

Thinking Outside the Boxes

Blurring the Bounds of Group Membership

September 7, 2021

Abstract

We apply an intersectional framework to explore how connections to marginalized communities interact with candidate demographics to shape vote choice. In an original experiment manipulating candidates' race, gender, sexuality, and endorsements, we show that endorsements by organizations advocating for marginalized communities shape voter evaluations to the same, if not greater, degree as candidates' gender, race, and sexuality alone. Moreover, these effects are often conditional on one's identity: evaluations of relatively privileged candidates like white men are both penalized and rewarded less by voters with a high and low sense of position threat than intersectionally marginalized candidates when both have the same endorsement. Attitudes towards marginalized communities are mapped onto candidates with ties to them whether the candidate is a member or not, a support or marginalization by proxy we define as associational affect. Identity has a complex role in shaping vote choice and, absent an investigation of power and interlocking social hierarchies, it alone is insufficient to explain vote choice.

1 Introduction

As parties have sorted and the U.S. electorate has diversified, candidates running for office face different electoral incentives when signaling support from and for different minoritized groups. A candidate’s associations—such as their own ascribed identity or who they are endorsed by—can be used by voters as a heuristic for whom a candidate will work on behalf of and who will potentially benefit from their election. In turn, will voters map their attitudes toward the marginalized group that a candidate is associated with onto the candidate? In a raced, gendered, and heteronormative social context, will these kinds of affiliations with minoritized communities increase support for the candidate among those that want to fight a given form of inequality while decreasing support among those invested in maintaining the status quo social hierarchy? In 2020, for example, former Vice President Joe Biden leaned heavily into his connections to former President Obama and the pivotal endorsement by Congressman Clyburn as he sought to shore up his support among Black voters in a Democratic presidential primary with record number of candidates (Caputo, 2020). In contrast, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton distanced herself from President Obama in 2016 as Republicans used her connections with Obama to shore up support among conservative white voters (Mehta, 2015; Scher, 2016).

Though candidates for office clearly want to take positions that will allow them to win, how precisely voters respond to signals of support for different marginalized groups, especially when they themselves do not belong to the marginalized group, is undertheorized. Research has shown that President Obama is a polarizing and “racializing” figure that can activate voters’ racial resentment attitudes when items and policies are tied to him (Tesler, 2016). Yet, this phenomenon may play out differently for candidates with different ascribed identities. For instance, recent work has suggested that voters’ evaluations of candidates are more complex than their ascribed identity alone. A growing body of work investigates how endorsements may signal coalitional support between groups and candidates (McDermott, 2006; Rothschild, 2020), and strong ties or a demonstrated commitment to the Black com-

munity can influence how Black voters and racially resentful white voters evaluate candidates even if those candidates are not themselves Black (Stephens-Dougan, 2016; Wamble, 2018). Where racialization is gendered (Bell and Borelli, forthcoming), might this phenomenon also generalize to other identities and dimensions of marginalization, such that an endorsement among a prominent women’s rights or LGBT organization negatively (and differentially) impact evaluations of candidates among sexist and heterosexist voters?

Three things are necessary in order to address questions such as these. First, we must establish whether and how voters across the range of racism, sexism, and heterosexism react to candidates based on their demographics alone, which has often treated identities and social prejudices in isolation from each other rather than intersectionally. Following this, we can then turn to whether associations with marginalized groups in the form of endorsements—a signal of commitment to fighting inequality and contesting existing social hierarchies—carry any separate, additional effects from candidate demographics. Finally, we can apply an intersectional framework to assess whether the effects of associations with marginalized groups are dependent on candidates’ co-constitutive identities.

To do so, we compare the effects of associations with different marginalized communities on candidates with different race-gender-sexuality profiles. For instance, we test whether a straight white man endorsed by a group advocating for gender equality is evaluated differently by voters compared to a similarly endorsed straight black man. Where candidates’ ascribed identities can be used as a heuristic for whether they will uphold or contest systems of power, associations with minoritized communities via endorsements can serve to signal a candidate’s commitments. Using an original conjoint experiment fielded on a nationally representative online sample recruited by the Qualtrics Panels Team, we asked respondents to evaluate six pairs of candidates in a hypothetical primary election where candidates’ race, gender, and sexuality were randomized to test the effects of ascribed identity on voter evaluations. We also randomized whether the candidates were endorsed by a neutral group or an advocacy organization for people marginalized in terms of race, gender, or sexuality to

signal candidate support for marginalized groups. We then examine how respondent support is affected by candidates' demographics and signals of support for marginalized communities. The results show that these group endorsements are significant and often stronger predictors of voter behavior than candidates' identities alone and that, in many cases, the effects of endorsements are conditional on the candidate's demographics. While a candidate's ascribed identity can provide some baseline guess as to who will benefit from their election, endorsements from advocacy organizations and support from minoritized communities can provide stronger, more concrete information on whom a candidate will benefit. Even when a candidate is relatively privileged, a marginalized community's support can signal the candidate's commitment to contesting their marginalization. Consequently, those threatened by challenges to the status quo are less supportive of the candidate while those that support contesting the social hierarchy become more supportive.

We contribute to the literature on voting behavior and identity in the following ways. First, we help bridge the literature on voting behavior and elections involving marginalized candidates (e.g., see Carey Jr and Lizotte, 2017; Haider-Markel et al., 2017; Pearson and McGhee, 2013) and the literature on intersectionality (e.g., see Cassese and Barnes, 2019; Junn, 2017). Previous work often considers identities in isolation from each other, while intersectional work questions this separation and details shortcomings in such an approach. We apply an intersectional framework to consider how co-constitutive identities affect voter evaluations of candidates and how (intersectionally marginalized) candidates running for office may be evaluated differently using endorsements as a means to signal a candidate's relationship to interlocking systems of power. Second, we show that processes such as racialization are likely neither exclusive to President Obama nor to racism. Our work thus suggests a broader "(de)marginalization by proxy" in which voters evaluate candidates with strong ties to and a potential willingness to form coalitions with historically marginalized groups similar to members of those groups, and that this applies to— at minimum— race, gender, and sexuality groups. Whether a candidate will uphold or contest existing interlocking

hierarchies thus has a stronger effect on voters' evaluations than identity alone.

2 Motivating Literature

To answer our question of interest, we must first account for how candidate demographics currently influence voter evaluations of those candidates. We must then determine how factors other than a candidate's demographics and identity influence voters' evaluations of them, especially for candidates with close ties to different demographic groups. If a candidate is of a comparatively privileged background but has close ties to marginalized communities, then will voters with negative affect toward those groups evaluate them similarly to marginalized group members? In turn, we must address whether the interactions between these social attitudes and a candidate's own identities may interact to affect candidates differently. Will, for example, a white man with ties to a Black advocacy group be evaluated by prejudiced voters differently from a white woman? Consequently, we briefly draw from two sets of political science literature to inform the hypotheses for our experimental design.

2.1 Candidates Demographics and Voter Support

A rich set of recent work on elections and voting behavior suggests that voters tend to penalize candidates running for public office when they are people of color, women, or LGBT candidates. A fairly robust literature has suggested that LGBT and Black candidates running for office are penalized relative to non-LGBT and white ones, respectively (Carey Jr and Lizotte, 2017; Haider-Markel et al., 2017; Terkildsen, 1993; Sigelman et al., 1995; Stephens-Dougan, 2020), although these are challenges that candidates can sometimes overcome by strategically choosing where and when to run (Haider-Markel, 2010). The research on women depicts a slightly more nuanced narrative. Women need more qualifications than men to win (Bauer, 2020; Pearson and McGhee, 2013) and are expected to conform to certain stereotypes when running (Teele et al., 2018; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993), although recent work has

shown that—despite these higher standards and expectations—women may be slightly *more* preferred to men by voters (Schwarz and Coppock, forthcoming). Nonetheless, few would dispute that sexism, racial resentment, and heterosexism are factors that women, Black, and LGBTQ candidates continue to face. Still, these studies tend to look at identities in isolation from each other. They also focus on *ascribed* identities, failing to consider how voters with prejudice towards out groups evaluate candidates with ties to those out groups.

2.2 Beyond Ascriptive Identity

Voters can use their own and a candidate’s identity as heuristics when deciding how to cast their ballot. Social categories such as racial groups are understood as positional and relative to each other (Blumer, 1958). Therefore, voters can use candidate identity as a signal for whose interests a candidate would be most likely to advance and whether they would reaffirm or challenge existing social hierarchies if elected (Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Strolovitch et al., 2017). However, this relationship between identity and vote choice is complex, and other factors may outweigh the use of identity as a heuristic in vote choice. Identities and social categories are by no means fixed, and one’s identity alone does not guarantee their beliefs or behaviors. Further, sharing one marginalized identity by no means ensures solidarity on other dimensions of marginalization between those with relatively more and those with fewer marginalized identities. For Black queer people, shared sexuality does not preclude anti-Black racism among white queer people and a shared race does not preclude heterosexism among other Black people (Cohen, 1999).

