

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: INTERSECTIONAL STEREOTYPING IN  
POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

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Political scientists have debated whether gender stereotypes influence support for women candidates. Similarly, scholars have examined how racism among whites affects evaluations of minority candidates. Yet, rarely have political scientists considered how racism and gender bias intersect when a female minority candidate runs for office. In this dissertation, I propose a theory of intersectional stereotyping, which argues that evaluations of black women candidates are influenced by unique stereotypes based on the intersection of race and gender. Specifically, I argue that stereotypes associating black women with agentic traits (such as assertiveness, dominance, and anger) put black women at a disadvantage when they run for elected office. I hypothesize that members of racial or gender out-groups will penalize black women candidates when they receive campaign information consistent with these agentic stereotypes. On the other hand, I expect that black women will reward an agentic black female candidate because these traits suggest that the

candidate is willing and able to stand up for the interests of black women. I test these expectations using a content analysis and two national survey experiments (one using a sample of whites and the other using a sample of blacks). In my content analysis of the 2018 Democratic primary for governor of Georgia, I find that Stacey Abrams, the black female candidate, was more likely to be described with agentic traits, especially negative agentic traits, in newspaper coverage than Stacey Evans, her white female opponent. My experimental data demonstrates that this media coverage of agentic traits puts black women at a disadvantage among white voters. White voters are more likely to penalize a black female candidate for acting in an assertive manner than identical white female and black male candidates. However, I find no penalty or reward for the assertive black female candidate among black voters. This research underscores the importance of studying the influence of race and gender in politics simultaneously. We cannot fully understand the effects of race and gender on support for minority women candidates by studying these concepts in isolation from one another.

INTERSECTIONAL STEREOTYPING IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

by

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## Chapter 1: A Theory of Intersectional Stereotyping in Political Campaigns

Recently, the term “intersectionality” has become a popular catchphrase in progressive politics (Hancock 2016). For example, although the organizers of the 2017 Women’s March on Washington originally drew criticism for not including women of color, the group quickly recruited several women of color as national co-chairs and embraced an explicitly intersectional agenda (Gebreyes 2017). In the end, the March’s mission statement affirmed support for “advocacy and resistance movements that reflect our multiple and intersecting identities” and the first two sentences of the group’s guiding principles read: “Women’s rights are human rights, regardless of a woman’s race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual identity, gender expression, economic status, age or disability. We practice empathy with the intent to learn about the intersecting identities of each other.”<sup>1</sup> Yet while Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality three decades ago, and it has gradually made its way into political activism and popular culture (Hancock 2016), research in political science has devoted little attention to uncovering the political implications of the intersection of race and gender (Brown and Gershon 2016; Junn and Brown 2008).

Early scholars of African American women in politics argued that black women face double-jeopardy or multiple-jeopardy because they encounter both

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<sup>1</sup> Mission and Vision. Women’s March on Washington. <https://www.womensmarch.com/mission/> (accessed Jan 25, 2017).

racism and sexism (Beale 1979; Githens and Prestage 1977; King 1988).

Intersectionality research, however, moves beyond this simple additive model of the influence of race and gender (Hancock 2007). Instead, intersectionality theory contends that race and gender are mutually constructed identities and that the combined influence of race and gender is not necessarily equal to sum of its parts (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Hancock 2007; Simien 2007). As Simien (2007) states, “race and gender cannot be reduced to individual attributes to be measured and assessed for their separate contributions in explaining political outcomes” (266). Alternatively, scholars of intersectionality stress that race and gender often work together to create unique experiences among women of color whose identities fall at the intersection of two or more marginalized groups (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Hancock 2007; Simien 2007; Smooth 2006).

Drawing on intersectionality theory, some scholars argue that women of color are not necessarily disadvantaged by the intersection of race and gender (Bejarano 2013; Brown and Gershon 2016; Fraga et al. 2005; Livingston et al. 2012). Fraga and his colleagues (2005), for instance, contend that Latina women benefit from “strategic intersectionality” when it comes to advocating for policies that aid communities of color. Fraga et al. (2005) argue that Latina women’s multiple identities, as both members of a minority ethnic group and also as women, let them “speak as authentic representatives” of a variety of groups, allowing them to more effectively build cross-group coalitions (8). Similarly, Bejarano (2013) argues that white voters see women of color as less of a racial threat compared to men of the same racial or ethnic group. She concludes that “[t]he interaction of race/ethnicity and gender...can mitigate the

effects of both racial bias and gender bias, resulting in fewer electoral disadvantages for females” (Bejarano 2013, 39).

While women of color may be well placed to build coalitions across race and gender in some situations, I argue that black women face political disadvantages based on the distinct stereotypes attached to them because of their race and gender. In this dissertation, I focus on the stereotype that black women are relatively tough and assertive (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012) and investigate how this stereotype affects support for black women candidates. I argue that the assertiveness stereotype causes black women who fight for the causes they believe in and who are ambitious enough to run for office to be unfairly perceived as “angry black women.” In addition, I argue that this stereotype will cause voters to penalize black women who act in a tough or assertive manner even more than is the case for members of other disadvantaged groups, such as white women or black men. Furthermore, I contend that this negative stereotype not only harms black women among white male voters, but also hinders their ability to win support from groups with whom black women share part of their identity, such as black men and white women.

Shirley Chisholm’s campaign for president in 1972 exemplifies the difficulty that the assertiveness stereotype poses for black women candidates, even among groups like black men and white women, who might be expected to support black women’s candidacies. While several black women have sought the Democratic

Party's presidential nomination, Shirley Chisholm was the first.<sup>2</sup> Historical accounts of Chisholm's campaign demonstrate that she faced challenges based on both her race and her gender (Greer 2016; Winslow 2014). She received resistance not only from the white male establishment in the Democratic Party, but also from most black men in Congress, and received lukewarm support from white women leaders of the feminist movement (Greer 2016; Winslow 2014). When African American politicians and civil rights leaders gathered in 1970 to discuss an electoral strategy for the 1972 election, Chisholm biographer Barbara Winslow (2014) writes, "it seemed that the only thing all the men agreed on was that she should not be the first black candidate for president and that she had no business even stating such an intention" (99). Yet the men at the conference contended that it was not Chisholm's gender, but rather her "brash style," that caused their unwillingness to support her candidacy (Greer 2016, 259). For example, Julian Bond, a state legislator from Georgia remarked:

"There was anger against her... She thought that by virtue of announcing her candidacy we would fall in line. There was enormous resentment at this idea. Politicians like to be asked. She would put it down to sexism and there was some of that, but I don't think her gender had as much to do with it as her style" (Richardson 1996, p. 194 quoted in Greer 2016, 259).

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<sup>2</sup> The other three black women who have sought the Democratic Party's nomination are Carol Moseley-Braun (2004), Mildred Glover (2004), and Kamala Harris (2020). Charlene Mitchell, the first black woman to run for president, ran as the Communist Party nominee in 1968 (Greer 2016).

While white women leaders within the feminist movement supported Chisholm when she was considering her run for president, once she officially announced her candidacy, these white women became much more reluctant to endorse her. For example, Chisholm's fellow Congresswoman and cofounder of the National Women's Political Caucus, Bella Abzug, refused to officially endorse Chisholm. Other leaders of the feminist movement, such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, expressed their support both for Chisholm and for one of the white male candidates in the race for the Democratic nomination. Gloria Steinem, for example, said, "I'm supporting both Shirley and McGovern. I don't think that's a conflict of interests. I feel he's the best white male candidate" (Fitzpatrick 2016, 215). Thus, she was hesitant to put her complete support behind a black woman presidential candidate.

As Chisholm's campaign demonstrates, minority men and white women are often reluctant to support the candidacies of women of color, even though one might expect these groups to be among the most supportive of minority women candidates. This is not to say that it is impossible for women of color to be elected to the highest political offices. However, it is important to understand the challenges that these candidates may be up against in order to create strategies to overcome the hurdles and challenges they face due to their race and gender. Intersectionality theory suggests that minority women face distinct stereotypes and disadvantages compared to minority men and white women (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991). While there is much research in political science about the barriers that minority candidates and women candidates face and how they might overcome biased perceptions when they run for

office, we know little about how racial and gender biases intersect to influence voters' support for minority women candidates.

In this dissertation, I argue that black women candidates face unique stereotypes based on the intersection of their race and gender. As a result, we cannot fully understand how bias and stereotypes impact black women candidates by studying race or gender alone. Specifically, I argue that, unlike black men or white women, black women are stereotyped as being assertive and domineering. Whereas some scholars contend that this stereotype may actually benefit black women leaders (Livingston et al. 2012), I argue that stereotypes about the assertiveness of black women will negatively influence support for black women political candidates and helps explain why black women are underrepresented in political offices. Shirley Chisholm's campaign epitomizes the challenges that this stereotype about the assertive black woman causes for black women candidates. Her assertive style not only cost her support from white voters but also limited her support among male leaders in the African American community. On the other hand, if she had not demonstrated her leadership skills, demanding attention and respect, through her assertive and outspoken campaigns, Chisholm may have never received as much success as she did in becoming the first African American woman elected to Congress and the first woman of any race to win delegates at the Democratic National Convention. Through investigating the stereotypes that black women candidates face, based on the intersection of race and gender, we can better understand how these candidates must walk a fine line between being seen as competent leaders and being perceived as overly aggressive.

*Black Women's Underrepresentation in Elected Office*

Although the news media lauded the 2018 midterms as a record year for the election of women of color, today black women still only account for 22 seats in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate. Thus, black women remain underrepresented, making up only up only 4.3% of members of Congress<sup>3</sup> despite being 7.6% of the U.S. population.<sup>4</sup> In all of U.S. history, only two black women – Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL) and Kamala Harris (D-CA) – have served in the U.S. Senate. And with Stacey Abrams's loss in the Georgia gubernatorial race, we have still yet to have a black woman serve as governor of any state. At the local level, a similar picture emerges. As of June 2017, black women made up only 3.7% of all state legislative seats (Dittmar 2017).

At the same time, black women are one of the most active groups in American politics. For example, in 2008 and 2012, black women turned out to vote in higher numbers than any other racial or gender group. Specifically, in 2012, the turnout rate among black women was 70.1%, compared to 65.6% among white women, 62.6% among white men, and 61.4% among black men (Dittmar 2015, 25). In addition, black women's voter registration and turnout rates have exceeded those of black men in every election since 1998. In 2012, 76.2% of black women were registered to vote, compared with 69.4% of black men (Dittmar 2015, 24-25). Black women's voter registration rates also exceeded those of white women (75.2%) and white men (72.2%) in 2012. In the 2014 midterm elections, black women did not quite reach the

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<sup>3</sup> History, Art, and Archives. U.S. House of Representatives. People Search. Black Americans in Congress. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. <http://history.house.gov> (accessed May 5, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, July 2018

voter turnout level of white men and women, with 43% of black women turning out to vote, compared to 46.3% of white women and 45.2% of white men. Still, black women's turnout rate exceeded that of black men (35.6%) by 7.4 percentage points. Indeed, as Dittmar (2015) notes, black women in 2014 "remained the most reliable voters among people of color" (25).

In 2017, black women voters were widely credited for the defeat of Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore, who faced numerous allegations of sexual misconduct, in the high-profile off-year election in Alabama. In the Alabama Senate race, 98% of black women voted for Roy Moore's Democratic opponent, Doug Jones, while 63% of white women cast their votes for Moore. In the aftermath of Roy Moore's defeat, the hashtag #thanksblackwomen spread rapidly across social media. As Brittney Cooper (2017) wrote in the *Washington Post*, black women "were praised as the saviors of political decency and common sense in American politics." In fact, Moore's loss in the Alabama Senate race prompted Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez to tweet, "Let me be clear: We won in Alabama and Virginia because #BlackWomen led us to victory. Black women are the backbone of the Democratic Party, and we can't take that for granted. Period."<sup>5</sup>

Although black women are one of the most politically engaged groups in American politics, their voices are still likely to be overlooked when it comes to public policy. Hajnal and his colleagues (2016) find that black women are

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<sup>5</sup> TomPerez. (2017, December 13). Let me be clear: We won in Alabama and Virginia because #BlackWomen led us to victory. Black women are the backbone of the Democratic Party, and we can't take that for granted. Period. [Tweet]. <https://twitter.com/tomperez/status/940968519088386049?lang=en>

disadvantaged by both their race and their gender when it comes to the responsiveness of political leaders. In a recent study, Hajnal et al. (2016) compare individuals' preferred spending levels on a variety of issues to the actual government spending in each policy area and find that Congress is least responsive to African Americans' preferences, compared to other races. Moreover, Hajnal et al. (2016) find that black women's preferences are even more likely to be ignored than those of black men. They conclude that, "When government chooses policy, it is the voices of black women, perhaps more than any other group, that are likely to be overlooked" (pg 16, footnote 16).

Still, some scholars have argued out that black women are doing better electorally than white women (Bejarano 2013). For example, in the 114th Congress, white women made up only 15.7% of white members of House, while black women accounted for 40.9% of African American members of House (Dittmar 2015). However, black women make up 58% of the black electorate, so they are still quite underrepresented in terms of their proportion of the electorate.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, black men have had greater success running for higher-level offices with majority-white constituencies; such as senator, governor, and even president. Whereas seven black men have served in the U.S. Senate, only two black women have served in the Senate. Likewise, four black men have served as governor, whereas no black woman has ever served as governor. Because black women vote at higher rates than black men, black women often make up the largest group of voters in majority-minority districts. The

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<sup>6</sup> This number refers to black women's percentage of black registered voters, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 Current Population Survey.

success of black women candidates in these districts, therefore, may be due more to high numbers of black women voters, and less so to the ability of black women to win over coalitions of black men and white women.

In fact, Philpot and Walton (2007) demonstrate that when black men run against black women, black men are less likely to support the black female candidate. Philpot and Walton (2007) analyze voting across race and gender lines during the 2001 mayoral race in Atlanta, in which the major contenders consisted of Shirley Franklin and Gloria Bromell-Tinubu, both black women, and Robert Pitts, a black man. They find that the combined vote share for the two women increased with greater numbers of black women registered in that precinct. On the other hand, greater numbers of black men and white women within a precinct corresponded with fewer votes for the black women candidates. Philpot and Walton (2007) note that black women made up the majority of registered voters in 89 of Atlanta's 92 precincts in 2001. In these precincts, the two black women candidates received about 79% of the vote, whereas these candidates received only 54% of the vote in the 3 precincts where black men were the majority of the electorate (Philpot and Walton 2007).

Philpot and Walton's study demonstrates that black women candidates find their greatest support from black women in the electorate. Although, on the surface, it may appear that black women are faring much better than black men and white women in increasing their presence in state legislatures and the House of Representatives (Bejarano 2013; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013), these increases may be attributed to black women making up the largest voting blocks in majority-minority districts. Black women remain highly underrepresented in statewide and

national offices where candidates must build a broader coalition of voters. My dissertation seeks to answer the puzzle of why black women are continually underrepresented in political office, particularly when it comes to statewide and national offices, despite their relatively high level of political activity.

While there may be many reasons for black women's underrepresentation in elected office,<sup>7</sup> I argue that black women face unique stereotypes based on the intersection of their race and gender that, when activated in campaigns, put them at a disadvantage in building support across racial and gender lines. Specifically, I argue that stereotypes associating black women with agentic traits (such as assertiveness, dominance, and anger) negatively influence support for black women candidates when they run for elected office. I expect that members of racial or gender out-groups will penalize black women candidates when they receive campaign information consistent with these agentic stereotypes.

### *Intersectionality Theory*

Understanding why black women candidates have difficulty winning elected offices is important because it may be especially difficult for this group to have their voices heard. A good deal of research finds that having more women and minorities represented in legislatures increases the sponsorship and passage of bills that are important to these groups (Minta and Brown 2014; Rouse 2013; Swers 2005; Tate 2003). For example, Swers (2005) finds that female members of Congress are

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<sup>7</sup> See Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2013) for a discussion of whether black women are less likely to be recruited by party leaders.

significantly more likely than their male colleagues to cosponsor legislation involving education, children and family issues, and women's health. Similarly, Tate (2003) demonstrates that African American members of Congress are more responsive to their black constituents' interests than white members of Congress. As a result, the underrepresentation of women and minority groups in elected office leads to these groups having less of a voice in politics. Indeed, Griffin and Newman (2008) find that Congress is less likely to respond to the needs of members of minority groups than to the interests of white constituents.

Not only are both women and minorities' voices underrepresented in our political system, but there is evidence that black women are particularly underrepresented, even when compared to other marginalized groups, such as black men and white women (Cohen 1999; Crenshaw 1991; Hajnal et al. 2016). Greater numbers of black women in local, state-level, and national elected offices means that these women will have a better opportunity to have their needs met through public policy. This increase is essential because black women have experiences, interests, and needs that are different from those of other marginalized groups, such as black men or white women (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989).

Scholars of intersectionality theory contend that race and gender are mutually constituted identities, which intersect in ways that create unique identities and experiences among members of multiple disadvantaged groups, such as black women (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991). As Crenshaw (1991) argues, black women's concerns are often ignored, even by groups that advocate on behalf of African Americans or women because they are marginalized within both of these groups. For

example, in the case of domestic violence, the anti-racism movement's attempts to counteract the stereotype that black men are violent has served to undermine the voices of black women who have been victims of domestic violence (Crenshaw 1991). Similarly, feminist campaigns against domestic violence often emphasize that domestic violence impacts everybody, not just minority communities, focusing on stories about abuse faced by white suburban women. But, this attention to white women's experiences pushes the experiences of black women to the sidelines of debates about how to end domestic violence.

Cathy Cohen (1999) provides a theory of why black women are marginalized within already underrepresented groups, such as the African American community. Cohen states that "African-American communities currently find themselves in a state of advanced marginalization, where stratification and cross-cutting issues increasingly define the political landscape" (55). A cross-cutting issue is one that directly impacts a specific segment of a marginalized group more than others. For instance, in Crenshaw's (1991) example of domestic violence, black women are the primary victims within the African American community. Yet, in the black community, this issue is framed as promoting negative stereotypes about violence among black men. As Cohen (1999) argues, "issues affecting men are often presented as representative of the condition of an entire community and thus worthy of a group response," while issues primarily affecting black women are relegated to the sidelines (11).

Cohen's theory of advanced marginalization also suggests a reason for why black women candidates may not receive a great deal of support from black men.

According to Cohen, when a group experiences advanced marginalization, elite members of the group are able to access some of the resources of the dominant society. This gives these members of the marginalized group an incentive to protect their position and promote a positive image of their group by policing other members of the group. As a result, these elites engage in “secondary marginalization,” or marginalization of members of their own group who, in their eyes, do not live up to expectations for the behavior of members of the group (Cohen 1999, 70). Cohen states that:

“[I]n the case of African Americans, systematic degradation, stereotyping, and stigmatization have all but dictated that attempts at incorporation, integration, and assimilation on the part of black people generally include some degree of proving themselves to be ‘just as nice as those white folks’”( 71).

Looking back on Shirley Chisholm’s presidential campaign, black male leaders may have objected to Chisholm’s assertive style because it violated the public image that these leaders wanted to portray of “nice black women.” As a result, black male leaders’ claims that Chisholm would “embarrass the black cause” (Winslow 2016, 99), fit well with Cohen’s theory of secondary marginalization.

### *The Importance of Intersectionality in Politics*

Previous research demonstrates that the intersection of race and gender is important to black women’s political identity (Gay and Tate 1998). Gay and Tate (1998) find that many black women identify with both their race and their gender and that these identities influence black women’s political beliefs, especially on issues

that involve the intersection of race and gender. For example, one of the issues Gay and Tate examine involving the intersection of race and gender is attitudes toward Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March in 1995. The march brought attention to civil rights issues affecting black men but ignored the discrimination that black women also face. In fact, organizers told women to stay home and “make sandwiches” for men attending the March (Harris-Perry 2011, 5). Gay and Tate note that the march “raised questions about the role of women in the struggle for racial equality and social dignity” (179). Gay and Tate (1998) find that black women’s attitudes toward the Million Man March are best modeled when an interaction between race and gender identification is included. In this model, identifying strongly with their race increases black women’s support for the march whereas gender identity does not have a significant impact on attitudes toward the march. However, black women who identified strongly with both their race and their gender rated the Million Man March significantly less favorably. This finding suggests that black women’s race and gender identities work together to influence their attitudes about issues that involve the intersection of race and gender. As a result, Gay and Tate (1998) push back against the idea that gender identity is irrelevant to black women. Instead, they find that race and gender identities work in tandem to influence black women’s political opinions.

Black women legislators also bring this intersectional identity to their legislative activities. Brown (2014) demonstrates that black women legislators view their unique identities as black women and their experiences with racism and sexism as important influences on their work as legislators. For instance, one member of the

Maryland House of Delegates remarked, “My identity as a black woman matters because I see it [legislation] from a different experience. I’ve experienced some of the prejudices, the not-so-friendly family legislation as it impacts black women” (quoted in Brown 2014, 77). Consequently, black women bring these experiences at the intersection of their race and gender to their legislative agendas (Brown and Banks 2013). Brown and Banks (2013) show that black women legislators are more likely than black men or white women to sponsor legislation that directly impacts both women and minorities; such as civil rights and affirmative action legislation targeted toward both women and minorities, as opposed to legislation that is targeted only toward African Americans or only toward women.

The research outlined above demonstrates that black women have unique experiences and hold identities based on the intersection of their race and gender (Brown 2014; Crenshaw 1991; Gay and Tate 1998), and these identities are influential in the types of legislation they bring to the table (Brown and Banks 2013). As a result, when black women are underrepresented in elected office, their unique experiences and interests are less likely to be taken into account. While recent research considers how black women represent their constituents once in office, we know less about the challenges black women political candidates face. Philpot and Walton (2007) find that black women voters are the largest supporters of black women candidates. Still, it is unclear what drives white voters, and in some circumstances black men, to be less likely to support a black woman candidate. Is it merely racism in the case of white voters and sexism in the case of black men? Or do black women candidates face unique disadvantages due to the combination of their

race and gender? Drawing on intersectionality theory, my contention is that black women candidates face stereotypes based on the intersection of their race and gender, which are different from the barriers faced by white women and black men. This intersectional challenge creates distinctive disadvantages for black women running for political office. Furthermore, I argue that, when activated, these stereotypes not only lead to decreased support for black women candidates among white voters, but they also cause black men to be less supportive of black women candidates.

### *Race and Gender Stereotypes in Political Campaigns*

A good deal of research demonstrates that Americans hold stereotypes based on race and gender. For example, whites tend to stereotype African Americans as lazy, irresponsible, promiscuous, and prone to violence (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Katz and Braley 1933; Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997; Piston 2010). Similarly, Americans hold stereotypes about traits that characterize men and women. Men are generally stereotyped as having “agentic traits”; such as being tough, assertive, and competent. Women, on the other hand, are generally characterized with communal traits; such as being compassionate, kind, and nurturing (Jost and Banaji 1994; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) find that these traits lead voters to perceive women candidates as better able to handle “compassion issues” like dealing with poverty and childcare, while men are seen as better able to deal with issues like the economy and foreign policy. Similarly, Schneider and Bos (2011) find that black

politicians are perceived as better able to deal with civil rights and race relations than politicians in general.

Other research suggests that both black politicians and women politicians are seen as a “subtype” of their respective groups, such that stereotypes about blacks and stereotypes about women do not always map onto beliefs about black and female politicians (Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014; Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2015). Still, campaigns may activate race and gender-based attitudes by portraying black and women candidates in a stereotypical manner (Bauer 2015; Lepore and Brown 1997). Yet, all this research focuses on race and gender independently. We know very little about how race and gender stereotypes intersect to influence evaluations of black women political candidates.

The little research that is available on support for women candidates of color is mixed. Some research suggests that minority women candidates may be disadvantaged when it comes to gaining support from white men and women (Clayton and Stallings 2000; Philpot and Walton 2007). Bejarano (2013), on the other hand, argues that women of color may have an advantage over male candidates from race and ethnic minority groups. She contends that gender “softens” racial threat, such that minority women candidates “experience less hostility from voters that do not share their race/ethnicity” (39). Drawing on data from the American National Election Study, Bejarano finds a positive interaction between race/ethnicity and gender, concluding that white voters “demonstrate less racially biased voting toward their racial/ethnic-minority incumbents if they are female” (48). However, Bejarano does not separate the minority women politicians in her study by race/ethnic

group, so it is unclear whether her results would hold up if looking only at black women. Attitudes toward Latina or Asian American women may be driving this effect. In addition, minority women politicians may make a conscious effort to “soften” their racial identity when making appeals to white voters. Therefore, it is unclear whether gender automatically softens minority women’s racial identities or whether it is the specific campaign choices that minority women candidates make which drives this effect. Understanding the unique stereotypes that black women encounter on the campaign trail can help us understand when black women will benefit from the intersection of their race and gender identity and when it may put them at a disadvantage.

### *Intersectional Stereotypes and their Consequences in Political Campaigns*

Scholars in the fields of psychology and sociology have recently begun to examine how stereotypes about black women differ from those of white women and black men (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). This research demonstrates that while white women tend to be stereotyped as having “communal” traits, such as kindness and compassion; black women are perceived as having much more “agentic” traits like toughness, assertiveness, and dominance (Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). At the same time, McConnaughy and White (2011) find that black men are much more likely to be perceived as violent and promiscuous compared to black women. They also find that black women are rated similarly to white women on the communal trait of “nurturing.”

Still, these stereotypes of black women in general may not always map well onto stereotypes of black women politicians (Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014). Carew (2016) finds that elite black women are both more likely to be seen as compassionate than other groups (a communal trait) but also more likely to be perceived as bossy (an agentic trait). Therefore, I expect that application of agentic or communal traits to black women candidates will depend on campaign information. Because the agentic traits that are associated with black women are usually negative in valence (i.e. bossy, pushy, etc.), I expect that black women candidates will be penalized more than other groups when campaign information activates agentic stereotypes.

In contrast, some scholars argue that agentic or dominant behavior is actually less proscribed for black women than it is for white women and black men (Livingston et al. 2012; Williams 2014). In other words, they argue that black women are less likely to be socially punished for acting in a forceful manner compared to white women. Robert Livingston and his colleagues (2012) draw on “intersectional invisibility” theory (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008) to support their proposition that black women leaders are less likely than white women leaders to face a backlash for agentic behavior. This theory proposes that the relative invisibility of members of two or more marginalized groups (e.g. women of color) actually shields them from some of the oppression that more prototypical members of the group (e.g. white women and minority men) face (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). In a workplace setting, Livingston and his colleagues (2012) find that white female and black male bosses are evaluated more negatively when they act in a tough, agentic

manner. In contrast, they find that black women are not penalized for acting in an agentic manner.

While Livingston and his colleagues find that black women leaders in the workplace may actually benefit from the agentic black woman stereotype, I argue that this is not likely to be the case in the context of a political campaign. Because elections are about who should hold power in our society and which policies should be enacted, there are different dynamics at play in political campaigns than Livingston et al. (2012) find in the workplace. I propose a theory of intersectional stereotyping, which argues that black women candidates are handicapped, not only by racism, but also by the intersectional stereotype that black women are particularly agentic. The stereotype of the agentic black woman is intersectional in that it draws on both race and gender beliefs, but it is a stereotype that uniquely affects black women. Forceful, agentic behavior is proscribed for both African Americans and women in the United States (Livingston et al. 2012; Rudman and Glick 2001; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). However, it is black women, in particular, who are stereotyped as being agentic in nature (Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). Given that stereotypes serve to maintain the status quo in power relations and justify the treatment of different groups in society (Jost and Banaji 1994; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999), I expect that, in politics, black women candidates will experience a penalty when these stereotypes are brought to mind.

