THE GLASS CEILING: PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

A Project

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by

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Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

THE GLASS CEILING: PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

by

Darla McBee

Kathleen Kouklis

Women face a number of barriers to accessing and engaging in the political sphere. This research project addresses the current barriers for women in running for and holding political office from the perspective of thirty-one young women, ages 18 to 30 years old, at California State University, Sacramento who are members of the student organization Social Work Student Association (SWSA). This research project was studied by conducting exploratory research using a mixed methods approach to examine the relationship between the perceived barriers and the effort women are willing to exert to ameliorate these barriers. This study revealed some key issues that require action on the part of politicians as well as the social work profession. The findings demonstrate that the majority of participants have not considered running for a political office (64.5%). The findings also indicate that there is a moderate correlation between receiving encouragement to run and consideration of running for political office ($r = 0.334$). Furthermore, it was noted that no participants received the suggestion to run from party
officials, elected officials, non-elected political activists, or any other political actors. Nevertheless, all participants identified that it is important for women to be involved in politics (100%). However, the two most recurrent barriers identified by participants were lack of knowledge about the political process (n=9) and having a different career trajectory (n=7). Although this research does not allow for a definitive, conclusive inference, it builds a knowledge base for potential solutions to advance gender parity in politics.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Teiahsha Bankhead, Ph.D., LCSW

_______________________
Date
DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this thesis to all the strong, fearless women who are, and continue to be, trailblazers for future generations. We would also like to dedicate this body of work to diversity and social justice, in all its forms.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, we would like to thank our loved ones, family and friends alike, for their unwavering support. We are indebted to our mothers for their unparalleled dedication to our wellbeing. We are also grateful to the current and former faculty in the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento who contributed to this project by inspiring us to remain critically curious, namely, Dr. Lynn Cooper and Dr. David Nylund. We are very grateful to our thesis advisor, Dr. Teiahsha Bankhead, for her support of the research presented in this body of work.
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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Great strides have been made in the quest for gender equity, offering women the opportunity and milieu to choose occupations in American politics more so than they historically were able (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). Unfortunately, the current number of women in political positions suggest there is still a long way to go. The subject of gender equity has escalated in significance over the years, providing the opportunity for women to enter into the field of politics at increasing rates. However, research has shown that many young women do not perceive political office as a viable career option to them for a variety of reasons (Fox, nd). The research findings on gender in politics suggest that a serious problem exists in our political system. Women are still far behind their male counterparts in terms of the number of political positions held, despite women comprising half of the population (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Women deserve an equal opportunity to provide service through political occupations. In order to achieve this goal, more research needs to be conducted on the barriers that young women perceive as impeding their intentions to seek political office.

Background of the Problem

In 1920, 144 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, women in the United States were given the right to vote. Ninety-two years later, gender equality has still not been achieved and continues to be discussed and debated. Gender equality is a human right (UN Millenium Project, 2005), but our world faces a persistent gap in
access, opportunities, and decision-making power for women and men (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2012). Globally, women have fewer opportunities for economic participation than men, less access to basic and higher education, greater health and safety risks, and less political representation (Hausmann et al., 2012). Guaranteeing the rights of women and giving them opportunities to reach their full potential is critical for attaining gender equality. Empowered women and girls contribute to the health and productivity of their families, communities, and countries, creating a ripple effect that benefits everyone.

The lack of gender parity in politics is an acute and stubborn problem. Comprising over 50 percent of the United States’ population, women continue to be underrepresented as elected officials (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The United States trails behind much of the world, ranking 92nd in the number of women in our national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013). In the congressional election of 2012, the number of women reached a record high in both chambers: 20 in the Senate, five of whom were elected in 2012, and 77 in the House of Representatives (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013). However, the United States still ranks behind most industrialized democracies with women filling a mere eighteen percent of the U.S. Congressional seats (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Women are faring better in statewide elective executive offices than congressional seats: in 2013, 75 women hold statewide elective executive offices across the country, meaning women hold 23.4 percent of the 320 available positions (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013). Since 1971, the number of women serving in state
legislatures has more than quintupled, yet in 2013 only 24.1 percent of the 7,383 state legislators in the United States are women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013). As of January 2013, among the 100 largest cities in the U.S., only 12 had women mayors (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013).

A strong and vibrant democracy relies on all members of a society having access to decision-making and the chance to have their issues heard and considered. With the perspective of women being sorely underrepresented, the U.S. is compromising the strength of its democracy. The costs of inaction are borne not just by women, but by all of society. Women’s direct engagement in public decision-making is a matter of democratic justice and a means of ensuring better governmental accountability to women. While there are a number of organizations that recruit, train, and support adult women to run, few are building political ambition among young women (Finlay, Flanagan, & Wray-Lake, 2011). The majority of the interventions targeted at closing the gender gap in politics are focused on adult women, which is too late, as the barriers to women’s candidacies are more easily overcome during the teenage and young adult years, when young women’s career and leadership aspirations are still in formation.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Few researchers have studied what women perceive as being the barriers for themselves in seeking to obtain political positions. Whether women prefer or reject their ascribed gender role, are coerced or readily conform to societal expectations, have a comparative biological advantage for caring for children or not, many women find themselves constrained by their gender role socialization, which leads them to believe
they must simultaneously be devoted to family and work (Parsons, 1955; Bielby, 1991; Blair-Loy, 2003; Fox, nd). Eagly (2007) added that although women are recognized as possessing the right combination of skills for leadership, a persistent pattern remains: women often are disregarded in favor of men in realizing leadership positions due to limited access to leadership positions, prejudice in their attempts to obtain leadership, and resistance when they occupy leadership positions. The researchers are interested in revealing what the barriers are that women perceive as impeding their interest in running for political office.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to gain a better understanding of what factors women perceive as inhibiting or diminishing their aspirations or efforts to enter into politics, leading to women engaging in political occupations at lower rates than men. A secondary purpose of this research is to investigate what factors could increase female involvement in politics so that future investigations can incite further engagement by women in seeking political office, and to assist in the development of real-world resolutions to the problem of gender disproportionality in politics. The factors which influence women’s decision to engage in politics and run for political office are associated with the on-going prescription of, and adherence to, traditional gender roles and the inability to access political positions in some areas. Although several political agencies have developed a variety of approaches to address the issues of gender openness and accessibility to political positions, appropriate outreach and advertising materials are currently not adequately targeted at young women.
Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks have guided this research: feminist theory (Shriver, 2010) and the social action model (Alinsky, 1989; Miller, 2010). Five principals of feminist theory resonate most with our social change effort. First, feminist theory emphasizes the elimination of false dichotomies; that people should critically evaluate the way thought and behavioral expectations are structured within the culture (Shriver, 2010). Western culture emphasizes separating people, things, and events into mutually exclusive categories. A traditional Western view stresses the division between male and female behavioral traits (Shriver, 2010). This can be seen in the roles dictated for women and men, with women being the social and emotional caretakers and men assuming the instrumental role by working, making decisions, and maintaining strength. Feminist perspective emphasizes attending to a balance between autonomy and relationship competency for both genders. A second dimension underlying feminist theory is the recognition that differences exist in male and female experiences throughout the life span (Shriver, 2010). One aspect of this dimension is the feminist focus on the impact of gender-role socialization. A third principal inherent in feminist theory is the end of patriarchy, the doctrine under which men hold positions of power. Simply stated, feminist theory refutes the concepts of male dominance, female submission, and gender discrimination (Shriver, 2010). The fourth feminist principal, closely related to that of ending patriarchy, is that of empowerment. A feminist perspective emphasizes the need to empower women, enhance their potential for self-determination, and expand their opportunities. Lastly, the fifth underlying principle of feminist theory is the idea that the
‘personal is political’. Feminist theory maintains that sexism is the result of social and political structures.

The community change model we employed for our research is the Social Action Model. The social action approach assumes there is a disadvantaged (often suppressed) segment of the population that needs to be organized, perhaps in alliance with others, in order to pressure the power structure for increased resources or for treatment more in accordance with democracy or social justice (Alinsky, 1989). Social action at times seeks basic changes in major institutions or changes in basic policies of formal organizations. Such an approach often seeks redistribution of power or resources (Miller, 2010). In summary, social action involves pressuring the power structure to provide resources or improve the treatment of oppressed populations who are victims. In the pursuit of social justice the power structure is viewed as the adversary, so conflict, confrontation, and direct action are often used.

**Definition of Terms**

*Gender:* A way of categorizing individuals into dichotomous categories such as male and female, that depends mostly on the embellishment of biological differences (Padavik & Reskin, 2002; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Masculinity and femininity are not fixed to the biological nature of men and women, respectively. Rather, these notions are social constructions which are modified over time, depending on cultural contexts. Being active agents in society, individuals are continuously shaping gender and what it means to be male or female. Nonetheless, the boundaries separating female and male genders are
widely accepted, despite debates amongst scholars about the justifications for this separation (Epstein, 1999).

**Gender Roles:** Shared expectations about behavior that apply to people on the basis of their socially identified sex (Padavik & Reskin, 2002). Gender roles include the behaviors, attitudes, rights and responsibilities that society attributes to being male or being female (Strong, DeVault, Sayad, & Yarber, 2008). Gender roles are often argued to be complementary: men provide for families by being ambitious and assertive, while women sustain family functioning by being gentle and nurturing (Parsons, 1955). By consequence, socially shared expectations arise about how men and women should behave.

**Gender Stereotypes:** Refers to the oversimplified or generalized characteristics of one’s gender, often they do not have anything to do with an individual’s personality (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

**Gender Prototypes:** Refers to symbolic knowledge categorization structures used to make sense of the anticipated and projected displays of gendered behavior for a given sex type of men and women consistent with their gender role (Scott & Brown, 2006).

**Agentic behaviors:** Refers to behaviors that are commonly associated with the male prototype. The male prototype contains the expectation of men to behave with agentic traits, including but not limited to ambition, assertiveness, dominance, or confidence (Eagly, 1987; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993).

**Communal behaviors:** Refers to behaviors that are commonly associated with the female prototype. The female prototype encompasses the traditional expectation of women to
behave with communal traits, including but not limited to cooperation, nurturance, or gentleness (Eagly, 1987; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993).

*Leadership Prototypes:* Refers to people's perceptions of a leader based on eight different leader prototype dimensions commonly associated with effective leaders: sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, strength, and masculinity (Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994). Leaders who exhibit behavior that is compatible with the leadership prototype are perceived more positively than leaders whose behavior does not align. Leaders acting outside of these prescribed leadership prototypes results in disparagement from onlookers.

*Gender Parity in Politics:* Refers to equality of representation of women compared to men.

**Assumptions**

All women deserve equal access to, engagement in, and representation in the political arena. An underlying assumption of this study is that the United States government is dominated by male elected officials, partially because women are less likely to run for office than men. The researchers assume that young women have similar levels of interest in and skills for engaging in the political process as men, yet due to perceived barriers, their type of participation varies with respect to male participation. An underlying assumption to this research about women in politics is that having more women in political office would make a substantial difference in policy outcomes.
**Justification**

Although many studies submit that this disproportionality is caused by women’s lack of interest in running for political office, the researchers postulate that this is largely related to the socialization of women. Essentially, women are socialized to remain in the private rather than public sectors of life and to focus on familial obligations. The researchers are examining the data with the presumption that women are entering politics at different rates than men mainly due to lack of training, preparation, and development of young women leaders. The researchers postulate that if women were to be more informed on how to become engaged in politics, namely through an increase in transparency about what was needed to start a campaign, more women would run for office.

