

'ACCIDENTAL CELEBRITIES': MAGAZINE COVERAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS¹

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ABSTRACT *Using quantitative analysis, we analyzed the coverage of women indirectly involved in four major U.S. presidential scandals (Watergate, Iran-Contra, Clinton-Lewinsky affair, Ukraine quid pro quo) through 258 articles published in six magazines (The Atlantic, The New York Times Magazine, Time, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Rolling Stone) to assess how they are described by journalists. Three assumptions guided our analysis. First, women are covered in a negative way even if they are not responsible for the scandal. Second, they are covered by the magazines in a stereotypical way to describe their behavior, their character, or their role in the scandal. Finally, the coverage of women involved in more recent scandals is less stereotypical and less negative. While the literature shows that women receive more negative coverage than men when they are responsible for political scandals, our results show that this is also the case for these “accidental celebrities”.*

KEYWORDS

PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS, UNITED STATES, MAGAZINES, GENDER STEREOTYPES, MEDIA COVERAGE

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INTRODUCTION

The profusion of scandals that have made headlines in the mainstream American media since the 2016 presidential campaign undoubtedly represents a turning point in American political life. While scandals have always been part of the media landscape, we are now witnessing the “scandalization” of politics (Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019), which puts revelations of all kinds at the center of political coverage. Sex scandals, in particular, seem to be multiplying: accusations against former President Donald Trump are added to numerous sexual affairs involving members of Congress, such as those concerning Katie Hill (D-CA), and Madison Cawthorne (R-FL), to name only the most recent. If we compile the financial or political scandals of all kinds that have erupted in the media since 2016, we quickly note that coverage of federal politics in the United States devotes a large share to scandals and transgressions involving politicians.

As scandals proliferate, it seems necessary to look at the news media coverage of scandals involving presidents. Although many studies have examined the coverage of scandals (Cervi, 2019; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2000; Downey & Stanyer, 2013; Entman, 2012; Marcos-Marne et al., 2022; Thompson, 2000; Weaver et al., 1975; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2000; Yioutas & Segvic, 2003), our analysis focuses on the media coverage of women involved in these scandals. Rather than analyzing the coverage of women involved in sex scandals with American candidates or elected officials (Dahl, 2016; Everbach, 2017; Kroon & Ekström, 2006; Mandell, 2017; Sipes, 2011; Stoker, 1993), or how women in elected office are perceived by voters or the media when they are responsible for scandals (Barnes et al., 2020; Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020; Kahn, 1994; Niven, 2004; Stilwell & Utych, 2022; Ross, 2017; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), we study the media coverage of “accidental celebrities”², that is, women who find themselves caught up in a presidential scandal even though they are not responsible for or directly involved in it.

Our analysis looks at the coverage of U.S. public affairs and cultural magazines. On the one hand, several scholars have already studied newspapers and television coverage of scandals (Burke & Mazzarella, 2008; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006; Just & Crigler, 2019; Pugliosi & Snyder, 2011; Sabato et al., 2001; Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a; Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b). On the other hand, although the representation of women in magazines has been analyzed (Harp et al., 2011; Hatton & Trautner, 2011; Yun et al., 2007), their coverage of political scandals – or of the women who were involved in these scandals – has not received as much attention from researchers. Finally, we think it is important to understand how magazines represent women involved in presidential scandals because of their generally more informed or interested audiences, but also because they often feature more in-depth articles (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001): these particularities could lead to a different coverage of women. The aim of our research is to demonstrate how women who are indirectly involved in presidential scandals are represented in American magazines, and to understand how – and if – this coverage evolves from one scandal to the next.

² The expression comes from a *Newsweek* article, which describes Fawn Hall as “the archetype of the Accidental Celebrity: an anonymous figure in a crowd of famous faces who happens to stick out a foot just as history is rushing by” (Adler et al, 1987, p. 36). We use this expression to refer to women who have found themselves indirectly involved in presidential scandals, whether or not they were already public figures.

THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN POLITICAL SCANDALS

Scandals, considered inherent to democratic life (Markovits & Silverstein, 1988), imply “verified allegations of illegal, unethical, or immoral wrongdoing” (Rottinghaus, 2015, p. 18), that is “a transgression of certain values, norms, or moral codes (Thompson, 2000, p. 13) or an action “contrary to conventional morality or a set of shared values” (Garment, 1992, p. 14). The scandal becomes political when it “involves a departure or lapse from the normative standards that guide behavior in public office” (Williams, 1998, p. 7).

