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The impact of gender and quality opposition on the relative assessment of candidate competency

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ABSTRACT

Extant women & politics literature suggests males are perceived to be better leaders than females. Men are more likely than women to be perceived as competent, decisive, and capable of handling crises—all important qualities for elected officials. This research suggests, on average, female elected officials are viewed as less competent than their male colleagues. Yet, extant literature typically examines perceived competency of elected officials in a vacuum. Notably, the research does not take in to account how the gender and quality of opposing candidates may influence the perceived competency of an elected official. In this research note, we address this limitation by examining evaluations of members of the U.S. House (henceforth MC) relative to the evaluations of their challenger. We find gender differences are larger and more pronounced when we compare male and female MCs competing against quality challengers.

The extant literature on women & politics suggests males are perceived to be better leaders than females. Men are more likely than women to be perceived as competent, decisive, and capable of handling crises—all important qualities for elected officials (Burrell, 2008; Holman et al., 2011, 2017; Paul and Smith, 2008). This research suggests, on average, female elected officials are viewed as less competent than their male colleagues. Yet, extant literature typically only examines gender differences of elected officials, rather than accounting for how gender and the quality of opposition candidates may influence citizens' attitudes about their representatives.

This research note addresses this limitation by examining the scores, or evaluations, of members of the U.S. House (henceforth MCs) and their challengers. We examine the gap, or difference, between the competency scores citizens give to each candidate. We propose the gap in candidate evaluations varies as a function of the gender of the candidates in a race, partisanship, and the quality of the challenging candidate. We test our expectations using the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study and U.S. House candidate data. We find gender differences in the relative assessment of competency emerge; however, these gender differences are more pronounced when we compare male and female MCs facing quality challengers.

1. Gender, party, opposition & perceptions of candidates

Extant research demonstrates voters employ gender and partisan cues to inform their evaluations of candidates. With respect to gender, research suggests gender stereotypes influence how male and female candidates are evaluated (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Barnes and Beaulieu, 2014; Burrell, 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Kahn, 1996; King and Matland, 2003; Lawless, 2004; Leeper, 1991; Paul and Smith, 2008). Traditional gender stereotypes emphasize women's communal traits and men's agentic traits (Cuddy et al., 2007). For instance, men are more likely than women to be perceived as competent, decisive, strong leaders, and capable of handling crises; all of which are important qualities for elected officials (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Burrell, 2008; Holman et al., 2011, 2017; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Kahn, 1996; King and Matland, 2003; Lawless, 2004; Leeper, 1991; Paul and Smith, 2008). As such, female candidates are often viewed as not competent or lacking the leadership traits than compared to male candidates (Bauer, 2017; Holman et al., 2011, 2017; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Kahn, 1996; King and Matland, 2003; Lawless, 2004). Relatedly, research suggests voters are more likely to seek out information regarding competency about female candidates (Ditonto, 2017) and female candidate evaluations are more heavily influenced by information regarding competency than compared to male candidates (Ditonto et al., 2014). Further, recent research suggests in order to be

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electorally competitive, female candidates have to be more qualified than male candidates (Barnes et al., 2017; Fulton, 2012, 2014; Pearson and McGhee, 2013). Taken together, the results suggest in mixed-gender contests, female MCs may be evaluated as relatively less competent than compared to a male MC.

The use of gender cues should not be considered in isolation from party cues (Hayes, 2011; Huddy and Capelos, 2002; King and Matland, 2003; Schneider and Bos, 2016). Respondents are likely to evaluate co-partisan candidates more favorably than candidates from the opposition party (e.g. Krupnikov and Bauer, 2014; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Rahn, 1993). Nonetheless, their evaluation may be tempered by the gender of the candidate. Republicans are perceived as prioritizing issues such as defense, security, and conservative fiscal policies (Koch, 2000; Rahn, 1993; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). These partisan stereotypes are more consistent with stereotypes ascribed to male politicians than female politicians. The incongruent issue stereotypes between women and Republicans may result in Republican women being viewed as less competent than Democratic women.¹ This research suggests the relative assessment of a female Democrat candidate will be more favorable than the assessment of a female Republican candidate.

Additionally, we propose the quality of the opposition serves as a cue. Quality candidates are unlikely to risk leaving their current positions or to chance losing financial and/or political capital by opposing MCs when winning is improbable (Jacobson and Kernell, 1983; Jacobson, 2004). Thus, the entry of a quality challenger (e.g. those with previous officeholding experience) likely signals an incumbent is electorally vulnerable (Gordon et al., 2007, 2009). Gordon et al. (2009) argue the high costs of quality candidate entry conveys information to voters about the relative merits of challengers and MCs. The quality opposition cue may serve to influence the respondent's assessment of the MC relative to the challenging candidate. This finding suggests when incumbent MCs face quality challengers, their opponents' competency scores will be higher than when MCs face non-quality challengers. Thus, the relative assessment of competency, or the difference in competency scores between the MCs and their challengers, will be larger when MCs face quality challengers.