The information collected and analyzed in this study should provide more general benefits, providing further knowledge about women’s experiences regarding political and civic education, exposure to women in political leadership, hands on training opportunities and a peer network of women who support and nurture each other’s aspirations for civic and political leadership. This would benefit social work by improving social justice for women by increasing their representation at the political level.

**Limitations**

As with all research studies, this research presents limitations that should be eminent when analyzing the findings. The goal of this research is focused on revealing young women’s feelings about politics. Participants in this research study are comprised
exclusively of undergraduate and graduate female students between the ages of 18 to 30 at California State University, Sacramento who are members of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA). Although it is possible that participants may respond differently than those with more extensive work experience, the researcher’s interest in young women’s perceived barriers have led to the decision to study this population. Consequently, both men and women younger than 18 or older than 30, will not be studied in this research. As the research findings address only the perceptions of a particular populace, they cannot be generalized to the public. Additionally, as women, younger people, and college students are noted to be more likely to be Democrat rather than Republican in their party affiliation (Center for American Women and Politics, 2005; Newport, 2009; Hart Research Associates, 2012), our study cannot be generalized to all party affiliates.

Additionally, since participants were only generated through the student organization SWSA, this could create discrepancies in overall representation. The field of social work has long been identified as being a more democratic or liberal occupation (Ritter, 2007). Consequently, the self-selected participants are more likely to be left-wing, liberal Democrats, therefore their experiences compared to other political affiliates could be significantly different. Our study may not subsequently represent all political affiliate experiences and therefore cannot be generalized to the public.

All of the surveys were administered during SWSA events. Since this is a controlled environment, participants may be in a different mindset than their everyday mindset, meaning given another social context, they might answer the questions
differently. Therefore, the complexity of the participants’ natural environments may not be represented in the findings. Future work is needed to understand whether similar perceived barriers emerge for other populations.

**Statement of Collaboration**

This research project was completed through the collaborative efforts of Masters of Social Work students Darla McBee and Kathleen Kouklis. The researchers participated equally in the writing, development of materials, distribution of surveys, and analysis of surveys. Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 were written by the researchers collaboratively sitting together with each researcher having input. Chapter 2 was divided into sections in which the Introduction, Gaps in the Literature, and Summary sections were written in collaboration between both researchers, the sections on Historical Background of Women in Politics and Current Political Representation were composed by researcher Kathleen Kouklis, and the sections on Barriers to Gender Parity in Politics and Potential Catalysts were composed by Darla McBee. Researcher Kathleen Kouklis took the lead in editing while researcher Darla McBee took the lead in analyzing the data through SPSS.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter describes literature relevant to the research purposes of this thesis regarding the underrepresentation of women in politics. Initially, it will provide a brief historical background of women in politics, covering time periods from the colonial and early national periods, the Antebellum Period, the Civil War and its aftermath, and the Suffrage Movement from 1890-1920. This will be followed by an examination of the current political landscape of women. Next, it presents several different explanations for the disparity of women in politics, including an overview of the effects of gender role socialization and gender stereotyping, women being perceived differently as leaders, women’s self-perception of their abilities depressing their political involvement, the lack of recruitment of women, and the incumbency disadvantage women face as politics have historically been male-dominated. After this discussion, it offers potential catalysts to promote an increase in female involvement in politics, such as how female candidates can embrace the feminine stereotype to their advantage, how women currently in political positions can lead to more women seeing politics as a viable career option, how developing women’s self-esteem can impact their assessment of their ability to fill political positions, and how approaching women politically at an earlier age can lead to further civic engagement later in those women’s lives. Finally, gaps in the literature will be discussed.
Historical Background of Women in American Politics

Historically women did not have a formal role in the public sphere of politics. In fact this arena was specifically exclusive of women, the practice of politics itself was considered unseemly altogether, as politics was professed to be a job only for the most educated and experienced businessmen (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999). In the new American democracy, politics became a pivotal tool in directing the future of this burgeoning nation, and while women were not allowed within the sphere of politics, politics intruded upon the spheres of women so drastically and depressively that women had no choice but to become involved (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012).

The Colonial and Early National Periods

During the colonial and early national periods, women were denied their political and legal rights under The Articles of Confederation (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). Despite gains women made in education and law, society still exclusively defined them as homemakers, wives, and mothers (Harvey, 2012; Kerber, 1976). Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, prompted her husband to “remember the ladies” when drawing up a new government or they would foment a rebellion, which they eventually did (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999). Nevertheless, even in the Republican zeal of the post-revolutionary period, women got few new rights.

The power to regulate elections and voting requirements, and legislate concerning the status of women was left to the states in The Constitution and Bill of Rights (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). The authority of state law meant that
much depended upon where a woman lived and the particular social circumstances in her
region of the country (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). The few
women who did participate in politics during the Revolutionary period did so using
pseudonyms. However, many colonial women were often behind-the-scenes participants
in politics. According to the Encyclopedia of Women in American Politics (Schultz &
Van Assendelft, 1999), women opposed royal taxes by boycotting goods, they
participated in public spinning bees to avoid cloth imports, and they participated in tea
leagues to avoid the purchase of tea. Yet, their contributions have been largely ignored.

Women’s political activism predates the fight for the right to vote. However,
after the Revolutionary War, politics was still largely viewed as an arena exclusive to
men and thought to be improper for women (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999;
Weatherford, 2012). Furthermore, the social norms of the time prevented women from
publicly speaking out, which in turn impeded their participation in the political arena
(Harvey, 2012; Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). Public sanctions
for women to act politically were limited to the role of what historians have called
republican motherhood, a notion that carved out a significantly new understanding of
women’s political status (Harvey, 2012; Kerber, 1976; Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999;
Weatherford, 2012). The concept of republican motherhood restricted women’s political
roles to those of a domestic nature, in that they were to indoctrinate the next generation
with republican ideals, values, and beliefs (Harvey, 2012; Kerber, 1976). Therefore,
women served a political purpose through their domestic responsibilities; there increased
domestic duties were a poor substitute for formal participation in politics.
The Antebellum Period

Before the American Civil War, the abolishment of slavery served as a catalyst for women to publicly speak out about a political issue (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). Political consciousness rose for women through the fight to abolish slavery because they realized they were nearly as devoid of political rights as the slaves they sought to emancipate (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012).

The Civil War and its Aftermath

Throughout the Civil War, efforts for women’s suffrage diffused as attention was directed towards war efforts and abolishing slavery by way of a constitutional amendment. After failed attempts for women’s suffrage concurrent with the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which introduced the word male to the U.S. Constitution to define citizenship and enfranchised Negro males, respectively, efforts were directed at achieving women’s suffrage on a state-by-state basis (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012).

During this time, two major organizations emerged to fight for women’s right to vote: National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and American Women’s Suffrage Association (AWSA) (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). While both organizations sought women’s suffrage, they differed in their tactics. NASW’s goal was to achieve women’s suffrage via a constitutional amendment and to fight for broad women’s rights, whereas AWSA believed in taking the state-by-state approach and thought that fighting for diverse goals would negatively affect the issue of women’s suffrage (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012). Despite disagreeing on
how best to achieve women’s suffrage, they both believed male dominance suppressed women’s political participation (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012).

**The Suffrage Movement from 1890-1920**

The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and American Women’s Suffrage Association (AWSA) merged to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The struggle for women’s rights heightened through organizational support and club membership in the 1880s and 1890s (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999). Within these clubs, women came to the realization that the reform they sought to elevate the status of working women and children could only be achieved through the political process. Suffrage opponents ensured a constitutional amendment would not pass through the rhetoric of states’ rights (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999). Many states achieved women’s suffrage before national legislative success was achieved, which only further demonstrated the political force of the suffrage movement. In 1919, the House of Representatives and then the Senate passed the suffrage amendment (Weatherford, 2012). By 1920, the necessary three-quarters of states were poised for ratification (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999). After 72 years of struggle, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote. By not initially addressing the suffrage issue more broadly, the Constitution's authors fostered a long-running battle over voting rights. This struggle lasted well into the twentieth century, forming a focal point for the civil rights and women's rights movements (Schultz & Van Assendelft, 1999; Weatherford, 2012).
Current Political Representation

While women achieved the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment, they did not gain political momentum until the women’s rights movement of the 1960’s (Weatherford, 2012). However, women holding office predates their right to vote, as the first woman mayor in the country was elected in 1887. Still, the first woman elected to Congress did not occur until 1917. Beginning with the first female candidate in 1866, women have progressed slowly in obtaining public office (Center for American Women and Politics, 2012).

Comprising over 50 percent of the United States’ population, women continue to be under-represented as elected officials (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The United States trails behind much of the world, ranking 92nd in the number of women in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013). In the congressional election of 2012, the number of women reached a record high in both chambers: 20 in the Senate, five of whom were elected in 2012, and 77 in the House of Representatives (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013). However, the United States still ranks behind most industrialized democracies with women filling a mere eighteen percent of the U.S. Congressional seats (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Women are faring better in statewide elective executive offices than congressional seats. In 2013, 75 women hold statewide elective executive offices across the country; women hold 23.4 percent of the 320 available positions (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013). As of January 2013, among the 100 largest cities in the U.S., only 12 had women mayors (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013). Since 1971, the
number of women serving in state legislatures has more than quintupled, yet in 2013 only 24.1 percent of the 7,383 state legislators in the United States are women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013).

**Barriers to Gender Parity in Politics**

**Gender Role Socialization and Gender Stereotyping**

In order to understand and assess the underrepresentation of women in politics, one must first be aware of the impact that gender has on individuals in society. Gender role socialization is the process by which individuals come to learn, undertake, and transmit what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate for their gender (Padavik & Reskin, 2002; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). This process holds that the behavior considered normative for a gender (the gender prototype) is internalized by the gendered individual and is translated into gender displays by that individual.

Traditional gender-role socialization influences how women and men think about seeking leadership positions, including public office, as observation of gender-related social roles leads individuals to have certain expectations of others on the basis of their gender. In accordance with the conventional gender prototypes, the female prototype encompasses the traditional expectation of women to behave with communal traits, such as cooperation, nurturance, or gentleness, while the male prototype contains the expectation of men to behave with agentic traits, such as ambition, assertiveness, dominance, or confidence (Eagly, 1987; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). These gender prototypes influence how women act, how they perceive others, and how they perceive themselves (Eagly, 1987; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008). Although
individuals may diverge from traditional gender expectations, there is a consensus of expected behaviors for each gender role due to the prototypes. Individuals are sanctioned when they act outside of the normative expectations of their assigned gender role (Eagly, 1987; Johnson et al., 2008; Padavik & Reskin, 2002). Gender prototypes consequently can facilitate or constrain women’s experience and attainment of life goals, including women’s avoidance of seeking political office due to being “socialized to view politics as a man’s world” (Arceneaux, 2001, p. 144). Arceneaux (2001) highlighted that some women are less willing to run for political office because they internalize the gender role prototypes which prescribe that they must exhibit certain behaviors, and, consequently, they do not see political positions as a possible career option for themselves.