Livingston et al. (2012) cite “intersectional invisibility theory” to support their argument that agency is less proscribed for black women than it is for black men or

white women (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). This theory suggests that members of multiple minority groups (e.g. black women) may be seen as less of a threat to the dominant group than members of a single minority group (e.g. black men and white women). In other words, they argue that black women face less hostility because they are often overlooked by those in power.<sup>8</sup> In political campaigning, however, being overlooked or ignored is not helpful at all. In order to successfully campaign for political office, black women candidates must work proactively to overcome intersectional invisibility and ensure that they are taken seriously as political candidates. They must make themselves visible in order to raise money, promote the issues they believe in, and win votes. But by making themselves visible as serious contenders for elected offices, black women candidates open themselves up for criticism based on the stereotype that black women are angry, bossy, pushy, and overly assertive. Therefore, I do not expect intersectional invisibility to shield black women candidates from stereotypes based on their race and gender. Instead, I argue that black women candidates will experience a penalty when the “assertive black woman” stereotype is brought to voters’ minds.

In addition, I expect that this penalty for black women candidates will come primarily from members of a racial or gender out-group. Because stereotypes serve to justify societal power-structures (Jost and Banaji 1994; Lippman 1922; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999), I expect that

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<sup>8</sup> Sidanius and his colleagues (2018), on the other hand, argue that black women face less racial discrimination than black men because males are both the “primary instigators” and the “primary targets” of race-based discrimination. Sidanius et al. 2018 argue that black women are “primarily discriminated against on the basis of their sex” (10).

when agentic stereotypes are activated, out-group members will perceive a black female candidate as pushing herself into a position of power where she is not wanted. I argue that this will be true even among white women and black men who share either a racial or a gender identity with black women. For example, Shirley Chisholm received little support from black male leaders in the Democratic Party when she sought the party's presidential nomination, and some even put it down to her assertive style (Greer 2016). More recently, Nancy Pelosi publicly criticized Maxine Waters for calling on Democrats to confront Trump administration officials. Pelosi, responding to a CNN article about Waters's remarks, tweeted "Trump's daily lack of civility has provoked responses that are predictable but unacceptable" (Martin 2018). Similarly, on the Senate floor, Chuck Schumer characterized Waters's comments as "harassment of political opponents" and said this was "un-American" (Morin 2018). While I expect that white men and women, along with black men, will penalize a black female candidate when she acts in an assertive manner; I expect that black women will welcome an assertive black female candidate, viewing her as someone who will fight for the unique needs of African American women.

In summary, I expect that when the negative stereotype that black women are overly assertive is brought to mind, this will lead to a decrease in evaluations of black women candidates among voters who do not share her racial and gender identity. Bauer (2015) finds a similar effect for white female politicians. She demonstrates that bringing to mind stereotypes about women being family-oriented and nurturing leads to a decrease in effectiveness ratings of a white female candidate. Because black women are more likely to be stereotyped as overly assertive than white women

or black men, I expect that activating this stereotype will decrease support for black women candidates among out-group members.

### Overview of the Chapters

The following chapters use national survey experiments and a content analysis to test my theory of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns. In chapter 2, I examine whether the agentic black woman stereotype is evident in news coverage of black women candidates. I use the 2018 gubernational primary in Georgia as a case study. In this race, a black female candidate (Stacey Abrams) ran against a white female candidate (Stacey Evans) in the Democratic primary. I conduct a content analysis of newspaper articles to examine how the news media portrayed each of the candidates in the race. If the news coverage supports my theory of intersectional stereotyping, I expect that Stacey Abrams will receive more coverage emphasizing agentic traits, while Stacey Evans's coverage will be more likely to mention communal traits, such as compassion and integrity.

Chapters 3 and 4 move to testing the effects of agentic news coverage on evaluations of black women candidates. Chapter 3 focuses specifically on white voters and their evaluations of black women candidates. While previous research has explored the ways that race influences whites' support for black candidates and how gender influences support for women candidates, Chapter 3 investigates whether stereotypes at the intersection of race and gender affect whites' support for black women candidates. In this chapter, I perform an experiment using a national sample of white Americans to test whether stereotypes related to assertiveness and agency

affect black women candidates differently than candidates from other racial and gender groups. I expect that when a black female candidate is described as acting in an agentic (or assertive) manner, she will be penalized more for this assertiveness than identical white male, white female, and black male candidates.

My theory of intersectional stereotyping suggests that out-group members will penalize black women candidates when they are perceived as behaving in a manner that is consistent with the agentic black woman stereotype. On the other hand, in-group members (i.e. black women voters) should be more likely to reward an agentic black female candidate because they share both her race and gender identities. Research on stereotyping often focuses on whites' stereotypes of a racial out-group, but black men may also see black women as a gender out-group. Chapter 4 analyses stereotypes that African Americans may have about women of their own racial group. Using a national sample of African Americans, I first test whether black Americans generally stereotype black women as being particularly agentic. Using the same experimental design as in chapter 3, I then test how acting in an assertive manner influences black voters' evaluations of a black female candidate.

Finally, chapter 5 draws conclusions and discusses the implications my findings. This chapter also outlines my plans for future research. For example, if agentic stereotypes are harmful to black women candidates; what, if anything, can candidates do to counteract these stereotypes? Would emphasizing communal traits serve to soften agentic perceptions of black women candidates and attenuate the influence of this stereotype?

## Chapter 2: Intersectional Stereotyping in Media Coverage – The Case of Stacey Abrams vs. Stacey Evans in Georgia

My theory of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns posits that members of racial and/or gender out-groups will penalize black women candidates when the media portrays them as exhibiting agentic traits. In this chapter, I examine the extent to which black women are described as having agentic traits in newspaper coverage of their campaigns. Scholars have found that how the media portrays public policy and political candidates profoundly influences people's political opinions, especially on matters of race (Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Gilens 1999; Iyengar 1990). For example, Gilens (1999) demonstrates that Americans' opposition to welfare can be traced to the media's overrepresentation of African Americans in articles about welfare, especially in articles where welfare recipients are portrayed as undeserving. As a result, the stereotype that blacks are lazy and the belief that welfare recipients are undeserving have become important predictors of Americans' attitudes toward welfare.

Similarly, literature on minority and women candidates suggests that reporters often apply stereotypes to their coverage of political candidates (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000). For example, if women are generally stereotyped as being kind and compassionate, reporters may also hold this stereotype and focus on these stereotypical traits when covering women candidates (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kittilson and

Fridkin 2008). If the media is more likely to describe black women candidates as being particularly assertive, this would compound the negative effect of the assertive black woman stereotype among out-group members. The more often the media describes black women as having agentic traits, the more often this stereotype will be accessible for use in voters' evaluations of the candidate.<sup>1</sup> While candidates now use social media in an attempt to speak directly to voters, most voters still get the majority of their information about candidates from traditional news sources (Hayes and Lawless 2015). As a result, the media's portrayal of the candidates can be highly influential in voters' evaluations of the candidates. This chapter takes a first step toward understanding whether the news media covers black women candidates differently than other candidates, using the 2018 Democratic gubernatorial primary in Georgia as a case study.

The 2018 election for governor of Georgia saw two women (Stacey Abrams and Stacey Evans) pitted against each other in the Democratic Primary. Reporter Letitia Stein of *Reuters* described the race as follows:

“The two Democratic candidates running for governor in Georgia are both lawyers and former state legislators. Both are women, and on many policy issues it's hard to tell them apart. Both even share the same first name – Stacey” (Stein 2017).

The major difference between the two candidates was their race - Abrams is black, while Evans is white. The similarities in the candidates apart from their race makes

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<sup>1</sup> The media's focus on black women's agentic traits may also contribute to the formation of the stereotype that black women are particularly agentic (Gilens 1999; Jerald et al. 2017).

the Georgia Democratic primary an ideal case to test whether the news media will treat a black female candidate differently than a white female candidate. As discussed in the previous chapter, black women tend to be stereotyped much differently than white women (Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008), but it is unclear whether these stereotypes will be apparent in news coverage of their political campaigns. In this chapter, I use a content analysis of newspaper articles about the candidates in the Georgia 2018 Democratic primary to test whether the news media treated Stacey Abrams differently than Stacey Evans during the campaign.

### *Media Coverage of Minority and Women Politicians*

A number of scholars have investigated whether women and minority politicians receive different treatment in the news media compared to white male politicians (Barber and Gandy 1990; Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart 2001; Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Chaudhary 1980; Hayes and Lawless 2015; Heldman, Carroll, and Olsen 2005; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Kahn 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000). These studies generally focus on one or more of the following aspects of media coverage: the amount and prominence of coverage, tone, foregrounding of race or gender, issue stereotyping, and trait stereotyping. I review the literature on each of these in turn and then set out my expectations for media coverage in the 2018 Georgia Democratic Primary based on previous literature and my theory of intersectional stereotyping.

One of the most basic differences in coverage that may affect women and minority politicians when they run for office is the amount of attention they receive from the media. Candidates with greater levels of media coverage are more likely to be recognized by voters (Goldenberg and Traugott 1984) and have a greater opportunity to get their message out and let voters get to know them. The amount of media coverage can also signal to voters which candidates are the most viable by focusing on some candidates over others. The same is true for the prominence of the candidate's campaign in the media coverage. If some candidates are constantly mentioned on the front page, above the fold in the newspaper, and the other candidates are consistently relegated to the back pages, voters are more likely to see the candidates with the most prominent coverage as the most viable options. The existing research on whether women and minority politicians receive different levels of attention in the news is mixed. Some scholars find that women and minority politicians receive less coverage than their white male colleagues (Chaudhary 1980; Heldman, Carroll, and Olsen 2005; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Kahn 1992; Terkildsen and Damore 1999). This research suggests that women and minority politicians may be taken less seriously by the news media. On the other hand, some research finds that the novelty of women and minority candidates may be perceived as particularly newsworthy, such that these politicians will be mentioned more often and more prominently than conventional white male politicians (Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Barber and Gandy 1990; Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart 2001). Finally, several studies find no difference in the amount of coverage given to women

and minority candidates (Hayes and Lawless 2015; Kahn 1994a; Zilber and Niven 2000).

Perhaps more important than the amount of coverage is the content and tone of the coverage that candidates receive. A number of studies find that women and minority politicians receive more negative news coverage than white male politicians (Jeffries 2002; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Kahn 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Larson 2006; Zilber and Niven 2000). For example, Zilber and Niven (2000) conducted a content analysis of articles in major newspapers focusing on African American and white members of Congress from January, 1993 through April, 1999. They find that the ratio of positive to negative news articles about white members of Congress was 5 to 1. On the other hand, African American members of Congress received less than one positive news article for every negative article. Similarly, Kahn (1992, 1994a) finds that women candidates running for U.S. Senate receive significantly more negative coverage about their viability than male candidates.

Another way that the news media may cover women and minority candidates differently than white male candidates is by foregrounding the race or gender of the candidate. By emphasizing a minority candidate's race or a female candidate's gender, the media may prime voters to think of the candidate as out of the ordinary and contribute to the belief that the candidate is less likely to win. Thus, although an article may discuss the novelty of a female or minority politician in a positive light, the perception of "otherness" that comes with that novelty is not necessarily beneficial (Meeks 2013). Paying special attention to a candidate's race or gender may also trigger stereotypes about minority groups and women in voters' minds

(Terkildsen and Damore 1999). The vast majority of literature on media coverage of minority and women politicians finds that minority politicians are far more likely to have their race mentioned in the news and women politicians see greater attention to their gender (Banwart et al. 2003; Falk 2008; Heldman, Carroll, and Olsen 2005; Kahn 1994a; Meeks 2013; Major and Coleman 2008; Schaffner and Gadson 2002; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000). In Zilber and Niven's (2000) content analysis, for example, 41% of articles focusing on African American members of Congress mentioned the politician's race compared to only 2% of articles focusing on white Members of Congress. Moreover, Terkildsen and Damore (1999) find that in elections involving both a white candidate and black candidate, the emphasis on race can be attributed solely to the news media and not to the black candidate highlighting race in the campaign. In fact, Terkildsen and Damore (1999) conclude that:

“[T]he cumulative reinforcement of race in campaign coverage may likely insure that even in high-information contests race remains a salient vote factor. Therefore, even if candidates chose to run a dual campaign (i.e., make separate appeals to voters of different racial groups as a means to maximize votes), mainstream press coverage that consistently primes race would negate the value of more moderate deracialized appeals” (697).

Closely related to the foregrounding of race and gender in news about minority and women politicians is the tendency of reporters to focus on different issues when covering these politicians than when covering white male politicians. Issue stereotyping is the idea that politicians' demographic characteristics influence

the types of issues that the public sees them as competent in addressing. For example, women politicians are generally viewed as better in dealing with “compassion issues,” such as education and health care, whereas male politicians are seen as better in dealing with issues like the economy and national security (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). If reporters hold these issue stereotypes, they may be more likely to ask women candidates about their positions on compassion issues and focus on these types of issues in their coverage of the candidate. Several studies find that women candidates receive more coverage of stereotypically female issues while male candidates receive more attention to stereotypically male issues (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Major and Coleman 2008). However, issue stereotyping based on the candidate’s gender seems to be more apparent in campaigns for some levels of office than others. For example, Kahn (1994a) finds that women receive more coverage of compassion issues than men in races for the U.S. Senate, but this is not the case in gubernatorial races. Similarly, Meeks (2013) finds evidence of gendered issue stereotyping in coverage of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin in the 2008 presidential election, but Hayes and Lawless (2015) do not find the same stereotyping in coverage of the 2010 candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives. Notably, gendered issue stereotyping is more common in elections where focusing on compassion issues may be a disadvantage to women candidates. Women candidates receive less coverage of “masculine” issues, such as the economy and national security, in races for the U.S. Senate and president, where dealing with these types of issues is an important part of the job. On the other hand, in gubernatorial and congressional elections, where voters may be more

concerned with candidates' positions on "feminine" issues, like education and health care, women candidates do not receive an advantage in the amount of attention they get on these issues.

For black politicians, issue stereotyping occurs when the news media focuses their attention primarily on racial issues, such as affirmative action, when covering black politicians. Zilber and Niven (2000), find that 52% of the articles on African American members of Congress discussed at least one racial issue, compared to only 11% of articles about liberal white Members of Congress and 6% of more conservative white Members of Congress. On the other hand, only 46% of articles about black politicians mentioned a nonracial issue, compared to 82% of articles on liberal white politicians and 86% of articles on conservative white politicians. Moreover, Zilber and Niven (2000) find that this primary focus on racial issues is not reflective of the ways that black politicians present themselves on their own websites. They point out that black politicians' websites demonstrate a concern for much broader policy agendas than is covered by the press. In the news, however, Zilber and Niven (2000) conclude that "[t]ime and time again, African American members are portrayed as having exclusive concern about the African American community" (27).

Beyond the types of issues that the media covers when discussing women and minority candidates, the coverage may reinforce more general stereotypes about the groups to which the candidates belong. For instance, some research suggests that the media pays more attention to women candidates' personality traits, appearance, personal lives, and family than it does for male candidates (Bystrom, Robertson,

Banwart 2001) and spends less time discussing women candidates' policy positions (Kahn 1994b). This differential coverage of men and women candidates reinforces the belief that women's place is in the home and politics is for men. In addition, the types of personality traits that the media emphasizes may fall in line with stereotypes about the candidate's gender or racial group. Several studies find that male candidates are more likely to be portrayed with "masculine" traits, such as experience and leadership, while women candidates are more likely to be described as having "feminine" traits, like compassion and integrity (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Kahn 1996; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008). Some of the more recent research, however, finds little evidence of gendered trait stereotypes in the news (Hayes 2011; Hayes and Lawless 2015; Meeks 2013).

There has been less comprehensive research on trait stereotyping for African American candidates, perhaps because typical stereotypes of blacks, such as being lazy and unintelligent, may be less relevant to portrayals of politicians, who tend to be accomplished members of the upper-classes (Schneider and Bos 2011). Still, there is some evidence that coverage of African American politicians falls in line with typical stereotypes of blacks. Barber and Gandy (1990) find that black politicians were less likely to be portrayed as competent and moral in the press compared to white politicians. Similarly, Niven (2004) demonstrates that, during the 1992 House banking scandal, black members of Congress receive more attention, more negative coverage, and more prominent coverage of their check-bouncing than white members of Congress who bounced the same number of checks. More recently, the media's focus on Obama's pastor, Jeremiah Wright, and his controversial statements in the

2008 presidential campaign may have reinforced whites' stereotypes about Obama. As Tesler and Sears (2010) explain, despite Obama's attempt to run a race-neutral campaign, the Rev. Wright controversy, "played into the prevalent stereotypes about black political radicalism that have often been hindrances to African Americans seeking elective office in the past" (32).

### *Intersectionality and Media Coverage of Minority Women Politicians*

On the whole, the literature cited above suggests that women and minority politicians may receive different treatment by the news media than white male politicians. However, none of the aforementioned literature looks at race and gender simultaneously. As discussed in chapter one, women of color often face stereotypes that are different from those encountered by black men and white women (Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). In addition, the intersection of race and gender may compound the disadvantages that previous studies have uncovered in terms of press attention and content of news coverage. Scholars have begun to investigate how intersectional identities may influence the news coverage women politicians of color receive (Gershon 2012; Ward 2016). Gershon (2012) conducts a content analysis of the newspaper coverage of 100 U.S. Representatives in the month leading up to the 2006 election. In terms of quantity of coverage, Gershon finds that black male and white female Members of Congress received the most coverage, followed by white males. Minority congresswomen received the least coverage. Gershon finds no differences in the tone of news coverage about minority men, white men, and white women. However, minority women Members of

Congress received coverage that was significantly more negative than the coverage of any other group. Gershon also finds that minority congresswomen were the least likely to be endorsed by their local newspaper.

While Gershon (2012) only looks at newspaper coverage of incumbent Members of Congress running for reelection, Ward's (2016) study looks at coverage of both incumbents and viable challengers in 2012 House races. Ward finds that minority congresswomen received significantly less coverage than white congresswomen, even when controlling for contextual factors in the campaign; such as incumbency, seniority, party affiliation, and competitiveness of the race. She also finds that minority women received significantly more negative coverage than both white women and white men. While the difference between coverage of minority men and minority women candidates did not reach statistical significance, minority men received positive coverage in twice as many news articles as minority women candidates. Finally, Ward finds that minority women candidates were significantly more likely than white women to have their gender highlighted in media coverage.

The Gershon (2012) and Ward (2016) studies suggest that minority women candidates may be disadvantaged by the media coverage they receive during their campaigns, even when compared to other underrepresented groups in politics, like black men and white women. However, these studies do not investigate the extent to which minority women candidates receive stereotypical news coverage during their campaigns or whether news coverage of minority women candidates' personality traits differs from the coverage other candidates receive. Based on my theory of intersectional stereotyping, I expect that black women candidates will receive more

attention to agentic traits, especially agentic traits that could be perceived as negative in valence, compared to candidates of other race-gender groups.

My theory of intersectional stereotyping, explained in more detail in chapter 1, contends that black women face unique stereotypes based on the intersection of their race and gender which make it more difficult for them when running for elective office, even when compared to white women and black men. I focus on the intersectional stereotype that black women are relatively agentic in nature, or believed to be tough and assertive (Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). These agentic stereotypes tend to take on a negative valence when applied to black women (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011). Black women are often seen as overly assertive, bossy, or pushy when they exhibit the same behavior as members of other racial and gender groups. Because stereotypes about race and gender often find their way into news coverage of minority and women candidates (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Kahn 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000), I expect that black women candidates will receive more news coverage emphasizing agentic traits than candidates of other race-gender groups. In addition, because agentic stereotypes about black women tend to be negative, I expect that when reporters describe candidates as acting in an agentic manner, these descriptions will be more negative for black women than for other candidates.

## *Hypotheses*

This chapter takes a first step in understanding the content of stereotypes about black women candidates in the media by examining newspaper coverage of the 2018 Democratic primary for governor of Georgia. Based on previous research and my theory of intersectional stereotyping, I propose several hypotheses about the ways news coverage will differ between the two Democratic candidates: Stacey Abrams (a black woman) and Stacey Evans (a white woman).

First, I expect that Stacey Abrams will receive more frequent newspaper coverage than Stacey Evans. The previous literature on whether black politicians receive a greater quantity of news coverage than white politicians is mixed (Barber and Gandy 1990; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000). However, there are several contextual factors in the campaign which I expect will propel Abrams to receive more frequent news coverage than Evans. For example, as minority leader, Abrams held a higher status position in the Georgia House of Representatives than Stacey Evans, who did not hold a leadership position. Abrams also polled significantly higher than Evans throughout the campaign,<sup>2</sup> although the majority of likely voters were undecided just a month prior to the election (Bluestein 2018). These two factors likely contributed to the perception that Abrams was the frontrunner, and frontrunners tend to get more coverage than underdogs (Graber and Dunaway 2018). In addition, Stacey Abrams had the potential to be the first black

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<sup>2</sup>Polls. Georgia Governor - Democratic Primary. Real Clear Politics.  
[https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2018/governor/ga/georgia\\_governor\\_democratic\\_primary-6559.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2018/governor/ga/georgia_governor_democratic_primary-6559.html)

woman in U.S. history to serve as governor, which may have driven greater coverage of her campaign for its novelty.

*H1: Stacey Abrams will receive more frequent newspaper coverage than Stacey Evans.*

While I expect Abrams will have the advantage in terms of quantity of newspaper coverage, I expect she will be disadvantaged by the tone of the coverage. Based on previous research finding that female politicians of color receive more negative coverage than their white female colleagues (Gershon 2012; Ward 2016), I hypothesize that Stacey Evans will receive more positive coverage than Stacey Abrams.

*H2: Coverage of Stacey Evans will be more positive in tone than coverage of Stacey Abrams.*

One of the most consistent findings about news coverage of minority politicians is the media's emphasis on the candidate's race and his or her stance on racial issues (Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000). News articles about politicians of color are more likely to mention the politician's own race as well as the racial background of their voters than is the case for white politicians (Zilber and Niven 2000). Furthermore, reporters tend to focus more on racial issues, such as affirmative action, when covering minority politicians than when covering white politicians. Therefore, I hypothesize that Stacey Abrams will receive more frequent references to her race and the race of her voters than Stacey Evans. I also expect that Stacey Abrams will receive more coverage about racial issues than Stacey Evans.

*H3a: Stacey Abrams will receive more frequent references to her own race and the race of her voters than Stacey Evans.*

*H3b: Stacey Abrams will receive more coverage about racial issues than Stacey Evans.*

In addition to receiving more coverage of her racial background, I expect that Stacey Abrams will receive more press attention to her gender than Stacey Evans. As Ward (2016) finds, women candidates of color encounter “a multiplicative process in which their racial difference also renders their gender more salient than that of white female candidates” (323). Although Evans and Abrams are both women, and if elected both would be the first female governor of Georgia, Abrams would be the first African American woman governor of any state. I expect that this “first in the nation” potential will lead Abrams to receive more coverage of both her race and her gender compared to Stacey Evans.

On the other hand, I hypothesize that Stacey Evans will receive more coverage of policies generally stereotyped as “women’s issues”, such as health care and education, than Stacey Abrams. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) demonstrate that stereotypes about women being particularly compassionate and caring underly the belief that women politicians are better able to handle these types of issues. However, because white women are more likely to be stereotyped as compassionate and nurturing than black women (Donovan 2011), I expect that Stacey Evans’ coverage will mention these “women’s issues” more often than coverage of Stacey Abrams.

*H4a: Coverage of Stacey Abrams will be more likely to mention her gender than coverage of Stacey Evans.*

*H4b: Coverage of Stacey Evans will be more likely to focus on “women’s issues” than coverage of Stacey Abrams.*

Based on my theory of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns, I expect that Stacey Abrams will receive more coverage of agentic traits, such as assertiveness, compared to Stacey Evans. Black women are generally stereotyped as having much more agentic personality traits than white women ((Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008), and I expect that these stereotypes of black women will be evident in coverage of the Georgia gubernatorial primary. Moreover, because agentic stereotypes of black women tend to negative, I expect that the type of agentic traits used to describe Stacey Abrams will be more negative (i.e. suggesting that she is pushy or aggressive) than those used to describe Stacey Evans. Therefore, I hypothesize that while Stacey Abrams will receive more frequent mentions of agentic traits, when Stacey Evans does receive agentic coverage, it will focus on more positive agentic traits (i.e. leadership and the ability to get things done) than the coverage of Stacey Abrams.

*H5a: Stacey Abrams will receive more coverage of agentic traits than Stacey Evans.*

*H5b: The coverage of agentic traits will be more positive for Stacey Evans than Stacey Abrams.*

Whereas black women are stereotyped as having agentic traits, white women are generally stereotyped as having more communal traits, such as compassion and integrity. Previous research suggests that these stereotypes may translate into beliefs

about women politicians (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993) and that reporters may be more likely to mention these communal traits in their coverage of women candidates (Kahn 1994a, 1994b). However, as discussed above, this research focuses primarily on white women. Therefore, I expect that Stacey Evans will receive more coverage of communal traits than Stacey Abrams. In addition, Kahn (1994b) finds that communal stereotypes “always lead to more positive evaluations of women candidates” (184). For example, she finds that women candidates are perceived as more compassionate and honest than male candidates, but that male candidates are not seen as better leaders than women candidates. Because these positive communal traits are more likely to be associated with white women than black women, I hypothesize that the coverage of communal traits will be more positive for Stacey Evans than for Stacey Abrams.

*H6a: Stacey Evans will receive more communal coverage than Stacey Abrams.*

*H6b: The coverage of communal traits will be more positive for Stacey Evans than Stacey Abrams.*

### Methods

I conduct a content analysis of newspaper articles during the 2018 Georgia Democratic primary campaign to test my hypotheses. Local newspapers remain the primary source of information for voters on state and local elections (Graber and Dunaway 2018). Therefore, I selected my sample of articles from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the largest circulating newspaper in Georgia. I collected all articles in *Atlanta Journal Constitution* that mentioned either “Stacey Abrams” or “Stacey

Evans” from May 25, 2017 to May 22, 2018 using Nexis Uni.<sup>3</sup> This constitutes the full range of the primary campaign, from the date the first candidate announced through election day.<sup>4</sup> The Nexis Uni search produced 191 articles, two of which were excluded from analysis because the only mention of the candidates was in a note at the end of the article announcing upcoming coverage. Each article was coded twice (once in reference to coverage of Abrams and once in reference to Evans). Because many of the articles mentioned both Abrams and Evans it was important to code each article twice in order to differentiate references to each candidate. The coder read each article twice, first coding for references related to Abrams and then coding for references related to Evans. This results in a total sample size of 378 candidate-article pairs.

For each article, a trained coder recorded whether the candidate was mentioned in the article, the tone of the article toward the candidate (neutral, positive, or negative), whether the candidate’s race and/or gender was mentioned, whether the race and/or gender of the candidate’s voters were mentioned, and the issues mentioned in relation to the candidate. The coder recorded every issue referenced in each article and the issues were later recoded into the categories of racial issues, masculine issues, feminine issues, and other issues. Issues coded as racial included voting issues (i.e. voter ID laws, registration of minority voters), removal of confederate statues, racial discrimination, and immigration. Feminine issues included

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<sup>3</sup> In several cases the formatting of the Nexi Uni entry caused the article text to be illegible. In these cases, the text of the article was obtained from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* website by searching their online archives for the title of the article.

<sup>4</sup> Stacey Evans announced her candidacy on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and Stacey Abrams announced on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

health care, education, and fighting poverty. Masculine issues included the economy, the budget, taxes, and job creation.

