

Voting for Women: The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Support for Women Candidates

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Kathleen Dolan

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

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OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Hillary Clinton's teary "diner moment," a small show of emotion that resulted in both severe criticism, and, in many minds, her win in the New Hampshire Democratic primary, serves as a classic example of the complex role of gender stereotypes in American politics. Indeed, there is clear evidence of the presence of gender stereotypes in people's evaluations of candidates. Women are seen as more liberal, more compassionate, emotional, and better able to handle education and social issues and better qualified for certain types of office, while men are seen as more conservative, assertive, and better at economic and military issues (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a). These findings hold true across countries, time periods, and political contexts. However, many studies of gender stereotypes focus on documenting the presence of stereotyped evaluations to the exclusion of determining whether these attitudes influence the likelihood that someone will vote for a woman candidate. And those studies that do examine vote choice generally rely on experiments that isolate and elevate candidate sex above all other considerations or create hypothetical election matchups between generic "woman" and "man" candidates. Neither of these approaches approximates how gender stereotypes shape vote choice in actual, real-world elections. As a result, there remains a *significant gap* in our knowledge: we still know relatively little about the impact of gender stereotypes on people's willingness to vote for women candidates and the extent to which they help or hurt women when they run. In the example of Clinton in NH, media analysts rushed in to offer assumptions about the degree to which voter attitudes shaped their vote choice in the primary. This is because what is presently lacking are data that investigate people's stereotyped evaluations of women candidates for office *and* their vote decisions in real elections involving those women. This is a *significant problem* because it limits our understanding of the extent to which gender stereotypes are important to vote choice, both by themselves and relative to other complex forces that govern elections, such as party identification, incumbency, candidate experience, and media treatment.

The *long-term goal* of this research is to understand the impact of gender stereotypes on the success of women candidates who run for office in the U.S. The *objective of this particular application* is to employ a national public opinion survey to determine the extent to which stereotypes shape the vote choice decisions that people make when faced with women candidates in real election situations, rather than in hypothetical constructs. The survey data will meet the application's objectives by linking information on gender stereotyped attitudes to the specific vote choice survey respondents make in elections involving women candidates. The *central hypothesis* is that stereotypes about policy competence will play a more significant role than trait stereotypes in shaping voting for women candidates, and that in both cases, the impact of stereotypes will depend on the level and type of office being sought and the political party of the woman candidate. This hypothesis is based on *preliminary findings from a pilot study* that demonstrate that gender stereotypes and support for women candidates exist simultaneously among the public (Dolan 2009) and on earlier work that suggests that the impact of candidate sex on vote choice is attenuated by political party and type of office sought (Dolan 2004).

The *rationale* is that having better information on the impact of gender stereotypes the public's willingness to vote for women candidates will allow us to more fully understand the ways in which

candidate sex and gender operate to shape public attitudes and behaviors. I am well-prepared to undertake the proposed research, having recently conducted a successful pilot survey to gather preliminary data on gender stereotyped evaluations of candidates (See Biographical Sketch).

There are three *specific aims* that will be undertaken to test the central hypothesis and achieve the overall objectives of this application.

Aim #1: *Identify the role that gender stereotypes play in vote choice when people are faced with a woman candidate.* I hypothesize that policy and belief stereotypes will have a greater impact on vote choice in races involving a woman than trait stereotypes.

Aim #2: *Identify how the impact of gender stereotypes on vote choice is influenced by the level of office (national v. state/local) and type of office (legislative v. executive) sought.* I hypothesize that gender stereotypes will be more strongly associated with vote choice in elections for national level office than for state or local level office and in elections for executive office rather than legislative office.

Aim #3: *Identify how the impact of gender stereotypes on vote choice varies based on the political party of the woman candidate.* I hypothesize that stereotypes will be more strongly associated with voting for Democratic women than for Republican women.

This research is *creative and original* because survey-based analysis of the public's evaluation of real-world women candidates, linked to voter's choices in elections, moves our knowledge beyond the reliance on controlled experiments and hypothetical situations. This approach will yield the following *expected outcomes*: more complete knowledge of how stereotypes influence voting decisions, both on their own and relative to other political and social variables, and how the impact of stereotypes varies across different types and levels of elective office and different political parties. Taken together, this research will illuminate the role that stereotypes play in shaping the electoral fortunes of women candidates and promote multidisciplinary attention to the intersection of psychological attitudes and political behaviors.

EXPECTED SIGNIFICANCE

The American public has traveled a long path in evaluating women who run for elective office, from a time when few people saw women as appropriate candidates for political life to the present day, when large numbers of voters voice support for women. Yet, despite changes in the acceptance of women candidates, it is clear that people still view women candidates through the lens of gender stereotypes. While we know this to be true, we have only very limited knowledge of the impact of the public's attitudes on their voting behavior. The contribution of this research will be to address this problem and transform our understanding of the gendered context of American elections by providing the first direct examination of the extent to which gender stereotypes influence women's political opportunities. *This proposal is significant because contemporary knowledge has not kept pace with changing political realities – women run for office at ever-increasing rates, but we have no appropriate data sources by which we can measure the impact of gendered attitudes on the public's voting behavior.* On a broad level, the results of this research will decrease our reliance on

“conventional wisdom” and ground our understanding in empirical evidence of the electoral challenges facing women candidates. At the same time, a more realistic sense of the impact of gender stereotypes may well inform candidate decisions when women consider running for office. On a concrete level, it will provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to be involved in the research process and will provide significant new knowledge for dissemination in appropriate classroom, public, media, and academic venues.

