Elections, Stereotypes and the American Voter: 

Application of Black and Female Stereotypes To American Electoral Candidates

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Introduction

Arguably one of the most difficult tasks that U.S. electoral candidates must overcome in a given election is winning favor in the mind of the American voter. There are various ways in which candidates may go about accomplishing this, including depicting information about themselves in a way that will allow them to be perceived more favorably by voters. Nevertheless, there are set features about a candidate that generally cannot be manipulated, including an individual’s race and gender. The existence of these physical differences and the inability of candidates to alter them has been the focus of extensive scholarship, including research that examines the influence of stereotypes that stem from these physical variations (Terkildsen, 1993). Specifically, scholars have studied how voters apply known cultural stereotypes to candidates and in turn what affect this has on voter behavior including vote choice and their reported level of support for a candidate. Within American politics, two of the most commonly studied stereotypes have been those directed towards blacks and females due to the prolonged discrimination that these groups have faced and their increased presence in elections in recent years.

Following the civil rights and women’s rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, increased awareness of the negative implications of black and female stereotypes has created a scenario in which public endorsement of these stereotypes is becoming less socially acceptable (Citrin, Green and Sears, 1990; Leeper, 1991). Nonetheless, just because society has labeled a certain belief as being undesirable or unacceptable to express in social settings does not imply that this particular belief has been eliminated from the American psyche. Rather as many scholars point out, stereotypes are thought to be a pervasive part of society and are automatically activated in a voter’s minds when an environmental cue is present such as skin color (Devine,
1989; Gaertner and McLaughlin, 1983; McDermott, 1998). In turn, a number of studies have been conducted that focus instead on the cognitive process of applying these stereotypes to a group or a member of a group. Included in this research are discussions of whether or not stereotypes are still a viable explanation for why females and blacks continue to be underrepresented in government (CAWP, 2015(b); Krogstad, 2015(a)). The purpose of this paper will be to discover additional evidence that indicates that the application of stereotypes to electoral candidates by voters is still a relevant issue to be explored in political science.

**Goal 1 – Research Question 1**

Crucial to the study of stereotypes in relation to political elections are the assumptions that political candidates do not possess control over their race and gender and furthermore, that seeking out information about a candidate comes at high cost for many voters. For voters who do not want to spend the resources it takes to gather additional information about a candidate, stereotypes function as a shortcut that allows these voters to infer assumptions about a candidate (McDermott, 1998). In order for a stereotype to be utilized in this manner, something must trigger the stereotype to be activated in the mind of a voter. In the case of black or female candidates, physical differences in race and gender act as demographic cues that in turn activate a particular stereotype in the mind of the voter (Citrin, Green and Sears; 1990; Matson and Fine, 2006; McDermott, 1998; Petrow, 2010). Studies have also shown how this activation is an automatic process that occurs when a cue is present in an individual’s environment (Devine, 1989). The first goal of this research will be to study how voters apply stereotypes to electoral candidates when a demographic cue is present. Specifically, this research is interested in testing whether voters are more likely to apply stereotypes to black or female candidates. Furthermore, research will examine whether voters are more likely to vote for a black or female candidate that
is pitted against a white male candidate. To isolate the stereotype of either “black” or “female”, research will focus on a hypothetical black male candidate and a hypothetical white female candidate.

In order to accomplish this, hypothetical white male, black male and white female candidate profiles will be constructed. Included in these profiles will be a picture of the hypothetical candidate accompanied by biographical information about each candidate. There will be a total of five candidate profiles created, one for the white male candidate, two for the black male candidate and two for the white female candidate. For the black and female candidates, one profile will contain stereotypical biographical information and the other profile will include counter stereotypical biographical information. These profiles will then be used in a survey that will place the white male candidate against one of the four other profiles belonging to either a black male or a white female. Participants will be presented with the two profiles and then asked a series of questions including which candidate they would be most likely to vote for, their warmth towards each candidate and what personality traits they would choose to describe each candidate.

A 2x2 study design will allow this research to explore what effect introducing additional cues into the environment, either stereotypical or counter stereotypical biographical information, has on an individual’s evaluation of a candidate. The motivation behind wanting to test the effect of introducing different environmental cues is based off previous research conducted by Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kuklinski and Schwarz (1992) that found evidence suggesting that the inclusion of additional information about a hypothetical candidate can counteract the influence that the physical attractiveness of a candidate may have on voters. Thus instead of testing physical attractiveness, I will focus on the demographic cues of skin color and gender and whether or not
voters are less likely to apply stereotypical traits to a candidate who possesses counter stereotypical biographical information.

Goal 2 – Research Question 2

Society’s overt effort to eliminate the application of black and female stereotypes to individuals has created a situation in which voters may choose to engage in the cognitive process referred to as self-monitoring. As described by Mark Snyder, an individual may decide to self-censor their expressive behavior for a variety of reasons, including “to conceal adaptively an inappropriate emotional state and appear to be experiencing an appropriate one” (Snyder, 1974). This act of consciously choosing to censor one’s behavior is considered a controlled cognitive process, whereas individuals who lack the mental capacity or motivation to self-censor are said to be engaged in automatic processing (Devine, 1989).

A further distinction is made between low and high self-monitors and is dependent upon how likely an individual is to modify their expressive behavior in order to better fall in line with societal expectations or cues (Snyder, 1974). For instance, high self-monitors are more concerned with maintaining a socially acceptable imagine, whereas low self-monitors are not. The second goal of this research will be to determine whether voters who identify as high self-monitors are more likely to monitor for black or female stereotypes. This will be accomplished by analyzing how likely these voters are to apply stereotypical traits to a hypothetical electoral candidate, their overall probability of voting for that candidate over a white male counterpart and how warmly they feel towards that black or female candidate.

Research Outline

This paper will begin by reviewing past scholarship regarding the nature of stereotypes
and the cognitive processes associated with stereotypes. In addition, specific research addressing black and female stereotypes will be analyzed to generate working definitions of what traits are commonly associated with each stereotype. From here, this research will be used as a foundation to construct an online survey in which both black and female stereotypes can be tested in the same controlled setting to accomplish Goal 1 and Goal 2 of this research. Following completion of the study, the results and implications of any significant findings will be discussed in relation to the potential impact black and female stereotypes may still have on American elections. Moreover, this research seeks to look at the application of black and female stereotypes to political candidates in a comparative manner instead of as separate areas of research. The reason behind this approach is to refocus how political science research views stereotypes; and furthermore, to explore whether or not approaching black and female stereotypes in this manner provides a possible link between race and gender politics, or an explanation of why these two groups are still underrepresented in American politics.

**Literature Review**

*Understanding the Cognitive Processing of Stereotypes*

Within social psychology, stereotypes are commonly conceptualized as cognitive structures consisting of attributes, attitudes and memories than an individual has learned to associate with a given object, idea, person, etc. (Blair and Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997). Learned associated is commonly the result of prolonged activation of this stereotype in an individual’s mind. Cognitive activation depends upon the existence of a stimulus in the environment that cues an individual to retrieve this structure in their memory, such as
when an individual “interacts with a member of a stereotyped group” (Devine, 1989; Kunda and Spencer, 2003; McDermott, 1998). In the case of low-information elections, voters tend to base their voting decision off of minimal knowledge about a candidate, including general facts about his or her background and their physical appearance (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Matson and Fine, 2006; McDermott; 1998). For voters in these types of situations, stereotypes function as cognitive shortcuts that are cued by certain biographical information or a particular physical characteristic of a candidate, rather than through an in-person interaction.

Differences in the physical appearance of a candidate produce what is commonly known as a demographic cue (McDermott, 1998; Petrow, 2010). The presence of this cue in the mind of the voter activates the associated stereotype with this particular demographic. For instance, when a voter assesses the profile of a black male candidate, skin color acts as a demographic cue that in turn prompts the cognitive structure associated with black stereotypes to be recalled in an individual’s mind. The inclusion of background information can also act as a cue, and has been shown to influence voting behavior (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kukinski and Schwarz, 1992). In particular, studies that have produced these results argue that the presence of this information can negate the stereotype application resulting from a demographic cue.

As Kunda and Spencer (2003) further note, activation also refers to the “extent to which a stereotype is accessible in one’s mind.” Because stereotypes are structures that have been repeatedly activated, they are highly accessible to an individual and require less cognitive effort to retrieve (Devine, 1989; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997; McDermott, 1998). As a result, this can lead individuals to engage in an activity known as automatic processing. Automatic processing occurs when an individual involuntarily recalls a particular cognitive structure in their mind.
This lack of control can be due to a variety of reasons, including a limitation of mental resources or a shortage of motivation on behalf of the individual. Several researchers have argued in favor of this claim that the activation of a stereotype by an environmental cue is an automatic process in the mind of an individual; and furthermore, that they automatically occur “despite deliberate attempts to bypass or ignore them” by the individual (Devine, 1989; Gaertner and McLaughlin, 1983; Terkildsen, 1993). Consistent with this specific theory is the idea that the existence of a demographic cue resulting from skin color or gender automatically triggers the respective learned stereotype in the mind of the voter. The research conducted in this paper will also operate under the assumption that stereotypes are common knowledge across all members of a society (Gaertner and McLaughlin, 1983; Terkildsen, 1993).

Nevertheless, scholars such as Blair and Banaji (1996) argue that “stereotype activation is a necessary but not a sufficient step in stereotyping.” This observation about stereotyping alludes to the argument that this cognitive activity is a two-step process, made up of the activation and application of a stereotype (Blair and Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989; Kunda and Spencer, 2003). As previously discussed, evidence has been found that supports the idea that activation occurs automatically in the mind of an individual. And although this initial step is required for the process of application to occur, knowledge of a stereotype does not necessarily imply that an individual accepts this view nor that they use it to make judgements about a member from that targeted group (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Blair & Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989). Rather when an individual takes learned associations that belong to an activated cognitive structure and projects these views on a member from a targeted group, they are said to be engaging in stereotype application. In other words, application refers to the “extent to which one uses a stereotype to judge a member of the stereotyped group” (Kunda and Spencer, 2003).
step of applying an activated stereotype to the targeted subject is considered a cognitive process that is largely under the control of the individual (Blair and Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989; Kunda and Spencer, 2003). Controlled processing occurs when an individual consciously makes a decision to exercise control over their thought process (Blair and Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989). The effectiveness of this control depends on a variety of factors, including if an individual has sufficient mental resources to engage in controlled processing, and if so, the amount of effort he or she chooses to put forth to engage in this process. The motivation behind wanting to either apply or not apply an activated stereotype can be explained through the process known as self-monitoring.