We chose to study only the scandals in which presidents are, or are suspected to be, directly involved, because these scandals are more widely disseminated by the national media (Woodward, 1999). The “presidential scandal” concept is also more specific than the notion of “executive scandal”, defined by Brandon Rottinghaus as a scandal which may involve not only the president or a governor, but also a member of their family or any person they have appointed to public office (Rottinghaus, 2015). We therefore selected our case studies based on the following parameters: a scandal must be considered serious, namely that it led to the appointment of a special prosecutor or an independent counsel to investigate (Williams, 1998). The scandal must also be the subject of a high-magnitude coverage (prominently daily coverage for more than a week) by the mainstream media (Entman, 2012).

Political scandals are more often than not perceived as entertainment rather than news (Apostolidis & Williams, 2004), especially as the protagonists become unwitting celebrities whose private lives are displayed in the public arena (Garment, 1992). This coverage of scandals as entertainment events also has the effect of minimizing the malfeasance of individuals or institutional failings (Just & Crigler, 2019). Finally, the extensive coverage given to political scandals obscures the media’s role and responsibility in how these events are presented. As transmitters of values and social norms, the media are also the “primary definers and shapers” (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 40) of discourses and issues, which is particularly important to understand the representation of women (Falk, 2008; Harp et al., 2016; Ross, 2009). Thus, media coverage of political scandals not only concerns transgressions, but also makes judgments about the personality and status of the people involved (Lull & Hinerman, 1997). In this sense, scandals represent “society’s broader gender dynamics [...], conveying messages that range from subtle to obvious about power and morality” (Mandell, 2017, p. 2).

News media coverage of women involved in scandals is part of the general literature on media coverage of women and female politicians: it is generally negative and usually stereotyped (Byerly & Ross, 2006). When not ignored (Yun et al., 2007), women are most often defined by the media through their personal and family lives, such as their status as wives or mothers (Burke & Mazarella, 2008; Rakow & Kranich, 1991), or trivialized or sexualized (Beasley & Gibbons, 1993; Johnson & Christ, 1988). The same applies to women politicians, whether candidates or elected: the media are more interested in their appearance or family life than their competence or political platform (Harp, 2019; Harp et

al., 2016). Although there are variations in the coverage of female politicians depending on the position sought or the candidate's experience (Kahn, 1994), they occupy less media space than male candidates and are portrayed more stereotypically (Byerly & Ross, 2006). They are also covered more negatively than men when they enter politics.

The literature has focused mainly on women involved in sex scandals, whether as mistresses of politicians or as deceived wives. The formers are most often demonized by the media (Rosewarne, 2009; Thompson, 2020) and described as exploiters, manipulators or gold-diggers (Mandell, 2017), judged solely through the prism of their appearance and sexuality. According to Hinda Mandell, who has published one of the most in-depth studies on this subject, wives are criticized when they support their husbands but are also criticized when they do not, forcing them into a "double bind of presence/absence" that reduces them to their role as wives (Mandell, 2017, p. 78). Thus, they find themselves, in one way or another, blamed for their husbands' sexual behavior (Harp, 2019).

In the case of female politicians responsible for or directly involved in scandals, the literature is more mixed as to the factors that can explain their news media treatment or the perceptions and judgments of public opinion (Cucchi & Cavazza, 2021; Huddy & Capalos, 2002). Some studies maintain that the gender of the politicians involved does not affect the way they are judged (Brenton, 2011; Smith et al., 2005), or that it is difficult to determine whether the judgement comes from ideological or partisan bias, or from sexism (Barnes et al., 2020; Solomon et al., 2019). Other research asserts that female politicians are judged less harshly than men, particularly in the case of sex scandals (Carlson et al., 2000; Stewart et al., 2013). Finally, other analyses show how norm transgression theories can explain why female politicians suffer more negative consequences following a scandal for which they are responsible, whether financial or sexual in nature (Barnes & Beaulieu, 2019; Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020; Kahn, 1992; Koch, 1999; Lull & Hinerman, 1997; Ross, 2017; Swamy et al., 2001).

In the light of this rich literature, we do not seek to explain the media treatment of women indirectly involved in political scandals, but rather whether it is similar to that offered to women responsible for or directly involved in scandals. Therefore, our research question is: *Are women who are indirectly involved in presidential scandals covered by magazines in the same way as female politicians involved in scandals or women caught up in sex scandals involving presidents or presidential candidates?* We postulate hypothesis H1: *Women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered in a negative way by magazines even if they are not responsible for the transgression*, as well as hypothesis H2: *Women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered by magazines in a stereotypical way*. Their physical appearance, their sexual or personal life, as well as the qualities usually perceived as "feminine" would be used to describe their behavior, their character, or their role in the scandal.

