

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Men of Color, Linked Fate, and Support for Women of Color Candidates

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## Abstract

Scholars are increasingly interested in “of color” identities. Yet, studies of “of color” identities have neglected attention to the gendered identities of men who could be categorized as “of color.” Meanwhile, women of color are playing a growing role in US politics as candidates and elected officials but are underrepresented in comparison with their presence in the population. We investigate whether Black and Latino men express a “men of color” linked fate and whether it has implications for support for women candidates of color. We seek to understand how Black and Latino men’s gender, race, and “of color” identities impact their evaluations of women candidates who are Black, Latina, and “of color” to better understand coalitional possibilities across gender and race lines. We find that Black and Latino men subscribe to “men of color” linked fate, with political consequences.

**Keywords:** Black politics; Latino politics; gender; woman of color; men of color; people of color; linked fate

In 2015, the census projected that by 2044, the United States would be a majority-minority country, where “people of color” will achieve numerical majority status (Colby and Ortman 2015). Scholarship has recently taken a turn toward a more thorough understanding of the broader identity terms “people of color” (PoC) and “women of color” (WoC). The mainstream definitions are that both encompass nonwhite persons and women, respectively, across race and ethnicity. Efrén Pérez and colleagues have advanced our understanding of PoCs, including finding that the most prototypical racial group is perceived to be Black Americans and identifying the varying power differentials across groups of color (Pérez 2021; Pérez et al. 2022; Pérez, Robertson, and Vicuña 2023; also see Starr 2022; Starr and Freeland 2023). This literature on PoC identity, however, does not include a gendered lens.

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Other scholarship intervenes by examining WoC. Unlike some of the scholarship on PoC that assigns PoC identity to individuals who could be categorized as such, Matos and colleagues (2023) make an argument that *self-identification* as a WoC matters socially and politically. Furthermore, while the likelihood of identifying as WoC depends on being Black, Latina, or Asian American, as does the level of linked fate with other WoC (Greene, Matos, and Sanbonmatsu 2022a), research suggests that the politics of WoC are wide-ranging and historically grounded (Greene, Matos, and Sanbonmatsu 2022b; Matos, Greene, and Sanbonmatsu 2021; Matos, Greene, and Sanbonmatsu 2023). This work finds that to self-identify as a WoC has utility for women voters, for campaigning as a WoC, and for coalition-building across women (Carey and Lizotte 2023). Carey and Lizotte (2023) find that higher levels of WoC linked fate have the potential for cross-racial coalitions on policies related to gender and racial justice.

A coalitional identity that is vastly undertheorized is that of “men of color.” Past research has not examined the MoC identity or the implications of MoC linked fate. We seek to understand if men who could be categorized as “men of color” subscribe to an MoC linked fate, examining Black and Latino men. We also make an argument about the political implications of MoC linked fate, linking the expression of a “men of color” linked fate with support for women candidates including those explicitly labeled as “women of color.” We theorize that MoC linked fate signals a broader and more coalitional perspective and will be positively related to support for women of color candidates.

Understanding how Black and Latino men make decisions about women candidates of color is imperative for the advancement of the race, ethnicity, and politics (REP) field. WoC outpace men of color (MoC) in the growth of voter registration, voting rates, and political officeholding (Garcia Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2005; Hardy-Fanta et al. 2007; Shah, Scott, and Gonzalez Juenke 2019). A record number of Black (Dittmar 2021) and Latina (Dittmar 2022) women ran for and won congressional offices in 2020. Further, women of color, and in particular Black women, remain reliable voters for progressive and Democratic candidates. Black women voters are also the most consistent supporters of Black women (Gershon and Monforti 2021; Mosier, Pietri, and Johnson 2022; Philpot and Walton 2007). Hence, electing Black women and Latinas, and WoC more generally, has significant implications for democracy. WoC elected officials support policies that benefit marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities (Bejarano 2013; Brown 2014; Brown and Gershon 2016b). Although research about who supports women candidates from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups has expanded (Bejarano and Smooth 2022; Brown, Clark, and Mahoney 2022; Brown and Gershon 2016a, 2016b; Greene, Matos, and Sanbonmatsu 2022b; Matos, Greene, and Sanbonmatsu 2021; Simien 2022), we still know very little about how MoC, and in particular Black and Latino men, view WoC, Black, and Latina women candidates.

Using the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-election Survey (CMPS), we draw on theories of group consciousness, intergroup relations, and coalition-building to investigate how Black and Latino men evaluate Black women, Latinas, and WoC congressional candidates using feeling thermometers and a survey question gauging the importance of candidates being WoC.<sup>1</sup> We primarily focus on men’s attitudes toward women candidates to probe the coalitional possibilities that an “of color” identity may

yield with a gender out-group, extending racial/ethnic politics research which has primarily investigated voter support for men candidates (Adida, Davenport, and McClendon 2016; Benjamin 2017; C. Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993; Tesler and Sears 2010). Although WoC may be a racial/ethnic in-group for MoC—depending on how WoC are perceived racially—they are a gender out-group; as such, WoC candidates may not be perceived as the ideal political representatives.

