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Women in Politics: A Comparative Study of Women's Political Participation in France and the U.S.

Sarah Stiles

Union College - Schenectady, NY

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**Women in Politics:
A Comparative Study of Women's Political
Participation in France and the U.S.**

**by
Sarah Stiles**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors in the Department of Political Science**

UNION COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

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Women's participation in politics in France and the US is a complex topic about which there is still much confusion and stereotyping. Throughout recent in both these countries, women have fought for equal representation and opportunity, not always achieving their desired goals. Although their histories differ in many ways, culturally and socially, there are substantial similarities, an exploration of which can help to understand the current situation of women in politics. On the whole, women remain less represented in the political sphere than men, however, this does not often stem from their lack of voter support. Instead, there are a few recurrent barriers presented to women. Women often lack a personal ambition to enter politics, the masculine domination in the political parties can prevent their ascension to higher levels, the political and electoral systems have innate barriers to women's success and there still exist some cultural stereotypes which sometimes inhibit their success in elections. By using an understanding of these barriers in both systems, it is then necessary to explore some real life examples of women who have persevered through these systems. Through the political experiences of Hillary Clinton and Segolene Royal, these barriers become apparent as well as the possibility of overcoming them and achieving success. Although women are presented with many barriers to political success, through other female support and determination, women will be able to gain greater participation and success in politics.

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Women in Politics:

A Comparative Study of Women's Political Participation in France and the U.S.

Women's political participation is a dynamic subject, constantly evolving and advancing with the progression of society. Through determination, sacrifice and change in social perceptions, women have slowly achieved success in the formidable arena of politics in both the U.S. and France. Historically, women have faced a powerful barrier of masculinity that dominates politics and society, improving their situation through slow but essential changes. Thus far, women have achieved significant political accomplishments, overcoming obstacles and reaching some of the highest positions in government. This continual progress is illustrated through the success of Segolene Royal in France and Hillary Clinton in the U.S.; each has defied the intrinsic barriers of their political systems to gain political equality. Both renowned female politicians, they demonstrate that it is not impossible for a woman to be a viable presidential candidate: Royal through her successful Parti Socialiste presidential nomination and Clinton through her success and popularity in the primary elections.

Today, studies show that women and men are almost equal in their political participation levels; there are more registered female voters, and they vote at the same rates as men (Lawless and Fox 2005, 40; Allwood and Wadia 2000, 116). Despite their apparent political activity, women's representation and desire to run is still less than men's; women comprise only 14.9% of Congress and 16.9% of the French Senate. Therefore, in this thesis I explore the gender disparity to ask why women lack a presence in the political world of both the U.S. and France. I investigate female candidates' experiences to discover the obstacles they are continually confronted with, perpetuating

their absence. I also seek to find any similarities and differences between the two systems to reveal these barriers and perhaps demonstrate ways to improve women's experience in the future. Progress necessitates an understanding of each system because the successful methods can be shared and used. These barriers to women that result in the lack of their equal representation in politics must be discussed; the women's movement for political equality still has considerable ground to cover. Through my research, I hope to expose the realities of preconceived gender stereotypes, thus illustrating women's situation in politics and the possibility of future advancements.

By addressing the historical and current political environments of each system, I will examine women's experience at each level of their candidacy to expose the reoccurring obstacles they encounter. I identify four main themes inhibiting women's success in politics: women's lack of personal ambition, the political and electoral systems, the cultural stereotypes of each society and the media that perpetuates these outdated beliefs. These impediments combined create serious obstacles to women in politics today. However, with a determined effort and the circumstantial help to advance in politics, some women succeed; such is the case with Segolene Royal and Hillary Clinton. Regardless of their success or failure in a presidential candidacy, these women have achieved a political stature that few can boast. Using these two successful women politicians, I personalize the political experience to isolate these obstacles. By examining their lives and political ascension, I question whether these two women have dealt with the reoccurring barriers and to what extent these barriers oppress them. Finally, I compare and contrast their political experiences to expose what factors helped and hindered them, thus prescribing what could help women in the future.

By researching and comparing women in politics in the U.S. and France, I found that these four obstacles do form a redoubtable barrier, restraining women's access to politics and perpetuating a masculine-dominated system. Many authors cite women's ambition, or lack thereof, as one of the largest problems; they are often less likely to consider running and are deterred by a lack of confidence in their qualifications. Historically masculine, political and electoral systems inadvertently discourage women from running and perpetuate traditional gender roles. Political elites, who are often male, tend to nurture potential candidates who are also male, positioning them for incumbency while dissuading women from these positions. Cultural stereotypes that portray women in traditional domestic roles and their inability to manage political power like men produce an image of women as outsiders. Women must live up to higher standards to conform to the 'male experience,' which is considered the neutral standard in both societies. These stereotypes are perpetuated by the media and consequently encourage the public's gendered opinion of a candidate. Many authors cite the media's focus on women's appearance instead of their policies. Women also receive less coverage overall. The media also presents women with a difficult dichotomy: they must illustrate their femininity while being masculine enough to prove they can be as politically successful as men.

The political experiences of Royal and Clinton reveal similar difficulties. They both struggled to create a successful image, the former too feminine, and the latter too masculine. The media constantly critiqued their appearance and exposed their personal relationships, creating barriers to their campaign success in Clinton's senate campaign and Royal's presidential campaign. Through the literature on women in politics and by

examining their experiences, I found that these obstacles have sometimes been exaggerated. Despite these issues, both women demonstrate that it is not impossible to succeed. Through resolute ambitions, the support of their spouse and fortunate circumstances, Clinton won her senate election and Royal lost a close presidential election as the first French female candidate. Through this research, I found many obstacles for women explaining their absence; however, I want to demonstrate that women can achieve political equality. Most importantly, women should support other women to continue the progress; changing societal views and creating a ‘female standard.’

Each section of this thesis reveals and explains the obstacles and realities of women in politics in the U.S. and France today. Chapter 1 explores women’s political history up to the present conditions of women in politics in both countries. I illustrate the progress of women thus far and expose four obstacles that still oppress women today. By analyzing these issues, I show what women must still overcome to gain political equality. In chapter 2, I examine the personal experience of Segolene Royal, giving a brief account of her biographical history and how it propelled her towards her presidential candidacy. Chapter 3 similarly analyzes the life of Hillary Clinton, using biographical information to show the evolution of her political career and explain her presence today. In these two chapters, I analyze their nomination processes and their candidacies in their respective parties to expose any of the obstacles that typically confront. Finally in chapter 4, I analyze the comparison of women in politics in the U.S. and France to illustrate the problems and what can be learned from the two. I also compare and contrast Royal and Clinton to show what factors were effective and destructive to their nomination and

campaign process. Overall I compare them to find reoccurring themes and obstacles that hindered or supported their candidacies and political success.

Chapter 1

Women in Politics in France and America

Women in the United States

Women's Historical Political Progress

Women's roles in the U.S. have long been limited to a domestic family life at home, creating the basis of women's constant exclusion from the political arena. These ideas were transported from Europe to the New World, continuing the separation of gender roles into two distinct spheres: the private, female life and the public, masculine life (Dolan 2004, 30). This way of thinking formed the fundamental view that "women rightly belonged in the private world of home and family...possess[ing] neither the intelligence...nor the temperament to deal with 'such an arduous task as politics'" (Ibid, 31). Identifying women "as bodies not minds, wombs not brains" creates the stereotypical images that hinder women in politics (Jamieson 1995, 53). Associating masculinity with power and success, it requires women to attempt to represent a specific political icon; an impossible task. Kathleen Jamieson cites this disparity as the "clichés of our culture;" intrinsically denigrating women at all levels of life by praising them "for defying the constraints of our sex [in] thinking like men" (Ibid, 53). These traditional cultural beliefs, remains a sizeable obstacle to women today who wish to become politically active and run for office.

Women slowly began to enter the political realm at the beginning of the 1800's attending rallies and organizing picnics; however, they were constantly criticized by many as forsaking "their home paths" (Dolan 2004, 31). In particular, women were able move into the public sphere by organizing around social causes, including the temperance

and abolition movements. Their active role was seen as “an extension of their compassionate natures” legitimizing their “moral authority” and partisan activity (Ibid, 31). The initial breach of traditional gender roles opened the door for the women’s suffrage movement; beginning after the Civil War, it continually empowered women to test society’s boundaries. Working to expose the unfairness of slavery and other social issues, women realized their own oppression, forming the suffrage movement. However, the inability of women to completely unite for success, a persisting theme throughout the feminist movement, was also produced out of this era. The fight for voting rights became an elitist and dividing movement of “racist rhetoric” and “self-interest,” split along lines of race and class women fought exclusively with others of their own status (Ford 2002, 41). Therefore, women who lacked the economic or political means to become visible, such as the newly freed black population, were ignored. Surprisingly, the most adamant opposition to the suffrage movement came from other women, mainly of the upper class. They viewed universal women’s suffrage as a threat to “the exclusivity of [their] elite social networks” (Ford 2002, 52). Suffragists also relied heavily on male supporters for their influence and experience; women felt they lacked the qualifications to lead their own meetings. Still, through the unrelenting efforts of women like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and women’s organizations including the National American Woman Suffrage Association, women finally won the right to vote in 1920.

Out of this early women’s movement, during the 1910’s, the idea of “feminism” emerged; encompassing the broader ideals and goals of the suffrage movement, it took aim at women’s oppression in the public and political world (Ford 2002, 19). Feminism is a “direct challenge to the gendered world” and the belief that women are inferior to men;

however, its definition is ambiguous because feminists have seldom agreed on its goals or means (Ibid, 19). Thus the original uniting goal to gain women's equality became the dividing factor, preventing women from combining under one theory. This dynamic has continually hindered women's ability to translate their voting power into political influence. An example of this erupted in the early 1970's with the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) debate (Ford 2002, 54, 58). In questioning women's traditional roles, the argument stimulated a fear that this amendment would cause a revolutionary change in homes and marriages. Despite the strong ERA advocacy, it ultimately failed, illustrating that although women may be of the same sex, "women are not alike" and will not all unite around the same gender equality goal (Ibid, 64). Ford cites an important moral to the women's movement: in order for a legal or political change to emerge, "social norms and attitudes about women" must first evolve (Ibid, 64). This is a valuable lesson for women in today's political efforts.

In 1916, prior to women's achievement of suffrage rights, Jeannette Rankin was elected to serve as the first woman in Congress. The desire to have someone in office who would better society for its women and children were the original political motives for women like Rankin (Palmer and Simon 2006, 19). However, women were often forced by political party pressures and an unsympathetic public to enter office based on policies that were stereotyped as appropriate for women (Dolan 2004, 36). Women were expected to represent a feminine image; thus forcing them to promote genderized policies including "social welfare, education and morals" in order to be accepted and win (Ibid, 36). Early political women were also intensely criticized by other women, the latter declaring that women's political involvement would lead to "the eventual decay of

American civilization” (Foerstel 1996, 4). Although these first women paved the way for others, their noticeable integration at the federal government level did not begin until the early 1970’s. Traditional gender beliefs, as well as the patriarchal political system, proved formidable barriers to women who were not seen as credible candidates by the public or the political parties. One male voter adamantly opposed the congressional campaign of Ruth Hanna McCormick in 1928 saying, “I would not think of voting for a woman for Congressman-At-Large any more than to vote for one of my cows for such a responsible office;” an attitude shared by many (Dolan 2004, 37). Assimilation of women into the House and the Senate was a difficult and selective process for women; they had to achieve the nomination and win both the primary and general election (Palmer 2006, 22).

Changing societal attitudes in the post-World War II period advanced women’s position in society. As family sizes diminished, social welfare programs accepted more family responsibilities while modern technology made domestic tasks much less time-consuming; therefore, women were able to expand their political and societal participation (Mandel 1981, 10). Cultural and political conditions during this time permitted women to create and join activist groups, promoting civil rights and peace movements. Many women who became involved in these activist and grassroots organizations were quickly exposed to the activity of political life; some were even motivated to further their involvement by running for office (Ibid, 11). During the early 1970’s women’s political action committees (PAC), private groups to promote election of officials, were formed. These PAC’s, including EMILY’s List, organized to give women the necessary monetary edge, greatly increasing their ability to run for office. Raising

extra funds early in the campaign, which is the basis for the acronym EMILY, meaning “Early Money is Like Yeast,” have helped many women win primaries in the House and Senate against biases that call “to find a man for the job” (Palmer and Simon 2006, 33). One of greatest influences was the women’s feminist movements; fortified throughout the sixties and seventies, it inspired women to “look at themselves anew and see broader opportunities open to them” (Mandel 1981, 13). This movement also helped to advance the cultural view of women’s political involvement and by the early 1980’s; many people “anticipated continued advancements for women as political leaders” (Ibid, 15).

Women in Politics Today

Despite the difficulties confronting women who seek to penetrate the patriarchal political system, women and men are almost equal in their political participation levels. There are more female registered voters than men and they have voted in higher percentages since 1980 (Lawless and Fox 2005, 40). Although women do not donate money to campaigns as readily, they are more likely to attend rallies and write to officials. Differences in voting habits tend to vary more across age, racial or regional circumstances than across gender lines (Ford 2002, 73). However, in the wake of women’s political history and advancements, their numbers still lag behind men in their participation and desire to become involved. Women in Congress only make up 14.9% of the seats, placing the U.S. 57th compared to all other nations and below the world average of 15.6%. Therefore we must question why women tend to fare equally well in elections, yet make up such a minute portion of the political body. In order to reconcile this difference it is necessary to consider women’s personal decision-making, the effects of

the American electoral and political system and the cultural view of women and the media's portrayal of women's campaigns.

Women's Ambition

The lack women's ambition is one of the most important considerations in accounting for the gap in men's and women's representation in Congress. Despite similar qualifications, women are much less likely to consider running or entering political contests compared to their male counterparts men (Lawless and Fox 2005, 38). Seltzer, Newman and Leighton attribute the deficit of women in office to the lack of women actually running for office combined with their overall "fear of failure" (1997, 90). Primarily, women are deterred by their own perceptions that they are not viable candidates in a "man's world" of politics; two-thirds of women believe they will have much more difficulty winning the election (Ford 2002, 82, 106). This distinction does not differ across racial or ideological lines; "Democratic women are no more likely than Republican or Independent women to consider running for office" (Lawless and Fox 2005, 82). The decision to run for office is "intensely personal," especially because women are more likely to undervalue their qualifications. They frequently reject the idea of running for higher office at a gap of more than 10% to men's ambition (Ibid, 48). A similar study by Fox and Carroll found that women are almost 50% less likely to declare that they would be interested in running for congressional office in the future (Fox and Carroll 2006, 113).

Comparisons of women and men of similar stature considering candidacy exhibit that women consistently perceive themselves as less qualified, while men feel confident. For example, when experienced professionals were asked if they felt qualified to run for

office, one man confidently replied, “I could run for office at any level...and one day, probably will” (Lawless and Fox 2005, 2). However, an equally experienced woman declared “‘Lord no,’ elaborating that she would not feel qualified to serve even at the local level” (Ibid, 2). In a survey of eligible candidates who were recruited for office, Lawless and Fox found that while 26% of male candidates “perceived [themselves] as ‘very qualified’ to run for office,” only 14% of women felt this way (2005, 129). Ford also cites the importance of political interest and knowledge in becoming politically motivated; there is a large gender gap in political awareness, especially among those who are college-educated (Ibid, 82). This study exposed that while 61% of women found politics too complicated, only 36% of men responded in this way, contributing to the lack of women’s ambition (Ibid, 83). However, Ondercin and Welch argue that women are just as strategic in their political ambition and calculation of where to run for office (Ondercin in Thomas 1998, 63).

Many authors also agree that women may be less likely to consider office because they are often out of touch with the “pipeline” to electoral office; an informal requirement to running for office (Ford 2002, 107). The fundamental requirements filtering out most female candidates include “political experience, name recognition, party support, adequate funding and fundraising abilities...and strong leadership and communication skills” (Han and Heldman 2007, 5). While women surpass men in undergraduate attendance, they fall behind in post-college endeavors (Ford 2002, 107). Motherhood is seen as a fulltime job and only about 15% of women in office are under forty (Ibid, 108). Throughout history, American society has presented women with a choice: “since you cannot exercise both your brain and your uterus, you must choose one over the other”

(Jamieson 1995, 55). Although the influence of this view has diminished over time, Jamieson argues this complex may still affect women's ambition since a candidacy and elected position are time consuming (Ibid, 68). Not only does the traditional maternal role of women deter them from running for office but it also precludes them from entering the professional world, known as the eligibility pool for political office; thus forming a masculine advantage (Darcy and Clark 1994, 106). Women are often seen as "temporary participants" in the workforce who will leave when they get married and/or pregnant, decreasing their credibility as candidates (Ford 2002, 12). Politics is often seen as a more "reasonable career possibility for men." A survey by Lawless and Fox illustrates that while 64% of eligible men were encouraged to run for office by a spouse, friends or family, only 56% of equally qualified women were encouraged (Ibid, 129). Similarly, in considering a presidential candidacy, women have a lack of experience in "launching roles" such as vice president, senator or governor; they are much less visible, making it almost impossible to permeate this masculine dominated world (Whicker and Isaacs 1999, 225).

The initial motivation to enter office also differs between men and women. Women who do decide to become a candidate are inspired by desire to instigate change and better society. Unlike men, women do not see themselves as "career politicians," desiring to complete their original goal and leave. Only about one-fifth of female candidates said they would remain in office indefinitely (Carroll 1994, 122). Fox notes that "feminist self-identification" and women's issues often directly correlate with their political ambition (2005, 82). Through their study, Lawless and Fox found that women "who consider abortion, gay rights, and the environment important issues are more likely

to have a thought about running for office” (Ibid, 82). Spouse and paternal connections have also played a major role in women’s entrance to politics and have accounted for many of the “firsts” of women in government (Ford 2002, 109). The “family explanation” is a common theme stimulating women’s involvement; many successful women have been a part of a political family, including Nancy Pelosi or Mary Landrieu (Lawless and Fox 2005, 63). Although the “widow explanation” is cited, Palmer and Simon argue that it has been largely exaggerated; women succeeding deceased husbands were not “given” their seats and many faced competition (2006, 61). Women have also been appointed to the Presidential cabinet twenty-five times since the creation of the government, five of whom were appointed during President Clinton’s term (Ford 2002, 125).

