

2013 New York City Mayoral Primary: An Investigation of Media Discussions of Intersectional Identity

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**2013 New York City Mayoral Primary:
An Investigation of Media Discussions of Intersectional Identity**

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Abstract

This study explores newspaper discussions of the intersectional identities of political candidates. Specifically, this study focuses on reporting of the 2013 New York City democratic mayoral primary and identifies how reporters of *The New York Times* discussed the identities of mayoral hopefuls Christine Quinn, Bill de Blasio, and Bill Thompson. The results indicated that Christine Quinn, as the only woman and openly gay candidate, was mentioned more frequently in discussions related to gender and sexuality than were the other two candidates. The results also indicated that Bill de Blasio, who was white with an interracial family, and Bill Thompson, the only black candidate in the democratic primary, were mentioned more frequently in discussions related to race than Quinn was. Further, the study finds that the reporting of *The New York Times* focused on both the sensitizing nature and the novelty of each candidate's identity. Finally, the study suggests implications of this media focus for discussions of intersectional identity in newspaper reporting of political campaigns.

Introduction

In this project, I wished to discover how *The New York Times* discussed intersectional identity in its coverage of the 2013 New York City democratic mayoral primary. The candidates in the Democratic primary included Bill de Blasio, Christine Quinn, Bill Thompson, Anthony Weiner, John Liu, Erick Salgado, and Sal Albanese. The candidates in the Republican primary included Joe Lhota, John Catsimatidis, George McDonald, and Adolfo Carrion. Jack Hidary ran as an Independent. This project focused on Christine Quinn, Bill Thomspson, and Bill de Blasio in the Democratic primary because they received the most media coverage (after Anthony Weiner) and finished first, second, and third in the primary, which marked their relative importance. Anthony Weiner was excluded from empirical assessment because media coverage of him focused mostly on his scandal. His scandal eclipsed all other aspects of his campaign and this made him unsuitable for comparison to the other candidates in this study. Because of the size of this study, it only focused on the democratic primary.

The primary, while local, received national coverage because of Anthony Weiner's scandalous presence. However, this primary was exciting for a number of reasons. Mayor Bloomberg would not be seeking another term for the first time since 2001, and thus, there was no incumbent to run against. This set a stage of potential change for which New Yorkers, as we found out in the election, were ready. The democratic primary centered on a few issues including stop-and-frisk policing, the 91st Street Marine Transfer Station, city employee contracts, hospital closings, Hurricane Sandy relief, and growing wealth inequality.

Christine Quinn, the assumed frontrunner, who ultimately finished third in the primary election following Bill de Blasio and Bill Thompson, was the Speaker of the City Council at the time of the primary. Many voters considered Quinn, as a mayoral hopeful, to be too close to

Mayor Bloomberg, and believed that electing her would be equivalent to electing Bloomberg for a 4th term. Quinn, though clearly the candidate with the most experience, found herself and her campaign in a tough position as more negative attacks from privately funded groups were focused on her than on any other mayoral hopeful. Further, and, in part, because of these negative attacks, Quinn was often perceived as lacking compassion, as overly angry, and as aloof (NYT, Ed Board, 2013; NYT, Bellafante, 2013). She is married to Kim Catullo, and would have been the City's first woman mayor and first openly gay mayor.

Bill de Blasio, at first irrelevant in the mayoral race, became the frontrunner in the last few weeks of August. As the Public Advocate – a position that holds little power and yields few concrete results - he campaigned ruthlessly on his distance from Bloomberg, on his plans for reform, and on his fight to save closing hospitals. He had two particularly impressive political moments. The first was his arrest at a rally to save the hospitals, which, while often criticized as a political move, in fact, solidified his position as the “progressive” candidate (NYT, Taylor, 2013). The second was the release of an advertisement narrated by his son, Dante, a young man with an Afro, who spoke with personal emphasis of his father's plan to curb stop-and-frisk. Dante's Afro has now gained national acclaim (NYT, Collins, 2013). Bill de Blasio is married to Chirlane McCray, an African American poet and key player in his campaign, and has two children, Dante and Chiara. He is now the mayor of the City of New York, and many hope he will usher in a new era of progressive politics (NYT, Hernandez, 2013).

Bill Thompson, the former city comptroller and second-time mayoral candidate, remained in the running throughout the primary, finishing second. However, he rarely inspired excitement from voters. Even as the only black candidate in the race, Thompson found it difficult to mobilize black voters. He did not support the racial profiling bill or the inspector general bill,

which were both designed to reform stop-and-frisk practices that disproportionately impact racial minorities. Further, Thompson took moderate positions on almost every issue (NYT, Gyrnbaum, 2013; NYT, Keller, 2013). Thompson gained support through the highly sought-after endorsement of the United Federation of Teachers, but it was not enough to energize his campaign (NYT, Hernandez, 2013). He is married to Elsie McCabe, and has a daughter from a previous marriage.

Thus, this race was a complicated one, and it offers many possibilities for studying discussions of intersectional identity because the different parts of each candidate's identity makes him or her more than a race, gender, or sexuality. We see this, in the initial descriptions of the candidates, as each candidate defies the stereotypes associated with the societal group to which he or she most obviously belongs. Thus, a study of media discussions about political candidates must adequately address the complex identities of candidates.

Literature Review

Because voters receive most of their information about political campaigns from the news media, it is critical to study how media outlets discuss political candidates (Atkeson and Krebs, 2008, p.239). Moreover, because people tend to rely on stereotypes when making complex decisions, it is vital to explore the discussions of candidate identity that exist in reporting and whether these discussions reinforce or influence voters' previously held stereotypes (Bodenhausen, 2005, p.116). Yet, while there is a significant body of research separately addressing media discussions of gender and racial identities of political candidates, individuals always occupy multiple social statuses, and thus are often portrayed in multiple ways (Holt, 2012, p.275-278). There is relatively little research on intersectional identity in media, which is defined by discussions of "the interplays between categorizations" (Lykke, 2010). Therefore, we do not know what media discussions of identity look like when a candidate identifies with more than one social group – especially if the candidate identifies with more than one stigmatized group - or if discussions of identity are more prevalent in certain instances.

The 2013 mayoral primary - which features Bill de Blasio, a white man with an interracial family and with a wife who previously identified as a lesbian, Bill Thompson, a black man, and Christine Quinn, a homosexual woman - provides an interesting platform on which to study how the media discusses intersectional identity in electoral contests. Intersectionality and its implications are illustrated, for example, in the historical contradictions between female and lesbian identities. The image of a woman, including that of female politicians, is often associated with certain traits, "such as being more compassionate, warm, and passive" while the image of a lesbian is often associated with "apparent masculinity" (Doan and Haider-Marker, 2010, p.66, Maltry and Tucker, 2002, p.92-93). How is an identity that draws from two often-conflicting sets

of stereotypes relayed to voters? Bill de Blasio and Bill Thompson also have intersecting identities that can be described with contradicting images. How are these images reconciled in media? Do media discussions of intersectional identity differ based on the number of stigmatized groups to which a candidate belongs or based on the specific gender, sexuality, racial categorizations with which a candidate identifies?

Stereotypes in Media

Stereotyping, defined as “a process through which we come to judge other people and respond to them in terms of their social category memberships,” is commonly used when processing complex information (Bodenhausen, 2005, 122). Even people who do not adhere to stereotypes are very much aware of the stereotypes present in their society. One widely cited experimental study conducted using college students as subjects found that “automatic stereotype activation is equally strong and equally inescapable for high- and low-prejudice subjects (Devine 1989, p.15).¹ Even though low-prejudice subjects were able to control the impact of these automatic stereotypes, such stereotypes were still activated subconsciously. The researcher concluded that, without careful consideration, stereotypes are likely to influence the way people think about others (Devine, 1989, p.16).

A large body of research examines how stereotypes infiltrate news reporting on political candidates, especially when reporting about the race or gender of a candidate. Media discussions of candidates and whether or not these discussions are based on stereotypes are important for understanding voter perceptions of candidates since most voters hear about candidates through the media rather than through the candidates (Devitt, 2002, 445; Atkeson and Krebs, 2008, p.239). Thus, if differences exist in media reporting of candidates that belong to different social

¹ This study was conducted providing two different race-related stimuli to participants, and then asking them to make a judgment about “Donald” from Srull and Wyer’s paragraph (Devine, 1989, p.10).

groups, these differences are likely to influence voter perception of candidates. Previous literature suggests that this differential news reporting does exist in regard to gender and race, and that the differential reporting develops, in part, from “a tendency to recall information based on deeply rooted stereotypes” (Usckinski and Goren, 2011, 885).

Discussions of Gender Identity in Media

Previous literature provides evidence of gender-based discussions in media coverage of female political candidates. Gender discussions, based on gender stereotypes, develop from the theory that gender is a “master status” and thus, is “automatically processed and accounted for in social interactions” (Usckinski and Goren, 2011, 885). A number of studies have found that female candidates for political office are often considered less competent or legitimate than male candidates and considered more likely to focus on women’s issues (Usckinski and Goren, 2001, 886; Sanbonmatsu, 2002, 21). One theory is that “many voters have a baseline preference for male over female candidates, or female over male candidates,” which indicates voter reliance on stereotypes (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). More generally, discussions of candidate gender might reflect the “implicit prototype for male leaders and the attendant belief that it is more natural for men to take control” (Rudman and Kilanski, 2000, 1325). Many researchers hypothesize that stereotypes commonly held about gender differences influence the way news reporting discusses candidates.

Of special note in relation to the present project, several content analyses demonstrate variations in reporting based on candidate gender. The authors of these content analyses use different coding schemes to determine how the media discusses female candidates. These coding schemes take into account whether the electoral contest of interest occurs at the national or local level, the identities and social statuses of the different candidates, and the type of media being analyzed. One study found that media discussions of candidates reflect gender biases through the

unequal practices of naming candidates. For example, the tendency of television commentators and reporters to use Hillary Clinton's first name more frequently than that of Barack Obama in the 2008 primary indicated an increased sense that informality is acceptable with female candidates (Uscinski & Goren, 2011, 892). Other studies of media discussions of female candidates have also found higher frequencies of non-issue coverage among all candidates when female candidates were present (as compared to coverage of elections in which no women were present), higher frequencies of specific gender mentions for female candidates, higher frequencies of trait coverage for female candidates, and lower frequencies of qualification coverage for female candidates (Atkenson & Krebs, 2008; Holt, 2012; Dunaway, 2013). Further, male reporters, in previous content analyses, were found to address female candidates more informally and to report about the personal lives of female candidates more frequently than female reporters did, which demonstrates the importance of reporter gender (Uscinski & Goren, 2011; Devitt, 2002).

Though a number of content analyses have discussed the role of gender-based discussions in media reporting of political candidates, there remains disagreement about the extent to which media discussions that focus on candidate gender are harmful to female candidates and about the extent to which these discussions can be considered evidence of biased reporting (in this study, discussions of gender will not be considered gender bias). On one hand, Sanbonmatsu's theory of gender schemas posits that female candidates, due to the existing stereotypes voters hold, are advantaged in electoral contests that focus on issues that are traditionally "women's issues" while male candidates are advantaged in electoral contests that focus on issues that are traditionally "men's issues" (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). On the other hand, there is a strong argument that certain mentions of gender in media are more likely to lower voter opinion of female

candidates than of male candidates (Uscinski & Goren, 2011). Thus, though many studies found gender discussions in media, the kinds of gender discussions each study found differ, which leaves a need for future research.

Because the present project looks at a mayoral primary, one study of particular interest is a content analysis that focused on female candidates in mayoral races. This study justifies its use of local races to study gender discussions by indicating that “the nature of the urban political agenda may advantage women” because this agenda may focus on issues such as healthcare and education, which are issues in which women are considered competent (Atkenson & Krebs, 2008). Thus, because of the different agendas at different levels of government, it is important to understand how gender discussions may differ in newspaper reporting depending on whether an election is national, statewide, or local.

The hypotheses in the present project derived this literature are:

H1: The frequency with which female candidates are described with indicators of their gender will be greater than the frequency with which male candidates are described with indicators of their gender.

H2: Reporters will describe the traits of female candidates more frequently than they will describe the traits of male candidates.

H3: The frequency with which reporters discuss female candidates in relation to “women’s issues” will be greater than the frequency with which they discuss male candidates in relation to the same topics.

