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# Impressions of a Female Political Candidate Based on Political Party Affiliation

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Impressions of a Female Political Candidate Based on Political Party Affiliation

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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# IMPRESSIONS OF A FEMALE POLITICAL CANDIDATE

## Abstract

There is a gender gap in United States politics; men are overrepresented, and prioritize issues/policies differently compared with women. Stereotypes may be associated depending on group memberships. Stereotypes of men (competent) are consistent and stereotypes of women (warm) are inconsistent with politicians (competent). I examined stereotypes of major/non-major political parties, and how party affiliation affects whether stereotypes about men/male politicians/women/female politicians predict female politicians' traits. Stereotype valence ascribed to political parties is important because people vote for a positively viewed party/representative. I assessed the strength and valence of stereotypes associated with political parties, and found major parties were viewed more positively than non-major parties, and the Democratic and Republican parties were viewed more positively than the Independent Party (Study 1). I found warmth and competence attributes ascribed to women/female politicians/men/male politicians predicted Karen Johnson's warmth and competence depending on whether Karen Johnson was a major or non-major party candidate. When men/male politicians were perceived as competent Karen Johnson was perceived as competent, but no relationship between men/male politicians' warmth and Karen Johnson's warmth emerged. When women/female politicians were perceived as warm/competent, Karen Johnson was perceived as warm/competent. As a major candidate, Karen Johnson was perceived as warm/competent when women/female politicians were perceived as warm/competent. However, when Karen Johnson was a non-major candidate, there was no relationship between women's competence and Karen Johnson's competence, and when women/female politicians were perceived as warm, Karen Johnson was perceived as warm (Study 2). Women in office and members of multiple social groups are discussed.

*Keywords:* politicians, women, political parties, stereotyping, subgrouping, subtyping



### Impressions of a Female Political Candidate Based on Political Party Affiliation

In the United States, politics is male-dominated (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018); women are underrepresented in political office (Dolan, 2010). Thus, most political research focuses on the representation of men in political roles (Dolan, 2010). The lack of diversity in politics is partially due to the stereotypes of politicians (e.g., assertive, ambitious, tough) (Dolan, 2010; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Hayes, 2011; Sanbonmatsu, 2002), as they are congruent with stereotypes of men (e.g., assertive, self-confident, aggressive, etc.) but not women (e.g., empathetic, intuitive, beautiful, etc.) (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Schneider & Bos, 2014). Because of the lack of stereotype consistency, female politicians receive less support from voters compared to male politicians (Hayes, 2011). Voters make decisions about the candidate's characteristics, values, and positions on public policies and issues while accounting for political candidate gender (Alexander & Andersen, 1993; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Koch 2000; Khan 1994; King & Matland, 2000; Leeper, 1991; Matland, 1994; Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sapiro, 1981-1982; Sapiro, 1983). Furthermore, intersectional invisibility may influence diversity in politics because being part of multiple subgroup identities (e.g., a female politician) can render an individual as "invisible," as these subgroup identities are mismatched from the norm of their identity groups (e.g., women, politicians) (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Shields, 2008). Invisibility could inhibit a politician from receiving the public attention needed to influence the concerns and topics important to the group they represent (e.g., political party, minorities, etc.). In addition, voters make decisions about a candidate based on the candidate's political party affiliation (Leeper, 1991). Political party memberships have associated stereotypes, which have a large impact on voter support (Gold, 2015). In the current research, I examined the stereotypes of major versus non-major political parties, and how

candidate party affiliation affects whether the stereotypes people have about men, male politicians, women, and female politicians predict the traits ascribed to female politicians.

### **Stereotyping**

People learn how to act and what to be like through interactions with their parents, peers, and other outlets (e.g., organizations, institutions, etc.) in their environment (Social learning theory; Bandura & Walters, 1977). Stereotypes shape the way we view others, such as what we think others should be like, and how we think others should behave (Greenwald, et al., 2002; Heilman, 2001). Stereotypes are a set of beliefs about the attributes associated with a group of people (Greenwald, et al., 2002). All groups have associated stereotypes; thus, there are stereotypes about gender as well as political parties. Stereotypes have two main components; they can be descriptive (the actual characteristics of the group) as well as prescriptive (the characteristics people think should be about a group). For instance, stereotypes shape voter's views about the appropriate place for women in politics (Dolan, 2010). Voters use stereotype when deciding which political candidate they want to support (Leeper, 1991). Voters want a representative who will be responsive to their needs, and they vote for a representative they think can fulfill their campaign promises. If the stereotypes attributed to a specific group are not consistent with group members being qualified for political office, it may jeopardize the political opportunities for members of those groups (Dolan, 2010; Hayes, 2011).

**Political parties within the United States.** Within the United States, there are two major political parties, the Republican Party and Democratic Party. The Republican Party focuses on Christian ethics, Authoritarianism, Conservatism, and is associated with equity, justice, and economic freedom (Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010; Noel, 2016). The Democratic Party focuses on income and wealth equality, affordable healthcare, Egalitarianism, and is

associated with progressiveness (Lichtenstein, 2011). Several other non-major political parties exist in United States politics (e.g., the Independent Party, the Green Party, and the Libertarian Party). These non-major parties offer issue solutions that either combine the views of the major political parties (Munro, Zirpoli, Schuman, & Taulbee, 2013) or are novel (Rosenstone, Behr, & Lazarus, 1996). For example, on the issue of energy, the Independent Party believes it is important to use alternative sources of energy (like the Democratic Party) and decrease the use of foreign oil reservoirs by utilizing our own oil reserves (like the Republican Party) (Independent American Party, 2012). However, on the issue of social security, the Republican Party believes the current social security plan should be altered, the Democratic Party believes the current social security plan should remain the same, and the Independent Party believes that participation in the current social security plan should be voluntary for citizens and that social security should be phased out (Democratic American Party, 2016; Independent American Party, 2012; Republican American Party, 2016).

Non-major political parties are researched less often because major political parties receive more attention from the public (Munro, et al., 2013). Although many voters think the United States needs a non-major party because the major parties are not representative of the people, these voters also do not think the United States democracy would be positively influenced by a non-major political party (Gold, 2015). Furthermore, non-major party politicians are scrutinized more than major party politicians, as voters not only consider a non-major party politician's position but are also more partial to other factors such as the non-major party politician's character, approval rating, education, and leadership expertise compared to major party politicians (Munro, et al., 2013). The current research will examine people's views of both major and non-major political parties.

**Gender, political party, and politicians.** In 2018 in the United States, 106 of the 535 seats in Congress, and 74 of the 312 statewide elective positions were held by women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018). The differences in the representation of men and women in elected offices influence the issues addressed by Congress, as there is a gender gap between male and female representatives in United States politics (Wiris, 1986) with male representatives focusing on topics such as foreign policy and female representatives focusing more on topics such as equal pay (Eagly, Diekman, Schneider, & Kulesa, 2003; Edlund & Pande, 2002; Inglehart & Norris, 2000). One plausible explanation for the gender gap in United States politics is the inability to nominate or recruit as many women as men to run for political office. Another explanation for the gender gap in politics is that women perceive themselves as possessing fewer of the necessary political leadership qualifications than men (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Fox & Lawless, 2014a). These nomination, recruitment, and perception issues limit the opportunities for women's participation and success in politics. To provide a representation of one group's views, multiple representatives of that group need to be physically present to voice the concerns and topics of importance the group holds (Campbell, Childs, & Lovenduski, 2010).