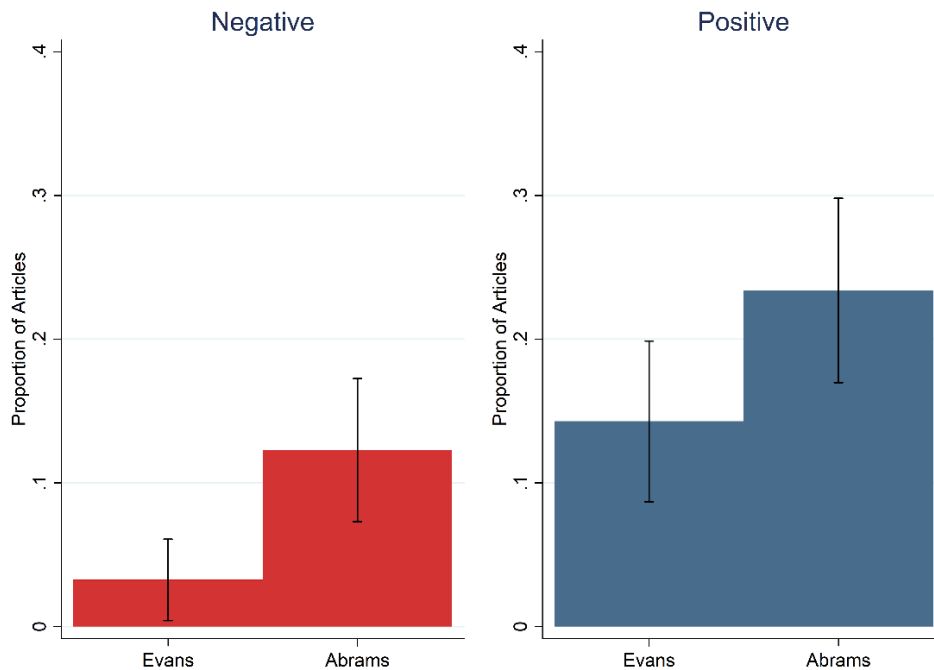
The coder also noted whether or not each candidate was described as having the following traits: positive agentic, negative agentic, positive communal, and negative communal. Traits coded in the category of positive agentic include “leader”, “competent”, “accomplished”, “gutsy”, “qualified”, “experienced”, “smart”, and “savvy”. These traits were often spelled out explicitly in the coverage. For example, one article quoted a state representative as saying, “[Abrams] is deliberate and does her homework, does her research, and investigates before putting together a plan of action.” In other cases, the agentic traits were implied in the coverage, such as when Stacey Evans was described as working hard to pull herself out of poverty. Negative agentic traits included descriptions of the candidates as aggressive, pushy, angry, unapologetic, loud, or power-hungry. These traits were more likely to be implied through descriptions of a candidate’s actions than explicitly attributed to a candidate’s personality. For example, statements like “Evans slammed her rival” or Abrams “swiped at Evans throughout the event” were coded as negative agentic traits. Other more explicit examples of negative agentic coverage include statements such as “the brass knuckles are out” and “[Abrams] decided to flip the volume up to 11.” A headline of another article read, “A leading Ga. Democrat embraces nasty politics” in reference to Abrams. Similarly, a couple of articles quoted Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp as calling Abrams’s criticisms of his policies, “brazen bullying, baseless accusations.”

Positive communal traits were coded along the lines of traditional stereotypes about women politicians (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994a, 1994b). Descriptions of the candidates' compassion and care for the citizens of Georgia were coded as positive and communal. In addition, references to "bringing people together" and "working across party lines" were coded as communal positive traits, as well as references to the candidates' honesty or integrity. Accounts of the candidate being friendly and warm were also coded as positive communal traits. Scholars note that positive stereotypes about women being compassionate and kind are often paired with more negative stereotypes suggesting that women are less competent and have less capacity for leadership than men (Bauer 2015; Fiske, Cuddy and Glick 2002). Examples of coverage containing these negative communal traits include references to the candidate being weak, unsuccessful, misinformed or uninformed, naïve, and "on the defensive". Also included in the category of negative communal coverage are descriptions that suggest the candidate lacks the communal traits of friendliness and warmth; for example, when the candidate is described as unfriendly or cold. One article, for instance, quoted a state House member as stating, "Some people felt that maybe [Abrams] wasn't as friendly as she should have been." Another article describes Abrams' relationship with Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed as "chilly at best" and remarks that Abrams' "tenure as leader of the House Democratic caucus was rife with complaints about a management style that was aloof and often uncommunicative."

## Results

I first examine whether Stacey Abrams received more frequent coverage than Stacey Evans. Out of the 189 articles, 90% mentioned Stacey Abrams while 81% mentioned Stacey Evans. This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level using a two-tailed difference of proportions test. Thus, H1 is supported; Abrams received significantly more frequent news coverage than Evans.

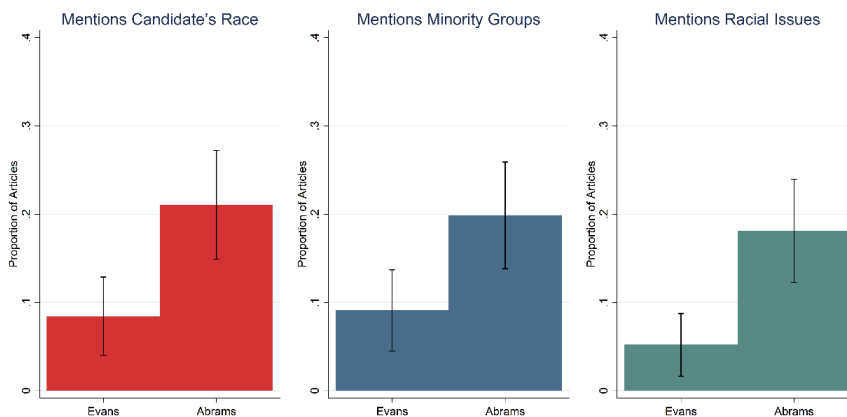
Figure 2.1: Positive and Negative Coverage of Stacey Abrams and Stacey Evans



I next investigate whether the overall tone of the Stacey Abrams's news coverage was more negative than Stacey Evans's. To examine the overall tone of the coverage of each candidate, I divided the number of articles coded as having a positive (negative) tone by the total number of articles mentioning the candidate. Figure 2.1 displays the proportion of articles coded as having a positive or negative tone toward each of the candidates. The left panel of Figure 2.1 displays the

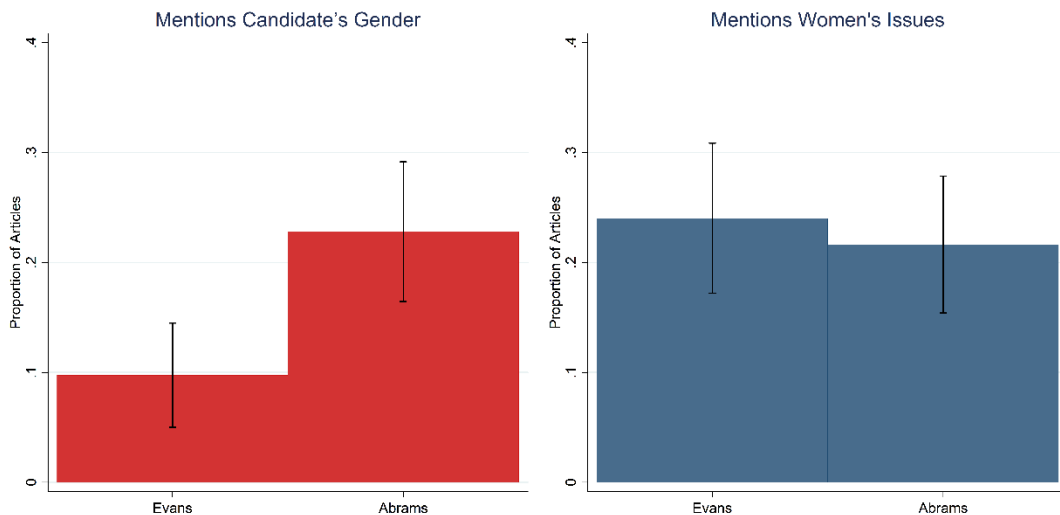
proportion of negative articles toward each candidate and the right panel displays the proportion of positive articles for each candidate. The error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Looking first at the left panel of Figure 2.1, we can see that about 12% of articles mentioning Abrams took a negative tone toward her, compared to only about 3% for Evans. This difference is statistically significant at the .01 level (two-tailed). However, looking at the right panel of Figure 2.1, we can see that Abrams also received more positive coverage than Evans. About 23% of Abrams's coverage was positive, compared to 14% of Evans's coverage, and this difference is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed). In addition, Figure 2.1 demonstrates that both candidates received significantly more positive coverage than negative coverage ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed for both candidates). Still, Stacey Evans's ratio of positive to negative coverage (4.4) is more than twice that of Abrams's (1.9). Out of total non-neutral coverage (total coverage coded as either positive or negative), Abrams has 34% negative coverage compared to 19% for Evans, a difference which is marginally significant ( $p = .07$ , one-tailed). Therefore, the hypothesis that Abrams's coverage will be more negative than Evans's coverage is partially supported.

Figure 2.2: Racial Coverage of Stacey Abrams and Stacey Evans



Hypotheses 3a and 3b are also supported. Figure 2.2 shows the proportion of articles mentioning the candidate's race (panel 1), minority groups (panel 2), and racial issues (panel 3). Stacey Abrams receives significantly more references to her race and the race of her voters than Stacey Evans. Abrams's race was mentioned in 21% of articles about her, compared to only 8% of articles about Evans ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Similarly, voters from racial minority groups were mentioned in 20% of Abrams's articles compared to only 9% of Evans's articles ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). In addition, reporters were more likely to bring up racial issues in coverage of Stacey Abrams. Evans's views on racial issues were mentioned in only 5% of her coverage, compared to 18% of the articles mentioning Abrams ( $p < .001$ , two-tailed). This finding is in line with the preponderance of previous research demonstrating that the media tends to emphasize race in its coverage of black candidates (Schaffner and Gadson 2004; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000).

Figure 2.3: Gendered Coverage of Stacy Abrams and Stacy Evans

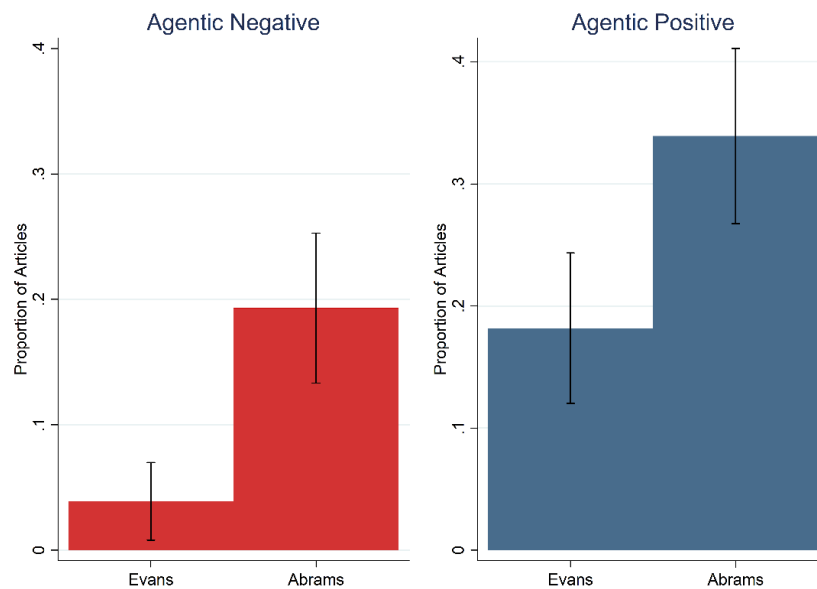


The results regarding gendered coverage of the candidates are more mixed. Figure 2.3 displays the proportion of articles mentioning the candidate's gender and women's issues. The data supports the expectation that Stacey Abrams would receive more coverage mentioning her gender than Stacey Evans (H4a). Abrams's gender is mentioned in 23% of her articles compared to 10% of articles about Evans ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). On the other hand, I expected that Evans would receive more coverage of issues traditionally seen as better for women candidates, such as health care and education (H4b). While Evans did receive slightly more coverage of "women's issues" – 24% of Evans's coverage mentioned at least one compassion issue compared to 22% of Abrams's coverage – this difference was not statistically significant ( $p = .61$ , two-tailed). Therefore, hypothesis 4b is not supported.

I next turn to the personality traits used to describe each of the candidates. I expected that Stacey Abrams would receive more coverage of agentic traits (H5a) but that agentic coverage would be more positive for Stacey Evans than Stacey Abrams (H5b). Figure 2.4 displays the proportion of articles mentioning each candidate that included positive or negative agentic descriptions of the candidate, along with 95% confidence intervals. Looking at the figure, it is clear that Abrams receives significantly more coverage of both positive and negative agentic traits than Evans. Agentic traits (either positive or negative) were used to describe Abrams in 46% of her articles compared to 21% of Evans's articles ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Therefore, H5a is supported. About 34% of articles that mentioned Stacey Abrams described her with positive agentic traits compared to 18% for Stacey Evans ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Negative agentic traits were used to describe Abrams in 19% her articles while only

appearing in 4% of Evans' coverage ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Although both candidates receive more coverage of positive agentic traits than negative agentic traits, the ratio of positive to negative agentic coverage is 4.7 for Evans, compared to only 1.75 for Abrams. About 82% of Evans's agentic coverage is positive, while 64% of Abrams's agentic coverage is positive. This difference is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed), supporting hypothesis H5b.

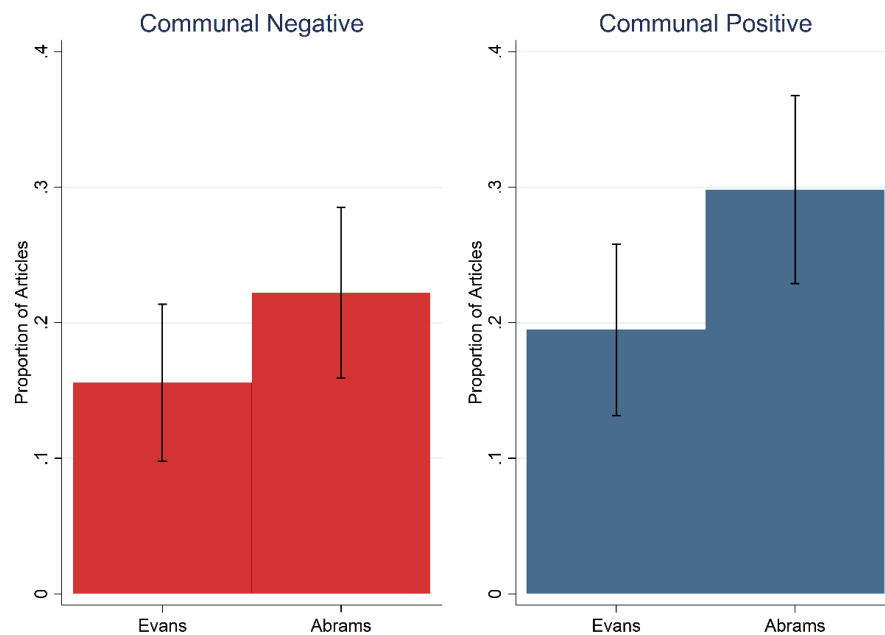
Figure 2.4: Agentic Descriptions of Stacey Abrams and Stacey Evans



Finally, I examine whether Stacey Evans received more communal coverage, based on stereotypes of white women, than Abrams (H6a) and whether communal coverage is more positive for Evans than Abrams (H6b). Figure 2.5 shows the proportion of articles mentioning positive and negative communal traits for each candidate and their 95% confidence intervals. As Figure 2.5 demonstrates, Abrams actually receives more communal coverage than Evans, although the difference is not as stark as it was for agentic traits. Overall, 41% of Abrams's articles and 31% of Evans's articles mention communal traits, a difference which is statistically

significant ( $p=.05$ , two-tailed). Abrams also receives significantly more positive communal coverage than Evans. About 30% of Abrams's articles mentioned positive communal traits, compared to 19% for Evans ( $p<.05$ , two-tailed). At the same time, Abrams receives more coverage of negative communal traits (22%) than Evans (16%), a difference which is marginally significant ( $p=.06$ , one-tailed). However, there is no statistical difference in the percent of Abrams's communal coverage that was positive (65%), compared to Evans's (56%,  $p=.28$ , two-tailed). As a result, neither hypothesis H6a nor H6b is supported.

Figure 2.5: Positive and Negative Communal Descriptions of Stacey Abrams and Stacey Evans



### Conclusion

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, Stacey Abrams won the Democratic primary to go on to face Brian Kemp in the general election for governor of Georgia. Although Abrams ended up winning the Democratic primary against Stacey Evans, the data presented in

this chapter suggests that she won the primary in spite of receiving more negative coverage than her opponent. These results corroborate previous research finding that minority women politicians receive more negative news coverage than their white female colleagues (Gershon 2012; Ward 2016). Unlike previous research on media coverage of minority women politicians, however, I find that Stacey Abrams received more frequent coverage than Stacey Evans. The greater amount of coverage Abrams received is likely due to her frontrunner status throughout the race, her position as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives, and the novelty of her potential to be the first black female governor ever elected in the United States.

Like many black politicians before her, Stacey Abrams also received a good deal of attention to her race, the race of her voters, and to her positions on racial issues. The intersection of Abrams's race and gender also led Abrams to receive more coverage highlighting her gender than Evans received. Reporters were quick to point out that Abrams could be the first black female governor in the nation's history. Fewer articles mentioned that either candidate would be Georgia's first female governor. This focus on Abrams's race and gender, while not necessarily negative, contributes to her being seen as "outside the norm" and member of a racial or gender out-group.

The results also provide support for my theory of intersectional stereotyping. Stacey Abrams not only received more coverage of agentic traits than Stacey Evans, but the coverage of agentic traits was more negative for Abrams than Evans. The coverage of agentic traits may have decreased support for Abrams among white voters and black men. On the other hand, I expect that the media's focus on agentic

traits helped increase enthusiasm for Abrams among black women. This high level of support among black women likely propelled Abrams to her victory in the primary election, given that black women make up a significant proportion of Democratic Primary voters in Georgia.

The attention to Abrams's agentic traits, combined with the media's emphasis on Abrams's racial identity, may have also contributed to the huge racial gap in the general election vote, with only 25% of whites voting for Abrams. In addition, the emphasis on her gender in combination with agentic traits may have contributed to the 11 percentage-point gender gap in African Americans' votes in the general election, with 88% of black men voting for Abrams compared to 97% of black women.<sup>5</sup> However, because this chapter focuses only on the primary election, future research should expand the analysis to determine if the same trends in coverage continued through the general election. Future research should also expand the analysis to include more candidates. This chapter only provides a case study of one race, in which a black woman ran against a white woman in a Democratic primary. An investigation of agentic and communal traits in coverage of congressional campaigns would help determine whether these findings are part of a broader trend in news coverage of black women candidates or if these findings are unique to the 2018 Georgia Democratic primary. In addition, the diversity of the race for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination provides a ripe opportunity to determine if these stereotypes play out in coverage of campaigns at the presidential level.

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<sup>5</sup> Exit Polls. CNN Politics. Race by Gender. <https://www.cnn.com/election/2018/exit-polls/georgia> (accessed May 5, 2019).

### Chapter 3: Agentic Stereotypes and White Voters' Evaluations of Black Women Candidates

The 2018 midterm elections were heralded as the “next year of the woman,” with more women running for office than ever before in U.S. history (Mulvihill and Linke 2018). Women of color, particularly, received a great deal of attention for their success in Democratic primaries. When Stacy Abrams won the Democratic primary in Georgia, for example, she became the first black woman ever to be a major party nominee for governor. Similarly, Ayanna Pressley upset 10-term Representative Michael Capuano to win the Democratic primary in Massachusetts’s 7th Congressional District. Pressley went on to win the general election, becoming the first black woman to represent Massachusetts in Congress (Seelye 2018). Other black women winning congressional seats in 2018 include Jahana Hayes in Connecticut and Lucy McBath in Georgia (Gomez 2018; Timm 2018). As the dust settled from the 2018 election, and presidential hopefuls began declaring their intention to seek the Democratic nomination in 2020, the media focus turned to Kamala Harris, another woman of color. Born to a Jamaican father and Indian mother, Kamala Harris is only the second black woman ever to serve in the U.S. Senate. Almost as soon as she announced her intention to run for president, several media outlets declared Harris as the frontrunner in the Democratic Primary (Enten 2019; Fund 2019; Mason and Barabak 2019). With the surge of women of color running for offices at all levels, it becomes especially important to understand how voters evaluate these candidates.

Yet, despite the media attention women candidates of color have recently received, the existing research in political science can do little to help us understand the influence of race and gender in voters' evaluations of these candidates. The vast majority of research on race and gender in political campaigns examines the influence of these two identities separately (Brooks 2013; Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Dolan 2014; Highton 2004; Kahn 1996; Piston 2010; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Terkildsen 1993). Meanwhile, research in sociology and social psychology demonstrates that women of color have unique experiences and face different challenges than white women and black men (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). As a result, attitudes about race and gender may intersect in unique ways to influence women candidates of color. This chapter focuses specifically on the ways that stereotypes about race and gender intersect when white voters evaluate black women candidates. I argue that whites are likely to associate black women with agentic traits, such as assertiveness and anger. Because black women are particularly likely to be stereotyped with agentic traits and these traits tend to have a negative valence when applied to black women, I expect that when these stereotypes are activated in a political campaign, whites will penalize black female candidates to a greater degree than white male, white female, or black male candidates.

### *White Voters' Evaluations of Black Candidates*

Whites' racial prejudice has been a part of American society since the country's founding, when slavery was legal and the Constitution counted black slaves as 3/5<sup>th</sup> of a person. Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, the establishment

of segregation and Jim Crow laws effectively kept blacks out of American politics (Key 1949; Kinder 2013). After the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, blacks in the South regained political rights and the number of African Americans in elected offices began to slowly increase. However, even today, most blacks serving in the U.S. House of Representatives are elected from majority-minority districts (Lublin 2018). As a result, political scientists have investigated whether whites' racial prejudice inhibits support for black candidates.

There are several ways that racial prejudice may lead white voters to be less supportive of black candidates. First, whites may have negative stereotypes about African Americans and then transfer these stereotypes onto their evaluations of a black candidate. As Kinder (2013) explains, "From this point of view, the key question voters ask themselves is this: Is the candidate one of *us*, or one of *them*?" (830). If the candidate is considered "one of them," negative stereotypes about the out-group may decrease whites' support for the candidate. Scholars have used both experimental and survey research to determine whether stereotypes about blacks influence support for black candidates (Moskowitz and Stroh 1994; Piston 2010; Terkildsen 1993; Sigelman et al 1995). For example, Terkildsen (1993) experimentally manipulated the race of a gubernatorial candidate, where the picture of the candidate displayed either a white candidate, a light-skinned black candidate, or a dark-skinned black candidate. All other descriptions of the candidate and his issue positions were identical across the three candidates. Terkildsen (1993) finds that respondents rated the white candidate significantly more favorably than the black candidates and were more likely to vote for the white candidate than either of the

black candidates. In addition, Terkildsen finds that stereotypes about blacks (such as whether they are hardworking and intelligent) influenced support for the black candidates but had no effect on support for the white candidate. Respondents who held negative stereotypes about blacks rated the black candidate significantly less favorably than those who did not hold these stereotypes. Piston (2010) uses a different form of analysis to come to similar conclusions. Using nationally representative survey data from the American National Election Studies, Piston (2010) finds that negative stereotypes about blacks significantly reduced support for Barack Obama in the 2008 election. Furthermore, stereotypes about African Americans had no effect on vote choice in previous elections that did not involve a black candidate. In addition, Piston (2010) finds no influence of stereotypes about blacks on attitudes toward prominent white Democrats in 2008.

Although Terkildsen (1993) and Piston (2010) find that negative racial stereotypes put black candidates at a disadvantage, other research suggests that voters may evaluate black politicians more positively on some traits. For example, both Sigelman et al. (1995) and Schneider and Bos (2011) find that respondents rate black politicians as particularly compassionate. However, these positive traits may be outweighed by perceptions that black politicians less competent in dealing with major policy issues (Sigelman et al. 1995) and less likely to be seen as leaders (Schneider and Bos 2011). Schneider and Bos find that black politicians are less likely to be perceived as competent in handling issues like the economy and national security compared to politicians in general. In addition, black politicians tend to be seen as more liberal than other politicians, which may hurt their electoral chances when they

need to appeal to moderate and conservative voters (Schneider and Bos 2011; Sigelman et al. 1995).

Another way a black candidate's race may influence vote choice is by activating cultural racism (Kinder 2013). In this case, instead of asking themselves whether the candidate is "one of *us* or one of *them*", voters ask themselves: "Is the candidate *for us*, or *for them*?" (Kinder 2013, 830). Cultural racism, alternatively known as symbolic racism (Sears and Kinder 1971) or racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996), is a subtle form of racial prejudice that rose to prominence following the Civil Rights Movement and the race riots of the 1960s and 70s. For most of American history, blacks were viewed as biologically inferior to whites, but this perception became taboo as courts struck down segregation laws and social scientists found that blacks' lower economic status could be attributed to environmental factors (like housing, health care, and nutrition) as opposed to biological differences between whites and blacks. Cultural racism shifted prejudice from the belief that blacks are biologically inferior to the belief that blacks have moral failings which keep them in the lower class (Kinder and Sanders 1996). This form of racism is grounded in the idea that blacks do not hold traditional American values, such as hard work and individualism, and instead expect to receive government handouts (Kinder and Sears 1981). From the perspective of cultural racism, whites may be hesitant to support a black candidate due to the belief that he/she will support policy that gives blacks "special favors."

In one of the early studies on support for black candidates, Kinder and Sears (1981) use surveys of white LA residents to determine whether cultural or symbolic

racism influenced voting in the 1969 and 1973 mayoral races. In both races, Thomas Bradley (a black city councilman) ran against Samuel Yorty (the white incumbent). The survey included measures of symbolic racism, such as agreement with the statements “Blacks shouldn’t push themselves where they don’t belong” and “Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more than they deserve.” The survey also included questions about vote intention and ratings of the candidates on several traits (such as honest, intelligent, and corrupt). Kinder and Sears (1981) find that symbolic racism had a significant effect on candidate preference, even when controlling for party identification and ideology. While the evidence from Kinder and Sears’s study is confined to Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s, more recent research finds that cultural racism was an important determinant of nationwide support for Barack Obama in his presidential races (Ditonto, Lau, and Sears 2013; Lewis-Beck, Tien, and Nadeau 2010; Pasek et al. 2009; Tesler and Sears 2010). For example, Lewis-Beck and his colleagues (2010) use statistical modeling to estimate that what Obama’s vote share would have looked like without the influence of cultural racism. They find that Obama would have won in a landslide (increasing his vote share by five percentage points), if not for this form of racism.

While stereotyping and cultural racism are both conscious decisions that whites may make when confronted with a black candidate, unconscious (or implicit) prejudices may also influence whites’ support for black candidates (Ditonto, Lau, and Sears 2013; Greenwald et al. 2009; Pasek 2009). Social psychologists have demonstrated that many whites hold negative feelings toward blacks that are outside of their conscious awareness, which affect their behavior toward African Americans

(Devine 1989; McConnell and Leibold 2001). These implicit attitudes may also come into play when whites evaluate a black candidate. Scholars have used two types of measures to capture unconscious racial bias – the Implicit Association Task (IAT: Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998) and the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP: Payne, Cheng, Govorun, and Stewart 2005).

The IAT asks respondents to use a keystroke to quickly sort pleasant and unpleasant words into the categories “good” and “bad” on the left and right of their computer screen. At the same time, respondents must also sort black and white faces into the categories “African American” and “European American.” Respondents who sort white faces with pleasant words (and black faces with unpleasant words) more quickly than they sort black faces with pleasant words (and white faces with unpleasant words) are said to have an unconscious preference for white Americans over African Americans. Anthony Greenwald and his colleagues found that the IAT predicted support for Obama in 2008, even after taking into account ideology and symbolic racism.

The Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) asks respondents to rate unfamiliar Chinese characters as “pleasant” or “unpleasant” after a picture of a black or white face is quickly flashed on their computer screen. Although participants are told to ignore the faces, researchers have found that participants’ ratings of the Chinese symbol as pleasant or unpleasant are influenced by their reactions to the picture shown immediately before the symbol. Therefore, the AMP measures unconscious racism based on the extent to which Chinese symbols are categorized as pleasant after the respondent is shown a white face and unpleasant after being shown

a black face. Both Pasek et al. (2009) and Ditonto, Lau and Sears (2013) find the AMP was related to whites' support for McCain over Obama in 2008. However, effect of the AMP was no longer significant after controlling for symbolic racism (Pasek et al. 2009; Ditonto, Lau and Sears 2013).

Although much of the literature suggests that racial attitudes in their various forms do play a role in whites' support for black candidates, a couple studies find a much more limited role of racial attitudes (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Highton 2004). For example, Citrin and his colleagues find that while racial attitudes drove voting for the Democratic candidate in several of California's 1982 statewide races, but the races involving a black Democratic candidate did not exhibit greater levels of racial voting than those involving two white candidates. Such evidence has led scholars to suggest that black candidates may try to deracialize their campaigns by steering clear of addressing issues specific to African Americans (like affirmative action and civil rights) and presenting a calm persona to contrast negative stereotypes about blacks being angry or aggressive (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Gillespie 2009). Indeed, Obama was very careful to use this deracialized campaign strategy in his presidential races (Tesler and Sears 2010). However, Tesler and Sears (2010) find that despite this strategy racial attitudes played a larger role in support for Obama than they did for the white Democrats in the 2008 primary or for previous (white) Democratic candidates in presidential elections.

In summary, the literature generally suggests that racism does harm black candidates in gaining support from white voters. However, none of the literature cited above takes the gender of the candidates into account. Women candidates may

also face stereotypes and negative evaluations due to their gender, so both racism and sexism may influence support for black women candidates. In addition, I argue that black women candidates face different stereotypes than black men and white women and these stereotypes have a unique influence on their electoral fortunes, beyond the influence of race or gender alone.

### *Gender Stereotypes and Support for Women Candidates*

A long line of research in social psychology finds that people hold stereotyped beliefs about the types of traits that characterize men and women. Men are more likely to be associated with “agentic” traits; like toughness, leadership, assertiveness, competence, and aggression. Women, on the other hand, are stereotyped as having more “communal” traits; such as being nurturing, compassionate, and kind. These stereotypes are thought to stem from the different roles that men and women have traditionally played in society, with women caring for the family and men as the “breadwinners” (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Social psychologists also stress that there are two different forms of stereotypes: descriptive stereotypes and prescriptive stereotypes. Descriptive stereotypes are used as a mental shortcut, or heuristic, in order to make judgments in complex world. As Rudman and Glick (2008) note, “Descriptive stereotypes promote cognitive simplification by saving considerable mental effort when perceiving other people” (107). Prescriptive stereotypes, on the other hand, are beliefs about how certain categories of people *should* behave. Whereas descriptive stereotypes serve as

a cognitive shortcut, prescriptive stereotypes serve to justify one group's beliefs and actions toward another group (Rudman and Glick 2008). A number of scholars argue that gender stereotypes are highly prescriptive in nature and serve to justify the status quo in the societal roles and power relationships between men and women (Jost and Banaji 1994; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). As a result, when women act in ways that are inconsistent with beliefs about the way women should act, for example when they are ambitious or unsympathetic, they may experience a backlash or penalty (Rudman and Glick 2001).

While the social psychology literature suggests that people do hold gender stereotypes, there is some debate among political scientists on whether these stereotypes affect evaluations of women candidates. Early research tended to find that gender stereotypes do influence women candidates' electoral fortunes (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993), for example, demonstrate that women candidates are seen as better on "compassion issues," such as dealing with poverty and health care, while men are seen as better able to handle issues like defense and the military. Therefore, when people are more concerned about poverty and health care, they may be more likely to vote for a woman candidate, but when the public is more concerned with defense and the military, women are disadvantaged.

On the other hand, some of the more recent studies on gender in political campaigns suggest that these stereotypes have little or no effect on the public's support for women candidates (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2015). Dolan (2014) argues that while voters may hold gender stereotypes about candidates

in the abstract, when it comes to their vote choice for real-life candidates, voters use other means to evaluate the candidates, such as ideology or issue positions. Similarly, Brooks (2013) contends that women politicians are seen as “leaders not ladies,” and finds that women politicians are not harmed by stereotypes in the same way that women are in other arenas, such as in the workplace. She argues that as women have increased their presence in Congress and state legislatures, women politicians have come to be seen as a “subtype” of women who are characterized as having traits that are more in line with expectations about politicians than expectations about women. In other words, women candidates are more likely to be judged as “leaders” than “ladies” (Brooks 2013). Hayes and Lawless (2015) agree, stating that “as more women have entered politics over the last three decades, the novelty of female candidates has waned” (96). In their study of the 2010 Congressional elections, Hayes and Lawless (2015) find that neither the news media nor voters treat female candidates differently than male candidates. While Hillary Clinton was subjected to gender-based stereotypes in her 2008 and 2016 campaigns, such as Donald Trump calling her a “nasty woman,” these scholars note that Hillary Clinton is no ordinary woman candidate, having spent decades in the public spotlight and bringing “well-publicized baggage” to her campaign (Hayes and Lawless 2015, footnote 93).

The existing research on gender stereotypes in political science, however, does not take the race of women candidates into account. The literature looks only at women in general and does not examine how gender stereotypes may differ across racial and ethnic groups. Consequently, it is unclear how gender stereotypes impact support for minority women candidates. Intersectionality research demonstrates that

women are not a homogenous group (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1995; Simien 2007). As a result, the types of obstacles that white women candidates face may be very different from those that black women candidates encounter. Therefore, in order to fully understand the difficulty that black women candidates may face, we must examine how gender stereotypes differ by race and the influence that these differences have in terms of support for black women candidates.

### *Stereotypes of Black Women*

While white women are stereotyped as kind, compassionate, and nurturing (Eagly and Karau 2002; Rudman and Kilianski 2000; Rudman and Glick 2008; Rudman, Greenwald, and McGhee 2001), African American women are stereotyped much differently (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008). Patricia Hill Collins (2000) describes how black women are characterized differently than white women due to the oppression black women have faced from the period of slavery to the modern day. These stereotypes have included the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother, the black lady, and the jezebel. The mammy stereotype reflects the idea that black women should be the ideal domestic servant to white families. She is nurturing to her “white family,” to the detriment of being able to care for her own family. The mammy “knows her place” and teaches her children to show deference to white power structures (Collins 2000, 80). Collins (2000) argues that the mammy stereotype was “created to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women’s long-standing restriction to domestic service” (80). This stereotype is exemplified by character of Mammy in

*Gone with the Wind*, the domestic servant who was protagonist Scarlett O'Hara's childhood nursemaid (Harris-Perry 2011). The mammy stereotype can still be seen in the face of Aunt Jemima plastered on breakfast products in supermarkets across the country. As Manring (1998) writes, "[t]he black woman on the box of Aunt Jemima pancake mix still smiles at us in much the same way she did in 1920. She has changed her hair, added some jewelry, and lost some weight, but she has not gone anywhere since the turn of the century" (7).

Another stereotype of black women is that of the matriarch. Collins (2000) defines this stereotype as the polar opposite of the ideal black mother from the point of view of the dominant white society. She states that, "Just as the mammy represents the 'good' Black mother, the matriarch symbolizes the 'bad'" (Collins 2000, 83). This stereotypical image portrays black women as overly aggressive and unfeminine working mothers, who spend too much time away from home and even drive away their husbands or lovers because of their dominant and aggressive behavior. By driving away the men in their lives and not spending enough time with their children, matriarchs are seen as the source of many of the social problems in the black community. The welfare mother stereotype, like the matriarch stereotype, also portrays a negative image of a black mother. Under this stereotype, black women are seen as lazy and materialistic single mothers who take advantage of the U.S. welfare system and pass on these negative character traits to their children. This stereotype is often used in U.S. politics to suggest that welfare recipients are unworthy of government aid. For example, Ronald Reagan used rhetoric about Cadillac-driving

welfare queens to highlight the need to cut government services in his campaign for the presidency and throughout his administration (Hancock 2004).

Appearing about the same time as the welfare mother stereotype, the stereotype of the “black lady” depicts black women who have worked hard and achieved middle-class status. As Collins (2000) explains, this stereotype may seem benign, but black ladies are often perceived to have benefitted from affirmative action. In the eyes of white Americans, they are blamed for taking the jobs of more deserving whites. Additionally, Collins (2000) notes that “many Black men erroneously believe that Black ladies are taking jobs reserved for them” (89). Collins concludes that the welfare mother and the black lady stereotypes “constitute class-specific versions of the matriarch thesis whose fundamental purpose is to discredit Black women’s full exercise of citizenship rights” (89).

The final stereotype of black women that Collins (2000) describes is the jezebel or “hoochie” stereotype. This stereotype focuses on black women as being sexually aggressive and stems from the days of slavery where it served as a rationale for white men’s assaults on enslaved women and as a means to expect enslaved black women to produce large numbers of children. The modern version of this stereotype, the “hoochie”, portrays a similarly sexually assertive black woman who wears revealing clothing and dances in a provocative manner.

While the stereotypes of the mammy, matriarch, welfare queen, black lady, and jezebel are each evident in popular culture portrayals of black women at various points in U.S. history, there is some debate in recent literature about the extent to which these stereotypes emerge in politics today. McConaughy and White (2011)

find that the general stereotypes that blacks are promiscuous and violent stem primarily from beliefs about black men, rather than beliefs about black women. McConnaughy and White's (2011) research suggests that on these particular traits (violence and promiscuity) black women are seen as being more similar to white women than to black men. Similarly, McConnaughy and White (2011) find that black women and white women are seen as equally nurturing, while it is black men who are stereotyped as being the least nurturing race-gender group.

On the other hand, several studies in the field of psychology suggest that stereotypes of black women are much more in line with the aggressive and unfeminine stereotypes that Collins (2000) describes. Donovan (2011) finds that the most common stereotypes of black women today are the "Matriarch" and "Sapphire" stereotypes. These stereotypes stand in stark contrast to stereotypes of white women, such that black women are seen as domineering and aggressive while white women are seen as kind and nurturing. Donovan (2011) explains that, "[p]aradoxical to the name and the matriarchal perceptions of White women, when applied to Black women the hypofeminine Matriarch image emphasizes domination, aggression, strength, and toughness as well as minimizes nurturing and caring" (p. 460). Similarly, the Sapphire stereotype, which gets its name from a character in the radio and television show *Amos 'n' Andy*, "depicts Black women as angry, aggressive, domineering, loud, and hostile" (Donovan 2011, 460). In the same vein, Ghavami and Peplau (2012) find that stereotypes about women in general are much more reflective of white women than black women and that the most common traits attributed to black women are "having an attitude" and "loud" (118). Goff and his

colleagues (2008) further find that the public has a strong association between blackness and masculinity, such that black women are seen as more masculine than white women and this association between black women and masculinity leads to negative evaluations of black women.

On a whole, the research on stereotypes of black women demonstrates that black women are stereotyped quite differently than white women or black men. Whereas white women are viewed as having more stereotypically feminine qualities, like compassion and kindness, black women tend to be seen as having characteristics that are more closely associated with white men than white women, such as assertiveness and dominance. I argue that this stereotype of assertiveness negatively impacts black women candidates when they run for office and can help explain why black women have had difficulty winning elections outside of majority-minority districts, where black women voters make up a large portion of the electorate.

#### *Activation and Application of Intersectional Stereotypes in Political Campaigns*

As discussed in chapter one, Philpot and Walton (2007) demonstrate that black women candidates find their greatest support from black women in the electorate. However, their study does not address the underlying factors that lead white voters to be less supportive of black women candidates. I argue that the tendency for black women to be stereotyped as overly assertive causes black women candidates to face a penalty when they run for elected office. To understand how and when stereotypes will influence support for black women candidates, I draw on the

literature regarding stereotype activation and application (Bauer 2015; Devine 1989; Kunda and Spencer 2003; Sinclair and Kunda 1999, 2000).

Walter Lippmann (1922) described stereotypes as the “pictures in our heads.” He explains that “in untrained observation we pick recognizable signs out of the environment. The signs stand for ideas, and these ideas we fill out with our stock of images” (Lippmann 1922, 58-59). Although stereotypes may not give us an accurate picture of the world around us, Lippmann noted two reasons why people use stereotypes in their judgements. First, stereotypes are cognitive shortcuts that allow us to make sense of a complicated world (Lippmann 1922; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). As Lippmann states, “There is economy in this. For the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities, is exhausting, and among busy affairs practically out of the question” (59). However, Lippmann goes on to write:

“A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights.”

Thus, stereotypes not only serve as a cognitive shortcut for decision-making; they also serve as a defense of one’s own value and position in society.

These heuristic and defense mechanisms of stereotypes have held up in our modern understanding of stereotyping (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Jost and Banaji 1994; Kunda and Spencer 2003; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick

2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). However, more recent research suggests that the use of stereotypes is not always automatic (Bauer 2015; Devine 1989; Kunda and Spencer 2003; Sinclair and Kunda 1999, 2000). Social psychologists argue that the use of stereotypes for judgement formation happens in two steps. Stereotypes must first be *activated*, or brought to the top of one's mind. These stereotypes may then be *applied* to a particular member of a stereotyped group (Kunda and Spencer 2003). Yet neither the activation nor the application of stereotypes is inevitable (Devine 1989; Kunda and Spencer 2003). Kunda and Spencer (2003) argue that individuals may increase or inhibit their use of stereotypes depending on the stereotype's usefulness in understanding a complex world (comprehension goals) and in enhancing one's self-esteem (self-enhancement goals).<sup>1</sup>

I contend that voters' perceptions about the usefulness of the assertive black woman stereotype in political campaigns depends on the extent to which voters are cued into this stereotype by the media and campaigns. When it comes to a black female candidate, voters have a variety of categories into which they can sort the candidate. For example, they may stereotype her as "black", "female", "black female", or "politician". Without campaign or media cues that a black female politician should be evaluated with the "black female" assertiveness stereotype, voters may find stereotypes of a "politician" more relevant than the stereotype of "black female". This explains why stereotypes of politicians sometimes diverge from stereotypes of ordinary members of the group. For example, Schneider and Bos

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<sup>1</sup> Kunda and Spencer (2003) also note that stereotype activation and application may be inhibited by motivation to avoid prejudice.

(2011) find that black politicians are not stereotyped as violent and unintelligent, although whites do stereotype ordinary blacks as having these traits. The traits of violence and lack of intelligence seem to be less relevant for black politicians because of their generally upper-class status. Similarly, Schneider and Bos (2014) find that women politicians are less likely to be stereotyped as warm and nurturing than ordinary women, taking on more of the stereotype of a “politician” than that of a “woman”.

However, when a black female candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner, I expect that this will activate the “assertive black woman” stereotype. It will bring the stereotype to the top of voters’ heads and voters will consider it to be more useful than it would otherwise be in their candidate evaluations. Bauer (2015) finds a similar effect when looking at the influence of traditional feminine stereotypes on women candidates. When campaign information emphasizes traditionally feminine stereotypes (like kindness and nurturing), voters are more likely to use feminine stereotypes to evaluate the candidate, leading to less support for the female candidate and doubts about her qualifications to run for senate or president (Bauer 2015). Likewise, I expect that when campaigns emphasize agentic traits (such as assertiveness) in relation to a black female candidate, this will activate negative stereotypes about black women being pushy and overly assertive, thus leading to more negative evaluations of the candidate.

I also expect that once the assertive black woman stereotype is activated in a campaign, self-enhancement goals will motivate members of racial and/or gender out-groups to interpret assertiveness as a negative trait and to use these negative

stereotypes in their evaluations of the candidate. Although assertiveness is generally seen as a negative trait when applied to black women (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012), assertiveness is usually a positive trait when applied to leaders. Therefore, voters may apply the assertive trait in a negative way because the candidate is a black woman or in a positive way because the candidate is demonstrating leadership potential. Indeed, Livingston and his colleagues (2012) find that black women leaders in the workplace are not penalized for assertive behavior. However, Livingston et al. (2012) argue that the reason black women leaders are not penalized for assertive behavior is because they are likely to be overlooked and not seen as a threat to dominate power structures in society. On the other hand, when a black woman is a credible candidate for political office, she becomes a much clearer threat to the predominately white and male power structures in American politics and society. If white voters do not see a black female candidate as being “for them”, the assertiveness stereotype can be used to justify negative evaluations of the candidate. As Pettigrew (1979) states, “an ambitious act becomes ‘pushy’, an intelligent act becomes ‘cunning,’” (465).

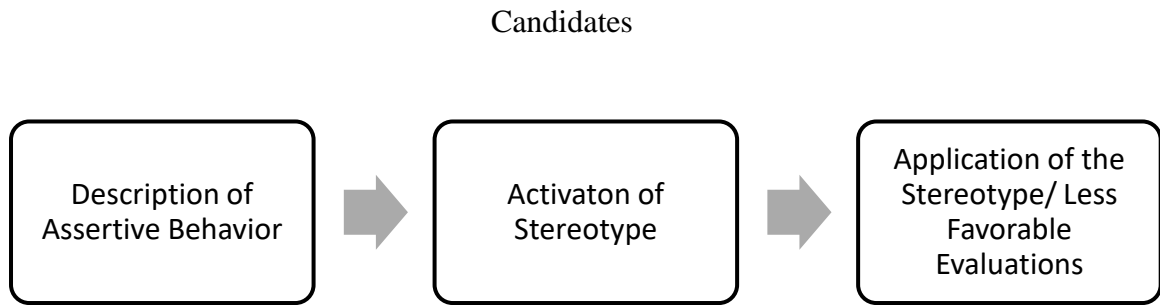
Sinclair and Kunda (1999, 2000) demonstrate how self-enhancement goals may influence the application of stereotypes. They find that patients who were criticized by a black doctor were more likely to apply negative stereotypes about blacks to their views of the doctor than patients who were praised by him (Sinclair and Kunda 1999). In another study, students who received poor grades rated their female professor less favorably than their male professor, but the same was not true when the students received high grades (Sinclair and Kunda 2000). Therefore, if

black women candidates are not seen as enhancing the goals of white voters, they are more likely to be stereotyped with negative traits associated with assertiveness in black women.

In addition to white voters not seeing black women candidates as “for them,” self-enhancement goals may lead white voters evaluate an assertive black female candidate negatively because she is not “one of them”. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) suggests that people will disparage an out-group in order to demonstrate the superiority of their in-group and increase their self-esteem. Along the same lines, Pettigrew (1979) argues that prejudiced people attribute negative behavior to out-group members’ overall disposition and character, whereas the same behavior from an in-group member is “explained away” as the product of a difficult circumstance. Therefore, if a black female candidate is observed as acting in an assertive manner, out-group members are more likely to interpret the assertive behavior as a negative trait. Moreover, out-groups will be likely to see that negative trait as a key component of the candidate’s personality and use that negative stereotype in their overall evaluations of the candidate.

Figure 3.1 summarizes my theory of the influence of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns. In short, I contend that when voters receive campaign information that describes a black female candidate as acting in an assertive manner, this will activate negative stereotypes about black women. Once activated, voters will apply these negative stereotypes to the black female candidate and evaluate her less favorably.

Figure 3.1: Effect of the Assertiveness Stereotype on Support for Black Women



### Hypotheses

I derive several hypotheses based on of my theory of intersectional stereotypes in political campaigns. First, I expect that whites will rate black women in general as being more assertive than white women or black men. This follows from the research in social psychology that black women are stereotyped as having agentic traits, one of which is assertiveness. Because white men are also stereotyped with agentic traits (Eagly and Karau 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008), I expect that black women and white men will be rated as similarly assertive.

*H1: Whites will rate black women as more assertive than white women and black men, but there will be no difference in assertiveness ratings of black women and white men.*

While whites may generally stereotype black women as being particularly assertive, perceptions of black women politicians may not necessarily be the same as those for ordinary black women. Previous research suggests that because politicians are an elite group, stereotypes of politicians do not always map well onto stereotypes of typical members of the group. In other words, politicians may be seen as a “special case” or “subtype” of their broader demographic group (Bauer 2015; Brooks

2013; Dolan 2014; Lawless and Hayes 2016; Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014). For example, Schneider and Bos (2011, 2014) demonstrate that stereotypes of about blacks and women are not necessarily the same as those for black politicians and women politicians. As a result, I expect that the assertiveness stereotype about black women will not automatically be activated when black women run for office.

Therefore, when a candidate is not described as acting in an assertive manner, race and gender will have little impact on evaluations of an in-party candidate.

*H2: Among candidates who are not described as acting in an assertive manner, there will be no difference between evaluations of the black female, white female, black male, and white male candidates.*

Research on stereotype activation suggests that stereotypes are more likely to be activated and applied when people are given stereotype-consistent information (Bauer 2015; Blair and Banaji 1996; Lepore and Brown 1997; Pettigrew 1979).

Therefore, I expect that when a black female candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner, this will bring negative stereotypes about black women being overly assertive and pushy to mind. As a result, whites will rate a black female candidate less favorably than identical white female, black male, and white male candidates.

*H3: When candidates are described as acting in an assertive manner, the black female candidate will be penalized more than white female, black male, and white male candidates.*

In addition to the main effects I describe in hypothesis 3, I also suspect that these effects will be most prevalent among individuals who generally hold the

“assertive black woman” stereotype. While most Americans have knowledge of race and gender stereotypes, some respondents may be motivated to control their application of the stereotype due to norms of race and gender equality (Blair and Banaji 1996; Devine 1989; Kunda and Sinclair 2003; Lepore and Brown 1997; Mendelberg 2001). Therefore, I expect that this negative assertiveness effect will be strongest among white respondents who generally stereotype black women as being more assertive than white women and black men. Consequently, we should see black women receive the biggest penalty for assertive behavior among whites who are predisposed to rate black women as more assertive than other groups.

*H4: The black female candidate’s penalty for assertive behavior will be most prevalent among whites who are already inclined to stereotype black women as more assertive than white women and black men.*

We might also see the black female candidate experience a penalty among whites who do not normally stereotype black women as being particularly assertive. The stereotype activation literature suggests that group stereotypes may be brought to mind when people are given stereotype-consistent information, even when they might not otherwise use these stereotypes in their evaluations (Bauer 2015; Blair and Banaji 1996; Lepore and Brown 1997). Thus, those who initially rate black women as equally assertiveness as white women and black men might also penalize black female candidates who exhibit assertive behavior.

*H5: The assertiveness penalty for the black female candidate will be apparent even among whites who initially rate black women as equally assertive compared to other race-gender groups.*

## Methods

I test these hypotheses using a two-wave experimental design. I used the survey firm Qualtrics to recruit a sample of white Americans that is matched to U.S. population demographics on age, gender, and census region. The first wave was conducted from July 19 to July 30, 2018 and the second wave was conducted from August 8 to August 13, 2018. Qualtrics recruited 1887 white participants to complete the first wave and 1241 returned to complete the second wave, for a 65.8% re-contact rate.<sup>2</sup> The two-wave design allows me to measure baseline stereotypes and other racial and gender-based attitudes in the first wave without these initial questions priming respondents' reactions to the stimuli in the second wave (Mendelberg 2008). The first wave begins with demographic questions; including age, race, gender, region and income. Participants who chose any race other than white were filtered out along with those who exceeded the gender, region, and age quotas. I measure the baseline assertiveness stereotype by asking respondents to rate black women, white women, black men, and white men on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 corresponds with "unassertive" and 7 corresponds with "assertive".<sup>3</sup> The race-gender groups were randomized to minimize any order effects. Next, participants answered standard measures of party identification and political ideology. Finally, participants

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<sup>2</sup> Participants who returned to complete the second wave were slightly older and higher in racial resentment than those who only completed the first wave. There were no differences between those who returned for wave 2 and those who did not in terms of party identification or modern sexism scores.

<sup>3</sup> Responses were later recoded on a 0-1 scale, where 0=unassertive and 1=assertive.

responded to questions measuring racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996) and modern sexism (Swim et al. 1995).<sup>4</sup>

Participants returned to complete the second wave at least nine days after participating in wave one. At the beginning of the first wave, participants were asked to read a newspaper article about a candidate running for Congress. I manipulate the race (black or white) and gender of the candidate as well as whether the candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner. This 2x2x2 design yields eight conditions – a control condition for each race/gender combination where the candidate is not described as having any particular personality traits and a treatment group for each race/gender combination where the candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner. Table 1 displays the eight experimental conditions. Based on the responses to the party ID question in wave one, each respondent reads about a candidate of their own party running in a primary election.<sup>5</sup> I use an in-party candidate because black and women candidates are more likely to be perceived as Democrats than white male candidates (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Schneider and Bos 2011). Giving all participants a candidate of their own party allows me to control for the effects of perceived party identification in my design.

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<sup>4</sup> The racial resentment and modern sexism questions were each recoded on a 0 to 1 scale, where 1 represents the most conservative response. The individual questions from each scale are then averaged into one racial resentment score and one modern sexism score. The exact wording of each of the measures is available in the Appendix.

<sup>5</sup> Pure independents are randomly assigned to read about a Democrat or a Republican.

Table 3.1: Experimental Conditions

Agentic Traits	No Description of Traits
Black Female Candidate	Black Female Candidate
White Female Candidate	White Female Candidate
Black Male Candidate	Black Male Candidate
White Male Candidate	White Male Candidate

The experimental stimuli are designed to look like real online news articles from a generic local newspaper (called News-Press) and include an ad for digital subscriptions at the top of the article.<sup>6</sup> Participants in the control condition read about Daniel or Danielle Williams who is running in the Democratic or Republican primary to fill an open seat for Congress. The candidate is quoted as saying he/she is running to ensure that our government “looks out for the citizens of District 5.” Respondents are told that the candidate is an attorney and is currently serving his/her second term in the state senate, where he/she is chair of the Appropriations Committee. The race and gender of the candidate is cued by a picture of the candidate. Manipulation checks asking participants to recall the race and gender of the candidate they read about demonstrate that the pictures were successful in cueing these traits (94% of participants correctly recalled the candidate’s gender and 93% correctly recalled the candidate’s race). The assertive condition for each race/gender combination contains all the same information as the control condition but also describes a debate on the floor the state senate in which the candidate “refused to be interrupted.” The

<sup>6</sup> The full text and layout of the articles are available in the Appendix.

candidate is quoted as saying “I will not be silenced” before continuing with his/her speech. The candidate is also quoted as later telling reporters, “I refuse to back down and make no apologies for that.” Finally, the article also notes that the candidate is known for being someone who “tells it like it is.” After reading the article, respondents were asked to rate the candidate using a feeling thermometer. Respondents were also asked to rate their likelihood of voting for the candidate on a 1-5 scale, where 1 means very likely and 5 means very unlikely. Finally, respondents rated how effective they thought the candidate would be as U.S. Representative on a 1 to 7 scale. The vote likelihood and effectiveness ratings were each recoded on a 0 to 1 scale, with higher values corresponding with the more positive response.<sup>7</sup>

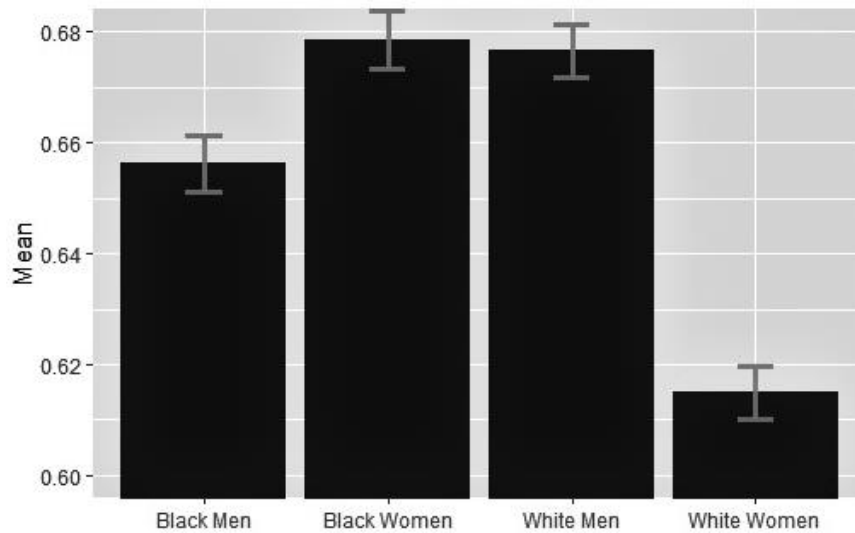
### Results

I first examine whether black women are generally rated as more assertive than black men and white women. Figure 3.2 displays the mean assertiveness rating for each race-gender group from the first wave of the study. The results support my first hypothesis – black women are rated as significantly more assertive than black men ( $p < .001$ , two-tailed) and white women ( $p < .001$ ). Black women are rated about seven percentage points higher on the assertiveness scale than white women, and about two percentage points higher than black men. There is no statistical difference, however, between assertiveness ratings of black women and white men.

