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The Impact of Race and Gender on Judicial Ambition

by

Yoshana J. Hill

Under the Direction of Amy Steigerwalt, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2021

## ABSTRACT

As the number of Black women have increased in the legal field over the past few decades, we are not seeing a corresponding increase in the number of Black women judges at either the state or federal levels. In this dissertation, I examine the impact of race and gender on judicial ambition for state judicial elections in Georgia. I perform several probit analyses on a random sample of 317 potential female judicial candidates. I find evidence that potential Black female judicial candidates are indeed different than potential non-Black female judicial candidates. In particular, I find that childhood socialization messages about independence and Black sorority membership impact potential Black female judicial candidates' ambition differently than potential non-Black female judicial candidates. Potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood socialization messages about financial independence and pursuing a career outside of the home have higher ambition than other potential candidates. I also find that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about marriage and having children are not more or less likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages. Additionally, potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities have higher ambition than other potential judicial candidates. This research advances our understanding of how race and gender interact in potential candidates' expression of judicial ambition.

**INDEX WORDS:** Intersectionality, Ambition, Judicial elections, Women political candidates, Sex role, Black women

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2021

The Impact of Race and Gender on Judicial Ambition

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Georgia State University

May 2021

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband, Cornelius F. Hill, and my sweet baby boy, Lennox W. Hill. Cornelius, you have always supported my grand dreams, aspirations, and goals ever since we met in Albany, Georgia seventeen years ago. You always told me I could achieve my goals and you are my biggest motivator. From college to law school to my legal career to my decision to go back to school for my PhD, you are my biggest supporter. Thank you, Cornelius, for the endless prayers and encouragement.

To my sweet son Lennox, you are the most tenacious and strong-willed little guy I know. Born in the midst of a global pandemic, you are the motivation behind me completing this important work. May this dissertation and subsequent work greatly improve the world you will experience. I pray that you live in a world full of grace, equality, and freedom.

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“The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman.” –

*Malcolm X*

May this dissertation shed light on the experiences of Black women.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The year is 2016, and magic is happening during the state court elections in Jefferson County, Alabama. Black girl magic to be specific. Nine Black women judicial candidates make history in the local elections in Jefferson County, which contains the metropolitan city of Birmingham. The nine Black women win seats in both the district (trial) and circuit (appellate) court elections (Gebreyes 2016; Evans 2016). One of the elected judges, Elisabeth French, attributes the success of her judicial campaign to her diligence and work experience. Judge French believes that her qualifications earned the voters' trust: "I think the people don't necessarily just support you just because of your race and gender. I think voters expect more than that. They look at our qualifications and make a decision about who they can trust with the leadership position" (Gebreyes 2016).

2016 is not the last time Black women make history during state judicial elections. In 2018, 19 Black women make history in Harris County, Texas, by winning their partisan judicial elections (Crumpton 2019; Schneider 2019). Harris County's county seat is Houston, the largest city in Texas. All of the Black women who win identify as Democrats. Lillie Schechter, the chair of the Harris County Democratic Party, notes the community's excitement over the Black women's election wins in 2018: "[I]n our office we're still getting notes from people who have seen the post [of the women posing together] and say, 'Thank you for trusting [B]lack women.' It's incredible" (Crumpton 2019). A picture of the 19 Black women goes viral after they are photographed together in a mock courtroom at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Thurgood Marshall was the first Black justice on the United States Supreme Court.

The election of the 19 Black women to judgeships in Texas point to the continuing need to have Black women at the decision-making table. Judge Erica Hughes, one of the Black women

elected to the Harris County bench in 2018, states, “If you look at the backbone of the country, the [B]lack woman has always been there but not necessarily given the opportunity to have input . . . Black women are taking a stand and saying ‘We bring a lot of things to the table and you should hear our voice. You’re going to hear our voice’” (Crumpton 2019).

One motivating factor for some of the Black women who were elected in Harris County in 2018 was the lack of representation on the bench (Crumpton 2019). Harris County consists mainly of minority residents. Forty-three percent of residents identified as Hispanic and twenty percent of residents identified as Black in 2018 (Crumpton 2019). However, the local judiciary did not reflect this diversity. Therefore, having a local judiciary that reflects the diversity of the general population was one element that motivated many of the Black women judges to run in 2018.

As of December 2014, only 8% of state court judges are women of color (The Gavel Gap). This dearth of diversity on the bench is not just a problem for state judiciaries. The federal judiciary is also lacking in the number of diverse judges, specifically Black female judges. About 73% of federal judges are men and about 80% are white (Root et al. 2019). Of the 179 judges who serve on the federal Circuit Courts of Appeal in 2020, only five are Black women (Smith and Jones 2020). Of the 673 District Court judges, only 42 are Black women (Smith and Jones 2020). Finally, a Black woman has never served on the highest court in our country. President Joe Biden indicated that he would nominate a Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court if he has the opportunity (Millhiser 2020).

So, why are there not more Black women who serve as judges, and specifically as elected judges? We cannot say that Black women are underqualified. Black women possess the same impressive qualifications, and often times more, as other potential judicial candidates. And, Black women’s numbers have increased in the legal field in the past few decades (Bratton and Spill 2002;

Williams 2008; Bonneau 2001). However, despite the success stories of Jefferson County in 2016 and Harris County in 2018, the state judiciary is still dominated by white men.

Nascent political ambition is “the embryonic or potential interest in office seeking that precedes facing a particular political opportunity structure and deciding whether to enter a specific political contest” (Lawless 2012, 5). In other words, nascent political ambition is the potential candidate’s interest in a political office before running for public office.

The existing literature on the intersection of gender and ambition focuses predominantly on legislative ambition (Green 1998; Fox and Lawless 2005; Fox and Lawless 2010; Costantini 1990). The studies examine the impact that gender roles have on the expression of ambition and find that potential female candidates who hold traditional gender views are less likely to express ambition than other potential candidates (Fox and Lawless 2003, 2010; Fox et al. 2001; Fulton et al. 2006). The studies reveal that women who believe they are the primary caretakers of home responsibilities are less likely to express ambition because they believe significant time will be taken away from these home obligations.

There are a few studies that explore ambition in the judicial arena ((Jensen and Martinek 2009; Williams 2008). These studies highlight an interesting difference between judicial and legislative ambition. In the judicial ambition studies, the scholars find that women tend to be more ambitious than men because a judicial career offers a consistent schedule and work-life balance, as compared to traditional law practice.

The commonality amongst these studies is the lack of examining the experiences of subgroups within the larger group of potential female candidates. The underlying assumption – perhaps inadvertent - is that all women’s socialization experiences are the same. Historically, that is an incorrect assumption, especially for Black women.



The purpose of this study is to explore judicial ambition for potential female candidates, with a particular focus on potential Black female judicial candidates. The present study investigates whether there are appreciable differences in who expresses interest for a judicial office between potential Black and non-Black female judicial candidates. Potential Black female judicial candidates have not been studied as a discrete group from either potential women or potential Black candidates. Black women are often assumed to have shared experiences with all women or all Black men. But, as this study will show, potential Black female judicial candidates have different life experiences which may impact their expression of ambition in ways that only apply to them.

It is important to understand the compound effect of both race and gender on a potential female candidates' expression of ambition. That is the primary goal of this present study. I theorize that potential Black female judicial candidates' unique socialization experiences have a differential impact on ambition compared to potential non-Black female judicial candidates. Potential Black female judicial candidates have a different decision-making calculus for running for judicial office. These differences help fill in the ambition gap for potential Black candidates.

## **1.1 Chapter Outline**

In Chapter 2, I present my theory of judicial ambition. I first outline why Black women should be studied separately from all women in studies of ambition. The literature shows potential female candidates tend to express lower ambition than potential male candidates, because women are concerned about balancing their home-work responsibilities. I use the literature to show Black women possess different socialization experiences, leading them to express ambition at different levels than non-Black women. I argue that potential Black female judicial candidates are indeed different from potential non-Black female judicial candidates. I argue that three particular societal

factors impact judicial ambition differently for these potential candidates: socialization messages from parents, Black sorority membership, and Protestant identification.

The next three chapters empirically test my socialization-judicial ambition hypotheses, using data collected from an original survey of Georgia lawyers. In Georgia, similar to other states, candidates for the state bench (with the exception of probate and county magistrate judges) must be active lawyers. Georgia was selected as a case study due to the sizeable number of Black attorneys, including Black female attorneys, in the state. Chapter 3 examines socialization messages from childhood. I first describe the history of workforce participation for Black women. The literature shows that Black women receive differential childhood socialization messages around independence from their parents, particularly with respect to financial independence and working outside the home. I argue that hearing these messages in childhood leads potential Black female judicial candidates to express higher levels of judicial ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages. I find that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about financial independence from one's spouse and pursuing a career outside of the home express higher judicial ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear financial independence messages. I also find that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about getting married or having children are not more or less likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear family messages.

Chapter 4 examines Black sorority membership. I start by examining the evolution of white sororities before explaining the history of political action of Black sororities. Building on literature showing that current-day white sororities are focused on relationship pairing while Black sororities are focused on community activism, I argue that potential judicial candidates who are

members of Black sororities are more likely than other potential judicial candidates to express judicial ambition. I argue that Black sororities provide leadership training and opportunities for their members, which encourage potential judicial candidates to express ambition. I also argue that Black sororities provide valuable resources to its members, including financial resources, campaign assistance, and a reliable voting bloc. Therefore, potential judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are likely to express ambition because they will be supported by sorority members if they choose to run. My findings reveal that potential judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are more likely than other potential candidates to express ambition.

In Chapter 5, I examine Protestant identification's impact on judicial ambition for potential Black female candidates. I first describe the historical development of the Black church, and turn to the role of the Black church during the Civil Rights movement. The literature shows that the Black church teaches civic skills to its members, which can be used outside of the church. I argue that potential Black female candidates who identify as Protestant will have higher judicial ambition than other potential female judicial candidates. I also argue that potential Black female judicial candidates who hear political messages in their religious institutions are more likely than other potential candidates to express ambition. I argue that the Black church is historically rooted in civic activism. From its founding during the time of slavery to present-day America, the Black church offers civic resources to its members, such as teaching meeting organization, parliamentary procedures, community organizing, and letter writing. Although I do not find that Protestant identification or hearing political messages in religious institutions lead to increased judicial ambition, the survey results do show that potential Black judicial candidates have different political experiences in their religious institutions.

Lastly, I conclude in Chapter 5 with a review of my overall findings and consider the long-term implications of my judicial ambition theory. I argue that socialization experiences help fill in the ambition gap for potential Black female judicial candidates. In particular, I argue that judicial ambition for potential Black female judicial candidates must continue to be studied to understand all the factors that impact the decision-making calculus for running for office for Black women.

In the next chapter, I explain why judicial ambition must be studied with an intersectionality lens.

## 2 THE THEORY OF INTERSECTIONALITY IN JUDICIAL AMBITION

The legal field is no different than other professionally trained occupations with its history of underrepresentation of both women and minorities. The legal profession, including the judiciary, has traditionally been dominated by white men (Hurwitz and Lanier 2003). Although gender and minority representation have been increasing in the legal field during the last few decades (Goldman 1997; Bonneau 2001; Hurwitz and Lanier 2001; Bratton and Spill 2002; Williams 2008), women and minorities are still underrepresented on all levels of the bench, including state courts. The scenario is even starker when we examine the status of minority women. While white men represent 57% of state trial court judges as of December 2014 (The Gavel Gap; National Women's Law Center), women of color account for only 8% of all state trial court judges (The Gavel Gap).

What explains the dearth of women of color on state judiciaries? Might there be a different decision calculus for potential Black female judicial candidates than for potential male or white female candidates? The purpose of this study is to shed some light on this often-forgotten subgroup of potential candidates by examining the intersection of race and gender on nascent political ambition in the judicial arena.

This dissertation focuses specifically on whether Black female lawyers approach the question of running for judicial office in a manner that differs significantly from their counterparts. I theorize that the decision calculus for potential Black female judicial candidates is indeed different, and that this difference is due to the distinct socialization experiences of Black women. Most important, the Black women of today stem from a long history of resistance from Black women in America. Therefore, when examining political ambition, it is important to not lump all women into one category. This chapter will first examine the literature on political ambition and

then outline how the history of Black women in America may influence their political ambition in ways quite distinct from others.

## **2.1 Gender & Political Ambition**

Nascent political ambition is “the embryonic or potential interest in office seeking that precedes facing a particular political opportunity structure and deciding whether to enter a specific political contest” (Lawless 2012, 5). A central question is thus what motivates – or, just as importantly, dissuades – individuals to decide to run for elected office?

Early studies on political ambition did not focus on individual factors that may influence a potential candidate’s decision to run, but rather on the political opportunity structure (Schlesinger 1966; Black 1972; Rohde 1979). Schlesinger (1966) theorized that political ambition is principally determined by the candidate’s end goals of being in office. Therefore, the end goals will impact the candidate’s current behavior, such as the decision of which office, if any, to run for. Schlesinger (1966), additionally, theorizes that the opportunity structure of an office impacts ambition for political candidates. He finds that some politically offices are more attractive to potential candidates because they are likely to lead to further career advancement.

Black (1972) builds upon Schlesinger’s (1966) theory and posits that potential candidates are rational actors. According to Black (1972), potential candidates will weigh the likelihood of winning office and the benefit of being in office against the costs of campaigning. Once the potential candidate weighs the costs and benefits, the potential candidate will act in a rational manner and make a decision where costs are minimized and benefits are maximized. Black (1972) bases his rationality theory on the assumption that potential candidates, since they are rational actors, will evaluate all alternatives and seek the alternative that confers the greatest benefit to them. Since Schelsinger’s (1966) and Black’s (1972) studies, scholars have examined various

electoral factors as an explanation for ambition, such as term limits, office prestige, incumbency, open seats, and party affiliation of the constituents (Maestas et al. 2006; Goodliffe 2001; Moncrief et al. 2001).

Scholars began to question, however, whether the rational choice model fully explains political ambition in all potential candidates, especially since women do not express ambition at the same rate as men (Costantini 1990; Arceneaux 2001; Fox and Lawless 2005; Fulton et al. 2006; Fox and Lawless 2010). Therefore, a new field of research developed that examined the impact of gender on political ambition.

In his study of political activists, Costantini (1990) finds that there exists a gender gap between ambition levels for male and female activists in his study. Costantini (1990) finds that female political activists had lower political ambition than their male counterparts. This is due to the fact that male and female activists want different things from politics. Costantini (1990) finds that this motivational explanation for ambition is true for both the Democratic and Republican women included in his study.

Arceneaux (2001) examines the impact of gender-role attitudes on state legislative ambition. He finds that political culture, ideology, and attitudes regarding gender-roles have independent impacts on legislative ambition. In particular, beliefs regarding feminism impacts legislative ambition. Arceneaux (2001) finds that study participants who have more accepting attitudes about women in politics express more ambition.

Fulton et al. (2006) examine the gender gap in progressive ambition for state legislators. They find that female state legislators are less ambitious than male state legislators for a U.S. House seat. They find that the gender gap in progressive ambition is because women legislators are more concerned than male legislators about child-care responsibilities.

The extant research on gender and political ambition primarily focuses on the legislative arena (Green 1998; Fox and Lawless 2005; Fox and Lawless 2010; Costantini 1990). Prior legislative political ambition studies find that women are less ambitious than men because they are concerned with home care duties (Fox and Lawless 2003, 2010). Fox and Lawless (2003) examine the role of traditional gender attitudes on political ambition for potential legislative candidates. They find that potential female candidates who hold traditional views about gender, i.e., that women are responsible for household duties and child rearing, are less likely to consider running for office than men. The implication is that women have been taught, both implicitly and explicitly, that politics is a job for men while women take care of the household (Fox and Lawless 2003; Fox et al. 2001).

Similar to Fox and Lawless, Fulton et al. (2006) also find that women are less ambitious than men. In their study of progressive ambition of state legislators, Fulton et al. (2006) find that women consider different factors and give different weights to those factors than men when deciding to pursue a higher office. Further, the costs of seeking higher office for women many times outweigh the benefits. For example, many women note that the costs of potentially being away from their children for long periods of time as they legislate on Capitol Hill or relocating their family to Washington are higher than they are willing to bear.

Overall, studies of gender and legislative ambition find that women have lower political ambition than men because they engage in a different decision-making calculus when deciding whether to run for office (Fox and Lawless 2005; Fox and Lawless 2010; Lawless 2012; Costantini 1990; Fulton et al. 2006). These studies show that women who view themselves as being the primary caretaker of the home and children are less likely to express ambition because running for office takes time away from their home responsibilities.



There are also a small set of studies that examine the intersection of race and ambition (Shah 2015; Johnson et al. 2012; Sanbonmatsu 2015; Lawless 2012). Shah (2015) finds that there is no difference in nascent political ambition for Black and white potential candidates. However, Shah (2015) also finds that Black candidates express more ambition than white candidates in higher political office. Therefore, the gap in political representation is not due to a lack of interest in office.

Johnson et al. 2012 examine progressive ambition for Black members of the U.S. House of Representatives. They find that race does impact the expression of ambition for higher office for House members. In particular, they find that Black House members are less likely to express ambition in a Senate seat if they believe their race will negatively impact voter turnout.

Lawless (2012) examines ambition for potential candidates for legislative office. She finds that potential Black candidates are more ambitious than potential white and Latina candidates. In particular, Lawless (2012) finds that potential Black candidates are 25% more likely than potential white candidates and 50% more likely than potential Latina candidates to express interest in running for office.

A small set of studies examine judicial ambition (Jensen and Martinek 2009; Williams 2008). Notably, these studies find less of a gender differential in ambition levels and therefore suggest that the decision calculus for women running for judicial office differs from the calculus undertaken in the legislative arena. Williams (2008) finds that “[p]rofessional characteristics, political characteristics and experiences, perceptions of the office, and gender” impact political ambition for the potential judicial candidate (Williams 2008, 74). Most important, Williams (2008) finds that potential female candidates are more ambitious than male candidates for judicial office. This finding differs from those for potential legislative candidates, in which scholars find

that women are less ambitious than men (Costantini 1990; Lawless and Fox 2012) or as ambitious as men (Fox and Lawless 2004).

Williams (2008) argues that there are more women in the legal field than in previous decades, highlighting the expanded eligibility pool of potential candidates. Since judicial offices have a distinct eligibility pool, women may be more likely to express judicial ambition because there is a more clearly defined set of qualifications for office. Williams (2008) further argues that a judgeship may be a more attractive option than traditional law practice for many women. A judgeship may free women from the high-stress demands of billable hours and competitive business development in the legal profession (Williams 2008; Epstein 1995). The consistent work schedule and steady pay alleviates a potential female candidate's concerns about childcare responsibilities. Any gap in political ambition may thus be overcome by the attractiveness of a judicial office.

Williams (2008) further explores whether the influence of each factor on ambition differs by gender. Of importance is the finding regarding perceptual barriers to entry into the judiciary. Williams (2008) finds that potential male judicial candidates are more ambitious than potential female judicial candidates when they view women as facing barriers to becoming a judge. In Williams' (2008) study, this is the only characteristic on which potential male judicial candidates expressed more ambition than potential female judicial candidates. Essentially, women who view themselves as facing barriers to the pursuit of a judgeship are less likely to express ambition as compared to their male counterparts. Conversely, potential female judicial candidates who do not view barriers to running for judicial office are more likely to express ambition than potential male judicial candidates. Thus, Williams (2008) theorizes that potential female judicial candidates are more willing to consider running for judgeships than potential male candidates because a judicial

career may offer more stability in their work schedule as opposed to a traditional career in the legal field.

Jensen and Martinek (2009) similarly find, again distinct from most studies of legislative progressive ambition, that female and minority trial court judges have a greater desire to move up the judicial career ladder than white, male trial court judges. Although Jensen and Martinek (2009) make clear that they have not determined the exact causal mechanism that explains the difference in progressive ambition, they do note important differences between legislative and judicial positions. They posit that a higher judicial office may be a more attractive career avenue for women and minorities than traditional law practice, because it provides a more linear chance of career advancement. Furthermore, Jensen and Martinek (2009) argue that women and nonwhite trial court judges have more of an opportunity to advance in the judiciary than the legislature because of the value placed on merit and experience (see also Stone 1980; Epstein 1981).

These studies thus suggest that judicial ambition is distinct from legislative ambition, and these important differences may make running for judicial office more attractive to potential Black female judicial candidates.

This current study seeks to expand our understanding of ambition by examining how race intersects with gender to alter the decision calculus for Black women who may consider running for an elected judicial seat. These previous studies have made tremendous headway in explaining the factors that a woman considers before tossing her hat into the proverbial election ring. But, few delve into how political ambition is simultaneously impacted by race and gender (except Lawless 2012, which examines differences in potential candidates' elective office preferences by race and gender). This limits our ability to make conclusions about political ambition, or the lack thereof, for potential Black female candidates.

## 2.2 A Look at the Past: Second Wave Feminism

In order to fully understand, and appreciate, why we may observe very real differences in political ambition between potential non-Black and Black female judicial candidates, it is important to first understand the separate paths to feminism for groups of women in the United States. Part of this understanding entails recounting how the second wave of feminism, which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, manifested itself differently based on racial, and sometimes even class, lines. Black and non-Black women simply have divergent advocacy experiences, showcased by how these different groups of women chose to organize and support specific issues during the 1960s and 1970s. I argue that the history of divergent advocacy experiences for Black and non-Black women plays an important role in explaining variations in judicial ambition levels. Therefore, a fuller story of political ambition is told by first understanding Black and white women's feminism during the 1960s and 1970s.

The second wave of feminism was largely organized along racial lines (Roth 2004). White female liberals such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem served as the primary faces of feminist protests. But, what was the place of Black feminists and Black issues in the mainstream feminist movement? "Feminists of color [Black and Chicana] argued that their activism was written out of the histories of second-wave protest; they argued that racial/ethnic and class biases that were part of the white feminist ideology and practice have shown up in subsequent scholarship about that ideology and practice" (Roth 2004, 3). Concerns about racial/ethnic and class biases caused Black and white women to traverse "separate roads to feminism," as Roth's 2004 book is so aptly called. These separate roads to feminism caused white, Black, and even Chicana women to practice "organizing one's own" (Roth 2004, 6).

Not all scholars believe that the separate Black feminist movement developed solely because of discrimination in the white feminist movement. Roth (2004) argues that Black women simply saw themselves as being different from white feminists, and that the white feminist movement did not fully encompass all the issues that impact Black women and the Black community. “Feminists of color saw themselves as belonging to a different movement than white feminists did, a self-perception that should be taken seriously; understanding why they saw themselves as different requires taking a feminist intersectional approach to the matter of oppressions” (Roth 2004, 11). Crenshaw (1995) similarly highlights the need to evaluate the feminist movement from an intersectional approach, illuminating the “need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed” (Crenshaw 1995, 358).

### ***2.2.1 Class Issues: Differences Between White and Black Women***

The 1960s and 1970s provided resources to women, both Black and white, that were not necessarily available to previous generations. Due to more women being college educated and employed in roles outside of the home, women were more equipped to participate politically. “Changes in women’s participation in public life – indicated by higher rates of women’s participation in the labor force and growing numbers of women in higher education – gave women the resources necessary to organize for gender equality” (Roth 2004, 24).

Workforce participation has traditionally been higher for Black women than for white women (Dugger 1988). Because nonwhite women, specifically Black and Chicana, were participating more in the labor force, these groups of women had access to resources that could be used in the feminist movements. Resources came in the form of access to professional networks, the gaining of civic skills, and the acquisition of the knowledge necessary to navigate the political

landscape. But women (white and Black) did not have equal access to the same resources. Class issues played a huge role in why their feminist movements developed separately.

Even though Black women were closing the earnings gaps between themselves and white women by the late 1960s, there were still gaps in many areas. Compared to white women, more Black women were underemployed or worked part-time jobs involuntarily. Furthermore, when Black women did work, the type of work was different than the work offered to white women. Black women were more likely to be domestic workers, while white women were more likely to be employed in professional services.

Because of these differences in economic status, white feminists became one of the groups that Black feminists compared themselves to, in addition to men. “African American . . . feminists had white women in mind as their reference group, and thus did not see them as natural allies in the struggle for gender, racial/ethnic, and economic justice” (Roth 2004, 45). Black feminists argued that white feminists were unsympathetic to the class issues faced by many women in America. Thus, white feminists did not truly represent all women in their fight for equality. “Feminists of color saw white middle-class women as insensitive to the kinds of lives that those without racial and/or class privilege had to endure” (Roth 2004, 45; see also Collins and Bilge 2020).

Black feminists therefore developed their own movement for racial, gender, and class equality outside the ranks of Black activists and white feminists. As I argue in more detail below, the emergence of the Black feminist movement foreshadows the broader differences in socialization and policy positions that may today contribute to variations in levels of judicial ambition between potential Black and non-Black female candidates.

Although other movements, like the Civil Rights Movement, equipped Black women with necessary organizing and advocacy skills, the lack of inclusion shown by white feminist leaders and some Black male leaders forced Black female activists to branch off into their own movement. The role of Black women differed amongst the Black social movement organizations, with Black women holding more leadership roles in the Black Panther Party (“BPP”) in the 1970s compared to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (“SCLC”) or Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (“SNCC”). For example, Elaine Brown was specifically chosen by BPP founder Huey Newton to lead the organization after he went into exile (Brown 2018).

Overall, the Civil Rights Movement and white women’s feminist movements suffered from biases that prevented Black women from organizing within those ranks:

Black feminists were critical of both the Black Liberation and the white women’s liberation movements, and their critiques focused on the middle-class biases of both movements; [Black women] developed an intersectional analysis of the interlocking dimensions of race, class, and gender oppressions, as they formed influential Black feminist organizations from 1968 through the mid-1970s (Roth 2004, 21).

### ***2.2.2 The Emergence of the Black Feminist Movement***

Black women are no strangers to political activism. “Since the 1830s, African American women have articulated feminist concerns with the antiracist struggle, and they continued to do so in the second wave” (Roth 2004, 79). Black women played key roles – both on the forefront and behind the scenes – within the Civil Rights Movement. One can even argue that Black women carried the Civil Rights Movement. According to Orum’s 1970 survey on civil rights demonstrations, more women than men participated in protests during the Civil Rights era (Orum 1970). Ella Baker also noted how important Black women were to the activism of the 1960s: “All the churches depended . . . on women, not men. Men didn’t do the things that had to be done and

you had a large number of women who were involved in the bus boycott. They were the people who kept the spirit going” (Payne 1989).

Although Black women held traditional gender roles within some organizations associated with the Civil Rights Movement, they were also given an opportunity to lead in nontraditional ways. They were often jailed and beaten for participation in protests and voter’s registration drives. As Bender (1969) notes, “Even later Black feminist critiques of sexism within the Civil Rights movement acknowledged that women had been given the opportunity ‘to do far more significant work than white women in their movement’” (citing Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton).

Although the Civil Rights Movement was focused on equality for racial minorities, it is not without its shortcomings as a movement. Namely, the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and their affiliate organizations failed to recognize the need for gender equality (Roth 2004; Estes 2005; Library of Congress). Black women believed that the Civil Rights Movement was chauvinist, and the white feminist movement only cared about issues relevant to white women. Thus, Black women saw themselves as advocating for a more holistic view of equality than either their Black male or white female counterparts.

These concerns heightened during the late 1960s. First, the social base of the Civil Rights Movement moved from the South to the North during the late 1960s. Second, the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement became younger. Third, there was a rise in the Black Nationalism movement. The Black Nationalism Movement is different from the Civil Rights Movement in that the former advocated for Blacks to be economically self-sufficient from the white community, while the latter advocated for interracial equality (The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute).



An issue that many Black women had with the Black Nationalism Movement was its treatment of women. The Black Nationalism Movement required women to play a supportive, not leading, role. Black women were discouraged, and sometimes forbidden, from taking on a role outside of traditional gender norms for women, such as cooking, cleaning, and being a partner to the male leaders of the movement.

It is important to understand the larger social context of why Black male leaders relegated Black women to domestic roles. Written in 1965, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (better known as the Moynihan Report), purported to explain racial inequality in the United States and the need for other steps besides just civil rights legislation to end racial inequality (Geary 2015). Its author, then-Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan, focused on the structure of the Black family in America. However, the Moynihan Report was heavily criticized for relying upon racial stereotypes of Black men and women. The Report, which disparaged the Black family as being female-led with weak male authority figures, directly influenced the leaders of the Black Nationalism Movement and how they treated Black women within their ranks. Roth (2004) maintains that “[b]lack feminists (both then and now) have argued that the masculinist cast of Black nationalism in the 1960s was a reaction to the ‘Black matriarchy’ theory in the 1965 Moynihan [R]eport . . . The resurgent masculinism of Black Liberation was therefore tied to state intervention into the relationships that existed within the Black family; Black feminism in part responded to the aftereffects of this intervention” (2004, 85; see also Geary 2015; Bobo and Charles 2009).

Initially, Black feminists attempted to work within the ranks of both the Civil Rights and Black Nationalism movements to advocate for the rights of women, similar to how white feminists tried to work within the Leftist movement before eventually branching off into a separate

movement. But, Black feminists were often silenced when they advocated for women-specific issues.

Black feminists eventually formed separate organizations from both the Black Nationalism and white feminist movements, such as the National Black Feminist Organization and the Combahee River Collective. These organizations were dedicated to advancing the Black feminist perspective that was missing from the mainstream organizations. In particular, the Combahee River Collective branched off from the National Black Feminist Organization (“NBFO”) because its founders, Black lesbians, believed that the white feminist movement and Civil Rights Movement failed to specifically address the needs of Black lesbians (Combahee River Collective). Once again demonstrating the importance of intersectionality when fighting for societal equality.

It is important to note that Black feminists did not hasten to join the white feminist movement. Black women were leery of working with white feminists because of the constant need to educate them around issues of class and race. Roth contends that “the ambivalence of Black activist women toward organized white feminism was just that: a hesitancy to work with white women exclusively on gender (and not race, and not class) oppression” (2004, 99; see also Collins and Bilge 2020). Black feminists were also concerned about two additional issues. First, they worried that white feminists would subjugate Black liberation issues in favor of issues important to white middle-class women (Roth 2004). Second, Black feminists feared that the white feminist movement would come between Black men and women (Roth 2004).

This second point deserves a little explication. Black and white feminists held different positions regarding the nuclear family during the 1960s and 1970s. White feminists tended to attack the nuclear family and wanted to dismantle the idea of the nuclear family (Ruggles 1994; Roth 2004). But, Black feminists already saw the nuclear family as under attack from the

Moynihan Report and wanted to protect it from further criticism: “The white feminist movement was seen as trying to destroy a family structure that Black feminists were trying to protect, even if their vision for the family differed from the patriarchal version espoused by Black Liberationists” (Roth 2004, also citing Dubey 1994; Ferguson 1970; hooks 1984).

