CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND POLITICS

Women, Gender, and the 2004 U.S. Elections: Looking Ahead to 2008

The 2004 U.S. presidential election was a highly gendered contest involving major masculinized, gendered campaigns by Senator John Kerry and incumbent President George W. Bush. If Senator Kerry was "reporting for duty," and "W [Stood] for Women," what have been the gendered implications for women as citizens, as voters, as candidates, and as potential officeholders? As we approach the 2006 U.S. midterm elections, five scholars, expert in gender and electoral analysis, share their observations about the short- and long-term implications of the 2004 elections for women's political participation and influence. These essays complicate and enrich our understanding of women and elections, and they come to different and even competing conclusions, leading us to suspect that there is a sea change under way in the analysis of women and elections, one that may recast our understandings of gender, generation, race, and sex.

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In 2004, 39 individuals were newly elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Eight of these individuals were women. Women went on to win two special elections held in 2005, while a man won the third contest. This increase in the numerical representation of women in the lower house of Congress in 2004–5 was a positive counter to the lack of progress women made in advancing their numbers in other elective offices, such as the U.S. Senate, governorships, and state legislatures in 2004. These gains in representation, however, only amounted to a 15.5% membership for women in the U.S. House of Representatives. Who were these successful women, and what does their election suggest to us about women and political officeholding and about gender as a factor when men and women run for public office in the early years of the twenty-first century? Do their campaigns and election reflect the continued relevance of gender, or are they indications of the demise of gender as a factor in elections?

What happens when we turn our attention to a woman being elected president? In 1995, Irwin Gertzog, long-time chronicler of the women who have served in the U.S. House, noted the emergence "in the United States of women who are strategic politicians—experienced, highly motivated, career public servants who carefully calculate the personal and political benefits of running for higher office, assess the probability of their winning, and determine the personal and political costs of defeat before deciding to risk the positions they hold to secure a more valued office" (1995, 4). If this description characterizes the elections of women in contemporary politics, then we might expect gender to be fading as a prominent influence on contests for national office and, by extension, for local office.

Do the women who were successful in 2004 reflect this trend toward women being strategic politicians similar to men? These eight women included a former member, Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), who had been ousted from her seat in the Democratic primary in 2002, a former welfare mother and current state senator (Gwen Moore, D-WI), and the minority leader of the Washington state House of Representatives (Cathy McMorris, R-WA). Debbie Wasserman Schultz, another successful can-

didate, was the mother of three young children, 5-year-old twins and a one-year-old, when she won election to the House in 2004 in Florida's 20th Congressional District. The women who won represented a range of occupational backgrounds, from a former orchard worker (in a family business) to a former community college president and a technology consulting-firm president. They tended to raise over a million dollars for their election bids, with Pennsylvania state Senator Allyson Schwartz raising over $4.5 million.

The men who were newly elected in 2004 tended to be Republicans (21 of the 31), while the women were slightly more likely to be Democrats (five of the eight women). In the 2005 special elections for House seats won by women, one was won by a Democrat and one by a Republican. The women who won in 2004 ranged in age from 35 to 61, while their male counterparts ranged in age from 29 to 67. The average age of both the male and female newcomers, however, was the same, at 49 years of age. The traditional pattern of female public officials tending to be older than their male counterparts was nonexistent among those elected to the U.S. House in 2004. At the same time, the men tended to be lawyers (39% of them), a traditional background of elective officials, whereas none of the women had law degrees. In this regard, women contributed to the diversification of the U.S. House.

All but one of the women had at least a bachelor's degree, and they came from diverse career backgrounds.[1] What nearly all of these women had in common was that they moved to the U.S. Congress from a state legislative position. For example, Cathy McMorris resigned her position as leader of the Washington state House Republicans to campaign for a seat in the U.S. House. She went on to be elected the freshman representative to the Republican Steering Committee, which makes House committee assignments, and was one of four freshmen named as an assistant whip. Four of these victorious women moved from state senates and two from state assemblies. Only incumbent challenger Melissa Bean had no prior elective office experience, but her campaign was a repetition of her 2002 effort to oust a sitting incumbent.

Although these victorious women won contests throughout the country, none of their elections represented a geographical expansion of

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1. Their careers as listed in *National Journal* profiles were state legislative aide, educator, technology sales and consulting, owner of a nursery and landscaping company and college administrator, founder of a women's health clinic and deputy commissioner of the Philadelphia Human Rights Department, real estate agent, family produce business and legislative aide, and a housing and urban development specialist. See http://nationaljournal.com/members/campaign/2004/house.

women's election to the Congress, that is, increasing the number of states that have elected a woman to national office. Four of the women were from the South, one from the Northeast, two from the Midwest[2] and one from the West. They were elected in major metropolitan areas, suburbs, and Norfolk, Virginia, the home port of the United States Navy's Atlantic fleet.

Most of the women had to win hard-fought primaries to become their party's nominee. There was little evidence from media stories that the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee or the Republican National Congressional Committee had actively recruited any candidates in these races. The women appeared to have been self-starters. Another important factor in their races was that none of these women seem to have been viable contenders because they could self-finance their campaigns, an increasingly important factor in the parties' recruitment efforts.[3] Where necessary, the national party committees poured money into their campaigns in the final weeks of the election to ensure their victory.

Does Gender Still Play a Role?

To what extent did gender play a role in the campaigns and elections of these women? Do their experiences suggest the demise of gender as a factor when men and women run for public office? How do we find gender, and where should we look for it in these elections and more generally? Gender refers to how actions are perceived when they are performed by men and when they are performed by women. Viewed from the long perspective of history, women's engagement in the public life of the nation has been unnatural. The second women's rights movement called for women to become political leaders, and groups within the movement have promoted the election of women to public office and called for equal representation. They have developed campaign training schools and established political action committees to help fund their

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2. Note that Gwen Moore was the first African-American woman elected from Wisconsin to the U.S. House of Representatives.

3. An exception was Debbie Wasserman Schultz, our 35-year-old mother of three youngsters. She was distinguished by the fact that she so dominated in the early days, following incumbent Peter Deutsch's decision to forgo running for reelection in Florida's 20th Congressional District to seek an open U.S. Senate seat, that she faced no opponent in the primary. She had raised so much early money that she was able to make a financial contribution to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, a very unique happening. In the heavily Democratic district, she easily won the general election.

campaigns. Women have made strides in moving in and moving up through elected positions within our government at both the state and national level, although their numerical representation remains woefully low. We need to ask whether something distinctive happens when a woman decides to run, compared to when a man runs in contemporary elections.

All of the newly elected female Democratic members of the U.S. House in 2004 had the advantage of having been endorsed by EMILY's List.[4] EMILY's List was a major player in Allyson Schwartz's primary victory in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, for example. Not only did it heavily finance her campaign through its donor network, but it also had workers on the ground in the district in the primary. The Almanac of American Politics reports that a strategist credited EMILY's List with sending the best mailings he had ever seen (Barone, Ujifusa, and Matthews 2004, 1457). EMILY's List was also early in endorsing state Senator Gwen Moore for election in Wisconsin's 4th Congressional District, which apparently prompted the other female candidate to drop out of the primary. An early poll showed Senator Moore leading in the Democratic primary in an overwhelming Democratic district, spurring EMILY's List to enter the campaign.[5] EMILY's List's prominence in recent campaigns has created consternation among candidates opposing its endorsed contenders, reflecting its significance in elections. (See, for example, Burrell 2006.)

The three female Republican winners all opposed abortion rights. Thus, none were endorsed by EMILY's List's counterpart in the Republican Party, the WISH List. Indeed, the WISH List had only one nonincumbent female candidate to endorse for national office in 2004.

Seven of the eight women won open seats. In the 8th Congressional District in Illinois, Melissa Bean, in her second attempt to oust longtime incumbent Philip Crane, was successful. She was one of only five challengers to beat an incumbent. Although all of these successful women came to win national office through the "political pipeline," their campaign themes varied by party. Democrat Debbie Wasserman Schultz, for

4. EMILY's List is a political action and training group that funds female pro-choice Democratic candidates, and has become a formidable force in national elections. This is not to say that all of the candidates EMILY's List endorsed in 2004 won election. The group lost some major U.S. Senate races.

5. It did not appear to be the case that EMILY's List had recruited Senator Moore to run in the first instance. Note that Moore's run for the House opened up her state senate seat, for which a female state representative was encouraged to run and, in turn, opened up a state assembly seat for yet another woman.

example, highlighted her policy victories in the Florida legislature concerning hospital stays for new mothers (the Drive Thru Baby Bill) and women undergoing breast cancer surgery (the Drive Thru Mastectomy Bill). At the same time, Republican Cathy McMorris highlighted her pro-business credentials and agricultural background as a farmer's daughter who worked in the family's orchard business; the theme of her campaign was "Proven Leadership for Eastern Washington."

On the other hand, Thelma Drake in the 2nd District of Virginia, home of the Atlantic fleet mentioned earlier, with its heavy dependence on military spending and infrastructure, focused on being able to get a seat on the House Armed Services Committee if elected, in order to promote the economic interests of her constituency. On the campaign trail, she promoted the idea that U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert had committed to placing her on that committee if she were elected, a prize assignment for someone whose district takes in the world's largest naval base and a number of other military installations. She won the nomination of the Republican Party in the 2nd District when the incumbent withdrew late in the process. Her opponent was newcomer Democrat David Ashe, a lawyer and Marine reservist who had recently returned from a two-year tour in the Middle East, including six months in Iraq where he had worked on restoring the judicial system. Democrats highlighted his military credentials, including ads urging voters to "send a Marine to Congress." One might have thought, on the basis of traditional gender stereotypes, that in this heavily military district Drake would have had difficulty countering Ashe's military credentials, but that did not happen. As noted in one of the district's major newspapers, what counted was the "R" word, Republican. "[T]here's the 'R' factor. The 'Republican' after Drake's name on the ballot could be the only qualification that matters, so strong is the allegiance to the GOP in Virginia Beach. Nomination practically guarantees election in what has become a one-party town." [6] Drake won with 55% of the vote.

No Gender Bias? No Gender at All?

To determine whether the presence and success of these women brought something distinctive to the election process and whether gender affected their campaigns and that of their opponents would require a much

6. "Alphabet Soup Heats Up 2nd District Contest," *Virginian-Pilot Norfolk*, September 3, 2004, Final Edition.

more systematic and in-depth analysis than the illustrations drawn here. Nonetheless, a perusal of media stories from the campaign trails of 2004 finds little in the way of gender bias or a focus on the sex of the candidates. Much analysis has shown that the presence of woman candidates has little effect on the outcome of contemporary elections. They raise the same kinds of money as male candidates (Burrell, 1994, 1998) and construct the same types of campaign organizations (Dabelko and Herrnson, 1997). They receive the same amount of help from their national political party organizations (Burrell 1994, Biersack and Herrnson, 1994); voters no longer seem to discriminate against them (Dolan, 2004); and they even engage in negative campaigning about as much as male candidates (Bystrom and Kaid, 2002). Thus, one might conclude not only that the phrase "when women run, women win" characterizes the election prospects of women candidates today but also that they are as equally professional and sophisticated on the campaign trail as men—and perhaps stumble in the same ways. Indeed, if it has become commonplace for women to be the strategic politicians that Gertzog has described, then gender may be fading, and as researchers we will have to look very hard to find differences when a woman runs and when a man runs.

This perspective on gender on the campaign trail and ideas about women as political candidates is not meant to imply, however, that women in public office do not make a difference. Research has shown that women in office and in political leadership positions do have different priorities, affect legislative agendas, influence the policymaking process, and have distinctive leadership styles. (See, particularly, the various chapters in *Women Transforming Congress*, edited by Cindy Simon Rosenthal, 2002). If we focus on the structure of elections, however, rather than starting from a gender perspective, it is likely that gender will not emerge as a significant explanatory factor today regarding who gets elected. It still affects, however, who runs.

Why Not in the United States?

Gender factors will not fade away from elections for public office in the United States until a woman is elected to the presidency. Germany has just elected its first woman, Angela Merkel, as chancellor, and Chile has just elected its first female president, Michelle Bachelet. Certainly the actions of these two very different countries, in different hemispheres, in addition to all of the other women who have headed their governments, should make Americans ask why not in the United States. While the

media and pollsters continue to emphasize gender factors in contempla-
tion of a woman becoming commander in chief, structural factors influ-
ence the likelihood of a woman being elected president.

The expectation that New York Senator and former First Lady Hillary
Rodham Clinton will seek the Democratic presidential nomination in
2008 will most certainly revive gender as a factor in national politics.
But let us look at some structural factors. First, Dianne Bystrom et al.'s
analysis of the NewsStyle presentation of Clinton and her opponent Rick
Lazio in the 2000 U.S. Senate election showed that the media covered
Clinton and Lazio similarly in terms of favorability and viability, and
that Clinton received stronger issue coverage than Lazio on several con-
cerns salient to voters: the economy, national defense, health care, and
education (2004, 201). Clinton enters her campaign for reelection to
the Senate with high approval ratings among New York State residents,
suggesting that she will easily win, giving a potential run for the White
House a boost. She leads the early polls as a potential candidate for the
Democratic Party presidential nomination, based primarily on name rec-
ognition, something most of the other potential contenders will have to
construct. Her campaign coffers are ample, too, another important fea-
ture of successful runs for major office.[7]

What do Americans appear to be making of the idea of a woman as
president? How does Senator Clinton's presence as a top contender af-
fect perspectives on a woman as president? From 1972 through 1998,
the General Social Survey (GSS) asked a national sample that if their
party "nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she
were qualified for the job?" By 1998, 90% expressed support, while 6%
said "no." At that point, the GSS stopped asking the question, perhaps
because it believed that it had reached a saturation point and was no
longer an interesting question.[8]

The Gallup Poll has queried the American public about its support for
the idea of a woman as president over a longer time frame than the GSS.
In 2003, Gallup reported that 87% of Americans said they would vote for
a woman if their party nominated a qualified one for president, a percent-
age that was down slightly from 92% support in 1999 (Jones and Moore
2003). In that 2003 poll, 85% of men and 89% of women said they would
vote for a generally well-qualified woman for president. All age groups
were supportive, although those over 65 lagged behind people under age

7. In the 2005–6 election cycle through the March 31, 2006 reporting period, Hillary Rodham
Clinton had raised over $27 million.
8. Jennifer Lawless makes a similar comment (2004, 479–90).

