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# Hillary Clinton and the Media: From Expected Roles to the Critique of Feminism

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## Hillary Clinton and the Media: From Expected Roles to the Critique of Feminism

### Abstract

In this paper, we analysed Hillary Clinton's relationship with the media starting from her first appointment at a US First Lady to her being the Democratic nominee for the US presidential elections in 2016. Thus, we analysed academic literature demonstrating Clinton's problems with the media bias, and then added our own discourse analysis of articles on Clinton and feminism in two main national newspapers that have consistently demonstrated the power of setting the agenda and forming public opinion in the U.S. – The Washington Post and The New York Times. Discourse analysis has been used to analyse 20 selected articles that discussed Clinton's feminist views in a period from September 2015 until September 2016, which was also a campaign period for 2016 U.S. elections. The findings add to the current research on the topic and show that the media undermined liberal feminism and its goals to undermine Hillary Clinton, whereas in the past Hillary was a subject of media criticism because of her refusal to fit into expected roles and be a supportive wife only. The discourse of criticism of Hillary Clinton has changed over time but every time with the same results, undermining the image and career advancement.

### Keywords

Hillary Clinton, Expected Roles, U.S. Elections, Feminism, Discourse Analysis

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## Hillary Clinton and the Media: From Expected Roles to the Critique of Feminism

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*In this paper, we analysed Hillary Clinton's relationship with the media starting from her first appointment at a US First Lady to her being the Democratic nominee for the US presidential elections in 2016. Thus, we analysed academic literature demonstrating Clinton's problems with the media bias, and then added our own discourse analysis of articles on Clinton and feminism in two main national newspapers that have consistently demonstrated the power of setting the agenda and forming public opinion in the U.S. – The Washington Post and The New York Times. Discourse analysis has been used to analyse 20 selected articles that discussed Clinton's feminist views in a period from September 2015 until September 2016, which was also a campaign period for 2016 U.S. elections. The findings add to the current research on the topic and show that the media undermined liberal feminism and its goals to undermine Hillary Clinton, whereas in the past Hillary was a subject of media criticism because of her refusal to fit into expected roles and be a supportive wife only. The discourse of criticism of Hillary Clinton has changed over time but every time with the same results, undermining the image and career advancement. Keywords: Hillary Clinton, Expected Roles, U.S. Elections, Feminism, Discourse Analysis*

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### Introduction

The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, and have feelings about. (Shaw & Martin, 1992, p. 919)

The quotation above is nothing new for Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Senator and Presidential candidate for the Democratic Party in the last U.S. presidential elections. Hillary Clinton has been the subject of the enormous media interest for decades. Criticism and ridicule of Rodham Clinton dates back to when her husband, Bill Clinton, ran for the office in 1992 and when she was subject of media criticism as a First Lady who refused to be a supporting wife only, and has made a choice to keep active in her career instead. Nevertheless, she was a leader of the Health Care Reform and this instigated criticism of the media (Burden & Mughan, 1999). This happened because, “first ladies were to be seen at social galas and by their husbands’ sides, not heard in policy debates” (Troy, 1997, p. 7), and scholars argued that, “the public nature of Hillary’s activities makes her a focal point for thinking and talking about gender norms” (Burden & Mughan, 1999, p. 240). More than 20 years later, not much has changed as Hillary Clinton is still scrutinised by the media.

However, while in the past Hillary has been criticised by the media for refusal to fit into expected role of a supportive wife only, newer research has supported that Hillary Clinton and her political career have been discussed within feminism debate (Sisco & Lucas, 2015). This has happened when she ran for Democratic nomination against Barack Obama, and recently when she was a Democratic nominee for the U.S. presidential elections in 2016.

