

# **Gender and Stereotypes in the News**

## **Coverage of Female Political**

### **Candidates:**

*An Analysis of Taiwanese Newspapers' coverage  
of Tsai Ing-wen's presidential campaigns in 2012  
and 2016*

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## Abstract

On January 16th, 2016, the Taiwanese people elected for the first time a female President of the Republic of China (ROC). The new President elected, Tsai Ing-wen, is not only well known for her long political career but is also a pioneer among female political leaders on the island. After being the first female vice Premier in 2006, she became the first woman to lead a major political party in 2008, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and was also the first woman to run for President in 2012. Tsai's two presidential candidacies offer a good opportunity to study gender stereotypes in Taiwanese newspapers.

American and European studies on gender stereotypes in the news coverage of female political candidates have shown that media tends to cover women candidates in a traditional gender role frame. Although the media covers women candidates as much as their male opponents, the quality of the coverage perpetuates gender stereotypes. This study aims to see whether Taiwanese newspapers followed the same pattern in the coverage of Tsai Ing-wen's 2012 and 2016 presidential election campaigns. It is based on previous studies conducted in the U.S. and more particularly on the works of Bystrom et al. in 2004 at a senatorial and gubernatorial level and of Kaitlyn Ryan in 2013 at a presidential level.

Through the study of four Chinese language and two English language newspapers' articles, this research aims first, to evaluate the importance given to Tsai Ing-wen's gender in the coverage of her two presidential campaigns; and second, to analyze whether the Taiwanese media conveyed gender stereotypes in their portrayal of the female presidential candidate. It focuses on the periods of March 2011 to January 2012 and March 2015 to January 2016 and uses content analysis methods.

Results show on one hand that gender of the female candidate was emphasized more in the newspapers' coverage of the 2012's campaign compared to the 2016 one which suggests that when the female candidate is in a winning position, then, her gender becomes less important. On the other hand, content analysis revealed that the Taiwanese newspapers did not convey the traditional gender stereotypes and portrayed the female candidate in an almost gender neutral manner in 2012 and 2016.

## Introduction

During political campaigns, media is the main source of information for voters to learn about the personality, the issue positions or the viability of candidates; especially during presidential elections (Falk 2010). The media shapes public views and expectation of politicians (Goldenburg and Traugott, 1987; Hitchon, Chang, and Harris 1997) and has an important role in the success of a political campaign by the portrayal made of the candidates and the setting of the political agenda. Media conveys a certain image of the candidates and often, this image is driven by gender stereotypes (Bystrom et al. 2004).

Ashmore et al. define gender stereotypes as a “structured set of beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women” (Ashmore 1986, 89) which concerns “personal traits, physical characteristics and expected behaviors associated with women or men as part of a gendered group” (Bystrom et al. 2004, 16). When lacking of information or facing a new situation, people often use stereotypes to fill the gaps and comprehend the situation. The act of stereotyping is a “normal cognitive process through which people simplify their perceptions about women and men by drawing inferences based on their beliefs about what members of a particular group are like” (Bystrom et al. 2004, 17). This is an act that voters also perpetrate when they evaluate political candidates. Studies have shown that gender is important in the way people portray the candidates (Stevens 2007). Ryan wrote that “when there are gaps in the information provided by the media, readers revert their own gender stereotypes in order to fill that void and try to complete the image of the candidate” (Ryan 2013, 15).

However, gender biases are not explicit. One needs to look at the coverage of issues, of candidates’ background and of candidates’ description through a gender lens to find them. Gender stereotypes can influence the quantity and the quality of the news coverage. Quantity by publishing less articles about women candidates and quality by portraying a gender biased image of female candidates. They do not always harm women but they can be “overgeneralized, incorrect and rigid” (Bystrom et al. 2004).

Studies on gender stereotypes in the media have often been conducted with elections at different levels mostly in the United States, but also in Europe and South America since the 1980s. Studies showed that during campaign coverage, men and women candidates are not covered the same and that the media actually portrays women politicians in a traditional gender roles’ frame (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Kahn 1994; Bystrom et al. 2004; Ryan 2013; Falk

2010; Hayes and Lawless 2015; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). Media tends to emphasize female traits and feminine issues which contributes to undermine the viability of female candidates. Female traits refer to how women are traditionally seen, such as caring, close to people, warm, emotional, discrete or honest; while men are seen as more confident, assertive, competitive, strong, or independent. The traditional feminine issues are education, health care, elderly and child care while the masculine issues, the one reputed to need more leadership and strength, include for example the military, national defense, foreign policy or economy (Kahn 1994; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Falk 2010; Hayes 2011; Hayes and Lawless 2015; Hitchon, Chang, and Harris 1997; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b, Bystrom et al. 2004).

Falk found that the press in the 1980s and 1990s often ignored women candidates and depicted them in stereotypical ways which contributed to amplify the impression that women did not belong to the political sphere. The press published less articles about women than about their male opponents. Norris wrote that women are covered more negatively than men and are more criticized in the media. Their program is often qualified of chaotic and disorganized (Norris 1997). The difference of treatment between male and female candidates makes running for office harder for women. They have to face more challenges than men do (Hayes and Lawless 2015).

Many studies from that period showed that media when covering female candidates tends to highlight their personal life, their physical appearance and their family responsibilities rather than their accomplishments or political program (Falk 2010; Bystrom et al. 2004; Kahn 1994; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Coulomb-Gully 2012). Whereas, when covering male politicians, media focuses more on issue position and experience. Coulomb-Gully found that in the news coverage of French women candidates, the latest are often referred to with their simple first name while men are called by their last name. The press also uses more nicknames to refer to women, such as “women warrior” for example. This shows that women politicians are given less credibility than men (Coulomb-Gully 2012).

Recent studies have shown that there has been some improvement in the news coverage of female candidates during political campaigns. It can be explained by the evolution of the society and the increasing participation of women in politics and by the press awareness of the reproduction of gender bias. Coulomb-Gully noticed that there has been a normalization of women candidates in France which assesses that mentalities have changed. Studies in the 2000s

found that women candidates in the U.S. got more coverage than male candidates (Bystrom et al. 2004). However, the journalists still have a tendency to confine women in very traditional roles (Coulomb-Gully 2012). Stereotypes are more subtle but they are still present (Ryan 2013; Fowler and Lawless 2009). The media still tends to cover more on a female candidates' appearance, personality, marital status, and to emphasize their feminine traits (Fowler and Lawless 2009; Bystrom et al. 2004; Ryan 2013). Women are still portrayed as more passive and the news focus on their issue position rather than on their accomplishments (Ryan 2013). However, there is a difference of coverage between women who run for legislative office and those who run for executive ones. Even though, there is less coverage of appearance for women running for a higher level election which could appear as a less biased coverage, the media in fact stresses even more on the masculinity of the higher office. Fowler and Lawless suggested that media coverage is more gendered when women run for higher office. Meeks explained this phenomenon by the novelty and unconventionality of women candidacy at such offices (Meeks 2012). Ryan added that "if the media doesn't portray a candidate as possessing these qualities, their success is much less likely" (Ryan 2013, 17).

This study focuses on the Taiwanese newspapers' coverage of Tsai Ing-wen's presidential campaign, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate during the 2012 and 2016 elections in Taiwan (Republic of China (ROC)). Through the study of four Chinese language (United Daily, Liberty Times, China Times, Apple Daily) and two English language newspapers' articles (China Post, Taipei Times), this paper aims to evaluate the importance given to Tsai Ing-wen's gender in the newspapers' coverage and to analyze whether they conveyed gender stereotypes in their portrayal of the female presidential candidate. It focuses on the periods of March 2011 to January 2012 and March 2015 to January 2016 and uses a content analysis method.

To understand the contexts of the 2012 and 2016 elections, we need to go back to 2008 when Tsai Ing-wen was elected chairperson of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). She came to leadership in a rather tumultuous time for the party after a scandal of corruption tarnished the departing President Chen Shui bian and the party. Tsai Ing-wen was seen as a temporary leader awaiting for the party to heal its wounds but she managed to revive the party's strengths and to regain voters' trust. In 2012, she was chosen to be the DPP presidential candidate against the then President of the ROC Ma Ying-jeou who was running for his second mandate. The political and economic situations of 2012 gave Tsai Ing-wen the underdog position all along the campaign even though she managed to secure 45.63% of the votes against

51.60% for Ma who was running for the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese nationalist party. The 2016 elections came into a totally different political context. Ma Ying-jeou disappointed the Taiwanese voters especially with his China policy among other things. A massive social movement took place in March 2014 called the Sunflower Movement to protest against the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with China (CSSTA). Disapproval of the KMT governance grew stronger and resulted in a substantial defeat for the KMT at the November 2014 local elections. On January 16th, 2016 the presidential and legislative elections were both held. All along the campaign, Tsai Ing-wen was given the winner of the presidential election. On the other hand, the 2016 election was quite unique in the history of the KMT due to a change of candidate three months before the Election Day. A woman was originally chosen in July to be the presidential candidate of the KMT, Hung Hsiu-chu. However, following internal conflicts and due to her low popularity, the party decided to change candidate in October. In the end, as expected, the DPP won both elections. At the presidential election, Tsai Ing-wen received 56.12% of the votes against Eric Chu (31.04%), candidate for the KMT, and James Soong (12.84%) candidate of the People First Party (PFP). This study compares the newspapers' coverage of both campaigns to see whether gender and stereotypes were more or less emphasized in one or the other election.

