VOTING FOR MOM OR DAD: HOW PARENTHOOD AFFECTS POLITICAL CANDIDACY

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Voting for Mom or Dad: How Parenthood Affects Political Candidacy
By BRITTANY L. STALSBURG

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Parenthood carries different consequences for women and men political candidates. I argue that while motherhood generally functions as a liability for women, fatherhood functions as an asset for men. Historically, women candidates have de-emphasized their parental status or have had to to assure voters their motherhood responsibilities would not interfere with their ability to serve in office. However, in recent elections, women have highlighted motherhood in unprecedented ways. Sarah Palin's "Mama Grizzly" cadre of conservative women exemplifies a potential trend of women turning conventional wisdom on its head by redeploying motherhood as a political asset or credential. These changes to the political landscape inspired broader questions about the role of parenthood in politics; specifically, this dissertation asks: what is the relationship among gender, parenthood, and political candidacy? I investigate three aspects of candidacy—political ambition, campaign strategy, and voter evaluations—to assess the nuanced and complex ways in which parenthood matters for women and men candidates, as well as *when* it matters. Because no comprehensive dataset exists to answer these questions, I rely on three different sources to investigate each aspect of candidacy—secondary survey data of state legislators, an original content analysis of 2008 and 2010 competitive congressional candidates' campaign websites, and an experiment that assesses voter reactions to mother, father, and childless candidates for Governor. My findings are complex but overall point to motherhood as a liability for women candidates, especially in political ambition and campaign strategy. However, voters are more likely to penalize childless women candidates while mothers of young children are not as disadvantaged electorally. My findings also explore how contextual variables, like

party identification, also influence the relationships among gender, parenthood, and political candidacy.

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My journey through graduate school has consisted of both challenges and rewards, ultimately culminating in a deep sense of accomplishment in my professional growth as a scholar. Despite the travails and sense of doubt that accompanies virtually every graduate student's experience, I can honestly say today that I have no regrets about my original decision to begin a PhD program in Political Science. My journey, however, has not been a solo one, and there have been many that have positively influenced my time as a graduate student in both personal and professional ways. To these people and institutions—I owe you gratitude that I can only barely begin to express here.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

You know the rules are basically as follows: If you don't get married you are abnormal. If you get married but don't have children, you're a selfish yuppie. If you get married and have children but then go outside the home to work you're a bad mother. If you get married and have children but stay at home, you've wasted your education. And if you don't get married but have children and work outside the home as a fictional newscaster you get in trouble with the vice president
(Hillary Clinton, 1994, address to Wellesley College)

When Pat Schroeder was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1972, she left two young children at home to serve in Washington (D-CO). Virtually unprecedented, Schroeder's decision to combine the dual roles of motherhood and politics inspired skepticism in many, even from her fellow Congresswoman Bella Azbug, who told Schroeder "I hear you have little kids. You won't be able to do this job" (Schroeder 1989, 35). Despite negative public reaction and doubt, Schroeder persevered and ostensibly was successful in performing what was undoubtedly a challenging balancing act. Still, Schroeder's career path was more of the exception rather than the rule for decades to come, as mothers of young children in politics are still relatively rare. Schroeder herself once reflected on her uniqueness among women in politics:

> [Congressional service] was either a capstone at the end of a career for those with grown children, or it *was* the career for unmarried or childless women. You could have a career or a family, or maybe a career *after* your family was grown. But rearing a family while in Congress was unheard of (Schroeder 1989).

Decades later, mother politicians were still rare but the sentiment reflected in Azbug's comment-- that it was categorically *impossible* for women to be both a mother and a Congresswoman—may have begun to fade. Blanche Lincoln was elected to the U.S. Senate from the state of Arkansas 1998, but only after she ran several television ads showing her husband caring for their 1-year old twins, apparently to assure voters that her children would be well taken care of despite the demands of the U.S. Senate. But around the same time, in 2001 the

first woman governor of Massachusetts, Jane Swift, incited a public outrage when she became pregnant with twins one month into her term ; Swift subsequently did not run for a second.[1]

But between the candidacies of Pat Schroeder and Blanche Lincoln emerged a different kind of mother candidate, Patty Murray who ran for Senate in 1992 (D-WA) under the campaign slogan "just a mom in tennis shoes." The slogan was a reaction to a male state legislator who once dismissed Murray as nothing more than a meddling nuisance. Murray's strategy of self-presentation differed from Schroeder's and Lincoln's in that rather than downplay her family life, justify her entrance into politics, or reassure voters that she could do both jobs, Murray attempted to *redeploy motherhood as an asset*.

In current political times, the way in which motherhood functions for political candidates seems to be shifting. Treated as a liability in the past that either must be hidden or dealt with strategically and carefully, now more mothers than ever seem to be showcasing their children and families as political assets. This turn of tide was exemplified in the candidacy of Krystal Ball (D-VA), who ran for Congress in 2010 with a 2-year old daughter at home. Ball tried to capitalize on her experience as a young mother, even crediting the birth of her daughter as the inspiration for her decision to run for Congress:

> Until recently, I had never even considered the possibility that I would run for Congress. In March of 2008, after my daughter Ella was born, I knew, like many parents, that I had to do something to ensure that our kids are raised in the same great Virginia that we were. Nothing makes you think harder about the direction of this country than raising children.[2]

I had the opportunity to meet Ball at a Women's Campaign Forum (WCF) fundraiser where I asked her about her decision to emphasize her motherhood and whether or not she felt

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[1] While the harsh treatment from the media and public may not be the singular reason for Swift's decision to not run again, Swift has spoken out on the negative effects of public scrutiny of her family life and decisions (Joan Vennochi, "For Jane Swift, harsh spotlight on Palin has familiar feel," Boston Globe, September 2, 2008).

[2] Accessed November 21, 2010: http://www.krystalballforcongress.com/about_krystal/Krystals_story.

any pushback from voters. She said that while her decision to run while raising a small child elicited some negative reactions among "older women" voters, overall she felt her motherhood status was a net positive, as it allowed voters to relate to her and see Ball as an ordinary woman with the same conflicts and demands as other working parents. Ball then added something that I believe gets at the heart of how parenthood functions positively in politics—she said that *being a mother made her seem like a "real person"* to voters. Ball's comment is telling in that it implies what parenthood status can do for parent candidates; it *normalizes* them and shields them from what may perhaps be even more harmful stereotypes that are associated with childlessness.[3] Ball's remark may imply, in fact, that childless candidates are *not* real people, as it may be considered more deviant to not have children at all than it is to run for office with small children at home.

All of these anecdotes about the challenges associated with combining motherhood and politics leads to a central premise of this project: parenthood carries different consequences for men and women in politics. Because women have been traditionally associated with the private sphere, including child-rearing responsibilities, the image of a mother politician in the public sphere has historically been perceived as novel at best, unwelcome at worst. Father candidates and politicians, on the other hand, are valorized for being "family men" while their ability to balance fatherhood and politics is seldom, if ever, questioned. But as the stories above suggest, while motherhood and politics have traditionally been thought of as incompatible, mothers *have* made their way into the political world, and many have won election to the highest

[3] Perceptions of childlessness are intimately bound up with sexuality; having children also assures voters that the candidates are heterosexual. Of course, non-heterosexual individuals may also have children, but the dominant cultural assumption is that parents are heterosexual. Further, some scholars have argued that lesbians are actually *excluded* from "legitimate" motherhood, as "*lesbian* and *mother* have most often been construed as mutually exclusive propositions" (Kawash 2011, 981). While little work exists on the experiences of gay political candidates and voter perceptions of them, Golebiowska (2003) found that voters evaluate gay and lesbian candidates through stereotypes and that voter discrimination against gay and lesbian candidates exists among some members of the electorate. Gay and lesbian candidates also themselves *perceive* voter discrimination and stereotyping during their campaigns (Golebiowska 2002).

political offices, including the U.S. Congress and Governor. In more recent elections, political mothers occupied the spotlight. While the politicization of parenthood is not a new phenomenon (Elder and Greene 2007), the 2008 and 2010 elections highlighted motherhood in unprecedented ways. Sarah Palin's candidacy, especially, brought forth a renewed debate on the place of working mothers and mothers in politics. Furthermore, Palin's decision to emphasize her motherhood experience and family life rather than downplay it is somewhat different from women candidates' strategies of the past.[4] And while Hillary Clinton generally emphasized her "toughness" and political experience during her 2008 presidential bid (Lawrence and Rose 2010), images of Clinton arm in arm with her daughter were replete in media coverage of her campaign. She was also careful to point out that she was a "mom first and a candidate second."[5]

The 2010 elections seemed to reflect this growing trend of women candidates turning what was once considered a liability into an asset. Sarah Palin's "Mama Grizzly" cadre of conservative women candidates used their motherhood status not only as a justification for entering the political world (Mama Grizzlies have to protect their cubs from the big, bad government), but also as a political asset that sets them apart from other, non-mother candidates. Mama Grizzlies have common sense and a keen, perhaps instinctual ability to perceive danger, as bears do when someone is coming "to do something adverse towards their cubs" because "moms kinda just know when something's wrong."[6] Palin-endorsed candidates were not the only women candidates to capitalize on motherhood, however, though the

[4] Campaign strategy groups often advised women candidates to downplay their domestic qualities while emphasizing their "male" qualities like toughness and strength. In fact, Emily's List, an organization that helps to elect Democratic women, warned in an internal memo that women must "fight throughout their campaigns to establish their qualifications, power, toughness and capacity to win" (Robin Toner, "Women Feeling Freer to Suggest 'Vote for Mom,'" *New York Times*, 29 January, 2007).
[5] Beth Fouhy, "Clinton says she can beat McCain," *Boston Globe* 9 February, 2008.
[6] Judith Warner. "The New Momism." *New York Times*, October 29, 2010.

attempt to redeploy motherhood as an asset certainly seemed to be a popular strategy among conservative, Republican women rather than liberals or Democrats. Childless women candidates felt the wrath of this new pro-maternal sentiment, especially in the Oklahoma woman vs. woman governor race between Republican Mary Fallin, a married mother of six, and Democrat Jari Askins, who is both single and childless. Fallin repeatedly questioned Askins' parental status and suggested more than once that her own motherhood experience set her apart from Askins. In Fallin's view, Askins' choice to remain single and childless was somehow a personal deficiency that rendered her an inappropriate choice for governor. Many commentators saw Fallin's strategy as an attempt to cast Askins as anti-family values, a strategy that might be effective in a conservative, traditional state where family values are important. Fallin's campaign reflected a growing number of women who seem to be turning conventional wisdom on its head—motherhood may not only function as a constraint, but can be redeployed as an asset.

The strategy of redeploying motherhood as an asset, however, is not new. As referenced above, Patty Murray (D-WA), one of the first women elected to the U.S. Senate with small children still at home, ran in 1992 under the campaign slogan "just a mom in tennis shoes." Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) frequently references the value she places on motherhood and family, once remarking that "there is no more important responsibility than raising a family."[7] All of these women have politically capitalized on their domestic roles and have chosen to highlight their experience as mothers rather than ensconce their family lives. But while Murray and Pelosi were once considered exceptions to the general rule of minimizing women's roles as wives and mothers, highlighting motherhood seems to represent a new trend among women candidates that may or may not become a permanent fixture of political campaigns.

[7] Kathy Kiely, "Nancy Pelosi speaks about being a mom," *USA Today*, 9 May, 2007.

But while some political candidates may successfully run and serve as political "moms," such a presentation may handicap others. A long-standing body of research shows that women candidates, especially those vying for top political positions, may need to emphasize their "masculine" traits and obscure tell-tale signs of their femininity (Duerst-Lahti 1997, 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Lawless 2004; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989), including their roles as wives and mothers. Political history is replete with examples that seem to confirm the negative consequences of combining motherhood with politics. While many Americans praised Sarah Palin's ability to juggle motherhood and politics, just as many, if not more, questioned her choice to run for vice president with five children at home, including an infant with Down syndrome.[8] We are hard pressed to find many examples of men candidates who receive such scrutiny of their family life, save for when the media discovers an adulterous affair.

Just how parenthood affects the political candidacies of men and women differently remains an insufficiently unexplored topic in political science. Most research on gender, family life, and politics focuses on how childcare responsibilities limit the career trajectory of women candidates—descriptive statistics tell us that women are more likely to run for office when they are older, apparently when their childcare responsibilities pose fewer constraints (Carroll 1989; Kirkpatrick 1976; Dodson 1997; Stoper 1977; Thomas 2002). This line of research is undeveloped, however, in that it fails to directly and comprehensively consider how parenthood affects political ambition. Furthermore, very few studies investigate how *voters* respond to the parental status of candidates, even though both theory and anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that parental status matters for evaluations of political candidates. That is, do voters react differently to mother, father, and childless candidates?

[8] A poll conducted by ABC found that 60% of respondents thought Palin made a good decision to join the Republican ticket given her family circumstances. Opinions were highly polarized by party, with Democrats much less likely to think Palin made a good decision. Jon Cohen and Jennifer Agiesta, "Partisanship Appears to Sway Opinions on Palin," *Washington Post*, 6 September, 2008.

Findings from the candidate self-presentation literature imply that the answer to this question is yes. Women and men candidates present their families to voters differently, with men more often highlighting their families as assets while women tend to de-emphasize their roles as wives and mothers (Bystrom et al. 2004). These findings suggest that candidates, at least, believe that voters will make judgments based on their parental status, and this assumption informs candidate campaign strategy, in regard to self-presentation. However, this trend may be rapidly changing, as more and more women turn against the conventional strategy of minimizing their roles as wives and mothers in favor of redeploying their parental status as political assets. Furthermore, the candidate self-presentation literature is limited in that most studies fail to control for parental status or other variables that might influence how men and women present their families. These variables are especially important when considering *who* adopts *which* kind of strategy in regards to presentation of family—do only conservative women present their motherhood experience as assets, or is this strategy used by Democratic women as well? Furthermore and perhaps more importantly, curiously little work has examined if these different strategies really *are* effective or not. That is, is it "smart" for women candidates to hide their children and men to highlight their families, or can motherhood also be used as a credential or asset? For which *kinds* of women might these strategies be more or less effective?

This dissertation seeks to fill these wide gaps in the literature and examine exactly how parental status matters differently for men and women candidates for U.S. Congress and Governor. More specifically, I ask how being a parent (or not) as well as the ages of the candidates' children (young vs. old) affect three aspects of candidacy: political ambition, campaign self-presentation, and voter evaluations for men and women candidates. I also examine how other variables, like party, may influence the relationship among gender, parental status, and the three aspects of candidacy outlined above. I do not contend that parental status

and gender matter in uniform nor universal ways across parties, type of office, electoral climates, time, place, or for all voters. Rather, like gender, I expect that the effect of parental status is contingent and dependent on contextual variables (Dolan 2004). Scholarship on gender, family life, and politics has virtually ignored the role of contextual variables, further limiting our understanding of how gender and parental status might affect political candidacy.

While the story of how parental status matters differently for men and women candidates is complicated and contingent on contextual variables, stereotypes about men and women and mothers and fathers are strong and durable enough to make a general argument. I hypothesize that despite the proliferation of political "moms" in the 2010 elections, *while a family is most often perceived as an asset for male candidates, it is generally perceived as a liability for women.* The role of motherhood is generally viewed as incompatible with a public, political career, and notions about a mother's proper place and role constrain political women in myriad ways. To be sure, women are not always penalized for having a family, and not all men are immune from certain stereotypes associated with fatherhood. The recent rise of political mothers, especially Palin's Mama Grizzlies, merits further investigation of when and how motherhood can actually be deployed as an asset. Still, the influx of women candidates who seem far freer to capitalize on their motherhood experience may be only a temporary phenomenon limited by electoral context, rather than a permanent change.

Project Relevance

Examining how gender and parental status influence different aspects of political candidacy has relevance for the literatures surrounding each stage. For example, considering how parental status influences gender differences in political ambition has significant implications for the question of why women are vastly underrepresented in politics. The oft-quoted phrase "when women run, women win" implies that the reason for the low number of

women in office is because they are less likely to run than men (Elder 2004; Lawless and Fox 2005). Many studies find that women win their elections at the same rate as men, which some interpret to mean that voter bias no longer explains women's underrepresentation (Burrell 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). This interpretation is overly simplistic in the sense that it fails to consider the many stages *before* the election that women must overcome before they actually achieve electoral success. Simply put, women and men are far from a level playing field in politics as women must overcome numerous obstacles, including gender stereotypes, in order to win their elections. For example, in the past women candidates had to make efforts to appear to embody "masculine" traits that voters valued in a leader (Fox and Oxley 2003; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988). More recently, women have been caught in a "double bind" which influences them to adopt a mix of masculine and feminine characteristics, as appearing too masculine or too feminine could both be detrimental to their electoral success (Carroll 1994; Jamieson 1995). Women may have to deal with the consequences of gender stereotypes not only in voter evaluations of them (Dolan 2010), but in biased media coverage (Bystrom et al. 2004; Niven and Zilber 2001a; 2001b) and resistance from party leaders (Sanbonmatsu 2006). That said, the low number of women candidates is indeed a significant explanation for women's underrepresentation. Exploring exactly how parental status affects political ambition will add a significant piece to the puzzle of why women are underrepresented politically, which they certainly are. In 2011, women occupy 16.8% of seats in the 112th U.S. Congress and only six women serve as Governors. In fact, historically only 34 women have served as Governors in 26 states, which mean about half of all states in the U.S. have never had a woman executive (CAWP 2011).

Considering parental status as a variable in candidate appraisal has relevance for the literature on voter evaluations of women candidates. The idea that voters use gender

stereotypes to make judgments about political candidates' personal traits, ideology, and issue competencies is well-documented (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Anderson et al. 2011; Carroll 1994; Dolan 2004; Dolan 2010; Fridkin and Kenney 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a,b; Kahn 1996; King and Matland 2003; Koch 2000; Lawless 2004; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Sanbonmatsu 2002;). We know, for example, that women are perceived as more warm, more caring, more compassionate, and more honest than men and that voters believe women are better able to handle so-called compassion issues, like healthcare, education, and welfare. These stereotypes correspond well to stereotypes about women and men generally (Eagly et al. 1991), but the roots of these stereotypes are not well understood. It could be the case, for example, that the traditional association of women with the private sphere and the "maternal" role influences the content of gender stereotypes. That is, it is not so much that *women* are perceived to possess these qualities and be especially adept at these issues, but that *mothers* are. Because over 80% of American women will become mothers in their lifetime (Livingston and Cohn 2010), it is likely that gender stereotypes about women become conflated with ideas about mothers. Candidates with different parental statuses and different strategies of self-presentation of their families may be more or less vulnerable to gender stereotypes, though the electoral consequences of these differences have yet to be determined. The findings from this study will explore these questions and make a significant contribution to the gender stereotypes and candidate evaluation literature. If we are to understand how voters use gender to make evaluations of candidates, we need to understand the effects of parental status.

Beyond filling gaps in the political science literature, examining the relationship among gender, parental status, and political candidacy has practical benefits as well. The findings from this project might inform candidates' campaign strategy and especially aid women candidates in their decisions surrounding the negotiation of their gender and parental status. Are women

well-served to de-emphasize their roles as wives and mothers, or are there times in which motherhood can be a credential or asset rather than a liability? Moreover, do the answers to these questions depend on other variables such as party? Answers to these questions may be useful to candidates—women and men—who must decide how to present their families to voters. Furthermore, women candidates, who must negotiate gender stereotypes and strike a balance between masculinity and femininity (Jamieson 1995), might especially benefit from understanding how parental status reinforces or moderates gender stereotypes.

Finally, some research has indicated that voters respond negatively to childless women candidates, while childless men candidates are evaluated better than men with young children (Stalsburg 2010). At the same time, there is also the possibility that childlessness among men may also be consequential. Like motherhood and femininity, fatherhood is also bound up with masculinity (Daniels 2006), since—to some extent—"manhood" and adult male development have historically been defined partly through marriage and fatherhood (Griswold 1993). But while society may question *both* childless men and women, women are *defined* by motherhood in ways that fatherhood does not for men; thus, childlessness functions differently for women in that the deviance associated with childlessness is exaggerated (Gillespie 2000; Hird and Abshoff 2000; Koropeckyj-Cox 2007; Rich 1976). Still, the consequences of childlessness for men and women are empirical questions that will be taken up in this project through the context of politics. Moreover, women candidates may be caught in a "double bind" that is structured by their parental status—childless women may be considered deviant or abnormal but women of young children may be perceived as less committed, competent, and in violation of gender roles for choosing a demanding career over their family. It may be the case that mothers of older children are ideal since their children are no longer a liability but voters are still reassured that the woman has a family (and thus is performing her proper gender role). It is important to

investigate the role of childlessness in voter perceptions since it may be the case that traits ascribed to women may actually be traits associated with *mothers*, not childless women. The way in which gender has been conceptualized and studied in political science so far has been limited by the lack of attention to parental status; this project seeks to fill this gap and thus advance knowledge of the way in which gender operates in political candidacy.

Project Scope

I focus my study of gender, parental status, and political candidacy on Congress and executive (governorship) office for several reasons. Most importantly, I believe that the constraints of parenthood become most salient in congressional and executive campaigns and careers, particularly for women candidates. Members of Congress must take frequent trips to Washington, D.C. where they are away from home for considerable amounts of time. Even when they are working out of their district or state, members of Congress face a demanding time schedule that may leave little time for family responsibilities. An article that described Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz's dilemma to stay at home with her sick daughter or go into session highlights the exceptional demands placed on mother politicians: "Stay home? Or go to work? It's a dilemma familiar to millions of working mothers. But her situation is complex: The job is 1,037 miles away, in Washington."[9] Executive offices also involve heavy, demanding responsibilities, although the travel requirements of the jobs may be less intense.[10] Still, the responsibility to run and manage an entire state (as Governor) is a significant one, and mother Governors may be even more constrained than mother Representatives or Senators. Further, executive office has historically been constituted as hegemonically "male," in a way that is very much antithetical to the femininity associated with mothers (Duerst-Lahti 1997).

[9] Lyndsey Layton, "Mom's in the House, With Kids at Home." Washington Post, July 19, 2007.
[10] This, of course, depends on the state. A Congresswoman from Maryland or Virginia, for example, may have a shorter commute to work than the Governor of Texas or California.

Further, congressional and governorship contenders are more "public" than candidates for lower offices since these campaigns (especially those considered competitive) receive more attention. Thus, candidates face more scrutiny, as their lives and background are on display. Parental status is more likely to be noticed in campaigns for Congress and Governor, and mother candidates might especially be constrained by skepticism surrounding their decision to run for office with children at home. Candidates for lower offices may face the same kind of constraints, but to a much lesser degree. Thus, I choose to examine congressional and executive candidates as a "most likely case" for effects of gender and parental status on political candidacy. In this way, gender and parental status effects not only should be easier to detect at these levels of office, but this is where the effects should be most consequential as well.

The race of the candidate should shape the relationship among gender, parental status, and political candidacy. Black mothers are especially vulnerable to negative stereotypes that are very different than perceptions of white mothers. Researchers and theorists have pointed to the ways in which black mothers are penalized for becoming mothers at all and that the positive traits associated with motherhood are actually reserved for white women (King 1998; Mink 1999; Roberts 1997). Thus, motherhood functions differently for white and black women, and I would especially expect to find racial differences in voter evaluations. However, because of time and economic constraints, I am unable to include race as a variable in the voter evaluation portion of this study. Further, because black candidates are underrepresented in elective office, and consequently in my candidate datasets, I am unable to study the relationships among gender, parenthood, race, and political ambition and self-presentation. Thus, the findings that emerge may only apply to white candidates. As unfortunate as this limitation is, it is a reality that the majority of candidates—and especially congressional and gubernatorial candidates—

are white.[11] I do, however, speculate as to how the findings from this study might be different for black candidates in the Conclusion chapter. My future research agenda includes expanding this work to accommodate black candidates—both theoretically and empirically—in order to understand how parenthood functions for candidates of different races.

Major Questions and Expectations

The major question of this dissertation is *how does parenthood function in the political candidacies of men and women?* Is parenthood an asset or constraint and under what conditions? Further, what is it about parenthood that constrains or advantages men and women candidates? In order to examine these questions comprehensively, it is necessary to examine three aspects of political candidacy—political ambition, self-presentation, and voter evaluations. Exploring the relationships among gender, parenthood, and these three stages will provide a complete picture of how gender and parental status function in political candidacy; although I have three distinct empirical tests for each stage of candidacy, together the findings "add up" to answers for how parenthood functions for men and women political candidates. It is important to examine each aspect of political candidacy in order to understand *when* and *how* parenthood may constrain or advantage men and women—it may be the case, for example, that although motherhood makes women less likely to seek office in Congress, once mothers emerge as candidates their parental status becomes an asset. That is, the meaning and consequences of parenthood are likely not uniform across different aspects of political candidacy. Further, in some sense each stage of candidacy is very much contingent upon one another. For example, candidate self-presentation can very much affect voter evaluations and thus candidate success (Burton and Shea 2010; Holbrook 2006); how men and women present their parental status to

[11] To illustrate this point, in the 112th Congress, 8.1% of members are African American, and all 44 of these members serve in the House of Representatives. 5.7% of the 112th Congress are Latino, 3% are Asian Pacific, and one member is American Indian (Manning 2011). Of the 50 U.S. governors in 2011, 45 are white (Center on the American Governor 2012).

voters may impact voters' perceptions of candidates. Also, studying how parenthood affects political ambition is important in that parental status may affect who actually becomes a candidate and therefore has a campaign strategy and is evaluated by voters. Thus, these aspects of candidacy are by no means mutually exclusive but rather considered together help make sense of how parenthood functions for men and women political candidates.

I ask how different parental statuses affect the political candidacies of men and women differently. More specifically, I address how being a mother or father of younger versus older children or the parental status of childlessness may have different impacts. I hypothesize that the constraints associated with motherhood are more of a burden for mothers of younger children while parents of older children—regardless of gender—enjoy experiencing parenthood as a political asset. Further, while childlessness may function positively for the political ambitions of men and women, it may become a liability in self-presentation and voter evaluations, especially for women whose identity is so bound up with motherhood. My general expectation is that mothers of young children should be disadvantaged across the board in comparison to fathers of young children and to parents of older children. That is, mothers of young children experience motherhood as a liability or constraint when it comes to political candidacy. In contrast, mothers of older children should enjoy considerably more freedom and should be less encumbered by the time constraints associated with motherhood as well as the idea that mothers of young children do not belong in politics. For childless candidates, I expect mixed results as childlessness may function as an asset for the political ambitions of men and women but a liability in voter evaluations, especially for women candidates. In self-presentation, I expect that childlessness will also function as a liability and that childless men and women may try to "compensate" for their parental status by incorporating other types of family members into their campaigns.

I also ask how contextual factors, such as party identification, influence the relationships among gender, parenthood, and political candidacy. Does candidate party influence how parenthood functions for candidates? Gender roles and expectations specific to each party's ideology may influence how candidates of Democratic and Republican parties experience parenthood as a constraint or asset (Freeman 1993). I expect that Republican *women* should experience motherhood as more of a constraint across the board, in relation to their men counterparts and Democratic women. Republican women are already disadvantaged as candidates (compared to Democratic women), especially in primaries (King and Matland 2003; Lawless and Pearson 2008), and it is important to understand how constraints associated with motherhood may also contribute to their lack of representation in political office.

Methods

To address these questions, I use three empirical tests, including analysis of survey data of state legislators and two original datasets—a content analysis of 2008 and 2010 competitive congressional candidates' websites and an experimental study that tested voter reactions to mother, father, and childless candidates. Each component is designed to test how parental status functions as a constraint or asset and for whom. Again, although each test is intended to test the effect of gender and parenthood on each stage of candidacy separately, together the findings will provide a complete picture of how gender and parental status function in political candidacy. There is no "one" dataset that can adequately and comprehensively capture the relationships among gender, parenthood, and political candidacy, so I draw on three separate sources to provide a more complete analysis of these questions.

In the first test, which examines the relationship among gender, parental status, and political ambition, I use two secondary datasets, both of which survey state legislators. The first is the 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study of state legislators conducted by the Center for American

Women and Politics (CAWP) (Principal Investigators: Susan J. Carroll, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Debbie Walsh). The second is the Candidate Emergence Study, a 1998 survey also of state legislators (Principal Investigators: L. Sandy Maisel, Walter J. Stone, and Cherie D. Maestas). The CAWP Recruitment Study surveys were mailed to state legislators in all 50 states and the sample included the population of women state senators (n=423), the population of women state representatives (n=1314), a random sample of men state senators, stratified by state and sampled in proportion to the number of women from each state in the population of women state senators (n=423), and a random sample of men state representatives (n=1314), stratified by state and sampled in proportion to the number of women from each state in the population of women state representatives. 1268 legislators completed the survey for a response rate of 36.5%. The Candidate Emergence Study surveys were mailed to state legislators from a random sample of 200 of the 435 congressional districts. 2715 total state legislators were sampled and 875 responded, for a response rate of about 32%.

Each dataset includes a host of questions relevant to my analysis of how gender and parenthood affect political ambition. I use these datasets to consider how a variety of gendered personal costs factor into explaining political ambition for Congress. I consider how prior private considerations, like the influence of separation from family and loss of family privacy (which may affect the decision to run for office) are shaped by gender and parenthood. That is, I examine the *indirect* effects of gender and parenthood on political ambition. Finally, I replicate the political ambition model developed in Fulton et al. (2006) but add variables relevant to gender and parenthood. Here I am analyzing the direct effects of parenthood on political ambition. Together these findings provide a more comprehensive examination of the various ways—direct and indirect—that family may impact the political ambitions of men and women.

To examine how parenthood functions in the self-presentations of men and women candidates for Congress, I rely on an original dataset that is a content analysis of 2008 and 2010 competitive congressional contenders' campaign websites. I analyze a variety of strategies that men and women candidates use to present their family lives to voters, and predict in regression models how gender, parental status, and their interaction influence different ways of presenting (or not) family to voters. I code for text mentions and pictures of children, spouses, and other family members as well as two specific strategies candidates might use to present their children—connecting their parental status to issues and citing parenthood as a motivation for running.[12] The results of this analysis allow me to assess how parenthood functions in men and women's campaigns for Congress—do women downplay their parental status while men showcase their families or have women caught on to the new trend of redeploying motherhood as an asset? I also consider how men and women of different parties present their families to voters.

The sample for this analysis includes all congressional contenders (House and Senate) in the 2008 and 2010 elections whose campaigns were considered competitive, as defined by *The Cook Political Report*. In these years, 162 total races (Senate: 28, House: 135) were considered competitive, for a total of 324 campaigns. The websites can be accessed through an online archive compiled by James Druckman and colleagues, the Congressional Campaign Website Archive. I also collected data for the following variables: parental status, party identification, district and state characteristics, candidate type (incumbent/challenger/open seat), and opponent gender.

To test how parenthood functions in perceptions of men and women candidates, I employ an experimental methodology. The experiment (n=317) was conducted in January 2009

[12] Details of the coding scheme can be found in the Appendix.

using undergraduates as subjects. I manipulated gender and parental status to assess how voters react to candidates for Governor on a variety of measures, including basic candidate competency and image questions, ability to handle certain issues, willingness to vote for the candidate, and candidate viability. The respondents are asked for their own party identification and to assume the candidate presented represents their own party, so I am also able to determine how Democratic and Republican candidates might be evaluated differently because of their gender and parental status. I also ask respondents to rate the candidates on a variety of "feminine" and "masculine" traits to investigate how parental status contributes to perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Finally, I ask two open-ended questions in which respondents can express what they like and do not like about the candidates. Even though they were not directly asked to, many respondents offered comments about the candidate's parental status, in both positive and negative ways. This qualitative data allows me to gain leverage on the question of *why* parenthood matters to voters, and what it is about being a parent (or not) that is important. This data is critical to help explain and interpret my findings from the quantitative portions of this project.

Chapter Outlines

In what follows, I begin by outlining the theoretical framework of this project in Chapter 2. I begin my intervention by explaining that virtually no political science work comprehensively examines the role of family life in political candidacy, especially in relation to voter perceptions of candidates. I borrow from several disciplines and political science subliteratures to outline a theoretical framework that holds the following proposition about gender, parenthood, and politics: while fatherhood is most often an asset for men, it is most often a liability for women. However, in light of the rise of political mothers, I make room in this framework to consider how motherhood can be redeployed as a political asset, and also what men might gain through

fatherhood. I also consider literature surrounding stereotypes of childless men and women and consider how *not* being a parent works differently for men and women candidates. Finally, outline how other variables—primarily, party—can influence the relationship among gender, parental status, and political candidacy.

Chapter 3 explores how gender and parenthood affect the political ambitions of men and women for Congress and Governor. Here I rely on the 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study and Candidate Emergence Study to explore how a variety of private considerations, such as the separation from family, factor into men and women's decision-making calculus. I also directly measure the effects of gender, parental status, and their interaction on political ambition, and also consider how other variables like candidate party, age, and marital status also influence ambition.

Chapter 4 examines different strategic choices men and women make when it comes to self-presentation of family and their parenthood experience. By coding candidate websites of competitive congressional candidates in the 2008 and 2010 elections, I explore the extent to which men and women might be constrained or free to adopt different strategies of presenting their family to voters. I also consider how contextual variables such as party, opponent gender, incumbent status, and election year moderate the relationships among gender, parental status, and campaign strategy.

Chapter 5 investigates voter reactions to mother, father, and childless candidates. I introduce an experiment that varies the gender (woman or man) and parental status (parent of young children, parent of grown children, childless) of a candidate for Governor. Respondents rate the candidates on a variety of basic candidate competency and image questions, issue competencies, femininity and masculinity, and likelihood of voting and viability. Respondents also provide their own party identification and are asked to assume the candidate they are

evaluating shares their own party, which allows me to assess the role of party in the relationship among gender, parental status, and voter evaluations. I also analyze the results of open-ended questions that ask respondents what they liked or did not like about the candidates. Because many respondents offered comments related to the candidate's parental status, I am able to use these data to investigate *why* parenthood can function as an asset or liability.

The final chapter weaves the results from the three empirical chapters together and offers an answer to the question of how parenthood functions in political candidacy for men and women. Together, the findings from the political ambition, campaign strategy, and voter evaluations tests provide a more complete picture of the role of gender and parenthood in political candidacy. I assess the limitations of my research and note how future studies can bring this literature forward to provide an even more nuanced explanation of the role of parenthood in politics.

