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Direct and Indirect Effects of Prejudice:
Sexism, Information, and Voting Behavior in Political Campaigns

In 2016, Hillary Clinton began her 2nd bid for the Democratic presidential nomination and, ultimately, became the first woman to run for president as the nominee from a major political party. While this is an historic step in women's political representation, many have claimed that Clinton's treatment by the media, opponents and some voters has demonstrated the extent to which misogyny and gender-based prejudice still exist in American politics. From pundits criticizing her tone of voice and whether she smiles enough, to blatantly sexist paraphernalia being sold at opponent Donald Trump's campaign events (buttons displaying the phrase "Trump that Bitch," for example), the primary and general elections of 2016 have brought discussions of gender, prejudice, and politics center-stage.

While many observers of the 2016 election have found myriad examples of sexism in the current election cycle, and the communications literature has uncovered evidence of lingering sexism in media coverage of women candidates (e.g., Carlin and Winfrey 2009; Kahn 1992; Heldman, Carroll and Olson 2005) the political science literature has found little evidence that gender-based prejudice held by voters affects female candidates negatively at the polls. Much evidence supports the adage "when women run, women win," suggesting that women are just as likely to win their races as are men. Because of this, many gender scholars have largely discounted overt bias as an obstacle to women's election to office (e.g. Burrell 1994, Seltzer, Newman and Leighton 1997, Darcy, et al 1997, Woods 2000, Dolan 2004).

However, it is my contention that sexism can still matter for women candidates. The fact that women tend to win their races as often as men do in the aggregate does not necessarily mean that gender based prejudice is inconsequential in individual elections or for certain groups of voters. A handful of studies have considered the effects of individual-level acceptance of sexist beliefs on voting behavior, and have come up with mixed results. Swim, et al 1995 and Mo 2015, for example, do find effects of sexism on political behavior, while Dwyer, Stevens, Sullivan, and Allen 2009 do not. These studies aside, we still know relatively little about how gender-based prejudice might function at the individual level, especially when compared to the extensive literature that exists on gender-based stereotypes. Because stereotypes

and prejudice are distinct, yet related constructs (Devine 1989), and gender stereotypes have been found to influence voting behavior in myriad ways, there is likely still much to learn about the role of sexism, as well.

Much of the work on gender-based stereotypes has relied on experimental methods (e.g. Huddy and Terkildsen 1993,; Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh, 1989; Riggle and Johnson, 1996; Huang, 2000; Huang and Price, 2001), and a large amount of recent work has found the effects of stereotypes to be contingent on a number of factors, such as the policy issues emphasized during an election (Holman, Merolla and Zechmeister 2011), the nature of the political ads used (Bauer 2015), and the information available about the candidates (Ditonto 2016). There is also evidence that stereotypes may have indirect effects on vote choice through other variables such as information search during a campaign (Ditonto, Hamilton and Redlawsk 2014). It is possible, then, that a similar approach to the study of gender-based prejudice may also uncover subtle or indirect effects of sexism on vote choice and/or candidate appraisals.

In particular, the role of information and learning during a campaign may be an important addition to our understanding of how sexism affects candidate evaluations and voting behavior. This is especially true if we are interested in understanding the role of gender in elections with high-information environments like those for the presidency. High-level elections in the real world take place over many months and often include far more information than most voters can process, as well as far more information than most survey experiments tend to simulate. We know little about how voters' beliefs regarding candidate gender function over time, and in relation to other elements of a major campaign. It is important to understand how and when gender matters as a variable in isolation, but it is equally important to examine how its role may change when other campaign-related factors are taken into account.

In this analysis, I look for both direct and indirect effects of sexism on voting behavior. I first look for direct effects of gender-based prejudice on vote choice in a presidential race, attitudes toward candidates in the race, and the "quality" of a person's vote decision (i.e. correct voting; Lau and Redlawsk 1997). Adding to the studies that have found sexism to influence voting behavior, I find direct effects of

prejudice on all of my dependent variables. I then test for indirect effects of prejudice on these variables via the amount of information that voters choose to access about women candidates and find that information search partially mediates the relationship between sexism and candidate evaluation, and completely mediates the relationship between sexism and vote choice by causing subjects who are high in prejudice to search for less information about female candidates. Further, for vote choice, higher information search seems to mitigate some of the effects of prejudice. All together, my results suggest that sexism leads subjects to treat women candidates differently in a number of ways, and that information acquisition is an important part of the story.

Gender Cues and Voting Behavior

It is well known that ascriptive identities like gender are often incorporated into voters' political judgments and decisions. Characteristics like gender can provide cues about politically salient attributes, and a rich literature studying the content and effects of gender-based stereotypes has grown over the last several decades. Political psychologists have shown that these types of group memberships are powerful heuristics, or "information shortcuts" that allow voters to infer a host of information from easily-observed cues. These "appearance heuristics" are among the most widely used in all aspects of life, and politics is no exception (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). Female candidates are perceived, for example, as more empathetic and less decisive than men, while men are seen as more assertive and rational than women. Women political contenders are also perceived as more trustworthy, honest, and compassionate than their male counterparts (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1996). At the same time, though, they are perceived as less competent and experienced, less able to handle to the emotional demands of high office, and lacking in masculine traits like "toughness" (Carroll and Dittmar 2010). Because of these trait perceptions, voters also believe that men and women have different policy strengths: women are perceived as better able to handle "compassion" issues like education, healthcare, childcare, and poverty, while men are more adept at "masculine" issues, such as the military, terrorism, and crime (Cook, Thomas and Wilcox 1994; Dolan 2004; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988). Women candidates are similarly stereotyped as more liberal than their male counterparts (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Koch 2000).