Relation to the PI’s Longer Term Goals

My long term research agenda is to understand the impact of gender stereotypes on the success of women candidates who run for office in the United States. The work proposed in this application is the next logical step along a continuum of research on the public evaluations of women candidates in which I have been engaged for the past 10 years. During this time, I have published the results of research that has examined several aspects of these public evaluations: whether the determinants of vote choice are similar for women and men candidates (Dolan 1998), whether support for women is shaped by constant forces or by the context of particular elections (Dolan 2002), who votes for women candidates (Dolan 2004), the degree to which issues shape voting for women (Dolan 2004), whether the presence of women candidates has an impact on voter engagement in elections (Dolan 2005), and whether candidate sex shapes how much information people have about congressional candidates (Dolan 2008). Recently, I have begun to work more specifically on examining the presence and role of gender stereotypes on evaluations of women candidates. Recent work with Kira Sanbonmatsu begins to examine the role of gender stereotypes in attitudes toward women in government (Dolan and Sanbonmatsu 2009) and the relationship between stereotypes and political party (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). Utilizing original data that serve to support this application, I continue the investigation of the impact of various gender stereotypes on attitudes toward women candidates (Dolan 2009). The project proposed in this application builds on these works to design a study that overcomes past measurement and data collection limitations by bringing together the study of gender stereotypes, attitudes towards women candidates, and voting behavior in elections with women candidates together in one data set. This will allow for a definitive examination of the role of gender stereotyped thinking in the public’s evaluation of women candidates and in shaping their ultimate voting decisions. Successful completion of this project is expected to inform subsequent research that will then allow researchers to turn their attention to candidate behavior, examining the strategic decision making candidates undertake in creating the personal and issue personas they present to the public. I envision that future work would take two streams: examining how candidates navigate the environment created by the public’s use of gender stereotypes (as in Dolan 2005) and whether the presence of women opponents changes the behavior of men candidates (as in Dolan 2008).

Review of Relevant Literature. According to social psychological theory, stereotyping is the process by which people, either through direct experience or other exposure, develop beliefs about the characteristics (usually personality traits and behaviors) of social groups (Macrae et al 1996). Through the process of categorization, people extend to individuals the attributes of a group to which an individual belongs (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Stereotyping is as pervasive as it is because it acts

to allow individuals a way of sorting through an information dense world to develop evaluation shortcuts, particularly in areas like politics in which people are minimally engaged (Conover and Feldman 1989; Rahn 1993). Gender stereotyping, then, involves ideas and beliefs about what women and men are like, what abilities they possess, what behaviors and activities are appropriate for each. These gender stereotypes, usually applied to family, workplace, and social interactions, are often transmitted to the political world, resulting in women and men candidates being viewed through traditional gender beliefs, often in ways that may not match reality.

To date, scholars have produced an impressive body of research that attempts to gauge the impact of candidate sex on public attitudes and behaviors. Most directly relevant to this proposal are those studies that document the presence in the public mind of a wide range of political gender stereotypes and examine the impact of stereotypes and related evaluations on voter's willingness to support a woman candidate. With regard to stereotypes, various studies indicate that voters believe that female politicians are warm and compassionate, are best able to handle education, family, and women's issues, and are more liberal, Democratic, and feminist than men. Male politicians are seen as strong and intelligent, best able to handle crime, defense, and foreign policy issues, and are more conservative (Alexander and Anderson 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Kahn 1996; Koch 1997; Lawless 2004; Leeper 1991). These stereotypes can shape whether the public sees a particular candidate as appropriate for an office. For example, Duerst-Lahti (2006) outlines how the extensive masculine characteristics of the U.S. presidency lead voters to see men candidates as the obvious choice for this office. This work also demonstrates that people often prefer "male" characteristics and abilities to "female" ones when evaluating political leaders (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Lawless 2004). Other work focuses on the evaluations people make about women and men candidates: whether they are "qualified," "prepared," and "honest" enough for elected office (Burrell 2008; Fridkin, Kenney, and Woodall 2009; Paul and Smith 2008). Stereotypes can even influence candidate behavior, as demonstrated by work that finds women more likely to run for and win offices that are concerned with women's perceived areas of strength, such as school superintendent or education board member (Fox and Oxley 2003).

Another focus of the relevant literature is the examination of the impact of stereotypes and attitudes about women on the likelihood that people will support a woman candidate (Dolan 2004; Fox and Smith 1998; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a and 1993b; McDermott 1998; Rosenthal 1995; Sanbonmatsu 2002). These studies investigate whether support for women candidates is dependent on a range of different conditions (political party, the sex of voters, public stereotypes, campaign strategies) and present generally mixed findings. Women candidates are advantaged in some situations and disadvantaged in others with no clear set of circumstances key to helping or hindering women's chances of election.

While the relevant literature has revealed much about the environment facing women candidates, these studies generally share common limitations. Research that examines gender stereotypes tends to rely on experiments or hypothetical survey situations (Adams 1975; Brown, Heigberger, and Shocket 1993; Eckstrand and Eckert 1981; Fox and Smith 1998; Fridkin, Kenney, and Woodall 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a and 1993b; King and Matland 2003; Lawless 2004; Leeper 1991;

McDermott 1998; Rosenthal 1995; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Sapiro 1981/82). And work that examines real election outcomes is often hampered by inadequate or absent measures of gender stereotypes (Brians 2005; Dolan 2004; Kahn 1996; Koch 2002; McDermott 1997; Smith and Fox 2001). For example, Sanbonmatsu (2002) finds a role for gender stereotypes in shaping vote choice in elections with women candidates, but her data present respondents with a hypothetical choice between a woman and a man candidate. Lawless (2004) finds that women candidates may be disadvantaged since September 11th, as voter stereotypes about terrorism have increased in importance. But her study presents voters with a hypothetical woman candidate for president. King and Matland (2003) demonstrate that political party is relevant to how women candidates are perceived by voters, yet their data come from a quasi experiment that presents a hypothetical Republican woman candidate. Each of these projects suggests that gender stereotypes can have a real impact on the fortunes of women candidates. But none of their findings has been tested in real world elections, which means we can't confirm or replicate these results.

