

The Continuing Dominance of Traditional Gender Roles in Southern Elections*

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Objective. Studies of the election of women to public office have been increasingly encouraging about their prospects of female candidates. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which gender roles continue to influence the election of women to local office and the pool of candidates for higher office. *Methods.* Utilizing data on the gender of officials, the nature of the office, and constituency demographics from county elections in eight Southern states, we construct logit models of the election of women. *Results.* Women hold few local offices involved in fighting crime or of an executive nature. On the other hand, women routinely win election to process-oriented offices with less discretion. Our analysis of constituency demographics reinforces our conclusions. Women win election in areas where the public office is relatively undesirable compared to other opportunities and the ratio of high-quality male to high-quality female candidates is relatively low. *Conclusions.* Although the frequent election of women to county office provides an expanded pool of female candidates for higher offices, it seems unlikely that women will find it as easy to move up the electoral ladder into the more competitive arena of high-profile statewide and federal leadership offices.

The South has been explored by political scientists as a unique political culture (Key, 1949; Elazar, 1972; Black and Black, 1987). Historically, the South has dragged behind other areas of the country in terms of women elected to state legislatures. Data gathered by the Center for American Women and Politics notes that the U.S. House delegations elected in 2002 of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina include

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no female members, although Southern women compose four of the 14 female U.S. Senators. Yet, we find that women hold a majority of certain types of county offices in many Southern states. Exploring why so many women have achieved political success in a region not known for its willingness to elect women should illuminate further the role of gender in American elections.

Studies on the election of women to public office are increasingly encouraging. In her study of the election of women to the U.S. House, Barbara Burrell (1994:145) concluded that “women have done as well as men” when they have sought election to Congress. In a comprehensive study of female candidates for state and federal legislatures, Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton (1997:79) similarly concluded, “When women run, women win ... as often as men do.” Other research substantiates the claim that female candidates no longer face discrimination at the ballot box (Carroll, 1984, 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1987, 1994). As a result, one would expect that the share of female elected officials should consequently rise as more entrenched male incumbents retire and more women seek elected office. Once women have established a “farm team” of candidates with experience in lower-level offices, female candidates should gradually win a greater share of more prestigious offices. As early as 1976, Karnig and Walter (1976) contended that more female candidates were needed for women to increase their numbers in elected office.

Political backgrounds of men and women federal officeholders have prompted a great deal of study. Political scientists have noted that many federal officeholders share similar career paths, starting as lawyers to state legislators to U.S. Representatives to Senators (Schlesinger, 1966; Rohde, 1979). Early women and politics scholars noted that, in the past, many women came to federal offices as widows of male officeholders (Chamberlain, 1973; Kirkpatrick, 1974; Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1994; Gertzog, 1995; Simon and Palmer, 2000). More recently, women and politics research has found that women have followed career paths to federal office similar to those of their male counterparts (Burrell, 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1994; Carroll, 1994). This “pipeline theory” argues that as women gradually increase their numbers as lawyers, they will spill over into local-level office then to state legislative office and finally to positions in the federal legislature (Simon and Palmer, 2000).

Data and Method

Our study focuses on the election of women to county office. Although county offices often receive little study, they are particularly fruitful for the study of gender. There is often a clear differentiation in the nature of the offices and whether the responsibilities are at odds with traditional gender roles. Some offices, like assessor and clerk, fit more traditional conceptions of appropriate work for women than others, like sheriff or coroner.

We constructed a data set containing the results of county elections held from 1979 through 1999 for partisan offices from nine Southern states:

Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. We matched this data with demographic data from the U.S. Census. Many Southern states disperse power within counties by requiring counties to elect a wide variety of local officials. The data set includes elections to a total of 47 county offices; typical offices included in the data set are sheriff, coroner, clerk, and tax assessor. Of course, the selection and number of offices gathered from each state depended largely on the number of elected offices and the availability of data. Although the data set includes information on seven distinct offices in Mississippi, it contains information on only three offices in North Carolina.