Women are increasingly becoming more left-wing than men because the cultural values and concerns of men and women within society have changed with societal modernization (Inglehart & Norris, 2000) and because their political values align with left-wing views and issues (Inglehart & Norris, 2000). For instance, marriages have increasingly ended in divorces since the 1990s, which usually leaves the single woman with less money than her former partner, because women are more likely to have custody of the children (Edlund & Pande, 2002). Due to primary custody and child care laws, if the woman has custody of the children, the man is only obligated to pay a fixed amount of money per month for child support, whereas the woman is

obligated to pay an indefinite amount to make sure the children are well cared for (Natalier & Hewitt, 2010). Thus, because of the economic inequalities, women often support Democratic Party issues like affordable healthcare and welfare (Edlund & Pande, 2002). If men on average are less supportive of reproductive rights, affordable healthcare, and equal pay than women (Edlund & Pande, 2002; Inglehart & Norris, 2000), and women are underrepresented in politics, then women's opinions are not represented within the government at equal magnitude as men's opinions (Campbell, Childs, & Lovenduski, 2010). Indeed, male representatives often do not focus on the issues of female citizens and overlook the unique opinions female politicians provide (Dovi, 2007).

Furthermore, political party is significant in the representation of gender in politics because there is a difference between the impact of major and non-major political party affiliation, as major political parties are more recognized by the public (Munro, et al., 2013). There is limited research investigating female major versus non-major political party candidates (Rosenstone et al., 1996). The current research investigates stereotypes associated with female major and non-major political candidates.

**Warm/communal versus competent/agentic traits.** Stereotypes can be divided into two groups, agency, which emphasizes people as independent individuals, or communion, which emphasizes people as individuals who engage with the larger community in which they live (Bakan, 1966). All groups and individuals can be classified in terms of communal and agentic traits. Communal traits have interpersonally-oriented components, and people with these traits (e.g., women) are focused on helping others, belonging to a community, and being involved with others (Diehl, Owen, & Youngblade, 2004; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Agentic traits have achievement-oriented components, and people with these traits (e.g., men) are focused on

attaining a sense of autonomy and personal gain (Diehl, Owen, & Youngblade, 2004; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000).

Prejudice can result from the mismatch between the stereotypes ascribed to a group and the stereotypes associated with the social roles that an individual engages in (Eagly & Karau, 2002). For instance, because women are perceived as possessing more communal traits, when women assume leadership roles (which are associated with requiring agentic traits), the perceptions of these women as opposed to men in leadership are more negative (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Greenwald et al., 2002). Furthermore, women are perceived as having stereotypic qualities such as affectionate, pretty, and motherly (communal traits), whereas men and politicians are perceived as having stereotypic qualities such as leadership, drive, and assertiveness (agentic traits) (Hayes, 2011). Because the stereotypes ascribed to women do not match with the stereotypes ascribed to politicians (Eagly & Karau, 2002), women in politics receive negative evaluations (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Leeper, 1991). Men, on the other hand, have greater opportunity to be involved and succeed in politics (Rosenwasser & Seale, 1988; Sanbonmatsu, 2002), because their ascribed stereotypes are similar to politicians' stereotypes (Schneider & Bos, 2014).

Furthermore, political parties may also be stereotyped, however, there is not much research investigating the stereotypes which are ascribed to them. For example, researchers often investigate the formation of stereotypes (e.g., thoughts which consist of what people believe, know, and expect about political parties) ascribed to political parties and how the stereotypes are classified, but not the specific stereotype content attributed to political parties (Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012; Rahn, 1993; Rahn & Cramer, 1996). What is known, however, are the policies and issues they support (e.g., the Democratic Party focuses on issues such as healthcare, and the

Republican Party focuses on issues such as immigration) (Democratic American Party, 2016; Republican American Party, 2016). The stereotypes ascribed to political parties are especially important when thinking about gender because many of the issues and policies the political parties support can impact gender groups. For instance, as it is more likely that people will vote for a candidate they believe will support the issues and policies that affect them (Inglehart & Norris, 2000), and the Democratic Party's support for health care policies are also supported by women, it is more likely that women will vote for a Democratic representative (Dolan, 2010; Edlund & Pande, 2002).

Stereotypes are applied to individuals who are members of multiple stereotypical groups through two different processes: subtyping and subgrouping. Subtyping occurs when attributes ascribed to an individual or group of individuals are not similar to the attributes ascribed to the larger group in general (Greenwald et al., 2002). Subgrouping is when attributes ascribed to an individual or group of individuals have traits that overlap with the attributes ascribed with the larger group in general (Greenwald et al., 2002; Schneider & Bos, 2014).

Male politicians are a smaller subgroup of men because they possess many of the same attributes associated with the large group of men in general (e.g., tough, assertive, competitive, etc.) (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Schneider & Bos, 2014). On the other hand, female politicians are associated with competence (Schneider & Bos, 2014), and are a subtyped group because they share very few stereotypic similarities with women who are associated with warmth (Brown, Phillips, Mercurio, Olah, & Veilleux, 2018; Fiske et al., 2002; Schneider & Bos, 2014). However, knowledge about a specific female political candidate (e.g., when the media publicly displays stereotypic information about the candidate) helps to determine whether a specific female politician is subtyped or subgrouped. Specifically, a novel female politician is subgrouped,

because the warmth and competence stereotypic traits ascribed to female politicians and women predict a novel female politicians' warmth and competence stereotypic traits, whereas Hillary Clinton is subtyped, because the warmth and competence stereotypic traits ascribed to female politicians, but not the warmth and competence stereotypic traits ascribed women, predict Hillary Clinton's stereotypic traits (Brown, et al., 2018).

Although subtyping and subgrouping has mostly been viewed in terms of gender and race (Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001; Schneider & Bos, 2011; Schneider & Bos, 2014; Vonk & Ashmore, 2003), examining other group members (e.g., political parties) may influence these previously studied relationships (e.g., subtyped female politicians may be viewed differently depending on the political party they represent). Political party type is also important to study as many voting decisions are based almost entirely on the party a candidate is representing (Campbell, 1980). People may also perceive representatives of major versus non-major political parties more positively based on the party in which they represent. If people view one party more positively than another, then they may also attribute this positivity toward the representatives of the party, thus being more likely to support and vote for the more positively viewed party. To determine the influence of political party type, the current research will examine participants' positivity toward non-major and major political parties, and perceptions of a novel female political candidate, Karen Johnson, as a non-major political party candidate and a major political party candidate. Furthermore, the current research will be looking at warmth and competence stereotypes of women, female politicians, men, male politicians, and party type (e.g., major political party and non-major political party) as they predict Karen Johnson's perceived warmth and competence traits.

### **The Current Research**



First, I examined the content of the stereotypes of major political parties, non-major political parties, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and the Independent political party by examining how strongly participants felt towards these parties and how negatively or positively they were viewed.

Next, I examined if warmth and competence stereotypes attributed to men, male politicians, women, and female politicians influenced the warmth and competence stereotypes attributed to an unknown female political candidate, Karen Johnson.

**Hypotheses for men and male politicians.** I hypothesized participants would perceive men and male politicians as more competent than warm. Additionally, as Karen Johnson is an unknown political candidate, I hypothesized the competence stereotypes of men and male politicians would contribute to the competence attributes associated with Karen Johnson.

**Women and female politicians.** Participants would have no preconceived stereotypes about Karen Johnson because they would have had no prior experience with her. Participants would, however, have preconceived stereotypes about women and female politicians as these groups are familiar. Karen Johnson is both a woman and a female political candidate. I hypothesized warmth stereotypes associated with women would contribute to the warmth attributes associated with Karen Johnson, and the competence stereotypes associated with female politicians would contribute to the competence attributes associated with Karen Johnson.

