**ComMANder in Chief: A Content Analysis of Masculinity in Candidates’ Images**

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*Abstract*

*People consume media daily. One issue that is pervasive in the media is the election of the President. This study examines presidential images from 1960 to 2008 in Newsweek magazines. The purpose of this study was to track the changes in masculinity through this time period in order to uncover trends. Operationalizing performances of masculinity into several variables and then using crosstabulations to observe any significant differences produced interesting findings. Overall, presidential candidates seem to have internalized what is appropriate masculine behavior for a potential president.*

Performances of gender have changed throughout time in the United States. Women’s studies and notions of femininity have been part of pedagogy in the United States much longer than men’s studies and ideas of masculinity. Often, definitions of what it means to be a man or a woman go unquestioned and unexamined throughout society. These silent assumptions, or hegemonic ideals, tend to limit options for performing a person’s gender. Not only are options limited, most people absorb what the acceptable choices are unconsciously. One site of gender performance and construction is the media. People perform their gender and then the media reconstructs these performances again. Presidential candidates have been performing masculinity since the incarnation of the United States. In the last five decades presidential candidates’ images have been pervasive in the media. The Media reconstructs presidential candidates’ performances of masculinity. Mainstream media most often reflect the hegemonic nature of gender performances. Through time, newsmagazine images show changes in presidential candidates’ performances of masculinity that reflect hegemonic ideologies of gender portrayal.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Masculinity*

Masculinity is a fairly new field of study within academia. Just as it is difficult to define femininity the study of masculinity is also complex and difficult to parse. Connell (2005:45) offers one definition of masculinity as, “true masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men’s bodies – to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body.” Some scholars believe that the body as an entity naturally produces gender differences. Other academics believe that the body is a neutral surface that is socially constructed and used in the performance of gender, a view that is more commonly accepted in the social sciences. Connell (2005:71) sums up masculinity as “simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture.” For this literature review, Connell’s summation is vital.

Given that gender is a social and historical construct that is performed differently, variations of masculinity can be produced (Coe et al. 2007). People are judged as being masculine in comparison to other individuals’ performances of masculinity. That is, “people are constructed as masculine by positioning themselves, or by positioning others, as embodying a set of cultural practices and expressions that carry the currency of manhood” (Coe et al. 2007:33). Alternative masculinities, or varying performances of masculinity, allow scholars to explore the constructs of masculinities that are dominant at a given moment in history, while trying to uncover how and why these certain performances of masculinity are prominent in society (Kimmel 1994). Coe et al. (2007) go on to examine ways in which political leaders portray masculinity in a strategic manner using mass media as an outlet.

While the Coe et al. study focused on language and rhetoric as ways to perform masculine ideology, visual media is another outlet for politicians to perform the masculinity they want citizens to perceive and consume. Robert Dean (1998), focusing on John F. Kennedy’s portrayal of masculinity, contends that gender is a critical component in the construction of an individual’s worldview. Dean asserts that the way influential men have conceived masculinity is a creditable area of study.

Following Dean’s claim that powerful men’s masculinity is a laudable area of study, Kimmel(2006) focused on the masculinity of past presidents in detail. Kimmel describes Kennedy as the final president built from a “heroic mold,” depicting a youthful dynamism and a robust manhood. Kennedy combined and harnessed his competitiveness and aggression with a handsome, young, energetic charisma, unlike his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, who lacked those qualities. Johnson’s masculinity was constantly compared to Kennedy’s throughout the news, magazines, and everyday conversation. Richard Nixon was also worried about appearing “soft” or effeminate on issues during his term. Both Johnson and Nixon tried to arouse their masculinity in action and words.

