Gender and the Aggressive or Compassionate President:
An Analysis of Electability for Presidential Candidates

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Abstract

This two part study explored the effects of gender and gender related descriptions on the evaluation of a Presidential candidate. In the first study, participants evaluated sentence descriptions of Presidential candidates. From the first study five sentences were selected that did not influence the participants decision to vote for that candidate, as well as one “compassionate” sentence and one “aggressive” sentence. These sentences were used to construct paragraph descriptions used in the second study. These paragraph descriptions manipulated candidate gender, and aggressive, compassionate, or neutral descriptions to test the effects of these variables on the decision to vote for the candidate, as well as the ratings of effectiveness on selected Presidential duties. While the data supported the decline of gender stereotyping in the evaluation of effectiveness on Presidential duties, a significant interaction for candidate gender and candidate description for the preferred type of President was found. The male compassionate President candidate was most preferred while the female compassionate President was least preferred.

Key Words:
Gender stereotyping, Presidential candidates, compassion, aggression, political evaluations
Acknowledgements

This document is but one testament to the love and support given to me by two of the greatest influences on my life, Donald and Susan Eimerbrink. Without their guidance I would be lost. I am proud to have parents whose limits of self-sacrifice have no borders, and if in my life I can live up to the example they have both diligently maintained, I could achieve no greater success. Mom and Dad, thank you for believing in me and above all, thank you for loving me. I love you both. For Mom and Dad…
Gender and the Aggressive or Compassionate President:

An Analysis of Electability for Presidential Candidates

The women’s movement has made dramatic progress within America; however, with all the advancements there is still under representation of women within the political arena. One of the most notable examples of a boundary that has yet to be broken is the election of a female candidate to the presidential office. Numerous possible explanations exist as to why this barrier remains for women, but answering these questions will take an examination of the current state of difficulties women face in the political arena. This study hopes to address some of the challenges women face when running for political office, with an emphasis on the Presidential office, while also evaluating if the American public would prefer a more compassionate or aggressive candidate.

What type of person is the public seeking to lead the country? This question has driven numerous studies designed to help gain an understanding of what type of individual the American public would be most likely to elect. There are several ways of attempting to answer this question. Methods include analyzing previous political elections and surveying the public to gain an idea of what influenced their decision. A third method is to use experimental design where some variables are manipulated and held constant. While the experimental method is not perfectly applicable to everyday situations where all variable are never held constant, this is the avenue of pursuit for this study.

The importance of expanding the understanding of who the American public would choose to elect has valuable implications. Not only would this information be
useful in planning political strategy, but it provides a window into the present climate of the nation. The President is the elected leader of United States. Understanding who the public wants to elect provides insight into who the nation believes most capable of leading them at that time. While there are certain traits that will stand the test of time, there are also traits that will be variable, with the evolution of the country.

Trent, Short-Thompson, Mongrau, Nusz, and Trent (2001) found that from 1988 to 1996 the most important quality was the ability to talk about problems facing the nation; however, this moved to second place in the 2000 election, being replaced by honesty. Given some of the issues surrounding the Clinton administration, this is not too surprising. There were also fluctuations noted over the 1988 to 2000 elections in five other areas including experience and competence as an elected official before running for president, being faithful to one’s spouse, having solutions to problems facing the country, being of the highest moral integrity, and being male (Trent et al., 2001). These findings illustrate a shift in political desirability among the public; while there are general trends, every election campaign tailors to this changing climate.

However, the question still remains as to who the American public generally seeks out for a President. In the 2000 election, the top three traits sought in a President were honesty, the ability to talk about problems facing the nation, and personal moral integrity (Trent et al.2001). Unfortunately, these characteristics were proven to be variable by the same study. Whitehead and Smith (1999) sought to provide insight into how the American President has changed by analyzing the inaugural speeches of traditional and modern presidents. For the purpose of this study, traditional presidents were those who served in office prior to FDR. This research provides insight into who
the public is electing from the electorate's own mouth. What they found was that one of the principle differences within the inaugural speeches was the growing presence of intimidation statements (Whitehead & Smith, 1999). These are statements in which the president appealed to the attribution of danger and attempted to portray himself as a dangerous person (Whitehead & Smith 1999). This research may prompt numerous questions and conclusions from different people. However, looking at two aspects of this research in conjunction, being male and the increase of intimidation statements, one may wonder if these two are related to the desirability of the Presidential candidate.

