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Campaigns as Gendered Institutions

When Hillary Clinton left the presidential stage in June 2008, she ended a campaign that would—for years to come—be both celebrated for the history it made and criticized for the strategies and tactics it employed. Conceding defeat after winning twenty-two Democratic primaries and caucuses and nearly eighteen million votes nationwide, Clinton told a crowd of supporters that her candidacy was not in vain: "You can be so proud that, from now on, it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories . . . unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be the president of the United States" ("Hillary Clinton" 2008). Having failed to win the nomination, Clinton highlighted her victories in altering perceptions of who can lead at the highest levels of American politics. More than three decades earlier, Jeanne Kirkpatrick wrote in *Political Woman*, "Simply by virtue of announcing their political candidacies, women have been challenging the traditional [masculine] image of who is appropriate to govern" (1974, 34). While Clinton's competitive candidacy arguably challenged perceptions of one of the *most* masculine offices in the United States, its ability to truly disrupt the gendered expectations of political office relied on more than just getting a woman's name on the ballot. The strategic and tactical decisions of the campaign—from the images, traits, and messages emphasized to the ways in which they were communicated to the public—influenced the degree to which Clinton would normalize the idea of a woman president.

In a December 2006 planning memo for Clinton's campaign, pollster and strategist Mark Penn argued that voters were not ready for a "first mama"

president but were instead "open to the first father being a woman" (see Green 2008). Rather than present Clinton as a future woman president, the campaign worked to normalize the idea that she would be a president who just happened to be a woman and who would still align with traditional masculine expectations for the presidency. In fact, Clinton repeatedly argued that she was "not running as a woman" but was instead running "because I think I'm the best qualified and experienced person for president" (see Pickler 2007). Throughout the campaign, many of the qualifications and experiences she emphasized were those typically expected of executive men. She portrayed herself as a "fighter," donning boxing gloves and being credited with having "testicular fortitude" at campaign events (see Balz 2007; Memoli 2008). She applied that tough persona equally to foreign policy. Clinton held firm on her vote for the Iraq War and made hawkish statements on Iran that ensured she would not be viewed as "soft" but may have also cost her Democratic votes (Carroll and Dittmar 2009).[1] And while there was great excitement among women about Clinton's opportunity to make history as the first female president, her campaign rarely touted that message, at least until Clinton's concession in June 2008.[2] With Penn at the helm, the Clinton campaign appeared most concerned with diffusing potential detrimental effects of the candidate's gender while meeting the masculine demands of the presidency. This approach appeared to be electorally ineffective and institutionally replicative, and attempts to change course toward better gender integration came too late in the campaign to alter its outcome.

In this book, I investigate how gender influences the campaign strategy and behavior of male and female candidates today and, concurrently, how candidates' strategic and tactical decisions might influence the gendered nature of campaign institutions. Recognizing the growing professionalization of modern campaigns, I ask: How do candidates and campaign professionals—consultants, managers, and party practitioners—navigate the gendered landscape of today's political campaigns? In what ways, if any, do their decisions and behaviors either maintain or disrupt prevailing gender dynamics and institutional norms? Through a survey of and interviews with candidates and campaign practitioners, I find that gender functions within campaigns, most importantly in informing strategy. In fact, in working to minimize gender as a determinative factor in electoral results, candidates and campaign professionals demonstrate the significant influence of gender in shaping how they navigate campaign terrain.[3] These decisions have both electoral and institutional consequences for the men and women who make the decision to run, with particular implications for women's political advancement.

Women's Representation in American Politics

Despite Clinton's defeat in 2008, her historic bid generated excitement and recognition that women could reach the highest heights of political leadership, and voters' ripeness for change benefited women who could bring something new to the political scene. Women achieved record levels of congressional representation in 2008, with two new female senators elected and eleven new women elected to the U.S. House (CAWP 2008b). The political opportunity structure for women changed from 2008 to 2010, when a demand for change shifted to frustration with the party in power, causing Democrats to take a major hit. Based on the tendency for female officeholders to be Democrats, that meant women took a hit as well. In 2010, the number of women in Congress and state legislatures actually decreased (CAWP 2010c).[4] The number of women governors increased by one in 2010 with three new women elected, but the total of six female state executives remained below the previous record of nine reached in 2004 and 2007 (CAWP 2013a).

