Does Gender Matter in Elections?
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Prospectus

Overview

The presidential election of 2008 was thought to be a breakthrough moment for women candidates in the United States. Senator Hillary Clinton, the first woman candidate with a real chance of winning a major party's nomination for president, won 18 million votes before losing the nomination to then-Senator Barack Obama. Governor Sarah Palin became the first woman on a Republican party ticket when Senator John McCain chose her as his vice-presidential running mate. Each woman campaigned around the country as a highly visible symbol of how far American women have come in political life. And yet, at the same time, each woman served as a symbol of the somewhat unsettled nature of public thinking about the role of women in politics. Whether it was a heckler calling on Clinton to "Iron my shirt" or a public debate about whether a mother of young children had the time to be vice president, the 2008 campaign was marked by both positive and negative debates about the ability of women to serve in high level office. Any excitement generated by these historic candidacies was tempered by discussions of whether Clinton was too abrasive and not sufficiently warm to be president and whether Palin was smart enough, too pretty, or too encumbered by motherhood to be one heartbeat away.

While highlighting the travails of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin as examples of the challenges women candidates face in combating stereotypes may seem obvious because of their high profile and visibility, subsequent elections continue to offer evidence that women candidates are sometimes viewed through the lens of gender stereotypes. In 2010, Kelly Ayotte, the Attorney General of New Hampshire and a candidate for an open U.S. Senate seat, had to respond to concerns that being elected to the Senate would leave her with little time to be a good mother to her two young children. In running for governor of her state, Oklahoma Lt. Governor Jeri Askins was asked whether, as a single, childless woman, she had enough life experience to understand the concerns of the average Oklahoma family.

Clearly, much of the debate about the qualifications of women like Clinton, Palin, and Askins was rooted in gender stereotypes about the appropriate role for women in public life. Indeed, one of the major pillars in the story of the status of women candidates for elected office in the United States is that voters rely on gender stereotypes to evaluate these women and their

suitability for office. As political scientists have examined several aspects of the realities of women's underrepresentation in political life, findings on the presence and direction of gender stereotypes have been a reliable starting point for understanding the context in which women are perceived. A long line of research has documented that the American public often relies on stereotyped thinking about women and men in political life (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Burrell 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Kahn 1996; Koch 1997; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989). This work often suggests that public reliance on stereotyped attitudes will hurt women candidates at the polls as voters draw on negative assumptions about women's traits and abilities. Yet, at the same time, recent work demonstrates that women who run for office win at the same rate as similarly situated men and that the small number of women candidates explains women's underrepresentation (Fox 2010; Lawless and Fox 2010; Seltzer, Newman, and Voorhees 1994). This would suggest that women's levels of representation are not necessarily the result of public antipathy toward their candidacies.

This reality leaves us with questions about how to make sense of two separate strands of research. We can clearly document the existence of political gender stereotypes on one hand and can examine election results that point to women's success on the other. But what we are less well equipped to do is bridge the gap and illustrate how voters who hold stereotypes end up evaluating and choosing (or failing to choose) women candidates - specifically, how, when, even whether, they employ gender stereotypes in their voting decisions when faced with women candidates. This reality leaves us with an incomplete understanding of the power and place of gendered attitudes and gender stereotypes, creating a situation in which we have something of a void in our knowledge of the relationship between voters and women candidates.

Another important issue here is a methodological one. Research that examines gender stereotypes tends to rely on experiments or hypothetical survey situations (Brown, Heigberger, and Shocket 1993; Fox and Smith 1998; Fridkin, Kenney, and Woodall 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a and 1993b; King and Matland 2003; Leeper 1991; McDermott 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2002). The experimental literature has certainly provided a significant basis for understanding how candidate sex can influence people's thinking about women candidates. Experiments provide the important ability to isolate candidate gender and track its impact. At the same time, experiments can only suggest to researchers what we might observe in the rich and complex environment of real world elections. While hypothetical 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 – their political party, incumbency status, their prior experience, the office they seek. As a result of these methodological considerations, existing literature is not situated to evaluate the role of attitudes in the context of primary political and contextual influences on candidate success.

