

Inconceivable Construction: a woman & a politician

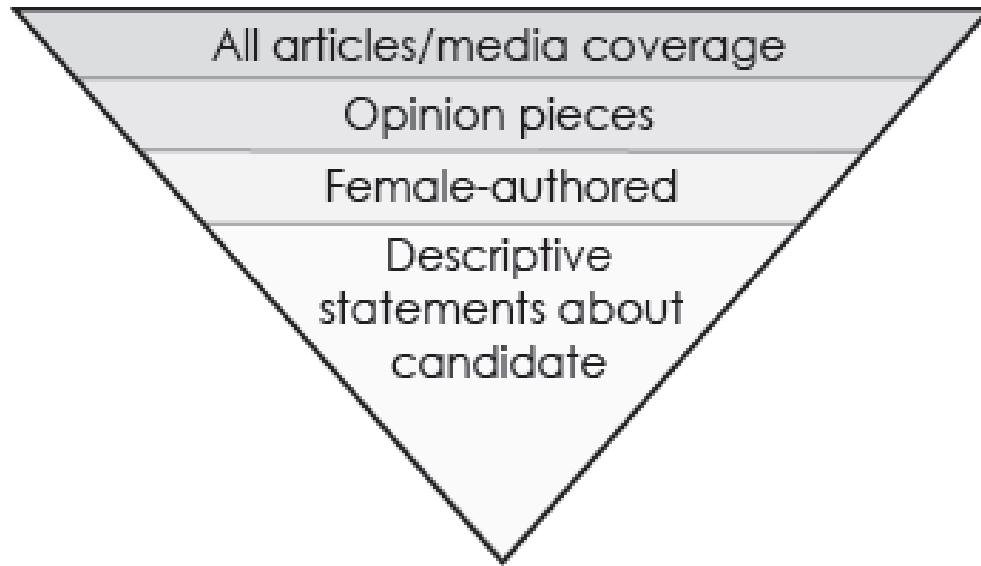
Examining Discourses of Female Opinion-Makers

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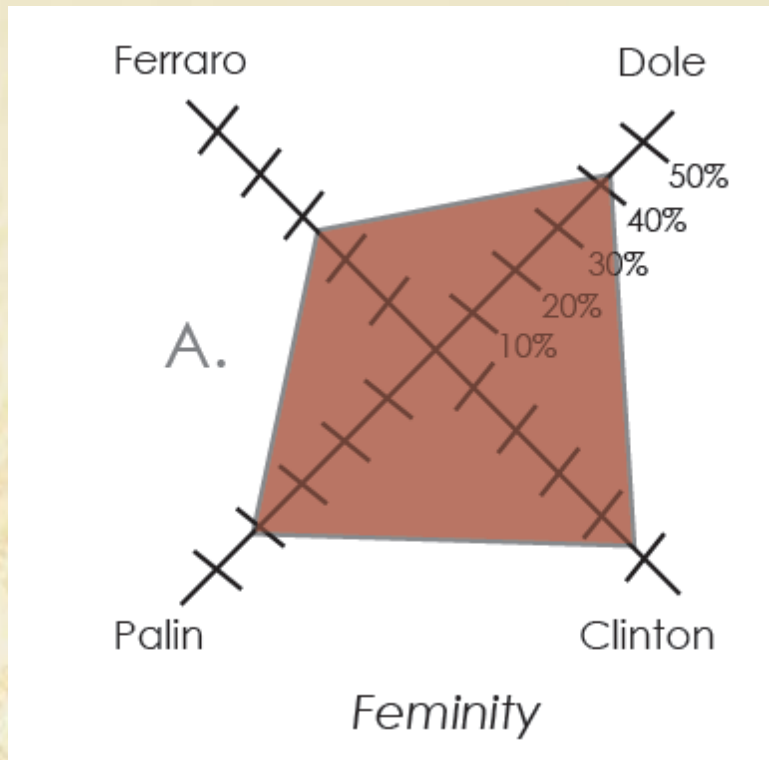


METHODOLOGY



FINDINGS

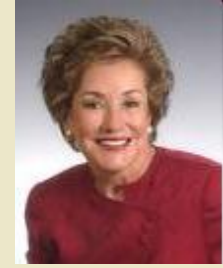
Historical Comparison





Historical Comparison

Markers of Femininity over Time



“This is the kind of woman (Ferraro) we can relate to. Smart, charming, good looking and not shrill.”

