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**Rhetorical Media Framing
of Two First Lady Political Candidates across Cultures**

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Abstract

This study examines the rhetoric used to frame news coverage of two first lady candidates from Uganda and the United States in the final weeks of their first political campaigns for legislative office, while their spouses were still serving as president. It assesses news coverage in two distinct political cultures with different forms of democracy in [*The Daily Monitor*](#) and [*The New Vision*](#) of Uganda, as well as New York's [*Daily News*](#) and [*The New York Times*](#) of the United States. Results show that newspapers emphasized gender-specific rhetoric to frame Janet Museveni and Hillary Clinton during their campaigns. The U.S. newspapers covered Clinton's campaign speeches and platform on international peace initiatives and national security, yet the Ugandan press did not highlight Museveni's statements on the northern war and peace initiatives. These newspapers underscored their first lady familial duties, and framed them as emotionally weak and unfit to serve beyond political spousal roles.

Keywords: First ladies, gender equality, peace, security, legislative campaigns, rhetoric, news framing, mainstreaming, Uganda

Introduction

This study examines the press coverage of two first ladies in Uganda and the United States (U.S.) who ran for legislative office and the news framing rhetoric they faced in the two distinct political cultures. Janet Museveni, the Uganda first lady, first sought a seat as a Member of Parliament for Ruhama County in 2006. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the U.S. first lady, first sought a U.S. Senate seat from the state of New York in 2000 and in 2006. The two sitting first ladies campaigned on their personal merit and ran against male veteran politicians in their respective constituencies.

Previous studies from single-country cases (Verloo, 2007; Winfield & Friedman, 2003) in the Western industrialized world have found gender rhetorical attributes like fashion trend-setter, party-organizer, or White House decorator, in some of the news coverage of political spouses. The paradox is that political spouses become particularly prone to unfavorable press coverage and disparagement once they seek power, with such aggression “to ridicule and thereby ensure that nobody will take them seriously again” (Dixon, 1992, p. 218). No known study has looked at news framing of first lady political candidates in starkly different forms of democracy and cultural milieu. The study provides a starting point at determining how gender equality and political mainstreaming are framed in the press coverage of first lady candidates in two distinct political cultures.

This study resonates because Janet Museveni and Hillary Clinton ran for public office when they were still first ladies. Both first ladies played similar public roles early on to uplift the welfare of citizens, such as proposing health care plans in the 1990s and fighting for peace and security of children in third world countries. They also started a joint-project in Uganda in 1999 which helped more than 10,000 needy students with educational fees and scholastic supplies. The two also have ambitions for the

presidency. Hillary Clinton ran for the democratic presidential nomination in 2008 and Janet Museveni announced her intention to run when President Yoweri Museveni, her husband, decides not to run again. In early 2009, the two first lady lawmakers were nominated and confirmed for cabinet positions in their respective countries: U.S. President Barack Obama named Senator Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State in December 2008 while Uganda President Yoweri Museveni named Parliamentarian Janet Museveni as Minister of State for Karamoja around the same time.

The question of how four independent newspapers, *The Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision* of Uganda, as well as New York's *Daily News* and *The New York Times* of the United States, rhetorically frame the campaigns of prominent sitting first ladies in two culturally distinct nations is a worthy study. How did the newspapers frame the messages of sitting first ladies who campaigned for legislative office in two different types of democracies? What framing rhetoric did the newspapers use to characterize candidates Janet Museveni and Hillary Clinton who were opposing two male incumbents? How did the press present the two first lady candidates to the public in a transitional democracy in Uganda and a consolidated democracy in the United States? How did the press frame the candidates' campaign platform on matters pertaining to their leadership abilities to champion peace, security, and the resolution of conflicts?

A transitional democracy is a type of regime and state where regular elections are held and the democratic consolidation conditions are either minimally met or deliberately constrained through totalitarianism (Diamond, 1999; Lindberg, 2006). A consolidated democratic regime holds free and regularly contested elections whereby the government and elected leaders preserve peace and protect civil liberties, and no matter the extent of their majority, they abide by the rule of law (Diamond, 1999; Lindberg, 2006).

Background

The position of first lady is attained by very few women by virtue of being married to the president and is resplendent in privilege and prestige. Yet according to studies from consolidated democracies, a first lady arouses animosity when she dares to use political

authority because the position is an acceptable face of femininity (Dixon, 1992; Winfield, 1997a). Literature from the Western industrialized world shows that the press primarily frames coverage of a first lady within female stereotypical roles of a supportive-nurturing position or a *noblesse oblige* role (Winfield, 1997b). Consistent framing attributes include: an escort for her husband, a protocol leader, a fashion trend-setter, a possible policy advocate, and a supporter of charitable works (Anderson, 2002; Winfield & Friedman, 2003). News coverage is also negative when the first lady exerts political influence or seeks policy changes (Winfield & Friedman, 2003). These findings cited so far are uniquely Western case studies. No known research from Third World nations has contributed to this Western literature on whether the press in transitional democracies frames first lady candidates as political equals to their male opponents.

Women have made considerable gains in attaining positions of political leadership in the past century (Jackson-Laufer, 1999; Mokhtar, 1990). Yet, they still remain under-represented in parliaments and even fewer in the political decision making processes around the world (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Rubery, 2002). Decades of research have shown societal reactions to women who cross established boundaries to assume national positions in public service. Women usually evoke fierce public attacks when they expand their public image beyond society's conventional standards of proper wife or first lady behavior (Garlick et al., 1992; Gutin, 2003; Verloo, 2007).