The data set includes information for virtually every county in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Louisiana parishes and Virginia independent cities are treated as counties. The Virginia data includes information on both counties and independent cities when the independent city elects the official separately from the county government. The Arkansas data includes information only on the name, gender, and party of the winner in the general election. The data from Florida and Texas is based on a nonrandom sample of 38 counties in east Texas and 52 counties around Florida. Data from Alabama and Tennessee proved impossible to obtain for a sufficient number of counties.¹

We conducted logit analyses of the gender of general election winners (woman = 1, man = 0) in order to assess the impact of office type and constituency demographics on the elections of women. The analysis includes only open seats because of the huge incumbency advantage in local contests. Very few incumbents fail to win reelection and the probability of winning unopposed rises enormously (Moncreif, Squire, and Jewell, 2001).²

The logit analyses of women elected to county office include several constituency variables, which are described below. Rather than simply being controls, we believe the impact of these variables is intimately related to gender roles. The demographic context influences the recruitment and success of male and female candidates. Constituency contexts that could discourage men from seeking election may not discourage women.

Theory and Model Specification

Past studies of female candidates' electoral success at lower levels of office have focused primarily on the effects of structural variables such as multi-

¹Information was solicited by telephone and by mail (or fax) from all counties in Florida and more than 100 counties in east Texas. The sample includes all counties that responded to requests for information. Unlike in Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, data on local election outcomes is not available from a central source in Florida or Texas. Information was solicited by mail from Alabama and Tennessee but counties responded at a very low rate to these requests. The Louisiana data excludes Orleans Parish (New Orleans) as Orleans elects its officials on a different schedule from the rest of the state.

²The results for incumbent-held and open seats are quite similar.

versus single-member districts, runoff election requirements, staggered versus simultaneous terms, and party registration requirements (Bullock and Akins, 1997; Bullock and MacManus, 1991; Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1987, 1994; Fleishman and Stien, 1987; MacManus and Bullock, 1993, 1996; Welch and Studlar, 1990). Although some structural variables such as multimember districts slightly enhance female candidates' probability of election (Welch and Studlar, 1990; Rule, 1981, 1998), most studies did not find that electoral structure greatly affected women's chance of electoral success. These findings suggest that the current electoral system is not significantly biased against female candidates.

These findings beg the question: Why are there not more female candidates running for state- and federal-level elected office? Researchers have examined the impact of candidate recruitment in general, and recruitment by party leaders in particular, on the number of women candidates (Welch, 1978; Carroll and Strimling, 1983; Niven, 1998). In a comprehensive study of women state and local officeholders, Carroll and Strimling (1983) asked men and women candidates whether or not they were recruited by local party leaders to run for office. They found that women were just as likely to report being recruited by local party officials as men candidates. However, they also found that women were more likely to be recruited to run for office in campaigns that they would be unlikely to win (i.e., as "sacrificial lambs").

David Niven (1998), in his book *The Missing Majority: The Recruitment of Women State Legislative Candidates*, found that a majority of women local officeholders reported elite bias in candidate recruitment. Niven (1998:56) found that 64 percent of women local officeholders agreed that "party leaders discouraged potential women candidates from running for office because of their gender." In addition, Niven's survey of state party elites found they were biased against potential women candidates for state legislative office. Although these studies focus on women candidates and their potential success at higher-level office, and examined the differences in men and women candidates' recruitment in different electoral situations, these studies did not systematically examine the different types of lower-level office held by men and women local officeholders. The type of lower office held by women could limit the number of viable female candidates at the state and federal level. As a result, we examine the effect of county-level demographic variables on the probability of women elected to county-level office.

Based on an examination of data from Southern elections to county office and the state legislature, we argue that traditional conceptions of gender roles play a critical part in determining the election of women to public office. Like Bullock and Akins's (1997) "gender roles" hypothesis, we expect that women hold many offices of a more clerkship nature, offices with relatively little in the way of discretion. Women dominate process-oriented offices that entail making sure procedures are followed, and keeping track of forms and filing. The public role of most of these offices is limited to routine

functions, such as processing a will through probate or mailing out or collecting tax assessments. Women will win few offices that are related to the investigation or prosecution of criminals.