Although many accept gender prototypes, some authors posit that these anticipated displays of behavior ignore the efforts of contemporary women in occupational attainment, reinforce gender stereotypes, and disregard entitlement norms which are afforded to men and not women (Bielby, 1991). Blair-Loy (2003) suggested that although a modern female’s devotion to work is just as pertinent to her role identity as devotion to family, the cultural pressure of women to commit to the family despite their employment is a testament to the gender prototype’s continued significance to their identity. Consequently, gender prototypes are cited throughout the literature as a barrier to women seeking political positions (Arceneaux, 2001; Eagly, 1987).

Fox (nd) sought to gain further understanding of the influence of traditional gender prototypes on men’s and women’s ambition to run for office. The study compared subgroups of similarly credentialed professional men and women who had the
likelihood of political candidacy by distributing mail surveys to men and women with careers in law, business, and education – three professions which generate the highest amount of political candidatures (Dolan & Ford, 1997; Burrell, 1994; Moncrief, Squire, & Jewell, 2001, as cited in Fox, nd) – and then drawing an equal number of men and women from each category to get a stratified sample. Fox (nd) found that women with a higher occupational attainment, i.e. “top level professionals” (p. 8), tend to de-emphasize a traditional family life. This finding was supported by Blair-Loy (2003) who articulated that a devotion to work has led women to devote less time to their families. Additionally the research suggests that as women’s responsibility for household division of labor decreases, interest in running for office increases (Fox, nd). Conversely, responsibility for household division of labor appears to be ineffectual in men’s likelihood of becoming a political candidate (Fox, nd). Thus gender role expectations of traditional familial duties were observed as still being influential in women’s decision to run or not to run for political office.

Whether women prefer or reject their ascribed gender prototype, or whether women get coerced or readily conform to societal expectations, despite the comparable abilities of women to men, many women find themselves constrained by their gender role socialization, which leads them to believe they must simultaneously be devoted to family and work (Bielby, 1991; Blair-Loy, 2003; Fox, nd; Parsons, 1955), and consequently do not see political office as a viable career option for themselves (Arceneaux, 2001). Although women are recognized as possessing the right combination of skills for leadership positions such as political office, a persistent pattern remains: women are often
disregarded in favor of men in realizing leadership positions due to limited access to leadership positions, prejudice in their attempts to obtain leadership, and resistance when occupying leadership positions (Eagly, 2007). Thus, although great strides towards gender equality have been made, there is recognition throughout the literature that the notion of gender prototypes has remained prevalent in our culture and the biases against women repeatedly thwart women’s paths to politics (Blair-Loy, 2003; Eagly, 2007; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Johnson et al., 2008).

**To Be Female is to Be Perceived Differently**

One argument for the disparity of women in politics is that the behaviors exhibited by men and women are *perceived* differently, essentially on the basis of their gender. In accordance with social role theory, when one behaves outside of their gender role they are subject to negative evaluation by others (Eagly, 1987; Johnson et al., 2008). The expectations assigned to a gendered individual impact the extent to which one is perceived as an effective leader. Since women are preferred to exhibit predominantly communal qualities, and leaders are often portrayed as exhibiting predominantly agentic traits, cross-pressures are experienced by female leaders (Eagly, 2007).

Role congruity theory suggests that people’s perceptions of a leader are influenced by how much they act in accordance with their gender role prototype. According to Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz (1994), there are eight different leader prototype dimensions commonly associated with effective leaders: sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, strength, and masculinity. Leaders who exhibit behavior that is compatible with the leadership prototype are perceived more
positively than leaders whose behavior does not align. Leaders acting outside of these prescribed leadership prototypes meet disparagement from onlookers. Eagly (2007) and Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, and Reichard (2008) proposed that the agentic qualities of the male prototype (expected patterns of behavior for the male gender) are more aligned with the expectations for leaders than the communal qualities of the female prototype (expected patterns of behavior for the female gender). Therefore, expectations for leaders are more harmonious with expectations for males than for females, as the roles of males and leaders are seen as being congruent. Since women are typified to have less agentic and more communal traits, women are expected to be less effective as leaders. Thus, it is not necessarily the behavioral differences between male and female candidates that are responsible for the discrepancy of women in politics, but rather, the interpretation of their behavior (Johnson et al., 2008).

Johnson et al. (2008) tested this theory by examining the expectations held for leaders on the basis of gender, and the consequences of those expectations on the assessment of gendered leaders. Through four studies, Johnson et al. (2008) examined the eight leader prototype dimensions proposed by Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz (1994), (dedication, intelligence, charisma, attractiveness, tyranny, sensitivity, and strength) in relation to how displays of leadership prototype dimensions are interpreted on the basis of female or male leaders. The research uncovered that females seeking leadership positions needed to exhibit both strength and sensitivity in order to be perceived as effective leaders, while men were perceived to be more effective so long as they exhibited strength. They posited that it is acceptable for either gender leaders to
adopt positive, albeit gender inconsistent, behaviors as long as they do not fail to exhibit gender-consistent behavior. Further, in order to be perceived as proficient leaders, it was found that women must exhibit both feminine and masculine traits, while men who exhibit solely masculine traits can still be perceived as effective leaders. Male leaders were generally perceived as being more effective when they exhibited strength, whereas effective female leaders, who needed to exhibit both strength and sensitivity to be perceived as effective, were still seen as being overall less effective than male leaders. Interestingly, male leaders who only exhibited sensitivity were seen as the weakest of the four leaders. Ultimately, the research found that violating one’s gender role prototype could have extensive impact on outsiders’ perceptions of their likeability and effectiveness.

Scott and Brown (2006) took this exploration of gender bias against female leaders even further. Their research suggested that the biases against women arrive as early as during the actual encoding of the behaviors the leader exhibits. Encoding is the basic stage of information-processing that occurs all the time, by which environmental stimuli are encoded into mental representations, using categories to distinguish and symbolize the complex stimuli. This encoded information can be easily understood and called upon, making it easier for the encoded data to be understood. Hypothesizing that traits are encoded during the basic person perception process (when one first meets a person) and, therefore, make up the basis on which understandings of leadership perceptions are formed (Lord & Maher, 1991, as cited in Scott & Brown, 2006), the researchers prescribed status characteristic theory as a possible reason for which women
and men are perceived differently in their endeavors to become political officials. The research sought to explore how salient characteristics which guide perceivers’ evaluations of potential leaders are encoded differently on the basis of the status characteristic of gender. Studying undergraduate students at a Canadian university, Scott and Brown (2006) executed two research studies to see if a leader’s gender influences the encoding process of leadership behaviors into their prototypical trait concepts and whether the encoding of communal or agentic traits varies based on the sex of the “target” candidate being examined. The findings indicated that social category cues, such as gender, enable access to gender stereotype-consistent traits or behaviors, while limiting access to gender stereotype-inconsistent behaviors (Scott & Brown, 2006). Gender bias arises early in the judgment-making process, as women are less likely to be endorsed as possessing the agentic behaviors typified by leaders.

**Self-Perceived Abilities: Equally Viable or Lack of Fit?**

Ultimately, leaders cannot become successful without others accepting their leadership. Thus, performance evaluations or judgments of others, although biased, become one way to measure how well a person is expected to lead (Eagly, 2007). Attempting to gain further understanding on gender bias, the judgment-making process of females in leadership roles was explored by Heilman (1983) who proposed the lack-of-fit model. The lack-of-fit model suggests that women determine their success by the perceived suitability between the requirements of the job and their perceived abilities (Heilman, 1983). Due to entitlement norms, or the implicit preference for male workers, women tend to undervalue their efforts relative to men (Beilby, 1991). In other words,
women perceive themselves as being less qualified than men (despite similar capabilities), and, consequently, do not seek leadership positions, such as positions in the political arena (Bielby, 1991; Fox, nd; Heilman, 1983).

Fox (nd) also tested the notion that women are more hesitant than men about entering politics because they perceive themselves as less qualified. Through the research of mail surveys sent to a stratified sample of 1,202 professional women and 1,397 professional men, Fox (nd) attempted to uncover whether men and women saw themselves as equally viable candidates for elective office. The survey asked respondents across professions in law, business, and education, whether they had ever thought of running for office. Additionally, to measure interest in a way that considered more than just self-perceptions, Fox (nd) asked whether they ever took steps necessary to launch a political campaign. The research found that women, despite having top tier professional accomplishments are less likely to contemplate running for political office than their comparably situated male colleagues.

Johanson (2008) concurred that the traditional views of leadership positions were aligned with masculine traits and behaviors, yet offered that more modern perceptions of leadership reflected the inclusion of more feminine traits and behaviors. In a study of 24 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a Midwestern university in the United States, Johanson (2008) explored whether leadership prototypes (commonly expected patterns of behavior of a leader) included masculine and feminine traits. His methods included having participants view a sequence of laser-scanned, visually depleted faces (rather than images to reduce conclusions made on additional contextual
information) and provide ratings of perceived masculinity, femininity, androgyny, consideration, structure and leadership ability of each. Johanson (2008) hypothesized that leadership prototypes included both a masculine and feminine aspect and further theorized that respondents would implicitly associate males with leadership behaviors of structure, and females with leadership behaviors of consideration. The outcome of the study suggested that although the consideration dimension of leadership is considered to be positively correlated with femininity, perceptions of leadership overall were positively correlated with masculinity and negatively correlated with femininity. In other words, leadership is seen as being a male-dominated field.

The expectations assigned to a gendered individual impact the extent to which one is perceived as an effective leader. Since women are typified to have less agentic and more communal traits, women are expected to be less effective as leaders. According to Arceneaux (2001), the expectations about women’s roles and positions in society are influential in developing or constricting the ability of women to pursue political positions. Specifically, the literature found that if an area has negative expectations of the female gender-role, then women in that area may not run for office because they do not believe it to be appropriate for their gender (Arceneaux, 2001). Even those women who reject passive gender roles and run despite unsupportive elites face unsympathetic voters at the polls and are, consequently, more likely to lose than female candidates in states with more positive gender-role attitudes.
Lack of Recruitment

As previously mentioned, social institutions can have an insidious impact on the political aspirations of females. Informal influences, particularly gender inequity in the recruitment process, are pointed to as a potential causal factor for the gender parity in politics (Arceneaux, 2001; Cheng & Tavits, 2011; Fox, nd). Arceneaux (2001) explained that negative expectations within particular communities about women’s roles and positions created biases against females, leading party officials to fail to recruit or encourage women’s pursuit of political office. Fox (nd) tested gender inequity in the recruitment process by asking respondents (a stratified sample of 1,202 professional females and 1,397 professional males) of the study’s mail-in surveys, whether anyone within the respondents’ lives had ever suggested that they initiate a candidacy. The findings exposed that women were less likely to have been given the suggestion to run for office, although the most likely source of encouraging women to run was found to be friends or acquaintances.