Voters can use other information to update their belief of a candidate’s views and commitments towards upholding or challenging status quo power hierarchies. While variables like candidate identity and partisanship can serve as a baseline, other information may become more important in shaping voter evaluations, particularly in low-information environments (Kirkland and Coppock, 2018). For instance, white Democratic politicians shown with a larger proportion of Black people serves as a heuristic for racist voters and decreases their

support for such candidates (Stephens-Dougan, 2016). On the other hand, demonstrated sacrifices or endorsements by organizations like the NAACP can increase Black voters' support for even white candidates (Wamble, 2018). In order to limit fallout among racist voters, Black candidates can attempt to use racial distancing to signal to white voters that they will not threaten the status quo racial order (Stephens-Dougan, 2020). In terms of upholding white supremacy, members of racist organizations do not view companionship with Black people as contradictory as long as they are not perceived to be challenging racial hierarchies (Blee, 1996). Other work shows that strong ties to figures such as President Obama can "racialize" support for policy and lead to racially resentful voters disapproving of them (Tesler, 2016).

Candidates that successfully demonstrate a commitment to working with marginalized communities may also do so in a variety of ways. For example, interest group endorsements have increasingly been shown to serve as a strong signal of potential coalitional relationships among interest groups, voters, and elected officials. A growing body of literature has analyzed the relationship between other voters and groups advocating on their behalf (e.g., see Lau and Redlawsk; McDermott, 2006; Rapoport et al., 1991). This research often emphasizes the value of such endorsements as a heuristic for low information voters (Arceneaux and Kolodny, 2009), and the coalitional component that interest groups bring to the table when choosing to work with and endorse candidates cannot be understated (Grossmann and Dominguez, 2009). Candidate endorsements may provide strong signals of an organization's confidence in a candidate's agenda and relationship to voters of various social groups (McDermott, 2006; Rothschild, 2020), and organizations have incentives to deliver to their supporters candidates that will be accessible in order to remain credible among their supporters (Heaney, 2004). Still, while voters may infer which social groups candidates are likely to advocate on behalf of when organizations endorse candidates, how *strongly* they react depending on their and the candidate's identity is undertheorized in existing studies. Consequently, we argue that the mechanisms underlying phenomena such as "racialization" and how voters

react to signals of support for members of specific social groups may be a subset of a more general phenomenon that may apply to identity broadly— including gender and sexuality. While presumptions of a candidate’s commitment to upholding or undoing racist power structures may influence voting behavior when race is made salient, the general phenomenon may interact with experiences of candidates at the intersections of identities. In turn, the number of and dimensions on which a candidate is marginalized may affect how associations with different marginalized communities affect voters’ evaluations of candidates.

Intersectional theories suggest that such a differential process may not only be possible but also likely. Political science research has historically approached questions of voting behavior using non-intersectional frameworks. Studies tend to look at identities in isolation from each other such that they focus on the effect of being Black *or* a cis gender woman *or* LGBT. While these studies are informative about how voters evaluate particular subgroups of candidates, some caution need be taken in overgeneralizing which groups of candidates such findings apply to. In coining the term “intersectionality,” Crenshaw (1989) notes the challenges Black women—who were unable to bring lawsuits representative of all women and all Black folks based on their unique experiences from co-constitutive identities as Black women—faced in relation to civil rights litigation. Similarly, Black women face unique stereotypes different than those of Black men or white women (Crenshaw, 1991). Analyzing one identity in isolation can mask heterogeneity within social categories and non-additive effects of forms of marginalization, running the risk of homogenizing groups’ experiences while missing how different identities and systems of power intersect (Hancock, 2007). An individual can simultaneously occupy both marginalized and relatively privileged positions when accounting for the intersections of different systems of power that underlie the construction of racial, gender, and sexuality-based forms of categorization. Likewise, a focus on ascribed identity alone is insufficient. Social categorization does not occur in a vacuum and is intimately tied to interlocking systems of power. It is therefore necessary to incorporate individuals’ complex relationships with and support for intersecting systems of power that are

inseparable from one another (Briggs, 2000; Cohen, 1997; Combahee River Collective, 2014). Ascribed identity may influence whether an individual struggles against oppression or seeks to uphold hierarchy, but an analysis of identity absent a focus on power is incomplete. Our study helps fill gaps in the research by jointly manipulating candidates' relationships to systems of race, gender, and sexuality through their identity and associations with marginalized communities, thus allowing us to observe the precise and unique ways in which candidates' complex relationships to power influence voter evaluations. Our work adds to the growing number of studies have taken an intersectional approach in analyzing group behavior and attitudes in recent years (e.g., Cassese et al., 2015; Hutchings et al., 2010; Bonilla and Tillery, 2020). In doing so, we test whether processes such as racialization play out for candidates differently conditional on their demographics.

3 Hypotheses

Building on the intersectional literature and work that investigates how voters react to signals of marginalized community support in addition to ascribed identity, we argue expect that a candidate's perceived commitment to different social groups is equally, if not more, important than identity alone. A candidate's identity in and of itself may not necessarily have an effect on voter evaluations but often gains meaning by placing a candidate within a racist, sexist, and heterosexist system of power. A candidate's race can sometimes be used as a heuristic for whether they will support racial hierarchy or contest it. Aside from a simplistic heuristic based on identity alone, however, other information can be used by voters that is perhaps more informative than identity alone. Endorsements by advocacy organizations can serve as a signal to voters of potential coalitional relationships between a candidate and a(n) (out) group that the organization is advocating on behalf of (Benjamin, 2017; Barreto, 2007), which may then affect voter evaluations of the candidate depending on whether voters support the existing social order or feel threatened by potential changes

to it (Craig and Richeson, 2014).

Generalizing racialization, we propose a broader phenomenon in which individuals' social positional considerations are brought to bear on evaluations of policy and political candidates that we define as **associational affect**, which is a sort of (de)marginalization by proxy. Where a voter has negative affect towards some social category or feels threatened by challenges to the status quo, they will be less supportive of the candidate or policy associated with the given social category. Likewise, a voter that has positive affect toward or supports contesting marginalization will become more favorable towards associated policies or candidates. A voter's own ascribed identities and social position will likely shape attitudes towards hierarchy, but the mechanism operates through their investments in or commitments to raced, gendered, and heteronormative power structures, not simply the voter's identities themselves.

These associations become politically relevant when they are seen as signals of which groups a candidate support and whether they will work to preserve social hierarchies. Although it will not take much for seemingly trivial associations with or connections to marginalized communities to become infused with concerns over social position and who benefits, different associations will provide stronger or weaker signals. An endorsement from an interest group advocating for equality for a minoritized community can provide a strong signal of a willingness of a candidate to work with members of that group (Heaney, 2004; Rothschild, 2020), and voters will evaluate these signals accordingly.

While a candidate's social categorization can be used as a heuristic for their views towards social hierarchy and whose social position will be advanced, identity heuristics can be supplemented with other information such as endorsements. When the endorsing group advocates on behalf of a group to which a candidate belongs, the endorsement serves to reinforce assumptions about the candidate's positioning. Consequently, a candidate with a marginalized identity and endorsement from an advocacy group working to address that marginalization may be more heavily penalized or rewarded by voters threatened by or

supportive of challenges to the status quo, respectively, relative to a similarly-marginalized candidate without such an endorsement. Alternatively, if a candidate is endorsed by an organization that advocates for a social group to which the candidate does not belong, the endorsement provides new and potentially countervailing information about their commitments that may not previously have been assumed (Arceneaux and Kolodny, 2009). This new information might influence or override pre-existing notions of which social group a candidate will support and whether a voter’s social position is threatened by the candidate on potentially multiple dimensions. When connections with marginalized communities that are seen as indicative of a candidate’s loyalties become salient, voters may presume that the candidate will contest the status quo to empower the given group, causing the candidate to gain support among sympathetic voters and lose support among prejudiced voters that feel their social position is threatened.

This first hypothesis is based on past work on prejudice and voting behavior with identity considered in isolation, which we will then build upon:

- **H1. Candidate Evaluations Hypothesis:** Individuals that do (not) support the status quo hierarchy will evaluate Black, women, and LGBT candidates more (less) negatively than straight white men and be less likely to vote for them.

Given the work on intersectionality, we also suspect that candidates that are marginalized on multiple social dimensions will be evaluated even more negatively compared to white men and candidates marginalized on just one dimension. We thus note a second hypothesis that applies an intersectional framework to findings from previous studies showing candidates from marginalized background are frequently penalized by voters:

- **H2. Intersectional Evaluations Hypothesis:** Individuals that do (not) support the status quo hierarchy will evaluate candidates marginalized on multiple dimensions more (less) negatively than they would candidates marginalized on fewer or no dimensions and be less (more) likely to vote for them.

Our theory, however, takes this work a step further. An intersectional analysis requires examination of complicated relationships with interlocking power structures. As we argue in the preceding section, we believe that a candidate’s demographics alone are insufficient to fully account for how voters evaluate a candidate. More importantly, a candidate’s perceived group loyalties and what they would do to advance a group will be *stronger* predictors of how

voters evaluate candidates; however, perceived group loyalties can combine with assumptions based on candidates’ ascribed identities enhance or counteract the associational affect. This in turn leads to the following two hypotheses:

- **H3. Associational Affect:** Individuals that do (not) support status quo social hierarchies will view candidates with strong ties to marginalized groups—thereby presuming a commitment to fighting inequality— less (more) favorably than candidates without such associations.
- **H4. Associational Affect and Intersectional Marginalization:** Individuals that do (not) support status quo social hierarchies will view single-dimensionally or intersectionally-marginalized candidates with strong ties to marginalized groups less (more) favorably than a candidate with fewer marginalized identities with similar associations.

