

Who is Nancy Pelosi?

The election of a Democratic majority to the U.S. House of Representatives in the 110th Congress paved the way for Nancy Pelosi of California to become the first woman speaker. As the incumbent Democratic leader, Pelosi was well known on Capitol Hill. Yet as the incoming speaker, and the first woman speaker, she faced the certainty of receiving extensive media scrutiny in the run up to the 2006 election, during the transition period, and during her first year in office. How would she become viewed by the American people? And who would shape the public's perception of her? What role would gender and her status as the historic first woman speaker play in focusing the lens of media attention?

Gender in Congressional Leadership Elections

Speaker Pelosi's historic rise to power must be seen in the context of the gendered dynamics of House leadership elections. Between 1975 and 2007 there were 307 leadership elections in the House. Of these, 141 were contested. A total of 25 individual women and 112 men sought leadership positions. During the same period, the number of women serving in the House ranged from 4.4% in 1975 to 15.4% in 2007. Thus, women comprised 18% of the candidate pool, a ratio above that of their representation in the House. Still, few women have

challenged for the top leadership positions.

Pelosi's rise to power may be viewed as culminating a trend that began in the 1990s (Rosenthal 2007). During that decade, as the number of women in both parties increased and the number of lower-level leadership posts expanded, more women vied for party leadership positions. Between the 104th Congress and the 110th Congress, 18 different women sought elected party leadership. These women members more often have faced contested and crowded leadership races (Rosenthal 2007). From 1975 to 2007, 61.7% of women candidates have run in contested races compared with 46.6% of men. Most of the difference comes in the decade of the 1990s, when men faced an average of 1.78 leadership opponents and women faced 2.5 opponents, a gender difference predominantly within the Republican Party.¹

Women historically have been found in lower-level leadership positions. But with the close of the decade of the 1990s, women in

both parties were challenging for the top positions. In 1998, Representative Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) became the first, though unsuccessful, woman to bid for the post of majority leader of the GOP, and Representative Rosa de Lauro (D-CT) unsuccessfully ran for Democratic Caucus chair. In 2003, Rep. Deborah Pryce (R-OH) became the first woman since Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME) to be elected chair of her party's conference.

The gendered pattern in contested races does not necessarily imply discrimination or bias against women, but it does suggest a gendered opportunity structure. The expansion of leadership positions since the mid 1990s has been mostly in lower-level positions where entry is to be expected by more junior members (where women are more numerous). Meanwhile, higher-level positions are already held by more established male members whose rise in leadership is no longer contested. In other words, first entry into leadership may produce more contested races than reselection in office or succession contests to move up the leadership ladder.

Pelosi's Rise to Leadership

Into this context, Nancy Pelosi stepped to break what she herself described as the "marble ceiling" of congressional leadership. In 1999, she was organizing her own race for Democratic Party whip, which culminated two years later when the caucus vote was held on October 10, 2001.² Just a year later, her colleagues elected her Democratic leader for the 108th Congress as Rep. Dick Gephardt (MO) relinquished his post to pursue his presidential aspirations. In November 2006, with her party's victory in the polls, she became the first woman ever to lead the House.

Speaker Pelosi's chief rival in the whip's race, and more generally in the Democratic Caucus, has been Steny Hoyer of Maryland.³ Their paths up the leadership ladder have differed. Hoyer worked through the lower rungs of leadership first as caucus secretary/vice chair (101st Congress), then as caucus chair (101st), then made his initial run for whip against Rep. David Bonior (MI) (102nd), and then his contest with Pelosi in 2001. By contrast, and perhaps with knowledge of previous women's experience, Pelosi avoided the successive battles (and potential set-backs) up the lower-level rungs of leadership and built her reputation and winning coalition in the committee system and as an appropriator. Indeed her successful efforts to obtain a seat on the Appropriations Committee presaged her leadership coalition.

by
Cindy Simon Rosenthal,
University of Oklahoma
Ronald M. Peters, Jr.,
University of Oklahoma

While their voting records are not far apart, their supporting coalitions reflect the divide in the Democratic Caucus. Representative Hoyer is clearly more aligned with the conservative Blue Dog Coalition and the moderate New Democratic Coalition, while Pelosi's strength draws from a coalition grounded in the large California delegation, her colleagues on the defense appropriation subcommittee (especially John Murtha of Pennsylvania who managed her campaign and was a link to some party moderates), women, Hispanic and African-American members, and more liberal members.