Unlike the hyper-masculine nature of Nixon and Johnson, Jimmy Carter was a new representation of what Kimmel termed the “new man,” (Kimmel 2006:185). Carter was a “soft-spoken, deeply religious man, who made compassion and concern the apparent cornerstone principles of his domestic and foreign policy” (Kimmel 2006:179). However, Carter only served for one term; it is possible that America was not ready for his new type of masculinity, as the presidency ultimately reverted back to the classic “Western cowboy” masculinity as performed by Ronald Reagan. Reagan represented the “triumph of the new-moneyed, gas guzzling, right-wing cowboys,” (Kimmel 2006:195), while George H. W. Bush represented the opposite. The first president Bush performed more of kinder and gentler politics, similar to the Johnson era, in the beginning of his term, but by the end Bush often grappled with his masculinity, trying to demonstrate a “manlier” masculinity (Kimmel 2006). Kimmel describes another swing in the spectrum during the 1992 election. Bill Clinton was closer in age to the average American, had a running mate who appeared to be his friend, and was a man married to a woman who was equally as driven and strong of character. A new dynamic had been introduced into masculine performances. The company of a strong woman sometimes made Clinton seem effeminate, other times it bolstered his perceived masculinity. With each president a new type of masculinity had been introduced into American society, and it may be possible to trace the differences and similarities between these men to better understand hegemonic masculinity within this country at a specific time.

*Media and Presidential Elections*

Over time the media has come to play a larger role in presidential election. According to a study by Gollin (1980), the political role of the media has been continuously evolving, from radio to mass circulation weeklies and finally to the primacy of television. Ramsden (1996) asserts that the way a candidate is depicted in the media is often the way he or she is understood by the voters. This may seem obvious, but it is a critical underpinning for this research. The assumption that audiences understand candidates based on the media depictions is what makes it possible for audiences to understand and absorb candidates’ masculinity performances. It is also imperative to note that in addition to the media becoming more involved in elections; the media molds public opinion (Miller and Krosnick 2000). Waldman and Devitt (1998) recognized that photographs play a fundamental role in people’s construction of impressions of candidates, finding that altering different photographic characteristics can produce changes in voters’ evaluations of candidates.

As the media has become more involved in elections a new trend in voters’ perceptions and assessments of the president has become more salient. Voters have begun to judge the president as a person rather than judging his leadership skills or his policy allegiances (Graber 1972). Garber’s research found that people are more likely now to determine if they like or dislike a president based on aspects of his personal image than they were in the past. References to a president’s political ideologies and leadership qualities occur significantly less frequently than references to a president’s personal qualities. Even though Garber’s study is dated, the infiltration of mediated images of presidents on television and in newspapers, magazines, and other popular media are possible reasons for the trend towards judging presidents based on personal and physical qualities. Garber found that 77% of all references to presidential qualities during the 1968 election were to the candidate as a man and an image rather than as a political actor. A candidate as a man and an image can be represented through photographs. Focusing on a president as a man as well as an image makes his masculinity as an influential aspect of how voters choose to cast their vote. In later studies, Garber (1976:301) asserts again “it seems clear that media audiences receive most information about general human qualities of candidates rather than about their professional qualifications.”

Another consideration is the issue of priming. Priming occurs when an experience increases the ease of access of a socially constructed image or opinion in people’s memories (Miller and Krosnick 2000). Mendelsohn (1996) found that voters most often form their political opinions based on what first comes to mind. The media primes this recall of information by presenting certain issues, stories, or images in the medium more often than others (Miller and Krosnick 2000). Mendelsohn (1996) also found that the media implies that the only issues of importance are the candidates themselves, stressing personal qualities, while understating party identification. This primes voters to recall the candidates as people, and as men, rather than political actors associated with a partisan party.

*Person Perception and Performance Fragments*

Person perception research focuses on self-presentation theories and performances. The performance of a candidate’s self through the media can be compared to an actor participating in a political role. This role participation projects a characteristic style that reflects how the candidate wants his or her performance and personal character to be perceived (Moriarty and Popovich 1991). Some researchers point out that the presidency is often spoken about as if it were a spectacle because citizens believe the president performs the role of a president rather “living” the presidency (Erickson 2000). It is no secret that presidents and candidates will stage photographic opportunities to “influence, manipulate, entreat, entice, and amaze” voters and citizens (Erickson 2000:139). Candidates as well as presidents take advantage of any opportunity they have to perform the role they want others to perceive.