Recent literature also shows that media coverage of female politicians is improving. Indeed, because gender norms are cultural representations, they evolve as concepts of masculinity and femininity change (Harp et al., 2016). Coverage of female politicians is thus

proving to be more equitable, at least in terms of quantity (Banwart et al., 2003), notably due to the increased presence of women in politics (Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020) but also in journalism and, more broadly, within media management (Mandell, 2017).

This evolution does not mean the disappearance of gender stereotypes, which persist despite social transformations (Devere & Davies, 2006). In this sense, we believe that this social evolution will also affect women indirectly involved in presidential scandals. We therefore pose the following hypothesis *H3: Magazines' coverage of women indirectly involved in presidential scandals improves from one scandal to the next* because of changing attitudes and journalistic practices, which means that their coverage will be less negative and less stereotypical in more recent scandals.

METHOD

We selected four presidential scandals: Watergate³ (Nixon Administration), the Iran-Contra affair (Reagan Administration), the Monica Lewinsky affair (Clinton Administration), and Ukraine *quid pro quo* (Trump Administration). Each of these is considered a serious scandal since they all brought to light illegal or unethical decisions or actions taken by the president during his term in office and led to the creation of congressional commissions of inquiry and the appointment of a special prosecutor. Three of these scandals – Watergate, Lewinsky and Ukraine – even led to impeachment proceedings against the president. These are also scandals that had high-magnitude coverage for months.

The scandals covered in this paper take place over a broad period, ranging from 1972 to 2020. Therefore, we gathered articles from magazines that were publishing political content in that same time frame⁴: *The Atlantic* (founded in 1857), *The New York Times Magazine* (1896), *Time Magazine* (1923), *The New Yorker* (1925), *Newsweek* (1933), and *The Rolling Stone* (1967). The choice of these magazines is also due to the accessibility of their archives, whether online or via databases such as ProQuest, EbscoHost, and Gale.

For Watergate, we compiled articles published between June 17, 1972 (the burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel) and August 8, 1974 (President Nixon's resignation). For the Iran-Contra case, we compiled articles published between November 3, 1986 (the revelation of the scandal by the Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa*) and November 18, 1987 (the publication of the Congressional Committees' final report). For the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, we compiled articles published between January 19, 1998 (the revelation of the relationship by the *Drudge Report*) and February 12, 1999 (the Senate vote in the impeachment proceedings). Finally, for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, we compiled articles published between August 28, 2019 (the revelation about the July 25, 2019, phone call between President Trump and Ukraine President

³ We started with Watergate because it is the archetypal political scandal of the contemporary era, against which all other scandals are measured.

⁴ We retained only articles published within issues (in paper or digital format) and not those published solely on the web: on the one hand, these can be modified several times, which complicates the analysis; on the other hand, two of the four scandals selected occurred before the arrival of the Internet, which would have caused a distortion in the analysis.

Volodymyr Zelensky) and February 5, 2020 (the Senate vote in the impeachment proceedings). As illustrated in Table 1, we initially collected 1 304 articles covering these four scandals across the selected magazines.

Table 1. Number of articles about presidential scandals

Source	Watergate	Iran-Contra	Clinton-Lewinsky	Ukraine	TOTAL
<i>Atlantic</i>	9	2	0	7	18
<i>New York Times Magazine</i>	14	4	4	15	37
<i>Time</i>	230	107	155	90	582
<i>New Yorker</i>	46	31	46	59	182
<i>Newsweek</i>	153	99	138	41	431
<i>Rolling Stone</i>	18	10	14	12	54
TOTAL	470	253	357	224	1 304

