

Gender and Black Presidential Politics: From Chisholm to Moseley Braun

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SUMMARY. Carol Moseley Braun's entrance into the 2003 Democratic presidential primaries brought Representative Shirley Chisholm's 1972 presidential run back into the spotlight. Numerous questions of interest immediately come to mind. Has the political environment for Black females interested in the presidency changed? Is a Black female candidate running nationally today in a better position than thirty years ago? Did Black Americans see a Black female as a serious contender in 2003 where they did not in 1972? Were Blacks more inclined to support a Black male in the race, Al Sharpton, regardless of the qualifications of Moseley Braun? While data are limited, this article attempts to address these questions and to draw some conclusions, albeit cautiously, about the current political environment for Black female candidates. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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INTRODUCTION

Most Americans, particularly Black Americans, tend to think Jesse Jackson was the first serious Black presidential contender with his 1984 and 1988 campaigns. Some have forgotten, but most are unaware, that former U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm (D-NY), the first Black woman elected to Congress in 1968, ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972. She was serious about her bid and stayed in the race through the presidential primaries and into the Democratic convention. Former Illinois Senator Carol Moseley Braun's entrance into the Democratic presidential primaries in 2003 brought Chisholm's run thirty years before into the spotlight again. Given that Carol Moseley Braun's bid for the Democratic nomination marked only the second time that a Black woman made a run for the White House,¹ attempts to compare the two are understandable.

Numerous questions of interest immediately come to mind. Has the political environment for Black females interested in the presidency changed? Is a Black female candidate running nationally today in a better position than thirty years ago? Did Black Americans see a Black female as a serious contender in 2003? Given the presence of a Black male, Al Sharpton, in the presidential primaries, were Blacks more inclined to support a male regardless of the qualifications of the female? The obvious temptation in approaching these questions might be to make sweeping claims based on comparisons between the Chisholm and Moseley Braun campaigns. Yet, major differences in the field of candidates, campaign election laws, the individual decisions of the candidates, and many other differences, all make a direct comparison very difficult. Furthermore, the fact that they are just two women divided by thirty years constrains our ability to generalize about the viability of Black female presidential candidates today.

Despite these limitations, the historical significance of these two presidential runs necessitates some attempt at comparison. This article seeks to address some of those questions. We may not be able to answer them definitively, but feel that an examination of the presidential primary bids by Shirley Chisholm in 1972 and Carol Moseley Braun in 2003 may give some sense of whether the political climate for Black female national candidates is improving. The first section of the article reviews the circumstances of Black women's political life and the limited literature on Black women and electoral politics. The next section briefly examines the context of Chisholm's 1972 presidential bid. The third section explores the performance of Moseley Braun and Sharpton

in the 2003 Democratic presidential primaries. The final section addresses the overall question of whether the climate has changed for Black female political candidates.

BLACK WOMEN'S POLITICAL LIFE

The political life of Black women has been a complex, multi-faceted state of affairs. Black women have always occupied a tertiary position in the American hierarchy, primarily because Black women exist at the intersection of race and gender. As such, they have constituted a neglected and oftentimes invisible category. To paraphrase Hull, Scott, and Smith (1982), at a time when all the women were white and all the Blacks were men, there existed virtually no place for Black women (Shin and Judson 1998, 247; Simien 2004). Black women lead much different lives than their White counterparts. The norm of Victorian femininity and gentility observed and reserved for White women popular during the 19th century was unavailable to Black women, although they were judged by Victorian standards (Carlson, 1992). Black women, both during slavery and in post-emancipation America, generally worked outside the home, which violated Victorian codes of conduct. Slavery dictated that every able-bodied person had to work in order to maximize the master's profits. After slavery, necessity dictated Black women had to work outside the home in a variety of jobs, usually as domestics, in order to help support their families (Hunter, 1998). Being in the workforce put Black women in quasi-competition with Black men. Given that White employers often refused to hire Black men, "Black women's loss of income was less likely to be made up by the gains of their men" (Giddings 1984, 148). Therefore, work was not an option, but rather a necessity for Black women.