While there may be the existence of a growing preference for an intimidating male President, women have far different stereotypes. One recent study examined the existence of feminine norms in present society. This study found that despite the efforts of feminism there is still the norm that women should “rely on men” and should behave in ways that are “sweet and nice” (Mahalik et al, 2005). Both norms identified may inhibit the potential of a female being elected into the presidential office in that a reliance upon men implies some degree of subordination, and behavioral stipulations reduce the potential of acceptance for those whose demeanor strays from the norm. This could prove to be of great detriment to a women’s success in the business sector as well as in a political campaign.

However, studies suggest that already women face challenges in attaining high level managerial positions, and it is difficult to quantify a higher level managerial position than that of the President of the United States. In a study by Reid, Miller, and Kerr, (2004) the existence of a glass ceiling was found to be present in the United States in terms of female managerial positions. This research demonstrates only some of the
difficulties women still face in the attainment of higher level positions. The study
focused on administrative positions in distributive and regulatory agencies, finding a
dramatic under representation of women in top positions (Reid et al., 2004). This
suggests that while women have made tremendous headway in decreasing the
polarization of representation within the business sector, gender barriers remain in
opposition to female advancement.

In an attempt to help explain the existence of these barriers, Carol Gilligan has
spoken out in the defense of women. As research demonstrates, women have to face
difficulties in the business sector (Reid et al., 2004). Gilligan attempts to resolve some of
the questions surrounding the existence of feminine integration barriers in her book, *In a
Different Voice*. Gilligan believes that women face difficulty because they are attempting
to enter an area dominated by men and are thus held to the male standard (Gilligan 1982).
Therefore, women face the problem of having to adapt to a masculine way of thinking in
hopes of fitting the mold set by their predecessors. While her book was written over
twenty years ago, male dominated areas remain in both the business and political field.

Another challenge which women face integrating themselves into a male
dominated sector is the attainment of automatic authority. Irgy and Brown (1995)
conducted a study interviewing 120 executives, equally divided by sex, to investigate
effective leadership. One of the key findings of the study revealed that when men are
given positions of authority, their authority is felt to be automatic as opposed to women
who have to earn their authority over time (Irgy & Brown 1995). This poses another
hurtle for the advancement of women, especially in high political office. While a man
can have authority that comes with a title of President, based on this research, a woman would still face difficulties in relations with others, having to earn her elected authority.

However, this is not to say that women are incapable of attaining upper level positions or that once these positions are reached that their performance is incomparable to men. While the typical manager is still perceived as being male, the ideal manager is not congruent with typically male managerial styles (Maier 1993). In terms of managerial performance, female managers are capable of producing the highest level of optimism regardless of the gender of their subordinates (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, the highest self-esteem among subordinates came from the pairing of a female manager with a male subordinate (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005). Additionally, female managers were capable of receiving the highest level of commitment from subordinates regardless of gender (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson 2005). With regard to these findings, one may wonder what was found when a male manager was paired with a male subordinate, as has been the case with all instances of the President and Vice President. This study revealed that when a male manager is coupled with a male subordinate, the highest levels of frustration were present in the workplace (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005).

While this data favors placing women in high-level positions of authority, there are still concerns raised by some, specifically that women with political power will centrally favor a female agenda (Saidel & Loscocco, 2005). However, this concern did not survive scrutiny. Analysis of the female political agendas revealed that only 50% of women in the political field maintain a female friendly agenda (Saidel & Loscocco, 2005). This accounts for a small percentage of political representation, but there maybe
men who favor the same policies as well. What Saidel and Loscocco (2005) found was that men and women have an equal chance of emphasizing policies that advance women’s interests. This data may help alleviate some concern surrounding the election of a female President, but what is important to note is that some people still hold reservations about electing a female into office based on gender. Fortunately, this fear does not appear to hold back the women who are in the present political environment.

In fact, previous research has shown that when women run for political office, their position is strengthened when they focus their campaign on women’s issues such as health care and welfare reform as opposed to typically masculine issues such as war and economic interests (Herrnson, Lay, & Strokes, 2003). This finding has been replicated in other research as well (Lubin and Brewer 2003). However, this may prove to be a limitation on women. Lubin and Brewer (2003) studied southern state elections, finding that women tend to be elected to typically feminine positions, such as clerical positions that restrict women from obtaining leadership experience which may help in advancing a political career. These findings may provide some explanation as to why there are fewer women in higher levels of government, but the existence of women in Senate and House positions proves that traditional political boundaries may be crossed.