Bolstered by a Democratic win at the presidential level, women performed better in 2012 campaigns, breaking records in the number of female congressional candidates and reaching record levels of representation in the U.S. House and Senate (CAWP 2012b).[5] Some touted the 2012 election results as evidence that the cracks Hillary Clinton made for women in the "marble ceiling" of American politics were growing wider. The fact that women's successes remained so remarkable may, however, demonstrate that women remain apart from the norm of who is expected to hold elective office. Only one woman's name was on the November ballot for governor among the eleven states with gubernatorial contests in 2012. New Hampshire's Maggie Hassan (D) won her race, but the number of women governors still dropped from six to five from 2012 to 2013 (CAWP 2012b).

Whether their numbers have increased or decreased slightly in recent elections, women remain underrepresented at all levels of political office.[6] Importantly, this underrepresentation is the outcome of gender dynamics that influence women—and men—far before Election Day. Women are less likely than men to be political "self-starters," making the decision to run for office an initial hurdle for women to overcome (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; see also Lawless and Fox 2005, 2010). Once they put themselves forward as candidates, women must navigate political networks and parties that are traditionally more supportive of men (Sanbonmatsu 2002, 2006). Most significantly, however, they must determine how to successfully navigate the gendered terrain of political campaigns that has long been defined by masculinity and dominated by men.

Political progress for women—most often measured in terms of numerical parity—matters not only for democratic fairness but also for effective representation. Women bring unique insights and approaches to political procedures and policy, yielding different outcomes and changing both how and what business is done (Carroll 2001, 2006a; CAWP 2001; Dodson 2006; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Kathlene 1994, 1995; Reingold 2000, 2008; Rosenthal 1998; Swers 2002, 2013; Thomas and Wilcox 1998).[7] Thus, reducing women's barriers to entering the political arena has democratic, political, and policy dividends. Campaigns too frequently act as a barrier to entry for women. Challenging the institutional gender norms of campaigns so that women candidates are not only unremarkable but integrated into voter expectations of who can and should lead is integral to promoting women's political inclusion and electoral success.

Campaigns as Gendered Institutions

In this book, I explore the ways in which campaigns, like government, are gendered institutions, whereby gender not only is embedded in expectations for and behavior of candidates but also influences the psyche and strategic considerations of all those involved.[8] In the first comprehensive analysis of women's entry into electoral politics, Jeanne Kirkpatrick writes, "Politics has been deemed inappropriate for women. A woman entering politics risks the social and psychological penalties so frequently associated with nonconformity" (1974, 15). Discussing the structural and electoral barriers erected against women in American government today, Kathleen Dolan writes, "Determining how women exist in a male-dominated system is still a fruitful area for research" (2008, 123). Politics en masse and electoral campaigns in particular are clear examples of systems rooted in masculinity and most often viewed as the territory of men (Carroll 1994; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995; Puwar 2004). Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox write, "The organs of governance were designed by men, are operated by men, and continue to be controlled by men" (2005, 10). As feminist scholars have pointed out, the act of excluding women only further ensured that gender would function in the "processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power" of politics (Acker 1992, 567).

Beyond the structural biases of American political institutions against women candidates (see Carroll 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; R. Fox 2010; Palmer and Simon 2006; Sanbonmatsu 2006), the cultural mores within them complicate women's participation and ultimate success. Women enter the masculine territory of electoral politics as deviations from the gendered norm—challenging existing gender power dynamics of different

offices.[9] As a result, they confront their gender early in campaigns and seek an appropriate plan by which to abate negative impact while benefiting from perceived gender advantages. Men are rarely conflicted with similar disparities in role-gender expectations. Gender differences are made stark in electoral campaigns, as they act as the audition through which men and women candidates demonstrate their capacity to "fit" within the institution in the specific role—or office—that they seek while meeting stereotypical expectations of their gender. Sue Thomas describes the challenges women face in waging campaigns:

> One implication of women as outsiders, apart from the norm, concerns the ways in which they seek entry into the elite arena. No better example of this assertion is available than one related to the development of campaign strategies. The very choices of how to present oneself in a legislature are replicated (or perhaps preceded) by the need to decide how to present oneself to the electorate during a campaign for office. (Thomas 1997, 48)

These choices are undoubtedly tied to perceptions of and reactions from voters, for whom gender-stereotypical expectations of political leaders persist (see Banwart 2010; Dolan 2010; Schneider and Bos 2014). Moreover, decisions regarding candidate presentation and strategy are linked to campaign strategists' perceptions of the stereotypical ground on which campaigns are contested (see Figure 1.1). For most of American history, this meant that candidates aligned with stereotypically masculine conceptions of leadership to be viewed as legitimate and appropriate contenders.

