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Gender Stereotypes and Citizens' Impressions of House Candidates' Ideological Orientations

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This research develops and tests hypotheses on the citizen and candidate characteristics that moderate utilization of candidate gender for forming impressions of House candidates' ideological orientations. High candidate visibility—attained through incumbency or campaign expenditures—enhances citizens' categorization of candidates on the basis of gender to infer ideological orientation. The effects of candidate gender are conditioned by political awareness for perception of Republican candidates' ideological positions because citizens receive conflicting cues about their orientations. In contrast, the relatively easy information process task for forming an impression of a Democratic female candidate allows for categorization on the basis of gender to occur among the most and least politically sophisticated. Finally, citizens draw on stereotypes of women to assign attributes to female candidates, not on stereotypes of men to infer attributes of male candidates.

A growing body of research demonstrates the importance of candidate gender for citizen assignment of attributes to candidates. This research is part of a trend in scholarship on public opinion and voting behavior that emphasizes citizens' strategies for forming impressions of candidates' attributes with minimal cognitive effort and time (Popkin 1996; Rahn 1993; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Here I examine the characteristics of candidates and citizens that moderate use of candidate gender as a tool used by citizens to infer the ideological orientations of 1994, 1996, and 1998 candidates for the United States House of Representatives. Though still a minority of candidates, in the 1990s the number of women seeking election to the House of Representatives and the Senate increased considerably, presenting an excellent opportunity for scholars to examine the relevance of candidate gender for citizen assignment of pertinent attributes.

Candidate Gender and Impression Formation

Research employing experimental designs documents a tendency for citizens to believe that female candidates are more liberal than male candidates, female candidates are more capable of dealing with political issues under the general rubric of "compassion issues" (health care, education, welfare, the environment), and female candidates are more caring, ethical, and nurturing (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994). Citizens' impressions of candidates' competencies and ideological orientations result from inferences about the policy beliefs and interests of male and female candidates, as well as from assignment of character traits to candidates on the basis of gender.

The set of issue competencies and ideological orientations assigned to candidates on the basis of gender in experimental research designs parallels

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findings of citizens' perceptions of the ideological inclinations and policy competencies of the major political parties. Policy areas where citizens commonly see women as more competent are typically assigned to liberals and the Democratic Party; and similarly, areas of competence generally assigned to male candidates—the economy, crime, defense, and foreign affairs—are the same as those assigned to conservatives and the Republican Party (Petrocik 1996). Thus, the political content of gender stereotypes leads citizens to believe women candidates are more liberal than male candidates. Empirical analyses of citizens in elections also reveal assignment of attributes to candidates on the basis of gender (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Koch 1999, 2000).

Moderators of Category-Based Impression Formation

To economize on cognitive effort and time, individuals often place others into a category they believe is useful for assigning attributes (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Once individuals place a candidate into a category they assign the attributes associated with that category to the candidate. This process is referred to as stereotyping or category-based impression formation. An alternative strategy for impression formation is to make use of specific information about the candidate (the candidates' actual issue positions, for example). This is referred to as an individuating or data-driven process of impression formation. An obvious characteristic of American electoral politics is that citizens are not equal in their political awareness nor are candidates the same in their attributes. This variation in citizens' cognitive engagement and candidate attributes, as well as theorizing in cognitive psychology on impression formation, guides the theoretical orientation and empirical analyses of this research.

Political Awareness and Candidate Visibility

One might hypothesize that utilization of a category to form an impression should be greatest when candidate-specific information is scarce. Citizens high in political awareness are more attentive to politics and devote a greater share of their time and cognitive resources to deciphering information from the political world. Accordingly, politically aware individuals may make greater use of individuating information to construct impressions of candidates' ideological orientations, perhaps lessening reliance on category-based cues.

Similarly, incumbents' extended public visibility, ample campaign resources, and aggressive utilization of the perquisites of office may result in greater citizen utilization of incumbents' individuating information to form an impression of their ideological orientation, reducing dependence on category-based cues. First-time candidates with abundant financial resources can make citizens as familiar with them as they are with incumbents (Jacobson 1997). Hence, citizens may depend less on candidate gender to form impressions of incumbent and well-financed first-time candidates because the supply of information is greater for these candidates.