In each of her leadership contests, the most frequently heard criticism was "San Francisco liberal." The fact that she represented a San Francisco district made moderate Democrats, especially the several remaining Southerners, skittish about having her as leader. Some of the more conservative Democrats even suggested that she would not be welcome in their districts. In the whip's race, Hoyer exploited the anxiety head on: "Members need to decide whether to have a symbol, or someone who represents a different kind of district, holds centrist views, backs a strong defense, and believes that we can compete in the world" (quoted in Cohen 2001). Pelosi ultimately prevailed over Hoyer by a vote of 118 to 95.

In her subsequent race for Democratic leader in the 106th, she was again challenged from the more conservative side of the party. Initially, both Representatives Martin Frost of Texas and Harold Ford of Tennessee mounted challenges, though Frost ultimately withdrew before the final vote. A content analysis of newspaper and magazine coverage of the race revealed that more than half of the articles mention her significant fund-raising and campaign organizational prowess (Rosenthal 2007), but in the same stories, doubts were voiced about whether she might be too liberal. For example:

"many are nervous that House Democrats under Ms. Pelosi's leadership will exacerbate the broader struggle between conservatives and traditional liberals" (McGregor 2002).

"The competition was being framed as a choice between a woman from one of the party's anchor states who could reinvigorate House Democrats with new ideas and leadership style and a man [Martin Frost] who has tangled successfully with tough Texas conservatives. . . . It presents lawmakers with a crucial decision on which candidate they think can shape a message and an agenda that can broaden the party's appeal to voters" (Hulse, 2002).

This time Pelosi overwhelmed Ford by a caucus vote of 177 to 29.

Having been elected as the Democratic minority leader, Pelosi worked hard during the 109th Congress to bring the Democrats together with a unity unmatched in decades. It was not easy, as the tension between the conservative and liberal wings of the Caucus continued (Billings 2005). She reached out to the moderates who had supported Hoyer (who was now the party's whip), worked with Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Rahm Emanuel to recruit moderate challengers to Republican incumbents in key Southern and Western districts, raised a whopping \$59 million in campaign donations to pour into Democratic congressional races, and generally downplayed her profile as the congresswoman from San Francisco.⁴

Defining the Pelosi Speakership

Not surprisingly, in the run-up to the 2006 election, the Republicans took the same approach as had her conservative Democrat rivals. The GOP featured the future speaker in some television and radio spots, direct-mail pieces, and candidate de-

bates with the warning that a vote for a Democratic congressional candidate was a vote for Speaker Pelosi. Majority Whip Roy Blunt (MO) called the prospect of Pelosi becoming speaker "just plain scary." In his nationally syndicated ABC radio program, Fox News commentator Sean Hannity exhorted GOP voters to action, saying "there are things in life worth fighting and dying for and one of 'em is making sure Nancy Pelosi doesn't become speaker."⁵ Bloggers joined fray, posing a "doomsday scenario [of presidential succession] would become even more of a nightmare because the new Speaker . . . would be none other than Rep. Nancy Pelosi."⁶ With no shortage of hyperbole and venom, the conservative blogosphere posited a liberal Pelosi agenda of land grants for illegal immigrants, a federal program for subsidized transgender surgeries, and a cosmetic center equipped with tanning booths and botox on Capitol Hill.⁷

The effort to make Nancy Pelosi's politics a centerpiece of the campaign failed.⁸ To be sure, there was coverage of her politics, wardrobe, district, and leadership potential, but the impact on the electorate was minimal. On the eve of the election, polls found two-thirds of those polled had either never heard of or not formed an opinion of Nancy Pelosi (or then-Speaker Dennis Hastert [R-IL] for that matter).⁹