**Major party versus non-major party.** I hypothesized participants would perceive Karen Johnson to be more competent when presented as a major political party candidate and warmer when presented as a non-major political party candidate. I also hypothesized when Karen Johnson was presented as being a member of a non-major political party, the warmth stereotypes associated with women would be especially strong predictors of Karen Johnson's warm

attributes, and the competence stereotypes associated with female politicians would not significantly predict Karen Johnson's competent attributes. Lastly, I hypothesized when Karen Johnson was presented as being a member of a major political party, the warmth stereotypes associated with women would significantly predict Karen Johnson's warm attributes, and the competent stereotypes associated with female politicians would be especially strong predictors of Karen Johnson's competent attributes.

Importantly, Studies 1 and 2 were pre-registered on AsPredicted.org (<http://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=wr6r3c>).

## Study 1

### Method

**Sample size.** Following Phills et al. (2017), I recruited slightly more than one hundred participants.

**Participants.** One hundred four students (82% women, 13.9% men; 72.1% White, 11.5% Black, 1.6% Hispanic; ages 18-58, median age = 20; 40.2% Republican, 39.4% Democrat, 14.8% Independent) participated for partial course credit.

**Procedure.** Participants listed the societal stereotypes associated with a major political party, a non-major political party, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and the Independent Party. Next, participants rated how positive or negative they thought these stereotypes were, and how strongly, or intensely they believed these stereotypes were associated with the groups. Demographic information was collected.

**Stereotype listing task.** Participants listed up to ten societal stereotypes they associated with different political parties (modified from Phills et al., 2017) by typing each stereotype into a text box on the screen one at a time. Participants were told that they did not have to personally

endorse the stereotypes that they listed. Participants were asked to list the stereotypes of the following political parties in the provided order: 1) major political party, 2) non-major political party, 3) Democratic Party, 4) Republican Party, and 5) Independent Party.

**Positive stereotyping.** To assess the strength and valence associated with the political parties (Phills et al., 2017), participants rated how strongly they associated the stereotypes they listed for each political party with that same political party using 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*very strongly disagree*) to 7 (*very strongly agree*). Next, they rated how positive they thought the stereotype was using scales ranging from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*). Positive stereotyping scores were calculated by summing the product of the strength and valence for each stereotype listed by participants. Higher scores represent more positive stereotyping.

## Results

All measurements, standard deviations, ranges, and correlations between variables for Studies 1 and 2 are on Tables 1-7. First, I conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for major political party and non-major political party (see Figure 1; Table 1). Participants perceived major political parties ( $M = 89.19$ ,  $SD = 58.16$ ) more positively than non-major political parties ( $M = 76.76$ ,  $SD = 62.98$ ),  $F(1,103) = 4.103$ ,  $p = .045$ ,  $d = .205$ .

Next, I conducted a one-way ANOVA comparing the Democratic Party, Republican Party, and Independent Party (see Figure 2; Table 1). There was a significant main effect of party,  $F(2, 102) = 14.595$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants perceived the Democratic Party ( $M = 98.10$ ,  $SD = 75.72$ ) and the Republican Party ( $M = 87.79$ ,  $SD = 58.30$ ) more positively than the Independent political party ( $M = 65.87$ ,  $SD = 62.89$ ) (Democratic Versus Independent:  $F(2, 102) = 14.595$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .463$ ; Republican Versus Independent:  $F(2, 102) = 14.595$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .361$ ).

However, participants did not differ in their positivity toward Democratic Party and Republican Party,  $F(2, 102) = 14.595, p = .101, d = .153$ .

**Discussion.** Participants viewed major as opposed to non-major political parties more positively, and both the Democratic and Republican Parties were viewed more positively than the Independent political party. When people are familiar with information (e.g., political party views), the easier is it for the information to come to mind and the more inclined people are to like the information (Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980). For instance, because they are major parties, the media publicly displays stereotypic information about the Democratic and Republican parties and the politicians representing these parties which then becomes familiar to people, thus making people like these parties and politicians. Results of Study 1 suggested the Democratic and Republican Parties did not differ on the positivity attributed to them. Thus, the stereotypes of major versus non-major parties were positive, and likely more well-formed. When people were shown known and unknown political candidates, they were more likely to attribute warmth and competence stereotypic traits to the known candidate because they had already formed stereotypes toward the known candidate based on previous exposure to them (Brown, et al., 2018). In Study 2, I am interested in whether connecting a novel female candidate with party affiliation (such as being a member of a major as opposed to non-major political party) may influence the attributions of warmth and competence stereotypic traits for the unknown female political candidate, Karen Johnson, women, female politicians, men, and male politicians.

## Study 2

### Method

**Sample size.** I collected 477 participants. Utilizing the G\*Power statistical software program (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), I calculated the minimum needed to detect

an effect size of  $d = .3$  at .90 power was 470 participants using an a priori power analysis and  $t$ -test. I oversampled by 7 participants to allow for weaker effect sizes and supplementary analyses. As stated in the preregistration, if I had not recruited at least 352 participants, which was needed for 80% power, by the end of the allotted term, then I would have continued recruiting participants the following term until at least 352 participants had completed the study.

**Participants.** Four hundred seventy-seven participants (53.9% women, 45.7 % men; 84.7% White, 8% Black, 1% Hispanic; ages 18-73, median age = 35; 30.6% Republican, 51.8% Democrat, 17.6% Independent) were recruited for compensation using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk).

**Procedure.** Participants were randomly assigned to view a political slogan accompanied by a photo of a novel political candidate, Karen Johnson. As part of a larger study, participants rated the warmth and competence of the following groups/individuals in random order: female politicians, women, male politicians, men, and Karen Johnson. Demographic information was collected.

**Context manipulation.** Participants were first given a picture of Karen Johnson which was accompanied by a slogan, "Protecting [participant's state] and its people." Participants were randomly assigned to read a synopsis describing Karen Johnson as a member of a major political party or a non-major political party. Participants read: "Karen Johnson is a member of a major [non-major] political party who is seeking office in the State of [participant's state]. She is visionary, smart, and tough, and has the skills, talent, courage, and character to confront [participant's state]'s challenges. She has championed the peoples' needs and knows how to deliver. She is an advocate for many important political and social causes and has devoted her career to making [participant's state] a better place to live." Lastly, participants were provided

with a definition and example for the political party that Karen Johnson was described as being a member of. A major political party was described as holding “...substantial influence in United States politics, receiving a significant percentage of the vote in elections. Current major political parties in the United States include Democratic Party and the Republican Party.” A non-major political party was described as holding “...less influence in United States politics, receiving the third largest percentage of the vote in elections. Current non-major political parties in the United States include the Libertarian Party and the Green Party.”

***Warmth and competence ratings.*** Participants rated female politicians’, women’s, male politicians’, men’s, and Karen Johnson’s warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2018) on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*). Warmth-related words were warm, rude, sensitive, conceited, faithful, arrogant, courteous, and honest. Competence-related words were competent, frivolous, intelligent, lazy, sophisticated, ignorant, industrious and independent. Female politicians’, women’s, male politicians’, men’s, and Karen Johnson’s warmth and competence ratings were summed to compute a composite score (Warmth: female politician  $\alpha = .825$ , women  $\alpha = .816$ , male politician  $\alpha = .860$ , men  $\alpha = .808$ , and Karen Johnson  $\alpha = .844$ ; Competence: female politician  $\alpha = .847$ , women  $\alpha = .768$ , male politician  $\alpha = .819$ , men  $\alpha = .723$ , and Karen Johnson  $\alpha = .850$ ).