Combining the expectations regarding candidate gender, party, and quality opposition cues leads to three expectations. First, we propose as a result of traditional gender cues, female MCs may be viewed as more vulnerable than compared to male MCs. Second, we expect differences in the relative assessment of candidate competency are dependent on partisan alignment of the candidate and respondent. Relatedly, we propose the relative assessment of female Republican candidates will be less favorable than female Democratic candidate. Finally, we anticipate muted differences in relative assessments of candidate's competency when the MC faces a non-quality challenger when compared to races in which the MC faces a quality challenger.

2. Data & methods

To evaluate relative assessment of candidate competency, we use data from the 2010 CCES “Common Content” survey (Ansolabehere, 2012), which is a nationally representative internet survey administered by YouGov in October through November 2010.² We merged the

2010 CCES survey data with 2010 U.S. House general election candidate-level data. The candidate-level data set contains information on candidates' gender, partisanship, and prior office-holding experience.³ Together, these data allow us to identify the gender of each candidate in a race and the political experience of each MC's opposition.

The dependent variable measures the relative assessment of the “competency” of the MC compared to the opposing candidate. The seven-point competency variable ranges from “1” reflecting extremely weak level of competence to “7” reflecting extremely strong level of competence.⁴ Thus, the relative competency measure is simply the competency score of the MC minus the competency score of the opposing candidate. The dependent variable ranges from -6 to $+6$, where positive values indicate more favorable assessments of the MC and negative values indicate more favorable assessments of their opposing candidate. To illustrate the relative assessment of competency measure, consider the following two scenarios. In one case, the MC receives a 7 on the competency measure and the opposing candidate receives a 5, resulting in a relative assessment score of $+2$. In another case, the MC receives a 5 on the competency measure and the opposing candidate receives a 7, which results in a relative assessment score of -2 .

Extant research suggests females are more likely to support female candidates (Brians, 2005; Dolan, 2004; Fox, 1997) and more likely to support Democratic candidates (Brians, 2005; Schlesinger and Heldman, 2001). As such, females may provide more positive relative assessments of candidate competency for female Democratic candidates. Thus, to account for the intersection of gender and party (Brians, 2005), we estimate several iterations of the model based on the gender and party of respondent, as well as the party of the MC. For both Democratic and Republican MCs, we estimate four different models based on respondent gender and partisanship: female Democrats, female Republicans, male Democrats, and male Republicans.⁵

The independent variables of interest are candidate dyads that account for the gender of the candidates *and* the quality of the MC's opposition. To differentiate between quality and non-quality challengers, we rely on the most common classification: those that have previous experience in elective office are considered quality candidates and those with no prior experience are considered non-quality candidates (Barnes et al., 2017; Branton, 2009; Carson et al., 2007; Jacobson, 2004).⁶ This candidate-level information was used to create a series of dichotomous variables denoting the MC's gender, the challenger candidate's gender, and the quality of the opposing candidate. The “candidate dyads” include: (1) Female MC versus Male Quality Challenger, (2) Male MC versus Female Quality Challenger, (3) Male MC versus Male Quality Challenger, (4) Female MC versus Male Non-Quality Challenger, and (5) Male MC versus Female Non-Quality Challenger.⁷

(footnote continued)

produced by YouGov.

³ Several sources were used to construct the candidate-level data set. We used the 2010 U.S. House certified election results for all 435 congressional districts provided by the Federal Election Commission to identify the candidates and their partisan affiliation (see <http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2010/federalelections2010.shtml>). Next, *CQ Weekly Report*, *The Almanac of American Politics*, and online resources (candidate campaign and personal websites, Lexis-Nexis, and Newsbank) were used to compile demographic information—gender and prior office-holding experience—on each candidate.

⁴ The original measure was coded such that a “1” reflected extremely strong and a “7” reflected extremely weak. We reversed the coding of the variable to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

⁵ Independents are omitted from the analysis. We did estimate each of the models for independents and the results were uniformly non-significant. We suspect the non-findings are related to the fact Independents fall across the ideological spectrum; thus, washing out any effects.

⁶ The literature has considered a few quality candidate measures (see Bond et al., 1985; Jacobson and Kernell 1983; Krasno and Green 1988). Yet, Jacobson (2004) offers evidence the binary measure of quality candidate is as robust a measure of a quality candidate as the more nuanced measures of candidate quality.

¹ Nonetheless, female Democrats legislating on stereotypically masculine issue areas, such as national security, are less likely to be viewed as competent on these issues than Republican women since neither Democrats nor women are stereotyped as owning these issues (Holman et al., 2011, 2017).