In terms of methodology, there are different ways to measure the influence of gender stereotypes in the media coverage of female and male candidates during political campaigns. Some studies compare the quantity and the quality of male and female candidates' coverage (Bystrom et al. 2004). They analyze the amount of articles and paragraphs that mention one candidate and see whether there is a parity between the male and female candidates. This kind of study would be possible for Taiwan at a legislative level but is more complicated for a presidential election since it is mostly disputed between three candidates. Moreover, the configuration of the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections would hardly allow this kind of research. Indeed, as mentioned above, in 2012, Tsai Ing-wen ran against Ma Ying-jeou who was running for a second presidency. The number of articles mentioning the President were greater due to his position. For example, between March 1st, 2011 and January 15th, 2012, in Taipei Time, there were 2149 articles mentioning Ma Ying-jeou while there were only 1115 about Tsai. The empirical validity of that sample would be contested. Regarding the unique configuration of the 2016 election, the comparison between Tsai Ing-wen and the other main party candidate, Eric Chu would have focused on a very short period which would have limited the number of articles to study. The third candidate of both 2012 and 2016 elections was James

Soong. Since he was running for a smaller party (the People First Party (PFP)) with small chances to win, the media chose to ignore him. Hence, this would not have allowed a fair comparison neither. Some other studies focus on the issue coverage to see whether there are more association of male candidates with ‘masculine issues’ and of female candidates with “feminine issues” (add reference). This kind of study in the U.S. are mostly done at a legislative level. Moreover, as the presidential elections in Taiwan are mostly focused on the cross-strait relations with China, the foreign policies with Japan and U.S. and the economy, the political context is mainly “masculine”, the result would have also been limited. Another way to measure gender stereotypes in the media is to look at the quality of the coverage which include “slant; mentions of viability, appearance, and marital status; and issue and image coverage.” (Bystrom et al. 2004, 177). This is the kind that will be used in the paper.

This study aims at uncovering the gender stereotypes contained in the newspapers’ coverage of the Taiwanese female candidate. The data classification utilized here is based upon two different but similar studies conducted in the United States and was adapted to fit the 2012 and 2016 elections environment in Taiwan. The first study used here was published in 2004 by Bystrom et al. in *Gender and Candidate Communication: Videostyle, Webstyle, Newstyle*. The second is a paper written in 2013 by Kaitlyn Ryan for the Xavier University. It is entitled *The Media’s War on Women: Gendered Coverage of Female Candidates*. I used an adapted version of these two studies’ categories to classify the articles with a gender-related content.

The results of this study on the Taiwanese newspapers made appear a low percentage of traditional gender stereotypes present in the coverage of the female candidate and a relatively low importance given to the candidate’s gender for both the 2012 and 2016 campaigns. Moreover, the results also revealed a clear decrease of the number of articles referring to gender in 2016 compared to 2012 for all the newspapers studied. This phenomenon suggest that gender becomes less important when the candidate is given winner of the election. I will label this phenomenon "the winner effect" which can add to the explanation about when gender matters.

There is no literature yet on the possibility that the winning position of a female candidate can have an influence on the importance given to her gender, however, by using a logic of rational choice, we can easily understand how newspapers and media in general will prefer to be on the side of the winner, hence to be less critical of the candidate. The novelty of this research resides in the possibility which emerged from the results and which suggests that gender matters less when the female candidate is in a winning position.

## Research Design

For this study, articles from six online Taiwanese newspapers were examined. It used four papers in Chinese language: Liberty Times (自由時報), China Times (中國時報), United Daily (聯合報) and Apple Daily (蘋果時報); and two papers in English language: Taipei Times and China Post. Taipei Times is the sister paper of Liberty Times (自由時報). These six newspapers were chosen because they have the largest circulation in Taiwan and because they represent the main political camps of the ROC: Liberty Times and Taipei Times for the pan-green camp; United Daily, China Post and China Times for the pan-blue camp and finally Apple Daily which is less politically oriented in its coverage<sup>1</sup>.

This longitudinal study aims to compare the news coverage of Tsai Ing-wen during the 2012 and 2016 presidential campaigns and focuses on the quality of the coverage. The periods examined in this study are from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 to January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016. March 1<sup>st</sup> was chosen as the starting date as it corresponds to the approximate time Tsai Ing-wen was officially chosen by the DPP to be the running presidential candidate. The ending dates correspond to the Election Day of both respective years.

Multiple coders<sup>2</sup> were used to code the articles of the six newspapers. The coding was executed in two steps. The newspaper articles were first selected through the newspapers' Web pages by setting specific keywords and coded into two categories depending on whether their content referred to gender or not<sup>3</sup>. In a category called 'refer to gender' were placed all the

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<sup>1</sup> The Taiwanese political landscape is historically divided around two main positions regarding the People Republic of China, whether to support the independence of the ROC from China or to unify. Nowadays, the two biggest parties, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which traditionally is more supportive of the Taiwanese identity of the ROC; and the Chinese Nationalist party also called the Kuomintang (KMT) which stresses the Chinese identity of the country. Both parties agree on maintaining the status-quo for now. The KMT idea is to maintain the status-quo according to what was decided in the 1992 Consensus and to unify with China once conditions will be favorable while the DPP position is to accept the status-quo in order to protect the peace in the cross-strait but to reach Taiwan's independence in fine. The pan-green camp in Taiwan is a coalition of smaller parties that are more aligned with the DPP's ideas. The green symbolizes the color of the DPP logo and is not related to environment. The pan-blue camp gathers political parties that are more aligned with the KMT.

<sup>2</sup> All the coders were Taiwanese master students in Political Science at NSYSU (Kaohsiung).

<sup>3</sup> On the Taipei Times webpage, we can directly type keywords and set a period of time that doesn't exceed three months. It's possible to make research from the year 1999 to today but resetting the time every three months. The database of Liberty Times works the same as the Taipei Times' one. China post can also directly set keywords on their web page but no time period so we had to check news day by day. Research is possible from the year 2000 to 2014 so we used that tool for the 2012 election campaign. For the research on the 2016 campaign, we proceeded by setting a keyword and used the previous page button which allows access to all the online articles from the year 2014 to today. Apple Daily also offers free access to its database from 2003 to today. We used the keywords and read every article, using the previous page button. United Daily's database is only accessible from the school's online library. It is also possible to set keywords and time period for the search on the search tool. China Times

articles that mentioned Tsai Ing-wen's gender, physical appearance, personality traits, marital status, personal details as well as the ones that used nicknames to refer to Tsai, that made comparisons between her and other people, reported sexist attacks, criticized her or questioned her competences. The category 'don't refer to gender' contained all the articles that did not mention the above.

Before starting the first classification, the relevance of various keywords used to select the articles was evaluated. The three keywords retained were: “Tsai Ing-wen”, “Little Ing” and “Tsai” in English and the same in their Chinese translation (蔡英文, 小英, 蔡). The use of no other specific keywords gave access to all kind of articles published about the candidate without limiting the topic to gender details.

Given the great amount of articles mentioning “Tsai Ing-wen” in their contents for the two periods studied, we decided to retain only the articles with the words “Tsai Ing-wen”, “little Ing” and “Tsai” in the title. Their direct focus on Tsai Ing-wen allowed sufficient relevance.

A total of 6206 articles was coded during the first classification. At first, this research intended to use computer to proceed to data-mining. However, the research settings and the limits of that technology with Chinese language did not fit the use of this tool. Hence, all the classification was made manually by the coders after reading each article. Once the first classification finished, 10% of the articles were double checked by other coders in order to attest the validity of the first classification. The results of the first coding were used to evaluate the occurrence of articles with gender-related content and provide data for comparison between the news coverage of the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections.

The second classification focuses only on the 809 articles that were put in the category “refer to gender”. The categories for this classification evolved from previous studies conducted in the U.S. and more particularly from Bystrom et al.’s study about the U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial races 1998-2002 (Bystrom et al. 2004) and from Ryan’s article from 2013 (Ryan 2013) who is herself using categories from Heldman (2005) and Meeks (2012). Some categories were added through the readings of articles during the first classification by the author which focus more on the Taiwanese elections context and allow deeper analysis. The coding of Taipei Times and China Post were made first to test the relevance of the categories and coders were

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research was more complicated since the NSYSU library only bought the recent articles. The 2016 research period was able to ease our work by offering keywords and time search but for the 2012 period, we had to check every news day by day.

trained to code during that period. Each coders proceeded to the coding of one newspaper and the totality of the 809 articles' coding was double checked during meetings between coders.

The second classification proceeded to content analysis. Each article was coded according to five major aspects of gendered news coverage and to three specific aspects of the 2012 and 2016 Taiwanese presidential elections. These eight categories are: “Candidate sex”, “Appearance”, “Private life”, “Female traits”, “Male traits”, “Scandals and Critics”, “Nicknames and Comparisons”, and “Attraction of Female Voters” (see Table 1 below). Each article could be coded in one or more categories. This classification enabled to look at the precise gender-related content in order to analyze how gender was treated in the coverage through the analysis of the frequency of occurrences and the discourse utilized. The five first categories are driven from the literature and permit to evaluate whether the Taiwanese newspapers perpetuated gender stereotypes in the campaigns' coverage. Whereas the three last categories were designed by the author in order to see how Tsai's gender was utilized and whether gender stereotypes could be found there.