**Self-Monitoring**

Pioneered by Mark Snyder (1974), self-monitoring occurs when an individual consciously chooses to repress how they outwardly express their views. This censorship can arise for a variety of reasons, including wanting to present oneself in a positive way to others, to avoid social disapproval and to avoid conflict with others (Kunda and Spencer, 2003; Snyder, 1974). Individuals engaging in this process commonly look to social or situational cues to guide their behavior. Furthermore, intentionally deciding to censor one’s thoughts or behavior is considered a controlled cognitive process (Devine, 1989). In relation to stereotypes, a person may participate in self-censoring behavior in order to “to conceal adaptively an inappropriate emotional state and appear to be experiencing an appropriate one” (Snyder, 1974). An example of masking an inappropriate emotional state may arise with white voters who might be more inclined to pay attention to societal norms concerning public expression of racial intolerance based on knowledge of poor white-black relations historically (Terkildsen, 1993).

An additional distinction is made between low and high self-monitors and is dependent
upon how likely an individual is to modify their expressive behavior in order to better fall in line with societal expectations or cues (Snyder, 1974; Terkildsen, 1993). High self-monitors are those individuals in society who “have well-cultivated social observation skills and are particularly sensitive to social norms” (Terkildsen, 1993). Thus in order to maintain a socially acceptable image, these individuals will modify their behavior in order to fit in with a social situation regardless if they personally endorse this belief or behavior. Conversely, low self-monitors do not place as much emphasis on situational cues and are more likely to act on their own personal beliefs regardless if this may affect how they are perceived by others in society (Terkildsen, 1993). In order to determine whether an individual is a low or high self-monitor, Snyder (1974) constructed a set of forty-one, self-descriptive true or false statements about a person’s behavior in certain social situations. Each statement was recorded in regards to how a high-self monitor should answer the question and if an individual’s answer was in disagreement with the baseline response, this would signal behavior of a low self-monitor (Snyder, 1974). After scoring, participants are given an overall grade that places them somewhere along the low to high self-monitoring scale. The bottom third of respondents were classified as low self-monitoring, while the top third were categorized as high self-monitoring. This classification method along with a sample of eight statements from the Snyder Self-Monitoring Scale will be used in this research to assign low or high self-monitoring to each study participant.

Implication of Prejudice

A concept that is commonly studied in connection with stereotypes is the idea of prejudice. Scholarship has approached the nature of prejudice in relation to stereotypes from a variety of angles, including if prejudice is due to the presence or the acceptance of a stereotype. Early research from scholars such as Ehrlich (1973) argues that knowledge of a stereotype
inevitability implies the existence of prejudice (Devine, 1989). However other scholars have refuted this idea and claim that although an individual may possess “knowledge of a stereotype, his or her personal beliefs may or may not be congruent with the stereotype” (Devine, 1989; Kunda and Spencer, 2003). This distinction between personal beliefs and stereotypes touches upon the concept of high verses low prejudice individuals.

For a person whose personal belief mainly overlaps with a given stereotype, they are considered to be a high prejudice individual (Devine, 1989). Conversely, an individual whose personal beliefs do not significantly overlap with a given stereotype are considered low-prejudice. This cognitive dissonance may lead a low-prejudice “voter, for whom a strong individual belief (e.g., egalitarianism) conflicts with the ... stereotype, to use cognitive effort to remind themselves about their beliefs and to suppress the spontaneously activated group stereotype when making political evaluations...” (Terkildsen, 1993). The concept of voter prejudice is also closely tied to whether an individual is a high or low self-monitor (See Snyder 1974). Yet, the scope of this paper is limited to stereotypes and specifically the application of stereotypical traits and beliefs to candidates. Consequently, this research acknowledges that a consequence of applying of stereotypical characteristics to a black or female candidate is prejudice; however, the concept of high verses low prejudice will not be specifically measured or explored. Inclusion of this concept in future research could be used to explore whether high prejudice – high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to monitor for black or gender stereotypes.

**Beliefs Approach to Stereotypes**

The characteristics that are associated with a particular stereotype are commonly split up into two subcategories, belief and trait stereotypes. In regards to belief stereotypes, members
from a stereotyped group are assumed to be located at a particular point on the ideological spectrum ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a). The implications of these stereotypes can be observed from the results of studies (Rahn, 1993) that demonstrate how voters believe one ideological faction is more competent to handle a particular policy issue. For instance, individuals identifying with a liberal ideology tend to be stereotyped to be better suited to handle social welfare issues.

In regards to blacks and women, both of these groups are stereotyped to be more ideologically liberal than their white male counterparts (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; McDermott, 1998). Research has also been conducted that suggests that voters stereotype blacks and females to be more competent to handle certain issues and less competent to handle others. For instance, a 2014 Pew Research study found that 37% of surveyed adults stated men are more competent to handle national security and defense issues, whereas only 5% of respondents indicated that women are more competent to handle these issues (Parker, Horowitz and Rohal, 2014). Findings such as these are echoed by McDermott (1998), who points out how voters “find women candidates more competent than men on education, helping the poor, healthcare and maintaining an honest and ethical government.” In regards to black candidates, scholars have found evidence that voters believe these candidates to be more competent to handle issues regarding the poor, race relations and advocating for disadvantaged groups in society (McDermott, 1998). This research will not focus on where each voter would place a hypothetical candidate on the ideological spectrum, but rather if there is a variation in what issues a voter believes a candidate is more competent to address when different environmental cues are present. For example, would a voter be more likely to indicate that a female candidate possessing counter stereotypical biographical information is competent to handle military or economics issues
compared to the same candidate who possesses stereotypical biological information?

**Trait Approach to Stereotypes**

The attribution of personality characteristics to a targeted individual or group are classified under the trait approach to stereotypes. Several methods have been utilized by scholars in an effort to identify what personality traits voters frequently attribute to black and female candidates. The results from these studies have been largely synthesized into common sets of stereotypical traits that are associated with black and female candidates (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a). In regards to female candidates, many of the traits associated with these women are congruent with traditional views of women in society. In general, stereotypes commonly portrayed women as being warm, gentle, kind, passive, compassionate, family-oriented and more expressive or emotional than their male counterparts (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Lawless; 2004). Conversely, men are more likely to be viewed as being assertive, decisive, tough, aggressive, competent, rational, ambitious, and intelligent (Dolan, 2010; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Lawless; 2004). In general, “female candidates are perceived as possessing more feminine traits and fewer masculine traits than male candidates” (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Scholars such as Leeper (1991) also argue that females who portray themselves as possessing more masculine qualities will still be stereotyped to also possess feminine traits. In the case of black candidates, voters may choose to associate personality traits that are consistent with society’s stereotyped view of blacks as an overall group. Generally, this stereotyped view includes labeling blacks as being lazy, unintelligent, athletic, dirty, entitled, poor, violent and uneducated (Devine, 1989; Gaertner and McLaughlin, 1983; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997; Moskowitz and Stroh, 1994; Terkildsen, 1993).

The application of these negative black and female stereotypical personality traits may
function as a type of penalty that voters levy against these candidates who possesses these physical features. For example, if a voter views a black male candidate as being less hardworking (or lazier) than his white male counterpart in the election, then this voter may be more inclined to not vote for this black candidate because the voter is making an assumption or inference about the work ethic of this black candidate. However it is important to note that Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) find evidence that voters may prefer women in lower levels of political office that involve issues stereotyped to be more suited for women, such as education and taking care of the poor, because women are viewed as being more compassionate. Nevertheless the negative effect of female stereotypes increases for higher levels of political office, including those at the national level where issues stereotyped to be more suited for men, such as the economy and national defense, are forefront and voters indicate that candidates should possess more masculine traits to be able to handle these issues (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a).

These lists of stereotypical personality traits for females, males and blacks will be utilized to construct a combined list of sixteen personality traits for use in this paper’s study that will allow voters to indicate what traits they would likely attribute to either a while male, black male or white female candidate. Consistent with Goal 1 of this research, the purpose of including stereotypical traits from each targeted group is to allow this research to observe whether or not voters alter what stereotypical traits they assign to female and black candidates when different environmental cues are introduced into the study; in this case, counter stereotypical biographical information. Furthermore, this research will not employ separate lists of traits for voters who are assigned a white female verses black male candidate for two reasons. First, this research is interested in testing black and female stereotypes jointly, not as separate theories and to utilize
different lists would treat these two groups as such. Secondly, making use of one collective list increases the level of control over variables in this study.

**Relevance of Race and Gender in Modern Politics – An Analysis of the 114th Congress**

A study conducted to measure the effect of stereotypes on voters in political elections is purposeless without evidence that race and gender are still relevant issues in modern American politics. Recent poll survey data from the Pew Research Center reveals that 79% of survey blacks indicated that “a lot” more needed to be done to achieve racial equality in America compared to only 44% of whites who agreed with this statement (Desilver, 2015). Drastically higher percentages of black respondents also agreed that blacks are treated less fairly than whites in their communities (Desilver, 2015). Comparatively, results from another 2014 Pew Research Center study concerning the idea of women in leadership and gender discrimination echo the findings regarding blacks in society. For women participants, 65% indicated that they experience some level of discrimination in society because of their gender (Parker, Horowtiz and Rohal, 2015). Furthermore in relation to female politicians, this study concluded that gender stereotypes continue to persist even though more women now serve in politics and top business executive positions that ever before and the U.S. might not be “ready to elect more female political leaders” (Parker, Horowtiz and Rohal, 2015).

Nevertheless, there are still critics who point to other sources that may demonstrate how the the importance of racism and sexism as a result of stereotypes in society are becoming less prominent issues. For example, a 2008 CBS News survey that found that only 42% of Americans still believed that racism towards blacks was a serious issue; and a mere 10% of Americans indicated sexism as being a serious issue in America (Elder, 2008). It would be a premature assumption to conclude that black and female candidates are therefore facing fewer challenges as
a consequence of what physical qualities they possess. Rather an analysis of the most recent United States Congress demonstrates how the issues of race and gender are still pertinent in representative government.