This project seeks to fill the void in our knowledge about the role of gendered attitudes and stereotypes on voter evaluations of women candidates for office and bridge the gap between various strains of research by examining the role and influence of political gender stereotypes in the context of voter decision-making in real world elections involving women candidates. The argument made here is that current experimental and hypothetical research may overestimate the centrality of gendered attitudes and political gender stereotypes on the success or failure of women candidates. To accurately assess their role, we must reevaluate the influence of political gender stereotypes *in the real world*, as they operate alongside more central political and contextual variables such as political party, incumbency, and candidate experience. Indeed, the primary hypothesis advanced by this manuscript is that gendered attitudes and gender stereotypes are less likely to influence electoral outcomes than traditional political variables and less often than the existing literature suggests.

The difference between experimental findings and the real world of candidates and elections is, of course, information. A longstanding theoretical framework demonstrates that stereotypes are a classic information shortcut designed to help people reach evaluations when they have limited information (Conover and Feldman 1989; Downs 1957; Popkin 1993; Rahn 1993; Sigelman and Welch 1993). So people use stereotypes in the absence of information, such as in an experimental setting. It is not surprising that experiments and hypotheticals that restrict information to a focus on candidate sex can produce evidence of subjects' reliance on gender stereotypes. But elections and campaigns provide exactly the kind of information that we might expect to blunt the impact of stereotypes over the course of a campaign (Fiske 1998). And the complexity of the campaign environment offers several different influences that have been shown to exert a pull on reliance on gender stereotypes – political party, actions of candidates, the impact of media framing, contextual issues about a campaign, among others (Hayes 2011, 2005; Winter 2010). While people can hold group stereotypes and individuating information about a candidate simultaneously, the evidence suggests that specific information can overcome

stereotypes to shape evaluations and decision-making (Kunda and Thagard 1996; Kunda, Sinclair, and Griffin 1997). In sum, the goal here is to return our attention to the richness of the electoral environment and place gender stereotypes in a more appropriate place alongside traditional influences on candidate evaluation and vote choice.

To support of this goal, and to expand the methodological approaches to the study of gender stereotypes and women candidates, *Does Gender Matter in Elections?* reports results from an innovative two-wave panel survey intentionally designed to examine gender attitudes and conducted with a nationally representative sample of 3150 U.S. adults during the 2010 midterm election.

Rationale and Scope

As the number of women candidates for office in the U.S. continues to rise slowly, it becomes imperative that we have a fuller understanding of whether and when gendered attitudes shape electoral outcomes for women. In exploring the impact of stereotypes on voter evaluations and vote choice, *Does Gender Matter in Elections?* makes four primary and unique contributions:

Contribution 1 – Examining Gender in Real World Elections

Much of the previous work on the impact of gendered attitudes on the success of women candidates has relied on data that are not ideally suited to the task. Much of the work on gender stereotypes is based on experimental studies and hypothetical survey situations. While the strength of experiments is their ability to block out "noise" and focus on the impact of candidate gender, they leave us with results that can't possibly replicate the complex environment of real world elections. Public opinion surveys that ask abstract questions about hypothetical candidates also fail to capture the richness of a contest between two real candidates. These approaches have limited our ability to explain election outcomes in the real world. Two other important sources of data on elections in the U.S. are the American National Election Studies (ANES) and the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). While the ANES has provided researchers with important opportunities to study real elections, it has never had the study of gender as a conscious focus. As a result, researchers are left with an incomplete set of measures of key gender variables. The CCES, while including some relevant gender items in some election

years, is funded by individuals at a variety of universities around the country. As a result of its structure, the data generated are not routinely made available until five or six years after collection.

In contrast, the survey that forms the basis for the data reported in this manuscript is one of the first intentional, large-scale examinations of public opinion about gender attitudes, gender stereotypes, and women candidates conducted during an election and asking respondents about actual candidates. The main point of this project was to gather the data necessary to definitively answer questions about the impact of gendered attitudes on the fortunes of women candidates. With funding from the National Science Foundation, I conducted a public opinion survey with a representative sample of 3150 U.S. adults in September and October of 2010. This two-wave panel was administered by Knowledge Networks and included respondents from 29 states and 240 congressional districts who experienced elections for U.S. Congress, governor, attorney general, and/or state superintendent of education. Across these elections, there are 610 candidates, distributed across races in which women ran against men, women ran against women, and men ran against men. A host of questions in the first wave of the survey were designed to probe respondent attitudes about the place of women in American politics, their abstract gender stereotypes, and a host of other attitudinal, behavioral, and political measures. The second wave of the survey was designed to gather respondent reactions and behaviors toward the specific candidates they experienced in their elections for the various offices included.