² A study comparing results of the 2010 CCES with a random sample mail survey and a random digit dialing telephone survey lends evidence that the 2010 CCES produces comparable estimates (Ansolabehere & Schaffner, 2011). The survey employs a matched random sample methodology to generate representative samples. YouGov first identified a “target population” from the general population and then randomly selected respondents from within the “target population” to generate a “target sample.” YouGov

The baseline category for the “Candidate Dyads” is a Male MC versus a Male Non-Quality Challenger.⁸

The model includes several candidate and district control variables: MC tenure, MC ideology, competitive district, and southern district. MC *tenure* measures the number of years an MC has been in office. MC *ideology* is measured using the DW-NOMINATE, which ranges from -1.35 (maximally conservative) to 0.78 (maximally liberal). To account for the competitiveness of a race, we include a dichotomous variable, *Solid District*, which is coded “1” if a district is rated as a solid Democratic or solid Republican district and “0” otherwise.⁹ The models also include a dummy variable denoting whether a district is in the South. This variable is intended to control for potential regional differences in evaluations of candidates.

The models also include respondent-level control variables: age, education, and ideology.¹⁰ Age is measured in years. Education is measured using a 5-category variable ranging from 1 (no high school degree) to 5 (Post graduate degree). The respondent's ideology is measured by a 7-point ideology scale where 1 denotes very conservative and 7 denotes very liberal. To account for the conditioning effect of MC ideology on the relationship between respondent ideology and candidate assessments, the models include an interaction between MC and respondent ideology.

3. Results

Table 1 gives the regression results for the candidate dyad covariates.¹¹ The first four columns present respondent evaluations of the Democratic MCs in the following order: female Democrat, female Republican, male Democrat, and male Republican. The final four columns present respondent evaluations of the Republican MCs in the same order as outlined above.

To facilitate the interpretation of the findings, we utilize figures that include three pieces of information for each candidate dyad: the predicted competency score for the MC, the predicted competency score for the challenger, and the predicted relative competency score.¹² The figures plot the predicted competency scores for the MC and challenger with the 95% confidence intervals. Additionally, for each candidate dyad the figure denotes the actual relative competency scores. The purpose of presenting the predicted competency score for the MC and the challenger is to illustrate how the predict relative assessment score is derived. That said, our primary focus is on the differences in the relative assessment, or the gap in candidate competency scores, across the candidate dyads to determine if and how the gender of the respondent, gender of the candidates, and the quality of the opposing candidate influences respondent evaluations. To highlight significant differences across the relative assessment of competency, the graphs include a line between the two dyads (with braced ends) which denotes the numerical difference between the two relative competency scores.

(footnote continued)

is excluded from Republican MC due to the limited number of cases.

⁸ We opted to assign Male MC versus a Male Non-Quality Challenger as the baseline category as this is the most common type of congressional election.

⁹ We utilized data available at: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~jcampbel/> The links were last accessed on February 1, 2017. For analysis of the accuracy of the Cook's Report see the report by James Campbell at: www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~jcampbel/documents/CookAccuracySummary.pdf.

¹⁰ Given the structure of the models, the analysis includes only Anglo respondents. There were too few minority respondents across the models to draw any conclusions about racial differences.

¹¹ The complete results, including the control variables, are presented in Appendix A and B.

¹² To generate the individual predicted competency scores for the MC and the challenger, we estimate the model separately for the MC and the challenger. For the MC we estimate the model where the dependent variable is the competency score for the MC and for the challenger we estimate the model where the dependent variables is the competency score for the challenger.

3.1. Democrat MC vs republican non-quality challenger

Fig. 1 presents the competency scores and relative assessments of competency for a Democrat MC facing a Republican non-quality challenger. The top left panel plots the results for a female Democratic respondent, the bottom left panel presents the results for a female Republican respondent, the top right panel presents the results for a male Democratic respondent, and the bottom right panel presents the results for a male Republican respondent (Figs. 2–4 present the results in a consistent manner). Not surprisingly, respondents uniformly offer a significantly higher evaluation of the candidate of their party than compared to the opposition candidate. Democratic respondents rate the Democratic candidate more favorably than the Republican candidate, while Republican respondents rate the Republican candidate more favorably than the Democratic candidate.

We now turn to a comparison of the relative assessment of candidate competency across the candidate dyads. Fig. 1 also shows in the case of a Democratic MC facing a non-quality challenger, the findings indicate there are no significant differences in the relative competency scores among female Democratic, female Republican, and male Democratic respondents. The only significant difference in the relative candidate competency emerges among male Republican respondents when comparing a female Democratic MC facing a male non-quality opponent and a male MC facing a male non-quality candidate. To illustrate, a male Republican's assessment of the competency of a female Democratic MC is 2.36 and his assessment of the male non-quality opponent is 5.31, resulting in a -2.96 relative assessment of competency. Whereas, in a race where a male MC faces a male non-quality candidate, a male Republican respondent's assessment of the competency of a male Democratic MC is 2.89 and his assessment of the male non-quality opponent is 5.37, resulting in a -2.47 relative assessment of competency. The difference in the relative assessment of these two candidate dyads ($-2.96, -2.47$) is -0.49 . Substantively, this suggests male Republican respondents view female Democratic MCs as significantly less competent than a male Democratic MC when the opposition is a male non-quality challenger.