## Results

**Karen Johnson’s perceived warmth/competence and political party affiliation.** All measurements, standard deviations, ranges, and correlations between variables are on Tables 1-7. First, I conducted an independent samples *t*-test to compare Karen Johnson’s warmth in major political party context and non-major political party context (see Figure 3). Karen Johnson’s warmth did not differ when she was described as being a member of a major political party ( $M =$

29.32,  $SD = 4.76$ ) or a non-major political party ( $M = 29.35$ ,  $SD = 4.79$ ),  $t(475) = .061$ ,  $p = .997$ ,  $d = .006$ . Next, I conducted an independent samples  $t$ -test to compare Karen Johnson's competence in major political party context and non-major political party context (see Figure 3). Karen Johnson's competence did not differ when she was described as being a member of a major political party ( $M = 30.38$ ,  $SD = 4.85$ ) or a non-major political party ( $M = 30.45$ ,  $SD = 5.07$ ),  $t(475) = .170$ ,  $p = .385$ ,  $d = .016$ .

**Men and male politicians' perceived warmth/competence.** Next, I conducted a within-subjects  $t$ -test analysis to compare men's perceived warmth and competence (see Figure 4; Table 2). Participants perceived men as more competent ( $M = 28.34$ ,  $SD = 4.28$ ) than warm ( $M = 20.47$ ,  $SD = 4.65$ ),  $t(476) = 29.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.76$ . Then, I conducted another within-subjects  $t$ -test analysis to compare male politicians' perceived warmth and competence (see Figure 4). Participants perceived male politicians as more competent ( $M = 26.98$ ,  $SD = 5.29$ ) than warm ( $M = 19.21$ ,  $SD = 5.54$ ),  $t(475) = 26.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.43$ .

**Karen Johnson's warmth/competence based on women's and female politicians' warmth and competence.** Then, I conducted regression analyses to predict Karen Johnson's warmth based on women's warmth, female politicians' warmth, and their interaction (see Table 5). The overall model was significant,  $F(3, 473) = 54.396$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .257$ . To the extent that participants saw women as warm,  $b = .229$ ,  $\beta = .215$ ,  $t(473) = 4.485$ ,  $p < .001$ , and female politicians as warm,  $b = .315$ ,  $\beta = .348$ ,  $t(473) = 7.265$ ,  $p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as warm. Also, there was an interaction between participants' view of women and female politicians as warm,  $b = .015$ ,  $\beta = .084$ ,  $t(493) = 2.087$ ,  $p = .037$ . Using a median split, I found that when female politicians were categorized as having low warmth, to the extent that participants saw women as warm, they saw Karen Johnson as warm,  $b = .303$ ,  $\beta = .278$ ,  $t(260) =$

4.661,  $p < .001$ . However, when female politicians categorized as having high warmth, to the extent that participants saw women as warm, they saw Karen Johnson as warm,  $b = .248$ ,  $\beta = .224$ ,  $t(213) = 3.361$ ,  $p = .001$ .

Additionally, I conducted regression analyses to predict Karen Johnson's competence based on women's competence, female politicians' competence, and their interaction (see Table 5). The overall model was significant,  $F(3, 473) = 75.487$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .324$ . To the extent that participants saw female politicians as competent,  $b = .471$ ,  $\beta = .510$ ,  $t(473) = 10.860$ ,  $p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as competent. However, no relationship emerged between women's perceived competence and Karen Johnson's perceived competence,  $b = .083$ ,  $\beta = .084$ ,  $t(473) = 1.796$ ,  $p = .073$ . Also, there was an interaction between participants view of women and female politicians as competent,  $b = .020$ ,  $\beta = .124$ ,  $t(473) = 3.268$ ,  $p = .001$ . Using a median split, I found that when female politicians were categorized as having low competence, to the extent that participants saw women as competent, they saw Karen Johnson as competent,  $b = .253$ ,  $\beta = .056$ ,  $t(251) = 4.543$ ,  $p < .001$ . When female politicians were categorized as having high competence, there was no relationship between perceptions of women's competence and Karen Johnson's competence,  $b = .094$ ,  $\beta = .089$ ,  $t(222) = 1.334$ ,  $p = .184$ .

**Karen Johnson's warmth/competence based on men and male politicians' warmth and competence.** Next, I conducted regression analyses to predict Karen Johnson's competence based on men's competence, male politicians' competence, and their interaction (see Table 6). The overall model was significant,  $F(3, 473) = 16.603$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .095$ . To the extent that participants saw men as competent,  $b = .260$ ,  $\beta = .225$ ,  $t(473) = 4.227$ ,  $p < .001$ , and male politicians as competent,  $b = .112$ ,  $\beta = .120$ ,  $t(473) = 2.249$ ,  $p = .025$ , they saw Karen Johnson as



competent. However, there was no interaction between participants' view of men and male politicians as competent,  $b = .002$ ,  $\beta = .009$ ,  $t(473) = .205$ ,  $p = .837$ .

Following this, I conducted regression analyses to predict Karen Johnson's warmth based on men's warmth, male politicians' warmth, and their interaction (see Table 6). The overall model was significant,  $F(3, 473) = 4.591$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $R^2 = .028$ . Men's warmth,  $b = -.057$ ,  $\beta = -.056$ ,  $t(473) = -.915$ ,  $p = .361$ , and male politicians warmth,  $b = -.052$ ,  $\beta = -.061$ ,  $t(473) = -.985$ ,  $p = .325$ , did not significantly predict Karen Johnson's warmth. However, there was an interaction between participants view of men and male politicians as warm,  $b = .023$ ,  $\beta = .156$ ,  $t(473) = 3.344$ ,  $p = .001$ . Using a median split, I found that when male politicians were categorized as having low warmth, there was no relationship between perceptions of men's warmth and Karen Johnson's warmth,  $b = .093$ ,  $\beta = .082$ ,  $t(238) = 1.268$ ,  $p = .206$ . When male politicians were categorized as having high warmth, there was no relationship between perceptions of men's warmth and Karen Johnson's warmth,  $b = -.088$ ,  $\beta = -.086$ ,  $t(235) = -1.051$ ,  $p = .294$ .

**Karen Johnson's warmth/competence based on women and female politicians' warmth and competence, and party type.** Next, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's warmth, female politicians' warmth, party type, interactions between female politicians' warmth and party type, and interactions between women's warmth and party type on Karen Johnson's warmth (see Table 7). The overall model was significant,  $F(7, 469) = 23.190$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .257$ . To the extent that participants saw women as warm,  $b = .206$ ,  $\beta = .193$ ,  $t(469) = 2.970$ ,  $p = .003$ , and female politicians as warm,  $b = .327$ ,  $\beta = .361$ ,  $t(469) = 5.478$ ,  $p < .001$ , Karen Johnson was seen as warm. Regardless of whether or not Karen Johnson was affiliated with major or non-major political party, her perceived warmth did not change,  $b = -.156$ ,  $\beta = -.016$ ,  $t(469) = -.367$ ,  $p = .714$ . There was no interaction between participants view of

female politicians as warm and party type,  $b = -.021$ ,  $\beta = -.027$ ,  $t(469) = -.313$ ,  $p = .754$ , or women as warm and party type,  $b = .053$ ,  $\beta = .034$ ,  $t(469) = .515$ ,  $p = .607$ .

Then, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's competence, female politicians' competence, party type, and interactions between female politicians' competence and party type as well as women's competence and party type on Karen Johnson's competence (see Table 7). The overall model was significant,  $F(7, 469) = 35.465$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .346$ . To the extent that participants saw women as competent,  $b = .225$ ,  $\beta = .227$ ,  $t(469) = 3.595$ ,  $p < .001$ , and female politicians as competent,  $b = .360$ ,  $\beta = .389$ ,  $t(469) = 6.004$ ,  $p < .001$ , Karen Johnson was seen as competent. Regardless of whether or not Karen Johnson was affiliated with major or non-major political party, her perceived competence did not change,  $b = -.452$ ,  $\beta = -.046$ ,  $t(469) = -1.079$ ,  $p = .281$ . There was an interaction between participants view of female politicians as competent and party type,  $b = .246$ ,  $\beta = .194$ ,  $t(469) = 2.860$ ,  $p = .004$ . When Karen Johnson was portrayed as a major political party candidate, to the extent that participants saw female politicians as competent,  $b = .356$ ,  $\beta = .387$ ,  $t(230) = 5.903$ ,  $p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as competent. When Karen Johnson was portrayed as a non-major political party candidate, to the extent that participants saw female politicians as competent,  $b = .591$ ,  $\beta = .638$ ,  $t(241) = 9.417$ ,  $p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as competent. There was no interaction between women's competence and party type,  $b = -.312$ ,  $\beta = -.224$ ,  $t(469) = -3.389$ ,  $p = .054$ .

