A Study on Anger in Politics: How Political Candidate Diversity Affects The Perceptions of their Anger Expressions

Application for the 2021-2022 Graduate Research and Creative Activity (GRACA) Grant

Masters Student: Jared Koelzer
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Gregory Petrow
University of Nebraska at Omaha; Department of Political Science

Project Description

Human nature greatly affects how individuals react to the world of politics due to biases, such as those based on the race or gender of a political candidate. These biases based on intersectionality, or how individuals belong to overlapping, socially salient groups, may result in discrimination and inequality (Crenshaw, 1989). Previous studies involving the political candidate evaluations have revealed very little about how these kinds of group memberships impact a voter's evaluation of political hopefuls in one particular aspect: How voters might evaluate these candidates differently when they express emotion. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to examine how these categorizations affect evaluations of politicians when they express emotions – specifically regarding the expression of anger. This study will look to identify if certain categorizations, such as African American men or Latino women, are judged more harshly for expressing anger than their white and/or male counterparts.

I am collaborating with my faculty mentor, Dr. Gregory Petrow in Political Science, to run an experiment in which we use a vignette to experimentally manipulate both the gender and racial groups of a political candidate, but also whether or not the person expresses anger. I am bringing my own research question to this project. My question concerns how the age of respondents affects their reactions to these racially and gender-diverse political candidates. Scholarship on how age affects political preference has made a few discoveries relevant to this research. A 2006 study found that an individual's age (and generation they belong to) does have a meaningful affect on personal political beliefs (Zukin et. al 2006). Further research found that Americans from Generation Z (born after 1996) are generally more left-leaning than any prior generation. This left-leaning bias has resulted in a generation more likely to vote for minority and female candidates, but the study did not find any relationship indicating that they were more likely to vote for younger candidates (McDonald and Deckman 2021). No study involving age-related voting preferences has examined whether or not emotional expression has an affect on political preference. Within my portion of this larger study, I hypothesize that the older research participants will view the non-white political candidates (who are all designed to be ~30 years in age) more harshly when they express anger compared to younger participants.

Current literature on the effects of candidate anger expression is lacking with very few studies having been conducted (Brooks 2011, 2013), and none of these existing studies

incorporate intersectionality. A politician's intersectional group membership may affect the reactions of voters based on the anger the politicians express. If their anger violates emotion display norms, it crosses into the impropriety threshold and becomes deviant anger (Geddes and Callister 2007). Additional research finds that, in various ways, a political candidate belonging to an intersectional category can be faced with specific disadvantages based on stereotypes when compared to a typical white male or even female politician (Cassese 2019). One example of this is the "macho" stereotype of Latino men, where it is believed that they possess a hot-blooded nature and may struggle to control their temper when expressing their anger (Mirande 1997). In summary, anger expression and intersectionality both have existing fields of research, and this study will pull from both existing bodies of research to understand how the two relate to each other in a more complete manner.

This research contributes to an understudied subfield of political science. With an increasingly diverse candidate pool it is growing ever more important to understand how the voting public perceives elected office hopefuls and government officials in terms of how their race and gender affect the public's perceptions. This is even more true when discussing the expression of emotions. Whether the topic is gun control, climate change, or healthcare, politicians both in office and on the campaign trail express their emotions to show their support or opposition to a variety of issues. This project is designed to understand if politicians of certain intersectional groups are at an inherent disadvantage when expressing the emotion of anger in the political sphere, and if they are, to determine how large of a disadvantage exists. Furthermore, this research will not only answer questions that need to be answered in our diversifying society, but the study will also contribute to UNO's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion by funding research on a project that will give diverse candidates greater information into how to plan their campaigns, helping to level the playing field for minority individuals interested in politics.

Method

The tests run in this experiment will be using an experimental 3x2x2 randomized bloc design, with twelve conditions separated into three conditions: race (white/African American/Latino), gender (male/female), and anger expression (showing anger/neutral). The planned experiment will use the same anger and control manipulations utilized in Brooks' research (Brooks 2011, 2013). Additionally, the surveys will only target Anglo respondents, as they typically comprise a majority of voters in American elections. Also, the required over-sampling of racial minority respondents needed to make good statistical inferences is both impractical and expensive. Respondents will first complete a pre-study questionnaire before being presented with an article used in Brooks' research (2011, 2013) that has demonstrated a large effect related to causing people to perceive the politician as angry. The race and gender of the politician will be manipulated using an information box that provides the name, gender and race. Names of politicians will be chosen based on common names for each race/gender relationship. The white and African American politicians will have the last name of Johnson (one

of the most common last names among both races), and the Latino politicians will use the surname of Martinez. The whites will be named Logan and Mary, the African Americans, Jamal and Lateisha, and the Latinos, Juan and Nydia. These names have been found by other scholars to successfully manipulate racial categorization (e.g. McConnaughy, White, Leal and Casellas 2010).