Key to the design of the panel study is the method by which I measure abstract gender stereotypes and specific candidate evaluations. In the first wave of the survey, respondents are asked to indicate whether they see "women or men who run for office" as better at handling a certain set of policy areas or possessing a set of character traits. The policies and traits employed are identified by the literature as stereotypical "male" or "female" items. Responses to these items are used to represent the *abstract gender stereotypes* that respondents hold about women and men. However, as with the abstract stereotypes measured in experimental work, this is insufficient to trace whether stereotypes are relevant to voter decision-making. To bring more precision to this analysis, the second wave of the survey (conducted a month after the first) asks respondents to evaluate the specific candidates in their election for Congress and/or statewide office using the same policy and trait items that was employed in the first wave. Here

respondents are asked whether one or the other of the candidates is better able to handle different policy areas or more likely to possess particular characteristics. These responses serve as measures of *specific candidate evaluations*. Having both sets of measures allows me to determine whether people rely on their abstract gender stereotypes in making evaluations of specific candidates in real elections. This is a significant improvement over existing data and will allow me to examine the impact of gendered attitudes alongside important political and contextual variables such as political party, incumbency, candidate experience, and campaign spending.

Beside offering the "freshest" data available, the elections of 2010 were a particularly good cycle in which to investigate the claims made by this research. One of the primary advantages of 2010 was the absence of a presidential election, an election that is always the 800-pound gorilla in the room. In presidential years, media attention to the presidential candidates can crowd out attention given to races "down ballot." In 2010, the statewide and congressional races of interest here were among the most visible races, ensuring that voters had a fair chance to see and read about the candidates. Too, examining the elections of 2010 offers us the first opportunity to examine the "post Clinton/post-Palin" world and see whether there has been any reconsideration of appropriate roles for women in political life since that historic election.

Another advantage that the 2010 elections offer is that the number and variety of women candidates in that cycle allows for more diversity among women candidates than in the past. A record number of women candidates (10) ran for Governor, a record number (15) ran for U.S. Senate, and a near-record number (138) of women ran for the U.S. House (Center for American Women and Politics 2010a). Perhaps even more important, given the power of incumbency, was the large number of women who ran for open seats for these offices. Nine of the 10 women candidates for Governor and 5 of the 15 women running for U.S. Senate contested open seats. A record number of woman v. woman races for Congress or Governor (14) resulted in two states, New Mexico and Oklahoma, electing their first-ever woman Governor (CAWP 2010b). And, finally, in a country where the party disparity among women candidates results in about 65 percent of women holding office as Democrats, the elections of 2010 saw a female candidate pool that exhibited a bit more party parity than usual. Half of the women candidates for Governor were Republicans, as were approximately 40 percent of the women candidates for Congress (CAWP 2010b).

Contribution 2 – Comparing Women and Men

Another intentional aspect of the design of this project was the inclusion of respondents who experience both single-sex and mixed-sex candidate pairings. It is often the case that research on women candidates compares women to men and assumes that any differences are attributable to gender. These data are an improvement on that approach because they will allow me to observe whether any impact for gendered attitudes and stereotypes depends on the presence of a woman candidate. While gendered attitudes are assumed by the literature to be most important in races in which women run against men, we know very little about whether and how these considerations matter when two men or two women square off as opponents. There are an almost equal number of respondents in the sample who experienced male-only races for U.S. Congress and statewide office as there are respondents who had female v. male races, which will allow for an analysis of whether and how gendered issues operate in the absence or presence of women and men. Too, having a large number of single-sex candidate pairs in the dataset will allow me to isolate the independent effects of gender and other important variables, such as political party. While having races between two women is still the least likely scenario in U.S. elections, there are sufficient respondents in these situations to allow for an analysis of how gender attitudes play out when both candidates are women.

