by three on September 6, and then a smattering of two on various days. Election Day was not a high-water mark for either candidate: Emken tweeted 38 times and Feinstein did not tweet at all. Notably, there were no debates during the general election: Feinstein refused to attend a debate, prompting Emken to demand a debate from Feinstein in numerous tweets. Emken included the word "debate" in 332 tweets, roughly 14% of her tweets. For example, Emken tweeted: "In honor of #emptychairday: R empty chair update....we wait and wait and wait for @SenFeinstein to debate. <http://t.co/4cpAX4NI>." Emken even started a petition: "Just say 'No!' to entrenched incumbents & demand @SenFeinstein debate. Sign thePetition Today:

<http://t.co/SdjBFJ7S> #twisters #CASen.” Emken often described Feinstein’s refusal to debate as an act of royalty by using such words and phrases as “queen,” “her royal highness,” “don’t put on that crown just yet,” “reign,” “anointed,” “coronation,” “She thinks herself above the peasant class,” and so on. For example, Emken retweeted the following: “RT @CArepub: Queen Feinstein does not debate commoners. Forget debates then. Lets elect a commoner. @ElizabethEmken.” The different styles in tweeting ultimately produced a negligible Twitter correlation for the two women, $r=.073$, *n.s.*

Figure 4.7 presents data for the New York Senate race, which held its primary June 26.

Figure 4.7

Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for New York Candidates

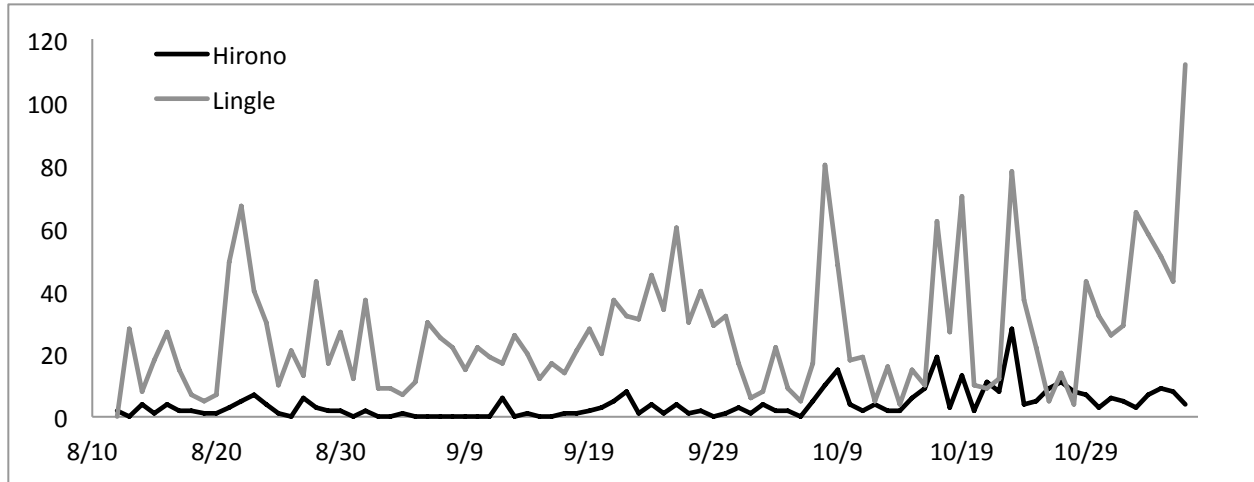


Data in Figure 4.7 show some noteworthy elements. First, Republican Wendy Long started off active with 28 tweets on June 17, compared to one tweet by Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand. Second, Long had several more peaks in activity than Gillibrand, including a flurry of activity during August and the first half of September. Long’s most active day was October 17—the date of the only debate—with 42 tweets. Gillibrand only tweeted eight times that day. Finally, Gillibrand’s Twitter activity remained relatively consistent over time, with one peak on her most active day, November 2 with 25 tweets. As with Emken and Feinstein, there was no significant

correlation between Gillibrand and Long in their Twitter usage, $r=.05$, *n.s.*

Figure 4.8 presents data for the Hawaii Senate race, which held its primary August 11.

Figure 4.8
Frequency of Tweets during the General Election for Hawaii Candidates



At first glance, we see seemingly very different Twitter patterns for Democrat Mazie Hirono and Republican Linda Lingle. Lingle’s gray line is higher than Hirono’s black line throughout the election, representing a significant gap in Twitter activity between the women. Lingle’s most active day was Election Day with 112 tweets, followed by October 8—the date of the second debate—with 80 tweets, and October 23 with 78 tweets, which followed the fifth and final debate. Hirono’s most active day was October 23 with 28 tweets, followed by October 17 with 19 tweets, which was the day after the third debate, and October 9 with 15 tweets, which was the day after the second debate. Thus, both women’s Twitter activity increased on or after debate days, and even though the lines in Figure 4.8 tend to be far apart, there was a synchronicity to them. This shared approach in Twitter usage of the candidates was supported by a significant positive correlation, $r=.452$, $p<.01$.

This examination of same-gender elections indicated some notable similarities between all-male and all-female elections, as well as some consistent differences between same-gender

and mixed-gender Senate elections. First, for mixed-gender elections, candidates were consistently more active on Twitter on days surrounding debates and on Election Day. For same-gender elections, only two of the six elections followed this pattern: the all-male election between Bob Casey Jr. and Todd Smith in Pennsylvania, and the all-female election between Mazie Hirono and Linda Lingle in Hawaii. The other four races had peaks of activity either during the summer, or on dates not associated with a debate or Election Day. Second, for mixed-gender elections, candidates consistently ramped up activity starting in late September, with a build-up of activity continuing through October. For same-gender elections, there was little evidence of build-up across all six elections. Men and women candidates in these elections were more likely to have Twitter activity throughout the campaign with peaks of engagement at various moments during the general election—sometimes in the fall, but also sometimes in the summer. This pattern was particularly apparent in all-female elections. Third, for mixed-gender elections, all of the correlations between candidates were positive and met conventional levels of statistical significance. For same-gender elections, half of the elections did not follow this pattern: Richard Carmona and Jeff Flake in Arizona only had a marginally significant positive correlation, and Dianne Feinstein versus Elizabeth Emken in California, as well as Kirsten Gillibrand and Wendy Long in New York had insignificant correlations. This suggests that candidates in the analyzed same-gender elections, especially women, were less likely to be in sync in their Twitter activity. I take up the meaning of these patterns in the Discussion section.

Test of Hypotheses: Content and Features

I now present the tests of hypotheses. First, I examined hypotheses across the content variables of interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits. Then, I addressed the feature variables of links, audio/visuals, and emoticons/emojis. In this examination of the

impressions a candidate gives and gives off, I first analyzed results for all-male elections, then for all-female elections, and finally, I compared results for all-female elections to those for women in mixed-gender elections.

The first set of hypotheses predicted—following party-ownership rationale—that in all-male elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans (H7a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would be more interactive than Republicans (H7b). To test these hypotheses I first compared Democratic and Republican men, then partisan women, in the percentages of their tweets containing interactivity. I then conducted the same analysis for each sub-component of interactivity (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
Interactivity by Republicans and Democrats in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men (<i>n</i> = 1607)	Democratic Men (<i>n</i> = 684)	<i>p</i>	Republican Women (<i>n</i> = 5468)	Democratic Women (<i>n</i> = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Interactivity	77.1%	63.0%	<.01	81.2%	73.6%	<.01
@mention	64.5%	44.3%	<.01	46.7%	60.5%	<.01
@reply	2.2%	0.6%	<.05	28.8%	5.3%	<.01
RT/MT	7.0%	8.9%	<i>n.s.</i>	34.2%	14.3%	<.01
RT plus	0.7%	0.3%	<i>n.s.</i>	8.3%	4.0%	<.01
In situ photos	18.1%	24.6%	<.01	5.0%	11.3%	<.01

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan men and women.

This analysis showed that Democratic men were not more interactive than Republican men. In fact, the top line on the left side of Table 4.3 shows that Republican men (at least one of the variables was present in 77.1% of their tweets) significantly outpaced Democratic men (63%) regarding overall interactivity, $p < .01$. A follow-up independent sample t-test substantiated these results: Republican men ($M = .93$, $SD = .622$) had a higher density of interactivity than Democratic men ($M = .79$, $SD = .704$), $t(2289) = 4.712$, $p < .001$. When I disaggregated interactivity, there were three significant differences: Republican men were more likely than Democratic men to mention

others in their tweets and to reply to tweets, and in contrast to the other data, Democratic men were more likely than Republican men to include in situ photos. In sum, Republican men were much more interactive in their tweets in the analyzed elections than Democratic men.

In a similar pattern, data in Table 4.3 show that Republican women were more interactive than Democratic women in the analyzed elections. The top line on the right side indicates that Republican women (at least one of the variables was present in 81.2% of their tweets) were significantly more likely than Democratic women (73.6%) to include some form of interactivity in their tweets, $p < .01$. A follow-up independent sample t-test supported these results: Republican women ($M = 1.23$, $SD = .819$) had a higher density of interactivity than Democratic women ($M = .95$, $SD = .713$), $t(6551) = 10.339$, $p < .001$. When I divided interactivity into its sub-components, all five comparisons were significant at the $p < .01$ level, and Republican women topped Democratic women in three of five comparisons. Republican women were more likely than Democratic women to reply, to retweet, and to include a retweet plus. Conversely, Democratic women were more likely than Republican women to mention others and to include in situ photos. Looking across Table 4.3, H7a and H7b were both unsupported because Republicans were more interactive than Democrats.

The next set of hypotheses compared Twitter usage in same-gender elections to that in mixed-gender elections for the female candidates. I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would be more interactive than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H8a), and Republican women in women-only elections would be more interactive than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H8b). To test these hypotheses I compared Democratic and Republican women for both electoral contexts in the percentages of their tweets containing interactivity, then repeated this analysis for each sub-component (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Interactivity by Republican and Democratic Women, by Electoral Context

	Republican Women			Democratic Women		
	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1357)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 5468)	<i>p</i>	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1163)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Interactivity	58.8%	81.2%	<.01	62.3%	73.6%	<.01
@mention	31.7%	46.7%	<.01	44.9%	60.5%	<.01
@reply	5.1%	28.8%	<.01	2.3%	5.3%	<.01
RT/MT	12.7%	34.2%	<.01	13.0%	14.3%	<i>n.s.</i>
RT plus	2.9%	8.3%	<.01	0.4%	4.0%	<.01
In situ photos	27.2%	5.0%	<.01	20.3%	11.3%	<.01

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan women.

Data in Table 4.4 indicate support for both hypotheses. The left side of the table focuses on Republican women, and the top line indicates that female candidates in same-gender elections (81.2%) were more likely than female candidates in mixed-gender elections (58.8%) to be interactive in their tweets, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Republican women in same-gender elections ($M = 1.23$, $SD = .819$) were more interactive than Republican women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .80$, $SD = .775$), $t(6823) = -17.651$, $p < .001$. Drilling down into the sub-components, results in Table 4.4 show that Republican women in same-gender elections were significantly more likely than their counterparts in mixed-gender elections to include mentions, replies, retweets, and retweet pluses. The only time Republican women in mixed-gender elections took the lead was concerning in situ photos. In sum, Republican women in same-gender elections upped the ante on interactivity when squaring off against another woman, and thus were more interactive than Republican women competing against men.

The right side of Table 4.4 focuses on Democratic women. The top line shows that Democratic women in same-gender elections (73.6%) were more likely than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (62.3%) to be interactive, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test

supported this result: Democratic women in same-gender elections ($M=.95$, $SD=.713$) were more interactive than Republican women in mixed-gender elections ($M=.81$, $SD=.751$), $t(2246)=-4.679$, $p<.001$. Data in Table 4.5 also show that Democratic women in same-gender elections were significantly more likely than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections to include mentions, replies, and retweet pluses, while Democratic women in mixed-gender elections were significantly more likely than Democratic women in same-gender elections to include in situ photos. Overall, then, women in same-gender elections—regardless of party—were much more interactive than women in mixed-gender elections.

Next, I turned to personalization. I first predicted that in all-male elections, Democrats would include more personalization than Republicans (H9a), and in all-female elections, Democrats would include more personalization than Republicans (H9b). I compared the overall percentages and each sub-component of personalization across partisan men and then partisan women (Table 4.5). Both hypotheses were supported.

Table 4.5
Personalization by Republicans and Democrats in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men ($n = 1607$)	Democratic Men ($n = 684$)	p	Republican Women ($n = 5468$)	Democratic Women ($n = 1085$)	p
Personalization	4.5%	6.6%	<.01	3.7%	5.4%	<.01
Gender	0.6%	0.0%	<.05	0.8%	1.4%	<.10
Uniqueness	0.2%	0.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.4%	0.0%	<.05
Hobbies/sports	1.1%	1.9%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.0%	2.3%	<.01
Family	0.8%	3.2%	<.01	0.3%	0.7%	<.05
Religion	0.9%	0.3%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.9%	0.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Signed tweet	0.7%	0.0%	<.05	0.1%	0.1%	<i>n.s.</i>
Photos	0.6%	1.6%	<.05	0.3%	1.0%	<.01

Note: p Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan men and women.

The left side of Table 4.5 shows that, as predicted, Democratic men (6.6%) were significantly more likely than Republican men (4.5%) to personalize their tweets, $p<.01$. This

result was supported by an independent sample t-test: Democratic men ($M=.07$, $SD=.285$) were more likely to emphasize personalization than Republican men ($M=.05$, $SD=.236$), $t(2289)=-1.959$, $p<.05$. In the sub-components of personalization, four comparisons were significant. Democratic men were significantly more likely than Republican men to mention their family and to tweet personal photos of their family or friends. Republican men were more likely than Democratic men to reference their gender and to sign their tweets. Overall, Democratic men were more personal in their tweets than their Republican competitors, especially regarding verbal and visual references to their loved ones.

The right side of Table 4.5 shows that Democratic women (5.4%) were, as predicted, significantly more likely than Republican women (3.7%) to personalize their tweets, $p<.01$. This result was supported by an independent sample t-test: Democratic women ($M=.06$, $SD=.281$) were more personal than Republican women ($M=.04$, $SD=.201$), $t(6551)=-3.330$, $p<.01$. In disaggregating the composite variable of personalization, I found five significant results—most of which support the aggregate finding. Democratic women were more likely than Republican women to reference their gender, interest in sports and hobbies, family, and to tweet personal photos. For example, Kirsten Gillibrand tweeted the following, which referenced her family, her attendance to a baseball game, and included a personal photo: “The whole family is having a great time at the Tri-City @ValleyCats game in #Troy tonight. #4thofjuly” (Figure 4.9). Republican women outpaced Democratic women in one area: Republican women were significantly more likely than Democratic women to invoke uniqueness. Overall, across women and men, Democrats trumped Republicans in personalization in same-gender elections. These results support Hypotheses 9a and 9b.



Figure 4.9
Senator Gillibrand and family

The next set of hypotheses compared women across types of electoral settings. I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would be more personal than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H10a), and Republican women in women-only elections would be more personal than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H10b). To test these hypotheses I compared Democratic and Republican women in the percentages of their tweets containing personalization, and repeated this analysis for each sub-component (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Personalization by Republican and Democratic Women, by Electoral Context

	Republican Women			Democratic Women		
	Mixed-Gender (n = 1357)	Same-Gender (n = 5468)	p	Mixed-Gender (n = 1163)	Same-Gender (n = 1085)	p
Personalization	4.9%	3.7%	<.05	17.7%	5.4%	<.01
Gender	1.0%	0.8%	n.s.	0.5%	1.4%	<.05
Uniqueness	0.4%	0.4%	n.s.	0.1%	0.0%	n.s.
Hobbies/sports	1.2%	1.0%	n.s.	0.9%	2.3%	<.01
Family	0.6%	0.3%	<.10	1.9%	0.7%	<.05
Religion	0.3%	0.9%	<.10	0.5%	0.7%	n.s.
Signed tweet	0.1%	0.1%	n.s.	14.4%	0.1%	<.01
Photos	2.2%	0.3%	<.01	1.5%	1.0%	n.s.

Note: p Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan women.

Data in Table 4.6 indicate that both hypotheses were not supported. Results in the top line on the left side show that Republican women in mixed-gender elections (4.9%) were significantly more likely than Republican women in same-gender elections (3.7%) to engage in personalization, $p < .05$. An independent sample t-test backed up this finding: Republican women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .06$, $SD = .272$) were more likely to include personalization than Republican women in same-gender elections, ($M = .04$, $SD = .201$), $t(6823) = 2.960$, $p < .01$. In particular, Republican women in mixed-gender elections were more likely than ones in same-gender elections to include references to family and personal photos of friends and family.

Similarly, the top line on the right side of Table 4.6 shows that Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (17.7%) were three times more likely than Democratic women in same-gender elections (5.4%) to engage in personalization, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .20$, $SD = .449$) were significantly more likely to include personalization than Democratic women in same-gender elections, ($M = .06$, $SD = .281$), $t(2246) = 8.430$, $p < .001$. Specifically, Democratic women in mixed-gender elections were significantly more likely to reference their family and to sign their tweets. In fact, Democratic women in mixed-gender elections were the most likely of any candidates in any analyzed election context to sign their tweets, at over 14%. Results in Table 4.6, therefore, show that women in mixed-gender elections—regardless of party—were more personal in their tweets than their counterparts in same-gender elections.

Next, I focused on political issues, with predictions derived from party-ownership logic. I first expected that in all-male elections, Democrats would discuss feminine issues more than Republicans, and Republicans would discuss masculine issues more than Democrats (H11a). Similarly, I predicted that in all-female elections, Democrats would discuss feminine issues more

than Republicans, and Republicans would discuss masculine issues more than Democrats (H11b). As before, I first compared the overall percentages, and then compared each sub-component for men and then women (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7
Political Issues by Republicans and Democrats in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men (n = 1607)	Democratic Men (n = 684)	<i>p</i>	Republican Women (n = 5468)	Democratic Women (n = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Feminine	13.3%	11.5%	<i>n.s.</i>	5.2%	10.8%	<.01
Education	0.2%	1.6%	<.05	1.0%	1.4%	<i>n.s.</i>
Health care	10.8%	7.3%	<.01	2.8%	3.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Women's issues	2.0%	1.8%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.1%	4.1%	<.01
Environment	0.2%	0.9%	<.05	0.3%	2.2%	<.01
Masculine	28.3%	19.7%	<.01	10.8%	18.2%	<.01
Military	3.2%	2.8%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.1%	4.3%	<.01
Crime/Law	0.4%	0.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.1%	1.1%	<i>n.s.</i>
Economy	23.4%	14.9%	<.01	7.9%	13.3%	<.01
Taxes	4.4%	4.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	2.0%	2.6%	<i>n.s.</i>

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan men and women.

Data on the left side of Table 4.7 show three noteworthy results for men. First, in contrast to my prediction, Democratic men were not more likely to discuss party-owned feminine issues. Rather, according to the top line, Republican men (13.3%) were more likely than Democratic men (11.5%) to discuss feminine issues, though this difference was not significant. An independent sample t-test also showed no significant difference between Democratic men ($M=.12, SD=.320$) and Republican men ($M=.13, SD=.344$) for feminine issues, $t(2289)=1.150, n.s.$ Once feminine issues were disaggregated, there were three significant differences: Republican men were more likely than Democratic men to discuss health care; Democratic men were more likely than Republican men to discuss education and the environment. Notably, for the men, the percentages of tweets referencing health care far surpassed the percentage

referencing the other three feminine issues combined, a pattern that drove the overall findings.

Second, as predicted, Republican men (28.3%) were more likely than Democratic men (19.7%) to discuss masculine issues, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test confirmed this result: Republican men ($M = .31$, $SD = .527$) were significantly more likely than Democratic men ($M = .22$, $SD = .464$) to discuss masculine issues, $t(2289) = 4.059$, $p < .001$. In particular, Republican men were significantly more likely than Democratic men to discuss the economy.

Third, Republican and Democratic men were more likely to discuss masculine issues than feminine issues. Republican men emphasized masculine issues (28.3%) over twice as much as feminine issues (13.3%), and Democratic men discussed masculine issues (19.7%) almost twice as much as feminine issues (11.5%), both significant differences at $p < .01$. In sum, part of the multi-part hypothesis was supported: Republican men did discuss masculine issues more than Democratic men. Furthermore, the dominance of masculine issues continued in all-male elections, with the economy being the most talked about issue for men regardless of party.

Turning to all-female elections, we see again a series of findings. First, the top line on the right side of Table 4.7 shows that, as predicted, Democratic women (10.8%) were more likely than Republican women (5.2%) to emphasize feminine issues, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic women ($M = .11$, $SD = .338$) were significantly more likely than Republican women ($M = .05$, $SD = .223$) to discuss feminine issues, $t(6551) = -7.608$, $p < .001$. In particular, Democratic women were over three times as likely as Republican women to discuss women's issues. In same-gender elections, Democratic women rivaled all of the other candidates combined in discussion of women's issues: Democratic women talked about women's issues in 4.1% of tweets, compared to 4.9% for all Republican women, Republican men, and Democratic men combined. For example, Mazie Hirono of Hawaii tweeted the following: "Fact

Check: Hirono Championed The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (read: <http://t.co/ByzTdf3J>) #hisenate @KHONnews,” and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York tweeted, “From #equalpay to access to contraception, I’m fighting for #women on the floor of the US Senate every day. #offthesidelines.” Further, Democratic women were twice as likely as Republican women to discuss the environment. Overall, Democratic women were more likely to discuss party- and gender-owned feminine issues.

The bottom half of Table 4.7 shows that, in contrast to my prediction, Republican women were not more likely to highlight party-owned masculine issues. Rather, Democratic women (18.2%) were significantly more likely than Republican women (10.8%) to discuss masculine issues, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic women ($M = .21$, $SD = .482$) were significantly more likely than Republican women ($M = .12$, $SD = .363$) to discuss masculine issues, $t(6551) = -7.167$, $p < .001$. Specifically, Democratic women were more likely than Republican women to highlight military/national security and the economy. In sum, Democratic women were more likely to discuss issues they do not traditionally own.

Finally, women in same-gender elections were more likely to emphasize masculine issues than feminine issues. Republican women discussed masculine issues (10.8%) twice as much as feminine issues (5.2%), and Democratic women referenced masculine issues (18.2%) much more than feminine issues (10.8%), both significant differences at $p < .01$. Overall, then, H11b was supported: Democratic women discussed feminine issues more than Republican women in same-gender elections. Additionally, just like men in all-male elections, women in all-female elections were more likely to emphasize masculine issues over feminine issues.

In addition to feminine and masculine issues, I also coded for when another issue was mentioned that did not fit into the feminine or masculine conceptual groupings. Other issues

were invoked in 6.5% of the tweets, regardless of candidate party or gender. This is nearly identical to the percentage of tweets that contained other issues in mixed-gender elections (6.6%). Once party was taken into account, Democrats (9.3%) were significantly more likely than Republicans (5.8%) to discuss other issues ($p < .01$), such as agriculture, same-sex marriage, and immigration. The combination of party and gender, however, shifted the scales. Republican men (6.7%) were more likely than Democratic men (4.1%) to discuss other issues, $p < .05$. Conversely, Democratic women (12.6%) were over twice as likely as Republican women (5.5%) to emphasize other issues, $p < .01$. These findings, combined with results from Table 4.7, reveal a consistent pattern: Republican men and Democratic women talked about feminine and masculine issues, as well as other issues, more than their same-gender competitors.

