

If You Can't Say Something Nice:
The Gender Dynamics of Negative Messaging

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Candidate Gender and Negative Messaging

“Joe Biden faces a challenge of his own: taking on the Alaska governor without coming across as sexist or a bully.” -- Wall Street Journal, October 2, 2008¹

As with many other professions, women have been moving into elected politics in significant numbers in recent decades. Within a relatively short amount of time, women in elected office have transformed from anomalies – usually widows filling the remainder of their deceased husbands’ terms – to serious contenders in their own right, sometimes for the highest offices in their states and the nation. With this evolution has come scholarly interest in the ways in which gender expectations and stereotypes affect candidate behavior and voters’ responses to that behavior. While many gender differences in campaign styles have been documented, question about the influence of gender dynamics on negative messaging strategies remain relatively underexplored.

Recent political events highlight the importance of investigating the effects of gender on these tactics. For instance, Senator John McCain stunned many political watchers when, on August 29, 2008, he announced his choice for a vice-presidential running mate. Alaska Governor Sarah Palin emerged from obscurity to obtain the coveted spot, beating out several more well-established and better-known contenders. The initial shock quickly turned into polarized – if not expected – reactions. Those leaning towards the Republican ticket appeared energized by the choice of a young governor who had a reputation for fighting her own party in Alaska. Her “maverick”

¹ Chozick, Amy. “Biden Prepares For Palin With Eye On Gender Pitfalls.” *Wall Street Journal*, October 2, 2008, A11.

status was seen as an asset at a time when the sitting Republican president was facing historically low levels of support, not to mention a counter-balance to the aged (and experienced) head of the ticket.

On the other side of the aisle, Democrats were non-plussed. At best, critics argued, this was a cynical attempt to co-opt female supporters of Senator Hillary Clinton, many of whom remained disillusioned with Senator Clinton's close loss of the Democratic endorsement. At worst, opponents pointed out Governor Palin's lack of experience and questioned her ability to effectively lead were Senator McCain to become incapacitated. For many weeks, Governor Palin became one of the major points of contention in a race that had already seen its share of rancor.

At the same time that traditional partisan cleavages emerged on the topic of Governor Palin, a second dynamic opened up – one that was not entirely unexpected but had had only one other chance to unfold in a general presidential race. That is, the issue of Governor Palin's gender – and the interactions sure to ensue with other political actors because of her gender – became a major topic of conversation. Supporters proudly trumpeted her status as only the second female to run for vice-president, and the first to do so on the Republican ticket. “Hoosiers for the Hot Chick” buttons emerged at the Republican National Convention, suggesting that delegates were not just proud of their candidate, but proud that that their candidate was a woman. Palin herself clearly identified herself as a woman and associated herself with the struggle for gender equality. “It was rightly noted in Denver this week that Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America,” she declared. “But it turns out the women of

America aren't finished yet, and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all."² This message appeared to resonate with some Clinton supporters, at least initially. A Clinton supporter noted that she would be voting for John McCain based on the Palin nomination, which was an indication from McCain that, "... 'Hey, if the Democrats are too stupid to break that glass ceiling, we [the Republican ticket] will do it for them.'"³

Matters became more complicated, however, when several gaffes in the media added fuel to criticisms that Palin was not vice-presidential material. Palin's supporters were quick to charge that these accusations of unpreparedness were thinly-veiled sexism. This was an interesting strategy on several levels. Most important here, however, was the willingness of the Republican Party to do something more often associated with the Democratic Party – that is, to continue to make salient Palin's gender *and* to broach topics of sexism.⁴ This was at least an attempt to put Democrats in the uncomfortable situation of looking like hypocritical sexists, were they to criticize Palin too harshly.

At the same time, the opening quotation illuminates the bind that Democrats – and, in particular, Democratic vice-presidential-hopeful Joe Biden, who had to debate Governor Palin – found themselves in. While not wanting to appear to unfairly attack a woman, the mounting public evidence of Palin's potential ineptitude meant silence on these points could also backfire. Democrats could be perceived as patronizing – a different form of sexism – were they to treat Palin too judiciously. This lack of vigor

² As quoted in Eilperin, Juliet and Anne Kornblut. "An All-Out Battle for Women's Votes Begins." *Washington Post*, August 30, 2008, A01.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See, for example, Palin's derision of Hillary Clinton's suggestion that sexism was at work in the Democratic primary (e.g., Alberts, Sheldon. "Sexual Politics Back On Agenda; Palin may need to heed advice she gave Clinton." *National Post*, A22.

would have been *particularly* noticeable, as Palin decided early to go negative against the Democratic ticket, painting herself as a pitbull with lipstick.⁵ As the *Wall Street Journal* notes, it was incumbent upon Senator Biden to strike just the right level of negativity with his opponent, a task that would have been less daunting for him were he facing another man.

The gender-conscious rhetoric surrounding negativity and the vice-presidential contest was a more explicit version of discussions that transpired earlier in that election cycle during the Democratic presidential primary. In a race that provided two “firsts” – the viable presidential candidacy of both a woman *and* an African-American man – issues of race and gender were salient. These issues played out in discussion about the candidates’ use of negativity, as well. One article describes Senator Hillary Clinton’s attempts to present herself in a “softer” way, in order to compensate for her previous aggressive tactics towards Senator Barack Obama. While she was navigating the gender expectations of negativity, her opponents were doing likewise. The same article attributes her first-place finish in the New Hampshire Democratic primary to the fact that her two male opponents “joined forces in criticizing her,” a tactic which ostensibly caused a “decisive swing of women into her camp.”⁶

These most recent examples of careful gendered strategizing amongst presidential and vice-presidential candidates is another example of the “double-bind” faced by women in politics (Jamieson 1995). These examples, particularly as they pertain to how

⁵ Paraphrased from her acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, St. Paul, MN, September 3, 2008.

⁶ As reported in Nagourney, Adam. 2008. “Race and Gender Issues Erupt In a Tense Day for Democrats.” *New York Time*, January 14, 2008, A1.

negative the candidates should get with one another, highlights the difficult decisions congressional candidates have been facing for years, as more and more women have run for Congress. For example, a staffer for the 2002 U.S. House race in South Dakota described the delicate balance of negativity faced by incumbent Bill Janklow and challenger Stephanie Herseth. Herseth, this staffer reported, could not be too negative in her campaign because she did not want “farmers’ and ranchers’ wives to think she had stopped being a lady.” At the same time, experienced politician Bill Janklow felt constrained in his negativity because he did not want to look like he was “picking on his daughter.” Certainly, these considerations would not have been in play – or, at least, would not have had the same gendered component – had the South Dakota race involved two men.

While scholars have made significant progress uncovering the different dynamics at play in men’s and women’s campaigns for public office, there is much we still do not understand, especially because the growth in the number of female candidates is recent. In particular, what effect does candidate gender – *and* the gender of the candidate’s opponent – have on candidates’ effective use of negative messages? Will female candidates perceive that expectations that they be kinder and more compassionate than men constrain them from being too negative? Or do female candidates incorporate negative messages in order to prove to voters that they are *not* stereotypical women and, therefore, up to the tough challenges of elected office? On the other hand, do male candidates constrain their negativity when running against women due to norms of chivalry or do they launch negative attacks against female opponents in order to leverage

expectations that women are unfit for elected office? Once candidates make the decision to go negative, how do gender stereotypes about issue competency influence the issues candidates invoke in their negative ads? Finally, assuming there are gender differences in negativity strategies, are these decisions made consciously? In other words, are these differences explicitly strategic, or are they the products of the gender expectations and stereotypes that the candidates and their campaign staff ascribe to themselves? For many years, the relatively small number of women who ran for office made it impossible to answer these questions in a systematic, large-scale manner. Now that increasing numbers of women have run for Congress, though, it is imperative that political scientists more fully understand the gender dynamics associated with this popular campaign tactic.

Before I proceed, however, I must clarify the scope of this study. First and foremost, it is *not* a study of biologically based traits. I do not argue that men or women are inherently more or less prone to using negative messages or launch negative campaigns. Instead, this is an issue of whether and how male and female candidates *perceive* and *anticipate* the well-documented gender expectations of their electorate. Voters' gender expectations, then, serve as the constraining framework, the reality in which candidates must operate. Because these voters – and their gender expectations – ultimately decide who will prevail, candidates have incentives to behave strategically in order to use these gender expectations to their greatest benefit. What is more, this is not necessarily only a question of avoiding stereotypically-rooted punishment. Candidates must avoid punishment but *also* strategize as to how they can make gender-based expectations work to their advantage as well. For example, a female candidate might

discover that using moderate levels of negative advertising does not bring the punishment that using high levels of negative messages would. At the same time, using moderate levels of negative messages might help her capitalize on voters' delighted surprise that she is not simply a nice – but incompetent – woman, an assumption that might remain intact were she to use no negative messages. The way gender enters into decisions to use or not use negative messages is a social phenomenon, contingent not just on gender expectations in general but conditioned specifically on the gender expectations of a certain electorate at a certain time.

While electorates and campaign environments may change – making candidate gender more or less salient for voters – I do expect general patterns to emerge based on what we know about candidates, campaigns, and gender expectations. What should we make of gendered differences in negativity strategies emerge? Questions of gendered differences in negative campaign messages are linked to core issues of representation and manifest themselves at two different stages of the campaign process. Those contemplating a congressional run face two decisions: first, whether or not to run. Second, once they have decided to run, they must choose what sorts of campaign strategies they will pursue. Most obviously, the gender dynamics of negative messaging will play out in the second stage of this decision and could have real implications for *who* gets elected. If, for example, men and women pursue different negative messaging strategies but win at similar rates -- which has been the case in recent cycles (Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997) – then it suggests that women's gendered strategizing is a factor in achieving win-rates comparable with men's. Alternatively, if men and women

are not pursuing gender-based negativity strategies, perhaps doing so could increase women's win-rates to achieve parity with similarly-situated men,⁷ or, potentially, negatively affect women's win-rates.⁸

More subtly, however, is the influence considerations of gendered negative messaging strategy may have on the *first* stage of the decision – that is, the impact it may have on a potential candidate's decision to run in the first place. Preliminary evidence suggests men and women contemplate campaign negativity differently. In a recent study, 45 percent of candidate-eligible women reported that the possibility of having to run a negative campaign was so unattractive that it dissuaded them from pursuing elected office. This compares to only 30 percent of candidate eligible men, a statistically significant difference (Lawless and Fox 2008, 7). Such findings may give insight into the vexing question of why, despite increasing education and participation in the careers that typically lead to running for public office, the number of women who choose to run for office remains so low. Figure 1 displays the number of women running for House and Senate seats from 1990 to 2008. The figure reveals the relatively dramatic increase of female candidates from 1990 to 1992, at least in the House, in what was hailed as the “Year of the Woman.” Gains since then, however, have been slow; in fact, since 2004, the number of women running for House seats has decreased slightly. Keeping in mind

⁷ While recent work points to equal win-rates for male and female candidates, a recent study shows that, while men and women win at equal rates, women are generally higher-quality candidates and more qualified, which suggests that gender continues to play a disadvantageous role for female congressional candidates (Pearson and McGhee 2009).

⁸ A third possibility here is that negative messaging strategies have no real ramifications for the outcome of elections. *Plenty* of political science research has established that campaigns do have real consequences on elections (e.g., Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Druckman 2004; Green and Gerber 2008; etc.); thus, it is not much of a stretch to suggest that a specific campaign strategy can influence the outcome.

that these numbers represent the number of female candidates out of a field of approximately 936 congressional candidates⁹, it is clear why the gender composition of Congress nowhere near resembles the gender composition – approximately 50-50 – of the general population. (See the appendix for a figure displaying women’s share of Congress.) At the height of women’s candidacies in 2004, women comprised approximately 16 percent of the congressional candidate pool.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Several explanations have been proffered for this continued gender gap amongst candidates. Gaddie and Bullock (2000) point out that high rates of re-election make it difficult for newcomers to successfully break into congressional politics. Since new candidates face the best chances of success when they are *not* running against an incumbent, the low number of open seats in any election year means that not only will a new (female) candidate face low odds of being elected, but also means that the most qualified candidates, who understand this daunting calculus, will not even run until it is an open race. (See also Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994 and Nixon and Darcy 1996 for studies that explicitly study the link between the incumbency effect and women’s underrepresentation.)

While the incumbency explanation appears to account for the very slow growth in women’s representation, in many ways it is a gender neutral explanation for the gender

⁹ The actual number of congressional candidates will fluctuate from year to year. This figure is based on the calculation that 435 House seats and 33 Senate seats are up every two years and based on the assumption that two candidates are vying for each seat. In some years, more Senate seats may be open, due to retirements or other events that require a special election. Moreover, some candidates – particularly in the House – do not draw an opponent. On the other hand, a few races will draw more than two candidates due to third party involvement. In any event, give or take, there will be approximately 936 candidates running in any given congressional election cycle.

gap. Certainly, because it is less likely that an incumbent is a woman, incumbency effects affect female candidates and potential female candidates more. However, the incumbency explanation leaves unexamined many of the structural characteristics of the American electoral system that primarily disadvantage women and other under-represented groups. To this end, Sanbonmatsu (2006) uncovers the ways in which different methods of party gatekeeping in different states can help or hinder women's entry into elected office. Some party institutions are simply more proactive in recruiting women to run. While there is large variation from state to state, another piece of the gender gap puzzle is the general lack of effort on the part of parties to recruit and support female candidates.

Lawless and Fox (2005) undertook a path-breaking survey to determine the causes of the candidate gender gap. In their study, they survey individuals in the careers that most typically lead to political candidacies – for instance, law, business, education, and political activism. The study is one of the first of its kind to successfully capture candidates, those who may have considered a candidacy but decided against it, *and* those who are similarly situated but never seriously considered a candidacy. This work is important because it sheds light on the reasoning used by those who did *not* become candidates, a selection effect that has hampered previous work. Lawless and Fox find a mix of factors at work, including gendered socialization patterns and institutional barriers. For instance, women who are as qualified to run for office as men are more likely to report they feel under-qualified. Additionally, like Sanbonmatsu (2006), they find institutional effects. Women who are similarly situated to men are less likely to be

asked to run or actively recruited by the party or other officials. These factors come together to make women less prone to pursue public office.

Scholars have also begun to parse the ways in which women's campaigns differ from men's. Studies have found differences between the *style* of men's and women's advertisements (e.g., Bystrom and Kaid 2002; Kahn 1996), as well as the issue focus of the campaigns (e.g., Larson 2001; Dabelko and Herrnson 1997; Kahn 1996; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994). Indeed, some of this work preliminarily points to gender differences in the incidence and use of negative advertising. (A point I shall return to later.) In sum, this segment of scholarship documents real differences in the ways in which men and women conduct their campaigns.

Understanding differences in men's and women's campaigns is an important piece of the puzzle for those attempting to determine why more women do not run for office. Taken together, this research reveals that men and women are, on average, contemplating running substantively different campaigns and *then* deciding to run for office at significantly different rates. Perhaps some of the explanation for the gender gap in candidate emergence is that women are contemplating running campaigns that are *less attractive* – both to them personally *and*, they reason, to the voters – than the campaigns men generally contemplate running. Until we understand how men and women navigate voters' gender expectations in general – and, in particular, in regard to negative messaging, an increasingly popular campaign tactic – it will be difficult to grasp the different decisions men and women are making about whether or not to run for office.

Questions about the under-representation of women amongst candidates is, ultimately, important inasmuch as it affects women's substantive representation in political institutions. For too many years, the study of women in politics was marginalized with arguments that men and women in elected office would produce the same public policies. However, recent research has shown that female elected officials *do* prioritize different types of issues. Swers (2002), for example, shows that women in the House of Representatives are more likely to sponsor and co-sponsor bills that address "women's issues." Similar differences in activity have been documented in the state legislatures, as well (Thomas 1994; Berkman and O'Connor 1993). Other scholars have focused on the differences in leadership styles amongst male and female elected officials. In general, women have a more inclusive style that encourages the consideration of a wider range of solutions and perspectives (Rosenthal 1998; see also Rinehart 2001 and Kathlene 1995 for additional research on the different legislative leadership styles of men and women). In sum, this research suggests that the under-representation of female candidates leads to an under-representation of female elected officials. And an under-representation of female elected officials can contribute to the under-emphasis of issues and leadership styles that are of particular relevance and familiarity to female constituents.

Many have also argued that women in elected office serve as important symbols to women in the electorate. Being represented by someone who *looks* similar can lend a degree of legitimacy to the system. As Mansbridge (1999) argues, the "...knowledge that certain features of one's identity do not mark one as less able to govern...contribute[s] to

making one feel more included in the polity. This feeling of inclusion in turn makes the polity democratically more legitimate in one's eyes" (651). Not only can women in elected office help increase the legitimacy of the system, but they can inspire the next generation of women to be involved in politics, thereby perpetuating these positive effects (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006).

While these questions of gender and negative advertising have implications for representation broadly, more specifically, this dissertation may help clarify the confusion surrounding studies of negative advertising's effect on voters. Significant disagreement surrounds the negative advertising literature, particularly in terms of its effects on voters. Do negative messages mobilize or demobilize voters? Do the messages increase or decrease positive assessments of the sponsors and targets? The majority of negative advertising scholarship has focused on differences amongst *voters* that might make certain individuals more receptive to this type of message. Less attention has been paid, however, to differences amongst *candidates* that might make negative messages more or less prevalent and effective for some candidates. Taking account of candidate gender could provide some additional nuance to understandings of when and how negative advertising affects the electorate.

Finally, on a more practical level, these findings will inform those who run for office and advise candidates. Certainly campaign professionals have theories and opinions as to how negative messages and candidate gender interact to influence voters – perspectives I aim to capitalize on in this dissertation – but the professionals themselves have little empirical evidence as to what other advisers are doing in this realm and, most

important for their purposes, whether these strategies work. Indeed, it is quite possible that candidates and campaign advisers make exaggerated or simply wrong assumptions about voters' gender expectations. This study, then, could serve as a catalyst for political practitioners to re-examine their reliance on presumptions about voters' gender expectations and on their own gender expectations.

Why Negativity?

Although scholars have begun unpacking the various ways in which men's and women's campaigns differ, there is much we do not systematically understand. In this dissertation, I focus on one aspect – the use of negative messages – that we have yet to fully understand. Of all the ways in which men's and women's campaigns differ, though, why choose negativity?

Most immediately, the current campaign environment makes this a salient and timely question. The use of negative campaign messages has been increasing with every cycle (Geer 2006); certainly, the 2008 elections followed this trend. The sheer volume of negative advertisements suggests that candidates and their political consultants believe they are necessary and successful, although research is contradictory, as I detail later in this chapter. In other words, it is a common tactic that appears to be here to stay. It is vital, then, that we gain a better understanding of this potent tool's limits and possibilities.

Preliminary evidence suggests that women and men contemplating running for office weigh the prospect of having to go negative differently. Women are more likely to report that they have dismissed the idea of running for office due to the possibility of

having to go negative (Lawless and Fox 2008). However, because we know little about the gender dynamics of negative messages, we do not really know why this discrepancy exists. Are women simply socialized to be more adverse to negative campaigning? Or are women more adverse to negative campaigning because they expect they would have to run campaigns that are *more* negative than men's? Or might they fear they may be *attacked* more than their male counterparts?

Because we do not yet know whether and how candidate and opponent gender influence negative messaging strategies, we have yet to answer these questions. In the rest of this chapter, I lay the groundwork for a systematic inquiry into questions of candidate gender, opponent gender, and negative messaging strategies. I begin with a review of the gender stereotyping literature. This literature gives significant insight into the types of considerations candidates may be contemplating as they think about their gender – both their own and their opponents' – and the decision to use negative messages. In the end, though, this literature gives competing directional hypotheses. I then move into a review of the voluminous and contradictory negative advertising literature, as well as a discussion of how party identification might moderate gender effects. Significant disagreement remains as to whether and when negative advertising is effective. It is my hope that the addition of candidate gender to the analysis will aid us in understanding these apparent contradictions. Finally, I lay out the plan for the dissertation and more specific questions attended to in subsequent chapters.¹⁰

¹⁰ One final caveat before I move into the literature reviews. Throughout the dissertation, I will be using terms for sex (e.g., male, female) and gender (e.g., woman, man) interchangeably. Fundamentally, of course, the way in which I approach and measure differences in candidates rests on biological *sex* differences. However, due to the implication of gender stereotypes to which candidates are attempting to

Scholars of voting behavior have long asserted that voters use many cognitive shortcuts – including party identification or the candidate’s stance on a single issue – when deciding which candidate to support in a given election (e.g., Campbell, et. al., 1960). More recent work in political psychology has focused on the usefulness to voters of various stereotypes, based on party, race, or gender. These stereotypes – such as beliefs that Democrats, African-Americans, and women tend to be more liberal – can serve as helpful heuristics to a voter who does not have the time or motivation to seek out unique information on each individual candidate. At the same time, the presence of more harmful stereotypes – such as the belief that women are not as competent as or possess fewer leadership traits than men – may explain the dearth of women in elected office. Depending on how reliant voters are on these gender stereotypes, it may be impossible for a female candidate to convince enough voters to use other vote-choice criteria.

Studies specific to the effects of gender stereotypes have identified three main ways in which they manifest: gender-linked ideology expectations, trait expectations, and issue-competency expectations.

Ideological Expectations

First, female candidates and elected officials are generally expected to be more liberal than their male colleagues (Koch 2000; McDermott 1997, 1998; Alexander and Andersen 1993). These expectations are, to some extent, grounded in empirical reality.

conform, and the gendered interactions between candidates, this quickly becomes a story of *gender*. Due to the fuzzy dividing line – and in order to avoid boring repetition – I will liberally swap these terms. That said, please keep in mind my caveat from before: this in no way is a story of biological sex differences, but a story of how those sex differences come to have loaded meanings in the gendered context of politics.

Most female members of Congress are Democrats, affiliating them with the more liberal party. For instance, in the 111th Congress, of the 89 female members of Congress, 68 of them are Democrats, a proportion that largely fits the pattern of recent Congresses (CAWP 2009). Moreover, congresswomen's voting records have tended to be more liberal than congressmen's (Burrell 1994), especially when it comes to gender-related issues (Swers 1998; Norton 1999). This systematic difference in ideology likely has several sources. It may reflect the gender gap in the U.S. population as a whole (see Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999 for a discussion of this gap); it may reflect the fact that more liberal districts are friendlier to the idea of being represented by a woman (Palmer and Simon 2008); or it may be a matter of electorally-successful women hewing to voters' expectations. Regardless of the origin, ideological expectations remain an important facet of gendered assessments of candidates and elected officials, and they have been linked directly (Sanbonmatsu 2002; Koch 2000) and indirectly (e.g., McDermott 1997, 1998) to vote choice.

Gender-linked Trait Expectations and Leadership

Perhaps most immediately relevant to the topic at hand are the trait-based gender expectations repeatedly documented by political scientists and psychologists. As Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) point out, numerous studies using a variety of methodologies come to the consensus that typical women are seen as "warm, gentle, kind, and passive," while typical men are described as "tough, aggressive, and assertive" (see page 121 of Huddy and Terkildsen for a more extensive review of this work). What is more, these gender-based expectations carry over into the assessment of candidates. As such, female

candidates are typically perceived to be warmer, more compassionate, and kind, whereas male candidates are more likely to be assumed to be aggressive, assertive and tough. Indeed, Huddy and Terkildsen find that it is the reliance on these trait stereotypes that leads to gender-based inferences of issue competencies (135).¹¹

The aggressive, unkind nature of attack advertising, then, directly contradicts the gender expectations about female candidates, but not men. The disadvantageous ramifications for female candidates to go negative loom larger than they do for men. In general, social psychology has concluded that individuals acting counter to stereotypical expectations will be punished (Cialdini and Trost 1998). This is particularly true for expectations that women behave communally (Rudman and Glick 1999). Women who adopt masculine leadership styles are also assessed negatively, particularly those in male-dominated fields (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992). Negative messaging is not a communal tactic, and it represents an aggressive campaign tactic in a traditionally male-dominated field. Thus, we could expect savvy female candidates to anticipate negative feedback from voters for adopting these techniques and avoid campaign tactics that include negative messaging.

However, female candidates and office holders face the infamous double-bind of politics (Jamieson 1995). On the one hand, there is the possibility that behavior deemed unfeminine will hurt a woman's electoral prospects. On the other hand, like women

¹¹ The majority of the studies linking these trait stereotypes to gender occurred in the late eighties and early nineties. It is reasonable to expect that gender attitudes have changed since then. More recent studies do verify the persistence of these expectations (e.g., Sanbonmatsu 2002), although there is still not large-scale verification of these expectations that is recent *enough* to be satisfactory. Chapter Two reports consultants' current assessments of voters' trait-based gender expectations, which largely confirm the literature, although a rigorous verification of Huddy and Terkildsen's (1993) study with voters is due.

breaking into other male-dominated fields, adhering too closely to gender expectations can lead those evaluating them to doubt whether the female contender has the qualities it will take – often stereotypically “male” qualities – to be an effective elected leader. Eagly and Karau (2002) describe this disconnect, as characteristics associated with successful individuals in male-dominated fields – such as “leadership” and “self-confidence” – run counter to characteristics typically ascribed to women – such as being “communal” and having a “willingness to compromise.” Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) verify that the higher the office, the more masculine traits are preferred in candidates. Even after decades of increased women’s participation in elected office, recent work continues to suggest that national elected leaders are expected to exhibit stereotypically masculine traits, particularly in a time of heightened national fear and concern about homeland security (e.g., Lawless 2004; Falk and Kenski 2006). These expectations may establish incentives for women to adopt more stereotypically masculine campaign tactics in order to compensate for their expected shortcomings. As Sapiro and Walsh (2002) explain, “Women may need to ‘go negative’ earlier to show they are fighters and serious candidates” (6). Or, in the words of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, “The minute you go into this arena, especially at this altitude, you have to prove you can breathe the air.”¹²

The simultaneous presence of gender and leadership stereotypes – and the countervailing direction of each for female candidates – sets up a complex calculation for women who are deciding whether or not to go negative. The choice is complicated by the fact that one set of expectations – that women be conciliatory, kind, and

¹² As quoted in Goodman, Ellen. “In Today’s Politics, Nice Gals Finish Last.” *Boston Globe*, November 3, 2006, A17.

compassionate – bears more normative weight than the stereotypes associated with leaders. In other words, gender stereotypes associated with personality traits carry prescriptive implications – women *should* be conciliatory, kind, and compassionate. Gendered leadership stereotypes, on the other hand, have a more descriptive flavor. It is not that women *should not* be competent leaders, it is just that they are not thought to possess the associated characteristics. Thus, although they might benefit from mounting a negative campaign, which challenges the gendered stereotypes of leadership, a negative campaign risks violating the prescriptive gender expectations in the process. Such violation can lead to voters punishing her, both by negatively assessing the female candidate and, more importantly for the candidate, not voting for her. At the same time, a female candidate who reinforces the prescriptive gender expectations with a nice campaign might get voters to *like* her – but not vote for her, if she has not proven her competence as a candidate.

While this double-bind is disheartening – particularly as it would appear to pose a greater hurdle for female candidates – subsequent work has offered evidence that there is some flexibility in these gender expectations, at least for women running for public office. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) find that it is not impossible to associate traditionally male (leadership) traits with a female candidate, and vice versa. For instance, it appears that if a woman explicitly describes herself in stereotypically male terms, individuals are generally willing to believe she possesses those traits and, consequently, assess her competence on “women’s issues” more positively than women with stereotypically feminine traits or men with masculine or feminine traits (139). Such

flexibility would suggest that balancing the countervailing gender and leadership

expectations may be delicate but not impossible for female candidates. More recent scholarship, however, suggests that although women may be able to convince voters they possess stereotypically masculine traits, they cannot do so as easily as convincing voters they possess stereotypically feminine traits (Schneider 2007). What is more, even when women have convinced voters they possess masculine personality traits, they are given lower scores on integrity, a trait on which female candidates usually out-perform male candidates. Thus, despite the apparent flexibility in terms of convincing voters that candidates can, in fact, have counter-stereotypical gender traits, this strategy is not without its costs. It is also important to note that both of these studies rely on experiments for their findings. It is plausible that candidates using counter-stereotypical appeals in an actual campaign *could* open themselves to a gender-based counter-attack from their opponents. Finally, it is unclear whether, without the *explicit* description of counter-stereotypical traits found in these experiments, voters would be prone to process information effortfully enough to overcome initial gender expectations.¹³

Up until now, my discussion of trait-based gender expectations has solely focused on the difficulties it presents for women mounting congressional campaigns. However, these delicate gendered decisions will also affect those men who are running *against women* for office, as Republican Congressman Rick Lazio could attest. During the 2000 New York Senate race, Hillary Clinton and Rick Lazio were locked in a tight race going into their debates. However, when Lazio marched across the stage during a debate,

¹³ Dolan's (1998) and McDermott's (1997, 1998) work would suggest that reliance on gender as a heuristic will be more prominent in races with low levels of information. Therefore, this concern of effortful processing would vary depending on the information environment of the race.

confronting Clinton in her face with a pledge to refuse all soft money and demanding she sign it, voters became uncomfortable with his aggressive tactics. While political commentators initially declared Lazio the debate's winner, voters – particularly women – registered disapproval of Lazio's "schoolyard bully" demeanor.¹⁴ Ultimately, Lazio was forced to defend himself. "You can't make a point forcefully if you're a man and the person you are making a point with is a woman," he explained. "I just think that that's sexist." Clinton countered by suggesting that Lazio never would have pursued such a forceful tactic if he had been debating a man.¹⁵

It is hard to know how much this particular encounter influenced the election's outcome. But it does highlight the intricate decisions facing men when running against women, weighing the influence of chivalric norms against desires to either leverage stereotypes of women as unfit for leadership or to simply be aggressive with pointing out a female opponent's deficiencies. More recent events suggest this is not only an issue of the past. While Rick Lazio may have erred towards being *too* aggressive, men may also face charges of being patronizing if they are not aggressive enough with their female opponents as the opening quotation points out.

In particular, men who are running against women may be subject – at least depending on the degree to which their electorate adheres to traditional conceptions of gender and gender relations – to expectations associated with norms of chivalry (Sapiro and Walsh 2002). If this is the case, men who attack their female opponents may be

¹⁴ Kaplan, Fred. "Campaign 2000/Battle for the Senate: Poll Suggests Lazio's Debate Tactics Helped Clinton; Aggressive Style Left a Sour Taste, Some Voters Say." *Boston Globe*, September 18, 2000, A6.

¹⁵ As reported by Archbold, Randal C. "Lazio Says Critics Are Sexist." *New York Times*, September 20, 2000, B1.

punished by voters who see this behavior as inappropriately aggressive – as the consultant from the South Dakota race related earlier describes it, the electoral equivalent of “hitting a girl.” Recall that this same consultant noted that the male candidate in this race refrained from being too negative, as he did not want to look like he was “picking on his daughter.” Such a mindset potentially would have roots in concepts of benevolent sexism, wherein paternalistic attitudes towards women are cloaked in innocent-sounding norms that women, in general, be protected, treated delicately, and placed on pedestals (Glick and Fiske 1996).

Like women in these situations, however, men are facing countervailing considerations. While chivalric norms may predispose men to be *less negative* against female opponents, the desire to capitalize on voters’ expectations that women are unfit for office (as described above, based on Eagley and Karau’s findings that women are not expected to possess characteristics of good leaders) may provide incentives for men to go *more negative* against their female opponents. What is more, in extreme cases where men are facing women in a district of voters with very traditional views on gender, the very act of running for office may make a female candidate a gender expectations violator. Since, in general, norm violators are punished (Cialdini and Trost 1998), a male candidate may take it upon *himself* to punish the violator with increased negativity, assuming this will buy good will from the voters. Such pressures, if perceived by a male candidate, would give him incentive to be *more negative* against a female than a male opponent.

This discussion highlights the fact that issues of gender and negative advertising can have noticeable effects for male candidates as well as female candidates. Certainly, the competing expectations of gender and leadership are at play in many aspects of women's campaigns. The delicate balance becomes particularly salient with decisions about negative messages. At the same time, men must make careful calculations when facing women, constantly determining how chivalric or aggressive to be. Chapter Two reports comments from consultants that suggest men may be less negative against women or, at the very least, are very "careful" in constructing their negative messages against female opponents. Thus, a systematic investigation of these decisions – and a systematic investigation that takes into account candidate gender *and* the gender of the opponent, what I will call the gender context of the race – is vital for a broader understanding of candidates' attempts to bridge these countervailing expectations.

Gender-linked Issue Competence Expectations

In terms of trait-based gender expectations, there is little to distinguish the expectations citizens hold for their candidates and elected officials and the expectations they might hold for their family members, neighbors, or co-workers. What is unique to the political realm, however, are the gender-linked expectations voters hold as to who is more competent on specific policy issues. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) established a link between trait-based and issue competence gender expectations. They find that because women are stereotyped as being more compassionate, warm, and sensitive, they are assumed to be better-equipped to address "compassion" issues, such as education, health care, and policies related to the poor and elderly (140). Men have an advantage on

issues such as defense, crime, and foreign affairs (which, in recent years, has transformed into advantages on homeland security and terrorism; see Pearson and Nelson 2009; Lawless 2004; Falk and Kenski 2006) Sanbonmatsu (2002) more recently confirmed the endurance of these gendered issue competency expectations. In a telephone survey of Ohio voters in 2000, she confirms that voters continue to adhere to these gender-based issue competency stereotypes. Finally, Dolan (2004) demonstrates women's issues are more accessible to voters when they evaluate Democratic women. She finds that individuals are more likely to mention issues associated with women when evaluating Democratic women, as opposed to Democratic men.

What is more, it appears that these expectations can have real consequences for election outcomes. Female candidates who directed stereotype-consistent messages towards women's groups enjoyed higher rates of electoral success (Herrnson, et. al., 2003). This finding suggests that if members of certain subpopulations – here, members of women's groups – are engaged and turn out to vote in sufficient numbers, their positive stereotyped assessment of the candidate could decide the outcome. Sanbonmatsu (2002) expands upon this research, by examining the attitudes and voting behavior of individual voters. She finds that respondents who disagree with basic stereotype questions, such as whether men are better suited for politics, show a higher affinity for voting for female candidates. This affinity ultimately predicts vote choice in some of her models.

The larger issue environment of a particular election matters as well. Recent scholarship in this area has examined whether the shift in policy focus post-September

11th has hurt female candidates. Might the national emphasis on issues like war and terrorism disadvantage female candidates, who are not typically viewed as being competent in these areas? Evidence gathered relating to presidential candidates suggests the answer is yes. Lawless (2004) finds that those who see women as less competent than men at curbing terrorism report lower levels of willingness to support a female presidential candidate. For a “significant portion” of the sample, this consideration even trumps party identification (487). Similarly, Falk and Kenski (2006) find that those who identify terrorism, homeland security, or US intervention in Iraq as their most important issue are more likely to believe a male presidential candidate is better qualified to deal with these issues. In a national policy scene where matters of war and terrorism dominate, then, it would appear that female presidential candidates are at a distinct disadvantage.¹⁶ At the same time, the effects leave open the possibility that a turn in the issue environment towards issues typically associated with women could advantage female candidates (Dolan 1998).

The importance of this line of literature as it relates to negative advertising largely regards the decisions candidates must make once they *have* decided to use negative messages against their opponents. First, candidates must decide whether they will attack based on issues or other, more personal, traits. Once candidates have decided to include issues in their messages, they must then decide *which* issues they will focus on.¹⁷

¹⁶ One important caveat, however, is that, out of necessity, these studies largely focused on abstract female candidates. In other words, they were not carried out in the midst of a presidential campaign with a viable female candidate. *Perhaps* a female candidate who is actively working against these stereotypes, much as Senator Hillary Clinton did in the 2008 presidential primary, would fare better than a generic prototype respondents may have called to mind.

¹⁷ Certainly, these decisions are not limited to negative messages. The same decisions must be made when constructing positive messages.

Because of the gendered expectations attached to perceived issue competency, it is plausible that these decisions will systematically vary between men and women. Kahn (1996) finds statistically significant differences between men and women running for the U.S. Senate in the proportion of candidate advertisements that mention certain issues. A higher proportion of men's commercials discuss foreign affairs and economic issues, while a higher proportion of women's commercials discuss social issues and social programs (36). Dabelko and Herrnson (1997) find similar differences for some subgroups in interviews of candidates for the U.S. House and their consultants. Larson (2001) finds the same tendency for female candidates to emphasize women's issues amongst state legislature candidates in Pennsylvania. (See also Iyengar et al., 1997 and Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994 for additional congruent findings.)

However, the question of gender-based differences in issue agendas is not a settled issue. Much has changed about the participation of women in politics since these studies were published – most notably, the fact that more women are running for and winning elected office. More recently, Dolan (2005) finds that there are not significant gender differences in the issues candidates choose to mention on their campaign websites. This different finding *could* reflect the relatively low cost of including large amounts of information on a web-site, as opposed to paid television spots or printed material. But it may also indicate that gender stereotypes about candidates have become less rigid, and that candidates may perceive advantages in demonstrating their competence on counter-stereotypic issues.

While these existing studies reveal some systematic differences between the messages men and women are choosing, they do not tell us how men's and women's strategies differ from one another when they construct *negative messages*. All of these studies examine positive *and* negative messages sponsored by candidates. However, the fact that negative advertising asks viewers to evaluate not just the sponsoring candidate, but also the sponsoring candidate's opponent (or possibly *only* the sponsoring candidate's opponent) intuitively adds a different dynamic to the issue-focus decision. While the typical dilemma associated with establishing a campaign issue agenda is whether to highlight one's strengths or work to counter one's weaknesses, the dilemma associated with establishing a campaign issue agenda for *negative messages* is whether to prime the opponent's established weaknesses or to turn the opponent's strengths into weaknesses.

The second consideration missing in existing work about the effects of gender on issue agendas is that of the gender context of the race; in other words, the sex of the opponent. Evidence from political consultants, as well as analyses on the *volume* of negative advertising will show that it is vital to account for the interplay of the candidate's *and* opponent's gender when considering the role of gender stereotypes. Because of expectations about how men and women should interact, men running against men will be constrained differently in their tactics than men running against women. Similarly, women running against men will face different considerations than women running against women. In mixed-gender races, for example, the contrast in candidates may mean that gender is a particularly salient heuristic. As of now, we know even less about how the opponent's gender influences negative messaging agendas than about how

the candidate's gender affects them (although see Sapiro and Walsh 2002 for a first-cut examination of this dynamic).

Thus, my investigation here into gender and negative advertising examines both the gender differences in the *frequency* of negative advertising (Chapter Three) and the content of those negative messages that *are* launched (Chapter Four), in order to understand how male and female candidates interact with, attempt to leverage, and attempt to avoid voter gender expectations to their greatest advantage.

Negative Messages

Before diving into an analysis of gender dynamics, it is important to situate the study not just with what we know about gender expectations of traits and issues and leadership expectations, but also what we know about negative advertising. I briefly focus on what scholars have found about *what* negative messages are, *whether* negative messages work, and *when* candidates resort to negative messages?

Negative Messages – Do They Work? or What Are They Anyway?

The most obvious question to ask about negative messages – and the most salient question for political practitioners – is whether negative messages are effective campaign tools. Although the sheer volume of negative advertisements during recent campaigns suggests that political practitioners believe they are effective, the situation is murkier amongst academics. It appears that a large contributing factor to the confusion centers around what it would mean for negative messages to “work” – does it mean higher voter turnout rates? Demobilization of the opponent's likely supporters? Higher rates of

winning for the candidate who uses them? Higher recall of the ads by voters? Increased voter engagement?

If we step back even further, there is also confusion surrounding what researchers mean by “negative advertising.”¹⁸ Is it a narrow definition that includes only attacks on the opposing candidate’s character? Or might it also include messages that attack the opponent’s policy record? Is the message only considered negative if the entire message focuses on the shortcomings of the opponent? Or should we also consider as negative those that point out the shortcomings of the opponent in conjunction with highlighting the sponsoring candidate’s finer qualities – what are referred to as “contrast” messages? Unfortunately, there are so many moving parts involved in a negative commercial; without accounting for each of them, it is difficult to meaningfully compare one study with another. I turn now to a brief discussion of the negative advertising literature in order to address these many variables – and the many operationalizations of these variables – in order to distill what we *do* and *do not* know about negative advertising.

Voters’ Responses to Negative Advertising

A significant majority of negative advertising research has focused on the effects of negative advertising on the electorate. This is a naturally dominant question, as many who ask it do so quite instrumentally – in other words, political practitioners ask it because they want to know if it will help their candidates win or not. Unfortunately for

¹⁸ Here, I will transition from using the term “negative messages” to using the term “negative advertising.” In a larger sense, I am interested in how gender context affects the use of negative messages, be they contained in paid television spots, debate appearances, or web-sites, for example. In reality, most negative message research – whether out of convenience or reflective of where most of these negative messages are disseminated – focus on paid negative advertising (although see Lau and Pomper 2001). In this study, consultants were asked about negative messages more broadly, so Chapter 2 will address negative messages, while Chapters 3 and 4 analyzes negative advertisements.

practitioners, political science does not have much of a unified answer. As I mentioned, part of this confusion has to do with disagreement about how to measure effects – is it mobilization, win-rates, voter knowledge? Scholars have measured negative ads' effects on voter mobilization (e.g., Ansolabahere and Iyengar 1995; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Stevens, Sullivan, Allen, and Alger 2007); their influence on voters' abilities to recall campaign messages (e.g., Lau, et. al 1999; Basil, Schooler, and Reeves 1991; Kaid Chanslor, and Hovind 1992; Kaid, Leland, and Whitney 1992; King, Hendersen, and Chen 1998; Thorson, Christ, and Caywood 1991); knowledge about the candidates (e.g., Geer 2006; Kahn and Kenney 1999a; Thorson, Ognianova, Coyle, and Denton 1996; Babbit and Lau 1994); affect towards the sponsors and targets of negative ads (e.g., King, Hendersen, and Chen 1998; Hitchon and Chang 1997; Kahn and Geer 1994; Bullock 1994); and trust in government (e.g., Thorson, et. al.1996; Martinez and Delegal 1990). Even when scholars measure the same effects, however, findings are mixed and often at odds with one another.

More sophisticated work has attempted to take account of voters' individual differences that may influence their reception and motivation to process or be persuaded by negative messages. For instance, the partisanship of the message recipient may moderate mobilization effects as well as perceptions of whether or not the criticism is fair (Finkel and Geer 1998; Stevens, et. al. 2007). At the same time, while these individual difference effects are illuminating, one then wonders if, in the aggregate, such differences will cancel one another out. Indeed, perhaps this is why Lau, et. al. (1999) find an overall null effect of negative advertising in their meta-analytic study.

This litany of findings largely serves to demonstrate the confusion that reigns in the negative advertising literature. As I have highlighted, some of this confusion is largely due to the myriad of measurements being employed, but can also be attributed to some specific methodological difficulties. Those trying to unearth negative advertising's effects on voters have used a mix of experimental designs and large *n* data collection from actual campaigns. While charges of diminished external validity are not new with experiments, they may be particularly strong in this instance, where laboratory negativity experiments are removed from the many and conflicting cues and interactions of a real campaign. For instance, it is realistically impossible for an experiment to replicate the fact that voters will often see *numerous* ads – negative *and* positive – in a real campaign, at different rates from individual to individual. On the other hand, those studies that attempt to gather negativity data from real campaigns and relate it to public opinion or voter behavior suffer from the same aspects of campaigns – *so much* is at play in any given campaign that it is difficult to isolate the effects of negative advertising.¹⁹ Certainly, this is not meant to unduly criticize the use of these methods but to point out the added difficulty of using them in situations as dynamic as campaigns.

Negative Messages from the Elite View

In some senses, the preceding discussion – whether and how voters are affected by negative advertising – is a bit beside the point. Even if scholars agreed that negative messages had *no* effect on election outcomes, the sheer fact of their existence – and significant volume – means that questions surrounding elites' strategies of when and how

¹⁹ Stevens, et. al.'s (2007) methodology perhaps offers the most promise, where they expose participants to advertisements in a laboratory setting that are taken from a campaign all the participants have (presumably) experienced in real-time.

to use them are relevant. Studies focusing on these types of questions have largely analyzed purchased television spots to reveal patterns as to what type of candidates or what type of race leads to more or less negative advertising. These studies have established some reliable predictors of campaign negativity.