Processing Gender in Campaigns

David Dulio notes this important link between practitioner perceptions and a campaign's strategic development:

> Those who maintain that consultants have a manipulative effect on the public begin their critique too late in the process, by focusing on the point at which electronic and print communications are created. The missing piece of the puzzle is the *process* that consultants go through to determine the content of their ads and mail pieces. (2006, 193)

I take a new approach to studying political campaigns by probing campaign practitioners—strategists (campaign managers, consultants, and party
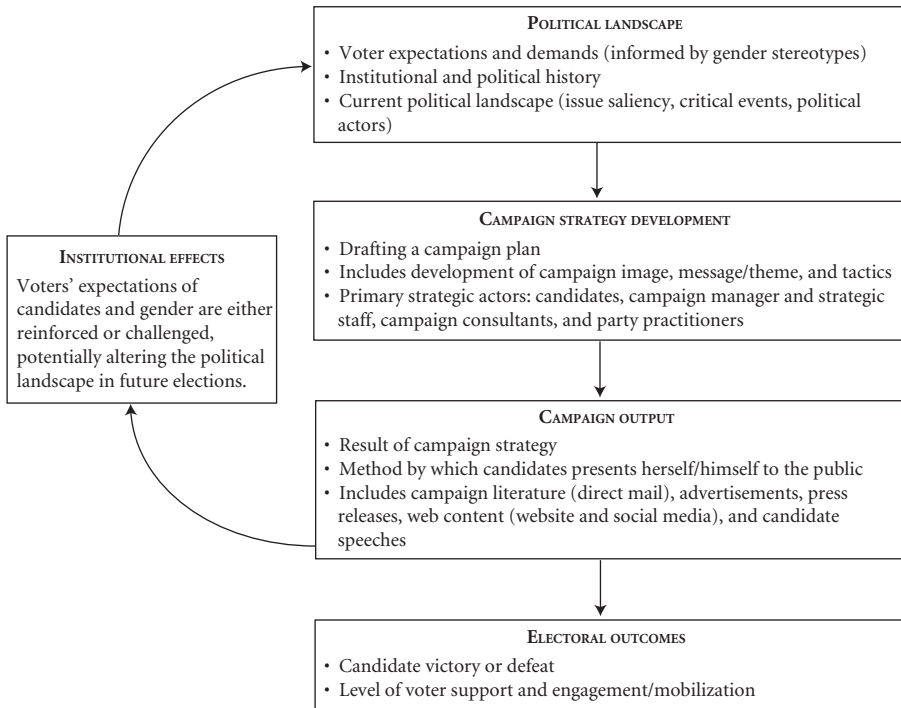
POLITICAL LANDSCAPE
• Voter expectations and demands (informed by gender stereotypes) • Institutional and political history • Current political landscape (issue saliency, critical events, political actors)

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
• Drafting a campaign plan • Includes development of campaign image, message/theme, and tactics • Primary strategic actors: candidates, campaign manager and strategic staff, campaign consultants, and party practitioners

CAMPAIGN OUTPUT
• Result of campaign strategy • Method by which candidates presents herself/himself to the public • Includes campaign literature (direct mail), advertisements, press releases, web content (website and social media), and candidate speeches

ELECTORAL OUTCOMES
• Candidate victory or defeat • Level of voter support and engagement/mobilization

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS

Voters' expectations of candidates and gender are either reinforced or challenged, potentially altering the political landscape in future elections.

Figure 1.1 Campaign process

directors) and candidates—about their perceptions of gender dynamics and the determinants of candidate presentation (image, message, and tactics) for male and female candidates, particularly those in statewide contests for the U.S. Senate and governor.[10] While success may be the overriding goal in electoral politics, I investigate whether or not the decisions made to get there are influenced, either knowingly or not, by the embedded masculinity of the campaign process, political structure, and voter expectations of candidates. Moreover, by focusing on the internal workings of campaigns, I am able to reveal important processes that are too easily missed in existing research on campaign output. Drawing on Kim Fridkin Kahn's (1996) illustration of the impact of sex stereotypes in political campaigns, I outline a simplified version of the campaign process that accounts for gender in Figure 1.1 and describe the phases of that process in the following section.

Gender Stereotypes and Voter Expectations

First, voters hold particular expectations of candidates and officeholders, and men and women. These expectations, or stereotypes, inform the lenses

through which voters evaluate candidates and campaign consultants survey the political landscape. Contextual factors are predominant in any campaign landscape. They interact with voter demands of candidates and consultants' perceptions of both the most important determinants of campaign strategy and the saliency of certain traits and issues in candidate messages. Moreover, and specific to gender, the dynamics of a particular race are altered when at least one candidate is a woman.