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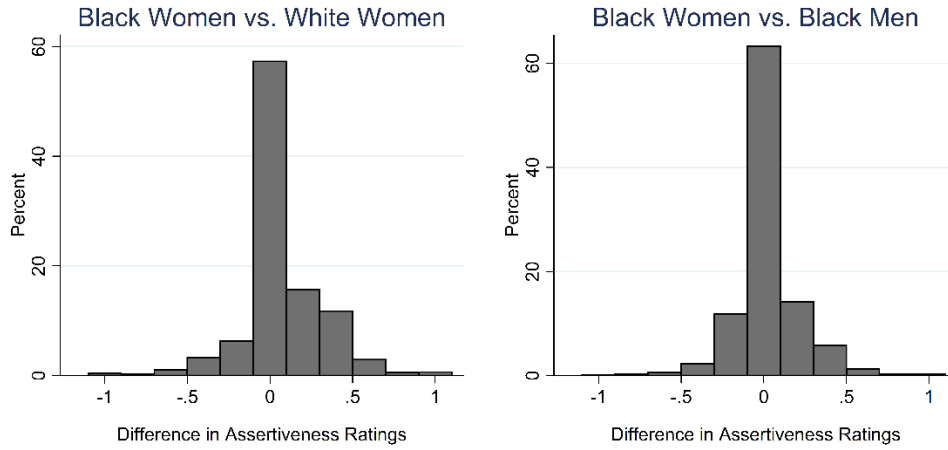
<sup>7</sup> The exact question wording for each variable is available in the Appendix.

Figure 3.2: Mean Assertiveness Ratings across Race-Gender Groups



Although the mean assertiveness rating for black women is higher than that of white women and black men, the majority of respondents tend to rate all groups as similarly assertive in the first wave. Figure 3.3 shows the differences in assertiveness ratings between black women and white women in the left panel and between black women and black men in the right panel. The difference measure subtracts the assertiveness rating for black women from the rating for white women (black men). Therefore, positive values indicate that the respondent rated black women as more assertive, negative values indicate that white women (black men) were rated as more assertive, and a score of zero means that the respondent rated both groups the same. We can see that 57% of respondents rated black women and white women as equally assertive and 63% rated black women and black men the same on the assertiveness scale. These findings are consistent with other stereotype measures from national surveys. For example, 55% of white respondents to 2012 American National Election Study rated blacks and whites as equally intelligent.

Figure 3.3: Difference in Assertiveness Ratings



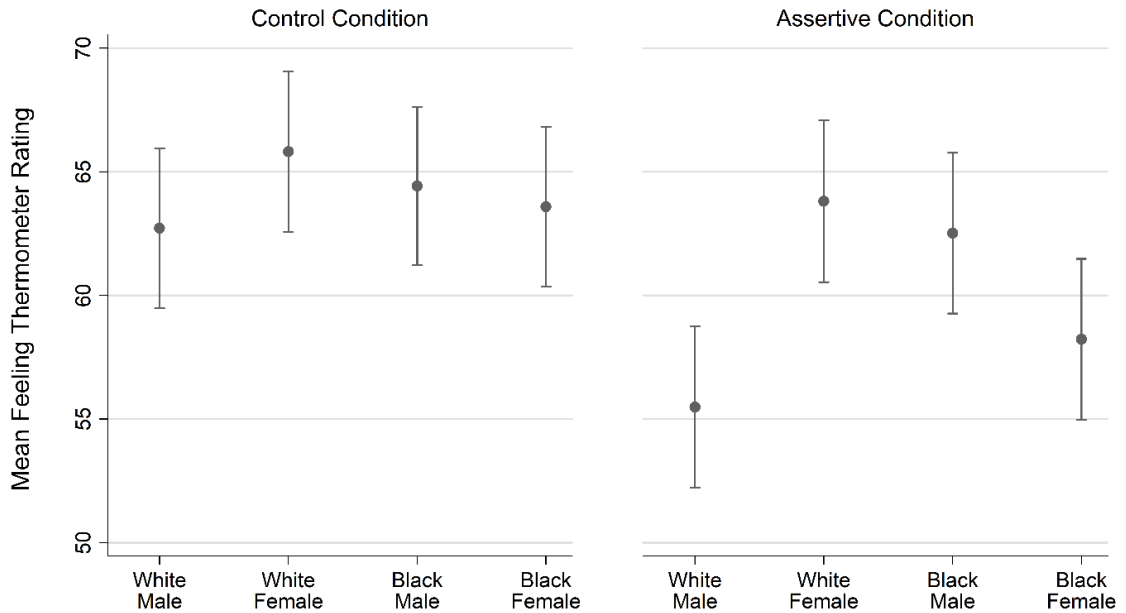
Next, I turn to the experimental results from the second wave of the study. I first examine the effects of candidate race, candidate gender, and the assertive condition on feeling thermometer ratings of the candidate. I regress feeling thermometer ratings on a three-way interaction between the candidate’s race, the candidate’s gender, and whether or not the candidate was described as acting assertively.<sup>8</sup> I expected that there would be little difference in evaluations of the candidates in the control condition – when the candidates are not described as acting in an assertive manner. Figure 3.4 displays the mean feeling thermometer ratings for each candidate along with 95% confidence intervals. The left panel of Figure 3.4 shows the mean feeling thermometer ratings in the control condition, while the right panel shows the mean ratings in the assertive condition. In the control condition, all of the candidates have mean feeling thermometer ratings between 63 and 66 on the 100-point scale. While the white male has the lowest mean rating and the white

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<sup>8</sup> All regression results are available in Table A1 in the Appendix.

female's mean feeling thermometer rating is the highest, there are no statistically significant differences between any two candidates. These results support my second hypothesis.

Figure 3.4: Mean Feeling Thermometer Ratings for Each Candidate Across the Control and Assertive Conditions



My third hypothesis was that the black female candidate would receive the largest penalty for acting in an assertive manner. Looking at the right panel of Figure 3.4, we can see that this is not the case. The difference between the control and assertive condition is actually greatest for the white male candidate. The assertive white male candidate is rated seven points lower than the white male in the control condition, and this difference is statistically significant at the .01 level. We also see a statistically significant decline in support for the black female candidate between the control and assertive conditions. When the black female candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner, she loses five points compared to the control condition

( $p < .05$ , two-tailed). The white female candidate and the black male candidate are both rated two points lower in the assertive condition compared to the control condition, but these differences are not statistically significant ( $p = .39$  for the white female candidate and  $p = .41$  for the black male candidate, two-tailed).<sup>9</sup> As a result of the larger penalty for the black female candidate, in the assertive condition, the black female candidate receives significantly lower feeling thermometer ratings than the white female ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed). Similarly, the black female receives lower feeling thermometer ratings than the black male in the assertive condition, though this difference is only marginally significant ( $p = .07$ , two-tailed).

While the decline for the black female candidate was in line with expectations, the decline for the white male candidate goes against previous research suggesting that white males are rewarded for assertiveness (Eagly and Karau 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008). This large decline in feeling thermometer ratings for the white male candidate may be an artifact of the time in which the study took place. President Trump is perceived by many Americans to be assertive in a negative way. An *ABC News/Washington Post* poll found that the top ten words Americans use describe Trump included “arrogant”, “egotistical”, and “narcissistic” (Verhovek 2017). Similarly, an August 2018 poll from *ABC News/Washington Post* put Trump’s approval rating at 34% with a majority of respondents saying they “strongly disapprove.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the assertive condition may have primed respondents in

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<sup>9</sup> The differences in the marginal effect of the assertive condition (difference in difference) between the black female and the white female ( $p = .31$ ) and black male ( $p = .29$ ) are not statistically significant.

<sup>10</sup> *Washington Post-ABC News Poll Aug. 26-29, 2018.*  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2018/08/31/National-Politics/Polling/question\\_20686.xml?tid=a\\_inl\\_manual](https://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2018/08/31/National-Politics/Polling/question_20686.xml?tid=a_inl_manual) (accessed May 5, 2019).

this study to think about Donald Trump when the candidate was a white male. Some evidence for this explanation is found when I separate the results by party. Because thoughts about Trump are more likely to be primed when the white male candidate is a Republican, I expect that the “Trump effect” will be strongest among respondents who read about a Republican candidate. I find this to be the case. Among those who read about a Democratic candidate, the effect is smaller and not statistically significant. It is among respondents who read about a Republican candidate where the negative assertiveness effect for the white male candidate is strongest and statistically significant. Since the results for the white male candidate are contrary to expectations and may be an artifact of the current political environment, I focus the remainder of my analyses on the differences between the black female, white female, and black male candidates.

#### Black Female Candidate vs. White Female Candidate

I first compare the black female candidate to the white female candidate. I expected that the penalty for the black female candidate would be greatest among respondents who are predisposed to rate black women as more assertive than white women and black men (hypothesis 4). To test this hypothesis, I collapse my difference in assertiveness measures from Figure 3.3 into three-categories: those who rated black women as more assertive than white women in the first wave, those who rated black women and white women as equally assertive, and those who rated black women as less assertive than white women. Selecting on those who received the black female candidate or the white female candidate, I regress my dependent variables (feeling thermometer ratings, likelihood of voting for the candidate, and

effectiveness as U.S. Representative) on the triple interaction between the candidate race condition, the assertive condition, and the three-category difference in perceptions of assertiveness variable from wave one. I also include the triple interaction between candidate race, the assertive condition, and racial resentment in the model to ensure that it is not general racial attitudes that are driving my results, but rather the assertiveness stereotype specific to black women.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 3.5: Mean Feeling Thermometer Ratings for the Black Female and White Female Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions

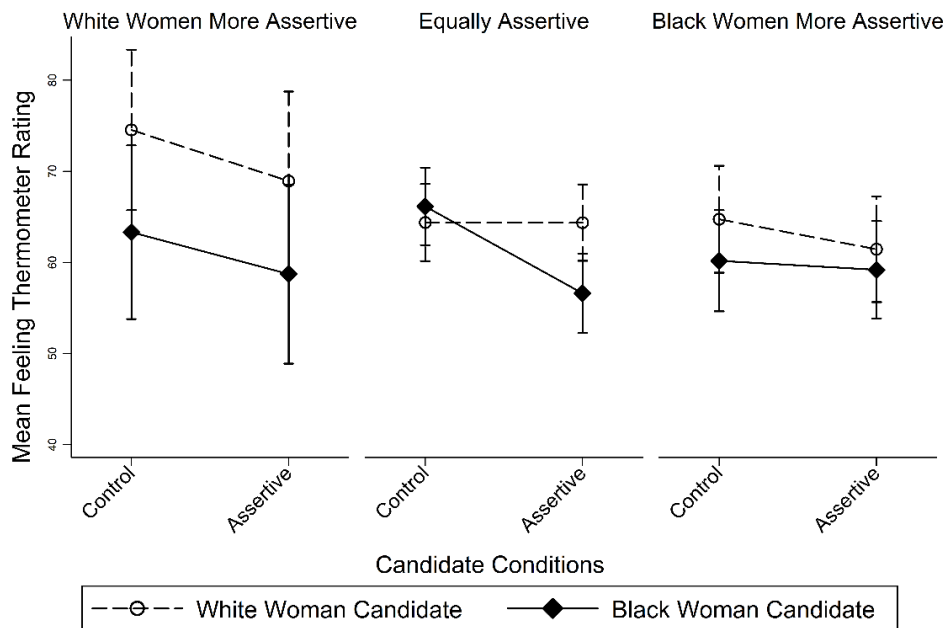


Figure 3.5 displays the predicted mean feeling thermometer ratings for the black female and white female candidates in the assertive and control conditions, across initial differences in perceptions of assertiveness among black women and white women. I expected that the effect of the assertive condition would be strongest

<sup>11</sup> All lower-order interactions are also included in the model. All regression coefficients are available in Table A1 in the Appendix.

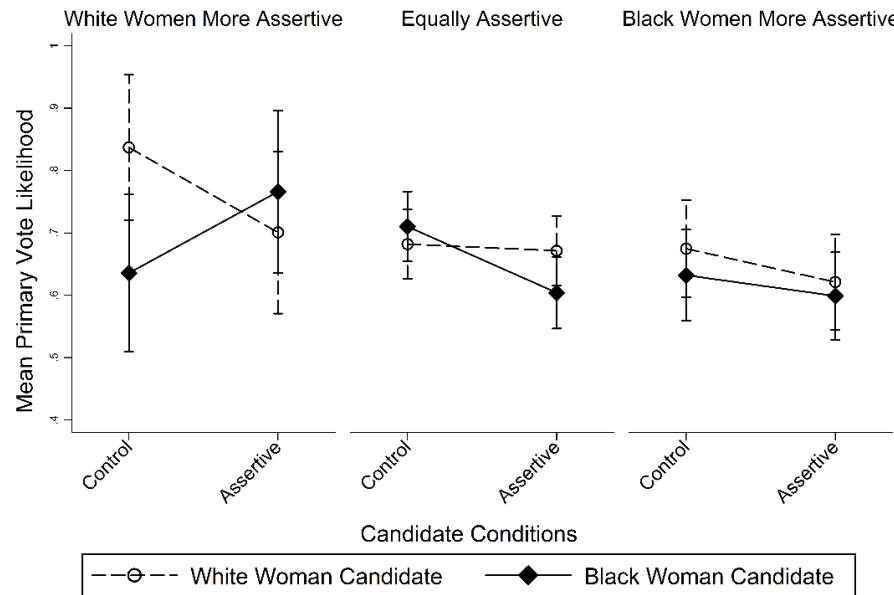
among those who are already stereotype black women as more assertive than white women (right panel of Figure 3.5). However, I find that the assertive condition has little effect on feeling thermometer ratings of the black female candidate or the white female candidate among this group. The black female candidate is rated six points lower than the white female candidate in the control condition ( $p=.15$ , two-tailed), and her ratings only decrease by about 2 points in the assertive condition ( $p=.57$ , two-tailed). The white female candidate is penalized 3 points in the assertive condition, compared to the control condition, but this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.46$ , two-tailed). I suspect that the reason why the assertive condition is not having much effect on the black female candidate is that these individuals automatically stereotype the black female candidate as being more assertive than the white female candidate, even when no information is given about the candidates' personality traits (control condition). Therefore, they may have already taken her greater assertiveness into account in evaluations of her (rating her less favorably than the white female) in the control condition. As a result, the assertive condition does not give these respondents any additional information about the candidate, since they already expected her to be relatively assertive.

On the other hand, those who initially rate black and white women as equally assertive (center panel of Figure 3.5) do not automatically apply the assertiveness stereotype to the black female candidate in the control condition. The black female candidate is rated slightly higher than the white female candidate in the control condition, but this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.48$ , two-tailed). However, when these individuals are given information that the black female

candidate is assertive, it makes the assertive black woman stereotype more salient to them. As a result, these individuals rate the assertive black female candidate 9 points less favorably than those in the control condition ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). In contrast, the white female candidate is not penalized for assertive behavior, losing less than one point in favorability ratings ( $p = .96$ , two-tailed). Among these individuals, the marginal effect of the assertive condition on feeling thermometer ratings of the black female candidate is statistically different from that of the white female candidate (difference in differences,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). This supports my fifth hypothesis – that we would see the black female candidate experience a penalty for assertiveness even among those who do not initially rate black women as more assertive than white women.

Finally, moving to those who rated white women as more assertive than black women in the first wave (left panel of Figure 3.5), we again see that black women are rated lower than white women in both the control and the assertive conditions. However, there are very few individuals in this group (only 11% of the sample rates white women as more assertive than black women,  $n = 69$ ). As a result, the confidence intervals are very large and it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the behavior of these individuals.

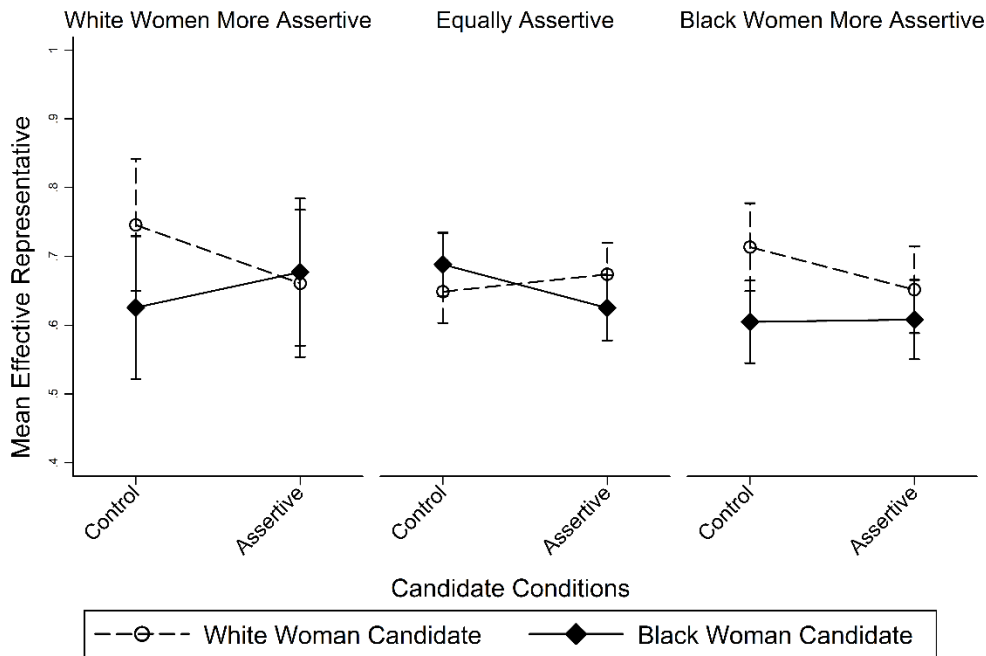
Figure 3.6: Likelihood of Voting for the Black Female and White Female Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions



A similar picture emerges when we look at the likelihood of voting for the candidate in the primary election. Figure 3.6 shows the predicted mean likelihood of voting for the black female and white female candidates. Again, we see little effect of the assertive condition on support for the candidate among those who stereotyped black women as more assertive than white women in the first wave (right panel). The white female candidate is rated slightly higher in both the control and assertive conditions, but these differences are not statistically significant and neither candidate receives a significant penalty for acting in an assertive manner. On the other hand, among those who initially rated black women and white women as equally assertive (center panel), the black female candidate receives a 10-percentage point penalty for acting in an assertive manner ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed), while the white female candidate is not penalized for assertive behavior. Here, the difference in the effect of the assertive condition for the white female and black female candidate is marginally significant

(difference in differences,  $p < .1$ , two-tailed). We also see a significant difference in the effect of the assertive condition for the black female and white female candidates among those who generally rate white women as more assertive than black women (left panel,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). These individuals are more likely to vote for the black female candidate in the assertive condition compared to the control condition. At the same time, they are less likely to vote for the white female candidate in the assertive condition, compared to the control condition.

Figure 3.7: Mean Effectiveness Ratings for the Black Female and White Female Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions



Again, we see very similar results when we look at people's perceptions of how effective the candidate will be as a representative in Congress (Figure 3.7). Among those who generally stereotype black women as more assertive than white women, the white female candidate has a significant advantage over the black female candidate in the control condition ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). The assertive condition has no

effect on ratings of the black female candidate, though the white female candidate loses about six percentage points in the assertive condition compared to the control condition ( $p=.18$ , two-tailed). As a result, there is no difference between ratings of the two candidates in the assertive condition ( $p=.33$ , two-tailed). Turning to those who rate black women and white women as equally assertive, the effect of the assertive condition again goes in opposite directions for the black female and white female candidates. The white female gains a couple of percentage points in effectiveness ratings ( $p=.46$ , two-tailed) when she is described as assertive, while the black female candidate loses six percentage points ( $p=.08$ , two-tailed). The difference in these effects is marginally significant ( $p=.06$ , two-tailed). Finally, among those who initially rated white women as more assertive than black women, we see that the black female candidate is rated about 12 percentage points less effective than the white female candidate. Similar to the findings for primary vote, these individuals reward the black female candidate for assertiveness and penalize the white female candidate. Because this group is initially more likely to see white women as more assertive, it could be that the assertive condition causes them to see the black female candidate as a better leader without pushing her into the general stereotype of the overly assertive black woman. On the other hand, because these individuals initially rate white women as the more assertive group, the assertive condition may tip the white female candidate into being perceived as overly assertive or pushy. It is important to remember, however, that these individuals who reward the black female candidate for assertive behavior and penalize the white female candidate make up only 11% of the sample. The majority of the sample (56%) falls

into the group that rewards the white female candidate for assertiveness and penalizes the black female candidate (center panel of Figures 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7).

Black Female Candidate vs. Black Male Candidate

Next, I compare the black female candidate to the black male candidate.

Again, I create a three-category measure of the general assertiveness ratings from wave one and interact this with candidate gender and the assertive condition.

Because these candidates share the same race, but differ in their gender, general attitudes toward women could drive my results, rather than a specific stereotype about black women. I control for this possibility by including a triple interaction between candidate gender, the assertive condition, and modern sexism in my model. I regress my dependent variables (feeling thermometer ratings, primary vote, and effectiveness) on this these two triple interactions and their lower-order interactions.

Figure 3.8: Mean Feeling Thermometer Ratings for the Black Female and Black Male Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions

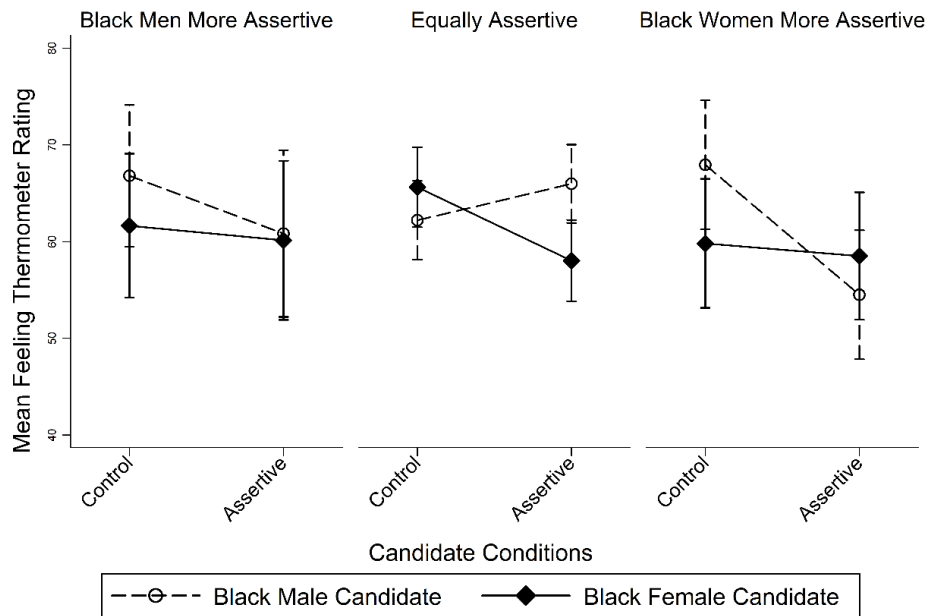
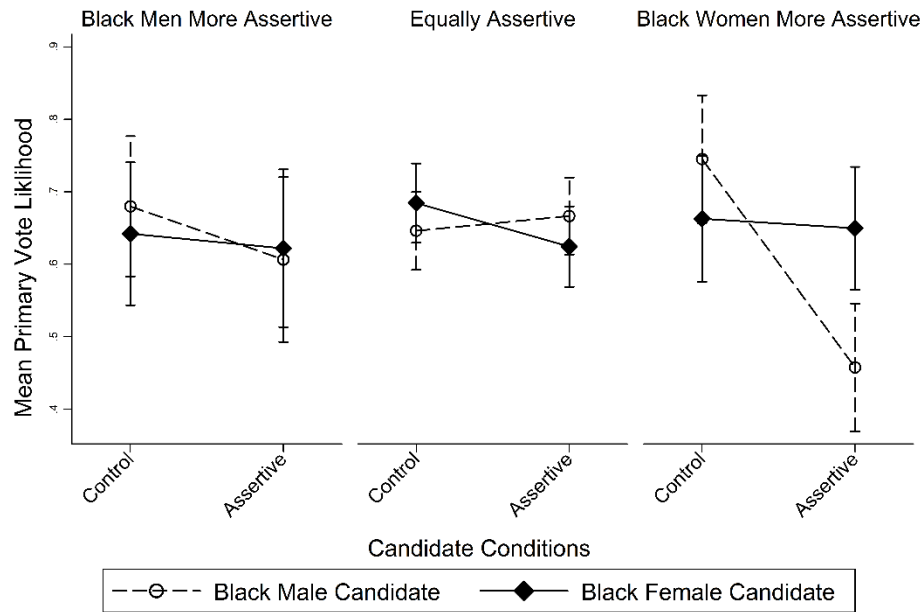


Figure 3.8 displays the predicted mean feeling thermometer ratings for each candidate across the article conditions (assertive vs. control) and general perceptions of assertiveness. Similar to comparisons with the white female candidate, we see the expected result among those who rated black men and women as equally assertive in the first wave (center panel of Figure 3.8). These individuals (who make up 60% of the sample), rate the black female candidate 3.8 points lower on feeling thermometer ratings in the assertive condition compared to the control condition. On the other hand, the black male gains a few percentage points in the assertive condition ( $p=.20$ , two-tailed) such that those in the assertive condition rate the black female candidate significantly less favorably than the black male candidate ( $p<.01$ , two-tailed). In addition, the difference in the effect of the assertive condition between the black male and black female candidates is statistically significant at the .01 level.

Moving to those who initially rated black women as more assertive than black men (right panel of Figure 3.8), we again see that the assertive condition does not have much of an effect on the black female candidate. Again, I suspect this is because these individuals already believe her to be relatively assertive in the control condition, so the assertive condition does not provide them with any new information. However, we see a 13-point penalty for the black male candidate among this group when he is described as acting in an assertive manner ( $p<.01$ , two-tailed). While he is rated 8 points higher than the black female candidate in the control condition ( $p=.09$ , two-tailed), in the assertive condition he is rated slightly lower than the black female candidate (but this difference is not statistically significant,  $p=.41$ , two-tailed). Unlike for the black female candidate, who I suspect this group already perceived to

be assertive, the assertive condition provides new information about the black male candidate, causing white voters to rate him less favorably. This difference in the effect of assertiveness between the black female and black male candidates is marginally significant ( $p=.07$ , two-tailed). We also see a small assertiveness penalty for the black male candidate among those who initially rated black men as more assertive than black women (left panel of Figure 3.8), but this difference between the control and assertive conditions is not statistically significant ( $p=.33$ , two-tailed).