Despite the large amount of evidence that stereotypes are applied to women candidates, more recent work has cast some doubt on their continued influence on voting behavior, finding other variables such as party identification to be far more important (Brooks 2013, Dolan 2014, Hayes 2011). Other recent studies provide evidence for a more nuanced or conditional role for gender-based stereotypes, and suggest that they may matter in some contexts, such as in low-information elections (Matson and Fine 2006), when stereotypes are activated via campaign advertisements (Bauer 2015a), when national security, the military and terrorism are high priorities on the national agenda (Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004; Holman et al 2011), and when considering certain kinds of voters (Bauer 2015b), but not in others. There is also evidence that partisanship can affect whether and how gender-based stereotypes matter (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009; Schneider and Bos 2016; Huddy and Capelos 2002) and that women candidates may be stereotyped based on their status as women candidates per se, rather than as women more generally (Schneider and Bos 2014a).

While the research on gender-based stereotypes has been extensive, the same cannot be said of gender-based prejudice. While the two concepts are related, they are distinct cognitive structures (e.g. Devine 1989). Stereotypes are generally considered to be beliefs about the traits or attributes of a particular social group and its members, while prejudice is conceptualized as a negative attitude applied to members of that group (e.g. Bar-Tal, Graumann, Kruglanski, and Stroebe 2013). The exact nature of the relationship between stereotypes and prejudice is still a subject of debate (Bar-Tal, et al 2013). Some work suggests that prejudicial attitudes naturally follow the categorization process inherent in stereotyping (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), while others have found evidence that prejudice can lead individuals to alter the content of group stereotypes to fit with those negative attitudes (Heider 1958; Rosenberg 1960), and still others have found that there does not necessarily have to be a relationship between the two at all (Brigham 1971). Whatever the exact nature of the relationship between stereotypes and prejudice, studying stereotypes exclusively is insufficient if we are to better understand the full range of the ways that a candidate's gender may matter to voters.

To the extent that prejudice, per se, has been considered in the gender and politics literature, it has largely been discounted as a major consideration for women candidates. Studies of aggregate voting patterns for women candidates have found that women tend to do just as well as men when they run (Burrell 1994, Seltzer, Newman and Leighton 1997, Darcy, et al 1997, Woods 2000, Dolan 2004; Carroll 1994; Fox 2000; Lawless and Pearson 2008), which has led many to assume that bias must not be impeding women's chances at the polls. On the other hand, both men and women demonstrate a "baseline gender preference" for candidates of their own sex (Sanbonmatsu 2002) and women are more likely than men to express the opinion that the country would be better-governed if more women were in office (Dolan 2008). Further, women were slightly more likely to support Hillary Clinton in 2008 than were men (Huddy and Carey 2009). Other scholars have found evidence of barriers to election that seem particular to women candidates, such as a greater likelihood to be challenged and a larger numbers of opponents than men in primary elections (Palmer and Simon 2006; Lawless and Pearson 2008), as well as generally higher-quality opponents in those elections (Milyo and Schosberg 2000). Further, female candidates have to work harder to raise money (Jenkins 2007) and are less likely to be recruited by party leaders (Sanbonmatsu 2006). Further, women candidates for Congress tend to have more experience than male candidates (Pearson and McGhee 2013) and female legislators are more successful once in office than are men (Anzia and Berry 2011), both of which suggest that female candidates have to be "better" in some sense than men in order to be elected. There is no direct evidence, however, that these gender differences are necessarily the result of prejudice and may very well be the result of some other phenomenon, such as in-group affinity instead.

To my knowledge, only a handful of studies have attempted to directly gauge individual-level prejudice and its effects on a person's voting behavior, though psychologists have examined the effects of sexism on other kinds of attitudes and behaviors, such as negative attitudes toward feminism (Swim and Cohen 1997), hiring practices (Tougas, et al 1995), perceptions of sexual harassment (Swim and Cohen 1997) and discrimination (Cameron 2001), career outcomes (Watkins, et al 2006), anxiety levels in social situations (Barreto and Ellemers 2005), and use of sexist language (Swim, Mallett and Stangor 2004).

These studies utilize sexism scales, each of which measures gender-based prejudice in a slightly different way. The original measure was the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS), which attempts to determine the extent to which respondents endorse traditional gender roles (Spence and Helmreich 1972). Over time, there has been a steep decline in the number of people who express such blatantly sexist attitudes, however (e.g. Swim, et al 1995), so psychologists have constructed subtler measures of sexism, largely modeled after the "new racism" literature, which posits that racist attitudes still exist but are more difficult to tap into because of social desirability factors and a general norm of egalitarianism that has caused the nature of racism to become more insidious (e.g. "symbolic racism" [Sears 1988] and "aversive racism" [Gaertner and Dovidio 1986]). Several scholars contend that a similar evolution has taken place with regard to sexism—that it is subtler in the modern context and therefore more difficult to measure. The Modern Sexism Scale (Swim, et al 1995), for example, posits that contemporary gender-based prejudice takes the form of "the denial of continued discrimination, antagonism toward women's demands, and lack of support for policies designed to help women" (Swim, et al 1995, p. 199), and while the Neo-Sexism Scale (Tougas et al 1995) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske 2001) differ slightly, they also contend that the nature of sexism is more nuanced now than it once was.