CHAPTER 2: A FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING GENDER, PARENTAL STATUS, AND POLITICAL CANDIDACY

Traditionally women candidates have minimized their roles as wives and mothers in order to gain credibility as serious political contenders and to assuage voters' fears about their ability to effectively serve in political office. Accordingly, motherhood has historically functioned as a *liability* or constraint for women candidates. In contrast, men have not experienced fatherhood as a liability and if anything have been able to present their roles as husbands and fathers as additional political assets. That is, parenthood has functioned very differently for men and women political candidates. However, recent elections suggest how parenthood functions in politics may be in flux, as many women candidates have attempted to redeploy what was once a liability into an asset. Like men, more women seem to be showcasing their families and presenting their motherhood experience as an asset or additional credential. This project seeks to uncover how parenthood functions for men and women candidates through three empirical tests. Before these questions can be tested, however, I introduce a theoretical framework for how parenthood functions in political candidacy. In general, I hypothesize that despite the proliferation of mother candidates attempting to redeploy motherhood as a political asset, entrenched gender roles and expectations make it so that parenthood *on average* continues to function as a liability for women candidates but as an asset for men. Furthermore, the advantages mother candidates receive from motherhood are not as important as the disadvantages and constraints associated with motherhood. In this chapter, I divide the literature review into two parts—parenthood as a constraint and parenthood as an asset. Additionally, I summarize literature related to contextual variables that influence the relationship among gender, parental status, and political candidacy.

Parenthood as a constraint

Motherhood and its attendant responsibilities have historically been antithetical to political office.[13] In the past, traditional gender divisions of labor have required men to work outside the home as breadwinners while women attend to domestic duties in the private realm. Social expectations required women to perform most of the childcare responsibilities, and this requirement still exists today (Lawless and Fox 2010; Thomas 2002). While 59% of American women work outside the home, women are still the primary caregivers to children (Parker 2009).[14] Motherhood constrains political women in two ways—one is practical in nature, and involves time constraints that may preclude women from entering politics at all, delays their entrance, and/or inhibits political ambition to higher offices. Moreover, the notion that women are unable to "balance" demanding political careers with childcare responsibilities may affect how voters perceive mother candidates and in turn might affect mother candidates' electoral success. The second barrier involves perceptions of gender role violations about mother candidates. Women who run for politics with children at home violate the model of "intensive mothering" which requires women to expend as much energy as possible on their children, rather than their careers. In practical terms, voters might be concerned that mother candidates are neglecting their children or that they are necessarily "bad" women or mothers for choosing a political career in the first place.

Mother candidates who are forced to confront both categories of perceptions—that they are unable to balance motherhood and politics and that perhaps they *shouldn't* attempt to balance these roles at all-- have to craft a campaign strategy that ameliorates concerns about time balance or potential hostility toward their decisions to combine motherhood and politics.

[13] Motherhood has not, however, been antithetical to public life generally, but rather to serving in public office. The use of motherhood as a justification for political action, especially in regards to social policy that affects mothers and families, has been well-documented (Skocpol 1995).
[14] See also Hochschild (1997) for an excellent historical overview of patterns of women's domestic labor.

This strategy might include completely de-emphasizing their children, or at least not showcasing their families to the extent that father candidates do. Perceived hostility to mothers of young children running for office may also dissuade women from running in the first place, for fear of voter reprisal. These negative evaluations, furthermore, should only apply to mothers of young children while women of grown children should not be subject to the same kind of constraints. Childless women candidates, however, are also subject to judgment—voters may react to childless women with skepticism or feel they may not be able to relate to her.

Understanding what exactly *about* motherhood constrains women has implications for political campaigns and how motherhood might be successfully redeployed as an asset. For example, if voters are concerned about time balance, then mother candidates would do well to reassure voters that their constituents will be a top priority. If role violations are the main sources of constraint for mother candidates, then mothers might do one of two things—they can rely on the conventional wisdom to minimize their roles as wives and mothers or they can devise a strategy that ameliorates this aspect of constraint by assuring voters in other ways that they are performing their proper gender roles and have not violated norms of femininity. In many ways, this is exactly what Palin's Mama Grizzlies did—these women used motherhood and concern for their children as a justification for both their entry in the political world and their preferred policies. They have not violated gender expectations because they have fulfilled their duties of having children and raising a family and because the welfare of their children is their motivation for political action. Mama Grizzlies are able to embody masculine qualities like aggression and strength precisely because these traits are balanced out by their emphasis on motherhood, the epitome of femininity (Choi et al. 2005; Ruddick 1982). Beyond Mama Grizzlies, emphasizing motherhood and using it strategically might be a way for all women to negotiate the double bind and allow them to embody masculine traits without risking the

penalties associated with role violations. Thus, uncovering the roots of how motherhood functions as a liability is key to understanding how these constraints affect the political candidacies of women. The remainder of this section will review the literature of each of the two categories of constraint—time balance and role violations.

Practical Constraints

While most working mothers likely feel the time pressures of combining work and family life, mother politicians face highly demanding schedules that require them to travel often and be away from home. The difficulty of balancing motherhood and politics is evidenced in the different structures of men and women politicians' families. Studies that document the composition and characteristics of politicians' family lives inevitably uncover gender differences that provide clues to how private life structures the political career choices of women. Women who enter politics are less likely than men to have children, and when they do have children, they have fewer (Carroll 1989; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2010; Dodson 1997; Kirkpatrick 1974; Thomas 2002). For example, in a survey of state legislators, Thomas (2002) found that 55% of women were childless compared to just 3% of men. Furthermore, women in politics tend to run when their children are older while the age of their children is basically irrelevant to the career decisions of men politicians (Carroll 1989; Dodson 1997; Sapiro 1982; Thomas 2002). Women with young children (under the age of 18) are also underrepresented in politics. While 23% of male state legislators have minor children, only about 14% of women do (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2010). Women with very young children are even rarer in politics: Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2010) recently found that of state representatives, 3% of women have children under the age of six compared to 8.2% of men. This line of research comes as no surprise given that women are still the primary caregivers to children. While motherhood constrains both the

choice to run for politics, and the timing of a political career, fathers enjoy considerably more freedom in their ability to have both a political career and family.

An early study by Virginia Sapiro (1982) found that family life and private commitments constrain political women more than men. In a sample of delegates to the 1972 Democratic and Republican conventions, Sapiro determined that while both men and women perceive conflict between politics and family life, how this conflict is resolved differs by gender. Men are more likely than women to bear the "costs" of having a family and a demanding a political career, while women are more likely to sacrifice their careers for their family. Sapiro positions political ambition and the decision to enter politics as a cost/benefit analysis in which women and men make different calculations that result in different outcomes:

> We may view potential costs of office-holding as a series of filters that gradually screen out those who cannot pay the price. Political ambition is costly to both men and women in terms of their family commitments, but by the end it appears that most of the people who can or will pay the price are men (274).

Because of this perceived role conflict, then, women are less likely than men to run for office at all, more likely to run at later ages (when their children are grown), less likely to seek higher offices, and more likely to retire early (see also Blair and Henry 1981). Thirty years later, Sapiro's findings continue to hold. Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2010) recently found that women state legislators were significantly more likely than their men counterparts to say that their decision to run for office was profoundly shaped by their children being old enough to make them feel comfortable being away from home.

Fulton et al. (2006), in a survey of state legislators, found that the presence of children at home strongly predicts decreased ambition to run for the House of Representatives for women but not men. That is, women state legislators with children at home are far less politically ambitious compared to their men counterparts. In contrast, the presence of children

at home actually *increases* political ambition of fathers in comparison to childless men. The authors interpret their findings to mean this:

> Children tend to enhance parents' social networks (e.g., PTA, little league, etc.) and provide them greater visibility in the community. Nevertheless, while such community ties might foster men's congressional ambitions, the child-care responsibilities that women often disproportionately bear at home likely mitigate the positive influence of social networks on women's ambitions for Congress (241).

These findings are significant because they suggest that children act as a barrier to women's political ambition even for women who have already entered politics. Childcare responsibilities do not only inhibit the initial decision to run as well as the timing of entry into politics, but political ambition to higher office as well. The authors found no gender differences in the political ambitions of childless men and women.

While studies of potential public office-holders are rare because of the difficulty in studying those individuals who *do not* run, the few studies that do exist suggest that family obligations explain much of the political ambition gap between men and women potential officeholders. In a study of individuals who possessed the necessary qualifications to run for political office, Lawless and Fox (2005) found that 65 out of 100 women cited children as a reason for not running while only 3 out of 100 men cited the same hindrance. Lawless and Fox (2005; 2010) also note that traditional family structures are still entrenched, even in the homes of eligible potential candidates. For example, 42% of eligible women said they were responsible for the majority of childcare compared to 4% of eligible men. With much more childcare responsibility falling on the shoulders of women than men, eligible potential women candidates are more likely to consider running when they are older, after their family responsibilities as mothers diminish. This finding spans generations, as young women are just as likely as their older women counterparts to cite family obligations as a deterrent to running (Lawless and Fox 2005). However, Lawless and Fox (2011) recently argued that although eligible men and women

candidates are *unequal* in the amount of domestic responsibilities they shoulder, traditional divisions of labor do not ultimately inhibit political ambition.

Time constraints affect not only the pathway of mothers' political careers, but may also influence voter perceptions of mother candidates. The political science literature is extremely limited in its examination of the effect of parental status on candidate evaluations, but literatures from other disciplines contain a wealth of evidence that parental status interacts with gender to produce different evaluations and consequences for men and women in the paid labor force. Findings from sociology and social psychology indicate that in general, mothers receive a penalty in the workplace while fathers may be advantaged by their parental status. These findings are helpful in that they provide clues for how parenthood might apply to evaluations of political candidates, but limited in that political candidates are not simply subtypes of general "working" men or women. In fact, I argue that voters use different standards and have different expectations for political candidates that do not apply to other kinds of (non-political) positions. However, some of these standards, such as competence, overlap and may apply in the same way to workers and political candidates. I will review the findings about parental status in the working world and carefully note how these findings might apply differently to the political world.

Studies of men and women in the workforce consistently find that mothers receive a penalty in perceived competence, actual wages, and decisions regarding hiring and promoting. This line of research explains these findings by pointing to a tension between the motherhood role and the prototypical "ideal worker." The traits and roles associated with motherhood (nurturing, patient, affectionate, the ability to always be available to one's child) conflict with the traits and roles necessary for success in the workplace (independence, aggressiveness, competitiveness, ability to sacrifice everything for one's employer) (Schein 2001). While the

ideal mother is a woman who "will direct her time and emotional energy to her children without limit" (Ridgeway and Correll 2004, 690), the ideal worker must be "unencumbered by competing demands and [is] 'always' there for his or her employer" (Correll, Beard, and Paik 2007, 1306). These conflicting expectations influence employers to judge mother workers as less competent and less committed to their jobs compared to father and childless women workers. In addition to influencing traits evaluations, stereotypes about mother workers also influence recommended starting salaries as well as the decision to hire or promote mother workers. Mothers earn less than childless women and men—controlling for other factors, mothers suffer a 5% wage penalty per child (Anderson, Binder, and Krause 2003).

Although women who become mothers are perceived as less competent and committed as workers (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2004; Etaugh and Folger 1998; Fuegen et al. 2004), they are perceived to possess more warmth compared to childless men and women. That is, while women who become mothers lose competence in the eyes of their employers, they gain in perceptions of warmth. Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2004) argue that these perceptions of mothers are related to prejudice towards women more generally. The authors note that individuals tend to stereotype and judge members of groups on two dimensions—competence and warmth. Some groups in society score low on both dimensions—in the United States, groups considered "neither nice nor able" include some minorities, the poor, and the homeless. Groups stereotyped as high on both dimensions (competent and warm) include whites, Christians, and middle class individuals. Women as a group are typically seen as high on one dimension and low on the other, but are not usually perceived as both competent and warm. As the authors put it: "Women are either liked or respected but not both" (705). Women who are homemakers, for example, score high on warmth but low on competence while professional or "business" women score high on competence but low on warmth. What happens, however, when men and women

become mothers and fathers in the workplace? In an experiment, Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2004) find that mothers are evaluated as much warmer than competent while the converse is true for childless women. Fathers score similarly to childless men on competence but increase in warmth by becoming a parent. Furthermore, the authors also find that competence is much more salient to hiring and promoting decisions while warmth has little effect. That is, even though mothers may be advantaged in perceptions of warmth, this will not give them a professional advantage, and their loss in perceived competence will penalize them. These findings are directly applicable to the political world, where traits like warmth and empathy matter far less to voters compared to traits like competency and leadership abilities (Kinder 1983). Men are perceived as competent, regardless of parental status, but fathers gain in warmth. Therefore, fatherhood can only advantage men in the workforce while motherhood is a net loss for perceptions of working women.

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) argue that different evaluations of mother and father workers can be explained by the idea that parenthood is a "status characteristic" that works differently for men and women in the workforce. Under this theory, the role of mother is devalued in the workforce and affects performance expectations. Employers assume that mothers are less competent in terms of effort and ability. Competing time demands between childcare responsibilities and professional obligations lead employers to believe that mother workers will be less committed to their paid occupations (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Fuegen et al. 2004). While "good mothers" are expected to always be there for their children (Kobrynowicz and Biernat 1997), the "ideal worker" is expected to always be there for his or her employer (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Employers, then, assume that mother workers simply cannot put as much effort into their jobs as childless women or men. Furthermore, the distractions attached to the mother role lead employers to believe that mother workers are less serious and

able to fully focus on their paid jobs. Therefore, mother workers are perceived as not just likely to expend less effort than childless women and men workers, but actually less *able* to do their jobs (Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

While both working mothers and fathers are judged as less agentic than childless workers, this standard is far more lenient for fathers than mothers (Fuegen et al. 2004). In an experiment, Fuegen et al. (2004) asked participants to set performance standards for individual candidates applying for a legal position. They found that mothers were held to a much higher standard than fathers and were expected to be more competent and agentic than fathers were expected to be. This finding suggests that in order for mothers to succeed, they must overcompensate for their perceived liability of having children. In application to the political world, mother candidates might do well to play up their masculine qualities more than is normally required of women candidates in order to assure voters that their parental status does not detract from their competence, seriousness, and commitment as political candidates.

While the literature on evaluations of working mothers, fathers, and childless workers is a helpful starting point in the examination of evaluations of parent and childless political candidates, it is necessarily limited by the fact that expectations for workers are different than expectations for political candidates. What may make an ideal worker may not necessarily coincide with the qualities desired in a political candidate. To be sure, however, the two sets of expectations do overlap and are certainly not mutually exclusive. The following section will attempt to bridge the sociology and social psychology studies just reviewed in order to assess their applicability to the political world and voter expectations concerning the parental status of political candidates.

To review, studies of parents in the workforce consistently find that parents, and especially mothers, are perceived as less committed to their jobs (Fuegen et al. 2004; Williams

2001; Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Simply put, the cultural expectation that mothers are expected to be there for their children without limit, in both time and emotional energy (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) is in direct conflict with the expectations that the ideal worker will always be there for his or her employer. As Correll, Beard, and In Paik (2007) put it:

> The cultural norm that mothers should always be on call for their children coexists in tension with another widely held normative belief in our society that the "ideal worker" be unencumbered by competing demands and be "always there" for his or her employer (1306).

However, some studies on parents in the workforce note that parental status may become more or less salient depending on the type of job. For example, we might expect that motherhood is a more salient status characteristic in jobs that are more demanding and time consuming. As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) explain:

> Thus, in high-powered, '24/7' jobs like business executive and high level professional, once a woman's role as mother does become salient we would expect it to evoke stronger discrimination than it would in some less intensive, more flexibly structured '9 to 5' jobs (695).

For women in politics, the salience of motherhood to perceptions of commitment should vary according to level and type of office. Low-level offices like city council that demands far less time compared to, say, the job of a U.S. senator or Governor of a state should render the parental status of candidates less important. Women and men running for federal level offices in Congress must be in Washington, D.C. often and necessarily must leave their families and children for periods of time. Women in executive office as Governors, who are responsible for running and managing an entire state, clearly have much more responsibility than, say, a state legislator responsible to the constituents of a single state legislative district. As O'Regan and Stambough (2011) explain: "Voters perceive women politicians as less capable of leading a state than making decisions within a group of legislators" (97). Simply put, the time demands of

different offices should affect how important parental status is to both the decision to run for the office and voter perceptions of commitment to the political position.

Furthermore, perceptions of commitment should vary according to the age of the candidates' children. The literature on parents in the workplace often conceptualizes parenthood narrowly and without attention to how the age of children may strongly relate to perceptions of working parents. For example, Fuegen et al. (2004) found that parents, and especially mothers, are predicted to be less committed to their jobs. In this particular experiment, the subjects were asked to evaluate either a single and childless job candidate or a candidate said to be married and parent of two *young* children. A parent, and especially a mother, would obviously experience more time conflicts when their children are young and still living at home. Motherhood, then, is conceptualized as being the caregiver to young, dependent children. This conceptualization, however, is narrow and ignores another type of mother—a woman with grown children who are no longer dependent and living at home. In both the workforce and political world, there should be little perceived time conflicts for parents of older children. Therefore, mothers may only suffer in voter perceptions of commitment and competence when their children are young and dependent.

The scant research that examines how parental status affects voter perceptions of candidate commitment corroborates the idea that parents of young children may suffer in voter evaluations, especially for higher political offices. A focus group study conducted by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (1998)[15] found that voters prefer male candidates to have teenage children and female candidates to have adult children. Focus group participants in this study

[15] The few studies that address the impact of parenthood on candidates' political fortunes have been conducted by research organizations, not academic scholars. These studies are not peer-reviewed, but do provide helpful information that might inform political scientists interested in these types of questions. Furthermore, Celinda Lake, a prominent political pollster and ABD in political science, was the primary investigator for the reports produced by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation.

expressed anxiety about female candidates in executive positions, particularly in relation to time balance and loyalties to their family versus their constituents. For men, this concern was not an issue since voters make the assumption that a male candidate, even if a father, has "someone else" to tend to the family (that someone else, undoubtedly, is his wife) (Barbara Lee Family Foundation 1998). A later study conducted by the same foundation in 2004 reached similar conclusions, noting that women running for governor face voter concerns that the presence of young children would "distract" the mother candidate. Men candidates for governor did not face this constraint and voters did not "question whether a man could be both a good father and a good governor" (Barbara Lee Family Foundation 2002, 13).

Although the political science literature lacks in studies that assess how parenthood figures into voter evaluation, findings from the candidate self-presentation literature *suggest* that candidates themselves believe that their parental status matters for their image and thus, electorally.

Women candidates can respond to voters' concerns about time balance issues by de-emphasizing their roles as mothers. Analyses of candidate self-presentation reveal that women are less likely than men to include pictures of their children on their campaign websites (Bystrom et al. 2004). The authors of this study explain the telling implications of these findings: "Women candidates may want to show voters that they are more than wives and mothers and to dismiss any concerns voters may have over their abilities to serve in political office due to family obligations" (Bystrom et al. 2004, 44). Again, men do not face scrutiny of their ability to successfully combine fatherhood with politics, and thus are less constrained in how they present their family life to voters. In fact, a survey of political campaign consultants suggested that the strategy of picturing candidates with their children works better for men candidates than for women. Men may use this strategy of showcasing their families as a way of "softening" their

image (Dittmar 2010). Other studies have suggested that some women may sometimes use a similar strategy of incorporating children into their campaign strategy in order to negotiate the "double bind" (Jamieson 1995) which requires women candidates to present images that are neither too masculine nor too feminine (Bystrom 2009). For example, Dianne Feinstein, known during her early political careers as tough and aggressive in a way that is uncharacteristic for a woman, spent later periods of her career attempting to soften her image and appear more "womanly." Bystrom (2009) argues that Feinstein's campaign commercials that included her grandchildren and focusing on stereotypically feminine issues might have been intended to soften her image. Indeed, with the proliferation of mother candidates and trope of motherhood as a political credential, it is possible that women candidates en masse are deviating from strategies of the past in favor of attempting to redeploy motherhood as a political asset.

Role Violations: "Bad Mothers" and "Deviant Women"

In addition to constraints posed on mother candidates because of real or perceived time constraints, motherhood can also affect women candidates' political ambition, campaign strategy, and voter evaluations because of perceptions that political mothers are transgressing gender roles. Motherhood as an institution has evolved into a series of strict expectations for how mothers act and structure their lives. Several scholars have identified the dominant model of "intensive" mothering which requires women to be intensely involved in the upbringing of their children and devote as much time as possible to caring for and nurturing their children. This model of mothering mandates that women place their children's needs over their own: "[the]needs of individual are often subsumed by domestic roles. The social obligation to fulfill the demands of being a good mother appears to take precedence over self-needs" (Guendozi 2006, 906). Studies have shown that working mothers experience intense guilt, often feel like "bad" mothers, and struggle in their ability to balance competing obligations (Guendozi 2006;

Holcomb 1998; Parker 2009). Politicians undoubtedly feel this burden, probably more intensely than the average working woman. Furthermore, the nature of the politician's occupation is public, where scrutiny of personal decisions about family is common (Witt, Paget, and Mathews 1995). This psychological barrier may constrain women from running for office in the first place, delay their entrance, and/or constrain their ambition to higher offices that demand more of their energy and are also more publicly visible.

Although it is probably obvious that the time conflict in being both a mother and a politician may preclude women from running for office or running for a higher office, less overt are psychological motivations that may affect women's political ambitions relative to men's. Women may be hesitant to run for politics if they perceive the decision to do so as in conflict with social norms that dictate women should be "intensive mothers." In fact, although the evidence is not systematic, Lawless and Fox (2005) noted that in their study of eligible potential candidates, women with children often expressed the fear of being "looked down upon" as a reason for not running for politics. Because social norms and gender expectations are internalized (Lorber 1994), women may wish to avoid negative evaluations of her character by choosing not to run for politics, at least not until their children are grown. Judgment could come from a variety of sources—voters, family, social networks—and ultimately make it less likely for mothers rather than fathers to enter the political world. As Witt, Paget, and Matthews (1995) put it, family is a priority that women are "not allowed to put anywhere but first" (92).

Expectations about women and childcare responsibilities not only affect women's career trajectory, but also how they must present themselves to voters. Mother candidates who enter the political world may face an electorate that is hostile to their decision to violate traditional gender roles and combine motherhood and politics. Although working mothers are fairly common in U.S. society, with 66% of women with children age 17 and under employed either

part-time or full-time, not all of American society is comfortable with this trend. While 40% of Americans believe mothers of young children should ideally work part-time, 38% believe they should not work at all (Parker 2009). Furthermore, almost 20% of Americans believe working women should return to their traditional social roles and stay at home with their children (Parker 2009). Some subgroups of the population are more likely to hold conservative attitudes towards working mothers: The Pew Research Center found that while the American public generally believes that the trend of mothers working outside of the home is bad for society, Republicans were much more likely to hold this attitude (Taylor, Funk, and Clark 2007). Traditional expectations that men are breadwinners, regardless of their parental status, exclude them from the judgment working mothers are subjected to.[16]

Voter perceptions that a mother candidate is necessarily a "bad" mother or woman for seemingly abandoning her family have parallels to concerns about mothers in the workforce. While most research on gender and parental status in the workforce has focused on how women are disadvantaged on competence and commitment perceptions when they become mothers, some studies have found that employers and the general public make negative character assessments about mothers who choose to work. For example, compared to childless women, working mothers are viewed as less dedicated to their families (Etaugh and Nekolny 1990). Moreover, the reason why the mother works also matters for public judgment—one study found that mothers who work because of economic necessity are judged more favorably than mothers who work for personal fulfillment (Bridges and Etaugh 1995). The same study also found evidence that mothers who chose not to take maternity leave after the birth of a child were viewed as less committed to their children compared to mothers who did take leave. In

[16] Freeman (1993) contends that attitudes towards family roles and values polarize the political parties, with Republicans much more likely to value the traditional model of the nuclear family and policies that preserve it.

contrast, men who become fathers are implicitly dissuaded from taking paternity leave, since to do so is in conflict with the long-standing cultural expectation that men are breadwinners and providers for their families (Hyde et al. 1996; Coltrane 1996; Deutsch and Saxon 1998b).

Additionally, when women in the workforce become mothers, the public evaluates them differently from the stereotype of "woman" generally. For example, although women are generally perceived as more communal than men, mothers who continue to work after the birth of a child are perceived as *less* communal than mothers who leave their job (Bridges and Etaugh 1995). Furthermore, compared to fathers who are employed full-time, working mothers with full-time positions are perceived as less nurturing (Etaugh and Folger 1998). However, as noted above, women who become mothers gain in perceived warmth at the cost of competence.

How these findings might apply to political candidates is unclear, but speculation can be made. The studies cited above all find that the way a mother *acts* determines how the public will judge her. In other words, simply the fact of becoming a mother while in the workforce may not be enough for public disdain, but the actions a woman takes after becoming a mother matters. Mothers who forego maternity leave are seen as less committed to their families—in this way, the decision to continue working is what leads to a negative character judgment rather than becoming a mother per se. To overcome these negative evaluations, mother candidates might have to emphasize their dedication to their families, and possibly point out that they took time off from politics or their previous occupations when their children were born.[17] Or, they can de-emphasize their families and make little to no mention or showing of their children.

[17] Blanche Lincoln, in her first Senate campaign, repeatedly told voters that she took time off in between her career in the U.S. Congress and her bid for the U.S. Senate in order to care for her newborn twins (who were age 2 by the time of her first Senate campaign in 1998). The USA Today covered this aspect of Lincoln's candidacy: "The 38-year-old former congresswoman, who left Capitol Hill in 1996 to care for newborn twin sons, tells supporters, 'I'm ready to go back now,' and adds that one of the reasons 'my husband, my two sons and I are running for this office'' is to 'show the rest of this nation exactly what rock-solid Arkansas values are all about'" (October 28, 1998).

Furthermore, the *motivation* of the working mother also matters to the public and definitely might affect how voters judge political candidates. In contrast to some working mothers, mothers who become politicians usually do not do so because of economic necessity.[18] That is, they are not serving in political office to survive financially. Their choice to enter the political world may be based on a number of motivations, including personal fulfillment, though it is not in their interest to emphasize this type of motivation. Mother candidates, then, might be judged more favorably if they connect their reason for running for politics to the welfare of their family. In fact, this is what many women candidates did in the 2010 elections. Motherhood was often used as a justification for running for politics, as illustrated from this excerpt from Krystal Ball's (D-VA) website:

> Until recently, I had never even considered the possibility that I would run for Congress. In March of 2008, after my daughter Ella was born, I knew, like many parents, that I had to do something to ensure that our kids are raised in the same great Virginia that we were. Nothing makes you think harder about the direction of this country than raising children.[19]

Other mother candidates similarly used motherhood to explain their motivation for running, but because almost no research exists that examine voters' reactions to parent candidates, whether or not this strategy works is still a question.

Although voter perceptions of parent candidates and politicians have been under-studied in political science, the few analyses that do exist indicate that voters indeed respond differently to women and men candidates with children. Sacco (2007) found that women candidates without children receive higher evaluations than mother candidates. A study conducted by the Pew Research Center (Morin and Taylor 2008) reached similar conclusions as

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[18] Most members of the U.S. Congress come from backgrounds that are "privileged" compared to the average American. 95% of the 111th U.S. Congress holds at least a college degree and a vast majority of members lists business or law as their prior profession (Manning 2010).

[19] Accessed November 21, 2010: http://www.krystalballforcongress.com/about_krystal/Krystals_story.

Sacco and also noted that Republicans are significantly less likely to support a mother of young children compared to a father of young children. However, Stalsburg (2010) found that mothers of young children are actually *advantaged* on several measures, especially compared to childless female candidates. In fact, while voters evaluated childless men candidates higher than men with children, the opposite was true for women—childless women consistently received lower scores on candidate traits such as leadership, qualifications, and competence. Voters were also much more willing to say they would vote for a mother of young children than childless women candidates. This study suggests that *not* having a family can also be a political liability for women, most likely because of social ideas that associate women's identity with motherhood (Hird and Abshoff 2000). Furthermore, both mother and father candidates were advantaged on perceived ability to handle compassion issues, like childcare and children's issues, compared to childless candidates. This finding suggests that parental status may be an asset, especially in political contexts in which these kinds of issues are salient (Stalsburg 2010).

The Case of the Childless Candidate: Childless as ideal in workforce, but not for politics

If motherhood more often than not constrains the political candidacies of women, what does this mean for childless candidates? One the one hand, given the norms surrounding the model of intensive mothering, combined with concerns about mothers' abilities to balance family obligations with a political career, childless women may seem advantaged since these constraints do not apply to them. There are reasons, however, to call this assumption into question. Childless women may seem "deviant" or abnormal for choosing childlessness. They may also be perceived as selfish for seemingly choosing a career over a family. Furthermore, men who do not have children will miss the opportunity to present a family as another political asset. While the social deviance of childlessness may affect both women and men candidates, women may be perceived as especially in violation of gender norms of behavior. By integrating

theories and findings from several disciplines, including feminist theory, social psychology, and sociology, this section will explore how being childless might affect the political decisions and strategies of men and women candidates as well as how voters perceive childless candidates.

In the workforce, the parental status of childless is an asset for both women and men. Lack of familial obligations makes it possible for workers to devote longer hours and energy to their occupations, without the role conflict that plagues working parents. For women especially, the conflict between the intensive mother and ideal worker role simply does not exist for childless women. Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick's (2004) study revealed that compared to mothers, childless women in the workforce were viewed as much more competent (capable, efficient, organized, skillful). Men, however, maintained similar ratings of competence regardless of their parental status. That is, parental status affects perceptions of women's competence but not men's. In contrast, childless men and women are viewed as less warm compared to working parents. However, perceptions of competence are strongly related to hiring and promoting while warmth matters little if at all (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2004). Childless men and women are also perceived as more committed to their jobs compared to their parent counterparts. They are also seen as more available and agentic (Fuegan et al. 2004).

Candidates for political office who are childless are likely perceived very similarly as childless workers in relation to perceptions of commitment and competence. Absent family obligations, women and men politicians can travel often to Washington, D.C., stay late at the office, and schedule meetings with constituents, aides, colleagues, and others with much more flexibility than politicians with children. This idea was exemplified during deliberation about Janet Napolitano's nomination for Secretary of Homeland Security. Though he received harsh criticism for his comment, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell claimed that Napolitano was a perfect fit for the job since she has no family, "she has no life" and thus can "devote, literally,

19-20 hours a day to [the job]."[20] However offensive this comment may have seemed, the underlying idea is that childless women may be better able to handle demanding political jobs, since they are free from family obligations that might conflict with their careers. Thus, childless candidates are not constrained by the practical constraints that limit parent candidates and especially mothers.

But while the parental status of childlessness might advantage individuals in the workforce, and especially women, there are ways in which the status of childlessness might lead voters to view political candidates negatively. The character of a politician is important to voters in ways that might matter less for employers. Politicians are expected to be more than competent, capable workers who can get things done in Washington. They are also expected to be relatable and able to empathize with their constituents (Kinder 1986; Markus 1982; Funk 1999). Candidates are also evaluated by other personality traits, including kindness, honesty, integrity, and morality (McGraw and Steenbergen 1995). Perceptions of candidates' character and personality are central to voter evaluation and also affect perceptions of issue positions (Funk 1999). The parental status of childless has several implications for character assessment as will be detailed below.

While more women than ever are deciding to delay motherhood or to not have children at all, over 80 percent of American women will be mothers in their lifetime (Livingston and Cohn 2010). Becoming a parent might be thought of as a social norm or obligation that requires both men and women to have children. Childless individuals may be perceived as deviant since having a family is considered "normal" and natural: "Since pronatalism is normative, voluntarily childless individuals by definition challenge society" (Hird and Abshoff 2000, 354). Women might experience more social pressure than men to reproduce, since women's identity has historically

[20] Gail Collins, "One Singular Sensation," *New York Times* 4 December, 2008.

been so closely connected to maternity (Beauvoir 1953; Rich 1976). Indeed, there exists an "indelible association between women and maternity" (Hird and Abshoff 2000, 348) that, in practice, compels women to seek the ideal of a nuclear family.

Studies have found that childless individuals are subject to negative stereotypes, and are often ascribed the following traits: selfish, incomplete, unloving, irresponsible, unnatural, immature, materialistic, individualistic, lonely, and psychologically unstable (Cameron 1997; Gillepsie 2000; Magarick and Brown 1981; May 1995;). 41% of the American public indicates some level of agreement with the idea that childless individuals lead empty lives while 38% agree that the trend of growing childlessness among women is bad for society (Livingston and Cohn 2010). Childless women are especially vulnerable to these stereotypes, since motherhood is considered integral to women's identity in ways that fatherhood is not for men.

To be sure, fatherhood can be a political asset that childless men candidates lack. While few studies exist that investigate the effect of parental status on men's political fortunes, research on gender differences in employee evaluations find that fathers benefitted from their parental status in terms of perceived competency and on recommended starting salary (Correll, Beard, and In Paik 2007).[21] Susan Carroll and Kelly Dittmar argue that while a woman candidate's family is often considered a liability, men candidates' families are viewed as a support system: "When a man runs for office, his family is generally viewed as an important source of emotional and personal support. When a woman runs, her spouse and children are more often perceived as additional responsibilities that the candidate must shoulder" (Carroll and Dittmar 2009, 46). However, Stalsburg (2010) found that both men and women childless candidates were perceived as less capable on compassion issues compared to their parent

[21] The same study found that employees who are mothers were penalized on perceived competence measures and recommended starting salary. Another study found that mothers in the workforce suffer a 5% wage penalty per child, while controlling for other factors (Anderson, Binder, and Krause 2003).

candidate counterparts. Thus, men may receive a penalty for remaining childless, but probably one that is less harsh than what women receive.

The very few studies that have specifically investigated childless candidates reach mixed findings. Focus groups conducted by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (1998; 2002) found that voters prefer women to have a family so that they feel they can relate to the candidate. However, voters prefer that women have older children in order to avoid interference with her political responsibilities. Stalsburg (2010) found that childless women candidates scored significantly lower on several candidate evaluation measures compared to childless men and women with children. Sacco (2007), however, found that women with no children received higher evaluation scores than women candidates with families. Clearly, then, the few findings surrounding childless candidates are mixed.

The idea that childless candidates are unrelatable and may be ill-equipped to handle compassion issues is rooted in the idea that the parenthood experience increases qualities of nurturance and warmth in individuals. *Experience* with institutions that children pass through like the educational system render parents more familiar with, and thus more capable to address as politicians. Furthermore, life experiences that come with the parenthood role, such as decisions about abortion, might give parents more credibility in these types of judgments. Indeed, this was the rationale of one reporter who expressed anxiety about Elena Kagan's nomination to the Supreme Court. In an article entitled "Elena Kagan sends us on the way to a motherless Supreme Court," Michael Roston argued that "If a woman doesn't have a child, she has only an abstract ability to pass judgment on issues where motherhood is concerned" (Slate, May 9, 2010). The truth or falsity of this claim notwithstanding, it is likely that many voters share the feelings of Roston—childless candidates (and especially childless women) simply may not be

able to relate to the experiences of parents and thus, compared to parents, are ill-equipped to handle issues that require a direct experience with childbearing or the raising of children.