Another study focusing solely on newsmagazine photographs of the 1984 campaign (Moriarty and Garramone 1986), demonstrates that images of candidates in the media are established by how the candidate portrays himself and then how the media represents the candidate’s portrayal. Like Erickson (2000), Moriarty and Garramone contend that political candidates are actors playing political roles. Given the previous study by Graber (1986) that recognized the role masculinity and manhood plays in candidates garnering voters’ support, it could be argued that political candidates are also actors performing different masculinities.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY

Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue that reality is socially constructed and it necessary to analyze the processes in which the constructions occur. They further contend that reality is characteristic of happenings, situations, or phenomena that people acknowledge as being independent of their own wishes or decisions; in other words, people cannot make reality disappear. Knowledge is defined as the conviction that phenomena are real and possess detailed attributes. These concepts are vital because the theory is intended to provide a sociological understanding of the knowledge that directs behavior in everyday life. Thus, people of different cultures and societies understand reality differently.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) contend that the construction of reality begins with repeated actions that have meanings attached to the action itself. Habitualized actions retain their meaning for the person, but eventually the meanings involved become solidified as routines. Routines and habitualized actions narrow choices for people, and these habitualized actions provide direction that is naturally lacking in people’s desires. This direction alleviates the buildup of anxiety that is an outcome of possessing wavering drives.

Berger and Luckmann also state that habitualized actions also give rise to institutions, such as political institutions like the Presidency. Institutions are created whenever certain members of a society collectively understand examples of habitualized actions. Institutions are built through shared histories of people and shared confirmations of unquestioned exemplifiers. The institutionalization of human activity happens when that segment of human activity has been integrated under social control. The institutionalization of actions or ideas is discriminating in nature because only certain ideas or actions become acceptable. It is important to remember that no matter how great the objectivity of the institutional world may appear institutions are a humanly manufactured objectivity. In other words, people construct institutions; they are not an innate characteristic of society.

In order to continue, the institutional world needs legitimation, or ways in which it can be explained and validated. Part of this legitimation manifests itself through socialization. Legitimation clarifies institutional order by confirming its objective meanings and giving dignity to its practical demands (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Legitimation continues the cycle of hegemonic norms that become accepted throughout societies and extends the control that socially constructed ideas and actions have beyond the abstract.

Socialization is central for Berger and Luckmann because through socialization people become members of society and internalize the constructed reality of that society. Socialization is defined as the complete orientation of an individual into the objective element of a society, or part of a society. Significant others shape a person’s socialization, individuals interact with these significant others through language. The process of primary socialization ends when the notion of the “generalized other” has been firmly planted in the consciousness of the individual. The “generalized other” arises when people abstract the thoughts and opinions of concrete persons and begin to compare themselves and their actions to society as a whole. Socialization continues as a lifelong process through secondary socialization, which is the internalization of institutional categories. The success of a society’s construction of reality depends upon the success of the socialization of its members.

Expanding on Berger and Luckmann’s original theory of social construction, Best (2005) and Loseke (2007) use social constructionism to understand social problem frameworks. Best summarizes Berger and Luckmann’s key observation, noting that people comprehend the world through language. Because language is an integral part of culture, which is also learned, every thought is a social construction. Best thus contends that everything a person knows is a social construction. An example of a socially constructed concept that is relevant to the research question at hand is masculinity. Understanding such a concept happens only through language. Language is only relevant in the context of society in which common meanings of the language are accepted. Best implies that concepts of masculinity are socially constructed because the medium used to understand masculinity, language, is also socially constructed.

Taking a constructionist approach increases our understanding of the processes the media uses to construct presidential masculinities. Best (2007) outlines key concepts necessary to dissect social problems using a constructionist lens. The first of these concepts, which are relevant to this research, is that of “claims-makers,” or people who bring an issue to the attention of others by proposing that a specific condition exists, is troubling, and needs to be handled. Obviously, claims-makers make claims, so the concept of a claim is also relevant. A claim is defined as a statement that tries to influence audiences to describe a condition as a social problem.

Thus, the media, acting as claims-makers, makes claims both intentionally and unintentionally regarding presidential candidates’ masculinities through the visual and verbal imagery presented. Claims-making as a process exists because meaning is constructed through language and symbols. People are often moved to action by framing language in a way that highlights certain issues as important or problematic. For example, constructing a presidential candidate’s masculinity in a certain way may move people to either vote for or against him.