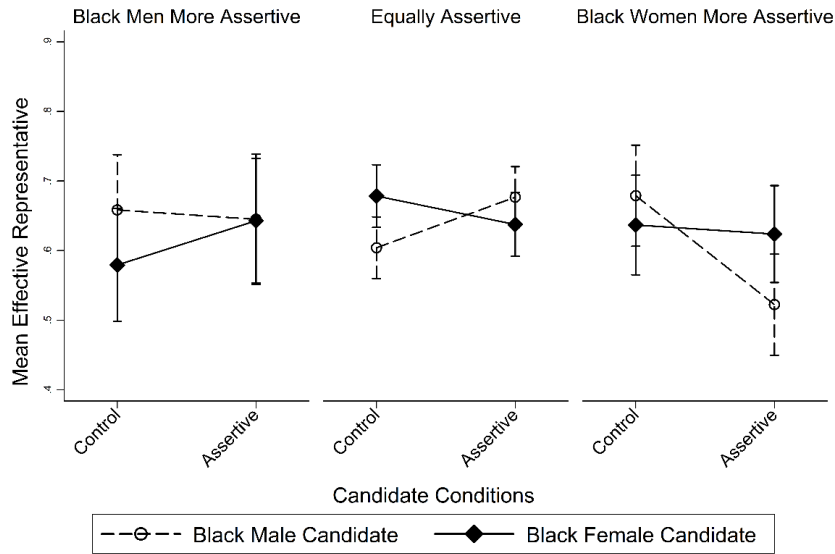
Figure 3.9: Mean Primary Vote Likelihood for the Black Female and Black Male Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions



We see similar results when we look at the likelihood of voting for the candidates in Figure 3.9. There are no significant differences in likelihood of voting for the black female and black male candidates in either the control or the assertive condition among those who initially rated black men as more assertive than black women (left panel of Figure 3.9). There is a six-percentage point penalty for the black female candidate among those who rated black women and black men equally

on the stereotype measure (center panel of Figure 3.9), while the black male candidate gains a couple of percentage points in vote likelihood. However, this difference in the effect of the assertive condition between the black female and black male candidates does not quite reach statistical significance ( $p=.15$ , two-tailed). The most dramatic effect of the assertive condition is actually for the black male candidate among those who initially rated black women as more assertive than black men. In the control condition, they rate the black male candidate slightly higher than the black female candidate, though this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.25$ , two-tailed). However, we see a 28-percentage point decrease in support for the black male candidate when respondents are informed that he is assertive ( $p<.01$ , two-tailed). As a result, support for the black male candidate is significantly lower ( $p<.01$ , two-tailed) than support for the black female candidate in the assertive condition for this group.

Figure 3.10: Mean Effectiveness Rating for the Black Female and Black Male Candidates across the General Assertiveness Stereotype and the Article Conditions



Finally, the results are consistent when we look at effectiveness ratings of the black female candidate compared to the black male candidate (Figure 3.10). The effect of the assertive condition goes in different directions for the black male and black female candidates among those who rate black women and black men as equally assertive (center panel of Figure 3.10). The black male gets a 7-point increase in effectiveness ratings ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed) when he is described as acting in an assertive manner, while the black female candidate gets a 5-point penalty in this group ( $p = .13$ , two-tailed). This difference in the effect of the assertive condition between the black female and black male candidates is statistically significant at the .05 level. On the other hand, those who initially rated black women as more assertive than black men (right panel of Figure 3.10) penalized the black male candidate 14 points more than the black female candidate, and this difference is also significant at the .05 level.

### Conclusion

I proposed a theory of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns in which campaign information and stereotypes interact with one's own race and gender identity to influence support for black women candidates. I argue that the stereotype that black women are particularly assertive is associated with negative attitudes toward black women among those who see black women as an out-group in terms of race or gender (or both). In this chapter, I test one aspect of this theory - that negative stereotypes about black women will be applied when a black female candidate is described as acting in an assertive manner, thereby lowering white voters' evaluations

of the black female candidate relative to a white female candidate and a black male candidate. Using a two-wave national survey experiment, I find support for this aspect of my theory. White voters rated the black female candidate similarly to other candidates when they had no information about her personality traits. However, when they read a newspaper article describing the candidate as acting in an assertive manner, whites penalized the black female candidate, leading her to be rated less favorably than identical black male and white female candidates. Contrary to my expectations, I found that whites also penalized the white male candidate in the assertive condition. My reasoning is that respondents associated the assertive white male candidate with Donald Trump, and therefore negative feelings about him may have influenced these results. Still, a replication study conducted after Trump leaves office, when thoughts about Trump are less salient in Americans' minds, is necessary to determine if this result is an artifact of our current political environment.

I also test whether the effect of the assertive condition is strongest among those who initially rated black women as more assertive than white women and black men in the first wave. I find that this is not the case. Those who rated black women as particularly assertive in the first wave, rate the black female candidate less favorably than the black male and white female candidates in the control condition. Because they already expect the black female candidate to be assertive, I suspect that the assertive condition doesn't give them any new information. In contrast, we see a negative effect of the assertive condition for the black female candidate among whites who initially rated black women the same as black men and white women in terms of assertiveness. When the black female candidate is described as acting in an assertive

manner, this brings the assertive black woman stereotype to mind and leads respondents to evaluate her less favorably. I also find a strong negative effect of the assertive condition for the black male candidate among those who initially rated black men as less assertive than black women. I suspect that this group of white voters originally expected the black male candidate to be relatively unassertive. However, when he is described as acting in an assertive manner, this may bring to mind stereotypes about black men being particularly aggressive. Still, the assertive penalty for the black male candidate is only present for those who initially rated black women as more assertive than black men, who make up only 23 percent of the sample. Most individuals (60% of my sample) initially rated black women and black men as equally assertive, which is where we see an assertiveness penalty for the black female candidate. Among the majority of respondents, if the assertive condition had any effect on the black male candidate, it was to his benefit.

This research underscores the importance of studying the influence of race and gender in politics simultaneously. As the intersectionality literature suggests, we cannot fully understand the effects of race and gender in isolation from one another. For example, much of the recent gender research in political science finds that women candidates are not generally disadvantaged by gender stereotypes (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2015). The advice for women candidates from political scientists is to not worry about facing a backlash from acting in a tough or assertive manner (Bauer 2017; Brooks 2013). This advice, though, does not apply equally to all women. Because black women are negatively stereotyped as being overly assertive, black women candidates experience a backlash from voters outside

of their own race and gender group if they demonstrate agency. As a result, black women must walk a particularly fine line to show that they are strong leaders without activating negative stereotypes about their group.

## Chapter 4: Agentic Stereotypes and Black Voters' Support for Black Women Candidates

In February of 2019, black women from across the country gathered in New Orleans for the second annual Power-Rising Conference. The mission of the conference, created “by black women for black women,” was to “leverage [black women’s] collective wisdom to develop strategic, actionable ways to build and maximize our economic and political power—for the betterment of ourselves, our families, our communities, and our future.”<sup>1</sup> The opening plenary session of the 2019 conference, titled “Surviving and Thriving”, featured political scientist Melissa Harris-Perry moderating a conversation between Stacey Abrams (former candidate for governor in Georgia) and several leading black women activists.<sup>2</sup> During the conversation, Harris-Perry noted that there has been a good deal of discussion on social media about white women’s support for Republican candidates, but much less discussion about the votes of black men. She stated, “Every Wednesday morning black female twitter is losing our minds. We’re like listen Becky get a life, pull it together, let’s go... But the part of the red/blue chart that we are often not looking at is that of black men voting.”<sup>3</sup> Harris-Perry referenced the 11% of black men voting

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<sup>1</sup> About us. Mission. Power Rising Conference. <https://events.bizzabo.com/210790/page/1390814/about-us> (accessed May 5, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Deon Haywood (Women with a Vision), Joanne Smith (Girls for Gender Equality) and Barbara Perkins (International Black Women Public Policy Institute) joined Abrams on the panel.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Niele. WATCH: Power Rising Conference Surviving and Thriving Panel with Melissa Harris Perry and Stacey Abrams joined by Deon Haywood, Joanne Smith and Barbara Perkins. *Los Angeles Sentinel*. February 23, 2019.

for Abrams's Republican opponent, Brian Kemp, in the 2018 gubernatorial election, according to CNN exit polls. Stacey Abrams disputed the exit poll data, arguing that she received the vote of 97% of black women and 94% of black men. However, Abrams conceded that turnout among black men was an issue, saying:

“The problem was [black men's] participation rates are lower. Black women not only show up, they show out. Black men do not vote at the same rate as black women, and that creates a gap. It's not that they are voting the wrong way, they just don't see themselves in the story.”

Harris-Perry replied that “when black men drop even 5% or 7% to cross over to vote for the Republican party, I do want to ask questions about how that margin is invested in some form of patriarchy.” Abrams agreed, stating, “As much as whites want to protect their white privilege, men want to protect their gender privilege, so it is a difficult thing to navigate both.”

The exchange between Harris-Perry and Abrams highlights an important question about electoral support for black women candidates: Are black men hesitant to vote for black women, and, if so, why? Exit polls from elections such as Abrams's and previous research in political science (Philpot and Walton 2007), suggest that black men are somewhat less likely than black women to vote for a black female candidate. However, it is unclear why black women candidates receive less support from black men than black women. Is sexism driving black men's hesitancy to vote

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<https://lasentinel.net/watch-power-rising-conference-surviving-and-thriving-panel-with-melissa-harris-perry-and-stacey-abrams-joined-by-deon-haywood-joanne-smith-and-barbara-perkins.html> (accessed May 5, 2019).

for black women candidates, or are black women simply more enthusiastic about supporting “one of their own” (Philpot and Walton 2007)? In this chapter, I assess whether the same intersectional stereotypes that lead white voters to be less supportive of black female candidates also decrease support among black men. Like whites, I argue that black men and women will stereotype black women as exhibiting agentic traits (such as assertiveness, toughness, anger), and that activation of this stereotype will decrease support for black women candidates among black men. Black men may feel less warm toward an assertive black female candidate because she is violating traditional gender role expectations that women should be kind and nurturing. On the other hand, I expect that black women’s support for black female candidates will only increase when the media highlights their agentic traits. My contention is that black women will be particularly enthusiastic about supporting an agentic black female candidate because these traits suggest that she is willing to fight on behalf of black women.

In the sections that follow, I first review the literature on group consciousness in African Americans’ political behavior, why we would expect black voters to support black candidates, and what types of black candidates African Americans prefer. I then consider the literature on the role of gender in black men and women’s political attitudes and explain how I expect my theory of intersectional stereotyping to apply to black voters. Next, I present the results of an experiment testing my theory using an adult national sample of African Americans. Finally, I draw conclusions about the implications of the results and discuss avenues for future research.

### Group Consciousness and Black Voting Behavior

Group-based cues have long been recognized as having an important influence on voting decisions (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell et al., 1960; Huddy 2013; Popkin 1991). It is much easier for voters to determine whether a candidate is a member of their in-group – for example sharing their race, gender, or political affiliation – than to know specific information about the candidate’s policy preferences (Campbell et al., 1960). As a result, voters use group membership as a heuristic to determine whether the candidate will represent their interests (Dawson 1994; Popkin 1991; Tate 2003). Yet, political behavior scholars note that simply being a member of a particular group is not nearly as important as having a psychological attachment to the group or believing that one’s own lot in life is linked to the larger group’s wellbeing (Dawson 1994; Gurin, Miller, and Gurin 1980; Huddy 2013; Miller et al. 1981). Gurin and her colleagues (1980) define group *identification* as “the awareness of having ideas, feelings, and interests” in common with other members of the group, while group *consciousness* “refers to a set of political beliefs and action orientations arising out of this awareness of similarity” (Gurin, Miller, and Gurin 1980, 30).

Research on group identification and group consciousness demonstrates that African Americans exhibit particularly high levels of group identity and group consciousness. For example, when Gurin and her colleagues (1980) asked respondents which social group they felt closest to (options were whites, blacks, middle-class people, workingmen, women, and older people) blacks were six times more likely than whites to say they felt closest to their racial group. Blacks who

closely identified with their race also showed the highest degrees of political consciousness and were the most likely of all groups to support collective action (Gurin, Miller, and Gurin 1980). This high level of group consciousness leads to a large degree of cohesion in blacks' support for the Democratic Party and policies that benefit African Americans – such as social safety net programs, government aid to blacks, and affirmative action (Dawson 1994; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1994).

Dawson (1994) attributes to this high level of group cohesion to the use of a “black utility heuristic,” in which black voters use information about how public policy or candidates would affect the black community as a proxy for their own self-interest. He argues that information on the interests of the black community is readily available through black political leaders and black churches, but it is much more difficult to figure out how a candidate or policy will affect one individually. Dawson explains:

“Until the mid-1960s, race was the decisive factor in determining the opportunities and life chances available to virtually all African Americans, regardless of their own or their family’s social and economic status.

Consequently, it was much more efficient for African Americans to determine what was good for the racial group than to determine what was good for themselves individually” (10).

While Dawson’s black utility heuristic is similar to Gurin’s definition of group consciousness, “it differs in that it explicitly links perceptions of self-interest to perceptions of racial group interests” (Dawson 1994, 76). Dawson measures linked

fate with a question asking participants “Do you think that what happens generally to the black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?”(77). Although the original studies on group consciousness and linked fate were conducted in the 1980s (Dawson 1994; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1994) and blacks’ political beliefs have become more moderate in recent years, African Americans remain highly racially conscious (Tate 2010). For example, in the 2016 American National Election Study, 77% of African American respondents said that what happens to blacks generally affects them at least “some,” with 46% saying it affects them “a lot.”

The sense of group consciousness and linked fate also leads blacks to be highly supportive of black candidates (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Tesler and Sears 2010). For example, both Dawson (1994) and Tate (1994) find that blacks who identified closely with their racial group were the most likely to support Jesse Jackson in his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. The idea that blacks use a candidate’s race as a heuristic for his or her policy positions is also supported by experimental research (McDermott 1998). McDermott (1998) finds that in low information elections blacks are more likely to support a black candidate, but this effect goes away when ideology and policy preferences are taken into account. In other words, McDermott (1998) concludes that “black voters stereotype black candidates as being more qualified to deal with the issues important to them” (910).

More recently, research suggests that group consciousness played a role in blacks’ support for Obama over Clinton in the 2008 Democratic Primary (Huddy and Carey 2009; Sullivan and Johnson 2008; Tesler and Sears 2010). In open-ended

questions about their choice to vote for Obama in the primary, Sullivan and Johnson (2008) found that 64% of black Obama voters said they voted for him because of his race. Similarly, Telser and Sears (2010) find that the extent to which blacks fall on the liberal end of the racial resentment scale is correlated with feelings of linked fate, and the racial resentment scale was highly influential in blacks' support for Obama in the Democratic Primary. Tesler and Sears (2010) conclude that among African Americans, "strong in-group attachment was the primary ingredient in generating overwhelming support for Obama" (104).

The research discussed above demonstrates that black voters will usually vote for a black candidate when given the opportunity, but what happens when two or more African American candidates run against each other in a majority-minority district? Scholars have recognized two general styles of black politicians: the traditional black politician who focuses on racial issues and appealing to black constituents and the new-style politician who runs a deracialized campaign in order to win over moderate white voters (Canon 1999; Canon, Schousen, and Sellers 1996; Gillespie 2009). Traditional black politicians, such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, tend to have backgrounds in the civil rights movement and the black church. New-style black politicians, like Barack Obama, are generally too young to have been personally involved in the civil rights movement and focus more on collaboration with whites (Canon 1999; Canon, Schousen, and Sellers 1996; Gillespie 2009). Canon (1999) argues that when new-style black politicians run against a traditional black politician in a majority-minority district, the new-style politician will win by splitting the black vote and winning the overwhelming majority of whites. However,

Canon and his colleagues note that “if the blacks unite behind a single candidate, a traditional black will win” (847). For example, when new-style politician Barack Obama challenged Bobby Rush, a traditional black politician, in the 2000 Democratic primary for Illinois’s first congressional district, the majority of African Americans supported Rush. As a result, Obama ended up losing the election by a 2 to 1 margin. Canon’s theory, therefore, suggests that many blacks prefer a traditional black politician who is explicit about standing up for black interests, but new-style politicians can win in majority-black districts by carrying white voters and more moderate blacks.

In summary, the research on black voting behavior demonstrates that blacks will generally support the candidate who they believe will be the most likely to further the interests of the group while in office. As a result, black voters are likely to choose a black candidate over a white candidate because the candidate’s race is used as a heuristic in determining whether the candidate will support the interests of the African Americans community. However, the vast majority of research on blacks’ support for black candidates focuses on black male candidates, like Jesse Jackson and Barack Obama. In the following section, I review the limited literature on blacks’ support for black women candidates (Greer 2016; McClain, Carter, and Brady 2005; Philpot and Walton 2007) and outline my expectations for the influence of the agentic black woman stereotype on black men and women’s support for their candidacies.

### *Intersectionality and Blacks' Support for Black Women Politicians*

The little research that is available on black women candidates suggests that they are less successful in winning over black men than black women, especially when competing against a black male candidate (Greer 2016; McClain, Carter, and Brady 2005; Philpot and Walton 2007). As described in chapter 1, historical accounts of Shirley Chisholm's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972 demonstrate that she received resistance from black male politicians (Greer 2016; McClain, Carter, and Brady 2005; Winslow 2014). Similarly, McClain, Carter, and Brady's (2005) analysis of Carol Moseley Braun's bid for the 2004 Democratic nomination suggests that, thirty years later, a black woman still struggled to win support from black voters. McClain and colleagues note that black voters overwhelmingly supported the black male candidate, Al Sharpton, in the 2004 primary over Moseley Braun. Blacks were more likely to support Sharpton despite the fact that Moseley Braun was objectively much more qualified, having served in the U.S. Senate, while Sharpton had never held political office.

Philpot and Walton (2007) examine support for black women candidates using both experimental data and results from real-world elections in which black women were candidates. Philpot and Walton's experimental data demonstrate that black women candidates receive significantly higher support from black women than from black men when running against a black male. Their precinct-level data tell a similar story. Looking at the 2001 mayoral race in Atlanta, they find that a statistically significant relationship between the percentage of black women in the district and a higher vote share for the two black women candidates in the race. In precincts where

black women made up the majority of the electorate, the two black women candidates received 79% of the votes, while they received only 54% of the votes in precincts where black men made up the majority of voters. However, the data from Philpot and Walton's study cannot explain why we see different levels of support for black women candidates among black men and women.

Literature on black men's gender attitudes provides a potential explanation for some black men's reluctance to support black women candidates. For example, some survey research has found that black men hold relatively conservative attitudes toward women in political leadership, even when compared to white men (Carter, Corra, and Carter 2009; Kane 2000; Ransford and Miller 1983). Some scholars trace the origins of this gap to the importance placed on black men holding leadership roles during the black power movement in the 1960s and 70s (Tate 1994; Simien 2005). For example, Tate (1994) notes that "as the black power movement took off in the urban North, Black identification and consciousness became transformed into an assertion of Black masculinity" (29). However, this reluctance to include black women and their agendas in black politics is not simply a relic of the 1960s and 70s. For example, Anita Hill was "maligned as a race traitor" when she accused Supreme Court Justice nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in 1991 (Harris-Perry 2011). Similarly, black women were excluded from Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March in 1995 (Gay and Tate 1998). Even Michelle Obama found it necessary to embrace relatively traditional gender roles as first lady, as evidenced in her choice to focus on issues such as nutrition and childhood obesity (Harris-Perry 2011).

Cathy Cohen's (1999) theory of advanced marginalization suggests that the black community continues to undermine the role of women because priorities of black men are taken as "as representative of the condition of an entire community" while women's concerns about sexism in the black community are ignored. Simien (2005) agrees, stating:

"Black men report a higher sense of race identification than Black women due to the prioritization of their lived experience in relationship to the Black political agenda, which portrays the struggle of Black women against patriarchy as antithetical to the larger community narrative of racial discrimination" (545).

Thus, black men may continue to believe that black male leadership is essential to attacking issues important to the community as a whole. Indeed, Carter, Cora, and Carter (2009) find that while black men's attitudes toward women's involvement in politics have become somewhat more liberal since the 1970s, black men remain significantly less favorable toward women entering politics compared to black women.

While black men may be hesitant to vote for a black female candidate, Philpot and Walton (2007) demonstrate that black women are the most enthusiastic supporters of black women candidates. Evidence of this is 97% of black women supporting Stacey Abrams in Georgia's 2018 gubernatorial election. Their high level of support for black women candidates may be due to intersectional group consciousness whereby black women identify not only as blacks, but more so as black women. Scholars have documented black women's high level of group identification

with other black women (Gay and Tate 1998; Settles 2006; Wilcox 1997). For example, Settles (2006) finds that black women rate their identity as a black woman as more important than either their racial or gender identities. There is also evidence that this combined identification with race and gender influences black women's political behavior. Wilcox (1997) uncovered a strong interactive effect between black women's gender and racial consciousness, leading to higher levels of political participation among black women who are conscious of both identities. Gay and Tate (1998) similarly find that black women's racial and gender identities interact to influence black women's positions on political issues in which the two identities may conflict. For instance, black women who identified strongly with both their race and gender felt significantly less favorably toward Clarence Thomas and Farrakhan's Million Man March.

Based on this literature, I contend that my theory of intersectional stereotyping applies to black men in much of the same way it applies to whites, but that black women will react much differently. Like whites, I expect that black men will view black women as being particularly assertive and see this as a negative trait. As a result, I argue that when the news media portrays a black female as acting in an assertive manner, this activates black men's negative stereotypes about black women. Therefore, black men will evaluate black women candidates less favorably when they are described with agentic traits. On the other hand, I argue that black women will reward an assertive black female candidate. I expect that media coverage of a black female candidate's agentic traits will increase feelings of intersectional group consciousness among black women. Consequently, black women will see

assertiveness in a black female candidate as a cue that she is willing and able to stand up for the interests of black women.

### Hypotheses

While there has been little systematic research on blacks' stereotypes about black women, I expect that blacks, like whites, will stereotype black women as being relatively agentic (or tough and assertive) in nature. Specifically, I expect that black men will stereotype black women as having negative agentic traits; such as being pushy, aggressive, and domineering. Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) demonstrates this stereotype of black women with African American comedian Chris Rock's 2008 take on the possibility of a black first lady. He joked,

“I don't think a black woman can be first lady of the United States. Yeah, I said it! A black woman can be president, no problem. First lady? Can't do it. You know why? Because a black woman cannot play the background of a relationship. Just imagine telling your black wife that you're president? 'Honey, I did it! I won! I'm the president' 'No, we the president! And I want my girlfriends in the Cabinet. I want Kiki to be secretary of state! She can fight!'” (Chris Rock, 2008, quoted in Harris-Perry 2011, 287).

Harris-Perry (2011) argues that Rock's joke comes from “widely held assumptions” about “aggressive black women dominating their male partners” (287-8).

I also expect that black women will stereotype women in their own racial and gender group as having agentic traits, but that black women's views of these agentic traits will be much more positive. For example, I expect black women to be

especially likely to rate black women as “strong” and “competent.” This is in line with previous research which finds that the “strong black woman” image is an important aspect of many black women’s self-perceptions (Abrams et al. 2014; Harris-Perry 2011; West, Donovan, and Daniel 2016). Therefore, my hypotheses about African Americans’ stereotypes of black women are as follows.

*H1a: Blacks will generally rate black women as more agentic than black men.*

*H1b: Black women will rate black women higher than black men on positive agentic traits (strong, assertive, competent).*

*H1c: Black men will rate black women higher than black men on negative agentic traits (aggressive, angry, acts inappropriately).*

When it comes to voting behavior, I expect that black men and women will be more supportive of black candidates than white candidates, regardless of the candidates’ gender or whether the candidate is described as having agentic traits. Despite black men’s more conservative views on women in politics, their high levels of race consciousness (Dawson 1994; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1994) should lead black men to prefer a black female candidate over white candidates. Similarly, research suggests that black women’s racial consciousness trumps their gender consciousness (Gay and Tate 1998; Philpot and Walton 2007; Wilcox 1998). Therefore, I expect black women will prefer a black male candidate over a white female candidate.

*H2: Blacks will evaluate black candidates more favorably than white candidates.*

Although I suspect that blacks will always rate black candidates higher than white candidates, I expect that black men will rate an assertive black female candidate

more unfavorably than an identical black male candidate. Based on my theory of intersectional stereotyping in political campaigns, I argue that when black men see a black female candidate behaving in an assertive manner this cue will activate negative stereotypes about black women, leading black men to rate her less favorably.

Because I expect that negative stereotypes about black women are driving this effect, I also hypothesize that the penalty for the assertive black female candidate will be strongest among black men who generally rate black women as being particularly assertive.

*H3a: Black men's ratings of an assertive black female candidate will be less favorable than their ratings of a black female candidate who is not described as having agentic traits.*

*H3b: The penalty for an assertive black female candidate will be especially prevalent among black men who generally rate black women as more assertive than black men.*

Finally, I argue that black women will be enthusiastic supporters of an assertive black female candidate due to black women's high levels of group consciousness with other black women (Gay and Tate 1998; Settles 2006; Wilcox 1997). Therefore, I hypothesize that black women will be even more supportive of black female candidates who are portrayed as having agentic traits than they are of black female candidates who are not described in this manner. Because I expect that positive stereotypes about black women's agentic traits are driving the effect, I hypothesize that the reward for an assertive black female candidate will be strongest among black women who generally stereotype black women as being more assertive than black men.

*H4a: Black women will rate an assertive black female candidate more favorably than a black female candidate who is not described as having agentic traits.*

*H3b: The reward for an assertive black female candidate will be especially prevalent among black women who generally rate black women as more assertive than black men.*

### Methods

I test these hypotheses using an experimental design nearly identical to the design utilized in chapter 3.<sup>4</sup> Keeping the design as similar as possible allows me to make comparisons between the way that intersectional stereotypes influence black and white voters' candidate evaluations. It was necessary, however, to make two small changes to my experimental design for my sample of African Americans. First, the newspaper articles in my African American sample note that candidate is running in a majority-black district. This is important because black respondents' evaluations of the candidates may depend on the type of district that they believe the voter is running in. This could be especially true in a primary election setting, as used in my experiment, because blacks may vote strategically depending on perceived electability of the candidate in the general election. For example, if black voters believe the black candidate is running in a majority-white district, they may be less likely to support the candidate in a primary campaign, even if he or she is their top choice, for fear that moderate white voters will defect to the Republican Party. The only other change in the experimental design is that all respondents read an article

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<sup>4</sup> For a full description of the experimental design see chapter 3.

about a Democratic candidate (in my white sample respondents read about a Democrat or Republican depending on their own party ID, while pure independents were randomly assigned to a Democrat or Republican). Because the vast majority of African Americans identify as Democrats, there would be too few Republicans in the sample to make any meaningful comparisons across parties. Therefore, all respondents read about a Democrat, but for consistency with my white sample, I only include Democrats and Independents in my analyses.<sup>5</sup>

As in chapter 3, I employ a two-wave experimental design so that I can measure group stereotypes in wave one without the measurement of these stereotypes influencing respondents' reactions to the experimental stimuli in wave 2 (Mendelberg 2008). The first wave was conducted February 14 through 26, 2019 and the second wave was conducted February 27 through April 9, 2019. The sample was collected using Qualtrics's online panel and the total sample size was 1,040 African Americans. However, 91 Republicans were eliminated from my analyses, resulting in 949 Democrats and Independents. The sample was matched to census demographics on age, gender, and region.

### Results

I begin by examining the stereotypes black men and women apply to different race and gender groups. My expectation is that blacks would generally stereotype black women as more agentic than black men (H1a). I also hypothesized that black

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<sup>5</sup> The results are very similar if I include all respondents in the analyses.

men would rate black women higher on negative agentic traits, while black women would rate members of their own race-gender group with more positive agentic traits. Among all blacks, black women are rated significantly higher on positive agentic traits (assertive, strong, competent) than black men ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed, for all comparisons between stereotypes of black men and black women). However, black men are rated significantly higher than black women on negative agentic traits: aggressive ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed), angry ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed) and inappropriate ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Therefore, H1a is partially supported. Black women are more likely than black men to be stereotyped with positive agentic traits but less likely to be stereotyped with negative agentic traits. These results, however, may be driven by black women's beliefs about black men. Black women may be particularly likely to rate their in-group with positive agentic traits while rating black men with negative agentic traits. Therefore, I next investigate whether there are gender differences in application of these stereotypes.