Next, I looked across election types. I predicted both that Democratic women in women-only elections would discuss feminine issues more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H12a), and that Republican women in women-only elections would discuss masculine issues more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H12b). To test these hypotheses I compared Democratic and Republican women in the percentages of their tweets containing issues, and repeated this analysis for each sub-issue (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Political Issues by Republican and Democratic Women, by Electoral Context

	Republican Women			Democratic Women		
	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1357)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 5468)	<i>p</i>	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1163)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Feminine	6.0%	5.2%	<i>n.s.</i>	16.1%	10.8%	<.01
Education	0.1%	1.0%	<.05	5.1%	1.4%	<.01
Health care	4.4%	2.8%	<.01	7.1%	3.7%	<.01
Women's issues	0.7%	1.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	3.4%	4.1%	<i>n.s.</i>
Environment	1.0%	0.3%	<.01	0.9%	2.2%	<.05
Masculine	25.6%	10.8%	<.01	19.3%	18.2%	<i>n.s.</i>
Military	2.7%	1.1%	<.01	4.2%	4.3%	<i>n.s.</i>
Crime/Law	0.1%	1.1%	<.05	0.0%	1.1%	<.05
Economy	21.1%	7.9%	<.01	14.5%	13.3%	<i>n.s.</i>
Taxes	4.7%	2.0%	<i>n.s.</i>	2.9%	2.6%	<i>n.s.</i>

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan women.

Data in Table 4.8 show that both hypotheses were not supported. The top line of the upper right quadrant shows that Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (16.1%) were significantly more likely than Democratic women in same-gender elections (10.8%) to discuss feminine issues, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .17$, $SD = .387$) were significantly more likely than Democratic women in same-gender elections ($M = .11$, $SD = .338$) to discuss feminine issues, $t(2246) = 3.304$, $p < .01$. Further, the data in the lower left quadrant show that Republican women in mixed-gender elections (25.6%) were more than twice as likely as Republican women in same-gender elections (10.8%) to discuss masculine issues, $p < .01$. A follow-up independent sample t-test lent further support to this result: Republican women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .29$, $SD = .513$) were significantly more likely than Republican women in same-gender elections ($M = .12$, $SD = .363$) to discuss masculine issues, $t(6823) = 13.670$, $p < .001$. Notably, Republican women in mixed gender elections discussed the economy three times as much as their counterparts in same-gender

elections. Furthermore, candidates once again discussed masculine issues more than feminine issues regardless of party. The difference in discussion (masculine minus feminine) ranged from a 3.2% difference among Democratic women in mixed-gender elections to a nearly 20% difference among Republican women in mixed-gender elections. Overall, partisan women in mixed-gender elections discussed party-owned issues more than women in same-gender elections, and all of the women discussed masculine issues more than feminine issues.

Next, I focused on discussion of traits, continuing with a party-based logic. First, I predicted that in male-only elections, Democrats would discuss more feminine traits than Republicans, and Republicans would discuss more masculine traits than Democrats (H13a). Furthermore, in all-female elections, I predicted that Democrats would mention feminine traits more than Republicans, and Republicans would reference masculine traits more than Democrats (H13b). As before, I compared the percentages of men’s, then women’s, tweets containing traits, and then repeated this analysis for each sub-component (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9
Character Traits by Republicans and Democrats in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men (n = 1607)	Democratic Men (n = 684)	<i>p</i>	Republican Women (n = 5468)	Democratic Women (n = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Feminine	6.0%	8.0%	<.10	6.4%	3.4%	<.01
Compassionate	0.5%	0.4%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.7%	0.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Honest	4.4%	4.2%	<i>n.s.</i>	4.9%	1.3%	<.01
Congenial	0.5%	0.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.1%	0.0%	<i>n.s.</i>
Collaborate	0.7%	3.5%	<.01	0.8%	1.5%	<.05
Masculine	6.9%	8.3%	<i>n.s.</i>	8.2%	8.5%	<i>n.s.</i>
Leadership	1.7%	0.9%	<i>n.s.</i>	2.1%	1.2%	<.10
Strong	3.7%	4.4%	<i>n.s.</i>	3.7%	7.0%	<.01
Confident	0.4%	1.6%	<.01	0.8%	0.3%	<.10
Decisive	1.4%	1.6%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.8%	0.6%	<.01

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan men and women.

Data in the top line on the left side of Table 4.9 show, as predicted, that Democratic men (8%) were marginally more likely than Republican men (6%) to discuss feminine traits, $p < .10$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic men ($M = .08$, $SD = .287$) were significantly more likely than Republican men ($M = .06$, $SD = .245$) to discuss feminine traits, $t(2289) = -1.898$, $p < .05$. Once feminine traits were disaggregated, just one comparison was significant: Democratic men were significantly more likely than Republican men to emphasize collaboration. For masculine traits, there was not a predicted statistical difference between Republican men (6.9%) and Democratic men (8.3%). A t-test confirmed the lack of statistical significance for Republican men ($M = .07$, $SD = .267$) and Democratic men ($M = .08$, $SD = .284$), $t(2289) = -1.064$, *n.s.* The only difference that was significant was that Democratic men were more likely than Republican men to discuss being confident. Further, men in all-male elections, regardless of party, were slightly more likely to discuss masculine over feminine traits, but these differences were not significant. In sum, the only aggregate difference in all-male elections was that Democrats emphasized party-owned feminine traits more than Republicans—supporting the first part of H13a.

The right side of Table 4.9 shows results for women, and data indicate that both hypotheses were not supported. Specifically, in contrast to my prediction, Republican women (6.4%) were significantly more likely than Democratic women (3.4%) to emphasize feminine traits, $p < .01$. A follow-up independent sample t-test supported this result: Republican women ($M = .06$, $SD = .248$) were significantly more likely than Democratic women ($M = .04$, $SD = .189$) to discuss feminine traits, $t(6551) = 3.734$, $p < .001$. Once feminine traits were broken down, there were two significant findings: Republican women were more likely than Democratic women to emphasize honesty, and Democratic women were more likely than Republican women to

highlight collaboration. Thus, both sets of women had areas of particular emphasis on feminine traits, but Republican women were much higher in general.

For masculine traits, there was no significant difference between Republican women (8.2%) and Democratic women (8.5%) in the aggregate. This lack of difference was confirmed by an independent sample t-test: Republican women ($M=.08$, $SD=.286$) and Democratic women ($M=.09$, $SD=.308$) were equally likely to discuss masculine traits, $t(6551)=-.625$, *n.s.* Once disaggregated, Republican women were more likely than Democratic women to emphasize leadership, confidence, and decisiveness, whereas Democratic women were more likely than Republican women to discuss strength. Republican and Democratic women were also similar across partisan lines in their emphasis on masculine traits over feminine traits. Specifically, Republican women discussed masculine traits (8.2%) more than feminine traits (6.4%), and Democratic women discussed masculine traits (8.5%) more than feminine traits (3.4%), both significant at $p<.01$. Thus women, regardless of party, reinforced the privileging of masculinity in politics.

As with issues, I coded for the presence of other traits that did not fit feminine or masculine trait categories. Other traits, such as being smart or hardworking, were discussed in 4.5% of tweets—slightly higher than the 2.9% of tweets in mixed-gender elections. A comparison based on party showed a relatively equal emphasis between Republicans (4.4%) and Democrats (4.9%). The similarity in mentions continued when party and gender were taken into account: Democratic men (4.7%) were marginally more likely than Republican men (3.1%) to discuss other traits, $p<.10$, and there was no significant difference between Democratic women (5.1%) and Republican women (4.8%). Overall, these findings suggest that the incorporation of other traits was relatively similar regardless of party and gender.

Turning to a comparison of electoral context, I predicted that Democratic women in women-only elections would discuss feminine traits more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (H14a), and Republican women in women-only elections would discuss masculine traits more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections (H14b). Table 4.10 presents the percentages for each aggregate set of issues, and their sub-components.

Table 4.10
Character Traits by Republican and Democratic Women, by Electoral Context

	Republican Women			Democratic Women		
	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1357)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 5468)	<i>p</i>	Mixed-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1163)	Same-Gender (<i>n</i> = 1085)	<i>p</i>
Feminine	5.5%	6.4%	<i>n.s.</i>	5.6%	3.4%	<.05
Compassionate	0.6%	0.7%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.4%	0.7%	<i>n.s.</i>
Honest	4.3%	4.9%	<i>n.s.</i>	3.8%	1.3%	<.01
Congenial	0.2%	0.1%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.6%	0.0%	<.05
Collaborate	0.4%	0.8%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.9%	1.5%	<i>n.s.</i>
Masculine	4.3%	8.2%	<.01	14.5%	8.5%	<.01
Leadership	1.3%	2.1%	<.10	1.1%	1.2%	<i>n.s.</i>
Strong	2.1%	3.7%	<.01	11.0%	7.0%	<.01
Confident	0.7%	0.8%	<i>n.s.</i>	0.0%	0.3%	<.10
Decisive	0.7%	1.8%	<.01	3.0%	0.6%	<.01

Note: *p* Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan women.

Data in Table 4.10 show support for hypothesis 14b: The bottom left quadrant shows, as predicted, that Republican women in same-gender elections (8.2%) were nearly twice as likely as Republican women in mixed-gender elections (4.3%) to emphasize party-owned masculine traits, $p < .01$. An independent sample t-test supported this result: Republican women in same-gender elections ($M = .08$, $SD = .286$) were significantly more likely than their counterparts in mixed-gender elections ($M = .05$, $SD = .238$) to discuss masculine traits, $t(6823) = -4.249$, $p < .001$. In particular, Republican women in same-gender elections were significantly more likely than Republican women in mixed-gender elections to discuss leadership, strength, and decisiveness.

However, the upper right quadrant shows that Democratic women in same-gender elections did not up the ante on feminine traits. Rather, Democratic women in mixed-gender elections (5.6%) were significantly more likely than Democratic women in same-gender elections (3.4%) to emphasize feminine traits, $p < .05$. A follow-up independent sample t-test supported this result: Democratic women in mixed-gender elections ($M = .06$, $SD = .235$) were more likely than partisan counterparts in same-gender elections ($M = .04$, $SD = .189$) to discuss feminine traits, $t(2246) = 2.405$, $p < .01$. Finally, masculine trait discussion trumped feminine trait discussion in three of four comparisons. The only set of women to emphasize feminine traits over masculine traits was Republican women in mixed-gender elections. That said, this difference was not statistically significant. Thus, overall, masculine traits comprised more of the market share of trait discussion than feminine traits.

Lastly, I analyzed whether candidates incorporated feature variables in their tweets. Across the all-male campaigns, the most employed feature variable was links (present in 76.9% of tweets), followed by audio/visual (32.6%), then emoticons/emojis (0%). For all-female campaigns, the trend was the same: links were first (52.5%), then audio/visual (15%), followed by emoticons/emojis (1.4%). Based on these percentages, men were more likely than women to include links and audio/visuals, whereas women were more likely than men to include emoticons/emojis. I then broke down these comparisons based on party and gender (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11
Feature Variables by Candidate in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men ($n = 1607$)	Democratic Men ($n = 684$)	p	Republican Women ($n = 5468$)	Democratic Women ($n = 1085$)	p
Links	74.5%	82.5%	<.01	50.3%	64.0%	<.01
Audio/Visual	28.3%	43.0%	<.01	14.1%	19.4%	<.01
Emoticons	0.0%	0.0%	<i>n.s.</i>	1.6%	0.5%	<.01

Note: p Values based on difference of proportions test comparing percentages for partisan men and women.

There was one notable finding in Table 4.11: Democrats were more likely than Republicans to include links and audio/visuals. Specifically, Democratic men (82.5%) were significantly more likely than Republican men (74.5%) to include links, and Democratic men (43%) were significantly more likely than Republican men (28.3%) to include audio/visuals, both significant at $p < .01$. Similarly, Democratic women (64%) were significantly more likely than Republican women (50.3%) to include links, and Democratic women (19.4%) were significantly more likely than Republican women (14.1%) to include audio/visuals, both significant at $p < .01$. Across links and audio/visuals, Democratic men came in first and Republican women came in last both times. There was only one instance in which Republicans engaged in more feature variables. This occurred when Republican women (1.6%) were more likely than Democratic women (.5%) to include emoticons/emojis, $p < .01$. Across the all-female campaigns, there were 92 tweets that included an emoticon/emoji. Linda Lingle of Hawaii tweeted over a third of those with 34 tweets. For example, she tweeted: “.@Linda_Lingle just checked in at Costco Hawaii Kai. Does @Foursquare have a Senator title? :-) #SMCHI.” Overall, Democratic men and women outpaced their counterparts in adding paracommunicational content to their self-presentations.

Some summary seems useful at this point. Overall, there were 16 hypotheses featured in Chapter Four analysis. Of those, eight were supported. For *interactivity*, Democrats in all-male and all-female elections were expected to be more interactive than Republicans, but the opposite was found. That said, two hypotheses were supported for this concept: Women of both parties in same-gender elections were more interactive than those in mixed-gender elections. The trend was reversed, however, for *personalization*. As predicted, Democrats in all-male and all-female elections were more personal than Republicans, but in contrast to predictions women of both

parties in mixed-gender elections were more personal than women in same-gender elections. Thus, women in same-gender elections upped the ante on interactivity, but not personalization.

For *political issues*, there was partial support for hypotheses concerning same-gender elections. Specifically, I expected Democrats to talk more about feminine issues and Republicans to talk more about masculine issues. I found that Republican men, as predicted, emphasized masculine issues more than Democratic men, but Democratic men did not discuss feminine issues more than Republican men. For women, Democratic women, as predicted, discussed feminine issues more than Republican women, but Republican women did not emphasize masculine issues more than Democratic women. Therefore, Republican men and Democratic women were the candidates that emphasized party-owned issues more than their same-gender competitors. When comparing women in same-gender and mixed-gender elections, neither hypothesis was supported. Democratic women in same-gender elections did not emphasize feminine issues more than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections, and Republican women in same-gender elections did not focus on masculine issues more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections. Rather, women in mixed-gender elections talked more than women in same-gender elections about party-owned issues.

For *character traits*, there was also partial support for some hypotheses. In same-gender elections I expected Democrats to emphasize feminine traits and Republicans to focus more on masculine traits. I found that Democratic men, as predicted, discussed feminine traits more than Republican men, but Republican men were not more likely than Democratic men to discuss masculine traits. For women, Democratic women did not discuss feminine traits more than Republican women, and Republican women did not discuss masculine traits more than Democratic women. Only one hypothesis, then, was supported: Democratic men discussed party-

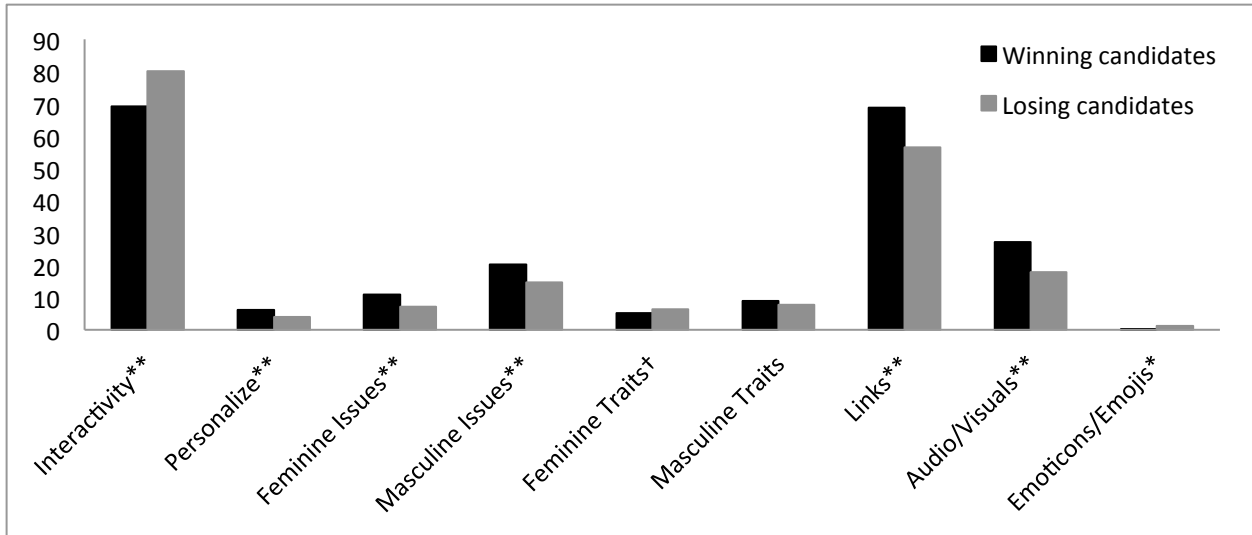
owned traits more than Republican men. When comparing electoral contexts for women, one hypothesis was supported: Republican women in same-gender elections were more likely to discuss masculine traits than Republican women in mixed-gender elections. Thus Republican women in same-gender elections elevated their party-owned trait discussion as compared to Republican women running against men. This party-based pattern was not the case for Democratic women: those in same-gender elections were not more likely than ones in mixed-gender elections to discuss feminine traits. Ultimately, these results showed that the electoral world of same-gender elections was complex, and that these six races both aligned with and deviated from expectations at the intersection of gender and party.

Additional Analysis

As a final set of analysis for this chapter I examined two components: the self-presentation styles of winning and losing electoral candidates, and opponent mentions in relation to gender, party, and victory by candidates. Notably, it is the case that among women, only Democrats won same-gender elections. In turn, the results of hypotheses among women already tell us much about the kinds of Twitter communication by winning and losing candidates. But we have not yet combined male and female candidates in analysis of their Twitter communications. The first step was to assess the impression a candidate gives and also gives off. I therefore examined the percentage of tweets containing each content and feature variable, comparing winning and losing candidates regardless of party or gender (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10

Content and Feature Variable Percentages by Candidates in Same-Gender Elections



† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

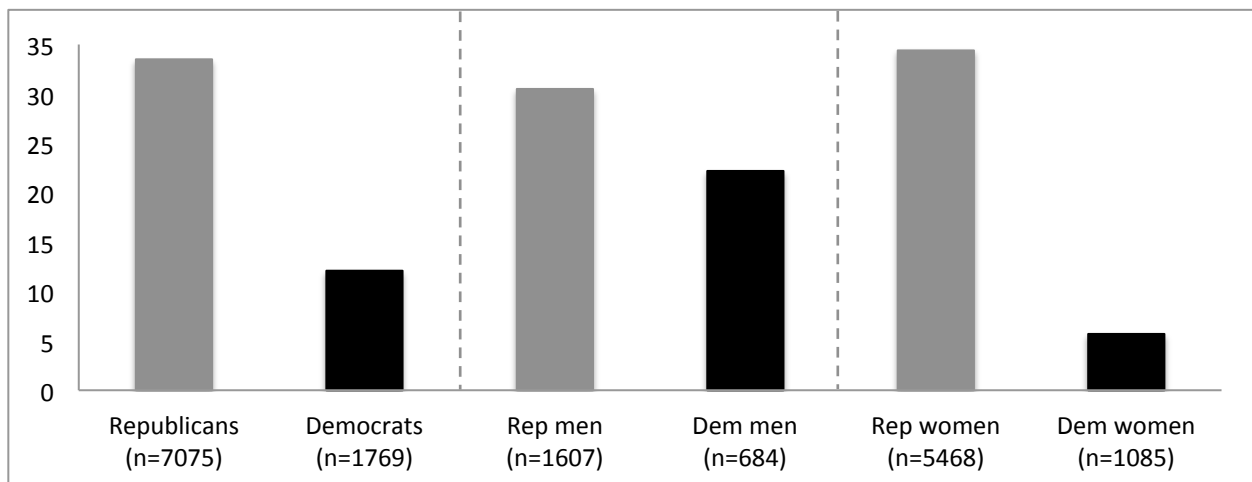
Note: Winning candidates $n = 1599$; Losing candidates $n = 7245$; p Values based on difference of proportions test.

Two patterns emerged in Figure 4.10. First, winning candidates tweeted *much* less than losing candidates. Winning candidates tweeted 1,599 times, compared to 7,245 tweets by losing candidates. In other words, losing candidates tweeted over four and a half times as often as winning candidates. Second, when looking at the percentages within tweets, winning candidates' tweets included a greater percentage of content or feature variables in six of nine comparisons. Specifically, winning candidates were more likely to personalize their tweets, emphasize feminine and masculine issues, focus on masculine traits, and include links and audio/visuals. Each of these comparisons, with the exception of masculine traits, was significant at the $p < .01$ level. Losing candidates, on the other hand, were more likely than winning candidates to be interactive ($p < .01$), to highlight feminine traits ($p < .10$), and to include emoticons/emojis ($p < .05$). A possible pattern emerges in these data: winning candidates tweeted less in volume and when they did so they combined both masculine and feminine elements, whereas losing candidates tweeted more in volume and tended to emphasize more feminine areas of ownership like

interactivity and feminine traits. These results, combined with earlier findings by party and gender, are discussed at length in the next section.

Finally, I ended the chapter’s analysis with an examination of opponent mentions—when a candidate referenced their opponent in a tweet. Opponent-centric tweets often took the form of attack tweets in which a candidate critiqued, rebuked, or questioned their opponent or the veracity of their claims. As a first step, frequency analysis indicated that approximately 29% of same-gender election tweets included an opponent mention; it had been 25% in mixed-gender elections. I then compared the percentages between men and women in same-gender elections, and found that men (28%) and women (29.6%) were just about equally likely to mention their opponent. Thus, there was no significant difference based on gender alone. Given the focus of this chapter on the intersection of gender and party, I then compared percentages across party, and then by party and gender (Figure 4.11). Note, gray bars represent Republicans, and black bars represent Democrats.

Figure 4.11
Opponent Mention Percentages by Party and by Candidates in Same-Gender Elections



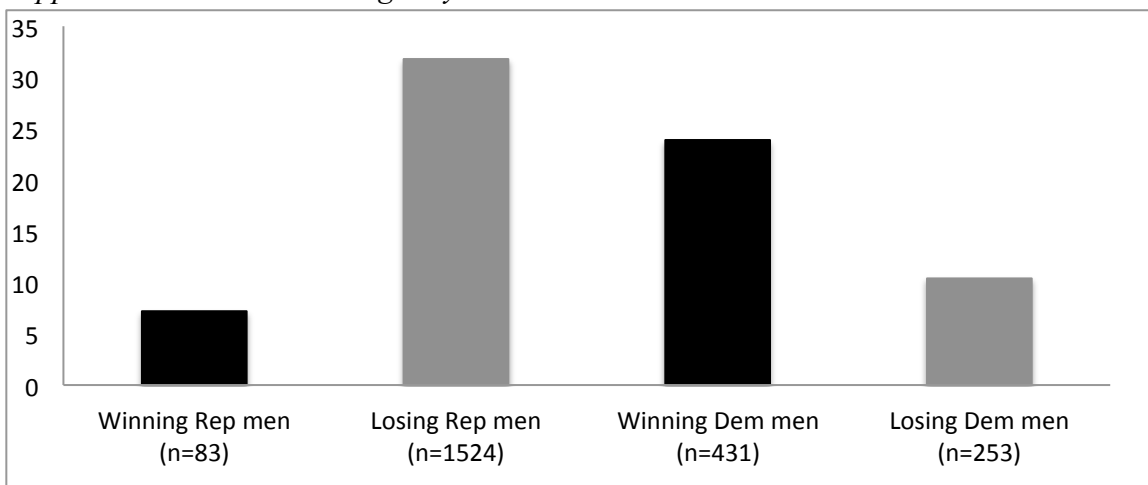
Note: Difference of proportions tests indicate each comparison was significant at $p < .01$.