4 Data and Methods

We use a conjoint experiment to test our theory and hypotheses. A conjoint allows us to jointly manipulate candidate demographics and endorsements to identify multi-dimensional effects and their interactions in order to determine whether evaluations of candidates are affected by their ascribed identity and their commitment to and support from minoritized communities, signaled via endorsements. Although some caution need be taken in inferring majority preferences from conjoint AMCEs (Abramson et al., 2019), we note similar challenges with individual-level inferences and average treatment effects in other settings (Bansak et al., 2021). We conducted our pre-registered survey in March 2020 using an on-line sample nationally representative in terms of gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and income recruited by the Qualtrics Panels Team.¹ We did, however, have slightly more Democrats and LGBT respondents than the nation as a whole. For the full set of descriptive statistics, please see the Appendix. Our sample includes 639 complete respondent profiles, 51 of which did not pass a manipulation check.² The remaining sample of 588 respondents

¹We conducted a pilot of our conjoint experiment on MTurk in September 2019 prior to fielding the full study. The anonymized pre-registration is attached to the Appendix, and the OSF link has been provided to the editors.

²Respondents were shown the profile provided in Figure 1 and asked which candidate(s) were LGBT and which were endorsed by an LGBT rights group. See the Appendix for success rates by check and tests

included in the analyses evaluated a total of 7,056 candidate profiles. Respondents were asked to evaluate both the candidates on a feeling thermometer and select which one that they would prefer to vote for in the hypothetical primary election.

Respondents were shown candidates from six hypothetical gubernatorial primary elections. Similar to Haider-Markel et al. (2017), we used primary elections to reduce the use of partisanship as a heuristic to imply that the candidates' share the respondents' ideology. The presentation of profiles was designed to approximate a Ballotpedia page and provide information that one would likely see in advertisements, fliers, debates, on a candidate website, or through some other means during the campaign. This design was chosen to increase external validity by attempting to imitate the context in which an individual would obtain information about candidates and make judgments in both high and low information elections. Each profile includes a photo, name, spouse's name, number of children, age, undergraduate education, two endorsements, and political experience.³ We include a sample profile in Figure 1. A candidate's race (Black or white) and gender (man or woman) were signaled using their name and corresponding photo, while their sexuality was signaled by indicating that they have a same- or different-gender spouse by listing a husband or wife. Race, gender, and sexuality have successfully been signaled using these methods in previous studies (Sen and Wasow, 2016; Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Mishel, 2016; Adida et al., 2010).⁴ Each candidate had two endorsements: one that was always a neutral endorsement and another that was either another neutral organization or one working on behalf of women, racial minorities, or LGBTQ people. The endorsement order was randomized. Candidate demographics and endorsements were assigned independently and with uniform probability except for sexuality, for which the probability that a candidate had a same-gender spouse was reduced to .25 given that same-gender couples are less common. In all, there were a

for differences between respondents that passed and failed the check. Including respondents that failed the manipulation checks does not substantively affect the results as noted in the appendix.

³See the Appendix for a full list of attribute levels and power analysis.

⁴Race was either white or Black in order to increase power and avoid potential complications from the racial resentment questions' focus on attitudes towards and stereotypes of Black people.


Candidate 1		Candidate 2	
John Kelly		Latonya Washington	
	Husband: David Children: 1	Family	Husband: Darnell Children: 2
	43	Age	40
	Princeton	Undergraduate School	Harvard
	The State Policy Center	Endorsements	The National LGBT Rights Policy Center
	The Organization for Productive Policy		Voters for Effective Government
	State Senator	Political Experience	State Senator

Figure 1: Sample Profile

Example of candidate pairs used for the manipulation check. A full list of attributes is provided in the appendix.

total of eight possible race-gender-sexuality demographic profiles. Combined with the four different group associations, there were a total of 32 possible profiles of theoretical interest. All candidate profile matchups were possible; however, the same candidate and endorsing organization name and photos could not be used for both profiles.

The names of the fictional endorsing organizations were designed to provide a clear association with minoritized groups and signal to respondents candidates' commitments or lack thereof to contesting social hierarchies. For example, interest groups included the National Women's Policy Center, the National Racial Equality Policy Center, and the National LGBT Rights Policy Center. Although fictional, the names are modeled after groups such as the NAACP, and all specifically invoked references to equality or policy to give a strong signal of the endorsed candidate's commitment to supporting a given group. Thus, the policy-centric group endorsements provide a strong signal of what sorts of issues that candidates would likely prioritize if elected to office and, by extension, how likely those candidates would be to maintain or alter the status quo social hierarchy by working with certain marginalized communities if elected. Endorsements also provide a strong association since they are a costly signal from organizations and indicate that they are actively supporting the given candidate over others while also having implications for candidates that were not endorsed. The lack of a demonstrated commitment through endorsements indicates that a given candidate may

be less threatening to the social hierarchy or is potentially invested in supporting the status quo.

After respondents viewed and evaluated the sets of candidates, they answered sets of questions to measure their levels of racial resentment, sexism, and heterosexism. We used the standard racial resentment battery ($\alpha = .823$), five questions from the modern sexism battery (Swim et al., 1995) ($\alpha = .755$), and amnesic heterosexism battery (Walls, 2008) ($\alpha = .775$) for our measures of sexism and heterosexism. The 14 questions have a Cronbach's α of .877 when combined. In order to come up with a single measure of social positional threat, we standardized the respective batteries and averaged them. We also performed latent class analysis on the batteries in order to identify respondents that are high or low in position threat as well as to allow different questions or clusters to weigh more heavily in determining position threat.⁵ We made these decisions both given the intersectional nature of our hypotheses as well as our theory that these measures are more intricately and complexly linked than the measures individually could capture. We also performed Principal Component Analysis on the 14 questions. The questions all load heavily onto one component, suggesting that racial resentment, sexism, and heterosexism are connected and capture similar sentiments. As a robustness check, we repeat our analyses using these alternatives to the position threat score as well as include analyses using racial resentment, heterosexism, and sexism separately to account for the possibility that certain attitudes weigh more heavily in voters' perceptions of candidates. Our analyses are generally robust across all these specifications, with estimates included in the Appendix.

⁵Details are provided in the Appendix. We also include a three-class analysis for those low, medium, and high in position threat. As another robustness check, we divide respondents into the high threat group if their average threat score is above the midpoint of three, indicating on average a more prejudicial response on the three batteries.

Table 1: Attitude Correlations

	Racism	Sexism	Heterosexism	Ideology	Party ID
Racism	1	0.480	0.598	0.374	0.361
Sexism	0.480	1	0.478	0.247	0.281
Heterosexism	0.598	0.478	1	0.373	0.365
Ideology	0.374	0.247	0.373	1	0.642
Party ID	0.361	0.281	0.365	0.642	1

Correlations between prejudice measures and political orientations. See the appendix for correlations with additional variables and for the full sample.

5 Results

We provide the distribution of our position threat score along with racial resentment, modern sexism, and heterosexism by respondent race, gender, and sexuality in Figure 2. The measures varied in predictable ways. Non-LGBTQ white and non-Black respondents were more racially resentful than Black respondents. Likewise, non-LGBTQ respondents expressed higher levels of heterosexism than LGBTQ respondents. Men tended to register higher in sexism. However, the separation in attitudes is less stark than on racism and heterosexism. Men and white respondents in general tended to score higher across the batteries than women and non-white respondents. Depicted in Table 1, the three attitudes are moderately correlated with each other with coefficients from .478 to .598. The correlations between the attitudes are higher than their correlations with ideology and party identification, with a maximum of .374.

5.1 Candidate Demographics

We first analyze the effects of candidates' race, gender, and sexuality independently and then combined into co-constitutive race-gender-sexuality demographic profiles. While previous work has shown that demographics alone can influence support for candidates, the effects of these co-constitutive forms of categorization cannot be studied in isolation from one another. Likewise, the negative effect associated with a candidate's categorization cannot be separated