**Table 1: Categories of the Second Classification**

|  | <b>2012</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>Candidate sex</b> ( <i>any mention that Tsai is a woman, the first female president or and any mention or comments about women leaders in general</i> )  |             |             |              |
| 2. <b>Appearance</b> ( <i>any mention to her style, her image, her hair, her clothes, her body, and her smile</i> )  |             |             |              |
| 3. <b>Private life</b> ( <i>any mention of Tsai's marital status, family background or personal details</i> )  |             |             |              |
| 4. <b>Female Traits</b> ( <i>any mention of her personality or adjective used to describe her, her behavior or policies that are qualified as feminine. For example caring, emotional, homemaker, dependent, weak, passive, quiet, shy, unconfident, untrustworthy, etc.</i> )                     |             |             |              |
| 5. <b>Male traits</b> ( <i>any mention of her personality or adjective used to describe her, her behavior or policies that are qualified as masculine. For example independent, strong, leader, dominant, assertive, competitive, insensitive, tough, brave, confident, arrogant, cold, etc.</i> ) |             |             |              |
| 6. <b>Scandals and critics</b> ( <i>any mention of scandals, any sexist attacks made by the reporters or political figures</i> )   |             |             |              |
| 7. <b>Nicknames and Comparisons</b> ( <i>any use of nicknames to refer to Tsai such as Matsu, Mother or Hollow Tsai, or any comparison with another public figure such as Merkel, Thatcher, etc.</i> )   |             |             |              |
| 8. <b>Attraction of Female voters</b> ( <i>Any mention to the fact that she may attract female voters because she is a woman</i> )   |             |             |              |

Source: Bystrom et al. 2004; Ryan 2013 (1,2,3,4,5) and the author (6,7,8)

In the category “Candidate Sex” (1), were placed all the articles that referred to Tsai Ing-wen's gender, any mention that she is a woman and that she might be the first female president of the ROC as well as any comment about women leaders in general which referred to Tsai and

her running as a woman for a presidential election. The main purpose of this category is to see if Tsai's gender mattered during the elections and if the Taiwanese newspapers emphasized her gender in one way or another (Ryan 2013). It also gives clues on how women leaders in general are perceived and portrayed by the Taiwanese media.

In the category "Appearance" (2) were placed all the references to Tsai's physical appearance (clothing, hairstyle, body and smile). This will uncover potential stereotypes and reveal whether importance was given to the female candidate appearance as well as which details were particularly reported in the articles.

The category "Private Life" (3) gathers any reference to Tsai's marital status (single, unmarried and without children) or articles about her sexual orientation. It also contains any mention of her family or details about her private life. This category will give information on whether the newspapers emphasized some of Tsai's personal details also to find possible stereotypes.

In the "Female traits" (4) and "Male traits" (5) categories, we placed any mention about Tsai Ing-wen's personality traits, behavior or policies that contained a gendered wording. The division of these references was made between female traits and male traits. Female traits include any adjective or noun that stereotypically refer to women such as warm, compassionate, caring, emotional, dependent, weak, passive, while male traits refer to men's one, for example independent, strong, leader, dominant, assertive, competitive, insensitive, brave, assertive, self-confident, active, experienced, competitive, controlling (Ryan 2013; Hayes and Lawless 2015; Ross 2002; Stevens 2007). These stereotypes "come from traditional gender roles and expectations permeate contemporary politics" (Hayes and Lawless 2015) and permits to unveil a possible gender stereotyped portrayal of the candidate.

The category "Nicknames and Comparisons" (6) is based on previous studies conducted in France in which it appeared that women candidates were often compared to other female leaders, real or mythic. There is a tendency to present women leaders as mythic creatures or even goddesses making it sound as if women needed to be very special person to be leaders and to use nicknames to characterize the female candidates (Coulomb-Gully 2012). This category aims on one hand, to see who the DPP candidate was compared with and on the other hand, to analyze the type of nicknames given to Tsai Ing-wen along the two presidential campaigns to see if her gender was used to qualify her. The use of nicknames in Taiwan is quite widespread. The

Taiwanese public and media often use paronomasia to qualify a situation or a person<sup>4</sup>. It is not always pejorative but it can also reveal stereotypes in the portrayal of the candidate.

In the category “Scandals and critics” (7) were gathered all the articles already referring to gender which reported scandals around Tsai as well as all the articles that presented a critic of the candidate program, personality or background in order to analyze the kind of attacks the Tsai had to face during the campaigns and whether gender was used to build these critics (Bystrom et al. 2004).

The category “Attraction of female voters” (8) was created in order to look at whether Tsai Ing-wen’s gender was utilized by the DPP, herself or the media to attract female voters. As explained, this concern came from debates around Hillary R. Clinton’s campaign in the United States and will give clues about the use of gender during the campaigns.

## **Findings and Analysis**

### *Results of the first classification*

The first classification compared the number of articles that referred to gender in their content in 2012 and in 2016 in order to evaluate whether Tsai Ing-wen’s gender mattered during the presidential campaigns. In total, 6206 articles were read among the six online newspapers for the two periods of March 2011 to January 2012 (3243) and March 2015 to January 2016 (2963). We can first observe that four out of the six newspapers published less articles about Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 compared to 2012. In 2012, United Daily had 1414 articles published that contained Tsai Ing-wen, Little Ing or Tsai in the title, against 1163 in 2016. China Times had 526 in 2012 and 431 in 2016, Taipei Times 258 and 177 and China Post 198 and 178. Only Liberty Times and Apple Daily had more news about the DPP candidate in 2016 than in 2012 with respectively 390 in 2012 and 539 in 2016 and 457 in 2012 against 475 in 2016. This tendency can be explained by the fact that Tsai Ing-wen was running for the second time in 2016 and her political program was very similar to the 2012 one, hence, her candidacy was less novel than in 2012. But it also reveals differences of the gender treatment between the two

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<sup>4</sup> This is related to the Chinese mandarin language which allow the use of a different Chinese character with a close pronunciation to a word but with a totally different meaning. The best example of wordplay around Tsai Ing-wen is the nickname “Hollow Tsai” (空心蔡 kong xin tsai). That nickname originally comes from the Chinese mandarin word for water spinach (空心菜 kong xin tsai) which last character has the same pronunciation as Tsai’s last name. It can be found already in 2012 and was largely used again in 2016. It is used to say that Tsai Ing-wen’s policies are empty.

campaigns. We can also notice disparities in the total amount of articles published per newspaper. The lower amount of articles for Taipei Times and China Post is linked to their audience and language. They are newspapers in English, thus, not directed to a local Taiwanese public. The greater amount of articles found in the United Daily comes from the relatively short size of its online articles. Some articles are only five or six lines long.

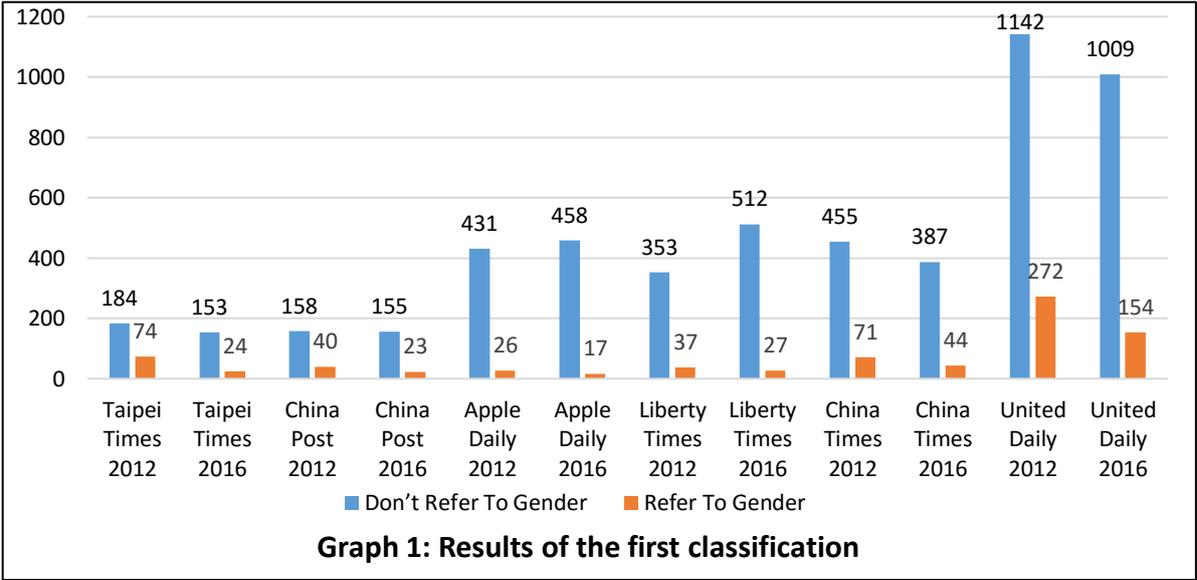
**Table 2: Results of the first classification**

|                    | <b>Don't Refer To Gender</b> | <b>Refer To Gender (RTG)</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percentage of RTG (%)</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Taipei Times 2012  | 184                          | <b>74</b>                    | 258          | <b>28.68</b>                 |
| Taipei Times 2016  | 153                          | <b>24</b>                    | 177          | <b>13.56</b>                 |
| China Post 2012    | 158                          | <b>40</b>                    | 198          | <b>20.20</b>                 |
| China Post 2016    | 155                          | <b>23</b>                    | 178          | <b>12.92</b>                 |
| Apple Daily 2012   | 431                          | <b>26</b>                    | 457          | <b>5.69</b>                  |
| Apple Daily 2016   | 458                          | <b>17</b>                    | 475          | <b>3.58</b>                  |
| Liberty Times 2012 | 353                          | <b>37</b>                    | 390          | <b>9.49</b>                  |
| Liberty Times 2016 | 512                          | <b>27</b>                    | 539          | <b>5.01</b>                  |
| China Times 2012   | 455                          | <b>71</b>                    | 526          | <b>13.49</b>                 |
| China Times 2016   | 387                          | <b>44</b>                    | 431          | <b>10.21</b>                 |
| United Daily 2012  | 1142                         | <b>272</b>                   | 1414         | <b>19.24</b>                 |
| United Daily 2016  | 1009                         | <b>154</b>                   | 1163         | <b>13.24</b>                 |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>5397</b>                  | <b>809</b>                   | <b>6206</b>  |                              |

