

UC Berkeley

Working Papers

Title

Female Candidates, Issues, and Political Proselytizing: Understanding Why Women Talk About Politics

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/43w6t172>

Authors

Stokes-Brown, Atiya Kai
Neal, Melissa

Publication Date

2006-06-01

Female Candidates, Issues, and Political Proselytizing: Understanding Why Women Talk About Politics

Atiya Kai Stokes-Brown
Florida State University
Department of Political Science
570 Bellamy Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306
akbrown@fsu.edu

Melissa Neal
Florida State University
Department of Political Science
570 Bellamy Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306
mon04@fsu.edu

Paper prepared for presentation at the *Women in Politics: Seeking Office and Making Policy* conference, Berkeley, CA, June 9-10, 2006.

Female Candidates, Issues, and Political Proselytizing: Understanding Why Women Talk About Politics

Abstract

Previous research has demonstrated that the presence of a woman on a major party ballot is linked to increased attempts at political persuasion among women (Hansen 1997). Yet, this type of political engagement is enhanced when certain contextual conditions are met (e.g. Atkinson 2003). In this study, we hypothesize that female citizens are more likely to engage in political persuasion when female candidates are on the ballot and when female candidates on the ballot stress women's issues. Using 2002 and 2004 NES, we find that the presence of a woman on the ballot increases proselytizing overall but does not significantly increase political influence attempts among women. We also find that while the combined effect of candidate gender and candidate issues is positively related to proselytizing among women, economic issues, not women's issues increase women's attempts to influence others' votes.

Women have made significant social gains in American society. Gains in education have been particularly impressive as women are close to achieving parity with men in educational attainment (Spraggins 2000). Women now make up more than half of college undergraduates and are more likely to complete college than are their male counterparts (U.S. Department of Education 2004; 2005). The number of women earning advanced degrees has also increased dramatically, from 9 percent in 1970 to 47 percent in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education 2004). Women's pursuit of higher education has gone hand in hand with their movement into the labor force. Women's labor force participation rates have increased from 43% in 1970 to 59% in 2004 (U.S. Department of Labor 2005). Women have also made progress entering occupations predominately held by men (Spraggins 2000).

In addition, women have made significant strides in American politics, as more women move into public office. Albeit small proportionately, the percentage of women in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures is steadily increasing. In 1993, after the "Year of the Woman", 10% of members of Congress were women. As of 2006, the percentage of women in Congress has increased to 15% (CAWP 2006). The percentage of women in state legislatures has more than doubled from 1979 to 2006 (from 10% to 23%). Recently, political women have also made history, serving in visibly powerful positions. In 1993, Janet Reno became the first woman to serve as U.S. Attorney General. Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Nancy Pelosi have also become women "firsts" serving as Secretary of State, National Security Advisor, and House Democratic Whip, respectively.

Despite this progress, there are still significant gender differences in political engagement. While there is little disparity between men and women in terms of voting, women remain less likely to engage in many political activities including political proselytizing (e.g. Hansen 1997; Rapoport 1981; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue 1995). Yet, research suggests that the gender gap in political persuasion closes when certain conditions are met. The presence of a woman on a major party ballot is linked to increased

attempts at political persuasion among women (Hansen 1997; but see Lawless 2004a). Women are more likely to attempt to convince others to vote when a female candidate runs in a competitive intergender contest (Atkeson 2003).

In this study, we investigate whether another contextual factor, campaign issues, influences the political engagement of female citizens. We believe that while the presence of women on the ballot alone can mobilize female citizens to proselytize, the chances that women will proselytize are greater when female candidates focus on issues of concern to women. In this article, we test the hypotheses that female candidates increase political proselytizing among women, and that female citizens are more likely to attempt to influence others when major party female candidates in intergender contests run on women's issues.

Gender, Campaign Issues, and Political Proselytizing

The integration of women in the public sphere of work and politics has had a profound impact on political participation. Whereas women were once excluded and largely absent from politics and the electorate because of legal barriers (but see Freeman 2000), women are now visibly active as candidates, legislators, and voters. This is clearly evidenced by the increasing number of female candidates and legislators, and current voting patterns. Turnout rates for women in presidential elections now exceed that of men (Beckwith 1986; Leighley and Nagler 1991). In 2004, the rate of voter turnout for women was 60.1%, compared with 56.3% for men (CAWP 2005).

Yet, at the same time, significant gaps between men's and women's participation remain. Women are less likely to engage in a wide range of political activities, including political proselytizing (e.g. Hansen 1997; Rapoport 1981; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue 1995; Welch 1977). In her study of male and female political participation, Welch found significant gender differences in political persuasion, even after controlling for structural and situational variables. Hansen (1997)

also shows that from 1972 to 1994, women were less likely than men to report any attempts at influencing another's vote¹ (see Hansen 1997, 77). This gender gap is still evident in the most recent elections of 2002 and 2004 (see Table 1).

[Table 1 about here]

This lasting gender difference in political persuasion is important because willingness to engage in public discussion implies an active orientation to politics (Rapoport 1981). If individuals are talking about politics, then they themselves are more likely to participate. Political discussion also enables individuals to make informed reasonable political decisions (Downs 1957; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Personal contact is the most influential form of mobilization (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). If individuals who are interested in politics (more generally or in a particular election) are speaking to others about politics, that discussion presumably will have a meaningful impact as people learn which leaders and policies are in their best interests.