65 by several points. A more recent Gallup Poll found 85% reporting that they personally would vote for a qualified woman for president (Jones 2005).

The same poll found that nearly one-half of the American public (46%) thinks that the United States will have a female president in the next 10 years. Why more than half of the U.S. public does not think we will have a woman as president in the next 10 years remains a question. Gallup suggests that, in part, it is at least because Americans do not see their neighbors as ready to vote for a woman. By implication, they see gender as a factor.

The idea of a woman as president is no longer an abstract phenomenon for respondents to national surveys. We now have faces that respondents can call to mind when asked about their predilection to vote for or against a female candidate—particularly Senator Clinton or Secretary of State Condeleeza Rice. In this 2005 Gallup Poll, Republican identifiers were less likely than Democratic Party identifiers to say that they would vote for a qualified woman for president (76%–94%). This difference may be a reflection that the most likely next female candidate for president would be Senator Clinton, which affected Republican identifiers' support for the idea of a woman as president more generally. Furthermore, we need to consider whether a 13% opposition, as found in the 2003 Gallup Poll, would be a deterrent to party operatives in their support for advancing a potential woman candidate. The opposition may come primarily from nonvoters, for example, or hard-core partisan opponents of a particular candidate.

Gender is still a factor for the public in response to survey questions about whether a man or a woman president would better handle national security and domestic policy. In the Gallup survey, being a woman trumps being a man if the focus is on domestic issues, whereas the reverse is the case if the focus is national security. Thus, as we move forward to a new presidential campaign, the national context of that election could very well condition how opportune the situation would be for a woman seeking the presidency. Would Marvin Kalb ask Hillary Clinton or Condeleeza Rice the question he asked Geraldine Ferraro on *Meet the Press* in 1984 when she was the Democrats' vice presidential candidate: "Are you strong enough to push the button?" Given the strides women have made in political leadership positions, the way in which opponents of a woman as president in general or of a female candidate of the opposition party attempt to make gender an issue in such an election will certainly make for a lively—and perhaps conclusive—debate on the nature of gender in American elections.

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Moms Who Swing, or Why the Promise of the Gender Gap Remains Unfulfilled

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In 2004, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the voter turnout rate for women was 60.1% compared with 56.3% for men, and across the United States 8.8 million more women than men voted. Women have voted at higher rates than men in all presidential elections since 1980, with the gap between women and men growing slightly larger in

each subsequent election year. Moreover, in 2004, women outvoted men (in terms of both turnout rates and actual numbers) in every racial and ethnic group—African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and whites (Center for American Women and Politics 2005a).

Not only did women outnumber men among voters in 2004, but a gender gap in voting preferences, measured as the absolute difference between the proportion of women and the proportion of men voting for the winning candidate, was also very much apparent. The nationwide exit poll conducted by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International showed that 48% of women compared with 55% of men voted for George W. Bush, resulting in a gender gap of seven percentage points.

The 2004 gender gap was neither the largest (11 percentage points in voting for Bill Clinton in 1996) nor the smallest (four percentage points in voting for Bill Clinton in 1992) for presidential elections since 1980. In fact, gender differences in voting in 2004 appeared very average in magnitude; the mean gender gap for all presidential elections from 1980 to 2000 was 7.7 percentage points (Center for American Women and Politics 2004; Center for American Women and Politics 2005b).

The suffragists who struggled long and arduously for women's enfranchisement would undoubtedly be heartened by these statistics, and yet one imagines that many of the suffragists would be very disappointed that the increase in women's voting and the emergence of the gender gap have not translated into significantly greater political power and influence for American women. There is not much evidence that women's lives have improved dramatically as a result of public policy enacted in the two and a half decades since the 1980 election, when women first surpassed men in their rate of voter turnout and the contemporary gender gap in voting first became evident. We are still a long way from gender equity in the United States. For example, on average, women who work full time earn only 76.5 cents for every dollar men earn (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2005). Women are more likely than men to live below the poverty level, and 50.9% of families living in poverty in 2001 were headed by women (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Many women still struggle to find affordable, quality child care, and the United States provides only 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave, in contrast to 163 other countries that offer guaranteed paid leave to women who give birth (Heymann et al. 2004, 1). Moreover, reproductive rights seem just as much in jeopardy in 2005 as they were in 1980.

Despite persistent gender inequities, the gender gap in voting, and the much larger number of women than men who vote, recent presi-

dents have not made public policy on women, or policies aimed at alleviating gender inequities, a priority of their administrations. One searches long and hard on the official Website of the Clinton-Gore administration detailing policy accomplishments from 1993 to 2000 for a single mention of "women" ("The Clinton-Gore Administration" 2000). In contrast, there is an entire section on "families and community," along with sections on issue areas such as crime and drugs, the economy, education, health care, housing, and immigration. Women are not even mentioned in a lengthy section called "moving families from welfare to work" (instead, gender-ambiguous "parents," "people," and "families" are the preferred terminology)—even though a large majority of those "moved" off the welfare roles were very clearly women.

The Bush-Cheney White House Website ("The White House: Policies and Initiatives" 2005) is no better. The Web page offers a long list of categories under "Policies and Initiatives," not one of which pertains to women. Unlike the case for the Clinton-Gore Website, however, women do appear in some of the more detailed discussions under certain issue headings. Specifically, they appear in discussions of "Afghanistan" and "Iraq," where there is mention of how women are guaranteed seats in the national governing bodies and how, under the proposed Iraqi constitution, "Discrimination on the basis of gender is banned" ("The White House: Renewal in Iraq" 2005). Ironically, of course, there is no mention on the Website of presidential proposals or support for guaranteeing women seats in the U.S. Congress or adding an amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning discrimination on the basis of gender.

My point is simply that the persistent inequalities women face and the lack of priority given by recent administrations to policies targeted to American women are seemingly quite inconsistent with the fact that women voters outnumber men by 8.8 million and have different political preferences. Increases in the numbers of women voting and the persistence of the gender gap have not translated into significant increases in political clout and major advancements in public policy for women. Why?

Electoral Manipulation

There is no simple answer to this question. I suggest that part of the answer lies with the prevalent practice in recent elections of targeting a small and unorganized segment of the electorate who are deemed to be the "swing" voters who will determine the outcome of the election.

These voters may be Democrats or Republicans or independents, but what makes them "swing" voters is that they are not strongly committed to one candidate or another in a particular election. They are presumably persuadable.

In recent elections, many of the groups targeted as swing voters have been gendered, and the targeted swing voters have been men as well as women. In the early 1980s, the most coveted group of swing voters were Reagan Democrats—blue-collar men who had traditionally voted Democratic but who voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980. For years thereafter, Democratic campaigns focused on trying to win back the so-called Reagan Democrats. In 1994, the "Year of the Angry White Male," white men had apparently "swung" their votes over to the Republican Party, giving the Republicans an unexpectedly large victory in the congressional elections. Leading up to the 2004 elections, there was talk of NASCAR dads—white males, blue-collar and socially conservative, who normally would have voted Republican but who were seen as up for grabs politically because of the downturn in the economy.

Women have also been targeted as swing voters in recent elections. The most notable targets by far have been the so-called soccer moms in the 1996 and, to a lesser extent, the 2000 elections (Carroll 1999; Vavrus 2002) and security moms in the 2004 elections (Carroll 2005). Democratic pollster and consultant Celinda Lake, who is credited with coining the term *NASCAR dads*, has also tried to push the idea of "waitress moms" as possible swing voters in recent elections. Waitress moms, however, never attracted nearly as much attention as soccer moms or security moms.

What impact have these targeted, swing-voting women had in recent elections? Paul Frymer, in his insightful book *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (1999), may suggest an answer. He identifies a phenomenon he calls "electoral capture," and argues that the influence of African Americans on U.S. elections has been limited by this phenomenon. Electoral capture occurs when a group that

> votes overwhelmingly for one of the major political parties . . . subsequently finds the primary opposition party making little or no effort to appeal to its interests or attract its votes. . . . The party leadership, then, can take the group for granted because it recognizes that . . . the group has nowhere else to go. Placed in this position by the party system, a captured group will often find its interests neglected by their own party leaders. These leaders,

in turn, offer attention and benefits to groups of "swing" voters who are allegedly capable of determining election results. (Frymer 1999, 8)

Certainly, women have not been among the electorally captured. In fact, some women have been viewed as among the highly desired swing voters to whom benefits are supposed to accrue. Frymer suggests that the political influence of swing voters is far greater than that of the electorally captured. Nonetheless, I argue that the interests of women voters, like the interests of African-American voters, have been neglected by political leaders (in this case, recent presidents) of both parties, despite the fact that women have been identified as key swing voters in recent elections.

Women, as voters, have been subject to a phenomenon that might be called "electoral manipulation," as opposed to electoral capture. Electoral manipulation involves the creation of a socially constructed target group of voters (whether Reagan Democrats, NASCAR dads, or security moms) who do not consciously identify with one another and who are not represented by any existing organization or interest group. A campaign can target appeals to this hypothetical group and talk about their importance in an election without any fear that the victorious candidate will be held accountable to this group—since there is no organized entity to articulate the political interests of this social construction, to lobby the candidate or his or her staff once elected, or to call attention to the victorious candidate's failure to be responsive to the social construction's political interests. In this manner, a candidate can appear to be responsive to the voters who are supposedly most critical to the outcome of an election, while promising little or nothing to "real" organized groups that could actually hold the victorious candidate accountable.

In recent elections, there has been yet another dimension to this process that has made the phenomenon of electoral manipulation even more problematic for women voters. Women have been subjected to a particular form of electoral manipulation that could be considered "electoral *mom*ipulation" (as opposed to *man*ipulation) in that they have been targeted only in their roles as "moms." The soccer moms of 1996 and 2000 and the security moms of 2004 were not constructed as groups of women broadly interested in a host of issues, including their own status as women. Rather, they were constructed as narrowly focused, self-sacrificing moms whose concerns centered almost exclusively on the welfare of their families and children.

The remainder of this essay examines the social construction of soccer moms in the 1996 election and security moms in the 2004 election, illustrating how the process of electoral momipulation has undermined the potential inherent in the gender gap and limited the political influence of women.

Soccer Moms

Soccer moms received considerable attention during the 1996 presidential race. A search for newspaper articles mentioning the words "soccer mom(s) and election(s)" published between July 1 and November 30, 1996, within the "major papers" classification in LexisNexis yielded 303 stories, of which 211 gave more than passing attention to soccer moms. The *New York Times* published 11 articles on soccer moms, while the *Washington Post* and *USA Today* each published nine. More than three-fifths of news stories were published in the two weeks before and one week after the November 5 election.

The first reference to the term *soccer mom* in the context of the 1996 election appeared in a July 21, 1996, article by E. J. Dionne, Jr. in the *Washington Post*, entitled "Clinton Swipes the GOP's Lyrics; The Democrat as Liberal Republican." In the article, Alex Castellanos, a senior media advisor to Bob Dole, suggested that Bill Clinton, following the advice of his pollster, Dick Morris, was targeting a voter whom Castellanos called the "soccer mom," defined in this article as "the overburdened middle income working mother who ferries her kids from soccer practice to scouts to school." As this account makes clear, the soccer mom was the creation of consultants involved in the presidential campaigns.

Newspaper coverage of the 1996 election commonly portrayed the soccer mom as a mother who lived in the suburbs, was a swing voter, was busy and stressed out, worked outside the home, and drove a minivan or sports utility vehicle. Newspaper coverage also described the soccer mom (although somewhat less frequently) as middle class, married, and white (Carroll 1999). Thus, soccer moms were frequently marked explicitly by race and class as well as gender.

There was a near consensus about the concerns of the soccer moms among reporters and the political pundits whom they quoted as sources. The soccer mom's interests focused on her children and her family. She was concerned about her children's futures, their education, and their

safety. As Republican pollster Kellyanne Fitzpatrick noted, "If you are a soccer mom, the world according to you is seen through the needs of your children."[1] Similarly, a *Tampa Tribune* reporter concluded, "In brief, she [the soccer mom] has no identity apart from her children and their extracurricular activities."[2]

Both presidential campaigns in 1996 appealed to so-called soccer moms through their children and families. Bill Clinton and Bob Dole talked about a number of issues that, according to reporters, were aimed at soccer moms, including education, v-chips, school uniforms, student financial aid, drug use among young people, smoking among children, and teen curfews (Carroll 1999). Absent in newspaper reports of the campaigns' attempts to appeal to soccer moms were a whole host of other issues associated with organized feminism, or related to women's status or interests apart from their roles as mothers: for example, abortion, welfare reform, health care for women, sexual harassment, job training for women, pension reform, and child care.