Contribution 3 – Considering Political Party

Political party is one of the most important influences on the public's attitudes and vote choice in elections. Indeed, previous research suggests that political party is considerably more important to the fortunes of women candidates than are gendered attitudes (Dolan 2004). However, there is some research that suggests that political party is important to shaping how people evaluate women and men as candidates. Important here is the interaction of gender stereotypes and party stereotypes. When voters examine a candidate, they see a woman or a man, but they also simultaneously see a Democrat or a Republican. The interplay of these stereotypes can create categories based on both gender and party in the minds of voters (Koch 2002; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). There is considerable research on the concept of issue ownership, the idea that the Democrats and Republicans each own a set of issues on which they are seen to be most competent. For example, Democrats are thought to be best at social policies and Republicans better at economic and military issues (Petrocik 1996). More recent research

has extended this thinking to traits, suggesting that party images have become intertwined with a set of character traits, some of which are clearly gendered (Hayes 2011; Winter 2010). This work suggests that gender stereotypes are often subordinate to party stereotypes, with voters first seeing Democrats and Republicans in particular ways and then considering whether the candidate's gender influences the initial reactions. *Does Gender Matter in Elections?* addresses the simultaneous influence of gender and party on voter attitudes about women and men in politics and also captures their evaluations and vote choice of specific candidates in their elections. Preliminary analysis suggests that party does indeed shape respondent attitudes about women and men (Dolan 2012).

Contribution 4 – Considering Level and Type of Office

Previous research on gender stereotypes suggests that 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 (Burrell 2008; Dolan 1997; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). 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, and 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. To most fully understand the impact of gendered attitudes and stereotypes, I examine elections for U.S. House and Senate, governor, attorney general, and state education secretary. This combination of offices allows me to compare national and statewide, as well as executive and legislative, offices. Too, the statewide races include offices that could be stereotypes as more or less appropriate for women (attorney general/superintendent of education). With the exception of House races, all of these offices are statewide elections, which allows me to control for the effects of constituency. This ability opens up the possibility of examining individual-level behaviors, such as whether people turn out to vote at higher rates in the presence of women candidates. Fox and Oxley (2003) assume that women candidates will receive higher or lower vote totals when they run for stereotyped offices, but they have no individual-level with which to test that assumption.

In sum, *Does Gender Matter in Elections?* is uniquely situated to fill several voids in our understanding of the role of gendered attitudes and stereotypes in American elections. Its intentional focus on gender attitudes and women candidates ensures that there are significant and relevant measures of important gender influences. It also improves upon the methodological limitations often imposed by work based on experiments and hypothetical candidates. Finally, it allows for a more complete examination of the fortune of women candidates by considering the impact of gender stereotypes in the context of a host of important variables, namely the sex of an opponent, political party, and level and type of office. Once completed, this manuscript will make a unique and definitive contribution to the literature on the relationship between voters and women candidates.

Proposed Table of Contents

Previous research has attempted to examine the cost of stereotyped attitudes on the prospects of women candidates. However, these studies have tended either to rely on hypothetical candidates in survey or experimental settings or have drawn on episodic public opinion polling that may offer a question or two on gender-related issues. For the first time, *Does Gender Matter in Elections?* offers an analysis of a full-scale public opinion panel survey specifically designed to capture public attitudes and behaviors toward women candidates for a range of offices in the United States. Based on these data, the book is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: The first chapter of the book lays out the basic questions at the heart of the study and situates the proposed project in the context of previous research on these topics. The primary questions to be addressed in this manuscript examine whether and how the public's attitudes about women's appropriate place in politics and political gender stereotypes shape the success or defeat of women candidates. This chapter lays out the current state of our knowledge and draws upon recent political campaigns to illustrate the ways in which gender still permeates American elections. At the same time, it highlights the objective indicators of women's success in gaining electoral office and identifies the limitations in our ability to determine whether and when gender and gendered attitudes are determinative in politics.

Chapter 2: This chapter outlines the rationale for the project, the theoretical framework, and the contribution that it makes to our understanding of the impact of gendered attitudes and stereotypes on candidate success. This work challenges a primary assumption of earlier research

– that gendered attitudes and political gender stereotypes often limit women candidates' viability – by proposing a model that more fully represents the process by which voters evaluate and choose candidates. I make the argument that previous research, based largely on experiments and hypothetical candidates, fails to fully account for how gendered attitudes and stereotypes might operate in the real world of politics.