We find that Black and Latino men subscribe to a “men of color” linked fate, with Black men expressing higher levels of MoC linked fate compared with Latino men. We find that MoC linked fate has implications for electoral politics: examining men’s support for women candidates, we find that MoC linked fate is associated with warmer feeling thermometer ratings for Black women and Latina congressional candidates, as well as candidates labeled “women of color.” We also find that MoC linked fate increases Latino men’s interest in candidates being WoC, although the effect is reversed for Black men. We conclude that men’s views on women candidates of color can be enhanced when men take up the gendered “of color” identity of MoC. However, there may be limits to racial/ethnic solidarity across gender lines to the extent that descriptive representation is zero-sum.

### Linked Fate as “Men of Color”

A significant theoretical development in the REP field is the emergence of theories and empirical investigations of PoC, or people of color, identity (Pérez 2021; Pérez, Robertson, and Vicuña 2023; Pérez et al. 2022; also see Starr 2022; Starr and Freeland 2023). Despite common usage of the term PoC in the media, researchers have only recently begun to discern the degree to which individuals who can be categorized as such take up the PoC label. Such studies demonstrate the relevance that “of color” identities hold for many Americans, the variation in who subscribes to a PoC identity, and the downstream effects of these identities. Similar research studies have been undertaken on the contours of the WoC label including self-identity and the link between WoC voters and WoC candidates (Greene, Matos, and Sanbonmatsu 2022b; Matos, Greene, and Sanbonmatsu 2021, 2023).

A gender lens is often applied to women as political subjects, with scholars commonly equating the category of “gender” with “women.” But gender as a category and source of identity encompasses men including men of color. What an “of color” identity might entail for men as a gender group has yet to be examined. We contribute to this debate through an exploration of “men of color” linked fate. Linked fate, which is the belief that one’s life outcomes are interconnected with that of other group members (Dawson 1994), has not been considered from the vantage point of “men of color” as a group. What it means to be a person of color might vary with gender identification, making for stronger in-group bonds with individuals who share one’s gender as well as race/ethnicity.

The measure of linked fate was created to operationalize Black group consciousness (Dawson 1994). Scholars have, however, extended the concept to other racial and ethnic groups as well as other identity categories such as gender, class, and religion (Gay, Hochschild, and White 2016). Surveys, for example, show that Latinos express a sense of linked fate (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010),<sup>2</sup> resulting in

the overall understanding that linked fate is not unique to one group but that the concept is intricately tied to the history of Black Americans.

Both Black and Latino men may find common cause with “men of color” per se. As Pérez (2021) and Starr and Freeland (2023) have theorized, being a PoC is more than a demographic term; it is also a source of identity. But the experiences of being PoC may be gendered. After all, how gender identity and gender equality should figure into struggles for racial equality are contested topics (Giddings 1984; Carbado 1999; Roth 2004; Alexander-Floyd 2007). Even if racial/ethnic groups gather beneath an “of color” umbrella, the question of whose interests are represented in that coalition remains.

The history of the concept of linked fate, recent linked fate research, and new work on PoC identity lead us to believe that Black men might have higher levels of MoC linked fate than Latino men. Research on the PoC identity (PoC ID) finds that the prototypical “PoC” is Black and that “PoC ID” is higher for Blacks than Latinos (Pérez 2021; Starr and Freeland 2023). Starr and Freeland (2023), for example, find that non-Hispanic Black Americans (96%) followed by Black Latinos (93%) self-identify at the highest rates as PoC, whereas only 45% of Latinos of any race self-identify as a PoC. The same trend follows in relation to PoC linked fate, where 77% of non-Hispanic Blacks and 50% of Latinos agree that “what happens generally to people of color” will affect their lives (2023, p. 12). Using 2020 CMPS data, Greene et al. (2022a) found that WoC Identity (WoC ID) was highest for Black women (91%) followed by Asian American women (58%) and Latinas (36%). They found that WoC linked fate was highest for Black women followed by Latinas and then Asian American women.

Scholars have also examined Black Americans’ expressions of linked fate by gender (Dawson 1994; Gay and Tate 1998; Simien 2005; Tate 1993) and have found some differences. In the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), for example, 68% of Black men, compared with 60% of Black women, expressed Black linked fate, a significant difference among Black Americans. However, there were no gender differences among Latinos’ expressions of Latino linked fate. Simien (2005) finds that Black men expressed linked fate with Black men at higher rates than Black women but that there were no gender differences in Black men and women’s expression of linked fate with Black women. Gershon et al. (2019) find that Latino males have the lowest levels of minority linked fate compared with Black men, Black women, and Latinas. Given these findings, we hypothesize that

*H1: Black men will score higher than Latino men on MoC linked fate.*

## MoC Linked Fate and Support for WoC Candidates

Theories of intergroup relations have found that superordinate identities can foster intergroup cooperation (Sherif et al. 1961). For example, in times of crisis, a shared national identity has been a uniting force (Transue 2007). Scholarship on PoC also reveals that a PoC identity fosters coalition-building among racial and ethnic minoritized groups (Pérez 2021). Research on WoC captures a similar coalition among self-identified WoC who support women of color candidates at higher rates than do white women (Matos, Greene, and Sanbonmatsu 2021). Linked fate, we

argue, plays an important role in how minoritized groups understand and make decisions about political candidates (Gershon et al. 2019). In their work, Gershon et al. (2019) find that “minority linked fate” may be related to perceptions of representation from diverse political candidates, although we should note that their measure did not take into account the potential for gendered aspects of minority linked fate. The authors find that higher levels of minority linked fate were associated with higher levels of perceived representation for all the minority candidates, both in-group and out-group members regardless of gender. Hence, we contend that MoC linked fate, as an expression of group consciousness (McClain et al. 2009), will serve as a mechanism through which Black and Latino men can increase their support for Black women, Latina, and women of color candidates. The “of color” grouping can gather women and men in a common cause against a white out-group.