After reading the article, participants will answer some evaluation questions, also taken from Brooks (2011), including favorability toward the politician, rated effectiveness as a potential U.S. Senator, and trait evaluations (such as, a rating of the politician as a strong leader). The experiment will be designed on Qualtrics and executed using research participants from Dynata, an online resource with an Internet panel of 62 million respondents – more than enough to provide for the needed sample size – to allow for statistically significant results (the sample size was assessed by Dr. Petrow using a statistical power calculation). Therefore, this project will aim to use 2220 respondents, provided by Dynata, resulting in 185 respondents per race/gender pairing (i.e. per experimental treatment condition). This aspect of the experiment will use funds provided by the Faculty Mentor, Dr. Gregory Petrow, and therefore are not taken into account in this budget proposal. Before running the experiment, a pretest will be conducted using funds partially from this GRACA application to pilot the experimental design and help ensure that the tests are conducted as well as possible. The pretest will use respondents from Prolific, an online-based survey platform with access to over 150,000 respondents and the capability to filter respondents to suit the needs of our preliminary testing.

Project Timeline

Month	Planned Schedule of Research Activities
May 2022	Submit the pilot test study to IRB for approval. Begin input of questionnaire into Qualtrics and pilot test the design after approval
June 2022	Collection of data. Begin to analyze data as available
July 2022	Run final data analysis.
August 2022	Write up results into conference paper format.
Fall Semester and Beyond	Finish writing results in conference paper format and apply to present the results at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association

Student/Faculty Mentor Roles

Student Role: Jared Koelzer, Department of Political Science, will focus on the following research activities: Designing framework for surveys and tests, collecting and analyzing data, and writing results into conference paper format with assistance from the Faculty Mentor.

Faculty Role: Dr. Gregory Petrow, Associate Professor of Political Science, will oversee the collection and analysis of data, review frameworks for surveys and tests, provide general supervision, and provide general paper co-author support.

Previous Internal Funding

　　　　I have received no previous internal funding for this project.

Budget Justification

　　　　The budget request for this project includes a stipend of $4800 plus $200 for expenses to run a pre-test using Prolific. Additional funding for the main experiment on Qualtrics will be provided through funds from the Faculty Mentor Dr. Gregory Petrow. I expect to work on this project over the summer in lieu of other forms of employment or self funding, so a majority of the budget is set towards a living expense stipend to support this research project. This will allow for a complete focus on this research project without the need for balancing time between research and an additional full-time job. The stipend is calculated based on a $10 an hour wage with 40 hours of work per week. May and August will only consist of 2 weeks due to the start and end of classes. An itemized table of budget items is included below:

Budget Item	Budget Description	Justification for Expenses
May 2021	Personnel Costs	● Stipend for Living Expenses: $800 　○ 40 hours per week 　○ $10 wage per hour
June 2021	Personnel Costs	● Stipend for Living Expenses: $1,600 　○ 40 hours per week 　○ $10 wage per hour
July 2021	Personnel Costs	● Stipend for Living Expenses: $1,600 　○ 40 hours per week 　○ $10 wage per hour
August 2021	Personnel Costs	● Stipend for Living Expenses: $800 　○ 40 hours per week 　○ $10 wage per hour
General Resources	Access to resources necessary for the completion of the project	● Access to Qualtrics is available through the Department: $0 ● Pre-Test Research Participants: $200 　○ Website Used: Prolific[1] 　○ Paying $1.50 per participant
Total Budget		$5,000.00

---

[1] Dr. Petrow will provide other funds for the pre-test as well. More information about Prolific can be found at https://www.prolific.co/. Two studies (Peer et al 2017 and Palan & Schitter 2018) find that research participants provided by Prolific have very desirable qualities and constitute a good source of research participants.

