

The “Un-Candidates”: Gender and Outsider Signals in Women’s Political Advertisements

Shauna Shames, Research Director, The White House Project

ABSTRACT. Much has been written on whether female candidates “run as women” in their campaigns. This study explores the role of gender in political advertising through a systematic analysis of campaign commercials from U.S. House, Senate, and Governor races from 1964 to 1998. I hypothesize that candidates will use “femininity” in the commercials as a marker of “outsider” status. This theory considers image differentiation and branding as they relate to gender in political advertising. Advertisers typically use branding for two reasons: (1) to manufacture illusory differences to differentiate nearly identical products (such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi); and (2) to emphasize and expand real differences (7-UP, for instance, tries to differentiate itself from both Coca-Cola and Pepsi by branding itself the “Un-Cola”). Female candidates who correlate feminine character traits and women’s issues with an outsider presentation in their campaigns are trying to be the “Un-Candidates.” The data in this study reveal the importance of contextual factors in determining whether a female candidate will undertake an “un-candidate” strategy. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

INTRODUCTION

Women running for political office in the United States have traditionally faced difficulties reconciling their gender with their desired po-

Women & Politics, Vol. 25(1/2) 2003
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10.1300/J014v25n01_05

litical role. Because the realm of national and statewide politics is still primarily an “old-boys’ network,” female candidates have found breaking into this world a formidable challenge. Voters and the media tend to perceive women candidates as women first and candidates second.¹ When reporters asked veteran Representative Pat Schroeder (D-CO) if she was “running as a woman” in her 1988 Presidential bid, she responded, “Do I have an option?” (Schroeder 1998, 183).

Scholars of women in powerful positions describe a “role incongruity” between the social norms of femininity and the norms of power (see Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995; Eagly and Johnson 1990; Goffman 1979; Kahn 1996; Sapiro 1983). In *Strangers in the Senate* (1994), Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) labeled women in politics “strangers” and reformist “others.” Because outsidership can be a desirable quality for candidates, I hypothesize a correlation between feminine symbols and issues and a political outsider presentation.

The growing literature on gender in the political realm suggests that recently we may have witnessed a series of shifts in the ways candidates campaign for office, including an increased focus on “femininity” and social issues (Abzug 1984; Burrell 1994; Bystrom and Kaid 2000; Carroll 1994; Kahn 1996; Klein 1984; Sapiro 1983; Strauss 1998; Thomas 1994; Tilly and Gurin 1990; Tolleson-Rinehart and Stanley 1994; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994). My analysis of campaign commercials from 1964 to 1998 suggests that femininity can help all candidates, including men, by symbolizing an outsider perspective. Femininity also works as a differentiation tool because it can make a candidate (male or female) stand out, while masculinity often makes a candidate look like just another “suit.” For these reasons, some candidates seek to emphasize traditionally or stereotypically “feminine” traits.² They seek to become what I will call the “Un-Candidates.”

Candidates do not always want to stand out. Candidates trying to look experienced and effective may not want to seem like outsiders. In campaigns, masculinity serves as a stabilizing device, often lending credibility and authority. Several factors influence candidates’ decisions about emphasizing femininity in a race; I limited this analysis to what I believe to be the most influential factors: candidate gender, incumbency status, political party, and temporal context (general “mood” of the country).³ In 1992, for instance, the Hill/Thomas hearings combined with the House banking scandal and a poor economy put the public in an anti-incumbent mood that greatly benefited women candidates. Temporal context is particularly important as we consider the effects of September 11 and its aftermath on women’s candidacies. It may be that

the “Un-Candidate”⁴ strategy described here peaked in the 1990s and is now in decline. More likely, the current economic recession and foreign policy focus may have decreased feminine outsidership in the 2002 election cycle, but I maintain that the pendulum will swing back to favor “Un-Candidates” at a later point. The enduring power of the assumption that gender difference links to a fundamental difference in candidates’ legislative priorities and leadership styles suggests that we will see a resurgence of feminine outsidership when the country is again in an anti-incumbent mood.

***LITERATURE REVIEW:
GENDER, POLITICS, AND DIFFERENCE***

Think about the attributes of someone running for office—smart, tough, knowledgeable in foreign policy. And if you do have all these things, my God, are you really a woman?

—Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT),
at event for The White House Project, 2002

Certain features of gender roles have proven immune to the feminist challenges of the past century. As a society, we still associate masculinity with authority, leadership, and aggressiveness, while we link femininity with compassion, nurturing, and subservience, and still assume women to be primary caregivers for children and the elderly. The concept of “difference,” whether based on sex,⁵ race, class, religion, or sexual orientation, continues to fundamentally structure the ordering of society. As Representative DeLauro points out, a woman running for office was and still is something of a gender paradox. Bonnie Campbell, the former Attorney General of Iowa, put it in succinctly, “Running a political campaign is often antithetical to what it means to be a woman” (2001). This section explores previous literature on this conundrum and the ways women have responded in the past.

Feminism in its many waves and forms has struggled with how to treat gender difference. While early suffrage leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott based their arguments on equality language, later suffragists used common ideas of difference between men and women to justify their goals. Nancy Cott writes, “Woman’s sphere was both a point of oppression and the point of departure for nineteenth-century feminists” (Cott 1987, 20).⁶ According to later suffra-

gists and social reformers, the fact of women's difference was a reason they should vote. McGlen et al., in *Women, Politics, and American Society*, write "[L]eaders of the suffrage movement viewed motherhood and marriage as an important basis for the right to vote" (2002, 8). The idea of "municipal housekeeping," promoted by Jane Addams of Hull House, became central to the movement. Such a tactic anticipated "woman's place" objections voiced by the opposition, and appealed to a self-image that resonated with far greater numbers of American women than did the equal rights rhetoric of early suffragists (Marilley 1996).

Like the suffrage movement, the "women's liberation" movement of the 1970s was rooted in a dual foundation of equality and difference (Cott 1987; Echols 1989). Alice Echols concludes that the "question of whether women should be mobilized on the basis of their sameness to or their difference from men" continues to confront women—particularly, I would add, those running for office. As the later suffragists and some modern candidates found, arguments based on gender difference are more palatable to (and therefore more effective in) a country unwilling to relinquish the concept of women's fundamental difference from men.

Scholars of women and politics agree that the gendering of the public leadership as masculine creates challenges for women candidates. Susan Carroll writes, "Although socialized to exhibit values and behaviors considered appropriate for females, in running for office women enter a sphere of life dominated by masculine values and behavior patterns" (Carroll 1985, 94). Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly, in their study of gender power, say "Our review of the literature on power and leadership reveals how rarely the words *women* and *feminine* are associated with them and how heavily men and masculinity saturate our understanding of power and leadership" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995, 9). Likewise, Cheryl King cites a "preference for masculine" in our cultural definitions of leadership, and writes that leadership and governance "bear[s] an explicit masculine identity" (King 1995, 67-69). Lyn Kathlene says bluntly "few social and occupational domains are more masculinized than politics" (Kathlene 1995, 167). Such a dilemma is what Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1995) terms the "double bind."