The most prominent of these predictors is the status of the candidate (e.g., incumbent versus challenger), the status of the race (e.g., whether it is an open seat), and the competitiveness of the race. The general consensus has been that challengers are more negative than incumbents, controlling for the amount of campaign spending and regardless of the measure used for campaign negativity (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau and Pomper 2001). This empirical finding is intuitive. On the one hand, incumbents have a public record that can be attacked, whereas challengers, depending on their current occupations, may not. In addition, the burden of proof is on the challenger, who needs to give voters a reason to replace the incumbent. The incumbent, on the other hand, has less of an incentive to attack a challenger. Most incumbents enjoy a significant name-recognition advantage over their opponents, one they are unlikely to endanger by providing publicity – albeit negative – to the otherwise unknown opponent.

Along these same lines of reasoning, open races – races in which there is no incumbent – should be more negative, as neither candidate necessarily enjoys the same overwhelming name recognition advantage that incumbents might. Studies bear this expectation out, showing that open races are, on average, more negative than those in which there is an incumbent (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau and Pomper 2001). Finally, past studies have consistently found that competitive races are more negative than non-

competitive races (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Sapiro and Walsh 2002; although, see Lau and Pomper 2001 for results that suggest competitive races are not statistically significantly different from non-competitive races).

Certainly, these are important findings for understanding the dynamics of negative advertising. What is striking, though, is that the only consistently influential variables affecting the prevalence of negative advertising are largely transient – the very same candidate might be an incumbent, challenger, or taking part in an open race, just as the same candidate might face a competitive race in one cycle and a non-competitive race in the next. What of ascriptive characteristics of the candidate – such as candidate gender – that very well might systematically influence these decisions?

There have been a few previous attempts to uncover the effects of gender on negative messaging strategies, although the conclusions have been contradictory. Lau and Pomper (2001) do not find an effect of candidate gender on levels of negativity, although others have found that women are more negative than men (Bystrom and Kaid 2002; Kahn 1993, 1996) *and* that men are more negative than women (Kahn and Kenney 2000). Some of these differences could have to do with how the dependent variable was measured. Lau and Pomper (2001) measure percentages of negative comments attributed to the candidates newspaper articles about Senate races, while Kahn (1996) and Bystrom and Kaid (2002) analyze paid television spots.²⁰ Similarly, since these studies look at different election cycles, the studies may be picking up the fact that candidate gender is more salient in negativity decisions in some issue environments than in others.

²⁰ Although, due to the limitations of the data at the time, Kahn (1996) and Bystrom and Kaid (2002) could only analyze the negativity of unique spots that were made, and could not account for how *often* a given spot was aired.

Most previous studies are limited because they only take account of candidate gender and do not simultaneously incorporate the gender of the candidate's opponent – in other words, the gender context of the race.²¹ Perhaps such oversights were warranted when these studies were undertaken: the datasets available undoubtedly yielded too few female candidates to examine races that did not only include two men. At the same time, these studies do not parse out the potential interacting effect of party with candidate gender. Again, perhaps this was warranted at the time, as the overwhelming majority of female candidates and elected officials were Democrats.

Party Stereotypes and Negativity

There is significant reason to believe that the parties make *different* gendered calculations about negativity strategies. As you will recall, I argue that gendered differences in negative messaging strategies are due to candidates' attempts to react to and anticipate voters' gender expectations to their greatest benefit. As with gender, voters associate certain traits with members of the two major political parties. These party trait attributions resemble the traits voters associate with gender. In particular, voters expect Republicans to be stronger leaders and more moral while Democrats are expected to be more empathetic and compassionate (Hayes 2005). Trait attributions for Republicans are closely related to the traits stereotypically attributed to men, while Democratic traits are similar to the traits associated with women. Partisans, then, are facing the same kind of stereotypes relevant to campaign strategy that men and women are.

²¹ To be fair, some studies have investigated differences in negativity based on the gender of the opponent (e.g., Kahn 1993), but do not account for the gender of the candidate *and* gender of the opponent at the same time.

To complicate matters even further, no candidate faces any of these sets of expectations in a vacuum – a candidate is simultaneously a member of a party and has gender ascribed to him or her. Some candidates – such as Democratic women and Republican men – belong to two groups that share attributed traits. Democratic men and Republican women, however, must navigate between the conflicting expectations – of ideology, traits, and issue competency – of their gender and partisan identities. To better understand these dynamics, recent work has begun to uncover how gender stereotypes affect Democratic and Republican women differently due to conflicting expectations, their different electorates, and voters' responses to these candidates.

Turning first to conflicting party and gender expectations, it is not clear whether candidates will be advantaged or disadvantaged in this situation. For instance, it is reasonable to conclude that Republican women may gain an advantage with their conflicting identities if voters were to attribute the positive aspects of both sets of expectations to them – for instance, that a Republican woman would be a strong, yet compassionate leader who understands military *and* healthcare issues. Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2008), however, find that this is not the case. Respondents to the 2006 American National Election Studies survey ranked Republican women as less competent than Democratic women on stereotypical “women’s” issues and ranked Republican women as less competent than Republican men on stereotypically Republican issues (5). It seems that instead of being perceived as more competent on a wide range of issues, Republican women are seen as *less* competent on a wide range of issues.

Concurrently, Republican women do not enjoy the same support from their base of voters as Democratic women do from theirs. Republicans report a lower likelihood of supporting a Republican female versus a Republican male candidate (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008), while Democrats (particularly Democratic women) display a high affinity for female Democratic candidates (Dolan 2008). Republican women *do* enjoy a relative advantage over Republican men with Democratic and independent voters, who report a higher likelihood to vote for the Republican woman (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008).

This line of research is relevant to the questions of negativity at hand in that it demonstrates that Republican women face more barriers and are more constrained in their campaign strategy than Democratic women (and, perhaps, of men of both parties as well). Republican women face a steep challenge in shoring up their base, an obstacle that may give them incentives to emphasize their Republican characteristics (or issue stances) over feminine expectations (or issues stances). Such a situation may give Republican women reason to be more negative than Democratic women. Chapter 3 draws this theoretical discussion out further, adding considerations of the gender of the opponent, particularly for female candidates vying for women voters, who are typically believed to be more adverse to negative advertising than men (e.g., Broton).

As it relates specifically to negative advertising, recent work has touched on the moderating effects of gender context and party on negativity strategies. Most notably, Sapiro and Walsh (2002) incorporated the idea of gender context and the interactive effects of party in their analysis of the 2000 campaign season. Examining televised commercials from this cycle, as well as taking the important step of interacting gender

with party, they find that Democratic women are particularly likely to include negative advertising. Additionally, Democratic men avoid personal issues more when they face a female opponent. Finally, Republican men appear more willing to attack female opponents, and do so in a harsher way. These findings certainly hint at some interesting gender dynamics; however, the limited extent of the dataset does not allow for generalizations over several election cycles and, due to the small number of women running, does not allow sufficient statistical power to delve deeply into these relationships.

Stepping back for a moment, it is important to reflect on the questions that these particular methodologies have allowed us to examine. The experimental manipulations and large *n* behavior studies have allowed scholars to analyze the effects of negative messages on voters. Analysis of campaign messages have shown what candidates are actually *doing* with their negative campaign strategies. Although many questions remain unanswered in regard to these points, we know even less about the source of these gender differences in strategies. Assuming there are systematic differences in the use of negative advertising based on the gender context of the race, neither of these approaches reveal *why* candidates and their advisers made these decisions, nor whether these gendered differences were *conscious* decisions or, perhaps, more automatic responses to a gendered situation. In other words, are candidates' (and their advisers') gendered negative advertising strategies sophisticated responses to perceived voter gender expectations or naïve implementations of gender expectations they themselves hold? To investigate these types of questions, in Chapter Two I go directly to the source – the

campaigns' consultants – with surveys and in-depth interviews to assess these motivations.

Dissertation Outline

In sum, then, this dissertation analyzes whether these are systematic differences in negativity as moderated by the gender context of the race and candidate party. More specifically, the purposes are threefold: to uncover consultants' beliefs about the electorate's gender expectations and how they incorporate these – consciously and subconsciously – into campaign strategies; to examine empirically how candidate gender and party moderate one another to affect the level of campaign negativity; and how candidate gender and party moderate one another to affect the issue agendas of candidates' negative messages. More generally, I ask: How do candidates' assessments of voters' gender expectations change negative messaging strategies? Are these assessments sophisticated or naïve? How do candidates balance countervailing gender expectations? And how do candidates use different gendered issue competency expectations to their advantage in these negative ads? In order to address these points, the dissertation proceeds as follows:

In the next chapter (Chapter Two), I report on in-depth interviews and responses to a wide-ranging survey completed by campaign consultants. These consultants report that there definitely *are* gender considerations that go into their negative messaging strategies – both in regard to the gender of their clients *and* the gender of their clients' opponents. Most consultants report that these differences are largely in the way that the negative message is delivered, rather than differences in the volume of negativity.

Additionally, these interviews and surveys reveal that consultants perceive of systematic gender expectations within the electorate – expectations that largely match the findings of existing gender research.

In Chapter Three, I test the consultants’ assertions that gender differences will not manifest themselves in variation of the sheer volume of negativity. By analyzing candidate-sponsored congressional campaign advertisements, I find that candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and party affiliation *do* come together to affect candidates’ levels of negativity. The results fill a gap in political science research, which lacks a comprehensive and current understanding of the effects of candidate gender on negative messaging strategies. Moreover, these systematic differences, where consultants generally insisted there would be none, suggest that gender plays a subconscious role in negativity strategies, in addition to the conscious ones described by the consultants.

I turn my focus from differences in levels of negativity to the differences in the types of issues invoked in negative messages in Chapter Four. Here I analyze the same advertisements used in Chapter Three, but this time account for the issues candidates use to attack their opponents. Once again, I find a complex but real effect of candidate gender, opponent gender, and party. These factors come together to influence candidates’ attack issue agendas.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I discuss the implications of these findings for larger questions of representation in American politics. In addition, I lay out a proposal for an experiment to test the findings of Chapter Four – in particular, since Republican women are the most constrained candidates when it comes to the use of negative messages, how

might a different issue focus in their messages attract (or repel) additional supporters? In

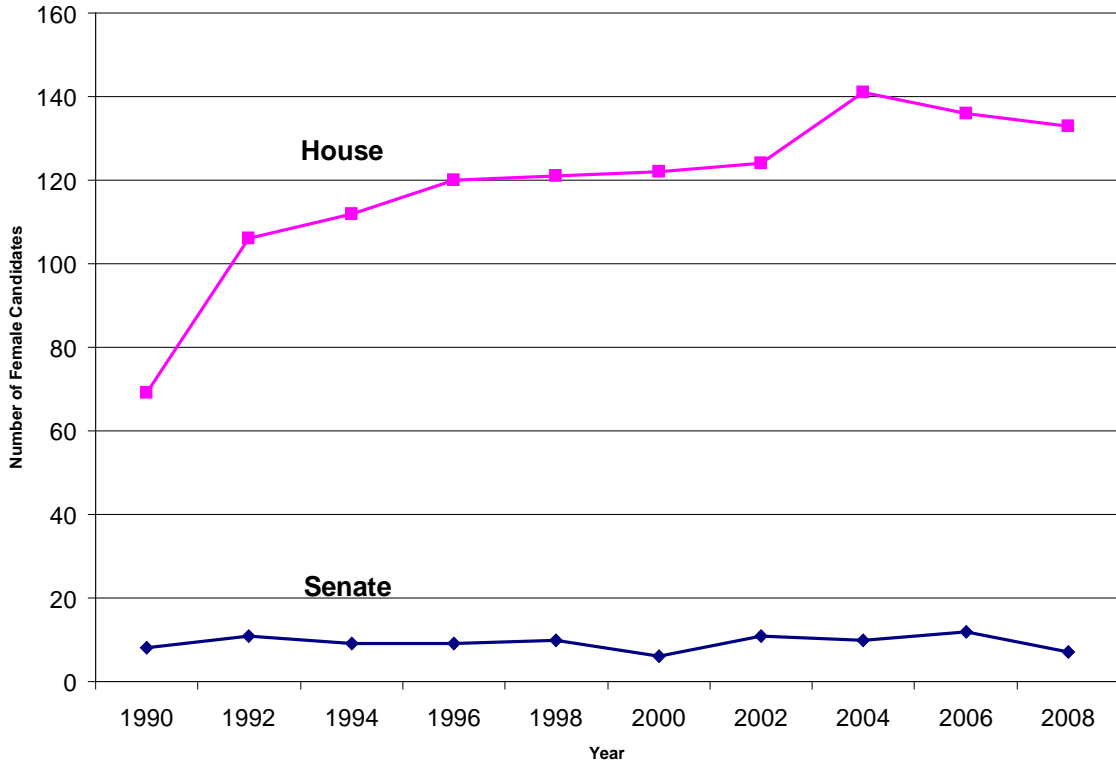
other words, this experiment will examine the final step in this dynamic interaction

between voters and candidates by investigating the effects of candidates' choices about

negativity strategies on voters' assessments of candidates.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Number of Women Running for Congress, 1990-2008



Chapter 2

Voices from the Field Political Consultants' Views of Gender and Negative Messaging

“Politics has no gender – simply a seeking of balance between anarchy and tyranny as the Framers of the Constitution had envisioned.” – Republican consultant survey respondent

“Everything is different even if we say it isn’t.” -- Kitty Kurth, Democratic consultant

“[You] beat [your opponents’] brains out in a gender-neutral manner.” -- Scott Cottingham, Republican strategist

Does gender play a role in candidates’ negative messaging strategies? As Chapter One lays out, there are theoretical reasons to believe that voters’ gender stereotypes provide incentives for male and female candidates to have different levels of negativity. These same theories also suggest that candidates will adjust their levels of negativity based on whether their opponents are men or women. What these theories do not provide, however, is a clear *directional* theory – if there is a difference in levels of negativity, will men be more or less negative than women? Similarly, will candidates be more or less negative towards female opponents as opposed to male opponents?

An important link in analyzing this relationship between voters’ gender stereotypes and candidates’ messaging strategies is understanding consultants’ beliefs about voters’ gender stereotypes. Consultants are key actors in building a campaign strategy – those candidates who are well-funded enough to hire consultants turn to them as campaign professionals. While candidates may be relatively new to the political arena, a seasoned consultant will have experienced *many* campaigns, often associated with many different types of offices, involving candidates with many different personalities

and personal electoral strengths and weaknesses, and often across different localities and electorates. Even the experienced candidate – and, perhaps, especially the experienced candidate – relies on the advice of political consultants, as they can be expected to grasp a professional, sometimes scientific, sometimes intuitive, understanding of complex issues like framing, messaging, and mobilization.

Consultants, then, are a key source of advice for candidates as they construct their campaign messages. Assuming that candidates accept at least *most* of their consultants' messaging advice, then it is important to uncover consultants' understanding of voters' gender expectations and how this affects negative messaging. After all, consultants will translate their experiences and implicit gender biases into campaign advice to their candidates. The outcomes of these communications, which I will analyze in Chapters Three and Four, should reflect consultants' beliefs about the electorate. In fact, this link determines to a large degree how closely campaigns will hew to voters' stereotypes. If consultants correctly understand and translate these stereotypes into campaign strategies, then candidates will be leveraging these stereotypes most effectively. If, however, the consultants either fundamentally misunderstand voters' gender expectations – or understand the expectations but then do not strategize correctly about them – then candidates will run sub-optimal campaigns.

My interviews with consultants will also help to provide some context by which the theory and empirical findings of political science can be interpreted. Do consultants think gender matters at all? Do they think that it works in the same way that political scientists think that it works? Do consultants' perceptions on these issues vary based on

which party they advise? In this chapter, I address these questions, using data obtained from a large-scale consultant survey and more in-depth interviews with political consultants. While there is some widespread agreement amongst these consultants about the role of gender in negative messaging strategies, as the opening quotations illustrate, there are some notable points of disagreement, some of which turn out to be just as instructive as the points of general consensus.

In this chapter, I broadly address whether campaign consultants believe that gender matters in negative messaging strategies. More specifically, I first establish that consultants perceive of gender stereotypes – both trait- and issue-based. I then examine *how* gender influences negative messaging strategies – do campaign consultants report that gender affects the level of negativity in campaigns or the *substance* of the negative messages in campaigns? Finally, I explore whether and how differences in the parties' electorates may give the parties' consultants different perspectives on these matters.

I begin by describing the survey and interview instrument. I then review some of the reasons to expect gender differences in negative messaging strategies by gender of the candidate, gender of the opponent, and in regard to the types of issues used. I examine each of these questions with respect to the data collected in the survey and interviews, as well as examine whether party differences emerge in these expectations. I finish by considering the role the candidates' perceptions of voters' gender expectations might play in determining the final campaign strategies.

The data presented in this chapter were collected through in-depth interviews, conducted either over the phone or in person, and a larger-scale web-based survey, distributed via email to professional political consultants. The interview sample was attained using a snowball sample – I initially identified local consultants and approached them for interviews. From there, I asked the consultants and other actors in the political scene to recommend individuals who have experience with consulting, preferably across several types of gender contexts. Using this method, I spoke with ten consultants. The plurality are based in Minnesota, although there is some representation from other Midwestern states (South Dakota, Illinois, and Ohio), as well as consultants who are based out of Colorado and New Jersey. The sample is highly skewed in terms of partisanship – eight out of ten of the participants are affiliated with the Democratic Party, while the remaining two consultants worked for Republican candidates.²²

Interviews with local consultants took place in person while long-distance interviews took place over the phone. For all consultants, the order of questioning generally followed the instruments included in Appendix B.²³ After asking the consultant to give a brief history of his or her time in politics, the interview began with a

²² Despite my best efforts to recruit more Republican consultants, many of my attempts were not successful. This is largely due to the fact that I had prior relationships with, or knew people who did have prior relationships with, many of the Democratic consultants I approached. I did not have this luxury with many Republican consultants and, consequently, was cold contacting them. Thus, I had a *far* lower response rate from those Republicans I contacted. In fact, the one Republican I did interview contacted me after receiving the survey instrument, saying he preferred to speak with me as opposed to completing the survey.

²³ I basically completed two flights of interviews – the first, early on in the project, I viewed more as pilot interviews that would aid me in constructing the survey. These questions were largely the same, although in a somewhat different order and included some questions that I did not pursue beyond the pilot interviews.

broad question about the ways in which campaign messaging varies based on the gender of the candidate and the gender of the opponent. I then moved into specific questions about how negative messaging strategies might vary based on the candidate's gender, addressing both contrast messages – those messages that explicitly compare the record and stance of the candidate and his or her opponent – and attack messages, which I referred to as messages that “focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent” (Appendix B). While this latter wording became awkward at times, I learned early on in my pilot interviews that many consultants are not comfortable discussing the use of “negative” or “attack” messages, as these words have come to have highly undesirable associations attached to them.

The interview questions then moved into how negative messaging strategies might vary based on the gender of the candidate's opponent, as well as if they noticed that women were any more or less hesitant to use contrast and attack messages than men. I finished by asking if there were any systematic differences in the issues that were highlighted in negative messages, depending on the candidate's gender and the gender of the candidate's opponent. Later, I followed-up with an email question regarding consultants' perceptions of how voters receive negative messages, depending on voter gender.

Surveys. The survey was constructed based on some of the preliminary interviews, as well as the questions that I explore in Chapters Three and Four. (See Appendix C for the full survey.) Questions in the survey focus on differences in how frequently and in what proportion consultants advise using contrast and attack messages based on the gender of

the candidate and gender of the opponent. I also ask whether the way the consultants strategize about gender has changed over time; whether men or women are more or less hesitant to use negative messages; and whether or not candidates are more or less hesitant to use negative messages against men versus women. I then ask consultants to rate several traits and issue areas as to whether they think voters expect men or women to be more likely to possess the trait or to be more competent on the issue area. I also collected a host of relevant contextual data, including how many women they had worked for, how many candidates they worked for who ran against women, what areas of the country they work in, how long they have worked as a professional consultant, what type of consulting they do, and demographic questions about the consultants themselves. Finally, I asked several open-ended questions throughout the survey, so the consultants could expand upon their reasoning or thoughts. These open-ended fields turned out to be quite informative – many of the answers provided here lead me to believe that the consultants who took the survey took it seriously.

Survey Sample. How were consultants identified to participate in the survey? Locating and identifying political consultants is not entirely straight-forward. Some political consultants *only* consult political campaigns, while others do so as part of a larger business of public relations consulting. Add to this the fact that many consultants are hired because of past collaborations or word-of-mouth, and the apparent proclivity for political consultants to move amongst different political positions (e.g., consultant to campaign manager to party staff), and it is a relatively difficult profession to pin down. However, I did identify two relatively centralized databases of potential participants.

First, I consulted *The Political Pages*, a directory available for subscribers of Campaign and Elections' *Politics* magazine. The directory was developed to serve as a resource for candidates and those running their campaigns. Political consultants and relevant companies pay to be included in this directory. I used this directory to identify the names of consulting firms (and sometimes individual consultants). Email addresses were extracted directly from the guide when possible; if not, I undertook an internet search to identify individuals associated with the consulting company and their email addresses. If all else failed, I simply included the general information email address.

To supplement this list, I turned to the American Association of Political Consultants, which maintains an online database of its members (AAPC). From this database, I was able to extract a list of individual consultants. Using the information from the database, an internet search was undertaken to obtain email addresses. Many of the consultants' web-sites no longer have email addresses available but, for those that did, I added these to my list of those to contact.²⁴ Finally, implementing a snowball sampling method similar to that employed for my interviews, I added consultants recommended by my interviewees, other contacts with political actors, and those who completed the survey.

Between the guide, the AAPC web-site, and recommendations, I compiled a list of 559 consultants.²⁵ These consultants received an emailed invitation to participate in an

²⁴ Many web developers – perhaps in an effort to avoid receiving unsolicited invitations via email to fill out random surveys -- have provided webmail forms to contact the consultants instead of providing email addresses, a practice the AAPC also uses for their membership directory. The distribution of my survey was reliant upon actual email addresses, however, so those with webmail forms are not included in the sample. I have no reason to believe that this systematically skewed my sample, however.

²⁵ Initially, this list consisted of well over 600 consultants, but once expired email addresses were removed, the result was 559 consultants.

on-line survey, then received two subsequent email reminders. In total, 101 consultants logged in to take the survey. Some were eliminated immediately, either because they had not consulted since the year 2000 or only consulted on issue (as opposed to candidate) campaigns. Fifty-five consultants completed at least half of the survey (through Question 30, which completes the section asking about gender differences in contrast messages), while 45 consultants completed the final demographic questions. While this represents a rather low rate of acceptance and completion as compared to phone surveys or some other surveys of elites (e.g., Thompson and Phua 2005; McAllister 1991; Rothman and Lichter 1987), the rates are not unexpected considering this was an unsolicited email to a professional group of people. Overall, eighteen percent of those contacted initiated the survey and ten percent completed at least half of it. Eight percent completely finished the survey, which is also notable as it relates to its length (a total of 75 questions).

The vast majority of the respondents have experience working for both male and female candidates, as well as running against men and women. Forty percent of the respondents have worked for more than seven female candidates, while 34 percent have worked for more than seven candidates who were running against women. Fifty one percent of respondents have worked in at least two races for which they were consulting a woman running against another woman. See Figure 1 for this distribution.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Like my interview sample, the sample of those taking the survey was skewed towards Democratic consultants, although Republicans were better-represented here as a proportion of the sample. Of those who answered the question regarding which party's

candidates they consult, 21 (29 percent of the sample) reported consulting a majority of Republicans while 51 (71 percent of the sample) reported consulting a majority of Democrats.²⁶ The sample is also somewhat skewed by sex of the consultant (75 percent male), as well as race (only 1 respondent notes being non-white). The demographic questions do reveal a relatively even distribution of consultants across geographic region, age, and associational situation (e.g., whether members of a firm or not). It is, however, impossible to know how the sample reflects the universe of political consultants, as the universe is utterly unknown. For instance, it is quite reasonable to speculate that the racial make-up of the universe of political consultants does not reflect the racial make-up of the United States population, but it is impossible to know if the racial composition of the universe of political consultants is as skewed as this sample. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of these and other variables.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Results: Candidate Gender

As Chapter One details (and Chapter Three will delve further into), women in politics face a double bind (Jamieson 1995) – in order to be perceived as viable candidates, they must prove that they are competent leaders. However, many of those traits associated with competent leadership run directly counter to the traits typically associated with women. As Eagly and Karau (2002) explain, characteristics associated

²⁶ Far and away, most consultants reported consulting *either* Democrats or Republicans. A few reported consulting candidates of both parties, although it was generally skewed one way or another. I assigned a consultant a party if over fifty percent of their consulting was done for candidates of one party. This threshold was rarely even approached, however. One consultant reported a 60-40 split, although, for the small number of consultants who worked for both parties, the split was usually far more lop-sided (e.g., 90-10).

with successful individuals in male-dominated fields – such as “leadership” and “self-confidence” – are inimical to characteristics typically ascribed to women – characteristics such as being “communal” and having a “willingness to compromise.” The use of negative advertising provides a particularly acute instance where women must carefully navigate between these two competing sets of expectations. On the one hand, using negative messaging may serve as a potent cue to voters that the female candidate is tough enough to thrive in the rough-and-tumble of politics. On the other hand, being *too* tough and straying from expected norms of femininity may backfire, turning voters away from the female candidate. Most of the consultants, both in the survey and in interviews, identified this difficult balancing act. Consultant Darin Broton, a Democratic consultant from Minnesota, summed up the sentiments of many in an interview. For women to be successful in the field of elective politics, they must be “hard-edged” and “cold;” and yet, they must constantly try to avoid the “bitch-factor.” Comments from the survey concurred. Contrast ads – in which the candidate explicitly compares her stances or record with those of the opponent – are particularly vital tools for all candidates, including women, as they serve as a nice balance between the two sets of expectations. “A woman who doesn’t draw a contrast is going to lose,” reports one consultant. “But she must guard against seeming unfair and therefore a bitch.” A second survey respondent echoes these sentiments by noting the double-standard at play: “What’s ‘tough’ for a man, can be ‘shrill’ or ‘bitchy’ coming from a woman.”

The different considerations women face in developing their negative messaging strategies lead to some competing expectations, then, for how women’s strategies might

differ from men's. If female candidates and their consultants perceive that they must make up for voters' assumptions that women are not tough or competent enough to be effective elected leaders, they may want to be *more* negative than their male counterparts. If this is the case, women should be more negative than similarly situated men, as the female candidates must compensate for the baseline expectation that women are weak and less competent to hold public office. *However*, the female consultant and her candidate may also avoid negative messages if they fear such a strategy would signal to voters that the candidate does not possess socially-desirable feminine traits. If hewing to feminine expectations is the overriding concern, female candidates should be *less* negative than similarly-situated men.

One way to adjudicate between these competing expectations is to determine to what extent consultants believe that voters attribute these different traits to men and women. To that end, I asked consultants to rank how much they believed voters attributed various traits to men and women. For each trait, respondents could respond that voters generally expect women to possess this trait more than men; that they generally believe that men and women possess this trait equally; or that voters generally expect men to possess this trait more than women. The traits included in the survey have been established in the literature as either being associated with gender (e.g., compassion, kindness, trustworthiness, having good people skills, and ethical; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993) or associated with good leaders (e.g., competence; being tough, articulate, and ambitious; and being a strong leader; Eagly and Karau 2002). While these studies have determined that individuals attribute these traits to men and women, there is not yet

systematic evidence that *consultants* perceive and, therefore, potentially counsel candidates to respond to, these trait attributions.

The results of the survey questions are reported in Figures 2.A and 2.B. On balance, consultants believe that voters associate stereotypically feminine traits with women more than with men (Figure 2.A). A large majority of consultants report that voters expect women to be more compassionate (79 percent) and kinder (77 percent) than men, traits that are particularly relevant to expectations that women may be less negative than men. For the other three feminine traits, a majority of consultants reported that voters expect men and women to possess the trait equally: 73 percent for trustworthiness, 75 percent for having good people skills, and 58 percent for being ethical. However, in each of these cases, for those who did not choose the middle option, women were given the advantage. For trustworthiness, 27 percent of consultants believe women enjoy the advantage compared to only 2 percent who choose men. Twenty-five percent of consultants give women the advantage on possessing people skills versus zero for men; and 42 percent of consultants believe that voters associate being ethical more with women as opposed to zero for men.

INSERT FIGURES 2.A AND 2.B HERE

There is some evidence from these survey questions that women who are running for office have gained ground on some traits associated with both men and with being considered good leaders (Figure 2.B). A majority of consultants report voters believe that men and women are equally likely to be competent (70 percent), and to be articulate (84 percent). For each of these, though, the second most common choice was that men

enjoyed the advantage: 26 percent of consultants believe that men are at an advantage in terms of competence; and eleven percent for being articulate. And while a slim majority of consultants report that voters expect men and women to be equally strong leaders, a full 45 percent of consultants report that voters expect men to be strong leaders more than women. In terms of strong leadership, then, consultants perceive that women are at a distinct disadvantage with voters. In contrast, consultants did report that voters were more likely to consider men to be tough (68 percent), ambitious (63 percent), and career politicians (61 percent). Interestingly, these results suggest that men have retained the so-called advantage most strongly on those traits that are not necessarily as positively-received. Most female candidates probably would not see it as a disadvantage to not be considered as ambitious or as likely to be a career politician as their male opponents.²⁷

Given the findings listed above, I hypothesize that consultants will report advising women to be generally less negative than men. While expectations appear to persist that women are more compassionate and kinder than men, expectations that women are not fit for office appear to be dissipating (e.g., expectations that women are less competent and less articulate than men). It thus seems that women would have more to lose by violating expectations of their compassion and kindness than in having to mount a campaign to prove they are as tough and competent as men.

²⁷ There is some reason to believe, given Hayes (2005) work on party stereotypes, that there may be partisan differences in the distribution of these beliefs. However, chi-squared tests reveal only one difference that even approaches significance ($p=.12$). Democrats appear slightly more likely to give either men or women an advantage on competence. One hundred percent of Republican respondents believe that voters expect men and women to be equally competent, while 26 percent of Democrats give the advantage to men and 5 percent to women. Of course, these findings *may* have two sources. First, it may be that voters assess men and women in the two parties uniformly; *or* it may be that the consultants *perceive* that voters assess men and women in the two parties uniformly.

An alternative hypothesis is that consultants are *not* advising men and women any differently in their levels of negativity. Perhaps the competing expectations described above cancel one another out – incentives to be *more* negative *and less* negative than men simply wash out, so that women are equally negative. Conversely, it is possible that consultants no longer believe that different gender expectations amongst the electorate – at least in regard to these two competing sets of expectations – are cause for concern. Indeed, several consultants noted a certain amount of progress in how the electorate views female candidates. One consultant in the south, who has been in the profession for over 20 years, notes that in his career, “female candidates...have become much more commonplace and much more willing to act like men in politics: that is, attack, be attacked, etc.” Another notes that “there was a time when a female candidate had to be more ‘genteel.’ It’s now expected that a female candidate be as tough as a male candidate.” Such comments lead one to expect that consultants are not advising men and women to use different levels of negative messages in their campaigns.²⁸

To gauge how these perceptions of voters’ expectations influence negativity strategies, my survey allows for a more systematic analysis of consultants’ attitudes and beliefs about candidate gender and negative messaging strategies. The survey asks the consultants four questions relating to the likelihood of using negative messages and the total proportion of negative messages used. In particular, the questions are:

²⁸ There was one interesting exception to this line of comments, however. One consultant noted that Hillary Clinton’s run for the presidency has actually made it *more* difficult for women to use negative messages. She notes, “When I was an undergraduate, my final research design was on an analysis of Kim Fridkin Kahn’s research on gender. So, initially, you’d advise women to just attack as much as they could, and the gender stereotypes wouldn’t allow a woman to be perceived as aggressive. But now, with the coverage of Clinton as so shrewish, you have to be aware that as you advise a female candidate to be tough and attack, that you have to be sensitive to portrayal as a shrewish, negative Hillary Clinton clone.”

- Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of [contrast messages (Question 19)/messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents (Question 33)] differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was a man or a woman?
- Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised male and female candidates to use different *proportions* of [contrast messages (Question 20)/messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents (Question 34)]?

Respondents were given three response options: that, in general, they advised male candidates to be more negative; that, in general, they advised female candidates to be more negative; and, that, in general, they advised men and women to be equally negative. (Exact wording of the response options is available in Appendix C.) The distribution of the responses is displayed in Table 2. For each question, the overwhelming majority of consultants report making no distinctions in negative messaging strategies based on the gender of their clients. Many, in fact, registered their frustration with this line of questioning – either because “politics has no gender,” as the opening quotation attests, or because thinking about gender differences in negativity in terms of sheer volume is too simplistic. This sentiment was summed up nicely by one consultant who said, “...you are asking the wrong questions. It’s a matter of tone...Men can whack their opponents, but the public still holds women to a different standard. So it’s not whether you do negatives, it’s *how*.”

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Indeed, in both the surveys and the interviews, this was a recurring theme – consultants report that the gender differences in negative messaging strategies will not show up in quantifiable *levels* of negativity, but in *how* the negative message is crafted. This comports with much existing literature, particularly in mass communications, that has documented systematic differences in men’s and women’s campaign commercials.²⁹ Comments were extensive and wide-ranging on this point. Democratic consultant Broton (2009) explains that in television ads in general, a female candidate should always be talking *to* the camera, there should be no voiceovers, and no “fancy images.” Such tactics play to stereotypes that women are more engaging and relational. In regard to negative messages in particular, Bill Amberg, a former communications director for the Minnesota state Democratic Party, said he would advise all candidates, but *especially* women, not to deliver the critiques in contrast ads themselves. Republican consultant Mark Campbell spends more time establishing female candidates as leaders and focusing on their background in an effort to prove they are accomplished enough to hold office. Comments from the survey stressed the point that gender differences in negative messages have more to do with a difference in tone than a difference in volume. “It is not about the proportion of the contrast between male and female candidates, it is about the nuance or how you approach it...[W]hen a women is attacking a man, you have to

²⁹ For examples of some of these differences, see Bystrom and Kaid (2002) and Kahn (1996).

make sure it isn't done in a shrill way." The term "shrill" was used repeatedly as

something female candidates should avoid in their negative messaging.³⁰

Party Differences. In general, then, the consensus from consultants appears to be that we should not observe any differences in the levels of negativity depending on the gender of the candidate. The literature laid out in Chapter One, however, gives reason to suspect that opinions on this topic *may* vary based on which party is involved. Republican women are in a distinctly different position than Democratic women. Democratic women enjoy a wider base of women voters, who support them more strongly than women in the Republican base support Republican women (Sanbonmatsu 2008). Thus, Democratic women may be less likely to lose these female voters to an opponent. However, there is also concern amongst consultants that female voters are more sensitive to negative messages and more easily turned off by them (Broton; Cottington). Democratic consultants, then, may be more reticent to use these messages, since a larger proportion of their potential electorate – when evaluating both male and female candidates – is poised to be disenchanted by them. Indeed, a Democrat's potential electorate may include an even *higher* percentage of women when the Democratic candidate is a female. Democratic consultants may, thus, have different opinions about the influence of candidate gender on their negative messaging strategies.

Chi-square tests by party of the questions presented in Table 2, however, do not support any partisan differences. The tests are all well out of the range of significance, allowing me to confidently reject the idea that there are partisan differences in the reports

³⁰ The repeated and unsolicited use of the word "shrill" was interesting in and of itself, vis a vis Jamieson's (1995) discussion of the ways in which female speech is devalued – often, as she notes, by invoking the adjective "shrill" to describe it.

of candidate gender effects on negative messaging strategies. (The distribution of responses to the four questions analyzed in Table 2, by party and with chi-square tests, are displayed in Table D.1 of Appendix D.)³¹

Opponent Gender

The consensus from consultants, then, is that candidate gender matters, but only in the *style and tone* of negative messages and not in the volume of the negative messages. Gender might play a role in negative messaging strategies beyond candidate gender, of course – the gender of the opponent might influence negative messaging strategies as well. Once again, theory leads to two opposite hypotheses. Male candidates who are running against women may want to adhere to norms of chivalry (Sapiro and Walsh 2002). These norms, rooted in theories of benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996), might make it difficult for men to attack their female opponents as forcefully as they would male opponents. As one Democratic strategist notes, being too negative against a woman might be perceived as the electoral equivalent of hitting a girl. Conversely, the desire to capitalize on voters' expectations that women are weaker leaders than men (Eagly and Karau 2002) and, thus, unfit for office, may provide incentives for men to go *more negative* against their female opponents as compared to their male opponents, in order to point out these stereotypical shortcomings.

As with candidate gender, a third option also presents itself here. There may not be any noticeable difference in negativity aimed at men and women. The lack of a

³¹ I also ran chi-square tests for these questions broken down by the gender of the consultant. In general, women report slightly higher levels of gender consciousness, particularly those with higher levels of education (e.g., Gurin 1985), so it is reasonable to believe that female consultants may perceive gender differences where male consultants do not. These chi-square were all also highly insignificant. Results are displayed in Appendix Tables C.3 and C.4.

reported difference may be due to the previous two considerations balancing one another out or, again, may reflect consultants' beliefs that issues of candidate gender are no longer relevant for electoral politics. In the case of the opponent's gender, the qualitative evidence grants more support to the chivalry hypothesis. One consultant notes that "...as a man running against a woman, you have to watch your tone so as not to appear threatening or condescending." Another concurs: "...a man taking on a woman has to be very skilled or be branded a bully." To gain a broader view of consultants' attitudes towards the effects of opponent gender on negative advertising strategies, I again ask four questions. They are as follows:

- Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of [contrast messages (Question 22)/ messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents (Question 33)] differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was running against a man or a woman?
- Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised candidates to use different *proportions* of [contrast messages (Question 23)/ messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents (Question 34)] depending on whether the candidate you were advising was running against a man or a woman?³²

³² For purposes of simplicity, these questions do not ask the consultants to consider the full gender context of the race, i.e., men running against men versus men running against women; women running against men versus women running against women. The vast majority of candidates are men, so it is reasonable to conclude that, when asked about a generic candidate, most consultants will think of a male candidate. As such, I presume that these questions are actually tapping consultants' attitudes when working for a man running against a man versus a woman.

Respondents were again given three response options: that, in general, they advised their clients to be more negative when running against men; that, in general, they advised their clients to be more negative when running against women; or that, in general, they advised their clients to be equally negative, regardless of the gender of their opponents. (Exact wording of the response options is available in Appendix C.) The distribution of the responses is displayed in Table 3. Once again, the results suggest a consensus amongst consultants that they do not systematically give different advice based on gender. However, the consensus is somewhat less pronounced with these questions than in the questions regarding candidate gender (displayed in Table 2). Certainly, the vast majority of consultants still report no gender differences. However, a higher percentage of consultants report that the gender of the *opponent* matters as compared to the gender of the consultants' clients. For instance, while under 5 percent of consultants reported being more likely to consult men to use contrast messages than women, 8.6 percent of consultants report being more likely to advise the use of contrast messages against men than women. Most striking is the difference in responses for attack messages. While 90 percent of consultants reported no difference in advice about attack messages based on their client's gender, 19 percent reported being more likely to advise the use of attack messages against men as opposed to women (compared to under 7 percent for the comparable category based on client gender). Similarly, while no consultants reported advising women to use a higher proportion of attack ads than men, 12 percent of consultants reported that they advise their candidates to use a higher proportion of attack messages when running against men than running against women.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Thus, in thinking about the opponent's gender, consultants by and large report treating opponents the same. However, there is some evidence to suggest that consultants are slightly more likely to explicitly consider the *opponent's* gender when constructing negativity strategies, as opposed to explicitly considering their *client's* gender. What is more, like the comments regarding candidate gender, many comments relating to this line of questioning stressed an important difference in *style* when running negative messages against men and women. In every interview and in a vast majority of survey comments, the consultants noted that one must "be careful" when running negative messages against female opponents. As one survey respondent describes:

"When you are attacking a female opponent, you just have to be careful to do it in a way that is not going to backfire. You can't use a sledgehammer...It is about 'how' you execute the contrast not whether you are going to do it or in what proportion."

Campbell, the Republican strategist from New Jersey, agrees that men running negative messages against women have to be particularly careful not to appear "mean-spirited." He goes on to say that, when running negative messages against women, he is "far more cautious on the tone of voice," and he will tend to use a woman's voice to deliver the negative message. Another consultant notes a difference in timing that is dependent upon the gender of the opponent. The consultant states that she is "less likely to attack a woman opponent out of the gate because voters are sometimes hesitant to accept full attacks on female candidates."

Another strategist shared a story that illustrates particularly well the care candidates take when going negative against a female opponent. This consultant worked

for a man who was running against a woman in the Democratic primary for a congressional race in a western state. The female candidate had, in his estimation, opened herself up to an attack based on her voting record in the state house. In particular, on the campaign trail, she often touted her support for better protections, such as bullet proof vests, for the troops in Iraq. However, in her time in the state legislature, she had cast a vote to legalize bullets that could pierce the bullet-proof vests of the state's law enforcement officials. Once the consultant identified this vote, he strongly urged his candidate to stress this issue but met with much resistance from his client. The candidate did not want to broach this topic, fearing that it would come off as "mean-spirited" and, ultimately, backfire. As a debate approached, however, the candidate and his consultant practiced how to make this attack, by carefully "sticking to the facts" and not "becoming emotional" about it. The carefully-delivered attack, in the consultant's estimation, was successful – the opponent stormed out of the debate and her poll numbers began to drop.³³ Yet significant time and resources went into convincing the candidate to make the attack and in delivering it effectively.

In sum, the quantitative evidence on this point suggests that the vast majority of consultants are not explicitly invoking gender when deciding *how* negative to make a campaign. However, consultants appear to be more likely to explicitly take the gender of the opponent into account as opposed to the gender of their clients. What is more, the qualitative evidence suggests again that there *are* gender differences in the *way* negative messages are delivered. The care mentioned when constructing negative messages

³³ Interestingly, the consultant noted that the candidate's hesitance was even in *spite* of his rather diminutive stature – he was "not some big, mean-looking guy." Such description undergirds candidates' and consultants' fears that the attacks not make them look like "bullies."

against women, as opposed to men, supports the idea that consultants are operating under the assumption that abiding by norms of chivalry will be more successful with voters than leveraging negative stereotypes about women's competence.³⁴

Party Differences

As with candidate gender, there is reason to believe that party may influence the impact of gender context on negative messaging strategies. As previously noted, women make up a larger proportion of Democrats' voting base than Republicans'. Consultants also report that the conventional wisdom is that women tend to respond more adversely to negative messages than men do. Finally, Sanbonmatsu (2008) demonstrates that female Democratic voters and independent voters report a higher likelihood of voting for a female Republican than a male Republican. It follows, then, that Democrats running against women might constrain their levels of negativity for fear of losing their female voters to the Republican female opponent. Republicans, on the other hand, may see women voters as largely a lost cause, and be less concerned with offending them with negative messages. Such a dynamic seems to give Republicans *less* incentive to adjust their levels of negativity aimed at male versus female opponents.³⁵

As with the questions relating to candidate gender, I run chi-squared tests on the four questions relating to gender of the opponent. Once again, all chi-squared tests are insignificant, suggesting no relationship between these assessments and party

³⁴ Again, assuming that consultants were thinking about working *for* a man running against a man versus a woman when answering these questions.