Essentially, Black feminists saw a profound need to create a separate feminist movement. The Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements did not provide a platform for Black women to espouse feminist concerns. And, the white feminist movement was seen as a movement only for white middle-class women, instead of a movement that would advocate for the liberation of all people. Black women found themselves at the intersection of two movements, yet not belonging completely to either. The difference between white and Black feminists was probably most pronounced during this time. As Black feminist Althea Scott aptly states: “White women were groomed to be ladies. I came from a history of women groomed to be workers” (Liddick 1973). White feminists focused on political and workplace equity with men, sexuality and reproductive rights, and domestic violence issues (Breines 2002). In addition to the issues that white feminists focused on, Black feminists also fought against racism and class discrimination (Breines 2002). Since the second-wave of feminism was dominated by white, educated, middle-class women, they failed to address any issues related to racism and class discrimination.

It is this need to separately recognize the experiences of Black and white women that precipitates the need to study their judicial ambition separately.

### **2.3 Black Women’s Socialization Experiences**

As we can see from the development of the Black and white feminist movements, it is important to not conflate the experiences of potential Black and white female judicial candidates. Similar to the Black feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, potential Black female judicial candidates

may have overcome different hurdles, experienced different life events, and found motivation from different professional goals than their white female counterparts. I therefore theorize that potential Black female judicial candidates – who stand at the intersection of two identities – will use their distinct experiences to overcome many of their fears and concerns about running for judicial office.

For potential Black female judicial candidates, history tells an interesting story about political ambition. The development of the Black feminist movement highlights how Black women's histories have caused them to be socialized around independence and activism in their communities.

Most notably, Black women have rejected the gender norm that a woman's place in society is solely in the home, in part because that norm has simply not applied to them. Black women's history of workforce participation and community activism required them to balance home life and work life responsibilities. I explore this phenomenon to help show the link between Black women's lived and historical experiences and expectations about judicial ambition levels.

Society has always treated Black and white women differently when it comes to expectations regarding their participation in the workforce. Historically, white women have been seen as the paragon of womanhood and motherhood. The expectation for them was to stay home and take care of the household while their husbands worked and provided financially for the family. Black women, on the other hand, experienced a far different reality. During slavery, Black women were expected to contribute their labor to the slave economy, regardless of motherhood status. They were not given the option to take leave to care for children or altogether opt out of the workforce. In fact, many female slaves worked right up to the time they gave birth. Dugger (1988, 427) notes the stark differences in expectations for white and Black women in the 1800s:

While nineteenth-century culture in the United States stereotyped White women as too frail and dainty to undertake physical labor, Black women were viewed as

beasts of burden and subjected to the same demeaning labor and hardships as Black men (see also hooks 1981; King 1975; Ladner 1997; Welter 1978).

Furthermore, the socialization experiences of Black women in America show that they had to always be steadfast and creative with limited resources. “African women who arrived in the New World during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were likely ‘accustomed to being resourceful, determined, and somewhat independent economically’” (Parker 2004, 33). This tradition was maintained once Africans were enslaved in America: “Female-centered families and the mother-child relationship was central under slavery, with slave families often defined as a mother and her children” (Hill 2001, 496). Further, Black female slaves did not have the option of choosing to work or take care of their families. Since racism has historically shaped how Black families raised their children in America, Black families have retained many Afrocentric values, such as strong female household leads (Hill 2001). This expectation to be a strong-willed Black woman who works and leads her family was passed on to young Black girls from generation to generation.

Furthermore, Black women’s requirement of workforce participation extended past the end of slavery. Black women’s income was needed in order to support the Black family because the male figure in the family was often unemployed or underemployed during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dugger explains that “racial discrimination has produced high rates of unemployment among Black men and segregated them into low paying jobs, and thus the Black family needs the labor of more than one wage earner” (1998, 428; see also Woody 1992). Black men were often unable to maintain continuous employment with livable wages. Therefore, Black women had to work in order to care for the family, and often times, Black women were the only wage earners as men searched for employment.

Black women thus have not had the same opportunity as white women to sit out of the workforce and stay at home. The history of Black women in America shows that Black women have been socialized to have careers while simultaneously taking care of home responsibilities. Potential Black female judicial candidates come from a history of always having to balance work and childcare responsibilities, a history that may alter the way they view and assess the costs and benefits of seeking a judgeship.

History also shows that Black women have been active participants in their communities, including during slavery. As Parker (2004) argues, “Activism through community work consists of activities to strengthen family and kinship ties, combating racism, and empower communities to survive, grow, and advance, thus reinforcing the theme *lifting as we climb*” (40, original emphasis; see also Gilkes 1980). Black women were indispensable to family survival during slavery because they were responsible for the education, healthcare needs, and spiritual guidance of the Black community (Parker 2004). This focus on activism allowed Black women to exercise their voice and provide leadership in their community.

One form of community involvement after slavery was in the creation of organizations committed to fighting social injustices in the United States (Parker 2004). One such organization was the National Association of Colored Women, which had the motto “lifting as we climb” (Parker 2004). The National Association of Colored Women was founded in 1896, predating the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) by 15 years, and focused on fighting social inequities within the Black community (Parker 2004).

Black women today thus stem from a long history of social activism and community organizing. Black women viewed women-led organizations like the National Association of Colored Women as a way to leverage their voices in the community and speak out against the

systematic discrimination in America. These women-led organizations were dedicated to informing Black women of the issues most relevant to them and organizing Black women in order to combat social injustices.

For Black women, community activism and taking care of home are closely linked. Barnes (2016) calls this “strategic mothering,” in which Black women are socialized to be mothers for their entire communities. “Mothering” does not require that Black women be actual mothers. For example, Black women are taught to be active in their community by taking on a mothering stance for children who may not biologically be theirs. Rather, strategic mothering leads to Black women fighting against problems that have a widespread impact on their community by creating women-led organizations, informing community members of pressing social issues, and organizing groups of women to fight against injustices. Mothering, taking care of home responsibilities, and working is the norm for Black women because their double minority status required them to balance these three aspects of their identity.

Hill (2001) further argues that womanhood looks different for Black women than white women: “Evidence strongly supports the contention that Black women have escaped the narrow confines of the restrictive gender roles assumed by Euramerican women, mostly because they have had to assume heavy responsibility for paid work, family and community” (501; see also Collins 1987). Womanhood for Black women has been based on financial independence and workforce participation. And, this expectation to be able to take care of oneself is passed down to Black daughters (Hill 2001). “As a result, it is commonly held that African American daughters, from an early age, are taught to assume strong family roles and to be strong, self-reliant, and independent” (Hill 2001, 501; see also Collins 1987, 1990 and Ladner 1971). Parker (2004) and Barnes (2016) similarly argue that Black women serve as the foundation of the Black community,

and they lead their families through working and community activism. Black daughters are therefore taught that the norm is to work while taking care of their home responsibilities.

Moreover, Hill and Sprague (1999) reveal that Black families do not follow rigid gender roles. For example, it is not an expectation in Black families for only female children to engage in household duties such as caretaking. “Some have pointed out that a relative degree of gender neutrality exists in the socialization of Black children . . . , especially arguing that Black girls are taught from an early age to be independent, strong, and resourceful” (Hill and Sprague 1999, 481). Consequently, both Black girls and boys are taught to play a role in taking care of the family. Traditional household duties, such as cooking and cleaning, is not just the responsibility of Black girls, as Black boys are also expected to contribute. Thus, this gender neutrality in the Black home runs counter to the stereotypical gender norm that household duties are a “woman’s job.”

Therefore, Hill and Sprague (1999) and Hill (2001) show that Black girls are taught to be strong and self-reliant. It is expected for them to both participate in the labor force and take care of household responsibilities. Gender neutrality in the Black home has allowed Black women to exercise a level of autonomy not always experienced by white women. Therefore, ambition studies that do not recognize Black women’s historical autonomy may overemphasize the barrier that home life responsibilities may play in potential Black women candidates expressing ambition.

In her 2014 book *Sisters in the Statehouse*, Nadia Brown explored how Black female legislators in the Maryland legislature view their identity in relation to the legislative process. Brown (2014) finds that Black women legislators do not only work for the singular purposes of self-aggrandizement and achieving personal policy goals. Black female legislators are also community-minded and work in order to right the wrongs of women and men who have come before them. Brown (2014) finds that these legislators view themselves as standing on the



shoulders of giants, and they hope that their legislative work has an impact above and beyond them.

For the Black female elected officials in Brown's (2014) study, political representation is not just about achieving certain policy outcomes: "[T]here was a quiet yet strong-willed fortitude . . . that causes African American women to view political representation as an extension of a unique culture, history, and upbringing that harnesses the sacrifices, dignity, and powerfulness of our foremothers" (Brown 2014, 2). Inextricably intertwined in political representation for Black women is the past history of their ancestors. Not only does history play a role in the expression of ambition for Black women, it also plays a role on Black female elected officials' values and leadership.

Brown (2014) argues that individuals who stand at the intersection of multiple identities face persecution, but also have favorable opportunities available specifically to them. For Black female elected officials, standing at the intersection of two identities offers an opportunity to bring something unique to the decision-making process. In a political system that often sees the same ideas presented from the same perspective, potential Black female candidates offer a chance to propose fresh viewpoints and bring a different and distinct voice to the decision-making table. This voice was many times either previously unknown or unheard. Potential Black female judicial candidates can similarly highlight issue areas that were previously neglected or offer different solutions to solving problems affecting marginalized communities. Although intersectionality many times illuminates a story of disadvantage and marginalization, it is also a story about being different from the mainstream.

Brown's (2014) findings highlight that Black women elected officials are indeed different from their white female and male counterparts. Although the focus of this current study is on

potential candidates, and not currently elected officials, Brown's (2014) findings are important because they reveal how Black women's socialization experiences impact not only their ambition levels but also their view of their role in the legislative – and potentially judicial – process.

I now turn to an explication of my theory of how these important socialization experiences of Black women may inform the political ambition of present-day potential Black female judicial candidates.

#### **2.4 A Theory of Black Female Judicial Ambition**

Building off of previous works on gender and ambition, as well as the historical ark of Black women's roles in society and their unique socialization experiences, I theorize that potential Black female judicial candidates will express higher ambition levels than other candidates because they are socialized to balance career and home responsibilities, as opposed to adhering to traditional gender norms where women are forced to choose one over the other.

Black families do not traditionally reflect the same strict gender roles as white families (Chavous and Cogburn 2007; Hill 2001, 2002; Kane 2000). “Historically, the African American family has been characterized by greater gender equality in decision-making and division of labor than white, middle-class mainstream American norms” (Chavous and Cogburn 2007). This explains why the experiences of potential white and Black female judicial candidates should not be lumped together. Their socialization experiences are quite different. For example, Black women have been socialized to work while taking care of home responsibilities while many white women, historically, had the option to stay at home (Hill 2001). Black women are simultaneously socialized to care for their home while participating in the workforce. Black women thus reject traditional gender roles because they never really applied to them (Dugger 1988).

Potential Black female judicial candidates may draw upon this long history of working and community activism by Black women when assessing whether to run for a judicial office. Black women were the true leaders of the Civil Rights and Women's Rights Movements, although their contributions to these movements were often marginalized. In studying the leadership styles of Black female corporate executives, Parker (2004) notes:

It is arguable in the context of the Civil Rights Movement that a tradition of African American women's leadership – grounded in a culture of resistance first forged in the era of slavery, and fine-tuned in the Black Women's Club Movement, other Black civic organizations, unions, and a general entrepreneurial spirit – begins to seem plausible. (54)

For centuries, Black women have worked and been activists in order to protect their families and communities. While Black women's double minority status exposes them to both racial and gender discrimination, their double minority status also creates in them a sort of resiliency and courage that makes them a distinct group from white women in terms of their historical experiences.

I argue that although potential Black female judicial candidates will be concerned about the balance between work and home, it will not be an absolute barrier to expressing ambition for judicial office. In instances where potential white female judicial candidates may not express ambition to run for judicial office, a potential Black female judicial candidate may not see the same hurdle because they have been taught to simultaneously participate in the workforce while balancing home responsibilities. I theorize instead that Black women's rejection of traditional gender norms causes them to view household duties as less of an impediment to running for judicial office than white women. Black women's double minority status may therefore help them overcome the traditional gender gap in ambition because they are socialized to be both caretakers *and* participants in the labor force.

The history of Black women, and the resultant socialization influences that act on Black women today, has not yet been the focus of ambition studies, either in the legislative or judicial literatures. I argue that it is important to recognize the role that history has played in socializing Black women to be both leaders in their homes and communities while working. These socialization experiences are the foundation of the leadership styles of Black women. In recognizing that potential Black female judicial candidates come from a long line of Black women who are primed to be financially independent and social activists, we will understand why potential Black female judicial candidates are more ambitious than other potential candidates. This theory has widespread implications not only with respect to ambition but also for understanding how Black women view themselves once they are in office. These unique socialization experiences may similarly impact potential Black female judicial candidates once they become judges.

In essence, although the previous literature on gender and ambition goes a long way in explaining the ambition of potential female candidates, it does not explain the story of potential Black female candidates. I theorize that socialization experiences that are unique to potential Black female judicial candidates makes them distinctively different from other candidates. And, these differences will impact their desire to run for a judicial office.

I argue that childhood socialization messages to potential Black female judicial candidates are different than socialization messages to other potential female judicial candidates. In particular, potential Black female judicial candidates receive messages from their parents about maintaining financial independence from their spouse and pursuing a career outside the home. I argue that these childhood messages fill in ambition gaps for potential Black female judicial candidates because these messages reinforce the idea that Black women can both work and maintain their home responsibilities.

In the following chapters I will demonstrate the ways that childhood socialization, membership in Black sororities and membership Black churches have also played a major role in Black women's ambition and socialization. Specifically, I argue that membership in a Black sorority fills in ambition gaps for potential female judicial candidates. Black sororities offer leadership development training for its members, which can be used both within and outside of the sorority. Also, Black sororities are different from white sororities because Black sororities are focused on community activism. White sororities are focused on relationship pairing for its members. Therefore, for potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities, I argue that these potential female judicial candidates will have higher ambition than potential female judicial candidates who are not members of Black sororities.

Lastly, I examine the religious socialization experiences. The Black church, which affiliates as Protestant, offers civic leadership opportunities and training for its members. Steeped in a history of community activism and resistance, the Black church helps fill in ambition gaps for potential female judicial candidates because it provides an opportunity to practice civic skills. The skills include letter writing, meeting organization, and community organizing. Also, due to the history of activism, the Black church tends to intermingle religious messages with political messages. The Black church educates and mobilizes its membership in community activism through its sermons, which are sometimes laced with political messages and a call to action. I argue that potential Black female judicial candidates who identify as Protestant are more likely to have higher judicial ambition than other potential female judicial candidates. I also argue that potential Black female judicial candidates who hear political messages while in religious institutions are more likely to have higher ambition than other potential candidates.

The next chapter examines the impact that early childhood messages regarding independence has on potential Black female judicial candidates' ambition levels.

### **3 MESSAGES FROM HOME – HOW DOES EARLY SOCIALIZATION MESSAGES IMPACT AMBITION?**

Parents are indispensable in helping their children foster positive images of themselves. Parents do this through the implicit and explicit socialization messages they provide. The goal of socialization is to help prepare children to navigate the world by communicating principles, value systems, and ideas that will help children function in society. Socialization takes on even more importance in the Black family: “The challenge that [Black] families face is the task of socializing their children to be competent and function within an oppressive society” (Thomas and King 2007). Black families must balance teaching their children about their culture and heritage with acknowledging that they also live in a society that will discriminate against them because of their cultural background.

Research shows that Black parents socialize their children around various racial messages, including messages about racism, workplace bias, and pride in one’s culture (Stevenson et al. 2002; Thomas and Speight 1999). However, the socialization process for Black girls is distinct from that of Black boys and non-Black children (Thomas and Speight 1999). The intersection of race and gender produces gendered racial socialization messages (Thomas and King 2007). Gendered racial socialization is “the process through which families provide differing messages to [Black] girls and boys based on their perceptions of the varied racial climate and landscape for boys and girls” (Brown et al. 2017). Black boys receive socialization messages about racial barriers and how to overcome them, while Black girls receive socialization messages around education, relationships with men, and financial independence (Thomas and Speight 1999). Based on the biased treatment of Black women in society, Black girls are specifically taught to be financially independent and to pursue a career outside of the home in order to support themselves and their families.

Black women's double minority status – being both Black and a woman - forces them to challenge stereotypes about both race *and* gender (West 1995; Chisolm and Greene 2008; Lewis et al. 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand Black women's experiences and how those experiences may impact how they view their place in the world. Part of understanding Black women's experiences is understanding the socialization messages they receive from their parents.

I argue that parental socialization messages around independence will positively impact a Black woman's expression of ambition. Historically, Black women have participated in the labor force in order to support their families (Collins 1987; Hill 2001). Coupled with these parental socialization messages, I contend these twin forces mitigate concerns for Black women over balancing work and family obligations; the reality is that Black women have always had to balance work responsibilities with family obligations. Consequently, this balancing act – one they are taught to master from an early age – will not necessarily deter them from expressing ambition to run for judicial office.

This chapter first overviews Black women's participation in the workforce. It then proceeds by explaining the racial and gendered socialization messages that Black girls receive in their childhood from their parents, in particular messages about financial independence and the pursuit of a career outside the home. I next explicate my theory of how these socialization messages connect to judicial ambition. Lastly, I test this theory utilizing an original survey of Georgia lawyers, and show how socialization messages around financial independence and family influence the expression of judicial ambition among potential female candidates.

### **3.1 Black Women's Participation in the Workforce**

The socialization messages that Black girls receive in childhood is heavily influenced by Black women's workforce participation. Due to a system of segregation and racism in the United



States, Black families have retained Afrocentric values and norms (Hill 2001). In particular, gender roles are more fluid in Black families, with many families being led by the Black female matriarch. “Female-centered families and the mother-child relationship were central under slavery, with slave families often defined as a mother and her children” (Hill 2001). For many Black families today, the Black woman remains the head of the household and the lead in family decision making.

More important, there has not been a history of Black women remaining at home while Black men dominate the workforce. Black women have always had to balance obligations at home with responsibilities at work (Collins 1987). “Evidence strongly supports the contention that Black women have escaped the narrow confines of the restrictive gender roles assumed by Euramerican women, mostly because they have had to assume heavy responsibility for paid work, family, and community” (Hill 2001, 501).

Traditionally, Black women had to be leaders in their families. Hill (2001) states:

A strict breadwinner-homemaker division of labor among spouses never became a tradition in Black families, because men were denied jobs paying a family wage. Thus, the economic roles of women continued to be crucial to the survival of most families, reinforcing the African (Burgess 1994) and American traditions of labor force participation by Black women.

The power of Black women in their families led to redefining the meaning of womanhood. “[D]efinitions of womanhood among Blacks [include] achievement, work and independence” (Giddings 1984, 356).

Dugger (1988) finds that Black women are more likely than white women to reject traditional gender roles. She argues that it is important not to subsume the experiences of Black women into the experiences of white women: “Identification of differences and commonalities among race-gender groups will dispel universalization, which has portrayed the experience of

White middle-class women as the experience of womankind and has distorted analyses of the operation and consequences of sexism” (Dugger 1988, 426).

Since Reconstruction, Black women have been stable fixtures in the labor force, often working as hard (or even harder) than men. At the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851, civil rights activist Sojourner Truth gave one of the most famous speeches about women’s rights, with a particular focus on Black women.

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?  
(National Park Service)

Sojourner Truth, in this speech, highlighted the stark differences of treatment of white and Black women. White women were treated with delicacy while Black women were expected to perform the same time of work as men. Despite this treatment, Black women had to both work and maintain the home, which reinforces values such as independence and self-reliance.

During Reconstruction, the US struggled to “reintegrate Southern states from the Confederacy and 4 million newly-freed people into the United States” (“Reconstruction”). As part of that reintegration, Congress passed the 13<sup>th</sup> (abolished slavery), 14<sup>th</sup> (guaranteed birthright citizenship), and 15<sup>th</sup> (granted right to vote to Black men) Amendments to the Constitution. However, Southern states attempted to continue some elements of slavery by passing legislation which severely limited Blacks’ ability to fully participate in society. These restrictive laws, known as “Black Codes,” enabled whites to control the labor of newly freed Blacks and were intended to codify Blacks’ inferior status in the United States (“Black Codes and Pig Laws”). For example,

Black Codes mandated that Blacks seek the approval of their previous employer before beginning a new job (“Black Codes and Pig Laws”). In South Carolina, Black Codes even allowed the courts to “apprentice” Black orphans to white employers as a source of free labor (Constitutional Rights Foundation).

Both Black and white women fought for rights during the Reconstruction Era, but in different ways. While white women advocates, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were fighting for the right to vote, Black women were fighting for basic survival rights. Black women were fighting for the right to financially support their families (Collins 1990). Because Black men were systematically discriminated against in the labor force, this effectively meant that Black women had to work in order to take care of their families. “Denying U.S. Black men a family wage meant that Black women continued working for pay” (Collins 1990). The idea that a woman’s occupation is exclusively in the home as a homemaker never materialized for Black women.

Even when Black women were employed outside the home, the work consisted primarily of unskilled labor jobs or domestic jobs (Collins 1990; New York Historical Society). Black women continued to work field jobs, often for former slave masters. The work was grueling, and the little earnings that Black women made were used to support their family, including extended family members.

Although Black women were experiencing some new levels of agency, this agency did not lead to overwhelming economic advancement. In addition to receiving low pay in domestic jobs, Black women also had to contend with sexual harassment from their white employers (Collins 1990). With the inability to opt-out of the labor force, Black women had to adeptly navigate situations in which they were being harassed. The sexualization of Black women by white men led to the hypersexualized stereotypes of Black women that persist today (Blackburn Center).

Even though Black women worked primarily domestic or field jobs during Reconstruction, this did not mean that they were not fighting for economic parity with whites. Black women were activists during this time and used their networks to advance equality in their communities.

One such example of Black women's political activism was the 1881 Atlanta Washerwomen Strike. Several Black women gathered at a local Black church to discuss what they should do about the low wages they were receiving as washerwomen (AFL-CIO; Bentley 2019). Washerwomen earned as little as \$8 per month for the tedious work they had to perform (AFL-CIO). The Black women decided to form a trade organization. The result of that meeting was to recruit more washerwomen and then go on strike. Over a span of three weeks, the Washing Society, as the group came to be known, recruited approximately 3,000 Black women to join their cause (AFL-CIO).

The strike lasted for several weeks, and strikers were arrested and fined. But, this response did not discourage the Washing Society from advocating for higher wages. The Atlanta City Council proposed, and the Washing Society accepted, a compromise in which the washerwomen would pay an annual license of \$25 in order to be a self-regulated industry. "To them, self-regulation of their industry was about respect" (AFL-CIO). Black women refused to be treated as second-class citizens with little or no rights. The strike was not just about gaining higher wages. It was also about respecting Black women as a viable labor force.

After Reconstruction, many Black women migrated to cities – both Northern and Southern – from rural areas in search of greater opportunities. In the cities, however, they continued to serve in low-wage domestic roles (Banks 2019; Spaights and Whitaker 1995; Roscigno 2007). Black women had to compete with white women for non-domestic jobs because white women were increasingly entering the workforce (Spaights and Whitaker 1995; Roscigno 2007). This increased

competition caused Black women to continue to be overrepresented in the service job sector (Banks 2019).

Most important for my theory, Black women have consistently had the highest levels of workforce participation of any group of women (Status of Women in the States), and this continues into the 2020s. I argue that this norm of workforce participation has been socialized into the childhood messages Black girls hear, and in turn influences their perception of the costs and benefits of pursuing judicial offices.

### **3.2 Racial and Gendered Socialization Messages**

Historically, racism in society shapes the socialization experiences of children in Black families (Hill 2001). Due to the systematic racism in the workplace, political, and economic spheres, Black parents socialize their children around concepts of identity and self-esteem (Thomas and Speight 1999; Constantine and Blackmon 2002; McHale et al. 2006; Frabutt et al. 2002). Black parents also socialize their children around various messages related to racism, including identifying and dealing with racism, identifying Eurocentric values, and self-pride (Thomas and King 2007). For Black families, racial socialization messages to children are coupled with messages about self-esteem, anger management, anxiety, and academic achievement in school (Constantine and Blackmon 2000, 2002).

Gendered socialization studies examine the difference in socialization messages for girls and boys. These studies include girls of all races, not just Black girls. In gendered socialization studies, researchers find that girls and boys receive different childhood messages regarding family responsibilities (Medved et al. 2006; Galvin et al. 2015; Mesman and Groeneveld 2017; Wang 2012; Lucas and Buzzanell 2012). In their study of gendered socialization messages, Medved et al., (2006) find that the adult men and women continue to receive the same socialization messages

as children. Those messages are that men are responsible for providing for their families and should enter professions that will allow them to financially do so, without the need for their wives to also financially contribute. Alternatively, women are expected to exit the paid workforce at some point in their careers to tend to family responsibilities (Medved et al. 2009; Galvin et al. 2015; Mesman and Groeneveld 2017; Wang 2012; Lucas and Buzzanell 2012). Therefore, women, as a whole, are socialized to rely on men to financially support their families. To the detriment of their career advancement, women are also socialized to make their families their primary jobs, as opposed to a career outside the home.

Socialization messages differ, however, in Black families. Even though Black families tend to provide early childhood socialization messages to their children, the gender of the child impacts the messages that are given. While Black boys are taught about racism and overcoming racial barriers, Black girls tend to receive messages about relationships with men, financial independence, and education (Thomas and Speight 1999).

Not only do socialization messages to Black girls from their parents impact girls' life experiences, the parent that is providing the messages is also significant. Thomas and King (1999) find that Black mothers give specific messages to their Black daughters. In particular, Black mothers teach their daughters about religion, self-determination, and self-pride.

The mothers included in Thomas and King's (1999) study focused on telling their daughters not to let their race and gender keep them from accomplishing their goals. "Mothers seemed to feel that it is important for their daughters to not allow their gender and race to serve as barriers for identity development for functioning as adults. The emphasis placed on self-determination and assertiveness reflects the image of the strength of Black women" (Thomas and King 140-141). For potential judicial candidates, Black women who are socialized to overcome

racial and gender barriers despite discrimination will have the confidence to run for a judicial office.

For Black women, the intersection of race and gender is more salient to their sense of identity than just race or gender alone (Thomas et al. 2011). In their study of Black women (ages 15-21), Thomas et al. (2011) find participants were concerned about negative stereotypes specific to Black women, colorism issues, and issues related to physical appearance and beauty. Furthermore, the participants highlight the importance of self-determination in their lives that they learned from their parents.

Although Thomas and King (1999) find that Black girls are taught self-determination, they warn that such messages may lead to a Black superwoman syndrome. “Many [Black] women often develop a façade of strength and sometimes have difficulty admitting to difficulties or asking for support” (Thomas and King 1999, 141; see also McNair 1992). While parents may teach their Black daughters about working hard to overcome racism and sexism, these messages may cause Black women to work past the point of exhaustion. They may do it because they have seen their mothers and other Black women in their lives do it. Nelson et al. (2016) also find that messages to Black women may manifest themselves into the idea of the strong Black woman or superwoman. But, in their study, their participants note that the strong Black woman idea helps them feel empowered when navigating society (Nelson et al. 2016).

### **3.3 Work Force Participation and Socialization Messages’ Impact on Judicial Ambition**

While Lawless and Fox (2005) find that female candidates are concerned about the balance between career and home, leading to lower political ambition, I theorize instead that potential Black female judicial candidates are less concerned about career-home balance because they have always had to balance these responsibilities. Additionally, they may have seen maternal figures

adeptly balance these obligations during their childhood. Therefore, maintaining both work and home duties is the norm in many Black families. For potential Black female judicial candidates, this will cause them to have higher judicial ambition than other candidates.

My theory explicitly recognizes how Black women's intersectional identity may lead to outcomes different than those experienced by other women, and especially white women. As Dugger (1988) notes in her study, the experiences of Black women should not be subsumed within the experiences of white women. Studies that highlight the experiences of women as a whole (Arceneaux 2001; Costantini 1990; Fox and Lawless 2010; Fox and Lawless 2003; Williams 2008; Jensen and Martinek 2009) miss out on the nuances of judicial ambition for subgroups of potential candidates.

Specifically, studies about traditional gender roles and political ambition (Fox and Lawless 2003) may not capture the experiences of potential Black female judicial candidates. Fox and Lawless (2003) find that women who hold traditional gender views or attitudes are less likely than men to consider running for office. According to their findings, women with traditional gender attitudes express less political ambition than men because they view themselves as the primary caregiver of their children. Therefore, they are less likely to consider running for office because it will take time away from their families.

Comparatively, the history of Black women often involves both working and taking care of the family. In many instances, the Black female is the breadwinner for the family. Not only does the history of the Black family cause Black women to simultaneously work and maintain their home obligations, this history of workforce participation also causes Black women to be socialized from a young age around being financially independent. Young Black girls are taught to be self-sufficient and independent (Hill 2001; Collins 1987, 1990). This sense of independence



will positively impact a potential Black female judicial candidate's ambition because she will not be afraid of the challenges that come with elected office while still maintaining a home life. This balance has been the norm for so many Black families, and so the decision making calculus for potential Black female judicial candidates will consider the impact of family obligations differentially than other women. Thus, elected office becomes just another form of career advancement and responsibility.

Building on Dugger's (1988) finding that Black women tend to reject traditional views regarding gender roles, I argue that Fox and Lawless's (2003) study may not be generalizable to all subgroups of women. I theorize instead that potential Black female judicial candidates will express more judicial ambition than other candidates because they have been socialized around leading their households while simultaneously managing their careers. Family obligations, such as marriage and children, are not an automatic deterrent for potential Black female judicial candidates as they are for other female candidates. "Black women's long history of economic participation has given rise to definitions of womanhood at odds with those of the dominant culture" (Dugger 1988). Black girls are socialized to be independent, assertive, and economically self-sufficient (Hill and Sprague 1999).

For potential Black female judicial candidates, these socialization messages, paired with the history of Black women participating in the workforce, leads to them overcoming gaps in judicial ambition. They are socialized around being superheroes and directly confronting (and fighting against) stereotypes about Black women. So, Black women's double minority status actually works in their favor when it comes to expressing judicial ambition. There is less of a fear of putting their hat in the candidate ring because Black women are used to stepping into uncomfortable spaces. There is less of a fear of balancing work and home because Black women

have always had to do that. Therefore, for potential Black female judicial candidates, childhood messages from parents about identity and race help potential candidates gain the confidence they need to potentially run for office.