The results show that gender was not a central issue nor during the 2012 election or the 2016 one. On average 12% of the total articles read in 2012 referred to gender against 9.7% in 2016. Most of the 6206 articles read in this study focused on the female candidate’s program and policies. However, there is a disparity between newspapers. We notice that except for Taipei Times (28.68% in 2012 and 13.56% in 2016), the newspapers which refer the most to the candidate gender are the opposition newspapers: China Post (20.20% and 12.92%), China Times (13.49% and 10.21%) and United Daily (19.24% and 13.24%) against the Chinese language pan-Green Liberty times (9.49% and 5.01%) and the more neutral one, Apple Daily (5.69% and 3.58%). Taipei Times is still the newspaper with most references to gender in 2016 but at about the same percentage as the pan-Blue newspapers this time. The newspaper seemed to have bet on promoting Tsai’s gender as a sign of modernity.

Moreover, we observe a clear diminution of the number of articles related to gender in 2016 compared to 2012. All the six newspapers followed the same tendency. Taipei Times had

the biggest percentage of articles with gender-related content in 2012 (28.68%) but it went down to 13.56% in 2016. Same for the China Post with 20.20% compared to 12.92%. Apple Daily already had the lowest percentage of gender-related content in 2012 (5.69%) but went even lower in 2016 (3.58%). Liberty Times had 9.49% in 2012 and 5.01% in 2016. China Times appeared to have 13.49% of articles that referred to gender in 2012 and 10.21% in 2016. The proportion of United Daily’s articles referring to gender in 2012 was the second highest with 19.24% and it also lowered down in 2016 with a percentage of 13.24.



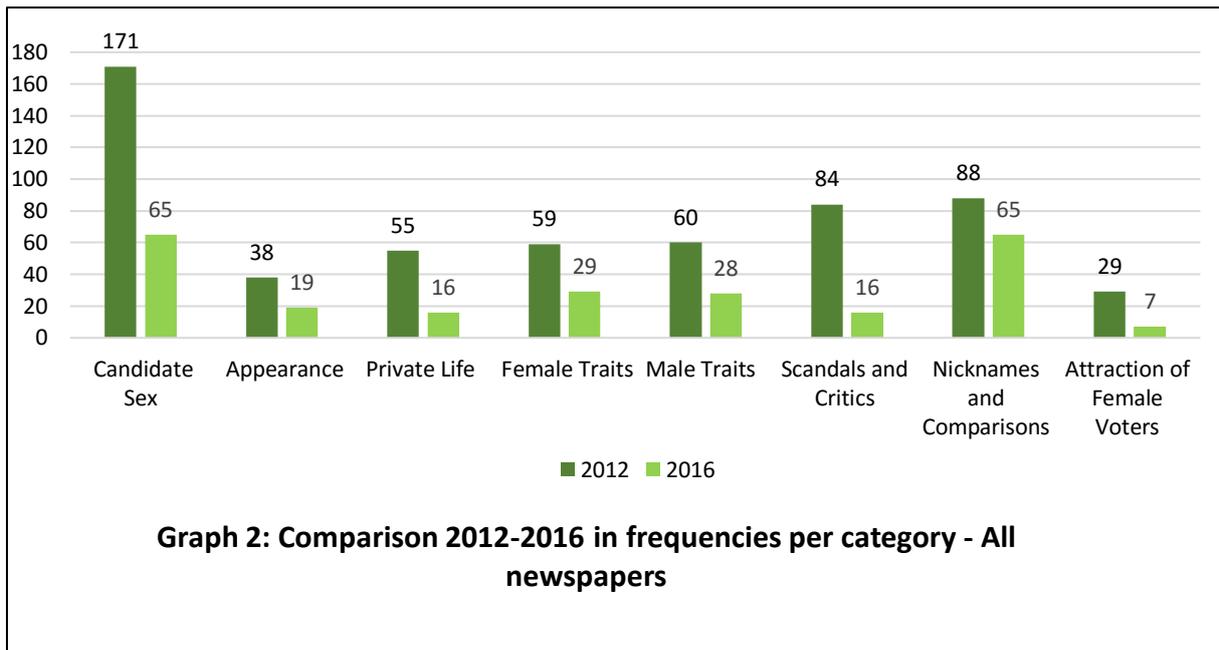
Results of the second classification

The second classification gives a better insight on how Tsai Ing-wen was portrayed in the news referring to her gender. The classification of the news’ content into eight categories permits a better understanding of the importance and utilization of Tsai’s gender. It also reveals notable differences between the coverage of the 2012 and 2016 elections.

The second classification in this study revealed that in 2012, mentions of the candidate sex represented 5.2% of the average of the total articles; 1.2% of articles mentioned Tsai Ing-wen’s physical appearance; and 1.7% were about her private life. In 2016, these rates fell down to respectively 2.2%, 0.6% and 0.5%. This shows that Taiwanese newspapers did not focus on these three aspects for both 2012 and 2016 and thus, even less in 2016. The news exposed the critics or praises that Tsai received from politicians or from the public during both campaigns and provided information about the candidate’s trips abroad or her political rallies around Taiwan. Tsai was portrayed as a viable candidate and a serious political opponent.

**Table 3: Results – 2<sup>nd</sup> classification**

|   | Taipei Times  |             | Liberty Times |              | Apple Daily  |             | China Times  |             | China Post  |             | United Daily |              | Total         |               |
|---|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
|   | 2012          | 2016        | 2012          | 2016         | 2012         | 2016        | 2012         | 2016        | 2012        | 2016        | 2012         | 2016         | 2012          | 2016          |
| <b>Total of articles</b>  | 258           | 177         | 390           | 539          | 457          | 475         | 431          | 431         | 198         | 178         | 1414         | 1163         | 3243          | 2963          |
| <b>Total of "Don't Refer To Gender"</b>                           | 184           | 153         | 353           | 512          | 431          | 458         | 387          | 387         | 158         | 155         | 1142         | 1009         | 2723          | 2674          |
| <b>Total of "Refer To Gender"</b>                                 | 74            | 24          | 37            | 27           | 26           | 17          | 44           | 44          | 40          | 23          | 272          | 154          | 520<br>(16%)  | 289<br>(9,7%) |
| <b>Candidate Sex</b><br><i>including "First Female President"</i> | 33<br>(12,8%) | 7<br>(3,9%) | 24<br>(6,1%)  | 15<br>(2,7%) | 13<br>(2,8%) | 7<br>(1,4%) | 9<br>(2,1%)  | 9<br>(2,1%) | 7<br>(3,5%) | 9<br>(5%)   | 73<br>(5,2%) | 18<br>(1,5%) | 171<br>(5,2%) | 65<br>(2,2%)  |
| <b>Appearance</b>   | 29            | 7           | 22            | 8            | 5            | 1           | 6            | 6           | 5           | 5           | 52           | 10           | 125           | 37            |
| <b>Private Life</b>   | 5<br>(1,9%)   | 4<br>(2,2%) | 5<br>(1,3%)   | 2<br>(0,4%)  | 3<br>(0,6%)  | 1<br>(0,2%) | 5<br>(1%)    | 3<br>(1,5%) | 3<br>(1,5%) | 3<br>(1,7%) | 17<br>(1,2%) | 6<br>(0,5%)  | 38<br>(1,2%)  | 19<br>(0,6%)  |
| <b>Female Traits</b>  | 8<br>(3,1%)   | 2<br>(1,1%) | 1<br>(0,2%)   | 3<br>(0,5%)  | 6<br>(1,3%)  | 3<br>(0,6%) | 22<br>(4,2%) | 1<br>(0,2%) | 4<br>(2%)   | 3<br>(1,7%) | 18<br>(1,8%) | 17<br>(1,5%) | 59<br>(1,8%)  | 29<br>(1%)    |
| <b>Male Traits</b>  | 8<br>(3,1%)   | 1<br>(0,6%) | 8<br>(2%)     | 5<br>(0,9%)  | 10<br>(2,2%) | 5<br>(1%)   | 8<br>(1,5%)  | 3<br>(1,5%) | 7<br>(3,5%) | 7<br>(3,9%) | 19<br>(1,3%) | 7<br>(0,6%)  | 60<br>(1,8%)  | 28<br>(0,9%)  |
| <b>Nicknames and Comparisons</b>                                  | 8<br>(3,1%)   | 4<br>(2,2%) | 4<br>(1%)     | 4<br>(0,7%)  | 5<br>(1,1%)  | 4<br>(0,8%) | 8<br>(1,5%)  | 6<br>(1,4%) | 4<br>(2%)   | 4<br>(2,2%) | 59<br>(4,2%) | 43<br>(4,3%) | 88<br>(2,7%)  | 65<br>(2,2%)  |
| <b>Scandals and Critics</b>                                       | 3<br>(1,2%)   | 3<br>(1,7%) | 1<br>(0,2%)   | 3<br>(0,5%)  | 9<br>(1,2%)  | 1<br>(0,2%) | 19<br>(3,6%) | 1<br>(0,2%) | 10<br>(5%)  | 0           | 42<br>(3%)   | 8<br>(0,7%)  | 84<br>(2,6%)  | 16<br>(0,5%)  |
| <b>Attraction of Female Voters</b>                                | 8<br>(3,1%)   | 0           | 1<br>(0,2%)   | 0            | 0            | 1<br>(0,2%) | 5<br>(1%)    | 1<br>(0,2%) | 2<br>(1%)   | 0           | 13<br>(0,9%) | 5<br>(0,4%)  | 29<br>(0,9%)  | 7<br>(0,2%)   |