Barriers of the Political and Electoral Systems

The political and electoral systems in the United States create a formidable barrier to women’s ambition and success in elections. Inadvertently, many political institutions oppress and discourage women’s desire to run for office, perpetuating traditional gender roles (Lawless and Fox 2005, 13). Since the beginning of U.S. history, “men have dominated our political sphere and our political institutions,” ingraining a “masculinized ethos” into our government and culture (Ibid, 10). The political party system has also been historically dominated by masculine authority, deterring the entrance of women and prolonging men’s control (Dolan 2004, 51). However, both Ford and Dolan express that although there is a widespread belief of a bias against women in political parties, the research shows mixed results. They cite the ‘outgroup effect’ as the main deterrence to women: party elites often judge men on their potential as a candidate whereas women,

with the same or more political experience, were not considered eligible (Ford 2005, 110). Instead these male elites chose candidates who resembled themselves, forming assumptions about women as a general group (Dolan 2004, 51). As many as 64% of women said they experienced discrimination from their party leaders. A survey by Lawless and Fox also shows that while 45% of eligible male candidates were encouraged by party leaders and members, only 32% of women received this same support (2005, 129). Carroll cites that party leaders were only somewhat involved in the recruitment of candidates and did little to “facilitate the movement of women” (1994, 42). Illustrating the lack of party support, women are often recruited as “sacrificial lambs,” placed in districts where they are guaranteed to lose (Ibid, 42). In this way, the party can appease public opinion by nominating more women, yet assure that women will not ultimately represent the party. Regardless of intentions, overall these tactics have worked to restrain women’s advancements in political parties and therefore in office.

The two main political parties also receive the idea of women as candidates differently. If a district is typically one ideology, it is almost impossible for a woman of the opposing party to win; personal characteristics rarely overcome political association. Women are less likely to run in the South as Democrats due to a more conservative political culture that deters women from becoming politically involved (Ondercin referred to by Thomas 1998, 78). From 1990-2000, Democratic women won their primary election 54% of the time, while Republican women won only 38% of the time (Ibid, 64). Women make up 20% of the Democratic electorate while only composing less than 10% of the Republican’s. Therefore Ondercin infers that Democrats are more accepting and supportive of female candidates. Dolan, Lawless and Fox also support this

analysis through their findings that more women in office are aligned with the Democrats (Lawless and Fox 2005, 79). They argue that the “issues and policy agenda associated with the Democratic party lead more women than men to identify as Democrats;” therefore, they are more likely to run as a Democrat (Ibid, 82). Lawless and Fox found that women are more liberal in their views and emphasize “women’s issues” such as abortion or health care, policies focus on by the Democratic Party (2005, 81).

There also exists the campaign financing barrier that women must overcome; indeed; this has been noted by women as the largest obstacle in their candidacy (Ford 2002, 111). However, with the recent creation of at least fifty-seven new women’s PAC’s, women have been given the necessary edge to compete with men. Both Ford, Darcy and Clark illustrate that currently, women are raising around 111% of what men are in campaign funding, also showing that political parties do not deny funding to women candidates (Darcy and Clark 1994, 98). The Republican Party gave more money to women candidates; however the Democrats were more supportive of female candidates vying for an open seat (Ibid, 98). Burrell cites that the Democrats gave more to male incumbents than female, in contrast to the fact that they are more supportive of women overall (Burrell cited in Thomas 1998, 34). Today there is equal ground between male and female financing and the funding difficulties are faced by both candidates. However, Carroll suggests that campaign financing provides more of a barrier for women because psychologically, they have a more difficult time asking for money and have an even harder time receiving donations from women who are less likely to donate to political causes (1994, 50, 51). Women are also not often involved in professional “feeder:” occupations that put them in a better position to attract donations.

The political and structural arrangements of our governmental system are not neutral and there exists a bias against women in its very nature (Darcy and Clark 1994, 140). The absolute power of incumbency is widely noted as a barrier to women; “women do win less often, not because they are women, but because they are less often incumbents (Seltzer et al 1997, 87). Although a survey of House elections from 1986-1994 showed that female incumbents had similar success rates to men, 91.9% compared to 93.8%, incumbency remains a difficult obstacle for women’s candidacies because more incumbents are male (Seltzer, Newman and Leighton 1997, 86). Incumbents retain such a high success rate because they are constantly in the public eye; communicating with the constituents and devoting a portion of their staff to an incumbency committee (Rule and Zimmerman 1992, 6). Incumbents are visible and have had time in office to make valuable connections with organizations and businesses. Therefore, they receive a substantial amount of funding from their party and other PAC’s because of their recognition and assumed success rate (Carroll 1994, 54, 55). As a result, incumbents can focus more of their time and resources on a variety of issues to ensure re-election; a luxurious situation that challengers lack. Palmer and Ford both note how the incumbency barrier may diminish women’s ambition to run; they must use precise strategic planning to choose a time of “crisis” in which incumbents may be retiring more readily (Palmer and Simon 2001, 74). These opportunities are rare and women, who do not often view themselves as ‘career politicians’ may become discouraged. Implementation of term limits will greatly increase the turnover of candidates; diminishing the possibility of masculine dynasties and increasing women’s ability to run. Women are still the

“outsiders” in politics so they must make the effort to change it, men will not protect these rights for them (Ford 2002, 121).

Authors commonly find that in the electoral system, women are prevented from gaining success as a result of the different districts. Women have much higher success in multi-member districts because they are more comfortable running with others and there is no specific opponent (Ford 2002, 121). Women are seen as a novelty among other men and they can run on their own policies. On the other hand, the single-member districts present much more difficulty for women’s success because the election focuses a spotlight on them, leaving them less room for error. This translates into lack of success at the Congressional level because elections are held in single-member districts, creating another factor in the gap of representation (Rule and Zimmerman 1992, 5). At the presidential level, women so far have had a difficult time even winning the candidacy in this “bastion of maleness” (Whicker and Isaacs 1999, 221). Han and Heldman cite the “marriage of masculinity and the presidency” as the dominant factor in women’s lack of success (2007, 20). In comparison to other international political systems, the U.S. presidential system has proved impossible for women to penetrate because it is based primarily on public opinion, a realm where women consistently fare worse (Whicker and Isaacs 1999, 224). The parliamentary system however, has allowed for women prime ministers mainly because they are not directly elected in a public vote. Instead, they are nominated by the president and elected through Parliament. Candidates receive less public scrutiny, giving a greater success rate to women (Ibid, 222).

Cultural Implications

Another important consideration cited in most literature on women and politics is the impact, both negative and positive, of the cultural views of women and the effect of the media on continuing certain stereotypes. While some authors cite gender stereotyping as a large hindrance to women, others dissent, arguing that women face much larger issues in the election process and that they can even use these cultural images to their advantage. Ford and Norris allude to an important fact that gender stereotypes cause voters and the media to view women differently than men in the political context (2002, 113). The “male experience” is still universally viewed as the “neutral standard” for all people; ignoring women’s experiences and encounters. This leaves a large gap in the representation of women, who make up more than half the population, 53% (Ford 2002, 11). It also promotes the view of female candidates as “interlopers;” they “may wear masculinity ideology, but they cannot embody it because masculinity is an exclusively male prerogative” (Han and Heldman 2007, 21). Our society requires that both women and men “adopt masculine characteristics,” however this is challenging for women because they are biologically disadvantaged (Ibid, 21). Duerst-Lahti concurs, stating that “gender shapes interpretation” and it is important to create a ‘female experience’ as well. He also notes that by requiring “gender neutrality” in politics, an ambiguous term that “implies that gender has no effect,” it ignores that women may have a different view. Instead, society must deal with the preconceived images of women to create political equality (Duerst-Lahti cited in Borelli 1997, 12). Dolan also cites an important clarification of the difference between the definition of “sex” and “gender” which are incorrectly used interchangeably; allowing for misconceptions in studies of women in

elections (2004, 7). Ford addresses this issue as well, noting that sex is a physical identification while gender “incorporates society’s interpretation of sex-based characteristics” (Ford 2002, 7).

The psychological practice of categorization is the process of assigning certain ‘objects’ to a group using preconceived stereotypes. This frequently happens during an election because people may not have the time and information to be informed about a candidate (Dolan 2004, 59). People tend to stereotype women’s character traits as “warm, compassionate...and passive;” therefore they can be perceived as lacking successful leadership skills (Ibid, 64). Unfortunately, male traits are often viewed for favorably; therefore, women struggle to convince the public of their masculine traits, while maintaining their female image (Ford 2002, 113).

Stemming from historical expectations, women are often stereotyped as nurturing and caretaking figures; today, between one-fifth and one-quarter of the population “express concern about the abilities of women” (Dolan 2004, 61). However, some women have used this stereotype to their advantage at lower levels of political office, waging a successful campaign as the nurturing “mom in tennis shoes” role. During times of voter dissatisfaction, these “outsider” traits can be very appealing to voters (Ibid, 65). Although some women have used these stereotypical terms to gain support, they are also used in ways derogatory towards women. By linking women and their stereotypical association with sensuality, it can be detrimental to a political campaign. Unfair sexual innuendos are constantly placed on women who appear independent and powerful. “Unprotected by a husband, [she is] fair game for sexualized attack” (Jamieson 1995, 70). Women who refuse the traditional family life for a demanding career are often required to

explain why they don't have children. These types of comments are incensed with contempt against these women who do not follow the norm.

These cultural views are especially visible at the presidential level, a position which is continually associated with the masculine 'commander-in-chief.' The cultural "expectation of 'presidential machismo'" often demands that their "president exhibit tough and aggressive behavior on the international stage" (Han and Heldman 2007, 8). A CBS news poll in 2006 recorded that 92% of respondents would vote for "qualified woman" for president (Ibid, 3). However as Han and Heldman admit, declaring "in theory" that one would vote for a woman and actually voting are completely different (Ibid, 4). The poll support declined to 55% when the question read "would you be personally willing to vote for a woman president?" removing the adjective 'qualified' (Ibid, 19). The concept of 'femininity' and its association with weakness has harmed women's electability at the presidential level (Han and Heldman 2007, 22). Male candidates, notably in presidential elections, attempt to "feminize" their opponent to discredit their viability (Ibid, 22). The less masculinized male is placed in the "category of female/other/lesser;" this automatically lowers women's status as a viable candidate. The political atmosphere also affects the public's potential support of a female candidate. Women are often connected with the social issues of health care and education; foreign affairs, especially those involving violence and national security issues are associated with masculinity. Americans desire the "citizen-soldier" with prior military experience; thus masculinizing the presidency and excluding women who aren't likely to have this experience (Ibid, 24). Support for a female president diminished after the 9/11 terrorist

attacks illustrating that these stereotypes still affect the public who prefer “male leadership traits” (Han and Heldman 2007, 5).

There is also a persistent stereotype about women’s political affiliation and the policies they support. Women are perceived as more liberal than men, but Dolan admits that women really are often more liberal than men (Iyengar, et al 1997, 77). Kahn and Gordon’s survey finds that “female Republican and female Democrats are significantly more liberal than their male counterparts” (Kahn and Gordon 1997, 69). Through this concept, many authors agree that voters sometimes classify women’s policy interests as “women’s issues” meaning poverty, health care, education, children...etc (Ibid, 65). Female candidates emphasize these issues more frequently than male candidates (Ibid, 67). This trend is the same across racial and partisan lines. This could benefit a female candidate in elections where women’s issues, such as sexual harassment or abortion, are especially salient; women are seen as more effectively addressing these issues (Ibid, 65). However, although Fox and Lawless find that female candidates may be motivated by ‘women’s issues,’ men are also concerned with these issues. These studies show that women may be more liberal overall; however, in a specific political environment these gender stereotypes can support women to run and win the election.

The Media

These stereotypes are often significantly publicized in the media which in turn influences and encourages the public’s gendered opinion of candidates. During elections, people often receive most of their news through what they see in the media; therefore it has a large impact on the creation of their opinions and the information they have about female candidates (Dolan 2004, 50). Iyengar cites the great importance of the media in a

candidate's campaign because "the typical voter lacks the motivation to acquire even the most elementary level of factual knowledge" (Iyengar, et al 2001, 79). For both men and women, exposure in the media increases their likelihood of being visible, enhancing their chance of winning (Iyengar, et al 2001, 88). Through their research, Darcy and Clark do not find an evident difference in men and women's campaigning techniques (1994, 84). However, authors widely note that women receive less media coverage than their male counterparts, initially skewing their visibility (Dolan, 2004, 50, Ford 2002, 113, Kahn 1996, 53).

The media also creates and publicizes an image of a candidate and their campaign, often perpetuating gender stereotypes. The media is 16.9% more likely to focus on women's personal appearance and characteristics, focusing less on their policy interests (Ford, 2002, 113). Our materialized "beauty culture," propagated by the media, presents women with the "mind/body dichotomy:" female candidates must be "sufficiently attractive...with the fact that this will increase perceptions of their femininity and hurt their electoral chances" (Han and Heldman 2007, 29). Men are more likely to be characterized by their occupational accomplishments; they are shown backing their campaign with evidence 62.2% of the time while women were only portrayed in this way 56.2% of the time (Ford 2002, 113). Weaver cites that the gender of journalists can also make a difference in a candidate's coverage; they affect who gets coverage and what stereotypes are portrayed (Weaver 1997, 38). However, women journalists remain very loyal to beliefs of the news organizations, not straying far a field to publicize marginal views (Ibid, 38). Mills even goes so far as to say that women journalists are even less accurate than men in covering women's preferred trait emphasis (Mills 1996, 54).

Surprisingly, women reporters portray female candidates' stereotypical traits, focusing more on their appearance than on their issues. Overall, Kahn and Gordon highlights that women are less likely to positively describe the press coverage of their campaigns; "successful and unsuccessful women candidates have complained about the press' preference for style over substance (Kahn and Gordon 1997, 73).

Voting and the Gender Gap

Women's ability to succeed is largely affected by the gender gap in men and women's voting habits. Women do not unite in voting, illustrating that women cannot be relied upon to vote for other women based upon their same sex connection (Ford 2002, 64). Women are up to 15% more likely to vote for a Democratic candidate, often translating into more support for women because they are more often Democrats (Ibid, 117). There is a greater gap in voting between genders regarding a Democratic candidate than there is regarding a Republican candidate. This gap also increases with the desired office level; men and women may vote along gender issues when the stakes are higher. Ford shows that the sex of a candidate may matter when analyzing policy interests because women may be slightly more likely to vote for a women if women's issues are a salient matter. However, they should not consider the "female electorate as a natural ally" (Ibid, 117). Older women who are homemakers are much less likely to support women. Seventy-four percent of women voters said the candidate's sex does not make a difference in their consideration and were unwilling to give women candidates the advantage (Ford 2002, 117).

Many authors observe that "a candidate's sex does not affect his or her chances of winning an election" (Seltzer, Newman and Leighton 1997, 79). Seltzer, Newman and

Leighton support this argument through a study of women's success rates in the House and Senate between 1972-1994; 51.2% of men and 47.9% of women won open seats in the House while a similar 50.3% to 50.0% difference was found in the Senate (1997, 84). Women challenging incumbents also fared equally in the House; they won 4.0% of the time while men won 6.2% of the time. However, challenging incumbents in the Senate was much more difficult for women. He their survey also found that Republican women did better against men than did Democratic women. Although the public may apply stereotypes in evaluating potential female candidates, "there is less evidence that they employ those stereotypes when faced with an actual woman candidate" (Dolan 2004, 128). Regarding the success of women in Congress, Dolan argues that sex as a political variable may not be as much of a factor as was previously expected (2004, 128). Recent literature of women in politics illustrate that many preconceived stereotypes of the affects of gender are actually exaggerated or false. Women in America have significantly advanced since their early suffrage days; however it's obvious that there remains a considerable distance to go for women to receive equality in elections and in our culture in general.

Women in France

Historical Political Process

Women in France have had a similarly difficult, if not more challenging time gaining entry into the political sphere. Marianne, the powerful female icon of France is a humorous contradiction to the reality of women's inadequate representation throughout the political sphere (Lenoir 2001, 217). Women's political representation in France is ranked near the bottom of all European Union countries (Ibid, 217). The term "l'exception française" is often used to describe the slow progression of women's rights and delayed suffrage in France (Sineau 2002, 171). Historical stereotypes and inequalities that have permeated the system since its existence are present in subtle ways today creating obstacles for women. French women must weigh their ambition and possibility of success with their family responsibilities. There are also similar barriers in the governmental and electoral system, as well as in the arrangement of political parties that prevent women's presence in politics. The male dominance throughout history paralleled with persistent barriers has created "la politique, considérée des lors comme un territoire masculin" (Koskas and Schwartz 2006, 38).

During the monarchical period in France, beginning in the 17th century, women were forbidden to fill the role of absolute monarch, a sentiment that continued into the new République. Since this early time, a natural law, based on the biologic difference of men and women, governed the gender roles and beliefs of society (Lenoir 2006, 221). Qualifying women as weak and juvenile, philosophers of the 18th century Enlightenment era strengthened this notion, insisting that society must protect them against the vigorous world of politics (Ibid, 221). Women, although valuable soldiers in the French

Revolution, were excluded from the declaration of the first Republique in 1789. This intrinsically eliminated them from the citizen rights of “egalite” and “fraternite” (Ibid, 221). Despite women’s increased freedoms in the pre-revolutionary France including the right of women property owners to vote, they were quickly silenced (Bouchardeau cited in Ramsey 2003, 19). After the Revolution, some women continued to voice and critique their political desires and social situations provoking a post-revolutionary fear that viewed women’s rights as dangerous and disturbing to the traditional order (Ibid, 19). Adamant female intellectuals who contested “la vision masculine d’une Revolution Francaise” like Olympe de Gouges met a similar fate; she was executed in 1791 because of her “Declaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne” (Koskas and Schwartz 2006, 37). Those who spoke out were imprisoned or executed and all women were “confined” in the domestic sphere to maintain obedience

Following this early outbreak of feminism, their lack of success rendered them subservient to men. Women were forced to feel that a bid for equality was a threat to the core beliefs of the Republique’s “universalism” (Goyet 2007, 54). Connected with images of the passed and traditional religious beliefs, women were the antithesis of the new abstract spirits embodied by the new constitution. Their desires were silenced as masculine values were reinforced by each Republique during the 18th and early 19th centuries. The inherent organization of the Catholic religion and its importance in France also suppressed women’s independence, highlighting masculinity (Koskas and Schwartz 2006, 42). Women became “la deuxieme sexe” whose potential political involvement would feminize men and turn women into masculine monsters (Chilcoat 1998, 11). Despite renewed efforts for women’s rights in the early 19th, Lenoir cites a surprising

trend of female intellectuals who refused to become involved in the fight for political representation (2001, 226). Some women even tried to disassociate themselves with the growing feminist movement; they said that “nothing is more contrary to their natural nature than anything which places women in a position of rivalry with men” (Ibid, 226). This attitude resulted in a lack of women questioning their civil rights and remaining passive in comparison to their American counterparts leading into the early 20th century.