**Karen Johnson as a major party candidate.** To investigate how portraying Karen Johnson as a specific political party candidate might change how the stereotypes of women and female leaders predict Karen Johnson's attributes, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's warmth, and female politicians' warmth, on Karen Johnson's warmth when she is portrayed as a major political party candidate (see Table 7). The overall model was

significant,  $F(2,230) = 38.582, p < .001, R^2 = .251$ . To the extent that participants saw women as warm,  $b = .191, \beta = .186, t(230) = 2.796, p = .006$ , and female politicians as warm,  $b = .337, \beta = .379, t(230) = 5.694, p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as warm.

Next, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's competence, and female politicians' competence, on Karen Johnson's competence when she is portrayed as a major political party political candidate (see Table 7). The overall model was significant,  $F(2,230) = 49.597, p < .001, R^2 = .549$ . To the extent that participants saw women as competent,  $b = .225, \beta = .233, t(230) = 3.566, p < .001$ , and female politicians as competent,  $b = .356, \beta = .387, t(230) = 5.903, p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as competent.

**Karen Johnson as a non-major party candidate.** Also, to investigate how portraying Karen Johnson as a specific political party candidate might change how the stereotypes of women and female leaders predict Karen Johnson's attributes, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's warmth, and female politicians' warmth, on Karen Johnson's warmth when she was portrayed as a non-major political party candidate (see Table 7). The overall model was significant,  $F(2, 241) = 40.022, p < .001, R^2 = .249$ . To the extent that participants saw women as warm,  $b = .244, \beta = .221, t(241) = 3.202, p = .002$ , and female politicians as warm,  $b = .312, \beta = .337, t(241) = 4.892, p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as warm.

Finally, I conducted a regression analysis examining the impact of women's competence, and female politicians' competence, on Karen Johnson's competence when she was portrayed as a non-major political party candidate (see Table 7). The overall model was significant,  $F(2, 241) = 63.830, p < .001, R^2 = .346$ . No relationship emerged between women's perceived competence and Karen Johnson's perceived competence,  $b = -.083, \beta = -.082, t(241) = -1.214, p = .226$ . To

the extent that participants saw female politicians as competent,  $b = .591$ ,  $\beta = .638$ ,  $t(241) = 9.417$ ,  $p < .001$ , they saw Karen Johnson as competent.

**Discussion.** Participants perceived men and male politicians as more competent than warm. Also, the stereotypes of men and male politicians as competent, predicted the stereotypes of Karen Johnson as competent. However, there was no relationship between men and male politicians' warmth and Karen Johnson's warmth.

Furthermore, the stereotypes of women and female politicians as warm or competent, predicted the stereotypes of Karen Johnson as warm or competent. Participants' perceptions of Karen Johnson's warmth or competence did not change based on party type. When participants perceived women and female politicians as warm or competent, they perceived Karen Johnson as warm or competent when she was portrayed as a major political party candidate. However, there was no relationship between women's competence and Karen Johnson's competence when she was portrayed as a non-major political party candidate.

### **General Discussion**

Although the major political parties were viewed more positively than the non-major political parties, when an unknown political candidate, Karen Johnson, was introduced, participants perceived her as having warmth and competence stereotypic traits when she was affiliated with a major political party. However, when Karen Johnson was affiliated with a non-major political party, participants perceived her as having only warmth stereotypic traits, as no relationship emerged between Karen Johnson and competence stereotypic traits. Among participants for whom Karen Johnson was portrayed as a major political party candidate, and who perceived women and female politicians as warm or competent, they perceived Karen Johnson as warm or competent. Therefore, she was subgrouped, because the stereotypes of both

groups, women and female politicians, were associated with Karen Johnson. Yet, among participants for whom Karen Johnson was portrayed as a non-major political party candidate, no relationship emerged between women's competence and Karen Johnson's competence.

Therefore, she was subtyped, because the stereotypes of female politicians were not ascribed to her, but the stereotypes of women were ascribed to her.

Previous research has focused on stereotypes of male and female political candidates (Leeper, 1991; Rosenwasser, & Seale, 1988; Schneider & Bos, 2014). By investigating the stereotypes people attribute to politicians and political candidates representing different parties, as well as different genders, we can better understand the reasons why there is a clear gender gap in United States politics, and why women are underrepresented in political office. If voters attribute stereotypes which are inconsistent with leadership stereotypes to a political candidate/party, such as portraying an inability to implement change or competently fill the leadership role in general, then they will be less likely to support this candidate/party. Alternatively, if they attribute stereotypes consistent with leadership to a political candidate/party, or those which portray a candidate/party as a capable, confident leader/representation, then voters will be more likely to support this candidate/party. Therefore, if United States voters attributed leadership consistent stereotypes to female political candidates, we would see more of them in political leadership roles and the gender gap may begin to shrink. Furthermore, if voters attributed leadership consistent stereotypes to political candidates representing different parties, we would have a better understanding as to which political party would have more voter support.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Information regarding stereotype attributions could help people to better understand cultural differences regarding gender stereotyping and its comparable impact on men and women in political leadership positions. The current research only focused on the United States, which was an issue because other countries may contribute alternative views regarding the stereotypes associated with politics and politicians. It would be interesting for future research to explore whether people from other countries (e.g., Great Britain, South Africa), who utilize other political structures (e.g., British Parliament, South African Parliament), attribute similar stereotypes (e.g., warmth and competence) to a novel female political candidate as well as male politicians, and female politicians in a leadership positions in government. Perhaps the stereotypes ascribed to female politicians from other countries will be different than the United States, because many parts of the world are populated by collectivist cultures who value communal traits, while the United States, as an individualist culture, values agentic traits (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007).

Another limitation of this research was that stereotypes, valence scores, and strength scores were gathered for two major political parties and only one non-major political party, which was a problem because people make choices based on the options provided, so the fewer options offered, the less information we can obtain. It would be interesting to investigate the stereotypes people attribute to two non-major political parties (e.g., Independent Party versus Green Party) and how strongly and how positively or negatively they feel about the stereotypes. Perhaps these findings would show that the major political parties (e.g., Democratic Party and Republican Party) would still be viewed more positively than the non-major parties (e.g., Independent Party and Green Party), but one non-major political party would be viewed more positively than the other (e.g., the Green Party would be viewed more positively than the

Independent Party). Future researchers exploring this could help us understand the more familiar people are with a political party, the more positively they viewed the political party and the more likely they are to support and ultimately vote for the political party. Also, knowing the stereotypes people attribute to each non-major political party could open doors to explore the similarities rather than the differences non-major political parties share with major political parties. This knowledge could then offer the non-major political parties more opportunity to impact voters who support major political parties which share similar concerns as their own party.