Recent efforts to explain the continuing gender gap in political persuasion emphasize cues provided by the political environment. The context and setting of an election influences the individual's decision to participate, as certain cues indicate to the individual that the perceived benefit of participating outweigh the perceived costs (e.g. Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Studies of race and political behavior confirm the salience of contextual effects. The presence of African American and Latino candidates significantly increases political efficacy and interest in elections, which increases African American and Latino political participation (e.g. Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Tate 1991; Baretto, Villarreal, and Woods 2005). A growing body of literature about the contextual effects of female candidates suggests that the presence of women changes the nature of political discourse, encouraging women to feel less alienated from politics. Hansen (1997) shows that the presence of women candidates significantly increased attempts at political persuasion among women in 1992. The presence of female Senate candidates in 1992 also increased the

¹ Question wording – During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them when they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?

psychological engagement of women (Koch 1997). Furthermore, the combined effects of gender and the electoral context increase political engagement. Schlozman et al. (1995) find that the presence of competitive female candidates stimulates female political involvement and interest. Female candidates running for high profile offices have also been shown to affect the anticipated activity of adolescent girls (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). In a study of female Senate and gubernatorial elections, Atkeson (2003) finds that female candidates running in intergender, competitive contests stimulate a wide range of female political engagement, including proselytizing.

Just as the presence of female candidates and the electoral context provided by competitive elections bolster women's political engagement, so too might the issues stressed by female candidates bolster participation. Female candidates are often thought to be more competent on traditional women and family related issues that are of concern to women. These issue stereotypes shape the campaign decisions of both female and male candidates (Huddy 1994; Kahn 1996). While most female candidates do not run on women's issues alone, they are more likely to stress these issues than their male counterparts (e.g. Larson 2001; Dabelko and Herrnson 1997; but see Dolan 2005). In her study of state legislative candidates, Larson (2001) finds that female candidates include traditionally male and female claims in their brochures but are more likely than male candidates to identify "female issues."

Women's issues proved highly salient in 1992's Year of the Woman – a year in which candidate gender was highlighted by the media and campaigns. In her study of the 1992, 1994, and 1996 congressional elections, Dolan (2001) finds that only the electoral environment in 1992 cued voters to employ gender issues in deciding to vote for a female House candidate (Dolan 2001). While the "Year of the Woman" is a unique case, recent research suggests that women's issues remain salient despite the relatively "gender-free" electoral environment in post-1992 elections. Female candidates benefit when they run "as women", calling attention to their uniqueness as women. Female House and state legislative candidates who ran on women's issues

and targeted female voters in 1996 and 1998 gained a significant advantage at the polls (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003). When female candidates' campaigns reinforce gender stereotypes that voters possess, candidate gender and issues may offer not only an electoral advantage to female candidates, but a psychological benefit for female voters. Female candidates who play to the stereotypes the public holds about candidates may send specific cues to female voters that stimulate political proselytizing. This may be especially true in intergender contests where male candidates are likely to reformulate their campaign strategy and give greater attention to women's issues (Fox 1997; also see Kahn 1993; Chaney 1998). It may also be the case the candidate's issues become more significant in female-male races because of voters' stereotypes (Dolan 1998; McDermott 1997).

Hypotheses

We hypothesize that female candidates increase political proselytizing among women. However, we also believe that the issues female candidates stress in their campaigns serve as a contextual cue for women. Thus, when women run "as women" in intergender contests, the combined effect of having a woman on the ballot and the issues raised in her campaign (women's issues) will stimulate political proselytizing among women in the electorate.

We also hypothesize that certain types of women's issues may be more influential than others. While there are few significant differences in men's and women's attitudes about traditional women's issues like abortion rights and ERA, women tend to be more supportive of welfare and other compassion issues, and more likely to protect traditional values (Delli Carpini and Fuchs 1993; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Thus, we expect to see significant gender differences in proselytizing when female candidates stress compassion issues and traditional values.

Formally stated, our hypotheses are as follows:

1. Women are more likely to proselytize when a major party female candidate is on the ballot.
2. Women are more likely to proselytize when major party female candidates in intergender contests stress women's issues in their campaigns.
3. Women are more likely to proselytize when major party female candidates in intergender contests stress compassion and traditional value issues.

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, we use American National Election Study (ANES) data. This research focuses on Senate and House contests over two election cycles, 2002 and 2004. We use this data to determine whether female House and Senate candidates and their campaign issues influence attempts at political persuasion among women in the electorate. Our analysis focuses primarily on intergender contests – races in which female major-party candidates ran against male candidates.² For the period covered by this analysis, there were 127 intergender contests. Thirty-three percent (849) of the respondents in the pooled data lived in states or districts featuring intergender House or Senate contests.³ A majority (54%) of the respondents in the sample of intergender contests are women.

Because our dependent variable, attempting to influence others' votes, is dichotomous, we use logistic regression (Aldrich and Nelson 1984). Our key observations consist of the issues central to the campaigns of the female candidates. In order to determine the issues on which the candidates focused in their campaigns, we first used LexisNexis to search for newspaper articles about the candidates. Specifically, we looked for articles that were written for the purpose of comparing the candidates to each other across many issues. In other words, we would not use an

² Intragender contests (contests in which both major party candidates were women) and races in which a female candidate was unopposed in the general election are excluded from the analysis in Tables 3 and 4.