Though the development of these "new" sexism scales has largely mirrored those from the new racism literature (which are common in political science), they have not been applied to the study of voting behavior in the same way. In their original 1995 piece, Swim, et al found that a respondent's score on the Modern Sexism Scale predicted attitudes in a number of domains, including willingness to vote for a female Senate candidate. On the other hand, Dwyer, et al (2009) find that a survey respondent's score on the Modern Sexism Scale did not affect attitudes toward Sarah Palin in the 2008 presidential election. Finally, Mo (2015), using a self-created index of explicit attitudes toward women and the IAT finds that both implicit and explicit prejudice against women predict the likelihood of voting for a female candidate.[1]

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[1] It is also important to note the recent developments in studies of implicit prejudice using tests such as the Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee and Schwartz 1998) which have found evidence of implicit

Because the literature on sexism and voting is limited and conflicting, and the current political context is seemingly so rife with examples of gender-based prejudice, it is an area that seems worthy of further consideration. Further, it is possible that a systematic examination of the information sought out by voters in a campaign environment will shed light on previously unseen ways that sexism may matter in voting behavior.

Information Processing and Candidate Gender

Studying gender-based prejudice via an information processing perspective (Lau and Redlawsk 2006) may further our understanding of if, how, and when gender-based prejudice factor into a voter's behavior during a campaign and election. Voter decision-making is a process, with candidate evaluations and vote choice as only the last in a series of steps that voters must progress through as they experience a campaign and learn about the candidates in the race. According to an information processing paradigm, cues like gender probably influence voter decision-making at multiple stages of this process and may interact with voters' prejudices in different ways at various points.

While a candidate's gender may or may not influence vote choice and candidate appraisal directly, some evidence suggests that it can have an effect on what and how voters choose to learn about candidates, as well as how they react to ostensibly gender-neutral information. In particular, Ditonto, Hamilton, and Redlawsk (2013) found that subjects in an information processing study sought out more information about women candidates' competence and stances on compassion issues than they did for men candidates, and that these differential search patterns had consequences for subjects' ultimate vote choices. Further, Ditonto (2016) finds that women candidates are more vulnerable to information that casts doubt on their competence than are men, and seemingly less competent female candidates are both evaluated more negatively and less likely to win votes than less competent male candidates.

The information search and acquisition process, then, seems to have a more proximal relationship to final appraisals and vote decisions than subject level stereotypes and prejudices themselves, and it may

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gender-based prejudice (e.g. Rudman, Greenwald and McGhee 2001; Rudman and Kliianski 2000) have also generally not been applied to studies of voting behavior (though Mo 2015 is obviously an exception).

be through this process that gender cues, and the prejudices they may invoke, are working. Gender-based stereotypes and prejudice are stored in long-term memory throughout a person's life, but information search and learning for a specific candidate must take place during a campaign, immediately before a vote choice is made. Also, information search does not require a direct statement from subjects regarding their attitudes toward a female candidate, like evaluation and vote choice measures. These types of traditional measures are subject to social desirability effects and subjects may answer dishonestly to avoid appearing prejudiced to researchers. Information search is less susceptible to self-monitoring, given the nature of the task that subjects must complete. Because of the nature of learning and campaigns, then, gender based prejudice may actually have an *indirect* effect on voting behavior through information search and acquisition patterns instead of, or along with, a direct relationship. Figure 1 displays this relationship.

[Figure 1 about here]

In order to explore these possibilities, this study will use a computer-based experiment utilizing the Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE),[2] which is a web-based computer program that allows researchers to mimic the constant flow of information in an actual campaign environment. We can then follow subjects' information search as the campaign progresses, tracking the content, sequence and amount of information accessed by subjects. In this way, DPTE provides a unique opportunity to examine the effects of cues like gender on political learning and decision-making. Most prior studies of gender on candidate evaluation and vote choice have not been able to treat voter decision-making as a process that occurs over time, but DPTE allows researchers to examine the relationships between candidate cues like gender, the prejudices they might trigger, candidate evaluation, and vote choice *through* information search.

Hypotheses

My analysis will examine both the direct and indirect effects of gender-based prejudice on candidate evaluation, vote choice, and correct voting for the female candidates in the study, essentially

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[2] DPTE was developed by Richard Lau and David Redlawsk. The software can be accessed at www.processtracing.org

testing whether information search mediates any relationship between sexism and these dependent variables.[3] In order to test for direct effects, the three dependent variables mentioned above will be regressed on a number of traditional individual-level predictors of vote choice. I will also test for direct effects of prejudice on the amount of information that subjects accessed for the women candidates. This measure of information search will then be added as a predictor to the models for vote choice, evaluation, and correct voting.

I expect that sexism will have a direct effect on information search, such that subjects scoring high in sexism will seek out less information about the female candidate than subjects with lower sexism scores. Further, I expect that any direct of effect of sexism on vote choice or feeling thermometer scores will ultimately be mediated by information search. In other words, sexism will be a negative and significant predictor of these variables, but adding information search to the model will either partially or completely "do the work" of sexism, rendering its direct effect smaller and potentially non-significant.

I expect similar patterns for correct voting, but expect stronger direct effects of sexism, even when information search is included in the model. Much like information search, correct voting is a measure of preference that is much less likely to be influenced by social desirability effects than are traditional measures of evaluation and vote choice. More details are given below, but correct voting compares a subject's expressed preferences in terms of policy, group endorsements, and personality traits to all of the candidates in the race and determines whether a subject voted for the candidate who most closely fits with those preferences. Researchers calculate subjects' correct candidate choices after the fact and do not need to rely on subjects' expressed attitudes toward candidates, so it is almost impossible for subjects to consciously influence this measure. For this reason, direct effects of sexism should be easier to identify. At the same time, information search should still play a role in determining whether a subject voted correctly, which will mean that, if prejudice does indeed affect information search, it will also have an indirect effect on correct voting.