Data in Figure 4.11 show a party-based trend. Specifically, starting with the left two bars,

we see that Republicans (33.5%) were significantly more likely than Democrats (12.1%) to reference their opponent, $p < .01$. This pattern continued once gender was factored in. The two center bars show that Republican men (30.5%) were more likely than Democratic men (22.2%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$, and the two bars on the right show that Republican women (34.4%) were six times as likely as Democratic women (5.7%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. Overall, these comparisons suggest that at least in these same-gender elections, mentioning one's opponent was a strategy employed far more often by Republicans.

Next, I compared percentages for winning and losing candidates on opponent mentions. Losing candidates (33.3%) were significantly more likely than winning candidates (10.7%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. I then compared winning and losing candidates across party and gender. For women, all of the winning women were Democrats—and as Figure 4.11 showed, Republican women were far more likely than Democratic women to mention their opponent. Thus, as was found in the aggregate comparison, losing women were more likely to mention their opponent than winning women. For men, the percentages of opponent mentions across party and gender are in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12
Opponent Mention Percentages by Candidates in All-Male Elections



Note: According to difference of proportions test, each comparison was significant at $p < .01$.

Losing Republican men (31.8%) were over four times as likely as winning Republican men (7.2%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. Thus for Republican men and all of the women—who were all Republican in this case—electoral losers were more likely to mention their opponent than winners. Conversely, winning Democratic men (23.9%) were more likely than losing Democratic men (10.4%) to mention their opponent, $p < .01$. With all of these findings in mind, mentioning one's opponent more often was associated with a loss for Republican women and men, and a win for Democratic men.

Discussion

This chapter presented results for a content analysis of six same-gender elections during the 2012 Senate election cycle. Specifically, I analyzed Twitter feeds for three all-male and three all-female elections to examine the intersection of party and gender in candidates' self-presentations. Alignment of party and gender is particularly interesting in U.S. politics because conceptions of femininity and perceptions of Democrats tend to align, and conceptions of masculinity and perceptions of Republicans tend to overlap. The overarching argument of the chapter was that because gender is not a key distinction for candidates in same-gender elections, in such contexts both men and women candidates would predominantly align with their political party's ownerships of interactivity, personalization, political issues, and character traits to create electable personas. For some candidates, this meant there was consistent alignment between party and gender—for Democratic women and Republican men—while for others there was conflict—Democratic men and Republican women. To gain another vantage point on these alignments, I also compared partisan women in same-gender elections to those in mixed-gender elections, who had been the focus of Chapter Three. What I found in this chapter's analysis was ultimately a complex web of party and gender alignment, as well as party and gender trespassing.

I discuss in this section the pattern of results.

First, distinct electoral settings produced distinct daily tweeting patterns. When data were assessed across same-gender and mixed-gender elections, I found that all-male and all-female elections had more in common with each other than with mixed-gender elections in the daily frequencies of tweeting. There were three notable patterns. First, candidates in mixed-gender elections increased their Twitter activity on days surrounding debates and Election Day, but this pattern was present for only two of the six same-gender elections. Second, candidates in mixed-gender elections ramped up their activity as the general election wore on, but candidates in same-gender elections had peaks of activity throughout the general election, including summer months. Third, in their Twitter activity all of the candidates in mixed-gender elections had positive correlations with significance levels of at least $p < .05$, but among same-gender elections one exhibited a marginally significant correlation in candidates' Twitter activity and two showed no correlation at all. Overall, the daily campaign Twitter touches in same-gender elections differed greatly from those in mixed-gender elections, suggesting distinct campaign styles based on electoral contexts.

I suspect that the first two of these identified patterns contributed to the third one. That is, without parallel activity around specific dates like debates and Election Day, and without a steady build in activity linking these crucial days together, candidates in same-gender elections acted in more disassociated ways, riding the ebbs and flows of *individual campaigns* rather than a *shared election* communications rhythm. This pattern was particularly present for women in same-gender elections. In two of the three same-gender elections, debate days played a small role. In particular, one election only had one debate, and another election did not have any debates. It is plausible that women in these unique electoral settings strive to get out in front of their

competitors and the news media to control the narrative and carve out their own distinct self-presentations, and that these efforts, when not grounded by unified election dates, create little rhythm between opponents in terms of tweet frequency. In other words, if the discourse has a tendency to lean toward cat fights and best-selling erotica, perhaps women more fully take the reins of self-presentations to maneuver these tricky waters. One important outcome of such an approach might be a marching to their own communications drum.

Second, for interactivity and personalization, it was a tale of opposites. For example, I found that, contrary to my predictions, in same-gender elections Republican women and men were more interactive than their Democratic counterparts. Thus Republicans, who typically align with masculinity, took on a more typically feminine style of interactivity. But then this pattern was reversed for personalization. Here I found, as predicted, that Democratic women and men were more personal—the approach considered more typically feminine—in their Twitter feeds than Republican women and men. Therefore, Republicans were more engaging in terms of reaching out and connecting with others, whereas Democrats were more integrative of personal aspects of their lives in their Twitter campaigns. Furthermore, comparison of women in same-gender and mixed-gender elections showed fulfillment of and no support for my hypotheses. In particular, I predicted that women in same-gender elections would be more interactive and personal than women in mixed-gender elections because candidates in all-female elections are facing off against someone who also owns the feminine styles of higher interactivity and personalization. For interactivity, this was the case. For personalization, it was not. Overall, then, Republicans and women in same-gender elections were more interactive, and Democrats and women in mixed-gender elections were more personal. These findings support and conflict with expectations, and may suggest that in addition to the intersection of gender, party, and electoral

setting, that the communicative space itself, Twitter, also demands certain styling from candidates. For example, Republicans may not typically be associated with interactivity, but perhaps in a space that enables such connection, Republicans may find themselves adopting differing communication strategies to keep pace with Democrats and the medium.

Third, candidates' discussion on Twitter of political issues and character traits also presented a nuanced story. For issues, I predicted that Democrats would emphasize feminine issues more than Republicans in their Twitter communications. Among women this expectation was borne out, but among men there was no significant difference. For masculine issues, I predicted that Republicans would focus on such issues more than Democrats. This time, the expectation was supported among men, but among women Republicans did not discuss masculine issues more than Democrats. Therefore, Democratic women and Republican men were more likely to talk about party-owned issues than Democratic men and Republican women. In comparing women in same-gender elections to those in mixed-gender elections, neither of two hypotheses was supported. Namely, Democratic women in same-gender elections were not more likely than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections to talk about feminine issues, and Republican women in same-gender elections were not more likely than Republican women in mixed-gender elections to talk about masculine issues. Instead, partisan women in mixed-gender elections emphasized party-owned issues more than women in same-gender elections.

For traits, I also expected that Democrats would emphasize feminine traits the most and Republicans would emphasize masculine traits the most. This expectation was partially supported. First, Democratic men did discuss feminine traits more than Republican men, but Democratic women did not discuss feminine traits more than Republican women. For masculine traits, Republican women and men were not more likely than Democratic women and men to

discuss these traits. Therefore, Democratic men aligned with party on traits, but Democratic women, Republican men, and Republican women did not. Second, I predicted that Democratic and Republican women in same-gender elections would discuss party-owned traits more than women in mixed-gender elections. Again, this prediction was partially supported. Republican women in same-gender elections did emphasize masculine traits more than their counterparts in mixed-gender elections. This was not so for Democratic women: those in same-gender elections did not discuss party-owned traits more than ones in mixed-gender elections. Thus, Republican women showed a stronger attachment to masculine traits in same-gender elections and a weaker attachment in mixed-gender elections where their male competitors also owned masculinity. For Democrats the stronger attachment was in mixed-gender elections, perhaps because their competitor had no claim to feminine traits since they were Republican *and* men.

The results in this chapter ultimately indicate that success for partisan women and men in same-gender elections aligned with party congruence in some instances and in party trespassing in others. At the crossroads of gender and party in same-gender elections, self-presentations were not consistently cleaved to one facet of ownership or another, and presented two notable trends across areas of ownership. First, aligning with ownership to some extent matters. In particular, three of the four types of candidates did predominantly focus on one aspect of party ownership. Specifically, Democratic women emphasized *feminine* issues more than Republican women, Republican men focused on *masculine* issues more than Democratic men, and Democratic men discussed *feminine* traits more than Republican men. Therefore each of them staked a claim on a party-owned electoral element. The only ones who did not do so were Republican women, and in the three elections analyzed, all of those women lost. Thus, it may be that *some* ownership, not *full* ownership, is enough to meet voter expectations in same-gender elections.

Second, trespassing ownership also matters on two levels: in certain election cycles and in general. First, at the level of the individual election cycle, trespassing may be necessary due to the issues of import on the current political agenda, or because some issues may act as more effective ammunition than others. For the former, one could imagine that candidates would be willing to forego some ownership to address the issues that dominate that particular election cycle. For example, if the country appears to be on the verge of war, Democrats may trespass ownership to ensure that they are discussing this matter, even though Republicans generally own national security and defense. For the latter, issues shrouded in controversy may also prompt some trespassing. For example, the Affordable Care Act in 2012 spurred a great deal of debate, and escalated to the level of requiring the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on its constitutionality. Democrats generally own health care—suggesting that they would have an advantage in such issue discussions over Republicans. However, due perhaps to the controversy of the topic, I found that Republicans routinely discussed ACA, or “Obamacare” as they typically framed it, and claimed it was a threat to individual and religious rights as well as a threat to businesses and their economic viability. It is possible that negatively framing an unowned issue was a way to draw in fellow Republicans. As such, trespassing on the health care issue in 2012 may have been a party-oriented strategy that served to unite partisan voters. Second, at a general level, some trespassing may actually be a stock part of politics. For example, there were no significant differences between partisan women or between partisan men regarding masculine traits. Thus it is possible that all candidates, when in the context of masculinized politics, feel equally compelled to emphasize traits such as strength and toughness, regardless of party or gender. Masculine traits certainly seem like a near-universal requirement in American politics, prompting candidates to carve out images that are not only tough enough for the world of politics,

but also images of being willing to stand up for and fight for their constituency when politics get volatile. The lure of this potentially universal expectation may almost demand a certain degree of trespassing in any electoral context or election cycle. Overall, then, several factors may shape and influence candidates' motivation to conform and conflict with party ownership in their self-presentations.

This chapter's and Chapter Three's examinations of women and men have sought to analyze what makes for an electable online self-presentation, knowing all the while that elections are complex and comprised of many aspects beyond the scope of a content analysis. Therefore a next important step is to isolate some of these factors, starting with a key one, and examine its impact on electability in these electoral settings. The next chapter does exactly this with an experiment that focuses on the effects of personalization.

Chapter Five

Effects of Personalization in Politics

Politics in America has long emphasized personal characteristics of candidates. Initially, when television brought politics into the home, many worried that the candidate evaluative process would become too personality-focused (cf. Druckman, 2003; Hayes, 2009; McLeod et al., 1983; Ottati & Deiger, 2002). Later, as women started running for office in increasing numbers, news coverage disproportionately focused on women's personalities and personal lives (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Bystrom, 1999; Devitt, 1999). Such coverage associated women with the domestic, personal sphere instead of the public domain. However, more recent scholarship has shown that when candidates *themselves* go personal, it can be politically valuable (e.g., Lee & Oh, 2012; Warnick et al., 2005). Twitter offers candidates a new communicative space for showcasing a more personal side. Data in Chapters Three and Four show that personalization via Twitter was common in 2012 U.S. Senate elections, occurring across a range of electoral settings and topics. For example, Scott Brown in Massachusetts tweeted a picture of his family—the human and furry kind—and said: “Got back on the bus to warm up - they thought it was a good idea too. #masen.” In Nebraska Bob Kerrey kept it short and sweet with: “Remains of the day” that featured a photo of an empty Dairy Queen Blizzard cup. Kirsten Gillibrand in New York posed with her family and sent holiday greetings: “Enjoying time with the boys today. From my family to yours, wishing you a happy & safe #4thofJuly!” And Richard Carmona in Arizona tied his own history to an issue: “Thanks to the GI Bill, Rich Carmona graduated medical school \$12,000 in debt. The average medical school debt today \$160,000. #CarmonaFacts” (Figure 5.1). Political issues, family photos, football, recipes, and even pig wrestling contests—nothing seemed to be off limits when it came to personalization. The question now is whether personalization on

Twitter makes an electoral impact.



Figure 5.1
Left, Scott Brown and family; Right, Kirsten Gillibrand and family.

The potential effects of these personalized tweets are the core focus of Chapter Five. In this chapter I offer and test the perspective that personalized self-presentations spur positive impressions of a candidate because they break down the wall between the private and public selves of candidates, and create a sense of connection with citizens. To assess the impact of personalization I conducted an experiment that examined people's perceptions when they were exposed to a set of personalized versus depersonalized tweets. And in keeping with Chapters Three and Four, I examined these impressions across each candidate's gender and political party affiliation. For this research, 843 adults participating in an online survey were randomly assigned to read one of eight simulated Twitter feeds, and those feeds featured (a) a series of personalized or depersonalized tweets (b) from a man or woman candidate (c) who was a Republican or Democrat. Participants then completed a questionnaire assessing perceptions of the candidate's issue competency and trait portrayal, personal attitudes toward vote intention for the candidate, parasocial interaction, and social presence. Overall, this chapter focuses on whether candidates who adopt and implement personalized self-presentations on Twitter benefit and improve their

standing with voters.

Expectations for Personalization and Self-Presentations

I had several expectations and research questions regarding how personalization would impact public perceptions of partisan men and women candidates. Personalization can be part of how a candidate constructs their self-presentation and potentially creates a more stimulating environment for certain psychological effects. First, for self-presentations, personalization enables candidates to distinguish between themselves and competitors, and adds a sense of authenticity to campaigns by breaking down the barrier between their private and public selves—a dynamic that is appealing to voters (Louden & McCauliff, 2004). Personalization facilitates these tactics because it affords candidates the ability to reveal pieces of themselves or connect content to some aspect of their identities. By personalizing messages, candidates have the chance to emphasize elements that are not shared by their competitor. Furthermore, this reveal may also lead citizens to believe that they are seeing a more private, authentic view of the candidate beyond the smoke and mirrors of the campaign. For example, when a candidate tweets a personal photo at their child's wedding, it adds a personal dimension to the candidate beyond their campaign platform. And when a candidate ties some aspect of their life to a political issue, it may ring more genuine for people. Issues can often be abstract tug-o-wars over numbers and budgets, but by tying campaign concerns to people—in this case, to a candidate—personalization grounds the issues in something more tangible: personal experiences. Therefore whether the personalization humanizes the candidate or an issue, it ultimately may bring more depth and impact to the campaign.

Second, candidate personalization may trigger certain psychological reactions among citizens that could aid campaigns. Specifically, personalized self-presentations may prompt

greater levels of parasocial interaction and social presence. Parasocial interaction is a one-way, nonreciprocal, pseudo relationship that audiences form with a mediated personality (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Lee & Oh, 2012). Parasocial relationships are sometimes called “intimacy at a distance” because people feel like they know the mediated person despite never meeting them (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215). Part of why people may be able to form a parasocial relationship with a mediated person may be because of heightened social presence. Social presence is the extent to which virtual communication simulates face-to-face interactions, and prompts people to feel like they are “there” with a person despite the mediated space (Biocca & Nowak, 2001; Nowak & Biocca, 2003). Since much of today’s campaigning takes place via mediated politics, overcoming such barriers and connecting with citizens via a pseudo relationship seems valuable for candidates. And indeed, Lee and Oh (2012) found that when a politician tweeted in more personal terms, it heightened participants’ perceptions of social presence and parasocial interaction, and also positively impacted their vote intention toward the politician. Overall, then, personalized self-presentations seem to generate a range of potentially positive outcomes for candidates among citizens.

With this in mind, I predicted that people exposed to personalized tweets would report higher levels of social presence (H15a), parasocial interaction (H15b), and vote intention for the candidate (H15c) than those who were exposed to depersonalized tweets. In addition to these concepts, I also wanted to examine the effects of personalization on the public’s perceptions of the candidate’s ability to handle political issues and embody character traits—thereby connecting factors from Chapters Three and Four. Previous research has found that personalization can spur greater issue recall and accuracy, as well as trigger a liking heuristic for candidates (e.g., Han, 2008; Lee & Oh, 2012; Warnick et al., 2005). This work, however, has not examined issue

competency or other traits that were included in this dissertation's content analyses. Therefore I posed RQ1: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets by candidates impact voters' perceptions of candidates on issue competency and trait portrayal?

My experimental design also sought to examine the effects of personalized self-presentations based on the gender and political party identification of candidates. This examination included a number of expectations. I began with gender. In Chapter One, I presented scholarship showing that a more feminine communication style is considered more personal, whereas a more masculine style is typically perceived as more impersonal (e.g., Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Jamieson, 1988; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). I predicted that since women typically implement a more feminine style that they would include more personalization than men in their tweets. Analysis in Chapter Three showed that this expectation was fulfilled: Female candidates were significantly more likely than male candidates to include personalization. Women in these mixed-gender elections were meeting social and political expectations, which would suggest that they would reap the rewards from citizens when they personalized their communication. However, meeting expectations is only part of the equation. American politics is still dominated by a preference for male politicians, as evidenced by the historic and current overwhelming majority of men in elected offices from state legislatures to the U.S. presidency. Such a preference may offset the benefits of women meeting personalization expectations. Thus I posed RQ2: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of male and female candidates regarding social presence, parasocial interaction, vote intention, issue competency, and trait portrayal?

Expectations of how a candidate's political party affiliation might intersect with personalization were slightly less conflicted. As noted, Democratic and feminine styles overlap,

and Republican and masculine styles align, suggesting that citizens would expect Democrats to be more personal than Republicans and may have more positive evaluations of Democrats for meeting this expectation. With this in mind, I predicted that people exposed to personalized tweets by a Democrat would report higher levels of social presence (H16a), parasocial interaction (H16b), and vote intention for the candidate (H16c) than people exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican. This party-based prediction was not mitigated like gender because there is no general bias toward Democrats or Republicans. From state legislatures to gubernatorial offices to the U.S. Congress and presidency, modern American politics has had a range of Democratic and Republican majorities. That said, perceptions of party ownerships of certain issues and traits complicate how personalization may intersect with issue competency and trait portrayal. Thus to explore this potentially nuanced dynamic, I put forth RQ3: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of Republican and Democratic candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal?

Finally, I explored effects of personalization based on the combination of gender *and* political party. In Chapter One I discussed how Democratic women own personalization via both gender and party, whereas Republican women own personalization only via gender. Further, among men, Democrats own personalization via party while Republicans have no ownership-based claim to personalization. With this in mind, I predicted that Democratic women and men would include more personalization than Republican women and men in Twitter communication. Chapter Four analyses found this to be so: Democratic women included more personalization than Republican women, and Democratic men emphasized personalization more than Republican men. These findings and the intertwining of gender- and party-based ownership expectations among voters prompted the following prediction for this chapter's experiment: People exposed to

personalized tweets by a Democratic candidate—female or male—would report higher levels of social presence (H17a), parasocial interaction (H17b), and vote intention for the candidate (H17c) than those who were exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican, female or male. Such benefits from personalization are less clear for issue competency and trait portrayal since partisan women and men are seen as owning different issues and traits. Thus, I posed RQ 4: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters’ perceptions of Republican and Democratic female candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal? And lastly, RQ5: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters’ perceptions of Republican and Democratic male candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal?

Hypotheses and research questions were explored by employing a 2 x 2 x 2 experimental design with a large population of U.S. adults ($N=843$). The method, measures, subjects and demographics were described in Chapter Two, but recall that participants were randomly assigned to one of eight treatment groups (Table 5.1). The stimuli are available in Appendix B.

Table 5.1
Number of Participants in Experiment Treatment Groups

Content of Tweets	Women Candidates		Men Candidates	
	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat
Personalized	110	90	105	109
Depersonalized	104	95	125	105

After reading introductory text that featured the gender (Sarah or Steve Adams) and political party identification of the Senate candidate (Republican or Democrat), participants then read a series of personalized or depersonalized tweets. For example, the following was a personalized tweet: “As a proud [mom/dad] & PTA member, I’m honored to have the American Federation of Teachers endorsement. #Edu4OurKids,” and the following was a depersonalized version of that tweet that focused on the same general topic: “As a proud candidate for Congress, it’s an honor

to have the American Federation of Teachers endorsement. #Edu4All.” After encountering the tweets, participants were asked a series of questions. The first five sections of questions assessed participants’ level of agreement with the following: perceptions of the candidate’s *issue competency* and *trait portrayal* for masculine and feminine issues and traits, and their sense of *social presence*, *parasocial interaction*, and *vote intention* toward the candidate. Participants were then asked three more sets of questions: a manipulation check, social media use, and general demographics. All relevant questions are available in full in Appendix B.

In the following pages I present findings from this experimental study. Specifically, I first present the manipulation check for the experiment and the reliability coefficients for my concepts of interest to provide a backdrop for the data. Then, I address the hypotheses and research questions. The data will show, in general, that personalization in tweets was beneficial for candidates. Finally, I present some additional analyses beyond the expectations and research questions that provide further insight into how personalization can abet candidate’s electability.

Overview of the Data

As a first step, I examined two pieces of data for a manipulation check to ensure that the tweets were perceived as intended. First, I asked participants how they would evaluate Adams’s tweets based on two seven-point, semantic differential scales that contained non-intimate/intimate ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.657$) and impersonal/personal ($M=4.16$, $SD=1.700$) as the semantic anchors. These items were adapted from Lee and Oh (2012). I expected that participants receiving personalized tweets would be more likely than those who received depersonalized tweets to rate Adams’s tweets as more intimate and more personal. Independent sample t-tests showed this expectation was met. Specifically, those exposed to the personalized tweets ($M=4.11$, $SD=1.700$) were significantly more likely than those exposed to the

depersonalized tweets ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.584$) to say they were intimate, $t(811)=4.154$, $p<.001$. Similarly, those exposed to the personalized tweets ($M=4.48$, $SD=1.705$) were significantly more likely than those exposed to the depersonalized tweets ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.639$) to say they were personal, $t(809)=5.354$, $p<.001$. Overall, then, the manipulation of personalized versus depersonalized content appeared to function as expected.

For the next step, I assessed the reliability for the evaluative measures. Issue competency and trait portrayal were both divided into masculine and feminine elements. To measure issue competency, I asked participants, “How capable do you think candidate Adams is in handling the following political issues?” Participants were provided five-point, Likert-type scales ranging from “not at all” (1) to “extremely” (5). Masculine issues were Economy ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.059$), Crime ($M=2.35$, $SD=.982$), Taxes ($M=2.74$, $SD=1.073$), and National Security ($M=2.35$, $SD=1.005$). Based on these four measures, I created a composite variable for *masculine issue competency* ($\alpha = .892$). Feminine issues were Health Care ($M=2.83$, $SD=1.043$), Education ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.057$), Women’s Issues, e.g., equal pay, abortion, maternity leave ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.081$), and Environment ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.028$). Based on these four measures, I created a composite variable for *feminine issue competency* ($\alpha = .883$). Next, for trait portrayal, participants were asked, “To what extent do you think candidate Adams portrays the following character traits?” Masculine traits were Strength ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.043$), Leadership ($M=2.96$, $SD=1.077$), Decisiveness ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.078$), and Confidence ($M=3.37$, $SD=1.091$). Based on these four measures, I created a composite variable for *masculine trait portrayal* ($\alpha = .917$). Feminine traits were Compassion ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.105$), Collaboration ($M=2.79$, $SD=.998$), Honesty ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.069$), and Friendliness ($M=3.39$, $SD=1.038$). Based on these four measures, I created a composite variable for *feminine trait portrayal* ($\alpha = .894$).