1) Candidate Sex – First Female President

The most of the gender-related references found were about the candidate sex. Comments about Tsai’s gender were mostly placed inside articles rather than inside titles. The DPP candidate’s gender was not particularly emphasized in 2012 as in 2016. However, results show that the pan-Green newspapers did emphasized more Tsai’s gender compared to the pan-Blue ones. Taipei Times had 12.8% of its articles in 2012 mentioning Tsai’s gender and Liberty Times 6.1% against 2.8% for Apple Daily, 3.9% for China Times, 3.5% for China Post, and 5.2% for United Daily. In fact, the pan-Green newspapers particularly emphasized that Tsai would become the first female President of Taiwan: in 2012, in Taipei Times, 29 out of 33 occurrences, and 22 out of 24 for Liberty Times mentioned this aspect; while United Daily had 52 occurrences out of 73, China Times 12 out of 21, China Post 5 out of 7, and Apple Daily 5 out of 13.

In 2016, mentions of the candidate gender diminished of half for all newspapers except for China Post. Taipei Times and Liberty Times had respectively 3.9% and 2.7% of their articles mentioning about Tsai’s gender, Apple Daily and United Daily had around 1.5% and China Times around 2% while China Post had 5%. In 2012, there were 171 mentions of Tsai’s gender for all newspapers and it fell down to 65 in 2016 which show the lower importance of gender in the coverage of the 2016 campaign. As well, the number of references to the first female president decreased too with 7 out of 7 occurrences for Taipei Times, 8 out of 15 for Liberty

Times, 1 out of 7 for Apple Daily, 6 out of 9 for China Times, 5 out of 9 for China Post, and 10 out of 18 for United Daily.

In the six newspapers, many references to the candidate's gender were to report Tsai's commenting about being a woman and a female leader or to report other people's words. For example, the Taipei Times reported that Tsai believed Taiwan was mature enough to accept a female president; that women can sometimes be better leaders than men; or that electing a woman leader would set an example for China. Apple Daily focused on Tsai's experiences as a woman mentioning that she is a "Hakka daughter" and that she is very independent and did not rely on her father to rise to the top in politics. It also mentioned that Chen Shui-bian asked her to be the Minister of National Defense but she refused because it was a too 'masculine' environment for her<sup>5</sup>. It made a comment about Tsai meeting Ma Ying-jeou's wife and shaking hands with her saying that women definitely show more tolerance than men<sup>6</sup>. It also stated that female leaders are nowadays a worldwide trend. One article mentioned some people had reservations in electing a woman president, but the younger generation is excited about it since they think it's trendy. Though, the article does not give precision about who has reservations and does not provide any analysis on the topic.

In 2012, China Post's articles mentioned that Tsai was an outstanding 55 year old woman whose gender had been overwhelmingly well accepted by the public and quoting her intervention about women leaders such as "women are very qualified to be national leaders and maintain peace". But what is more interesting about China Post is that it published opinion papers and in one of them, the author denounces gender stereotypes against Tsai Ing-wen and against women leaders in general. Both China Times and China Post published an article quoting Tsai, in which she joked about whether she did "effeminate" the DPP. She actually meant that she reformed the old party and improved it by bringing feminine qualities such as openness, accessibility, friendliness, flexibility and willingness to communicate<sup>7</sup>. China Times focused more on mentioning that a female president is a good thing; that people like the idea; and that women will vote for her since she is a woman. And as the other newspapers, it also stressed that Tsai's nomination promoted gender equality and that women have all the necessary qualities to lead a country. Liberty Times only focused about the idea that a woman president

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20111025/33764162/applesearch/%E8%94%A1%E7%BC%9A%E6%89%81%E6%9B%BE%E8%A6%81%E6%88%91%E7%95%B6%E5%9C%8B%E9%98%B2%E9%83%A8%E9%95%B7>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20111228/33918546/applesearch/%E8%BE%A3%E8%98%8B%E6%9E%9C%E5%B0%88%E6%AC%84%E7%BC%9A%E5%85%A9%E5%80%8B%E5%A5%B3%E4%BA%BA%E7%9A%84%E8%B7%9D%E9%9B%A2%E7%BC%88%E4%BD%99%E8%89%BE%E8%8B%94%E7%BC%89>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/editorial/taiwan-issues/2011/09/19/317117/p1/Meaning-of.htm>

will bring change and make Taiwan better by bringing a new democratic paradigm. United Daily had 73 articles mentioning the candidate sex. Most of them were not critical and just reported Tsai's words about women leaders. For example, in 2012 it reported that Tsai said that women were rising but men should not be too nervous because women will take care of them; or in 2016, there was an article quoting Tsai saying that only 5 to 10% of Taiwanese would not be willing to vote for a women as President.

The only three more stereotypical comments concerning Tsai was her choice of Vice-president (VP) in both 2012 and 2016; her bodyguards in 2012 and the 'battle' with Hung Hsiu-chu, the female KMT candidate, in 2016. For both 2012 and 2016, the question of who would be Tsai's running mate was central and the DPP candidate was often asked about whom she would choose and more especially about the sex of the VP. This led to many suppositions but most people agreed on one point: she had to choose a male running mate in order to balance the sex. Tsai answered that the gender of the Vice-president did not matter but the competences of the person. This is interesting to notice that this question of a woman and man's balance was only asked to Tsai Ing-wen and the two other male candidates in 2012 were not questioned whether they would chose a female running mate. However, in 2016, this was reluctantly admitted that even the gender of the male presidential candidates' Vice President mattered. Indeed, both Eric Chu (朱立倫) and James Soong (宋楚瑜) chose a woman to run with them. Eric Chu chose a feminist, Jennifer Wang (王如玄), whose role was obviously to attract female voters by insisting on the women issues in Taiwan; and James Soong chose Hsu Hsin-ying (徐欣瑩) who both were from a different political party than the male candidates. This showed that gender did matter during the 2016 election but the question was very implicit. Last, in 2016, United Daily used the term "Battle of two women" to describe the electoral competition between Tsai and Hung. A comment that Tsai herself found sexist and to which she answered by saying that we would never say that about two men running.

In short, the six newspapers all relatively rarely mentioned the fact that Tsai is a woman or questioned whether women fit the role of President. However, the gender issue was not inexistent. Many references to her gender were to report Tsai's commenting herself about being a woman and a female leader or to report other people's words. For both years, the comments concerned the ideas that electing a female leader proves Taiwan's progressivism and modernity and favors gender equality and women empowerment. Both Liberty Times and China Times reported about the foreign media praising Tsai for breaking the male dominant political

situation in Taiwan and promoting gender equality. Most importantly, the “candidate sex” category shows a clear diminution of references to Tsai’s gender and particularly to the fact that Tsai would become the first female president. It is the pan-Green newspapers that insisted the most about this aspect of the candidate compared to the pan-Blue ones.

## 2) Appearance

In the Taiwanese newspapers coverage of the campaigns, it was very rare to find mentions of Tsai’s style, clothing or hair style. There were not any articles directly focusing on Tsai’s appearance, it was only a short sentence or adjectives found in the content, focusing on a particular event or on the candidate image in general. In 2012, five articles mentioned Tsai’s physical appearance in Taipei Times, in China Times and in Liberty Times and only three in China Post and Apple Daily representing less than 2% for each newspaper and an average of 1.2% for the six newspapers. In 2016, the latter percentage dropped to 0.6% on average but Taipei Times, China Times and China Post had slightly more articles concerning the candidate’s appearance compared to 2012.