The literature on candidate evaluations often focuses on evaluations of men candidates even when the research question concerns racial and ethnic minoritized groups. Kaufmann (2003), for example, found that the majority of both Black Americans and Latinos supported the Black and Latino candidates in distinct Denver, CO, mayoral races although Black voters supported the Latino candidate at higher rates than Latino voters supported the Black candidate. Even though the work by Schwarz and Coppock (2022) finds that on average, the effect of being a woman candidate increases support by 1.8 percentage points, they also find that this effect was stronger among white candidates compared with Black candidates and stronger for women respondents compared with men respondents. Hence, evaluations of Black and Latino men, as MoC potential voters, and their support for women and women of color candidates are a continued gap in the literature of candidate evaluations.

The work by Bejarano and team furthers this research by examining co-ethnic and co-gender support for candidates. Bejarano (2013), for example, found that broadly ethnoracial minorities supported other ethnoracial minority incumbents over white incumbents. In their 2021 work, Bejarano et al. examine whether shared racial and gender identity is associated with Black and Latina/o voters’ beliefs about how well a candidate of a different race and/or gender will represent them (Bejarano et al. 2021). They find that among Latino respondents, a stronger sense of minority linked fate—measured as linked fate with “racial and ethnic minorities”—is positively associated with an increase in expressing that a Latino man and a Black woman candidate will represent their interests. Among Black men, the authors find that not sharing the ethnoracial and gender identity of the candidate is negatively associated with the likelihood that the candidate will represent their interests.

Other scholarship identifies the ways that gendered interests can divide communities of color (Alexander-Floyd 2007; Bejarano 2014; Capers and Smith 2016; Carbado 1999; Harnois 2017; Hill Collins 2004; Robnett and Tate 2023; Simien 2005). Within communities of color, gendered inequalities in power, resources, and status can lead to differences in political agendas and opportunities for coalitions that are gender-specific. Variation in perspectives and policy priorities can create dynamic arrangements of in-groups and out-groups that fall along the lines of race and gender, including cross-racial and panethnic coalitions.

Sigelman and Welch (1984) found that African American men were less likely to vote for a woman presidential candidate compared with African American women. Philpot and Walton (2007) found that Black men and women were equally likely to support a Black woman candidate over a white man or woman candidate; however, if a Black woman ran against a Black man, a gender gap emerged. Likewise, Montoya et al. (2021) using data from the 2016 CMPS find that Black women and men see Black candidates as likely to represent their interests with evidence of gender affinity effects. That Black men's race identification was found by Simien and Clawson (2004) and Simien (2005) to be positively related to gender identification suggests that equality for Black women and Black men can coexist. Indeed, Simien (2004) concludes that "black feminist consciousness is quite widespread among both black women and black men" (330–331). Few gender differences in policy are usually evident among Black voters compared with white voters.

There is considerably less research on Latinos' support for Latinas in politics. Bejarano (2013) found that Latino men were supportive of Latinas, their co-ethnics, in politics. Montoya et al. (2021) found that Latinos and Latinas see Latino/a candidates as likely to represent their interests with evidence of gender affinity effects. Latino candidates were perceived to be more likely than Black candidates to represent their interests.

We propose that those higher in MoC linked fate may find more commonality with women candidates from racial out-groups, as well as WoC candidates who explicitly share the "of color" label.

*H2: We hypothesize that MoC linked fate will be positively related to feeling thermometer ratings for Black women, Latinas, and WoC congressional candidates, for both Black and Latino men.*

*H3: We hypothesize that MoC linked fate will be positively related to seeing WoC candidates as important, for both Black and Latino men.*

## Data, Methods, and Descriptive Summary

We turn to the most comprehensive dataset of public opinion and elections for studies of race and ethnicity: the 2020 CMPS (Frasure et al. 2021). The study represents the first national data collection of men's linked fate with "men of color" as well as the first data collection of "WoC" congressional candidate feeling thermometers, offering an unprecedented opportunity to probe the ways that gender and race interact for men's attitudes and political behavior.

The key dependent variables of interest are the questions that ask respondents to place groups of congressional candidates on a 0–100 feeling thermometer.<sup>3</sup> To further evaluate views of WoC, we include a measure of the importance the respondents place on a candidate being WoC.<sup>4</sup> Our main independent variable of interest is the linked fate question concerning "men of color" ("MoC linked fate") to measure that raced and gendered coalitional identity.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Gershon et al. (2019) previously examined minority linked fate, we explicitly test for the gendered dynamics of linked fate.

Following the research of Montoya et al. (2021), we are interested in the ways that Black men and Latino men assess the different candidate race and gender subgroups. We make a unique contribution by including a feeling thermometer for WoC congressional candidates explicitly labeled as such.