As the legislative session got underway, the GOP continued to portray her as a harsh partisan who failed to live up to her promises of a "kinder and gentler" majority. The Republicans fussed about heavy-handed Democratic tactics echoing Democratic complaints while in the minority.¹⁰ Near the end of the first 100 days, a March poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press gave Speaker Pelosi a 48% job approval rating, but only 40% said congressional Democrats more generally were keeping their campaign promises. Not dissuaded by the ineffectiveness of their attack ads on Speaker Pelosi during the election, the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee launched a round of radio attack ads targeting Pelosi that ran in 18 districts represented by newly elected Democrats. "Nancy Pelosi is not a good sell in the majority of these places, and the fact that these freshmen are tying themselves to her in Washington is going to create significant problems for them back home," proclaimed the RCCC spokesperson (O'Connor 2007).

Perhaps seeing an opportunity to erode Speaker Pelosi's own ratings and take advantage of the public's lower opinion of the Congress more generally, GOP leaders began describing the 110th as a "do-nothing" congress. In a *Washington Times* op-ed piece, House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) in July pointed out that only 39 bills at that time had become law, and 18 of them named a federal property or road.¹¹ Boehner and other Republican leaders tried to tie Pelosi to the inactivity and lowest-ever approval ratings for Congress, even though an analysis by Thomas E. Mann and Molly Reynolds at the Brookings Institution showed the House to be as productive as the 104th Congress (led by a newly installed Republican majority and Speaker Newt Gingrich [GA]) and the 109th Congress. By September, the "do-nothing" tag was applied mostly to appropriations bills, the farm bill, and the failure to fix the alternative minimum tax (Cusack 2007).

Nancy Pelosi Defines Herself

As enduring as the liberal tag has been, so too has been the historic significance of being the first woman at each point in Pelosi's rise through the leadership ranks.¹² In the whip's race, she stated: "I didn't run because I'm a woman, but because I can help us win the majority. . . . But the idea of a woman as whip is very powerful. It is an important signal to women that there is infinite opportunity" (Cohen 2001). Nonetheless, the path-breaking aspects of her rise have been dogged by the doubts about a woman's capability to be tough enough for the

job of national leadership. So as the 2006 election approached and media attention intensified, Pelosi recognized this enhanced coverage as an opportunity to frame her own image to the American people.

First, she embraced two competing images to counter the femininity-competence double-binds that traditionally have confronted women in politics (Jamieson 1995). Pelosi granted *60 Minutes* an interview that would air just before voters went to the polls.¹³ She was also the subject of extensive coverage in the press after the election, including as the subject of a major feature in the *AARP Bulletin* (Povich 2007). This coverage conveyed two key themes by which the Washington community and the general public would come to understand a Pelosi speaker-ship: power and motherhood.

In her *60 Minutes* segment, she was explicit in discussing her intention to use the tools of power to advance a Democratic agenda. Her deliberate emphasis on the use of power served two purposes. On the one hand, it sent a clear message to “friend and foe alike,” in John Kennedy’s phrase, that she aimed to be a speaker with whom to be reckoned. On the other hand, she sought to assuage any doubts that a woman could use power effectively.

The deliberate invocation of the power theme is not unprecedented among House speakers, but it is unusual. Among recent speakers, only Jim Wright (D-TX) and Newt Gingrich spoke explicitly about power, and we know what happened to them.¹⁴ Speakers more often downplay emphasis on their power in order to conciliate members. In Pelosi’s case, it seems likely that her gender contributed to her sense that it was important for her to stake her power claim. As she told the *Los Angeles Times* prior to the election, “I’m fighting a battle here. I’m not getting my hair done” (Fiore 2006). To be sure, her embrace of power was not just a matter of her gender; it should be acknowledged that she is the daughter of a big city mayor, and thus fully schooled in grassroots politics, building relationships, calling in favors, and, when necessary, wielding power in the old-fashioned way of reward-and-punish.¹⁵