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[3] Following the procedures set out by Baron and Kenny 1986, as well as Sobel 1982.

Method

In order to examine the relationship between candidate gender, voter prejudice, and information acquisition, I conducted an analysis of voters' information search behavior during a simulated presidential campaign and election that took place in the spring of 2011. A non-student sample of 303 adult subjects was recruited in [redacted]. The average age of subjects was 39 and 68.5% of the sample was female. In terms of race and ethnicity, 69.5% was white, 11.5% black, 4.4% was Asian, and 11.9% identified as Latino. 46.8% identified as a Democrat, 19.3% as Republican, and 33.8% as independent.

DPTE experiments are designed to allow researchers to follow subjects' behavior as they search for and learn information during a simulated political campaign. This study consisted of both a Democratic and Republican primary campaign and election, as well as a general campaign and election in which a candidate ran from each of the major parties, though this study makes use of data from the primary election, only. Subjects first completed a questionnaire that asked them questions related to partisanship, ideology, political attitudes, political sophistication, participation, prejudice measures, and demographics. Subjects were then asked to register for one of the party's primaries,[4] though they saw information about candidates from both parties. The primary race lasted approximately 16 minutes.

During the campaigns, subjects saw scrolling boxes that contained different pieces of information related to one of the candidates in the race. Individual pieces of information scrolled down the subject's computer screen from top to bottom, each remaining available for a period of time (in this experiment, 12 seconds). As one piece of information (an "information box") moved off of the bottom of the screen, it was replaced by a new piece of information at the top of the screen. Each scrolling box had a label describing the information available in the box, should the subject decide to click on it (saying, for example, "Lou Baker's Stance on Crime"). Each information box also had a colored border indicating the party affiliation of the candidate to whom the information applied (red for Republicans, blue for Democrats). When an information box was selected by clicking on it, the information in the box filled up

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[4] 204 subjects chose to vote in the Democratic primary, and 99 chose to vote in the Republican primary.

the screen and subjects could spend as much time as they wished reading it. While they did this, however, the other pieces of information continued to scroll by behind it, so there was an opportunity cost each time a subject chose to learn a piece of information. In the primary election, there were 25 distinct pieces of information available about each candidate, including 12 policy positions, party affiliation, a picture, and 11 other personal/background-related bits of information. There were also endorsements from 9 different interest groups. Each piece of information was available twice during the campaign, with the items presented in random order. With 300 pieces of information available, in total, during the campaign, there was far more information available to learn than any one subject could. By overwhelming subjects with so much information, DPTE mimics the abundance of information available during a real-world campaign and forces subjects to choose what is most important to them. The number of boxes opened by each subject during the primary campaign ranged from 9 to 139, with an average of 60 items per person.

In the primary election, the main manipulation was to vary the candidates' gender. Race and ethnicity of the candidates were also varied, though the nonwhite candidates in this experiment were always male.[5] Three different candidate "personas" were created for each party's primary, each containing unique issue positions, ideologies, background information, and endorsements from various groups. In the Democratic primary, one of the personas was extremely liberal and took issue positions consistent with that ideology. Another was a "mainstream" liberal Democrat in ideology and issue stances, and the third was a moderate Democrat with issue stands that reflected this ideology. Among Republicans, there was likewise an extremely conservative persona, a "mainstream" Republican persona, and a moderate Republican persona.

At the same time, each persona was tied to a particular appearance that varied by race, ethnicity and gender. Each persona could either be paired with a white man, a white woman or a man who was also a member of a racial/ethnic minority group. Among Democrats, the minority candidate was a Hispanic man, while the minority candidate in the Republican primary was an African American man. Race,

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[5] All manipulations were randomly assigned, so candidate race and ethnicity should not systematically affect the results of my study and, indeed, do not. Results of analyses that include race/ethnicity are available upon request.

ethnicity, and gender were portrayed through pictures of the candidates[6] (as well as via name in the case of female vs. male candidates and the Hispanic candidate). Each persona was paired with each picture/name combination 1/3 of the time, which allowed me to examine the effects of candidate gender while controlling for ideology. Table 1 shows the persona-picture combinations seen by each group.

[Table 1 about here]

Each subject saw a "synopsis page"[7] at the beginning of the primaries that displayed the names and pictures of each of the candidates running in each party's contest. The scrolling information boxes also had a small "thumbnail" picture of the candidate to whom the information applied. Finally, the pictures of each candidate were included in the scrolling information available during the campaign, so subjects could click on them as they wanted. The same picture of each candidate was always used.

Dependent Variables

Vote choice for the female candidate will be measured using a dichotomous variable with a score of 1 indicating a vote for the woman candidate, while the candidate evaluation measure is a traditional 100-point feeling thermometer. Vote choice is analyzed using a logistic regression and the feeling thermometer measure is analyzed using an OLS regression.

Correct voting will be analyzed using logistic regression and will predict whether subjects voted for the candidate who is considered to be their "correct" choice. Lau and Redlawsk's (1997) dichotomous measure of correct voting is defined as "the likelihood that citizens, under conditions of incomplete information, nonetheless vote for the candidate or party they would have voted for had they full information about those same candidates or parties" (Lau, et al 2008). It compares an individual's self-proclaimed preferences to the positions of the candidates in a given race. Respondents who vote for the candidate most closely aligned with their expressed preferences are said to have voted correctly, while those who did not are said to have cast an 'incorrect' vote.[8]

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[6] Pictures were taken from state legislators' websites in states other than those from which subjects were recruited. All were pre-tested and rated similarly in terms of attractiveness, age, and likability.
[7] Available in the appendix.
[8] More information on the calculation of correct voting is available in the appendix.