From Soccer Moms to Security Moms

The security mom was the hot, new woman voter of 2004. Security moms made the list—along with eight other terms, including Mess O' Potamia, red state/blue state, TiVo, and wardrobe malfunction—of *Time* magazine's buzzwords of the year ("The Year in Buzzwords" 2004). Like the soccer mom, the security mom seems to have been invented by a pollster who worked for political candidates and campaigns; several sources attribute the first use of the term *security mom* to Republican pollster David Winston (Gilson 2004; Tumulty et al. 2003; "The Zoology of Swing Voters" 2004), although prominent Democratic pollsters, such as Celinda Lake, helped to propagate the idea of security moms as well.[3]

The media portrayed the security mom as a former soccer mom, transformed by the events of September 11, 2001. Worried about future terrorist attacks and single-mindedly focused on the safety of her family and children, she was, according to most media reports, a swing voter who would help to determine the outcome of the 2004 election.

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1. Neil MacFarquhar, "Don't Forget Soccer Dads; What's a Soccer Mom Anyway?," *New York Times*, 20 October 1996, sec. 4.
2. Froma Harrop, "Chasing Soccer Mom," *Tampa Tribune*, 21 October 1996.
3. For example, Starr 2003; Lois Romano, "Female Support for Kerry Slips; Polls Show Women View Bush as Stronger on National Security," *Washington Post*, 23 September 2004, sec. A.

One of the first media references to security moms was in an article entitled "How Soccer Moms Became Security Moms" by Joe Klein, which appeared in *Time* magazine in February 2003. He argued that the "war on terrorism is two wars, one for men and one for women." While men were focused on special forces and bombing runs, women, according to Klein, were concerned with "protection of hearth and home against the next terrorist attack." In support of his thesis, he cited Joe Biden:

> When I was out campaigning last fall [2002], this [a possible terrorist attack] was all women wanted to talk about. . . . Not schools, not prescription drugs. It was "What are you doing to protect my kids against terrorists?" Soccer moms are security moms now. (Klein 2003, 23)

Despite this and other occasional references, security moms did not receive much media attention until mid-September 2004 after Bush experienced an upswing in popular support following a very successful Republican convention focused on security and terrorism-related themes and the tragedy in Beslan, where terrorists held hundreds of Russian schoolchildren hostage, many of whom were killed during an attempted rescue mission. A total of 130 articles that mentioned the words "security mom(s) and election(s)," including 13 in the *Washington Post* and 10 in the *New York Times*, were published between July 1 and November 30, 2004, in newspapers classified as "major papers" within Lexis-Nexis. As with soccer moms in the 1996 election, interest in security moms peaked during the last two and a half weeks before the November 2 election and in the first few days of postelection analysis, with almost one-half of all stories appearing between October 16 and November 7.

In an editorial entitled "Myth of the Vanishing Swing Vote," published in the *Washington Post* on October 5, 2004, Mark J. Penn, who conducted polls for the Clinton campaign during the 1996 election, was one of many who pointed to security moms as important to the outcome of the presidential election (although, unlike others, he did not explicitly refer to them as security moms):

> Who are the voters swinging back and forth? They are the very ones we identified in 1996 as the most important group of swing voters: middle-aged white women. . . . These modern moms work, have kids and live in the suburbs. They are not concerned with party labels, Vietnam service or the National Guard. They are voting on the basis of what they think will be best for the future of their families. Forty-seven percent of these voters believe security is the most important issue.

The idea that security moms were swing voters who could determine the outcome of the election was a very prevalent theme in newspaper coverage of security moms. In fact, the two most frequently mentioned characteristics attributed to security moms were that they were swing voters and that they were the same voters as the soccer moms from previous elections. Besides being swing voters and former soccer moms, their most frequently mentioned attributes were that they were mothers, married, white, and lived in the suburbs (Carroll 2005). Like the soccer moms of 1996, the security moms were often explicitly marked by race (i.e., as white) and implicitly marked by class (i.e, as living in the suburbs).

Not surprisingly, security moms were seldom portrayed in print media coverage as interested in any issue other than security, terrorism, and the safety of their families and children. Article after article described security moms as women "who are fearful of another attack within the United States,"[4] "who are fearful for their family's future,"[5] and "who worry about terrorism and security."[6] The impression left by newspaper stories is that security moms were concerned primarily with the security and the safety of their children and families and, secondarily, with electing a strong, proven leader who would protect their families (Carroll 2005). Little else seemed to matter; terrorism and security trumped all other issues.

Just as newspaper articles portrayed security moms as almost single-mindedly focused on terrorism and safety, so too did these stories present the presidential campaigns and candidates as appealing to these voters largely on the basis of security issues and the need to have a strong and proven leader. In stories where candidate appeals were described, more than half the appeals focused on national security, terrorism, or safety, while another one-fifth were based on leadership qualities (e.g., proven leader, protector, strong leader) commonly linked to the war on terror (Carroll 2005).

Conclusions and Implications for the 2008 Elections

Electoral momification, involving the targeting of soccer moms and security moms in recent elections, has undermined the potential inher-

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4. Katharine Q. Seelye, "Kerry in a Struggle for a Democratic Base: Women," *New York Times*, 22 September 2004, sec. A.

5. Lionel Barber, "Bush Gambles the Presidency on Mobilising the Faithful," *Financial Times*, 30 October 2004.

6. Richard Morin, "Swing Voters Who Hang Real Loose," *Washington Post*, 3 October 2004, sec. D.

ent in the gender gap and limited the political influence of women. The emphasis on soccer moms in 1996 and 2000 and security moms in 2004 detracted attention from the problems and concerns women face in American society as workers, as activists for feminism and other social causes, as the majority of adults living below the poverty line, as members of minority populations, and as a majority of the elderly. The fact that soccer moms and security moms were portrayed through media coverage as the critical swing voters who mattered most made it easier for the candidates largely to ignore women voters who might be politically unpalatable (e.g., women on welfare, female immigrants) or who might push to have their concerns addressed in the campaign or placed on the president's agenda (e.g., feminists, women of color, professional women).

In addition to diverting attention from other female voters and their concerns, the focus on soccer moms and security moms as moms also erased from public view any interests the women who fit the soccer and security moms' demographic profile (white, married with children) may have had in roles or capacities other than as protectors of the welfare of their children and families. For the most part, the focus was not on these women, but rather on their children and their families. Women were represented only in their roles as mothers.

Women as voters did have concerns other than those attributed to the soccer moms and security moms. For example, in a survey conducted on November 1–2, 2004, by Lake Snell Perry & Associates for Votes for Women 2004, a nonpartisan network of women's organizations created to monitor the gender gap in the 2004 presidential elections, women identified health care, education, and the economy and jobs as the top issues they wanted the president to focus on over the next four years. Large proportions of women also indicated that they would like to see the administration give priority to violence against women, women's equality under the law, and equal pay (Lake Snell Perry & Associates 2004).

A very positive development from the 2004 election was that parties, advocacy groups, and even the press seemed more cognizant of the diversity among women voters and were less likely to treat women monolithically than ever before. In trying to increase women's turnout, political parties and advocacy groups targeted very specific subgroups of women with very distinctive appeals (MacManus 2006). Similarly, at least impressionistically, the press in the 2004 election cycle seemed more than ever before to recognize that different subgroups of women

voters exist. Yet in the final weeks of the campaign, security moms received far more public attention than any other subgroup of women, either real or fictional, leaving the impression that they were the only women who really mattered. Ironically, then, at the same time that there has been a move away from a monolithic notion of women as voters, the women who have been seen as most important to election outcomes have been reduced to their roles as moms—and nonthreatening white, middle-class moms at that. In a sense, the monolithic, but politically relevant, category "women" has now been replaced by the narrower, monolithic category "moms."

All that President Bush has to do in his second term to seem responsive to the concerns of the women viewed as most critical to his reelection—the security moms—is to keep their children and families safe from terrorists. He need not do anything for these voters as women because, as security moms, they were portrayed as having no concerns outside of their maternal roles. And regardless of what Bush does in his second term, he certainly does not have to worry that some association of security moms will come knocking on the White House door in an attempt to hold him accountable.

If recent elections are any indication, electoral manipulation and momipulation are likely to occur again in the 2008 election cycle. For feminist activists, the lesson to be learned from recent history is that the creation by political consultants of a socially constructed target group of female voters who do not consciously identify with one another and who are not represented by any existing organization or interest group should be viewed with great skepticism—and even resistance. So should the dissemination of information about this group in the media. Even though the constructed target group draws attention to women as a political force, in the end this construction is not likely to serve the interests of women or feminists. Rather, it is likely to divert political and media attention away from the concerns of "real" (i.e., socially recognized and organized) groups of women voters.

It is far too early to tell what will happen in the 2008 elections. Perhaps the security moms of 2004 will resurface in 2008; this seems likely if the country remains preoccupied with terrorism. Or perhaps security moms will morph back into soccer moms if security concerns recede and domestic issues once again come to the forefront. Yet another possibility is that political consultants will invent a new group of politically relevant moms who swing. Although it may be too early to tell which group might be targeted in the 2008 elections, it is not to early for femi-

nists to begin to strategize about ways to resist momipulation in the next election.

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Targeting [Specific Slices of] Female Voters:
A Key Strategy of Democrats and Republicans
Alike in 2004 . . . and Most Assuredly So in 2008

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> *Political watchers say the dynamics of the women's vote—and the efforts to grab it—are* different this year. . . . *The number of undecided voters is small—roughly 10 percent. But of those undecided voters, 60 percent are women. . . .The razor-thin margins have prompted both parties to reach out to traditional female supporters* as well as to try to attract new ones.
>
> —Jane Musgrave, "Candidates Chase Votes of Undecided Women"[1]

The Women's Vote in 2004

Words and phrases commonly used to describe the women's vote in 2004 ranged from "much-coveted," "vital," "swing," "heavily sought after," and "diverse" to "the largest and most pivotal voting group" and "a challenge for each candidate to reach." Political strategists, analysts, and scholars were cognizant that women had decided every presidential election since 1980.[2] The closer it got to election day, the more aggressive became the targeting of female voters, primarily because women constituted the largest portion of the shrinking pool of undecided voters. The frenzy with which women voters were courted made it clear that Republican George W. Bush and Democrat John F. Kerry each understood the importance and urgency of mobilizing "his" most likely female supporters.

In 2004, after intense Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts, ranging from calls and transportation assistance to heavily targeted television, radio, Internet, and direct mail ads, the turnout rate went up, especially among women (MacManus 2006). As a result, women increased their share of the electorate from 52 percent in 1996 and 2000 to an estimated 54% in

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1. *Palm Beach Post*, 27 August 2004; emphasis added.
2. Meredith Wagner, executive vice president of Lifetime Television, quoted in Jane Musgrave, "Candidates Chase Votes of Undecided Women," *Palm Beach Post*, 27 August 2004.

2004. Women made up a majority of the electorate in all but three states. (See Table 1.)

Lasting Lessons from 2004

In the 2004 campaign, both major political parties and their respective allies learned four important lessons. Each of these lessons is sure to be heeded in the 2008 presidential election cycle because the proportion of women in the electorate will undoubtedly continue to rise.

<u>Lesson No. 1</u>: *Identifying and effectively targeting "persuadable and winnable" infrequently voting slices of the female electorate is essential to winning the White House.* The Kerry-Edwards campaign and its Democratic-leaning advocacy groups heavily targeted young, single, and blue-collar working women, and suburban women seen as "swing" voters. (Pollsters tended to describe the typical swing female voter as one who is "older than 50, lives in the suburbs, and works outside the home. Half are married; a majority never attended college."[3]) The Bush-Cheney campaign and its Republican allied groups targeted married women with children and social conservatives in suburban and rural areas.

Many analysts honed in on the "marriage" gap among women voters: "Want to know which candidate a woman is likely to support for president? Look at her ring finger. It may sound like the start of a bad joke, but the fact is most married women say they'll vote for President Bush. By nearly 2-to-1, unmarried women say they support John Kerry," wrote reporter Susan Page in a lead article in *USA TODAY*.[4] Pollsters Celinda Lake (Democrat) and Ed Goeas (Republican) flushed out the reasons for this marriage gap:

> Married people are more optimistic about the future and more suspicious about government's ability to help them. This favors incumbents and Republicans, the definition of Bush. Unmarried people tend to view government as more able to provide solutions to problems and are more

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3. Joseph Curl, "Despite Campaign Tactics, Female Vote Remains Elusive," *Washington Times*, ⟨http://www.washingtontimes.com/functions/print.php?StoryID=20041021-120937-4652r21⟩ October 21, 2004.

4. "Married? Single? Status Affects How Women Vote," 26 August 2004, sec.1A.