The second major limitation for work on stereotypes is that data sources beyond experimental studies are quite limited. Currently, the primary source of data for scholars of the political attitudes and behaviors of the American public is the American National Election Study (ANES), conducted every two years since 1952 by the University of Michigan (now in collaboration with Stanford University). Researchers have mined the ANES data in creative ways to maximize their utility in examining gender issues. For example, using ANES data, Koch (2002, 2000) and McDermott (1997) find an important role for party and political ideology stereotypes in voting for women candidates. Others (Brians 2005; Dolan 2004; Kahn 1996; Smith and Fox 2001) have creatively employed aspects of the ANES to test ideas about the impact of public evaluations on voting for women, but without any direct measure of the kinds of gender stereotypes that the experimental and quasi-experimental literature so clearly documents. However, as valuable as the ANES has been, it has never had the study of gender in American politics as an intentional focus, has not tried to capture the impact of an increasing number of women candidates on public behaviors, and has not included direct measures of gender stereotypes or other gender-related issues. Indeed, it did not even begin coding the sex of congressional candidates until 1998. The lack of a specific focus on gender issues in the ANES means that many important questions have gone unanswered, questions that can best be examined with a project intentionally designed to tap into the complex realities of gender in American elections.

It is, in many ways, as if the subfield has two bodies of literature that are talking across each other. One rich set of findings clearly demonstrates how pervasive gender stereotypes are in the public mind. Another body of work attempts to determine when and why people support or fail to support women candidates. Yet, to date, no project has been able to bring the findings of these two sets of studies together to determine whether the findings of the experimental and hypothetical literature are an accurate reflection of what happens in the real world. This is the primary motivation behind this proposal. Our understanding of challenges facing women candidates will continue to be incomplete until we have data that test the hypotheses about the impact of gender stereotypes against the rigorous conditions and competing influences of real election environments. The project outlined here will determine whether and how stereotypes act to influence support for women candidates

alongside considerations such as political party, candidate and challenger experience, incumbency, media coverage, campaign strategies, and contextual factors such as the level and type of office sought.

Results from Prior NSF Support

None

Preliminary Studies In an effort to demonstrate the feasibility of both the substance and method of this proposal, I developed and administered a public opinion survey specifically designed to examine the impact of candidate sex and gender considerations on public evaluations of women in politics to a random sample of 1039 U.S. adults in September 2007. The sample was stratified to represent respondents who lived in states with women governors and/or U.S. Senators and respondents from state with only men in these positions. Funding for the pilot project came from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Research Growth Initiative (RGI) competition. The pilot survey incorporated questions that measured respondents' political gender stereotypes, the presence of a baseline gender preference for candidates, support for women candidates for president, attitudes toward gender balance in government, attitudes about the reasons for women's underrepresentation in office, and a host of political and demographic characteristics. The survey was administered online in a WebTV environment by Knowledge Networks (KN) through their KnowledgePanel. Relying on a sampling frame that includes the entire U.S. telephone population, Knowledge Networks uses random digit dialing and probability sampling techniques to draw samples that are representative of the U.S. population. They provide, at no charge, WebTV hardware and free month Internet service to all sample respondents who don't already have these services, thereby overcoming the potential problem of samples biased against individuals without access to the Internet.

Analysis of the pilot study data lend support to the notion that the public still holds gendered attitudes about the characteristics and competencies of women and men who run for office and that these gendered stereotypes shape people's preferences about who should hold office. Most respondents have a baseline preference for a candidate of one sex or the other, with a majority of respondents saying that, all else equal, they prefer a male candidate (58.8 percent prefer a man, 38.8 percent prefer a woman). It is also clear that people evaluate women candidates differently based on their political party. Respondents in the pilot study expressed greater willingness to vote for a woman for president if she was a Democrat (70 percent) than if she was a Republican (59 percent). In terms of women's representation in government, a majority of respondents supported gender parity in elected office (52 percent), while 39 percent wanted men to constitute the majority of officeholders and 9 percent supported a government with a majority of women. The pilot data also demonstrate that people still tend to evaluate candidates for office through the lens of gender stereotypes. Most respondents see women as more capable of handling issues of education and health care and men as more competent at dealing with terrorism and, to a lesser degree, the economy. These findings largely confirm the results of earlier research on stereotypes. With regard to personal characteristics, the same impact of gender stereotypes is present. In keeping with expectations, respondents see women as more compassionate and consensus-oriented than men and see men as more assertive.