Before turning to the multivariate analyses, we display the feeling thermometer ratings of our sample. While our hypotheses concern the relative evaluations of different groups of *women* candidates, for the purposes of providing descriptive statistics, we first include evaluations of men congressional candidates.

Table 1 indicates that Black men's evaluations of Black men congressional candidates and Black women congressional candidates are statistically indistinguishable. Black congressional candidates are rated more highly than Latino congressional candidates. While we expected Latina congressional candidates to be rated lower than Latino congressional candidates, the reverse was true: Black men are warmer toward Latina congressional candidates than Latino congressional candidates.

For Latino men, similarly, the racial/ethnic in-group (Latino) congressional candidates are rated more highly than are Black congressional candidates. Latino men do not differentiate between Black men and Black women congressional candidates. For neither Black men nor Latino men do we find evidence of gender solidarity with the racial/ethnic out-group.

Past scholarship has not measured Black and Latino men's attitudes toward congressional candidates explicitly labeled "WoC." While Pérez (2021) did not assess gender, he found that Black Americans are the prototypical PoC. If this applies to WoC, WoC evaluations may be like evaluations of Black women congressional candidates. On the other hand, to the extent that WoC implies a group beyond Black women, the evaluations of WoC may be lower than evaluations of Black women.

To the degree that Latinos, too, view Black women as the prototypical WoC, they may regard WoC as less of an in-group compared with those described as Latina. At the same time, if WoC is broader than Black women and could encompass Latina women as well, Latino men's evaluations of WoC could be higher than their evaluations of Black women congressional candidates.

Table 1 sheds light on these relationships. For Black men, WoC congressional candidate evaluations are one point lower than that for Black men and Black women candidates, but the difference is not statistically significant. These findings may suggest that Black men primarily view WoC congressional candidates as Black women. Black men rate WoC candidates higher than Latina candidates, indicating that Black men do not equate the appeal of WoC candidates with one of the groups that could be labeled WoC: Latinas.

The results are similar for Latino men in that WoC and Black candidates are scored similarly and below Latino men and Latina congressional candidates (see Table 1). Latino men's evaluations of WoC and Black women congressional candidates are not statistically distinguishable. WoC appear to be an out-group on both race/ethnic and gender grounds. Despite the common social categorization of Latinas as WoC, Latino men seem to make a distinction between the two groups of women candidates.

**Table 1.** Feeling thermometers: how men of color evaluate congressional candidates

	Black men congressional candidates	Black women congressional candidates	Latino men congressional candidates	Latina women congressional candidates	Women of color congressional candidates
Black men	48.9 (29.6)	48.7 (30.6)	40.7* (27.8)	42.5* (28.7)	47.6 (29.9)
Latino men	43.1* (27.6)	42.9* (28.6)	48.0 (28.0)	47.0 (29.07)	44.2* (28.9)

Source: Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (2020).

Cell entries are means on the 101-point feeling thermometer (0–100) with standard deviations in parentheses.

N = 1889 (Black men), 1694 (Latino men).

\*Out-group mean is significantly different from race-gender in-group mean.

In sum, we see that men of color make distinctions across groups of women congressional candidates even though all could arguably be categorized as “of color” women candidates.

## Main Analytic Plan and Results

Our first hypothesis concerned the strength of MoC linked fate for Black men compared with Latino men. We find that Black men score higher on MoC linked fate (mean = 3.2, sd = 1.4) than Latino men (mean = 2.6, sd = 1.2) as we had anticipated. This difference may indicate that Black men are more likely to see themselves as “of color” than are Latino men, consistent with Starr and Freeland (2023), who also find that PoC ID is much lower among Latinos. However, MoC linked fate is gendered as well as raced, which may affect men’s solidarity levels.

To better understand the political implications of MoC linked fate and heterogeneity in men’s attitudes, we turn to a multivariate analysis and a linear regression model; linear regression is appropriate given the nature of our dependent variable which varies from 0 to 100. Our main independent variable of interest is MoC linked fate. Because higher MoC linked fate signals an interest in communities of color, including WoC, we expect that higher MoC linked fate will be positively related to all the women candidates’ feeling thermometers.

In the multivariate analysis, we also control for variables related to political engagement (e.g., party identification and political interest) and demographic factors (e.g., age, education, and income). We control for hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, following women and politics researchers (Cassese and Holman 2019; Winter 2023). Because the phrase “women of color” is specific to the US context, we control for nativity and whether a language other than English is spoken in the home, following race/ethnic politics and immigration research.<sup>6</sup>

We expect that out-group considerations will also play a role in attitudes toward women candidates. Sanchez (2008), for example, finds that Latinos with strong expressions of Latino linked fate are less likely to have negative stereotypes of African Americans. This is consistent with Kaufmann’s (2003) findings that Latinos who feel closer to other Latinos are more likely to perceive commonality with Blacks. Newer

scholarship on shared marginalization and PoC solidarity suggests that groups who feel a shared marginalization or discrimination with an out-group will be more likely to have positive attitudes toward the out-group and policy preferences that help the out-group (Pérez et al. 2022). Of importance in this work is similarity in experience rather than identity (see Bejarano et al. 2021; Pérez 2021; Zou and Cheryan 2017).