During those two campaigns, Hillary Clinton has been portrayed as a second wave feminist seeking equality in appointments to political positions, which was then negatively framed by the media as opposed to the so-called new feminism that places more emphasis on choice and social justice, as well as pro-choice feminism (Sisco & Lucas, 2015). The feminism that advocates justice as portrayed by the media actually goes in line with radical feminism that focuses predominantly on social divisions among women rather than on quests for women's inclusion in politics (Segal, 2010). It therefore seems as if the media are applying a mixture of pro-choice feminism and social feminism to undermine liberal, second wave feminism that was looking, among other issues, to achieve equality of women with men in their efforts towards gaining political appointments.

In this paper we, therefore, discuss Hillary Clinton's relations with the media using her latest presidential campaign as a case study for the research. We focus on analysing how feminism has been used to represent Clinton and her campaign in two major press outlets, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Drawing from the literature review discussing her position as a US First Lady and other political efforts preceding the last presidential elections, we are arguing that the US media systematically undermine female politicians by using variety of discourses.

The idea for the paper derived from Martina's long interest in Hillary Clinton that started in 2006 during her studies at the University of Amsterdam where she has first encountered feminist media work with case studies of Hillary Clinton as a First Lady and the media treatment of her work. After joining academia in 2007, Martina analysed how Barack Obama won nomination of the Democratic Party when he was running for the office for the first time (Topić, 2009). Naturally, when Hillary announced she will be competing for the nomination again, this triggered Martina's interest and she has carefully followed the campaign to see whether a central goal of liberal feminism will finally be completed with Americans electing women to the Office.

Etajha was an American graduate student (with Martina as her supervisor) who expressed interest in writing MA dissertation on women in the media and PR. Martina then suggested Hillary Clinton as a case study. Etajha conducted an analysis of Clinton's press releases and their representation in the media. As that research has not provided fruitful results due to Hillary Clinton's team not always inserting dates to press releases, this hindered source analysis of the dissertation. Since there was a plan to publish Etajha's research following her degree completion, Martina used some parts of her dissertation literature review, and has conducted a new discourse analysis of articles which is presented later in this paper.

Our intended audience are feminists who are already familiar with debates surrounding Clinton's media representation, and who can then use this paper as an addition to other body of knowledge on the matter. Secondly, our intended audience are those who do not know much about problems women still face when trying to obtain high position in politics or business, and who think that feminism has lost its purpose. This paper intends to convince them otherwise, for it provides an overview of problems women face when they join politics, and then an overview of Clinton's media representation following with a new analysis that shows the discourse changed with time but undermining of Clinton and her political endeavours remained.

## **Women in Politics and the Media**

There is a wealth of research on women in politics, and all available research points towards direction that media treat women in politics differently than men (Van Zoonen, 2001), and they face scrutiny unseen with male politicians. Van Zoonen (2001) found that female politicians have only limited options in politics. In other words, "they need to mask their

femininity and imitate men, otherwise accusations of being frivolous, coquettish and loose will be their lot. The only feminine model of celebrity available to women in politics would be that of the mother, tying myths of femininity as nurturing and caring” (p. 291).

When it comes to the media, women are either receiving little coverage on the positive things they do or negative coverage on their misgivings. Kahn’s study (1996, p. 132) indicated that, “women have a harder time controlling the media’s agenda, than do their male counterparts. Women candidates receive less issue coverage and more negative comments on their viability”. Another study supported Kahn’s statements: female candidates received more negative coverage than their male opponents (Rausch et al., 1999) and less coverage in open races (Smith, 1997). Vavrus (1998) thus argued that, “the media treats women candidates in a classist, biologically essentialized manner” (p. 79).

Recently, it seems that feminism is also being used to portray women in an unfavourable way, since research shows that feminism does not have positive coverage in the media (Ashley & Olson, 1998; Sisco & Lucas, 2015). This is due to the fact feminism recently seems to be seen as negative, and many commentators argue that the movement has fulfilled its purpose and is no longer needed. In addition, the mainstream media sometimes “oversimplified feminism by linking it to the non-traditional candidates in the race” (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 493), and the media tend to present feminism as a set of factions that are in confrontation with each other, also because of generational differences (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 493). As our analysis will also show, these generational differences are particularly pertinent to Hillary Clinton and her latest presidential effort since media portrayed her as a representative of an old feminism that does not appeal to younger women anymore, and in some instances stated that Clinton is not a feminist simply for not advocating a certain type of feminism as proposed by the media.