3.2. Republican MC vs Democrat non-quality challenger

Fig. 2 presents the competency scores and relative competency score for a Republican MC facing a Democrat non-quality challenger. Among Democratic respondents—male and female—and male Republican respondents the gender of the candidates does not influence their assessment of candidate competency. The only significant differences in the relative competency scores emerge among female Republican respondents. A female Republican respondent's relative assessment of competency of a male Republican MC facing a female non-quality challenger is 3.10, which is significantly different when compared to the relative assessment of a male MC facing a male non-quality challenger (2.77) and a female MC facing a male non-quality challenger (2.62) (See the footnote¹³ for details on the individual candidate assessments.). Substantively, the findings suggest female Republicans view male Republican MCs facing a female non-quality candidate as significantly more competent when compared to a male MC facing a male non-quality challenger and a female MC facing a male non-quality

¹³ Here we note the individual assessments for the relevant dyads. First, a female Republican's assessment of the competency of a male Republican MC is 5.77 and her assessment of the female non-quality opponent is 2.67, resulting in a 3.10 relative assessment of competency. Second, her assessment of the competency of a male Republican MC is 5.68 and her assessment of the male non-quality opponent is 2.91, resulting in a 2.77 relative assessment of competency. The difference in the relative assessment of these two candidate dyads (3.10–2.77) is 0.33. Third, her assessment of the competency of a female Republican MC is 5.83 and her assessment of the male non-quality opponent is 3.21, resulting in a 2.62 relative assessment of competency. The difference in the relative assessment a male Republican MC facing a female non-quality challenger and a female MC facing a male non-quality challenger (3.10–2.62) is 0.48.

Table 1
Relative assessment of competency.

Candidate Dyads	Democrat MC				Republican MC			
	Female Respondent		Male Respondent		Female Respondent		Male Respondent	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Male MC versus								
Female QC	.83** (.31)	.24 (.36)	-.28 (.71)	.36 (.29)	.24 (.24)	-.51 (.33)	-.56 (.35)	-.49† (.29)
Male QC	-.05 (.18)	.09 (.25)	-.01 (.27)	-.14 (.21)	-.48† (.27)	-.05 (.25)	-.29 (.36)	.11 (.21)
Female Non-QC	-.25 (.34)	.08 (.27)	.03 (.26)	-.06 (.24)	.24 (.25)	-.32* (.16)	-.08 (.51)	-.30 (.21)
Female MC versus								
Male QC	-.42 (.27)	-.11 (.27)	.07 (.56)	-.92*** (.28)				
Male Non-QC	.03 (.23)	-.30 (.18)	.39† (.20)	-.48* (.22)	.14 (.28)	.15 (.16)	.58 (.36)	.22 (.23)

†p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Coefficients are OLS with Robust Standard Errors. All F-tests are significant at p < .0001. The complete results including the control variables are presented in Tables A and B of the appendix.

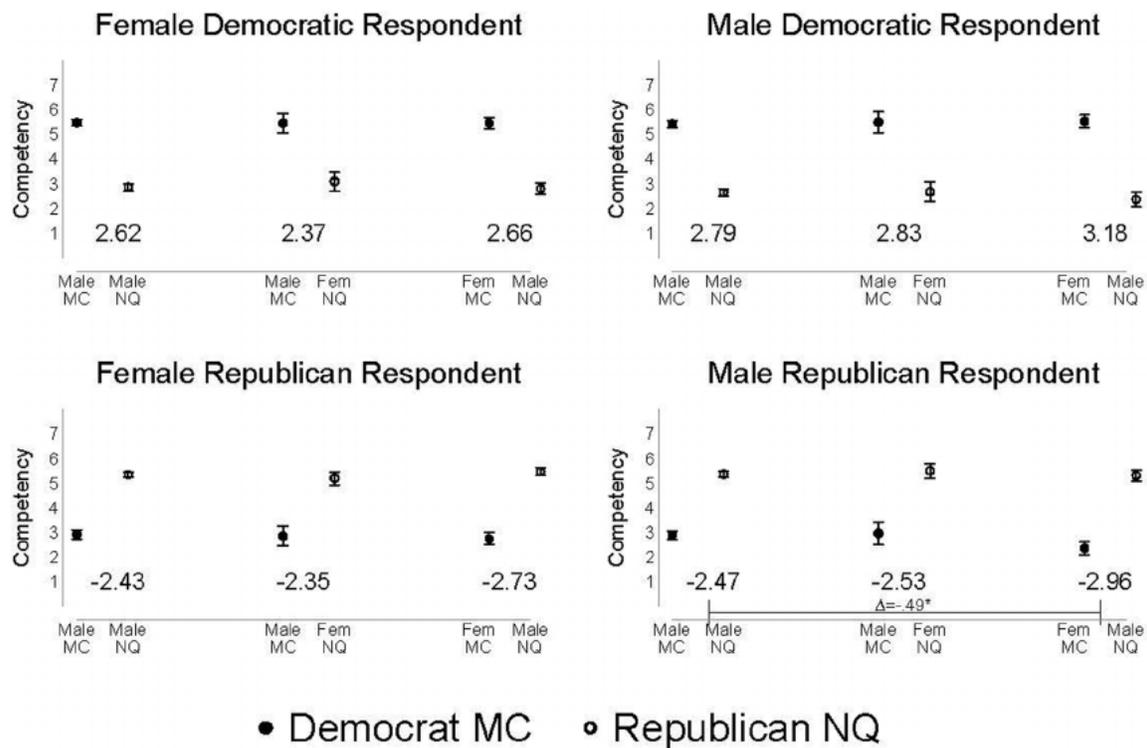


Fig. 1. Democrat MC vs Republican Non-Quality Challenger.

challenger.