The amount of information accessed for the female candidate will function as both a dependent and independent variable in this study. It will serve as a dependent variable first in order to ascertain the effects of prejudice on information search. It will then be added as an independent variable to the models for vote choice, feeling thermometer ratings, and correct voting. Information search is measured using a count variable of the total number of unique information boxes opened for woman candidate. Possible values range from 0 to 25 and, because the distribution mimics a normal curve, will be analyzed using an OLS regression.[9]

Independent Variables

Predictors of interest include a subject's gender and his or her score on a scale of a set of modern sexism measures taken from the 2008 ANES (alpha = .660).[10] Control variables include a subject's race, ethnicity, strength of party ID, political sophistication, and age. When the variable measuring search for the female candidate is added to the model, a variable measuring search for all candidates in the subject's out-party is also added to control for inter-subject differences in the amount of information they accessed, overall.

Results

I begin with an analysis of how gender-based prejudice influences information search. Table 2 shows the results of the OLS regression with the number of unique information boxes opened for the female candidate as the dependent variable. In terms of my predictors of primary interest, subject gender is negative but not statistically significant (b=-.819, n.s.), indicating that, on the whole, men did not seek out less information for women candidates. As hypothesized, however, the measure of gender-based prejudice is negative and significant (b=-3.148, p<.05). This suggests that the higher a subject scores in modern sexism, the less information they access about the female candidate in their party. Because all

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[9] Negative binomial regressions were also estimated but were essentially identical to the OLS models.
[10] Items include: "Women who demand equality these days are actually seeking special favors," "Women often miss out on jobs because of discrimination," "Women who complain about harassment cause more problems than they solve," "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work," "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family."

predictors are on a one-point scale, the regression coefficient shows that there is a difference of approximately 3 information boxes accessed from the top to the bottom of the sexism scale. Those who scored lowest in sexism are predicted to look at approximately 13 unique information boxes for the female candidate, while those who scored highest are predicted to access about 10 items, or almost 1/3 less. This is a rather large effect and, if information search proves to be an important direct predictor of candidate evaluation and vote choice, as I expect, then this is an important indirect route by which prejudice influences political attitudes and behavior.

[Table 2 about here]

Candidate Evaluation

Table 3 shows the results of the analysis of feeling thermometer ratings for the female candidate running in the subject's in-party. Model 1 includes subject characteristic variables, only, and Model 2 adds variables for total information search for the female candidate and, as a control, total information accessed in the primary for all out-party candidates. Unexpectedly, Model 1 suggests that a subject's score on the sexism scale does have a large and significant direct effect on affect toward the female candidate (b=-18.515, p<.01). A subject with the lowest possible sexism score is predicted to give the female candidate a rating of almost 71 out of 100, while a subject with the highest level of prejudice would only give her a 52.

Model 2 suggests that prejudice continues to affect feeling thermometer scores directly once information search is added to the equation, though its substantive effect is decreased (b= -14.123, p<.05). Further, search for the female in-party candidate is also positive and significant (b=1.508, p<.001). Accessing more information about the female candidate leads to more positive evaluations of her and, since those who are higher in sexism search for less information about the female candidate, prejudice also has an indirect effect on evaluations through search behavior. Because the inclusion of information search also decreases the effect of sexism on feeling thermometer scores, this is also an indication that search is a partial mediator of prejudice. A Sobel Test (Sobel 1982) confirms this finding, yielding a test statistic of -2.028, which is statistically significant at p<.05. In other words, sexism

is influencing subjects' evaluations of the female candidate both through information search and directly, and those who are high in sexism and do acquire more information about her may evaluate her more positively.

[Table 3 about here]

Vote Choice

Table 4 shows the results of the two models predicting vote choice for the female candidate. In Model 1, sexism is negative and significant at $p<.1$ (b=-1.234). Again, this suggests that sexism has a direct effect on whether subjects vote for the female candidate. In Model 2, when search is added, sexism remains negative and but loses significance (b=-1.063, n.s.), At the same time, the amount of information sought by the subject is positive and significant (b=.078, $p<.05$), again suggesting an indirect effect of prejudice through the amount that subjects choose to learn about the female candidate. More search for the female candidate improves the likelihood of voting for her, but higher sexism scores lead to less search for the female candidate. Further, in this instance, the fact that sexism drops below statistical significance suggests that information search is completely mediating the relationship between sexism and vote choice for the female candidate. A Sobel Test is statistically significant at $p<.1$, with a test statistic of -1.689.

[Table 4 about here]

Figure 2 graphs the predicted probabilities of voting for the female candidate given the number of unique information boxes opened for the female candidate. Subjects who search for no information about her have about a 12% chance of voting for her, while those who search for the most possible information about her have about a 46% chance of doing so. Again, since gender-based prejudice negatively influences information search for the female candidate, this is more evidence of an indirect effect of sexism on voting for female candidates.