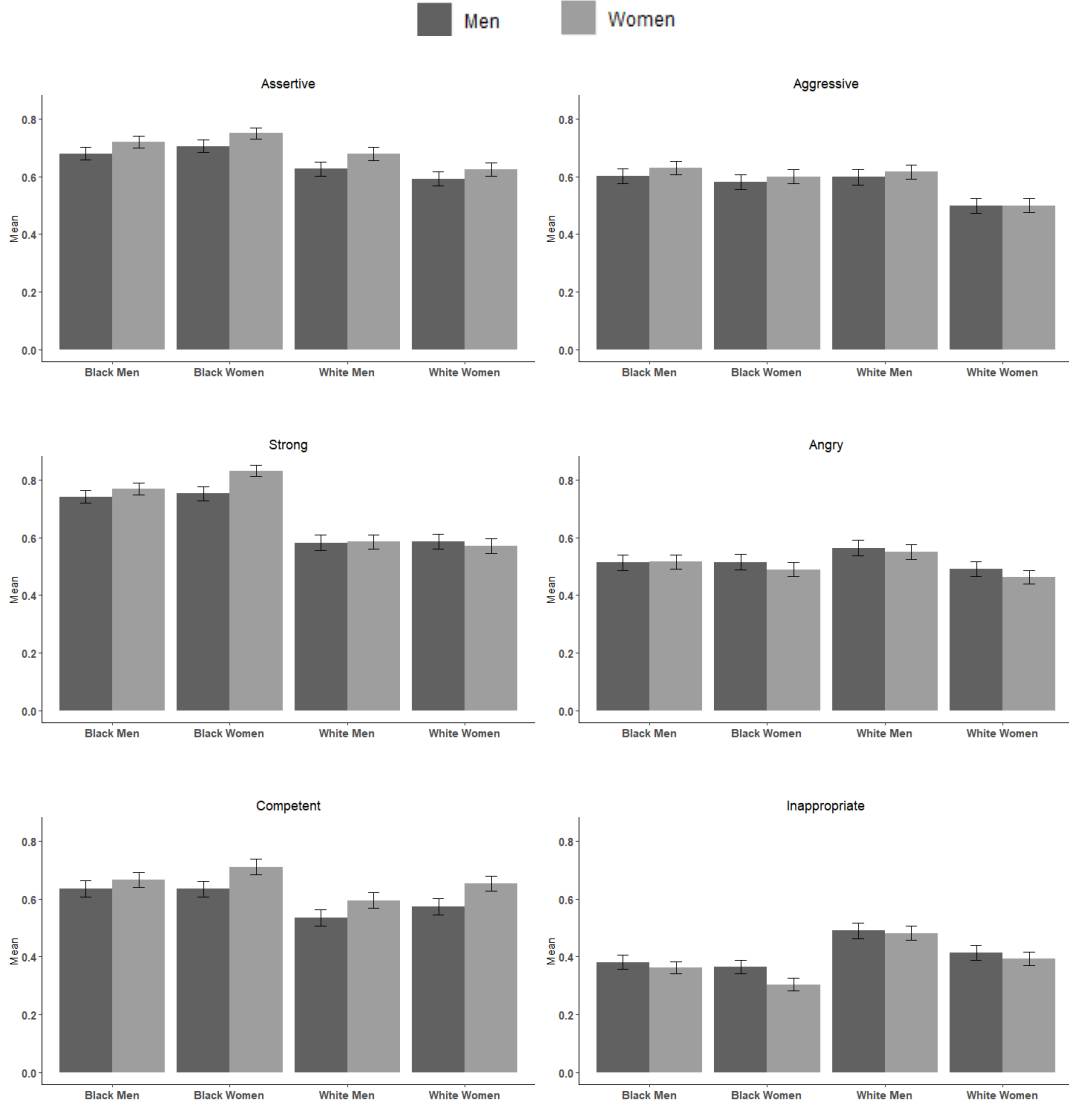
I hypothesized that black men would be more likely to rate black women with negative agentic traits (H1b) while black women would stereotype their racial-gender in-group with more positive agentic traits (H1c). Figure 4.1 displays black men and women's mean stereotype ratings for each racial-gender group. The dark bars in Figure 4.1 represent black men's stereotypes and the light bars represent black women's stereotypes. Looking first at the positive agentic traits in the left column of Figure 4.1, we can see that both black men and black women rate black women higher on positive agentic traits. Black men and women both rate black women as significantly more assertive than black men ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed for both men and

women). However, while black women rate black women significantly higher than black men on the traits “strong” ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed) and “competent” ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed), the difference between black men’s ratings of black men and women on these traits is not statistically significant (strong  $p = .28$ , competent  $p = .83$ , two-tailed). As a result, H3b is partially supported. The reason black men and women both rate black women as significantly more assertive than black men may be due to the somewhat ambiguous valence of the assertive stereotype. Black men may see assertiveness in black women as a more negative trait while black women see assertiveness as a positive trait.

Turning next to the negative agentic traits in the right column of Figure 4.1, we do not see black men rating black women significantly higher on these negative traits. Both black men and black women rate black men as more aggressive than black women. This difference is statistically significant for black women ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed) and marginally significant for black men ( $p = .07$ , two-tailed). Black women see black men as significantly more angry than black women ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed), while black men rate black men and women as equally angry ( $p = .90$ , two-tailed). Finally, both black men and black women rate black men as acting more inappropriately than black women, though the difference for black men is smaller and only marginally significant ( $p = .09$  for black men and  $p < .01$  for black women, two-tailed). Black men’s ratings of black women on these negative traits may be driven by social desirability bias. Black men may truly believe that black women are less likely to exhibit these negative traits than black men, but black men may also be hesitant to rate black women with these negative traits for fear of being perceived as

sexist. Therefore, I use the more ambiguous “assertive” term as the agentic stereotype in my subsequent analyses because both black men and black women rate black women as particularly assertive. In addition, using this trait allows me to keep the analyses consistent with my white sample.

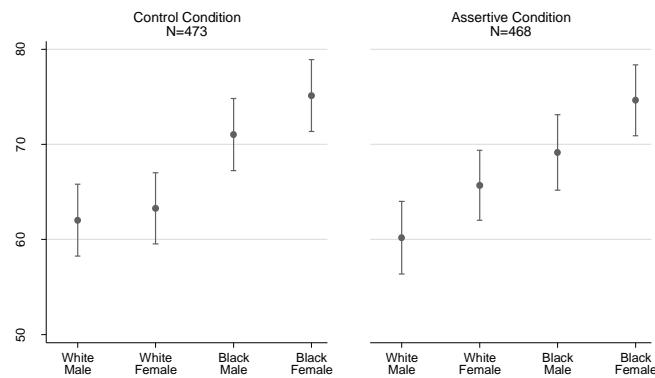
Figure 4.1: Mean Stereotype Ratings by Respondent Gender



I next examine the results of my experiment manipulating the race of the candidate, gender of the candidate, and whether or not the candidate is described as having agentic traits. Figure 4.2 displays the mean feeling thermometer ratings for

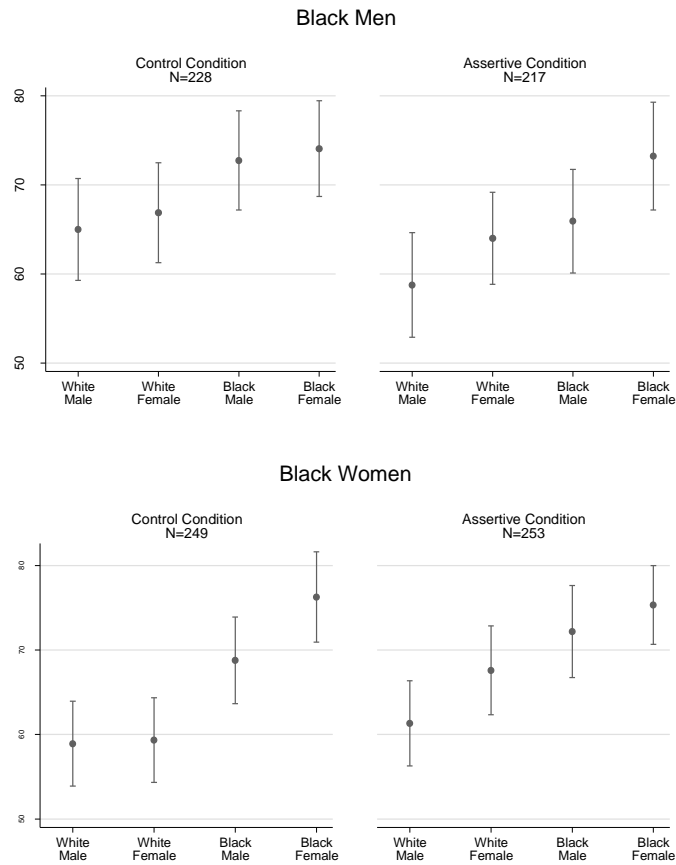
the candidates in each condition. Supporting hypothesis H2, I find that the black candidates are rated higher than the white candidates across all conditions. For example, in the control condition (left panel of Figure 4.2), the black female candidate is rated 13 points higher than the white male candidate ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed) and 12 points higher than the white female candidate ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). Similarly, the black male is rated 9 points higher than the white male ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed) and 8 points higher than the white female ( $p < .01$ , two-tailed). The assertive condition has little effect on the candidates' feeling thermometer ratings. All candidates except the white female receive slight, but non-significant, penalties in the assertive condition. The white female candidate, on the other hand, experiences a small 2-point increase in feeling thermometer ratings in the assertive condition. While this increase itself is not statistically significant ( $p = .37$ , two-tailed), it boosts ratings of the female candidate enough to bring her ratings within the 95% confidence interval of the black male candidate. As a result, the difference between the white female and black male in the assertive condition is not statistically significant.

Figure 4.2: Mean Feeling Thermometer Ratings for Each Candidate Across the Control and Assertive Conditions



The results so far do not indicate any penalty for the assertive black female candidate. The 4-point difference in feeling thermometer ratings between the black female candidate and the black male candidate in the control condition does not reach statistical significance ( $p=.13$ , two-tailed), but the 6-point difference in the assertive condition is statistically significant ( $p<.05$ , two-tailed). However, I expected that black women would reward an assertive black female candidate (H4a) while black men penalize her for assertive behavior (H3a). Therefore, men and women's opposite reactions may have balanced each other out in the aggregate. Consequently, I next examine the results separately for men and women in Figure 4.3. I find no support for either hypothesis H3a or H3b. Black men do not significantly penalize the black female candidate for acting in an assertive manner, nor do black women significantly reward the assertive black female candidate relative to the control condition. Instead, black men penalize the black male candidate in the assertive condition. The 7-point difference for the black male candidate across the control and assertive conditions is marginally significant ( $p<.1$ , two-tailed). The only other significant difference between the assertive condition and the control condition is that black women rate the assertive white female candidate 8 points higher than the white female candidate in the control condition ( $p<.05$ , two-tailed).

Figure 4.3: Black Men and Women’s Feeling Thermometer Ratings Across Conditions

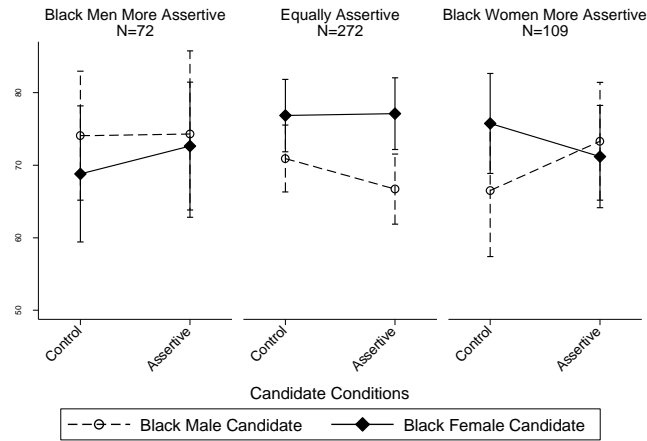


I still find no evidence that descriptions of agentic traits have any significant influence on evaluations of the black female candidate, but perhaps the effect is confined to those who say black women are particularly assertive. Figure 4.4 shows the predicted mean feeling thermometers for the black male and female candidates across conditions and the assertive black woman stereotype.<sup>6</sup> I find that among

<sup>6</sup> The predicted means are obtained by regressing feeling thermometer ratings on the triple interaction and all lower-order interactions between the assertive condition, the gender condition, and whether the respondent said black women are more assertive, less assertive, or equally assertive compared to black men. To ensure that my results are driven by the stereotype and not general levels of sexism I also include the triple interaction and all lower-order interactions between the assertive condition, the gender condition, and modern sexism. The results from this regression are available in Table A2 in the Appendix. All results remain the same when removing the interactions with modern sexism.

blacks who rate black women as more assertive than black men (right pane of Figure 4.4), the black female candidate is rated about 9 points higher than the black male candidate in the control condition, although this difference is not statistically significant. Among this group, the black male candidate gains about 7 points in the assertive condition while the white female candidate loses about 4 points. Although these results are in the expected direction, the effect of the assertive condition is not statistically significant for either the black male ( $p=.28$ , two-tailed) or black female candidate ( $p=.40$ , two-tailed). The difference in the effect of the assertive condition for the black female compared to the black male candidate also fails to meet conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p=.15$ , two-tailed). Among those who say black men are more assertive than black women (left panel of Figure 4.4), there are no significant differences across the candidates or conditions. Turning to those who say black women and black men are equally assertive (center pane in Figure 4.4), the black female candidate is rated 6 points higher than the black male candidate in the control condition, though this difference is only marginally significant ( $p=.09$ , two-tailed). This group rates the black female candidate about the same in the assertive condition as in the control condition, while the black male is penalized 4 points in the assertive condition. This penalty for the black male results in significantly higher ratings for the black female candidate than the black male candidate in the assertive condition (11-point difference,  $p<.01$ ).

Figure 4.4: Feeling Thermometer Ratings across Conditions and the General Assertiveness Stereotype



Because I expected the effect of the assertive condition to vary based on the respondent's gender, Figure 4.5 displays the results separately for black men and women. I hypothesized that the penalty for an assertive black female candidate will be especially prevalent among black men who generally rate black women as more assertive than black men (H3b). This hypothesis is not supported. Among black men who rate black women as particularly assertive (top right panel), the black male candidate is rated slightly higher than the black female candidate in both the control and the assertive conditions. The feeling thermometer ratings of the black female candidate decrease slightly more than those of the black male candidate in the assertive condition, but all differences are small and statistically insignificant. When we look at black men who stereotype black men as more assertive than black women (top left panel), black men are rated about 10 points higher than black women, but the difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.20$ , two-tailed). While there is no effect of the assertive condition on feeling thermometer ratings of the black male candidate, the black female candidate gets a 5-point reward when she is described as acting in an assertive manner. However, neither the effect of the assertive condition for the black

female candidate ( $p=.58$ , two-tailed) nor the difference in the effect across the male and female candidates is statistically significant ( $p=.58$ , two-tailed). Among black men who rate black men and women as equally assertive (top center panel), the black female candidate is rated 7 points higher than the black male candidate in the control condition, but the difference between the male and female candidates is not statistically significant ( $p=.18$ , two-tailed). In this group, both the black female candidate and the black male candidates are penalized in the assertive condition, but the penalty for the black female candidate is small and not significant (2 points;  $p=.75$ , two-tailed), while the penalty for the black male candidate is larger and marginally significant (10 points;  $p=.06$ , two-tailed). This results in the assertive black female candidate receiving significantly higher feeling thermometer ratings than the assertive black male candidate (16 point difference;  $p<.01$ , two-tailed).

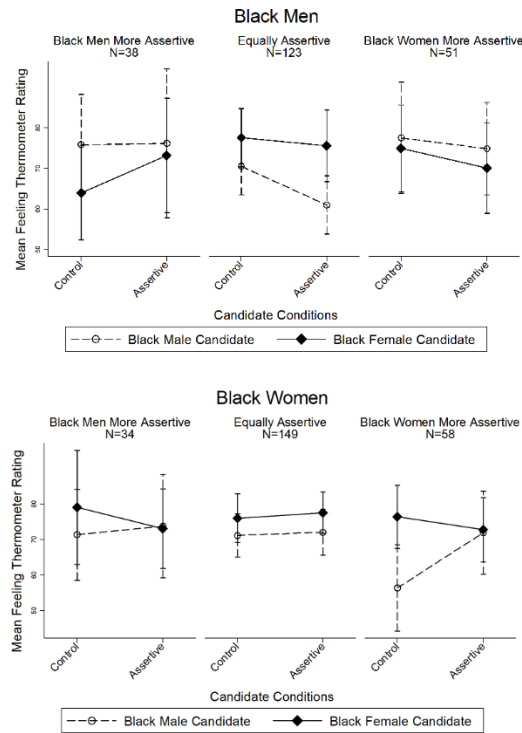
Finally, I examine whether black women who stereotype women of their own racial group as particularly assertive reward an assertive black female candidate (H4b). Again, the data do not support my hypothesis. Black women who rate black women as more assertive than black men (bottom right panel of Figure 4.5), are much more favorable toward the black female candidate than the black male candidate in the control condition, rating her 19 points higher than the male candidate ( $p<.05$ , two-tailed). Black women penalize the black female candidate slightly when she acts in an assertive manner, but the decline is not statistically significant (4 points,  $p=.58$ , two-tailed). On the other hand, black women in this group reward the black male candidate for assertive behavior, increasing their feeling thermometer ratings of him by 14 points, which is marginally significant ( $p<.1$ , two-tailed). The difference in the

effect of the assertive condition for the black male and black female candidates is also marginally significant ( $p < .1$ , two-tailed). We see a similar pattern of rewarding the black male candidate and penalizing the black female candidate for assertive behavior among black women who see black men as generally more assertive than black women (bottom left panel). However, the differences between the candidates are smaller for this group of black women and none are statistically significant. There is no effect of the assertive condition among black women who rate black men and women as equally assertive (bottom center panel). These black women rate the black female candidate about 5 points higher than the black male candidate in both the control and the assertive conditions, but neither difference is statistically significant.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to feeling thermometer ratings, I also tested my hypotheses on two other dependent variables – likelihood of voting for the candidate in the primary election and ratings of how effective the candidate will be in Congress. These results are available in Figures A1 – A6 in the Appendix. Although there are some minor differences across the dependent variables, I find few significant effects and no further support of my hypotheses.

Figure 4.5: Black Men and Women’s Feeling Thermometer Ratings across Conditions and the General Assertiveness Stereotype



Conclusion

This chapter examined my theory of intersectional stereotyping as it applies to black voters. I argued that black women would be stereotyped with agentic traits and that these stereotypes would influence black men and women’s support for a black female candidate. Based on black men’s relatively conservative views about women in politics (Carter, Corra, and Carter 2009; Kane 2000; Ransford and Miller 1983), I expected that black men would penalize an assertive black female candidate. On the other hand, I hypothesized that black women would reward an assertive black female candidate due to high levels of group consciousness with other black women (Gay and Tate 1998; Settles 2006; Wilcox 1997).

Overall, few of my hypotheses were supported by the data. My expectation that black women would be stereotyped as more agentic than black men was only true for positive agentic traits. In line with previous literature, I did find that black candidates are generally rated more favorably than white candidates. However, my expectations for black men and women's reactions to assertive black women candidates did not hold up. I find no evidence of black men penalizing black women for acting in an assertive manner. In fact, it appears that blacks are more likely to penalize candidates of their racial and gender in-group for assertive behavior. This may be evidence of a form of respectability politics in which blacks police members of their own in-group for fear that acting in a stereotypical manner will reinforce stereotypes about their group (Cohen 1999; Harris-Perry 2011; Higginbotham 1994). However, this explanation would be more relevant for black men than black women. The assertiveness penalty for black male candidates was large and marginally significant among black men (10 points,  $p=.06$ ), while the penalty for the assertive black female was small and statistically insignificant among black women.

While black men penalize an assertive black male candidate, black women reward black male candidates who are described as assertive. This reward for assertive black male candidates is especially prevalent among black women who rate black men as less assertive than black women. This may be an indication that some black women expect black male candidates to be relatively unassertive, perhaps due to Obama's calm public image, and would prefer more assertive candidates. Initially, these black women will rate a black male candidate less favorably than a black female

candidate. However, once the black male candidate proves he can be assertive, he is rated on par with the black female candidate.

A limitation of this study is that my sample size across eight conditions becomes quite small when examining effects across the assertive black woman stereotype. This problem is exacerbated when I split the sample by gender. Therefore, in future iterations of this research, I plan to drop the white candidate conditions and focus on black voters' evaluations of black male and female candidates. Dropping the white conditions will allow me to have double the number of participants in each of the black candidate conditions at the same cost. In the future, I also plan to investigate how measures of intersectional group consciousness influence support for an assertive black female candidate. I expect that black women who have high levels of group consciousness with other black women will be particularly enthusiastic about an assertive black female candidate, but black men who have high levels of group consciousness with black men may be hesitant to support an assertive black female candidate. In another follow-up study, I plan to vary the race and gender of the black female candidate's opponent as Philpot and Walton (2007) find that black men are only reluctant to vote for a black female candidate when she is running against a black male. Finally, I plan to vary the type of district the candidate is running in. Perhaps black men will be less supportive of an assertive black female candidate in a primary election for a majority-white district because they fear she will not be able to win over white voters.

Although my theory of intersectional stereotyping did not hold up well in this study of African American voters, the results still have important implications for

political campaigns. First, clear differences were found between black men and women's reactions to the candidates. This underscores the importance of continuing to study the role of gender in black men and women's voting behavior, rather than treating black voters as homogenous. An unexpected implication for white female candidates also arises from this study. I find that black voters, especially black women, are much more supportive of white female candidates when they exhibit agentic traits. In conjunction with my finding in chapter 3 that white voters do not penalize white female candidates for assertive behavior (see also Brooks 2015), it becomes very important for white female candidates to demonstrate agentic traits in their campaigns. Assertiveness does not hurt white female candidates among white voters and can help them win over black voters. Demonstrating assertiveness will be especially important for white women candidates running in Democratic primary elections, where black women make up a sizable voting bloc.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

“The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says: ‘It’s a girl.’”

- Shirley Chisholm

Decades of research backs up Shirley Chisholm’s statement that women are stereotyped from the moment they are born (Eagly and Karau 2002; Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Jost and Banaji 1994; Kahn 1996; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman and Glick 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). However, more recent research demonstrates that gender stereotypes are not the same for all women. Black women face unique stereotypes based on the intersection of their race and gender (Collins 2000; Donovan 2011; Ghavami and Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008; Harris-Perry 2011). When Shirley Chisholm ran for president in 1972, she encountered criticism stemming from the stereotype that black women are overly assertive, pushy, angry, and loud (Greer 2016; Winslow 2013). Today, women of color are running for office in greater numbers than ever before, but political science research has largely ignored the intersecting roles that race and gender play in their elections. My dissertation helps to fill this gap in the literature. I propose a theory of intersectional stereotyping arguing that black women candidates are uniquely disadvantaged by the stereotype that they are highly assertive. I contend that when the media portrays black women as acting in an assertive manner, this activates negative stereotypes related to assertiveness in black women. As a result, voters

belonging to racial and gender out-groups will penalize black female candidates for assertive behavior to a greater degree than other candidates. On the other hand, I suspected that black women would become more supportive of a black female candidate who exhibits agentic traits because assertiveness is seen as a positive trait among members of their in-group, suggesting that the candidate will fight for the interests of black women.

I test this theory using a content analysis and two national survey experiments. The content analysis of the 2018 Democratic primary campaign for governor of Georgia demonstrated that black women candidates are often described as having agentic traits, like assertiveness. Stacey Abrams, the black female candidate in the race, was much more likely than her white opponent, Stacey Evans, to be described with agentic traits. The difference between the two candidates was especially stark when it came to coverage of negative agentic traits. About 19% of articles mentioning Abrams described her as having at least one negative agentic trait, compared to only 4% of articles mentioning Evans. The next two chapters examine what effect the media's focus on agentic traits has on support for black women candidates.

The experimental data from my white sample largely supported my theory of intersectional stereotyping. I find that white voters evaluate a black female candidate less favorably when she is described as acting in an assertive manner. White female and black male candidates, on the other hand, are not penalized for assertive behavior. The negative assertiveness effect for the black female candidate appears to be driven by whites who initially rated black women about the same as white women and black

men in terms of assertiveness. This suggests that the negative assertiveness stereotype is not automatically salient to many voters, but when primed in media coverage it has negative consequences for whites' evaluations of black women candidates. When coupled with the results of my content analysis, these findings paint a troubling picture for black women candidates running in majority-white districts. The media tends to emphasize agentic traits when covering black women candidates. This coverage makes negative stereotypes about black women salient in white voters' evaluations of black women candidates, leading to a decrease in their support.

The results from my African American sample are much more favorable for black women candidates. There is little evidence that black voters penalize black women candidates for acting in an assertive manner. Among black women, there was a very small decrease in feeling thermometer ratings of the assertive black female candidate compared to the control condition, where the candidate is not described as acting in an assertive manner. However, this decrease was not statistically significant. Similarly, black men rated the black female candidate quite positively whether or not she was described as having agentic traits. I also expected that black women would rate the black female candidate even higher when she exhibited agentic traits. I find no evidence of this, but this may be due to a ceiling effect in black women's support. Black women's support for the black female candidate was extremely high in the control condition. As a result, there was not much room for improvement in the assertive condition.

These results have important implications for black women's political campaigns. Previous research in political science suggests strategies for how black candidates and women candidates may counteract negative stereotypes through their campaign messaging (Bauer 2015, 2017; Gillespie 2009; Sigelman et al. 1995), but because stereotypes about black women are different from those of white women and black men (Donovan 2011; Ghavami & Peplau 2012; Goff et al. 2008), black women candidates will need to use different strategies to mitigate the impact of voters' biases. For example, recent research suggests that women candidates need not worry about violating traditional gender stereotypes by coming across as too tough or assertive (Brooks 2013; Bauer 2015, 2017). In fact, these studies suggest that women candidates benefit from emphasizing agentic traits inasmuch as they demonstrate leadership potential (Brooks 2013; Bauer 2015, 2017). However, my results indicate that this advice is much more relevant to white women candidates and does not always extend to black women candidates. Like previous studies, I find that white women candidates are evaluated more favorably when they are described as acting in an assertive manner. Black women, on the other hand, experience a penalty among white voters when they exhibit agentic traits. For black women candidates, the effect of the assertiveness stereotype also depends on the type of district they are running in. The results from my African American sample suggest that black women may not be penalized for assertive behavior when running in a majority-minority district, but if the candidate has ambitions for higher office or runs in a majority-white district, the assertive black woman stereotype puts her at a disadvantage.

My research also has implications for the study of race and gender in politics. The results underscore the importance of using an intersectional framework to understand the ways that race and gender influence political behavior. I consistently find that race and gender interact such that voters evaluate black male candidates differently than black female candidates and black female candidates differently than white female candidates. The influence of the assertive black woman stereotype also depends on the race and gender of the voter. As a result, we cannot fully understand the nuances of voting behavior by studying the effects of race and gender in isolation from one another.

Several avenues for future research emerge from the research presented here. First, I plan to investigate whether counter-stereotypical images work to mitigate the negative effects of the assertive black woman stereotype among white voters. For example, are black women candidates evaluated more favorably when they are described with communal traits; such as being kind, compassionate, and nurturing? Several studies have found that providing counter-stereotypical information can curtail the use of stereotypes (Blair, Ma, and Lenton 2001; Dasgupta and Greenwald 2001; Bauer 2017). While Bauer (2015) finds that communal traits lead to more negative evaluations of women candidates, I expect that this only applies to white women candidates. Because black women are stereotyped as being overly agentic, I expect that black women candidates may be able to combat this stereotype by emphasizing their communal traits. I plan to test this expectation using an experimental design similar to that in chapters 3 and 4, but manipulating whether or not the candidate is described with communal traits.