3.3. Democrat MC vs Republican quality challenger

Fig. 3 presents the findings for a Democrat MC facing a Republican quality challenger. There are no significant differences in the relative assessment of competency among female Republican and male Democratic respondents. However, female Democratic and male Republican respondent's relative assessment of competency differ significantly. A female Democrat's relative assessment of a male Democratic MC facing a female quality opponent is significantly more favorable (3.46) than compared to the relative assessment of a male Democratic MC facing a female quality challenger (2.57) and a female Democratic MC facing a male quality opponent (2.21). For instance, a female Democrat's assessment of the competency of a male Democratic MC is 6.23 and her

assessment of the female quality opponent is 2.77, resulting in a 3.46 relative assessment of competency. Meanwhile, her assessment of the competency of a female Democratic MC is 5.49 and her assessment of the male quality opponent is 3.28, resulting in a 2.21 relative assessment competency. The difference in the relative assessment of these two-candidate dyad (3.46–2.21) is 1.25.¹⁴ Consistent with previous research indicating gender stereotypes are more likely to influence the evaluation of non-co-partisans (Barnes and Beaulieu, 2014; Krupnikov and Bauer, 2014), our findings indicate female Democratic respondents

¹⁴ A female Democrat's assessment of a male Democratic MC is 5.67 and her assessment of the male quality opponent is 3.10, resulting in a 2.57 relative assessment competency. Thus, the difference in the relative assessment between a male Democratic MC facing a female quality opponent and male Democratic MC facing a male quality opponent (3.46–2.57) is .88.

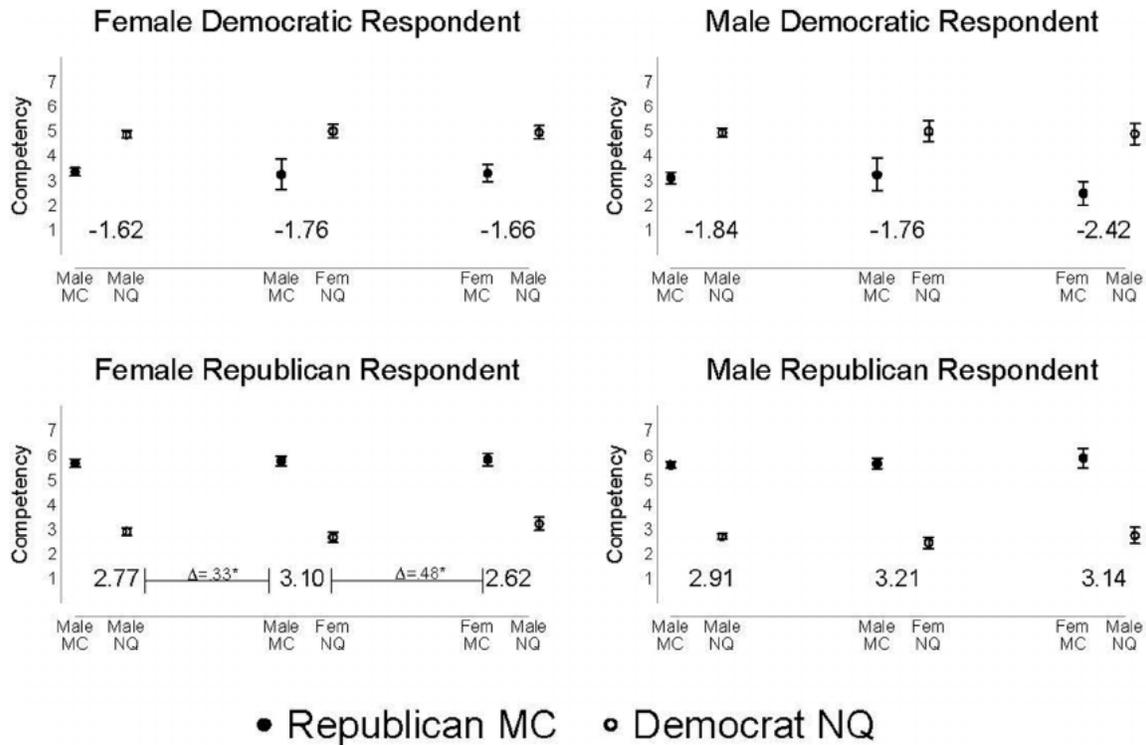


Fig. 2. Republican MC vs Democratic Non-Quality Challenger.