“In Praise of Shrillness”
The New York Times
8 April 1984

“Mrs. Dole failed to capitalize on her strengths. She boasted of an ‘historic’ campaign as a woman but sent a mixed and uncertain message about what that meant.”

“One Less Candidate”
The New York Times
25 October 1999



Historical Comparison

Markers of Femininity over Time



“Hillary dealt with the issue head-on – ‘I’m a woman; I’m a mom’ -- hoping to stir that sisterly vote that Ms. Ferraro failed to draw ... many women were skeptical about one of their own facing down the Soviets.”

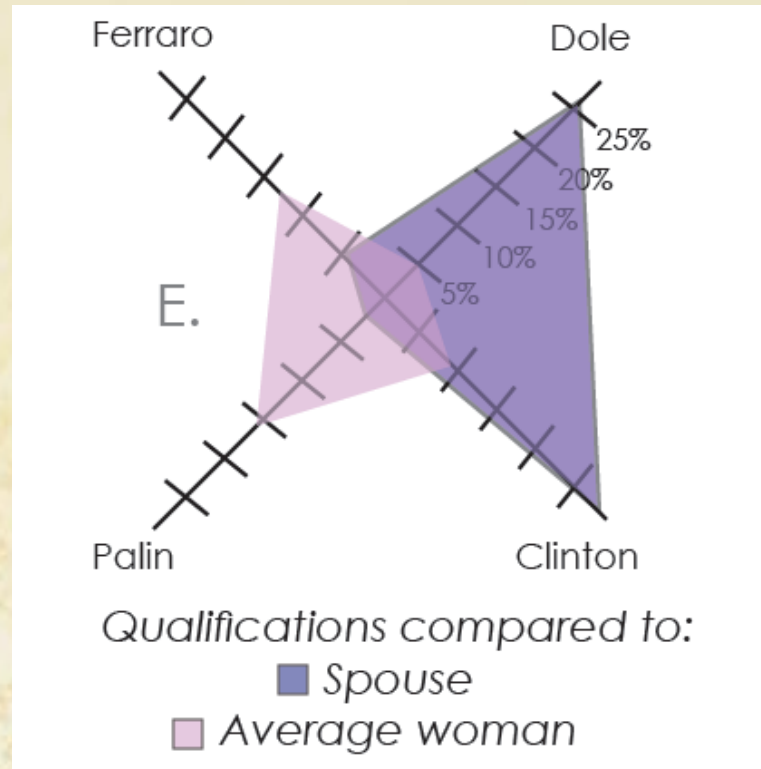
*“Mama Hugs Iowa”
The New York Times
31 January 2008*

“Palin has exploited what has long been a burden on women in executive office--to prove that they will not be distracted or hindered by domestic responsibilities.”

*“From Seneca Falls To ... Sarah Palin?”
Newsweek
23 September 2008*

FINDINGS

Ticket Position Comparison





Presidential Candidates

Qualifications Compared to Spouse



“The former first lady's popularity ratings have never been higher than when her husband's affair with a young intern burst into the open and cast her in the role of the victim.”

“Clinton Fights to Keep Impeachment Taboo”

The Washington Post

26 February 2008

“Many people might have preferred somebody different -- a woman less dependent on a famous husband for her name recognition...”

“Mrs. Dole Takes a Leap Into the Gender Gap”

The New York Times

11 February 1999

Vice-Presidential Candidates

Qualifications Compared to the “average” women



“She worked part time in her husband's office and, incurably active, dropped in on the local Democratic club on her way home from PTA meetings and children's ballet classes.”

“The Rising Star from Queens”

The New York Times

5 June 1984

I don't question whether Palin can pull off the most impressive juggling act in the history of working moms... But I do wonder -- somewhat to my astonishment -- why she'd choose to, and I suspect many mothers feel the same.