Women in leadership positions

Throughout history and in the twenty-first century, women have effectively been at the helm of political and cultural leadership despite barriers and perceptions of incompetence. For Africa, Mokhtar's (1990) historical accounts point out that Queen Nefertari ruled Egypt from 1292–1225 B.C. while Queen Cleopatra led Egypt from 51 to 50 B.C. In fact, eight women ruled Egypt in the B.C. era alone. Elsewhere in Africa, Queen Nzingha became the cultural leader of Angola from 1582 to 1663. Later, four queens conquered and ruled Madagascar from 1821 to 1897 and more recently Empress Zaudita reigned in Ethiopia from 1916–1930 (Mokhtar, 1990).

In recent times, women leaders who had been married to famous politicians also made a mark in history. India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was the head of state from 1966 to 1977 and again in 1984 to 1990. In Nicaragua, Violeta Chamorro became the first woman to be elected president in the Western Hemisphere when she won the elections in 1990 (Jackson-Laufer, 1999). Mireya Moscoso took office September 1, 1999 as the first woman president in Panama. Janet Jagan took office as the first woman president of Guyana on December 19, 1997. Jagan also served as the first woman Prime Minister in March 1997, following her husband's death (Jackson-Laufer, 1999). In December 2007, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was inaugurated as Argentina's first female president.

Unlike most of the women leaders mentioned earlier who followed in their husbands' footsteps to springboard to the presidency, a few women leaders such as Michelle Bachelet won the presidency of Chile on her own merit. Other women who recently became their country's head of state on their own merit include Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose tenure covered 1979 to 1990 and Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir from 1969 to 1974 (Jackson-Laufer, 1999). In September 2005, Angela Merkel won the elections to become the first woman chancellor of Germany. Also, in November 2005, Liberians voted for Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first elected woman president in Africa. She joined 11 other women who currently serve as their countries' presidents or prime ministers, including Michelle Bachelet of Chile. Such political successes dispel the notion that in contemporary political cultures women are less qualified to be elected than their male counterparts (Vanguard, 2006).

First Lady candidates in Uganda and the United States

Drawing from other national experiences provides a wider range of alternatives and new insights about transnational challenges (Green & Luehrmann, 2003). Cross cultural studies provide unique learning prospects about the interaction of states within an international order as technology, immigration, peace building, mass communication, and culture foster deep global connections (Joseph et al., 2000).

One normative and unique theme to Ugandan politics is a campaign manifesto. A manifesto is a public declaration of political intention, principles and policy positions by an aspiring candidate. It is quite similar to a “platform,” on which candidates in the U.S. run on for public office. From 1996 to 2006, about 55 percent of the politicians elected in each cycle at the county, district, and parliamentary level were women (Ellis et al., 2006). This trend shows that Uganda is steadily overcoming the traditional patriarchal systems in Africa, which had for long disadvantaged women while strengthening the male political control in government. For instance, since President Yoweri Museveni took office in 1986, women have generally been elected to represent women constituents in parliament and in charge of gender or women affairs at the district level (Kharono, 2003). The ministerial cabinet posts which the Uganda women leaders have held in the last 20 years include the portfolio of Minister of Gender and Women’s Affairs; Minister of Labor; Social Affairs; Ethics; Education; Culture and Sports; Agriculture; and most recently, a Minister for Peace and Security, and a Minister of State for Defense. In 1994, Dr. Specioza Kazibwe became the first woman to be elected Vice President of Uganda and she served in that position until 2003.

Uganda has had eight presidents since it attained independence from the British in 1962, and the typical responsibilities for first ladies throughout this post-colonial period were of supportive-nurturing roles. Before Museveni became first lady, these political spouses never made political speeches or exerted any political influence to effect policy changes (Nuwagaba, 2001). Their typical roles were to bear children, decorate the State House, host children’s parties, and to represent the president at social gatherings like religious ceremonies, funerals, and at high school graduation events. In times of ethno-political conflicts, wars, and natural disasters, the early first ladies escorted their husbands or represented them to deliver first aid donations and to provide moral support to women and children who were victims of war or other disasters (Turshen, 2000).

In the United States for instance, the traditional U.S. first lady role includes responsibilities such as role modeling, fundraising, counseling families and communities, and getting involved in patronage requests from charitable organizations

such as foundations and other non-for-profit public institutions (Burrell, 1997). The U.S. first ladies have in the past acted as political symbols and hostesses to political fundraisings and functions that advance a partisan agenda or to bolster political coalition (Harris, 2005). The term “first lady” is neither constitutionally nor legally an official title in the United States. The U.S. first ladies also do not get salaries. However, the first ladies in both countries are provided with official offices and a substantial budget for aides, travel, and personal protection by the government. Many corporate organizations, foundations, and agencies in the public sector seek the U.S. and Ugandan first ladies’ endorsement and support for their charity causes and the first ladies have traditionally supported those types of causes.

Janet Museveni – Uganda

Janet Kataha Museveni ran for a parliamentary seat at the same time that her husband was also running for reelection for president in 2005/2006. She was born in 1949 in Ntungamo, western Uganda, where she was educated and met her future husband. Janet married army officer Yoweri Museveni in London, U.K. in 1973. When Museveni lost his first presidential bid in early 1982, Museveni moved their family to Gothenberg, Sweden to live in exile (Amaza, 1998). Throughout her husband’s five-year guerrilla rebellion in Uganda, she worked tirelessly to look after their three children while in exile. She concealed their identity in Sweden from then President Milton Obote’s spies and mercenary, when those military intelligence men were assigned to travel to Sweden to kidnap and persecute them (Amaza, 1998). The family stayed in Sweden from 1982 until the end of the war rebellion in Uganda in 1986, and then she returned home to join her husband. In mid-1986, she became first lady of Uganda after her husband’s guerrilla fighters overthrew the civilian government.