Consequently, French feminism was slow to organize and lacked the “militancy” essential to the relatively quick success of the American suffrage movement (Lenoir 2001, 225). Women in France were prohibited even from organizing women’s clubs and societies, making the emergence of the “Union for Women’s Suffrage” in 1909 a turning point (Ibid, 227). However, it quickly deteriorated as the movement accepted compromises from masculine leaders who adamantly opposed women’s complete equality (Ibid, 227). A concern that women embodied the antiquated religious traditions of the past created their image as merely a “menace” to the advancements of the government and society (Goyet 2007, 54). Through this religious connection politicians believed that women use the female vote to “combat the secular Republic” because “many women remained sensitive...to the advice of the clergy” (Lenoir 2001, 229). The “internalized masculinity” formed strongholds in the government that were adamantly against women’s political access. Political parties were equally opposed to the vote of women fearing that their inexperience would interrupt the traditional electoral process. Senators notably rejected women because they wanted to ensure a “stable electorate” to guarantee re-election (Lenoir 2001, 229). They feared that women in government would agitate the goals of Republic by emphasizing women’s issues (Ramsey 2003, 119).

A large dislike of “feminist ideologies” among women also persisted throughout the 1900’s as an identity of something “different” or alien (Ramsey 2003, 119).

Feminism was declared a “‘monstrous drama’ likely to entail the derailment of French civilization” (Lenoir 2001, 229). Like women in America, French women also lacked political identities of any sort and had a difficult time reconciling their traditional domestic roles and desire to raise children with their political and career paths (Ramsey 2003, 199). Many French women themselves showed little interest or opposition in “defending the equality of all citizens” (Lenoir 2001, 229). Throughout the early 1900’s leading up to WWII, the issue of women’s political rights was barely a public concern.

Whether women’s feminist activism ultimately affected their achievement of suffrage is unknown; however their role in the WWII French resistance enhanced their visibility. Recognizing their vital involvement, leader Charles de Gaulle included the promise of women’s equality and suffrage as early as 1942 (Ramsey 2003, 41). Although France was viewed as a progressively intellectual state, women’s suffrage was finally granted in 1944, far behind most other European countries. This decision was not stimulated by a sudden political movement or a parliamentary vote. Instead it was enacted by a decree made by President de Gaulle and passed into law by a 51-16 vote in Parliament (Ibid, 41). Although it had been the center of debate for decades, the lack of immediate passion surrounding this event on both sides is surprising; the press, political parties and even feminists had little to say on the event. The Constitution itself is brief in its inclusion of women stating, “‘all French nationals of both sexes shall be entitled to vote’” (Lenoir 2001, 232). However, Article 6 of the original 1789 constitution which

states that “all citizens enjoy equal access to public posts...” was never changed to explicitly include women. Therefore, the original superiority of males is innately upheld.

Although the number of voters doubled, in the election of 1945, women only constituted 5.6% of voters (Lenoir 2001, 231). Tentatively, a second wave of feminism emerged in the early 1970's but failed to undertake the issue of women's political representation. For the first fifty years of women's suffrage, the proportion of women in Parliament never exceeded 6% compared to men (Bereni 2007, 194). The movement instead focused on “sexual liberation, the right to contraception and the right to abortion;” the “emancipation of women's civil status of married women” was controlled by their husbands until 1985 (Lenoir 2001, 234). French women have only just begun to organize en masse to promote their political equality since the late 1980's (Ramsey 2003, 21). Lenoir also cites that women's place in politics was never discussed “seriously” in legal literature until the early 1990's (2001, 231). With so many beliefs and different goals women were deeply divided on the foundation to achieve political equality. Some believed that women should fight their oppression at all levels, including discrimination based on biological differences between genders. Others believed that women should embrace their maternal qualities, using them to advance their political success as an innovative presence (Chaperon 1995, 63).

Francois Mitterand was the first French president to understand “the growing significance of women” in the political and electoral arena. He even aligned himself with the feminist group, *Programme commun des femmes* during his 1991 victorious presidential campaign (Ramsey 2003, 48). He placed himself in favor of many women's advancement policies such as birth control, maternity leave, and professional equality as

well as exposing the patriarchal political system's "exploitation of women" (Ramsey 2003, 48). Mitterand even went so far as to appoint Edith Cresson as the first woman prime minister in 1991. Although 73% of the population approved of her nomination and women were especially supportive, the role she played was "too non-traditional." Her inability to "perfect a media image" and prominence of her "off-the-cuff statements" lost her support (Ramsey 2003, 182). She was unable to use women's support and affection to her advantage and was quickly viewed as the "intruder" (Ibid, 182). Unfortunately continual criticisms comparing her to a "puppet" left a negative image for women's success in government. She was seen as "a woman...without ideas or intelligence, a regrettable accident and an insult to political men" instead of a leader in women's advancements (Ibid, 183). Despite his noble efforts however, he was not a feminist and merely saw "sexist discrimination...[as] a distraction" (Ibid, 48).

Parité

In spite of the continual efforts to advance women in politics, they only represented 5.7% of the National Assembly in 1988 and 3.1% of the Senate in 1989. In 1996, only 33 women (5.5%) held seats in the parliament, placing France in last place in European systems (Ramsey 2003, 43). Although several gender-based quotas had been attempted in elections, these measures completely failed to increase women's representation (Scott, 2005, 51). The constitution did not legally declare gender equality since it wasn't a "political issue" during this time (Lenoir 2001, 223). Early in 1992, feminists began to lobby for "parité," a complete political equality in elections and government. This idea was ambitious because no other country in Europe had legally required political gender equality. Seldziewski argued that "parity should be a political

prerequisite pertaining to constitutive principles of the regime, exactly like universal suffrage” (Seldziewski cited in Bereni 2007, 196).

The campaign for parity united women from many different outside of the government pressuring political parties and leaders to ensure equality. It was inspired by feminist lobbying in Europe towards a greater female role in decision making as well as a desire to “overturn entrenched male control of access to elective office” (Scott 2005, 8). Feminists hoped to end “stereotypes and blockages” by exhibiting that they could be competitive candidates, holding the same high level positions as men (Ibid, 52). Women argued that politicians were out of touch with “civil society,” comprising a homogenous body of politicians (Ibid, 51). They believed the government should include more women to represent the diverse electorate. Political parties, especially from the left including the Socialist Party and the Communist Party also assisted the parity fight by presenting 30% female candidates in the 1997 general election (Lenoir 2001, 240). Many of these women were elected increasing their presence in the National Assembly and in key government positions exhibiting that women were not “objectionable to the electorate.

However, there were constantly questions and controversy surrounding the necessity of a parity law. Women hoped gaining political equality would create a “more perfect vision of French universalism” and secure the support of political parties (Scott 2005, 8). Nevertheless, by proposing legal gender equality it highlights the differences between the two genders, thus questioning the idea of French universalism which emphasizes the sameness of all citizens. It also acknowledges that women’s “difference” is a barrier to political participation exhibiting the “inextricability of sexual differences and politics” (Ibid, 9). The interminable question, “au nom de quoi? la parite? de l’equite

individuelle? ou de la difference des sexes?” emerged exposing the ambiguity surrounding this issue (Bird 2003, 9). These arguments represent the opposing sides of feminist thought: which Scott refers to as “‘anatomical dualism’ and ‘sexual difference’” (2005, 6). The first position contests that women symbolize the “abstract individual” while the latter maintains a “heterosexist” view supporting a biological difference (Ibid, 6). The resolution created a paradox for women: to give women political equality, they had to be declared different. Ultimately, paritarists overcame this obstacle by “sexing the abstract individual” to “unsex the political body” (Bereni 2007, 204).

Despite the controversy, the parity law was passed in Parliament by a majority of 741-42 on June 28, 1999 and enacted on June 6, 2000. The law does not “constitute a fundamental right based on gender distinctions nor does it change the foundation of the ‘principle of universal suffrage’” (Lenoir 2001, 244). Instead it recognizes that “development of political practice does not suffice to secure quick enough progress in the situation of women in politics” and “ensures that equal access to political responsibility does not remain purely formal but becomes genuinely real” (Ibid, 245). The parity law gives parties the task of “promoting gender equality” by requiring them to provide an equal number of female and male candidates in general elections: municipal, regional, European and senatorial (Ibid, 242). Parties also cannot fix the order of their candidates and must continually alternate female/male. Failure to comply with these standards results in penalties: government allocated campaign funds are cut in half or the list candidate list will be rejected (Ibid, 243).

The achievement of parity is important for women in France because in theory, it guarantees an equal number of female candidates to male. It demonstrates the

“importance of sexual differences” in politics by legally making gender an “enduring and undeniable factor in French political consciousness” (Scott 2005, 9). The number of female voters has also significantly increased over the years; Allwood and Wadia show that women have about the same political interest as men (2000, 116). The positive effects of the law are most recognizable at the level of the conseil regionaux: 47.6% of the conseillers elected were women (Goyet 2007, 64). However, in the first general election involving the parity law in 2001, the percentage of women in the Senate only increased from 5.9% to 10.9% (Scott, 2005, 136). Although 41.6% of the candidates for the *Assemblée nationale* were female in the 2007 election, only 18.5% of those elected were female (la france en faits et chiffres). Similarly, since 2004, women have only comprised 16.9% of the Senate. Despite the attempts to provide gender equality in politics, the law failed to completely integrate women into the electoral body; as Scott remarks, “there was considerable distance between the original conception of parité and the law that was passed in its name” (2005, 147). Therefore we must question why women have such difficulty entering the political body despite a parity law which constitutionally requires their equality. To understand this dilemma we must consider women’s personal decision-making, the effects of the French electoral and political system, cultural views of women and the media’s portrayal of female candidates and their campaigns.

Ambition

A female candidate’s personal ambition is a significant barrier to women’s integration in politics. Although they may have similar political experience or be even more qualified, women exhibit much lower levels of ambition than men (Bird 2003, 13).

In a study of the legislative elections in 2002, Bird analyzes the differences in men's and women's decisions to run for office; women "persistently" hesitated more often than men" (Ibid, 13). Women have a constant "fear of not being good enough" (Ramsey 2003, 119). Bird also explains that "lack of experience" was the most common cause of hesitation for women who had previously run for office (2003, 14). Women are less likely to consider remaining in office as 'career politicians.' In her interviews in 1996 with various elected women, Mariette Sineau exposed this trend; "I always thought there was someone else more capable than I was" and "I find it very difficult to assert myself (Sineau cited in Ramsey 2003, 119). Women also work harder to achieve assimilation, internalizing "images of themselves constructed by men" (Ibid, 115). They often feel like foreigners in politics referring to themselves as "ugly ducking[s]" or "monster[s]" (Ibid, 115). Mariette Sineau even argues that "women have internalized the limits set to their territory by men" barring them from advancing (Ibid115). However, Allwood and Wadia argue that due to gender differences women have not become "integrated into masculine structure" instead occupying different spheres of society (2000,130).

Bird and Ramsey both cite 'family reasons' as another important factor in women's decision-making. Women with a family often feel guilty or over-exhausted balancing familial and political responsibilities (Ramsey 2003, 122). A complete "redistribution of gender roles" is considered essential to allow women to work in politics. Opello also suggests that women who "develop...nurturing traits in the domestic sphere, are uninterested in the competitive power struggles that define political life (2006, 19). Women are "too busy fulfilling their domestic roles as wives and mothers" (Ibid, 19). Bird argues that the affect of a female candidate's spouse was paramount in their

decision; the majority of women who entered the race in 2002 had spousal support and many who didn't, did not run (2003, 14).

The existence of a masculine figure, signifying "legitimate authority," has been a dominant criterion for women considering a candidacy; thus this plays to the stereotype that "a political woman is always dependent on a man" (Ramsey 2003, 88). Similar to American women, French women often enter politics through familial connections, however, their ambition is still tested. The decision to enter politics in the wake of a relative in office is often a very psychological decision which Ramsey has found can best be described by Freud's Oedipal complex (2003, 88). This complex motivates the daughter to follow the male into politics, which provides a patriarchal protection giving women the necessary confidence to succeed (Ibid, 88). The father-daughter succession and "widow track" phenomenon are especially salient in the Socialist Party which is more accepting of women's emergence into politics (Ibid, 90). There are many psychological barriers including the view that women are the "token" representatives and are only appointed because the party perceives them as loyal "puppets" (Ibid, 93). Unfortunately the persistent view that "to appoint a woman is to take a legitimate place away from a man" has had an incredibly dampening effect on women's ambitions (Ramsey 2003, 93).

Barriers of the Electoral System and Political Parties

The electoral and political systems themselves act as barriers to women in France; it maintains the traditional masculinized ethos, only gradually evolving with movements for equality. Many governmental institutions are slow to integrate women and despite the parity law, they've had a difficult time entering through elections. Women have entered

political office more readily through nominations as ministers than through popular elections of regional *deputees* (Galligan 2005, 54). Although the parity law requires gender equality in general elections, it does not include departmental councilors or mayors. Women comprise only 7.5% of mayors and 20.28% of municipal councilors. Incumbency at all levels of government, especially nationally, promotes the domination of male officials making a female candidate's attempt almost futile. Incredibly selective and elitist, the Senate continually limits women's entrance in Parliament, retaining its conservative anti-feminist nature (Ibid, 56). Governmental pressures to open female recruitment were strongly opposed and it remains 80% male today (Ibid, 56). These barriers create a catch-22 for women, perpetuating their lack of representation in parliament along with a low success rate of elections (Ibid, 54). However, as women begin to emerge more frequently in successful careers; their economic independence will support increased political activity, thrusting them into visible party roles.

Political parties have constantly worked to prevent women's access to politics, forming bastions of male dominance in the higher levels of office. One previous female parliamentarian declares that "the party system is the most misogynist, the most allergic to women" (Ramsey 2003, 94). Viewed as "outsiders," women are often excluded from "dominant or prestigious positions coveted by men" (Ibid, 93). Allwood and Wadia cite that parties have traditionally been "extremely reluctant" to place women in positions unless there is an empty seat and a viable man cannot be found (2000, 148). Even the recent parity law has not successfully enforced gender equality in elections. Parties are often more willing to pay the fine than place an equal number of female candidates on the ballot assuming they will lose. Political parties may also pressure the government to relax

strict parity standards in coming years. Lenoir argues that much more needs to be done inside political parties to change their approach towards women in politics; “parity, as a factor for developing mentalities, will not solve all the problems” (Lenoir 2001, 246). A few parties, primarily on the left, have taken this plunge. In the Socialist Party, women have been nominated to cabinet positions; however party recruitment for female candidates remains stagnant (Galligan 2005, 56). The Socialist party actually did better because of its female candidates during the election of 1997 (Opello 2006, 75). However, Oppello argues that political parties espouse gender policies in keeping with their political ideologies (Ibid, 22). While the left tends to adopt “interventionist policies” responding to women’s demands, the conservative right is more “laissez-faire” not actively aiding women’s integration into politics (Ibid, 22). Perhaps when political parties realize the significance of the female electorate, they may tend to actively support more women candidates (Ibid, 86).

Cultural Stereotypes

Cultural gender roles and values, stereotypes and biases continually play a significant role in women’s success, or lack thereof. An almost malicious oppression of women’s political participation by the dominating masculinity has resurfaced throughout French history; diminishing their ambition and barring their entrance to politics. Opello cites a direct connection of women’s exclusion from the “concept of the abstract individual” to their exclusion from politics and delay in electoral success (2006, 19). This abstract individual, meaning “that all humans have natural and universal rights to liberty, property and happiness,” was only applied to men (Ibid, 18). Although women have political equality through the parity law, today as in the US Constitution, there is no

official document declaring women equal to men; thus it still excludes them from this innate citizenship and “fraternite.” The political world and all of society has been formed according to the male standard and worldview through which women construct their own images (Ramsey 2003, 115). Sineau describes the difficulty of women to create their own “feminist consciousness” perpetuating the masculine image of political power (Sineau quoted in Ramsey 2003, 115). Therefore, the “right qualities” that are desired in a candidate, “those that are possessed by...men” are not adapted to the gender difference or characteristics of women (Ramsey 2003, 164).

Traditional gender beliefs can also be attributed to the large cultural influence and dominance of Catholicism that has continued to reign in France, enforcing strict traditional gender roles (Galligan 2005, 56). Allwood and Wadia explain that “Catholicism still correlates strongly with voting behavior” translating into a more conservative bias. There is still an underlying belief that women are “socialized to maintain the private or domestic sphere” while men are better equipped to participate in politics (Opello 2006, 19). Ramsey suggests that the primary key to women’s political advancement would be through the evolution of these societal gender perceptions (2003, 166). Many of the political biographies she cites show that women may desire to win as much as men, but are deterred by the perceived need to have the “right” qualities (Ibid, 164). As with American female candidates, these gender biases slow women’s inclinations to put themselves in a competitive atmosphere and be “apart of the ‘conquest of power’” (Ibid, 98). Ramsey argues that women are actually excluded by nature from the “process of civilization” and the “masculine space of power play” (2003, 166). These

views can only be undermined by a continuation of women's literature and a change in societal perceptions (Ibid, 166).

Views of gender differences in France are also founded on distinct psychological claims that emerged from the 18th century Enlightenment philosophy. They claimed that the biological differences between men and women helped establish the "theory of woman's inferiority and her consubstantial inability to assume civic responsibility" (Lenoir 2001, 221). Based on this innate physical and mental disparity, women were denied political access because they were "irrational," "had smaller brains" and were considered weaker in general (Opello 2006, 18). Although Opello argues that this biological inequality was emphasized to help continue women's obedience excluding them from politics, this idea persisted and is constantly studied and accepted in France even today. Recent articles in the passed fifteen years have examined the controversial question of "why men and women cannot be like each other" (Chilcoat, 2000, 3). In her article, Chilcoat highlights studies exposing that "one's sex can be scientifically proven to affect one's intellectual capacity" which she says is not a new idea (Ibid, 3). Through these studies, she shows that women may be excluded from certain careers due to structural differences, not "social conditioning or stereotyping" (Ibid, 3). This illustrates that the lack of women in certain fields may result from a natural selection. However, she does not allow that this biological difference would exclude women from office, yet their number could be reduced in other powerful feeder positions. Fortunately, Ramsey argues that women have typically turned this "traditional 'difference' argument to advance their own cause and establish their legitimacy" (2003, 59). Instead of allowing it to limit them, women can use their difference to promote "freedom and diversity;" they represent a

different but equal political image that can complete that of males' (Ibid, 60). Ramsey also argues that it would be unjustifiable to require women to abandon their "distinctive character in exchange for political power" (Ibid, 60). Women desire political equality in which they can bring their own personal world views and unique ideas, adding to that of males instead of conforming.