Incumbency Advantage

The incumbency advantage is explored in the literature as being another cause hindering women’s access to political positions (Fox, nd; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). Being that politics has historically been an arena dominated by men, incumbency becomes a major advantage for future male candidates and a disadvantage for future female candidates (Fox, nd; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). Incumbency has historically made the inclusion of previously excluded groups a tumultuous task because, since the bulk of incumbents are men, this decreases the availability of positions opening for females (Fox,
The incumbent advantage of males reinforces the notion of politics being a man’s world (Arceneaux, 2001), which reinforces gender stereotypes and ignores the entitlement norms of men. This can reduce the willingness of women to run for office as they see little possibility for success in political careers.

**Potential Catalysts**

**Embracing the Stereotypes**

The extent to which traditional gender socialization continues to influence a woman’s decision to enter politics is often examined in the literature (Eagly, 2007; Fox, nd; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Johnson et al., 2008). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) explored the political impact resulting from sex stereotyping of women, by examining the impact of stereotypic expectations of male and female candidates’ personality traits on expectations about their respective areas of issue expertise. The research included the random assignment of 297 undergraduate participants to read a brief description about a female or male candidate with typically feminine or masculine traits, holding constant their occupation, level of experience, and other personal information. Participants were asked to rate the competency of the candidates about whom they read. The findings suggested that stereotypic assumptions about women’s greater communal competencies impact the assessments of the candidate’s perceived ability to deal with certain contextual issues. However, their work also revealed that women can ameliorate negative assumptions on the basis of gender stereotypes by exhibiting traits which are typically seen as being part of the male prototype. This finding is supported in Catalyst (2001), a financial magazine, which found that developing a leadership style which is agreeable to
others is rated as critical or fairly important by 96 percent of Fortune 1000 female 
executives (as cited in Eagly, 2007). This statistic highlighted how agentic qualities are 
perceived as valuable by female leaders in an effort to improve the negative-value 
judgments made solely on the basis of their gender. When it comes to running for office, 
both male and female candidates find it advantageous to take on traits or behaviors that 
are considered to be belonging to the other gender (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993).

Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes (2003) explored this embracing of the gender 
stereotypes to be used to the advantage of female candidates by conducting a study of a 
nationwide sample of candidates who ran between 1996 and 1998 for statewide, U.S. 
House, state legislative, local, or judicial offices. They administered a survey that 
generated responses from 1,798 major-party general election candidates, including but 
not limited to 22 female and 66 male candidates of the U.S. House, and 248 female and 
585 male candidates for state legislature. Their survey population spanned 882 state 
legislative districts in 44 states, and 277 U.S. House districts in 43 states. To uncover 
whether women gained a strategic advantage when they embraced their female prototype 
when running for office (meaning the female candidates who focused on women’s issues 
and targeted women’s groups or social groups as their political base), the study examined 
the impact of strategic factors on female and male candidates’ electoral prospects. The 
findings indicated that when women employed strategies of focusing on women’s issues 
and targeting their political base, it could increase their probability of winning by 11 
percent. Ultimately, using the assumptions made about their gender as a strategic asset
rather than a liability was found to have the ability to increase chances of victory for women in political elections.

**Women in Politics Lead to More Women in Politics**

Cheng and Tavits (2011) and Bosak and Sczesny (2008) offered an alternative catalyst to inciting female involvement in the political arena. Cheng and Tavits (2011) suggested that the presence of female politicians could increase the amount of women seeking candidacy. As previously discussed, in the recruitment process, if the party positions are dominated by men, this would signal politics as being men’s work, which would discourage female candidates from running because they would feel unwelcome and would perceive a lack-of-fit with that position (lack-of-fit theory). Their research examined party gatekeepers (those who have an impact on the pipeline of candidates by being responsible for candidate recruitment) in Canada during the 2004 and 2006 national elections, as Canada has a higher proportion of female candidates than most new democracies. By examining the five significant political parties of Canada, the research sought to uncover the effect of the party president’s gender on the gender of incoming female candidates. The research indicated that the more female candidates there were in a given district in the past quarter century, the more likely a party was to nominate a female candidate in the 2004 and 2006 national elections. Cheng and Tavits (2009) argued that having female party gatekeepers is likely to increase the selection of female local party candidates for three distinct reasons: 1) people are more likely to hire persons that resemble themselves, i.e. women favor candidates with female traits; 2) women gatekeepers are more likely to know other qualified women who would be suitable
parliamentary candidates and thus are more likely to recruit them into the electoral process, making important organizational knowledge accessible; and 3) the presence of female party gatekeepers sends a bolstering message to potential female candidates that women are accepted as being active in politics.

This work is supported by Bosak and Sczesny (2008) who contended that having a “stimulus person of their own gender” (p. 683), or a person of the same gender already filling a political position, increased women’s perceived suitability for political leadership positions. The study, which sampled 186 Caucasian management students with prior professional training in Germany, showed participants fictitious advertisements for leadership positions with either male, female, or both male and female stimulus persons shown. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the advertisement versions, then asked to rate their perceived suitability for the advertised leadership positions of each of the exemplar. Their work found that men and women’s perceived compatibility and capability for leadership positions could be stimulated or enhanced by seeing someone of their same gender already filling that position (Bosak & Sczesny, 2008). Simply put, the study elucidated that if women (and men) were to see others of their same sex filling a particular occupational field, then they would be more likely to see that field as a potential avenue to launch a career.

Encouraging Women to See Themselves as Equally Viable

Bosak and Sczesny (2008) explored alternative ways to ameliorate the gender gap in addition to seeing a women already filling the position. The research tested the lack-of-fit theory by examining gendered, self-ascribed fit to leadership positions. The
researchers hoped to expose whether one’s self-ascribed agency mediates the relationship between an individual’s gender and an individual’s perception of their suitability for a certain role. Their methods included asking participants to rate themselves on eight items from the Bochum Inventory for the Description of Personality Traits in the Occupational Context (BIP, Hossiep & Paschen, 1998, as cited in Bosak & Sczesny, 2008) which measures core aspects of agency, including leadership motivation, self-confidence, competitiveness, assertiveness, and performance motivation. The data showed that women evaluated themselves as less suitable for the leadership position than men, yet self-concept and agency served as mediators in the sex difference in perceived suitability for leadership positions. Ultimately, the study found that self-ascribed agency, rather than their biological sex, is to blame for many women not attempting to pursue leadership positions despite being qualified to do so. Bosak and Sczesny (2008) maintained that increases in agency positively affect the likelihood for women to seek political positions. Increasing one’s self-concept of agency is seen as another facilitator of women’s involvement in politics, as agency is seen as a mediator between perceived abilities and perceived suitability for a political position.

Drawing on research that finds women hold themselves to higher standards when deciding to run for elected office (Fox, nd), Ondercin and Jones-White (2011) sought to discover similar behavior for other forms of political participation. Particularly, the research examined sex-based differences in political knowledge and its impact on men and women’s participation in political activities. The study assembled the American National Elections Studies data from the five presidential elections between 1984 and
2000 to gain robust results across different electoral circumstances. The research employed logistic regression to estimate the likelihood of engaging in six different participatory acts: voting, attempting to influence someone’s vote, attending a public meeting, working on a political campaign, wearing a campaign button, and making a campaign contribution. The data mirrored significant differences between gendered persons’ levels of political participation. Regrettably, women were found to be less knowledgeable about politics than men. Ondercin and Jones-White (2011) found that the level of political knowledge a person has impacts them differently based on their gender. Although increased levels of political knowledge translated to greater levels of political participation for both genders, higher levels of knowledge increased women’s gains in political participation more than men’s. This differential impact of political knowledge impacts women significantly, and, as Ondercin and Jones-White (2011) highlight, women hold themselves to a higher standard with regards to their political knowledge. Lack of political knowledge depressed women’s political participation and likelihood to seek candidacy. Consequently, programs which seek to increase women’s political knowledge are explored as a catalyst for inciting female involvement in politics. Understanding the etiology of women’s beliefs in the political system and their sense of responsibility to serve as politicians has implications for future involvement of women in political affairs.

**Developing Political Involvement for Young Women**

Since the educational system is the only institution with the capacity to reach every young person, schools are a setting explored in the literature as a milieu in which to motivate political engagement of women. Additionally, during the formative years of
adolescence, young women expand their awareness of their interests and capacities (Watson, Quatman, and Edler, 2002). Through longitudinal interviews with 100 ethnically diverse youth (ages 14-21) in 10 urban and rural arts and leadership programs, Dawes and Larson (2011) found that organized youth programs, such as school-based extracurricular activities and community programs, are environments that can stimulate adolescents to form a personal connection to a cause or goal, which can then be cultivated through the developmental opportunities presented by organizational programs. Dawes and Larson (2011) conducted face-to-face interviews with participants at the beginning, midpoint, and end of their study period, paired with telephone interviews on a biweekly basis. The goal of this data collection procedure was to elicit youth’s interpretations of their subjective experience in program activities in terms of change in their engagement or motivation. The research concluded that youth become psychologically engaged with organizational programs after integrating their personal goals with the goals of the organization, thereby forming a personal connection with the organization. From this research, it can be surmised that women can become further engaged in politics after integrating their personal goals with organizations that strive to increase their political knowledge. This political knowledge can then be promoted and developed, leading the young women to flourish in political engagement in their adulthood.

In their two-year, two-wave panel study in Belgium among a stratified sample of 4,325 sixteen- and eighteen-year olds, Quintelier and Hooghe (2011) further researched the relationship between socialization effects on political attitudes and political participation. Specifically, the longitudinal research hoped to unearth whether
socialization and interaction with civically engaged actors had an effect on motivations and attitudes towards political participation, as the presence of others could serve as a motivational incitement to acquire specific and group-legitimized preferences and attitudes. Political participation was measured by asking respondents how often they participated in particular activities in the past twelve months, specifically individual and/or collective forms of political participation. Political attitudes were measured by the selection of two basic attitudes: political interest and political trust. On all accounts, their investigation revealed that political attitudes are developed following engagement in participation, not prior to it. During late adolescence, individuals are in the identity formation process of viewing themselves as responsible members of the community, and engagement in political activities can increase the likelihood of their engagement later in their lives. The conclusion drawn from Quintelier and Hooghe’s (2011) study was that to increase interest in seeking political occupations, participation experiences at a young age have persistent socialization effects and can lead to greater development of political attitudes necessary to develop candidacy for political office.

An additional way to incite civic engagement of previously disengaged populations (for the purpose of this literature review, women) is offered by Crocetti, Jahromi, and Meeus (2012). Their study of 392 Italian high school students (58% females) who completed a self-report questionnaire sought to uncover links between identity and civic engagement in the form of volunteer and political participation. The study recognized that civic engagement was low among Italian youth, and hoped to illuminate an intervention to increase civic engagement. The research found that active
reflection on commitments which they are currently engaged in appeared to be the fundamental identity process to promote civic engagement through the attitudes of social responsibility. Specifically, developing in youth a stronger relation to social responsibility in the younger identity development stages could be a catalyst to encourage further political involvement of previously uninvolved populations.