Journalists tend to focus on a few feminist leaders in their news coverage and these leaders are then framed as unauthentic representatives of interests of women (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 494). In addition, some authors argued that feminism was predominantly framed within the doctrine of liberal feminism, rather than radical feminism (Van Zoonen, 1992; Sisco & Lucas, 2015; Mendes, 2011). However, this has changed recently and the second wave feminism is “framed negatively in comparison to post-feminism or other third wave feminisms” (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 495). Sisco and Lucas (2015) analysed news coverage of presidential candidates including Hillary Clinton in the period from November 2007 and December 2008. As the results showed, feminist movement was simplified and represented as fractured. Some types of feminism received more positive coverage than others, and feminism as a whole has been trivialised to lifestyle rather than an issue as the media portrayed the movement as having no goals anymore due to increased participation of women in the public sphere (Sisco & Lucas, 2015). Furthermore, “the news media presented post-feminism and choice feminism as the mode modern, legitimate alternatives to a more negatively constructed second wave feminism, particularly by highlighting the generational and ideological divisions” (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 497).

### **Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Media**

There is an argument that Hillary Rodham Clinton has faced the most public criticism and backlash out of all female political leaders. Clinton scored a spot on the media’s radar when she and Bill Clinton vowed “joint leadership.” Bill openly stated “buy one, get one free,” and Hillary proclaiming, “If you vote for him, you get me” (Troy, 1997, p. 346).

In the U.S. context, the media expect a “stereotypical ‘political wife; standards of the first lady, and when she does not conform, negative coverage ensues” (Winfiend, 1994, p. 297). Thus, Clinton’s struggle to fit into the roles assumed by the media made her an easy target for

the media. For example, she piqued the opinions of stay-at-home mothers with her infamous statement, “I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas” (Burden & Mughan, 1999, p. 238). The repercussions Hillary felt from this statement reflects ideas brought up by Stephanie Greco Larson (2001), if a man made that same statement, the coverage would be much lower if not non-existent. Many have proposed that Hillary Clinton’s demeanour is the issue, or “she should be softer, more conciliatory, more of a lady” (Templin, 1999, p. 32).

Hillary Rodham Clinton spent 8 years in the White House as one of the most active and involved First Lady’s in history. When she made her run for President, she was expected to not just win the Democratic nomination, but the presidency as well. During the “nomination race, HRC garnered more votes, delegates, and state contest victories than any previous female presidential candidate” (Uscinski & Goren, 2010, p. 5). Uscinski and Goren’s (2010) research covered televised news stories from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News Network, and MSNBC, and they found, “evidence suggesting sexism affected her coverage: HRC was named by first name four times more than her male rival, BHO” (Uscinski & Goren, 2010, p. 9), while the male senators in the race were not referred to by their first name. Naturally, Hillary did not lose the nomination solely based on the names the media used for her, but the names the media used along with the, “coverage of her menstrual cycle, pantsuits, laugh, and her husband’s infidelity” (Uscinski & Goren, 2010, p. 9) could be seen as contributing to the way voters perceived Hillary as a presidential candidate. Nevertheless, during the race for a presidential candidate of the Democratic Party against Barack Obama when he was running for his first nomination, Hillary was in the lead in all polls and yet the media insisted that she withdraws and stops dividing the party (Newport, 2008b; Newport, 2008a) and this is the time when the feminist discourse started to emerge. During the period of November 2007 and December 2008, the media attached a second wave feminist label to Hillary Clinton, and noted her status as a “feminist icon,” “symbol,” “true pioneer,” “long-time feminist” (Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 497 & 498). However, what we see as problematic in this representation is that articles projected Clinton’s candidacy as “a major step forward in achieving one of the high-profile goals of liberal feminists: to increase the number of women in politics, and elect a female president, in fulfilment of the second wave feminist project” (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, cited from Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 498).