As first lady, Museveni immediately invited exiled friends to mobilize international assistance for thousands of destitute children orphaned by the war (Hunter, 1990). She then founded a private relief agency, the Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO) and became its patron in 1989. Never in the short history of Uganda had a political spouse sought for a mainstream political platform to address national concerns and social issues such as HIV/AIDS and other health concerns, children orphaned by

wars, and women's rural farming needs. She promoted universal education for all children and other humanitarian interests (Wallman, 1996). Museveni broke the traditionally expected supportive role as a State House hostess and a 'maama'.

In October 1998, Museveni received the Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger, which she shared with her husband in New York City. In 1999, Janet Museveni and Hillary Clinton created the Village Power 2000 - Uganda Youth Mission to offer inspiration, technical help and expert human services to thousands of students in upcountry schools. In May 2002, the International Coalition of AIDS organizations and two retired U.S. Senators, Dennis DeConcini and Steve Symms, honored Museveni in Washington D.C. for her tireless efforts against HIV/AIDS and orphaned children. In 2003, Museveni received the Global AIDS Leadership Award (Portillo, 2002).

As the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) waged a two-decade war against Museveni's government, they looted homes and abducted up to an estimated 80,000 children and youths in northern Uganda (Blattman, 2009). The instability and phantom distraction of communities in northern Uganda left many people internally displaced (IDPs) and were placed in the government's protection camps. From 2003 to late 2006, Museveni helped children whose homes had been attacked and destroyed during the protracted war. She worked with the United Nations' humanitarian agencies to steer a peaceful resolution of conflicts and to provide security to the IDPs (Branch, 2008). Before she ran for a public office, the Ugandan first lady also set up a women's leadership council called UWOPA to establish peace and security to ensure their full engagement in peace and the recovery efforts in northern Uganda. She declared her candidacy for the parliamentary seat of Ruhama constituency in 2005 and was overwhelmingly elected in February 2006. President Museveni, then appointed her the Minister of State for Karamoja in early 2009.

Hillary Rodham Clinton – United States

Hillary Rodham Clinton's candidacy came near the end of her tenure as first lady in 2000, the last year of her husband's second presidential term. During the second wave of American women's rights, she graduated from Yale Law School, taught and then

practiced law in Little Rock, while her husband was governor of Arkansas. Before becoming first lady in 1993, she took leadership roles on political issues concerning education and children. She was twice recognized as one of 100 most influential lawyers in the U.S. by the *National Law Journal* in 1988 and 1991 (Nelson, 1993).

After Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992, Hillary Clinton openly mentioned her role as one of the president's advisers and became known as a key policy maker. In 1993 she chaired an important but unsuccessful health care task force to change the country's fragmented existing health care system. She campaigned for women in top administrative posts and was the first U.S. first lady to actively serve as a global advocate for women (Beasley, 2005; Gutin, 2003).

Clinton's previous Arkansas business dealings became a White House scandal, culminating in the 1994 Whitewater land investigation and cattle futures trading, although she was never indicted (Brown, 1997; Gardetto, 1997; Winfield, 1997b). In 1998, she defended her husband during his impeachment proceedings involving his lying about sexual relations with White House intern, Monica Lewinsky. By openly supporting her husband, the public opinion response to her reaction went up to 67% favorable (Beasley, 2005), although many feminists were furious that she remained with the president. On one hand, she appeared to be a model as an inspiring professional woman, while on the other hand her critics like Rush Limbaugh called her a "Femi-Nazi," meaning that she was too powerful and dangerous.

As first lady, Clinton also demanded justice and accountability for war crimes in third world states. Just like former U.S. first lady Rosalynn Carter, Clinton promoted international human rights and peace efforts in Asia and South America in 1995 and 1997, in Africa in 1997 and 1998, and in the Middle East in 1998. For example, she spoke out against the treatment of Afghan women by the Taliban fundamentalists who controlled Afghanistan throughout the 1990s (Bernstein, 2008; Clinton, 2003). She was also the White House's torch-bearer in Northern Ireland, the Balkan states, and China for Vital Voices, a U.S.-sponsored initiative which promoted third world women's efforts to engage in peace-building and political processes. With Clinton's contribution, women

politicians in Northern Ireland supported the Good Friday peace agreement in 1998, which halted the nation's protracted civil war (Bernstein, 2008; Clinton, 2003).

As first lady, Clinton advocated health care, education, peace-building, children's security, and human rights. In 2000, she ran for U.S. senator from the state of New York and won. Soon after her 2000 senatorial victory, Clinton wrote of political power: "after eight years with a title but no portfolio, I was now a Senator-elect," (Clinton, 2003, p. 524). She was reelected in 2006. Senator Clinton also ran an unsuccessful bid for President of the United States in 2008 but she was named and later confirmed as Secretary of State in 2009 in President Barack Obama's administration.

Theory and concepts

Framing is used here to understand how news of first ladies who ran for political office was delivered by the newspapers. Framing is a function of choices and selection made by news reporters and editors, as they attempt to make sense of events and situations (Gamson, 1992). Some scholars have studied political mainstreaming frames and other feminizing attributes (Ferree & Gamson, 2003). Journalists include and exclude issues and highlight inherent biases or partiality in their coverage of issues and personalities (Ott & Aoki, 2002). As a result, the media highlights certain frames that reflect mainstream political viability and character of candidates (Kerbel et al., 2000).

For that matter, the way the news media influence public opinion is socially and culturally set by the rhetoric of political mainstreaming without withdrawing from the normative stereotypes (Lombardo, 2005; Mazey, 2000). For instance, literature about the Western press suggests that chauvinistic cultural norms and employment inequality impeded the eradication of gender power imbalances in U.S. political coverage in the 1980s and 1990s (Squires, 2005; Winfield, 2003). Frames are conceptualized here through the rhetoric attributed to the candidates as it relates to gender equality and political mainstreaming.