Furthermore, this research was limited in that I presented participants with only a White female political candidate, which is a problem because the stereotypes people have about White women are not the same as the stereotypes people have about all women (Johnson, Freeman, & Pauker, 2012; Phills, et al., 2017; Putnam, 2003). Future researchers should present participants with political candidates of a different race or gender (e.g., Black female political candidate, Black male political candidate, White female political candidate, and White male political candidate), so they can explore and compare stereotypic attributes (e.g., warmth and competence) people ascribe to candidates with different characteristics. This information could be important in helping to understand the impact different stereotypes people have toward political candidates with comparable characteristics, and whether the stereotypes influence subtyping and subgrouping for these candidates. For instance, would both a Black male candidate and White male candidate be subgrouped because the stereotypes ascribed to them overlap with those of men in general? Or would one of them be subtyped because the stereotypes ascribed to him are different from men in general?

Also, researchers should investigate whether being a member of multiple groups (e.g., being black, a woman, and a politician) influences people's stereotypes. This could help people understand which stereotypes overlap for specific groups. Then, we can ask whether being a member of multiple groups influences the strength or valence people feel toward the candidates and whether this makes them more or less likely to vote for and support these candidates. Ultimately, knowing whether being a member of multiple groups influences people's stereotypes could assist in recognizing how stereotypes of people who are in multiple groups are being shaped.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding the stereotypes we attribute to different political candidates is useful and important because stereotypes influence the way we think about people and how we feel towards them, which impacts the choices people make when voting for a political representative. This exploration has afforded us more understanding that people perceived women and female politicians as having stereotypic traits that were not usually associated with political leadership roles, but men and male politicians were perceived as possessing these stereotypic traits. Additionally, the lack of familiarity with a political candidate may impact the stereotypic traits people ascribe to the candidate, as we saw with Karen Johnson because people ascribed both warm and competent stereotypic traits to her. Also, in finding that major political parties are viewed more positively than non-major political parties, we can better comprehend people's perceptions of political representatives based on party affiliation in addition to gender. Future researchers should examine the impact stereotypes have on people's preference for political candidates of different races and gender, ultimately becoming closer to bridging the gender gap in the United States.





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Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for All Measures in Study 1.*

	<b>Study 1</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Major political party	89.19	58.16	5-324
Non-major political party	76.76	62.89	4-274
Democratic Party	98.10	75.72	6-325
Republican Party	87.79	58.30	6-300
Independent Party	65.87	62.89	4-286

*Note:* Positive stereotyping scores were calculated by summing the product of the strength and valence for each stereotype listed by participants. Higher scores represent more positive stereotyping.

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for All Measures in Study 2.*

	<b>Study 2</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Women's perceived warmth	29.91	4.35	10-40
Women's perceived competence	26.81	4.96	14-40
Female politicians' perceived warmth	27.37	5.17	10-40
Female politicians' perceived competence	28.02	5.34	13-40
Men's perceived warmth	20.47	4.65	8-40
Men's perceived competence	28.34	4.28	11-40
Male politicians' perceived warmth	19.21	5.54	8-40
Male politicians' perceived competence	26.98	5.29	9-40
Karen Johnson's perceived warmth	29.51	4.72	15-40
Karen Johnson's perceived competence	30.74	4.79	14-40

*Note:* Warmth and competence ratings were summed to compute a composite score.

Table 3

*Correlations between Measures in Study 2 for Women, Female Politicians, and Karen Johnson.*

	<b>Women, Female Politicians, and Karen Johnson</b>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1. Women's perceived warmth	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Women's perceived competence	.324***	--	--	--	--	--
3. Female politicians' perceived warmth	.550*	.359	--	--	--	--
4. Female politicians' perceived competence	.410***	.591**	.507***	--	--	--
5. Karen Johnson's perceived warmth	.399***	.293	.471***	.427***	--	--
6. Karen Johnson's perceived competence	.397***	.381	.353	.551***	.680***	--

*Note.* \*  $p \leq .050$ ; \*\* $p < .010$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4

*Correlations between Measures in Study 2 for Men, Male Politicians, and Karen Johnson.*

	<b>Men, Male Politicians, and Karen Johnson</b>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1. Men's perceived warmth	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Men's perceived competence	.127**	--	--	--	--	--
3. Male politicians' perceived warmth	.672**	.029***	--	--	--	--
4. Male politicians' perceived competence	.201***	.567	.304***	--	--	--
5. Karen Johnson's perceived warmth	-.070	.283***	-.063	.293**	--	--
6. Karen Johnson's perceived competence	-.080	.292***	-.136*	.247*	.680***	--

*Note.* \*  $p \leq .050$ ; \*\* $p < .010$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 5

*Women’s Perceived Warmth/Competence, Female Politicians’ Perceived Warmth/Competence, and Their Interactions Predicting Karen Johnson’s Warmth/Competence.*

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<b>Karen Johnson’s Warmth</b>		<b>Karen Johnson’s Competence</b>	
	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	$\beta$
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.229***	.215***	.083	.084
Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.315***	.348***	.471***	.510***
Women’s perceived warmth/competence × Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.015*	.084*	.020**	.124**
<i>Female Politicians’ Low Warmth/Competence</i>				
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.303***	.278***	.253***	.056***
<i>Female Politicians’ High Warmth/Competence</i>				
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.248***	.224***	.094	.089

*Note.* \*  $p \leq .050$ ; \*\* $p < .010$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 6

*Men’s Perceived Warmth/Competence, Male Politicians’ Perceived Warmth/Competence, and Their Interactions Predicting Karen Johnson’s Warmth/Competence.*

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<b>Karen Johnson’s Warmth</b>		<b>Karen Johnson’s Competence</b>	
	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	$\beta$
Men’s perceived warmth/competence	-.057	-.056	.260***	.225***
Male politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	-.052	-.061	.112*	.120*
Men’s perceived warmth/competence × Male politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.023**	.156**	.002	.009
<i>Male Politicians’ Low Warmth/Competence</i>				
Men’s perceived warmth/competence	.093	.082	.248**	.189**
<i>Male Politicians’ High Warmth/Competence</i>				
Men’s perceived warmth/competence	-.088	-.086	.199**	.251**

*Note.* \*  $p \leq .050$ ; \*\* $p < .010$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 7

*Women’s/ Female Politicians’ Perceived Warmth/Competence, Party Type, Their Interaction, and Karen Johnson as Major/Non-Major Political Party Candidate Predicting Karen Johnson’s Warmth/Competence.*

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<b>Karen Johnson’s Warmth</b>		<b>Karen Johnson’s Competence</b>	
	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	$\beta$
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.206**	.193**	.225***	.227***
Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.327***	.361***	.360***	.389***
Party type	-.156	-.016	-.452	-.046
Women’s perceived warmth/competence × party type	.053	.034	-.312	-.224
<i>Major Political Party</i>				
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.191**	.186**	.225***	.233***
<i>Non-Major Political Party</i>				
Women’s perceived warmth/competence	.244**	.221**	-.083	-.082
Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence × party type	-.021	-.027	.246**	.194**
<i>Major Political Party</i>				
Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.337**	.379***	.356***	.387***
<i>Non-Major Political Party</i>				
Female politicians’ perceived warmth/competence	.312**	.337***	.591***	.638***

*Note.* \* $p \leq .050$ , \*\* $p \leq .010$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$