Table 1.   Women as a proportion of the electorate: 2004

State	Ranking: All Women as % of Electorate	State	Ranking: White Women as % of Electorate	State	Ranking: Nonwhite Women as % of Electorate
North Carolina	59	Vermont	53	Hawaii	31
Delaware	57	IOWA	52	NEW MEXICO	24
South Carolina	57	MAINE	52	South Carolina	21
Arkansas	56	OREGON	52	Mississippi	20
COLORADO	56	Idaho	51	Alabama	18
Georgia	56	Nebraska	50	California	18
Hawaii	55	North Dakota	50	Georgia	18
Kansas	55	Washington	50	North Carolina	18
Louisiana	55	WEST VIRGINIA	50	Texas	18
NEW MEXICO	55	COLORADO	49	Louisiana	17
New York	55	Kansas	49	Maryland	17
OREGON	55	Kentucky	49	FLORIDA	16
Tennessee	55	MINNESOTA	49	New Jersey	16
Texas	55	Utah	49	Virginia	16
Vermont	55	South Dakota	48	Delaware	15
Washington	55	MISSOURI	47	New York	15
Alabama	54	Montana	47	Oklahoma	14
FLORIDA	54	NEW HAMPSHIRE	47	Illinois	12
Illinois	54	WISCONSIN	47	NATIONAL	12
IOWA	54	Arkansas	46	NEVADA	12
Kentucky	54	OHIO	46	Arizona	11
Maryland	54	Rhode Island	46	Arkansas	11
NATIONAL	54	Tennessee	46	PENNSYLVANIA	10
New Jersey	54	Connecticut	45	Alaska	9
Utah	54	Indiana	45	MICHIGAN	9
Virginia	54	Massachusetts	45	Connecticut	8
Arizona	53	Wyoming	45	Ohio	8
Connecticut	53	Delaware	43	Tennessee	8
Idaho	53	PENNSYLVANIA	43	COLORADO	7
MAINE	53	Alaska	42	Indiana	7
Mississippi	53	Arizona	42	Rhode Island	7
MISSOURI	53	Illinois	42	Kansas	6
OHIO	53	MICHIGAN	42	Massachusetts	6
PENNSYLVANIA	53	NATIONAL	41	MISSOURI	6
Rhode Island	53	NEVADA	40	Washington	6
WEST VIRGINIA	53	New York	40	WISCONSIN	6
WISCONSIN	53	North Carolina	40	Kentucky	5
Indiana	52	FLORIDA	38	Utah	5
Massachusetts	52	Louisiana	38	Wyoming	4
MINNESOTA	52	New Jersey	38	Idaho	3
Nebraska	52	Oklahoma	38	MINNESOTA	3
NEVADA	52	Virginia	38	OREGON	3
Oklahoma	52	Georgia	37	IOWA	2
Alaska	51	Maryland	37	Montana	2
California	51	Texas	37	Nebraska	2
MICHIGAN	51	Alabama	36	NEW HAMPSHIRE	2
North Dakota	51	South Carolina	36	South Dakota	2
South Dakota	50	California	34	Vermont	2
Montana	49	Mississippi	33	WEST VIRGINIA	2
NEW HAMPSHIRE	49	NEW MEXICO	31	MAINE	1
Wyoming	49	Hawaii	23	North Dakota	1

Notes: Capital letters = battleground states; Shaded cells = states carried by Republican George W. Bush in 2004; Unshaded cells = states carried by Democrat John Kerry in 2004. Federal Election Commission official 2004 results, http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2004/2004pres.xls.
Source: Compiled by Thomas A. Watson. All data come from the exit poll surveys conducted by Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International for the AP and television networks; the polls were then pulled from the CNN Election 2004 Website: www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/epolls/.

pessimistic about the future of the country. This tends to favor challengers and Democrats, the definition of Kerry.[5]

Democrats aimed their sights at unmarried women who are more liberal-leaning, while Republicans targeted more conservative married women, especially those with children, and those who work outside the home. The latter group was perceived as a high turnout group, but one that tended to switch its vote between Republicans and Democrats.

While the nonmonolithic nature of the women's vote was well established prior to 2004, many of the "microtargeting" techniques used to reach key slices were new and improved. Postelection analyses generally concluded that the Republicans had the superior microtargeting operation, as this account from the *Washington Post* affirms:

> The Bush operation sniffed out potential voters with precision-guided accuracy, particularly in fast-growing counties beyond the first ring of suburbs of major cities. The campaign used computer models and demographic files to locate probable GOP voters. "They looked at what they read, what they watch, what they spend money on," a party official said. Once those people were identified, the RNC [Republican National Committee] sought to register them, and the campaign used phone calls, mail and front-porch visits—all with a message emphasizing the issues about which they cared most—to encourage them to turn out for Bush.[6]

By 2008, the technology and the retrievable individual-level data will undoubtedly permit even sharper targeting, or "narrow-casting," of messages and media. It is likely that Democrats will put a higher priority on refining their voter data bases before the 2008 presidential election.

Lesson No. 2: *Mobilizing single, non-college-educated, and infrequent women voters is considerably more difficult than it looks on a paper. Gains tend to be incremental rather than sharp.* Without question, Democrats had the right group targeted to help Kerry win the election. Polls showed that the overwhelming majority of never-married, divorced, and widowed women favored Kerry, and statistics from the 2000 election showed that 22 million unmarried women who were eligible to vote did not do so.[7] However, this goal proved to be elusive (particularly to the Kerry

5. Cited by Chuck Raasch, Gannett News Service, "Candidates Face Challenges in Courting Female Voters," *Florida Today*, ⟨http://floridatoday.gannettonline.com/election2004/gns/20040924-51819.html⟩ September 27, 2004.
6. Dan Balz and Mike Allen, "Four More Years Attributed to Rove's Strategy," *Washington Post*, 7 November 2004, sec. A.
7. Susan Page, "Married? Single? Status Affects How Women Vote," *USA TODAY*, 26 August 2004, sec.1A.

campaign and its supporters) in spite of the millions of dollars and the innumerable volunteer hours that were expended to register, educate, and energize this hard-to-reach demographic.

Early on, supporters of this targeting strategy had presumed that pocketbook issues would *overwhelmingly* trump security issues among these women. The campaign literature distributed by groups like America Coming Together, AFL-CIO, NOW, and Media Fund generally emphasized economics and jobs over security issues. But as the campaign progressed, it became evident that the pocketbook premise was not a "universal truth," particularly among middle-class women. The director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, in discussing the results of its September poll, said: "There's a tension among middle-class women who are attracted by Bush's perceived strength on terrorism and concerns about his poor performance on the domestic agenda. 'They will be the story of this election: the way women make this choice,' he predicted."[8]

As it turned out, Democrats had a tougher time reaching their female targets than did Republicans. A postelection survey by Lake Snell Perry & Associates (2004, 2) found that "support for the Democratic candidate . . . eroded among white women, working women, married women, and older women." Kerry did best among minority women, especially first-time voters, and young women. Exit polls showed that the Democratic women who did vote placed the most importance on the economy and jobs, while the Republican women were more concerned about homeland security and terrorism, followed by moral values. The all-important *independent* women, who *split* their votes between Bush and Kerry, put the greatest emphasis on homeland security and terrorism, followed by jobs and the economy (Lake Snell Perry & Associates 2004, 3).

The bottom line is that Republicans were better at mobilizing the infrequent female voters they targeted (conservative moms in rural and suburban areas) than were the Democrats (targeting more liberal-leaning, single, working women in urban areas). From a broader perspective, the results seem to reinforce what social scientists have long known: Fear is a more powerful motivator than money. As one NOW member put it, "The theme of security in a time of war appears to be the major winner — the 'fear gap' clearly played to Bush's advantage" (Bennett 2004). Bush increased his overall share of the women's vote by 5% more than he re-

8. Katherine Q. Seelye, "Kerry in a Struggle for a Democratic Base: Women," *New York Times*, ⟨http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/22/politics/campaign/22women.html?pagewatned=print⟩ September 25, 2004.

ceived in 2000 (48% to 43%). He received a majority of the women's vote in 28 states—all of which he carried. (See Table 2.) He also received a narrow majority of female votes in the two most fiercely fought and critical battleground states—Ohio and Florida. (See Table 3.)

Looking ahead to 2008, the key question is whether having a woman on one or both major parties' presidential tickets may be more effective in mobilizing generally "apolitical" women than are either heavily targeted campaign ads or female surrogate appearances. The political science literature tells us that a "glass-ceiling-breaker" candidate often spikes turnout among the constituency that that person represents. Both Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Condoleezza Rice might well have this effect if they are on presidential tickets in 2008.

Lesson No. 3: *The "woman-to-woman" approach to getting-out-the-female-vote (GOTFV) has become a vital part of each party's campaign strategy.* The 2004 election cycle saw the emergence of many women's groups, each reaching a narrow slice of the female electorate and each with its own clever "marketing" strategies, ranging from house parties to meet-ups at girls-nights-out-oriented festivities and chic "chick" shoes and shirts (MacManus 2006).

In 2004, the "surrogate campaign" featuring the wives of the Democratic and Republican presidential and vice presidential candidates was quite evident, particularly in key battleground states down the final stretch when Laura Bush, Teresa Heinz Kerry, Lynne Cheney, and Elizabeth Edwards were almost omnipresent in key states like Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania. (See Figures 1, 2, and 3.) Each campaign had professionals charged with managing and coordinating the appearances of these "running mates." As an example, the Democrats' *Florida Victory 2004* handbook had an entire section devoted to "surrogate strategy." It identified female voters as one of the key constituency groups to be targeted by the surrogate program and even identified the specific media markets (Orlando, Tampa, Daytona) where surrogates that would appeal to women should be taken.[9] According to the handbook, "When we go to the trouble and expense of bringing a national surrogate into the state, it is obviously desirable to maximize that surrogate's local exposure."[10] The Florida Republicans also planned to use the female surrogate approach early on. Their campaign playbook pledged that

9. Victory 2004 Florida Coordinated Campaign, *Florida Victory 2004*, September 3, 2004, p. 12. The other key constituency groups to be targeted by the surrogate campaign were seniors, African Americans, Hispanics, Jews, veterans, and youth.
10. Ibid., p. 7.

Table 2.   Women's vote for Bush 2004: state-by-state analysis

State	Ranking: % of All Women Who Voted for Bush	State	Ranking: % of All White Women Who Voted for Bush	State	Ranking: % of all Nonwhite Women Who Voted for Bush
Utah	71	Mississippi	89	Oklahoma	50
Idaho	67	Alabama	79	Alaska	47
Wyoming	67	South Carolina	78	Hawaii	47
Nebraska	66	Georgia	76	Arizona	45
Oklahoma	64	Texas	76	NEW MEXICO**	42
Texas	63	Louisiana	74	FLORIDA**	38
Kansas	62	Utah	73	Texas	38
South Dakota	60	North Carolina	72	California	30
Mississippi	59	Oklahoma	69	COLORADO**	28
North Dakota	59	Wyoming	68	NEVADA**	28
Indiana	58	Idaho	67	New Jersey	26
Kentucky	58	Nebraska	67	Washington	24
Montana	58	Indiana	65	Kentucky	22
Alabama	57	Kansas	64	PENNSYLVANIA**	22
Alaska	57	Tennessee	64	WISCONSIN**	21
Georgia	56	Virginia	64	Rhode Island	20
Tennessee	56	Kentucky	62	New York	19
WEST VIRGINIA**	56	South Dakota	61	MICHIGAN**	18
South Carolina	55	Arkansas	60	OHIO**	18
Louisiana	54	Delaware	60	Georgia	17
MISSOURI**	54	North Dakota	60	South Carolina	17
North Carolina	54	Alaska	59	Maryland	16
Arizona	52	MISSOURI**	59	North Carolina	16
COLORADO**	51	Montana	57	Illinois	15
Arkansas	50	WEST VIRGINIA**	57	Connecticut	14
FLORIDA**	50	FLORIDA**	56	Delaware	14
OHIO**	50	COLORADO**	55	Tennessee	14
Virginia	50	OHIO**	55	Virginia	14
IOWA**	49	Arizona	54	Louisiana	13
NEW MEXICO**	49	NEW MEXICO**	54	MISSOURI**	13
NEVADA**	47	Maryland	53	Indiana	12
MICHIGAN**	46	NEVADA**	53	MINNESOTA**	12
MINNESOTA**	46	MICHIGAN**	52	OREGON**	12
PENNSYLVANIA**	46	Illinois	51	Alabama	10
WISCONSIN**	46	New Jersey	51	Arkansas	10
NEW HAMPSHIRE**	45	PENNSYLVANIA**	51	Mississippi	10
Hawaii	43	IOWA**	49	Massachusetts	9
Illinois	43	MINNESOTA**	49	Idaho	–
New Jersey	43	WISCONSIN**	49	IOWA**	–
Washington	43	California	47	Kansas	–
Connecticut	42	Connecticut	47	MAINE**	–
MAINE**	42	New York	47	Montana	–
California	41	NEW HAMPSHIRE**	45	Nebraska	–
Delaware	41	Washington	45	NEW HAMPSHIRE**	–
Maryland	41	OREGON**	43	North Dakota	–
OREGON**	41	MAINE**	42	South Dakota	–
New York	40	Rhode Island	39	Utah	–
Rhode Island	37	Hawaii	37	Vermont	–
Vermont	37	Vermont	37	WEST VIRGINIA**	–
Massachusetts	33	Massachusetts	36	Wyoming	–
NATIONAL	48	NATIONAL	55	NATIONAL	24

Notes: Capital letters = battleground states; Shaded cells = states carried by Republican George W. Bush in 2004; Unshaded cells = states carried by Democrat John Kerry in 2004. Federal Election Commission official 2004 results, http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2004/2004pres.xls.
Source: Compiled by Thomas A. Watson. All data come from the exit poll surveys conducted by Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International for the AP and television networks; the polls were then pulled from the CNN Election 2004 Website: www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/epolls/.