Parenthood as an asset

Thus far, the theoretical framework of this project has focused on parenthood as a constraint for women candidates. Traditionally, this is how parenthood has functioned in politics—as a liability for women, and as an asset for men. However, the rise of women candidates who are increasingly devoting a space for their children and families in their political campaigns demands attention to how parenthood might be turned into a political asset for women. Furthermore, the fact that men have historically been much more willing to emphasize their roles as father and portray themselves as "family men" suggests that men are gaining political capital from fatherhood. Why do men highlight their families and can women also use this strategy successfully or must women modify this strategy of including their families in their campaigns? This section will theorize how candidates might use positive traits associated with parenthood in constructing their images, and how men and women might use parenthood differently. Because the research on parenthood and politics is so limited when it comes to evaluations and perceptions, I use real world elections to illustrate how parenthood can be deployed as a political asset. I also draw from sociological and feminist research that explores beliefs and perceptions about mothers and fathers more generally.

The 2010 elections provide clues as to how motherhood might be redeployed as an asset for women candidates. Mary Fallin, Republican candidate for governor of Oklahoma, drew a sharp contrast between her and her opponent, Democratic candidate Jari Askins, by claiming Askins' lack of motherhood experience rendered her unqualified for the governorship. When asked to defend her negative comments regarding her opponent's parental status, Fallin suggested that her motherhood experience helps her relate to voters: "I was just explaining

that these things give me a good perspective on the challenges Oklahomans face, and hopefully voters can relate to that."[22] Apparently some Oklahoma voters agreed that Fallin's motherhood and Askins' lack thereof was relevant for the governor's office. As one voter put it: "Because I think when you are actively involved in raising children, it shows you know how to sacrifice yourself for the well being of others."[23] Here, Fallin's motherhood experience allows her to portray herself and be perceived by voters as relatable—she is a common woman who has experienced what most Oklahomans have also experienced—raising a family and through this experience, becoming familiar with issues that affect families. Her motherhood experience also influences a perception of selflessness, which at least one voter believed was a good quality for a governor. Apparently, actually becoming a mother is the only way to gain this advantage, even though Askins might have developed traits of selflessness, relatability, and familiarity with family issues through other ways and in other experiences.

Mothers, through their experience with raising children, may develop skill sets like multitasking and other practical traits. In fact, this emphasis on practicality was exactly what the Mama Grizzlies capitalized on. As Palin put it, mothers know when their "cubs" are in danger, and have an instinctual, common sense to protect their children and ward off those who would do their family harm. These qualities contrast with a view of the status quo government as composed of lofty esoterics who are far removed from the realities of day to day live in America. A New York Times reporter describes this idea well:

> 'Mom' — in both Democratic- and Republican-speak — is political shorthand now for good common sense and authenticity, an antidote to the effete sensibilities of the so-called Washington elite. As in: 'I'm not a career politician. I'm a mother and a grandmother,' the Nevada Senate candidate Sharron Angle told Harry Reid in their only debate.[24]

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[22] "Motherhood generates talk in Okla. Governor's race." *Washington Post*, October 23, 2010.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Judith Warner, "The New Momism," *New York Times*, October 29, 2010.

Sharron Angle and other women candidates who exploit their parental status for political gain implicitly make the claim that mothers are *different*. There are desirable traits that women acquire through the experience of mothering that lead to a unique and better way of thinking and behaving. The idea that mothers and even all women are different because of unique life experiences or different realities compared to the lives of men is a claim that has also been made by a strand of feminist theorists known as the "difference feminists" (Dietz 2003). Difference feminists "are preoccupied with revaluing 'women' or the feminine in order to affirm a positive account of the female side of the gender binary or the female aspect of sexual difference" (Dietz 2003, 402). Traits traditionally associated with women (e.g. nurturing, compassionate, caring) that were often used as a justification for women's oppression or exclusion from masculine activities are reconceptualized and reclaimed as positive traits that uplift women's status.

The "motherhood" feminists are a subgroup of difference feminists who have attempted to identify something about the childhood bearing and rearing experience that can explain women's supposedly universal oppression (Grant 1993). While most of these feminists maintain that motherhood as an institution is oppressive, they also argue that the act of mothering instills positive values in women that are "better" than the masculinist values that pervade the public sphere. For example, Ruddick (1980) posits that the motherhood experience leads to a pacifist orientation that would promote a better vision for the world and politics. Others argue that mothers develop such positive traits as tolerance, nurturing, altruistic, and compassion (Daly 1978; Griffin 1978; Ruddick 1980; see Grant 1993 for a review). Finally, some difference feminists claim that mothers have a different way of "knowing," and understanding of reality that is based on intuition rather than the more masculinist, rational form of knowledge. Mothers' intuition and unique way of perceiving the world and its effects on

children is exactly what Palin and her Mama Grizzlies claimed to embody—their unique perspective derived from the motherhood experience entitles them to an additional qualification for politics. It seems as though women in the 2010 elections, through the trope of motherhood, attempted to revalue women and the feminine in the same ways that the difference feminists theorized.

The claim that the motherhood experience sets women apart from men and other women who are childless is a powerful one. As the Mama Grizzlies and other women candidates who have redeployed motherhood have conceptualized it, bearing and raising children endows women with certain "natural" qualities that make them better politicians. While qualities and traits like empathy, compassion, and tolerance might be learned traits that are not necessarily exclusive to mothers, other motherhood "assets" like instinct are presented as inherent and natural to mothers. Constructing traits associated with mothers as natural is powerful because it gives women an advantage that men and childless women do not have because of biology. Childless women and men cannot "learn" to develop instinctual skills when it comes to learning, because this trait is unique to women who have borne children. If this strategy of naturalizing motherhood and connecting it to traits that are valued in politics is actually successful for women, then mothers will have a clear and unique advantage in politics.

Unlike women, men have not needed to redeploy fatherhood as an asset, since fatherhood is not perceived as a liability, at least in ways that are damaging politically. However, father candidates do often emphasize their children and families in campaigns, which suggest that there is something to gain from emphasizing the fatherhood experience. Like motherhood, fatherhood is a social construction whose meaning has varied over time and in different contexts (Marisglio et al. 2000). In the past, fathers were stereotyped as authoritative, disciplinarian types whose main functions were to be breadwinners and protectors (Marisglio et

al. 2000; Olmstead et al. 2009). Fathers had little to do with children's emotional development or the day to day tasks of raising children, since childhood development was a task reserved for mothers. Over time, the role of the father expanded to allow men to play a greater part in raising their children and becoming involved in their lives. Marks and Palkovitz (2004) call this new father archetype the "involved father" and claim that the model for the involved father is a man that is more hands-on and nurturing than the father types of the past. Basically, with evolving constructions and conceptualizations of fatherhood and fathers' roles, men have become freer to adopt qualities that were previously reserved for mothers and women, like nurturance, compassionate, and caring.

While the parenthood role may be less of a concern in campaign strategy for men candidates compared to women candidates, many men do highlight their families. One reason for this difference is because unlike for women, the presence of children is rarely a liability for men. But why play up the father role at all? Father candidates may emphasize their family life to gain additional credentials—they are "normal," heterosexual men who have adhered to social norms of marrying and reproducing (Hird and Abshoff 2000; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). To a greater degree, women are subject to the same social norm restriction, but women are also restricted by the norm of intensive mothering and may not want to remind voters of their status as mothers and wives. That is, women are caught in a double bind in ways that men are not.

However, highlighting their family may be a way that men negotiate their gender, which can be especially salient depending on contextual factors like the electoral climate, party, district/state characteristics, and their opponent. Traditionally, the ideal leader has not only been biologically male, but also a male with masculine characteristics. A political leader is expected to be confident, aggressive, rational, assertive, and tough which are all traits usually

assigned to men (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b),. However, there may be cases in which voters may desire less masculinity and more femininity in a leader. Political history tells us this is true—the 1992 elections, often called the "Year of the Woman," represent a perfect example of an electoral context in which feminine qualities and traits were valued by voters. Many scholars argue that women did so well in these elections precisely because the electorate desired their stereotypical strengths. Thus, father candidates might present their children as a way of softening their image and appeal to voters who may be adverse to too much masculinity in a political leader. A study of campaign consultants' perceptions confirms this idea—Dittmar (2010) found that consultants believe picturing men candidates with their families is effective because it "humanizes" and softens their images. Women, on the other hand, are already perceived as maternal and nurturing, while men have to actively construct these images (Dittmar 2010). That is, presenting fatherhood as an asset may be a strategy men use to associate themselves with feminine traits that voters value.

Context: How Party Identification, District Characteristics, and Voter Demographics Interact with Gender and Parental Status

I argue that gender and parental status differences in political ambition, campaign strategy, and in voter evaluations are best understood in context. As noted in the Introduction, the way in which parental status and gender matter to political ambition, candidate self-presentation, and voter evaluation is contingent on a host of contextual factors. The women and politics literature suggests that party, electoral climate, district characteristics, and voter demographics, can affect the decisions, campaign strategies, and evaluations and electoral fortunes of women candidates in ways that differ from men. The following section will briefly review the literature of the impact of these variables on women candidates and also speculate as to how parental status might affect the relationships between and among these variables. I

note here that I am not able to test how every contextual variable influences the relationships among gender, parental status, and political candidacy, but deem it important to theorize how these variables might alter the relationships under investigation. In this dissertation, I examine the role of party in all three empirical tests.

PARTY

Party identification has long been considered one of the most potent predictors of candidate evaluation and vote choice (Campbell et al. 1960; Dolan 2004; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Party of the candidate and respondent can affect the relationship among gender, parental status, and evaluation in two ways—party identification can decrease the salience of gender and parental status or it can alter the ways in which the candidate is evaluated. Furthermore, gender roles and expectations specific to each party's ideology may influence how candidates of Democratic and Republican parties present their family lives to voters differently. Finally, because of different gender ideologies associated with the two parties, party may affect the decision to run and political ambition.

Gender stereotypes work differently for Democratic and Republican women. King and Matland (2003) found that Republican respondents rate a hypothetical Republican woman candidate lower than a virtually identical Republican male candidate. The reason, according to the authors, is because the Republican respondents assumed that the woman candidate was more liberal than the male candidate. Partisan stereotypes interacted with gender stereotypes to disadvantage Republican women candidates, at least among Republican respondents. This can be a problem for Republican women in primaries. In contrast, Democratic respondents rated the Republican woman candidate more favorably than the Republican male candidate, and perceived the woman as more trustworthy, qualified, and a better leader than the male candidate. Democrats were also more willing to vote for the Republican woman candidate over the Republican man candidate. King and Matland's study was important in that it considered

party and gender stereotypes in concert and revealed the nuanced ways in which gender and party matter and for whom.

Republican women, however, may be advantaged by their party label when it comes to trait stereotypes. For example, one study found that Republican women candidates for Governor were perceived as better able to handle a crisis and be decisive compared to Democratic women candidates (Barbara Lee Family Foundation 2002). This finding implies that the Republican Party label may influence voters to perceive Republican women as more masculine and better able to handle stereotypically male issues. On the other hand, Democratic women candidates were perceived as more compassionate and better equipped to deal with social issues compared to Republican candidates. This stereotype might help Democratic women candidates when compassion issues are salient, but hurt them when they are not.

King and Matland's findings on differences between perceptions of Democratic and Republican women were corroborated in subsequent studies. Lawless and Pearson (2008) also find that Democratic women are more successful in primary campaigns than Republican women. Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2009) find that gender stereotypes disadvantage Republican women more than they disadvantage Democratic women. The reason for this is that Democrats are more likely to view a woman candidate's gender as positive; they are more likely to perceive women candidates as more competent on education, for example, and less likely than Republicans to see a disadvantage for women on male issues like crime.[25] Republican women, in contrast, send voters a mixed message—their gender provides a liberal cue that is at odds with

[25] Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2008) offer another tentative explanation for why running as a Republican woman may be more difficult: "It may be that Republican voters, who are more likely to hold a conservative political and social ideology, have less confidence about women's abilities in general" (491). They go on to note that in their sample, Republican respondents were less likely than Democrats to perceive women as emotionally well suited for politics compared to men. These findings point to a need for a broader research agenda that can investigate the *roots* of gender stereotypes and who in the electorate holds them.

the conservative cue reflected in their party label. While these stereotypes might aid Republican women in general elections by garnering cross over votes from Democrats, they are disadvantaged in primaries.

Considering how parental status affects stereotypes and evaluations of Democratic and Republican men and women candidates complicates the story. The two major parties differ significantly in their ideologies of the family and gender, even to the point of polarization (Evans 2003; Freeman 1993). Republicans place tremendous value on the preservation of the nuclear family and the maintenance of a patriarchal structure that clearly defines women's place as in the home as primary caregivers (Evans 2003; Freeman 1993; Gillepsie 2000; Critchlow 2005; Elder and Greene 2008). This means that a Republican woman candidate with young children might be judged especially harshly, at least by her own party members. Awareness and internalization of a more traditional gender ideology may also make Republican women less likely to run for office in the first place. But childless Republican women might be disadvantaged as well—Republican women who do not have children might be penalized for seeming "deviant" and possibly too masculine. If Republican women are indeed caught in a catch-22 because of ideologies of the family, then perhaps Republican beliefs about gender roles related to the family contribute to the explanation of Republican women's underrepresentation in the political world. Republican ideology about the family can constrain Republican women in three ways—mothers of young children might be less likely to run for fear of judgment from both voters and people in her personal life; secondly, both childless and mother Republican candidates might be evaluated more negatively and thus have a harder time achieving electoral success; and finally, for those Republican women who do run, they must especially contend with decisions about presenting their families to voters. Finally, Republican men might be rewarded for highlighting their families because of the value Republican voters place on the family. Unlike women, men

are not caught in a catch-22 because for them, fatherhood is rarely a liability. Rather, emphasizing their roles as husbands and fathers can only help Republican men who may appeal to pro-family value voters in the Republican Party.

VOTER AND DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

Regional culture and local attitudes towards gender roles and women's proper place can severely constrain the emergence of women candidates as well as influence their self-presentation, and how they are evaluated by voters. Research on state legislators by Sanbonmatsu (2006) found that in some parts of the country, party elites expressed the belief that voters are resistant to women candidates. That is, about 45% of state legislative and party leaders felt that women could not be successful as candidates to the state House of Representatives in some districts because of voter discrimination against them. For example, party elites in both Iowa and Ohio believed that women suffered an electoral disadvantage in many of the rural parts of their states. In general, of the six states Sanbonmatsu studied, party elites in North Carolina, Iowa, Ohio, and Alabama were more likely to hold the belief that women would have a difficult time winning election in some districts than party elites in Massachusetts and Colorado. In these regions or districts, voters may hold more conservative and traditional attitudes towards women's roles and may expect that the gender prescriptive that a woman's place is in the home, not in politics, should be followed.

Furthermore, voters with certain characteristics, regardless of where they live, are more or less likely to support women candidates. While Dolan (2004) finds a limited role for voter demographic characteristics as a predictor of voting for a woman, she nevertheless makes a compelling argument for the importance of considering voter characteristic in any analysis of women's electoral success:

> In sum, it is important to consider characteristics of the voter that may have an impact on women candidates. Women candidates are not 'invisible' to the public: Their sex is

> obvious, and their difference from the expected norm of the traditional male candidate is as well. Women candidates are also not evaluated by the public in isolation. Each voter examines a candidate through the lens of his or her own attributes and experiences. Whether these attributes and experiences can pull people toward women candidates or push them away is an important question (95).

Dolan (2004) provides two empirical tests of how voter demographics can impact the propensity to vote for a woman candidate. The first analyzes responses to a hypothetical question repeatedly asked in public opinion polls, "If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?" Note that this question controls for party identification, which would otherwise limit the extent responses to this question could be examined for gender bias. Looking at responses to this question over time (1972-1998), Dolan finds that older, less educated, and more religious people are less likely to answer this question in the affirmative while Democrats, liberals, and women are more likely to express support for women candidates.

In a look at real House and Senate elections that occurred between 1990 and 2000 and that pitted a woman against a man candidate, Dolan reaches more tenuous conclusions for the role of demographic variables on the likelihood of voting for a woman. She finds that liberals are significantly more likely to vote for a woman in Senate elections, but that Democrats are no more likely than Republicans to vote for a woman. She also finds no significant effects for age, education, and religion, but discovers that women and minority voters are slightly more likely to vote for women candidates. Finally, Dolan concludes that the effect of voter characteristics on the likelihood of voting for a woman candidate is highly election-specific. In 1992, voter characteristics had more influence on voting for a woman—in this year, women, liberals, older voters, and less religious voters chose the woman candidate over the man. Furthermore, the overall "affinity effect" of women voting for women is driven mostly by the 1992 elections.

Thus, the influence of voter demographic variables is inconsistent and depends on the specific election in question.

Geographical location and demographic characteristics of voter matter if they affect the gender ideology of voters. That is, where a person lives and the culture in which they are immersed can profoundly affect their beliefs and attitudes towards gender roles and expectations. For example, people who are religious, older, less educated, and who live in some Southern regions might be significantly more likely to be biased against a woman candidate in comparison to someone who is atheist, young, more educated, and who resides in the Northeast. In turn, gender ideology affects how voters evaluate women candidates. For example, Sanbonmatsu (2002) found that agreement with the belief that men are suited better emotionally for politics predicts the view that a man would be better able to handle crime, foreign policy, and social security. Sanbonmatsu (2002) argues that social security, however, is a traditional strength of women candidates, which suggests that people who hold basic sexist stereotypes are more likely to believe that men are better on most political issues, including those associated with women's strengths. These findings suggest that individual attitudes towards men and women's abilities as policymakers may affect evaluations of and support for women candidates.

Parental status of candidates may interact with gender ideology of voters to produce different evaluations. In general, people with traditional gender ideologies may evaluate women candidates who do not conform to traditional gender expectations (e.g. mothers of young children and childless women) less favorably than women who seem to have fulfilled their "womanly duties" (e.g. mothers of older children who no longer have children living at home). Of course, voters with traditional gender ideologies may react negatively to women candidates *generally*, but parental status may exacerbate or ameliorate these reactions. These voter

expectations, especially when and where they are particularly strong, certainly must influence how women candidates negotiate their family lives in their self-presentation. Women with young children, for example, are probably more likely to downplay their mother role in districts or states where traditional gender ideology is strong. Women running in areas with more progressive gender ideologies should be freer to show their families to voters. Childless women do not have to worry about voter concerns about their children; however, they must confront the questions and whispers about their choice to remain childless. In order to seem more "womanly" and to combat negative stereotypes associated with woman childlessness, childless women running in regions that are more hostile towards women candidates might make an extra effort to appear compassionate, nurturing, or to embody other qualities associated with womanhood and mothering. Childless women may adopt this strategy categorically regardless of the gender ideology of the district or state since stereotypes about childlessness seem to be more universally adopted than stereotypes about mother candidates.

Summary of the Literature

To review, while parenthood has traditionally been thought of as an asset for men but a liability for women, recent political developments suggest that women may also be able to politically capitalize on motherhood. Theory and empirical findings from a variety of disciplines hold that parental obligations constrain the political candidacies of men and women differently. Until recently, most women have had to negotiate their private responsibilities in ways that minimize the role conflict of mother versus politician. Strategies involve running at older ages, when children are grown (if at all) and de-emphasizing their family lives in their campaigns. Men, on the other hand, have had considerably more freedom in negotiating their private and public lives and if anything, are advantaged by having children. However, as important as the existing literature is, it is limited in several ways. Findings about gender differences in political

ambition merely suggest motherhood acts as a tougher constraint on women, and it is unclear what the root of this constraint might be (time constraints vs. role violations). The few studies that look at gender differences in presentation of family life fail to control for parental status and virtually ignore childless candidates. Furthermore, with the rise of political mothers, it becomes necessary to consider how candidate self-presentation might be changing for women. Finally, almost no studies assess how voters react to different combinations of parental and gender status. I propose that there are two reasons why mother candidates might be viewed less favorably than father candidates—voter concerns about time balance and competing loyalties and perceptions of role violations. These two theories, however, should not be viewed as mutually exclusive but rather should overlap and have more or less impact depending on the stage of candidacy as well as interaction with contextual variables. Finally, childless candidates are not hindered by the perceptions that plague mother candidates but may be penalized for not performing the normative expectation of having children. In light of recent political trends, including Sarah Palin's candidacy and the plethora of women who highlighted their roles as mothers during the 2010 elections, I also make room in my framework for considering parenthood as a credential or asset. I ask when and how parenthood and can redeployed as a political asset for women candidates. The following three chapters will present the results of tests designed to determine how parenthood functions for men and women at three stages of political candidacy—political ambition, campaign strategy, and voter evaluations.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL AMBITION

Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (D-CO) arrived on Capitol Hill in 1972 as the first woman Colorado voters sent to the U.S. House of Representatives. Known as a trail blazer for women in politics, Schroeder encountered myriad gender stereotypes during her time in office, often dismissively called "little Patsy" by her male colleagues and later writing in her autobiography that she felt "submerged in sexism." With two small children at home by the time she entered Congress, Schroeder's decision to be both a politician and a mother was often met with criticism and doubt. When asked how she could possibly balance the two competing roles, she famously replied "I have a brain and a uterus and I use both."[26]

Pat Schroeder is an example of a woman who overcame what might be one of the most significant barriers to women's political ambition: motherhood responsibilities. Still, even after clearing the first hurdle by deciding to run for Congress, Schroeder continued to confront serious backlash as detractors questioned two things—one, how could a mother of small children competently serve in political office? That is, how can a mother cope with the time balance dilemma of two highly demanding jobs? Secondly, how good of a mother is Pat Schroeder? How will her children cope with their mother's absence? The highly gendered nature of these questions were not lost on Schroeder herself who once said in response to her critics: "One of the problems with being a working mother, whether you're a Congresswoman or a stenographer or whatever, is that everybody feels perfectly free to come and tell you what they think: 'I think what you're doing to your children is terrible.' 'I think you should be home.' They don't do that to men."[27]

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[26] "Patricia S. Schroeder, Representative 1973-1997, Democrat from Colorado." Women in Congress, Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. Retrieved 4-26-11. Available: http://womenincongress.house.gov/member-profiles/profile.html?intID=220; Pat Schroeder. 1989. *Champion of the Great American Family*. New York: Random House.

[27] "Patricia S. Schroeder, Representative 1973-1997, Democrat from Colorado."

Nearly thirty years later, how much has really changed for the prospects of mothers in politics? The same questions that plagued Pat Schroeder—how can a mother possibly balance childcare responsibilities with political office?; and moreover, *should* she try to strike such a balance?—are questions that still deter women from running for political office. The effects of these constraints are evident in the negative reactions to those mothers who *do* run for office, even in more "modern" times. Jane Swift, the first woman governor of Massachusetts, incited a public outrage when she became pregnant with twins while serving in office. While many Americans praised Sarah Palin's ability to juggle motherhood and politics, just as many, if not more, questioned her choice to run for vice president with five children at home, including an infant with Down syndrome.[28] In contrast, we are hard pressed to find many examples of men candidates who receive such scrutiny of their family life, save for when the media discovers an adulterous affair.

Mothers who enter the political world may alter their campaign strategies to combat negative voter perceptions of both their ability to be effective politicians and also of their character and image for seemingly "abandoning" their children. Thus, attitudes toward and beliefs about mother candidates should influence campaign strategy and voter perceptions of candidates once mothers choose to become candidates. But how might these constraints preclude women from running for office at all? I posit that both types of constraints introduced earlier—practical and psychological—reduce women's political ambition, for several reasons. First, because mothers are still the primary caregivers to children (Hochschild 1989; Thomas 2002), mothers of dependent children should on average have less time to devote to a political career. Secondly, mothers may confront an electorate who holds the *perception* that they are

[28] A poll conducted by ABC found that 60% of respondents thought Palin made a good decision to join the Republican ticket given her family circumstances. Opinions were highly polarized by party, with Democrats much less likely to think Palin made a good decision. Jon Cohen and Jennifer Agiesta, "Partisanship Appears to Sway Opinions on Palin," *Washington Post*, 6 September, 2008.

unable to balance childcare responsibilities with politics. Finally, mothers confront social norm expectations that require them to devote their free time to their children. The intensive mothering model may influence mothers to believe that devoting too much time to their career will harm their children or reflect negatively on their own character and parenting skills. Mother candidates might also be hesitant to run if they believe their actions will be judged harshly by an electorate that believes in the intensive mothering model. Women may not want to be subject to the intense scrutiny that comes with the decision to run for office with children at home and thus avoid this backlash (including negative publicity) until their children are older or simply not run at all. For men, these constraints do not really exist or at least not to the extent that their political ambition should be negatively affected. For one, men are not the primary caregivers and do not confront the time balance dilemma to the extent that women do. Secondly, there is no male equivalent to the intensive mothering model as social norms do not preclude men from having a career and a family.

The relationship between motherhood and political ambition, however, is not simple and may be dependent on other factors like the type of office, age of children, and party. Having children may dissuade women from entering politics overall, but for those women who do enter the political world, it should also shape women's *progressive* political ambition for higher offices. For example, the presence of children at home may not matter as much for women's ambition for city council as it does for the U.S. Congress, a much more demanding and high-profile office. Similarly, simply having children does not matter so much as the age of the children does. There is ample evidence that women enter politics at older ages, when their children are grown, which suggests that only minor children should constrain women's political ambitions.

Studying Ambition Among State Legislators

The present analysis involves analyzing survey data of men and women state legislators to determine how their parental statuses influence political ambition, including the decision to run for Congress. In 2011, 1,745 or about 24% of state legislators are women (CAWP 2011). A healthy majority of women state legislators are Democratic (60.6%) compared to Republican (38.4%).[29] Women's representation in the state legislature varies widely by state. For example, Colorado has the highest proportion of women state legislators (41%) compared to the lowest, South Carolina, where women make up only 9.4% of the state legislature (CAWP 2011). The state legislature is a common stepping stone or "breeding ground" for Congress (Schlesinger 1966), and I am interested in understanding how familial responsibilities might constrain the decision of legislators to run for Congress. My analysis will be based on two data sources—the 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study conducted by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) (Principal Investigators: Susan J. Carroll, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Deborah Walsh) and a 1998 survey from the Candidate Emergence Study (Principal Investigators: L. Sandy Maisel, Walter J. Stone, and Cherie D. Maestas).[30]

State legislators have already run for and held political office, which means that they have successfully navigated and negotiated the constraints that may be associated with their parental status. However, as noted in the introduction, running and serving in the state legislature is quite unlike a bid for and seat in Congress. In fact, running for and serving in Congress is likely when parenthood becomes the most salient, especially for women. The job of a member of Congress is more demanding on time than the job of most state legislators and requires frequent trips to Washington, D.C. which take the member of Congress away from their

[29] .6% of women state legislators identify as nonpartisan and .2% identify as progressives (CAWP 2010).
[30] See Appendix A for survey details.

home state.[31] Members of Congress, then, experience more time constraints and are also at risk for being perceived as violating their gender roles much more so than state legislators. A woman state legislator is much less encumbered by her job and, depending on the state she lives in, she may even have another occupation, possibly even full-time![32] Voters and the public may question women state legislators' ability to balance motherhood and politics as well as her proper role in each, but this vulnerability increases significantly for members of Congress. Further, congressional contenders are more "public" than candidates for lower offices since congressional campaigns (especially those considered competitive) receive more attention. Thus, candidates face more scrutiny, as their lives and background are on display. Parental status is more likely to be noticed in campaigns for Congress, and mother candidates might especially be constrained by skepticism surrounding their decision to run for office with children at home. That is, candidates who run for Congress face exaggerated constraints of parenthood compared to candidates for lower office. State legislators, however, are ideal subjects to examine since a majority of members of Congress were previously state legislators (Manning 2011). I am interested in determining gender differences in how parental status of candidates affects political ambition for Congress.

Parental status may also inhibit the emergence of women candidates for Governor for many of the same reasons that prevent the emergence of women candidates for Congress. However, the state legislature is not a "breeding ground" for the governorship the same way it

[31] Although some members of Congress move their families to Washington, D.C., anecdotal evidence suggests that many of them do not, including women (See Lyndsey Layton, "Mom's in the House, With Kids at Home," Washington Post, July 19, 2007).

[32] The "professionalization" of state legislatures varies widely by state. Some state legislatures are considered "citizen" assemblies in which the legislators act more as volunteer public servants than professional politicians. Representative in citizen legislatures spend considerably less time serving in office and in some states, receive almost no compensation. For example, New Hampshire, the quintessential "citizen assembly" provides state legislators $200 per two-year term. In contrast, New York, a very professionalized state legislature, pays a base salary of $79,500 (National Conference on State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org).

is for Congress in that candidates for Governor rarely come directly out of state legislatures. Although many governors *have* served in state legislatures, compared to members of Congress, governors are more likely to have served in a statewide executive office (e.g. lieutenant governor)[33], state-level administration positions (e.g. state attorney general), or even the U.S. Congress (Center on the American Governor 2012; Hamman 2004). Thus, surveys of state legislators are not ideal to measure ambitions for the governorship. However, because the CAWP survey does allow respondents to list the next office they would like to run for, I do analyze the respondents who express desire to run for Governor next, although the primary focus of this chapter is on ambition for Congress.[34]

Both the CAWP and Candidate Emergence Study data contain useful measures to help explain the relationship among gender, parenthood, and political ambition. The Candidate Emergence Study survey specifically asks candidates about personal factors that would influence their interest in running for the U.S. House of Representatives, including factors like "separation from family and friends," and "loss of personal and family privacy" (private considerations). The survey also asks the respondent how attracted he or she is to a career in the House of Representatives. The CAWP data includes an important measure for this analysis— how important the following factor was to the state legislator's decision to run for office: "my children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being home as much." The data is also cut by gender and political party which will allow me to assess the interaction among gender, parental status, and party on political ambition more clearly.

With the CES data, I am not able to determine the specific ages of respondents' children, only their age ranges, and I specifically examine those respondents with children living at home

[33] Thirteen out of 50 current Governors previously served as Lieutenant Governors (Center on the American Governor 2012).
[34] Not surprisingly, only 58 respondents in the CAWP survey say they want to run for Governor next.

(under age 18). The CAWP Survey asks respondents for the age of their youngest child, but this measure has little utility for the purposes of this analysis since the ambition question asks respondents If you had the necessary political support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive political offices at any level of government that you would eventually like to hold. I present the results below regardless though I put little weight on these findings because of the flaws in this measure (for the purposes of my analysis) as I describe below.

While the data described above are useful in that I will be able to determine how gender and parental status might affect political ambition of state legislators for Congress, the data will not permit me to understand *why* the gender and parental status interaction is significant to predicting political ambition. That is, I may be able to determine that having young children significantly constrains women's ambition but not men's, but I will not be able to adequately determine *what it is about motherhood* that explains this trend. To be sure, both datasets contain measures that may be useful in assessing the "why" of this study. The Candidate Emergence Study asks specifically how important the factors of separation from family and friends as well as loss of personal and family privacy influence the interest of the respondent in running for the House of Representatives. These measures will allow me to determine how gender and parental status may influence the weight of these factors, in political ambition for the House, but these measures are not clearly measures of practical constraints *or* role violations. While loss of personal and family privacy may somewhat measure the psychological constraints on mothers (e.g. if she believes media scrutiny will negatively affect her children or is concerned about being judged negatively), state legislators who are concerned about separation from family and friends may be responding to concerns they have about the ability to balance both roles *or* to the hostility they may encounter about their decision to separate from their

families in the first place. Thus, data limitations preclude a straightforward analysis of my hypotheses concerning time constraints and role violations as impediments to political ambition.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Consistent with prior research, I expect to uncover gender differences in *family structure and composition* of men and women state legislators' families (Carroll 1989; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2010; Dodson 1997; Thomas 2002). That is, men should be more likely than women to have minor children while women should be more likely to have older children. Because Republican women may be more restricted by gender norms and expectations (Freeman 1993), Republican women may be especially more likely to run for office when their children are older, and therefore Republican mothers of young children should be scarce. That is, I expect to find a party x gender interaction with Republican women less likely to have younger children and more likely to have older children.

Hypothesis 2: I expect that the *private considerations* involved in the decision to run for office (children being old enough to feel comfortable, approval of spouse/partner, influence of separation from friends and family, and influence of personal and family privacy) will matter more to women and parents of young children compared to men and parents who do not have children at home. This hypothesis is based on both the practical and psychological constraints of motherhood. Mothers are constrained by the *time* it takes to raise children, which may influence the importance of private considerations in their decision making calculus (Sapiro 1982; Thomas 2002). But perhaps more importantly, they are restricted also by the norms of "intensive mothering" which require them to devote their time and attention to their children first and foremost (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Indeed, Lawless and Fox (2005) noted that women in their potential officeholder sample often cited the perception that they would be

"looked down upon" for neglecting their parenting responsibilities. There should also be an interaction effect (gender x parental status) with mothers of young children being more strongly influenced by private considerations compared to men of young children. I also expect party to influence these relationships with Republican women most likely to ascribe importance to these private considerations, given the centrality of the traditional family structure in Republican ideology (Freeman 1993).

Hypothesis 3: I expect that gender and parental status should significantly predict differences in political ambition with women and parents of younger children less likely to be politically ambitious. That is, not only should the practical and psychological constraints of motherhood cause women to weigh family considerations more heavily than men in their decision-making calculus, but should also prevent them from emerging as candidates. Therefore, I expect a gender x parental status interaction effect in that women should be more affected by the presence of children at home compared to men with minor children.

The Family Structures of Men and Women State Legislators in the CAWP 2008 Survey

Turning first to the CAWP 2008 survey, Table 3.1 displays frequencies for key variables of the sample, including parental status and parental status by gender. Most respondents do not have a child under the age of 18 living at home (82%) compared to those who do (12%). However, consistent with my expectations about family structure and composition, men are more likely to have a child under 18 than women (22.7% vs. 14.3%, p<.001).

Table 3.1: Parental Status of Men and Women State Legislators

Minor child	18.0%
No minor child	82.0%
Total N	1257
Men with minor children	22.7%
Women with minor children***	14.3%
Total N	1257

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment; ***=p<.001.