As such, the role that came to define Black women was that of the "strong Black woman," who was able to overcome all obstacles in her path with little or no help from anyone, including Black men (Harris-Lacewell 2001). Black women had to cultivate responses to both sexism and racism. Not only did they have to confront discrimination in response to the majority community, Black women had to also learn how to negotiate the confines of a male-dominated Black "counter-public" (Brown 1994; Harris-Lacewell 2001; Wolcott 1997, 2001). In so doing, Black women tended to adopt a racialist perspective of their world. That is, the burgeoning movement for Black incorporation in a post-emancipation America required Black women to support their

men. Indeed, Black women had a vested interest in obtaining civil rights for the larger Black community, but that meant many of the gendered critiques that they would offer throughout this period would be suppressed in favor of “the race.” Discussions about greater equality for Black women were seen as a challenge to male authority within and as divisive to the broader Black community (Staples 1970). Increasingly, the public political space that Black women had available to them was restricted in ways that they had not experienced before (Brown 1994). Black women, while remaining active in African American political struggles, had to do so largely on men’s terms (Wolcott 1997).

Few scholars of the attitudes and behaviors of Black communities or everyday Black people will deny that issues of gender are problems within the larger Black American community. While space does not permit a complete explication of the situation, Manning Marable (2001) has identified the genesis of the sexism that pervades Black communities. In a description of the history of the development of sexism within America’s Black communities, Marable states:

from the very beginning of Black political activism in the United States, Afro-American men had real difficulty in considering the “triple oppression” (race/class/sex) of Black women with any degree of seriousness. Part of the problem stemmed from the evolution of patriarchal institutions within Black civil society. . . . Many Black male activists identified the cause of Black liberation with the ultimate attainment of “Black manhood.” (Marable 2001, 124)

Moving into the 20th century, Marable identifies the opposition of Black nationalists to birth control, arguing, as Elijah Muhammad did, that Black women were created by God to serve their husbands and sons. “The woman is man’s field to produce his nation,” Elijah Muhammad observed.

Well before the Civil Rights Movement, a not-so-subtle reaction began to form within Black civil society, according to Marable, that reinforced patriarchal relations between men and women. The Depression and war years produced the figure of Sapphire—a Black woman who was “evil, treacherous, bitchy, stubborn, and hateful”—within the popular culture. The Sapphire stereotype, as explained by Marable, was used to explain away any Black woman who exhibited tendencies of strength that were designated only for males.

If anything, black women fared even worse within the world of women’s political activity. Even when White women made their bid for

access to the mainstream public sphere, Black women, though integral to the suffrage movement, were accepted only on very limited terms (Giddings 1984). Black women had to deal with White women's racism, which caused Black women largely to abandon movements highly identified with White women, a situation that persists today (Kay 1985). Additionally, while Black women remained acutely aware of their gendered position, they continued to be extremely sensitive to racial inequality (Fulenwider 1980; Kane 1992). Thus, most Black women, notwithstanding the sexism they encountered within their community, felt they had more in common with Black men than White women. Moreover, most they felt their own communities presented them with more opportunities than their work with White women had (Giddings 1984; Simien 2004b; Tate 1993). It is worth noting that sexism experienced by Black women at the hands of Black males has existed alongside a belief in the importance of group among Blacks as a whole in the face of exclusion or opposition from the larger White society (Collins 1990; Mansbridge and Tate 1992). While Black women are "doubly bound," a racially constructed identity more strongly affects the political attitudes of Black women than one based on gender (Gay and Tate 1998, 170).

While Black women were politically active in the past and remain very active, very little work has been done on their political activities (Simien 2004a). This is especially true in political science. Although research has been done on female (i.e., White) political candidates (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Koch 2000, 2002; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002) and on Black (i.e., male) political candidates (Citrin et al. 1990; McDermott 1998; Sigelman et al. 1995; Sigelman and Welch 1984; Terkildsen 1993), there has been virtually nothing done on Black women's political involvement and much less on Black women as candidates (for exceptions see, for example, Barrett 1995; Clayton 2003; Clayton and Stallings 2000; Gill 1997; Githens and Prestage 1997; Stone 1980). Although it may have been implied that the work on women and Blacks may have captured the experience of Black women, nothing could be farther from the truth. Black women occupy a unique position because they are "*status deprived* because they face discrimination on the basis of race and gender" (Simien 2004a, 83, emphasis in original). As a result, work done on Black men and White women is wholly inadequate to encapsulate this dynamic of race and gender, which is not simply additive, but multiplicative in effect where Black women are concerned (Simien and Clawson 2004; Wing 1996).