Persistent stereotypes about women's political ideologies and voting habits may impede their success. Feminist principles of gender equality are innately opposed to the more conservative gender views of the right; therefore women may be continually associated with the left (Sineau 2006, 54). However as party's messages change, imitating societal and economic evolution, women become less likely to support a specific ideology. Women do not form a voting bloc; instead Opello shows that women do not necessarily vote for a specific ideology and are not more likely to support female candidates (2006, 75). Women like men, are a diverse electorate whose differences in voting are a result of age, education and class (Sineau 2006, 43). Moreover, both Opello, Allwood and Wadia cite that a candidate's gender makes little difference on male or female voting choices (2006, 75; 2000, 113). Illustrating this, Opello's study of the 1997 legislative elections found that the increased inclusion of female candidates on the Parti Socialist's ballot did not affect the outcome; women's participation has a relatively neutral influence on the voting population (2006, 75). As recently as the 2002 legislative election, Opello found that women do not tend to vote differently compared to men; resulting in a mere 1% gender gap in voting habits (2006, 79).

The Media

As in the US, the power of the media's portrayal significantly affects women's campaign and can make or break election success. There are many issues women must confront in forming their image as a viable candidate, many of which can be contradictory and almost impossible to accomplish. Women in the French media tend to be portrayed in a very sexual and typically attractive way; one photograph showing Edith Cresson after her nomination "in a low-cut, sleeveless dress behind a huge bowl of roses" (Ramsey 2003, 104). Freedman notes that the reader "would not imagine he/she was looking at the new minister of European affairs (Ibid, 105). The caption to this political advertisement, "a huge task awaits our European parliamentarians," exposes the huge paradox for women candidates. They must deal with the "'masculine' portfolios" as well as present themselves in an extremely feminine, almost sexually seducing way (Ibid, 105). This "feminine specialty" which constitutes the "art of appearance" compared to the "art of government" is often too difficult for women to achieve. Those who refuse to accept this challenge to make people comfortable with their gender image fail miserably; often viewed as "masculine," they "instigate a war of sexes" or are accused of being "bitchy" (Ibid, 105). Assertive or aggressive female candidates are automatically identified as cold. If they defy this ingrained requirement, women are accused of being "deviant" and may lose the election merely because they couldn't dress correctly to fit the exact image (Ibid, 104). Edith Cresson's refusal to comply with a stereotypical feminine image resulting in her rapid loss of national support illustrates women's need to obey gender standards.

This trend of media analysis obsesses over their feminine qualities and appearance while ignoring the more important critique of women's policies (Ramsey

2003, 105). Thus a vicious cycle is formed: women are constantly told they must always look good but are then criticized for caring too much about their looks. Forming a black and white path for women the media argues that they are either seeking too much attention or “insufficiently attending to the media” (Ibid, 108). However, Ramsey also cites that this negative media attention does not necessarily coincide with the public opinion which is relatively positive and supportive of women. Women have also used this “feminine difference” as a source of legitimacy to office, illustrating women’s right to “play both maternal and public roles” (Ibid, 101). They are viewed as outsiders but embody a new and interesting option to political office.

Women in both France and American have advanced a long way in political activism since their original movements towards suffrage. History has shown that through the slow process of evolution, women have been able to overcome many obstacles so far; paving the way for future development and success. However, it is apparent in both countries that women’s struggle for ultimate equality and acceptance is nowhere near finished. First and foremost, women must motivate each other by example, gaining the ambition to run and becoming more visible. These united efforts will ultimately stimulate a change in the gendered cultural views, the media and the electoral and political system equalizing women’s political participation.

Chapter 2

Segolene Royal

The first female presidential candidate in France, Segolene Royal, represents a unique but controversial image in French politics. The historically masculinized world of French politics and society forced her to confront many issues typically surrounding women's involvement in politics, such as her maternal responsibilities, her stamina, her femininity and her previous experience in visible roles. Although a popular and successful politician, she was constantly balancing her femininity and her motherly instinct with her desire to present an authoritative and dominant image. Throughout her previous political years, she was often caught between these two sentiments and appeared vague in her policies. In her recent 2007 presidential campaign, her desire to portray different identities and appeal to the people with an innovative program proved to be too complex. Despite a progressive platform, she was ultimately unable to find a connection with either the people or her party, leading to her loss of the election.

Biographical History

Segolene Royal was born in Dakar, Senegal in 1953 into a family with a strong catholic, military heritage. She grew up in the Vosges region, where her family had inherited an estate and a distinguished title. Her familial situation was strict and she developed a quiet but determined attitude that undoubtedly helped her prepare for the political masculine world (Bernard 2005, 21). At a young age, she acquired her delicate but enthusiastic femininity that has helped her win the hearts of her constituency. Although not idyllic, she has at times embellished her rigid childhood to create the appearance of hardships that helped her struggle to success (Harneis 2007, 10). She often

exaggerates the severity of her father, who “lacked flexibility and was tactless (but) loved his children” (Ibid, 12). Harneis cites that she was unhappy in her estranged childhood “where girls learned to cook and boys went to study” (Ibid, 10). However these claims have been attributed to political motives and a desire to distance herself from her conservative, catholic background, far from her liberated socialist image of today (Ibid, 11).

Despite this adversity, she was sent to boarding school at fifteen, invigorating her independent, progressive nature. Realizing that as a woman, “l’école était [sa] seule chance d’émancipation » (Royal 2007, 133) and financial and intellectual independence, she was a determined student. With this motivation, she continued her studies at Nancy University and supported herself after her parents divorced in her first year (Harneis 2007, 23). She then went on to the prestigious *Institut d’études politiques de Paris*, where her interest in politics and activism developed. In 1978 she entered the incredibly elite *Ecole National d’Administration*, which is a channel into prominent political life. It was here that Segolene first actively aligned with the left through her adamant focus on feminism. She began to realize the injustices endured by women in all parts of life and was inspired to work proactively to change it (Royal 2007, 134).

Completing her studies in 1981, she entered the political sphere at an incredibly volatile time; the Parti Socialist on the left had finally beaten the right which had controlled the presidency for twenty-three years (Harneis 2007, 56). She was quickly accepted onto the successful campaign of François Mitterrand, the first Socialiste president of the Fifth Republic. After the election, she was hired as an advisor to the president’s advisor and slowly networked, showing her knowledge and propensity for

hard work. Her future partner, Francois Hollande, was also recruited at the same time and was much more outgoing and enthusiastic. Harneis, suggests that she was only accepted because of him. Segolene Royal's relationship with Francois Hollande formed when they were both in the *Ecole National d'Administration* and they moved together into politics; their careers always parallel, but never crossing (Ibid, 31). They never married but had four children during their twenty-five year relationship. They each matured politically at different points; she was named Minister of the Environment instead of him in Mitterrand's administration in 1992. After she left office, he began to expand and became the Secretary-General of the Parti Socialiste in 1997. His position was essential to her presidential nomination and success (Ibid, 94). Despite her early reticence, her experience in connection with the president, an all-powerful figure in the French government, allowed her to create networks of support. She used many of these years later in her presidential campaign (Ibid, 43).

Segolene's demonstrated her steadfast nature when she solicited President Mitterrand's help in acquiring a seat in the Parlement. He, apparently impressed by her determination, supported her successful candidacy in the region of Deux Sèvres (Harneis 2007, 54). Despite the fact that she was now a mother of three at age thirty-five, she successfully and enthusiastically campaigned, and with Mitterrand's influence, she won her first seat in the Parlement in 1988. Her first term exposed many of the same ideologies she would present in her presidential campaign years later. Her active work on issues concerning "children, workers, the family and the countryside," created her image as a politician who could relate to their daily lives (Ibid, 67). Hints of her more

traditional, Catholic upbringing continually surface in her campaigns; she promotes family values and military service for juvenile delinquents.

While remaining the representative, she was appointed *ministre d'Environnement* in Mitterrand's government. Gaining national recognition, she expounded upon her femininity and worked to be an image for women (Bernard 2005, 51). She was also a constant face in the media and her "unique approach explains why journalists listen to what she has to say" (Harneis 2007, 76). Working at a remarkable pace she was proactive with the media, immediately creating new environmental initiatives and continually providing them with a new story. Despite this success, she was almost excluded from Lionel Jospin's new government in 1997; however, using her shrewd nature she retaliated by running against his appointee for the position of President of the National Assembly (Ibid 96). After a long stalemate, the issue was negotiated by her partner, Francois Hollande. Despite her capability as a politician, this demonstrates the essential support of a male figure in her life.

She was eventually appointed junior minister of *enseignement scolaire*, a position that she believed would "reinforce her [woman's] image as a housewife" (Harneis 2007, 105). True to her character, she connected this position to women's rights and equality; she equalized women's and men's maternity/paternity leaves, so men could bear some of the childcare responsibilities as well. The media exposed her efforts to confront the concerns of her constituents, attracting the "sympathy of the general public" (Ibid, 108). Her ability to turn minute issues into "effective political action" through communication gained her incredible media coverage and recognition (Ibid, 110). Her popularity with the media was dubbed "Segolene Royal Circus" (Bernard 2005, 123). Overwhelming

popularity and experience translated into a shocking victory: she was elected president of the Poitou-Charente region in 2004, overthrowing the current prime minister and incumbent, Jean-Pierre Raffarin. This was her first position of political independence, an experience that placed her in the public eye for the 2007 presidential elections (Harneis 2007, 117).

Decision to Run for Presidential Nomination

Her almost twenty-six years of political struggle and determination would culminate in her bid to be the Socialist presidential candidate, which she announced to *Paris Match* on September 22, 2005 (Harneis 2007, 130). Her ascension thus far and her immediate decision to run were natural; she had been in politics all her life and had hardly had to worry about her children, who were always cared for by their grandmothers. Although she tried to position herself as a “supermom” keeping up a strong feminist appearance, she did not have the pressing maternal responsibilities that many women entering politics must confront (Ibid, 96). However, she has admitted remorse about being absent from her children; thus showing how it is practically impossible for a woman to have such a successful political career and a prominent role as a mother in her children’s life. Her role as president of her region also lends itself to running for higher office; it gave her experience and vast media attention propelling her to a level of national recognition. Harneis also cites the significance of timing in her decision; her victory allowed her time to prepare for the primaries, but not enough time for failures to surface (Ibid, 126). Her relationship with Francois Hollande, the leader of the Parti Socialiste, also gave her an advantageous connection, demonstrating that male support can help legitimize a woman. Finally, her personal determination, to actively

“seize the opportunity” and agitate societal norms gave her the desirable, innovative image of change. Segolene Royal was fortunate; confronted with few obstacles and given circumstantial support, she had a relatively easy decision to run for the presidential nomination.

Party Nomination Process

In understanding Royal’s ultimate failure, it is important to look at the base of her support, the Parti Socialiste, and its presidential nomination process. French electoral politics has been historically founded on a “presidentialized system; this explains why political party’s *“raison d’etre”* is based on the presidential elections (Clift 2007, 283). In this system, a party’s “primary function is to act as a springboard for a presidential candidacy, and subsequently to act as an organizational resource for the president” (Ibid, 283). Political parties often struggle to find a balance in their nomination process; they cannot reconcile this traditional presidential approach with the unanimous selection of a presidential candidate (Ivaldi 2007, 253). In particular, this is a major problem in the PS, which lost the 1995, 2002, and 2007 elections due to disjointed factions and a lack of support for their candidate (Clift 2007, 283). As a result, the PS has tried to “monopolize presidential candidate selection,” which is unsuccessful and allows new candidates to emerge at any time (Ibid, 282). The abundance of candidates creates numerous factions; each have their own policies which leads to passionate “intra-party tensions” (Ibid, 283). This perpetual problem factored largely in the nomination of Segolene Royal as the PS candidate. Unable to compromise on a candidate, this disparity caused profound tensions leading up to the primary elections and increased the strain by angering the traditional “*éléphants*” of the party (Clift 2007, 283).

There are many requirements in the PS to win the party's nomination; this includes winning the primary elections, but also fitting abstract requirements such as popularity in the media and electibility compared to their opponents. The process by which party elites secretly select the nominee has been dying out. As the party attempts to revise its traditional nomination process, it has stimulated a move towards the "democratization" of the nomination (Ivaldi 2007, 263). This "unrestrictive participation paradigm" is difficult to achieve; however, the PS has recently adopted more inclusive nomination techniques, allowing unconventional candidates with new ways of thinking to emerge (Ibid, 263). Ivaldi cites these changes as central factors in the 2006 nomination process. During the fall and winter, in this election 2005/2006, the potential candidates announce their bids and begin to vie for control of party factions. The party holds an internal consultation to discuss the party's platform for the next election and June before the nomination vote. This conference allows the party to see if they are in accordance with their potential nominees and vice versa. If there is a discrepancy, the candidate may realize they need to change their campaign strategy.

Leading up to the primary vote, the candidates campaign within the party and attempt to gain endorsements from different factions. This period reveals the less concrete requirements of a nominee: they must portray their electibility through media popularity, previous experience, and their viability in comparison to other candidates. Ivaldi calls this the "expected-utility model" indicating that party voters "balance their ideology...with their interest of winning by considering competing values linked to each candidate (2007, 255). The first requirement is "candidate visibility in the mass media;" they must exhibit that they can endure in public discussion and criticism while

maintaining a commanding image in politics (Ibid, 255). Visibility also helps them continue their momentum in the people's and party's view. In this way, a candidate can generate a "bandwagon effect" in the party, gaining popular support "as they seem to be in the best position to win the contest" (Ibid, 258). A candidate must also prove their electability or credibility as a possible president. Through media and party polling the PS exposes a candidate's potential, creating a 'horse-race' effect that can stimulate a candidate's popularity. Ivaldi notes that between September 2005 and November 2006, there were at least 35 "primary-like polls" testing candidates acceptance (2007, 258). The media also polled to estimate election results between potential candidates of opposing parties. Candidates gain advantage when they are viewed as more successful than top candidates of opposing parties. During the year before the nomination vote, the PS used 16 different polls to test the party candidate's credibility on 182 different policy issues. In this way, the party can understand how the public will react to their nominee and who will be the most successful in a presidential candidacy.

Finally, in November, in this case 16 November, 2006, the party holds its first primary vote to select the candidate. In 1995, the PS decided to involve all party members in the direct election of the presidential candidate through a secret ballot. At this time, a majoritarian two-ballot system was adopted, similar to the presidential election method. If one candidate has a clear majority, they automatically win the nomination. However, if the results are less definitive, a second primary election takes place involving the top two candidates and the one with a majority wins. In Segolene Royal's case, she was the clear victor in the first primary election. She won a majority

60% of the party vote while her opponents Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Laurent Fabius each won 20.7% and 18.7% respectively (Ivaldi 2007, 254).

Despite this remarkable victory, she did not symbolically represent the party's traditional views. In his article, Ivaldi focuses on the importance of a candidate's "strategic considerations" as well as the dynamics of public opinion and popularity to gaining the nomination and uniting the party (Clift 2007, 254). Typically candidates try to strategically align themselves with the different party factions, creating a *ligne majoritaire* for support. Acquiring this "leader above faction" status is important in French party elections because it's the only way to gain control the ideology of the party and its future policies during presidency (Clift 2007, 284). Experienced party leaders recognize this importance. Francois Hollande did so when he stated that "the party is a major force which no-one can do without" and many agree that "party organizational resources [are] indispensable" (Clift 2007, 284). Segolene Royal was not the uniting force that was needed to pull the party's strained factions together. In many ways, she was the antithesis of the party's values; she marginalized party elites and failed to unite diverging factions.

Successfully Gaining the Nomination

Despite these setbacks, how did Segolene do so well in the Socialist Party primaries, winning 60% of the vote? Her main advantage was the instability and border-line crisis of her party that allowed her to emerge as a well-known, successful candidate (Ivaldi 2007, 270). She was able to take advantage of the competition and rivalries; major factions' interests were cancelled out by equally large opposing factions. As a result of intra-party competition, Francois Hollande's popular faction lost support as it contended

with that of equally influential Laurent Fabius; they both lost their potency (Ibid, 270). This “defeated” sentiment throughout the party caused factions to rally around Segolene Royal’s “momentum” to create a firm presidential candidate (Ibid, 270). She profited from support of the rival factions who no longer had their own momentum. Her indecisiveness made her more appealing than the other two candidates, Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Laurent Fabius, who were both firm in their beliefs. She portrayed an image of flexibility that would represent the diverse beliefs of the PS. Despite the fact that her candidacy was controversial, her ambiguity was also uniting; no one could criticize her politics and she didn’t polarize any sides (Ivaldi 2007, 265). Using her charismatic personality, she united support, regardless of the different ideologies.

Segolene Royal achieved the necessary exposure to become a legitimate candidate through her visibility in the media and recognition from her previous political positions (Ivaldi 2007, 255). She had recently beaten the incumbent and prime minister to become president of the Poitou-Charente region and had always been an innovative and successful *députée*. Her position as regional president also linked her with the Socialist network of other regional presidents, increasing her influence (Harneis 2007, 134). As early as 2004, she was included in “presidential barometers by pollsters,” enhancing her credibility as a presidential candidate in the mass media (Ivaldi 2007, 255). In April of this year, 60% of PS voters supported her potential candidacy. Her program of “participative democracy” as well as her successful online campaign launched in 2006 attracted a younger generation increasing her recognition in a diverse crowd (Harneis 2007, 125). Her quirky charisma and unique, divergent image representative of the public sentiment also added to her growing popularity. Parties follow popularity in the media

and polls to decide who has the most electability; the polls were raging about Segolene (Ivaldi 2007, 255).