Appearance of the candidate was obviously not of concern for five out of the six newspapers during both 2012 and 2016 campaigns’ coverage. However, there was still some gender stereotypes hidden in the content of the articles. Only the United Daily was more critical of Tsai’s style in 2012 but it changed in 2016. It is also the only newspaper that described what Tsai Ing-wen was wearing during some events, or made more sexist comments about her make-up or hairstyle though it was still relatively rare since there were only 17 out of 1414 (1.2%) talking about Tsai’s appearance. Most comments regretted that her style was so simple. Journalists wrote that she wears only black suits, added that wearing a skirt and some make-up would be more appropriate and make her look more formal. Another comment was about a change in her hairstyle which made her look more feminine. China Times only mentioned Tsai’s short hair and her scholar image once but had two articles evoking tears in the DPP candidate’s eyes while China Post mentioned her lack of charisma and cold image. Liberty Times posted about her hair and her smile once and wrote that she does not look like a typical politician; although it did not define what a typical politician looks like. It also posted about her cute hair, her modern and refreshing image. Taipei Times wrote about her image of a “cool and collected intellectual” and her “academic image”. Here we notice a difference between the pan-Blue and pan-Green newspapers. The opposition being more critical and negative in their

comments about the candidate's appearance while the pan-Green newspapers were more positive in describing the candidate's image.

In 2016, the number of articles with appearance-related content lowered. There were two in the Liberty Times, one in Apple Daily, six in United Daily, three in China Times and China Post and four in Taipei Times. Comments about her style were found in Liberty Times, Apple Daily and United Daily only. Liberty Times reported someone saying that female candidates in general should dress more female-like while Apple Daily and United Daily made comments about her change of style compared to 2012 saying that she now wears more colors and sometimes printed tee-shirts or stripes which make her look younger, less serious, more confident and brighter. The three newspapers mentioned her simple style being her own style, the one that corresponds with her the best. Taipei Times and China Times published an article about the New York Times's cover of Tsai Ing-wen and reported other people's comments about that picture. The shot made her look older, showed all her wrinkles and skin issues but also made her look depressed according to this people. Most of the other occurrences in the six newspapers were about a cold, her smile on stage or at a rally, tears in her eyes and some few about her scholar and cold image.

Through the appearance category, content analysis shows that the pan-Blue newspapers did not publish more articles concerning the candidate's appearance compared to the pan-Green ones but they were more critical of the style and image of the candidate in 2012 compared to 2016. Most comments of 2012 concerned the femininity of Tsai Ing-wen while in 2016, comments were more positive. These results support the argument that the candidate's feminine attributes were less used to criticize Tsai in 2016 than in 2012 and that the importance of gender diminished in 2016.

### 3) Private Life

The third category analyzes the content of the articles mentioning about Tsai Ing-wen's private life which include her age, her love life, her sexuality and her family. As for the two previous categories, the Taiwanese newspapers did not refer too much to her private life. And in 2016 even less than in 2012 for 5 out of the 6 newspapers. Here, there is no difference between the pan-Green and the pan-Blue newspapers. While Taipei Times, Apple Daily, and China Post had over 3% of their articles with mentions about the candidate private life, these numbers all dropped under 0.8% in 2016. On average, there were 55 references to Tsai's personal details in 2012 against 16 in 2016.

Most of the occurrences of the 2012 campaign were about one particular scandal brought by Shih Ming-teh (施明德), a former DPP chairman, who asked Tsai Ing-wen to reveal publicly her sexual orientation after some assumption were made of a love relationship between her and her female aid. Tsai refused to answer because to her, it is a private matter and does not relate to her candidacy<sup>8</sup>. Shih Ming-teh retorted that since she was going to be the highest public figure of Taiwan, she owed the truth to Taiwanese people. To him, her homosexuality or heterosexuality could affect the way she handles the State affairs. Apple Daily, a newspaper that is more focused on entertainment, published eight articles on the topic but most newspapers only focused on it in two or three articles. In fact, most people and the newspapers too condemned Shih for his question. The China Post who published five articles on the matter said it even contributed to increase the number of Tsai's supporters who were angry at Shih for his comment. The China Post in the same article also mentioned that rumors about Tsai's homosexuality started when she was the head of the Mainland Affairs Council in 2000. In another article, it quoted a supporter who said she does not care at all about Tsai's sexual orientation, that it would not affect her choice. Tsai was obviously asked questions about her sexual orientation because she is single, a marital status that is often not well accepted for women. This is a gender stereotype that would probably not happen to a single man. When asked about her single status, Tsai said she was in a relationship with her country.

In total, only 9 articles mentioned that fact that she is single, unmarried and does not have children. On the latest topic, Apple Daily reported a student who asked her how she could understand family policies since she was not a mother herself. A comment to which Tsai answered that if a leader actually only leads a country based on his personal experience then it would be a very bad leader. Tsai also added that the person currently in charge of her family program was a man, meaning that there should not be gendered roles. Other comments in 2012 portrayed her as rich and coming from a rich family and mentioned that she did not leave office right away when her father died, that she stayed until her job was done before going back to Pingtung. Some articles also focused on her ethnic identity indicating that she has Hakka and aboriginal ancestors, a topic that is directly linked to Taiwan history and does not relate to gender stereotypes except once, when a politician said that she has the virtues of the Hakka

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<sup>8</sup> "Tsai Ing-wen yesterday said she would not answer questions raised by prominent dissident Shih Ming-teh about her sexual orientation, refusing to act as an "accomplice of gender oppression." "I'm not angry, and I don't care. There is no need to answer" The DPP chairwoman said that although she is a single woman, her political and academic achievements in past decades can withstand public criticism."

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2011/04/17/298939/Tsai-says.htm>

women and is strong like them. There was only four references to her age. Most of the other comments focused on discretion about her private life, noting that when asked about private details, she refuses to answer. Even in her books, she did not give too much details except some about her family and her life in university. Apple Daily particularly chose to talk about one of Tsai's date during which she was the one who drove the man home, showing how untraditional she is.

In 2016, not many articles mentioned Tsai's age or marital status neither. Tsai was also caught in two other attacks but this time brought by a politician from the opposition. First, the third presidential candidate James Soong posted on his Facebook page that since Tsai Ing-wen and Hung Hsiu-chu were both single, he was not sure they could handle family policies. And the second one came from the New Party Chairman Yok Mu-ming (郁慕明) who said that Tsai was dangerous on the cross-strait issues because she is single and single people do things ruthlessly<sup>9</sup>. Each newspaper published one article about it just to report it but it did not go further in the debate.

Thus, the Taiwanese media did not produce a biased coverage of Tsai Ing-wen's campaigns but the nature of some comments revealed that the few gender stereotypes emerged in fact from older politicians who have a traditional vision of women. Moreover, Tsai's discreet personality also contributes to this tendency. She has never been caught in any private scandals and keeps her personal details secret. As for the two previous categories, results of the private life category show that the Taiwanese newspapers did not covered the female presidential candidate's campaign in a gender stereotyped way. Though, stereotypes could still be found, they mostly came from the report of incidents but not from the journalists themselves. Moreover, in this category also there were less references to the candidate private life in 2016 compared to 2012.

#### 4) *Female and Male Traits*

The two next categories "Female Traits and Male traits" are aimed at analyzing whether Tsai Ing-wen was portrayed with more feminine or masculine characteristics. As mentioned before, the presidential office is seen as the most masculine one because it requires qualities

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<sup>9</sup> "Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) is "more dangerous" than President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and could "be ruthless" because she is "single, without family burdens." "What is different between Tsai and Chen is that she is single. Single people do things more ruthlessly because they have less to care about compared with those who have children. She is more dangerous than Chen. One day she might go amok; she might ally with the US and Japan and start a war against China," he said." <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/01/09/2003636789>

that are traditionally seen as male ones such as leadership, rationality, assertiveness or confidence. This is the reason why some voters tend to perceive women as less qualified for President because the feminine traits are stereotyped as being warmth, compassionate, weak or passive.

First, there are differences between the 2012 and 2016 news coverage. The six newspapers published less articles referring to Tsai's personality. Taipei Times had 16 mentions about personality traits in 2012 against 3 in 2016; Liberty Times had 9 and 8; Apple Daily had 16 and 8; China Times had 30 and 4; China Post had 11 and 10; and United Daily 37 against 24.

On average, the results showed that Tsai was portrayed equitably between male and female traits with a total of 59 female traits and 60 male ones in 2012; and 29 female traits against 28 male traits in 2016. However, there are differences in the use of male and female traits between the pan-Green and the pan-Blue newspapers. While Taipei Times, Liberty Times and the more neutral Apple Daily tended to portray Tsai with predominantly male traits; the two Chinese language newspapers that are less friendly to Tsai, United Daily and China Times stressed more her female traits. But both had a different attitude in 2016. United Daily was constant between the two campaigns with 18 references to female traits in 2012 and 17 in 2016; while China Times had 22 in 2012 and fell to 1 in 2016. But United Daily which counts 19 male traits for 2012 actually tended to portray Tsai less masculine with only 7 references to male traits; whereas China Times jumped from 8 to 3 but the masculine traits of 2016 became superior to the feminine traits. Liberty Times, Apple Daily and China Post all stayed constant with more mentions of masculine traits than feminine ones during both year's coverage. Taipei Times showed a balanced coverage with about the same number of occurrences in 2012 and 2016.