Membership in the 114th Congress

On the surface, the 114th United States Congress has been characterized as being the most diverse Congress to date (Krogstad, 2015(a); AP, 2015). Record numbers of members coming from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds have been elected, in addition to having the most women ever to serve in Congress. Currently, 84 members from the 114th U.S. House of Representatives and 20 members from the U.S. Senate are female; blacks hold 44 seats in the 114th U.S. House of Representatives, and an additional 2 seats in the U.S. Senate (CAWP, 2015a; Manning, 2015). Increased diversity in congressional membership signals a national legislature that is slowly becoming “a bit less white and a bit less male” (Bump, 2015).

Conversely, critics have raised the question of how truly representative the 114th Congress is of constituent demographics (Bump, 2015; CAWP, 2014b; CAWP, 2015b; Warner, 2015). According to the most recent population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of Americans identifying solely as African American or black is roughly 13.2%, while females account for approximately 50.8% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2014a). When these group population ratios are compared to their respective representation percentages in the 114th Congress, staggering inconsistencies exist. For blacks, 46 out of 535 congressional seats equates to roughly 8.6% of the seats in Congress belonging to black members. Comparing this 8.6% congressional membership against black’s 13.2% population share, the black demographic only enjoys roughly 65% representation in the national legislature. For female members of Congress, 104 out of a possible 535 seats equates to approximately
19.4% of seats in Congress belonging to women. For the female demographic in America, comparing a 19.4% congressional membership against a population ratio of 50.8% reveals that women are significantly less represented in Congress at a mere 38%. To put these representation statistics in perspective, white males in Congress occupy 329 out of 535 congressional seats, or approximately 61.5% of congressional membership (Manning, 2015). In the U.S. total population, this demographic accounts for roughly 31.6% of citizens (U.S. Census, 2014b). Thus in the 114th Congress, white males are overrepresented in Congress by almost a two-to-one ratio.

These representation discrepancies allude to the continuing debate over what is causing blacks and females to still be largely underrepresented in elected office. Some have asked whether or not white male voters just simply turn out to vote at higher rates than their black and female counterparts. However, studies conducted by the Center for American Women and Politics indicate that women voters have consistently turned out in larger numbers than male voters since the 1980s (CAWP, 2014a). Since 1992, the gap in turnout rates between blacks and whites has been shrinking, with black voter turnout during the 2012 presidential election surpassing white voter turnout (File, 2013; Krogstad, Feb. 2015). Therefore if voter turnout is not a viable explanation for a lack of blacks and females in elected office, other reasons must be explored.

**Past Research**

Though there is a strong consensus amongst numerous scholars that blacks and females continue to be underrepresented in elected office, the causation of this gap continues to be debated. For some scholars, their research indicates that women and blacks do in fact get elected at the same rate as their white male counterparts and therefore this gap must be due to institutional barriers and not voter bias (Dacey and Schramm, 1977; Highton, 2004). For
instance, some scholars hold that lower levels of women and black representatives in government can be contributed to a lack of candidates from these specific backgrounds being encouraged to run for election by members from their own political party (Darcy and Schramm, 1977; Highton, 2004; Lawless and Fox, 2004). Others argue that whether or not candidates choose to make race or gender a salient issue in their own campaign strategy can effect whether or not voters account for these demographics in their voting decisions (Leeper, 1991; Citrin, Green and Sears, 1990). Yet scholars continue to find support for the claim that voters do in fact rely upon gender and race to make judgements about a candidate, which includes whether or not to vote for that individual (Dolan, 2010; Lawless, 2004; Matson and Fine, 2006; McDermott, 1998; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Terkildsen, 1993).

Within this body of scholarship that agrees stereotypes do play a role in voter analysis of political candidates, there is disagreement amongst scholars about whether application of these stereotypes aids candidates instead of harming their chances of winning elections. Many scholars researching gender stereotypes make a distinction between candidates participating in national and gubernatorial races due to the assumption that different levels of government normally handle varying policy issues. Evidence from Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) indicates that female candidates may actually benefit from female stereotypes at lower levels of office. This is based on the theory that issues that are commonly associated with gubernatorial seats are viewed as being compassion issues such as taking care of the poor and education, both of which women are stereotyped to be more competent to handle (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a). For blacks running in gubernatorial races, similar studies have demonstrated that voters view blacks as more sympathetic or compassionate towards disadvantaged groups and this attribute may counteract the negative effect of an applied black stereotype regarding the competency of a candidate to
handle certain policy issues (Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkosz, and Nitz, 1995). However for many female and black candidates, stereotypes may in fact be working against their election efforts.

For higher levels of office, voters may possess a predisposition to favor male characteristics in elected officials due to the nature of the office (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993b). Common issues arising at the national level include military and defense, economics, and big business, all of which are stereotyped to be better handled by men because they are presumed to possess key masculine qualities such as toughness and emotional stability (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993b; Lawless, 2004). Thus because women are stereotyped to possess more feminine qualities than male qualities, voters may see female candidates as lacking necessary traits to be able to handle certain issues if elected (Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Sanbonmatsu (2002) further argues that voters have a baseline preference of whether they would rather be represented by a male or female in office. A key finding in Sanbonmatsu’s research is that a voter’s gender does not necessarily indicate that they would prefer to see a candidate from their own gender in office. Instead, a voter’s knowledge of gender stereotypes effects whether or not they think a female candidate possesses qualities that are necessary for a particular office, as discussed by Huddy and Terkildsen (1993b).

For blacks seeking election, stereotypes commonly portray these candidates as being more focused on “black” issues (McDermott, 1998; Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkoza and Nitz, 1995). In response, candidates may choose to strategically avoid being labeled a stereotypical black candidate by instead running on non-race related issues (Citrin, Green and Sears, 1990). However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been questioned by scholars and research from Moskowitz and Stroh (1994) suggests that there is little that black candidates can do to escape stereotyping. Additional studies find that voters tend to associate positive and negative
personality traits with blacks and whites differently, which can lead black candidates to be penalized by voters’ hesitation to apply positive qualities with blacks, even if voters are no more likely to associate negative qualities with blacks over whites (Gaertner and McLaughlin, 1983; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997).

The effect of black and female stereotype application by voters is even more pronounced in low-information elections. For many voters, gathering additional information outside of what is readily available to them is not an economical use of their time (McDermott, 1998; Terkildsen, 1993). Thus, these voters tend to rely on basic information about a candidate including a candidate’s race, gender, party affiliation, and basic background information (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Matson and Fine, 2006; McDermott, 1998). The presented information creates cues in the mind of the voter that in turn triggers an associated stereotype that can be utilized as a cognitive shortcut to aid in the evaluation of a candidate. However researchers have provided evidence that the inclusion of certain information may counter the effects of an environmental cue (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Matson and Fine, 2006; Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kukinski and Schwarz, 1992).

In particular, a 1992 study found that the physical attractiveness of a candidate did not affect the voting decision of a voter if other information was provided such as a candidate’s voting record or partisanship (Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kukinski and Schwarz, 1992). This study also acknowledged the fact that though additional information may be available to a voter, the physical attractiveness cue had not disappeared in the mind of the voter but instead had been counteracted. Concluding that a cue still exists echoes the findings of several scholars who hold that the activation of a stereotype is an automatic process in the mind of an individual (Devine, 1989; Kunda and Spencer, 2003). Furthermore, counteracting the effect of that cue alludes to the
controlled cognitive process of applying a stereotype.

The findings of Riggle, et al.’s study are relevant to the discussion of black and female stereotypes because like the physical attractiveness of a candidate, skin color and gender are physical differences a voter can observe about a candidate. Thus black and female candidates who are faced with this reality may try to provide or highlight certain information about themselves that suggests that they do not fit society’s stereotype. A situation where this might occur would be if a female candidate possessed counter-stereotypical background information, such as military experience. Since women are frequently described as being gentle, passive, kind, etc., and not commonly as tough, the inclusion of military experience may signal to a voter that stereotypical traits cued by the candidate’s gender are less relevant to this particular female. In this case, the two cues present in the mind of the voter work in opposition to each other. Moreover, this conceptualization of counter-stereotyping accounts for the distinction made by scholars regarding the activation verses the application of a stereotype, including the automatic and controlled components of this cognitive process.

In regards to modern politics, an in-depth look at specific black and female congressional members who have recently won seats in the U.S. Congress provides evidence that this tactic continues to be used by several black and female candidates in an effort to avoid stereotyping. In the 2014 election cycle, Tim Scott from South Carolina was formally elected to the 114th U.S. Congress. Scott’s election marked the first time that a black male republican Senator from the south had been elected since the Reconstruction Period of the 1870s (Timm, 2014). Not only did Scott frame his campaign around the fact that he was a conservative Tea-Party tied Republican; he also chose not to run on a campaign that included stereotypical “black” issues (Bouie, 2014). The electoral success of Senator Scott suggests that perhaps candidates can in fact preclude
stereotyping by making counteracting efforts in their campaigns. This also challenges Moskowitz and Stroh’s (1994) conclusion that black candidates cannot avoid a certain amount of racism by concentrating on more conventional issues instead of racial issues (Moskowitz and Stroh, 1994).