Best (2007) specifically discusses the media in the context of claims and the claims-making process. Best notes that every type of media tends to change how social problems are constructed. Mass media produce secondary claims, another version of a claims-maker’s original claim. The media interprets and renovates claims-makers’ messages, making the messages shorter, more memorable, and less ideological in nature. Claims-makers understand that the media cannot possibly cover all claims and that competition for media attention is to be expected. Claims-makers will package their claims accordingly to receive the greatest media attention, for example, highlighting any scandal that may have been in a presidential candidate’s past in order to question his current beliefs. The images and stories the media produces lead to cultural constructions of concepts, people, and social problems. Many claims-makers argue that cultural change or changes in the way people view the world can be the only driving force for substantial change (Loseke 2007). Today, the media is a significant claims-maker, shaping the way people view the world.

Robert Entman (1989) analyzed the relationship of the media to democracy and politics. Although Entman does not use the term social construction specifically, he observes that the media does not control people’s preferences; rather it shapes public opinion by being a source of most of the information people consider. Entman also argues that what the media selects to show is what makes a considerable impact on audiences’ thinking, and those who produce the media are acting as claims-makers that try to shape how audiences view reality. Similarly to Berger and Luckmann, Entman contends that people’s party and ideological allegiances stem from socialization in political culture that is learned from peers, professors, parents, and partners.

METHODOLOGY

A content analysis of presidential candidates’ photographs within *Newsweek* magazine was used to gather and analyze data. A content analysis is the method used for examining words, meanings, and ideas (Neuman 2007). Content can be words, meanings, pictures, ideas or any message that can be communicated. Neuman (2007) suggests that content analysis is appropriate for historical analysis such as this research. *Newsweek* was chosen as it has a large worldwide circulation of approximately 4 million subscribers (Newsweek 2007). The use of *Newsweek* is also a convenience sample because the issues are readily available at both the public library and the Saint Mary’s College library. *Newsweek*, a weekly publication, also provides comprehensive coverage of national and global events.

A decision was made to begin this historical content analysis with the election between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. This time frame was an appropriate choice as it was during the 1960 election season in which the usage of visual images in political campaigns became widely used. Kennedy is often considered the first television president; from Kennedy’s victory on, presidential candidates incorporated images into their campaign strategies. As presidents have been historically male, how they performed their masculinity would be evident in those images.

This analysis examined photographs of the Democratic and Republican candidates from the day they were officially nominated as candidates at their party’s respective conventions until the results of the election were published in the magazine. Therefore, the analysis focused on the two men vying to be president as opposed to focusing on all of the potential contenders that eventually drop out or are eliminated from the presidential race. Any photograph of either the Republican or Democratic nominee throughout each issue was examined and coded.

To analyze the different masculinities performed by presidential candidates it was necessary to operationalize the concept of masculinity and different ways masculinity could be performed within a photograph. Using a study done by Moriarty and Popovich (1991) as a guide, the following items were coded: activity, posture, portrayal, expression, setting, and position of the photograph, size of the photograph, props, dress, and family association. Behaviors considered “more masculine” would include dynamic behavior such as talking, shaking hands, interacting with other people, while a “less masculine” performance would include more passive actions like listening or reading. A “more masculine” posture would entail standing tall, shoulders back, upright, while a “less masculine” posture would be a man slumped over, leaning to one side, or with shrugged shoulders. A copy of the coding sheet is attached in the Appendix.

This methodology has both strengths and weaknesses. Content analysis as a methodology can help to unveil messages or themes within text and images that are difficult to notice at first glance (Neuman 2007). It is important as a researcher to develop a precise and specific coding system to ensure as much reliability as possible and maintain the objectivity of the research. This research will lack intercoder reliability because only one researcher will be doing the content analysis. A strength of this methodology is that an in-depth historical analysis of a fairly large sample will result in a detailed description of the masculinities constructed by the media of past presidential candidates. However, an analysis of this nature cannot be generalized to other men’s masculinities. Presidents are a specific type of person and the type of masculinity the media constructs for them cannot be generalized to all men within American society. Given America’s recent choice for president this research is both timely and interesting.