In a recent analysis, Kim Fridkin, Patrick Kenney, and Gina Woodall conclude, "Gender stereotypes are pervasive, widely shared, and have proved to be resistant to change" (2009, 55). Dolan's data on voter beliefs yield this claim: "Despite the integration of women into elected office and the presence of high visibility figures like Nancy Pelosi, Sarah Palin, and Hillary Clinton, reliance on gender stereotypes is still the most common response when evaluating political women" (2010, 78). According to Dolan, evaluations of political women rely on gender stereotypes that predict traits, beliefs, behaviors, and overall competencies for men and women.[11] Scholars who have explored gender stereotypes in the public psyche have noted the influence that these expectations have on women's electoral experiences and fortunes. As Dolan explains, "At their most basic, stereotypes tell us whether people see candidates to be capable of governing or not" (72). Beyond shaping expectations of candidate image, these stereotypes influence expectations of candidate behavior and tactics. While the influence of gender stereotypes varies by office type, office level, and electoral context, the most valued attributes and issues in political evaluations are most often those that advantage men (Kahn 1996; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Schneider and Bos 2014).[12] As Monica Schneider makes clear, "males and females are fighting on male-stereotypical territory" in political campaigns (2007, 91).

Deborah Jordan Brooks (2013) argues that this stereotypical terrain has shifted since 2008 to benefit women candidates. In survey experiments conducted in the spring of 2009, she found little evidence of negative effects of stereotypes on evaluations of and outcomes for women candidates. However, gender still functions differently for the female and male candidates in her survey, whether in positive trait attributions the woman receives or different effects of her and his emotionality or perceived lack of empathy on voter evaluations. Brooks puts forth a "leaders-not-ladies" theory of gender stereotypes that states, "Women politicians will be held to the standards of good leadership rather than to the standards of good femininity" (29). While a potential step forward for women's integration into political life, this theory does little to challenge findings that voters' standards of "good leadership" are still rooted in masculinity and more easily met by men (Koenig et al. 2011). In fact, Monica Schneider and Angela Bos (2014) find that female

politicians seem to be viewed neither as leaders nor ladies; they suffer from perceptions that they are deficient, in comparison to male politicians, in leadership, competence, and other male-stereotypical traits while also being attributed with fewer stereotypically feminine traits than women overall. They write, "Female politicians seem to be 'losing' on male stereotypical qualities while also not having any advantage on qualities typical of women" (261).

These findings demonstrate that scholarship on the prevalence, content, and impact of gender stereotypes has been mixed in recent years. The electoral impact of gender stereotypes has been particularly unclear partly because of contextual variance, wherein expectations of women's issue competence or female traits are seen as advantageous in certain contexts and disadvantageous in others (Burrell 1994; R. Fox 1997; Kahn 1996). Stereotype impact is also masked by women's equitable success at the ballot box and the now common refrain that "when women run, women win." Recent research by Kathleen Dolan (2014b) shows that gender stereotypes, though held by voters, do not seem to influence candidate evaluations or, most important, vote choice. However, and consistent with my findings, she cautions, "Gender stereotypes may exert an influence on other stages of the electoral process, perhaps when women make choices about how to campaign or even when they decide whether to run at all" (105). Similarly, Mary Christine Banwart offers an alternative site for stereotype impact: "Perhaps female candidates are successfully employing strategies that enable them to overcome the negative consequences of gender stereotyping" (2010, 267). Men, too, may adapt to shifting gendered terrain when running against women and confronting gender-stereotypical challenges previously absent in all-male contests (R. Fox 1997; Panagopoulous 2004). In other words, while a candidate's gender is not necessarily a direct harbinger of electoral success or defeat, gendered perceptions are politically relevant and influential in campaign experience and strategy building for men and women candidates (Carroll 1994; Hayes 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a, 1993b).

Campaigns' Strategic Development and Output

Candidates and campaign professionals must grapple with when and how to address these stereotypes (or not) in campaign message, image, and tactics. At times this may mean highlighting competitive advantages unique to candidate gender, while other instances may call for inaction to prevent undermining prevailing assumptions that benefit a candidate.[13] Campaign professionals, who have garnered greater presence and influence in modern political campaigns, are most often responsible for examining voter expectations and developing strategic recommendations for candidates. They bring knowledge

of the political context and insights unique to their partisan affiliation and previous experiences to these recommendations (Burton and Shea 2010; Dulio 2004; Grossman 2009a, 2009b; Herrnson 1992; Johnson 2001; Medvic 2001; Sabato 1981; Thurber and Nelson 1995). Their recommendations are processed by the candidates who hire them and who most often have the final say on whether or not (and how) these strategies are executed.