Throughout the history of Congress, membership has commonly been referred to as a men’s only club, while the women who had won congressional seats were “elected to a club they were never meant to join” (Mundy, 2015). Insight from past and current female members of Congress illustrates an environment filled with “corrosive sexism”, and further demonstrates the exclusivity of this male dominated profession (Mundy, 2015). Current Senator Debbie Stabenow recalls an interact she had while serving as the Chairwoman of the Senate Agricultural Committee in regards to a pending farm bill. While discussing the challenges that bill presented, a male agricultural lobbyist told Stabenow, “I know it’s going to be tough...but you’ll do the best you can” (Mundy, 2015). Senator Stabenow’s familiarity with gender stereotyping is not unique and has been experienced by several other female members of Congress including Senators Jeanne Shaheen, Barbara Mikulski, Kristen Gillibrand, Tammy Baldwin, Claire McCaskill, Barbara Boxer and Lisa Murwoski (Mundy, 2015; Warner 2015). To counter this anti-female mindset in Congress, many female candidates and current members have depicted themselves as possessing more masculine personality traits. For example in her 2014 senatorial campaign, Jodi Ernst from Iowa portrayed herself as a tough, military veteran, republican woman who had “more than just lipstick in her purse” (Warner, 2015). Senator Ernst’s electoral success serves as a vehicle to apply the theory of past scholars such as Alexander and Anderson (1993), Huddy and Terkildsen (1993a) and Matson and Fine (2006) who hold that female candidates should make an effort to escape application of female stereotypes through inclusion of certain information about themselves.
It is important to note however that the research conducted in this paper does not agree with nor rely upon the findings of scholars such as Bauer (2014) and Blair (2002) who argue that gender and racial stereotypes are not automatically activated. In her research, Bauer (2014) claims that gender stereotypes are only activated when additional outside information is presented to a voter that endorses the given societal stereotype. In other words, “voters may make these inferences [about gender], but feminine stereotypes will not affect how voters evaluate female candidates” (Bauer, 2014). This argument runs counter to several other studies that demonstrate how stereotype activation is automatic but application in under the control of the perceiver (Blair and Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989; Gaertner and McLaughlin; 1983; Kunda and Spencer, 2003; Terkildsen; 1993). Bauer’s research fails to acknowledge that although activation is automatic, this activation does not guarantee application of a stereotype. This same flawed logical is observed in research from Blair (2002) who makes a similar misinterpretation of the activation verses application process involved with stereotyping. With that in mind, the research conducted in this paper will build upon past research that acknowledges that both activation and application are separate and required steps in the stereotyping process.

**Hypotheses & Operationalization of Variables**

**Overarching Hypothesis**

Analysis of past literature produces an overarching hypothesis that voters will be more likely to apply stereotypical characteristics to female candidates than black candidates due to differences in voter awareness that a stereotype has been triggered in his or her mind. In other words, voters are more aware of the activation of a black stereotype than a female stereotype. As a result, voters may be more likely to suppress application of black stereotypical traits to a black
candidate than they would be with application of female stereotype towards a female candidate. The motivation to suppress application can be linked to cognitive knowledge of society’s efforts to classify use of these stereotypes as unacceptable expressive behavior. There are various reasons why a difference in level of awareness may arise in a voter; however, the focus of this paper is to address the observable application of stereotypes that arises as a result of varying levels of awareness and not to theorize about the cognitive process of awareness itself.

This hypothesis is based in part on research from Terkildsen (1993) who discusses whether or not voters are more likely to apply black stereotypes to a darker black skinned candidate over a lighter black skinned candidate. Terkildsen (1993) argues that when presented with a darker skinned candidate, a voter is more consciously aware that a stereotype has been triggered as a result of the demographic cue than if a voter were to be presented with a lighter skinned candidate. This difference in mindfulness may be because when a voter is asked to evaluate a lighter black skinned candidate, “the activated stereotype is more likely to remain in the nonconscious realm because...voters are unaware that a racial stereotype has been triggered” (Terkildsen, 1993). Rather than evaluating darker verses lighter black skinned candidates, this research will instead use an adapted version of this theory to determine whether or not voters are less conscious of female stereotype activation. In terms of stereotype activation and application, though black and female stereotype activation is automatic, a voter may be more consciously aware of the activation of black stereotypes than female stereotypes.

**Research Question/Goal 1**

As applied to the first research question contained under Goal 1 of this paper, this research hypothesizes that black candidates will be more successful in counteracting the application of black stereotyping through inclusion of counter stereotypical background
information than female candidates. This is based off of the theory that if a voter is more mentally aware that an inappropriate stereotype has been activated in their mind, they may be more likely to recognize that additional background information about this candidate counteracts the potential effect of this activated stereotype. Therefore, voters may then rely on cues from a candidate’s background instead of a demographic cue. Conversely if provided information endorses a triggered stereotype, then this research should observe that voters are more likely to apply stereotypical traits to a candidate compared to when they are presented with counter stereotypical information regardless if that candidate is black or female. In addition to looking at the application of traits and competency, Goal 1 will look at how voters report their warmth towards each candidate using a thermometer scale and their vote choice.

Research Question/Goal 2

The hypothesis for the second research question contained in this paper follows the same line of logic laid out for Goal 1. It is hypothesized that high self-monitors will be more likely to self-censor the application of black stereotypes than female stereotypes. Consequently if this hypothesis is supported, the results of the conducted research should demonstrate that identified high self-monitors are less likely to apply stereotypical characteristics to black candidates. Again, this act of self-monitoring more rigorously for black stereotypes over female stereotypes may be due to the varying levels of activation awareness on behalf of the voter. As with Goal 1, research conducted to answer Goal 2 will also analyze how voters report warmth towards black and female candidates, apply stereotypical characteristics and indicate vote choice.

Operationalization of the Dependent Variable

In order to determine whether voters are more cognitively aware of black or female stereotypes, this research will measure and compare the frequency in which voters apply
stereotypical characteristics to black and female candidates. In particular, this will be accomplished by observing how voters choose from a predetermined list of personality traits to assign characteristics to black and female candidates. The list of personality traits will contain sixteen describers, eight of which are commonly associated with a stereotypical white male, four with stereotypical female traits and the remaining four with stereotypical black traits. Overall if the conducted study supports the hypothesis, voters should be more likely to select stereotypical female traits to describe the white female candidate then they are to describe the black male candidate. Furthermore, a list of issues will be provided to voters who will then be asked to indicate whether a white male candidate or a black male/white female candidate is more competent to handle each issue. Applying the same logic to the idea of candidate competency, research should show that voters are more likely to indicate that black candidates are competent to handle a larger array of issues when counter stereotypical background information is provided.

Another tool that will be used to operationalize the dependent variable of “awareness” will be analyzing how voters report their level of warmth towards each candidate and vote choice. Vote choice will be measure through asking voters whether they would be more likely to vote for the white male candidate or the black male/white female candidate in the study. In order to measure warmth towards a candidate, a thermometer rating scale ranging from zero to one hundred will be used, where zero indicates a total lack of warmth and one hundred indicates maximum warmth towards a candidate (Terkildsen, 1993). Applying the previously discussed theory, if voters are more aware of black stereotype activation it should be observed that these voters will be more likely to vote for a black candidate then a female candidate. And furthermore, these voters should generally indicate higher levels of warmth towards black candidates, controlling for the fact that females are stereotypes to be “warm.” This will be
accomplished through comparing relative changes in thermometer ratings when pro and counter
stereotypical information is present.

**Operationalization of Independent Variables**

**Goal 1 – Age, Political Party ID, Gender**

Like candidates, voters also possess demographics that can be used to generalize how voters who fit a specific demographic may choose to vote. Political candidates can observe these variances and tailor their campaign strategies based on this information. In relation to providing counter stereotypical background information as a campaign strategy, it is beneficial for black and female candidates to be aware of what voters may be more receptive to these tactics. Though there are several voter demographics that could be explored, this research will focus on how voter age, political party identification and gender may affect a voter’s awareness/application of black and female stereotypes.

As discussed by numerous scholars, the age of a voter is an important demographic that has been show to influence how a voter chooses to vote. In regards to both black and female candidates, older voters may have reluctance to for these candidates because to do so would conflict with traditional knowledge of political candidates being white males (McDermott, 1998). However for younger voters, they have been exposed to a larger variety of candidate demographics in their shorter time as a voter and consequently may be more likely to support a candidate from a different background (McDermott, 1998). Moreover, older voters have generally experienced a longer period of stereotype activation then younger voters due to a larger amount of time spent with elections and interacting in society. Thus, this research expects to observe younger voters as being more likely to voter for a minority candidate over the white male candidate, and overall to apply stereotypical traits to black and female candidates at a lower
rate than their older voter counterparts.

The second independent variable that will be explored in this research is the role that political party identification has on how a voter chooses to vote. After ideological sorting occurred in American politics after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, liberal minded voters have generally been categorized as belonging to the Democratic Party and conservatives as typically identifying with the Republican Party. For those individuals who identify as moderates, they tend to be classified as Independents who may lean towards the Republican or Democratic Party. Moreover because candidate profiles generally include a candidate’s party affiliation and not their ideological stance, this study will focus on party ID and not political ideology of a voter. With that in mind, numerous studies have shown how black and female candidates are more often than not running as members of the Democratic Party and stereotyped to be more liberal than their white male counterparts (Dolan, 2004; Dolan, 2010; McDermott, 1998; Moskowitz and Stroh, 1994). Therefore voters who identify as Democrats are generally more familiar with candidates from diverse groups running to represent their party. Additional research demonstrates that voters of the Democratic Party are also more drawn to vote for black and female candidates than Republican voters (Dolan, 2004; Parker, Horowitz and Rohal, 2014; McDermott, 1998). This paper argues that since Democratic voters have a heightened awareness of black and female candidates running in elections, they will be more likely to suppress application of stereotypes and be more likely to vote for a black male or white female candidate than self-identified Republicans.

The third variable that will be analyzed is voter gender. In general, women voters are stereotyped to be more liberal thinking than men and a more liberal mindset may allow women to be more open to the idea of diverse political candidates. For example, evidence has been found
that women voters are more likely than men voters to support the election of female candidates to higher political offices, regardless of political party ID (Parker, Horowitz and Rohal, 2014). Thus this research seeks to explore whether this same observation holds when women voters are presented with a black candidate. Similar to the logic used to example the role of political party ID, women may be more aware of stereotype activation due to their increased exposure to diverse candidates who typically run on liberal platforms and their own personal experience with being the target of gender stereotyping.