**Gaps in the Literature**

Much attention in the research is given to the ways in which gender stereotyping has influenced female involvement and subsequent political and voter reaction. In considering the ambition to run for office, much of the research indicates that women tend to demonstrate lower levels of ambition than men for seeking political office. Much of this research focuses on individuals who have already engaged in politics. Despite the attention given to whether women and men are equally likely to aspire to attain high-level elected offices, little research has focused on younger women who may be in more initial phases of identity development, and, consequently, who may be more responsive to catalysts to encourage female involvement in politics. The discursive processes during the transitional age of women can be further researched to gain insight in how such processes produce inclusive teamwork and opportunities for female leadership. It is also important to evaluate the moderating and mediating influence of individual difference variables, such as prior experience and reason for joining, to understand the role of programs, program leaders, and peers in socializing and facilitating youth’s process of psychological engagement.
In terms of willingness to engage in fundamental campaign steps, little research seeks explicitly to uncover what steps young women are more willing to engage in to achieve their political aspirations. This additional knowledge could prove beneficial in enabling the development of targeted education strategies to be provided to young women to potentially increase their political engagement and likelihood for running for political office.

**Summary**

Throughout the literature, there are many attempts to explain the disproportionality of women in politics. Looking at the history of women in politics contextualizes the current state of women’s underrepresentation. Some main theories for the disproportionality have been discussed in this chapter, namely that the underrepresentation is due to women choosing to not run due to constraints of their gender role socialization which leads them to not see politics as a viable option for themselves, that women are perceived differently by voters on the basis of their gender, that women are not recruited to run, that there is an inherent incumbency advantage which favors men over women candidates, and that women assess themselves as not being qualified to run for political office. Potential catalysts to stimulate women to become political candidates were discussed. Finally, gaps in the literature were highlighted.
Chapter 3

METHODS

The objective of this project is to explore young women’s perceptions of barriers to running for and holding political office. The researchers hope to gain insight about women’s attitudes, beliefs, and motivations to run for political office. This information was gleaned from surveys administered to females 18 to 30 years old, who are members of the Social Worker Student Association (SWSA) at California State University, Sacramento. The study explores what accounts for the lack of gender parity in politics and how interventions, which aim to civically engage women, hope to address these concerns. The intent of this project is to determine what young women perceive as barriers to engage in politics, thus contributing to gender parity in politics. The researchers hope the findings will help professionals obtain more knowledge about and solutions to assist women in overcoming perceived barriers to holding political office.

Study Design

This proposed research question was studied by conducting exploratory research using a mixed methods approach. The researchers administered a survey composed of quantitative and qualitative questions to delve into the internal factors that women feel influence their attempts to hold public office. This research examines the relationship between the perceived obstacles, and effort women are willing to engage in to ameliorate these barriers. This method of research was used to gain familiarity and better understanding of what young women perceive as barriers, as gaps in the literature exist in terms of young women’s perception of barriers. The survey was used to develop
quantitative data for the researchers to analyze. This project is a one-group posttest design, as the questionnaire examines the perception of young women regarding barriers to running for and holding political office. Although this research does not allow for a definitive, conclusive inference, the hope is that it will provide an opportunity for others to build a knowledge base on the development of ways to create gender parity in politics.

**Population and Sample**

Participants in this research are thirty-one students currently enrolled at California State University, Sacramento. The researchers recruited participants from the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) on campus. Both researchers are members of SWSA, however, there was no perceived conflict of interest, as the researchers did not participate in this research as subjects. No inducements were offered to engage participation.

**Sampling Plan**

The researchers used a purposive method in studying the sample population by utilizing the criterion sampling approach. Research participants had to meet specified criteria related to the purpose of the study in order to take part in the research. The criterion for inclusion to be a subject in this study is twofold including gender and age: participants must be female and age 18-30 years old. This approach was used because this study is interested in the views and experiences of young women in regards to decisions to enter politics. The researchers administered a survey consisting of 48 open-ended and scaled questions. Participants were asked to complete the survey based on their perceptions related to entering politics.
Data Collection Procedure

The researchers contacted Daniel Wilson, the President of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) on the campus of California State University, Sacramento. The research proposal was explained to Mr. Wilson as well as the purpose of the research. Mr. Wilson provided the researchers with a letter of authorization to recruit participants from SWSA (see Appendix A). The researchers recruited participants from SWSA by attending the student organization meetings and explaining the research proposal to potential participants. The participants were instructed to review and sign an informed consent form to acknowledge their understanding of the research and its procedures. Following this, the participants were instructed to complete the survey to identify their perceived barriers, and then returned the survey to the researchers upon completion.

Instrument

The researchers administered a survey consisting of 48 open-ended and scaled questions. Sections include: demographics, importance of and interest in running for political office, perceptions of the electoral environment, perceptions of bias against women, self-assessment of qualifications to run for office, attitudes about engaging in campaign activities, assessment of political ambition, and encouragement to run for office (see Appendix B).

Measurement

The researchers designed a survey composed of 48 questions that included the following measures within the instrument. Nominal questions regarding participants’
socio-demographics were asked, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. There were also interval-scaling questions regarding the participant’s perceptions of barriers that provided quantitative data to be analyzed by the researchers, which are scored using a three- or five-point Likert-type scale (such as 1=agree, 2=somewhat agree, 3=don’t know, 4=somewhat disagree, and 5=disagree). Other portions of the survey contained open-ended questions, which provide qualitative data to be interpreted by the researchers.

**Data Analysis Plan**

The researchers analyzed the responses of the surveys utilizing two methods of data analysis: statistical data analysis and content analysis, which included summarizing responses to open-ended questions. In order to analyze the quantitative data, the researchers coded and entered the data collected for statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The researchers ran descriptive statistics on all the variables of interest, including perception levels scales. Pearson R tests were calculated between all the variables of interest to determine the level of correlation. The data collected from the research survey was organized into the groupings of quantitative questions so that the data could be entered into the SPSS. The data analysis strategies of content analysis and summarizing responses to open-ended questions were employed to analyze the qualitative data. The researchers focused on the specific repetition of words and phrases through content analysis. Next, the responses to open-ended questions were condensed into a smaller set of general categories.
Human Subjects Protection

Before gathering data, the researchers submitted this study to The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects from the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. The human subjects approval number is 12-13-021. The proposed study was approved as “exempt” according to the human subjects federal regulations under exemption 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) because this research involves the use of survey procedures, does not involve children participants, and the information obtained is not be recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Additionally, any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside of the research would not put the human subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Participants were given a clear and fair explanation of the research procedures, their risks and benefits, and provisions for confidentiality in the research. Each participant provided informed written consent before participation (see Appendix C). The person who signed the consent form was given the option of retaining a copy as a reference and reminder of the information conveyed.

The researchers made every effort to protect the privacy of all research participants by ensuring confidentiality. Participants were advised that the study is confidential meaning the researchers know the names of each participant but did not disclose these names to anyone outside of the research team. Confidentiality also includes ensuring that data that is presented cannot identify any participants. Access to
the data is restricted to the researchers and their faculty sponsor, Dr. Teiahsha Bankhead. Research materials will be destroyed once the Office of Graduate Studies accepts the project.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the mixed methodology utilized in this research study. The population and sample of the study were described. The chapter also included a discussion about the survey, data collection procedures, and the protection of human subjects. The next chapter will present the findings of the data analyzed.
Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to explore young women’s perceptions of barriers to running for and holding political office. A survey designed by the researchers (see Appendix B) was distributed to members of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) who were enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program with the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. Thirty-one questionnaires were completed by participants at student organization events for SWSA and returned to the researchers. All participants were female and between the ages of 18-30 years old at the time the survey was administered. This mixed methods research study used open-ended and scaled questions in order to obtain data from the sample. The participants were asked a series of 48 questions in the survey regarding their interest in running for political office, perceptions of the electoral environment, perceptions of women in politics, self-assessment of qualifications to run for office, attitudes about engaging in campaign activities, assessment of political ambition, encouragement to run for office, and perception of the importance of young women running for office. In this chapter, the researchers present quantitative and qualitative findings thematically using descriptive statistics.

Quantitative Analysis

Gender and Age

All thirty-one participants were female, as that was a criterion for inclusion. Ethnicity and race were not addressed in this survey. Therefore, demographics on
ethnicity and race were not recorded and will not be speculated on for the purpose of accurate data analysis. The average age of the participants was 25.7 years old, with the more participants (n=8) being 23 years old than any other age.

Figure 1. Pie graph showing age of participants.

Household Composition

When asked about marital status, over half of the participants (54.8%, n=17) identified as single, approximately one fourth of participants indicated they were cohabitating with their partner (25.8%, n=8), 12.9 percent of participants were married (n=4), and 6.4 percent of participants were separated or other (n=2). A majority of the participants surveyed (83.9%, n=26) were childless, however, 16.1 percent of participants have children living at home (n=5). When participants were asked about the division of childcare duties, all respondents indicated either equal division of childcare duties or another person (spouse, partner, or caretaker) as responsible for the majority of childcare
(n=6), with all other participants indicating this question was not applicable to them. The largest number of participants specified having equal division of household responsibilities (41.9%, n=13), with 38.7 percent stating they are responsible for a majority of household responsibilities (n=12), and 19.4 percent stating another person is responsible for the majority of household tasks (n=6).

**Figure 2.** Bar graph showing level of household responsibilities.

**Party Affiliation and Political Ideology**

The majority of participants identified as being affiliated with the Democrat political party (83.9%, n=26), 6.5 percent were affiliated with the Republican party (n=2), 3.2 percent identified as Green party affiliate (n=1), 3.2 percent identified as other party affiliate (n=1), and 3.2 percent did not respond (n=1). Additionally, the majority of participants identified having a liberal political ideology (71.0%, n=22), 3.2 percent identified as having a liberal/moderate political ideology (n=1), 19.4 percent identified as having a moderate political ideology (n=6), and 6.5 percent did not respond (n=2).
**Figure 3.** Bar graph showing composition of political party affiliation based on political ideology.

**Interest in Running for Office**

To analyze the participants’ level of interest in running for office in the future, the researchers used a Likert scale (1=definitely interested, 2=probably interested, 3=may or may not be interested, 4=probably not interested, 5=definitely not interested). The mean score for interest level for all respondents was 3.5, indicating the average response was that participants “may or may not be interested” or were “probably not interested.”

**Perceptions of the Electoral Environment**

When examining participants’ perceptions of the electoral environment in which they live, the majority of participants agreed or somewhat agreed that local and congressional elections are competitive. None of the participants disagreed with the statement “elections are highly competitive” in both local and congressional elections.
Table 1

Perceptions of Electoral Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local elections are competitive</th>
<th>Congressional elections are competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Perceptions of Women in Politics

The majority of participants reported that female candidates do not win as often as male candidates (83.9%, n=26), as indicated by Figure 4.