Gender equality in the present endeavor is concerned with the politics of representation and inclusion between women and men. It describes the power imbalances on gender,

impediments of inclusion in public life based on gender, and stereotyping of women based on customary women roles. It is also concerned with the politics of representation, between women and men, by valuing equally the differences and the diverse roles they each play in society (Sainsbury, 1996). Some studies have shown that the media demonize political spouses and other emerging women politicians despite their exemplary accomplishments in the public spotlight (Anderson, 2002; Saxenhouse, 1992; Winfield, 1997). Thus, news coverage is shaped by various societal customs that reinforce traditional women roles, despite the political ideologies, contributions, and influence of women in society.

Political mainstreaming encompasses the press's selection of political rhetoric that gives an edge to one candidate over the other owing to normative political experiences (Squires, 2005). Mainstreaming of gender can be looked at as a new form of gendered political ideology and displacement strategy in the political culture of a country. It addresses persistent and emerging disparities in the general policies imposed on society, which helps pave the way for the electorate to elect their leader based on competency and aptitude (Lombardo, 2005; Squires, 2005).

The traditional women roles include but are not limited to: stay-at-home motherhood and homemaking; prepare meals for the family and entertain guests; household cleaning and catering; and subordination to manhood on the basis of essential attribute (Mazey, 2000; Verloo, 2007; Walby, 1990). Other so-called traditional roles of the first ladies, which the press has used in the West to frame their character, are unviable, unnatural, incompetent, and weak; thereby impacting and discouraging women who might want to run (Falk, 2008).

Rhetorical framing analysis

The frames observed in the four newspapers are evaluated based on the rhetorical attributes of gender equality and political mainstreaming, which are constructed as messages that characterize and define political candidates (Wander, 1984). These are judgment metaphors made by journalists which are drawn around information that

delimits issues or the journalists' subjective depictions of the first ladies by focusing on selected elements (Ott & Aoki, 2002).

We analyze two metro and two national newspapers from Uganda and the U.S. A metro newspaper primarily caters to a targeted region or demographic area both in coverage and distribution. A national newspaper covers the entire country both in newsgathering and circulation. The Uganda metro/regional newspaper, *The Daily Monitor*, and *The New Vision*, a national newspaper, were assessed with two U.S. newspapers, New York's *Daily News*, a metro newspaper, and *The New York Times*, which is both a state and national newspaper. All four newspapers' articles were drawn from LexisNexis Newssearch database. We stress that both *The Daily Monitor* and *Daily News* might be similar in their editorial content since both are highly politicized tabloids.

All stories about the first ladies as candidates were drawn from the four newspapers within 120 days before the election. The intensity of political coverage is expected to be substantial within those last 90 to 120 days of the campaigns. The 92 articles about Janet Museveni were collected from the *Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision*, published from October 25, 2005 to February 23, 2006. The 129 articles about Hillary Clinton were collected from *Daily News* and *The New York Times*, published from July 9 to November 7, 2000.

The unit of analysis is a campaign story assessed using qualitative measures. The data included a total of 92 news briefs, hard news, editorials and feature stories about the candidacy of Janet Museveni in both the *Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision*, from December 7 to February 23, 2006. A total of 129 hard news, editorials, and features stories were published about the candidacy of Hillary Clinton in both the *Daily News* and *The New York Times*, from August 23 to November 7, 2000. We selected news articles, editorials, and feature stories of more than 300 words. Only 61 out of 129 stories met these criteria in the two U.S. newspapers whereas 54 out of 92 stories fit this requirement in the Ugandan newspapers. The stories about Clinton were arranged by chronological dates of publication; from the earlier to the last published article.

From that sample of 61 stories, ten news articles, five editorials and five feature stories were selected from each U.S. newspaper to give us a total of 40 stories from both newspapers. Also, the same criterion was used on stories about Museveni to retain ten news articles, five editorials and five feature stories from each Ugandan newspaper to give us a total of 40 stories about a candidate. Each of the four newspapers ultimately contributed an equal sample of twenty stories. A total of 80 stories were analyzed.

It should be underscored that there is no perfect interpretation of rhetorical spins from surrogate politicians who campaign for men candidates and challenge women candidates. Consequently, a researcher's reading, like a journalist's, is filtered through the lens of that person's own experiences and encounter, and the applied theory (Kellner, 2003). According to Gavrilos (2002), qualitative analysis calls for sequential and multiple reading of the texts to decode the message frames. Three general readings of all the newspaper articles were done by the authors to gain an understanding of the issues and the context, while making descriptive notes about the content of the articles. The second and third round of analysis involved critical exploration to gain a deeper understanding of the rhetoric conveyed in the framing of the first ladies to discern their cultural meanings, implications, and stance on the campaign trail. At each stage of analysis, independent notes of the framing rhetoric were assessed, adjudicated by one additional reader, to establish mutual consistency in the analysis.

As examples, gender equality frames were those attributes that reoriented structural inequalities into the coverage of the first ladies such as a mental toughness or physical inability to perform certain duties presumed to be traditionally exclusive to male political candidates. Emphasis on the candidates' spousal role instead of their campaign policy issues was interpreted as gender equality attribute. Others were disparaging frames which suggested that candidates were unfit, unviable or weak to lead because of being women political spouses. Also interpreted as a gender equality attribute was the frequent use of sources that sowed seeds of mistrust and skepticism about the leadership potential of the first ladies because they simply are women. Other frames

were stay-at-home mom, White/State House hostess, caterer, spousal escort, and any portrayal of subordinate to the other political candidate on the basis of gender.

Examples of political mainstreaming included policy agendas proposed by all candidates and the actions they take on the campaign trail in either broad or explicit terms without challenging the candidate on the basis of being a woman. Also, inclusiveness and deliberation of political ideologies are attributes of political mainstreaming. Other attributes were the news reports of the candidates' political skills and organizational effectiveness or lack therefore without diffusing feminizing stereotypes.