**Goal 2 – High Self-Monitors**

In order to observe the behavior of high self-monitors this research will employee a shortened version of Snyder’s (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale that was utilized in research conducted by Terkildsen (1993). As previously discussed, Snyder (1974) assembled a collection of forty-one, self-descriptive true or false statements about a person’s behavior in a given social situation. Each statement was individually scored in regards to how a high-self monitor should answer the question and if an individual’s answer was in disagreement with the baseline response, this would signal a response of a low self-monitor (Snyder, 1974). The eight selected statements were scored according to Snyder’s methodology and a similar classification system was employed to separate study participants based on their response to the eight self-monitoring questions. If an individual scored 3 or less responses (37.5%) with that of a high self-monitor, they were categorized as low self-monitoring. On the other hand, if respondents scored 5 or more responses (62.5%) with that of a high self-monitor, they were classified as high self-monitors. The range from $3 < x < 5$ is left uncategorized to account for the fact that some participants may be moderate self-monitors (which this study is not focused on exploring) and to mimic Snyder’s use of a “thirds” classification system. The eight item self-monitoring scale and its scoring can
be found below in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am uncertain how to act in social situations I look to the behavior of others.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not change or modify my opinions in order to please someone else or win favor.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not always the person I appear to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My behavior is usually an expression of my true attitudes and beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not particularly good at making other people like me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Design/Methodology**

**Study Design**

Instead of analyzing preexisting data regarding the effects of black and female stereotypes on voters, this paper relied upon construction of an original survey that would allow black and female stereotypes to be measured and compared jointly. The general structure of the survey was taken from research conducted by Terkildsen (1993) who pitted hypothetical white male and black male candidates against each other and then asked survey participants (“voters”) a series of questions regarding how they felt towards each candidate and how they would assign personality traits to each candidate. For purposes of this paper, Terkildsen’s (1993) research design was adapted to allow for white male, black male and white female candidates to be used in the same survey. Furthermore, the use of hypothetical candidates allows for increased control over what information is provided to survey participants and will make manipulations of
Creation of this new survey was accomplished through the use of survey software known as Qualtrics. This program permits a researcher substantial control over the overall lay out, question design and calculation of results. It is due to this malleability that Qualtrics was employed in this research. The initial step after selecting Qualtrics as a survey platform was to determine the overall design of the survey. In general, the purpose of this research is to observe whether voters are more willing to vote for a black male or white female candidate over a white male candidate when certain environmental cues are manipulated. Thus the control group/profile in my survey will belong to a white male candidate who will be pitted against either a black male candidate or a white female candidate. In order to accomplish Goals 1 and 2 of this research, it is necessary to employ a 2x2 survey design where the black male and white female candidates each have two profiles. The first profile for either candidate will include background information that endorses the respective cultural stereotype that is triggered as a result of the demographic cue. In other words, the cue taken from a candidate’s background information will not counter the demographic cue that activates a given black or female stereotype. This profile will be referred to as the baseline profile. The second profile for either candidate will provide voters with counter stereotypical background information that will allow this research to test whether or not introducing countering environmental cues can in fact curb or eliminate stereotype application initiated by the presence of a demographic cue. This profile will be labeled as the counter profile for each candidate.

These five candidate profiles will all include a picture of the candidate, their name, their age, their personal background which includes their education and occupation, political experience and community involvement. Preliminary testing was conducted to ensure that all
three candidates were similar in age, facial features, physical attractiveness, etc., in order to control for as many third-party variables as possible. Across all four variable profiles (black male (x2) and white female (x2)), the community involvement, age, and political experience were held constant. In addition, political party ID was held constant (Democratic) for all five candidate profiles and consequently the survey presents each candidate as being a Democratic Primary candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. Thus, research will manipulate a black male and white female candidate’s education, occupation, their family life and any prior criminal convictions to either fit or counter societal norms for blacks and females. The selection of pro and counter stereotypical background information is based off previously discussed scholarship.

For the white female baseline profile, this candidate’s personal background information told surveyors that her career is in social work and she is a mother to four children. Inclusion of this specific information reinforces female stereotypes that women are more competent to handle social issues and be family-oriented or “motherly”. Alternatively, the counter white female profile does not mention if she has children and instead indicates that she has prior military experience and her career focuses on business. Military and the economy are two areas commonly stereotyped to be male issues and therefore inclusion of this background information seeks to counter stereotypical assumptions that this particular female candidate is not tough or competent enough to handle these issues. In regards to the black male baseline profile, this candidate’s personal background information includes a past criminal conviction for trespassing. Including a criminal offense echoes the stereotypical trait of blacks that they are more prone to crime or illegal behavior. However to avoid surveyors believing that this is an overt effort by a researcher to trigger a black stereotype, the controlled profile for the white male candidate also includes a minor criminal offense. If voters are more likely to attribute negative traits to a black
candidate with a criminal offense than a white male candidate with a criminal offense, this could be due to racial stereotyping. Conversely, the counter profile for the black male candidate does not include a criminal offense and instead this candidate has a background in law enforcement. This aims to portray this black candidate as tough on crime and hardworking, instead of criminal, lazy, etc. Each completed profile can be located on pages 60-64 of the Appendix.

The first seven questions of the survey are standard across all of the study scenarios and asks a participant standard questions about their personal demographics including age, gender, race, political party ID and political ideology. After completion of these questions, a participant (voter) is randomly assigned one of the four survey scenarios: (white male candidate vs. black male candidate (baseline), white male candidate vs. black male candidate (counter), white male candidate vs. white female candidate (baseline), or white male candidate vs. white female candidate (counter). After being provided with an opportunity to evaluate the profile of both candidates, participants will be asked to answer a series of questions regarding the political candidates they were just introduced to. The purpose of asking participants to evaluate these candidates is to observe how voters apply stereotypes to candidates and if the manipulation of environmental cues (background information) does have an effect on voters. Voters are first prompted to indicate who they would be more likely to vote for between the white male and black male/white female candidate. Next, a thermometer rating scale is provided and participants are asked to report how warm they feel towards each of the two candidates. Both of these questions aid in this research’s efforts to determine whether voters are more likely to support a black male or white female candidate who is pitted against a white male.

The next block of questions allows a participant to select up to five personality traits they would assign to each candidate and choose which candidate they believe is more competent to
handle a variety of social and economic issues. The list of personality traits includes eight baseline traits that are drawn from stereotypical traits of males, in particular white males (competent, educated, trustworthy, hardworking, intelligent, ambitious, and rational). The other eight traits will be made up of four stereotypical female traits (gentle, sympathetic, irrational, and family oriented) and four black stereotypical traits (uneducated, lazy, aggressive, and unintelligent). Analyzing how participants apply stereotypical traits and assign competency to candidates will allow this research to determine whether voter behavior is altered when counter stereotypical background information is present in a candidate profile.

The last block of questions asks participants eight true or false questions from Snyder’s (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale regarding how he or she would act in a variety of social situations. Depending on how a participant answers these questions will determine whether or not they are a low or high self-monitor. For participants identified as high self-monitors, research will analyze how they assigned issue competency, personality traits, warmth for each candidate and their vote choice. Three additional questions concerning black and female representation in the U.S. Congress and general likeability questions about a candidate where included in the last block of questions. However, analysis of the study results indicated that inclusion of these questions did not substantially further Goals 1 and 2 of this paper and therefore will not be discussed in further detail. The full survey used can be located on pages 55-59 of the attached Appendix.

**Methodology**

Following construction of the survey through Qualtrics, Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was employed to recruit individuals to participant in the study. Mechanical Turk is an online program that pays out a small monetary reward to a participant for completing a given experiment. This program has access to a wide variety of participants and subjects are “often more representative of the general population” (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2012). Moreover,
the ease of recruiting participants through MTurk allows studies to be conducted more efficiently compared to other research methods and allows participants to remain anonymous to researchers (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2012). The fact that this study is conducted online also eliminates interviewer bias that is commonly found in the study of black and female stereotypes. This survey was released through MTurk in December 2014. The results from this survey are discussed in depth in the following section.

**Analysis & Discussion of Results**

**Survey Participant Demographics**

A total of 216 individuals participated in this survey that was administered through Mechanical Turk in December 2014. Failure to fully complete the survey resulted in the elimination of eighteen participants. Of the 198 remaining participants, 75 identified as female and the remaining 123 as male. Average reported age of participants was 33.79 years old and ranged from 18 to 67 years old. Participants were 74.24% white, 6.57% black, 5.56 Hispanic/Latino/a, 11.10% Asian and 2.53% Multiracial. Lastly, there were 87 self-identified Democrats, 37 Republicans and 74 Independents.

**Research Question/Goal 1- Results**

To study the effect of manipulating cues in the voting environment, analysis focused on how participants across all four survey scenarios reported vote choice, warmth, application of the respective stereotypical straits, and whether or not they selected a black male/white female candidate to be more competent to handle five stereotyped issues. Overall, the results from this survey do not support the initial Goal 1 hypothesis that black candidates may be more successful in counteracting the application of black stereotyping through inclusion of counter stereotypical
background information than their female candidate colleagues. In general, voters were more likely to apply stereotypical personality traits to female candidates than black male candidates. However once counter stereotypical information was provided, the rate at which stereotypical traits were applied to white female candidates by voters dramatically declined. On the other hand when counter stereotypical background information was present in a black male candidate’s profile, voters were actually more likely to apply stereotypical black personality traits. The analysis of issue competency did not yield significant evidence that either black or female candidates are able to counter the tendency of voters to assign issue competency consistent with female and black stereotypes. However in relation to vote choice and warmth towards a candidate, voters were more likely to select the black male baseline profile overall. And in addition, evidence supports the claim that voters would indicated higher warmth levels for black candidates than female candidates. These two pieces of evidence support the overarching hypothesis that voters would counter stereotype application more for black male candidates then white female candidates.
Table 2: White Female Baseline & Counter Profiles vs. White Male Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Measures</th>
<th>Candidate Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baseline Profile n=41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Choice</td>
<td>58.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Warmth</td>
<td>64.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personality Traits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Baseline Profile n=41</th>
<th>Counter Profile n=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>21.95%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>34.15%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Oriented</td>
<td>60.98%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>63.41%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issue Competency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Baseline Profile n=41</th>
<th>Counter Profile n=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare/Entitlement Spending</td>
<td>90.24%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor healthcare/high cost of healthcare</td>
<td>87.80%</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving accessibility to higher education</td>
<td>80.49%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation in the Middle East/ISIS</td>
<td>17.07%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the federal budget deficit</td>
<td>19.57%</td>
<td>48.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 above contains the results of both white female baseline and counter profiles that were pitted against the white male candidate. In general, the hypothetical white female candidate was consistently rated warmer than the white male candidate and more likely to be voted for in the “mock” primary race in both the baseline and counter profiles. In the baseline scenario, 58.54% of voters indicated that they would rather vote for the white female candidate. This percentage increased to 70.00% when counter stereotypical background information was included. This observation serves as evidence that supports the initial hypothesis that contradictory environmental cues will work in opposition and thus curb the effect of stereotype application.