As the scope of this article is to study how magazines cover women involved indirectly in U.S. presidential scandals, we identified seven “accidental celebrities”. Starting with Watergate, we selected Rose Mary Woods, which was President Richard Nixon’s personal secretary and claimed to have accidentally erased 18½ minutes of one of the recordings requested by the Ervin Commission; and Martha Mitchell, wife of Attorney General John Mitchell, who made several statements about Nixon’s involvement in the Watergate scandal. For the Iran-Contra scandal, we singled out Fawn Hall, Oliver North’s secretary, who participated in the destruction of important documents concerning the details of the operation to sell arms to Iran and redistribute the money to Nicaragua’s Contra. Regarding the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, we selected Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky’s colleague and friend, who recorded Lewinsky without her knowledge and gave the tapes to Kenneth Starr, the prosecutor investigating the Clintons; and Hillary Rodham Clinton, President Bill Clinton’s wife. We ruled out Monica Lewinsky, as she was one of the parties directly involved in the scandal, but also, and more importantly, because her media coverage has been widely studied (Berlant & Duggan 2001; Dahl 2016; Everbach 2017; Joslyn 2003; Kenski 2003; Lawrence & Bennett 2001; Williams & Delli Carpini 2000, 2004; Yioutas & Segvic 2003). Finally, as for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, we opted for Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, who was the subject of a smear campaign waged by President Trump and his top advisors, and recalled because she refused to encourage Trump’s attempts to convince Zelensky to launch an investigation on Joe Biden or his son Hunter; and Fiona Hill, Director of Europe and Russia of the National Security Council, who testified, like Yovanovitch, before Congress during the impeachment proceedings against Trump in this case.

To pinpoint the articles mentioning these women, we used the R language as it offers multiple packages for statistical computing. First, we created a query to search through our 1 304 articles and were left with 258 articles, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of articles mentioning women indirectly involved in presidential scandals (percentage of the total number of articles)

Source	Watergate	Iran-Contra	Clinton-Lewinsky	Ukraine	TOTAL
<i>Atlantic</i>	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.56%)
<i>New York Times Magazine</i>	3 (21.43)	1 (25)	1 (25)	1 (6.67)	6 (16.22)
<i>Time</i>	21 (9.13)	8 (7.48)	76 (49.03)	0 (0)	105 (18.04)
<i>New Yorker</i>	2 (4.34)	2 (6.45)	23 (50)	5 (8.47)	32 (17.58)
<i>Newsweek</i>	25 (16.33)	14 (14.14)	64 (46.38)	0 (0)	103 (23.9)
<i>Rolling Stone</i>	3 (16.67)	3 (30)	5 (35.71)	0 (0)	11 (20.37)
TOTAL	55 (11.7)	28 (11.06)	169 (47.34)	6 (2.68)	258 (19.79)

This article focuses on quantitative textual analysis techniques known as Natural Language Processing (NLP) using the *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018). While many sentiment dictionaries are available, we settled on using the *Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary* (LSD) (Young & Soroka, 2012). Using these results, we created a positivity ratio for each sentence using the following formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ positive words} - \# \text{ negative words})}{\# \text{ words}} * 100$$

Furthermore, we built a dictionary containing stereotypical words that we used to search through the sentences referring to the women selected. We thus built an inductive list of 93 words/stereotypes based on reading the magazine articles and on the literature, then grouped these stereotypes into four themes: appearance, personality and behavior, personal life, sexuality⁵. We could then pin down stereotypical sentences and measure a stereotypical ratio for each women using this formula:

$$\frac{\# \text{ stereotypical sentences}}{\# \text{ sentences}} * 100$$

ARE WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS COVERED IN A NEGATIVE WAY BY MAGAZINES?

Hypothesis H1 postulates that women are covered in a negative way even if they are not responsible for the transgressions at the origin of the scandal in which they are involved. When we examine the sentences mentioning these women (Table 3), we see that they have a rather negative polarity, except for Hillary Rodham Clinton, and even a very negative one in the case of Fawn Hall. Since this is an automated analysis based on LSD, we cannot conclude without further investigations that the negativity is aimed at

⁵ The lists of words and stereotypes used, as well as of the articles cited and analyzed, are available on request.

them directly, but the emotions associated with these women seem to be more negative than positive. Therefore, we proceeded with a manual randomized screening of negative polarity-based sentences for each woman involved with a baseline of 20 percent of their overall sentences. Following our manual verifications, we can confirm that most of these negative polarity-based sentences are, in fact, directed towards the women involved in the various scandals except for Marie Yovanovitch and Fiona Hill. In these cases, the very small number of sentences makes it impossible to obtain significant data.