Next, to measure participants' feelings of social presence via the tweets, I adapted four items from Nowak and Biocca (2003) and Lee and Oh (2012). Specifically, I asked participants to what extent they agreed with four statements, and then provided seven-point, Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The statements were the following: "I felt as if I were engaging in an actual conversation with the candidate" ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.595$), "I felt like I was in the same room with the candidate" ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.576$), "I felt as if the candidate was speaking directly to me" ($M=3.05$, $SD=1.663$), and "I felt like I could get to know the candidate through Twitter" ($M=3.09$, $SD=1.718$). Based on these four measures, I created a composite variable for *social presence* ($\alpha = .940$).

To measure participants' sense of a parasocial relationship with the candidate, I adapted six items from Thornson and Rogers (2006) with the same seven-point, Likert scales. The statements were: "The tweets showed me what the candidate is like" ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.655$), "The candidate made me feel comfortable, as if I were with a friend" ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.577$), "The candidate seemed to understand the kinds of things I want to know" ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.614$), "I would tell my friends about this candidate" ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.629$), "I can trust the information I get from this candidate" ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.430$), and "I found myself comparing my ideas with what the candidate said" ($M=4.51$, $SD=1.624$). Based on these six measures, I created a composite variable for *parasocial interaction* ($\alpha = .918$).

Finally, to measure vote intention toward the candidate, I adapted two items from Lee and Oh (2012) with the same seven-point, Likert scales to determine agreement with the following statements: "I would like this candidate to run in the next election" ($M=3.85$, $SD=1.595$) and "I would vote for this candidate if they ran in the next election" ($M=3.57$, $SD=1.569$). Based on these two measures, I created a composite variable for *vote intention* (α

= .937, $r = .882$, $p < .001$). Overall, all of the composite variables showed high reliability coefficients, providing a strong foundation upon which to explore the effects of personalization.¹

Tests of Hypotheses and Examination of Research Questions

I now present the tests of the hypotheses and the analyses related to the research questions. The initial set of hypotheses focused broadly on the effects of personalization, and predicted that people exposed to personalized tweets would report higher levels of social presence (H15a), parasocial interaction (H15b), and vote intention for the candidate (H15c) than those exposed to depersonalized tweets. To test these hypotheses, I ran a series of independent sample t-tests to compare those exposed to personalized and depersonalized tweets, regardless of candidate gender or party affiliation (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
Perceptions of Social Presence, Parasocial Interaction, and Vote Intention, by Personalization

	Tweet Content	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Social Presence	Personalized	394	4.04	1.341
	Depersonalized	420	3.79	1.309
$t(812)=2.688, p < .01$				
Parasocial Interaction	Personalized	394	3.09	1.583
	Depersonalized	420	2.90	1.428
$t(812)=1.800, p < .05$				
Vote Intention	Personalized	394	3.78	1.549
	Depersonalized	420	3.65	1.521
$t(812)=1.176, n.s.$				

Note. Measures based on seven-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (7).

Data in Table 5.2 provide support for two of the three hypotheses, suggesting that personalization can be beneficial for candidates. Specifically, participants exposed to personalized tweets ($M=4.04$, $SD=1.341$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized

¹ According to Nunnally (1978), a Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.9 is typically considered “excellent” in terms of internal consistency, and alphas between 0.7 and 0.9 are considered “good.” Therefore all of the composite variables met the standard conventions for internal consistency.

tweets ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.309$) to report a sense of social presence, $t(812)=2.688$, $p<.01$. Those in personalized tweet conditions ($M=3.09$, $SD=1.583$) were also more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweet conditions ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.428$) to report a sense of parasocial interaction, $t(812)=1.800$, $p<.05$. Impressions regarding vote intention followed this trend, but the difference between conditions was not significant. Overall, personalized tweets garnered higher levels of social presence and parasocial interaction, thereby supporting H15a and H15b. These findings suggest that personalized tweets go some distance to making a digital space feel more like a face-to-face interaction, in which one can form a relationship with the mediated candidate.

To explore the effects of personalization on other crucial elements in an election, the first research question sought to explore whether exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets impacted public perceptions of candidates on issue competency and trait portrayal (RQ1). To examine the impact of personalization on these two areas, I ran a series of independent sample t-tests across masculine and feminine issues and traits (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3
Perceptions of Issue Competency and Trait Portrayal, by Personalization

	Tweet Content	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Masculine Issues	Personalized	408	2.60	.910
	Depersonalized	423	2.53	.889
$t(829)=1.158$, <i>n.s.</i>				
Feminine Issues	Personalized	408	2.86	.887
	Depersonalized	423	2.67	.913
$t(829)=3.047$, $p<.01$				
Masculine Traits	Personalized	408	3.13	.954
	Depersonalized	423	2.98	.960
$t(829)=2.172$, $p<.05$				
Feminine Traits	Personalized	408	3.20	.922
	Depersonalized	423	2.95	.895
$t(829)=3.963$, $p<.001$				

Note. Measures based on five-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (5).

Data in Table 5.3 suggest that personalization prompted more favorable perceptions of issue competency and stronger perceptions of trait ownership. In particular, there were three significant differences. First, those exposed to personalized tweets ($M=2.86$, $SD=.887$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets ($M=2.67$, $SD=.913$) to perceive the candidate as more capable in handling feminine issues, such as health care and education, $t(829)=3.047$, $p<.01$. Similarly, those exposed to personalized tweets ($M=3.13$, $SD=.954$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets ($M=2.98$, $SD=.960$) to perceive the candidate as embodying masculine traits, such as confidence and leadership, $t(829)=2.172$, $p<.05$. Participants in personalized conditions ($M=3.20$, $SD=.922$) were also more likely than those in depersonalized conditions ($M=2.95$, $SD=.895$) to view the candidate as holding feminine traits, such as compassion and honesty, $t(829)=3.963$, $p<.001$. This overarching trend was also apparent regarding masculine issues, such as the economy and taxes, with those in personalized conditions ($M=2.60$, $SD=.910$) more likely than those in depersonalized conditions ($M=2.53$, $SD=.889$) to perceive the candidate as more capable in handling these issues, but this difference was not significant, $t(829)=1.158$, *n.s.* Overall, personalized tweets fostered greater confidence in issue competency and a stronger sense of trait ownership than depersonalized tweets.

Next, I examined the impact of personalization for men and women candidates. Specifically, I wanted to explore whether exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impacted public perceptions of male and female candidates concerning social presence, parasocial interaction, vote intention, issue competency, and trait portrayal (RQ2). To examine this question I ran one-way ANOVAs, with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests when appropriate. Table 5.4 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 5.4
Perceptions of Women and Men Candidates, by Personalization

	Women Candidates				Men Candidates			
	Personalized		Depersonalized		Personalized		Depersonalized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Social Presence	2.97	1.539	2.89	1.497	3.20	1.621	2.91	1.374
Parasocial Interaction	4.00	1.352	3.76	1.360	4.08	1.334	3.82	1.271
Vote Intention	3.75	1.550	3.57	1.567	3.79	1.555	3.72	1.480
Masculine Issues	2.50	.916	2.46	.897	2.71	.873	2.59	.871
Feminine Issues	2.89	.850	2.68	.923	2.88	.883	2.67	.895
Masculine Traits	3.17	.923	2.97	.975	3.13	.935	3.01	.938
Feminine Traits	3.29	.870	3.00	.897	3.16	.926	2.91	.877

Note. The first three variables were based on seven-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (7), and the latter four variables were based on five-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (5).

Overall, there are three notable trends in Table 5.4. First, personalization seems valuable for candidates. Across the seven variables, the highest mean among the four groups was always for a candidate with personalized tweets: four times for the personalizing male and three times for the personalizing female. Further, in each significant ANOVA test, those exposed to the personalized tweets reported higher means than those exposed to depersonalized tweets. For example, there was a marginally significant difference for parasocial interaction, $F(3, 807)=2.505, p=.058$: those exposed to personalized tweets from a male candidate ($M=4.08, SD=1.334$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a female candidate ($M=3.76, SD=1.360$) to report higher levels of parasocial interaction, $p<.10$. This finding mirrors the findings presented in the previous section of analysis, and further suggests that personalization abets candidates.

Second, as an extension of the first pattern, I found that personalization aided candidates for feminine issues and traits *regardless of their gender*. For example, there was a significant

difference for feminine issue competency, $F(3, 807)=3.577, p<.05$: participants exposed to personalized tweets from women *or* men ($M=2.89, SD=.850$; $M=2.88, SD=.883$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from men ($M=2.67, SD=.895$) to perceive the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues, $p<.10$. Thus, personalized tweets—from men and women—garnered stronger impressions of feminine issue competency than depersonalized tweets. There were also significant differences for feminine traits, $F(3, 807)=7.176, p<.001$. The first difference highlighted personalizing women: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a woman candidate ($M=3.29, SD=.870$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a woman or a man ($M=3.00, SD=.897$; $M=2.91, SD=.877$) to perceive the candidate as holding feminine traits, $p<.01$ and $p<.001$, respectively. The second difference highlighted personalizing men: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a man ($M=3.16, SD=.926$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a man ($M=2.91, SD=.877$) to perceive the candidate as embodying feminine traits, $p<.05$. Therefore, personalizing women and men were seen as more capable in handling feminine issues and more likely to embody feminine traits as compared to their depersonalizing counterparts.

Third, personalizing males garnered higher means for gender-congruent issues, but personalizing females did not receive a similar bump for such gender congruency. Specifically, there was a significant gender difference for masculine issue competency, $F(3, 807)=3.262, p<.05$: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a *male* candidate ($M=2.71, SD=.873$) were more likely than those exposed to personalized tweets ($M=2.50, SD=.916$) or depersonalized tweets ($M=2.46, SD=.897$) from a *female* candidate to perceive the candidate as capable in handling masculine issues, $p<.01$ and $p<.05$, respectively. Therefore, men were perceived as more competently owning gender-congruent masculine issues. Women did not receive the same

benefit for feminine issues or traits. Specifically, there were no significant differences between personalizing women and men regarding feminine elements. Thus, even though women generally politically “own” personalization and feminine issues and traits, these ownerships were not enough to create a distinction between personalizing men and women.

The next set of analyses focused on political party. In particular, I predicted that people exposed to personalized tweets by a Democrat would report higher levels of social presence (H16a), parasocial interaction (H16b), and vote intention for the candidate (H16c) than people exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican due to party alignment between personalization and the Democratic Party. To test these hypotheses I ran a series of independent sample t-tests that compared perceptions when people were exposed to personalizing Democratic and Republican candidates (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5
Perceptions of Social Presence, Parasocial Interaction, and Vote Intention, by Political Party

	Personalized Tweets	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Social Presence	Democrats	192	3.11	1.525
	Republicans	202	3.08	1.639
<i>t</i> (392)=-.154, <i>n.s.</i>				
Parasocial Interaction	Democrats	192	4.17	1.187
	Republicans	202	3.92	1.467
<i>t</i> (392)=-1.789, <i>p</i> <.05				
Vote Intention	Democrats	192	3.91	1.446
	Republicans	202	3.64	1.634
<i>t</i> (392)=-1.737, <i>p</i> <.05				

Note. Measures based on seven-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (7).

Data in Table 5.5 show a clear favoring of personalizing Democrats over Republicans in two of the three comparisons. First, those exposed to personalized tweets from a Democrat (*M*=4.17, *SD*=1.187) were more likely than those exposed to personalized tweets from a Republican (*M*=3.92, *SD*=1.467) to report higher levels of parasocial interaction, *t*(392)=-1.789,

$p < .05$. Second, participants exposed to personalized tweets from a Democrat ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.446$) were more likely than participants exposed to personalized tweets from a Republican ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.634$) to express intent to vote for the candidate, $t(392)=-1.737$, $p < .05$. Overall, H16b and H16c were supported because personalizing Democrats fostered a greater sense of a parasocial relationship with participants and vote intention than personalizing Republicans. Therefore Democrats appear to reap the benefits of party-congruent personalization.

To dig deeper on party and personalization, I then posed the following research question regarding issues and traits: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of a Republican and Democratic candidate regarding issue competency and trait portrayal (RQ3)? To explore this question, I ran one-way ANOVAs, with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests when appropriate. Table 5.6 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 5.6
Perceptions of Democratic and Republican Candidates, by Personalization

	Democratic Candidates				Republican Candidates			
	Personalized		Depersonalized		Personalized		Depersonalized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Masculine Issues	2.68	.877	2.55	.896	2.52	.935	2.51	.884
Feminine Issues	2.99	.845	2.75	.888	2.75	.912	2.61	.931
Masculine Traits	3.21	.900	3.00	.977	3.06	.999	2.97	.947
Feminine Traits	3.30	.856	3.03	.903	3.10	.972	2.88	.884

Note. The variables were based on five-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (5).

Three patterns emerged from the analysis in Table 5.6. First, Democrats gained the most from personalization for issues and traits. Personalizing Democrats had the highest means in every comparison in Table 5.6, and they were often statistically superior to the other candidates in perceptions of issue competency and trait portrayal.

Second, this general favoring of the personalizing Democratic candidate aligned with party-based expectations. In particular, personalizing Democrats received higher evaluations on party-owned issues and traits. For instance, there was a significant partisan difference for feminine issue competency, $F(3, 827)=6.581, p<.001$: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a Democrat ($M=2.99, SD=.845$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a Democrat ($M=2.75, SD=.888$), those exposed to personalized tweets from a Republican ($M=2.75, SD=.912$), and those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a Republican ($M=2.61, SD=.931$) to perceive the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues, $p<.05$. In other words, the personalizing Democrat was seen as significantly better at handling feminine issues over any of the other three types of candidates. Further, there was a significant difference for feminine trait portrayal at the cross-section of party and personalization, $F(3, 827)=7.995, p<.001$: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a Democrat ($M=3.30, SD=.856$) or personalized tweets from a Republican ($M=3.10, SD=.972$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a Republican ($M=2.88, SD=.884$) to perceive the candidate as embodying feminine traits, $p<.001$ and $p<.05$, respectively. Thus for feminine traits, personalization fostered strong impressions of trait ownership. This finding was especially evident regarding Democrats and feminine traits because in this comparison, there were *within* party differences. Specifically, participants exposed to *personalized* tweets from a Democrat ($M=3.30, SD=.856$) were more likely than participants exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Democrat ($M=3.03, SD=.903$) to perceive the candidate as holding feminine traits, $p<.05$. Overall, personalizing Democrats were perceived as significantly better at owning feminine issues and traits when compared to depersonalizing partisan candidates.

Third, personalizing Democrats were also evaluated more highly on *un-owned* territory as

well. One would imagine that a depersonalizing Republican would do well with masculine traits because being less personal and being Republican are associated with masculinity. However, the opposite occurred. There was a marginally significant partisan difference for masculine trait portrayal, $F(3, 827)=2.444, p<.10$: those exposed to personalized tweets from a Democrat ($M=3.21, SD=.900$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a Republican ($M=2.97, SD=.947$) to perceive the candidate as embodying masculine traits, $p<.10$. When combined with the previous analysis, personalizing Democrats garnered the highest evaluations across parasocial interaction, vote intention, issue competency, and trait portrayal. In other words, these candidates appeared to have the most to gain from personalization.

The final set of analysis in this section focused on the intersection of gender *and* party in the context of personalization. Specifically, I expected that people exposed to personalized tweets by a Democratic candidate—female or male—would report higher levels of social presence (H17a), parasocial interaction (H17b), and vote intention for the candidate (H17c) than those who were exposed to personalized tweets by a Republican, female or male. To test this set of hypotheses, I conducted one-way ANOVAs, with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests when appropriate. Table 5.7 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 5.7
Perceptions of Personalizing Democratic and Republican Candidates, by Gender

	Democratic Candidates				Republican Candidates			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Social Presence	3.03	1.536	3.17	1.521	2.94	1.546	3.24	1.733
Parasocial Interaction	4.18	1.136	4.15	1.231	3.86	1.492	4.00	1.442
Vote Intention	3.89	1.411	3.93	1.480	3.65	1.647	3.64	1.628

Note. The variables were based on seven-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (7).

There were no significant differences between personalizing partisan men and women

candidates regarding social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention. Therefore there was no support for H17a, H17b, or H17c because there were no differences based on the intersection of gender and party. Before moving on it is important to put these results in context. In Table 5.5 I found that personalizing Democrats garnered significantly higher levels than personalizing Republicans of parasocial interaction and vote intention. Yet, as the data in Table 5.7 indicates, once gender was factored in along with party, personalizing Democrats lost their edge on these evaluative criteria. Both Democratic women and men in Table 5.7 perform better than their Republican counterparts, but it appears as though the addition of gender as a variable shortened the advantageous distance between partisans on these variables.

Next, I focused on the women candidates to examine the impact of personalization on issues and traits. In particular, I asked the following research question: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters’ perceptions of Republican and Democratic female candidates regarding issue competency and trait portrayal (RQ4)? To examine this question, I ran one-way ANOVAs, with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests when appropriate. Table 5.8 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 5.8
Perceptions of Democratic and Republican Women Candidates, by Personalization

	Democratic Women				Republican Women			
	Personalized		Depersonalized		Personalized		Depersonalized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Masculine Issues	2.53	.929	2.38	.948	2.49	.921	2.53	.859
Feminine Issues	3.00	.842	2.66	.954	2.81	.872	2.71	.916
Masculine Traits	3.22	.852	2.89	1.040	3.14	1.006	3.03	.925
Feminine Traits	3.40	.799	3.01	.976	3.20	.939	3.00	.849

Note. The variables were based on five-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (5).

This analysis indicated that Democratic women had the most to gain from personalization.

Overall, the personalizing Democratic woman had the highest means in every instance in Table 5.8. Further, most of the significant differences occurred *within* a party, not across. For example, there was never a significant difference between the personalizing Democratic and Republican women. Rather, the *lack* of personalization seemed to be most damaging to the Democratic woman, who received the lowest mean scores in three out of four comparisons, and who was significantly lower than her personalizing fellow Democrat on party- and gender-owned issues and traits. For instance, there was a marginally significant difference within partisans for feminine issue competency, $F(3, 387)=2.531, p=.057$: subjects exposed to *personalized* tweets from a Democratic woman ($M=3.00, SD=.842$) were more likely than those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Democratic woman ($M=2.66, SD=.954$) to perceive the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues, $p=.057$. There was also a significant difference for feminine trait portrayal, $F(3, 387)=4.182, p<.01$: those exposed to *personalized* tweets from a Democratic woman ($M=3.40, SD=.799$) were more likely than those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Democratic woman ($M=3.01, SD=.976$) or from a Republican woman ($M=3.00, SD=.849$) to perceive the candidate as embodying feminine traits, $p<.05$. Thus for women, personalization appeared to play a larger role than partisanship since both significant tests featured within party differences for Democrats.

The final research question for this section focused on men, and asked: Did exposure to personalized rather than depersonalized tweets differentially impact voters' perceptions of Republican and Democratic male candidates concerning issue competency and trait portrayal (RQ5)? To explore this question, I conducted one-way ANOVAs, with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests when appropriate. Table 5.9 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 5.9

Perceptions of Democratic and Republican Men Candidates, by Personalization

	Democratic Men				Republican Men			
	Personalized		Depersonalized		Personalized		Depersonalized	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Masculine Issues	2.80	.817	2.70	.824	2.56	.953	2.48	.907
Feminine Issues	2.99	.851	2.83	.823	2.68	.951	2.52	.939
Masculine Traits	3.20	.941	3.09	.913	2.97	.990	2.93	.966
Feminine Traits	3.22	.897	3.06	.837	3.00	1.000	2.78	.903

Note. The variables were based on five-point, Likert scales, ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (5).

This analysis produced two notable trends. First, Democratic men fared better than Republican men. In every comparison, personalizing Democratic men had the highest evaluations, followed by depersonalizing Democratic men. Second, this difference was most acute for depersonalizing Republican men, and occurred both in *support* of and in *violation* of party ownership. In alignment with Democratic ownership, there was a significant difference between groups for feminine issue competency, $F(3, 436)=5.674, p<.01$: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a Democratic man ($M=2.99, SD=.851$) or those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Democratic man ($M=2.83, SD=.823$) were more likely than those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Republican man ($M=2.52, SD=.939$) to perceive the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues, $p<.01$ and $p<.05$, respectively. Additionally, there was a significant difference between groups for feminine trait portrayal, $F(3, 436)=4.791, p<.01$: those exposed to personalized tweets from a Democratic man ($M=3.22, SD=.897$) or those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Democratic man ($M=3.06, SD=.837$) were more likely than those exposed to *depersonalized* tweets from a Republican man ($M=2.78, SD=.903$) to perceive the candidate as embodying feminine traits, $p<.01$ and $p<.10$, respectively. Therefore Democratic men—regardless of personalization—were seen as more in control of feminine

issues and traits when compared to depersonalizing Republican men.

Moving beyond feminine elements, the contrast between Democratic men and depersonalizing Republican men was stark on masculine issues. As stated, being less personal and being Republican are associated with masculinity, whereas being more personal and being a Democrat are perceived as at odds with masculinity. Thus one may expect the depersonalizing Republican male to fare better on masculine issues. However, the opposite was found. Specifically, there was a significant difference between groups for masculine issue competency, $F(3, 436)=2.936, p<.05$: subjects exposed to personalized tweets from a Democratic man ($M=2.80, SD=.817$) were more likely than those exposed to depersonalized tweets from a Republican man ($M=2.48, SD=.907$) to perceive the candidate as capable of handling masculine issues, $p<.05$. Overall, it appears as though the lack of personalization produced the biggest detrimental impact on evaluations of Republican men.

At this point, I wish to summarize the key findings and patterns in the analysis. In the aggregate, personalization seems to pay off. As predicted, personalizing candidates garnered higher levels than depersonalizing candidates for social presence and parasocial interaction. Further, analysis related to the first research question revealed that personalizing candidates received higher evaluations than depersonalizing candidates for masculine traits and feminine issues and traits. Overall, then, personalization aided candidates for most of the evaluative criteria. Moving beyond the aggregate, there were some notable distinctions based on gender, and then on party affiliation. First, personalizing men and women candidates were evaluated more highly than their depersonalizing counterparts on feminine issues and traits. In fact, there were no significant differences between personalizing men and women on these feminine components, suggesting that men can gain ground on these gender-incongruent matters when

they add a personal style to their repertoire. However, the same cannot be said for women. Both personalizing and depersonalizing women were seen as less capable than the personalizing man on dealing with masculine issues. Thus even a more impersonal, masculine style did not benefit women in this masculinized area. Second, as predicted, personalizing Democrats fostered higher levels than personalizing Republicans for parasocial interaction and vote intention. Personalizing Democrats also received higher evaluations than depersonalizing candidates of both parties on feminine issues and traits, suggesting a compounding of party-congruent effects when Democrats implement a party-aligned personalizing style to discuss party-aligned issues and traits.

At the intersection of gender, party, and personalization, analyses produced several findings. First, I predicted that there would be significant differences between personalizing Democratic and Republican men and women regarding social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention. Specifically, I expected Democratic women and men to receive higher evaluations on these criteria. None of these predictions panned out. Rather, there were no significant differences between these four types of candidates concerning any of these variables. Second, personalization produced more differences than party in issue competency and trait portrayal. Specifically, there were no significant differences between personalizing Republican and Democratic women, and there was only one difference between personalizing Republican and Democratic men. Rather, many of the differences occurred *between* personalizing and depersonalizing partisans. For example, personalizing Democratic women received higher evaluations than depersonalizing Democratic women for feminine issues and traits. Further, personalizing Democratic men received higher evaluations than depersonalizing Republican men in three out of four comparisons. To explore these findings, the next set of analysis digs into other factors that may impact the effects of personalization for partisan men and women.