I therefore argue that potential Black female and potential white female judicial candidates express ambition differently based on whether they hear messages about marriage, having children, and maintaining financial independence from their parents. This results in two hypotheses that will be tested in the upcoming sections of this chapter:

*Financial Independence Hypothesis (a): Potential Black female judicial candidates who hear messages from parents about financial independence are more likely to have higher ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages.*

*Financial Independence Hypothesis (b): Potential white female judicial candidates who hear messages from parents about financial independence are more likely to have higher ambition than potential white female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages.*

*Family Hypothesis (a): Potential Black female judicial candidates who hear family messages from parents are no more or less likely to have higher ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages.*

*Family Hypothesis (b): Potential white female judicial candidates who hear family messages from parents are more likely to have lower ambition than potential white female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages.*

In the next section, I explain the survey instrument used in this study and the survey questions that are used to test the hypotheses.

### 3.4 Judicial Ambition Survey

To examine the impact of various factors on judicial ambition, I build upon the previous work of Fox and Lawless (2003, 2005). Fox and Lawless (2003) created the Citizen Political Ambition Study which surveys “potential” political candidates about their interest and willingness to run for elected office. I administered an original survey of licensed Georgia attorneys. Attorneys who were listed as “active” on the Georgia Bar Association’s website and had a publicly available email address were included in the survey distribution list. I excluded from the survey distribution list attorneys who were listed as “terminated” or “inactive.”

The email invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 8,803 attorneys, with 317 women responding. There were also 1 non-binary respondent, and 5 respondents who declined to identify their gender.

Table 3.1 shows a breakdown of the respondents’ race. Although most of the survey respondents identify as white, the respondents’ race is aligned with the population’s race.

*Table 3.1 Respondents' Race*

	Number of Respondents
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Asian	5
Black	72
Latina	8
White	228

Table 3.2 shows the current job positions of the survey respondents. There is great diversity in the current positions held by the respondents. But, very few respondents currently work as prosecutors or public defenders at either the state or federal levels. Most respondents work as law solo practitioners (45), law firm partners (52), or identify themselves as “Other” (73).

Table 3.2 Respondents' Job Positions

	Number of Respondents
Federal Prosecutor	1
Federal Public Defender	1
Judicial Law Clerk	5
Law Firm Associate	44
Law Firm Partner	52
Solo Practitioner	45
State Prosecutor	11
State Public Defender	11
Other	73

Since this current study is focused on judicial ambition for potential female judicial candidates, only the responses from the female survey respondents (317) were used in the analyses.

The judicial ambition survey consisted of questions in the following areas: background and family life; political attitudes; attitudes about running for public office; impressions and experiences with running for office; professional experiences; parental messages; membership in a sorority, and religious community participation. The survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

The dependent variable in the analyses is *Judicial Ambition*, which is whether the respondent has ever thought about running for judicial office. The survey question for the dependent variable is as follows:

*If you have never run for an elective judicial office, have you ever thought about running for judicial office?*

- *Yes, I have seriously considered it.*
- *Yes, it has crossed my mind.*
- *No, I have not thought about it.*

I recoded the dependent variable *Judicial Ambition* as a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent has ever thought about running for judicial office, and 0 otherwise. Respondents who indicate either “Yes, I have seriously considered it” or “Yes, it has crossed my mind” are coded as 1. Respondents who indicate “No, I have not thought about it” are coded as 0. Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, a probit model is used in the analyses.

Two survey questions are used for the Financial Independence Hypothesis. They are listed below:

1. *How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to pursue a career outside the home?*
  - Very frequently*
  - Frequently*
  - Occasionally*
  - Rarely*
  - Very rarely*
  - Never*
2. *Did your parent/guardian ever tell you that you were expected to maintain financial independence from your spouse?*
  - Yes*
  - No*

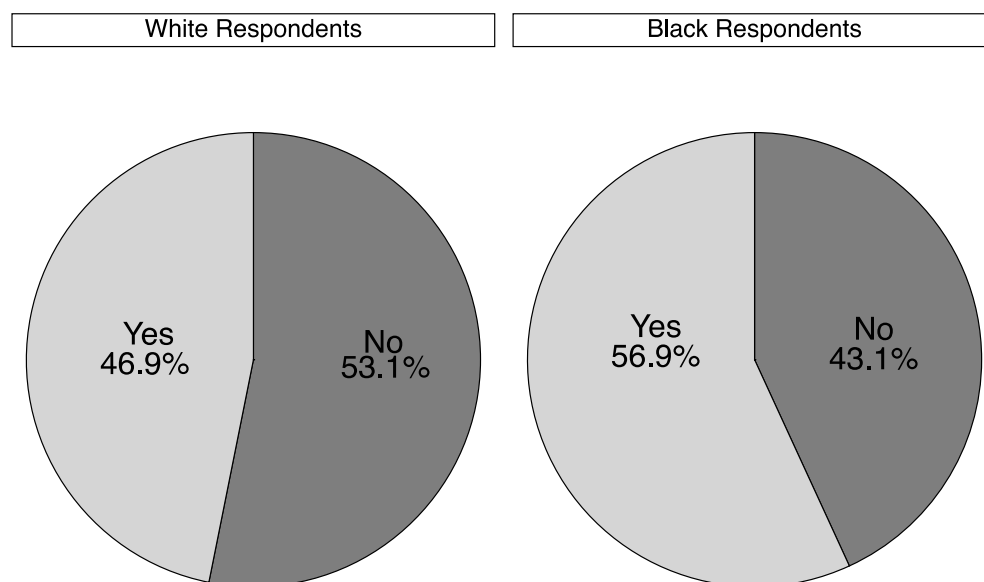
Additionally, two survey questions are used for the Family Hypothesis. They are listed below:

1. *How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to get married?*
  - Very frequently*
  - Frequently*
  - Occasionally*
  - Rarely*
  - Very rarely*
  - Never*
2. *How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to have children?*
  - Very frequently*
  - Frequently*
  - Occasionally*

- *Rarely*
- *Very rarely*
- *Never*

### 3.5 Empirical Analysis

I begin with a descriptive analysis of the survey results. Figure 3.1 shows the results from the question of whether the respondents' parents ever told them that they were expected to maintain financial independence from their spouse (Financial Independence Question #2). Black respondents are more likely than white respondents to be told by parents that they should maintain financial independence from their spouse. 56.9% ( $p = 0.072$ ) of Black respondents indicate that their parents told them to maintain financial independence from their spouse, compared to 46.9% ( $p = 0.475$ ) of white respondents.

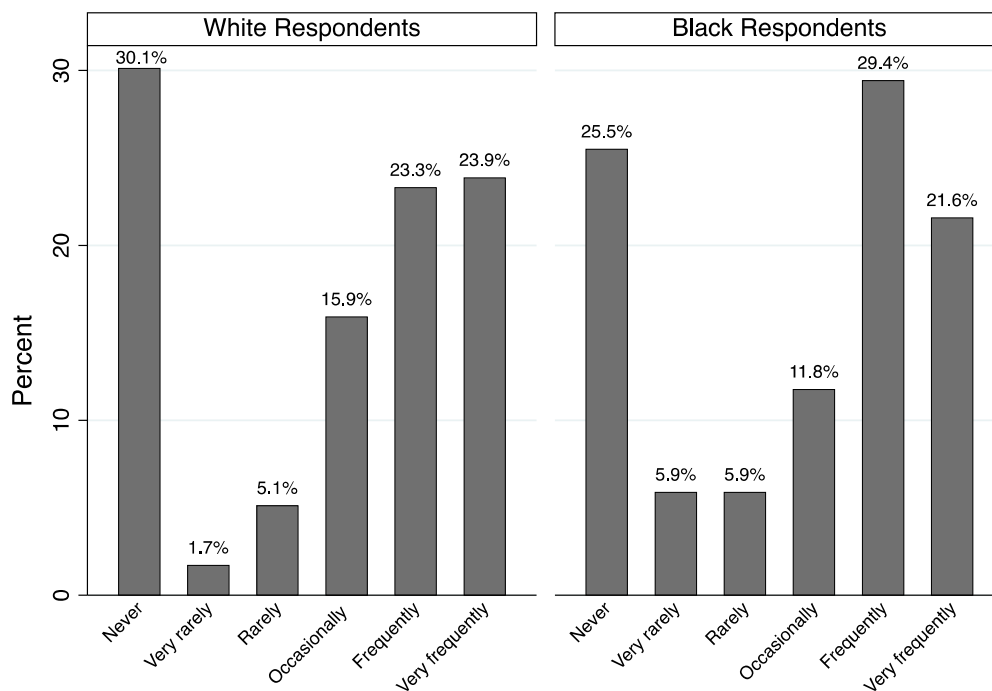


*Figure 3.1 Did Your Parent/Guardian Ever Tell You That You Were Expected to Maintain Financial Independence From Your Spouse?, By Race (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

There are also differences between Black and white respondents regarding how often they received messages from their parents regarding pursuing a career outside of the home (Financial Independence Question #1). Figure 3.2 shows that white respondents are slightly more likely than Black respondents to have never heard outside career messages from their parents: 30.1% of white respondents, compared to 25.5% of Black respondents, indicate that they have never received messages from their parents about pursuing a career outside of the home.

There are also slight differences in the percent of respondents who frequently or very frequently heard such messages. Figure 3.2 shows Black respondents were slightly more likely to indicate that they were frequently or very frequently told by parents to pursue a career outside the home. Fifty-one percent of Black respondents, compared to 47.2% of white respondents, indicate that their parents frequently or very frequently told them to pursue a career outside the home. Overall, Black respondents are slightly more likely than white respondents to receive parental messages regarding pursuing a career and maintaining financial independence in their marriage.



*Figure 3.2 How Often Did Your Parent/Guardian Tell You That You Were Expected to Pursue a Career Outside the Home?, By Race (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

Table 3.3 reports judicial ambition levels based on whether the respondents have received parental messages regarding financial independence. There are astounding differences between the ambition levels for white and Black respondents based on whether they have received financial independence messages from their parents. As Table 3.3 shows, a Black respondent who receives no messages from her parents regarding pursuing a career outside the home or maintaining financial independence from her spouse is less likely than a white respondent to express ambition. About 67% of Black respondents who do not receive such messages indicate that they have not thought about running for judicial office, compared to 53.9% of white respondents ( $p=0.06$ ).

As Table 3.3 shows, most Black respondents have received at least one of the financial independence messages. Twenty-five Black respondents have been by their parents to told either



to maintain financial independence from their spouse or pursue a career outside the home. Twenty-one Black respondents have received both financial independence messages from their parents. Only three Black respondents did not receive either message.

77% of white respondents have received at least one or both of the financial independence messages, compared to 94% of Black respondents ( $p=0.00$ ). For respondents who have received messages from their parents about *either* financial independence or pursuing a career outside the home, white respondents are less likely than Black respondents to indicate that they have not considered a judicial run. 51.8% of white respondents, compared to 56% of Black respondents, who have only received one of the financial independence messages indicate that they have not considered running for judicial office.

Lastly, there are appreciable differences between the ambition levels of Black and white respondents if their parents have told them to both pursue an outside career and maintain financial independence from their spouse. For Black respondents, if they have received both financial independence messages, only about 19% indicate they have not considered a judicial run, compared to 81% who have indicated that it has crossed their mind or they have seriously considered running. For white respondents who have received both financial independence messages, 44.1% indicate they have not considered a judicial run, compared to 55.9% who have indicated that it has crossed their mind or they have seriously considered running.

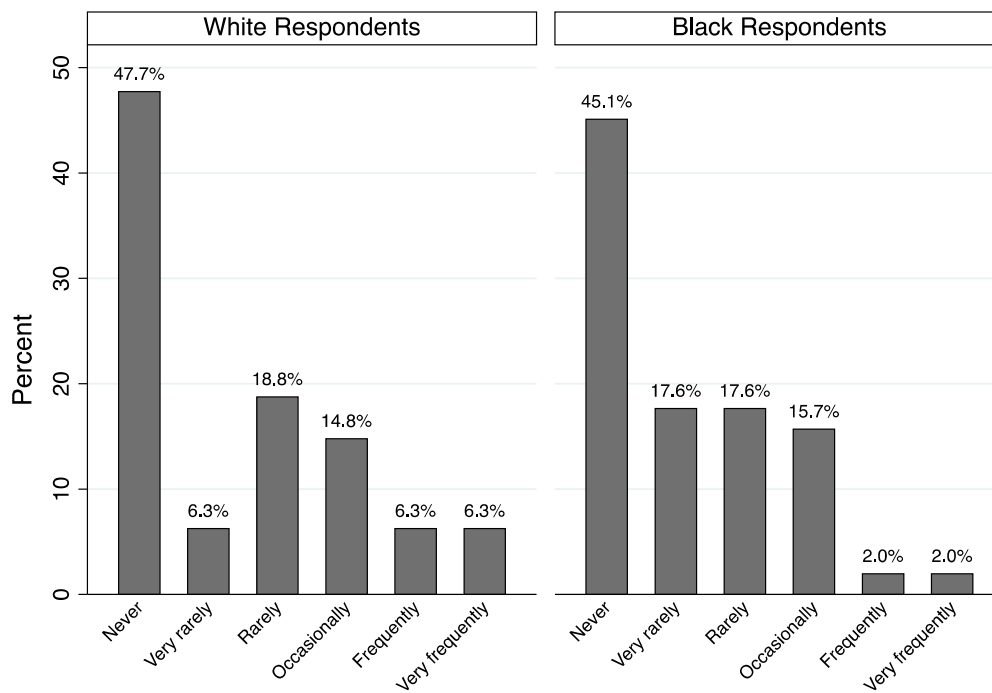
Table 3.3 *Ambition Levels, By Financial Independence Messages*

	<i>White Respondents</i>			<i>Black Respondents</i>		
	Received no messages	Received financial independence or outside career messages	Received both financial independence and outside career messages	Received no messages	Received financial independence or outside career messages	Received both financial independence and outside career messages
No, I have not thought about it.	21 (53.9%)	29 (51.8%)	30 (44.1%)	2 (66.7%)	14 (56.0%)	4 (19.0%)
Yes, it has crossed my mind.	16 (41.0%)	22 (39.3%)	28 (41.2%)	1 (33.3%)	8 (32.0%)	14 (66.7%)
Yes, I have seriously considered it.	2 (5.1%)	5 (8.9%)	10 (14.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.12%)	3 (14.3%)
Totals	49	39	68	3	25	21

Table 3.3 shows that financial independence messages tend to have a noticeable impact on Black respondents. If Black respondents have not received both financial messages from their parents (maintain financial independence and pursue a career outside the home), they are less likely than white respondents to express ambition. Once a Black respondent has received both financial independence messages, she is noticeably more likely than a white respondent to express interest in running for a judicial seat.

Do messages about family expectations have similar effects? Figure 3.3 shows how often respondents have been told by their parents that they were expected to get married. White respondents were more likely than Black respondents to indicate they have never been told by their parents that they were expected to get married. This is likely due to the fact that marriage is an

implicit expectation for white women. 47.7% of white respondents, compared to 45.1% of Black respondents, have never been told by their parents they were expected to get married.



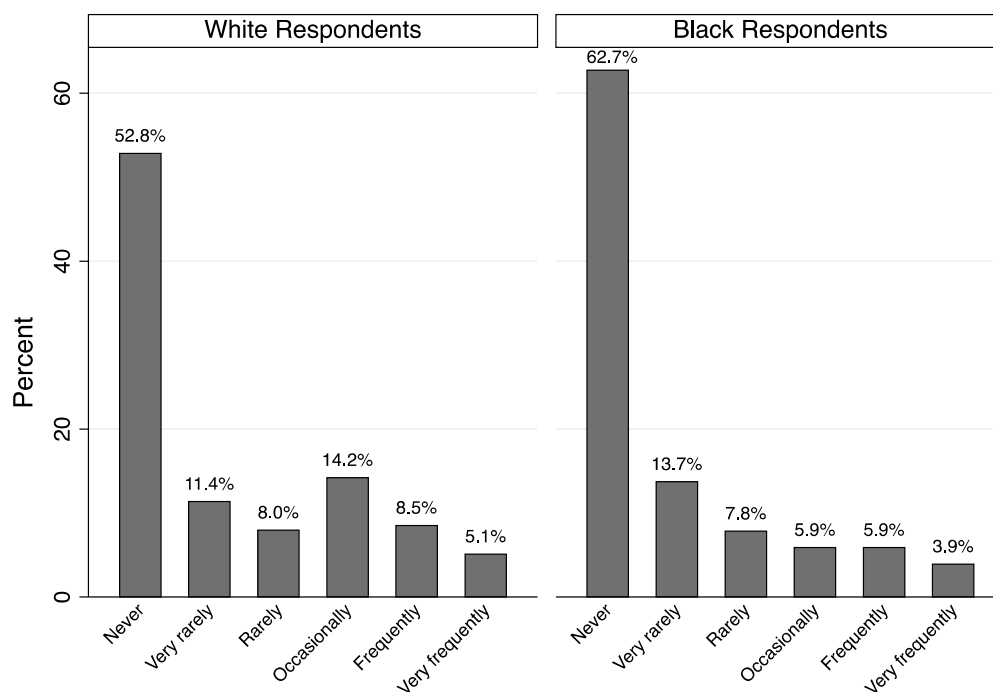
*Figure 3.3 How Often Did Your Parent/Guardian Tell You That You Were Expected to Get Married, By Race (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

Figure 3.3 also shows, however, that white respondents are more likely than Black respondents to have frequently or very frequently been told that they were expected to get married. 12.6% of white respondents were frequently or very frequently told they were expected to get married compared to only 4.0% of Black respondents.

Figure 3.4 reports how often respondents were told by their parents they were expected to have children. Black respondents (62.7%) are more likely than white respondents (52.5%) to have never received messages from their parents about having children. Not only are Black respondents less likely to have received such messages from their parents than white respondents, they also

receive such messages less frequently than non-Black respondents if they are told messages about having children. 13.6% of non-Black respondents frequently or very frequently receive parental messages about having children, compared to 9.8% of Black respondents.



*Figure 3.4 How Often Did Your Parent/Guardian Tell You That You Were Expected to Have Children, By Race (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

Table 3.4 explores how these messages about children and marriage influence the ambition levels of respondents. 57.7% of white respondents have received one or both of the family messages from parents, compared to 69.4% of Black respondents ( $p=0.00$ ). Therefore, Black respondents are more likely than white respondents to receive messages from their parents about having children. However, as I will show in the probit analysis, this will not impact the expression of ambition.

For Black respondents, receiving messages from their parents about getting married or having children depresses their likelihood of expressing ambition in running for office. Interestingly, Black respondents who have received only one of the family messages from parents have the lowest level of ambition of all respondents. 66.7% of Black respondents who have been told by their parents either about getting married or having children have not thought about running for judicial office. However, once the Black respondent has received both family messages from their parents (having children and getting married), the ambition level increases, with 30.8% of those respondents not considering a run for judicial office.

Table 3.4 also shows that white respondents who have not received family messages from their parents have higher ambition than white respondents who have received such messages. 40.8% of white respondents who have not received family messages from parents have not considered a judicial run, compared to 58.6% and 54.4% of white respondents who have either received one or both family messages from parents, respectively.

When comparing white and Black respondents, Black respondents who have not received family messages from parents are more likely to express ambition than white respondents who also have not received such messages from parents. 86.7% of Black respondents who have not received family messages from parents express ambition, compared to 59.1% of white respondents.

Table 3.4 Ambition Levels, By Family Messages

	White Respondents			Black Respondents		
	Received no messages	Received marriage <i>or</i> children messages	Received <i>both</i> marriage <i>and</i> children messages	Received no messages	Received marriage <i>or</i> children messages	Received <i>both</i> marriage <i>and</i> children messages
No, I have not thought about it.	27 (40.8%)	17 (58.6%)	37 (54.4%)	2 (13.3%)	14 (66.7%)	4 (30.8%)
Yes, it has crossed my mind.	35 (46.9%)	7 (24.4%)	24 (35.3%)	10 (66.7%)	6 (28.6%)	7 (53.9%)
Yes, I have seriously considered it.	5 (12.2%)	5 (17.2%)	7 (10.3%)	3 (20.0%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (15.4%)
Totals	67	29	68	15	21	13

With white respondents, there is little difference in ambition once the respondent receives at least one family message from parents. For white respondents who have been told either to have children or get married, 58.6% indicate that they have not considered a judicial run. For white respondents who have been told by parents to have children and get married, 54.4% of respondents have not considered a run for judicial office.

The same pattern holds true when we examine those who do express some level of ambition: about 17.2% of white respondents who have received just one of the family messages from parents indicate they have seriously considered running for judicial office, compared to 10.3% of white respondents who have received both family messages from parents.

Lastly, I examine the initial relationship between the independent variables of interest in this chapter and the dependent variable. Table 3.5 shows the correlations between (1) financial messages and (2) family messages and the dependent variable *Judicial Ambition*. I expect that there is a positive relationship between financial messages and judicial ambition. More financial independence messages from parents to a potential candidate will increase the likelihood that the potential candidate expresses ambition. Conversely, more family messages from parents to potential candidates will decrease the likelihood that the potential candidate expresses judicial ambition. Statistical significance of the correlations are in parentheses.

Also, in comparing white respondents, there is little difference in ambition once the respondent receives at least one family message from parents. For white respondents who have been told either to have children or get married, 58.6% indicate that they have not considered a judicial run. For white respondents who have been told by parents to have children and get married, 54.4% of respondents have not considered a run for judicial office.

*Table 3.5 Correlations Between Possible Parental Messages and Judicial Ambition*

	Judicial Ambition
Financial Independence Messages (Black Respondents)	0.116 (0.02)
Financial Independence Messages (non-Black Respondents)	-0.013 (0.854)
Family Messages (Black Respondents)	0.047 (0.458)
Family Messages (non-Black Respondents)	-0.130 (0.06)

*Note:* Statistical significance is in parentheses.

For Black respondents, financial independence messages is significant with its  $p$ -value of 0.02. The correlation is also in the expected direction (positive). For Black respondents, hearing financial independence messages tend to increase the expression of judicial ambition. For white

respondents, financial independence messages is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. While the raw results suggest some linkages between judicial ambition and messages about family, none of the correlations are statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level for either Black or white respondents.

To further explore the connection between judicial ambition and childhood socialization messages, I estimate series of probit models. The dependent variable for the analysis below is *Judicial Ambition*. I code this variable dichotomously, with 1 reflecting the respondent has ever considered running for office, and 0 meaning that they have never thought about it.

The independent variables of interest pertain to childhood socialization messages from parents. I created a set of four dummy variables to measure financial independence messages. *Black Financial Messages* captures whether the respondent identifies as Black and has received messages from parents to pursue a career or maintain financial independence from one's spouse. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as Black and has received at least one financial independence message, and 0 otherwise. I expect that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive financial independence messages from parents are more likely to have higher judicial ambition than potential -Black female judicial candidates who have not received such messages. This variable should have a positive relationship with the dependent variable.

*Black Non-Financial Messages* captures whether the respondent identifies as Black and has not received messages from parents to either pursue a career or maintain financial independence from one's spouse. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as Black and has not received financial independence messages, and 0 otherwise.

*White Financial Messages* is whether the respondent identifies as white and has received messages from parents to pursue a career and maintain financial independence from one's spouse.



This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as white and has received financial independence messages, and 0 otherwise. I expect that white respondents who have received financial independence messages are more likely to have higher judicial ambition than white respondents who have not received these messages. This variable should have a positive relationship with the dependent variable.

*White Non-Financial Messages* is whether the respondent identifies as white and has not received messages from parents about either pursuing a career outside of the home or maintaining financial independence from one's spouse. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as white and has not received financial independence messages, and 0 otherwise.

To measure family messages, I created a set of four dummy variables. *Black Family Messages* measures whether the respondent identifies as Black and has received messages from parents about having children or getting married. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as Black and has received at least one family message, and 0 otherwise. I expect that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive messages from parents about having children or getting married are no more or less likely to have lower judicial ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not receive family messages.

*Black Non-Family Messages* measures whether the respondent identifies as Black and has not received messages from parents about having children or getting married. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as Black and has not receives family messages, and 0 otherwise.

*White Family Messages* measures whether the respondent identifies as white and has received messages from parents about having children or getting married. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as white and has received family messages, and 0 otherwise. I expect

that potential white female judicial candidates who receive messages from parents about having children or getting married are more likely to have lower judicial ambition than potential white female judicial candidates who do not receive messages from parents about having children or getting married. This variable should have a negative relationship with the dependent variable.

*White Non-Family Messages* measures whether the respondent identifies as white and has not received any messages from parents about getting married or having children. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as white and has not received family messages, and 0 otherwise.

In addition, I include several variables to control for other demographic and socialization factors that may impact the expression of ambition. First, I include the dichotomous variable *Children in Home*, coded 1 if the respondent has any children currently living in their home, and 0 otherwise. Prior studies show that potential female candidates who have children in the home express lower ambition because women tend to be the primary caregiver in their homes (Lawless and Fox 2005). I expect to find that potential judicial candidates with children in the home will express lower ambition than other potential candidates who do not have children currently living at home.

Second, I include the dichotomous variable *Married*, which indicates whether the respondent is currently married. Studies indicate that potential female candidates who are married tend to express lower ambition than unmarried potential candidates because they are concerned about the impact of an elected office on their home responsibilities. (Lawless and Fox 2005; Sheldon and Maule 1997; Carroll 1994).

Third, the dichotomous variable *Recruitment* indicates whether the respondent has ever been recruited or encouraged to run for judicial office. Studies show that female candidates are

less likely to be recruited for office, despite being high qualified (Williams 2008; Fox and Lawless 2010). This lack of political recruitment leads to lower ambition. I expect to find that potential female judicial candidates who are recruited will have higher ambition than other potential candidates.

### ***3.5.1 Results and Discussion***

Table 3.6 displays the results from the probit analysis for the Financial Messages hypothesis. In Model 1, the reference category is *White Non-Financial*. In Model 2, the reference category is *Black Non-Financial*. In Model 1, *Black Financial Messages* and *Recruitment* are statistically significant at the 0.05 level and in the expected direction. As the results of the analysis show, potential Black female judicial candidates who hear childhood messages from their parents about maintaining financial independence from their spouse and pursuing a career outside of the home are more likely to express ambition than potential white female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages. In Model 1, potential white female judicial candidates who hear financial messages are not more likely to express ambition than potential white female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages.

In Model 2, *Black Financial Messages*, *White Financial Messages*, and *Recruitment* are statistically significant. Potential Black female judicial candidates who hear childhood messages about pursuing a career outside the home or maintaining financial independence from their spouse are more likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages. This supports Financial Independence Hypothesis(a).

As the results from the probit analysis in Table 3.6 show, childhood socialization messages to Black women impact how they view their ability to engage in the civic process, namely by running for office. Messages that encourage Black women to financially support themselves and

have a career outside the home fill in gaps in ambition because those messages encourage Black women to continue balancing home and work responsibilities.

*Table 3.6 The Impact of Financial Messages on Judicial Ambition*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Black Financial Messages	0.810 (0.351)	0.021	1.312 (0.412)	0.001
Black Non-Financial Messages	-0.503 (0.387)	0.195	—	—
White Financial Messages	0.085 (0.238)	0.722	0.588 (0.338)	0.082
White Non-Financial Messages	—	—	0.502 (0.387)	0.195
Recruitment	0.854 (0.281)	0.002	0.854 (0.281)	0.002
Married	0.086 (0.199)	0.669	0.086 (0.20)	0.669
Children	0.176 (0.196)	0.369	0.176 (0.196)	0.369
Constant	-0.946 (0.341)	0.006	-1.449 (0.431)	0.001
N	211			
Wald $\chi^2$	21.32			
Log pseudolikelihood	-133.154			
% correctly predicted	64.5%			
PRE (%)	24.9			

*Note:* Dependent variable is *Judicial Ambition*. Estimates are probit coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. PRE = Percent Reduction of Error. The reference category for Model 1 is *Non-Black Non-Financial Messages*. The reference category for Model 2 is *Black Non-Financial Messages*.

Table 3.7 displays the results from the probit analysis for the Family Messages hypothesis. In Model 1, the reference category is *White Non-Family Messages*. In Model 2, the reference category is *Black Non-Family Messages*. In Model 1, *Black Non-Family Messages* and *Recruitment* are statistically significant. Potential Black female judicial candidates who do not

hear family messages are more likely than potential white female judicial candidates who do not hear family messages to express ambition.

In Model 2, *White Family Messages*, *White Non-Family Messages*, and *Recruitment* are statistically significant. *Black Family Messages* has a *p*-value of 0.140, which shows support for the Family Messages(a) null hypothesis. I expect that potential Black judicial candidates who hear family messages about getting married and having children are no more or less likely to express judicial ambition than potential Black judicial candidates. Furthermore, I expect that potential Black judicial candidates who hear messages about maintaining financial independence from their spouse and having a career outside of the home are more likely to express judicial ambition.

Early socialization messages from parents to potential Black candidates about getting married or having children do not tend to suppress or amplify judicial ambition. As the results of the probit analysis show, early socialization messages about family does not deter potential Black female judicial candidates from considering running for office. This is due, in part, to the history of work force participation for Black women. Traditionally, Black women have had to work to support their families. Therefore, childhood messages about having children and getting married will not impact a Black woman's willingness to continue to participate in the workforce.

Additionally, as will be shown throughout this research study, potential candidates who are recruited or encouraged to run are more likely to express ambition than other potential candidates. The coefficient for *Recruitment* is positive and shows that recruited potential candidates tend to express judicial ambition.