However, evidence persists as to the existence of gender stereotyping. Dolan (2004) examined how female candidates for the House of Representatives were evaluated based on ideological and issue-based evaluations from the general public. This study found evidence to support continued gender stereotyping involved in the political procedure, but Dolan (2004) admits that there are too many other variables that need to be taken into account before anything can be considered definitive (Dolan 2004).
However, Dolan (2004) did note that the existence of party affiliation in regard to gender evaluation. Democrats are more likely to view women as liberal and believe women to emphasize a female agenda, while Republicans differentiated significantly less regarding gender-based evaluations (Dolan 2004). However, this is not to say that Republicans are friendlier to female candidates than are Democrats. In fact, Democrats are more supportive of female candidates in comparison to Republicans (Sanbonmatsu 2003).

Additional support for gender stereotyping was found by Sanbonmatsu (2003). She found that women in the general public tend to have less political knowledge than men (Sanbonmatsu 2003), and that women were more likely than men to overestimate the actual female representation. Furthermore, people who made this overestimation were less likely to support more women entering Congress (Sanbonmatsu 2003). On the other hand, underestimating female representation leads to more support for women entering Congress (Sanbonmatsu 2003). Interestingly, women have a tendency to overestimate the number of women in the Congressional sector, and according to Sanbonmatsu (2003), have a decreased probability to vote for a female candidate based on gender alone. However, men are more likely to underestimate the number of women in Congress, but show more support for electing women into office (Sanbonmatsu 2003).

The most concrete findings for gender discrimination have shown that men are perceived as more effective with regard to masculine political tasks while women are more effective with regard to feminine political tasks (Herson, Lay & Strokes 2003; Lubin & Brewer 2003; Rossenwasser, Rogers, Fling, Silvers-Pickens, and Butemeyer 1987). However, when candidate gender is evaluated separately from other variables,
women are more supportive of electing women into office than men (Sanbonmatsu 2003).

Even though there has been some weak evidence for gender discrimination and stereotyping, there has also been evidence that shows equality for women at higher levels of political office. In a study by Gaddie and Bullock (1995) political experience and financing were the most strongly related to being elected, but they did not find any evidence to suggest that women have more difficulty raising or receiving financial support for their campaigns. While women may not have an increased difficulty in raising political funds, they are typically awarded less than men (Seltzer, Newman, & Leighton, 1997). One of the most interesting results noted by Gaddie and Bullock was that while there was statistical support for political experience and campaign finance related to being elected, a relationship with gender was not found (1995). Consistently, whoever had the most political experience and the most financing was predicted to win the election, regardless of gender (Gaddie & Bullock, 1995). With this in mind, the researchers conclude that all women need to do to be represented in Congress is run for office. Similarly, Fox and Oxley (2003) found that with regard to higher political offices, women have an equal chance of being elected to a masculine position as compared to a feminine position.

If it happens to be the case that women have an equal chance of being elected at higher political offices, then it seems reasonable that women have an equal chance at being elected to the Presidential office as well. In this study, gender of the candidate will serve as only one of the variables being studied. I want to explore the understanding of the role of gender in a Presidential election, while simultaneously testing to see if a more
aggressive/masculine candidate is desired over a compassionate/feminine candidate. If previous research is correct, a female candidate should have an equal chance of being elected President as a male candidate. Additional manipulation of character descriptions between aggressive and compassionate candidates should reveal differences related to gender role characteristics.

In the first study, participants will evaluate candidate descriptions to yield paragraph descriptions to be used in the second study. In the second study, these paragraph descriptions will manipulate gender and aggressive versus compassionate descriptions of the candidate. Regarding levels of support as found in previous research (Sanbonmatsu 2003), women are predicted to demonstrate more overall support for a female candidate than men regardless of aggressive or compassionate descriptions. I also expect to replicate gender effectiveness, in terms of masculine and feminine political issues (Rosenwasser et al, 1985). The female candidates are expected to be perceived as more effective on feminine issues, and male candidates are expected to be perceived as more effective on masculine political issues. Individual candidates are expected to receive varying levels of support. The highest level of support is predicted for the male aggressive candidate, followed by the male compassionate candidate. The two remaining candidates are expected to receive the lowest levels of support, with the female aggressive candidate receiving more support than the female compassionate candidate.