Table 3. Voting patterns in 15 battleground states

	Percent Female			Bush			Kerry		
Battleground State	*Women as a % of All Voters*	*White Women as a % of All Voters*	*Nonwhite Women as a % of All Voters*	*% of All Women Who Voted for Bush*	*% of All White Women Who Voted for Bush*	*% of All Nonwhite Women Who Voted for Bush*	*% of All Women Who Voted for Kerry*	*% of White Women Who Voted for Kerry*	*% of All Nonwhite Women Who Voted for Kerry*
COLORADO**	56	49	7	51	55	28	48	44	72
NEW MEXICO**	55	31	24	49	54	42	49	44	58
OREGON**	55	52	3	41	43	12	59	57	87
FLORIDA**	54	38	16	50	56	38	49	43	62
IOWA**	54	52	2	49	49	–	51	51	–
MAINE**	53	52	1	42	42	–	57	57	–
MISSOURI**	53	47	6	54	59	13	45	40	85
OHIO**	53	46	8	50	55	18	50	45	82
PENNSYLVANIA**	53	43	10	46	51	22	54	48	78
WEST VIRGINIA**	53	50	2	56	57	–	43	42	–
WISCONSIN**	53	47	6	46	49	21	53	50	78
MINNESOTA**	52	49	3	46	49	12	52	51	83
NEVADA**	52	40	12	47	53	28	52	47	71
MICHIGAN**	51	42	9	46	52	18	53	47	82
NEW HAMPSHIRE**	49	47	2	45	45	–	54	53	—

Notes: Battleground states were those identified by CNN as "showdown" states.
Capital letters = battleground states; Shaded cells = states carried by Republican George W. Bush in 2004; Unshaded cells = states carried by Democrat John Kerry in 2004. Federal Election Commission official 2004 results, http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2004/2004pres.xls.
Source: Compiled by Thomas A. Watson. All data come from the exit poll surveys conducted by Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International for the AP and television networks; the polls were then pulled from the CNN Election 2004 Website: www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/epolls/.
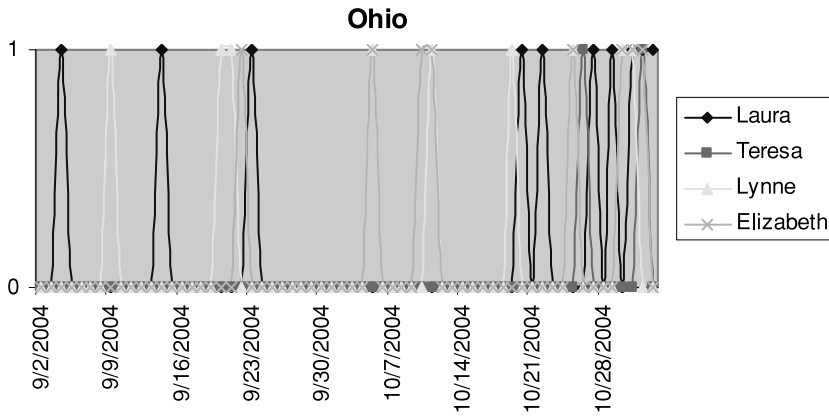
Ohio

FIGURE 1.   Presidential and vice presidential candidate wives' visits: Ohio. (Sources: Compiled by Andrew Quecan from "The Note" by ABCNEWS Political Unit, candidate Websites, George Washington University's Democracy in Action Website, http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/.)
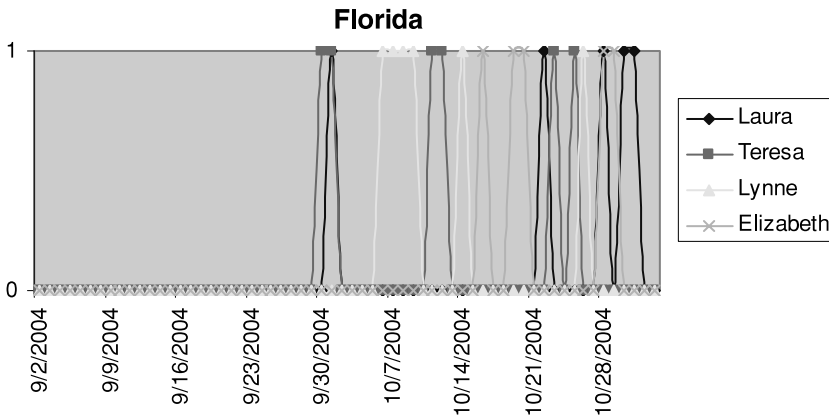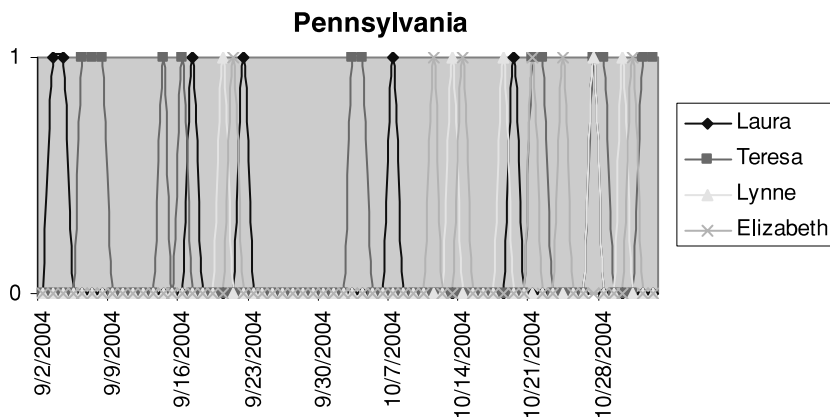
Florida

FIGURE 2.   Presidential and vice presidential candidate wives' visits: Florida. (Sources: Compiled by Andrew Quecan from "The Note" by ABCNEWS Political Unit, candidate Websites, George Washington University's Democracy in Action Website, http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/.)

rallies with "high-level surrogates like the First Lady" would be used for volunteer recruitment (Republican Party 2004). Note that some 3,000 volunteers were signed up at a rally in Orlando at which Laura Bush appeared.

Pennsylvania

F<small>IGURE</small> 3.   Presidential and vice presidential candidate wives' visits: Pennsylvania. (Sources: Compiled by Andrew Quecan from "The Note" by ABCNEWS Political Unit, candidate Websites, George Washington University's Democracy in Action Website, http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/.)

In general, turnout in the presidential battleground states increased by 6.3%. In hotly contested Florida and Ohio, it rose by more than 8% (Ritchie 2004), mostly "in regions of Republican strength."[11] The GOP won the turnout game and carried nine of the 15 battleground states (Table 3).

The "high profile female surrogate" campaign is likely to become even more finely tuned in 2008. Some analysts have already predicted that "all attention [will] again [be] paid on the two big truly swing states, Florida and Ohio" (Ritchie 2004).

Lesson No. 4: *The outreach to women voters escalates in key states the closer it gets to Election Day—when polls are showing the election "too close to call."* Why? Because historically, women are more likely to be late deciders than men. In August of 2004, political scientist Sue Carroll predicted the emergence of that same pattern: "This election may well be won by the presidential candidate who does the better job of mobilizing and speaking to the concerns of women voters, especially those still undecided women voters who will make their decisions between now and Election Day" (Junk 2004). Sure enough, with less than two weeks

11. Larry Eichel, "Lessons Learned From the Bush Win," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, ⟨http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/special_packages/election2004/10122793.htm?tem⟩ November 7, 2004; Paul Farhi and James V. Grimaldi, "How Ohio Was Won," *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, 8–14 November 2004, p. 13.

left in the campaign, "both candidates [were] making emotional appeals to undecided women, who, if the polls [were] accurate, could [have] total[ed] as many as 11 million voters."[12] However, some pollsters admitted that "the exact demographics of the undecided woman voter are unclear," although one surmised that "the undecided woman is likely to be single, older than 55, with little formal education past high school and more likely to identify herself as a liberal."[13] As previously noted, Democrat Kerry made some inroads with this group but not as much as had been forecast.

The emergence of "two campaigns" within one presidential election cycle—one for early voters, the other for election day voters—began to gel in 2004. It will intensify in 2008 as more states adopt early voting and move to make absentee voting easier. This obviously intensifies the need for more focus-group work and greater attentiveness to age. Typically, older voters cast their ballots earlier than younger voters. We can expect more intense generation-based targeting in 2008.

Key Research Questions

From the four lessons learned come a number of research questions for women-in-politics scholars to examine more closely in future election cycles:

1. *Timing of decision making*. We need to probe more deeply into the demographics of late-deciding female voters. (It is easier to tell which way they are leaning than to gauge whether they will actually vote.) Understanding more precisely who these women are and how they eventually make up their minds about issues or candidates could help campaigns plan strategies for converting them to firm votes.

Are late deciders caught in the tension between poor performance on domestic issues and strength on international terrorism? Would a female candidate provide just enough motivation to push them to one side? When persuaded to vote for one side, how can late deciders be encouraged to vote early or absentee or to hold to that side on election day?

One may surmise that a portion of women voters will always make their decisions late and that campaigns need to plan their strategies

12. Joseph Curl, "Despite Campaign Tactics, Female Vote Remains Elusive," *Washington Times*, ⟨http://www.washingtontimes.com/functions/print.php?StoryID=20041021-120937-4652r21⟩ October 21, 2004.

13. Republican pollster Sergio Breglio, quoted in Musgrave, "Candidates Chase Votes of Undecided Women."

accordingly. In that case, what are the most effective tactics for identifying and persuading eleventh-hour deciders?

2. *Generational dimensions of campaigning*. What works best to reach young, middle-age, and older women voters? Are their issues and priorities different? The evidence to date is mixed (Lake Snell Perry & Associates 2004; MacManus 1996).

In 2004, Kerry was successful in turning out young, especially first-time, women voters but lost support among older women. Does appealing to one generation necessarily alienate another generation, or are there issues and candidates that can unify women across the age spectrum?

Perhaps age is best considered in combination with factors like education level, race and ethnicity, employment outside the home, or blue-collar versus white-collar job. What are the key combinations that a campaign can use to its benefit?

3. *Marital status and children*. Is there more to the "marriage gap" than meets the eye? It is well documented that married people—men as well as women—are more optimistic and live longer than those who are unmarried. A corollary is that unmarried women feel more pessimistic and vulnerable. This feeling of insecurity could translate into favoring the political party that promises more social programs. The truth is that unmarried women today have more resources than their grandmothers did. The circumstances of a woman's marital status—a choice of career over marriage and family, a nasty versus amicable divorce, widowhood, cohabitation without marriage—can affect a woman's perspective. Is it worth sorting out these nuances? Is the assumption about a woman's political leaning based on marital status dangerously close to a stereotype?

Having children changes the equation for both married and unmarried women. Children give women first-hand experience with such issues as affordable health care, quality of schools, neighborhood safety, illegal drugs, choice of military service, higher education costs, and future employment opportunities. Controlling for marital status, what are the key differences in issues and priorities between women with children and those without?

Fear has proven to be an effective campaign tactic. Is it possible for a campaign to effectively diffuse fear engendered by an opponent? Is it harder to quell fear related to international issues than that related to domestic issues?

4. *The effectiveness of the female surrogate campaign*. What type of female surrogate is selected to target specific audiences? How effective are local surrogates? The presumption is that national surrogates are bet-

ter, yet in the aftermath of the 2004 election, many have concluded that neighbors are more effective than outsiders in drawing voters to the polls.

What kind of forum is best for which kind of surrogate? Does a national surrogate attract more targeted women in a rally on state capitol grounds or at a garden club luncheon, for example? Is a local surrogate most effective in a child health clinic or on a city-to-city bus tour? What is the best purpose for each event: signing up volunteers, raising money, garnering votes?

How can meet-ups, clothing gimmicks, and similar activities be made more effective? How can campaigns further exploit technology—Websites on the Internet, cellphone messaging, and podcasting, for example?

5. *Different mobilization approaches to non-college-educated women*. Historically, this demographic has been hard to engage. Why? Is it an attitude of powerlessness or perhaps an indifference to public affairs? Is it a lack of education about citizen responsibility or about the candidates and issues? Is the reason more pragmatic—a lack of time, child care, or transportation to the polls?

Could campaigns more readily identify and motivate these women through microtargeting and other techniques? How and when should state and local party organizations gear up voter registration drives aimed specifically at noncollege graduates? Which messages are most effective for this slice of the female voting demographic? To what degree do television ads, direct mail ads, front-porch meetings, neighbor-to-neighbor interactions, and other outreach strategies work among this group?

As the campaigns become more strategic in their efforts to reach out to women, scholars have wonderful opportunities to investigate new theories and offer fresh explanations of female voting behavior. Will the dynamics of the women's vote be different this year?

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Gender Pools and Puzzles: Charting a "Women's Path" to the Legislature

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The "social eligibility pool" stands as one of the most common, and most powerful, explanations for women's underrepresentation in elective office.[1] By this view, women are underrepresented in elite politics because sex discrimination and socialization have produced a gender imbalance in the occupations that typically precede a political career (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). The scarcity of women in law and business has implications for politics: "The absence of women from these stepping-stones to political office does explain a good portion of women's under-representation in public office. A decrease in this under-representation helps explain gains in women holding office" (1994, 179).

The eligibility pool varies somewhat by the type of office and by state, and some women officeholders were homemakers or had careers in female-dominated professions (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). Nevertheless, gender differences in occupational background are believed to pose a substantial obstacle to increasing the presence of women in public office. R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Janet Clark (1994, 112) explain that "it is safe to say that women's occupations and activities have not provided the same sort of gateway to political office as presti-

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1. For the purposes of this essay, I limit my interest in the pool to occupational background rather than previous officeholding experience. The term "eligibility pool" may include lower-level offices, particularly if the office has a well-defined opportunity structure or ladder (Schlesinger 1966). This is known as the "pipeline" problem facing women in politics. To the extent that previous officeholding is a valued credential for a given office (e.g., president, senator, member of Congress, or governor), women confront a serious structural problem resulting from their relatively recent entry into the pool of lower-level offices (Duerst-Lahti 1998). Whether women run for the legislature has implications for state policymaking, but women's candidacies have additional consequences: State legislative office is a stepping-stone to congressional and statewide office, making women state legislators a natural pool of women poised to run for higher office.

gious male occupations." This account predicts that the level of women's representation will inevitably increase in tandem with women's gains in the professions and improvements in women's general socioeconomic position (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). Indeed, the percentage of women in the labor force and the percentage of women lawyers are usually positively correlated with the presence of women state legislators (Norrander and Wilcox 1998; Williams 1990).