One result of the double bind is the necessity for women to prove they can do the job as well as the men. In "Why Gender Matters: The Perception of Women Officeholders," Thomas writes, "Women legislators often find themselves continuously in a position to prove themselves to be every bit as competent, knowledgeable, dedicated, serious, and ambitious as their male counterparts" (1997, 31). While in the past

this has often taken the form of women acting like “honorary men” (Tolleson-Rinehart and Stanley 1994, 7), such as Margaret Thatcher, the growing prevalence of a “feminine outsider” strategy in political advertisements indicates that women candidates are finding new ways to appeal to the public.

Studies of “gender schemas” in the processing of ads suggest that “feminine outsider” strategies may in fact be more effective in some ways than the “honorary man” approach. Just as later suffragists found the public more receptive to arguments resting on women’s difference, Jacqueline Hitchon and Chingching Chang found “enhanced recall of ad information from content domains of family and appearance in the case of women as opposed to men candidates, and enhanced recall from the domain of campaign activities in the case of men as opposed to women candidates” (Hitchon and Chang 1995, 430). Voters rated male candidates higher on “men’s issues” (defense, terrorism, and crime) and women higher on “women’s issues” (education, the elderly, minorities, and welfare). Hitchon and Chang attribute this to differing perceptions of male and female candidates, based on gender schemas in voters’ minds: A schema is “a mental representation of a category . . . It provides a network of cognitive associations that guide the individual’s processing of category-related information. Once developed, the schema sets up expectations about how the world works that impose meaning onto incoming information” (Hitchon and Chang 1995, 432).

Far from being neutral, gender schemas reinforce and reproduce set notions of gender. Hitchon and Chang write, “Individuals tend to remember best information that is consistent with a prevailing schema” (1995, 434). This understanding of psychological processes helps explain how the “Un-Candidate” approach may help women candidates: Voters are more likely to remember a candidate’s ads if her image and issue presentations activate a “feminine” gender schema. Additionally, the correlation between feminine and outsider can factor positively into the gender schema processing. “To the extent that a man candidate is processed as ‘just another politician,’ that is, possessing low personal integrity, rather than as a man per se, it is not surprising that women candidates, who are processed primarily as women, would generate more favorable evaluative thoughts” (Hitchon and Chang 1995, 450).

A critical element in the theory presented here is an understanding of gender as a set of performative actions and symbols available to either men or women. The idea of gender as a performance, detailed by gender theorists such as Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam, and Kate Bornstein, has not escaped the attention of political researchers. Duerst-Lahti and

Kelly define gender as “a set of interpersonal practices with political consequences” (1995, 6-7). They explain “because gender is socially constructed, it is composed of ideas, or more specifically normative beliefs about valuation, modes of behavior, and being. Gender is something one can do or perform as a result” (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995, 32-33). It is clear from the literature that reconciling role incongruence often leaves women candidates trying to perform a dual role. In “Gender, Political Advertising, and the ‘Air Wars,’” Leonard Williams says:

Women seeking office end up speaking in two distinct voices. On the one hand, they speak in a woman’s voice that focuses on an “ethic of care,” which emphasizes nurturant symbols and stresses social welfare issues. On the other hand, they must also speak in a more masculine voice that emphasizes strength and competence. . . . [A]ttempts to combine these voices do not necessarily bring success; instead, they often lead to a complicated, disjointed, and fragmented narrative . . . [a] sort of ‘complex, hermaphroditic persona. . . .’ (1998, 50)

The negotiation of gender rules and roles itself becomes a performance in this view. Women running for office must draw a careful balance between performing too much masculinity on one hand and too much femininity on the other. Yet, as I will argue, rising negativity toward the government and feminization of the political issues discussion through the 1990s allowed both women and men candidates to focus more on a feminine gender presentation in this time period.

Several recent studies have examined gender in political ads in the 1980s and 1990s, including Bystrom and Kaid (2000), L. Williams (1998), and Kahn (1996), among others. Bystrom and Kaid find few significant differences between men’s and women’s use of femininity in ads for the U.S. Senate, but note the importance of those few:

On issues more often classified as “feminine,” only one significant difference between men and women was found in the analysis of the spots from the 1990-1993 elections—women were three times as likely to discuss “women’s concerns,” such as women’s rights. However, two issues, health care and education, received much greater emphasis by female candidates in 1998. This difference in emphasis, even though on only a few issues, is interesting, because there were no significant differences at all in the issues mentioned

by women and men candidates in the 1994 and 1996 elections. (Bystrom and Kaid 2000, 9)

Williams also finds that men's and women's ads are more similar than they are different. He notes, however, that the "videostyles of men and women may be similar because political discourse has been previously structured by male experience" (L. Williams 1998, 51).

Kahn (1996) finds that while women's ads did focus on masculine images and issues in the 1980s, this shifted around 1992, a finding echoed in other works. Bystrom and Kaid write, "Interestingly, women and men candidates showed the most significant differences in their issue discussion in the 1992 and 1998 elections. Perhaps, they were trying to set themselves apart from men on such traditional, 'feminine' issues as education and women's issues in 1992 . . . and education and health care in 1998" (2000, 15). The "Year of the Woman," 1992, deserves special attention for the increase of both women's candidacies and femininity within campaigns.

The political opportunity structure shifted to benefit women candidates in 1992. Changes included an increased gender focus because of the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings and the large number of women running, as well as increased opportunity for women candidates to win as reapportionment led to a large number of open seats. All of these opportunities combined with a wave of anti-incumbency, due to both a House banking scandal and a low economy, to produce a shift in the language in women's campaigns. Feminine outsidership abounded during this election cycle. Witt, Paget, and Matthews write in *Running as a Woman*, "What was stunning about the slogans and rhetoric of 1992, in comparison with the past twenty years, was how often candidates placed the exclusion of women from power as a central theme of their campaigns" (1994, 14). Women, as Susan Carroll points out, were especially seen as outsiders and change agents in 1992:

During the 1990s, especially during the 1992 election, women who ran for office frequently presented themselves and were viewed by others as "agents of change" . . . [T]he idea of women as agents of change . . . evokes the image of outsiders to the existing political establishment. As outsiders, women represent an alternative to "politics as usual"—bringing new ideas into the political arena, reaching out to different constituencies, or employing different ways of doing business. (Carroll 2001, xiv)

Other scholars, including Cook, Thomas, and Wilcox (1994) point out that 1992 was not a bolt out of the blue but a magnification of changes already underway. Witt, Paget, and Matthews agree, stating "The changes, so visible in 1992 and still in progress, are a product of the subtle and cumulative changes in women's campaigns and voter attitudes that have been occurring over the last twenty years or so" (1994, 9). Women's candidacies, this view assumes, reflect the ongoing advances and changes in women's role in society more generally and thus have been continually changing throughout the past few decades. While this is certainly true, 1992 holds a privileged position in the study of gender in politics, both for the greater opportunities it afforded women and for the impact it has had on both men's and women's campaigns since that time.