*Sample*

The content analysis examined 232 weekly issues of *Newsweek* from July 11, 1960 until November 14, 2008 producing 1359 images. A total of 13 elections and 26 candidates were examined. The images were almost evenly divided between Republican and Democratic candidates; 49.2% of the images were of Republican candidates and 50.8% of the images were of Democratic candidates.

FINDINGS

Given that the purpose of this research was to track the changes of masculine performances by presidential candidates over time, most of the quantitative analysis compared these changes by creating a decade variable. Creation of this variable made it possible to use crosstabulations to compare masculine performances across the decades. The decades were categorized as follows; 1960s included the 1960, 1964, and 1968 elections, 1970s included the 1972 and 1976 elections, 1980s included the 1980, 1984, and 1988 elections, 1990s included the 1992 and 1996 election, and lastly, 2000s included the 2000, 2004, and 2008 election. The following table shows the volume of images broken down by decade.

The following charts show the findings with respect to changes in masculine performances through the decades. The changes in how the presidential candidates carried their torsos approached statistical significance.

**Table 1. Changes in Torso Performance from 1960 to 2008.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Bow | Sit | Tall | Total (N) |
| 1960s | 2 (1.5%) | 34 (25.2%) | 99 (73.3%) | 135 (100.0%) |
| 1970s | 5 (2.3%) | 74 (34.7%) | 134 (62.9%) | 213 (99.9%) |
| 1980s | 7 (1.9%) | 106 (28.1%) | 264 (70.0%) | 377 (100.0%) |
| 1990s | 16 (7.2%) | 64 (29.0%) | 141 (63.8%) | 221 (100.0%) |
| 2000s | 14 (3.4%) | 136 (32.9%) | 263 (63.7%) | 413 (100.0%) |
| Total for decades | 44 (3.2%) | 414 (30.5%) | 901 (66.3%) | 1359 (100.0%) |

The percentages in each row are the percentages of images within each decade. Given that each decade did not have the same number of elections, using percentages within the decade made it possible to compare across decades. The most masculine torso performance, indicated by the “tall” variable, had both the highest frequency and percentage in each decade.

The second variable used to operationalize masculine performances was interaction. This was categorized in three ways: alone, interacting with a cheering crowd, and interacting with an unseen crowd. The most masculine performance was interaction with a cheering crowd. Overall, interacting with a crowd, either cheering or unseen, was more acceptable. Table 2 shows the changes across the decades. There was a significant relationship between decade and interaction (*p* < .01), showing that, over time, masculine performances of interaction have fluctuated. These significant findings show that presidential candidates’ understanding of what is expected of them in regards to interacting with the public has changed over time. Candidates became more likely to be alone or interact with a cheering crowd rather than an unseen crowd.

**Table 2. Changes in Interaction from 1960 to 2008.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Alone | Unseen Crowd | Cheering Crowd | Total (N) |
| 1960s | 20 (14.8%) | 93 (68.9%) | 22 (16.3%) | 135 (100.0%) |
| 1970s | 45 (21.1%) | 130 (61.0%) | 38 (17.8%) | 213 (99.9%) |
| 1980s | 77 (20.4%) | 259 (68.7%) | 41 (10.9%) | 377 (100.0%) |
| 1990s | 39 (17.6%) | 140 (63.3%) | 42 (19.0%) | 221 (99.9%) |
| 2000s | 79 (19.1%) | 244 (59.1%) | 90 (21.8%) | 413 (100.0%) |
| Total for decades | 260 (19.1%) | 233 (17.1%) | 866 (63.7%) | 1359 (99.9%) |

A significant relationship exists between decade and how a candidate was dressed in photographs (*p* < .001). “Dress” is operationalized as dignified (suit and tie); unclear, and casual or athletic wear. Clothing is an outward expression of many aspects of identity, including gender performance. Clearly, given the significant finding, there was a change through the years in what were acceptable options for presidential dress with a decrease in the number of photographic portrayals of candidates in “dignified” dress and an increase “casual” dress. Table 3 shows that through time performances of gender through dress have changed. In the 1960s “dignified” dress occurred more often in the images than in any other decade. In the 1990s “casual” dress occurred more often in the images than any other decade.