[Figure 2 about here]

Correct Voting

The analysis of information search, feeling thermometers, and vote choice for the female candidates in this study have provided quite a bit of support for my hypotheses, as well as some unexpected results. Gender-based prejudice seems to directly affect both candidate evaluation and voting behavior, as well as information search, which, in turn, also influences these other measures. My final dependent variable of interest is correct voting. While I did not expect to find direct effects of prejudice on feeling thermometers or vote choice, because of its subtle nature and lower likelihood of susceptibility to social desirability effects, I do expect to find both direct and indirect effects of prejudice on correct voting. To test these hypotheses, I use logistic regression to estimate two correct voting models – one that takes subject level variables and the gender manipulation, only, into account, and one that adds in information search variables.

Table 5 shows the results of the correct voting models. Again, Model 1 includes all but the information search variables. The interaction term between a subject's score on the modern sexism scale and the indicator variable that the subject's correct choice was the female candidate is negative and significant here (b=-2.885, p<.05), suggesting that, among those whose interests and preferences most closely aligned with the female candidate, subjects who were higher in gender-based prejudice were less likely to vote for her, regardless of their proximity on these things. Figure 3 shows the predicted probability of casting a correct vote among those subjects whose correct choice was the female candidate according to subjects' sexism scores. Among subjects whose "correct" vote was the female candidate, those with the lowest score on the sexism scale have about a 53% chance of casting a correct vote. On the other hand, those who scored at the top of the sexism scale had only about a 13% chance of voting correctly.

[Table 5 and Figure 3 about here]

Model 2 adds the information search variables to this model. In this model, the interaction between sexism and the indicator that the female candidate was the correct choice is negative but loses significance (b=-2.195, n.s.). Unexpectedly, the interaction between search for the female candidate and

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the indicator that the female candidate was the correct choice is positive but not significant, suggesting that, among those who should have voted for the female candidate, those who searched for more information about her were no more likely to vote correctly. Unlike in the other analyses, then, it seems as if prejudice has *only* a direct effect on correct voting, and that information search does not seem to play the same mediating role.

Discussion and Conclusion

The 2016 presidential election has made clear to many people the extent to which gender-based prejudice still permeates the American political context. Sexism in the media and the campaigns themselves may reflect (and/or perpetuate) prejudice in the electorate. The findings from my analyses suggest that gender-based prejudice does indeed affect voting behavior for female candidates, both directly and indirectly. I find direct effects of sexism on information search patterns for female candidates, feeling thermometer scores for female candidates, vote choice for female candidates, and correct voting when the female candidate is the "correct" choice. At the same time, the effects of sexism on candidate evaluation and vote choice measures also showed up indirectly via information search. In particular, the higher a subject scored on the scale of modern sexism items, the fewer information boxes he or she opened related to the female candidate. At the same time, increased information search was positively correlated with both voting for the female candidate and rating her more positively on the feeling thermometer. In both of these instances, information search patterns either partially or completely mediated the relationship between sexism and the dependent variable. Sexism also seems to play a significant role in influencing voting behavior using the subtler correct voting measure. Those higher in gender-based prejudice were less likely to vote correctly if their correct choice was the female candidate. Even when a subject admittedly preferred many policy stands and characteristics held by the female candidate, sexism stopped some of them from casting a vote for her. All together, these findings suggest that sexism is still serving to disadvantage female candidates among some voters, and is doing so both directly and through the process of learning about candidates during a campaign.

While the continuing influence of gender based prejudice may be disheartening, it is important to recognize the ways in which sexism may still be working in order to effectively combat it. Indeed, the important role of political learning may be cause for some hope. The fact that information search mediates the relationship between sexism and vote choice, for example, suggests that subjects who score high in sexism may be persuaded to vote for a woman if they are exposed to politically substantive information about her that they like. It is possible that if these voters are exposed to more information about women candidates during an actual campaign, that this learning process could overcome their initial biases. Of course, the ability of female candidates and their campaigns to control their own message and the information available about them varies from race to race. The media serve a crucial function in this regard and since women often face biased coverage, this may be a solution that is "easier said than done."

There is clearly still much more work to be done, but this paper makes an important contribution by providing evidence both that sexism still influences the attitudes and behavior of some voters, and by one mechanism through which prejudice influences those attitudes and behavior (information search). Future research should expand on these findings in several ways. First, because this study uses a convenience sample, it cannot speak to the level of sexism that still exists in the electorate. Do the results of this study apply to 5% of the electorate or 50%? A similar study using a nationally representative sample would help to determine the extent to which these findings affect women candidates in the "real world." Second, the growing literature on implicit attitudes suggests that implicit and explicit prejudices may actually be separate cognitive constructs (e.g. Mo 2015), so it would be instructive to complete a similar study that uses a gender IAT to measure implicit sexism as an independent variable. Finally, it is possible that the pattern of results found in this study may apply to modern racism and political behavior, as well. A similar study which examines the role of substantive information in possibly mediating the relationship between racist attitudes and voting and/or evaluations of black candidates would further our understanding of how prejudice functions in high-information environments.

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Table 1. Primary Election Group Assignments

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Moderate Democrat	Moderate Republican	Conservative	Very Conservative
Group 1 (n = 47)	Hispanic Male	White Female	White Male	Black Male	White Female	White Male
Group 2 (n = 50)	Hispanic Male	White Male	White Female	Black Male	White Male	White Female
Group 3 (n = 49)	White Male	White Female	Hispanic Male	White Female	White Male	Black Male
Group 4 (n = 52)	White Female	White Male	Hispanic Male	White Male	White Female	Black Male
Group 5 (n = 55)	White Male	Hispanic Male	White Female	White Male	Black Male	White Female
Group 6 (n = 49)	White Female	Hispanic Male	White Male	White Female	Black Male	White Male

Table 2. Information Search, Female Candidate

	B	S.E.
Subject Male	-.819	.762
Subject Non-white	-1.722*	.747
Subject Age	-1.102	1.364
Strength of Party ID	-1.934*	.961
Political Sophistication	4.524*	1.767
Out-party Candidate Search	4.893**	1.589
Sexism	-3.148*	1.482
Constant	10.006***	.966
Adjusted R^2	.090	

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.1
Note: Values are OLS regression coefficients, n=285.