To control for perceptions of out-group discrimination, we use the question: “How much discrimination, if any, do you think exists against each of the following groups in the United States today?” For Blacks, the out-group measure concerns beliefs about the extent of discrimination faced by Latinos; for Latinos, the out-group measure concerns beliefs about the extent of discrimination faced by Blacks. For Black and Latino men who perceive the out-group experiences racial discrimination, feeling thermometer ratings for candidates from that out-group should increase.

At the same time, scholars examining Black and Latino relations often describe interactions as laden with conflict. Some scholars have found that Latinos see little commonality with African Americans (Kaufmann 2007) and see the relationship as competitive in nature (McClain and Karnig 1990; McClain et al. 2007; Meier and Stewart 1991). Some work has found that Latinos express stereotypical views of African Americans. McClain and colleagues (2006) find that in North Carolina, Latinos expressed that Black Americans did not work hard and were untrustworthy. These feelings were not necessarily reciprocated by the Black respondents, the majority of whom responded that Latinos were hardworking and trustworthy. Latino men, compared with Latinas, held more negative stereotypes of African Americans. Because of this line of research, which suggests that there may be feelings of threat or competition between the two groups, we control for a geographic version of group threat. We use a question that asks respondents about the relative presence of different racial groups who live within their zip code. To measure group threat from the standpoint of Black respondents, we subtract the percentage of Blacks from the percentage of Latinos; for Latinos, we subtract the percentage of Latinos from the percentage of Blacks. Higher values on this variable indicate more threats from the out-group.<sup>7</sup>

## Results

Our expectations about MoC linked fate are largely confirmed in the multivariate analysis (Tables 2 and 3). This is the case for both Black men and Latino men.

We find that the more that men think that what happens to MoC affects them, the warmer they are toward Black women, Latina, and WoC congressional candidates. These positive relationships suggest that the MoC and WoC labels are ones that transcend a single racial/ethnic group. Depending on the sample and the dependent variable, moving one unit on the 5-point linked fate measure increases scores on the feeling thermometer from 3 to 5 degrees. Although the gender dimension of MoC linked fate might signal distinct raced-gendered interests for men, the results are in a positive direction as we hypothesized. This is also the case for the importance Latino men place on a candidate being WoC: the stronger MoC linked fate, the more interest is evident in candidates being WoC.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2.** Determinants of Black men’s evaluations of women candidates

	Black women FT	Latina women FT	WoC FT	WoC importance
MoC linked fate	5.09** (.60)	3.65** (.57)	4.65** (.60)	-.06* (.03)
Beliefs about Latino discrimination	4.93** (.83)	5.12** (.82)	5.65** (.84)	-.05 (.04)
Group threat (zip code)	-4.55 (2.57)	.24 (2.43)	-.87 (2.54)	.09 (.11)
Hostile sexism	-28.61** (3.73)	-26.37** (3.78)	-22.91** (3.71)	.27 (.18)
Benevolent sexism	12.89** (4.26)	8.40* (4.18)	12.25** (4.34)	1.07** (.21)
US-born	-1.91 (2.50)	-4.41 (2.52)	-2.28 (2.40)	.22 (.14)
Home language	-7.46** (2.34)	-3.94 (2.26)	-5.34* (2.37)	.26** (.10)
Party identification	1.17** (.42)	.35 (.40)	.59 (.43)	.10** (.02)
Political interest	-1.04 (.87)	-.49 (.84)	-1.09 (.88)	.26** (.04)
Age	.15** (.05)	.06 (.05)	.20** (.05)	-.02** (.00)
Education	.08 (.85)	1.56 (.84)	.69 (.82)	-.01 (.04)
Income	.58* (.25)	.27 (.24)	.35 (.24)	.01 (.01)
Intercept	16.59** (5.11)	22.33** (4.98)	13.30** (4.96)	1.83** (.26)
N	1677	1677	1677	1638
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.16	.20	.15

\*\**p* < .01; \**p* < .05.

Source: Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (2020).

Note: “Black women FT” is the feeling thermometer for Black women congressional candidates, “Latina women FT” is the feeling thermometer for Latina women congressional candidates, “WoC FT” is the feeling thermometer for “women of color congressional candidates” (all 0–100), and “WoC importance” is a five-category question about the importance of a candidate being WoC.

**Table 3.** Determinants of Latino men’s evaluations of women candidates

	Black women FT	Latina women FT	WoC FT	WoC importance
MoC linked fate	4.05** (.75)	3.01** (.75)	3.99** (.74)	.18** (.04)
Beliefs about Black discrimination	5.92** (.86)	6.54** (.85)	5.51** (.90)	-.05 (.04)
Group threat (zip code)	5.28 (2.94)	-1.50 (3.03)	.05 (3.23)	.27* (.13)
Hostile sexism	-24.16** (4.08)	-15.91** (4.15)	-20.48** (4.02)	.30 (.19)
Benevolent sexism	10.40* (4.73)	8.72 (4.69)	8.26 (4.89)	.48* (.22)
US-born	3.11 (1.76)	2.60 (1.79)	1.64 (1.81)	.12 (.08)
Home language	-.45 (1.68)	-.43 (1.74)	-1.88 (1.70)	.40** (.08)
Party identification	1.17** (.41)	1.14** (.42)	1.32** (.42)	.11** (.02)
Political interest	.43 (.98)	.40 (1.00)	1.26 (.99)	.16** (.05)
Age	.09 (.05)	.18** (.05)	.10 (.05)	-.01** (.00)
Education	1.85* (.81)	1.85* (.81)	1.27 (.84)	-.02 (.04)
Income	-.13 (.26)	.04 (.27)	-.03 (.27)	-.02 (.01)
Intercept	6.44 (5.66)	3.01 (5.82)	7.20 (5.80)	1.38** (.26)
N	1522	1522	1522	1459
R <sup>2</sup>	.16	.14	.14	.17

\*\**p* < .01; \**p* < .05.