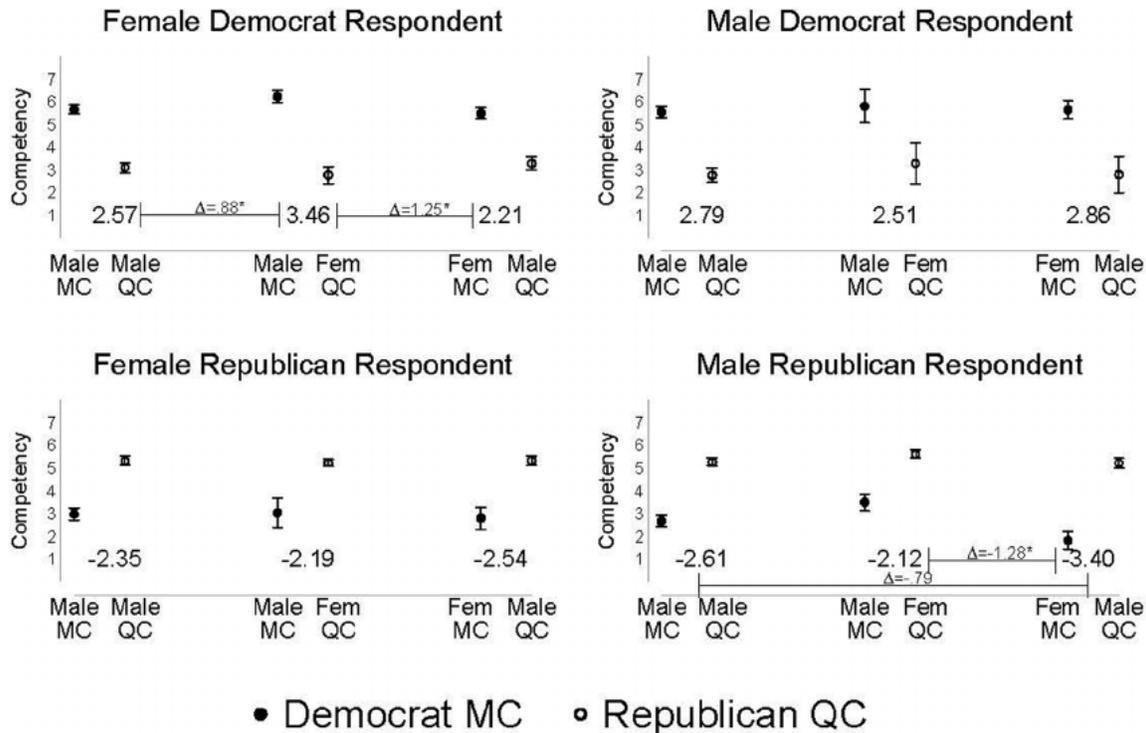


Fig. 3. Democratic MC vs Republican Quality Challenger.

tend to view Republican women as particularly unfavorable. In both scenarios, MCs facing Republican women are seen as relatively more competent than male or female MCs facing a Republican man.

Further, male Republican respondents' relative assessments of a female Democratic MC facing a male Republican quality opponent are significantly less favorable (−3.40) than compared to a male Democratic MC facing a male Republican quality challenger (−2.61)

and a male Democratic MC facing a female Republican quality challenger (−2.12). A male Republican's assessment of the competency of a female Democratic MC is 1.82 and his assessment of the male quality opponent is 5.22, resulting in a −3.40 relative assessment of competency. While a male Republican's assessment of the competency of a male Democratic MC is 5.62 and his assessment of the female quality opponent is 3.50, resulting in a −2.12 relative assessment of