Study 1: Trait Selection

Method

Participants. Participants for this portion of the study were selected from a sophomore level psychology course at a Texas university. Of the 34 participants 18%
were male and 82% were female. Because the study focused on the election process, all participants were over the age of 18. The age distribution was as follows: 50% were 18-19; 32% were 20-21; 12% were 22-25; and the remaining 6% were over the age of 25. The majority of the participants, 74%, described themselves as Caucasian, while 12% described themselves as African-American; 8% described themselves as Hispanic, and there was an equal distribution of 3% Asian and 3% other. The socioeconomic status was dominated by participants who described themselves as middle class, consisting of 76% of all participants. The second largest proportion of participants described themselves as upper-middle class, 18%. Only 3% of participants described themselves as upper-class, and the final 3% described themselves as lower class. The political orientation of the participants was fairly equally distributed with 32% Republican, 29% not political, 27% Democrats, and the remaining 13% described themselves as other (6% moderate, 3% green, and 3% independent). However, of all the participants only 18% considered themselves to be politically active, while the remaining 82% did not.

**Materials.** Participants were issued a five-page survey. The first page obtained relevant demographic information regarding the participant, as described above. The second page contained a list of five sentence descriptions aimed at portraying compassionate behavior of a candidate. Participants were instructed to indicate on a nine-point Likert scale the degree to which they felt the sentence displayed compassionate behavior. The subsequent page contained the same number of sentences and an identical scale used on the previous page; however, on this page participants were instructed to indicate the degree to which they felt the sentence displayed aggressive behavior.
The remaining two pages contained a list of 12 sentences aimed at eliciting no influence, positive or negative, on the participant’s decision to vote for such a candidate. The instructions provided asked the participants to read the candidate descriptions and indicate the level of influence each description would have on their decision to vote for the candidate. These sentences were also rated on a nine-point Likert scale, ranging from a “very negative influence” to a “very positive influence” on the participant’s decision to vote for the described candidate. For a complete copy of the forms used in Study 1, please see the appendices.

Procedure. Participants were instructed to first fill out the demographic information page. Following the demographic sheet the participants read the first five sentences (Section A) and indicated on a nine-point Likert scale the degree to which they felt the sentences displayed compassionate behavior. The next five sentences (Section B) were rated on the same scale, but these sentences displayed aggressive behavior. The degree for acceptance set for both of these section’s sentences was an average score of 6.5 to 7.5. The rationale behind this was to eliminate possible confoundment that could result from behavior being too extreme to be desirable for a President.

The following two pages contained 12 sentences (Section C) that were aimed at providing neutral candidate descriptions. As before, a nine-point Likert scale was used to rank each sentence. For this portion of the study, however, sentences scoring most neutral, between 4.5 to 5.5, were considered optimal. The goal was to have a minimum of five sentences out of the twelve that would be perceived as neutral.

Results
All sections of the study produced sentences within the desired range of acceptability. Means were calculated for each sentence to reflect the overall participant rating of the description. Each sentence was chosen based on two criteria: a) if the average fell within the desired range, and b) the mean sentence scores have a minimal difference corresponding to the aggressive/compassionate sentence. In Section A, the compassionate sentence selected received an average score of 7.44, while the aggressive sentence in Section B received an average score of 7.32. These sentences have the minimum difference between them, equaling .08. The two sentences are provided below.

**Compassionate Sentence:** During candidate’s service in the military, he/she volunteered his/her extra time to assist local charity organizations.

**Aggressive Sentence:** In diplomatic affairs, candidate refuses to compromise and will not “take no for an answer” on issues he/she feel strongly that others should support.

Regarding Section C, five sentences fell within the desired mean range to proceed with the second portion of the study. The five sentences selected all scored higher than 4.5 and equal to or under the upper bound of 5.5. The sentence averages are as follows: 5.5, 5.5, 5.41, 5.44, and 5.47. In the study, a score of 5 indicated no influence on voting for this candidate. These sentences are provided below.

1) While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Candidate received his/her Bachelors degree in Political Science.

2) In debates and political speeches, Candidate often uses his/her military experience as reference point for their political plans.

3) In his/her spare time Candidate enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.
4) Candidate believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in.

5) Candidate has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations.

Discussion

While no implications can be made from this segment of the study, the information obtained facilitates the second study. However, there are already areas present which pose limitations for the study. First, the gender distribution was highly skewed in favor of female participants. This is not expected to invalidate any of the information obtained; however, it is worthy of note. What poses the most significant detriment to the study is the lack of participants who consider themselves to be politically active. This study is focused on the political process, specifically on the selection of a presidential candidate. Having 82% of participants who do not consider themselves politically active does threaten the validity of the results.