A look at parental status by gender and party suggests that both Democratic and Republican women are less likely than men to have a dependent child at home (Table 3.2). The survey also asked respondents to list the age of their youngest child, and while the average age of state legislators' youngest child suggests that state legislators overall tend to have adult children, women tend to have even older children than men. The average age of women's youngest child is 28.0 while for men it is 24.7 ($p<.001$). Democratic women have significantly older children than Democratic men, but Republican men and women do not significantly differ in the average age of their youngest child. Thus, the evidence so far only partly confirms Hypothesis 1—while women have older children than men, Republican women are not more likely than their male counterparts to have older children. In fact, *Democratic* women appear to have older children compared to their Democratic male counterparts. Thus far, I interpret the evidence to indicate that the different family compositions of women and men legislators suggest that women are constrained by parental status in that they are more likely to run when their children are older and less likely to enter the legislature with minor children (compared to men).

Table 3.2: Parental Status by Gender and Party

	Democratic women	Democratic men	Republican women	Republican men
Total sample	38.9%	22.5%	17.1%	21.5%
N	394	235	190	241
Have minor children	13.5% ***	22.7%	15.6%+	21.4%
Mean age of children	28.5***	23.7	27.2	26.0
N	394	235	190	241

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study
Note: +=p<.10; ***=p<.001. In this table, the significant differences shown compare women to men in their respective parties.

Gender, Parental Status, and Political Ambition in the 2008 CAWP Survey

Survey respondents were asked if they had ambition for other political offices. Specifically, the question was: "If you had the necessary political support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive political offices at any level of government that you would eventually like to hold?" If the respondent answered in the affirmative, they were asked to indicate which office they would like to hold next and also the highest office they would like to hold in the future. There are a few problems with this question in its utility for the present analysis. One, the wording of the question effectively holds constant electoral support. The phrase "necessary political support," can imply a lot of things, including the idea that the electorate would welcome the state legislator's candidacy. Thus, parents of young children, when considering the answer to this question, may think of "the right opportunities" as related to when childcare responsibilities are irrelevant to their political careers. Also, this question does not ask for a specific time frame for which the state legislator might consider a run for a higher office, as there is no way to determine what "eventually" means to respondents. This means that parents of young children might answer this question thinking of the far future, such as when their children are grown. Because of these limitations, it is no surprise that the interaction between gender and parental status has no effect on how political ambition is measured through this survey item (Table 3.3). That is, men and women and respondents who have dependent children and those who do are not significantly different in their answers to whether or not they would like to hold some other office. However, it does seem that parental status has an independent effect on political ambition, though regardless of gender. State legislators with minor children are far more likely to say they would like to seek another political position (82.2%) compared to those with no minor children (50.6%, $p<.001$). This result may be

related to age of the state legislator—those with minor children are likely younger than those with grown children, and may hold more political ambitions for the future.

Table 3.3: Differences in Ambition by Gender and Parental Status

	Women	Men	N
Minor children	82.3%	82.1%	994
No minor children	50.3%	51.1%	219

Source: CAWP 2008 Survey
The dependent variable was operationalized as an affirmative answer to this question: "If you had the necessary political support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive political offices at any level of government that you would eventually like to hold?"

I also examined differences by gender and parental status for ambition for both Governor and Congress as the next offices state legislators want to hold.[35] Tables 3.4 and 3.5 examine only parents of minor children and find no significant gender differences in women and men's expressed desire to run for Governor or Congress as their next office. I also looked at gender differences in ambition for Congress and Governor among state legislators without minor children, and again there were no significant differences between women and men (results not shown).

Table 3.4: Gender Differences in Ambition for Governor Among Parents of Minor Children

	Women	Men
Ambition for Governor	6.0%	4.8%
Ambition for some other office	73.0%	75.4%
No ambition	21.0%	19.8%
N	100	226

Dependent variable: "If you had the necessary political support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive political offices at any level of government that you would eventually like to hold?... [If yes] Which office would you like to hold next?"

[35] I recoded the data so that 0=respondents who indicated there is no other office they would like to hold; 1=respondents who indicated they would like to hold some other office, but not Governor or Congress; 3=respondents who want to hold some other office and specifically Governor or Congress. Expressed desire to run for U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate were combined into one variable to measure ambition in both chambers of Congress.

Table 3.5: Gender Differences in Ambition for Congress Among Parents of Minor Children

	Women	Men
Ambition for Congress	18.0	15.1
Ambition for some other office	61.0	65.1
No ambition	21.0	19.8
N	100	126

"If you had the necessary political support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive political offices at any level of government that you would eventually like to hold?... [If yes] Which office would you like to hold next?"

The Impact of Gender and Parental Status on the Private Considerations of State Legislators in the CAWP 2008 Survey

Although the main political ambition questions in the CAWP survey are limited for purposes of this analysis, other questions are useful in their ability to examine how constraints of private life affect men and women's political career decisions differently (Hypothesis 2). That is, I am able to examine whether men and women place more or less importance on family-related considerations that influence their ultimate decision to run for office. One section of the survey lists various factors "that have been suggested to be important in influencing decisions to run for office." Respondents were asked to indicate how important each factor was in affecting their decision to run the first time for the office they currently hold from four answer choices: very important, somewhat important, not important, and not applicable. Relevant factors for the present analysis include "approval of my spouse or partner," and "my children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being home." To be clear, respondents were asked to consider how these various factors influenced their choice to run for *state legislature*. The results, then, are interesting since they capture how family life may have acted as a constraint for a lower office and for many, the very first political office they sought. Because the state legislature is often the first office that political men and women seek, the answers to these

questions may reveal how family life influenced the decision to run for office at all. Also, because state legislatures are often stepping stones to Congress, it is important to understand the first barriers women and men faced when initially running for state legislature. Of course, every respondent in this survey overcame these barriers and actually did run for office. The results, then, should underestimate the effects of family life on political ambition, and provide some clues for how private life influences men and women's political ambition.

I first turn to the factor "my children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being home as much." Almost a majority of respondents (48.7%) indicated that this factor was "very important," 17.8% said it was somewhat important, 8.1% indicated it was not important, and a quarter (25.4%) indicated this factor was not applicable. The finding that only 8.1% of respondents felt that the age of their children was irrelevant to their decision to run for office is interesting in itself as it suggests parental status and parenthood responsibilities matter a great deal for political ambition. I dropped the respondents who answered "not applicable" from the subsequent analysis since I interpret this response to mean the respondents are childless or did not have children at the time of their first run for state legislature.

Turning to Table 3.6, we see stark gender differences in how relevant this factor is to women and men's decisions to run for state legislature. 75.2% of mothers indicated that their children being old enough to feel comfortable not being at home as much was very important to their decision to run for office, compared to the 53.3% of men who felt the same way. In contrast, men are almost twice as likely as women to say that this factor was somewhat important to their decision. Fewer women than men say their children's ages were not at all important, with a small minority of both men and women giving this response. This first look at the data seems to confirm my hypothesis that women put more weight on private considerations when running for office compared to men and suggests that while comfort level

in spending less time at home with children matters to both men and women, the *degree* to which this matters varies strongly by gender, with women more likely to believe this factor is very important while men are more likely to cite it as somewhat important.

Table 3.6: Age of children factor by gender

	Women	Men
Very important	75.2%	53.3%
Somewhat important	16.6%	32.6%
Not important	8.2%	14.0%
N	512	420

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study
Differences between men and women significant at p<.001.

A look at how gender *and* party influence how state legislators answer this question is also revealing. Table 3.7 displays the percentages of Democratic and Republican men and women who answer how important their children being old enough to feel comfortable not being home as much was to their decision to run for office. Therefore, within both parties women are more constrained than men by the age of children factor. That is, the gender effect is relatively strong with both Democratic and Republican women ascribing more importance to this factor. However, the results also suggest that there is indeed a party effect with both more Republican men and women indicating this factor was very important compared to Democratic men and women. Democratic men seem to be the least constrained by this factor, as they score the highest in the "not important" category and the lowest for "very important." Thus, the results of Table 3.7 provide evidence that is consistent with my expectation that private considerations matter more to women than men (Hypothesis 2), but inconsistent with my expectation that Republican women are especially constrained. Rather, gender (regardless of party) seems to be driving these differences whereas being Republican (regardless of gender) may also influence the importance of this private consideration, but there is no interaction effect.

Table 3.7: Age of children factor by gender and party

	Democratic Women	Democratic Men	Republican Women	Republican Men
Very important	70.5%	47.0%	83.3%	58.0%
Somewhat important	19.3%	38.0%	12.1%	28.3%
Not important	10.2%	15.0%	4.6%	13.7%
N	332	200	174	212

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study
"Below are various factors that have been suggested to be important in influencing decisions to run for office. Please indicate how important each factor was in affecting your decision to run for the first time for the office you know hold…my children being old enough for me to feel comfortable not being home as much." 1=Very important; 2=Somewhat important; 3=Not important; 4=Not applicable
Differences between women and men of both Democratic and Republican parties significant at $p<.001$.

In order to further ascertain how party and gender work to influence how children constrain the decision to run for office, I ran a series of t-tests that examine the mean answer for women and men by party to the importance of their children being old enough when they ran for office. Comparing women to men, both Democratic and Republican men score higher on this variable, which indicates men report this factor was less important to their decision to run.[36] Comparing by party, Democratic women cite their children being old enough as significantly less important compared to Republican women, but interestingly, this finding does not hold for men. That is, the age of their children was more important to Republican women's decision to run compared to Democratic women, while the factor was about equally important to Democratic men as it was to Republican men. This evidence seems to confirm my expectations that private considerations may matter more to Republican women. This finding provides some support for the hypothesis that motherhood is more of a liability for Republican rather than Democratic women. Republican women are likely more constrained by gender norms that place high importance on the role of mothers and preservation of the nuclear family. While these norms

[36] The question was coded as follows: 1=very important, 2=somewhat important, 3=not important. Thus, higher means indicates the factor was perceived as less important.

did not stop Republican women from ultimately running for state legislature, they may have weighed heavily in their considerations about running. Thus, party seems to influence how much parenthood matters for political ambition, but only for women with parental status being more of a liability for Republican women than Democratic women.

Approval of spouse or partner

Respondents were also asked to indicate how important the approval of their spouse or partner was to their decision to run for office. While this question, on its face, measures an aspect of family life that may contribute to explaining differences in political ambition, it does not directly ask about how *children* may influence the decision to run. While I am generally interested in how private commitments affect the career choices of men and women, my project is specifically focused on how parenthood impacts political candidacy. However, I believe that approval or spousal support is very much related to parenthood in that the degree of support may be highly dependent on the spouse's perceptions of the parenthood role and their partner's ability to balance childcare responsibilities with politics (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994). In particular, women who enter politics may have to rely on their spouse to shoulder some of the childcare responsibilities that their political careers require them to shirk. Political women's spouses, then, must be willing to deal with what is often perceived as a role reversal. On the other hand, empirical data shows that even when women enter politics they still end up burdened with the majority of domestic labor, including childcare responsibilities (Thomas 2002). That is, women can "have it all" as long as they are still home to put food on the table and raise their children. Still, succeeding in both roles—as a mother and politician—is no doubt a difficult feat, and it is easy to imagine that male spouses would react with skepticism towards their wives' ability to handle both roles.

When asked how important the approval of their spouse or partner was to their initial bid for state legislature, few gender differences emerge. A slightly lower percentage of women (77.7%) than men (82.6%) indicated the approval of their spouse or partner was very important while a slightly higher percentage of women indicated it was somewhat important or not important ($p<.10$). Still, the data reveals that the vast majority of both women and men consider this factor highly important.

Table 3.8: Approval of spouse or partner factor by gender

	Women	Men
Very important	77.7%	82.6%
Somewhat important	16.9%	14.0%
Not important	5.3%	3.4%
N	561	501

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study
"Below are various factors that have been suggested to be important in influencing decisions to run for office. Please indicate how important each factor was in affecting your decision to run for the first time for the office you know hold…approval of my spouse or partner." 1=Very important; 2=Somewhat important; 3=Not important; 4=Not applicable
-Differences between men and women are significant at $p<.10$.

I also consider how men and women of different parties answer this question, and Table 3.9 reveals that although more Republicans than Democrats indicate that approval of their spouses was very important, the biggest gap is between Democratic women (76.3%) and Republican men (85.2%). Therefore, contrary to my expectations that women are generally more concerned than men about private considerations, gender does not have a particularly strong relationship with this particular consideration, and if anything more men than women said approval of their spouse was very important to their decision. Also, there does not seem to be a gender x party interaction but rather just a straight party effect with Republican women and men state legislators more likely to ascribe importance to this factor than Democratic women and men. I interpret the lack of a gender effect to reflect the fact that women in the CAWP sample are less likely to be married than men state legislators (72.1% vs. 86.4%) and

more likely to be divorced or widowed. As noted previously, women are also less likely than men to have minor children. These two differences in family structure combined help make sense of the finding that there are no gender differences in importance of spousal approval.

Table 3.9: Approval of spouse or partner factor by gender and party

	Democratic Women	Democratic Men	Republican Women	Republican Men
Very important	76.3%	79.8%	81.5%	85.2%
Somewhat important	17.6%	15.7%	15.2%	12.4%
Not important	6.1%	4.5%	3.4%	2.4%
N	376	242	178	250

Source: 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study
"Below are various factors that have been suggested to be important in influencing decisions to run for office. Please indicate how important each factor was in affecting your decision to run for the first time for the office you know hold…approval of my spouse or partner." 1=Very important; 2=Somewhat important; 3=Not important; 4=Not applicable

Candidate Emergence Study

Turning now to the 1998 Candidate Emergence Study, Table 3.10 displays basic information about the gender and parental status of the sample. Women make up 22.1% of the sample (which mirrors the proportion of women serving in state legislatures), 40% of respondents have children living at home, and 83.1% are married. Consistent with expectations about women and men's family structures, the gender differences in age of children are dramatic, with women legislators much less likely to have younger children than men legislators except in the age 12 and over category. 29.6% of women compared to 43.0% of men have children living at home, a stark 13-point difference. Women are almost three times less likely than men to have very young children (under age 6) and also less likely to have school aged children (age 6-12) compared to men (Table 3.11).

Table 3.10: CES Sample Characteristics

Women	22.1%
Men	77.9%
Total N	861
Democrats	51.7%
Republicans	45.3%
Total N	868
Married	83.1%
Not married	16.9%
Total N	859
Minor child	40.0%
No minor child	60.0%
Total N	853

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
Note: "Not married" could include respondents who indicated they were never married, divorced or separated, and widowed. For party affiliation, 2.4% of respondents indicated they were Independent and .6% indicated "Other."

Table 3.11: Parental Status by Gender

	Women	Men
One or more children living at home	29.6%***	43.0%
N	186	665
At least one child under age 5	4.6%***	12.4%
N	175	636
At least one child 6-12	6.9%***	19.9%
N	175	643
At least one child over 12	25.6%	29.0%
N	180	645

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
**=p<.01
***=p<.001

Respondents were asked to "indicate how the following factors would influence your interest in running for the U.S. House." Respondents were told to answer these questions even

if they had no interest in the U.S. House. In contrast to the CAWP survey, this measure allows me to determine how family-related concerns impact ambition specifically for Congress rather than the state legislature. The two factors most important to this analysis are the "separation from family and friends" and "lost personal and family privacy" factors. Each factor included five answer choices: strongly discourage, discourage, somewhat discourage, makes no difference, and not sure. Respondents who answered not sure were excluded from the analysis.

Influence of separation from family and friends

Overall, the modal answer to this factor is somewhat discourage, with 35.9% of the sample choosing this answer choice. About 20% say the influence of separation from family and friends is very discouraging, over a quarter (26.2%) think it is discouraging, and 18.1% find that it makes no difference. Thus, the vast majority of respondents indicate that separation from family and friends is at least somewhat discouraging to their interest in running for Congress. In fact, for both men and women, this factor was the second most discouraging factor only after "needing to raise large amounts of money" (See Appendix B). I also display the distribution of answers by gender. More women (22.6%) than men (18.8%) say this factor would strongly discourage them from running. Fewer women than men say this factor would discourage them (20.4% vs. 28.2%) and a slightly larger proportion of women than men say the separation from their family and friend would make no difference (21.5% vs. 17.5%). Married state legislators and those with children at home are more discouraged by separation than their unmarried and childless (at least at home) counterparts (See Table 3.12). Consistent with expectations, looking only at respondents with minor children reveals a gender difference with women being slightly *less* discouraged (M=2.51) compared to men (M=2.27, $p<.10$). However, contrary to expectations, women and men overall have similar means on the separation variable (2.56, 2.51 respectively).

Table 3.12: Influence of separation from friends and family by gender, marital status, and parental status

Variable	Mean
Men	2.51
Women	2.56
N	842
Not married	3.04
Married***	2.42
N	839
No children at home	2.67
Children at home***	2.30
N	835

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
Dependent variable: "Please indicate how the following factors would influence your interest in running for the U.S. House. Please answer this question even if you have no interest in running for the U.S. House…separation from friends and family." Response choices: strongly discourage (1), discourage (2), somewhat discourage (3), makes no difference (4), not sure (dropped from analysis).
***=p<.001

Thus, simple difference of means tests reveal no gender differences in the extent to which this family-related factor impacts political ambition for the House of Representatives. These results are contrary to the expectation that the influence of separation from family and friends should discourage women much more than men. However, looking at just parents of minor children, we see that women are slightly more discouraged by separation from family and friends. Different family structures of women and men state legislators could be driving these findings, which suggest a need to control for other variables. Indeed, we saw previously that women are less likely to have children living at home, which may indicate that even if women are just as

likely as men to have a family, their children are older and thus less constrained by the separation factor. It may also be the case that women are less likely to be married than men among state legislators in this sample.[37] In order to control for these various factors, I model these independent variables to predict differences in the influence of separation of family.

Table 3.13 displays the results of a linear regression model in which gender, age, parental status, and marital status of potential candidates are modeled as independent variables that can predict differences in the influence of separation from family and friends. The results indicate that all variables are significant except gender. That is, potential candidates who are older find separation from family and friends less discouraging while those who are married and have dependent children find separation more discouraging.

The main effects of this model may mask interactive effects that also predict differences in influence of separation from family and friends. For example, it could be that marital status and having children at home affect men and women differently. As my theory suggests, women should be more constrained by these family factors than men. In order to investigate these nuances, I add interaction terms to the model in order to determine if marital and parental status affect men and women differently when it comes to the importance placed on separation from family and friends. I first add the interaction between gender and parental status, and although this interaction term barely reaches significance (p=.10), it makes gender significant in the model. Thought the effect is slight, it seems that the presence of children at home makes separation from family and friends more important to men than to women, while women overall (regardless of parental status) find this factor more discouraging. I then add the interaction between gender and marital status; addition of this term makes gender insignificant again but the interaction between gender and parental status slightly more significant as a

[37] Descriptive statistics do suggest just that. Women are less likely than men to be married (72.1% vs. 86.4%) and more likely than men to be divorced (12.1% vs. 4.9%).

predictor of influence of separation from family and friends. The interaction between marital status and gender itself is not a significant predictor of this variable.

Table 3.13: The Influence of Separation from Family and Friends

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	3.106 (.208)	3.124 (.190)	3.116 (.191)
Woman	-.076 (.083)	-.473* (.245)	-.412 (.268)
Age	.076* (.030)	.073* (.030)	.070* (.031)
Children at home	-.185* (.079)	-.547* (.224)	-.576* (.230)
Married	-.627*** (.098)	-.621*** (.098)	-.580*** (.123)
Woman X Children at home	---	.300+ (.174)	.319+ (.177)
Woman X Married	---	---	-.112 (.200)
	R2=.074; N=824	R2=.077; N=824	R2=.076; N=824

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
Dependent variable: "Please indicate how the following factors would influence your interest in running for the U.S. House. Please answer this question even if you have no interest in running for the U.S. House…separation from friends and family." Response choices: strongly discourage (1), discourage (2), somewhat discourage (3), makes no difference (4), not sure (dropped from analysis).
Note: Woman is coded as 0=man, 1=woman
+=p<.10; *=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

I turn now to the second family-related variable, the influence of lost personal and family privacy. Again, I expect that women, and especially mothers, should consider this factor more discouraging compared to men. Loss of personal and family privacy seems to be less discouraging overall than the previously considered variable, influence of separation from family and friends. Over a majority of respondents indicate loss of personal and family privacy only somewhat discourages them or makes no difference. 23.7% indicate this factor would discourage them from running for Congress and 14% indicate it would strongly discourage them.

I first display the means on this variable by gender, marital status, and parental status. First, there is no significant difference between women and men, meaning that, contrary to my

hypothesis, the potential loss of personal and family privacy that comes with a career in Congress affects women and men overall about the same (Table 3.14).[38] Differences do emerge, however, between married and unmarried respondents and respondents who have children at home versus respondents who do not. Unmarried individuals are less discouraged by privacy loss compared to those who are married. State legislators with children at home are also more discouraged by the privacy loss that comes with a congressional bid compared to individuals who do not have children at home. Again, because women and men state legislators have different family structures that could be driving the null findings regarding gender differences, it is important to model these variables in a regression.

Table 3.14: Influence of loss of personal and family privacy by gender, marital status, and parental status

Variable	Mean
Men	2.80
Women	2.75
N	833
Not married	3.06
Married***	2.74
N	830
No children at home	2.88
Children at home**	2.66
N	826

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
Dependent variable: "Please indicate how the following factors would influence your interest in running for the U.S. House. Please answer this question even if you have no interest in running for the U.S. House…loss of personal and family privacy." Strongly discourage (1), discourage (2), somewhat discourage (3), makes no difference (4), not sure (dropped from analysis). **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

[38] Even looking at only respondents with minor children at home, women and men have almost identical means on this factor (2.64 vs. 2.66).

I now model the influence of personal and family privacy by including the following predictors: gender, parental status, marital status, and age. Model 1 considers the main effects of these variables. Here, gender, age, and marital status all seem to have some effect on the influence of personal and family privacy on the decision to run for office, while parental status has no effect. Thus, Model 1 suggests that women and married respondents find the loss of personal and family and privacy more discouraging while older people find it less discouraging as a factor that would influence their decision to run for Congress. Two interaction variables—gender x parental status and gender x marital status—did not add explanatory power to the model. Thus, the results suggest that women, regardless of the presence of children at home, consider the loss of personal and family privacy more of an impediment to running for Congress than men. This evidence confirms my expectation that women are more deterred than men by private considerations but disconfirms my hypothesis that mothers of younger children would be even more discouraged. Finally, state legislators who are married, regardless of gender, find loss of privacy more discouraging than their unmarried counterparts.

Table 3.15: Influence of the loss of personal and family privacy

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	2.854 (.193)	2.865 (.201)	2.842 (.202)
Woman	-.151+ (.088)	-.193 (.259)	-.040 (.283)
Age	.099** (.032)	.099** (.032)	.091** (.033)
Children at home	-.055 (.083)	-.093 (.237)	-.168 (.243)
Married	-.400*** (.104)	-.399*** (.104)	-.012 (.307)
Woman X Children at home	---	.032 (.184)	.080 (.187)
Woman X Married	---	---	-.283 (.211)
	R2=.029, n=811	R2=.028, n=811	R2=.029, n=811

Source: Candidate Emergence Study, 1998
Dependent variable: "Please indicate how the following factors would influence your interest in running for the U.S. House. Please answer this question even if you have no interest in running for the U.S. House…loss of personal and family privacy." Response choices: strongly discourage (1), discourage (2), somewhat discourage (3), makes no difference (4), not sure (dropped from analysis).
Note: Gender is coded as 0=man, 1=woman; age is coded as high

Political Ambition

Respondents were asked to rate "the attraction to you personally for a political career" in a series of political offices, including the U.S. House of Representatives. Answer choices ranged from extremely low to extremely high on a seven-point scale. The modal value for this variable is 6, meaning 23.6% of the sample indicated they were highly attracted to a career in the U.S. House of Representatives but the mean is 4.08 which indicates the average respondent answered "toss-up" to this question. Women (M=3.51) are much less likely than to be attracted to the House compared to men (M=4.25) ($p<.000$). Unmarried state legislators (M=4.39) are slightly more likely than married state legislators (4.01) to be attracted to the House ($p<.10$) while legislators with children at home (M=4.56) are much more attracted than those without children at home (M=3.75) ($p<.001$).

As noted previously, Fulton and her colleagues (2006) conceptualize the gender dynamics of political ambition in innovative ways. First, unlike most models of political ambition, Fulton et al. (2006) consider how *personal* costs might factor into the decision-making calculus of potential candidates for Congress. They include a variable for having dependent children at home and also consider how this variable might operate differently for men and women. They also consider several other gender interactions. I build on the Fulton et al. (2006) study by exactly replicating their models (and using the same dataset) but adding other personal costs and interaction variables that I theorize as relevant to political ambition. More specifically, I add how the perceived impact of separation from family and friends might deter political ambition. Given the primacy of family to the lives of women, as well as the social norms of intensive mothering, I hypothesize that mothers will be more strongly deterred by this variable than fathers. I also add additional gender interactions to the model including how party, marital status, and having dependent children at home may affect women and men's political ambition differently. My own innovations significantly add to the models of Fulton et al. (2006) by considering different ways that private costs and gender differences contribute to political ambition.

Model 1 (Table 3.16) replicates Fulton et al.'s model of attraction to the U.S. House of Representatives, but also includes the separation from family and friends variable.[39] I find that this variable does indeed contribute to explaining political ambition, as respondents who find separation to be less discouraging are more politically ambitious compared to respondents who indicate separation would more strongly discourage them from running. As in other studies of political ambition, including Fulton et al., perceived benefits (e.g. chances of winning) and

[39] Fulton et al. (2006) use an ordered probit model while mine uses OLS. I make this revision because I theorize political ambition (here operationalized as attraction to a career in Congress) as linear even though the actual variable is ordinal. I also ran the model as an ordered probit and found that the main results do not change.

perceived costs (e.g. difficulty of winning) contribute to explaining state legislators' attraction to a career in the U.S. House of Representatives. Gender is also a significant independent variable and the sign is negative which indicates women are less politically ambitious than men. Age also contributes to the explanation with older state legislators being far less likely than younger state legislators to be attracted to the House. Surprisingly, marital status and the presence of children in the household do not significantly relate to state legislators' political ambition. Thus, the most interesting results for the purposes of the present study so far are that gender and separation from family and friends are indeed important pieces of the puzzle in explaining political ambition.

The second model builds on the first in that it adds interaction effects that might explain state legislators' attraction to the House. I interact gender with separation from family and friends, party, marital status, and presence of children in the household. Contrary to my hypothesis, men and women are not affected differently by the separation from friends and family variable, as the interaction is not significant. Further, the gender interactions with party and marital status are also insignificant, results that again run against expectations. Gender does interact with having children at home, however, and this result was expected. That is, while having children at home decreases political ambition for women, it *increases* ambition for men. I interpret this result in the same way that Fulton et al. (2006) do:

> Children tend to enhance parents' social networks (e.g., PTA, little league, etc.) and provides them greater visibility in the community. Nevertheless, while such community ties might foster men's congressional ambitions, the child-care responsibilities that women often disproportionately bear at home likely mitigate the positive influence of social networks on women's ambitions for Congress (241).

Interestingly but not surprisingly, gender is not significant in the second model, which suggests that much of the original difference in ambition between men and women might in fact be accounted for in the interaction effect of gender x presence of children.

Table 3.16
Congressional Ambition

		Model 1	Model 2
Constant		1.030	.939
		(.980)	(.992)
Long-term Electoral Prospects	Chances of Winning, Future	.164***	.165***
		(.028)	(.028)
Attitudes	Personal Motivations	.276***	.276***
		(.075)	(.075)
Assessments of Institution	Relative Effectiveness and Prestige of House	.110*	.097*
		(.049)	(.049)
Political Costs	Political Costs	.177	.184
		(.160)	(.160)
Career Opportunity Costs	Difficulty of Winning State Legislative Seat	.104*	.107*
		(.050)	(.050)
	Term-Limited	.211	.190
		(.172)	(.172)
	Value of State Legislative Seat	.079	.091
		(.100)	(.100)
Personal Costs	Married	.251	.516
		(.242)	(.695)
	Children in Household	.202	1.320*
		(.178)	(.536)
	Separation from family and friends	.252**	.082
		(.090)	(.262)
Recruitment	Recruitment	.254***	.252***
		(.055)	(.055)
Gender	Female	-.493**	-.319
		(.207)	(.817)
	Seniority	-.022	-.026
		(.052)	(.052)
Controls	Age	-.357***	.359***
		(.081)	(.083)
	State Legislative Professionalism	-.037	-.048
		(.058)	(.058)
	Education	.140	.120
		(.092)	(.092)
	Income	-.022	-.019
		(.056)	(.056)
	White	-.253	-.168
		(.337)	(.338)
	Republican	-.029	-.015
		(.030)	(.093)
Interactions	Separation from family and friends X Gender		.138
			(.503)
	Party X Gender		-.011
			(.076)

Married X Gender		-.215 (.499)
Children in Household X Gender		-.963* (.417)
R2	.370	.375
Total N	492	492

Dependent variable: "In general, how would you rate each of the institutions listed below…the attraction to you personally for a career in the U.S. House of Representatives." Answer choices: 1=extremely low, 2=low, 3=not so low, 4=toss-up, 5=not so high, 6=high, 7=extremely high

The evidence above indicates a few things: one, separation from family and friends (a personal cost) is an important determinant of political ambition for both women and men yet this "cost" is rarely considered in the literature. Scholars would do well to consider how private commitments indeed affect public choices. Secondly, gender has an important, independent effect on congressional ambition with women being less politically ambitious than men overall, *but only when the interactive effect of gender with children in the household is unaccounted for*. This finding indicates that much of the gender disparity in political ambition can be explained by parental status. The difference is this—while the presence of minor children is an asset for men in terms of political ambition, it is a constraint for women. Parental status carries different meanings and consequences for men and women when it comes to their political ambitions, in ways that are almost completely opposite. Much of this can be attributed to simple sexual divisions of labor—while children to women mean more work and responsibilities, children to men mean more opportunities for networking and establishing a presence in their community.

Summary of Key Findings

Variable	CAWP Data	CES Data
Family composition	Women are less likely than men to have minor children and women have older children than men; these differences transcend party with the exception that while Democratic women have older children than their male counterparts, Republican men and women do not differ in average age of their youngest child.	Women are less likely than men to have minor children and three times less likely to have very young children (under age 6).
Private considerations	*Children being old enough to feel comfortable:* While this factor is considerably important to both men and women, women are much more likely to ascribe importance to this variable compared to their male counterparts. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to rate this consideration as important and Republican women are the most constrained by this factor. *Approval of spouse:* This factor is important to both men and women and no significant gender differences emerge. Republicans care more about the approval of their spouse than Democrats.	*Separation from family and friends:* Almost half of both men and women find this consideration discouraging to a congressional bid and no gender differences emerge. Legislators with children at home, women, and married legislators find this consideration more discouraging compared to their counterparts. *Loss of privacy:* This consideration is predicted mostly by marital status and age, with married people and younger people being more discouraged from running for Congress because of privacy loss. Gender and children at home are less significant to this consideration.
Political Ambition	No differences by gender or gender x parental status emerge, though parents of minor children are much more likely to have ambitions for other offices.	Having children at home lowers women's political ambition but increases men. Separation from friends and family predicts lower political ambition in both men and women. Marital status is insignificant.

Final Thoughts: Gender, Parenthood, and Political Ambition

The story for how gender and parenthood figure into potential candidates' calculations for a congressional bid is complex. Simply put, the effects of gender and parental status on political ambition are complicated and contingent. Moreover, the effects of these variables cannot be fully understood without considering their indirect effects on political ambition, through important intervening variables like private considerations (e.g. influence of separation from family and friends). My results suggest that political ambition scholars who neglect to consider how gender, parenthood, and private considerations affect political ambition are missing a key part of the story. Who you and your family are (gender, parental status) and what you think about certain private/family considerations strongly influence decisions surrounding political candidacy for Congress.

In sum, gender affects political ambition, at least in part, through a path of personal decisions, considerations and attitudes: political men and women have different family compositions (women are far less likely to have minor children and are more likely to have older children), they place more or less importance on private considerations that affect political ambition (women care more about the age of their children), and are affected differently by the presence of minor children (women with children at home are less politically ambitious while men with minor children are more ambitious). These differences add up to the general conclusion that in part, because of different family structures and attitudes toward family, women are less politically ambitious than men. To be sure, other variables like marital status and party, also matter and are an important part of the story. Going forward, future research might tease apart the indirect and direct effects of marital status on political ambition, and how this status affects men and women differently.

Even though motherhood may function as a constraint on women's political ambition, some mothers overcome these barriers and emerge as candidates for Congress and other offices. The next chapter will study the campaigns of these women (and male counterparts) contenders for Congress to investigate how gender and parental status function in campaign strategy.

CHAPTER 4: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

As noted previously, Blanche Lincoln's first campaign for the U.S. Senate was forced to confront voter skepticism surrounding her ability to combine motherhood and politics. The mother of two-year old twins, Lincoln ran commercials that featured her husband caring for her sons, apparently to assure voters that her children would be well taken care of while she served in office. Lincoln won her first bid for Senate in 1998, and went on to win another term in 2004 before she was defeated in 2010 by John Boozman (R-AR). Over the course of Lincoln's Senate career and during her 2010 campaign, the way in which Lincoln presented her motherhood status and experience changed. No longer having to "prove" her ability to successfully combine motherhood and politics, Lincoln played up her family in 2010. In addition to displaying pictures of her children prominently on her campaign website (including the front page), Lincoln also referenced her children and her motherhood experience, both in the biography and issue sections of her website. After noting she is "the mother of 14-year-old twin boys, Reece and Bennett," Lincoln indicates how raising her children has helped her fight partisan polarization in the U.S. Senate: " Blanche has famously remarked to her Senate colleagues during moments of partisan impasse that the same values taught to her sons are often applicable in the U.S. Senate: trust, accountability and cooperation." Lincoln also uses her motherhood experience to support her positions and credibility on a number of issues. Consider Lincoln's statement in the healthcare issue stance:

> As a mom, Blanche Lincoln knows how legislation directly affects children and their families. That's why she's fighting to end childhood hunger, vastly improve child nutrition, expand access to health care for children and expectant mothers and raise awareness on the plight of missing and exploited children.