Another choice in gender performance for the candidates was setting of their images. This was coded as either indoors or outdoors, and there is a significant relationship (*p* < .05) between the photo settings and the decade of the election. Table 4 shows the changes through time of the setting of presidential candidate images, a decrease in the number of images indoor and an increase in the number of outdoor images.

**Table 3. Changes in Dress in Presidential Candidates’ Images from 1960 to 2008.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Dignified Dress | Casual Dress | Unclear Dress | Total (N) |
| 1960s | 97 (71.9%) | 12 (8.9%) | 26 (19.3%) | 135 (100.1%) |
| 1970s | 127 (59.6%) | 34 (16.0%) | 52 (24.4%) | 213 (100.0%) |
| 1980s | 243 (64.5%) | 52 (13.8%) | 82 (21.8%) | 377 (100.1%) |
| 1990s | 138 (62.4%) | 55 (24.9%) | 28 (12.7%) | 221 (100.0%) |
| 2000s | 241 (58.4%) | 65 (15.7 %) | 107 (25.9%) | 413 (100.0%) |
| Total for Decades | 846 (62.3%) | 218 (16.0%) | 295 (21.7%) | 1359 (100.0%) |

**Table 4. Changes in Setting in Presidential Candidates’ Images from 1960 to 2008.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Indoor | Unclear | Outdoor | Total (N) |
| 1960s | 59 (43.7%) | 49 (36.3%) | 27 (20.0%) | 135 (100.0%) |
| 1970s | 79 (37.1%) | 77 (36.2%) | 57 (26.8%) | 213 (100.1%) |
| 1980s | 140 (37.1%) | 141 (37.4%) | 96 (25.5%) | 377 (100.0%) |
| 1990s | 85 (38.5%) | 57 (25.8%) | 79 (35.7%) | 221 (100.0%) |
| 2000s | 167 (40.4%) | 128 (31.0%) | 118 (28.6%) | 413 (100.0%) |
| Total for decades | 530 (39.0%) | 452 (33.3%) | 377 (27.7%) | 1359 (100.0%) |

Another variable used to operationalize masculine performance was facial expression. There were three variables in this category including confident facial expression, serious facial expression, and lastly unhappy facial expression. The most masculine facial expression is a confident facial expression. A none category that included three images (less than 1% of total images) where the candidates’ face was hidden; this category was used for coding purposes but not included in Table 5 because of its minuscule presence.

**Table 5. Changes in Facial Expression in Presidential Candidates’ Images from 1960 to 2008.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Confident Expression | Serious Expression | Unhappy Expression | Total (N) |
| 1960s | 71 (52.6%) | 51 (37.8%) | 13 (9.6%) | 135 (100.0%) |
| 1970s | 82 (38.5%) | 109 (51.2%) | 21 (9.9%) | 212 (99.6%) |
| 1980s | 152 (40.3%) | 173 (45.9%) | 51 (13.5%) | 376 (99.7%) |
| 1990s | 102 (46.2%) | 111 (50.2%) | 7 (3.2%) | 220 (99.6%) |
| 2000s | 186 (45.0%) | 199 (48.2%) | 28 (6.8%) | 413 (100.0%) |
| Total for decades | 593 (43.6%) | 643 (47.3%) | 120 (8.8%) | 1356 (99.7%) |

As Table 5 shows, the 1960s was the only time a confident facial expression occurred more often in the images than a serious expression. Unhappy expressions were kept to a minimum in each decade.

Presidential candidates’ choice to be present with their family was also coded but did not change significantly across time. However, crosstabulation of presidential candidates with their families across parties did show a significant association (*p* < .001). Across all decades, Democratic candidates were pictured with their family more often than Republican candidates. More often than not, the family present was the candidate’s wife. This held true for both parties. The two remaining variables used to assess masculine performance were candidates’ hand and arm position in the image. Neither of these variables showed a significant change over time.