Table 3. Sentiment analysis

Scandal	Women involved	Number of sentences	Positivity ratio
Watergate	Rose Mary Woods	268	-1.89
	Martha Mitchell	118	-3.18
Iran-Contra	Fawn Hall	83	-4.02
Clinton-Lewinsky affair	Linda Tripp	1 105	-1.39
	Hillary Rodham Clinton	702	0.28
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>	Marie Yovanovitch	5	-4.15
	Fiona Hill	8	-3.22

Fawn Hall is the subject of the highest ratio of negative sentences (Table 4). She also receives the most sentences containing at least one sentiment – almost twice as many sentences about Hall contain sentiments, compared to those about other women. This suggests that stories about her are more emotionally charged than those about other women.

Table 4. Sentiments per sentences

Scandal / Women involved	No sentiment	Negative sentiments	Neutral sentiments	Positive sentiments
Watergate				
Rose Mary Woods	62 (23.13%)	99 (36.94%)	36 (13.43%)	71 (26.49%)
Martha Mitchell	30 (25.42)	48 (40.68)	15 (12.71)	25 (21.19)
Iran-Contra				
Fawn Hall	10 (12.05)	43 (51.81)	12 (14.46)	18 (21.69)
Clinton-Lewinsky affair				
Linda Tripp	284 (25.70)	377 (34.12)	140 (12.67)	304 (27.51)
Hillary Rodham Clinton	161 (22.94)	213 (30.34)	90 (12.82)	238 (33.9)
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>				
Marie Yovanovitch	1 (20)	3 (60)	1 (20)	0 (0)
Fiona Hill	0 (0)	5 (62.5)	2 (25)	1 (12.5)

It is interesting to note that a minority of sentences are neutral, and this applies to all the women studied except Fiona Hill (but again, the small number of sentences does not allow for precise analysis). This means that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are most often covered by magazines in either a positive or negative light. Only Clinton is mentioned more often in sentences with positive connotations: all the others are mostly associated with negative feelings. For example, while Rose Mary Woods is presented as almost “a member of the Nixon family” (Time, July 30, 1973) and as “his indispensable office aide” (Time, December 10, 1973), that loyalty is repeatedly portrayed as negative, as of a devoted person ready for anything to protect her boss (The Atlantic, April 1, 1974) and who is both “feisty” (Time, November 19, 1973) and “combative” (Time, December 10, 1973) before the members of the Ervin Commission.

Martha Mitchell was already a household name before Watergate due to her outspokenness and regular participation in Republican events. From the outset of Watergate, Martha Mitchell’s propensity to address reporters off the cuff to accuse the president of using her husband as a scapegoat in the scandal quickly propelled her into the headlines. In the articles studied, she is often described in pejorative terms, suggesting she may have mental health or drinking problems, and that she embarrasses her husband by phoning reporters to flaunt her moods (Newsweek, September 10, 1973). Thus, while it is acknowledged that Mitchell possesses “a certain wacky charm” (Time, May 21, 1973), journalists also point out that she “has never come up with much solid evidence to back up her intuitions” (Newsweek, September 10, 1973) and that despite the ridicule, “she could not be silenced” (New Yorker, May 5, 1973)⁶.

From the moment Fawn Hall appeared in the media, she was perceived as a “bad girl” (Orth, 1987), portrayed in the same way as women involved in sex scandals with politicians, even though the Iran-Contra scandal was not a sex scandal and her relationship with her boss, Oliver North, was not an intimate one. Most of the sentences about her are strongly stereotyped – as we will show later – but they are also largely negative, mostly describing her (and North’s) attempt to destroy key documents as “neglectful and unlucky” (New Yorker, June 22, 1987). While it is acknowledged that she does not play “Dumb Dora on the witness stand to protect her boss” as other secretaries have, like Woods (Rolling Stone, April 23, 1987), reports often repeat the demeaning jokes made about her on late-night shows (Time, March 9, 1987).

As for Linda Tripp, the coverage she received in the magazines mirrored that of the TV channels and Americans’ perception of her: only 12% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Tripp when the scandal first broke (Holland, 1998), and only 30% of television reports about her were positive (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006). In the articles we analyzed, Tripp is depicted as “nosy, shrewd, principled, conniving, cynical and moralistic” (Newsweek, February 2, 1998), with “a penchant for office intrigue” (New Yorker, March 23, 1998).

⁶ Martha Mitchell’s image and reputation are currently being rehabilitated, at least on TV and radio: the series *Gaslit* (Matt Ross, 2022), taken from the first season of the podcast *Slow Burn* (Slate, 2017), as well as the documentary *The Martha Mitchell Effect* (Anne Alvergue, 2022) paint a fairer, more modern portrait of the Attorney General’s wife, who was sedated and kept prisoner in her own home to prevent her to talk to journalists at the height of the Watergate scandal.