In media coverage, Pelosi touted how her experiences as a mother would inform her leadership over the errant flock of Democratic and Republican members. “The gavel of the speaker of the House is in the hands of special interests, and now it will be in the hands of America’s children,” she stated (Fiore 2006). She stressed that as a “stay-at-home” mom and more recently as the grandmother of six she learned to think strategically, make every minute count, and pay attention to organizational details—skills that would contribute to her success as speaker. She sought to convey to America’s many mothers and grandmothers that she understood their experiences and concerns. She claimed that those experiences would inform her conduct of the speakership and bring a renewed civility to the House of Representatives.¹⁶

The transcendent connection with women—daughters, granddaughters, mothers, and grandmothers—was the centerpiece of a “women’s tea” emceed by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) on the eve of Pelosi’s swearing-in ceremony as speaker. The tea also honored the late Texas Governor Ann Richards and featured remarks by Richards’s granddaughter Lily Adams and Pelosi’s own granddaughter Madeleine Prowda. Pelosi was careful to connect her own success with the accomplishments of the past—the suffragettes and many feminist leaders who were present at the tea party—and the promise of the future as embodied in the children and grandchildren also in attendance.

These themes of power and nurturing mother figure became the centerpiece of Pelosi’s next step in framing her image, which occurred during the organization of the 110th Congress and her swearing-in ceremony. She gathered her own grandchildren and other congressional offspring on the dais to celebrate

with her even as she flexed her bicep as she accepted the gavel from Republican Leader John Boehner and waived it high above her head.¹⁷ No one, she seemed to imply, would throw this grandmother from the train.

Pelosi set one other objective in seeking to frame her image as speaker. The San Francisco Democrat transplanted herself back to her native Baltimore. There were no images of the Golden Gate Bridge in her celebration, only images of the Mass dedicated to the children of Katrina and Darfur, a reception at her alma mater, Trinity College, and stories about the girl from Baltimore who rose to the pinnacle of American politics.

Nancy Pelosi had introduced herself as a power, as a mother, as a conciliator, and as a leader. From this point forward, however, her fate would be significantly in the hands of the media through which her actions would be filtered and interpreted.

Looking through the Media Lens

Thus, as she embarked upon her speakership the third framing of Nancy Pelosi began. The media coverage to this point had been interpretive, newsy, speculative, and largely sympathetic, because to this point she had made few actual decisions. As she began to actually lead instead of just talking about leading, the media coverage was bound to become more analytic and critical.

Every politician understands the power of the media and the need to try to shape its coverage. Presidents have more tools at their disposal in this effort than do speakers. The president is the focal point of a hungry pack of White House correspondents who yearn for his attention. He can hold nationally televised press conferences and offer speeches from the Oval Office. He has an extensive communications staff to provide round-the-clock media response to breaking events. Media attention on the Congress is diffuse and intermittent. The speaker competes with other voices for media attention. The minority party is always on the attack with its media operation. And, a speaker who draws too much attention can get into trouble.

Speaker Pelosi’s prospects would be shaped in part by how the media chose to portray her, which would be considerably beyond her control. The contradictory images that have emerged in the media about her leadership style began with coverage of her in the whip’s race. Pelosi’s approach to leadership and personal attributes were variously characterized as “unfailingly gracious,”¹⁸ “relentless fighter,”¹⁹ “politically shrewd” with “collaborative skills,”²⁰ and having “the ability to make merry while reaching for the jugular.”²¹ These themes were repeated in the coverage she received just before and after her election as speaker. The public was told that the speaker-designate was “more pragmatic than ideological” but would “punish those who cross her.”²² She was described as a “person of singular focus” who deftly combines the image of “a mother and a grandmother,” whose style was described as “the chocolate and the gavel.” Just as she was said to combine the soft and hard touches of the mother and the leader, she was also described as an ideological Oreo: “San Francisco on the inside, Baltimore on the Outside.”²³

Speaker Pelosi drew stricter scrutiny than she had as Democratic whip or floor leader. This extended to her appearance and behavior in a way that her male predecessors had not experienced.²⁴ Thus, we learned that Pelosi “is, as ever, exquisitely dressed in a stylish pale-green suit.” She has adorned her leadership office with “vases of white lilies.” Her speaking style was subject to close examination as well. “She tends to speak in scripted talking points” and leans toward “mind-numbing alliteration.” In the same analysis, however, she is regarded as a tough disciplinarian who “threatens consequences for anyone who strayed from the party line.”²⁵