By all indicators, women continue to make gains in the eligibility pool (Costello, Wight, and Stone 2003). Women are increasingly educated and are moving into the professions in record numbers. Women's presence in elite politics has increased as well: Women comprised fewer than 5% of state legislators in 1971, but today they are over one-fifth of legislators (CAWP 2005b). More women have also won statewide office: Women were fewer than 10% of statewide elective executive officeholders in the early 1970s but are now over one-quarter of these officeholders (CAWP 2004, 2005a).

Yet a close inspection of the 2004 election results reveals that women's progress in achieving elective office in the states has slowed. The 2004 elections continued the plateau in women's representation that began in the mid-to-late 1990s. Incumbency remains an obstacle to women's candidacies (Burrell 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). Yet there are many more open seats in state legislative races than congressional ones. After the 2004 elections, women comprised 22.5% of state legislators, in keeping with the level of women's representation since 1999 (Carroll 2005). Thus, although more than one-quarter of state legislative seats turned over in the 2004 elections, the presence of female legislators did not increase.[2] Women's representation increased somewhat in 16 states, but decreased in 19 states (Carroll 2005). Put simply, "there is no invisible hand at work to insure that more women will seek and be elected to office with each subsequent election" (Carroll 2005, 25). Indeed, women comprised only about 23% of major-party general election candidates for the legislature in 2004 (Sanbonmatsu 2006a). Women's progress as statewide officeholders has slowed in recent years as well (Carroll 2004). After the elections, 25.1% of statewide elective offices were held by women (Sanbonmatsu 2006a).

The plateau in women in state legislative office—which is usually an entry level office—was not predicted by the social eligibility pool

2. The 2002 turnover data were provided to me by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

explanation.[3] The flagging numbers of women in the states raise a number of puzzles about how gender and officeholding are related. In the remainder of this essay, I revisit the eligibility pool account of women's representation and argue that it has significant shortcomings as a causal explanation. I propose that we direct our attention to how changes occur in beliefs about the types of backgrounds that are thought to be desirable in politicians—the "informal qualifications" for public office. In particular, I suggest that we work to identify the conditions under which women can take a "women's path" to the legislature from female-dominated occupations.[4]

Taking Gender Differences in the Path to Office Seriously

Scholars have long observed that many women take a different path to office compared to men (Burrell 1994; Carroll and Strimling 1983; Diamond 1977; Dolan and Ford 1997; Kirkpatrick 1974; Thomas 1994, 2002). Today's women legislators come from a more diverse set of backgrounds and more professional backgrounds than the women who served in the 1970s and earlier decades (Dolan and Ford 1997; Thomas 1994), but gender differences in the path to office are hardly limited to the past (Burrell 1994).

Indeed, more than a few women officeholders have backgrounds that differ from their male counterparts. A Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP 2001) survey found that the lawyer's path to office is much more likely to be taken by men than by women: 19% of men state legislators but only 10% of women are attorneys. Meanwhile, 22% of women but only 7% of men are school teachers or administrators, and 8% of women but only 1% of men are nurses or health-care professionals (CAWP 2001). Thus, twice as many women legislators hail from education as from legal fields. Gender differences are evident in the biographies of members of Congress as well, with men much more likely to be lawyers than women, and women more likely to be educators than men (Burrell 1994). On the whole, state legislators come to office from a wide range of occupational backgrounds (Hirsch 1996). The percentage of legislators who are attorneys has declined, though they remain the single largest occupational group at 16% of legislators (ibid. 1996).

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3. Most state legislators have no prior elective officeholding experience (Pew Center on the States 2003).
4. I borrow the idea of a "women's path" from the "widow's path" that women have frequently taken to Congress (Gertzog 1995).

If we revisit the qualifications question from the perspective of state legislators' actual backgrounds, the pool of potential female state legislative candidates increases dramatically. Despite the movement of women into nontraditional fields, occupations remain highly segregated by sex (Reskin and Roos 1990). According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, women were 27.6% of lawyers in 2003 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2004), yet women were 73.8% of workers employed in education-related occupations, including 81.7% of elementary and middle school teachers, 55.2% of secondary school teachers, and 44.9% of postsecondary teachers (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2004). Women were only 29.9% of physicians and surgeons, but 92.1% of registered nurses. The total number of those employed in education and health-care occupations also greatly exceeds the number of lawyers. Meanwhile, women in government jobs provide another source of candidates: women were 56.8% of government workers in 2000 (Costello, Wight, and Stone 2003).

Moreover, the time demands of legislative service and, frequently, relatively low legislative compensation mean that the opportunity costs of serving in the legislature may discourage officeholding. The fact that women's earnings are, on average, lower than those of men, however, may make legislative service of disproportionate interest to women. Precisely because the opportunity costs of service are likely to be lower for women, women may be more interested in pursuing state legislative office than men (Maddox 2004). In short, the states provide numerous opportunities for women candidates.

Studying Change in Informal Qualifications

Rethinking the informal qualifications for political leadership is as large a project as rethinking gender itself. It is important to acknowledge the hurdles of launching a political career from a female-dominated occupation. Susan Carroll and Wendy Strimling (1983, 5) observed that the "standards by which we evaluate qualifications for public office-holding are defined by men's experiences." The standards of voters, political parties, interest groups, political action committees (PACs), and donors may be difficult to change. Carroll (1993, 204) acknowledged that women from female-dominated occupations "may have to work harder to prove that they are 'qualified.'" Female-dominated occupations tend to be lower in prestige and lower paid than male-dominated ones (Reskin and Roos 1990). Individuals in these careers may also lack flexible work

schedules, which may make it harder to combine outside employment with officeholding (Carroll and Strimling 1983). The personality traits deemed most desirable in politicians are also linked to gender and to gender roles, which poses an additional challenge for women candidates (Deaux and Lewis 1984); traits associated with men are typically seen as more important to officeholding than those traits associated with women (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988).

Because women are unequal in society and have fewer socioeconomic resources, they may be less attractive candidates in comparison with men (Chapman 1993). The idea that women have a lesser role in politics because of gender inequalities in social status is a parsimonious and persuasive account. Political elites do not typically represent a broad range of social groups (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Eldersveld 1989; Matthews 1983; Prewitt 1970; Putnam 1976; Seligman et al. 1974).

But ideas about politicians do change. This suggests that our theories need to specify the conditions under which the image of the "typical politician" changes. What factors can fuel an increase in the pool of women who are considered "qualified" for public office? An obvious answer, and the one proposed by the social eligibility pool account, is advances in women's professional standing and educational attainment. This route does not necessitate a change in beliefs about qualifications but, instead, an increase in the number of qualified women.

Yet there are other routes by which the eligibility pool can become more gender inclusive. For example, one such mechanism is changes in gender-role attitudes and greater acceptance of women in politics (Dolan 2004; Ferree 1974). The survey question often used as a benchmark of voter bias against women candidates is a hypothetical one about whether voters would support a qualified woman presidential candidate. Gallup asked voters in 1937: "Would you vote for a woman for President if she were qualified in every other respect?" (Falk and Jamieson 2003, 46). Times have changed, and women are no longer thought to be automatically disqualified for office by virtue of gender; indeed, the updated survey question recently used by Roper asks about voting for a woman for president if nominated by your party "if she were qualified for the job" (Falk and Jamieson 2003, 46). As the electorate has become more accepting of women, women should be treated equally by voters. Indeed, more liberal gender-role attitudes and ideology are typically positively related to the pattern of women's officeholding in the states (Brace et al. 2002; Norrander and Wilcox 1998).

Meanwhile, some electoral contexts present opportunities for female candidates. One such example is the so-called 1992 Year of the Woman, in which women benefited from the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas hearings as well as from anti-incumbency sentiment (Carroll 1994; Cook, Thomas, and Wilcox 1994; Duerst-Lahti and Verstegen 1995; Paolino 1995; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994). The idea of balancing the gubernatorial ticket by including a female candidate for lieutenant governor has become popular in recent years (Fox and Oxley 2004). Today, only eight women serve as governors; yet, 15 women serve as lieutenant governors, making it the most common statewide elective executive office held by women (CAWP 2005a). Under some conditions, then, being a woman may itself be a desirable candidate qualification.

Occupations and Qualifications

I propose that a missing piece of the puzzle in studies of gender and candidacy is attention to a particular group of potential women candidates: women from female-dominated occupations. In their discussion of the social eligibility pool, Darcy, Welch, and Clark (1994, 180) observed: "More research is needed on how women can enter political life using their existing backgrounds and experiences." Few scholars have pursued such a line of inquiry. Because of the prevalence of gender differences in the path to office and continued occupational sex-segregation, however, this is a pressing research agenda for scholars interested in women's representation. The very definition of the social eligibility pool is endogenous to women's representation. If the social eligibility pool includes not just the traditionally male-dominated professions that have usually been stepping-stones to office but female-dominated occupations as well, then a shortage of "qualified" women candidates for entry-level public offices may not cause women's underrepresentation after all.

This suggests an investigation of the conditions under which women are able to take a "women's path" to office, by which I mean a background in female-dominated occupations. What explains changes in the desired qualifications for office? Under what conditions do conceptions of the social eligibility pool change? What mechanisms expand the social eligibility pool to be not only more inclusive of women but also more inclusive of women from education, nursing, and other predominantly female fields? If women, like men, are strategic (Fulton 2003; Pearson and McGhee 2004), then we would expect to see more women

run for office from female-dominated occupations when the structure of political opportunities is more favorable.

I briefly outline three directions for research about candidacy and female-dominated occupations. Changes in the issues on the states' agendas, changes in recruitment patterns, and changes in the numbers of women in office may increase the likelihood that women can take a women's path to the state legislature.

New Issues and Changes in Candidate Criteria

We know that issue context can help women's election to office. Women candidates may benefit from voters' stereotypes about the personality traits and issue competencies of politicians (Dolan 2001; Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003; Kahn 1996; Schaffner 2005). In a similar vein, Fox and Oxley (2003) suggest that some statewide elective executive offices are "feminine," or in keeping with women's traditional areas of expertise, compared to "masculine" offices that are more consistent with stereotypes about men's abilities and issue competence. For example, in 2005, only five women serve as attorney general in the states, but 10 women serve as chief state education official (CAWP 2005a). Because of voter stereotypes, then, we can expect that women are more likely to be candidates in some years and for some offices than others, and that women may want to accentuate "female" campaign issues.

How beliefs and context shape women's opportunities has also been examined from the vantage point of political culture. Voters may be more comfortable with women in politics in settings where the political culture is more public-spirited than individualistic (Diamond 1977; Elazar 1984; Hill 1981). Eileen McDonagh (2002) also makes a cultural argument in her cross-national study, suggesting that where state policies recognize the significance of women's reproductive labor by providing social benefits for individuals engaged in care work, more women hold office.

I propose a related line of inquiry about how issues are related to women's opportunities for office. The mechanism identified by most of these studies is the fit between voter stereotypes and women candidates. An important mechanism that may connect the issue context to women's officeholding is the qualifications for office. Changes in issue context may expand the notion of the eligibility pool to include women from female-dominated professions.

For example, demographic changes such as suburbanization or federal policy changes could increase the salience of education as an issue

in the states. In turn, an occupational background in education—a female field—may be a more attractive candidate qualification. Thus, an increase in the salience of policy debates related to the traditional expertise of women should lead to changes in the candidate pool.

Changes in Recruitment Patterns

The composition of the social eligibility pool may also be altered by the political actors engaged in recruitment. One might expect, for example, that changes in the involvement of interest groups or PACs tied to female-dominated occupations in electoral politics could have implications for the types of credentials that are sought in candidates. Similarly, were the gender and/or occupational background of party, interest group, or PAC leaders to change, ideas about which individuals are qualified might expand to include women from predominantly female occupations. Recruitment patterns and occupational background may also vary by party due to occupational differences between Democrats and Republicans (Sanbonmatsu 2002).

Meanwhile, party competition, party realignment, or candidate scarcity may lead to changes in the opportunity structure facing potential candidates (Canon 1990; Diamond 1977). Shifts in the normal recruitment patterns may lead to a search for new types of candidates, which may create more openings for women candidates with experience in female-dominated fields.

Changes in legislative institutions may also alter the typical qualifications sought in officeholders. For example, the state legislatures have become more "professionalized" and more similar to the full-time institution of the U.S. Congress (Rosenthal 1989; Squire 1988, 1992, 1997; Thompson and Moncrief 1992). As legislative service becomes more of a full-time job and less of a part-time job, the occupational backgrounds of legislators may become more diverse; it may no longer be necessary to combine legislative service with additional employment, such as a law practice (Squire 1992). Other institutional changes such as term limits may also have implications for occupational backgrounds.

The "Critical Mass Hypothesis" with Respect to Candidacy

One mechanism that facilitates women's election to office is the precedent of female officeholders. An historical legacy of women's officeholding can undermine voter stereotypes and reduce bias against women,

reshaping the public's expectations about what a politician should look like (Diamond 1977; Dolan 2004; MacManus 1981; Mandel 1981). In addition, Kanter's (1977) "critical mass" theory about sex ratios within organizations has led to a growing body of work that investigates whether a critical mass or certain threshold of women within legislatures is needed in order for gender differences in behavior to emerge (Beckwith 2002). According to this logic, when women are vastly outnumbered within legislatures, there is more pressure to conform to dominant norms, reducing the likelihood that women will act "as women" on behalf of their women constituents. Thus, increasing the presence of women within the institution may enable women to pursue a wider range of activities.