Scholars have dedicated great energy to analyzing voter stereotypes, perceptions, and electoral decisions, as well as to investigating gender differences in campaign output and candidate presentation. More specifically, scholars have used campaign advertisements or electronic media to evaluate gender differences in candidates' strategic image, message, and tactics (Banwart 2002; Bimber and Davis 2003; Bystrom et al. 2004; Bystrom and Brown 2009; Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2007; Kahn 1996; Panagopoulous 2004; Sapiro et al. 2011; Schneider 2007). Few conclusions are consistent among these analyses of campaign output, though scholars seem to agree that emphasizing masculine traits, appearing in masculine settings, and displaying competence on masculine issues are the most successful strategies for female candidates (Bystrom et al. 2004; Chang and Hitchon 2004; Kaid et al. 1984; Panagopoulous 2004; Wadsworth et al. 1987). The most overarching conclusion, however, is that campaign context matters significantly in shaping campaign approaches and output. After analyzing campaign advertisements from 2000 and 2002 U.S. House races, Virginia Sapiro and colleagues conclude that any gender differences in candidate presentation are "highly dependent on context" and identify a need for more qualitative, indepth research approaches to analyzing gender and candidate presentation (2011, 116).

Jessica Harrell notes in her modeling of gender and campaign strategy, "Most of these studies focus more on documenting the presence (or absence) of sex differences rather than developing a theoretical framework to explain and predict gendered behavior in campaign strategies" (2009, 4). In Darrell West's terms, political science has rarely investigated the steps in the campaign process that move candidates from voter "demands" and expectations to campaign "supply" or candidate self-presentation (1994, 1073). More clearly, scholars have spent very little time asking those making campaign decisions if, how, and when gender considerations come into play in strategy formation and why and by whom certain decisions surrounding candidate image and message cultivation are made. To truly understand campaign's strategizing and decision making, more research is needed from insiders' perspectives at this understudied phase of the campaign process. This book provides that research by investigating the role of gender in campaign decision making by candidates and their campaign teams.

Electoral and Institutional Outcomes

Research on political campaigns has long debated whether or not campaigns "matter," asking if the strategies developed and tactics deployed have any influential effect on electoral outcomes. While early behavioral scholars argued that vote choice was determined primarily by party identification (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944), more recent scholarship has demonstrated that campaigns *do* matter in determining candidate success (Burton and Shea 2010; Holbrook 1995, 2006). Beyond vote choice, campaigns affect voter perceptions, knowledge, and engagement (Hillygus and Shields 2009; Kahn and Kenney 1999). For example, campaign images and messages help communicate cues to voters on candidate traits, expertise, and priorities, and campaign processes can engage voters in the electoral process (Hayes 2005; Salmore and Salmore 1989). These effects often have an indirect impact on the decisions voters make at the polls, and they are often greatest among undecided, independent, and crossover voters (Hillygus and Jackman 2003).

Kahn's (1996) model of the campaign process focuses primarily on the impact of sex stereotypes on vote choice and notes that female candidates may present themselves in ways consistent with voters' stereotypical beliefs to ensure electoral success. Thus, in shaping strategy to conform to prevalent gender stereotypes and voter expectations of candidates and officeholders, campaigns can reduce electoral bias in women's success rates. In other words, women's electoral success may be a result of *adaptation to* instead of *triumph over* gender barriers. In Figure 1.1, I build on and complicate Kahn's model by arguing that campaigns can actually influence voters' expectations of the ideal candidate and stereotypes of gender—reinforcing or disrupting them—based on these decisions over conformity or nonconformity to established norms. The images and messages that campaign practitioners create and voters receive from campaigns (either directly or indirectly via media filters) inform their expectations in future campaigns.

This approach challenges claims that campaigns are, or can be, gender neutral and demonstrates how the gender dynamics of campaigns influence both elite behavior and institutional change. Delving deeper into the campaign mind at the stage of strategic development enables researchers to both engage important political actors and understand campaigns as gendered institutions whereby strategy is informed by, but also has the potential to influence, prevailing gender expectations. Thus, beyond evaluating different electoral experiences and approaches of men and women candidates, this research investigates the influence of campaign decision making on institutional climates and change.