³ For 68 respondents (8%), a female candidate was running in an intergender contest for both the House and Senate. In this case, we choose to focus on the female House candidate. Of the 68 respondents, 40 were female.

article written for the purpose of discussing some specific issue such as social security that quoted the candidate as an indication that the candidate was focusing her campaign on social security. We tried to find articles that did not center on a particular issue, but rather focused on comparing the candidates to one another.

When we could not find suitable LexisNexis articles, we searched the Internet for candidate web pages. These web pages typically had an introduction page that listed what issues were important to the candidate. Generally, however, the newspaper articles were a better source because websites often mention nearly every possible issue as important to the candidate, while newspaper articles are more focused on issues central to the candidates' campaigns. Occasionally, we could not find any information on the candidate.⁴ However, this usually occurred only when the races were overwhelmingly uncompetitive.

We coded candidates' issues into several issue categories: women's issues (which included compassion issues, traditional values, and traditional women's issues), economic issues, candidate qualifications, government reform, Iraq/War on Terror and miscellaneous issues (see Appendix A for coding of the variables).⁵ Each variable is a binary variable that measures whether the female candidate in the intergender contest stressed that issue.⁶ *Women's issues* are those issues which are generally classified as compassion issues, traditional values, and traditional women's issues. We also examine each issue subgroup independently (*Compassion issues*, *Traditional values*, *Traditional women's issues*) to test whether certain types of women's issues better mobilize women in the electorate. Despite electoral context, women's issues are high on the female candidates' list of issues. Preliminary tests show that the issues mentioned most often by female candidates in the data were economic issues, Iraq/War on Terror, and women's issues.

⁴ This was the case for 15 female House candidates. Twelve of these candidates ran in 2002. All 15 candidates lost the election, earning less than 30% of the vote.

⁵ Candidates generally run on more than one issue thus we chose an open-ended coding scheme, coding all of the issues mentioned by the candidate.

⁶ 0 indicates that the female candidate did not run on this issue.

In order to measure the effect of female candidates and their campaign issues on political proselytizing among women, we divide the data among male and female respondents. Originally, we created an interaction variable to test the combined effects of respondent gender and female candidate stressing women's issues. The interaction variable introduced high levels of multicollinearity into the models.⁷ By separating out our analyses by gender, we avoid this methodological problem and can easily track whether impact of female candidates and their issues on proselytizing differs among male and female respondents (see Atkeson 2003).

We also include several control variables. We control for strength of partisanship (*Partisan intensity*), recognizing that stronger partisans are more likely to be engaged in the politics than are weak partisans and independents. We also control for party identification (*Democrat*) and partisan congruence between respondents and the female candidate (*Party congruence*).⁸ We include two variables that measure psychological involvement in politics in general (*Follow public affairs*) and in campaigns (*Campaign interest*).⁹ Respondents who are informed and interested are generally more active in a wide range of political activity, including political discussion (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Thus, we expect respondents who are interested in public affairs and campaigns to be more likely to proselytize than those who have little interest in politics.

We also control for demographic factors that may explain differences in women's and men's levels of political participation (Verba and Nie 1972; Welch 1977). Age is measured in the model with two dummy variables (*Age 31-59*, *Age over 60*), as younger people are more likely to engage in this political activity than are older people (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Finally, we

⁷ The correlation between respondent gender and interaction variable is .63; the correlation between the variable measuring a female candidate who stressed women's issues and the interaction variable is .60. Correlations with women's issues subgroups, respondent gender, and interaction variables ranged from .60 to .73.

⁸ We use *Party congruence* as a proxy to gauge ideological congruence (see Lawless 2004a).

⁹ The question wording for *Follow public affairs* is "Would you say that you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all? The question wording for *Campaign interest* is "Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say you are very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year?"

also control for the competitiveness of the election (*Competitive election*) and year of the election (2004).¹⁰ We would expect higher levels of political persuasion to occur in competitive elections and during presidential elections than in uncompetitive and midterm elections (see appendix B).

Findings

Hypothesis 1 posits that the presence of a female candidate increases attempts to influence others' votes among women in the electorate. The results presented in Table 2 show that the presence of female candidates on the ballot does have an impact when other factors are controlled. Because logistic coefficients are not readily interpretable, we use CLARIFY (Tomz et al. 2003) to show the substantive effects of this variable when all other variables in the model are set at their modal value. Setting the variables at their modal value rather than the mean creates a "hypothetical" voter. In this case, the "hypothetical" voter is female, racially identifies as "White", is married, and between 31-59 years old. She has a high school diploma, earns between \$15,000 and \$34,999, is not a Democrat, is a weak or leaning partisan, follows public affairs some of the time, and is somewhat interested in political campaigns.

Given these conditions, the average respondent's predicted probability of attempting to influence others' votes increases by 5 percentage points in Model I and 8 percentage points in Model II when a female candidate is on the ballot. However, Model II provides little support for the hypothesis that political proselytizing among women increases when female candidates are on the ballot. The interaction variable measuring the combined effect of candidate and respondent is statistically insignificant, as is the respondent gender variable. The female candidate variable remains positive and significant.¹¹ Thus, the probability of political influence attempts is not higher for women if women are running. Having shown that 1) male and female respondents are likely to attempt to sway others' votes; and 2) the combined effect of respondent and candidate

¹⁰ Competitive elections are contests where the margin of victory between the winner and runner-up is less than 20%.