During the election period of 2008, the media discussed the so-called “playing the gender card” and accused Hillary Clinton of doing so. In a research conducted by Falk (2013) that analysed a one week period of the campaign during November 2007 when Hillary Clinton visited the Wellesley College and gave a speech, the media developed the gender card narrative referring to the “Pile On” advert published by Clinton’s team just before that speech even though the advert had nothing to do with her gender. However, because she mentioned gender in the speech that followed the advert the media constructed a gender card narrative. As our analysis will show, this narrative was also present in articles we analysed during the campaign period and formed part of the argument why Hillary Clinton should not win the U.S. presidential elections in 2016. However, some authors noted that once Hillary Clinton started to run for her own presidential appointments the media started to described her as a popular First Lady (Walsh, 2015), despite all negative coverage and criticism she has received while she was a First Lady.

In this paper we therefore analysed recent coverage of the presidential debate when Hillary Clinton lost to Donald Trump. In this, we are focusing on the representation of Hillary Clinton as a feminist and the way feminism was portrayed.

## Method and Data Analysis

The representation of women politicians in the media can be examined using a qualitative discourse analysis, as this type of analysis can expose media bias and underlying assumptions within media texts. Nevertheless, agenda setting theory has argued for decades that the media do influence our beliefs even if we are not aware of it (McCombs, 2005, 2014), and “knowledge of contemporary society is to a large extent, mediated to us by text” (Smith, 1990, p. 61, cited from Sisco & Lucas, 2015, p. 495).

For this paper, we looked at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* websites and typed in the keywords “Hillary Clinton feminism” and “Hillary Clinton feminist,” and searched for articles in the period for the period of the presidential campaign from September 2015 until September 2016. The next step was to analyse all articles that appeared in the search. The ones that mentioned Hillary Clinton and the keywords were kept, the ones that did not, were discarded. In total, three (3) articles from the Washington Post and 17 articles from the New York Times have been selected for the analysis for these articles directly addressed feminism and Hillary Clinton, as well as her presidential campaign. We firstly read selected papers, and then then we analysed them in accordance to already explained framework offered by Ruth Wodak (1999), where we have looked in each article for a main argument that the journalist uses in describing Clinton and her campaign, or discursive topoi. After reading and capturing main arguments, we then grouped them into main discourses as presented in the next part of the paper.

A qualitative discourse analysis has been used for analysing selected articles. In that, discourse is understood through the definition offered by Ruth Wodak (1999) where a discourse is understood as a so-called discursive topoi, or a core argument that actors use in their talk. In this case, the actors are journalists who are writing the articles and the unit of the analysis is each article. Discourse is, in our understanding, also embedded in a social and institutional context (Wodak, 1999), and this is also why discourse analysis was convenient for this paper because Hillary Clinton’s campaign and failure to win the elections, that is, Hillary Clinton’s problems with the media date back to her First Lady role in 1990s when she refused to be a supportive wife only, and the problem in general is, in our view, in gender anxiety inherent to the US media.

The discourse analysis also goes in line with constructionist epistemology according to which the media and readers construct realities. We thus selected discourse analysis because we believe that discourse analysis is the only method that shows how discourse is constructed and how arguments change to meet the agenda. In other words, we noted during the election coverage that Clinton is not being criticised through the notion of expected roles as it was the case in previous coverage (e.g., when she was a First Lady). If we have done a content or thematic analysis we would only find a quantitative data on her coverage whereas we wanted to capture arguments possibly used against Hillary Clinton to see if there is a new underlying assumption in covering Hillary Clinton.