Applying a Feminist Institutionalist Framework

Scholars have long asked how women can effectively operate in, or adapt to, the masculine world of politics and campaigns. Instead, I ask if and how campaign strategies might challenge the masculinity inherent in the institution itself. Georgia Duerst-Lahti's analysis of congresswomen clearly illuminates the challenge for women entering governing institutions:

> Congresswomen must adapt to, not challenge, structures in order to gain credibility. In the process of fitting in, however, congresswomen face a lose-lose situation: their success inside the institution paradoxically reinforces masculinism, which in turn perpetuates their difficulties in gaining power and influence. (2002, 382)

However, institutions are not entities immune to change (Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Both external pressures and internal disruption may alter institutional structure, function, and culture. In campaigns, strategic development and execution act as the sites in which candidates and their teams both confront and create institutional gender dynamics.

A feminist-institutionalist theory of campaigns combines the "insights of institutionalism"—which offer explanations for institutional continuity and change and the role of individual actors therein—and feminism, which seeks to highlight the gendered dimensions of campaign institutions, the ways in which they uphold masculine power, and the routes toward institutional change (Krook 2010, 717; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995). Via this feminist-institutional framework, I move beyond asking how and when gender functions in campaigns to explore its institutional effects. More specifically, I explore the constitutive relationship between institutions and individual actors, whereby candidates' and practitioners' perceptions and understanding of how gender operates in campaigns influences to what extent and in what ways gender shapes campaign strategy. Finally, I explore whether those strategic decisions have the potential to maintain or disrupt prevailing gender norms and expectations of campaign institutions.

If women work to align their public personas with prevailing expectations that mark the identities of female and candidate as incompatible, they do little to challenge the gender understructure of campaigns. On the contrary, innovative campaign decisions and strategies for men and women candidates have the potential to disrupt, instead of replicate, institutional norms and power structures. Challenging the masculinity of political offices, and the credentials required to hold them, via campaign messages and imagery is one route toward redefining gender in campaigns so male and masculine are

not the only "appropriate" traits for success. Moreover, redefining the imagery and attributes of an ideal candidate and officeholder today means not only changing the literal face of power but also marketing traits and attributes formerly undervalued in political leaders as worthwhile, including those traits and attributes most associated with femininity and women.[14] Redefinition also occurs through campaigns' tactical decisions, which have the potential to meet or challenge voters' behavioral expectations of candidates and gender, and creates opportunities for more women to run and win elective offices.

In her study of women legislators, Thomas argues, "Women today who operate in the political realm face the absence of a defined and accepted role and have had to develop entirely new ones" (1997, 44). In doing so via campaign strategy and candidate presentation, women have the potential to "reshape American political institutions so that [they] can enter them on their own terms" (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994, 313). This capacity for campaigns to disrupt or replicate ideals of gender and candidacy represents one of the "unintended outcomes" of campaign decision making too often underexplored in both scholarship and political practice (Grossman 2009b, 21).[15]

Methodology

Infiltrating the cocoon of electoral campaigns is no easy task. In this project, I confront this challenge by employing multiple methods to provide insight about campaigns' decision making and gender considerations therein. First, I used a nationwide survey of political consultants to measure their baseline perceptions of voters' gender stereotypes, campaign strategy, and gender dynamics within the campaign profession. Then, recognizing that it is difficult for strategists to speak in generalizations about decision making in campaigns at-large, I evaluated practitioner perceptions within the context of particular campaigns in 2008 and 2010. In both years, I interviewed campaign insiders about campaign strategy, decision making, and gender dynamics in statewide contests in which at least one candidate was a woman. Asking similar questions in multiple formats and settings permitted me to better analyze the importance of context in determining the ways and degree to which gender shapes campaign terrain and the strategies by which candidates and their teams navigate that terrain.

Baseline Perceptions: National Survey of Campaign Consultants

I capture the perspectives, behaviors, and influences of campaign consultants through one of only a small number of surveys taken of campaign profession-

als (see Dulio 2004; Grossman 2009c; Kolodny and Logan 1998; Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000) and the only one that explores questions of gender.[16] I also conducted post-survey phone interviews with select respondents. Together, my survey and interview findings provide foundational knowledge on consultants' perceptions of the political landscape, especially as they relate to gender.