¹¹ The interaction variable is just shy of significance at the .1 level (one tailed test).

gender does not significantly impact political proselytizing, we now turn to the remaining hypotheses to determine whether the desire to proselytize increases for women when female candidates in intergender contest focus on women's issues.

[Table 2 about here]

Hypothesis 2 predicts that female citizens are more likely to proselytize when female candidates in intergender contests stress women's issues in their campaigns. The results in Table 3 reveal little support for this hypothesis. The coefficient for women's issues is negative and statistically insignificant. The combined effect of candidate gender and women's issues has no effect on women's propensity to try to influence others' votes. The coefficients for the issue variables reveal that the combined effect of female candidate and female candidates' issues has little impact on women and men's propensity to influence someone's vote, except in the case of economic issues. Women are significantly more likely to proselytize when female candidates stress economic issues. The predicted probability of proselytizing increases by 11 percentage points when the female candidate stresses economic issues. This effect does not hold for male respondents.¹²

[Table 3 about here]

Turning to the control variables, we find significant differences among female and male respondents. Partisan intensity, campaign interest, and education are all positively related to proselytizing among women. Women who strongly identify with one of the major political parties, are very interested in campaigns, and have advanced degrees are significantly more likely to try to influence someone's vote than women who have no attachment to the parties, lack interest in campaigns, and have little education. The size of the coefficient for *Campaign interest*

¹² Lawless (2004a) argues that observed political proselytizing effects may underestimate the effects of previously elected women. We also included controls for symbolic representation (female member of the Congress and female member of the Senate). The variables had no effect on the results and were not statistically significant in the female models. The presence of a female member of Congress is, however, a positive and statistically significant (.05 level one tailed test) predictor of political proselytizing among men (tables not shown).

confirms that psychological resources help reduce the costs associated with political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). The average female respondent's predicted probability of proselytizing increases by 36 percentage points as her interest in campaign increases from 0 (not much interested) to 2 (very much interested). As hypothesized, age affects the propensity to proselytize, as women 60 and older are significantly less likely to attempt to influence others' votes.

For male respondents, race and income are significant predictors, as white males and men with higher levels of income are more likely to proselytize. As with women, campaign interest increases political persuasion. The average male's predicted probability of proselytizing increases by 34 percentage points as his interest in campaign increases from 0 (not much interested) to 2 (very much interested). Unlike women, men who follow public affairs are also more likely to proselytize. The results also show that married men are significantly less likely to proselytize. The predicted probability of attempting to influence others' votes decreases by 7 percentage points when the average male respondent is married. Finally, for men, the political context is important, as men are more likely to influence others' votes when the intergender contest is competitive and during a presidential election year.¹³

Hypothesis 3 predicts that certain types of women's issues may be more influential than others. Specifically, we hypothesized that women are more likely to proselytize when major party female candidates in intergender contests stress compassion and traditional value issues. Again, the results presented in Table 4 reveal little support for this hypothesis. The combined effect of candidate gender and these issues has no effect on the propensity to try to influence others' votes. As in the previous table, only the coefficient for economic issues is positive and statistically significant for female respondents. Women citizens are more likely to attempt to influence others if a female candidate in an intergender contest stresses economic issues.

¹³ Atkeson (2003) also finds a positive but statistically insignificant effect for proselytizing among men respondents when a female candidate ran in competitive, intergender election.

[Table 4 about here]

Again, the control variables reveal significant gender differences. As in the previous table, partisan intensity, partisanship, campaign interest, education, and age are significant predictors of political proselytizing among women. Race, campaign interest, following public affairs, income, marital status, competitiveness of the election, and election year are significant predictors of men's propensity to influence others' votes.

Discussion

Our research provides interesting findings: 1) the presence of a woman on the ballot increases proselytizing overall but does not significantly increase political influence attempts among women; 2) while the combined effect of candidate gender and candidate issues is positively related to proselytizing among women, economic issues, not women's issues increase women's attempts to influence others' votes. Our first finding (Hypothesis 1) is somewhat surprising – other studies clearly show that female candidates affect women's political engagement and participation (Verba, Burns, and Scholzman 1997; Hansen 1997; Burns, Scholzman, and Verba 2001). However, Hansen (1997) does find that the presence of a female on the ballot increased proselytizing among women in 1992, the Year of the Woman, but not in 1990 or 1994. Our lack of findings seems to support Dolan's (2001) electoral environment theory. Remember, Dolan argued that the electoral environment of 1992 was distinctive in that it focused heavily on gender issues. The 2002 and 2004 elections centered mainly on issues of terrorism and national security, and in 2004, "moral values" to a lesser extent (Pomper 2005).¹⁴ There was little focus on domestic issues that are stereotyped as women's issues, and female candidates received little special attention in both campaign cycles. Perhaps our findings suggest that gender-related information in the environment of an election influences not only the formulation of vote choice but also influences voters' willingness to influence others' votes. Although female candidates

¹⁴ There is great debate as to the degree that moral values influenced the vote in the 2004 election.

have been successful running as “women” in non-gendered electoral environments (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003), it would seem that the cues provided by candidate gender and women’s issues have little influence on women’s propensity to proselytize.