This article argues that since 1992, both men's and women's ads have focused more on femininity. As the discourse of political issues feminized through the 1990s, men as well as women found the performance of femininity profitable. Bystrom and Kaid's analysis found that men through the 1990s began to adopt the more feminine elements of campaign style:

[Although] women were significantly more likely than men to maintain frequent eye-contact with the viewer (61% vs. 40%) and have a smiling facial expression (56% vs. 29%) in 1990-93, these differences were not sustained through the end of the decade and had mostly disappeared by 1998. In 1990-93, women displayed another feminine style characteristic, touching others, more often than men (25% vs. 20%). However, by 1998, this difference had also disappeared, with men using this nonverbal communication strategy in 54% of their ads in 1998, compared to women who used touch in only 17% of their ads, a statistically significant difference. (Bystrom and Kaid 2000, 13)

In a later section, I present data for women candidates' ads both pre- and post-1992, and for male candidates' ads within the 1990s.

In analyzing the complex labyrinth of pitfalls and opportunities facing women as candidates, Sue Thomas explicitly links women's outsidership with the need to find new ways to negotiate gender boundaries. Thomas writes, "Because women in politics are outsiders, newcomers, and in the minority, they have little choice but to negotiate a distinctive identity, one different from private sphere identities they were once confined to and different from the public sphere, political identities of men"

(1997, 47). Bystrom and Kaid concur, suggesting new strategies. “Perhaps women need to find ways to emphasize their achievements, successes, and leadership within and outside the political realm in their spots” (Bystrom and Kaid 2000, 15). The “Un-Candidate” strategy described in this article represents one such approach.

Leonard Williams (1998) calls for new approaches not just on the part of women candidates, but also for those who study them:

[G]ender-related research should move beyond a simple demonstration of influences to research what would account for those influences and understand the condition under which they operate. This would mean exploring gender influences in political advertising as they might be affected by such factors as the status of the candidate (challenger or incumbent), the level of office sought, the party ideology of the candidate, the type of election (primary or general), and the structure of competition (male-female, female-female, male-male). (L. Williams 1998, 52)

This article takes up Williams’ challenge by examining how certain contextual factors—candidate gender, incumbency status, party, and temporal context of the race—impact a candidate’s use of a feminine-outsider presentation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using data from campaign commercials collected from House, Senate, and Gubernatorial campaigns from 1964 to 1998, this project offers both qualitative and quantitative analysis of political campaigns.⁷ The advertisements come from the Political Communication Center (PCC) at the University of Oklahoma, which houses the largest collection of broadcast political commercials in the world. I gathered data from 526 commercials (representing 95 male and female candidates), coding the character traits and issues that the candidates emphasized. I chose my sample of ads to be representative of certain categories (year, party, incumbency status, geographical region), but random within those categories.⁸

Specifically, I sought to test two hypotheses: (1) that candidates’ use of femininity would correlate with other attempts to project an “outsider” image; and (2) that projection of a feminine image would be more popular with challengers than incumbents. To test these hypotheses, I

coded the commercials for elements of gender in both issue and character presentations.

I used the literature on stereotypes, gender and political issues, and campaign strategies to develop codes for stereotypical femininity and masculinity. I coded “feminine” characteristics as those that have been linked traditionally to women or mothers, including kindness, compassion, cooperation, nurturance, understanding, and honesty (Bystrom and Kaid 2000; Kahn 1996; Thomas 1997; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994).⁹ I coded “masculine” characteristics as those that stated or implied they were aggressive, effective, experienced, firm, authoritative, strong, or powerful. For policies, I coded as “feminine” the political issues of (1) sex discrimination; (2) education; (3) reproductive rights; (4) health care; (5) welfare; (6) gay rights; (7) care of children; (8) civil rights and race discrimination; (9) social security; and (10) the environment.¹⁰ Because the literature on gender stereotypes tends to categorize business, economic development, and foreign relations as “masculine” (Burrell 1994; Kahn 1996), I coded federal or state budgets, taxes, defense, business, farm/agriculture, and transportation as “masculine.” These codings reflect gross generalizations based on cultural stereotypes presumably shared by most voters.

In preliminary tests of advertisements with my codesheets, gender signals seemed also to relate in candidate ads to “outsider” and “insider” presentations. To test whether female candidates consistently used their femaleness positively to signal outsider status, I included in my coding scheme elements related to being a political outsider. I coded two issues as relating to an “outsider” presentation—reducing bureaucracy and cleaning up the federal or state government—and four candidate traits: being an “agent of change,” anti-establishment, independent, and espousing “not politics as usual” (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997; Kamber 1997; Wattenberg 1991). I hypothesized that presenting oneself as an outsider in these ways would correlate with presenting oneself as “feminine” through gendered characteristics, symbols, and issues.

Because I expected outsider presentation and femininity to be related, I also theorized that a position as an incumbent would negatively impact use of femininity by candidates of both sexes. It is harder to present oneself as an outsider when one is an incumbent—by definition an “insider.” The corollary hypothesis was that challengers seeking to emphasize and capitalize on their outsider position would use a feminine gender presentation more often. This pattern would clarify the role of gendered self-presentations in all races. Importantly, it would also

explain the contrast between the massive focus on gender in 1992—the “Year of the Woman”—when most of the women running were non-incumbents, but the minor role gender played in re-election campaigns for these women.

This research points to the importance of contextual factors in determining whether a female candidate runs “as a woman.” Incumbency status, temporal context of the race, gender, and party all impact a candidate’s gender presentation. Each factor has been studied individually in the previous literature, and gender in women’s political advertising of the 1980s has been explored in depth by Kim Kahn (1996) and of the 1990s by Dianne Bystrom and Lynda Lee Kaid (2000) and Leonard Williams (1998), among others. However, no previous work has compared gender signals in ads from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in this fashion.

FINDINGS

The data in this study confirm both of my original hypotheses, showing that over the past decade candidates of both sexes, and especially challengers, increasingly turned to femininity to showcase outsider status. Overall, my findings suggest three related trends over time: (1) increasing use of outsider signals; (2) “feminization” of the dialogue of political issues; and (3) increasing percentages of women candidates who run as “feminine outsiders.” Rising negativity toward government and politics through the past two decades has, I believe, increased outsider presentations by all candidates and has increased feminine outsider presentations by women.

The data in this study show that candidates over this span were more likely to employ a feminine presentation if: (a) they were not incumbents; (b) they were running from 1992-1998 rather than before; (c) they were Democrats; and (d) they were female. These overlapping elements produce the subcategory of candidates most likely to use a feminine outsider strategy: Democratic female nonincumbents, whom I have termed the “Un-Candidates.”

In addition to the mood of the country (insider vs. outsider), a second temporal factor that affects a candidate’s gender emphasis is the number of women running in races around her. In 1992, called the “Year of the Woman” due to the record number of women running for Congress, many women emphasized gender as a positive. When only one or a few women are running, the candidate is more likely to downplay femininity, in line with Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s (1977) classic description of behavior among corporate women who are tokens in their companies.

The positions women occupy in politics thus inform their candidate self-presentation. Incumbency status or lack thereof influences whether a candidate runs as an outsider or an insider. Women, who are disproportionately challengers, tend to be outsiders even before the campaigning begins. It is not the case that women are more likely to run as outsiders because they are women. Instead, women are more likely to run as “women” because they are outsiders.