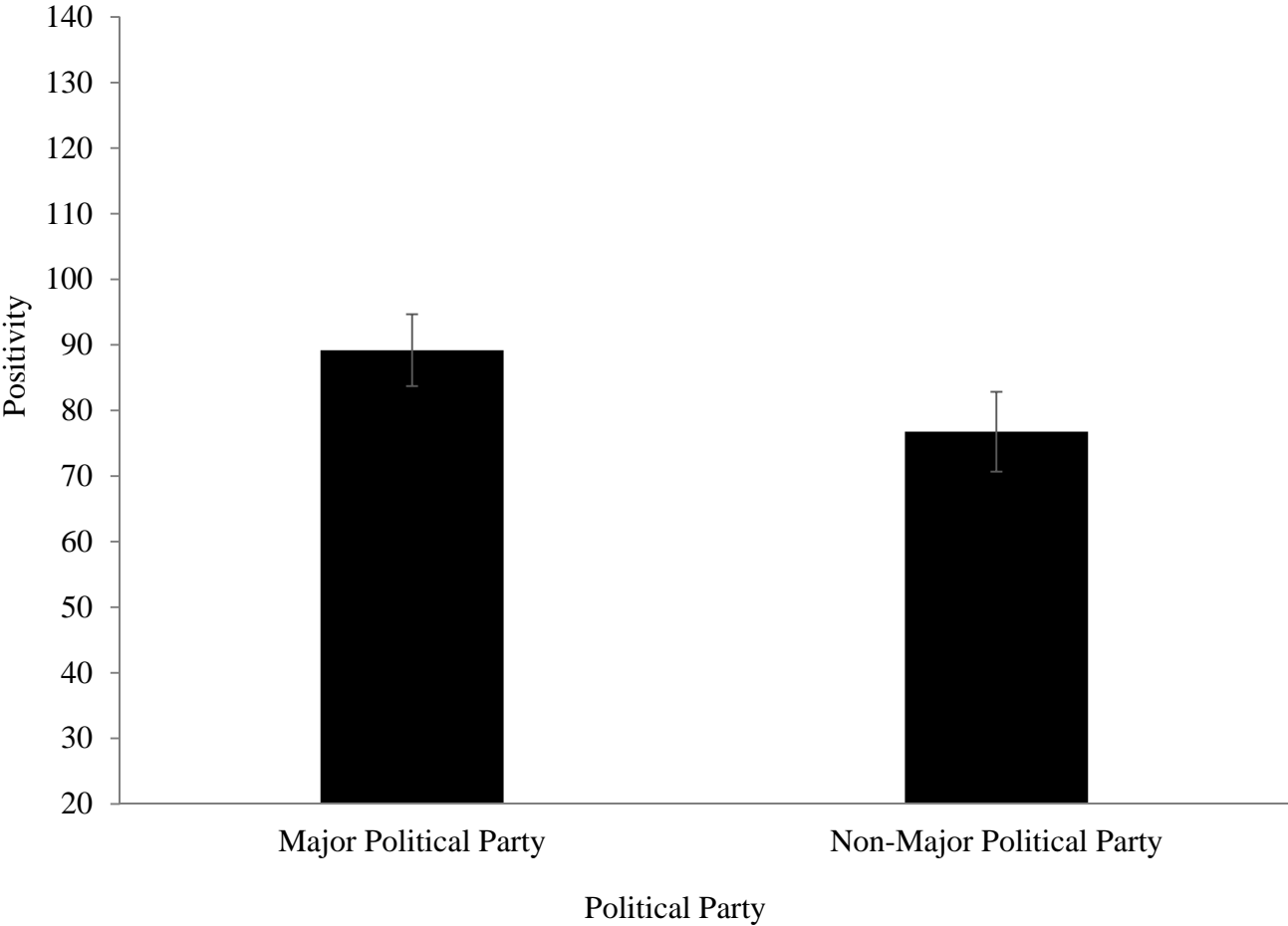
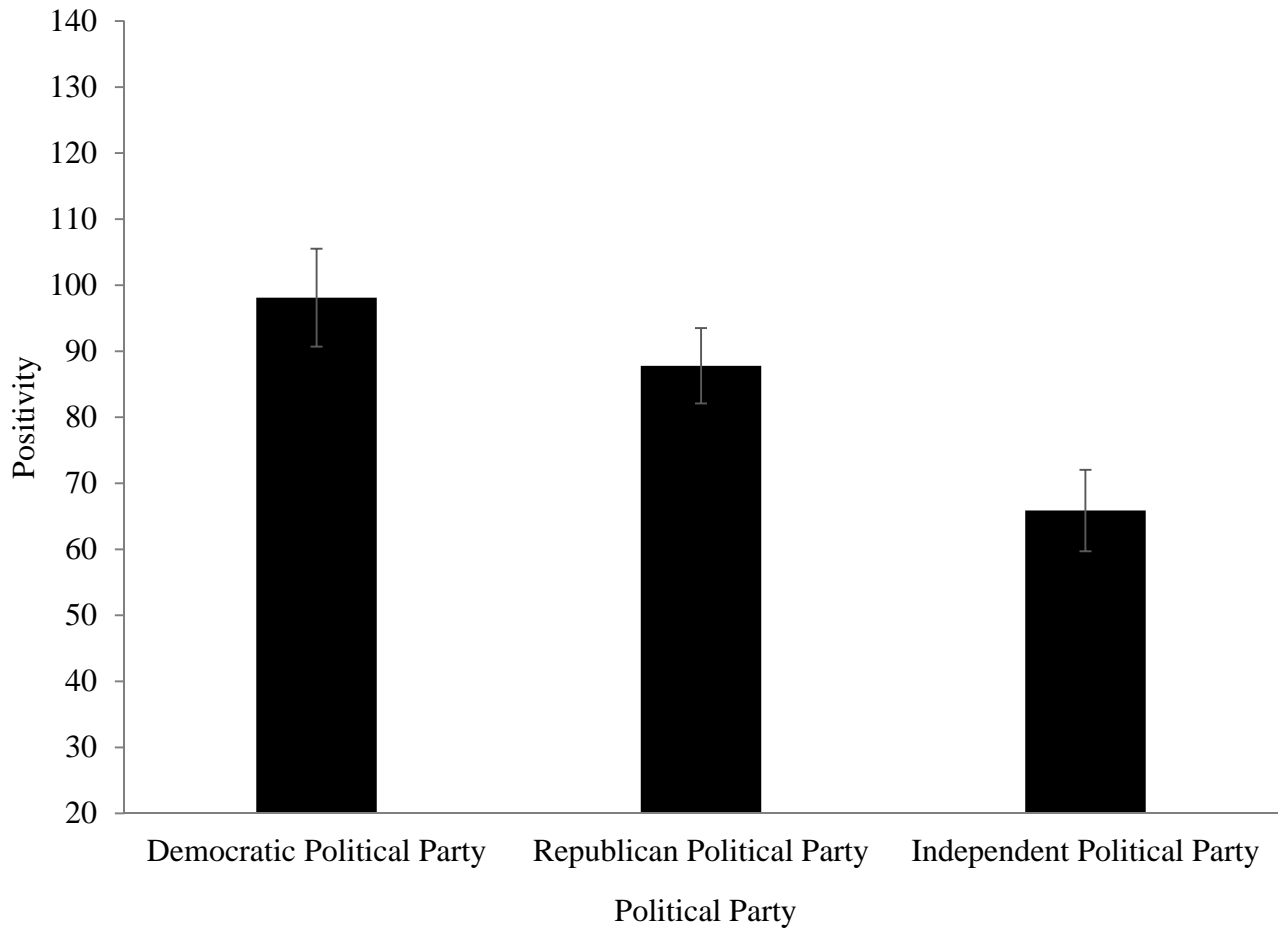


Figure 1. Participants' perceived positivity for major versus non-major political party; Study 1. Note. Error bars represent standard errors.



*Figure 2.* Participants' perceived positivity for Democratic versus Republican versus Independent Party: Study 1.

*Note.* Error bars represent standard errors.