References

Brooks, Deborah Jordan. 2011. "Testing the Double Standard for Candidate Emotionality: Voter Reactions to the Tears and Anger of Male and Female Politicians." *The Journal of Politics* 73(2): 597-615.

Brooks, Deborah Jordan. 2013. *He Runs, She Runs: Why Gender Stereotypes Do Not Harm Women Candidates.* Princeton University Press.

Cassese, Erin C. 2019. "Intersectional Stereotyping in Political Decision Making." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Ed. William R. Thompson. Oxford University Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140(1): 139-167.

Geddes, Deaba and Ronda R. Callister. 2007. "Crossing the Line(s): A Dual Threshold Model of Anger in Organizations." *The Academy of Management Review* 32(3): 721–746.

McConnaughy, Corrine M., Ismail K. White, David L. Leal, and Jason P. Casellas. 2010. "A Latino on the Ballot: Explaining Coethnic Voting Among Latinos and the Response of White Americans." *The Journal of Politics* 72(4): 1199-1211.

McDonald, Jared and Melissa Deckman. 2021. "New Voters, New Attitudes: How Gen Z Americans Rate Candidates with Respect to Generation, Gender, and Race." *Politics, Groups, and Identities*.

Mirande, Alfredo. 1997. *Hombres y Machos: Masculinity and Latino Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Palan, Stefan and Christian Schitter. 2018. "Prolific.ac—A Subject Pool for Online Experiments." *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance* 17: 22-27.

Peer, Eyal, Laura Brandimarte, Sonam Samat, and Alessandro Acquisti. 2017. "Beyond the Turk: Alternative Platforms for Crowdsourcing Behavioral Research." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 70: 153-163.

Zukin, Cliff, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins, and Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2006. *A New Engagement?: Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Department of Political Science
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0271
PHN (402) 554-2624
FAX (402) 554-4860

February 24, 2022
Dr. Gregory A. Petrow
Associate Professor of Political Science

University of Nebraska Omaha
Office of Research and Creative Activity

To GRACA Review Committee Members:

Jared Koelzer is submitting an application for a GRACA grant, and I am the faculty mentor on that grant. I encourage you as strongly as I can to award the grant to Jared. The project concerns how voters evaluate political candidates when they express anger. Given the rise in outrage politics, expressions of anger are becoming more common place in our politics. However, little is known concerning how voters evaluate diverse candidates differently when they express anger. There is reason to think that voters may penalize non-white male candidates for expressing anger. Raphael Warnock, the African-American U.S. Senator from Georgia, certainly had related concerns when he ran an advertisement that featured him walk and play with a puppy. Jared proposes to run an experiment in which a research participant is randomly exposed to one out of 12 types of candidates. The candidates vary by gender (male, female), race (Anglo, black and Latino), and whether or not the candidate expresses anger.

Jared and I have developed this project together. He is quite interested in how age may affect the results. His literature review finds that younger people hold less traditional gender attitudes, and also more progressive racial attitudes. This leads to his hypothesis that, if non-white male candidates are penalized more by voters for expressing anger, that this may be less true among younger voters. He also will program the experiment onto Qualtrics and clean and analyze the data once it is collected. When it comes time to write, he will write drafts of the paper and make the tables and figures. I will probably write more on the parts of the paper concerning the literature review and theoretical argument, and he will probably write more when it comes to the results and discussing them.

Jared is more than prepared for these tasks. He is a graduate assistant in the Political Science department, and I have worked with him the entire time. I was the grad chair when we hired him. I interviewed his academic references, and they both called him the best student they had ever worked with in their 30 years. My own experiences corroborate that sentiment. He also completed my class, Research Methods in Political Science, and clearly demonstrated mastery of the skills, including the data analysis which he will need to perform for the project.

The project itself is viable. It addresses a very clear hole in the literature, and addressing it has practical implications for politicians of diverse backgrounds. I also think that the budget is sound. Almost all of the money will go to paying Jared so he can work on this project. The remaining few hundred dollars can fund a pre-test pilot study.

This letter signifies my commitment to overseeing the project. In fact, I used this project to apply for a Faculty Development Fellowship from the College of Arts and Sciences. As a result, by the end of the spring 2023 semester, I will need to have run this experiment, and two other related experiments, that I proposed. I will maintain oversight by having weekly meetings with Jared.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Petrow, Ph.D.