In contrast, Hillary Rodham Clinton enjoys both public support – almost 70% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the First Lady (CNN, 1999) – and largely positive television coverage: up to 96% of television coverage was positive at the height of the scandal (Farnworth & Lichter, 2006). In magazine articles, while some journalists wondered what Hillary Clinton knew about the president's "philandering and lies" (Time, August 31, 1998), her faith, courage and stoicism were often highlighted in reports (Newsweek, February 9, 1998; Time, August 31, 1998).

Considering the low number of sentences available to describe Yovanovitch and Hill, no significant analysis can be pursued. Although, a manual screening allowed us to observe that the negativity of the sentences is not directed towards them, but rather towards President Donald Trump's actions being "highly improper" (New Yorker, November 18, 2019).

Therefore, the results obtained for women involved in Watergate, Iran-Contra, and Clinton-Lewinsky scandals allow us to partially validate our hypothesis that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered negatively by the selected magazines. While it seems that is not the case for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, our sample size is too small to allow any substantial confirmation.

ARE WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS COVERED IN A STEREOTYPICAL WAY BY MAGAZINES?

The women we selected receive rather stereotypical coverage from the magazines (Table 5), as do female politicians involved in scandals and women who have had relationships with politicians. Stories about Hall contain the most stereotyped sentences (31.33%), while stories about Woods contain the fewest (6.72%) – if we exclude stories about Yovanovitch and Hill. The beauty and youthfulness of Hall seemed to open the door to the use of stereotypes linked more to her appearance and love life.

Similarly, Hall also receives the most stereotyped coverage in terms of the ratio of stereotypes per stereotyped sentence, at 1.58: even though the number of stereotyped sentences is small (26), each contains more stereotypes than in the other stereotyped sentences concerning other women.

Table 5. Sentences with at least one stereotypical keyword

Scandal / Women involved	Number of sentences	Stereotypical sentences	Stereotypes per stereotypical sentence
Watergate			
Rose Mary Woods	268	18 (6.72%)	1.06
Martha Mitchell	118	18 (15.25)	1



Scandal / Women involved	Number of sentences	Stereotypical sentences	Stereotypes per stereotypical sentence
Iran-Contra			
Fawn Hall	83	26 (31.33)	1.58
Clinton-Lewinsky affair			
Linda Tripp	1 105	167 (15.11)	1.11
Hillary Rodham Clinton	702	98 (13.96)	1.10
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>			
Marie Yovanovitch	5	0	0
Fiona Hill	8	0	0

Most of the stereotypes used in the articles studied relate to women’s personal lives or behaviors (Woods, Mitchell, Tripp, Clinton), or their appearance (Hall) (Table 6).

Table 6. Number of stereotypical mentions by category

Scandal / Women involved	Appearance	Personality and behaviors	Personal life	Sexuality	Total stereotypical mentions
Watergate					
Rose Mary Woods	5 (26.32%)	7 (36.84%)	6 (31.58%)	1 (5.26%)	19
Martha Mitchell	4 (22.22)	2 (11.11)	12 (66.67)	0	18
Iran-Contra					
Fawn Hall	19 (46.34)	9 (21.95)	6 (14.63)	7 (17.07)	41
Clinton-Lewinsky affair					
Linda Tripp	48 (25.95)	48 (25.95)	61 (32.97)	28 (15.14)	185
Hillary Rodham Clinton	25 (23.15)	19 (17.59)	54 (50)	10 (9.26)	108
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>					
Marie Yovanovitch	0	0	0	0	0
Fiona Hill	0	0	0	0	0

Several journalists mention Rose Mary Woods’ “scant personal life” (Time, November 19, 1973), who chose to devote herself to President Nixon, going so far as to lie or accuse herself to protect him (The Atlantic, April 1974). Her personal qualities, considered “feminine”, are highlighted in reports, including that she is “one of the most decent persons on the White House staff” and that “she had heart and warmth, and she would go out of her way to help you out on a problem” (Time, December 10, 1973).

In Martha Mitchell’s case, the articles focus on her personality and behaviors, describing her as unpredictable or “unshushable” (Newsweek, July 16, 1973). This “unrepressed

Southern belle" (Time, May 21, 1973) is described as "the Cassandra of the Watergate case – an insomniac talker whose wee-hour prophecies have not always been proved but have always been hard to ignore" (Newsweek, September 10, 1973). She is also described as increasingly "frantic" and "unpredictable" as the Watergate story unfolded (Newsweek, September 24, 1973). Several reports mention Martha's mental state more directly, stating that John Mitchell "feels like his wife needs medical help, but cannot bring himself to take the necessary legal steps to try to have her committed" (Newsweek, September 24, 1973).