Extending this logic to the realm of candidacy, we might expect that greater numerical representation of women provides more freedom for women to pursue office from a wider range of backgrounds. In those settings with a stronger track record of women in public office, it may be easier for women to run for the legislature from female-dominated occupations. Thus, numbers may be related to qualifications. If this dynamic is correct, an increase in female legislators could subsequently lead to more heterogeneity among the types of women who run for office. Indeed, the idea of critical mass has received some criticism for assuming a link between descriptive and substantive representation; after all, increasing the presence of women legislators may lead to more diversity among women legislators and less cohesive behavior by women as a group (Reingold 2000). In sum, the level of women's representation may have implications for the types of backgrounds from which women can legitimately seek office.

Research on these questions would require data on the occupational backgrounds of potential candidates, candidates (both winners and losers), and legislators. In general, we know very little about how voters use candidates' occupations to make inferences (McDermott 2005). Are women successful when they run for the legislature from a female-dominated occupation? Does the likelihood of candidacy from female professions depend on the track record of female candidates with those biographies? Aggregate election results cannot reveal how occupational background affects candidates' chances or how these relationships have changed over time. Instead, we would want to examine individual-level data. We would want to consider how gender and occupational background shape electoral results by analyzing who does and does not run, as well as how various candidate backgrounds affect electoral success (Black and Erickson 2000).

It is worth noting, however, that we cannot assume that the pool leads directly to officeholding. Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox (2005) find that women in the eligibility pool (i.e., lawyers, educators, business people, and political activists) are much less likely to consider running for office than similarly situated men. Meanwhile, studies of political parties reveal that the dearth of women party leaders, the existence of gender bias, and gender differences in social networks reduce the likelihood that the parties will recruit women candidates (Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2006b). Thus, the relationship of the eligibility pool to officeholding is contingent rather than automatic.

Conclusion

Prior to winning suffrage, women used their location in the private sphere as a justification for their political involvement (Baker 1984; Cott 1987; Skocpol 1992). Women's family responsibilities and housekeeping role translated into concern for social provision in the public sphere. These social reform and housekeeping issues often served as the basis for the candidacies of the few women who ran for office in the early twentieth century (Andersen 1996). For much of the twentieth century, the accepted pathways for women's officeholding were uniquely female; women achieved office as housewives, widows, and from women's occupations (Carroll and Strimling 1983; Gertzog 1995; Kirkpatrick 1974).

The bases from which women can launch political careers have expanded: Women now have more paths available to them with the enactment of equal educational and employment laws. But inequities in the economy persist, with important consequences for politics. The dearth of women in the social eligibility pool is a well-recognized structural barrier to women's representation. However, if women in female-dominated occupations are also eligible, then we have discovered a large supply of potential candidates.

Instead of treating the contours of the eligibility pool as given, we need to revisit the very notion of the pool and identify the conditions that lead to changes in how the pool is defined. What types of electoral conditions and institutional settings have been conducive to women's pursuit of political careers from female-dominated occupations?

As we look ahead to the 2008 elections in the states, we should reconsider whether women are truly as underrepresented in the pool as we too often assume. Waiting another generation for women's share of the eligibility pool to expand seems misguided when a pool of qualified women is

already waiting in the wings. After all, as Jeane J. Kirkpatrick (1974, 60) observed: "To become a legislator it is only necessary to win an election."

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Intersectionality in Electoral Politics:
A Mess Worth Making

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Prior to the recent reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, I was involved in numerous conversations regarding strategies for its re-

newal.[1] These conversations prompted me to reflect not only on the impact of the Voting Rights Act for African-American citizenship but in particular on the ways in which it did for African-American women what the Constitution and its amendments had previously failed to do. After all, it is not until the passage of this legislation that African-American women are first extended a modicum of citizenship in the United States.

Although we typically think of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as affecting representation for people of color, we would do better to recognize the increased representation of women following its passage. Shortly thereafter, 1,469 African Americans served in elected office from the national to local levels, and only 160 were African-American women. As the numbers of African-American officeholders increased, African-American women were central to that growth. By 2001, there was a reported 9,101 black elected officials, of whom 3,220 were African-American women. Since 1990, African-American women have outpaced African-American men in elective office success, and over the last decade, all of the growth in the number of black elected officials is attributable to these women. This reverses the trends of the 1970s immediately following the passage of the Voting Rights Act when 82% of the growth in black elected officials was attributed to African-American men (Bositis 2001). Similarly, the overall numbers of women serving in state legislatures steadily grew between 1976 and 1996.

Yet to the puzzlement of women and politics scholars, these numbers began to plateau in the mid-1990s and remain static today (Sanbonmatsu 2006). This is not, however, the trend for African-American women and other women of color. Their numbers, though small, have continued to increase at a steady pace (Smooth 2006). The impact of the Voting Rights Act extends beyond increasing representation for racial minorities, as women's representation also increased with its passage.

A consideration of the impact of the Voting Rights Act at the intersection of race and gender politics makes conversations messy. It requires the interaction of two parallel yet divergent areas of scholarship and activism: race and politics and women and politics. Such interaction requires each to yield space and to recognize their shared interests. For race and politics scholars and activists, this means relinquishing their proverbial hold on the Voting Rights Act as a racial policy. For women

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1. These include two recent conferences: "Lessons From the Past, Prospects for the Future: Honoring the 40th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965" at Yale University, hosted by Khalilah Brown-Dean; and "Who Draws the Lines? The Consequences of Redistricting Reform for Minority Voters" at the University of North Carolina's School of Law, hosted by the Center for Civil Rights.

and politics scholars and activists, however, this means making an investment in the ongoing battles to protect and extend voting rights.

Examining the significance of the Voting Rights Act to multiple communities requires us to consider more broadly what seriously engaging intersectionality means for electoral politics. The primary purpose of this essay is to illustrate the usefulness of an intersectionality framework for understanding electoral politics. Here, I reflect on three issues in electoral politics that are traditionally considered within the realm of gender politics or race politics. I offer a rereading of these areas using an intersectionality framework. As is typical of intersectionality politics, the focus of each area shifts and new issues emerge for consideration. From these thought exercises, it becomes clear that we as scholars, pundits, and political strategists miss important aspects of these critical issues when we adhere to using race or gender as separate, distinct spheres of inquiry. In this discussion, I primarily engage race from the perspective of African Americans, but these issues manifest themselves in similar ways when we consider additional racial groups. Although the focus here is primarily on African-American women in electoral politics, the core issues have implications for all women of color.

I begin by considering how the narrative of the voting rights struggle shifts when we view it from the intersection of race and gender. I follow by discussing what I call the "the new black voter," who emerges as a result of the increasing numbers of African-American women voting in relationship to their male counterparts. I link the new black voter to the increased incarceration rates of African-American men, and point out that when we look at this issue as an issue of race or gender, we miss the larger story. Next, I examine the gender gap as a social construction in electoral politics that resists the realities of intersectionality and, in doing so, limits the possibilities of progressive campaigns. The remainder of the essay focuses on examples from the 2004 elections in which political strategists effectively used an intersectionality framework as an asset in their campaigns.

Strategists, pundits, and scholars will find that employing an intersectionality framework further complicates electoral politics and likewise comes with costs. Across history, when African-American women have pointed out their positioning at the intersection of race and gender politics, they were accused of being race traitors, operating with a false consciousness or, in contemporary parlance, selling out. Essentially, they have been accused of making a mess of what many see as discreet domains of politics: race politics and gender politics. In this essay, I argue

that attentiveness to the intersections of race and gender in electoral politics is indeed a mess worth making. We can look back to the 2004 elections and look ahead to 2008 to see that the fate of progressive politics may depend upon the degree to which those at the intersections—women of color—are made visible during elections. Encouraging women of color to turn out to the polls and even to become candidates may be the best way to ensure the future of progressive politics. Resisting the desires to make tidy categories of voters and candidates, and allowing the messiness of categorizing voters and candidates to come to the forefront, will build better models for studying electoral politics and will help in devising more effective political campaigns.

A History of Mess Making: African-American Women and the Struggle for Voting Rights

What is often overlooked in discussions of the road to democratic inclusion for both African Americans and women is the exclusion African-American women experienced in both of these struggles. African American-women's vantage point complicates the dominant narratives of the voting rights struggle. The words of former slave and suffrage activist Sojourner Truth in her speech "Ain't I a Woman" are indicative of African-American women's predicament at the intersection of the suffrage debates. In her impassioned rhetoric, Truth sought recognition from both white female suffragists and black male suffragists, who willfully neglected the fate of African-American women in early suffrage debates. In subsequent speeches, Truth and other African-American women activists made arguments for bestowing on African-American women the full inclusion and citizenship that voting would ensure. Making such demands epitomizes early mess making, yet despite the best efforts of these early mess makers, it is not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 that African-American women reach this moment of full citizenship and inclusion.

With the passage of the Voting Rights Act, African-American women went from zero inclusion under the constitutional provisions of the United States to political inclusion and citizenship. At its inception in 1787, the U.S. Constitution disregarded the humanity of African-American women by classifying them as three-fifths of a person and thereby limiting any rights to citizenship. Ironically, we can now look at the three-fifths classification and regard it as "inclusive" and "pro-

gressive" since African-American women later lost *all* status under the Constitution. Mamie Locke (1997) points out that African-American women would move from three-fifths of a person under the Constitution to total exclusion from constitutional protections with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, which extended the right to vote to black men only. Even when women secured the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, large numbers of African-American women were still denied access to the franchise through the cultural norms of the Jim Crow South and the political structures of literacy tests, poll taxes, the grandfather clause, and all-white primaries. In light of these de facto and de jure means of exclusion, we see the heightened significance of the Voting Rights Act for African-American women. To the extent that voting and citizenship are linked, it was not until 1965 that the United States included African-American women as full citizens—the first time in the country's history.

Once extended democratic citizenship, African-American women exercised their right to participate both in informal and formal politics. A recent study of black political participation at the macro level concludes that since the 1980s, African-American women have been as likely as their male counterparts to engage in political work activities, such as attending a rally or speech and carrying membership in a political party or other political organizations (Harris, Sinclair-Chapman, and McKenzie, 2005). Like African-American men, following the passage of the Voting Rights Act, African-American women ran for and won elected offices on all levels, and they now outpace their male counterparts. As voters, they are also exceeding their male counterparts in turning out at the polls, marking the emergence of what I term the new black voter, a voter who is centrally defined by gender. Simply examining the differences in voting between African-American men and women, however, masks a larger issue for the African-American community.

The Emergence of the "New Black Voter"

Women and politics scholars have made us aware that women generally turn out to vote in higher numbers and in higher percentages than do men. This has been true for all groups of women except Asian-American women across the last five presidential elections. In 2004, Asian-American

women also slightly outvoted their male counterparts. For African Americans, the difference between men and women is the greatest (Center for American Women and Politics 2005). According to data from the Voter News Service, the numbers of African Americans casting their ballots increased by one million between 1996 and 2000 and by 4.1 million between 2000 and 2004. African-American women cast 60% of these votes in 2000 and 58% in 2004 (Bositis 2001, 2005). The higher turnout rate among female voters has become an important feature of electoral politics, particularly for women and politics scholars.

The increasing disparities in voting between African-American men and women are actually alarming when we focus attention on what these voting patterns signify from a race and politics perspective. These disparities signify a more critical problem that stands to impede democratic inclusiveness for African Americans for years to come and to further compromise the fragility of America's status as a representative democratic state. Using an intersectionality framework, the larger percentages of African-American women voting must be considered in tandem with the loss of voting rights for an ever-increasing number of African-American men through felony disenfranchisement laws. These laws, which differ by state, restrict access to the ballot for ex-felons, under conditions ranging from disenfranchisement only while imprisoned to permanent lifetime disenfranchisement. It is estimated that 13% of African-American men are currently disenfranchised as a result of felony disenfranchisement laws across the country (Mauer 2002).

Since the 1980s, the national crime policy trends aimed at getting "tough on crime" have contributed to the incarceration of petty drug criminals by inducing harsher possession penalties, particularly in inner-city communities of color, while promoting treatment options in suburban, white communities (Maur 2004). Such policies have contributed to disproportionate numbers of African Americans and Latinos entangled in the criminal justice system. While African Americans make up only 13% of the U.S. population, as of 2004, they comprise 41% of those incarcerated. Latinos are similarly disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system. Latinos comprise only 13% of the U.S. population, yet constitute 19% of the nation's state and federal prisons and jails (Harrison and Beck 2005). As the prison industrial complex grows, the effect on African-American men is staggering, as they currently represent over 40% of the nation's prisoners and comprise only 6% of the national population (ibid.).

The impact of these statistics is even more compelling when viewed in the context of a single state's voting population. Ryan King and Marc Maur (2004) examined the impact of Georgia's felony disenfranchisement laws on African Americans in the state. By 2003, 12.6% of adult African-American men were disenfranchised in the state, meaning that one in every eight men in the state is ineligible to vote (King and Maur 2004). The decreasing population of eligible black male voters has had a deleterious effect on the electoral gains of African Americans in the state of Georgia over the last 20 years. This can mean big losses for African American-representation in Georgia, given that African Americans have elected the largest number of African-American state lawmakers and the largest number of African-American women of any state legislature (Smooth, 2006). In addition, African Americans have elected a consecutive run of African-American mayors in the city of Atlanta, including Shirley Franklin—the only African-American woman to lead a city with a population of more than 100,000.