The female traits used to describe Tsai Ing-wen were various. In 2012 and 2016, Liberty Times and Taipei Times used female traits to portray Tsai in order to show her to advantage. Taipei Times mentioned that Tsai has a consensus builder character, great communication skills, that she is passionate and touched by the people and is also reasonable, moderate and gentle. There were only two more negative comments. One about the DPP candidate's ambiguity on the cross-strait policies and another about her love to micromanage everything. Liberty Times valued women characteristics such as trust, safety, warmth, harmony and reliability in 2012 and Tsai's personality in 2016 describing her as patient, honest, adaptive or active and praising her good learning skills. The two newspapers used the male traits to assess Tsai's competency and leadership abilities. In 2012, both newspapers portrayed Tsai as rational (five times in Liberty

Times and two in Taipei Times), confident, pragmatic, responsible, practical, strong minded with good leadership and management. In 2016, there were less comments on Tsai's personality and in the male traits she was mostly described as brave, strong, more combative, and confident with an improved leadership compared to 2012.

Apple Daily did not make any relevant description of the DPP candidate. It just wrote that she was cute, studious, beautiful and clever when she was young. Now, she is considerate and sincere but a bit of an arrogant princess sometimes<sup>10</sup> which does not portray Tsai as a serious politician. The male traits used in 2012 were not really gratifying, describing the female candidate as violent, angry, with a pressing tone, authoritarian with her staff, harsh, ambitious who makes bold promises. In some other articles, Tsai was depicted as professional, rational and serious. In 2016, the newspaper qualified Tsai as moderate and mild for the female traits and responsible, rational, firm, persistent and not emotional for the male ones. The only pejorative comment was about Tsai's need to control everything and to have things done her way. Once again, the 2016 portrayal was less critical of the female candidate.

Although United Daily is the newspaper that used the most female traits to portray Tsai Ing-wen, it did not do it in a negative way in 2012. The DPP candidate was described as warm, tolerant, empathetic, mild, modest, patient and delicate with a flexible leadership. Her program was qualified as frugal and fair, caring for different ethnic groups and professional categories. However, in 2016, even though the idea of tolerance, compassion, understanding and empathy were still there, the female traits stressed her ambiguity and evasiveness and one article declared that Tsai's cutes and closeness to people were fake. The male traits used in the articles were about the same as in Liberty Times and Taipei Times and Apple Daily. The main difference resides in a utilization of war rhetoric such as "rivalry", "warlord" or "she is not the goddess of war, she is not a panacea"<sup>11</sup>. Another article depicted her as arrogant, gloomy and proud.

China Times and China Post are the only two newspapers which used female traits in a more pejorative way in 2012. China Times wrote that Tsai is not clear, not powerful and not competent. She is also undecided, mysterious, and immature. China Post described her as changing, capricious, indecisive and soft-spoken. But both newspapers added the traditional female traits in their description too, they said she is warm, calm, harmonious, moderate,

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<sup>10</sup> Apple Daily uses the word "嬌嬌女" which is hardly translatable in English.

<sup>11</sup> 小英不是戰神，也非補選的萬靈丹。

trustworthy, and that she can touch the people. In 2016, China Times only mentioned that she is moderate and China Post only stressed her ambiguity and soft-speaking traits with a more gendered article saying that since Tsai has reserved manner, she needs a man like Chen Jian-ren to help her on the communication side. The male traits were also about the same as in the four other newspapers, emphasizing Tsai's rationality, courage, strength and confidence. Both papers suggested the DPP candidate is a manipulator and maneuvering in order to get what she wants. China Times added that she is over-confident, cold and does not accept critics in 2012 and added that she is not generous enough and too direct in 2016.

To sum up, the use of male and female traits to portray the female candidate mostly depended on the political position of the newspaper, favoring the male traits and advantageous female traits for the pan-green newspapers and using pejorative female traits to discredit the DPP candidate. The diminution of articles referring to personality traits in 2016 also shows that there was less need to describe Tsai Ing-wen since she was running for the second time and was already given winner. The most gender stereotypes were found in these two parts by attributing the traditional female traits to Tsai. This supports the idea that gender can be used as a tool to critic a candidate by using gender stereotypes to discredit him or her. A better analysis of this aspect would be possible by comparing the portrayal made of male and female candidates.

##### 5) Nicknames and Comparisons

Nicknames used to refer to Tsai Ing-wen during the 2012 campaign were about the same as during the 2016 election. In five out of six newspapers, their utilization was rather low and at about the same rate for both elections. Only United Daily had an extensive range of nicknames and a higher number of it with 55 occurrences in 2012 and 37 in 2016. However, proportionally, it represents about 4% of the total articles published in the newspaper. It tended to use more critical nicknames to refer to Tsai while the newspapers friendlier to the Green camp had an inclination to use comparisons to public figures more than nicknames.

The most used nickname to refer to Tsai is Little Ing (小英 xiao ying). It was often used in the Taiwanese newspapers in Chinese Language and never in the two in English languages. The number of uses of Little Ing was not reported here since it would have been too numerous. However, it is important to notice that the adjective 'Little' as used in Chinese does not hold a sexist meaning and can be used to refer to men too. However, only the two women candidates had nicknames. Male candidates did not have any. The other female candidate, Hung Hsiu-chu

(洪秀柱) is called “Little Hot Pepper” (小辣椒 xiaolajiao) because of her temper and direct way to speak. The second most often used is the one mentioned in the research design part, “Hollow Tsai”. This was logically more often encountered in the newspapers supporting the opposition camp, China Times and United Daily. This nickname does not contain any masculine or feminine reference.

The other nicknames that can be found in the newspapers were mostly positive but gendered. Tsai was called “Female Robin hood” (女羅賓漢) to describe how she helped the farmers, “Matsu” (媽祖) who is the famous Chinese goddess who protects the sailors and fishermen, “The Queen of the Markets” (菜市場女王) because she organized political rally in one thousands markets and finally the “Girl next door” (鄰家女) to say that she looks like everyone. Other than “Hollow Tsai”, the negative nicknames were “the Female Version of Ma Ying-jeou” that was used to say that she was too moderate and was only used in China Post (two times in 2012 and one in 2016). As we can see, in these nicknames, Tsai’s gender is more emphasized. The reference to a queen or a goddess are often used to qualify women leaders as noted in the literature review. Coulomb-Gully explained that due to the special character of a women in charge, the media need to compare them with mythic or very powerful women.

This also appear in the comparisons to famous figure that were made in the news coverage of Tsai’s campaigns. Tsai Ing-wen was not often compared to male figures in the newspapers. She was once compared to Vladimir Putin and once to George W. Bush. But mostly, she was compared to female leaders such as Hillary R. Clinton, Angela Merkel, Margaret Thatcher and Sarah Palin for international leaders. All Western and powerful female leaders. Tsai Ing-wen herself declared that one of her role model is Margaret Thatcher. Tsai was less compared to Asian leaders, and if she was, it was to Annette Lu, the former Vice-president of the ROC and to Wu Zetian; the first and only Chinese female leader who ruled as an Empress of the Zhou dynasty from 690 to 705AC. These comparisons made with very powerful female leaders revealed how the media perceived Tsai’s leadership. Incidentally, just after her election on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, many articles were entitled or mentioned that Tsai had become “the most powerful woman of the Chinese world” in both local and international media<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://richieast.com/tsai-ing-wen>  
<http://time.com/4183442/china-taiwan-tsai-ing-wen-first-female-president/>

In this category were found some traditional gender stereotypes that could be found in American or European studies such as comparing the female candidate to other women leaders rather than men politicians as well as using deities or historical female characters to compare with Tsai Ing-wen. Results show that the pan-Green newspapers as well as Apple Daily tended to use less nicknames and comparisons when referring to Tsai, the opposition's newspapers used them at about the same rate in 2012 and 2016. However, the total numbers of use still diminished from 2012 to 2016 with 88 occurrences against 65.

#### 6) *Scandals and Critics*

The category “Scandals and Critics” was aimed to analyze whether the DPP presidential candidate was attacked by her opponents or the media on more gender-stereotyped matters. The first observation is that Tsai Ing-wen was more criticized or victim of sexist attacks in 2012 than in 2016 and that the critics came mainly from the newspapers supporting the opposition. In 2012, in total there were 84 articles reporting scandals or critics toward Tsai Ing-wen. 42 were from United Daily, 19 from China Times and 9 from China Post. While there were 16 in 2016 and they were mostly found in the Green Camp newspaper (Taipei Times: 3, Liberty Times: 3, United Daily: 8, China Times: 1, China Post: 0, Apple Daily: 1). This list of critics is not exhaustive. It does not gather all the critics and scandals that could be found in the 6206 articles that were read over the two periods. Here, we only focused on the articles related to gender that also contained critics, sexist attacks or report about scandals.

Apart questionings on Tsai's sexual orientation and single status as mentioned in the second category, which were the main scandals affecting the DPP candidate in 2012, another sexist attack also came from Shih Ming-teh who questioned the “soft leadership skills of women” to which no one responded directly. The other surprising comments were about Tsai's choice of Vice-president. An opinion paper published in China Post in 2011 also contained some gender remarks. It said that Tsai had no leadership, no statesman-like manners and that she was a run-of-the-mill politician<sup>13</sup>. Another gender related remark from the 2012 campaign came from Wang Yeh-li (王業立), a political scientist at National Taiwan University who said that “while Tsai's nomination as Taiwan's first female presidential candidate was a milestone, [...]