In regards to personality traits, inclusion of counter stereotypical background information drastically reduced the tendency of voters (participants) to apply stereotypical
female traits to the white female candidate. In particular, the baseline white female candidate was assigned the trait of being family oriented by 60.98% of respondents. However the white female candidate who possessed counter stereotypical background information was assigned the trait of being family oriented by only 12.00% of participants. Moreover when presented with counter stereotypical background information, voters (participants) issued the trait of being competent at higher rate to the white female (84.00%) than the white male (70.00%). These overall results indicate that females who make an effort to portray themselves as masculine in some way are successful at reducing the frequency with which stereotypical traits are applied to them; however, they are not able to completely eliminate application. Furthermore, the results from trait application support the overarching hypothesis that inclusion of an opposing environmental cue (counter stereotypical background information) can counteract stereotype application caused by the demographic cue.

A similar trend occurred with issue competency when counter stereotypical background information was included in the white female candidate profile. Though female candidates were thought to be best suited to handle stereotypical female issues (i.e. social welfare/entitlement spending, poor healthcare, accessibility to higher education) overall in both survey scenarios, respondents were less likely to select the female candidate in the counter profile. When asked who would be more competent to address the issue of the military (Situation in the Middle East/ISIS), a majority of voters choose the white male candidate in both primary election scenarios. This occurred despite the inclusion of counter background information for the white female that stated she was a military veteran whereas her white male counterpart was not. Voters were nearly split in their support for who would be better suited to handle the economy when presented with a counter stereotypical female candidate who had a background in business.
Comparison of voter responses to the military and economic issues suggests that there may be certain issue that a woman can successfully portray herself as being competent to handle (the economy), and certain issues where voters still have a substantial preference for men (military)-regardless of the inclusion of certain background information. Overall, the findings from both female candidate scenarios echo the conclusion from Leeper (1991) that states “voters seem to infer that women possess traditional feminine strengths even when they emit a clear “masculine” message.” Accordingly, this research draws its first preliminary conclusion that inclusion of counter stereotypical background information for female candidates increases a voter’s awareness that a stereotype has been activated and consequently produces the scenario observed in Table 2.

White female political candidates seeking to counter stereotype application also benefit from understanding which voters are more likely to be receptive to their efforts. Analysis of the three main independent variables, age, gender and political party ID, suggests that political party ID is the best indicator of how a voter will react to this campaign strategy. In general, self-identified Democrats were more likely to support the hypothetical female candidate. This result is not surprising and follows past literature that more liberal voters tend to identify with the Democratic Party. Next most likely to voter for a female candidate were Independents, followed last by Republicans. Yet when counter stereotypical information was presented, all three political party members increased their reported level of support for the female candidate. This unanimous increase in support was not seen in the other two variables of gender and age. Thus, future female political candidates may benefit from providing counter stereotypical background information and tailoring their campaign approach to appeal to Democrats, as well as registered Republican and Independent voters.
Black Male Candidate

The following table on page 39 contains the analysis results for the black male candidate profiles that were positioned against the white male candidate. Like in the case of the female candidates, average warmth for the black male candidate was higher in both the baseline and counter profiles. And again, voters overwhelmingly chose the black male candidate over the white male candidate in both scenarios. Though vote choice for the black male candidate in both scenarios only differs by roughly 5%, an examination of this variance suggests that voters may be less aware of black stereotype activation when counter stereotypical information is present. In the baseline profile containing a criminal offense for the black male candidate, 71.70% of respondents chose this candidate. Conversely when this same candidate possessed no criminal offense but instead counter stereotypical background information, voters were not as likely to choose this candidate. Could this shift in support be due to the fact that voters presented with the counter black male candidate were less aware of stereotype activation? Further analysis of survey data suggests that this conclusion may be supported.
### Table 3: Black Male Baseline & Counter Profiles vs. White Male Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Measures</th>
<th>Candidate Selection</th>
<th>Baseline Profile n=53</th>
<th>Counter Profile n=54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>Black Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Choice</td>
<td>71.70%</td>
<td>28.30%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Warmth</td>
<td>63.38</td>
<td>55.55</td>
<td>61.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality Traits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>11.32%</td>
<td>33.96%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintelligent</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>69.81%</td>
<td>73.58%</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue Competency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare/Entitlement Spending</td>
<td>79.25%</td>
<td>20.75%</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the gap between rich and poor</td>
<td>83.02%</td>
<td>16.98%</td>
<td>75.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty/homelessness</td>
<td>86.79%</td>
<td>13.21%</td>
<td>85.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War on Drugs</td>
<td>54.72%</td>
<td>45.28%</td>
<td>62.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the federal budget deficit</td>
<td>47.17%</td>
<td>52.83%</td>
<td>42.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to the behavior that was observed in the white female candidate profiles, inclusion of counter stereotypical background information resulted in respondents being more likely to apply stereotypical black personality traits to the counter black male candidate. This was the case for all four stereotypical black traits of being lazy, uneducated, aggressive, and unintelligent. Though the statistical significance of the variance in trait application is low, the general observation of all four traits being more likely to be applied is of interest to this research discussion. Specifically, the trait of being aggressive runs counter to the initial hypothesis proposed by this paper. For the black male candidate who has a criminal offense, 11.32% of participants selected this trait to describe this candidate. When this criminal charge was retracted and instead this black male candidate was given counter stereotypical information (career as a police officer/tough on crime), he was thought to be more aggressive (16.67%).

Another significant observation in evaluation of the application of the aggressive trait is
the fact that the white male candidate was described as being more aggressive in both survey scenarios. For voters presented with a black male and white male candidate, regardless of background informational cues, there may be a tendency to refrain from the application of aggression to black candidates due to awareness that a black stereotype has been cued by the difference in skin color. This repression of application is demonstrated in Table 3. Consequently the role of the environmental cue is called into question. If a criminal offense doesn’t trigger an increased application of the trait “aggressive” for a black male candidate but instead is more likely to be applied to a candidate possessing counter stereotypical information, the environmental cues may be in fact working with each other instead of against each other in the counter profile. This theory of a cooperative relationship between environmental cues in black candidate profiles can also be applied to the other three traits. However due to the fact that the statistical significance of trait attribution is low, a more in-depth study of stereotypical black personality traits, especially the trait of “aggression”, should be conducted in the future.

Results for issue competency for black male candidates largely reflected what was found with the white female profiles. Overall, the black male candidate was chosen by a majority of respondents as being more competent than a white male candidate to handle social issues (i.e. social welfare spending, poverty/homelessness, reducing the gap between rich and poor), regardless of the inclusion of counter stereotypical information. Respondents were also still more likely to select the white male candidate to be better at handling economic issues. The only issue that did not follow past stereotyping literature is the question regarding the war on drugs. Stereotyping tends to cast black male candidates as being “soft on crime”; yet, survey participants in both scenarios were more likely to indicate the black male candidate as more competent to handle this issue. This research looks to two possible explanations of this
observation. First, black candidates are typically viewed as being more compassionate towards disadvantaged groups than white candidates. Consequently if voters believe this issue tends to deal with disadvantaged groups in society, they may also be more inclined to believe that a black candidate would best handle this issue. Second, results in Table 3 show that voters were more likely to choose the counter black male candidate overall in regards to the war on drugs. This may be due to a design error in the survey that has the counter black male’s background in law enforcement. This increased experienced with criminal law may be the reason for selecting this candidate and have nothing to do with his racial demographic.

It is beneficial for black male political candidates seeking to counter stereotype application to recognize which voters are more likely to be receptive to this strategy. Analysis of the three main independent variables, age, gender and political party ID suggest that political party ID is the best indicator of how a voter will react to this campaign strategy. As is in the case with voters who were assigned female candidates, self-identified Democrats are the most likely voters to support a black male candidate. Additionally, self-identified Democratic, Republican and Independent voters generally increased their support for a black candidate when his background included counter stereotypical information. Voter age and gender did not produce consistent nor favorable results for a black candidate. In turn, future black candidates should follow the same suggest as female candidates and tailor their campaign strategy to target political party ID.

**Research Question/Goal 2 – Results**

Across all four possible survey pairings, there were 96 participants who were classified as high self-monitors based on their responses to the Snyder Self-Monitoring Scale questions. However for purposes of this research, the high self-monitors who received the baseline profiles
for the black male (28 participants) and white female candidates (17 participants) will be used to help answer the research question laid out in Goal 2 of this paper. Analysis is limited to those individuals who receive the baseline profiles because both cues in question, the demographic and background informational cues, are believed to be working in the same direction to endorse the activated stereotype. Thus in theory, if a voter chooses to refrain from applying the activated stereotype that has been reinforced by additional background information, he or she may be engaging in self-monitoring. This same logic cannot be as easily applied to the counter candidate profiles because the demographic and informational cues are in opposition and therefore this research cannot confidently conclude that this resistance to apply stereotypes is due to self-monitoring rather than the countering effect of the informational cue. Overall, the results from the high self-monitoring participants aligned with the results observed in Goal 1.

As hypothesized, high self-monitors were found to be more likely to counter application of black stereotypes than female stereotypes. This conclusion was drawn from analysis of how these participants indicated vote choice, warmth, application of the respective four stereotypical traits, and whether or not they selected a black male/white female candidate to be more competent to handle five stereotyped issues.

The results contained in Table 4 indicate that high self-monitors still have a propensity to apply female stereotypes to female political candidates. As expected, participants reported feeling warmer towards the white female baseline candidate (64.41) then the white male candidate (55.17). This variance in thermometer ratings may be attributed to the fact that women are generally stereotyped to be more warm or welcoming then men. Furthermore, a larger percentage of high self-monitors indicated that they would be more likely to vote for the white female candidate over the white male candidate. Assuming that high self-monitors are therefore
less likely to apply stereotypes to a female candidate is a premature and erroneous conclusion.