From the work that has been done, however, it is clear that the road Black women have to negotiate in order to be elected to political office

is a difficult one (Darcy, Hadley, and Kirksey 1993). Since Black women have been largely rendered invisible in political life, their political prospects have been difficult, at best, to forecast (Gill 1997). This is perhaps even more evident if one is to consider the presidential prospects of a Black female. Nevertheless, Black women have made tremendous strides in national elected office in the past 30 plus years (Barker, Jones, and Tate 1999). In 2005, the number of Black women in the 109th Congress stands at 14.² Yet, despite the tremendous strides Black women have made, they have had to strike a delicate balance in crafting their campaigns as they face stereotypes associated with both Blacks and women (Clayton 2003; Clayton and Stallings 2000). Little information exists about what types of campaigns Black women run (whether they are different from or similar to those run by Black men and White women), or how Black voters perceive Black female candidates as opposed to male candidates. Of course, based on the history of Black women in the political sphere, one might expect that national campaigns would create tough challenges from Whites and Black males. This claim seems to be true in the case of Shirley Chisholm in 1972, but have thirty years allowed for evolution in the role Carol Moseley Braun played in 2003?

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM'S 1972 PRESIDENTIAL BID

Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm ran for president in 1972 on the Democratic Party ticket. She entered the race after no woman or Black chose to run for the nomination. Her goal was never to win, but rather to show it was possible for an African-American woman to make a good standing in a presidential run. As she said in 1973:

I ran because someone had to do it first. In this country everybody is supposed to be able to run for President, but that's never been really true. I ran *because* most people think the country is not ready for a black candidate, not ready for a woman candidate. Someday . . .

It was time in 1972 to make that someday come and, partly through a series of accidents that might never recur, it seemed to me that I was the best fitted to try . . . (Chisholm 1973, 3)

By concentrating her limited resources on more sympathetic states and rallying women, blacks and college students in those states, she was able to make a good showing. She won the New Jersey presidential pri-

mary with 66.9 percent of the vote and had a strong showing in Florida, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. She received 4 percent of the vote in Florida, 23 percent in Massachusetts, and 9 percent in North Carolina (Haskins 1975, 167, 173). Chisholm's run for the nomination failed, as she knew it would, but she received 430,000 votes in the presidential primaries leading up to the 1972 Democratic National Convention. She ran an impressive campaign considering her fairly late start and shoestring budget. She entered the convention with twenty-eight delegates, but in the end, received votes from 151 delegates on the first roll call ballot. Chisholm became the first and only Black woman to have her name placed into nomination at a national party convention.

Even though a poll conducted by Miller and Miller (1975) showed Chisholm with a very positive image among Blacks (73.2 percent), other candidates were viewed favorably by Blacks as well—George McGovern (76.4 percent), Ted Kennedy (86.4 percent), and Hubert Humphrey (73.4 percent). Among White voters, Chisholm was at the bottom of the rating poll with a score of only 42.2 percent. Although a record number of Black delegates (452) was at the 1972 Democratic Convention, most were committed to other candidates. Nevertheless, Chisholm was able to pick-off sixty-seven of those Black delegates.

Despite the historic nature of her presidential bid, not all went well for Chisholm. She faced many obstacles in her bid for the presidential nomination, much of it associated with sexism within Black America. One black politician said, "In this first serious effort of blacks for high political office, it would be better if it were a man" (Haskins 1975, 158). Once it became clear Chisholm was going to run, many Black males felt that her candidacy would divide the Black voting bloc (Koplinski 2000, 99). In fact, a number of Black leaders claimed that, "A vote for Shirley Chisholm is a vote for George Wallace" (one of the Democratic front-runners who was widely perceived to be running a pro-white, racist campaign) (Koplinski 2000, 100). In addition, despite her attempt at coalition building, Chisholm faced criticism from the Black community from those who felt that she was not representing the Black point of view and was beholden to the women's rights movement (Koplinski 2000, 99).