Linda Tripp's past is scrutinized, from her acrimonious divorce to an arrest for theft when she was younger (New Yorker and Newsweek, March 23, 1998). She is described as "the modern Mata Hari" (Time, November 30, 1998), "sometimes playing off different officemates against each other and delighting in watercooler gossip, especially about the foibles of her bosses" (Newsweek, February 2, 1998). Numerous articles describe her physical appearance and clothing, noting that "her hair had been styled by a Georgetown salon" (Time, March 23, 1998).

As for Hillary Rodham Clinton, she was also stereotyped in terms of her personal life and behavior. On the one hand, reports noted that she "was not subservient but equal" to her husband (Time, August 31, 1998), but "constantly shouted at her husband and ruthlessly bossed him around" (Rolling Stone, March 19, 1998). On the other hand, journalists dwell on her reaction to her husband's infidelities. Since last summer, she has done nothing directly to pick her husband up, dust him off with public praise and send him back into the fray" (Newsweek, December 21, 1998). Some also analyze the support – or lack of it – that Hillary Clinton received from feminists, who "wouldn't stand for too much standing by her man" (Newsweek, December 21, 1998). Stereotypes linked to physical appearance are also present in magazine coverage of Hillary Clinton, with some not hesitating to resort to dubious analogies: "This is my big question: If you are married to Hillary Clinton, why the hell would you want to mess around with Monica Lewinsky anyway... why go out for a cheeseburger when you can have a filet mignon at home" (Rolling Stone, November 12, 1998).

However, it is Fawn Hall who is judged most on her appearance and sexuality. From "Foxy Fawn" (Newsweek, June 15, 1987) to "show-stopping blond secretary" (Newsweek, May 4, 1987), from "Intranscend beauty" (Time, March 9, 1987) to "North's glamorous secretary" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987), Hall is covered more as a mistress than a secretary. The articles also mentioned her personal life, noting that she dated the son of a Contra Leader" (Time, March 9, 1987). Several journalists also hinted at a relationship between Hall and Oliver North: "The combination of their closeness and her beauty led to inevitable rumors of an affair, but North – who is married with four children – dismissed the speculation" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987). This "strikingly pretty blond with blue-green eyes" (Time, March 9, 1987), who has done a bit of modeling, is also the subject of gossip within the National Security Council, where she works, where the "top-secret electronic message system contained a surprising number of references to Fawn Hall and her physical beauty" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987). Moreover, some observers insinuated that the members of the Tower Commission "needed her blond hair, pretty face and nice figure to keep their

audience interested" (Newsweek, July 20, 1987). Finally, some journalists pointed that Hall "may look like a Republican bunny, but she is not stupid" (Rolling Stone, April 23, 1987): she did not hesitate to reveal that she and her boss had destroyed documents. She did shred documents, some journalists say, because she was "so obedient that she followed North's orders last November to retype four NSC memos, possibly to conceal President Reagan's role" (Time, March 9, 1987). But in addition to being "a loyal secretary who helped her boss [...] she was also tall, blond and beautiful" (Newsweek, June 15, 1987).

In the light of these data, we can validate our H2 hypothesis, which states that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered in the same stereotypical way as female politicians involved in scandals or as women entangled in a sex scandal with a politician, with accent put on their personal lives, behaviors, and physical appearance. Just as sexism can be hostile or benevolent, so too can stereotypes: many articles presented these female stereotypes as qualities.

IS THE COVERAGE OF WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS IMPROVE OVER TIME?