The reason for selecting the New York Times and the Washington Post resides in their agenda setting power in the U.S. and internationally (McCombs, 2005, 2014; Tan & Weaver, 2013). The *Times* is especially important during election period for two main reasons:

First, the *Times* assigns several reporters during election cycles, and news organisations that cannot afford to dispatch their own reporters rely on the syndication of this content. Second, voters tune in to news to learn about politics and to decide their votes. Thus, the times triggers a cascade of influence that starts with its coverage, flows directly to its readers and indirectly to other

news organisations and their readers, and informs American voters. (Meeks, 2013, p. 521)

The *Times* not only has an effect on its readers, but also sets an intermedia agenda (Meeks, 2013), and nevertheless it was The Times that already participated in undermining Clinton in the past. For example, during the 2008 election cycle, Clinton received less coverage than Obama and McCain, and when she did get coverage she was seen as, “cold, calculating and overly ambitious” (Meeks, 2013, p. 532).

### Findings

When it comes to the way media covered Hillary Clinton and feminism, our findings suggest that while the media were not negative in all articles the predominant discourse is negative against Hillary Rodham Clinton and feminism is used to support this negative view. In that, the Washington Post endorsed a main discourse that Hillary is not a feminist, while the New York Times endorsed a main discourse according to which Hillary should not win just because she is a women. These two discourses were then supported with sub-discourses of feminism as not necessary and Hillary not actually being a feminist. While Hillary Clinton made good points for a plight for full equality of women is not completed yet, it is true that feminism became a bad word and that the wider population thinks women have achieved equality to an extent that feminism is no longer needed (see Christian, 2015; Kim, 2014).

When it comes to discourse in The Washington Post, the paper stated that white masculine culture is clearly bad for the U.S., but it also emphasized that elections in which only men compete reinforces manliness as inevitable part of politics. For example,

But with or without a female candidate, the race for the presidency has always been gendered (...) often in ways that are explicitly unfriendly to women. And the language we use to talk about who is fit for the presidency is language that hurts women. (The Washington Post, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2016)

When gender is relied upon to contrast two men vying for the presidency, it tends to reinforce a political culture of manliness. In a conflict between a more masculine and a more feminine male, masculinity is used to suggest who's better equipped to lead. (The Washington Post, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2016)

On the other hand, the Washington Times also argued that Hillary is not a feminist and that she does not even have a support of feminists. For example, In her presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton is selling herself as a feminist, but some of the movement's leftiest ladies aren't buying it. (The Washington Post, July 28<sup>th</sup> 2016)

In a situation where Hillary has placed lots of emphasis on feminism and women's rights, this was a dangerous claim and an unprofessional taking said out of context just because some feminists did not support Hillary Clinton. In other words, saying that she is “selling herself” implies lack of trustworthiness and sincerity whereas an argument can be made that Hillary Clinton is a feminist given her infamous statement on baking cookies and refusal to be a supportive wife only when her husband Bill was the president of the United States. Indeed, radical feminists most likely did not support her. Segal (2010) has, for example, used her as an example of a successful women in power in her criticism of the system of inequality. This type of feminism will see Hillary as a part of the capitalist system they oppose and will not

necessarily support her. Therefore, undermining Hillary Clinton by saying that she is “selling herself” clearly brings a question of credibility and it does not come as a surprise that some citizens were reporting that Hillary is not trustworthy during the elections. However, what needs to be said is that Hillary Clinton did represent feminist albeit a liberal feminism that advocates equality of women and men and that is sometimes in heated debates with radical feminism. In its doctrine, liberal feminism states that “all women and men should be considered full individuals, capable of making rational decisions; a special focus should be placed upon opportunities for women to increase social and political participation only because women have not been treated as full individuals for a long time, and only until this advantage for women is overcome” (Rakow & Nastasia, 2009, p. 254). In summary, “liberal feminism asserts that gender system should be minimised, women should be seen as rational individual human beings in the same way as men, there is a need for reform of the distribution of power between men and women by distributing roles, women have been discriminated throughout history and the social change must come within existing social structures” (Rakow & Nastasia, 2009, p. 256).