Table 3. Feeling Thermometer Ratings, Female Candidate

	Model 1	Model 2
Subject Male	.747 (3.026)	1.955 (2.805)
Subject Non-white	4.599 (2.967)	7.232* (2.771)
Subject Age	-2.689 (5.194)	-3.128 (5.016)
Strength of Party ID	10.404** (3.759)	6.569† (3.558)
Political Sophistication	7.355 (7.001)	1.167 (6.567)
Sexism	-18.515** (5.881)	-14.123* (5.490)
Out-Party Candidate Search	--	-16.010** (5.935)
Search for Female Candidate	--	1.508*** (.221)
Constant	55.874*** (2.890)	44.241*** (4.181)
Adjusted R^2	.075	.208

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.1
Note: Values are OLS regression coefficients, n=285. Values in parentheses are standard errors.

Table 4. Vote Choice for Female Candidate

	Model 1	Model 2
Subject Male	-.295 (.348)	-.228 (.354)
Subject Non-white	.424 (.320)	.596† (.330)
Age	.304 (.575)	.264 (.612)
Strength of Party ID	-.548 (.415)	-.783† (.439)
Political Sophistication	.350 (.780)	.052 (.800)
Sexism	-1.234† (.692)	-1.063 (.702)
Out-Party Candidate Search	--	-.893 (.742)
Search for Female Candidate	--	.078** (.028)
Constant	-.694* (.315)	-1.310* (.527)
Pseudo R²	.045	.088

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.1
Note: Values are logistic regression coefficients, n=276. Values in parentheses are standard errors.

Table 5. Correct Vote Choice

	Model 1	Model 2
Subject Male	-.194 (.315)	-.170 (.321)
Subject Non-white	.127 (.299)	.167 (.310)
Age	-.182 (.530)	.395 (.568)
Strength of Party ID	.553 (.388)	.748† (.412)
Political Sophistication	.646 (.722)	.406 (.740)
Sexism	.445 (.694)	.471 (.708)
Female Candidate Correct Choice	-.323 (.284)	-.976 (.751)
Female Candidate Correct X Sexism	-2.885* (1.383)	-2.195 (1.443)
Search for Female Candidate	--	.020 (.031)
Out-Party Candidate Search	--	1.940** (.682)
Female Candidate Correct X Search for Female Candidate	--	.049 (.053)
Constant	-.704* (.315)	-1.735*** (.544)
Pseudo R²	.054	.113

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.1
Note: Values are logistic regression coefficients, n=276. Values in parentheses are standard errors.

Figure 1. The Mediating Effect of Information Search on Prejudice and Voting Behavior
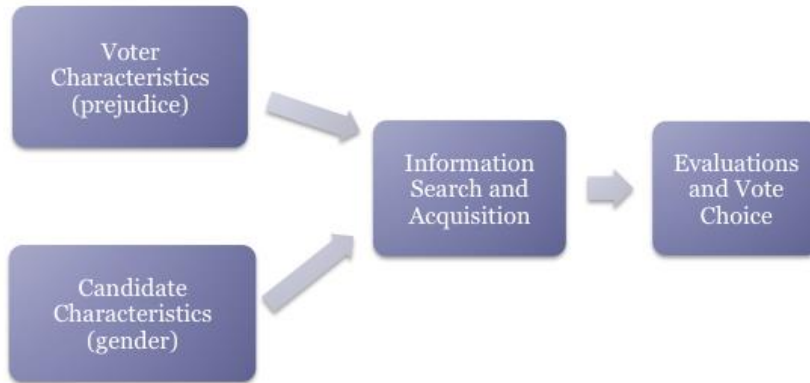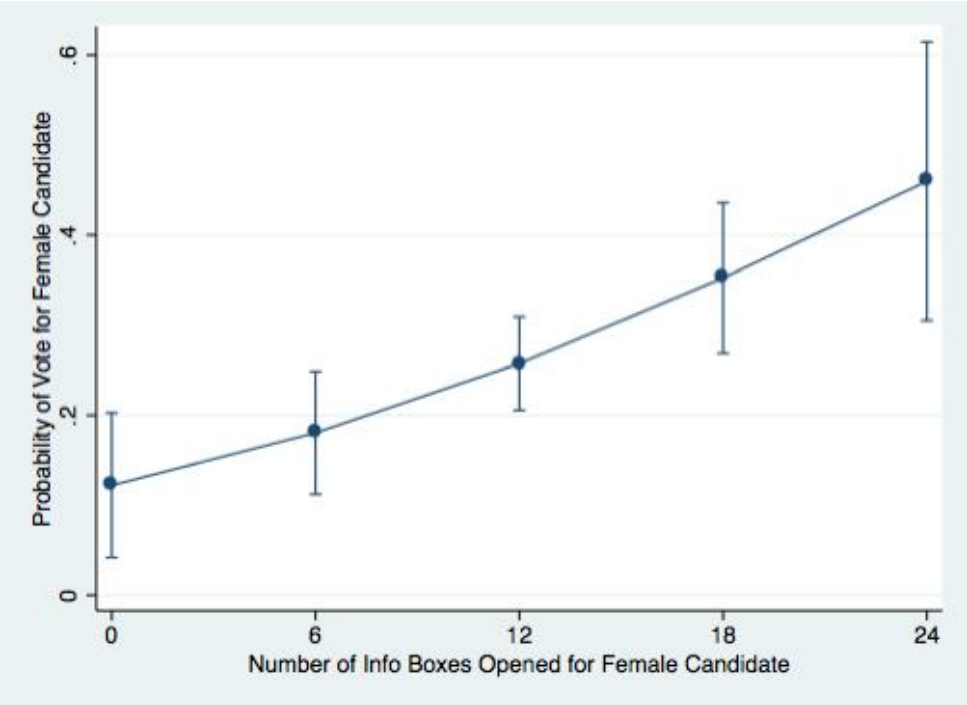
Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities of Voting for the Female Candidate by Information Search for the Female Candidate