Additional Analysis

As a final stage of analysis for this chapter, I wanted to explore (a) whether participants' demographics made an impact on the evaluative criteria, and (b) the direct and interaction effects of the stimuli on evaluative criteria when controlling for several predictive variables. To do so, I ran a series of hierarchical regressions to examine the impact of several demographic variables and the stimuli in predicting each of this chapter's evaluative criteria (Tables 5.10 and 5.11). The regressions included three blocks: demographics, stimuli, and stimuli interactions. Two dummy variables were created for demographics: *race*, which included subjects who identified as White versus those who identified as another race, and *political party affiliation*, which included those who identified as Democrat versus those who did not. Additionally, three dummy variables were created for the stimuli: personalized versus depersonalized tweets; tweets from a female candidate versus a male candidate; tweets from a Republican candidate versus from a Democratic candidate. These dummy variables were also used to create interaction variables for the third block.

Table 5.10
Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Evaluative Criteria

	Social Presence (N=784)	Parasocial Interaction (N=785)	Vote Intention (N=784)
	β	β	β
Demographics			
Gender (male)	-.085*	-.108**	-.082*
Age	.043	-.015	-.025
Race (White)	-.019	.014	.069 [†]
Education	-.102**	-.078*	-.058
Income	.027	.046	.003
Party Affiliation (Dem)	-.009	.021	.004
Political Ideology (Lib)	-.066	-.057	-.028
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	2.3*	1.9*	1.4
Stimuli			
Personalization (Personalized)	.058	.094**	.047
Candidate Gender (Male)	.027	.004	.018
Candidate Party (Democrat)	.028	.073*	.069 [†]
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	0.5	1.4**	0.7
Stimuli Interactions			
Candidate Gender x Personal	.144	.000	-.089
Candidate Party x Personal	-.148	.056	.085
Cand Gender x Cand Party	.083	.110	.114
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	0.3	0.1	0.1
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	3.1*	3.4*	2.2

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. β s refer to standardized regression coefficients. Regression analysis conducted listwise.

Overall, there were three notable trends. First, each regression featured two significant demographic effects. For social presence, demographics explained a significant amount of variance (2.3%). Specifically, male participants ($\beta = -.085$) and those with higher levels of completed education ($\beta = -.102$) perceived lower levels of social presence when evaluating the candidate. Next, for parasocial interaction, the demographics also accounted for a significant amount of variance (1.9%). Similarly to social presence, male participants ($\beta = -.103$) and those with higher levels of completed education ($\beta = -.080$) perceived lower levels of parasocial interaction with the candidate. Finally, for vote intention, I found that participant gender once

again played a significant role: Male participants were less likely to vote for the candidate ($\beta=-.082$). There was also another marginal demographic effect: Participants who identified as White were *more* likely to vote for the candidate ($\beta=.069$). In sum, one constant across this analysis was that males were less likely to report a sense of social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention for the candidate.

Second, two of the three regressions featured significant effects from the stimuli even once demographics were controlled. First, the stimuli block explained an additional 1.4% of variance in impressions of parasocial interaction. Specifically, those exposed to the personalized tweets ($\beta=.094$) and those exposed to tweets from a Democrat ($\beta=.073$) reported higher levels of parasocial interaction. Overall, the predictive variables explained 3.4% of the total variance for parasocial interaction, $F(13, 772)=2.099, p<.05$. Second, there was also a marginal direct effect from the stimuli for vote intention: Subjects receiving tweets from the Democrat were more likely to vote for the candidate ($\beta=.069$). Overall, however, the predictive variables accounted for no significant amount of variance for vote intention, $F(13, 771)=1.365, n.s$. In sum, when controlling for demographics, there were some statistically important direct effects of the stimuli. Specifically, the personalizing candidate prompted a greater sense of parasocial interaction, and the Democratic candidate spurred higher levels of parasocial interaction and vote intention.

Third, there were no significant interactive effects across any of the regressions for these three evaluative criteria. In two of three instances, the third block accounted for only .1% of additional variance. Thus, beyond demographics and direct stimuli effects, the interaction of experimental stimuli did not add much to the equation in terms of predicting social presence, parasocial interaction, or vote intention.

Table 5.11 presents the regression analyses for issue competency and trait portrayal. The

analysis for issue competency and trait portrayal yielded more variations across the regressions. As such, I will address each evaluative criterion separately, beginning with issue competency evaluations.

Table 5.11
Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Evaluative Criteria

	Masculine Issues (N=785)	Feminine Issues (N=785)	Masculine Traits (N=782)	Feminine Traits (N=782)
	β	β	β	β
Demographics				
Gender (male)	-.025	-.064 [†]	-.075*	-.102**
Age	-.023	-.022	-.080*	-.071 [†]
Race (White)	.054	.042	.067 [†]	.051
Education	-.085*	-.109**	-.072 [†]	-.078*
Income	-.016	.020	-.008	.001
Party Affiliation (Dem)	.063	.070	.063	.090 [†]
Political Ideology (Lib)	-.101*	-.089 [†]	-.045	-.093 [†]
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	1.7 [†]	2.0*	2.2*	2.7**
Stimuli				
Personalization (Personalized)	.048	.111**	.081*	.148***
Candidate Gender (Male)	.092**	-.015	-.009	-.074*
Candidate Party (Democrat)	.051	.110**	.043	.094**
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	1.4*	2.5***	0.9 [†]	3.7***
Stimuli Interactions				
Candidate Gender x Personal	.056	-.060	-.110	-.040
Candidate Party x Personal	.065	.029	.079	-.057
Cand Gender x Cand Party	.312*	.250	.164	.137
<i>Incremental R² (%)</i>	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	3.6**	4.9***	3.3*	6.5***

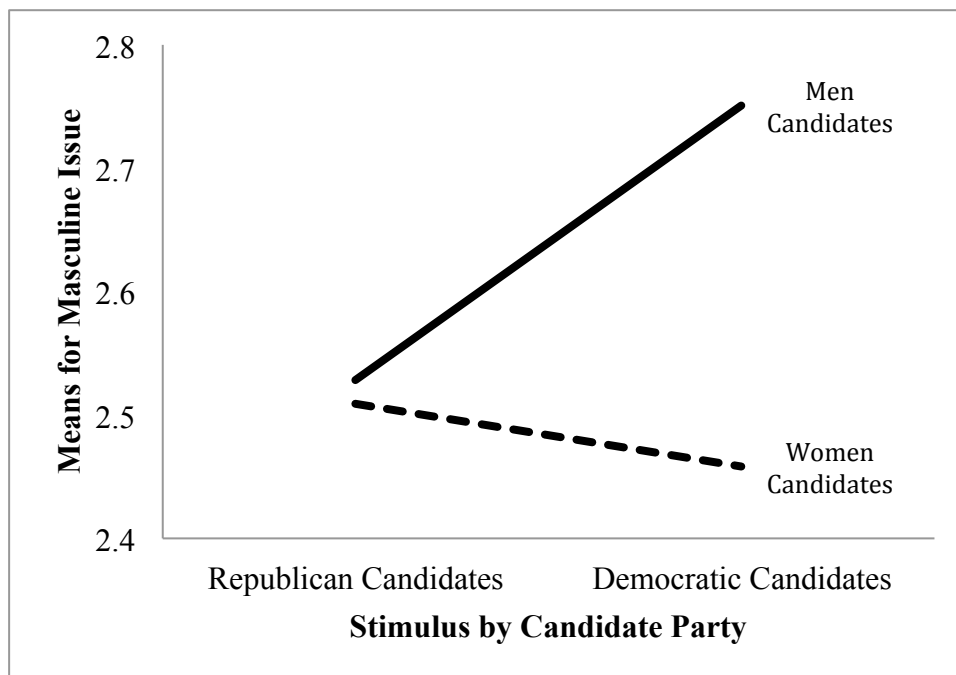
[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. β s refer to standardized regression coefficients. Regression analysis conducted listwise.

First, for masculine issue competency there were significant effects in all three blocks. Overall, demographics accounted for a marginal amount of variance for masculine issue competency (1.7%), with two significant effects: Subjects with higher levels of completed education ($\beta = -.085$) and who identified as more ideologically liberal ($\beta = -.101$) were less likely to view the candidate as capable of handling masculine issues. Second, the stimuli block

accounted for a significant amount of additional variance (1.4%), and subjects encountering the male candidate viewed him as more capable of handling masculine issues ($\beta=.092$). Therefore there was a gender congruent link between male candidates and masculine issue competency. Furthermore, though the last block did not produce a significant amount of additional variance, it did feature a significant interaction effect: The link between candidate party and masculine issue competency was moderated by candidate gender ($\beta=.312$). This interaction is graphed in Figure 5.2, and shows that candidate gender significantly moderated perceptions of masculine issue competency when people were exposed to Democratic candidates, and impacted perceptions of masculine issue competency significantly less when exposed to Republican candidates. Overall, the predictive variables for masculine issue competency accounted for 3.6% of the total variance, $F(13, 772)=2.195, p<.01$.

Figure 5.2
Interaction Effects of Candidate Gender on Candidate Party and Masculine Issue Competency



Next, analysis of feminine issue competency showed several significant demographic and

stimuli effects. In particular, subject demographics accounted for a significant amount of variance (2%), with two notable findings: Male participants ($\beta = -.064$) and participants with higher levels of completed education ($\beta = -.109$) were less likely to view the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues. Next, the stimuli block explained a significant additional amount of variance (2.5%), with subjects exposed to the personalized tweets ($\beta = .111$) and to tweets from a Democratic candidate ($\beta = .110$) more likely to evaluate the candidate as capable of handling feminine issues. Overall, these predictive variables explained 4.9% of the total variance, $F(13, 772) = 3.052, p < .001$.

All together, examination of issue competency showed that even when demographics were controlled, there were direct stimuli effects and three ownership-congruent findings. Specifically, male candidates were seen as more competent in handling owned masculine issues, and personalizing and Democratic candidates were seen as more capable in handling owned feminine issues. There was also one significant interaction effect of the stimuli: candidate gender significantly impacted the relationship between Democrats and masculine issues, but not so for Republicans and masculine issues. Specifically, male Democrats garnered higher levels of masculine issue competency than female Democrats. The lack of distinction between Republicans and the presence of distinction between Democrats could be because across all four types of candidates, Democratic women are generally perceived to have no ownership over masculine issues based on gender or party, whereas the other three types of candidates are thought to have at least partial ownership due to gender and/or party.

Lastly, I turn to analysis of trait portrayal. First, for impressions of masculine traits we see significant effects across demographics and stimuli. Specifically, the demographic variables explained a significant amount of variance (2.2%), and there were multiple variables of impact:

Males ($\beta=-.075$), older participants ($\beta=-.080$), and participants with higher levels of completed education ($\beta=-.072$) all viewed the candidate as less likely to embody masculine traits. In contrast, subjects who identified as White were more likely to think the candidate portrayed masculine traits ($\beta=.067$). Next, the stimuli accounted for a marginally significant additional amount of variance (.9%), with one significant result: Personalizing candidates were seen as more likely to embody masculine traits ($\beta=.081$). Overall, the predictive variables accounted for 3.3% of the total variance in impressions of masculine traits, $F(13, 769)=2.011, p<.05$.

For impressions of feminine trait portrayal we see the most significant effects for the evaluative criteria. Specifically, the demographics block accounted for a significant amount of variance (2.7%), with males ($\beta=-.102$), older participants ($\beta=-.071$), and participants with higher levels of education ($\beta=-.078$) and who identified as more ideologically liberal ($\beta=-.093$) all perceiving the candidate as less likely to embody feminine traits. Alternately, those who identified as Democrats were more likely to view the candidate as portraying feminine traits ($\beta=.090$). Next, all of the stimuli variables produced significant effects and explained a significant amount of additional variance (3.7%). Specifically, subjects exposed to the personalized tweets ($\beta=.148$) and to tweets from a Democratic candidate ($\beta=.094$) were *more* likely to evaluate the candidate as embodying feminine traits, while subjects encountering the male candidate were *less* likely to perceive the candidate as holding feminine traits ($\beta=-.074$). Overall, these findings support previous trends, and collectively the predictive variables explained 6.5% of the total variance for feminine trait portrayal, $F(13, 769)=4.124, p<.001$.

In sum, male participants, older participants, and those who completed more education in general perceived candidates as less likely to portray a multitude of character traits. For the stimuli variables, we see an effect of ownership congruence similar to that which occurred in

issues. For issues, we saw that personalizing and Democratic candidates were seen as more capable in handling owned feminine issues, and male candidates were seen as more competent in handling owned masculine issues. For traits, we see that personalizing and Democratic candidates were more likely to be seen as embodying owned feminine traits, and male candidates were less likely to be seen as embodying unowned feminine traits.

Discussion

This chapter presented the results of an experiment among a group of U.S. adults examining the impact of personalization on several evaluative criteria. Specifically, participants were exposed to a series of personalized or depersonalized tweets from either a male or female candidate who was running for U.S. Senate as a Republican or Democrat. Conceptually in American politics, personalization generally is thought to interact in important ways with gender and political party. Women typically engage in a more personal communication style that is more interactive and incorporates demonstrative anecdotes as support, whereas men often employ a less personal style that focuses on analytics and facts as evidence. These gendered styles overlap with party, with Democrats aligning with women and Republicans with men. On Twitter, political candidates have the opportunity to be purely informational, focusing on facts and linking to additional content, but they can also personalize their feeds by tying this information to personal experiences or tweeting more informal tweets or pictures with family and friends. Research has found that when candidates take this second route, of personalization, that it can be politically beneficial (Lee & Oh, 2012; Warnick et al., 2005). Data from Chapters Three and Four found that candidates implemented personalization in their Twitter self-presentations in 2012 U.S. Senate elections, and the goal of this chapter was to examine whether such a practice is likely to produce positive effects across multiple evaluative criteria. Ultimately,

personalization appeared to prompt several electoral benefits, and this pattern held relatively constant once broken down along a candidate's gender and party affiliation. I discuss this pattern, and other intriguing items, in this section.

First, at the aggregate level, personalization abetted candidates. Across the seven evaluative criteria, the candidates with personalized Twitter feeds had higher means than the candidates with depersonalized feeds for all of the variables. For instance, personalizing candidates cultivated a greater sense of social presence and parasocial interaction. Thus, personalization spurred subjects to feel like they were more physically "there" with the candidate, and it also provided a stronger foundation upon which to build a seemingly real interpersonal relationship with the candidate. As such, personalization helped break down the mediated divide between candidates and the public. Furthermore, personalizing candidates were seen as more capable in handling masculine and feminine issues, as well as more likely to embody masculine and feminine traits. Political issues and character traits are common evaluative criteria for voters, and it is important to emphasize that the issues and traits discussed in both Twitter feed conditions were the same. Therefore the presence of personalization, not additional policy or character statements, drove the more favorable impressions. Overall, these findings suggest that a more personal delivery of information resonates strongly with the public and positively impacts their opinion formation process.

Second, the electoral benefits of personalization remained even in the contexts of gender *or* political party (the combination of these two is in the next paragraph). For the former, personalizing men and women candidates received higher means than depersonalizing men and women across the evaluative variables. The one exception to this trend was in masculine issue competency. Specifically, personalizing men were seen as more capable of handling masculine

issues than all women, regardless of whether they personalized their tweets or not. Therefore, personalization could not overcome the alignment of men and masculine issues. For political party we saw both the impact of and limitations for personalization. Personalizing Democrats and Republicans garnered higher evaluations on feminine trait portrayal, but the personalizing Democrat topped the personalizing Republican in parasocial interaction and vote intention. Further, the personalizing Democrat was seen as more capable in handling party-owned feminine issues than any other candidate. Therefore at the intersection of personalization and partisanship, personalization seemed to elevate Democrats' ownership over feminine elements and enabled them to surpass personalizing Republicans on the ultimate evaluative criteria: vote intention. Overall, personalization appears to benefit candidates, even when taking into consideration their gender or party affiliation, but these benefits are not universal, and sometimes are moderated by gender- or party-based ownership.

Third, when personalization was combined with candidate gender *and* party, the effects were much more nuanced. There were three distinct patterns. First, when comparing only personalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *diminish* the effects of ownership in general. Specifically, there were no significant differences between personalizing Democratic and Republican women, and there were no significant differences between personalizing Democratic and Republican men. Thus across social presence, parasocial interaction, vote intention, and issues and traits, personalization appeared to mitigate the impact of gender and party ownership. Second, when comparing personalizing and depersonalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *elevate* the effects of ownership for women. In particular, personalizing Democratic women garnered higher evaluations than depersonalizing Democratic women regarding their ability to handle feminine issues and offer feminine traits. Thus even

though Democratic women have both gender and party ownership on these feminine elements, personalization still made a further impact. Third, when comparing personalizing and depersonalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *recede* in light of party ownership for men. Specifically, both personalizing and depersonalizing Democratic men garnered higher evaluations than depersonalizing Republican men for feminine issues and traits. Therefore regardless of personalization, Democratic men held the advantage on party-owned elements. These last two findings suggest that personalization intersects with gender and party in differing ways for Democratic men and women candidates. For Democratic women, personalization amps up ownership, and for Democratic men it takes a back seat on certain party-owned elements.

Fourth, the hierarchical regression analysis showed two demographic variables that played a significant role across the evaluative criteria. The first was a participant's gender: male participants had less favorable impressions of the candidate regarding this chapter's evaluative criteria. Notably, other scholarship has shown that women are more likely than men to report higher levels of social presence and develop parasocial relationships (e.g., Cohen, 2004; Gefen & Straub, 1997). Thus this finding aligns with previous work. Furthermore, it is plausible that if men could not overcome the sense of distance between themselves and the mediated candidate, that it could have impacted their evaluations of the candidate on issues, traits, and vote intention. In other words, if self-presentations via Twitter prompted more of a mediated divide for men than women, then it could have created a systematic impasse for men that influenced their evaluations. The second demographic was a participant's level of education: participants with higher levels of education rated candidates less favorably across all of the evaluative criteria. It is possible that people with higher levels of formal education also have higher levels of cognitive complexity, in which case they are more likely to seek out more information and context as part

of their opinion formation process. A series of 14 tweets may not meet their information threshold, spurring them to be skeptical, or, at the least, be less likely to form favorable opinions of a candidate. Collectively, these demographic differences suggest a line of future research regarding the effectiveness of digital campaigning and candidate self-presentations across individuals' personal characteristics.

Finally, the regression analysis showed that even when controlling for participant demographics, the stimuli impacted criterion evaluations. These findings broke into two groups. First, participants exposed to the personalizing candidate and the Democratic candidate, separately, evaluated these candidates more favorably on parasocial interaction, vote intention, and feminine elements. As such we see an overlap between more feminine candidates—those who personalize and those who are Democratic—and feminine issues and traits. Second, ownership also intersected in notable ways for participants exposed to gender-based stimuli. Specifically, those encountering a male candidate's tweets perceived him as more capable of handling masculine-owned issues and less likely to embody feminine-owned traits. Furthermore, candidate gender significantly moderated the relationship between candidate party and masculine issues. In particular, Democratic women paled in comparison to Democratic men regarding perceptions of masculine issue competency. Thus when participants were exposed to Democratic candidates, they rewarded men for their gender-based ownership over masculine issues and, comparatively, penalized women for their lack of gender or party ownership over such issues.

In sum, personalized self-presentations appeared to cultivate more positive impressions than depersonalized self-presentations, and this trend remained fairly stable once examined in the contexts of gender and political party. Collectively, these findings add to scholarship that suggests the tide has turned regarding the personalization of politics. When candidates were

covered in a more personalizing frame by the news media, scholars disparaged such coverage as too trivial and as getting too far away from more important matters such as issue stances and policy plans. Such coverage of women candidates was seen as a move to further situate women in the private, domestic domain, and thus distance them from the arena of politics. This chapter has shown that when personalization comes from candidates themselves, it can garner more positive impressions and perhaps abet candidates' perceived connection to issues and traits. Personalization also contributed to creating a more realistic atmosphere for the mediated space of digital campaigning—a benefit that seems like a requisite for 21st century politics. The findings in this chapter were, of course, more nuanced in some circumstances, but the overarching trend suggests there is value in personalization in political campaigning.

Chapter Six

Moving Toward a Better Understanding of Gender in American Politics

Gender in American politics is complicated to say the least. America's complex relationship with gender in politics has deep historical roots that still color contemporary notions of what it means to "fit" cultural and political expectations. One of the foundational documents of the United States, the U.S. Constitution, denied women the right to vote in American politics, and thus helped to characterize this public arena as a masculine domain. Women found alternate ways to raise their voices and concerns, including the pivotal Seneca Falls Convention. Even then, women would have to wait till the next century to earn the right to vote. Close to a hundred years since the ratification of the 19th Amendment, this plight is not lost on modern women. The women of the U.S. Senate gather socially on a regular basis, and in 2013, for the first time, they invited the sitting president. The gathering was held at the White House, prompting Senator Barbara Boxer of California to remark that a hundred years ago these women would have been meeting *outside* the White House gates to demand the right to vote. The twenty women who attended this event represented a watershed moment for America. In 2012, more women ran for and won elected office in the U.S. Congress than ever before, bringing female representation from 17% to 18.3%. Such numbers, of course, make women a statistical minority in American politics, and reinforce the idea that American politics is still, by and large, a man's game. That said, 2012 witnessed other events that elevated the role of gender politics. In ways not seen in years, national discourse was filled with discussion of so-called "women's issues": funding for Planned Parenthood, access to and insurance coverage of contraception, fair pay, and rape-related pregnancies and abortion. These issues led to partisan rallying cries such as the "war on women" and how "being a woman should not be a pre-existing condition." From women

politicians to women's issues, gender represented a powerful dynamic in politics in 2012.

There was also another actor in this political arena that was impacting daily discourse: Twitter. Twitter's pivotal role in global politics emerged in 2009 due to its adoption during the Iranian election protests. Its impact on American politics did not catch fire till the 2012 election cycle. From journalists, to politicians, to the public, Twitter made American politics a much smaller world. Insights from the "boys on the bus" days of political journalism were now shared on Twitter for all to see. Voters were brought into a direct line of communication with candidates, and candidates could bypass traditional media platforms, speak directly to their electorate, and set their own campaign narratives. Twitter contracted other aspects of politics as well. The news cycle lasted days or hours, not weeks. Candidates did not wait till the spin room after the debate to refute their opponent; instead, they seized upon the real-time opportunity to do so during the debate. The public took hold of this dynamic too, and with each new, major political event of 2012, Twitter reported record-breaking numbers of tweets. The more passive role of watching politics unfold had given way to people wanting to actively participate in these events as they happened. This new, hyper fast dynamic lead David Axelrod, senior adviser to President Barack Obama, to characterize the pushing back and promoting of agendas on Twitter as leading to the "sense that every day is Election Day" (Carr, 2013). If every day is Election Day, then candidates' daily presentations of self become critically important and can ultimately contribute to whether the actual Election Day ends in victory or defeat.