Discussions of Race Identity in Media

Previous literature also provides evidence of how reporters discuss African American political candidates. Studies of race-related discussions in media focus on an understanding of stereotypes

that exist about African Americans in the U.S. One study builds on this idea by showing that stereotypes of African Americans as a general population and of African American politicians are notably different. Using a modified 1933 Katz and Braly experimental paradigm², the researchers generated a list of stereotypes associated with black politicians. This list of stereotypes suggests that voters view black politicians as likely to focus on certain issues that disproportionately impact African American communities, as “surviving adversity,” as “opinionated,” and “as having something to prove” (Schneider and Bos 2011, 214).

The influence of these stereotypes is manifested in coverage that, when discussing African American candidates, gives heightened attention to race and to racialized issues. Of particular interest for this study, several researchers used content analyses to suggest the existence of differential media coverage due to race. One content analysis, using newspaper articles, found that media reporting referenced the race of black candidates even if the candidates themselves rarely mentioned race (Holt, 2012, 282). Another analysis expanded this in its finding that newspaper reporting emphasizes the race of black candidates regardless of the race of reporters (Terksildsen and Damore 1999, 696). A third study analyzed the websites of white and black Congress members to see what race-related messages their offices released, and supplemented this analysis with interviews of the press secretaries of these representatives. The researchers found that the offices of both white and black Congress members released similar information about racial issues, but media reporting about black Congress members nevertheless highlighted race and issues related to race. Reporting on white Congress members did not show this same attention to race (Zilber and Niven, 2000). The emphasis on race in newspaper

² This test uses a pre-test participant group to generate lists of adjectives that describe 10 different groups. The researchers create one list from all of these adjectives (in this case, 84 adjectives). A second group of participants marks all the traits they think apply to each group and marks the 5 traits most relevant to every group (Schneider and Bos 2011, 211).

reporting is particularly important to discuss because “the underscoring of candidate race, either visually or in print, provides a powerful vote cue for racially prejudiced voters and those prone to stereotypical judgments” (Terkildsen and Damore, 1999, 697).

The hypotheses in the present project derived from this literature are:

H4: The frequency with which African American candidates are described with racial indicators will be greater than the frequency with which white candidates are described with racial indicators.

H5: Reporters will discuss African American candidates or candidates with African American families in relation to “black issues” more frequently than they discuss white candidates or candidates with white families in relation to the same topics.

Discussions of Sexual Orientation Identity in Media

Previous literature suggests that candidate sexual orientation is a factor in voters’ selection of political candidates. Stereotypes that factor into voter understanding of candidate sexuality reflect the idea that “apparent masculinity confirms...innate and authentic lesbian[ism]” (Maltry and Tucker, 2008, 92). This stereotype of lesbian masculinity might be helpful to lesbian candidates when they are judged on male-dominated issues – especially when female voters evaluate them (Doan and Haider-Markel, 2010, 82). In fact, both the gender of the voter and of the candidate are important in perceptions of homosexual candidates (Doan and Haider-Markel, 2010, 85). Of particular interest to this research, one study found that “lesbian candidates also have to contend with prevailing gender stereotypes about women’s ability to effectively hold office” (Doan and Haider-Markel, 2010,75). However, there is conflicting evidence about the influence of candidate sexuality on voter choice. For example, a survey-based study found that, while voter perceptions of gay candidates are different from voter perceptions of straight

candidates, “sexual orientation had no significant effect on the likelihood that [their] subjects would vote for a candidate” (Herrick & Thomas, 2001, 117). While the academic discussion of how voters view gay candidates is growing, there is a gap in the literature about voters perception lesbian candidates in particular. There is even less information about how lesbian candidates are discussed in newspaper reporting or media.

The hypotheses in the present project derived from this literature are:

H6: The frequency with which lesbian candidates are described with indicators of their sexual orientation will be greater than the frequency with which heterosexual candidates are described with indicators of their sexual orientation.

H7: Reporters will discuss lesbian candidates or candidates with gay family members in relation to “gay issues” more frequently than they will discuss straight candidates in relation to the same topics.

Intersectional Identity in Media

Intersectional theory addresses the challenges that face individuals and groups of individuals who occupy more than one social status - as all people do. Intersectional theory can be used “to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations... interact and in so doing produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations” (Lykke, 2010, p.50). Kimberlé Crenshaw, credited with intersectional theory, uses the example of black women to illustrate how multiple social categorizations can interact: “Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (1989, 40). Crenshaw also indicates that there

is a “contradiction between the ideological myths of womanhood and the reality of Black women’s experiences” (1989, 36). Although it seems likely that this multidimensional existence is reflected in media discussions, documentation and examination of how reporters discuss intersectional identity in media is lacking. To address this gap in the literature and to expand on previous literature of identity discussions that exist in media reporting of political candidates, I will undertake a content analysis of *The New York Times* to compare reporting about Christine Quinn, Bill Thompson, and Bill de Blasio in the mayoral primary for New York City. In this content analysis, I will identify the identity-based discussions that exist in the reporting of all three candidates due to their membership in a stigmatized societal group(s), compare the frequencies with which these discussions occurred in relation to each candidate in newspaper reporting, determine whether reporting about a candidate with membership in two stigmatized groups differs significantly from that about candidates in only one stigmatized group, and draw conclusions about the frequency of discussions of intersectional identity in newspaper reporting and about the possible implications for voter evaluation.

The findings of the inquiry promise both theoretical and practical benefits. This study will discover whether doubly stigmatized candidates experience different discussions about their identities than their opponents who have membership in only one marginalized group experience in newspaper reporting. The study will contribute to intersectional theory. It also promises to explore different ways in which identity is discussed within political newspaper commentary. Practically, the study will expand knowledge of discussions of intersectional identity in reporting about political campaigns, and thus can be used, both by reporters and campaign managers, to better understand how to discuss or market candidates. Finally, the study can provide consumers

of newspaper reporting with an understanding of how reporting may reflect stereotypical notions of identity.

Data and Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of all *New York Times* articles (n=232) that mentioned Bill de Blasio, Bill Thompson, and Christine Quinn between July 1, 2013 and September 20, 2013. (Appendix 2 graphically summarizes the steps of sample selection). The final sample consisted of 14 editorials, 13 opinion pieces, and 209 objective pieces. Of this sample, the journalists were 29% (n=68) female and 60% (n=140) male. 12 articles were written by the editorial board and 10 articles were written by a team of male and female authors. Only 1 article was written by an African American journalist, while 68% (n= 160 articles) of the articles were written by white journalists and 30% (n=54 articles) were written by journalists of another race. 27% (n=64) of the articles were from July, 38% (n= 89) were from August, and 36% (n=83) were from September. For the purpose of measuring statistical significance, all duplicate articles were counted twice, so each article was coded for only one candidate. This expanded the measured sample to 301 articles. Of the 301 articles in the sample, 177 articles contained coded material. Of these coded articles, 29% (n=52) were coded for Bill Thompson, 37% (n=65) were coded for Christine Quinn, and 34% (n=60) were coded for Bill de Blasio. The measures of significance are derived from the sample of coded articles.

Measures and Instrument

I developed a coding scheme that allowed me to classify segments of text based on key words or phrases that described the social groups to which the candidates belonged. I intended the coding scheme to identify discussions of race, sexual orientation, and gender in articles through the identification of these key words or phrases. These words and phrases were drawn from the literature about media discussions of candidate identity.

Race Discussions in Media:

Previous literature on media discussions of race, specifically in relation to African Americans, found that media often gave African American candidates less coverage than their white opponents, mentioned African American candidates' accomplishments with less frequency than those of their white opponents, and frequently discussed African American candidates in conjunction with issues related to race (Holt, 2013, p.277). Drawing on this literature, I have decided to code for specific mentions of race that pigeonhole one individual as “the Black candidate,” and for mentions of issues related to race (e.g. racial profiling, stop and frisk, Trayvon Martin). I have included a full description of the codes in the instrument that appears in Appendix A.

Sexuality Discussions in Media:

Modeling this variable on the media discussions of race and gender, I decided to code for specific mentions of sexuality that label one candidate as the “lesbian candidate,” including mentions of issues related to the gay community (e.g. marriage equality, pride parade) and indications of candidate sexuality. These codes are included in the instrument appended.

Gender Discussions in Media:

Previous studies of media discussions of gender suggested that “gender remains a political obstacle for female candidates because people, especially men, view them as less legitimate or competent than their male competitors,” and that these common stereotypes are reflected in the disparate ways in which newspeople refer to female and male candidates (Uscinski & Goren, p. 886). Other articles indicated that female candidates received more non-issue coverage than their male opponents (including coverage of appearance, personality, and marital status) and received less policy position coverage than their male opponents (Devitt, 2002,p.447). Drawing on this

literature, I have decided to code for specific mentions of gender that brand one candidate as the “woman candidate,” for mentions of candidate traits, and for mentions of issues considered “women’s issues.” A complete set of codes is included in the instrument appended.

Data Analysis

I selected the *New York Times* as the newspaper from which I would retrieve content because *The New York Times* covered the 2013 New York City mayoral race closely and journalists from the paper produced articles every day concerning the candidates I discussed. Further, *The New York Times* has a complete online archive and an advanced search tool, which allowed me to make sure I included every article published about the three candidates within a specific date range. This date range included the two months before the democratic primary and the 10 days after the democratic primary to understand news coverage of the mayoral primary at its height. This is a purposive and availability sample because I chose *The New York Times* because I believed its articles would have useful information and would be easily accessible.

The New York Times, as a reputable newspaper and as the second or third most-read newspaper in the United States, is useful for studying how reporters discuss the identities of political candidates because it has a national audience (Pew Research Center, 2013). However, the use of *The New York Times* also has significant limitations because it appeals to a certain demographic. A Pew Research Center study reported that regular readers of *The New York Times* are younger than average (32% of readers are between the ages of 18 and 29, 31% between the ages of 30 and 49), are highly educated (56% of readers have at least a college degree), have higher incomes than average (38% of readers make above \$75,000), and are liberal (44% of readers are democrats and 36% identify themselves as liberal on liberal to conservative scale) (Pew Research Center, 2012). These numbers indicate that readers of *The New York Times* are

not representative of the United States population as a whole. From this demographic information and from general knowledge about the reputation of the newspaper, it follows that *The New York Times* is an atypical media source and thus the content of the paper is not representative of media in the United States. Therefore, use of *The New York Times* narrowed the scope of this study. However, inferences can be made about reporting in other newspapers by comparing the readerships and reputations of different papers to those of *The New York Times*. These inferences can suggest further empirical study.

I used the method of content analysis to understand my data. Content analysis “is a research technique by which certain characteristics of printed, spoken, or visual material are systematically identified” (Jones, 1996, p. 122). The common use of this method of analysis for research on media discussions of identity reinforces my choice of method – especially because many researchers have used this method specifically to understand media discussions of political candidates. My content analysis will expand previous explorations of media discussions of identity in political coverage by looking at discussions of intersectional identity.

To perform this analysis, I coded each article according to my coding categories, which included 8 domains and 2 to 4 subsets within each domain. The coding categories gain reliability and become low-inference from their previous use in other studies. Further, a second researcher coded a randomly chosen 10% of the total sample using this coding scheme to give the sample intercoder reliability. The two coders discussed any ambiguities in the code and amended the coding scheme appropriately. The coding was completed and organized in Dedoose, which is a quantitative and mixed-methods research analysis software. Once the articles were coded, I used Dedoose to count the frequencies with which each coding category appeared, and to analyze

these frequencies in relation to the corresponding hypotheses. The results were further analyzed using statistical measures of significance.

Results

I evaluated each hypothesis using the sample of total coded articles (n=177). I used the statistical method of Chi Square to measure the significance of the frequencies of gender, racial, and sexuality discussions for the three candidates. I used Cramer's V to measure association between the variables. I also used proportional z-tests to measure the significance of the frequency with which a certain variable was used to describe an individual candidate compared to the total use of that variable in the sample. The frequency of each variable is measured by the number of articles in which each variable is mentioned.