Janet Museveni's parliamentary candidacy

Overall, gender power imbalances were prominently featured in the coverage of Janet Museveni's candidacy in both *The New Vision* and the *Daily Monitor*. With political mainstreaming, coverage did not include a larger proportion of stories about Museveni's campaign policies, unlike what is usually seen for Ugandan male candidates. Her political manifesto she used in the campaigns had clearly outlined that if elected, Museveni would use her lobbying skills in parliament to push government to create jobs for Ruhama women and work hard to build peace and security in the Southwestern region. She also pledged in her political manifesto and throughout the campaign to set up clinics and schools for underprivileged students, and to generate agricultural schemes in the constituency. Yet, newspapers did not provide those noteworthy plans and policy initiatives Janet Museveni had campaigned on. The two Ugandan newspapers also did not provide context and the background of her previous achievements in contrast with those viewpoints and background of her incumbent male opponent, Augustine Ruzindana.

Gender equality attributes were in 23 of the 40 articles in both newspapers, which portrayed Museveni as a political spouse who had lost her dignity and status as first lady by running for a parliamentary seat. The *Daily Monitor* (2006, January 30) wrote:

Janet has never been elected to even a village committee. How can she deliver in the august House? The husband is on top and wants the wife at the bottom. They want to rule us up and down; it's a family affair. (p. 4)

In addition, *The New Vision* did not portray Museveni's candidacy as legitimate, primarily because her husband was still president and was also running for another presidential term. Both newspapers framed Museveni's parliamentary candidacy with skepticism and pointing out the lack of experience that she would not be a better legislature to "fight on the House floor for her constituency" given her stature as a first lady. Museveni spent a considerable amount of time and effort on the campaign trail touting her previous achievements in pushing policy agendas on health care, early childhood education, peace building, and women's rights in the State House. Yet, *The New Vision* newspaper had one news article of less than 150 words which covered her campaign speech on women's rights. The *Daily Monitor* newspaper did not have a single article that covered her speeches on peace initiatives, security, or health care program.

Notwithstanding the lack of gender mainstreaming, the rhetoric in framing her candidacy emphasized the so-called traditional roles of a supporting, nurturing, and fashionable female. In a few instances when the Ugandan newspapers appeared to support Museveni's candidacy, both newspapers still resuscitated traditional gender roles and attributes using disparaging frames. For example, *The New Vision* (2006, February 16) wrote:

Janet Museveni has excelled as a mother, a grandmother, an entrepreneur and a First Lady. She could have chosen to merely accompany her husband to state functions like the previous First Ladies. Her decision to join politics should be applauded by Ugandans especially the people of Ruhama. (p. 11)

Museveni's candidacy for a parliamentary seat came secondary to her first lady role in newspaper coverage. Apart from a few exceptions, 19 stories out of 40 reported that the

candidate's platform was not well articulated to separate policy positions from personal beliefs, cultural morals, and faith. Museveni was constantly framed as a born-again Christian whose sole mission to parliament would be to "represent God." This came after her one-time declaration that she derived her conviction to join politics from God to save the people of Ruhama. "God has sent me to do this and I must obey," she was widely quoted, and both Ugandan newspapers repeated that statement made on December 2, 2005, over and over again until Election Day. Her multi-tasking roles were also emphasized in 11 stories: "Mrs. Museveni says that though in active politics, she would still find time to play her role as first lady. She maintains that seeking the Ruhama seat and being the wife of the President do not conflict," said a *New Vision* reporter (2006, February 27).

The rhetoric of her fashionable female capacity also became a main frame in the newspapers about her candidacy. The *Daily Monitor* (2005, December 13) emphasized her appearance:

With her arresting profile, bright white teeth and jet-black hair, [she] came across as an engaging First Lady throughout the 1990s. In an era when women did their hair in perms and wet-looks, she went African, keeping hers natural, combed low at the back and rising to a sharp point over the forehead. The style caught on, becoming the chosen style of the Ugandan power woman - the Janet cut, usually allied with a broad beaded necklace. It became the mark of emancipated women strong enough not to 'improve' their looks. (p. 2)

In all 40 articles, the rhetoric on Museveni's fashion styles was found in 19 different stories. Yet this "fashion and style" frame was ignored about her male political opponent. Rather, her political challenger's scathing attacks centered on gender equality attributes, which became the embodiment of news coverage regarding her candidacy. For instance, both newspapers reported Ruzindana's political attacks that Museveni was unelectable because she is a first lady (nine articles), weak (six stories), and "a first lady fronted by her hubby," (14 stories). "It helps to have a renowned

husband, more so a president in the forthcoming elections,” were some of the portrayals of her candidacy.

When former Democratic Party president general,ⁱ Paul Ssemogerere from the opposition side, advised Museveni to abandon her political ambitions and look after her family, articles in both *The New Vision* and the *Daily Monitor* emphasized his advice for over two weeks. Ssemogerere said, “I advise her to go and cook food for her husband and look after the children,” (*The New Vision*, 24 January, 2006). Such conflict over her first lady roles and her parliamentary candidacy continued in the *Daily Monitor* (2005, December 6) rhetoric.

Likewise, for NRM politicians in Ruhama, Janet's bid puts them in a fix. You can't denounce her, given that like Miria she too has little critical public affairs experience, because how then do you face her husband, who is your party president? It is political suicide. So, again, the NRM nomination for Janet has been fixed by the fact of her being First Lady. (p. 7)

Ironically, in some stories where her campaign issues appeared, the newspapers mostly emphasized Museveni's proposed policies on gender equality. These issues appeared 13 times in the *Daily Monitor* and 11 times in *The New Vision*. The *Daily Monitor* consistently reported controversial sound bites from Museveni's political statements on AIDS, rather than the other advocacy frames. The *Daily Monitor* (2006, January 16) reported that she wanted a national census to discover how many young people were still virgins. It quoted her as saying that condom promoters were racist because they believe “Africans cannot control their sexual desires.”