This dissertation sought to bring these two raising tides together and explore the gender dynamics of the 2012 elections via Twitter communications. In particular, I wanted to examine how candidates employed Twitter to create online self-presentations, and the effects of these self-presentations. According to Goffman (1959), self-presentations are comprised of two

components: the expression one *gives*, which constitutes verbal information that is intentional and managed, and the expression one *gives off*, which consists of non-verbal messages that seep out in potentially conscious or unconscious ways. Collectively, Goffman (1959) calls this exchange a performance, which he defined as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (p. 25). Self-presentations, then, are deeply strategic. The goal of this dissertation was to examine how candidates cultivated online self-presentations that created strategic distinctions between themselves and opponents. Specifically, I wanted to explore how communications differed based on the candidate’s gender and political party identification, and their opponent’s gender and party identification. As such, I focused on mixed-gender and same-gender elections to examine the interplay of gender and party when gender is and is *not* a shared identity. I then built upon these examinations to analyze how these self-presentations influenced the public’s evaluations and impressions of partisan men and women candidates. Effectively, this dissertation focused on what the candidates said in these differing electoral contexts, and the effects of such communications.

The core conceptual pieces driving this examination were gendered communication styles and political ownerships. I elaborate on both later in this chapter, but provide a brief discussion of them here to set up the chapter. A gendered communication style is based on a socially constructed identity, comprised of stylized, performative, and repeated acts that constitute what we as a culture think it means to be a man or a woman, or to act manly or womanly (cf. Butler, 1986; 1988). These socially defined roles, according to Goffman (1959), ultimately impact an individual’s performance of self. In other words, women and men’s roles in society dictate to some extent how they create and express their self-presentations. Using this concept as a base, I

wanted to explore *how* candidates communicated across two areas of importance in politics: interactivity and personalization. We expect candidates to get out and to “be among the people.” A candidate’s interaction with the electorate allows us to engage with the candidate, get to know them, voice our concerns, and feel as though the candidate has a better sense of the community they may serve. Getting to know the candidate can also happen via personalization. When candidates choose to reveal aspects of their personal identity or personal lives, it can provide another facet of connection with the candidate. As discussed later, gendered communication styles intersect in important ways with interactivity and personalization, and may prompt men and women to employ differing self-presentations. Also creating an area of distinction for candidates is political ownership. Political ownership suggests that different groups are seen as better able to handle certain political matters, namely political issues and character traits (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996). This concept enabled me to explore *what* candidates communicated by analyzing what issues and traits were discussed as part of their self-presentations. These ownerships also correspond to both gender and party, and thus impact how candidates may present themselves.

To examine these self-presentations and their related effects, I employed a mixed-methods approach. First, I undertook a detailed content analysis of six mixed-gender U.S. Senate elections during the 2012 election cycle. In particular, I analyzed the candidates’ campaign tweets during the general election, and accounted for their levels of interactivity and personalization, as well as their issue and trait emphases. This analysis was presented in Chapter Three. Second, I used the same variables of interest to analyze six same-gender U.S. Senate elections in 2012. Specifically, I examined three male-versus-male elections and three female-versus-female elections. This analysis was presented in Chapter Four. Finally, I implemented a 2

x 2 x 2 experimental design on a large group of online U.S. adults to test the effects of personalized versus depersonalized tweets across several evaluative criteria. These criteria included previous variables of interest, as well as additional criteria that are important to examining the prospects of digital campaigning. Specifically, I examined people's impressions of the candidates' ability to handle political issues and hold character traits, as well as their sense of social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention. Also building on the gender- and party-based foci of previous chapters, this work examined these dynamics for Republican and Democratic women and men. This analysis was presented in Chapter Five. These approaches provide considerable insight into how Senate candidates in a range of electoral settings constructed their self-presentations across gender and party, and how these presentations impact public impressions. In this chapter, I first review the conceptual framework and how it led to this dissertation's expectations and eventual results. I then present the limitations of this research and ideas for future research. And finally, I discuss the broad implications of this research for political candidates and political communication scholarship.

Conceptual Framework, Expectations, and Results

Throughout this dissertation I had several expectations based on the two core ideas of gendered communication styles and political ownerships. The first context in which I examined these ideas was in mixed-gender elections in Chapter Three. In such elections I argued that candidate gender would be the key distinguishing factor between competitors, and thus candidates would employ communication styles that, by and large, aligned with their gender. Scholarship on gendered leadership and communication styles prompted differing expectations of interactivity and personalization. American women are seen as more interdependent than men and often exhibit a leadership style that is more collaborative and interactive, while men are

typically seen as more independent and autocratic (e.g., Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Guimond et al., 2006). Thus I expected that women would be more interactive than men in their communication. Further, women are thought to engage in a more “feminine” communication style that is characterized as more personal, conversational, and anecdotal, and men are more likely to implement a “masculine” communication style that leans toward being more impersonal, factual, and analytical (e.g., Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Campbell, 1989; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). In turn, I expected women to include more personalization than men. On both accounts, my expectations were supported. Specifically, women employed a more feminine style because they were more interactive and personal than men.

I also expected gender to be a source of distinction for issue and trait emphases. Due to women’s role as society’s caretakers, they have been culturally viewed as better at handling issues such as social welfare, education, health care, and the environment; whereas men have been perceived as society’s breadwinners and protectors, and thus viewed as better equipped to handle foreign policy, national defense, crime, and economic issues (e.g., Heldman et al., 2005; Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009). In other words, women and men are seen as “owning” different sets of issues, and thus I expected women to discuss feminine issues more than men, and men to discuss masculine issues more than women to create distinct self-presentations that centered on owned issues. Neither of these predictions came to light. Rather, women and men discussed these issues in similar volumes. One prediction that was supported regarding issues was the expectation that candidates would discuss masculine issues more than feminine issues—an expectation based on the public’s perception of masculine issues as more important (e.g., Bystrom & Kaid, 2002; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Smith, Paul, & Paul, 2007). It is the case, then, that while men and women did not discuss gender-owned issues more than

their opponent, they did reinforce the connection between masculinity and politics by privileging masculine issues in their self-presentations.

Candidates also have the opportunity to create distinction via their gender-based ownership of character traits. For example, women are perceived as owning warmth, compassion, congeniality, and empathy; in contrast, men are seen as owning individualism, toughness, and strength (e.g., Connell, 2005; Hayes, 2011; Lawless, 2004). With this in mind, I expected that women would emphasize feminine traits more than men, but as with issues, women and men discussed feminine traits in similar volumes. Regarding masculine traits, I deviated from gender ownership, and suggested that women and men would discuss masculine traits in *similar* volumes. This expectation was based on previous evidence of this occurring and also because masculine traits are seen as more important than feminine traits for politicians and leaders (e.g., Bystrom, 2006; Hayes, 2011; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a). What I found was that women actually discussed masculine traits *more* than men, perhaps in an attempt to “fit” the more masculine domain of politics. This result was extended by the finding that men and women in general discussed masculine traits more than feminine traits. Thus, for issues and traits, candidates, regardless of gender, contributed to the masculine norms of politics by emphasizing such elements in greater volume. In sum, gendered stylizing created distinctions for interactivity and personalization, but gendered ownership gave way for issues and traits, and ultimately led to a strong embrace of masculinity for all candidates in these mixed-gender elections.

The next electoral setting I examined also presented some challenges to existing scholarship. Namely, my expectations for same-gender elections in Chapter Four resulted in varying levels of support. Guiding this chapter was the premise that since gender could no longer serve as a site of distinction, candidates would rely on their political party affiliation to construct

their self-presentations. Though the electoral context now focused on same-gender elections, the expectations treaded on the same ground as mixed-gender elections because perceptions of women and Democrats overlap, and perceptions of men and Republicans align. As such I expected that in all-male and all-female elections, Democrats would be more interactive and personal than Republicans. These expectations were partially supported. Namely, Democrats were more personal, but it was Republicans who were more interactive. Thus members of both parties found ways to connect with their followers.

The overlap between gender and party also prompted the expectation that in all-male and all-female elections, Democrats would discuss feminine issues and traits more, and Republicans would emphasize masculine issues and traits more. What I found was not as clear-cut as these expectations. In all-female elections, Democrats did discuss feminine issues more than Republicans, but Republicans did not take the lead on masculine issues. In all-male elections, Republicans did emphasize masculine issues more, but Democrats did not discuss feminine issues more. Thus Democratic women and Republican man were more likely to discuss owned issues. As for traits, the only significant differences were for feminine trait discussions. Namely, Democratic men, as expected, did emphasize feminine traits more than Republican men, and in an unexpected twist, Republican women discussed feminine traits more than Democratic women. Thus across Chapter Four's core areas of interest, party-alignment was present, but was not universal in same-gender elections.

I then extended this examination by comparing partisan women in same-gender and mixed-gender elections. This pursuit enabled me to directly assess the impact of electoral context in a comparative manner. In a same-gender election, women face other women who also have access to a feminine leadership and communication style. Therefore to out do their competitor, I

expected Democratic women in women-only elections to be more interactive and personalized than Democratic women in mixed-gender elections, and Republican women in women-only elections to be more interactive and personalized than Republican women in mixed-gender elections. The results were mixed: Democratic and Republican women in same-gender elections were more interactive than their mixed-gender counterparts, but they were not more personal. I also expected the difference in electoral setting to amp up discussion of owned issues and traits in same-gender elections. In women-only elections, Democratic women are squaring off against someone who also has some claim to ownership over feminine issues and traits, which is not the case in mixed-gender elections. For Republican women in same-gender elections, they have a more exclusive claim to masculine issues and traits—a distinction not present in mixed-gender elections. Only one of these expectations was supported: Republican women in same-gender elections emphasized masculine issues more than Republican women in mixed-gender elections. The mixed results of this analysis reveal a nuanced constellation of factors at play at the intersection of electoral setting, and gender and party ownership.

Building on the results of the content analyses, I sought to examine whether personalization generated more positive impressions of candidates via an experimental design. In doing so I joined elements from the content analyses—issues and traits—with evaluative elements that directly spoke to the potential benefits of digital campaigning—social presence, parasocial interaction, and vote intention. Social presence is the extent to which virtual communication simulates face-to-face interactions, and prompts people to feel like they are “there” with a person despite the mediated space (Biocca & Nowak, 2001; Nowak & Biocca, 2003). Parasocial interaction is a one-way, nonreciprocal, pseudo relationship that audiences form with a mediated personality (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Lee & Oh, 2012). Previous research

has found that when a politician tweeted in more personal terms, it heightened participants' perceptions of social presence and parasocial interaction, and also positively impacted their vote intention toward the politician (Lee & Oh, 2012). Results in Chapter Five supported this work, and found that personalizing candidates did garner higher levels of social presence and parasocial interaction than depersonalizing candidates. Further, personalizing candidates were seen as more capable in handling certain issues and more likely to hold certain traits. Overall, personalized self-presentations cultivated more positive impressions.

This overarching trend was supported and challenged once I examined the effects of personalization by candidate gender, candidate party, and the intersection of the two. Generally speaking, personalizing men and women, and personalizing Republicans and Democrats, garnered more favorable impressions than their depersonalizing counterparts. At times, ownership moderated this relationship and favored one personalizing candidate over another, but in general, personalization was beneficial. Once candidate gender *and* party were factored in, the results were more nuanced. In particular, personalization played three distinct roles. First, when comparing only personalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *diminish* the effects of ownership because there were no significant differences between personalizing Democratic and Republican women, and there were no significant differences between personalizing Democratic and Republican men. Second, when comparing personalizing and depersonalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *elevate* the effects of ownership for women because personalizing Democratic women garnered higher evaluations than depersonalizing Democratic women on owned feminine issues and traits. Thus, even though both women had ownership over these elements, personalization prompted further ownership for one candidate. Third, when comparing personalizing and depersonalizing candidates, personalization appeared to *recede* in light of

party ownership for men because both personalizing and depersonalizing Democratic men garnered higher evaluations than depersonalizing Republican men for party-owned feminine issues and traits. Overall, personalization appeared to prompt more positive impressions in general, and especially for Democratic women.

Collectively, these findings support one overarching conclusion: Elections are complex. The candidate's gender and party affiliation, as well as their opponent's gender and party affiliation, did yield results that aligned with expectations. These findings extended the applicability of communication style and political ownership scholarship across 12 mixed-gender and same-gender elections. This combination of factors also missed the mark. Candidate gender and party affiliation are dominant elements in elections, but they are certainly not alone. Other aspects of the election could shift how candidates construct their self-presentations, such as geographic location, the salient concerns unfolding in a state during a given election cycle, the type of race, e.g., incumbent versus a challenger or open, and whether the election occurs during a presidential election. This list is merely suggestive and could include a host of additional factors. The addition of personalization via the experiment added to our understanding of just how complex elections are because it often had a notable impact on ownership across partisan men and women candidates. Such complexity does not diminish the findings of this research nor dissuade future research endeavors; rather, it suggests that incremental work is necessary to continue to explore the dynamic intersection of gender and party in American elections.

Limitations and Future Research

This project was not without limitations. In particular, I want to address aspects of the content and candidates analyzed in the content analyses in Chapters Three and Four, and also issues related to the method, sample, and effects of the experiment in Chapter Five. First, to

analyze candidates' campaign tweets during their respective general elections, I employed a large-scale content analysis, which included 14,662 tweets across the 24 candidates. The codebook I implemented across this vast array of content included three feature variables and 31 content variables, resulting in 34 variables, not including variables such as unit ID or date. This work enabled me to build a rich dataset, to examine communication dynamics from various perspectives for 12 mixed-gender and same-gender elections, and to contribute to and expand upon existing scholarship on candidate communication. This expansiveness, however, does have some limitations. All of these variables were coded as present or absent, and thus did not capture the tone or valence of the tweet content. The tone of the tweet content could provide perhaps a deeper understanding of *how* candidates were discussing issues and traits, as well as other campaign matters, to create and foster their online self-presentations.

Additionally, knowing whether the tweet was neutral, positive, or negative in nature could be beneficial regarding discussion around unowned issues and traits. For example, when a Republican candidate is discussing an unowned issue, such as health care or education, they could be doing one of three things: (a) neutrally mentioning the issue, perhaps saying that they are discussing this issue today with voters, (b) positively mentioning how they can fix/handle the issue, or (c) negatively critiquing the status quo, or the opponent's or Administration's handling of the issue. The tone of the tweet may contribute to issue ownership in important ways. For example, if a Republican is positively tweeting about their abilities to handle an unowned issue, then they could be actively trespassing party lines and perhaps trying to exert ownership. In other words, planting their flag in the other side's camp. If a Republican is negatively critiquing the other party's handling of an issue, then they may not be trying to take over ownership, but rather, trying to tear down the other party's claim to effective ownership. In other words, trying to

remove the other side's offense. It is possible that these two could work together in the process of establishing an ownership reversal. For example, candidates may first critique the other party's handling of an issue to demonstrate that they are no longer effective leaders on that issue, and then showcase how they can handle the issue. Such a process would arguably be slow since it also requires the public and news media to accept and reinforce these changes in ownership. Despite this slow process, the content analyses of Chapters Three and Four would serve as a comprehensive foundation for what men and women candidates discussed on Twitter, enabling future research in ownership scholarship to expand and examine the tone of the content and the effects of differing tone on the public's perceptions of ownership.

Second, the brevity of tweets presented both strengths and weaknesses to this research. Tweets are no more than 140 characters in length, and provide the opportunity for candidates to send short blasts of information and updates easily throughout the day. As the frequency analysis in Chapters Three and Four demonstrated, candidates often sent multiple tweets a day. This practice provides a dynamic understanding of how the candidates constructed their self-presentations. The drawback to these daily or hourly insights into the campaign was the potential loss of context. For instance, Elizabeth Emken of California once tweeted the word "water" with a link, and nothing else. Based on the content of the tweet, it was hard to decipher whether she was talking about water conservation efforts, the need for water or irrigation to agricultural areas, etc. In these cases, the links may have provided more context and enabled me to code whether this was discussion of a political issue, and if so, what kind, e.g., environment, agricultural, etc. However, for links, I only coded whether they were present since I was mainly focused on the content present in the body of the tweet.¹ Emken's example is on the extreme end of losing context, and in fact, rarely happened, but it is possible that future studies of tweets could use the

¹ I also coded for whether the links led to a photo, and if so, I assessed whether the photo was personal or in situ.

links to provide additional context on the tweet. The issue, of course, then becomes whether the study is coding tweets or whether it branches out into coding the headline, lead paragraph, or whole article of the linked content, and so on. Methodologically, this presents a host of decisions for researchers. These decisions were not of consequence in this study because I kept the unit of analysis to just the tweet, which afforded clarity on when the “codable” content began and ended. Ultimately, the coding practice I employed produced acceptable levels of intercoder reliability, even with the loss of context at times, but future work could expand upon this practice to examine how linked content provides perhaps greater detail on how candidates’ construct their self-presentations.

Third, there was a limitation of the content analyses regarding Republican women candidates. In the 2012 elections, only one Republican woman ran *and* won her election for the U.S. Senate: Deb Fischer of Nebraska. Fischer ran in a mixed-gender election, which means that none of the Republican women featured in the same-gender elections won their races. Therefore, my analysis of Republican women in Chapters Three and Four largely featured the tweets of losing women, and exclusively so in same-gender elections. In turn, this analysis may represent more of a cautionary tale for Republican women of what *not* to tweet and how *not* to construct online self-presentations. This information is still valuable and informative, and speaks to the real-world trend in which Democratic women are typically more successful when running for office than Republican women. For example, the 113th U.S. Congress includes 16 Democratic women Senators to four Republican women Senators, and this ratio is similar in the House: 59 Democratic women to 19 Republican women. Further, research has shown that Democratic women have a higher win rate for Congress than Republican women (CAWP, 2013a). Thus this research was working within the parameters available when studying a real-world election cycle.

That said, future research could build upon this work should more Republican women run for and win Senate seats, as well as other levels of office. For instance, 2014 appears to be another potentially historic year for women in politics at the gubernatorial level. According to figures by the Center for American Women and Politics (2013b), 27 women have filed to run for governor of their state, which includes 11 Republican women, four of which are incumbents running for re-election. The prospect of these four Republican women winning, and thus providing researchers with tweet content of winning Republican women, is fairly high, especially considering that the last sitting female governor to lose a general election was in 1994. Furthermore, 15 Republican women have filed to run at the Senate level in 2014, including three incumbent Senators. Thus, 2014 is ripe with opportunity to examine how winning Republican women create their online self-presentations. If more women from both major parties run and win, then future research could also benefit from analyzing the distinctions in self-presentations of incumbent and challenger candidates, as well as candidates in open races, to assess whether this factor impacts areas of ownership across various electoral settings.

The fourth limitation is regarding the experiment featured in Chapter Five. As with many communication laboratory experiments, this research included a certain degree of artificiality and also depended on the effects of a single collection of messages: a series of 14 tweets. In other words, subjects were exposed to hypothetical candidates and a snippet from their Twitter feeds, and then asked to assess the candidate and their likelihood to vote for them. In reality, people are more likely to draw upon a number of sources when forming their opinion, including content from the candidate, but also information from the news media and other media sources, as well as from interpersonal conversations with friends and family. Furthermore, this information collection process and opinion formation process typically occur over a period of time, not

during a one-time occurrence. That said, the fact that I saw any movement, let alone consistent movement at times, as the result of a single collection of messages speaks to the potential power of these messages, especially if they were repeated and reinforced by the candidates throughout the election. This potential power is reinforced by the realistic nature of the tweets used in the experiment. Specifically, my reading and analyzing of thousands of tweets informed the construction of these tweets, and at times, I used actual tweets from candidates in Chapters Three and Four and only made slight modifications to fit the experimental design. Thus despite the setting of this experiment, its results still have a strong touchstone with realistic conditions.

Fifth, the use of Survey Monkey to build the sample for the experiment created some limitations as well. The process for becoming part of a study via Survey Monkey is that members of the public agree to join Survey Monkey's panel of 30 million users, and in doing so they agree to be contacted by Survey Monkey to take surveys and experiments at some point in the future. Therefore the sample for this study was based on a pool of opt-in volunteers, and I did not employ a probably sampling technique. Because of this selection process, there are limits to the representativeness and generalizability of my study and its related results. Furthermore, there could be underlying characteristics of individuals who choose to join this type of panel that could affect the outcome of the study. All of these factors are valid limitations of the research, but there were also some advantages to using Survey Monkey. Namely, the vast reach of Survey Monkey enabled me to gather a sample that was politically, demographically, and geographically more diverse than the oft-employed university student population. This diversity does not completely assuage the limitations of the sample, but along with random assignment of participants to conditions, it does add validity to the study and its findings. Future work could employ this experiment with various samples, and determine through replication the broader effects of

personalization.

Finally, I presented a series of hierarchical regressions in Chapter Five as part of the additional analysis section, and this analysis presented a potential concern. Several of the blocks for the regressions, as well as the overall models, accounted for small, but significant amounts of variance explained. For example, most of the final models for the hierarchical regressions accounted for less than 5% of the variance for each dependent variable. That these R^2 values were significant is most likely due to the relatively large size of the sample. That these R^2 values explained such little variance is a valid concern and may seem like a limitation if my goal for the additional analysis was to predict a large amount of variance. However, that was not my goal. Rather, I wanted to explore the *relationships* (a) between the individual effects of participants' demographics and evaluative criteria, and (b) between the stimuli and evaluative criteria when controlling for demographics. Therefore the significance and directionality of the beta coefficients was of greater concern regarding this study's intentions. Our broader understanding of the effects of personalization would, of course, benefit from future work that focused on prediction or that used the variables in the regressions to create a structural equation model to better understand the dynamics at play in this process for various evaluative criteria. Ultimately, this experiment sought to build iterative knowledge of the effects of personalization in general, and in regards to a candidate's gender and party affiliation, and it was successful in this pursuit.

Implications

This dissertation offers several key contributions to our understanding of gender and political party in American elections. I focus on four implications in this final section of the dissertation. First, I further explore the role of masculinity in American politics, and its pervasive presence in the selected elections featured in Chapters Three and Four. Second, I address the

concept of personalization via the content analyses, and reveal how winning and losing candidates differentially emphasized personalization in mixed-gender and same-gender elections. Third, I stay in the realm of personalization, but extend the conversation to the storied past of personalization in politics and how the results in Chapter Five paint a more positive future for personalization moving forward. Finally, I argue for a shift in political issue ownership scholarship to both address the patterns I witnessed in the content analyses, and to enhance our understanding of the role of issue ownership in American politics. I discuss each of these in turn.

When women first started running for political office, they were often told they should “run like a man.” Such advice was given most likely because a women’s place for much of American history has been outside the political arena. Thus to enter a man’s domain, they needed to act like a man. In the early 1900s, when women first started running for and winning congressional offices, Theodore Roosevelt was president—founder of the Rough Riders, and a man who once took a bullet before a campaign event and then proceeded to give a 90 minute speech. Roosevelt was, and arguably still is, the preeminent image of American masculinity. This image has cultivated a strong desire from the American public for masculinity in politics—an image that has been reinforced by the news media, popular culture, and candidates alike. Many women pursued this more masculine image in an attempt to get elected, which is why it was so jarring when Senator Parry Murray of Washington initially ran for elected office as a “mom in tennis shoes.” Modern women candidates have certainly departed from running exclusively as men. The emphasis of both masculine and feminine issues and traits in Chapters Three and Four, as well as the employment of a feminine style via interactivity and personalization, support this transition. These findings suggest that women create more balanced self-presentations that align and trespass gender ownership to present a more well rounded

persona.