Hypothesis 1: The frequency with which female candidates are described with indicators of their gender will be greater than the frequency with which male candidates are described with indicators of their gender. The null hypothesis was thus that the two variables - candidate gender and the frequency of gender indicators - would be independent. When measuring the frequency of chi square indicators for Christine Quinn, Bill Thompson, and Bill de Blasio, the chi square value was 41.07, which was well beyond the critical value of 5.99. Because the chi square value fell beyond the critical value, the difference in the frequency of gender indicators for each candidate was statistically significant, and was very unlikely to have occurred by random chance. Cramer's V was .48, which suggests a strong association between candidate gender and the frequency of gender indicators. Since both Bill Thompson and Bill de Blasio were mentioned zero times with gender indicators, it did not make sense to perform a z-test since Christine Quinn was clearly more likely to be mentioned with gender indicators. Thus, the hypothesis that the frequency of gender indicators depends on candidate gender is supported.

Hypothesis 2: Reporters will describe the traits of female candidates more frequently than they will describe the traits of male candidates. The null hypothesis was that the two variables -

candidate gender and the frequency of trait mentions - would be independent. The chi square measure, looking at the three candidates, was 3.46. The critical value was 5.99. Thus, since the chi square value did not fall outside the critical region, the difference in frequency of trait mentions was not significant and likely did not depend on candidate gender but on chance. The Z-obtained for Quinn ($Z= 1.54$), de Blasio ($Z= -.33$), and Thompson ($Z= -1.08$) all fell within the critical region, which reaffirmed that this difference was not significant. Thus, the hypothesis that the frequency with which reporters mention candidate traits is dependent on candidate gender is not supported in this case.

Hypothesis 3: The frequency with which reporters discuss female candidates in relation to discussions of “women’s issues” will be greater than the frequency with which they discuss male candidates in relation to the same topics. The null hypothesis was that the two variables - candidate gender and the frequency of women’s issues discussions - would be independent. The chi square value, looking at the three candidates - was 33.54. The critical value was 5.99. Thus, since the chi square value fell well beyond the critical value, the difference in the frequency of women’s issues discussed in relation to each candidate was significant and likely did not occur by chance. Cramer’s V was .45, suggesting a strong association between the variables. For de Blasio, the Z-obtained was -2.08, which fell beyond the critical Z-score of -1.65. Thus, de Blasio was significantly less likely to be mentioned in relation to women’s issues. For Quinn, the Z-obtained was +4.71, which fell beyond the critical Z-score of +1.65, which suggests that Quinn was significantly more likely to be mentioned in relation to women’s issues. Thompson’s Z-obtained was -3.04, which also fell beyond the critical Z-score of -1.65. This suggests that Thompson, like de Blasio, was significantly less likely to be mentioned in relation to women’s

issues. Thus, the hypothesis that the frequency of mentions of women's issues is dependent on candidate gender is supported.

When looking at these three measures of gender-based discussions together, it is possible to measure whether Quinn, as a woman, experienced these discussions more frequently in this reporting than the male candidates, de Blasio and Thompson, did. To measure this, the three gender variables - mention of traits, mention of women's issues, and mention of gender indicators - were all measured together. The null hypothesis was that the two variables - frequency of gender discussions and the gender of the candidate - would be independent. The chi square value, looking at the frequency of gender discussions for all three candidates, was 43.70. This value fell well beyond the critical value of 5.99, which indicates that the differences in the frequency of gender discussions in the sample are significant and likely did not occur by chance. Cramer's V is .50, suggesting a strong association between the frequency of gender discussions and candidate gender. The Z-obtained for Quinn was +4.83, which falls beyond the critical region of +1.65, which suggests that Quinn, the female candidate, was significantly more likely to be discussed in relation to gender in reporting. The Z-obtained for Thompson was -2.92 also fell beyond the critical value of -1.65 in the other direction, which suggests that Thompson is less likely to experience gender discussions in reporting. The Z-obtained for de Blasio was -2.55, which suggests that he, as a male candidate, is less likely to experience gender discussions in reporting. This supports the hypothesis that Quinn, as a female candidate, is more likely to be discussed in relation to gender in media and that the frequency of gender discussions is dependent on candidate gender.

Hypothesis 4: The frequency with which African American candidates are described with racial indicators will be greater than the frequency with which white candidates are described with

racial indicators. The null hypothesis was that the two variables - candidate race and the frequency of race indicators - would be independent. The chi square value, when looking at the frequency of race indicators for the three candidates, was 38.18. This value fell well beyond the critical value of 5.991, which suggests that the difference in frequencies is significant and did not occur by chance. Cramer's V was .46, which indicates a strong association between the variables of candidate race and the frequency of race indicators. The Z-obtained for Thompson is +1.5, which falls within the critical region between 0 and +1.65. Thus the difference in frequency for Thompson is not significant in terms of race indicators. The Z-obtained for de Blasio is +3.68, which falls beyond the critical value of +1.65, suggesting that de Blasio is more likely to be mentioned with race indicators (this includes mentions of his family's race/his interracial family). The Z-obtained for Quinn was -5.2, which falls beyond the critical value of -1.65 and thus, Quinn is significantly less likely to be mentioned with race indicators. This variable is complex because while Thompson is the only black candidate, de Blasio has an interracial family, and thus, I coded mentions of his family's race as race indicators. However, I also coded separately for mentions of de Blasio's race (white). Therefore, both of these measures will be reflected here. The chi square value, when comparing de Blasio (with measures of race indicators for both de Blasio and his family) and Thompson, is +1.68. Since the critical value is 3.841, the difference between the frequencies of race indicators for the two candidates is not significant and likely did occur by chance. However, when measuring the difference in frequency when only mentions of de Blasio's race (and not his family's) are coded, the Z-obtained for de Blasio is -1.9, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=-1.65$. Thus, de Blasio is significantly less likely to be mentioned with race indicators when mentions of his interracial family are not included. Further, when de Blasio's measure only includes mentions of his own race, the Z-obtained for

Thompson is +5.58, which falls well beyond the critical $Z=+1.65$. Thus, in terms of candidate race (excluding family mentions), Thompson, the only African American candidate, is significantly more likely to be described with race indicators in reporting. This supports the hypothesis that the frequency of race indicators is dependent on candidate race. However, when mentions of de Blasio's family's race are counted, this hypothesis is not supported.

Hypothesis 5: Reporters will discuss African American candidates or candidates with African American families in relation to “black issues” more frequently than they discuss white candidates or candidates with white families in relation to the same topics. The null hypothesis was that the two variables – candidate/candidate family race and the frequency of race-related issues discussed - would be independent. The chi square value, when looking at the three candidates is 41.75. This is well beyond the critical value of 5.991, and suggests that the differences in frequency of “black issues” discussed are significant and did not occur by chance. Cramer's V is .49, suggesting a strong association between the variables. The Z-obtained value for de Blasio is +2.19, which falls beyond the critical values of $Z=+1.65$ and suggests that de Blasio is significantly more likely to be mentioned in relation to “black issues.” The Z-obtained for Quinn is -5.03, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z= -1.65$ in the other direction. This suggests that Quinn is significantly less likely to be mentioned in relation to race-related issues. The Z-obtained for Thompson is +3.34, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=+1.65$ and indicates that Thompson is more likely to be mentioned in relation to race-related issues. These findings support the hypothesis that the frequency with which reporters discuss candidates in relation to “black issues” is dependent on the race of the candidate/the race of candidate's family.

When looking at the overall frequency of media discussions of race, it is possible to measure whether Thompson, as the only African American candidate, experiences more

discussions of race in reporting than his white opponents. It is also possible to measure if de Blasio, with an interracial family, also experiences heightened racial discussions in reporting. The null hypothesis for the chi square test here is that the two variables - candidate race and frequency of racial discussions - are independent. The chi square value, when measuring the difference in frequencies between the three candidates, is 59.36. This value falls beyond the critical value of 5.991, and thus suggests that the difference is significant and likely did not occur by chance. Cramer's V is .57, which indicates a strong association between candidate race and the incidence of racial discussions in reporting. The Z-obtained for Thompson is +3.13, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=+1.65$, and thus indicates that Thompson is significantly more likely to experience racial discussions in reporting. The Z-obtained for de Blasio is +3.33, which also falls beyond the critical value of $Z=+1.65$, and thus indicates that de Blasio is also significantly more likely to experience racial discussions in reporting. The Z-obtained for Quinn is -6.17, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=-1.65$, and indicates that Quinn is significantly less likely to experience discussions of race in reporting. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that Bill Thompson, who is African American, and Bill de Blasio, who has an interracial family, are more likely to experience racial discussions in media than Christine Quinn who is white and has a white family. However, since de Blasio is white, the results are not completely consistent with the hypothesis that the frequency of media discussions of race depends on candidate race.

Hypothesis 6: The frequency with which lesbian candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality will be greater than the frequency with which heterosexual candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality. The null hypothesis for the chi square test was that the two variables - candidate sexuality and the frequency of sexuality indicators - are

independent. The chi square value, when measuring the differences in frequency of sexuality indicators between the three candidates, is 7.71. This falls beyond the critical value of 5.99, and thus, the difference is significant and likely did not occur by chance. Cramer's V is .21, which suggests association - though not a very strong association. The Z-obtained for Thompson was -1.14, which falls within the critical range between 0 and -1.65, suggesting that the difference is not significant and that Thompson is not less likely to be mentioned with indicators of sexuality. The Z-obtained for de Blasio is -1.22, which also falls within the same critical range, and also is not significant. De Blasio is not less likely to be mentioned with indicators of his sexuality. The Z-obtained for Quinn was +2.08, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z = +1.65$. Thus, Quinn is more likely to be mentioned with indicators of her sexuality, and is thus the reason the chi square measure was significant. However, the fact that both Thompson and de Blasio's Z-scores were not significant is likely the reason for low association in the chi square measure. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that Quinn, as the only homosexual candidate, would be more likely to be mentioned with indicators of her sexuality. However, the support for the hypothesis is not overwhelming and could benefit from further research – perhaps examining tabloid newspapers in which this type of reporting is likely to be more widespread.

Hypothesis 7: Reporters will discuss lesbian candidates or candidates with gay family members in relation to “gay issues” more frequently than they will discuss straight candidates in relation to the same topics. The null hypothesis for the chi square measure was that the two variables - candidate sexuality and the frequency of discussion of “gay issues” - are independent. The chi square value, when measuring the difference in the frequencies between the candidates, is 11.63. This falls beyond the critical value of 5.991, and thus the differences are significant and likely did not occur by chance. The Z-obtained for Thompson is -2.6, which falls beyond the critical

value of $Z=-1.65$, and thus is significant. Thompson is significantly less likely to be discussed in relation to “gay issues” in reporting. The Z -obtained for de Blasio is -1.46 , which falls within the critical region of 0 and -1.65 . This does not indicate significance, and thus de Blasio is not less likely to be discussed in relation to “gay issues.” The Z -obtained for Quinn is $+3.64$, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=+1.65$, and thus Quinn is more likely to be discussed in relation to “gay issues.” These findings support the hypothesis that Quinn, as the only homosexual candidate, would be more likely to be discussed in relation to “gay issues.” However, it does not support the hypothesis that de Blasio, whose wife once identified as a lesbian, would be more likely to be mentioned in relation to “gay issues.” His wife’s sexuality was only mentioned a few times in this sample, and thus, it seems that this limited interest influenced the results.

When looking at overall media discussions of sexuality, it is possible to measure whether Quinn, as the only homosexual candidate, was more likely to be discussed in relation to sexual orientation in reporting. This measure combines the two variables (sexuality indicators and “gay issues”) within the overall category of sexuality discussions. The chi square value, when comparing the differences in frequency of sexuality discussions between the three candidates, is 33.8 , which falls beyond the critical value of 5.99 and thus suggests that the difference is significant and likely did not occur by chance. Cramer’s V is $.44$, suggesting a strong association between candidate sexuality and frequency of discussions of sexuality. The Z -obtained for Thompson is -2.84 , which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=-1.65$, and thus suggests that Thompson is less likely to experience sexuality discussions in reporting. The Z -obtained for de Blasio is -2.06 , which also falls beyond the critical value of $Z=-1.65$, and indicates that de Blasio is also less likely to experience sexuality discussions in reporting. The Z -obtained for Quinn $+4.67$, which falls beyond the critical value of $Z=+1.65$, and suggests that Quinn is significantly

more likely to experience sexuality discussions in reporting. This is consistent with the hypothesis that Quinn, as the only homosexual candidate, would be more likely to be discussed in relation to sexuality in reporting.