The media's creation of a "horserace" highlighted her electoral momentum, continually placing her in the lead. Polling was used to estimate the success of Royal vs. Sarkozy in a general election; she had a constant lead up to the primary election. As early as 2006, she established her lead in the party that was never threatened by her competitors; she was consistently 34.7% and 49% ahead of Strauss-Kahn and Fabius respectively (Ibid, 258). Party factions hopped on the "bandwagon" because everyone else was supporting her credibility (Ibid, 258). In 2006, 16 polls created by the Socialist party tested the public's opinion of each candidate's credibility on 182 different issues. Segolene Royal was favored above her competitors 89% of the time (Ibid, 260). She even placed higher on issues regarding the economy, in which she had no previous experience. The endorsement of Royal as a candidate was never challenged because of her variety of advantages and she retained a 35% lead over her competitors (258).

The Socialist party also used Segolene Royal's broad base of popularity to attract new members. It is typical for a party to use a nomination period to increase membership. Through her internet site, *Desirs d'avenir* and "anti-establishment attitudes" she was close to an "underrepresented constituency." (Ivaldi 2007, 262). In trying to democratize the party nomination process, the PS was looking for a way to "renew" their image and appeal to a large base. As a result, the PS created a "voluntarist recruitment platform" to enlist new members. Ivaldi notes that the combination of Royal's internet use and lower membership costs opened the party access to a diverse group (Ivaldi 2007, 264). Between March and the primary in November, party membership increased by 73%.

Campaign Policies

The underlying theme of her presidential campaign before and after her nomination was a break from traditional political practices. She tried to “embody a sense of political renewal in France” and used unique campaign strategies by involving the public in the formation of her campaign policies (Clift 2007, 285). Her goal was to connect the citizens to the government, becoming pro-active with her campaign and her potential presidency (Veyssy 2007, 118). In her campaign, she declared a “listening period,” touring the country to hear what issues people wanted to include her campaign. Her plan was to make no policy statements; instead she organized meetings with activists, party supporters and anyone else with concerns (Harneis 2007, 153). She held about five thousand citizen meetings in different regions and subsequently analyzed the information in her campaign center (Ibid, 153). This correlated with her “participative democracy” program through which she hoped to allow citizens’ interaction in policy making. She also proposed a “citizens’ jury” to increase the participation of the public in the governance of the people. In addition, for Segolene, education was an essential political focus, supporting the ability of parents to decide which schools their children attend (Clift 2007, 287). Control of education is important in the French system because students are placed in certain schools at a young age which dictates their career paths. Her image was one of openness to all ideas; unafraid of new issues, she said, “je me rangerai a l’avis des Français” (Veyssy 2007, 118).

Some of her policies also represent a more conservative view, similar to the views crafted by Nicolas Sarkozy. She used these policies to appeal to a middle ground as well (Harneis 2007, 136). By empowering the people, she envisioned a country in which the

government is decentralized and all citizens can voice their ideas. She is also closely associated with Catholicism and the Front National (Harneis 2007, 131). This was shocking to her Socialist party, but moving a little to the right helped her in the polls. As a deputy in the National Assembly, Royal was hesitant to sign a proposal for gay and lesbian marriages and also took a stricter stance on immigration than most in the PS. In addition, she wanted to re-implement military service for “incarcerated juvenile delinquents.” Although this caused uproar, she saw beyond it to prove that she could stand strong on law and order policies and later argued that she meant “vocational humanitarian work” (Harneis 2007, 138). She even endorsed some of Tony Blair’s economic policies, supporting stricter government scrutiny on welfare. She stated that the government should closely supervise households in which there is a “family breakdown” and children who are out of control (Ibid, 139). She criticized the 35-hour work week which prevents employees from getting paid past this time limit. She felt it has “caused some wage earning-women to have to work more difficult hours” and has been overall unsuccessful for wage-earners (Ibid, 140). Instead, she supported a more capitalist approach to the socialist economic system in an effort to reduce regulations and stimulate more work.

Feminism

She presented her image as new and different as well, through her femininity and attractive physical features that she was not afraid to emphasize. “Segolene Royal incarne une promesse: celle d’être la première femme Présidente de la République française” (Veyssy 2007, 119). Her strong focus on femininity put her at odds with many in the PS where “male chauvinism” existed; however, it also helped her retain her image as an

“outsider” and sometimes a victim of the misogyny of the political system. She said, “la vraie révolution, c’est la mixité et l’égalité” (Royal 2007, 134). Segolene wanted to work against the sexuality and constant nudity and vulnerability of women’s bodies. She proposed legislation on prostitution to empower women to control their own bodies (Veyssy 2007, 117). There must be respect and protection for all women and children. Segolene embodied these sentiments consistently in her life, remaining independent and not making career decisions on Francois Hollande. She is a mentally and emotionally determined woman who also expresses her feminine side. Segolene wants to represent the icon of Joan of Arc, signifying resistance and female strength.

Relations with the Parti Socialist (PS)

In her campaign, Royal strategically positioned herself away from the traditional beliefs of the party, playing off of the “citizens’ growing estrangement from the political system” (Ivaldi 2007, 254). Her own online campaign, *Désirs d’Avenir*, was kept separate from the party’s organization to focus her recruitment efforts beyond that of her party (Clift 2007, 284). Her speeches expressed that “there was to be no special role for the party within the campaign;” instead the party would be apart of the “listening campaign” attending to the peoples’ needs (Ibid, 285). She remained ambiguous on the details of her policies, contending that she was waiting for the people to express what they wanted in her campaign (Ivaldi 2007, 265). Her indecisiveness was criticized as a lack of real policy goals and an inability to commit (Ibid, 265). In her party, she was viewed as a “modernizer” and someone who was “misjudging the mood of the left [which] would do her no good (Harneis 2007, 146). Despite the increase in party membership, a large faction “welcomed the newcomers with suspicion rather than with political enthusiasm”

(Ivaldi 2007, 264). Her emphasis on gender issues and a break from traditional views was met with “male chauvinism” and sexist comment. Her fellow nominee, Laurent Fabius demanded, “but who will look after the children?” (Clift 2007, 285), to which she retorted with “would you ask that if I was a man?” (Harneis 136). Hollande contends that “she has a language very different from that which has hitherto been used within our political life,” illustrating that she did not fit in (Clift 2007, 287).

Relationship with Francois Hollande

The mysterious relationship between Segolene Royal and Francois Hollande is constantly an issue of debate. The purpose of their ‘partnership’ and the role each plays in the other’s political career, if any, is unclear (Harneis 2007, 148). Did he help her achieve the PS presidential nomination or were they competitors? Although they have four children together, they never married, a fact which in itself raises questions. Was this a strategy to allow individual career development or to advance their together while claiming their political relationship is purely professional? Despite these questions, their relationship has always been based on “a free union” (Ibid, 148). For example, when Michel Charasse, a minister in President Mitterand’s government offered her the job of Minister of the Environment, she took the influential position (Ibid, 75). Although the two were both considered, she jumped at the chance to get ahead.

Throughout their political history, they have worked in parallel positions, but have never outwardly united to form a strong faction. This parallel status has positioned them to compete for success; however, the political contests have often ended in her favor. The two were initially opponents for the presidential nomination. However, when Hollande’s faction lost momentum, she took the lead. When Hollande, as party leader,

declared a tax increase, Royal, as the presidential candidate flatly refused; there were no new taxes (Ibid 150) Harneis notes that, “despite her feminist rhetoric, it is impossible to notice that, from her father onwards...there has been a man around to fight her corner throughout her life and she has always seemed to know how to get them to do what she wanted” (2007, 152). After Hollande’s defeat, his role in her nomination is elusive; however, it would seem plausible that as the PS leader, he helped her win the nomination. However, the nomination must have caused tensions; the two split after a twenty-five year relationship after allegations were publicized of his affair with another woman. This helped in the public opinion, creating her image as a victim and allowing her to reinvent herself as a truly independent woman.

Setbacks of Campaign Leading to Defeat

After securing her candidacy, Segolene remained popular in the media, but relations with her party and polls weakened. Mistakes in her campaign with team members giving incorrect information caused some to question the “professionalism and coherence” of her campaign (Clift 2007, 289). She also slipped up during a visit to Lebanon, instigating the questions of her abilities as a diplomat. While talking with a Hezbollah leader, “she let pass” as remark comparing the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon to the Nazi occupation of France (Harneis 2007, 155). Based on her idea that voters want to be more connected that only once per five year on Election Day, her campaign held about five thousand meetings to get information on how different communities feel. However, she refused to make any policy statements herself, instead waiting for other’s ideas (Ibid, 153). Her popularity in the polls dropped from the mid-thirties to mid-twenties between December 2006 and February 2007 (Clift, 2007, 289). A

troubling rift grew in the party due to her lack of policy definitions and her inability to network for support. When she finally laid out some ideas, the program looked exactly like previous, traditional socialist platforms; they far from the innovative “democratic revolution” she was hoping for (Clift 2007, 289). Towards the end, she tried to reorganize the campaign by bringing back the older party factions, including the “‘elephants’ she had spent 2006 snubbing (Ibid, 289). She tried to re-unite the party in an effort to revitalize support, instead of marginalizing them. However, the party was less accepting and she had invalidated her whole revolutionary campaign of renewal.

Nicolas Sarkozy began with a strong campaign on January 14, 2007, quickly gaining a lead ahead of Royal. He easily gained full support and control of the Union pour la Mouvement Populaire (UMP) and led a refreshing campaign compared to Royal’s. She had been campaigning since December 2005 and her “innovations” had become overused. He presented a renewed image and different policies that caught the public’s attention, perpetuating his momentum. In desperation, she attempted to “differentiate” herself from him, keeping away from the media and refusing to comment on his campaign (Harneis 2007, 154). This is a typical Segolene tactic. She does not try to compete; she just does something completely different” (Ibid, 154). Her ambiguity was the opposite of his outlined campaign and party support (Ivaldi 2007, 274). Her separation from the party became apparent and her credibility decreased. She remained less visible, visiting small constituencies and not commenting on UMP policies. In two months her polls dropped to the mid-twenties while Sarkozy maintained a comfortable lead. Ivaldi notes that although the rival campaign may have originally been welcomed as a motivation, “the fierce competition...was considered *ex-post* one of the motives for

Royal's failure" (Ibid, 274). At the end of February, in a last attempt to re-create her campaign success, she announced her "Presidential Pact," a proposal of one hundred policies. Bringing her back in touch with her constituency, her speech was broadcast on television; her polls temporarily recovered however she was not able to overtake Sarkozy (Harneis 2007, 159).

Media Analysis

As stated, the media played an essential role in her public popularity, poll success and ultimate party nomination. Through the media, she was able to create a feminine image and expose her attractive physical traits, which were two of her most-focused-upon attributes. Looking at two different French newspapers, *Le Figaro* on the right and *Liberation* on the left, there was a definite ideological division in their coverage and portrayal of Segolene Royal. In 109 articles between the dates of April 8, 2007 and May 8, 2007, although *Le Figaro* seemed fair in its coverage of Segolene Royal, it was visibly conservative and biased against her. The tensions within her party and her strained relationship were played upon, exposing that the election optimism was merely a "façade" to cover the internal estrangement and her move to align with the center (Barotte 2007, 1). She was portrayed as denouncing "l'agressivité" and "brutalité" of politics and her tactic of "seducing" the public was waning. Key male figures of her campaign, such as Jean-Pierre Chevènement were credited with being the strength and success of the campaign.

Le Figaro translated the ambiguity of her campaign into a fatigue of her momentum and loss of her fiery, confident voice. Party officials were constantly questioned about her credibility and the viability of her candidacy (Barotte 2007, 7).

Quotes from citizens were shown questioning what her campaign was really about; one stated, “il faudrait que je sache a quelle Segolene Royal je parle” (Barotte 2007, 7). No one could identify her real character and her “Presidential Pact” was not enough at the last minute to provide answers. After the first round, the articles in *Le Figaro* began critically comparing the two candidates, consistently showing Sarkozy as a more credible candidate. The agreed sentiment was that “le programme de Segolene Royal, je ne sais pas que ce que c’est...relativement informe...d’engagements sans cohérence global” (Fay, 2007, 1). She even lost strength in her feminist policies, unable to create a concrete political solution to women’s issues in a debate with Sarkozy. *Le Figaro* also constantly used poll results to show that Sarkozy was in the lead; 51% support among the population made him a more plausible president.

Contrarily, in sixty-nine articles during the same time frame, *Liberation’s* tone was much more supportive of her and the PS, giving her credibility and focusing on the policies that she had outlined. There were fewer articles about her, but they were consistently more insightful and focused on her as a candidate. There was a large focus on her femininity and the difficulty of being a woman in politics. This article dared to attribute her inability to gain majority support in either her party or among the public to the fact that she was a woman. The traditional problems of misogyny in France, where powerful women are seen as ‘deviant’ have not been solved; women in Royal’s situation are often treated and critiqued differently because they are women (Santucci 2007, 12). The author attributes the switch in support towards the central right candidate, Francois Bayrou from the UDF, to the fact that a female candidate for the PS weakens its

credibility. One voter said “j’ai toujours vote gauche, mais Royal je ne vais pas pouvoir (2007, 16).

Another article shows her determination to gain the female vote and desire to represent women’s rights in politics. Publicizing issues and being elected is the only way political equality can be achieved. She tried to invoke an image of Joan of Arc, a symbol of strength and femininity. The newspaper shows a poll indicating that 39% of voters say they like her “determinant” and “important” personality, which will help in the competitive second round elections (Rotman 2007, 8). However, “il n’y a pas de solidarité de classe sexuelle” and polls show she may not receive the female majority. Overall, *Liberation* shows much more optimism about her campaign calling it “revelee, assurément, plein de surprises” (Revault d’Allonnes 2007, 4). They present her early attempts to unite conservative views with her revolutionary campaign as an innovative way to create a “France réconciliée” (Ibid, 4).

Election Results

As the elections neared, Sarkozy retained his lead. The French presidential election system is a two-ballot majority system with the first round of elections on April 22, 2007 and the second round on May 6, 2007. The first round includes all candidates and the two candidates who receive the highest votes go on to the second round. In the first round, Sarkozy won 31% while Royal obtained 26% of the vote, moving them on to the second election. On May 6, Sarkozy won the presidential election with 53% of the vote, compared to Royal’s 47%. Despite her focus on femininity and rights of women, French women did not vote for her because she was a woman and only 48% of the women’s vote went to her (no author editorial, 2007, 1).

Although she was a very controversial figure in the 2007 French presidential campaign, Segolene Royal has exposed determination and hard work in her political skills throughout her career. Her support and portrayal of the importance of women's equality in politics and society is an issue which must be supported by influential women in all countries. Through this union women can advance their opportunities to independently achieve success. She has not left the political world in France and is continually reworking her image to fit the popular views. Segolene Royal still hopes to be a figure of innovation and divergence from the stagnant, traditional beliefs and remains an icon of strength and femininity; she is a model for all women to follow.

Chapter 3

Hillary Clinton

The first viable female presidential candidate in America, Hillary Clinton characterizes a similarly distinctive yet contentious and enigmatic image to that of Segolene Royal. Politically savvy and arguably world renowned, she has unabashedly fought and survived in American masculinized politics, polarizing some but inspiring fervent support in others. Through her presentation of a multi-faceted image, she has been categorized as a “lawyer, activist, mother, political wife, feminist,” first lady and now a potential presidential candidate (Warner 1993, 4). Her most vital, yet challenging decision was her entry into political life and which of her conflicting images she would portray: traditional supportive wife or politically active partner? Faced with the dilemmas of women in politics, she has struggled to balance her strong, powerful image with her more feminine side, often eliciting questions and criticisms. In her current 2008 presidential campaign, she has combined the knowledge from previous life experiences with her tenacious determination to project a successful campaign. Her steadfast agenda and ability to woo female voters may propel her to become the first female presidential candidate in the US.

Biographical History

Born in 1947 in Park Ridge, Illinois, Hillary Clinton’s background was religious, conservative and strict. Her predominant Methodist upbringing inspired her to place emphasis on “personal salvation and active applied Christianity” throughout her political career (Radcliffe 1993, 28). She became deeply involved in her church, an aspect that “aside from her family...[became] perhaps the most important foundation of her

character” (Bernstein 2008, 36). Her father, Hugh Rodham, embodied masculine authoritarianism, dominating and verbally abusing his devoted wife, Dorothy. Friends of the family were perplexed with Dorothy’s decision to stay with her abusive husband, but her steadfast dedication to her marriage and her fervent belief that “you do not leave the marriage” allowed her to persevere (Bernstein 2008, 26). This advice was drilled into Clinton’s mind; during the difficulties in her and Bill’s marriage, she continually supported her husband.

The family’s modest living conditions, a result of her father’s miserly nature, gave her early lessons in thriftiness and the ability to survive no matter the conditions (Warner 1993, 17). However, their status was by no means impoverished and her father would drive them past the “track houses and little apartments” to illustrate how privileged they should feel (Bernstein 2008, 19). Resembling a boot camp, the house was strictly run, requiring unpaid daily house work and high standards in everything. Despite this subjugation, the children recognized his deeper purpose to enable them to become “scrappy fighters” with a “pragmatic competitiveness” (Ibid, 15). Her father encouraged her to work hard and did not differentiate her abilities from those of her brothers. As a girl, he gave her confidence that she could do anything if she was determined (Radcliffe 1993, 35). She also had the uncanny ability to talk her way out of any problem and persuade others into agreement with her. Later, Clinton saw the demands of her childhood as a way to build character and stamina; she used these skills to persevere in the political world (Klein 2005, 51).

In high school, Clinton was a predominant figure in many extracurricular activities. She exhibited her competitive leadership skills through her active roles in

speech activities and debate, student council, sports and her position as junior vice president (Radcliffe 1993, 37). Although not the smartest in her class, she had an incredible work ethic, pushing herself to exceed the limits. Throughout high school she exposed a self confidence rarely matched by other adolescent students (Bernstein 2008, 29). In 1965, she entered Wellesley College, which has produced many prominent female leaders, acting as a haven to cultivate intelligent women in a masculine society (Radcliffe 1993, 56). She entered college at a politically and socially volatile time for institutions nationally; leading up the Vietnam War there were many discontented students stimulating continual social change. Challenging structural and social aspects of the school, she took many political activists group by storm (Ibid, 58). Clinton cared about making a difference at school and fulfilled her role by “trying to improve the system” through political groups on campus (Ibid, 65). Rejecting traditional political and gender standards, she peacefully marched for progressive actions in civil rights and the admission of more blacks to schools, of which there were only ten at Wellesley (Bernstein 2008, 39). Clinton’s years at Wellesley symbolized a transition period for her; she was exposed to a new, diverse political world, very different from that of her somewhat sheltered childhood. Through activism on campus, her political views also transformed. She slowly moved away from her conservative upbringing as she realized the need for extensive political and social reform (Radcliffe 1993, 57).