If our results (or lack of results) can be explained by the electoral context, why are women in the electorate moved to proselytize by female candidates who stress economic issues? Why not Iraq and the War on Terrorism? The political context of both elections was dominated by war, foreign policy, and military concerns, yet our findings show that the combined effect of candidate gender and War has no effect on respondents’ propensity to try to influence others’ votes. It may be the case that this particular issue is not influential because of remaining gender stereotypes. In a study of voters’ attitudes about male and female candidates for high-level office, Lawless (2004b) finds that voters overwhelmingly prefer for men to govern in a time of war. Women make up about 15 percent of the U.S. military. Most military occupations are open to women, with the exception of combat positions – infantry, armor, artillery and special-forces jobs. Yet, because most “citizens are accustomed to the words of war belonging to men” (Lawless 2004b; 487), Iraq and the War on Terror work to the detriment of female candidates. If women are less likely to support female candidates in times of war (Lawless 2004b), then the presence of female candidates who stress this issue in their campaigns may do little to increase female political engagement.

While women do not respond when female candidates run on war/military issues, women are more likely to proselytize when female candidates stress economic issues. It is not entirely clear why this might be the case, given that like war, voters are more likely to consider male candidates as better able to manage the economy (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994). The results suggest that female candidates can more easily overcome this stereotype – perhaps women are willing to attribute a higher level of expertise to female candidates on these issues because of women’s advancements in the labor force. Despite our initial hypotheses, the results clearly show that running against type, stressing this particular “male” issue, motivates women to use their

political voice in a way that running on as “women” does not. Presumably women proselytize when female candidates stress economic issues because the economic issues they stress in the campaign are “compassionate” in nature – they are designed to provide a social safety net for disadvantaged Americans. To test this premise, we recoded the economic issues variable into two categories: compassionate and non-compassionate economic issues. Compassionate economic issues are those focused on providing aid or assistance whereas non-compassionate economic issues are those focused on economic development (see Appendix A).¹⁵

The results presented in Table 5 show that women are significantly more likely to proselytize when female candidates stress non-compassionate economic issues. The predicted probability of proselytizing increases by 18 percentage points when female candidates stress these issues. This effect does not hold for compassionate economic issues. Again, these findings suggest that female political proselytizing increases not when female candidates run as “women” but rather when they emphasize certain issues traditionally thought of as best handled by men.

[Table 5 about here]

Conclusion

In this study, we examine female candidate’s issue positions to determine whether female candidates and the issues raised in their campaigns encourage women to influence others’ vote choice. Following in the tradition of Hansen’s research (1997), we hypothesized that female candidates increase political proselytizing among women. We also hypothesized that when women run “as women” in intergender contests, the combined effect of having a woman on the ballot and the issues raised in her campaign (women’s issues) will stimulate political proselytizing among women in the electorate.

¹⁵ Candidates who supported tax cuts for all Americans regardless of their income are coded as non-compassionate economic issues. As before, we used an open-ended coding scheme to code all the economic issues mentioned by the candidate.

Our results do not confirm our hypotheses. Rather, we find that the presence of a woman on the ballot increases proselytizing overall but does not significantly increase political influence attempts among women. We also find that while the combined effect of candidate gender and candidate issues is positively related to proselytizing among women, economic issues, not women's issues increase women's attempts to influence others' votes. Overall, the results demonstrate that female candidates and their issues provide important contextual cues to women that help in activating their political voice.

Unfortunately, the NES is a blunt instrument, and as such, there are limits to this study. Given the question wording, it is not possible to untangle whether respondents proselytized for candidates, parties, or both. We also have no way of knowing *why* respondents attempted political persuasion, or *why* they supported or opposed a particular candidate (or party). Given that being female is strongly associated with preferring a female candidate (Sanbonmatsu 2002), one might assume that the combined effect of candidate gender and issues elicits positive behavior from female voters – women attempt to influence others to throw their support to female candidates who stress certain issues. However, women are not monolithic in their interests and choices and may choose to speak out against the female candidate.¹⁶

Despite these limitations, this research has important implications for research on political behavior and gender politics. First, candidate gender affects the electoral context – attempts to influence others' votes increases significantly when women are on the ballot. Yet, the results suggest that the impact of candidate gender is conditioned in part by external forces (Dolan 2001). The probability of political proselytizing is not higher for women when women are on the ballot. Without a gendered electoral environment, candidate gender is a relatively weak cue that influences women's political engagement. Second, candidates' issues are influential contextual variables that play a significant role in understanding the proclivity of female political communication. Female candidates and the issues they stress can help women overcome societal

¹⁶ A potentially polarizing candidate (i.e. Hillary Rodham Clinton) is also likely to produce this effect.

stereotypes of female political indifference and inactivity (e.g. Atkeson and Rapoport 2003).

Thus female candidates and the issues raised in their campaigns can encourage women to influence others' vote choice.

Appendix A

Coding of issues

Women's issues (broad): any issue that fits into the following categories –

Compassion: health care, education, Medicare, Medicaid, seniors, Social Security, welfare, working poor

Traditional values: morality issues, working poor, homosexuality, prayer in schools, gun control, drugs, safety

Traditional women's issues: abortion, equal rights, gender equality

Economic issues (broad): taxes, minimum wage, jobs, the deficit

Compassionate economic issues: increased jobs, increasing the minimum wage, tax cuts for low income/working families, tax cuts for middle class

Non-compassionate economic issues: bringing businesses to the area, fiscal responsibility, the lowering the national deficit, tax cuts for everyone/all

Candidate qualifications: state or local level political experience, seniority/experience in Congress

Government reform: campaign financing, citizen involvement, reform, government corruption

Iraq/War on Terror: Iraq, War on Terror, homeland security

Miscellaneous issues: Latino/race specific issues

Appendix B

Coding Procedure

Female candidate in state or district: (1) when female major party candidate ran in state or district against a male candidate; (0) otherwise.