Fortunately, there was a relatively equal distribution of Republicans, Democrats and people who described themselves as “not political.” From the first study the control and experimental sentences were obtained. These sentences, with appropriate transitions added to assist in the flow of the paragraph without changing the content of the sentence, were used in constructing the paragraphs for the second study. In the second study the word “candidate” was changed to reflect the gender of the hypothetical candidate.

Study 2: Paragraph Descriptions

Method
Participants. Participants for this section of the study were taken from a sophomore level psychology course at a Texas university. There were a total of 249 participants for this portion of the study. Of these participants the gender distribution consisted of mostly female participants accounting for 63% (157 participants) of the sample pool, the male population accounted for the 37% with 92 participants. Of these 249 participants, all were above the age of 18, and the majority of the sample (47%) described themselves as being 20 or 21. The second largest sample age range was comprised of 22 to 25 year olds (25%), followed closely by participants describing themselves as 18 or 19 (24%). The remaining category consisted of participants who described themselves as older than 25, and these participants represented only 4% of the sample. The majority of participants described themselves as Caucasian and accounted for 72% of the total sample. The remaining participants described themselves either Hispanic, 15%; African-American, 8%; or other, 5%. The socioeconomic status of participants consisted of upper-middle class, 40%; middle class, 39%; lower-middle class, 16%; upper class, 4%; and lower class, 1%. The political orientation of the participants was fairly equally distributed with 36% Republicans, 28% Democrats, 23% “not political” and 13% “other.” Finally, only 34% of participants considered themselves to be politically active; the remaining 66% indicated that they were not politically active.

Materials. Participants were given a five-page survey. The top two pages were identical to the first two pages used in the first study and obtained informed consent and relevant demographic information. The third page of the study contained one of six paragraph descriptions for a presidential candidate. Of these six different paragraphs, three were describing a female candidate and three were describing a male candidate.
There were also three levels within the gender distribution accounting for the following six groups: male-aggressive, male-compassionate, male-control, female-aggressive, female compassionate, and female-control. Each of the gender descriptions contained six identical control sentences, and in the control paragraph only these six sentences were provided. An example paragraph is provided below.

Jane Smith is running in the election for President of the United States. Jane Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jane Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jane Smith received her Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jane Smith often uses her military experience as reference points for her political plans. In her spare time, Jane Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

The introductory sentence was added to acquaint the participant with the gender and purpose of the candidate. The remaining sentences were obtained from the initial study and were selected because they did not have a significant amount of influence on the decision to vote for such a candidate.

The remaining four paragraphs followed the indicated structure, and the “experimental sentence” was either the aggressive or compassionate sentence candidate description. (Please see the appendices for the actual surveys used in the study.) The sentence used to create the experimental manipulation (aggressive or compassionate sentence) was inserted right before the last sentence.
Following the paragraph descriptions there were four questions aimed at assessing the amount of support one would provide for the indicated candidate. The first question was multiple-choice and asked the participant how likely they felt they would be to vote for such a candidate. The following three questions were aimed at assessing the participant’s level of support for the candidate, and were rated on a five point Likert scale. The next page of the survey listed ten questions with typically masculine and feminine Presidential duties and participants were asked to rank the effectiveness of the candidate on the duties based on the paragraph description. The final page contained three questions. The first questions asked the participant to indicate the political orientation of the candidate. The second asked the if there should be greater representation of women in politics, and the final question asked what type of President the participant would prefer, with options reflecting the four experimental conditions of the experiment.

Procedure. Participants were instructed to first sign the informed consent form and then complete the demographic page. After these two pages were completed the participants were instructed to carefully read the provided paragraph description, with each participant reading only one description. Once the paragraph was read, the participants began to answer the questions on the remaining pages of the survey. After the survey was complete participants returned all materials, and a log was kept to provide the participants with extra credit in the course as determined by the instructor.

Results

The results were analyzed using a three-way multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the thirteen continuous variables. The independent variables for the
MANOVA were: participant’s gender, candidate gender, and candidate description (aggressive, compassionate, and neutral). The first of the significant findings was a main effect for candidate descriptions on the likelihood of voting for the indicated candidate, $F(2, 224) = 3.20 \ p < .05$. A Bonferroni post-hoc comparison revealed that there was a significant difference between the compassionate candidate compared to the neutral candidate descriptions in willingness to vote for the particular candidate.

Regarding the likelihood of the participant placing a sign in their yard, a main effect for candidate gender indicated that participants were more likely to put a sign in their yard for a female candidate than a male candidate, $F(1, 224) = 10.49 \ p < .01$. No significant main or interaction effects were found for attending a local rally for the candidate, or volunteering one’s time for that particular candidate.