Outsider presentations in politics have been popular recently in part because of widespread distrust of the government. Such trust has hit a record low over the past decade. Nye, Zelikow, and King write that, “In 1964, three-quarters of the American public said that they trusted the federal government to do the right thing most of the time. Today only a quarter of Americans admit to such trust . . .” (1997, 1).¹¹

In the years 1964 to 1998, from which I drew my sample, concentrating most heavily on the years 1982 to 1998, more than 40% of all ads in my sample tried to avoid a “politics-as-usual” image. For challengers, this figure was 51%. With distrust of government high, most candidates prefer to be “un-candidates,” like Mr. Smith of Frank Capra’s 1939 film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Bill Clinton’s 1992 slogan, “Take Back America,” echoed this theme. George W. Bush in 2000 portrayed himself as “the man from Texas,” a Washington outsider, juxtaposing himself with Al Gore, a Washington insider most of his career.

Nye, Zelikow, and King (1997) say that, since Jimmy Carter’s campaign, most political candidates have “run against Washington.” Carter and Reagan’s campaigns typified this strategy—both candidates stressed honesty and “outsiderness” while criticizing the government. Outsiderness is simultaneously a desirable trait in modern political candidates and an effective differentiation technique to separate candidates from insider opponents. Women have traditionally been political outsiders, whether or not they try to appear so. Recently, many have begun to use this position to their advantage.

WOMEN AS POLITICAL OUTSIDERS

Have you seen Congress lately? [Black-and-white image of little boys running wildly around a playground.]

It’s a wonder anything gets done in Washington. Ann Wynia wants to change that.

—Ad for Ann Wynia for Congress, 1994

Outsider signals pervade American political advertising, providing an opening for women. In the above ad, Ann Wynia combined a gender appeal with “outsider-ness” to present herself as a feminine reformer, a strategy also used by Lana Pollack, a candidate for the Michigan Democratic Senatorial Primary in 1994. Pollack describes her main ad:

It was me walking through a field of cut-out suits, and I was wearing a red dress. They were all identical suits—dark blue, with all the same red ties—then all the faces of the suits morphed into the one face of my opponent. . . . So it was a gender pitch, yes, but also an insider/outsider pitch—he was an insider, I was an outsider—and this commercial was enormously effective. (2000)

These ads explicitly connect the candidate’s gender to her status as a political outsider, a connection at the heart of suffrage-era “difference feminism” arguments. Women, these arguments assume, are different from men in ways that can benefit the political realm.

Previous studies have examined outsider presentations in political advertising, but have not focused on gender as a major outsider signal. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) connect outsider references to a broader “us against them” theme. “This theme has four manifestations: the Cowboys versus the Yankees, us against the foreigners, class warfare, and the anti-Washington mentality” (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1991, 107). My analysis adds a fifth category to this schema: women against men.

Especially since 1992, women running for office have successfully tied feminine appeals to outsider status. Signals of femininity for women hook easily into outsider/reformer self-presentations. The “woman in a red dress” technique used by Pollack reappeared several times in my sample. Kathy Karpan (D-WY) wore bright red in several of her ads for Governor in 1994, contrasting this with a black-and-white photo of her opponent. Jan Backus in a 1994 Vermont Senate race ran ads asking, “Who dares challenge this 20-year Washington incumbent?” Switch to active shot of Jan Backus in a bright red dress at county fair talking with citizens: “This ordinary person.” As with Pollack, the red dress emphasizes women’s difference from dark-suited men of the Washington establishment.

Bonnie Campbell, who ran for Attorney General of Iowa in 1990 and for Governor of Iowa in 1994, said that the strategy for women candidates before Anita Hill was to “be one of the boys.” In Campbell’s 1990 race, she “had a bunch of pictures with me with cops and prosecu-

tors—lots of *men*—hopefully diminishing the fear factor of what a woman might do if elected” (2001). Campbell concluded, “Anita Hill made a huge difference.” Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) echoed this claim, saying she ran “on Anita Hill’s shirt-tails” (Woolsey 2002). Lynn Yeakel, running in 1992 against incumbent Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, used Specter’s role in the Hill/Thomas hearings as a focal point in her campaign. Yeakel’s ads showed footage of Specter and a panel of Senators (all white men) grilling Hill (a black woman). Yeakel’s ads began, “Did this make you as angry as it made me?” Witt, Paget, and Matthews note that, “Virtually all of the women who ran for the U.S. Senate [in 1992] used references to Anita Hill in their campaign literature and direct mail solicitations . . .” (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994, 2). The “anti-insider” political current of 1992 was helpful both to Washington outsiders such as Ross Perot and to women candidates—who are marked as outsiders even before saying a word.

Many traits and issues that I coded as “feminine” (nurturing, compassion, caring) relate particularly to women as mothers. A motherhood image in politics can be a double-edged sword. Witt, Paget, and Matthews explain, “Children immediately invoke the image of woman as mother, which can swamp other aspects of her background or career. Motherhood may be revered within the family, but it has not been considered an experience or a credential for holding political office” (1994, 9). Even today, perhaps because of women’s fears of being “swamped” by the motherhood image, men are 8% more likely than women to include pictures of children in their ads.

Yet several recent female candidates have used their status as mothers as a positive in their campaigns, especially in and after 1992. Senator Patty Murray successfully projected an outsider image with her 1992 campaign slogan, “She’s a mom in tennis shoes.” Martha Clark’s 2000 Congressional slogan was “Legislator, Mother, Leader.” In 1992, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey focused on her experience as a welfare mom because “only women are mothers and it meant I had walked my talk” (Woolsey, 2000). Dottie Lamm also played the “mother card,” as she termed it, in her 1998 Colorado race for the Senate. “I used that. I’m a mother who sent her kids to public schools in Denver. You use what works” (Lamm, 2000).

A particularly strong example of “playing the mother card” comes, surprisingly, from Senator Dianne Feinstein, who tended to emphasize masculinity more than femininity in her campaigns before 1992. The slogan of her 1990 run for Governor of California was “Tough But Fair.” In 1992, however, she said the fact that she was a woman was “no

longer a disadvantage” (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994, 12). The hype surrounding the Year of the Woman and the gender gap in voting led Feinstein, like many candidates of 1992, to focus more on femininity:

Ad description: Feinstein is seated by a pink crib, holding a sleeping baby. We hear soft, gentle guitar music. Feinstein says, “When I see my granddaughter Eileen, I think of what can be, not what is. And that’s why I’ll go to the Senate and fight for change. . . . For a growing economy that can provide opportunity for this small child, and for all our children.” Close-up of Feinstein’s face. “Our children are our future, and I won’t forget that as a Senator.”

In a dramatic departure from her earlier campaigns, this ad was trying to *soften* Feinstein, to “feminize” her. In the “Year of the Woman,” if she was going to benefit from the hype, she had to play the part—and nothing makes a female candidate look feminine so much as motherhood.