Lincoln's shift in self-presentation from a focus on assuring voters of her ability to be both a mother and a politician to being able to redeploy motherhood as a political asset

suggests a number of things about the "new" place of mother politicians. For one, Lincoln's shift in campaign strategy may reflect a growing acceptance of mothers in politics as well as a decrease in the share of the electorate skeptical of women's ability to juggle both roles. The fact that Lincoln's children were older and more independent at the time of her 2010 bid may also help explain the shift in strategy, as a mother of teenagers may be less worrisome for voters than a mother of toddlers. Finally, Lincoln's incumbent status may also influence the change in her self-presentation, as incumbents who have already "proved" their ability to combine politics and family may be freer to deploy their parenthood as assets.

Whatever the reasons behind Lincoln's shift in campaign strategy, her decision to highlight her children and motherhood experience reflects a growing trend of women abandoning conventional wisdom to downplay their domestic roles in favor of presenting motherhood as a credential. In 2008, Sarah Palin ran for Vice President with five children at home, including one with Down syndrome. While Palin is certainly not the first mother candidate, her decision to run *as* a mother and showcase her family on the campaign trail for the second highest office in the country represents a different strategy from many women politicians who came before her.[40] And while Hillary Clinton generally emphasized her "toughness" and political experience during her 2008 presidential bid (Lawrence and Rose 2010), images of Clinton arm in arm with her daughter were replete in media coverage of her campaign. She was also careful to point out that she was a "mom first and a candidate second."[41]

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[40] Campaign strategy groups often advised women candidates to downplay their domestic qualities while emphasizing their "male" qualities like toughness and strength. In fact, Emily's List, an organization that helps to elect Democratic women, warned in an internal memo that women must "fight throughout their campaigns to establish their qualifications, power, toughness and capacity to win" (Robin Toner, "Women Feeling Freer to Suggest 'Vote for Mom,'" *New York Times*, 29 January, 2007).

[41] Beth Fouhy, "Clinton says she can beat McCain," *Boston Globe* 9 February, 2008.

Observers of the 2010 elections also witnessed an increasing number of women candidates presenting their motherhood experience and family as assets or credentials. Sarah Palin's "Mama Grizzly" cadre of conservative women candidates used their motherhood status not only as a justification for entering the political world (Mama Grizzlies have to protect their cubs from the big, bad government), but also as a political asset that sets them apart from other, non-mother candidates. For example, Mary Fallin's attempt to use her opponent's childless status to her own advantage reflected a growing number of women who seem to be turning conventional wisdom on its head—motherhood may not only function as a constraint, but can be redeployed as an asset.

While the construction of fatherhood may have changed over time, its function in the political sphere has not. In contrast to women, fatherhood has seemed to have always functioned as an asset for men. Men, in contrast to women, may be unencumbered by the perception that combining parenthood with politics is impossible and/or undesirable. Consider the following excerpt from Mark Schaeur's (D-MI) biography section, which appears among a barrage of family photos:

> When he's not working on one of these challenges, Mark enjoys spending time with his wife, Christine, his three stepchildren, and his brand new grandson. You'll also find that he rarely misses his morning jog with his two dogs, Sheila and Shep. Family is important to Mark, and that is another reason he will always work in Congress to make sure that those in south central Michigan have someone standing up for them.

Though subtle, Schaeur's remarks imply that while family is important, his wife, children, and grandson do not come first. It is only *after* Schaeur is finished working on the "challenges" facing Michigan that he will enjoy some time with his family. The idea of a mother candidate using such language is almost impossible to imagine, as women are constrained in ways that force them to assuage voters' fears that mother politicians are neglecting their children or are "bad" mothers.

The last chapter found evidence that when it comes to political ambition, parenthood is a constraint for women but an asset for men. However, many mothers do overcome the constraints associated with parenthood and run for elective office. This chapter analyzes the campaigns and self-presentations of these women in comparison to their male counterparts and also childless candidates. That is, this chapter examines another facet of family life in politics—how men and women candidates negotiate the *presentation* of their family to voters in their campaigns. Given the proliferation of political mothers in recent years, to what extent does motherhood function as a constraint? Is it the case that women can now present their families as assets and are as free as men to showcase their families? More specifically, I will compare campaign websites of men and women candidates running in competitive Congressional races (House and Senate) in 2008 and 2010 to investigate differences in the use of children and other family members in campaigns.

Despite the recent proliferation of political mothers and their attempts to redeploy motherhood as an asset, I predict that the conventional wisdom still holds in most circumstances: while a family is most often an asset for male candidates, it is a liability for women, and this idea should influence candidates' self-presentations. Although I cannot *directly* measure how parental status is an asset or liability in self-presentation, I can compare men and women's self-presentation and draw an *interpretation* about what potential differences say about the function of parenthood for men and women candidates. Also, it may be the case that women are not always penalized for having a family, and not all men are immune from certain stereotypes associated with fatherhood. In fact, in some contexts women may be able to successfully redeploy motherhood as an asset. But deployment of this strategy may be contingent on several contextual variables, including the ages of their children (minor or adult children), who they are running against (opponent gender), incumbent status, and their party

identification. Thus, while mother candidates may generally de-emphasize their roles as mothers, there may be times and settings in which some women can present their parental status as an asset.

Hypotheses

Based on literature and theory presented in Chapter 2, I hypothesize that overall, mothers will be less likely than fathers to use their children in their campaigns. One reason why this might be the case is because children can "feminize" candidates in such a way that women wish to avoid since evidence suggests the ideal political leader, especially for higher offices, possesses masculine traits and is adept at "masculine" issues (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Lawless 2004; Rosenwasser and Seale). Because motherhood and its attendant roles represent feminine traits and skills (Guendozi 2006; Hird and Abshoff 2000; Kobrynowicz and Biernat 1997; Ridgeway and Correll 2004), women may de-emphasize this part of their identity as an overall strategy to appear more masculine to voters. Women may want to show voters that they are more than wives and mothers (Bystrom et al. 2004; Bystrom 2009) and also assuage voters' fears that they do not have time to balance both roles. Further, mothers may wish to avoid perceptions of role violations and the scrutiny of voters who may believe that mothers *should not* run for politics.

To be sure, mothers may accrue benefits from presenting their children and/or motherhood experience, and indeed this strategy seemed to grow in popularity in the 2010 elections. In fact, some scholars suggest that although women candidates in politics must appear masculine, they also have to assure voters that they are "real" women and are feminine as well (Carroll 1994; Dolan 2008; Jamieson 1995). Empirical research that investigates which strategies women actually adopt usually find that women present themselves in order to conform to the double bind—they present *both* their masculine and feminine attributes and issues in order to walk the fine line between being perceived as too masculine or too feminine

(Bystrom et al. 2004; Bystrom 2009; Dolan 2005; Kahn 1993). Indeed, voters don't want a woman who is "too much" like a man, but they also don't want a woman politician who is too soft and "too much" of a typical woman. Additionally, due to negative stereotypes associated with childlessness, mother candidates must assure voters that they have the traditional nuclear family that is normative in U.S. society. Family also operates as a signal that the candidate is not "deviant" or embodies any of the negative stereotypes associated with childless candidates (Gillepsie 2000). Thus, it may not be that mothers will completely hide their parental status, but rather that they will not *emphasize* motherhood as an asset.

Fathers, on the other hand, can really only gain by presenting fatherhood as an asset and additional credential, and thus should be more likely than women to showcase their children. Father candidates may emphasize their family life to gain additional credentials—they are "normal," heterosexual men who have adhered to social norms of marrying and reproducing (Hird and Abshoff 2000; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). To a greater degree, women are subject to the same social norm restriction, but women are also restricted by the norm of intensive mothering and may not want to remind voters of their status as mothers and wives. That is, women are caught in a double bind in ways that men are not.

However, highlighting their family may be a way that men negotiate their gender, which can be especially salient depending on contextual factors like the electoral climate, party, and their opponent. There may be cases in which voters may desire less masculinity and more femininity in a leader (Dolan 1998; Witt, Paget, and Mathews 1995), and father candidates might present their children as a way of softening their image and appeal to voters who may be adverse to too much masculinity in a political leader. They may be especially likely to do this when they are running against a woman, an opponent who may already be advantaged on feminine traits and issues by virtue of her gender and/or parental status. A study of campaign

consultants' perceptions confirms this idea—Dittmar (2010) found that consultants believe picturing men candidates with their families is effective because it "humanizes" and softens their images. Women, on the other hand, are already perceived as maternal and nurturing, while men have to actively construct these images (Dittmar 2010). That is, presenting fatherhood as an asset may be a strategy men use to associate themselves with feminine traits that voters value.

H1: On average, father candidates should be more likely than mother candidates to emphasize their children on their campaign websites.

I also hypothesize that mothers of younger children should be even less likely than mothers of older children to emphasize their families. Mothers with dependent children are subject to the time balance dilemma and may also face scrutiny of their decision to run with children at home. Mothers of adult children, however, are basically free from the time constraints involved in raising children. However, mothers of older children may be less likely than fathers to play up the motherhood role since doing so may increase perceptions of femininity. That is, deploying motherhood as an asset runs the risk of appearing too feminine and less masculine than what is normally required in a political leader, regardless of the ages of candidates' children.

H2: Mothers of older children are more likely than mothers of younger children to emphasize their children on their campaign websites.

I hypothesize that because of negative stereotypes associated with childlessness (Cameron 1997; Gillepsie 2000; Magarick and Brown 1981; May 1995) as well as candidates' need to be perceived as relatable to voters, men and women childless candidates should be more likely than parent candidates to use other family members in their campaigns as a "compensatory" strategy.

H3: Childless candidates are more likely than parent candidates to use other family members (not children) in their campaign websites.

Finally, I expect that variables other than gender and age of children should influence the extent to which candidates include their families in their campaigns. Republicans overall should be more likely to emphasize their families because of the value Republicans place on the traditional nuclear family (Freeman 1993). However, Republican mothers may be constrained by the perception that mothers should spend their time raising their children, not serving in political office (which is a role violation), and thus may be less likely to showcase their families.

H4: While Republican candidates should be more likely than Democratic candidates to emphasize their families to voters in their campaign websites, an interaction effect may occur with gender and party as Republican mothers may be less likely to do so.

Additionally, I include opponent gender and candidate type (incumbent, challenger/open seat) as independent variables that may influence a candidate's tendency to include their families in their campaigns. I expect incumbents to be less constrained and freer to showcase their families to voters, as voters have already "accepted" their family roles. Men may be more likely to showcase their family when they run against women, in order to appear softer or embody traits that his opponent "naturally" has by virtue of being a woman.

H5: Incumbents and candidates running against women should be more likely to include their families on their campaign websites.

Candidate Websites and Self-Presentation of Candidates for Congress

To investigate how parenthood shapes campaign strategy of men and women candidates, I examine how candidates present themselves to voters. Students of candidate self-presentation begin their work with the premise that campaign strategy matters since media such as campaign advertisements and websites provide important opportunities for candidates

to define themselves and construct an image that will maximize electoral success (Herrnoson 2000; Shea and Burton 2010; Sweeney 1995). For women, self-definition is especially important since women candidates are prone to media bias (Kahn 1996). Both women and men confront gender stereotypes and must make a strategic choice to either conform to gender stereotypes or attempt to challenge them. As Kim Kahn (1993) puts it: "Candidates often have a choice: they may adopt strategies that exploit voters' stereotypes about male and female candidates, or they may try to dispel stereotypes by acting in ways inconsistent with their traditional strengths" (483). Building on this logic, I examine campaign websites of men and women congressional candidates in order to discover differences in the use of family.

Campaign websites are appropriate media to examine candidate self-presentation because virtually every candidate who runs under a major party label for Congress has a website (Bimber and Davis 2003; Druckman et al. 2009). As mentioned above, candidates are unconstrained in their ability to define their images on their websites. Further, campaign websites are arguably "representative" of the campaign in the aggregate. That is, the images candidates project on their websites are reflective of the messages conveyed through other communication media. A recent study tested the validity of this claim and provided evidence that the messages conveyed on websites indeed mirrors the messages conveyed elsewhere (Druckman et al. 2009). Druckman and his colleagues contend that data on campaigns should ideally be "unmediated (i.e. directly from the campaign), complete (i.e. covering a full range of rhetorical strategies), and representative of the population of campaigns" (Druckman et al. 2009, 345) and submit that websites meet these criteria.

However, using candidate websites to examine self-presentation and strategy is not without limitations. For one, the internet in general and certainly campaign websites are far from the primary way voters learn about candidates. Even in highly visible electoral contests like

the presidency, voters are much more likely to learn about the campaign on television. A recent Pew Research study (2012) found that thus far in the 2012 presidential primary elections, 72% of registered voters have seen a commercial about the campaign versus 15% who have visited a presidential candidate's campaign website. Further, those who do visit campaign websites tend to be unrepresentative of the general voting population. Druckman et al. (2009) found in a survey of website designers that those who create campaign websites tend to believe that "highly engaged" voters tend to visit more often than the primary target of campaign websites, "voters in general" and "undecided voters." Other studies that have tracked demographics of campaign website viewers find that voters who already support the candidate tend to visit their website compared to undecided voters (Bimber and Davis 2003). This limitation—that only a small percentage of voters view campaign websites and that those who do already support the candidate—has implications for this project. I am testing how campaign strategy may differ depending on the candidate's gender, parental status, and party under the assumption that voters pay attention to these candidate characteristics and are affected by the images candidates present. But if very few voters even see these messages and images as presented on candidates' websites, they certainly cannot impact voters' impressions of candidates. However, based on the studies discussed above that find campaign websites are actually representative of other campaign messages, I do not consider this limitation a serious problem.

Further, it is possible that candidates alter their strategy of self-presentation depending on their audience. If the voters who visit candidate campaign websites already support the candidate and comprise the candidate's "base," then how might this audience influence the campaign's strategic choices when it comes to self-presentation of family? One idea is that the "cost" of incorporating children and motherhood experience into women's campaigns is lower, meaning that women candidates may be less constrained and freer to adopt strategies that

highlight their children and family experiences, since they already have the support of website visitors. If this is the case, then any gender differences that *do* emerge are even more telling and significant, since websites might be the medium where there is more gender "equality" in the types of family self-presentation strategies that women can adopt.

Although this project as a whole is also concerned with how gender and parenthood function in the political candidacies of Governors, small sample sizes make it difficult to include gubernatorial contests in this analysis. In 2008, only four women ran as candidates for Governor and in 2010, 12 women did. Women are generally foreign to the office of Governor--currently only six women serve as state executives and 34 women have ever served as Governor in 26 states (CAWP 2011). Thus, it is more appropriate for the purposes of this project to examine women contenders for Congress, especially because women are much more likely to run for this office than Governor.

Examining Campaign Strategy of Candidates for Congress

The sample for this analysis includes all congressional contenders (House and Senate) in the 2008 and 2010 elections whose campaigns were considered competitive, as defined by *The Cook Political Report*. In these years, 162 total races (Senate: 28, House: 135) were considered competitive, for a total of 324 campaigns. The websites were accessed through an online archive compiled by James Druckman and colleagues, the Congressional Campaign Website Archive. I also collected data for the following variables: parental status, party identification, district and state characteristics, candidate type (incumbent/challenger/open seat), and opponent gender.

Unfortunately, the Congressional Campaign Website Archive does not contain the universe of candidate websites because many websites use a type of technology that prevents outsider users from archiving the website. In some cases certain pages of the website were

archived but not the full site. This was especially a problem for 2008 since almost all candidate websites from 2008 do not exist on the live web; thus, if the site was not archived, there is no way of viewing the website. For 2010, many of the candidates' websites that could not be archived still existed on the live web, and thus could be viewed. In total, about 25% of the data is coded as missing. Because there is no reason to believe that candidates who had archivable websites differed in a systematic way from candidates who did not, the substance of the results should not be affected by missing data. The missing data do, however, reduce the sample size, making certain statistical tests (e.g. regressions) impossible to do in some cases. This is especially the case for the Senate, in which missing data reduce the original sample size of 56 to approximately 37. Thus, the focus of the analysis is on the House candidates, although I do include results from the Senate when appropriate.

Coding and Dependent Variables

The coding scheme relies on research from the gender stereotypes and candidate self-presentation literatures. To ensure the coding scheme is accurate and comprehensive, I performed an initial check that theory and past literature do, in fact, predict how candidates use their families in their campaign strategies (Bystrom et al. 2004; Kahn 1996). To ensure I did not leave any coding categories out, I randomly selected 10% of all websites and checked to make sure my coding scheme accurately reflected the range of strategies candidates might employ to present their family and family experience to voters. While candidates' websites often include multiple sections such as a media/press page and a "get involved" tab to recruit campaign volunteers, I focused my analysis on the website's front page, biography section, and issue section. These sections are where I expected family mentions to be located. I also chose to exclude other sections because of missing data, as sections with videos and other multimedia often could not be archived. I coded for not only the quantity of family mentions and pictures,

but also *how* candidates use their children and other family members in campaigns (detailed coding in Appendix C).

I then developed an overall measure of candidates' use of children in their campaigns by summing the scores from each measure that includes the use of children.[42] I also developed an overall variable of candidates' use of other family members by summing measures that include other family members. The inter-coder reliability score for these data is 90.3%.[43]

Unlike past self-presentation studies in which parental status is not controlled for (Bystrom et al. 2004; Dolan 2005), I collect data on candidates' parental status, including the age of their children.[44] While for some candidates, the specific ages of their children can be easily ascertained, in many cases it is difficult to find their ages. To deal with this problem I made age of children a dichotomous variable to distinguish minor children (age 17 or under) and grown children.

Gender, Parental Status, and Campaign Strategy

Sample Characteristics

Table 4.1 displays relevant demographic variables of congressional contenders for the House and Senate in 2008 and 2010. I combine both years for the Senate analysis because of

[42] In creating the children overall measure, I excluded item 4, 9, and 10, since these strategies are not available to all parents in the sample. Obviously, only parents of adult children can mention they are "grown" or adult and it is reasonable to assume that parents of adult children are much more likely to mention their children's accomplishments. Active parenting is also excluded since this strategy seemed to be concentrated among parents of young children, who, for example, coach their children's sports teams, etc. Thus, the overall score measures strategies that are available to all parents.

[43] A fourth-year undergraduate political science major was trained and coded 10% of the sample. The undergraduate was told the project was about candidate self-presentation.

[44] Age of children was primarily determined from the candidates' campaign websites where most candidates either specifically noted their children's ages or described them in age-related term (e.g. "grown children"). When the candidate did not mention anything about the ages of their children, I turned to family pictures on the website as well as media articles about the candidate. In many cases, it was easy to determine from pictures if the children were under the age of 18 or adult. In cases of uncertainty, I searched for media articles and in most cases could find information on children's ages. In the few instances I could not reliably determine the children's ages, I coded this data as missing. In the 2008 and 2010 House races, 15 observations for age of children (6.1%) were coded as missing; in the Senate races, 4 observations were missing (8.3%). These candidates were excluded from the analysis.

low sample sizes in each year and also because the candidates who ran in 2008 were different candidates than in 2010.[45] The same problem of low sample size also prevents me from conducting regression analyses for the Senate, though I do show simple difference of means tests in some cases. Thus, because the data for the Senate is limited, most of the results focus on the House of Representatives. For the House, I analyze each year separately since almost all of the contenders who won election in 2008 ran again in 2010, which violates the assumption of independence for statistical analyses.

In the Senate, about 24% of competitive candidates were women, 87% of candidates have children, and of candidates with children, 43.8% have children living at home. In 2008 House races, women made up 19.2% of competitive candidates but dropped to only 12.6% of competitive contenders in 2010. Almost all competitive candidates in 2008 had children (92.3%) while 85.1% did in 2010. 48.3% and 53.5% of parent candidates in 2008 and 2010 respectively had children living at home.

Table 4.1: Sample Distribution of Competitive Congressional Contenders

Gender	**Senate**	**House 2008**	**House 2010**
Men	76.4% (42)	80.8% (84)	87.4% (152)
Women	23.6% (13)	19.2% (20)	12.6% (22)
Parental Status			
Has children	87.3% (48)	92.3% (96)	85.1% (148)
Childless	12.7% (7)	7.7% (8)	14.9% (26)
Age of children			
At home	43.8% (21)	48.3% (42)	53.5%
Adult	53.3% (24)	51.7% (45)	46.5%

Note: All statistics represent competitive candidates in Senate and House races. There was no missing data for gender and parental status. For age of children, less than 10% of data is missing.

There are also gender differences among candidates. Although the low sample sizes in the Senate races make reaching statistical significance difficult, women are more likely than men to be childless (23.1% vs. 10.5%), to have adult children (60% vs. 40%) and be Democrats (60%

[45] Because of 6-year term lengths in the Senate, every candidate who ran in 2008 could not run again in 2010, making the candidate pools for each election year completely distinct.

vs. 40%), which is no surprise given the stark differences in family structure and composition found in prior literature and also in the previous chapter of this dissertation. On the House side, women comprise 19.2% of congressional contenders in 2008 and 12.6% in 2010. These results make sense in light of the findings from the political ambition analysis in Chapter 3—women are less likely to emerge as candidates for Congress compared to men, and the greater weight they put on private considerations as well as the presence of minor children partially explain why. Women contenders for the House are significantly more likely to be Democrats in both 2008 and 2010, are actually more likely than men to *have* children in 2008, but more likely to be childless in 2010. Mother candidates for the House are significantly more likely than father candidates to have adult children (72.2% vs. 27.8%) in 2008 but are equally likely to have younger children in 2010.

Table 4.2: Gender Differences in Candidates' Parental Status, Age of Children, and Party

	Senate 2008-2010		**House 2008**		**House 2010**	
	Women	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**
Has children	76.9%(10)	90.5%(38)	95.9% (19)+	91.7% (77)	72.7% (16)	86.8% (132)
Childless	23.1%(3)	10.5% (4)	5.0% (1)	8.4% (7)	27.3% (6)+	13.2% (20)
Minor children	40.0%(4)	50.0%(17)	27.8% (5)	53.6% (37)	50.0% (8)	54.0% (68)
Adult children	60.0%(6)	50.0%(17)	72.2% (13)*	46.4% (32)	50.0% (8)	46.0% (58)
Democrat	60.0%(6)	50.0%(19)	80.0% (16)**	44.0% (37)	72.7% (16)*	46.7% (71)
Republican	40.0%(4)	50.0%(19)	20.0% (4)	56.0% (47)	27.3% (6)	53.3% (81)

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001
Note: All statistics represent competitive candidates in Senate and House races. There was no missing data for gender and parental status. For age of children, less than 10% of data is missing.

Use of children

Table 4.3 shows gender differences in parent candidates' different ways of using their children in their Senate campaigns. Although no strategy reaches statistical significance, fewer

women than men picture their children on the front page and in the biography sections. They are also more likely to mention engaging in activities with their children. As an example, Bob Schaffer, a Republican candidate from Colorado who ran in 2008, uses the "active parenting" strategy in his biography section: "Bob spends his free time with Maureen and their children. When not at one of the kids' sporting events, the family enjoys skiing, snowboarding, backpacking, and biking in the Colorado Rockies and playing with their two dogs." The tendency for fathers to use this strategy more often than mothers suggests that fathers may want to seem more well-rounded and not simply the family breadwinner. They also may choose this strategy to seem actively involved in their children's lives and are not remote parents. Women, on the other hand, may not want to remind voters that they have children at all and certainly would not want to cause voters to question how much time she has to serve in office if she is busy doing outdoor activities with her children. Consistent with expectations, men seem to have more freedom to use their children in strategy since there is no concern about their ability to balance family and politics.

Table 4.3: Senate Parent Candidates' Use of Strategies for Presenting their Children

Strategy	Mothers	Fathers	N
Front page	20.0%	27.3%	43
Mentioned in bio	100%	100%	42
Ages stated	30.0%	21.9%	42
Pictured in bio	40.0%	58.1%	41
Occupations/accomplishments	22.2%	29.6%	36
Active Parenting	22.2%	35.7%	37
Motivation	12.5%	16.7%	38

Note: The number of cases (N) for each variable varies because of missing data. For example, more front pages of candidate websites were viewable compared to other pages.

Gender differences in use of children also emerge in both 2008 and 2010 House races, as Table 4.4 documents below. Mother candidates in 2008 were more likely than fathers to mention their children's occupations or accomplishments, which reflect a strategy intended to

show voters that their children are older, accomplished adults. Fathers were more likely than mothers to picture their children in their biography section in 2010, and in 2008, fathers are twice as likely as mothers to picture their children on the front page on their website, but this result does not reach significance. This finding is telling in that visual representations of children make the parental status of a candidate much more obvious than a simple text mention. Thus, this strategy is one that unquestionably highlights children in an overt way. Men's tendency to highlight their children in pictures is consistent with the hypothesis that men are still freer than women to adopt strategies that showcase their families and present their children as assets. Thus far, some evidence indicates that, consistent with my hypotheses fathers (compared to mothers) are more likely to present their children to voters on their campaign websites.

Table 4.4: House Parent Candidates' Use of Strategies for Presenting their Children

	2008			2010		
Strategy	**Fathers**	**Mothers**	**N**	**Fathers**	**Mothers**	**N**
Children on front page	32.7%	15.4%	62	25.4%	25%	138
Children mentioned in bio	96%	94.1%	67	95.1%	93.3%	137
Children's ages mentioned	16%	5.9%	67	13.9%	6.7%	137
Children pictured in bio	44.7%	33.3%	62	38.8%	13.3%*	136
Separate family section	7.7%	5.9%	69	4.1%	0%	137
Children's occupations/accomplishments	18%	29.4%*	67	16.4%	13.3%	147
Active parenting	18.4%	17.6%	66	12.3%	6.7%	137
Children as motivation for running	14.6%	6.3%	64	5.9%	0%	133

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Table 4.5 shows the means for candidates' combined scores for overall use of children. In the Senate, the mean for the entire sample is 2.43 which indicate that Senate candidates in 2008 and 2010 mention or picture their children an average of about 2.4 times throughout their campaign websites. Men are significantly more likely than women to include children overall on their campaign websites, while fathers (compared to mothers), parents of adult children (compared to parents of minor children), and Democrats (compared to Republicans) have

slightly higher overall scores but not significantly so. For House races in 2008, the sample mean is 2.31 but drops to 1.96 in 2010. No significant gender differences emerge in 2008 or 2010 although both men and fathers do have a higher average than women and mothers in 2008 and 2010. Parents of younger children are significantly more likely to include their children in 2008 and 2010, and while Democrats have a higher average in 2008, the reverse is true in 2010.

Table 4.5: Candidates' Overall Use of Children by Gender, Age of Children, and Party

Gender	**Senate**	**House 2008**	**House 2010**
Women	1.64+	2.22	1.43
Men	2.55	2.33	2.05
N	40	52	149
Parental Status			
Mothers	2.25	2.22	1.87
Fathers	2.85	2.61	2.40
N	34	47	124
Age of children			
At home	3.06	3.17	2.57
Adult	1.42	2.00*	2.11+
N	33	44	119
Party			
Democrats	3.08	2.84	2.23
Republicans	2.73	2.18	2.45
N	34	47	124

Note: Child overall score is coded so that the higher the number, the higher the number of discrete uses of children. For example, if the candidate mentioned their children in their biography, included a picture of them on the front page, and used their children in connection to an issue, the overall use of children score for that candidate=3.
+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

In Table 4.6, I present a Poisson regression for House races in 2008 and 2010 in order to control for other independent variables including opponent gender and type of candidate (incumbent or challenger/open seat candidate). Poisson regression is most appropriate because the dependent variable is a "count," in this case, of the number of discrete instances that a candidate uses his or her children on their website. Because of the relatively small sample size for 2008 (n=42), I must restrict my model to four predictors at most. For comparability across election years, I restrict the model to the same four predictors in 2010. Thus, the model is

under-specified and includes only gender, age of children, party identification, and candidate type as predictors of overall use of children. However, I am able to combine observations from 2008 and 2010 to increase the sample size while using robust standard errors and am therefore able to add more predictors, including important interaction effects.[46]

Table 4.6: Predicting Parent Candidates' Overall Use of Children for House Races (Poisson Regression)

	Model 1: 2008 House	Model 2: 2010 House	Model 3: 2008 and 2010 House	Model 4: 2008 and 2010 House	Model 5: 2008 and 2010 House
Predictor	B (S.E.)	B (S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)
Intercept	.498 (.306)	.549 (.224)	.966 (.110)	.962 (.109)	.969 (.107)
Gender	.350 (.306)	.236 (.201)	-.229 (.147)p=.12	-.239 (.152)p=.11	-.387** (.132)
Party ID	.320+ (.198)	-.088 (.170)	-.153 (.110)	-.163 (.113)	-.149 (.115)
Age of children	.300 (.207)	.188 (.130)	-.245* (.112)	-.244* (.112)	-.281* (.125)
Candidate type	-.447* (.207)	.088 (.172)	.209+ (.121)	.212+ (.121)	.212+ (.119)
Opponent gender			---	.063 (.160)	.060 (.163)
Gender*Age of children					.298 (.286)
	N=44 Likelihood ratio chi2=13.406	N=118; Likelihood ratio chi2=4.579	N=162; Wald chi2=11.04, R2=.02	N=162; Wald chi2=11.07, R2=.02	N=162; Wald chi2=14.46, R2=.02

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001
Note: Women, grown children, Republicans, challengers/open seat candidates, and opponent is a woman are coded as high (1).
For Models 3, 4, and 5 I clustered on candidate and used robust standard errors to avoid violating the assumption of independence since some of the same candidates who ran for the House in 2008 did so again in 2010.

[46] Using robust standard errors and clustering on the candidate allows me to combine both election years in a regression without violating the assumption of independent observations.

While no variables reach significance in 2010, party identification and type of race are both significant in 2008. The results indicate that, inconsistent with my expectations that Republicans and incumbents would be more likely to use their children in campaign strategy, Democrats and challengers/open seat candidates are more likely to include their children compared to Republicans and incumbents. Model 3 (2008 and 2010 combined), which uses the limited model specification, finds that parents of younger children and challengers and open seat candidates are more likely to use their children in their campaigns. The same is true for the fully specified model (4) that adds opponent gender (which is not significant). I also add an interaction term (gender*age of children) to see if men and women differ in their presentation depending on the age of their children but this term is not significant. However, with this specification gender becomes significant which indicates mothers are less likely than fathers to include multiple uses of their children in their self-presentation. The evidence now seems to indicate that contrary to expectations, parental status (measured as having younger vs. older children) is a stronger predictor of use of children than gender, and mothers of older children are no more likely than mothers of younger children to present their families on their campaign websites. Rather, parents of younger children—regardless of gender—are much more likely to present their children in their campaigns. Parents of younger children may believe their children will appeal to voters who will react positively to the candidate's family, perhaps because voters feel warmly towards young children or because the candidate seems more relatable. Also, voters may assume that candidates with adult children must be much older, and perhaps candidates with adult children wish to avoid drawing attention to their older ages. In fact, some studies have found that ageism can significantly affect voter evaluations of candidates in that voters strongly prefer younger candidates to older candidates, and that ageism actually may be a stronger bias than racism and sexism (Sigelman and Sigelman 1982).

Perhaps the combined measure of overall use of children obscures differences in use of children on certain parts of candidates' websites as well as differences in specific strategies. The overall measure combines text mentions of the children with pictures. Because pictures make candidates' parental status more salient and obvious, we might expect mothers to be more cautious in picturing their children, especially if the children are young. That is, while mother candidates may mention their children briefly in their biography or issues section, they may not be as free to showcase their children in pictures, especially on the front page which carries the first image website visitors would see. Table 4.7 shows that in the Senate, no significant differences emerge except for age of children, meaning that candidates with younger children are more likely to show pictures of their children compared to candidates with adult children. In 2008 and 2010 House races, the mean score for the number of times candidates pictured their children anywhere on the front page, biography, or issue sections is .85 and .75 respectively. Fathers in 2008 and candidates with children living at home in both 2008 and 2010 are both more likely to showcase their children in pictures, and in 2010 Republicans were slightly more likely than Democrats to do so (see Table 4.7). Table 4.8 shows that a limited Poisson regression[47] model using gender, age of children, party, and candidate type as predictors washes out the party effect but gender and age of children remain significant in 2008. In 2010, only age of children is significant. Looking at combined years, gender and age of children are again significant, thus indicating that fathers and parents of younger children are more likely to include pictures of their children on their websites. Adding opponent gender to the combined model does not add any explanatory power, and neither does the gender x age of children interaction in Model 5. Thus, the evidence indicates that consistent with expectations, fathers are more likely than mothers to picture their children, but the age of children does not interact

[47] Again, Poisson is the appropriate statistical method since the dependent variable is a count of the number of times a candidate pictures his or her children on their campaign website.

with gender as I expected, and opponent gender does not seem to influence candidates' self-presentation of family. Again, regardless of gender, parents of younger children are more likely than parents of older children to picture their children on their campaign websites.

Why are Democrats more likely to use children in their campaign strategy in 2008 while Republicans are more likely to do so in 2010? These results suggest that depending on the election year and context, it is possible for one party to emerge as the "owner" of the "family theme" in campaigns. While both election years saw "masculine" issues like the economy predominate, 2008 favored Democrats while 2010 favored Republicans. Perhaps including children and other family members is simply a way to appeal to voters who are dissatisfied with the party currently in power and portray their party as sympathetic to the American people. Children and other family members may be deployed to attack the opposing party and candidates, though it seems that more men deploy this strategy than women. Contrary to the popular Mama Grizzly rhetoric about the need for mothers to step in and "protect their cubs" from big government, no evidence indicates that Republican women were more likely to adopt this strategy, although the low number of Republican women in the sample may be to blame.

Table 4.7: Parent Candidates' Overall Use of Children's Pictures

Gender	**Senate**	**House 2008**	**House 2010**
Men	.767	.864	.586
Women	.667	.333	.238*
N	42	53	149
Parental Status			
Mothers	.89	.333	.333
Fathers	.85	.974+	.688
N	36	48	123
Age of children			
At home	1.12	1.40	.873
Adult	.588+	.300***	.429***
N	34	45	119
Party			
Democrats	1.00	.885	.532
Republicans	.773	.818	.758+
N	36	45	124

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Note: Overall use of children in pictures measure was created by summing the following variables: children pictured on front page, children pictured in biography, and children pictured in issues section. The higher the score, the higher number of discrete times the candidate pictured their children on their campaign websites.