Ironically, many of the leading feminists would not endorse her either because they felt she never had a chance and didn't want to lose the favor of the eventual nominee (Koplinski 2000, 99).³ Thus, while the strong base of her campaign was female and Black voters, these groups were largely unwilling to endorse what they perceived to be a doomed campaign and, therefore, supported White male candidates that they felt had the possibility of winning the presidency.⁴ In addition to gender,

Chisholm's racial identity also played a role in her being seen as an unrealistic candidate. Just a year prior, Senator Muskie publicly asserted that the country was not ready for a Black vice president (Koplinski 2000, 103).

Although her campaign followed the height of the Civil Rights Movement, her biggest problem seemed to be people taking her seriously. Although attitudes toward a female candidate for president were changing, female candidates, particularly a Black female candidate, faced tremendous opposition. Ferree (1974, 390-399) found that although discrimination against female candidates⁵ remained relatively constant from 1958 to 1969, fluctuating between 38 percent and 40 percent, there was a significant drop of 25 percent in the number of respondents opposed to a female candidate in 1972. Although attitudes were changing and the number opposed to female candidates was declining, a significant portion of the American public still would not vote for a woman candidate for president. In an era when the Black Civil Rights Movement had peaked and the Women's Rights Movement was gathering steam, the American electorate was still willing to back White males for office because they were seen as "realistic" options. Thus, Shirley Chisholm, though ahead of her time, was viewed as an improbable candidate for president, and to use a phrase associated with the dreams of Don Quixote, was "titling at windmills."

CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN'S 2003 PRESIDENTIAL BID

If, in 1972, Shirley Chisholm was a woman before her time, former United States Senator Moseley Braun was a woman of her time and marketed herself in 2003 as a realistic and viable candidate for president. Unlike Shirley Chisholm, who recognized the impossibility of her run on the presidency, Moseley Braun stated ". . . Americans are prepared to think outside the box and elect a person who is female and African-American, a person who does not fit the mould that we have resorted to for the last 200 years" (Younge 2003, 3). While Moseley Braun had little name recognition outside of the African-American community, she represented an important demographic within the Democratic Party and the anti-Iraq war movement. She claimed to be ". . . a budget hawk and a peace dove" (Younge 2003, 1). With only 37 percent of African-Americans in favor of the Iraq war and 51 percent of women, Moseley Braun articulated a much needed voice (Gallup 2003). Although she had lost her bid for reelection to the Senate in 1998, Moseley

Braun viewed her 2003 race for the Democratic presidential nomination as a serious effort.

In 2003, Moseley Braun and Al Sharpton were two Blacks among the nine Democrats running in the Democratic presidential primary. A question that was clearly in the forefront was which of these candidates was best positioned to articulate the issues of concern to many Blacks and to be seen as a credible spokesperson for those views? As far as professional and political credentials went, Moseley Braun was stronger. She is a lawyer, former Assistant US Attorney of Illinois, a former member of the Illinois House of Representatives, Cook County recorder of deeds, served in the US Senate for six years, and was ambassador to New Zealand. Sharpton's educational and political credentials were not as impressive. He attended Brooklyn College, but did not attain a degree. He was a Pentecostal minister (ordained at age 9), had been mentored by the singer James Brown, and is known more for his work as an activist, which brought him national attention. He is founder and president of National Action Network, and was a candidate for US Senate in 1992 and 1994, and for mayor of New York City in 1997.

Both Moseley Braun and Sharpton had controversial baggage. Moseley Braun's reelection to the US Senate was undone by ethical lapses, namely sharing an inheritance with her siblings that should have been used to reimburse Medicaid for their mother's nursing home care, accusations of misuse of campaign funds by her former fiancé and campaign manager, and a visit to the military dictator of Nigeria that was not authorized or approved by the US State Department. Sharpton had to contend with his involvement in the 1987 Tawana Brawley incident that resulted in the loss of a lawsuit that ordered him to pay \$345,000 to one of the White prosecutors in the case, whom Sharpton accused of being one of the men that supposedly raped Brawley. He had also been captured on an FBI tape in 1983 discussing a cocaine deal with an undercover agent, and faced accusations of being an FBI informer during the 1980s.