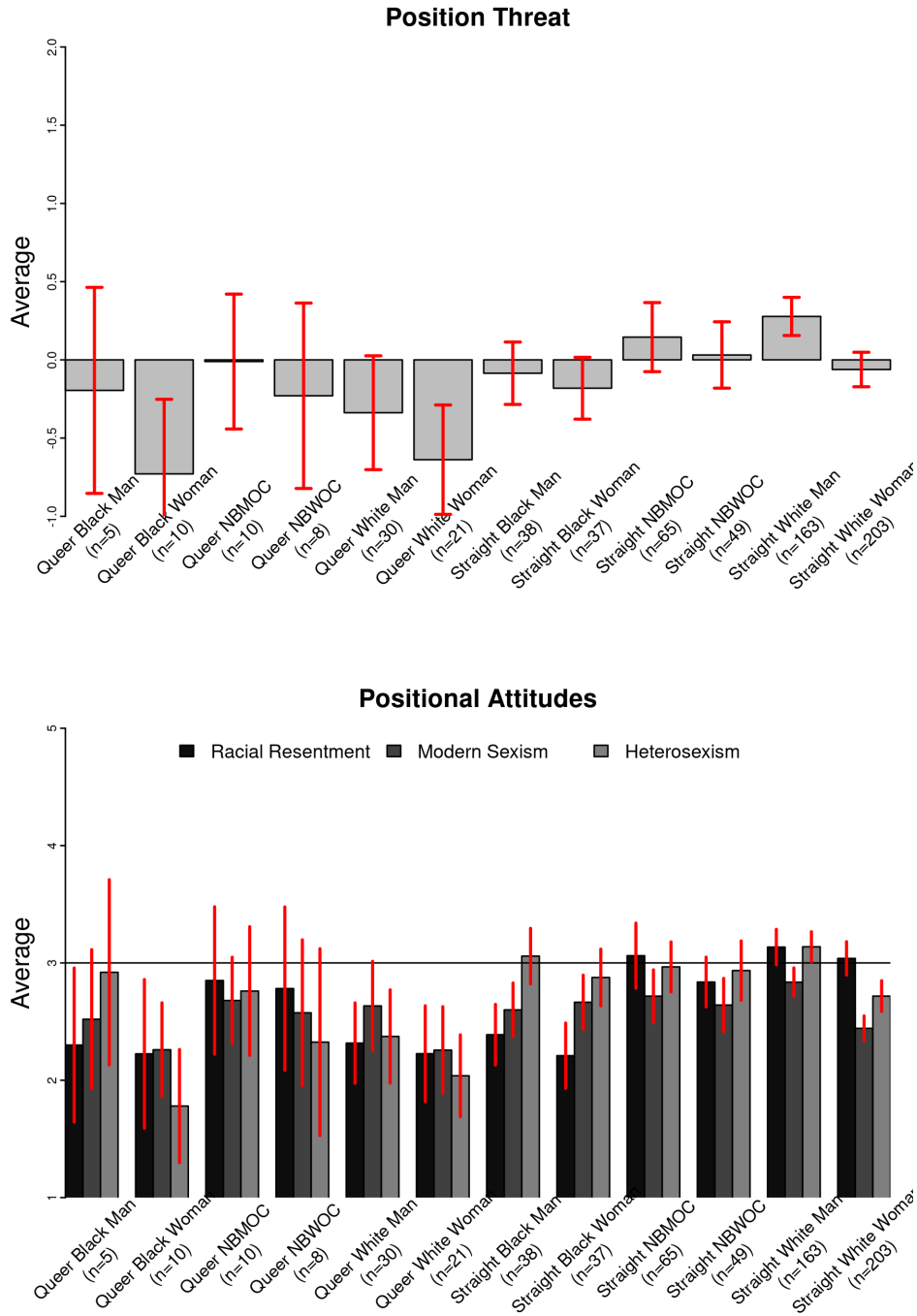


Figure 2: Average standardized position threat score and composite prejudice measure by respondent race-gender-sexuality

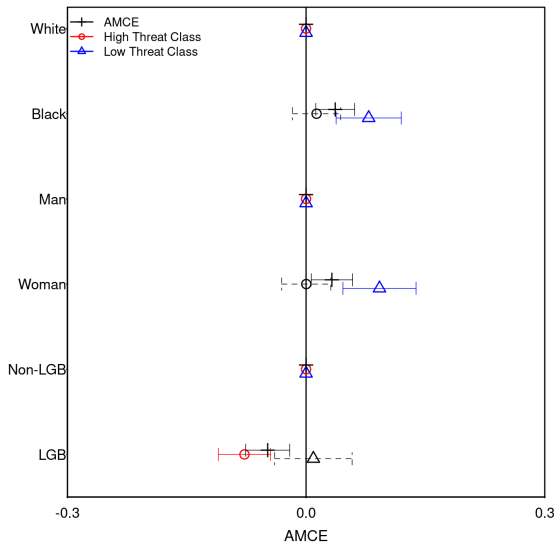
Respondents that did not indicate that white or Black is one of their primary racial identities are coded as non-Black men/women of Color, or NB(M/W)OC.

from the prejudice that causes the effect—prompting us to consider both the overall effect of candidate demographics and the effects by respondent position threat. We present the Average Marginal Causal Effect and Average Causal Interactive Effect of candidate race, gender, and sexuality in Figure 3. The top two plots show the effects of being a Black, woman, or LGB candidate independent of one another relative to a white, man, or non-LGB candidate, respectively. The bottom two provide estimates of the effects of the race-gender-sexuality combinations relative to a candidate that is a straight white man. The plots on the left show the overall AMCE (the crossed line) and then the AMCE conditional on a respondent being in the high treat class (circle bars) and low threat class (triangle bars), with significant differences highlighted in red and blue. The right plots show the coefficients of the demographics and their interaction with the continuous position threat score.

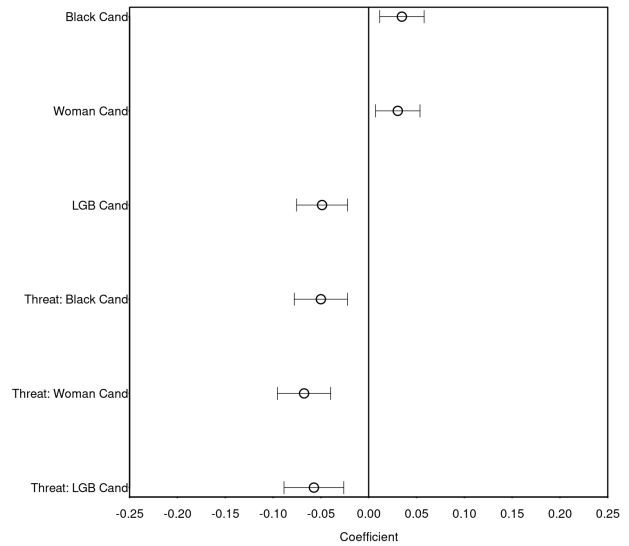
We initially find little evidence in this context supporting overall penalties for candidates based on identity alone; however, the relationship between candidates’ intersecting identities and social position threat depicts a more complicated narrative and offers support for the first two hypotheses based on previous work. Minoritized candidates do receive some benefits in terms of extra support, but the penalties they face from those with a high position threat are generally not enough to counteract the increase in support they receive from those that feel their social position is less threatened. The AMCEs in Figure 3(a) for Black candidates and women are significant and positive, indicating that they on average tend to be selected at higher rates than white or male candidates, while LGB candidates are chosen less often than straight ones. These effects are the result of an increase in support for Black and women candidates among those low in position threat, which is not matched by an equally strong counteracting negative effect among those higher in position threat. The opposite is true for LGB candidates, who receive a penalty without a corresponding increase in support. Shown in Figure 3 (b), the relationship between minoritized status and position threat is negative, indicating that respondents high in prejudice or feeling their social position is threatened support minoritized candidates less; however, the effect is not strong enough to decrease the

Candidate Race, Gender, and Sexuality Alone

(a) Interaction with Threat Class

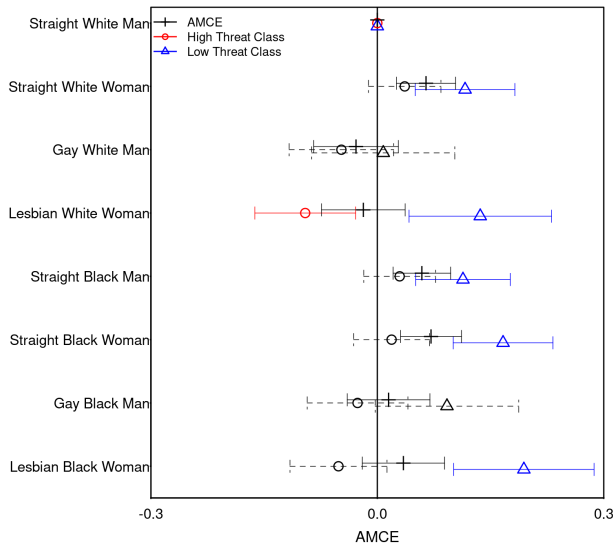


(b) Interaction with Threat Score



Co-Constitutive Candidate Race, Gender, and Sexuality

(c) Interaction with Threat Class



(d) Interaction with Threat Score

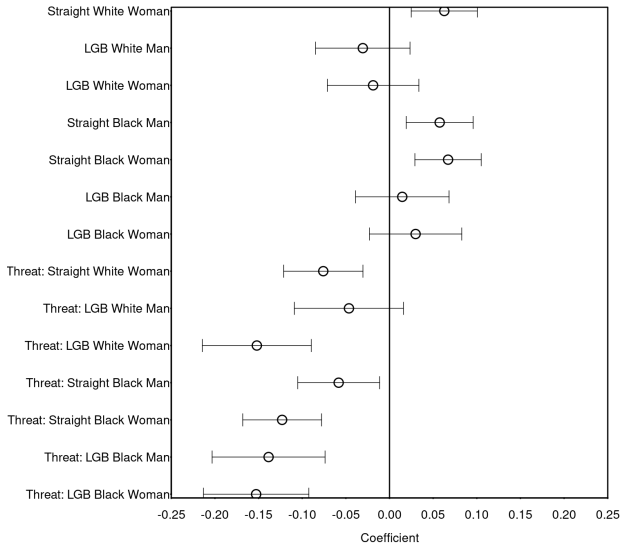


Figure 3: Candidate Demographics and Respondent Position Threat.

Figure depicts effects of candidate demographics on the probability of profile selection. Interaction with respondent social position threat class in (a) and (c) and with continuous threat score in (b) and (d) (from OLS regression). Figures (a) and (b) treat candidate race, gender, and sexuality separately while figures (c) and (d) treat each demographic profile as categorically different. Estimates do not include controls. Only includes 588 respondents that passed the manipulation check (N=7,056; 2,436 in low threat class; 4,620 in high threat class). Additional details are in the Appendix.

average support for minoritized candidates among those in the high threat class. Where LGB candidates generally receive less support by everyone, a high position threat score serves to increase the penalty they receive.