Table 4.8: Predicting House Parent Candidates' Overall Use of Children in Pictures (Poisson Regression)

	Model 1: 2008 House	Model 2: 2010 House	Model 3: 2008 and 2010 House	Model 4: 2008 and 2010 House	Model 5: 2008 and 2010 House
Predictor	B (S.E.)	B (S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)	B (R.S.E.)
Intercept	-1.852 (.724)	-1.397 (.506)	-.046 (.163)	-.066 (.161)	-.072 (.159)
Gender	-1.071+ (.609)	-.693 (.464)	-.849** (.319)	-.912** (.305)	-.624* (.277)
Party ID	-.111 (.319)	.165 (.316)	-.115 (.196)	-.187 (.203)	-.213 (.203)
Age of children	-.111** (.319)	-.661** (.258)	-.892*** (.198)	-.888*** (.196)	-.811*** (.200)
Candidate type	.508 (.364)	-.067 (.325)	.290 (.203)	.307 (.198)	.307 (.200)
Opponent gender	---			.341 (.257)	.349 (.254)
Gender*Age of children					-1.33 (1.05) *p=.20*
	N=45; Likelihood chi 22.529	N=118; Likelihood chi 12.199	N=163; Wald 32.07, R2=.09	N=163; Wald 37.29, R2=.09	N=163; Wald=28.85, R2=.10

Note: Women, adult children, Republicans, challengers/open seat candidates, and opponent is a woman are coded as high (1). For Models 3, 4, and 5 I clustered on candidate and used robust standard errors to avoid violating the assumption of independence since some of the same candidates who ran for the House in 2008 did so again in 2010.
+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

In Tables 4.9 and 4.10, I predict candidates' children pictured on the front page as well as in the biography section. Logistic regression is the appropriate test since both dependent variables are dichotomous (candidates either picture their children on the front page or in the biography section or they do not). Across the board, in both 2008 and 2010 and the two election years combined, candidates with children at home were much more likely than candidates with adult children to picture their children on the front page of their campaign websites. This is also the case for including pictures of children in the biography sections, though the results are not as robust. Fathers are slightly more likely to picture their children in their biographies in 2010

and in Model 4, which combines the two election years. This result mirrors trends in the Senate, where 58.1% of fathers picture their children in their biographies compared to only 40% of mothers. Interacting gender with age of children does not add any explanatory power to the model and is insignificant in both 2008 and 2010. These results indicate that, consistent with Hypothesis 1, fathers are more likely to use their children in their self-presentation.[48] The finding that fathers are more likely to include pictures of their children is telling. First, it confirms previous findings that failed to control for parental status (Bystrom et al. 2004). Thus, even with parental status controlled, men are still freer than women candidates to represent their children with pictures in their campaigns. These results suggest that pictures of children have different meanings for men and women candidates' campaign strategies. For men, images of their children are assets and may evoke positive feelings and associations among voters and also soften the male candidate's image. For women, images of children may evoke concerns about time balance and may also make women candidates seem overly feminine. Women may also wish to avoid voter scrutiny of their very decision to run for office while raising children.

[48] I was unable to definitively test H2, which predicted mothers of older children would be more likely to showcase their children compared to mothers of young children. Because of the low number of mothers in the sample to begin with (24 total in the 2008 and 2010 House races), it is impossible to confidently perform statistical tests. However, I did examine the average use of children in pictures for mothers of young children compared to mothers of adult children in the 2008 and 2010 House races combined. For mothers of young children, the mean is .636 (N=11) and for mothers of adult children the mean is .077 (N=13). This difference is significant at the $p<.01$ level, but because of low sample sizes, I do not put much weight on this finding.

Table 4.9: Pictures of children on front page, House Parent Candidates

	Model 1:2008 House	**Model 2: 2008 House**	**Model 3: 2010 House**	**Model 4: 2010 House**	**Model 5: 2008 and 2010 House**	**Model 6: 2008 and 2010 House**
Predictor	**B (S.E.)**	**B (S.E.)**	**B (S.E.)**	**B (S.E.)**	**B (R.S.E.)**	**B (R.S.E.)**
Constant	-.598 (.752)	-.489 (.775)	-.481 (.430)	-.476 (.431)	-.482 (.372)	-.460 (.375)
Gender	-.638 (1.028)	-1.350 (1.268)	-.212 (.683)	-.365 (.808)	-.466 (.665)	-.711 (.644)
Age of children	-2.450** (.874)	-3.153** (1.180)	-1.844*** (.521)	-1.910*** (.558)	-1.96*** (.458)	-2.09*** (.487)
Party identification	.347 (.810)	.555 (.860)	-.685 (.569)	-.672 (.571)	-.497 (.400)	-.465 (.412)
Candidate type	1.017 (.755)	.925 (.781)	.537 (.576)	.540 (.575)	.670+ (.420)	.656 (.420)
Opponent gender	-.278 (1.051)	-.532 (1.064)	.847 (.596)	.865 (.598)	.617 (.549)	.609 (.555)
Gender*Age		2.391 (2.009)		.521 (1.431)		.766 (1.34)
	N=57; R2=.38	N=57; R2=.41	N=131; R2=.20	N=131	N=188; Wald chi2= 24.70, r2=.16	N=188; Wald chi2= 27.66, r2=.16

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Note: Women, adult children, Republicans, challengers/open seat candidates, and opponent is a woman are coded as high (1). For Models 3, 4, and 5, I clustered on candidate and used robust standard errors to avoid violating the assumption of independence since some of the same candidates who ran for the House in 2008 did so again in 2010.

Table 4.10: Pictures of children in biography, House Parent Candidates

	Model 1: 2008 House	**Model 2: 2008 House**	**Model 3: 2010 House**	**Model 4: 2008 and 2010 House**	**Model 5: 2008 and 2010 House**
Predictor	**B (S.E.)**	**B (S.E.)**	**B (S.E.)**	**B (R.S.E.)**	**B (R.S.E.)**
Constant	.619 (.644)	.548 (.664)	-.264 (.388)	-.109 (.316)	-.137 (.315)
Gender	-.592 (.804)	-.324 (1.045)	-1.424+ (.800)	-.846* (.439)	-.465 (.572)
Age of children	-1.446* (.610)	-1.289 (.714)+	-.672+ (.391)	-.943** (.327)	-.834* (.349)
Party identification	-.542 (.683)	-.581 (.685)	.459 (.533)	-.075 (.375)	-.117 (.377)
Candidate type	.314 (.624)	.361 (.634)	-.197 (.541)	.333 (.386)	.343 (.387)
Opponent gender	-.004 (.857)	.067 (.879)	.194 (.564)	.133 (.467)	.149 (.464)
Gender*Age		-.583 (1.429)			-.920 (.981)
	N=59; R2=.20	N=59; R2=.20	N=130; R2=.10	N=189,, Wald chi2=16.54, r2=.06	N=189; Wald chi2= 15.03, r2=.07

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Note: Women, adult children, Republicans, challengers/open seat candidates, and opponent is a woman are coded as high (1). For Models 3, 4, and 5, I clustered on candidate and used robust standard errors to avoid violating the assumption of independence since some of the same candidates who ran for the House in 2008 did so again in 2010.

Connecting parental status to issues

What kinds of candidates are more or less likely to connect their parental status to issues? That is, who uses their motherhood or fatherhood experience to lend credibility to one's competency or experience with certain issues? The overall means for this strategy are .52 and .48 for 2008 and 2010 respectively, which indicates that parent candidates do not use this strategy very often. However, difference of means tests (Table 4.11) reveal that in 2008, mothers and Democrats are significantly more likely to connect their parental status to issues, but no significant differences emerge in 2010. However, controlling for other factors, these

differences disappear (regressions not shown). A qualitative assessment of this strategy reveals that citing the parenthood experience is definitely a distinct strategy that candidates use to appear as "experts" on the issue or to indicate their commitment to the issue. Many candidates connected their concern for their children and the next generation to their position on economic issues. Consider the following quotes:

> As the father of three daughters, Baron is very concerned with issues affecting the next generation, such as our mounting federal budget deficit. Throughout his time in office, Baron has been a member of the Blue Dog Coalition – a group of conservative Democrats focusing primarily on reigning in federal spending. Hoosier families have to live within a budget, and Baron believes the federal government should have to as well (Baron Hill,R-IN9, 2008)

> It is my responsibility to pass on to my children a nation as solid and as improved as the country I inherited from my parents. When I look at my kids, Justin and Alexandra, I see the burden of the mistakes being made today weighing on their futures. The security of our economic future is not clear and becomes more in question every day. Jobs are being shipped overseas, access to health care is more difficult and more expensive. The deficit fueled by tax cuts and unrelenting government spending has created a true toddler tax of over $27,000 dollars for every new child born in this nation. We are failing to secure the future for our children (Eric Massa, D-NY29, 2008).

> Connecting parental status to the issue of education is another popular strategy:
> Our children's tomorrow is greatly shaped by how we support their education today. As a mother and a grandmother, I understand the importance of fighting to have access to the best education possible for our kids (Debbie Halvorson, D-IL11, 2010)

> The mother of two college-age daughters, Ann knows the roots of future success are found in a good education and has worked to improve the quality of education for all Arizona's youth through her service on the Education K-12 Committee (Ann Kirkpatrick,D-AZ1, 2008)

> Walt has four children, one granddaughter and one grandson, and they are the reasons education is one of his passions (Walt Minnick, D-ID1, 2008)

Table 4.11: Connecting Parental Status to Issues by Gender, Age of Children, and Party, for Senate and House Candidates

Gender	**Senate**	**House 2008**	**House 2010**
Men	.76	.31	.45
Women	.46	.82*	.43
N	46	71	160
Parental Status			
Fathers	.83	.35	.52
Mothers	.60	.88*	.53
N	40	64	135
Age of children			
At home	.84	.40	.48
Adult	.63	.61	.54
N	38	61	130
Party			
Democrats	.88	.71	.65
Republicans	.70	.21**	.40
N	40	64	135

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Interestingly, fathers and mothers tend to connect their parental statuses to different sets of issues. Among House candidates in 2008 and 2010, the issue candidates mention most often in association with their children is education, as 41.2% of candidates who use this strategy do so with the education issue. Other issues commonly mentioned in association with children include values (16.2%), abortion (16.2%), and the economy (14.7%) (See Appendix E). However, as Table 12 shows, mothers are more likely than men to connect their parenthood experience to education while fathers are more likely to do so with the abortion issue. In fact, not one mother among House 2008 and 2010 candidates use their motherhood experience to seem more competent or committed to the abortion issue compared with one in five men (see illustrations below). No significant gender differences emerge on any other issues.

> The single greatest influence on my outlook on life, and how I will represent the 1st Congressional District in Congress, stems from my marriage and the birth of my son, Noah. I am pro-family and pro-life (Randy Altschuler, R-NY29, 2008).

> As a father, I understand the value and dignity of every child - born and unborn. It is for this reason that I recognize the importance of defending the sanctity of human life (Frank Guinta, R-NH1, 2010).

Table 4.12: Gender Differences in Connecting Parental Status to Issues, House 2008 and 2010

Issue	Percent men	Percent women
Education*	34.6% (18)	62.5% (10)
Values	19.2% (10)	6.3% (1)
Abortion*	21.2% (11)	0% (0)
Economy	11.5% (6)	25.0% (4)
Healthcare	7.7% (4)	18.8% (3)
Military	9.6% (5)	12.5% (2)

*=p<.05; Total N=68

Note: This table includes only parent candidates who use connecting their parental status to issues as a strategy. The percentages refer to the proportion of men and women who connect their parental status to a particular issue. That is, of women who use this strategy, 62.5% do it with the issue of education.

Children as a motivation for running for Congress

While the small sample sizes and missing data preclude a statistical analysis of this strategy, a qualitative assessment reveals that connecting children to the candidate's motivation for running is indeed another distinct strategy, even if it is not a common one. The few candidates who use this strategy tend to be fathers (see Tables 3 and 4 above). Below are some illustrations of how candidates use their children to explain why they are running for office:

> Jerry McNerney, small businessman and renewable energy engineer, was inspired to run for Congress by his son Michael, who joined the Air Force after 9/11. Michael called his Dad after receiving his absentee ballot and saw that no one was running against the incumbent at the time. "Dad," Michael said. "People should have a choice. I'm serving our country and you can as well by running for Congress." (Jerry McNerney,D-CA11, 2010).

> I entered this race because future generations, including that of my three daughters, depend upon it. This country needs to follow a new direction - one that is progressive

> for all Americans, one that finally grants women the equality for which they have long fought (Kathy Dahlkemper, D-PA3, 2010).
>
> I am running for Congress because I am afraid that the American Dream available to me and my generation won't be there for my three children and future generations of Americans (John Runyan, R-NJ3, 2010).
>
> The most important two people in Tim's life are his sons, Brock and Trent. In fact, they are the reason he decided to run for Congress (Tim Burns, D-MI19, 2010).

Under a subsection of his biography called "Why I'm Running," Tim Burns says this:

> You see, I have two young sons. I'm doing this for them. Because, by the time they graduate from High School, their portion of the national debt is likely to be hundreds of thousands of dollars. On graduation day, when all kids are supposed to be looking forward to a bright future, what will theirs be? And what do I tell them?
>
> Do I tell them that I saw this coming and did nothing? I wouldn't be able to live with myself. Although I've never held a political office before, I do feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility to my children and to all young and future Americans, to do what I can to take back this country!

Men may be more likely to include their children as a motivation for running in order to "soften" what are otherwise strong, aggressive statements about the need for new political leadership.

Overall use of other family members

What kinds of candidates are more or less likely to use family members other than their children in their campaigns? The primary hypothesis is that candidates without children should be more likely than candidates who are parents to use other family members as a compensatory strategy. Childless individuals might picture family members such as their spouses, parents, or nieces and nephews. They also might incorporate textual mentions of their families and even connect other family members to issues. To assess who uses other family members in their campaigns, I combined four measures (family mentioned in biography, family connected to issues, family pictured in biography, and family pictured in issues) into one overall score for use of other family members.

In the Senate, the average number of mentions of other family members is 3.39. Candidates seem to use other family members less in House races where the mean number of mentions for 2008 and 2010 are 2.64 and 2.53 respectively. In the Senate, women, parent candidates, and Democrats have higher overall means for overall use of other family members but these differences are not significant (Table 4.13). For the House, contrary to expectations, childless candidates are far less likely than parents to use other family members in their campaigns, and this difference is dramatic among 2010 candidates. This unexpected finding may mean that parent candidates tend to adopt an overall strategy that includes both children and other family members in their campaigns while childless candidates may simply de-emphasize the "family theme" in their campaign and focus on other strengths. In 2008, Democrats were significantly more likely than Republicans to use other family members in their campaign websites, a finding that is inconsistent with my hypothesis (4) that Republicans would actually be more likely to do so. Controlling for other factors in a regression model (Table 4.14), party identification remains significant for House candidates in 2008, and parental status remains a strong predictor in 2010. Opponent gender is significant in 2008 which indicates that candidates running against a woman are actually less likely to include other family members. In 2010, candidate type is significant which means that challengers and open seat candidates are more likely to include other family members compared to incumbents. This evidence indicates that Hypothesis 3 can be decisively rejected, as the opposite of what I expected is true—childless candidates are *not* more likely to use other family members in their campaigns but in fact, parent candidates are much more likely to do so. Thus, the evidence indicates that childless candidates do not adopt a compensatory strategy in their campaigns, contrary to my expectations. There are several reasons for why this may be the case. Childless candidates may forego the "family theme" altogether in their campaign in favor of a strategy that capitalizes on

their strengths, which may include a focus on policy issues and their dedication to the job. Alternatively, it may be that parent candidates are more likely to be married and thus have the option of including their spouses in their campaigns. This strategy is not available to single childless candidates who can only include family members like parents, nieces, nephews, etc.

Table 4.13: Senate and House Candidates' Overall Use of Other Family Members by Gender, Parental Status, and Party

Gender	**Senate**	**House 2008**	**House 2010**
Men	3.06	2.40+	2.42
Women	3.50	3.30	2.48
N	41	58	153
Parental Status			
Has children	3.34	2.62	2.60
Childless	2.33	1.80	1.50***
N	41	58	151
Party			
Democrat	3.73	3.10	2.36
Republican	2.92	1.96**	2.49
N	41	58	153

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001

Note: Overall use of other family members was created by summing the following variables: other family member mentioned in biography, other family member pictured in biography, other family member mentioned in issues section, other family member pictured in issues section.

Table 4.14: Predicting House Candidates' Overall Use of Family

	2008	2010
Predictor	B (S.E.)	B (S.E.)
Intercept	.564 (.322)	1.143 (.197)
Gender	.215 (.221)	.104 (.153)
Parental Status	.176 (.354)	.585*** (.182)
Party identification	-.312+ (.187)	-.112 (.143)
Candidate type	.172 (.175)	.254+ (.148)
Opponent gender	-.513+ (.291)	.068 (.156)
	N=58; Likelihood ratio chi2= 13.801	N=151; Likelihood ratio chi2= 15.205

+ = p≤.10; *= p≤.05; **= p≤.01; ***= p≤.001
Note: Women, having children, Republicans, challengers/open seat candidates, and opponent is a woman are coded as high (1).

Other trends

While low sample sizes preclude a formal analysis of some measures of the dependent variables, qualitative probing of these strategies reveals interesting results. For example, I coded candidates' mentions of their children's occupations and accomplishments and "active parenting" but did not use these measures in the overall use of children variable since these strategies are not available to all parent candidates but rather depend on the age of children. Considering these variables on their own, however, reveals interesting use of these strategies. In 2008 women were significantly more likely than men to mention their children's occupations or accomplishments, while in 2010 men were slightly more likely than women to mention engaging in activities with their children (although this difference was not significant). Despite the uncertainty as to what variables predict the use of these strategies, the strategies in themselves

represent additional ways in which parenthood can be deployed as an asset for men and women candidates. Consider the following excerpts:

> Ed is the proud father of three daughters – Alexis, Abby, and Zoë. As a busy dad, Ed was involved with PTAs, booster clubs, the Applewood Community Church, and coaching the "Angels," Abby's competitive softball team (Ed Perlmutter, D-CO7, 2008).
>
> Her son Andrew is an airline pilot and her daughter Sarah and her son-in-law Ron are the proud parents of Sydney's three grandchildren Andrew, Caleb and Sophia (Sydney Ann Hay, R-AZ1, 2008).
>
> Jerry McNerney and Mary, his wife of 31 years, have lived and raised their children in Pleasanton since 1990. Their oldest son, Michael, is a reserve officer in the US Air Force. Daughter Windy is working on her Doctorate in cognitive neuroscience at Notre Dame, and youngest son Greg is pursuing his Doctorate in biophysics at UC Davis (Jerry McNerney, D-CA11, 2010).

For men, presenting themselves as "active fathers" shows a commitment to their families and may soften their images. Both men and women might benefit from pointing to the accomplishments and prestigious occupations of their children since this might be interpreted as evidence that they were "good" parents who raised their children well. Mothers are more likely to use this strategy than fathers which suggests perhaps this is a strategy to assure voters that the candidates' children are prospering, older, and unaffected by their mothers' political inclinations.

Hillary Clinton once said that she is "a mom first and a candidate second,"[49] a quote which captures a sentiment among candidates who may feel the need to assure voters that their political career will do no harm to their family because they are a mom or dad first and foremost. This strategy is likely an attempt to appear more selfless than the common stereotype of politicians as selfish, power-hungry individuals (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Women may be especially likely to adopt this strategy in order to ease voters' fears that she is a "bad

[49] Beth Fouhy, "Clinton says she can beat McCain," *Boston Globe* 9 February, 2008.

mother" or otherwise transgressing her traditional role as wife and mother to run for political office. The low number of candidates who use this strategy precludes a statistical analysis of this variable, but illustrations help make sense of how this strategy is deployed:

> Ron and Jane's first daughter, Carey, was born with a serious medical condition. It was then that Ron realized that his family is the most important thing in his life, and it still is today while everything else has become secondary (Ron Johnson, R-WI, 2010).
>
> First and foremost, I am a proud husband and father of three children (Bobby Bright, D-AL2, 2008).
>
> The central focus on Kay's life remains her family, especially her mother, children, and granddaughter (Kay Barnes, D-MO6, 2008)

For women, deploying this strategy catches them in a double bind. Citing their children as their life focus may cause concerns about time balance, but failing to convince voters that their children occupy a central place in their mother's life may cause concern that the candidates is not a good mother. Thus, this strategy is probably used most often by men, whose ability to balance family and politics is not in question. Indeed, my data bears this out—of the nine House candidates who use this strategy, eight of them are men.

Finally, a handful of candidates allude directly to the time balance dilemma and attempt to assure voters that that their family obligations will not affect their service in office. Some candidates deploy this strategy by reminding voters that their children are grown and are no longer an obstacle for their time:

> Ten years ago, I was a working mom who went to Raleigh because I thought the state needed a voice like mine. I'm still that same person, but my children are grown and I'm no longer car-pooling them to soccer practice while talking to the Governor on my cell phone (Kay Hagan, D-NC, 2008).

Or consider this line in Vicky Hartzler's (R-MO) biography, in which she explains why she retired from her seat in the Missouri General Assembly and waited ten years to re-enter politics: "In

2000 Representative Hartzler decided to not seek re-election after the Lord blessed her husband and her with a beautiful baby girl."

Men candidates also use this tactic, albeit in a slightly different way. It seems that men tend to emphasize their *commitment* to their family and point to career decisions they made in the past that allowed them to spend more time with their children. In this way, men are not alluding to the time balance dilemma to assure voters they are committed to public office so much as they are assuring voters they are "family men" and are committed to their families despite career demands:

> Mick and Pam got married in 1998, and are the proud parents of triplets. As much as he enjoyed running his own law firm, Mick knew that if he wanted to be home with his new wife and quickly-growing family, a career change would be in order. So, he sold his firm in 2000, quit the law, and joined the family homebuilding and real estate business (Mick Mulvaney, R-SC5, 2010).

> So that their children would be raised with the same Ohio values that Rob treasured from his youth, Rob and his wife, Jane, kept their home in Ohio and Rob commuted to Washington for over 14 years during his time in Congress and in the Cabinet (Rob Portman, R-OH, 2010).

While alluding to the time balance dilemma cannot be considered a "popular" strategy among competitive congressional candidates in 2008 and 2010, even the handful of candidates who address the dilemma suggests that some candidates indeed are worried about easing voters' concerns about where their loyalties and commitments lie.

Final Thoughts: Gender, Parenthood, and Campaign Strategy

The results from this chapter suggest that men and women make different strategic decisions about incorporating their children and other family members in their campaigns. Moreover, gender is not the sole predictor of differences in use of family, as variables like parental status, age of children, party, and type of candidate emerged as strong predictors, at

least for some dependent variables. Thus, the story of who uses family members in their campaigns and when is complex and cannot not be reduced solely to gender differences.

That being said, the results overall do suggest that men are still freer to showcase their children to voters compared to their women candidate counterparts. Despite the proliferation of mother candidates in recent election years as well as the emergence of "Mama Grizzlies" who have tried to redeploy motherhood as an asset, on the whole, mother candidates in 2008 and 2010 were less likely than men to use their children in their campaigns, especially in pictures. The results presented in this chapter complement the previous chapter in that both tests provide evidence that while parenthood is a constraint for women candidates, it is an asset for men.

CHAPTER 5: VOTER EVALUATIONS

The question of how parenthood affects voter evaluations of men and women candidates is more salient than ever. Chapter 3 opened with an anecdote of Pat Schroeder, whose candidacy and career in many ways exemplify the challenges mother candidates bear when it comes to the electorate's perceptions. Not only did the public question Schroeder's *ability* to combine motherhood and politics, but they also questioned whether or not she *should* attempt to do so, assuming her children would suffer negative consequences from an absent mother or from the political spotlight her family might be subjected to (or both). Decades later, voter skepticism toward mother candidates is alive and well, as exemplified in a 2007 *Washington Post* article which reported that only ten women serving in the U.S. Congress had children under the age of 13. The article was intended to describe the challenges associated with working on Capitol Hill while simultaneously raising young children. In the reporter's own analysis of the consequences of combining motherhood and politics, her explanation vividly captures the two constraints associated with motherhood—the time balance dilemma and perceptions of role violations:

> Most of the House members live apart from their children during the week, parenting by phone, e-mail and faxes and relying on husbands, family or nannies to fill the gaps. It's a lifestyle dictated by election cycle. The four senators live with their families in Washington but wake to the daily frenzy of integrating children into unpredictable workdays that can exceed 16 hours and fray relationships.
>
> And they all live with a reality possibly even more difficult: The public will scrutinize and judge the mothering choices these politicians make. It is this that sets them apart from other professional women and their male counterparts in Congress, and the 10 in the group are keenly sensitive to it.[50]

But mother candidates are not the only candidates who must navigate complicated political terrain in which parental status is salient; childless women are also scrutinized. In one

[50] Lyndsey Layton, "Mom's in the House, With Kids at Home." *Washington Post,* July 19, 2007.

way, childlessness can advantage political women, as illustrated in discussion about Janet Napolitano's nomination for Secretary of Homeland Security. Though he received harsh criticism for his comment, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell claimed that Napolitano was a perfect fit for the job since she has no family, "she has no life" and thus can "devote, literally, 19-20 hours a day to [the job]."[51] However offensive this comment may have seemed, the underlying idea is that childless women may be better able to handle demanding political jobs, since they are free from family obligations that might conflict with their careers. That said, childlessness can be perceived as a *disadvantage* as well. As previously discussed, the Fallin/Askins race for Governor typifies how childless women can suffer in voter perceptions. What is also interesting about that race is not only how Fallin attempted to use Askin's lack of children as a weapon against her, but also how she attempted to frame her own motherhood status to present it as a political asset: "I think my experience is one of the things that sets me apart as a candidate for governor. First of all, being a mother, having children, raising a family... these things give me a good perspective on the challenges Oklahomans face, and hopefully voters can relate to that."[52]

The media was quick to notice the proliferation of political mothers in the 2008 elections, and even more so in 2010. Now more than ever, it seemed as though mothers were redeploying what was once a liability into a political asset. One New York Times reporter explained the unique advantages associated motherhood:

> In an age when "the mommy brain" is now considered a greatly superior organ — uniquely suited for multitasking, specialty-schooled in the challenges of diplomacy and budgeting, grounded in the can-do here and now rather than in the hopelessly abstract or esoteric — being a mom (the "just" has been dropped) is now frequently spun as a prime career asset, particularly in the world of politics…Being a mom is synonymous with being one of the people. No matter who you are, no matter where you've lived or

[51] Gail Collins, "One Singular Sensation," *New York Times,* December 4, 2008.
[52] As quoted in Sean Murphy, "Motherhood generates talk in Okla. Governor's race," *Washington Post*, October 23, 2010.

> how much money you've made, if you're a mom, you are simple; you are decent; you are *real.*[53]

The last line—that moms are *real*—dovetails with the previously discussed comment made by mother candidate Krystal Ball who claimed that her motherhood status was an advantage electorally, as it made her seem like a "real" person. This may be what is at the heart of what motherhood means for political women—it *normalizes* them in a way that protects against perceptions of "deviance" from the norm to procreate (in a heterosexual marriage).

What the above anecdotes suggest is that there are reasons why voters might prefer a mother candidate and reasons why they would not. Notably, none of the anecdotes are about men, who also have a parental status. As discussed previously, the parental statuses of men are rarely scrutinized, if at all. Still, there are advantages men might receive from their fatherhood status that childless men cannot claim. The analysis below will systematically test how parenthood functions in voter perceptions of men and women candidates—is parenthood a liability or an asset and for whom?

Hypotheses

Evaluations of Candidates

I create several measures of candidate quality, likelihood of voting for the candidate, and candidate viability as I detail below. On all of these candidate evaluation measures, I expect that mother candidates with young children will be disadvantaged compared to father candidates, and that mothers of young children will be particularly disadvantaged. There are two reasons this pattern might emerge: one is that voters may believe the candidate will lack the time and dedication to properly serve her role in office if she has young children at home. Indeed, some evidence indicates that voters worry that "a woman candidate with small children

[53] Judith Warner, "The New Momism," *New York Times*, October 31, 2010.

could be hindered by torn loyalties" (Barbara Lee Family Foundation 1998, 34). The second reason voters might give mothers with young children more negative evaluations might have to do with ideas about what constitutes the proper place for women. Although it is more or less acceptable for a woman to work outside of the home,[54] a position that carries as much responsibility and time-demands as high-level political offices might seem unsuitable for women with younger children. Voters might form a negative impression of mother candidates if they believe she is violating her traditional role as mother and keeper of the private home (Guendozi 2006).

Specifically, I hypothesize that:

H1: Overall, women with younger children will be evaluated least favorably compared to their male counterparts and women with grown children or no children.

I also hypothesize that this negative attitude toward mother candidates with young children might also apply to mothers with grown children, although to a lesser extent in light of voters' perception that they have already fulfilled their "motherly" duties and can thus pay more attention to their political careers; moreover, mothers of grown children may benefit from the perception that they *should* have a political career, as their children are grown and thus would not suffer perceived negative effects associated with mother politicians' absenteeism.

[54] Public opinion data indicates that attitudes towards working mothers have liberalized over time. While in 1977, 68% of respondents agreed with the statement, "A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works," only 41% of respondents agreed with that statement in 2006 (General Social Survey). Attitudes towards women's place in politics have also improved over time: in 1977, 38% of those surveyed agreed that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men." When asked the same question over twenty years later, only 15% agreed. The Pew Center, however, recently found that the American public generally believes that the trend of mothers working outside of the home is bad for society, with Republicans much more likely to agree (Pew Center 2007). While public attitudes towards working mothers and women in politics have improved over time and present less of a barrier to women now compared to the past, parts of the public and are clearly still uncomfortable with women leaving the private sphere for public careers.

I predict that men can only gain from fatherhood, and the age of their children should not matter for voter evaluations. For men, fatherhood is a political asset that can only positively affect their images as candidates.

H2: Fathers of younger and grown children should receive higher evaluations on the good candidate measure compared to childless men.

Time Balance Evaluations

One of the constraints associated with motherhood is the perception that women with childcare responsibilities will not be able to balance dual roles. Mothers of young children should be particularly susceptible to this perception, as their responsibilities are considerable compared to mothers of grown children who do not deal with the day to day tasks of raising children. Childless women, obviously, are exempt from this constraint. While men with children may have less time to devote to political office in *reality*, voters should not perceive a conflict between fatherhood in politics since women are the primary caregivers to children; in this way parental status should have a negligible effect for this variable. For these reasons,

H3: Voters will perceive women with young children as having significantly less time to fulfill their office compared to mothers of grown children while childless women should be perceived as having the most time to fulfill their role. For men, there should be no difference in perception of time balance across conditions.

Issues

The one exception to the "mother disadvantage" women suffer might be competency ratings on compassion issues that directly relate to family, like child care and children's issues. At the same time, mothers may seem *less* able to handle typically "masculine" issues (e.g. terrorism and the military) compared to childless women and men. I expect no difference across conditions with men candidates.

H4: Mothers of both young and grown children should receive higher competency scores on compassion issues and lower scores on masculine issues, compared to men and childless candidates.

Femininity/Masculinity

I also expect gender and parental status to affect perceptions of candidates' masculine and feminine traits. Because motherhood is so intimately connected with womanhood (Gillespise; Hird and Abshoff 2000), both mothers of younger and grown children should be perceived as more feminine compared to childless women and men candidates. I also expect children to somewhat "feminize" fathers who may be perceived as less masculine compared to childless men candidates.

H5: Mother and father candidates will be perceived as more feminine and less masculine compared to childless women and childless men, respectively.

Party

Finally, I predict that party may alter the relationships among gender, parental status, and voter evaluations. The only variable I use to measure the effect of party is the voter's likelihood of voting for the candidate measure. I predict that because of very different ideologies of the family and women's proper roles, Democrats and Republicans will evaluate mothers of young children and childless women especially differently.

H6: Republicans, compared to Democrats, will give lower evaluations to mothers of young children and childless women compared to men and mothers of older children.

Examining the Relationships Among Gender, Parental Status, and Voter Evaluations Using Experimental Methodology

In order to examine how gender and parental status interact in evaluations of political candidates, this study employed an experimental design. Because of the limitations of survey data, including social desirability issues and the inability to adequately control for other factors,

an experiment allowed me to isolate the effect of parental status and gender on voter evaluations of men and women candidates.[55]

The sample consisted of 317 undergraduate students in an introductory political science course.[56] Respondents participated voluntarily and were told the study was about voter reactions to political candidates. Men comprised 52.7% of the sample while 47.3% of the respondents were women. Although the ages of respondents ranged from 18-40, the mean age in this sample was 20 years. The sample over-represents Democrats, with 56.5% of respondents identifying with the Democratic Party, 23.0% as Republicans, 14.2% as Independent, and 4.7% who identify with an "Other" party. While the respondents in this study are not representative of the national voting population, there are advantages in using a student sample as well. College students and young people generally are more likely to support female candidates and hold more egalitarian ideas about women in politics (Dolan 2004), thus they are probably less likely to hold biases against a female candidate. Because college students are among those least likely to endorse gender stereotypes or discriminate against women candidates, any bias that does emerge holds greater weight.

Respondents were presented with a picture of a mock candidate, a short description, and an excerpt from a speech purportedly delivered by the candidate at a campaign rally.[57] The

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[55] Of course, the trade-off inherent to the experimental method is external validity. The controlled conditions allow the researcher to gain causal leverage on an independent variable, but the results may not be comparable to conditions outside of the laboratory. This study attempted to minimize threats to external validity as much as possible, though because this study is one of the first to examine the effect of parental status and gender on voter evaluations, internal validity is more important than the generalizability of this study.

[56] Subjects were randomly assigned to the six treatments. A one-way ANOVA and Duncan post-hoc test were performed to check for differences among respondents for age. Because respondent sex is a dichotomous, nominal variable and party identification is an ordinal variable, a chi-square test of significance was used. Results indicated that treatment groups did not differ by age, party identification, or sex, and group means and proportions for each variable are displayed in Appendix G.

[57] The speech was relatively content-neutral, so as to not bias the results. A similar rationale has been used by Rosenwasser and Seale 1988 and Sapiro 1981-1982.

speech excerpt is based on text from Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe's campaign website so as to mimic real-life campaign talk. In the experiment, I varied three factors—the gender of the candidate, whether or not the candidate has children, and the ages of the children, for a total of six different conditions (see Table 5.1 below). To ensure that the candidate's parental status was obvious, the picture included the candidate's children with a caption that stated their names and ages.[58] The description reiterated the fact that the candidate is a parent and again listed the names and ages of the children.[59] For the childless condition, I explicitly stated that the candidate was married and had no children.[60] I controlled for both the race and sexuality of the candidates by including all white candidates who are in heterosexual marriages.[61] The description also stated that the candidate is running for Governor of Connecticut. I chose the governorship since past research indicates that women may be at a greater disadvantage for executive positions that carry more responsibility and are often thought of as "masculine" positions (Duerst-Lahti 1997, 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Sheeler 2010). As Sheeler (2010) puts it:

> As executive-level institutions, the presidency and the governorship are steeped in a history of rugged individualism, strength, decisiveness, and heroic expectations that have defined the offices in masculine terms as long as our country has been on the map (34).