Although citizens are certainly exposed to more information about incumbents and first-time candidates with large fiscal resources, the utility of this information for drawing conclusions about their ideological orientation is questionable. Much of the information in contemporary campaigns is devoid of issues, and most of the information members of the House of Representatives' dispense is personal rather than issue oriented. The absence of measures of the ideological orientations of would-be members of the House of Representatives has prevented researchers from determining if incumbency enhances the application of individuating information and, consequently, reduces reliance on candidate gender for inferring candidates' ideological orientations.

Recent research in cognitive psychology portrays a more complicated relationship between cognitive engagement and category-based impression formation than previously appreciated. Although stereotyping has commonly been viewed as an automatic, involuntary cognitive process triggered when a member of a category is encountered, other research reveals that activation of a category for impression formation requires a minimum level of engagement with the task of impression formation (Bargh 1989; Kahneman and Treisman 1984). For example, subjects with low attentiveness to another person were less likely to employ a category to assign attributes than subjects more attentive to that same person (Gilbert and Hixon 1991). Up to some point, rising levels of cognitive engagement may lead to increased utilization of categories for assigning attributes.

Thus, category-based cues may matter more for constructing impressions of incumbents and well-financed first-time candidates. Cognitive psychology holds that individuals attempt to gather more information to form an accurate and detailed mental portrait of targets that are “minimally interesting or relevant” (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Citizens have reason to care more about the attributes of viable and prominent candidates. Moreover, highly visible candidates provide frequent prompting to

citizens to form an impression of them, serving to activate candidate gender. Consequently, incumbents and competitive challengers may receive more scrutiny from citizens, and citizens may make a greater effort to construct a detailed picture of their issue positions and ideological orientations, leading them to make greater use of category-based and candidate-specific information to form an impression.

Task Complexity and Impression Formation

When citizens receive conflicting category-based and individuating information on a candidate's attributes, greater effort must be expended to integrate these cues and information to form an impression (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Once a category becomes dominant, contradictory category-based cues and individuating information are less likely to be attended to and integrated into impression formation (Bodenhausen and Macrae 1994; Dijksterhuis and Knippenberg 1996). Conversely, individuals more commonly attended to and more easily integrate into the impression-formation process category-based cues and individuating information consistent with the dominant stereotype. For individuals attempting to create a coherent picture of a candidate's ideological orientation (to label him or her), category-based cues and individuating information inconsistent with the dominant category (the candidate's partisanship) is less likely to be employed than consistent category-based cues and individuating information.

Citizens attempting to construct a mental picture of a Republican female candidate's ideology receive two contradictory pieces of category-based information. The candidate's partisanship suggests a conservative orientation but the candidate's gender implies a liberal position. Moreover, the individuating information citizens receive from Republican female candidates is often contradictory and complex. As will be made clear below, Republican female candidates are the most ideologically moderate of the four categories of candidates (male or female, Democrat or Republican). Ideological moderation results from one of two styles of issue positioning. First, a candidate can take liberal positions on some issues and conservative positions on other issues, thus providing conflicting individuating information that makes drawing a conclusion on the candidate's ideological orientation difficult. Second, a candidate can assume nuanced issue positions: for example, supporting Roe v. Wade but also calling for many limitations on abortion.

The conflicting cues and complex information citizens receive from Republican female candidates may

serve to weaken the impact of candidate gender, the less powerful category-based cue. Integrating contradictory category-based and individuating information for impression formation requires a greater investment of cognitive resources. Citizens attempting to construct an impression of a Democratic female candidate receive two consistent pieces of category-based information, each implying a liberal orientation. Moreover, Democratic female candidates are the most liberal candidates, albeit modestly. Any candidate issue information received by citizens is generally consistent with the category-based cues, presenting citizens with a simpler information-processing task. In sum, high cognitive engagement may enhance the application of candidate gender for perception of the ideological orientation of Republican female candidates but not for Democratic candidates.