When looking at AMCEs for the intersections in Figure 3c, straight white women and straight Black men and women are more likely to be chosen relative to straight white men. All profiles besides gay white and Black men are more likely to be selected than straight white men by low-threat respondents. Only lesbian white women are significantly less likely to be selected than candidates that are marginalized on fewer dimensions. The overall interaction between position threat and candidates' intersecting demographics in Figure 3d provides additional insight. Gender-wise, women receive a benefit relative to men; however, this benefit is not consistent across race and sexuality. White women are initially selected more than queer women, and they face a smaller penalty among those high in position threat relative to intersectionally-marginalized women candidates. The penalty that straight white women face is significantly smaller than Black women and queer white women. The same is true for race: straight Black men receive an initial benefit accompanied by a statistically significant smaller penalty relative to queer white women, queer Black men and women, and straight Black women candidates. While estimates based on threat class are not always significantly different from each other, the overall interactions between continuous position threat and a demographic profile (except for gay white men) is statistically significantly larger relative to the effect on straight white men.⁶ We also observe positive and significant effects among those scoring low in social position threat for all groups except gay white men and gay lesbian women. The “topline” AMCEs and estimates that do not account for intersecting identities in the top of Figure 3 mask heterogeneous effects among respondents with varying levels of social position threat, something with potentially consequential strategic implications for candidates of different backgrounds running in different parts of the country.

⁶The results are the same when we measure by racial resentment, modern sexism, and heterosexism separately, something that holds even when we test for one while controlling for the others. See “Analysis with Other Attitudes” in the appendix.

Respondent	Candidate	AMCE	N	Low Threat Class	N	High Threat Class	N
Person of Color	Black	0.0594 (0.0205)**	2412	0.0714 (0.0354)*	924	0.0497 (0.0249)*	1488
White	Black	0.0246 (0.0157)	4644	0.0821 (0.0259)**	1512	-0.0037 (0.0196)	3132
Man	Woman	0.0127 (0.0184)	3444	0.0884 (0.0352)*	984	-0.02 (0.0212)	2460
Woman	Woman	0.0495 (0.019)**	3612	0.0923 (0.0313)**	1452	0.0185 (0.0234)	2160
Non-LGBT	LGBT	-0.0585 (0.0149)***	6120	-0.0024 (0.0276)	1908	-0.0837 (0.0174)***	4212
LGBT	LGBT	0.0201 (0.0417)	936	0.0445 (0.0566)	528	-0.0055 (0.0624)	408

p < .05 *; p < .01 **; p < .001 ***

Table 2: Average Marginal Causal Effects of candidate race, gender, and sexuality by respondents’ race, gender, sexuality, and position through latent class

The first column provides the unconditional AMCEs. The second and third are the AMCEs conditional on position threat latent class. Standard errors clustered by respondent are in parentheses. Sample sizes for the number of respondents with the given threat class (N) are also provided.

We also consider the effects of candidate profiles by respondent demographics in Table 2.⁷ Black respondents favor Black candidates regardless of position threat, as do respondents of color generally. White respondents low in position threat also show a preference for Black candidates. Men do not disfavor women, but women lower in position threat prefer them. LGB candidates generally receive a penalty regardless of positions threat among all groups except LGBTQ respondents. Thus, we again find only mixed evidence of our first set of hypotheses. Only LGBT candidates are penalized, and we actually see some preference for Black candidates among non-Black respondents. In this context, belonging to a marginalized group does not necessarily correspond to an electoral penalty, even among out-group respondents scoring high in social position threat. However, there do appear to be some gains in support among voters low in position threat.

The results here depict a complex narrative for the effects of identity alone even when considering the effects of prejudice. Recent work has shown, for example, that women on balance are actually slightly preferred to men candidates (Schwarz and Coppock, forthcoming), even as few would dispute women still face sexism in various ways. Our findings are in line with the research on group consciousness and how voters use available heuristics to

⁷Full estimates for main text tables and estimates using the matching analysis to account for confounding on position threat class assignment and estimates using other measures of position threat are in the Appendix. AMCEs for candidate age, education, number of children, and experiences are excluded in tables depicted here.

make judgements about candidates. Identity alone is not a perfect signal of an individual’s or candidate’s commitment to upholding or contesting social hierarchy. Language of group consciousness can be used to reinforce hierarchies (Schreiber, 2002), commitments to equality may be less strong for those less directly affected by the inequality (Harnois, 2017), and the intersections of identities create complicated relationships with power structures (Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Strolovitch et al., 2017). In the context of this experiment, a candidate’s ascribed identity alone is a weak signal of their commitments and can be influenced by other types of associations with marginalized communities. These findings do not serve to dismiss the racism, sexism, and heterosexism that marginalized candidates face when running for office, as voter choice and evaluations are but one means of capturing attitudes. Rather, they corroborate findings that candidates can overcome these obstacles in certain scenarios while suggesting that other factors—such as perceived or assumed commitments to marginalized communities and contesting inequality—can be more influential in shaping voter perceptions of candidates than traditional studies often suggest.

5.2 Associational Affect and Endorsement Effects

To evaluate this possibility, we turn to the coefficient estimates for a race, gender, or sexuality advocacy group endorsement relative to a neutral group in Tables 3 and 4.⁸ The former provides the effects of any endorsement by an advocacy group relative to a neutral one, and the latter looks at the effect by type of group. We find some initial support for our Associational Affect Hypothesis even before looking at the ACIEs. The results for the effect of an endorsement overall are clear in Table 3: candidates without a group endorsement are significantly less likely to be selected by respondents scoring low in social position threat, and they are significantly more likely to be selected by candidates scoring high in social position threat. Those that recognize different forms of discrimination and do not feel that their own social position is threatened favor candidates that are endorsed by groups advocating for

⁸See the appendix for estimates using the matching analysis to account for confounding on position threat class assignment and estimates using other measures of position threat.

marginalized communities. The opposite is true for respondents that register high in our measure of social position threat, with marginalized community endorsements decreasing the likelihood that the candidate is chosen.

When broken out by type of endorsement in Table 4, we find further evidence supporting our associational affect hypothesis. Driven by those with low position threat, candidates with support by organizations advocating for gender equality on average receive more support, and those with a gender or race endorsement receive a larger benefit among those in the low threat class. Further, the gain of a gender or race endorsement relative to a neutral endorsement is larger than the effect of a candidate being a woman relative to a man and being Black relative to white, respectively. Those endorsed by an LGBTQ rights group are less likely to be selected than candidates with a neutral endorsement, which is driven by respondents scoring low and high in social position threat. The effect of an LGBT endorsement is also greater than the effect of a candidate themselves being LBG. Even though the endorsements do not register significant effects in every case, they all are registering effects in some way that match our hypothesized pattern. The endorsements alone thus are successful in priming voters to consider who the candidates would be likely to advocate on behalf of if elected to office, serving as a potential signal of candidates' later policy support that voters may not otherwise expect based on demographics alone.

5.3 Endorsements and Candidate Demographics

Finally, we compare the overall effects of different endorsement types on a particular candidate profile in order to determine whether different demographic profiles are impacted in different ways by the same associations. We start by looking at candidate identities individually in Table 5,⁹ which provides the effects of group endorsements broken out by candidates' gender (a), race (b), and sexuality (c) relative to a candidate with the same ascribed identity

⁹AMCEs for candidate age, education, number of children, and experiences are excluded. See the appendix for estimates using the matching analysis to account for confounding on position threat class assignment and estimates using other measures of position threat.

Table 3: Effects of Neutral Endorsement and Latent Position Threat Class

AMCE	-0.0054 (0.0165)
Low Threat Class	-0.151 (0.0278)***
High Treat Class	0.0711 (0.0191)***

Estimates relative to a candidate endorsed by any non-neutral organization. Total N is 7,056; 2,436 in low threat class; 4,620 in high threat class.

Table 4: Endorsement Effects by Type and Latent Position Threat Class

	AMCE	N	Low Threat Class	N	High Threat Class	N
Gender	0.049 (0.0185)**	1733	0.181 (0.0315)***	609	-0.0205 (0.0218)	609
Race	0.0205 (0.0188)	1799	0.1222 (0.0329)***	628	-0.0329 (0.0222)	628
Sexuality	-0.0536 (0.0213)*	1735	0.1513 (0.0358)***	583	-0.1591 (0.0247)***	583

p < .05 *; p < .01 **; p < .001 ***

Estimates of the change in the probability of selecting a candidate with an endorsement from a racial, gender, or sexual minority rights organization relative to a candidate with a neutral endorsement. First column provides the AMCEs and sample size for each endorsement treatment. Second and third columns provide conditional AMCEs and sample sizes. There are 1,789 profiles with a neutral endorsement, 616 and 1,173 of which were evaluated by low/high threat class respondents, respectively. Only includes 588 respondents that passed the manipulation check. Additional estimates and robustness checks in the Appendix.

with a neutral endorsement. Although the candidate endorsements register effects for many of the profiles, we would like to draw attention to two key differences. First, estimates using a candidate with the relatively privileged identity (man, white, non-LGBT) and a gender, race, and LGBT endorsement, respectively, as the baseline relative to women, Black, and LGB candidates reveals that the candidate from the relatively privileged group supported by a marginalized community are penalized less than members of the marginalized group that are supported by it.¹⁰ Men endorsed by a gender equality advocacy organization and white candidates endorsed by a racial equality organization are affected by respondent position threat significantly less than a woman with a gender endorsement and Black candidates with a race endorsement, respectively. Further, men with a race endorsement are favored on average and by those low in position threat relative to men without any endorsements, while women with a race endorsement are penalized relative to women with a neutral endorsement. In other words, men are penalized less for a gender endorsement relative to women with a gender endorsement and receive a greater benefit from a race endorsement than women candidates. A similar phenomenon plays out for white candidates, who receive a greater benefit from a race endorsement relative to white candidates without an endorsement than Black candidates with a race endorsement relative to Black candidates without an endorsement. Again, the comparatively privileged groups benefit from an endorsement while the comparatively marginalized groups do not, further supporting our associational affect hypotheses and suggesting that voters are interpreting these endorsements as signals of support for historically marginalized groups that otherwise might not be expected absent additional information.