The main goal of Chapter 2 is to outline the theoretical framework for the expectations tested throughout the rest of the manuscript. In doing so, I employ research on how stereotypes and individuating information are used to evaluate targets, or in this case, political candidates. When candidates stand for election, they can be viewed by the public as a member of a group with whom they share characteristics or as a fully-formed individual. Social psychological research suggests that people are generally seen as group members first, but can be seen as individuals if evaluators have enough incentive to seek and utilize individuating information (Brewer 1988; Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Once additional information enters the mix, the parallel processing model suggests that people can hold stereotypic information and individuating information about a target simultaneously (Kunda and Thagard 1996; Kunda, Sinclair, and Griffin 1997). This allows for the possibility that stereotypes about groups and specific information about individuals can be present in the minds of the public as they evaluate candidates.

In the analyses that appear in subsequent chapters, I identify three points in the elections process where gender stereotypes might be at work and where "information" of different types is generated. Identifying these stages allows me to examine gender stereotypes from several different perspectives. The first of these stages focuses on the backgrounds and credentials of the candidates. Some researchers suggest that women are strategic about where and when they run so as to avoid the impact of negative voter stereotypes (Palmer and Simon 2008), which might result in the emergence of "better" women candidates. Information about the credentials and experiences of candidates may serve to support or refute stereotyped evaluations as voters balance group and individual information about candidates. The second stage involves attempts by candidates to raise or diminish the role that gender stereotypes play in the election environment and in the minds of voters through their campaigns (Dolan 2005). At this stage, candidates can provide information in the form of campaign ads and other forms of media to paint a particular picture of their policy abilities and their personal traits. This information is

also available to voters as they evaluate candidates. The third stage involves voters making evaluations of the candidates and deciding for whom they will vote. At play are many different types of information, some based on group stereotypes and some specific to the individuals and the election. Here, in an electoral environment that offers significant individuating information, I expect that abstract stereotypes will mean less and specific candidate information will mean more to the evaluations and vote choice decisions respondents make.

This framework generates several expectations that are empirically tested in subsequent chapters. While not an exhaustive list, I outline some of the broad hypotheses here. First, I expect abstract gender stereotypes to be less central to candidate evaluations and voting decisions than specific individuating information about candidates like their political party, incumbency status, and experience. Second, I expect that voters processes for evaluating candidates and reaching vote decisions will be similar for women and men candidates. Third, I expect that stereotypes will be more important to the candidate evaluations and vote choice decisions among some respondents, such as those who have low levels of individuating information about candidates. Fourth, because of the presence of stereotypes about both candidate sex and political party, I expect that stereotypes will influence evaluations and vote choice differently for Republicans and Democrats. Finally, I expect that stereotypes will be more closely related to evaluations and vote decisions for offices that are more clearly stereotyped (attorney general and superintendent of education) by their specific policy focus than those that are less clearly identified with a single policy area.

In outlining this plan for the manuscript, I offer a more complete picture of the processes at work in the minds of voters by analyzing the impact of gendered attitudes alongside numerous other political and social influences. The chapter will conclude by discussing the empirical and methodological contributions of the present study with a focus on how the two-wave panel study was conducted.

Chapter 3: One of the advantages of the data collected for this project is the intentional focus on gendered attitudes and stereotypes about women in political life. As a result, the project offers an in-depth examination of a wealth of public attitudes about the current and "appropriate" role for women in elected office. This chapter will begin the empirical investigation of these attitudes and their potential link to candidate evaluations and vote choice in races involving women candidates. The attitudes examined here include:

* policy competence and trait stereotypes about women and men
- the public's views on whether they prefer candidates of a particular sex
- whether they have accurate information about women's current levels of representation
- whether people see women as most appropriately holding particular offices or serving at particular levels of government
- whether people want to see more or fewer women serve in office
- attitudes about women's equality and the presence of discrimination or sexism in American life

The analysis in this chapter will focus on illuminating the degree to which Americans hold attitudes that might be more or less conducive to a larger role for women in politics, who is more likely to hold these attitudes (with a particular focus on any gender gap between respondents), and whether these attitudes are related to candidate evaluations and vote choice. This chapter will present bivariate analysis of these gendered attitudes to lay the groundwork for the more complete multivariate analysis in Chapters 4-7.