Discussion

A few descriptive features characterize the sample. The majority of the articles were written in August and September while only 27% were written in July. This is likely because the primary was held on September 10th. Thus, *The New York Times* coverage of the mayoral race increased in the first ten days of September and in the month of August. A majority of articles were written by white male reporters. This suggests that *The New York Times* staff covering the race was predominately white and male. The impact of this on discussions of intersectional identity could be an object of further study, but the sample of reporters here is too small to measure the impact of this demographic composition in a meaningful way. 29% of the articles were written by female reporters, which gives some diversity to the sample. While 69% of the articles were written by white journalists and 30% were written by Hispanic or Asian American journalists, only 1 article was written by an African American journalist. The sample is thus primarily composed of articles written by white male journalists. This significantly limits the ability to study the impact of reporter race or gender on the frequency of discussions about race, gender, and sexuality.

Of the articles that contained coded variables, 29% were coded for Bill Thompson, 37% for Christine Quinn, and 34% for Bill de Blasio. These percentages are relatively close; however, there may be reasons for the differences. Quinn was likely to be mentioned most in this time period because she was the frontrunner in the race until August. Thus, prior to and after de Blasio's rise in the polls, reporters focused a lot of attention on Quinn first as the frontrunner and then on why she fell from this position. Further, Quinn would have been the first female and first openly gay mayor of New York City, which had exciting implications and thus was a subject of journalistic interest. Bill de Blasio is likely to have a greater number of mentions than Bill

Thompson because he emerged out of near anonymity to become the frontrunner. De Blasio, as the public advocate at the time of the race, also took on issues that were very popular with a dissatisfied population of New Yorkers suffering from stark economic inequality. He was able to turn some of this into media attention when he was arrested at a rally to save a Brooklyn hospital. De Blasio also released a commercial featuring his African American son, who commented on the police system of stop-and-frisk that unfairly targeted minorities. The excitement from these events and others became the subject of reporting as de Blasio started to gain support in early August. Bill Thompson is likely to be mentioned least for a few reasons. He did not elicit much excitement because he did not launch a particularly exciting campaign. One reporter even described him as “the anti-Weiner - even-keeled, not self-aggrandizing, careful, decent,” adding that “his favorite adjective seem[ed] to be ‘balanced’” (NYT, Keller, 2013). While these may be objectively good qualities, they hardly inspire excitement and rarely gain media attention for politicians. This is especially true in a race with so many colorful characters that were constantly competing for media attention. In fact, another reporter, Maureen Dowd, wrote of the race (referencing de Blasio’s interracial family): “The summer has been so drenched with the unthinkable and the unorthodox that the de Blasios, married for 19 years, seem quite conventional by comparison” (NYT, 2013). Further, Thompson was a candidate in the 2009 mayoral primary and this could have contributed to reporters treating him as old news. He never gained frontrunner status and consistently maintained second or third place throughout the race. Thus, while the number articles mentioning each candidate is satisfactorily close for measurement, there are some potential reasons for the differences.

Media Discussions of Candidate Identity:

The candidates in the 2013 mayoral primary were a diverse and sometimes eccentric group of characters. The multiple social categorizations with which each candidate identified provided the media - particularly newspaper media in this study - with ample material for reporting. Local politics became national politics because of the sensational or surprising personal characteristics of the candidates in an election with not so exciting and not so novel issues on the table. Stories of Anthony Weiner's sexting scandal elicited interest and disappointment nationwide; Christine Quinn's potential to be the first woman and first openly gay mayor of the liberal capital of the country drew excitement from national organizations hoping for historic firsts; Bill de Blasio's advertisement featuring his mixed-race son, Dante, denouncing stop-and-frisk and, by extension, Mayor Bloomberg's reign of inequality, sparked an endorsement from President Obama; Bill Thompson, who did not gain much national attention, did speak in a "soaring, provocative, and personal" way about Trayvon Martin's death and its implications for African Americans around the country (NYT, Barbaro & Schweber, 2013). Andrew Meier of *The New York Times* described the mayoral race: "The campaign is a carnival, and yet in rare moments, it can seem a hopeful, ennobling, pluralistic spectacle. For all the pandering and patronage, you also see flickers of an unfashionable civic spirit, New Yorkers devoted to their city" (NYT, 2013). Meier's words describe the media coverage of the primary as well as the election itself since reporters covering the race detailed the carnival-like moments, but also strove to illuminate the hope each candidate promised for the city as the "anesthetized body politic struggl[ed] to revive itself" (NYT, Meier, 2013). This becomes clear in the ways in which reporters wrote about the identities of the candidates. This study focuses on coverage of Bill de Blasio, Christine Quinn, and Bill Thompson and how reporters of *The New York Times* discussed their identities on both

one-dimensional and intersectional levels. It aims to explore how newspaper coverage discusses identity when a mayoral race includes so many rich and intersectional identities. This limited but implication-heavy study suggests that reporters tend to focus on the assumption that personal identity sensitizes candidates to certain issues and on the novelty of certain identities in the context of a mayoral primary. This coverage echoes the circus-like nature of the democratic primary because it, on occasion, asks too much from the candidates based on stereotypes associated with their identities. However, the coverage also echoes the sense of hope that local politics can inspire because it reveals the diversity possible in a position that has often been dominated by white men and it shows the possibility for change in a city dominated by “three terms of Michael Bloomberg, coming after eight years of Rudolph Giuliani” or, in other words, by 20 years of Republican leadership in a largely liberal city. The next sections will detail the findings that suggest newspaper coverage focuses on identity as an indicator of sensitivity to certain issues and as something exciting and new.

Media Coverage: Identity as Sensitizing

Quinn, as the only woman and openly gay candidate in the race, was significantly more likely to be discussed in relation to women’s issues and in relation to issues important to the gay community. Thompson, as the only African American candidate, was more likely to be discussed in relation to “black issues” when only the candidate’s race was taken into account. However, when de Blasio’s interracial family - he is married to an African American woman and has mixed-race children - was also measured, both Thompson and de Blasio were more likely to be mentioned in relation to “black issues” such as stop-and-frisk than Quinn was.

Discussions of Quinn concerning “women’s issues” are a product both of reporters believing that Quinn, as a woman, would have more insight about such issues and also of her

campaign, desiring the women's vote, marketing Quinn as a champion for women and women's issues. Reporters also focused on Quinn's struggle to appeal to women, which indicated an increased journalistic interest on whether Quinn, as a woman, could appeal to women voters. Since Quinn, often described as having "a lack of polish," did not gain support from a majority of women voters in New York, journalists also focused on Quinn's deviation from these expectations of sensitivity. This interest was not repeated with male candidates because there were no discussions of whether male candidates, as men, could appeal to male voters. Reporting in *The New York Times* discussed Quinn's inability to excite "Hillary-style thrills" and the fact that "she [had] a hard time exciting voters, even women" as major flaws (NYT, Dowd, 2013). The assumption that Quinn, as a woman, would focus on certain issues was not always true and it is possible to see how her campaign reacted to reporting focused on this deviance. Since news coverage of her often focused on her identity as a woman, her campaign tried to soften her image so that she would appear more feminine, and thus, more acceptable to the image her identity conferred on her. One article described Quinn's performance in a debate: "Ms. Quinn, who is trying to overcome a reputation for sometimes being abrasive, appeared less brash than in previous debates, lowering the timbre of her voice and projecting a warmth that has sometimes eluded her" (NYT, Grynbaum & Barbaro, 2013).

Both Quinn and de Blasio demonstrated how candidates could be inconsistent with the expectations of their identities on the issues of paid sick leave and preschool. Quinn deviated from her expected role as a female candidate when she "stalled action on the [paid sick leave] measure for so long that she was widely viewed as an opponent, which hurt her credibility as a fighter for women" (NYT, Kantor & Taylor, 2013). De Blasio did not garner more mentions of "women's issues" than Quinn did, but Gloria Steinem expressed that de Blasio "effectively 'took

over the language of gender' in the race with his proposal to expand preschool programs with a tax increase" (NYT, Kantor & Taylor, 2013). In fact, if preschool had been included in the code "women's issues," it is likely that de Blasio would have experienced more gendered coverage and further study could include such a measure. De Blasio's focus on pre-school indicates that certain issues, traditionally associated with femininity, can be major issues on the campaign platforms of male candidates. Quinn's position on paid sick leave similarly emphasizes that issues considered women's issues might not be major issues on the campaign platforms of female candidates. Quinn's gender conferred on her expectations about which issues to champion and how to behave and these expectations were reflected in media discussions about Quinn's deviant positions on certain "women's issues."

Further, although Quinn's campaign did not market her as the first woman and first openly gay mayor until the very end of the primary, her campaign welcomed many endorsements from women's groups such as the National Organization of Women and from famous feminists such as Gloria Steinem and Sandra Fluke. This suggests that her campaign recognized the expectation that Quinn would be a voice for women and that it wanted, at least in part, to meet this expectation. These endorsements were a source of media coverage related to women's issues that the other candidates did not receive. Thus, Quinn's identity as a woman drew interest from reporters on her views on women's issues and also on her ability to garner mass support from female voters. Both of these factors increased the frequency with which Quinn appeared in gendered media discussions and corresponded with the idea that Quinn's identity as a woman would make her more receptive to issues concerning women and would make her more appealing to female voters.

The expectation that Quinn would be more sensitive than other candidates to issues concerning New York City's gay community is also reflected in newspaper coverage of Quinn. Quinn, as a gay woman, was more likely to be discussed in relation to "gay issues" because of the journalistic expectation that Quinn would be more sensitive to these issues and because of the expectation that she would receive the support of the gay community. As one of the few openly gay members of the city council and as the only openly gay candidate, she was frequently asked to comment on "gay issues" or decided on her own to make statements about such issues. Quinn's campaign wanted to appeal to gay voters and therefore often asked for this type of coverage. A description of an event Quinn's campaign held emphasizes its focus on Quinn's sexual orientation: "Before a backdrop of fluttering rainbow flags and the façade of Stonewall Inn, the West Village pub known as the birthplace of the modern gay rights movement, Christine C. Quinn and a slew of her supporters trumpeted the Democratic mayoral candidate's record...and asked 'gay New York'...to rally behind her as one of their own" (NYT, Maslin Nir, 2013). Further, the expectation of sensitivity was true in some cases as Quinn's personal experience likely contributed to her role in "push[ing] for the legalization of same-sex marriage" (NYT, Kaplan, 2013). Thus, both the media and Quinn's campaign promoted Quinn as the candidate who would be a voice for the gay community. Quinn's position also allowed her to gain credibility as this champion since she had already contributed to making New York friendly to the gay community.

However, Quinn's deviation from her expected role of sensitivity to the gay community also increased the number of discussions of her in relation to "gay issues." It appeared that Quinn couldn't unite a base of gay voters because voters were divided on other issues, such as Quinn's close relationship with Mayor Bloomberg, which was considered fatal in the primary. Some

reporters emphasized this inability, writing that “Christine Quinn, who is openly gay, lost the Chelsea-Union Square area of Manhattan” and that “gay men and lesbians split with Christine C. Quinn,” indicating that Quinn did not capture the vote of communities with large gay populations (NYT, Blow, 2013; NYT, Powell, 2013). Quinn’s sexuality likely gave the media and voters the expectation that she would be more progressive. However, Quinn did not trumpet the idealism of de Blasio, and instead focused on practicality and results. This made her seem like “the hack, the soul-seller, the expedient manipulator of self-interested deal-making” (NYT, Bellafante, 2013). Her willingness to work with Mayor Bloomberg, which is arguably necessary for the City’s success, could not compete with de Blasio’s fierce denunciations of most of Bloomberg’s initiatives. Although de Blasio could only do this because his position as the public advocate allowed him to criticize Bloomberg and to hold the city accountable, Quinn still came across as less progressive for her practical, and perhaps necessary, relationship with Bloomberg. This relationship hurt her terribly. Though Quinn may not have been overly progressive (for New York) for many reasons, it is likely that her identity as a lesbian emphasized her deviation from extreme liberalism. This is reflected in reporting that expected from her identity positions that she, as a person, did not hold.

Thompson was less likely to be mentioned in relation to “gay issues” and de Blasio was neither more or less likely to be mentioned in relation to “gay issues.” One probable reason Thompson was less likely to be discussed in this context is his position in the primary. As a not terribly exciting candidate and as one that did not market himself as the “true progressive,” Thompson did not speak on issues of social justice for gay couples or gay people very often, if ever. Thompson also received less overall coverage because of his largely stagnant position in the polls. De Blasio, on the other hand, in his role as the public advocate, had a convenient

platform from which he could speak on issues of social justice. One reporter wrote about de Blasio's attendance at a forum on discussing AIDS and the gay community: "Mr. de Blasio again indicated what an impressive command he had of the issues, immediately honing in on a matter of vital importance to AIDS activists." Thus, de Blasio revealed his expert understanding of "gay issues," which may have led to greater coverage of de Blasio's position on such issues.