DISCUSSION

Findings indicate that some variables measuring presidential candidates’ performances of masculinity have remained relatively constant throughout time while other variables measuring performance have changed significantly. Candidates’ interaction with others has significantly changed over time, but active interaction with others has always been prominent. From this data, it can be concluded that part of performing potential presidential masculinity is being engaging, interactive, and available to the masses. Given the smaller number of images of candidates alone, it seems that both the candidate and magazine producers have internalized the above-mentioned characteristics, making them hegemonic in nature.

Like the interaction variable, the dress variable also showed a significant relationship with time (*p* < .001). Overwhelmingly, dignified dress was the attire of choice for presidential candidates, although this tended to decline over time. Casual dress has fluctuated over time as well, but images including casual dress appear to be increasing. President Clinton was seen jogging in athletic attire more than once, he was seen building a house in jeans and a t-shirt, and President H. W. Bush was seen fishing. Perhaps the increase in casual attire was intentionally used to highlight Clinton’s youthfulness juxtaposed with H. W. Bush’s older age. This finding could also speak to changing ideals throughout society. During times of prosperity voters might be more acceptable of a somewhat relaxed style. Many speculations could be made about the increase in casual dress images, but the undeniable standard for presidential candidates’ dress through time is still a dignified look, including suits and ties.

Another variable used to assess performance of hegemonic masculinity that produced significant results was facial expression. The election of 1960 was unlike the other elections in that confident facial expressions were seen in the majority of images as opposed to serious facial expressions that were prominent in the other elections. This finding shows a shift in what type of facial expression is understood as most acceptable for presidential candidates. Facial expressions within images can never be totally controlled by the candidate himself because the magazine editors can choose which pictures to include in each issue. Choosing to include fewer images featuring confident facial expressions and more images with serious facial expressions may show how the media wanted president candidates’ masculinity to be constructed.

The other variables, including arm position, hand position, and presence of family were assessed but did not show significant changes over time. The lack of significant findings supports the idea of hegemonic masculine performances, where certain actions have been internalized and understood to be appropriate for presidential candidates. For example, presidential candidates throughout time seem to know that it would appear unusual or unfavorable if the candidate always chose to cross his arms in photographs or always have his hands above his head, waving. Shaking hands was a gesture frequently seen in the images. Throwing a baseball, holding a baby, and gesturing a peace sign or thumbs up were also frequent images. Never did a presidential candidate make a fist in anger or make any other angry gesture with their hands or arms. These consistencies support the notion that presidential candidates internalize an understood code of conduct and gender performance.

This data produced some interesting findings regarding the dichotomy of the partisan system and masculine performances, such as family in images being seen significantly more often (*p* <.001) in Democratic candidates’ images. Future research could further this data and look more specifically at differing masculine performances based on political party affiliation. Analyzing various magazines as opposed to just one as in this case would provide this research with a wider range of images and could help lessen any bias that may arise from just analysis of just one magazine.

Presidential candidates’ images are pervasive in the media. Since every presidential candidate has been a man, performances of masculinity by these candidates are also pervasive in the media. Hegemonic ideals are omnipresent in all aspects of life including performances of gender. Like the presidential candidates, most people perform their gender in a certain way due to unconscious standards they have internalized. What would happen if everyday people or the president decided to uncover these unconscious standards and actively include more options for personal gender performance? It is difficult to imagine. That is the power hegemony has in everyone’s life.

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***Appendix***

**Date of Magazine:**

**Page # of picture:**

**Candidate pictured**:

Color Black/White

**Location on page:** Top Middle Bottom

**Size of photograph:** less than ½ a page ½ a page more than ½ a page

**Camera angle:** looking down at candidate level looking up at candidate

**Torso:**  standing tall, upright sitting or unclear bowed, slumped

**Interaction:** cheering crowd, attentive colleagues’ unseen crowd, colleagues alone, inattentive crowd

**Dress:** dignified, suit and tie light suit, unclear casual, athletic, raincoat

**Setting:** Indoor Outdoor

**Face:** cheerful, confident serious, indeterminate unhappy, worried, tired

**Family Present:** Yes No

**Hands:** gesturing, shaking hands midbody, unseen at side, at rest, down

**Arms:** above head, waving midbody, unseen at side, at rest, folded

**Comments:**