Politically mature at a younger age than most, Clinton loved engaging in animated discussions and was able to dominate with her well informed ideas. One female peer recounted that “Hillary knew what she was about long before most girls her age” (Radcliffe 36). In high school, she became “Goldwater Girls,” working for local

Republican campaigns checking for voter fraud. Her “Barry Goldwater conservative” attitude, influenced by her father and her childhood, stayed with her until her early years at Wellesley. As a freshman, she was elected president of the Republican club, lobbying for Republican candidates. However, it was during this first transition year that her ideology drastically shifted towards the left. She began to question the Republican Party’s policies on civil rights and the Vietnam War and became progressively more feminist and egalitarian (Bernstein 2008, 43). She described herself, reflecting “what you would expect in a certain kind of young person at the time...sort of on the liberal side” (Ibid, 43).

During this time, her high school youth minister and mentor, Reverend Don Jones, also opened her eyes to a more progressive, liberal landscape. He was “something between a father figure, adored brother and knight-errant” to her and she often wrote him from school for advice (Ibid, 34). He taught her how to combine her political values with religious morals to proactively improve the social situation in America. She began to accept a more liberal ideology that embodied her religious desire to help others. Finding that Republican policies correlated less with her progressive views towards helping society, she slowly moved to the left. Through these beliefs, Clinton formed her motivating motto: “balancing human nature, in all its splendor and baseness, with a passion for justice and social reform” (Ibid, 34). In the end, Hillary’s “real-life education and a sense of right and wrong guided her away from rigid ideology;” she saw what needed to change and realized a Democratic approach was necessary (Bernstein 2008, 104).

Her experience at Wellesley propelled her to enter Yale Law School in 1969 where she banded with like-minded students continuing her steadfast political activism. She was exposed to an eclectic mix of liberal politics and women's rights issues. There were visits from a commune in Texas to "light shows and music that went on all night" (Radcliffe 1993, 88). The presence of women was laughable; there only thirty female students and there was continual condescension from male classmates. Even faculty "seriously doubted woman's place was before the bench" (Ibid, 89). Already comfortable with males from dealing with her brothers, Clinton maintained her self-confident attitude and "stood out as someone who was marching forward" (Ibid, 89). She cultivated her talent as a coalition builder as well obtaining impressive "negotiating skills and advocacy experience (Warner 1993, 46). Although many students would be heading into careers in massive law firms, Clinton's law school career further stimulated her political activist desire. She also formed a platform of ideologies that she would use in her future political career, including an interest in children's and women's rights. Although she had always persevered, not allowing her gender to compromise her success, she was inspired to work to advance the overall situation of women in society (Radcliffe 1993, 97). Despite being a woman in a typically masculine dominated field, Clinton's intellectual stamina and unyielding determination allowed her to constantly achieve her goals.

Bill Clinton

Her relationship with Bill developed passionately during law school and in the years after; however, it is a controversial topic for family and friends. Their original fateful meeting at Yale is constantly an issue of contention, both recalling different times (Warner 1993, 49). Incidentally, each remembers the other making the first move to

meet. The one thing about their relationship that is indisputable is the incredible partnership they have formed, that has directly affected their success as politicians in all areas. There was an unspoken understanding and connection between the two from the beginning that linked the path of their lives together indefinitely. They also had similar ideological views and ambitions and both were renowned activists at the school. The two sensed and admired a competitive equality and an “engagement...intellectual and otherwise” that drew them to each other (Bernstein 2008, 82). However, “women were never far from Bill’s mind;” “seduction and betrayal” became his lifelong passion (Klein 2005, 70). Despite the excitement of their new relationship, Bill “continued to see other women, even after they moved into an apartment,” an indication of the future of their relationship (Ibid, 72). However, their relationship would never be conventional; the “rules of courtship would never apply” in a “romance [that] was not based on mutual physical attraction” (Ibid, 72). Their ideological and intellectual appeal was enough to keep them together. Hillary, who hadn’t placed much emphasis on sex in her life did not mind when Bill “found sexual release elsewhere” (Ibid, 72). From the beginning, it was obvious that “he was beyond her control when it came to other women” (Bertstein 2008, 88). Their relationship was more of an intriguing friendship and “Bill treated Hillary as one of the boys” which only strengthened her self-image of equality and invincibility (Klein 2005, 73).

After graduation, Hillary sacrificed her independent ambitions to remain at Yale an extra year to be with Bill who was a year behind her (Bernstein 2008, 89). When they finally left, the two went to Texas to work on George McGovern’s presidential campaign in 1972. Although a good experience, the campaign was a bust and she found herself

wandering, trying to find something to latch onto. Fellow co-workers on the campaign could see that Hillary was on her way to “an exceptional career in politics” (Ibid, 87). In 1973 “her no-nonsense student activist” attitude was rewarded by an appointment to a panel of impeachment lawyers investigating the Watergate controversy (Radcliffe 1993, 120). At twenty-six years old, this would be “one of the greatest experiences professionally and politically,” working as one of three women on a staff of forty-three lawyers (Ibid, 120). This sobering experience, investigating corruption in the nation’s highest office, again exposed her to the realities of politics and society. Their diligent work finally resulted in victory for the team and Hillary felt that her course of “pragmatic activism” was revived (Ibid, 130). Hillary was exiting academic life at an explosive and opportune time; she was propelled into her first political position and ultimately launched her reputation as a stalwart leader and activist.

While she was in Washington, however, Bill followed his dream to campaign for governor in Arkansas. While there, he became caught up in a relationship with a college girl. Hillary, already determined to sustain the relationship, sent her father and brother to correct the situation. She ordered her brother to “give the College Girl the rush;” he stalked her everyday until she left and married another man (Klein 2005, 84). This was the way that Hillary dealt with Bill’s continual affairs throughout their relationship and marriage, never demanding that he stop, but creating a plan to make the situation disappear (Ibid, 83). After two years of delaying the inevitable, Hillary finally agreed to marry Bill in October 1975, “for love, and the shared dream of a grand political future someday in Washington” (Bernstein 2008, 89). By marrying Bill, she would move to Arkansas to follow his dream to become a congressman. Consequently, she would work

in a law firm or law school, “hardly roles commensurate with the scale of her ambition” (Ibid, 91). A law school friend tried to dissuade her asking ““why on earth would you throw away your future?”” (Ibid, 106). She knew her career would be at least temporarily compromised “forgoing a [potentially] prestigious job in the capital or New York,” a path which most Yale classmates followed. Instead “she would inhabit the more traditional universe in which she would invest her talent” (Ibid, 89). Hillary was the antithesis of Bill’s typical women, but she would become the essential “partner, manager [and] advisor” (Ibid, 89). She kept her maiden name to remain a “person in her own right,” yet “sacrificed her feminist principles” by giving up her immediate independence (Klein 2005, 88).

Early Career in Arkansas

After moving to Fayetteville, Arkansas to start a life with Bill, she became a professor at the University of Arkansas Law School; however her steadfast political ambition still burned. Before they were married, Bill ran for a congressional seat against the incumbent and lost by 2%. A blow for the two, Hillary had had to decide if she would remain with Bill or attempt success on her own. She again conceded, determined and a bit desperate to fulfill their political dreams (Bernstein 2008, 115). This decision paid off; while Bill was attorney general, he began his first successful campaign for governor of Arkansas. Hillary started looking for more serious jobs and was finally hired at the Rose Law Firm, becoming the first female associate. Confronted with gender related issues in an all white, male firm, they questioned “how will we introduce her to our clients” and “what if she gets pregnant” (Ibid, 129). Although she had a reputation as a “scrappy, straightforward, very smart litigator” with an excellent resume, the decision to hire

Hillary was also based on her status as the governor's wife (Radcliffe 1993, 180). Despite her personal success, the affect of a powerful man and the opportunity to mingle in a world of elite and powerful politicians helped her gain the position.

In 1980, the couple decided that it would be politically successful to have a child. Throughout her pregnancy and mothering years, Hillary admits that she "had advantages that other women didn't have" (Radcliffe 1993, 179). Living in the governor's mansion with a full time staff helped her ease into the life of a working mother. The law firm so much valued her work that they allowed her to create her own schedule according to her personal needs. Few women could have this luxury. Although her pregnancy involved a rigorous work schedule, which may have been difficult on her, she was able to extend her leave from work and spend time significant time with her daughter (Ibid, 182). Due to her commitments at the law firm and her position on the board of the Legal Services Corporation, requiring her to travel, she relied on her mother's help in raising Chelsea (Klein 2005, 93). While Hillary adamantly campaigned for child care and upheld the importance of family, her motherly instinct was questioned and criticized. One woman who had an affair with Bill commented that "Hillary didn't have the mothering instinct...she couldn't wait to dump this kid with a nanny and get back to work" (Ibid, 92). Regardless, throughout her career, she was able to elicit the help of friends and family as well as her advantageous situation to persevere and augment her political career without compromising Chelsea's childhood.

During Bill's campaign for re-election, their marriage tensions were becoming visible. The rift in their personal relationship greatly affected his success and the two were unable to project the united image that people relied on. The public and the media

also attacked Hillary's refusal to take Bill's last name, comparing her to the Republican candidate's wife who was the picture of traditional femininity (Bernstein 2008, 157). Her last minute efforts to save the campaign showed her critical role as leader of his campaigns; however they were unable to succeed. Attempting to deter negative attention from failed policies in Bill's previous term, she called a former campaign assistant to create positive media. Despite the campaign failure, her efforts exposed her pivotal role in his campaigns; when he was tired out, she would take over. From this point on, Hillary would have a "far more direct, hands-on role in terms of policy, strategy, scheduling and hiring staff for the campaign" (Ibid, 165). She represented the reality for their political careers and kept him on track. During this post lost period, Hillary also sacrificed her un-conforming image to that of a supportive wife. "The price of defiance was too high, and proud Hillary Rodham became Mrs. Clinton" (Bennets 2008, 232). She finally decided to adopt Bill's last name and remade her physical image, taming her hair and softening her style (Radcliffe 1993, 194). This ultimately fortified Bill's image, making people more comfortable with their relationship and relying on their ability.

Feminism

Throughout her early life, Hillary never attempted to project a very feminine image through her attitude or dress, nor did she conform to the norm even after being ridiculed. Friends early on believed her father's merciless criticism and motivation "undermined Hillary's sense of femininity" forming the image of a callous, determined woman (Bernstein 2008, 32). Lacking a sense of style and emitting a conceited self-possession, Hillary's image has always been hard to decipher, probably adding to her inability to keep Bill at her side. This adamant refusal to conform got her into trouble

in her early years with Bill; her “unkempt appearance” and “tough, aggressive manner” ignited rumors that she was a lesbian (Klein 2005, 86). Her enigmatic sexuality was at the center of Bill’s campaign for Congress, hurting his chances and perhaps contributing to his loss. This defiant image has continually caused consternation in the public and media because she refuses to conform or be tied down.

During her freshman year at Wellesley, a more radical feminism with deep resentment towards males was growing. It was formed out of an era where false promises and delusions were made by a system in which women were continually the victims (Bernstein 2008, 41). Radical feminists “preached open hostility” towards males and the women’s movement was focused on equal opportunity for women in all areas (Ibid, 41). However, Hillary was neither a “pioneer” nor a “firebrand” of this feminist movement; she still influenced by the traditional beliefs of her childhood. Despite this, as an ambitious woman, she benefited from the ‘woman’s liberation’ and was influenced by its accomplishments (Ibid, 41). Her feminist fight formed by finding solace in rejecting the traditional soft femininity. She continually supported the solidarity of women; however, female peers note she “could be oblivious to the obstacles impeding her gender, because her own experience was so singular (Ibid, 42). Although this approach worked for her, her difficulty to arouse the same blind sighted determination in other women has been an impediment to articulating her real personality and goals. Hillary also had a critical view of women who “stayed home, baked cookies and had teas;” she wanted to go out and be an activist to “assure that women can make the choices they make” (Cheever 2008, 83). As a result of her determination, her femininity has been questioned and she has been

called the “yuppie wife from hell;” however she is paving the way, “redefining what it means to be a woman” (Ibid, 84).

“Their” Campaign for Presidency in 1992

The early political career they share in Little Rock, Arkansas was merely preparation for the journey that awaited in Washington and the White House. “Their” 1992 presidential campaign proved to be an incredibly critical testing ground for their success. Sexual scandals, possible illicit connections between the Rose Law Firm and Bill’s governorship, as well as intense scrutiny of their daughter and marital life were the topic of every discussion (King 1993, 160). She gallantly ignored many of these allegations saying that their personal life was private; instead she turned her focus to the issues facing “modern women” (Ibid, 160).

During the campaign, Hillary focused on gaining female support by addressing the issues confronting women. In trying to unite the female vote, she showed the possibility of success to women, encouraging them to take all opportunities to further their career. The real issue to her was the ability of “women [to] make the choices that are right for them” (King 1993, 161). However, at times she was also a liability for the campaign with her explosive and often times offensive remarks. She marginalized some women’s votes by essentially showing “contempt for women who work at home” (Ibid, 162). This disdain for what she called, the “unenlightened country women,” turned many against her. She continually expressed who she was not and what she did not agree with, confusing women by not articulating who she really *was* and what values she supports (Ibid, 162). A polarizing figure during the campaign, “many men didn’t like her because she was a radical feminist...[and] many women said they couldn’t stand her because she

was willing to tolerate abuse from her husband in order to stay in power” (Klein 2005, 115). She was a complex figure: a successful lawyer, political activist and feminist on the one hand with the contradictions of supporting her husband’s infidelity and furthering his career while apparently ignoring her own, on the other (Troy 2006, 43). In the final months of the campaign, officials devised a plan to make Hillary more likable; she would calm her criticisms and they would create an image of a family to quell public aversion to their relationship (Ibid, 118).

Clinton’s Presidency 1992-2000

Their years together in the White House represented an incredibly volatile period personally and in some ways nationally. Filled with sexual scandals, lies and policy failures, the two Clinton terms are an image of chaos and perplexity. Among many things, Hillary still represented a feisty, polarizing figure; an image that was both invigorating and harmful to the presidency. She placed great emphasis on the protection of international women’s rights and what they could possibly do in their lives if they work hard. Although she continually stressed this empowerment of women, she ignored the struggles women face in less fortunate or violent situations (Burrell 2001, 135). By suggesting what women could ‘possibly’ do, it gives them the ends but not the means to advance themselves. Women’s situations’ nationally and internationally are so diverse; her ‘answer’ was not always the best ‘answer.’ Taking the “traditional ‘goodwill ambassador’” approach to her role as first lady, Hillary traveled internationally to promote goals for women and condemn their victimization (Ibid, 139). However, she was criticized for continually changing her feminist platform, “conveniently adopting the feminist mantle when it seem[ed] politically prudent” (Ibid, 135). She was also accused

of encouraging Bill's pull to the left which was unpopular with influential party and cabinet members (Klein 2005, 119). Yet nothing resonated with less success and failure than the health care plan; the "most humiliating defeat of her life," allowing Republicans to sweep through, gaining Congressional majority in 1994 (Ibid, 122). This policy collapse marked a separation in their co-presidency, paving the way to an even greater marital rift and the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Hillary did everything in her power to save the face and office of her husband; she spearheaded the counterattack and even humiliated herself to support him and remain his wife (Troy 2006, 183).

Affect of Relationship

A relationship of this sort was able to survive due to the pivotal roles they played in one another's careers and lives. They each believed in each other's strong minded, politically savvy qualities, confident that with the other they could make it. For Hillary, Bill represented someone who treated her like an equal, encouraging her that "there was nothing beyond her reach—including becoming the first woman president" (Klein 2005, 73). He gave her the ability to "transcend her gender" and she gave him moral and tacital support, certain he would succeed. Hillary also knew that the feminist movement was not yet strong enough for her to excel on her own in male dominated politics; she needed Bill's help to make her legitimate (Ibid, 73). Compromising some of her dignity because "[Bill] was almost adolescent when it came to his sexual sensibilities," she has stayed married to him through difficult times (Bernstein 2008, 88). Likewise, Bill saw in her all the qualities he lacked: a tough, almost ruthlessness to persevere with anything. While Bill would rather attempt to compromise and persuade, she was fierce; it "often took Hillary to push him into the ring" (Ibid, 84). She is straightforward with everything

without the need to add “subtlety” or “nuance.” Bill is slow to recognize ill will and Hillary often acts as his filter, cutting off the enemy before any harm is done.

This seamless political partnership has fascinated and repulsed peers and the public; however, it has been a successful method that has stayed intact throughout their unpredictable and complex marriage (Bernstein 2008, 89). Throughout their academic and political career, the two nurtured each other’s passion and supported the other’s endeavors. Hillary also used her dedicated religious background to justify continually forgiving Bill (Ibid, 36). “She elevates her staying with [Bill] to a moral level of biblical proportion” and believes she is acting as the stronger person; she stayed with him because it is her “biblical duty to love the sinner” (Ibid, 36). In all respects, they rely heavily on each other and their relationship is incredibly dependent on their political success.

Campaign for Senate

After the Lewinsky scandal, Hillary decided to make her first independent political career decision by announcing her bid to run for Senator in New York State on July 7, 1999. Her close friends were not surprised at her decision; one of her friends admitted that “being a U.S. senator gives her an ongoing forum in which to pursue the agenda she’s always been interested in” (Bernstein 2008, 540). Her campaign for the Senate allowed her to project a revived image, starting out on her own career instead of constantly playing the “indispensable first lady” role (Troy 2006, 205). Fortunately, as she separated herself from her position in the White House, her success showed that “the criticism...as first lady had less to do with her personality, her policy, or her gender” and more to do with the traditional idiosyncrasies of being the first lady (Ibid, 205). She appeared on the cover of *Vogue* magazine in 1998 and “was never more popular with

Americans;” an ABC poll showed that 64% of Americans viewed her favorably (Givhan 2008, 212).