Chapter 4: While the primary focus of this work is the examination of the impact of gender stereotypes on support for women candidates, I do acknowledge that this is not the only point in the process at which stereotypes might influence elections. In thinking about the different places where we might see this influence, I highlight two in this chapter. First, as scholars have suggested, the decision to run for office can be shaped by concerns candidates may have about potential voter stereotypes. Women may behave strategically, running in areas where they believe that stereotypes are less likely to hurt them and declining to run when they believe they would face a more hostile electorate (Burrell 1988; Palmer and Simon 2008). As a result of this calculation, these scholars suggest that women candidates may actually be stronger and more accomplished candidates than similarly situated men. Relying on background information about the personal and political accomplishments of all 610 candidates in my dataset, I test this proposition by examining the relative quality of the candidacies of the women and men running for each of the five offices – U.S. House, U.S. Senate, governor, attorney general, and superintendent of education. Of particular importance here will be the previous political and elected office holding experience of candidates. If women candidates, on average, have more experience than men, this might be evidence of strategic behavior on the part of these women.

Also important will be an examination of the different offices, particularly those that are stereotyped on policy grounds, specifically attorney general and superintendent of education. If previous research is correct, we would expect women candidates for an office like attorney general to be more experienced than men as these women attempt to defuse negative stereotypes about women's ability to handle a position focused on law and order (Fox and Oxley 2003).

The second place where we might see the impact of gender stereotypes is in the media campaigns candidates run. Candidates have a good bit of discretion in the degree to which they try to heighten or downplay gendered considerations. Since past research has shown that the public holds both positive and negative gender stereotypes about women and men, candidates can make clear choices about the images and issues they want to present to voters (Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004). As a result, we must consider whether voters employ gender stereotypes when evaluating candidates because stereotypes are a handy and present information shortcut or because candidates run campaigns that stimulate voters to think about them or their opponents in gendered terms (Dolan 2005). To this end, I employ data on the campaign ads of candidates in my dataset. I have all of the television ads (approximately 1000 individual ads) run by each of the 610 candidates in my dataset and all of the websites maintained by their campaigns. The aspect of these ads and websites that are of primary interest here is an analysis of the issues and traits that candidates present to the public. In line with past work (Dolan 2005), the goal here would be to see whether women and men run campaigns that work to reinforce positive gender stereotypes and counter negative ones. For example, a woman who plays up education issues could be seen as "playing to type," and one who focused a good deal of campaign attention to foreign affairs could be seeking to counter traditional thinking that women are not skilled in this "male" domain. These two analyses would allow me to contribute to a more fully realized discussion of the potential impact of gender stereotypes on elections by focusing attention on these two early sets of processes.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5 begins the analysis of the impact of gender stereotypes on the evaluations of and voting for women candidates by focusing on the important role of political party. In my argument that stereotypes will compete with other forms of political information, political party is the primary competitor. It is, of course, the case that political party is one of the primary determinants of voter attitudes and behaviors in elections, including stereotypes. There is a body of research that suggests that political party stereotypes interact with gender stereotypes

to produce different reactions to candidates based on their sex and party attributes. This is an important distinction that is often left out of work that focuses exclusively on candidates as women or men. This chapter explores the ways in which people think differently about women and men as Democrats and Republicans. The analysis first considers how people think about party and gender stereotypes in the abstract and then moves to a consideration of the specific candidates for Congress and statewide office in this data set, comparing same-sex and mixed-sex races as outlined in earlier chapters. Focusing on how party and gender stereotypes shape reactions to, and support for, women and men candidates continues the book's theme that gender is not always, or even often, the determining factor in elections.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6 is the first of two empirical chapters that deals with political gender stereotypes and questions about their impact on candidate viability. Experimental and hypothetical work largely suggests that public reliance on gender stereotypes will have a negative impact on women candidates, resulting in lower evaluations and fewer voters willing to vote for them. Here the focus is on whether abstract gender stereotypes are related to respondent evaluations and behaviors toward real world candidates for U.S. House and Senate relative to other important political variables. Using responses to a series of questions that ask people to offer their evaluations of "women and men who run for office," as well as their evaluations of the specific candidates running in their districts and states, I am able to trace whether and when people draw upon their abstract gender stereotypes about women and men when they evaluate specific candidates in an election and decide for whom they will vote. Of primary importance in this chapter will be the consideration of the role of stereotypes on evaluations and vote choice in models that also include primary political and contextual variables such as political party, incumbency status, campaign spending, and candidate experience. A second important aspect of this analysis utilizes another unique aspect of these data - the sample contains respondents who experienced elections between a male and a female candidate as well as respondents who experienced races with two candidates of the same sex. In determining whether abstract gender stereotypes are related to candidate evaluations and vote choice, this chapter will analyze male-only, female-only, and female-male races to examine the degree to which the sex of candidates and his/her opponent matters to these dynamics.