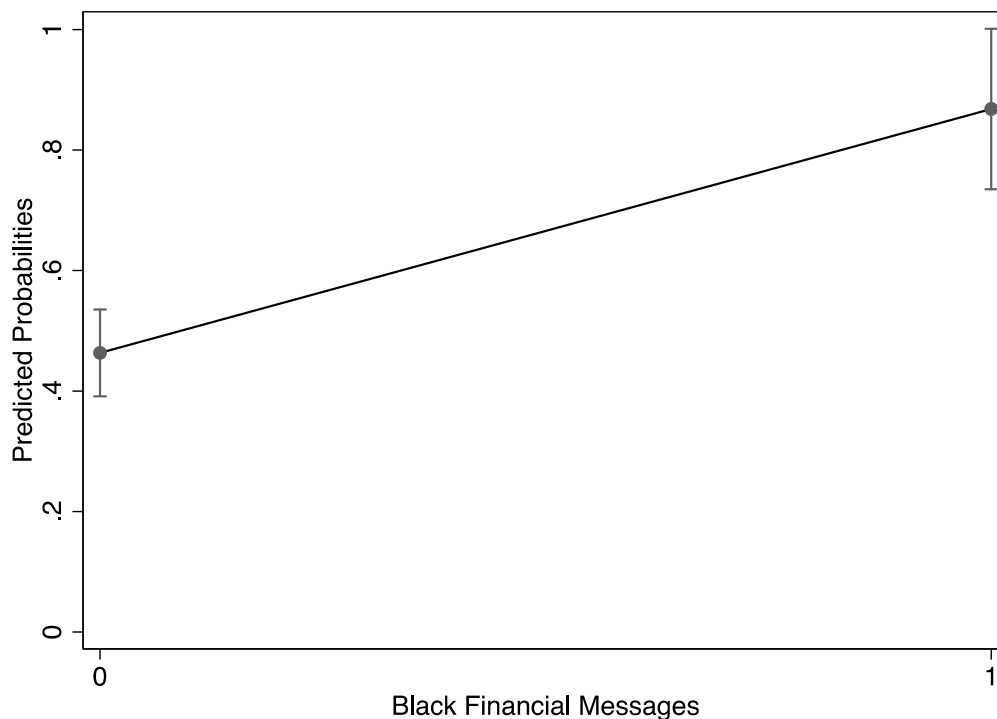
Table 3.7 *The Impact of Family Messages on Judicial Ambition*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Black Family Messages	-0.389 (0.280)	0.165	-1.201 (0.488)	0.140
Black Non-Family Messages	0.812 (0.456)	0.050	—	—
White Family Messages	-0.392 (0.206)	0.057	-1.204 (0.449)	0.007
White Non-Family Messages	—	—	-0.812 (0.456)	0.075
Recruitment	0.901 (0.206)	0.001	0.901 (0.270)	0.001
Married	0.058 (0.199)	0.771	0.058 (0.198)	0.771
Children	0.237 (0.201)	0.237	0.237 (0.201)	0.237
Constant	-0.714 (0.316)	0.024	0.098 (0.498)	0.844
N	212			
Wald $\chi^2$	22.65			
Log pseudolikelihood	-133.752			
% correctly predicted	62.7%			
PRE (%)	21.9%			

*Note:* Dependent variable is *Judicial Ambition*. Estimates are probit coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. PRE = Percent Reduction of Error. The reference category for Model 1 is *Non-Black Non-Family Messages*. The reference category for Model 2 is *Black Non-Family Messages*.

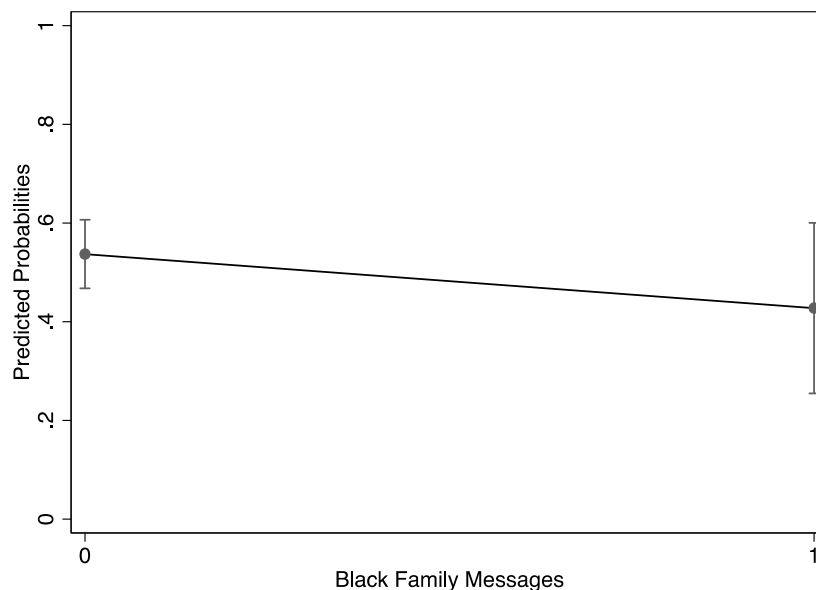
Figure 3.5 confirms the results from the probit analysis for the Financial Independence Messages hypothesis (Model 2). Figure 3.5 shows that for potential Black judicial candidates who receive messages from their parents about pursuing a career outside the home or maintaining financial independence from their spouse, ambition increases by 32.3%. Therefore, a potential Black judicial candidate who does receive childhood messages from parents about having a career outside of the home or maintaining financial independence from their spouse are more likely to

express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages.



*Figure 3.5 Predicted Probabilities of Receiving Financial Independence Messages on Judicial Ambition, For Black Respondents*

Figure 3.6 confirms the results from the probit analysis for the Family Messages hypothesis (Model 2). Figure 3.6 shows that for potential Black judicial candidates who receive messages from their parents about getting married or having children, ambition only decreases by 13%. Therefore, a potential Black judicial candidate who does receive childhood messages from parents about having children and getting married are not substantially less likely to express ambition, even though discussion of getting married and having children conform to traditional gender norms.



*Figure 3.6 Predicted Probabilities of Receiving Family Messages on Judicial Ambition, For Black Respondents*

### 3.6 Conclusion

Black women have traditionally participated in the labor workforce. Due to the discrimination against Black men, Black women had to participate in the work force in order to support their families, including extended family members. Therefore, for potential Black female judicial candidates, the work-life balance is not as big a concern as for non-Black female judicial candidates because of this history of working. Since Black women have always had to work, judicial ambition is not impacted by the concern of maintaining family responsibilities.

Not only do Black women have a history of participating in the work force, they are also socialized around maintaining financial independence, even during marriage. Socialization messages are important to Black women. And, childhood socialization messages have a later impact on the expression of judicial ambition.

For potential Black female judicial candidates, they are more likely to express judicial ambition as they receive more childhood independence messages throughout childhood.



Childhood messages from parents about maintaining financial independence from one's spouse and having a career outside the home lead potential Black female judicial candidates to express more ambition than Black women who have not heard such messages. On the other hand, childhood messages that encourage potential Black candidates to adhere to gender norms have the opposite effect. Messages about having children and getting married tend to depress ambition for potential Black judicial candidates.

Overall, I find that childhood socialization messages impact judicial ambition for potential Black female candidates. In particular, potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about maintaining financial independence from their spouse or pursuing a career outside of the home are more likely to express ambition than potential Black or white female judicial candidates who do not hear such messages. Financial independence messages do not impact the expression of ambition for potential non-Black female judicial candidates.

Childhood socialization messages regarding getting married or having children impact potential Black and white female judicial candidates differently. Messages from parents about having a family do not have a statistically significant impact on white female judicial candidates. For potential Black female judicial candidates who have heard family messages during childhood, hearing the messages do not deter Black female judicial candidates from expressing ambition. This is likely due to the fact that Black women have always had to work while maintaining families. For potential Black female judicial candidates who have not heard family messages during childhood, they are more likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who have heard such messages.

For potential Black female judicial candidates, childhood messages from parents matter. As a whole, socialization experiences tend to impact whether a potential Black female judicial

candidate expresses ambition. One such experience is Black sorority membership. As will be shown in Chapter 4, Black sorority membership primes potential judicial candidates to express ambition.

#### 4 STOMPING THE YARD – THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF BLACK SORORITIES ON JUDICIAL AMBITION

On January 21, 2019, United States Senator Kamala Harris announced her presidential bid on the national news broadcast *Good Morning America*. Joining a very crowded field of Democratic candidates for the highest office in the country, Harris stood out for a number of reasons. Although Harris was joining other women and minorities in trying to capture the Democratic nomination for president, she was one of only two minority women in the jam-packed race. The other minority woman was Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, who is of Asian, Polynesian, and Caucasian descent. Harris ultimately became the first-ever Black and first-ever Black Female (as well as first-ever South Asian) vice presidential nominee from a major party, as well as the first ever person in all of those categories to hold the office of Vice President. One would reasonably imagine Harris stood out to voters for this reason alone.

But another part of Vice President Harris’s identity captured as much media attention as her race and gender. Harris has in her arsenal a political weapon that no other current national candidate from a major political party has – membership in a Black sorority.<sup>1</sup> Although the honor of being the first Black sorority member to seek a major party nomination for president belongs to former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.),<sup>2</sup> Harris

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<sup>1</sup> Fraternity membership is not a new phenomenon to our nation’s leaders. In fact, most men in the nation’s highest government positions were members of fraternities in college. “Fraternity men make up 85 percent of U.S. Supreme Court justices since 1910, 63 percent of all U.S. presidential cabinet members since 1900, and, historically, 76 percent of U.S. Senators, 85 percent of Fortune 500 executives, and 71 percent of the men in ‘Who’s Who in America.’” (Konnikova 2014). As will be explained throughout this chapter, Black sororities differ from their white counterparts because they are primarily focused on community service and leadership development as opposed to social connections.

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Chisholm, a Congresswoman from New York, was the first Black woman to run for U.S. president. (National Public Radio 2008). Recognizing the low chance of obtaining the 1972 Democratic nomination, Chisholm shared with U.S. Representative Barbara Lee in the 1970s that she should use her power, even if it seems futile. “Chisholm told me [Lee], no matter what I do in life, use your power judiciously, use it with humility, but use it” (National Public Radio 2008). Chisholm eventually lost the nomination to Senator George McGovern (National Public Radio 2008). She was also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., one of four Black sororities (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority – Notable Members).

is the first member of a Black sorority to be chosen as a vice presidential candidate for a major party.

Harris is a member of the oldest Black sorority in our country, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA) (Suggs 2020). Kamala Harris was initiated into AKA in 1986 on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC (Suggs 2020). In commenting on her initial run for president, Harris noted the importance of the sorority to her identity and to the run itself: “Having my AKA sisters behind me, seeing them at events across the country, is a reminder to me as I run for president, because I know if I’m not on the stage, there’s a certain voice that will not be present on that stage, a voice that must be heard” (Terry Ellis 2019). Not only is Harris proud to mention that she is a member of AKA, and often mentioned her membership on the campaign trail, but the sorority’s members are also elated to mention that Harris is a prominent member of the organization (Saul 2019, Terry Ellis 2019). Shannon Burge, an AKA member, stated that Harris “just reminds me to be fearless in the pursuit of my goals” (Saul 2019).

Black sororities are a unique microcosm of campus life and differ in important ways from their white counterparts. Black sororities are more than just sister organizations to their male equivalents, and they are more than just organizations that host college parties. Rather, the four historically Black sororities -- Alpha Kappa Alpha<sup>3</sup>, Delta Sigma Theta<sup>4</sup>, Zeta Phi Beta<sup>5</sup>, and Sigma Gamma Rho<sup>6</sup> -- were all founded by college-educated Black women in order to spearhead

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<sup>3</sup> Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 15, 1908 on the campus of Howard University (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority). Although Alpha Kappa Alpha was initially founded based on a social mission, the organization eventually adopted a community activism mission (Giddings 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 13, 1913 on the campus of Howard University (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority – Mission and Purpose). The organization’s first public act was participating in the women’s suffrage march, which was three months after its founding (Giddings 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 16, 1920 on the campus of Howard University (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority).

<sup>6</sup> Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. was founded on November 12, 1922 on the campus of Butler University (Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority).

positive change in the community at large, especially regarding issues important to the Black community. And, membership in Black sororities extends beyond college. Members are expected to financially contribute to and actively participate in alumnae chapters once they graduate.

Black sororities provide opportunities for their members to be leaders in their communities. Voter registration drives, social protests, and community calls-to-action are not uncommon for Black sorority members. Thus, Black sororities are the perfect training ground for its members who aspire towards public office because these organizations give members an opportunity to practice necessary civic engagement skills before hitting the campaign trail. And that is a reason why Harris credits AKA with being such an influential part of her identity. In a 2019 Tweet, Harris stated that “[b]eing a graduate of @HowardU and a proud member of @akasorority1908 changed my life. Today, I’m excited to announce we’ve launched a national program to mobilize HBCU and Black fraternity and sorority members with our campaign. #ForThePeople” (Harris 2019).

Although Kamala Harris is but one example of how Black sorority membership can impact political ambition for a national executive-office candidate, I argue that these same forces influence all Black female sorority members who consider becoming political candidates, including potential Black female candidates for judicial office. Black sororities are unlike white sororities and fraternal organizations in that they teach necessary civic skills that will be imperative for a potential candidate. Rooted in a rich and deep history of community organizing, Black sororities teach their members about social responsibility, civic responsiveness, and the courage to speak up to protect human rights. Unlike white sororities, these organizations are not focused on finding potential marital partners for their members. There are no pins or special sorority ceremonies for achieving relationship milestones like in white sororities (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999). Black sororities are instead focused on social change and community empowerment.

Therefore, I argue that potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are more ambitious than potential female judicial candidates who are not members of black sororities.

This chapter first explains the traditional role of sororities on college campuses. I next will describe how Black sororities were created in order to orchestrate societal change, and I then explicate my theory about the link between Black sorority membership and political ambition. Lastly, I test this theory utilizing an original survey of Georgia lawyers, and show that membership in Black sororities, but not white sororities, has appreciable positive influences on political ambition among potential women candidates.

#### **4.1 The Role of White Sororities on College Campuses**

##### ***4.1.1 White Sororities as Safe Havens on College Campuses***

In order to fully understand the potential impact of Black sorority membership on political ambition, it is important to recognize (1) the evolution of white sororities on college campuses and (2) the resulting stark differences between white sororities and Black sororities today.

The first white sorority – Kappa Alpha Theta – was founded on January 27, 1870, on the campus of Indiana Asbury College (Turk 2004; Kappa Alpha Theta)<sup>7</sup>. Kappa Alpha Theta and its subsequent chapters were founded to bring college women together by providing support and a safe space on campus. The 1800s were quite a tough time for women to attend college. Often told that they did not belong in a college classroom, women had to prove time and again that they had the same intellect as their male counterparts.

Isolated and denigrated by those who both doubted their intellect and challenged their femininity, the founders of Kappa Alpha Theta recognized that if they bonded together and provided mutual aid to one another, their efforts might quell the

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<sup>7</sup> Asbury College is now known as DePauw University (DePauw University). Founded in 1837 by the Methodist Church, the college began admitting women in 1867 (DePauw University).

hostility surrounding coeducation and carve a more permanent place for women within institutions of higher education (Turk 2004, 22).

Thus, sororities were necessary to provide encouragement to white female college students who were often told by both male students and faculty members that they should be at home in the kitchen, as opposed to learning on a college campus.

One can view the founders and members of Kappa Alpha Theta as collegiate pioneers. Not only did they work hard to dispel any thoughts about college women not being intellectually equal to men, they also had to work against suspicions that college women were “unsexed” (Turk 2004, 22).

Testing the elasticity of, but not breaking their allegiance to, Victorian notions of the ‘feminine ideal,’ the early sisters of Kappa Alpha Theta strove to prove themselves the intellectual equals of men while at the same time continuing to fulfill the tenets of ‘true’ and ‘noble womanhood’ (Turk 2004, 23).

The early sorority members believed they had to balance being intellectually competent with their own notion of femininity.

The founders of Kappa Alpha Theta at Indiana Asbury (now DePauw University) were not the only female collegians who were iced out of campus life. Women at Syracuse University, Colby College, and Monmouth College similarly created sororities in order to unite against the isolation they faced from their peers and professors (Torbenson and Park 2009; Turk 2004). To help prove their members as academicians, these early sororities had mission statements and constitutions that were specifically academic in nature (Torbenson 2012; Turk 2004).

White sorority members’ objective was to spend time during chapter meetings reciting and receiving feedback on oral essays in order to be prepared for class (Dodge 1930). “With the primary goal of proving themselves capable of handling college work at the same level as their male peers, the founders [of the early white sororities] and women they subsequently selected to join them spent much of their time together reading and critiquing one another’s essays and

scholarly performances” (Turk 2004, 29). Sorority members of the 1870s and 1880s recognized that they had to be just as good, or even better than, their male counterparts. Part of this process was to receive constructive criticism in the safe bubble of sorority meetings. Not only did a sorority member represent herself in her scholarly endeavors, she also represented her sorority as a whole. “In order to ensure that Kappa Alpha Theta as a whole achieved its collective goal of proving women capable of college work, each chapter of the fraternity had to ensure that all of its members ‘acquitted themselves credibly’ in the classroom” (Turk 2004, 32).

Therefore, high academic achievement was the primary marker for membership in the early white sororities. It was not about who one knew in the organization but rather what one could intellectually contribute to the broader campus community. Kappa Alpha Theta, Pi Beta Phi<sup>8</sup>, and Kappa Kappa Gamma<sup>9</sup> spent time monitoring prospective members’ grades before offering them membership into their organizations (Turk 2004).

Part of ambition for women is overcoming the stereotypes that women should only be concerned about the home and becoming mothers. Early sorority members were tenacious, academically-focused, and not afraid to challenge their male peers in the classroom. These women were trailblazers. They fought to have equal standing with their male counterparts on campus. Although still wanting to be seen as feminine, they also wanted to be seen as intellectual equals. However, the evolution of white sororities from the late 1800s until now changed their character significantly.

What changed since the early days of the white sorority? How did we transition from sorority members as intellectuals challenging the status quo to sorority members being more concerned about the social life on campus? Ironically, the answer lies in male faculty members

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<sup>8</sup> Pi Beta Phi was founded on the campus of Monmouth College in 1867 (Pi Beta Phi).

<sup>9</sup> Kappa Kappa Gamma was founded on the campus of Monmouth College in 1870 (Kappa Kappa Gamma).



and students becoming more accepting of white female college students. Once the number of college-enrolled women increased and males began to accept women as students with a right to be on campus, the status of campus sororities permanently shifted.

#### ***4.1.2 Partnership and Pairing: White Sororities' Focus on Finding a Mate***

The 1830s-1890s were revolutionary times in white women's pursuit of higher education. Female students were considered outsiders (Horowitz 1987), and the white sorority was birthed from the need of white female collegians to have a safe space and support system on college campuses. The white sorority was an organization that nurtured and provided academic support for its members. Beginning in the 1890s, the traditional academic focus of white sororities began to change.

During the 1890s, college campuses became more accepting of white female students. By 1870, approximately 9,100 white women were enrolled in higher education institutions across the United States (Newcomer 1975). By 1890, that number had increased to 56,300 female students (Newcomer 1975). With white men becoming more tolerant of white women on college campuses, white sororities transitioned from being solely academically focused to centering more on social endeavors (Padavic and Berkowitz 1999; Turk 2004; Torbenson and Parks 2009). As Turk argues in describing this newly evolved college woman, “[f]reed of the pioneers’ burden of forging a path and representing their sex, the second generation of female collegians turned their attentions largely to social and extracurricular concerns” (2004, 48).

Known for its focus on social and political changes (Overview – Progressive Era), the Progressive Era (1890s to 1920s) ushered in a new – and different – generation of white female college students. White women, not just college women, were active in making social changes during the Progressive Era, which can be seen as a radical public act. White suffragists fought to

ensure that white women and Black men had the right to vote (Women's Suffrage in the Progressive Era).

The "college girl" was no longer depicted in popular culture as mannish and unsuitable for marriage (Gordon 1987). It became acceptable to date a college educated woman without the fear that she was unfit for wifehood and motherhood. While white female college students before the 1890s had to overcome social and institutional barriers in order to be accepted on campus, the white female college students of the Progressive Era found more acceptance from male professors and peers. Institutional barriers included the lack of housing, equal facilities, and integrated classrooms (Gordon 1987; Turk 2004). Also, many women's colleges developed primarily in the Northeastern United States until the Progressive era (McDonald 1997). The reason why women's colleges did not proliferate in the South until the Progressive Era because there was still the stereotype of the "Southern Belle" who should be dedicated to life as a wife and mother (McDonald 1997).

An example of a social barrier came from the medical profession. Medical professionals such as Dr. Edward Clarke claimed that higher education was medically detrimental for female students. In his 1873 book *Sex in Education Or A Fair Chance For the Girls*, Dr. Clarke claimed that women who attended college would permanently damage their reproductive systems (Gordon 1987; Turk 2004). This medical claim discouraged many would-be female college attendees because they were afraid that they would be unable to become mothers one day if they attended college.

Male professors and students realized that they could peacefully co-exist with female students on campus (Gordon 1987).<sup>10</sup> This newfound on-campus acceptance impacted how white sorority members viewed themselves and their place in college: “No longer struggling and isolated female collegians in need of solidarity and support from others in the same predicament, the [sorority] sisters of the 1890s and early 1900s deemphasized the intellectual aspect of their fraternities’ missions while accentuating the social side of Greek-letter life” (Turk 2004, 48).

Instead of using their chapter meetings as a place to prepare for class and lectures, the Progressive Era sorority members used this time to plan parties for the purpose of “heterosexual socializing” (Turk 2004, 48; Horowitz 1988, 201). Gone were the days when white sorority members would first monitor a prospective member for her academic achievement before offering her membership into the organization. The main criterion for being invited into a sorority was now personal appearance (Turk 2004). More sororities were emerging on college campuses across the country, and current sorority members wanted to nab the prettiest new prospects. It was beauty, not brains, that mattered the most.

Furthermore, the white sorority members of the 1890s and early 1900s no longer believed they had to prove their academic abilities on campus. The previous generation already laid the groundwork for women to be able to study at a college. Therefore, the Progressive Era sorority members focused more on group events and interactions with the opposite sex.

For example, Progressive Era members of Kappa Alpha Theta (the first college sorority) centered on the needs of their own members as opposed to the academic and emotional needs of

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<sup>10</sup> Even though women were more accepted on college campuses starting in the 1890s, they were still largely segregated from the male student body. Women had their own student advisors, residence halls, and athletic activities (Turk 2004; Gordon 1987; Eisenmann 1991; Horowitz 1988).

all female students on campus. The women of Kappa Alpha Theta fixated on how their members compared physically to other female students on campus:

More confident in their place on campus and less driven to prove their worth to critics, the sisters of the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century centered their energies on setting themselves and their fraternity off from, not male taunters as in earlier times, but fellow female collegians whose appearances and social skills, not academic abilities, placed them in a category below “good Theta material.” Their primary means of achieving this position of distinction lay in adopting an almost entirely social program for their fraternity. (Turk 2004, 52)

The collegians (both male and female) of the 1890s and early 1900s were different in material aspects from the previous generation. In the 1800s, college was a place where thoughtful students went to earn a higher education in order to seriously prepare for their future careers. But, by the turn of the twentieth century, the curriculum was no longer exclusively focused on liberal arts majors like literature and philosophy (Levine 1997). Students were able to study in additional fields, such as social work and home economics (Turk 2004). College administrators also allowed more flexibility in the course selection and electives that could be used to satisfy a degree program, creating some college programs with less rigor than others (Levine 1997). And, with the development of athletic life and college sports programs around the late 1800s and early 1900s, there was more of a focus from the entire student body on extracurricular activities – Greek and non-Greek students alike (Turk 2004; Horowitz 1988).<sup>11</sup> The end result was that early twentieth century college had become a place to go for four years and have fun for many students (Horowitz 1988; Turk 2004).

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<sup>11</sup> The first intercollegiate sporting competition was a regatta between Harvard and Yale in 1852 (Lewis 1970). Since the 1920s, collegiate athletic programs have been popular with students, faculty members, and non-students alike. The popularity of sporting programs increased when college sports became televised events. No longer just fun extracurricular activities for college students, college athletic programs mean big business for universities and they rival many professional programs in terms of interest and revenue (Smith 2000).

The sorority girl of the early 1900s not only had to contend with a changing college campus but also changing societal norms regarding gender roles. At this point, the focus on social events was ingrained in the fabric of white sorority life. But, the attention given to social events worked hand in hand with gender norms that white female students were taught before they even arrived on campus. Regardless of college attendance, white women were expected to adhere to traditional gender roles (Horowitz 1988; Fass 1977). These gender roles included white women aiming to become wives and mothers above all else, including the pursuit of an education or advancement of their careers (Modell 1989). Wifhood was the ultimate goal of womanhood for white women during this time. Now freed from the need to prove themselves at college, the white sorority members in the Progressive Era and forward now used the sorority social events as a way to attract a male partner.

Holland and Eisenhart's (1990) study of how educational institutions aid gender inequalities and gender norms finds that the white female college students in their study were more concerned about romantic relationships than academics. The white female students felt pressure from family members, in particular their mothers, to find a spouse while in college (Holland and Eisenhart 1990). Although female-female friendships held some importance to the white women in Holland and Eisenhart's (1990) study, the most important relationship to be pursued was the male-female relationship.

Berkowitz and Padavic (1999) examine adherence to gender norms for members of white and Black sororities. They find that members of white sororities were more focused on relationship pairing while members of Black sororities were focused on career progression. Recognizing that members of both white and Black sororities receive messages from parents about the proper role of women, members of white sororities are told that finding a spouse is of utmost importance in

college. Members of Black sororities are also told about marriage but financial independence and self-sufficiency is also stressed. Berkowitz and Padavic (1999) coin these messages as “getting a man” versus “getting ahead.” They find that socialization messages about gender norms have been incorporated into sorority life.

The white sorority members of the 1890s and beyond differed substantially from the first-generation sorority members of the mid-1850s. No longer concerned about earning their place on college campuses, members of white sororities since the Progressive Era have shifted their focus to more social activities, recruiting the prettiest girls on campus, and making sure that they came home from college with a partner. This adherence to traditional gender norms stands in sharp contrast to the history and focus of Black college sororities.

#### **4.2 Born from Necessity: Black Sororities and Community Activism**

Although Alpha Kappa Alpha and the other three Black sororities could not officially endorse Kamala Harris in her vice-presidential bid, they did rally behind her in different ways. First, AKA members began to inundate the Democratic National Committee with donations in the amount of \$19.08 (Janes 2020). Alpha Kappa Alpha was founded in 1908, and the call for donations in this odd amount of \$19.08 was a subtle way to show that the donation came from an AKA member. Due to many of Alpha Kappa Alpha members making donations in the amount of \$19.08, approximately \$275,000 was raised in a short amount of time after Harris joined the Democratic ticket as the vice-presidential candidate (Janes 2020). The financial support of Harris by AKA members was used to shore up Democratic resources and voter mobilization efforts in key battleground states.

Second, Black sorority chapters – both graduate and undergraduate - leveraged the power of social media to encourage voters to go to the polls during the November 2020 election, including

encouraging voters who are not members of their organization to vote. While donning the organization’s distinctive colors of pink and green, AKA members encouraged voters to register and vote early (Janes 2020). Not only did AKA members wear the organization’s noticeable pink and green paraphernalia to the polls as a subtle way to show their support for Harris, members of Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta, and Sigma Gamma Rho also wore their organizations’ paraphernalia to show that the Black Greek community was behind Harris.

Third, not only did Harris receive support from members of Alpha Kappa Alpha, she was also supported by members of all the other Black Greek organizations, not just the Black sororities.<sup>12</sup> This level of support was monumental and was arguably the decisive factor in Harris’s successful vice-presidential bid. “[Alpha Kappa Alpha] is a member of an even larger ‘family’ of Black sororities and fraternities known as the Divine Nine,<sup>13</sup> whose nearly 2 million members are community leaders, civic activists and philanthropists [and are] adept at raising money” (Gaines 2020). Harris’s vice-presidential election is important to all Black Greek organizations, not just her own. She represents to many Black Greeks what former President Barack Obama represented to the Black community as a whole during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections – hope, change, and a rightful seat at the decision-making table. Mae Frances Frazier, chaplain of the D.C. National Pan-Hellenic Council,<sup>14</sup> stated “[w]e are all sisters, we just wear different colors” (Gaines 2020). Frazier is a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

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<sup>12</sup> There are five Black Greek fraternities. They are Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (1906), Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. (1911), Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (1911), Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (1914), and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. (1963) (HBCU Lifestyle).

<sup>13</sup> The “Divine Nine” is a common way to reference the nine Black Greek organizations (HBCU Lifestyle).

<sup>14</sup> The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was founded on May 10, 1930 at Howard University in order to centralize the voices of the Black Greek organizations (National Pan-Hellenic Council). Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta, Kappa Alpha Psi, and Omega Psi Phi were founding organizations (National Pan-Hellenic Council). Alpha Phi Alpha, Phi Beta Sigma, and Sigma Gamma Rho joined later (National Pan-Hellenic Council). The NPHC was founded to encourage collective action amongst the Black Greek organizations (National Pan-Hellenic Council).

Black sororities have a markedly different historical trajectory than their white counterparts. Founded on ideals of community activism and social uplift, Black sorority members are less concerned about relationship benchmarks and more concerned about how they can aid in creating systematic change in the Black community. Rooted in community activism, Black sororities and their members are active participants in the social uplift of their entire community.

During the time period white women fought to be taken seriously on college campuses, Black women and men were either enslaved or denied the opportunity to pursue a basic education, let alone a college education. Although a few higher education institutions admitted Black students as early as 1799, these students would many times not finish the program or earn just a certificate, as opposed to a bachelor's degree (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education). In the post-Civil War era, many freed Blacks saw education as a way to advance economically. Due to overt racism and segregation, funding for many education programs were cut or drastically reduced during the post-Reconstruction era (Thomas and Jackson 2007). So, while white women were endeavoring to prove their place on college campuses, Black students – both male and female – were fighting for access to a basic education.

Black sororities grew out of the Black Women's Club movement began in the 1890s as an attempt to fight against racial injustices in the United States (Decolonizing Our History; National Women's History Museum). Responding to persistent racial and gender discrimination, Black women mobilized around issues important to the Black community, such as lynching and wage disparities (National Women's History Museum). Initially consisting of many small clubs across the country, the Black women's clubs eventually united to form the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW) in 1896 (Lerner 1974; National Women's History Museum).



Lerner (1974) highlights how Black women were always active social organizers concerning matters important to the Black community. At a time when Booker T. Washington espoused his self-help ideology and W.E.B. DuBois advocated for the “talented tenth” ideology, the leaders of the Black Women’s Club movement melded both philosophies and viewed themselves as the prototypical women (Knupfer 1996). This melding of philosophies is reflected in the NACW’s motto of “Lifting as We Climb,” which is a call for the Black community to take responsibility for its own members by helping all achieve economic and social freedoms. “The impulse for organizing arose whenever an urgent social need remained unmet” (Lerner 1974, 159). For example, Black women’s clubs in the late 1800s recognized the need to provide educational opportunities for young Black students in their communities. Thus, these women often created and provided financial support through fundraising for educational institutions, such as day cares and one-room schoolhouses (Lerner 1974).

Although white women’s clubs also worked on some of the same issues as Black women’s clubs, such as education and women’s suffrage (National Women’s History Museum; Thomas 2020), Black women’s clubs were concerned about uplifting their entire community – not just a subsection of it. Most importantly, members of the Black Women’s Club movement constructed their own version of womanhood that differed in significant aspects from the white women’s club movement. Womanhood, for members of the Black women’s clubs, was not just about caring for members’ individual families. Womanhood also encompassed caring for all families in the community. This “other mothering” is quintessential to the Black female experience and is historically rooted in slavery (Knupfer 1996). “Since slavery, African American women had cared for and reared not only their own children but other slave children also” (Knupfer 1996, 13; see

also Barnes 2016). Black women's socialization around taking care of communities, and not just oneself, also materializes in the mission and vision of Black sororities.