The final piece of the model requires hypothesizing when citizens will draw on gender, and which gender, for impression formation. Theoretical and empirical research in cognitive psychology demonstrates that “contextual novelty” prompts stereotype usage. For example, when respondents observe a sole woman in an otherwise all-male group they are more likely to draw on stereotypes of women to assign attributes to that woman than when the same woman is in a gender-mixed group (Sackett, Dubois, and Noe 1991; Taylor et al. 1977). Identical results are obtained when the target is male or black. Contextual novelty serves to make a social category salient to the perceiver, enhancing the likelihood of applying category-based cues of that group for assigning attributes. This view has important implications for theorizing on citizen impression formation of candidates for the House of Representatives. A woman candidate for the House is a relatively rare occurrence. Only 10 percent of the Republican candidates in 1994, 1996, and 1998 were female, 18 percent of the Democratic candidates.¹

The preceding considerations lead to three hypotheses:

- (1) High candidate visibility prompts citizens to draw on candidate gender to infer a candidate's ideological orientation.
- (2) Citizens draw on stereotypes of women more than stereotypes of men to make inferences about candidates' ideological orientations.
- (3) High political awareness enhances the application of candidate gender more for impressions of Republican female candidates' ideological orientation than for impressions of Democratic female candidates. Citizens

¹These proportions are a double those of the 1980s (<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/pdf/candbyseat.pdf>).

receive conflicting category-based cues and candidate-specific information from Republican female candidates. Political awareness enhances the likelihood a citizen integrates the conflicting individuating information and category-based cues into an impression.

Data

The 1994, 1996, and 1998 American National Election Studies contain measures of citizens' perceptions of House candidates' ideological orientations and other variables necessary for model estimation. Three data sources are utilized to construct a measure of candidates' ideological orientations. The sources are the National Political Awareness Test by Project Vote-Smart; responses to a survey administered to first-time candidates by *Congressional Quarterly* on how they would have voted on controversial bills in the previous congress and the roll-call votes of incumbent candidates on these House bills; and ratings by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and the American Conservative Union (ACU) of House members' ideological orientations on the basis of select roll-call votes.

Separate principal components factors analysis was performed on the Congressional Quarterly and Project Vote Smart candidate survey data for each year. For both the Congressional Quarterly and Vote Smart data the scale locations on the first factor were highly correlated with ADA and ACU scores (.78 to .87). Analysis revealed one dominant factor for the ideological orientation of the candidates. If a candidate failed to answer four or fewer questions these full-information indices were used as a basis for imputing values based on items the candidate did answer; otherwise data from that source was ignored.² ADA and ACU scores were combined to form an additive index of candidate ideology ranging from 0 to 100, high scores indicate liberalism. Principal components factor analysis was performed on those candidates where information was available from the three sources; the regression imputation technique then utilizes this information to assign ideology scores to candidates where information was available from at least one of the three sources. Candidate ideology scores were scaled to range from 0 to 1, high scores indicate greater liberalism.

None of these three sources provides a measure of the ideological orientation of all House candidates. Each,

²A regression imputation technique (in Stata 6.0) was employed to assign scores for the missing data. This regression estimates the value for the dependent variable based on information from the available candidate responses.

however, provides information about a significant portion of the candidates, and through implementation of a statistical imputation technique the ideological orientations of 89 percent of 1994, 1996, and 1998 major party candidates can be made available for analysis. The cost of combining ideology scores from three different sources is probably to introduce some imprecision in the measurement of candidate ideology; the gain, however, is to permit analysis on a larger number of cases than would otherwise be possible. Additional information about these data is presented in the appendix.