Our hypothesis H3, which states that coverage of women indirectly involved in presidential scandals should be less negative and less stereotyped from one scandal to the next due to changing attitudes and journalistic practices, is invalidated by our results. When we look at the percentage of stereotyped sentences presented in Table 5, we should observe a lower rate in more recent scandals. However, this percentage remains the same for Watergate and the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (between 13 and 15%), while it doubles for the Iran-Contra affair (31%). Furthermore, the articles selected for Ukraine *quid pro quo* did not generate enough sentences to draw any conclusions about Yovanovitch and Hill's coverage, which prevents us from seeing if and how stereotypes have evolved since the 1990s, and therefore from saying whether magazine coverage is improving over time. Nonetheless, we need to consider the time elapsed between the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (1998) and Ukraine *quid pro quo* (2019), which amounts to a little over two decades. Events such as the #MeToo movement created more social awareness towards all forms of abuse perpetrated against women. It is not far-fetched to assume that these events created an increase in collective awareness towards the representation of women in society, or at least, in the news media. While our dataset is not suited to observe this intuition, it is an avenue worth pursuing to determine if there is indeed an improvement in women's representation in the media.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We can therefore say that, like women politicians responsible for scandals and women caught up in sex scandals with politicians, women who are indirectly involved in a political scandal also receive negative and stereotyped coverage by magazines. We can draw several conclusions from our results, although they only allow to analyze a small number

of scandals. Firstly, we can say that the results obtained by T. Everbach (2017) on the negative and stereotypical coverage of Monica Lewinsky also apply to women indirectly involved in presidential scandals, whether of a sexual nature or not. Moreover, women do not seem to be covered more negatively or stereotypically when they are indirectly involved in a sex scandal than when they are in a political scandal, as the case of Fawn Hall clearly demonstrates.

Secondly, our study also shows that the use of stereotypes is a constant that does not seem to diminish over time, which supports the assertion that:

journalists actively re-use previous knowledge, experience and assumptions based on prior scandals when the discursive frame of a politician is constructed in a new scandal. This seems to be even more true when the politician in question is a woman, possibly because women are used more actively in the construction of an emotional scandal narrative (Kroon & Ekström, 2006, p. 22).

Women who are not politicians but who find themselves caught up in political scandals do indeed seem to be stuck in a stereotyped frame, despite social transformations, confirming the "durability of basic stereotypes" over time (Haines et al., 2016, p. 353).

Finally, our results help to understand the limitations of our corpus, particularly regarding the number of scandals and the difference between the roles and implications of the women we selected – Tripp is a more active player than Woods; Hall has engaged in illegal actions, contrary to Mitchell; Clinton is a First Lady and Tripp is a total stranger to the public – but also regarding more recent presidential scandals. Analyzing executive scandals, adding scandals that occurred during presidential election campaigns or even the scandals that happened before the election but were revealed once the candidate is in office would yield a greater number of scandals and, by the same token, a greater number of women whose media coverage could be studied.

In addition, it might be interesting to integrate web articles for more recent cases, such as Ukraine *quid pro quo*, to broaden our corpus and make a more detailed and accurate analysis of Marie Yovanovitch and Fiona Hill's coverage, especially as the number of such articles available only on the web is growing at the expense of the paper or digital format.

Finally, a systematic comparison between the magazines' coverage of women involved in presidential scandals and that of the men responsible for or involved in them would undoubtedly provide a better understanding of how stereotypes are used, in addition to measuring the presence of male stereotypes in news coverage. Such an endeavor would allow to determine if stereotypes are generalized equally across men and women or if there is an asymmetry in their usage.

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„SLUČAJNO SLAVNE“: KAKO ČASOPISI IZVJEŠTAVAJU O ŽENAMA UMIJEŠANIMA U AMERIČKE PREDSDJEDNIČKE SKANDALE

Karine Prémont :: Alexandre Millette

SAŽETAK Koristeći se kvantitativnom analizom, analizirali smo izvještavanje o ženama koje su bile neizravno umiješane u četiri velika predsjednička skandala u SAD-u (Watergate, Iran – Contra, afera Clinton – Lewinsky, Ukrajina quid pro quo) u 258 članaka objavljenih u šest časopisa (The Atlantic, The New York Times Magazine, Time, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Rolling Stone) kako bismo ocijenili kako ih opisuju novinari. Tri su pretpostavke vodile našu analizu. Prvo, žene su pokrivene na negativan način, čak i ako nisu odgovorne za skandal. Drugo, časopisi o njima pišu na stereotipan način kada opisuju njihovo ponašanje, njihov karakter ili njihovu ulogu u skandalu. Konačno, izvještavanje o ženama uključenima u novije skandale manje je stereotipno i manje negativno. Dok literatura pokazuje da su žene negativnije prikazane od muškaraca kada su odgovorne za političke skandale, naši rezultati pokazuju da je tako i s ovim „slučajno slavnim ženama“.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

PREDSDJEDNIČKI SKANDALI, SJEDINJENE AMERIČKE DRŽAVE, ČASOPISI, RODNI STEREOTIPI, MEDIJSKA POKRIVENOST

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