Several of the leaders of the Black Women's Club movement were also members of historically Black sororities. Mary Church Terrell (first president of the National Association of Colored Women) and Mary McLeod Bethune (founder of Bethune-Cookman University and the National Council of Negro Women) were members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Maggie L. Walker, the first Black woman to charter a bank, was a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Black sororities are organizations committed to larger advances within the Black community and were born from necessity. In particular, due to overt sexism and racism, educated Black women had to create a space for themselves. "In general, despite Blacks' academic record, they did not have access to honorary Greek societies such as Phi Beta Kappa, founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776. Membership invitations from White social sororities to Black women were nonexistent because of segregation policies in the United States" (Whaley 2010).

Founded during the Progressive Era, Black sororities emerged at a time when Blacks were experiencing both *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination. Blacks faced segregation in public spheres and disenfranchisement in political processes. Progressive Era reforms, while benefitting white men, largely ignored the plight of Blacks in both rural and urban areas (Franklin 1999). Therefore, Blacks had to form their own organizations in order to advocate for their rights. "Despite the presence of [discriminatory] laws and politics, African-Americans attempted to achieve equality by creating organizations that would help them lobby a few anti-lynching legislation and achieve prosperity" (Lewis 2019). Organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), the National Urban League, and the National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People (NAACP) were founded during this time to address systematic racism and discrimination (Lewis 2019).

All four Black sororities were founded during the Progressive Era with the intent of fighting for the most pressing interests of the Black community, especially issues important to Black women. Blacks were excluded from white fraternities and sororities during the 1800s until the mid-1900s (McKenzie 2012). Thus, if Blacks were going to have fraternal organizations, they would have to create their own separate from white fraternal groups.

Delta Sigma Theta, the second Black sorority, is a prime example of how Black sororities are focused on community activism. Delta Sigma Theta was founded on the campus on Howard University in the nation's capitol in 1913. The city of Washington, DC, and Howard University in particular, was changing by the fall of 1912. Howard University had a new president that bestowed a lot of power on the three leading Black administrators on its campus (Giddings 1988). As a result, the three Black administrators led the university in creating new courses that explored and celebrated Black life (Giddings 1988; Logan 1969). Also, in 1912, there was a larger political movement around women's suffrage. There were renewed talks about bestowing the right to vote to women and many women's groups – both Black and white – were organizing their members around suffrage. So, for the twenty-two women who eventually founded Delta Sigma Theta at Howard, it was an exciting time to be a student in Washington, D.C. “Washington, D.C. became not only a center of [B]lack intellectual and social development, but of feminist activity as well” (Giddings 1988, 47).

The 22 founding members of Delta Sigma Theta were originally initiated into the Alpha chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha on the campus of Howard University (Giddings 1988).<sup>15</sup> There is historical disagreement about the reason why the 22 founders left Alpha Kappa Alpha. According to Delta historian Paula Giddings, the young women were greatly dismayed by the initial lack of activism of the organization. As mentioned previously, 1912 was a time in which Black activists, such as Ida B. Wells and W.E.B. DuBois, were using their platforms to mobilize Blacks around anti-discrimination issues. So, Alpha Kappa Alpha's unwillingness at the time to become active in issues important to the Black community dismayed the young Black women who went on to found Delta Sigma Theta (Giddings 1988; McKenzie 2012).

According to AKA historian and past president Marjorie Parker, however, the women did not leave due to a lack of social activism. They left because they wanted to change the motto, colors, slogan, and name of the organization (Whaley 2010). One of the past presidents of AKA (Nellie Quander) resisted these proposed changes because she claimed the changes would not honor the original vision of the founders (Whaley 2010). Despite the historical discrepancies, it is clear that both organizations have made tremendous inroads in fighting for issues important to the Black community, and Black women in particular.

There is evidence that AKA also has an early history of civic involvement. In the early 1900s, the organization established a scholarship program for sorority members at Howard ("AKA History"). By the 1920s and 1930s, AKA advocated for anti-lynching legislation and established the country's first mobile health clinic ("AKA History"). In the 1940s and 1950s, AKA gained observer status from the United Nations and financially supported sickle cell research ("AKA

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<sup>15</sup> Black sorority and fraternity chapters are named based on the Greek alphabet and are given a name based on the order of the chapter's founding. An "alpha" chapter signifies that is the first chapter of the organization. "Beta" signifies that it is the second chapter of the organization, and so on.

History”). As of the 1960s and 1970s, the group was the first organization to operate a federal job corps center (“AKA History”). They also purchased Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s childhood home on behalf of the MLK Center for Social Change (“AKA History”). During the 1980s and 1990s, AKA established a multi-million scholarship fund and built ten schools in Africa (“AKA History”). And in 2000s and 2010s, Alpha Kappa Alpha donated \$1 million to Howard University and created several educational programs for young leaders (“AKA History”). So, with its focus on being civic-minded, it is no surprise that the first woman of color vice-president credits the organization with heavily influencing her identity.

It is unmistakable that the 22 founders of Delta Sigma Theta wanted to explicitly focus on public service and racial uplift in the Black community (Giddings 1988; Davis 1982). And, on January 13, 1913, Delta Sigma Theta was born (Delta Sigma Theta – Mission and Vision). Delta’s founders would not shy away from advocating for issues important to Blacks. The organization’s first public act came on the eve of the new president’s (Woodrow Wilson) inauguration (Giddings 1988). The young sorority members participated in a women’s suffrage march in Washington, D.C. shortly after their founding (Giddings 1988; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority). And, these civic efforts and public activism continue until today.

Black sororities today provide their members with opportunities to practice leadership skills that can be used beyond the college campus (Giddings 1988; Berkowitz and Padavic 1999). Black sororities’ commitment to civic engagement is even noted as an attractive attribute by prospective members. In her study of Delta Sigma Theta’s impact on college engagement for its members, Harris (1998) finds that current members of the sorority specifically joined the organization because of its commitment to community service. One respondent in the study stated that “[t]he sorority performed services that were in line with the goals which I set for myself. The

women I met in this organization were strong and dedicated to their tasks, i.e., community service and school” (Harris 1998, 286). This study highlights that Black sororities are embodiments of the National Association of Colored Women’s motto of “Lifting As We Climb.” It is expected, and even required, that each member is community-oriented and engages in activities that benefit those in need.

Furthermore, Harris (1998) finds that the collegiate members of Delta Sigma Theta view the organization as a training ground for leadership. The undergraduate members take on leadership roles within the organization because it is a safe space to practice and hone leadership skills such as organizing, public speaking, and leading a group of others. As a result, the women felt more confident to lead in other capacities on their college campuses and after graduation. “The respondents’ involvement in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. provided them with a springboard from which to become involved with other campus, community, and professional organizations” (Harris 1998, 299-300). Therefore, the Black sorority provides its members with ample opportunities to serve their communities in meaningful ways.

Black sororities were created as ways to combat the larger societal issues that were plaguing the Black community. “These organizations, unlike their White counterparts, were established, not only for intellectual and social outlets for African American students, but also to deal with de facto and de jure racism surrounding their college campuses, student involvement in their own education, and racial uplift and self-empowerment in the African American community support networks” (Harris 1998, 284). The NACW’s motto of “Lifting As We Climb” is part of Black women’s story of existence, including Black sorority members, because it recognizes their need to ensure the betterment of those in the Black community, not just self-aggrandizement (Wilkerson 1984). Although Black sororities engage in social activities, similar to other Greek-

letter organizations, there is paramount importance placed on the ideal of service to others. Due to the differential histories of Black and white sororities, I argue that Black sorority membership will help potential female judicial candidates express ambition for office.

### **4.3 Sororities' Impact on Political Ambition**

I argue that sorority membership will have an impact on judicial ambition for potential female candidates. Building on the historical evolution of Black and white sororities outlined above, I posit that sorority membership and its effect differs based upon whether women join a Black or white sorority.

Members of white sororities tend to adhere to traditional gender norms (Kalof and Cargill 1991; Handler 1995; Risman 1982; Robbins 2005; Berkowitz and Padavic 1999; Whipple 2015). In their comparison of members of Black and white sororities, Berkowitz and Padavic (1999), find that members of white sororities are largely focused on finding a partner (getting a man) while members of Black sororities are focused on career progression (getting ahead). White sororities place an emphasis on its members finding a spouse while in college. This is evidenced by white sororities' celebrating relationship milestones, such as pinning ceremonies when sorority members get serious with their fraternity boyfriend (Daves 2013; Mestre 2012; Berkowitz and Padavic 1999). Lavaliering, which is a common milestone ceremony in white sororities, is when "a fraternity man gives the sorority woman a charm to wear as a necklace that signifies the strength of their romantic involvement" (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999). Pinnings are "when a fraternity man gives his fraternity pin to a sorority woman" and getting "promised" is "when a woman receives a promise ring as a symbol of an impending engagement" (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999, 542). In addition to "pinnings", getting "promised" and engagement, white sororities have several ceremonies that are focused on its members achieving relationship goals.

There are no analogous relationship rituals in any of the four Black sororities. Although there are sorority songs that may be sung at major life events, such as weddings and graduations, there are no relationship-specific ceremonies in these organizations. Black sorority members are instead primarily focused on community service. "The Black women [in the study] described community service as a central and meaningful part of their sorority experience, while white women generally viewed it as a way to facilitate their social lives" (Berkowitz and Padavic 1999, 546). In their comparison study of Black and white Greek members, Whipple et al. (2015) find that members of Black sororities have more peer independence, liberalism, and social consciousness when compared to members of white sororities.

I argue that this independence, liberalism, social consciousness, and rejection of traditional gender norms results in members of Black sororities displaying higher levels of political ambition than either members of non-Black sororities or those who were not a member of any sorority. With the focus on community involvement and providing leadership opportunities to its members, Black sororities are training grounds for women interested in public service. Members of Black sororities are leaders within the organization, on college campuses, and within philanthropic circles. They are also expected to be civic-minded and willing to work for the betterment of their communities.

I thus argue that membership in a Black sorority will lead to appreciable differences in political ambition by potential judicial candidates. Not only will these potential judicial candidates be more comfortable balancing work and family obligations because they tend to reject traditional gender norms, they will also be more likely to express interest in public judicial office because of Black sororities' focus on community service. This results in one hypothesis that will be tested in the next sections of this chapter:



*Black Sorority Hypothesis: Potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are likely to have higher ambition than other potential female judicial candidates.*

#### **4.4 Empirical Analysis**

To investigate the effect of sorority membership on judicial ambition, I again utilize the results of my original survey of Georgia lawyers. Respondents were asked whether they were a member of a sorority or fraternity in college? For those respondents who answered “yes,” a follow-up question asked them to list the name of the sorority or fraternity they joined; all respondents provided this additional information. I was able to then identify whether each sorority listed was a historically black or historically white sorority.

Table 4.1 shows the racial identification of the sorority and non-sorority members. Eighty-eight survey respondents were members of sororities, while 148 were not. Of the 88 sorority members, 16 survey respondents identified themselves as members of Black sororities, while 72 survey respondents identified themselves as members of non-Black sororities.

Falling along racial lines, only one Black female respondent identified herself as belonging to a non-Black sorority; the remaining 71 non-Black sorority members identify as non-Black. For those belonging to Black sororities, all identify as Black women. Of the 148 non-sorority members, 34 are Black women and 114 are non-Black women. Therefore, Table 1 confirms that the decision of which sorority to join continues to fall along clear racial lines.

*Table 4.1 Racial Identification of Sorority and Non-Sorority Members*

	Black	Non-Black	Total
Black Sorority Member	16	0	16
Non-Black Sorority Member	1	71	72
Non-Sorority Member	34	114	148

I now provide a descriptive investigation of the survey responses. Overall, more potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities express interest in running for judicial office than potential female judicial candidates who are not members of Black sororities.

Table 4.2 displays the results of the preliminary bivariate analysis.

*Table 4.2 Female Respondents That Have Considered Running for Judicial Office, By Sorority Membership*

	Member of Black Sorority	Member of Non-Black Sorority	Not a Member of Sorority
No, I have not thought about it.	3	36	67
Yes, it has crossed my mind.	11	22	60
Yes, I have seriously considered it.	2	11	10
Totals	16	69	137

To provide an initial understanding of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the analyses, I start by examining the correlations between (1) Black sorority membership, (2) non-Black sorority membership, and (3) non-sorority membership and the dependent variable *Judicial Ambition*. I expect that there is a positive relationship between membership in a Black sorority and judicial ambition, a negative relationship between non-Black sorority membership and judicial ambition, and a negative relationship between non-sorority membership and judicial ambition. Table 4.3 shows the correlations between these various

independent variables and judicial ambition. Statistical significance of the correlations are in parentheses.

*Table 4.3 Correlations Between Possible Sorority Membership and Judicial Ambition*

	Judicial Ambition
Black Sorority Membership	0.131 (0.05)
Non-Black Sorority Membership	0.01 (0.86)
Non-Sorority Membership	-0.08 (0.23)

*Note:* Statistical significance is in parentheses.

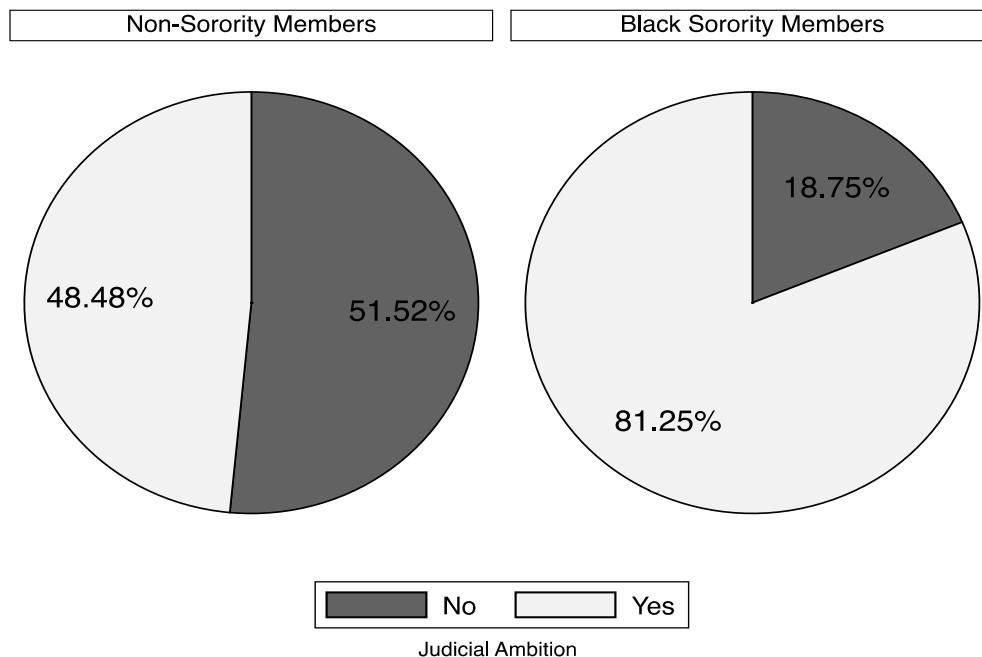
As Table 4.3 shows, there is a positive correlation between Black sorority membership and judicial ambition, and the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. If a respondent is a member of a Black sorority, she is more likely to express judicial ambition than other respondents. Comparatively, there is no initial connection between judicial ambition levels for either membership in a white sorority, or simply not joining a sorority.

There are surprising differences in ambition of potential candidates based on membership in a Black sorority, as compared to membership in a non-Black sorority or not being a member of a sorority at all. For members of non-Black sororities, 52.2% of respondents have not considered running for judicial office, compared to 48.9% of respondents who are not members of sororities. Members of non-Black sororities express the lowest ambition in running for judicial office compared to the other two categories of respondents.

In comparing non-Black sorority members and non-sorority members, 31.9% of non-Black sorority members indicate that running for judicial office has crossed their mind, while 43.8% of non-sorority members indicate such as response. Non-sorority members tend to express judicial ambition at a higher rate than non-Black sorority members, but not as high as members of Black sororities.

The biggest difference in ambition is with members of Black sororities. Only 18.8% of respondents who are members of Black sororities state that they have not considered running for judicial office, as shown in Figure 4.1. For members of Black sororities, running for judicial office has either crossed their minds (68.8% of respondents) or they have seriously considered it (12.5% of respondents). Non-Black sorority members and non-sorority members have not expressed interest in running for office at the same level as members of Black sororities, which provides support for the Black Sorority hypothesis.

Next, it is important to parse out the judicial ambition levels specifically for Black respondents based on sorority membership. Figure 4.1 shows the judicial ambition levels between Black women in a Black sorority and Black women who are not in a sorority at all. For Black non-sorority members, approximately 52% of respondents have not considered running for judicial office. However, for Black female respondents who are members of Black sororities, only about 19% of respondents have not considered running for judicial office. This is a noticeable difference in ambition levels and shows the power of Black sorority membership on ambition. For Black female respondents, Black sorority membership strongly impacts whether a potential candidate has considered running for judicial office.



*Figure 4.1 Black Female Respondents That Have Considered Running for Judicial Office, By Sorority Membership*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

For non-Black respondents, Figure 4.2 shows whether the respondent has considered running for office, based on membership in a sorority. It is worth noting that there are no appreciable differences in ambition for non-black respondents based on sorority membership. While 52.4% of non-Black non-sorority members have considered running for judicial office, 47.1% of non-Black sorority members have also considered running for judicial office. These numbers are remarkably close, unlike ambition for Black respondents. Therefore, for non-Black respondents, sorority membership does not impact judicial ambition.

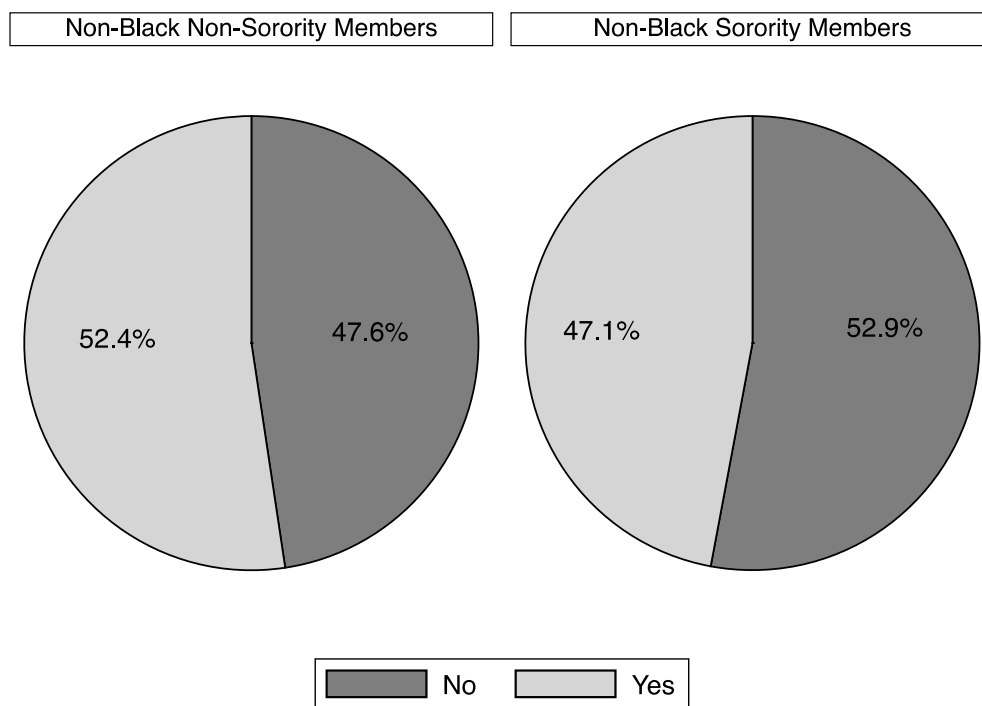


Figure 4.2 Non-Black Respondents That Have Considered Running for Judicial Office, By Sorority Membership

Note: Due to rounding, the total percentages are over 100.

To further examine the linkage between sorority membership and judicial ambition, I estimate a probit model. Once again, the dependent variable for the analyses below is *Judicial Ambition*.

The independent variables of interest pertain to Black sorority membership. I created three dummy variables to account for sorority membership. *Black Sorority* measures whether the respondent is a member of a Black sorority. This is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent is a member of a Black sorority, and 0 otherwise. *Non-Black Sorority* measures whether the respondent is a member of a non-Black sorority. This is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent is a member of a non-Black sorority, and 0 otherwise. Finally, *Non-Sorority*

measures whether the respondent is not a member of a sorority. I use *Non-Sorority* as the excluded, baseline category in the analyses presented below.

In addition, I include several variables to control for other demographic and socialization factors that may impact the expression of ambition. First, I include the dichotomous variable *Children in Home*, coded 1 if the respondent has any children currently living in their home, and 0 otherwise. Prior studies show that potential female candidates who have children in the home express lower ambition than those without children at home because women tend to be the primary caregiver in their homes (Lawless and Fox 2005).

Second, I also include the dichotomous variable *Married*, which indicates whether the respondent is currently married. Studies indicate that potential female candidates who are married tend to express lower ambition than unmarried potential candidates because they are concerned about the impact of an elected office on their home responsibilities. (Lawless and Fox 2005; Sheldon and Maule 1997; Carroll 1994).

Third, the dichotomous variable *Recruitment* indicates whether the respondent has ever been recruited or encouraged to run for judicial office. Studies show that female candidates are less likely to be recruited for office, despite being high qualified (Williams 2008; Fox and Lawless 2010). This lack of political recruitment leads to lower ambition. I expect to find that potential female judicial candidates who are recruited will express higher ambition than other potential candidates.

Finally, I control for socialization messages that potential female judicial candidates receive from their parents. *Financial Independence Messages* is whether the respondent has received messages from parents to pursue a career or maintain financial independence from one's spouse. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent has received such messages, and 0 otherwise.

*Family Messages* measures whether the respondent has received messages from parents about having children or getting married. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent has received such messages, and 0 otherwise.

As shown in Table 4.3 above, race perfectly predicts Black sorority membership, and so I do not separately control for race.

#### **4.4.1 Results and Discussion**

Table 4.4 displays the results of the probit analyses of the Black Sorority hypothesis. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Sorority Model I examines only the impact of sorority membership on judicial ambition. Sorority Model II includes the various control variables in addition to the sorority membership variables. One important observation is that the addition of the control variables in Sorority Model II shifts some of the explanatory power from the variable *Black Sorority*.

The results in Table 4.4 both reveal support for the Black Sorority hypothesis. In Sorority Model I, *Black Sorority* is statistically significant at the 0.05 level and in the expected direction. As predicted, potential female judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are more likely to consider running for judicial office than potential candidates who are not members of any sorority (the excluded baseline category). Comparatively, membership in a non-Black sorority does not impact judicial ambition for potential candidates. Although the coefficient is in the expected direction (negative), *Non-Black Sorority* is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Due to the adherence to traditional gender norms, I expected that members of non-Black sororities would have lower ambition than other potential female judicial candidates who are not members of any sorority. However, the results below suggest that Non-Black sorority membership does not



significantly impact a potential candidate's decision to run for judicial office as compared to those who did not join a sorority.

Table 4.4 *The Impact of Sorority Membership on Judicial Ambition*

	Sorority Model I	<i>p</i> -value	Sorority Model II	<i>p</i> -value
Black Sorority	0.860* (0.379)	0.023	0.946* (0.401)	0.018
Non-Black Sorority	-0.082 (0.186)	0.659	-0.023 (0.192)	0.906
Children in Home	—	—	-0.003 (0.184)	0.989
Married	—	—	0.075 (0.192)	0.697
Recruitment	—	—	0.904*** (0.275)	0.001
Financial Independence Messages	—	—	0.254 (0.231)	0.271
Family Messages	—	—	-0.457* (0.185)	0.013
Constant	0.027 (0.107)	0.26	-0.758 (0.360)	0.035
N	222		221	
Wald $\chi^2$	5.83		24.33	
Log pseudolikelihood	-150.411		-140.113	
% correctly predicted PRE (%)	48.3%		60.3%	
	0.9%		17.1%	

*Note:* Dependent variable is Judicial Ambition. Estimates are probit coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. PRE = Percent Reduction of Error. *Non-Sorority* is the reference category. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . The reference category for Models I and II is *Non-Sorority*.

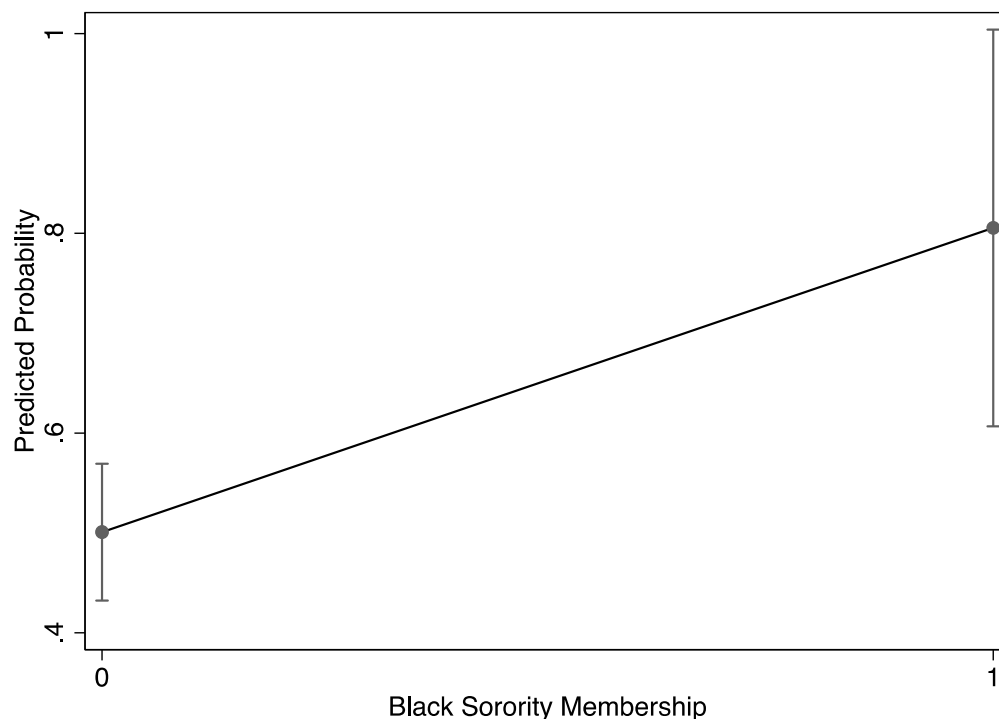
The results from Sorority Model II shows support for the Black Sorority hypothesis. *Black Sorority* and *Family Messages* are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In Sorority Model II, *Non-Black Sorority* is again not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. *Recruitment* is statistically significant at the 0.001 level and the coefficient is positive.

With a  $p$ -value of 0.001, *Recruitment* impacts whether a potential female candidate expresses judicial ambition. As shown in Sorority Model II, whether a potential female candidate has ever been encouraged to run for judicial office has the most influence on whether the potential candidate expresses ambition.

Similar to the probit analysis from Chapter 3 regarding socialization messages, *Family Messages* also impact whether a potential candidate expresses judicial ambition. Potential judicial candidates who hear messages from their parents about getting married or having children are less likely to express judicial ambition than other potential candidates.

For Sorority Model I, I examine the predicted probability of potential judicial candidates expressing interest in running for judicial office, based on sorority membership. I hold *Non-Black Sorority* at its median. I expect the impact of the variable to vary across the dependent variable.

Figure 4.3 shows the substantive impact of Black sorority membership on the expression of judicial ambition for Sorority Model I. Black sorority membership increases the probability that a potential judicial candidate expresses ambition by 28.3%. Figure 4.3 confirms the results from the probit estimation for the Black Sorority hypothesis for Sorority Model I. The probability that a potential female judicial candidate will express ambition increases from 50.1% to 80.5% when the potential candidate is a member of a Black sorority.

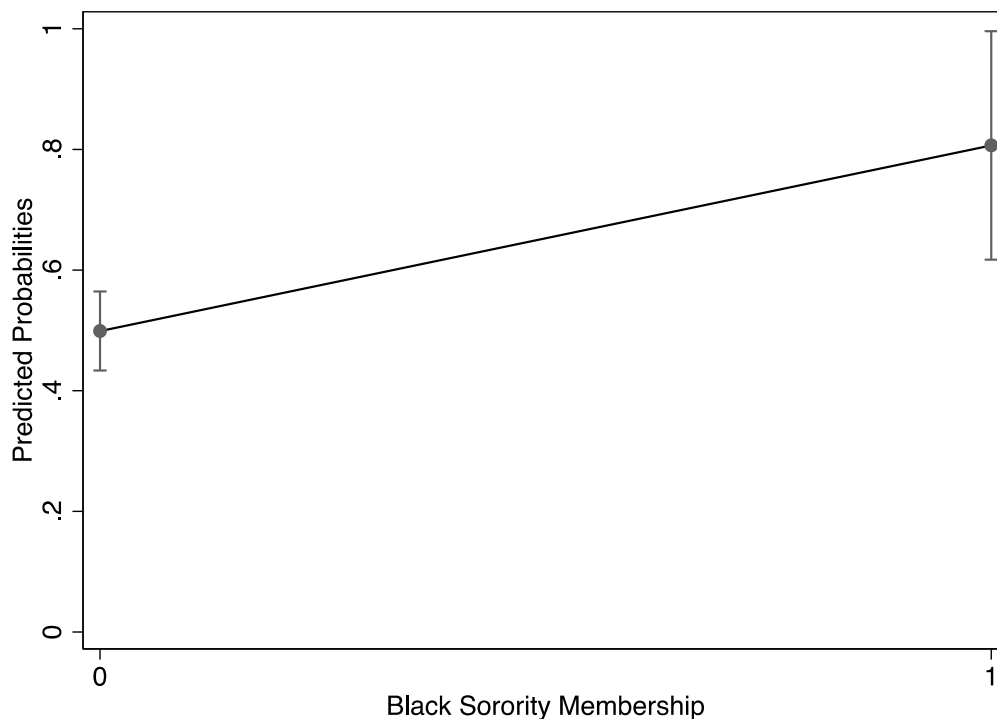


*Figure 4.3 Predicted Probabilities of Black Sorority Membership on Judicial Ambition (Sorority Model I)*

I will now show the substantive effects of the statistically significant variable of interest (*Black Sorority*) for Sorority Model II. I examine the predicted probability of potential judicial candidates expressing interest in running for judicial office, based on sorority membership. I expect the impact of the variable to vary across the dependent variable.