Conversely, in the New York Times, the discourse was that even if she wins an entry ticket to the White House this will not solve problems of women. For example,

Even if Hillary wins the White House, there will still be political worlds for women to conquer (...) But things aren't equal. We've made it to a point where a women who's been first lady, U.S. senator and secretary of state can win a presidential nomination. Now let's see how long it takes for someone who's a little less overqualified to get the nod. (The New York Times, July 28, 2016)

It is largely unclear what the journalist meant with this, surely not that since we cannot solve problems for all women let's not start anywhere at all and let's just give up. The statement also brought the issue of Hillary being overqualified which brings an interesting question, that is, when did being qualified became a bad thing and when in history was a male candidate ever criticised because of having (not, not having) qualifications? However, this statement from The New York Times also clearly signalled that liberal feminism is not appropriate anymore, and that a different feminism is needed. The statement obviously leaned towards radical feminism advocating social justice among women. Feminism is portrayed as unnecessary because so many women go to colleges as in the statement below,

Some female leaders of other countries, like Indira Gandhi in India and Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, accumulated power in sharp contrast to their countrywomen, who had very little. But if Mrs. Clinton wins the presidency, she would take office during a period of economic and demographic transformation for American women, who are outnumbering men in college enrolment by ever widening margins, becoming primary breadwinners and heading their own households. (The New York Times, July 28, 2016; different article)

In other words, because women are allowed to educate themselves, they do not need any support for being a women, and this is said regardless of the fact there is a pay gap and glass ceiling issue everywhere in the world (Proctor et al., 2016).

Finally, the main contention against Clinton is that while she argues she should win because she is a woman and that Americans do not need her feminism but another type of feminism. For example,

There's a weird strain of thought swirling around Clinton's campaign; that she should vote for her because she's a woman. Or that she's inoculated from certain flaws or accusations by dint of gender. Or that, at the least, there's an onus on forward-looking people who care about gender inequality to promote her candidacy. (The New York Times, February 9, 2016)

We live in an age rich of feminisms. One celebrates our multiplicity of identities: black, lesbian, transgender. Another had effectively anathematized sexual violence. Yet another – I think of it as C-suite feminism – chips away at the glass ceiling that keeps women out of the most powerful jobs, such as, say, the presidency. But we need another feminism – and it needs a name that has nothing to do with gender. Let's call it, for lack of a better term, "caregiverism." It would demand dignity and economic justice for parents dissatisfied with a few weeks of unpaid parental leave, and strive to mitigate the sacrifices made by adult children responsible for aging parents. (The New York Times, June 16, 2016)

So this time, the Clintons assumed, the women had deserted Hillary for Barack, in Congress and in the country, owed her. Democrats would want to knock down that second barrier (...) This attitude intensified the unappetizing solipsistic subtext of her campaign, which is "What is Hillary owed?" It turned out that female voters seem to be looking at Hillary as a candidate rather than as a historical imperative. And she's coming up drastically short on trustworthiness (...) Instead of just admitting that he had had an affair with Monica Lewinsky and taking his lumps, Bill lied and hid behind the skirts of his wife and female cabinet members, who had to go out before the cameras and vouch for his veracity, even when it was apparent he was lying" (...) What about Clinton humiliating his wife and daughter and female cabinet members? What about a president taking advantage of a gargantuan power imbalance with a 22-year-old intern? What about imperilling his party with reckless behaviour that put their feminist agenda at risk? (The New York Times, February 13, 2016)

In other words, Clinton was again accused of playing the gender card just like during 2008 primaries even though she did not say anyone owes her anything. Nevertheless, she is seen as a bad feminist in a time when different feminism is needed. The New York Times also predicted a generational divide and that Hillary will fail to attract women votes because many younger voters do not pay much attention to women's rights as they take them for granted,