A main effect for candidate sex was found on three of the other items analyzing the candidate’s effectiveness on Presidential duties. Participants indicated that a female candidate would be more effective than a male candidate on guaranteeing the rights of racial minorities, $F(1, 224) = 10.64 \ p < .01$; solving the problems of the handicapped and disabled, $F(1, 224) = 5.99 \ p < .05$; and solving the problems of the elderly, $F(1, 224) = 5.93 \ p < .05$. There was also a two way interaction between candidate gender and participant gender which yielded significant findings on the following items: guaranteeing the rights of racial minorities, $F(1, 224) = 7.71 \ p < .01$, and solving the problems of the elderly, $F(1, 224) = 7.13 \ p < .01$. While men rated these two items similarly for male and female candidates, women rated the female candidate as being more effective than the male candidate.
Chi-squares were used to analyze the frequency of responses for the final two questions regarding whether or not there should be greater representation of women in politics and the indicated ideal President of the participant’s choice, male or female; aggressive or compassionate. Regarding the increase of representation of women in politics, significant support for greater representation was found, $X^2 = 80.49, p < .001$, and a physical count of 194 “yes” and 53 “no” responses. There was a greater percentage of women, 88%, compared to men, 63%, in favor of support of greater female political representation, $X^2(1)$ with continuity connection = 19.50, $p < .001$.

The chi square comparing the four types of preferred President was significant, $X^2(3) = 51.90, p < .001$ with 39% of participants selecting the male compassionate candidate. This was followed by 31% of participants selecting the male aggressive candidate, 23% of participants selecting the female aggressive candidate, and 7% of participants selecting the female compassionate candidate. The frequency of responses again differed by participant gender, $X^2(3) = 27.16, p < .001$. Please see Table 1 for a complete breakdown of percentile distributions.

Discussion

Although the findings of the study did not directly support the hypotheses, the results are interesting nonetheless. While there were not significant results to indicate a preference for compassionate or aggressive candidates based on the paragraph descriptions, there was a significant preference, as indicated by likelihood of voting for the candidate compared to the neutral candidate. A similar trend was found in that the male compassionate candidate was more often selected as the preferred candidate by both men and women. Interestingly, candidate gender affected preference for the
compassionate candidate. While the male compassionate candidate received the highest level of support, the female compassionate candidate received the lowest level of support among the four candidate choices available. This presents an interesting area for future research.

While one may view these findings as evidence of gender discrimination, this study potentially suggests that previous research on gender stereotypes in effectiveness on masculine and feminine Presidential duties may be beginning to dissolve. According to previous research, (Herson, Lay & Strokes 2003; Lubin & Brewer 2003; Rosenwasser, Rogers, Fling, Silvers-Pickens, and Butemeyer 1987) women are perceived as more effective in “feminine” duties, and men are more effective in “masculine” duties. However, of the five masculine and five feminine duties listed in this study, only three of these duties yielded significant findings for candidate sex: guaranteeing the rights of racial minorities, solving the problems of the handicapped and disabled, and solving the problems of the elderly. Moreover, the two-way interaction of gender of the participant and gender of the candidate existed on two of the three significant results which suggested that women were more likely than men to attribute effectiveness on two feminine Presidential duties based strictly on gender of the candidate: guaranteeing the rights of racial minorities, and solving the problems of the elderly. Rosenwasser et al., (1985) listed these duties among the five feminine Presidential duties studied, but the remaining two feminine duties and all five of the masculine duties no longer yielded significant differences. Additional research is needed to explore perceived effectiveness of Presidential candidates on possible Presidential duties.
Unfortunately, the overrepresentation of women in this study may have biased the results, and judging from the differences on gendered responses, this is very possibly a problematic area. Future research should allow for the increase of male participants to help balance the results. Also, if the degree of aggression and compassion is increased by manipulating additional sentences in the paragraph descriptions and the sample size is increased, more of the candidate comparisons may be significantly different.