Despite her own baggage, Moseley Braun was the much more credible candidate to put forth the issues of concern to Black communities, women in general, and women of color in particular than was Sharpton. She was also better positioned to push the Democratic Party back to the left on many issues of concern to Blacks. An August 22, 2003, poll by the Pew Foundation found that of Democratic voters who had heard of Moseley Braun, 46 percent said there was at least some chance that they would vote for her. Conversely, 70 percent of Democrats who were familiar with Sharpton said that there was *no* chance they would vote for

him. Also, unlike Chisholm in 1972, Moseley Braun was endorsed by the National Organization of Women and the National Women's Political Caucus. She was the only woman in the race and women's organizations supported her.

Despite this support from women's groups and the views of Democrats in general, Black Americans appeared more willing to support a Black man unfavorable to 70 percent of party faithful than a Black woman with the skills and credentials to move forward issues of concern to Blacks. A CNN/Gallup poll of Black voters in June 2003 found only 12 percent supported Moseley Braun, while 24 percent favored Sharpton followed by 17 percent for Joseph Lieberman (D, Connecticut). (See Table 1.) A Gallup poll of Black voters conducted in September and October of 2003 found that Al Sharpton easily led the Democratic field with 22 percent, well ahead of retired Army General Wesley Clark's 13 percent, and 15 points ahead of Carol Moseley Braun, who garnered only 7 percent. We do not know whether Moseley Braun's lack of support among Black Americans was related to gender issues because Moseley Braun participated in only one presidential primary before she formally withdrew from the race on January 15, 2004. The only primary Moseley Braun participated in was the unofficial Washington, DC, contest on January 13th which did not include John Kerry, Joseph Lieberman, Richard Gephardt, and several other candidates. Sharpton outdistanced Moseley Braun in the unofficial primary with 34 percent of the informal vote total to Moseley Braun's 11 percent.

TABLE 1. Democratic Primary Race—Black Voters Only, June 12-18, 2003

Al Sharpton	24%
Joe Lieberman	17%
Carol Moseley Braun	12%
Bob Graham	8%
John Kerry	6%
John Edwards	6%
Dick Gephardt	6%
Howard Dean	3%

margin of error: $\pm 3\%$

Source: Gallup, June 12-18, 2003.

HAS THIRTY YEARS MADE A DIFFERENCE?

What comparisons can we make between Shirley Chisholm's run in 1972 and Carol Moseley Braun's in 2003? Did the political environment change for a Black woman running for president between 1972 and 2003? These are difficult questions and data are scarce or nonexistent for a definitive answer. Nonetheless, there are a few readily available indicators that point, at least, to possible answers while providing a window to the future.

Did Moseley Braun do better than Chisholm in the presidential primaries? When Shirley Chisholm ran for the Democratic nomination in 1972, she faced a field with two or three nationally well-known candidates and numerous local favorites. Julian Bond, a state representative from Georgia, and activist in the NAACP, proposed that in order to get a large Black contingent of delegates at the convention, each major city or state should run a "native son" that would turn out Black voters (Chisholm, 1973). Thus, Chisholm faced popular local candidates as well as the "big" opponents in all of the primaries she contested. Consequently, using actual vote share in a comparison today proves difficult because of the different nature of the primary field in 2003 and 2004. Besides, Moseley Braun pulled out before the Iowa caucuses in 2004 and was active only in the informal D.C. primary, which did not have the full field of candidates. To make comparisons of election results even more difficult, Chisholm did not participate in the 1972 D.C. primary as a favor to "native son" candidate Reverend Walter Fauntroy, who was worried she would undermine his political influence in the area (Chisholm 1973). Thus, there are no primaries where both Moseley Braun and Chisholm participated and we are unable to compare electoral performance in similar districts. But, Chisholm stayed in the race through the entire presidential primary season and went into the convention with delegates. Moseley Braun did not.