Yet the findings from Chapters Three and Four also suggests that candidates, both women and men, have not forgotten the masculine roots of American politics and continue to feed this connection in contemporary elections. In mixed-gender, all-male, and all-female elections, men and women candidates emphasized masculine issues and traits over feminine issues and traits. In fact, there was a consistent pattern across all three types of races: Candidates discussed masculine issues almost twice as much as feminine issues, if not more, and the discrepancy between masculine and feminine trait discussion was much smaller, but still always favored masculine traits. The consistency of this pattern across 12 elections that featured every combination of candidate gender possible speaks to the continual, strong embrace of masculinity in American politics. What this also suggests is that women construct a more balanced self-presentation, as referenced above, because running *solely* as a woman is not a viable option in the contemporary political climate, and the communication patterns of women suggests they know this to be the case. This pattern for women is also particularly apparent when examined in the context of masculine traits. As stated, candidates favored masculinity for traits, but the difference was much smaller than that found in issues. In fact, for men in mixed-gender elections and in same-gender elections, the difference between masculine and feminine trait emphases never rose above 1%. But for women across these elections, masculine trait references led feminine traits anywhere from 1.8% to 5.1% more. Thus it is the women, not the men, who were coupling a strong embrace of masculine issues with a comparatively stronger embrace of masculine traits over feminine traits. Women candidates have made notable gains in winning congressional offices since the early 1900s, but their communications indicate that they still take heed of the ardent relationship between masculinity and politics.

Seemingly discordant with the role of masculinity in politics is this study's finding that personalization—a more feminine style—can be beneficial. In practice, the benefits of personalization were more nuanced. The first examination of the impact of personalization occurred in the content analyses in Chapters Three and Four regarding communication styles. Recall that masculine communication styles rely on facts and analytics, and thus typically take on a more impersonal characterization; feminine communication styles embrace anecdotes to create a more personal approach. The analysis of winning and losing candidates in these data chapters indicated that the positive effects of personalization depend on the electoral setting. At the aggregate level, *losing* candidates in mixed-gender elections were more likely to include personalization in their tweets. Conversely, *winning* candidates in same-gender elections were more likely to include personalization. Thus personalization was associated with winning in same-gender elections. Digging deeper we see a stark contrast between winning women depending on who they were running against. Specifically, winning women in mixed-gender elections emphasized personalization *less* than their losing male competitors, but winning women in same-gender elections incorporated *more* personalization than their losing female opponents. It is important to keep in mind that the winning women in mixed-gender elections represented both parties, whereas the winning women in same-gender elections only included Democrats. Thus, party affiliation may moderate the relationship between personalization and electoral success in different electoral settings. That said, these patterns suggest that personalization is more beneficial in same-gender elections, especially so for women candidates. In other words, it seems to abet female candidates when they can “out-woman” the other woman in the competition.

The previous discussion of personalization may seem to limit its benefits, and thus I wish

to focus on the experiment in Chapter Five to broaden this conversation. The findings in the content analyses suggested that personalization was more of a winning strategy in same-gender elections. But it is important to note that many things occur in real-world elections that tip the scales in favor of one candidate. The finding that personalization is less beneficial, comparatively speaking, in a mixed-gender election is tentative at best. Content analyses are valuable and provide considerable insight on what candidates are saying, but they lack the control of an experiment, and thus are less able to suggest causality. This is why, in part, the examination of personalization in an experiment is such a crucial step to understanding its role in an election.

Personalization has cultivated a bad reputation in politics. That said, personalization as a concept has taken on several forms. One of the initial discussions of personalization was based on the personalization of voting behavior, and was often called “candidate-centered” voting. The idea that voters would focus on and evaluate a candidate’s persona, personality, or personal image—basically on anything besides issue platforms—was seen by some scholars as irrational (cf. Fenno, 1978; Hayes, 2009; McLeod et al., 1983). For example, Fenno (1978) stated, “normative theorists...have a tendency to think of policy congruence as the only legitimate basis for representation and denigrate extrapolicy bases of representation...” (as cited in Popkin, 1991, p. 5). Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) in *The American Voter* deemed issues and party identification as more rational and acceptable forms of information because they are enduring qualities, whereas candidate-centered voting is too idiosyncratic. Focusing on the personal, it seems, was problematic. The next iteration of personalization of politics was the use of the “personal frame” in news coverage of women candidates. Such news coverage focused more on women’s personalities and personal lives as compared to men (Aday & Devitt, 2001;

Bystrom, 1999; Devitt, 1999). On its surface, such coverage does not appear detrimental. However, this framing would often focus on women's roles as mothers and wives, and use that framing to question women's experience, fit for office, and whether they could juggle the demands of domestic and public responsibilities (Braden, 1996). As such, personalization in both iterations elicited a sense of triviality: either voters' focus on persona was deemed as a trivial way to form an opinion, or women candidates were trivialized based on their personal lives.

These iterations also share another commonality: The actor perpetrating this form of personalization is someone *other* than the candidate. In the former, it is the voters who are using personalization to evaluate the candidates, and in the latter, it is the news media who is casting women with a more personalized framing. In the experiment in Chapter Five, the actor in this examination of personalization was the candidate themselves. I wanted to build on the work of Lee and Oh (2012) and Warnick et al. (2005) to examine whether personalization *from the candidate* could positively impact the public's impressions of the candidate. What I found was that personalization garnered more favorable impressions than depersonalization in the aggregate, and, generally speaking, once examined based on a candidate's gender and party affiliation. Personalization also made the mediated space of digital campaigning feel more like a relational space. In short, personalization abetted candidates. In Chapter One I presented a quote from Emin Milli and connected it to how women could use digital media in campaign efforts, but it also strikes a chord with the current discussion. Specifically, Milli said, "the point is not just using new technologies, it's new ways of breaking the old narrative." If the old narrative was that personalization was problematic, then the new narrative, achieved by candidates via Twitter, is that personalization can be beneficial. Digital media enables candidates to have more control over getting their message to a wider audience. This control allows them to put forth their own

version of personalization, to construct their own narrative, and, based on the results of this dissertation, to create more personalized self-presentations that resonate positively with the public. Therefore just as women can use digital media to carve out a narrative that counteracts more negative news framing, candidates in general can use digital media to advantageously recast the role of personalization in politics.

The results of this dissertation call for a different perspective within scholarship on personalization, and they also call for a different perspective within scholarship on ownership. In particular, scholarship needs to drill down on issue ownership to gain a better understanding of electoral politics. Political ownership research has operated at a fairly high level since its inception. Meaning, much of the work has focused on the presence or absence of political issues in candidate communication and news articles, as well as whether the public associates these issues with different groups.² This work essentially answers the following questions: Did the candidate mention health care? Did the news article reference national security? Does the public associate the handling of foreign affairs with Republicans? In some ways, this angle on ownership research mimics that of agenda-setting theory. By examining what candidates are saying and what the news is saying, we can establish what issues they have decided should be on their respective agendas, and thus also, the public's agenda. This type of work on issue ownership, just like agenda-setting work, is incredibly valuable and informative. Such work within gender and party is key to building an understanding of what candidates are saying, and how that communication has changed overtime, across electoral context, across level of office, and so on. The content analyses in Chapter Three and Four are one of the first of their kind to examine such communication across electoral contexts and on a media platform like Twitter.

² It is important to note that some scholarship has deepened this focus on issue ownership via, for example, examining the role issue salience in this process, e.g., Bélanger & Meguid (2008).

These types of studies are crucial to building a foundation of knowledge because to understand the effects or impact of communication, we must understand what communication exists.

Thus what I am about to argue regarding the future direction of issue ownership does not undermine this work; it simply urges it to move further. To explain this transition, it is again helpful to reference agenda setting. McCombs and Shaw conducted the first agenda-setting study during the late 1960s, examining what issues were deemed salient and thus on the agendas of the news media and the public. Decades later, McCombs presented the concept of second-level agenda-setting, which focused on the attributes of the story that were made salient. Thus, scholarship moved from what *issues* were made salient, to what *aspects* of the issues were made salient. I argue for the same move to occur in issue ownership research. Specifically, to better understand how men and women, Republicans and Democrats, own certain issues, we need to start to explore what aspects of issues they own. Political issues are broad and include several different components. For example, within crime/law and order, there can be sub-issues ranging from gun control to drug trafficking to funding for prisons. Also within issues there can be diverse issue stances. For instance, Democrats typically lobby for more gun control, whereas Republicans advocate the rights of the Second Amendment. Actual examples of these sub-issues and issue stance differences arose within my analysis of tweets in Chapters Three and Four. Democrats often talked about immigration from the perspective of the DREAM Act, which champions a route to citizenship via education or military service; whereas Republicans stressed the economic downfalls of more relaxed immigration policies. Thus, within this overarching, unowned issue, we see Democrats embracing a stance that relies on the owned issue of education, and Republicans do the same via their ownership over the economy. This approach certainly requires more nuance, but it could be especially beneficial to our understanding of how

candidates communicate across gender and party ownership. This deeper examination of issue ownership could be particularly helpful to understanding communication patterns of candidates who face a conflict between gender and party ownership—specifically, Republican women and Democratic men. These candidates must negotiate contrasting ownerships to build electable self-presentations, and it is possible that a “second-level” issue ownership approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how they navigate these waters and to what effect.

An overriding theme of this chapter is complexity. Elections are complex. The role of gender and party in an election is complex. Even our understanding of personalization in politics is complex. The only clear cut answers I can provide are that gender matters, party matters, electoral context matters, and personalization matters. How they matter and to what extent leads back to the theme of complexity. This conclusion, however, is not disheartening, and when viewed within a certain context, it seems logical. For hundreds of years in America we have seen what it means to be a man who runs for and wins an elected office. We have seen it repeatedly at every level of office—from city to national—and we have predominantly seen it in the context of only men on the ballot. As such, voters, potential candidates, the news media, and scholarship have seen countless models of successful, and unsuccessful, male politicians. We have almost an endless reservoir of data and experiences to draw on when trying to understand how men might construct their self-presentations and to what effect. In comparison, as of 2013, only 44 women have ever held a seat in the U.S. Senate—this translates to roughly 2% of people who have ever held the office. And five of those 44 were just elected in 2012. Our notion of what it means to run and win as a woman in the U.S. Senate pales in comparison to our understanding of men. And our understanding what it means for a woman to compete against another woman for U.S. Senate is by far smaller. And when I say “our understanding,” I mean voters, the news media,

scholarship, and the potential women candidates themselves. Many women who ponder running for office or eventually decide to do so comment on the lack of role models. When it comes to the U.S. Senate, women are still statistical outliers, and their unique paths to success complicate the process of understanding how they eventually won the office. The unsatisfactory conclusion of all of this regarding building and testing scholarship, theories, and potential strategies is that we need more time. Or rather, we need more women to study. Theories on gender ownership are based on the historical divisions between men and women. Such divisions still exist, and, as demonstrated in this dissertation, still have purchase in modern elections. But scholarship will need to evolve as women candidates evolve, and as our societal expectations and perceptions of women and politics evolve as well. This process will be slow, and will undoubtedly still incorporate some legacy aspects of politics, such as the strong embrace of masculinity shown earlier. But through future research, and perhaps research endeavors such as my proposal on issue ownership, we will gain a better understanding of the complex relationship between gender and American politics.

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Appendix A

Codebook for Content Analyses

General coding notes:

- The unit of observation and analysis is each individual tweet.
- Tweets can contain multiple variables, e.g., be a retweet and reference an issue, include two distinct political issues, or include a photo, issue, and gender reference.
- All of the content of the tweet should be coded, including “hashtags.” A hashtag is when a user includes a “#” symbol to mark a keyword or topic. Some of the examples below include hashtag content that would be coded as present for certain variables.
- Coders should only code a variable as present when it is explicit and manifest in nature, not implicit or latent. When in doubt, code the variable as not present.

Variables

1. Unit ID

Unit ID is the numerical file name of the individual tweet, which is also the unique identification number attached to each tweet by Twitter, e.g., 4993776572.

2. Candidate

Record the code next to the appropriate candidate. You can determine which candidate it is based on the name of the folder containing the tweets, which coincides with the candidate’s @username. Shading indicates pairs of opposing candidates.

Code	Candidate Name	@username	Code	Candidate Name	@username
1	Chris Murphy	ChrisMurphyCT	13	Jeff Flake	FlakeforSenate
2	Linda McMahon	Linda_McMahon	14	Richard Carmona	CarmonaForAZ
3	Elizabeth Warren	elizabethforma	15	Joe Donnelly	JoeforIndiana
4	Scott Brown	ScottBrownMA	16	Richard Mourdock	richardmourdock
5	Claire McCaskill	McCaskill2012	17	Bob Casey, Jr.	Bob_Casey
6	Todd Akin	ToddAkin	18	Tom Smith	TomSmithforPA
7	Deb Fischer	DebFischer2012	19	Dianne Feinstein	DianneFeinstein
8	Bob Kerrey	kerreybob	20	Elizabeth Emken	ElizabethEmken
9	Dean Heller	DeanHeller	21	Mazie Hirono	mazieforhawaii
10	Shelley Berkley	Berkley4Senate	22	Linda Lingle	lingle2012
11	Martin Heinrich	Heinrich4NM	23	Kirsten Gillibrand	SenGillibrand
12	Heather Wilson	Heather4Senate	24	Wendy Long	WendyLongforNY

3. Date
The date that the tweet was posted. Record as MMDD, e.g., 07/28 would be entered as 0728.
4. Link
If the tweet includes a URL to another information source, image, or video, mark as “Present” (1), if not, mark as “Not present” (0).
5. Audio/Visual
If the tweet includes a picture, video, or sound, indicated by either the content of the tweet or a link that includes the words “pic,” “photo,” “twitpic,” etc. mark as “Present” (1), if not, mark as “Not present” (0).
6. Emoticon or Emoji
If the tweet includes an emoticon—a picture composed of numbers, letters, or punctuation marks to depict some type of emotion, such as :) which is a smiley face—or includes an emoji—the Japanese term for a picture character, mark it as “Present” (1). If the tweet does not include emoticons or emojis, mark as “Not Present” (0). For example, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) tweeted using emojis: “Whew, that was close. 🐯🐯 great win Tigers. MIZ!”

The following variables should be coded as either “Not present” (0) or “Present” (1). Below, “CD” stands for Conceptual Definition, and “OD” stands for Operational Definition.

Interactivity

CD: Any tweet that reflects some level of interaction or exchange with another Twitter user or with another person(s) or organization(s).

7. Retweet or Modified tweet
OD: Retweet is when a candidate reposts another user’s tweet and “RT” appears at the beginning of the tweet, and a modified tweet is when a candidate reposts another user’s tweet, but has modified the original text in some way and “MT” appears at the beginning of the tweet. For example, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) retweeted: “RT @AmbassadorRice: Rami al-Sayed, Marie Colvin & Remi Ochlik died showing the world what is happening in #Syria.”
Note: If the user adds their own content to the retweet, it is coded as present for a “Retweet Plus,” not a “Retweet.” The categories of “Retweet or Modified tweet” and “Retweet Plus” are mutually exclusive.
8. Retweet Plus
OD: When a candidate posts a retweet or modified tweet and also adds some of their own content to the beginning of the tweet. For example, Senate candidate Tom Smith tweeted: “Another poll has us within 2. RT @DCMorningCall Alright twitter friends, ready for poll reveal? This one’s a jaw dropper <http://goo.gl/fOTDa>.” The content preceding the “RT,” “Another poll has us within 2,” is what Smith added to the retweet.
9. @mention/Mention

OD: When a candidate *references* another user(s), that is not their direct opponent, and includes the @username in the body of the tweet. For example, Gov. Jay Inslee (D-WA) tweeted: “I’m proud to have President @BarackObama’s endorsement.” *OR* When a candidate references a specific person(s) or organization(s) in the body of the tweet but does not use their @username. For example, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) tweeted: “Rep. DeLauro On Fair Pay <http://twurl.nl/bbylkl>.” *Note:* Quotes and quoted tweet content attributed to someone would be considered an “@mention/Mention.” General mentions of vague groups should *not* be coded as “present,” such as “women,” “voters,” “vets,” “Democrats,” “Republicans,” or “families.” Self-references should also *not* be coded as “present.” References to locations, such as “chatting with voters at the Flipnotes Café,” should *not* be coded as “present.” Also, it is not automatically a @mention if it is a “Retweet or Modified Tweet” or a “Retweet Plus.” In other words, the first @username after the RT or MT does not count as present for a “@mention.”

10. Opponent @mention/Mention

OD: When a candidate references their direct opponent and includes either their @username, a variation of their given name, or the content of the tweet explicitly references the opponent but does not use their name, but rather says something like “my opponent” in the body of the tweet. For example, Senate candidate Heather Wilson (R-NM) mentioned only her opponent, Martin Heinrich (@Heinrich4NM), when she tweeted: “#FLASHBACK #FACTS @Heinrich4NM said he was proud to vote for cap and trade, which would kill 11,000 NM jobs. #nmsen #debate.” *Note:* Opponent mentions do *not* automatically count as “@mention/Mention,” and opponent mentions are not included in the interactivity index.

11. @reply

OD: When a candidate *responds to* a specific user’s tweet, and the @username(s) appears at the beginning of the tweet and is *not* the grammatical subject of the sentence. For example, Rep. John Culberson (R-TX) tweeted in response to Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH): “@timryan I am glad we are having this high tech debate Tim – what is your source for this factoid? It is far too small to be believable.”

Additional Coding Note: A tweet can be double, triple, or quadruple coded as present for either a “Retweet or Modified Tweet,” a “Retweet Plus,” an “@mention/Mention,” “Opponent @mention/Mention,” and/or a “@reply.” For instance, the tweet: “RT @MrAtkinss: @roseatable9 @elizabethemken as it should, all hands should be working hard in blue areas where opportunity harkens!” would be coded as present for “Retweet or Modified tweet” *and* “@reply” since @MrAtkinss is replying to both @roseatable9 and @emlizabethemken, and neither of them are the subject of the tweet.

12. In situ photo

OD: Photo of the candidate “in position” interacting with people who are *not* family members or friends, such as the public, other politicians, etc, or tweet content that suggests such interaction. For example, if the photo includes the candidate speaking behind a podium or on a stage, and no audience members are present, and the tweet content does not explicitly mention that this is a rehearsal but does state that the candidate is speaking at something or to an audience. Such photos would be marked as “Present” (1). If you cannot tell from the tweet

content or photo whether the people in the photo are *not* family members or friends, mark as “Not present” (0). An example of an in situ photo would be when Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) tweeted the following: “Senator Schumer, Rep. Dan Maffei and I meeting w/voters at the Grandview Diner in #Syracuse yesterday #Nov2 <http://twitpic.com/32m31s>.”



Personalization

CD: Any tweet that references the *candidate's* personal identity or life, and creates a personal connection via the text of the tweet or the usage of a photo in the tweet.

13. Gender

OD: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their gender—using words such as man, woman, male, female, father, mother, or phrases or hashtags such as “#offthesidelines” when used in conjunction with a female candidate, etc. For example, Sen. McCaskill tweeted: “As a woman & former prosecutor who handled 100s of rape cases, I’m stunned by Rep Akin’s comments about victims this AM.”

14. Uniqueness

OD: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their uniqueness in a certain context, including a candidate’s novelty, meaning that they are the first, lone, or pioneer to do something based on gender, race, religion, etc., or that they embody a unique spirit, e.g. “march to the beat of their own drum,” or phrases such as “once-in-a-generation” candidate. For example, Christie Vilsack, candidate for the House from Iowa, tweeted: “I would be honored to make history and represent Iowa as the first woman in #Congress. Vote today: <http://t.co/A0Imzzif> #IA04.” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Gender,” given the “woman” reference.

15. Hobbies and Sports

OD: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to personal hobbies or sporting events/teams. For example, Sen. McCaskill tweeted: “Gracious, Tigers very flat in first half. Will the real Mizzou basketball team please stand up?”

16. Family

OD: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their immediate or extended family members. For example, Sen. Bob Casey, Jr. (D-PA), retweeted: “RT @ActioNewser: Bob Casey surrounded by family makes victory speech <http://t.co/AtrxU3kL>.”

17. Religion

OD: When a candidate ties the content of the tweet to their religion or religious practices, e.g., attending a religious service, participating in a religious activity or occasion, etc. For example, Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) tweeted: “On my way to church...then off to a super busy day!” *Note:* Seasonal greetings for holidays related to religion, e.g., “Happy Easter!” should be coded as present for “Other Personal,” not for “Religion.” If the tweet had said, “Headed to mass. Happy Easter!” then it could also be coded as present for “Religion” since it has a more explicit connection to religion/religious practice.

18. Signed tweets

OD: When a *candidate*, not the campaign staff, “signs” their tweet using a version of their name. Some politicians have their staff write their tweets for them, and when they decide to personally write the tweet, they indicate it by signing at the end of the tweet. Some politicians make this practice explicitly known. For example, Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s Twitter account states, “Tweets from Tammy are signed -TB.” Other candidates do not include such a message in their account bio, but do make it explicit in other ways. For example, Senate candidate Pete Hoekstra (R-MI) tweeted: “We had a strong start. Now want to finish strong. Please consider a donation at hoekstraforsenate.com Thank you. Diane and Pete.” In this tweet he signed it on behalf of himself and his wife Diane.

19. Personal photos

OD: Photos that include the candidate on their own depicting a personal activity, such as fishing or in their alma mater’s attire for a game, or a photo of the candidate with their significant other, children, other family members, friends, pet, etc. Also, the photo could include the candidate’s significant other, children, other family members, friends, pet, etc. posing on their own *without* the candidate. If you cannot tell from the tweet content or the photo whether the other people in the photo are family or friends, mark as “Not Present.”

For example, on the left is an example of a personal photo with Sen. Gillibrand and her family celebrating Halloween. She tweeted: “Check out the pic of Spiderman and the Star Wars trooper. Great Halloween fun for the Gillibrand family this weekend. <http://bit.ly/SLRrA>.” On the right is an example of a personal photo where Sen. Gillibrand does not appear in the photo. She tweeted: “Theo & Henry had a great time Trick or Treating tonight! Theo went as a ninja & Henry was a caterpillar #HappyHalloween <http://t.co/dRr06jQI>.” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Everyday Mundane” because it includes a seasonal greeting.



Political Issues

CD: Any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate and their stance, plan for, or general statement regarding a political issue. Also, any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate's opponent or another person or entity's stance, plan for, or general statement regarding a issue.

20. Education

OD: Any discussion relating to teaching, funding for K-12 or higher education, charter schools, school vouchers, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) efforts, literacy, affordable education, access to education, etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding education. For example, Judy Biggert, candidate for House from Illinois, tweeted: "Our new bill will build on McKinney-Vento and keep the doors of education open to homeless children. Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/29ju9fs>."

21. Health Care

OD: Any discussion relating to prescriptions, health care insurance or lack thereof (e.g., being un/underinsured, lacking coverage), hospitals, vaccines, reform, wellness programs, veteran hospitals, veteran's care, Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare," Medicaid, Medicare, etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding health care. For example, Sen. Heller tweeted: "Ways and Means is holding 1st hearing on House health care bill Wed. Senate bill costs \$1.5 trillion, covering less than half of uninsured." *Note:* Discussion of health care explicitly tied to women's issues, listed below, should be coded under "Women's Issues."

22. Women's Issues

OD: Any discussion related to a set of issues that are typically seen as concerning women, such as fair/equal pay, pregnancy, rape-related pregnancy, maternity leave, reproductive rights, contraception access and coverage, funding for or access to planned parenthood or other women-oriented organizations, the phrase "women's issues," "women's rights," etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding women's issues. For example, Cynthia Dill, candidate for House from Maine, tweeted: "49% of women support mandatory insurance coverage of

contraception. I do, too. Other candidates do not. <http://t.co/FvsM2YYF> #dillforsenate.”