Another interesting factor of relevance here is that de Blasio's wife, Chirlane McCray, "previously identified as a lesbian" before marrying de Blasio. In an interview, McCray said that "sexuality is a fluid thing, and it's personal" when she was asked if her sexual orientation had changed (NYT, Dowd, 2013). Thus, because McCray does not fit a stereotypical mold of a politician's wife, it would be an appropriate assumption that her former lesbian identity would gain a fair amount of media attention. However, while some of the sexuality coverage of de Blasio was related to McCray's identity, it was not a huge source of interest and reporters of *The New York Times* only mentioned her former lesbianism a few times in the entire sample. Journalists may have had limited interest in McCray's sexuality because McCray, married to de Blasio and with two children, appears to be straight by societal standards. Further, coverage of this topic may have seemed more suited for tabloid newspapers as McCray was not a candidate in the race and because too much focus on McCray's sexuality would have seemed unworthy of *The New York Times* coverage. In fact, mentions of McCray's sexuality seemed to contribute to de Blasio's progressive identity rather than casting doubt on the wholesomeness of his family as it might in other parts of the country or in another time period. McCray is portrayed as powerful, trendy, and smart. In fact, when de Blasio first met McCray, she "worked for the New York Commission on Human Rights and wore African clothing and a nose ring." Thus, while *The New York Times* mentioned McCray's sexual orientation minimally, her personality, including a

flexible sexuality, likely aided de Blasio's image by creating the sense that the personality of his family was entirely progressive. McCray's media presence contributed to de Blasio's image as an atypical white male candidate and gave him more flexibility in his identity. Thus, this image of McCray may have been one reason that the media, to de Blasio's advantage, assumed that de Blasio would be receptive to issues of both sexuality and race as well as other "progressive" issues.

One interesting, if not completely illuminating moment on the campaign trail, was when McCray was misquoted in a piece by Maureen Dowd, expressing her opinion of Quinn: "She's not the kind of person I can go up to and talk to about issues like taking care of children at a young age and paid sick leave" (NYT, 2013). The quote suggested that Quinn "could not understand the problems of parents because she did not have children herself" (NYT, Taylor, 2013). While this quote was reprinted to clarify the ambiguity that suggested an attack on limits associated with Quinn's sexual orientation, Quinn still brought the quote up during a debate and indicated that she was hurt by this sentiment. It is very likely Quinn did this for political reasons and did not believe McCray would suggest this, but this exchange reveals how a candidate can exploit media interest in identity to her advantage and shows the role candidates can have in dictating media coverage.

Thompson, as the only black candidate, received more coverage than Quinn on "black issues," especially on the issue of stop-and-frisk. De Blasio, both because the media gave attention to his interracial family and because stop-and-frisk was a major issue of his campaign, also received increased coverage on "black issues." Both de Blasio and Thompson were personally connected to stop-and-frisk as Thompson is black himself and as de Blasio's children are mixed-race but would be defined as black within the societal standards of the United States.

Thompson released an advertisement about stop-and-frisk in which he connects himself to the issue saying, “I’ve lived it” (NYT, Grynbaum, 2013). De Blasio also released an advertisement that featured his son, who had a frequently admired Afro, talking about the personal impact of stop-and-frisk. This successful ad led to increased coverage of de Blasio and stop-and-frisk. It also tied him to discussions about the “black vote” in a way that he had not been previously. Thompson, since he “defended elements of the stop-and-frisk policy as effective and stopp[ed] short of the call to abolish it,” was frequently discussed in connection with it as reporters believed his position to be a deviation from the expectations of his race and strange because of his desire to appeal to black voters (NYT, Barbaro & Schweber, 2013). In fact there is much commentary on the idea that “Bill de Blasio, a white candidate,...threatened Mr. Thompson’s support among blacks with [de Blasio’s] fierce denunciation of the Police Departments’s stop-and-frisk tactics”(NYT, Barbaro & Schweber, 2013). Thus, Thompson, in defying his assumed role as the “black candidate,” generated even more media discussion about his relationship to stop-and-frisk. Like with Quinn, newspaper reporting expected Thompson to behave within the stereotypical dictates of his race (here, to oppose stop-and-frisk fervently). When Thompson was not more sensitive to this issue than non-black candidates were, he received increased news coverage because of his deviance.

In fact, de Blasio, as a white man with an interracial family, seemed quite sensitized to “black issues.” De Blasio’s fight against inequality ignited support from African-American voters as a historically marginalized group excluded from many of the City’s economic opportunities. This further fueled the fact that both de Blasio and Thompson were “aggressively courting African-American voters” (NYT, Barbaro & Schweber, 2013). Another article discussed a common sentiment: “People were saying, ‘We may have a black candidate in the

race who we may like, but we also have a candidate who more closely represents the issues that we care about” (NYT, Chen, 2013). Thus, there was a lot of media interest in whether black communities would vote for the black candidate or for the candidate who championed “black issues.” This media interest also focused on why the black candidate was not necessarily this champion. This kind of discussion – including those of Thompson’s limited criticism of stop-and-frisk - likely pressured Thompson to make more aggressive statements against the practice and to possibly move away from what he believed was right and best for the City. Thus, while the media’s expectation that candidates with certain identities will be more receptive to issues related to those identities is often a fair expectation, it is important to remember that this is not always true and that reporting can pressure candidates to behave in ways that contradict with what they believe is best for the City.

Thompson generated some media attention that differed from de Blasio’s in terms of “black issues.” This included his statement on Trayvon Martin, whose death became a national issue and seemed to require a response from the black candidate in a city election believed to be important on a national level. In fact, Thompson “drew a connection between racially motivated stops in New York and the killing in Florida of the unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin” (NYT, Barbaro & Schweber, 2013). Thompson also commented on issues that plague minority communities in New York, such as gun violence. He was the only candidate to comment on the death of a 1-year-old in a Brooklyn community. One reporter described the event: “[Thompson] decried the ‘senseless death of our children,’ and said that even with a citywide murder rate at record lows, ‘neighborhoods like Brownsville still have to deal with too high a level of violence’” (NYT, Goodman, 2013). Thus, although Thompson came from a relatively middle class background, it seems that he was expected to speak for poor black communities largely

because of his race and despite the fact that he sometimes seemed uncomfortable with this role. Overall, the reporters of *The New York Times* expected both Thompson and de Blasio to comment with more personal emphasis on issues of race than they expected of Quinn.

The idea of identity as sensitizing plays out in different ways for de Blasio and Thompson in this primary. Thompson seems to be discussed in relation to “black issues” frequently because of his race while de Blasio seems to be frequently discussed in relation to “black issues” because of his interracial family. De Blasio sought this attention and hoped to benefit from his intersectional identity as a white male that could intimately identify with racial discrimination. Thompson also solicited coverage on certain issues like the death of Trayvon Martin, but did so in a less aggressive way. Mentions of Thompson indicating his race mostly have to do with the fact that he was the only African American candidate in the primary and with his relationship to black voters. Mentions of Thompson’s race and of Thompson in relation to “black issues” seem to be restrictive and to pigeonhole him as the “black candidate.” De Blasio, in contrast, seems to have more flexibility with his dual identity, maintaining the typical and possibly comfortable image of the white male politician while also gaining credibility in his appeal to black voters from his family’s mixed-race status. De Blasio was not expected - as much - to act in a certain way, and had more possibilities open to him because of this. Although in many parts of the country de Blasio’s dual identity and interracial family might inspire criticism, this did not appear to be the case in New York. While it is likely that there were some people who disapproved of de Blasio’s family, these people were in the minority as de Blasio’s eventual victory indicates. Further, in a race with so many different identities, de Blasio’s family did not seem out of the ordinary. Many people responded to the fact that de Blasio’s family reflected the composition of their own families or communities - a reflection that would not exist in many

places outside of New York City. One article quotes a New Yorker, saying of de Blasio: “He’s married to a black woman and it seems like he can relate to New Yorkers because it’s a multicultural place” (NYT, Berger, 2013). Moreover, de Blasio’s message about economic inequality appealed to many people from many different backgrounds and it is likely this message overshadowed concerns that people had about an interracial family inhabiting Gracie Mansion.

However, this is not to say that de Blasio’s strategy went without criticism. One resident of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn preferred Thompson because “he was honest and straightforward,” believing that de Blasio’s ad was “a ploy to get the black vote” (NYT, Grynbaum, 2013). Further, Mayor Bloomberg “said he considered it racist of Mr. de Blasio to promote his mixed-race family” (NYT, McGeehan, 2013). Thus, the presence of de Blasio’s family in the primary was not universally appreciated. The fact that Mayor Bloomberg described de Blasio’s bid as racist – though this blunder was corrected and explained - probably indicated a deeper dislike of de Blasio and was likely shared by many New Yorkers.

It appears that reporters give different candidates more attention on certain issues because of their identities. In many ways, this coverage conforms to stereotypical notions of identity, but it also manages to highlight diversity and to give candidates a chance to speak on issues they might be more knowledgeable about because of their identities. Further, this type of coverage was not only initiated by the media, but candidates often asked for coverage that would make them more appealing to certain demographic groups because of their personal abilities to identify with such groups.

Media Coverage: Identity as Novel

Quinn, who had the potential to be the first woman and first openly gay mayor of the City of New York, received a significant amount of newspaper coverage discussing her historic run. She was significantly more likely to be mentioned with indicators of her gender and sexuality than the other candidates were. Quinn's family - Quinn and her wife, Kim Catullo - would be the first same-sex couple to live in Gracie Mansion, and this also presented something new and worthy of media coverage. Andrew Meier emphasized this novelty when he commented on the sense of potential change in this race: "The worry that hangs over the longest race for City Hall in New York history is whether any of these 11 men and 1 woman can keep that prospect [of change] alive" (NYT, Meier, 2013). Thus, Quinn's place as the only woman in the race is emphasized when she stands next to the 11 men, who represent the dominance of males in politics.

Bill de Blasio, as a white man with an interracial family, was equally as likely to be mentioned in relation to "black issues" and with indicators of his family's race as Thompson, the only black candidate, was, and de Blasio was significantly more likely to be mentioned in relation to these issues than Quinn was. Bill de Blasio's interracial family presented a new and, for many, exciting identity as the idea of the "modern family" becomes popularized in American society, especially in New York City. Bill Thompson, although on his third marriage, had a relatively conventional family by comparison, and thus, his identity appeared less novel and less exciting than those of the other two candidates discussed here.

The historic potential of Quinn's candidacy inspired many media mentions. The media mentioned her gender significantly more than it discussed the genders of the other candidates. These mentions were often related to her position as the potential first woman mayor of New

York City. This is expected because, as the female candidate, Quinn deviated from the norm of male candidates and male mayors. She was also the lone woman candidate in the race. This is certainly newsworthy and a subject of media interest and it would be strange if her gender was never mentioned. It would also be strange if the gender of de Blasio or Thompson was mentioned due to the societal and historical dominance of men in politics. Thus, the idea of a first woman mayor of the City was one way that the media made sense of Quinn's candidacy and her identity. While Quinn may not have always acceptably fit the feminine role expected of the first female mayor as a woman "reputed to have a hot temper and blunt manner," this characterization also suggested hope of a future in which women can be mayors of large cities in the U.S.