In addition, our analysis of constituency demographics explores the “desirability hypothesis,” which contends that women are far less likely than men to win prestigious executive offices that grant their holder obvious power and discretion (Bullock and Akins, 1997). Although the impact of constituency demographics on the election of women pales in comparison to the effect of office type, an examination of the relationship between constituency demographic variables and the election of women tests the significance of the effects of office desirability on gender and local office holding.

Constituency Variables

Scholars have repeatedly found that rural areas are less likely than urban areas to elect women to public office (e.g., Bullock and Akins, 1997; MacManus et al., 1998; Glaser, 1996; Burrell, 1994). Greater rural support for traditional gender roles, particularly in the South, is hypothesized to explain these differences. As one male voter reacted to a female candidate running in his rural congressional district: “Is she the widdah? No. What business does she have running for the seat then?” (Glaser, 1996:205 n.18). In contrast to previous consistent findings of women winning at a higher rate in urban areas, we suspect that running in a *rural* constituency aids female candidates for county office. Populous urban counties pay their county officials more than in rural areas. Controlling for other factors, elected office is consequently more desirable and prestigious in populous counties so a greater number of high-quality male candidates seek election in these areas. Rural counties with small populations often pay their county officials surprisingly small salaries, so men, who on average earn more than women, choose to pursue other career opportunities. Salary should trump rural traditionalism in the pursuit of county office.

Scholars have suggested that education, particularly university education, renders voters more likely to accept women in nontraditional roles (Carroll, 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1994). Counties should become more likely to elect women to public office as the *proportion college graduates* rises. Past research on the effect of income on the election of women has similarly argued that higher incomes indicate a more egalitarian attitude on the part of constituents in the district or county (Darcy, Welch, and Clark, 1987, 1994; Rule, 1981; Karnig and Welch, 1970; Welch and Karnig, 1979). We contend that income may more accurately serve as a measure of office desirability as opposed to a measure of more egalitarian attitudes. In high-income regions, the opportunity cost of pursuing public office is higher as the gap between public and private sector incomes is greater, even if high-income areas provide better salaries to their public officials. Men continue to

dominate most businesses and professional jobs, especially the most lucrative jobs within these fields. On average, potential male candidates likely lose even greater opportunities than female candidates by seeking public office in high-income areas. In contrast, ambitious women may win prestige that is harder to gain in the private sector, at least partially due to the glass ceiling and the difficulties women continue to face in attaining the highest ranks within corporations and professional associations. After controlling for education, *mean household income* should positively relate to the election of women.

We further examine the impact of age and race on the election of women to local office. We expect that higher proportions of African Americans or older Americans in a county the greater chance of female candidates' electoral success. Past studies have found different relationships between the racial composition of the electorate and female chances for electoral success. Burrell (1994) found no relationship between the percentage African American and the nomination of female candidates to the U.S. House by either major political party. However, Burrell completed her study prior to the election of significant numbers of new African-American women to the House in 1992. Women composed 37.5 percent of African Americans elected to the House in 1998 from the South, so the relationship between percent African American and the election of women, at least for the South, may have changed. Bullock and Akins (1997) found a positive relationship between the *proportion African American* and the election of women to county office in Florida and Georgia. They hypothesize that African Americans and Republicans are the harbingers of changes in Southern politics, so areas more willing to elect African Americans (and Republicans) are more likely to elect women (Bullock and Akins, 1997).

We suspect that more mundane reasons explain the relatively high levels of success of women in areas with significant African-American populations. First, unlike among whites, the average level of education among African-American women actually exceeds that for African-American men.³ These educational skills may give African-American women an edge in seeking political office over African-American men that white women lack in contrast to white men. Second, a much higher proportion of African-American men than white men have been convicted of a felony and are excluded from voting and running for public office. Over 30 percent of African-American men in Alabama and Florida currently cannot vote due to felony convictions; 24 percent of African-American males in Virginia and 20 percent in Texas are similarly barred from the ballot box (Sentencing

³According to the national U.S. Census Current Population Survey on Educational Attainment in the United States conducted in 1998, 27.3 percent of white men, but only 22.8 percent of white women, aged 25 and over, had completed four years of college. Among African Americans, 15.4 percent of women, but only 13.9 percent of men, had completed four years or more of college. See <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/tablea-02.txt>.