Second, candidates with an LGBT association are rarely rewarded for the endorsement. Every single subgroup here is penalized among those scoring higher in social position threat, and the penalty typically outweighs any benefit from those low in social position threat. An LGBT endorsement for a LBG candidate is the only case in which support from a candidate's

¹⁰See "Endorsement Effects and Position Threat" in the Appendix.

own community significantly decreases support relative to a candidate without the support of their community. An LGBT endorsement is also the only case in which non-group members are not penalized less for an endorsement compared to members of the minoritized community with an endorsement. Further, the penalty for a straight candidate with an LGBT endorsement is greater than the penalty for LBG candidates with an LGBT endorsement. We suspect that this may be a consequence of the comparatively “invisible” nature of sexuality, something not necessarily exclusive to this experiment (Cech and Rothwell, 2020). While respondents could often infer the race and gender of a candidate based on their name and photo in the experiment, the same was not necessarily true for sexuality—especially absent other information about a candidate’s behavior. Consequently, while we suggested a candidate’s sexuality by listing whether they had a spouse, we suspect that many respondents may have interpreted the LGBT endorsement as the candidate being a closeted member of the LGBT community. Regardless, the findings are nonetheless informative about the nature of LGBT politics and effects of LGBT group endorsements, an often-understudied area of scholarship in political science discourse.

We finally move to our intersectional analyses to test the specific effects of group endorsements on unique co-constitutive groups. Although in the preceding paragraphs we break analyses out by race, gender, and sexuality separately, we note that these effects can be misleading without considering the manner in which intersecting identities uniquely influence voter evaluations when interacted with the group endorsements. We depict these results in Figure 4,¹¹ which plots the ACIE by candidate profile and group endorsement type. Except for demographic profiles without an endorsement, nearly all race-gender-sexuality profiles with some endorsement receive a statistically significant penalty or benefit from those in the high and low position threat latent classes, respectively. When considering the interaction with continuous position threat score, the effects are statistically significantly more negative relative to a straight white man with no association for all profiles except for straight Black

¹¹See the appendix for the estimate table, estimates using latent position threat class, robustness checks, and within candidate and within endorsement effects

(a) Candidate Gender

	Man	Woman
Gender Endorsement: AMCE	0.0585 (0.0255)*	0.0462 (0.0249)
Low Threat Class	0.1532 (0.043)***	0.2192 (0.0416)***
High Threat Class	0.0082 (0.0306)	-0.0473 (0.0299)
Race Endorsement: AMCE	0.0695 (0.0264)**	-0.0233 (0.0236)
Low Threat Class	0.1991 (0.0426)***	0.0568 (0.0436)
High Threat Class	8e-04 (0.0321)	-0.065 (0.0273)*
LGBT Endorsement: AMCE	-0.0167 (0.0267)	-0.088 (0.0263)***
Low Threat Class	0.1821 (0.0425)***	0.1306 (0.0446)**
High Threat Class	-0.1219 (0.0325)***	-0.1969 (0.0307)***

(b) Candidate Race

	White	Black
Gender Endorsement: AMCE	0.0472 (0.0235)*	0.0545 (0.0257)*
Low Threat Class	0.1729 (0.0419)***	0.1895 (0.0415)***
High Threat Class	-0.0198 (0.0273)	-0.0175 (0.032)
Race Endorsement: AMCE	0.0441 (0.024)	-0.0012 (0.0252)
Low Threat Class	0.1489 (0.041)***	0.1025 (0.0443)*
High Threat Class	-0.0117 (0.0289)	-0.0545 (0.0301)
LGBT Endorsement: AMCE	-0.0672 (0.027)*	-0.041 (0.0278)
Low Threat Class	0.1222 (0.0456)**	0.1733 (0.047)***
High Threat Class	-0.1649 (0.0323)***	-0.1536 (0.0334)***

(c) Candidate Sexuality

	Non-LGBT	LGBT
Gender Endorsement: AMCE	0.049 (0.0204)*	0.0452 (0.0346)
Low Threat Class	0.187 (0.0364)***	0.1715 (0.058)**
High Threat Class	-0.024 (0.0235)	-0.021 (0.043)
Race Endorsement: AMCE	0.0117 (0.0213)	0.0458 (0.0339)
Low Threat Class	0.1126 (0.0365)**	0.1592 (0.0605)**
High Threat Class	-0.0412 (0.0257)	-0.0112 (0.0405)
LGBT Endorsement: AMCE	-0.0703 (0.0245)**	-0.0105 (0.0331)
Low Threat Class	0.1273 (0.0414)**	0.2177 (0.0557)***
High Threat Class	-0.173 (0.029)***	-0.1266 (0.0394)**

p < .05 *; p < .01 **; p < .001***

Table 5: Endorsement Effects by Candidate Demographics and Respondent Latent Position Threat Class. Estimates by respondent race, gender, and sexuality of the change in the probability of selecting a candidate with the given endorsement relative to a candidate with a neutral endorsement. Includes the unconditional ACME and then the effect among respondents in the low and high latent position threat class for each endorsing group type. Only includes 588 respondents that passed manipulation check. Total N is 7,056; 2,436 in low threat class; 4,620 in high threat class. See Appendix for additional estimates and robustness checks.

men and gay white men with no association.

Straight white men are generally not penalized if they have the various group endorsements even though they do benefit from the race and gender endorsement among those scoring low in status group threat. We begin to see penalties among straight candidate profiles relative to white men with a neutral endorsement once we consider the other profiles that are endorsed by marginalized groups. Straight white women, straight Black men, and Straight Black women are not necessarily penalized among respondents high in social position threat with a neutral endorsement, but each of these profiles is penalized when they have the LGBT group endorsement. Moreover, we observe somewhat of a pattern as one moves from straight white men (the comparatively most privileged group) with a neutral endorsement to Black lesbian women with a marginalized group endorsement (the relatively least privileged group) at the bottom. The further down the figure, the greater the “splitting” effect of endorsements among those scoring high and low in status group.

In order to compare the effects of position threat on candidates with the same endorsement, we provide the predicted probability of selecting a profile grouped by the type of endorsement in Figure 5 and the predicted feeling thermometer in Figure 6.¹² Position threat has a significant and larger effect on most profiles that received a gender or race endorsement. Further, the effects are typically largest for the intersectionally marginalized candidates— and lesbian white and Black women candidates in particular. Endorsements from LGBTQ rights groups buck this trend and are the only endorsement for which straight white men are penalized. Candidates are relatively uniformly penalized and, while larger than the effect on straight white men, the interaction does not reach traditional levels of significance.

While some of these relationships may seem counter intuitive, this is likely a consequence of associational affect activated by endorsement information overriding signals from

¹²Predicted probabilities from OLS regression. See the appendix for regression estimates, predicted probabilities using other measures of position threat (such as latent class), estimates with controls, and other robustness checks