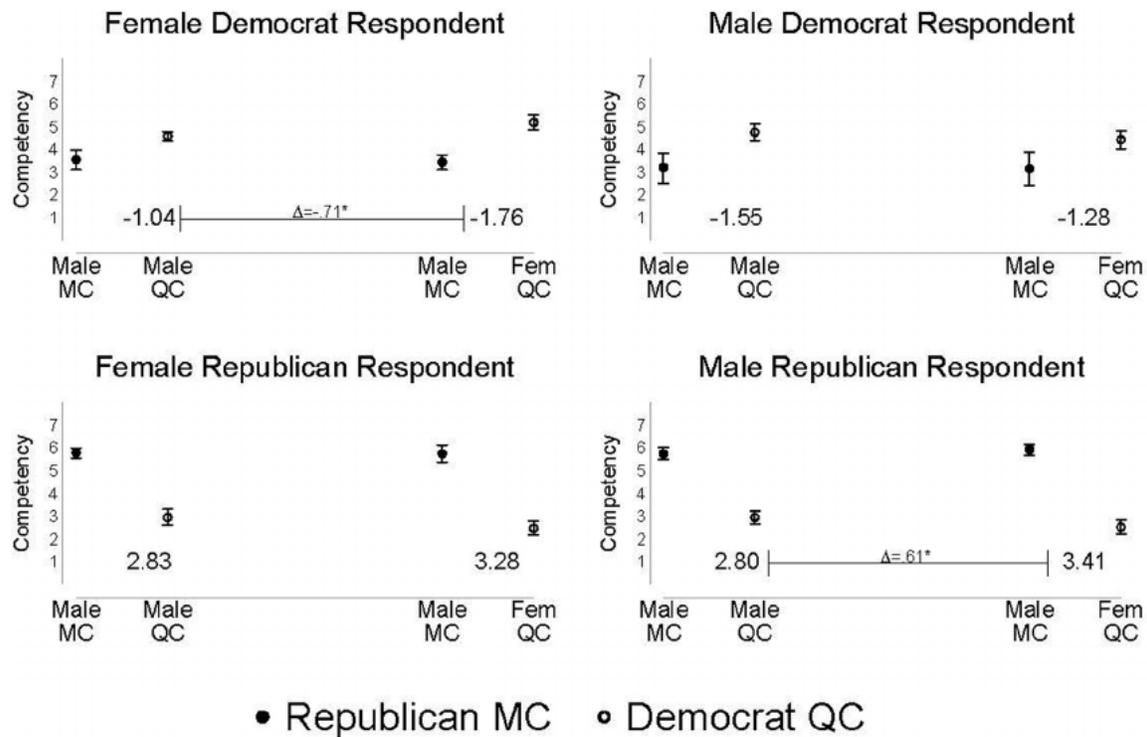


Fig. 4. Republican MC vs Democrat Quality Challenger.

competency. The difference in the relative assessment of these two candidate dyads (−3.40 and −2.12) is −1.28. In other words, male Republican respondents view female Democratic MCs facing a male quality challenger as significantly less competent relative to their opponent than male Democratic MCs facing a male or female quality challenger.

3.4. Republican MC vs Democrat quality challenger

Fig. 4 presents the findings for a Republican MC facing a Democrat quality challenger. There are no significant differences for female Republican and male Democratic respondents, but the relative assessment significantly varies for female Democratic and male Republican respondents. A female Democrat’s assessment of a male Republican MC facing a female quality candidate is significantly less favorable (−1.76) than compared to the relative assessment of a male Republican MC facing a male quality candidate (−1.04). She rates the competency of a male Democratic MC is 4.59 and her assessment of the male quality opponent is 3.55, resulting in a −1.04 relative assessment. Whereas, a female Democrat’s assessment of the competency of a male Republican MC is 3.44 and his assessment of the female quality opponent is 5.19, resulting in a −1.76 relative assessment. Substantively, the results suggest female Democratic respondents perceive the relative competency of a male Republican MC as significantly lower when he faces a female quality challenger when compared to a male quality challenger.

For male Republican respondents, the relative assessment of a male Republican MC facing a female quality opponent is significantly more favorable (3.41) than the relative assessment of a male Republican MC facing a male quality opposition (2.80). In a race pitting a male Republican MC against a male quality opponent, a male Republican’s assessment of the male Republican MC is 5.93 and his assessment of the female quality challenger is 2.52, which renders a 3.41 relative assessment of competency. Whereas in the case of a male Republican MC facing a male quality challenger, a male Republican’s assessment of the male Republican MC is 5.75 and his assessment of the male quality opponent is 2.95, resulting in a 2.80 relative assessment of competency.

The difference in the relative assessment for these two races for a male Republican respondent (3.41 and 2.80) is 0.61 and it is statistically significant.

4. Conclusion

This research note finds there are gender differences in candidate assessments. Consistent with recent research demonstrating the conditions under which gender stereotypes are more or less likely to be employed (e.g., Barnes and Beaulieu, 2014; Bauer, 2015, 2017; Holman et al., 2011, 2017; Krupnikov and Bauer, 2014), the results illustrate the need to account for the electoral context—and specifically the electoral competition—when evaluating whether men and women are held to different standards at the polls. Substantively, these results show that in more competitive races, those in which a MC faces a quality challenger, female Democratic respondents offer the least favorable relative assessments of a female Republican quality candidate; whereas, male Republican respondents offer the least favorable relative assessment of a female Democratic MC. Further, female Democratic respondents offer a more favorable relative assessments of a female Democratic quality challenger, and male Republican respondents offer the less favorable relative assessments of a female Democratic quality challenger.

Our findings are consistent with recent research suggesting female candidates have a more difficult path to victory than their male counterparts (Barnes et al., 2017; Fulton, 2012, 2014; Pearson and McGhee, 2013; Lawless and Pearson, 2008; Milyo and Schosberg, 2000; Palmer and Simon, 2006; Sanbonmatsu, 2006). Research indicates that female MCs attract larger and more competitive pools of challengers than male MCs (Lawless and Pearson, 2008) and they are more likely than their male counterparts to face quality challengers (Milyo and Schosberg, 2000). Indeed, Palmer and Simon (2006) show that female MCs are extremely likely to attract a challenger; whereas, male MCs more frequently run unopposed.