To identify consulting firms that should be included in my national survey of campaign consultants, I used *Campaigns and Elections'* annual "won-lost" report of consulting firms active in the 2008 and 2009 election cycles and *National Journal*'s consultant database (Dulio 2004; Medvic 2001; Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000). After establishing a list of firms, I used data available in the *Political Resources Directory* and individual firms' websites to determine and collect contact information for individual consultants at each firm.[17] I limited my population to firms active in congressional and/or gubernatorial races in 2008 and 2009 and verified clients for each firm using Congressional Quarterly's *Campaign Insider* reports when necessary (Johnson 2001). I also limited the population to those consultants—general consultants, media consultants, and pollsters—most engaged in campaigns' strategic development, including image cultivation, message creation, and tactical plans. The final population contacted includes 878 active political consultants. My methodology replicates that of previous surveys of political consultants (Dulio 2004; Grossman 2009c; Kolodny and Logan 1998; Medvic 2001; Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000).

I invited campaign consultants to participate in a web-based survey through Survey Monkey Professional.[18] The survey asked about campaign strategy, tactics, perceptions of gender stereotypes among voters, and the consulting profession. The survey remained in the field from March 29 to May 29, 2010, during which consultants were contacted multiple times through various modes of outreach.[19] In recruitment materials, the survey was described as an online survey about campaign strategy and candidate presentation. I noted that my study would investigate consultant perceptions and decision making, and I assured respondents that their responses would be confidential.

Two hundred twenty-three active campaign consultants responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 24.8 percent.[20] This rate is consistent with recent surveys of political elites.[21] Upon completion of the survey, participants were asked if they were willing to participate in a brief post-survey telephone interview, ranging from twenty to forty minutes. Eighty-four respondents volunteered to participate in post-survey interviews, thirty-two were contacted, and seventeen were interviewed between July 21, 2010, and September 17, 2010.[22] These interviews supplement the survey data, providing context and explanation for the empirical findings.

Campaign Strategists in Context: Investigating Statewide Campaigns in 2008 and 2010

To investigate practitioner perceptions and behaviors within specific campaign contexts, I interviewed campaigns' most important actors: candidates and campaign professionals. The campaigns included in my analysis are statewide contests for the U.S. Senate or governor in 2008 and 2010 that had at least one female contender.[23]

In late 2009, I analyzed four competitive statewide general election campaigns from 2008 as exploratory research for the 2010 election analysis. In 2008, three of ten competitive Senate races had at least one major-party female candidate.[24] I chose two of these races, in North Carolina (Kay Hagan, D, vs. Elizabeth Dole, R) and New Hampshire (Jeanne Shaheen, D, vs. John Sununu, R), to compare two female challengers and to present a unique case in which both major-party candidates were women. Female candidates were similarly few in 2008 gubernatorial races, with only four major-party female candidates across the country. Of those races, only two concluded within margins of ten points or fewer; I included those races—in North Carolina (Beverly Perdue, D, vs. Pat McCrory, R) and Washington (Christine Gregoire, D, vs. Dino Rossi, R)—in my analysis.[25] For each 2008 race, I completed background analysis of the political climate, time line, and journalistic coverage. Moreover, I completed seven semi-structured phone interviews with campaign insiders from these races, including one candidate (Pat McCrory, R-NC; see Appendix A for complete list of interview subjects). Analysis and findings from these select 2008 contests provided important information and guidance as I developed a more extensive plan to analyze gender dynamics in the 2010 elections.

Unlike with my selective approach in 2008, I included all 2010 U.S. Senate and gubernatorial contests—primary and/or general election—in which at least one candidate was a woman in my analysis to yield maximum findings across different political climates and contexts.[26] Between June 2010 and February 2011, I interviewed seventy-three candidates and campaign operatives from mixed-gender primary and general election contests for governor and the U.S. Senate. These include thirty-four interviews with candidates, campaign consultants, and campaign managers in gubernatorial contests in eleven states; thirty interviews with candidates, campaign consultants, and campaign managers in U.S. Senate contests in thirteen states; four party committee operatives (Democratic Governors' Association [DGA], National Republican Senatorial Committee [NRSC], and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee [DSCC]); and five prominent political consultants

who worked on both mixed-gender Senate and gubernatorial contests in the 2010 cycle (see Appendix A and Appendix B).[27] Each semi-structured telephone interview, from both 2008 and 2010 contests, lasted between twenty-five and seventy-five minutes, and subjects were asked about early campaign calculations and considerations, perceptions of gender influence and gender dynamics, major factors in the political landscape and electoral outcomes, and reflections on the state of women in the campaign profession. Three interviews from the 2010 elections were completed in person. All subjects were given the option to complete the interview on or off the record, depending on their comfort level, and could move between degrees of confidentiality at any point in the interview. My response rate for interview requests for the 2008 and 2010 election cycles was approximately 43 percent.[28]