Although Democratic female candidates are more likely to emphasize femininity (see data below), Republicans also used the “mother card.” In 1993, Christie Todd Whitman’s ads implied that motherhood gave her special political insight. “I’m a mother of two teenagers. I know what it’s like on a Friday night to worry about drunk drivers while my kids are out of the house. As Governor, no one will be tougher than me on drunk drivers and criminals, especially those who prey on women and children.”¹² Sally Thompson’s 1996 Kansas Senate race ads implied that her household experience would help in politics. “Unlike a Washington politician, she knows how to balance a budget.” Ronna Romney in 1996 presented herself as a mother compared to a specific Washington politician. “Unlike Carl Levin, I’ll protect our children from drugs.” Explicitly referencing their status as mothers and, therefore, outsiders, these female candidates imply that motherhood is a good credential for political office, not a detriment to fulfilling the role. Nearly 20% of the women’s ads in my full sample explicitly portrayed the candidates as women or mothers, and women candidates after 1992 were 12% more likely than those before 1992 to show pictures of children in their ads (significant at the .05 level).

FEMININITY AND OUTSIDERNESS: DATA

The data, taken from my sample of political commercials from 1964 to 1998,¹³ indicate both that outsider references have increased in

women's commercials in the past decade, and that this outsidership is often correlated with femininity in issues and image. Table 1 presents data on the changes in outsidership in women's campaign ads pre- and post-1992.

With a few exceptions, outsider presentations in female candidates' image and issue pitches increased since 1992. Several outsider-related variables show statistically significant changes (.05 level): Female candidates are 8% more likely to portray themselves as independ-

TABLE 1. Outsidership in Women's Campaign Ads, Pre- and Post-1992

	PRE-1992	POST-1992 ¹	CHANGE
Issues:			
Reducing bureaucracy	11	16	+5
Cleaning up government	34	29	-5
Image:			
Dress informally (not in suit), or combine formal & informal	43	25	-18**
Portray self as:			
Independent/Not partisan	14	22	+8**
Experienced	64	30	-34**
Not politics as usual	37	42	+5
Anti-establishment	26	30	+4
Agent of change	74	67	-7*
Portray opponent as:			
Dependent/Partisan	4	12	+8**
Dishonest	15	21	+6*
Inexperienced	7	2	-5**
Insensitive	34	39	+5
Politics as usual	20	23	+3
Total N = 393 ads (representing 82 female candidates)	(N = 167)	(N = 226)	
¹ Includes 1992. **significant at the 0.05 level *significant at the 0.1 level			

ent/non-partisan and 8% more likely to portray their opponents as dependent or partisan. Surprisingly, they are 18% less likely to wear less formal attire. Women after 1992 were also slightly more likely (significant at the .1 level) to portray opponents as “dishonest” (6%). Most of the outsider traits became more popular—with the notable exception of “describe self as agent of change” decreasing 7% (significant at the .1 level).

Concurrently, “insider” traits (describing self as “experienced” and describing opponent as “inexperienced”) significantly decreased in prominence. From 1964 to 1990, 64% of all women’s ads in my sample described the candidate as “experienced.” From 1992 to 1998, only 30% of women’s ads claimed this qualification, a significant decrease of 34% (significant at the .05 level). Likewise, the percentage of women’s ads describing the opponent as “inexperienced” fell from 7% to 2% (significant at the .05 level). Overall, the ads in my sample shifted from trying to portray the candidates as experienced insiders to independent outsiders in touch with the people.

At the same time, the political issues dialogue feminized significantly from the 1980s to the 1990s. Table 2 gives data on policy issues raised in women’s ads pre- and post-1992. Four key feminine issues increased in prominence (significant at the .05 level): education (12%), sex discrimination (7%), health care (7%), and reproductive rights with a pro-choice stance (5%). Three feminine issues also decreased significantly in prominence, two at the .05 level of significance: race discrimination (3%) and the environment (7%). The third, care of children, decreased 3% (significant at the .1 level). Overall, an index of the feminine issues shows a significant increase of 11% (significant at the .1 level).

Simultaneously, two major masculine issues declined as a focus in the ads: defense and foreign policy (–16%) and agriculture/farm issues (–10%), both significant at the .05 level. No masculine issues showed a significant increase. An index of all the masculine issues shows a 12 point decrease from pre- to post-1992 (significant at the .05 level). The importance of masculine issues declined significantly as the focus on feminine issues rose through the 1990s, probably due in part to the end of the Cold War and the good economy in this period.

Rising negativity toward the government coupled with new attention on feminine policy issues allowed for a significant increase in the use of femininity to showcase outsider status. I measured the total number of personality traits for each ad and counted the number of masculine, feminine, and outsider traits to arrive at three ratios: masculine-to-total

TABLE 2. Policy Issues in Women's Campaign Ads, Pre- and Post-1992			
	PRE-1992	POST-1992 ¹	CHANGE
Issues:			
Education [F]	18	30	+12**
Sex discrimination [F]	6	13	+7**
Healthcare [F]	11	18	+7**
Reproductive rights [F] ²	2	7	+5**
Welfare [F]	2	3	+1
Gay rights [F]	0	0.4	+0.4
Care of children [F]	5	2	-3*
Race discrimination [F]	3	0	-3**
Social Security [F]	21	17	-4
Environment [F]	12	5	-7**
Index of feminine issues³	45	56	+11*
Defense/Foreign policy [M]	17	1	-16**
Farm/Agriculture [M]	12	2	-10**
Transportation issues [M]	4	2	-2
Budget/Govt. spending [M]	21	22	+1
Economy/Business/Taxes [M]	47	50	+3
Index of masculine issues⁴	66	54	-12**
Total N = 393 ads (representing 82 female candidates)	(N = 167)	(N = 226)	
¹ Includes 1992.			
² Pro-choice only.			
³ Index sums the preceding ten issues, each coded 0-1. Percentage = those scoring 2-3 on [F] issues.			
⁴ Index sums the preceding five issues, each coded 0-1. Percentage = those scoring 2-3 on [M] issues.			
[F] = relates to femininity			
[M] = relates to masculinity			
**significant at the 0.05 level			
*significant at the 0.1 level			

traits; feminine-to-total traits; and outsider-to-total traits. Using ratios as a measure standardizes across ads, controlling for the varying number of traits presented. Table 3 shows that the ratio of masculine-to-total traits per ad significantly decreased from pre- to post-1992, while the ratio of feminine-to-total traits remained relatively constant and the ra-

TABLE 3. Feminine Outsider Presentations in Women's Ads, Pre- and Post-1992			
	PRE-1992	POST-1992 ¹	CHANGE
Ratio of masculine-to-total traits > 0.4	76%	48%	-28%**
Ratio of feminine-to-total traits > 0.3	60	53	-7
Ratio of outsider-to-total traits > 0.2	41	58	+17**
Percentage of women's ads using a "feminine outsider" presentation²	20	32	+12**
Total N = 393 ads (representing 82 female candidates)	(N = 167)	(N = 226)	
¹ Includes the year 1992. ² Percentage includes only those ads where the ratio of feminine-to-total traits is > 0.3 and where the ratio of outsider-to-total traits is > 0.2. **significant at the 0.05 level *significant at the 0.1 level			

tio of outsider-to-total traits skyrocketed. Table 3 also contains a variable, "Feminine Outsiderness,"¹⁴ measuring those ads with an unusually high ratio of both feminine-to-total traits *and* outsider-to-total traits. Looking at this variable shows that only 20% of female candidates presented themselves as both feminine and outsiders in the era before 1992, while 32% did so after 1992 (significant at the .05 level). Women were more likely to run as "feminine outsiders" after 1992 than they were before 1992.