Model Specification

Multivariate regression analysis is employed to determine if political awareness and candidate visibility moderate the impact of candidate gender on perception of House candidates' ideological positions. The dependent variable is citizen perception of the ideological position of the House candidates, measured on the ANES seven-point scale. Candidate gender is scored one for a female candidate, zero for a male candidate.³ In addition to candidate gender, prior research demonstrates a tendency for individuals to assign the positions of the party sponsoring a candidate to the candidate (Conover and Feldman 1989; Franklin 1991). Thus, a variable measuring respondents' perception of the ideological orientation of the candidate's sponsoring political party is included in the model. Individuals also tend to assume others hold views similar to their own, hence a measure of the respondents' ideological orientation is included (Conover and Feldman 1989).⁴ Prior research demonstrates projection effects; that is, a propensity for citizens to assign their own political views to candidates they like (Markus and Converse 1979). These effects are estimated with an interaction term that matches respondents' ideological position with their affect for the candidate, as measured with a feeling thermometer. Finally, a variable is included that measures candidates' actual ideological orientations, high scores indicate greater liberalism. To facilitate comparison of the effects of each variable on perception, independent variables are coded such that its lowest value is zero and highest

³The 1994, 1996, and 1998 ANES sampling frames included fifty Republican House female candidates, thirty-five first-time candidates, and fifteen incumbents. Of the ninety-seven Democratic House women candidates, fifty-one were first-time candidates and forty-six were incumbents.

⁴Consult the ANES for exact question wording.

value one. The mean scores for the ideological orientation of Democratic men and women are .77 and .82 (t-stat = 3.00), respectively; the equivalent scores for Republican men and women candidates are .24 and .32 (t-stat = 3.60).⁵

Candidate gender was matched with political awareness and high candidate visibility to determine if they moderate the impact of candidate gender on perception of candidates' ideological orientation.⁶ Candidate visibility is a dichotomous variable. Incumbents and first-time candidates with campaign expenditures in the upper 25th percentile (approximately \$750,000 or more)

⁵One concern is that the gender differences in candidates' actual ideological orientations reflects nothing more than regional variation in the presence of female candidates and in candidates' ideological orientations. There is some evidence of this, but this bias is small. Moreover, after controlling for region significant gender differences in candidate ideology remain. Using the worst case as an illustration, 27 percent of all Republican candidates included in the ANES sampling frame are from the Northeast but 33 percent of the Republican female candidates are from that region. Similarly, 22 percent of all Republican candidates are from the South but only 12 percent of the Republican female candidates. However, regional differences between candidates of the same gender are very small. On a 0-to-1 scale of the candidates' ideology, the mean score for Republican female candidates from the Northeast is .32 compared to .29 for Republican female candidates from the South. In an OLS model of candidate ideology with dummy variables for five of the six regions of the country (Northeast, South, Midwest, Mountain, Border) and candidate gender as independent variables, candidate gender exerts significant effects on candidate ideology but only two of the regional variables do (Midwest and Northeast). Moreover, the coefficient for candidate gender is larger than that of any of the regional variables. A similar pattern is present for Democratic candidates. For analysis of the relatively small effect of constituency ideology on candidate ideology see Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001).

⁶Political awareness was measured by respondents' ability to correctly identify four prominent political figures and partisan control of each chamber of the U.S. Congress, producing a seven-point scale that ranges from 0 to 1.

⁷I examined several measures of candidate prominence as moderators of category-based impression formation: incumbency, a candidate's years in office, campaign expenditures, and the competitiveness of the race. When matched with candidate gender, never did a characteristic that enhances a candidate's visibility serve to reduce the incidence of category-based impression formation. Characteristics associated with high visibility and prominence always enhanced stereotyping; the effects, however, did not meet minimum levels of statistical significance in every instance. For perception of Republican candidates, incumbency and a candidate's years in office increased the impact of candidate gender on impression formation. Campaign expenditures or (for challengers) the competitiveness of the race did not moderate the impact of candidate gender on perception of a Republican candidate's ideology. The opposite was true of Democratic candidates. The partisan difference seems to be attributable to a relatively large number of first-time Democratic female candidates able to raise and spend large amounts of money, but very few first-time female Republican candidates possessing large fiscal resources. Additionally, a measure of whether other prominent elections were occurring was cre-

were scored as highly visible.⁷ Additionally, interaction terms matching the candidate's actual ideological position with political awareness and high visibility are also included to determine if they moderate use of individuating information.