The results presented herein provide a foundation for reconciling seemingly inconsistent findings in the existing literature. On the one hand, the conventional wisdom suggests that when women run they

win (Burrell, 1994; Darcy et al., 1994; Fox, 2000; Seltzer et al., 1997). Indeed, research that does not account for the gender and/or quality of the opposition shows that women fare just as well as the polls as their male opponents (Burrell, 1994; Palmer and Simon, 2001; Gaddie and Bullock 2000; Lawless and Pearson, 2008; Seltzer et al., 1997). On the other hand, a growing body of research finds that voters display a host of biases towards female candidates (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Barnes and Beaulieu, 2014; Bauer, 2015, 2017; Dolan, 2009; Koch, 1999; Holman et al., 2011, 2017; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Lawless, 2004; Leeper, 1991; Matland, 1994; Rosenwasser et al., 1987; Eagly and Carlie, 2007). Our research suggests in order to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of the impact of candidate gender, it is important to incorporate more information about both candidates in a race. Indeed, our findings are consistent with recent research indicating that female quality candidates have a more difficult path to victory than their (equally qualified) male counterparts (Barnes et al., 2017). If respondents view female candidates as relatively less competent when they face male opponents—and also view male MCs as more competent when facing a female quality challenger than when facing a male quality challenger—it stands to reason that once scholars account for the quality of the opposition women may still face a disadvantage at the polls.

Appendix C. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2018.04.002>.

Appendix A. Relative assessment of competency: Democratic MC

Full dyad model

Candidate Dyads	Female Respondent		Male Respondent	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Male MC versus				
Female QC	.83** (.31)	.24 (.36)	-.28 (.71)	.36 (.29)
Male QC	-.05 (.18)	.09 (.25)	-.01 (.27)	-.14 (.21)
Female Non-QC	-.25 (.34)	.08 (.27)	.03 (.26)	-.06 (.24)
Female MC versus				
Male QC	-.42 (.27)	-.11 (.27)	.07 (.56)	-.92*** (.28)
Male Non-QC	.03 (.23)	-.30 (.18)	.39† (.20)	-.48* (.22)
Control Variables				
Ideology	.47*** (.15)	.43** (.14)	.41** (.14)	.68*** (.13)
Age	.03*** (.01)	-.02*** (.00)	.02** (.01)	-.01 (.00)
Education	.14** (.05)	-.09† (.05)	.05 (.06)	.04 (.04)
MC Ideology	-.27 (2.46)	-5.25*** (1.36)	-2.69 (2.21)	-2.78** (1.04)
Respondent Ideo * MC Ideo	.28 (.46)	.42 (.40)	.70† (.36)	-.08 (.37)
Tenure	.20* (.09)	.27* (.11)	.24* (.12)	.14 (.11)
Solid District	-.23 (.20)	.45* (.23)	-.58* (.25)	.22 (.20)
Southern District	-.26 (.19)	-.13 (.19)	.02 (.89)	-.21 (.20)
Intercept	-2.77*** (.84)	-1.12* (.57)	-1.19 (.89)	-2.97*** (.46)
N Case	1950	2157	1977	3378
R ²	.19	.17	.14	.14

†p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Coefficients are OLS with robust standard errors. All F-tests are significant at p < .0001.

Appendix B. Relative assessment of competency: Republican MC

Full dyad model

Candidate Dyads	Female Respondent		Male Respondent	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican

	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Male MC versus				
Female QC	.24 (.24)	-.51 (.33)	-.56 (.35)	-.49† (.29)
Male QC	-.48† (.27)	-.05 (.25)	-.29 (.36)	.11 (.21)
Female Non-QC	.24 (.25)	-.32* (.16)	-.08 (.51)	-.30 (.21)
Female MC versus				
Male Non-QC	.14 (.28)	.15 (.16)	.58 (.36)	.22 (.23)
Control Variables				
Ideology	.37 (.33)	.18 (.27)	.33 (.35)	1.41*** (.41)
Age	.02*** (.00)	-.03*** (.01)	.02*** (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Education	.17*** (.05)	-.09 (.06)	.04 (.06)	-.02 (.05)
MC Ideology	-1.42 (3.11)	1.21 (1.13)	.16 (3.05)	-2.73† (1.46)
Respondent Ideo * MC Ideo	-.07 (.55)	-.74† (.44)	-.29 (.57)	1.16† (.65)
Tenure	.06 (.10)	.23† (.12)	-.09 (.15)	.12 (.09)
Solid District	-.33 (.29)	-.24 (.29)	-.41 (.47)	-.13 (.25)
Southern District	-.15 (.21)	.27 (.17)	-.70** (.25)	-.23 (.21)
Intercept	-2.90 (1.93)	-1.86* (.93)	-1.48 (1.99)	-5.49*** (1.05)
N Case	1041	962	942	1778
R ²	.15	.19	.14	.16

†p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Coefficients are OLS with robust standard errors. All F-tests are significant at p < .0001.

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