![Figure 4. Pie graph showing general perceptions about women winning elections as often as men.](image)

Additionally, the majority of participants believe that either women do not raise as much money as similarly situated men (43.3%, n=13 out of 30 responses) or that they do not know if women raise as much money as similarly situated men (46.7%, n=14 out of 30 responses), as indicated by Figure 5.
There is a correlation between participants’ responses for whether they perceive women to win as often as men and whether they perceive women to raise as much money as men, in that the Pearson correlation is $r = 0.594$. This indicates that if a participant believes women do not win elections as often as men, they are likely to believe that women do not raise as much money as men. A participant indicating that they perceive women to win elections as often as men did not appear to be correlated to their interest level in running for office in the future, as researchers found a Pearson correlation between these two variables of $r = 0.143$.

**Self-Assessment**

When participants were asked whether they perceive themselves to be qualified to run for public office, 48.4 percent ($n=15$) reported they were qualified or somewhat qualified, and 51.6 percent ($n=16$) identified they were not at all qualified. No participants indicated they were very qualified to run for public office. Participants identified whether they considered themselves confident, competitive, risk-taking,
entrepreneurial, and thick-skinned using a Likert scale (1=agree, 2=somewhat agree, 3=don’t know, 4=somewhat disagree, 5=disagree). The researchers found that for each of the aforementioned character traits, the participants most frequently indicated they somewhat agree that they possess each trait (mode=2, somewhat agree; see Appendix D).

The researchers created a composite self-assessment score by averaging scores of participants’ self-assessment of the five aforementioned character traits. The composite score was compared to participants’ responses of whether they consider themselves qualified for running for public office. The researchers found there is an insignificant correlation between a participant identifying themselves as possessing the five character traits (confident, competitive, risk-taking, entrepreneurial, and thick-skinned), and feeling qualified to run for public office, with a Pearson correlation of $r = 0.122$.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessment: I am qualified</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment: Composite score</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers found that the trait that most closely correlates with a participant identifying themselves as qualified to run for office is confidence, however the correlation is weak ($r =0.270$). The other character traits were found to have no significant correlation to a participant identifying themselves as qualified.
Table 3

*Correlation Between Self-Assessment of Qualifications and Other Character Traits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am qualified</th>
<th>I am confident</th>
<th>I am competitive</th>
<th>I am risk-taking</th>
<th>I am entrepreneurial</th>
<th>I am thick-skinned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>.920</td>
<td>.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing the participants’ assessment of qualification to run for office, the researchers found that this did not have a correlation with a participant’s interest in running for political office.

Table 4

*Correlation Between Interest Level in Running for Office in the Future and Self-Assessment of Qualification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s interest level in running for office in the future</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am qualified</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attitudes about Engaging in Campaign Activities**

Participants were asked about their willingness to engage in seven different campaign activities: soliciting campaign contributions, dealing with party officials, going door-to-door to meet constituents, dealing with members of the press, potentially having to engage in a negative campaign, spending less time with family, and experiencing a potential loss of privacy. A slight majority of respondents reported that they would be willing to deal with party officials (54.8%, n=17) and are willing to go door-to-door to
meet constituents (51.6%, \( n=16 \)). The top four campaign activities that participants indicated they were not willing to do include experiencing a loss of privacy (74.2%, \( n=23 \)), spending less time with family (73.3%, \( n=22 \) out of 30 responses), engaging in a negative campaign (70% \( n=21 \) out of 30 responses), and soliciting campaign contributions (61.3%, \( n=19 \)).

While 83.9 percent of the sample population indicated they were childless at the time of the survey (\( n=26 \)), 71 percent of participants were not willing to spend less time with family (\( n=22 \)). Interestingly, when looking at the breakdown of who had children and who did not, the researchers saw that a large portion of childless participants still see loss of time with family as an impediment to their willingness to take steps toward running for office, with 72 percent of childless participants being unwilling (\( n=18 \)), and 80 percent of participants with children living at home being unwilling (\( n=4 \)).

![Figure 6](image.png)

Figure 6. Bar graphs showing crosstabulation between willingness to spend less time with family and parental status.

Although loss of privacy is the foremost activity people are unwilling to engage in, if someone is willing to have a loss of privacy, they will be more likely to engage in
almost all other campaign activities (except for spending less time with family), including running for political office.

Table 5

Correlations Between Willingness to Experience Loss of Privacy and Willingness to Engage in Other Campaign Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willing to experience a potential loss of privacy</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to solicit campaign contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to deal with party officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to go door-to-door to meet constituents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to deal with members of the press</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to potentially have to engage in a negative campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to spend less time with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant's interest level in running for office in the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political ambition: Considered running for any political office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Asterisks (*) indicate significant correlations.
The researchers found that if a participant was willing to engage in certain campaign activities, they would be more likely to be willing to engage in other activities. For example, if a participant is willing to solicit campaign contributions, then they are more likely to be willing to deal with party officials \( (r = 0.588) \), go door-to-door to meet constituents \( (r = 0.504) \), deal with members of the press \( (r = 0.423) \), and experience a loss of privacy \( (r = 0.591) \) (see Appendix E).

When comparing the willingness to engage in campaign activities to participants’ self-assessments, it was observed that if a participant assessed themselves as being competitive, they were more likely to engage in all campaign activities. This is shown in Table 5, which indicates there is a significant correlation between a participant assessing themself to be competitive and being willing to deal with party officials \( (r = 0.530) \), willing to deal with members of the press \( (r = 0.625) \), and willing to experience a potential loss of privacy \( (r = 0.455) \). There was found to be a weak correlation, but a correlation nonetheless, between a participant assessing themself to be competitive and being willing to solicit campaign contributions \( (r = 0.261) \), willing to go door-to-door to meet constituents \( (r = 0.258) \), willing to potentially have to engage in a negative campaign \( (r = 0.297) \), and willing to spend less time with family \( (r = 0.231) \).
Table 6

_Correlation Between Self-Assessment of Competitiveness and Willingness to Engage in Campaign Activities_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to solicit campaign contributions</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to deal with party officials</td>
<td>.530*</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to go door-to-door to meet constituents</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to deal with members of the press</td>
<td>.625*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to potentially have to engage in a negative campaign</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to spend less time with family</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to experience a potential loss of privacy</td>
<td>.455*</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note._ Asterisks (*) indicate significant correlations.

**Political Ambition**

When participants were asked whether they have ever considered running for political office, 64.5 percent of participants indicated they have not considered running (n=20), while 29.1 percent identified that they have considered running (n=9).

Participants were asked whether they had discussed running or investigated how to run
for political office. The researchers found that the majority of participants had not discussed running with anyone or investigated how to place their name on a ballot.

Table 7

*Political Ambition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Discussed running with friends or family</th>
<th>Discussed running with community leaders</th>
<th>Discussed running with party leaders</th>
<th>Discussed financial contributions with potential supporters</th>
<th>Investigated how to place name on a ballot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouragement to Run for Office

The researchers examined whether participants have ever been encouraged to run for office by party officials, elected officials, non-elected political activists, any other political actor, coworkers, friends, spouse or partners, family members, or religious affiliates. Participants were most likely to have received encouragement to run for political office from a friend, although only 29.0 percent of participants identified receiving this type of encouragement (*n*=9).
Table 8

Encouragement to Run for Political Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received suggestion from party official</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from elected official</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a non-elected political activist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from any other political actor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a coworker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a friend</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a spouse/partner</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a family member</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received suggestion from a religious affiliate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers discovered a weak correlation between participants receiving encouragement to run for office from a friend and whether they had ever considered running for any political office ($r = 0.334$), although receiving the suggestion to run from a friend was considered insignificantly correlated with their interest level in running in the future ($r = 0.119$).

Table 9

Correlation Between Suggestion to Run and Interest Level in and Consideration for Running for Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encouragement to run: Received suggestion from a friend</th>
<th>Participant's interest level in running for office in the future</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Political ambition: Considered running for any political office</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant's interest level in running for office in the future</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>Political ambition: Considered running for any political office</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Resources to Increase Likelihood to Run**

Participants were asked whether certain resources would increase their likelihood of running for political office, namely manuals and articles on campaigns and elections, interviews with political operatives and elected officials, webcasts on organizing, fundraising, and media skills, and training programs sponsored by political organizations. One-fourth to two-fifths of participants do not know if any of the suggested resources would be influential to them. Of the suggested resources, the one that received the highest appraisal as being most influential in increasing participants’ likelihood of running for office was training programs sponsored by political organizations at 61.3 percent (n=19).

*Figure 7.* Bar graph showing participant preferences for resources to increase their likelihood to run.

**Importance of Young Women Being Involved in Politics**

Based on the data, participants unanimously agree that young women being involved in politics is somewhat, very, or extremely important, with 71 percent of
participants reporting that it is extremely important (n=22). This was not found to be correlated with young women’s likelihood to engage in campaign activities or interest in running for political office in the future.

Table 10

*Correlation Between Importance of Young Women’s Political Involvement and Interest in and Ambition to Run for Office*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of young women’s political involvement</th>
<th>Participant's interest level in running for office in the future</th>
<th>Political ambition: Considered running for any political office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Analysis**

**Identified Reasons for Running or Not Running for Office**

Participants were asked an open-ended question to identify three reasons why they would or would not consider running for political office. These responses were organized according to themes emerging from the responses. Inter-rater reliability was developed for this question as the researchers developed themes and categorized answers separately, then compared answers and found that they had developed similar themes and categorized answers similarly. Specifically, for respondents’ explanations of why they are interested in running for political office there was an inter-rater reliability of .91 and for explanations of why participants are not interested in running for office there was an inter-rater reliability of .73. Emergent themes that the researchers found in the
participants’ responses were separated on the basis of reasons why participants would run and reasons why participants would not run for office.

**Why I would run.** Five thematic categories emerged for reasons why participants would run: to advocate for and affect change, for leadership opportunity, indecisive on decision to run but may change mind in the future, feel that women’s involvement is important, and to gain skills. The most frequent theme that arose was to advocate for and affect change, with five participants identifying this as a reason why they would run for political office. One participant articulated, “I’m interested in running for office because I want to be able to implement and advocate for laws that will benefit disadvantaged communities and marginalized people.” Three participants identified their reason as wanting to engage in the leadership opportunity; three indicated they were indecisive on the decision to run and may change their mind in the future; two participants felt that women’s involvement is important; and two participants reported wanting to gain skills.

**Why I would not run.** Nine thematic categories emerged for reasons why participants would not run for political office: lack of knowledge about the political process, different career trajectory in mind, not interested in politics at all, feeling unqualified to run for office, having a lack of time, believing that politics are disingenuous, not wanting to have a loss of privacy, lacking confidence, and having family responsibilities. The two most recurrent themes were lack of knowledge about the political process and having a different career trajectory. Lack of knowledge about the political process was expressed by one participant who identified they were “not sure
how to get my foot in the door.” Another respondent stated, “I don’t know what it would include. Need a better understanding of politics.” In terms of having a different career trajectory, one participant specified that politics is “not the line of work I’m interested in,” while another participant stated, “I enjoy micro level work.” Five participants were clustered as not being interested in politics; five felt they were not qualified, four articulated they did not have the time to run; two thought politics are disingenuous; two did not want to suffer a loss of privacy; two expressed lacking confidence; two felt obligated to family responsibilities.