Another area where comparisons between the two campaigns can be made is through financial contributions and expenses. According to the Center for Responsive Politics and Federal Election Data, Carol Moseley Braun raised \$627,869 as of December 31, 2004 (which does not include federal matching funds since her campaign failed to file for them). She also had expenses and debts totaling \$885,267. Unfortunately, federal election laws for the 1972 campaign did not require reporting of campaign donations, so official records of Shirley Chisholm's contribution data do not exist. Yet, in her book on the campaign, Chisholm reports that she had receipts of about \$95,000 and ex-

penses of \$300,000 (Chisholm 1973, 45). In 2004 dollars, Chisholm's figures amount to a fundraising effort of \$371,095 and costs of \$1,171,875. Though one should look at Chisholm's figures with some skepticism, it appears as though Moseley Braun raised the equivalent of a quarter-million dollars more, but spent almost \$300,000 less.

The difference in expenses make some sense since Moseley Braun left the race early, while Chisholm campaigned through to the convention, but the difference in money raised is interesting. Of course, due to any number of possibilities, which could account for the relative increase, this should not be taken as direct evidence that Black female candidates today face better financial prospects in presidential bids. Yet, all things being equal, it offers some hope that money might be more readily available to Black female candidates today. Had Moseley Braun received enough electoral and polling support to keep her in the race, or had she applied for federal funds, her fundraising as compared to Chisholm's would have shown even greater success. On the other hand, Chisholm notes that she did not pay people to actively engage in fundraising (Chisholm 1973, 45), which would be unheard of in a modern campaign, and factors such as lack of attention, the economy, and the field of opponents all confound the comparison. Yet, despite numerous plausible confounding factors, it is still hard to avoid the implication that a Black female candidate in 2003, with a record the likes of Shirley Chisholm or Carol Moseley Braun, might face better fundraising prospects than in 1972. In fact, Moseley Braun raised more money than did Al Sharpton, who raised \$611,757, which included \$100,000 in Federal matching funds. Moreover, Sharpton ended the race \$556,550 in debt. Thus, it appears that Moseley Braun not only raised more money than Chisholm thirty years ago, but more than Al Sharpton as well, who enjoyed more support in polls of Black Americans than she did, despite his higher level of "unfavorables."

Another area of potential comparison between the two candidates is in endorsements. Were endorsements more readily available for Moseley Braun in 2003 than they were for Chisholm in 1972? Again, the answer is unclear given a lack of complete information of all the potential mitigating factors, but their "big name" endorsements came from groups or individuals representing similar issue groups. In fact, the only major endorsements Moseley Braun received in the 2003-2004 campaign were from the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). Chisholm, on the other hand, received only a personal endorsement from NOW's president in 1972. It might be the case that Moseley Braun was not in the race long

enough to receive other major endorsements, or that the field in 1972 was so scattered as to make major endorsements not readily available for Chisholm. Yet the fact remains that the only big endorsements either received, thirty years apart, were from women's groups. If indeed Black female candidates were in a better position today, one might expect other types of organizations, such as the Congressional Black Caucus, to come out in support of a candidate like Moseley Braun.⁶ The fundraising data suggest that there may be some credibility to the claim that Black female candidates are more viable today than when Shirley Chisholm ran in 1972. Yet, the lack of change or diversity in the endorsement records thirty years later suggests a different interpretation.

A last comparison worth making is that when Chisholm ran in 1972 she claimed, and subsequent research has confirmed, that other Black male politicians and political leaders resented her presence in the campaign. After a meeting with other Black politicians and civil rights activists, Chisholm wrote, "What was really bothering the black males at the meeting was more directly hinted at by one who told a *Washington Post* reporter (anonymously—I don't remember who he was), 'In this first serious effort of backs for high political office, it would be better if it were a man'" (Chisholm 1973, 35). Based on public appearances and debates, Sharpton and Moseley Braun seemed cordial, and Moseley Braun did not face the prospects of numerous "native son" opponents in every primary. Perhaps Black political activist groups have moved to a position more welcoming of a Black female candidate, or perhaps Chisholm's 1972 bid just paid the "dues" necessary for a Black woman to be taken seriously as a presidential candidate.