One of the unanswered questions in the study of gender stereotypes and elections is whether these stereotypes are strong enough to shape people's behaviors in races involving women candidates. Since the pilot study was conducted in 2007, there are no direct evaluations of specific candidates and no measures of vote choice available. However, multivariate analysis of the pilot data clearly demonstrates that gender stereotypes are significantly related to each of the four measures of attitudes toward women candidates (baseline gender preference, support for Democratic or Republican women presidential candidates, and desire for parity in government). Taking the baseline preference variable first, people's attitudes on both issue and trait stereotypes are significantly related to their preference for supporting a woman over a man. The probability that respondents who see men as better at female policy issues such as education and health care will prefer the woman over the man is .19. However, for those who see women as better at female policy areas, the probability of supporting the woman rises to .42. This provides clear support for the hypothesis that people who see women as more competent at certain policy areas will be more likely to support women for office. The same pattern is true for the female trait stereotype. Respondents who see men as more likely to possess the female traits (compassion and consensus orientation) have a .20 probability of preferring to support a woman. This probability rises to .42 among people who see women as stronger on the stereotypical female characteristics. Yet, the strongest relationship is between evaluation of competence on stereotypical male policy issues and preference for a woman. Here, we see that the probability of preferring a woman is .12 among those who see men as better at male policy issues (economy and terrorism). However, among those who see women as better able to handle these male issues, the probability of supporting a woman is .84. This is an enormous increase and it speaks to the power of people's evaluations of women's competence in dealing with stereotypical male issues in increasing their comfort level with voting for a woman.

The two variables measuring support for women based on their political party offers an interesting insight. The only stereotype variable related to people's willingness to support a woman Republican for president is their evaluation of the male policy issues (terrorism and the economy). The probability of supporting a woman Republican for president increases from .55 among those who see men as better at male issues than woman to .71 among those who see women as better than men. The absence of a significant impact for evaluations of female policy stereotypes suggests that people view Republican candidates, or at least Republican women candidates, more closely through the lens of male issues. The story is a bit different for people's support for a woman Democrat for president. Here, both female and male policy stereotypes are significant. As respondents move from seeing men as better on female policy issues to seeing women as better on these issues, the probability of supporting the woman Democrat for president rises from .63 to .88. Overall levels of support for a woman running for president as a Democrat are clearly higher than they are for a Republican woman. Here the impact of the male issue stereotypes is just as large, increasing the probability of supporting a woman Democrat from .70 among those who see men as better at the economy and terrorism to .95 among those who see women as better able to handle these issues. None of the trait stereotypes are significant to shaping support for women presidential candidates of either party.

Issue stereotypes are also important to people's sense of the appropriate balance of women and men in elected office. Taking female policy attitudes first, we see a rise in the predicted probability of

desiring more gender balance in government from .48 to .64 as people move from seeing men as having an advantage on these issues to seeing women as having the advantage. Yet, the impact of evaluations of male issues is enormous, with the probability of favoring parity increasing from .33 among those who see men as better than woman on male issues to .95 among those who see women as better on these issues than men. Neither of the trait stereotypes is significantly related to a desire for gender parity in government.

In sum, the hypothesis that stereotypes matter to people's willingness to support women in elective office receives clear support from the pilot data. The hypothesis that policy stereotypes will be more important to evaluations than trait stereotypes is also supported. Clearly, all stereotypes are not equally important to electoral evaluations. This is an important finding, as it allows us to bring more precision to our understanding of the actual impact of political gender stereotypes. The other major finding from the pilot data is the importance of male issue stereotypes to evaluations of women candidates. Of the various stereotype measures, the traditional male policy issues are the only ones significantly related to all four of the variables measuring support for women candidates. In each equation, it is the most important explanatory variable, demonstrating that evaluations of women's abilities to handle stereotypical male issues have an enormous impact on willingness to support women in electoral situations.

These pilot data provide preliminary support for the hypotheses in this proposal. The next necessary step is to field a survey like this during an election period so that the survey can also ask respondents about their evaluations of specific candidates, their political activities during the election, and their vote choice in the relevant elections. These are the kind of data that are necessary to test the hypotheses that gender stereotypes don't simply exist in people's minds, but that they are also an important component of people's political attitudes and behaviors.

RELATION TO OTHER WORK IN PROGRESS

Other Work in Progress by the Principal Investigator

Work on public evaluations of women candidates has been a primary focus on my research for the past 10 years. The other current project on which I am working investigates the gender gap in political knowledge in the U.S. This work creates an index of gendered political knowledge and argues that what appears to be a persistent finding that women hold lower levels of political information than do men is a function of the content of the knowledge measures political scientists use. The project outlined in this proposal does not overlap with this current study.

Work in Progress Elsewhere

The goal of this proposal is to fill a significant gap in our current knowledge by bringing together two areas of inquiry: those on gender stereotypes and those on how voters make vote choice decisions in the presence of women candidates. To date, research has focused on one or the other, leaving us with no ability to connect the two bodies of literature. To the best of my knowledge, this proposal is not duplicative of any research being conducted or proposed elsewhere. However, given

the expected impact of these data and the analyses proposed here, I anticipate that other researchers will be energized by this project and will find synergistic linkages to their own work.

Research Plan

Specific Aim #1: Identify the role that gender stereotypes play in vote choice when people are faced with a woman candidate.

Introduction. Despite the body of literature that examines the presence and types of political gender stereotypes in American politics, we have very little knowledge of whether and how these stereotypes shape public attitudes and behaviors toward women candidates. The *objective* of this aim is to determine whether people employ stereotypes in making voting decisions when they are faced with a woman candidate and, if so, whether different kinds of stereotypes matter equally to those evaluations. I *hypothesize* that policy and belief stereotypes will have a greater impact in races involving a woman candidate than will trait stereotypes. These belief stereotypes go directly to judgments about whether candidates are qualified for office and are more strongly held than trait stereotypes, which would make their utility to voters higher (Fox and Oxley 2003; Dolan 2009). To accomplish this aim, I will conduct a national public opinion survey of U.S. adults during the congressional and presidential elections of 2010 and 2012. This *approach* is necessary to overcome the major limitations that exist on our current knowledge: we currently have no data sources that allow us to link the presence and use of gendered stereotypes with attitudes and behaviors toward women candidates in real election situations. One *outcome* of this phase of the project will be to determine the role, if any, that gender stereotypes play in the evaluations and vote choices that respondents make.