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[58] For the parent of young children condition, the children's ages were listed as 3 and 6. For the parent of grown children condition, the ages were listed as 20 and 25.

[59] A full description of how the candidates were presented to respondents, including the exact text of the description and the speech excerpt, can be found in Appendix F.

[60] This more blatant statement explicitly pointing out the candidate's lack of children may account for some of the strong results in the childless condition. Real-life descriptions of candidates might not always explicitly note the absence of children, though there are many examples of cases in which the childless status of a candidate or politician is made obvious and explicit by the media (e.g. Janet Napolitano).

[61] I held race and sexuality of the candidates constant in order to isolate the effects of gender and parental status on voter evaluations. I was particularly concerned that the absence of a husband in the childless female condition might lead respondents to question the candidate's sexuality. This would be problematic if my subjects responded to the childless female candidate based on her perceived sexuality, rather than parental status, which is the variable of interest. Respondents might perceive childless women candidates who are married and not married in very different ways.

Thus, if a bias against women candidates exists, the governorship is where we would most expect to find it (save for the presidency). Further, the time demands of the governorship may make parental status more relevant as well since voters may question a mother candidate's ability to balance her family life with running the state. The governorship is a unitary office in the sense that one person is essentially responsible for the entire state in contrast to members of Congress who make up part of a whole—they are only one out of 435 representatives or 100 senators. This characteristic of the governorship affects women running for it in the sense that voters may be uncomfortable giving a woman—and especially a woman of one children—this much power, control, and responsibility (Duerst-Lahti 1997; O'Regan and Stambough 2011). Jane Swift is a key example of a mother governor whose career exemplifies the challenges women with children confront in executive office. A content analysis of media coverage of Swift revealed a barrage of voter skepticism of her ability to balance motherhood with the governorship (Loke et al. 2011). As one citizen put it in a Letter to the Editor of a Massachusetts newspaper: "There's no way…Jane Swift can be both a competent governor and an adequate mother. One (the state) or the other (the babies) will get the short end of the stick" (as quoted in Loke et al. 2011, 211).

Table 5.1: Experimental Conditions

Condition	Gender	Parental Status	N
1	Male	No children	54
2	Female	No children	48
3	Male	Young children	47
4	Female	Young children	55
5	Male	Grown children	57
6	Female	Grown children	56
			Total N= 317

The candidate was evaluated on a host of dimensions, and the questions I asked mostly came from past candidate evaluation experimental studies. First, the respondents were asked to rate the candidates on overall impression. Next, respondents were asked their level of agreement with general "good politician," or "strong leader" statements such as:

- Candidate Smith will make a good governor.
- Candidate Smith is qualified for office.
- Candidate Smith has qualities I look for in an elected official.
- Candidate Smith will get things done in office

These five indicators, along with the overall impression score, were combined to form a summary scale measuring what I will call the "good candidate" evaluation. The five measures all correlated positively with a Cronbach alpha score of .853.

Additionally, two other questions tap into perceived ability to handle the responsibility of the governorship; these questions are especially important in determining if voters believe mother candidates (specifically, mothers of young children) would be less committed to their jobs than father candidates. Respondents were asked if:

- Candidate Smith will have enough time to fulfill her/his role as Governor.
- Candidate Smith will be committed to the job.

These two measures were analyzed separately as distinct dependent variables. While both questions generally relate to the candidate's ability to perform in office under time constraints, the measures are theoretically and empirically different. While the first question taps into practical time constraints the candidate might face, the second question relates to the candidate's perceived motivation or drive to fulfill his or her responsibilities as Governor.

Respondents were also asked the likelihood they would vote for the candidate and the perceived likelihood that the candidate would win the election.[62] When answering the former question, respondents were asked to assume that the candidate shares their own party identification. Issue competency questions asked the respondent, "Based on your impression of Candidate Smith, how well would Candidate Smith handle each of the following issues":

- A military or police crisis
- A terrorist threat
- Childcare
- Improving the welfare of children

Respondents were then asked to rate the candidate on traits that previous research has identified as either masculine (aggressive, assertive, tough, rational) or feminine (emotional, moral, responsible, cautious). Finally, respondents answered two open-ended questions that asked if there was anything they particularly liked and anything they particularly disliked about the candidate. The answers to these questions help me interpret the quantitative findings and glean insight into what exactly it is about parental status that can help or hurt men and women candidates.

Evaluations of Candidates for Governor

Gender differences in evaluations of candidates

I first consider the effect of gender on voter evaluations of men and women candidates. The first cut at the data shown in Table 5.2 reveals a pattern that suggests pessimistic consequences for women candidates: in the aggregate, men candidates receive higher

[62] The perceived likelihood that the candidate will win election is what I term the viability question. Past studies indicate that voters are more likely to say they personally would support a non-conventional candidate (like a woman or a minority) but that people they know probably would not. The explanation for this trend is that voters do not want to appear sexist, racist, or intolerant to the researcher or even to themselves, but still perceive a societal bias against the non-conventional candidate.

evaluations on every evaluation measure *except* competency on childcare and children's issues. Men and women candidates also score about the same on military and terrorism issues. Because the hypothetical candidates were pictured and described in exactly the same way, the male advantage can be attributed solely to his gender. Table 5.2 shows significant differences across both the good candidate and commitment to office dimensions: respondents believe that the man candidate is a better candidate and will be more committed to the office than the woman candidate. Additionally, respondents are more likely to say they would vote for the man candidate and that the man candidate is likely to win his election in comparison to the woman candidate. It is noteworthy that these gender differences emerge even in a *student* sample, which is surprising given that college students are not expected to be biased toward women political candidates. Overall, then, this evidence suggests that men have the gender advantage in politics.

Table 5.2: Differences in Evaluations of Men and Women Candidates

Question	Man Candidate (Mean)	Woman Candidate (Mean)	
Good candidate**	4.62	4.34	
Time**	4.91	4.60	
Commitment*	5.32	5.09	
Vote for candidate**	5.41	4.97	
Viability of candidate***	4.82	4.25	
Military/police crisis	2.39	2.30	
Terrorism	2.28	2.28	
Childcare**	2.89	3.17	
Children's issues**	2.92	3.12	
N	159	158	Total N=317

+ p<.10 ;*p<.05 ; **p<.01; *** p<.001
Note: For each indicator, the higher the number, the more positive the rating.
Scale: Candidate evaluation questions range from 1-7, with 1 indicating the lowest scores and 7 the highest. The issue questions ranged from 1-4, with 1 being the least competent and 4 being the most competent.

Differences in evaluations of women by parental status

Looking at gender effects in the aggregate may mask important differences in how voters evaluate different *kinds* of men and women. In this study, parental status was manipulated to see how mothers fare with voters as compared to childless women and male candidates. I hypothesized that women with younger children would receive relatively low scores compared to men with younger children and women with grown children. Expectations concerning the childless woman candidates were less defined, since on the one hand voters might believe a woman without childcare responsibilities would have more time and energy to fulfill her political duties, but on the other hand voters might feel uncomfortable with a childless woman and question her decision to choose a career but not a family. Hypothesis 3 also predicts childless women will be evaluated more positively than mothers in relation to their time

capacity. The results shown in Table 5.3[63] below provide partial support for all hypotheses. Women with young children are disadvantaged compared to women with grown children and women with no children with respect to evaluations of time capacities, a finding that is consistent with my expectations. Not surprisingly, women with no children are perceived to have substantially more time to fulfill their role as Governor compared to women with children, especially young children (5.15 vs. 4.09, p<.001), consistent with Hypothesis 3. The gap between women with young children and women with grown children is significant as well (4.09 vs. 4.63, p=.04) and narrows somewhat between women with grown children and childless women (4.63 vs. 5.15, p=.06). Among women, parental status seems to make little difference for good governor evaluations, commitment to the job, and perceived viability of the candidate as I expected, but respondents are more likely to express willingness to vote for a mother candidate rather than a childless female.

Women with young children do not have a significant disadvantage in comparison to women with grown children and women with no children, except on the time variable. As I expected, mothers with young children are perceived to have less time to fulfill the governorship than women with grown children and no children, and this difference is strong (p<.001). As I predicted, women with young children receive the highest scores on childcare and children's issues competencies while women with no children receive the least favorable evaluations. While these findings run against the expectation that women with young children will receive the most negative evaluations overall, it confirms the hypothesis that childless women lose their gender advantage on compassion issues, particularly when these issues are related to children. Childless women fare about the same with childless men on these issues, which suggest that the female advantage on these kinds of policies may partly be driven by

[63] While Table 3 is intended to compare women to men in each condition, I ran significance tests separately among women and then among men and report significant differences within the text.

associations with the motherhood experience and women's care-giving role. Thus, the evidence so far indicates that parental status is a mixed bag for women candidates—childless women are able to escape the time balance dilemma but there is something about childlessness that garners fewer votes compared to mother candidates.

Differences in evaluations of men by parental status

Although men may receive higher evaluations than women overall, parental status also has some effect on perceptions of men candidates. In general, childless men receive slightly higher scores than father candidates, a finding that contradicts my expectation that fatherhood can only help men candidates. This evidence of a "fatherhood penalty" may be attributed to the "feminization" that comes with being a father (and especially, being pictured with children). Evidence provided in Table 5.3 below suggests that men with no children are perceived to have more time to fulfill their political obligations and are more committed to the job than men with young children and grown children. Additionally, men with young children are significantly disadvantaged on the good candidate variable compared to men with grown children and no children, which is a surprising finding that disconfirms my hypothesis that fatherhood should function as an asset for men candidates. Again, fathers of young children may appear more feminine compared to their counterparts. Because research suggests that the ideal political executive is a masculine figure, and one that embodies typical masculine qualities like strength and aggression (Duerset-Lahti 1997; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Sheeler 2010), the image of young children may offset this image and make the father appear "softer," and thus less like the ideal political leader. Childless men also score higher on likelihood of receiving the respondent's vote and viability, though these differences are not significant. Men with no children also receive higher competency ratings on handling a military/police crisis and a terrorist threat. As with women candidates, father candidates score higher on childcare and children's issues. It

seems that despite men's historical "distance" from private realm responsibilities (including childcare) (Daniels 2006), voters may still perceive fathers as having the necessary experience to make them more competent on issues related to children, at least in comparison to childless men.

Differences in evaluations of men and women across different conditions

Women with young children vs. Men with young children. While women with young children may not have a disadvantage in comparison to women with grown children and women with no children, they may fare poorly compared to men candidates. Holding parental status constant allows me to consider gender differences among men and women with the same family description. When looking at men with young children compared to women with young children in Table 5.3, we see that men and women score about the same on the good candidate and commitment variables, but are slightly different with respect to time capacities, with women scoring lower (as expected). The most substantial difference emerges on viability: respondents *are much more likely to believe the male with young children is likely to win his election compared to the female with young children*. As has been the case throughout this analysis, women do better on childcare and children's issues competency.

Men with grown children vs. Women with grown children. When comparing men with grown children to women with grown children in Table 5.3, the male advantage gap widens. Respondents are more likely to positively evaluate the man candidate on the good candidate variable and are more likely to say they would vote for the man candidate and that he will win his election compared to his woman counterpart. Interestingly, men are not rated much lower on childcare and children's issues in the grown children condition, though women still receive the higher competency evaluations. Clearly, there is something about having younger children that makes a woman seem better able to handle children's issues. On the one hand, this seems

counterintuitive—women with grown children have more years of experience with raising a family than women with younger children and might be sager on these matters. But women who are still raising their children, who are in the throes of the motherhood experience, might be perceived as having a more accurate perspective than their older mother candidate counterparts.

Men with no children vs. Women with no children. As we see in Table 5.3, women with no children do significantly worse on every single indicator compared to men with no children, except for children's issues and time capacities, where they are rated almost exactly the same. The results from this analysis indicate that gender matters most for candidates who are childless. Men with no children receive much higher evaluations than their women counterparts, and are considered better candidates, more committed to the job, more likely to receive the respondent's vote, and more viable a candidate. This finding, taken with the results comparing women candidates across parental statuses, provides strong support for the hypothesis that voters penalize women with no children. Voters hold opposite feelings towards men candidates without children—childless men consistently receive the highest scores *across* conditions, not only in comparison to women. Perhaps men pictured with their children project an image of femininity or softness that voters are uncomfortable with. Whatever the reason, it is clear that when candidates are childless, the gender of the candidate matters more than ever in how voters will perceive them.

Table 5.3: Differences in Evaluations of Men and Women Candidates by Parental Status

Question	Young children		Grown children		No children	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Good candidate	4.37	4.38	4.68	4.34**	4.80	4.31**
Time	4.53	4.09*	4.86	4.63	5.28	5.15
Commitment	5.13	5.00	5.32	5.16	5.48	5.10*
Vote	5.11	5.07	5.60	5.14**	5.46	4.65**
Viability	4.91	4.31**	4.79	4.16**	4.76	4.29*
Military/police	2.22	2.20	2.32	2.38	2.63	2.34**
Terrorism	2.17	2.27	2.19	2.34	2.46	2.21*
Childcare	3.28	3.63*	3.11	3.30	2.33	2.60
Children's issues	3.09	3.45**	3.04	3.13	2.67	2.70
N	46	55	57	53	54	47

* p<.10 ;** p<.05 ; *** p<.001

Note: For each indicator, the higher the number, the more positive the rating.
Scale: Candidate evaluation questions range from 1-7, with 1 indicating the lowest scores and 7 the highest. The issue questions ranged from 1-4, with 1 being the least competent and 4 being the most competent.

The Time Variable: Parental status and perceptions of candidates. One variable deserves additional discussion because of its consistent effects across conditions. The time question, which asked respondents to agree or disagree with the following statement: "Candidate Smith would have enough time to fulfill his/her role as Governor," cuts at a core aspect of what it means to be a parent candidate in politics, as it represents the time balance dilemma. Regardless of the parental status considered, men are perceived as more likely to have enough time for politics than the women candidates, *even in comparison to women without children*. Regardless of gender, too, candidates with young children are perceived to have substantially

less time to serve than candidates with grown children and candidates with no children.[64] While voters perceive men with children as having less time to be Governor than men without children, the differences among women candidates is much more pronounced. Because all of the conditions except for gender were the same in these comparison groups, the factor that causes different evaluations of time capacities is gender alone. The results of this experiment indicate that voters perceive more of a conflict for women candidates between their family and politics than they do for men candidates.

Impacts of Candidate Sex, Parental Status, and the Interaction on Evaluations. Thus far, the results of my analysis suggest that both gender and parental status affect evaluations of political candidates, and that the effects are different for men and women. In order to examine the distinct effects of candidate sex, parental status, and the interaction between the two, I conducted a two-way ANOVA for each dependent variable (Table 5.4). The results of this analysis basically confirm and crystallize the evidence discussed above, but the effects of each variable can be seen more clearly. First, candidate sex has the largest and most consistent impact on voter evaluations of candidates. Candidate sex is a significant predictor for all evaluation measures, with men always scoring higher than women, except on compassion issues. Parental status clearly drives differences in evaluations of candidates' time capacities, though candidate gender is significant as well. Interestingly, parental status also affects competency ratings on military issues. Men with no children seem to be driving this effect, since they receive the highest scores compared to women and to father candidates. Of course, as discussed above, being a parent is an important predictor for competency on childcare and children's issues. Significant interaction effects emerge on the good candidate and vote choice variables. On the good candidate measure, childless men are significantly advantaged compared

[64] Means on each condition: candidates with young children (4.29), candidates with grown children (4.74), and candidates with no children (5.22); $p<.001$.

to men with children, especially men with young children. Parental status does not seem to affect evaluations of women on the good candidate variable. With vote choice, women with no children receive significantly lower scores compared to their mother counterparts, but this effect does not exist for male candidates. Clearly, not having children affects men and women very differently when it comes to evaluations of candidates and vote choice—while childlessness advantages men, it penalizes women.

Table 5.4: Impacts of Candidate Sex, Parental Status, and the Interaction on Evaluations of Candidates

Question	Candidate Sex (df=1, 311)	Parental Status (df=2, 311)	Candidate Sex X Parental Status (df=2, 311)
Good candidate	8.14**	1.23	2.26*
Time	4.47**	12.44***	.559
Commitment	2.72*	1.08	.337
Vote for candidate	9.86**	2.22	2.32*
Viability of candidate	17.76***	.419	.200
Military/police crisis	.927	3.49**	1.63
Terrorism	.000	.548	2.07
Childcare	6.57**	38.86***	.046
Children's issues	3.33*	12.74***	1.25

* p<.10 ;** p<.05 ; *** p<.001
Note: Scores are F-ratios.
Men and childless candidates coded as 0, women and parent candidates coded as 1.

Sub-Group Differences in Evaluations. Perhaps the demographic characteristics of the sample may be driving some of the findings. Previous literature suggests that both the gender and partisan identification of the *respondent* can influence support for a woman candidate. While party affiliation is generally a stronger predictor of vote choice than the gender of the candidate (Dolan 2004; King and Matland 2003), some studies have found that women are slightly more likely to support women candidates (Dolan 2008; Paolino 1995; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Sigelman and Sigelman 1982). In this study, however, there were no significant gender differences in evaluations of women or men candidates, including vote choice. That is, women respondents in this sample were no more likely than male respondents to evaluate the woman candidate more highly in comparison to the male candidate. Women candidates, then, seem to have no advantage among women voters.[65]

Partisan identification as a predictor of support for a woman candidate. Why do voters evaluate women candidates consistently lower than men? Why do childless women fare so much worse than their male counterparts and mother candidates? The results from Table 5.5 demonstrate that more positive evaluations of female candidates are partly dependent on the respondent's party identification. The Republicans assign the women candidates the lowest scores on almost every single indicator compared to Democrats and Independents, though not all variables reach significance. The variable where this difference is most obvious is found on the viability question—Republicans are substantially less likely to say the woman candidate will win her election. These findings are consistent with past research that suggests political liberals and Democrats are more likely to support female candidates (Dolan 2004). Republicans, who

[65] The lack of an affinity effect in this study might be attributed to the low-information environment. If women vote for women when they believe the candidate will champion a women's agenda, then the null finding here should come as no surprise. No information concerning the candidates' policy positions on women's or family issues were provided in this experiment.

espouse socially conservative ideas and traditional attitudes towards women in politics (Bennett and Bennett 1992), may be uncomfortable with a woman running for a highly visible office like the governorship. Also, because women candidates are perceived as more liberal than male candidates (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Koch 2000), Republicans may have a negative reaction to their inferred political ideologies (King and Matland 2003; Koch 2000). No such partisan differences existed for evaluations of male candidates.

Table 5.5: Differences in Evaluations of Women Candidates by Partisan Identification

Question	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Good governor*	4.38	4.67	4.15
Time	4.72	4.67	4.36
Committed to job	5.16	5.29	4.97
Vote for candidate	5.12	5.05	4.64
Viability of candidate***	4.48	4.57	3.58
Military/police crisis	2.35	2.45	2.22
Terrorism	2.29	2.45	2.22
Childcare	3.18	3.25	3.16
Children's issues	3.11	3.15	3.22
N	93	20	32 Total N=145

* p<.10 ;** p<.05 ; *** p<.001

Note: For each indicator, the higher the number, the more positive the rating.

Scale: Candidate evaluation questions range from 1-7, with 1 indicating the lowest scores and 7 the highest. The issue questions ranged from 1-4, with 1 being the least competent and 4 being the most competent.

Furthermore, there are significant partisan differences in evaluations of women without children, as shown in Table 5.6 below. Republicans are significantly less likely than Democrats or Republicans to rate the woman candidate positively on the good candidate variable and viability. Again, no such partisan differences exist for childless men candidates. Because the number of Republicans in this sample and in this specific condition is relatively low, this finding is tenuous. On the other hand, the partisan differences in evaluations of childless female candidates do reach statistical significance, and the differences in means are quite large. This finding lends support to my expectation that Republicans would consider childlessness among women deviant.

Table 5.6: Differences in Evaluations of Childless Women Candidates by Party

Question	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Good governor*	4.27	4.95	3.88
Viability**	4.48	5.00	3.00
N	31	8	7
			Total N=46

* p<.10 ;** p<.05 ; *** p<.001
Note: Only differences that were significant are shown.

As noted previously, one survey item specifically asks respondents to assume the candidate they are rating belongs to the party they usually vote for. Respondents are asked what the likelihood is they would vote for the candidate. Table 5.7 displays the means each type of candidate receives among Democrats while Table 5.8 shows the same for Republicans. Democrats are more willing to vote for the father of grown children with the childless man and mother of grown children close behind. The childless woman receives the lowest amount of

electoral support. Among Republicans, the childless woman is again disadvantaged, while the father of grown children and childless man enjoy the most electoral support, though the overall ANOVA just misses statistical significance (likely due to a very small sample size). A two-way ANOVA (Table 5.9) measures the impacts of candidate gender, parental status, and the interaction on likelihood of voting among Democrats and Republicans. The results indicate that among Democrats, candidate sex is a significant predictor of electoral support, as voters are more likely to vote for men compared to women. Parental status is also an independent predictor, as Democratic voters are more willing to vote for parents of grown children compared to childless and parents of younger children. The interaction between candidate sex and parental status, however, is insignificant. For Republicans, voters are also more likely to vote for men compared to women, though parental status does not have an independent impact. Rather, the interaction between candidate sex and parental status is significant with childless women receiving far less support than childless men. Interestingly, the category of young children works differently for men and women—fathers of young children receive the lowest support levels compared to childless men and fathers of grown children while mothers of young children receive more support compared to childless women and mothers of grown children.

Table 5.7: Likelihood of Voting Across Conditions Among Democrats

Condition	Mean	N
Father of grown children	5.82	33
Childless man	5.58	31
Mother of grown children	5.53	36
Father of young children	5.30	20
Mother of young children	5.07	28
Childless woman	4.67	30

Note: For each indicator, the higher the number, the more positive the rating.
Scale: Likelihood of voting measure ranges from 1-7, with 1 indicating very unlikely and 7 indicating very likely.
Note: Overall ANOVA significant at $p<.001$; $F=4.338$
Between groups: Sum of squares=26.251, df=5
Within groups: Sum of squares=208.154, df=172

Table 5.8: Likelihood of Voting Across Conditions Among Republicans

Condition	Mean	N
Father of grown children	5.64	11
Childless man	5.50	14
Mother of young children	5.07	14
Father of young children	4.73	15
Mother of older children	4.58	12
Childless woman	3.86	7

Note: For each indicator, the higher the number, the more positive the rating.
Scale: Likelihood of voting measure ranges from 1-7, with 1 indicating very unlikely and 7 indicating very likely.
Note: Overall ANOVA significant at p<.15; F=1.701
Between groups: Sum of squares=20.264, df=5
Within groups: Sum of squares=159.681, df=67

Table 5.9: Impacts of Candidate Sex, Parental Status, and the Interaction on Willingness to Vote for Democratic and Republican Candidates

	Candidate Sex	Parental Status	Candidate Sex X Parental Status
Democrats	8.103***	4.778**	1.745
Republicans	4.429*	.402	2.643

Adjusted R2 for Democrats=.086
Adjusted R2 for Republicans=.046
Note: Scores are F-ratios

Feminine and Masculine Trait Evaluations of Candidates

How does parental status alter perceived feminine and masculine traits of men and women candidates? My primary hypothesis is that parenthood "feminizes" parent candidates while childlessness has a "masculinizing" effect. The results, however, do not lend credence to my expectations. Looking at the individual traits, the only significant differences by sex emerge on assertive and rational, with men perceived as more assertive and rational compared to women. Taking parental status into account does not make much difference, except on the "cautious" trait for which parents of young children score higher than parents of grown children

and childless candidates. Looking at the masculine and feminine trait scales, men are perceived as more masculine than women, but the genders do not differ when it comes to ratings of femininity.[66] Parental status does not seem to influence either scale and no significant differences emerge by experimental condition. To be sure, I conducted at two-way ANOVA which revealed that candidate sex is a significant predictor of masculinity, but parental status and the interaction are not (results not shown). No significant differences emerged for femininity. Contrary to my hypothesis, parental status does not have a significant effect on voter perceptions of candidates' masculine and feminine traits.

Why might voters penalize or reward mother, father, and childless candidates?

Finally, I analyze the results of the open-ended questions that ask respondents to indicate what they particularly liked or did not like about the candidate they evaluated. Overall, 54.6% of respondents offered a comment about what they liked about the candidates and 46.7% wrote about what they disliked. Table 5.10 and 5.11 display the type of comments made by experimental condition. Looking first at what respondents liked about the candidates, voters clearly have more to say concerning what they like about fathers of both young and grown children. Comments tended to use "family man" language and sometimes consisted of just those two words. Other respondents elaborated as to what is desirable about having children, such as the respondent who wrote "family means caring." Several respondents wrote that the father of young children seemed "dedicated to family issues," even though nothing in his speech would indicate that kind of commitment. Other respondents responded in ways that seemed to suggest the significance of having a family as "normal" and a cover from the deviance associated

[66] I combined the masculine traits to produce a "masculinity scale" and the feminine traits to create a "femininity scale." The masculine traits correlated positively with a Cronbach alpha score of .740, mean=2.34, N=315. The feminine traits also correlated positively with a Cronbach alpha score of .579, mean=2.18, N=315.

with childless candidates. The father of grown children was described as a "nice, regular family man"; many respondents simply said "looks like a nice family."

Considering what respondents disliked about the candidates, it is clear that childless men receive the wrath of voters, which is contrary to the findings that voters rate childless *women* lower in the candidate evaluations while childless men generally received high scores, both among Democrats and Republicans as well. Comments were usually blunt and said "no kids," as the answer for why they disliked the childless male candidate, though some elaborated: "lack of family means disconnect with average voter," or "no children means too elite." However, the same respondent who offered the latter dislike also wrote this in the "like" question: "rational and level headed."

The mother of young children condition also received a host of negative comments, such as "seems more focused on her children than other issues," a telling comment considering the candidate does not mention her children at all in her speech. Several respondents seemed to question the type of mother she is: "a picture with her family seems to garner sympathy as a mom, though we don't know what kind of mom she is." Some respondents specifically cited the work/family time balance dilemma which provides support for the theory that perceptions of practical constraints is what makes motherhood a liability for mother candidates: "too busy raising her children;" "she should focus on her children."

Although fathers of young children received few negative comments, this particular one is worth noting: "Young kids will affect ability to perform, not tough enough." Here the respondent suggests that having young children disadvantages men candidates in two ways—they suffer from the time balance dilemma that also disadvantages women *and* having young children makes men seem less masculine. The quantitative results did not bear these ideas out, but the qualitative analysis suggests that perhaps these thoughts linger in voters' mind, which

causes them to "lash out" at candidates in other evaluation measures. Although few respondents actually articulated these ideas, they could help explain some of the findings that fathers of young children suffered somewhat in voter evaluations, particularly among Republicans when it came to vote likelihood.

Although the subjects of this experiment tended to rate the childless woman candidate negatively compared to the other candidates, few respondents offered a reason for why they disliked the candidate in this condition. Three respondents offered comments specifically related to parental status—two who simply said they disliked the candidate had "no children" or "no kids" and one who wrote in the like section that "no kids [means] more time to devote to the job."

Table 5.10: Open-ended responses by condition (Like)

Condition	Parental Status-Like	Other comment	No comment
Childless male	7.4% (4)	53.7% (29)	38.9% (21)
Childless female	2.1% (1)	50.0% (24)	47.9% (23)
Father of young children	27.7% (13)	21.3% (10)	51.1% (24)
Mother of young children	9.1% (5)	29.1% (16)	61.8% (34)
Father of grown children	33.3% (19)	35.1% (20)	31.6% (18)
Mother of grown children	17.9% (10)	39.3% (22)	42.9% (24)

Table 5.11: Open-ended responses by condition (Dislike)

Condition	Parental Status-Disike	Other comment	No comment
Childless male	20.4% (11)	46.3% (25)	33.3% (18)
Childless female	6.3% (3)	41.7% (20)	52.1% (25)
Father of young children	6.4% (3)	48.9% (23)	44.7% (21)
Mother of young children	14.5% (8)	25.5% (14)	60.0% (33)
Father of grown children	0% (0)	36.8% (21)	63.2% (36)
Mother of grown children	3.6% (2)	32.1% (18)	64.3% (36)

Final Thoughts: The Electoral Consequences of Parenthood

The analyses from this chapter suggest that the effects of candidate sex, parental status, and the interaction carry different weights depending on the dependent variable. Overall, the story is more about gender than anything else—candidate gender has a significant effect on each evaluation variable with men scoring higher than women. Parental status matters most for time capacities, with childless candidates scoring significantly higher than parent candidates. Mother and father candidates, but especially mother candidates, have a strong advantage on compassion issues compared to their childless counterparts. These results suggest that men and women who do not have children may be perceived to lack compassion and the absence of a parenting experience may render them inadequate to handle child-related issues. Also, the significant interaction effects suggest that the state of being childless affects men and women in opposite ways. While men are advantaged by having no children, women are penalized, particularly among Republican respondents.

The findings from this chapter deviate from the political ambition and campaign strategy analysis in that there is now evidence that motherhood can function as an asset for

women candidates. Mothers of young children did not fare as poorly as predicted, and mothers overall certainly fared better than childless women in this experiment. As I will elaborate later, this pattern may indicate not so much that motherhood is an asset, however, but that it is a *credential* and cover from the negative stereotypes associated with childlessness. As long as the maternal is intimately bound up with women's identity, childless women challenge this norm and may be punished for it.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Through motherhood, every woman has been defined from outside herself: mother, matriarch, matron, spinster, barren, old maid – listen to the history of emotional timbre that hangs about each of these words. Even by default motherhood has been an enforced identity for women, while the phrases 'childless man' and 'nonfather' sound absurd and irrelevant to us (Adrienne Rich, 1978: 261).

In 1998 The Barbara Lee Family Foundation, an organization committed to increasing women's representation in government bodies, produced an informational "handbook" with advice for women gubernatorial candidates (*Keys to the Governor's Office)*. This handbook, based on research conducted by a political consulting firm[67], dedicated an entire chapter to how women should present their family lives to voters. Titled "Family Matters," the chapter's primary theme is that voters are wary that a mother governor can balance the demands of political office with childcare responsibilities:

> When both male and female voters imagine a woman with children as the executive leader of their state, they also express some anxieties. How will she balance the needs of her family with the responsibilities she has at work? If she really had to choose between managing a family emergency and a statewide crisis, would she choose her state? Moreover, should she choose her state?

In addition to the warnings about the time balance dilemma, the last line of the above quote alludes to voter perceptions that mother candidates are violating their proper roles by putting anything or anyone but their children first. Consistent with requirements of the intensive mothering model, mother candidates are not only constrained by the time balance dilemma, but also the perception that "good" mothers focus their time and energy on their children, not politics. In general, the Foundation's handbook implicitly told candidates that motherhood functions as a *liability* in political candidacy.

Fast forward to 2010, when the Barbara Lee Family Foundation produced another

[67] Lake Research Partners produced the research for the Barbara Lee Family Foundation. Celinda Lake, ABD in political science, served as the principal investigator.

handbook geared towards women candidates for governor (*Turning Point)*, which claimed that women's gender, including their roles as wives and mothers, can actually be an *advantage* in political candidacy. Contrary to past advice, the Foundation now advises political candidates to explicitly "reference family":

> Even if you choose to keep your family far from the campaign trail, you can and should let people hear your point of view as parent, child, spouse or partner. That's the thing about family — everyone has one.

Moreover, the handbook cites the views of consultants and campaign personnel who acknowledge that mother candidates seem more relatable to voters and are perceived as having particular strengths because of their motherhood experience. Consider the following quotes:

> You know they can manage things pretty well because they are moms and wives. I think that's strength. They're more open to dialogue, more consensus builders. Isn't it just that a woman can use everything and if she does, voters will perceive her as more?
>
> A campaign manager spoke about a woman candidate's ability to "use everything" including her personal experience. In his view, that made her more "relatable, knowing family budget, about school and work-life balance…the advantage is you can play both sides."Another campaign manager spoke in similar terms, noting, "You can be tough and policy-minded and still talk to people about your kids."

The only times in which *Turning Point* treats motherhood as a potential liability is in this remark: "One note of caution: our prior research shows that some voters are still wary of a woman with young children running for office."

The rather drastic change in advice provided to mother candidates very much reflects how the meaning of motherhood in politics truly is in flux. Once almost categorically treated as a liability, more mother candidates than ever seem have greater freedom to adopt strategies that involve presenting motherhood experience as an additional credential or asset. Given these changes to the political landscape, my dissertation seeks to investigate the complexity of how parenthood functions in political candidacy.

The results reveal that how parenthood functions for men and women political candidates is contingent in many ways—first, parenthood functions differently depending on the aspect of candidacy in question. While motherhood may function as a constraint in political ambition, evidence suggests it is an asset or at least a credential in voter evaluations. Secondly, parenthood is very much bound up with other variables that together tell the story of how motherhood and fatherhood function in politics. Simply put, parenthood does not function in a vacuum but rather must be considered in tandem with such variables as gender and political identification. Rather than offering a succinct, firm answer to the question, "Does parenthood function as a liability or asset for men and women political candidates?" this dissertation proposes a nuanced analysis of the relationships among gender, parental status, and political candidacy. In what follows, I summarize key findings from the three empirical chapters and am careful to note how these findings confirm or deviate from the theory outlines in Chapter 2. I also discuss the limitations of this research and point to future directions that may add to our understanding of how parenthood functions in politics. Finally, I discuss implications of my research and offer an assessment of what my findings mean in application to real world politics.

Chapter 3 analyzed how parenthood influences the political ambitions for men and women state legislators. To do so, I relied on two secondary surveys of state legislators: the 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study and the Candidate Emergence Study. Unlike mainstream political ambition studies, my analysis explores the many ways in which family life directly and indirectly influences men and women's political inclinations. I see my findings as an improvement over gender and politics research that uses descriptive statistics to characterize how family life affects the political ambitions of men and women differently. These studies note that women tend to run for political office when they are older, after childrearing responsibilities have lessened. Women in politics also tend to be childless and mother politicians

tend to have fewer children compared to their male counterparts. While this line of research provides helpful clues into how parenthood might affect the political careers of men and women differently, systematic tests of the impact of parenthood on men and women's political ambitions are largely absent (but see Fox and Lawless 2011; Fulton et al. 2006; and Sapiro 1982 as exceptions).