In terms of the frequencies with which the different candidates were described with indicators of their sexuality, Quinn was significantly more likely to be mentioned, but both Thompson and de Blasio were neither significantly more or less likely to be mentioned with these indicators. These findings can be explained in a few ways. These differences can be explained, in part, by the novelty of a first lesbian mayor. Quinn was mentioned directly as the potential "first openly gay mayor" many times, which increased the number of times her sexuality was discussed. The context surrounding certain articles also illuminates why media mentions of the wives of the different candidates increased. Mentions of whether the candidates were in same-sex or heterosexual relationships were coded as indicators of their sexuality. With the revelation of Anthony Weiner's sexting scandal, all other candidates emphasized the stability of their marital relationships by increasing spousal appearances on the campaign trail. Thus, as reporters covered these appearances, the number of times they indicated the sexuality of different candidates increased. However, with regard to mentions of the candidates' spouses, the mentions

are relatively close in number. Thus, while Quinn's historic potential earned her the position of being most likely to be mentioned with sexuality indicators, the sexualities of Thompson and de Blasio were also considered newsworthy even if this was largely due to Weiner's transgressions rather than Quinn's sexuality. A reporter called attention to the importance of spouses on the campaign trail – especially for Quinn – writing, “showing off spouses can be an important way for candidates, particularly for gay candidates, to soften their images, by demonstrating that they have families, and Ms. Quinn's rivals in the Democratic primary, all men, have repeatedly called attention to their wives in the campaign” (NYT, Taylor, 2013). Thus, the fact that Quinn would be the first openly gay mayor and the first mayor to be in a same-sex marriage was exciting because of its novelty and its implications for the direction of social values in New York City. However, her campaign's emphasis on her wife indicates that it sought to make her more acceptably female and to make her lesbianism less deviant. This is one instance in which the different parts of Quinn's identity conflict because women are stereotypically expected to have children and same-sex marriages do not yield biological children of both partners. Thus, while these notions are changing, it is still possible to see how Quinn, as a lesbian candidate, navigated this conflict between her sexuality and her femininity. From this discussion, it is clear that one reason newspaper reporting discussed Quinn with such emphasis on her identity was the novelty of her candidacy. Because of this novelty, the media could both discuss her campaign's different strategies for dealing with the historic nature of her candidacy and the larger societal implications of such a run.

De Blasio's interracial family also received novelty reporting. His family would be the first interracial family to live in Gracie mansion and this had societal and political implications. The novelty of his family structure was one reason he received significant mentions of race and

race related issues. Bill de Blasio, as a white heterosexual male, did not fit his classic image in many ways, and thus, the subject of his interracial or “modern” family was very popular among reporters and among New Yorkers. The advertisement starring his son was very effective, in part, because it highlighted “the fact that his family is racially mixed: he’s white, his wife is black and Dante [his son] has the most impressive Afro since Angela Davis” (NYT, Collins, 2013). Thus, this unexpected family structure in the mayoral race generated intense journalistic interest that more typical family structures, such as Thompson’s, could not.

Thus, it is clear that reporters from *The New York Times* put a significant emphasis on novelty during this race. This is expected because what is new is often interesting and is more likely to catch the attention of readers.

Implications of Media Focus on Sensitivity and Novelty

Intersectional identity – belonging in more than one social group – is acknowledged in newspaper discussions of each of these candidates. However, the discussions differ based on the different identities a candidate holds. For Bill Thompson and Christine Quinn, the fact that their most visible identities are marginalized ones seems to limit their ability to deviate from what is expected of them. For Bill de Blasio, his intersectional identity as a heterosexual white father of mixed-race children seems to give him more flexibility with his identity since his white male identity is typical of politics and, therefore, is not an identity that comes with the same expectations of appealing to a narrow demographic group. The media focus on the sensitivity of candidates to issues related to their identities emphasizes the limitations placed on candidates, especially on those, like Christine Quinn, who belong to more than one marginalized group.

For Quinn, the expectation that she would respond more than the other candidates to issues concerning the female and gay communities led to greater news coverage of her related to

these issues and related to the voting habits of these groups. However, this expectation of sensitivity that the media had of Quinn constricted her campaign in some ways. She struggled to fill these roles and to express viewpoints that did not fit with these parts of her identity. This led to “the perception that [Quinn] [was] a party hack, a bureaucrat with no inspiration, a brassy or aggressive personality without redeeming brilliance or vision” (NYT, Torregrosa, 2013). This critique indicates the kind of visceral hatred that Quinn experienced and that the other candidates did not. While this extreme criticism certainly was not dependent on Quinn’s gender or sexuality, the two were not completely unrelated. This view of Quinn likely emerges in part because of her platform’s inconsistency with the expectations of her gender and sexual orientation. Further, when reporting constantly discusses deviation from the expected issues and voter base, a negative image emerges that the candidate can only control by changing her platform and possibly compromising the positions that she believes are best for the City. Even more, since Quinn’s gender and sexual orientation do not necessarily carry the same set of stereotypes, there was sometimes pressure for Quinn to fulfill different and conflicting expectations.

The complicated relationship that Quinn’s campaign had with marketing her historic run reveals some implications that media focus on novelty has for discussions of intersectional identity. Though her campaign tried to soften her image and tried to flaunt support from women’s groups, the “campaign for the most part [didn’t] blar[e] or bra[g] that she would be New York’s first openly gay mayor and its first female one; neither a reason to vote for her” (NYT, Bruni, 2013). Thus, the emphasis on the historic nature of the campaign was an understated one and the Quinn campaign focused more heavily on Quinn’s record of results and ability to get things done. While Quinn’s campaign debated how to deal with Quinn’s potential firsts, the media took on the emphasis of “firsts” as its own responsibility, leading to many

discussions of this as well as discussions about Quinn and her potential to harness the power of the “women’s vote” and the “gay vote.” Though Quinn did not always emphasize gender and sexuality in her campaign, she did realize her unique ability to talk about the personal nature of women’s rights, especially reproductive rights. She capitalized on this ability by making “access to abortion and emergency contraception for women a signature issue” and by “saying she wanted to make New York as ‘pro-choice and pro-women as possible’” (NYT, Hartocollis, 2013). However, Quinn’s self-definition as “a big pushy broad” sometimes made it difficult for her to appeal to voters on these issues (NYT, Chen, 2013). In fact, one article expressed that “men, and some women, regularly called her voice grating” (NYT, Kantor & Taylor, 2013). A fellow New York woman, on a committee to support Quinn, even expressed that Quinn could benefit from a voice coach. Another candidate, John Catsimatidis, said of Quinn, “Nice lady, but if I have to listen to her voice for four years, I’ll die” (NYT, Kantor & Taylor, 2013). Thus, while Quinn’s gender was likely not a determining factor in her loss, it did play a role in perceptions of her as a candidate. Quinn experienced more discussions of her identity than the other two candidates did because she had these two sometimes-conflicting parts of her identity that the media discussed both together and separately.

De Blasio, although not all New Yorkers liked the idea of an interracial family at the head of the City, seemed to largely benefit from this intersectional identity. In part, this is because he could often genuinely appeal to minority communities in ways that other white male candidates could not because of his close connection to race. Further, he did not fit the classic image of a heterosexual white male because of his platform, his family, and his existing position in city government. The high frequency of race related discussions about de Blasio was largely a result of his mixed-race family, which gave him an advantage in appealing to different groups of

voters. Even as a white man, de Blasio was able to convincingly label himself as the most progressive candidate. This was somewhat because his identity as the father of mixed-race children and as the husband of a black woman made him seem more relatable to many black voters. The advertisement featuring his son Dante made his stance on stop-and-frisk credible as voters could see the personal investment de Blasio would have in reforming this practice. Therefore de Blasio's intersectional racial identity proved an advantage to him because it allowed him to make this connection. The social justice and economic inequality issues on which he focused likely defined his eventual victory, but his ability to appeal to voters in a seemingly honest and true way likely helped (or didn't hurt) his chances.

De Blasio did not experience the same pressure Thompson did to act as the "black candidate," and thus, had more flexibility in his campaign message. For example, when Thompson did not support the complete discontinuance of stop-and-frisk, he was criticized as having a "thread-the-needle position" (NYT, Chen, 2013). When de Blasio similarly did not support eliminating the tactic, he was heralded as "claiming the mantle of the issue closest to the hearts of many black voters" (NYT, Grynbaum, 2013). Though de Blasio's message was admittedly clearer than Thompson's or, at the least, more widely discussed, both candidates wanted to maintain the policy with reforms. Perhaps more was expected of Thompson as the "black candidate," and de Blasio exceeded expectations as a white candidate taking careful notice of an issue important to the black community. This is only a theory, but it is supported by the results here and by the commentary of many reporters in the sample. In one article, Sam Roberts quotes Chris McNickle, an authority on ethnic politics, suggesting that de Blasio's win over Thompson in Brooklyn "supports 'the notion of a continued migration toward post-racial politics'" (NYT, 2013). This might be partly true, but it also appears that de Blasio's mixed-race

family played a prominent role in this win and in his success in Brooklyn. Media attention on de Blasio's family emphasizes the focus on novelty and sensitivity. Without having the personal relationship to race, De Blasio likely would not have received as much coverage surrounding stop-and-frisk and about the black vote. Without the novelty of a "modern family," de Blasio would likely have received less media coverage overall and would have found it harder to appeal to voters across the city.

Bill Thompson, unlike de Blasio, did not have as much room to deviate from the role he was expected to fill as the "black candidate," and this becomes clear in media discussions that give voice to the people of New York and to the leaders of minority communities. While Thompson received endorsements from local leaders of communities that were primarily composed of minorities, he did not receive the endorsement of Al Sharpton, a prominent African American leader in New York, who was furious over Thompson's opposition to the Racial Profiling Bill and the Inspector General Bill, both of which de Blasio supported. Sharpton, who historically endorses black candidates, could not endorse Thompson, which left Thompson "crestfallen." Another article discussing Thompson's position on stop-and-frisk expressed that his position "won the candidate endorsements from police unions, but it confused his message where it mattered most: with black voters, a majority of whom voted for Mr. de Blasio, whose opposition was crisper and had a harder edge" (NYT, Chen, 2013). This suggests a heavy expectation that a black candidate should champion the issues of minority groups. Thompson was not able to meet this expectation. This expectation seems unrealistic for Thompson because he promoted a "centrist" platform and his experience had not been with issues of human rights. Thompson was the President of the New York City Board of Education and then the Comptroller of the City before he entered the private sector and worked for an investment bank. Thompson

grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a neighborhood of Brooklyn traditionally populated by poor minority groups. However, Thompson, while sharing this neighborhood experience with what he hoped would be his voter base in Brooklyn, did not grow up in poverty. His grew up in a middle-class household with his mother as a teacher and his father as a judge. While, this does not mean he would be unable to understand poverty and unable to be an advocate for impoverished minorities, it is noteworthy that his race seems to require that he take this role even though his professional and personal backgrounds do not suggest that this is a role he commonly fills. Thus, Thompson's race seems to put him at a slight disadvantage, not because voters were overwhelmingly racist, but because voters expected him to focus more on racial and minority issues, which, while part of his platform, was not satisfactorily so.

Further, Thompson did not receive a lot of coverage related to gender or sexuality issues. This could be because he never gained frontrunner status and thus was mostly covered in relation to dominant issues of the election. While coverage of his wife's activity on the campaign trail likely humanized Thompson and made him seem family-focused compared to Anthony Weiner, his wife did not receive enough coverage for her to inspire the excitement of Chirlane McCray or the excitement generated by Quinn's wife, Kim Catullo. Thus, Thompson seems to be at a disadvantage because of his very typical family, which didn't provide material for media discussions of novelty. In fact, when he tried to create a commercial starring his daughter and her personal experience with stop-and-frisk, it "struck many as a late and lesser version of the popular ad Mr. de Blasio ran featuring his son" (NYT, Chen, 2013). Thus, Thompson's identity as both a black man and as a financial rather than human rights presence in city politics seemed to hurt his candidacy as he couldn't meet the expectations that his race required. Further, the lack of nuance in his campaign likely led to less media interest in Thompson overall. When the media

was interested in Thompson, the interest was often in his stance on race-related issues or in his deviance from his expected role as the “black candidate.” Therefore, media focus on novelty and sensitivity was, at least partly, detrimental to Thompson because the media ignored him on certain issues and gave him less attention overall.