Project, 1998). Women constitute a much higher share of legally eligible officeholders in the African-American community than in the white community as a result of these depressing statistics.

Two competing theories suggest different relationship between the share of senior citizens in the population and the probability of a women winning election. If the elderly are more traditional than other voters, areas with a high percentage of elderly residents would be expected to elect women at a lower rate. Burrell (1994) demonstrated that older Americans are less supportive of female congressional candidates. In contrast, we believe that areas with a large senior citizen population elect women at a higher rate because these areas contain relatively greater numbers of women compared to men. Women live longer than men and tend to enjoy greater health at an advanced age. According to estimates for 2000 by the U.S. Census, the ratio of women to men in the under-65 population is almost even, but the ratio for the 65 and older population is 1.4. Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell (2001) report that retirees compose the second largest source of state legislative candidates. Communities with many retired elderly residents will have a higher ratio of potential female to potential male candidates and probably elect greater numbers of women as a result. Of course, the electorate in these communities will also have a relatively high share of female voters. The sexual revolution has sufficiently passed so that traditionalism may not cause older voters to support male candidates at a higher rate than young voters. Consistent with our emphasis on the impact of constituency factors on the pool of candidates and recruitment, we expect that the probability of a woman holding office should increase with the share of the population that is *proportion 65 and older*.

Office-Type Variables

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the percentage of offices won by women varies hugely by office type. Traditional conceptions of gender roles appear to explain these differences. Women win few elections to offices that entail leadership, executive responsibility, or are involved with violence in any way. Female candidates win very few offices involved in the investigation or prosecution of crime; there are few female sheriffs, coroners, or attorneys in any state. County judge is a leadership and executive position with large amounts of power and discretion in both Arkansas and Texas and women hold few of these offices. Education is often seen as a feminine issue and educators nurture children and many women work as public school teachers. Yet, few women were elected superintendent of education in Mississippi prior to 1999. Even today, women are far more likely to serve as circuit clerks or tax assessors in the Magnolia State. The role of the officeholder as an important executive administrator with a great deal of authority over the local education system may make this office more of a

TABLE 1
Percent Female Winners of County Office in the South

		Virginia					Florida					
	Clerk	Treasurer	Revenue Com.	Comm Attorney	Sheriff	Sup. of Elections	Tax Collector	Clerk	Property Appraiser	Sheriff		
1983	30	1981-83	41	36	4	5	1980	68	25	14	3	0
1987	42	1985-87	48	42	3	4	1984	77	26	16	5	0
1991	29	1989-91	55	46	3	3	1988	78	34	20	10	3
1995	35	1993-95	59	46	8	5	1992	83	35	29	11	0
1999	41	1997-99	60	47	10	5	1996	80	40	27	10	0
Texas												
	District Clerk	County Clerk	Judge	Tax Assessor	Sheriff	Clerk	Sheriff	Register of Deeds				
1986	74	76	3	63	0	1982	47	1982-84	65			
1990	74	75	14	72	5	1986	55	1986-88	70			
1994	78	76	16	73	8	1990	57	1990-92	77			
1998	81	76	13	81	5	1994	59	1994-96	82			
South Carolina												
	Treasurer	Clerk	Auditor	Probate Judge	Coroner	Sheriff	Tax Commis.	Probate Judge	Coroner	Sheriff		
1980-82	42	44	45	30	0	2	34	36	3	0		
1984-86	53	63	64	43	2	2	45	41	5	0		
1988-90	59	67	64	46	2	0	51	40	8	0		
1992-94	61	65	66	54	11	2	53	49	9	1		
1996-98	64	63	62	51	11	0	60	49	8	1		