³⁵ Granted, this assessment of potential party differences largely glosses over the interplay between candidate gender *and* gender of the opponent, what I refer to elsewhere as gender context. Due to the limits of written language, I left this dynamic out of the consultant survey in an effort to keep the questions clear and straight-forward. I will revisit this dynamic extensively in Chapters Three and Four.

identification. I should note, however, that the relationship between party and the question regarding the likelihood of advising a client to use contrast messages against men as opposed to women does *approach* statistical significance ($p=.14$). While both parties overwhelmingly report no gender differences in their negativity strategies, Republicans are somewhat more likely than Democrats to say that they are more likely to advise using contrast messages against male opponents than female opponents (20 percent versus 4.7 percent). This finding actually runs *counter* to the hypothesized party difference and, again, is only *approaching* statistical significance. However, it will be interesting to see if this difference plays out in other analyses. (The full distribution of responses to the four questions analyzed in Table 3, by party and with chi-square tests, are displayed in Table D.2 in of Appendix D.)

Issue Focus

Thus far, the analysis has focused on the differences that might be expected due to the literature about traits associated with men and women and Democrats and Republicans. A second line of literature, which is detailed in Chapter 1, explores the gender differences in *issue competency stereotypes*. Women are generally seen as more competent on “compassion issues” – that is, those issues, such as healthcare, education, and poverty, that are typically associated with women’s caretaker roles (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004). On the other hand, men are typically given higher competency ratings on issues such as foreign affairs, defense, and homeland security (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004; Falk and Kenski 2006). As with the work on trait stereotypes, while this literature

documents the existence of these stereotypes in the electorate, there is very little evidence that the *architects of these campaigns* perceive and respond to the gender stereotypes.

What is more, most of the experimental and survey evidence that verifies the existence of these stereotypes is dated – the most recent studies assessing these were carried out in 2000 (Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004). Women’s representation in several offices, such as senator and representative, has seen an increase since then (CAWP 2009). At the same time, Nancy Pelosi’s rise to Speaker of the House, Hillary Clinton’s campaign to be the Democratic nominee for president, and Sarah Palin’s run for the vice-presidency has brought significantly more attention to women politicians.

In order to answer the question of whether consultants *currently* perceive – and, therefore, presumably strategize about – gendered stereotypes about issue competencies amongst the electorate, I asked consultants to rate, for several issues about which there are clear gender stereotypes, whether voters generally believe that women handle this particular issue better; that men and women handle the issue equally; or that men handle this particular issue better. For those issues typically considered “women’s issue,” consultants were asked to rate health care, education, social security, poverty, and the environment. For those issues typically considered “men’s issues,” consultants were asked to rate national defense/homeland security, the Iraq war, foreign affairs, crime, the economy, and veterans’ affairs (Dolan 2004; see Chapter Four for an in-depth discussion on the categorization of these issues). The order of these issues was randomized to prevent any response order effects. (See Appendix C for exact wording.)

Figures 3.A and 3.B present the results of these questions. In general, these responses reveal two things: first, consultants largely *do* perceive of voters' gender stereotypes regarding issue competency. Second, these stereotypes appear to have changed slightly since the latest work on issue competency stereotypes in the electorate.³⁶ Turning first to "women's issues" (Figure 3.A), a majority of consultants report that voters expect women to be more competent on health issues (53 percent), while a plurality of consultants report that voters expect women to be more competent on education (48 percent). Gender-based issue competency stereotypes appear to have dissipated in relation to social security and poverty. A vast majority of consultants say that voters expect men and women to be equally competent on social security (79 percent)³⁷ and the environment (75 percent), while a plurality report voters expect men and women to be equally competent on poverty issues (43 percent). Notably, however, 36 percent of consultants do report that voters expect women to be more competent than men on poverty issues.

INSERT FIGURE 3.A AND 3.B HERE

A similar pattern emerges with "men's issues" (Figure 3.B). A majority of consultants report that voters expect men to be more competent than women on issues of defense and homeland security (55 percent) and the Iraq war (50 percent). However, consultants report that voters expect men and women to be equally competent on the

³⁶ One other possibility, which I cannot address with these data, is that the electorate's issue competency stereotypes have changed but that consultants have not yet noticed this.

³⁷ This change *may* have something to do with the re-framing of social security in recent years from an issue that deals largely with services delivered to the elderly ("women's issue") to an issue of budgeting and fiscal management ("men's issue") (compare, for example, Rich's (1996) report on Social Security as a "safety net," versus the rhetoric surrounding Social Security in the 2000 presidential campaign, that largely focused on budgetary issues (e.g., Connolly 2000).

economy (58 percent), crime (49 percent), and foreign affairs (47 percent), although men gain an advantage amongst 37 percent of the consultants in foreign affairs. The issue of veterans' affairs is also somewhat less skewed. Forty-two percent of consultants report that voters see men and women as equally competent on the issue, while 44 percent believe that men have the advantage amongst voters.

Documenting consultants' beliefs about voters' gender-related issue competency stereotypes is one thing; determining how consultants and candidates then work this into their negative messaging strategies is another. Minnesota Republican consultant Scott Cottington offers some insight into how these stereotypes may be leveraged. He points to the 2006 Governor's race in Minnesota. Right before the election, the female Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor was caught on camera, failing to grasp a reporter's question about the fuel-additive ethanol, a matter of particular interest to Minnesota farmers. Cottington notes this mistake, although understandable in the context of a long and exhausting race, had to be addressed, since voters already assume that female candidates do not understand agricultural issues as well as men. He notes that while the message itself does not explicitly make the link between the opponent's gender and her apparent lack of knowledge on a particular issue, the issue is primed so that voters can draw these conclusions. These stereotyped conclusions, he notes, is not something he endorses, but notes that, in order to win, taking advantage of them is often necessary.

Party Differences. As Chapter One outlines, recent research has begun to examine how gender and partisan stereotypes may converge to produce different circumstances for Republican and Democratic women. Dolan and Sanbonmatsu (2008) find that

Republican women are assessed as less competent than Democratic women on women's issues *and* less competent than Republican men on Republican/men's issues.

Interestingly, this empirical evidence runs exactly counter to the belief of one Democratic survey respondent, who believes that Republican women's identities may actually serve as an *advantage*: "the best candidate in a partisan election is a Republican woman... Voters believe Republicans and men are competent and that Democrats and women are compassionate. A female R[epublican] candidate gets the benefit of competence and compassion."

There is reason to believe, then, that Republican and Democratic consultants may have different perspectives as to what benefit gender issue competency stereotypes may confer, although judging from the consultants' quotation, it is not entirely clear whether Republican or Democratic women would benefit from these more. Based on the empirical evidence that finds that Republican women gain only moderate benefit on women's issues, Republican consultants may not perceive the same advantage for Republican women on women's issues. Indeed, because Republicans – both men and women – are less likely to support a Republican woman, as opposed to a Republican man, Republican consultants may not consider Republican women as holding an *advantage* on women's issues. Invoking these issues in a campaign would, perhaps, emphasize issues that the base is not overly concerned with *and* would simply prime the candidate's gender over her partisan affiliation. Moreover, if the Republican woman is running against a Democratic woman, the Democratic woman would, in all likelihood, maintain the advantage on women's issues.

This reasoning is, however, based on the assumption that consultants were answering these questions while considering the voters they are most concerned with as opposed to the universe of voters: for a Republican consultant, that would generally mean Republican and swing/independent voters. For a Democratic consultant, that would generally mean Democratic and swing/independent voters. The wording of the question does not allow me to distinguish *who*, exactly, each consultant considered when assessing voters' beliefs. What is more, any differences detected between the parties would also assume that each party's consultants are considering the male and female candidates of *their own* party.³⁸

With this in mind, however, I turn to a party-based analysis of consultants' reports of voters' gender-based issue competency stereotypes. The results are displayed in Tables 4.A and 4.B. The results suggest only a moderate relationship between party and assessments of voters' expectations. On women's issues, there is a relationship between gender and party on the issues of education ($p=.08$). On this issue, Republican consultants overwhelmingly believe that women enjoy the advantage (86 percent), while Democratic consultants are more evenly distributed across the three categories. The results for Republican consultants mirrors the sentiments of Republican consultant Campbell, who notes that Republican women have an "easier time" appearing empathetic and, therefore, are more easily believed on issues like education, health care, and

³⁸ Of course, differences could also emerge even if all consultants are considering the same pool of voters and *not* only thinking of the candidates of their own party. This might happen if the consultants' positions as Democrats or Republicans systematically skewed their perceptions of the overall voting pool. As I have said, the wording of my survey does not allow me to adjudicate amongst these possible explanations; I simply hope to establish whether or not there are partisan differences in perceptions of gender-based issue competency stereotypes.

children's issues. The relationship also approaches statistical significance between party and poverty ($p=.17$). A higher percentage of Democrats believe that men hold an advantage on this issue (26 percent versus 0 percent for Republicans), while the vast majority of Republicans believe there is no gender advantage on this issue (71 percent). The party-based findings for poverty and education are inconsistent with one another; further investigation could examine whether this inconsistency is due to substantively different views about these issues in the electorate or differences in how consultants interpret voters' attitudes about these matters.

INSERT TABLES 4.A AND 4.B HERE

Turning to men's issues, there is a relationship between party and voter assessment on the issue of national defense and homeland security ($p=.1$), as well as suggestive relationships between party and voter assessments on the economy ($p=.12$), foreign affairs ($p=.18$), and crime ($p=.17$). In all of these cases, some Democrats see an advantage for women where absolutely *no* Republicans do. Twenty-nine percent of the Democratic consultants reported that women have the advantage on the economy, 29 percent for women on national defense and homeland security, 20 percent on foreign affairs, and 26 percent on crime. To be sure, a fair proportion of Democrats also give the advantage to men on these issues (from a low of 14 percent on the economy to 47 percent on national defense and homeland security). However, these percentages are striking considering absolutely *no* Republicans give women the advantage on these issues. Although highly insignificant, these patterns – with no Republicans noting women's advantages – carry over into all men's issues.

This difference in distributions may reflect a gender-based version of the issue trespass strategy developed by Sides (2006) and referred to by Democratic consultant Broton. Broton explains that he advises his female candidates to focus on a typically Republican male-dominated issue: “pick it and own it, know it inside and out,” viewing this as a means to win over male voters. He illustrates this tactic with one of his female candidates, who was running for Congress against a male incumbent in 2004. Her contrast messages focused on the economy – a stereotypical men’s issue – but with a frame that emphasized how policies like middle-class tax cuts and balancing the budget would affect families, a decidedly feminine/Democratic spin.³⁹ This same candidate emphasized her father’s service in World War II to imply that she understood matters of veterans and defense, a critical issue in the 2004 cycle. Once again, though, she framed these messages differently, focusing on, for instance, a concrete plan to withdraw troops from Iraq. This anecdote suggests, then, that women may have flexibility to trespass on stereotypically “men’s” issues, as long as they use a feminine frame, a strategy that, due to overlapping party stereotypes, is more available to Democratic women than Republican women.

Candidates: The Final Link

As I have explained, my purpose for including consultants’ perspectives is to establish something of a link between voters’ beliefs and campaign strategies. Studies have established that voters ascribe to gender stereotypes. However, we can only expect these gender stereotypes to play out in campaigns if those who are constructing and

³⁹ Broton’s assessment of the economy as a men’s issue is interesting, considering that, in the aggregate, consultants reported that voters think men and women are equally competent on economic matters.

carrying out campaigns *perceive* and *respond to* voters' gender stereotypes. The survey and interview evidence provided so far generally points to consultants' awareness of gender expectations in the electorate and strategies for leveraging these stereotypes. The consensus points towards not adjusting *levels* of negativity based on the gender of the candidate, but adjusting the tone and content of negative messages. There is more – albeit limited – evidence that consultants may advise going less negative against female opponents although, again, more evidence points to adjusting the tone and content of the commercial to respond to a female (versus a male) opponent.

The final link in this chain of causality, however, is the candidate him or herself. While consultants can make their best recommendations based on their experiences, the candidate ultimately has to approve any campaign strategy. We can assume, then, that candidates are acting on their own beliefs about the gender expectations of the electorate and what strategy will best leverage those stereotypes. To assess this final link in the causation chain, then, I asked consultants whether they have experienced more or less hesitation to use negative messages, based on the gender of their client and the gender of the opponent. Specific wording of the questions is as follows:

- In your general experience, which of the following statements most accurately describes your experience with candidates' willingness to use [contrast messages (Questions 29 and 30)/messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent (Questions 41 and 42)]?

The response options then allowed for the consultant to indicate that women, compared to men, were more, less, or equally hesitant to use negative messages; and to indicate

whether their clients were more, less, or equally hesitant to use negative messages against women versus men. Exact wording of the questions is available in Appendix C. Results are displayed in Figures 4.A and 4.B.

INSERT FIGURES 4.A AND 4.B HERE

Across every question, the majority of consultants do not perceive any difference in hesitancy based on the gender of their client (57 percent for contrast messages, 56 percent for attack messages) or the gender of the opponent (61 percent for contrast and attack messages). However, the second most common category for candidate gender is to note that women are more hesitant to use negative messages than men (38 percent for contrast messages and 37 percent for attack messages). Likewise, the second most common category when asking about the gender of the opponent is that clients are more hesitant to go negative against female opponents than male opponents (35 percent for contrast messages and 37 percent for negative messages). While only suggestive, these results may indicate that female candidates will be less likely to act upon their consultants' advice to go negative, and that clients may be less likely to act upon advice to go negative against a female, versus a male, opponent.

Once again, however, I want to account for the party of those consulted. The different electoral considerations of Democrats and Republicans may lead to the candidates themselves being more or less hesitant. A higher proportion of Democrats' base is female – an even higher proportion of a female Democrats' base is female. And, as established before, the conventional wisdom is that women will not respond as positively to negative messages as men. Therefore, Democratic consultants may report

more hesitance from female clients than Republican consultants and may be more likely to report hesitance to go negative against a female opponent if there is concern about losing female voters to the opponent.

The results from the chi-squared tests comparing assessments of hesitancy and party are displayed in Tables 5.A and 5.B. The relationship between party and client gender is significant when measuring hesitancy to use contrast messages ($p=.06$). Democrats are more likely to report that women are more hesitant to use negative messages than men (44 percent for Democratic consultants versus 15 percent for Republican consultants), while Republicans are more likely to report that *men* are more hesitant to use contrast messages than women (2 percent for Democratic consultants versus 15 percent for Republican consultants). At the same time, fewer Democratic consultants report that men and women are equally hesitant (53 percent) versus Republican consultants (69 percent). A similar pattern appears to emerge when consultants are asked about attack messages, although the difference only approaches statistical significance ($p=.14$, which may be due to the smaller sample size). Again, Democratic consultants are more likely to report that female candidates are more hesitant to use attack messages than men (42 percent, versus 20 percent for Republican consultants), and Republican consultants are more likely to report that male candidates are more hesitant to use attack messages (3 percent, versus 20 percent for Republican consultants). This time, though, the difference between Republican and Democratic consultants on seeing men and women as equally hesitant is somewhat smaller (60 percent for Republican consultants versus 55 percent for Democratic consultants). As

Table 5.B shows, there are no party-based differences in assessing candidate hesitancy when using negative messages against men versus women.

INSERT TABLES 5.A AND 5.B HERE

In sum, these results suggest that female Democrats may be somewhat more hesitant than female Republicans to implement the advice of their consultants to use negative messaging. Democratic consultant Broton, in an interview, backed up this assessment. In comparing a man and a woman who he worked for, he noted the woman was much less enthusiastic about using negative messages. Whereas the male candidate was “cold” and “calculated” about the decision, the female candidate “hated the idea” – she ran one contrast spot but could not “stomach” any more. Comments from Republican consultant Campbell offer insight into Republican women as well – perhaps women’s hesitance comes through less in the ultimate *decision* to go negative but in the amount of work it takes to produce a negative message that they are comfortable with. Campbell notes that once he “thought about it, yes,” women are more hesitant in that it takes longer to put together the message and things must be re-written more often. What is more, women will often be concerned that negative media messages not be aired at a time when children are likely to be watching, a concern he has never heard from male candidates. It is interesting, however, that the interview evidence from Republican consultants does not corroborate the chi-square findings that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to report that male candidates are more hesitant to use negative messages than female candidates.

What, then, have the surveys and interviews with political consultants revealed about the way that gender factors into negativity strategies? I find evidence that consultants do, in fact, consider gender. Although they by-and-large do not report adjusting the likelihood of going negative or the *volume* of negativity based on gender – either of the candidate or the opponent – they do note the importance of gender as it relates to the style and substance of negative messages. What is more, consultants are somewhat more likely to report adjusting the volume of their negativity strategies based on the opponent’s gender – they are more likely to report advising less negativity against female opponents than male opponents.

As for gender stereotypes about issue competencies, consultants continue to perceive gender stereotypes among voters – women continue to be perceived as generally more competent on “women’s issues,” and vice versa for men, although certain issues have drifted towards parity. From these data, however, it is impossible to say whether voters’ attitudes on these matters have changed or if consultants merely perceive these egalitarian attitudes.

I now move to quantitatively testing whether one aspect of gender differences in negativity strategies – that is, differences in the proportions of negative messages used based on candidate gender and the gender of the opponent – are present in broadcast television commercials aired by congressional candidates. While the surveys and interviews presented here suggest that these differences should *not* emerge, stereotypes sometimes manifest themselves in implicit ways. In other words, consultants have told

us that gender matters, just not in the *volume* of contrast messages that they use. Maybe

so – but Chapter Three moves to test whether gender might *also* matter in terms of the

volume of negativity, a finding that would suggest gender is also at work in negative

messaging strategies in a subconscious way.

Table 1 – Distribution of the Sample

	Category	Percentage of Sample
Party (n=72)	Democrat	71
	Republican	29
Gender (n=44)	Male	75
	Female	25
Region (n=45)	Northeast	27
	Midwest	24
	West	27
	South	22
Race (n=45)	White	98
	Non-White (Black)	2
Age (n=45)	18-24	2
	25-34	24
	35-50	31
	51-65	40
	Over 65	2
Education (n=45)	Bachelor's Degree	67
	Master's or other advanced degree	33
Association Status (n=45)	Not affiliated with other consultants	20
	Small firm (1-2 others)	18
	Mid-sized firm (3-5 others)	38
	Large firm (more than 5 others)	24

Any group of cells that does not add to 100 is simply due to rounding.

Table 2 – Distribution of Consultants' Responses to Advice about Negative Messages Based on Candidate Gender

	Use of contrast messages	Proportions of contrast messages	Use of attack messages	Proportions of attack messages
Men more negative than women	5% (3)	7% (4)	7% (3)	0 (0)
Women more negative than men	2% (1)	2% (1)	2% (1)	2% (1)
Women and men equally negative	93% (57)	91% (53)	91% (40)	98% (42)
n	61	58	44	43

*The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table 3 – Distribution of Consultants’ Responses to Advice about Negative Messages Based on Opponent Gender

	Use of contrast messages	Proportions of contrast messages	Use of attack messages	Proportions of attacks messages
More negative against men than women	9% (5)	7% (4)	19% (8)	12% (5)
More negative against women than men	3% (2)	2% (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Equally negative against men and women	88% (51)	91% (52)	81% (34)	88% (36)
n	58	57	42	41

*The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table 4.a – Distribution of Consultants on Gender-Related Issue Competency Stereotypes, Women’s Issues

	Health			Education			Social Security			Poverty			Environment		
	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*
Women’s Advantage	49% (17)	75% (6)		40% (14)	86% (6)		14% (5)	0 (0)		37% (13)	29% (2)		20% (7)	13% (1)	
Equal	31% (11)	2% (25)		31% (11)	14% (1)		74% (26)	100% (8)		37% (13)	71% (5)		71% (25)	88% (7)	
Men’s Advantage	20% (7)	0 (0)		29% (10)	0 (0)		11% (4)	0 (0)		26% (9)	0 (0)		9% (3)	0 (0)	
n	35	8	.28	35	7	.08	35	8	.17	35	7	.17	35	8	.57

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table 4.b – Distribution of Consultants on Gender-Related Issue Competency Stereotypes, Men’s Issues

	Economy			Nat’l Defense			Iraq War			Vets’ Affairs			Foreign Affairs			Crime		
	Dem	Rep	Pr*	Dem	Rep	Pr*	Dem	Rep	Pr*	Dem	Rep	Pr*	Dem	Rep	Pr*	Dem	Rep	Pr*
Women’s Advantage	29% (10)	0 (0)		29% (10)	0 (0)		15% (5)	0 (0)		17% (6)	0 (0)		20% (7)	0 (0)		26% (9)	0 (0)	
Equal	57% (20)	63% (5)		24% (8)	13% (1)		38% (13)	38% (3)		40% (14)	50% (4)		49% (17)	38% (3)		73% (15)	75% (6)	
Men’s Advantage	14% (5)	38% (3)		47% (16)	88% (7)		47% (16)	63% (5)		43% (15)	50% (4)		31% (11)	63% (5)		31% (11)	25% (2)	
n	35	8	.12	34	8	.10	34	8	.48	35	8	.45	35	8	.18	35	8	.17

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table 5.a – Distribution of Consultants’ Assessments of Hesitancy to Attack by Candidate Gender and Party

	Contrast Messages			Attack Messages		
	Dems	Reps	Pr	Dems	Reps	Pr
Men more hesitant than women	2% (1)	15% (2)		3% (1)	20% (2)	
Men=Women	54% (23)	69% (9)		55% (17)	60% (6)	
Women more hesitant than men	44% (19)	15% (2)		42% (13)	20% (2)	
n	43	13	.06	31	10	.14

Table 5.b – Distribution of Consultants’ Assessments of Hesitancy to Attack by Opponent Gender and Party

	Contrast Messages			Attack Messages		
	Dems	Reps	Pr	Dems	Reps	Pr
More hesitant against men	2% (1)	8% (1)		4% (1)	0 (0)	
Men=Women	61% (25)	62% (8)		57% (16)	70% (7)	
More hesitant against women	37% (15)	31% (4)		39% (11)	30% (3)	
n	41	13	.66	28	10	.69

Figure 1 – Distribution of Sample

Distribution based on how many women consultants have worked for, against, and worked for a woman against another woman (n=72)

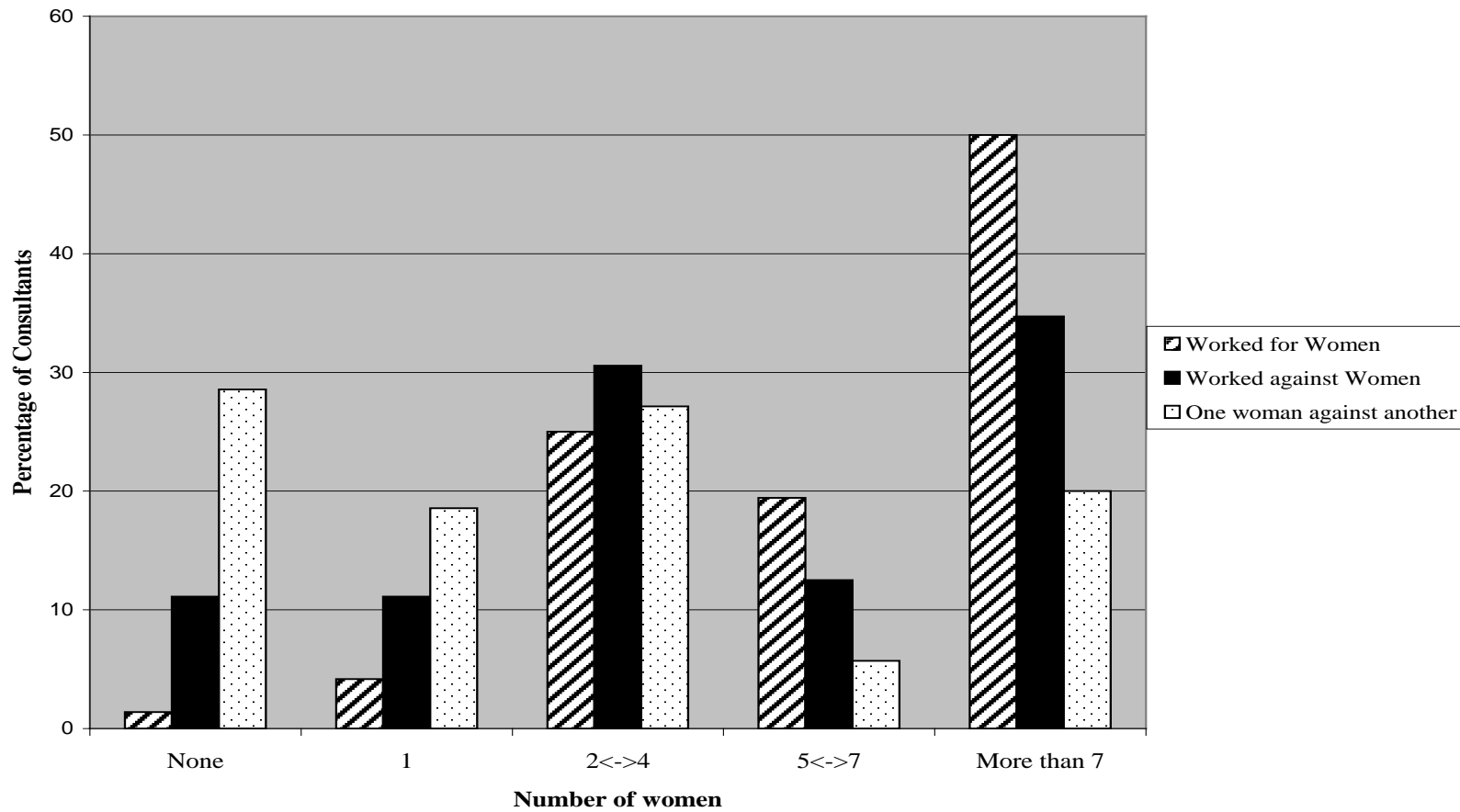


Figure 2.a – Consultants’ Assessment of Voters’ Expectations – Stereotypical Women’s Traits

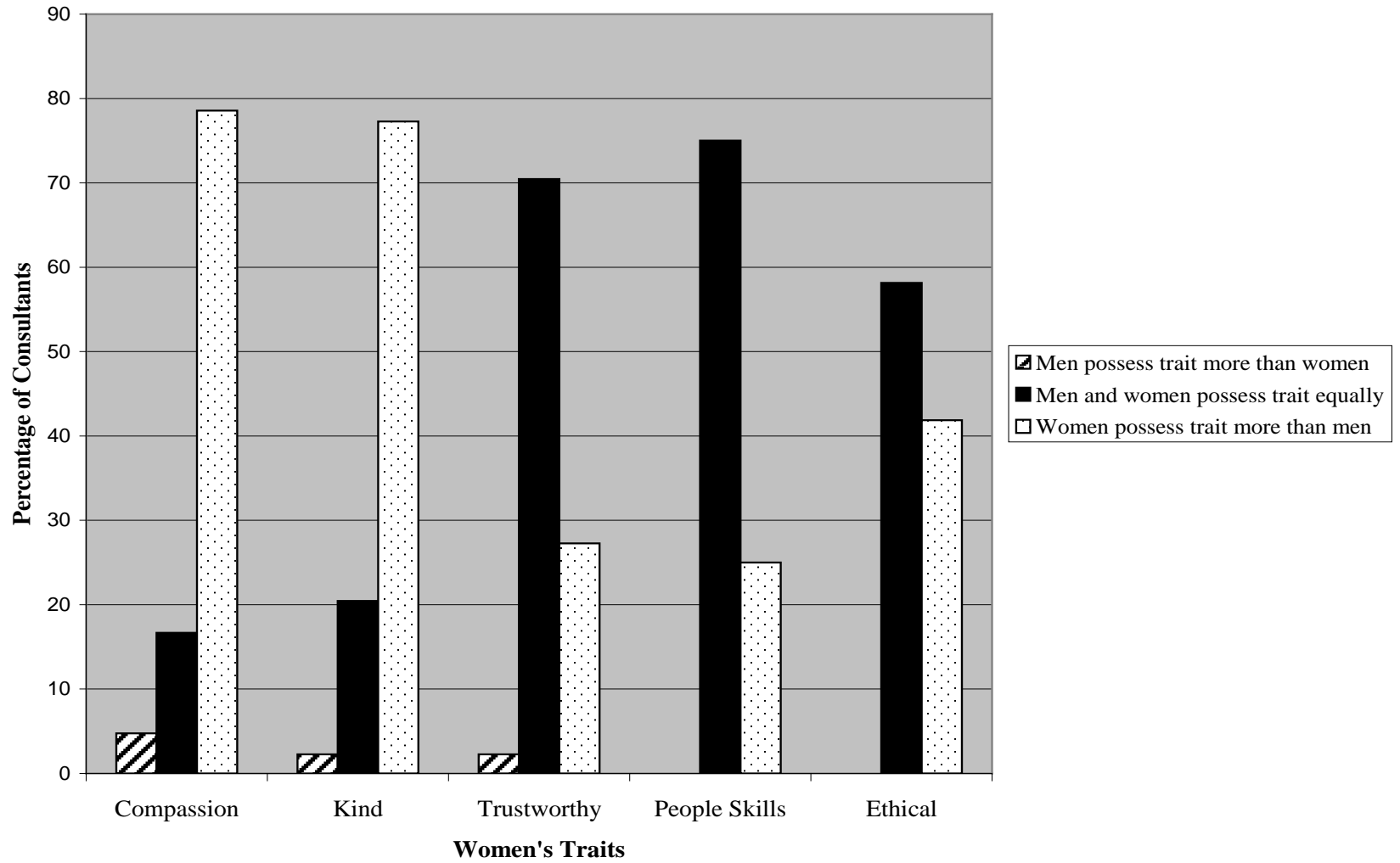


Figure 2.b – Consultants’ Assessment of Voters’ Expectations – Stereotypical Men’s Traits

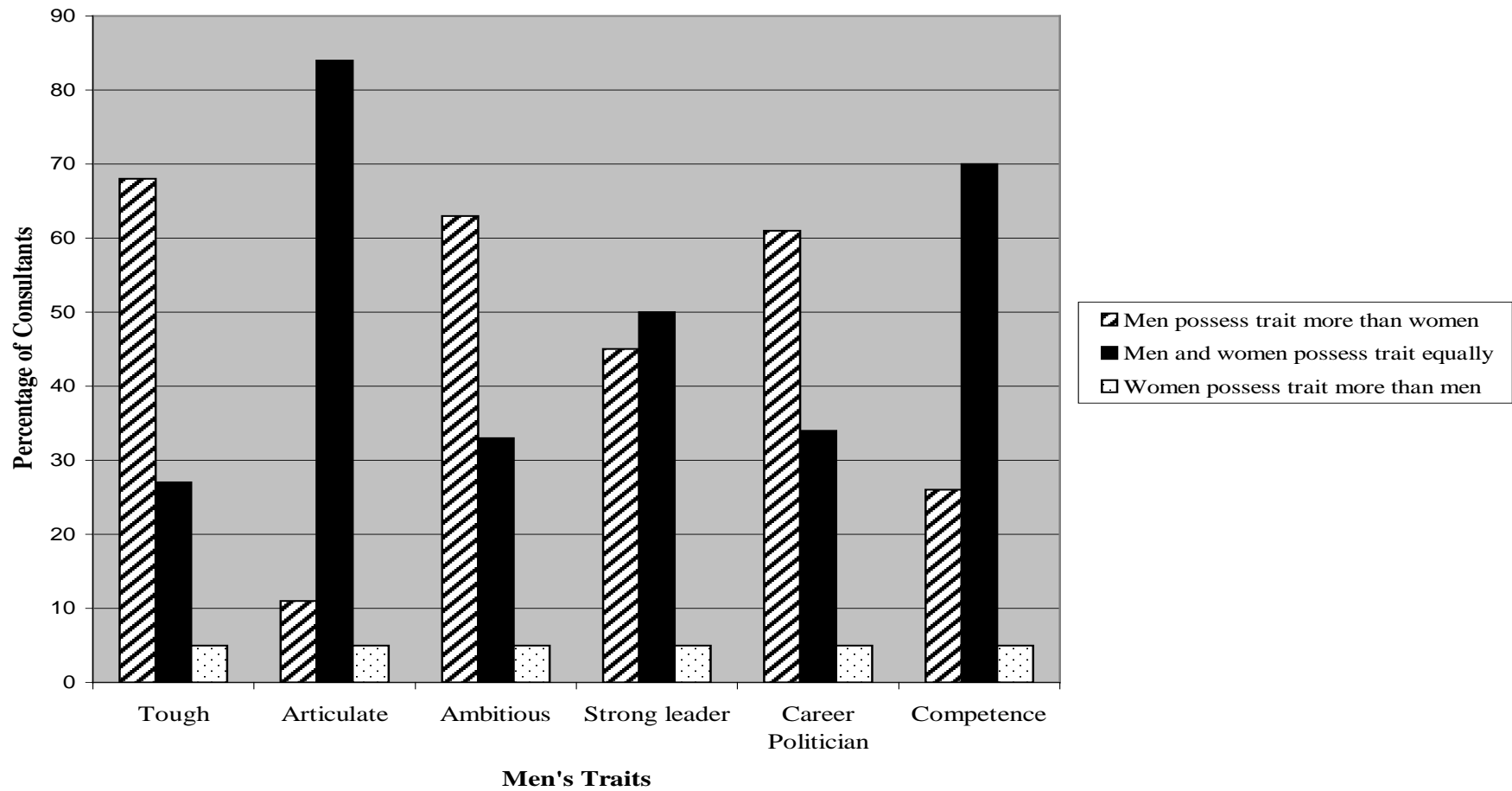


Figure 3.a – Consultants' Assessment of Voters' Expectations – Stereotypical Women's Issues

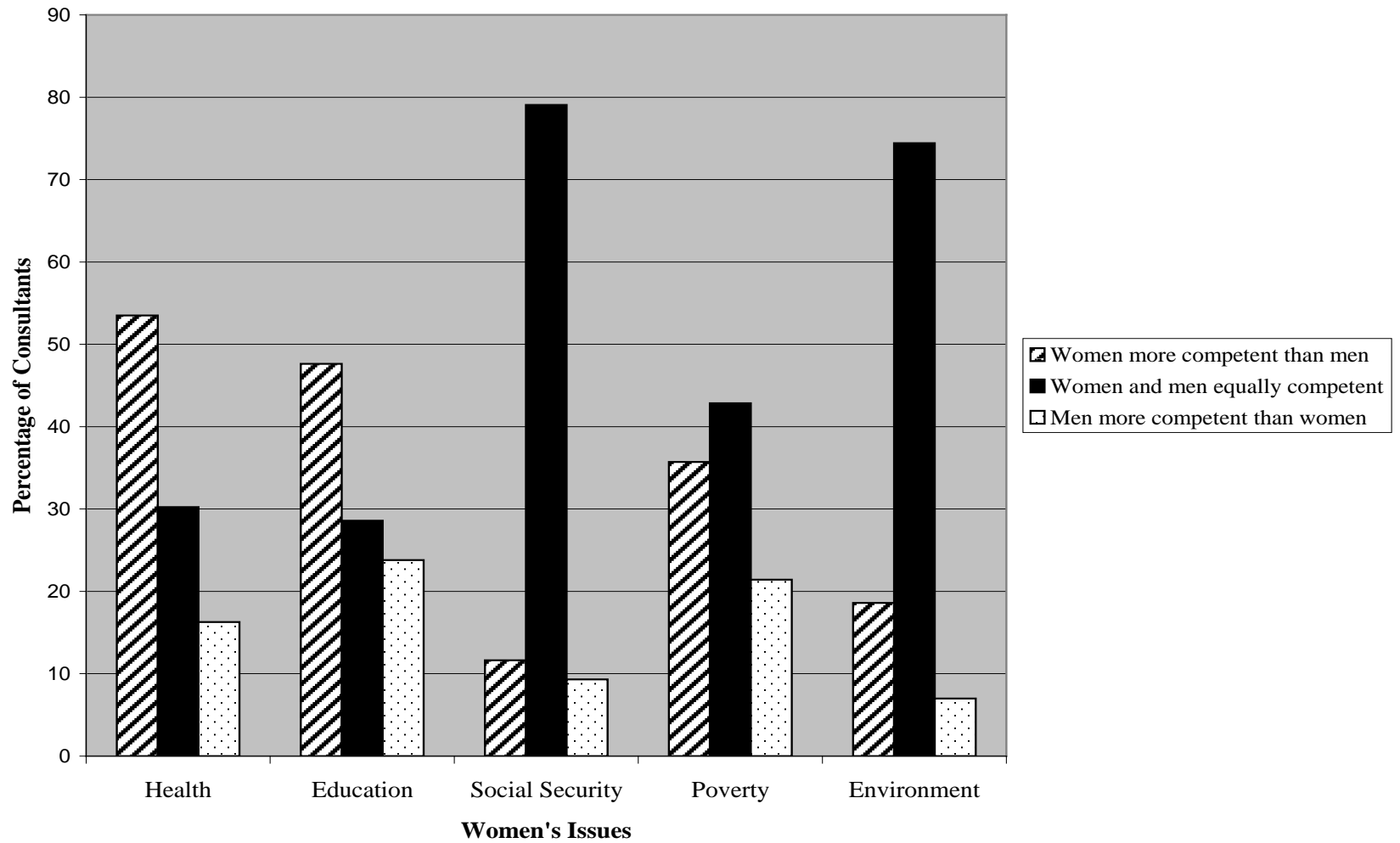


Figure 3.b – Consultants’ Assessment of Voters’ Expectations – Stereotypical Men’s Issues

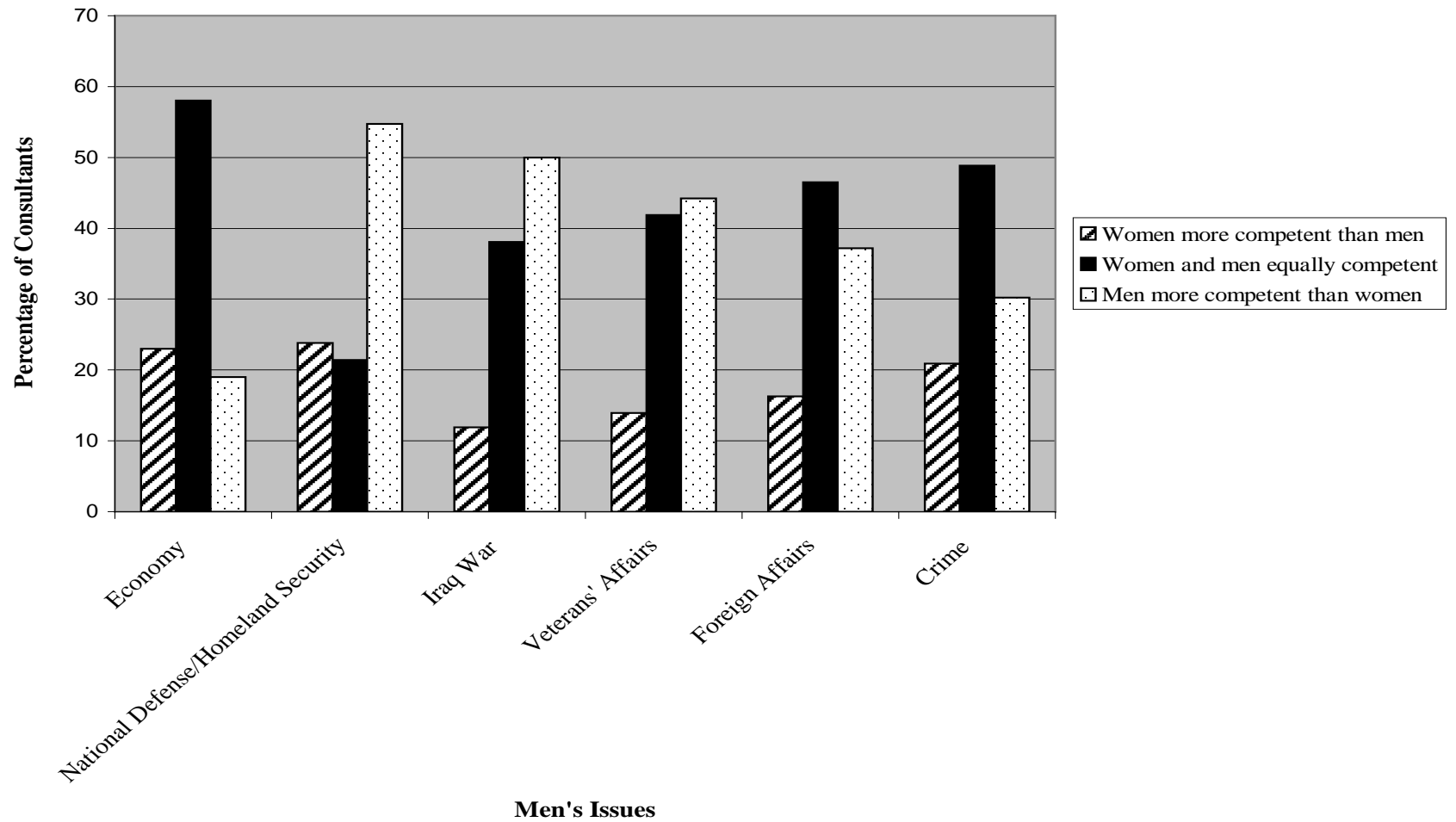


Figure 4.a – Consultants’ Assessments of Candidate Hesitancy to Attack by Gender of Candidate

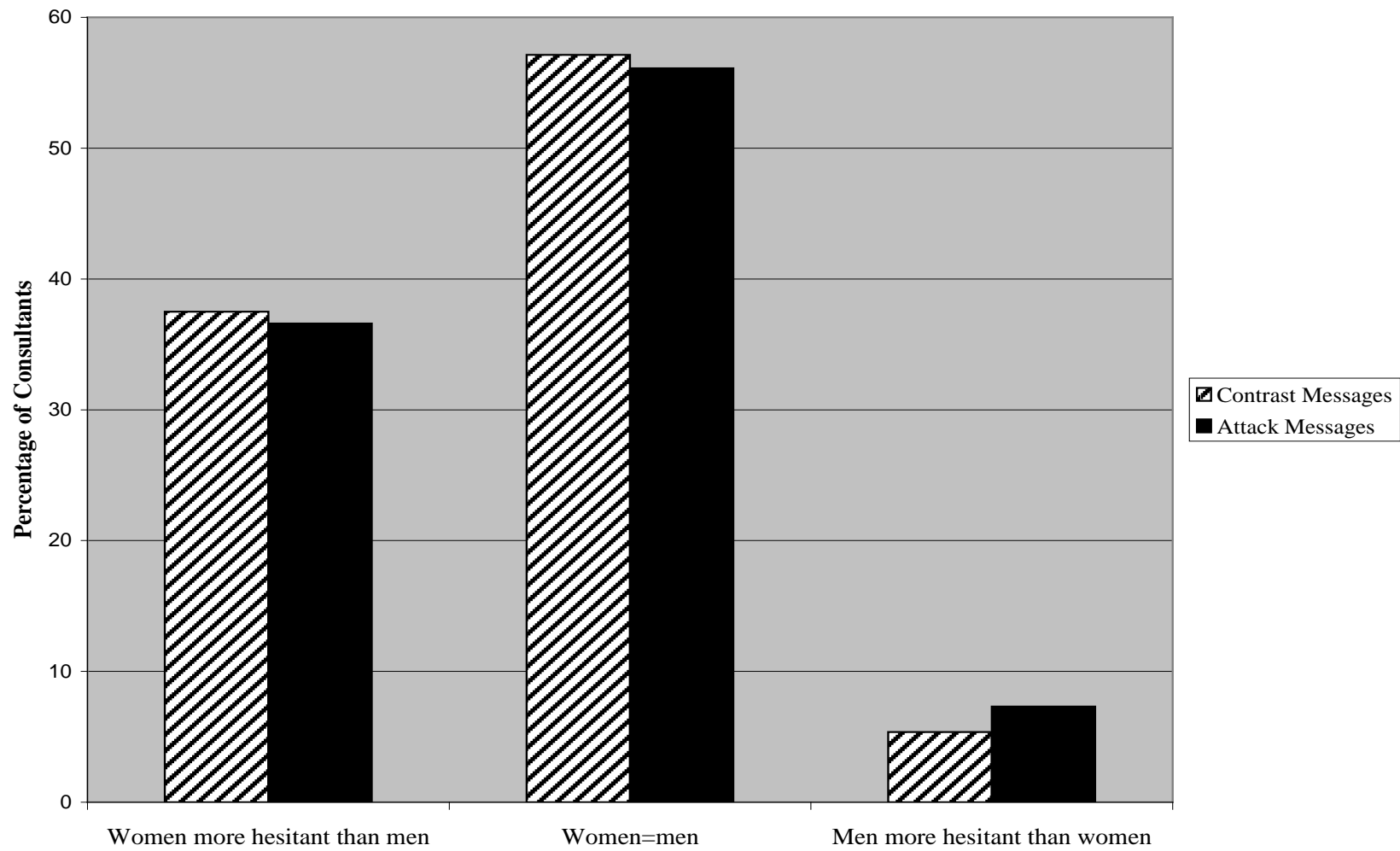
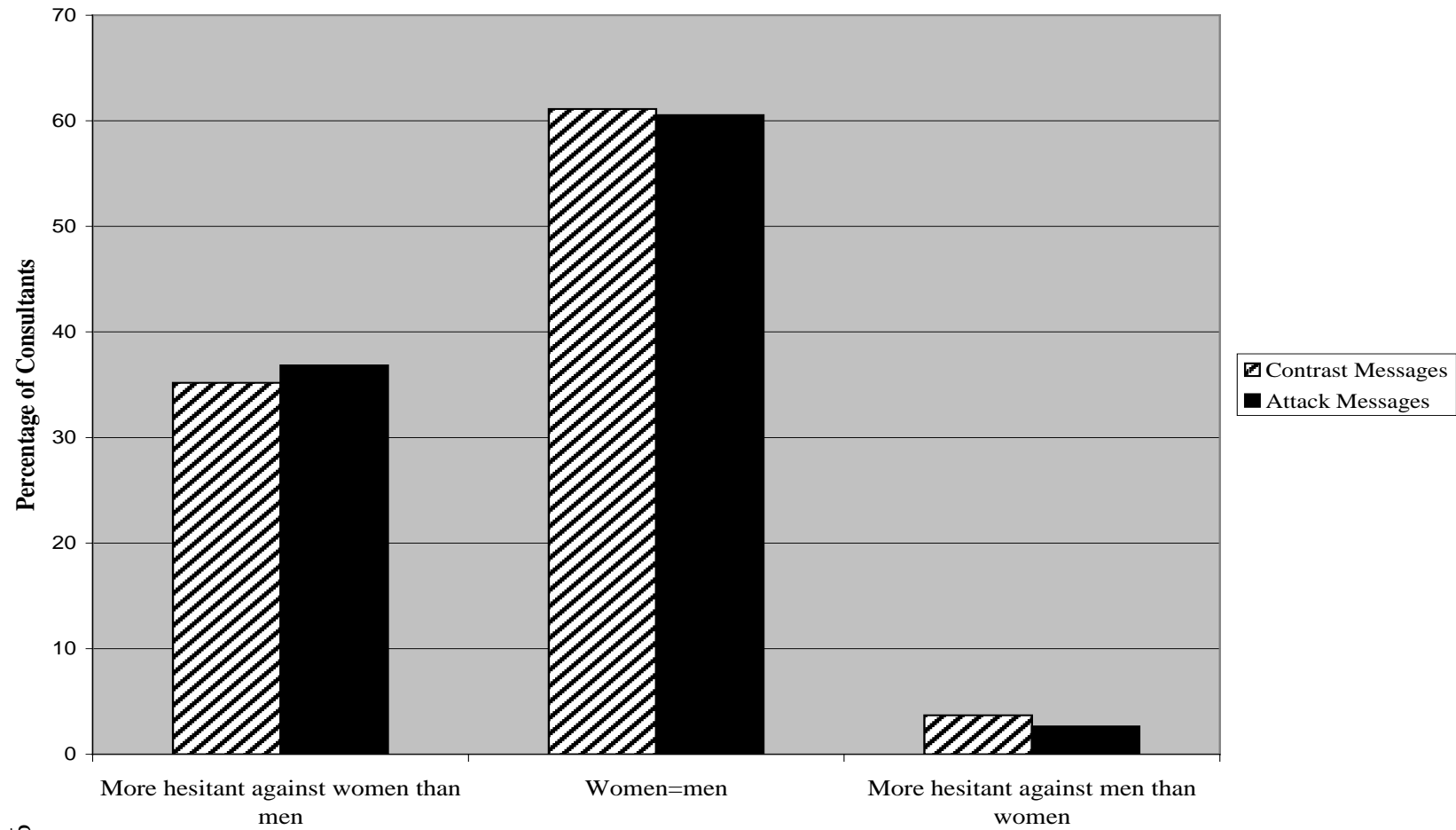


Figure 4.b – Consultants’ Assessments of Candidate Hesitancy to Attack by Gender of the Opponent



Chapter 3

Mean Levels of Mean Gender, Party, and Campaign Negativity

Accounts of particularly negative campaigns permeate every election season. In 2006, Missouri voters were treated to a war of words between Senator James Talent and challenger Claire McCaskill – McCaskill launched attacks at the sitting senator for a range of issues, including his opposition to stem cell research and his loyalty to President Bush. Senator Talent responded with more “personal” attacks that tarnished his “nice-guy” image.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, in Minnesota, voters were bemoaning the increasingly negative ads leveled by Congressman Mark Kennedy (R) against Hennepin County prosecutor Amy Klobuchar (D).⁴¹ Two years later, the state’s voters witnessed another particularly vitriolic Senate contest in which Senator Norm Coleman and challenger Al Franken lobbed accusations at one another. In one of many twists in this campaign, Senator Coleman responded to voters’ discontent with the negativity by announcing he would pull all of his negative advertisements from the air, a move that was met with general disdain by the Franken campaign.⁴² Unlike most election contests, the opportunity for negativity did not end on Election Day. The candidates continued to trade barbs well into the next year as a close election prompted a recount and protracted legal action.