23. Environment

OD: Any discussion related to the environment, emissions, parks, reserves, climate change, global warming, environmental protection, conservation, preservation, or relief for land, plants, water, or wildlife, clean or green energy, single-use plastic bags or plastic bag bans, clean-ups, etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding environment. For example, Sen. Gillibrand tweeted: “W/#Upstate, #NY devastated by drought, I’m pushing for NY to be included in any 2012 #FarmBill disaster relief program <http://t.co/VzXd070k>.” This variable can also include references regarding fossil fuels, natural resources, gas prices, drilling for oil or pipelines, and energy independence as long as they are *explicitly* tied to the environment. For example, Sen. Gillibrand tweeted: “V proud to recv 100% on @LCVoters 2011 Natl Environmental Scorecard. <http://t.co/N5oWZBOQ> I’ll always fight to protect our natural resources.” General references to these matters without an explicit reference to the environment or references that only link these matters to foreign policy should be coded as “present” for “Other Issues.”

24. Military/Defense/Security

OD: Any discussion related to the state’s army bases or reserves, border security, war, terrorism, preparedness for crisis, national or homeland security, *non*-health care matters regarding veterans, troops, the military, etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding military. Sen. Gillibrand tweeted: “Proud to serve on Armed Services Cmte. One reason I came to Congress was to strengthen natl security & be a voice for troops & mil families.” Note: General references to “vets” or “veterans” is not sufficient for a code of “present.” For example, if a candidate tweets that they are “chatting with vets” or attending a veterans rally, it would be coded as “not present.” However, if they tweeted, “speaking today on veterans’ affairs,” that would be coded as “present.”

25. Crime

OD: Any discussion related to crime, safety, prevention, police, handling of criminal offenders (e.g., procession, sentencing, parole, prisons), laws (proposed or in place), death penalty/capital punishment, pardons, guns, and drugs (e.g., possession, trafficking, zero-tolerance, the “war on drugs”), references about specific crimes such as child abuse, domestic abuse, murder rates, etc., or budget or tax discussion regarding crime. Sen. Heller tweeted: “Intro’d bill w/Sen. Udall(D-NM) to tackle NV drug trafficking. Increases penalties for using ultralight aircraft <http://tinyurl.com/3qw4tj4>.”

26. Economy

OD: Any discussion relating to the general economy, un/employment, job growth, business and industry, tourism, Social Security, stimulus, deficit, inflation, deficit, the “debt ceiling,” stock market, credit rating, banks and loans, “mortgage crisis,” fiscal responsibility, general spending or budgets (e.g., Congressional or federal spending, Congress’s budget), etc. For example, Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA) tweeted: “A vibrant economy requires workers with the skills they need to do their jobs well. That’s why quality schools are essential.” *Note:* Since this example also mentioned schools being essential, this tweet would also be coded as present for “Education.”

27. Taxes

OD: Any discussion relating to taxes or levies in general, including raising, lowering, or cutting of taxes, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service), tax breaks or credits, specific taxes, e.g. property taxes, state income taxes, federal income taxes, etc. For example, Vernon Parker, candidate for House from Arizona, tweeted: “In difficult times leaders can lose common sense. Raising taxes and selling government buildings, only to lease them back, makes no sense.” *Note:* Does not include references to the candidates’ personal taxes. For example, do not code the following tweet as present as it relates only to a candidate’s personal taxes: “RT @SLOTribune: Maldonado and family business owe more than \$4 million in taxes, IRS says <http://t.co/0p5mm4hi>.” Also, “Taxes” are *not* automatically coded as “Economy.”

28. Other Issues

OD: Any discussion relating to other issues not specified above, including, but *not limited to*, immigration, big government, energy independence, foreign policy, LGBT issues, or poverty. For example, Sen. Chris Murphy (CT-D) tweeted: “Great to see NY follow CT’s lead and legalize same-sex marriage. Now its time to get rid of DOMA.”

Character Traits

CD: Any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate and their ability to *or* lack of ability to portray or embody a character trait. Also any discussion in a tweet regarding the candidate’s opponent or someone else’s ability to *or* lack of ability to portray or embody a character trait.

Therefore any discussion of a trait—whether the discussion indicates that someone embodies a trait, e.g., Sen. Heller is compassionate, or indicates that someone does not embody a trait, e.g., Sen. Heller lacks compassion—would be coded as “Present” (1), and in this case, both of these references would be coded as present for the trait “Compassionate.”

29. Compassionate

OD: Any discussion including terms such as compassionate, caring, sympathetic, kind, warm, empathetic, etc. For example, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) retweeted: “RT @denaclentz: @Tammy4Congress Thank you, Tammy for yr. commitment to us all and caring for yr. constituents. You’re admired and smart!” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Retweet.”

30. Honest

OD: Any discussion including terms such as honest, upstanding, integrity, trustworthy, honorable, candid, authentic, phrases such as you can “count on” this person, “straight talker,” or “a stand up” man or woman, etc. For example, Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) retweeted: “@moethehoeee Hard working, honest and a proven leader: vote to re-elect Rep. Grijalva today.” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Leadership” since it references the candidate as being “a proven leader,” also coded as “Other Trait” since it references being “handworking,” and also coded as present for “Retweet.”

31. Congenial

OD: Any discussion including terms such as congenial, friendly, likable, personable,

approachable, etc. For example, Nan Hayworth, candidate for House from New York, tweeted: ““Most Likable” freshman woman in the House, and more, thanks to your support! <http://t.co/mjqAFQRi> #vr4smallbiz.” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Gender” since it mentions that the candidate is a “woman,” and it would also be coded as present for “Economy” since the hashtag (the text appearing along side the “#” symbol) references small business (“smallbiz”). Another example includes when Sen. McCaskill tweeted: “Sitting right behind Todd Akin on plane back to St Louis. He’s always friendly and polite. I appreciate that.”

32. Collaborative

OD: Any discussion including terms such as compromising, collaborative, cooperative, phrases such as “reach across the aisle,” or bringing people or parties together, etc. For example, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) tweeted: “Utahns knows me and that I walk the walk to reach across the aisle to make progress. #ksldebate #utpol.”

33. Leadership

OD: Any discussion regarding leadership skills, or whether the candidate is a good/bad or strong/weak leader, has a plan for the future/visionary, or phrases such as “guiding force,” “leading by example,” “being a role model,” being “ready to serve,” or retweets where a user says they will “follow” the candidate, etc. For example, Abel Maldonado, candidate for House from California, tweeted: “Race is tight, going to be a long night! Californians have told me they are ready for pragmatic leadership - Looking forward to serving you.”

34. Strong/Tough

OD: Any discussion including terms such as aggressive, tough, strong, “finishing strong,” “fighter,” “fighting for,” “don’t back down,” “standing up for” something, bold, audacious, as well as references showing the lack of strength, like being vulnerable or a coward, etc. For example, Shelley Berkley, candidate for Senate from Nevada, tweeted: “Shelley knows we need new good-paying jobs here in NV that can’t be shipped overseas. That’s why she’s a #fighter 4 clean energy jobs #nvsen.” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Economy” since it references jobs and as “Environment” since it references clean energy.

35. Confident

OD: Any discussion including terms such as confident, self-assured, self-reliant, independent, poised, etc. For example, Rep. Chris Collins (R-NY) tweeted: “Collins demonstrating calm, confident leadership. Hochul seems rattled by all press calling her attacks “false” and “misleading”. #ny27” *Note:* This tweet would also be coded as present for “Leadership” and “Honest.”

36. Decisive

OD: Any discussion including terms such as decisive, assertive, determined, focused, unshakable, unwavering, steadfast, or a lack of decisiveness, such as being “wishy-washy” or a “flip-flopper,” etc. For example, Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) tweeted: “Michelle Lujan Grisham was endorsed today by the Albuquerque Journal, which praised her as an assertive and... <http://t.co/LUhdDqlA>.”

37. Other Traits

OD: Any discussion relating to other traits not specified above, including, but not limited to hardworking/working hard, intelligent/knowledgeable, capable, competent, modest, arrogant, etc. As previously noted, an example would be when Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) retweeted: “@moethehoeee Hard working, honest and a proven leader: vote to re-elect Rep. Grijalva today.”

Appendix B

Experiment Stimuli and Relevant Questions

>>>Participants first read the following introductory text. Content in brackets indicates what text changed depending on which treatment participants were randomly assigned to.

Please read the following tweets from [Sarah/Steve] Adams, who is a [Democrat/Republican] candidate for U.S. Senate. The tweets have been randomly selected from Adams’s Twitter feed. Once you have read the tweets, you will be asked some questions about Adams.

Depersonalized	Personalized
As a proud candidate for Congress, it’s an honor to have the American Federation of Teachers endorsement. #Edu4All	As a proud [mom/dad] & PTA member, I’m honored to have the American Federation of Teachers endorsement. #Edu4OurKids
This campaign’s Jobs Plan focuses on the middle class--this state’s backbone. Clark’s plan is copied from natl talking points. #BetterJobs	My Jobs Plan focuses on the middle class because I’m the middle class. Clark’s plan is copied from natl talking points. #BetterJobsforU
Be one of the first to watch our new campaign ad, and RT to pass it along! AdamsForCongress.com/WorkingTogether	Be one of the first to watch our new campaign ad, and RT to pass it along! AdamsForCongress.com/WorkingTogether
The price at the pump is too high. RT if you agree and support @AdamsForCongress’s Gas Price Relief Act.	Every fill up, I feel pain at the pump. It’s a staycation for us this year. RT if you agree & support my Gas Price Relief Act.
Quality health care is important for everyone, especially senior citizens. Support Medicare and take care of seniors.	My mom & dad made sure my siblings and I had quality health care. It’s time to take care of them. Support Medicare & our seniors.
@Lilly_Sig Thanks for your support!	@Lilly_Sig Thanks for your support!
Talking with voters at Greenville Pancake Breakfast. More than 10000 flapjacks flipped so far! Everyone is enjoying the great food and fun.	My family is enjoying the great food at the Greenville Pancake Breakfast. My fav is blueberry; kids can’t get enough chocolate chip.
@BCarrey82 It’s critical to focus on issues that are important to women. And in this race, the right choice for #women is @AdamsForCongress.	@BCarrey82 My grandma was born before women could vote. I promised her I’d focus on issues important to women. #AdamsForCongress
Great crowd in Franklin yesterday at the	Great crowd in Franklin yesterday at the

Harvest Festival!	Harvest Festival!
“You can’t change the rules after someone has risked their life for America’s freedom,” @AdamsForCongress on keeping promises to veterans.	My father, a war vet, said, “You can’t change the rules after someone has risked their life for our freedom.” I’ll keep my promises to vets.
Politics is full of tough decisions. Americans need someone who can make the hard calls on Senate floor. Vote @AdamsForCongress.	Politics is full of tough decisions, but we all face hard calls everyday, from family to \$. I know the struggle because I live it #VoteAdams
Most farms are family owned. Farming is a labor of love. Support is needed for this vital part of America.	Most farms are family owned--like my grandpa’s. I saw firsthand that farming is labor of love. Support vital part of America.
RT @PoliNewsNow Tonight’s candidate forum starts at 7pm. We will be live tweeting the event right here!	RT @PoliNewsNow Tonight’s candidate forum starts at 7pm. We will be live tweeting the event right here!
Stretched middle class pocket books can’t handle more taxes. Vote @AdamsForCongress for honest fiscal leadership.	My family feels pain of stretched pocket books just like you. We can’t afford more taxes. Vote for me for honest fiscal leadership.

>>>Participants were then asked to read the questionnaire below. Information in brackets indicates which questions correspond with which concepts of interest.

The following questions ask about your personal opinions regarding Senate candidate Adams. Please select the answer that best fits your personal opinion.

1. How capable do you think candidate Adams is in handling the following political issues? [Issue competency measures for masculine and feminine issues]

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
Economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women’s issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. To what extent do you think candidate Adams portrays the following character traits?
 [Trait portrayal measures for masculine and feminine traits]

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
Compassion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strength	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decisiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 [Parasocial interaction measures]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree/ Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The tweets showed me what the candidate is like.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The candidate made me feel comfortable, as if I were with a friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The candidate seemed to understand the kinds of things I want to know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would tell my friends about this candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can trust the information I get from this candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

comparing my ideas with what the candidate said.

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
[Social presence measures]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree/ Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt as if I were engaging in an actual conversation with the candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt like I was in the same room with the candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt as if the candidate was speaking directly to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt like I could get to know the candidate through Twitter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
[Vote intention measures]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree/ Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would like this candidate to run in the next election.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would vote for this candidate if they ran in the next election.

6. How would you evaluate Adams’s tweets?
[Manipulation check]

Non- intimate <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimate <input type="checkbox"/>
Impersonal <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal <input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions are about your social media use.

1. Which of the following social media do you currently use? Check all that apply.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Other
- I do not currently use any form of social media (*built-in skip logic will flow these participants to the demographic questions below.*)

2. On average, how often do you use social media?

- Several times a day
- About once a day
- 3 to 5 days a week
- 1 to 2 days a week
- Every few weeks
- Less often

The following questions are general demographic questions about you.

1. Generally speaking, which of the following do you consider yourself?

- Strong Republican
- Lean Republican

- Lean Democrat
- Strong Democrat
- No Preference

2. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a scale showing the political views that people might hold arranged from extremely conservative to extremely liberal. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- Extremely conservative
- Conservative
- Slightly conservative
- Moderate; middle of the road
- Slightly liberal
- Liberal
- Extremely liberal

3. What is your gender? – Used certified wording

- Female
- Male

4. What racial or ethnic group best describes you? – Used certified wording

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic American
- White / Caucasian
- Other

5. What is the highest grade or level of school that you have completed?

- 8th grade or less
- Some high school, but did not graduate
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college or 2-year degree
- 4-year college graduate
- More than 4-year college degree

6. Last year (2012), what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Please choose the appropriate category:

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999

- \$100,000 - \$249,999
- Over \$250,000

7. What is your age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

8. Do you consider yourself Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, a follower of some other religion, or not religious?

- Christian
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- Muslim
- Hindu
- A follower of some other religion
- Not religious

9. In which region of the United States do you live?

- New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)
- Middle Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)
- East North Central (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin)
- West North Central (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas)
- South Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)
- East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi)
- West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)
- Mountain (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada)
- Pacific (Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii)

Appendix C

Additional Analyses

Additional analysis for Chapter Three

The percentages in Table A.1 represent the percentages for each candidate across all six dependent variables.

Table A.1

Average Communication Patterns by Individual Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections, by Percentage

Women Candidates	Linda McMahon (n=754)	Elizabeth Warren (n=337)	Shelley Berkley (n=669)	Heather Wilson (n=471)	Claire McCaskill (n=157)	Deb Fischer (n=132)
Interactivity	55.0	65.6	62.3	68.2	54.8	47.0
Personalization	4.2	5.9	26.3	6.6	6.4	2.3
Feminine Issues	4.0	6.8	19.3	9.3	22.3	6.1
Masculine Issues	25.1	11.6	23.5	30.4	18.5	12.1
Feminine Traits	6.2	7.1	4.3	5.1	7.6	3.0
Masculine Traits	4.8	14.8	14.9	3.2	12.1	6.1
Men Candidates	Dean Heller (n=1053)	Bob Kerrey (n=866)	Todd Akin (n=448)	Chris Murphy (n=307)	Martin Heinrich (n=454)	Scott Brown (n=170)
Interactivity	48.1	51.6	51.8	55.0	68.7	51.8
Personalization	9.6	6.4	2.9	2.9	3.1	12.4
Feminine Issues	7.7	7.3	7.8	13.0	18.9	9.4
Masculine Issues	24.6	16.6	12.9	23.1	31.5	15.9
Feminine Traits	5.5	7.4	4.2	3.6	3.5	7.1
Masculine Traits	4.5	5.5	10.7	7.2	6.8	8.8

The percentages in Table A.2 represent the following process: I ran frequencies on each individual male and female candidate for each dependent variable, producing 12 percentages for each dependent variable (see Table A.1). I then averaged the six female and the six male percentages to report the average percentage of women, then men, for each dependent variable.

Table A.2

Communication Patterns by Women and Men Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections, by Average Percentage

	Women Candidates (n = 2520)	Men Candidates (n = 3298)
Interactivity	58.8%	54.5%
Personalization	8.6%	6.2%
Feminine Issues	11.3%	10.7%
Masculine Issues	20.2%	20.8%
Feminine Traits	5.6%	5.2%
Masculine Traits	9.3%	7.3%

The percentages in Table A.3 represent the following process: The percentages labeled as “Average” are the same percentages reported in Table A.2. The percentages labeled as “Aggregate” are the percentages originally reported in Chapter Three. These percentages do not represent an averaging across six women and then six men; rather, they represent an aggregate measure of all women analyzed and all men analyzed. The purpose of this table is to compare the results of the two analytic approaches.

Table A.3

Average versus Aggregate Communication Patterns by Women and Men Candidates in Mixed-Gender Elections

	Women Candidates (n = 2520)		Men Candidates (n = 3298)	
	Average	Aggregate	Average	Aggregate
Interactivity	58.8%	60.4%	54.5%	53.2%
Personalization	8.6%	10.8%	6.2%	6.5%
Feminine Issues	11.3%	10.7%	10.7%	9.7%
Masculine Issues	20.2%	22.7%	20.8%	21.3%
Feminine Traits	5.6%	5.6%	5.2%	5.5%
Masculine Traits	9.3%	9.0%	7.3%	6.4%

Overall, the patterns of both analytic approaches were the same: Women included more interactivity, personalization, and masculine trait references than men, ranging from 2% more (Average for masculine traits) to 4.3% more (Average for interactivity). Further, women and men had equitable discussion of feminine and masculine issues, and feminine traits, ranging from .4% (Average for feminine traits) to .6% (Average for both feminine and masculine issues). Therefore both analytic approaches suggest that there are some differences between women and men candidates in their online self-presentations.

Additional analysis for Chapter Four

The percentages in Table A.4 represent the percentages for each candidate across all six dependent variables.

Table A.4

Average Communication Patterns by Individual Candidates in All-Male Elections, by Percentage

	Republican Men			Democratic Men		
	Richard Mourdock (n=1101)	Tom Smith (n=423)	Jeff Flake (n=83)	Bob Casey, Jr. (n=310)	Richard Carmona (n=253)	Joe Donnelly (n=121)
Interactivity	77.9	73.5	84.3	46.8	75.9	77.7
Personalization	3.5	3.8	21.7	1.6	9.5	13.2
Feminine Issues	15.8	8.0	4.8	14.2	9.9	8.3
Masculine Issues	30.7	26.0	7.2	29.4	5.9	24.0
Feminine Traits	6.8	4.0	4.8	10.0	5.5	8.3
Masculine Traits	8.0	4.7	3.6	12.9	3.6	6.6

The percentages in Table A.5 represent the following process: I ran frequencies on each individual male candidate for each dependent variable, producing six percentages (see Table A.4). I then averaged the three Republican percentages and the three Democrat percentages to report the average percentage for each dependent variable. (This process was also repeated in Table A.8 for women in same-gender elections.)

Table A.5
Average Communication Patterns by Men Candidates in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men (<i>n</i> = 1607)	Democratic Men (<i>n</i> = 684)
Interactivity	78.6%	66.8%
Personalization	9.7%	8.1%
Feminine Issues	9.5%	10.8%
Masculine Issues	21.3%	19.8%
Feminine Traits	5.2%	7.9%
Masculine Traits	5.4%	7.7%

The percentages in Table A.6 represent the following process: The percentages labeled as “Average” are the same percentages reported in Table A.5. The percentages labeled as “Aggregate” are the percentages originally reported in Chapter Four. These percentages do not represent an averaging across the three Republican and three Democratic men; rather, they represent an aggregate measure of all Republican men analyzed and all Democratic men analyzed.

Table A.6
Average versus Aggregate Communication Patterns by Partisan Men Candidates in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Men (<i>n</i> = 1607)		Democratic Men (<i>n</i> = 684)	
	Average	Aggregate	Average	Aggregate
Interactivity	78.6%	77.1%	66.8%	63.0%
Personalization	9.7%	4.5%	8.1%	6.6%
Feminine Issues	9.5%	13.3%	10.8%	11.5%
Masculine Issues	21.3%	28.3%	19.8%	19.7%
Feminine Traits	5.2%	6.0%	7.9%	8.0%
Masculine Traits	5.4%	6.9%	7.7%	8.3%

Overall, the patterns of both analytic approaches were similar in four out of six comparisons: Republican men were more interactive and emphasized more masculine issues than Democratic men, and Democratic men referenced feminine and masculine traits more than Republican men. On two occasions, the different analytic approaches produced different results: First, in the aggregate, Democratic men had a 2.1% advantage on Republican men regarding personalization, but via the averaging analytic approach, Republican men had a 1.6% advantage on Democratic men. Second, in the aggregate, Republican men had a 1.8% advantage over Democratic men regarding feminine issue discussion, but via the averaging analytic approach, Democratic men had a 1.3% advantage over Republican men. This latter finding supports my hypothesis in

Chapter One, which predicted that due to party ownership, Democratic men would discuss feminine issues more than Republican men. In sum, the two analytic approaches produced similar results for the majority of the dependent variables.

The percentages in Table A.7 represent the percentages for each candidate across all six dependent variables.

Table A.7
Average Communication Patterns by Individual Candidates in All-Female Elections, by Percentage

	Republican Women			Democratic Women		
	Linda Lingle (n=2303)	Elizabeth Emken (n=2347)	Wendy Long (n=818)	Kirsten Gillibrand (n=695)	Mazie Hirono (n=338)	Dianne Feinstein (n=52)
Interactivity	70.4	91.4	82.5	73.8	76.0	55.8
Personalization	2.2	4.0	7.5	6.0	3.8	7.7
Feminine Issues	7.6	2.7	5.5	12.2	5.9	23.1
Masculine Issues	10.7	6.7	22.9	22.3	8.9	23.1
Feminine Traits	10.0	3.5	4.8	1.9	6.2	5.8
Masculine Traits	7.7	9.2	6.8	9.8	5.6	9.6

The percentages in Table A.8 report the average percentages for partisan women in same-gender elections.

Table A.8
Average Communication Patterns by Women Candidates in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Women (n = 5468)	Democratic Women (n = 1085)
Interactivity	81.4%	68.5%
Personalization	4.6%	5.8%
Feminine Issues	5.3%	13.7%
Masculine Issues	13.4%	18.1%
Feminine Traits	6.1%	4.6%
Masculine Traits	7.9%	8.3%

The percentages in Table A.9 represent the following process: The percentages labeled as “Average” are the same percentages reported in Table A.8. The percentages labeled as “Aggregate” are the percentages originally reported in Chapter Four. These percentages do not represent an averaging across the three Republican and three Democratic women; rather, they represent an aggregate measure of all Republican women analyzed and all Democratic women analyzed.

Table A.9

Average versus Aggregate Communication Patterns by Partisan Women Candidates in Same-Gender Elections

	Republican Women (<i>n</i> = 5468)		Democratic Women (<i>n</i> = 1085)	
	Average	Aggregate	Average	Aggregate
Interactivity	81.4%	81.2%	68.5%	73.6%
Personalization	4.6%	3.7%	5.8%	5.4%
Feminine Issues	5.3%	5.2%	13.7%	10.8%
Masculine Issues	13.4%	10.8%	18.1%	18.2%
Feminine Traits	6.1%	6.4%	4.6%	3.4%
Masculine Traits	7.9%	8.2%	8.3%	8.5%

Overall, the patterns of both analytic approaches were the same: Republican women were more interactive and emphasized more feminine traits than Democratic women. Further, Democratic women were more personal and emphasized more feminine and masculine issues than Republican women. And finally, both sets of partisan women emphasized masculine traits in similar volumes. As such, the two analytic approaches yielded similar patterns of partisan communication for women in same-gender elections for all six dependent variables.

In sum, the results between the two analytic approaches were similar in 16 out of 18 comparisons (6 dependent variables x 3 election types)—suggesting that the gendered and partisan communication patterns found in Chapters Three and Four persist even when you slice the data in a different way.