CONCLUSION

Has thirty years made a difference for Black female candidates in general, and Black female candidates for President in particular? While we lack the ability to conduct a rigorous assessment with just two candidates separated by thirty years, the evidence we do have is suggestive that some positive movement has occurred. First, Moseley Braun received official endorsements from women's organizations (as opposed to just the individual, personal endorsement for Chisholm), which is encouraging. This suggests that women's organizations are willing to support a female candidate without a predisposition to race. Still, the lack of support from other organizations, particularly race-based organiza-

tions, in both of these campaigns when Black male candidates were present might be indicative of a persistent reluctance to support Black women over Black men. Shirley Chisholm's 1972 campaign was fraught with attempts by Black political leaders to undermine her candidacy (even if they were not intentionally designed to do so). Though Carol Moseley Braun did not face these same challenges from Black males, the lack of support in endorsements from groups other than women's groups is disconcerting. Thus, while it seems entirely possible that a Black female can be seen as a viable presidential candidate for women's groups, it is not clear that a Black female for president is viable for race-based organizations.

Is it possible that Marable's (2001) "Sapphire" characterization that males are preferred to females among Blacks holds in presidential politics? Polling data suggests that an overwhelming majority of Black Americans were more willing to support a Black male with no elective office experience for President than they were a Black female former United States Senator. Unfortunately, we do not have data that allow us to measure the effects of continued sexist attitudes within the broader black communities on support for Moseley Braun's presidential bid. Clearly, there is the need to conduct better polling and ask better questions of black voters as a means of making future comparisons more meaningful. Moreover, we also need more research on voter perceptions and decision making when faced with a choice between Black female and Black male candidates.

Our comparison of fundraising efforts is also consistent with an air of cautious optimism. Moseley Braun was able to raise more money than Shirley Chisholm, but the money Moseley Braun raised was minimal compared to that raised by even lesser known White male presidential candidates.⁷ What this means is not entirely certain, but it does make one wonder how much support in dollars a Black female presidential candidate can expect to raise vis-à-vis her male counterparts. Yet the fact that Moseley Braun raised more money in a few short months than both Sharpton and Chisholm over their entire campaigns might be suggestive of an improved position for Black female presidential candidates with the larger public.

The above analysis suggests that, in the thirty years since Shirley Chisholm's bold candidacy, the prospects for Black women in presidential contests have improved somewhat. At the same time, however, the brief candidacy of Carol Moseley Braun suggests that this optimism should be tempered, especially without a better understanding of how the opinions of Black males toward Black female candidates have—or

have not—changed since Chisholm’s bid. The analysis presented here does move us a little farther down the road to understanding the political climate for Black female national political candidates, which is promising, but clearly it suggests that far more work needs to be done.

AUTHOR NOTE

This article was developed from remarks given by the first author on a roundtable, “Blacks and Presidential Politics,” at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, September 1-5, 2004

NOTES

1. There is no consensus on the actual number of women who have run for president, but the most authoritative estimate, by the Center for American Women and Politics, is twenty-two—fourteen from the two major parties, and six from minor parties. Many of these women ran in several state primaries, but never entered the national stage and were never viewed as national presidential primary contenders. Of the five national candidates in modern times—Margaret Chase Smith (Republican, 1964), Shirley Chisholm (Democrat, 1972), Patricia Schroeder (Democrat, 1986), Elizabeth Dole (Republican, 1999), and Carol Moseley Braun (Democrat, 2003)—two have been Black. Thus, Black women stand out as being in the forefront of the effort to elect a woman as president. Retrieved August 5, 2005, from <<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/Facts/CanHistory/prescand.pdf>>.

2. This number includes representatives from the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. *Source*: Congressional Black Caucus. Retrieved February 26, 2005. <http://www.house.gov/cummings/cbc/cbcnew/cbc109th.pdf>.

3. Gloria Steinem, Editor of *Ms. Magazine* and a prominent feminist, gave Chisholm an ambiguous endorsement by saying, “I’m for Shirley Chisholm, but I think that George McGovern is the best *male* candidate” (Chisholm 1973, p. 76).

4. The eventual Democratic nominee, Senator George McGovern, carried only one state in the 1972 election, which suggests how wrong White feminists were about the electability of the White male Democratic candidates.

5. This was measured by a negative response to a question on whether or not one would vote for a woman president.

6. We are unable to determine if Moseley Braun would have gotten more respect from Black organizations if she had been the only Black candidate in the race, or if men in general, and Black men in particular, would have curried favor with the White male front-runners.

7. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Dennis Kucinich, Democratic Congressman from Ohio, raised over \$13 million.

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