At the beginning of her campaign, she finally agreed to expose her real views of her husband and his infidelities. She attempted to show her innocence and gain allies through a personal story that made her the victim. Instead of hiding who she was and asserting strong marginalizing views, she decided to tell New Yorkers what they wanted to hear. She admitted personal emotions of how she was wronged by Bill, yet she also explained her desire to stay with him as a supportive wife. Explaining Bill’s ‘sexual problem,’ she gave excuses for his “compulsive infidelity” (Troy, 2006,207). She described his scarring abuses as a child: his mother and grandmother fought constantly fought over him giving him “too much love” (Ibid, 207). Her ultimate justification was “he couldn’t protect me, and so he lied” (Ibid, 207). She also wanted to reassure voters that her relationship with the president and Washington was strong. Her new image as a wronged wife gained her popularity because she espoused traditional American values by staying with her husband. Bennetts suggests that this “wronged wife role” was the first time the American people could understand and sympathize with her (Bennetts 2008, 243). However, many women strongly disagreed with her decision, and were angered that she didn’t just “toss her husbands—the president’s—belongings onto the White House lawn” (Givhan 2008, 212).

Despite public opinion support, she faced skepticism from the start. The previous senator, Pat Moynihan disliked her because he believed her motivation was “self-aggrandizement,” referring to her health care plan as “boob bate for the bubbas” (Klein 2005, 165). When she arrived to address the New York State public for the first time, her

speech was ambiguous. She admitted she was “very humbled and more than a little surprised to be here” (Kolber 2008, 9). Instead of answering the questions that were on everyone’s mind, “Why the Senate? Why New York? And why me?,” she left them unanswered, apparently for the voters to decide. It was obvious, Kolbert argues, that “New York was just a vehicle for Clinton’s ambition” towards the presidency (2008, 10). She was also faced with high expectations, especially from women; they “assume that female politicians will be purer of motive than their male counterparts, [and] more driven by empathy” (Kolbert 2008, 12). Kolbert argues “if Clinton weren’t a woman she could quite easily be admired for her remorselessness” (Ibid, 12). Not many people believed she could actually win the election.

After the announcement, her campaign began with a famous “listening tour;” she traveled around the state insisting that “she had come to New York to listen” (Kolbert 2008, 11). A “carpetbagger” to some and a “deft politician” to others, she intently listened to a “local doctor” speak about the “importance of public education” and a “college student offer[ing] his reasons for wanting to become a teacher” (Ibid, 10). Her tour also attempted to give all regions of New York an equal say. Instead of focusing only the New York City, she allowed constituents everywhere to feel that their vote mattered. The basis of the listening tour was to personally create “a method of surveying and polling that established what voters wanted, and what would offend their sensibilities” (Bennett 2008, 542). During her tour, she restrained the inclination to assert her strong views; she did not offend them and told them what they wanted to hear (Ibid, 542). Consequently, almost all her policies directly represented the beliefs and priorities of her constituents.

However, Hillary's motto, "exploit the prejudices against you," illustrates that her campaign was mainly to give the *impression* that she could be a good listener (Kolbert 2008, 14). She followed the societal guidelines to fit the stereotypically feminine role; "If people think women are good listeners...stage a listening tour" (Ibid, 14). She was concerned with whatever policies would get her elected. Clinton "is willing to do whatever it takes" to achieve her goals whether that means fulfilling an imaginary image or forgetting her principles to gain popularity (Ibid, 15). Kolbert calls the campaign "sleep-inducing;" half an hour into one session she noted three reporters were asleep (2008, 10). Hillary's main goal was to create a new image for herself to further her political success and power. In the end the listening tour worked brilliantly for her; pretending to 'listen' she satisfied the constituency, allowing them to voice their concerns, while evading the 'carpetbagger' image and creating the image New Yorkers wanted.

During her campaign, she inhabited a "delicate balance;" showing her connection to the President and Washington, yet illustrating her ability and desire to remain an independent woman as well (Troy 2006, 208). Russell argues that her position as first lady was integral to her success; "the job of political spouse was a source of power in itself" (2000, 8). She strategically used her recognition as first lady. Embellishing her connection and support of her husband, the president, she constantly changed from first lady to candidate and back again. Her role as first lady also helped her project a balanced image. Her skills learned as first lady, those of "exemplary manners and connecting with women voters at a visceral level," along with her independent image negated that of a 'carpetbagger' (Ibid, 8).

Clinton easily won the Democratic nomination; Congresswoman Nita Lowey stepped aside. Her Republican opponent was originally New York City mayor, Rudy Giuliani, who would have proved a tough competitor (Bennett 2008, 542). However, Clinton was lucky; Giuliani was involved in a marital scandal and was diagnosed with prostate cancer, forcing him to withdraw. Inexperienced and lacking recognition, Rick Lazio became the Republican nominee. Hillary won all the debates, although Lazio tried to portray her as an extreme liberal. Her listening tour created a large support base, especially upstate New York, where the economy had stagnated under a previous Republican governor (Ibid, 542). On November 7, 2000, she beat Lazio in an overwhelming victory; she won 55% to his 43%. Russell also cites female voters gave her the large margin; 60% supported Clinton while only 39% support Lazio (2000, 8). She gained more female support across party lines as well. As Kolbert and many others predicted, her position as senator of New York became a launching pad for her potential presidential candidacy.

Decision to Run for Presidential Nomination

Her experience in the Senate propelled her on her life long journey to attempt the Democratic nomination for president of the United States. Counseled by a close advisor, she announced that she would not run in 2004, but followed the election closely to attempt to secure her position for 2008 (Klein 2005, 237). She would need George Bush to beat John Kerry to keep her a desirable and plausible candidate for 2008. Although she pretended to back Kerry's campaign, she promoted her own values and ideas, positioning herself in the public's focus. After the defeat of Kerry, Hillary knew she would run for the 2008 nomination and spent the next years preparing and refining her image and

policies (Ibid, 240). “Human progress was on Hillary’s side” and she was convinced that women and men alike were ready for a female president (Ibid, 241). Expounding upon the revolutionary idea that the country could accept a female president, she lobbied and warmed people up to the idea. Her poll ratings in New York soared from 38% to 61% by 2005.

Democratic Party Nomination Process

The Democratic presidential nomination process is complex and requires many levels of success through its primary and caucus system. The overall U.S. presidential process can be broken down into four periods: the pre-primary campaign, January, Super Tuesday and the Spring. The pre-primary campaign begins when a candidate announces their bid for their party’s nomination; they begin publicizing their policies and gaining media attention vital to their momentum into the primaries. The media plays an important role during this period, establishing a ‘horse-race’ effect. Candidates must try to gain ‘front-runner status’ in popularity, fundraising and other issues to increase visibility and viability before the elections begin.

In January 2008, the primaries and caucuses began, to test a candidates’ viability. A primary is an election conducted by each state government for the political parties; members of the Democratic Party in each state vote to select the nominee by giving delegates to each candidate according to voting percentages. A caucus is also a meeting of party members to choose the nominee as well. Candidates campaign in most states to gain recognition and support by illustrating their campaign policies. These two voting processes focus on a candidate’s viability to prevent small factions from gaining delegates. However, it sometimes results in candidates gaining viability in some states

and not others, drawing out the process. Super Tuesday is an important date because a large number of primary and caucuses are held on that day; it was March 4 this past year. The cycle of primary and caucus elections can continue until the Democratic convention in August, but can end as early as March if a candidate gains the necessary majority of delegates. On Monday August 25, 2008 through Thursday August 28, 2008 the Democratic National Convention will meet to officially declare the nominee. The members of the party choose the nominee through delegates given to each candidate through the primary election cycle. The delegates who must vote for a specific candidate are called pledge delegates. Those who can vote for either are called super-delegates; there are 795 made up of House representatives, Senators, governors and members of the Democratic National Committee. Of 4,048 delegates, a candidate must receive a majority of 2,024.5 to win the nomination.

Thus far, forty-eight out of six primary events have taken place; Obama has won the most delegates in thirty events while Clinton has won thirteen, they have tied in two and three have not decided. Obama holds an overall lead with an estimated 1,405 pledged delegates, while Clinton has 1,244.5 pledged delegates. He has an overall popular vote total of 50.56%, compared to her 49.44%. Although Obama is estimated to gain more pledge delegates overall, Clinton has more super-delegates which could result in her victory or a very close nomination vote. She has tried to increase her attraction beyond the “Democratic diehards” by representing an innovative image of a woman in charge. She gained support from a diverse group, ranging from lesbians to young people to trial lawyers (Klein 2005, 242). She learned how to campaign and present a charisma; a new addition to her personality. Although some in her party agree that she is influential

enough to win the party's nomination, she may still represent an image, too "northeastern elitist liberal" to win (Ibid, 243). Despite her conservative background, Hillary represents a strong, devoted liberal image, one that may polarize support from a large conservative and moderate majority. Being the "master of reinvention" she has recently re-created her image to present a more moderate, less marginalizing stance (Ibid, 244). Her ideology has become more centrist on domestic policy and hawkish on foreign affairs. With this new conservative image, Hillary attempts to convince the public that she can be whatever image and leader they desire. At the end of the current primaries and caucuses, Clinton and U.S. will see if her strategies can finally gain succeed. Will she win the presidential nomination or is her image too ambiguous and polarizing for the public's trust?

Who is Hillary?

The controversies about her image, character and real motivations were apparent in her Senate race as they are now in her bid for the presidential nomination. Despite the attempts of her listening tour, to many this represented pure opportunism and a lack of a "notable legislative accomplishments or principled standards" (Thurman 2008, 79). Today she is perceived to have an "overconfident sense of entitlement to the public trust;" this is viewed as undesirable "arrogance" (Ibid, 79). She is especially marginalizing to women of similar status, who are confused at how she can so easily balance her career and her family; they are "resentful of the fact that Hillary could have it both ways" (Klein 2005, 181). The lack of female supporters is known as her "woman problem" and her senate campaign hired a psychologist to help refocus her image. The public's view of her is "very controlling, self-serving, cunning, cold...you get the sense that she doesn't think like a woman...she thinks like a man" (Ibid, 181). Attempts to

“warm up” Hillary and make her more “motherly...wifely, and more feminine” were implemented in both campaigns after criticisms detracted from her public support (Ibid, 182). Overall, the media has played a large role in shaping her political image and will have a large affect on her nomination success.

Media Analysis

The media constantly plays a crucial role in her image portrayal and public success. Her presidential campaign today continually has trouble illustrating Hillary’s strong and successful, yet feminine and compassionate image. She is depicted through both extremes, requiring her campaign to relentlessly present the other image, playing catch up. Looking at two different US newspapers, *The New York Times* on the left and the *Wall Street Journal* on the right, there is a definite disparity between the two images portrayed. In 231 articles published during the period between January 1, 2008 and January 31, 2008, the *New York Times* was visibly supportive of Hillary; they often turned her faults into a fight against the odds. In an article about Bill’s influence on her political career, the author softly criticized her “political move” to marry Bill. Although she criticizes Hillary’s actions, she also exposes the reality that “political nepotism has often served feminism’s causes” (Howley 2008, 1). For many women the “road to advancement often begins at the alter,” with the husband providing the initial necessary support (Ibid, 1). For Hillary, Bill provides basic reassurance to voters. The author admits that women with more supportive husbands may be less likely to “pursue feminist policies.” However, the mere existence of a woman in politics is an “attack on the norms and assumptions that bar other women from ascending to power on their own” (Ibid, 1). The *New York Times* also supports her current image, noting that voters can be confident

in her because some of the fiery “old Hillary” is hidden in her new successful image (Collins 2008, 1). This author highlights the fact that many new women are supporting Hillary because she represents all aspects of their hectic lives: multitasking children, work and personal responsibilities (Ibid, 1). The articles also exhibited continual support of her emotional moment at the New Hampshire primaries, allegedly increasing the sympathy of women voters nationally.

Contrarily, the *Wall Street Journal* exposes a different side of Hillary’s campaign, one that is less successful, emotional and possibly failing. One article discussed her constant criticisms of Barack Obama’s health care plan; she declared it was based on myths not facts. The author exposes her plan as defective, based on incorrect percentages and statistics. Her intense fighting with Obama in a recent debate was the focus of a few articles discussing her ultimate viability. Although both Democrats, the *Wall Street Journal* seems more favorable to Obama, highlighting polls that put him 16% ahead of her. Out of 192 articles, the majority only mentioned her briefly in a small paragraph commenting on her campaign or an event, but rarely delving into the policies of her campaign. One article was merely about her professional way of dressing that might be a good example for an interview. Hillary could not escape criticism for her infamous tearing spell in a café during the New Hampshire primary; however, the author did not expose that it gained her female voters, as the one in the *New York Times* had. Instead the author stated that the road will only get harder after this primary, questioning her emotional and political stamina.

As the nomination decision draws nearer, the questions of her ability, stamina, desire and personality may begin to be uncovered as she fights to gain the nomination.

However, as her political history shows, she is not willing to respond to or be apologetic of these mysterious characteristics. In the primaries and her potential candidacy for the presidency, she will continue to offer a take it or leave it attitude. Exposing her strong opinions and hopes she will go to all costs to make her campaign a success. Although she may change her image, her steadfast determination and political resilience remain. This allows her to succeed in the face of adversary and continually create an image she believes will win. Despite the controversy that surrounds her character, throughout her career she has been and continues to be an incredible role model of hard work and success; through this, she can inspire other like-minded women to excel. In a political world still somewhat hostile to women, Hillary represents a hope for women's advancement in the future.

Chapter 4

A Comparison of Women in Politics in the U.S. and France

Historically, women have faced a barricade of masculine domination in their attempt to enter politics. In both the U.S. and France, women have deliberately worked to break passed this obstacle; through determination they have increased their political visibility, evolving social perceptions. As the previous chapters have shown, through the exploration of Segolene Royal and Hillary Clinton, women can and have made important achievements; they have overcome barriers and reach some of the highest positions in government. However, the research also shows how complex and elusive this goal is; it lacks a definition and continually challenges women to achieve higher standards. Despite their success, both American and French societies, illustrate that the concerns of ambition and traditional roles and stereotypes as well as the electoral and political systems still restrain women from entering political positions. The history of women's advancement shows that success cannot be achieved in an abrupt revolution but through a persistent evolution of diligence and struggle.

Revealed through the success of renowned political women like Segolene Royal and Hillary Clinton, who demonstrate that it is not impossible for a woman to be a successful politician or a viable presidential candidate, they embody women's continual progress. Living in different cultures, societies and political systems, these two women have been faced with similar challenges in intrinsically male dominated systems. In an attempt to balance their maternal femininity with the desire to gain powerful authority, they are continually criticized by the media for presenting the incorrect image; Royal too feminine, Clinton not feminine enough. In the face of these obstacles they rose beyond

gender stereotypes to achieve their common goals. Exhibiting parallel characteristics of determination and devotion to succeed, Royal and Clinton have fought diligently during their ascension in politics. Although these two women possess exceptional situations with more resources than most, they both symbolize that through intense determination, women can succeed in politics.

Lessons Learned About Women in Politics

An understanding of women's situation in politics today cannot be achieved without the knowledge of each society's historical process. The creation of traditional gender stereotypes of women in the U.S. and France, affect their political status today. Women's history of oppression has delayed their advancements in society and politics, preventing women from entering the public domain at the same rates as men. The fundamental view, stating that women belong in the private, domestic world, has traditionally precluded them from entering the public life of politics. Society feared that a politically active role of women would endanger the status quo of family and social life, producing movements throughout history that continually prevented women's success. Women's absence from politics in both the U.S. and France until the mid 1900's, allowed the emergence of a masculine dominated system, not easily penetrable by women. Although women cannot erase the influences of history, they can work hard to enter politics today and support other women.

Women in both systems can learn from the other's successes and failures to advance women in politics. For example, the feminist movement in France was much less militaristic in the U.S.; women did not gain suffrage until 1944, much later than most. However, today their representation in government is similar to women's in the U.S.

Women in France also achieved a declaration of political equality in their constitution, a status that American women fought for but ultimately lost. This ‘complete’ political equality was established by the parity law. When other approaches to stimulating political equality failed, including allowing the parties to establish parity, the government acted; they made a law requiring parity in elections and enforced it with sanctions. In the U.S., the government should adopt a similar method to gain equality because many obstacles to women stem from the masculinized party system. The government should take a proactive role in guaranteeing women’s political equality. In doing so, American feminists should realize that men and women *are* different, biologically, emotionally and mentally. Although women should have as many equal opportunities, women’s and men’s brains are naturally different. Therefore, women in the U.S. should focus on gaining a legal form of political equality first, instead of concentrating on being declared the “same” as men. Equal representation for women will increase their activity in policy making and will consequently help equalize the situation of women at all levels.

There are many complex factors that still inhibit women’s success and representation in politics. These obstacles are visible at all levels of the political process, discouraging women from entering electoral office and impeding their progress to higher positions. Although gender stereotypes are the traditional explanation for women’s absence in politics, this obstacle has been exaggerated in past years. In making political career decisions, “sex does not appear to be one of the most important factors” (Allwood 2000, 130). Instead, one of the largest barriers to women in both societies is their personal ambition. The statistical information of women in politics does not take into account the abstract differences in their political experiences and views. Women in both

cultures do not follow the same paths to politics as men, and may need more support to enter an election. The fact that women's own ambition is one of the largest barriers to their success in politics shows that women have the immediate power to advance themselves. Other women should give encouragement by voting for female candidates. Although women do not vote in a unified block, the only way to gain support and representation in politics is by increasing the number of women in office. More women in electoral office translates into direct success for other women; if higher party elites are female, they may select young women who they relate with, in the way men do with young male politicians.

Another obstacle, society's perception of women, is essential to understanding the media's role. It continually perpetuates stereotypical views of women in cultures, focusing on their appearance and ignoring their campaign policies. Media analysis of female candidates impacts the public opinion, directly affecting their success in the election. It is sad that stereotypes and criticisms of every aspect of their image are the reward for determined, intelligent women, who work hard to achieve their successful positions. To promote women's success in the future, it is the job of the public, the consumer and constituent, to show the media and other politicians that this kind of rhetoric is unacceptable in today's modern societies.

Will a Female President be Accepted?

Thus the question remains, is either country ready for a female president? As a result of the recent emergence of potential female presidential candidates, this question has continually been a topic of debate. Han and Heldman clarify this question by saying "getting elected, as opposed to governing" will be the biggest issue for women (2007, 8).