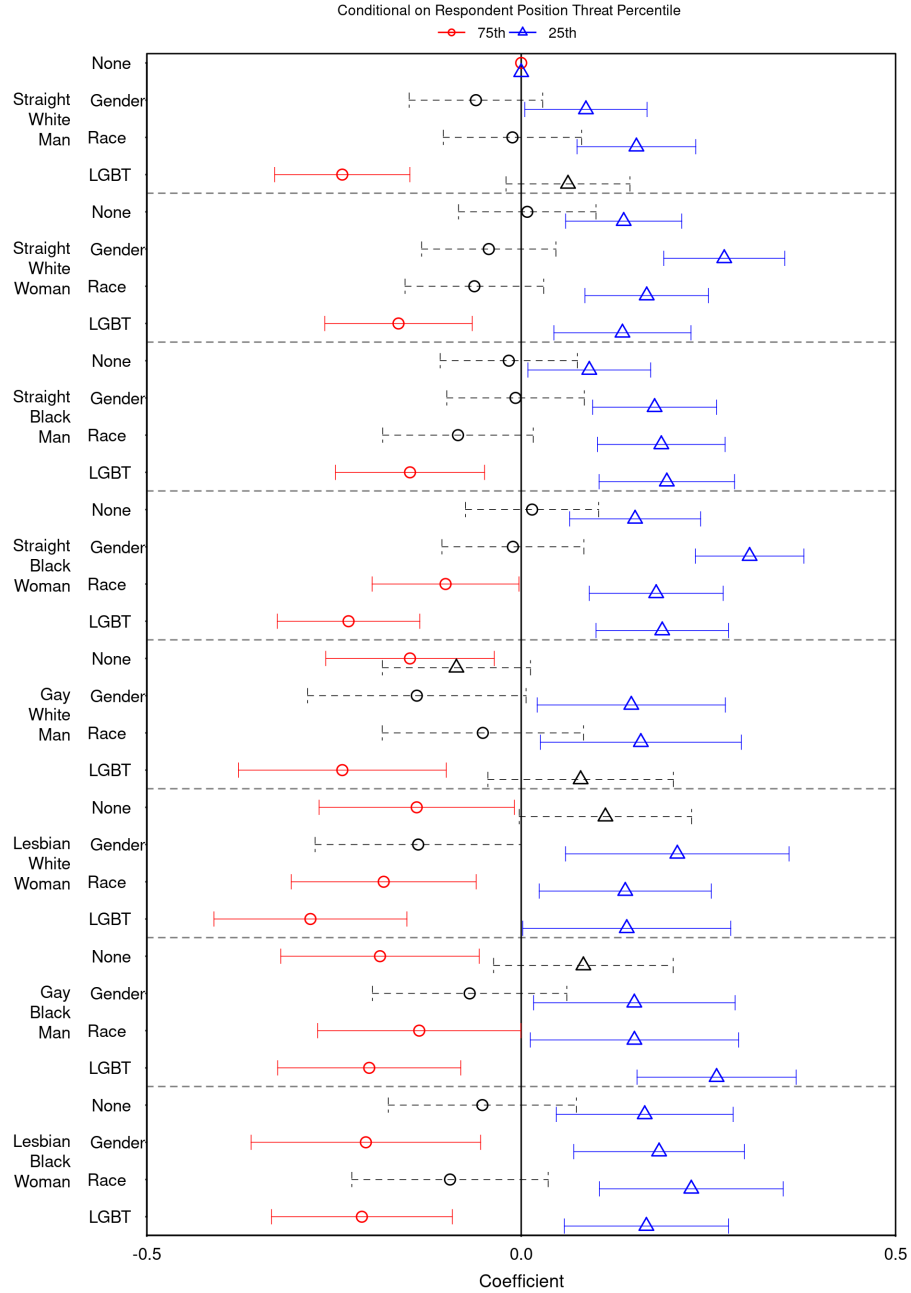


Figure 4: Candidate Demographics and Endorsement Effects. Figure depicts the AMCE of a candidate demographic profile with each group endorsement on the probability of candidate selection relative to a straight white man. Interaction effects are depicted at the 25th and 75th percentile of the position threat score. Estimates that are not significantly different from zero are included as black dashed bars. Total N is 7,056. See Appendix for number of profiles evaluated per demographic-association pair and number evaluated by respondents low or high in position threat.

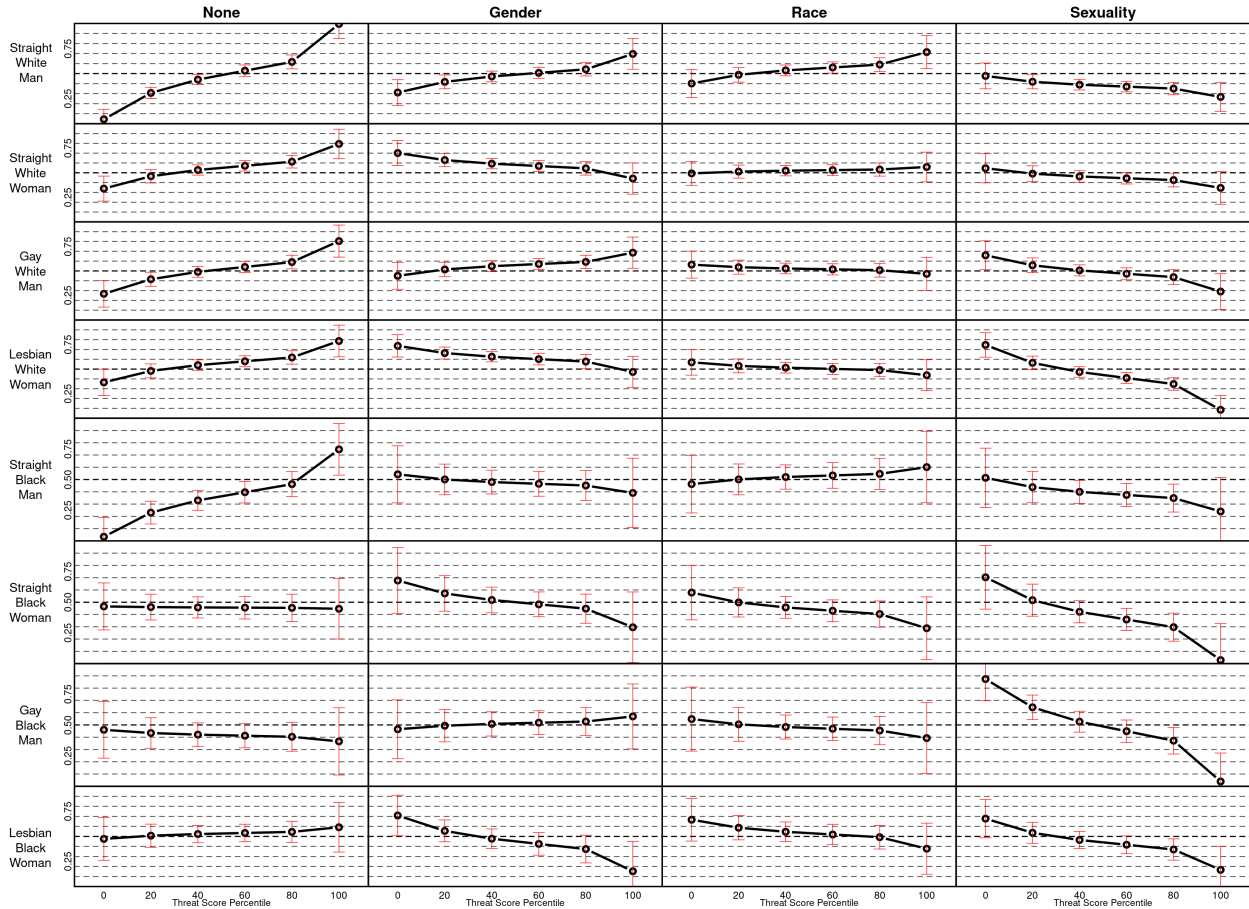


Figure 5: Predicted Probability of Candidate Selection by Demographics, Endorsements, and Respondent Position Threat. Figure depicts the predicted probability that a candidate with the given race-gender-sexuality and endorsement type will be selected by respondent social position threat score percentile. Total N is 7,056. See Appendix for number of profiles evaluated per demographic-association pair and number evaluated by respondents low or high in position threat.

ascribed identity alone. While support for white candidates and straight Black men with a neutral endorsement increases with position threat, this increase is a result of a preference for candidates with an endorsement signaling a commitment to contesting social hierarchies among those low in position threat and a preference for candidates without such a commitment among those high in position threat. These increases may be unexpected since a more marginalized candidate is favored by those with higher position threat, but these are candidates without an additional signaled commitment to contesting hierarchy—something that may implicitly signal an investment in maintaining the status quo. It is also important to note that while positive, the effects of position threat on support for white and straight Black candidates with a neutral endorsement are still statistically significantly less than the effect on a straight white man with a neutral endorsement. The predicted feeling thermometers also provide results that might be more expected. While minoritized candidates with a neutral endorsement are more likely to be selected, they are still seen as less favorable than straight white candidates among those high in position threat. A respondent high in position threat may feel less warmly towards a minoritized candidate, but they will still select them as long as they appear less threatening to the status quo than their opponent.

5.4 Robustness Checks

Perceptions of position threat are closely tied to one’s own social position and their political ideology. While they are closely related, we are able to determine the effects of position threat within social categories, parties, and ideological leanings by conducting subgroup analyses. When comparing men’s responses to women’s, for example, our results are similar. However, women are not as likely to penalize candidates for endorsements from a women’s organization for those scoring high in our social position threat, suggesting that men with an investment in traditional gender roles drive this result. The effects across some of the other associations are also smaller than they are for men. Similarly, when looking at race, even non-white respondents registering high in social position threat are unlikely to penalize candidates