Specific Aim #2: Identify how the impact of gender stereotypes on vote choice is influenced by the level of office (national v. state/local) and type of office (legislative v. executive) sought.

Introduction. A reliance on a body of experimental work on the impact of political gender stereotypes on women candidates leaves us with little understanding of how the level and type of office women seek may interact with stereotypes to shape women's situation. For example, stereotyped concerns about foreign policy can work against a woman seeking the presidency, but may have no impact on a woman seeking election to county government. At the same time, past work suggests that people may be more comfortable with women as members of legislative bodies than in their holding executive positions like mayor or governor. The *objective* of this aim is to determine whether different policy, belief, and trait stereotypes are activated depending on the level and type of office women seek. I *hypothesize* that the impact of policy and belief stereotypes will be more strongly associated with vote choice for national and statewide office than local office and in elections for executive office rather than legislative office. Earlier work suggests that people's desire for male characteristics and competencies increases as the level of office candidates seek increases from local to national (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). Executive offices such as president, governor, or mayor are more clearly stereotyped with regard to their responsibilities (Fox and Oxley 2003) and clearly place officeholders in a position of single authority as compared to legislative office. Public stereotypes about policy abilities and personality characteristics are likely to be seen as more relevant

in evaluating candidates for executive office than for legislative. The public opinion survey to be employed in this research will sample respondents who live in areas with women candidates running for national, statewide, and local office. This *approach* will allow for an examination of races for Congress, statewide office like governor or attorney general, and local offices like mayor or city council. The expected *outcome* of this element of the project will be an increased ability to determine the electoral situations in which gender stereotypes are more or less relevant to election results and the circumstances under which particular stereotypes are more or less important.

Specific Aim #3: Identify how the impact of gender stereotypes on vote choice varies based on the political party of the woman candidate.

Introduction. Research that focused on gender stereotypes and public attitudes and behaviors toward women candidates finds fairly clear and consistent differences depending on the party of the woman candidate. For example, people tend to have more information about Democratic women candidates (Dolan 2008), Republican women candidates tend to have a harder time winning party primaries (Lawless and Pearson 2008), and ideological stereotypes can hurt Republican women candidates with Republican voters, but increase their appeal to Democrats and Independents (King and Matland 2003). The assumption here is that party stereotypes interact with gender stereotypes to lead people to evaluate Republican and Democratic women candidates differently. The *objective* of this aim is to examine whether a woman candidate's political party shapes the gender stereotypes that people employ in their evaluations and vote choice. I *hypothesize* that stereotypes will be more strongly associated with voting for Democratic women than for Republican women. The public opinion survey to be undertaken here will include respondents who are faced with women candidates of both parties. This *approach* will make these cross-party comparisons possible. The *outcome* of this analysis will be to determine whether party and gender stereotypes serve to reinforce each other or whether conflicting stereotypes can weakness the overall impact of these attitudes on evaluations and behaviors.

Research Design. The data necessary to achieve the objectives of this research will come from two sources. The first is a public opinion panel survey of 2500 respondents that will be conducted during the fall of 2010 and fall of 2012. Conducting surveys in two different election cycles allows me to maximize the number of observable implications of the hypotheses proposed: this time frame will 1) increase the number of women candidates running and available for analysis, 2) increase and diversify the set of states and local areas from which women candidates run, 3) include both a presidential and congressional election cycle. The panel survey, which will be implemented in a web environment by Knowledge Networks, will include two waves in each year, a pre-election wave in October and a post-election wave in November. The pre-election survey should take approximately 20 minutes for respondents to complete and the post-election wave should take approximately 10 minutes. The sample will be stratified to include respondents from cities, states, and congressional districts in which women candidates are running for city council, mayor, governor, attorney general, and U.S. Congress and other cities, states, and congressional districts without women candidates. Stratifying the sample to include races with male and female candidates and those with only men will allow for a comparison of whether and how stereotypes matter depending on the sex of the

candidates. Key to the specific aims of this proposal will be a series of measures of the three major types of gendered political stereotypes identified in the literature: policy, belief, and traits. Also included on the survey instrument will be a series of questions that measure respondent's personal characteristics (for example, education, age, race, sex, occupation, religion, media usage), their attitudes toward, and evaluations of, the relevant candidates, their awareness of the information offered by the campaigns and by media coverage of the candidates, and their vote choice and other forms of political behavior in the elections. These data on respondents will be employed as critical controls in the analysis of the impact of gender stereotypes on attitudes and behaviors.

The second source of data will include extensive secondary data collected from several sources. First, I will undertake a content analysis of relevant elements of the campaign environment. In determining the presence and impact of gender stereotypes, researchers have to account for whether stereotyped responses on the part of voters are primed by the electoral environment. For example, the media can explicitly or implicitly highlight gender stereotypes in their coverage of candidates (Falk 2007; Kahn 1996). At the same time, candidates make choices about how to present themselves and their policy positions to the public and may consider stereotyped expectations when doing so (Bystrom et al 2004). To account for the impact of electoral context on public attitudes and behaviors, I will conduct a content analysis of media coverage (primarily print coverage) of the relevant candidates and a content analysis of the campaign information that candidates put out during the election. This will include candidate websites, advertisements, and printed materials. I will also collect data on the candidates themselves, noting their political party, previous experience, and professional education and background. These contextual data will also provide important controls on the hypothesized relationships between gender stereotypes and public evaluations and vote choice.