Female: (1) respondent is female; (0) otherwise.

Partisan intensity: (0) apolitical, (1) independents, (2) weak or leaning partisans, (3) Strong partisans (strength of party identification, based on NES 7-point scale).

Democrat: (1) respondent is a Democrat; (0) otherwise.

Party congruence: (1) respondent and female candidate are of the same political party; (0) otherwise.

Follow public affairs: (0) hardly at all, (1) only now and then, (2) some of the time, (3) most of the time follow what's going on in government and public affairs.

Campaign interest: (0) not much interested, (1) somewhat interested, (2) very much interested in political campaigns.

White: (1) respondent is White; (0) otherwise.

Married: (1) respondent is married; (0) otherwise.

Income: (1) 0 to \$14,000, (2) \$15,000 to \$34,999, (3) \$35,999 to \$49,000, (4) \$50,000 to \$89,000; (5) \$90,000 and up.

Education: (1) 8 grades or less and no diploma or equivalency, (2) 9-11 grades, no further schooling, (3) high school diploma or equivalency test, (4) more than 12 years of schooling, no higher degree, (5) junior or community college level degrees, (6) B.A. level degrees; 17+ years, no advanced degree, (7) advanced degree, including LLB.

Age 31-59: (1) respondents ranging in age from 31 to 59; (0) otherwise.

Age 60 and over: (1) respondents age 60 and older; (0) otherwise.

Competitive election: (0) margin of victory between the candidates in an intergender contest is 20% or more; (1) margin of victory between the candidates less than 20%.

2004: (1) election held in 2004; (0) election held in 2002.

Appendix C

US States Reflected in the Analysis

	2002	2004
Alabama	X	
Arizona	X	
Arkansas		X
California	X	X
Colorado	X	X
Connecticut	X	X
Florida	X	X
Georgia		X
Illinois	X	X
Idaho	X	
Indiana	X	X
Iowa	X	
Kentucky	X	
Louisiana	X	
Maryland	X	X
Massachusetts		
Michigan	X	X
Minnesota	X	
Mississippi		
Missouri	X	X
Nebraska		
New Hampshire	X	X
New Jersey	X	
New Mexico		
New York	X	X
North Carolina	X	
Ohio	X	X
Oklahoma		
Oregon	X	
Pennsylvania	X	X
South Carolina		
South Dakota	X	
Tennessee	X	
Texas	X	X
Utah	X	
Virginia	X	X
Washington	X	X
West Virginia	X	
Wisconsin	X	X
Wyoming	X	

References

- Aldrich, John H., and Forrest D. Nelson. 1984. *Linear Probability, Logit, and Probit Models*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Atkeson, Lonna Rae. 2003. "Not All Cues Are Created Equal: The Conditional Impact of Female Candidates on Political Engagement." *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 1040-61.
- Atkeson, Lonna Rae and Ronald B. Rapoport. 2003. "The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same: Examining Differences in Political Communication 1952-2000." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67(4): 495-521.
- Barreto, Matt A., Mario Villerreal, and Nathan D. Woods. 2005. "Metropolitan Latino Political Behavior: Voter Turnout and Candidate Preference in Los Angeles." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 27: 71-91.
- Beckwith, Karen. 1986. *American Women and Political Participation: The Impact of Work, Generation, and Feminism*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence and Frank D. Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84(2): 377-93.
- Burns, Nancy, Donald R. Kinder, and the National Election Studies. AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY, 2002: PRE- AND POST-ELECTION SURVEY [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies [producer], 2003. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2003.
- Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, David E. and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents." *Journal of Politics* 68(2): 233-247.
- Center for American Women and Politics. 2006. "Women in Elective Office 2006." CAWP Fact Sheet. National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics. Rutgers, N.J.; Rutgers University.
- Center for American Women and Politics. 2005. "Sex Differences in Voter Turnout." CAWP Fact Sheet. National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics. Rutgers, N.J.; Rutgers University.
- Chaney, Carole Kennedy. 1998. "Running Against Women: Advertising Strategies in Mixed-Sex Races for the United States Senate and Their Impact on Candidate Evaluation." Presented at the Western Political Science Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- Dabelko, Kirsten LaCour and Paul Herrnson. 1997. "Women's and Men's Campaigns for the US House of Representatives." *Political Research Quarterly* 50: 121-135.
- Delli Carpini, Michael and Ester R. Fuchs. 1993. "The Year of the Woman? Candidates, Voters, and the 1992 Elections." *Political Science Quarterly* 108(1): 29-36.