One *Daily Monitor* columnist suggested that the president should have sent his wife to Parliament through one of the mandated women seats instead of subjecting her to the current political campaign thunderstorm. Three different *Daily Monitor* editorials consciously advised Museveni to seek “a women seat” rather than contest the general constituency vote where she had to face men.

Despite her political passion to promote health care for all, a free universal education, antenatal care, economic empowerment of women farmers and peace building initiatives, Museveni was not totally framed as a viable candidate. Instead, the press framed her as a political spouse with the State House clout who used the taxpayers' money to win an election. When the Ugandan press attempted to portray her positively, it dwelled on her looks (11 articles), hair (three), fashion style (four), religious inclination (13), nurturing role (six), and her controversial remarks about sexuality (nine).

Hillary Clinton's senatorial candidacy

Gender mainstreaming was salient in 29 out of 40 stories about Hillary Clinton's senatorial candidacy in 2000. Among issues covered by the two U.S. newspapers were the persistent and emerging disparities in the general policies and concerns of New Yorkers. *The New York Times* reported about the great support by New York voters for Clinton: "The people of New York can count on her to constantly fight against discrimination, to fight for principles, to be for the right thing" (2000, September 16). *The New York Times* and the *Daily News* also directly quoted Clinton as she presented her political agenda to voters, something not seen in the Ugandan stories about Museveni. In line with the political mainstreaming, this is how *Daily News* (2000, October 18) quoted Clinton:

Whether we are ready or not, we are the leader—militarily, politically, and culturally—in the world today. We will not have strong markets to invest in or democratic allies to depend on, if children are unschooled, if ethnic cleansing is ripping apart communities, if women are being silenced and brutalized, as they are in Afghanistan. (p. 32)

Clinton's policy agenda on national security and world peace were prominently covered by both newspapers throughout her Senatorial campaign. Unlike coverage of the Ugandan first lady, the U.S. newspapers routinely showed political mainstreaming by integrating Clinton's political agenda in their stories. For instance, she was the favored candidate who would do more to protect natural resources. The Sierra Club endorsement was cited saying that she "showed an unequaled depth of knowledge on a

plethora of state and national issues” (*The New York Times*, 2000, September 6, Sec. B, p. 6).

With such coverage, the newspapers portrayed inclusiveness and the legitimacy of Clinton as a viable New York Senate candidate in 27 out of 40 stories. Political mainstreaming played out in what the *Daily News* (2000, November 7) wrote on Election Day about her overall political agenda.

In electing first lady Hillary Clinton their senator, New Yorkers have not only made history, they have chosen a leader who is committed to fiscal discipline and social progress and determined to fight for the state's fair share from Washington. She has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that she is no mere carpetbagger, a fact that seemed to escape Lazio. (p. 17)

Gender power imbalances also featured in the coverage of Clinton in *The New York Times* (13 articles) and *Daily News* (12 articles). *The New York Times* wrote that women candidates usually have to prove they are tough enough to face male candidates but “Hillary Clinton is in the odd position of having to prove she's tender enough,” (2000, September 20, Sec. A, p. 27). *The New York Times* also stated in the editorial that with this race “never has American politics been so fraught with gender gyrations.”

Hillary Clinton’s marital issues dominated the rhetoric as gender equality became central (13 out of 40 articles) in “Lazio versus a first lady.” In a *New York Times*’ article, “Staying Married and Paying a Price” the paper wrote that “the questioning of Mrs. Clinton for staying with Bill Clinton comes from people of all political persuasions, but it is especially odd coming from the right, where the conventional rhetoric so often touts the sanctity of marriage.” (2000, October, 12, Sec. A, p. 29). The *Daily News* (2000, October 20) argued:

Much about Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton's marriage remains a mystery, but they have indisputably raised a fine daughter - by all accounts down to earth and spectacularly normal, but equipped with an extraordinary inner

strength to endure when her family's private matters came under the harshest of public spotlights. (p. 4)

Clinton also had to fend for herself from electorate mistrust and skepticism pertaining to media disparagement (13 articles). *The New York Times'* editorial wrote that a lot of voters initially were really working out their feelings about Clinton in terms of her spouse, the president, and their relationship; but in the end, they just voted for a U.S. senator. This type of coverage negated the gender equality assumptions. The papers even predicted that Clinton had ambitions to run for the White House and both papers even made a case in their editorials that she would make a strong presidential candidate in the future. In "Lonely Passion of Hillary," *The New York Times* (2000, October 1, Sec. 4) wrote:

Conservatives see the Clintons on a steely march back to the White House with Hillary as president and Bill as consigliere. But up close it looks more poignant than Patton. Once again, the Clintons' private lives are enmeshed with their public ambitions in ways that are exhausting and ultimately sad. The more closely they work together on her campaign, the more alone they both seem. (p. 15)

Similar to the Ugandan newspapers, these two U.S. newspapers also portrayed Clinton as a political spouse whose husband empowered her candidacy (nine articles) and her first lady position. The newspapers often framed her as a carpetbagger (five articles); a stereotypical rhetoric touted by her opponent, Congressman Rick Lazio. *The Daily News* wrote that with the help of her husband, Clinton had proven to be a fund-raising powerhouse while *The New York Times* (2000, September 17, Sec. 4) talked about Bill Clinton's assistance:

Even as Mrs. Clinton talks in the debate about "the very painful time" her husband put her through, she relies more on his political advice and fund-raising cachet, adopting more of his machinations. She has set up her

own war room and gobbled up soft money. She has been treating donors to state dinners and nights in the Lincoln bedroom. (p. 19)

To visibly show the differences or similarities of this press coverage, Table 1 provides a comparison of frequencies to illustrate how the four newspapers framed the campaigns for the two first lady political candidates in distinct political cultures.