The sartorial focus carried on in the media coverage of the new speaker. Her pearl necklace set a style standard. The gathering of women at the tea in her honor comprised “women . . . dressed in elegant pantsuits and wreathed in pearls and gold.”²⁶ Even supportive journalists could not avoid the subject. “Over the past week House Speaker Nancy Pelosi toured the Middle East with a congressional entourage and a generous collection of scarves.” “Pelosi’s scarf collection included a red print style . . . in Jerusalem” and “in Syria and Saudi Arabia, she wore one dominated by yellow.” In Beirut her scarf was blue. “In each example, the scarf was incorporated into the day’s wardrobe.”²⁷ The focus on Speaker Pelosi’s appearance, even by sympathetic voices, reflects a reality for female leaders that male leaders do not typically encounter. The woman leader may be doughty, may change her hair style often, may be suspected of surgical interventions; or, she may be regarded as too elegant, too fashionable, too refined. Unlike Goldilocks’s favorite porridge, her appearance is rarely “just right.”²⁸

Aside from these aesthetic considerations, early media coverage of Speaker Pelosi reflected the duality in image that she had herself advanced. Is a strong, but nurturing, leader strong enough? Her early and unsuccessful effort to back Congressman John Murtha’s challenge to Steny Hoyer for party floor leader raised questions about both her judgment and her power. Could a Democratic party riven at the start by a divisive (and as many thought, unnecessary) leadership fight regain its footing to move its legislative agenda (Conatsen 2006; Hulse 2006)? The Republican majority had been known for strict party discipline. Pelosi had unified the Democrats in opposition, but could she do so as speaker?

Pelosi faced challenges on both the party’s left and right wings. She had never been the favorite of Blue Dog conservatives and many party moderates. Yet even though her natural base was among party liberals, she would have to ask (or force) them to accept the realities associated with maintaining their new majority. Pelosi’s initial strategy, passing the party’s “Six for ’06” package through the House in the first 100 legislative hours, won generally favorable reviews. Her dealings with previously powerful committee chairs, her decisions in denying chairmanships to some members, and her firm grip on the House schedule all drew favorable comments in the media as well as some disgruntlement from members (Hearn 2007a; Lexington 2007). Still, in October, 2007 she received favorable reviews for her collaborative style of leadership (Grim 2007).

But Speaker Pelosi had set a high bar for her speakership. She had promised reform in House procedures, a fair hand in dealing with Republicans, ethics reform, and a vigorous effort to bring the war in Iraq to an end. It did not take long for the realities of governing with a narrow majority in the House (and a narrower majority in the Senate) to hit. Thus, after a quick start to the 110th Congress, both Speaker Pelosi and the Congress enjoyed high approval ratings. But by the end of the summer of 2007 congressional approval ratings had plummeted to historic lows, and the speaker’s own approval ratings had also fallen.²⁹ The public now was told that “Pelosi Falls Short on Election Promises,” and the record of the 110th Congress came under close scrutiny.

One thing that the 110th Congress had not done was to end the Iraq War. Pelosi successfully pushed not one but two “get out of Iraq” votes through the House, but Senate Republicans filibustered all such efforts. The speaker’s strongest critics were among liberal Democrats, primarily due to the war issue but extending to other liberal priorities as well (Bauman 2007). Instead of pressing the Out of Iraq Caucus’s measures, which were doomed to fail, Pelosi designed legislative proposals that almost all Democrats could support, aiming for timetables for withdrawal. This brought on the ire of the liberal blogosphere.

Media coverage suggested that Pelosi had been forceful in dealing with the liberals, but the drop in her and the Congress’s approval ratings seemed due to disaffection on the left as much as on the right (Bresnahan 2007).