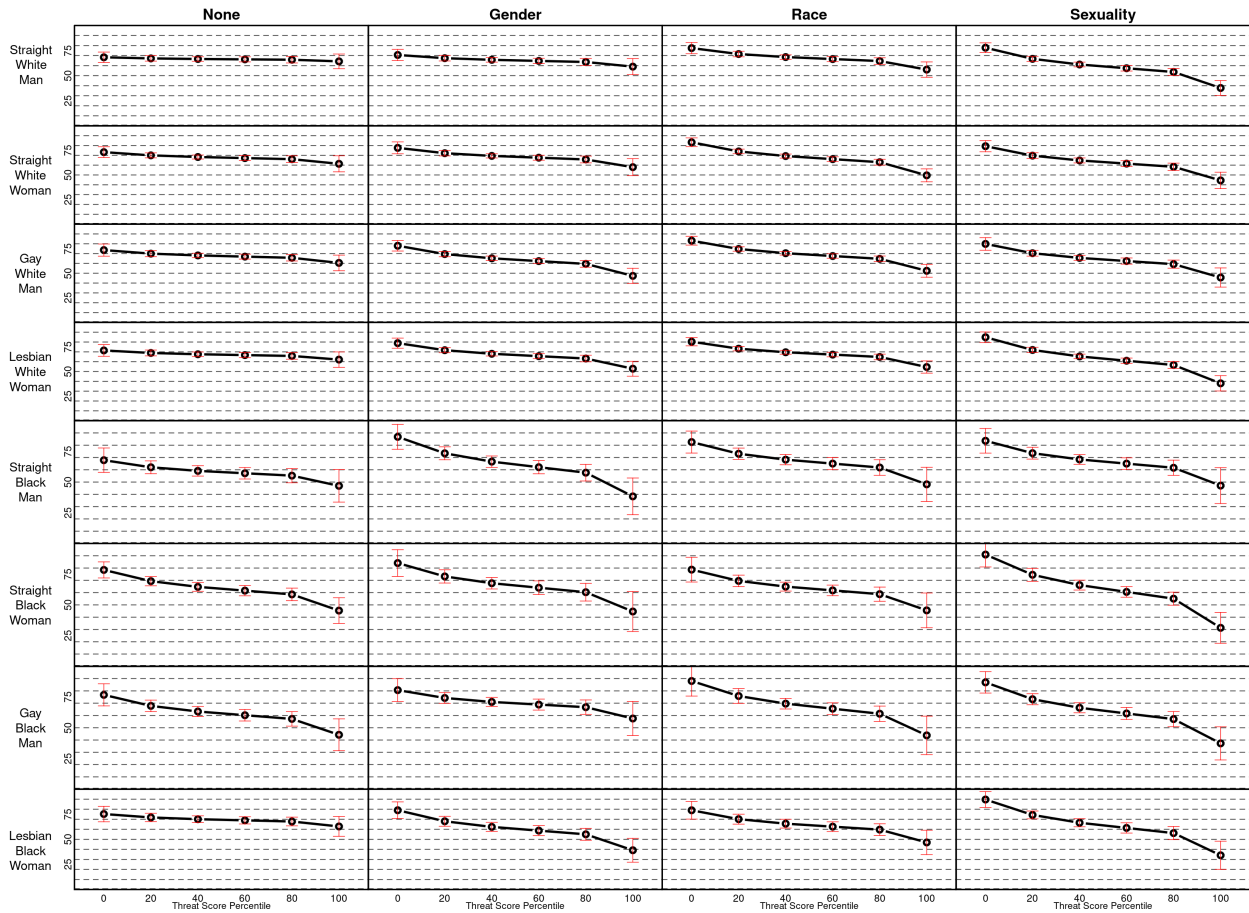


Figure 6: Figure depicts the predicted feeling thermometer score for a candidate with the given race-gender-sexuality and endorsement type by respondent social position threat score percentile. Estimates are otherwise the same as Figure 5. Total N is 7,056. See Appendix for number of profiles evaluated per demographic-association pair and number evaluated by respondents low or high in position threat.

with a race association compared to other candidates, and the results are otherwise less frequently significant and smaller (depicted in the Appendix). This suggests that white respondents with an investment in the racial hierarchy are largely driving the penalties to candidates with the race associations. It also suggests that non-white candidates, who are lower in the social hierarchy than white candidates, are more sympathetic to candidates associated with other marginalized groups. These findings also suggest that members of groups marginalized along one dimension are often (though not always) more sympathetic to groups marginalized on other dimensions.

We also tested the robustness of the results to alternative constructions of the position threat variable.¹³ First, we include analyses with the results broken out by racial resentment, sexism, and heterosexism separately to account for the possibility that one of the measures may be driving the results more than others. Second, we use the respondents' loading on the first principal component from the PCA on the 14 questions. This component can account for nearly 40% of the variation in answers to the three batteries. When using this loading in place of the position threat score, the results are substantively the same and, in some cases, more precise. Third, we performed another Latent Class Analysis to categorize respondents into low, medium, or high levels of position threat. Fourth, we divided respondents into low and high threat groups by whether their non-standardized position threat was at or above the midpoint of the scale. Whether using these different constructions of position threat, the findings remain largely unchanged. They are also substantively similar when broken out by attitude, something in turn suggesting that these attitudes are intricately linked in complex ways.

We also take into consideration that our sample is slightly more Democratic than the country as a whole and whether this may be driving our results. Still, we first observe that (when considering partisan leaners) our sample is comparable to the 2016 ANES, only slightly overrepresenting Democrats and underrepresenting Republicans by about 6 points

¹³Results provided in “Additional Estimates for Main Text Tables and Analysis with Other Attitudes” in the Appendix.

each. We do not expect heterogeneous effects by partisanship, and when breaking out the results by partisanship, our results still hold.¹⁴ As expected, the estimates for Democrats and Republicans are comparable and in the same direction, but the sub-sample of Republican respondents has less power and is therefore less able to consistently detect significant effects. Additionally, a slightly more Democratic leaning sample provides a more conservative test of our theory. Even as parties have increasingly sorted on social attitudes, our study shows that among Democrats, we still observe 1) a large subset of voters scoring high in social position threat (and, by extension, racial resentment, sexism, and heterosexism); and 2) large effects among a group of voters many would expect to be *more* favorable to outgroups than conservatives. Even among Democrats, high position threat can lead to penalties for candidates with an endorsement of an organization working on behalf of a marginalized community; and our analysis strongly supports our discussion that those low in position threat should be more likely to favor candidates with an endorsement. The fewer respondents high in position threat reduces the power to detect penalties and provides a harder test, but our analysis is still able to consistently detect such penalties while enabling us to consistently identify significant rewards for candidates. When taking these various factors into consideration, our results still provide strong evidence of our theory of associational affect.

As an additional check to account for the predisposition of some ideological, demographic, and partisan groups to have higher or low position threat, we also conducted our main analyses with two matching analyses. In the first, respondents were matched on their predicted position threat class. In the second, respondents whose threat score is at or above the midpoint of three (indicating higher levels of prejudice and threat) were matched with those below. For both, respondents were matched on party ID (Democrat, Independent, or Republican), ideology (liberal, moderate, or conservative), race (only white, non-Black POC, or Black), gender, sexuality, income, and education. We used the following matching algorithms: exact, genetic, random forest, and logistic propensity score. We achieved balance for

¹⁴See “Analysis with Other Attitudes and Partisanship and Ideology” in the Appendix for partisanship interaction effects and subgroup analyses.

both matching outcomes on all variables with exact matching and achieved balance on all but party identification and ideology with all other matching methods. Results and additional information using matched data are provided in the Appendix in “Additional Estimates for Main Text Tables and Matching and Additional Estimates,” and they are substantively the same. We still detect significant effects on the interaction between position threat and candidate demographics and endorsements, suggesting that the results are not based on respondent party or liberal-conservative ideology.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Previous work has shown clear evidence that former President Obama was a powerful motivator in influencing racially voters’ attitudes of policies and things tangentially related to him (Tesler, 2016), which other work has extended to consider gender (Bell and Borelli, forthcoming). In this study, however, we demonstrate that this phenomenon is not necessarily limited to Obama, nor is it limited to race: endorsements by various race, gender, and LGBT organizations are also likely to prime racist, sexist, and heterosexist sentiments, respectively, resulting in situations in which affect towards a given marginalized group shapes attitudes towards those that are connected with the group. This is the case even for those that are not themselves a member of the group. We describe this more general process as Associational Affect, in which connections with communities that invoke considerations of one’s social position cause views of the community to shape views of the person or thing tied to it. Members of dominant groups in society are viewed skeptically by those who resent more marginalized groups and viewed positively by those who either belong to or support such marginalized groups. Moreover, more marginalized members are often penalized and rewarded more heavily by those with high and low levels of social position threat, suggesting that ascribed identities interact with perceived group loyalties in complex ways.

Our findings have important implications for the study of identity and voting behav-

ior. Marginalized candidates in our study are generally not penalized absent additional information, although this does not mean that they are not subject to various forms of discrimination or prejudice. Rather, our findings suggest that potential coalitional signals often far outweigh the effects of identity alone, a finding in line with work suggesting that a) members of marginalized groups can win over support of members of dominant groups in choosing not to openly challenge existing power hierarchies (Blee, 1996); and b) dominant group members can signal commitments to challenging the status quo and win support of minoritized individuals (Wamble, 2018). However, this is not to say that endorsements take away the privileges associated with being a member of a dominant group outside of an electoral context. Endorsements can serve as a strong coalitional signal of whether a candidate will challenge the status quo, but “(de)marginalization by proxy” by no means replicates the lived experiences of marginalized communities.

We note briefly here some of the challenges to using an intersectional framework for an experimental design, especially given that identities and voters’ attitudes toward them are not simply additive. While our results thus follow a general pattern, this pattern may not always be perfectly clear-cut given the complex ways in which identities interact. Given the lower probability that a candidate was LGB, there were fewer profiles evaluated, making it more difficult to accurately assess the effects of endorsements here. In terms of future extensions, we do not consider a number of potentially relevant identities that also may be primed through group endorsements. For example, ability, class, and religion can also be salient identities and other dimension on which candidates can be marginalized or privileged, though we do not include them in the study due to power limitations. Things other than group endorsements might also prime social position threat, which we did not include here. Finally, we only consider hypothetical progressive groups in our study, although we expect that conservative groups could have similar but opposite effects (e.g., a heterosexist group endorsement increasing support for candidates high in social position threat and decreasing it among those low) on voter behavior.

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