Louisiana

Arkansas

	Clerk	Treasurer	Assessor	Coroner	Sheriff	Judge	Clerk	Assessor	Coroner	Sheriff
1980	49	43	20	3	1	0	16	8	0	0
1984	59	53	29	1	1	1	19	7	0	0
1988	77	64	41	3	0	0	27	10	3	0
1992	80	72	51	4	3	0	30	15	2	0
1996	84	76	61	5	3	0	30	17	3	0
							29	16	6	2

	Circuit Clerk	Tax Assessor	Chancery Clerk	Coroner	Sup. of Education	County Attorney
1983	44	41	14	8	5	5
1987	46	41	18	12	6	9
1991	57	43	22	17	6	5
1995	61	47	26	12	9	7
1999	59	52	30	21	21	11

Mississippi

traditional male role despite any potential identification of education with women.

On the other hand, women often hold a clear majority of positions that entail more of a clerkship role. In a region known for electing few female officials, women routinely win election to offices such as assessor, auditor, clerk, probate judge, supervisor of elections, and treasurer. Common to all of these positions is that they are process oriented. Officials often have little discretion, but it is critical that they make sure that the appropriate process or procedure is carried out properly and in accordance with the law. Many of the functions of these offices appear to be of a clerkship nature. All these officials must keep track of voluminous files and records. Many must routinely send out forms or collect taxes and fees from all county residents. These offices are usually far less visible than the offices dominated by men.

The model of the election of women to county office includes dummy variables to control for the impact of office type on the probability of a woman holding office. The dummy variables *sheriff* and *coroner* are both expected to have negative coefficients. The dummy variable *attorney* is coded 1 for commonwealth attorney in Virginia and county attorney in Mississippi, and 0 otherwise. *Executive office* is a dummy variable coded 1 for the offices of superintendent of education in Mississippi and county judge in Arkansas and Texas, and 0 otherwise. Both attorney and executive office should have negative coefficients as women appear less likely to win election to these offices even after controlling for other factors.

Temporal and State Controls

In many cases, the share of female officeholders has increased substantially since the early 1980s (see Table 1). Antipathy toward the election of women has probably declined over time as female participation in the workforce and gender equality has become more accepted. Any potential hostility among more traditional older voters has also declined as voters who are more accepting of female officials grow older. The probability of a woman winning election should accordingly grow with the *year* of the election.

In addition, controls for individual states were tested and included in the models if they came close to attaining statistical significance. Differences in the rate of the election of women between states likely reflect a combination of state differences in structure and political culture. It is difficult to test for structural differences separately from state controls as many of these differences are unique to one state.

Findings

The logit model of the election of women to county office presented in Table 2 confirms the impression given by the descriptive statistics displayed

TABLE 2
Logit Analysis of Election of Women to Open County Offices

Dependent Variable: Woman (Yes = 1)	Coefficient	SE
Constant	-2.13**	.43
Population (10,000)	-.18**	.06
Proportion 65 or older	3.30*	1.45
Proportion college graduate	-1.35	1.11
Mean household income (\$1,000)	.03**	.01
Proportion African American	1.60**	.31
Year (1978 = 0, 1979 = 1, ... 1999 = 21)	.06**	.01
Sheriff	-4.21**	.26
Coroner	-2.60**	.17
Attorney	-2.02**	.23
Executive office	-3.51**	.32
Arkansas	.68**	.16
Georgia	.35**	.13
Louisiana	-.91**	.25
North Carolina	1.12**	.22
South Carolina	.40**	.16
Texas	1.26**	.22
Number of cases	3,454	
Pseudo R^2	.30	
Log-likelihood	-1515.80	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed tests.

in Table 1: traditional conceptions of gender roles play a crucial role in determining the gender of the holders of different types of offices. Table 3 shows the mean predicted probability in each state of electing a woman to county office by office type based on the model presented in Table 2. (The table does not present hypothetical probabilities for offices that do not exist in a state.) Outside of Louisiana, women are more likely than not to hold clerkship-type offices such as assessor, probate judge, and treasurer. In five of the nine states studied, the probability of a woman holding these offices is greater than two-thirds. These results appear stunning when one considers the region's reputation for hostility to female candidacies.