Another question that comes out of the results of this dissertation is whether implicit, or unconscious, stereotypes are driving whites' negative reactions to assertive black women candidates. In my white sample, I found that the voters most likely to penalize an assertive black female candidate were those who initially rated black women as equally assertive as white women and black men. Social desirability bias in the stereotype measure may explain some of this result, but this does not explain why I find no effect of the assertive condition among whites who explicitly stereotyped black women as more assertive than white women and black men. Therefore, I plan to create a version of the Implicit Association Test where respondents must quickly sort black and white women's faces with agentic and communal traits. If respondents more easily sort black women's faces with agentic traits and white women's faces with communal traits, this would indicate implicit agentic stereotypes about black women and implicit communal stereotypes about white women. I plan to include this measure of implicit stereotypes in wave one of future studies to determine if implicit stereotypes help to explain why white voters penalize assertive black women candidates.

In a separate follow-up study, I also plan to investigate whether black women politicians are stereotyped differently than ordinary black women. Research has shown that women politicians and black politicians are not necessarily stereotyped in the same way as ordinary members of their groups (Schneider and Bos 2011, 2014). For instance, Schneider and Bos (2011) find that black politicians are stereotyped as particularly compassionate, while this is not a stereotype applied to ordinary African Americans. In this dissertation, I was interested in whether media coverage of

agentic traits would prime general stereotypes about black women, causing voters to apply these stereotypes to black women politicians. Therefore, I measured general stereotypes about black women rather than stereotypes about black women politicians specifically. However, if black women politicians are stereotyped differently than ordinary black women, this would explain why white voters did not rate the black female candidate more negatively in the control condition. To test whether black women politicians are stereotyped differently than ordinary black women I plan to run a separate experiment in which half of the respondents are asked to rate “black women” on various traits and the other half of respondents are asked to rate “black women politicians” on the same traits. Differences in mean ratings across the two groups would provide evidence that black women politicians are stereotyped differently than ordinary black women. These stereotypes about black women politicians may be especially influential in low-information elections where the candidates receive little media coverage (McDermott 1998).

Another avenue for future research is to determine whether the effect of the agentic black woman stereotype weakens when voters evaluate incumbents. In this study, I only looked at candidates running in an open-seat contest. However, this stereotype may be less relevant once voters have gotten to know an incumbent, especially if the incumbent has provided important service to the constituency. Hajnal (2001) finds that whites who lived in a city with a black mayor were more likely to support blacks in leadership roles. White voters may become more accepting of an assertive black female candidate once they have had a chance to experience her in office. Maxine Waters, for example, regularly receives high-profile

news coverage of agentic traits, from her tough criticism of President Trump to her no-nonsense style in committee hearings. At the same time, she continues to be re-elected by overwhelming margins in a district that is 35% white, 23% black, and 15% Asian.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, while I focus on black women in this dissertation, in the future, I plan to investigate how intersectional stereotypes influence support for women of other races and ethnicities. For example, Latina women might also be perceived as more agentic than white women, based on the “fiery Latina” stereotype (Williams 2014, 241). As a result, Latina candidates may also face penalties for assertive behavior. On the other hand, Asian women may be stereotyped as being less agentic than white women due to a combination of beliefs about Asian culture and attitudes toward women. Asian women candidates, therefore, may have to work particularly hard to demonstrate that they are strong leaders. As our country becomes more diverse and women of color run for office in greater numbers it is becoming more and more important to understand the unique obstacles minority women candidates face when running for elected office. By understanding stereotypes associated with the intersection of race and gender, women candidates of color can be better armed to counter-act negative stereotypes and use positive stereotypes to their advantage. This will take us one step closer to ensuring that all voices are heard and represented in our democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> 2017 American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, US Census Bureau. [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_1\\_YR\\_DP05&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1_YR_DP05&prodType=table) (accessed May 5, 2019).

## Appendix

Table A1: Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors for Figures in Chapter 3

	Feeling Thermometer (All candidates)	Feeling Thermometer (Black Female vs. White Female)	Primary Vote (Black Female vs. White Female)	Effective Representative (Black Female vs. White Female)	Feeling Thermometer (Black Female vs. Black Male)	Primary Vote (Black Female vs. Black Male)	Effective Representative (Black Female vs. Black Male)
Assertive	-7.229** (2.342)	-8.225 (8.452)	-0.165 (0.112)	-0.101 (0.0919)	-5.973 (7.017)	-0.0490 (0.0927)	-0.0407 (0.0764)
Black	1.705 (2.316)	-2.955 (8.175)	-0.106 (0.108)	-0.0454 (0.0889)			
Assertive X Black	5.324 (3.299)	18.04 (11.85)	0.409** (0.157)	0.259* (0.129)			
Female	3.096 (2.334)				1.731 (6.549)	0.0622 (0.0865)	-0.0164 (0.0713)
Assertive X Female	5.226 (3.317)				6.400 (9.827)	0.0438 (0.130)	0.129 (0.107)
Black X Female	-3.930 (3.288)						
Assertive X Black X Female	-8.679 (4.676)						
Black and White		-10.17*	-0.155*	-0.0969			

Women Equally Assertive	(4.987)	(0.0659)	(0.0542)
Black Women More Assertive than White Women	-9.808 (5.360)	-0.162* (0.0709)	-0.0321 (0.0583)
Assertive X Black and White Women Equally Assertive	5.607 (7.401)	0.126 (0.0978)	0.110 (0.0805)
Assertive X Black Women More Assertive than White Women	2.322 (7.921)	0.0830 (0.105)	0.0228 (0.0862)
Black X Black and White Women Equally Assertive	12.99 (7.296)	0.230* (0.0965)	0.159* (0.0794)
Black X Black Women More Assertive than White Women	6.667 (7.765)	0.159 (0.103)	0.0112 (0.0844)
Assertive X Black X Black and White Women Equally Assertive	-10.54 (10.64)	-0.362* (0.141)	-0.224 (0.116)
Assertive X Black X Black Women More Assertive than White Women	1.291 (11.27)	-0.247 (0.149)	-0.0708 (0.123)

Racial Resentment	0.0434 (6.183)	0.00779 (0.0815)	-0.0283 (0.0670)		
Assertive X Racial Resentment	4.911 (8.905)	0.0544 (0.118)	0.0314 (0.0967)		
Black X Racial Resentment	-15.58 (8.476)	-0.179 (0.112)	-0.140 (0.0920)		
Assertive X Black X Racial Resentment	-32.07* (12.41)	-0.268 (0.164)	-0.231 (0.135)		
Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				-4.602 (4.274)	-0.0337 (0.0565)
Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				1.131 (5.058)	0.0652 (0.0668)
Assertive X Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				9.754 (6.467)	0.0938 (0.0854)
Assertive X Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				-7.458 (7.516)	-0.214* (0.0993)
Female X Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				8.591 (6.097)	0.0760 (0.0806)
Female X Black Women More				-2.956 (7.185)	-0.0446 (0.0947)
					0.153* (0.0664)
					0.0369 (0.0780)

Assertive than Black Men							
Assertive X Female X Black Men and Women Equally Assertive					-15.85 (9.107)	-0.134 (0.120)	-0.191 (0.0991)
Assertive X Female X Black Women More Assertive than Black Men					7.655 (10.55)	0.221 (0.139)	0.0665 (0.114)
Modern Sexism					1.313 (7.251)	0.101 (0.0958)	-0.0144 (0.0789)
Assertive X Modern Sexism					-0.0147 (10.59)	-0.0672 (0.140)	0.0752 (0.115)
Female X Modern Sexism					-19.04 (10.39)	-0.276* (0.137)	-0.173 (0.113)
Assertive X Female X Modern Sexism					-5.307 (15.02)	0.0261 (0.199)	-0.144 (0.163)
Constant	62.72*** (1.648)	74.52*** (5.744)	0.833*** (0.0759)	0.761*** (0.0624)	66.34*** (4.618)	0.643*** (0.0610)	0.664*** (0.0503)
<i>N</i>	1232	610	614	614	610	614	614

Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Table A2: Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors for Figures in Chapter 4

	Among all Democrats and Independents	Among Black Men	Among Black Women	Black Female vs. Black Male	Black Female vs. Black Male Among Black Men	Black Female vs. Black Male Among Black Women
Assertive	-1.843 (2.742)	-6.235 (4.181)	1.797 (3.611)	-1.561 (8.586)	-0.364 (14.31)	-4.429 (10.81)
Black	8.992** (2.730)	7.737 (4.066)	9.869** (3.671)			
Assertive X Black	-0.0335 (3.918)	-0.578 (5.860)	1.003 (5.252)			
Female	1.241 (2.713)	1.875 (4.084)	0.594 (3.611)	-9.402 (8.296)	-17.77 (11.94)	1.657 (12.21)
Assertive X Female	4.264 (3.830)	3.360 (5.711)	5.671 (5.161)	12.30 (12.28)	27.50 (20.00)	-0.263 (16.39)
Black X Female	2.869 (3.849)	-0.546 (5.678)	6.287 (5.227)			
Assertive X Black X Female	-2.887 (5.462)	2.617 (8.158)	-9.190 (7.363)			
Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				-3.151 (5.106)	-5.320 (7.334)	-0.208 (7.250)
Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				-7.561 (6.495)	1.694 (9.429)	-15.00 (8.979)
Assertive X Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				-4.433 (8.147)	-9.922 (12.49)	-1.496 (10.88)
Assertive X Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				6.576 (9.673)	-3.016 (14.53)	13.15 (13.03)
Female X Black Men and Women Equally				11.20 (7.414)	18.94 (10.08)	-2.829 (11.45)

Assertive						
Female X Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				14.51 (8.867)	9.305 (12.48)	12.35 (13.06)
Assertive X Female X Black Men and Women Equally Assertive				0.856 (11.05)	-1.304 (16.70)	9.002 (15.43)
Assertive X Female X Black Women More Assertive than Black Men				-14.98 (12.76)	-11.12 (18.95)	-10.80 (17.70)
Modern Sexism				-12.94 (8.790)	-16.09 (13.10)	-20.13 (12.65)
Assertive X Modern Sexism				5.326 (13.53)	1.874 (20.79)	23.80 (19.29)
Female X Modern Sexism				12.33 (12.73)	15.12 (18.40)	20.98 (18.91)
Assertive X Female X Modern Sexism				-25.94 (19.30)	-47.80 (30.11)	-28.26 (27.22)
Constant	62.03*** (1.926)	65.00*** (2.914)	59.53*** (2.553)	78.42*** (5.418)	82.15*** (8.401)	77.16*** (7.155)
<i>N</i>	941	445	496	453	212	241
Standard errors in parentheses. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001						

Figure A1: Black Sample Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions

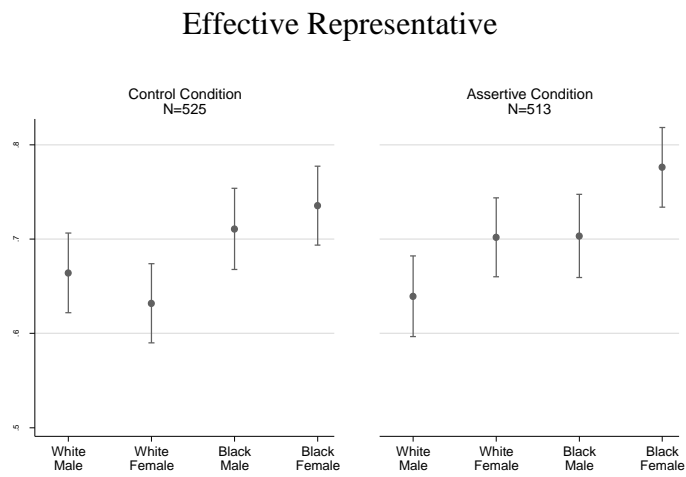
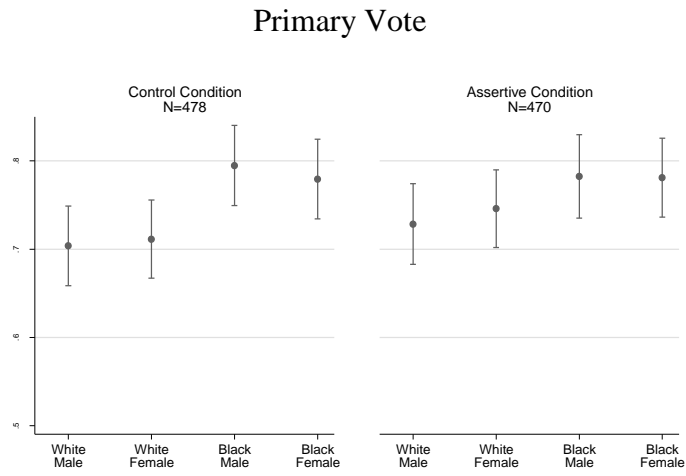


Figure A2: Black Men's Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions

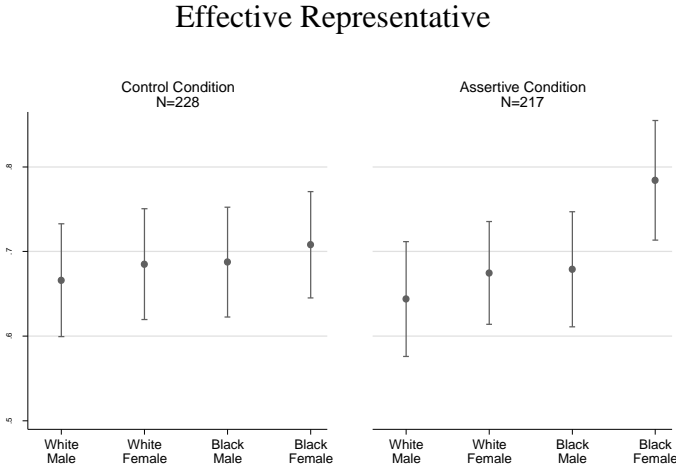
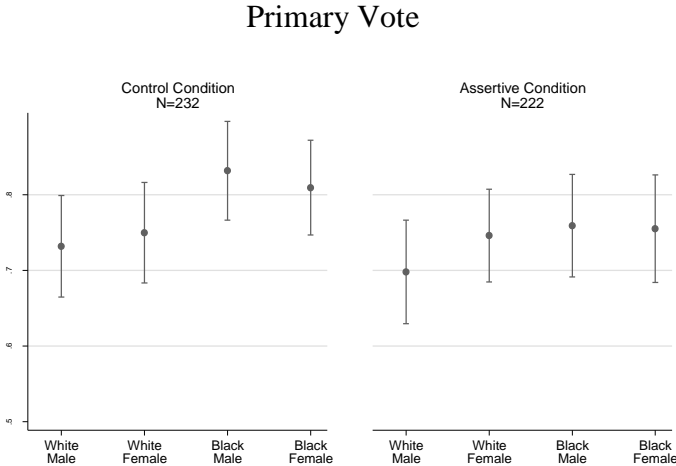
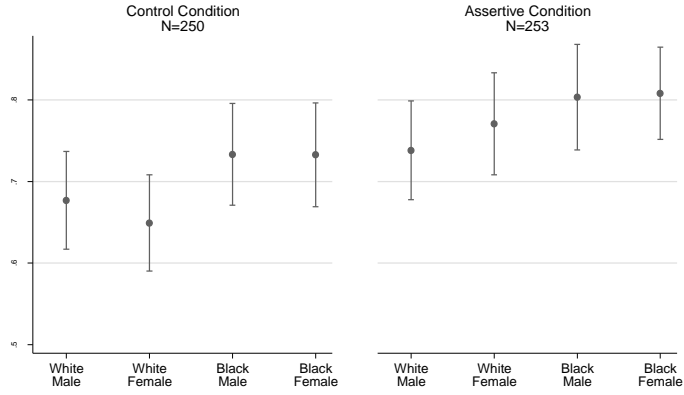


Figure A3: Black Women's Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions

### Primary Vote



### Effective Representative

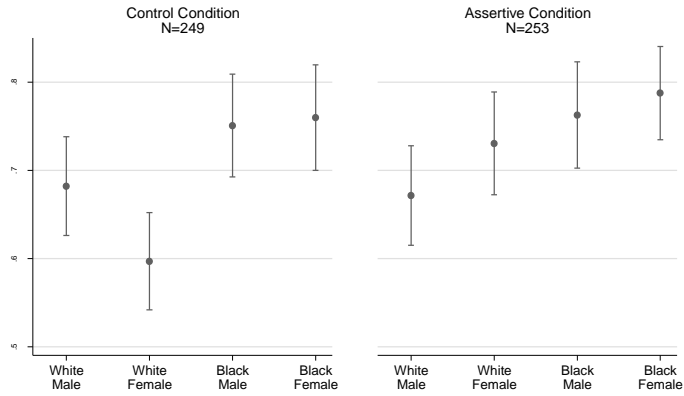


Figure A4: Black Sample Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions and General Assertiveness Stereotype

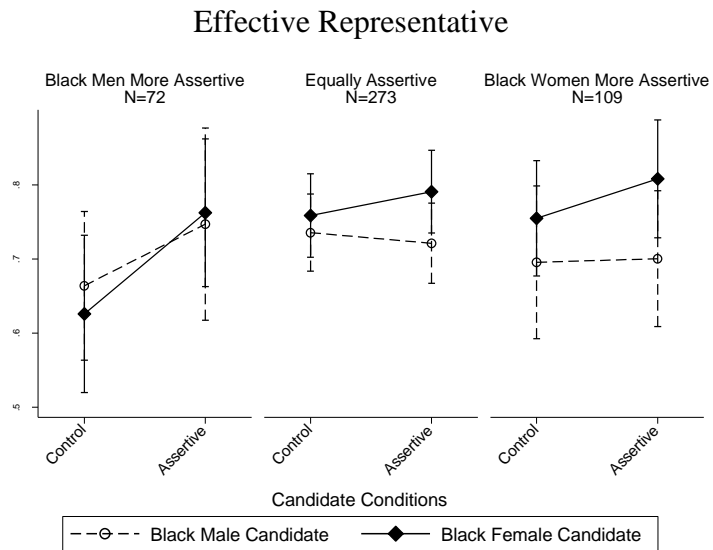
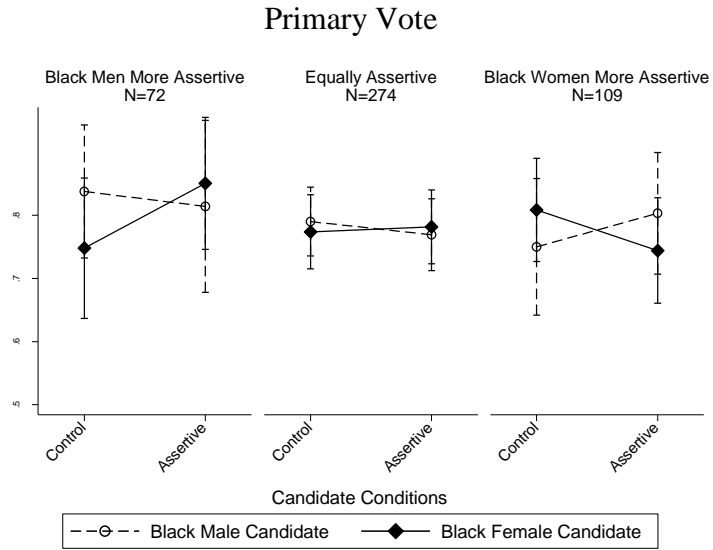


Figure A5: Black Men's Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions and General Assertiveness Stereotype

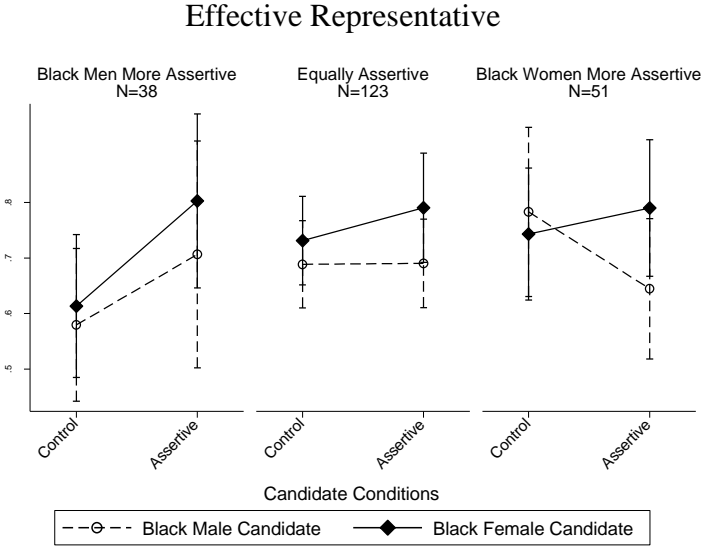
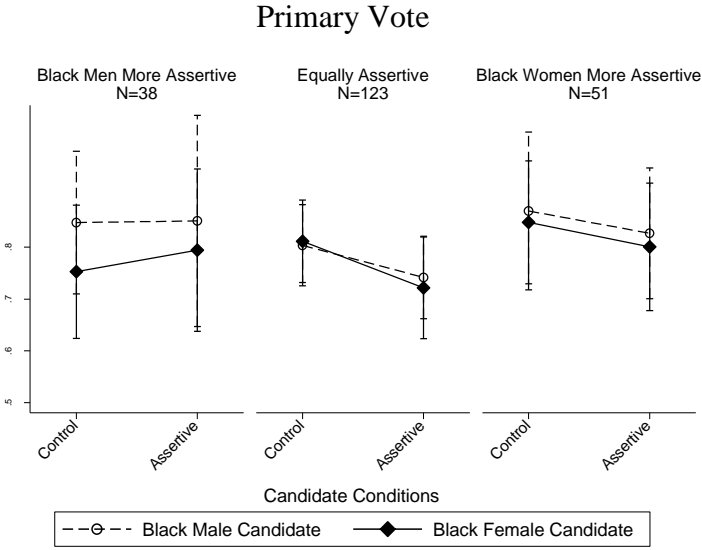
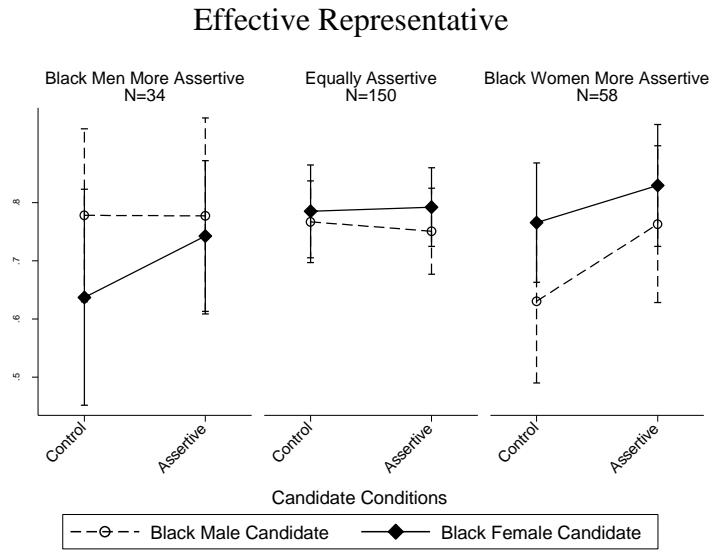
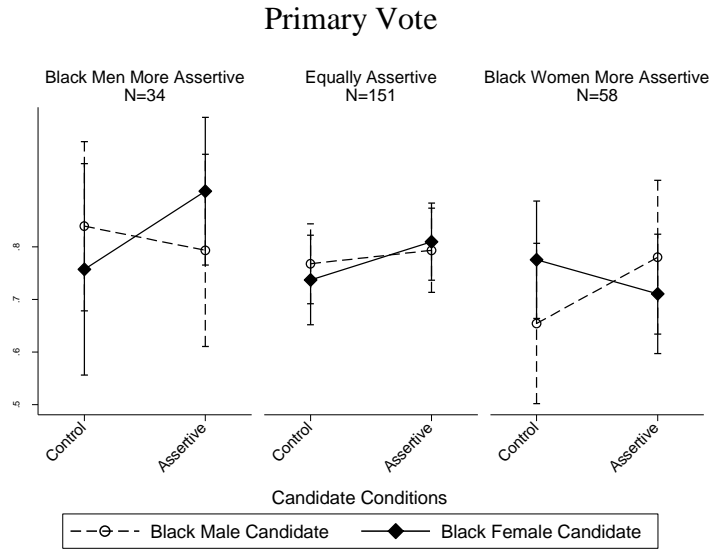




Figure A6: Black Women's Primary Vote Likelihood and Job Effectiveness Ratings Across Conditions and General Assertiveness Stereotype



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## Politics

### State Senator Danielle Williams Refuses to be Interrupted



Danielle Williams

By Casey Green

Yesterday, debate on the floor of the state senate became heated as senators discussed SB132, a bill to improve highway infrastructure. The incident began when Democrat Danielle Williams launched into a lengthy defense of her proposed amendments to the bill.

When the Senate President, who presides over floor debates, attempted to interrupt Williams she refused to yield her time. Williams raised her voice and demanded, “I will not be silenced,” before continuing with her speech.

#### **Williams: “I will not be silenced.”**

Williams’ proposed amendments to the bill were previously voted down in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, but she continued to push the matter on the Senate floor.

When reporters approached Senator Williams after the debate, she said, “Listen, I refuse to back down and make no apologies for that.”

#### **“I refuse to back down and make no apologies for that.”**

Williams’ assertive behavior came as no surprise to her colleagues, however. In the state senate, she’s known for being someone who “tells it like it is.”

Williams recently launched her bid to fill the open seat for U.S. Congress in District 5. She joins a crowded Democratic primary field with a number of qualified candidates.

In her campaign announcement, Williams said that she is running to ensure that our government “looks out for the citizens of District 5.”

Williams is currently serving her second term in the state legislature, where she is chair of the Appropriations Committee. Before entering politics, she was an attorney at the law firm Johnson, Rochester, and Patterson.

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### **Williams: “I will not be silenced.”**

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When reporters approached Senator Williams after the debate, he said, “Listen, I refuse to back down and make no apologies for that.”

### **“I refuse to back down and make no apologies for that.”**




Williams’ assertive behavior came as no surprise to his colleagues, however. In the state senate, he’s known for being someone who “tells it like it is.”

Williams recently launched his bid to fill the open seat for U.S. Congress in District 5. He joins a crowded Democratic primary field with a number of qualified candidates.

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## Question Wording

### Assertiveness Rating

Please rate the following groups on the scale below:

Unassertive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Assertive

White Men

White Women

Black Men

Black Women

### Party ID

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other – Fill in the blank [     ]

(If Democrat)

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

(If Republican)

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

(If Independent or other)

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?

1. Closer to Democratic Party
2. Closer to Republican Party
3. Neither

### Modern Sexism

For each of the following statements, we would like you to indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

Women often miss out on good jobs due to gender discrimination.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

When women demand equality these days, how often are they actually seeking special favors?

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. About half the time
4. Some of the time
5. Never

When women complain about discrimination, how often do they cause more problems than they solve?

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. About half the time
4. Some of the time
5. Never

### Racial Resentment Scale

For each of the following statements, we would like you to indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

It is really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

### Feeling Thermometer

Now we would like you to rate the candidate you just read about using something called a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

On a scale from 0 to 100, where would you rate the candidate?

### Primary Vote

How likely would you be to vote for the candidate you just read about in the Democratic (Republican) primary election for the U.S. House of Representatives?

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Somewhat unlikely
5. Very unlikely

### Effectiveness as Representative

How good of a job do you think that the candidate would probably do with the following:

A poor job   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   An excellent job

Be an effective U.S.  
Representative

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