**Achieving Gender Parity in Politics**

Participants were asked if gender parity were achieved in U.S. politics, what would be different about running for political office for women. Six themes emerged from the responses: equal opportunity, shift perceptions of women as candidates, more encouragement of women to run, equal rights, and more respect of women candidates. Equal opportunity was the most prominently coded theme, arising in 35.5 percent of responses ($n=11$). Examples of responses that were coded as belonging to the category of equal opportunity are “Women would have an easier time getting elected/running for office,” “Women would not have an extra point against them right off the bat, just because of their gender,” and women “would be judged on experience, not gender.” Some responses were codified into two themes, for example, the following statement was determined to dwell in the themes of equal opportunity, shift in perception of women as candidates, and more encouragement of women to run:
More information would be geared towards women running and it would soon become more of a norm for women to run. I think more women would start to engage in politics more and consider it a serious career path whereas I think women believe it’s more of a career risk right now.

The second most prevalent themes were a shift in perspective about women and women would be more encouraged to run, both totaling 16.1 percent of responses \((n=5,\) respectively). In examining responses for a shift in perspectives about women, one participant pronounced, “Women would be perceived as strong candidates and judged on experience not gender,” while another participant expressed that there would be “less concentration on what they [women] are wearing and [more] concentration on their qualifications/positions.” With respect to the category of more encouragement to run for office, one participant communicated, “More women would aspire to run for office.”

Three participants identified women having greater confidence as an outcome of gender parity in politics; two specified women would have equal rights; and two stated women would gain more respect as political candidates.

Summary

In this chapter, findings from the data collected from the thirty-one participants who completed the survey were presented. This chapter summarized the findings from thirty-one surveys administered to members of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) on the campus of California State University, Sacramento. The information was collected from participants using a mixed methods approach. The research was designed to explore the perceptions of young women regarding the barriers to running for and
holding political office. The study collected demographic information, as well as perceptions of local and congressional elections, women in politics, self-assessment, engaging in campaign activities, political ambition, encouragement to run for office, and available resources. A discussion of these findings will follow in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5
DISCUSSION

The underrepresentation of women in political positions is a persistent problem in the United States. Although there has been significant exploration by research studies to account for the gender gap in politics, little research has been conducted on what barriers exist from the perspective of young women (Finlay, Flanagan, & Wray-Lake, 2011). The present study builds on previous research to gain a better understanding of young women’s attitudes and feelings regarding the perceived barriers preventing acquisition and holding of political positions. The exploratory research design generated quantitative and qualitative data that the researchers analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. From the analysis of surveys completed by thirty-one participants, important findings emerged. The findings provide further insight regarding women's experiences with political and civic education, and exposure to women in political leadership, and offer ideas about how to further engage women in the political process.

Summary of Findings

Demographic Data

In examining participants’ levels of childcare duties and household responsibilities, the researchers expected to find that participants were impeded by having to take on the majority of the division of domestic labor. Historically, societal values have constructed a women’s role as a mother and caretaker, and not as an active participant in political institutions (Eagly, 1987; Harvey, 2012; Kerber, 1976; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Parsons, 1955). Interestingly, the findings demonstrated that a
The majority of the sample population was childless (83.9%). The researchers noted that all participants were educated, as enrollment at California State University, Sacramento was a parameter for participation in the survey. Literature has shown that educated women tend to procreate later in life, and this could account for the majority of participants being childless (Mezey, 1978; Slaughter, 2012). This is a relevant finding because the literature indicates that older women’s political participation is impeded by childcare and household responsibilities (Mezey, 1978; Slaughter, 2012). Thus, by targeting younger women, the researchers sought to ascertain their perceived barriers before they are subjected to such obligations. While there are a number of organizations that recruit, train, and support adult women to run for office, very little resources go into fostering political ambition among young women.

Furthermore, all the participants who had children also had an equal division of childcare duties, or someone else was responsible for the majority of childcare. Similarly, the majority of participants identified as having an equal division of household responsibilities. Less than 40 percent of participants stated they were responsible for the majority of household tasks. These findings are interesting because they contradict previous literature, which reports that women’s ongoing commitment to household and childcare obligations impede their likelihood to run for political office (Mezey, 1978; Slaughter, 2012).

Previous literature has indicated that women tend to belong to the Democratic Party in greater numbers than do men (Center for American Women and Politics, 2005;
Newport, 2009). This understanding was upheld by the data collected from participants in that 83.9 percent of participants identified themselves as Democrats.

**Interest Level in Running for Political Office**

Regarding participants’ interest level in running for political office in the future, although there was a slant towards participants not being interested, just under half of participants (48.4%) were unopposed to the idea, indicating that there is room to encourage them to run for office and increase the amount of female candidates.

Furthermore, when asked about what resources could increase participants’ interest in running for political office, 61.3 percent of participants agreed or somewhat agreed that training programs sponsored by political organizations would increase their likelihood to consider running for office.

When analyzing for correlations, the researchers expected to find that the participants’ interest level correlated strongly with their political ambition in that they considered running for a political office. However, there was an insignificant correlation between the participants’ levels of interest and whether they considered running for office. This could be explained by the fact that respondents who indicated an interest in running for office in the future did not necessarily have the political ambition to follow through with running for political office. In other words, a participant being interested does not necessarily lead to action. This notion was supported by questions regarding actions participants had or had not taken towards seeking office, such as discussing running or investigating how to get their name on a ballot. The researchers found that
very few participants had taken these steps toward candidacy, no matter what their level of interest in running was.

**General Perceptions of Women in Politics**

Although research has shown that female candidates are just as likely to win as male candidates when running for political positions (Fox, nd; Herrnson et al., 2003), surprisingly, data collected from participants indicates that young women continue to perceive (incorrectly) that female candidates do not win elections as often as male candidates when running. Believing that the electoral environment is biased against them could also contribute to an explanation regarding women’s aversion to running for political office. Interestingly, when asked about what would be different for female candidates should gender parity be achieved in politics, the most recurrent theme identified was that this would create more of an equal opportunity for women in politics.

**Self-Assessment of Qualifications**

Using Likert scales, the participants were asked to assess whether they considered themselves to possess character traits that are important for running a campaign, namely whether they considered themselves qualified, confident, competitive, risk-taking, entrepreneurial, or thick-skinned. Enigmatically, although 51.6 percent of participants consider themselves not at all qualified for running a campaign, for all other specified traits, the majority of women considered themselves to somewhat possess these traits. Women’s self-doubts are important, as they correspond to deeply embedded gendered prototypes. As previous research and findings make clear, these prototypes continue to influence women and reduce their consideration of candidacy as a viable option for their
future. This speaks to previous literature, which has indicated that although women possess the skills and training necessary to run for political office, they do not consider themselves as qualified to do so (Bielby, 1991; Bosak & Sczesny, 2008; Fox, nd; Heilman, 1983). Essentially, the participants are saying they are qualified based on the individual metrics of the self-assessment of their qualifications; however, when asked directly if they are qualified to run for office, the majority feels they are not. This presents insight into an area that further education and training could address to bolster young women’s self-confidence to engage in the political process.

Additionally, participants who identified themselves as being unqualified might attribute their lack of qualification to run for political office to their lack of knowledge about the political process. When participants were asked to identify reasons for their interest or lack of interest in running for political office, participants identified a lack of knowledge about the political process as a major theme that inhibits their interest in running. This could speak to why young women assess themselves as being unqualified to run a campaign, despite having the qualities necessary to be a candidate. This leads to the conjecture that further education and training about the political process itself could give participants the needed knowledge to feel confident in their own abilities to run a political campaign. This was supported by the participants’ responses to what additional resources could, potentially, increase their likelihood to run, since the majority of participants identified that training programs sponsored by political organizations would strengthen their prospects of running for a political position.
Attitudes about Engaging in Campaign Activities

Previous research has indicated that although women are interested in running for political office, they are less willing to engage in the campaign process (Fox, nd). To ascertain participants’ willingness to engage in campaign activities, participants were asked whether they would be willing to solicit campaign contributions, deal with party officials, go door-to-door to meet constituents, deal with members of the press, potentially engage in a negative campaign, spend less time with family, and experience a potential loss of privacy. The researchers found that the four campaign activities that participants were least willing to undergo were experiencing a loss of privacy, spending less time with family, engaging in a negative campaign, and soliciting campaign contributions.

The fact that 71 percent of participants were not willing to spend less time with family, despite 83.9 percent of participants identifying as childless, could indicate that these women had already absorbed cultural norms of the female prototype, particularly, the traditional devotion to family. On the contrary, these findings may indicate these women simply value their partners and families of origin.

Interestingly, although loss of privacy is the foremost experience participants were unwilling to endure, if someone is willing to have a loss of privacy, they will be more willing to engage in almost all other campaign activities mentioned. In addition, if participants are willing to have a loss of privacy, this increases their likelihood of running for political office.
Encouragement to Run for Political Office

The literature suggests that recruitment to run for political office increases a person’s likelihood to consider running (Fox, nd; Cheng & Tavits, 2011; Arceneaux, 2001). Although the data from this research study indicated that there is a moderate correlation between receiving encouragement to run and consideration of running for political office ($r = 0.334$), it was noted that no participants received the suggestion to run from party officials, elected officials, non-elected political activists, or any other political actors. Therefore, this moderate correlation could be attributed to the fact that no participants were encouraged by any political actors. Thus, this research study’s findings do not negate the conclusions of previous literature, which suggests that further recruitment of young women could increase their likelihood of running. Recruitment continues to be a noteworthy catalyst for provoking women’s engagement in political campaigns.

Implications for Social Work

Social justice is a core tenet of the National Association of Social Worker’s Code of Ethics, embraced by all social workers (NASW, 2008). The focus of social justice is the pursuit of social change in the best interest of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. As women remain underrepresented in the political arena, to continue to engage in social change efforts focused on this form of gendered inequity is consistent with the ethical principles of social workers. Social workers can seek activities to promote sensitivity to, and knowledge about, gender oppression in politics. Social workers should strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources
about the political process leading to meaningful participation and decision-making for all people.

Curriculum and ongoing training for social workers should promote the notion that the personal is political. Too often, social workers believe there is a dichotomous separation between micro and macro levels of social work. Specifically, social workers do not always recognize how these levels of social work practice overlap and influence each other. To ensure democratic justice and political accountability, social workers ought to work to improve gender disparities in holding office. Social workers must work to enhance women’s access to political candidacy to ensure that the political arena is reflective of the people it serves. In this way, social workers will uphold their ethical responsibility to the broader society to shape social policies that advance social justice for women.

As suggested by participants of the study, training programs sponsored by political organizations were found to be the resource that women most readily identified as having a positive impact on increasing their likelihood to run for office in the future. Since gender differences in confidence, competitiveness, and ambition develop during the earlier stages of life, such as adolescence and early adulthood, targeting young women in these stages through training programs could develop women’s self-perceived capabilities so that they would feel more qualified to enter into the political arena and become candidates. Consequently, training programs may be a forgotten resource to facilitate young women’s engagement in traditional political participation.
**Recommendations**

Future research should expand upon the sample population to include young women outside of the social work profession. A meta-analysis of women in varying career fields would create greater generalizability of the findings. This future research should ascertain whether the perceptions of young women vary based on career choice, and how to enhance women’s engagement in political campaigns in each of the respective career trajectories.