Source: CMPS (2020).

Note: “Black women FT” is the feeling thermometer for Black women congressional candidates, “Latina women FT” is the feeling thermometer for Latina women congressional candidates, “WoC FT” is the feeling thermometer for “women of color congressional candidates” (all 0–100), and “WoC importance” is a five-category question about the importance of a candidate being WoC.

However, in contrast to the results for Latino men, we find that higher MoC linked fate *reduces* the importance that Black men place on a candidate being WoC. This negative relationship may be indicative of perceived trade-offs in whose representation should be a priority: the election of WoC might reduce the election of MoC because there are a finite number of elected positions. This is the only result in our analyses that hints at the limits of racial and coalitional solidarity across women and men. However, given the descriptive findings, it might be that Black men read WoC candidates as indistinguishable from Black woman candidates. If this is the case, it is consistent with some past research about the perceived costs to Black men of Black women's leadership (Alexander-Floyd 2007; Philpot and Walton 2007; Simien 2015). At the same time, this is the only effect that is in the negative direction.

Turning to the control variables, we expected that as men perceive higher levels of discrimination for the racial/ethnic out-group, their thermometer evaluations of Black women/Latina congressional candidates will rise. These expectations were borne out in the results displayed in Tables 2 and 3. Black men who perceive that Latinos as a group experience higher levels of discrimination are more likely to rate Latina congressional candidates higher. They were also warmer toward Black women congressional candidates and WoC congressional candidates. In line with prior work (Bejarano et al. 2021; Cortland et al. 2017; Pérez 2021; Pérez, Vicuña, and Ramos 2023; Zou and Cheryan 2017), these findings suggest that awareness of racial/ethnic discrimination generally leads to higher scores for underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

Perceptions of the discrimination facing Black people as a group likewise were positively related to Latino men's evaluations of Black women congressional candidates (see Table 3). The effect is positive for the other groups of women candidates as well, like the relationships we observe for Black men.<sup>9</sup>

We did not find a statistically significant effect of perceptions of discrimination for Black men or Latinos on the fourth dependent variable in our tables, which is the importance respondents place on a candidate being WoC (see Tables 2 and 3). Beliefs about racial/ethnic discrimination faced by the out-group did not influence the value placed on a candidate being WoC. Unlike the thermometer questions that gauge warm (or cold) feelings toward candidates, the important question is about voters' priorities. That discrimination perceptions do not drive beliefs may reflect ambiguity about the meaning of the WoC label or lack of solidarity with the goal of electing more WoC.

We hypothesized that group threat, measured with the relative balance of Blacks and Latinos in the respondent's zip code, would reduce Black men's evaluations of Latina candidates and Latino men's evaluations of Black women candidates.<sup>10</sup> However, we did not find an effect on the thermometers. We did find that group threat is *positively* related to Latino men's assessments of how important it is that a candidate is WoC. This finding may indicate that familiarity with the out-group leads to more support for WoC candidates. At the same time, if Latino men perceive WoC to include Latinas, then group threat may lead Latinos to want to elect more individuals from their in-group: WoC. Because the CMPS does not have a direct measure of who Latinos (or Black men) perceive to be WoC, we can only speculate at this point about the meaning of this result. Meanwhile, the threat measure does not have an effect for Black men.

## Discussion

We first found that Black men feel warmer toward Black congressional candidates followed by Latinas. Latino men feel warmer toward Latina/o congressional candidates and do not differentiate between Black men and women congressional candidates. Both Black men and Latino men evaluate WoC and Black candidates similarly. Black men rate WoC candidates higher than Latina candidates, while Latino men rate Latina congressional candidates higher than WoC candidates. These thermometers are important in that they ask about raced-gendered congressional candidates not just racial/ethnic candidates. Similar to findings by Simien (2005), although Black men rated Black men congressional candidates slightly higher than Black women, the differences are not significant, and Black men's racial consciousness as it relates to support for Black congressional candidates seems to outweigh their gendered identity. Although Black men and Black women experience race differently due to their gender, it seems that for Black men affect toward Black women and WoC candidates are not reduced because of disparate gendered experiences. The same is the case for Latinos, whose feelings for Latino candidates are higher than for Latinas but not statistically different. These findings are in line with Bejarano's (2013) work on Latino men's support for Latinas (also see Montoya et al. 2021).