Data from the two sources will be combined to estimate a series of models examining several different dependent variables. Chief among these will be measures of respondent evaluations of the candidates in his/her election and a measure of vote choice. Such an analysis will allow me to determine whether gender stereotypes are significantly related to these attitudes and behaviors in real election situations and to differentiate the impact of the three different categories of stereotypes across several different electoral situations. Among these will be analyses of 1) the role of stereotypes in races with and without women candidates, 2) the impact of stereotypes when women run for executive v. legislative office and national v. state v. local office, 3) whether party and gender stereotypes interact to influence evaluations and vote choice.

Expected Outcomes. The major improvement on current knowledge that this project will advance is the creation of a data set that links gender stereotypes to evaluations of real candidates and measures behaviors in actual election circumstances. This proposal outlines the first major data collection project intentionally designed to examine the ways in which candidate gender shape public evaluations and election outcomes, taking into account the influence of candidate and respondent sex, prior political attitudes, political party, incumbency, level and type of office, and election year context, which will result in the most comprehensive investigation of the gendered nature of elections than has been possible to date. The completion of this project will allow for a definitive test of the degree to which gender stereotypes matter in shaping public actions in the presence of women

candidates across a range of electoral situations: when women candidates run against men, when women run for different types of office and at different levels of government, when women run as Democrats or Republicans.

The results of this project will be shared with the scientific community in two ways. Once the data collection and analyses are complete, I will begin to present a series of conference papers to share the findings. This will then culminate in a book-length project to be submitted to an appropriate press for possible publication. Once this process is complete, I will make the data available to the larger scholarly community through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). This will allow other scholars to analyze the data and make new contributions to the state of our understanding of gender and elections.

Potential Problems and Alternative Approaches. As with any research undertaking, readers may raise questions about the soundness of the study and its design. Here I anticipate three concerns and provide support for arguing that none of them is a threat to the viability of the proposal. First, while unlikely, the possibility exists that the working hypotheses in this proposal will not be supported by the data. Evidence at hand suggests that the hypotheses developed are well supported by the existing literature. The analysis of the pilot survey data that support this proposal (See Preliminary Study) demonstrate both the presence of political gender stereotypes in the US population and the relationship of these stereotypes to people's evaluations and attitudes about women candidates (Dolan 2009). Myriad other studies also document the extent and importance of stereotypes (See Review of Literature). So the question to examine is not whether stereotypes exist, but whether and how they relate to public attitudes and behaviors concerning women candidates.

Another concern might rest with the reliance in this proposal on survey data. Indeed, some scholars in the field argue that experimental designs offer the best way to examine the impact of gender on respondent attitudes and behaviors. As discussed earlier, there is a fairly large literature on gender stereotypes and candidates that employs experimental or quasi-experimental designs (See Review of Literature). However, this proposal argues that reliance on experimental designs alone do not allow us to account for all of the important variables at play in American elections. While candidates in experiments can be made equivalent except for their sex, this is not true in the real world where candidates are the sum total of many different factors. Further, experimental research on the impact of candidate gender generally isolates gender or perhaps considers an additional variable like office sought or party identification or previous experience. But these designs almost never move beyond two or three factors. The election of real candidates is the result of numerous "moving parts" that all contribute in some way to a particular outcome. We will continue to have an incomplete understanding of the gendered dynamics of American elections unless we consider the simultaneous impact of all of these important variables. Experiments are often conducted on specialized populations (college students, people from one geographic area) with relatively small Ns. The project proposed here takes advantage of our ability to examine a large random, nationally representative sample of U.S. adults, which will strengthen our ability to generalize the findings to a broader set of issues. Findings from experimental studies are often of limited application in explaining a particular set of election outcomes. This proposal does not suggest that there is one way

to study the impact of candidate sex on elections, but that we can learn more by employing a range of methods. The findings of the research proposed here will provide the best understanding of the gendered dynamics of American elections.

Finally, because of the subject matter at hand, some may express concern about the possibility that respondents will offer socially desirable responses when asked about gender issues. Others may fear the presence of a “halo effect” among respondents, the tendency of some evaluators to ascribe all positive or all negative characteristics to a person based on the presence of one positive or negative trait. First, it is important to recognize that studying human beings always opens the door for selective biases to appear. Indeed, the point of this project is to examine one such bias: gender stereotypes. But beyond that, we have to acknowledge that this possibility is not solely the concern of survey research and can be present in experimental designs as well. That human beings act like human beings cannot detour us from examining difficult topics. At the same time, we can employ what we know about how to extract the most truthful responses from people by incorporating research on the impact of data collection mode on respondents. A long line of research on survey questions on sensitive topics like drug use, marital fidelity, and sexual practices finds that offering respondents more anonymity increases truthful responses (Tourangeau and Smith 1996; Schaeffer and Presser 2003). The data for this survey will be collected in a web-tv environment. This method allows respondents the greatest level of anonymity by eliminating interaction with an interviewer. The respondent answers the questions alone in his or her own home. Recent research on data collection comparing internet surveys to other methods of collecting survey data demonstrates clearly that there are lower levels of socially desirable answers from populations who are surveyed using this format (Dennis and Li 2007; Heerwegh 2009; Kreuter, Presser, and Tourangeau 2008). As a result, I am confident that this survey mode will allow for the best quality data we can gather.