Note: Horizontal axis shows the number of unique information boxes opened by subject. Vertical Axis shows the subject's probability of voting for the female candidate. Brackets show 95% confidence intervals. Predicted probabilities holding all other independent variables at their mean or modal value.

Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities of Correct Vote Choice for Female Candidate by Sexism Score
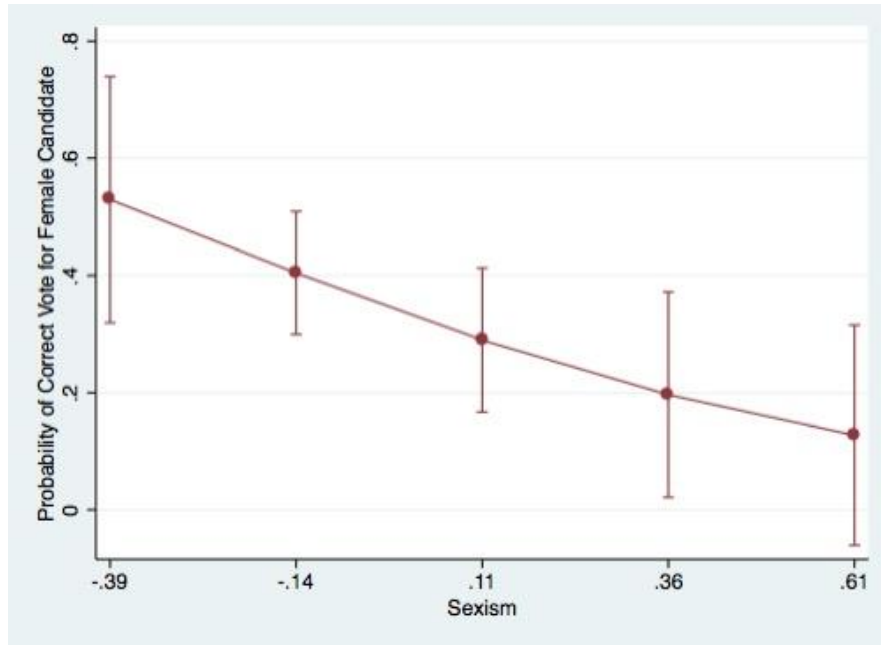
Note: Horizontal axis shows a subject's score on the sexism scale. Vertical Axis shows the subject's probability of casting a correct vote (among those whose correct choice was the female candidate). Brackets show 95% confidence intervals. Predicted probabilities holding all other independent variables at their mean or modal value.

Appendix

Correct Voting

Lau and Redlawsk's (1997) dichotomous measure of correct voting is defined as "the likelihood that citizens, under conditions of incomplete information, nonetheless vote for the candidate or party they would have voted for had they full information about those same candidates or parties" (Lau, et al 2008). It is a 'normative-naïve' construction built from the MIMS experimental data that compares an individual's self-proclaimed preferences to the actual positions of the candidates in a given race. It is normative in the sense that 'experts' determine where candidates actually stand on the issues and other areas of judgment, yet naïve because respondents' own answers to survey questions are used to ascertain their unique values and policy preferences. Respondents who vote for the candidate most closely aligned with their expressed preferences are said to have voted correctly, while those who did not are said to have cast an 'incorrect' vote.

In order to assess whether a respondent has voted correctly, several types of survey responses are included in the correct voting construct—information that indicates 1) a respondent's values and preferences, 2) the relative importance of various issues about which each respondent was asked, and 3) an objective measure of where each candidate in the election stood on relevant issues and evaluative dimensions. The first type of information—that which provides indicators of respondents' values and preferences—is gathered from responses to questions about an individual's party ID, positions on policy issues, feelings about different groups of people, feelings about different candidates, and evaluations of politicians in office. In terms of issue importance, subjects were deemed to consider an issue "important" if they opened an information box about that issue (for one or more candidates) at least twice throughout the primary campaign. Finally, a candidate's objective ideological position was determined by a series of "experts" (graduate students), who rated each candidate's issue positions on a liberal-conservative scale.

Four separate correct voting measures were then constructed using an alternately weighted and unweighted method of combining judgment items, and either an additive or averaging method of aggregation (i.e. there are four dependent measures of correct voting—a weighted sums model, a weighted means model, an unweighted sums model, and an unweighted means model). The correct candidate for each respondent is the one with the highest summary judgment, and each individual is assigned either a '1' or '0' for choosing the correct candidate or not, respectively.

For a more detailed explanation of how these measures were calculated and a discussion of the considerations involved in choosing one model over the other, see Lau and Redlawsk (2001) or Lau, Andersen, and Redlawsk (2008).

Candidate Synopsis Page

Republicans   **Democrats**