Additionally, as the sample of this study was solely female participants, it would be beneficial to study young women and young men’s perceptions of barriers toward running for political office. This would create an environment in which to do a comparative analysis of how gender is associated with an individual’s perceptions of politics as a career option for young individuals, and would create a more robust understanding of gender disparity in politics. Furthermore, future research should explore what women under the age of 18 feel regarding the prospects of candidacy, as the researchers have suggested that targeting younger populations of women could increase their likelihood for running for political office in the future.

**Limitations**

As with any research study, this study presented some limitations to the current research. The researchers used an exploratory study design to gain a better understanding of young women’s perceived barriers to entering into political positions. However, this research design does not establish a causal relationship between the variables studied in the survey.
Other limitations arose in the sample the researchers chose to study. The data was generated from a population consisting of undergraduate and graduate level social work students at California State University, Sacramento, constraining the generalizability of the findings. Considering 89.3 percent of the sample identified as belonging to the Democratic Party, the breadth of perception being examined is incomplete due to the limited political party representation in our sample. Additionally, relying on retrospective self-assessments of character traits may make participants’ reports vulnerable to measurement error, particularly social desirability. Consequently, our data results are not generalizable and should be interpreted with thoughtfulness.

Conclusion

This study revealed that some of the barriers for women identified as being historically obstructive and preventing women from entering the political arena still exist in present times. Specifically, participants were largely uninterested in running for political positions, felt inhibited by their self-perception of qualifications to run for office, perceived themselves as having inadequate knowledge regarding the political process, were unwilling to engage in particular campaign activities, and were not being recruited into running for political office. The researchers hope that our framing of politics as unrepresentative and in need of change will peak more interest in training programs sponsored by political organizations so that more women feel encouraged to run for office. In response to a major theme arising from the qualitative data – namely, that women do not know much about the political process – the researchers’ main goal is to provide women with the resources and information they need to run for political office.
The underrepresentation of women serving in elected office and women’s scarce political ambition seem to make future prospects regarding gender parity in politics seem bleak. The findings of this research study suggest that many of the barriers to women’s interest in running for office can be ameliorated through major cultural and political shifts. Until such changes occur, the results of this study suggest that educating young women about the electoral environment and process, increasing women’s self-esteem, and encouraging women to run can help remedy gender disparity in politics by increasing women’s representation. The researchers push for the continued advocacy for a more inclusive electoral process.
Appendix A

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION

October 5, 2012

Dear Darla and Kati,

As the President of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA), I grant you authorization and consent to distribute your research surveys to SWSA members. We have a total of 362 members available via email. Unfortunately, I am unable to sort our membership roster by age or gender. Do not hesitate to contact me for further assistance, questions, or requests.

Daniel Wilson
President
Social Work Student Association (SWSA)
Appendix B

SURVEY

Demographic Information

1. What is your sex?  □ Female  □ Male

2. What is your age?  ________________

3. Are you currently enrolled at California State University, Sacramento?  □ Yes  □ No

4. What is your major?  ______________________________________

5. What is your highest level of education?
   □ Some college credit, but less than 1 year  □ Master’s degree
   □ 1 or more years of college, no degree  □ Professional degree
   □ Associates degree  □ Doctorate degree
   □ Bachelor’s degree

6. What is your current marital status?
   □ Single  □ Separated
   □ Living with Partner  □ Divorced
   □ Married  □ Other

7. Which of the following best describes your current parental status?
   □ No children
   □ Have children that are not school aged (e.g. children under the age of 5)
   □ Have children living at home
   □ Have children not living at home

8. Which of the following best describes your childcare duties?
   □ Responsible for the majority of childcare
   □ Equal division of childcare
   □ Another person (spouse/partner/caretaker) is responsible for the majority of childcare
9. Which of the following best describes your household responsibilities?
   ☐ Responsible for the majority of household tasks
   ☐ Equal division of labor
   ☐ Another person responsible for the majority of household tasks

10. What is your party affiliation?
    ☐ Democrat
    ☐ Republican
    ☐ Green Party
    ☐ Other (please state): _______________

11. What is your political ideology?
    ☐ Liberal
    ☐ Moderate
    ☐ Conservative

12. Are you interested in running for office in the future?
    ☐ Definitely interested
    ☐ Probably interested
    ☐ May or may not be interested
    ☐ Probably not interested
    ☐ Definitely not interested

13. Please briefly explain why you are or are not interested in running for office in the future citing at least three reasons.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
For the next section, please mark or fill in the answer that best represents your opinion regarding the following questions.

**Perceptions of the electoral environment in area you live**

14. Local elections are highly competitive, meaning involving or determined by rivalry  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

15. Congressional elections are highly competitive, meaning involving or determined by rivalry  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

**General perceptions of women in politics**

16. Women running for office win as often as similarly situated men  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

17. Women running for office raise as much money as similarly situated men  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

**Self-Assessment**

18. How qualified are you to run for public office?  
☐ Very Qualified  ☐ Qualified  ☐ Somewhat Qualified  ☐ Not at all Qualified

19. Do you consider yourself confident?  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

20. Do you consider yourself competitive?  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

21. Do you consider yourself risk-taking?  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

22. Do you consider yourself entrepreneurial?  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree

23. Do you consider yourself thick-skinned?  
☐ Agree  ☐ Somewhat Agree  ☐ Don’t Know  ☐ Somewhat Disagree  ☐ Disagree
Attitudes about engaging in campaign activities

24. I am willing to solicit campaign contributions  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
25. I am willing to deal with party officials  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
26. I am willing to go door-to-door to meet constituents  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
27. I am willing to deal with members of the press  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
28. I am willing to potentially have to engage in a negative campaign  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
29. I am willing to spend less time with my family  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
30. I am willing to experience a potential loss of privacy  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Political ambition

31. I have considered running for any political office  [ ] Agree  [ ] Somewhat Agree  [ ] Don’t Know  [ ] Somewhat Disagree  [ ] Disagree
32. I have discussed running with friends and family  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
33. I have discussed running with community leaders  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
34. I have investigated how to place my name on the ballot  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
35. I have discussed running with party leaders  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
36. I have discussed financial contributions with potential supporters  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Encouragement to run for office

37. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a party official  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
38. I have received the suggestion to run for office from an elected official  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
39. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a non-elected political activist  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
40. I have received the suggestion to run for office from any other political actor  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
41. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a coworker
   □ Yes    □ No

42. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a friend
   □ Yes    □ No

43. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a spouse/partner
   □ Yes    □ No

44. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a family member
   □ Yes    □ No

45. I have received the suggestion to run for office from a religious affiliate
   □ Yes    □ No

46. Would any of the following resources make you more likely to consider running for office?

   a. Manuals and Articles on Campaigns and Elections
      □ Agree    □ Somewhat Agree    □ Don’t Know    □ Somewhat Disagree    □ Disagree

   b. Interviews with Political Operatives and Elected Officials
      □ Agree    □ Somewhat Agree    □ Don’t Know    □ Somewhat Disagree    □ Disagree

   c. Webcasts on Organizing, Fundraising, and Media Skills
      □ Agree    □ Somewhat Agree    □ Don’t Know    □ Somewhat Disagree    □ Disagree

   d. Training Programs Sponsored by Political Organizations
      □ Agree    □ Somewhat Agree    □ Don’t Know    □ Somewhat Disagree    □ Disagree

47. If gender parity were achieved in U.S. politics, what would be different about running for political office for women?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
48. How important do you think it is for young women to be involved in politics?

☐ Extremely important

☐ Very important

☐ Somewhat important

☐ Not very important

☐ Not important at all
Appendix C

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are being invited to participate in research, which will be conducted by Kathleen Kouklis and Darla McBee, in the Social Work Division at California State University, Sacramento. This study is being conducted as part of a graduate student thesis. You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a female student at California State University, Sacramento, and you are between the ages of 18 to 30 years old.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what young women perceive as barriers to holding public office.

PROCEDURES

You will be asked to complete a survey about your perceptions of political office. The survey may require up to 30 minutes of your time. Please read the survey thoroughly, paying attention to all aspects of the survey. If you have any questions, please ask for assistance. Make sure that your answers are well thought out. However, remember that all answers are subjective, based on your perceptions, and thus there are no right or wrong answers.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Some of the items in the survey may seem personal, but you are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

You may gain additional insight into factors that affect young women to run for political office, or you may not personally benefit from participating in this research. It is hoped that the results of the study will be beneficial for programs designed to encourage young women to be civically engaged.
CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses on the survey will be anonymous. Participants will only be identified by a randomly assigned ID number in any data collected for this research. Access to the data will be restricted to the researchers and their faculty sponsor, Dr. Teiahsha Bankhead, who may be reached at bankhead@csus.edu. All research records, including this consent form, will be stored in a lock box in the home of the researchers. No individuals will be identified in any reports or publications that may result from this study. Research materials will be destroyed once the Office of Graduate Studies has accepted this project.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study at any time without any consequences. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in the research study.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions about this research, please contact: Darla McBee at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email xxxxxxx@saclink.csus.edu or Kathleen Kouklis at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email xxxxxx@saclink.csus.edu. You may also contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Teiahsha Bankhead at by email at bankhead@csus.edu.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Subject

Signature of Subject   Date
## Appendix D

### CORRELATION BETWEEN SELF-ASSESSED CHARACTER TRAITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am qualified</th>
<th>I am confident</th>
<th>I am competitive</th>
<th>I am risk-taking</th>
<th>I am entrepreneurial</th>
<th>I am thick-skinned</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td>.048</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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<td>.798</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>.920</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>I am competitive</th>
<th>I am risk-taking</th>
<th>I am entrepreneurial</th>
<th>I am thick-skinned</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td>.502**</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.003</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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<td>.004</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.987</td>
<td>.001</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am competitive</th>
<th>I am risk-taking</th>
<th>I am entrepreneurial</th>
<th>I am thick-skinned</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
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<td>.002</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am entrepreneurial</th>
<th>I am thick-skinned</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.594**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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<td>.804</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
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### Appendix D (continued)

#### CORRELATION BETWEEN SELF-ASSESSED CHARACTER TRAITS

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<th>Self-assessment: Composite Score</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.515</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am entrepreneurial</td>
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<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am thick-skinned</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
## Appendix E

### CORRELATION BETWEEN WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willing to solicit campaign contributions</th>
<th>Willing to deal with party officials</th>
<th>Willing to go door-to-door to meet constituents</th>
<th>Willing to deal with members of the press</th>
<th>Willing to engage in a negative campaign</th>
<th>Willing to spend less time with family</th>
<th>Willing to experience a potential loss of privacy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
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### Appendix E (continued)

#### CORRELATION BETWEEN WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

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<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
REFERENCES


Fox, R. L. (nd). Gender, political ambition and the decision not to run for office. *Union College.* Typescript.