Supplemental interviews from the consultant survey, interviews from select 2008 contests, and the interviews completed from 2010 races combine to yield ninety-seven total interviews of candidates and campaign practitioners from diverse viewpoints and contexts.[29] Questions that were asked in every interview were systematically analyzed to determine dominant themes in responses, while responses to questions unique to particular campaigns are used to provide evidence of these thematic findings. To best analyze the interview transcriptions, I used the qualitative software Dedoose.[30]

Outline of Chapters

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present findings from my national survey of campaign consultants. I provide evidence of consultants' perceptions of voters' gendered beliefs and track how those perceptions translate into strategic recommendations and behavior. While I show the persistent influence of gender stereotypes for many insiders, these chapters reveal differences in perceptions among campaign practitioners across party lines. These differences have implications for strategic recommendations and behaviors and institutional maintenance or change. The survey findings in Chapters 2 and 3 not only show multiple sites wherein gender functions in campaign strategy and decision making but also demonstrate that campaign insiders' views are vital to the practice of campaigns, influencing the development and execution of campaign images, messages, and tactics.

While the survey findings presented in Chapters 2 and 3 provide rich and unique data on political practitioners' gender beliefs and behaviors, they are limited to generic campaign contexts that do not account for the dynamism of political campaigns. Therefore, in Chapters 4 through 6, I draw on interviews completed with candidates and campaign practitioners active in

specific 2008 and 2010 mixed-gender statewide races to illuminate how, when, and in what ways gender influences campaign strategizing alongside the many factors shaping campaign processes and outcomes.

In Chapter 4, I analyze campaign insiders' perceptions of the factors most influential in shaping electoral outcomes—political climate, campaign strategy, media, money, and parties—and identify the interaction of gender with each. I then investigate more specifically in what ways, if any, interview subjects' identified gender as an influence on strategy, tactics, or campaign results. I find that while campaign insiders identify gender dynamics in campaigns when probed directly about specific strategies and tactics, their evaluations of gender effects are often focused on electoral outcomes and, as a result, discount the overall magnitude of gender's influence in campaigns.

The findings in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate the value of questioning candidates and campaign practitioners about specific gendered dimensions of campaign images, messages, and tactics. In Chapter 5, I focus on the ways in which gender informs campaigns' decisions over candidate presentation—the images and messages they develop to meet voter demands. I analyze how perceptions of gender shape practitioners' decisions on which candidate traits to emphasize and how to best communicate candidates' issue expertise. In doing so, I investigate the ways in which both male and female candidates and their teams negotiate voter expectations of masculinity and femininity of candidates and officeholders. My findings reveal nuances of gender that are otherwise masked or overlooked in analyses of campaign output. Moreover, they are based within particular campaign contexts, allowing me to better analyze factors or settings that temper or amplify gender influence on strategic decisions. Together, these findings provide more cumulative explanations for when, why, and how candidates and practitioners navigate gender in campaign decision making and candidate presentation.

In Chapter 6, I move from the development of candidate images and campaign messages to analyze how campaigns communicate those images and messages to voters. I focus on two tactics that interview subjects described as most influenced by gender: direct appeals to women voters and negative campaigning. Throughout the chapter, I assess men and women candidates' unique approaches to these communication tactics as evidence of campaigns' adherence to gendered rules of electoral engagement to avoid gendered electoral outcomes.

In Chapter 7, I return to the motivations of my feminist-institutionalist framework for analysis. I elaborate on the institutional implications of my findings for gendering, or regendering, campaign institutions. Feminist-institutionalist approaches look to the development of a "transformative agenda" to consider practical possibilities for change and ways in which

institutional processes can be disrupted (Kenny and Mackay 2009). I outline possible components of such an agenda for political campaigns, whereby prevailing gender norms and expectations that advantage men and masculinity might be disrupted and new "rules of the game" might be put in place to benefit women's long-term political progress.

This book provides unprecedented, detailed, and diverse insights into the campaign mind by analyzing an understudied phase of the campaign process and relying on a population of subjects too often ignored in campaign and gender research to reveal the myriad ways in which gender functions in modern campaigns and campaigning. More specifically, the following chapters illuminate how candidates and campaign practitioners navigate gender dynamics in strategic development and decision making in order to minimize or eliminate gender effects in campaign results and what those decisions mean for institutional maintenance or change.