We also found that Black men are more likely to express linked fate with "men of color" compared with Latino men. These findings seem to indicate that Black men see themselves represented in the "of color" term more so than Latino men. An exploration of social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel and Turner 1986) illuminates this particular finding. The "of color" part of the terminology, like that of PoC (Pérez 2021) and WoC, might be read as Black among Black men. SIT posits that group members often want to be part of a distinct and positive group. To the extent that Latino men do not want to share an "of color" identity with Black men, they may not express linked fate with "men of color." Furthermore, to the extent that Latino men are also anti-Black, they are less likely to express linked fate with "men of color," if they see the "of color" as being primarily Black (Pérez, Robertson, and Vicuña 2023). Pérez et al. (2023) manipulate Latinos' feelings of Americanness, and when they prime Latinos to feel less American, Latinos become more anti-Black. Thus, to the extent that Latinos want to bolster their own distinct group, their anti-Black sentiments might increase leading them to disidentify with a MoC identification and dampen linked fate.

Linked fate as a concept is important for cross-racial and cross-gender solidarity and coalition-building (Bejarano et al. 2021; Carey and Lizotte 2023; Gershon et al. 2019). The extension of linked fate beyond African Americans, as it was originally intended (Dawson 1994), has been contested (McClain et al. 2009). McClain et al. (2009), for example, argue that the concept of linked fate has been overextrapolated. However, other works argue that linked fate excludes cross-cutting issues such as around gender and gender identity (Cohen 1999). In this paper, one could critique our use of linked fate as it concerns Latino men and the MoC group.<sup>11</sup> The notion of group consciousness is grounded in feelings of groupness based on systemic inequality. Research has shown that Latinos in the aggregate experience discrimination and believe that Latinos as a group experience discrimination, which subsequently grounds group consciousness among Latinos. In fact, discrimination

is one of the factors that influence higher levels of Latino group consciousness (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019).

Our paper shows that MoC linked fate matters as it relates to men's attitudes toward the importance of WoC candidates. The more that Black and Latino men think that what happens to MoC affects them, the warmer they are to Black women, Latina, and WoC congressional candidates. MoC linked fate, then, transcends a single racial/ethnic group. Furthermore, the stronger MoC linked fate among Latinos, the higher the importance Latinos place on a candidate being a WoC. The shared "of color" experience among Latinos may supersede any gender differences. Future research might delve deeper into MoC linked fate by comparing Black men's linked fate with their racial group and utilizing the original linked fate questions with a linked fate question specifically about Black men's linked fate. In Simien's (2005) work, a higher percentage of Black men indicated more linked fate toward Black men compared with Black women, which might be indicative that for Black men, group consciousness that takes into account both race and gender might be at work.

Meanwhile, we find that for Black men, MoC linked fate reduces the importance they place on a candidate being a WoC. Black men may be thinking about the perceived zero-sum game of descriptive representation because they see the prototypical WoC congressional candidates as Black woman candidates. In line with scholarship about gender dynamics within the Black community (Alexander-Floyd 2007; Philpot and Walton 2007; Simien 2015), Black men might perceive electing WoC, who they see as Black women, as at odds with Black men's leadership. Philpot and Walton (2007) also found that although Black men matched Black women's support for Black women candidates, this was only if her opponent was not a Black man candidate. In other words, when a Black woman candidate's opponent was a Black man, Black men showed less support for the Black woman. However, we caution that this result was the sole negative effect we found for the MoC linked fate variable.

MoC linked fate might also have implications for the literature on representation. Prior work has found that minority linked fate is linked to how well minoritized individuals think out-group members by race and/or gender represent their interests. In this work, Black men's perceptions of the WoC category seem to be indistinguishable from Black women at the expense of seeing the importance of candidates being WoC. This is distinct from Latinos who might perceive WoC candidates as broader. Future work might consider whether MoC linked fate similarly influences representation. As the country becomes more majority-minority, linked fate across race/ethnicity and gender might become imperative for groups that remain underrepresented in local, state, and national elected positions. The exploratory nature of this work contributes to a larger understanding of Black and Latino men's voting behavior. Indeed, it is possible that, to the extent that MoC perceive gender differences in racialized experiences (Lindsay 2015), Black and Latino men may be more or less supportive of WoC in political leadership roles. Candidates' platforms and the salience of particular agenda items might play a role as well.

## Conclusion

We join other scholars in interrogating the political significance of "of color" categorizations. By establishing that Black men are higher in MoC linked fate than

Latino men, we contribute to debates about which “of color” identities hold appeal for voters. Regardless of these average values, the MoC linked fate item held explanatory power for both groups of men. The scores of men on the MoC linked fate measure and the association of this measure with candidate support indicate that “of color” identities are both racialized and gendered.

Unlike past work, we probed both race/ethnicity and gender to understand men’s support for candidates who could be considered within their coalition: women candidates “of color.” By measuring MoC linked fate and attitudes toward WoC candidates, explicitly labeled, we offer novel, exploratory evidence of how men conceptualize “MoC” and “WoC” and the boundaries of those groups. Most of our evidence pointed to a positive relationship between MoC linked fate and support for women candidates, suggesting that WoC are perceived as an in-group.