Illustrated through the obstacles for women in politics today, the actual decision-making and campaign process is the most vital and potentially destructive to success. Once in elected office, although women may focus on different policies, they are as equally successful as men. Similarly, after becoming a viable candidate, women have overcome most of the barriers; in both countries they consistently do as well as men in elections. As long as the stereotypes supporting male domination surround the presidential role, women will have difficulty achieving this position. Although public opinion would support a female presidential candidate “in theory,” they may react differently in an actual election involving a woman. Like all problems presenting women and politics, social perceptions prolonged by the media are at the base of the issue and must be evolved first. As society sees more women in powerful roles in the private sector and in politics, stereotypes will weaken and a woman as president will not seem so foreign.

Segolene Royal and Hillary Clinton

In today’s modernized and seemingly equal world, it is incredible that women are still confronted with so many persistent obstacles to their involvement in politics. Although this process filters out many potential women, both Segolene Royal and Hillary Clinton have proven that it is not impossible to be a viable presidential nominee. In their political careers, they gained significant support and viability. Through similar political struggles, these two women defeated the odds, ignoring stereotypes to compete for the highest level of political office. Although Royal lost her election to Sarkozy and Clinton may go the same way, they have played important roles in furthering women’s visibility and acceptance in politics. Regardless of the outcome, neither will give up their political activity. There are many detectable parallels between the two: their childhood, the affect

of their spouse, their campaign images, strategies and dynamics, and their difficulty of crafting a successful image to the public. They are both determined to achieve political success at all costs. By continually reinventing themselves, they evolve their image to please changing societal desires. However, the media criticizes each image and is never satisfied; this creates an almost impossible paradox to overcome. In the end, if they both lose the presidential candidacy, they will play sacrificial roles by getting the public used to the idea of a female president.

Childhood

Leading similarly strict and religious childhoods, these two women learned how to use their background to their advantage in their political lives. Royal was raised with a strict adherence to Catholicism; her father displayed the traditional masculine 'head of the house' role and dominated over her mother. Although her father always stern, he cared about his children. Royal continually portrays herself as a neglected, yet prodigious child, self-taught in the ways of the world. Seeing education as her only way to independence, she illustrates this victimized youth as the cause of her self-determined, hardworking nature. In her presidential campaign, she has used her rebellious, anti-conforming image as an option to the traditional restraints of the French political culture. Her Catholic background is also apparent in some of her campaign policies that support family values. Similarly, Clinton transformed her rigid childhood into necessary life lessons to survive in any conditions. Her father also represented the masculine authority of her household, dominating and abusing her mother. Like Royal, her Methodist background plays a large role in her campaign policies and ideologies; she wants to stimulate social reform to help the justice of all. Unlike Royal, Clinton was able to see

how the rigid structures of her childhood were meant to build her character and stamina. Clinton does not portray an image of an innocent victim, but one of an independent woman comfortable in the masculine dominated structures of politics. Both proactive with their political career goals, the two excelled in school and their early political life.

Affect of spouse

Royal and Clinton both sustained relations with and relied to some extent on their “partners” during their political careers. Although these relationships had very different dynamics, both women gained support and legitimacy from their male counterparts. Hillary and Bill’s relationship was much more of a partnership, making joint decisions to further one or the other’s political career. At the same time, they both relied on each other maintaining a vital equality. She followed his success from Arkansas to the White House until it was her turn for the limelight in her 1999 Senate campaign. Although in the beginning, Hillary relied on Bill’s success; her political career was enhanced by their connection and her visibility in the White House. Now it may be her turn to re-enter those years, this time in the most powerful seat. Royal and Hollande’s relationship and political lives were much less connected, which shows why they never committed to marriage. Each making their own decisions, they did not hesitate to compete with each other, both eyeing the presidential nomination of the Parti Socialiste. The similar political desires of this seemingly devoted couple created an immutable rift; they abruptly ended their twenty-five year relationship in 2006.

In both cases, the media and literature on the topic constantly questions the purpose of these two relationships. Bill and Hillary’s relationship seems to be almost completely based on a political partnership; however people find it hard to understand

why she has stayed with him through his scandals. Hollande and Royal deny that their relationship has any political purpose; however, Harneis questions the validity of this statement, indicating the possibility of a secret political strategy to work together. Interestingly, in both relationships their “spouses” had at least one affair with another woman. Their personal lives were intensely scrutinized by the media, affecting their images. However, the affairs had a positive affect on the women, victimizing them and creating sympathy in the public opinion. This event even helped to boost their careers, inspiring Clinton to campaign for the Senate in New York and completely opening Royal’s path to the candidacy. Their determination in politics after the affairs shows a lesson they both learned: “better to earn power via election than to assume it via marriage.” (Troy 2006, 213).

Despite the support that each woman had from their spouse, their relationships may have added to the intense media criticisms they received. Unable to completely elude the shadow of their relationships, it presented more of an obstacle. Continually scrutinized by the media, these women were often associated with damaging images of dependence and scandal. Much of the coverage of their political campaigns was ensconced with the events of their relationships, constantly showing the need for a male figure in their campaigns. Not only were their policies and experiences examined but their personal lives were completely dissected, continuing derogatory female stereotypes harmful to the success of their campaigns. Royal was unable to win without a husband and Clinton is having trouble proving that her potential presidency will be different from that of Bill’s in the 1990’s. It is unfortunate that a relationship has such an effect on their political success.

Therefore, which relationship was more helpful to their respective political careers? Although I would like to argue that a woman could win the presidency on her own, I think the role of a spouse, in the case of Hillary and Bill's relationship, gives a necessary dynamic to the success of a presidential campaign. Both societies still have stereotypical views about women's success in politics and having an equally successful spouse for support can't hurt. Although there were constantly questions in the media surrounding Bill's sexual scandals, their marriage persists. I think more questions could arise surrounding an unmarried candidate's personal and political relationship with her 'companion.' It is easier to 'split' because they were never married, giving their relationship a less serious and concrete image. The public likes to see a married couple in the presidency. When Hillary stayed and supported Bill during the Monica Lewinsky trial, although she was criticized by some women, her ratings skyrocketed. Although this may have been a political strategy, it worked; by supporting Bill she was sympathized and the public agreed with her focus on traditional marital values.

Female candidates can also create a successful campaign by creating an image of a loving wife. Being first lady increased her popularity in her Senate campaign because she was able to use the "lady-like" image to balance her more independent, authoritarian side. Seeing how a female candidate interacts with her spouse is also important to understanding all levels of the candidate. A woman has more advantages in politics by having a supportive spouse. Bill and Hillary are actually still together; despite the volatility of their relationship, their political partnership and marriage has kept them together and continually progressing forward.

Campaigns Images

The campaigns of Royal and Clinton at each level of their political career highlight their similarities. During their ascension in politics, they cared about their appearance in as far as it would further their success. Necessitated by being minorities, they resolutely fought to gain ground in any way they could. If this meant re-inventing their image numerous times, they would, a strategy they both used in their campaigns. Throughout her career, “Segolene a su créer sa légende personnelle” re-inventing herself from “Marie-Segolene” to “Segolene Royal” (Guiot 2006, 14). She refined her younger image into that of a sophisticated and educated political woman; at the same time, she gained the title of “sixième femme la plus sexy du monde” (Ibid, 15). In her new identity, she was able to portray an intelligent and viable candidate who commands respect. She also learned how to use “les medias pour servir sa cause de mère et femme politique,” embodying a delicate femininity and a commanding motherly role. Through her innovative use of femininity, she highlighted her position as an “outsider,” representing an alternative to traditional French political society. However a feminine outsider was apparently not what French society wanted in a presidential candidate. Sometimes her publicity of images went too far, confusing the public and raising questions about her motivations; “elle vend une image ou des idées?” (Ibid, 19). Despite her loss, she exposes that women can and should express their femininity as a part of their political identity; this is the only way to create a ‘feminine view’ through which, women can relate to their own political experiences.

Clinton also realized a make over was necessary in her early political years and has been continually recreating herself ever since. She never relied much on her

femininity and only created a softer image to appease constituents during Bill's campaign for governor of Arkansas. However, she too recognized the necessity of creating a pleasing and somewhat stereotypical image to gain voter support. Principally, Clinton demonstrates an image of power and stability, projecting the same steadfast and determined image. Despite her powerful image, she is often portrayed as a "smiling barracuda" ready to strike (Ducat 2004, 129). Due to her apparent lack of femininity, she was even rumored to be a lesbian, leading to her elusive sexuality becoming a defining issue of Bill's campaign. The gap in her support widened during her years as first lady and only rebounded after the Lewinsky trial when she was perceived as more feminine and supporting of her husband (Ibid, 134). Thus most of her criticism resulted from her "failure to be a properly subordinate female," not in her lack of viability as a candidate. This helps to explain why she quickly garnered success in her Senate campaign, despite the negativity surrounding her identity in the White House. Clinton and Royal expressed their femininity in different ways according to their personalities as well as the perceptions of the constituents they sought. Embodying a dominant, somewhat masculine image, Clinton tries to create an identity of viability and attractiveness to appeal to women as well as men. Royal is instead creating an image of soft yet deliberate femininity, bringing innovation to a stagnant political system.

Intrigued and incensed by the situation of women, as well as the affect of watching their fathers' abuse and domination of their mothers, Royal and Clinton became early supporters of the feminist movements. They were both drawn to liberal politics by women's rights issues and the desire to better society. However, each woman's image parallels their view of the feminist movement. Working through completely different

projections of femininity, they have both learned ways to use it; neither allowed gender to compromise their goals. Royal's view of femininity influenced her to actively promote policies protecting women and children; she also had a strong campaign against the exploitation of female nudity and vulnerability. Her desire to encompass and protect women contrasted with Clinton's more "do it yourself" attitude. Because Clinton entered politics at an age of resentment towards masculine false promises, she rejected the traditional femininity espoused by Royal. Her intense determination and individualism has made it difficult for her to relate to the majority of women who lack the resources to achieve such high political standards. Unlike Royal, Clinton has also criticized homemakers and women, who are content to raise children; she marginalized the solid female support she may need to win. These two women present an image at the extreme opposite ends of the spectrum. A combination of these two mindsets could create a more appealing female candidate giving the media less gender questions to scrutinize; however women seem to live a paradox rarely able to portray the exact desired image.

Campaign Strategies and Dynamics

Royal in her presidential campaign and Clinton in her Senate campaign both embarked on their infamous "listening tours." Reminiscent of each other in their innovation, these tours helped them to understand the desires of their constituents and gain popularity. Initially for Royal, this gave her the image of a crusader, letting the people create policies and modernizing the campaign process. Her separation from the antiquated party customs was appreciated by the public and she gained a diverse support base. However the public view was more skeptical of Clinton, regarding her as a "carpetbagger," attempting to represent a state she had no affiliations with. Her campaign

was associated with her desire for “self-aggrandizement” and her real motivations were continually questioned (Klein 2005, 165). Although the two campaigns worked to further their visibility and gain support, Royal’s showed a genuine desire to base her presidential platform on the people’s needs while Clinton’s goal was to enhance her image and power as a politician.

Through different initial approaches, they both struggled to fulfill the unique paradigm they set for themselves. Royal ultimately failed to create a unique and innovative program despite her year long tour, generating criticism against her. Her opponent represented a more stable image to the public as someone who was prepared to follow through with his policy ideas. Although she won, public opinion was incredibly skeptical of Clinton’s motives. Being a woman and an intriguing candidate, she was held to high standards that she did not always fulfill. She also had the good fortune of competing against a weak candidate who was inexperienced and awkward in national media (Troy, 2006, 210). Had she been running against a legitimate opponent, the negativity around her campaign may have caused a loss. However, ultimately, Clinton’s listening tour proved brilliant; the people felt satisfied that she had included their needs and she won the election. Royal, on the other hand, failed in her attempts to create a platform based on the citizens’ beliefs and consequently reverted back to traditional party policies. This failure negated her image as a revolutionary, unconforming leader and probably led to her defeat. As her campaign progressed, she became a more polarizing figure, unable to unite a female solidarity in voting. Clinton, however, was preferred by women, gaining an almost 30% gap as a result of their vote. Finding it difficult to

captivate the moods of her constituency, Royal gained negative attention weakening her electability while Clinton success advanced her political career.

Affects of the Nomination Process

After overcoming the obstacles that commonly inhibit women's access to politics, Royal and Clinton both had to deal with the selective process of party nomination. The first barriers are those presented by procedural requirements. The French political system, necessitates that the candidate work hard to reconcile factions and unite the party. However, Royal's whole presidential platform was based on a move away from the traditions of the party; she failed to create a united platform. The U.S. system focuses mainly on the candidates' ability to campaign and win as many primaries and caucuses as possible. Although the Democrat candidates are vying for party support, Clinton's main goal is set on winning the necessary number of delegates; therefore she plays more to the member voters than the party factions.

The primary election system in France is much less interactive. There are only two, sometimes one primary vote(s). As a result, Royal's viability was not continually checked through 'straw polls,' elections with nonbinding results. Royal was able to embark on her year long 'listening tour,' however, during this time she may have lost some structure of her campaign. Being kept in check by the constant primary cycle, Clinton was and is forced to intensify her campaign, continually reinventing her image if necessary. She is also closely competing with other equally viable, including her biggest opponent, Barak Obama. While PS candidates were campaigning separately there was not much competition generated to test the candidates' political abilities. This is one of the reasons why Royal, with her popularity momentum, was able to gain such a large

margin of support compared to her opponents. The nominee in the PS is chosen through a direct member voting system, while the Democrat Party selects their candidate through an indirect system. The delegate system, including the possibility of more super-delegate votes allows some wiggle room for candidates that is not permitted in the PS system.

Attached to the procedural requirements of becoming the candidate of the Parti Socialiste (PS) and the Democrat Party, there are similar theoretical requirements that a candidate must fit to become the nominee. The period leading up to the primary vote in France is when candidates must exhibit their popularity and viability compared to other candidates. In the U.S., this is taken care of through the primary cycle, which questions their viability and stamina in politics. Clinton's determined nature has allowed her to persevere despite her losses that have given Obama a less than 1% lead. The results of the primaries are published daily, acting as polls to create the 'horserace' effect for candidates. Although Obama is leading, the race is so close; each time she wins this effect gives her more momentum to win.

The media is involved in the nomination process; they publicize primary results and also submit their own polls to find public opinion. The Democrat Party also bases their views on the media's polling which show a candidate's, popularity, viability and fundraising, among others. During the first three months of her campaign, Clinton was leading the poll for fundraising; she raised more than \$20 million. Fundraising is not an issue in the French system because a regulated amount of government funds are allocated for this purpose. Polling is also a strategy frequently used by the French media. Royal and Clinton were incredibly visible in the media, a judge of their viability. Royal's previous political experience and her overall popularity with the media because of her

stylish, charismatic and interesting image made her a constant face. Clinton had been in the media for many years, but never for her own campaign. Royal's ability to win the PS nomination was based more on a lack of another option. Her opponents' popularity polls were lagging by 30% and no other candidates had emerged to challenge her success. As she began gaining support through media popularity and polling results, those in the party followed suit. Clinton on the other hand completely exposed herself and her opinions providing a straightforward approach that was also marginalizing to those who didn't agree. In her current campaign for the nomination it will be interesting to see which approach, if either, might work to further a female presidential candidate. Is it more beneficial for a female candidate to be elusive, trying to appeal to a larger and diverse constituency or to be outspoken and definitive with her opinions? Time will tell if either strategy is successful.

Affect of Media

Carrying reputations from previous political endeavors and that of their partners,' they were initially faced with preconceived views from both their parties and their constituencies. Clinton had already become a "brand name" by the time of her Senate campaign, bearing implications from previous years in the White House (Troy 2006, 205). Although Clinton did not create many policies to show from her senate years, the experience and recognition in political life was essential. She was also somewhat liberated from the limitations of the "traditional" first lady role, allowing people to recognize her as an independent woman. Royal had been a successful députée in her region but also had a lack of distinct strategies or accomplishments from her past. Her continual presence in national media as more of a fashion icon impeded her electability

among voters. Her style was closely followed and she was even photographed in her bathing suit on vacation exposing questions of her viability and seriousness as a candidate for the presidency. This materialistic approach barely critiqued her actual policies, leaving a vague agenda for voters and party members to evaluate.

My analysis of two newspapers from each country, one from the right and one from the left, illustrates similar trends of like-minded newspapers. The newspapers from the left, *Liberation* and the *New York Times* showed continually more supportive view of both Royal and Clinton respectively. They gave support to her policies and were more insightful in their analysis. Both liberal newspapers focused on the difficulty women are confronted with in politics. They illustrate how revolutionary these two women's potential presidential campaigns are; they are slowly helping to change the situation of women in politics. These two newspapers also support their determined personalities and use polling techniques to broadcast their success. The more conservative papers, *Le Figaro* and the *Wall Street Journal* were quick to criticize each woman. While *Le Figaro* gave an image of the fatigue of Royal's campaign, the *Wall Street Journal* attacked her political stamina after she became teary during the New Hampshire primary. *Le Figaro* exposed voters' opinions questioning her image and policies; they tried to give the impression that no one could understand her campaign. These two newspapers also used polls to show the popularity lead of their male opponents, Sarkozy and Obama. Although the left may have been more inclined to support these women who were also aligned with the left, the conservative papers were noticeably more critical, attempting to marginalize Royal and Clinton.

Through analysis of their campaigns and careers, Royal and Clinton exhibit many similarities that are consistent with women's experiences in politics. They are confronted with difficulties ranging from the barriers in the political and electoral systems to that of traditional stereotypes inherent in both societies. However, the biggest obstacle to both these women's success is the projection of their image and how it's portrayed in the media. Mass media "reinforces rather than challenges the dominant culture" thus playing an incredibly vital role in female candidates' image creation and success (Norris 1997, 1). The necessity of women to present a symbol of authority and viability as well as a femininity and thoughtfulness creates a continual paradox for women in politics. Women must support female candidates like Royal and Clinton, adding to the slow evolution of society's perception of women. Only as this view of gender changes along with the help of the media will women be able to enter politics on the scale that men do.

The fight for political equality is an evolutionary process, one that can only be won by a united female effort. The male domination since the inception of these two countries provides a redoubtable obstacle for the majority of women who do not have unlimited resources to compete. Women must overcome the systemic barriers in the political process by first realizing the reality that they are viable candidates. Together, women can motivate each other through their ambition to create their own female bastion in politics. As they become a stronger force, societal perceptions will change allowing easier access to higher positions. Although women still have much to accomplish, their extraordinary achievements since suffrage demonstrates that women can and will realize their political equality.

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