Timeline

Table 1 – Timeline of Proposed Activities over the Years of the Study

	Year 1 (2010-2011)	Year 2 (2011-2012)	Year 3 (2012-2013)
Sample Construction	X		X
Data Collection	X		X
Data Set Aggregation	X	X	X
Data Entry	X	X	X
Data Analysis	X	X	X
Present and Publish Results	X	X	X
Complete Final Report			X
Disseminate Dataset for public use			X

Broader Impacts

The proposed project will be perfectly positioned to contribute to important advances in our knowledge of how candidate gender shapes the attitudes and behaviors of voters in national, state, and local elections. I expect to present several papers at professional conferences and publish the results in peer-reviewed journals and in a book manuscript. Given the range of topics to be addressed in the survey, the data and findings generated by the project will have appeal to a host of political scientists across the discipline, from those interested in gender politics, to others who study elections and voting behavior, public opinion, and American politics generally. Because of the treatment in this proposal of gender stereotypes, there should be significant interdisciplinary interest in the results of the project, particularly those in gender studies and psychology. Beyond making presentations at political science conferences, I plan to present findings in papers at the National Women's Studies Association and the American Association for Public Opinion Research, thereby making the results of the project available to a wider audience.

Once I have conducted the relevant analysis for a series of papers and a book, I will make the data publicly available to the wider scholarly community through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Given that existing databases that examine American elections and voting behavior contain very little content about gender, this new dataset would prove to be an invaluable research to scholars of gender politics and political behavior. I envision that many scholars, particularly those at non-Ph.D granting institutions and other who lack the resources to conduct original data collection, will be able to rely on these data as a significant resource for continuing to explore the impact of gender on American elections. I anticipate that the data generated from this proposal will have a significant impact, not just on my own research agenda, but also for scholars across a range of subfields and institutions.

Funding for this project will also have an impact on the education and training of graduate and undergraduate students at my home institution. Given the focus on gender, the data set will be of particular value for graduate students with an interest in these areas across departments, in Political Science, Sociology, and Women's Studies. I also assume that the topic will allow me to recruit several women graduate and undergraduate students to participate in the project. According to recent data, women still only comprise 26 percent of political science faculty in the U.S., signaling a continuing need to mentor and train women graduate students (Sedowski and Brintnall 2007). The political science graduate students funded by the project will benefit from the exposure to and participation in original research design and data collection. I also plan to recruit undergraduate student participation in the project through UWM's Undergraduate Laboratory for Empirical Analysis of Politics (ULEAP). The ULEAP program, housed in the Political Science Department, recruits talented undergraduates and pairs them with faculty on research projects. While ULEAP students would not be funded by this proposal, they would be brought into the project to assist with data collection and analysis. Once data collection was complete, each of the students would identify a research question of interest and conduct appropriate analysis to test that hypothesis, thereby gaining valuable experience in conducting social science research. Since I also regularly teach our department's introductory graduate scope and methods course, I would also use the research design,

data collection, and analysis components of the project as hands on examples and opportunities for the students in that course.

I also see this project having a broader impact outside of academic circles. Women are currently the most dramatically underrepresented group in elected office in the U.S. At the same time, the number of women candidates who stand for election in the U.S. increases slightly each election cycle. As more women run, particularly after the candidacies of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, there is increased attention to the role of gender in elections. As an illustration, during 2007-2008, I conducted 91 separate interviews with international, national, state, and local television, radio, internet, and print media about numerous gendered aspects of the 2008 elections (the gender gap, support for women candidates, the specific candidacies of Clinton and Palin, etc.). Data such as those generated by this proposal would dramatically improve our resources for analyzing and commenting on elections. There is a broad audience, in both the media and their consumers, for accurate research findings that can help them make sense of the political world. There is also a potential value in this project to the increasing number of women candidates who may use relevant findings to shape their campaigns and strategies.

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Dolan Budget Justification

- A. Salary and Wages, Senior Personnel (\$27, 225)** - Kathleen Dolan, Principal Investigator – 3 summer person months in total, one in each budget year, are requested. The summer month during the first (2010) and third (2012) budget years will be spent identifying the relevant candidates for office for each level of office included. From that, the sampling frame of states and congressional districts can be constructed. During the summer month in the second (2011) and third (2012) budget years, time will be spent on coordinating the integration of the secondary data with the survey data, disseminating results, and supervising the work of the graduate student assigned to the project. In addition, during the academic years, Dr. Dolan will invest 4 person months, for which no salary is requested.
- B. Salary and Wages, Other Personnel (\$62,334)** – This sum represents funds to hire a 12 month (50%) research assistant for the three year duration of the project. This person will assist with the preparation of the survey instrument, the collection of secondary data, and the management and analysis of the data.
- C. Fringe Benefits (\$28, 182)** – This is the fringe benefit calculation for the salaries in A and B above. Senior personnel salary is calculated at 38.9% and the research assistant salary is calculated at 27.8%.
- D. Equipment** – None requested.
- E. Travel (\$8250)** - There is a request for travel money in each of the budget years to support the dissemination of the research findings. Year 1 – the PI will present findings at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, Illinois in April 2011. This is the second largest national meeting of political scientists and is an important venue for American politics. The estimated costs for train fare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$750. The PI will also present a paper at the annual meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research in Phoenix, Arizona in May 2011. AAPOR is the national association of public opinion researchers and an important interdisciplinary conference for scholars who study elections and voting behavior. The estimated cost of airfare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$2000. Year 2 – the PI will present findings at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in San Francisco, California in September 2011. The APSA is the national association of political scientists and the major professional meeting in the discipline. The estimated cost of airfare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$2000. The PI will also present a paper annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, Illinois in April 2012. The estimated costs for train fare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$750. Year 3 - the PI will present findings at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in New Orleans

in September 2012. The estimated cost of airfare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$2000. The PI will also present a paper annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, Illinois in April 2013. The estimated costs for train fare, hotel, meeting registration, and food is \$750.