The findings in Chapter 3 suggest that more often than not, motherhood functions as a constraint on women's political ambitions while men are not affected by family or if anything, are *motivated* by family. In sum, gender affects political ambition through a path of personal decisions, considerations and attitudes: political men and women have different family compositions (women are far less likely to have minor children and are more likely to have older children), they place more or less importance on private considerations that affect political ambition (women care more about the age of their children), and are affected differently by the presence of minor children (women with children at home are less politically ambitious while men with minor children are more ambitious). Some evidence also indicates that party identification complicates the relationship among gender, parenthood, and political ambition, as Republicans were more likely to ascribe importance to private considerations such as the approval of their spouse or partner and their children being old enough, with Republican *women* being the most constrained by the latter variable. There were a few instances in which gender and parental status did not seem to predict differences in state legislators' considerations: one example is the approval of spouse or partner variable (CAWP data) on which no gender differences emerged; rather, the evidence points to party differences as both Republican men and women were more likely to say this factor was important in their initial decision to run for office compared to Democrats. One interpretation of this null finding is that women are less likely than men to have been married at the time of their initial bid. Also in the CAWP data, men

and women are just as likely to express political ambition for another office while in the CES data, women with young children are less ambitious than women without young children and men. I attribute this mixed finding to the limitations of the CAWP ambition question for the purposes of my analysis, which I detail in Chapter 3. Overall, then, despite the few instances of mixed or null findings, in general, gender, parental status, and the interaction between both very much matter to explanations of political ambition. The findings add up to the general conclusion that because of different family structures and attitudes toward family, parenthood functions as a constraint on mothers' political ambitions, and particularly the ambitions of mothers of young children.

It is important to note that the datasets I used to capture the relationships among gender, parenthood, and political ambition use samples of state legislators, who have already run for and held office. This means that the individuals I have studied have successfully navigated and negotiated the constraints that may be associated with their parental status. As stated previously, I do believe that running and serving in the state legislature is quite unlike a bid for and seat in Congress in that the time demands and public scrutiny involved in a congressional bid and career make it so that parenthood becomes all the more salient, especially for women. That is, candidates who run for Congress face exaggerated constraints of parenthood. This makes the findings in Chapter 3 the result of a "most likely case" which means that I might have measured the constraints of parenthood at their highest. Additionally, state legislators—by virtue of already entering the political world—are a distinct group that are arguably very different from the men and women who have never run for political office. Future research should explore the relationships among gender, parenthood, and political ambition among individuals who have yet to run for office. Lawless and Fox (2011) conducted such an

analysis that, using a sample of "eligible candidates,"[68] found that marital status, parental status, and traditional family structures did not impede women from considering a run for political office. Based on their findings, the researchers make a rather strong claim that as an answer for why more women do not emerge as candidates, "the 'family' explanation carries intuitive appeal, but no explanatory power" (Lawless and Fox 2011, 23). The nature of Lawless and Fox's sample, however, may underestimate the effect of family roles and responsibilities on political ambition. People who have never been political candidates or had political careers may be acutely unaware of what it takes to combine parenthood and politics, and what the consequences of such a decision really are. State legislators, in contrast, are cognizant of what it means to balance both roles—from time balance dilemma considerations to perceptions of role violations. These considerations, based on experience, may dissuade them from running for an even higher office in which the constraints associated with parenthood are even more exaggerated and perhaps detrimental. Thus, family considerations may be peripheral to eligible candidates' considerations when considering political candidacy, but evidence from my analysis indicates that it is far too soon to conclude that family roles are no longer a formidable barrier to the emergence of women as candidates for Congress.

Lawless and Fox (2011) argue that the "normalization" of the double bind has made women accustomed to the work/family balancing act: "The struggle to balance family roles with professional responsibilities has simply become part of the bargain for contemporary women" (21). For this reason, they argue, family does not impede the emergence of women political candidates. Implicit in Lawless and Fox's argument is that gender roles—or at least the perception of what women can and cannot do simultaneously—has shifted over time. Because the Candidate Emergence Study data used to assess the relationship among gender, parental

[68] Eligible candidates include individuals who are situated in careers that often precede political bids (law, business, education, and political activism), but who have not held political office before.

status, and political ambition was fielded in 1998, it may be possible that my results from this dataset actually reflect a time in which women were *not* as accustomed to the balancing act as they are today, in 2012. If this is the case, then my results from the CES data would be overestimations of the present effects of parental status and private considerations on the political ambitions of women. However, there are two reasons to question this proposition. For one, the CAWP data was collected ten years after the CES survey was fielded, and the general results—that private considerations and parental status operate as constraints for women but not as much for men—still hold. Secondly, survey evidence indicates that gender norms and expectations have not changed much over time, as well as concerns about working mothers. For example, 25.2% % of the general public in 1998 disagreed with the notion that "a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." By 2006, the proportion of the public who disagreed actually slightly increased to 27.3% (General Social Survey).

Chapter 4 considered gender and parental status differences in campaign strategy. In order to analyze different strategies men and women candidates use in their campaigns to present their family lives to voters, I relied on an original dataset that contained data from the 2008 and 2010 campaign websites of competitive congressional contenders. Despite the recent proliferation of mother candidates and the emergence of "Mama Grizzlies," the results indicate that if any gender has more freedom in using their children in their campaign strategy, it is men. Father candidates are especially more likely to include pictures of their children on their campaign websites, which is a telling finding in that visual representations of children make the parental status of a candidate much more overt than a simple text mention hidden at the end of a candidate's biography page. Thus, the strategy of using children in pictures is one that decidedly emphasizes children and the father role. Men's tendency to highlight their children in

pictures is consistent with the hypothesis that men are still freer than women to showcase their families in their campaigns and present their children as assets.

Candidates with children living at home were consistently and highly significantly more likely to picture their children on their campaign websites. I interpret this finding to mean parents of younger children may believe their children will appeal to voters who will react positively to the candidate's family, perhaps because voters feel warmly towards young children or because the candidate seems more relatable. Also, this strategy may be an attempt to counter ageism among the electorate (Sigelman and Sigelman 1982), as voters may assume that candidates with adult children must be much older, while candidates with young children are assumed to be relatively younger. It is also important to note that the gender interaction—gender x age of children—did not reach significance in this model which indicates women with younger children were as likely as men with younger children to present them in pictures. However, this finding should be treated with caution given the low number of women with young children who competed in competitive congressional elections in 2008 and 2010. As more mothers of young children enter the candidate pool, future research should assess the extent to which gender differences may emerge, as well as the *effects* of these strategies for women and men candidates.

As for childless candidates, a finding that was contrary to my expectations was that childless candidates were not more likely to include other family members in their campaigns, but in fact were *less* likely to use this strategy compared to parent candidates. Childless candidates may forego the "family theme" altogether in their campaign in favor of a strategy that capitalizes on their strengths, which may include a focus on policy issues and their dedication to the job. Alternatively, it may be that parent candidates are more likely to be married and thus have the option of including their spouses in their campaigns. This strategy is

not available to single childless candidates who can only include family members like parents, nieces, nephews, etc. Future research might control for marital status in order to make clear which explanation is driving this finding. Either way, it is clear that when it comes to campaigning with family members, parent candidates and childless candidate employ distinct strategies. Because of the findings in Chapter 5 that indicated childless women suffer in voter evaluations, future research should investigate the types of strategies that may aid childless women in overcoming negative voter perceptions.

The major limitations of the findings of Chapter 4 concern the low sample sizes. Although this study captured the universe of competitive congressional candidates in 2008 and 2010, the small number of women as well as missing data limits the generalizability of these findings. When parental status is controlled for, the number of mothers in the sample is further reduced. Because of the low number of women in competitive congressional campaigns relative to the number of men, it is also difficult to compare groups of women (e.g. mothers of young children vs. mothers of older children). Adding additional election cycles to the sample cannot correct this problem if election years are analyzed separately, but inclusion of *all* congressional candidates in subsequent research may paint a more generalizable picture of what predicts differences in candidates' use of family in campaign strategy.

Further, although small sample sizes makes the following assertion tenuous, candidates for the Senate seem to deploy the use of family slightly differently than candidates for House. For one, Senate candidates use family members (including children) more often than House members. Contrary to the strong evidence that parents of young children for the House are more likely than parents of adult children to showcase their family, the evidence is contrary in the Senate, where parents of adult children actually have a higher mean on the overall use of children variable. This evidence suggests that candidates use their family differently depending

on the level of office and future research might explore how type of office mediates candidates' strategies for self-presentation of their families.

Finally, although this project does much to explain how candidates use their families differently in campaigns, it does not measure the *effects* of these strategies. Indeed, how voters react to these strategies is really at the heart of why candidates deploy different strategies in the first place. For women, who are severely underrepresented in politics, this question is important. Although Chapter 5 tests how voters react to the parental statuses of men and women candidates for Governor, this is different than testing for the effect of different strategies or ways that candidates use their children in campaigns. The results of the present analysis suggest that women still tend to de-emphasize their parental status and motherhood experience, at least for some strategies like showcasing children in pictures. For other measures of family use, women and men seem to use strategies in equal proportions. Future research should test the effectiveness of these strategies, and how voters react to the different ways in which men and women deploy children and other family members in their campaigns. The results of these tests will have implications for men and women candidates who must decide how to negotiate their self-presentation of family to voters.

Chapter 5 is the heart of this dissertation in that it tests for the electoral consequences of being a parent (or not) for men and women candidates. To help determine the relationship among gender, parenthood, and voter evaluations I conducted an experiment that varied the gender and parental status of candidates and relied on a sample of college students. Even before considering parental status, however, the results of the experiment found that voters (college students at a liberal Northeastern university) consistently penalized the woman candidate. Although real-life political races involve other factors that matter to vote choice besides gender, the findings from this study indicate that sex discrimination may still be

operating under the surface, albeit in subtle, hidden ways.[69] This finding alone should serve as a seriously cautionary tale to both scholars and practitioners who believe that voters are no longer biased against women candidates.

But although men fare better than women regardless of their parental status, motherhood also matters to voters. The respondents in this sample, especially Republicans, evaluated the childless woman candidate negatively. Voters in this study may have been responding to a subconscious feeling of discomfort with a woman who is not like most other women, in that childlessness represents "deviance" from the procreative norm.[70] This finding is critical in that it provides support for the idea that *motherhood can be a political asset for women candidates*. As discussed previously, it may not be so much that voters respond to positive traits associated with mothers, but rather that they are responding to the *absence* of negative traits associated with childlessness. In this case, motherhood functions as an asset in that it provides cover for women candidates from the negative stereotypes associated with childlessness.

Contrary to my expectations, women with young children are not evaluated as poorly as predicted in that voters are not strongly biased against women candidates with young children. Thus, the results from this test showed that motherhood is *not* a liability or constraint as

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[69] Some studies have shown that myriad factors, including political structure and party identification have more influence on the fate of female candidates than gender stereotypes or voter bias. Incumbency, for example, is a key barrier for women seeking political office (Carroll 1994; Dolan 2004) and women do best when there are open seats (Burrell 1994). Furthermore, some scholars have demonstrated that gender is more salient in low-information contexts (Banducci, Everitt, and Gidengil 2002; Dolan 1998), and that shared partisan identification is one of the most potent predictors of votes for women (Dolan 2004; King and Matland 2003). Some researchers have argued that gender as a variable cannot be considered alone, but in conjunction with partisan affiliation (King and Matland 2003). In many cases, voters are more influenced by the party of the candidate rather than his or her gender (King and Matland 2003), though some studies note an "affinity" effect in races where women are more likely to support women candidates, especially when those candidates are Democrats (Cook 1994; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002).

[70] While more women than ever are deciding to delay motherhood or to not have children at all, over 80 percent of American women will be mothers in their lifetime (U.S. Census Bureau 2008) Available: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012510.html.

expected. However, it is worth noting that women with young children may not fare as well with a representative sample of the U.S. population, and in fact that the original hypothesis of this study concerning the disadvantage of women with young children, might actually be confirmed with a non-student sample.

In addition to the student sample, another limitation of the experiment is that perceptions of candidate age may have also affected the results. Respondents were presented with pictures of the same male or female candidate in each condition, but in the parent conditions either young children or grown children were picture alongside of the candidates. Candidates with young children are likely perceived as younger compared to the candidates with older children, but this effect might be more pronounced for women candidates. Women are constrained biologically to child-bearing years while men can father children well after the age at which women cannot (although there are certainly exceptions). Ageism is gendered in the sense that older women are perceived as less feminine, unattractive, less sexual, and stereotyped as cruel and unhappy (Gutmann 1985; Sherman 1997). For these reasons, respondents might have evaluated the mother of younger children more positively and the mother of grown children more negatively because of the stereotypes associated with younger and older people (Cuddy and Fiske 1998; Sigelman and Sigelman 1982). This idea delves nicely with the findings from Chapter 4 in which parents of younger children were much more likely to picture their children on their campaign websites. Future research might assess the extent to which perceptions of age are bound up with parental status and how these relationships work differently for women and men political candidates.

My experiment also found evidence of a "fatherhood penalty." That is, childless men candidates are advantaged compared to father candidates which is very much contrary to the expectation that fatherhood is an asset in voter evaluations of candidates. I originally

hypothesized that children may "feminize" men and challenge the ideal of the lone, autonomous male leader (Duerst-Lahti 1997), but the quantitative results did not bear this out. One possible reason for this finding may be attributed to the nature of the sample. Since most college students cannot directly relate to parent candidates, perhaps the typically positive associations with fatherhood are absent from young people's evaluations. Future research should explore exactly how voters (and especially parent voters) perceive father candidates of young children compared to childless men candidates, especially considering the analysis from Chapter 4 clearly showed that father candidates tend to showcase their children in their campaigns.

Overall, when it comes to voter evaluations, the story is more about gender than anything else—candidate gender has a significant effect on each evaluation variable with men scoring higher than women. When parenthood does matter, the results seem to demonstrate that childlessness among women is particularly disadvantageous. Unfortunately the respondents in this study did not offer many reasons for penalizing the childless woman, other than they simply disliked the fact that she had no children. Future research must investigate the roots of antipathy toward childless women as well as strategies women can use to counteract the negative stereotypes associated with childlessness. Further, even though the campaign strategy analysis found that childless candidates are *not* more likely to include other family members in their self-presentations, but rather may be foregoing the family theme altogether, future research might investigate if using a family theme might aid childless women in offsetting negative stereotypes associated with their parental status.

Finally, future research may explore how gender and parenthood not only affect political candidates, but also politicians. Do the functions of parenthood change for men and women once they are in office? In one way, perhaps nothing changes since even in office,

political men and women may still act like "candidates" if they desire re-election. On the other hand, perhaps politicians are freer to present parenthood as an asset if they are not as concerned about voter perceptions as they might be during a campaign. Just today I received an e-mail from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's listserv which included a photo of her and her young boys preparing a Thanksgiving meal. What did Gillibrand hope to gain from sending this image to her supporters and would she have done the same thing if she were currently a candidate and not in a relatively safe seat in the Senate? That is, is motherhood more likely to function as an asset for women politicians compared to women candidates? Future research might explore how exactly parenthood functions for politicians, as well as the consequences.

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

Revisiting the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, I offered two reasons why parenthood may function as a liability or constraint in the candidacies of women. One reason concerns the time balance dilemma—mothers either do not have the time or are *perceived* as not having time to perform both roles (office holder and mother) adequately. The second category of constraint is the role violation hypothesis which posits that mothers who run for political office deviate from social norms and expectations that require women to be "intensive mothers" that direct their time and energy toward their children. While it is impossible from the datasets utilized in this dissertation to determine exactly how each category of constraint affects the political candidacies of women, this framework does help make sense of my findings. Chapter 3 found that women are more likely than men to ascribe importance to "private considerations" surrounding their decisions to run for office, including separation from family and friends and their children being old enough to make them feel comfortable spending time away. The findings also provided evidence that mothers of minor children are less likely to hold ambitions for a career in the U.S. House of Representatives. It makes sense that mothers may be

concerned about balancing both roles and may be particularly concerned about "neglecting" their children. Chapter 4 found that mothers are less likely than fathers to adopt strategies of showcasing their children to voters. Here, mother candidates may be responding to perceptions of the time balance dilemma *and/or* to perceptions of role violations. Mother candidates may strategically de-emphasize their roles as mothers to avoid voter concerns about competing loyalties as well as concerns over their children's welfare or decision to run for a position that would take time away from their children.

In addition to the constraints associated with motherhood, my theoretical framework also included how parenthood can function as an *asset.* Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 suggest that parenthood does function as an asset for men, but not for women. One of the most striking findings from Chapter 3 was the gender x parental status interaction effect for congressional ambition which means that while having minor children constrained women's ambition, it *increased* men's ambitions. There is something about being a father that makes men state legislators more likely to want a career in Congress. In this way, parenthood may function as a networking opportunity—father legislators might be involved in activities or with organizations where they find encouragement to run for a higher office. In Chapter 4, the most striking finding was the gender difference in the inclusion of photos of candidates' children, as fathers were much more likely to adopt this strategy. As noted previously, visual representations of children very overtly highlight parenthood and in this case, fatherhood. Men may use their children to appear "softer" and more relatable (Dittmar 2010) or perhaps to assure voters that they are "normal," heterosexual men who have the standard nuclear family.

A major challenge of this dissertation is squaring the findings from Chapter 5 with the theoretical framework. The "fatherhood penalty" found in Chapter 5 deviates from the notion that fatherhood is always an asset for men while the advantage mother candidates received in

comparison to childless women was also unexpected. Here, the most interesting implication is that parental status *is* a liability for women, but for childless women, not mothers. As discussed prior, I believe this finding means not so much that motherhood is an asset for women candidates, but more so that it is a qualification. Motherhood normalizes women and protects them from perceptions that they are the "Other" kind of woman—the deviant childless one. In some ways, women again find themselves in a double bind—they want to assure voters that they are normal, heterosexual women participating in a nuclear family structure, but they do not want voters to think that their family responsibilities makes them less committed or less competent for political office. And indeed, some of the findings provided evidence of such, including that voters believe mothers of young children have far less time for the job. Overall, then, in spite of the null findings that mothers of young children are consistently penalized, I believe my findings still illustrate the many ways in which motherhood can function as a liability in voter evaluations of women candidates.

Limitations

I noted some specific limitations of the empirical tests discussed above, but there are also general limitations to this project that are worth outlining. Theoretically, the race of the candidate should shape the relationship among gender, parental status, and political candidacy. Black mothers are especially vulnerable to negative stereotypes that are very different than perceptions of white mothers. Researchers and theorists have pointed to the ways in which black mothers are penalized for becoming mothers at all and that the positive traits associated with motherhood are actually reserved for white women (King 1998; Mink 1999; Roberts 1997). Thus, motherhood functions differently for white and black women, and I would especially expect to find racial differences in voter evaluations of candidates. Black male candidates may also be able to use family and children to soften their image and escape the "angry black man"

stereotype (Sinclair-Chapman and Price 2008). Therefore, like white men, black male candidates may also present their families as assets in their campaigns, but for different reasons and to counteract different stereotypes. That is, fatherhood has a different *function* for white and black men candidates.

A look at the backgrounds of black women elected to the U.S. Congress reveals that black women have very different family structures compared to their white women counterparts. Notably, black women are significantly less likely to be married compared to other members of the House of Representatives and much more likely to serve as single mothers of young children (Bedolla et al. 2005). In fact, only three black women who have served in Congress have been childless. These findings suggest that motherhood may not function as a constraint on black women's political ambition for Congress as it does for white women and in fact may be an asset or motivation to run for Congress. Future research should investigate how parenthood functions for black candidates not only in political ambition, but also in their self-presentations and in voter evaluations.

The conclusions from my project are limited to candidates for high office (Congress and Governor). The relationships among gender, parenthood, and political candidacy might be different for lower office in that parenthood may not be as salient. Particularly, the constraints associated with motherhood (time balance and role violations) may not matter as much for political ambition, campaign strategy, and in the minds of voters. Because candidates for Congress and Governor often have prior experience in lower offices, it is important to understand how gender and parenthood affect the decisions, careers, and perceptions of men and women candidates throughout their time in politics.

Implications for the Women and Politics Field

The findings from this project have important implications for understanding how gender functions in politics. A durable finding from the women and politics literature is that women are perceived as better able to handle "compassion" issues, such as healthcare, education, childcare, and poverty. In contrast, men are perceived as better able to handle so-called "masculine" issues like terrorism, the military, and foreign policy (Cook, Thomas, and Wilcox 1994; Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004 Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Sapiro 1981-1982). Chapter 5 demonstrated that this long-standing finding is very much bound up with parental status. Childless women lost women's typical advantage on compassion issues while childless men were perceived as better than father candidates at handling a military/police crisis and terrorism. Thus, just as voters seem to be unable to separate a candidate's gender from their parental status, scholars also cannot and should not treat gender stereotypes as simply the product of sex, but rather also consider how parenthood influences the ways in which men and women political candidates are perceived.

Early women and politics studies often relied on experiments to find evidence of voter discrimination toward women candidates (e.g. Sapiro 1981). Later studies examined real elections to make the claim that once women emerge as candidates, they are just as likely as men to win their elections (Burrell 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994), which many scholars take to suggest that voter discrimination is no longer a barrier to women's representation in politics. Other scholars argue that even though women may be as successful in men in their elections, they must overcome several barriers that do not apply to men, including lower political ambition and gender stereotypes (Dolan 2010; Lawless and Fox 2005; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Koch 1999; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988; Sanbonmatsu 2002). As of late, women and politics researchers have noted the importance of considering gender *and* party in

examinations of how voters evaluate candidates, especially since party is such a dominant cue in voter evaluations and choice (Dolan 2004; King and Matland 2003). This last line of research has found that Republican women are generally disadvantaged compared to Democratic women, and may fare especially poorly in primaries (King and Matland 2003; Lawless and Pearson 2008; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). These studies have advanced the field by demonstrating that certain *kinds* of women may be penalized by the electorate, and that gender does not operate in a vacuum. My dissertation expands on this approach by considering gender in tandem with parental status. Women are not simply less politically ambitious than men but rather *mothers with minor children* are. Men and women candidates may have similar self-presentations in their campaigns overall, as many recent studies have suggested (e.g. Dolan 2005), but my work in Chapter 4 demonstrates that when it comes to use of family and children, women have very different self-presentations compared to men. Finally, the experiment in Chapter 5 illustrates that not only are women penalized in voter evaluations because of their gender, but also that a certain type of woman—a childless one—is particularly disadvantaged, especially among Republicans. This work advances the women and politics field by clearly demonstrating that gender analyses of political candidacy cannot be completely explained without also considering parental status.

Final Thoughts and Implications for Real World Politics

Were Sarah Palin and her cadre of Mama Grizzlies right in their decisions to campaign on motherhood? Could Hillary Clinton have gained more political capital in 2008 had she done more to emphasize her motherhood experience? The answers to these questions are complicated, in that whether or not parenthood is a liability or asset is contingent. However, when it comes to voter evaluations, it seems like motherhood *is* definitely an asset, especially among Republican voters. Contrary to how I originally envisioned this project, the political

consequences of parenthood are most significant for childless (women) candidates. Mother candidates may be constrained in other stages of candidacy including political ambition and their ability to showcase their families in pictures, but when it comes to voter perceptions, motherhood experience is critical to have, though not necessarily for the reasons expounded by the Mama Grizzlies and others who have attempted to use the positive qualities associated with women and mothers to claim these qualities also make them good politicians. In fact, motherhood may advantage women simply because it protects them from the negative qualities associated with the opposite of motherhood—childlessness.

In sum, the story is this: women candidates are disadvantaged compared to male candidates, but not necessarily because of constraints associated with motherhood. While having minor children may explain female state legislators' decreased ambition for Congress compared to their male counterparts, it does not explain lower voter evaluations of women compared to men. Of the women who do run for Congress, motherhood constrains the extent to which they showcase their children relative to men, especially in pictures. Even though voters may prefer women candidates to be mothers over childless, perhaps a good strategy is not to *highlight* motherhood experience, but simply assure voters that you are "normal" (not childless), and a "real person," as Krystal Ball has suggested.

The results from this dissertation may suggest pessimistic consequences for childless women candidates. Yet, given the extreme difficulties of combining motherhood and a political career, it is perfectly understandable that political women are more likely to be childless than their male counterparts. While childless women may successfully emerge as candidates precisely because of their parental status, they are subject to much scrutiny once they get there. To be sure, childless women (and men) were perceived as having more time to fulfill the responsibilities of Governor, but in general scored lower on all other evaluation variables.

Although future research might investigate what kinds of strategies are useful in helping childless women overcome the negative stereotypes associated with childlessness, the reason for the varying importance voters place on a man and woman's family is symptomatic of deeply ingrained ideas that even the best campaign strategies might not be able to overcome. Women are intimately connected to, and associated with, the family in ways that men are not. For women who do not have children, this cognitive dissonance is a problem, and one that involves a radical change in how we conceptualize the family, the political realm, and women's role in both.

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Appendix A: Sample Details for the Candidate Emergence Study and CAWP 2008 Routes to Office Study

Candidate Emergence Study
The Candidate Emergence Study (CES) data used in this study is part of a larger study of potential candidates' decisions to run for Congress conducted by principal investigators L. Sandy Maisel (Colby College), Walter J. Stone (University of California, Davis), and Cherie D. Maestas (Florida State University). Surveys were mailed to state legislators in 1998 from a random sample of 200 of the 435 congressional districts. 2715 total state legislators were sampled and 875 responded, for a response rate of about 32%.

Center for American Women and Politics 2008 Routes to Office Study
In 2008, the Center for American Women in Politics (CAWP) conducted the "2008 Routes to Office Study," with principal investigators Kira Sanbonmatsu, Susan J. Carroll, and Debbie Walsh (Rutgers University). Surveys were mailed to state legislators in all 50 states and the sample included the population of women state senators (n=423), the population of women state representatives (n=1314), a random sample of men state senators, stratified by state and sampled in proportion to the number of
women from each state in the population of women state senators (n=423), and a random sample of men state representatives (n=1314), stratified by state and sampled in proportion to the number of women from each state in the population of women state representatives. 1268 legislators completed the survey for a response rate of 36.5%.

The 2008 CAWP Recruitment Study was administered by the research firm Abt/SRBI Inc. Data collection began in late January 2008 and continued through early September 2008. Respondents received an initial letter informing them of the study and inviting them to complete the survey online. This letter was also sent electronically to those respondents with publicly available email addresses. Respondents who did not complete the web survey after this initial invitation were sent a paper copy of the survey instrument with a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelope. Non-respondents were subsequently re-contacted with reminder messages and additional copies of the survey instrument. Towards the end of the data collection period, remaining non-respondents received phone call reminder messages as well as invitations to complete the survey by phone. Most respondents (63.2%) completed the paper version of the survey although some respondents completed the web version (27.6%) or phone version (9.1%). Respondents were promised confidentiality.

Of women in the CAWP sample, 69.4% identified as Democrats compared to 51.2% of men (Independents and "Other" party-identifiers were excluded from my analysis).

Appendix B: Factors that Influence Ambition for Men and Women State Legislators

Table: CES Data: Means on each factor that could discourage running for office

Factor	Men	Women
Separation from family and friends	2.51	2.56
Lost personal and family privacy	2.80	2.75
Negative impact on political career if lost election	3.52	3.54
Loss of leisure time	3.12	3.05
Enduring negative advertising attacks**	2.95	2.71
Needing to raise large amount of money*	2.10	1.92
Losing income	3.34	3.41
Lack of assistance from political party**	3.57	3.49
Possibility of serving in the minority party	3.57	3.49
Having to give up current career	3.33	3.44

+=p<.10; *=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

Table: CAWP Data: Means on each factor that could affect decision to run for state legislature

Factor	Men	Women
Financial resources*	1.83	1.74
Approval of spouse or partner*	1.21	1.28
Children being old enough***	1.61	1.33
Building prior experience	2.30	2.25
Flexible occupation	1.46	1.47
Feeling capable***	1.57	1.39
Contacts for career	2.78	2.73
Perception of office as stepping stone**	2.79	2.87
Policy issues***	1.91	1.68
Longstanding desire to run***	2.12	2.37
Candidate training***	2.77	2.62
Can handle public scrutiny**	1.85	1.73
Party support***	1.97	1.83

Below are various factors that have been suggested to be important in influencing decisions to run for office. Please indicate how important each factor was in affecting your decision to run the first time for the office you now hold. 1=very important, 2=somewhat important, 3=not important

+=p<.10; *=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

Appendix C: Campaign Strategy Coding Measures

Coding measures

1. Children pictured on front page
2. Children mentioned in biography
3. Children's specific ages mentioned in biography
4. Children's ages described as "grown" or "adult" children in biography
5. Children pictured in biography
6. Other family members mentioned in biography
7. Other family members pictured in biography
8. Separate website section on family
9. Children's occupations or accomplishments mentioned
10. "Active parenting" mentioned (candidates describe activities with children such as coaching sports teams)
11. Connecting parental status to an issue (e.g., from Senator Kelly Ayotte's (R-NH) 2010 campaign website: "And as the mother of two children, Kelly also supports efforts aimed at providing parents with school choice.")
12. Children pictured in issue section
13. Other family members mentioned in issues section
14. Other family members pictured in issue section
15. Parenthood as a motivation for running (e.g., from Krystal Ball's (D-VA) 2010 campaign website: "In March of 2008, after my daughter Ella was born, I knew, like many parents, that I had to do something to ensure that our kids are raised in the same great Virginia that we were.").

Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics for Campaign Strategy Variables

Variable Descriptives, Senate

Variable	Mean	Range	N	Missing
Child front page	.22	0-1	49	8
Children-bio	.87	0-1	48	9
Ages	.21	0-1	48	9
Children pictured in bio	.47	0-1	47	10
Other family bio	1.60	0-2	48	9
Other family pictured in bio	.72	0-2	48	9
Separate family section	.15	0-1	48	9
Family importance				
Parenthood connected to issues	.67	0-3	46	11
Children pictured in issues	.12	0-1	42	15
Family connected to issues	.98	0-5	46	11
Family pictured in issues	.10	0-1	41	16
Motivation	.14	0-1	44	13

Variable Descriptives, 2008 House

Variable	Mean	Range	N	Missing
Child front page	.26	0-1	68	37
Children-bio	.86	0-1	74	31
Ages	.12	0-1	74	31
Children pictured in bio	.39	0-1	67	38
Other family bio	1.34	0-2	74	31
Other family pictured in bio	.55	0-2	67	38
Separate family section	.08	0-1	76	29
Family importance	.11	0-1	47	58
Parenthood connected to issues	.44	0-5	71	34
Children pictured in issues	.11	0-2	62	43
Family connected to issues	.58	0-3	71	34
Family pictured in issues	.11	0-2	62	43
Motivation	.11	0-1	71	34

Variable Descriptives, House 2010

Variable	Mean	Range	N	Missing
Child front page	.21	0-1	163	11
Children-bio	.80	0-1	163	11
Ages	.11	0-1	163	11
Children pictured in bio	.30	0-1	162	12
Other family bio	1.45	0-2	163	11
Other family pictured in bio	.46	0-2	161	13
Separate family section	.03	0-1	163	11
Family importance	.05	0-1	163	11
Parenthood connected to issues	.44	0-7	160	14
Children pictured in issues	.04	0-1	153	21
Family connected to issues	.50	0-4	159	15
Family pictured in issues	.05	0-2	154	20
Motivation	.04	0-1	158	16

Appendix E: Connecting Parental Status to Issues

Connecting Parental Status to Issues: Senate

Strategy	Count
Economy	4
Second amendment	1
Education	9
Abortion	5
Healthcare	2
Military	2
Values	4
Marginalized groups	3
	N=21

Connecting Parental Status to Issues: House, 2008 and 2010

Strategy	Percent
Education	41.2
Values	16.2
Abortion	16.2
Economy	14.7
Healthcare	10.3
Military	10.3
Other	8.8
Marginalized groups	5.9
Public safety	4.4
Environment/energy	4.4
Second amendment	4.4
Agriculture	1.5
N=68	

Appendix F: Experimental Stimulus

Description of candidates without children:

Connecticut State Representative *John/Jane* Smith is running for Governor of Connecticut. *He/She* is married and has no children. *John/Jane* Smith has worked as a lawyer for more than 15 years and is currently serving *his/her* second term in the Connecticut State Assembly.

Description of candidates with children:

Connecticut State Representative *John/Jane* Smith is running for Governor of Connecticut. *He/She* is married, and is the *father/mother* of two children—Brad, *25/3* and Katelin, *20/6*. *John/Jane* Smith has worked as a lawyer for more than 15 years and is currently serving *his/her* second term in the Connecticut State Assembly.

Speech excerpt:

"All over Connecticut, people are anxious. Like everyone else in America, they are nervous about the economy. This is not a Democratic or Republican or Independent issue. This is a Connecticut issue.

In every corner of the state – in rural, suburban, and urban areas – unemployment rates are rising, homes are being foreclosed on, and people's life savings are diminishing. And all signs indicate that next year is going to be even worse – perhaps the worst year since the Great Depression. Connecticut residents are worried.

But Connecticut residents also know that the best days are ahead. They know that the next few years are going to be tough, but they are ready to get to work and build a better future for their children. They need a governor who can bring an energetic, fresh, creative approach to solving problems and building a stronger economy… a governor who comes to the job with values such as honesty, hard work, and accountability.

I believe that we can solve our problems together. With hard work, dedication, and perseverance, you and I can ensure a brighter future for Connecticut."

Note: This text was borrowed from Terry McAuliffe's campaign website (McAuliffe is running for Governor of Virginia in 2010) and was adapted to the purposes of this study. http://www.terrymcauliffe.com

Appendix G: Characteristics of Respondents in Each Treatment Group

Group Treatment	**Age (mean)**	**Party Identification (percent for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents)***	**Sex (percent men; percent women)**
Childless men	19.7	62%; 28%; 10%	53.7%; 46.3%
Childless women	19.6	67.4%; 15.2%; 17.4%	39.6%; 60.4%
Men with young children	20.1	47.6%; 35.7%; 16.7%	51.1%; 48.9%
Women with young children	19.7	56%; 28%; 16%	58.2%; 41.8%
Men with grown children	19.3	58.9%; 19.6%; 21.4%	47.4%; 52.6%
Women with grown children	20.0	67.9%; 22.6%; 9.4%	64.3%; 45.7%

*Although data for "Other" party was collected, respondents choosing this option comprised less than 5% of the sample, and so were dropped in the subsequent analysis.
Note: Results from chi-square tests for party identification and sex and ANOVA for age revealed no statistically significant differences among groups.