Outsiderness: Women vs. Men

In the 1990s, women were slightly but significantly more likely than men to portray themselves as outsiders. From 1992 to 1998, women were 10% more likely than men to portray their opponents as espousing "politics as usual" and to discuss "cleaning up the government" (.05 significance level). Women were slightly more likely (.1 significance level) than men to portray themselves as "anti-establishment" (8%); describe their opponents as "dependent or partisan" (6%); and present themselves as an outsider (12%). Women may have been slightly more likely than men to portray themselves as an "agent of change," as honest, and as "not politics as usual," although these differences are not statistically significant. Strikingly, in one measure men show

more feminine-outsiderness than women: Men's ads are more likely to show pictures of children (8%, significant at the .1 level). This relates to women as mothers, an immediate outsider connection but a risky one that can reinforce stereotypes of women as caretakers rather than political players.

Incumbency, not candidate gender, better predicts whether or not a candidate presents a "feminine" image. Many observed sex differences stem from women and men tending to occupy different positions, not from women acting differently from men within positions. My study supports a similar conclusion: Within categories, women and men tend to run for office similarly, with a few small but key differences. Female nonincumbents (including challengers and those in open-seat races) are more likely than male nonincumbents to present a feminine image, and are significantly more likely to focus on feminine issues. Male challengers are, not surprisingly, more likely than their female counterparts to present themselves as outsiders in a gender-neutral way, such as labeling themselves "independent" (14% difference, significant at the .1 level).

The perception that women run differently than men simply because they are women is somewhat misleading. Rather, the data on commercials show primarily that Democratic female nonincumbents run differently than other candidates, and women are disproportionately Democratic nonincumbents. Researchers have found that incumbency creates at least a temporary "political glass ceiling" for women in politics (Palmer and Simon 2001). Women are thus outsiders both as women and as challengers. This doubly-disadvantaged position, though to some degree helpful when the country is in an "outsider" mood, such as in 1992, has also meant that women's candidacies were often not taken as seriously as men's.¹⁵

Outsiderness and Incumbency: "The Incumbency Effect"

The most significant differences between candidates in outsider presentations are due to incumbency, not candidate gender. Party, gender, and time period all play second fiddle to incumbency, for good reason. Uhlaner and Schlozman, in "Candidate Gender and Congressional Campaign Receipts," write "The single best predictor of victory in a congressional race is incumbency status" (1986, 32). Merriner and Senter write that the strength of the "incumbency effect" (Fiorina 1977) increased through the 1990s. "As recently as the 1940s, a 75% reelection rate for incumbents was the norm. . . . Now the figure routinely ex-

ceeds 90%” (Merriner and Senter 1999, xxi). A large part of this advantage stems from incumbents’ increased ability to raise campaign funds. Female challengers, in particular, have often experienced difficulties as the probability of winning against male incumbents is usually low. As Duerst-Lahti puts it, “Women have a tougher time winning elections not because they are women, but because they are not incumbents” (Duerst-Lahti 1998, 15).

My second hypothesis, therefore, stated that challengers seeking to emphasize and capitalize on their outsider position would be the group most likely to use a feminine outsider presentation. Although incumbents sometimes attempt an outsider presentation, it is more difficult to attack successfully an institution of which you are a part. The data support this second hypothesis. Among women, 35% of nonincumbents used a feminine outsider style, compared with only 8% of incumbents (significant at the .01 level). Among men, 19% of nonincumbents used a feminine outsider style, compared with only 11% of incumbents.¹⁶ Regardless of gender, nonincumbents were 12% more likely than incumbents to present a feminine image (significant at the .05 level) and 8% less likely to present a masculine image (significant at the .01 level). Nonincumbents were 36% more likely than incumbents to present themselves as outsiders (significant at the .05 level).

Outsiderness and Candidate Party

By itself, party had only a small and statistically insignificant effect on emphasizing outsidership in these ads. Party was less important than both candidate gender and incumbency in determining whether a candidate would emphasize masculinity or femininity. However, some key differences emerged between women and men within parties. Among Democrats, female nonincumbents emphasized feminine issues to a greater extent than male nonincumbents. Party also interacts with incumbency: Among female nonincumbents, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to present themselves as feminine. In issues, the 19% difference is significant at the .05 level; in image, the 9% gap is not significant. In all, Democratic female nonincumbents are the group most likely to try to look both feminine and outsider.

Democratic female nonincumbents were thus most likely to present themselves both as feminine and outsiders—the “Un-Candidates.” As shown in Table 4, which compares ads for Democratic female nonincumbents to all others, the Democratic female nonincumbents were (significant at the .05 level): 7% more likely to present a strongly

TABLE 4. "THE UN-CANDIDATES": Ads for Democratic Women Non-Incumbents (DWNIs)

	ALL OTHERS	DWNIs	DIFFERENCE
Image:			
Present a strongly feminine image ¹	11	18	+7**
Present a moderately feminine image ²	41	51	+10**
Present a gender-neutral image ³	48	31	-17**
Present self as outsider ⁴	31	48	+17**
Include own picture in ad	84	83	-1
Include own voice in ad	42	54	+12**
Portray self as:			
Feminine/Mother [F]	9	22	+13**
Compassionate [F]	26	37	+11**
Understanding [F]	34	61	+27**
Nurturing [F]	28	35	+7
Honest [F]	26	33	+7
Not politics as usual [O]	34	52	+18**
Anti-establishment [O]	22	38	+16**
Agent of change [O]	66	73	+7*
Indep./Not partisan [O]	18	23	+5
Experienced [M]	40	38	-2
Strong, powerful, tough [M]	37	33	-4
Portray opponent as:			
Politics as usual [O]	14	33	+19**
Dependent/Partisan [O]	5	13	+8**
Immoral [O]	6	13	+7**
Power-hungry [O]	0	2	+2*
Dishonest [O]	16	26	+10**
Insensitive [O]	33	44	+11**
Issues:			
Education [F]	20	33	+13**
Environment [F]	6	14	+8**
Healthcare [F]	11	19	+8**
Sex discrimination [F]	7	13	+6*
Reproductive rights (pro-choice) [F]	3	8	+5**
Focus on feminine issues ⁵	45	59	+14**

	ALL OTHERS	DWNIs	DIFFERENCE
Issues:			
Cleaning up the government [O]	25	36	+11**
Defense/Foreign policy [M]	8	5	-3
Budget/Government spending [M]	22	18	-4
Economy/Business/Taxes [M]	51	45	-6
Focus on masculine issues ⁶	62	56	-6
Total N = 526 ads (representing 95 male and female candidates)	(N = 366)	(N = 160)	
¹ Index of feminine traits. Percentage = those who included 3-6 [F] traits. ² Index of feminine traits. Percentage = those who included 1-2 [F] traits. ³ Index of feminine traits. Percentage = those who included 0 [F] traits. ⁴ Ad included 2 or more outsider elements. ⁵ Ad focused on one or more feminine issue. ⁶ Ad focused on one or more masculine issue. **significant at the 0.05 level *significant at the 0.1 level			

feminine image; 10% more likely to present a moderately feminine image; 17% less likely to present a gender-neutral image; and 17% more likely to present the candidate as an outsider.