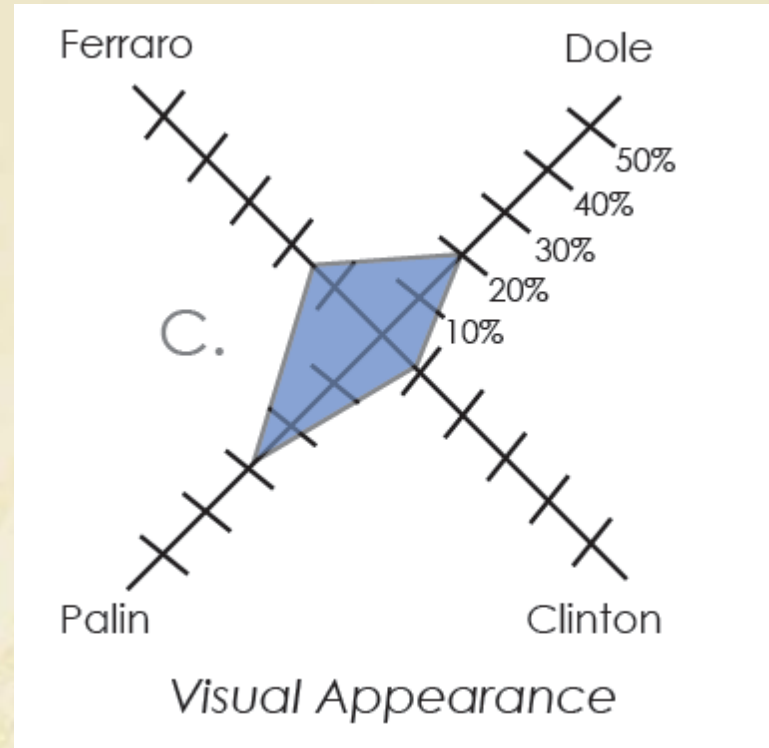
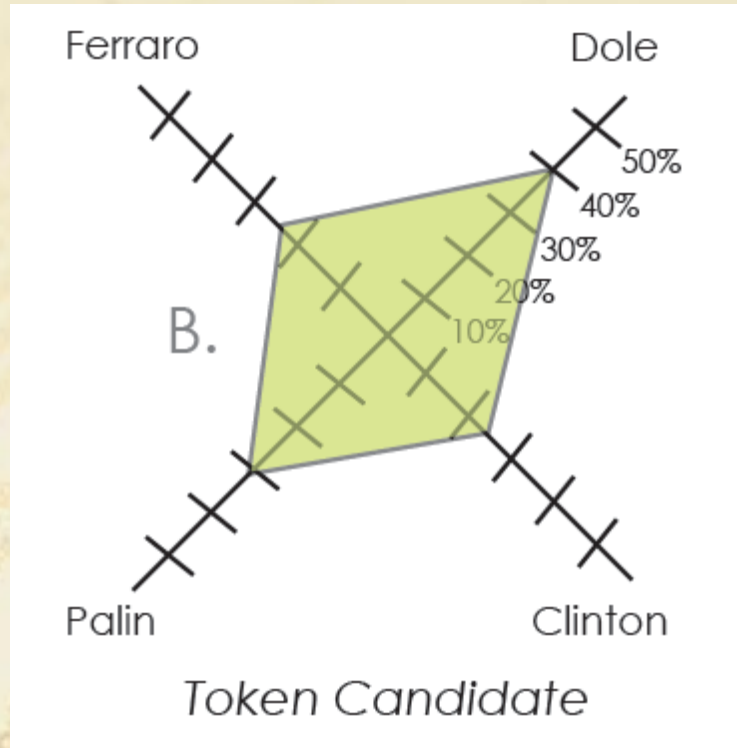
“Palin Hits the Motherload”

The Washington Post

11 September 2008

FINDINGS

Political Party Comparison





Republican Candidates

Tokenism and Visual Appearance



Despite [Dole's] considerable credentials, she brought only a skirt to the proceedings and in the end offered only the novelty of the first serious presidential run by a woman.

"One Less Candidate"
The New York Times
25 October 1999

Palin proves that a woman can wear red patent-leather shoes and still take questions on foreign policy and the economy.