F. Participant Support Costs – None requested.

G. Other Direct Costs (\$219, 136) – There are two items here. The first (\$203, 553) is to fund the two two-wave surveys of a random sample of U.S. adults during Year 1 (2010) and Year 3 (2012) that is the primary data collection method for this project. The surveys will be conducted by Knowledge Networks, a national survey research firm that conducts surveys for the federal government, state governments, academic institutions, and private corporations. The second element (\$15, 583) is the tuition remission for the research assistant requested in section B.

H. Total Direct Costs (\$345, 128)

I. Indirect Costs (\$72, 023) – This is calculated from an MTDC base at a rate of 47.7%

Total Budget Request (\$417, 150)

Dolan - Current and Pending Support

Current: Not Applicable

Pending: Voting for Women: The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Support for Women Candidates

Investigator: Kathleen Dolan

Support: Pending

Project Title:

Source of Support: NSF – Political Science Program

Total Award Amount: \$417, 150

Total Award Period: August 2010 – July 2013

Location of Project: University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

Person months: Calendar: 0; Academic: 0; Summer: 3

Kathleen Dolan

Professional Preparation

Providence College	Political Science	B.A. 1985
University of Maryland	Government	M.A. 1987
University of Maryland	Government	Ph.D 1985-1991

Appointments

Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, September 2006 to present

Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, January 2000 to August 2006

Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, September 1999-December 1999

Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, September 1993-August 1999

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Toledo, September 1992-June 1993

Analyst, Government Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, July 1991-August 1992

Publications – Most Closely Related to Project

Dolan, Kathleen. 2009. “The Impact of Gender Stereotyped Evaluations on Support for Women Candidates.” *Political Behavior*. Online First DOI: 10.1007/s11109-009-9090-4
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/85005496x0777w28/fulltext.pdf>

Dolan, Kathleen and Kira Sanbonmatsu. 2009. “Gender Stereotypes and Attitudes Toward Gender Balance in Government.” *American Politics Research*, 37: 409-428.

Sanbonmatsu, Kira and Kathleen Dolan. 2009. “Do Gender Stereotypes Transcend Party?” *Political Research Quarterly*. Online First DOI:10.1177/1065912908322416
<http://prq.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/1065912908322416v1>

Dolan, Kathleen. 2008. “Is there a ‘gender affinity effect’ in American politics? Information, Affect, and Candidate Sex in U.S. House Elections.” *Political Research Quarterly*. 61: 79-89.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2004. *Voting for Women: How the Public Evaluates Women Candidates*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Publications – Other

Dolan, Kathleen. 2008. "Running Against a Woman: Do Female Opponents Shape Male Candidate Behaviors?" *Social Science Quarterly*. 89: 765-779.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2006. "Symbolic Mobilization? The Impact of Candidate Sex in American Elections." *American Politics Research*. 34: 687-704.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2005. "Do Women Candidates Play to Gender Stereotypes? Do Men Candidates Play to Women? Candidate Sex and Issue Priorities on Campaign Websites." *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 31-44.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2004. "The Impact of Candidate Sex on Evaluations of Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives." *Social Science Quarterly*, 85:206-217.

Dolan, Kathleen. 1998. "Voting for Women in the Year of the Woman." *American Journal of Political Science*, 42:272-293.

Synergistic Activities

Co-editor of *Politics & Gender*, the official journal of the Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association, 2007-2010. This peer-reviewed journal, published by Cambridge University Press, disseminates research on women and politics and gender politics to 700 individual and 200 institutional subscribers, as well as numerous readers worldwide. In this position, I am involved in service to my discipline, disseminating knowledge, and broadening the participation of women and minorities in political science.

Author of "Gender Stereotypes, Voting for Women, and Evaluations of the American Political System," a survey of a random sample of U.S. adults funded by the UWM Research Growth Initiative and conducted in September 2007. This original survey provides new measures of key concepts and unique data on how the American population evaluates women candidates. These pilot data serve as the basis for this NSF proposal.

Author of "Comparing Modes of Instruction: The Relative Efficacy of On-Line and In-Person Teaching for Student Learning." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2008. This article documents a recent quasi-experiment I conducted in teaching a course in online and face to face formats simultaneously. The goal of the project was to examine the degree to which mode of instruction influences student success and satisfaction with a course.

Collaborators and Other Affiliations

Collaborators and Co-Editors – Kira Sanbonmatsu, Rutgers University, co-author on two articles appearing in 2009. Aili Mari Tripp, University of Wisconsin Madison, Co-Editor of the journal *Politics & Gender*. Atiya Stokes-Brown, co-author on a conference paper in 2008.

Graduate Advisor – M. Margaret Conway, Emeritus, University of Florida

Thesis Advisor – I have served as Ph.D. advisor to Katherine Sheurer, assistant professor of Political Science at the University of North Dakota

Dolan - Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources

Facilities

Laboratory: Not Applicable

Clinical: Not Applicable

Animal: Not Applicable

Computer: The PI has all computer hardware and software necessary to complete this project. The PI has a two year old Dell Optiflex 755 with access to the internet. The PI also has all statistical packages needed for data analysis (SPSS, Stata). The PI's department has a similar configuration of hardware and software available for the research assistant for this project.

Office: The PI has a 10x8 office equipped with computer, phone, scanner, and copy capabilities. The PI's department has office space available to house the project and to serve as an office for the research assistant.

Other: Not Applicable

Major Equipment Not Applicable

Other Resources

Subawards: The survey for this project will be carried out by Knowledge Networks, a national survey research firm. The PI has an established relationship with Knowledge Networks, as they carried out the survey for the pilot study on which this proposal is based. The PI has worked extensively with their consultants and programmers in mounting the pilot survey.

Administrative: The PI has access to administrative support through the Political Science Department. Department staff are available to help with the coordination of the research assistant and the administration of the grant.