Another problematic area for this study lies in the under representation of the voting population, due to the over sampling of a younger demographic and those not politically involved. Furthermore, the results may be reactionary to the current political climate, the current President, or the U.S. involvement in the War in Iraq. Nonetheless, an observable trend from this study indicates the greatest percentage of desirability for a male compassionate President, 39% of the sample’s responses, while the female compassionate President was the least desirable, receiving only 7% of the sample’s responses. These findings potentially indicate evidence for a complex gender influence on the desirability of a Presidential candidate. This interaction may be reflective of the results found by Irgy and Brown (1995). With both results viewed in conjunction, the interaction may be explained with the application of automatic authority typically ascribed to a male as opposed to a female (Irgy & Brown 1995). In conclusion, the results from this experiment demonstrate that while the amount of gender stereotyping and discrimination appear to be diminishing within society, women have barriers yet to be broken to achieve gender equality.
References


Saidel, J. & Loscocco, K. (2005). Agency leaders, gendered institutions, and


## Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Aggressive</th>
<th>Male Compassionate</th>
<th>Female Aggressive</th>
<th>Female Compassionate</th>
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<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Responses</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Responses</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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Appendix

You are invited to participate in a research study to obtain information in regards to the political views of college students.

If you choose to participate in this study, your responses will be kept confidential. Participation in this study will include completion of a demographic information sheet as well as reading and responding to a brief description of a Presidential candidate. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and extra credit will be provided as determined by your instructor. If at any point during the study you feel the need to terminate your participation you may do so without compromising your extra credit. If you do not wish to participate, please see the research administrator for alternative extra credit options.

If you choose to participate, please read and sign in the indicated area.

I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study. I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all information. I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Micah Eimerbrink at me1052@txstate.edu.

Participant’s Name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Identification Number

Date: ____________________________

Please write your e-mail or postal address at the bottom of this sheet if you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study.
Demographic Information

Please fill in all the requested information for the data collection of the study.

1. Classification:
   a) Freshman
   b) Sophomore
   c) Junior
   d) Senior
   e) Graduate

7. Political Orientation
   a) Republican
   b) Democrat
   c) Not Political
   d) Other: __________

2. Gender:
   a) Male
   b) Female

8. Do you consider yourself to be politically active?
   a) Yes
   b) No

3. Age:
   a) younger than 18
   b) 18 or 19
   c) 20 or 21
   d) 22 – 25
   e) Older than 25

4. Ethnicity:
   a) Hispanic
   b) Caucasian
   c) African-American
   d) Asian
   e) Other

5. How would you describe your socioeconomic status?
   a) Upper class
   b) Upper-middle class
   c) Middle class
   d) Lower-middle class
   e) Lower class

6. Major:
   a) Psychology
   b) Other social science (political science, sociology, criminal justice, etc)
   c) Science
   d) Education
   e) Other
Please rate the following sentences on how well you feel the description displays compassionate behavior according to the following scale.

1= no compassion
5= moderately compassionate
9= extremely compassionate

1. After college Candidate 1 spent four years working with the Peace Corps in Africa.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. During Candidate 2’s service in the military, he/she volunteered his/her extra time to assist local charity organizations.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. Candidate 3 has always devoted large segments of his/her time to listen to and assist the needs of people in distress.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. In times of need, such as natural disasters, Candidate 4 always puts him/her self on the “front lines” aiding with first aid to wounded, reconstruction of houses and neighborhoods, and donating any other recourses at his /her disposal applicable to those in need.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. Candidate 5 enjoys volunteering his/her time with local animal shelters and nursing homes as well as participating in various community strengthening activities such as neighborhood watch etc.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Please rate the following sentences on how well you feel the description displays aggressive behavior according to the following scale.

1 = not aggressive
5 = moderately aggressive
9 = extremely aggressive

1. Candidate 6 believes in strict enforcement of consequences in regard to any crime and that the best method to solve social problems (such as violence) is to increase punishment similar to that of a zero tolerance policy.

2. In debates, Candidate 7 will go to any length to conquer his/her opponent, and has been known to site past delinquencies committed by his opponents.

3. Candidate 8 believes that any act interpreted as hostile must be met with immediate retaliation equal to or superior to the initial offense.

4. In diplomatic affairs, Candidate 9 refuses to compromise and will not “take no for answer” on issues he/she feels strongly that others should support.

5. Candidate 10 has a highly competitive nature and pursues victory ruthlessly in all undertaken endeavors.
Please read the following candidate descriptions and indicate the level of influence each description would have on your decision to vote for such a candidate, according to the following scale.