ANES separately ascertains respondents' perceptions of Republican and Democratic candidates' ideological orientations; thus, separate models are run for each. To the extent we are solely interested in political perception, it is beneficial to analyze the perception formation process of all respondents. However, some scholars might argue that of primary concern are the consequences of perceptions for the voting decision, maintaining analysis should be limited to voters. As both are reasonable points, separate analysis is performed on voters and the entire sample of respondents. The results are presented in Table 1.⁸

High candidate visibility enhances citizen utilization of candidate gender for inferring a candidate's ideological orientation in three of the four models; the exception is for the model that includes both voters' and nonvoters' perception of Republican candidates. *Ceteris paribus*, voters perceived a visible Democratic and Republican female candidate as .32 and .33, respectively, more liberal on the ANES seven-point ideology than a male candidate or a female candidate unable to become highly visible. Candidate gender fails to shape perceptions of female candidates lacking the viability and prominence that accrues to incumbents and first-time candidates with large fiscal resources. Political awareness fails to either enhance or attenuate the utilization of candidate gender for inference of a Democratic candidate's ideological orientation. Knowledgeable and attentive citizens are as likely to utilize candidate gender to infer a visible Democratic House candidate's ideology as less knowledgeable and attentive citizens.

For impressions of Republican candidates' ideological orientation, politically aware citizens are more likely to perceive female candidates as liberal than equivalent

ated. In one version, this variable was scored one if either a Senatorial, Gubernatorial, or Presidential race was occurring simultaneously with the House race; in another version an additive variable was created reflecting the number of prominent races occurring. The logic for the analysis was that the occurrence of other elections would lessen citizen attention to the House race, thereby reducing the occurrence of stereotyping. These variables were then interacted with candidate gender. The coefficients for these interaction terms never came close to reaching statistical significance.

⁸The interaction terms formed with candidate gender and the variables used for measuring projection effects sometimes correlate slightly above .80 with some of the variables used in their construction. The level of multicollinearity was slightly greater in the model for perception of the Democratic candidates.

TABLE 1 Multivariate Model of Citizen Perception of House Candidate's Ideological Orientation

Independent Variables	Democrat	Democrat (voters only)	Republican	Republican (voters only)
Female Candidate	.11 (.216)	-.16 (.272)	.62*** (.241)	.51 (.324)
Female Candidate X Awareness	-.14 (.263)	-.27 (.332)	-.95*** (.310)	-.72* (.412)
Female Candidate X High Visibility	-.40*** (.141)	-.32** (.157)	-.18 (.151)	-.33*** (.170)
Candidate's Ideology	.13 (.686)	.18 (.839)	.48 (.536)	.99 (.694)
Candidates' Ideology X Political Awareness	-.81 (.777)	-1.09 (.960)	-.98 (.690)	-1.78** (.878)
Candidate's Ideology X High Visibility	-.04 (.052)	-.18 (.569)	-.29 (.39)	-.06 (.434)
Political Awareness	.15 (.613)	.537 (.758)	1.22*** (.246)	1.43*** (.309)
High Visibility	.12 (.385)	.19 (.422)	.13 (.130)	.05 (.142)
Respondent Ideology	-2.55*** (.265)	-2.35*** (.301)	-2.98*** (.214)	-2.62*** (.240)
Feeling Thermometer	-1.60*** (.252)	-1.46*** (.290)	-3.05*** (.205)	-3.29*** (.222)
Respondent Ideology X Feeling Thermometer	5.40*** (.409)	5.15*** (.456)	5.66*** (.353)	5.43*** (.386)
Perception of Party Ideology	1.79*** (.116)	1.97*** (.139)	1.98*** (.113)	2.00*** (.135)
Constant	3.87*** (.557)	3.33*** (.682)	4.36*** (.230)	4.29*** (.286)
N =	1683	1226	1849	1347
Adjusted R ² =	.36	.38	.34	.34

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is a seven-point scale measuring respondent perception of the candidate's ideology. High scores indicate greater conservatism.