⁴⁰ Feldman, Linda. 2006. “As Election Nears, A Flood of Nastiness.” *Christian Science Monitor* October 31, 2006, 1.

⁴¹ Kirkpatrick, David D. 2006. “Race: Amy Klobuchar/Mark Kennedy.” *New York Times* September 19, 2006, A5.

⁴² Hulse, Carl. 2008. “No More Mr. Un-Nice Guy?” *New York Times* October 11, 2008, A13.

The most talked-about negative advertisement of the 2008 election season, however, probably came from the North Carolina Senate race, in which challenger Kay Hagan and Senator Elizabeth Dole were locked in a tight race. Little distinguished the ads in this race from other competitive races around the nation until Senator Dole aired an ad suggesting that her opponent was an atheist. The ad ended with a voiceover, presumed to be challenger Hagan, proclaiming, “There is no God.” The vitriol of this particular spot, added to the revelation that the final line was not, in fact, actually Kay Hagan’s voice (nor could anyone document that she had ever said this particular line), made this ad a focal point for Hagan supporters; Democrats across the nation; the media, who sensed a juicy story; and, presumably, those who were generally fed-up with the negative tone of politics. It is impossible to say whether this spot cost Senator Dole the election, but one can speculate there was probably some re-evaluation within the Dole campaign as to whether this was an effective campaign message.⁴³

While anecdotal, these examples provide initial evidence that negative messages are a strategy employed by candidates involved in all gender contexts, a sentiment echoed by the consultant comments in Chapter Two. Men attack men, men attack women, women attack men, and women attack each other. However, these accounts are anecdotal – and media analyses of negative advertising in campaigns has generally ignored the gendered aspect of candidates’ negativity decisions (for an exception, see Goodman 2006).⁴⁴ Moreover, as women’s presence in electoral politics grows, and as the negative

⁴³ Although Dole’s campaign manager, in a post-election analysis, says he only regrets that he did not run the ad sooner (Ryall 2009).

⁴⁴ And, apparently, despite a propensity to use “nice guy” references for male candidates, but not female candidates.

campaign ad appears to be here to stay, a systematic investigation of the differences between men's and women's negative messages is vital. Do men and women go negative against their opponents at different rates? What leads to gender differences in the proportion of negative messages? In this chapter, I explore how candidates' attempts to leverage voters' expectations about gender and party manifest in different levels of negativity.

As Chapter One more fully outlines, these questions are inspired by the continued lack of gender parity in elected office and in those who choose to run for office. It is notable that female membership of Congress is at an all-time high in the 111th Congress – 73 representatives and 17 senators. Women are also reaching new heights in politics, evidenced by Nancy Pelosi, who serves as the first female Speaker of the House; Hillary Clinton, who very nearly became the first major party candidate for president in 2008; and Sarah Palin, who became only the second woman in the country's history to run for vice-president. Despite this excitement, women's representation remains low, particularly in higher elective offices. And while women may win races at rates equal to male candidates (Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994), these gender-neutral outcomes are not the result of a gender-neutral process. Women's equal success in general elections may reflect female candidates' ability to successfully neutralize or leverage voters' gender expectations and stereotypes. The consultant interviews in Chapter Two suggest that candidates – particularly female candidates – are aware of the gender expectations they face and conduct their campaigns differently than male candidates because of them. Evidence from the consultants supports the idea that

women candidates enjoy electoral success equal to men not because gender no longer matters to voters, but because female candidates and their staff are savvy about anticipating and responding to voters' gender expectations.

What is more, attaining elected office is a multi-stage process; the outcome of the general election is only the final stage. Women who become their party's general election candidates face a different set of circumstances in their quests for the party's nomination than similarly situated men. For instance, female congressional candidates tend to face more competition in their primaries (Lawless and Pearson 2008). Gendered dynamics emerge even (and, perhaps, most blatantly) at the earliest stage of the campaign process. As I described in Chapter One, women's continuing underrepresentation in elected office is largely due to the dearth of women who choose to run for office. Despite steady gains in the professions that tend to feed into elective office, women are less aggressively recruited to run for office and do not consider themselves as qualified to run as similarly situated men (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Lawless and Fox 2005). These findings attest to the continued and complex impact of gender in the electoral process.

Finally, recent work has begun to acknowledge the fact that women's gains in elected office have been lop-sided. While the presence of Democratic women in Congress has expanded significantly, Republican women's gains have been more incremental. Scholars have begun to parse out how the parties' bases react differently to gender stereotypes and expectations (e.g., Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008; Dolan 2008; King and Matland 2003). These studies reveal an even more harrowing and delicate path for Republican women seeking elected office

In this chapter, I investigate whether there are differences in levels of candidates' negativity based on the candidate's party, gender, and gender of the opponent. In particular, I compare the proportions of each candidate's ad buy that is devoted to negative ads – both attack and contrast. Discovering such differences speaks to many of the unanswered questions of gender and politics. First, uncovering differences in candidates' negative messaging strategies will help elucidate one of the many ways women adjust their campaigns in order to neutralize or leverage the gender stereotypes they face. Discovering such differences will be particularly instructive vis a vis consultants' general insistence, noted in Chapter Two, that gender does *not* influence overall levels of campaign negativity.

Second, a deeper understanding of candidates' negativity strategies – conditioned on gender context – may offer insight into the low levels of women's participation in congressional races. Lawless and Fox (2008) find that significantly more candidate-eligible women than men reported not considering running for office because the possibility of having to go negative made the prospect so distasteful (45 percent of candidate-eligible women versus 30 percent of candidate-eligible men, page 7). It is likely that some of this difference is due to socialized gender norms that made certain aspects of campaigning – such as networking, fundraising, or creating a public persona – less attractive to women than men. However, because we do not yet know *whether and how* women's congressional campaigns differ from men's in terms of their negativity strategy, we do not know if the candidate-eligible women who are asked this question are considering running the same *types* of campaigns as their male counterparts. Are they

considering running campaigns that are *more* negative than men's? Are they considering getting involved in campaigns in which they will be *attacked more* than men? Because we do not yet understand how gender context affects negativity strategies, it is impossible to say whether men and women are contemplating the same type of campaigns when they decide whether to run for office or not.

Finally, because recent work points to party's moderating role on the effects of candidate gender, an in-depth look at negative messaging strategies can elucidate how Democratic women and Republican women may be implementing these tools differently in order to respond most effectively to their different bases and potential supporters.

At this point, there has been little systematic research to determine if men's and women's campaigns *do* differ in terms of negativity, particularly as they would be moderated by party. There is reason to believe that gender expectations may play a particularly prominent role in this regard. Women face the "double-bind" of proving they are tough enough to live up to stereotypic expectations of what constitutes a good leader while avoiding implications that they violate prescriptive gender norms of communality and "niceness" (Jamieson 1995; Rudman and Glick 1999). A negative message that attacks an opponent as unfit for office certainly reveals a certain level of grit but may also signal the candidate does not conform to prescriptive feminine expectations. Those studies that do exist look for the effects of gender in a rather straight-forward way – largely by accounting for the gender of the candidate and sometimes for the gender of the opponent (e.g., Lau and Pomper 2001; Kahn 1996; Sapiro and Walsh 2002). Until now, however, a lack of gender variation in these races prevented a larger investigation into the

moderating effects of gender context and party in ways that would more closely mirror the nuanced findings of research looking at how voters process gender and party stereotypes (e.g., Sanbonmatsu 2008; Dolan and Sanbonmatsu 2008; Matland and King 2003)

Thus, a nuanced investigation of candidates' behaviors – in light of the growingly nuanced understanding of voters' stereotype processing – is due. What is more, the study is timely in regard to the real world of politics, as negative messages are a tactic that candidates have increasingly relied upon in order to highlight the shortcomings of their opponents and, ostensibly, increase their likelihood of electoral victory (Geer 2006). While there has been extensive debate amongst political scientists as to whether negative advertising has positive consequences – both for the sponsoring candidates and democracy (e.g., Geer 2006; Brooks 2006; Lau, et. al. 1999; Ansolabahere and Iyengar 1995) – the popularity of negative advertising amongst candidates implies that candidates believe them to be successful tools for electoral victory.

All candidates behave strategically in order to maximize their likelihood of winning. The outcomes of elections ultimately come down to voters' choices. Thus, the double-bind faced by female candidates (Jamieson 1995) is dependent upon the degree to which voters ascribe to and vote based upon stereotypes of gender and leadership. Ultimately, candidates' success in these gendered environments relies upon their ability to anticipate and respond to voters' gender expectations. This chapter will determine whether and how candidates maneuver within the framework of gender expectations and how that is reflected in the levels of negativity of their televised messaging strategies.

Building on past work on gender expectations and negative advertising, I look at televised advertisements in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 congressional election cycles to determine whether the gender context of a campaign affects its level of negativity. In other words, is a man more or less negative when he runs against another man versus a woman? Does it matter if a woman is running against a man versus another woman? Additionally, I consider how gender may have indirect effects on negative messaging strategy by accounting for voters' familiarity with women as candidates and elected officials. Will previous experience with women in these roles moderate the effects of gender context? Finally, I re-examine variables that have been established as consequential, such as the incumbency status of the candidate, the competitiveness of the race, and party affiliation of the candidate to examine whether these established predictors have endured (e.g., Kahn and Kenney 1999; Sapiro and Walsh 2002; Lau and Pomper 2001).

I proceed with a review of the literature relating to voters' use of gender stereotypes; party expectations; and negative advertising. I follow with hypotheses and a description of my dataset and methods. Finally, I present my findings and discuss the implications both for the complex role of gender in the political process and for women's representation in its elected institutions.

The Role of Gender Expectations

What role does gender play in a candidate's decision of whether and how to go negative? The answer to this question depends, first, upon the extent to which voters ascribe to gender stereotypes, attribute those gender stereotypes to candidates, and vote

based upon those assessments. Second, it depends on whether candidates and other political elites perceive that voters ascribe to and vote based upon these stereotypes *and then* to what extent these campaigns play to (or against) the established stereotypes – whether consciously or not.

The consultant interviews and surveys, which I described in Chapter Two, provide some compelling evidence for the latter question: these professionals operate under the assumption that men and women face different constraints as they construct campaign messages. In particular, several mentioned that female candidates had to be more “careful” than men when they went negative (Broton 2009; Amberg 2009; Kurth 2008).

Existing literature speaks extensively to the former question: gender matters in assessments of candidates, both in terms of the type of expectations voters hold for candidates and, ultimately, in their voting decisions. As Chapter One details, typical women are seen as “warm, gentle, kind, and passive,” while typical men are described as “tough, aggressive, and assertive” (see page 121 of Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) for a more extensive review of this work). What is more, these gender-based expectations carry over into the assessment of candidates. As such, female candidates are typically perceived to be warmer, more compassionate, and kind, whereas male candidates are more likely to be assumed to be aggressive, assertive and tough.⁴⁵

The Consequences of Expectations for Female Candidates

⁴⁵ The majority of the studies linking these trait stereotypes to gender occurred in the late eighties and early nineties. It is reasonable to expect that gender attitudes have changed since then. However, more recent studies verify the persistence of these expectations (e.g., Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004).

The aggressive, confrontational nature of attack advertising, then, directly contradicts the gender expectations of female candidates, but not men. The disadvantageous ramifications for female candidates to go negative loom larger than they do for men. There is, after all, reason to believe that voters' gender expectations will have real consequences for candidates. While Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) focus on identifying the nature and roots of political gender expectations, other scholars have investigated how these expectations might influence the thing candidates ultimately care about: vote choice.

Indeed, while Huddy and Terkildsen's (1993) findings were pathbreaking – and continue to form an important foundation for the study of gender and politics – knowing that men and women are assessed differently does not automatically translate into an impact on the election outcome. Only if these differential assessments affect individuals' vote choices will they have any real electoral effect.

The earliest attempts to document whether gender expectations affected election outcomes related to stereotypes about ideology. Female candidates and elected officials are generally expected to be more liberal than their male colleagues (Koch 2000; McDermott 1997, 1998; Alexander and Andersen 1993). These expectations are not completely without grounding in empirical reality. Most female members of Congress are Democrats, affiliating them with the more liberal party. Moreover, congresswomen's voting records have tended to be more liberal than congressmen's (Burrell 1994), especially when it comes to gender-related issues (Swers 1998; Norton 1999). This systematic difference in ideology likely has several sources. It may reflect the gender

gap in the U.S. population as a whole (see Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999 for a discussion of this gap); it may reflect the fact that more liberal districts are friendlier to the idea of being represented by a woman; or it may be a matter of electorally-successful women hewing to voters' expectations.

Regardless of the origin, ideological expectations remain an important mechanism by which gender stereotypes might affect individuals' votes. Because ideology is an important heuristic, it provides a link from gender stereotypes to vote choice. Several studies provide suggestive evidence that the link from gender to ideology to vote choice is a primary means by which gender indirectly influences the vote, particularly in low-information races (Paolino 1995; Kahn 1996; Dolan 1998; McDermott 1997, 1998). As Sanbonmatsu (2002) points out, however, due to the available data which did not ask respondents *both* vote choice *and* gender stereotype items, these studies were not able to provide a definitive link. She advances our understanding of how gender stereotypes might influence vote choice by asking the same respondents questions about gender stereotypes *and* hypothetical vote choice. Respondents who disagree with basic stereotype questions, such as whether men are better suited for politics, show a higher affinity for voting for female candidates. This affinity ultimately predicts vote choice in some of her models. Thus, significant evidence points to the mediating effect of ideology between gender and vote choice.⁴⁶

The surveys and interviews with consultants verify that candidates and campaign staff are aware of and respond to these stereotypes. It is also then reasonable to assume

⁴⁶ The second indirect mechanism through which gender may affect vote choice is issue salience and competency, which will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Four.

that candidates will consider how their campaign strategies may be assessed using these same gender expectations. In this regard, the trait-based stereotypes, discussed above, provide the most relevant comparisons. If women are expected to be compassionate, warm, and conciliatory, how will voters assess women who use negative messages, a tactic that runs directly counter to these expectations?

As Chapter One describes, extensive work in political science and social psychology illuminates this “double-bind” for women in politics (Jamieson 1995). On the one hand, women who adopt traits associated with men are often punished (Cialdini and Trost 1998; Rudman and Glick 1999; Eagly, et. al. 1992). These dynamics might suggest that female candidates should avoid aggressive negativity tactics. At the same time, women who adhere too closely to feminine norms, particularly in leadership roles in which stereotypically masculine traits are seen as desirable, will not succeed (Eagly and Karau 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a). These expectations suggest that women *should* employ the same types of negativity strategies as men. Consultant Darin Broton summed up the contradictory expectations female candidates face, a sentiment echoed by others. For women to be successful in the field of elective politics, they must be “hard-edged” and “cold;” and yet, they must constantly try to avoid the “bitch-factor.”

Even after decades of increased women’s participation in elected office, recent work verifies Broton’s sentiment that national elected leaders are expected to exhibit stereotypically masculine traits, particularly in a time of heightened national fear and concern about homeland security (e.g., Lawless 2004; Falk and Kenski 2006). These expectations may establish incentives for women to adopt more stereotypically masculine

campaign tactics in order to compensate for their expected shortcomings. As Sapiro and Walsh (2002) explain, “Women may need to ‘go negative’ earlier to show they are fighters and serious candidates” (6). Or, in the words of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, “The minute you go into this arena, especially at this altitude, you have to prove you can breathe the air” (Goodman 2006).

The simultaneous presence of gender and leadership stereotypes – and the countervailing direction of each for female candidates – sets up a complex calculation for women who are deciding whether or not to go negative. The choice is complicated by the fact that one set of expectations – that women be conciliatory, kind, and compassionate – bears more normative weight than the stereotypes associated with leaders. In other words, gender stereotypes associated with personality traits carry prescriptive implications – women *should* be conciliatory, kind, and compassionate. Gendered leadership stereotypes, on the other hand, have a more descriptive flavor. It is not that women *should not* be competent leaders, it is just that they are not thought to possess the associated characteristics. Thus, although they might benefit from mounting a negative campaign, which both improves the information environment and challenges the gendered stereotypes of leadership, a negative campaign risks violating the prescriptive gender expectations in the process. Such violation can lead to voters punishing her, both by negatively assessing the female candidate and, more importantly for the candidate, not voting for her. At the same time, a female candidate who reinforces the prescriptive gender expectations with a nice campaign might get voters to *like* her – but not vote for her, if she has not proven her competence as a candidate.

This complex set of considerations leads to my first hypothesis.

Hypothesis One: Women’s levels of negativity will be different than men’s levels of negativity.

Hypothesis One adjudicates between two competing strains of literature. Women may have significantly *lower* levels of negativity than men due to the restrictions of feminine norms. But women may have significantly *higher* levels of negativity than men if they feel compelled to prove their competence. The theory does not strongly suggest one direction should prevail, however, so I shall remain agnostic and simply hypothesize that men’s and women’s levels of negativity will be different.

In contrast, consultants provided significant evidence in Chapter Two that there will *not* be any significant difference in the levels of negativity between men and women. This outcome may be reached in several different ways. Perhaps the competing expectations described above cancel one another out – incentives to be *more* negative and *less* negative than men simply wash out, so that women are equally negative. Conversely, it is possible that consultants no longer believe that different gender expectations amongst the electorate – at least in regard to these two competing sets of expectations – are cause for concern. Indeed, several consultants noted a certain amount of progress in how the electorate views female candidates. One consultant in the south, who has been in the profession for over 20 years, notes that in his career, “female candidates...have become much more commonplace and much more willing to act like men in politics: that is, attack, be attacked, etc.” Another notes that “there was a time when a female candidate had to be more ‘genteel.’ It’s now expected that a female candidate be as tough as a male candidate.” Such comments lead one to expect that

consultants are not advising men and women to use different levels of negative messages in their campaigns.

Findings from Chapter Two can offer insight into these competing theories.

Consultants continue to believe voters adhere to expectations of women, such as women being more compassionate and kinder than men. At the same time, expectations that women are not fit for office appear to be dissipating (e.g., expectations that women are less competent and less articulate than men). It thus seems that women would have more to lose by violating expectations of their compassion and kindness than in having to mount a campaign to prove they are as tough and competent as men.

Gender Context

Of course, it is not just women who face gender expectations during a campaign. Men are also bound by norms and expectations of behavior, which are typically the mirror-opposite of those expected from women. Precisely *because* men do not face the same double-bind as women, should they be expected to go negative more often, in order to prove they are both tough enough for the job and to comport with male gender expectations? Men face campaign gender minefields of their own, particularly owing to the gender of the opponent. Certainly, men are expected to be assertive, as are candidates (Eagly and Karau 2002). Will there be a difference, then, between men who are running against women as opposed to men running against men?

Again, there are two potential stories. On the one hand, when men run against women, we might expect norms of chivalry to take over, depressing levels of negativity directed by male candidates towards their female opponents. However, if male

candidates perceive expectations amongst voters that women are, by default, less

competent candidates, negative messaging may be seen as a valuable way to leverage

these stereotypes, reinforcing that the female candidate is not, in fact, up to the job.

Moreover, in some cases, a woman has already violated gender expectations simply by running for office in the first place. In this circumstance, she may be an unsympathetic

character. Here, a man running against her may want to go negative in order to be

viewed as someone who punishes norm violators. This leads to my second hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two: Men will have different levels of negativity depending on whether their opponents are men or women.

Again, this hypothesis encompasses theories that suggest different directional hypotheses.

Judging by the qualitative evidence presented in Chapter Two, I expect the chivalry

hypothesis to dominate. One consultant notes that "...as a man running against a woman,

you have to watch your tone so as not to appear threatening or condescending." Another

concur: "...a man taking on a woman has to be very skilled or be branded a bully." In

contrast, there were no comments to suggest that men would want to be *more* negative

against women in order to leverage disadvantageous stereotypes of women.

Women also face different gender contexts: they can run against men or women.

I have a similar hypothesis for these candidates.

Hypothesis Three: Women will have different levels of negativity depending on whether their opponents are men or women.

When a female candidate is running against another woman, several different scenarios

could play out. The constraining norms of femininity may cancel one another out, in

which case the two women would be competing to show that each is fitter for the office.

In this instance, one could expect higher levels of negativity as compared to women running against men. In contrast, though, it is possible that the expectations that women are unfit for elected office are neutralized, in which case the two candidates would be competing to prove that each adheres more closely to feminine norms. If this is the case, one would expect *lower* levels of negativity in women-only races as compared to women running against men. Finally, it is plausible that *both* sets of considerations are neutralized. In this instance, one could expect that women-only races largely resemble races in which two men are running against each other.

Past studies of gender and negative advertising have come to mixed conclusions as to its effect (e.g., Lau and Pomper 2001; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Hitchon and Chang 1995; Bystrom and Kaid 2002; Sapiro and Wash 2002). These studies were hampered by a limited number of cases, particularly where two women run against one another. Thus, a larger-scale systemic investigation of negative advertising, incorporating the gender context of the race, is warranted.

Party Expectations

Past studies have produced inconsistent findings as to whether and how party affiliation affects negativity strategies. While some studies have found no statistically significant differences when comparing negativity by party (e.g., Kahn and Kenney 1999), others suggest that one party is significantly more negative than the other, although *which* party is more negative depends on the study (e.g., Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2007; Lau and Pomper 2001; Perloff and Kinsey 1992). These findings, however, have generally not been guided by theory or presented any theoretical rationale to explain

why Republicans *should* be any more negative than their Democratic counterparts or vice versa.

But recent studies exploring party trait stereotypes (Hayes 2005) and the interactive effects of party and gender expectations (Dolan 2008; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008; King and Matland 2003) establish theoretical reasons and find empirical support to believe that negativity strategies vary between parties *and* that party and gender expectations moderate one another. Turning first to the question of party trait expectations, Hayes (2005) establishes that, on average, voters expect Republicans to be stronger leaders and more moral while Democrats are expected to be more empathetic and compassionate. The theoretical mechanism is the same as the theoretical mechanism that explains gendered issue competency stereotypes. In explaining the origins of gendered issue competency expectations, Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) suggest that voters' generalized trait expectations of women – e.g., compassion and empathy – and women's expected roles – e.g., working with children and serving as caregivers – make women seem better-suited to deal with “compassion” issues. In other words, women are assumed to be more competent on those issues that require some compassion and touch the lives of those most associated with needing care – such as children and the elderly.

Hayes (2005) has a similar explanation for how traits come to be associated with the parties. Based on findings that individuals are particularly prone to infer candidate traits from information provided about that candidate's issue stances (Rapoport, Metcalf, and Hartman 1989), the fact that Democrats' and Republicans' issue agendas systematically differ from one another should lead to divergent party-based trait

attributions. Because each party must shore up its own core constituencies, in focusing on different groups the parties' candidates campaign in different places and emphasize different issues. Democrats are often considered the party of the underdog, with its base comprised of working people, racial minorities, and the elderly (Gerring 1998). This base, Hayes argues, influences Democrats' campaign strategies in terms of where they campaign and what they say. Their campaign appearances – in places like nursing homes and blue-collar workplaces – mixed with their issue agendas – focusing on the stereotypically Democratic issues like education, healthcare, and Social Security reinforces notions that Democratic candidates will be more empathetic and compassionate.

The Republican base, on the other hand, is primarily composed of upper- and middle-income individuals, members of the business community, and social conservatives. Hayes explains that due to Republicans' emphasis on their owned issues, like crime, the military, family values, and tax cuts; the rhetoric invoked when doing so – which often focuses on toughness and individualism; and Republicans' chosen venues of campaigning⁴⁷, voters would infer traits such as strong leadership and high morality.

If this relationship among party issue ownership, campaign strategy, and inferred traits stands – and Hayes' empirical tests provide convincing support that it does – then partisans are facing the same kind of stereotypes relevant to campaign strategy that men and women are. In particular, if Democrats are expected to be empathetic and compassionate – just as women are expected to be – then violating these expectations and

⁴⁷ Which, according to West (1983), often include places like churches, business associations, and defense contractors, as opposed to the union halls and poor neighborhoods of the Democratic candidates.

mounting a significantly negative campaign could harm Democrats' electoral success

(see Cialdini and Trost 1998 and the above discussion for evidence that violating expectations leads to punishment). On the other hand, Republicans may perceive greater leeway in using negative messages. If they are expected to be strong leaders – a definition which often involves assertive behavior (Eagly and Karau 2002) – they may not fear the same type of punishment that Democrats do. Based on the argument here, then, we might expect Republicans to be more negative than Democrats, in each party's attempt to reinforce its owned traits.

However, as with gender, the predictions are not necessarily that straight-forward. Hayes goes on to lay out his “expectations gap” hypothesis. In it, he surmises – and his data suggest – that candidates will be more successful *if they can convince voters that they possess the positive traits of the opposing party*. For our purposes here, then, if a Democrat could convince voters that she is just as strong a leader as the Republican candidate, she stands a better chance of winning. Similarly, if a Republican can convince voters that he is just as compassionate and empathetic as his Democratic rival, he will gain votes. This line of reasoning leads to an expectation in just the opposite direction – Democrats will be more negative than Republicans, as Democrats attempt to prove they are strong, assertive leaders and Republicans present themselves as empathetic and compassionate.

This, again, leads me to a hypothesis that leaves open the possibility of both of these relationships, adjudicating between theoretical expectations in opposite directions.

Hypothesis Four: Democrats and Republicans will have different levels of negativity.

Until recently, most work in political science treated candidate gender and party as two completely distinct independent variables. Studies of party campaign effects – such as work on party issue ownership (e.g., Petrocik 1996; Sides 2006) – only account for candidate party, without consideration of candidate gender.⁴⁸ Perhaps more inexplicably, most of the work on gender and politics has implicitly assumed that gender stereotypes and expectations will affect Republican and Democratic candidates in the same way. This mindset has either been reflected by including party as an independent variable without interacting it with candidate gender (e.g., Kahn and Kenney 1999), or simply by leaving party out of the analysis altogether. For a most recent example, Fridkin, Kenney, and Woodall (2009) conduct an experiment to test whether candidate gender, opponent gender, and civility of message influence the reception of advertising messages. Party is not mentioned in these ads. While it is understandable to want to constrain the number of conditions in any experiment, it is impossible to tell whether respondents assumed the candidate belonged to one party over another and whether this assumption would make any difference.

But there are many reasons to believe that Democratic and Republican women face different constraints and expectations. For one thing, Democratic women do not face competing expectations based on their party and gender – in their ideology, traits, and issue competencies, both party and gender cues suggest they would be more liberal; compassionate and empathetic; and competent on issues such as healthcare and education. Republican women, on the other hand, face incongruent gender and party

⁴⁸ Usually necessarily, as these studies generally look at presidential campaigns.

stereotypes in ideology, traits, and issue competencies. Will a voter expect that a

Republican woman candidate is strong on defense, a stereotype of Republicans and of

men, or strong on health issues, a stereotype of Democrats and women? Or will

Republican women be doubly-advantaged, seen as strong on both, or doubly-

disadvantaged, strong on neither? In other words, for Republican women, it is less clear

what, exactly, the expectations for them *are* and how they might successfully navigate

these competing expectations.

Studies have suggested that party-incongruent gender stereotypes do hurt Republican women with Republican voters. In an experiment, King and Matland (2003) find that male Republican identifiers are 13.6 percent less likely to support a fictitious female Republican candidate than an identical Republican candidate who is male; female Republican identifiers are 10.5 percent less likely to support the female Republican candidate than the male Republican candidate. Although it may seem counterintuitive that female Republicans also prefer male candidates to females, Republican strategist Mark Campbell reinforces this finding, and even suggests that female candidates have a “higher bar” to pass with female voters. What is more, this general skepticism of female Republicans may be related to stereotypes that are unique to female Republicans. As compared to female Democrats, Republican consultant Scott Cottingham notes, female Republicans are seen as “more prudish,” and more like “church lad[ies.]” Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2008) verify Republican women’s comparative disadvantage. Respondents to the 2006 American National Election Studies survey ranked Republican women as less competent than Democratic women on stereotypical “women’s” issues and ranked

Republican women as less competent than Republican men on stereotypically Republican

issues (5). It would appear that instead of being perceived as more competent on a wide range of issues, Republican women are seen as *less* competent on a wide range of issues.

Although not directly related to questions of negative advertising, or even campaign strategy, these findings offer evidence that Republican women face a substantively different set of constraints than Democratic women. This confluence of gender and party stereotypes constantly puts Republican women in a position of having to prove their competence – either as women or as Republicans. For Republican women, then, negative messages may be a more attractive tool than Democratic women, a means by which they can prove their competence, particularly in relation to their opponent. Such expectations are preliminarily supported by the finding in Chapter Two that, compared to Republican consultants, Democratic consultants are more likely to assess female candidates as being more hesitant than male candidates to sponsor negative messages.

Hypothesis Five: Republican women will be more negative than Democratic women.

Earlier, I discussed the expected influence of gender context on men – male candidates may use different negativity strategies depending on whether they are running against men or women. Similarly, I expect gender context to influence women, based on considerations of their traditional supporters and circumstances that would make them more vulnerable to losing those supporters.

Specifically, Democratic women enjoy particularly high support amongst female voters. Of course, women disproportionately support the Democratic party in general

(Dolan 1998); but female voters display a particularly high affinity for Democratic women (Dolan 2008). All else equal, when Democratic women are running against male opponents, they can count on the votes from a majority of this demographic. However, when a Democratic woman faces a female Republican woman rather than a man, this advantage among women voters may subside somewhat. Research shows that Democratic and Independent voters – and particularly female voters in these categories – report more willingness to vote for a female Republican than a male Republican (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008). In this situation, then – a female versus female race – the Democratic candidate may not be able to count on her female base to the same great extent.

How would this affect her negativity strategy? As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the consultants I interviewed revealed a consistent belief that negative messages are more effective with male voters than with female voters. As Democratic strategist Broton, explains, “Women [voters] tend to be a little more skeptical or critical of negative messages, so it is best to make sure your attacks are not over the top and exaggerated.” Republican strategist Campbell concurs, noting that differences in men’s and women’s communications style mean that “men are more accepting of information portrayed” in negative messages. Another strategist concurred, noting that one female client he worked for in South Dakota was particularly worried that “farmers’ and ranchers’ wives would stop thinking she was a lady” if she went too negative. If Democratic women fear this backlash, particularly amongst a demographic they depend on, and particularly in an

electoral situation where they are more vulnerable to losing votes to the opponent, they should rely on negative messages *less* when facing a female opponent.

Hypothesis Six: Democratic women will be less negative against their Republican female opponents than they are against their Republican male opponents.

Will Republican women follow suit? Probably not. For Republican women, whether they run against Democratic men or Democratic women, they face a better chance of attracting Democratic and Independent women voters than a similarly-situated Republican man. At the same time, they are more concerned than Republican men with keeping their bases enthusiastic about their candidacies (Dolan 2008). Thus, Republican women face fewer incentives to adjust their negativity strategy based on the gender context of the race – they will *always* need to prove their competency with their base and will *always* be attempting to peel away female voters from the Democratic candidate.

Hypothesis Seven: Republican women will be equally negative against Democratic women and Democratic men.

Finally, this line of reasoning may give some insight into the earlier hypotheses regarding men's reactions to gender context. In particular, Democratic men find themselves in the same situations as Democratic women when running against a Republican woman – key members of their usual base (women) may be more prone to vote for their female opponent. Therefore, I expect Democratic men running against Republican women to be less negative than Democratic men running against Republican men, presuming that female voters disdain negative advertising, in an effort to prevent these voters from supporting the Republican woman.

Hypothesis Eight: Democratic men will be less negative towards their female Republican opponents than their male Republican opponents.

Beyond the arguments elaborated above – the competing interests of adhering to norms of chivalry or leveraging stereotypes of women’s incompetency – there is little electoral reason to believe that Republican men would adjust their negativity strategies based on gender context. Due to their gender and party, they have little advantage with female voters and, thus, would typically not adjust their strategies in any effort to appeal to them on a large scale.

State Context

I introduce one final complicating factor to this analysis: the consideration of voters’ past experience with female candidates and elected officials, a consideration that varies based on the voter’s state of residence. States have wide variation in women’s representation in office. For instance, voters in a state like Alabama, where women comprised only 9.8 percent of the state legislature in 2000, will undoubtedly have less familiarization with the concept of women running for and being elected to office than the citizens of New Hampshire, who have seated a state senate in 2009 that is over half female (Snow and Milberger 2008).

More specifically, a significant presence of women in state elected office suggests three interconnected things. First, successful female candidates are proof of citizens’ willingness to *vote* for female candidates. Second, women’s presence in state elected office implies that the realm of elected politics may be more egalitarian – in other words, with more women elected to office, politics seems like less of a man’s realm. Finally, the fact that women win office means that women emerged as candidates and survived the

nomination process in the first place. Higher rates of female candidate emergence suggest that structures or generalized attitudes exist in that state that encourage – or, at least, do not discourage – women’s participation in politics. Finally, the success of women at the state level provides a larger pool of qualified, experienced female candidates who may seriously consider a run for Congress.

It is plausible that this orientation towards women in politics, as well as the reduction of barriers to elected office, carries over to House and Senate races. As such, one would expect that citizens in states with more prior exposure to women as candidates and elected officials would have fewer gendered expectations about how male and female candidates should interact. Similarly, in states where previous experience with women in public office is low, gendered expectations should endure. Candidates, running in these different environments, should strategically react to these expectations, adjusting their negativity strategies accordingly. This leads to my final hypothesis.

Hypothesis Nine: Gender and gender context-based differences in levels of negativity should be smaller in states with high levels of women in elected office than in states with low levels of women in elected office.

See Figure 1 for a summation of the hypotheses.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Predictors of Negative Advertising

While work relating to gender provides the primary basis for this investigation, work on negative advertising provides important insights into when candidates will use negative messages. Scholars studying negative advertising have established some reliable predictors of campaign negativity. The most prominent of these is the status of

the candidate (e.g., incumbent versus challenger), the status of the race (e.g., whether it is an open seat), and the competitiveness of the race. The general consensus has been that challengers are more negative than incumbents, controlling for the amount of campaign spending and regardless of the measure used for campaign negativity (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau and Pomper 2001). This empirical finding is intuitive. On the one hand, incumbents have a public record to attack, whereas challengers, depending on their current occupations, may not. The incumbent, on the other hand, has less of an incentive to attack a challenger. Most incumbents enjoy a significant name-recognition advantage over their opponents, one they are unlikely to endanger by providing publicity – albeit negative – to the otherwise unknown opponent.

Along these same lines of reasoning, open races – ones in which there is no incumbent – should be more negative, as neither candidate necessarily enjoys the same overwhelming name recognition advantage that incumbents might. Studies bear this expectation out, showing that open races are, on average, more negative than those in which there is an incumbent (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau and Pomper 2001). Finally, past studies have consistently found that competitive races are more negative than non-competitive races (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Sapiro and Walsh 2002; although, see Lau and Pomper 2001 for results that suggest competitive races are not statistically significantly different from non-competitive races).

Data and Methods

The ability to analyze campaign communications has increased exponentially since tracking of campaign advertisements done by the Campaign Media Analysis Group

(CMAG) have been made available for academics through the Wisconsin Advertising

Project (Goldstein, Franz, and Ridout 2002; Goldstein and Rivlin 2005, 2007).⁴⁹ CMAG advises political clients. In an effort to do this more effectively, CMAG developed a technology to capture and record all political advertisements aired on the major networks, 25 cable networks, and local advertising in the largest media markets in the country.

These markets initially encompassed the 75 largest media markets in the country.

Beginning in 2002, the CMAG technology monitors the 100 largest media markets in the nation (“University of Wisconsin Advertising Project”). The monitoring includes screen shots of every fourth second of the advertisement, as well as a complete transcript of the audio portion. The technology also creates a dataset with an observation for each airing of any political commercial. Once the advertisements are compiled by CMAG, coders with WiscAds code the ads for a multitude of attributes, including whether and how the ad is negative.⁵⁰

Beginning with the spot-based dataset, I compiled a candidate-level dataset with the Congressional candidate as the unit of analysis for the 2000, 2002, and 2004 election

⁴⁹ The Wisconsin Advertising Project was sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this dissertation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Wisconsin Advertising Project, Professor Goldstein, Joel Rivlin, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

⁵⁰ For all three election cycles, ads were coded as either “attack,” “promote,” or “contrast.” Wisconsin Ads Project coders are specifically asked, “In your judgment, is the primary purpose of the ad to promote a specific candidate, to attack a candidate, or to contrast the candidates?” Coders were given the following examples for each type of ad:

- Promote: “In his distinguished career, Senator Jones has brought millions of dollars home. We need Senator Jones.”
- Attack: “in his long years in Washington, Senator Jones has raised your taxes over and over. We can’t afford 6 more years of Jones.”
- Contrast: “While Senator Jones has been raising your taxes, Representative Smith has been cutting them.”

Using the same question, I coded a subsample of these ads to verify that the codes are accurate. For each cycle, agreement rates between the Wisconsin Ads Project codes and me were 89 percent and above. For my purposes, I have counted both attack and contrast ads in my calculation of negativity, as they both represent an assertive campaign strategy.

cycles, the three most recent election cycles available at the time of analysis. I calculated the percentage of each candidate's total airings that were negative in tone.⁵¹ To this initial dataset, I added dummy variables accounting for the party (coded 0 for Republicans and 1 for Democrats) and gender of the candidate, as well as the gender of the candidate's opponent⁵² (coded 0 for men and 1 for women). Additionally, I included several measures to control for factors that have consistently proven to be influential. In particular, I accounted for whether the race was competitive; the proportion of the race's overall spending that was spent by the candidate; and whether the candidate was an incumbent, challenger, or if it was an open seat. The competitiveness of the race was determined using the competitiveness rankings assigned by *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* (Giroux and Basu 2000; Giroux 2002; "GOP Confident of Holding the House" 2004). These are prospective competitiveness measures, typically issued two to four weeks before the elections, and they represent the conventional wisdom upon which the candidates and campaigns are basing their strategies. In this sense, these prospective measures should more accurately assess the environment in which candidates are operating, as opposed to retrospective measures – such as final vote margin – which, one could argue, more accurately represent the *outcome* of candidates' strategies and may or *may not* reflect how close candidates felt the race was.⁵³

⁵¹ Although the Wisconsin Ads Project database includes ads sponsored by candidates, parties, and interest groups, I limit my analyses here to candidate-sponsored advertisements, so as to specifically examine *candidate* strategies.

⁵² I largely coded these races based on the names of the candidates. For names that were not obviously either male or female, I undertook an Internet and LexisNexis search.