It is as if Mrs. Clinton's campaign, based partly on revealing the power of female voters, has instead revealed something else: a generational schism that threatens to undermine it. Mrs. Clinton lost the vote in New Hampshire by 11 percentage points. Broken down by age, the results were even more striking: She led by 19 points among women 65 and older, but trailed by a huge margin, 59 points, among millennial voters, ages 18 to 29 (...) Many younger women already take for granted some of the gains that those before them fought for, and they identify strongly with their generation's collective concerns - student debt, finding a job in postrecession America, and the fight for gay rights and a more flexible view of gender than their parents considered. Older women recall their own struggles to break the glass ceiling, and battles in male-dominated

workplaces. They feel themselves running out of time to see a women reach the presidency. (The New York Times, February 16, 2016)

As already emphasized earlier, many millennial women do not see feminism as relevant to their lives and chose to vote according to their general political views (Kim, 2014). However, predicting this to happen in a widely circulated national press in advance of the elections, could have inevitably influenced voters not to vote for Hillary Clinton, as it was predicted that she would not win anyway. In a situation when political participation is low as it is, it is entirely unnecessary to further demotivate voters to attend polling stations. Nevertheless, the discourses very clearly emphasized that feminism is wrong but because the media cannot really say that arguing for women's rights is wrong then all of a sudden a particular type of feminism is wrong, or the one that Hillary Clinton was seen to represent.

### Conclusion

In summary, the major issue of the U.S. elections in our view are that the media are allegedly centred on the political centre or leaning towards the left, however, when it comes to women's matters this is clearly not the case because it is the U.S. media that systematically undermines women using this argument or the other. In our example, Hillary was undermined as a First Lady for not conforming to the expected role of women to be a supportive wife only. During the campaign for a nomination of the Democratic Party, Hillary was "whitened" while Obama was "blackened" by the media to further create a narrative and division (Zacharias & Arthurs, 2008). Samek (2013) argued that the news media are white and masculine and that the media sexualized both Obama and Clinton to create a narrative of both people of colour and women not normally achieving powerful position, which then also revealed anxieties in the U.S. society. As emphasised by Gloria Steinem (2008, cited from Charlesworth, 2013), a pioneer of the U.S. feminist movement, Hillary was seen as divisive because of her gender while Obama was seen as unifying because of his race, and this view further confirms masculinity of the U.S. media that constructs narratives of both women and blacks not being present in the position of power, but when confronted with a choice between a women and a man, the media supported a black man.

Then, when Hillary openly started to campaign as a feminist, it seems that the media could not have argued against it because they would effectively attack a social movement that advocates equality of women. Therefore, a new discourse emerged, that is, a new feminism is needed and not the one she promises to provide even though her main arguments were centred on pay gap and equality of women, which comfortably fits within liberal feminist paradigm popular in the U.S. Or, she is playing the gender card and should not win just because she is a woman. Basically, the arguments and discourses adapt per situation but the outcome is the same, that is, glass ceiling is still there and the goal of liberal feminism has not been fulfilled because it took all the way to 2016 to have a woman nominated for a presidential nomination and then she lost in a campaign where the opposing candidate and a new U.S. president openly denounced women's rights.

However, if there is one positive thing that the last US election brought that is certainly a full recognition of the devastating effect anti-feminist view has on women in the U.S. who turned towards voting for a clear chauvinist by emphasizing they are more concerned with other issues than women's rights, which have, according to their view, already been achieved. Feminist movement now needs to continue their work and insist that equality has not been achieved while women are undermined because they are women, and perhaps it is more pertinent than ever to campaign for influencing media reform that would prevent future undermining of female candidates. In other words, while in the past women have been

undermined in different ways (e.g., most commonly because of not fitting into expected roles) feminism has become almost a dirty name and in this particular case has been used to undermine political endeavours by two most influential agenda setters in the US media.

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