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<sup>13</sup> “Leadership, if it matters at all, does not seem to be the academician-turned-politician's long suit. One could argue that had she behaved in a more statesmanlike manner, her political future, and even an exalted place in history, will be ensured whether she is president or not. And even if she loses the current race to Ma or Soong, she would still be president one day, and even more.

A weak leader, one that has failed to win an election, simply cannot survive internecine rivalries.  
<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/editorial/taiwan-issues/2011/12/17/326101/Tsai's-best.htm>

voters might not be ready for a female president<sup>14</sup>”. Finally, in 2016, Jennifer Wang, the KMT Vice-presidential candidate said that Tsai Ing-wen had done nothing for feminism and this was the title of the Taipei Times articles<sup>15</sup>.

All the other critics and attacks were not directly related to gender. In 2012, she was criticized about the fact that she could not speak the Taiwanese dialect nor the Hakka language, the two other main languages of Taiwan. But she learnt both and in 2016, she was not attacked anymore about it. Other than that, she was criticized a lot about her ambiguity and her lack of substance, but that came logically from the opposition newspapers. Tsai was also caught in other scandals of possible corruption which is quite a common attack during election campaigns. She was questioned about her salary, her assets, her properties, etc. But none of these were related to gender neither which suggests that gender was not central in the critics emitted toward the DPP candidate. Nevertheless, the “Scandal and Critics” category is important insofar as it supports the idea that the DPP candidate was less criticized in 2016 than in 2012 and more especially on gender related issues. This is particularly obvious for the pan-Blue newspapers which counted 71 occurrences in 2012 against 9 in 2016.

#### 7) *Attraction of Female Voters*

The category “Attraction of female voters” was created in order to look at whether Tsai Ing-wen’s gender was utilized by the DPP, herself or the media to attract female voters. As for the other categories, the candidate’s gender argument was more important during the 2012 presidential campaign than the 2016 one. Taipei Times published 8 articles about the fact that she would attract female voters, China Post had 2, Liberty Times 1, China Times 5, United Daily 13 and Apple Daily had none. Taipei Times’s attitude can be explained by the fact that the newspaper bet on Tsai’s female identity during the first campaign as we saw earlier in the “Candidate Sex” campaign. However, the newspaper did not publish anything about it in 2016. The small number of articles in the six newspapers shows that the topic was not particularly discussed though the idea existed.

In 2012, the Taipei Times reported that the campaign is expected to improve Tsai’s support among women and the youth. The newspaper does not provide much analysis but quoted Chen Shui-bian who said that “it is a given that more women will support Tsai<sup>16</sup>” and in another

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2011/04/30/2003502057/1>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/12/21/2003635307>

<sup>16</sup> “Ma no longer has any advantage among young people [...] and it is a given that more women will support Tsai,” Chen said, adding that widespread public interest in the race would likely contribute to record-high voter turnout

article quoting Chen Chun-lin (陳俊麟) it wrote that “Tsai’s image, which is largely seen as a departure from traditional DPP candidates has turned many female voters, especially housewife with children, in the party favor<sup>17</sup>”. According to the journalists, the DPP never managed to attract female voters but Tsai’s candidature could change that not only because she is a woman but also because she is more moderate than the traditional DPP members. In another article, the Taipei Times tried to analyze why women would not vote for the DPP. Both the person questioned, Chang Chia-ling (張嘉玲) who is in charge of the DPP’s Department of Women’s Development and Tsai’s campaign spokesperson, Hsu Chia-ching (徐佳青), answered that the reason was the image of violent party that the DPP had since the democratization movement. Tsai managed to change the DPP image since 2008 and the party hopes it will attract women. Chang added that women are “a complicated animal of a gentle and soft nature” which stereotypically describe women’s voting behavior.

China Times produced five articles about attracting female voters saying that Tsai’s candidature will probably attract some old ladies and housewives because she can understand women better so women will vote for her. The China Post and Taipei Times insisted on the fact that she would especially attract more Hakka women voters who usually vote KMT because Tsai is a Hakka herself. But later during the 2012 campaign, China Post reported that statistics have shown that, surprisingly, women still generally supported Ma Ying-jeou more. For the 2016 election, China Post said that Tsai’s campaign directly targeted women voters by emphasizing child care and elderly care, two domains that are usually taken care of by women. Liberty Times who had one article on the topic in 2012 and none in 2016 talked about the association of Tsai’s sisters who said that electing women was trendy and so they supported Tsai. Apple Daily did not have articles in 2012 and only one in 2016 which said that Tsai’s profile actually attracted women because she is young, she is a woman and she is highly educated so she represents women success.

One more time in this category, the gender argument was rarely used but content analysis revealed the presence of gender stereotypes by assuming that a woman candidate would attract female voters. However, the number of occurrences was very low during both campaigns and

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of about 80 percent. “Tsai isn’t second to Ma either in leadership ability or educational background. She’s also younger,” Chen said. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2011/06/08/2003505258>

<sup>17</sup> “Tsai’s image, which is largely seen as a departure from traditional DPP candidates, has turned many female voters, especially housewives with children, in the party’s favor, Chen said, adding that were it not for Tsai, this segment might not support the DPP candidate”.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2011/06/13/2003505667>

in 2016 even lower than in 2012. The candidate sex was seen or used as an attraction to female voters to vote for the female candidate in 2012, but this argument almost disappeared in 2016; with occurrences that jumped from 29 in 2012 to 7 in 2016.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

This study aimed at observing whether the Taiwanese newspapers conveyed gender stereotypes in the coverage of the DPP female candidate's presidential campaigns of 2012 and 2016, as well as analyzing whether and how gender mattered. Through a first classification, 6206 articles were collected in six different online newspapers and among them, 809 contained references to gender. Using content analysis methods, the latest were then classified in eight different categories which allowed to uncover gender stereotypes and to see how the gender of the female candidate was utilized.

This study permitted to assess that the Taiwanese newspapers conveyed few gender stereotypes and that the gender of Tsai Ing-wen was not of major importance in the coverage of both 2012 and 2016 presidential campaigns. Analysis of the articles' content revealed that the Taiwanese newspapers did not convey most of the traditional gender stereotypes that were found in studies on female candidate's news coverage in Western countries. The candidate sex, physical appearance and private life's categories showed that these three aspects were not emphasized in the coverage of Tsai Ing-wen and mostly gathered stereotypes which emerged from other male politicians. The portrayal of the DPP candidate was also mainly balanced between female and male traits. Though, the opposition's newspapers stressed more some pejorative female traits. The viability of Tsai was not discussed in gender terms and focused mainly on her capacity to handle the cross-strait relations. Tsai Ing-wen's gender was rarely used to attract female voters neither. However, gender was more emphasize in the choice of nicknames used to characterize the female candidate and the comparisons to public figure which were mostly done with powerful female leaders and not too much with male figures. Although some gender stereotypes can be found in the coverage, their rate was relatively low.

Results of the first classification revealed that the number of references to gender lowered in 2016 compared to 2012 and this for all six newspapers. These results were confirmed by the second classification which shows a clear diminution of the number of references to gender in

each category. I explain this phenomenon by an unconscious rationalization by the media of the political situation which lead to the emphasis or de-emphasis of the female candidate's gender depending on her position in the electoral race. The media would tend to be less critical of the given winner than of its opponents. In this study, I extended this idea by suggesting that, while media usually tend to cover female politicians with gender stereotypes and emphasize the candidate gender, when this candidate is in a winning position, the gender issue tend to disappear; especially at a presidential level, when power is at stake. I labelled this phenomenon as the "Winner Effect".

Indeed, in 2012, Tsai Ing-wen was the underdog of the election while in 2016, the DPP candidate was given winner as soon as the race started. Hence, the winning position of Tsai in 2016 seems to have had an influence on the importance given to her gender. Since only four years separate the two elections, the diminution of the gender related articles can't possibly be explained by an improvement in terms of gender equality in the Taiwanese society or the high participation of Taiwanese women in politics even though it might have played a part. Moreover, the evidence that the opposition newspapers tended to refer more to the female candidate's gender support this idea. In the analysis, differences in the use of gender appeared between the pan-Green and the pan-Blue newspapers. The ones more supportive of the opposition tended to use more some gender stereotypes than the pan-Green ones. Newspapers supporting the female candidate gave less importance to the gender of the candidate and if they did, such as did Taipei Times in 2012, it was used in a positive way while the opposition newspapers used to a certain extent gender to critic and discredit the candidate.

The study presented in this paper has never been done before about Taiwan elections and provides only a small insight on women and politics in Taiwan; a research field that is lacking resources in English language. This research then represents a preliminary work on gender stereotypes in the media coverage of Taiwanese women politicians and suggests that Taiwanese newspapers hold less stereotypes than what was found in Western studies by scholars. This would require to conduct the same kind of studies at a Legislative and Mayoral level to assess the findings.

But this study also adds to the explanation about when gender matters by suggesting that gender matters less when the female candidate is in a winning position for an election and that gender could be unconsciously emphasized or de-emphasized by newspaper and, to a larger

extent media, depending on the female candidate's position in the electoral race. Since there is not yet literature on the matter, this hypothesis will require further exploration to be validated.

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