⁵³ *CQ Weekly* ranks the competitiveness of the race on a four-point scale, ranging from "Safe" on one extreme to "Toss-Up" on the other. For parsimony's sake, I have converted this ranking into a dummy variable, where one represents that the race is a toss-up and that *CQ Weekly* considered this race a toss-up. All other rankings are considered non-toss-up races.

The dataset includes the proportion of the race's expenditures spent by each candidate.⁵⁴ In addition, I included candidates' status – in other words, whether they are incumbents, challengers, or running for an open seat. “Challenger” and “Open Seat” are included in the model as dummy variables, coded 1 when the candidate is either a challenger or an open seat candidate. Incumbents serve as the omitted category.⁵⁵ I also included dummy variables to account for the election cycle. Election cycles certainly vary in terms of the issues and level of negativity associated with them. This is particularly relevant in this time series, however, as the 2002 elections took place approximately a year after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Political observers have noted the increased (albeit temporary) unity following the attacks,⁵⁶ which leads me to believe that 2002 may see lower levels of negativity than 2000 and 2004. The 2002 election cycle serves as the omitted category.

The candidate dataset includes all candidates who ran *any* ads in the respective election cycle. This results in a dataset of 856 candidates, representing 33 percent of the two major party candidates who ran in these three election cycles. Certainly, my decision to focus on candidates who air commercials means I am restricting my analysis to candidates who choose to pursue this strategy, meaning that these are campaigns that are likely better-funded and more competitive. At the same time, broadcast strategies are more feasible – and probably more effective – in districts where television advertising is

⁵⁴ Senate expenditure data was collected from the Center for Responsive Politics' web-site (www.opensecrets.org). I thank Gary Jacobson for providing expenditure data for the House candidates.

⁵⁵ Again, I thank Gary Jacobson for providing this information for House candidates. Senate data was collected from *America Votes* (Scammon, McGillivray, and Cook 2001, 2003, 2006).

⁵⁶ e.g., Mitchell, Alison and Richard L. Berke. 2001. “After the Attacks: the Congress; Differences Are Put Aside As Lawmakers Reconvene.” *New York Times* September 13, 2001, A16; Stolberg, Sheryl Gay. 2002. “A Nation Challenged: Congress; Daschle Wants President to Tell Congress More About His Plans for War.” *New York Times* March 4, 2002, A10.

not astronomically expensive and where media markets more closely overlap with congressional districts. For instance, candidates in New York City will not only pay the high advertising rates of that area, but will also reach many citizens with the advertising who are not even in their districts. What is more, there are other means by which candidates can convey negative messages to their constituencies – for instance, direct mail and campaign web-sites (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2007).

That said, broadcast advertising remains an important means by which campaigns communicate with voters (Sapiro and Walsh 2002). Moreover, this sample represents the most viable candidates in these three election cycles – the candidates who were able to amass the financing and resources necessary to produce and air a commercial. Additionally, the gender composition of the sample closely resembles that of the universe of candidates. While 84 percent of all congressional candidates running in 2000, 2002, and 2004 were male, 81 percent of candidates who chose broadcast advertising were male, suggesting the sample and population are similar in terms of gender.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE.

Table 1 presents the data broken down by gender context. The dataset contains 560 observations where the candidate is a man running against another man, while there are only 30 instances where the unit of analysis is a female candidate who is running against another woman. In 135 observations, the candidate is a man running against a woman, and in 127 observations, the candidate is a woman running against a man.⁵⁷ To clarify, this dataset is a *candidate-level* dataset, meaning that the unit of analysis is the

⁵⁷ While it is tempting to divide these figures by two to determine how many races are included in each category, this would be misleading. There are several instances in the data where only one candidate in a race ran ads.

candidate, not the race. For instance, in 2000, Congressman Henry Hyde of Illinois' sixth district ran against challenger Brent Christensen. Both candidates are male, so each would be a case in the dataset and both have variables indicating a "man versus man" race. In 2004, when Senator Barbara Boxer ran against challenger Bill Johnson, each candidate would receive a line in the dataset. Senator Boxer would be counted as a "woman running against a man," while Mr. Johnson would be considered a "man running against a woman." Finally, where two women are running against one another, each would receive a line in the dataset and both would be counted as a "woman running against a woman." An example of this is Florida's thirteenth, where Jan Schneider and Congresswoman Katherine Harris ran against one another in 2004. Also, because this is a candidate-level database, it is possible that one candidate in a race is in the dataset but not his or her opponent. While *most* races include both candidates, in some instances only one is represented in the dataset, because the opponent did not run any television advertisements.

Table 2 depicts the breakdown of male and female candidates by candidate status. As it shows, the percentage of female candidates who aired advertising and who are incumbents is 32 percent, as opposed to 49 percent of male candidates who are similarly situated. This distribution is reversed for challengers who choose to air campaign spots. Forty percent of female candidates who broadcast were challengers, while only 27 percent of male candidates were. Candidates running in open seats were more equally distributed: 24 percent of broadcasting male candidates were candidates in open seat races, while 28 percent of broadcasting female candidates were. A chi-square test reveals

this relationship between gender and candidate status to be statistically significant

(Pr=.000).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE.

Finally, Table 2 compares the competitiveness of the race with the gender of the candidate. The data here suggest that, at least amongst candidates who choose to air ads, female candidates are more than likely to be in non-competitive races. Of the female candidates who aired commercials, 41 percent are in non-competitive races. Of the male candidates in the dataset, 48 percent of them are in non-competitive races. The chi-square test suggests that, amongst those candidates that air ads, being a male is associated with being in a non-competitive race (Pr=.09).⁵⁸

Results

Bivariate Comparisons

I begin my analysis by examining bivariate differences based on the simpler hypotheses. For instance, as Table 3 reveals, a bivariate analysis provides some support for Hypothesis One – women devote a somewhat higher proportion of their candidate-sponsored ads to negative messages (.38) as compared to men (.33) at the $p < .1$ level ($t = 1.91$). This difference also provides preliminary evidence as to which line of reasoning dominates; it would appear that women may be turning to assertive negative messaging strategies in an effort to overcome stereotypes that they are not tough enough for the job.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

⁵⁸ To be clear, this comparison cannot reveal whether incumbent women are more likely to be challenged in the first place or whether those challenges are likely to be deemed competitive.

The bivariate comparisons in Table 3 do *not*, however, provide any support for Hypotheses Two or Three. Unlike Hypothesis Two's prediction, men do not significantly alter their levels of negativity based on whether they are running against men or women (.33 versus men, .31 versus women, where the difference of means test is insignificant at a level greater than .9). Similarly, women do not display a statistically significant difference in levels of negativity against men (.40) and women (.34, where the difference is insignificant at a level greater than .65). In fact, once I break down the analysis based on the gender context of the race, there are no longer any significant differences between men and women, as the first difference of means tests suggests. Finally, the bivariate analysis reveals no support for the hypothesis that Republicans and Democrats will have different levels of negativity (H4). On average, both parties' candidates devote about 34 percent of their ads to negative messages.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Bivariate analyses, of course, are not the final word on whether any gendered or partisan relationships exist. As I explained earlier, past work on negative advertising has established several influential factors that must be controlled for. Therefore, I construct a multiple regression model, where the dependent variable is the proportion of candidate-sponsored ads that are negative. In order to test the first hypothesis – that men and women will have different levels of negativity – I include the dummy variable for candidate gender, as well as candidate status (e.g., incumbent, challenger, or open seat), competitiveness, the proportion of overall race expenditures spent by the candidate, and dummies for the election cycle. I then construct a second model to account for the

second and third hypotheses – in other words, to test whether gender context influences the levels of negativity. This model is identical to the first, except that instead of a dummy for candidate gender, I include a dummy for gender of the opponent. What is more, Hypotheses Two and Three are actually interactive hypotheses: it is the gender of the candidate *and* the gender of the opponent that matter. Thus, I run the model twice: first with only the male candidates and then with only the female candidates. The results are reported in Table 4.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

These models confirm several findings from past studies. Challengers are consistently more negative than incumbents and, in two out of three models, open seat candidates are also more negative than incumbents. Competitive races are also significantly more negative than non-competitive races in all three models. In addition, in two of the three models, the higher the candidate's proportion of expenditures, the lower the level of negativity, suggesting that front-runners are less prone to negative messaging. Finally, the models suggest a 9/11 effect: in five out of six instances, levels of negativity in 2002 are statistically significantly lower than levels in 2000 and 2004. These findings confirm the idea that candidates are strategically adjusting their negative messages to use the electoral environment to their best advantages.

However, the main variables of interest – the gender variables – are *not* statistically significant. These straight-forward tests do not allow me to reject the null for any of my first three hypotheses – women's levels of negativity are no different than men's (H1, see Model 1), and neither men nor women appear to be affected in their

negativity strategies by the gender of their opponents (H2, H3, see Models 2 and 3).

Finally, Model 3 also allows for a test of whether Republican women are more negative than Democratic women (H5). The coefficient on party is not statistically significant at the .1 level, suggesting no difference between Democratic women and Republican women. Thus far, then, a straight-forward model of candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and party does not support the first five hypotheses.

Testing a Conditional Model

The results so far may suggest a minimal role for gender. However, many of the hypotheses outlined above are conditional in nature and require a more complex model to test. What is more, the subtle ways in which gender currently manifests leads me to believe that this relationship would not be observed in such an obvious manner. To test the conditional relationships of Hypotheses Six through Nine, I begin with the previous model. The percentage of candidate-sponsored ads that are negative serves again as the dependent variable. I then include dummy variables for both the gender of the candidate and the gender of the opponent, as well as an interaction between the two to account for any gender context effects above and beyond the effects of the individual independent variables. I retain the same variables from the first model that account for the status of the candidate (incumbent, challenger, or open seat), whether or not the race is a toss-up, the candidate's proportion of race expenditures, and the election cycle.

I also keep the independent variable accounting for the party of the candidate. However, to account for the conditional nature of Hypotheses Six, Seven, and Eight, I interact candidate party with candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and a three-way

interaction amongst them all. These interaction terms will help me determine how party affiliation moderates gender context of the race.

Similarly, I add a variable to account for a state's constituents' familiarity with women in politics. I measure this by including the percentage of a state's legislature that is female.⁵⁹ I include this as an independent variable, then interact it with candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and, finally, all three independent variables. This, again, will account for the conditional nature of Hypothesis Nine – that is that candidates in states with low levels of women in office will exhibit larger gender context-based differences in levels of negativity. I report the results of this model, with Huber-White robust standard errors, in Table 5.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE.

The model reveals that many of the same variables are statistically significant, as was expected from the simpler models and previous work. Challengers are the most negative candidates, followed by open seat candidates, and, finally, incumbents.⁶⁰ Being in a competitive race increases a candidate's mean negativity level by 24 percentage points ($p < .05$), while increasing a candidate's proportion of the expenditures by one standard deviation (.27) leads to a five percentage point decrease in negativity ($p < .05$).

⁵⁹ Certainly there are many other ways to operationalize this construct. For instance, I could include a dummy variable for whether or not the state's governor was a woman. I have chosen state legislature composition for both theoretical and measurement-related reasons. Theoretically, I believe that the variation inherent to the state legislature measure can more closely capture the variation of familiarity with women in politics within a state. For instance, it is possible that urban voters in a state are quite prone to elect women while rural voters are not. The state legislature will more accurately represent this delineation, as the rural voters would send fewer female members. However, if the urban voters outnumbered the rural voters, they may elect a female governor. This measure would not, then, reflect the diversity of familiarity within the state. Second, but related, is that the state legislature measure has the benefit of greater variation than a dummy "female governor" variable. Finally, this state legislative measure has been validated in other studies (e.g., Hill 1981; Lawless and Fox 2004).

⁶⁰ These are all statistically significantly different from one another at the .025 level or below.

Finally, across the board, levels of negativity were lower in the 2002 electoral cycle than in 2000 or 2004. This behavior suggests that campaigns were responding to heightened expectations of unity following the attacks of September 11th, 2001.

Party Results. Interpreting the effects of candidate gender, the opponent's gender, and party is somewhat less straight-forward. Due to the large number of dummy variables, as well as interactions, I calculate the predicted values for each of the eight groups on the dependent variable. By constructing confidence intervals around these predicted values, I can determine if the values are statistically significantly different from one another.⁶¹ A second advantage to this method of comparison is that I set other variables in the equation to mean or modal values that comport with the means and modes for that subgroup. For instance, the mean value for the percentage of the state legislature that is female is somewhat higher for women who run against other women. In this way, my predicted values can account for several aspects in which the environments of candidates in different subgroups may differ. The predicted values for each subgroup are presented in Figure 2, with the groups arranged in order of increasing negativity.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

As Figure 2 reveals, Democratic women running against women who choose to air commercials have the lowest level of mean negativity at 25 percent. On the other extreme, Democratic women running against men who air advertisements use, on average, 51 percent of these ads to attack their opponents. This last group is statistically

⁶¹ I test all differences in predicted values between groups at both the 95 and 90 percent confidence level. The confidence level for a given statistically significant difference is noted throughout.

significantly more negative than all other subgroups, except for Republican women

running against women, who are the next highest subgroup (39 percent).

What is immediately striking about this figure is that female candidates tend to cluster towards the high end. To better understand the dynamics, however, it is important to make the more specific comparisons hypothesized above. I turn first to Hypothesis Six – in an attempt to prevent female voters from crossing over to vote for a female opponent, are Democratic women less negative against their Republican female opponents than their Republican male opponents? Table 6 provides support for this hypothesis. The difference between Democratic women running against Republican men (.51) and Democratic women running against Republican women (.25) is statistically significant (difference=.26, $p < .05$). Democratic women, then, are adjusting their negativity based on the gender context of the race.

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE.

What about Republican women? Hypothesis Seven suggests that Republican women will be equally negative against their male and female opponents. When running against Democratic women, Republican women's average level of negativity is .39; when running against Democratic men, it is .38. This difference is not significant, a finding that supports the reasoning that while Republican women may be attempting to poach Democratic and independent female voters, they also must fight to retain their base Republican votes. One means to do this is to run campaigns that look similar to Republican males' – in this case, by maintaining levels of negativity, regardless of the

opponent's gender.⁶² Such a finding is congruent with scholarship looking at members of Congress. As polarization increased in recent Congresses, Republican women became more conservative and, consequently, looked more like their male Republican counterparts (Swers 2002). What is more, the findings are intuitive, since these Republican women had to survive polarized partisan primaries in order to gain the party's endorsement. Perhaps their success in the primary hinged upon positioning themselves as typical Republican candidates, as opposed to typical *female* Republican candidates. Their general election tactics, then, should reflect these evolving strategies.

Do the data support Hypothesis Eight – that is that Democratic men will be less negative towards their female Republican opponents than their male Republican opponents? As Figure 2 shows, on average, Democratic men devote 32 percent of their televised commercials to negative messages when running against Republican men, as compared to 28 percent when running against Republican women. This is not a statistically significant difference, suggesting little support for Hypothesis Eight. However, in this instance, it is important to compare opponents to one another – in fact, we can revisit Hypothesis Two, which predicted that men will have different levels of negativity depending on whether their opponents are men or women. The average levels of negativity for Republican men running against Democratic men (.34) and Republican men running against Democratic women (.36) are not statistically significantly different

⁶² It is possible that when Republican women are running against other women, there is less danger of a member of the Republican base crossing over to vote for the opponent. If Republicans are generally leery of female candidates based on stereotypes that they are more liberal, then there is little danger of a conservative Republican voting for a *Democratic* female over a Republican female. However, I suspect that the major danger with the Republican base for female Republicans is not losing them to the Democratic opponent (male or female), but either losing them to a third-party candidate or simply not having them vote at all.

from one another. Neither are the average levels of negativity for Democratic men running against Republican men (.32) and Democratic men running against Republican women (.28). However, both Democratic and Republican men are *statistically significantly less negative against their female opponents than their female opponents are against them*. Republican men running against Democratic women devote .36 of their advertisements to negative messages, as compared to .51 of Democratic women's advertisements aimed at Republican men, a difference that is statistically significantly different at $p < .05$. Similarly, Democratic men running against Republican women devote .28 of their advertisements to negative messages, as compared to .38 for their Republican female opponents, a difference that is also statistically significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. Such a difference suggests, then, that men actually *are* sensitive to gender context, providing support for Hypothesis Two. It appears that chivalric norms (perhaps for both Republican and Democratic men) and/or electoral considerations (for Democratic men, attempting to retain female Democratic voters when running against a woman) constrain levels of negativity in mixed gender races.

Finally, although not explicitly hypothesized above, it is interesting to examine races in which two women are running against one another. The theory here states that Democratic women in these races have incentives to reduce their levels of negativity, while Republican women have incentives to sustain their levels of negativity (as compared to races against Democratic men). What does this dynamic look like to voters watching these races play out? As Figure 2 shows, Republican women are 14 percentage points more negative against their female opponents than Democratic women are. While

this is not statistically significantly different, the substantive size suggests this is a case of a small-n problem; this cell only contains 30 cases and the difference does approach statistical significance, even with this small number ($p < .15$). As the number of cases in this cell continues to grow, it will be interesting to further examine this dynamic and explore its impact on the voters in these races.⁶³

State Context Results. Hypothesis Nine suggests that as voters in a state become more familiar with women in elected politics, gender should matter *less* in predicting negativity strategies. Is this the case? Table 5 displays the results for the effect of the percentage of the state legislature that is female, as well as interactions with this variable and candidate gender; this variable and gender of the opponent; and a three-way interaction of female percentage of the state legislature, gender of the candidate, and gender of the opponent. The ultimate test of Hypothesis Nine, which predicted that gendered differences in negativity strategies will be more pronounced in states with low levels of women in elected office, is the three-way interaction of candidate gender, opponent gender, and the percentage of the state legislature that is female. The coefficient on this term is not statistically significant, which suggests there is no support for Hypothesis Nine.

⁶³ To verify the findings of the model presented in Table 5, I ran a similar model using the total number of negative ads run as the dependent variable, and adding total ads run as a control. Otherwise, the models were identical. Using a negative binomial regression analysis, the findings were largely verified. I obtained all of the same statistically significant differences amongst subgroups, except for two instances. The difference between Republican men versus women and Democratic women versus men is not statistically significant at $p < .1$, although the relationship runs in the expected direction. Additionally, this model suggests that, when running against women, Democratic women air more negative ads than Republican women, although this difference is not statistically significant. Ultimately, I chose the multiple regression model (where the dependent variable is the proportion of candidate-sponsored ads that are negative) because it explained more variance in the dependent variable; it had better predictive validity (some established variables, such as candidate status, were not statistically significant in the negative binomial regression model); and it was more straight-forward to interpret. Results of these analyses are displayed in Table E.1 of the Appendix.

However, the interaction between state legislature composition and gender of the opponent *is* statistically significant and negatively signed. This reveals that as women become increasingly successful in state elected office – and as voters in the state become familiar with women’s representation – candidates running *against a female candidate will be less negative against her*. Figure 3 illustrates the shape of this relationship. The lines representing races run against women are in bold and show a steep decline in negativity from the state with the lowest level of female representation in the state legislature (Alabama, with 7.9 percent) to the median state (Florida with 24 percent) to the state with the highest level of female representation in the state legislature (Washington State, with 40.8 percent). In contrast, the lines representing races run against men are fairly flat, indicating little difference (and no statistically significant difference) based on the representation of women in a state’s legislature. At its highest, a Republican woman running against a woman would devote 64 percent of her ad buy to negative ads in the state with the lowest female representation in the state legislature. At the opposite end, a Democratic woman running against a woman in Washington State would only devote 3 percent of her ad buy to negative messages. (Table E.2 in the appendix displays all predicted values for the minimum, median, and maximum state for all eight party/gender subgroups.)

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

Thus, although the analysis does not support Hypothesis Nine, it does support the general idea that voters’ familiarity with women candidates and elected officials moderates candidates’ negativity strategies. In fact, though I hypothesized that gendered

differences would be *smaller* as familiarity increased – which, in this operationalization, would mean that gendered differences in negative messaging strategies diminish as the representation of women in the state legislature increases – Figure 3 shows the widest gap between male and female opponents in Washington State. At the minimum and median levels of women in the state legislature, there is no observable gap between proportions of negativity aimed at men and women. However, at the maximum level of female representation (Washington State), a gap emerges between races run against men and races run against women – all races run against women display lower levels of negativity than races run against men. In effect, these results suggest that individuals running against women in states with high familiarity are responding to an electorate that seems particularly receptive of female candidates and elected officials.⁶⁴

Who Attacks First?

Thus far, I have established that gender context and partisanship are important considerations for candidates as they plan and implement negative messaging strategies. Democratic women are highly sensitive to gender context, launching significantly more negative ads against their male opponents than their female opponents. Additionally, women are more negative against their male opponents than men are against women. Finally, Republican women are more negative against their female opponents than

⁶⁴ It is also possible that those states with high percentages of women in the state legislature are also states that are more Democratic. Indeed, the explanation here sounds similar to the argument for why Democrats would be more sensitive to gender context than Republicans. As a quick check into this possibility, I correlated the percentage of women in the state legislature with the percentage of Democrats in the state legislature. The correlation is only -.21, verifying the conclusion that the effect has to do with women in the state legislature and not a state's propensity to elect Democrats. I thank Henriette Hendricks for pointing out this possibility. The information about party composition of state legislatures was accessed at the National Conference of State Legislatures' "Election Results and Analysis" page at www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/elect/analysis.htm.

Democratic women are against their female opponents. These results suggest that men and women feel more or less constrained in aggressive campaign tactics based on the gender context of the race.

The quantity of negative messages is an important part of this story. A second important consideration, however, is *who goes negative first*. It is one thing to respond in kind to a negative attack; it is quite another to instigate an aggressive negative attack. Past scholarship has shown this to be an important consideration, especially for men. In interviews with candidates for California U.S. House seats in 1992 and 1994, Fox (1997) finds that men running against women report waiting for women to go negative first. These male candidates reason it will be more acceptable for them to attack their female opponents if they are responding to a negative attack. Do these data reinforce these qualitative findings?

To answer this question, I use the same independent variables from the conditional model reported in Table 5, minus the variables measuring women's representation in the state legislature and the related interaction variables.⁶⁵ This time, however, I implement a logit analysis, as the dependent variable is coded "1" if the candidate went negative first and "0" otherwise. These codes were obtained from the Wisconsin Ads Project data, which provides the date of airing for each ad spot. I compared the candidates in the race and assigned a "1" to the candidate who first aired a negative ad. This analysis is necessarily restricted to those races where at least one of the

⁶⁵ I omit these state legislature variables largely for parsimony's sake. I do not expand upon hypothetical reasons to believe these variables will affect the propensity to go negative first. What is more, when I do run the model with the state legislature variables included (in an analysis not shown here), the predicted probabilities do not change substantively.

candidates went negative. In other words, purely positive races were dropped from this analysis, resulting in an n of 625.⁶⁶

Results. The predicted probabilities for the likelihood of each type of candidate going negative first are reported in Table 6.⁶⁷ (Full results of the logit model, with Huber-White robust standard errors, are displayed in Table E.3 of the appendix.) As with the model presented in Table 5, the independent variables measuring candidate gender, opponent's gender, and party are not individually statistically significant. However, once the predicted probabilities are calculated, significant results emerge. These results verify Democratic women's comfort with mounting aggressive campaigns against male opponents. Democratic women are 66 percent likely to go negative first against their male opponents, as opposed to 41 percent for Republican men running against women. Democratic women are also more likely to go negative first than their Democratic male counterparts. Democratic men have only a 25 percent chance of going negative first against a male opponent and a 27 percent chance of going negative first against a female opponent. Finally, Democratic women are more likely to go negative first against their male opponents than Republican women are against their male opponents (.66 versus .25). In all four cases, the difference between Democratic women and the comparison group is statistically significant at the .05 level.

This model also reveals a second way in which Republican men are sensitive to gender context. As you will recall, Republican men restrained their levels of negative advertising aimed at female opponents. It appears that Republican men *may* try to

⁶⁶ Also note that 8.9 percent of the cases in the original dataset ran all negative advertisements.

⁶⁷ Predicted probabilities were obtained by setting all other independent variables to their mean or mode for each particular subgroup.

counteract some of this negativity, not by meeting the higher levels of negativity but by striking first against their female opponents. When Republican men run against other men, there is only a 29 percent chance that they will go negative first. When Republican men run against women, there is a 41 percent chance that they will go negative first. Again, this difference is significant at the .05 level. These findings suggest that candidates – at least, in this case, Republican men running against women – are considerably sophisticated and, potentially, learning from similar races they have observed. These men may understand that they will be facing significantly more negative campaigns than if they were running against men. It appears that they are anticipating their opponents' strategies – by increasing their likelihood of going negative first – in an effort to combat this negativity without altering their overall levels of negativity.

Conclusion

I have now established that there are, indeed, significant gender differences in candidates' levels of negativity and strategizing about whether to go negative first. In particular, the data reveal that Democratic women are particularly sensitive to gender context. They are significantly more negative towards their male opponents than their female opponents. This proclivity for assertive campaigns is reinforced by Democratic women's higher likelihood of going negative first against male opponents. Republican women, however, do not distinguish between male and female opponents, either in terms of levels of negativity nor in the propensity to go negative first. What is more, the lack of difference in gender contexts for Republican women – matched with Democratic women's sensitivity to gender context – results in women-only races in which the

Republican is more negative than the Democrat. These findings are indicative of candidates' desire to comport with party *and* gender stereotypes, as well as Democratic women's electoral calculations to retain women voters and Republican women's desire to capture women voters while maintaining their conservative base.

Men are also adjusting their campaign behavior to account for gender context. Regardless of party, when men run against women, the female candidates will be more negative than the male candidates. Although there is no difference in men's levels of negativity directed at male and female opponents, this very lack of difference suggests sensitivity to gender context, as the male candidates are not *meeting* the high levels of negativity being directed at them by their female opponents. This suggests a measure of constraint by men running against women. However, amongst Republican men, there is some attempt blunt their Democratic female opponents' negativity advantages by being more likely to go negative first against female, as opposed to male, opponents.

Finally, there is evidence here that suggests the increasing presence of women in state elective office will mitigate levels of negativity aimed at female congressional candidates. This points to the indirect effects of women in elected office. Indeed, some of the findings here – namely, that women running against men are considerably more negative than other candidates – may strike some as bad news. Historically, the entry of women into politics was supposed to make it more civil. The findings here suggest this is not the case. *However*, the entry of more women into state office does appear to have a trickle-up effect, reducing the negativity of congressional races – at least those congressional races run against women. And while these findings do not exactly comport

with the original hypothetical expectations – namely, that an increased presence of women in state politics would lead to smaller gender context differences – the finding is interesting and should be elucidated in further work, potentially with qualitative investigation.

Thus, this chapter provides empirical insight into the gendered strategizing reported by consultants in Chapter Two. Consultants report being conscientious about the gender dynamics of a race. These results suggest that these considerations translate into substantively different campaigns. However, consultants contended that there would not be any observable differences in the *levels* of negativity based on gender, an inconsistency that suggests gender stereotypes may be manifest in subconscious differences in campaign advice. The findings here also corroborate recent experimental work. By manipulating different types of attacks as well as the gender of the target, Fridkin, et. al. (2009) find that negative messages are more effective at suppressing assessments of male candidates than female candidates. The content of the experimental advertisements were identical but for the gender of the attacked candidate, suggesting that voters' attitudes about gender interact with campaign strategies, producing different advantages for male and female candidates.⁶⁸ The results in this chapter suggest that these experimental findings may translate to the real world and, again, suggest that candidates are reacting to and anticipating voters' gender expectations. Moreover, the findings here suggest that campaign professionals are at least intuitively aware of these dynamics.

⁶⁸ Although, as I mentioned earlier, the experiment in the Fridkin, et. al. (2009) piece does not account for candidate party.

Differences in the *quantity* of negative advertising are only part of the story of candidate gender effects on negative messaging strategies. Are there also gendered differences in the substance of these negative messages? Chapter 4 picks up on this question with an analysis of the different issues men and women use to go negative.

Table 1 – Distribution of the Gender Context of Races in 2000, 2002, and 2004 of those Candidates Running TV Advertisements

	Men	Women
Men running against...	560	135
Women running against...	127	30

Table 2 – Distribution of Candidates in 2000, 2002, and 2004, by Gender and Candidate Status (percentages) and Race Competitiveness (percentages) of those Candidates Running TV Advertisements

	Women	Men
Incumbent	32	49
Challenger	40	27
Open Seat	28	24
Total	100	100
Toss-Up	59	52
Non-Competitive	41	48
Total	100	100

Table 3 – Bivariate Comparisons of Mean Levels of Negativity

	Mean Level of Negativity Proportion of candidate's ad-buy devoted to negative messages
Men	.33*
Women	.38*
Men versus Men	.33
Men versus Women	.31
Women versus Men	.40
Women versus Women	.34
Republicans	.34
Democrats	.34

Note: *=cells are statistically significantly different from one another at the .05 level based on a difference of proportions test.

Table 4 – OLS Regression Results

(Dependent variable is the proportion of candidate-sponsored televised advertisements that are negative)

	<i>Model 1</i> All Candidates	<i>Model 2</i> Male Candidates	<i>Model 3</i> Female Candidates
Female Candidate	.009 (.03)		
Female Opponent		-.02 (.03)	-.05 (.06)
Democrat	-.04* (.02)	.03 (.02)	-.08 (.06)
Challenger	.18* (.03)	.15* (.04)	.28* (.07)
Open Seat	.07* (.03)	.04 (.03)	.16* (.06)
Toss-Up	.24* (.02)	.24* (.03)	.21* (.06)
Expenditure Proportion	-.16* (.06)	-.21* (.06)	-.03 (.12)
2000	.07* (.02)	.07* (.03)	.04 (.06)
2004	.09* (.02)	.07* (.03)	.19* (.06)
Constant	.20* (.05)	.25* (.06)	.10 (.11)
n	819	668	149

Note: *= $p < .05$. Huber-White robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 5– OLS Regression Results, Full Model*(DV is the proportion of candidate-sponsored televised advertisements that are negative)*

Female Candidate	.08 (.11)
Female Opponent	.16* (.09)
Female Candidate X Female Opponent	.18 (.19)
Democrat	-.03 (.02)
Democratic Woman Candidate	-.02 (.07)
Democrat X Female Republican Opponent	-.03 (.05)
Democrat X Female Candidate X Female Opponent	-.15 (.13)
% Legislature	.0006 (.002)
% Legislature X Female Candidate	-.002 (.005)
% Legislature X Female Opponent	-.007** (.004)
% Legislature X Female Candidate X Female Opponent	-.005 (.007)
Challenger	.17** (.03)
Open Seat	.06** (.03)
2000	.07** (.02)
2004	.09** (.02)
Toss-Up	.24** (.02)
Proportion of Expenditures in Race	-.17** (.06)
Constant	.19** (.07)
N	819
R-squared	.29

Note: *= $p < .10$ **= $p < .05$ Huber-White robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 6 – Predicted Probabilities of First Strike

Predicted Probability of First Strike calculated from model depicted in Table E.3.

Gender Context			Predicted Probability of First Strike
Republican	Men running against...	Men	.29
		Women	.41
	Women running against...	Men	.25
		Women	.36
Democratic	Men running against...	Men	.25
		Women	.27
	Women running against...	Men	.66
		Women	.34

Figure 1: Hypotheses

<i>Hypotheses</i>
<p><i>Gender</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H1: Women's levels of negativity will be different than men's levels of negativity.
<p><i>Gender Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H2: Men will have different levels of negativity depending on whether their opponents are men or women • H3: Women will have different levels of negativity depending on whether their opponents are men or women.
<p><i>Party</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H4: Democrats and Republicans will have different levels of negativity.
<p><i>Party X Gender</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H5: Republican women will be more negative than Democratic women.
<p><i>Party X Gender X Gender Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H6: Democratic women will be less negative against their Republican female opponents than they are against their Republican male opponents. • H7: Republican women will be equally negative against Democratic women and Democratic men. • H8: Democratic men will be less negative towards their female Republican opponents than their male Republican opponents.
<p><i>State Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H9: Gender and gender context-based differences in levels of negativity should disappear in states with high levels of women in elected office.

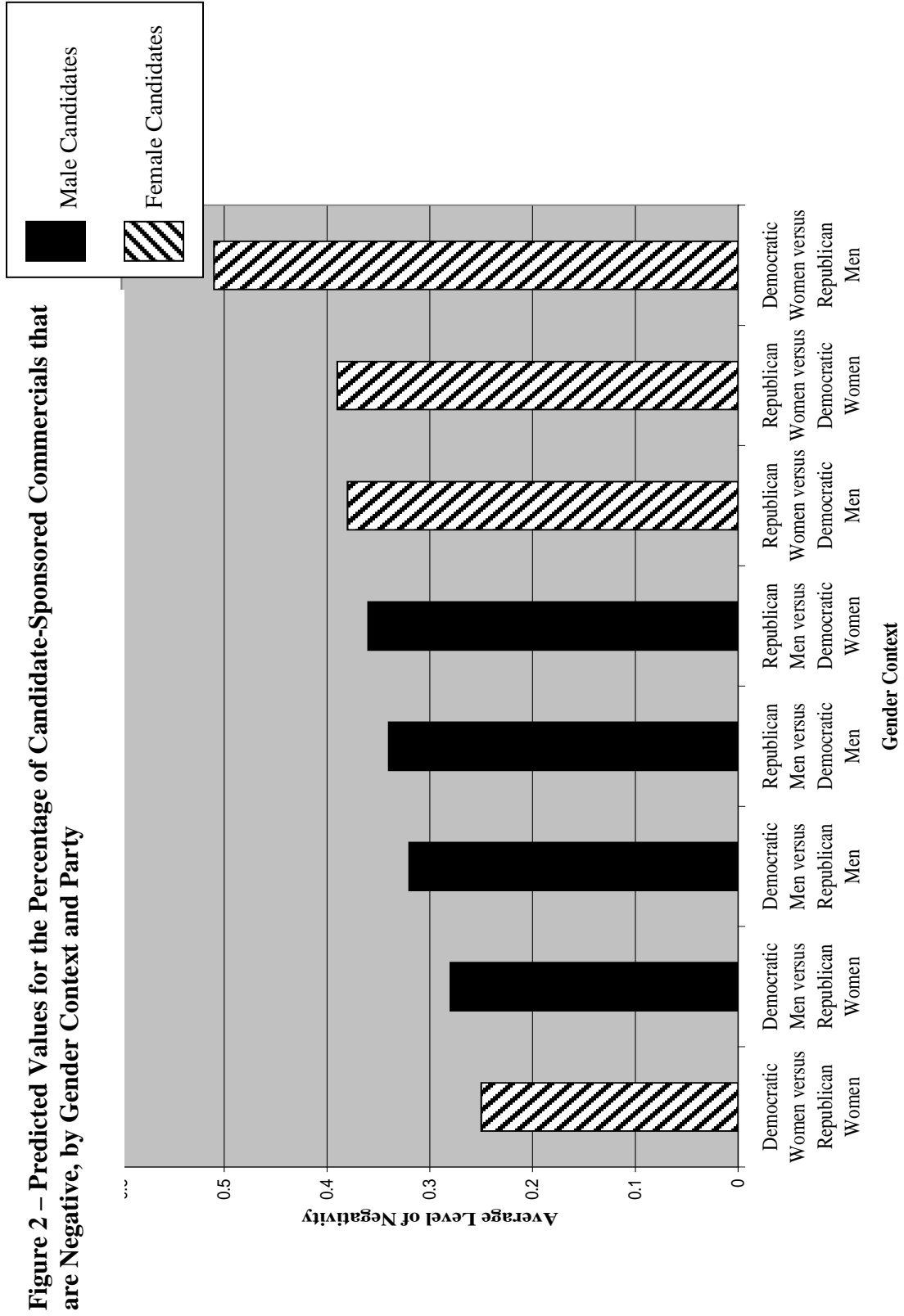
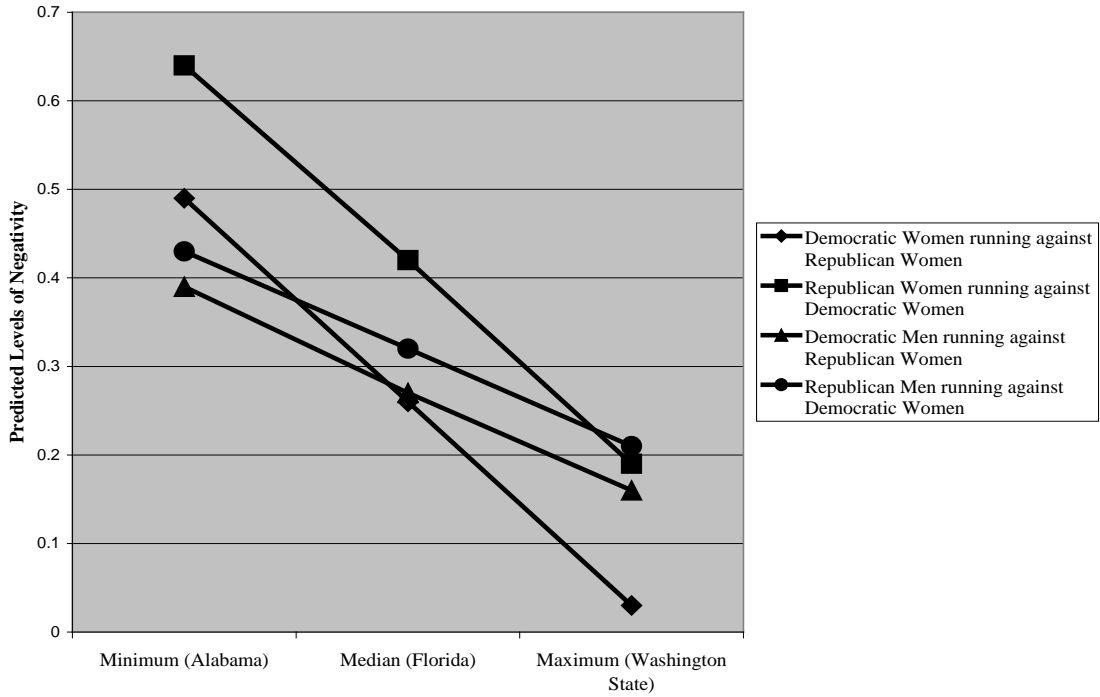
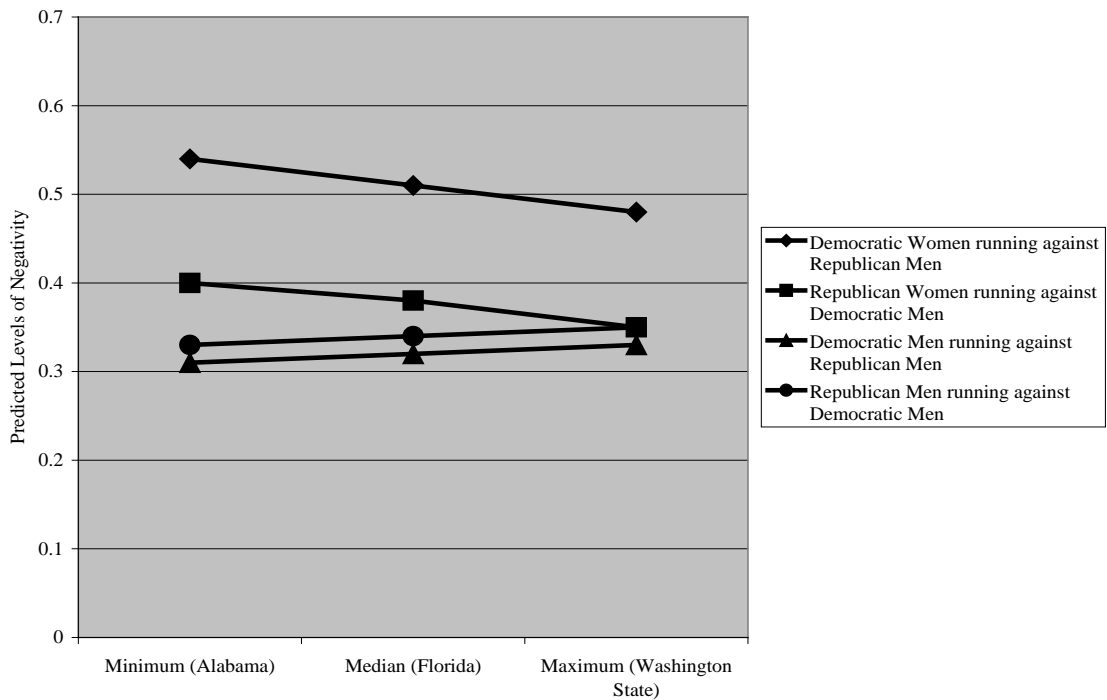


Figure 3 – Predicted Levels of Negativity by Party/Gender Context and Women’s Representation in the State Legislature

Running Against Women



Running Against Men



Chapter 4

Focusing the Attack Gender and Party Effects on Issue Agendas

For candidates, running for office requires an endless stream of decisions to be made. The candidate must first decide to run for office. After that, decisions range from the big-picture concerns – what is my theme, what do I want to accomplish in office? – to the practical – who will I ask for money? – to the mundane – where should I rent office space? Between these high- and lower-level concerns come strategic decisions about campaign tactics. One strategic decision that political scientists have been particularly interested in is the issue focus of candidates' campaigns. Candidates must decide which issues they want to emphasize in their communications with voters and, just as important, which issues they want to avoid. Because resources are limited – if not just the money of the campaign, then the attention devoted to the race by voters – candidates will want to focus on those issues which will be most persuasive with the electorate.

As rational actors, congressional candidates will act in a strategic manner in order to increase their chances of winning. As Chapter Two showed, the consultants advising congressional candidates about these strategic decisions explicitly consider gender – both of their clients and their opponents – in the ways that they deliver negative messages. Chapter Three further suggests that candidate gender is at work in ways the consultants do not explicitly acknowledge: despite their general insistence that candidate gender does not influence the *volume* of negative messages, an empirical analysis of congressional ads uncovers these very differences.

Choosing *how* negative a campaign should be is one important strategic decision. Another of these strategic decisions – choosing *which issues will be highlighted* in a candidate's negative messages – also involves anticipating and responding to voters' expectations of candidates and elected officials. As significant scholarship has shown, voters have different expectations about how male and female candidates will and should behave. Scholars have established that voters consistently expect men and women to be more competent at specific issues – women are more generally entrusted with “compassion” issues, like healthcare and education, while men are commonly cast as stronger on foreign affairs and defense issues (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004). These findings lead to the central questions of this chapter. How do candidates – an expanding proportion of whom are women or are running against women – play to or against the gender stereotypes and expectations of the electorate as they decide which issues will be emphasized in their campaigns? How does the gender of a candidate's *opponent* influence these calculations?

Scholars have begun to investigate the gender differences in issue focus, using data from actual campaigns to supplement experimental work (e.g., Dolan 2005; Herrnson, et al. 2003; Kahn 1996). In this chapter, I begin with these findings, but then focus on a subset of campaign communications: the negative advertising of House and Senate campaigns. Previous work on issue agendas does not make the distinction between negative and positive campaign messages (e.g., Petrocik 1996; Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006; Sides 2006). However, as I argue below, the fact that negative advertising asks viewers to evaluate not just the sponsoring candidate, but also the

sponsoring candidate's opponent (or possibly *only* the sponsoring candidate's opponent)

intuitively adds a different dynamic to the issue-focus decision. While the typical dilemma associated with establishing a campaign issue agenda is whether to highlight one's strengths or work to counter one's weakness, the dilemma associated with establishing a campaign issue agenda for *negative messages* is whether to prime the opponent's established weaknesses or to turn the opponent's strengths into weaknesses.