Figure 4.4 shows the substantive impact of sorority membership on ambition based on Sorority Model II. I hold *Non-Black Sorority*, *Children*, *Married*, and *Recruitment* at their medians. I hold *Financial Independence Messages* and *Family Messages* at their mean. For Sorority Model II, Black sorority membership also increases the expression of ambition. Membership in a Black sorority increases the probability that a potential judicial candidate expresses ambition by 23.0%. The probability that a potential female judicial candidate will express ambition increases from 50.0% to 80.7% if the potential candidate is a member of a Black

sorority. Figure 4 thus confirms that sorority membership has a substantively significant impact on the likelihood of a Black woman expressing high levels of judicial ambition.



*Figure 4.4 Predicted Probabilities of Black Sorority Membership on Judicial Ambition*

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

I find that for potential female judicial candidates, membership in a Black sorority is instrumental to their leadership development and sense of self. Black sororities are organizations that provide a training ground for its members to develop needed leadership skills and serve their broader community. As the results show, the leadership development that a potential judicial candidate receives from a Black sorority helps close the ambition gap for potential candidates. Black sororities give potential candidates the confidence and leadership experience that will prove to be invaluable in a potential run for judicial office.

Being a member of a non-Black sorority or not being a sorority member at all does not have the same effect on ambition as being a member of a Black sorority. Rather, the data show that membership in a non-Black sorority does not impact a potential candidates' desire to run for judicial office. Based on its current focus on relationship pairing and adherence to traditional gender norms, I expected that non-Black sorority membership would negatively impact a potential female candidate's interest in running for office. However, I find instead that members of white sororities and non-sorority members are no less or more likely to express ambition for ascending to the bench. Thus, while white sorority membership does not negatively impact one's level of ambition, neither does it offer the positive benefits given to Black sorority members.

Overall, my results confirm that the historical role of Black sororities – a place of refuge and community activism – leads to its members displaying more ambition than their peers. Most important, these benefits are not a function of sorority membership writ large, but rather are bestowed only on members of Black sororities. These findings both illuminate and reaffirm the civic minded-nature of these particular organizations, as compared to their white counterparts. As society considers how to increase ambition for potential female candidates, my findings suggest that leadership training programs with an organizational focus on community service, similar to Black sororities, will likely help close that gap in ambition for women.

In my final empirical chapter, I explore the role that Protestant identification and hearing political messages in religious institutions play in judicial ambition.

## 5 FROM THE PEWS TO THE POLLS: THE INTERMINGLING OF RELIGION AND AMBITION

Despite the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment’s ban against government established religion, the church (or religion in general) and politics are inextricably intertwined in the United States.<sup>16</sup> In particular, there is an exceptionally heavy leaning towards the mix between Christianity and politics. With 88% of Congress identifying as Christian (“8 Facts About Religion and Government in the United States”) and almost all U.S. presidents identifying as Christian (“8 Facts About Religion and Government in the United States”), politicians attempt to appeal to various groups of potential voters with religious affiliations in order to court their votes. From the evangelical Christians to the Black church, potential and actual candidates try to explain to voters how their personal viewpoints and faith align with certain religious groups.

Not only do politicians try to connect with voters who regularly attend or are affiliated with religious institutions, religious leaders themselves toss their hat into the candidate ring. From Jesse Jackson<sup>17</sup> to Mike Huckabee<sup>18</sup> to Cori Bush<sup>19</sup> to Raphael Warnock<sup>20</sup>, religious leaders often have crossed-over to the political arena. Raphael Warnock, for example, often referenced in his 2020 election campaign ads the fact that he is a senior pastor at an historic Atlanta church. Although he did not mention the church by name since this will likely have the appearance of an endorsement

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<sup>16</sup> Although the phrase “separation of church and state” does not specifically appear in the United States Constitution or its Amendments, the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment’s Establishment Clause is widely believed to have such a meaning (Freedom Forum Institute). The Establishment Clause prohibits the government – both state and federal – from favoring or disfavoring a particular religion.

<sup>17</sup> Jesse Jackson, a Baptist minister and civil rights activist, ran as a presidential candidate during the 1984 and 1988 Democratic primaries (Kornacki 2019). He lost both bids.

<sup>18</sup> Mike Huckabee is a Baptist pastor and former governor of Arkansas. He also ran as a presidential candidate in the Republican primary during the 2008 and 2016 elections (Tumulty 2016). He lost both bids.

<sup>19</sup> Cori Bush is a pastor and a Democratic Representative for Missouri’s 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional district. She is the first black woman to represent the state of Missouri in Congress (Haynes 2020) and defeated 10-term incumbent Representative Lacy Clay (Fandos 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Reverend Raphael Warnock is the Georgia Democratic Senator (Warnock for Georgia).

by a tax-exempt organization, it is widely known that said church is the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, the religious home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. By referencing his religious roots, Warnock signaled to voters – both religious and non-religious – that he possessed a certain value system that they can rely on in Congress.

The Black church is the cornerstone of the Black community. Serving as the spiritual, financial, educational, emotional, and resource needs of its congregants and the larger community, the Black church is the foundation of many activities in the Black community. It is also seen as quite influential in the political thought of its individual members. That is why reaching out to the Black church is so important for new candidates and candidates running for re-election.

The Black church offers an opportunity to reach many Black voters in one place. Seventy-one percent of Blacks identify as Protestant (Pew Research), and 53% of Blacks specifically identify as historically Black Protestant (Pew Research). “Church attendance among African Americans is proportionately higher than attendance among white Protestant Americans” (Wiggins 2005, 15): 47% of Blacks state that they attend a religious service at least once per week, as compared to only 34% of whites (Pew Research). Therefore, the pulpit of the Black church offers candidates a reliable source of potential voters that they can leverage quickly.

The membership of the Black church is quite unique. Although the leadership of most Black churches consists of men in senior roles, the congregants are overwhelmingly Black women (The Miami Times). In Wiggins’ (2005) study of Black women in the church, her study participants noted that they were always expected to attend church services as youth. Even if their parents did not attend, Black girls would often go to church with family members or friends. Their parents sent them to church because of the values the institution instilled in its members. And, this

initial church attendance as a child, whether forced or not, is a practice that continues into adulthood for many Black women.

Besides just providing a religious foundation for Black women, church attendance also teaches skills to its members (Harris-Lacewell 2007; Payne 1994; Robnet 1997). Skills such as meeting organization, unifying groups of people, public speaking and community outreach, just to name a few, are implicitly taught to Black church members. These skills are often used in the political sphere. Historically, the Black church is the center of social movements and political action.

Additionally, the skills taught by the Black church can be useful to potential candidates, especially Black women since they constitute the majority of membership in the church. I argue that for potential Black female judicial candidates, membership in a Black church can help them overcome gaps in judicial ambition. The civic skills that are taught in the Black church can be utilized by the potential Black female judicial candidate as she considers a run for office.

In this chapter, I first discuss the development of the Black church stemming from slavery. Next, I discuss the role of the Black church in the Civil Rights Movement. Lastly, I show the impact of Black church membership on judicial ambition.

## **5.1 The Black Church as a Cultural Institution**

### ***5.1.1 The Spread of Christianity to Enslaved Blacks***

The role of the Black church in the Civil Rights Movement is directly connected to the historical dispersion of Christianity to Black slaves in America. The spread of Christianity to enslaved Blacks, and the subsequent founding of the Black church, was not without its fair share of trials, tribulations, and contradictions. While Christianity taught its adherents about selfless love, sacrifice, and treating one's neighbor with respect, these principles stood in direct conflict



with the institution of slavery. These principles also stood in opposition to how enslaved Blacks were treated by members of white churches. As will be explained, while religion was used to justify slavery, the Black church was eventually used as a liberating, cultural institution in the Black community.

The Black church is a cultural establishment that arose from the ashes and dark shadows of slavery. It was one of a few institutions that transcended beyond the end of slavery and still has an impact in the present-day Black community. “Reliable investigators have consistently underscored the fact that [B]lack churches were one of the few stable and coherent institutions to emerge from slavery” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; see also Erskine 2014 and Calhoun-Brown 2000). The Black church’s importance stems from the fact that it was one of the first cultural institutions that Blacks created as a symbol of independence and freedom.

From the 1500s through most of the 1700s, most plantation owners did not encourage their slaves to attend church or develop a spiritual connection with God. Their fear was that learning the Bible would encourage slaves to rebel due to the messages of hope and salvation, especially teachings from the Old Testament about salvation for God’s oppressed people. Plantation owners believed that in order for the institution of slavery to thrive, it was important to keep slaves ignorant and docile.

Not all religious groups turned a blind eye to slavery. Although the Quakers were one of the first groups to engage in the slave trade (“Quakers: From Slave Traders to Early Abolitionists”), by the late 1700s they forbade their members from owning slaves and petitioned Congress to abolish slavery (“Quaker Activism”; see also Calhoun-Brown 2000 and Wilmore 1983).

Eventually, itinerant preachers convinced slave owners that teaching their slaves Christianity would increase their obedience to the slave owners. Slave owners reluctantly agreed

to allow preachers to introduce Christianity on their plantation, but with various control measures in place to ensure that that enslaved Blacks would remain submissive.

Initially, slave owners controlled all aspects of religion and conversion on their plantations. Plantation owners did not want their slaves to leave the plantation. Therefore, they choose to have preachers come onto the plantation for religious services. Whites were also afraid to have enslaved Blacks gather in large groups, especially if the groups consisted of slaves from multiple plantations. Plantation owners wanted to keep their slaves uninformed and isolated. The best way to do that was to keep them separated from other slaves from neighboring plantations. Finally, whites feared that slaves, when gathered together unsupervised by whites, would get ideas about independence and plan a revolt. Plantation owners thus initially only allowed white preachers to preach to enslaved Blacks.

Eventually, some plantation owners allowed Black slaves to preach to other slaves. But, if a Black slave was allowed to preach, he could only preach to those on his own plantation (Erskine 2014; Lincoln 1999). He could not travel to other plantations to preach. Furthermore, if the Black slaves were allowed to preach at all, it was usually in the presence of a white person to ensure that they were not sharing messages about freedom, hope, or equality (Erskine 2014; Morris 1996; Lincoln 1999).

When Blacks were allowed to attend white churches, the churches insisted upon segregation. Blacks could not worship and pray alongside whites and were forced to worship in the balconies or back pews of the church (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Essentially, the white church was an extension of society's racism. It perpetuated the belief that slavery was a sanctioned institution in society. "It was readily apparent that the white church had become a principal instrument of the political and social policies undergirding slavery and the attendant degradation

of the human spirit” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 47; see also Erskine 2014 and African Methodist Episcopal Church).

It was hypocritical for white churches to teach religious messages about love and hope while also sanctioning the enslavement of other human beings. But, some whites viewed the institution of slavery as a political issue, not a religious one (Erskine 2014; “Free African Society”). Others explicitly preached in church the “virtue” of slavery and how slavery was for the betterment of Blacks. Erskine (2014) notes the following:

Many churches began to preach that slavery was a divine institution that would benefit both slave and master. Churches began to teach that the Christianizing of the slave would make him dutiful. Indeed the best slave a master could have would be a Christian slave. Along these lines masters were encouraged to allow their slaves to receive religious instruction as a Christian slave would work harder than a non-Christian slave (114).

White preachers justified to their congregants the continued existence of slavery. They argued that slave masters should overcome their fears about introducing Christianity to their slaves. Furthermore, they argued that a Christian slave would be more submissive. Therefore, the Bible, which teaches about equality and faith, was used by whites to suppress Black people.

The Black church was born from the overt discrimination against Blacks in white churches (African Methodist Episcopal Church). “This independent church movement of [B]lack Christians was the first effective stride toward freedom by African Americans” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 47). During and immediately after the Civil War, newly freed Blacks were encouraged to join Black churches. The Black church served as a symbol of both their spiritual and physical freedom. It was a badge of honor for Blacks to worship in a Black church. The Black church represented the yearning of Blacks to be free in all aspects of their lives, including, but not limited to, their religious life.

In every day usage, the “Black church” refers to any church that has a majority Black congregation. However, the “Black church” historically refers to Christian denominations that were formed and are currently controlled by Blacks, separate from the major Christian denominations managed by whites. The following Protestant denominations comprise the “Black church”: African Methodist Episcopal Church; African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated; the Progressive National Baptist Convention; and the Church of God in Christ (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Calhoun-Brown 2000).

The first Black church was in the Methodist denomination (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Erskine 2014; African Methodist Episcopal Church). It grew from the Free African Society, which was a nondenominational religious mutual aid organization formed in the late 1700s (“Free African Society”). Forming a church separate from the white church was an emblem of pride for Blacks, and the church served as a symbol of protest and a signal to whites that Blacks were seeking equality.

The Black church is unique in that it is not just a replica of the white church. The Black church blends indigenous African culture with Christianity: “The roots of the Black church are in Africa and this church functions at the center of social life for Africans in America” (Erskine 2014, 95; see also Lincoln 1999 and Wilmore 1983). The Black church is unique because it was not just a place to receive spiritual enlightenment. It was a place to experience art, drama, storytelling, and music (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; McAdam 1985; Lincoln 1999; Wilmore 1983). Blacks – both free and slave – incorporated elements of their indigenous religions into how they practiced Christianity. This novel style of praying and songs became how Blacks were able to connect with one another in their harsh new world.

The inimitable elements of the Black church have continued past slavery. The Black church continues to be the center of the Black community and the heart of Black culture. Other institutions emerged from the Black church, such as schools, housing opportunities, political organizations and black-owned banks (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). The Black church provides resources to its congregants and the greater community at large. And, the Black church continues to have an impact in social protest movements, including the Civil Rights movement.

### ***5.1.2 The Black Church During the Civil Rights Movement***

The Black church sat at the heart of the Civil Rights movement. Although some scholars argue that the role of the Black church in the Civil Rights movement has been overemphasized (Frazier 1964; Marx 1967; see also Cadet 2013), it is undisputable that the Black church provided needed resources that were indispensable to the success of the movement.

The Black church served as a safe haven in Black communities during the 1950s and 1960s. It was a place where Blacks “could meet with neighbors, friends and family in a comfortable environment. Churches were arguably some of the only places people of African descent felt free” (Explore Georgia). Therefore, the Black church was the epicenter of life during the Civil Rights movement.

In her study of the Black church, Calhoun-Brown (2000) emphasizes the importance of studying the Black church from the perspective of resource mobilization theory. She argues that the Black church was “the most resource-rich institution in the African American community” (Calhoun-Brown 2000, 170). One obvious resource the Black church offered to the community is a physical place to meet. In addition to offering meeting locations to plan important aspects of the Civil Rights movement, the Black church offered a dedicated membership base, clergy leadership, financial resources, and emotional support. In particular, the church provided “leadership of

clergymen [who were] largely economically independent of the larger white society and skilled in the art of the managing people and resources” (Morris 1996, 29; see also McAdam 1985). These experienced clergymen were particularly instrumental in connecting the efforts of multiple churches and providing direction to the community with the protest efforts. Many of the leaders of the Civil Rights movement were ministers, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, Ralph Abernathy, and Hosea Williams.

Not only did the Black church provide resources, it also provided a forum to send messages to its members. And, those messages were political in nature and helped mobilize congregants to support the Civil Rights movement. In particular, the structure of the Black church encouraged peaceful protests.

The [B]lack church supplied the civil rights movement with a collective enthusiasm generated through a rich culture consisting of songs, testimonies, oratory, and prayers that spoke directly to the needs of an oppressed group. Many [B]lack churches preached that oppression is sinful and that God sanctions protest aimed at eradicating social evils (Morris 1996, 29).

These messages from the pulpit of Black churches served to inform congregants of the accomplishments of the movement; to encourage congregants to participate in the movement; and to inspire congregant to financial contribute to the movement. Politics was inextricably intertwined with the sermons in Black churches, allowing the Black church to be integral to the Civil Rights movement.

The Black church did not operate in isolation from other political organizations during the Civil Rights movement. It often worked in official and unofficial capacities with organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) (“SCLC History”; “Congress of Racial Equality”; SNCC Digital Gateway). These organizations engaged in direct activism,

such as protests and sit-ins. They offered an opportunity for the church to play both a leading and supportive role in the movement. The leaders of Black churches led the SCLC by orchestrating the Montgomery Bus Boycott, for example. Especially, the founding members of the SCLC were Dr. King and Rev. David Abernathy (“SCLC History”). Furthermore, the Black church played a supportive role to these political organizations by offering financial support. They would raise funds to pay the bail of students who were arrested during the sit-ins of the 1960s (SNCC; Morris 1996; Calhoun-Brown 2000).

The Black church had an intricate structure which relied heavily on volunteer congregants. These congregants practiced civic skills, such as meeting organization and protesting, that they could use outside of the church. Congregants practiced leadership skills and served on committees with specific tasks for supporting the movement. It cannot be overstated how important it was to the civic engagement of congregant to be involved with the Civil Rights movement. The Black church filled a gap in society by allowing the traditionally disenfranchised Black community to become engaged. This engagement lasted beyond the Civil Rights movement and continues today. I argue in the next section that the civic skills taught in the Black church positively impact ambition for Black women.

## **5.2 Protestant Church Membership’s Impact on Ambition**

I argue that Protestant identification will have an impact on judicial ambition for potential Black female candidates. Due to religious organizations providing potential Black judicial candidates with the opportunity to practice necessary civic skills, I suggest that the effects of religious affiliation differ based upon whether a potential judicial candidate identifies as Protestant.

Studies show that churches provide an opportunity for its members to practice civic skills, which may then allow the members to participate fully in political life (Verba et al. 1993, 1995;

Schlozman et al. 1994; Djupe and Grant 2001; Brady et al. 1995). In particular, the church offers resources to traditionally marginalized groups, such as Blacks, that they may not receive outside of the church (Verba et al. 1993, 1995; Schlozman et al. 1994; Djupe and Grant 2001; Brady et al. 1995). These resources provided by the church may help to fill gaps with judicial ambition for potential Black candidates, especially since Black women frequently attend church (Cox and Diamant 2018; Labbe-DeBose 2012).

In their study of political participation by race, Verba et al., (1993) theorize that access, or the lack thereof, to resources explains why there are differential levels of participation for Blacks, Latinos, and whites. They find that Blacks and Latinos are less politically active than whites, but this decreased level of political activism is due to the lack of access to an important set of resources needed for political participation: education, money, time, and language skills (Verba et al. 1993). They also find, however, that once groups have access to these resources, there is no discernible difference in political activism (Verba et al. 1993; Verba et al. 1995; see also Schlozman et al. 1994).

Verba et al. (1993) argue that citizens can gain political skills in non-political contexts, and one such non-political context is the church (see also Brady et al. 1995). In particular, Protestant churches offer its members an opportunity to practice civic skills. "Protestant congregations tend, on average, to be smaller; most Protestant denominations allow for greater lay participation in the liturgy; and most Protestant denominations are organized on a congregational rather than a hierarchical basis" (Verba et al. 1993, 481). The Roman Catholic church, on the other hand, offers less of an opportunity to practice civic skills because it is more hierarchical. Since 71% of Blacks identify as Protestant (Pew Research), the church provides an opportunity for potential Black female judicial candidates to practice civic skills and overcome judicial ambition gaps.



Studies find that the church is a source of social capital for Black Americans and a place for them to potentially learn about politics (Brown and Brown 2003; McDaniel 2009; Liu et al. 2009). Brown and Brown (2003) find that simply attend church will not teach Blacks about politics. Black churches that specifically discuss politics and civic culture will encourage its members to be politically engaged (Brown and Brown 2003). Liu et al. (2009) find that Black churches are instrumental in increasing social capital for its congregants because of their access to political messages.

I argue that Protestant identification will lead to differences in ambition by potential judicial candidates. Not only does identifying as Protestant have a differential impact on potential Black female judicial candidates and potential non-Black female judicial candidates, this identification as Protestant will help prepare potential Black female candidates for a judicial run. This results in two hypotheses that will be tested in the next sections of this chapter:

*Protestant Identification Hypothesis: Potential Black female judicial candidates who identify as Protestant are more likely to have higher ambition than other potential female judicial candidates.*

*Political Messages Hypothesis: Potential Black female judicial candidates who hear political messages in religious institutions are more likely to have higher ambition than other potential female judicial candidates.*

### **5.3 Empirical Analysis**

To test the above hypotheses, I again use the results from my original survey of Georgia lawyers. To assess *Protestant Identification*, survey respondents were asked about their present

religion affiliation.<sup>21</sup> Respondents were also asked how often they attended religious services as a proxy for level of religiosity, and whether they ever volunteered at church. Finally, to examine the impact of *Political Messages*, respondents were asked “how often have you heard political messages during your religious services? – Very frequently, frequently, occasionally, rarely, very rarely, or never?”

I begin by exploring the aggregate responses given by survey respondents to these questions. Figure 1 shows the religious affiliation of all female survey respondents. The majority of female respondents (about 62%) identify as Protestants, with the second-highest percentage identifying as Agnostic (about 11%). The number of female survey respondents who identify as Protestant reflects the Protestant adult population in Georgia. Sixty-seven percent of adult Georgians identify as Protestant (“Religious Composition of Adults in Georgia”).

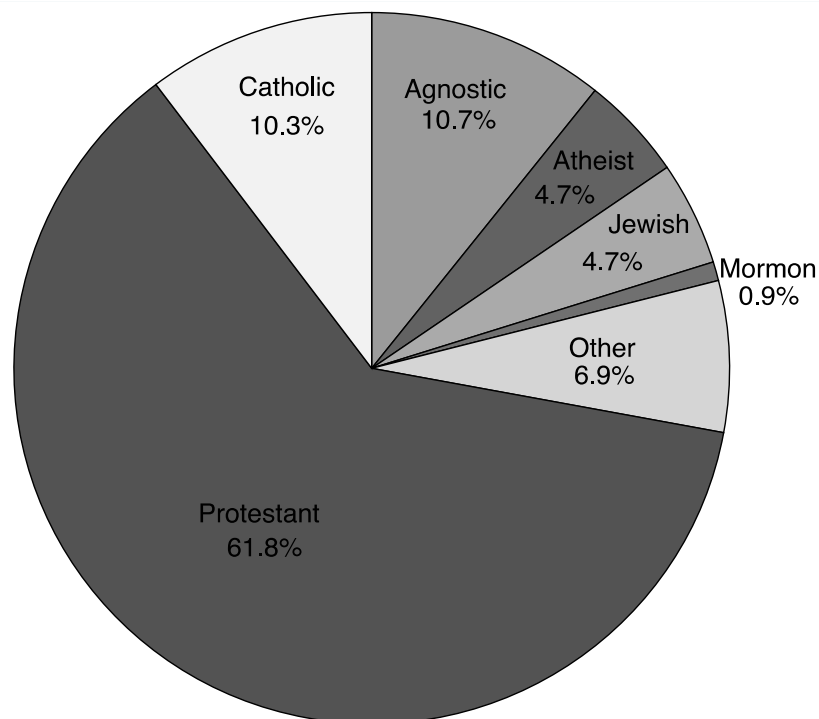
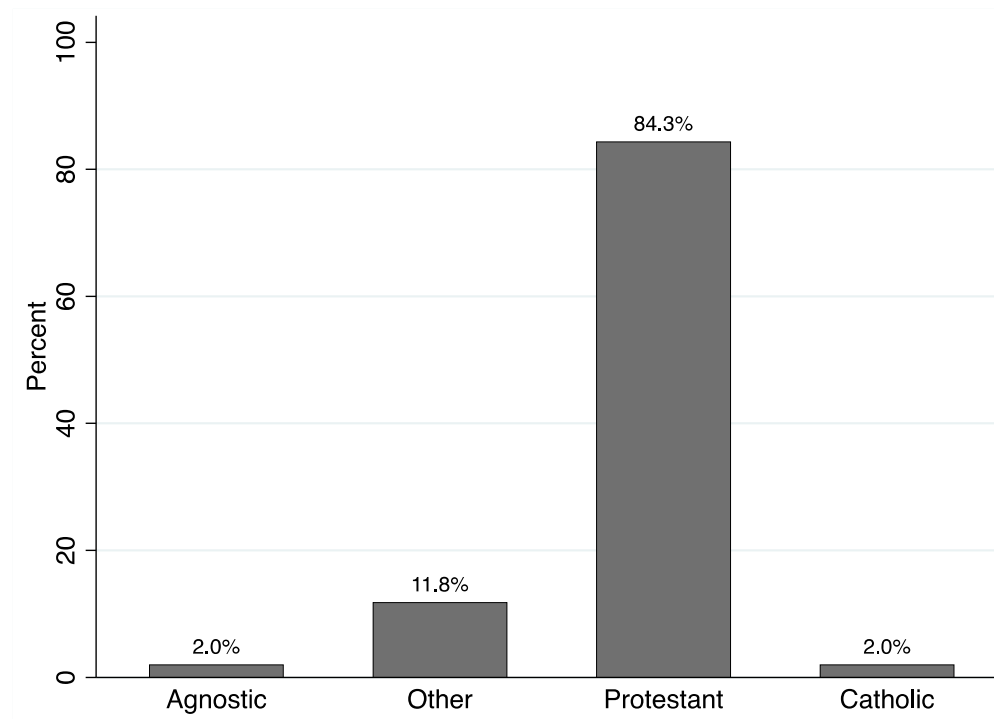


Figure 5.1 Female Respondents' Religious Affiliation, (in %)

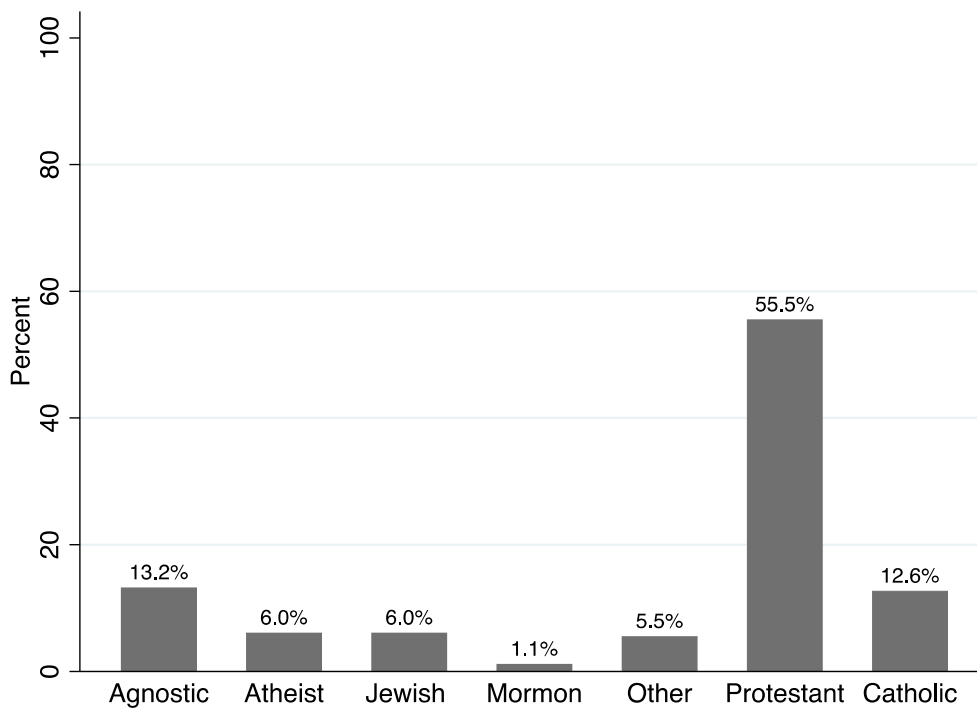
<sup>21</sup> Respondents could answer Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, or Other.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the religious affiliation of Black female and non-Black female respondents, respectively. As Figure 5.2 shows, there is less diversity in religious affiliation for Black female respondents. About 84.3% of Black female respondents identify as Protestant, with no Black female respondents identifying as Mormon, Jewish, or Atheist. The second highest religious affiliation for Black female respondents is “Other” religion (11.8%).

For non-Black female respondents, Figure 5.3 shows that there is more variation in religious affiliation. Although the majority of non-Black female respondents also identify as Protestant (about 55.5%), other religious affiliations are also represented in the responses, including respondents identifying as Mormon, Jewish, and Atheist. The second-highest religious affiliation for non-Black female respondents is Agnostic (13.2%).



*Figure 5.2 Black Female Respondents' Religious Affiliation, (in %)*



*Figure 5.3 Non-Black Female Respondents' Religious Affiliation, (in %)*

To test my hypotheses about the impact of religion on ambition levels, I first begin with a descriptive investigation of the survey results before explaining the results of the probit analyses. It is important to examine the judicial ambition levels for each group of respondents for the Protestant Identification hypothesis I will analyze in this chapter – Black Protestants, Black non-Protestants, non-Black Protestants, and non-Black non-Protestants. Table 5.1 shows the results.

Overall, potential female candidates who identify as Protestant report higher judicial ambition than potential non-Protestant candidates. Notably, Black Protestant respondents express the highest levels of ambition, followed by non-Black Protestant respondents. Sixty-one percent of Black Protestants report that running for judicial office has crossed their mind or they have seriously considered running compared to 50.0% of non-Black Protestant respondents ( $p=0.00$ ).

*Table 5.1 Ambition Levels, By Religious Affiliation*

	Black Protestant Respondents	Black Non-Protestant Respondents	Non-Black Protestant Respondents	Non-Black, Non-Protestant Respondents
No, I have not thought about it.	16	4	42	44
Yes, it has crossed my mind.	21	2	40	29
Yes, I have seriously considered it.	4	2	11	6
Total	41	8	93	79

As predicted, non-Black non-Protestant respondents have the lowest judicial ambition of all potential female candidates. About 56% of non-Black non-Protestant respondents have not thought about running for judicial office.

Black respondents who do not identify as Protestant have the second lowest ambition levels of all categories of respondents. 45.2% of Black non-Protestant respondents have not thought about running for judicial office. These results show that respondents who identify as Protestant are more likely to consider a run for judicial office.

To provide an initial understanding of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the analysis for the Protestant Identification hypothesis, I start by examining the correlation between Protestant Identification and judicial ambition. Table 5.2 reports the correlations between Protestant Identification and judicial ambition. I expect that there is a positive relationship between Black Protestant identification and judicial ambition. Statistical significance of the correlations are in parentheses.

As Table 5.2 shows, no relationship between religious identification and judicial ambition has a correlation statistically significant at the 0.05 level. However, the relationship between identifying as both non-Black and non-Protestant barely misses this threshold, with its  $p$ -value of 0.063. This result is negative, suggesting, in line with my expectations, that respondents who identify as both non-Black and non-Protestant are less likely to express judicial ambition than other potential candidates.