*significant at .05; **significant at .01; *** significant at .001 level (one-tailed tests)

male candidates.⁹ Using the estimates from the analysis of both voters and nonvoters, a citizen with the highest

level of political awareness perceives a female Republican candidate as .33 more liberal on the seven-point ideology scale than the least politically aware citizen.

⁹Note the positive sign of the coefficient for candidate gender, the baseline condition, for the model that includes voters and nonvoters. A simple bivariate analysis also revealed that those unable to correctly answer any of the knowledge items perceived male candidates as more liberal than female candidates (t-stat = 2.06). The mean score assigned to Republican male candidates by the least politically aware is 3.90; the equivalent score for Republican female candidates is 4.72. The analysis was also performed with a series of dummy variables measuring different levels of political awareness (high, medium, and low) to determine if the conditioning effect of political awareness for candidate gender was not monotonic. That analysis produced substantive results identical to those presented here: candidate gender-shaped perception of

Republican candidates' ideology more for those with high levels of political awareness.

TABLE 2 Candidate Visibility, Candidate Gender, and Perception of House Candidate's Ideological Orientation

Independent Variables	Democrat	Democrat (voters only)	Republican	Republican (voters only)
Highly Visible Female Candidate	-.32*** (.089)	-.32*** (.100)	-.13 (.098)	-.28** (.113)
Highly Visible Male Candidate	.03 (.060)	.007 (.067)	.06 (.052)	.04 (.056)
Candidate Ideology	-.64*** (.198)	-.66*** (.219)	-.45** (.180)	-.37* (.201)
Perception of Party Ideology	1.78*** (.115)	1.96*** (.138)	1.98*** (.114)	1.99*** (.135)
Respondent Ideology	-2.54*** (.264)	-2.33*** (.299)	-2.95*** (.214)	-2.60*** (.239)
Respondent Ideology X Feeling Thermometer	5.39*** (.408)	5.12*** (.454)	5.62*** (.353)	5.40*** (.386)
Feeling Thermometer	-1.57*** (.251)	-1.42*** (.289)	-3.04*** (.205)	-3.29*** (.222)
Political Awareness	-.08*** (.017)	-.06*** (.021)	.13*** (.016)	.12*** (.020)
Constant	4.30*** (.238)	4.02*** (.273)	4.70*** (.165)	4.79*** (.191)
N=	1683	1226	1849	1347
Adjusted R ² =	.36	.38	.34	.34

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is a seven-point scale measuring respondent perception of the candidate's ideology. High scores indicate greater conservatism.

*significant at .05; **significant at .01; *** significant at .001 level (one-tailed tests).

didates at the scale's midpoint. For disinterested and uninformed citizens, placement of the candidate at the midpoint of the scale probably represents a "safe guess."¹⁰ Candidates' partisan labels powerfully shape perception of their ideological orientations, testifying to the important role they play. Neither candidate visibility nor political awareness enhanced the impact of candidate ideology on perception of the candidate's ideological orientation.

whether citizens draw on stereotypes of men or women to reach conclusions about candidates' ideological orientation I constructed separate variables matching male candidacy and female candidacy with high visibility. Equivalent effects for a high-visibility male candidate and a high-visibility female candidate should be evident if citizens make equal use of stereotypes of men and women to make inferences about candidates' ideological orientations. The candidate gender and high visibility are not included as separate variable in this model. Results are presented in Table 2.

The coefficient for a male candidate of high visibility never reaches statistical significance, in every model the coefficient for a high-visibility female candidate is larger than that for a male candidate of high visibility, and in three of the of the four models the coefficient for a female candidate of high visibility reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. To the point, citizens draw on category-based cues of women candidates, not of male candidates, to reach conclusions about candidates' ideological positions.

Stereotypes of which Gender for Impressions of Candidate Ideology

High candidate visibility enhances citizen categorization of candidates on the basis of gender for inferring their ideological position, but stereotypes of which gender do citizens call on to make these inferences? To determine

¹⁰In more parsimonious specifications of the model for perception of Democratic candidate's ideology the coefficient for political awareness reached statistical significance.