In the individual variables, Democratic female nonincumbents were significantly (at the .05 level) more likely than all other candidates to portray themselves as compassionate (11%), understanding (27%), “not politics as usual” (18%), and “anti-establishment” (16%); and to portray their opponents as “politics as usual” (19%), dependent or partisan (8%), immoral (7%), dishonest (10%), and insensitive (11%). Female Democratic nonincumbents were also significantly (at the .05 level) more likely to address the feminine issues of education (13%), the environment (8%), health care (8%), and reproductive rights with a pro-choice stance (5%); address the outsider issue of “cleaning up the government” (11%). Female Democratic nonincumbents were also significantly (at the .05 level) more negative than other candidates: They were 12% more likely to state the opponent’s name; 12% less likely to use a positive tone in the ad; and 14% more likely to focus on the opponent rather than on themselves.

SEPTEMBER 11th AND BEYOND

This research focuses on the impact of contextual factors in determining a candidate’s gender emphasis. In any campaign, the exogenous

policy environment of a campaign interacts with gender to favor or disfavor women candidates. In a bad economy or a foreign policy crisis, this environment favors male candidates, who are thought to have the decisiveness, foreign policy or even military experience, and tax and budget expertise required to deal with such crises (Kahn 1996). In a feminizing political climate, such as that in this country immediately before the September 11th attacks, women candidates can benefit from stereotypical femininity. Candidates were more likely after 1992 to discuss feminine political issues (e.g., education, health care, reproductive rights [with a pro-choice stance], and sex discrimination) than masculine issues (e.g., defense, foreign policy, agriculture, and transportation). The traditional associations of women with caring, nurturing, and family issues gave female candidates an edge during the 1990s, just as traditional notions of men as tough, powerful, and more knowledgeable about the economy and military matters may give men the advantage in the current climate.

The tragic events of September 11th and the aftershocks that continue to reverberate through the political world may have shifted us back into a situation similar to that which Bonnie Campbell faced in 1994. When Campbell, the former Attorney General of Iowa, ran for Governor in 1994, the most prominent issues in her race were the death penalty and economic development. Women, Campbell noted, are “absolutely at a disadvantage speaking about those issues” (2001). Campbell says her opponent, the incumbent Governor, used that weakness against her. “The Governor went on the air with the death penalty ads against me in July and continued right up until election day. I had been ahead in the polls, but he ran those until we were even” (Campbell 2001). As Campbell found, female candidates often lack credibility with voters to address masculine issues when running against a man.

The 1990s overall were marked by a good economy, a lack of foreign policy crises, and a focus on the feminine issues of education and health care. The prominent issues post-September 11, by contrast, are homeland security, the war on terrorism, and the flagging U.S. economy—all masculine. Simultaneously, insiderness has become more popular: Directly following September 11, President Bush’s approval ratings soared up past 80%, and the approval ratings of almost every elected official rose correspondingly. At the same time, trust in government increased 18 percentage points between July and October 2001 (Gallup, cited in Rothenberg 2001, 1). The new legislative priorities, the article concludes, are broadening security, expanding defense spending, and stimulating the economy. As Kahn (1996) points out, in politics, economic and security issues tend to benefit male candidates over female candi-

dates. Witt, Paget, and Matthews explain that 1990, not 1992, was supposed to be the Year of the Woman—until Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait (1994). Women candidates of 1990 found that nothing polarizes gender roles quite like the twin plagues of war and a bad economy, as women running in 2002 also discovered.

It remains to be seen whether the effects of September 11 will have a permanent or temporary effect on women's campaigning styles. At the White House Project, where I work, we recently released the results of a new study on voters' perceptions of women's political commercials. The study, "Barriers & Opportunities to Women's Executive Leadership," recommends that women candidates in the current political climate, especially those seeking executive office, downplay femininity and instead use forceful language, active verbs, and formal attire and settings to stress their toughness and effectiveness.¹⁷

Preliminary accounts of campaigning for the 2002 election cycle indicate that, at least to some degree, the high numbers of women running for Governor may mitigate some of the negative effects of September 11. A series of articles proclaiming 2002 the "Year of the Woman Governor" (Jones 2002; Mark 2002; Marlantes 2002; Sorokin 2002; and Toner 2002) reinforce my notion of the importance of a number of women running simultaneously as a critical contextual factor in a woman candidate's race. Candidates Jennifer Granholm (MI), Shannon O'Brien (MA), Kathleen Sebelius (KS), and Myrth York (RI) recently espoused a feminine outsider approach. Sebelius explained that women focus on different issues, while York and O'Brien played the "mother card." O'Brien stated, "I know what it's like to struggle with child care, and struggle between managing your job and making sure that you are raising your child . . ." York added, "Women know how to take two kids and one cookie and spread it around and make everybody reasonably happy" (S. Page 2002, 2A). With more women running concurrently, this language can become more prevalent, even in the wake of September 11 and the subsequent military and economic issues focus.

CONCLUSION

The biggest asset for a woman candidate is being a woman, and the biggest liability is not being a man.

—Barbara Curran, former New Jersey Assembly member
(Mandel 1981, 31)

This study examines two intuitive facts of politics—that women in politics are outsiders and that nonincumbents are outsiders—through the lens of gender and gendered self-presentations. The research suggests that a “feminine outsider” strategy was on the rise through the 1990s, particularly for female nonincumbents. As in the suffrage era, women today have again started to use their status as political outsiders as justification for an increased political role. Female candidates who employ a feminine presentation are using gender stereotypes, up to now their greatest disadvantage, as positive elements in their campaigns. The data in this study reveal that party, incumbency, and gender interact to produce a subcategory of candidates who emphasize their outsideriness significantly more than all other groups of candidates. Democratic female nonincumbents are notably the most likely to present themselves as feminine “Un-Candidates.” The media hype over the “Year of the Woman” in 1992 masked the pattern that Democratic female nonincumbents have always tended to run as feminine outsiders.

Additionally, rising negativity toward government during the 1980s and '90s spurred an increase in outsider presentations by candidates, especially challengers seeking to capitalize on their outsider positions. The data reveal that outsideriness in political campaigns correlates positively with femininity and negatively with incumbency. Outsider presentations, particularly feminine outsider strategies such as the Un-Candidate approach described here, increased during this time period. The data also show that within the 1990s, the strategy of feminine outsideriness became prevalent among male as well as female candidates, suggesting it is a successful strategy for nonincumbents regardless of gender. September 11, however, will affect the advance of this trend, at least temporarily, as attention shifts to budget and foreign policy concerns.

Insofar as it has produced an increase of women in high offices, the rise of feminine outsideriness in campaigns can be read as a positive trend. Yet the Un-Candidate strategy draws on traditional gender norms to connect femininity with outsideriness. In campaign commercials, this strategy distills complex claims about gender into simplified stereotypes understandable to the general public. By doing so, these ads rely on two assumptions that possess key implications for women in politics and for feminism in general.