Discussions of intersectional identity in this study focus on race, sexual orientation, and gender. However, intersectional discussions cannot focus only on these elements of identity but must also include personality. Discussions of personality are prevalent in reporting about the three candidates and these discussions contribute to the complexity of candidate identity. Gender, sexuality, and racial identity cannot be separated from personality since no part of a person exists independently. Thus, voter perception of candidates is likely to be influenced by both identity and personality. Quinn was generally considered the least likeable of the candidates and reporters emphasized this in terms of personality. Meier’s descriptions of each candidate at a mayoral forum epitomized the reporting about personality. Of Quinn, Meier wrote: “As her rivals took their turns, Quinn sat placidly in the corner...She [in response to boos] stood her ground...comporting herself, as always, more with the air of a hostess than coequal.” Of de Blasio, Meier wrote: “De Blasio may not be a graceful presence, but he is at home on the soapbox...He held the cord of the microphone in his left hand, à la Sinatra, as he unspooled a string of one liners.” Of Thompson, Meier wrote: “When Thompson stood, his left hand dipped into a trouser pocket, the message was clear: *The race is long folks. I’m in no rush.* At 60, ‘Billy’ Thompson possesses a courtly bearing and a calm voice” (NYT, 2013). Thus, as Meier described the candidates standing beside one another, a sense of their personalities shone through: Quinn as aloof and cold, de Blasio as a romanticized crooner, and Thomson as familiar but passive. These brief but telling portraits raise some questions about newspaper reporting of candidate

personality. To what extent do reporters accurately capture the public personalities of candidates? Are personality portrayals influenced by understandings of other elements of identity such as race, sexuality, and gender? Since voters get most of their information about electoral contests from media sources and not from interaction with candidates, it is likely that media portrayals of personality affect the way voters feel about candidates and that most voter ideas about candidate personalities are secondary as these ideas are filtered through the lens of the media.

Emphasis on Quinn's personality seems to be at least somewhat related to her gender as her deviance from the warm and soft personality expected of women likely contributed to her low likeability. However, her closeness to Mayor Bloomberg also severely lowered her likeability ratings and contributed to the perception that she was inauthentic. One anecdote from an article represented the intersection of Quinn's gender and personality. In one debate among the democratic candidates, a reporter asked Quinn about her temper. Michael Powell described her response: "Ms. Quinn, who has perfected a glazed-eye lobotomized smile when addressing this question, slowly, sweetly, carefully confess[ed] that, yes, she [had] been known to raise her voice" (NYT, 2013). Powell also noted his own response, writing that he "wanted to throw [his] shoe at the television and ask (loudly, of course): Good God, a New Yorker with a temper? Knock me over with a feather" (NYT, 2013). He went on to describe the long history of male mayors in New York with amazing tempers and attributed this question about Quinn's personality to her gender, emphasizing that the men that came before her and those on the stage with her had not and would not receive similar questions. Thus, perceptions of personality and candidate identity are intertwined, especially when, as discussed previously, a candidate's identity demands a certain personality. Just as reporters expected Quinn to be more responsive to

women's issues because she was a woman, both reporters and voters expected Quinn to have a certain personality because she was a woman. This is, of course, more complicated, as female politicians who are considered too gentle or too polite are also criticized for having personalities inconsistent with leadership. The description of Quinn's "lobotomized smile" demonstrates her attempt to portray herself with a balanced personality.

Commentary on Quinn's personality is also closely related to her relationship with Mayor Bloomberg, which contributed to the perception of Quinn as inauthentic. One article discusses Quinn's likeability: "When you ask people why they don't like Ms. Quinn, they cite her closeness to the mayor, her reversal on term limits and the incredibly long time it took her to support paid sick leave for privately employed workers. This in particular makes her seem not merely opportunistic but petty and unfeeling" (Bellafante, NYT, 2013). Thus, likeability is determined by a combination of issues, personality, politics, and identity. It is noteworthy that Quinn's positions made her seem unlikeable despite the fact that most of them could be reasonably explained and despite the fact that other candidates shared some of her criticized positions (e.g. de Blasio also changed his position on term limits). Thus, dislike of Quinn must have been partly due to how media sources portrayed her personality in relation to her positions. Her public appearances were often characterized by "a continuing mode of response" since "she [was] always having to defend herself – and defensiveness in politics and in life rarely leave people wanting more of you" (Bellafante, NYT, 2013). This defensiveness was necessary because of the intense privately funded public opposition Quinn experienced. A group, Anybody But Quinn, made it more difficult for Quinn to attend public events and forums because this group followed her, bombarding her with boos wherever she went. This loud opposition did not contribute to a positive public image of Quinn, and thus she tried to limit her interaction with the

group toward the end of the race. However, in exchange, her low attendance at forums further contributed to her image as aloof and uninterested. Many factors contributed to the idea that Quinn's personality made her unlikeable, which demonstrates how perceptions of personality are necessarily tied to other elements of identity.

Media discussions of Bill de Blasio indicated that voters perceived him as much more likeable than Quinn. Like with Quinn, perceptions of de Blasio's personality were closely tied to his identity, the issues he championed, and the way in which he presented himself. De Blasio did not claim the crooner personality described above without hard work and deft political strategy. De Blasio's focus on certain issues was carefully calculated: "Underlying it all was a message of indignant liberalism, sketched out by de Blasio at a Manhattan restaurant in 2012, that was simple, sellable and penetrating enough to transcend class, gender and race" (Barbaro, NYT, 2013). His acclaimed advertisement used "a long lens" to "blur out the expensive fixtures" of a neighbor's home that were deemed inconsistent with his campaign message (Barbaro, NYT, 2013). Both despite these calculations and because of them, de Blasio labeled himself as the progressive candidate, the fighter of economic inequality, and the enemy of stop-and-frisk. This image required de Blasio to express authenticity as a personality trait. His political decisions, which were undoubtedly genuine as well as political, to get arrested in an act of civil disobedience and to participate in rallies indicated his authenticity. His participation made him the candidate of the people, which greatly increased his favorability. Further, de Blasio's personality – "calm and deferential" – contributed to his easygoing but outspoken-against-injustice image and increased his favorability (Chen, NYT, 2013). Moreover, de Blasio's identity as the father of mixed-race children contributed to his likeability because his family "appealed to our multiethnic yearning for racial harmony" and because "the pictures of his family laughing

together remind you both of how far we've come and where we'd like to go" (Collins, NYT, 2013). It is important to note that the leaders of de Blasio's campaign worried that "his personality could seem too professorial" and thus, his emergence as the people's candidate was the result of a concerted effort (Barbaro, NYT, 2013). Thus, like Quinn, de Blasio's public personality was intimately tied to his identity and to the issues on which he focused. The favorability that his personality inspired likely contributed to his electoral success.

It is also important to note de Blasio's focus on economic inequality and how this focus factored into the language of the primary and into de Blasio's eventual win. While this study shows how identity is portrayed in *New York Times* reporting, de Blasio's focus on economic inequality in the aftermath of the Occupy Wall Street movement is crucial for understanding his candidacy and contributes to the above discussions of his intersectional identity and personality. De Blasio's overarching campaign message was the "Tale of Two Cities" and all of the policies for which he advocated - including an end to stop-and-frisk, funding for universal pre-k, and passing paid sick leave- fell under the heading of this message targeting inequality. In *The New York Times* editorial board endorsement of de Blasio for mayor (not for the Democratic nomination), the board writes: "For all his reliance on his well-worn 'tale of two cities' metaphor, de Blasio has already united New York. Voters across the boroughs support him overwhelmingly. He promises to be a mayor who listens instead of scolds, who calms fears instead of inciting them" (NYT, 2013). Thus, de Blasio's campaign correctly realized that New Yorkers across socioeconomic statuses desired economic and social justice and favored decreasing the wealth inequality that grew dramatically under Bloomberg. De Blasio's identity as a member of a mixed-race family helped him deliver this message of change and hope successfully by contributing to his credibility on and increasing his media coverage related to

these issues. However, de Blasio's identity was just one tool he used to appeal to voters and to urge them to listen to his message that was popular on its own merits. The "tale of two cities" rhetoric became so popular partly because de Blasio's identity and personality allowed him to capture the attention of New Yorkers. Without the convergence of personality, identity, and issue-based messages, de Blasio's emphasis on Occupy-style change may never have reached the ears of voters and the ears of the nation.

Bill Thompson's personality was portrayed in reporting as friendly but bland, which made him likeable but mostly ignored by reporters and unknown to voters. The most common descriptions of Thompson's personality centered on his lack of "fire" and lack of recognition with voters: "Even though this year is the fourth time Thompson has appeared on a citywide ballot, nearly half of New York voters in a Quinnipiac Poll taken last month said they still did not know enough about him to form an opinion" (Chen, NYT, 2013). Further, a person present in meetings with Thompson told a reporter that Thompson's shows of anger were "like watching someone get up and do a high school play: Time to be angry! Time to be fiery!" (Chen, NYT, 2013). Thus, opposite to Quinn's difficulty with a brash personality, Thompson's difficulty was with a personality not brash enough. This difference provides interesting commentary on gender expectations. Perhaps both Thompson and Quinn would be considered more politically acceptable if they switched personalities. Thompson's personality was also linked with his identity and with the issues on which he focused. His centrist position on most issues contributed to perceptions that his personality was mild and to his relative anonymity in the race. Further, the fact that he was the only black candidate in the primary came with the expectation that he would have a greater "capacity for passion" with respect to issues affecting African-American communities (Chen, NYT, 2013). When he did not, this contributed not only the image of

Thompson as boring and conventional, but also to the perception of Thompson as “stiff and formal” (Chen, NYT, 2013). Thus, personality, identity, and central campaign issues all influence one another and their intersections contribute to media and voter perceptions of candidates. This emphasizes the importance of understanding intersectional identity as including both demographic identity and also personality.

Implications for Intersectional Discussions of Identity

The media’s coverage of identity – especially of intersectional identity – focuses on the novelty of identity and the sensitivity that identity gives candidates to certain issues. These discussions can be both beneficial and detrimental. While discussions in media about how a candidate deviates from what that candidate’s race, gender, or sexuality would stereotypically suggest may be interesting, these discussions can also contribute to increased pandering by candidates who wish to avoid the negative tone of deviance. However, there is no direct link drawn in this study between candidate behavior and media reporting, and thus, it can be hypothesized that both campaigns and reporting influence each other rather than the influence running in one direction. Drawing on this, journalists should take their influence into account and pay more attention to the extent to which they characterize – intentionally, unintentionally, or at the candidate’s urging - a candidate by gender, race, or sexual orientation. It also suggests that even when campaigns do not emphasize candidate race, gender, or sexuality, these aspects of a candidate will still be discussed, which reaffirms the fact that campaigns do not have ultimate control over how a candidate is perceived. This is how it should be, but it is important both for reporters and for campaigns to realize their respective roles in relaying a candidate’s identity to voters.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of how intersectional identity is discussed in media discussions of political campaigns. Thus, it can be expected - especially when

a candidate belongs to more than one marginalized group – that the candidate will experience discussions infused with stereotyping on multiple levels and in multiple directions. However, since all candidates have complex identities, it is likely that all candidates will experience some contradicting and complex discussions of identity. For example, within the discussion of Bill Thompson, he is described within the category “black man,” but he is also described by his identity as a politician and as a middle-class black man rather than as a poor black man. Thus, while common stereotypes are present in media reporting, there is always more complexity to these stereotypes than a narrow race, gender, or sexuality characterization.

Further, since most voters receive information about candidates from the media, it is important for voters to understand the complexity of the media’s presentation of a candidate and to understand that identities are always intersectional even if a candidate is primarily discussed in terms of one dominant identity. In part, discussions of intersectional identity create room for a more complex image of candidate and possibly a more realistic version of that candidate. However, discussions of intersectional identity may also create expectations in so many different directions that the candidate cannot come close to meeting these expectations. This can be especially true when a candidate’s intersectional identity includes membership in two marginalized groups.

Limitations and Future Study

There are some important limitations of this study that suggest future study. First the study only examined one mayoral primary in one city. This limits the reach of the results and thus it can only offer limited implications. Further study could compare this primary to a similar one to see if these results were particular to this race or could be generalized further. This study used a specific set of codes that, while drawn from previous literature, remain unsatisfactory for looking at comprehensive media coverage of identity in mayoral races. Thus, it would be interesting to see how the results changed with more coding categories that included different measures of identity.

One future area of research that this study suggests is the exploration of the intersections between class, race, and gender. For example, are discussions of Bill Thompson actually about his race or do these discussions comment on class distinctions that are commonly incorporated into understandings of race? Similarly, are discussions of Quinn's sexuality and gender also related to class distinctions? Ginia Bellafante of *The New York Times* wrote about why some voters reacted to Quinn with anger: "I've had acquaintances tell me that they find her too provincial, too suburban, which is to say not quite sophisticated enough to manage the gleaming city that she is criticized for helping to create" (NYT, 2013). In fact, Bellafante continued: "Worldly intellectuals of the left have flocked to Mr. de Blasio" (NYT, 2013). Therefore, to what extent did support for de Blasio involve ideas of social class? To what extent is interest in his interracial family related to class associations? It would be interesting to explore how ideas about class play a role in discussions of identity even when class is rarely mentioned explicitly.