A category is made more visually salient when it holds a unique status within a larger group, increasing the importance of that category for assigning attributes (Sackett, Dubois, and Noe 1991; Taylor et al. 1978). In a world of all (or nearly all) male candidates' gender would not serve as a useful category for assigning attributes to candidates. A female candidate is unusual, and her unusualness leads citizens to use stereotypes of women for inferring her ideological orientation. What prompts application of candidate gender for inferring a candidate's ideological orientation is the presence of a female candidate, not the presence of a male candidate.

Why are the effects of candidate gender conditioned by political awareness for perception of Republican candidates' ideological orientations but not for perception of Democratic candidates' ideological orientations? Models of impression formation posit that not all categories are employed to form an impression (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Citizens receive two contradictory pieces of information when attempting to construct a portrait of a Republican female candidate's ideology. The candidate's partisanship suggests conservatism but the candidate's gender implies liberalism. The contradictory nature of these two pieces of information attenuate the impact of candidate gender on impression formation. Citizens with high cognitive resources and motivation are able and willing to utilize these contradictory pieces of information to form an impression.

In contrast, when forming an impression of a Democratic female candidate citizens note two pieces of category-based information and the candidate's individuating information all pointing in the same direction: the candidate is liberal. Attending to and integrating the category-based cues and individuating information of a Democratic female candidate is a relatively easy task compared to the same exercise for a Republican female candidate. Most citizens believe Democrats are liberal. Little cognitive effort is required to fit the category "woman candidate" with the category "Democratic candidate." Moreover, female Democratic candidates are the most liberal candidates; any individuating information citizens receive is most likely consistent with the category-based information. The consistency of the category-based and individuating information received by citizens makes positioning a Democratic female candidate a relatively simple information-processing task, one that can be done by the most and least politically aware.

Conclusion

The goals of this research were to determine if the effects of candidate gender were moderated by citizens' political

awareness and candidate visibility, and which gender citizens use to make inferences about candidate's ideological orientation. Citizens draw on category-based cues of women for inferring the ideological predispositions of the most visible female candidates. In many ways this finding is contrary to the conventional wisdom for when people draw on category-based cues for impression formation. Category-based impression formation is commonly viewed as the practice of the cognitively lazy or most likely to occur when the supply of information is low. Categorization, however, is not an automatic, involuntary response. Instead, individuals must have some minimum level of cognitive engagement in the task to draw on categories for forming an impression. Category-based cues are not merely the crutch of citizens in low-information elections. Visibility achieved through incumbency or high campaign expenditures prompts citizens to draw on candidate gender for forming an impression. It is precisely those female candidates who achieve electoral viability and its concomitant visibility that citizens are most likely to categorize on the basis of gender.

Finally, the pattern of results is consistent with a theoretical model of impression formation that posits political awareness increases the application of stereotypes of women candidates when the information-processing task is difficult. The contradictory nature of the category-based cues received from Republican female candidates presents citizens with a complicated information-processing task, making the effects more conditional upon the citizen's motivation and cognitive resources. For the citizen attempting to "figure out" a Republican female candidate, category-based cues are a piece of information more likely to be used by the politically aware for constructing an impression of a highly visible candidate's ideological orientations.

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Appendix

For a complete description of the data and method used to construct the 1994 candidate ideology values see Erikson and Wright (1997), an identical process was used to produce the 1996 and 1998 candidate ideology scores. Three sources of candidate ideology were employed: Americans for Democratic Action and American Conservative Union scores, candidates' responses to a survey administered by Project Vote Smart, incumbent candidates vote on issues selected by Congressional Quarterly, and first-time candidates' responses to a survey asking them how they would have voted on these bills. The 1996 Project Vote Smart sur-

vey ascertained candidates' spending preferences on nine items and their positions on prayer in school. The nine spending items were AIDS, Arts, Education, Environmental Protection, Housing, Job Training, Medicaid, Welfare, and Student Loan. The 1998 Project Vote Smart survey drew upon responses to the same nine spending items plus preferences on spending for foreign aid. Responses placed on a six-point scale where 1 signified greatly increasing spending and 6 completely eliminating the program.