Chapter 7: The analysis in Chapter 7 extends the discussion of the viability of women's candidacies by examining whether reliance on gender stereotypes is related to the level and type

of office women seek. Previous research has indicated that gender stereotypes differ across different levels (local, state, national) and types (executive, legislative) of office. In general, women are seen as more appropriately situated in legislative offices as opposed to executive and in offices where the policy focus is in keeping with ideas about women's natural expertise (Fox and Oxley 2003). Employing the same approach as Chapter 6, this analysis will examine the impact of gender stereotypes on evaluations and vote choice relative to the political and contextual variables outlined above in voting for candidates for governor (21 races) and attorney general (17 races). In comparing the results of this analysis with that from Chapter 6, I will be able to determine the degree to which gender stereotypes play a greater or lesser role in evaluating and choosing candidates for statewide and national office, as well as legislative and executive office. The analysis will be conducted on races with and without women candidates, as in Chapter 6.

Chapter 8: In this final chapter, I summarize the findings and discuss their implications for women candidates, elections, and future research on the status of women candidates. The analyses outlined here support the idea that gender stereotypes have somewhat limited utility in helping us to understand how and when people think about and choose to support women candidates. The conclusion situates the discussion of women candidates more squarely in the context of traditional influences on elections and illustrates the power of political party, incumbency, and candidate experience. The findings also point out the importance of broadening our focus and research designs to intentionally examine the role that gender and gendered issues play in elections in the real world.

Relationship to Other Books/Readership

While the subfield of gender politics has produced a considerable amount of work on women candidates, most of it appears as research articles in peer-reviewed journals. The book market on related topics tends to be dominated by edited volumes that might include a chapter on some aspect of the political situations of women candidates.[1] To date, however, there are

[1] In the past five years, four edited volumes on women in politics have been produced, each with a chapter on some aspect of women candidates. These are *Political Women and American Democracy.* 2008.ed. Christina Wolbrecht, Karen Beckwith, and Lisa Baldez. New York: Cambridge; *Voting the Gender Gap*. 2008. ed. Lois Duke Whitaker. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press; *Gender and Elections*, Second Edition, 2010. ed. Susan Carroll and Richard Fox. New York: Cambridge University Press; *Women, Gender, and Politics: A Reader*. 2010. ed. Mona Lena Krook

relatively few book-length manuscripts about women candidates and even fewer that focus on how public attitudes and behaviors can shape success or defeat of these women. Below I highlight recent books that address somewhat related topics:

Palmer, Barbara and Dennis Simon. 2008. *Breaking the Political Glass Ceiling: Women and Congressional Elections*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge. In this volume, Palmer and Simon focus on ambition among women who run for Congress and the kinds of congressional districts from which these women are most likely to be elected. There is no treatment of public attitudes towards women or gender stereotypes.

Bystrom, Dianne, et al. 2004. *Gender and Candidate Communication: VideoStyle, WebStyle, NewStyle*. New York: Routledge. Bystrom and her co-authors examine how women and men present themselves in television ads and on websites and how the media covers these candidates. In examining ads and websites, they focus on the character traits candidates present and the degree to which candidates present a "male" or "female" image through their choice of dress and whether or not they present their families and children in their campaigns. Their work does not examine individual-level responses to these images.

Lawrence, Regina and Melody Rose. 2009. *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics and the Media on the Campaign Trail*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Lawrence and Roe address the degree to which the media were biased in their coverage of Clinton's 2008 campaign without any real attention to public reaction or action regarding her candidacy.

Winter, Nicholas. 2008. *Dangerous Frames: How Ideas about Race and Gender Shape Public Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Winters' book is not about women candidates at all, but instead is about how racial and gender stereotypes and media frames can shape the way the public thinks about policy issues.

Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2006. *Where Women Run: Gender and Party in the American States*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Sanbonmatsu examines the relationship between state-level political parties and women candidates, focusing on recruitment patterns, the attitudes of party leaders about women candidates, and the formal and informal mechanisms that lead to women's uneven representation in states across the U.S.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2004. *Voting for Women: How the Public Evaluates Women Candidates.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press. In this book, I began my examination of public attitudes about women candidates and the impact these attitudes have on candidate success that I continue to explore today. *Voting for Women* was, and remains, one of the only book-length treatments of these issues that examined actual voting behavior toward real women candidates. However, I relied on American National Election Studies data, which share the same data limitations as many other works on women candidates. Specifically, the ANES survey has historically neglected questions about voters' political gender stereotypes or about women and men as

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and Sarah Childs. New York: Oxford University Press. I am the author of the chapter on women candidates in two of these books, those in the Wolbrecht et al and Whitaker volumes.

candidates and has only asked relatively few questions about attitudes toward women in politics. Therefore, the analysis of the impact of stereotypes and other attitudes on the success of women candidates is incomplete.

Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1996. *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman: How Stereotypes Influence the Conduct and Consequences of Political Campaigns.* New York: Columbia University Press. Kahn's book is now almost 20 years old, but I include it because it is one of the only books that has dealt with women candidates and stereotypes. Kahn reports extensive analysis of experimental studies she conducted, as well as content analysis of media coverage of women and men. She also includes analysis of ANES data from 1988-1992.

Brooks, Deborah Jordan. Forthcoming 2012. *He Runs, She Runs: Gender Stereotypes, Double Standards, and Political Campaigns.* Princeton University Press. This volume addresses the impact of stereotypes on evaluations of women and men politicians exclusively with experimental data. The author runs a series of experiments in which respondents are given mock newspaper articles about a woman and a man candidate or officeholder. Her manipulations include testing to see whether displays of anger, crying, kindness, and other emotions are evaluated differently when hypothetical women or men candidates exhibit them. While I am sure that this book will enhance our understanding of stereotypes, I would argue that it suffers from the usual limitations of experimental work. It will not be able to tell us much about whether and how voters will react to the tears or anger of women and men candidates in the real world when they have to balance all of the competing influences present in their electoral environment.

Lawless, Jennifer and Richard Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. Revised Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press. While the Lawless and Fox book does not address public attitudes about women candidates or gender stereotypes, I include it because I consider it to be the model for the manuscript I will produce. By this I mean that I see one of the greatest strengths of their book to be the improvement on current knowledge that their original data provide. Scholars before them had studied political ambition in women and men, but had usually done so with data that had significant limitations. Lawless and Fox undertook an ambitious data gathering exercise to produce appropriate samples from which they could make generalizable claims. In doing so, their work has become a quickly accepted landmark in the field. While I don't make any advance claims that my manuscript will be as significant, I believe that it will produce the same sort of shift in thinking about data and research design issues related to studying gender stereotypes and will contribute to a significant reexamination of what we think we know about the real world relationship between the public and women candidates.

I believe that this review of the major recent books on women candidates/gender politics illustrates the fact that there is no current treatment of the important role of public attitudes on the success or failure of women candidates. We continue to struggle with reconciling research findings that warn of the harmful impact of gender stereotypes on women candidates with the electoral success that women candidates clearly have. *Does Gender Matter in Elections*? is

poised to fill this void by providing data from a representative, generalizable survey that intentionally examines whether gender attitudes and stereotypes are as important as earlier work would suggest. Situated as a research monograph published by a university press, the book would have an audience among scholars of political science, sociology, psychology, and women's/gender studies. It would also be useful in undergraduate classes on gender politics as well as more general courses on public opinion and electoral behavior and would certainly be appropriate for graduate seminars on these topics.

Projected Timetable for Completion

All data collection for the project has been completed. I am currently working on the chapter on the impact of political gender stereotypes on voting for women candidates. I anticipate that a manuscript of approximately 250-300 pages will be complete in the spring of 2013.

About the Author

Kathleen A. Dolan received her Ph.D in political science from the University of Maryland. She is currently a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Her teaching and research focus on gender politics, electoral politics, and public opinion. She has published numerous articles in academic journals, including *The American Journal of Political Science, The Journal of Politics, Political Research Quarterly, Political Psychology, Political Behavior,* and *American Politics Research* and is the author of *Voting for Women: How the Public Evaluates Women Candidates* (Westview 2004). From 2007-2010, she served as co-editor of the journal *Politics & Gender* and is currently a member of the board of directors of the American National Election Studies.

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