The research of The Sentencing Project and work by political scientists[2] illustrate that the growth of the prison industrial complex marks the next phase of the black voting rights saga. The consequence of disproportionate incarceration rates, coupled with the severity of disenfranchisement laws across the country, is rapidly shrinking the pool of eligible voters in both African-American and Latino communities across the country (Dameo and Ochoa 2003; Manza and Uggen 2004; Maur 2004).

This analysis brings into focus how felony disenfranchisement laws and women's voting patterns both point to the effects of gender and race systems operating in tandem. The new black voter not only is symbolic of women's differing voting patterns but is also a symptom of the increasing decline in minority voting power. Using an intersectionality framework illuminates how an entire community is impacted, not just women alone as a traditional feminist analysis might explain. This directly addresses concerns of black feminists and womanist scholars who argue that feminism is inadequate for addressing the concerns of most women of color, given that their concerns reflect both the men and women of their communities (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1994; hooks 1984; Walker 1983). This approach takes into account the gendered and racialized

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2. These include Adolphus Belk, Jr (2005), whose work focuses on the impact of the prison industrial complex on local communities, and Khalilah Brown-Dean's (2003) research on the impact of disenfranchisement laws on black voting populations.

processes that combine to impact electoral representation; a race or gender lens alone renders only a partial analysis.

What Is Black and Brown, Yet White All Over? The Gender Gap

Though African-American women now account for the predominance of black voters, the magnitude of their voting power goes largely unrecognized by scholars and politicos alike. African-American women have continuously supported the Democratic Party since the 1960s, and for many, any claim that the Democratic Party holds sway with women's votes is predicated on the support it enjoys from African-American women and Latinas (Scruggs-Leftwich 2000). Their loyalties were all the more critical during the 2004 elections, as more white women gravitated toward the Republican Party. Yet despite this ardent support, African-American women's voting patterns are largely dismissed by political party strategists and subsumed in scholarly discussions of the gender gap.

In discussions of the gender gap—the differences between men's and women's voting patterns—African-American women's and Latinas' contributions to this phenomenon are so often muted. This is particularly startling given the voting patterns of black and brown women in the last several presidential elections. Few scholars are attentive to the racial differences associated with the gender gap (Lien 1998). When the gender gap is examined by race, we see that African-American women's support of the democratic presidential nominee is greater than is white women's support. In fact, African-American women and Latinas heavily account for the consistent claim that women are more supportive of Democratic candidates. The story of the gender gap, the major frame for discussing gender and elections, most often focuses on the voting patterns of white women, whether they are discussed as the soccer moms of 1996, the security moms of 2004, or the single women of 2004. Remarkably, the Democratic Party clings to these frames, even as white women's support of the party wanes. In all of these constructions of so-called women voters, the silence around the intersection of race and gender is deafening.

With the 1996 presidential campaign, the so called soccer mom—the suburban, middle-class, white mother of school-age children—is typically accredited with delivering Bill Clinton's victory. What is obscured, however, in discussions of the soccer mom is the overwhelming support of black and brown women. Overall, the 1996 presidential election produced an 11-point gender gap among women voters in favor of Clinton. He received 31% of white men's votes and 42% of white women's votes,

a 10% difference in support for Clinton among white men and women. In contrast, 89% of African-American women and 78% of Latinas voted for him in 1996. As Carol Hardy-Fanta (2000) argues, Clinton would not have returned to the White House in 1996 had black and brown women stayed home.

Al Gore's story in 2000 is quite similar as he attempted to appeal to the same group of women. In 2000, an even larger gender gap emerged, with a 12 percentage point difference between men and women in support of Gore, the Democratic candidate. Overall, 54% of women voters and 42% of men supported Gore (Center for American Women and Politics 2000). Again, African-American women's immense support for Gore is masked in the commonly reported numbers. African-American women voted in even greater numbers for Gore than they did for Clinton in 1996, with 94% supporting Gore (Bositis 2001). African-American women contributed nearly 12% of all votes cast for Gore in 2000.

While the dominant frame of the 2004 elections emerged as the "security mom" or (a less prominent frame) the "single woman voter," neither of these groups of women supported the Democratic nominee as decisively as did women of color.[3] Fully three-quarters (75%) of women of color cast their votes for John Kerry, while fewer than half of white female voters (44%) supported Kerry. In all of these election cycles, women of color and their concerns were never made visible, despite such ardent support of the Democratic Party's nominee.

As women and politics scholars, our imperative is to consider what is gained and what is lost by the general inattentiveness to the racial and even class compositions of the gender gap, especially since these frames dominate the ways in which we discuss women and electoral politics. As Susan Carroll (2006) argues, some political pundits seek to minimize the impact of the gender gap by suggesting that it is not in fact a gender gap, but reflects race and class differences. In making such arguments, the goal of these pundits is clearly to diminish the decisive power of women's voting patterns and the power of women's voices in politics. Certainly, women and politics scholars and women-centered political strategists have significant investments in maintaining the power of women's distinctive voting patterns. On some levels, the potential power of the gender gap has proven to be a valuable tool for advancing women's

3. The available exit poll data from Edison Media Research and Mitofsky Internationl Exit Polls used by the major media outlets released data disaggregated by white women and nonwhite women. At this date, data are not yet available for voting trends among each racial/ethnic group and gender group.

representation. After all, had feminist organizations not pointed to the differences between men's and women's voting patterns in the 1980s, the Reagan administration might not have made attempts to attract female voters with the appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court (Mueller 1988).

Equally important, however, is the question of what is lost by how we have invested in the gender gap as a way to talk about women and electoral politics. Our investments in presenting this fictitious monolithic group "women" as the story of the gender gap engages a form of essentialist politics that limits voters to their race, sex, or class. In simplifying the gender gap into a story of the "women's vote," as if women are one homogeneous group, we reduce a complex subject into essentialist fanfare. Rather than bringing attention to the power of all women who vote, social constructions like "soccer mom" and "security mom" pick off the most desirable, sought-after voters. These voters are then targeted by the parties through elaborate recruitment initiatives, while women of color and other voters are rendered invisible. As scholars, we reinforce the construction of female voters as homogeneous when we teach gender gap politics to our students without interrogating its race and class limitations. Even more problematic are scholarly discussions of women and electoral politics that fail to discuss differences among women.

As scholars with investments in the advancement of women and women's interests—in all their diversity—a critical question is whether gender gap politics and all the social constructions of female voters that have evolved have yielded enough to account for rendering women of color and other groups of women invisible during election cycles. Has this strategy provided the type of access for women and women's interests? From a study of gender framing in elections, Carroll concludes that women realized few policy gains—despite all the emphasis on women's voting patterns and particularly the emphasis on the narrowly constructed soccer mom, following the 1996 election cycle. In fact, the attention to the gender gap frame allowed the 1996 candidates to appear to have concern for women yet dodge real policy commitments to organizations that represent women's interests (Carroll 1999).

This suggests that a change in strategy is warranted. Adopting a more intersectional approach to gender gap politics or, in general, increasing attentiveness to the diversity of women participating in electoral politics would present women as voters more accurately and possibly advance issues of interests to greater numbers of women. Beyond its strategic po-

litical advantages, engaging a more intersectional approach offers new scholarly opportunities as it remains an understudied area, particularly in electoral politics. Employing an intersectionality framework in electoral politics requires the development of new approaches for studying women and elections in which the differences among the women generating the gender gap in politics are recognized, exalted, celebrated, and, most of all, given serious scholarly attention.

Intersectionality in Campaigns and Elections: 2004

The political advantages of complicating the group "women" and the group "blacks" by engaging an intersectionality framework are demonstrated by two examples from the 2004 elections. Gwen Moore's successful congressional bid and the get-out-the-vote efforts of 527 organizations in key battleground states are examples of the ways in which both candidates and voters capitalized on the advantages of an intersectionality framework.

   With her win in 2004, Gwen Moore became not only the first African-American woman but also the first African American elected to Congress from Wisconsin. Elected from the 4th Congressional District, which includes the city of Milwaukee, Moore ran on a traditional Democratic Party agenda of job creation, health care, and education. During the primary, she trailed behind her most formidable opponent in fund-raising. Her political fortunes changed once she received the critical endorsement from EMILY's List, which solidified her fund-raising efforts and pushed her to win the Democratic primary, having raised four times the amount of her closest opponent, Matt Flynn. Beyond ensuring critical campaign funds, the endorsement also constructed Moore as a candidate invested in building coalitions among African Americans, women, and progressives. She received support from an array of sources within the African-American community and the women's community, including campaign endorsements from the NOW Political Action Committee and the newly formed Future PAC, a political action committee that seeks to increase the numbers of African-American women elected to national office. In addition, Moore secured financial backing from five major unions, ranging from "teachers to truckers," which also confirmed her class-based concerns.[4]

4. See Larry Sandler, "Moore Nears Lead in Fundraising; Candidates Close in on $2million in Spending," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 4 September 2004.

Moore's success is even more striking given the last redistricting cycle, which changed the makeup of her district to majority white. This necessitated a shift in her campaign as well. Indeed, her positioning in Milwaukee politics as a state representative for 16 years played a big role in her victory. However, the national attention her campaign garnered with the endorsement from EMILY's List, which ensured her crossover appeal for white voters, cannot be minimized. The funds generated by her national visibility provided for television, radio, and print ads, allowing her personal story, her message, to enter the homes of white voters and increasing her appeal.

At the same time, Moore was able to maintain her connections with African-American and Latino voters. National Democratic Party notables, such as Jesse Jackson, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and several actors, appeared in her district at get-out-the-vote rallies. This allowed Moore to build a diverse coalition of African Americans, women, and progressives that extended beyond her district. These resources add to the uniqueness of her campaign, and point to what is possible by combining resources that are traditionally kept in discreet coffers. Moore embraced the fullness of her identity and employed an intersectional framework in which she drew upon race-based resources and women-based resources. Had she run as the "black candidate" only or the "woman candidate" only, she would not have capitalized on the crossover appeal needed to secure the vote in her majority white district. If the availability of majority minority districts continues to decline, as many scholars suggest, political strategies that draw upon multiple community identifications will become all the more necessary to elect candidates of color.

Get-out-the-vote campaigns launched by 527 organizations in key battleground states offer another example of an intersectionality framework at work in electoral politics. During the 2004 elections, race and gender converged, rendering African-American women visible as critical voters in key battleground states like Ohio.

Both parties recognized that in key battleground states, the difference between winning and losing the presidential election would depend upon the party that would be able to get its loyalists to the polls. For Democrats, African-American women in key states figured prominently in their plan, and various 527 organizations sought ways to deliver these voters to the polls on election day. Using direct mail campaign leaflets and door-to-door canvassing, these groups sought not simply to target African-American voters. These groups specifically targeted African-American

female heads of household as the linchpin of their political campaign strategies (Wood 2004). This was certainly the case in Ohio, as 527 organizations such as Reclaiming Our Democracy carefully crafted campaign push cards and door hangers to appeal to African-American women voters. These ads, however, did not depict a range of African-American women's experiences but instead constructed African-American women absent any variations in class status, religiosity, or sexuality. These ads can be critiqued for their narrow constructions of African-American women's experiences (Smooth and Adams 2006), and without question, more can be done to portray the variances among women-of-color voters. Nonetheless, aside from this limitation, these ads broke new ground rendering African-American women visible in an election and in acknowledging their grave importance in securing victories for progressive political candidates.

Conclusion

This discussion includes just a few examples of the ways in which electoral politics is reshaped and reconsidered with the inclusion of an intersectionality framework. As this essay demonstrates, structuring race politics and gender politics as competing ideologies has distinct limitations for both political strategists and scholars. We cannot underestimate the real political consequences of not taking this framework seriously in our analyses of electoral politics.

For political strategists, utilizing an intersectionality framework can contribute to the building of winning campaigns, as it creates a means of recognizing the realities of who voters are and how they experience the world. Looking ahead to the 2006 midterm elections and further ahead to 2008, campaigns that realize the diversity of women voters will be best positioned. For progressive campaigns, acknowledging their base supporters—women of color—and depicting them as the important linchpin they continue to be in elections are critical next steps.

Electoral politics scholars and, more importantly, women and politics scholars will ultimately find that continuing to ignore the dynamism of intersectionality politics limits the knowledge production process. In comparison, embracing an intersectionality framework holds endless scholarly promise. At a minimum, we must engage intersectionality as a contending theoretical paradigm, as many scholars are doing. The pressing challenge before us is to operationalize the concept. For some who are working to this end, the question has been whether race *or* gender is

more of a determining factor in predicting political behavior (Gay and Tate 1998; Lien 1998). Although this represents a beginning to this conversation, it does not reflect the core principles of intersectionality. Intersectionality requires inclusiveness reflecting a both/and process, rather than an either/or process. It is not about choosing or forcing individuals into categories, but is about understanding how multiple identities are constitutive of the others.

Given our existing methodological approaches, this represents a monumental task for political science scholars. Working through the potential methodological pitfalls of intersectionality research includes confronting small n's and the limited availability of data (Simien 2004). Perhaps the greatest of these challenges is developing means of addressing the multiplicative effects of race and gender. These are actually the features of this research area that makes it such a fruitful area of study. The best methods and approaches to producing this scholarship are still being uncovered, which further suggest that intersectionality in electoral politics is definitely rich in scholarly promise, if one is willing to take on the challenges of its messy characteristics.

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