The 1996 Congressional Quarterly candidate survey included representatives' votes and first-time candidates' expressed position on the following thirteen pieces of legislation: Budget Reconciliation, Reduce Medicare Spending, B2 Stealth Bomber, Term Limits, Partial Birth Abortion, EPA Funding, Family and Medical Leave, Brady Bill, Gays in the Military, U.S. Troops in Bosnia, NAFTA, Aid to Russia, and Welfare Reform. The 1998 Congressional Quarterly candidate survey included incumbent Representatives' votes and first-time candidates expressed positions on the following twelve pieces of legislation: Gingrich Reprimand, Partial Birth Abortion Ban, Low Income Housing, Balanced Budget, GOP Budget, Bosnia Ground Forces, Arts Funding, Abortions International, Pay Raise for Congress, Private Property Land Use, Education Vouchers, and Restructure IRS.

For the 1996 and 1998 data, approximately 15 percent and 16 percent of first-time candidates provide complete information on both the Vote Smart and Congressional Quarterly surveys, 35 percent and 46 percent either completed or partially completed both surveys, respectively. First-time candidates were more likely to complete the Vote Smart survey than incumbent candidates, 47 percent versus 33 percent and 50 percent versus 39 percent, respectively. Of the 1996 and 1998 first-time candidates, 61 percent and 63 percent provided enough information on the Vote Smart survey to receive an ideology score, 46 percent and 47 percent of incumbents, respectively. In 1996 and 1998, 43 percent and 47 percent of Democratic candidates completed the Vote Smart Survey, 38 percent and 43 percent of Republican candidates, respectively. For a complete description of the 1994 data see Erikson and Wright (1997). Within each party, male and female candidates were equally likely to complete or partially complete the survey.

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The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-wide Government

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This article suggests that the EU's representation deficit undermines mass support for Europe's political integration, especially when national institutions work well. Combining public opinion surveys from twelve West European publics with ratings of nations' institutional quality, we estimate a multi-level model. The results show that when citizens perceive that they are unrepresented, their support for the EU is reduced independent of economic perceptions; this reduction is especially strong in nations with well-functioning institutions. The study (1) suggests that transition and EU analyses converge on the import of regimes' democratic performance in shaping regime support; (2) proposes guidelines to model mass support for new institutions; (3) contains disquieting implications for Europe's political integration and its eastward enlargement.

The democracy deficit of the European Union increasingly receives attention in the scholarly literature (Blondel, Sinnott, and Svensson 1998; Scharpf 1999; Katz and Wessels 1999). Surprisingly, despite the fact that these discussions focus on whether publics are represented by the EU, no crossnational study examines whether citizens feel represented by the EU. Neither do prior studies examine whether such views affect EU-support. This article addresses these issues.

Prior research about mass support for European integration often points to economic factors to explain why citizens support the EU (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel 1998). From the perspective of democratic representation, such a focus implies an output-based conception of representation: citizens presumably base their evaluations of a regime on its capacity to deliver desired goods. However, democratic representation also means that a system provides democratic procedures for expressing mass preferences (Dahl 1989). Empirically, transition research in Central Europe shows, for example, that citizens are quite concerned with the quality of the democratic process independently of regimes' economic performance. In turn, such procedural evaluations shape mass support for new systems, at times exceeding the influence of economic evaluations (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Mishler and Rose 2001). Our first goal is therefore to probe whether mass support for the EU is lowered when citizens perceive the EU as being unresponsive to their preferences.

A second argument develops an insight advanced by Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) who suggests that higher levels of corruption at the national level directly increase EU-support. However, we argue that the quality of national institutions *mediates* the effect of the perceived democracy deficit on EU-support. Accordingly, we expect perceptions of under-representation to reduce mass support for the EU when citizens reside in nations with superior institutions.

One theoretical contribution of this article is to show the influence of a regime's democratic performance on mass support for institutions. This

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