Table 1 – Rhetorical media frames featuring the two First Ladies’ campaigns

UGANDA – Janet Museveni Frames in NV and DM <i>From Oct 25, 2005 to Feb 23, 2006</i>	Freq.	USA – Hillary Clinton Frames in NYT and DN <i>From July 9 to November 7, 2000</i>	Freq.
Committed to international peace	0	Committed to international peace	5
Unviable candidate to legislate	9	Unviable candidate to legislate	2
Fronted by husband/name recognition	14	Fronted by husband/name recognition	9
Unelectable first lady (cannot lead)	9	Unelectable first lady (cannot lead)	2
Supporting and nurturing role	6	Supporting and nurturing role	7
Multitasking (Politics/first lady roles)	11	Multitasking (Politics/first lady roles)	7
Manifesto not articulated	19	Platform not articulated	1
Fashion and stylish hair (good looks)	19	Fashion and stylish hair (good looks)	5
*Weak and lacks experience	11	*Carpetbagger	5
*Gender equality attributes	23	*Political mainstreaming attributes	29
*Obsessed with promiscuity, virginity	9	*Skepticism / mistrust of candidate	13
*Fights for women’s rights	8	*Wronged wife (by her husband)	9

*Sent by God to participate in politics	13	*Must prove she is tender	15
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Notes:

- Table 1 shows the number of stories that carried a rhetorical frame about a candidate.
- A story may have more than one rhetorical frame.
- The asterisk * refers to frames which exclusively featured one candidate.
- Acronym ‘NV’ is a short form for *The New Vision*; ‘DM’ is for *The Daily Monitor*.
- Acronym ‘NYT’ is a short form for *The New York Times*; ‘DN’ is for the *Daily News*.
- Acronym Freq. is a short form for frequencies. It indicates the total number of stories.

This analysis shows that Clinton’s 2000 campaign for senator was primarily framed based on political mainstreaming and minimally invoking her first lady role. Her policy agenda and the White House influence were all factors which contributed to the rhetoric used by the two newspapers to frame her 2000 candidacy for U.S. Senator.

Discussion

This study illuminated the rhetoric used by the press to frame the first ladies’ candidacies for legislative office in the two unique political cultures with different journalistic and gender equality standards. Press coverage of Hillary Clinton and Janet Museveni in the four newspapers from two culturally distinct nations was different, both in journalistic standards and in the way gender attributes were used to frame their political campaigns. The coverage emphasized gender-specific rhetoric underscoring the two first ladies’ familial relationships. Clinton was framed as a viable candidate who was committed to legislate and establish international peace, food security in third world countries, and to bring an end the global nuclear proliferation. On the other hand, Museveni was not framed as a viable candidate despite her political passion to promote the economic empowerment of women, children’s’ welfare, and peace building initiatives for the total pacification of Uganda from ethno-political conflicts and wars.

The assessment offered an understanding of how the four newspapers in both countries framed political spouses as unviable candidates but at varying degrees of disparagement. In Uganda in particular, they reinforced a regressive public perception

that Museveni was emotionally weak and unfit to serve outside accepted societal roles. Furthermore, by patriarchal proxy, the press rhetorically framed both Museveni in Uganda and Clinton in the United States as if the first ladies would never have run for political office without the name recognition.

In the Ugandan press, however, coverage highlighted other feminizing frames that had nothing to do with the candidate's merit as a viable political candidate. The frames identified in the analysis indicate that all four newspapers from Uganda and the United States treated their political candidacies as mere affinity to plausible politicians because of their husbands. The political culture in Uganda as a transitioning democracy could have played a major role in the way *The New Vision* and the *Daily Monitor* covered Museveni's candidacy on matters pertaining to gender and the women's role in politics.

In the Ugandan campaigns, the two newspapers framed Museveni as unqualified to lead, illegitimate, and politically less competent than her male contender. Although Museveni sought the parliamentary seat under universal suffrage, the newspapers framed her candidacy with an emphasis on her femininity in some stories, subordinating her with traditional patriarchal mind-set. Stories about Museveni were framed with contradictory messages portraying her as a political spouse with no political agenda although she presented her political manifesto in speeches on every campaign event. No efforts were made by *The Monitor* newspaper in particular, to show Museveni as a serious political candidate with a policy agenda.

Meanwhile, Clinton championed human equality, build peace and global food and health security in her 'internationalist' political platform, which the U.S. newspapers coverage frequently and almost equally to her male opponent. She also called for resources and pledged to push for foreign policy agenda against discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnicity around the world. The U.S. newspapers, *The Daily News* and *The New York Times*, did not enforce or pointedly emphasize the equality issue as her main campaign platform. However, Clinton had to fend for herself from mistrust and skepticism just like Museveni did about her leadership viability and other feminizing media disparagement.

In all four newspapers, the first ladies were framed within their feminizing roles of a supportive-nurturing political spouse. Clinton was not framed as an escort for her husband or as a fashion trend-setter as was Museveni; but rather framed as a recently wronged wife. Clinton's independence and emphasis on more than her appearance may have become a tired story. The findings in two democratically different political cultures support some of what Winfield (2003) and Anderson (2002) advanced in their studies on the U.S. media coverage of U.S. first ladies on campaigns.