To explore these questions, I turn first to a review of work on gender differences in campaign agendas. While the effects of candidate gender on campaigns have been documented, scholars have only begun to examine how candidate gender specifically influences campaign issue agendas. I then discuss scholarship on party ownership of issues and its relationship to campaign agendas, as it provides a useful framework with which to examine the influence of candidate gender. What is more, the ownership of issues by parties is moderated by gender-ownership of issues. Political scientists are beginning to understand that voters have different expectations about Republican women and Democratic women, differences that are subtle but real (Dolan 2005; Schaffner 2005). Finally, I examine the questions raised with a database of commercials from the Wisconsin Ads Project, examining the 2000, 2002, and 2004 election cycles. I conclude that party and gender provide important contexts that influence candidates' negative messaging strategies. These findings give insight into the complex considerations of candidates as they make strategic campaign decisions.

Gender-Based Campaign Differences

Some of the earliest work examining the effects of gender on campaigns finds a wide array of differences between men's and women's messages. Most of this work focuses on differences in style. In a review of senate advertisements in the 1980s, Kahn (1996) finds that women appear in more of their advertisements and are more likely to appear in formal attire than their male counterparts. More recently, a review of political commercials from the 1990s reveals that women are more likely to wear professional attire than men; smile more; are more likely to serve as the narrator in their television spots; and are more likely to resort to distortive production techniques (Bystrom and Kaid 2002). These findings were echoed in the words of consultants reported in Chapter Two. Bill Amberg (2009), a former communications director for the Minnesota state Democratic Party, said he would advise all candidates, but *especially* women, not to deliver the critiques in contrast ads themselves. Republican consultant Mark Campbell spends more time establishing female candidates as leaders and focusing on their background in an effort to prove they are accomplished enough to hold office. Such comments suggest that many of the gender differences are content-based and subtle.

In the same vein, previous work forms a basis to expect differences between male and female candidates in issue agendas. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) establish that citizens expect men and women to be competent on different issues. Women are more likely to be assumed to be competent on so-called "compassion" issues – issues such as healthcare, Social Security, and children's issues. Men, on the other hand, are assumed to better handle issues of defense, foreign affairs, and crime. These differences are

attributed to the different traits individuals associate with men and women. Subsequent studies have verified and expanded these findings. For instance, Dolan (2004) finds that individuals are more likely to mention issues associated with women when evaluating Democratic women, as opposed to Democratic men. Moreover, the campaign consultant surveys detailed in Chapter Two find that campaign strategists believe voters continue to hold many of these gendered assumptions about issue competence. We can then expect candidates to strategically leverage these expectations – women by emphasizing women’s issues in their campaign communications and men by emphasizing issues of security and foreign relations. Not only will candidates want to reinforce their strengths with the electorate, but they will also want to avoid priming issues on which they are disadvantaged (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Druckman 2004).

Indeed, political scientists have begun to examine whether there are gender differences in campaign issue agendas. Kahn (1996) finds statistically significant differences between men and women running for the U.S. Senate in the proportion of candidate advertisements that mention certain issues. A higher proportion of men’s commercials discuss foreign affairs and economic issues, while a higher proportion of women’s commercials discuss social issues and social programs (36). Dabelko and Herrnson (1997) find similar differences for some subgroups in interviews of candidates for the U.S. House and their consultants. Larson (2001) finds the same tendency for female candidates to emphasize women’s issues amongst state legislature candidates in Pennsylvania. (See also Iyengar et al., 1997 and Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994 for additional congruent findings.)

However, the question of gender-based differences in issue agendas is not a settled issue. Much has changed about the participation of women in politics since these studies were published – most notably, the fact that more women are running for and winning elected office. More recently, Dolan (2005) finds that there are not significant gender differences in the issues candidates choose to mention on their campaign web-sites. This different finding *could* reflect the relatively low cost of including large amounts of information on a web-site, as opposed to paid television spots or printed material. But it may also indicate that gender stereotypes about candidates have become less rigid, and that candidates may perceive advantages in demonstrating their competence on counter-stereotypic issues.

One consideration that is absent in all of this work is a distinction between issues raised in positive and negative messages. When constructing a positive message about oneself, it is perfectly reasonable to expect that the candidate would only want to prime issues on which he or she holds a stereotypical advantage. However, when attacking the opponent two options present themselves – to attack the opponent on an issue on which you hold an advantage *or* to attack the opponent on an issue on which the opponent holds the advantage, in an attempt to persuade voters that the opponent is *not* as competent on that issue as they would expect.

The second consideration missing is that of the gender context of the race. As analyses in previous chapters have verified, it is vital to account for the interplay of the candidate's *and* opponent's gender when considering the role of gender stereotypes. Because of expectations about how men and women should interact, men running against

men will be constrained differently in their tactics than men running against women.

Similarly, women running against men will face different considerations than women running against women. In mixed-gender races, for example, the contrast in candidates may mean that gender is a particularly salient heuristic. As of now, we know even less about how the opponent's gender influences negative messaging agendas than about how the candidate's gender affects them.

Thus, the literature provides relatively consistent – albeit somewhat dated – evidence that candidates play *to* gender stereotypes in the issues they choose to emphasize in their campaigns. However, the aggregation of positive and negative appeals, more recent findings that bring gendered differences into question, as well as the lack of account of the interplay of candidate and opponent gender in this previous work makes further analyses necessary.

Party-Based Issue Stereotypes

While the primary focus of this chapter relates to the effects of gender on issue agendas, the vast majority of work on issue agendas has focused on party-related differences in campaign strategies. The findings from this work provide an intuitive framework for thinking about the impact of gender. Voters hold deep-seated stereotypes about which parties are more competent at various issues. Republicans are typically viewed as better-equipped to handle issues of defense, foreign affairs, and crime while Democrats are given the edge on social issues, such as education, healthcare, and the environment (Rahn 1993; Petrocik 1996; Sides 2006). Whereas the gender issue ownership work points to gendered associations of traits as an explanation for issue

competencies, party issue ownership is tied to past and repeated experiences with

Democrats and Republicans in power. As Petrocik (1996) explains, “It is a reputation for policy and program interests, produced by a history of attention, initiative, and innovation toward these problems, which leads voters to believe that one of the parties (and its candidates) is more sincere and committed to doing something about them” (826).⁶⁹ In sum, there is little debate within the literature that the Democratic and Republican parties hold an advantage on certain issues, nor is there any meaningful disagreement as to *which* issues each party owns.⁷⁰

Where the disagreement in this literature does lie is in whether and when candidates will emphasize issues associated with their party’s strengths, and when they might “trespass” on the opponent’s issues in an effort to gain advantage. In other words, when should a candidate buttress her existing advantage by emphasizing her party’s owned issues and when should she attempt to challenge the existing party advantages? As Petrocik (1996) again points out, candidates are not free to make this decision in a vacuum. The prevailing issue environment sets many of the terms of an electoral cycle’s issue agenda. While the candidates themselves contribute to setting the terms of the issue environment, large, external forces constrain the parameters. For instance, in 2002, the recent terrorist attacks made it impossible for Democrats to entirely ignore matters of defense and security. Conversely, in 2008, the crumbling economic situation compelled

⁶⁹ Although see Hayes (2005) for a trait-based explanation of party differences. He does not explicitly tie these trait differences back to issue competencies, but his work does form a trait-based foundation similar to that of the gender competency literature.

⁷⁰ This is not to say that these advantages are static (see, for example, Sides’ (2006) analysis of issue advantage by party over time (413)). These advantages tend to cluster around a long-term equilibrium, however.

most Republicans to address issues of foreclosures and unemployment, issues on which they do not hold a traditional advantage.

These two examples, however, are relatively extreme cases of issue environments. In most cycles, although national attention is *generally* gathered on a handful of topics, candidates have some freedom to establish their agendas. When they do, Petrocik (1996) finds that presidential candidates will overwhelmingly favor party-owned issues (834). Page (1978) had earlier concluded the same about presidential elections, while others verified similar behavior in congressional races (e.g., Kahn and Kenney 1999; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002). Such persistent differences can be normatively viewed as a triumph of the responsible parties model, in that, as representatives of their parties, candidates are offering clear and distinct alternatives to voters (e.g., Schattschneider 1942; Fiorina 1992). Voters treated to these issue-divergent campaigns would need to expend minimal effort to understand that the Republican candidate, if elected, would focus more time and energy on defense and foreign policy issues, while the Democratic candidate would prioritize healthcare and programs for the poor.

Other scholars were not so sanguine about the conclusions of issue divergence, either on normative nor empirical grounds. What responsible party theorists might deem clear alternatives, others saw as a recipe for vapid campaigns – indeed, campaigns that simply talk past one another (Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006). If each party's candidates *only* discuss their owned issues, the candidates will never challenge one another nor engage in meaningful dialogue about policies or values. At the same time, there were just too many high-profile politicians attempting – and succeeding – at trespassing on the

other party's issues. President Clinton revamped crime policy during his term, a traditional Republican advantage (Holian 2004), while President George W. Bush championed education reform, the established realm of Democrats (e.g., Balz 2002). Studies revealed these examples to be part of larger patterns (Geer 1998; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003; Sigelman and Buell 2004). Most recently, Sides (2006) demonstrates the sophisticated nature of candidates' issue trespassing. When candidates trespass on the other party's issues, he finds, they frame the issue in terms that are advantageous to their own party. So, for instance, if a Democrat talks about crime, he might emphasize crime prevention through interventionist government policies rather than punishment.

In summary, the issue agenda research comes to contradictory conclusions. Some points to the dominance of issue-ownership strategies, while other work suggests that candidates prefer to strategically trespass on the opponent's issues. There are several possible explanations for these inconsistent findings. First, the contradictory findings may be a function of different election cycles. As I mentioned earlier, some election cycles are more constrained in their issue foci, due to external events, than others. Second is the fact that, as with the work on issues and gender, previous research in this area has not separated negative campaign messages from positive campaign messages. Candidates may make different calculations about whether to emphasize an owned issue or trespass based on whether the message is extolling the candidate's virtues or attacking the opponent.

Finally, the issue agenda literature has largely ignored other characteristics of the candidates – in this instance, specifically, candidate gender and how gender and party stereotypes will interact to influence issue agendas. Evidence from interviews presented in Chapter Two offer reason to believe that these two sets of stereotypes will moderate one another. While Democratic consultant Darin Broton consults his female candidates to “pick [a Republican, male dominated issue] and own it, know it inside and out,⁷¹” Republican strategist Campbell, when asked if the issues are different for women than men, responds, “Not really.”

As I discussed above, gender carries with it its own expectations about issue competencies. Based on the interaction of party and gender, these expectations will either reinforce or contradict one another. I turn now to a discussion of how these dual expectations might reinforce each other for some candidates (i.e., Republican men and Democratic women) while creating a complicated navigation for others (i.e., Republican women and Democratic men).

Responses to Competing Stereotypes

Voters associate distinct groups of issue competencies with men and women and with Republicans and Democrats. While these groups of issues are associated along two orthogonal measures (gender and party), there is obvious overlap in the content of the two groups. Issues on which women are given an advantage – women’s issues, such as healthcare, education, and the environment – are by and large congruent with the group of issues on which voters presume Democrats to be more competent. Conversely,

⁷¹ Perhaps most telling, Broton began referring to “Republican male” issues without any prompting from the interviewer. In fact, this answer came in response to a question that was not even asking about issue differences specifically.

Republicans tend to hold advantages on the same types of issues that men do. To be clear, the groups of issues associated by gender generally include *more* issues than the issues that are categorized by party. They are, however, largely congruent. Throughout the rest of this paper, then, the terms “women’s issues” and “Democratic issues” can be considered to refer to the same category of issues (e.g., health, education, the environment, etc), while the terms “men’s issues” and “Republican issues” refer to the same group of issues (e.g., national defense, homeland security, foreign affairs, etc.)

How might a candidate navigate these stereotypes? A candidate may contend with either complimentary or contradictory gender and partisan stereotypes. Each candidate necessarily thinks about expectations associated with his or her gender *and* his or her party – or, at least, the candidate’s staff does, as described in Chapter Two. Simultaneously, a candidate will be considering how these two stereotypes are at play in regard to the candidate’s opponent. Is the opponent facing complimentary or contradictory gender and partisan stereotypes? Either way, what is the best strategy to reinforce the candidate’s stereotypical strengths and the opponent’s stereotypical weaknesses?

The increasing number of women in the political arena, along with the persistent nature of gender stereotypes, undoubtedly makes this navigation a salient one for men and women, Republicans and Democrats. For Democratic women and Republican men, the party and gender expectations are congruent – both point to competence on the same set of issues. But this complex navigation is *particularly* salient for those candidates – Republican women and Democratic men – who face gender and party stereotypes that are

inconsistent. Should they play to gender stereotypes, party stereotypes, or a mix of the two? And how should the candidates running *against* Republican women and Democratic men focus their messages – any issue chosen will be a strength on one set of stereotypes and a weakness on the other.

Because candidates want to win, how they choose to resolve this dilemma is based on how they think voters are processing and responding to the two sets of stereotypes. Voters use various sorts of shortcuts, or heuristics, in an attempt to efficiently make sense of the chaotic campaign environment (Popkin 1991). Voters rely more heavily on these heuristics in low information environments. For example, voters rely more on gender stereotypes in lower-information House races than Senate races (Dolan 1998). And while voters' reliance on these heuristics is well-accepted, what is less well-understood is what voters do when faced with multiple heuristics.

Psychological theories offer some possible explanations. Building from Kunda's "parallel processing" theory (Kunda and Thagard 1996; Kunda, Sinclair, and Griffin 1997), Huddy and Capelos (2002) theorize that voters integrate multiple stereotypes in the formation of candidate impressions. In such a case, the different stereotypes might moderate or reinforce one another. For the purposes here, then, Democratic women would be assessed as being particularly competent on women's issues, while a Republican woman might be deemed moderately competent on both women's and men's issues.

Sanbonmatsu and Dolan's (2008) finding that Republican women are evaluated as less competent on women's issues than Democratic women and less competent on

Republican issues than Republican men provides some support for the parallel processing model. On the other hand, several empirical tests do not appear to bear out this theory. Both Huddy and Capelos (2002) and Hayes (2008) find that the party cue dominates the gender cue. Hayes (2008) bases an explanation of the dominance of party cues on work related to attitude accessibility (e.g., Fazio 1995; Huckfeldt, et al 1999) – because voters are accustomed to evaluating candidates using party heuristics, they are more “chronically accessible” than gender expectations when forming candidate impressions (Huckfeldt, et al 1999). In such a case, gender expectations should largely drop out of the equation. Republican men and women would then be judged equally competent on men’s issues, and Democratic men and women would be judged equally competent on women’s issues.

So while more research is needed, evidence suggests that, for voters, the party cue dominates the gender cue. But assuming candidates do not have the benefit of this research, how do they behave? How do *candidates* believe voters will respond to multiple – and sometimes contradictory – pieces of stereotype-based information? This question is an important corrolary to the findings of party cue dominance. Without knowing what *candidates* are doing, it is difficult to conclude whether the party cue dominates in all circumstances or whether the party cue dominates because the candidates have effectively neutralized gender cues with their campaign strategies. With the assistance of candidate-sponsored campaign advertisements, I test whether candidates, by and large, are ascribing to one theory of multiple-stereotype processing over the other.

The literature presented leads to two different sets of questions when considering the interplay of negative messages, candidate gender, gender context of the race, party, and issue competency. First, considering the stereotypical issue competencies attributed to both party and gender, will candidates follow a strategy of issue ownership, attacking opponents on those issues they own through gender, party, or both; or will candidates follow a strategy of issue trespass, attempting to counter the opponents' gender- or party-based advantages on certain issues? This question leads to two competing hypotheses.

Issue-Ownership Hypothesis: Candidates will attack their opponents using their stereotypical strengths. Men and Republicans will attack their female or Democratic opponents on men's issues and women and Democrats will attack their male or Republican opponents on women's issues.

Issue-Trespass Hypothesis: Candidates will attack their opponents on the opponents' stereotypical strengths. Men and Republicans will be attacked on men's (Republican) issues and women and Democrats will be attacked on women's (Democratic) issues.

The second question relates to whether candidates' behavior reveals a general belief that the parallel processing model of multiple stereotype integration or the dominance of the party cue is operating amongst voters. The observation of either of these models will depend upon whether candidates are pursuing issue-ownership or issue-trespass strategies. Will candidates with congruent party and gender stereotypes heavily emphasize their owned issues, while candidates with competing party and gender stereotypes generally balance the issues they use to attack? Or will candidates with

congruent party and gender stereotypes attack heavily on the opponent's strengths, while

candidates with contradictory party and gender stereotypes balance their attack issues?

Or will candidates assess that voters rely on party cues to the exclusion of gender cues,

and base their attacks only on their party? Once again, these questions lead to competing

hypotheses:

Parallel Processing Hypothesis: As compared to candidates with incongruent party and gender stereotypes, candidates with congruent party and gender stereotypes will more heavily emphasize their opponents' weaknesses (issue-ownership strategy) or their opponents' strengths (issue-trespass strategy) in their negative messages. Candidates with incongruent party and gender stereotypes will balance the issues in their negative messages.

Party Dominance Hypothesis: Candidates will base attack strategies solely on the stereotypes associated with their party, assuming that voters evaluate candidates based on party cues to the exclusion of gender cues.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Figure 1 illustrates these competing hypotheses. The specific predictions of these hypotheses depend upon whether the issue-ownership or issue-trespass hypothesis bears out. If, in general, candidates are pursuing an issue-ownership strategy, and follow a parallel processing model, those candidates with congruent party and gender stereotypes will attack most heavily with issues on which they hold a traditional advantage.

Republican men would attack most heavily on men's issues, while Democratic women would place an emphasis on women's issues in their attacks. For those candidates with

incongruent party and gender stereotypes – in other words, Republican women and

Democratic men – if they pursue issue-ownership and parallel processing strategies, they will balance their attacks between women's and men's issues, in an attempt to aid voters in integrating the competing expectations. If, however, candidates are following an issue-ownership strategy but ascribe to the party dominance hypothesis, candidates will attack primarily with those issues on which they hold a party advantage. Republicans will attack on men's issues and Democrats will attack on women's issues.

On the other hand, if candidates are following an issue-trespass model with assumptions about the parallel processing model, candidates with congruent party and gender stereotypes, as compared to candidates with incongruent party and gender stereotypes, will most heavily attack on the opponents' traditional strengths. In particular, Democratic women would be most heavily attacked on women's issues while Republican men would be attacked primarily on men's issues. Republican women and Democratic men – those candidates with countervailing party and gender stereotypes – would be attacked in a balanced manner. Finally, if candidates are pursuing an issue-trespass strategy and assuming that voters give primacy to the party cue, then Republicans, regardless of their gender, will be attacked on men's issues, while Democrats, regardless of their gender, will be attacked on women's issues.

With the major hypotheses explained, I turn now to the data and models I use to test them.

In order to test the influence of gender and party stereotypes on candidates' negative issue agendas, I turn once again to the database of congressional campaign commercials collected and maintained by the Wisconsin Ads Project, which I previously analyzed in Chapter Three. I began by culling the dataset down to the negative ads run by congressional candidates.⁷² Coders then categorized advertisements into each of twenty different issue categories. These codes were adapted from Sulkin's issue codes (Sulkin, Moriarty, and Hefner 2007); a full list is included in Appendix F.⁷³ Each category was coded as a dummy variable and ads received a one in a category if that ad mentioned an associated issue. Ads were coded for *each* issue mentioned – many ads were given a one in multiple categories, while some were not issue-based so received all zeroes.⁷⁴ In sum, four coders analyzed just over 2,000 unique commercials. Once all commercials were coded, I collapsed the ads by candidate, so that I obtained a dataset where the candidate is the unit of analysis. Based on the total number of ads each candidate ran, I constructed proportion variables for each issue area – in other words, what proportion of each candidate's negative ads included mention of each type of issue.⁷⁵ The bivariate results for these variables are presented in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

⁷² See Chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion of the dataset, as well as how negativity is coded.

⁷³ I thank Tracy Sulkin for sharing her coding scheme and coded advertisements with me.

⁷⁴ Negative ads that did not include at least one issue, however, were rare, comprising only 8 percent of the sample of negative ads.

⁷⁵ These proportions account for how many times a given ad ran. In other words, the proportion would accordingly weight an ad that ran 100 times more than an ad that ran only once.

These analyses allow us to first examine any gender differences in issue agendas as it has generally been conceptualized – that is, by examining differences between male and female candidates, without *simultaneously* considering the effects of gender context or party. As the table demonstrates, gender-based differences are largely insignificant with one interesting exception. Candidates running against women sponsor a significantly higher proportion of ads that attack the opponent on defense and foreign policy issues, a finding that suggests a gender-based issue-ownership strategy, as women are not typically perceived as competent on these issues.⁷⁶ This difference is interesting considering the time period of the study – in 2002 and 2004, defense and foreign policy issues were particularly salient as elected officials responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The finding, then, suggests an issue environment that may have been tilted against women (Lawless 2004; Falk and Kenski 2006).

Other bivariate results in the table are suggestive of an issue-ownership strategy by candidates. Republicans are generally attacking more on issues owned by their party: crime, terror, and taxes. Republicans also attack more than Democrats on “other social issues,”⁷⁷ a fact that probably reflects the prominence of gay marriage and other socially conservative issues in these election cycles. Similarly, Democrats are attacking more on

⁷⁶ The interpretation here gets murkier if gender context *is* considered. This strategy represents issue ownership most obviously for a *man* running against a woman, but it is not clear whether this would be issue ownership or trespass for a women running against a woman. For now, I will call this issue ownership, as the vast majority of candidates running against women in the dataset are men (82 percent). But I will return to this dynamic shortly.

⁷⁷ This category does not include abortion.

issues owned by *their* party, the women's issues: health, Medicare, social security, corporate regulation,⁷⁸ and employment.

Defining and Aggregating "Women's" and "Men's" Issues

While examining the individual issue areas provides a detailed view of candidates' issue agendas, aggregating these issues into "men's" and "women's" issues will aid in the analysis of how gender systematically influences the focus of a campaign. Ultimately, I am less concerned with the *specific* men's or women's issue that candidates emphasize, and more interested in to what degree candidates emphasize men's and/or women's issues. In order to aggregate, I rely on Dolan's (2004) work. Based on an extensive literature review, she concludes that the category "women's issues" – or, at least those issues that voters typically associate with women – is comprised of education, welfare, health, social security, civil rights, abortion, women's rights, day care, family leave, and the environment. She concludes that the category "men's issues" include economic issues, taxes, monetary policy, employment policies, crime, drugs, military, and international issues. Based on this, I assign my categories "family," "education," "environment," "health," "Medicare," "Social Security," "abortion," "other social issues," and "welfare" to be women's issues. I also include campaign and government reform, based on its fit with past work that shows women are seen as more moral than men (Jamieson 1995). Also based on Dolan's work, I assign my categories "budget," "taxes," "corporate regulation," "employment," "crime," "terror," "defense/foreign

⁷⁸ "Corporate regulation" does not necessarily fit nicely into empirically established Democratically-owned issues. In these election cycles, it probably represents a "performance issue" (Petrocik 1996), as voters reacted to Enron-like scandals that were typically attributed to lax corporate oversight at the hands of a Republican-controlled federal government (e.g., Altman 2002).

policy,” and “agriculture” as men’s issues.⁷⁹ (See Appendix G for a discussion of coding these groups of issues as men’s and women’s issues, as opposed to Republican and Democratic issues.)

Once I aggregated the individual issue categories based on Dolan’s (2004) typology, I then calculated two variables. The first divides the number of negative ads that mention a women’s issue by the candidate’s total number of negative ads. The second divides the number of negative ads that mention a men’s issue by the candidate’s total number of negative ads. The resulting variables are proportions of the candidate’s negative ads that mention women’s issues and men’s issues.⁸⁰

The only bivariate significant difference comes through for the parties. As the issue ownership hypothesis would expect, Democrats sponsor a higher proportion of ads that mention women’s issues. The opposite case is true of men’s issues for the Republicans. Finally, the third to last row of Table 3 shows the average difference in proportions between women’s issues and men’s issues. I compute this to get a sense of whether campaigns are emphasizing one set of issues over the other. Positive numbers indicate that campaigns are emphasizing women’s issues while negative numbers suggest that campaigns are emphasizing men’s issues. Once again, the only significant difference

⁷⁹ My aggregation measures include all the original categories I coded for *except* “guns” and “immigration.” These categories seemed particularly vulnerable to *position* ownership rather than *issue* ownership. In other words, women and Democrats might be viewed as more competent on gun control issues while men and Republicans could be viewed as more competent on gun rights issues. It seemed to me a similar divide would exist for immigration. Due to this uncertainty, as well as the overall small proportion of ads that included these issues (a mean proportion of 4 percent by candidate for guns and 1 percent by candidate for immigration), I omitted these from the aggregation.

⁸⁰ To be clear, any given ad could include a men’s issue *and* a women’s issue. In such a case, the ad would be coded both a men’s issue ad and a women’s issue ad. In addition, one ad may have several women’s (or men’s) issues mentioned. However, mentioning several women’s issues would not give that ad more weight as a women’s issue ad. Each ad either mentions women’s (men’s) issues or it does not.

emerges between parties, with Democrats being significantly more likely to emphasize women's issues than men's issues (the difference of means test is statistically significantly different from zero at $p < .05$)⁸¹ and significantly more likely to emphasize women's issues than Republicans (the difference of means test is statistically significantly different at $p < .05$).

Table 2 displays the mean level of negative advertisements that mention men's issues, women's issues, and the difference between the two by party and gender context subgroup. These also verify a consistent party difference – across all Republican subgroups, negative ads emphasize men's (Republican) issues more than women's (Democratic) issues, and the opposite is true for Democrats. Within the Republican Party, men and women appear to be responding to the gender of their opponents in similar ways – both male and female Republicans emphasize *more* men's issues when running against female Democrats than when running against male Democrats. In the Democratic Party, men generally pursue the same issue strategy in their negative messages (.20 against men, .25 against women). Democratic women, however, almost appear to balance their attacks between men's and women's issues when running against men, but act like Democratic men in their emphasis on women's issues when running against Republican women. The patterns revealed in Table 2 must be taken as merely suggestive, however, as few of these differences are statistically significantly different at the $p < .1$ level.⁸²

⁸¹ Republicans, however, are not significantly more likely to emphasize men's issues than women's issues. Their difference score (-.04) is not statistically significantly difference from zero at the $p < .1$ level.

⁸² Democratic men running against men and Republican men running against men are statistically significantly different from one another ($p < .05$), as are Democratic men running against men and

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

In sum, the bivariate findings again suggest an issue-ownership strategy, with Democrats attacking more on women's issues and Republicans attacking more on men's issues. What is more, the significant differences in party but the relatively few differences in gender suggest that candidates are assuming the dominance of the party cue amongst voters. However, the suggestive results in Table 2 do offer some evidence that further models may reveal differences in negative advertising issue agendas based on the gender of the opponent.

Multiple Regression Models

The bivariate findings are generally suggestive of a party-based issue-ownership strategy with candidates. However, until accounting for other relevant variables, I cannot draw any definitive conclusions. I build an ordinary least squares (OLS) model beginning with dummy variables to account for the gender of the candidate and the gender of the opponent, each of which are coded one when the candidate or opponent is a woman. The equation also includes an interaction between these two terms to account for any effects of gender context above and beyond the individual independent variables. I then include a dummy variable for the candidate's party, coded one when the candidate is a Democrat.

Republican men running against women ($p < .05$). I am suspicious that some of these differences – such as the difference between Democratic women running against men and Democratic women running against women – are not statistically significant due to the small number of cases that fit in some of these categories.

The model also includes controls for candidate status (incumbent, challenger, or open seat) as well as whether or not the race was a toss-up.⁸³ These measures are common in models predicting issue agendas (e.g., Kaplan et al 2006; Petrocik 1996, 2003). A measure of the district's vote (or state's vote, in the case of a senate race) for the Democratic presidential candidate accounts for the general partisan preference of the district – holding all else equal, one would expect candidates running in heavily Democratic districts to emphasize women's issues more than candidates running in Republican districts (Petrocik, etc.). For 2000 and 2004, I use the Democratic presidential vote in that year, while for 2002 it is the 2000 presidential vote adjusted for redistricting.⁸⁴ Finally, I include dummy variables to account for the election cycle. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, issues of terrorism, defense, and homeland security were far more salient for voters (Lawless 2004; Kenski and Falk 2004). I expect candidates, *ceteris paribus*, to emphasize men's issues more in 2002 and 2004 than in 2000.

I begin with three OLS models – in the first, the dependent variable is the proportion of a candidate's commercials that include at least one women's issue. In the second, the dependent variable is the proportion of a candidate's commercials that include at least one men's issue.⁸⁵ Finally, the third model includes a dependent variable

⁸³ See Chapter 3 for further discussion on the coding of this variable.

⁸⁴ I thank Gary Jacobson for sharing this data for House candidates. Democratic presidential vote for the senate races was collected from the *Almanac of American Politics* (Barone, Cohen, and Ujifusa 2001, 2003, 2005).

⁸⁵ Recall that the database I use in this chapter only includes candidates who actually ran negative ads. This censors 307 candidates out of a total of 820 candidates from the database – candidates who did run commercials in at least one of these election cycles but not negative ads. Based on the data, I suspected that I may need to run a Heckman selection model in order account for those who chose not to run any

that is the calculated difference between the first two: the proportion of a candidate's ads that include at least one men's issue subtracted from the proportion of a candidate's ads that include at least one women's issue. Positive values indicate that, overall, the candidate emphasized women's issues while negative values indicate that the candidate emphasized men's issues. Columns 1, 3, and 5 of Table 3 display the regression results for these models with Huber-White robust standard errors.⁸⁶

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

What do these models say about the issue-ownership and issue-trespass hypotheses? Across all three models, candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and the interaction between the two variables is insignificant. Therefore, I cannot draw any conclusions about how gender is affecting the issue agendas of candidates' negative messages except that it *appears* that gender is not a factor in these strategies. Party, however, is another matter. Being a Democrat is a highly significant variable across all three models, and in a direction consistent with the issue-ownership hypothesis. Democrats' negative commercials contain a significantly higher proportion of ads that mention women's issues (an increase of .09 over Republicans, $p=.005$), a significantly lower proportion of ads that mention a men's issue (by .14, $p<.001$), and, on average, emphasize women's issues over men's issues, with a mean difference of .23 (which is

negative ads. I did so for each of the dependent variables I discuss in this chapter. Rho was insignificant for each, however, suggesting that the selection model was not necessary. Nevertheless, the selection model coefficients and standard errors did not differ significantly from the simpler OLS model. In the interest of parsimony, then, I stick with the OLS models. Results from the Heckman selection models are available in Appendix H.

⁸⁶ These robust standard errors help correct for the fact that the observations in the data set are not entirely independent. Some candidates appear more than once in the dataset, due to having races in multiple election cycles. Moreover, there is dependence between candidates running against one another, as each candidate responds to attacks from the other.

significantly different from zero at the $p < .001$ level). The findings suggest that candidates are pursuing issue-ownership strategies in their negative message agendas based on party affiliation.

What is more, the consistent significance of party suggests support for the party dominance hypothesis as opposed to the parallel processing hypothesis. Because gender is never significant – as the gender of the sponsoring candidate, the gender of the opponent, nor an interaction between the two – yet party always is, it suggests that party is an important consideration for candidates when making strategic negative messaging decisions. Assuming the candidates are rational actors who want to *win* their races, such a finding implies candidates' theorizing about voters – namely that the party cue is a stronger influence on voters than gender. These results may reflect two different strategies. Candidates may be more concerned about abiding by party issue-competence stereotypes than gender issue-competence stereotypes. Or, perhaps candidates are *strategically* choosing issues so as to de-emphasize the gender cue.

Note also that, as expected, candidates were influenced by the issue environments of the races. Across all models, candidates sponsored a higher proportion of ads that mentioned men's issues, which include terrorism and defense, and a lower proportion of ads that mention women's issues after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The findings reflect the electorate's change in focus following these events and candidates' responses to the issue environment.

Interaction Models

It is a bit premature, however, to draw any conclusions about the party dominance and parallel processing models, as a more complex model is necessary to properly test how the convergence and divergence of party and gender stereotypes influences candidate strategy. To that end, I run three new models, which are the original models with added interactions. In particular, I include a three-way interaction of candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and party, as well as the lower-order two-way interactions. Such interactions will provide insight into the behavior of candidates based on the confluence of multiple stereotypes. The results are presented in columns 2, 4, and 6 of Table 3.

These models verify the findings from the simpler models regarding parties and issue-ownership. Candidates continue to focus on the party issues they own. Republicans sponsor a higher proportion of ads that mention at least one men's issue (by .16, $p < .001$), Democrats seem to sponsor a higher proportion of ads that mention at least one women's issue (by .07, but $p = .11$), and Democrats emphasize women's issues overall in their campaigns with a balance of .23 (constant plus coefficient) of their ads ($p = .001$). And, once again, the electoral cycle has the expected influence on negative messaging agendas.

Once again, however, the regression results suggest that gender largely does not influence negative messaging issue agendas. The coefficient on the interaction between Democrat and woman in the model predicting the percentage of a candidate's negative ad buy that mentions a men's issue is significant, suggesting that Democratic women devote

a higher percentage of their negative ad buy to these issues (by .03, $p=.01$).⁸⁷ Due to how gender and party are coded, this particular coefficient compares Democratic women to Republican men. However, I have eight different subgroups I am interested in comparing – I need a straightforward way to compare subgroups, while accounting for the contextual differences inherent to these different subgroups (e.g., account for the fact that women who run against other women do so in districts with significantly higher proportions of the vote for Democratic presidential candidates).

I calculate the predicted value of the dependent variable for each model for each of eight subgroups (i.e., Republican women running against Democratic women; Democratic women running against Republican women; Republican men running against Democratic women; Democratic men running against Republican women; Republican women running against Democratic men; Democratic women running against Republican men; Republican men running against Democratic men; and Democratic men running against Republican men), just as I did in Chapter Three. I vary the variables of interest (candidate gender, gender of the opponent, and party) and hold all other variables at their means or modes for the specific subgroup in question. Confidence intervals around the predicted values allow me to test whether the predicted proportions for each group are

⁸⁷ I also ran some pared down models for each of the three dependent variables. With so many interaction terms, it is possible that many of these variables are insignificant due to high multicollinearity. The only difference between the full models and the pared down models was in predicting the difference in issues. When the three-way interaction between party, gender, and gender of the opponent is dropped, the interaction DemocratXFemale Opponent becomes significant ($p=.09$). The coefficient on this term, .21, suggests then that Democratic women emphasize women's issues more against Republican female opponents (as compared to Republican men running against men). This comparison is not entirely useful, as there is little reason to compare these two sub-groups; but any effects of this significant interaction should emerge in the predicted values of the dependent variable which I analyze next.

significantly different from one another. Table 4 displays the predicted proportions for these models and Figures 2, 3, and 4 graphically depict the predicted proportions.

INSERT TABLE 4 AND FIGURES 2, 3, AND 4 HERE

Figures 2 and 3 display the predicted proportions of negative ad buys that mention women's issues (Figure 2) and men's issues (Figure 3) for each of the eight sub-groups. Democrats tend to be clustered towards the high end of Figure 2, indicating that a higher percentage of their negative ad buys include ads that mention at least one women's issue. In Figure 3, Republicans cluster towards the high end, indicating that they tend to have higher proportions of their negative ad buys that include at least one men's issue. More specifically, let us examine races where Democratic women are running against Republican men. This offers the most straight-forward look at the question of issue ownership versus issue trespass. For Democratic women who are running against Republican men, all indicators point to women's issues as being their stereotypical strengths – their party and gender stereotypes suggest this should be their strength, while party and gender stereotypes suggest these issues would be weak issues for their opponents. The opposite is true for Republican men running against Democratic women – their party and gender stereotypes would indicate strength on men's issues, while their opponent's party and gender stereotypes indicate weakness on these same issues. An issue ownership strategy for a Democratic woman running against a Republican man would be reflected in heavy emphasis of women's issues and light emphasis of men's issues; and vice versa for the male Republican running against her.

Figures 2 and 3 reveal that each of these candidates is following a different strategy. Both candidates are relatively low in the proportion of their negative ads that mention women's issues – these Republican men average .44 of their negative ads that mention women's issues, the lowest average level for a subgroup, while Democratic women average .57. At the same time, both of these sub-groups are relatively high in the proportion of their ads that mention men's issues: an average proportion of .69 for Democratic women and .70 for Republican men (levels that are statistically indistinguishable from one another at the $p < .1$ level). These values suggest, then, that Democratic women running against men pursue an issue-trespass strategy, while their Republican male opponents are pursuing an issue ownership strategy.

However, the dependent variables depicted in Figures 2 and 3 may not tell the whole story of a campaign. A given subgroup may sponsor a high proportion of ads that mention at least one women's issue, but may *simultaneously* sponsor a high proportion of ads that mention at least one men's issue.⁸⁸ In this particular situation, the voters will see a high proportion of negative ads that mention both issues, ultimately resulting in a rather balanced campaign in terms of campaign emphasis. Therefore, I run another model that includes the same independent variables as before but a dependent variable that measures the difference in proportion between ads that mention at least one women's issue and ads that mention one men's issue. As with the bivariate analysis, positive figures indicate an overall focus on women's issues, while negative figures reveal an overall focus on men's

⁸⁸ The way in which the ads were coded makes this possible, since ads were coded for *all* issues mentioned. Thus, the same ad might include a hard and compassion issue.

issues. The results of the regression model are displayed in column 6 of Table 3, with the predicted values displayed in Column 3 of Table 4 and Figure 4.

This model verifies many of the findings from the previous models. The post-9/11 election cycles are weighted more heavily towards men's issues than the 2000 election cycle. In addition, open seat candidates lean more towards men's issues than incumbents, while candidates running in districts with higher Democratic vote totals emphasize women's issues more heavily. The coefficient for party is statistically significant, indicating that Democrats will, on balance, run negative ads that emphasize women's issues 22 percentage points more than Republicans' negative ads. At the same time, there are no coefficients on any gender variables that reach statistical significance, once again suggesting that party, as opposed to gender, serves as the dominant cue.

Issue-Ownership versus Issue-Trespass: A Test

Using the predicted values on the dependent variable for this model, however, I can more closely investigate how congruent and countervailing stereotypes, as well as the gender context of the race, influence negative messaging strategies. I begin with those candidates who have congruent stereotypes: Democratic women and Republican men. These candidates make up the extremes of the predicted values. Democratic women have the largest difference score – .33 – indicating an emphasis on women's issues when they are running against Republican women.⁸⁹ This figure is statistically different from zero ($p < .05$), statistically significantly different from the predicted value for their opponents (-

⁸⁹ This can get a little confusing here, as technically, Republican possess *some* sort of assumed issue strengths in regard to women's issues. But based on how I have defined issue-ownership – that is, that it is evident when candidates *attack on their strengths*, Democratic are still exhibiting issue-ownership behavior, even if the strengths they use to attack may also be somewhat shared by the opponent.

.13, $p < .1$), and statistically significantly different from Democratic women's difference score when they run against Republican men (-0.12, $p < .05$). Conversely, Republican men who run against women have the lowest difference score – -0.26 – indicating that their negative ads focus most heavily on men's issues. This value is statistically significantly different from zero ($p < .05$), and statistically significantly different from their difference value when running against men (-0.03, $p < .05$).

These two cases, however, speak to the importance of *gender context* in conjunction with candidate gender and party. Both Democratic women and Republican men – despite having congruent stereotypes at work – behave differently depending on whether they face a man or a woman. When Democratic women face women, they place a relatively heavy emphasis on women's issues; when they face men, they balance their attacks. (The Democratic women versus men predicted value is -0.12, which is not statistically significantly different from zero at the $p < .1$ level.) Similarly, Republican men heavily emphasize men's issues when running against women, but balance their attacks when running against men (-0.26 versus -0.03, which is not statistically significantly different from zero).

These two groups – Democratic women and Republican men – are those that offer insight into the question of whether candidates are pursuing issue-ownership or issue-trespass strategies in their negative messaging. Because both sets of stereotypes point in the same direction, there are clear expectations for what each of these strategies would look like. If Democratic women follow an issue-ownership strategy, they would, on average, always emphasize women's issues more than men's issues. Conversely,

Republican men would always, on average, emphasize men's issues. The results here suggest that the choice between issue-ownership and issue-trespass is a highly contextual one. When facing women, both congruent groups choose issue-ownership. However, when facing men, both groups pursue a mixed strategy, attacking their opponents generally equally on the sponsors' strengths and weaknesses. See Table 5 for a summary of the hypotheses' expectations and findings.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

Considering the particular circumstances around each of these sub-groups, some findings are intuitive. Democratic women running against Republican women, for instance, emphasize their doubly-owned issues perhaps in an attempt to prevent members of their gender base from voting for the *other* woman. If Democratic women suspect that some of their support amongst women voters comes because *they are women*, they will act to remind these voters that while the other candidate might also be female, she cannot be expected to be as competent on those issues which women tend to value more than men. On the other hand, Republican men running against women have chosen the textbook issue-ownership strategy, so as not to prime the issue advantages of their opponents, who enjoy a *double-advantage* on women's issues.

What is less clear is why Democratic women and Republican men running against men pursue balanced attack strategies. In particular, what keeps Democratic women running against Republican men from pursuing the same textbook issue-ownership strategy that Republican men employ against women? Both are *facing* opponents with congruent stereotypes, so it is unclear why these similarly situated candidates pursue

different strategies. For that matter, why do Republican men not also pursue an issue-ownership strategy against male opponents? It would appear they are attempting to neutralize their opponent's party advantage while playing up their own party issue advantages.

Parallel Processing versus Party Dominance: A Test

The parallel processing and party dominance hypotheses predict how candidates facing multiple stereotypes will behave. In a first test of these hypotheses, I look again at the congruent subgroups: Democratic women and Republican men. If these subgroups are following a parallel processing theory of multiple stereotypes, they will expect that voters assessing them – with two congruent stereotypes – will perceive them to be *particularly* competent on those issue strengths related to the two stereotypes.

Democratic women would be deemed particularly competent on women's issues, while Republican men would be perceived as particularly competent on men's issues.

Democratic women running against Republican women and Republican men running against Democratic women may be reflecting this operating theory – based on the predicted differences between men's and women's issues (displayed in column 3 of Table 4), these groups particularly emphasize their stereotypically advantageous issues.

However, within parties, Democratic women do not appear to be emphasizing these issues *more than* Democratic men: the only significant difference amongst the predicted differences of these four groups is between Democratic women running against Republican women and Democratic men running against Republican men. In this instance, though, the difference runs in an opposite direction than the parallel processing

theory would predict. Democratic men running against men emphasize women's issues significantly more than Democratic women running against men (0.13 versus -0.12, difference significant at $p > .05$). Similarly with Republicans, there are no statistically significant differences compared within the party. Republican men are not making statistically significantly different emphases in their negative messages than Republican women. Thus, there is little support amongst the stereotype congruent groups that candidates assume voters implement parallel processing in candidate assessment.

What about those groups with countervailing gender and party issue-competency stereotypes: Republican women and Democratic men? It is plausible that the conflicting stereotypes are more salient to these groups than the congruent stereotypes are for Democratic women and Republican men. If so, these incongruent groups may be more effortfully strategizing around this perceived disadvantage. For these subgroups, assuming voters are following a parallel processing theory of countervailing stereotypes means that the voters' stereotypes will moderate one another. In other words, Republican women will be deemed somewhat less competent on women's issues than Democratic women and less competent on men's issues than Republican men; similarly, Democratic men would be assessed as less competent on men's issues than Republican men and less competent on women's issues than Democratic women. Candidates responding to these assumptions would pursue balanced attacks since they do not have a strong advantage (or disadvantage) on either.

If, however, candidates assume that voters place a priority on the party cue when faced with competing stereotypes, the candidates will pursue negative messaging

strategies premised primarily on their party identification. Republican women, then, would emphasize men's issues and Democratic men would emphasize women's issues (assuming they are pursuing a strategy of issue-ownership).