Another area for further exploration would be looking more closely at trait coverage. Here, the candidates had relatively equal amounts of trait coverage. Trait reporting included

mentions of Quinn's "teal toenail polish," of de Blasio's height and "easygoing but frequently indecisive" character, and of Thompson's "low-key manner." In this sample reporters gave equal attention to the character and the physical traits of each candidate, which indicates that there was no significant inequality of these discussions. There could be a number of reasons for this; however, the reasons would be best addressed in further research that explored traits in greater detail.

This study only focused on the reporting of one newspaper and thus, it can only provide insight into how candidates were presented in this paper. One interesting study could compare reporting of this electoral contest in *The New York Times* with that of another paper. Still more interesting would be to examine intersectional discussions of identity present in television reporting and social media discussions of this election. Therefore, while this study gives us a glimpse into media discussions of intersectional identity, its most important implications are those that suggest further study. Since the findings here are significant, the findings of future studies promise to yield significant and enlightening results.

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Appendix A: Instrument and Understanding

Unit of Measurement: words or sets of adjacent words (phrases).

Domain 1: Racial Discussions in Media

When the frequency with which African American candidates are described with racial indicators is greater than the frequency with which white candidates are described with racial indicators. When reporters discuss African American candidates or candidates with African American families in relation to “black issues” more frequently than they discuss white candidates or candidates with white families in relation to the same topics.

01: indication that candidate/family is black: African American, black, Afro, race

02: indication that candidate /family is white: white

03: discussion of “black issues”: Trayvon Martin, Stop and Frisk, racial profiling bill, black vote, Chirlane McCray, Dante De Blasio, Chiara DeBlasio.

Domain 2: Sexuality Discussions in Media

When the frequency with which lesbian candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality is greater than the frequency with which heterosexual candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality. When reporters discuss lesbian candidates or candidates with gay family members in relation to “gay issues” more frequently than they discuss straight candidates in relation to the same topics.

01: indication that candidate is lesbian: lesbian, gay, homosexual, married to woman, wife

02: indication that candidate is straight: straight, heterosexual, married to woman, wife, children, husband

03: discussion of “gay issues”: Gay Marriage, same-sex marriage, Edie Windsor, pride parade, children, Chirlane McCray (when her sexuality is mentioned), gay vote.

Domain 3: Gender Discussions in Media

When the frequency with which female candidates are described with indicators of their gender is greater than the frequency with which male candidates are described with indicators of their gender. When reporters describe the traits of females candidates more frequently than they describe the traits of male candidates. When reporters discuss female candidates in relation to “women’s issues” more frequently than they discuss male candidates in relation to the same topics.

01: indication that candidate is female: female, woman

02: indication that candidate is male: male, man

03: discussion of traits: attire, hair, weight, tone of voice, personal habits, character.

04: discussion of “women’s issues”: women’s issues, Planned Parenthood, Gloria Steinem, National Organization of Women, women’s vote, reproductive health.

Domain 4: Candidates

- 1: Bill Thompson
- 2: Christine Quinn
- 3: Bill de Blasio

Domain 5: Type of article

- 1: Opinion
- 2: Editorial
- 3: Objective report

Domain 6: Sex of Author

- 1: Male
- 2: Female

Domain 7: Month of Article

- 1: July
- 2: August
- 3: September

Domain 8: Race of Author

- 1) African American
- 2) White
- 3) Other

Guiding notes for Codebook:

This codebook is subject to change. While the domains and the 2-4 subsets within each domain will remain the same, it is likely that some words or phrases will be added within the subsets of each domain. When this occurs, the text that has already been coded will be recoded using the new modified version of the codebook.

The coding of each article was performed using Dedoose, which is an online qualitative and mixed methods research analysis software that allows for the efficient organization and reorganization of data.

Understanding the Coding Scheme:

Type of Identity Discussion	Corresponding Hypotheses (# refers to those listed in literature review)	Corresponding Codes
Racial Discussions in Media	H4: The frequency with which African American candidates are described with racial indicators will be greater than the frequency with which white candidates are described with racial indicators.	Domain 1: 01: indication that candidate/family is black: African American, black, Afro, race 02: indication that candidate /family is white: white

	H5: Reporters will discuss African American candidates or candidates with African American families in relation to “black issues” more frequently than they discuss white candidates or candidates with white families in relation to the same topics.	Domain 1: 03: discussion of “black issues”: Trayvon Martin, Stop and Frisk, racial profiling bill, black vote, Chirlane McCray, Dante De Blasio, Chiara DeBlasio.
Sexuality Discussions in Media	H6: The frequency with which lesbian candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality will be greater than the frequency with which heterosexual candidates are described with indicators of their sexuality.	Domain 2: 01: indication that candidate is lesbian: lesbian, gay, homosexual, married to woman, wife 02: indication that candidate is straight: straight, heterosexual, married to woman, wife, children, husband.
	H7: Reporters will discuss lesbian candidates or candidates with gay family members in relation to “gay issues” more frequently than they will discuss straight candidates in relation to the same topics.	Domain 2: 04: discussion of “gay issues”: Gay Marriage, same-sex marriage, Edie Windsor, pride parade, children, Chirlane McCray (when her sexuality is mentioned).
Gender Discussions in Media	H1: The frequency with which female candidates are described with indicators of their gender will be greater than the frequency with which male candidates are described with indicators of their gender.	Domain 3: 01: indication that candidate is female: female, woman 02: indication that candidate is male: male, man
	H2: Reporters will describe the traits of female candidates more frequently than they will describe the traits of male candidates.	Domain 3: 03: discussion of traits: attire, hair, weight, tone of voice.
	H3: The frequency with which reporters discuss female candidates in relation to “women’s issues” will be greater than the frequency with	Domain 3: 04: discussion of “women’s issues”: women’s issues, Planned Parenthood, Gloria Steinem, National

	which they discuss male candidates in relation to the same topics.	Organization of Women, women's vote, historical moment for women
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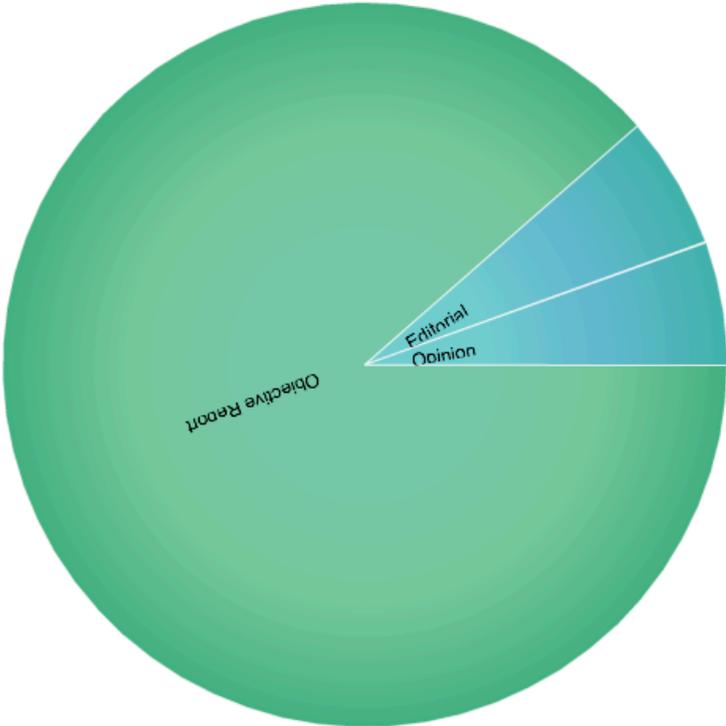
Measuring Intersectional Bias with this Coding Scheme:

Candidate	Intersectional Identity	Membership/Association in Marginalized Groups	Hypotheses Related to Intersectional Bias	Measuring these Hypotheses	Corresponding Codes
Bill de Blasio	He is a white man with an interracial family (his wife is African American). His wife, before marrying him, identified as a lesbian.	While a white heterosexual man, through his family, Bill de Blasio can be associated with African American identity and homosexual identity, two historically marginalized identities.	While Bill de Blasio is a white heterosexual man, media discussions of de Blasio will contain sexuality and racial discussions, though less sexuality discussions than Quinn experiences in media coverage and fewer racial discussions than Thompson experiences in media coverage.	Compare the results of H1-H8	See chart above for codes relating to H1-H8
Bill Thompson	He is a black man, which gives him the societal advantages of gender but the societal disadvantages of race.	As an African American, Bill Thompson is in a historically marginalized racial group.	Media discussions of Bill Thompson will contain more racial discussions than discussions of the other two candidates. However, media discussions of Thompson will contain less discussion of sexuality and gender than those of the other two candidates.	Compare the results of H1-H8	See chart above for codes relating to H1-H8
Christine Quinn	She is a white homosexual woman.	While white, Christine Quinn is a homosexual woman, giving her membership in two historically marginalized groups.	Media discussions of Christine Quinn will contain more discussions of sexuality and gender than will discussions of the other two candidates. However, media	Compare the results of H1-H3	See chart above for codes relating to H1-H8

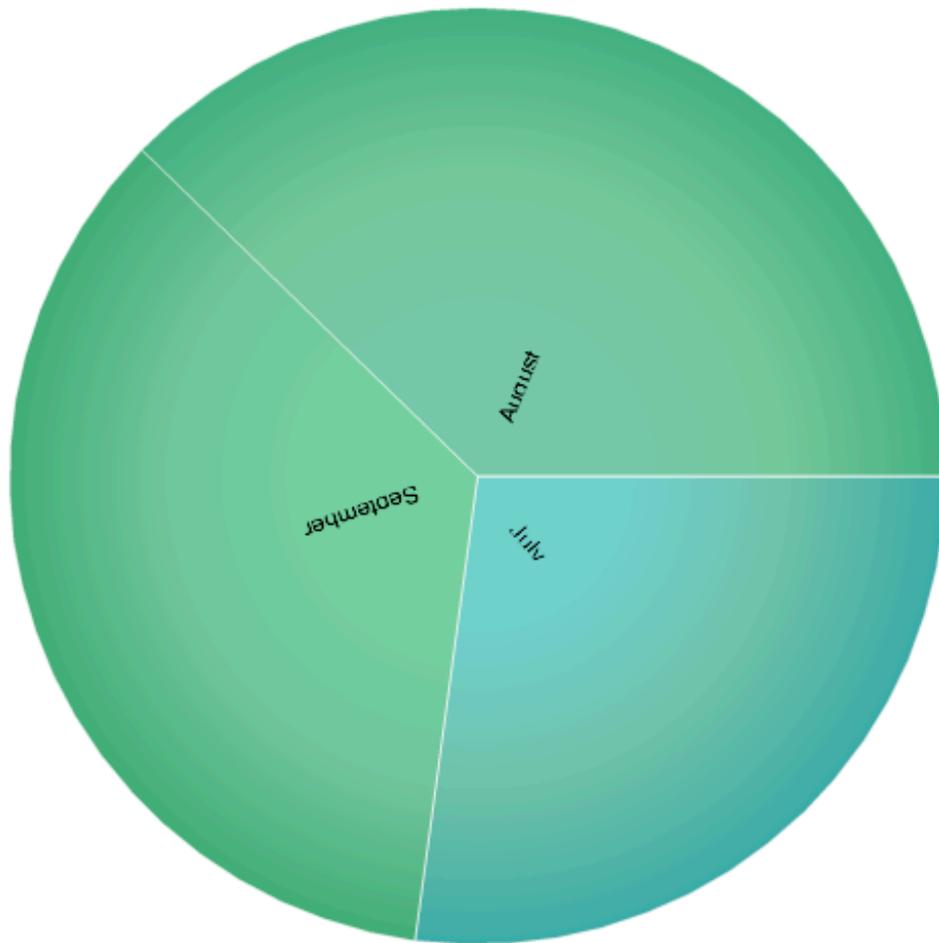
			discussions of Christine Quinn will contain fewer discussions of racial bias than will discussions of the other two candidates.		
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Appendix B: Sample

Type of Article



Month of Article



Total Number of Articles Identified = 232

Expanded

Total Articles (when an article mentioning Quinn and de Blasio = 2 articles) = 301

Coded

Total number of articles containing coded material = 177

Total Number of Articles with de Blasio Codes = 60

Total Number of Articles with Thompson codes = 52

Total Number of Articles with Quinn Codes = 65