Coverage of Museveni by virtue of her first lady status supports that argument that women politicians who jump-started their careers from political spouses to an elected position normally face a biased press in Uganda with fierce gender-based disparaging stereotypes. The two Ugandan newspapers prominently featured Museveni in her nurturing roles as first lady and her State House charitable activities, which overshadowed her political manifesto. Her peace-building efforts to assist women and children who had been devastated by the war in northern Uganda were not highlighted in both newspapers during the campaign.

Our analysis of political mainstreaming in Uganda and the United States underscores an issue that has largely not been emphasized in the previous media framing research. The two newspapers in Uganda do not look at gender equality in terms of representation in leadership positions, but yet they reinforce hegemonic cultural discourses which highlight spousal first lady roles. The implications are that political mainstreaming is undermined in Uganda's journalistic standards because of the lack of focus on salient issues of her candidacy instead of the disparaging frames. The newspapers emphasized family issues even when the candidate prominently discussed the economy, free universal education, and peace, and national security. They provided an outlet to existing stereotypical gendering of the candidates and feminizing rhetoric, instead of mediating the candidates' political discourse by framing their campaign issues.

What earlier studies did not find in single-country cases is that despite a lack of coverage portraying political mainstreaming in transitional democracies such as

Uganda, women still get elected in larger numbers than in a consolidated democracy where political ideologies for both candidates are fairly reported. When Clinton won the Senate seat in 2000, women occupied only 13% of the U.S. Senate and only 17% joined the U.S. Senate in 2006. In Uganda, 39% entered Parliament in 2006 with Museveni and more than 50% were elected to district commissions. Where political mainstreaming is weak, women politicians can wield political influence and attain seats in both the executive and legislative arms of the state through a constitutional gender equality entitlement. This puts the transitional and consolidated democracies at a comparatively equal leverage in terms of women's political participation and contestation.

Whereas Uganda is governed under an authoritarian regime and is a transitional democracy, and the U.S. is a consolidated democracy, women have been incorporated in the mainstream political life in both of these cases. This analysis shows that Uganda still has work to do to consolidate its democratic process. Consolidation of democracy is considered complete when the legislature, the executive, and the judicial branches, as well as civil society are deeply internalized in social and institutional life; protected by the democratic regime even in the midst of political and economic turmoil (Dahl, 1989).

Conclusion

Examining the political campaigns of two first ladies in Uganda and the United States makes a meaningful contribution to the literature as it adds to our understanding of the challenges women encounter to serve their countries beyond the spousal support.

One of the implications is that although Uganda is still democratically unstable and the United States enjoys democratic consolidation, the four newspapers framed both first lady candidates as breakers of the conventional feminine spousal roles. They both faced disparagement for crossing their established norms. The disparaging rhetorical frames were not as prominent in the two U.S. newspapers as they were in the two Ugandan newspapers.

The rhetoric in the Ugandan press was broadly patriarchal as both Ugandan newspapers presented the conventional standards of proper wife behavior. At the same time, the news stories portrayed Janet Museveni as a spiritual, religious first lady, and an asset to her husband's public image. The U.S. newspapers covered Hillary Clinton's speeches and platform on international peace initiatives and national security, yet the Ugandan press did not highlight Museveni's campaign statements on those issues. Despite her political passion to end ethno-political conflicts and wars, Museveni was framed as a weak candidate, whereas Clinton was framed as a viable candidate who could one day run for president.

It is important to note that since gender equality is still a legal political entitlement in Uganda, and political representation is more conducive and accommodative of women politicians. As a result, Uganda has more women at the helm of legislative representation than the U.S. This puts Uganda somehow on the same political footing as the United States in terms of political gendering and representation. Nevertheless, the journalistic standards in Uganda are lacking on what makes an important story that would help voters make informed decisions when electing their representatives. Additionally, the analysis shows that the treatment of the first lady political candidate in the news remains more disparaging in Uganda than was evident in the U.S. press.

Future studies should examine whether Clinton's candidacy in the 2008 U.S. presidential race was framed with similar rhetoric in these and other news media. Future research should also examine whether the media take women politicians seriously as they ascent to top political leadership including the presidency, in countries which are fighting domestic and international wars. This noteworthy inquiry was beyond the scope of our study. From this analysis, it is hardly conceivable how unknown and capable women can be taken seriously as viable candidates in such imbalanced coverage. It is also implausible how the public can make rationale decisions about the candidates' leadership skills to govern in times of war and other crises, when women are misrepresented in the news in such political culture. This analysis does not fault newspapers, but concludes that they contributed to spreading this rhetoric that undercuts the first ladies' candidacies as capable state leaders. This norm may be

slowly changing, but it yet has to be challenged in newspapers and other media with vigilance.

Note

¹ The Democratic Party is one of the main political parties in Uganda. The current president of the party, Ssebaana Kizito was in the same period contesting for the president against the incumbent, Yoweri Museveni (Janet's husband) who has ruled Uganda for the last 20 years.

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Media gender stereotyping of women who seek political office is as old as political institutions themselves. Journalistic media tend to portray women who find their way into politics as incapable of cultivating their own credibility and reputation. For example, when 120 women were elected to the British parliament in 1997, front-page headlines labeled them as "Blair Babes" when Blair was pictured in their midst (Rose & Sreberny, 2000).¹⁶ The way a first lady is framed as being politically active or non-politically active will play a role in other aspects of media coverage such as valence of stories and degree of stereotyping in images (p55). Rhetorical Media Framing of Two First Lady Political Candidates across Cultures. Yusuf Kalyango, Jr. Institute for International Journalism E.W. Scripps School of Journalism Scripps College of Communication.

Abstract This study examines the rhetoric used to frame news coverage of two first lady candidates from Uganda and the United States in the final weeks of their first political campaigns for legislative office, while their spouses were still serving as president. It assesses news coverage in two distinct political cultures with different forms of democracy in *The Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision* of Uganda, as well as *New York's Daily News* and *The New York Times* of the United States.