Conclusion

As the first session of the 110th Congress nears completion, Speaker Nancy Pelosi is no longer the new kid on the block. She has endured a year under the microscope, with her every decision, action, and statement subject to examination by her members, her adversaries, the media, and the public. Who, then, is Nancy Pelosi? Her own effort in self-definition appears to have produced a mixed result. On the one hand, it is clear that she has succeeded in filling the shoes of the speakership as the first woman speaker. By objective measures the House of Representatives performed quite well in 2007 in comparison with other recent Congresses. It certainly worked harder, produced more legislation, and conducted more oversight than its immediate Republican-controlled predecessors. Speaker Pelosi was able to put a new face on the Democratic Party, and that it was a female face was of no small significance. She proved capable in balancing the two images she wanted to convey: strength and motherhood. She survived initial stumbles and grumbles to lead her caucus to very high levels of party loyalty, with even the least supportive members voting with the party 75% of the time. She was able to win bipartisan support for several important bills.

On the other hand (as women perhaps know better than men) sometimes the shoes pinch. Speaker Pelosi’s efforts to brand the 110th Congress as the “New Direction” Congress met with middling results at best. Congressional approval ratings in the fall of 2007 are below the levels experienced by the Republican majority in the 109th Congress. Speaker Pelosi is under increasing criticism not only from the Republicans on the right, but also from the left wing of her own party. Even her status as the first woman speaker could not spare her from sharp questioning on the quintessential women’s TV program, *The View* (Hearn 2007b). This closer scrutiny reflects an underlying fact that will shape Speaker Pelosi’s public image more than anything else: she is the first woman speaker, but she is still the speaker, and her image and reputation will, in the end, depend upon how she is perceived as the leader of the House.

Efforts to define Speaker Nancy Pelosi will, of course, continue for as long as she is speaker. She might seek to disengage from the headlines, receding from public view in the manner of her immediate predecessor, Speaker Hastert. But it is apparent that Speaker Pelosi, she of the white lilies, is no shrinking violet. She has embraced a very aggressive public speakership, and the historic role as the first woman to serve as speaker. When asked by Fox News Sunday’s Chris Wallace what message might be sent if the first woman speaker were to introduce the first woman president at a State of the Union address, Pelosi took the opportunity to once again tell her own story, with which we may fittingly conclude:

I can only tell you the message that my own achieving the office of Speaker has sent. I’m deluged with communications from all over the country. And when I travel, people are so excited that there is a woman Speaker, that we’ve broken the marble ceiling, and they’re excited for what it means for young girls. Fathers of daughters particularly have been enthusiastic about what it means for their children, for their daughters, that anything is possible. This is a men’s club here. It has been. And I sometimes think it’s harder to become Speaker of the House than president of the United States for a woman.³⁰

Notes

1. The 1970s and 1980s illustrate a different pattern: women ran without opposition for the positions of conference vice chair or secretary but were often unsuccessful in their efforts to move up to conference chair or higher office; examples are Rep. Mary Rose Oaker (D-OH), Rep. Lynn Martin (R-IL), and Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-NY) (Amer 2005).
2. Congressman David Bonior (MI), the incumbent whip, had begun exploring a race for governor of Michigan early in the 106th Congress, creating a long window for the whip race to develop.
3. Hoyer won election as Democratic floor leader over the opposition of Speaker Pelosi, who supported his rival, Congressman John Murtha (PA). Speaker Pelosi's decision to support Murtha has been characterized as demonstrating an instinct for power, a passion for loyalty, or both.
4. Ironically, she has been picketed in San Francisco by antiwar groups and derided by the district's activists for not being liberal enough (Barabak 2006).
5. "The Sean Hannity Show," ABC Radio Networks, 29 August 2006.
6. John W. Lillpop, "Nancy Pelosi, President of the U.S." Conservative Voice weblog, October 13, 2006. Available at: www.theconservativevoice.com/article/19185.html.
7. John W. Lillpop, "Can America Survive a Pelosi Plundering?" Conservative Voice weblog, October 9, 2006. Available at: www.theconservativevoice.com/article/19104.html.
8. See Steinhauer (2006). While speakers have rarely been at the center of national campaigns, it has happened on occasion. Republican Speaker Joseph Cannon (IL) was the main target of Democrats in the 1912 election. He lost his seat and the Democrats captured the House. Democratic Speaker Tip O'Neill (MA) was a Republican target in 1982 ("big, fat, and out of control, like the federal government"), to no avail. Speaker Gingrich was a Democratic target in 1996 and 1998 leading to the loss of Republican seats and his eventual decision to retire from the House.
9. New York Times-CBS News Pool, October 27–31, 2006, accessed at: http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/20061031_poll.pdf, and Diageo/Hotline Poll, November 8–11, 2006, accessed at www.pollingreport.com/P.htm on October 3, 2007.
10. See, for example, David and Yachnin 2007; Ferguson 2007a; 2007b; Richert 2007.
11. GOP Leader Press Office, "Wash Times Boehner Op-Ed: Broken Promises." 2 July 2007, retrieved from <http://republicanleader.house.gov/blog/?p=104>.
12. Interestingly, the focus on the first woman frame briefly was displaced when Rep. John Lewis of Georgia flirted with joining the race for Democratic whip and argued for a minority face among the party leaders. Lewis noted, "The leadership should be a reflection of the makeup of the Democratic Party and the country. Right now, the ... leadership is all white" (Sandalow 1999).
13. *60 Minutes*, October 22, 2006.
14. John Barry's *The Ambition and the Power* (1989) chronicles Jim Wright's quest to dominate the House and Newt Gingrich's fear that Wright