- Dolan, Kathleen. 2005. "Do Women Candidates Play to Gender Stereotypes? Do Men Candidates Play to Women? Candidate Sex and Issue Priorities on Campaign Websites." *Political Research Quarterly* 58(1): 21-44.
- Dolan, Kathleen. 2001. "Electoral Context, Issues, and Voting for Women in the 1990s." *Women and Politics* 23(1/2): 21-36.
- Dolan, Kathleen. 1998. "Voting for Women in the "Year of the Woman." *American Journal of Political Science* 42: 272-293.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Freeman, Jo. 2000. *A Room at a Time: How Women Entered Party Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fox, Richard L. 1997. *Gender Dynamics in Congressional Elections*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hansen, Susan B. 1997. "Talking About Politics: Gender and Contextual Effects on Political Proselytizing." *Journal of Politics* 59(1): 73-103.
- Herrnson, Paul S., J. Celeste Lay, and Atiya Kai Stokes. 2003. "Women Running 'as Women': Candidate Gender, Campaign Issues, and Voter Targeting Strategies." *Journal of Politics* 65 (1): 244-55.
- Huckfeldt, Robert and John Sprague. 1995. *Citizens, Politics and Social Communication*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Huddy, Leonie. 1994. The Political Significance of Gender Stereotypes. In Michael X. Delli-Carpini, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Y. Shapiro (Eds.), *Research in Micropolitics: New Directions in Political Psychology*, Volume 4. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Huddy, Leonie and Nayda Terkildsen. 1993. "Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 119-47.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1996. *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1994. "Does Gender Make a Difference: An Experimental Examination of Sex Stereotypes and Press Patterns in Statewide Campaigns." *American Journal of Political Science* 38: 162-195.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1993. "Gender Differences in Campaigns Messages: The Political Advertisements of Men and Women Candidates for U.S. Senate." *Political Research Quarterly* 46 (September): 481-502.
- Kaufmann, Karen M. and John R. Petrocik. 1999. "The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 864-87.
- Koch, Jeffrey. 1997. "Women's Engagement in Politics in the Year of the Woman." *American Politics Quarterly* 25(1): 118-33.

- Larson, Stephanie Greco. 2001. "Running as Women? A Comparison of Female and Male Pennsylvania Assembly Candidates' Brochures." *Women and Politics* 22: 107-124.
- Lawless, Jennifer L. 2004a. "Politics of Presence: Congresswomen and Symbolic Representation." *Political Research Quarterly* 57(1): 81-99.
- Lawless, Jennifer L. 2004b. "Women, War, and Winning Elections: Gender Stereotyping in the Post-September 11th Era." *Political Research Quarterly* 57(3): 479-490.
- Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. 1991. "Socioeconomic Class Bias in Turnout, 1972-1988: Institutions Come and Go, But the Voters Remain the Same." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC.
- Lupia, Arthur and Matthew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need To Know?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDermott, Monika L. 1997. "Voting Cues in Low-Information Elections: Candidate Gender as a Social Information Variable in Contemporary US Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 41: 270-283.
- Pomper, Gerald M. 2005. "The Presidential Election: The Ills of American Politics After 9/11." In Michael Nelson, ed. *The Elections of 2004*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Rapoport, Ronald B. 1981. "The Sex Gap in Political Persuading: Where the 'Structuring Principle' Works." *American Journal of Political Science* 25(1): 32-48.
- Rosenstone, Steven J. and Mark John Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice." *American Journal of Political Science* 46: 20-34.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Nancy Burns, Sidney Verba, and Jesse Donahue. 1995. "Gender and Citizen Participation: Is There a Different Voice?" *American Journal of Political Science* 39(2): 267-293.
- Shapiro, Robert Y. and Harpreet Mahajan. 1986. "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50: 42-61.
- Spraggins, Renee E. 2000. *Women in the United States: A Profile*. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports.
- Tate, Katherine. 1991. "Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Elections." *American Political Science Review* 85(4): 1159-76.
- Tomz, Michael, Jason Wattenberg, and Gary King. 2003. *CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results* (version 2.1). Cambridge: Harvard University. Available at <<http://gking.harvard.edu/>>

University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies, American National Election Study. AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY, 2004: PRE- AND POST-ELECTION SURVEY [Computer file]. ICPSR04245-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies, American National Election Study [producer], 2004. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2006-02-17.

U.S. Department of Education. 2004. National Center for Educational Statistics, Trends in Educational Equity of Girls & Women: 2004, NCES 2005016, 70. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Labor. 2005. Women in the Labor Force: A Data Book. Available at <http://stats.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook2005.htm>.

Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America*. New York: Harper Row.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Welsh, Susan. 1977. "Women as Political Animals? A Test of Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences." *American Journal of Political Science* 21(4): 711-30.

TABLE 1
Gender Differences in Attempts to Influence Others' Votes

Year	Percent "Yes"			
	Total (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Difference (%)
2002	33.2	38.9	28.9	-10.0*
2004	48.5	50.5	46.7	-3.8

*Statistically significant at $p < .001$ (Chi-square)

TABLE 2
Predictors of Political Proselytizing

	I Baseline Model	II Interaction Variable
Female candidate in state or district ^a	.285** (.100)	.430** (.146)
Female	-.105 (.099)	-.008 (.122)
Female candidate*Female	- -	-.272 (.200)
Partisan intensity	.322*** (.089)	.319*** (.089)
Democrat	-.108 (.110)	-.112 (.110)
Follow public affairs	.212*** (.068)	.210*** (.069)
Campaign interest	.968*** (.094)	.973*** (.094)
White	.089 (.118)	.093 (.118)
Married	-.264** (.100)	-.264** (.100)
Income	.098** (.045)	.097** (.045)
Education	.061* (.034)	.062* (.034)
Age 31-59	-.260* (.144)	-.252* (.144)
Age 60 and up	-.660*** (.163)	-.652*** (.163)
2004	.587*** (.108)	.583*** (.108)
Constant	-3.312 (.292)	-3.367 (.295)
(N)	2191	2191
Log-Likelihood	-1293.466	-1292.531
Chi-square	373.640	375.510
Prob > chi2	.000	.000
Pseudo R ²	.126	.127

NOTE: Estimates are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

^aIntergender contest between female and male major party candidates

*Significant at p<.05, **Significant at p<.01 ***Significant at p<.001, one-tailed test.