On the other hand, women rarely win election to the more powerful county offices. The chance of a women serving as sheriff, a nontraditional female role, is very small. Chances of a woman serving a coroner, attorney, or in an executive capacity are somewhat greater but still low. In no state does the chance of a woman occupying any of these offices exceed 20 percent. In most cases, the probability of a female officeholder is much smaller. Gender roles clearly still matter. Women run for and are welcome to serve in clerkship positions with little discretion or power. However, they either do not seek or do not win powerful leadership roles. These results may have national implications: if women are not regularly chosen for leadership,

TABLE 3
Mean Predicted Probability of Electing a Woman to County Office

	Clerkship	Sheriff	Coroner	Attorney	Executive
Arkansas 1996	.70	.03	.15		.07
Florida 1996	.52	.02			
Georgia 1996	.67	.03	.13		
Louisiana 1999	.35	.01	.04		
Mississippi 1999	.63		.12	.16	.04
North Carolina 1994	.77	.05			
South Carolina 1996–98	.69	.03	.15		
Texas 1996–98	.81	.06			.12
Virginia 1997–99	.63	.03		.18	

law enforcement, or executive positions in a large region of the country, one can imagine that it is an even far greater leap to envision a woman serving as president and commander of the armed forces.

Constituency Characteristics

Although Burrell (1994) found that constituency variables had little impact on the election of women to the U.S. House, we find that constituency characteristics, excepting education, have an important impact after considering office type. Regardless of constituency type, the chance of a woman holding law enforcement or executive county offices is low. Proportion college graduates did not appear to predict the election of female local officials. Excluding income from the analysis did not alter this relationship. The election of women to clerkship-type offices has become so common that perhaps it is now equally accepted among people of all educational backgrounds. However, Table 4 reveals that the remaining demographic variables have an important influence on whether a woman is elected to a clerkship county office.

Part A of Table 4 shows the mean predicted impact of a one-standard-deviation change in the county constituency variables on the selection of a woman for county office.⁴ The mean impact was calculated separately for each state because the means and standard deviations of the demographic

⁴As Nagler (1991) has explained, the magnitude of the predicted impact of a change of a fixed magnitude in an independent variable varies in a logit or probit analysis. Unlike in linear regression, the predicted impact of a one-standard-deviation change in the independent variables varies depending on the value of the other variables. We set the value of the other variables at the mean in each state to avoid imposing regional similarity. The examination of variation in the predicted values in constituencies utilized in actual elections helps to avoid the potential problem of over- or underestimating the impact of the independent variables.

variables vary substantially from state to state. The predicted impact of a one-standard-deviation change in any one variable is generally quite small; the vast majority of the changes in probability predicted in Part A of Table 4 are 5 percent or smaller. Increasing the share of the African-American population by one standard deviation has the largest impact on the election of women in all states except Texas and Virginia.

The cumulative effect, however, of the demographic variations between counties is far from small. Part B of Table 4 displays the mean predicted probability of electing a woman to a clerkship office, the standard deviation around that mean, and the minimum and maximum probability. The range of predicted probabilities for individual counties is large in all nine states, and this sizeable variation is due solely to demographic differences among counties. Different types of counties are more likely to elect women. Specifically, high-income counties with a large number of elderly residents and a sizeable African-American population are the most likely to elect women, but populous counties are not. Counties have steadily become more likely to elect women over the years; the change over one year is generally quite small, around 1 percent, but the cumulative effect over two decades of these small changes is sizeable.

Discussion

Contrary to regional stereotypes, women frequently win election to public office in the South. Women hold a majority of clerkship-type offices in many Southern states. Models of the election of women to county office suggest that they are more likely than not to carry open-seat elections for these positions. More problematically, female candidates rarely win election to relatively high-paying leadership positions. Rather than winning elections as executives or in law enforcement, women are chosen more often to carry out process-oriented jobs that have relatively little discretion. This study thus provides more solid evidence than past studies that candidate and voter conceptions of traditional gender roles continue to shape the election of women to public office. One cannot help but speculate that women will continue to face major barriers in winning election to executive positions such as governor and president if they are only infrequently elected to even local leadership positions.