Once again, the data tell a contextualized story that reinforces the importance of considering the interactive effects of party and gender. Turning first to the congruent groups, Democratic women's and Republican men's behavior is consistent with both the parallel processing and the party dominance hypotheses – at least when they are running against women (.33 for Democratic women running against Republican women, -.26 for Republican men running against Democratic women). As the values in column three of Table 4 show, when running against women, these groups sponsor negative ads that, on balance, are congruent with their party stereotypes. However, when running against men, these two groups (rather inexplicably) balance their attacks. These balanced attacks do not fit the predictions of either the parallel processing model nor the party dominance model. Further investigation is necessary to determine what causes these groups to follow these particular strategies.

Figures 5 and 6 give examples that highlight the difference in Democratic women's strategies when running against men versus women. In 2004, when Jan Schneider ran against incumbent Representative Katherine Harris in Florida's 13th Congressional District, she ran this negative ad focusing solely on women's issues (Figure 5). The ad emphasizes potentially dishonest conduct while in Congress and policy stances about Medicare and Social Security. On the other hand, Hillary Clinton's 2000 ad against Rick Lazio, displayed in Figure 6, carefully balances attacks between

men's and women's issues, emphasizing health and Medicare issues (women's issues), but also focusing on budget concerns (men's issues).

INSERT FIGURES 5 AND 6 HERE

As for the incongruent groups, Republican women, whether facing women or men, pursue balanced strategies; their difference scores (-0.03 against men and -0.13 against women, see, again, column 3 of Table 4) are not statistically significantly different from zero. These results suggest that Republican women are operating on parallel processing assumptions. Figure 7 presents an example of a spot sponsored by Republican candidate Lisa Marie Cheney, running for office in Virginia's 8th Congressional District against incumbent Representative Jim Moran in 2004. This particular advertisement encapsulates a balanced attack strategy – within 30 seconds, Cheney contrasts herself with Moran on the women's issues of domestic violence (family issue) and education *and* regarding terrorism and the economy – stereotypically men's issues.

INSERT FIGURE 7 HERE

In contrast, Democratic men, whether running against men or women, consistently emphasize women's issues in their campaigns (0.20 against women, 0.13 against men, both statistically significantly different from zero at $p < .05$). In this instance, Democratic men appear to perceive an electoral advantage in emphasizing their party strengths in their negative messaging strategies, a tactic that should be successful *if* voters operate under the party cue dominance theory. See Table 6 for a summary of the parallel processing theory and party cue dominance theories predictions and findings.

Once again, there is a reasonable explanation for these differences. The countervailing stereotypes at work with Republican women are, in all probability, more salient for Republican women than Democratic men. While Democratic men technically face countervailing issue-competency stereotypes, Democratic men running for office are *not* a new or difficult concept for voters. Voters have, in all likelihood, created a consistent and established subtype about Democratic men due to the sheer number of male Democrats that have been encountered in a lifetime. This does not mean that Democratic men do not perceive or act on countervailing stereotypes at *all*, simply that Republican women's countervailing expectations probably remain more problematic for the typical voter, who is less accustomed to seeing women in politics (and is *particularly* not accustomed to assessing Republican women, since, historically, most women running for and filling elected office have been Democrats.)

In sum, the findings presented here represent a nuanced and contextual role for gender and party in their effects on candidate's negativity strategies. While not entirely tidy, the data suggest some real ways in which candidate gender and party make a difference in the types of campaigns voters will be exposed to.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings I have presented above, then, suggest a highly contextualized and complex process for candidates accounting for voters' party *and* gender expectations. Democratic women and Republican men follow issue-ownership strategies, at least when running against women. And they appear to assume voters are operating as parallel-

processors, at least when running against women. Similarly, Republican women's negative messaging strategies suggest they assume voters operate under the parallel processing theory, while Democratic men consistently pursue negative messaging strategies consistent with the party cue dominance theory.

In some regards, these contexts do not contribute to a simple, straight-forward story. But there are some larger implications to draw from these results. First, those actors with congruent stereotypes appear to be more flexible in their abilities to react to the gender of their opponents. Republican men and Democratic women pursue statistically significantly different issue agenda strategies based on whether they are running against men or women. Those with incongruent party and gender expectations do not. While not conclusive, it does suggest that those with incongruent expectations do not perceive the same range of negative messaging strategies and, thus, suggests they are more constrained in their strategic options.

What is more, these contextualized findings provide some insight into the previously-assumed inconsistent findings in issue agenda scholarship. Because gender context, in conjunction with party, influences candidates' negative messaging strategies, previous studies that have not simultaneously accounted for these factors would draw different conclusions based on the candidates and campaigns included in their samples.

On a normative level, what do these data say to the larger debate about strong parties and substance-less campaigns? Recall that strong party advocates extol issue-ownership strategies, in that they provide clear evidence of the difference between the candidates (e.g., Schattschneider 1942; Fiorina 1992). Those concerned with pure issue-

ownership strategies, however, worry about the lack of dialogue in campaigns when each candidate only emphasizes their own strengths (Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006). The results presented here suggest that voters are exposed to a wide-range of campaign strategies – some of which emphasize issue-ownership, but others that pursue both owned and un-owned issues. Indeed, the reality of campaigning certainly lies somewhere in between the extremes of issue ownership and issue trespass.

What the data presented here can *not* conclusively answer is how effective the candidates' chosen strategies are. Other studies suggest that voters probably do operate with party cue being the dominant consideration (Huddy and Capelos 2002; Hayes 2008). Such findings might suggest, then, that Republican women are making mistakes in balancing their attacks. Such a conclusion is reinforced by the fact that from 1986 to 2006, Republican women running as challengers and in open seat races won at lower rates than Republican men running as challengers and in open seat races (Pearson and McGhee 2009). Indeed, these differential win rates are verified by the dataset used here: of those candidates that aired negative advertising in at least one of the three election cycles, Republican women challengers and open seat candidates won at rates lower than Republican men challengers and open seat candidates. (See Table 7.) However, it may also be true that the Republican women included in these studies have successfully *reduced* the damage their countervailing stereotypes might cause. In a study that asked respondents about a fictional Republican woman, the Republican woman was ranked as less competent than a Democratic woman and a Republican man (Sanbonmatsu and

Dolan 2008). Therefore, the fact that the party cue appears to dominate in the real world of elections may signal that this strategy is most effective for Republican women.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

Moreover, what these existing studies do not tell us is whether the party cue dominates universally or whether the party cue dominated in the particular cases studied because the candidates facing incongruent party and gender stereotypes effectively neutralized gender considerations based on the strategies they pursued. They also cannot tell us whether pursuing a different strategy – perhaps one based on party cue domination – would actually *improve* Republican women’s success rates. Chapter Five proposes an experimental study that can begin to account for this interplay between candidate strategies and voters’ gender and party expectations.

Table 1 – Bivariate Comparisons of the Mean Proportion of Negative Ads with Specific Issue Mentions

		Mean Proportion of Ads with Issue Mention					
	Issue	Men	Women	Against Men	Against Women	Reps	Dems
<i>Men's Issues</i>	Budget	.05	.05	.05	.04	.05	.05
	Taxes	.28	.34	.28	.34	.39	.18
	Corporate Regulation	.08	.08	.09	.05	.06	.11
	Employment	.17	.15	.17	.13	.14	.19
	Crime	.07	.03	.06	.05	.07	.05
	Terror	.04	.07	.04	.07	.07	.02
	Defense/Foreign Policy	.09	.1	.08	.13	.1	.08
	Agriculture	.01	.02	.02	.005	.02	.01
	Men's Issues	.57	.59	.57	.59	.63	.51
<i>Women's Issues</i>	Family	.02	.003	.02	.02	.01	.02
	Education	.16	.15	.16	.15	.14	.17
	Environment	.06	.1	.07	.06	.06	.08
	Health	.2	.23	.21	.22	.17	.26
	Medicare	.13	.16	.14	.12	.08	.19
	Social Security	.18	.14	.18	.15	.14	.2
	Abortion	.06	.07	.05	.08	.06	.06
	Other Social Issues	.07	.04	.06	.06	.08	.04
	Welfare	.01	.01	.01	.02	.02	.006
	Campaign/Gov't Reform	.1	.11	.11	.07	.1	.1
	Women's Issues	.64	.63	.64	.61	.59	.69
	Women's Issues – Men's Issues	.07 (.03)	.04 (.06)	.08 (.03)	.02 (.06)	-.04 (.04)	.18 (.04)

*The darkly shaded cells are significantly different from one another at the .05 level. The lightly shaded cells are different from one another at the .1 level.

Table 2 – Cross-Tabulations of Mean Proportion of Ads by Party and Gender Context Subgroup

		Men versus Men	Men versus Women	Women versus Men	Women versus Women
Republicans	Men's Issues	.63 (.38)	.65 (.40)	.57 (.38)	.70 (.42)
	Women's Issues	.61 (.40)	.55 (.42)	.54 (.36)	.59 (.46)
	Women's Issues – Men's Issues	-.02 (.60)	-.10 (.67)	-.03 (.61)	-.11 (.79)
Democrats	Men's Issues	.49 (.39)	.45 (.37)	.61 (.40)	.41 (.37)
	Women's Issues	.68 (.36)	.71 (.35)	.70 (.36)	.70 (.31)
	Women's Issues – Men's Issues	.20 (.61)	.25 (.46)	.08 (.63)	.28 (.51)

Table 3 – OLS Results with Three Different Dependent Variables

	Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one women's issue		Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one men's issue		Difference between proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one women's issue and at least one men's issue	
Woman Candidate	.002 (.04)	-.02 (.07)	.04 (.04)	-.10 (.07)	-.04 (.07)	.07 (.11)
Woman Opponent	-.02 (.05)	-.07 (.06)	.01 (.05)	.02 (.06)	-.03 (.07)	-.09 (.10)
Woman Candidate X Woman Opponent	.02 (.11)	.07 (.16)	-.02 (.10)	.15 (.13)	.04 (.16)	-.09 (.24)
Democrat	.09** (.03)	.07 (.04)	-.14** (.03)	-.16** (.04)	.23** (.05)	.22** (.06)
Woman Candidate X Democrat		.04 (.08)		.23** (.09)		-.18 (.14)
Woman Opponent X Democrat		.12 (.09)		-.06 (.10)		.17 (.14)
Woman Candidate X Woman Opponent X Democrat		-.11 (.20)		-.30 (.20)		.19 (.30)
Toss-Up	-.04 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.001 (.06)	-.001 (.06)
2002	-.17** (.04)	-.17** (.04)	.16** (.04)	.18** (.04)	-.33** (.06)	-.35** (.06)
2004	-.27** (.04)	-.27** (.04)	.23** (.04)	.23** (.04)	-.50** (.06)	-.51** (.06)
Challenger	-.01 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.06 (.04)	.05 (.04)	-.07 (.06)	-.07 (.06)
Open Seat	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	.08* (.04)	.08* (.04)	-.11* (.06)	-.11* (.06)
Democratic Presidential Vote	.002 (.002)	.002 (.002)	-.005** (.002)	-.004** (.002)	.007** (.004)	.007* (.003)
Constant	.70** (.12)	.73** (.12)	.73** (.12)	.72** (.12)	-.02 (.18)	.01 (.18)
R-squared	.10	.11	.11	.13	.16	.17

**=p<.05 *=p<.1

Table 4 – Predicted Proportions of Candidate-Sponsored Ads Devoted to Specific Groups of Issues

	Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one compassion issue	Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one hard issue	Difference between compassion issue proportion and hard issue proportion
Republican women versus Democratic women	.58	.71	-.13
Democratic women versus Republican women	.71	.38	.33*
Republican men versus Democratic women	.44	.7	-.26*
Democratic men versus Republican women	.69	.49	.2*
Republican women versus Democratic men	.55	.59	-.03
Democratic women versus Republican men	.57	.69	-.12
Republican men versus Democratic men	.6	.63	-.03
Democratic men versus Republican men	.65	.52	.13*

*=significantly different from zero at the $p < .05$ level

Table 5 – Issue Ownership and Issue Trespass Expectations

	Issue-Ownership Hypothesis	Issue-Trespass Hypothesis	Findings
Democratic Women versus Republican Women	Emphasize Women’s Issues	Emphasize Men’s Issues	Issue-Ownership
Democratic Women versus Republican Men			Mixed
Republican Men versus Democratic Women	Emphasize Men’s Issues	Emphasize Women’s Issues	Issue-Ownership
Republican Men versus Democratic Men			Mixed

Table 6 – Parallel Processing and Party Dominance Expectations

	Parallel Processing Hypothesis	Party Dominance Hypothesis	Findings
Democratic Women	Reinforce – Women’s Issues	Women’s Issues	Reinforce (agst women) Balanced (agst men)
Republican Women	Moderate – Balanced	Men’s Issues	Balanced
Democratic Men	Moderate – Balanced	Women’s Issues	Women’s Issues
Republican Men	Reinforce – Men’s Issues	Men’s Issues	Reinforce (agst women) Balanced (agst men)

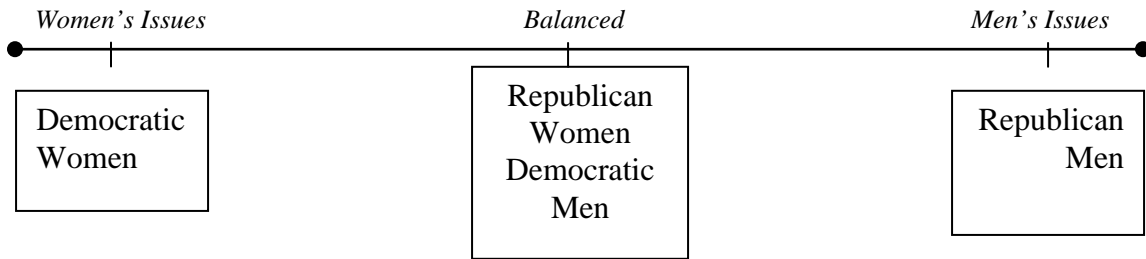
Table 7 – Win Rates by Party and Candidate Status

	Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seat
Republican Women	92.9	5.3	50
Republican Men	90.6	12.1	75.9

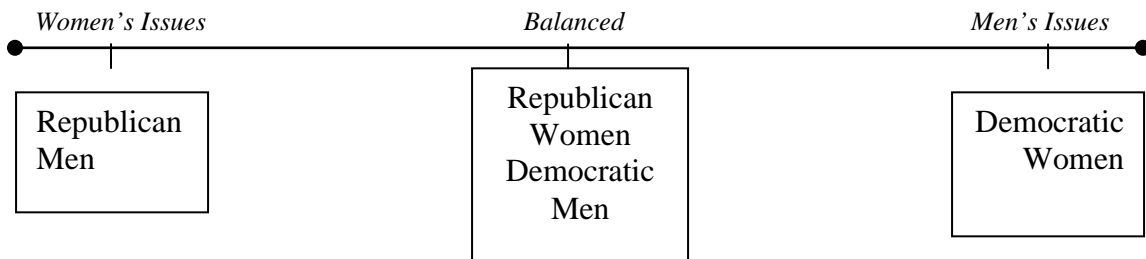
Figure 1 – Schematic of Expectations

Specific predictions of the parallel processing and party cue dominance will vary based on whether candidates are pursuing issue ownership or issue trespass strategies. The horizontal lines represent a continuum of issues emphases, with all women’s issues and all men’s issues on the extremes.

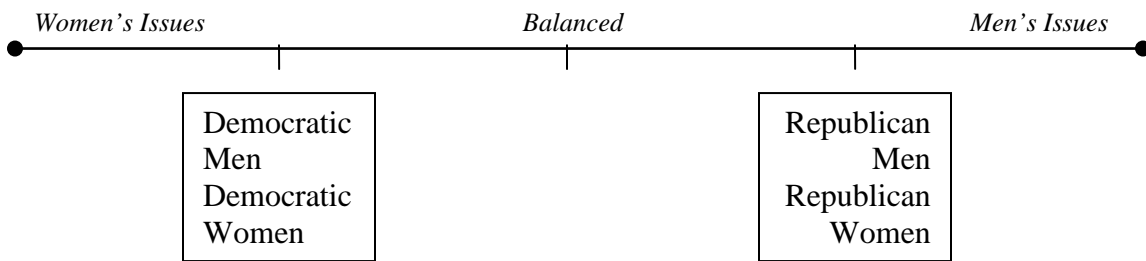
Issue Ownership/Parallel Process



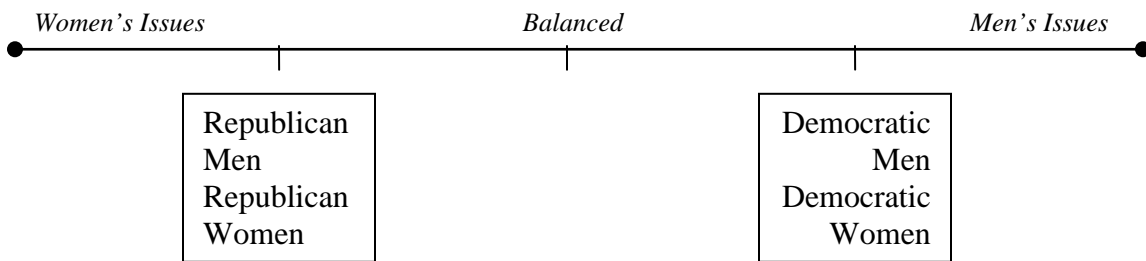
Issue Trespass/Parallel Process



Issue Ownership/Party Dominance



Issue Trespass/Party Dominance



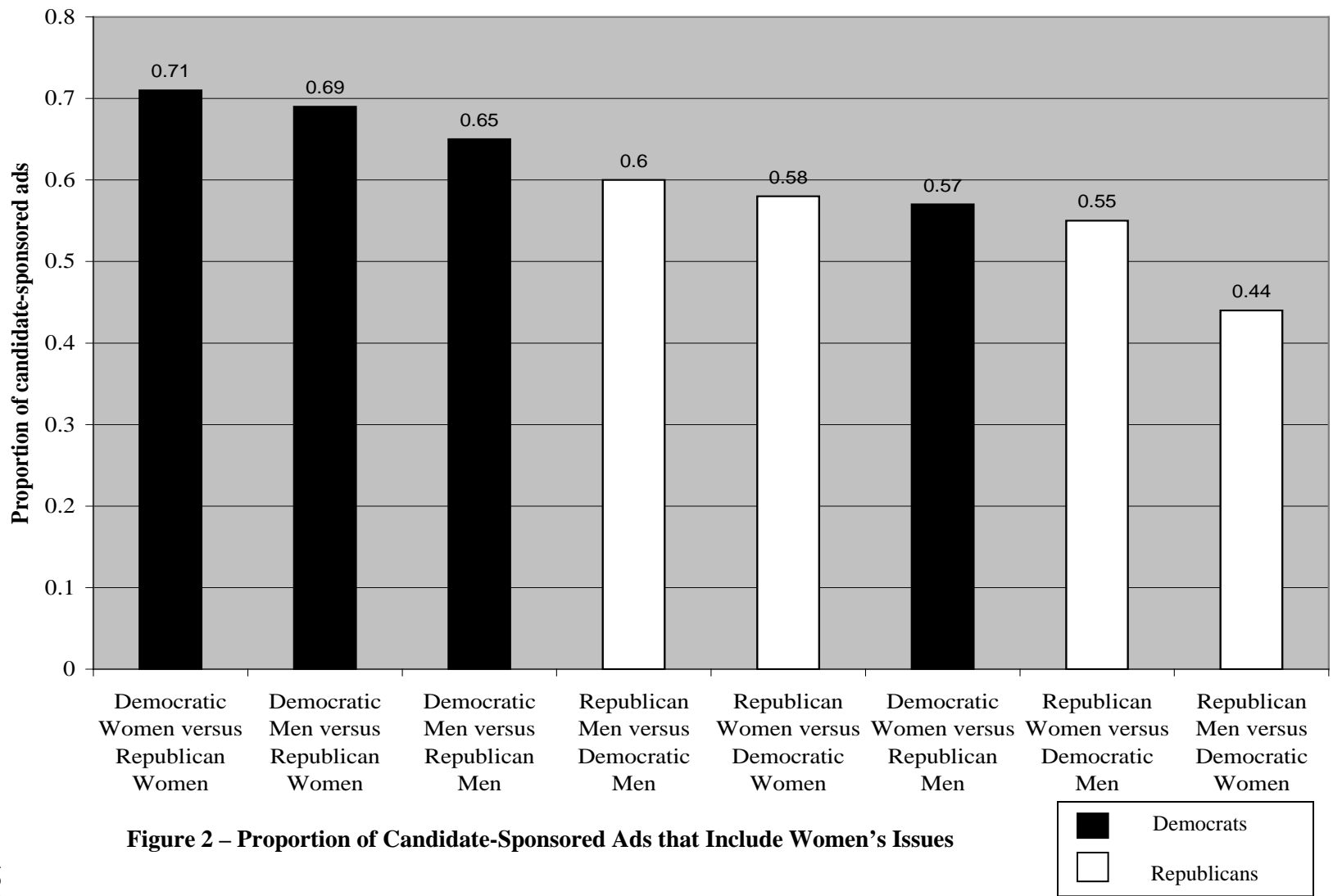


Figure 2 – Proportion of Candidate-Sponsored Ads that Include Women’s Issues

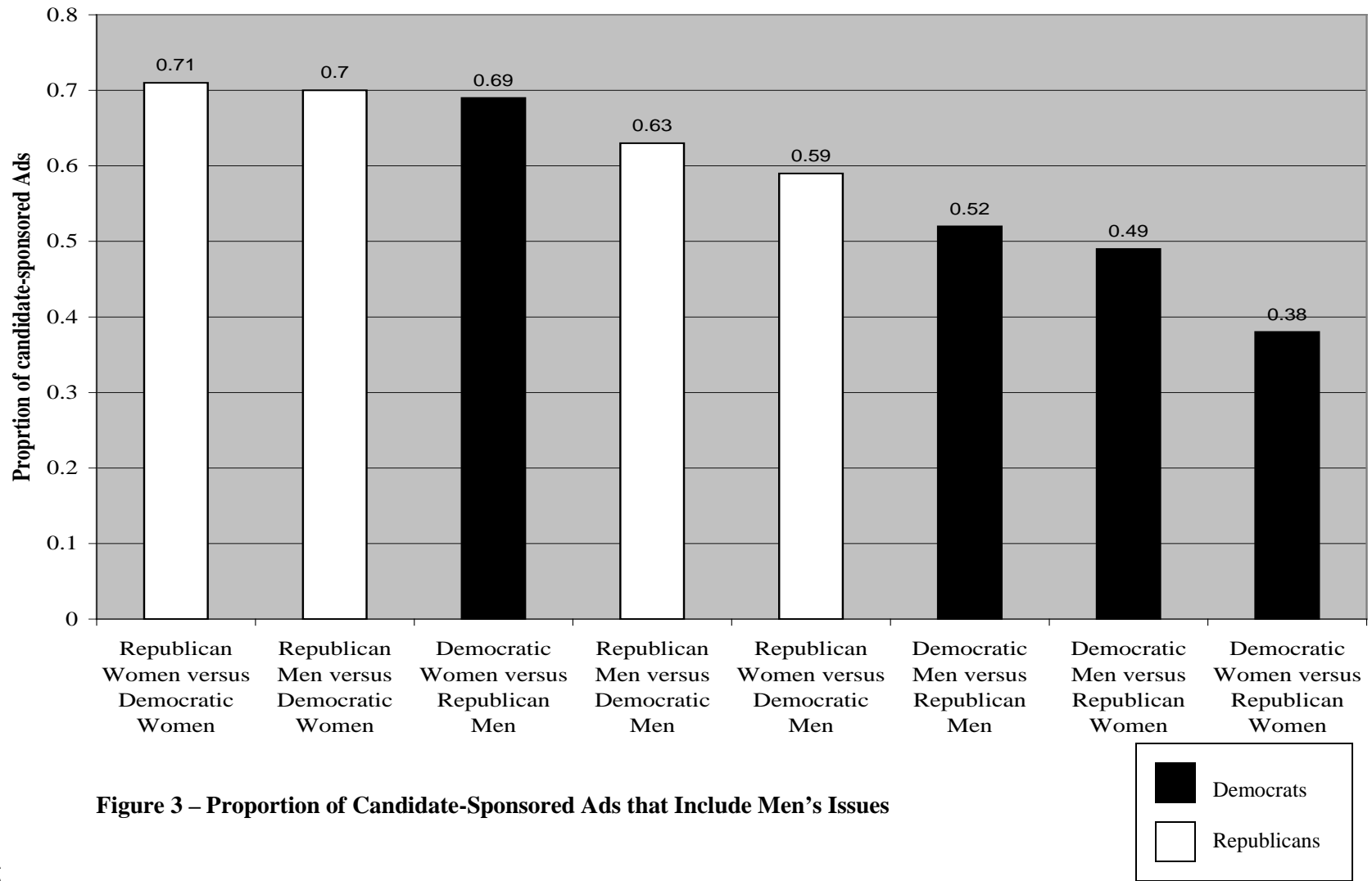


Figure 3 – Proportion of Candidate-Sponsored Ads that Include Men’s Issues

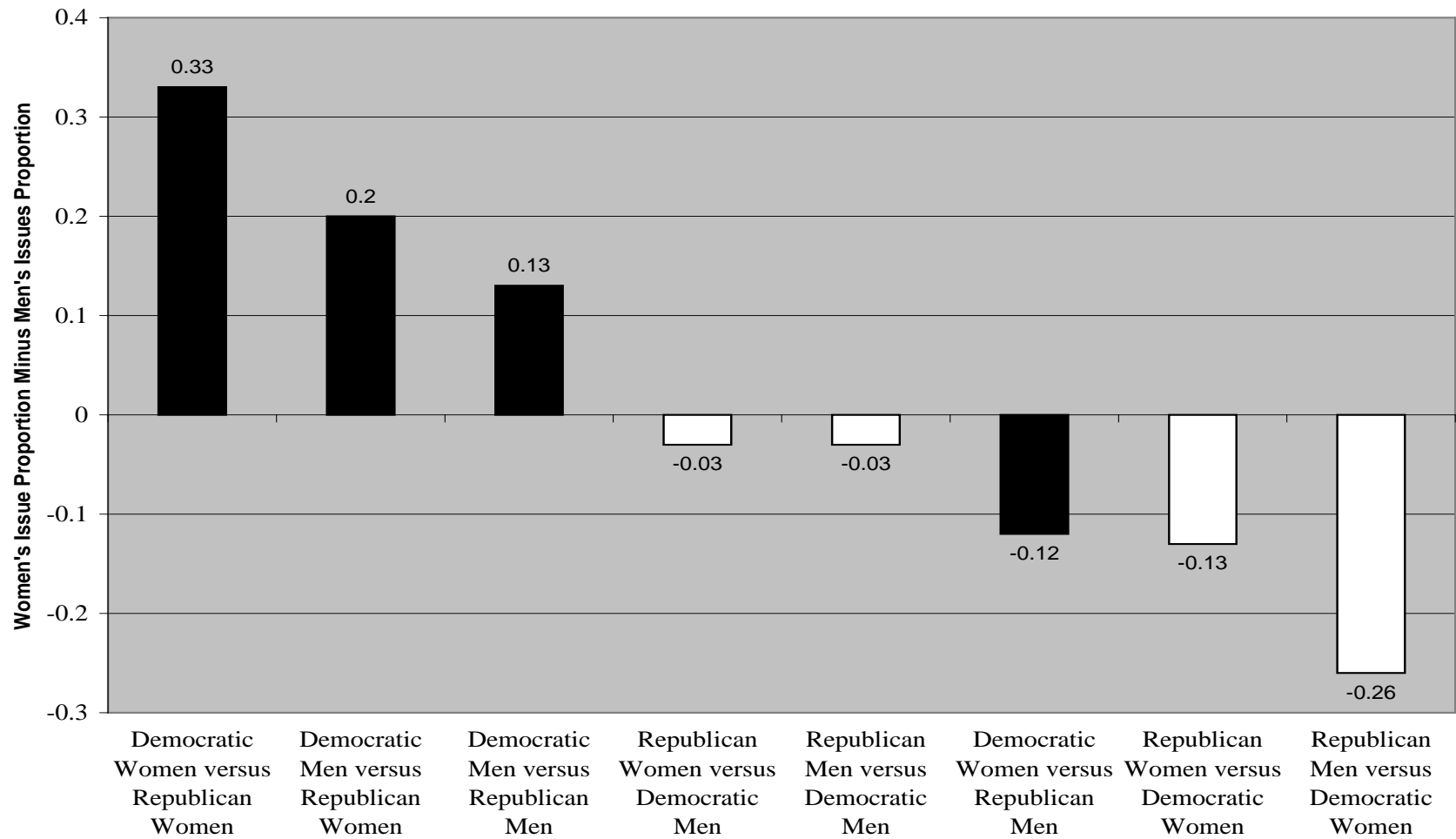
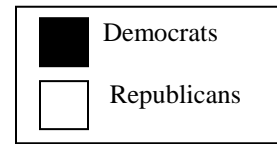


Figure 4 – Emphases of Negative Messaging



**Figure 5 – Democratic Woman versus Republican Woman
HOUSE/FL13 SCHNEIDER HARRIS THINKING**

Brand: POL-CONGRESS (B332)
Parent: POLITICAL ADV
Aired: 10/30/2004 - 10/31/2004
Creative Id: 3613082



[Announcer]: Ever wonder what Katherine Harris is thinking? As Secretary of State,



Harris awarded no-bid contracts to her friends, and billed taxpayers for



extravagant travel. In congress, Harris forbid Medicare to negotiate for lower



drug prices, and banned importing cheaper prescription drugs. And Harris



vowed to add trillions in new debt threatening social security, and



mortgaging our childrens future, and a recent bi-partisan survey named Katherine



Harris the worst new member of Congress. Want real change? Jan Schneider she'll vote




for us. [Schneider]: "I'm Jan Schneider and I approved this



message." [PFB]: Friends of Jan Schneider.

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1-866-559-CMAG

Figure 6 – Democratic Woman versus Republican Man



Ad Detector


BRAND: POL-US SENATE+

TITLE: NY/Clinton More Attacks from Lazio

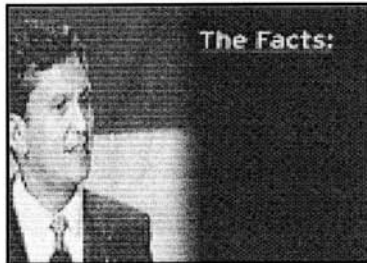
COMMERCIAL: NY/Clinton More Attacks from Lazio 1 of 1

LENGTH: 30

FRAMES: 7



A0071PXG.ES3



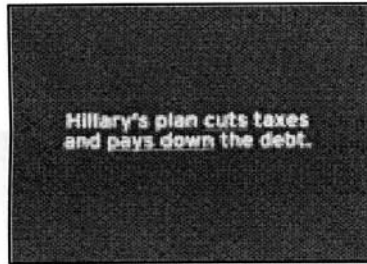
[Announcer]: More attacks from Rick Lazio. Here are the facts. Since Labor Day, Rick Lazio has had the second worst voting record in the whole



Congress. He skipped 78 of the last 82 votes. And it's Lazio's



plans that will squander the surplus. Hillary's plan cuts taxes and pay down the debt.



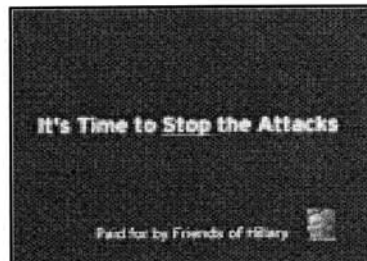
Lazio voted with Gingrich to cut \$24 billion from New Yorker's



hospitals. Against guaranteed prescription drug coverage under Medicare.



Hillary is fighting for quality healthcare for all. It's time to stop the attacks and stick to the facts.



[PFB: Friends of Hillary]

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Figure 7 – A Republican Woman’s Balanced Attack

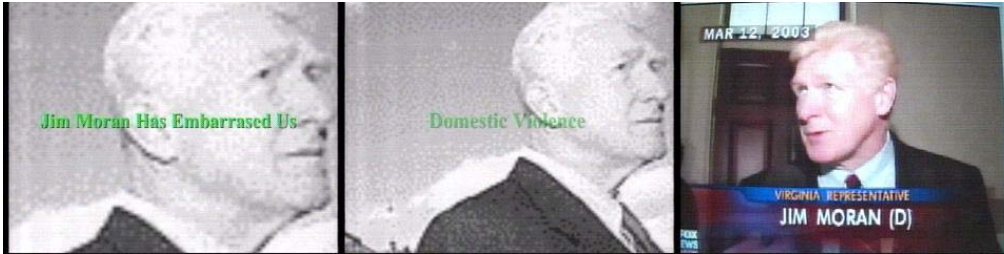
HOUSE/VA8 CHENEY MORAN EMBARRASSED US

Brand: POL-CONGRESS (B332)

Parent: POLITICAL ADV

Aired: 11/01/2004 - 11/02/2004

Creative Id: 3614377



[Announcer]: Jim Moran has embarrassed us. He took loans from lobbyists, has been accused of

domestic violence, he assaulted a child, and has made discriminatory statements.

[Moran]: "I'm probably not meant to be in the Congress."



[Announcer]: Lisa Marie Cheney is a wife, mother, and small business owner.

She understands the importance of protecting us from terrorism,

improving our schools, and boosting our economy. [Cheney]: "My name is Lisa Marie Cheney and



I paid for and authorized this ad because we deserve better than Jim Moran." [PFB]: Friends of Lisa Marie Cheney

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

The dissertation began with questions about the dynamics surrounding candidate gender and negative messages. Most broadly, I ask what sort of constraints and opportunities do voters' gender and party expectations offer to candidates as they construct negative messaging strategies? More specifically, do the professionals who are often key in developing these strategies perceive these expectations? If so, how do they respond to them? How does candidate gender influence how negative a campaign is? How does it influence the substance of those negative messages? How does the gender of the opponent and expectations about party come together to moderate the influences on these measures?

Throughout these chapters, a unifying theme has been that the influence of gender is both subtle and complex. Except in rare cases, it no longer seems reasonable to expect that female candidates will be subjected to explicit shows of discrimination as they seek elected office. But the fact that the influence of gender has become less overt does not make its effects any less real for the candidates who are attempting to leverage – or at least neutralize – gender stereotypes. In this final chapter, I summarize the findings of this project. I then discuss the larger implications for American politics. In particular, what do these findings say about initial hopes that women's entry into politics would elevate discourse? And how do these findings inform scholars concerned with women's continuing underrepresentation in elected office? I finish by laying out future avenues of

research, in particular, an experimental design that might offer further insight into questions of representation and women's electoral success.

And Now We Know

The study began by exploring political consultants' conceptions of voters' gender stereotypes. While previous work has extensively documented voters' adherence to gender expectations, particularly as it relates to assessments of female leaders and politicians (e.g., Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Eagly and Karau 2002), we knew very little about whether and how political elites were perceiving these stereotypes *and then* strategizing in an attempt to fully leverage or combat them. Through interviews and surveys, I establish that consultants do, indeed, perceive trait and issue competency gender stereotypes among voters. There is general consensus, too, that consultants respond strategically. Most consultants insisted, however, that the means by which they account for candidate gender is through the *style* of the negative message, not the overall volume or likelihood of advising the use of negative messages. Consultants were somewhat more likely to report that they advised clients to be less negative when running against a woman versus a man, but on this point, too, the general consensus was that gender differences would not be manifest in quantities of negative advertising.

Chapter Three, however, offers a different perspective on these reports. Despite consultants' insistence, systematic and significant differences *did* emerge between candidates based on gender context and party of the candidate. In particular, while Democratic women display the *highest* levels of negativity against Republican male opponents (as compared to almost all other subgroups), they exhibit the *lowest* levels of

negativity against their Republican female opponents, support for the idea that

Democratic women are highly sensitive to gender context as they attempt to retain their strong base of women voters. Republican women, on the other hand, do not display different levels of negativity against male and female Democratic opponents. Instead, it would appear that incentives from their electorate – namely, that the Republican base is less likely to support a Republican female than a Republican male (King and Matland 2003) – provide reason for a Republican woman to maintain levels of negativity, regardless of gender context, in an effort to prove her worthiness to her base and swing voters. Republican *and* Democratic men do not appear to delineate between male and female opponents – they are equally negative against both. However, the fact that, in mixed-gender races, the female candidates are significantly more negative than their male opponents does offer evidence that men, by not matching the high levels of negativity of their opponents, are constrained by some norms of chivalry. In this situation, men appear to believe that attacking their female opponents too harshly would backfire with voters, a sentiment echoed by political consultants.

Thus, despite consultants' (sometimes annoyed) reports that gender effects would not be evident in something as obvious as different levels of negativity, these differences did emerge. The discrepancy in the reports and the empirical findings suggest an interesting dynamic. Although consultants are explicitly aware of *some* of the ways that gender influences strategy, it appears that gender expectations may also be operating *implicitly*. Perhaps, even, the gender expectations and stereotypes the consultants and candidates hold and ascribe to *themselves* subconsciously influence the type of advice

they give and the types of campaigns they choose to run. Such a mechanism provides one more way that gender expectations might influence campaigns in a subtle and complex way.

Finally, Chapter Four examined how the same gender and party expectations that influenced the level of campaign negativity might also moderate one another to affect the types of issues candidates focus on in their negative messages. Once again, the analysis revealed complex findings. Democratic women and Republican men, who enjoy congruent party and gender stereotypes, heavily emphasize their issue strengths when attacking male opponents, but balance their attacks between their stereotypical strengths and weaknesses when attacking men. Republican women balance their attack messages between men's and women's issues, in an apparent attempt to navigate the conflicting partisan and gender stereotypes with which they must contend. Democratic men, on the other hand, allow the party cue to dominate. Regardless of their opponents, their attack strategies emphasize women's (and Democratic) issues more than men's (and Republican) issues. These varying strategies, dependent upon the candidate's gender and party and the gender of his or her opponent, illustrate the complicated ways in which these expectations come together to influence negativity strategies. Every candidate, as they try to persuade voters into their camp, attempts to navigate party and gender expectations optimally. However, the optimal strategy differs slightly for candidates depending on party and gender – or, at least the results suggest that candidates and their consultants believe this to be the case.

Knowing now that the presence of women in elected politics – as candidates *and* as opponents – *can* change the types of campaigns that are run, can we determine whether this change is for the better or worse? The findings here show that the presence of women in campaigns does not typically lead to *lower* levels of negativity. Democratic women who are running against men are, in fact, the subgroup with the highest mean proportion of advertised negativity. Moreover, Republican women are no less negative than their male Republican counterparts, and men are not any less negative against female opponents than their male opponents. The one exception here, of course, is Democratic women running against women – they have relatively low levels of negativity as compared to the other subgroups.

For reformers who hoped that the entry of women into politics would bring a new level of civility to the process, these findings must be somewhat disheartening. Women, instead of bringing any sort of civilizing influence to political debate, are, as one consultant put it, “much more willing to act like men...: that is, attack, be attacked, etc.” For those concerned about the increasing levels of negativity in campaigns, recruiting more women to the enterprise may not be the answer. What is more, campaign negativity may be a significant factor in keeping more women from running for office in the first place (Lawless and Fox 2008). Unless something alters the face of modern campaigning, the prospect of needing to go negative will probably continue to deter women from running for office at a greater rate than it deters men.

There are, however, three reasons why these findings may not be cause for alarm.

First is the finding that the increasing representation of women in state legislatures appears to mitigate the level of campaign negativity, at least for candidates running against women. Such a mechanism does not offer a cure-all for high levels of negativity, but does provide an indirect means by which recruiting more women to politics – at least state level politics – might help to civilize higher-level campaigns. These findings also offer a mechanism by which running for elected office *may* become more attractive for a wider array of women. As women's representation in the state legislature increases, and campaign negativity against female candidates decreases, it offers reassurance to other women who might contemplate running for office. While a female candidate may still need to use negative messages herself, she may be encouraged with the thought that she will not be unduly attacked as a candidate. And, as more women run for office, there is a greater chance that a female candidate will, herself, be running against another woman, a situation that does offer the female candidate hope for sponsoring fewer negative messages.

The second reason these findings may not be normatively troubling links to arguments that negative messages may actually add substance to campaigns. Geer (2006) finds that negative messages in presidential campaigns contain more information relevant to the election and vote decision. Assuming, then, that the type of negativity women engage in is equally issue-based, the fact that female candidates do not generally display substantially lower levels of negativity than their male counterparts may bode well for substantive campaigns.

Finally, the finding that female candidates are equally, and sometimes *more* negative, than their male counterparts is heartening for those who are concerned about the additional obstacles women face in their campaigns. As detailed in Chapter One, while the political science literature remains mixed as to how effective negative messages are, political practitioners are united in their belief that negative messages work. The fact that women *are* going negative at rates equal to, and greater than, male candidates provides evidence that this assumedly potent campaign tool is available to women just as it is to men. The gender parity of negative messages, of course, should not be overstated. As the consultants in Chapter Two stress, women's negative messages are substantively *different* than men's, in a way that acknowledges and tries to leverage enduring gender stereotypes. However, the fact that these stereotypes do not render negative messages off-limits to female candidates bodes well for women's campaign tool chests.

Campaign Dialogue versus Campaign Monologue

The second issue related to campaign substance which political scientists have debated at length is whether candidates engaged in campaigns meaningfully engage in debate about important issues or whether they simply talk past one another. As Chapter Four discussed, this concern is implicated in work about issue ownership versus issue trespass strategies. If candidates only campaign on issues which they own (or even only campaign on issues which the opposition owns), the candidates will ostensibly rarely be discussing the same issues, a phenomenon that would hamper meaningful give-and-take. For instance, if a Democratic candidate only discusses Democratic issues, and a Republican candidate only discusses Republican issues, voters will never hear the

Democrat's stances on Republican issues and vice versa. Voters then are making decisions based on incomplete information *and* different bases of information for each candidate.

The introduction of considerations about gender-based issue ownership and issue trespass, however, complicates this question. Candidates do not just face decisions about whether to own or trespass on party-based issues, but must also consider how this relates to the gender-based issue competency stereotypes they are concurrently facing. This multi-layered decision presents far more opportunities for candidates to meaningfully debate issues on which they actually share strengths (or weaknesses). For instance, a Republican woman who is pursuing an issue ownership strategy is more apt to attack her opponent on healthcare (a women's issue) than her Republican male colleague. Her Democratic opponent, if also pursuing an issue ownership strategy, is more likely to engage that healthcare attack, since the opponent also enjoys a stereotypical strength on this issue (party-based for Democratic men, party and gender-based for Democratic women).

In fact, Table 1 reveals that there is probably a significant amount of campaign dialogue happening, at least within negative messaging strategies. Based on the analyses from Chapter 4, in each possible race match-up, one candidate is pursuing an issue ownership strategy. For instance, when Democratic women run against Republican women, on balance, Democratic women will emphasize women's issues in their attacks, issues on which they hold stereotypical advantages. Yet in each of these race matchups, the *other* candidate is pursuing a mixed strategy, including both men's and women's

issues in their negative messages. In other words, the *other* candidate appears willing to discuss some of the same issues in their ads as the candidate who is pursuing an issue-ownership strategy. While these match-ups are not sufficient conditions for campaign dialogue to take place, they are necessary conditions.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Implications for Representation

As discussed in Chapter One, understanding the effects of gender on negative messaging strategies can offer a new perspective for work that examines the underrepresentation of women in elected office. Gendered differences in negative messaging strategies may influence women's representation at two distinct stages: first, at the point where women decide to become candidates; and, second, if different negative messaging strategies lead to discrepant success rates for men and women.

Turning to the decision to run in the first place, previous scholarship shows that candidate-eligible women are more likely than men to mention the possibility of having to go negative in a campaign as a prospect that is so distasteful that they will not consider running for office because of it (Lawless and Fox 2008). Knowing what we now know, this difference may be partially due to the fact that women sense that, in most cases, they will have to be as negative as – and, sometimes, more negative than – their male counterparts. If women are already socialized to be more uncomfortable with the confrontation necessary to sponsor these types of messages, the added expectation that they must do even *more* of it – or, at least, not less of it – than male candidates would make a campaign an unattractive pursuit.