"Sarah Palin's Unassertive Fashion Statement"
The Washington Post
29 September 2008



Democrat Candidates

Tokenism and Visual Appearance



Many are not yet ready to judge [Ferraro] as anything but a woman; that is, they hail the choice but resist criticism of anything about the woman -- which is its own form of condescension.

"...And the Ferraro Phenomenon"

The Washington Post

21 July 1984

Senator Clinton appears to have finally found her fashion center -- long Nehru-ish jackets with pants, often in black, a vivid shirt underneath and bold jewelry. Her hair mostly compliments her age and standing.

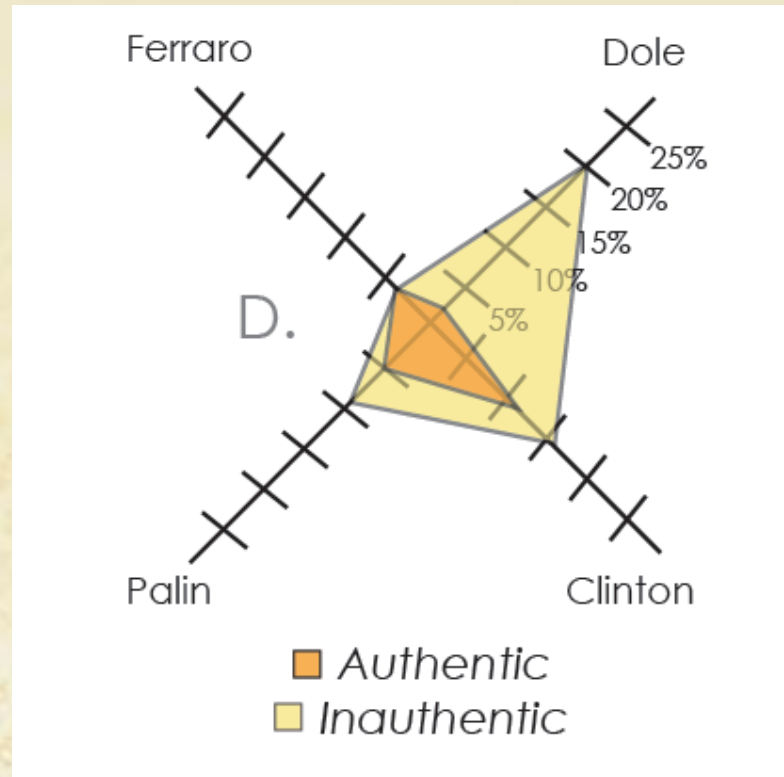
"Speaking of Chic Power"

The New York Times

19 January 2008

FINDINGS

Authenticity



As far as devising ways to use her to their advantage, one Ferraro aide said: "The Mondale people are totally mystified. They don't know what she represents."



"For Ferraro, Tough Week Isn't All That Bad"

The New York Times

17 September 1984

Some men called [Dole] ‘a Stepford wife,’ an over-programmed perfectionist. And women from outside the South found her deep-fried effusiveness off-putting--they could not identify with a woman who calls her husband precious, an adjective they might give a baby but never a husband.



*“It’s Not the Money Honey”
The Washington Post
25 October 1999*

For Mrs. Clinton, highlighting the maternal is a way of building on what polls and strategists suggest are her clear advantages, like strength and intelligence, while compensating for what are widely considered her liabilities: a coolness, an excess of caution and a capacity to so polarize the electorate that many voters question her ability to win.



“Women Feeling Freer to Suggest 'Vote for Mom' ”

The Washington Post

29 January 2008

To put it plainly, Palin is seriously messing with our templates. We know what political women in the USA are supposed to look like -- and she's not it.



"Feminist template obliterated"

USA Today

12 September 2008

Thank you!

Q & A

Clinton critical of rival's comments

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — Taking a swipe at a potential GOP Presidential rival, Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton on Saturday criticized Thompson for suggesting Cuban immigrants pose a threat.

Thompson, who has been campaigning for the Republican nomination, talked about the potential of Cuban immigrants. "Apparently, there's a lot of people running for office who are talking about the potential of Cuban immigrants posing a threat to our country," Clinton said. "I think it's important to have a clear-eyed view of the situation. I think it's important to have a clear-eyed view of the situation. I think it's important to have a clear-eyed view of the situation."

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