Constituency characteristics further influence recruitment and voting patterns. Women are most likely to win election in areas where the share of eligible female candidates is high. Female candidates also fare better in areas where other opportunities are likely to render public service relatively unattractive. Put more bluntly, women are most likely to win public offices in areas where men do not want the jobs. These findings explain why more women win election to county office than state legislative office. In turn, these patterns are consistent with evidence that women win fewer offices the higher up the electoral food chain one looks.

TABLE 4
Impact of Constituency Variables on the Probability of Electing a Women to "Clerkship" County Offices

	AR	FL	GA	LA	MS	NC	SC	TX	VA
<i>a. Predicted Impact of One-Standard-Deviation Change in Constituency Variables</i>									
Population (10,000)	-.02	-.12	-.03	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.03	-.06	-.04
Proportion 65 or older	.02	.06	.02	.02	.02	.02	.01	.02	.04
Mean household income (\$1,000)	.02	.04	.04	.04	.03	.02	.03	.03	.07
Proportion black	.05	.04	.06	.05	.07	.04	.05	.02	.06
Year	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
<i>b. Predicted Values</i>									
Mean predicted probability	.70	.52	.67	.35	.58	.77	.69	.78	.63
Standard deviation	.05	.11	.06	.06	.06	.05	.06	.08	.08
Minimum predicted probability	.58	.17	.45	.19	.44	.63	.54	.31	.34
Maximum predicted probability	.79	.67	.82	.46	.70	.87	.79	.83	.79
Probability of Women for Noncrime, Nonexec Offices									
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	
AR 1996	.70	.05	.58	.79	.03	.01	.02	.05	
FL 1996	.52	.11	.17	.67	.02	.01	.00	.03	
GA 1996	.67	.06	.45	.82	.03	.01	.01	.06	
LA 1999	.35	.06	.19	.46	.01	.00	.00	.01	
MS 1999	.63	.06	.50	.74	.05	.02	.02	.09	
NC 1994	.77	.05	.63	.87	.03	.01	.02	.05	
SC 1996-98	.69	.06	.54	.79	.03	.01	.02	.05	

TX 1996-98	.81	.08	.37	.86	.06	.01	.01	.01	.08
VA 1997-99	.63	.08	.34	.79	.03	.01	.01	.01	.05
AR 1996					.15	.03	Coroner	.09	.22
GA 1996					.13	.03		.06	.25
LA 1999					.04	.01		.02	.07
MS 1999					.12	.03		.07	.18
SC 1996-98					.15	.04		.08	.22
MS 1999					.16	.03	Attorney	.09	.23
VA 1997-99					.18	.05		.06	.33
AR 1996					.07	.02	Executive	.04	.10
NC 1994					.04	.01		.02	.06
TX 1996-98					.12	.03		.02	.16

Although the frequent election of women to county office and increasing numbers in the state legislature provide a stronger farm team of female candidates, it is not at all clear that these women will find it as easy to move up the electoral ladder into the more competitive arena of statewide and federal office. Based on the continuing power of gender roles, one suspects that women are more likely to win positions in the U.S. House and to statewide offices, such as secretary of state and lieutenant governor, which are not traditionally seen as strong leadership roles. Female governors may continue to remain a rarity.

However, past studies (e.g., Burrell, 1994) show that women who do run are as likely to be successful as their male counterparts. This suggests that the greater part of the problem may lie with recruitment, rather than voting behavior, as women are less likely to pursue top offices than men. If these studies are correct, recruiting more of the increasing number of highly-qualified women to go for the top electoral prizes would help address the gender gap in the number of elected officials, particularly in executive positions, at all levels of government. Expanding on their success, groups such as EMILY's List and WISH List, which promote the election of women to Congress, might consider creating state affiliates to provide funding to women seeking executive positions at lower levels of government. This sort of greatly expanded effort might pay dividends in increasing the number of eligible candidates for higher-level offices as well as increasing confidence that women can win these positions.

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