An analysis of the four stereotypical female personality traits that were included in the creation of this survey furthers the initial claim that these participants are likely to apply stereotypical gender traits to female candidates. A white female candidate was assigned the stereotypical personality trait of being family oriented by 64.70% of high self-monitors, whereas 0% of participants applied this trait to the white male candidate. And again with the personality trait of being gentle, 35.39% of individuals assigned this to the white female candidate but 0% indicated that this attribute accurately described the white male candidate. Furthermore, although 11.76% of survey takers chose the trait of being sympathetic to describe the white male candidate, a larger percentage applied this trait to the white female candidate (29.41%). No respondents selected the trait of being irrational to describe either candidate. This may be due to confusion on behalf of the survey participant concerning the intended meaning of irrational. As a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Measures</th>
<th>Candidate Selection</th>
<th>Candidate Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>White Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Choice</td>
<td>52.94%</td>
<td>47.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Warmth</td>
<td>64.41</td>
<td>55.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Female Personality Stereotypes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotype</th>
<th>White Female</th>
<th>White Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>35.39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Oriented</td>
<td>64.70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issue Competency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>White Female</th>
<th>White Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor healthcare/high cost of healthcare</td>
<td>88.23%</td>
<td>11.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving accessibility to higher education</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare/Entitlement Spending</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation in Middle East/ISIS</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the federal budget deficit</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
result, no further analysis of the application of this trait is appropriate as it relates to Goal 2.

Participants continued this trend of applying female stereotypes to the white female candidate when asked to select which candidate was more competent to handle a variety of issues. In regards to addressing issues such as problems with healthcare, higher education and social welfare/entitlement spending, high self-monitoring participants overwhelmingly indicated that the white female was more competent to handle these issues. These results also support past literature that argues issues such as the military and the economy are stereotyped by voters to be better handled by male candidates. When asked who would be better to address issues with the federal budget deficit, a majority of participants chose the white male candidate (76.47%). And likewise when individuals were asked to indicate who they believed would be better to handle the conflicts arising in the Middle East/ISIS, 70.59% chose the white male candidate. Overall, high self-monitoring participants acted in a manner consistent with the hypothesis of this research. However analysis of female stereotype application by high self-monitors alone does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that high self-monitors are more likely to self-censor for black stereotype then they are for female stereotypes. Rather, the results from Table 4 are compared with the results from the black male baseline profile scenario contained in Table 5 on the following page:
As observed with the white female baseline profile, high self-monitoring participants were more likely to indicate that they would vote for the black male candidate (53.57%) in addition to feeling warmer towards the black male candidate (55.11). This similarity in results between the white female and black male candidate suggests that voters (participants) may feel warmer towards and are more likely to vote for candidates from underrepresented groups. However it is important to note that the variance between average reported warmth for a black male candidate and white male candidate is not as statistically significant when compared to the differences in candidate warmth found in Table 4. Nevertheless, an examination of how high self-monitors chose to apply stereotypical black traits and assign issue competency to the black male candidate further supports the main hypothesis of this research.

Unlike participants assigned to evaluate the white female candidate, high self-monitors
were not likely to apply the four black stereotypical personality traits to the black male candidate. When given the choice to report the black male candidate as lazy, only 7.14% of respondents chose this trait and none selected this trait to describe the white male candidate. For the trait of being unintelligent, a mere 3.57% of high self-monitoring participants assigned this trait to both the black male and white male candidate. Furthermore, 3.57% of participants reported the white male candidate as being uneducated whereas 0% applied this trait to the black male candidate.

The most revealing observation taken from the application of black stereotypes by high self-monitors is in regards to the trait of being aggressive. As previously discussed, this trait is commonly stereotyped to be associated with blacks; however, a significantly larger portion of high self-monitors (39.28%) selected this trait to describe the white male candidate compared to only 14.30% who applied this trait to the black male candidate. The existence of a criminal offense for both the control (white male) and baseline (black male) candidate rules out the explanation that this observation can be contributed to the white male being the only candidate with a criminal history. Additionally, both crimes were misdemeanors and non-violent. Therefore the fact that a white male was more likely to be characterized as aggressive may be a consequence of high self-monitors being more cognitively aware that a black stereotype has been activated and as a result participants repressed the application of the stereotype to the black male candidate. It can also be argued that if a high self-monitoring participant was not as mentally aware that a black stereotype had been activated by the existence of the demographic and informational cues, this respondent may in fact be more inclined to describe the black male candidate as aggressive and possibly even more so than the white male candidate.

For issue competency, high self-monitoring participants did not generally demonstrate
the same behavior that was observed with personality trait application. When asked whether the black male or white male candidate was more competent to address to issue of reducing the income gap between the rich and the poor, 71.43% of respondents chose the black male candidate. Similarly, 82.14% indicated that the black male candidate would be better at handling social welfare/entitlement spending and 78.60% reported the black male as a better candidate to address poverty/homelessness. All three of these issues are stereotyped as being black issues and with all three questions over 70% of participants indicated that the black male candidate was more competent to handle these issues. The exception to this trend was when participants were asked which candidate would be better able to address the war on drugs. Often, black candidates are stereotyped to be “soft” on crime; however, 57.14% of high self-monitors stated that they believed the black male candidate was more competent to address this issue. The results of the last issue area contained in Table 4 may suggest that high self-monitors are not as likely to counter black stereotype application in regards to issue competency as initially hypothesized. Although both the white male and black male candidates possessed a background involving business, 57.14% of participants believed that the white male candidate was better suited to handle this issue.

Overall, key results from survey analysis contained in Tables 4 and 5 supports the general hypothesis that high self-monitors are more likely to apply certain stereotypical characteristics to white female candidates then they are to black male candidates. When given the option to apply the personality traits of being gentle and family oriented, no participant selected either trait to describe the white male candidate, only the white female candidate. Specifically in regards to the trait of being family oriented, nearly two-thirds of respondents choose this trait to describe the female candidate. In the case of stereotypical black personality traits, high self-monitors who
selected these traits to describe the black male candidate were nearly nonexistence excluding the application of the “aggressive” trait. A lack of respondents who applied this trait to the black male candidate but instead selected this trait to describe the white male candidate provides evidence that high self-monitors may be more aware of the activation of black stereotypes as it relates to the application of stereotypical personality traits. Furthermore, although both sets of high self-monitors still assigned issue competency in a manner consistent with black and female stereotyping, participants evaluating the white female candidate were more consistent in their behavior. For all five issue areas, reported candidate competency aligned with past literature regarding what issues are stereotyped to be better handled by women instead of men, and vice versa. The deviation by participants to choose the black male candidate over the white male candidate in regards to handling the war on drugs supports this research’s preliminary hunch that high self-monitors would be more likely to counter, at least in part, the application of black stereotypes to political candidates.

**Conclusions & Future Research**

Throughout this research, three hypotheses were presented and the results observed from the December 2014 survey support two of the three claims made. In regards to the overarching hypothesis: “voters will be more likely to apply stereotypical characteristics to female candidates than black candidates due to differences in voter awareness that a stereotype has been triggered in his or her mind”, this claim was supported. Evidence presented in Tables 2 and 3 demonstrates that voters were more likely to apply stereotypical female personality traits to the white female candidate than the black male candidate by a substantial margin. This observation also supports the claim made that voters presented with a black male candidate are more likely to suppress the application of stereotypical characteristics such as personality traits. This conclusion
is supported despite the observation found in Table 3 that the presentation of counter stereotypical information actually increased trait application to a black candidate. The rate of application may have increased for these voters, yet it was still lower compared to the rate at which voters applied stereotypical traits to female candidates in Table 2.

Analysis of issue competency did not yield as strong of results that supported this research’s main hypothesis. General observations about this collected data suggest that blacks and females are still stereotyped to handle certain issues regardless of the presence of countering background information. However unlike the white female candidate who was consistently assigned issue competency that aligned with stereotypes, the black male candidate was thought to be able to handle the war on drugs better than the white male candidate. This runs counter to past literature from scholars such as Moskowitz and Stroh (1994) that black candidates cannot escape racial stereotyping. To improve the credibility of this conclusion, future research should conduct a larger study that includes more respondents and a greater variety of issue areas in order to determine more substantial differences in how issue competency varies depending on the existence of certain environmental cues.

On the surface, the results from this study suggest that the hypothesis presented in Goal 1: “black candidates will be more successful in counteracting the application of black stereotyping through inclusion of counter stereotypical background information than female candidates”, is not supported. Specifically, the evidence contained in Table 3 under personality traits indicated that voters were actually more likely to apply stereotypical personality traits to a black male when counter stereotypical information was presented. This observation runs counter to this research’s previous assumption that when informational cues were pitted against each other that stereotype application would be less prevalent. A possible explanation for this
observation may be that when stereotypical background information was present, this cue more successfully countered the application effect of the black demographic cue because this information actually increased a voter’s awareness of the stereotype activation. When counter stereotypic background information was included, voters may have not been as aware of the activation effect of the demographic cue and thus exerted less effort to counter stereotype application towards black candidates. The implication of this finding for future black male candidates suggests that these individuals may actually not want to fully counter certain aspects of their background. As long as that individual’s background information is not substantially harmful overall (major criminal offense, etc.), then a black candidate may in fact benefit from a voter acknowledging the information that aligns with a known stereotype. In theory, this knowledge in combination with the demographic cue spurs a situation where voters are more psychologically aware of the unacceptable nature of a racial stereotype and thus refrain from applying it.

This research does not make the same suggestion for future white female candidates. Rather, information in Table 2 suggests that female candidate substantially benefit from the inclusion of counter stereotypical background information. As initially predicated, the information cue in the baseline profile endorsed the application of the female stereotype whereas the inclusion of counter stereotypic information worked in opposition to the application initiated by the demographic cue. Female candidates were described less often using the female stereotypical personality traits when there was no mention of her family and she had a background in two fields commonly stereotyped to be dominated by males (military and business/economics). Analysis of the results of issue competency indicated that for white female candidates, voters across both survey scenarios consistently assigned these women higher issue
competency in stereotypical policy areas such as healthcare and education than their white male counterparts. However when countering background information was presented, a smaller percentage of voters chose the female candidate as better to handle healthcare, education, etc. This observation demonstrates the countering effect that the informational cue enacted. The idea of application countering was also seen in issue areas that are stereotyped to best handled by men (the military and the economy).