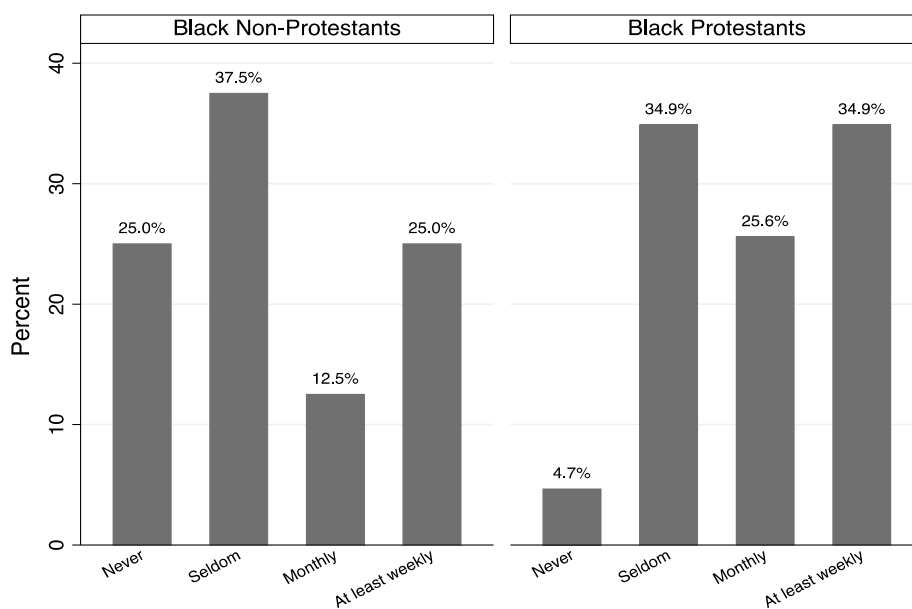
*Table 5.2 Correlations Between Religious Identification and Judicial Ambition*

	Judicial Ambition
Black Protestant	0.083 (0.218)
Black Non-Protestant	-0.008 (0.906)
Non-Black Protestant	0.058 (0.396)
Non-Black Non-Protestant	-0.126 (0.063)

*Note:* Statistical significance is in parentheses.

I next examine the religiosity levels of the four group of respondents, focusing on how often respondents attended religious services and whether they have ever volunteered in a religious house of worship. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 report the results for religious attendance, separated by religious affiliation and race. Figure 5.4 shows the current religious service attendance for Black Protestant and Black non-Protestant respondents. The responses range from “never” to “at least weekly.” The overwhelming majority of Black Protestant (about 95%) and Black non-Protestant (75.0%) respondents attend religious services on at least a “seldom” basis. But, when comparing the percentage of Black respondents who never attend religious services, more Black non-Protestants (25.0%) than Black Protestants (4.7%) report that they never attend religious services.

There are also differences in who attends religious services at least weekly. More Black Protestant (34.9%) than Black non-Protestant (25.0%) respondents attend religious services at least weekly. Although Black respondents, as a whole, attend religious services on at least an intermittent basis, Black respondents who identify as Protestant tend to attend religious services more often than Black respondents who do not identify as Protestant.

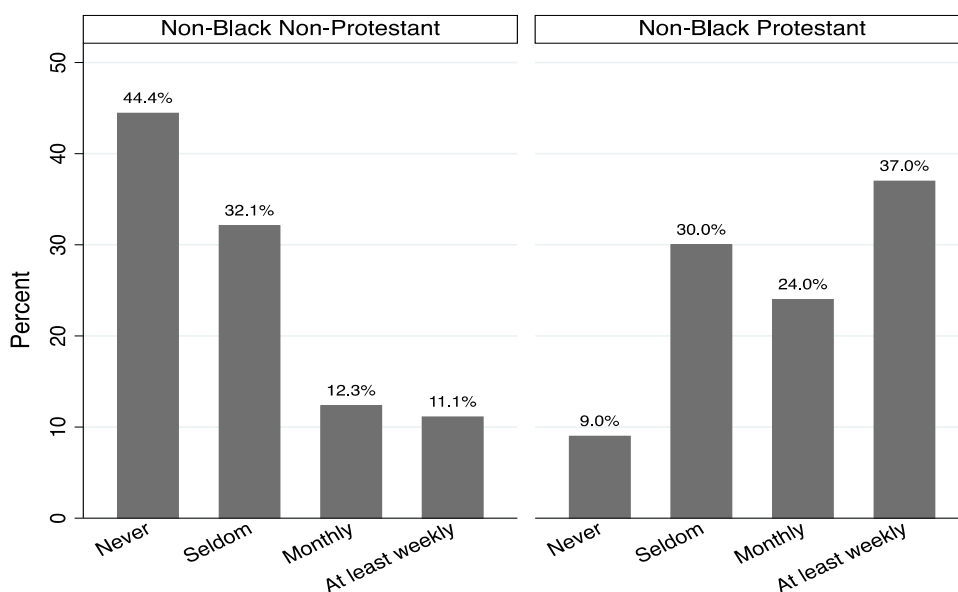


*Figure 5.4 Black Respondents' Current Religious Attendance, By Protestant Affiliation (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be 100.

Figure 5.5 shows the current religious service attendance for non-Black Protestant and non-Black non-Protestant respondents. When comparing all four groups of respondents, Black Protestant and non-Black Protestant respondents are less likely to indicate that they never attend religious services. 4.7% of Black Protestant and 9.0% of non-Black Protestant indicate that they never attend religious services. Therefore, Protestant respondents are more likely than non-Protestant respondents to attend religious services, at least on an intermittent basis.

For non-Black respondents, the difference in religious service attendance is quite noticeable. 44.4% of non-Black non-Protestant respondents indicate that they never attend religious services, compared to only 9.0% of non-Black Protestant respondents. Also, more non-Black Protestant (37.0%) than non-Black non-Protestant (11.1%) respondents attend religious services at least on a weekly basis. Therefore, not only are non-Black Protestants more likely to attend religious services than non-Black non-Protestants, they also attend religious services on a more frequent basis.

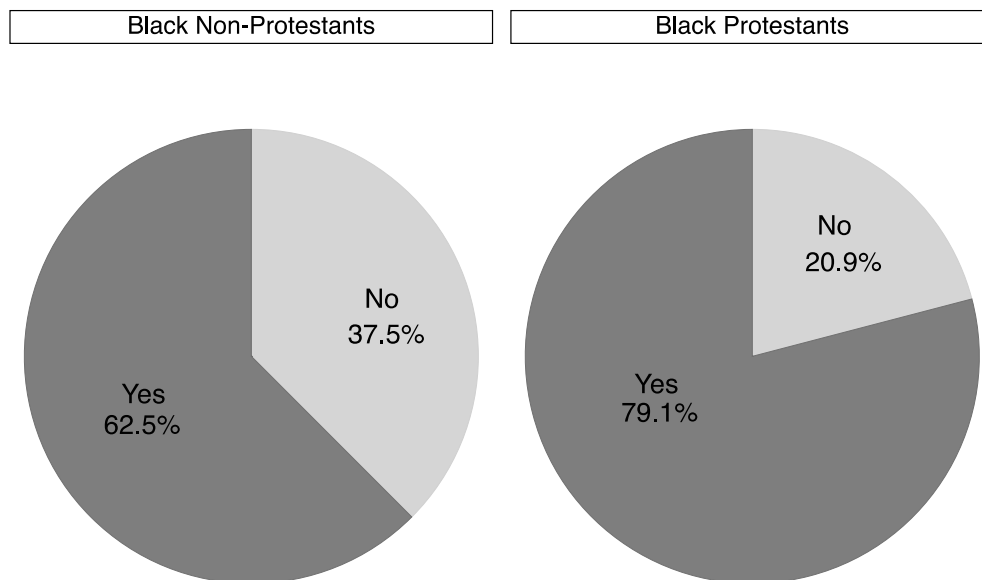


*Figure 5.5 Non-Black Respondents' Current Religious Attendance, By Protestant Affiliation (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

Figures 5.6 and 5.7 show whether the respondents have ever volunteered in a religious house of worship, again separating respondents by religious affiliation and race. Figure 5.6 shows that most Black respondents have volunteered at a religious house of worship. 62.5% of Black non-Protestants and 79.1% of Black Protestants have volunteered at a religious house of worship.

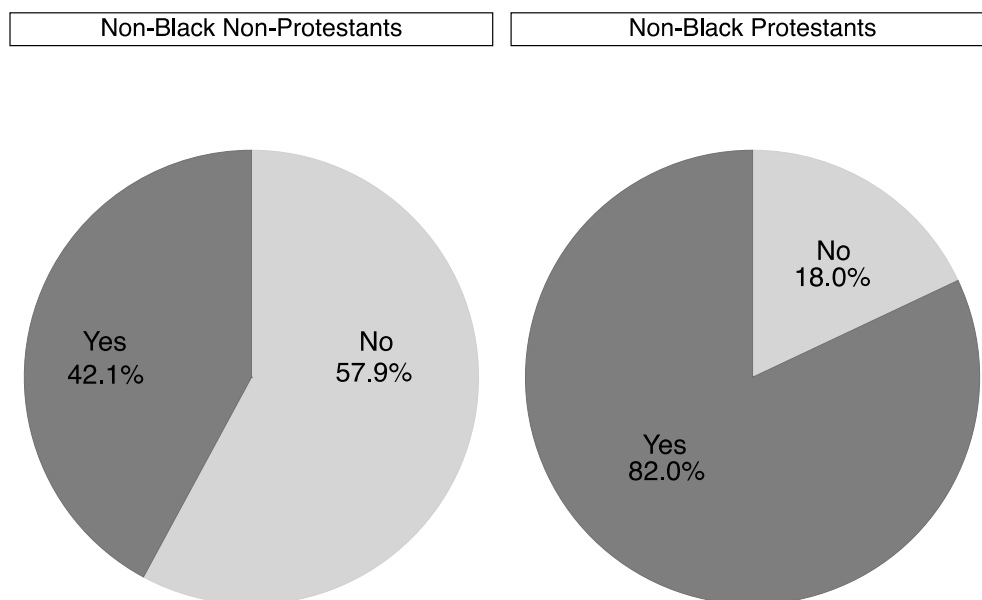




*Figure 5.6 Black Respondents' Religious Volunteer Experience, By Protestant Affiliation (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

In comparing all four groups of respondents, non-Black non-Protestants report the lowest level of religious volunteer experience. Figure 5.7 shows that only 42.1% of non-Black non-Protestants have volunteered at a religious house of worship, compared to non-Black Protestants (82.0%), Black Protestants (79.1%), and Black non-Protestants (62.5%). Overall, Protestants (both Black and non-Black) are more likely than non-Protestants to indicate that they have volunteered in a religious house of worship.



*Figure 5.7 Non-Black Respondents' Religious Volunteer Experience, By Protestant Affiliation (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

The initial results so far suggest that Protestants are much more likely to attend religious services and volunteer at their place of worship than non-Protestants, and that the highest prevalence for each of these facets is reported by Black Protestant respondents. Are these respondents also hearing political messages while at church? Table 5.3 reflects how often female respondents report having heard political messages while in religious institutions. For all female respondents, 25.2% have never heard political messages while in a religious institution. However, that number changes drastically once we separate Black female respondents from non-Black female respondents. For non-Black female respondents, the percentage of respondents who have never heard political messages in religious institutions is greater than the overall female respondents' number, with 28.5% of non-Black female respondents never hearing such messages. For Black female respondents, however, only 13.8% have never heard political messages in their religious institution. Alternatively, over 20% of Black female respondents report hearing political

messages “frequently” or “very frequently,” compared to only 10.7% of non-Black respondents. Therefore, potential Black female judicial candidates tend to hear political messages while in a religious institution more often than potential non-Black female judicial candidates.

*Table 5.3 How Often Have You Heard Political Messages in Religious Institutions? (in %)*

	All Female Respondents	Black Female Respondents	Non-Black Female Respondents
Never	25.2%	13.8%	28.5%
Very Rarely	14.8	7.8	16.8
Rarely	17.8	21.6	16.8
Occasionally	29.1	35.3	27.4
Frequently	8.3	11.8	7.3
Very Frequently	4.8	9.8	3.4

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be 100.

I next examine how often Protestant respondents hear political messages in Protestant churches. The frequency of hearing such messages differs from the total numbers once I account for only Protestant respondents. Table 5.4 shows the results. For female respondents identifying as Protestant, only 19.9% have never heard political messages while in church. For both Black and non-Black female Protestant respondents, the percentage who have never heard political messages while in church is lower than the percentage of all religious affiliations hearing such messages. 10.7% of non-Black female respondents and 21.6% of Black female respondents who identify as Protestant report they have either frequently or very frequently heard political messages while in church. Therefore, potential female judicial candidates identifying as Protestant, regardless of race, were more likely than other potential female candidates to report hearing such messages. Also, in comparing Black and non-Black female Protestant respondents, Black female Protestant respondents were more likely than non-Black female Protestant respondents to hear political messages in church.

*Table 5.4 How Often Have You Heard Political Messages in Religious Institutions? (in %)*

	All Female Protestant Respondents	Black Female Protestant Respondents	Non-Black Female Protestant Respondents
Never	19.9%	13.3%	21.8%
Very Rarely	17.6	6.7	20.8
Rarely	19.9	30.0	16.8
Occasionally	29.8	26.7	30.7
Frequently	8.4	10.0	7.9
Very Frequently	4.6	13.3	2.0

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be 100.

Table 5.5 begins to explore the potential connection between political messages and judicial ambition. It shows the reported ambition levels for the four groups of respondents that will be analyzed in the Political Messages hypothesis: (1) Black respondents who have heard political messages; (2) Black respondents who have not heard political messages; (3) non-Black respondents who have heard political messages; and (4) non-Black respondents who have not heard political messages. Overall, respondents who have heard political messages in religious institutions were more likely than other respondents to express ambition. 60.4% of Black respondents who have heard political messages and 52.1% of non-Black respondents who have heard political messages have considered running for judicial office. Comparatively, a majority of those, Black and non-Black, who have not heard such messages report “never” having considered a run for judicial office.

*Table 5.5 Ambition Levels, By Political Messages*

	Black Respondents Who Have Heard Political Messages	Black Respondents Who Have Not Heard Political Messages	Non-Black Respondents Who Have Heard Political Messages	Non-Black Respondents Who Have Not Heard Political Messages
No, I have not thought about it.	17	3	57	25
Yes, it has crossed my mind.	21	2	48	20
Yes, I have seriously considered it.	5	1	14	3
Totals	43	6	119	48

One interesting result from the survey concerns respondents who have seriously considered a judicial run. Black respondents who have not heard political messages (16.7%) in a religious institution are more likely than any other group in the Political Messages hypothesis to have seriously considered running for judicial office; 11.6% of Black respondents who have heard political messages and 11.8% of non-Black respondents who have heard political messages have seriously considered a judicial run.

The respondents least likely to report seriously considering a run for judicial office are non-Black respondents who have never heard political messages. Only 6.3% of non-Black respondents who have never heard political messages while in a religious institution have seriously considered running for a judicial office.

Next, Table 5.6 shows the correlations between hearing political messages and judicial ambition. I expect a positive relationship for Black respondents who hear political messages in a religious institution and judicial ambition levels. I also expect a negative relationship for non-

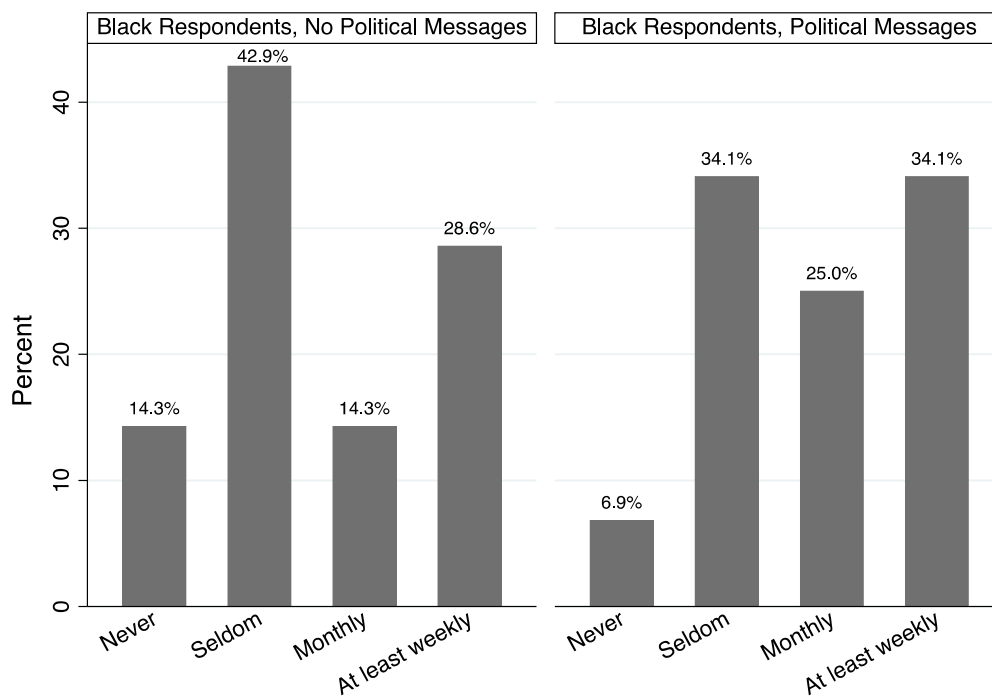
Black respondents who do not hear political messages in a religious institution and judicial ambition. Unfortunately, none of the relationships between hearing political messages and judicial ambition are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

*Table 5.6 Correlations Between Political Messages and Judicial Ambition*

	Judicial Ambition
Black Political Messages	0.077 (0.261)
Black Non-Political Messages	-0.009 (0.891)
Non-Black Political Messages	-0.015 (0.826)
Non-Black Non-Political Messages	-0.052 (0.447)

*Note:* Statistical significance is in parentheses.

Similar to the Protestant Identification hypothesis, it is important to outline the religious experiences of respondents for the Political Messages hypothesis. Figures 5.8 and 5.9 show the current religious attendance for respondents, delineated by race and whether they have heard political messages in a religious institution. Figure 5.8 shows the current attendance of Black respondents, based on whether they have heard political messages.



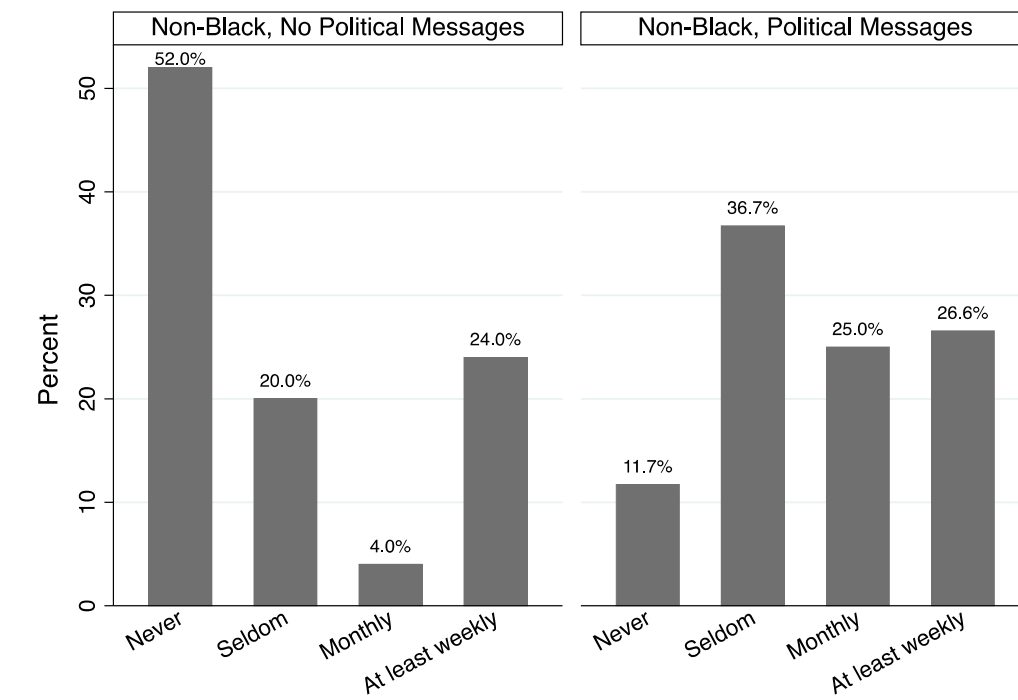
*Figure 5.8 Black Respondents' Current Religious Attendance, By Political Messages (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

For Black respondents who indicate that they have not heard political messages in religious institutions, 14.3% of those respondents indicate that they never attend religious services. This number differs from the Black respondents who have heard political messages in religious institutions. Only 6.9% of Black respondents who have heard political messages in religious institutions never attend religious services. Therefore, Black respondents attend religious services seem to be more exposed to political messages than Black respondents who do not.

Figure 5.9 shows the current religious attendance for non-Black respondents. There is a striking difference in the percentage of non-Black respondents who never attend religious services. 52.0% of non-Black respondents who have not received political messages never attend religious services, compared to 11.7% of non-Black respondents who do receive such messages. One

plausible explanation for this difference is that non-Black respondents who do not attend religious services are simply not exposed to political messages while in a religious institution.



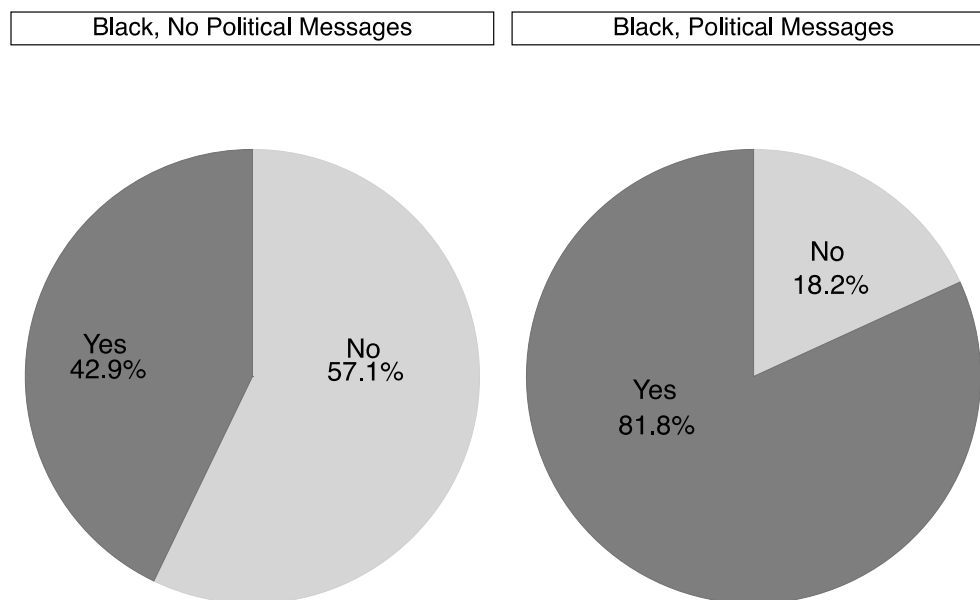
*Figure 5.9 Non-Black Respondents' Current Religious Attendance, By Political Messages (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

Finally, Figures 5.10 and 5.11 show whether respondents have volunteered at religious institutions, delineated by whether they have heard political messages in religious institutions. Figure 5.10 shows whether Black respondents have volunteered in religious institutions, based on whether they have heard political messages. For Black respondents, potential candidates who have heard political messages in religious institutions are more likely to have volunteered at a religious house of worship than potential candidates who have not heard such political messages. 81.8% of Black respondents who have heard political messages have volunteered in a religious house, compared to 42.9% of Black respondents who have not heard political messages in a religious



institution. Overall, Black respondents who have heard political messages tend to be more religiously active in their places of worship, both in terms of attendance and volunteering.



*Figure 5.10 Black Respondents' Religious Volunteer Experience, by Political Messages (in %)*

*Note:* Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

Figure 5.11 shows the religious volunteer experience of non-Black respondents, delineated by political messages. Non-Black respondents (70.3%) who have heard political messages in religious institutions are more likely than non-Black respondents who have not heard such messages (49.0%) to have volunteered in a religious house of worship. Non-Black respondents who have heard political messages in religious institutions have the second-highest religious volunteer experience, second to Black respondents who have also heard political messages. Overall, respondents who have heard political messages while in religious institutions, regardless of race, are more active in religious houses of worship than other respondents.

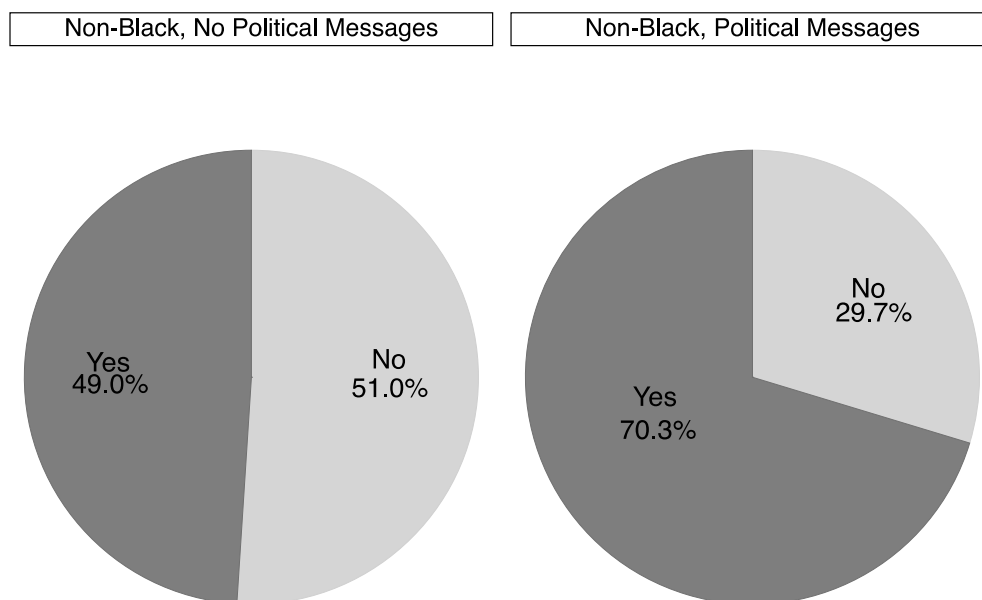


Figure 5.11 Non-Black Respondents' Religious Volunteer Experience, by Political Messages (in %)

Note: Due to rounding, the total percentages may be over 100.

In order to assess how all of these influences work together to influence judicial ambition, I estimate a series of probit models. Once again, the dependent variable for the analysis below is *Judicial Ambition*, operationalized as 1 if the respondent as considered running for judicial office, and 0 otherwise.

The independent variables of interest in this chapter pertain to religious membership and the frequency of hearing political messages while in a religious institution. To account for the intersection of race and religious affiliation, I create a set of 4 dummy variables. *Black Protestant* reflects whether the respondent identifies as Black and Protestant *Black Non-Protestant* reflects respondents who identify as Black and non-Protestant, and 0 otherwise. *Non-Black Protestant* is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as both non-Black and Protestant, and 0 otherwise. Finally, *Non-Black Non-Protestant* measures whether the respondent identifies as non-Black and non-Protestant. I exclude Non-Black Non-Protestant as the baseline category from the models

estimated below. I expect that each of the included categories will lead to higher levels of judicial ambition than the excluded category.

To test for the impact of political messages on judicial ambition, I similarly create a set of four dummy variables to account for the interaction of race and the hearing of these messages. *Black Political Messages* measures is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as both Black and has heard political messages in a religious institution, and 0 otherwise. *Black Non-Political Messages* is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as Black but has not heard political messages, and 0 otherwise. *Non-Black Political Messages* is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as non-Black and has heard political messages while in a religious institution, and 0 otherwise. Finally, *Non-Black Non-Political Messages* is coded 1 if the respondent identifies as non-Black and has not heard political messages while in a religious institution, and 0 otherwise. This last variable is excluded from the model below, and used as the baseline for comparison. I expect that potential political candidates in all other categories than Non-Black Non-Political Messages will express higher levels of judicial ambition than those in the excluded category.

In addition, I include several variables to control for religious activity and political recruitment. *Religious Volunteer* is whether the respondent has ever volunteered at their religious house of worship. This variable is coded 1 if the respondent has volunteered, and 0 otherwise. Studies show respondents who are active in churches gain needed leadership skills, which increases political participation (Verba et al. 1993, 1995; Driskell et al. 2008). I posit that it will similarly lead to an increase in judicial ambition levels.

*Current Religious Attendance* is how often the respondent currently attends a religious institution, ranging from “never” (0), “seldom” (1), “monthly” (2), to “at least weekly” (3). Studies show that individuals who do not attend religious services on a regular basis hold the same

viewpoints and show the same behavior as individuals who do not attend religious services at all (Green et al. 1996). Studies also show that individuals who are active in their church are more politically active as well (Peterson 1992; Gerber et al. 2015). I expect that this increased political activity will also result in higher ambition levels.

Finally, *Recruitment* is whether the respondent has ever been recruited or encouraged to run for a judicial office. Studies show that female candidates are less likely to be recruited for office, thus negatively impact their level of ambition (Williams 2008; Fox and Lawless 2010). This variable is coded 1 if the respondent has ever been recruited, and 0 otherwise. I expect ambition levels to be higher for those respondents who have been recruited or encouraged to run for office.

### **5.3.1 Results and Discussion**

I estimate two probit models to assess my two main hypotheses. Table 5.7 displays the results of the probit analysis for the Protestant Identification hypothesis. The variables of interest for the Protestant Identification hypothesis are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. For the Protestant Identification hypothesis, *Black Protestant*, *Black Non-Protestant* and *Non-Black Protestant* are not statistically significant. I expected that respondents who identify as both Black and Protestant will have higher judicial ambition than respondents who identify as non-Black and non-Protestant. However, the results of the probit analysis show that this is not the case. The results do not support the Protestant Identification hypothesis. Identifying as Protestant does not have an impact on a potential judicial candidate expressing – Black or non-Black – expressing ambition.

Interestingly, and similar to the results from the previous chapters, the control variable *Recruitment* is the only statistically significant variable in the Protestant Identification model, with

a  $p$ -value of 0.001. Not only is *Recruitment* statistically significant, but it is also in the expected direction. Whether a potential judicial candidate has been recruited or encouraged to run for office impacts whether she expresses ambition. Potential candidates who are recruited are more likely to express ambition for judicial office than potential candidates who are not recruited.