might consolidate his power. Gingrich's own effort to consolidate power in 1995 are well documented.

15. In the Thomas D'Alessandro administration in Baltimore, it was Nancy's mother who handled social service patronage, a position of considerable power.
16. The "Nurturant Parent" model of political life was given scholarly credence by George Lakoff (2001). This theme transcends American politics as witness the final French presidential debate between Segolene Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy on May 2, 2007. Royal sought to wrap her candidacy in the nurturing French welfare state, for which she symbolically stood. In response, Sarkozy consistently sought to portray Royal as an angry woman, contrary to stereotype. Royal was then forced to be more aggressive in order to convey that a woman can be a strong leader for France (C-SPAN coverage, May 2, 2006).
17. Officially, this was the first time that a House minority leader kissed the speaker on the cheek in presenting the gavel.
18. Marc Sandalow, "Pelosi Steps into History as New Democratic Whip," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 15, 2002, A1.
19. Karen Foersta, "A Tireless Fundraiser Sees Herself as a 'Fresh' Face," *CQ Weekly*, October 6, 2001, 2324.
20. Gebe Martinez, "Solidly Backed by her Colleagues, Pelosi Faces GOPs Sharpened Barbs," *CQ Weekly*, November 16, 2002, 3008.
21. David Firestone, "The 2002 Election: Woman in the News; Getting Closer to the Top, and Smiling All the Way," *New York Times*, November 9, 2002, 30.
22. Jill Barshay, "Woman of the House Brings a Sense of Power." CQ.com, November 13, 2006.
23. Kate Zerkni, "Nancy Pelosi is Ready to Be Voice of Majority," *New York Times*, November 9, 2006.
24. A study of Speaker Wright's various sports coats might suggest that he benefited from this inattention.
25. Fiore 2006.
26. Ferguson 2007b.
27. Robin Givhan, "Nancy Pelosi Respectfully Maintaining Her Own Image," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2007.
28. One long-time congressional observer indicated to us in a confidential interview that Speaker Pelosi's high fashion style was a real asset, because it enabled her to avoid criticism about her appearance that might otherwise be heard. The fact that this seemed important enough to warrant comment indicates a difference between the perceptions of female and male leaders.
29. The month before the 2006 election Pelosi had a 19% approval rating with 42% of respondents saying that they had not heard of her. In January, 2007, her approval rating was 36% with only 16% not having heard of her. By July 2007, her approval rating had fallen to 31%. Source: Diageo/Hotline Poll, October 11–14, January 11–14, and July 19–22, 2007. Accessed at www.pollingreport.com/P.htm, October 4, 2007.
30. Nancy Pelosi, Interview, Fox News Sunday, October 7, 2007. Accessed at: www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,300097,00.html.

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