When a white female candidate did not mention family and was instead a military veteran and businesswoman, more voters chose her to handle these non-social issues. Yet, voters as a whole did not indicate that this female candidate would be more competent to handle either issue (military/economy) over a male candidate. In particular, there was still a wide divide amongst voters over who was more competent to handle military issues, even more so than the issue of the economy. Consequently from these observations, this research purports that female candidates may be more successful at countering certain aspects of feminine stereotypes (the economy) and not others (military competency). A possible explanation for this discrepancy in issues may be due to the fact that issues of the economy often are associated with intelligence or knowledge of a subject verses the military which may invoke a need to be “physically tough enough” to serve/adequately handle this issue. Future research should conduct more in depth studies concerning these two specific issue areas to determine if this preliminary conclusion is supported by additional research.

The third hypothesis contained in Goal 2: “high self-monitors will be more likely to self-censor the application of black stereotypes than female stereotypes”, is supported by the data contained in Tables 4 and 5. High self-monitoring voters were not only more likely to apply stereotypical personality traits to female candidates but also more consistently indicated that
females were better to handle stereotypical female issues and not stereotypical male issues. Consequently, this finding in combination with the overarching hypothesis suggests that female candidates may in fact be more likely to be stereotyped than black candidates. A preliminary explanation for why this occurs is rooted in this research’s belief that voter awareness of black stereotypes in society is higher than female stereotypes. In order to strengthen the validity of this claim, additional research should be conducted that not only expands the participant pool but also focuses on specific aspects within each stereotype, such as aggression in relation to black candidates and possible differences in views towards the military and the economy in relation to female candidates. Moreover, the results from this study support past literature that stereotypes still play a substantial role in American political elections and the effects of stereotypes should continue to be explored in the field of political science.

Future Research - Being a Black Female in Congress

In addition to conducting future research to further the claims made in this paper, scholars should explore how the combination of these two stereotypes may affect voter behavior. As Clayton (2003) argues, black female’s running for office “face a double disadvantage...because of race and gender biases.” Analysis of the interaction between black and female stereotypes in the evaluation of a black female candidate may allow researchers to discover if these candidates experience increased penalties because they are subject to the application of two stereotypes. Conversely if researchers were to find evidence that agrees with the conclusions of this research, there is the possibility that a black female candidate may be able to counter female stereotype application through increasing voter awareness of her racial demographic. Thus, the study of race and gender in American politics will remain relevant until sufficient evidence can be provided that proves that these groups are not underrepresented in
office due to the color of their skin or gender but rather as a result of institutional barriers or non-race/gender related causes.
Appendices

Appendix A - Survey Layout

Indiana University – Waiver

What is your gender? (Select one)
- Male
- Female

What is your age in years? (Open ended response)
- ____________

What is your race/ethnicity? (Select one)
- Black or African American
- White
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- Native American or Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify): ________________

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent? (Select one)
- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent

(IFF Republican/Democrat Selected) Do you consider yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)? (Select one)
- Strong
- Not Strong

(IFF Independent Selected) Do you think of yourself closer to the Democratic or Republican party? (Select one)
- Closer to Republican Party
- Closer to Democratic Party
- Neither
We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? (Select one)

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Moderate
- Somewhat moderate
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative
- Haven’t thought about this much

You will now be shown candidate fact sheets on two candidates running in a Democratic primary for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Following the profiles, you will be asked a series of questions to ensure that you have read and understood the fact sheets, in particular the backgrounds of each candidate.

- All participants received the **White Male Treatment: David Miller**, and then each participant was randomly assigned one of the following stereotype treatments:
  - (1) Female Baseline Treatment: Helen Michaels - See Appendix B
  - (2) Female Counter-Stereotype Treatment: Helen Michaels - See Appendix B
  - (3) Black Male Baseline Treatment: Michael Williams - See Appendix B
  - (4) Black Male Counter-Stereotype Treatment: Michael Williams - See Appendix B

The exact format of subsequent questions is dependent upon what treatment pair each participant receives: the **White Male Treatment: David Miller** with either Female Treatment: Helen Michaels (1) or (2) OR Black Male Treatment: Michael Williams (3) or (4).

For whom would you be more likely to vote for in a primary election, Helen Michaels/Michael Williams or David Miller? (Select one)

- Helen Michaels/Michael Williams
- David Miller

On a scale from 0 - 100, with 0 being very cold and uncomfortable and 100 being very warm and comfortable, how warmly do you feel towards Helen Michaels/Michael Williams?

- **Slider Scale**: 0(cold) – 100 (warm)

On a scale from 0 - 100, with 0 being very cold and uncomfortable and 100 being very warm and comfortable, how warmly do you feel towards David Miller?

- **Slider Scale**: 0(cold) – 100 (warm)
Out of the following list of traits, which traits would you select to best describe Helen Michaels/Michael Williams (Choose up to five traits):

- Competent
- Educated
- Honest
- Aggressive
- Trustworthy
- Gentle
- Rational
- Hardworking
- Sympathetic
- Intelligent
- Ambitious
- Irrational
- Unintelligent
- Lazy
- Uneducated
- Family oriented

Out of the following list of traits, which traits would you select to best describe David Miller (Choose up to five traits):

- Competent
- Educated
- Honest
- Aggressive
- Trustworthy
- Gentle
- Rational
- Hardworking
- Sympathetic
- Intelligent
- Ambitious
- Irrational
- Unintelligent
- Lazy
- Uneducated
- Family oriented
Which candidate do you believe would be better at addressing economic issues such as: *(Select one for each issue)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Helen Michaels/Michael Williams</th>
<th>David Miller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the federal budget deficit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment/creating jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax brackets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing income gap between rich and poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising minimum wage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare/Entitlement spending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which candidate do you believe would be better at addressing social issues such as: *(Select one for each issue)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Helen Michaels/Michael Williams</th>
<th>David Miller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor healthcare/ high cost of healthcare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration/illegal aliens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving accessibility to higher education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation in Middle East/ ISIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War on drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government/poor leadership/corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty/homelessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about the following characteristics and qualities, please indicate whether you think each of the following applies more to Helen Michaels/Michael Williams or more to David Miller: *(Select one for each characteristic/question)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Helen Michaels/Michael Williams</th>
<th>David Miller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is likeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands the problems that Americans face daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What percentage of representatives in the U.S. Congress are women?

- **Slider Scale: 0 – 100**

What percentage of representatives in the U.S. Congress are African American?

- **Slider Scale: 0 – 100**

Please indicate if each statement is true or false as it applies to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am uncertain how to act in social situations I look to the behavior of others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not change or modify my opinions in order to please someone else or win favor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not always the person I appear to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My behavior is usually an expression of my true attitudes and beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not particularly good at making other people like me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B - Candidate Profiles

White Male Treatment: David Miller

David Miller
U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Primary Candidate

Age: 58 years old

Personal Background

- 1978: BA in Political Science, Economics
- 1981: J.D. law degree, concentration in Tax Law
- 1982 – present: MDR Attorneys at Law, Partner
- Criminal Convictions: 1984 – Misdemeanor for contempt of court

Political Experience

- State Senate: 1994 – 2012

Community Involvement

- Successfully lobbied for passage of legislation to rebuild deteriorating structures across the state. Including roads, historical and governmental buildings and waterways
- Serves on Board of Regents for all universities within the state
- Founding member of coalition to address state wide inflation and growing budget deficit in order to improve job market and economic stability
(1) Female Baseline Treatment: Helen Michaels

Helen Michaels

U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Primary Candidate

Age: 57 years old

Personal Background

- 1979: BA in Social Work, Psychology
- 1983 – present: Director of Patient Health
- Married, mother of four children

Political Experience


Community Involvement

- Headed statewide initiative to reduce unemployment and create jobs after 2008 Recession
- Served as executive border member for statewide Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Conversation Initiative for 8 years
- Currently serving on statewide coalition responsible for addressing the quality and cost of education for primary and secondary students to ensure higher graduation rates across the state
(2) Female Counter-Stereotype Treatment: Helen Michaels

Helen Michaels

U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Primary Candidate

Age: 57 years old

Personal Background

- 1979: BA in Economics, Finance
- 1991: Masters in Finance and Business Administration

Political Experience


Community Involvement

- Headed statewide initiative to reduce unemployment and create jobs after 2008 Recession
- Served as executive border member for statewide Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Conversation Initiative for 8 years
- Currently serving on statewide coalition responsible for addressing the quality and cost of education for primary and secondary students to ensure higher graduation rates across the state
(3) Black Male Baseline Treatment: Michael Williams

Michael Williams
U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Primary Candidate

Age: 57 years old

Personal Background

- 1979: BA in Accounting, Finance
- 1982: Masters in Finance and Business Administration
- 1983 – present: Senior Financial Analyst:
- Criminal Convictions: 1981 – Misdemeanor for trespassing

Political Experience


Community Involvement

- Headed statewide initiative to reduce unemployment and create jobs after 2008 Recession
- Served as executive border member for statewide Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Conversation Initiative for 8 years
- Currently serving on statewide coalition responsible for addressing the quality and cost of education for primary and secondary students to ensure higher graduation rates across the state
(4) Black Male Counter-Stereotype Treatment: Michael Williams

Michael Williams
U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Primary Candidate

Age: 57 years old

Personal Background

- 1979: BA in Criminal Justice, Psychology
- 1982: Masters in Public Administration
- 1983 – present: City Police Officer, Deputy Chief

Political Experience


Community Involvement

- Headed statewide initiative to reduce unemployment and create jobs after 2008 Recession
- Served as executive border member for statewide Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Conversation Initiative for 8 years
- Currently serving on statewide coalition responsible for addressing the quality and cost of education for primary and secondary students to ensure higher graduation rates across the state
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