1 = very negative influence
5 = no influence
9 = very positive influence

1. Ever since Candidate A was a child, he/she was always interested in politics.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. While Candidate B served as governor of his/her home state, he/she helped reduce crime by 3%.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Candidate C received their Bachelors degree in Political Science.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. In debates and political speeches, Candidate D often uses his/her military experience as reference point for his/her political plans.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. Before Candidate E began his/her political career, he/she also studied medicine at John Hopkins University.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6. Candidate F has been married for the past 22 years; they have two children who are both currently enrolled in accredited universities.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7. Candidate G grew up in rural America, neither of his/her parents went to college but worked throughout their lives to ensure that Candidate A would have the best future.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

8. Candidate H began their political career in high school through participation in student government, this continued throughout their college education.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

9. Candidate I believes in supporting a strong educational system, with an emphasis on elementary education.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

10. In his/her leisure time, Candidate J enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

11. Candidate K believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

12. Candidate L has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jack Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jack Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jack Smith received his Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jack Smith often uses his military experience as reference point for his political plans. However, in diplomatic affairs, Jack Smith refuses to compromise and will not “take no for an answer” on issues he feel strongly that others should support. In his spare time, Jack Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

9. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   a. 1-20%
   b. 21-40%
   c. 41-60%
   d. 61-80%
   e. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>Moderately Likely</td>
<td>Very Likely</td>
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10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jack Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jack Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jack Smith received his Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jack Smith often uses his military experience as reference points for his political plans. During Jack Smith’s service in the military, he volunteered his extra time to assist local charity organizations. In his spare time, Jack Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

9. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   f. 1-20%
   g. 21-40%
   h. 41-60%
   i. 61-80%
   j. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

   _____       _____    _____ ______ ______
   A           B         C       D       E
   Very Unlikely       Moderately Likely           Very Likely

10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jack Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jack Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jack Smith received his Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jack Smith often uses his military experience as reference points for his political plans. In his spare time, Jack Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

9. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   k. 1-20%
   l. 21-40%
   m. 41-60%
   n. 61-80%
   o. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

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10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jane Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jane Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jane Smith received her Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jane Smith often uses her military experience as reference points for her political plans. In diplomatic affairs, Jane Smith refuses to compromise and will not “take no for an answer” on issues she feels strongly that others should support. In her spare time, Jane Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

9. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   a. 1-20%
   b. 21-40%
   c. 41-60%
   d. 61-80%
   e. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

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10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jane Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jane Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jane Smith received her Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jane Smith often uses her military experience as reference points for her political plans. During Jane Smith’s service in the military, she volunteered her extra time to assist local charity organizations. In her spare time, Jane Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

10. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   
   p. 1-20%
   q. 21-40%
   r. 41-60%
   s. 61-80%
   t. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

   ______       ______    ______ ______ ______       ______
   A           B         C       D       E
Very Unlikely       Moderately Likely           Very Likely

10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please carefully read the following paragraph.

Jane Smith is running in the election for President of the United States. Jane Smith believes that America is the best country in the world to live and raise a family in. Jane Smith has never had any problems with the law, except for minor traffic violations. While studying at Carnegie Mellon, Jane Smith received her Bachelors degree in Political Science. In debates and political speeches, Jane Smith often uses her military experience as reference points for her political plans. In her spare time, Jane Smith enjoys nature walks and reading about foreign politics.

Please answer the following questions in response to the above paragraph.

9. Based on the paragraph you read, how likely do you feel you would be to vote for such a candidate?
   u. 1-20%
   v. 21-40%
   w. 41-60%
   x. 61-80%
   y. 81-100%

Please indicate the level of support you would provide for the described candidate according to the provided scale.

   ______       ______    ______ ______ ______
   A           B         C       D       E
   Very Unlikely       Moderately Likely           Very Likely

10. I would place a sign in my yard advertising for this candidate.
11. I would attend a local rally for this candidate.
12. I would volunteer my time to support this candidate’s campaign.
Please rate this candidate’s effectiveness on the following Presidential duties using the provided scale.

A       B       C       D       E
Very Ineffective   Moderately Effective   Very Effective

13. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in dealing with terrorism?
14. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in handling a military crisis?
15. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in solving problems with the educational system?
16. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in conserving and wisely utilizing our natural resources?
17. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in guaranteeing the rights of racial minorities?
18. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in solving the problems of the disabled and handicapped?
19. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in ensuring an adequate military defense system?
20. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in relating to and leading the American public?
21. How effective do you feel this candidate would fill the President’s role as Commander-in-Chief?
22. How effective do you feel this candidate would be in solving problems of the elderly?
Please answer the following questions.

23. Do you think this candidate is a Republican or a Democrat?
   a. Republican
   b. Democrat
   c. Neither

24. Do you feel that there should be a greater representation of women in politics?
   d. Yes
   e. No

25. Please indicate the type of President you would prefer?

   f. Male, aggressive
   g. Male, compassionate
   h. Female, aggressive
   i. Female, compassionate