TABLE 3
The Impact of Candidate Gender and Issues on Political Proselytizing

	Female respondents	Male respondents
Female Candidates' issues		
Women's issues	-.291 (.301)	-.176 (.317)
Economic issues	.598* (.297)	-.171 (.332)
Candidate qualifications	-.151 (.308)	-.118 (.329)
Government reform	.567 (.737)	.639 (.637)
Iraq/War on Terror	.207 (.349)	-.272 (.372)
Miscellaneous issues	-.073 (.329)	.203 (.354)
Partisan intensity	.590** (.213)	.224 (.232)
Democrat	-.569 (.365)	.211 (.451)
Party congruence	.112 (.349)	-.325 (.438)
Follow public affairs	.071 (.150)	.406* (.180)
Campaign interest	1.144*** (.224)	1.025*** (.242)
White	-.145 (.283)	.499* (.283)
Married	-.295 (.241)	-.779** (.275)
Income	-.049 (.107)	.262* (.114)
Education	.171* (.084)	-.048 (.087)
Age 31-59	-.085 (.353)	-.097 (.339)
Age 60 and up	-.900* (.401)	-.238 (.409)
Competitive election	.195 (.256)	.506* (.273)
2004	-.034 (.320)	.753* (.340)
Constant	-3.620 (.769)	-3.576 (.886)
(N)	411	355
Log-Likelihood	-235.373	-205.153
Chi-square	85.260	81.190
Prob > chi2	.000	.000

Pseudo R ²	.153	.165
-----------------------	------	------

NOTE: Estimates are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

*Significant at $p < .05$, **Significant at $p < .01$ ***Significant at $p < .001$, one-tailed test.

TABLE 4
The Impact of Candidate Gender and Women's Issues on Political Proselytizing

	Female respondents	Male respondents
Female Candidates' Issues		
Compassion issues	-.258 (.352)	-.243 (.353)
Traditional values	.224 (.347)	.180 (.378)
Traditional women's issues	-.104 (.419)	-.355 (.479)
Economic issues	.712** (.313)	-.122 (.354)
Candidate qualifications	-.131 (.324)	-.158 (.337)
Government reform	.664 (.736)	.608 (.633)
Iraq/War on Terror	.177 (.356)	-.223 (.378)
Miscellaneous issues	-.039 (.331)	.183 (.357)
Partisan intensity	.604** (.214)	.224 (.232)
Democrat	-.551 (.365)	.235 (.452)
Party congruence	.092 (.349)	-.327 (.438)
Follow public affairs	.077 (.150)	.407* (.181)
Campaign interest	1.141*** (.225)	1.016*** (.242)
White	-.147 (.284)	.495* (.284)
Married	-.304 (.241)	-.772** (.276)
Income	-.048 (.107)	.266** (.114)
Education	.167* (.085)	-.048 (.087)
Age 31-59	-.072 (.354)	-.082 (.340)
Age 60 and up	-.893* (.402)	-.212 (.412)
Competitive election	.219 (.261)	.522* (.273)
2004	-.087 (.330)	.731* (.345)
Constant	-3.794 (.770)	-3.595 (.880)

(N)	411	355
Log-Likelihood	-235.507	-204.869
Chi-square	84.990	81.760
Prob > chi2	.000	.000
Pseudo R ²	.153	.166

NOTE: Estimates are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

*Significant at $p < .05$, **Significant at $p < .01$ ***Significant at $p < .001$, one-tailed test.

TABLE 5

The Impact of Candidate Gender and Economic Issues on Political Proselytizing

	Female respondents	Male respondents
Female Candidates' issues		
Women's issues	-.435 (.296)	-.121 (.305)
<i>Compassionate</i> Economic issues	.278 (.291)	-.005 (.313)
<i>Non-compassionate</i> Economic issues	.844* (.413)	-.018 (.459)
Candidate qualifications	-.356 (.309)	-.090 (.327)
Government reform	.600 (.738)	.681 (.638)
Iraq/War on Terror	.128 (.365)	-.329 (.381)
Miscellaneous issues	-.114 (.325)	.277 (.339)
Partisan intensity	.565** (.211)	.225 (.234)
Democrat	-.531 (.363)	.212 (.452)
Party congruence	.060 (.353)	-.327 (.439)
Follow public affairs	.072 (.150)	.411* (.181)
Campaign interest	1.130*** (.225)	1.017*** (.241)
White	-.140 (.282)	.490* (.284)
Married	-.291 (.242)	-.784** (.275)
Income	-.044 (.107)	.263* (.114)
Education	.148* (.085)	-.042 (.086)
Age 31-59	-.063 (.350)	-.094 (.339)
Age 60 and up	-.920* (.400)	-.236 (.410)
Competitive election	.251 (.268)	.536* (.281)
2004	.257 (.313)	.681* (.344)
Constant	-3.309 (.728)	-3.742 (.855)
(N)	411	355
Log-Likelihood	-235.251	-205.286

Chi-square	85.500	80.930
Prob > chi2	.000	.000
Pseudo R ²	.154	.165

NOTE: Estimates are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

*Significant at p<.05, **Significant at p<.01 ***Significant at p<.001, one-tailed test.