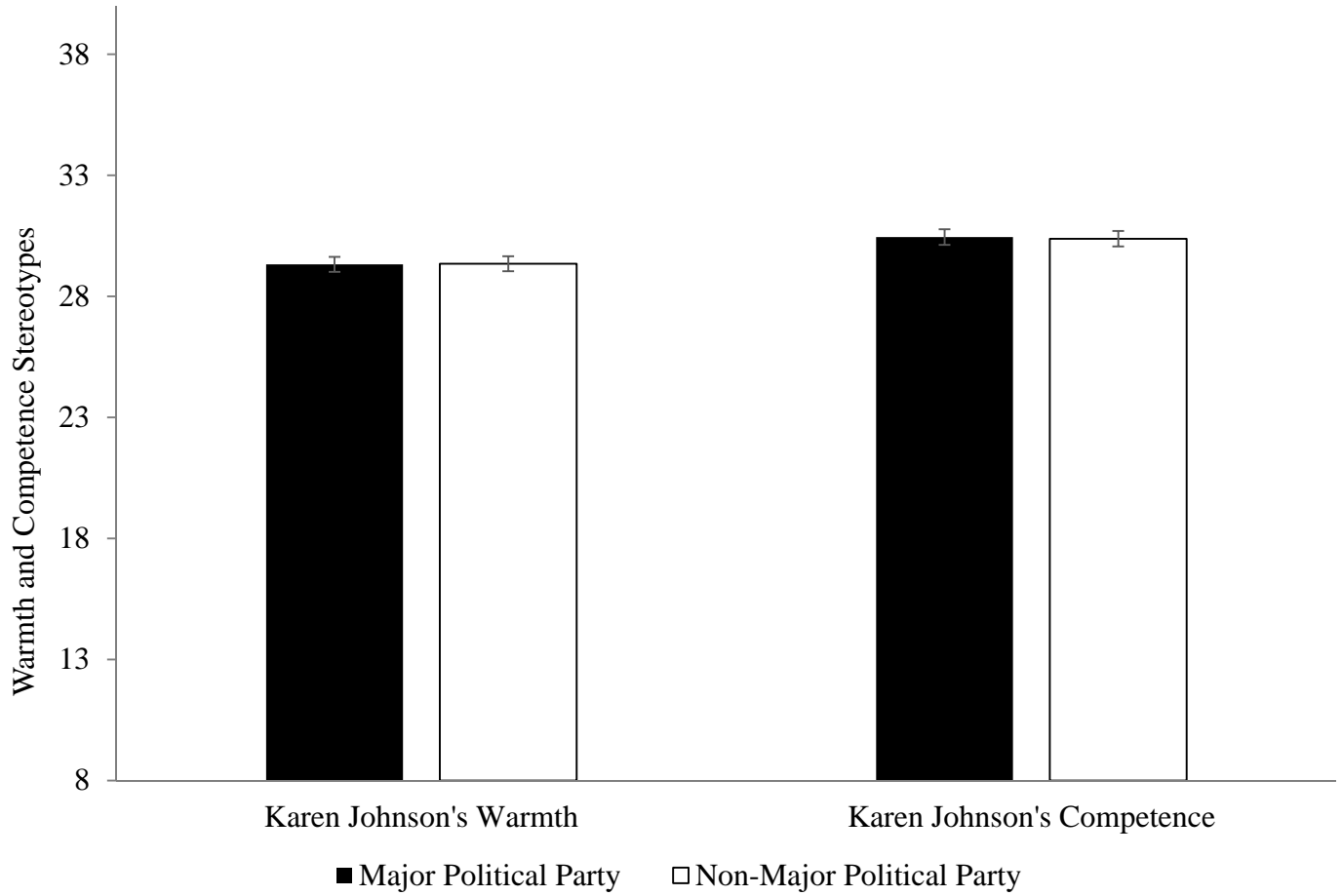


Figure 3. Participants' perceptions of Karen Johnson's warmth and competence based on political party type (major versus non-major political party): Study 2.

Note. Error bars represent standard errors.

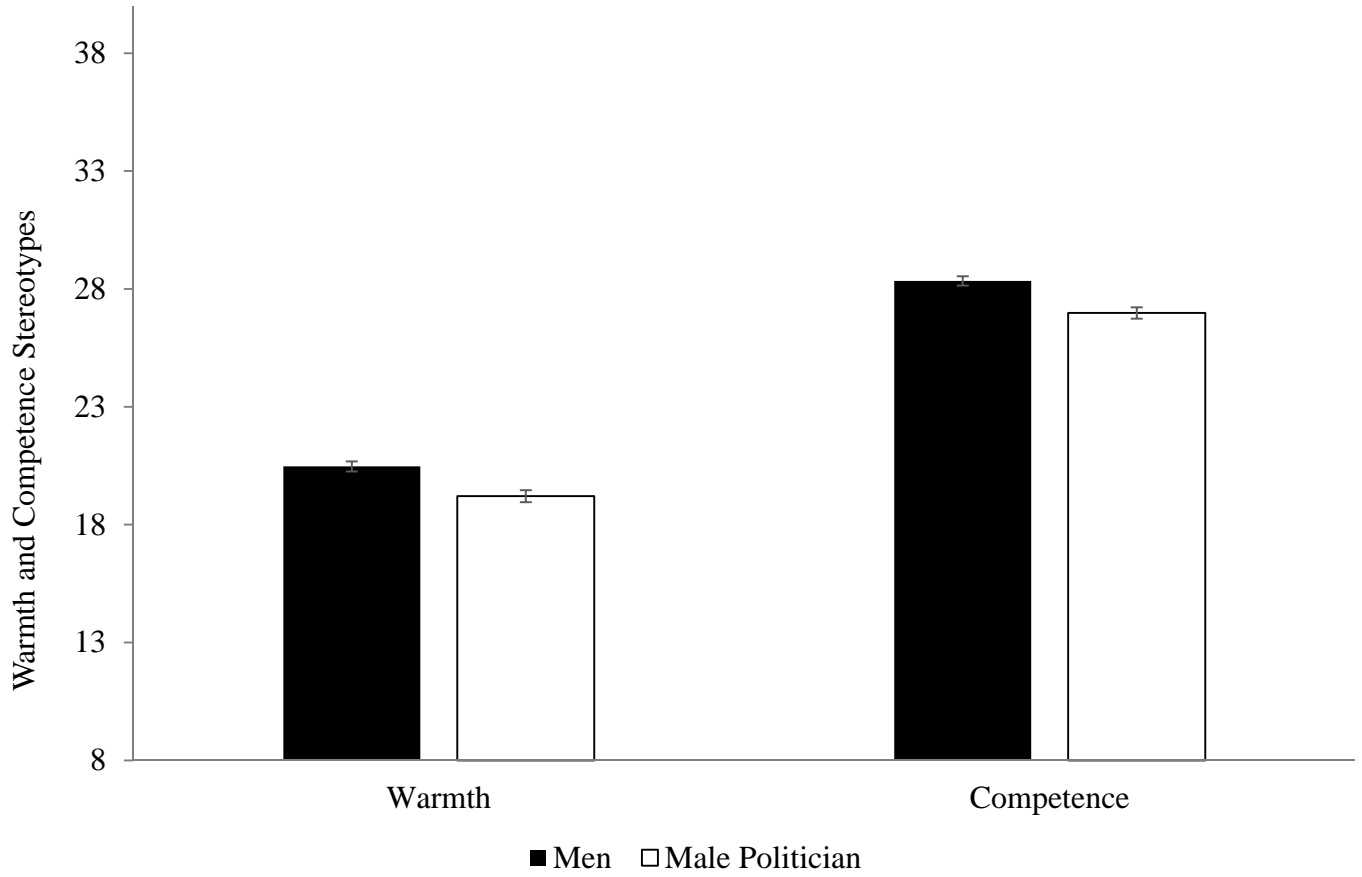


Figure 4. Participants' perceptions of men and male politician's warmth and competence: Study 2.

Note. Error bars represent standard errors.