It is difficult to determine what the remedy for this might be, however, especially as it relates to the second point at which female underrepresentation may happen – that is, in women’s electoral success rates. In general, women have approached parity with men in rates of success for the general election. However, women face more competition in their primaries, making it less likely that they will make it to the general election (Lawless and Pearson 2008); what is more, women win general elections at equal rates *but* are comparatively more qualified than male winners. In particular, Republican female challengers and open seat candidates seem to be faring worse than their male counterparts (Pearson and McGhee 2009; Chapter Four). These findings suggest that women are actually underperforming in their win rates as compared to *equally qualified* men.

Given this state of affairs, it is hard to know what may aid women’s representation more – reducing women’s levels of negativity in their campaigns in an effort to encourage more women to run *or* maintaining (or even increasing) levels of negativity in an attempt to increase the win-rates of women who make it to the general election. In order to address this trade-off, though, more information is needed as to whether the different negativity strategies documented here are optimal strategies. Indeed, just because differences are noted does not mean that these are the *most successful* negativity strategies that female candidates could be pursuing. The data presented thus far cannot speak to this question, but it is important as scholarship in this area moves forward to close the loop from candidate strategy to voter behavior. In other

words, I established here that consultants understand and strategize about voters' gender and party expectations. How, though, are *voters* responding to these strategies?

Future Research

In order to investigate the impacts of the gendered strategies documented here, I propose an experiment in which voters' responses to varying negativity strategies can be directly measured. While many questions arise from this study, I focus on the issue agenda strategy pursued by Republican women in their negative messages. Recall from Chapter Four that Republican women, regardless of the gender of their opponents, balance their attacks between men's issues and women's issues. I choose Republican women as the topic of the experiment for three reasons: first of all, the recent work on gender and party suggests that it is Republican women who are most constrained by these conflicting groups of stereotypes (Matland and King 2003; Sanbonmatsu 2008; Dolan and Sanbonmatsu 2008). This intersection of conflicting stereotypes presents an interesting case where the candidate faces the tightest party and gender constraints.

The second reason I focus on Republican women is because existing literature, which has begun to examine the confluence of gender and party stereotypes, has found that, when presented with two sets of stereotypes, such as gender and party, voters appear to primarily process the party cue as opposed to the gender cue (Hayes 2008; Huddy and Capelos 2002). These findings, then, suggest that Republican women should be mounting campaigns that play to their party's strengths. Instead, the evidence presented in Chapter Four reveals that Republican women pursue strategies that would be more successful with voters who would be implementing a parallel processing model – that is,

effortfully trying to process both sets of stereotypes concurrently. In other words, based on the evidence from Chapter Four, Republican women appear to be the group most likely to be pursuing a sub-optimal gender/party strategy with their negative messages.

Finally, the third reason I focus here on Republican women – to the exclusion of Democratic women – is based on the mounting evidence that gender stereotypes are not processed uniformly across party. Republican women face a more skeptical base, while Democratic women benefit from relatively loyal supporters (Matland and King 2003; Dolan and Sanbonmatsu 2008). However, there is little evidence as to how weak partisans or independents will process female candidates from the two parties. And, although numerous past experimental manipulations in this area have ostensibly held party constant by leaving it out of the experimental manipulation (e.g., Hitchon and Chang 1995; Gordon, Shafie, and Crigler 2003; Fridkin, et. al, 2009), recent evidence suggests that any experimental findings will only be externally valid if the experiment accounts for party differences.

Design

I propose a 3-x-2 experimental design, whereby subjects are exposed to six different versions of a campaign advertisement for a female Republican congressional candidate. The television spot will be identical across all six conditions but for two variations. First, I will manipulate the advertisement as to whether or not the sponsoring candidate is running against a Democratic man or Democratic woman, as several findings throughout this study have found gender context to be a significant variable. Second, I will manipulate the commercial as to whether the attack is balanced between men's and

women's issues; whether it heavily emphasizes men's (Republican) issues; or whether it heavily emphasizes women's (Democratic) issues. The conditions are presented in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

This experiment serves as a laboratory test of the parallel processing versus party cue dominance test discussed in Chapter Four. If the previous work is correct, and voters do favor the partisan cue over a parallel processing model, then, overall, the subjects in Conditions 2 and 5 should evaluate the candidate higher on measures such as affect towards the sponsoring candidate, recall of the advertisement, and likelihood to vote for the sponsoring candidate (as measured in other negative advertising studies, which are reviewed by Lau, et. al 1999). At the same time, I expect to see lower affect towards the opposing candidate in Conditions 2 and 5, as compared to Conditions 1 and 4, indicating that this would be a more successful negative messaging strategy for Republican women.

However, I also predict that differences amongst the conditions will emerge along party lines amongst the subjects. While issues are considered Republican-owned and Democratic-owned due to party stereotypes of who is more competent to handle them, the bases of these parties are generally believed to be more interested in the issues associated with their respective parties (Hayes 2005). If this assumption actually holds, then Republicans will respond more favorably to the party-ownership message. An emphasis on these messages may help Republican women overcome the skepticism of their base that they are less competent on Republican-owned issues than Republican men (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2008). Democrats, on the other hand, will probably respond

more favorably to the balanced message – perhaps by priming the women’s issues that Democrats are concerned with, the Republican woman can emphasize her gender-linked issue competence stereotypes, making Democrats more open to her than those Democrats in Conditions 2 and 5, who receive the party-ownership message.

The third column in Table 2 represents a manipulation that would have the Republican woman stress those issues on which she holds an advantage based on her *gender* rather than her party. While the evidence pointing to the dominance of the party cue suggests this may not be a fruitful strategy to pursue, preliminary analysis of the data from Chapter 4 reveals that a sizable proportion of Republican women do sponsor negative messages that, on balance, emphasize issues on which they hold a gender-based – but not party-based – advantage. Thirty-seven Republican women pursue negative messaging strategies that, on balance, emphasize women’s (Democratic) issues, while 13 Republican women emphasized men’s (Republican) issues, and 18 Republican women pursued a generally balanced strategy. As a preliminary examination of the success of these strategies, almost 60 percent of the Republican women who pursued an emphasis on women’s issues in their negative messages won, as compared to 61 percent of Republican women who ran balanced negative messages and only 31 percent of Republican women who emphasized men’s issues. While this analysis does not control for other important variables, it does suggest different rates of success attached to different strategies – most interestingly, strategies that are not necessarily supported by the party cue dominance theory. Thus, although the parallel processing and party cue dominance theories tested in Chapter 4 do not provide a role for a gender-ownership

negative messages, the fact that Republican women are employing them – and to successful effect – warrants further examination in an experimental setting. Conditions 3 and 6, then, will present messages identical to the other four conditions but emphasize issues Republican women would own based on their gender, rather than party.

The gender context manipulation is crucial here, as well, as gender and party issue competency expectations interact. Recall that women are expected to be more liberal than their male counterparts, with Democratic women being considered particularly liberal (Koch 2000; McDermott 1997, 1998; Alexander and Andersen 1993). In addition, Democratic women are expected, through both gender and party stereotypes, to be competent on women's/Democratic issues. Perhaps in the match-up presented in Conditions 1, 2, and 3, Republicans will assess the Republican woman more positively than the Republican woman pitted against a man. Why? Perhaps in relation to the Democratic woman – who is assumed to be quite liberal and competent on (and interested in) issues which are not particularly relevant to the Republican base, the desire to prevent the Democratic woman from winning will be strong enough to overcome any doubts about the Republican female candidate. In contrast, in Conditions 4, 5, and 6, where the Republican woman is running against a Democratic man, the Republican identifiers will not necessarily support the Democratic man, but he will seem less undesirable than the female Democratic opponent. And for these Republicans, the issue-ownership message will probably still be more effective, as it aims to neutralize some of the gender-linked advantage the Democratic man enjoys on the otherwise Republican-owned issues. Conversely, the gender-ownership message will be least effective, as it reminds

Republican voters of their candidate's assumed weakness – that she would focus on issues which they do not prioritize.

What will Democrats do? They will be making assessments that are the mirror opposite of the Republican identifiers. Democratic women show a particularly high affinity for female Democratic candidates; because women represent a disproportionate share of the Democratic base, Democratic identifiers should, overall, show higher support for the Republican woman's female opponent, all other things equal. Amongst the balanced, party-owned, and gender-owned messages, Democrats should rate the candidate highest on the gender-owned message, as it addresses issues Democrats are most concerned with. Democrats would rank the balanced messages next, since such a message would at least acknowledge *some* of the issues that Democrats prioritize. See Table 3 for a summary of the expected outcomes from the different experimental treatments by party identification of the subject.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

If the results of the experiment are as predicted, then Republican women, in pursuing an emphasis on women's issues, and assuming that the modal gender context for a Republican woman would be running against a man (as reflected in the data), are implementing strategies that are *least preferred* by their Republican base and *most preferred* by Democratic voters (see the bottom right cell of Table 3). Would this be a smart strategy? It *might* be, if Republican women could both rely on their base *and* rely on Democratic voters to actually support them. But Matland and King (2003) have shown that Republican woman cannot rely on their base – male Republican identifiers are

13.6 percent less likely to support a fictitious female Republican candidate than an identical Republican candidate who is male; female Republican identifiers are 10.5 percent less likely to support the female Republican candidate than the male Republican candidate. While it is somewhat unlikely (depending, of course, on the specific race) that these Republicans would defect to the Democratic candidate, it *is* a distinct danger that they would defect to third-party candidates or simply refrain from voting in great enough numbers to influence the outcome of the race.

What is more, although Democratic identifiers report a higher likelihood to support a female Republican than a male Republican, it is doubtful that this difference actually translates into Democrats voting for the Republican woman *over* the Democratic candidate – a prospect that is especially dim when the Republican woman faces a Democratic woman (Dolan and Sanbonmatsu 2008).

The real question, however, will be the behavior of weak partisans and independent voters – do the weak partisans react to these candidates in the same way that strong partisans? Do independent voters behave more like Democrats or Republicans in their assessments of female candidates? Dolan and Sanbonmatsu (2008) find that, like Democrats, independent voters are more likely to support a female Republican over a male Republican. But it is unclear which of the tactics explored in this experimental design would be most effective, depending on whether independents prioritize men's/Republican issues or women's/Democratic issues.

Thus, again assuming that the experimental results emerge as hypothesized, Republican women would be well-advised to consider the composition of their electorate

as they construct negative messaging strategies. For those with a sizable and conservative base, and if independents behave like Republicans in this regard, their efforts might best be served using strategies to shore up that base. If, however, they are running in a more balanced or Democratic district, and independents behave like Democrats, they may want to emphasize a gender-ownership or balanced strategy that resonates with these voters, much as they do now. For the most sophisticated campaigns, these findings could inform a strategy of micro-targeting. The Republican female candidate with adequate staff and resources could simultaneously pursue each of these strategies, with the proper tactics focused on the relevant audiences.

Conclusion

The findings presented in the preceding chapters – and the proposed experiment for further study – provide a systematic investigation of the ways in which negative messaging strategies vary based on candidate gender and party. These findings are important, as they give new insight into the ways that gender continues to subtly, yet substantively, influence electoral politics. Understanding these dynamics is vital for those who are committed to completely opening the doors of elected office to all groups. Increased representation of women will be vital to maintaining the legitimacy of the political system, as elected officials come to more accurately reflect the population they represent. Additionally, women politicians prioritize different issues than men – specifically, they focus on those issues that disproportionately affect the lives of their female constituents. Questions about the dynamics that help and hinder women’s entrance into, and success in, elected office, then, have broad implications, not just for

those women who wish to fill these roles, but also for the citizens affected by the resulting public policies. The findings presented here can inform not just political science, but also those women already in the electoral arena and those committed to recruiting even more.

Table 1 – Race Match-Ups and Negative Messaging Strategies

	Issue-Agenda Emphases	
Democratic Women versus Republican Women	Gender/Party-Owned (Women’s Issues)	Mixed (Men’s & Women’s Issues)
Democratic Women versus Republican Men	Mixed (Men’s & Women’s Issues)	Gender/Party-Owned (Men’s Issues)
Republican Women versus Democratic Men	Mixed (Democratic and Republican Issues)	Party-Owned (Democratic Issues)
Republican Men versus Democratic Men	Mixed (Democratic and Republican Issues)	Party-Owned (Democratic Issues)

Table 2 – 2-x-2 Experimental Design

	Balanced Message	Party-Ownership Message	Gender-Ownership Message
Running Against Women	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3
Running Against Men	Condition 4	Condition 5	Condition 6

Table 3 – Predicted Levels of Candidate Assessment, by Condition and Party Identification of the Subject

The numbers in the cells are the rank order given to the female Republican candidate for identifiers of each party. One is the condition that elicits the highest evaluations of the Republican female, while four corresponds to the lowest evaluations.

		Balanced Message	Party-Owned Message	Gender-Owned Message
Running Against Women	<i>Rep Subjects</i>	3	1	5
	<i>Dem Subjects</i>	4	6	2
Running Against Men	<i>Rep Subjects</i>	4	2	6
	<i>Dem Subjects</i>	3	5	1

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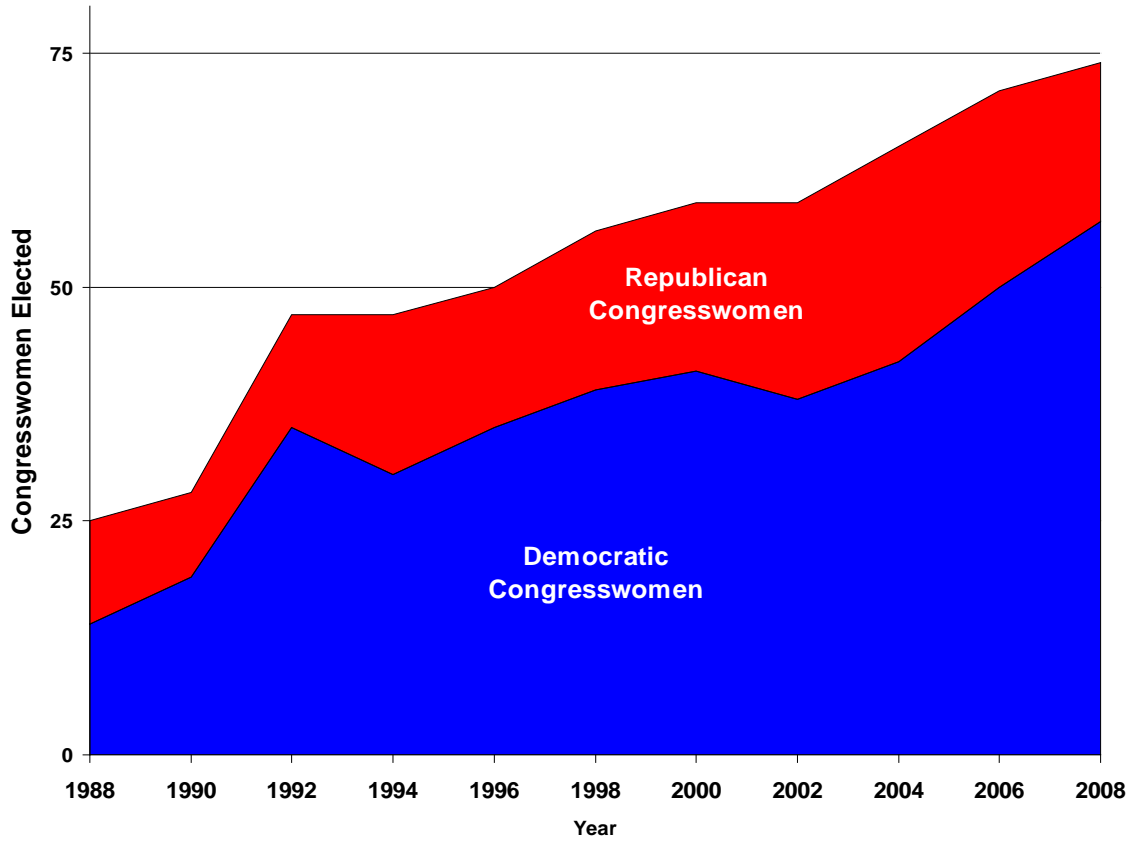
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Appendix A

Figure A.1 – Number of Congresswomen, 1988-2008



Appendix B**Interview Instrument**

The interviews, conducted both in person and over the phone, generally followed these questions:

1. Please tell me a little bit about your background in politics.
2. What are the ways that gender influences the way campaigns construct their messages?
 - a. [If not mentioned:] How does the gender of the *opponent* influence campaign messages?
3. What about contrast messages and messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent? How does candidate gender affect these strategies?
 - a. [If not mentioned:] How does the gender of the *opponent* influence these strategies?
4. Do you find that women are any more hesitant to use contrast messages or messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent?
5. Is there any difference in issue focus in negativity strategies based on candidate gender?

Appendix C

Survey Instrument

The following is the survey instrument distributed to professional political consultants via the internet.

1. Are you now – or have you in the past – been a professional political consultant?

Yes, I am one now
 Yes, I have been in the past but am not currently
 [THESE INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED THE SAME INSTRUMENT, JUST IN THE PAST TENSE]
 No, I am not a professional political consultant and have not been so in the past [END]

2. Approximately how long have you worked as a professional political consultant?

Less than 1 year
 1-3 years
 4-6 years
 7-9 years
 More than 9 years

3. In what ways are you, or have you been, professionally consulting campaigns **since the year 2000?** (Please check all that apply.)

Field Relations
 Polling/Focus Groups
 Earned Media & Press
 Fundraising
 Paid Media (Print, Radio, TV)
 Messaging/Strategy
 Direct Mail
 Other (please specify: _____)

4. In what areas have you consulted campaigns **prior to the year 2000?** (Please check all that apply.)

Field Relations
 Polling/Focus Groups
 Earned Media & Press
 Fundraising
 Paid Media (Print, Radio, TV)
 Messaging/Strategy
 Direct Mail
 I was not professionally consulting prior to 2000
 Other (please specify: _____)

5. Please indicate what percentage of your professional political consultant work these days is devoted to each of the following types of campaigns.

Presidential specify)
 Gubernatorial
 Other (please specify)
 Senate races
 Other races for state government (e.g., state attorneys general, legislature)
 House races specify)
 Issue campaigns
 Other (please specify)
 Other (please specify)

[END IF ISSUE CAMPAIGNS=100]

6. Has any of your **candidate** consulting included consulting on paid television commercials?

Yes
 No, but I have consulted on other types of messages (e.g., web messages, speeches, etc.)
 No, and I have not consulted on any type of messages (e.g., web messages, speeches, etc.) [END]

Now I would like to ask you about some of the characteristics of the **candidate** campaigns you have worked on throughout your career as a political consultant.

7. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, what percentage of these candidates were Republicans and what percentage were Democrats?

- _____ percent Democratic candidates
- _____ percent Republican candidates
- _____ percent third-party or non-partisan candidates

8. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, approximately how many of these involved you working on behalf of a female candidate?

- _____ None
- _____ 1
- _____ 2-4
- _____ 5-7
- _____ More than 7

9. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, approximately how many of these involved you working on behalf of a male candidate **who was running against a female candidate**?

- _____ None
- _____ 1
- _____ 2-4
- _____ 5-7
- _____ More than 7

10. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, approximately how many of these involved you working on behalf of a female candidate **who was running against another woman**?

- _____ None
- _____ 1
- _____ 2-4
- _____ 5-7
- _____ More than 7

11. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, in which region(s) of the country were these races? (Please check all that apply.)

- Northeast
- Midwest
- South
- West

12. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, in which region(s) of the country have you worked on behalf of a female candidate? (Please check all that apply.)

- Northeast
- Midwest
- South
- West

13. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, in which type of area(s) were these races? (Please check all that apply.)

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

14. Thinking about those **candidate** campaigns on which you worked, in which type of area(s) have you worked on behalf of a female candidate? (Please check all that apply.)

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

15. Please list the states in which you have worked on **all candidate** campaigns.

16. Please list the states in which you have worked on **candidate** campaigns **on behalf of a female candidate**.

In the next few questions, I will ask you about contrast messages. When I refer to contrast messages, I am referring to those messages that explicitly draw distinctions between your candidate's positive attributes and issue stances and the opponent's shortcomings. And when I refer to "messages," I am referring to any type of campaign communication, such as paid advertisements, speeches, web-sites, etc.

17. In your career as a professional political consultant, in how many candidate campaigns did you advise your candidate to use contrast messages?

- Many
- Some
- A few
- None (SKIP TO 18.1.A)

18. Thinking about those candidates for whom you've consulted since 2000, under what circumstances have you advised your candidates to use contrast messages?

19. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of contrast messages differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was a man or a woman?

- Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise men to use contrast messages than women.
- Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise women to use contrast messages than men.
- No, in general, I have advised men and women to use contrast messages roughly equally.

20. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised male and female candidates to use different *proportions* of contrast messages?

- Yes, in general, I advised men to devote a higher proportion of their messages to contrast messages.
- Yes, in general, I advised women to devote a higher proportion of their messages to contrast messages.
- No, in general, I advised men and women to use roughly equal proportions of contrast messages.

21. What is your reasoning behind these strategies?

Now, I would like to ask you about some of the contingencies that might affect your advice about using contrast messages.

22. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of contrast messages differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was **running against a man or a woman**?

___ Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise my candidates to use contrast messages when they were running against men.

___ Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise my candidates to use contrast messages when they were running against women.

___ No, in general, I have advised men and women to use contrast messages roughly equally regardless of whether their opponents were men or women.

23. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised candidates to use different *proportions* of contrast messages depending on whether the candidate you were advising was running against a man or a woman?

___ Yes, in general, I advised my candidates to devote a higher proportion of their messages to contrast messages when they were running against men.

___ Yes, in general, I advised my candidates to devote a higher proportion of their messages to contrast messages when they were running against women.

___ No, in general, I advised my candidates to use roughly equal proportions of contrast messages regardless of whether they were running against men or women.

24. What is your reasoning behind these strategies?

25. Are there any other factors that affect the advice you give female candidates about the proportion of contrast messages to use in a campaign?

___ Yes (Please explain)

___ No

26. Are there any other factors that affect the advice you give your candidates about the proportion of contrast messages to use in a campaign when they are running against women?

___ Yes (Please explain)

___ No

27. Has the way you strategize about gender changed in the time you have been a professional political consultant?

___ Yes

___ No

28. How has it changed?

29. In your general experience, which of the following statements most accurately describes your experience with candidates' willingness to use contrast messages?

___ In general, male candidates are more hesitant than female candidates to use contrast messages.

___ In general, female candidates are more hesitant than male candidates to use contrast messages.

___ In general, there is little difference between male and female candidates.

30. In your general experience, which of the following statements most accurately describes your experience with candidates' willingness to use contrast messages?

___ In general, candidates are more hesitant to use contrast messages when they are running against a woman than a man.

___ In general, candidates are more hesitant to use contrast messages when they are running against a man than a woman.

___ In general, there is little difference between candidates running against men or women.

Now I am going to ask you about messages that focus solely on the shortcoming of your candidates' opponents. This type of ad (message) is different from contrast messages, in that it *only* focuses on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents, without mention of the sponsoring candidate's positive attributes and policy stances.

31. In your career as a professional political consultant, in approximately what portion of the candidate campaigns did you advise your candidate to use messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents?

- Many
- Some
- A few
- None

32. Thinking about those candidates for whom you've consulted since 2000, under what circumstances have you advised your candidates to use messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents?

33. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of messages that focus solely on shortcomings of candidates' opponents differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was a man or a woman?

- Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise men to use these types of messages than women.
- Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise women to use these types of messages than men.
- No, in general, I have advised men and women to use these types of messages roughly equally.

34. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised male and female candidates to use different *proportions* of messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents, regardless of the opponent's sex?

- Yes, in general, I advised men to devote a higher proportion of messages to this type of messages.
- Yes, in general, I advised women to devote a higher proportion of their messages to this type of messages.
- No, in general, I advised men and women to use roughly equal proportions of this type of messages.

35. What is your reasoning behind these strategies?

Now, I would like to ask you about some of the contingencies that might affect your advice about using messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of the candidates' opponents.

36. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, has your advice about the use of messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of your candidates' opponents differed depending on whether the candidate you were advising was **running against a man or a woman**?

___ Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise my candidates to use this type of messages when they were running against men.

___ Yes, in general, I was more likely to advise my candidates to use this type of messages when they were running against women.

___ No, in general, I have advised men and women to use this type of messages roughly equally regardless of whether their opponents were men or women.

37. Looking back at the candidate campaigns you have consulted since 2000, have you advised candidates to use different *proportions* of messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents depending on whether the candidate you were advising was running against a man or a woman?

___ Yes, in general, I advised my candidates to devote a higher proportion of their messages to this type of ad (message) when they were running against men.

___ Yes, in general, I advised my candidates to devote a higher proportion of their messages to this type of ad (message) when they were running against women.

___ No, in general, I advised my candidates to use roughly equal proportions of this type of ad (message) regardless of whether they were running against men or women.

38. What is your reasoning behind these strategies?

39. Are there any other factors that affect the advice you give female candidates about the proportion of messages to use in a campaign that focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent?

___ Yes (Please explain)

___ No

40. Are there any other systematic factors that affect the advice you give your candidates about the proportion of messages to use in a campaign that focus solely on the shortcomings of the opponent when they are running against women?

___ Yes (Please explain)

___ No

41. In your general experience, which of the following statements most accurately describes your experience with candidates' willingness to use messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents?

___ In general, male candidates are more hesitant than female candidates to use this type of messages.

___ In general, female candidates are more hesitant than male candidates to use this type of messages.

___ In general, there is little difference between male and female candidates.

42. In your general experience, which of the following statements most accurately describes your experience with candidates' willingness to use messages that focus solely on the shortcomings of their opponents?

___ In general, candidates are more hesitant to use this type of messages when they are running against a woman than a man.

___ In general, candidates are more hesitant to use this type of messages when they are running against a man than a woman.

___ In general, there is little difference between candidates running against men or women.

You are now almost done with this survey. But first, I will give you a list of traits. People often expect different groups to generally possess different traits to a greater or lesser degree. For each, please indicate whether, in your general experience, you have found that **voters** expect differences between male and female candidates as to the degree to which they possess these traits.

1=Voters expect male candidates to possess this trait more than female candidates.

2=Voters expect male and female candidates to possess this trait equally.

3=Voters expect female candidates to possess this trait more than male candidates.

43. Compassionate

44. Competent

45. Kind

46. Tough

47. Trustworthy

48. Possesses good people skills

49. Articulate

50. Ambitious

51. Strong leader

52. Good administrator

53. Ethical

54. Career Politician

I will now give you a list of issue areas. In your general experience, have you found that **voters** expect differences between male and female candidates as to how competent each group would be on these particular issues? Please indicate your assessment for each issue.

1=Voters expect female candidates to be more competent on this issue than male candidates.

2=Voters expect female and male candidates to be equally competent on this issue.

3=Voters expect male candidates to be more competent on this issue than female candidates.

55. Economy

56. Health care

57. National defense/Homeland security

58. Education

59. Social Security

60. Poverty

61. The Iraq War

62. Veterans' Affairs

63. Foreign Affairs

64. Crime

65. Environment

Finally, we will finish with some demographic questions.

66. Are you male or female?

____ Male

____ Female

67. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

68. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-50
- 51-65
- Over 65

69. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school
- Associate Degree/Technical College
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree or other advanced degree

70. In which region of the United States do you live?

Northeast

South

Midwest

West

Hawaii/Alaska

I do not live in the United States

71. Are you a member of a consulting firm? If so, how large is the organization?

No, I do not affiliate with any other consultants. [SKIP TO 58.1]

Yes, but there are only 1-2 other consultants.

Yes, and there are 3-5 other consultants.

Yes, and there are more than five other consultants.

72. What is your position within the firm?

73. Would you be willing to answer some additional follow-up questions in person or over the phone? If so, please provide your name and contact information below. Please note, this identifying information will be separated from your previous answers to preserve anonymity.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Preferred method of contact (please circle one): Phone E-mail

74. Is there anyone else you think I should contact with this survey? If so, please provide that person's name and contact information below.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

75. Is there anything else you would like to discuss, explain, or tell me?

Appendix D

Table D.1 – Distribution of Consultants’ Reponses regarding Candidate Gender, by Party

	Use of contrast messages?			Proportions of contrast messages			Use of attack messages			Proportions of attack messages		
	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*
Men more negative than women	7% (3)	0 (0)		7% (3)	7% (1)		7% (2)	8% (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)	
Women more negative than men	2% (1)	0 (0)		2% (1)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)	
Women and men equally negative	91% (42)	100% (15)		91% (43)	93% (14)		90% (28)	92% (12)		97% (29)	100% (13)	
N	46	15	.50	43	15	.84	31	13	.80	30	13	.51

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table D.2 – Distribution of Consultants’ Reponses regarding Opponent Gender, by Party

	Use of contrast messages?			Proportions of contrast messages?			Use of attack messages?			Proportions of attack messages?		
	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*	Dems	Reps	Pr*
More negative against women than men	5% (2)	20% (3)		5% (2)	15% (2)		0 (0)	0 (0)		0 (0)	0 (0)	
More negative against men than women	5% (2)	0 (0)		2% (1)	0 (0)		20% (6)	17% (2)		10% (3)	17% (2)	
Equally negative against men and women	91% (39)	80% (12)		93% (41)	85% (11)		80% (24)	83% (10)		90% (26)	83% (10)	
N	43	15	.14	44	13	.36	30	12	.80	29	12	.57

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table D.3 – Distribution of Consultants’ Reponses regarding Opponent Gender, by Gender of the Consultant

	Use of contrast messages?			Proportions of contrast messages?			Use of attack messages?			Proportions of attack messages?		
	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*
Men more negative than women	6% (2)	0 (0)		6% (2)	0 (0)		7% (2)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)	
Women more negative than men	3% (1)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)		0 (0)	0 (0)	
Women and men equally negative	91% (30)	100% (11)		91% (29)	100% (11)		90% (26)	100% (8)		97% (28)	100% (7)	
n	33	11	.59	32	11	.57	29	8	.64	29	7	.62

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Table D.4 – Distribution of Consultants’ Reponses regarding Opponent Gender, by Gender of the Consultant

	Use of contrast messages?			Proportions of contrast messages?			Use of attack messages?			Proportions of attack messages?		
	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*	Men	Women	Pr*
More negative against women than men	6% (2)	0 (0)		3% (1)	9% (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)		0 (0)	0 (0)	
More negative against men than women	6% (2)	0 (0)		3% (1)	0 (0)		21% (6)	13% (1)		11% (3)	0 (0)	
Equally negative against men and women	88% (28)	100% (11)		94% (30)	91% (10)		79% (22)	88% (7)		89% (25)	100% (7)	
n	32	11	.47	32	11	.61	28	8	.57	28	7	.37

*The probability that the difference is due to chance, based on a chi-squared test. The actual number of consultants is in parentheses in each cell.

Appendix E

Table E.1 – Negative Binomial Regression Results

(Dependent variable is a count of number of times a negative spot was aired.)

Total Number of Ads	.0006** (.00008)
Female Candidate	.03 (.53)
Female Opponent	.08 (.43)
Female Candidate X Female Opponent	2.42* (1.42)
Democrat	.03 (.13)
Democrat Woman Candidate	-.03 (.29)
Democrat X Female Republican Opponent	-.21 (.26)
Democrat X Female Candidate X Female Opponent	.19 (.75)
% Legislature that is female	.003 (.008)
% Legislature X Female Candidate	.004 (.02)
% Legislature X Female Opponent	-.006 (.02)
% Legislature X Female Candidate X Female Opponent	-.10* (.05)
Challenger	.43** (.14)
Open Seat	.26** (.13)
2000	.24** (.12)
2004	.47** (.12)
Toss-Up	1.40** (.12)
Proportion of Expenditures in Race	-.53 (.34)
Constant	3.53** (.33)
N	851

Note: *= $p < .10$ **= $p < .05$ Huber-White robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Table E.2 – Predicted Levels of Negativity by Gender Context and Levels of Women’s Representation in the State Legislature

		Minimum (Alabama, 7.9 percent)	Median (Florida, 24 percent)	Maximum (WA State, 40.8 percent)
<i>Against Women</i>	Democratic Women versus Women	.49	.26	.03
	Republican Women versus Women	.64	.42	.19
	Democratic Men versus Women	.39	.27	.16
	Republican Men versus Women	.43	.32	.21
<i>Against Men</i>	Democratic Women versus Men	.54	.51	.48
	Republican Women versus Men	.40	.38	.35
	Democratic Men versus Men	.31	.32	.33
	Republican Men versus Men	.33	.34	.35

Table E.3 – First Strike Logit*(DV=1 if candidate goes negative first)*

Female Candidate	-0.03 (.40)
Female Opponent	.53* (.30)
Female Candidate X Female Opponent	-.06 (.77)
Democrat	-.05 (.23)
Democrat Woman Candidate	-.70 (.50)
Democrat X Female Republican Opponent	-.42 (.51)
Democrat X Female Candidate X Female Opponent	-.002 (1.10)
Challenger	2.63** (.30)
Open Seat	1.20** (.24)
2000	-.03 (.22)
2004	-.07 (.21)
Toss-Up	-.31* (.19)
Proportion of Expenditures in Race	1.90** (.50)
Constant	-1.79** (.44)
N	625

Note: *= $p < .10$ **= $p < .05$ Huber-White robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Appendix F

Issue Coding of the Advertisements

Amongst the many aspects the Wisconsin Ads Project codes for, the staff includes issue codes. However, to ensure that the ads were coded along lines that reflect gender and party stereotypes, I employed four coders to recode negative ads. Coders were given twenty different issue categories to choose from, constructed from Tracy Sulkin's ad coding scheme (reported in Sulkin, et. al. 2007) and modified to reflect the salient issues of the three election cycles. Sulkin's original categories are as follows:

- Agriculture
- Budget
- Campaign Finance and Government Reform
- Crime
- Children's Issues
- Defense, Immigration, and Foreign Policy
- Education
- Environment and Public Lands
- Health Care
- Jobs and Infrastructure
- Medicare
- Consumer Issues
- Moral Issues
- Civil Rights
- Social Security
- Taxes
- Welfare
- Government Operations
- Corporate Regulation

The majority of my changes were to separate out some categories that were not necessarily consistent with the gender literature or that I intuited may have changed since the most recent gender literature. For instance, due to the recent attention paid to

immigration issues – and the potential for there to be gender *position* ownership, apart from issue ownership, I separated immigration from defense and foreign policy. In addition, I added some narrower categories relating to defense and national security – such as “terrorism/September 11” and “Iraq war,” to specifically gauge the use of these salient issues. In another instance, I combined “Government Operations” with “Campaigns and Government Reform,” as the literature did not provide a compelling reason to keep these separate (and this category was mentioned relatively rarely, anyhow.)

The resulting choices were as follows:

Broad Issue Area	For example
1. Agriculture	Subsidies, most agricultural trade, food safety
2. Budget	Balancing it, cutting spending **If only social security is mentioned in relation to the budget, code as “social security” **If social security <i>and</i> other budget matters mentioned, put it here (make note)
3. Campaigns and Government Reform	Term limits, congressional pay raises, campaign finance, accepting gifts, general ethics
4. Crime	Drugs, controlled substances, death penalty, trafficking, police and firefighters (general), criminal procedure, obscenity, voting rights of felons
5. Terrorism/September 11th	Increased border security, punishing offenders, preventing future attacks, preparing first-responders, victim compensation, Victory Bonds
6. Defense and Foreign Policy	Foreign aid and assistance, treaties, military matters, base closings, human rights, veterans’ affairs **If policies with specific countries are mentioned and those policies deal

	<i>specifically and only with terrorism, code as “terrorism”</i>
7. Guns	Second amendment, gun control
8. Family and Children’s Issues	Family law (adoption, child support, etc.)
9. Education	
10. Environment and Public Lands	Any environmental issues unless it is about energy policy (if so, code as “energy”)
11. Health	Insurance, long term care, prescription drug prices, etc. (If limited to <i>Medicare</i> , code as “Medicare”)
12. Medicare	Any Medicare only mentions, including the prescription drug benefit
13. Social Security	
14. Abortion	
15. Other Social Issues	Cloning, same-sex marriage/unions, etc.
16. Corporate Regulations	Antitrust, corporate welfare, encouraging business (including lowering taxes on businesses)
17. Taxes	Raising, lowering, only in reference to personal taxes **If related to business/corporate taxes, code as “Corporate Regulations”
18. Employment	Good/bad-paying jobs, addressing unemployment, union-related issues
19. Immigration	Tightening borders, naturalizing citizens, illegal immigration, amnesty
20. Welfare	Child nutrition, public housing, SSI for people with disabilities, TANF, etc. **If only talking about seniors, code as “Social Security” **If only talking about veterans, code as “Defense”

Coder 1 did the bulk of the coding, with Coders 2, 3, and 4 largely coding in order to verify the validity of Coder 1. In some instances, the codes of Coders 2, 3, and 4 were used, mostly to fill-in random ads that Coder 1 had not coded.

This substitution posed no problems, as the inter-rater reliability of all four coders was substantial. The kappa measure of inter-rater reliability, amongst all four raters for each category, is as follows.

Issue Area	Kappa Statistic
Agriculture	.51 (1.14)
Budget	.88* (4.13)
Campaigns and Government Reform	.89* (6.45)
Crime	.82* (4.44)
Terrorism/September 11th	.88* (4.10)
Defense and Foreign Policy	.90* (5.69)
Guns	1.00* (4.25)
Family and Children's Issues	.83* (2.23)
Education	.93* (7.63)
Environment and Public Lands	.81* (4.33)
Health	.76* (7.51)
Medicare	.69* (5.33)
Social Security	.81* (7.92)
Abortion	1.00* (5.54)
Other Social Issues	.55* (2.71)
Corporate Regulations	.60* (3.99)
Taxes	.84* (9.64)
Employment	.82* (6.97)

Immigration	.83* (2.18)
Welfare	.75* (1.64)
Compassion Issues	.85* (11.44)
Hard Issues	.82* (11.62)

Each of these values falls within an acceptable range of kappa. All but the agriculture category is statistically significant, meaning that the coders agreed at a rate that is greater than would be expected by chance. The agriculture category does not meet this requirement, but it is not worrisome for the overall analysis. First, when collapsed into hard issues, the hard issues measure is robust for the analysis. Since I do not analyze agriculture on its own, it is less of an issue. Second, agriculture's lack of significance is probably due to the small number of ads that mention agriculture. Neuendorf (2002) notes that extreme distributions may lead to underestimation of inter-rater reliability. The percentage of ads coded "one" on agriculture varied between coders from around two percent of ads to zero ads. This distribution is probably the source of the lower reliability coefficient and the reason it just misses statistical significance ($p=.13$). This conclusion is further verified by the fact that two-way intercoder reliability, in terms of raw percentage of agreement, is high. (Raw agreement is above 97 percent for those coders with sufficient observations to compare.)

I also note that these kappas reflect adjustments made to the categories of "budget," "campaign and government reform," and "family." Initial agreement amongst the coders on these categories was not as high as I desired. I personally reviewed and

repaired these disagreements. Moreover, I found that on these issues I overwhelming
agreed with the codes of the main coder (Coder 1).

Appendix G

Discussion of Aggregation Issues

Because I am simultaneously looking at issue ownership based on both gender and party stereotypes, I had to make a decision as to whether I conceptualized the dependent variables as men's and women's issues or Republican and Democratic issues (and functions thereof.)

While these issue areas correspond highly to one another – women's issues correspond closely with Democratic issues and men's issues with Republican issues – the correspondence is not perfect. Due to the relatively large variance in issues owned by each party (at least compared to the more stable gendered issues), there is only a small sub-set of issues I would confidently grant each party. Based on Sides (2006), and in a somewhat conservative estimation, I consider my categories “terror,” “defense and foreign policy,” and “taxes” to be Republican issues and “education,” “environment,” “health,” social security,” and “medicare” to be Democratic issues. In other words, all those issues I consider to be Republican issues are men's issues, but not vice versa. Similarly, all Democratic issues are women's issues, but not vice versa. In fact there are some areas where I suspect there would be disagreement. For instance, in the bivariate analysis, Democrats attack more on corporate regulation, likely related to the Republicans' poor perceived performance on corporate regulation, leading to scandals surrounding Enron and other companies. However, because it can be considered an economic issue – a set of issues generally owned by men – it is placed in the hard issue category.

Ultimately, though, I had to choose one dependent variable. Here, I have used the broader gender ownership aggregation as the dependent variable. I do so for several reasons. First, because I test whether the party cue dominates the gender cue, it was only fair to give party the tougher test. Due to the imperfect correspondence, the gender categories should produce more measurement error in respect to party. Therefore, the fact that I still find significant party influence says that party influence is significantly important, so much so that it overcomes increased measurement error.

From a practical standpoint, however, I ran the models both ways. Using the party-owned categories as bases for “compassion” and “hard” issues did not fundamentally change the results. I did find a few more statistically significant differences between sub-groups, but these differences were not theoretically expected. What is more, the correlation between the conceptualizations of the variables – a party basis versus a gender basis for the aggregation – is quite high ($r=.76$ for the difference in compassion and hard issues measures for each; $r=.76$ for the correlation of women’s and Democratic issues; and $r=.70$ for the correlation of men’s and Republican issues).

Appendix H

Results of the Heckman Selection Models

As discussed in Footnote 17, the structure of the data suggested that a Heckman selection model may be necessary, in order to account for the decision of a significant portion of the sample to not run negative advertisements at all. Results from the three independent variables are below. I model selection based on a simplified version of the model in Chapter 3. Rho is well above significance levels for all three models – particularly for the main dependent variable of interest (the difference between the proportion of women’s issues and the proportion of men’s issues), indicating that a selection model is not necessary. Nevertheless, the coefficients are substantively the same as the OLS model reported in the main body of the chapter.

Table H.1 – Results of the Heckman Selection Models

	Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one women’s issue	Proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one men’s issue	Difference between proportion of candidate-sponsored ads including at least one women’s issue and at least one men’s issue
Female Candidate	-.03 (.07)	-.10 (.07)	.07 (.11)
Female Opponent	-.07 (.06)	.02 (.06)	-.09 (.09)
Female Candidate X Female Opponent	.06 (.14)	.15 (.14)	-.09 (.22)
Democrat	.06 (.04)	-.16** (.04)	.22** (.07)
Female Candidate X Democrat	.05 (.09)	.23** (.09)	-.18 (.14)

Female Opponent X Democrat	.12 (.09)	-.06 (.10)	.17 (.15)
Female Candidate X Female Opponent X Party	-.11 (.22)	-.30 (.22)	.19 (.34)
Toss-Up	.004 (.07)	-.03 (.07)	.05 (.15)
Year 2002	-.17** (.04)	.18** (.04)	-.35** (.06)
Year 2004	-.26** (.04)	.24** (.04)	-.49** (.07)
Challenger	.01 (.05)	.06 (.05)	-.03 (.10)
Open Seat	-.01 (.05)	.09* (.05)	-.09 (.08)
Democratic Presidential Vote Share	.002 (.002)	-.005** (.002)	.007** (.003)
Constant	.64** (.15)	.70** (.16)	-.08 (.30)
<i>Selection Model</i>			
Female Candidate	-.09 (.13)	-.09 (.13)	-.09 (.13)
Female Opponent	-.09 (.13)	-.09 (.13)	-.08 (.13)
Democrat	-.22** (.10)	-.22** (.10)	-.22** (.10)
% of State Legislature that is Female	-.005 (.007)	-.004 (.007)	-.005 (.007)
Challenger	.89** (.17)	.87** (.17)	.89** (.17)
Open Seat	.53** (.14)	.53** (.14)	.53** (.14)
Year 2000	-.13 (.12)	-.13 (.12)	-.13 (.12)
Year 2004	.31** (.12)	.31** (.12)	.31** (.12)
Toss-Up	1.39** (.11)	1.38** (.11)	1.38** (.11)
Proportion of Expenditures	-.06 (.25)	-.07 (.26)	-.05 (.26)

Nelson

Appendices

Constant	-.55* (.29)	-.56** (.29)	-.57 (.28)
Rho	.19 (.22)	.05 (.24)	.13 (.35)

**=p<.05 *=p<.1