*Table 5.7 The Impact of Protestant Membership on Judicial Ambition*

	Coefficient	$p$ -value
Black Protestant	0.238 (0.276)	0.388
Black Non-Protestant	0.213 (0.486)	0.661
Non-Black Protestant	0.162 0.223	0.466
Current Religious Attendance	0.138 (0.098)	0.259
Religious Volunteer	-0.159 (0.230)	0.490
Recruitment	0.966 (0.291)	0.001
Constant	-1.014 (0.298)	0.001
N	213	
Wald $\chi^2$	16.15	
Log pseudolikelihood	-138.834	
% correctly predicted	50.1	
PRE (%)	5.4%	

*Note:* Dependent variable is *Judicial Ambition*. Estimates are probit coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. PRE = Percent Reduction of Error. The reference category for the Protestant Identification hypothesis is *Non-Black Non-Protestant*.

Table 5.8 shows the results for the Political Messages hypothesis. Similar to the Protestant Identification hypothesis, none of the independent variables of interest for the Political Messages hypothesis are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.8 *The Impact of Political Ambition on Judicial Ambition*

	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Black Political Messages	0.159 (0.288)	0.580
Black Non-Political Messages	-0.042 (0.612)	0.945
Non-Black Political Messages	-0.012 (0.230)	0.957
Current Religious Attendance	0.150 (0.097)	0.122
Religious Volunteer	-0.163 (0.227)	0.474
Recruitment	0.983 (0.288)	0.001
Constant	-0.948 (0.320)	0.003
N	215	
Wald $\chi^2$	15.27	
Log pseudolikelihood	-140.595	
% correctly predicted	49.8%	
PRE (%)	4.5%	

*Note:* Dependent variable is *Judicial Ambition*. Estimates are probit coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. PRE = Percent Reduction of Error. The reference category for the Protestant Identification hypothesis is *Non-Black Non-Protestant*.

However, once again the control variable *Recruitment* is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for the Political Messages hypothesis. It is also in the expected direction (positive). The significance of this variable in the two hypotheses tested in this chapter is to show that, above all else, whether a potential candidate has been recruited for office is the leading indicator of whether she will express ambition. Encouragement for office seems to help potential female candidates overcome gaps in ambition.

Although the preliminary bivariate analyses explained earlier in this chapter suggest that there are different ambition levels for potential candidates based on Protestant identification (Table 5.8) and hearing political messages (Table 5.9), such variances do not lead to appreciable differences in expressing judicial ambition.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The Black church is one of the most long-standing cultural institutions in the Black community. Born from the oppression of slavery, the Black church is more than just a place for spiritual development. For Blacks, it is the epicenter of the community and provides many services to both members and non-members alike. The Black church is known for arts, music, drama, storytelling, education, and providing financial resources. It is also known for being indispensable in social protests movement, including the Civil Rights movement and the current Black Lives Matter movement.

The Black church is also a place for its congregants to fill in gaps in civic skills. Members can practice civic skills such as meeting planning and organizing and community canvassing. For Black women, this is particularly important since Black women are more likely than Black men to attend the Black church. Overall, the Black church is a place for marginalized members of society to gain needed skills to successfully participate in democratic processes.

Although the Protestant Identification and Political Messages hypotheses do not find support in the fully estimated models, it is important to note that potential Black and non-Black judicial candidates have different political experiences in church. While these different experiences in church may not impact judicial ambition, these differences do point to the educational and training functions of the Black church. The lack of results in the full models may also be a function of a relatively low N, and fewer Black female respondents than expected.

In the next chapter, I will summarize my conclusions and explain future areas of research.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this study is to examine factors unique to potential Black female candidates that may influence a run for judicial office. Although there are increasing numbers of Black female judges, as compared to years past, there is still much work to be done in the legal field with diversifying the state and federal judiciaries.

In a 2021 interview, former Georgia Supreme Court Justice Leah Ward Sears stated that individuals who are concerned about diversity in the legal profession should ask white lawyers, not Black lawyers, about diversifying the field. Former Justice Sears stated:

Maybe it's time to ask white lawyers—Big Law lawyers—about that. I don't want to spend my entire career talking to white people about diversity, who don't want to hear it . . . Nobody asks them what they're going to do. All the Blacks are always lined up and asked about diversity. But we've been talking about it for years, and the needle doesn't move. So maybe it's time for all the whites to be lined up. And asked what they're going to do, and do they really give a damn—honestly (Joseph 2021).

Former Justice Sears notes that she has spent her entire professional career talking about diversity, but a monumental change has yet to occur. “I want to be thought of as a lawyer – not a Black lawyer, not a woman lawyer. I don't want to be a lawyer with an asterisk, a judge with an asterisk” (Joseph 2021). This is similar to Judge Elisabeth French's sentiments after her historic win in the 2016 Jefferson County, Alabama elections. She also noted that she wanted to be known by her qualification for judicial office, not her race or gender (Gebreyes 2016).

I argue in this dissertation, however, that it is the compound effect of their race and gender, and associated life experiences, that impact judicial ambition for potential Black female candidates. I contend that potential Black female judicial candidates are different than potential non-Black female judicial candidates and potential Black male candidates because of the differences in their decision-making calculus for office. Therefore, studies that subsume Black



women into larger minority categories, or group them with all women, miss an opportunity to investigate the nuances of ambition.

In Chapter 2 I lay out my theory of how differences in the socialization processes of Black women set them apart from other women, and how these differing socialization experiences may in turn influence ambition levels. I pinpoint three important areas where life experiences differ greatly by race: first, I examine the messages that children hear as they are growing up, particularly with respect to financial independence and getting married and having children. Second, I illuminate the role the Black sorority plays in creating civic-minded women that differs greatly from the experiences of those in white sororities. Finally, I explore how the Black church continues to play a central role in the political life of Black Americans. I argue that each of these factors influences how potential candidates view the costs and benefits of running for judicial office, and that each of them leads Black women to report higher levels of judicial ambition than their non-Black counterparts. The crux of my theory is that studies which treat women as a monolithic group overlook important ways groups of women may differ, as well as undercutting our ability to identify correctly why we see a dearth of Black women on the bench.

In Chapter 3, I explore my first main hypothesis that childhood socialization messages impact ambition. First, I outlined a two-part hypothesis regarding financial independence messages. I hypothesized that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages from their parents about financial independence are more likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages. I also hypothesize that potential non-Black female judicial candidates who receive financial independence messages are more likely to express ambition than potential non-Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages.

Second, I outlined a two-part hypothesis regarding family messages. I hypothesized that potential Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about getting married or having children are no more or less likely to express ambition than potential Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages. Furthermore, I hypothesized that potential non-Black female judicial candidates who receive childhood messages about getting married or having children are less likely to express ambition than potential non-Black female judicial candidates who do not receive such messages. The results from the analyses confirm these hypotheses. These findings suggest that when a potential Black female judicial candidate receives childhood messages that encourage her to adhere to traditional gender norms, she is no more or less likely to express ambition. Such family messages do not act as a suppressant to ambition for potential Black female judicial candidates because, traditionally, Black women have had to both work and manage family obligations. If a potential Black female judicial candidate is encouraged to pursue a career outside the home or be financially independent from her spouse, these messages encourage ambition because she is taught that career advancement can coexist with having a family.

In Chapter 4, I investigate the impact of Black sorority membership on judicial ambition. I hypothesized that potential judicial candidates who are members of Black sororities are more likely to express ambition than other potential female judicial candidates. The results from the analysis supports my hypothesis: Black sorority membership is an important training ground for potential female political candidates, especially judicial candidates. With its focus on community service and the uplift of the entire Black community, Black sororities are counter-images of white sororities. Members of Black sororities are tapped into an intimate network of college-educated women. This network transcends beyond college. Not only does Black sorority membership help

train future leaders, it also provides a reliable resource system (votes, financial assistance, and volunteers) for potential candidates.

Lastly, in Chapter 5, I assess the impact of Protestant identification and political messages at religious services on ambition. First, I hypothesized that potential Black female judicial candidates who identify as Protestant are more likely to have higher judicial ambition than potential female candidates who do not identify as Protestant. Second, I hypothesized that potential Black female judicial candidates who hear political messages in religious institutions are more likely to have higher ambition than other potential female judicial candidates. Although the results of the analyses do not support either hypothesis, Protestant identification and political messages may possibly influence legislative ambition or civic engagement for potential Black female candidates. Future research should explore this relationship. The Black church often fills the civic skills gap for many Black adults.

Overall, the results presented herein confirm that potential Black female judicial candidates are indeed distinctive from other potential judicial candidates. Black women's double minority status actually works in their favor when expressing ambition. Black women's life experiences, including the organizations they form, shape their ambition in profound ways. Because Black women are used to fighting against systematic injustices in society, ascent to the bench is a natural extension of their willingness to fight against biases. It is also a natural extension of their inclination to use the law to change how society treats historically disenfranchised groups.

The results with respect to Black sorority membership suggest one potential path for increasing the number of Black women, and perhaps all women, on the bench: the creation of programs that capitalize on the features of Black sororities that most likely result in increased ambition for their members. In particular, programs that provide community-based leadership

development will likely increase judicial ambition for women. Leadership programs that focus on community issues will help potential female judicial candidates develop civic-minded leadership skills, which are essential for public servants.

Future research in judicial ambition of Black women must also focus on the role of recruitment. Previous studies continually reveal a strong link between political ambition and whether one has been recruited to run for office; this relationship is particularly strong for women (Fox and Lawless 2010; Crowder-Meyer 2013; Butler and Preece 2016). In Chapters 2 through 4, *Recruitment* was similarly significant in all of the analyses. This shows that when women are encouraged to run for judicial office, they are more likely to express ambition than women who are not encouraged to run. The logical next step in this line of research is to examine the recruitment sources and whether those source influence ambition differently for potential Black and non-Black female judicial candidates.

Along those same lines, future research should examine a specific recruitment source – the mentor. Legal mentors are indispensable in advancing one’s legal career. Therefore, with the next line of research, it is important to examine the support systems around potential female judicial candidates and how those support systems influence ambition. These analyses could provide a great deal of understanding into judicial ambition and why potential Black female judicial candidates are a distinct group and should not be treated like other minority judicial candidates.

The major implication of this study is that different forces impact judicial ambition for potential Black female judicial candidates than for other potential judicial candidates. The uniqueness of these forces, and the future line of research, show that potential Black female judicial candidates are a distinct group from other potential candidates. Their double minority status aids the expression of ambition for these potential candidates.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A Judicial Political Ambition Survey

#### Instructions

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. All of your answers are confidential. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. If you would like a copy of the results, then please write to the address at the end of the survey. Thank you.

#### Part I – Background and Family Life

We would like to begin this study by asking you some questions about background and family life.

1. What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Non-binary/third gender
  - Prefer to self-describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - Decline to answer
3. Which categories best describe you? Check all that apply.
  - White
  - Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin
  - Black or African American
  - Asian
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Middle Eastern or North African
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - Other race/ethnicity/origin
  - Decline to answer
4. Do you have a parent/guardian who is a first-generation American?
  - Yes
  - No

If so, please list the parent/guardian (mother, father, grandmother, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a first-generation American?
  - Yes
  - No
6. What was your undergraduate major? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you attend a single-sex high school?  
 Yes  
 No
8. Did you attend a high school where you were a racial or ethnic minority?  
 Yes  
 No
9. While in high school, did you run for an elected position?  
 Yes  
 No

If so, please list the position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Did you attend a single-sex college?  
 Yes  
 No
11. Did you attend a historically black college for undergrad?  
 Yes  
 No
12. Did you attend a historically black college for law school?  
 Yes  
 No
13. While in college, did you run for an elected position?  
 Yes  
 No

If so, please list the position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

14. While in law school, did you run for an elected position?  
 Yes  
 No

If so, please list the position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

15. In what category were your personal and household income (household income includes the income of every wage earning adult in your house) last year? (check one for each column)

	Personal income	Household income
Under \$25,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
\$25,000 - \$50,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\$50,001 - \$75,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
\$75,001 - \$100,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
\$100,001 - \$200,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over \$200,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decline to answer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Unmarried, Living as a Couple
- Married/Civil Union
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Decline to answer

17. If you are married or live with a partner, what is your spouse's/partner's highest educational level of attainment?

- Some high school
- High school
- College
- Graduate school
- J.D.
- M.D.
- PhD

18. If you are married or live with a partner, which of the following statements best describes the division of labor on household tasks (cleaning, laundry, and cooking)?

- I am responsible for all household tasks.
- I am responsible for more of the household tasks than my spouse/partner.
- The division of labor in my household is evenly divided.
- My spouse/partner takes care of more of the household tasks than I do.
- My spouse/partner is responsible for all household tasks.
- Other arrangements; describe: \_\_\_\_\_

19. How many hours each week do you spend on these household tasks? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No

21. How long did you take off for maternity/paternity leave? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do your children live with you?

- Yes
- No

23. Which statement best characterizes your child care, or characterized it when your children lived at home?
- I am the primary caretaker of the children.
  - I have more child care responsibilities than my spouse/partner.
  - My spouse/partner and I share child care responsibilities completely equally.
  - My spouse/partner has more child care responsibilities than I do.
  - My spouse/partner is the primary caretaker of the children.
  - Other arrangements; describe: \_\_\_\_\_
24. When your children were (are) young, what were (are) your professional responsibilities?
- I work(ed) full time.
  - I work(ed) full time, but scaled back my responsibilities.
  - I work(ed) part time.
  - I am taking (took) a number of years off.
25. Do you have children under age 6 living with you?
- Yes
  - No
26. Did you have a parent/guardian who took time off from work to care for a child?
- Yes
  - No

If so, please list the parent/guardian (mother, father, grandmother, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

27. In the last six years, have you . . . ?

	Yes	No
Had or adopted a child		
Undergone a career change		
Moved to a different town, city, state		
Increased your religious devotion		
Had children move out of the house		
Had to care for a sick or aging parent		
Taken on more responsibilities at work		
Dealt with a serious personal or family illness		

28. Do you have family members who are lawyers?

	Yes	No
Mother	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grandparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spouse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. Do you have family members who are judges?



	Yes	No
Mother	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grandparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spouse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. If you do have family members who are judges, which court do they serve? Please list.

\_\_\_\_\_

31. Which statement best characterizes your attitudes toward running for judicial office in the future?

- I definitely would like to do it in the future.
- I might do it if the opportunity presented itself.
- I would not rule it out forever, but I have no interest now.
- It is something I would absolutely never do.

## **Part II – Political Attitudes**

We would next like to ask about your political attitudes and the ways you participate politically.

1. How would you describe your party affiliation?

- Strong Democrat
- Democrat
- Independent, Leaning Democrat
- Independent
- Independent, Leaning Republican
- Republican
- Strong Republican

2. How would you describe your political views?

- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative

3. How closely do you follow national politics?

- Very closely
- Closely
- Somewhat closely
- Not closely

4. How closely do you follow politics in your local community?

- Very closely
- Closely
- Somewhat closely

- Not closely

5. How do you characterize the political leanings of the city or town where you live?

- Heavily Democratic
- Leans Democratic
- Roughly Equal Balance
- Leans Republican
- Heavily Republican

6. Either professionally, or outside of work, have you ever done any of the following things?

	Yes	No
Engaged in regular public speaking	○	○
Conducted significant research on a public policy issue	○	○
Solicited funds for an organization, interest group, or cause	○	○
Run an organization, business, or foundation	○	○
Organized an event for a large group	○	○

7. Thinking about your news habits, how often do you . . . ?

	very day	A few times a week	A few times a month	Rarely/Never
Read a print or online newspaper	○	○	○	○
Watch local television news	○	○	○	○
Listen to political talk radio	○	○	○	○
Watch C-SPAN	○	○	○	○
Watch the Fox News Channel	○	○	○	○
Watch CNN or MSNBC	○	○	○	○
Read political websites	○	○	○	○
Listen to political podcasts	○	○	○	○

8. When you think about politics, how important are the following issues to you when you are considering how to vote and whether to participate politically?

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important
Abortion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gun rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gun reform	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criminal Justice Reform	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equal Rights for Women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equal Rights for Religious Minorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equal Rights for Ethnic/Racial Minorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay Rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Which classification best describes you?

- Strong feminist
- Strong black feminist/Womanist
- Feminist
- Feminist/Womanist
- Not a feminist
- Anti-Feminist

10. In general, how competitive are judicial elections in the area where you live?

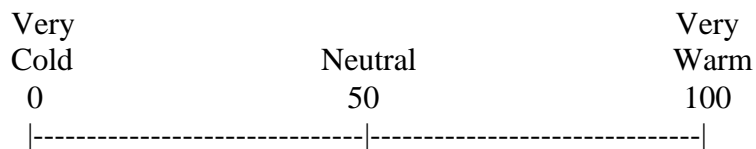
- Very competitive
- Competitive
- Somewhat competitive
- Not at all competitive
- I don't know

11. In general, how competitive are local elections in the area where you live?

- Very competitive
- Competitive
- Somewhat competitive
- Not at all competitive

- I don't know
12. In general, how competitive are congressional elections in the area where you live?
- Very competitive
  - Competitive
  - Somewhat competitive
  - Not at all competitive
  - I don't know
13. Off the top of your head, do you recall the name of your member of the Georgia State House?
- Unsure
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Off the top of your head, do you recall the name of your member of the Georgia State Senate?
- Unsure
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Off the top of your head, do you recall the name of your member of the U.S. House of Representatives?
- Unsure
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Off the top of your head, do you recall the names of your U.S. Senators?
- Unsure
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Unsure
  - Name
17. Are you at all inspired by any of the following contemporary political leaders? (check all that apply)
- Donald Trump
  - Stacy Abrams
  - Brian Kemp
  - Andrew Gillum
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Bill Clinton
  - Barack Obama
  - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
  - Nancy Pelosi
  - Lindsey Graham
  - John Lewis
18. We would like to get your feelings about some individuals and groups within American society. When you see the name of individuals and groups below, please rate it with what we

call a feeling thermometer by **writing a number from 0 to 100 in the blank next to it**. As indicated by the scale below, ratings between 0 and 49 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward those individuals and that you feel cold towards them. Ratings between 51 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward those individuals. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward an individual or group you would rate them at 50 degrees.



U.S. Supreme Court justices	_____
Georgia Supreme Court justices	_____
Justice Brett Kavanaugh	_____
Undocumented immigrants	_____
Kay Ivey	_____
William Barr	_____
Brian Kemp	_____
Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg	_____
Chief Justice Harold Melton (GA Supreme Court)	_____
Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms	_____
Fulton District Attorney Paul Howard	_____

**Part III – Running for Public Office**

The next series of questions concerns whether you have ever considered running for office, including judicial office.

1. Do you hold or have you ever held elective public office?
  - Yes

What office[s]? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What year[s] did you serve? \_\_\_\_\_

- No

If no, have you ever run for public office?

- Yes
  - What office[s]? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What year[s]? \_\_\_\_\_

- No
2. Do you hold or have you ever held elective judicial office?
- Yes
 

What office[s]? \_\_\_\_\_

What year[s] did you serve? \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
 

If no, have you ever run for elective judicial office?

    - Yes
 

What office[s]? \_\_\_\_\_

What year[s]? \_\_\_\_\_
    - No
3. If you have never run for an elective judicial office, have you ever thought about running for judicial office?
- Yes, I have seriously considered it.
  - Yes, it has crossed my mind.
  - No, I have not thought about it.
4. How often do you think about running for elective judicial office?
- It is always in the back of my mind
  - At least once a year
  - Sporadically, over the years
  - It has been many years since I last thought about it
5. To the best of your recollection, how old were you when you first thought about running for elective office? \_\_\_\_\_
6. To the best of your recollection, how old were you when you first thought about running for judicial office? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever taken any of the following steps that often precede a run for office?

	Yes	No
Discussed running with party leaders or elected officials		
Discussed running with a current judge		
Discussed running with friends and family		
Discussed running with community leaders		
Discussed running with a legal mentor		
Solicited or discussed financial contributions with potential supporters		
Investigated how to place your name on the ballot		

### **Part IV – Impressions and Experiences with Running for Office**

Most citizens have never thought about running for office. But, we're interested in your impressions and experiences even if you're not interested in these things.

1. Overall, how qualified do you feel you are to run for public office?
  - Very qualified
  - Qualified
  - Somewhat qualified
  - Not at all qualified
  
2. Overall, how qualified do you feel you are to run for judicial office?
  - Very qualified
  - Qualified
  - Somewhat qualified
  - Not at all qualified
  
3. Would you be more interested in judicial office if you were appointed, rather than had to engage in a campaign?
  - Yes
  - No
  
4. Has anyone been particularly persistent or influential in trying to get you to run for judicial office?
  - Yes
  - No

If yes, what is this person's gender? \_\_\_\_\_

What is this person's race? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person a lawyer?

- Yes
- No

What was this person's relationship to you? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Regardless of your interest in running for judicial office, have any of the following ever suggested running for office to you?

	Never	Once or Twice	3-5 Times	More than 5 Times
A friend or acquaintance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A co-worker or business associate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

An elected official	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A judge (federal or state)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An official from a political party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A spouse or partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A member of your family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A non-elected political activist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A legal mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A women's organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A member of your sorority or fraternity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Someone from your church, synagogue, mosque, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Have any of the following individuals ever discouraged you or tried to talk you out of running for judicial office?

	Yes	No
A friend or acquaintance		
A co-worker or business associate		
An elected official		
A judge (federal or state)		
An official from a political party		
A spouse or partner		
A member of your family		
A non-elected political activist		
A legal mentor		
A women's organization		
A member of your sorority or fraternity		
Someone from your church, synagogue, mosque, etc.		

7. In thinking about your qualifications to run for judicial office, do any of the following apply to you? (check all that apply)
- I know a lot about criminal justice issues.
  - I have relevant professional experience.
  - I am a good public speaker.



- I have strong connections in the legal community.
- I have strong connections in my local community.
- I have or could raise enough money.
- I am a good self-promoter.
- My politics are too far out of the mainstream.

8. Turning to your interest in specific public offices . . .

	1) If you were to run for office, which one would you seek first? (check one)	
		2) What offices might you ever be interested in running for? (check all that apply)
School Board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mayor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
City, County, or Town Council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State Legislator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Governor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Statewide Office (i.e., Attorney General, Secretary of State)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Member of the U.S. House of Representatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
U.S. Senator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
President	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Judge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
District Attorney	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Would any of the following resources make you more interested in running for judicial office? (check for all that apply)

- Manuals and articles on campaigns and elections
- Interviews with political operatives and elected officials
- Webcasts on organizing, fundraising, and media skills
- Training programs sponsored by political organizations

10. Lots of people have a negative view of what is entailed in running for judicial office. How would you feel about . . . ?

	Comfortable	Wouldn't Bother Me	Negative	So Negative, It Would
--	-------------	--------------------	----------	-----------------------

				Deter Me from Running
Spending less time with family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Loss of privacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less time for personal interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hindering professional goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. If you were to run for judicial office, how would you feel about engaging in the following aspects of a campaign?

	Comfortable	Wouldn't Bother Me	Negative	So Negative, It Would Deter Me from Running
Soliciting campaign contributions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going door-to-door to meet constituents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with members of the press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potentially having to engage in or endure a negative campaign	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving support from leaders in the legal community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Answering questions about your professional experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. If you were to run for judicial office, how likely do you think it is that you would win your first campaign?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

13. In thinking about your qualifications to run for office, do any of the following apply to you? (check all that apply)

- I don't have thick enough skin.
- I have a lot of skeletons in my closet.
- I worry about how a campaign would affect my family.
- I am too old.
- I am the wrong gender.
- I am the wrong race/ethnicity.

14. Please mark your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Government pays attention to people when making decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
Courts are useful for protecting the rights of racial and religious minorities.	○	○	○	○	○
Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.	○	○	○	○	○
Within the legal community, it is still more difficult for women to climb the career ladder.	○	○	○	○	○
Within the legal community, it is still more difficult for blacks to climb the career ladder.	○	○	○	○	○
Within the legal community, it is still more difficult for black women to climb the career ladder.	○	○	○	○	○
It is just as easy for women to be elected to high-level office as men.	○	○	○	○	○

It is just as easy for a black person to be elected to high-level office as a white person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is just as easy for a black woman to be elected to high-level office as any other person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feminism has had a positive impact on social and political life in the United States.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When women run for public office, it is more difficult for them to raise money than it is for men.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When black women run for public office, it is more difficult for them to raise money than it is for any other candidate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **Part V - Professional Experiences**

The next series of questions ask about your professional work experiences as an attorney.

1. What year did you become a member of the Georgia bar? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What law school did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_
3. During your law school summers, did you ever work or intern in the Atlanta area?
  - Yes
  - No
4. Are you a member of the bar in another state?
  - Yes
  - No

If yes, which state? \_\_\_\_\_

What year did you become a member of the bar of the other state(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which organizations were you a member of during law school? Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of the following best characterizes your current position?
  - Judicial law clerk
  - Solo practitioner
  - Law firm associate
  - Law firm partner
  - Federal public defender
  - State public defender
  - Federal prosecutor
  - State prosecutor
  - Other; please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What year did you start your current position? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What were your previous legal positions? Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long did you hold each of your previous positions? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How often do you appear in court?
  - Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
11. Are you a litigation attorney?
  - Yes
  - No
12. What area(s) of law do you practice? Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Are you a member of a voluntary bar association in Atlanta? If so, please list. \_\_\_\_\_
14. What year did you first join the voluntary bar association? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Have you ever held a leadership position in a voluntary bar association?
  - Yes
  - No

If so, list the position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

16. Have you ever been asked to run for judicial office?

- Yes
- No

If so, please list the office(s). \_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you have professional mentors?

- Yes
- No

If yes, do you have professional mentors in the legal field?

- Yes
- No

18. Do you have professional mentors at the firm or office where you practice?

- Yes
- No

19. Did you gain this mentor as part of a formalized mentorship program at your firm or office?

- Yes
- No

20. Do you have at least one professional legal mentor who shares both your race and gender?

- Yes
- No

21. Do you have at least one professional legal mentor who does not share both your race and gender?

- Yes
- No

22. Do you serve as a mentor to another attorney?

- Yes
- No

### **Part VI - Parental Messages**

The next series of questions asks about the messages that you have received from your parent or guardian.

1. How often did your parents/guardians discuss state politics with you?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Very rarely

- Never
2. How often did your parents/guardians discuss federal politics with you?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
3. How often did your parent/guardian discuss women's issues with you?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
4. How often did your parents/guardian discuss race issues with you?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
5. Has your parent/guardian ever taken you with them to vote in an election?
- Yes
  - No
6. Has your parent/guardian ever run for elective office?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, please list the office. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Has your parent/guardian ever held elective office?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, please list the office. \_\_\_\_\_

8. As a minor (under the age of 18), how often did your parent/guardian encourage you to take on a leadership position at school?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently

- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Very rarely
- Never

If so, please list the position(s). \_\_\_\_\_

9. How often did your parent/guardian encourage you to take on a leadership position in college?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never

If so, please list the position(s). \_\_\_\_\_

10. How often did your parent/guardian encourage you to take on a leadership position in law school?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never

If so, please list the position(s). \_\_\_\_\_

11. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to get married?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never

12. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to have children?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never



13. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to pursue a career outside the home?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
14. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to pursue a non-domestic services career?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
15. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you were expected to attend college?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
16. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that your career success will be beneficial to your local community?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
17. How often did your parent/guardian tell you that you had to academically outperform your fellow classmates?
- Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Very rarely
  - Never
18. Did your parent/guardian ever tell you that you were expected to maintain financial independence from your spouse?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how often did they tell you that you were expected to maintain financial independence as an adult?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Very rarely

### **Part VII - Membership in Sorority or Fraternity**

The next series of questions is about membership in a sorority, fraternity, or other social groups.

1. Were you a member of a sorority or fraternity in college?
  - Yes
  - No
2. Was this a single-sex sorority or fraternity?
  - Yes
  - No
3. What was the sorority or fraternity? Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What year did you join the sorority or fraternity? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the pillars of your organization? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you have a parent who is also member of your sorority or fraternity?
  - Yes
  - No
7. While in college, did you hold a leadership position in your sorority or fraternity?
  - Yes
  - No
8. While in college, what type of events did you participate in with your sorority or fraternity?  
Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Within the past six years, have you made a financial contribution to your sorority or fraternity?
  - Yes
  - No
10. Within the past six years, have you volunteered with your sorority or fraternity?
  - Yes

- No

11. After college, have you held a leadership position in your sorority or fraternity?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you have a mentor who is a member of your sorority or fraternity?

- Yes
- No

13. Have you ever attended your sorority or fraternity's conferences?

- Yes
- No

14. Within your sorority or fraternity, how often did you hear political messages?

- Very frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Very rarely
- Never

15. Did you participate in the following activities with your sorority or fraternity?

	Yes	No
Voter registration drive	○	○
Financial literacy workshop	○	○
Mental health workshop	○	○
Tutoring	○	○
Canned food drive	○	○

16. Are you a member of any other social organizations?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please list. \_\_\_\_\_

17. Have you ever held a leadership position in another social organization?

- Yes
- No

If so, please list. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part VIII - Religious Community Participation**

Lastly, we would next like to ask you about your involvement with religious institutions.

1. What is your present religion, if any?
  - Protestant (Baptist, Methodist, Non-denominational, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Episcopalian, Reformed, Church of Christ, etc.)
  - Roman Catholic (Catholic)
  - Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints/LDS)
  - Orthodox (Greek, Russian, or some other orthodox church)
  - Jewish (Judaism)
  - Muslim (Islam)
  - Buddhist
  - Hindu
  - Atheist
  - Agnostic
  - Other
  
2. How often did you attend religious services, on average, when you were a minor (under the age of 18)?
  - At least weekly
  - Monthly
  - Seldom
  - Never
  
3. How often do you currently attend religious services?
  - At least weekly
  - Monthly
  - Seldom
  - Never
  
4. Are you a member of a local church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other house of worship?
  - Yes
  - No
  
5. How many years have you been a member of your house of worship? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray?
  - Several times a day
  - Once a day
  - A few times a week
  - Once a week
  - A few times a month
  - Seldom
  - Never
  
7. How often have you heard political messages during your religious services?
  - Very frequently
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally

- Rarely
- Very rarely
- Never

8. Have you ever volunteered at your house of worship?

- Yes
- No

If so, what volunteer role(s) have you held? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you ever participated in small group study of your religious text?

- Yes
- No

10. Have you ever participated in the following activities at your house of worship? (check all that apply)

- Organizing meetings
- Attending meetings
- Writing letters to advocate for a cause
- Canvassing the community to inform them about community matters/issues
- Voter registration drive
- Contacting elected officials

11. Have you ever held a leadership position at your house of worship? Examples of leadership positions include pastor, priest, deacon, bishop, imam, rabbi, etc.)

- Yes
- No

If so, please list the leadership position(s). \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have any of the following family members ever held leadership positions at a house of worship?

	Yes	No
Parent(s)	○	○
Grandparent(s)	○	○
Spouse	○	○

Thank you for completing the survey. We truly value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to our understanding of judicial political ambition.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Yoshana Jones Hill at 38 Peachtree Center Avenue SE, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 or yjones7@gsu.edu.

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