The views of MoC toward WoC depend on race, gender, and coalitions. While we do not have direct measures of men’s identity as “MoC” or which groups men see as “WoC,” our results are suggestive. Black men and Latino men differ in how they perceive themselves on raced-gendered lines as well as how they perceive the contours of the women candidates who might represent them. Because of the correspondence between views of “Black women” and “WoC” candidates, it may be that Black women are perceived to be the prototypical WoC candidates. And yet other evidence hints that WoC resonate with men in a way that can lead to broader coalitions beyond one’s racial in-group. More work should be conducted to decipher whether these findings are because of the ambiguity of the term WoC or if there is a solidarity threshold for Black and Latino men if there is a zero-sum outcome. Our research design did not address the possibility that supporting women candidates could lead to the displacement of men incumbents or lower odds for men candidates; future research can take up how MoC linked fate impacts these dynamic relationships.

Future research can take up these questions further to better understand how men who are Asian American, Middle Eastern/North African, and Native American, as well as Black Latinos, navigate their race and gender identities and those of other candidates. One practical appeal of “of color” identities is the broader coalition and sizable voting bloc that can emerge. Yet, coalitions may be unlikely due to factors such as unique group experiences and negative out-group evaluations, and coalitions bring the risk of erasure (Edwards and McKinney 2020). To the degree that the public, the media, and candidates themselves invoke these identities in the future, researchers will want to unpack the meaning and consequences of PoC—for men and women. Future studies could also consider how attitudes toward WoC candidates in the abstract are brought to bear on voting decisions for particular individual women candidates.

**Supplementary material.** To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2024.10>.

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## Notes

**1** Blacks and Latinos are the two largest racial/ethnic groups who can be categorized as “of color.” Because CMPS respondents could identify with more than one racial/ethnic group, those who identified as Black Latinos—choosing both “Black or African American” and “Hispanic or Latino” ( $n = 90$ )—are included within our Black sample and Latino sample. The Online Appendix (Tables OA3 to OA6) presents alternative perspectives on these men who identify as Black Latinos, considering the effect of including a dummy variable for the main models as well as considering the effects of excluding those individuals from the analysis.

**2** However, other scholarship find that Latinos are unique in their relatively lower levels of linked fate (Gay, Hochschild, and White 2016).

**3** We worked with Stacey Greene to add these feeling thermometer items and the importance of a candidate being a WoC to the 2020 CMPS, along with the WoC identity and linked fate items.

**4** The question wording is: “In deciding how to vote, is the candidate being a woman of color an important consideration for you?” Responses range from 1 to 5 (not at all to extremely important).

**5** The question wording is: “How much do you think what happens to the following groups here in the United States will have something to do with what happens in YOUR life? What happens to men of color will have . . .” Responses range from 1 (“Nothing to do with what happens in my life”) to 5 (“A huge amount to do with what happens in my life”).

**6** Party identification ranges from 1 to 7 (strong Republican to strong Democrat), political interest ranges from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very interested), education ranges from 1 to 5 for less than high school to postgraduate, income is household income ranging from 1 to 12, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are each measured with four items and rescaled from 0 to 1 (with higher values indicating greater sexism), nativity is a dichotomous variable that taps whether the respondent was born in the United States (coded 1), and language is a dichotomous variable that measures whether a language other than English is spoken in the home (coded 1). If we include racial resentment in the model for Latino men (Table OA9 in the Online Appendix), the results remain largely the same.

**7** We were limited in the operationalization of group threat and understand that this proxy is less than ideal; it is difficult to know how much contact respondents have with out-group members given residential segregation.

**8** In supplemental analysis (Online Appendix Tables OA5–6), we see that the main results are essentially unchanged if we exclude those men who identify as both Black and Latino. We also considered whether Black Latinos are distinct, although our data are limited. The mean MoC linked fate for Black Latinos is 3.13. In Tables OA3–4, we control for individuals identifying as Black Latinos. Black Latinos are warmer than are other Blacks toward Latina women congressional candidates, suggesting that Latina women are perceived as an in-group. The positive effect of being Black Latino can also be seen on the WoC congressional candidate thermometer, indicating that these men may have a more expansive view of “WoC” than other Black men, which makes sense given Black Latinos’ racial, ethnic, and gendered identity and lived experiences. Meanwhile, if we contrast those men who identify as Black within the Latino models, no differences emerge with respect to the thermometers. However, Black Latino men are more likely to see the identity of a candidate as WoC as important compared with other Latino men. However, the thermometer for WoC congressional candidates was not affected. And in this alternative model, the group threat variable (zip code) is no longer statistically significant at conventional levels. Although we separated “Black men” and “Latino men” into two groups for our main models, more analysis is warranted in the future to fully unpack what “of color” means for men who identify with both groups; with only 90 Black Latinos in these data, we can only speculate.

**9** We also considered beliefs about how much discrimination is faced by the in-group (Bejarano et al. 2021). For Blacks, the measure concerns beliefs about the extent of discrimination faced by Blacks; for Latinos, the extent of discrimination faced by Latinos. Tables OA7 and OA8 (Online Appendix) show that beliefs about in-group discrimination behave as expected, leading to more positive feeling thermometer ratings. No effect was found on the importance of a candidate being WoC.

**10** This question asked: “Please indicate the approximate racial/ethnic composition of the zip code where you currently live. Responses must add up to 100 percent. (Note: use a sliding scale that adds up to 100).”

**11** Black men are already included within the original group—Blacks—in Dawson’s formulation. In fact, other scholars have examined whether linked fate differs by gender among Black Americans (Simien 2005).

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