The Un-Candidate tactic assumes women to be both outsiders to politics and fundamentally different from men. Emphasizing the

outsiderness inherent to femininity may reinforce the disparity between popular conceptions of womanhood and of leadership. Elective offices—especially those of national significance—are positions of power, associated culturally with masculinity. The stereotypical constructions of femininity underlying the Un-Candidate strategy may thus make it *more* difficult for a woman to win election for executive office, even as this brand of femininity helps women win legislative seats. Role incongruity continues to plague women running for executive positions. In *Claytie and the Lady: Ann Richards, Gender, and Politics in Texas*, Tolleson-Rinehart and Stanley write, “As voters, we still seem more comfortable with women who represent us than we do with women who ‘run things’ . . . While women’s share of legislative offices of all types has grown steadily, women’s share of gubernatorial offices has not” (Tolleson-Rinehart and Stanley 1994, 3).

The renewed emphasis on femininity by women running in the 1990s points to the persisting and enduring power of difference in the mind of the public. As in the second phase of the suffrage movement at the beginning of the 1900s, women seeking an increased political role at the end of the 1900s again turned to difference strategies and arguments. Playing into gender assumptions to win election is often easier than challenging them—yet arguments relying on women’s difference can be double-edged swords. Most voters still expect women to be nurturers, mothers, and “feminine”—linked in politics to good constituent service, compassion, nonhierarchical leadership, gentleness, and caring (Eagly and Johnson 1990; Kahn 1996; Thomas 1994). A feminine outsider presentation in a campaign suggests that women will behave differently in office, thereby setting voters up for a predictable disappointment when women have to conform to the (male) norms of the political institutions to achieve success and change. The question is whether “as more and more opportunities become available to women in what were once exclusively male preserves, women must simply act like men or whether they can enjoy the fruits of these opportunities without sacrificing a distinctive style” (Schlozman 1990, 375).

Further research along these lines of inquiry should address the hypothesis that all candidates, men and women alike, will be less likely to use feminine outsiderness in their ads after September 11, 2001, than before the terrorist attacks, as well as address the images and messages that will be most effective in getting women elected in this difficult political climate.

NOTES

1. On sex/gender as a marker in society in general, see in particular Bem 1988, Goffman 1979, and Sapiro 1983. On gender as a marker within the political sphere, and particularly for candidates, see Boxer 1994; Carroll 1994; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995; Kahn 1996; Petrocelli 1999; Riggle et al. 1997; Sapiro 1983; Thomas 1994; and Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994.

2. It will be evident from my application of the analysis to both men and women that in characterizing a certain issue or behavior as “feminine,” I do not seek to essentialize that behavior or issue as necessarily relating to women. Rather, I draw the category from historical and sociological literature on gender, stereotypes, and women in politics.

3. Other factors, such as candidate’s racial/ethnic group and level of office sought (Kahn 1996) may have a secondary impact on the candidate’s choices about using a feminine outsider approach. I was unable to examine these factors as my unit of analysis is political ads for high office (House, Senate, and Governor). Campaigns for lower-level offices like state legislator, mayor, or city commissioner rarely make campaign ads. Additionally, and perhaps unfortunately, the vast majority of candidates for the high-level offices continue to be white. While this study includes ads from women of color, notably Patsy Mink (D-HI) and Carol Mosely-Braun (D-IL), the numbers of women of color were too small to examine separately.

4. Thanks to Gil Troy, political historian and author of *See How They Ran: The Changing Role of the Presidential Candidate* for this term (Horovitz 1992).

5. By sex I mean the biological differences between men and women, and by gender I mean the social construction of those biological differences.

6. On difference feminist arguments during the U.S. suffrage movement, see also Andersen 1996, Cott 1987, and Kraditor 1971.

7. See Appendix for data sample breakdown and References for interviews.

8. Although the PCC is the most extensive archive of its kind, its holdings are not exhaustive. My data sample, taken only from data available in the archive, may not necessarily represent the full number and type of ads over time.

9. Honesty is coded in the literature as simultaneously a feminine and an outsider trait (see Bystrom and Kaid 2000; Carli and Eagly 2001; Florida Commission 2002; Kahn 1996; Strauss 1998; Thomas 1997). Carli and Eagly write, “The idea that women might hold such positions and the suspicion that they might exercise power somewhat differently than men no longer seems as alarming to people as in the past. Indeed, people are receptive to the idea that different might be better or at least not worse than what the nation experiences now” (2001, 630).

10. This choice of issues derives from three sources: “traditional,” “feminist,” and “gender gap” issues (Strauss 1998). For this study, I aggregated these three sets, although others have disaggregated them (Carroll 1994; Thomas 1994; Strauss 1998).

11. See also Putnam 2000.

12. These examples vary in the type of motherhood they reference. Although I did not divide the category of “mother” into types, many of the motherhood references I saw related to mothers as protectors of children and family, not simply nurturers. This type of presentation links motherhood with substantive policy issues, while images of nurturing, cookie-baking-type mothers places women back in a traditional gender sphere where they have less authority to discuss political issues.

13. See Appendix for Ad Sample Breakdown.

14. I multiplied the simplified (0-1) ratio of feminine-to-total traits by the simplified (0-1) ratio of outsider-to-total traits. If an ad portrayed a candidate as both feminine and an outsider, it received a value of 1. If the ad portrayed the candidate as only feminine, only an outsider, or neither, that ad received a 0. This became my dummy variable of “Feminine Outsiderness.”

15. The literature on women in politics and anecdotal evidence suggests that in the past many female candidates were, in a sense, sacrificial lambs. Uhlaner and Schlozman found in 1986 that “Female nominees were concentrated disproportionately in candidacies in which the chances of winning were lowest” (1986, 36). They concluded, “There is considerable evidence that political influentials actively discourage—or at least fail to encourage—women to run unless a race appears hopeless” (Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986, 30). Barbara Burrell notes that long-time Connecticut Democratic state party leader and Democratic National Committee Chair John Baily once famously declared, “The only time to run a woman is when things look so bad that your only chance is to do something dramatic” (Burrell 1993, 123).

16. This difference is not statistically significant because of the small numbers of men in my study. I have reason to believe that this difference would be significant if the Ns were higher.

17. The White House Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing women’s leadership and to fostering the entry of women into leadership positions, including the U.S. Presidency. More information on the Project and on the new research can be found at www.thewhitehouseproject.org.

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APPENDIX: Ad Sample Breakdown								
	1968-1990				1992-1998			
	DEMOCRAT		REPUBLICAN		DEMOCRAT		REPUBLICAN	
	NI ¹	I	NI	I	NI	I	NI	I
WOMEN:	66	41	35	25	94	45	81	6
MEN:	6	0	3	12	29	15	51	17
N = 526 Ads total (393 Ads from Female Candidates, 133 Ads from Male Candidates)								
YEAR	# OF ADS			YEAR	# OF ADS			
1964	1			1990	49			
1972	4			1992	43			
1982	18			1993 ²	10			
1984	46			1994	123			
1986	65			1996	83			
1988	5			1998	79			
TOTAL for 1964-1988: 139			TOTAL for 1990s: 387			TOTAL N = 526		
¹ NI = Non-incumbent, I = Incumbent								
² Special election for Governor in New Jersey.								